

Submission Number: NND.001.00742

Submission Of:

Your Details

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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? Sydney - Lane Cove

Your Submission

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

Fires near Me website was excellent- up to date and accurate.

The NSW Fire Commissioner's excellent regular updates- a compassionate caring man -extremely competent

Community support and rallying for those in fire affected communities.

Amazing spirit of resilience, courage and endurance in challenging times shown by emergency workers and volunteers risking their lives.

Resourcefulness and skill of volunteer and regular firefighters in such dangerous conditions.

Incredible fundraising efforts on the part of communities and individuals and outpouring of concern and compassion within the communities to support those affected.

Communities rallying to save and protect injured wildlife.

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

Attitude and insensitive behaviour of some politicians as they toured the devastated areas.

Lack of consultation at any stage with Aboriginal groups who have both experience and excellent knowledge about how to prepare for and manage fires.

Lack of willingness on the government's part to fully recognise the full extent of the impact of climate change leading up to and during the fire season

Lack of a national strategy across all states and territories NSW was experiencing weather never before seen so early in spring, as was south-east Queensland. Ecologists watched on in horror as stands of ancient Gondwana rainforest over the border – never previously known to burn – succumbed to flames.

Lack of information about how the fundraising millions have been used and whether they are available to the people who lost their homes and livelihoods.

Disregard by governments of scientists' warnings of the consequences of fossil fuel dependence and lack of preparedness for a catastrophic summer season following extreme drought across the country.

"Climate change is the key reason why fire seasons are lengthening, fires are harder to control, and access to international firefighting resources like large aircraft is becoming more difficult." former Fire Chief Mullins..

Aboriginal elders claimed that the government's approach to western style land management was a contributing factor thus more consultation with these groups needs to take place.

Management of pollution and the impact on communities at some distance from the fires

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

The Federal Government and State leaders need to meet with State Fire Chiefs well ahead of the next summer fire season to discuss strategies for managing fires in the future.

We need to tackle the root cause, we need to rapidly bring down emissions and transition Australia beyond coal, oil, and gas.

The State Government in NSW needs to place a moratorium on logging and assess the damage that occurs to plant communities and wildlife especially post fires. For example the north coast region's unique forests are "recognised as one of the thirty-six biodiversity hotspots in the world "so cannot afford to lose any more environmentally significant habitat.

Any hazard reduction burns or controlled burning should be done in consultation with local indigenous communities, who have a vast knowledge of fire management and control. "Cultural burning is proactive, while Western-style controlled burning, also called hazard reduction burning, is reactive."

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

I wish to reiterate that there is no denying that climate change has been the most significant factor in the recent serious fires we have seen across the country. The Governments both state and federal must consult early with Fire Commissioners, scientists, ecologists and Indigenous elders to develop an overall consultative approach in preparation for future fire seasons and other similar natural disasters.

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