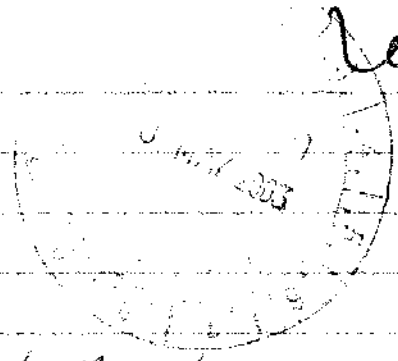


Rev. Quilong



The Secretary,  
Select Committee on the Recent  
Australian Bushfires  
Parliament House  
Canberra A.C.T. 2600

Dear Sir,

People who lived in the mountains knew it was only a matter of when the conditions were right for the worst fires known, would have to happen. Thirty to forty years of accumulated fuel produced fires that destroyed & repossessed hundreds & thousands of hectares of our native environment, our farmlands & finally emerged to destroy the greatest number of homes in the history of Australia, when more than 500 houses were burnt in Canberra. Our family predicted for years that Canberra would one day burn. These fires were watched for days on the Canberra horizon with complacency or was it ignorance, until the worsening weather conditions brought the crisis to the national capital & to others, who had no choice but to share the appalling holocaust. It was a total aberration & was avoidable. Had hazard reduction been carried out at the appropriate times as had been done by the Aboriginal People & later by the mountain graziers who used fire as a tool to farm the land & to promote healthy pastures, for warmth & to communicate.

to describe it as a "rebirth." "Come to see it!"

Unless the Senate Inquiry is able to establish the overwhelming degree of neglect & mismanagement & achieve change at the administrative level, I despair for the mountain environment.

When my husband & I complained of the neglectful manner in which the N.P.W.S. system affected our ability to continue to earn our living (the worst neighbor possible) we were forced to leave Brindabella without any compensation. At that time, we were informed, ours was a vested interest, not concerned with conservation!

May I ask, who has the vested interest to-day? Conservation has become secondary to a career in the bureaucracy, it is obvious.

Best wishes for your much needed inquiry  
Yours faithfully

Ruth Franklin  
L.R. Franklin

P.S. In 1987 we were forced to leave Brindabella because of wild dogs that destroyed our sheep flock, my husband caught at least fifty which bred in K.N.P. More recently, the 5000 acres still held by our family, were entirely backburnt. Why?

There is greater need for hazard reduction in N.P.s & state forests to protect homes & settled areas. It is imperative that prescribed hazard reduction measures are implemented with equal responsibility & accountability for "inaction" & the resultant consequences. What more can I say?

Signed: Ruth Franklin