

Facts that need to be addressed

1. 15TH January 2019. Dry Lightning strike hits Riveaux Road hilltop in the afternoon.
2. Not long after a single helicopter fly's over the southern forests after the lightning.
3. Parks and Sustainable Timbers Tasmanian were alerted to the fire on top of the Riveaux road hill sometime between the helicopter sighting it and the next morning.
4. On the morning of the 16th January 2019, Parks and S.T.T. at that time the fire was only half the size of a 4x4 ute. Apparently they had a meeting to discuss what's to be done about the fire.
5. Parks and S.T.T. couldn't agree what to do. S.T.T. wanted to go and put the fire out. Parks who are now the custodians of this part of the forest Parks said it was a natural incident. The fire could have been put out.
6. There were helicopters and fire brigades sitting on the Kermandie football ground for three days and nights before they were allowed to start putting out the fire.
7. Parks had to ring Melbourne Forest Heritage to get permission to start putting out the fire. Now that in itself is ridiculous, this is our state and decisions of this importance should be made in our state.
8. By the time they made up their mind about putting the fire out, the fire was getting out of control.
9. There should be no blame game, Parks are not proven for their fast action on any maintainment of the forest they look after. But I do believe with many other residents of the Southern part of Tasmania that someone should be made accountable.
10. This fire should never have happened, but now it has, it is time to think of the future maintenance and controls of any other southern forest fires.
11. After the 1967 fires the government put in place a management agreement and made an industry that not only protected the wild life and flora, it also created jobs, income and tourism to the state.
12. The government can do this again by taking back the forest to manage again, and help reduce the chance of an even fierce fire in the future. There will be more fires as the summers seem to be getting drier every year.

There was not only the Tas fire Service, Parks and S.T.T controlling and dowsing the fire with water. There were also some 20 or more residents who stayed behind to protect their property's. They all worked together to protect each other's homes and other people's homes who could not do it them selves. While they were not professionally trained to fight forest fires, they were brave enough to stay behind to do this. (They saved our town.)Locals who stayed behind received no information from the Tas fire serves in which direction the fire was coming from . The local farmer's who stayed behind to protect their properties were the one's to let the Tas fire service know.

The majority of the Tas firies were not professionally trained to fight bush fire's at this magnitude. Blue lines were drawn on road's and they were not allowed to enter to stop any fire coming in that direction.

Here are some of the events the locals noted about how the fire was controlled by the government agencies.

There was no one in the fire tower on Doodies hill.

Fire crew's were designated fire's to go to, this led them to fire's that were not threatening the town. The fire response unit was controlled by Hobart in a simulation way, which prevented the Tas fire service to really know where the fire was coming from.

Fire crews were also filling up water from our main water scheme and not out of the creeks and rivers. This led to our water supply getting low.

Fire crews were not stationed in Geeveston this meant they had to travel from Huonville or Hobart every day. While the firies were travelling, our own brave men were taking it in terns to sus out which direction the fire 's were coming from and ascertaining what could be done about it.

All the farm boys who stayed were in contact with each other except when the NBN was down , they would rally and be in a 5 minute notice and respond where assistance was needed ie: fighting fires that were approaching on the town or just removing valuable machinery from farms but unfortunately they were stopped by the Tas fire people and told they were not allowed to enter certain areas even though the locals new there were fire's to be stopped.

In one case our local boys were stopped by Tas fire service and not let into the area in which they were fighting a fire coming down Donnelly's road. The Tas fire service told them there was no fire up Donnelly's road but our boy's knew different. Our boy's put this fire out.

A local man had a personal fuel bill of \$15,000.00 because he had to build his own containment road behind his property to stop the fire reaching his house and also stopping the fire from entering Geeveston from the west.

The right information was not getting to the fire crews until it was too late, this was because the NBN was off, due to maintenance.

In the early days of the fire getting closer to Geeveston, there was a lack of communication between the Tas fire service and police. This led to evacuations that didn't need to happen so soon. Due to the lack of people in the town there was no one to look out for spot fires.

Southern Tasmania needs its own forest fire fighters. S.T.F were recruiting some months before the fire began, but the government put a fee of around \$1800.00 per person to be trained. It is the government's responsibility to protect our forest and its population living near these forests. So we believe the government should train these people at no cost to themselves. They are brave enough to go out there and fight these fires so they should not be charged.

In a meeting in Hobart The Tasmanian Government deemed Geeveston unsalvageable. Well, **it was saved**.

So we would like to recommend that the Government takes on the likelihood of another bad fire season in the future and prepare for the worst.

All in all we need fire fighters who know how to fight forest fires and the government to spend the money and get proper fire fighting planes so a fire like this can be controlled and be put out before we do lose the southern part of Tasmania all together.

Our state needs to get together and save our lovely forests and our community.

Once, a long time ago we had a workable state that employed people to maintaining the forests, but now it has fallen by the wayside , **please** our state needs to lift it's game and move forward.

It's ok for the Greens to say "save our forests" " for future generations, but now we don't have the forests to look at. Unless they are managed they are **going to burn.**

This said, We say this with confidence that the local people of the Southern Forest are really concerned of what the Government is going to do in the future.

Please respond to this.

Regards

Joe Hickey

Jo Donnelly

Residents of the Geeveston community