18th February 2016

Mr Eric Hutchinson MP

Member for Lyons

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Dear Sir,

**Lightning Strike Real-Time Data made available to our communities.**

As a constituent I am writing to you in relation to this matter.

You would be aware of the recent and ongoing fires in our Tasmanian landscape.

According to the press many may have been started by dry lightning strikes.

In a dry landscape these fires can spread rapidly from many starting points and turn into monsters causing great distress to many and soaking up valuable time and resources.

As I write, many interstate firies, and aircraft, have been brought in to tackle our current blazes.

It has turned into a military style exercise.

The money and time required to quell these fires once they got a hold must be phenomenal!

Further, it puts our firies on the ground at greater personal risk the bigger the fires become and our susceptible groups (heart and lung patients, plus the young and elderly) are having their health damaged for years to come from pernicious smoke.

The Tasmanian community needs a real-time early warning system for cloud to ground lightning strikes.

You may not be aware that there is already an Australian company that delivers exactly this information and more in a very detailed and accurate manner. Tasmania is extremely well covered.

The company is Global Position and Tracking System Pty Ltd (GPATS) <http://www.gpats.com.au/>

GPAT actually provides information to the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) but I am advised by BoM they cannot provide it to the public. I do not know if this is the case, but surely given the severity of what we are going through now and the advantages it would provide, there must be a way around it.

The real-time lightning strike information being supplied to BoM needs to be made available to the general public via the internet so that we all have access to it. After all it is our money that is paying for it.

I believe BoM uses this information for weather predicting which is somewhat different to what people are asking for.

I propose that this lightning data would go hand in hand with other real-time data already being made available to Tasmanian’s on the www. For example:

<http://epa.tas.gov.au/epa/real-time-air-quality-data-for-tasmania>

<http://satview.bom.gov.au/>

<http://earth.nullschool.net/#current/wind/isobaric/1000hPa/orthographic=146.14,-39.70,2151>

It may interest you that I worked for some time with the Electricity Commission of NSW on their high voltage systems where we were trained extensively on lightning.

I feel the public should be able to personally access our real-time high-resolution lightning-strike data that is currently available.

Could you please raise this matter with the other Tasmanian Members?

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your reply to see what can be done.

Yours faithfully,

Clive M. Stott