

Submission Number: NND.001.00943

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What is your submission based on? I am making this submission based on my professional knowledge, qualifications or experience or on behalf of a group or organisation

What is your area of professional expertise?

If you are lodging your submission on behalf of a group or organisation, what is the name of the group or organisation?

Your Submission

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

Governments and fire agencies were effective in communicating what was known about the fires to the public.

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

The activities of fire management agencies in preparing and responding to bushfires in 2019/20 was hampered by a high degree of uncertainty in relation to key areas. These are described in detail in an attached document. In short, the key areas are

1. A lack of understanding of weather / landscape flammability dynamics limited agencies abilities to predict and forecast the nature of fires through space and time.
2. There is no consensus in the scientific community as to how hazard reduction burning should best be applied. It is unclear how optimal current practices are.
3. There are limited periods of time each year when hazard reduction burning can be undertaken. We have limited abilities to predict opportunities for burning, and it is unclear how opportunities for burning will be affected by a changing climate.
4. Research in Australia into how to evaluate the effectiveness of fire management efforts is immature. This means there are limited opportunities for identifying areas for improvement.
5. The current structure of funding research is not addressing the important applied needs of fire and land managers.

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

Recommendations to resolve the issues listed above are presented in the attached document. Key recommendations are

- Invest in research in key areas (particularly applied fire management and weather / landscape flammability dynamics)
- Increase the capacity of fire agencies to undertake research to address gaps and enhance communication.
- Review existing research funding arrangements to determine how needs can be met.
- Invest in a coordinated national approach to improve the data collection relating to fires to support future research.

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

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