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SUBMISSION

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ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
HERITAGE COMMITTEE

To whom it may concern,

The result of a slow, cool prescribed burn done in Spring/Winter to remove dead understorey (excepting habitat logs lying on the ground & in situ on both crown & freehold land is 1) genetic diversity is maintained. 2) the land itself is rejuvenated 3) 1st year understorey after burn clear of flammable vegetative refuse. This is done in N.T. with no problems 4) Rivers, streams, soil & air damage is reduced.

The effectiveness of the prescribed burns done in East Gippsland can be seen by simply walking down a road where a quick, hot (reckless) burn has been perpetrated on one side, while the other side is closer to remnant bushland. The burnt side is a MONOCULTURE of FIREPRONE Stringybark saplings regenerating very close together, dead older trees burnt & fallen where they stood, no habitat trees left, thicker higher understorey growing back, soil damage from helicopter incendiaries & diesel oil from manual firestarters, hollow habitat logs burnt on the ground.

The manner in which prescribed burning is conducted is enthusiastically overdone, seemingly devoid of any scientific monitoring before or after for flora & fauna. D.S.E. burns always seem to be timed to occur on forecasted very hot & windy days presumably to kindle this fast, ferocious & devastating burning technique. Special Protection Zones are burnt as are National parks & State forests. Natural bush is easily sacrificed for the protection of the polluting plantation corporations. This puts people living in close proximity to plantations, in extra danger from fire. Helicopters dropping incendiaries of napalm onto bush which is surrounded by a burning circular containment line is a disgusting, destructive & moronic (?) practice that should be stopped immediately. Incineration of all

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wildlife with nowhere to run, every live tree & hollowed habitat tree, shrubs & seed layer. In other words, annihilation of biodiversity is not good land care management.

D. S. E. Bairnsdale, Incident controller Ben Rankin said on A.B.C. radio (DEC 06, JAN 07) that their own prescribed burns didn't seem to be making any difference to control the spread of bushfires. The impact of prescribed burns & recent bushfires here in East Gippsland have both been very destructive to biodiversity, wildlife & other natural assets including water & AIR quality & quantity.

East Gippsland Water says the Mitchell river will never be the same again. It is a poisonous porridge made up from silt from erosion because of reckless, uninformed (or badly directed) work done on containment & bulldozer lines, access tracks & rehabilitation zones. The same silt contains ^(PHOSPHORUS) ~~PHOSPHORUS~~ (fire retardant) (very TOXIC), heavy metals from mining, probably herbicides, insecticides etc. all flushed into rivers & creeks with the 1st rain. After the 2003 fires (& before), it's well known that big fires create their own weather system, can even generate lightning & big fireballs that soar way over the forest canopy hundreds of metres even kilometres ahead.

How are these containment lines supposed to halt a raging bushfire especially if that containment line is being back-burnt while the fire is allowed to rage for days behind it? Lightning strikes & arsonist strikes should be picked up by satellite as soon as possible & those fires attacked immediately with all manpower & resources concentrating on fires alone.

How many of the bushfires were actually containment lines that got away? Who said that fiddling around with huge containment lines while our natural resources are decimated & polluted, is an acceptable strategy? (EVEN IF IT IS THE SAME STRATEGY USED BY N.Z., CANADA & U.S. WHICH HAVE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FOREST SYSTEMS)

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To see the rehabilitation lines made since the fires is to witness a crude example of overzealous bulldozer work; pushing over live box trees, pointing them down slopes (inviting erosion) & ripping understorey down to pure silt. A lot of hard, well paid work further destroying the bush & not sensitive to any sustainable land management concerns & standards.

The constant clearfelling in East Gippsland, prescribed burning of bush & forests, burning of logging coup. (which the public could use for firewood instead of plundering forests) all amount to destruction of trees & bush for a start which we KNOW are INTEGRAL to human LIFE on earth. We should be guarding the forests with all our knowledge.

Quality & quantity of soil, air, water, food & naturally the climate are all affected when tree numbers are clearfelled, pulped, chipped & burnt. Carbon & phosphorus are released when trees are logged. Creeks & streams are silted up, water table drops as new single species saplings draw huge amounts of water for their 30 yr. cycle. The health effects on our community from the burning of coup. & prescribed burns can be measured by the high rise of hospital admissions.

After the main fires had died down, D.S.E. continued lit up & burnt vast areas of bush. These burns were partially responsible for towns being threatened. When the A.B.C. ceased reporting on bushfires (EL NINO WAS ANNOUNCED "OVER"), information was in the form of a notice from D.S.E. taped up on a shop window in town. The Bushfire Information line was inadequate!

The Code of practice of prescribed Burns & the Flora & Fauna Act are ignored.

I do not agree with permanent firebreaks because

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they do not work. Fires can spot 5 kms ahead. Soil run-off is a major issue initially, then erosion, silting up of waterways & tributaries to rivers. The cost would be astronomical & what methods would be used to keep these areas cleared?

A major part of the soil running into the Mitchell river was not caused by fire but the steep bulldozer lines that were done through the Mitchell river national park.

Being in bushland management myself for many years, I suggest the heavy machinery operators who were responsible for the devastation of the firebreaks & rehabilitation areas should be made to do a short course (even one day) to teach the rudiments of soil management. Forestry fire officers who conduct the prescribed burns also need education in flora & fauna, especially the diverse forest systems.

Until it was demanded by the union, there were no health warnings telling the public of the toxic effect from the spraying of PHOSCHEK fire retardant (very poisonous Monsanto product)

yours sincerely

Karl Beavis