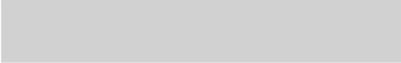


Dear Inspector-General of Emergency Management Tony Pearce,

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

**Name:** Janine McCarthy

**Email:** 

**Gender:**

**Age:** Prefer not to answer

**Privacy preference:** I give permission for the Inspector-General to make my submission public

**My personal story of the fires:**

We live in Melbourne and experienced the extreme air pollution from the distant fires. We also drove to Sydney to spend Christmas with family and were driving near the bushfires, where the smoke was dense and the heat almost unbearable. This was awful, but far more devastating was the knowledge that the fires were destroying the pathetically small areas of forest we have left in those areas.

I call for immediate halt of forest logging. I call for the government to engage fire and environmental scientists and Aboriginal fire experts to lead the approach to controlling and preventing bushfires for next season.

We have no future beyond the next few decades as a species and as a planet if the climate crisis is not addressed immediately. The pandemic has shown how quickly government and community can mobilise in response to a catastrophe. Climate crisis is actually more threatening to the wider population than COVID-19 and requires the same urgent mobilisation. We only have 8 years to reverse ocean acidification from CO2 emissions, and beyond that point there is no return. We all have NO future once that happens.

**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:**

The government must end all fossil fuel exploration immediately and close all fossil fuel facilities by 2025. The biggest single cause of climate change is pollution from burning fossil

fuels, followed by destruction of soil health from chemical farming. Healthy soil draws down massive amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>. To reverse climate change we must immediately direct all investment to renewable-energy infrastructure and transitioning all farms to the regenerative agriculture model.

This is the only way the State Government can achieve or exceed the objectives of the Paris Agreement (to keep warming well below two degrees and pursue efforts to keep warming to 1.5 degrees).

**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":**

Biodiversity is key to our survival as a species and to protection of the planet beyond the next few decades. Victoria must prioritise protecting diversity of our remaining plant, animal, bird and insect species by ending all forest logging. This year's fires have destroyed much of our remaining biodiversity and we just cannot afford to lose any more with reckless salvage logging, forest logging 'quotas' and man-made destruction of our natural environment.

**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:**

I call for immediate halt of forest logging. I call for the government to engage fire and environmental scientists and Aboriginal fire experts to lead the approach to controlling and preventing bushfires for next season.

Old-growth forests must be protected using fire-stick farming and other Aboriginal land management practices which succeeded for thousands of years before white settlement.

We must leave behind the existing approach to broad scale planned burning which is shown to exacerbate the problem.

Regarding cultural burning, government should provide ongoing support to the expansion of existing and new Aboriginal groups specialising in a range of fire management activities, planning, preparation, response and recovery activities, on Country.

**I would like to add the following:**

**I would like to make the following recommendations:**

I call for an immediate end to logging of our forests in 2020.

I call for environmental scientists and Aboriginal fire and land management experts to drive the government's approach to fire, forest, biodiversity and land management.

I call for the government to redirect funding away from fossil fuel exploration and development, desalination plants, carbon sequestration facilities and existing fossil fuel facilities and use it to fund large-scale renewable energy infrastructure, large-scale programs supporting farmers to transition to regenerative agriculture, and large-scale greening/planting programs in urban, suburban and rural regions across the state.

I call for these programs to be fast-tracked for operation by 2025. The technology for all these projects exists now. See the films 2040 and Farmers Footprint for detailed information. This is an emergency and it requires all of us to act now.

Yours sincerely,

Janine McCarthy

Thornbury 3071