

April 15th 2016

To:

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission to: Inquiry into the response to, and lessons learnt from, recent fires in remote Tasmanian wilderness affecting the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

The impact of global warming on fire frequency and magnitude

In the past, bushfires in south-west Tasmania were largely started by people, but now, since the beginning of the 2000s, dry lightning fires are now of the greatest concern (Pyrke, 2016). The recent disastrous fires are further evidence of that trend.

This trend speaks to the impact of global warming on fire risk in south western Tasmania.

Australia's obligations as State Party to the World Heritage Convention

The current 1999 Management Plan for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) contains (page 108) the following prioritisation for bushfire management:

- first priority will always be the protection of human life;
- **second priority will be the protection of rare and threatened fire sensitive species and communities** and
- third priority will be the protection of substantial and valuable infrastructure.

It is clear that these priorities were not followed when fire-fighters tried to suppress the recent wilderness fires.

The federal government has a responsibility, together with the State Government, to make sure that the TWWHA values are protected by:

- following management plan prescriptions for bushfire suppression,
- responding to bushfires as rapidly as possible,
- Ensuring that adequate financial, human and mechanical resources are available to enable the best effort possible to go into the suppression of fires .

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Jane Wilson
