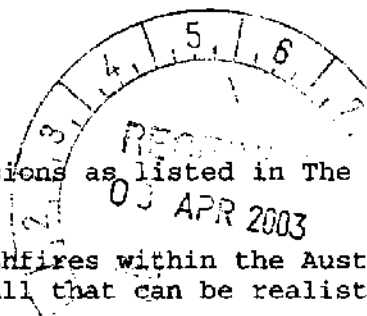


From: MULDER, Ken
Sent: Monday, 7 April 2003 7:34 PM
To: Committee, Bushfires (REPS)
Subject: Request for Submissions

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to you in response to the request for submissions as listed in The Australian newspaper, dated Wednesday 2 April 2003.



It appears to me that the complete elimination of bushfires within the Australian environment is neither feasible nor even desirable. All that can be realistically achieved is the reduction of any impact and danger.

In my opinion, the first step must be the regular and controlled backburning of native bushland, aiming to backburn every 10 years or so. However, I understand that this may not be achievable, since the conditions for a controlled backburn are not always present, and only reduces rather than eliminates the frequency/severity of the bushfires.

Thus even with controlled backburning, there is a significant likelihood that bushfires will start, and can get out of control. At this stage all we can do is reduce the tragic loss of life and property to a minimal level.

My suggestion is that everyone should do a little, rather than a few do a lot. What is needed is a means to encourage people to look after themselves.

In the same way that insurance premiums for break and enter are set according to the risk category of the residence, so I suggest that fire-premiums are set according to the risk of the property. Further, just as discounts then apply for security measures that are fitted such as deadlocks, alarm systems and the like, so discounts should be given for the following:

- On site water storage (say 5000 litre minimum)
- Pumping facilities independent of mains power
- Suitable vegetation clearance around the house
- Metal flyscreens
- Steel roof or fully sarked tile roof

If all of the above fire-reduction features have been fitted, then the insurance premium should be identical to a low-risk residence. This should encourage people to do what they can, and thereby allow the fire brigades to concentrate on fire containment rather than property protection.

Lastly, most precautions are useless unless there are people available to apply them. With this in mind, special leave days should be available for people in the workforce, allowing them to take time off during high fire-risk days without having to worry about losing their job.

Regards,

Ken Mulder
Adelaide