

SUBMISSION

RECEIVED

17 MAY 2007

NO. 061

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE



wannonWATER

Ref: FC2007/03018

JMM:JC

10 May 2007

Hon. John Pandazopoulos, MP
Chair – Environment and Natural
Resources Committee
Level 8, 35 Spring Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000

Dear Sir

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE SUBMISSION

Thankyou for the opportunity to enter a submission of the impact due to land management practises on bushfires in Victoria.

Wannon Water encourages and assists where ever necessary in the creation/review of public land management practises in order to protect critical assets in the most environmentally efficient manner.

In regards to the terms of reference for this committee, Wannon Water offers the following points:-

- 1) Wannon Water encourages the prescribed burning practises currently utilised in the control of bushfires on public and freehold land. The extent, timing and resources that have been applied to the prescribed burning practises appear to be adequate for the current practises. The current practises however do not appear to be achieving the overall reduction in the damage caused by the recent spate of wildfires in Victoria this summer. Wannon Water would encourage the expansion of these practises during the low risk periods in order to mitigate the risk of damage to crown land, freehold land and public infrastructure.
- 2) The prescribed burning is conducted in a suitable manner with consultation of all the relevant stakeholders. Wannon Water has requested input into the future prescribed burns planning and has received adequate support from the relevant authorities.
- 3) The impact to water quality and quantities due to prescribed burns will be minimal if the consultation process is continued. Wannon Water has requested notification prior to the commencement of prescribed burns in order to alter the procedures to ensure the impacts of these burns will have little or no affect to our ability to maintain a suitable water supply to our customers.

ABN 94 007 404 851

PO Box 1158 Warrnambool Vic 3280

Tel 1300 WANNON [1300 926 666]

Fax 03 5564 7650

Email info@wannonwater.com.au

DX 28029

www.wannonwater.com.au

Office Locations

Camperdown 6 McNicol Street

Hamilton 66 Gray Street

Portland 15 Townsend Street

Warrnambool 99 Fairy Street

- 4) Wannon Water has received the prescribed burns planning documents and has worked proactively with the relevant authority to ensure that all risks to infrastructure have been acknowledged and suitable reporting mechanisms have been put in place in order to mitigate the risk to the interruption of supply of good quality water to our customers. Specific areas of the prescribed burns have been identified and highlighted to the relevant authority of the risks associated with the specific burn taking place and the potential impact that this practise may have in continuity of service.
- 5) Wannon Water makes no further comment on this point.
- 6) Wannon Water encourages the maintenance of fire breaks and containment lines.
- 7) Wannon Water during the 06-07 fire season has been requested on numerous occasions for access to water resources. Wannon Water has complied with all requests that have been received and, where water resources have been low, have offered alternative water resources that may achieve an acceptable result without impacting on the normal operations and continuity of supply to our customers.

Wannon Water also would like to point out that the assistance from the relevant authorities during this time of drought has been exceptional. In a time when water resources have been stretched to the limit, the relevant authorities have been supportive of the lack of water supplies available and have accepted advice from Wannon Water in regards to continuity of supply to both customers and fire fighting purposes.

Wannon Water supports and encourages the provision and maintenance of large water points for fire fighting purposes and encourages the expansion of these resources due to the scarcity of water resources forecasted by the impacts of climate change.

- 8) Wannon Water makes no further comment on this point.
- 9) Wannon Water supports the provision and maintenance of serviceable access tracks and signage.
- 10) The current forecasts for climate change will require new methodology in fighting fires. During the 06-07 fire season there were examples of the extremes that may impact all Victorians in the future. Wannon Water would encourage relevant authorities to continue to develop practises to combat wildfires using alternative methods to water resources.
- 11) During the 06-07 fire season the mechanisms that exist for community consultation have been adequate. The use of geographical displays of current status and forecast status have allowed Wannon Water to prepare in advance to mitigate further damage to infrastructure. The current emergency management arrangements have been adequate for the dissemination of information to all agencies. The divisional emergency management committee acts as a very efficient tool in networking between agencies.
- 12) Wannon Water supports and encourages the involvement of the local communities in the management of bushfires.
- 13) Wannon Water makes no further comment on this point.

Yours sincerely



for Jamie Crowe
Manager Operations Support/Emergency Manager