

**Submission Number: NND.001.00905**

**Submission Of: Melissa Pickering**

**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? We stayed and defended our property and did suffer personal and financial loss

Where do you live? Bega Valley (A)

**Your Submission**

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

The Bega Valley SHire Council BVSC facebook updates

The army moving into town

Volunteers groups ie Blazeaid, Rubicon, Fire relief run, Cityslickers, World Food Kitchen

\$1000 offered by government to everyone in the bushfire affected area

RSL, local clubs, council buildings offering places for fire refugees to stay

Local RFS

Local people starting up and co-ordinating relief centres all voluntary

Mostly it was the community groups or small groups of volunteers who supported our community the most. Our local council was fabulous.

All of the aid agencies coming together in each locality for those affected to register with

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

The Prime Ministers visit to Cobargo :)

The RFS were completely under resourced for the task. We fire down here started two days before it hit any homes, in that time to RFS could have been sent support. So much more could have been saved if the RFS had had additional support and the stress not placed on the shoulders of a few.

People having to wait so long without power and water. Essential Energy did a great job but they could have used more support to get generators out to people. We were 7 weeks without power

When we listened to the radio, at times the information was read out from someone who clearly did not know the area and at times we did find mistakes in the reporting which could have lead to dangerous situations

Having more people monitoring the fire in the days leading up. More information about possible paths the fire could take. More emphasis put on making sure the areas of potential risk are notified much earlier. Lots of people were not on to it as they should have been. These people need to receive a 'wake up; call much earlier than 1am in the night when fire is licking at their doorstep. Perhaps a text the days preceding, rating the potential risk and warning them to make plans. I am continually surprised by how many people were surprised by the fire and had gone to bed. Maybe a text earlier in the day to a wider portion of the community

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

More funding to the RFS. It stills blows my mind how much they give collectively and individually and how little they receive in terms of financial assistance from the government. The RFS need numbers on the ground, payed employment opportunities, equipment and post fire support.

Stop logging our native forests. The trees that cause the most problem in a fire are the small, thin trees that grow back after logging. Drive into the forests around the far south coast to see first hand evidence of this.

Stop messing with the environment - more trees = more rain

Stop messing with our water ways

More education and focus around what it takes to stay and defend a house. More houses could still be standing with proper planning and smarter design. Let the public hear more stories of those who stayed and saved rather than those that fled and lost it all. Sure, it is not as dramatic and tragic but it is empowering. Let the public hear the stories of just what it takes to stand in front of a fire and defend your home A priority of the government should be ensuring that all people have power and water within a much shorter time frame

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

The response from the government was far from appropriate. There may need to be a more considered, compassionate approach by the government when dealing with natural disasters.

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