



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

Verbal submission taken by [REDACTED] 26/04/20.

Email.

### 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	Snowy Valleys
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?**

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

**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?**

In the Monaro region in NSW there is a significant issue with communications:

On the Monaro in NSW during the Goodgood fires in Numeralla we had no ABC emergency broadcasting except a transmitter that was collocated on the NBN tower at 800m for a village of 50 rooftops. Also no mobile phones. This was the same situation as the fires in 2016 – the mobile tower does not allow people 17km from Cooma North to get any more than 1 bar or reception.

The ABC South East (Bega) has 2 transmitters: 1 in Bega, a 1,000 watt tower. Over the escarpment into the Monaro you can hardly hear it and its subject to atmospheric conditions. In 1964 the Snowy Mountains authority and ABC built a tower in Cooma. That tower is part of the ABC South East, it is 1602AM, it is only running at 400 watts and its radius of transmission is 17km to 25km. It is capable of going to 800 watts. But at the ABC Gavin Bowman and Broadcast Australia, who own the ABC transmitters won't increase the power. Estimated cost for a new tower is \$500-700,000 and it would be 3 kilowatts. The ABC won't raise it to 800 watts as it could interfere with other 1602 transmitters 600km away in Vic and Qld. ACMA and ABC have not even tried to gradually raise it from 400-800 as an interim. Very little of the Monaro area gets any ABC AM. There are 3 FM transmitters (ABC): Bombala, Thredbo, Jindabyne. But the FM doesn't travel and only services those communities. Difference between FM and AM - AM better for our landscape given the topography, reflects of hills etc. FM is line of sight.

A previous Senate inquiry into regional/rural ABC broadcast recommended that ABC should increase the Monaro tower range. Also recommend that new mobile tower. With Snowy Hydro 2 there are going to be an extra 2000 workers in the area. 200 employees in Adaminaby and around Lake Eucumbene. Trucks will be travelling from Cooma to Adaminaby up the snowy mountains highway near Talbingo, there will be no emergency broadcasting and no ABC and no

mobile phone reception. \$500,000 not a lot of money to upgrade and Broadcast Australia already has the plans to build a 3kw tower at Cooma, which would cover local residents but over 2 million cars and trucks (between Canberra and Cooma) and 5 million tourists in the Monaro.

Canberra 666 is over 110km away, and can hardly be heard. Canberra is not interested in Monaro local broadcasting. As an example, there was a three car pileup in Williamsdale. Called ABC SE and they didn't know. Able to broadcast in that limited area but not able to get the message out any wider.

In the recent bushfire, a fibre optic cabinet burnt out which meant no TV, no internet and no ATM. Only thing that still worked was radio with a battery.

One day recently ABC 1602 was off air for most of the day. I reported it to ABC in Bega. It's caused by a defect on the tower and it's not unusual for it to have problems. ABC 1602 interviewed CO of Snowy Hydro: "when everything falls down, all you have is a radio and battery". That's what was happening on South Coast and Monaro.

**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](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

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