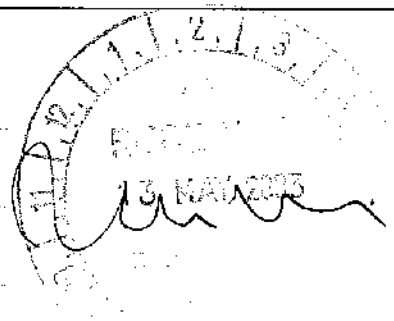
Submission No.271

Committee Secretary
House Select Committee on the recent Australian bushfires

Submitted by: Mr. Ross BRIGGS

Address:



Date: 5 / 5 / 2003

INQUIRY INTO THE RECENT AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES

Dear Sir / Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the recent bush fire disaster.

As a volenteer fire fighting member of the local Brigade and one who spent many days and nights at various fire fronts, I feel I should make the following comments to the fire enquiry. I believe it is clear beyond doubt that there nee to be more fuel reduction burns in the National Parks and rown land areas during late autumn.

After the lightning strikes on 8th Jan. this year, I attended the fire on Mt Jack behind Dederang and the "Bee Pat" fire in the Running Creek area.

In the case of the Mt Jack fire. there was a rapid response from CFA & DSE personell, and the fire was brought under control. This was potentially a dangerous fire in hazardous and rough terrain but the task was made much easier because the area had been fuel reduced 3 or 4 years earlier. The debris on the floor was much less and the fire lacked the intensity as seen in other areas. A similar situation prevailed in the case of the "Glen Pat" fire, where the bush had also been burnt. The task for firemen was easier and resulted in much less devastation and environmental damage with a less intense burn.

In contrast the fires which I attended around Mt Beauty in parks & Crown land, which had not been burnt for many years, were of extreme heat and ferocity. In these areas extreme environmental damage was done. Vegetation was destroyed, the earth was burnt to a fine powder. The ferocity & intensity of the flames used up the oxygen and large numbers of birds were seen dropping out of the sky - to die on the ground. These areas are now more prone to erosion and will take many more years longer to regenerate than those areas where the fire was less intense through fuel reduction burning.

SIGNED: Ross J. Briggs.