



Your details

Mrs

Title

First name

Elizabeth

Last name

Gossell

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

We have lived in Illawong for 42 years and therefore have a pretty good idea of bushfire risk and prevention. We have been directly threatened (ash & embers flying into our property) 3 times, including the 1994 fires which resulted in the loss of 89 homes in an adjoining suburb, as a result of wind-driven fire jumping the Woronora River. To be honest, I can understand people needing to feel secure in their home during a fire, but the 10/50 rule seems not to have addressed this issue at all in our area. The clearing of bushland and trees in the main seems to have been of larger trees near houses where either owners were frightened of branch fall or wanted to open up their views. This has resulted in a hit and miss clearing of mature trees without making homes any safer. The loss of tree cover is huge and as a result, we see wildlife leaving the area due to unsuitable habitat left, whilst the hollowed out older trees are cut down. We even lost a much-loved 225' Forest Red Gum on our property through swimming pool overflows eventually poisoning the ground water.

We lost 8 trees in that event, and we do not have a pool!!! Every new owner of a home that is built or sold seems to engage in major clearing of their blocks, especially of the older trees so needed for wildlife. There used to be a continuous canopy of large trees along the waterfront where we live which provided homes for so many animals, from birds to tree snakes to sugar gliders. In 42 years of tree removals, we have seen the wildlife disappear as well. I am of the belief that any tree older than 10 years should be identified on each property at the point of sale or transfer and should be guaranteed of some oversight for its welfare. The Council Policy of planting 4 for every one cut down is great in theory, but these new plantings seldom make it past their first year and if they do, it will take 25-50 years before they are suitable wildlife habitat. The old trees of any area contribute hugely to its amenity, providing shade, land stability and habitat and thus are fundamental to life. Please do away with the 10/50 rule as rank amateurs with no comprehensive knowledge of trees or their worth seem empowered by that rule to just take out what they don't like without really making their homes safer. We need bush fire experts to deliver the rules in person after inspection of properties where trees are to be cut down, thus ensuring that they are not removed for the wrong reasons. The Shire is a good place to live in large part because of its environment, including the tree canopy. All steps to preserve it are worth taking, lest we create another concrete jungle of uber-large homes requiring rooms of air conditioners to replace the shade of real trees.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

Supporting documents or images
