

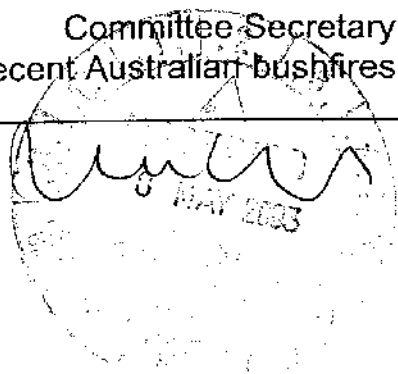
Submitted by:

JIM CREBBIN

Address:

Date:

6/5/2003



INQUIRY INTO THE RECENT AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES

Dear Sir / Madam,

- 1) From viewing scenes where housing was lost, it is very obvious that people who choose to live in a bush setting, on a slope and don't clear their properties of enough trees to as not to endanger their buildings should - have to pay a huge increase in insurance & should not expect or demand fire crews to risk their lives to protect them.
- 2) The areas where the fires burnt downhill, have not suffered much & will regrow.
- 3) The areas where the fire burnt uphill (& had not had their fuel reduced by wind burning) are devastated.
- 4) It is totally unrealistic of anyone to expect fire fighters to stop a forest fire in the Alps if there is a wind, or if crews.
- 5) The volunteers, dog drivers, etc etc were fantastic and very appreciated.

Where to from here - see over.

5th February 2003

The Honourable J. Brumby
Minister for State and Regional Development
1 Treasury Place
Melbourne
VIC 3000

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you to seek your active involvement in a plan to help Mt Beauty in particular, but also other towns bordering on the alps, not only to recover from the fires, but to take advantage of the disaster to our forests. If implemented, my plan would create many long-term jobs, resurrect local industries, and use very valuable resources before they become useless.

The plan is simply this:

Have the Governments of the day allow Alpine Ash, which will die as the result of recent fires, to be salvaged.

Precedents have been set, especially in the 1940's, and more recently in 1983, and 1998. The idea is sensible, simple to implement and beneficial to the State and local economies.

The suggested stages of this project could be:

1. For you to give permission to extract the millable dead timber (Alpine Ash and others) from the State Forests and the National Park (absolutely vital). It is estimated that up to 2000 trees, beside the road to Fall's Creek and in the National Park, are earmarked for removal. This work has already commenced without protest.

2. Estimate the volume of timber available for salvage.
3. Find someone who wishes to operate the Mt Beauty Mill, knowing they will be able to stockpile enough timber to last at least a decade or longer. The present owners may/may not be interested considering the trauma they have recently gone through.
4. Implement this program immediately, as the loggers have a limited time to fell and store the timber before it suffers from barrel cracks and rot, which make it unsuitable for salvage.

The Mt Beauty Mill has a huge area for the storage of the timber, and with water spraying, can keep the logs usable for countless years if necessary.

It would be an absolute criminal waste to leave this priceless and scarce resource die and fall to the ground when the milling area of such wood has been severely restricted by successive governments, who were led to believe if you didn't chop it down it would last forever.

Alpine Ash is a perfect timber for furniture making, and maybe access to this timber should carry the requirement that it all has to be kiln dried and dressed or used for f17 beams. Using this timber would of course help reduce the \$260 million we spend annually on importing hardwoods. (See attached article from 'The Age' by P Hopkins.)

I hope you find the idea acceptable, and feel inclined to take prompt action, as Mt Beauty desperately needs the jobs that would be created by this project. I have absolutely no pecuniary interest in the timber industry, being a retired schoolteacher

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Jim Crebbin

For background reading try 'Black Friday' by Tom Griffiths and enclosed articles.

Copies to: Sophie Panopoulos (Federal Liberal Member), Tony Plowman (State Liberal Member), Bill Sykes (State National Party Member), Tracey Squires (Alpine Shire), Denis Payton (Furnishing Industry Association)