

PROF MARY O'KANE AC

NSW Bushfire Inquiry 2020



Mary O'Kane delivered an absorbing presentation that incorporated a thorough description of the bushfire inquiry from the Terms of Reference, through to the severity of the fires, how the inquiry functioned, major misconceptions and a selection of the recommendations.

Some of the misconceptions included the fire being significantly caused by arson, the volume of the fuel load being the main problem and the support of the 'stay and defend' approach. In reality these were 'monster' fires, following extreme drought conditions, spreading quickly even at night, mainly started by lightning and fanned by high winds that spread embers enormous distances.

Key contributing factors were the dryness of the fuel load (rather than its quantity), the remote origins and the heavy smoke making it difficult for firefighting services to accurately locate the fire front.

Mary touched on the health impacts of the fires and finally a review of some of the major recommendations of the inquiry.

John Thom accurately conveyed the enormous appreciation of the members. Many members approached Mary at lunch to convey their appreciation of the presentation.

[A link to the Report is here](#) The Executive Summary provides an overall picture.