

Submission Number: NND.001.00683

Submission Of: Property Owners' Association of Victoria

Your Details

Email address:

Phone:

Preferred means of contact: Email

What is your submission based on? I am making this submission based on my professional knowledge, qualifications or experience or on behalf of a group or organisation

What is your area of professional expertise? Various experts with professional high university degrees and professor-like experience

If you are lodging your submission on behalf of a group or organisation, what is the name of the group or organisation? Property Owners' Association of Victoria

Your Submission

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response worked well?

See attached

N/A

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response didn't work well?

See attached

N/A

In your experience, what needs to change to improve arrangements for preparation, mitigation, response and recovery coordination for national natural disaster arrangements in Australia?

See attached.

Is there anything else you would like to tell the Royal Commission?

Yes.

Do you agree to your submission being published? Yes I agree to my submission being published in my name

Supporting material provided:

Bushfire2020.pdf



Property Owners' Association of Victoria Inc

www.poa.asn.au

Submission by Property Owners' Association of Victoria to the National Bushfire Royal Commission

1. The terms of reference seem to ignore any investigation into why fire clearing or proper fire prevention, doesn't take place as required. We trust you will interpret them widely to include this very critical investigation.

<https://naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/about/terms-reference>

It is time honored practice to do fire clearing, especially annually in April, in Victoria. The recent clearing restrictions by this State are making fire clearing almost impossible and the Government is not doing them. As one fire brigade captain explained in NSW, the permits only specified a certain day for clearing and if the weather wasn't suitable on that day, they would have to apply again. The Property owner with Freehold Title should not have to ask permission to clear his own property in a Liberal Democracy. The Lessees who have long leases are likewise stopped from managing their property efficiently and safely.

2. The terms of reference seem to ignore the huge property taxes levied ("Fire service levies") on property owners, in Victoria – including on vacant land or on a small concrete flat in an inner safe suburb - , for alleged fire fighting, but not applied to the basic method of fighting fires, namely fire clearing for fire prevention.

We ask that you investigate or recommend the Productivity Commission undertake a full survey of the effectiveness and efficiency of these taxes throughout Australia. We are sure you will find the Victorian taxes for this are the worst in actually preventing fires.

How disgusting are the fire service levies that most states levy on property owners but they don't pay for the FIRE PREVENTION work

The Vic Liberal Coalition Govt under Premier Napthine suddenly got rid of a voluntary levy for fire services, on property insurance & introduced a massive fire services levy on properties collected by Councils with the Rates.

Previously a user pays system applied to those who self insured. The fire brigade would send a bill to the owner if called out to a fire on the property. There was no-one who didn't pay and the old levy operated to pay the cfa to do clearing work plus people would give money to assist in clearing work if they weren't members able to assist the cfa themselves, or able to do this clearing work and if necessary, fire fighting work. The local Councils all still have powers to issue Fire Notices that require property owners and occupiers to do fire hazard clearing but some councils do not use these powers instead they can and do prosecute some owners for doing necessary fire hazard reduction clearing work.

The new levy had the effect of funding new ambulance and fire stations everywhere and the unions started fighting for the extra money and the VIC Labor Govt passed new laws that destroyed the volunteer CFAs by requiring paid union members to be in charge of the local CFAs and in charge at each call-out .

In the city, it would not be unusual to see 4 fire trucks turn up for a small rubbish bin smoke. The waste of money by bureaucracy in unnecessary "fire fighting" is crippling property owners with massive taxes that leave no money left to do essential repairs and work to counter normal building depreciation.

3. The Prohibitions on Clearing work.
The Greenie laws won't allow clearing work without special permits in most areas now & the fire service unions wont do it. The fire clearance work has gone into decline with fire tracks covered in trees and ungraded. The fire dams are silted up and the roads are unsuitable for heavy vehicles that the fire brigades all have now, and the property owners and occupiers are at increased risk due to massive green growth in forests after the drought has broken and the slight increase in CO2 levels have increased the rate at which trees are growing by an exponential factor. The Greenie laws have stopped people from picking up fallen sticks by roadsides by huge fines and consequently the forest and roadside

debris of fire hazard wood and dry grass has increased tenfold around towns that previously had people self clearing at no cost. There is no benefit to nature conservation as the timber debris is only proliferating white ants that are busy turning wood into dust that blows away. The myth that CO2 is causing climate change is causing great harm by increasing the damage caused by forest fires.

The cladding of buildings was done for greenie rules in buildings to conserve energy, resulting in massive multi billion dollar repair charges that owners are being asked to pay directly or through increased taxes and charges. The lunacy of putting plastic on the outside of high rise buildings was encouraged by this environmental climate change crap. If you don't believe that was the reason, please consult the Grenfell fire reports where the then Lord Mayor insisted that the renovations should include cladding for alleged climate change reasons.

The lunacy is that the Victorian Building Authority is now applying high rise safety rules to 3 storey buildings as well and increasing new fire regulations on everyone for no benefit.

4. Bushfire Clearing theory.

Bushfire intensity is directly proportional to the square of the fuel load. (The US Father of Fire Science George Byram, proved that the Intensity of a bushfire is proportional to the square of the dry fuel load.)

It seems the fuel load in tonnes per hectare is directly proportional to the number of years since the last bushfire, assuming they havent allowed forest harvesting or cattle grazing.

So knowing we had 10 years from 2009 Black Saturday to this years bushfires, that means the previous Victorian Royal Commission now would have determined that 10% of the forests should be burned, harvested & grazed every year.

5. Land Fuel Management : from the Victorian Royal Commission report.

“Prescribed burning is one of the main tools for fire management on public land. it cannot prevent bushfire, but it decreases fuel loads and so reduces the spread and intensity of bushfires. By reducing the spread and intensity of bushfires, it also helps protect flora and fauna. ironically, maintaining pristine forests untouched by fuel reduction can predispose those forests to greater destruction in the event of a bushfire. about 7.7 million hectares of public land in Victoria is managed by DSE. This area includes national parks, state forests and reserves, of which a large portion is forested and prone to bushfire. DSE burns only 1.7 per cent (or 130,000 hectares) of this public land each year. This is well below the amount experts and previous inquiries have suggested is needed to reduce bushfire and environmental risks in the long term. The Commission recognises that prescribed burning is risky, resource intensive, available only in limited time frames, and can temporarily have adverse effects on local communities (for example, reduced air quality). Nonetheless, it considers that the amount of prescribed burning occurring in Victoria is inadequate. it is concerned that the State has maintained a minimalist approach to prescribed burning despite recent official or independent reports and inquiries, all of which have recommended increasing the prescribed-burning program. The State has allowed the forests to continue accumulating excessive fuel loads, adding to the likelihood of more intense bushfires and thereby placing fire fighters and communities at greater risk. The Commission proposes that the State make a commitment to fund a long-term program of prescribed burning, with an annual rolling target of a minimum of 5 per cent of public land each year, and that the State be held accountable for meeting this target. DSE should modify its Code of Practice for Fire management on Public Land so that it is clear that protecting human life is given highest priority, and should report annually on prescribed-burning outcomes.

6. Further Refs.

<http://joannenova.com.au/2020/02/on-average-bushfires-burn-an-amazing-50000-ha-every-year-in-australia/>

https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=534065180542531&_rdr

Jeremy Griffiths on Alan Jones show- biologist gum trees incinerators from hell.

<https://www.spectator.com.au/2020/01/the-science-of-bushfires-is-settled-part-2/>

For inquiries: [REDACTED]

www.poavic.org

Email [REDACTED]