

## SUBMISSION ON BUSHFIRE REDUCTION STRATEGIES

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My recommendations have been influenced by my 10 years with the Bingie Fire Brigade, 5 years on the Eurobodalla Rural Land Strategy Committee and 4 years on the South Coast Area Consultative Committee. They are outlined below:

1) Government Level

a) Rural Fire Service

- There needs to be a re-assessment of the policy and operational roles of the local brigade (volunteers) and the central control (paid staff).
- There needs to be more liaison and practical training at all levels so the policy and operational levels within each district is on the same approach to the specific problems of the area.

b) State Forests

- The timber industry needs encouragement to cooperate with fire authorities at brigade and control levels.
- State Forest staffing needs to be at levels that provide for correct practical assessment of fuel loads and appropriate hazard reduction.
- Hazard reduction should be undertaken more often according to expert assessment of build-up of fuel loads and probably no less than 10 year intervals.

c) National Parks

- They need to reinstate staff to levels which provide for assessment of fuel loads as per their State Forest counterparts.
- Hazard reduction needs to be undertaken as per State Forests. (eg the Eurobodalla National Park has not had hazard reduction since its inception 25 years ago!).

2) Private Level

- Allow clearing around houses to be a width consistent with feasible fire protection – minimum of 30 meters and up to 50 meters if deemed necessary by Fire brigade.
- Provide tax breaks for installation of fire control devices where town water is not available – would apply to fire carts, storage tanks (cement) sprinkler systems etc.
- Extend fence line clearing from current 6 m. to 20 m.
- Encourage regular hazard reduction measures on private forestry land on regular basis with advice from the Rural Fire Service and shire rate reduction for areas subjected to hazard reduction.

I refer you to 2 articles which I have found good reading on this subject and recommend as references for your Committee.

- 1) Why are bushfires getting worse? Written by Mark Poynter a retired /forester with 40 years experience. Quadrant Magazine April 2020 Page 38 – 40.
- 2) Bushfires, Climate Change and Logic. Written by Jarrod Brady. Quadrant Magazine April 2020 pages 41 – 47.

Yours faithfully

Huon Hassall

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