

**Submission Number: NND.001.00816**

**Submission Of:**

**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? Eurobodalla (A)

**Your Submission**

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

This is a difficult question to answer. Nothing seemed to work well. I understand that the situation was unprecedented, but many of us were in fear for our lives.

There were few warnings before the new years eve fires that devastated so many areas on our coastline.

There were insufficient resources on the south coast to deal with the area impacted by fire.

Within hours, our telecommunications were cut.

When the telecommunications systems were up and running, the RFS fires near me notifications came through but they were not always accurate or timely.

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

There were no warnings before the new years eve fires that devastated so many areas on our coastline.

There were insufficient resources on the south coast to deal with the area impacted by fire.

Within hours, telecommunications and electricity were cut.

The RFS fires near me notifications were not a reflection of what was happening at the time. Sometimes notifications came too late to take action.

We were not kept up to date by local council. Communication was appalling. I began to rely on information from Shoalhaven and Bega Councils. Eventually our council posted on their Facebook page but not with the frequency and detail of our neighbouring shires.

At the local evacuation centre, briefings were only sometimes held as scheduled and even when they were, representatives from the RFS were not always there. After a while, people stopped attending.

Facilities at the evacuation centre were inadequate.

Local radio transmissions were cut and we had no lifeline to the outside world. It was terrifying.

Fires could not be fought from the air due to the thick smoke and monitoring could not be conducted to see where the fires were. We sat in a smoke haze, not knowing where the fires were and what to do about it. It was terrifying and we were helpless.

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

Communication planning in times when there is no telecommunications.

Communication planning in times when there is no radio.

Regular updates at the local RFS or evacuation centres with relevant information.

Council briefings at the same time each day.

Use the Bega Shire Council response as a model as they communicated with their residents regularly, interviewed the RFS more than once a day for updates.

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

You asked if I have personal or property damage. I said no. But the truth is that I am suffering psychologically as a result of sustained fear over the period of 3 months. I have lost my sense of personal safety. I still panic at the smell of smoke.

It is difficult to write more about my experiences as I relive the trauma.

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