



## Your details

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## Submission details

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**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

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**Your story**

The entire population of Blackheath and the Upper Blue Mountains were severely impacted by the bushfires of 2019-2020. We lived for months breathing hazardous air, due to thick bushfire smoke both from the Gospers Mountain Fire, which started on Oct 26, 2019 and eventually reached Mt. Wilson on Dec 14. This fire then spread to the Grose Valley and reached Blackheath by jumping up the escarpment both at Govetts Leap and Evans Lookout. December and the beginning of January were very stressful for our town. The fire came very close to many houses in Blackheath and RFS did heroic work and only 1 property was destroyed by the fire (Jemby Rinjah Eco Lodge). The fires came within about 500m of our house. We had to be constantly packed and ready to evacuate ourselves and several animals but we couldn't leave our car packed as there were thefts from cars in the area. We had several emergency text messages including 2 in the middle of the night. It would have been very

helpful if there could have been official evacuation centre in Blackheath and all the small towns in the Upper Mountains. As it was, a local resident had to take it upon himself to set up a make-shift centre at a hall in town. He stayed there for many, many nights so residents had somewhere to go. The whole town was and still is traumatised by this experience. The destruction of the bush. The loss of wildlife. The impact on our economy. All of these things have caused a lot of stress for our Upper Mountains communities.

## Terms of Reference (optional)

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

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### 1.2 Preparation and planning

During bushfire emergencies, each town really needs an official evacuation centre so residents have somewhere to go. We felt like we were left to our own devices and a local resident had to take it upon himself to open up a local hall for residents. There needs to be a safe, local places to go to, especially when emergencies happen at 2am in the morning.

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### 1.3 Response to bushfires

I don't understand how the Gospers Mountain fire was allowed to become a mega-fire. Why wasn't water bombing done in October, when it started? Why weren't remote area fire teams sent in? This fire was allowed to burn closer and closer to the Blue Mountains for weeks and it eventually impacted in a devastating fashion on Mt. Wilson and other towns on Bells Line of Road and then Blackheath in December. We can't let fires become mega-fires. There needs to be a much swifter response when fires break out.

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### 1.4 Any other matters

Many streets in Blackheath are right on top of bushland. I am wondering if we need cleared areas of land along these streets to create a buffer zone between the bush and residences.

## Supporting documents or images

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### Attach files

- pyrocumulus211219.jpg
  - firegospers9.jpg
  - firedarlingcauseway.jpg
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