

BETTY MOORE OAM

18-3-2020

Submission to the 2019-2020 Bushfires Inquiry  
which occurred across the Inverell Shire,  
in particular, Gilgai District and environs.

My property location: [REDACTED] of the  
Singha Plateau, Parish Blue, County Gough.

This submission covers December 2019 event which should  
be evaluated in conjunction with my submissions previously  
submitted which covered the 2019 Jan/Feb Singha Plateau  
fires, which also involved the Gilgai District and environs.

As previously stated, I reside in this isolated situation  
due to acute allergies resultant from previous career chemical  
traumas.

Consequently, I am very aware of atmospheric conditions,  
wind changes, chemical drift from any source, direction.

The attached Sequence of Events has been extracted from  
my personal diary daily events records.

Recorded in my previous detailed submissions are the  
reasons which contributed to the "catastrophic Declaration" fires.

In brief, namely:

- a) The lack of any "hands on" land management practices  
by any of the Rural Land Protection/Rating Bodies (NOT Shire  
Councils), on Crown Lands, Stock Routes, old forest lands, National  
Parks, other 'pocket' Protected Lands across the Singha Plateau,  
including the water catchment areas surrounding the  
Copeton Dam which was previously being grazed by cattle graziers.
- b) The lack of private and public lands hazard reduction  
burns since the mid 1980's.

Due to this lack of 'hands on management' across all of these lands, formally financially productive agricultural lands, it has lost its "grasslands" geographic category and capability, because it has become heavily infested by the overgrowth of the now VERY prolific seeding pine trees of such density it is impossible for a human or a beast to walk through it.

Consequently, this feral pine growth proliferation since the 1980's has killed off all ground level grasses and vegetation, bird and bee life. It is totally sterile to essential underground

bio-life which sustains other grassland trees and vegetation.

It has destroyed the grasslands of the Pilliga State Forest to Wamaldra and to this Gilgai - Lingha Plateau and into further areas of the Northern Tablelands of the New England Region.

It requires a massive widescale clean up, via

- a) Urgent feral pine tree clearances - mechanical, NOT POISONS.
- b) Selective, ongoing controlled hazard reduction burns.
- c) Leased grazing rights around Copeton Dam, plus cleaning / logging of the larger pine trees.
- d) Change of bureaucratic laws / regulations / policies to allow private property owners - (small and large) to actively manage their own lands more efficiently without multi-departmental, in-compatible, overcrossing, rules impossibilities -  
i.e. Sale of cleared timber from around houses / infrastructures, access roads, fence corridors, power lines etc to be sold - thus offsetting costs of incurred labour, goat fencing / grazing.
- e) Require all NPWS / Forestry, brown lands shall equally share the cost of neighbouring dividing fence as required by the NSW Dividing Fencing Act. to erect, maintain, and clear fence line corridors (FIRE BREAKS).

R.F.S. Matters

As revealed in all of my submissions:

- a) The gross lack of effective communications systems and phone & up to date data announcements via radio throughout the whole series of fire situations, locations, circumstances.
- b) The NSW RFS CHIEF stated on radio that the functional capacity of its whole system had never been designed to effectively deal with the current situations / load of transmissions at the time of installation, for the Jan / Feb events.
- c) RFS systems and website was utterly useless when the power failed to whole regions for many days whilst the fires raged uncontrolled, thus putting people and especially RFS ON-SITE fighters in jeopardy.
- d) Lack of educated local firefighters of their own local geographic and roadside / street names became evident thus confusing local residents and RFS Volunteer crews from other far flung locations. Extra training needed to comply with shire councils, RMS, & Mapping Authorities legal naming systems and records.
- e) Chemical Drops - Identification of actual substances etc
- i) Identification of contents is imperative, prior & post use
  - ia) Pink
  - ib) Silver / White - Refer 'Sequence of Events' -
    - to allow closing off of drinking water roof drains etc
    - notification of roof cleaning post fire.
    - People with allergies (such as myself) can protect themselves and their property grounds / edible vegetation
    - Silver-White data NOT supplied by RFS at any stage -
    - Silver-White data, only available on Dept. Health site giving warnings of its composition / toxicities.
- THIS IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH + + + +
- Class Action have been invoked in recent times.
- f) Is the inadequate communication technology the reason for the RFS holding onto the \$52 globally publicly donated for the relief of the VICTIMS? Finance an upgrade?? /4

ABC FM RN.

