



**Royal Commission**  
into National Natural  
Disaster Arrangements

## Submission Cover Sheet

This cover sheet has been prepared by the Commission's public contact team to accompany a submission.

### Person completing cover sheet

1. **Staff member name** [REDACTED]
2. **Date completed** 09.06.2020
3. **This cover sheet has been completed based on:**
  - details contained in the submission
  - a phone call with the person making the submission
  - an email from the person making the submission
  - Other (provide details) -

### Submission details

4. **Full name** Richard McDonald
5. **Email** [REDACTED]
6. **Telephone** [REDACTED]
7. **Preferred method of contact**
8. **Is the submission based on:**
  - primarily based on their personal situation.
  - primarily based on their professional knowledge, qualifications or experience, or on behalf of a group or organisation
9. **If the person is making the submission on behalf of a group or organisation, what is the name of the group or organisation:** R- Mach Aviation Pty Ltd

If the submission based on personal experience:

10. **What was their personal situation in relation to the 2019-20 Bushfires? Choose all that apply.**
    - were not living in an area affected by bushfire
    - were in an area affected by bushfires but was not evacuated, and didn't suffer personal or financial loss
    - lived in an area affected by bushfires and was evacuated, but didn't suffer personal or financial loss
-

- lived in an area affected by bushfires and was evacuated, and I suffered personal or financial loss
- part of the emergency response as a fire fighter on the ground
- part of the emergency response as an aerial fire fighter
- part of the emergency response as health professional
- part of the emergency response as an Australian Defence Force member
- part of the emergency response as a Commonwealth or State government employee
- assisted the emergency response as a community support volunteer
- assisted the emergency recovery (i.e. after the fire event) as a community support volunteer
- Other

**11. Where does the person live:**

Local Government Area	Choose an item.
Town name	Rockhampton
Post code	4700

If the submission is based on professional experience

**12. 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

All submissions

**13. Does the person agree to their submission being published?**

- Yes, agree to the submission being published in their name
  - Yes, agree to the submission being published anonymously
  - No, does not agree to the submission being published
-

## R-MACH Aviation Pty Ltd



3 June 2020

Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements

Locked Bag 2000

MANUKA ACT 2603

[rcnda@enquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:rcnda@enquiries@royalcommission.gov.au)

Dear Sir / Madam

Please accept this submission to be considered when evaluating the Natural Disasters of the 2019-2020 Bushfires.

I operate a small Aerial Applications business based in QLD. With over 35 years of industry experience in Australia as a fire bombing pilot, and also 10 years experience as an Airline Pilot and various corporate jet and charter operations (both Australian and Internationally).

During the 2009 Fire Campaign in the Rockhampton Area, where there was very limited aerial support, I found myself the only fixed wing aerial fire bombing platform in the region. Due to my frustrations I started looking for a better solution. Improvements I could see:

- Quicker Turnaround times
- Higher Capacity
- Faster ferry speed

Looking on the internet the Russian purpose built Beriev BE-200 Amphibious Fire Bombing Aircraft came to my attention. This concept was exactly what I thought was needed in Australia. The first production model was brought into service in 2003.


Since then I have actively been promoting this aircraft to the Australian Fire Fighting Authorities and Agencies. I have spent a good part of a decade, at my own expense, trying to set up demonstration flights in Australia. Since the arrangements of the overseas Large Air Tankers that have been utilised in Australia my efforts have been disregarded because of politics within that sector.

Our company has approached NAFC by means of submissions of request for tenders and I personally contacted NAFC directly. I have suggested an evaluation of the BE-200 with State agencies and NAFC several times. NAFC's response to our suggestion was the aircraft is not certified to be operate in Australia therefore the evaluation could not be conducted. It has brought to our attention that companies from overseas have brought their aircraft to Australia for evaluation free of charge that also were not certified to fly in Australia, but were granted a permission by NAFC to operate under a Discret AOC. This information did not come from NAFC.

R-MACH Aviation currently has a Type Acceptance Certificate being processed with CASA for the Beriev BE-200 and we expect this Type Acceptance Certificate to be granted in the next month. This upgrade to the Air Operators Certificate is a large financial strain on our company, however it is an important step to ensure the BE-200 can be operated and clear the barriers that are put in our way from the very department that we would have expected to help us achieve these goals through the generous government assistance they have been given in the last 12 months..

It has been disappointing that NAFC (being the procures of better Aerial Fire Fighting Platforms) have not been able to assist financially with any government grants offered to them for this very purpose to enable Australian operators the opportunity to present new an innovative aircraft (and in the case of the BE-200 – far superior) to what is being used at present by overseas operators to be evaluated for the greater good the Australian community.

We have noticed that the tender processes for the procurement of Large Air Tankers have been written specifically so that very few aircraft types will comply fully with the tender making it impossible to cross the line using that forum. Whilst completing this process we could see that the aircraft we were offering is far superior to what the tender was written for.



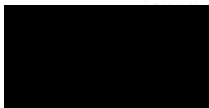
Australia possesses a vast pool of expertise in Fire Fighting that is poorly utilised at present. During this Royal Commission we would hope that at least some type of system could be implemented to allow new platforms to be evaluated and operated by Australian operators.

Due to the current arrangements I find myself in a precarious position writing to the commission on this matter as the knowledge of me doing so can have adverse affects to my current commercial activities within the fire agencies. This could also jeopardise the last ten years of time and expense in preparing the BE-200 for evaluation in Australia.

We are a small Australian operator with vast experience in this field, needing some assistance from our government for the benefit of the whole country.

Thank you for submitting this to the Royal Commission

Yours faithfully



***RICHARD MCDONALD***

***Chief Pilot***

***R-MACH Aviation Pty Ltd***



