



## Your details

Mr

Title

First name

JULIUS

Last name

TIMMERMAN

## 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

November 2019 to January 2020 was a very anxious time for my wife and I as we were surrounded by fires in the Blue Mountains. On occasions I felt very ill from the stress and the heat. The continuous smoke didn't help. We were always nervous about going to work as we didn't know what would happen next. However during the school holidays we braced ourselves and made lots of preparations around the house. We spent a lot of money on that. We have a couple of water tanks but we were still worried about the water supply and how much we might have if the fire arrived. We didn't actually have a holiday, just time to off to do enormous amounts of work. The Blue Mountains City Council was very helpful. Fortunately the fire didn't come to our place but just watching the news each day was very distressing.

## 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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**1.1 Causes and contributing factors**

Increased temperatures and dryness due to global warming; greater severity of drought due to global warming; large-scale inappropriate forest and land clearing; inappropriate local tree planting in communities eg conifers; not enough employment of indigenous knowledge of land management.

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**1.2 Preparation and planning**

Prep and planning extremely substandard. Aerial and ground firefighting teams savagely under-resourced when the warnings have been staring at us for years. NPWS under-financed and under-staffed. Governments who have a mindset that ignores reasons why things mentioned in 1.1 are happening, and pander to vested private interests over the public good, will never be prepared. When there is a large red warning light blinking, the government must take notice of it. Preparation and planning must include a strong ethic of environmental protection, while regulating and assisting with urban sprawl into bush areas.

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**1.3 Response to bushfires**

Too slow, too little too late. Not enough aerial firefighters. NSW response a little better than the Federal Government's which was woeful. More work is needed to help affected communities recover, especially with Covid-19 impact on top. Crews must be out there rebuilding, helping on farms, animal sanctuaries etc. Get people employed in these areas. Rural Fire Services should be not just be volunteers - a permanent, fully staffed, fully resourced Emergency Firefighting Unit/Department must be established, with paid skilled employees including indigenous people with knowledge of land management.

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**1.4 Any other matters**

Governments need to adopt indigenous cultural burning practices and use indigenous knowledge of the land and how to look after it. Employ many indigenous experts and listen to them. Governments need to recognise the enormous impact of global warming. The country must cease using fossil fuels including gas, transition quickly to clean energy and adopt sustainable practices on the land including farming and agriculture. This includes outlawing toxic chemicals like glyphosate. Governments must stop having a mindset of denying global warming and thinking things will just work themselves out - they must be far more proactive. Notwithstanding the NSW Govt has made some motions towards clean energy, much more action still is needed - very very quickly. Water use and retention must be a major priority including river systems and underground water (fracking definitely won't help). Efficiency of water use must constantly be encouraged. Rebates should be available to encourage households to adopt clean energy, install water tanks, and build fire-proof housing. Clearing of old growth forest including koala habitat must stop. Fires move faster through semi-cleared forest than through original dense forest. It is absolutely appalling that the government has allowed this practice to continue in forests not affected by bushfires. Promotion and information about trees like poplar and chestnut that withstand fires better than others like pine should be made available. Forests must be re-established - properly by experts, not ad hoc by volunteers, so the variety of species is present and balanced.

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## **Supporting documents or images**

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