



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT environment's Bushfire preparedness

Submission Number: 13

Date Authorised for Publication: 24 April 2024

Submission to the A.C.T Legislative Assembly Enquiry into A.C.T Environments Bushfire Preparedness

We live on our farm in the Naas valley , we share 70% of our boundary with Namadgi National Park . We have been severely impacted by both the 2003 Canberra fires and the 2020 Orroral valley fire . I have been a member of our local bushfire brigade , Southern districts V.B.B for 36 years , holding a number of positions in the brigade culminating in being elected Captain , I am currently the President of the brigade . I also represented the A.C.T. Rural Landholders Association on the A.C.T Bushfire Council for a number of years before it was abolished .

We are extremely concerned about the fuel build up in Namadgi National Park especially in the areas burnt by the Orroral Valley fire . Intense wildfire will change the composition and structure of the fuels in forested areas . Four years on we are seeing both low level and mid level exploding to the point that it is almost impossible to walk through areas of the park that burnt in 2020 .These additional fuel loads in extreme fire weather will quickly escalate fire behaviour , making suppression nearly impossible . The idea that we do not have to do any fuel reduction work in areas burnt in the 2020 Orroral Valley fire is ridiculous , as we have seen a number of times over the years , they will burn again more ferociously than ever before .

The only way to reduce the risk of wildfire is to conduct regular fuel reduction burns in areas of the National park and other areas that the A.C.T. Government manage . This has not been happening in recent times , due to a number of reasons i.e weather , ideological , lack of funding and resourcing etc.etc . The A.C.T. Government have a duty of care to the rural landholders who adjoin the National Park and the residents of Canberra .

Being impacted personally by bushfire has irrevocably altered our lives , we need to do everything we can to reduce the the risk of anyone being impacted by fire , at the moment this is not happening due to a lack of resourcing , bureaucratic interference and ideological reasons . Landholders have significant investments in their farms i.e buildings, fences , pastures , carbon storage and a huge emotional investment , as do the residents of Canberra .

We need to look at creating a bushfire abatement zone along the eastern edge of Namadgi National Park by creating better access , regular fuel reduction , suppression plans and revisit the location of fire trials on the eastern edge to gain a proper suppression advantage.

Thankyou

Stephen Angus A.F.S.M