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Mr John Young
Principal Council Officer
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NSW Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Your Ref:
Our Ref: HQ09/1074



16 September 2009

Dear Mr Young

Thank you for your recent letter following my appearance before the Standing Committee on State Development on Tuesday 25 August.

The amended transcript and my reply to the questions taken on notice are contained in this correspondence.

Question 1 - Are you able to provide the Committee with information on the number of referrals the Rural Fire Service receives each year, with an Indication of which regions or local government areas generate large numbers of referrals?

Answer:

During the 2008/09 Financial Year, the Rural Fire Service (RFS) assessed 7,399 development assessment referrals from across NSW.

The following table sets out the number of referrals received from the top 10 councils during the period 1 August 2002 to 30 June 2009. The figures are drawn from the *Bushfire Reporting Information Management System* (BRIMS) live tables on 11 September 2009.

LGA	No of Development Assessments Received	% of Total Received
Shoalhaven	4,547	8.10%
Ku-ring-gai	3,367	6.00%
Hornsby	3,338	5.95%
Coffs Harbour	2,390	4.26%
Blue Mountains	2,370	4.22%
Lake Macquarie	2,183	3.89%
Eurobodalla	2,041	3.64%
Gosford	1,850	3.30%
The Hills	1,601	2.85%
Wagga Wagga	1,596	2.84%

Question 2 - When you do that assessment, do you have a base level fuel load that you work it out on?

Answer:

The vegetation assessment provided for in *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006* (PBP) is classified by structure or formation using the system adopted by Keith (2004).

Vegetation descriptions are based on a book by Dr David Keith (2004) "*Ocean Shores to Desert Dunes*" which describes formations of native vegetation in NSW, explaining where it occurs and why, as well as, providing a description of typical species for each vegetation formation.

Dr David Keith is a highly respected research scientist in the Department of Environment and Climate Change where he has been based for many years.

The following table summarises the fuel loads utilised for each of the broad vegetation types:

Vegetation Type	Total Fuel Load (tonnes per hectare)
Rainforests	10
Wet sclerophyll forests	25-30
Grassy woodlands	15
Grasslands	6
Dry sclerophyll forests	25
Heathlands	25
Alpine complex	17
Freshwater wetlands	15
Forested wetlands	20
Saline wetlands	-
Semi-arid woodlands	8-18
Arid shrublands	9

Should you have further questions in relation to these answers, please do not hesitate to contact my office on telephone 8741- 5451.

Yours sincerely



Rob Rogers AFSM
Assistant Commissioner
Director Operational Services