



Title	Ms
First name	Margaret
Last name	Hogge
I am making this submission as	Other
Submission type	Organisation
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	Non-Smokers' Movement of Australia Inc.
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	President
Consent to make submission public	Public
Your story	<p>I watched the dreadful, frightening fires unfold from News Broadcasts, knowing most of the areas very well, and having friends and family in many fire-hit areas.</p> <p>I hope that the easily workable, potentially very popular and potentially life-saving measures proposed in this Submission will help save lives on several levels.</p> <p>Smoking kills, in many ways.</p>
1.1 Causes and contributing factors	Tossed cigarette butts start fires. This Submission makes some wide-ranging recommendations.
1.2 Preparation and planning	
1.3 Response to bushfires	All public warnings and announcements must be easy to understand.

1.4 Any other matters

The current all-encompassing Coronavirus Health Crisis must not mean that the Bushfire Crises and victims are overlooked and forgotten. Funds must reach the victims quickly, especially with winter approaching, and safe shelter at a minimum. Mental Health assistance is essential, for all ages. We need to give them hope for a safer, healthier and happier future.

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To the Premier and To the Convenor of this Inquiry.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry.

Comments and Recommendations

This response will refer to several matters listed in the Terms of Reference numbered 1, 3, and 11.

As President of Non-Smokers' Movement of Australia Inc.(NSMA), formed in 1977, I will comment about the sometimes devastating, and yet PREVENTABLE, damage caused by fires started, either deliberately or accidentally, by cigarette butt-tossers. Our movement primarily fights for everybody's right to breathe clean air free from the toxins in second-hand tobacco smoke, but also against the devastating effects of tobacco - use in Australia.

I will also comment about some aspects of Public Warnings and Communication.

Preamble:

Cigarette butts cause huge environmental damage, spreading toxins on land and in water, as well as damaging wildlife when consumed by them.

The sight of hundreds of filthy, poisonous butts strewn around our public and private lands causes disgust and distress to everyone who values living in an area of which they want to take pride.

The quantity of butts tossed is not known, but comments from the City of Toronto, Canada about their cigarette anti-litter campaign in a research study says about 4.5 trillion butt filters are littered annually world- wide. Many environmental groups have consistently noted cigarette butts are the most common item found on many beach clean-up campaigns and have noted their potential harm to marine life and birds.

In 2005, the number of fires around Australia started by discarded cigarette butts was, according to NSW Fire Department, approximately 4000.

Most smokers nowadays move outdoors to smoke – they are not allowed to smoke indoors at work, nor at most indoor activities, except when gambling in fake “outdoor” rooms, acting in some theatre performances, and, strangely, at home where they live with their family and/or friends.

When smoking outdoors, smokers are expected to find a suitable butt-receptacle. However, public butt receptacles are not always nearby. Smokers light up everywhere and anywhere outdoors, often in places where smoking is specifically outlawed. Many smokers ignore outdoor bans due to lack of policing – they know that members of the public are extremely wary of calling out errant smokers, knowing they could be attacked, both verbally and physically. We all remember the Doctor in Victoria who was killed by a smoker when he asked the smoker to stop smoking in Hospital Grounds.

Modern cars are no longer fitted with ashtrays – therefore smokers have nowhere safe in which to extinguish their cigarettes while driving.

-Drivers are restricted from smoking while driving when children are in the vehicle or when the vehicle is regarded as a work-place. There is no basic “right to smoke”.

Smokers now have easy access to approved affordable nicotine alternatives (nicotine sprays, gum, patches and lozenges) which **don’t cause fires**.

Why are smokers allowed to light up and smoke during a Total Fire Ban???

Total Fire Ban rules



A total fire ban means no fires out in the open. A total fire ban helps limit the potential of fires developing.

During a Total Fire Ban you cannot light, maintain or use a fire in the open, or to carry out any activity in the open that causes, or is likely to cause, a fire.

STEPS INVOLVED IN LIGHTING, SMOKING AND EXTINGUISHING A CIGARETTE:

Step 1. **Igniting** with a petrol lighter, electric ignition lighter, or matches

Step 2. **Holding the ignited item (CIGARETTE)** for up to twenty minutes, mostly whilst performing other activities – driving, walking, working with machinery, drinking, playing etc.

Step 3. **Ashing the cigarette** several times, maybe 20 or 30, and at the same time supposedly ensuring that the ashes don’t fly away or drop onto dry vegetation.

