

Your details

Title

Mr

First name

gavan

Last name

willis

Submission details

I am making this submission as

A primary producer

Submission type

I am submitting on behalf of my organisation

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)

Valley Farmers Group of Lower Bago

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

The 2019-20 bushfire season is claimed by some to be the result of climate change, believed by others to be made worse by climate change. The Valley Farmers Group of Lower Bago believe the 2019-20 fire season was a hot dry summer, made into the worst fire season this district has ever seen, by pine plantations, and negligent land management by plantation managers and national parks and wildlife service. Added to which is the vastly reduced fire fighting capability of nsw forestry, and the negligible fire fighting capability of npws and private pine managers. Note: half a

dozen 4wd utes with 400 litres of water does NOT equate to fire fighting capability for an organisation which is supposed to manage multiple thousand hectares of incendiary plants.

The Dunns road fire started in private pine plantation and ran through pine plantation, private land and national park, burning more than 330,000 hectares, including around 74,000 hectares of pine plantation, and it was almost always only able to be slowed or stopped on private land.

It is a tragic fact, and public record, that there were no effective fire breaks between the plantation where the fire started, and its eventual finish point. Given that it jumped Blowering Dam, it must be realised that on a bad day a fire in pine or npws "managed" land can be considered virtually unstoppable.

Most public roads in this shire have a lot of trees and native vegetation along the sides, which is great if one thinks that every available meter of land must be a nature reserve, but when these areas are unmanaged jungles with trees hanging over the road, they become the reason fire trucks and emergency vehicles cant access areas which desperately need help.

There were 17 fire tankers which could have helped in this valley on new years eve, but which couldnt, because of burnt trees across the road. This needs to be remedied before next summer. This situation will no longer be tolerated by the tax/ratepayer/voter/citizens of this valley, and indeed the shire.

The Valley Farmers Group of Lower Bago was formed to lobby for proper land management by all pine plantation managers and government agencies responsible for land management. The current situation seems to be the plantations are "sort of" required to have a six meter cleared strip around the edge of plantations (Which exists almost no where), a seventy meter gap between plantation trees and a habitable dwelling, and a thirty meter gap between trees and power lines.

None of wich is in any sensible consideration, remotely adequate, in fact it appears the regulations were written on behalf of plantation managers, as greed and corrupt behaviour is the only reason such a travesty could be legalised.

We are demanding two hundred meter buffer zone/fire breaks around all plantations, along all public roads (both sides) wich run through plantations, along all power lines, along all creeks and around any infrastructure on plantations such as phone/radio towers. If this seems extreme, consider that such a break along the power line on the southern edge of the Dunns Road Fire as it was on 28-12-2019 would have stopped the Dunns road fire! These fire breaks must also be made in the same manner through npws land. These people (npws) have used green ideology as a basis for land management for thirty years, and the 2019-20 fire season has demonstrated the folly and criminal negligence of this approach. Virtually all the fires on the east side of nsw started on npws land, which was utterly destroyed, and burnt thousands of neighbors out, for which it seems there are no consequences, and if npws are allowed to continue their madness, no lessons will be learned, nor constructive changes made.

The Valley Farmers Group Is also demanding that pine plantation managers be forced to control their weed infestations according to the law. Despite claims to the contrary there has been no effective weed control in plantations in this valley since the current managers took over from wilmott forests, and very little before that time.

There should also be no new plantation area approved, and consideration should be given to not replanting in gullies and valleys wich have significant natural springs and wet areas, as this has a major effect on the creeks and rivers in any area pine is planted. It has been noticed and remaked upon since the first week of January across this shire that creeks are running well, which in recent years have stopped during most of summer. This is an unambiguous indication that pine plantations remove a huge amount of water from the landscape, much more than natural bush and farmland. We

understand that the government of South Australia has recognised this fact and has begun charging plantation managers water extraction fees. Perhaps this needs to be looked at in NSW and other states which have large areas of plantations. The black sludge that has washed into the creeks since January is another issue, the Tarcutta creek was very healthy before the fires, there were platypus, water rats, native blackfish and trout, now there appears to be no life whatsoever in the creek, and there have been reports of large cod found dead near Tarcutta.

The release of the Keelty report into irrigation water indicates the river flows in the murray-darling system have halved over the last 20 years. We assume the alleged experts in the media and government will attempt to blame climate change, the Prime Minister and probably Donald Trump, but an objective look will certainly reveal that pine

plantations have played their part in depriving river systems of water.

The information we have is that plantations use 8 megalitres per year per hectare, on top of the 6 megalitres per hectare per year that normal bush/pasture uses. Given that there were approximately 74,000 hectares of pine burnt in this shire, there will be roughly 592,000 megalitres of extra water in the rivers in the next couple of years, which should be fairly easy to notice.

The Valley Farmers Group is not against pine plantations or the pine industry per se, but we are adamant that all levels of government must step up and force the industry to become decent citizens and good neighbors, and to end the tragic and destructive greed based practices of the last twenty years, which have directly caused the Dunns road fire and the destructive horror that it was, and its aftermath still is.

Sincerely

The Valley Farmers Group

Lower Bago.

NSW ...

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- IMG_20191231_052051.jpg
- IMG_20200104_164411.jpg
- IMG_20200101_093251.jpg