The ABC is the national government's official Emergency Services Broadcaster for public notification of disasters, floods, fires and times of need.

However, as itemised in all of my submission's diary of the fire events revealed it just did not function effectively nor timely specific to rapid changing local fire conditions, such as:

- a) Relay of RFS urgent messages - i.e. 'Evacuate now!'
- b) NIL NSW cover - only W.A. situations
- c) NIL URGENT updates RFS to ABC for 9 HOURS
- d) NIL updates after 11 a.m. due to an all-day CRICKET MATCH coverage ONLY!
- e) Local Radio 2NZ Announcer - 6 to 9 AM Breakfast session - stayed ON-AIR 6 AM to 9 PM with constant changing local situations, saved the day.

Will he get paid by RFS and/or ABC?

Conclusion

Because of the lack of effective policy, by all bureaus of "Land Management," of rural land activities (not Local Government councils) or, should I say, 'nil activities', since the early 1980's, peoples lives, properties assets, occupations have been lost.

Most, (like myself), likely to be homeless or never able to obtain a roof over their / families heads or recoup what they've lost.

Now, many are finding out that their insurance policies are useless because of policy loopholes.

It is criminal that consecutive governments have ignored the warnings by credible experts of the compounding dangers of heavy levels of groundmatter for some 20 years, without ~~address~~ <sup>re</sup> address.

JF Moore. 0 AM.  
.../5

Sequence of EventsSecond Inverell Shire Bushfire

Period Wednesday 11th December 2019

to Sunday 22nd December 2019

Which enveloped the locations of Mc Lachlans Lane, Broadies Plains, Rifle Range Road, Yoonwiggall Wilderness, Staggs Lane; and endangered both sides of the Old Stanmifer Road, Melia Close and the District and Village of Gilgai.

Included are the maximum temperatures, as recorded in my personal daily diary records also.

The thermometer is located on the eastern aspect of a roofed, shaded porch post.

TIME	DATE	
6:00pm	11-12-19	Storm, lightning strikes - fires across Yoonwiggall
	WED	Gilgai RFS Alarm rings constantly to alert everyone
MAX - 43°C		Gilgai RFS crews called out to Mc Lachlans Lane Broadies Plains. Heavy smoke infiltrates my building all night.
8:00	12/12	Radio 2NZ gives early notice of two fires. (Extra carparking)
11:00	THURS	Thick smoke, Melia Close off Old Stanmifer Rd, my home. NIL RFS, ABC RNFM, 2NZ or RFS 1800-679-737 updates Helicopter active across here / observations.
1:30pm		Rising ground smoke visible. Phoned RFS 1800 - Recorded message -> "Hold on, all lines busy - wait 8 minutes. NIL ABC all morning for Broadies Plains, Yoonwiggall.
3:00		Rang G.M. Inverell Shire Council, re NIL RFS data etc. G.M.'s staff phoned back - latest web site data, as did a friend. ISC Equipment already being used to assist back burning etc. at Staggs Lane, Middle brieks etc.
MAX	38°C	Air observations ongoing

4:30	12/12 THUR	Wind change, now from NW Multiple types aircraft, helicopters water drops - 3 grey planes, retardants circling overhead & around/over Village
7:15pm		NEW, <u>low at tree top level</u> - <u>SILVER/WHITE</u> , narrow width <u>CHEMICAL DROP</u> here & back to Village, & Stannifer and Staggs Lane. <u>NIL INFORMATION ABOUT THESE CHEMICALS OR LOCATIONS,</u>
2:30am	13/12 FRI	2NZ / 2 SM Dalback input, updates ONLY NIL RFS and/or <u>ABC RN FM</u> updates from 11:00am by broadcast continually until night ends play - <u>of a CRICKET MATCH !!</u> , of the 106 fires across NSW, PM Morrison voices concern of Sydney smoke levels. <u>NIL on Rurals yet again.</u> Not much sleep. Morning ABC TAMWORTH announced that the previously RFS had sacked a highly trained ground employee was recalled by the NSW Minister to work as a VOLUNTEER - UNPAID - because of RFS crew shortfalls & exhaustion.
11am		Fire retardent dropped on Staggs Lane area. Inverell Shire Council announced water restrictions for Inverell, Ashford, Yetman.
1:30pm		Heavy rain here - 15mls.
9:00am	14/12 SAT	Lots smoke again, Awoken by the heavy retardent plane overhead. Ongoing chest problems Rang RFS 1800 - A woman answered in person. gave me an update on Staggs Lane & news of back burns to-day - Many water drops, survey planes all a.m..
1:00pm	N.B.	Severe trachea, bronchus cough, ongoing chest problems. <u>For 3 days now ABC RN FM, News has only reported</u> <u>W.A. fires</u> , nil mention of NSW'S 100. NSW RFS brief, NSW Premier, Federal PM all silent NSW Radios & ABC Regionals - <u>NIL dates/updates</u> - <u>only</u> <u>brief "NSW TOTAL FIRE BAN"</u>

