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**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 March 2020 11:44 PM  
**To:** DJCS-IGEM-Contact (DJCS) <[IGEM@igem.vic.gov.au](mailto:IGEM@igem.vic.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Independent Enquiry into fires

Recently a meeting of high country graziers at Ensay I was assigned to pen a letter detailing conclusions reached after a lengthy debrief following the recent catastrophic bushfires in the area. Those present thought that if their voices were heard, it may be useful in policy making.

- The beginning of the fires was ignored and groups were not organised to combat the threat until 1st December 2019. It was considered that this was 6 weeks too late.
- The head office was in Melbourne and not on site and it was considered that the experience, networks and local knowledge were ignored by officialdom.
- Little to no water was put out on private property.
- Communications were inaccurate and not kept up to date.
- The most effective work was perceived to be accomplished by the Americans and Canadians in back burning between spikes. The risk aversion policy of the Australian fire fighters put brakes on their opportunities.
- The group felt generally that policy in landscape management is influenced by ideology of players who have scant knowledge of facts on the ground.
- Consideration should be given to some logging as a tool for landscape management and design to create breaks and refuges.
- Cattle could be grazed in selected areas for management if properly supervised and sensitive areas are protected by employing rangers, visible freeze branding, drones, GPS and charging a suitable agistment fee.
- Google Earth has uploaded since the fires and the picture of uninterrupted burnt bush with no breaks for refuge or speaks for itself.
- There is concern that whilst Climate Change is real, it should not be a reason to not seek out improvements in landscape management.

The outstanding issue of the meeting was that there is a huge communication gap separating government and academic bodies and the resource that is local experience and wisdom - often generations in the making. Neither side has respect for the other yet both sides are needed to solve the problems of landscape management and design. A credible and respected intermediary conduit is needed to bring the players together.

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