

Submission
No 22

**INQUIRY INTO HEALTH IMPACTS OF EXPOSURE TO
POOR LEVELS OF AIR QUALITY RESULTING FROM
BUSHFIRES AND DROUGHT**

Name: Mrs Julie Collier

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I wish my experiences to be considered. I feel I have written this many times in the last six months. My life was curtailed to the point of complete isolation from February 2019 until September 2019 because of continuous hazard reduction burns. Living on the escarpment of the Blue Mountains the smoke settles there every evening with the temperature inversion. The damp evening air contains the smoke under it, the mist rising from the Nepean Hawkesbury river system produces a wall again containing the smoke against the escarpment.

As we know smoke doesn't just go away, and there are particles that lodge in our lungs, also do not dissipate. I was chronically ill for this whole period. My lung Specialist, Dr Jimmy Chen, said it was the smoke.

I rang the RFS Commissioners Line in tears, only to be greeted by stick to your Asthma plan, shut your windows and stay inside. The Deputy RFS Commissioner and the Commissioner have promised to provide me with research that smoke won't affect me. My correspondence with them began in August and to date they have not produced their research, which apparently derives from the University of Wollongong.

It was suggested I move, I don't know where I would go that is not affected by bush fires. I have spent a fortune keeping my air conditioning running, I'm single and can't afford to keep living like this, spending up to \$800 a quarter on electricity with no relief. Perhaps Asthmatics can be given some relief. I had to spend a great amount on Doctors, Specialists and pharmaceuticals, again not sustainable. I simply cannot afford it.

I have put on weight, my blood pressure has gone up, and it has made me despairing of my future as to where I can live, leaving my friends, my Doctors, my home.

Continual Hazard Reduction burns are not the only way to reduce load. If this is to continue how can I afford to move and where would I go?

At the moment, for the first time in a year I can open my doors and windows and go outside. I've started going into the garden again, and was actually able to go for a walk.

Again there are other methods of Hazard Reduction, and now we have an opportunity to get into the bush, making proper fire trails, hazard breaks etc. I have lived in the Blue Mountains for 50 years and last year was the first year the Hazard Reduction burns were continuous, unrelenting. There was no time to get better before we were hit again.

I beg you to let me have some fresh air for awhile. I believe I have equal rights as you to breath and enjoy this beautiful country.