



LDH:RMJ OR/0008

22 May 2003

House of Representatives
Select Committee on the Recent Australian Bushfires
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: RECENT AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES

With reference to the letter received by the Local Government Association of Queensland Inc advising that the House of Representatives has established a Select Committee on the recent Australian bushfires to inquire into what can be done to minimise the incidence and impact of bushfires and inviting submissions on same.

This letter was presented to the General Meeting held on 2 May 2003 where Council resolved to forward the following suggestions based on Council's Natural Disaster Plan.

1. Hazard reduction burning/stock grazing

History has shown that stocking of National Parks has been effective in reducing the available fuel for wildfires. The State Government has indicated that they wish to eliminate stock grazing from National Parks and State Forests. Council believes that this is a denigrate step in that the build up of grass and fodder that stock are able to digest becomes a potential area for wildfires, which could be avoided simply by grazing.

Hazard reduction could also be achieved by regular controlled burning in liaison with adjoining landholders and rural fire brigades.

2. Increase in buffer zones

An increase in buffer zones surrounding populated areas would reduce the threat of wildfire to residents. Residents wishing to live within bush settings should be encouraged to reduce grass growth within the vicinity of their residence or any infrastructure.

3. Road networks in State Forests and National Parks

Unfortunately, State Government policy has been to reduce employment within State Forests and the maintenance to the State Forests roads network has been reduced to a state of non-existence within some forests.

The practice of maintaining a road network in State Forests and National Parks is two-fold, firstly, it provides access for travellers and employees, and secondly, it forms a significant fire break in the case of wildfire.

Trusting that the above comments may be of assistance and taken into account for future planning for our State Government.

Yours faithfully

LD Hotz
Chief Executive Officer