

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

██████ my partner and I lost our home on the evening of 4th January, 2020. After attending the briefings that morning by the RFS we were advised that Bundanoon was not a priority at this point, that the focus was on Joadja being the highest risk. We were then encouraged to go home and keep preparing which we had been doing over the past weeks. At approximately, 8pm on Saturday evening, I received a call from our neighbour to see if we were seeing embers. We met up with our neighbours and walked around our properties. When we approached our property, we saw magnificent orange colour in the distance. It took us some seconds to realise that our paddock was burning. I quickly called 000. My neighbour ██████ also called 000. From there, it was a terrifying experience and it all unfolded so quickly. ██████ and our neighbour ██████ and his step son ██████ defended as best they could. The RFS did not come, I called again, they advised they were on their way. Over the next 45 minutes or so, I kept calling

000 and they kept telling me they were on their way. The fire was coming at us from everywhere as the wind changed. I called other neighbours to tell them to get out, that it was in the park (the Morton National Park). Those neighbours then text all other neighbours to evacuate. At no time, did we receive any text alerts, the RFS app did not provide any emergency updates. We were on our own. After receiving a call from my next door neighbour yelling to get out that we were surrounded, I quickly told [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] that we need to get out and quick. We grabbed our keys and just managed to get out. I can further explain the terrifying scenes that we unfolding, including the fact that I thought I had lost [REDACTED] but it will only bring back the nightmares that I have been suffering since the fire. We called 000 at least 4 times. To say the communication across all the emergency services authorities broke down is an understatement. Additionally, to be told to seek shelter inside with an exit door is also floored as we would have been killed if we had done that. The whole event was absolutely terrifying and I feel for the families who lost a loved one. I thought I had at one stage. There is a lot to learn from this bushfire event and I hope the inquiry will delve as deeply at it can so that we can learn from event, because god we need to. To this day, we have not been officially told we had lost our home. We were told from a neighbour. I am happy to speak on this further should I need to. I can best be contact via email or phone on [REDACTED]. Kind regards
[REDACTED]

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

There were several contributing factors such as:

- RFS modelling was incorrect
 - Communication breakdowns including Emergency Services -000 advice; RFS app, no emergency text alerts; we received an alert late into the evening well past the disaster and it was for the next town not our own.
- NB: To this day, we have never officially been told we have lost our home. RFS says its the Police's responsibility and the Police say it was the RFS' responsibility. Again, the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Preparations were underway for weeks in case there was to be a fire. Our bushfire plan was in place but could not be used as the fire came so quickly we did not have a chance to execute it.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- burnt house photo 2.jpg

