



Title	Mrs
First name	Rosalie
Last name	Toth

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
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Your story	<p>I'm an aged pensioner living with my husband who has mobility issues. Our house is old and cannot be defended against fire. We are north-east and across the road from Chatham Park, a large forested reserve which has not been cleared of combustible material in close to a decade. With prevailing north-westerlies it would only have taken a lightning strike or some idiot setting off the Park for our home to have gone. Fortunately we dodged a bullet this time. But the trauma and anxiety seeing fire all around the area and ever-present smoke for 6 weeks takes a toll. There were days around New Year when we had no access to information (power, internet, phone). ABC local radio, when the power returned and the BoM were a lifeline, better than the Fires Near Me app. We lost our home in 1983 to a technical fault in the TV. This was not as traumatic as we were at work, didn't see it, and didn't have the day-in, day-out trauma of being on full alert for 6 weeks as we have in 2020.</p>
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1.1 Causes and contributing factors

I'm in no doubt that climate change has exacerbated the drought which has in turn exacerbated so many wildfires over the summer.

I'm also in no doubt that logging increases bushfires.

Australian National University landscape ecology expert Professor David Lindenmayer said multiple academic and forest industry studies showed forest thinning in Australia "makes forests more fire prone".

The decades' long history of intensive logging in the South Coast region has made our forests more fire prone. Logging has made the impacts of the fires worse by increasing the number of smaller, younger trees in denser drier forests. It has also hastened climate change by releasing tonnes of carbon stored in these trees into the atmosphere when they're logged.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Increasing the rate of prescribed burning is no answer to the current wildfire problem. Case studies from the recent fires illustrate this - most notably the Border fire. It burnt from the Victorian border to Eden in a single day, through some of the most heavily logged forest in Australia, so even though the fuel load in that forest had been reduced, the fire simply swept through anyway.

The longer old-growth forests remain fire-free, the less combustible they become. The thicker canopy creates more shade, the undergrowth becomes thinner and less vigorous and hence there is less fuel for fires.

1.3 Response to bushfires

A moratorium on logging native forests especially in bush fire affected areas would keep the carbon in the trees, assist with the recovery of native wildlife and in the longer term help prevent the extreme wildfires experienced this "Black Summer" of 2019-20. I request that this commission call for a moratorium on logging native forests and ask for a permanent transition out of logging native forests into plantation timber with adequate compensation for the workers affected.

If adequate funding was re-instated for NPWS it would contribute to good land / fire management and pest control practices in our parks and benefit the tourism industry.

Over the last 9 years NPWS had \$121 million cut from its budget. In 2017 an additional \$80 million was cut and the number of rangers employed was reduced by approx 25%. (Fact-checked by The Guardian) Previously 28 people were in the role of senior ranger. They had responsibility for hazard reduction and pest control. This role was abolished in a restructure in 2017, effectively replacing rangers with office based clerks - presumably on less pay than rangers with university qualifications and 20 to 30 years' experience in the service.

We need to listen to our scientists and fire experts and act on their recommendations. The short term political cycle of 3 to 4 years needs to be de-coupled from the longer term scientific cycle. If we want to decrease wildfires one of the steps we have to take now is to stop adding carbon to the atmosphere and start drawing it down out of the atmosphere.

1.4 Any other matters

In the Eurobodalla and Bega Shires jobs directly created by forestry represent less than 1% of the total work force. Many more jobs are dependent on our nature-based tourism sector which is heavily reliant on the South Coast's image as an environmentally unspoilt place which is incompatible with logging.

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