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25 MAR 2002

From: "Stephen Ashley" <steash@bullet.net.au>
To: <bushfires.committee@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
Date: Mon, Mar 25, 2002 1:00 pm
Subject: Bush Fires Committee - Proposal

To Whom it May Concern

Please find attached in Word Format:

1. Introduction letter
2. Proposal for Bush Fire Initiative

Addressed to: Joint Select Committee on Bushfires

This is the first proposal of this kind I have drawn up so if anything futher needs adding please do not hessitate to contact me.

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Regards

Stephen Ashley

25th March 2002

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Pre-proposal Feedback Letter

Re: 'Australian Fire Fighting Innovation Project'

To invite Individuals, Organisations, Universities, Research Laboratories, Inventors etc throughout the world to submit ideas and prototypes of devices to minimize the effects of and help combat Bush Fires.

To whom it May Concern,

To introduce myself I am a Workplace Trainer and Assessor dealing with Hazard Analysis and Safety in Food related environments and currently I am employed by Banister Technical Pty Ltd working on Food Processing Certificates 1 / 2 & 3 training a total of 400 workplace students.

I have qualifications in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) as well as Food Safety Project Management.

Also over the past 7 years I have had books published for the Professional Hospitality Industry with Macmillan Education (1), The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (3), Butterworths (1), Hospitality Press (2) and currently I am working on a Hazard Reduction Project for a major publisher.

At present I am preparing a proposal to State or Federal Government in regards to a project I shall call, "Australian Fire Fighting Innovation Project".

While viewing the fires on TV and as a distant spectator of the fires in the Lower Blue Mountains I tried to think of ways to help the Fire Fighters in their gargantuan task.

I came up with two extremely improbable methods of helping to contain bush fires.

The first was to initiate research into fire retardant foam that could be dispersed from crop dusters in order to slow the rate of advance.

The second was a series of pressurized 1000+ litre container whose sprinkler system could be activated either manually or through heat sensor. These could be brought in to the wildest terrain via helicopter, laid in a line 100 metres apart depending upon the spray range, to form a movable line of defense.

How many others where thinking along the same lines, seeking solutions and minimization techniques. Most of these ideas will never even be passed onto a second person.

Now, what if?

We could focus the minds of those who are a part of the worlds leading educational and research institutions and facilities to give a part of their time to finding solutions to a broad range of fire related issues.

These people hail from:

- Universities
- Colleges
- Schools
- Research Laboratories
- Science Labs
- Engineering Workshops
- Chemistry Labs
- Inventors Societies and Associations
- Every Fire Station Worldwide

Everything evolves, ideas evolve. In twenty years time a device may come onto the market that minimizes the risk of Bush Fires by 50%, we don't know, but it is possible.

My proposal would add momentum to this evolution in Fire Technology by offering an incentive to those wishing to take part.

We offer a Research and Development Grant / Cash Prize to the top XXX ideas, this would be the incentive, funded by either government or the appropriate Australian Industry. A good idea will easily be snatched up by Business.

How many ideas would we receive when these institutions are interested? 20, 100, 1000 it is hard to quantify a project such as this, but one thing is certain, it must be done.

I believe this to be a 2-3 year project to allow for initial communications to be made and data lists prepared, research and development of projects and finally the invite to Sydney to demonstrate their inventions in front of the Fire Fighters and other interested parties.

This could then have the backdrop of an event such as The World Fire Fighting Convention with business, suppliers and the general public involved.

My initial research has uncovered a potential participant list of over 20,000 organisations that may be willing to contribute to a project such as this.

In Summary

Invite all world institutions to take part in the 'Australian Fire Fighting Innovation Project'. To formulate ideas to be used in the fighting and minimisation of all fires. In categories: Bush Fire, House Fire, and Personal Protection etc
Offer Development and Cash Grants to outstanding entries.
Canvass for Corporate Sponsorship to raise funds for the Rural Fire Service.
Offer the manufacture and marketing of devices to Australian Companies in return for the relevant research and building of demonstration prototypes.
Royalties in the region of 10-15% from marketable ideas to be placed back into both the Rural Bush Fire Service and the inventor.

