

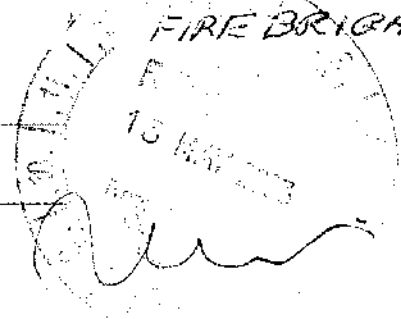
Committee Secretary
House Select Committee on the recent Australian bushfires

Submitted by: ANTHONY J CAREY. — MEMBER & EX CAPTAIN

Address:

OF THE ELDERADO
FIRE BRIGADE.

Date: 9/5/2003



INQUIRY INTO THE RECENT AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES

Dear Sir / Madam,

AT THE BEGINNING OF WHITE SETTLEMENT
GEORGE FURY BAKER TOOK UP A GRAZING LEASE FROM
ELDERADO TO CHILTERN. IT WAS KNOWN AS THE ELDERADO
RUN. BECAUSE HE STATED THAT THIS WAS GOING TO
BE HIS 'EL DORADO.'

THE TIME WAS ABOUT 1839 AND IT HAS BEEN
DOCUMENTED THAT THE COUNTRY WAS OPEN GRASS-
LANDS WITH SCATTERED TREES, AN IDEAL SHEEP RUN.
BY THE LATE 1850'S MINERS STARTED WORKING THE



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Dear Sir / Madam,

DRY CLEANERS AND SO ON UNTIL THE INTRODUCTION OF
LPG GAS

AFTER THIS TIME WHILE BEING MANAGED BY
THE FOREST COMMISSION ONE COULD BUY FIREWOOD,
FENCE POSTS, SHED AND POWER POLES AND REGULAR
FUEL REDUCTION BURNING WAS CARRIED OUT.

I WAS LED TO BELIEVE THAT I WAS THE LAST
PERSON IN VICTORIA TO TAKE UP A SELECTION
AND THE THEN LANDS DEPT PAID HALF THE COST OF
THE WIRE NETTING TO FENCE OFF AGAINST CROWN
LAND

5

WHEN THEY TOOK THE ABORIGINALS OUT OF THE GREAT SANDY DESERT IN W.A. THE WILD LIFE LEFT ALSO BECAUSE WITHOUT THE BURNING THE SPINIFEX AND HERBAGE GREW THAT RANK THEY COULDN'T LIVE ON IT. ALL YOU SEE OUT THERE TODAY IS THE ODD HALL STARRIED DINGO AND PLENTY OF WILD CATTLE.

ONE OF THE LAST THINGS THE OLD FOREST COMMISSION DID IN OUR AREA WAS TO PUT IN A FIRE BREAK AROUND EVERY PROPERTY. EVEN THIS ACTION WAS USELESS IN THIS LATEST ELDORADO FIRE.

I GOT TO THE FRONT OF THIS FIRE BEFORE IT JUMPED REEDY CREEK RD WITH MY PRIVATE UNIT. IT WAS BURNING QUIETLY WITH FLAMES ONLY ABOUT 1 METRE HIGH. I HAD A MATE WITH ME AND WE RECKONED WE'D LET IT GET A BIT CLOSER BEFORE WE HIT IT WITH WATER. WHEN THE FLAMES GOT TO ABOUT 20 METRES FROM THE ROAD THE ^{WIND} SPRUNG UP AND THE FLAMES WENT TO 3 TO 4 METRES HIGH. WE WERE PUTTING OUT WATER FLAT OUT AND THE FIRE WAS GAINING MOMENTUM. IT WASN'T UNTIL I HEARD A HELICOPTER BEHIND US THAT I REALIZED THE FIRE HAD JUMPED OVER US. IT WAS TIME TO GET OUT.

MOVING ON UP THE VALLEY TO A PRIVATE PROPERTY WE WENT INTO A CLEAR PADDOCK AND WAITED FOR THE FIRE TO COME OUT. THERE WAS NO ACTUAL FIRE FRONT THE FINE FUEL WAS BEING IGNITED AND CARRIED FORWARD AND SPOTTING A LONG WAY AHEAD OF THE FRONT.

IT WAS LIKE A LOT OF LITTLE CLUSTER BOMBS HITTING THE GROUND. PUT ONE OUT AND THERE'D BE TWO MORE AND SO ON, THEN THE WHOLE LOT WOULD ERUPT IN A FIRE BALL. IN THE BUSH THE WILD LIFE HAD NO HOPE OF ESCAPING. ANY BIRDS THAT MANAGED TO LIFT ABOVE THE FIRE AND SMOKE WERE SWOOPED UPON BY WEDGE TAILED EAGLES AND BIG BROWN HAWKES

THE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF THE DEPARTMENTS HAVE WIPTED OUT DECADES OF WILD LIFE GROWTH.

BEFORE THE ELDERADO FIRE I WAS PART OF A STRIKE TEAM FROM THE WANBARATTA GROUP THAT WENT TO THE HARRIETVILLE FIRE. WE SPENT THREE DAYS BACK BURNING THAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE IN ONE DAY. THERE SEEMED TO BE A LOT OF WAITING FOR INSTRUCTIONS.

THE HEAD OF THE N.S.W FIRE SERVICE CLAIMS THAT FUEL REDUCTION BURNING WOULD NOT HAVE MADE ANY DIFFERENCE TO THE RESULT. HE IS NOT SILLY, HE KNOWS WHICH SIDE HIS BREAD IS BUTTERED ON

COUNTRY PEOPLE HAVE A TRADIONAL RIGHT TO USE FIRE WOOD AS A CHEAP MEANS OF HEATING. THEY ARE BEING HOUNDED BY MANAGEMENT AND TURNED INTO CRIMINALS.

MANAGEMENT HAS CREATED A FALSE ECO SYSTEM IN OUR FORESTS.

Chathony J. Carey