

Kevin Cramer
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**KEVIN D CRAMERI O.A.M.
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE.**

Re fire inquiry

Unfortunately work commitments stop me from attending today's meetings but I shall briefly make a few comments.

I fought my first bush fire at age 10 and am now 57. Over the last 47 years I have been a Senior Dept. Captain for over 25 years and still hold the rank of Dept. Captain.

I wish the inquiry to consider the merit of burning off on the footpaths of rural roads, especially North South roads as this is where most problems and benefits occur. Burning off doubles the size of the fire barrier and is the place where most fuel and high growth occurs as no animals graze there, also fires start from cigarettes butts.

When I first started fire fighting in 1956 we had no water and fires were fought with bushes bags beaters and fire e.g. Back burns. We learnt fire behavior and fire management by doing burn offs not reading books, experience is gained not learnt and should be part of our training. It is better to have minor inconvenience than to have 50 cars trapped in between fires as happened in the Christmas fires. Nothing could have stopped the fires on Christmas day but the fires on Boxing Day should have been reduced to less than 30% of what occurred.

We were on Mulgoa rd (north south rd) trying to stop it crossing, it would get into long grass then crown and jump to the other side and off it would go. This happened many times. At one stage there were 4 Fire trucks and two Integral Energy trucks that were responding nearly collided because one was stopped fighting the fire and could not be seen in the smoke that blocked the road and all were now in danger from direct flame. This incident would not have occurred if the footpaths were burnt off. There are other things that happened but this was one that nearly claimed many lives. Endangered species stand a better chance of survival in controlled burns than in wild fires.

I would like to also make comment on other matters if somebody from the inquiry would care to contact me

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