

Letters

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Time to make good on burn advice pledge

WHEN "The nation's top bushfire scientist ..." and originator of the concept of 'residual risk', Professor Kevin Tolhurst says the Andrew's Government are "sneaky buggers", it confirms, at the highest level, our predictions about unprecedented loss of life from future extreme bushfires ("Smokescreen", TWT August 26).

Professor Tolhurst has stated extreme bushfires are less than 1 per cent of all bushfires, and yet they cause over 90 per cent of bushfire deaths and damage. His stated opinion that the Andrews Government are "sneaky buggers" about their "residual risk" figures, is the most damning indictment possible. This is because it cannot be dismissed as politically motivated. I believe he has been "their man", for a long time.

Professor Tolhurst was at Victoria's emergency headquarters on Black Saturday, where he predicted the Kilmore East fire would hit, and continue through suburban Melbourne. His prediction was based on the forecast wind change coming at 9pm. However, it arrived early at 6pm, saving thousands of lives on negligently unmitigated fuel, tree covered and blocked roads. Professor Tolhurst described that fire, which was the

worst killer fire in Australia's history:

"... the fire front itself can, for short periods, move devastatingly quickly ... pulsing with flashes of fireballs, often in a circular motion like a hurricane, as the fuel-air mixture bursts into flame well out from the fire front"

So when Professor Tolhurst says the Andrews Governments are "sneaky buggers", it demands an immediate and proper adoption of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission prescribed burning recommendation that both the Coalition and Labor parties promised Victorians.

**Tim Malseed,
President Firestick Estate Inc.**

Let's stand up to bureaucracy chaos

AS I sit back in the "border bubble" in my home town of Barham during COVID-19 I have reflected on the bureaucratic mismanagement that is

hurting our rural communities.

Decisions are made from afar by those who have very little knowledge, instead using computer models to justify their positions and the funding they rely on to keep their job.

Over the years I have unfortunately witnessed some of the worst bureaucratic blunders, though I must admit the ignorance that led to one farmer being advised by Service NSW to fly hay to Sydney before spending two weeks in quarantine just about takes the cake.

For those in the water space, the impact of decisions which are made in isolation by those with no understanding of local situations is a national disgrace, as are the rural politicians who don't call it out because it may threaten their political career.

Those unaccustomed to dealing with our bureaucracy will laugh at suggestions to fly sheep to Sydney, and rightly so. But those of us who have dealt with this dysfunctional system, especially over the past 15-20 years, are not surprised.

**Neil Eagle,
Barham**

In water policy I have seen governments move departments and their personnel out of rural towns, and in the process they bypass community consultation and collaboration. Now, the government's idea of "collaboration" is allowing city-based bureaucrats to invite submissions, then ignore the local advice and plough ahead with their false computer modelling.

This has been the key driver to the downfall of water policy that is destroying the environment, killing our communities and jeopardising our staple food industries.

The best projects I was involved in were led from the ground up with all stakeholders working together. Those days are over and now there are no winners.

But nothing will change until our local politicians convince their party colleagues to stand up to the bureaucracy and protect our future and the nation's food supply.

**Jan Beer,
Yea**

MDB politics 'contemptible'

IT IS time Basin States called the Federal Government and its agency the Murray Darling Basin Authority to account. There is no triple bottom line balance in the Basin Plan as is clearly shown in last week's article ("River flows rob irrigators" TWT Aug 26). Currently the environment has use of 70 per cent of all basin flows.

The initial intent of the MDB Plan was to deliver a healthy working river system, sustainable food production and strong regional communities. The triple bottom line outcomes of the Plan have been a monumental failure. Farmers and business owners in the MDB are sick to death of the blatant political agenda that uses Basin Plan policies to gain the South Australia vote and political advantage in Federal Government. It's nothing short of contemptible.

Malcolm

IN the process of all this, they are destroying the Murray and Goulburn Rivers ("Growers feel 'cheated' by SA water use" Aug 26). Rivers never ran high levels and high flows most of the year. They formed as flood and famine and should be run as such. The banks need time to dry out to recover. Trees need time to heal as well.

Andrew

BETTER stop the water at the border. If Victorians can't get in neither can our water.

Mitch



PIECE OF MIND

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THE concept has merit ("Why compulsory home insurance should be introduced," theweeklytimes.com.au Aug 26). Individuals have to take responsibility for their own risk mitigation.

Janice

HAVING lost our place to bushfire six years ago, I know that anyone who does not adequately insure their property is a fool. We were under-insured, but not now. It's an expense you can't afford to be without.

Pam

PITY we don't see more on supermarket shelves ("Kangaroo culling booming in Victoria" Aug 26). That's a lot of meat going to waste

Chris

IF THE federal government wanted to do some good for the river and the communities along it they'd have bought the water off this farm and reallocated it to Riverina and northern Victorian dairy farmers and fruit growers priced out of the water market by federal mismanagement ("Riverina farm fetches \$98m" Aug 26).

POLL RESULTS

CHINA TRADE
Is China's trade tactic an unfair retaliatory action?

52 votes to noon yesterday

Yes **96%**
No **4%**

THIS WEEK
Should free-range farms fund their own compo?

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Pacific Seeds
Growing possibilities