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<b>I am making this submission as</b>	Resident
<b>Submission type</b>	Personal
<b>Organisation making the submission (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Your position in the organisation (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Consent to make submission public</b>	Public
<b>Your story</b>	I am writing to tell you of the trauma of waking up at 4am to the bush on fire in my view to the north. We thought we had more time another day but no. We were prepared and we had a plan so that was enacted on the morning of NYE.
<b>1.1 Causes and contributing factors</b>	I wrote to the prime minister 26/12/19 "We are destroying our world with farming and agricultural practices that take limited water to abuse their rights until rivers run dry and fish die; by continual logging of native trees that produce humidity and oxygen; by producing too much plastic and toxic substances that we are not recycling but dumping in the ground rivers and oceans. nature is being destroyed at a rate tens to hundreds of times higher than the average over the past 10 million years. More than a million species are at risk of extinction, natural ecosystems have declined by about 47% and the biomass of wild mammals has fallen by 82%. All of this is largely because of human activity Mr Morrison- humans! And the resulting impacts

are likely to worsen unless we take action immediately."

Around Cobargo there was drought ridden parched and dry. "Meanwhile in rural NSW we are preparing for disaster.. We have spent the 3 months preparing for this fire season. The Tathra fires of March 2018 scared the shit out of me. So I have spent about 5000 dollars on mitigation: pumps and hoses and cleared our dying garden of trees and bushes that are hazardous. I see the danger to myself, my family and my property as well as to my friends and their families. My property is still not ready! We've been spared thus far. Come January it will be our turn. The native bush has died along our road someone asked has their been a fire there? No the Bush has died naturally from no water and extreme heat. It is a tinder box waiting for dry lighting or careless person and Cobargo will be the next area to burn. Everyone on the far south coast knows it. around Cobargo NSW saying Cobargo will be the next to burn and burn we did. Leading up to NYE there had been extreme hot dry weather. Cobargo had had a fire in October which had started after strong winds and quickly spread. There had not been any significant rains in our area during 2019."

Our place backs on to the Biamanga National Park and there had been no controlled burning around this area. After logging 10 years ago they did a small burn this encouraged new growth of one species and the bush grew back thick.

There was plenty of dry kikuyu grass around our farm, roadside and in paddocks near by as the dairy farm near by had closed down a few years ago.

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#### **1.2 Preparation and planning**

i don't feel that there was any preparation and planning prior to the NYE fires.  
there needs to be a coordinated strategy that brings together the sources and expertise of Federal, State, and Local government and its agencies to make the most of the resources available.

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#### **1.3 Response to bushfires**

There was a slow response to the bushfires and the response to this emergency lacked leadership throughout.

Badja State Forest fire started in early November 2019. There seemed to be a lack of urgency with this fire in the bush. There was no aerial water resources allocated and lack of understanding about the inevitable risk it poised to Cobargo and surrounding area. I am astounded that Australia doesn't own its own fleet of aerial firefighting craft but lease these from other countries. Australia is one of the hottest places on earth and know for its fires. To have no aerial fire resources is ludicrous and unfathomable as a tax payer.

On NYE we didn't receive any notification as the fires travelled quickly. We were fighting the fire before we received a text message warning us of danger. Mobile, internet coverage and power were lost. There was no fuel, food and no ATMs. Thanks to the generosity of Australians food and water did arrive eventually. Food and water is a number one human necessity in a crisis.

Our power was reconnected in 2 weeks but a number of friends are still without power 6 weeks later. Could this role be supported by our army to ensure people have basic services returned in good time?

In the days after we didn't see anyone for 3 days. It was hard to get information on the ground about what was happening and where the fires were. It was word of mouth mainly from locals. The use of forest names was confusing as we had never heard of some of these places before such as Badja State forest. This

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was confusing. Some people are aware of these places but the average person has no idea unless locality names are used as well.

ABC provided updates on the fire but sometimes people were being sent towards danger towards Bermagui when fires were travelling towards this town on strong winds. It was much more sensible to stay on the burnt lands of Cobargo than travel to evacuation point of Bermagui which was evacuated numerous times as the threat grew. There was no support for the recovery centre of Cobargo and yet it seemed like the safest place after NYE.

After fire response was slow and frustrating for the locals of Cobargo with many people taking the response to the fires into their own hands. The lack of coordinated leadership and good communication was apparent for weeks after the fires.

We were in a war zone. If an enemy of Australia had arrived all resources and coordination would have been given. Wild fires are now part of our lives and futures so we the people of Australia need to have the security of knowing the resources of Australia and ready to fight natural disasters and wars with our environment. This needs to be coordinated across governments and borders.

The Army Reservists were sent in willing to help. Although without sufficient skills, training and equipment for emergencies there offer of help was limited. They need to be trained to hold a chainsaw, chop down trees, clear roads, deliver resources, bring equipment and support to small towns that have limited to no resources for such a wide scale emergency.

indeed most full time paid staff of the government such as army, airforce, police, public servants should be trained and ready to be deployed to help in emergencies such as wild fire attack.

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#### **1.4 Any other matters**

Mostly i felt the lack of leadership, clear communication and on the ground support was lacking. I am working hard to recover on my property and many others are in the same or worse position. Without the government owning the issue and realising that a coordinated effort for emergency responses is important and crucial - this sort of event could easily occur again.

I want to know that the rebuilding of our towns will not take 5-10 years. Looking at Tathra there has only been 20 houses out of the 70+ rebuilt in 2 years. We need the resources now to rebuild our communities - trades people, apprenticeships and training to allow our community to recover and rebuild.

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#### **Upload files**

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