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NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry

Submission Application

If you are making this submission anonymously you do not need to fill in any personal details.

Applicant Information

Full Name: SUSAN ACKROYD

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I give consent to make this submission? Public Anonymous Confidential

Signature

Please note the Inquiry will retain discretion to withhold publishing any information that may be considered personal or defamatory in nature.

Signature: Susan Ackroyd Date: 28/2/20

Submission details

I am making this submission as

- A resident in a bushfire-affected area
- Emergency Services personnel
- A business owner
- A primary producer
- An academic/researcher
- A member of the general public
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Submission type

- I am making a personal submission
- I am submitting on behalf of my organization

Organisation making the submission (if applicable): _____

Your position in the organisation (if applicable): _____

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

Our home in the Kanimbla Valley was surrounded by fires on 3 sides. Through the efforts of the fireies, and luck, we were not burnt out. However like most of us, the thick smoke, poor air quality, fear, affected us.

Through our connection with our local brigade, we found out their equipment problems, which had not been addressed by the RFS (the Government. Only one fireie had a full face mask. The others could not get close to mega fire fronts. Bob Roger, deputy fire commissioner, forbade the RFS from "crowd funding" to purchase resources.

This absolutely incensed us. How dare he! The answer is probably a lack of independence from government.

Our solution - we let our community know the brigade needed masks, 2 chainsaws etc. The community responded, & within 3 weeks the brigade had enough donations to cover the above items.

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

The cause of the fires was largely climate change. This dried the land, raised temperatures. The world's scientists had said "extreme weather events" would happen. Ross Garnaut, Greg Bullis - & many others, predicted this devastating fire season.

The topography of the Great Dividing Range, meant lightning strikes in inaccessible areas would be difficult to put out. In earlier more normal, wetter conditions, the damp gullies allowed some control of fires at night.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Resources - The RFS is massively under-resourced. Our brigade has 4 fire trucks, all differently configured. One truck has the "mist"/sprinkler activated from outside the cabin, so in a 'burnover', one person has to get out!! More fires are needed. A system of voluntary national service directed to school leavers, to train them to fight fires, is worth investigating.

Fuel reduction - the use of backburning - National Park staff have been cut, so fewer people to either backburn or maintain fire trails. Intelligent integration of landowners in managing fuel reduction. Regulations requiring private landowners to clean up their properties, remove trees.

1.3 Response to bushfires

Federal government - total failure to protect us all, by reducing emissions, not meeting with the experts. Not providing aviation resources. Not preparing a ^{fire} trained group from the ADF. Not compensating fires for lost income soon enough.

Local brigades - amazing response. Months of long day fighting fires. Heroic really. Good support from their communities.

Future - buy back properties built in indefensible areas. Establish TAFE fire courses everywhere, free. Wake up federal government.

1.4 Any other matters

Appoint at all level of government a "minister" for the climate, & legislate that all policies are reviewed by these people, with their reviews made public.

Acknowledge the duty of care owed by our governments to protect their citizens. By failing to move to zero emissions, to prepare for the hotter climate, we are failed by government. Class action to sue may happen

Supporting documents or images

Please attach any other files you would like to include in your submission.