

The Secretary,  
Select Committee on Bushfires,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, ACT.



Dear Sir,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter that the editor of Wagga's local daily declined to publish.

By way of introduction, I was first involved in fire-fighting with the Humula Bushfire Brigade on New Year's Day, 1952, when I was twelve, and I was there every summer for the following fifty-one years.

I was captain of the Humula Bushfire Brigade from 1983 until I developed throat cancer at the end of 1989. Humula was by far the biggest brigade in the area at that time with over seventy financial members.

When I took on the captaincy of the brigade my aims were to modernize the show and never to have a fire worth reporting in the news media. Modernization requires the allocation of new equipment and that is largely a subjective political decision taken by the council clerk in charge. With this in mind the conventional wisdom was that a brigade could suffer if official feathers were ruffled.

Keeping fires small depends on speedy response with adequate resources and in my time as captain, this aspect was really hammered and we didn't have a fire burn more than twenty acres.

The Humula district is overlooked by a Forestry fire tower which would radio Wagga with the compass bearing and estimated distance from the tower of a smoke sighting. To capitalize on this we made up maps of the district from the four CMA maps which cover it and superimposed the compass bearings from the tower. (Sample attached). We also purchased a lot of old VHF radios and had them fitted with the Wagga bushfire frequency. The old Phillips and STC radios drew so little current they could be left on all summer. Most of the Humula district is shadowed from Wagga's Mt. Flakney transmitter so when the bush-fire mobiles started to rattle it was either a local caller or the Forestry tower and with so many radios, someone was bound to monitor a transmission and get some wheels rolling. We could also call the tower if we wanted the bearing repeated.

If you think I can add anything worthwhile to your deliberations I will cooperate in any way I can.

Yours faithfully,  
Michael Millard.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION HELD BY THE COMMITTEE**

**ATTACHMENT TO SUBMISSION NO.502**

**ATTACHMENTS, APPENDICES AND PHOTOGRAPHS PROVIDED WITH  
SUBMISSIONS ARE HELD IN THE COMMITTEE OFFICE**