



## 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** Lowell Steffen
2. **Email** [REDACTED]
3. **Mobile/Telephone** [REDACTED]
4. **What is your preferred method of contact if we want to follow up with you?**

Phone

Please send an email of my reference number to my email address once processed.

**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

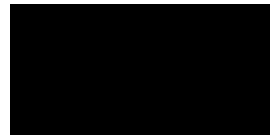
- I was part of the emergency response as an aerial fire fighter
- I was part of the emergency response as health professional
- I was part of the emergency response as an Australian Defence Force member
- I was part of the emergency response as a Commonwealth or State government employee
- I assisted 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

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
-

## Input / Comments

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

- I have been a firefighter for 25 years.
- Ability to bring in local plant operators. ( Bulldozers etc)
  - Liasing with local landholders on the ground.
  - Big new fire trucks with lovely pumps.

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

- Radio communication across diferent agencies.
- Mapping, all apps poorly managed.
- Every increasing calarories required for workers, the current melas didnt provide enough.

### 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?

- We need to not rely heavily on Volunteers with regard to preperation and mitigation. This needs to be professionalised on a seasonal basis.
- When moving into recovery everything shuts down and information doesn't flow from surpression into recovery mode, where fires burned, did we shut the gate etc... we loose time having to drive out again and find out all this information again.

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

- The Australian standards for hoses is an opt in and we cannot join hoses across state lines.
  - Inability to talk between aganecies is hard to operate when on the fire ground, this can be easily rectified.
  - Centralisation of complex fire issues, fragements of information flow up and down, maybe empowering small regions to feed information up and down giving a single point of contact like a community centre would be better.
  - Setting up school system AIMS to forward up to command centres and used to print maps
  - The big question is the tactics we use to surpress Bushfires is from 1915 the problem hasn't changed even with technologies still deploying people. The military have changed and looking at more modern techniques. Need to actually assess inefficiencies.
-

**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](mailto: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

---