

**Submission Number: NND.001.00894**

**Submission Of: Simon Trinca**

**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? Owner on property for 30 days assisting fire crews

Where do you live? Greater Hume Shire (A)

**Your Submission**

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

Very few. Local crews were good but co-ordination was poor. My property was used a defensive battleground for the district but I wasn't consulted even though I was on site every day.

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

Communication was dreadful, way too bureaucratic. Damaging and unnecessary fire brakes were graded without consultation in stupid locations.

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

See my letter

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

A stitch in time saves nine. That simple.

Be nice if I was compensated for the unnecessary damage done by ill informed , gungho fire captains who have no idea how to combat fire like this.

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

Supporting material provided:

Fire letter.pdf

To FireCon,  
Albury, NSW

Re Upper Wantagong Station, Green Valley, Talmalmo fire

Now that the dust has settled and the fire is out I would like to make a few comments.

First and foremost I would like to sincerely thank all the brigade crews who gave so much time and effort fighting and controlling the fire on and around our property. They were terrific and made some vital saves on several occasions when the fire spotted out into paddocks or threatened to do so. Just like the troops in the trenches at Gallipoli.

Second, I would like to thank the Sancon water tanker crew for their tireless efforts and firefighting support especially on the night of 9 Jan when, in the DELIBERATE absence of fire trucks, they doused ember producing fires and drove my contractor's dozer to knock down some trees that were blocking access for firetrucks at a critical stage when no RFS sanctioned dozer was available. My manager, his wife and children overheard a conversation on Ch12 that said, after I had asked for a fire truck to patrol the boundary, "the landholder didn't want to backburn the windrows, he can look after it himself". Thanks! I spent that night out with a 1000 litre tank behind a ute. But for [REDACTED] we could have had a major grass fire.

Third I would like to thank FireCon for their prompt post fire appraisal and incident logging. I am also very appreciative of the post fire support and response from [REDACTED] office and of [REDACTED] remediation work.

I am less happy about the management of the fire crews, back burning, earthmoving and communication. Again, just like Gallipoli.

To quote your own document -

"DivComms to ensure landholders are informed of any heavy plant and/or fire operations on their land".

This simply did not happen.

Apart from an early visit from [REDACTED] and response to calls I made to him and [REDACTED] I received NOT ONE communication [REDACTED] though as the landholder I am meant to be [REDACTED] I have been here every day since late December and spent most days and nights out and about on the fire ground. There is no record on either my mobile or landline of any incoming communication.

If I wanted to find out what was going on I had to either find the Incident Controller or ask a fire crew. Most of the time they didn't know who the controller was or where they were meant to go! On a number of occasions they would ask me and I had to reply I'm only the landholder - I don't know what's going on or who's in charge tonight. Don't you think it would be appropriate to let me know who the incident controller is? And how to contact him?

There were a number of quite unnecessary firebreaks graded on our property that were either in the wrong place or not authorised at all. These seemed to be more about protecting neighbour's properties than ours or the district. Their benefit, my cost. That's great. Trash our place, leave the loss of pasture and weeds to us, take our water without compensation or replacement and do a half baked repair of the 50 km of three grader width containment lines!

In any future fires I do not want, or legally approve, of any involvement of plant and equipment on my property unless there is an active fire ground ON MY PROPERTY! In future there is to be NO defensive work done on Upper Wantagong without my express, prior, written approval. Section 44 does not automatically permit trespass. National Parks can fight their fires on their property at their expense, not mine. They can also share in fencing repairs.

In future please monitor fire outbreaks with IR satellites, send in QUICK response strike teams to shut down fires in National Parks, which is where most of them start and send in a few trucks to patrol for spot fires in paddocks. Otherwise stay OUT of OUR property. Most of the damage to our property this time has been done back burning our north eastern country to protect others further north, interestingly, under the direction of Lankeys Creek captains with properties of their own to our north. One of whom, [REDACTED] told me on 8 Jan "Don't worry we'll look after you this time" as opposed to 2013 [REDACTED] t virtually no help or remediation after that fire. Needless to say I've heard nothing from him since.

To add insult to injury, I am now expected to pay nearly \$10,000 for the dozer that put in a number of very important firebreaks on our southern boundary, at my initiative, before the fire arrived because it was not RFS registered. This same dozer was apparently good enough to be later used for about 8 hours by the RFS to knock down some dangerous trees on the night of 8 Jan and put in tracks and firebreaks on our Mandaring boundary on 24 Jan at our expense!

Please forgive me if I am not an unqualified, sentimental supporter of the RFS or its sycophants.

In due course I will be making a submission to the recently announced Royal commission to which this letter and several time dated photographs will be appended.

I look forward to a sensible considered response,

Simon Trinca

PS My lawyers were quite interested to hear that you were happy to use the "unregistered" dozer at my expense on a number of occasions. At least 8 hours by our reckoning.