



Your details

Mr

Title

First name

Kevin

Last name

Shales

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

To the enquiry headed by Mr Dave Owens and Professor Mary O'Kane,
Following are actions to take to prevent future disaster bushfires like we have seen in 2019-2020.
We are now in a situation with climate change, that the bushfire threat to our country is going to be ongoing and will get worse. It's not going away, and we need to be far better prepared than we have been.
1. The experience of senior bushfire officers should be listened to. Last year a group of very senior officers made attempts to speak to the Prime Minister about the developing fire threat. They never got to see him. Had they been listened to we would not have seen so much damage and loss of life that occurred.
2. We need our own water bombing aircraft ready to be put into action at all times, instead of having to rely on overseas contractors. Why could we not have extra RAAF Hercules fitted with water tanks or be quickly adapted to be water tankers.

These aircraft could be used for normal RAAF duties when not operational for bushfire duties. Same with extra Black hawk helicopters. They could be used for fire fighting and resume normal duties when not needed.

3. We need trained fire jumpers like in America who go into remote areas to put out small fires before they build into the uncontrollable fire storms we saw.

4. Volunteer fire fighters need to be paid for the magnificent work they do. This fire season saw volunteers exhausted from what was expected from them. Men and Women are not going to put their lives on the line if they are not going to get State and Federal Government support from them. The 2019-2020 fires have clearly shown we are now in a different world when it comes the threat we face.

5. A huge effort must be put in to getting a core group of paid permanent bush fire fighters in place all the time who will be supported by paid volunteers in time of emergency situations. An effort must be made to get younger fire fighters into the service. To help the senior older fire fighters, they must have younger men and women to be able to deal with the arduous and highly physical demands required during fire fighting.

6. A huge effort must be made to ensure volunteers are fed and hydrated while in the field. I know of one case in the Wyee area where the volunteers were assisted with food and drink from the local home owners, because they had not had sustenance for some hours. Our volunteers should not be expected to put up with that.

7. All fire vehicles should have emergency rations on board for extended fire fighting operations in the field. If the military can provide rations to our soldiers in operations why cannot the Fire Service do the same.

8. We are now in a situation of fighting an enemy, being the bushfire, we need to have the best of equipment, vehicles and aircraft to more than cope with the horrific results we have seen. I find it amazing that the Federal Government can spend billions in the case of the Covid 19 situation but appears reluctant to fund a force with the best equipment of our own to be prepared for the coming years when our fire fighting forces will be called upon.

9. Is all the above going to be expensive? Of course, but we have no choice otherwise more lives will be lost, fire fighters and public injured and thousands upon thousands of homes and businesses lost.

10. More effort has to be made in the control of build up of fuel in bush around residential areas.

11. People who live on remote properties in the bush should be educated on building bunkers for themselves. This would save fire fighters from having to risk their lives going in to rescue people who have opted to stay and fight the fires. I saw a couple on the TV who had built such a bunker and it worked successfully.

12. That's about it for the moment, but can you pass on our thanks and gratefulness to all the fire fighters for all they did for us.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

Supporting documents or images
