



Your details

Mr

Title

First name

Stephen

Last name

Lloyd

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)

Mr

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

Mr

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

Berrara is a small hamlet near Sussex Inlet. We have lived here for over 30 years and experienced a few bushfires in that time, the worst being in the summer of 2001/2002 when the flames reached our back fence setting it on fire. Luckily for us Elvis the helicopter was in our area and doused the fire. In the recent fire the flames were stopped at the bottom of our street, about 100m from our house. This was achieved by 3 yellow planes that were scooping water from nearby Swan Lake and dropping it on the fire. We also had a couple of drops of the

pink fire retardant from the big 707 plane to help. Our house backs onto the bush and on both occasions, despite plans by our local bushfire brigade, controlled burnoffs in Autumn/Winter had not occurred due to stalling by bureaucratic interference. Also on both occasions the bush was bulldozed to make a wider firebreak (we have some clearance under powerlines), but only after the fire had finished. There was no maintenance program put in place to keep the bush down after the 2002 fire, so by the time this one started the fuel was back again. I'd suggest this is one way to help in the future. Our suburb's population swells each summer as tourists arrive to enjoy our beaches and bush. When the fire came this year there were a few thousand of tourists who became stranded when the roads out of Sussex Inlet were closed. Everyone was told to listen to the radio, which we did, to get updates on the fires. With power lines cut internet (which is irregular at the best of times) became virtually useless, so we relied on local radio broadcasts. They kept telling us that the roads were closed, however when I drove down to the turnoff that leads to the highway there were several police at the intersection allowing traffic out to the highway. This miscommunication needs to be addressed. A simple call from the police to the local radio station would have allowed people to know they could safely leave the area. Instead people sat around, literally in the dark (due to blackouts). My suggestions to your commission of inquiry are obvious from the above. Finally, in regards to funds raised by the bushfire appeal that the Supreme Court has ruled must be spent in NSW by the RFS I believe a large proportion should be spent on aircraft designed to fight fires. Without those planes operating for hours on end I'm sure we would have lost our houses, a bit like our unfortunate neighbours down at Conjola.

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	Overgrowth of bushland
1.2 Preparation and planning	A need to allow local fire brigades to regularly conduct burnoffs without bureaucratic interference.
1.3 Response to bushfires	As we are near water planes or helicopters have been able to save us from disaster.
1.4 Any other matters	Improved communication between authorities and local media. Updates on the hour as a minimum.

Supporting documents or images
