



Your details

Ms

Title

First name

Sally-Anne

Last name

Brown

Submission details

I am making this submission as

A resident in a bushfire-affected area

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)

na

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

na

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

I live on LEP zone E3 land. The Tathra Reedy Swamp fire started 2-3 km from our home. It was not affected. The Badger fire of 2019-20 travelled into Mumbulla forest and hung around our home for weeks, being turned away by wind direction 3 times. I am aware of that good fortune. I am a psychologist supporting many people professionally as well as personally with the impact of major loss and disruption in their lives.

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

Degradation of land and extreme weather increasing fuel loads, as observed on my land lots.
In 25 years only since moving here, I have been actively managing the fuel loads around my dwelling with winter ground burns and small pile burns. The fuel loads inside and outside the home perimeter are growing faster than they can compost due to higher death rates of vegetation (drought), lower ground moisture, greater tree breakage (high winds in fragmented forest canopy) local loss of species that turn the ground including bandicoots, insects such as moths and bird species. I am not a scientist but I have observed these changes. The continued disregard by government of protecting integrated ecosystems for no benefit outside personal profit, through neglect of good legislation with science, is in my view the greatest contributor to the ferocity of the fires. They are all related to extraction approach to land use rather than sustainable land use. Now, we must fast track regenerative land care, not intensify clearing responses which are only a short term solution causing increase of need for short term strategies. If this disaster experience in our society doesn't, what could motivate an end to this cycle of destruction?

1.2 Preparation and planning

I participated in the locally offered hotspots programme June 2019 offering 2 & 1/2 days of community and knowledge building about fire responses. It was empowering and valuable. At the same time the messaging was confronting - The fire risk is so great that landowners have to manage it themselves - communities will be supported not individual properties. Also it highlighted the government strategy of addressing the symptoms rather than the cause of the known escalating fire risk- extreme climate events due to human induced atmospheric changes. The failure of state and federal government to adopt and fund cause related policies and longer term mitigation strategies such as tighter environmental regulation and compliance of state forest activities, clearer responsibilities under environmental management and conservation zones of State LEP zones, adopting indigenous cultural management in national parks and adopting an ETS to cost fossil fuel use, are crucial contributors to the overload of the local RFS teams left to support their communities.

On a more personal and business model contributor to landowner preparation, insurers should recognise relevant risk management in premium assessments. Our dam started failing due to drought so we installed a fire water tank (150,000 l) and pump in 2018. We have a copper sprinkler system and council approved mudbrick and pole dwelling yet insurers seem to regard it as impermanent materials or temporary dwelling and few will insure it. Yet it is more resistant to fire than many other building materials. We have no urban standard 'break and enter' mitigation so are penalised for that..

1.3 Response to bushfires

The firesnearme app in conjunction with ABC radio were essential tools in managing fear and enabling better decision making around the crisis in my fortunate position of distance. Hard to imagine what could be different on the ground in such a storm as occurred. Prevention is so much more important. Supporting landholders to manage and protect native ecology and landscape is more important than supporting landholders to

extract, as those extractors obtain direct immediate profit from degrading the land, while conservers are financing husbanding it for the future, with no material gain. Custodianship at an individual level - currently unrecognised as is the care potential of the Traditional Custodians. Replacing subsidies for extractors with regenerative programmes would fast track salvage and recovery. eg clean up Paying council per tree removed regardless of an accurate assessment of its health and risk is not responsible management of a threatened system, and encourages profiteering, reflecting business as usual of private enterprise model of common assets use.

1.4 Any other matters

Humans are not more precious than any other complex life form such as ecosystems. The fallacy that we can live healthily outside an ecosystem needs acknowledgment at every level of organised society, government and private. Use of common resources - air, water and land, should be managed through true democratic processes, such as community consultations with binding recommendations rather than non transparent stakeholder processes dominated by vested interests of corporatised power holders .

thankyou

Supporting documents or images
