

A Timberman`s Fire Fighting Experience.

As a Timber worker part of our Contractual agreement with the Government in the past was that we had to attend and defend any bushfire (in the state you were working in) with our Logging Machinery.

Beginning with the Bushfires in 1983 Ash Wednesday, massive bushfires in 2003 in the North East of Victoria, extensive bushfires 2006 in the North East and horrific Black Saturday fires 2009.

2003 I was 8 weeks defending fire and property, it burnt 1.1 million hectare or area, I started fighting fires at Falls Creek and by 8 weeks later ended up in the back of Mansfield.



2006 burnt over 1,000,000 hectares in the North East, we had a terrifying experience of being trapped on Katherine Station, we were putting in containment lines to save life and property, when the erratic fire behaviour came from all directions trapping DSE workers, and Contract Fire Fighters, to our surprise we witnessed the intensity of the fire burn all river vegetation and houses, actually every house in its path on that section of the Buffalo River, it burnt so intense that it dried the river, a fire of this intensity creates its own wind tunnel.



Later with that same fire I was notified that all remaining Logging Equipment of mine had been burnt on the Mt Beauty logging coupe while I was off protecting other persons assets and life. *I wrote letters to government asking for support with the loss of equipment, we never received one response from Government, not any condolences, I was so disappointed when one is off defending life and assets to not even be acknowledged by the Labour Government of the day.*

Loosing this equipment meant we lost our Logging Contract with Forest Vic as we no longer had the correct equipment to carry out operation or the funds to purchase new.

With this extensive experience first hand, I am so concerned about the local area of the Yarra Valley, with an increase in vegetation in turn gives a massive increase in fuel load and the potential corridor effect into every town of Yarra Junction, Wesburn, Millgrove, Warburton , East Warburton, Gladysdale and Powelltown. The potential of this corridor in the right fire conditions as I have seen, no-one or equipment will be able to stop it, the potential loss of life makes me feel sick to the core.

Peter McConachy

