

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I give consent for this submission to be anonymous.

I am making this submission as a resident in a bushfire-affected area

I am making a personal submission

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience of the Gospers Mountain fire. I would like this submission to be seen in conjunction with the submission from [REDACTED] who is my partner. I wholly agree with and support his submission but would like to add a few things that I believe are important. I have attached a screen shot of [REDACTED] submission if that helps.

Our home was burnt on 21 December 2019 in the Gospers Mountain fire. Still the number one thing I can't fathom is how a fire that started on October 26 2019 by lightning strike was able to reach Lithgow township after burning for two months.

Our home is still uninhabitable, we are all still traumatised and I haven't even begun to process the enormity of what has happened. I'm still drinking way too much [REDACTED] [REDACTED].)

Our family is broken and really feels forgotten. It is extremely triggering now that this pandemic is settling down and the fires are in the media again. I'm just not able to tell my story the way I would have liked. Instead I'm just going to raise issues in point form.

- Probably the most important matter that [REDACTED] forgot to raise was how properties are assessed after the fire. The first assessment was from a RFS assessor. They briefly look at the outside of the property but are not allowed inside. There are so many problems with this. Firstly they are exhausted and probably still running on adrenaline. I'm not sure how qualified they are to make assessments on structures. The damage to the interior of our home was not accounted for. This is where the damage is most significant. So much of the assistance we required depended on this initial assessment which has been a real hindrance having our needs met. This method of assessment by the RFS could also be responsible for hiding the true damage and destruction that was actually caused by the fires. I really believe that there needs to be independent and professional assessment of the destruction caused by the fires.

There also needs to be more detail of the degree of damage and more categories of out buildings. Our laundry was classed by the RFS as an out building but as a part of our home by our insurance company. This has also impacted the amount of financial assistance we could access.

- The fires near me app failed on the day. In the days leading up to the fire reaching our home there were many false alarms. We went from advice level on the evening of 20 December. At 8.27 on 21 December were alerted to the immediate danger via text and telephone. The warning was to take shelter as fire approaches. The RFS Facebook page also had an emergency warning.

I relied on the sentinel heat map and weather forecasts to know that we going to be impacted on that day. I watched weather patterns temperatures and wind direction to monitor how close the fire was to us for weeks leading up to fire impacting our home. I had already determined that that Saturday was the day we would face the fire front. I'm glad I did. I was ready to leave immediately and knew I had enough time to evacuate. If I had of trusted the app it would have been a different story.

- The Inaccuracy in the RFS fire maps needs to be addressed. These maps are used for assessment of who needs assistance by lots of organisations. We eventually found out that a charity had trouble confirming that our home had been damaged because they couldn't find us on the map. Our property was [REDACTED] on the map instead of [REDACTED].

- As discussed at the Lithgow community meeting with the NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry on 25 February there is really a need for some sort of case management. It has been overwhelming reach out to so many services. I gave my details to a representative of service NSW at a recovery meeting on 1 March 2020. I was told that a case manager would contact me the next day (Friday 2 March 2020) or the following Monday. I didn't receive any response until an email on 7 May 2020 saying I had been assigned a Service NSW Bushfire Customer Care Specialist. I have chosen to ignore this offer. I have already sought and exhausted the assistance I need. Needless to say I am not very impressed with what service NSW has to offer.

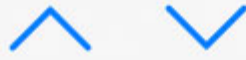
- Another thing that bothers me is that I read an article about insurance companies being prepared for this black summer. They had anticipated a catastrophic fire season and budgeted for it. I'm sorry that I don't recall which publication I read this in. My question for all governments is that if insurance companies can prepare for this then why can't the governments do the same.

Thank you for considering this submission.



1:23 pm Fri 22 May

[Inbox](#)



Thank you for your s



Thank you for your submission.

A copy of the submission is below for your records.

Please do not reply to this email. This mail box is not monitored.

Your details

Title

First name

Last name

Email

Address

I am making this submission as

Submission type

Consent to make submission public

Your story
