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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	<p>The Currowan bush fire over the summer of 2019/20 brought home to many inadequate fire fighting agencies in the state of NSW and Victoria.</p> <p>My firefighting experience began with NSW Forestry in the 1980's. I have extensive fire activity experience working from Crew Leader through to Divisional Commander with associated fire qualifications. I am experienced in helicopter fire fighting, hazard reductions burns, fire tower operations and possess an Associate Degree in Forestry Management.</p> <p>I no longer work in forestry but saved my residence west of Nelligen on New Years Eve unassisted by any fire agencies. The Currowan blaze cut a deadly path for weeks across our region. It turned out to be on a large scale and not contained early and several missed opportunities to stop it were missed with a major error in allowing the Kings Highway backburn to escape sending the fire towards Mogo and subsequently Malua Bay and the coast.</p>

Whilst the RFS are hailed as heroes the fact of the matter is they are poorly trained volunteers who don't have a lot of front line experience and don't know how to react to a fire let alone fight one. The brigades that were assigned to Old Bolaro Rd, Nelligen on New Years Eve left at 4 in the morning never to be seen again with a wildfire approaching and claiming several houses. This is at odds of several visits by SES advising residents that brigades would be present. There was an expectation of support by RFS and Forestry that was not forthcoming. In the weeks leading up to this, the RFS fire app "fires near me" was continually wrong with confusion over road names and was always out of date. Triple 000 calls were not responded to on the day and there was never a welfare check after these calls were made. Working on fire situations with RFS, problems stem from the top down, with paid professionals then volunteers who actually do the fire fighting and standards are enormously lower than the Forestry and NPWS professionals. The RFS were always difficult to supervise with their own communication network and are notorious for leaving the fire line unattended as they did at Nelligen on New Years Eve as they don't have the skill set. Forestry NSW or Forestry corporation are now a tin pot firefighting outfit. Poorly paid frontline fire fighters with numbers reduced and gone is the local firefighting knowledge and decades of know how on where to begin to stop fires, low numbers of local crews while foresters make the big money for managing bugger all. National Parks and Wildlife have good equipment but lack the zeal to properly use dozer to widen fire breaks and in most cases just shutting them down. All that land that is managed but with no plan on how to hazard reduce and save the native wildlife - a tragedy waiting to happen. RFS airwings has only added to the confusion with perceptions that if there is a fire the public thinks that there will be a chopper water bombing it out and that just doesn't happen. Huge aircrafts from America have tried and failed to stop fires and should be separated from the RFS and RFS just manage field based fire crews. The air wing should be its own group if not then disbanded. Hazard reduction burning is just not taking place and you if you ask most of the local firefighters from the 60's some can't remember when hazard reductions were practised around Nelligen, with comments like 'there hasn't been a burn in there for 30 years'.

1.1 Causes and contributing factors	Large scale fire not contained early with missed opportunities to stop it, Lost backburn on Clyde Mountain set up the fire to burn to the coast, Rural Fire Services, Forestry and NPWS under resourced
1.2 Preparation and planning	
1.3 Response to bushfires	Fires near me app constantly out of date, Triple 000 calls not responded to
1.4 Any other matters	SES gathering names of those staying and promising you will not be alone Expectation of support but not forthcoming Kings Highway closure - for what purpose, No petrol stations open at night when travellers were being diverted due to the Kings Highway being closed Councils have allowed sub-divisions in areas that could never be defended, Changed suburb names and roads so locals can't figure out where that area is and causing confusion

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