

Submission  
No 53

## INQUIRY INTO WAMBELONG FIRE

**Name:** Mr Ron Nash

**Date received:** 17/09/2014

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*Partially Confidential*

The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No.5  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

After attending the inquiry into the Wambelong Fire in Coonabarabran on 3rd & 4th of September 2014 I felt compelled to write a submission with points listed below.

First of all, I should give some background why I think I should be able to comment. I'm 54 years young have been a firefighter since age sixteen. I have been Captain of our local brigade for fifteen years and now a Deputy Group Captain. I'd like to make comment on the submission put forward by the Warrumbungle Fire Action Group (W.F.A.G.)

On Sunday (13th January) my brigade, Goorianawa, faced a wild fire like nothing seen before, we lost houses; wool, machinery & hay sheds, stock yards, fences, stock and the only dry feed people had left in the middle of the drought.

This was the biggest fire the zone had ever faced. Fire Comm, to their credit got themselves totally back together early Monday morning and were busy putting an Incident Action Plan together.

This fire had already burnt a very large area and as the W.F.A.G. stated in their submission we needed local Group/Captains with local knowledge to step up and be prepared to be Div Comms to run their sectors.

Going through the right chain of command, I rang my Group Captain who then organised it from there, within a couple of hours I was in the Control Centre putting my thoughts to the Incident Management Team (IMT) and asked if I

would be prepared to run my local area. From Tuesday onwards for sixteen days I was Div Com for my area, the Northern Division of the fire, organising bulldozes and graders putting in 56 kilometres of control lines, running out of area crews, strike teams and NPWS crews. It all went pretty well although extremely busy without much sleep.

I felt if the Deputy Group /Captains from the W.F.A.G. did the same they would have been met with the same respect and appreciation that I received from IMT. This would have put them into the right place for making decisions in their sectors.

One of the reasons the Deputy Group Captain might not have been rung, was that his Group Captain, Mountain Group, was one of the first to lose his property as the fire came out of the park.

Their concerns were raised at the AAR (After Action Review) and to my knowledge were dealt with.

Ron Nash

Captain

Goorianawa Brigade