

Our Ref: S3.16.18

25 March 2020

NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

Council, at their February 2020 Ordinary Meeting, made the decision to host a public meeting to gather feedback from residents to ensure locals were providing input to the NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry.

The public meeting was held in the Inverell Town Hall on Wednesday 18 March, 2020. 27 members of the community attended the meeting.

The following matters were identified at the public meeting and are submitted for the Inquiry to consider:

1. During the 2019-20 bushfires, the lack of mapping of fire trails hampered efforts by emergency services personnel to access rural areas to control the spread of fire and protect life, property and the environment. It is noted that fire trails could also be used as fire breaks and escape routes for fire fighters.

Suggestion:

That the Inquiry recommend that the Rural Fire Service prepare mapping of fire trails.

2. The lack of fire trails in public areas and National Parks was also highlighted.

Suggestion:

That the Inquiry considers the need for the establishment of new fire trails in public areas.

3. Regular maintenance of the fire trails is needed

Suggestion:

That an annual funding program be implemented to maintain fire trails.

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4. Fallen vegetation on single access roads caused safety concerns and delayed response times for emergency personnel.

Suggestion:

That legislative authorisation be provided to enable appropriate clearing of vegetation on single access roads.

5. The fuel load present in National Parks continues to be a great concern for residents and emergency service personnel.

Suggestion:

- The creation of buffer zones around National Parks would allay these concerns considerably.
- The use of regular 'cool burns' to reduce this fuel load was an issue that many speakers favoured.

Thank you for your attention to Council's submission. Should you require further details in respect of any aspect of this submission, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned

Yours faithfully

P J HENRY PSM

GENERAL MANAGER