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I am making this submission as	Resident
Submission type	Personal

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	

Consent to make submission public	Public
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Your story	<p>As a landowner in the Wollondilly shire on the outermost shire boundary near the small township of Yerranderrie we are forced to deal with the boundaries and its restrictions on all government agencies including emergency services. Yes we are a very small minority within the shire. We have been heavily impacted by bushfires then floods then the red tape that has forced our public access road to be closed for almost 6 months. Due to our location emergency services cannot attend our region unless by air or reason with another shires services to attend . The fact that we are in wollondilly shire is ridiculous as police, rfs, and any other authority cannot access the area ,due to the catchment being closed from impact by fire /flood also.</p> <p>It would make perfect sense for the shire to surrender this small area that they cannot service and pass it to a council that can service the area, regardless of day/time/weather etc etc.</p> <p>That would be Oberon shire and at least they could provide the required emergency assistance when necessary.</p>
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It is very clear the wollondilly cannot uphold their duty of care to ratepayers in an emergency. This impacted my family heavily as any time during the fires the catchment looked like being closed, the authorities couldn't leave quick enough, even though there was a public road in the opposite direction. That remained open for services to use. The RFS was happy to empty our private dams to try to extinguish bushfires out in the national park, BUT when the fire was threatening us and our livelihood, our dam was empty and they all fled.

It was very clear it wasn't a safety issue, it was just that services might have had to use another route. Consequently this public road which has many private landholders along it, has had endless unnecessary hurdles to overcome, generally without assistance. The public road maintenance is severely lacking and each time the council tenders it out to NPWS and then the job is never completed to a satisfactory standard. The communication between agencies was unbelievable, and severely lacking, people's lives were unnecessarily put at risk, not only volunteers but also contractors who were out here on machinery and had fire burn over them in machinery, all because no-one was communicating.

Some contractors were stranded out here with no form of communication, except UHF radios. I was forced to put random people/contractors up for the night and feed them as no-one had considered their needs or safety. The RFS had no clue how to deal with a wild bushfire, they are not rural-minded in the slightest. We had some RFS men here that couldn't even start their own fire pumps, we had our property here totally trashed by heavy plant, here for months, and no effort to repair the damage, we had a chainsaw taken and not returned, still yet to be replaced. It was used because they didn't have their own equipment they needed so just used ours and never returned.

Water not replaced in our dams, that we have maintained for our own fire protection, happy to use it and leave when our place was under threat after they took all our water for a fire in the national park. The RFS needs a huge overhaul, I know they are volunteers and do their best under very difficult circumstances, but the management/office staff in RFS is severely lacking and needs some serious revision for future emergencies. It was best described as a total circus, no-one knew who was where or doing what and some very stupid decisions were made that definitely put lives at risk. It was actually unbelievable to watch it unfold the way it did. I strongly recommend that Wollondilly Council seriously consider surrendering this area west of the catchment to a shire that can fully service landowners/ratepayers in an appropriate manner. Contractors were forced out into this isolated remote area and had no maps, no verbal direction as to where to be and what to do, it was just unbelievable to see such disorganised chaos in the event of an emergency. All because of lack of leadership and common sense certainly did not prevail.

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

Serious lack of communication between agencies. All on different channels, so unable to communicate well. Office staff making decisions that were completely irrelevant to this situation in a isolated area.

1.2 Preparation and planning

no preparation, no planning and just winging it as it happened, generally with a bad outcome as we saw.

1.3 Response to bushfires

these RFS guys need to be trained in remote rural areas, NOT suburban fires.

1.4 Any other matters

It was so very overwhelming to see such stupidity, chaos, lack of organisation/communication and failure to meet people's needs in the event of a crisis. If we didn't stay and defend as individuals we would have nothing at all. It's all up to individuals to have their say

and hope it makes a huge difference with big changes necessary in the event of natural disasters or crisis.

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