



Title

First name John

Last name Sutherland

I am making this submission as Resident

Submission type Personal

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

Consent to make submission public Public

Your story During the fires I sat at home glued to radio, TV and government web pages to determine when, and in which direction, I should evacuate as per my plan.

I soon realised that I also had to go outside and look at the sky and smell the air.

Radio 702 did not interrupt the cricket to give us bushfire information. The presenters treated fire info as entertainment. The phoned in vox pops from the field were more informative than the official info.

The RFS had all the fire information but they declined to share it with us. The RFS web page showed only burned areas, and no guidance as to where the flames were. The Western Australian government Landgate page showed the location of the hot spots. When RFS did publish a fire forecast map, it was buried 3 mouse

clicks down; thanks guys. Shane Fitzsimmons on TV was boring as batshit. He spoke in bureaucratic language. Most of his waffle applied to other parts of the state and not mine. Gladys disgraced herself when standing next to him by looking everywhere except at the camera, and by fiddling with her necklace to indicate that she did not want to be there.

The RFS map showed Couridjah as having being burned. Wollondilly Council mailed letters to residents advising us where to dispose of burned material.

LiveTraffic.com gave some clue as to where the smoke and flames were and was helpful in planning my evacuation, although it showed my access road as closed days after it was opened.

How many other map errors were there?

The BOM weather radar was a helpful web page. It showed the smoke clouds which, unlike rain clouds, were anchored to the ground at the upwind end. Their Meteye page enabled me to dismiss Shane's dire warnings when it forecast no wind for Couridjah that day.

I evacuated 3 times over the fire period. I observed the police stopping northbound traffic because of smoke at Maldon when I was driving south through it without much problem. Those poor motorists had to sit in their cars enveloped in smoke for goodness knows how long.

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

1.2 Preparation and planning

1.3 Response to bushfires

Had the RFS applied cost benefit analysis to the deployment of their water bombers, they may have diverted them from saving outlying properties on the North Coast to extinguishing at source the two fires which subsequently burned out the entire Sydney water catchment. I think the Victorians have already learned that fires should not be allowed to burn until they get near houses.

1.4 Any other matters

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