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## Your details

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## Submission details

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**I am making this submission as**

A resident in a bushfire-affected area

**Submission type**

I am making a personal submission

**Consent to make submission public**

I would like this submission to remain anonymous

## Share your experience or tell your story

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**Your story**

Our property was impacted about 11am on New Years Eve. My husband who has had over 20 years of Urban fire brigade training and asset protection stayed, but he insisted that the rest of the family leave for somewhere safer as he had his plan and didn't want the distraction or responsibility of us being there. He was well prepared with 4wd trucks, ibc's full of water, fire fighting pumps, generator running the house water pump, sprinklers on roofs etc. We had spent weeks preparing the property due to it being such a bad season but we were limited in water due to it being such a bad drought. He was successful in saving our home, main shed and vehicles but we lost everything outside of the main yard which included 3 shipping containers and contents, fences, small sheds, vegie garden, and misc items in the paddock. The fire got close enough to burn all of the gardens around the house and at one stage he had a fire in his shed. He also extinguished fires in neighbouring properties which would have destroyed homes and sheds. He received no help from the

fire brigade on the day but did flag them down after the fact and sent them to neighbours places to extinguish blazes. He has seen many fires but nothing like what came through our place on that day. Had he not stayed we are more than convinced that we would have lost everything. Thankfully we had insurance and they have been very quick in assessing and paying for our damages.

## Terms of Reference (optional)

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The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

### 1.1 Causes and contributing factors

Clear fell logging had been carried out in the state forest behind our property approximately a year ago, and also approximately 7 years ago selected logging. Although both times we had requested that they burn the area once they were finished to clean up the debris and fuel left behind, only the areas behind several of our neighbors was cleaned up and didnt happen in the area immediately behind our property, so we felt we were at a disadvantage already. We have lived on our property for over 18 years and the bush behind us has never had a controlled burn, and we believe that due to there being a water course directly behind us this is the reason that they have resisted burning this area.

### 1.2 Preparation and planning

We spent weeks removing debris and leaf litter, pruning back the native trees around our yard and buildings, watering lawns to keep them green etc but as we border onto the state forest the leaves just kept coming. The drought however did have an impact on our ability to keep lawns and surrounding acres green. Our dam which is our reserve fire fighting water was nearly empty and our rain water tanks were very low also. This did impact on our ability on the day of the fire to have more sprinklers going.

### 1.3 Response to bushfires

I believe that the severe evacuation warnings and the updates in the Fires Near Me app were instrumental in saving lives. Many people were able to follow the fires in real time and be guided by the advice given. Some claim the warnings were a bit over the top but I believe it made people who might have stayed home and tried to defend their property have second thoughts which may have been life saving.

### 1.4 Any other matters

For us personally our neighbor not keeping their property clean and not having prepared at all for the impact of bushfire put us at a direct disadvantage. Their property had been let go, was covered in underscrub, and there was a large fuel load just metres from our shed which is where the fire came through to our property. We wasted a lot of precious water and energy trying to defend our shed because of their lack of preparation. A severe lack of any means of communication on the day of the New Years Eve fires and for the days after was crippling. Not being able to contact loved ones, not being able to reach out for help, and feeling very isolated at such a disasterous time in our lives was quite debilitating.

## Supporting documents or images

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