

Your details

Title

Ms

First name

Bev

Last name

McVey

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

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

Excessive fuel load on private, public lands. Limited resources for back burning on public land. Less red tape required to permit controlled burning. Take notice of experience eg aboriginals used to back burn. Must take notice of local knowledge. Imperative to control the fuel load. Not enough clearance around assets eg powerlines, water facilities and mobile towers.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Extensive back burning required at least every 4 years by public authorities and private land holders. Capital resourcing must be adequate to allow this on public land.

Fishermans Paradise 20 years ago used to have an emergency village siren which meant villagers go to the Fire Shed/out of your house. In the 2000 fires the police drove around the village with a loud speaker lights flashing, door knocked and told everyone to get out now. None of this happened in this recent fire. Only mobile phone messages and people became complacent as there were so many for weeks. Mobile phones often patchy or no reception at all.

Need one federal agency to take control in emergencies to stop confusion don't need too many chiefs in these times.

ADF needed from the onset. HMAS Albatross at Nowra - our chopper fleet. These personnel wanted to help earlier but not allowed because of red tape, how stupid are we wasting this resource. Water bombing saved our house. The state government did not have enough fire retardant in storage at Bankstown Airport. Left the re-ordering too late as the retardant is manufactured in USA flown to Melbourne and then trucked to Sydney. Must be mandatory to be manufactured in Australia. I believe there was none in the country when the fires hit Fishermans Paradise. The local RFS need more volunteers a lot are dismayed at the huge amount of time consuming manual exams required and give up because of the red tape even if you are just the driver. RFS need to get back to becoming part of the community again. Some sort of incentives for our volunteers. Loved seeing the fire truck around the village at Xmas and Easter. RFS need to be fully equipped from state government funding. Fire sheds need to be adequate eg our fire shed is too small for an updated fire truck. The fire shed built by the community 30 years ago is now not practical and should be retained as a community meeting centre without the worry of RFS resources being damaged.

We had signs on our gates saying there was water in our tanks and the spa for emergency services to please access. When fires are located in remote bushland the question has to be asked is it best to let it burn itself out or let it go. Plan for the best time to intervene.

1.3 Response to bushfires

Water bombing I believe is the way for the future, it saved our house.

Need to research reliability of warning systems with back up systems.

Private paid personnel at highway junctions were very complacent. Prefer what happened at Bendalong where the residents had to prove ID and their visitors were only allowed to enter when they came to the highway for the OK to be escorted to the village. I do believe this stopped looters and sticky beaks. Fishermans Paradise access was not well organised.

Cannot believe that residents at Bendalong had to drain their vehicles fuel tanks so the RFS could do their job. In the last major fires here we had large fuel tanker trucks permanent at Murrays property Conjola which fuelled the choppers and RFS for weeks.

I am concerned about our safety with the burnt out trees on our 12 acres as to which ones should be removed because they are unstable.

I am reluctant to bring this up but I think it is important and not an isolated case that [REDACTED] had mental health issues due to the fires and possibly left his crew in danger as well as damage to the fire truck. Procedures need to be in place as nobody knew what to do.

I was unaware that you could listen in to the RFS scanner app. This would have greatly helped as felt frustrated with what was going on at many times.

Federal and State governments need to review fund raising organisations. Distribution needs to be better coordinated and transparent.

1.4 Any other matters

Upset with the sight of wildlife many dead kangaroos and injured wombats etc this would have been avoided if slow fire back burning was conducted they would have fared better.

I believe volunteers should have an option to be paid in this horrific instance and it should have been far more than the token given due to the extended period of the fires throughout NSW. It is unfair if you don't get paid leave from your employer to expect 2-3 months of volunteering. Not good for moral when people you are working beside are getting their full wage especially fire control public servants etc. We all know they are volunteers and do the job to the best of their ability but to expect this for such a long time is not right in my view. Volunteers have constant living expenses as do the rest of the community.

Supporting documents or images