We may not only increase thought into this area but also allow Australian business first chance to develop, market and export these ideas thus strengthening Australian business on the world market and securing Australian jobs.

This same idea could easily transfer over to other industries.

It is the intention of this brief letter to solicit constructive criticism of this project and hopefully in some instances to illicit support for this concept.

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This proposal is made on behalf of Stephen Ashley and no other Company or persons are involved.

Stephen Ashley

Application for Funding

Research Proposal

Project Title

Australian Fire Fighting Innovation Project

Ideas, Innovations and Technologies for use in Bush Fire Fighting and Fire Damage Minimisation

'Putting Inventors in Touch with Australian Manufacturers'

'Giving Australia The World Industry Advantage'

Applicant

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Area Covered by Proposal

All Australian Bush Fire Areas

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A Recent History of Bush Fires in Australia

Following Extract from: <http://www.bushfire.nsw.gov.au/education/majorfires.htm>

- **1957** - Bush fires in the Blue Mountains area driven by gale force winds destroyed **25 homes, shops, schools, churches and a hospital.**
- **1964/65** - Major fires occurred in the Snowy Mountains, Southern Tablelands and outer metropolitan area. The Chatsbury/Bungonia fire covered **250,000ha** and **destroyed the village of Wingello. Three lives were lost.** In March the Tumut Valley fire burnt **80,000ha.**
- **1968/69** - Widespread damage occurred over much of the eastern part of the State. Major fires at Wollongong burnt rainforest, **destroyed 33 homes and five other buildings.** Fires in the lower Blue Mountains were fanned by 100km/h westerly winds and destroyed **123 buildings. Three lives were lost.**
- **1969/70** - The Roto fire burnt some 280,000ha in a three week period.
- **1972/73** - The south-eastern corner of the State suffered the worst fires since 1968 with over **200,000ha burnt.** The Burrinjuck fire burnt **16,000ha** and was reported to have traveled **19km in three hours**, denuding a hillside in its path.
- **1974/75** - The severest season for perhaps 30 years in the far west with **3,755,000ha burnt, 50,000 stock lost** and 10,170km of fencing destroyed. **1.5 million ha were burnt** in the Cobar Shire in mid-December and **340,000ha** in the Balranald fire. The Moolah-Corinya fire **burnt 1,117,000ha** and was the largest fire put out by Bush firefighters - not the weather. Its perimeter was over 1,000 km.
- **1976/77** - In early December, **9,000ha** were burnt and **three homes** destroyed in Hornsby Shire, and **65,000ha** were burnt in the Blue Mountains.

- 1977/78 - In the Blue Mountains area **49 buildings were destroyed** and **54,000ha** burnt. Sydney suburbs up to 60km away were showered with fall out of blackened leaves.
- 1978/79 - Serious fires occurred in the Southern Highlands and South West Slopes regions. Over **50,000ha were burnt**, **five houses were destroyed** and heavy stock losses were inflicted.
- 1979/80 - Following severe drought conditions over most of the State, major fires were widespread. In Mudgee Shire **55,400ha** were burnt and **one life was lost**. **9,000ha** were burnt in Warrindah Shire and **14 houses lost**. Fires occurred in the majority of council areas within the State burning a total of over **1 million ha**.
- 1982/83 - \$12 million worth of pine plantation was destroyed in southern NSW in a fire which burnt **25,000ha** in only two and a half hours. The Grose Valley fire burnt **35,000ha**.
- 1984/85 - This was the worst fire season for ten years in the grassed western areas of the State. On Christmas Day more than **100 fires** were started by lightning strikes and **500,000ha burnt** as a result. The largest fire was at Cobar in mid-January with **516,000ha** burnt. During the season there were **6,000 fires** State-wide, **3.5 million ha burnt**, four lives lost, **40,000 stock lost** and \$40 million damage.
- 1987/88 - Over **115,000ha were burnt** in the Bethungra and Warurillah/Yanco fires with **three lives lost** at the Bethungra fire. Major fires also occurred in the south eastern part of Kosciusko National Park where **65,000ha** were burnt in the Park and surrounding areas.
- 1990/91 - In November fires raced through the council areas of Hay and Murrumbidgee, claimed nearly **200,000ha** of prime grazing land, destroyed **100,000 sheep** and hundreds of kilometers of fencing. Just one week later

