

Your details

Title

Ms

First name

Sue

Last name

Tasman

Submission details

I am making this submission as

Other

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)

Ms

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

Ms

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

As a member of a Volunteer Team from the Presbyterian Church in Nambucca Heads I have been involved with Taylors Arm and to a greater degree in South Arm since December 2019.

In my working life Community Consultation, Community Development, Community Capacity Building, Advocating for community and liaising across all Government and NGO sectors formed my working life for more than twenty years, I believe my experience allows me to offer comment to this Inquiry.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

1.2 Preparation and planning

I have offered my opinion in "Any other matters"

1.3 Response to bushfires

I have offered my opinion in "Any other matters"

There needs to be much more done to address the needs of community post fires, but developed well in advance of fires and developed in conjunction with strategies and planning/fire management plan

1.4 Any other matters

Volunteering in the Taylors Arm and South Arm communities allows for a personalised perspective of the needs of fire impacted people.

Specifically, I would like to address three of the Points of Reference in my submission.

Those points are:

2, 8 and 11.

POR 2.

I believe that when developing a strategy to address the possibility of bushfires there needs to be better planning for the affected community post the fires.

There appears to have been poor or no planning done to care for these communities after the fires with most assistance offered haphazardly or at the point of desperation.

A Bushfire Recovery Coordinator has been employed by Council in various affected areas but they have a specific roll, which to my understanding, does not encompass the various needs of the affected community, including but not restricted to:

* A gathering/ Recovery Centre in the immediate time following the fire, with showers and toilets cooking facilities, food and beds.

(Never assume that community following fires has the ability to look after their own well being and needs, all will be traumatised, many disorientated and at times catatonic)

Emotionally and physically scarred, 'there needs to be counsellors available within days of the fires not weeks or months after

* Habitable shelter sourced prior to the fire and a part of the fire management plan (short and long term) with animals.

Finding accommodation for people with animals (often their 'family' and the only things they escaped the fires with, removing these animals from the fire victim would cause a great deal of psychological trauma and stress) has been an exercise in futility for many from South Arm.

All avenues had been exhausted and the people returned to burned out dwellings on burned out land, to live in tents and leaky caravans, rather than give their pets up.

POR 8. Resourcing.

Again from a community perspective.

A Bushfire Recovery Coordinator is essential to be able to 'direct traffic' i.e. to answer questions on Council policy and procedures and also answer queries from community members on what might be available in the way of council grants, questions about rates etc.

There also needs to be a Liaison Officer as a go-between, working between and accessible to community and organisations, and to develop relationships with community and pathways with those organisations that can meet community needs, for example habitable shelter, short and long term, accessing clothes, school supplies and those resources necessary to develop a sense of 'normality'

POR 11. Public communication is a two way or multi-laned road.

Surrounding areas need to be made aware obviously of impending danger and well before danger is on their doorstep.

Many people in South Arm spoke of not being aware of just how quickly the fires were spreading.

Television, social media and mobile phones need to be utilised better as a warning system.

Just an idea is to make all screens red, all printing in CAPITALS.

Helicopters used in advance of the fires using coloured canisters/smoke and loud speakers, all of which the community has been advised about well in advance of fire season.

These warning systems will have been introduced to residents as will the safest, clear roads for escaping the fires.

Supporting documents or images
