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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 |
| Your story | As someone who has lived for more than a decade in the Blue Mountains, the Mid-North Coast and now the Shoalhaven region, almost always in bushfire-affected situations I have experienced several recurring issues during these fire events. |
| 1.1 Causes and contributing factors | Far more fires appear to be a matter of unlawful human intervention than weather or other factors like back-burns and fuel reduction episodes that have gotten out of hand. There are few ways to catch the perpetrators and this situation never seems to improve regardless of the technologies available today that might aid attempts to identify these people. In addition those that are caught rarely receive an appropriate penalty and this grinds badly with residents generally and the victims of their activities. |
| 1.2 Preparation and planning | Far too often planning seems to be ad-hoc. Authorities can grandstand on the nightly news but seem to be blissfully unaware |

of the danger anyone fighting fires must put themselves into. Volunteer firefighters should be provided with a set minimum of "suitable and working" equipment and local brigades should have a greater connection to town brigades - there should be no in-fighting/resentment from either side as they both perform the same function albeit in very different environments. Much could be learned by some form of improved bond between the two. To air these differences in the media, regardless of which direction they are coming from is not a good look to the public and affects their confidence in the brigades.

1.3 Response to bushfires

Warnings systems in rural areas are woefully inadequate, and often left to the police. Due to the lateness of warnings and the timing of directives to evacuate they are already overstretched in small rural towns and are often forced to call on a severely reduced number of residents - this is clearly inadequate. Other forms of warnings, perhaps scaled responses, need to be developed. Often I have found communities, even whole regions, that seemingly operate under the mistaken principle that placing a warning on the local radio or in the local press is efficient and effective.

Even ten years ago that would be a joke. Not everybody listens to radio, reads the local paper or watches the local tv news just as now not everybody is on Facebook, Twitter or other social media. There is no go-to place to get information.

1.4 Any other matters

The RFS website, while it does present a great deal of information, does not identify fireground progressions adequately as the event unfolds and updates are not frequent enough. In addition the mapping is quite general in nature and road closures and danger levels in micro environments (in which both residents and fire-fighters can find themselves trapped) are not adequately identified. Yes it means more manpower for website development but anything that reduces the danger and terrible results of out-of-control bushfires is worth investigation.

Upload files
