



Your details

Submission details

I am making this submission as

A resident in a bushfire-affected area

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Consent to make submission public

I would like this submission to remain anonymous

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

I have so many things to say but will limit them.

- The communications during the fires. Our suburb was meant to have the copper lines cut in November 2019, as the NBN completed its roll-out in our suburb. We asked to have the copper line left on but were refused and told our suburb would be cut off. It was by sheer luck this had not happened as it was the only comms we had after the radio, phone and power all went out, for days. Many other suburbs are the same. The NBN was completely inoperable.

We could just get ABC Illawarra and so I called my friend in sydney who works at the ABC and asked if they could please read out the RFS info for our region (normally covered by ABC South East) as their bulletins were always ended at Durras with, 'for information for the south east, tune into ABC South East or their website or fires near me. None of these things was

available.

- The Currowan fire had been burning for weeks during December. the RFS was constantly telling us that it would move further south (south of Batemans Bay) if there was a westerly or nor wester. Despite this, Eurobodalla Shire Council ran a tourism campaign to get people to ignore the smoke and come back to the area. When the fires inevitably reached our region, everything was massively stretched, from food to fuel, as we tried to get all the holiday makers out.

- There was record dryness leading up to the fires. The NSW RFS Commissioner had told everyone, numerous times, that this would be a record breaking fire season, due to record dryness. We were also told they'd not been able to complete backburning due to the record dryness.

Climate change is such an obviously real fact and yet our government continued to ignore it. Furthermore, following the fires, sometimes while running towards the beach to escape death, neighbours were screaming at each other because this is 'all the fault of you fucking greenies'. These fires did not 'bring our community together'. They ripped it apart. The government needs to wake up and accept that climate change is real, and stop seeding the community with anti-science rubbish. I blame the plainly delusional thinking (the fires won't come here) leading up to the NYE fires, squarely on those in government who think it's acceptable to ignore and denigrate scientists and in fact, reality, with zero accountability for their actions.

- After the second 'fire day' on the Saturday following NYE we decided to stay and defend. We found out later that the RFS had decided they would not come to our suburb if the fire impacted. We only found this out because a local had attended a meeting in town (Moruya) the day before the fire day. We didn't know about the meeting.

Lastly, on the third fire day, when Moruya was impacted, a fire started 200 metres upwind from my father in law's house at Bingi. It did not show up on Fires Near Me for three days, and we were told this was because there were people in the RFS office who were from Canada and couldn't work the system very well. This fire could have easily burned his place down, but he went to bed, not aware of it. Furthermore, if the wind had turned into a slightly stronger southerly that fire could and would have no doubt burned through Congo and right through to Moruya Heads, impacting thousands of homes. People who lived in that area should have been told, but as it was, the only way that people in Congo (who were about 2.5kms from the fire with bush in between) knew about it was through word of mouth in the settlement. We only found out because a friend walked through the bush to the headland and saw the orange glow coming towards his house. The fire had been alight for hours by then. The RFS and locals were working to put it out.

- RFS are volunteers. I know so many people in the RFS who honestly, genuinely thought they were going to die. The terror is still palpable. If the government is planning on ignoring the reality of climate change, then the least they could do is resource the RFS with paid professional firefighters. The stories I heard in the aftermath were and are heartbreaking.

- Many people in our region are only still here because the jobseeker has increased the amount of money they can get, due to Covid19. I think there will be a huge exodus of people from this region once the payment drops again but this is a guess.

Finally, I kept a documentary record of what happened during

those days of fires, including images and copies of RFS text messages, maps from Fires Near Me. It can be found here;

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

Supporting documents or images