80,000ha of land were burnt as fires claimed another **76,000 sheep** and 200 cattle in Hay and Carrathool Shires.

- On December 23, hundreds of fires were reported across the State with eight emergency declarations made in the Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, Cessnock, Hawkesbury, Warringah, Wollondilly, Gosford and Wyong council areas. **Eight homes** were lost in these fires.
- 1991/92 - On October 16, **two lives were lost** at Kenthurst in the Shire of Baulkham Hills. Emergency declarations were made for the councils of Baulkham Hills, Gosford City, Wyong Shire and Lake Macquarie. Nearly **2,500 Bush firefighters** battled more than **30** blazes around the State. **14 homes** were destroyed.
- 1993/94 - In late December 1993, a series of fires began on the north coast and in the Hunter Region. As weather conditions continued to deteriorate, fire occurrence spread from the Queensland border to Batemans Bay. In excess of 800 fires started between December 27, 1993 and January 16, 1994. Over 800,000ha were burnt. All areas affected had previously been subject to wildfires, but never before had they burnt simultaneously. Resources from across Australia and New Zealand were utilised, resulting in a firefighting effort larger than any previously experienced in the country. At the height of the exercise over 20,000 firefighters were deployed. Four lives were lost and 206 homes destroyed.

Following Extract from: http://www.uni-freiburg.de/fireglobe/current/archive/aus/1999/06/aus_040699.htm

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology issued on **4 June 1999, valid for Saturday**, high fire danger north of Barrow Creek. The last updated information of the current season statistics of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment in **Victoria** on **Friday 4 June 1999** shows, that **710** fires attended in the current season, which had burnt a total area of **58,911 ha**

Between 1957 – 1999

Total Area Burnt	14,674,000 ha +
Total Cattle Lost	266,200 +
Total Buildings Destroyed	2,063 +

Brief Project Description

To encourage the development of Bush Fire Fighting Techniques, Processes, Equipment and Fire Damage Minimisation Methods.

Project Start Date

July 2002

Project Completion Date

July 2004

Total Funding Required

\$198,168 (over two year period)

Accountant

Steve Rosen
(Details to be provided as needed)

Project Description

To speed up the evolution of Bush Fire Techniques, Processes, Equipment and Fire Damage Minimisation Methods by encouraging focused thought on the problems, and solutions, associated with Bush Fires.

Classifications of entry to include:

- Innovations for Bush Firefighting (Frontline)
- Reduction of risk from Bush Fires (Property)
- Reduction of risk from Bush Fire (Personnel)
- Chemicals for use in the minimization of Damage from Bush Fires
- Pre and Post Fire Innovations
- Miscellaneous

This project would cost less than one house lost to the bush fires. It will also allow us to compile a database of those interested in Fire Fighting Solutions for networking when and if needed.

To contact en masse Academic Unions and other Organizations and Institutions throughout the world in order for them to compete for business contracts with Australian Manufacturers and Project Development Companies.

This will not only allow Australia to become the leader in Bush Fire Fighting innovation throughout the world but will also bring Manufacturing, Marketing, Local and Export Sales.

This will be achieved by the offer of Research and Development through Australian Companies for those ideas that merit further research. The inventor and Manufacturer will enter into a standard contract. These ideas coming from Universities, Research Companies, Inventors Societies and Organisations, Technology Development Units, Individuals Worldwide and by Networking the relevant Australian industries in the further development of these innovations.

