

I take this opportunity to submit my opinion to you on the bushfires that were recently experienced. My opinion is probably not appreciated by some people throughout Australia, but it consistent with many opinions from Australians who are greatly concerned with the management of our National and State Parks, private land restrictions and road sides. We need to do more to protect ourselves from the potential of more intense bushfires.

“The intensity of the Australian bush fires is unprecedented in recent history and our heartfelt thanks must be extended to all fire fighters, support personnel, emergency officers, citizens and the ADF for their amazing heroism in putting their lives at risk on the front line to protect Australian citizens, homes, property and public infrastructure. All levels of Government must also be thanked by supporting these amazing selfless Australian people. Our sympathy is extended to all people who have lost loved ones and property during this time.

It is a pity that each Local, State and Federal Government Departments have contributed to the intensity of the bush fires during the past number of years by:

- not abiding by the all the recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, especially fuel reduction in Parks and bush land
- by reducing the cattle grazing in the State and National Parks,
- stopping the removal of fallen timber and dead trees on road-sides and private property
- ending logging of Victoria’s native forests,
- stopping the cutting down of old-growth forest, and
- phasing out the native timber harvesting.

Australia is predominately a dry continent and we will experience draughts and bushfires continuously. Historical climatic records are now sufficiently reliable to profile climate variability taking into account expectations for regions. Bureau of Meteorology records since the 1860’s show that a 'severe' drought has occurred in Australia, on average, once every 18 years.

Since 1806, these draughts have lasted between one and four years with the longest draught of ten years, being 1937 to 1947.

We have the ability to reduce the intensity of any future bush fires by the reduction of the under growth and the build-up of fuel load on the forest floor.

This can be achieved by adopting the fuel reduction burning practices of Indigenous Australians, allowing private land owners to remove fallen or dead trees from their land, allowing the removal of fallen or dead timber from road sides, allowing loggers in the native forests to continue to remove timber and construct/maintain fire tracks and return the cattle to the State and National Parks to reduce the growth of grasses/under growth.

We must maintain our land in a bid to save lives and property and history states that we may experience some loss of life (human, livestock, native animals) and property during a bush fire, but we must endeavour to live in sync with nature by reducing the fuel load, this is paramount to our future in this land.

I personally fought as a member of the CFA at the Ash Wednesday (1983) and the Maryborough (1985) bush fires and although my experience was overwhelming, it was not anything like the horrendous conditions the current fire fighter is facing day in, day out during the recent fire season.

We cannot experience another fire season like this.

Our Local, State and Federal Governments must take immediate action to reduce the fuel load in our forests and not make excuses on why they cannot implement fuel reduction practices throughout our country”.

The intensity of the recent bushfires need to be reduced as a matter of urgency.