



**Royal Commission**  
into National Natural  
Disaster Arrangements

## Submission Cover Sheet

This cover sheet has been prepared by the Commission's public contact team to accompany a submission.

### Person completing cover sheet

1. **Staff member name** [REDACTED]
2. **Date completed** 22 July 2020
3. **This cover sheet has been completed based on:**
  - details contained in the submission
  - a phone call with the person making the submission
  - an email from the person making the submission
  - Other (provide details) -

### Submission details

4. **Full name** Steve Bellchambers
5. **Email** [REDACTED]
6. **Telephone** [REDACTED]
7. **Preferred method of contact** Email
8. **Is the submission based on:**
  - primarily based on their personal situation.
  - primarily based on their professional knowledge, qualifications or experience, or on behalf of a group or organisation
9. **If the person is making the submission on behalf of a group or organisation, what is the name of the group or organisation:**

If the submission based on personal experience:

10. **What was their personal situation in relation to the 2019-20 Bushfires? Choose all that apply.**
    - were not living in an area affected by bushfire
    - were in an area affected by bushfires but was not evacuated, and didn't suffer personal or financial loss
    - lived in an area affected by bushfires and was evacuated, but didn't suffer personal or financial loss
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- lived in an area affected by bushfires and was evacuated, and I suffered personal or financial loss
- part of the emergency response as a fire fighter on the ground
- part of the emergency response as an aerial fire fighter
- part of the emergency response as health professional
- part of the emergency response as an Australian Defence Force member
- part of the emergency response as a Commonwealth or State government employee
- assisted the emergency response as a community support volunteer
- assisted the emergency recovery (i.e. after the fire event) as a community support volunteer
- Other

**11. Where does the person live:**

Local Government Area	Choose an item.
Town name	Batlow
Post code	2730

If the submission is based on professional experience

**12. What is your area of expertise? Please choose all that apply.**

- Emergency/disaster response and/or management
- Environment/land management
- Land use, planning, building standards
- Impacts of changes in climatic conditions
- Wildlife conservation
- Traditional land and fire management practices of Indigenous Australians
- Community welfare
- Other

All submissions

**13. Does the person agree to their submission being published?**

- Yes, agree to the submission being published in their name
  - Yes, agree to the submission being published anonymously
  - No, does not agree to the submission being published
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Sorry my submission is late I have been trying to recover from the fires where we lost everything, house, business, equipment etc

I am not sure if you have been made aware of several things

1) Hume forest where the Dunns road fire started by a dry lightning strike had a similar event happen the season before but because they had a fire crew stationed at Takejo (on site) the fire was controlled in less than 1/4 acre

This season in order to save between 20 and 25 k they decided not to have a crew on the site which is approximately 10000 acres

I know this because I was the business owner who ran the crew the year before and was advised with my son / off sided as witness that "instructions from up higher" meant they needed to save money this year and would not be having a fire crew on site despite being a dry lightning prone site (identified by hume), despite continuing to harvest on the site (high risk activity on a high risk site)

They opted to have a fire crew based at Adelong to cover a large area rather than be on site

2) In addition to this Hime forest has ignored warnings over the past few years about the excessive trash they have left instead of wind rowing and burning - again to save money This has been highlighted and documented by there OHS staff as I raised it as a contractor as planting staff and auditing staff were continually falling over on the sites and it was so bad I deemed it as a significant risk

3) Hume has spent minimal money on weed control and allowed an understory of blackberry to develop on multiple sites and in sensitive areas - creating an in managed fuel load that contributed significantly to the intensity of the fires

I believe that fire breaks and zones have been minimised to unacceptable levels in private and state forests

Water access points and requirements for a minimum level of water to be keep on site has been neglected

Auditing has been mainly internal and should have been external to ensure transparency and honesty

State forest has made many of the same mistakes

Snowy valleys shire were advised years ago when an extensive vegetation survey was done on roads of environmental (vegetation significance) that in order to maintain biodiversity and reduce risk of fire the roads - back Kunama and Old tumbarumba road - both which burnt heavily in the fires

It was identified that the ground trash at the time of the surveys was at an unacceptable level

No cultural / cool burning has taken place

I did the surveys as a contractor to the Shire

Steve Bellchambers

Director Rising Sun Bunyips

To discuss further please call [REDACTED]

I identify as aboriginal

I have Head national parks ranger qualifications

And Environmental Health officer qualifications

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