



Dear Inspector-General of Emergency Management Tony Pearce,

I would like to make a submission to the Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian fire season. My personal details are below:

Name: 

Email: 

Gender: Female

Age: 65-74

Privacy preference:

My personal story of the fires:

I was affected by the smoke from the Gippsland fires experiencing breathing problems and associated heart palpitations. More importantly the terrible devastation of the fires on our vulnerable wildlife and forests has left me despairing. I'm a pensioner and donated much of my weekly budget on rehabilitation of wildlife. These fires have left me with a great sadness and depression which has made life quite unbearable for me. Trees sustain all life on earth and must be protected at all costs. Trees give us hope and a way forward through despair. They help to mitigate the affects of climate change We must stop logging now to preserve the remaining life giving forests.I believe we should stop planned burns too, because there is no scientific evidence that suggests that these burns reduce the frequency of our bush fires or the severity of our bushfires. On the Mornington Peninsula where I live we have planned burns too and I've seen first hand the piles of cut vegetation and logs left from the contractors doing the burns. These surely must be areas that would cause concern and ignite in any future burns.

The climate crisis must be addressed now to protect future life on Earth.

My response to term of reference: Consider all challenges and implications for bushfire preparedness arising from increasingly longer and more severe bushfire seasons as a result of climate change:

Our government should be serious about tackling climate change and show leadership in our region of the world. It must do the will of the people and set targets that will reduce carbon to a level that is below 1.5 degrees warming to minimise changes to our climate. The government must stop all new coal, gas and oil developments and immediately reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and invest in renewable energy sources.

Our government is providing subsidies to coal companies which is immoral and criminal full well knowing that burning coal is the biggest contributor to our carbon emissions. This money should be spent on creating renewable energy industries that will support our energy use and provide jobs . Bush fires will get worse and more people will die from their effects. Life as we know it will be unliveable. The wealthy and powerful wont be exempt from this world.

My response to term of reference: In considering effectiveness of Victoria's operational response to the 2019-20 fire season, IGEM should particularly consider, "planning and response mechanisms to protect biodiversity threatened by bushfire":

I'm absolutely astounded by our state government continuing to allow logging in Victoria after the devastation of the bush fires last Summer. Our wildlife is hanging on by a thread and needs all the support it can get . The remaining intact forests and bush reserves need to be protected and the burnt areas rehabilitated as much as possible to help our wildlife recover. There was a massive outpouring of grief from Australians and communities overseas when seeing our suffering wildlife and the terrible decimation of our beautiful forests. We realised as a community that our beautiful wildlife and forests so vulnerable to the effects of human activity were a part of us and just as precious as any other Victorian affected by these fires. Thousands of people donated massive amounts of money to save as many wildlife as we could. Brave people went out into the bush for many weeks to search for suffering wildlife and provide medical care. This is still going on just as the communities of people are trying to recover so are the communities of our wildlife. The government must stop logging and transition the workers into sustainable industries. There is no economic reason to continue logging , in fact it is costing our state money. In order to protect our remaining wildlife logging must stop now and we must work out ways to protect our wildlife from fires in the future

My response to term of reference: Review of all opportunities and approaches to bushfire preparedness, including different methods of fuel and land management (for example

'cool burning', mechanical slashing, integrated forest management, traditional fire approaches) to protect life and property as well as ecological and cultural values:

Fuel reduction burns are yet to be proven to reduce the intensity or the frequency of bush fires. There is no scientific evidence that supports their effectiveness. It appears that our belief in fuel reduction burns to alter bush fires comes from a cultural norm and patterns of behaviour that have gone on over many years. What has been proven by scientific research is that trees especially old trees are significant in keeping the ground and air cool in forests helping to reduce the likelihood of bush fires occurring . Hazard reduction burns have increased over many years with little effect on the frequency of bush fires but have caused enormous damage to our wildlife habitat. If this activity is continued our flora and fauna will disappear preventing the bush from any hope of regenerating . If there is some cultural need that a community must reduce vegetation for their state of mind then slashing and physical removal of vegetation should occur. We need to look at new ways of protecting our bush and regional areas from fire and definitely not repeat the so called hazard reduction burns that obviously aren't working.

I would like to add the following:

I think the government should take this opportunity to really listen to the thoughts of its people. At the same time, look to science and the statements provided by wildlife and environmental conservationist to find a way forward for our struggling wildlife. The government needs to take on board their opinions and research seriously and act on their recommendations to support our wildlife and biodiversity. Species both flora and fauna that is affected by the bushfires may be lost forever if our government chooses to ignore the research of our environmentalists and wildlife experts.

I would like to make the following recommendations:

1. First and foremost, that the State Government stop logging our old growth forests immediately and transition workers into renewable energy industries.
2. The government needs to work with environmental experts and groups to start rehabilitating burnt out areas of the forests to assist our wildlife's recovery.
3. The government needs to legislate that biodiversity conservation is a priority when considering any activities in our forest.

Yours sincerely,

