

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications Inquiry into Recent Trends in and Preparedness for Extreme Events

Part one: Submission Covering Letter from Peter Moon. CEO BALTECH Pty Ltd

To Sophie Dunstone

This e mail and its attachments; is part one of our late submission. Below and attached will give you an idea of where we are at as a result of the Victorian 2009 Bushfires and our recommendations to the then State Labor Government on 18/02/2009. A revised proposal was sent to the Labor Government on 20/08/2010. We then forwarded a new Bushfire Emergency Management (BEM) proposal to the current Liberal State Government on 04/11/2011; unfortunately nothing really has been achieved from our perspective even tho we have been told (11/2011) we were the first and only proposal being formally assessed. There was to be three assessment steps, we have completed two and have had no follow up from the State Govt.

BALTECH Pty Ltd has been involved in the R&D of methods, Ideas and Technologies to assist in the response to bush fire disasters. Our approach is one of "Off season" assessment and "intelligence" gathering and decision making coupled with "On season" assessment and "intelligence" gathering and decision making; and "Nominated event" dynamic and real time assessment and "intelligence" gathering and decision making processes.

These three aspects of disaster management should (could) also be utilised for other disaster situations (Flood, Earth quakes etc.)

The three aspects of pre-season, seasonal and nominated event should utilise leading edge assessment and intelligence gathering technologies/tools, and robust National communications, command control and coordination processes. All of which need to be underpinned by expert system driven real time and dynamic situational awareness outcomes supported by a suite of ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) utilities.

From a disaster management point of view there are way too many levels of decision making and way too much duplication of process and management and control.

To hark back to the Victorian 2009 bushfires and the commissioners report; there were 67 recommendations. Number 65 is a key recommendation that has not been acted on. I will come back to this further down in this e mail.

My group went over the complete commissioner's report and came up with an additional 23-24 recommendations that we believe should have been made. I have attached that document for your information.

Re recommendation number 65: This was a recommendation for a National Bushfire Research and Development Institute, our view was that it was imperative that this Institute be set up ASAP and not be controlled or managed by the Bushfire CRC or any of the agencies such as the DSE or CFA. (This was also the considered view of the Bushfire Commissions report). To date nothing concrete has eventuated.

It needs to be independent of the influencers and focused on the National delivery of process/task/technology to make a difference utilising pure and applied research and development.

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In the context of your senate committee this National R&D Institute should also encompass all disasters, emergencies.

Our Bushfire (BEM) proposal to the Victorian State Government tho focused on Bushfires is also very relevant for this National approach to extreme events.

One of the key issues in a national approach to emergency/disaster/ extreme events is the lack of a robust self-healing national wireless communications network. The key to this is 'Spectrum' and the spectrum in question is within the digital dividend.

Currently Government does not fully understand the "Strategic value' of this and other key radio communications spectrum. The digital dividend is a key nationally significant 'strategic asset' that should not be squandered on just the 'Telco's' mobile phone capacity requirements. In fact there is a good argument strategically to have all wireless spectrum managed by a division of the NBN.

There is innovation wanting and seriously required to deliver the capacity gain/ increases needed for all users.

In the US studies have shown that at any one time only 30% of any spectrum is in use, the rest is either not in use at all (being sat on) or it in effect lies fallow. Access to Spectrum capacity should we allocated dynamically and in real time to user demand.

Regards
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Communications, Sensing and Simulation Technologies