Objectives

- To secure new Fire Fighting Techniques, Equipment and Methods.
- To encourage Australian Research and Development of the above.
- To promote Australian Production and Manufacture of all Viable Ideas.
- To increase export sales of Fire Fighting Techniques, Equipment and Methods.
- To raise funds for the Rural Bush Fire Service through 5% Agency Fee for all sales of products offered from this project.
- To set the groundwork for a major Hallmark event 'World Fire Fighting Expo'
- Gauge success to flow project on through other Australian Industries.
- Inclusion of Australian Schools as awareness of Bush Fires and also to establish school project, each school throughout Australia submits one idea.

Background to Proposal

Due to the 2001/2 Bush Fire in NSW all initiatives to save life and property must be at the forefront of all research.

After deliberating a number of ideas I myself had, I then moved a little further forward and recognised that we have a wealth of knowledge waiting to be tapped.

This knowledge comes from Academic Institutions and Organisations Worldwide.

The key is incentive. If we can encourage people with the relevant skills to put a little thought into solutions to Bush Fires then we allow ourselves to be offered the next generation in Bush Fire Fighting Techniques and Equipment without waiting for the ideas to evolve 10 years from now.

Feedback

Initial response has put me in contact with two inventors, one Australian and one European, working on two different outdoor fire control systems. This was without me requesting ideas I was just sounding out the proposal for feedback.

Project Timetable

Year One

July 2002 – Dec 2002

Compilation of Worldwide Contact Database
Procuring Industry Support
Initiate printing of brochures, application and submission forms
Networking of Industries to facilitate cross over from one discipline to another i.e. Plastics Molding with Metal Fittings – Fire Retardant Chemical Spray with Suitable Cloth – Foam Sprays with helicopter attachment
Initiate standard legal contracts for inventors / manufacturers
Set up of Information Web Site
Set up of Innovation Call Centre
Contact Relevant Organisations for further Support
Contact Australian Overseas representatives for support i.e. Consulates, Embassies, Austrade.

Jan 2003 – Jan 2004

Initiate contact with potential inventors / innovators. Approx 20,000.
Supervise enquiries
Collate submissions
Monthly briefings for interested parties

Jan 2004 – June 2004

Receipt of final submissions
Receipt of prototypes

July 2004

Prototype Field Demonstrations
Offer of innovations on paper to Australian Companies for Production

Hopefully the final stage will be encompassed within an event such as “The World Fire Fighters Expo”

Project Evaluation

Through Submissions and interest generated after first year.

No quantifiable markers until after first year.

Short and Long Term Results

Through Sales figures of Innovations adopted by Australian Business

Project Maintenance (on-going)

To be decided after project completion and results presented. Can be, should be, continued in perpetuity.

Project Documentation

- Monthly Timetable
- Monthly Progress Report
- Events causing deviation from initial plan and action
- Project amendments
- Issues and concerns report

Summary of Proposed Project Budget

Costs in Australian Dollars (AUS\$)

Total Budget Two years

\$198,168

Per Year Summary

Total Cost Per Year \$99,084

Staff

Full Time Staff x 1

\$46,800

Advertising and Promotion

Printing

Brochures, Envelopes
Letterheads
Application Forms
Business Cards

\$20,000

Mailing

\$9,000

Web Site

Construction
Maintenance

\$7,950

\$1,800 based upon \$150 per month

Infrastructure

Telephone

Rental

\$564 based upon \$47 per month line and
0500 Rental Number

Call Allowance

\$2,730 based upon 15 x .50c calls per day

Call Centre

Setup

\$2640 based upon \$220 per month

Petrol Allowance

\$2600 based upon \$50 per week

Legal Documentation

Contract between Inventor
And Australian Business
Standard and a Prerequisite
for all Participants

\$5,000

Total Per Year **\$99,084**