



The Hon Linda Burney MP
Minister for Indigenous Australians

Reference: MC22-005631

Mr Clive Stott
cleanair@cleanairtas.com

Dear Mr ~~Stott~~ *Clive*

Thank you for your email of 21 November 2022 regarding cultural burning and the health hazards of smoke inhalation. I apologise for the delay in responding.

First Nations people have used fire to shape and manage the land for over 60,000 years. While these practices have been widely disrupted over a number of generations, there is a growing recognition of the value of cultural burning, including as a way to mitigate the effects of bushfires. Partnerships with industry, research institutions and governments are reinvigorating the use of cultural burning, and developing hybrid systems of land management.

In many parts of Australia, cultural burning cannot be undertaken due to the change in climate and the presence of settlements. Modern cultural fire practices use a blend of customary and western techniques to manage land and waters for the benefit of Country and communities across Australia. Cultural burning can be used to gain better access to Country, to clean up important pathways, maintain cultural responsibilities, as part of culture heritage management as well as hazard reduction.

Cultural burning is a low intensity cool burning practice that is carried out by First Nations people with detailed historical and cultural knowledge of the Country. It is also carried out on smaller areas than many other fire management burns and has shown to reduce the intensity and destruction of bush fires. Like other fire management activities, best practice cultural burning includes informing the community when and where these activities will be conducted.

I understand your concerns regarding smoke inhalation and its effects on health and am keen to minimise the adverse effects that you describe. Like all fire management practices, cultural burning should be conducted using appropriate personal protective and other safety equipment. The lower intensity of the fires, conducted over a smaller area than many other fire management practices, also minimises the amount of smoke generated and the area over which the smoke spreads.

I encourage you to read more about the importance of cultural burning for both connection to Country and environmental purposes by visiting the following resources: firesticks.org.au and culturalburning.org.au.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely



The Hon LINDA BURNEY MP
Minister for Indigenous Australians

8 MAR 2023

I appreciate you sharing
your story about learning
the history of Tasmania

So many people were
simply not told

