

Your details

Title

Mrs

First name

Lynleigh

Last name

Greig

Submission details

I am making this submission as

Other

Submission type

I am submitting on behalf of my organisation

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)

Sydney Wildlife Rescue

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

Volunteer

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

We deployed our Sydney Wildlife Mobile Care Unit into the fire grounds for the first time in January 2020 - about a week after the South Coast fires.

On our first trip down to Wandandian/Sussex Inlet, we took 6 veterinarians and 3 volunteer rescuers. 5 of the 6 veterinarians were from the Northern Beaches of Sydney and the 6th was from Kellyville, Sydney. All 6 vets volunteered their time to assist fire-affected wildlife. The Mobile Care Unit was set up as a triage centre and treatment clinic. We had a nebuliser (to help with smoke inhalation), a centrifuge for blood work, a microscope for cytology, all kinds of wound dressings and medications to mitigate pain. We spent almost 3 months in the fire grounds – in many different areas from Lithgow in the Blue Mountains to Cooma in the Snowy Mountain region to Cathcart and then back to the South Coast. We had a rotation of veterinarians and rescuers. I was pretty much there for the full 3 months. We undertook Search & Rescue (in the areas into which we were permitted) and we continued to treat existing as well as new patients. The Mobile clinic was bought, kitted out and funded by volunteers.

In the first few days we attended to wombats, snakes, goannas, echidnas, wallabies and an overwhelmingly large quantity of kangaroos affected by the fires. The worst-affected patient that came to us on the first trip was a redneck wallaby that had absolutely NO outward sign of being a fire victim. Yet it died in our arms in excruciating agony from the benign-sounding condition known as smoke inhalation. The wallaby's trachea and lungs disintegrated and it was having convulsions. Nothing could be done and we lost her. Her name was Binta.

Binta was the first of many, many countless animals that endured horrific and heinous suffering as a result of the catastrophic fires. Many animals came in with burnt eyes, burnt ears, burnt feet, tails, paws... Some were taken out of their misery as soon as they arrived at the clinic and others were able to be rehabilitated – over many weeks and through countless bandage changes.

Over the course of the 3 months that we spent in the fire grounds, we witnessed innumerable animals starving to death, joeys (with burnt feet that could not keep up with their mobs) die alone and animals that had to wander into suburban areas for food and were then hit by cars or attacked by dogs.

The fact that we had international veterinarians from Canada, France, Germany, the USA, New Zealand and even Africa flying into Australia with the sole intention of assisting OUR wildlife - voluntarily - speaks volumes about the importance we should be placing on the welfare of our wild Aussies.

We need a better emergency response for our wildlife.

Wildlife rescuers need to be included in the state response to catastrophes and we need full access to all areas where animals can be assisted – as soon as possible after the immediate threat has passed.

So much suffering could have been mitigated.

So many lives could have been spared.

We saw things that we can't even bring ourselves to talk about.

We did things that will haunt us forever.

Our memories carry images that would break the most stoic of hearts.

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

We believe Climate Change to be a major contributing factor to these horrific and unprecedented fires.

All the veterinarians who volunteered in our Mobile Care Unit agreed.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Use of traditional methods of fire mitigation could be considered.

During/immediately after a natural disaster we need a planned response which includes wildlife. Our Sydney Wildlife Mobile Care Unit was funded and provided by volunteers! The triage centres and enclosures we provided for fire victims were built and paid for by volunteers. International veterinarians volunteered their time and expertise to assist Australian wildlife.

1.3 Response to bushfires

Wildlife rescuers, veterinarians, darters, shooters all need to be included in the response to bushfires.

Where possible, Search & Rescue teams should be deployed to affected areas as soon as the immediate threat has passed. Each rescue group should comprise a 4x4 vehicle with 2-way radios and a drone. Each team should comprise a veterinarian, a wildlife expert, a darter and a shooter.

There need to be triage centres on site and enclosures erected for patients requiring rehabilitation.

1.4 Any other matters

Funding or financial assistance for cost recovery should be made available.

We volunteers paid for fuel, accommodation, medical supplies, set-up of triage clinics, darting equipment etc.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- 4672CCBF-99A9-4609-910D-BC8F06B63BB9.jpeg
- 291E7F6A-5117-4B6F-8225-0D7306A98A7A.jpeg
- 03C0B050-1C40-4294-B973-14A1A6825516.jpeg



