

Submitted by: Roger Mull  
Address:  
Date:



**INQUIRY INTO THE RECENT AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES**

Dear Sir,

I write to express my utmost concern in relation to the mismanagement of so-called Alpine fire tracks. Just two months before the 2003 fires began, I decided to ride my bicycle from just above Bogong Village on the Spion Kopje track through to the Bogong High Plains. After crossing the East Kiewa River and starting uphill, I immediately encountered brush and scrub that was so thick it was virtually impassable without getting injured.

The growth was six feet in height which would indicate that the track had not been maintained for several years. One would have to ask how Parks Victoria can effectively manage the National Parks when even they have no access.

I was seriously considering ending the ride turned bush-bash within about three minutes of starting but wanted to see more. I lifted the bike to my shoulder and bush-bashed on. Even on that day I witnessed so much debris on the forest floor that I thought I should put pen to paper and bring this huge fire hazard to someone's attention. It wasn't until I reached the Bogong High Plains that I was able to start riding.

On the day of the fires the fire bombing aircraft flew in and were grounded for some time as they were the following morning. I live right next to the Mount Beauty airport and watched on as the pilots just walked around as if awaiting instructions. On those days I could see no logical reason why the pilots could not commence bombing. The storm had passed and smoke was light. I am a pilot myself and have a good understanding of flying conditions.

One thing which I found unsettling was the fact that the fires were well alight and every morning the pilots and phos-check mixers did not arrive at the airport early so it had been light for some hours before the planes left the ground.

I believe that had the fire tracks that I witnessed in the region where the fires originated been clear of debris and the fire bombing planes been working to extinguish the fires on their immediate arrival to Mount Beauty on the first day, a huge amount of devastation could have been avoided in the January 2003 fires.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roger Mull".

ROGER MULL