

Your details

Title

Ms

First name

Emily

Last name

Fishpool

Submission details

I am making this submission as

A resident in a bushfire-affected area

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)

Yuin Nation/Fenner school of Environment & Society

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

Community member and researcher

Consent to make submission public

I give my consent for this submission to be made public

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

5 months before the Currowan fire began, a small group of Yuin peoples; lead by fire practitioner Victor Steffensen, burned a small patch of Budawang country near Nullada (Ulladulla). The burn was "mixed stringy bark", facilitated the Indigenous fire sticks alliance. The Firesticks alliance facilitates resurgence of collective, and active participation of knowledge through cultural burns. On site, knowledge of when, where and how to burn is shared among fire-practioners. The burns reflect active practice and participation of 60,000 years of "empirical" knowledge.

This burn didn't require protective gear, nor back up fire units to contain the blaze. There are young people on site, learning knowledge from senior knowledge holders. Bare hands use dry branches, moving fire through grasses and shrubs. The fire is burning outward from a singular ignition point. A small tussock is initially lit; communicating to birds and insects that fire is coming.

The non-necessity of having heavy equipment on site saves extensive costs; whilst reflecting the 'non-threatening' nature of the right kind of fire. Yuin Elder Noel Butler; ""Fire in this place is our friend, fire has been used to maintain, to look after this whole continent forever".

Wrong fire is the type seen through most prescribed-burning operations; requiring ground and often aerial support in maintaining 'control' of the blaze. Evident through the recent fire season; this type of prescribed fire (wrong fire) doesn't save natural or human assets in the face of extreme wildfire/fire conditions. It is our (Yuin) belief; that it is the current prescribed-burning (the wrong fire) regimes that create the extreme conditions necessary for wildfires like Currowan; not to mention the thousands of other fires seen through the 2019-2020 fire season. Management bodies have a lot to answer for in this regard.

We are not of the position expressed through politicians like Barnaby Joyce, solely blaming destruction on the negligent management of fuel loads. We agree that this is a significant part of the problem; but it is far from reflecting our positions. 1. We understand 'management issues' i.e. management of 'fuels' as manifestations of colonial control within land/natural hazard institutions; which are utterly incoherent with the complexity of country seen, felt and understood (consciously and sub-consciously) by Indigenous peoples. 2. Our aspirations of healing country through fire are utterly indifferent to indiscriminately burning country in the name of hectare quotas and sole protection of human assets. 4. Burning requires the resurgence and adherence to our fire law; which in response; requires internal decolonisation of land and hazard management institutions.

Fire law doesn't just apply to us (Indigenous peoples), it applies to every single living being of country.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

Supporting documents or images
