

**Submission Number: NND.001.00468**

**Submission Of:**

**Your Details**

Email address:

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Preferred means of contact: Email

What is your submission based on? I am making this submission based on my personal situation

What was your personal situation in relation to the 2019-20 Bushfires? I successfully defended all the buildings on my rural property

Where do you live? Bega Valley (A)

**Your Submission**

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response worked well?

My own measures... On my own I as a 49 yearold of average fitness, successfully defended 9 timber buildings in 2 groups 200m apart (some 100+ years old).

Following the nearby Yankees Gap fire 18 months earlier I decided I needed to take personal responsibility for our property and did the hard work of clearing, tidying up, slashing, mowing etc & most of all installing sprinklers on the 2 main buildings, other hoses & a mobile vehicle with water with a small pump.

My success was 1/3 the relatively mild fire conditions I experienced, 1/3 preparations & 1/3 determination in defending from 3.30am to 9pm the following night. There is no doubt all buildings would have been destroyed and a part of this areas history lost if I had evacuated.

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response didn't work well?

During;

- I had no expectations of help from RFS & received nothing until 21 days later 2 RFS people arrived with an iPad...
- Fires Near Me was unreliable
- The phone network failed
- ABC radio at 3am is ineffective

After;

- The application process for govt assistance was/is terrible [REDACTED] business in the centre of Cobargo burnt down)
- The 'clean up' is yet to even start...

In your experience, what needs to change to improve arrangements for preparation, mitigation, response and recovery coordination for national natural disaster arrangements in Australia?

**\* INDIVIDUALS**

All Australians need to accept we live in a country that always has & always will have bushfires.

EVERY house within 15kms of bushfire prone areas needs to have as a minimum;

- well prepared buildings, clear of flammable vegetation/materials, no wooden fences etc
- a minimum of 10,000L of water
- fire fighting water pump not reliant on grid electricity
- petrol/diesel generator for inevitable power failures
- sprinklers on roof
- 2 x 30m of hoses
- PPE for all occupants (whether they stay or evacuate)
- knapsacks, rakes etc
- 'fire bunker' or safe place in high risk areas
- supply of food, water & fuel for vehicles for after

I understand that some people are best to evacuate. I DO NOT understand why the overwhelming advice given by 'authorities' is to evacuate, resulting in thousands of people at makeshift ill-equipped facilities, leaving their houses undefended or at best with a handful of RFS to try and protect entire towns.

I DO NOT understand the laziness & apathy of people who do not prepare their homes to at least give the building every possible chance. The majority of fires are not "firestorms" like the media loves to portray. Most houses burn down from simple ember attack, they don't "explode" from 20m walls of flames...The attitude of "it's only a house" or "everything is insured" provides little comfort when everything is gone and years of temporary accommodation is needed during the very lengthy & exhausting cleanup & rebuilding process.

**\* GOVERNMENT**

Better management of bushland needs to start IMMEDIATELY - not after never-ending studies etc. As a start, 'Cultural burning' is the logical choice to me for an ecosystem has been created by fire for 40,000+ years.

Less fragile communication networks, electricity supply (non flammable power poles & cleared corridors), town water supplies.

All major & secondary roads with verges cleared for 30m either side

Properly set up evacuation centres

I DO NOT understand why the 'authorities' do not admit to themselves they are powerless to adequately handle on their own, fires like what happened on NYE in SE NSW. A well prepared property & an educated resident who defends, is far more effective than an unprepared property & the hope of fire trucks/helicopters etc.

I DO NOT understand why there isn't more emphasis on education, preparation & empowerment given to people to defend their homes. I can only assume its fear of liability/being blamed?

EVERYONE who is part of the Royal Commission needs to read at least - Essential Bushfire Safety by Joan Webster OAM

[Is there anything else you would like to tell the Royal Commission?](#)

All Australians need to accept we live in a country that always has & always will have bushfires. All Australians need to accept if they choose to live outside of an inner city area they are personally responsible to prepare for bushfires.

[Do you agree to your submission being published?](#) Yes I agree to my submission being published anonymously

[Supporting material provided:](#)

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