



## MEDIA RELEASE – 8 June 2021

### **Independent Bushfire Group welcomes progress since the NSW Bushfire Inquiry but says there is more to do.**

The Independent Bushfire Group (IBG) has welcomed a new report on how the NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry is being implemented.

The NSW Government accepted all 76 inquiry recommendations which were handed down in August last year, and Resilience NSW is coordinating their implementation. The first progress report was tabled in parliament last week. The report can be found at:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/tp/files/79766/NSW%20Bushfire%20Inquiry%20Report%202020%20Progress%20Report%20-%20Q1%20January-March%202021.pdf>

The IBG says that urgent change is needed to prepare for coming fire seasons that in our warming world could be even worse than the Black Summer of 2019-2020.

“The government has made a good start on implementing the NSW Inquiry report. A lot of progress is reported and we commend the lead roles of Resilience NSW and the Rural Fire Service. The report records many positive initiatives, so it is puzzling that government has not made it accessible to the community”, Ian Brown from IBG said.

“A key point of our submission to the inquiry was the need for monitoring and public feedback on how the inquiry was being followed up, so we are pleased this was a recommendation, and that quarterly reporting was enshrined in legislation.”

“Vital work is reported on safety equipment for firefighters and community resilience. New backburning protocols will help firefighters with difficult decisions and new night-capable helicopters and spotter planes will help control lightning fires before they grow big.”

“Progress on managing the long-term ecosystem impacts of bushfire (Recommendation 36) is disappointing. We would also like to see an assessment of all recommendations against clear objectives, and whether changes are actually having the desired outcome.”

“The NSW Audit Office recommended in April that inquiry tracking include ‘*an assessment of whether the action taken has met the intent of the commitment to the accepted recommendation, and whether ongoing monitoring is required to embed changes made.*’”

“The progress report reads as a list of unconnected actions, without a plan to tie them together. We encourage the NSW government to weld the recommendations and other actions into a bushfire suppression strategy aimed at constantly improving how to keep fires small and limit their impact.”

“The Bushfire Inquiry noted that ‘*Inquiries like this one...must not be the end of the examination of the 2019-20 bush fire season. No one yet fully understands exactly what happened in every location...*’ We agree more work is critical, especially a full analysis of the 2019-2020 fires so we can get a more complete understanding of those things that worked out well and others that need improvement,” Mr Brown said.

**The Independent Bushfire Group's report to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry and Summary report are available [here](#).**

The **Independent Bushfire Group** is a group of non-aligned bushfire practitioners, fire managers, land managers, fire researchers and ecologists with over 400 years of collective experience across a range of landscapes. The IBG advocates for better fire management with a focus on practical firefighting, science and evidence-based practices so we can adapt to our worsening fire climate.