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## Your details

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## Submission details

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**I am making this submission as**

A member of the general public

**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**

Living in Blaxland, on the border of Glenbrook, a fire has impacted my area on recent and not so recent occasions, although my residence wasn't directly affected by the 2019-20 fires. However, I continue to be traumatized by seeing the devastation in the upper Blue Mountains and other fire-affected areas of NSW. People close to me have residences in South Coast townships and other areas of the Greater Blue Mountains region. Their experiences continue to affect them and me. As a keen bushwalker and outdoors person I have also been impacted in many ways by the great loss of bushland, species, flora and fauna, that occurred with these fires across NSW, and other States and Territories of Australia.

## 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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**1.1 Causes and contributing factors**

Governments should recognize the body of scientific evidence that strongly specifies only very recently burned areas may reduce fire severity under extreme and catastrophic fire weather conditions. Under these conditions, areas already hazard reduced, particularly those treated over more than 1 year previously, are unlikely to provide substantial fire suppression benefits.

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**1.2 Preparation and planning**

Future planning for bushfire risk management in NSW must recognise that climate change is now a major driver of increased bushfire danger and that further increases in global temperature are likely to increase the length and severity of the fire season, restrict the window of opportunity for safe and effective hazard reduction burning and increase the costs and the risk to the community from bushfire events across NSW.

Hazard reduction burning should be undertaken strategically, with clear objectives for burns that show measurable benefits in reducing risk to identified assets. Hazard reduction burning programs aimed at meeting area treated based targets are of little benefit.

Asset Protection Zones identified in Bush Fire Risk Management Plans should be the focus for reducing fuel loads, rather than undertaking hazard reduction burning in natural areas located far from built assets. The width of APZs required for asset protection must be based on scientific evidence.

There is no scientific evidence to show that grazing or logging will reduce fire risk and both can be devastating to threatened species such as koalas, and damage natural processes. Government must ensure that neither is reintroduced into conservation areas.

There are many strategies used in firefighting, the benefits and costs of each needs to be assessed to determine their effectiveness and what their detrimental outcomes for the environment are.

With the increasing frequency of lighting ignitions in remote areas, various technologies and strategies for rapid extinguishing of these fires must be investigated, including an increase in the use of remote area firefighting teams.

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**1.3 Response to bushfires**

There needs to be a comprehensive inventory of environmental assets, including the locations of threatened species and endangered ecological communities which are then included as environmental assets in Bush Fire Risk Management Plans. Treatments to reduce the risk to these assets must be identified where possible. The Plans must incorporate post-fire restoration and rehabilitation guidelines, especially for threatened species, communities, and refuge areas.

Following major bushfire events, post-fire environmental recovery actions are needed, including targeted recovery for threatened species and communities which are listed as vulnerable,

endangered or critically endangered. Recovery actions must consider pest species, weeds, minimizing erosion and sedimentation, and maintaining water quality.

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**1.4 Any other matters**

The Government must develop a State Fire Management Strategy in consultation with peak stakeholder groups (including Nature Conservation Council) that addresses fire response and recovery. The Government needs to commit to funding for these strategies which is not aligned to specific grant programs and has funding certainty.

Consideration must be given to collaborating with the first nations peoples of Australia and incorporating their cultural burning practices into the strategies for the future. Scientific evidence shows that these more sympathetic regimes provide protections from devastating bushfires and the environment and are less damaging to the landscape in the longer term.

### **Supporting documents or images**

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