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**FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN SCIENTIFIC
AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETIES**

Science and Technology for the Social, Environmental and Economic Benefit of Australia

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Submission to the Bushfire Inquiry

The Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies represents the interests of 60,000 working scientists across Australia. The 65 Societies which make up FASTS have members in all disciplines, working on both fundamental and applied research. Many of our scientists have expertise that is relevant to the current Bushfire Inquiry.

It is important that the extensive body of fire science in Australia plays a key role in understanding the circumstances leading up to the Canberra bushfires, and in determining any future fire management strategy. The enormous body of experiential information and scientific data that has been amassed during the modern occupation of the fire-adapted Australian continent will complement the anecdotal evidence offered to the inquiry. Scientifically gathered information should be the primary source to inform our future decision making.

There is an extensive body of national scientific expertise available, and there is also a great deal of local knowledge in the ACT and Kosciusko alpine region. Sources of scientific expertise on bushfire habitats, forest ecology, bushfire behaviour and urban fire propagation can be found in, but are not limited to, the following organizations:

- CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems
- CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products
- CSIRO Manufacturing and Infrastructure Technology
- CSIRO Atmospheric Research
- Bureau of Meteorology
- The Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre
- Government departments such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service
- The Australian Institute of Alpine Studies

In addition, there are many researchers located in other research organizations and in the university system whose expertise on bushfire environments is directly relevant to the Inquiry.

The special role of expert advice is to place the current scientific understanding of bushfire causes and preventative measures before the Inquiry. The scientists who study these environments and the fires that occur in them are the people best placed to advise on the range

of options required to strike a balance between fire prevention measures and sustaining our natural environment e.g. the environmental impact of prescribed burning, and the effect on fuel loadings. It is sometimes the case that the scientific results are non-intuitive, and run counter to apparent experience.

In order to facilitate the Inquiry's access to scientists over the broad range of discipline areas relevant to fire management and to the Australian fire environment, FASTS would be willing to work with your officers to construct a list of scientists with expertise in these issues.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Foll', written in a cursive style.

Professor Chris Foll
President
FASTS