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Hi Ceceilia,

I have been sent a copy of your letter to Russell Willis regarding his article on 'burning issues' in his last newsletter. Thank you so much for your interest and time taken in writing. No doubt the other letter you refer to is the one that I wrote to the EPA. It is indeed refreshing now, to have you, the younger generation caring about our country and taking up the challenge of preserving it. Whilst we all have the same interests and care though, sometimes words can get people offside. I don't think Russell meant to offend, or target you and your nearby stations with the words 'Land Managers', as Mornington and you, all do a wonderful job. I certainly know this.

Regrettably, there is much you don't see, or know, of what takes place elsewhere, and I'm afraid that Russell's description of the country in the National Parks and around Kununurra is very accurate. Certainly more dialogue between all the parties - yours, the walkers on the ground out there, and the long time locals in Kununurra would be most beneficial and foster understanding and the sharing of knowledge.

The problems - and there are many of these unfortunately, lie with DPAW, DFES and the KLC. It is not a matter of the fire mosaic burns and the distances between them - which you so carefully do - and are completely correct with your figures - but it is the total destruction of large tracks of country on a regular basis. We see this first hand every year, as do walkers from all over Australia and overseas.

The three entities mentioned above, may 'talk the talk' at your meetings, but it is much different in practice. Matters are also complicated by politics and Perth based regulations. Only last year the previous Regional Manager of DPAW expressed his frustration to me over the KLC's burning of the Mitchell Plateau National Park yet again and his inability to take action.

I, like Russell and other long time residents, have known this country well before your family bought Theda and Doon Doon. Well before the Bushfires Board put an officer in town who started the blanket aerial bombing in the nineties. We've seen what was here. Seen what has been lost, whilst the current generation see only what is left now.

Regrettably too, many staff who come and go, see only 'fire and burning' and not the larger picture of how the environment has - and is still, changing. For instance flooding - of which is talked about often now by departments - is not from 'big wets' as being promulgated, for we have had a much bigger wets in the eighties and nineties without so much flooding. The real cause is because there is so little vegetative cover left on the land now from burning, water runs off faster causing higher levels in creeks and rivers. Additionally, as the water is not on the ground as long, - aquifers no longer fill

as they once did, - many creeks no longer run as long as they used to, - transpiration in the build up is less and it goes on. This 'flow on' affects the ecosystem including the weather. I could tell and show you much, but that is not possible in the space of a short letter.

You would, I'm sure, find it beneficial to talk with the people 'on the ground' out there who see what is happening in other areas.

Next time you are in town I would be most happy to catch up with you over coffee or lunch, and pass on our knowledge and experiences, and I look forward to being able to do this.

Please keep up the good work, as the time has come for us older ones to step back and hope that dedicated people like you, will take over and make the changes to bring our country back.

Kindest regards

John Storey