



<b>Title</b>	Ms
<b>First name</b>	Alison
<b>Last name</b>	Ford
<b>I am making this submission as</b>	Resident
<b>Submission type</b>	Personal
<b>Organisation making the submission (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Your position in the organisation (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Consent to make submission public</b>	Public
<b>Your story</b>	<p>I live with my husband and dogs in the rainforest near Araluen to the west of the Monga National Park atop the ridge of the Araluen Valley. We have only lived here for 1 year. We bought this house knowing of the fire risk in this area. But before the sale went through, I spoke at length with the RFS about the potential fire dangers and how we might mitigate them. Once we moved in 2 members of the RFS came to our house and spent several hours with us analysing the vulnerable aspects of our house and property if bushfire should become a threat and reality. We spent all winter preparing our overgrown land for bushfire based on the advice given to us by the RFS. As spring arrived and we were hearing the risks of fire for 2019 were expected to be higher than normal we organised a community meeting at our house. We had about 17 neighbours attend in conjunction with 2-3 fire trucks filled with various members of the RFS from several local brigades. The morning was spent discussing problems, solutions and actions we might need to address if fire did come to our</p>

area. These meetings were vital in addressing our risks pertinent to our neighbourhood and our individual houses. The last meeting spurred on neighbours organising meetings with RFS members analysing their own situations, and for some neighbours to then join the RFS. Little did we know how important this became to our own fire readiness for 2019. Our fire preparations escalated as fires broke out in the Tallaganda National Park in November 2019 and became a danger to us. The threat became real and we evacuated a couple of times. The Currowan fire in the Monga National Park overtook the Black Range fire in danger and became a new threat to us. As the month of December progressed, we continued to evacuate a few times as the fire moved south and threatened to burst out of the bush towards us. Our final evacuation was for 10 days at the end of December before the fire arrived at our property on the night of January 4, 2020.

The house survived due to both house design, siting and our land preparation - and the fortunate attendance of the RFS, and not to mention luck, due to the timing of wind changes and the time of day. This house was built, not by us, in 2005 to the highest fire-proofing specifications available at the time. It should withstand attack by fire and embers without help by other means. It was why we felt comfortable buying a house in a very high fire prone area. But I am concerned for those who are not so lucky to afford such high standard specifications for their houses. And I am concerned for those who lost their houses, which for most cases were poorly designed to withstand fire and ember attack unless someone was in attendance. This should never have been the case. The whole Great Dividing Range is fire prone and this is where many people choose to live for its outstanding beauty, both historically and now.

I am concerned that houses re-built to replace those lost in this summer's fires will not encompass design and structural elements to protect them from fire or ember attack in the future. I am worried people will think this is an added extra they cannot afford to make when they re-build, rather than it being incorporated into the design of the house in response to its specific site and risk. I am worried people will continue to think they are safe in built up areas. I think built up areas surrounded by bush are more vulnerable to fire than a single house such as ours which is sited by itself and surrounded by bush. In our case we were safer because of its lone siting. It is harder for firefighters to protect a block of badly designed and badly prepared urban houses than a single well prepared and well-designed house within bush. But this does not have to be so. I am concerned that the urban design of the streets and landscaping in fire prone areas does not take into consideration the risk to human development where fire can travel between properties that are ill equipped for fire threat. I feel that councils will overlook the importance of these features in the hurry to allow people to get their lives back together. I have an idea to help with this. It involves a grant to people re-building.

I think a study could be made of how a standard project home could be re-designed to include the most important aspects which would keep a house safe in the case of fire. The difference in cost between a present standard project designed home and one that has been re-designed to include fire safe aspects could then be met by the government in the form of a grant. This could ensure EVERYONE rebuilding after the recent bushfires gets to have a safer house built without the need or expense of using an architect to ensure fire safety aspects are met. This could be a fantastic selling point for the government - the possibility to say that you ensured the future safety of 2800 homes by paying for the difference between a standard house and a fire safe house. This could be a leading example for future new home builds, and thus become the norm rather than an extra only the wealthy can afford. This grant would only be available to those people who have lost their homes in these 2019/2020 fires and set a

standard for house design in fire risky/prone areas in the future. This could then become a norm rather than an added extra only the wealthy can afford. I look forward to hearing your response.

---

**1.1 Causes and contributing factors**

---

**1.2 Preparation and planning**

---

**1.3 Response to bushfires**

---

**1.4 Any other matters**

---

**Upload files**

---