Title	
First name	Steve
Last name	Toms
I am making this submission as	Other
Submission type	Personal
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	
Consent to make submission public	Public
Your story	Hello, I am a retired public land manager having spent many years involved with bushfire management. I can recall a number of significant bushfire years, with 2002/03 being a standout for eastern NSW. It is apparent that the depth of drought leading into the 2019/20 is probably the most significant factor of this past fire season, and has made it more significant than fires of the last 50 years. Obviously, prevailing fire weather and fuel levels also contribute. The main point that I would like to raise for your consideration relates to fire detection, to which I will refer to under 1.3.
1.1 Causes and contributing factors	
1.2 Preparation and planning	

1.3 Response to bushfires	The 2019/20 bushfire season has clearly been heavily impacted by the prevailing drought conditions. Given the very dry, windy conditions experienced through the 19/20 fire season, any fire that starts whether by lightning or man made causes, has the potential to become a very big fire.
	In such difficult bushfire seasons, the importance of good fire detection is critical. To the extent that fires can be detected as they start, and rapid responses made, it is possible to prevent many fires from getting out of control. It is much more effective to utilise aircraft and ground crews to mop up fires as they start, as opposed to when they have become large wildfires, and much higher levels of effort are needed to attempt to control them.
	Forestry traditionally had a deep seated culture for fire detection, specifically including fire towers covering pine plantation areas. I have observed that other organisations including RFS and NPWS are less proactive with fire detection, particularly if there are not active fires running in the area, and can rely on more casual fire sightings.
	I believe remote sensing is the key for continuous fire detection going forward, obviously backed up by ground crews and any aerial reconnaissance that may be occurring.
	In more recent years the remote sensing capability of Geo-science Australia's Infrared remote satellite system of hotspots has been very useful in identifying fires and their extent, particularly in remote country. This system is currently limited by the number of satellites and the frequency with which they pass.
	I would encourage, greater research and investment in remote 24 hour continuous real time fire hot spot surveillance, such that, in problematic fire seasons, there is improved chance of detecting and responding to fires as they start.
1.4 Any other matters	I would like to commend the efforts of all involved with the 2019/20 fire season. It has clearly been a very significant and lengthy season.
Upload files	