

Novy, Felicity (TFS)

From: Helen Tait
Sent: Friday, 7 September 2012
To: Fire Service Act Review (TFS)
Subject: Act Review Comment from Helen T

Fire Services Act Review

As background my submission on Australia's faunal extinction crisis

Helen Tait, BSc Tas 1975

There is much to say re h

However, here I comment on the fact of prescribed burning, Forestry and the State fire Services.

Over burning is preventing stable balanced communities to develop and maintain themselves in a state where material production is eventually in balance with material decomposition.

There is too large a tendency to burn often with the justification of reducing fuel load and fire risk.

Each vegetation community has very specific need and the response to burning that is often not fully recognised when applying standardized burn modelling.

Authorities responsible for planned burning are often lacking in sufficient expertise and knowledge. They need supporting by strongly resourced bodies. In Tasmania for example numbers of staff permanently employed as experienced ecologists in natural history, biodiversity and conservation programmes is at a low level, and this is probably a trend throughout of Australia.

Another issue being trouble-some in the retention of specific and mature communities is the current widespread impetus to give aboriginal burning practices and practitioners high kudos and favour. This can become the factor responsible for naive and inappropriate application of burn programmes across widely different parts of Australia.

Consideration of protection priority in conservation zones is being eroded by poor planning or undue planning pressure of subdivision estates and developments by social forces bent on growth at all cost and an economic models based on that. By expanding increasingly close to protected areas to assets development and then protection measures are too easily overriding conservation of flora and fauna and bushland ecologies.

I have included the submission above as background to my comment towards the Fire Act Review, Tasmania.

Comment Fire Act Review:

Currently one of the elephants in the room is that the fire service is being asked to do more that it is provisioned to do. Fire service staff need to be enacted to have experience and expertise in the fire science, fire management and control, in assets protection etc. It is not necessarily the job of the fire service to be experienced and expert ecologists and versed in natural history and conservation research and procedures.

Strong provisions in the Fire Act for sound communication and cooperation amongst other land management agencies, including community bodies, requires that those other bodies also have sound jurisdiction and processes including funding guarantees.