



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: Jean Christie

Email: 

Gender: Female

Age: 55-64

Privacy preference:

My personal story of the fires:

I was safe in Melbourne, but I was worried about the towns of Orbost and Marlo, knowing that they were twice threatened by bushfires. My sister lives in Marlo, and used to work in Orbost, so naturally I was very concerned.

I would like to see more money spent on training and equipping firefighters. I also think that it is essential that Victorians, and rural Victorians in particular, become informed about the reality of climate change, its causes, and what we can expect in future as a result of climate change. We should also consider how our First Nations people cared for their land, and be prepared to learn from them.

Finally, I no longer look forward to our summer. I have become afraid of it.

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:

Victoria has always had a hot, dry summer. The burning of fossil fuels releases carbon, and the carbon traps heat in the atmosphere. Consequently, the surface of the earth loses moisture, and becomes more susceptible to drought and bushfires.

We need to protect our environment by immediately phasing out fossil fuels, and extensively supporting the introduction of renewable energy.

Our recent bushfire season has shown the effects of a mere 1.1 degree Celsius rise in temperature. The Paris Agreement allows for a 1.5 degree rise. That is the last thing that I want to experience.

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":

Following Victoria's dreadful bushfire season, our biodiversity is threatened. Areas of unburned vegetation should be retained as refuges where plants and wildlife can recover, rather than burned out by bushfire crews.

Salvage logging causes mechanical disruption, aggravating the effects of both fire and logging, and should not be allowed under any circumstances. All native forest logging should stop while the damage to habitat and the threat to biodiversity are assessed. Furthermore, regional economies would benefit from biodiversity recovery work.

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 can be used to protect towns, and the less flammable areas containing old growth must be protected from destruction. In addition, planned burns must take into account the need to protect wildlife habitat, such as hollows in trees and logs. Finally, First Nations groups should be consulted on the matter of fire management.

I would like to add the following:

Climate change is here, and we are suffering as a result. We need extensive and immediate action to achieve effective environmental protection.

I would like to make the following recommendations:

Introduce an immediate moratorium on logging of old growth forest.

Extensively revise and improve firefighting methods and training, and ensure that the most up-to-date resources are available and plentiful.

Enact strong, effective and permanent laws to achieve environmental protection and safety.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Christie

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