



08/04/03.

*Select Committee on the recent Australian Bushfires.*

*In response to your request for public submissions on fire prevention, we offer our thoughts on fire risk reduction to areas of non residential areas of Australia under the following points.*

- 1. Government and private service providers (eg. Telstra, Western Power) working in non residential areas should carry a 20l hand operated water backpack on every vehicle. A number of large fires could have been extinguished soon after ignition with such a simple unit.*
- 2. All new non residential property owners (and existing ones if possible) should own and maintain on each property a suitable water storage source and an appropriate portable fire fighting unit (200l or larger with a fire fighting pump and hose fitted)*
- 3. Private landowners of areas greater than 300m in width should be required to install a 300m fire break grid across land which is not already cleared, or parkland cleared. This should apply to all landowners within an area of 30 km. (including land under shire control) of any town or populated area. The reason for grid pattern fire breaks (all fire breaks need to be at least 5m wide to allow larger fire tanker access) is to allow fire services to gain instant access to the fire zone at an early stage and not have to wait for local earth clearing equipment to arrive for access and containment. Benefits of the grid are that it may contain a fire on its own, calm a young fire, and most importantly, allow access or exit from the three remaining grid lanes to or from the fire. These additional escape lanes may end up saving lives.*
- 4. Rural land which has regrowth more than 2 years old cannot be cleared or cultivated under present laws. This is leading to a buildup of fuel that was previously controlled by the landowner. This law needs to be removed and or modified to encourage conservative parkland clearing of land suitable for that purpose.*
- 5. Western power need to remove regrowth from below all high tension power lines (not just trim the tops off the trees) to reduce the fuel levels (fires starting when power lines tough in high winds)*

Regards

Handwritten signature of Ron &amp; Jennifer Dean.

Ron & Jennifer Dean.