



I am making this submission as	Other
Submission type	Organisation
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	Lake Tabourie Residents & Ratepayer Association
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	Secretary
Consent to make submission public	Public
Your story	I am the secretary of the LTRRA and an active RFS member in the Tabourie RFB. I have been a resident of Lake Tabourie (LT) for almost 7 years.
1.1 Causes and contributing factors	The five preceding summers in the region have been quite wet so this contributed to the density of surrounding bush and combustible fuel on the ground. This additional fuel loading, combined with the effects of the recent severe drought, exacerbated the Currowan fire. It has been the opinion of our local brigade that a "bad" fire was only a matter of time.
1.2 Preparation and planning	In our local region, there was a bushfire in early March 2019 south of Lake Tabourie at Meroo Lake. The fire (lit by an arsonist or camper) was fanned by strong Southerly winds towards LT. Fortunately, the fire was stopped by local brigades at Blackbutt Rd approx 1km south of LT. It was the opinion of many in the

community that a hazard reduction (HR) should have been done during winter to create a buffer zone to the south of LT. Such did not occur. Local RFB members are prepared and committed to assisting NPWS to undertake such HR's during the cooler months as most members are retired. Hence, they are available at short notice when conditions suit. A similar buffer zone should have been created to the west of LT to mitigate the effect of big burns which (obviously) did subsequently occur. It is noted that the Meroo Fire burnt area did not burn again during the December Currowan Fire. This is evidenced by photos taken with two weeks of that latter fire.

Individual households must also take more responsibility for their own preparedness. Many houses were surrounded by leaf litter, debris and other forms of rubbish. To not clear to the best of your ability is, in our opinion, irresponsible and placing a further burden on RFS resources.

1.3 Response to bushfires

Members of our committee worked strenuously prior to the first assault by the Currowan Fire on 5th December. The President, in particular, helped to inform households of a community meeting on 4th December (at short notice) which resulted in a significant proportion of residents attending the briefing by the local captain of the Tabourie RFB. The second assault of the fire on 4th January 2020 saw the local RFB provide a community presence (and improvised mobile fire fighting unit) despite both brigade trucks being at various firegrounds. This presence helped the community to remain calm which was a significant bonus. Fortunately for LT, neither fire assault actually caused any significant damage which, to a degree, was due to significant wind changes.

1.4 Any other matters

I have attached a letter below which was endorsed by a general meeting of the LTRAA in late January. The letter was addressed to the local NPWS and, inter alia, sought to establish an even more productive relationship between local brigades and the local NPWS. The aim is to use the services of the many retired members of local brigades who have the time and commitment to work on HRs during the cooler months of the year. It is not contended that there should be wholesale burning of National Parks. However, it would be prudent (in the light of climate change) to use such resources more wisely to mitigate the likelihood of such intense bushfires in the future. Ultimately, it is remarkable that, given the large proportion of Australia's population which lives to the east of the Great Dividing Range, that more homes and lives were not lost. It is a testament to local individuals which banded together, the RFS, the ADF and the SES (and even the politicians involved).

Upload files

tabourie-December-fire-1.docx - [Download File](#)

Dear XXXX

Our Association wishes to raise an important issue in the light of the recent Currowan Fire. Much of the community has been concerned about the lack of hazard reduction around the village particularly to the west and south. For example, after the Meroo fire in March 2019, it was the opinion of many residents (some with long term firefighting experience) that a hazard reduction should have occurred in the buffer zone between the southern border of Lake Tabourie (ie Patterson Close) through to Blackbutt Rd. That opportunity was not taken and such could have resulted in a significant impact to the southern part of the village during the fire. That impact was only averted by a lucky wind change and the effort of firefighting crews.

The community is of the opinion that it is both constructive and sensible to look at mitigation strategies for buffer zones for the future which, inter alia, would include regular and systematic hazard reductions (HRs). To take this point further, you should be aware that Lake Tabourie has its own RFB which is mainly manned by retirees. These members are local and happy to volunteer their services to assist NPWS in conducting such HRs. It is certainly the hope and expectation of this community that NPWS engages in meaningful liaison with the Tabourie RFB (and other local brigades). Timely decisions can be made locally in the full knowledge that there are ample RFS resources available to conduct HRs over the cooler months and on a recurring basis.

Photos taken of the area south of Tabourie village post fire are, in our opinion, informative. It is evident that the March 2019 fireground shows no sign of burning again during the December fire. The only area which burned was immediately north of Blackbutt Rd through to Tabourie village (ie the strategic buffer zone). This is strong evidence that an HR, conducted during the cooler months of last year, would have significantly reduced the risk to Tabourie village.

Of course, there are other local areas which also require HRs as they are currently unburned. I must also add that the community is aware of the displacement of wildlife during such HRs but also note that "hot burns" result in loss, rather than short term displacement. The community also acknowledges that HRs are not the only (or perfect) solution. There is no doubt, for example, that properties should have been better prepared for ember attack so there is also an opportunity for residents to review and improve their personal Fire Plans.

Is it possible for delegates of our committee to discuss this matter with you? Additionally, would it be possible to include [REDACTED] (the Tabourie RFB Captain) in any meeting or discussions? We are looking forward to your written response so that we may gather momentum in this matter and prepare for such HRs as soon as possible. You may also contact Keith [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) or David [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards

