

Hon. Linda Jean Burney  
Minister for Indigenous Australians  
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Dear Minister,

**Re: Cultural Burning**

I have got a problem so I am writing to ask you your views please?

I am a 74 years old non-indigenous male born and bred in Tasmania. I did work in Vic and NSW for a period of time then returned to Tas.

I know (some) stories of what happened to your people down here, it was passed on to me by my parents and we were taught it at school.

I have read much since and it is heartbreaking.

I, and others, have been fighting wood smoke issues for many years now. Not just in Tasmania but in other states as well.

PM2.5 is the major component of wood smoke. The science is very clear that there is no safe level of particulate matter (PM).

The specialized cancer agency of the World Health Organization, the [International Agency for Research on Cancer \(IARC\)](#), announced on the 17/10/2013 particulate matter was a Group 1

carcinogen which is the most harmful Group. Similar Group 1 carcinogens are asbestos, arsenic, formaldehyde, and mustard gas.

So why am I writing to you?

'Cultural' burning.

We know many Aboriginal people die younger than white people. Granted it cannot all be contributed to wood smoke but many of the diseases are...

**Have a Disease?**

"Every single disease that is non-communicable is impacted by air pollution.

It is not only involved in worsening diseases but in causing them, and new diseases that would not otherwise occur are happening because of air pollution" - Sir Stephen Holgate, National Clean Air Conference Nov. 20/21

We are seeing land clearing taking place by white and Indigenous people.

We are seeing Aboriginal people involved in fuel reduction burns. Usually these are low intensity or cool burns which are the smoky burns because of incomplete combustion.

It does not matter what a burn is called, smoke is smoke.

It is a worry to watch Indigenous people employed by Parks, Forestry, or similar, given a uniform and a forester badge and then see them go up in helicopters and firebomb, or go out with drip torches and set fire to things.

We are seeing smoking ceremonies conducted when we now know the harm that can result from these to your people.

It is all incredibly sad. I have an Aboriginal friend.

Health science tells us we can not go back to the following....

Exploring Australia's east coast in 1770, Captain James Cook described the land as "[a continent of smoke](#)" and noted that "we saw smoke by day or fires by night wherever we came"

Do you have any thoughts on this please? We are worried about supporting a referendum which we would very much like to do but in our hearts, we cannot while deliberate wood smoke continues. People, all people, must stop burning stuff.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Clive M. Stott  
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