



## ***The Bushfire Front Inc***

*Motto: Mild fires not wildfires*

*Box 1014 Subiaco WA. 6904*

**Email:**

The Chair  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Dear Chair

### **SUBMISSION FROM THE BUSHFIRE FRONT RE PETITION NO 29**

The Bushfire Front Inc comprises professional specialists in bushfire history, science and management. We have first-hand experience in mitigation and fighting bushfires in Western Australia, going back over the last 60+ years.

We strongly support a comprehensive and integrated bushfire management strategy for WA forests. This will encompass legislation, policy, resourcing, and effective programs of fire detection, mitigation, suppression and research.

The aim must to minimise bushfire damage to Western Australians, their assets, and to the environment. The prescribed burning program currently adopted by DBCA is of fundamental importance to the State achieving this outcome.

We reject claims by the Leeuwin Group and by some environmentalists that the prescribed burning program is damaging, or threatens to damage, forest biodiversity, human health and air quality. Opponents of prescribed burning are not able to name a single species of native plant or animal that has become extinct, or is realistically threatened with extinction, as a result of a burning programme that now extends back to the 1950s.

We also reject the theory being advanced by the opponents of prescribed burning that it is not needed on the grounds that bushland left long unburnt becomes non-flammable. This nonsensical idea flies in the face of science, history, observation and actual measurement of fuels in long-unburnt forests.

The fundamental principle is this: fuel reduction does not prevent bushfires from occurring; however, it makes potential bushfires easier, safer and cheaper to control, and ensures they do less damage. Bushfires burning in heavy fuels are almost impossible to control even under relatively mild weather conditions.

Finally, there have been numerous inquiries into bushfire management, bushfire outcomes, and prescribed burning over the years, including a detailed and sophisticated review by the EPA a few years ago. In no case has a cessation, or even a severe curtailment of the burning

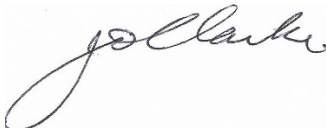
program, been recommended. However, there have been attempts to undertake bushfire management without a burning programme, or with a small and ineffective programme. This is currently being attempted in NSW and Victoria, and was attempted in WA in the early years of this century. In every case the outcome has been disastrous, damaging and costly bushfires.

DBCA's burning operations are not perfect, and the reasons for this are well-known: the lack of resources, and the running-down of numbers of experienced staff.

We suggest that the best recommendation that your review Committee could come up with is that the burning programme be continued and better resourced than in the past.

Thank you for considering this short submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Clarke', written over a light grey rectangular background.

John Clarke  
Chair  
Bushfire Front

16 November 2022