Your details

Title
Mr

First name
Paul

Last name
Michael

Submission details

I am making this submission as
A business owner

Submission type
I am submitting on behalf of my organisation

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)
Weathertex Pty Ltd

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)
Executive Chairman

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
Having spent over 20 years in the industry as a processor of approximate 40,000 tonnes p.a of pulp wood supplied from both Sate and Private Native forests the what I believe are contributing factors, and the bureaucratic and policy setting failures are set out below.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its Terms of Reference.

1.1 Causes and contributing factors
Primarily very low fuel reduction burning ie very high fuel loads
-Before white settlement the land was managed with cold fire burning.
-There is now many magnitudes more fuel in our forests than before white settlement
-National Parks have next to no fuel reduction burning creating huge fuel loads
Prolonged drought has caused extremely dry conditions in our forests. Under normal summer conditions streams and wet gully's have acted as natural fire breaks, this season these had dried up and fire roared through.

1.2 Preparation and planning
-The red tape to get a permit to have a fuel reduction burn in cooler months is overwhelming/ridiculous
-processing of permits is actively discouraged by those that give them
-Approvals to get a back burn permit even when imminent danger of an approaching fire takes days to get from Sydney

1.3 Response to bushfires
A philosophy in National parks that fire is a natural occurrence so let it burn. Only addressing fire after many weeks when is totally out of control
Wollemi National park fire was known for approx. 2 weeks before any action taken. Early response would have saved many millions of hectares of National Park and Private Native Forests

1.4 Any other matters
A cold/slow burn fire in cooler months burns slowly and on the ground only. This allows our wildlife to escape up a tree or run away.
Hot wildfire outrun even our quickest wildlife and burn though the crown of trees killing those that sort refuge there.
Attached pdf give graphic evidence of what a fuel reduction burn can do.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- Picture of effect of Fuel reduction burn.pdf

A picture tells a thousand words. Some people say that prescribed burning doesn't work. This photo was taken with a drone by Garry Squires last week (February 2020) at Orbost, in East Gippsland, Victoria. It clearly shows how the bushfire defoliated/decimated the forest on the right side of the picture, then ran out of steam as it hit the forest to the left which was control burnt the previous year. The reduced ground fuels in the recently control burnt forest meant the raging crown fire scorched some trees in the burnt area then fell to the ground where it was easily controlled or petered out. If State authorities are able to strategically control burn about 8% of their forested areas each year, fierce bushfires can be kept in check.