

Newsome, Silvana (REPS)

From:

Sent: Tuesday, 13 May 2003 10:11 PM

To: Committee, Bushfires (REPS)

Subject: Suggestions from A Small Landholder



Submission No.293

Bushfire Enquiry,

Sorry this is late, I did not know of the cutoff date. This was prepared for my local state member, Mr Craig Ingram, at the time of the fires.

I live on a block of land just north of Briagolong, and I have just been purchasing and repairing items of fire fighting equipment. I would like to draw your attention to the following issues which have concerned me.

1. The fact that all fire fighting equipment has GST attached. There was a time when safety gear like this would be tax free.

2. The actual cost of the fire fighting equipment. A plastic tractor knapsack sprayer costs about \$280 - including \$25 GST. A plastic backpack sprayer is about \$215. The tank only, as a replacement item, is just over \$100. A set of hoses for one fire fighting pump is over \$100. I have 2 such pumps.

3. The quality of the plastic tractor knapsack sprayer and plastic backpack sprayer is poor. They are difficult to use and are based on very old technology. The plastic degrades, not only in direct sunlight but also in any outside area such as a verandah, and they become brittle and then crack. This is extremely dangerous for an item that has to perform properly when needed. Unless the hand pumps are greased annually they seize up. This is technology from out of the 1920's!

4. We have spent several 1000's of dollars on our fire preparations over the years. We get no credit for this on our insurance premiums and we get no tax relief as we are not primary producers, yet by our efforts we are saving the insurance company a couple of hundred thousand dollars, and we are saving the taxpayer an enormous sum as well. We have no expectation of a fire truck coming to help us in a bushfire.

Could you please do something to remedy this situation as I know it applies to many others in similar situations. Also - some people simply do not prepare properly because of the cost (I suggest you have a look at the Rega tractor knapsack especially and see just how little you get for your money).

My suggestions are -

An Australian Standard for rural fire fighting equipment.

No GST on fire fighting equipment.

Subsidies for purchase of rural fire fighting equipment.

Discounts on insurance premiums for people who purchase fire fighting equipment and prepare their properties well.

An investigation into the design and construction of better knapsacks.

Thanks for your time

Yours faithfully,

Rod Andrew

15/05/2003