

Your details

Title

Mr

First name

John

Last name

Hawkins

Submission details

I am making this submission as

Emergency services personnel

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

Group captain

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

Green valley fire

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

Lightning strike 29/12/19 in steep difficult bushland.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Bulldozer & air support were asked for. No air support available, which I find out later was a lie. I had to organize bulldozer 1 hours after fire started, Albury RFS didn't call a dozer when asked. I was promised air support first afternoon & next morning, nothing came, about 11am 30th 2 Victorian planes 1 chopper came to help, still no NSW help. Dozer could only put a brake around 75% of fire 25% to steep & rocky

1.3 Response to bushfires

2 brigades responded straight away and requested heavy plant & air support

1.4 Any other matters

The comment on fire radio from fco on the morning of the 30th about 9am when I was asking for help was "you might as well just accept that you have lost it John". Looking back now they had no intention of helping, we didn't lose it until 2.30pm. Large air tanker turned up at about 2pm to my surprise to do a drop and then called away no drop happened. There are a lot more things that happened at this fire that is bad management at fire control in Albury. I have no confidence in our FCO in Albury at all. John [REDACTED]

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- 15869916063991012195513.jpg

- Initial communication of location of fire and urgency was poor.
- Lack of initial air support.
- Air support improved as time progressed.
- Communication with brigades on river road (Talmalmo, Mt Wagra and Bowna/Wymah) is always difficult. No mobile service, no pager service and limited UHF radio coverage.
- Handheld PMR's also had limited coverage depending upon location. Brigade Captains require vehicle mounted PMR's to ensure adequate service.
- Fireground radios were ineffective until booster was installed but still was limited in coverage.
- Brigades were repeatedly asked to ring office or use UHF or Fireground when this was not possible.
- Access to Green Valley was poor.
- X • Information from the fireground was supplied to FCC via PMR but it appeared that this information was not being forwarded to Ops/Logistics.
- After initial problems heavy plant availability was good.
- Lack of available units to support heavy plant.
- Heavy plant operators need to provide more turn-outs/safety refuge points.
- Greater direction required to plant operators for placement of trails/containment lines.
- Restrictions on heavy plant movement by road at night.
- ✱ • Re-deployment of plant and other resources from areas that are undefendable.
- Day 1 LAT run was aborted at what turned out to be a critical time.
- LAT run on Jingellic Road Lankeys Creek was poorly planned from the FCC and therefore ineffective.
- Forestry were of little help to assist RFS initially. The later arrival of out of area Forestry crews proved helpful.
- Require clarification regarding command structure for RFS, State Forest, Police.
- National Park crews were extremely helpful and useful.
- Community involvement has been excellent.
- Group 4 have provided terrific support to crews and community.
- Excellent and continued response from out of area crews.
- X • There was inadequate or non existent information given to Green Valley Control/Div Coms on decisions made by the IMT.
- IMT deploying Brigades/Captains/GC's to unfamiliar areas. Consultation with local brigades could help prevent lost time and confusion.
- ✱ • IMT appeared to be micro managing.
- ✱ • IMT staff often unavailable due to conference calls. Fireground Op's should take priority and a senior member of IMT should always be available to support Div Coms/Sector Leaders.