

# Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC



Member for the East Metropolitan Region

Our Ref: 21028  
Your Ref: A893549 Petition No. 014

1 July 2021

Hon Peter Foster MLC  
Chair, Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
4 Parliament Place  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

**BY EMAIL ONLY:** [env@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:env@parliament.wa.gov.au)

Dear Chair

## **Petition No. 014 – Moratorium on subdivision in bushfire prone areas**

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I refer to your correspondence to me dated 23 June 2021 inviting a submission in relation to Petition No. 014 – Moratorium on subdivision in bushfire prone areas.

The Principal Petitioner, and the large number of persons who have put their name to the petition, reflect the broad community concern regarding inappropriate development in bushfire prone areas, particularly in the Perth hills. The Wooroloo bushfires in February of this year affected 69 suburbs in both the hills and north eastern Perth regions, with hundreds of thousands of people affected either directly or indirectly by the fire. The bushfire, which burnt over 10,000 hectares and destroyed 86 homes, provides us with a timely and salient reminder of the dangers of building and living in bushfire prone area.

The design, density and layout of development in bushfire prone areas has a direct correlation with the survivability of the people living in those areas in the event of a bushfire. Poor design, inappropriate density, and the layout of developments can create bottlenecks, one way access and trap people trying to escape a bushfire. Our planning schemes need to ensure that any development, including subdivision, in bushfire prone areas does not increase the risks to established communities, nor place greater demands on existing infrastructure, such as the local road network and available water supplies.

As we continue to see decreasing rainfall, persistently higher summer temperatures and the consequential drying out of our forests in the South West, it is critically important our planning framework takes into account the increased risk of bushfire, and what is appropriate and responsible development in our bushfire prone areas.

I ask that the committee give serious and thorough examination of the matters raised in the petition and the Principal Petitioner's submission.

I would greatly appreciate you keeping me apprised of your enquiries as they proceed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Matthew Swinbourn'.

**Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC**  
Member for the East Metropolitan Region  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General and Minister for Electoral Affairs

c.c. Mr Peter Brazier, Principal Petitioner