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Submission Number: NND.001.01236

Submission Of: Frank Vella

Your Details

Email address:

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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? Shanes Park

Your Submission

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

see attached

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

see attached

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 attached

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

see attached

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

Supporting material provided:

Bushfire letter 28.04.2020.pdf

As a resident of Shanes Park, living across the road from the International Radio Transmitter Station, I am genuinely concerned of the possibility of having a potential bushfire attack due to the lack of maintenance in cleaning up the over-grown shrubs that has not been done for the past 30 years. With each summer becoming more and more 'dry', it is only a matter of time before we may potentially come face to face with such a natural disaster, as we did in November 2019, but we were lucky with the quick action of firefighters on the scene to put out a potential fire disaster. Not only for my family's safety or loss of my own property but of those of my friends and neighbours as well, not to mention of lives that will be lost fighting fires be it of residents or firefighters.

You would have to be pretty ignorant to not recognize or learn from the horrific summer that has just past and very careless/stupid to not know the main cause of the intensity of these fires. Yes, you can say that it was "climate change" but, that would be the easy way out and around this problem. The reality is, that we have years' worth of fuel load in this scrub area. Until we reduce the fuel load, we will continue to have the threat of wildfires during the hot summer seasons.

Backburning or control burning in the colder months is one of the only solutions to mitigating/managing this issue and probably the most effective procedure being on a roadside. Another alternative option would include letting cattle or goats graze to reduce the scrubs in these areas. Obviously, this is not the most effective management strategy to prevent fires from occurring especially across the treetops once scrub fires reach extreme temperatures however the idea is to not have it reach these temperatures.

Aboriginal people have used these types of methods for centuries to protect their people and regenerate plant life. We should be learning from these original custodians of our lands, not dismiss them as old time folk. Many will argue against backburning saying such things as "it creates greenhouse gases and pollution and will harm wildlife" but on the other hand, you have to consider the summer just past, with these uncontrollable fires and how much greenhouse gases and pollution was generated, how much bushland was burnt out, how many human lives were lost, how much wildlife was lost and to think we wiped out a huge number of koalas and left another huge number of them burnt or badly injured. I wonder how many of these people who argue against backburning were out there helping to fight fires and save homes and lives?

Therefore, without some kind of maintenance program in place in the cooler months, we will never be able to gain the upper hand to control fuel loads in scrub land and bush to try to prevent these catastrophic conditions ever reoccurring.

Regards

Frank Vella