

**Submission Number: NND.001.00956**

**Submission Of:**

**Your Details**

Email address:  
Phone:  
Preferred means of contact: Other No reply required due to anonymity  
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? I live in an area affected by bushfires but chose not to evacuate. While I didn't suffer financial loss, personal loss in terms of mental health and wellbeing was affected.  
Where do you live? Snowy Monaro Regional - not specified

**Your Submission**

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response worked well?  
The on-the-ground emergency personnel was fantastic. Our local brigade utilised additional resources wherever possible and coordinated well with fire control. The Centrelink support afterwards was also great - the mobile service centres visited our local area and were well received by the community.

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response didn't work well?  
Interstate communication and coordination was appalling. The main fire that threatened my area was the Orroral Valley fire. Within several hours of it starting, the NSW fire team managing the border sought permission to backburn to prevent the fire from moving across the border in the poor weather conditions expected later that week. The ACT Parks personnel who were responsible for approving this decided not to, because 'it was too late in the day'. Later in the week this fire then travelled south down the Murrumbidgee corridor and destroyed at least 11 houses, numerous livestock and wildlife as well as crops, causing significant financial and emotional damage to the community. This was unacceptable, and should not have been allowed to eventuate.

The Orroral Valley fire was predicted to impact heavily on my local area on a day of catastrophic fire conditions. It was sheer luck that the wind pushed it further south than anticipated. Had that not happened, the fire would have decimated the village of Michelago, before travelling into the Tinderry Ranges. The Michelago brigade had sought aerial support from a VLAT to drop a couple of retardant lines to protect the village; however the support was instead given to put retardant lines in around the ACT village of Tharwa. Tharwa was not in the path of the fire; in fact the fire was predicted (and did) run in the opposite direction. This was a tremendous waste of resources, and I am at a loss to explain how this occurred.

The Anembo fire brigade made a tremendous effort in containing the fire in the Tinderry ranges, with limited resources. However, the complete lack of forest management by National Parks and Wildlife in the Tinderry National Park made this a significantly harder prospect than it should have been. The Tinderry ranges suffered a significant bushfire ten years ago, where most of the National Park was decimated save for a small run up the range that had been subject to a hazard reduction burn within the preceding 12 months. As a result, much of the range is dead wood providing significant fuel for a bushfire. This needs to be addressed.

Finally, the emergency alert system is a fantastic idea in theory. However, it is reliant on telecommunications infrastructure to be effective and was just not particularly useful during this time due to significant black spot areas in the Snowy Monaro region. I did not receive the emergency warnings for when my property was about to be impacted until approximately 15 minutes after I saw the flames.

In your experience, what needs to change to improve arrangements for preparation, mitigation, response and recovery coordination for national natural disaster arrangements in Australia?  
There should be a national coordination centre for managing large bushfires to avoid each jurisdiction looking after their own. This centre should make decisions about allocation of resources and direction of fire management.  
Hazard reduction burning should be a regular occurrence, subject to minimal red tape and used as training opportunities for rural brigades.  
Telecommunications infrastructure must be improved.  
The findings from the Royal Commission into the Black Saturday bushfires should be implemented across Australia.

Is there anything else you would like to tell the Royal Commission?  
No

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