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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>In early December my partner and my elderly father were evacuated From Bawley Point to Ulladulla for 7 days. We were provided motel accommodation and excellent meals at Emergency Evacuation Centre Ulladulla. The community of Ulladulla offered extended care and support as did the government. The town of Bawley was saved by a combination of factors. 1. The massive land area of Willinga Park having under scrubbed 1000 acres of land that abuts the Nation Park, the resources of several Fire brigades, aerial water and retardant dropping and sudden changes in wind direction. Another 3 weeks later we received a second warning of another threat and to ensure readiness for evacuation. Those who remained were terrified that the bushland within the township perimeters and along the waters edge would be next to burn and would thereby prevent residents from fleeing to the seaside beaches.</p>
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1.1 Causes and contributing factors

The Villages of Bawley Point and Kioloa on the South Coast are surrounded by bush; National Parks and forests on the north, west and south. The villages also contain many bush reserves within and along the foreshore. My observations and discussions with the local RFS both pre and post fire storm, confirm that the bushland carries a huge load, estimated at 25 tonne per acre of combustible dry underscrub. Along with the very high temperatures, drought conditions and the capricious wind direction changes, fighting such a ferocious fire front with its multiple tendrils and fireballs became impossible to predict and to contain. What did slow the speed and height of the fire wall, was a massive hazzard clearing, underscrubbing and ongoing land management of Willinga Park. The fire was definitely slowed in its path and this . However allowing the RFS to save all houses. Applications for hazard reduction or burn back into the National Park that interfaces with our towns were rejected. Likewise 2 decades or more of overlays of environmental protection laws and classified e-zones have allowed mini forests of Casuarina stands and foreshore reserves to literally proliferate into dense thickets of fallen trees and branches and dead shrubs... a key fire risk right within our towns and along our street frontages. One last issue is the only one road access into our 2 towns. This road was closed to all traffic as soon as the threat of fire is imminent. Likewise as it too abuts the forest if trees and scrub are burnt, many trees fall onto roads preventing safe access.

1.2 Preparation and planning

My suggestions to respond to and remedy for better future planning and management are as follows...

1. Change the land planning laws to allow rural land holders and National Parks/Forests where such forest interfaces with urban/coastal village underscrubbing of land as a management and fire mitigation strategy.
2. Develop specific land zone definitions and management parameters at the forest/urban interface which allows for a 200m protective band enabling staged clearing and hazard reduction practices over a 10 year period.
3. A 5 years staged approach of clearing and / or under scrubbing a distance of 20 metres either side of one-access roads into remote villages.
4. Review and amend management policies of bushland within coastal and rural villages to provide clearing and underscrubbing and hazard reduction permits which allow privately owned properties to fire mitigate and manage their land and for Local Councils to work with their communities and volunteers to plan and stage such processes on Council/state managed land such as reserves and foreshore land.
5. Ensure all RFS and community halls and buildings in villages and towns have up to a 50m APZ around them.
6. Ensure each village has an accessible storage of usable water.
This may be 2 to 3 large rain water tanks placed next to RFS or community shed and halls within their APZ.

1.3 Response to bushfires

Remote towns are vulnerable in emergencies. They lose power and communication, being able to escape safely, being able to receive medicines, medical advice and receive food supplies for volunteer fire fighters and community members. I suggest the following as possible remediations.

1. Consider within an emergency planning boat access by water/sea. Denote a boat ramps/wharf for boat access. Upgrade each for ease of mooring for dropping off mediacines, or food or provisions and speed of access for young and old.
2. Ensure each RFS has satellite access for phone communication when our towers are compromised.
3. Each town to develop an emergency plan and signage and training that dovetails into and supports a regional plan.

1.4 Any other matters

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute and my sincere gratitude to our local and regional RFS, our local and State governments, the Red Cross and the many volunteers for working so well together in crisis and for protecting our future.

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