

**Submission Number: NND.001.00822**

**Submission Of: Heather Summers**

### 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? Brisbane Queensland

### Your Submission

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

The only areas of the emergency response that worked well were those that were done by the community.

Supporting one another, donating, organising evacuations and helping their neighbours.

The government response to the bushfire crisis was deplorable and in and of itself should be reason for our leadership to be strongly questioned.

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

We should have been listening to the state fire chiefs each day.

It is not acceptable that the New South Wales Rural Fire Service chief says he first heard of the call-out of the army reserve through the media.

The National Bushfire Recovery Agency should be underpinned by national legislation, jointly with the states, and empowered to slice through red tape.

There should be a national bushfire appeal – the Black Saturday appeal raised more than \$400m – and its disbursement should be coordinated by new agency to avoid waste and duplication.

Lack of proper and permanent funding for the nation's bushfire services.

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 recent bushfires are only a preview of the devastating impact climate change has in store for Australia if we fail to act. In order to respond to this increasing risk, the following actions should be considered:

1. Amend the EPBC act 1999 to include clear mechanisms that automatically trigger national and international responses in addressing the actual causes of climate change and associated environmental threats. With its processes essentially science-based, the Act can be amended and significantly strengthened to ensure ecological sciences and climate science work together in addressing the macro-systemic climate issues.
2. Inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions in the matters of national environmental significance, so an assessment process is triggered for a development wherever emissions exceed a threshold.
3. Through the Climate Change Authority, or similar body, ecological concerns can be aggregated with climate issues. This should require the Federal Government to implement all necessary controls on greenhouse gas emissions, land-clearing and other contributors to climate change and related ecological damage.
4. The Chief Scientist and the Climate Change Authority, or similar body, should be empowered to require a policy response (e.g. carbon pricing) from the Government to address the root causes of climate change and ecological damage.
5. Inclusion of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions in the matters of national environmental significance, so an assessment process is triggered for all developments, wherever emissions exceed a science-based threshold.
6. Other such science-informed mechanisms must also recommend the repeal or reform of all policies that directly or indirectly contribute to climate change and related ecological damage; including, but not limited to, fossil fuel subsidies, land use laws, and wetland reclamation.
7. Ensure that Indigenous Australians and their knowledge are included in environmental management on a national scale. We must acknowledge that for years prior to colonization, Aboriginals had a unique and healthy relationship with the land and understand the natural order required for healthy management including the important role of burn cycles.
8. Call out and demand that Angus Taylor stop citing defunct carbon credits from Kyoto as a means to manipulate the figures of our [lack] of Climate Action
9. Ensure we have proper and permanent funding and support for the nation's bushfire services through national legislation that will allow all states to be mobilised as needed

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

While the Terms of Reference for the Bushfire Royal Commission announced recognise the risks of climate change for the nation, they avoid addressing the root cause of worsening bushfires: climate pollution.

We have a window of opportunity to not simply adapt but to reduce the impacts of climate change on future bushfire seasons and the threat it represents to life, property and our natural world.

This summer's horror bushfires happened off the back of the 1 degree of heating that has already occurred. Australia is no where near in line with 1.5 degree compatibility and is actively contributing to the 3 degree path we are on.

The Royal Commission's recommendations on climate change mitigation must be taken seriously and raise the government's ambition to focus on reducing the pollution that is driving climate change and making bushfires worse. The Royal Commission must be more vocal and stronger in the face of climate denial and lack of federal government action.

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