



The Bushfire Front Inc

Motto: "Mild fires tame wildfires"

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Mr Des Donnelly
Chair, Tuart Forest Restoration Group
Ludlow, WA

Dear Des

Bushfire Front visit to Ludlow Tuart Forest

Many thanks to you and Evelyn for briefing the BFF on our visit to Ludlow recently. It was a pleasure to hear about the work of your group, and its aspirations. We thought you handled the presentation and field inspections very well, given the need to put across a message that did not completely conform with DBCA's position and priorities.

BFF members are interested in every aspect of management of the Ludlow Tuart Forest, and we could make many comments on silviculture, mining rehab, regeneration, pest and weed control and settlement restoration.

However, we will confine ourselves to two observations about bushfire management.

1. Inevitably a wildfire will, sooner or later, strike the national park. Unless the area has been better prepared, there will be a significant loss of old trees. The old trees are the essence of the national park, and its future. In our view a program of "tops disposal" clearing around tuart veterans is urgent, starting on the northern/eastern flanks of the forest, from which the most intense fires are likely to come. Once the veteran trees have been protected, a program of mild-intensity prescribed burning can commence.
2. Ludlow is perfectly placed for involvement with the emerging "cultural burning" programs. Young indigenous men and women being trained in this work could be employed to prepare the areas for burning and then undertake the burning, under suitable direction from DBCA. BFF member Ian Kealley is involved with these processes, and could be the link man, or at least a source of advice.

In our view the policy priority for the Tuart Forest National Park should be switched from possum conservation to regeneration, silviculture and bushfire management so as to protect and restore this (last, and best) remnant of the original tuart forests. As it is, the possums are doomed because the animals and their habitat cannot be protected from an intense summer bushfire (look what happened to Yalgorup NP). The BFF has advocated for many years a simple philosophy for forest management in WA: "**if you don't get your bushfire management right, no other management objective can be achieved**". Nowhere have I seen a place more in need of application of this philosophy than the Tuart Forest NP.

It grieves us to think that all the work, passion and dedication of your group could go up in smoke, because priority has been given to possums and peppermints over bushfires. There is some excellent leadership and bushfire nous in Parks and Wildlife at Bunbury and Busselton at the moment, and it needs to be focused on preventing a potential disaster in the tuart forest.

The BFF will be taking up these issues with DBCA P&WS and, depending on their response, with the Minister. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance in supporting your work and goals.

Yours sincerely

Roger Underwood AM
CHAIRMAN

June 10, 2022

Copy to Regional Manager, DBCA, Bunbury