



Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

Submission Form

Please complete this form if you would like to provide input or comments about coordination, preparedness for, response to and recovery from the 2019-20 'Black Summer' bushfires.

Personal and Background Information

1. **Full Name** Robert de Groot
2. **Email** [REDACTED]
3. **Mobile/Telephone** [REDACTED]
4. **What is your preferred method of contact if we want to follow up with you?**

email or phone

5. **The Commission would like to understand the views of community groups based on their respective experiences and background.**

- a. Please select Option 1 if you are providing input and comments primarily based on your personal situation.
- b. Please select Option 2 if you are providing input and comments primarily based on your professional knowledge, qualifications or experience, or on behalf of a group or organisation

Option 1: Based on your personal situation, please complete the following.

- a. What was your personal situation in relation to the 2019-20 Bushfires? Please choose all that apply.
 - I was not living in an area affected by bushfire
 - I lived in an area affected by bushfires but was not evacuated, and didn't suffer personal or financial loss
 - I lived in an area affected by bushfires and was evacuated, but didn't suffer personal or financial loss
 - I lived in an area affected by bushfires and was evacuated, and I suffered personal or financial loss
 - I was part of the emergency response as a fire fighter on the ground
 - I was part of the emergency response as an aerial fire fighter

- I was part of the emergency response as health professional
- I was part of the emergency response as an Australian Defence Force member
- I was part of the emergency response as a Commonwealth or State government employee
- I assisted the emergency response as a community support volunteer
- I assisted the emergency recovery (i.e. after the fire event) as a community support volunteer
- Other

b. Where do you live? Please provide your Local Government Area, town name and post code.

Local Government Area Choose an item.
Town name
Post code

Option 2: Based on your knowledge, qualifications or experience, or your role representing a group or organisation, what is your area of expertise? Please choose all that apply.

- Emergency/disaster response and/or management
 - Environment/land management
 - Land use, planning, building standards
 - Impacts of changes in climatic conditions
 - Wildlife conservation
 - Traditional land and fire management practices of Indigenous Australians
 - Community welfare
 - Other
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Input / Comments

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

communication

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

interstate divisions

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

Preparation and Mitigation are the important issues. What seems to be alarmingly missing from big picture bushfire mitigation plans is WATER MANAGEMENT. Fighting urban fire with water, not fire, has worked well for us so far. The only way bush fuel reduction preparation could work would be to get rid of all the natural fuel, including grass, because even grassland was a problem this time around. Its only about protecting people and thier property. We can do this successfully with water management.

That is water recycled; transported/piped and stored on property in preparation; water retained on property in the vegetation and in the ground. That same pulpy, small diameter bush fuel on the ground that changes so rapidly with lowering humidity levels will equally absorb and hold a lot of water if provided in the face of a firefront. Water must evaporate when sufficiently heated and when it does it takes up a lot of energy and thereby can effectively and rapidly reduce a threatening fire to a less harmful level. Fire breaks need to be full of water when needed. Either wet by way of maintained vegetation or timely dousing of nearby stored water.

The way we SAVE, DISTRIBUTE and STORE WATER around vulnerable property IS THE KEY, not more fire.

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

10. Do you intend to provide supporting material?

Yes

No

If you are providing any supporting material, please include it with your Submission if possible. If you need to send it separately (e.g. if you make a Submission over the phone), please ensure supporting material can be clearly identified as relating to your Submission by including your name or other identifier so that it can be considered with your Submission.

11. Do you agree to your submission being published? (Mandatory)

- Yes, I agree to my submission being published in my name
 Yes I agree to my submission being published anonymously
 No I don't agree to my submission being published

Once you have completed this form, email it to rcnda.submissions@royalcommission.gov.au or print the form and post it to the Royal Commission at:

National Natural Disaster Royal Commission
Locked Bag 2000
Manuka ACT 2603
