

The Secretary
House Select Committee on the Recent Bushfires

3-5-03



Dear Sir/Madam.

I would like to have my say in the way of a submission regarding the recent Bushfires in NSW and vic. I have had 35 years of fire fighting experience with our local Toome Bush Fire Brigade being a crew leader for 18 of those years.

1. My first comment is, litigation and liability insurance, a perfect example being there was a fire in our area with the potential to burn the whole district out there was a private bulldozer on site he was not allowed to be deployed because he had no insurance. I feel this issue has to be addressed as soon as possible.

2. Where possible keep local firefighters in their own areas, I realise in the event of a section 44 being declared there will be outside crews drawn upon. However I feel the local FGO and brigade Captains should be consulted at all times to make the best use of local knowledge of terrain and conditions.

3. With nearly 7% of NSW now being either declared National Park, Nature Reserves and or Wilderness areas, there seems to be a problem on how best to manage these areas. Unfortunately the Urban Green Movement seems to have the government ear at the moment.

The National Park Service say they are committed to fuel reduction burns however I feel there needs to be a lot more work done in this regard. We have all seen the results of the Wild fire which has just decimated 67% of the Kosciuszko National Park, I own land adjoining this Park. During this last crisis it appeared to me the Park Service had neither the man power or the equipment to handle a fire of this magnitude.

4. Fire Trails within the Park Service need to be upgraded, I heard of Fire Tenders becoming bogged on some of the trails surely this must be a threat to Fire crews lives.

Geoff Waters