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First name	Bruce
Last name	Shea

I am making this submission as	Resident
Submission type	Personal

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	
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Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	
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Consent to make submission public	Public
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Your story	<p>I am a 5th generation Australian bushman, my Great, Great Grandfather settled on the Clyde River below Shallow Crossing in 1860 and my family have been there ever since, my father, [REDACTED] still owns the original farm and forest holding. As practitioners of mixed age, mixed species, private native forestry, my family have always understood and maintained true forest health, of which prescribed burning is an integral part. This is not just for hazard reduction. Australian soils are not like the volcanic, glacial soils of Europe and the America's, they are very poor in their native state and the use of prescribed burning is an important, integral part of the nutrient cycle. Australian soils cannot support the soil biology required to chemically breakdown the large volume of leaf litter that our forests produce without some of it being turned into ash. It breaks down physically, ie. into small particles that look like soil, but closer inspection shows the reality and this fine substance burns in an angry red flame during an extreme fire event.</p>
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Our public forests were very unhealthy long before the fires. Our more visible native wildlife, (kangaroos, wallabies, wombats etc) were conspicuous by their absence in the forests where they should be, they are forced onto roadsides, powerlines, lawns and peoples farms because there was nothing in the forests for them to it. Too much leaf litter to allow grass and herbage growth, no nutrients available to drive it.

Our area received @650ml of rain last year. In a 1200ml rainfall area this is challenging, really challenging for land management, but not catastrophic by any means and absolutely no excuse for the circumstance that played out this summer. I was directly involved in firefighting, and preparation for asset protection from 27/11/2019 until 5/1/2020 and have to state that we experienced 6 hot days in 7 weeks where the temperature got to the high 30s. and at no stage did we have two hot days in a row. The 1/12/2019 was the only day of extreme (70k) wind and on that day the temp was comparatively cool, I recognize that in extreme heat the fire creates it's own wind and we saw this on New years eve and 4/1/2020. We at the fire front, found weather.com to be excellent, you could set your watch by their predictions. The BOMs press releases were overstated to the point where they were useless from a firefighting point of view, and they no longer have any credibility with us, likewise the RFS heirachy, who seem more interested in publicity, funding and power than forest health or fire prevention.

The three fundamental principles of scientific research are; observation, replication, prediction. Note that consensus does not get a mention. My family have observed for 5 generations, our indigenous predecessors for generations uncountable. Three replication of bushfire tragedy through lack of management had happened on a large scale in 1968 and in the early 40s I believe and on a small scale, too many times to count. Therefore the prediction that the major bushfire events will happen on average, every 10 years (a prediction that was made in the late 1990s when the vast national park estate was created), is 100% sound. The longer the interval the worse it will be. The BS involved in making real change on public land is always challenging, with so many claiming expert status, but the removal of landholders rights to practice prescribed burning on their own land was dishonest and hypocritical and needs to be reinstated quickly so at least some areas are being looked after.

Thankyou.

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

Large areas of public land locked up with no thought to maintaining forest health. RFS hierachy manipulating large bushfire events for power, publicity and funding. Constant, dishonest, insidious manoeuvres to remove landholders rights to protect and maintain their own forests.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Paid workers responsible for maintaining forest health. It's not glamorous or even newsworthy, but it has to be done. Every experiment should have a Control, in this case private forest owners should be able to practice prescribed burning without undue restrictions and could then be areas of relative safety in bushfire events.

1.3 Response to bushfires

A fit, highly trained professional team could have controlled and then extinguished the Currawan fire on the morning of 27/11/2019 My cousin, [REDACTED] and I were there at 7am, N/E wind and nobody but 2 NSW Forestry vehicles in attendance. At 7.30 am 1/12/2019 the backburn between The Blueberry farm and Barkshed road (@2km) was left un attended. This is not good enough.

1.4 Any other matters

I don't believe "the majority" will ever consent to cattle being allowed onto public lands, but I do want to point out that the towns of Bawley point and Conjola in particular were always

protected by the old bush families to their immediate west, running just a handful of cattle (between 10 and 20 breeders usually) and practising prescribed burning to keep the bush and therefore their stock healthy. This went on year after year, generation after generation, with the residents of these towns being for the most part unaware that it was even occurring. I would like to suggest that Narrawallee nature reserve be used as an experiment in indigenous land management as there is such a long history of such practices that continued right up until the mid nineties. The place is a wonderland when it's looked after, but just another litter choked inferno in waiting when it's not.

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