



Your details

Mr

Title

First name

David

Last name

Glasson

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 have been a member of the RFS for in excess of 50 years. Having been Captain of the local brigade, Group Captain in the local shire and then Chairman of the Snowy River Shire Bushfire Management Committee, including through the 2003 fires that impacted large parts of the Alpine areas through to Canberra. I acted as an Incident Controller during the 2003 fires. In my submission to the Federal Bushfire inquiry in 2003 I stated the following:
On the 8th January, 2003 there were some 50 lightning strikes in the Alpine areas from the Victorian Border to the ACT. Approximately 30 of those strikes were in National Parks and the remainder on private property. Within 24 hours all of the fires on private land were either extinguished or contained. As we all know the Section 44 for the Kosciusko South Complex of fires was revoked at 10.00 am on Monday 24th February, 2003, some 47 days later.

This last summer saw that nothing has changed; Public Land managers have not learnt.

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

I believe that the similarity between the 2003 fires and the 2020 fires is the mismanagement of Public Lands that allows excessive fuels to build up and become a danger. This results in a situation when a fire does start it easily gets out of control and becomes impossible to contain. During the 2020 fires the intensity was over 3000 kw/metre which is unlikely to be able to be suppressed.
With global warming it is imperative that proper fuel reduction methods are enacted well before a fire season.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Hazard reduction needs to be brought back to a local level where brigades identify areas that need to be treated and to do so accordingly; not the present situation where several meetings take place prior to any action. The request is sent to Sydney where it goes through many more meetings before returning to the Brigade and by which time the window of opportunity for effective fire reduction management has usually passed.
I am a great believer in Cultural Burning, a practice that has been carried out for thousands of years. The use of Asset Protection Zones cannot be applied state wide. They may be applicable on the outskirts of Sydney but in many areas the bush is the asset and needs to be protected and this should be done by mosaic burning, similar to Cultural Burning, and what was practiced some years ago by The Hume Snowy Bushfire Prevention Scheme.

1.3 Response to bushfires

Any emergency event needs proper planning and preparation and, sadly, lessons from the 2003 fires have not been learnt or acted on. One may ask why are so many trails in the Kosciusko National Park and other parks have not been maintained and have locked barriers preventing their use. When the Premier declared a State of Emergency they remained locked!!!! It should be noted that Victoria doesn't apply the same total exclusion and the trails or the country aren't vandalised.
Recently there has been much press from a group of retired Fire Commissioners that we need more aircraft and more tankers. It should be noted that on many occasions these aircraft can't get into the air because of the poor flying conditions, as happened here at Merimbula, for days on end. Mr Phil Koperburg, a much respected past Commissioner of the RFS, stated " you can build up your numbers of aircraft and tankers but the fire will always beat you". Believing that it again stresses the importance that the removal of flammable material, that as the major fuel in any mega-fire, prior to a fire starting is a major consideration .

1.4 Any other matters

Recommendations
1] The role of fire mitigation and suppression be brought back to a local level. National Parks to work under the local Brigade. The Brigades have the local knowledge.

2] That National Park Trails be maintained and the barriers removed.

3] Decision making be allowed at a local level.

4] Cultural Burning Groups be formed and aligned to the local

Brigade.

5} The High Fire Project at Snowy Plain be re financed. This is an independent study that is already showing in its results the effectiveness of proper management of the Australia Alpine areas and therefore lowering the impact of fire..

6} That the recommendations from this inquiry be enacted upon - not like many previous inquiries.

7} Power line easement to be sufficient to protect the line in a wildfire.

8} Main roads to have an easement that allows continual access in a wildfire.

9} Council reserves to be managed to reduce fire threat in urban areas.

Supporting documents or images
