

Submission Number: NND.001.00707

Submission Of: Matthew Ellis

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What is your submission based on? I am making this submission based on my professional knowledge, qualifications or experience or on behalf of a group or organisation

What is your area of professional expertise?

If you are lodging your submission on behalf of a group or organisation, what is the name of the group or organisation?

Your Submission

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

none

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

We need to stop pretending that existing processes work well, the fire services did not put out these fires, the weather did. Until we recognise that existing processes and mindsets are limited and remove our ego we will continue to see the same issues year after year. This is not the first commission into Australian fires, and I am not a believer that this commission will find anything new. How long before we as a society recognise that existing methods do not work, that there is a difference between managing an emergency and emergency/disaster management. As long as we focus on response we will not see any changes, as long as we continue to put emergency services personnel in charge of emergency/disaster management, we will continue to experience the same results. Most of these commissions focus on patting each other on the back saying how well we did, and reinforced the fact that we are not in fact learning from them as each commission reveals the same issues each time.

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

Everything, we need to start focusing on the fact that emergency services is not emergency/disaster management and we need properly trained and educated emergency/disaster managers not fire fighters or police officers with limited knowledge and experience pretending they are disaster managers simply because they wear a uniform and have attended a fire. It is time to invest in prevention and stop pretending that an emergency services limited journey into this area actually accounts for substantial and holistic understanding of this function.

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

Emergency services is not Emergency/disaster management, they require very different mindsets and skills and we need someone with the courage to examine the competence of these personnel and do more than do a superficial examination of response. Response is a small component of emergency/disaster management and reveals a significant failure in our systems. Our focus MUST be prevention, many studies have been revealed that the community gets a significant ROI (between 7 and 11 times) by focussing our efforts here rather than on response and recovery. There are several reports and academic thesis' completed by practitioners with significant experience, the commission would be advised to read these and presents a clearer picture on the role of the emergency/disaster manager across Australia, one however (a PhD), is undergoing an academic review but should be finalised shortly.

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