

Your details

Title

Mr

First name

Allan

Last name

Lehepuu

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 give my consent for this submission to be made public

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

I am a 40+ years member of the Rural Fire Service.

My wife and I have always lived in bush fire prone areas, growing up in the Blue Mountains and now currently resident in the Tinderry Mtns, Snowy Monaro Shire.

We lost our home in 2009 in the Tea Tree Fire that burnt out 9,300 hectares on the 17th December of that year so we understand the cost of poor land/ fuel management.

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

Our recorded rainfall was in 2017 was 653 mm, 2018 was 581 mm and 2019 was 429 mm from an average of 783 mm since 2010

From the middle of 2019 the effects of a positive Indian Ocean Dipole, a negative Southern Annular Mode , a negative Southern Oscillation Index and for the cherry on top a Sudden Stratospheric Warming event occurring above the Antarctic in the last week of August 2019

All these contributed to a warmer drier spring and a failed monsoon for 2019.

Locally for us on the Monaro this presented as very dry soil moisture level and a significant browning/ dying of leaves in local forests.

Local streams and creek lines dried up with the consequence that there were no potential boundaries to pull up any fire.

The maximum amount of fuel was available to be ignited and consumed by fire.

Looking at the BOM 120 years of Rainfall chart 1936 to 1938 looks similar but with the adjustments to data it is hard to tell for a lay person.

With Australian Climate Observations Reference Network - Surface Air Temperature (ACORN- SAT) versions 1 and 2 versus the raw Historical data so different now I dont know how you can compare 1938/39 with 2003 with 2019.

Fire History of the Australian Alps by P Zylstra has a good time line of fires in this area.

1.2 Preparation and planning

The RFS has in my experience has constantly improved it's professionalism.

Equipment, communications, training and procedures has steadily and constantly improved.

As much as older members have complained about the more ridged training and procedures they have benefited from being safer in a risky workplace.

The downside has been a more rigid Prescribed Fuel Reduction program requiring much more 'paperwork'.

This has slowed down the process of managing fuel in the landscape.

Understandably areas that had been treated by Prescribed Burning in this particular fire season did not stop fires by reduced fuel but I feel intensity in treated areas was less.

1.3 Response to bushfires

The Monaro Team in January 2020 was able to deal with multiple fires at the same time any one of which would of been considered major.

The communications system was able to split into three groups, interstate crews and resources were available to back up local crews, heavy plant was available.

Air attack was available when conditions allowed.

All this came about from putting resources in place, preplanning and establishing the networks.

1.4 Any other matters

The only thing that can be immediately effected is the amount of fuel in the landscape.

There is tension between those that prefer hands off land management against those that look to reduce forest fuels in the landscape.

There is much written supporting both points of view.

But I as a owner and occupier of 42 hectares of montane forest I am concerned that the Government may return to the days of State Environmental Planning Policy 46.

The fires of 2019/ 20 is the culmination of the experiment in land management that started with Sepp 46.

There is a huge cost in having a " hands off" land management policy, both environmentally and in human terms.

Twenty five deaths, 2439 homes destroyed or 37% (2.7 million hectares) of National Park estate burnt at various levels of intensity is not a good result for current landscape management policies.

Supporting documents or images

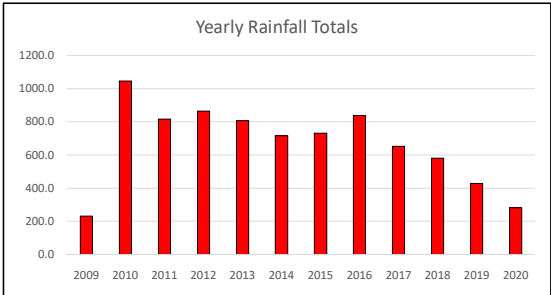
Attach files

- Rainfall Summary Tinderry NSW.pdf

TINDERRY MOUNTAINS, NSW Rainfall data
 collected by Allan Lehepuu of 258 Calabash Road, Tinderry NSW 2620

ALL

Year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Totals
2009	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	96.0	36.8	99.5	232.3
2010	39.2	151.3	109.8	4.0	100.5	21.0	56.0	55.5	53.0	118.0	123.5	214.5	1046.3
2011	89.0	143.0	83.0	7.0	31.7	22.7	35.0	94.8	23.5	44.3	145.5	95.8	815.3
2012	42.8	175.5	191.5	53.0	25.8	101.5	40.0	17.5	37.0	92.5	52.5	34.7	864.3
2013	98.5	115.2	30.5	42.5	14.0	121.0	28.5	26.7	132.5	23.0	102.5	72.3	807.2
2014	8.0	42.5	130.0	100.5	13.0	69.5	12.7	84.0	37.5	56.0	26.4	136.5	716.6
2015	108.5	79.0	4.0	147.5	25.5	68.0	53.5	49.5	14.0	44.0	100.0	38.0	731.5
2016	138.5	37.0	42.5	15.0	8.5	251.0	46.0	27.0	148.5	35.5	24.0	63.5	837.0
2017	8.5	11.0	117.3	51.0	75.0	15.0	4.0	52.0	0.0	39.5	171.5	108.3	653.1
2018	77.8	88.0	20.5	13.8	22.5	59.0	10.0	38.0	17.0	47.0	56.8	131.0	581.2
2019	82.8	62.5	107.5	6.5	43.0	27.2	6.0	8.0	28.1	33.0	23.5	1.0	429.0
2020	32.5	126.0	95.0	29.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	282.5
2021													0.0
2022													0.0
2023													0.0
2024													0.0
2025													0.0
2026													0.0
2027													0.0
2028													0.0
2029													0.0
2030													0.0
Totals	726.0	1,031.0	931.6	469.8	359.5	755.9	291.7	453.0	491.1	628.7	863.0	995.0	7,996.2



Average: 67.9 93.6 81.0 48.3 35.2 81.0 31.7 49.4 51.4 55.5 89.2 99.4 783.6