Step 4. **Stubbing out** the cigarette without causing any ashes to fly/drop onto dry vegetation

Step 5. **Disposing** of the stubbed out cigarette – where? – most modern cars don't have ashtrays, so smokers stub them out with fingers or against the car-body. Outdoors, they stub out on the ground and sometimes pick them up and bin them, but often, as can be seen everywhere around urban and non-urban areas, toss the butt out into the street, footpath, gardens, car-parks covered in oil-patches, parks, beaches, national parks – everywhere.

Personal ash-trays are easily carried on a belt-loop. They have been freely available for many years. How many are seen in use? Personal ash-trays can be used to both stub out the cigarette and to store the stubbed out butt. Simple. Cheap. Too easy. Meanwhile, dog – owners are obliged to pick up their dog faeces in a simple doggy-doo bag. They can be fined if not carrying a spare bag.

Photo: Examples of personal Ash-Trays



Recommendations: Terms of Reference #1 “human activity”

Terms of Reference #3 “to protect life”

1. Total ban on smoking in vehicles. (Australia already bans smoking in vehicles where children 16 years and under are passengers, and in work-related vehicles). Strong compliance over ten years.
2. Smokers should always carry and use a personal ashtray to extinguish cigarettes, or risk a fine. Public funds should not be used to purchase and install butt-bins or ash-trays – a butt-bin is regarded by smokers as an “invitation to smoke”. Fines, heavier than those for dog-owners not carrying an extra bag, should apply if a smoker is unable to produce personal ash-tray when questioned. Dog poo has never been known to start a fire.
3. During a Total Fire Ban, and also in areas where second-hand tobacco smoke may affect others, smoking tobacco should be totally banned – smokers can revert to using *approved* Nicotine Replacement products (patches, gums, sprays, lozenges). These products are affordable and easily available and don’t start fires.
4. Death Count. Deaths from direct fire as well as from exposure to bushfire smoke should all be regarded as Bushfire Deaths. Vehicle and air crashes related to fire-fighting have been included, so bushfire-smoke related deaths, which would not otherwise have occurred, must be recorded as Bushfire Deaths. (News 24Mar2020 – Bushfire smoke killed 12.6 times than Fires, study finds.)

Recommendation: Terms of Reference #11 “Public Warnings” and “Public Communication”

5. **Warnings and News services** must provide up-to-date information in clearly understood Language for as wide a range of Australia’s public as possible.

Stop using Acronyms, Initialisms, and confusing Numbering, especially during Emergency Warnings

Some examples:

ACRONYMS AND INITIALISMS:

BOM = Bureau of Meteorology – (Weather Report?)

PPE = Personal Protective Equipment - (Protective Clothing?)

GP = General Practitioner - (Doctor?)

DOCS = Department of Community Services (NOT Doctors)

FACS = Family and Community Services (NOT “facts”)

ASAP = As Soon As Possible

ACT = Australian Capital Territory (Say Canberra?)

One potentially alarming announcement occurred when a news item about some horrific fires included a reference to “the BOM”. Some would know the “BOM” as the Bureau of Meteorology. But many others who were watching or listening would possibly be even further alarmed when they thought that an exploding “BOMB” had added to the enfolding disaster.

NUMBERS: (e.g. Emergency Numbers, telephone numbers, payments, Medicare, Tax File, dates)

When giving a number, say or speak out each digit separately. For 7700015, don’t say “double seven, triple 0, fifteen” –this is very confusing and difficult to write down.

Simply say each digit: **7700015** – seven, seven, zero, zero, zero, one, five. Easy.

Some further comment, from experts at the Front Line:

(News Item, 13 November 2019 ABC Gold Coast "More than 200 people have been caught throwing lit cigarette butts in 2019." "In my own electorate so far this year there's been three bushfires started because motorists have thrown out cigarette butts onto dry grass," Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott said. As far as I'm concerned, you should be treated the same as an arsonist would be.")

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and hopefully to help to reduce the impact of future inevitable fires.

Most Important of all – let's not forget the wonderful, inspiring but exhausting work carried out fighting the fires as well as the magnificent support, by all involved, as well as the wide-ranging needs of the victims of those awful fires.

Thank you, and please know that you are in our thoughts.

Margaret Hogge President, Non-Smokers' Movement of Australia Inc.(NSMA)

