



Date: July 2, 2014

To: Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East
Melbourne Vic 8003
Cc: Michael Consolo
Telstra Corporation Limited

To whom it may concern

EYEfi submission to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into the national natural disaster funding arrangements

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into the efficacy of current national natural disaster funding arrangements.

I note in the Treasurer's terms of reference that the Government has asked that the inquiry take into account the priority of effective mitigation to reduce the impact of disasters on communities.

On this point I make the following submission with particular reference to the mitigation of bushfire risks and impacts:

1. Very early detection and accurate real time situational awareness intelligence is critical to decision making, mitigating the costs of bushfire disasters and protecting lives and property.
2. Australian Government Disaster Funding should have a much greater focus on investing in bushfire mitigation efforts, particularly through the adoption of very early detection technologies such as EYEfi SPARC.
3. Effective mitigation and more targeted response efforts will save state and federal governments millions of dollars in bushfire response efforts.
4. The Australian Government should take a lead role in coordinating with the jurisdictions to ensure a nationally consistent approach, and standard, to the adoption of bushfire detection, intelligence gathering and situational awareness technologies.
5. Without an avenue for federal leadership, there will continue to be cultural resistance and a disparate and inconsistent approach across jurisdictions to the adoption of currently available bushfire mitigation technologies; escalating costs to government and exposing communities to unnecessary risk.

Early detection and the cost of bushfires

It is well documented and understood that the first 30 minutes of a bushfire are critical. After the first 30 minutes the impact and costs of bushfire response efforts increase exponentially.

The total cost of bushfires is estimated at \$8.5 billion per annum¹.

Of this approximately \$2.55 billion directly relates to response efforts and \$1.2 billion relates to the economic losses arising from bushfires².

The Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission (VBRC) recently estimated the total cost of the Black Saturday fires to be in the order of \$4 billion.

Very early detection and accurate real time situational management data is key to making informed decisions and providing accurate warnings to the community; mitigating these costs and protecting lives, property and critical infrastructure.

¹ Ashe, Brian, McAneney, K.J and Pitman, A.J. (2009) 'Total cost of fire in Australia', Journal of Risk Research, 12:2, 121 -136

² Ashe, Brian, McAneney, K.J and Pitman, A.J. (2009) 'Total cost of fire in Australia', Journal of Risk Research, 12:2, 121 -136

The Aberfeldy fire in Victoria in 2013 resulted in the loss of 1 life and 22 homes, and cost upward of an estimated \$100m in response efforts.

The deployment of EYEfi's very early detection technology in the vicinity of this fire would have allowed this fire to be detected within minutes and much earlier than was reported by authorities, potentially saving one life, 22 homes, 1000's of livestock and millions of dollars in response efforts.

While the Federal Budget includes significant allocations under the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements, there is no avenue for Federal investment in bushfire mitigation.

Without federal leadership, there is significant cultural resistance within emergency services agencies to adopt new technologies and incorporate them into their decision making and operational response efforts.

As with Emergency Alert, federal leadership is critical to mitigating risks in this area. Providing for the allocation of disaster funding to invest in mitigation technologies will significantly lower the barriers to implementation of potentially lifesaving technologies.

About the technology

EYEfi spatial video technology is Australia's first cloud based application designed for the protection of state and national infrastructure through real time situational awareness and intelligence gathering.

The core system is already deployed and operating within Telstra's public safety platform (ESO Cloud), can be nationally accessed by government agencies, and is directly compatible with the National Emergency Alert (EA) system.

EYEfi's SPARC system allows for both manual and automatic real-time detection and location of lightning strikes, flames and plumes, enabling the very-early detection of bushfires over vast areas of the terrain day or night. EYEfi can also take real-time feeds from cameras mounted on towers, vehicles, aircraft and even on-person using our Smartphone technology, Spatialeye.

EYEfi SPARC enables key fire personnel located anywhere, to determine the location of a fire over wider areas than previously possible, within seconds and without needing any other frame of reference or triangulation.

During and after a bushfire the EYEfi SPARC system enables an operator to create accurate real-time situational reports on threats to life, infrastructure and assets, and then easily distribute this information through fixed and wireless media to emergency incident managers and other systems and processes.

The power of EYEfi's technology was demonstrated in the VBRC and critical evidence generated by the system on Black Saturday was examined and independently validated through the Victorian Police Phoenix Task Force process.

EYEfi is currently being used by VicRoads to manage hundreds of incidents across Victoria's road network every day.

This is proven technology ready for deployment and the cost benefit to governments would be significant.

Should you require further information on this submission and the EYEfi SPARC technology please do not hesitate to contact me.

I would also be grateful for the opportunity to participate in the public hearings in October and November 2014.

Kind Regards

Simon Langdon
Managing Director
EYEfi Pty Ltd
Unit 1, 255 Wellington St,
Collingwood VIC 3066

W. www.eyefi.com.au