

Submission Number: NND.001.00829

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? Bega Valley (A)

Your Submission

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response worked well?
Mobile phone messages, which we didn't receive as our phone was being recharged in another room.

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response didn't work well?
Warnings: We were only warned that Cobargo may have embers and therefore didn't have any sense of the terrible bushfire that was approaching. We were awoken by our neighbours phoning us on our landline at 4.55 am on 31st December. A better warning system is needed such as an air raid siren. There is too much reliance on mobile phones, as not everyone has a mobile phone, and some may not be working, i.e. flat batteries etc.

Communications: Whilst in the evacuation centre in Narooma, there was very little information on what was happening, and with the power out of action, and mobile phones flat, we couldn't even keep in touch with worried family members.

Supplies: with the electricity grid affected and no power, the shops shut very quickly, the bank ATMs were out of action, as were the petrol pumps.

In your experience, what needs to change to improve arrangements for preparation, mitigation, response and recovery coordination for national natural disaster arrangements in Australia?
For bushfires, clearing of the undergrowth and hazard reduction burning is essential. More volunteers needed for the RFS.

For droughts: build more dams, and look at ways of bringing water down from the Northern Territory.

For floods: don't allow building on flood plains. Look into dredging of rivers. Keep dams well maintained.

Bring the Army in earlier to help out with natural disasters, and keep them there longer.

Is there anything else you would like to tell the Royal Commission?
Last winter was exceedingly dry in the Bega Valley, with a lot of wind and no rain. I query whether the cloud seeding in the Snowy Mountains over winter is having an effect on rainfall on the eastern side of the ranges.

I feel that the new suburbs being built on the outskirts of cities are having an impact on climate change, as the houses are built very close together, on small blocks of land, with no room to grow trees for shade, and in summer air conditioners are pumping out more hot air into an already hot atmosphere. Please change the building code to allow houses to have more garden, more air flow between the houses, no black roofs, and all houses to have eaves.

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