



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

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 ██████████
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?

The actions of the fire-fighting services; especially the various Rural Fire Services in each State affected.

The application of the various aerial support to both fight the fires and to prevent spread of the fires to new areas.

The mobilising of members of the Reserve Army; especially on the South Coast of NSW.

The ready support from employers of those volunteers and Reserve Army members brought in to fight the fires.

The reporting of the fires in all aspects by the various media involved.

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

The delay in mobilising the Reserve Army.

Coupled with this was the lack of forward planning by the Army hierarchy as to how to deploy the Army troops immediately.

Members were mobilised and then spent the first week in base barracks.

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 & mitigation: The bush, be it National Parks, State forests or that located next to built-up areas (be they towns or individual properties) must be burned off on a regular basis. Government controlled land needs to have fire trails properly maintained.

The build-up of undergrowth, as widely reported by many different agencies, can be seen even on the sides of the Pacific Highway in northern NSW in the attached photographs taken in the latter half of 2019 during a trip from the Gold Coast to Sydney and return.

We certainly experienced the smoke from the northern NSW fires as we passed through that area.

All firefighting vehicles must be upgraded to ensure that they have roll-cages fitted and the have the necessary equipment to protect the occupants if they are caught by fire.

Recovery coordination: A National Disaster Fund needs to be created so that funds are immediately available to support and assist those affected by all natural disasters; be they drought, flood or fire. The almost immediate provision of billions of dollars in Federal funds in response to the Covid-19 pandemic is an example of how assistance can be given in national natural emergencies.

An authority must be created to enable the recovery to be fully coordinated. A model is the NSW Rural Fire Service, particularly the structure of the staff of the headquarters.

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

There are various claims that the "fire season" is becoming longer, that temperatures are rising, that "the climate is changing" and that CO2 emissions are the prime cause of this "climate change".

Colonial and Australian history from the mid 18th Century to the present day shows that there have been several "fire seasons" that were longer and more intense than the 2019-20 season under investigation. History also shows that recommendations, to mitigate future disasters, from previous Royal Commissions have not been implemented.

Rising temperature assertions by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM: Dr Karl Brazanga) are based on temperature homogenisation carried out by the BOM and the CSIRO, whereby both low and high values have been flattened. For example; supposedly the readings for Rutherglen Vic, had to be homogenised with 17 other stations, including Hillston (352km away in western NSW)!

The climate is continually changing, as it has for millions of years. Over the past 20 years there has in fact been no change, in spite of the "claims" by the "climate experts". There are also currently less "severe weather events" per year than in the decades in the 20th century.

Crop yields have grown over the past 40+ years, the result of increased levels of CO2 in the atmosphere.

In my academic lifetime, I spent over 20 years in several tertiary institutions, finishing as an associate professor at Deakin University.

In that time, all staff were encouraged/required to question, and test, the positions taken by others on matters of fact.

The problem now is that historical records are being "homogenised" to suit the new arguments.

For example: The relatively recent introduction of electronic temperature reading as opposed to the time-honoured use of mercury thermometers, is the "justification" for the need to homogenise past temperature readings.

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