	15/12 SUN	Feb PM - <u>QUOTE</u> - "Well, they (volunteer fire fighters) want to be there". <u>UNQUOTE</u> .
2:00pm	16/12 MON	Water dump helicopters active again - Staggs Lane fire now expanded to 530 hectares.
1pm		Staggs Lane resident defers painting contract - internal wall in shrine library, to stay home / protect his property. Staggs Lane fire expands to Rifle Range Road etc - soaring temperatures & increasing hot winds. Inverell Showgrounds become an Evacuation Area. 2NZ Announcer 'Monti' continues to broadcast fire events after his breakfast session 6am to 9am - through to 9:00 PM. Thus providing the best & most up-to-date information, far better than any other official source. - To be commended.
3pm		2NZ Again Fire Spotting across Rifle Range Road
4pm		Roads closed - Rifle Range Road, Lake Inverell Drive, Brewery Street, (Inverell town) - some evacuations.
MAY	3pc	Wind still SE. Much smoke here now. Pink Dump chopper overhead - refuel, rewater - Monti 2NZ interviews Glen Innes RFS Chief direct/updates. RFS GI, Easterly wind expected next hour.
5:15pm		Staggs Lane fire expected to be pushed towards town, Gaoniviggall & Bundarra Road. Rifle Range Road Sawmill & home lost.
7:30pm		Setting Sun is blood red
8:00pm		Fire now 1,204 hectares. Moore Street closed.
TUES 17/12		Heavy smoke infiltration into building. Nil Breeze
1:30pm		Nil Sleep. Moon is blood red. PM Morrison holidaying in Hawaii.
AM		Local RFS man = "Silver Drop is Super Phosphate + other chemicals - designed to halt ground fires" <u>BUT</u> - <u>DEPT HEALTH INFO LINK DATA - Dangerous to health etc</u> . . . /18

PM	17/12	Heavy smoke here
	TUES	NIL NOTIFICATION BY RFS OF "Silver Health Risks" or Drop Route.
7:30pm		Eastern Breezes.
	18/12	More smoke? RFS Backburns?
5pm	WED	Only NEWCASTLE ABC broadcast. NIL 1800 Data/ABC RN again.
	19/12	Thick smoke Inverell town Macintyre Valley.
3pm	THUR	Subtle wind changes from SE, E to <u>NW &amp; W, SW.</u> and this is a big worry.
		There are at least 5 fires surrounding Copeton Dam, Inverell, Bungara, Bundarra, Armidale Staggs Lane, Gulgai and Lenterfield.
5pm		Tried to phone ABC Tamworth 1300 - held on for 30 minutes waiting for the extension to answer - gave up.
		Shen rang ABC T'worth NEWSROOM - Staff would ask someone to ring back for details how to contact the national Radio official fire notification wavelengths.
		<u>THIS DID NOT OCCUR - COULD NOT OBTAIN ANY UPDATES RFS/ABC.</u>
		NSW Premier declares (2nd) Emergency Status - All 3 Defence Forces now assisting. RFS Section 44 invoked.
4:30pm	20/12	Smoke - Rising Sun an orange ball.
8:30pm	FRI	Thicker smoke MAX TEMP 40°C
8pm		Still 37°C oppressive heat.
8:45		New smoke incoming. RFS Update - monitoring situation, possible backburning.
		couldn't raise ABC T'worth again.
SAT	12/12	MAX 42°C here. 10pm Fires classified "Catastrophic" today.
		Over 3,000 fire fighters active Wild fires every state
	13/12	MAX 44°C here. = 105°F. RFS Volunteers now 100 days firefighting, exhausted; some since August.
	14/12	to March 2020, 15th My car is still packed in readiness for rapid emergency evacuation.