



## 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** James and Donna Thomson

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	Eurobodalla
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?

After the fire-

Local Land Services provided support and stock feed

Eurobodalla Council helped greatly.

Trying to repair roads and bridges and ensure trucks could deliver much needed feed.

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

Rural Fire Service- local brigade defended only evacuated houses not those with people.

Communication- 2 days after the fire the RFS locked their shed cutting those who were left in the valley with no other communication to the outside as all the phone lines had burnt and no internet available anywhere else.

As the yard around the RFS shed was the only secure yard left in the valley it was used to stockpile feed and machinery. The RFS continually locked the gates preventing us from accessing these essential items.

The RFS made it very clear it was there to assist members only.

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**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?**

RFS should NOT be the only or main agency incharge.

More power should be given to local government and local land services, Nation parks and Forestry. The reason being these dedicated services know and understand the country they are responsible for.

Communication needs to be improved with 1 dedicated form or channel that all services can access during these times.

Th RFS should have their powers wound back. It should not be a planning authroity and it should be made clear that outside of emergency situations it has no rights over private property.

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

We were not evacuated and had essentially no help from the RFS or any other authority. We have suffered huge losses.

We lost a house, all our sheds including the shearing shed which has put us out of business, all of the infrustructor for our camping area.

We lost live stock and pets.

**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.

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**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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