



FROM

ADJUNGBILLY
CAPTAIN

BUSHFIRE BRIGADE
BILL KINAWILL

5 PGS.

2727
[Signature]

TO COMMITTEE SECRETARY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON RECENT
AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA
ACT

Submission No.175

FY 02 62774424

DEAR SIR,

ON THE 18-1-03 @ 4.15pm A FIRE
STARTED AT "RIVER BEND" ON THE MURRUMBI
RIVER BELOW BURRINJUCK DAM. IT IS IN OUR
BRIGADE AREA WE RESPONDED & HAD IT
CONTAINED BY 12.00pm THAT NIGHT, ON OUR
SIDE OF THE RIVER (WESTERN). I WAS ONE
OF THE FIRST TO THE SCENE OF THE FIRE,
WAS ALREADY BURNING ON THE EASTERN
SIDE OF THE RIVER @ "CHILDOWLA" AS
WEATHER CONDITIONS FROM A HAND HELD METER WERE
10% HUMIDITY 41°C & WIND SW 30-40KPH GUSTY
TO 60KPH @ 4.45pm.

BY SUNDAY 19-1-03 AFTERNOON THAT FIRE
ON EASTERN SIDE OF MURRUMBIGEE RIVER IN
YASS SHIRE HAD BURNT APPROX 14,000 HA

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SIMILAR TO A FIRE THAT HAPPENED IN 1972 THAT I ATTENDED ALSO, I WAS 14 YEARS OLD, MY UNCLE WAS FIRE CAPTAIN.

ON 21-1-03 AFTER SPEAKING TO TWO ADJOINING FIRE CAPTAINS BILL LUFF & WARWICK GARNER WE ALL HAD THE SAME CONCERNS ABOUT THE FIRE AT BURRINSUCK IN THE MOUNTAIN THAT IT WOULD BURN UP TO THE DAM AND JUMP OVER TO BLACK ANDREW MTN AS IT DID IN 1972 BACK TO OUR SIDE, AS BLACK ANDREW IS IN MY AREA ITS MY JOB TO GET THE BACK BURN DONE.

I SPOKE OUR FCO RICHARD PETCH ABOUT GETTING BURRINSUCK BACK BURN & HE TOLD ME THAT IT WAS UNDER RFS YARRAULMA SEC. 44 AND IT WAS NOT A ~~P~~ PIRORITY, ALL TUMUT RFS WAS CONCERNED WITH WAS NATIONAL PARK FIRES. I SPOKE TO FORESTRY COMMISSION FIRE CONTROL OFFICER MARK CHAPLIN & HE SAID THAT THEY HAD THE SAME CONCERN AND THAT THE S.F.NSW COULDN'T GET ANY ONE TO MOVE ON A BACK BURN ALSO.

I WAS TOLD ON WEDNESDAY 22-1-03 & THURSDAY 23-1-03 WHEN I RANG HIGHLANDS FIRE CONTROL THAT BURRINSUCK FIRE WAS NOT A PIRORITY.

THE WEATHER FORECAST WAS FOR 39-41°C
 LOW HUMIDITY N TO NW WINDS FOR SAT & SU
 (25 & 26-1-03) JUST AS FIRE FRONT WAS
 COMING UP TO BURRINDUCK DAM.

ON FRIDAY 24-1-03 I RANG LOCAL MEMBER
 KATRINA HODGKINSON AND GOT HER TO
 ASK WHY WE COULDN'T GET THE BACK
 BURN DONE.

FINALLY IT WAS DONE BY AIR THE
 PLAN WAS TO DROP INCENDRIES ON RIDGE
 TOPS AND LET THE FIRE TRICKLE DOWN
 THE HILLS BUT RFS OFFICER WHO WAS TO
~~DO~~ DO THIS DROPPED THE INCENDRIES IN
 THE WRONG PLACE DOWN IN THE GULLIES.
 THAT RFS OFFICER WAS SHAWN MCCARRILL.

RICHARD PATCH RFS RANG ME & SAID
 AGAIN THAT IT WAS ALRIGHT OVER THE
 RIVER AND DONT BE SO PARANOID.

ON SATURDAY 26-1-03

R. PATCH & T. CLEE FCOs MET ME
 & WE FLEW OVER BURRINDUCK FIRE IT
 WAS BURNING DOWN IN GULLIES FROM
 BACK BURN AND SAID AGAIN YOU'VE GOT
 NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

SUNDAY 27-1-03

11:00AM FLEW WITH FCOs PATCH & CLEE
 OVER BURRINDUCK FIRE AGAIN SMOKE THAT
 THICK AT WOOLPACK ROCK DOWN IN GULLY
 THAT WE HAD TO FLY AROUND IT

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THEY SAID THE SAME YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. THE STRONG NW WINDS CAME UP AT ABOUT 1 O'CLOCK.

YASS FIRE CONTROL SENT 7 HELICOPTER FIRE BOMBERS IN THEY TRIED TO STOP THE SPOT OVERS FROM ABOUT WOOL PACK ROCK BUT COULDN'T THAT 2 & A BIT HOURS COST THE TAX PAYER APPROX \$200,000 HELICOPTER HIRE WHAT A WASTE OF MONEY.

WE FOUGHT THAT FIRE FOR ANOTHER 7 DAYS UNTIL WE WERE ABLE TO CONTAIN IT ON THE WEE JASPER TUMUT ROAD 15 KMS FROM BLACK ANDREW MTN AND IN THE PROCESS BURNT OUT APPROX 2500 ACRES.

IN THAT 7 DAYS I HAD VERY LITTLE CONTACT WITH RFS CONTROL CENTRE & FCO'S, WE WORKED WITH STATE FORESTS.

THE VOLUNTEERS OF RFS LOCAL & FROM AW WORKED WELL SO DID STATE FORESTS, THE NATIONAL PARKS EMPLOYEES DID NOT LIKE OR WORK ALONG. ONLY WANTED TO PLAY GUARDIAN OF SOMETHING A PLANT OR AN OLD TREE, NAT PARKS ONLY HAVE SLIP ON'S NO HEAVY TANKERS.

R.F.S. FCO'S LET US DOWN BADLY THEY HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY DON'T KNOW VERY MUCH ABOUT FIRE BEHAVIOUR

AND FIRE CONTROL & MANAGEMENT
OF RESOURCES.

YOU CANNOT FIGHT A FIRE & CONTROL
IT FROM AN OFFICE IT HAS TO
BE ON THE FIRE GROUND.

THE SECTION 44 DEBRIEFS THAT
WERE CONDUCTED AT TUMUT & GUNDAGH
WERE RUN BY RFS SO ANY
~~ONE~~ CRITICISM OF THEM AND THERE
WAS PLENTY WILL BE SWELVED.

THE BLACK ANDREW FIRE COULD
HAVE BEEN PREVENTED FROM EVER
HAPPENING, IF OUR CONCERNS WERE LISTENED
TO.

THE RFS CAPTAINS

BILL KINGWILL — ADJUNG BILLY

BILL LUFF — COBARRALONG

WARWICK GARNER — TOMORROMA

Yours sincerely,

