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I am making this submission as	Primary producer
Submission type	Personal
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	
Consent to make submission public	Public
Your story	<p>This is a personal submission, but I am also the President of the Progress Association, and Director of the Pre-School. I co-own a business in town and also have other executive positions on many local committees. My Husband Graeme and I own 3 properties on the QLD/NSW Border and produce Hereford Cattle. The Reid family have continuously farmed on these properties for over 112 years. Our closest town is the village of Woodenbong - 12km away. Our farms are bordered by State Forests on 3 sides and also Rainforest nearer to the border and National Parks. The drought during 2019 was the worst anyone could remember, we lost cattle, our creeks ran dry and our paddocks were dust. The fire started in National Parks in Qld as a lightning strike and was not contained, it was allowed to burn through the National Park near Mount Nothofagus and the rare Artic Beech trees, until it crossed the border and threatened landowners and properties at the top of Lindsay creek. The fire was named the "Border Trail Fire" The fire then traveled along the mountain to Grahams</p>

Creek, Mt Clunie, threatened Woodenbong and headed towards dairy flat, back into Qld and burnt Mt Barney and Mount Lindsay. We are very grateful that our friends, neighbors and community all combined with the RFS and emergency services to help us defend our home and livelihood. Approximately 30% of our land was burnt but no infrastructure. The town was under thick smoke for weeks, many people left, roads to Brisbane and Kyogle were closed, Schools closed for 2 weeks and the hospital evacuated twice. Personally we spent a lot of money on fuels to run pumps and vehicles, as well as setting up a firefighting unit on our 4WD as did almost all the landowners. Emotionally it was also draining as we did not go to work, lack of sleep, our precious belongings were packed in our cars for weeks, but we were the lucky ones.

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

The build up of fuel in the National parks and Forests was a huge concern. No hazard reduction has been completed near our properties for decades. We were unable to burn our own grass in winter as we were very concerned with prosecution if the fire got away into our adjoining landowners (NSW Govt). Old fire trails have disappeared and the bush is difficult to access, staff were reduced and no local office operates anymore. Lantana and noxious plants are everywhere.

1.2 Preparation and planning

I think our communities greatest frustration was the lack of factual knowledge. The "Fires near me" site only really told us that there was a fire, and rarely changed. I would highly recommend that a person with local knowledge and RFS training be stationed at the Woodenbong command centre so that people could contact them, ask questions and then plan their actions. Our only reliable information came from our local fire captain via facebook or by telephoning neighbors. The information about evacuation was confusing and stressful for some of our community. Residents were unclear if the the evacuation orders were voluntary or mandatory.
* we were fortunate to have built a very large dam near our house, which still held a lot of water despite the drought, this was used extensively by the RFS, helicopters, on our home and by a neighbour who had completely run out of water. This saved us. All communities and farms need access to water in the form of large dams that can be accessed by the RFS and others- this was critical to our survival.

1.3 Response to bushfires

*Containment lines- all over our properties were great (Still there) RFS, Local contractors and forestry were fantastic along with the locals and their Pod Army who supported the local RFS crews to refill tankers and monitor embers and observe the fire. We only have a small brigade and the whole community stepped up to help them defend Woodenbong and our farms. Local expertise and knowledge should be utilized and acknowledged as part of a united front.
During the whole duration of the fires we did not see one National Parks employee.
Back burning saved us but the red tape and frustration observed from our Emergency services was evident. Trying to convince superiors, with no local knowledge of the topography and conditions often meant decisions were delayed and opportunities missed. The scale of the fires across the state also meant that resources were very stretched and were being used in other more populated locations.

1.4 Any other matters

* Cross Border communication was non-existent. We live in Tenterfield Shire but our nearest town is in Kyogle Shire-each shire has their own protocols but we and the local RFS were fighting in both shires. We live right on the QLD/NSW border another drama, as no consultation occurred between the states We are also on the cusp of the federal boundaries as well.

Technically we are in "no mans land" which resulted in very limited media coverage or information dispersal.
* the Qld/NSW border fence has been badly damaged. This is also known as the rabbit fence and now poses a high bio-security risk for landowners. The border also provides a buffer to cattle ticks.

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