

We wish to make this submission anonymously.

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We were told "not if the bushfire would come but when". It took around two weeks between this warning and the first arrival of the Gospers Mountain fire on one side of us. There was at least two months of fire activity in our area.

We had known koalas in our area but because there were no licensing permissions in place to rescue healthy wild animals before the fire they all ended up being killed.

We live in an area with the highest genetic diversity of all koalas in Australia so our population is critical.

It was devastating to our community that we had to watch them die because of red tape. We had plenty of warning that the fire was coming. We could have safely rescued them but we were stopped.

We absolutely must have LOCALLY controlled wildlife rescue organisations that have permission in advance to act in an emergency situation, by getting animals out of harms way when it is safe to do so, in consultation with local RFS.

Wildlife Rescue Organisations that are controlled by head offices in the city are not able to respond adequately to what was happening in our community.

The licencing department was also shut down for two weeks at the exact time we desperately required permission to help these animals.

We rescued our domestic pets and farm animals yet we were forced to sit on our hands and watch species that were vulnerable to extinction die.

Most koalas burnt in fires (but rescued after) died from their injuries. We must be able to get them out of harms way before the fire hits if it is safe to do so.

There is no time to negotiate licence changes/permissions in an emergency. It needs to be done now in advance.

Wildlife rescue organisations must be diversified away from one dominant group to enable this to happen. It is grossly inappropriate that a handful of people from the Northern Beaches of Sydney should get to tell rural communities all over NSW whether their licenced wildlife rescuers can get animals out of harms way of a fire.

The local RFS knowing the situation on the ground and the risk of that specific area should be authorised to make that call.

We need fire trained preventative wildlife rescuers.

There are many animals that are being studied by universities for example, or are known to a community that can quickly and efficiently be rescued and saved.

As climate change impacts increase, this will become an important tool to saving our native wildlife. The use of drones and specialised sniffer dogs aid greatly in an efficient rescue.

Having permission for trained sniffer dogs to enter National Parks must also be planned and approved well in advance, not during an emergency.

These mega fires went for months. The fire projection maps were available. The technology is now there to help us safely rescue some known wildlife with permission from the local RFS.

Sincerely,

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