



9th May, 2003

The Secretary,
Australian Bushfire Council
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

Bushfire Management

Our family pioneered settlement at Brindabella a century and a half ago and we have a strong affinity for the bushland in this area and wish to see it very much better managed to avoid a repeat of the recent devastating bush fire.

Frustratingly for us we believe that we not only know what needs to be done, we also have the knowledge and expertise to demonstrate how it needs to be done.

Our ancestors adopted and adapted the bushland management using controlled fire that had been practised by the Aborigines. My father became a particularly adept exponent of the family tradition and expertise in this area and recalls that in 1939 the thousands of sheep pastured in the bush to the west of Brindabella were safe from the nearby fire crisis of that year because of the effectiveness of those practices.

He and members of his family have consistently objected to the restrictions placed on hazard reduction by the various forestry bushfire and National Parks organisations over the past 60 years or more. We have been dismayed that no effective hazard reduction has taken place on the vast tracts of public land in all of that time and have as a consequence predicted and dreaded the conflagration that has now come to pass.

He and my brother, however, have managed to maintain a reasonable level of hazard reduction protection for our private lands by taking every possible opportunity for 'cold' burning that the restrictions have allowed.

The effectiveness of recent hazard reduction on this private bushland is demonstrated from its survival as an oasis and refuge for wild life while almost all adjacent land has been devastated by the worst fire in living memory.

We would be very pleased to assist the Council with their investigation of management practices that would prevent and mitigate a repetition of the destruction of the recent fires by demonstrating both the value and the application of effective hazard reduction using fire. We note that we are uniquely situated to provide for convenient access to officers of the Council to inspect and investigate within a hours drive of their offices in Canberra.

We look forward to the opportunity of providing further assistance.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'M' followed by a long horizontal stroke that tapers to the right.

A M (Miles) Franklin