

**Submission Number: NND.001.00794**

**Submission Of: Raymond Harrop**

**Your Details**

Email address:

Phone:

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? Bega Valley (A)

**Your Submission**

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

dropping fire retardant to create barrier protecting Barraga Bay from the Badja Road fire

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

No electricity, no telephones, no internet, no television

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

We need a Permanent Aerial Fire Fighting Service to keep Australians safe.

By way of background, I am a recently retired farmer and I have watched my country burn from horizon to horizon – East to West and North to South – over the past 40 years.

My experiences include the Ash Wednesday fires in Victoria 1983, the Strathbogie fires on Boxing Day 1990 which burned to my farm gate, the Black Saturday fires of 2009 and most recently our current summer fires here on the South Coast of N.S.W. where my local community was evacuated 3 times in January.

Governments of both persuasions often state their main aim is to keep their citizens safe – they have all failed in this regard and many people have died due to recent bushfires.

For many years I have been apprehensive about the onset of summer and often wished that the month of February could be taken out of the calendar – now I am wishing that December, January, February and March (remember Tathra fires 17th March last year) could all be removed from the calendar.

My family and I are not safe.

Bushfires frequently start in the mountains caused by lightning – these locations are inaccessible to ground crews – mountain pastures no longer grazed by cattle and fire trails long overgrown due to neglect as people are discouraged from driving/camping in the high country. The result is the fires are totally out-of-control by the time they can be fought by ground crews.

The answer is to have a professional permanent aerial fire fighting force available to deal with the outbreak of fires at source.

The National Aerial Firefighting Centre could be developed along the lines of who are world leaders in aerial firefighting.

In my opinion it should be developed as a permanent branch of the A.D.F. and have branches located in all southern states of Australia – preferably located in country areas. It will cost billions of dollars – the Reserve Bank is calling for the Government to make significant infrastructure investments – what could be better than this investment. ?

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

No

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