

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 live in Eurobodalla and evacuated to Tomakin from Mossy Point area on 31st December 2019. I am married to a SES volunteer and as a group of three SES volunteers, their partners and a SES truck, we supported and assisted residents and evacuees at Tomakin over New Year. We dealt with a medical emergency and the only communication at the time was the SES radio to Sydney HQ who incredibly managed to get an ambulance to us. SES volunteers assisted people with putting out an ember attack, negotiating re-opening the club after the fire to provide food and shelter and providing people what limited information and advice was available over 2 days and nights. We later stayed in Moruya to be near SES control centre and my husband volunteered often working full time for weeks afterwards. I assisted at the evacuation centre in Moruya as a "good Samaritan". Luckily our house and garden was not burnt.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

Extreme dry hot weather as a result of climate change.

We reached a tipping point causing extreme fires over a huge area, this is unprecedented. Climate change is leading to longer more extreme fire seasons, more is yet to come with the increasing temperatures.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Local government had a plan and acted well on it despite no doubt some glitches. Until you put a plan into action unforeseen issues don't become evident.

Emergency services were incredible and many volunteers involved.

Emergency evacuation centres need to be bigger!

Fires Near Me was our new best friend.

Hazard reduction burns were limited prior to fires due to high fire risk days reducing time, and I believe their effect is limited especially in such a bad fire season. We should try Aboriginal fire practices for the future.

The public were advised, but many did not really prepare fully. Until it happens to you, you do not appreciate the need for action and many should have left earlier.

1.3 Response to bushfires

Resourcing RFS and Emergency services is vital, they need all the equipment.

Many fires started in National Parks, more resources into remote fire fighting is needed.

I was surprised to hear that we don't have an Ericson crane in Australia, why not? It will be getting some use in coming years and they seem very effective.

Lessons learned from previous bad fires appear to have been put into action and the emphasis on leaving early rather than staying and fighting fires has definitely saved lives.

Emergency text worked, as long as phone system is working.

SES and Police need more time and people on the ground for door knocking prior to expected fire event, as some residents just don't get it! They often ran out of time and used loud speaker/sirens to get attention from public.

1.4 Any other matters

Positives: RFS were incredible and Shane's briefings on TV (when we had it) were the best source of accurate information, his leadership was priceless. Thank you.

Emergency centres were inundated at Batemans Bay and Moruya. Need for basic camp beds in future, too many elderly folk struggling on the floor or hard chairs. EOC briefings were excellent after fires and during recovery, council did well. Thanks to long hours of contractors slowly getting communications up again.

Volunteer support services were great, Red Cross, Anglicare, Surf Life Club etc.

Negatives: The Government needs to address Climate Change and face up to bringing the country along with it. They need to heed the scientific advice and act on the huge amount of evidence presented.

Real goals to reduce the effects of climate change are required.

Logging in burnt areas and National Parks is unscientific and should be outlawed.

Protect and rehabilitate National Parks and wilderness areas after fires to protect vulnerable and endangered species, what we have left of them.

Wildlife extinctions in Australia were unprecedented before the fires, now it will be even greater.

Batemans Marine park has just lost 6 sanctuary zones with no prior public consultation or scientific evidence to support this, please don't let this happen to land based conservation areas, deforestation by land clearing is already out of control and protection of threatened species appears arbitrary.

Supporting documents or images
