

5 April 2020

Inspector-General for Emergency Management

Independent Inquiry into
2019 – 20 Victorian Fire Season
Brief Submission

Comments re Fire Detection and Prevention

No doubt you will receive plenty of suggestions concerning fire detection/prevention. Perhaps I can throw in my small contribution, which may help in the current and subsequent deliberations.

Detection and early Response

We have the technology to spot the outbreak of a fire anywhere in Victoria or Australia for that matter.

Satellites producing real time images with a resolution of about 10 cm are already up there and the scanning software can be specially tuned to detect flame. Hence with early detection the response can be rapid, even in dense forest. The responders, the water bombers, can be either conventional or unmanned remotely controlled drones. I suspect large drones with excellent fire fighting capability are available now. This is just one of a number of technology applications and other measures that can be applied to reduce the number and severity of bush fires.

Management of fire prone Forest; de-urbanisation

I have not read the 'Black Saturday 2009' Royal Commission report by Bernard Teague hence some of my points may have already been addressed by him. However I suggest the following –

- (a) The rebuilding of domestic dwellings in these areas be discouraged by whatever means.
- (b) If a house or commercial building is rebuilt, it must be to the highest fireproof standard.
- (c) A cleared area around the structure must meet a specified standard and be maintained.
- (d) People occupying government defined 'permissive occupancy' areas in fire prone areas must all leave when ordered on days of fire emergency. With this law at least human life will not be at risk to the extent that it has been in the past. This rule would apply to campers, hikers, residents and guests in hotels/guesthouses, etc.

Perhaps the above points, some of which may have been already considered, may help.

May I close by adding - we should not keep wrangling about the causes of droughts and fire, use the best **technology** to help control the availability and usage of water, the severity of droughts, and hence the effects of fire.

Lindsay Jackson