

Attachment: Roadside photos.pdf

I am a fire fighter with 45 years experience I am on the Mitchel Shire fire consultative forum which helps plan the fire prevention works for the shire and a member of the Mitchel shire roadside fire management work group which helped develop the shires new roadside fire management plan.

In relation to the context of bushfire preparedness, readiness and responsibilities statutory agencies, local government and state government bodies.

The state of our roadsides has become dangerous the practice of shires and Vicroads pushing fallen trees and branches to the side of the road where they are left with the rest of the debris on the road reserves has resulted in a large buildup of fuel on the roadsides.

This means in a fire situation flame heights which are 1-2 meters in the paddocks become tunnels of fire with flame heights of 10-12 meters or more on the roads which are not survivable even for our fire fighters let alone community members. I fear that the next royal commission we have in the future will be into the deaths of our fire fighters caught on a road on the way to help someone it very nearly happened this year as evident by the footage we all saw on the television.

At meetings when we have to do the fire prevention plans the topic comes up about the roadside fuel loads the answer is always the same there is no money from either the shires or vicroads. They could try to do some surly a bobcat with a stick rake could clean up a large amount of roadside quickly and at low cost there must be some balance between cost and the lives of our fire fighters.

Balance also needs to be achieved between the environment and safety both the shires and Vicroads seem to be too heavily influenced by the "green" sector recently a wind farm was built in the area and to facilitate this a no through road had to be widened. To achieve this about 40 trees had to be cut down the shire planning permit stated that the trees had to be left on the road reserve for animal habitat thus drastically increasing the fuel load on a one way in and out road. All without considering the increased danger to our fire fighters who are responsible for protecting community assets such as this.

Vicroads are in a similar situation the TAC wire rope barriers were put in with such hast that there was little or no consultation with fire authorities very many of the breaks in the barriers are in places where there are drop offs or trees preventing access by fire vehicles. Many areas are cut off completely and the hard fuels trees and branches are building up where they cannot be recovered other areas where slashing was conducted in the past cannot be accessed and as Vicroads has an aversion to spraying the fuel load mounts.

Something must be done to reduce the fuel loads on the road reserves before we loose fire fighters or community members.

Would you like your submission to be made publicly available?	Yes
Would you like your name (or your business or organisation's name) published with your submission?	
During the 2019-20 fire season, were you in an area where fires occurred?	No
Where were you impacted by fires?	
How would you describe your connection to the area?	
Were you involved in responding to the fires in that area?	Yes
How would you best describe your involvement in responding to the fires?	Volunteer role in the emergency services
Were you (or do you continue to be) involved in supporting individuals or communities affected by the fires?	
How would you best describe your involvement following the fires?	
What is the main reason for your submission?	
What is your Local Government Area (council)?	Mitchel
What is your postcode or town?	3660
What age group are you in?	55-64
What gender do you identify as?	Male
Other ways to be involved in the Inquiry	Yes
Full name Phone number Email What types of activities would you be interested in hearing about?	
Preferred method of contact	Email