

Mr Alan Joyce

CEO QANTAS

Dear Mr Joyce,

Fires in the Kimberley

Your website has recently been brought to my attention where you claim to be partnering the Indigenous Land owners in 'reducing emissions through traditional fire management techniques'.

The burning of the Kimberley has been of grave concern to us all up here for a long time, and below are my recent letters to the Minster and the EPA in regards to this burning.

Having now seen your site, I must also bring to your attention the gross inaccuracy and misconception of what you claim to be 'traditional burning practices. In no way whatsoever is dropping incendiaries from aeroplanes 'traditional methods'. In the early days the indigenous only burnt for access immediately after the wet or to drive game out into the open. Tribal groups were small and fires in small areas. These practices are well documented in the diaries of the early missionaries and German Anthropologists who lived up here with them. The present method being used is to drop incendiaries from aircraft over huge areas of country, and being taught how to do this by the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

These drops are made in June, which is too late in the year as the country is tinder dry and our South East winds have set in. The incendiaries are dropped in the mornings in these strong winds and burn for weeks destroying huge areas of country. There is nothing controlled about these burns, and much of the same country gets repeatedly burnt each year. I need to point out too that there is no such thing as 'wildfires' and CSIRO research verifies this. Late season fires are human started (except for lightening at the start of the wet season) and very little is done to suppress them, as in your area on the East Coast. These operations focus only on burning and are not taking into consideration the overall effect on the whole environment. With such loss of vegetation comes greater run off, creating larger creek and river flows and thus flooding (not bigger wet seasons!) With such quick water run off, water is no longer on the ground for long enough to soak in and replenish the aquifers, thus causing drought conditions for what trees are left. This then leads to no evaporation to create rainfall for the next wet season.

As the understory shelter and food sources have also disappeared, so too have our fauna, insects and birdlife – except in isolated pockets.

I obviously cannot give you all the evidence in this letter, but we would appreciate meeting with you in this regard, for your help in changing the way your money is used. At present your money is destroying this land and creating more carbon emissions – not the other way around.

Hoping to hear from you so that we may work together to change the present practices.

Yours Faithfully,
John Storey