



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 [REDACTED]
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
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- 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	Mt Colah, Hornsby
Post code	2079

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?

Very little, as inadequate preparation and response

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

Very poor strategic preparation with suitable equipment, e.g. Aerial bombing fleet.

Inadequate strategies only limited to "hazard reduction" by only backburning, and NOT land clearing for adequate breaks.

Inadequate back-burning and land clearing in advance.

Inadequate early actions to put out fires when start, i.e. the silly "watch and act" waiting game till it is too late to control it.

Focus currently is more on "defence" once fires start, rather than Prevention.

Actions to stop fires are too weak, and are currently a major failure – the loss of over 2000 homes and 20+ lives in NSW is a complete, bloody failure by the RFS and this has NOT been called out. If you don't call it out, then this Review / Royal Commission by the Federal Govt will be a failure.

As I live in a "bush fire prone land" area, I need to express my serious concerns and request for real actions to mitigate the risks posed by bush fires, as current efforts are a Failure.

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?

- a. Prevention of Bush Fires MUST be planned just like a War effort:
- i. Remove trees within 100m of all Residential properties, and don't allow new properties within 100m of Bush areas – this was recommended by Mr. Phil Koperberg, ex-RFS Commissioner (who lives in Blue Mountains), some 15-20 years ago!
 - ii. Ensure all National Parks and Bush areas actually have Strategies and Action Plans to implement Fire Prevention plans (sick of hearing that Bob Carr stopped access, why wasn't it reversed by the Liberals?).
 - iii. Police teams (with RFS coordination) must patrol risk areas and park accesses – by Car, Drones and Helicopters, to detect any arsonist actions or detect lightning strikes – with immediate Police action to arrest arsonists, and / or action by RFS to put out fires.
- b. Strategy for putting out Fires:
- i. It is a pathetic sight (preferred by TV channels) to show firefighters with a hose tackling 5-10m flames! The RFS are out of their depth, and need better Management (with advice from the Defence Forces) to instead Consider it like a War – send in a Fleet of Planes and Helicopters to put out any large flames effectively – Buy heaps more Equipment as needed!!!
 - ii. DO NOT let fires become Too Big, and then say “Don't expect us to save your house” – comment heard a couple of times in the media from RFS!!! Knock out the fires before they become big! The RFS approach of “Watch and Act”, etc, is just rubbish! If it was a war, would you let the invaders continue destroying a part of your country while you just “Watch”? If any fire is allowed to continue burning, and then it becomes Too Big, some heads must roll – as it is Failure by the Agency tasked to deliver safe outcomes without loss of property and lives in the community.

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

No.

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
