

Submission Number: NND.001.00582

Submission Of: Simon John Upward

Your Details

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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?

Where do you live? Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional (A)

Your Submission

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

Without the RFS we would have been stuffed. They did an incredible job with out of date equipment and a volunteer base, all credit to them. The notification system seemed to work well

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

Co ordination at the Federal level was hopeless. We didn't have near enough aircraft to fight the fires. They were warned 6 months before the fire season started and did bugger all, they did not start to take the issue seriously until it was too late. We all knew we are in a one in a hundred years drought and on top of this we have record high temperatures due to climate change and the Feds did very little to prepare and protect us and the environment. Also the State Governments need to take some blame their lack of proper natural resource management particularly the reduction of on the ground staff in national Parks is regrettable and a abrogation of their responsibility to properly look after these public assets.

There was very little done on a government level to try and help wildlife burnt by the fires, again an abrogation of their responsibility to this country.

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

Number one we have to start getting fair dinkum about trying to reverse climate change, without this we will be fighting these fires for generations to come. Second we need to start building infrastructure and homes to survive these types of events. It is possible, my small hut in the middle of [REDACTED] survived the inferno due to precautions I took when building; mud walls, stone floors, regular hazard reduction around the hut and over previous 24 months where I bought in enough metal filing cabinets to contain all the flammable materials in the hut.

Third we need to do proper hazard reduction in bushland areas. This requires more resources as this type of fuel reduction is a labour intensive process. Dropping incendiaries from aircraft and hoping for the best will not work. We need thousands of dedicated and knowledgeable people on the ground in and from the regions being controlled to do this work. Indigenous traditional burning practices have a lot to offer.

Is there anything else you would like to tell the Royal Commission?

MY small hut was one of 14 buildings on the five bush blocks in [REDACTED], only two of these structures survived, my hut and a small steel tool shed, the rest, including some substantial structures burnt to the ground. I believe that the only reason that my hut survived was everything inside that could burn was in metal cabinets. My daughters hut only 10 metres away and constructed of the same materials burnt to the ground, it was filled with boxes of books old windows and other flammable items.

Do you agree to your submission being published? Yes I agree to my submission being published in my name







