



## Your details

Mr

Title

First name

Jim

Last name

Osborne

## 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

Logging contractors were mobilised to help in the bushfire mitigation and recovery efforts in national parks. Processes exist for this to happen in a legislated framework yet it is apparent that these processes were either not always followed or were insufficient to ensure protection of national parks; significant instances exist where works undertaken appear opportunistic, unnecessarily destructive and possibly illegal. I detail in a supporting document one such event.

I ask the Bushfire Inquiry to review:

1. all works that took place in national parks by logging contractors during the bushfires and determine whether national parks think the works were appropriate.
2. the processes for delivering authority for works in national parks during and after an emergency and whether national parks believe the process is effective.
3. establishing a productive and transparent methodology for

reviewing these works after the emergency to enable learning and future co-operation.

## Terms of Reference (optional)

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

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### 1.4 Any other matters

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1. all works that took place in national parks by logging contractors during the bushfires and determine whether national parks think the works were appropriate.
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3. establishing a productive and transparent methodology for reviewing these works after the emergency to enable learning and future co-operation.

## Supporting documents or images

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### Attach files

- Bushfire Inquiry Submission.pdf
  - image-3.jpg
  - Nungatta Ck Rd 1.jpg
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I anticipate my financial losses from the January 2020 fires at my property, [REDACTED] (on the Victorian border, near Nungatta), to be up to \$ 1million and I have \$100k of insurance. Despite these personal losses, I accept the destruction caused by bushfires as a naturally occurring event and something we all must live with.

I struggle, however, to accept opportunistic destruction of national parks during and after a bushfire by logging contractors without proper authority to do so. Below I detail one such occurrence however I am led to believe this was not an isolated incident. Many stories came to light of works undertaken in national parks during and after the fire that had outcomes that conflict with conservation ideals and were done without following proper process. As a result, I believe the process needs review.

Between January 4<sup>th</sup> (when the fire front passed through) and January 25<sup>th</sup> (when I was allowed back into my property) a logging contractor cleared a 3.8km stretch of the Nungatta Creek Road, wholly within the South East Forests National Park. I know this road well, I have travelled it for 50 years and it forms part of the route I use to access my property. This was predominantly old growth forest, it was very scenic, remarkable even, yet this is now all gone.

The destruction after the fire by the logging contractor was indiscriminate; all the trees for 25m either side of the roadway were cut down and bulldozed into the forest, a 20 hectare area was denuded of all vegetation. This was extreme and unnecessary and the remnant catastrophic mess will now need to be remediated including: cleaning up stumps, softening bulldozer scars and stump craters to prevent erosion and fixing visual impediments. This road is a well used, important tourist pathway to the Waalimma Picnic Area.

The path of destruction continued on for a further 4.5km beyond what is detailed above, however by then it was on Crown Road Reserve (even though still through national park). Destruction of CRR, perhaps, isn't considered as heinous as clearing land wholly within national park and for this reason I'm treating it separately. Personally I think they are equal; the Grey Box Woodland that was destroyed just before the intersection of Nungatta Creek Rd and Poole Rd by this logging contractor was one of my favourite parts of the entire 40km forest journey I take to my property.

Speaking of the personal effects of this event, the destruction along the entire 8.3km Nungatta Creek Road is so distressing to me I cannot drive it any more; I now take a 10km detour. This is an irreparable, unnecessary loss and I am angry.

Despite numerous enquiries made to understand why and under who's authority this occurred, I don't have a clear picture. Given it is extremely hard to imagine how this action could be considered appropriate by anyone who understood process, my unsubstantiated conclusion is this was vandalism without proper authority or, if authority was given, liberties were taken by the logging contractor to expand the brief.

Logging contractors and national parks, by nature of their differing core values, have potential for conflict. It is well known changes in tenure of the land in this area from State Forest to South East Forests National Park created deep resentments in the timber industry. As a result, I believe allowing such contractors to work unsupervised in national park is highly inappropriate.

I bring this story to the Bushfire Inquiry as Incidents like this need to be understood so they don't happen again. Fires will happen again, hopefully opportunistic vandalism won't.

As such, I would appreciate the Bushfire Inquiry to review:

1. all works that took place in national parks by logging contractors during the bushfires and determine whether national parks think the works were appropriate
2. the processes for delivering authority for works in national parks during and after an emergency and whether national parks thinks the process is effective
3. establishing a productive and transparent methodology for reviewing these works after the emergency

Jim Osborne

[REDACTED]

April 29, 2020



