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I am making this submission as	Business owner
Submission type	Organisation
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	EcoView Design Pty Ltd
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	Business Owner
Consent to make submission public	Public
Your story	<p>I run a small building design firm from my home, which is a property that was bushfire affected. I defended my home and managed to save it. Many neighbours though lost their homes. As a building designer I have been approached now by many residents looking to rebuild and as a result have visited multiple homes that have been burnt down. This has given me a perspective on some planning aspects that may assist in preventing or minimising future events effecting residential areas.</p>
1.1 Causes and contributing factors	<p>Current legislation makes clearing on rural properties very difficult. I have been going through planning for a residence on a 100acre lot that is regrowth forest from a long term logging property. Due to current enviromental laws, for a clearing of more than 1 hectare on this property the owners would need to conduct extensive flora and fauna reports costing in excess of \$50,000 and then pay even more excessive biodiversity offset scheme to the government to clear the land. To give a</p>

perspective of this. The land was completely burnt through in December 2019. They could not afford to spend in excess of \$250,000 for the offset scheme to have a cleared area of just 60m around their home. Instead the allowable clearing only gave 30m around the home. This law puts people's lives at risk from fire conditions. When I was fighting fire on 5 different properties over summer the fire height was 60m. If you have a 30m cleared area around your home that amount leaves the home owner very vulnerable. I believe the planning laws should require a minimum of 50m of clearing on bush blocks without the requirement of flora and fauna reports as long as the area is outside environmentally sensitive areas such as creeklines. This would then not put extreme financial pressure on people to decide to clear to a safe level or minimise clearing and then be in unsafe conditions in the event of fires. This should also retrospectively be applied to properties to allow clearing around homes easily.

1.2 Preparation and planning

National parks should be required to maintain a 100m strip along areas abutting residential subdivisions to prevent spread of fires from land that is not managed effectively. If a maintained area was present on such land containment lines would have given fire crews the needed defense area to protect public assets and people's lives.

1.3 Response to bushfires

In my experience of the fires. The RFS and emergency services were not present on any of the 5 properties that I fought fires on. I realise the scale of the disaster but the RFS should have a required reporting to and legislated help given from the Armed Forces when a state of emergency is declared. The RFS should not have the ability to disregard offers from the Federal government for help. The scale of what occurred it should be mandatory that armed forces be deployed. I believe this was a major failing of the RFS. They did not have enough resources or personnel available yet they failed to allow the Federal government in to help with the army. The media complained about the prime minister being in Hawaii. He could have served more than adequately from a beach towel in Hawaii if the RFS let him provide the national assistance needed.

1.4 Any other matters

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