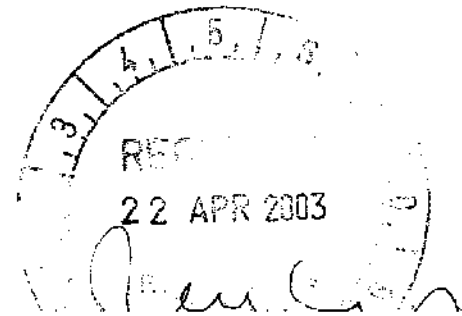


15 April 2003

Ms Sophie Panopoulos
Federal Member for Indi
117 Murphy Street
Wangaratta VIC 3677



Dear Sophie,

Submission No.38

Re: **BUSHFIRE ENQUIRY**

Thank you for attending and speaking at the public meeting in Mount Beauty last week on issues related to the recent bushfires.

While my family is very grateful for the efforts of the firefighters who saved our home and lives, I am very concerned about the following issues:

- The fire which threatened the Tawonga, Mount Beauty and Falls Creek communities originated in the Alpine National Park (ANP) and was not contained in the Park.
- The ANP is mis-managed by Parks Victoria as a result of policies which lack balance between conservation and public safety. It is also under-funded with inadequate resources for basic infrastructure, weed control and vermin control. As a result Parks Victoria management come across as irresponsible and arrogant neighbours who are not held accountable to anyone but the City-based environmental voters
- The spokesmen for Parks Victoria lack credibility because their public statements are at odds with local knowledge and common sense eg. statistics on fuel reduction
- Regional infrastructure proved to be inadequate and needs to be built to support local emergency plans eg. Mount Beauty airport was too short and too narrow to allow firefighting aircraft to take off with a full load. Telstra mobile phone service collapsed at Falls Creek isolating the community because no backup generator or service support was on the mountain

I would be grateful if you presented this submission to the Federal Enquiry and lobbied hard for management practices and policies on public land which are more balanced and hold the relevant Government and their officers accountable.

The gap has never been wider between city and country.

Yours sincerely

Susan Bartell
125 Fieldings Lane
TAWONGA VIC 3697