



<b>Title</b>	Mrs
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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>	<p>We had half prepared to leave and were told that we had until midday to get to the evacuation centre on New Year's Eve day. This Currowen fire has been licking at the a bay for some time now with some evacuations on the north side. We were woken at 6am that morning to sms notifications and phone calls telling us to leave now! Thank goodness my mother in law who was in our care was in respite, she had terminal cancer and was immobile. If she was with us we would have had even more of a stressful time. As it was i grabbed our kids, cat and belongings, left my husband to defend hoping to God he would survive and we would see him a bit later. I reached the evacuation centre, left the cat in a hot car, as I had to take my two children with me to register and my youngest is disabled. We waited for about 1 1/2 to register and were told we would get a call re accommodation due to the kids. The centre was not ready or set up. There was little to no communication, regarding food, toilets, drinks or updates as we were told to come to the centre with a backpack and bottle of</p>

water. We had no idea where to park the car. We heard nothing about any accommodation. We my kids, cat and I parked where we could and just sat and waited for mu husband. As the day went on it got smokier and darker. More and more sirens and air traffic not to mention the people turning up. You could see the flames a nd plumes of smoke coming up behind the front houses on the cliff of Catalina that overlooked Hanging rock evacuation centre. It looked like the fire was coming straight for us. The area just got more and more smokey. It was as hot as hell like our skin was melting and we could nOw see lots of smoke and flames in the direction of our home. We couldn't get hold of my husband phones were down. My kids were stressed and crying worried about their dad. My cat was stressed from the situation and the heat. Eventually my husband made it to the evacuation centre just before lunch when it started to get dark and red and you couldn't see more than metre in front of you. We were deciding if we should leave our cars and head to the beach. But decided to wait it out a bit longer. The smoke and colour eventually lifted. We felt safe enough to stay put now. We didnt eat for 48 hours as we didnt know where or when to get food, water was minimal. Luckily we were loaned a tent last minute and slept in that until we got accommodation for a few days. Even at the accommodation we could not access food. Eventually Coles opened but it was over crowded and people fighting over food. We got some basics. We ended up going home as we could not get continued accommodation. Also somehow fires were starting near the evacuation centre even though there were no live embers. We had no power or phones so we couldnt keep track of the fire apps or information and we couldnt get batteries for our radio and eventually after a week when shops were restocked the radio station's didnt work. We had no power for 17 days. And no water initially either. So being at home was a hazard. We were lucky our house just survived but has smoke and ash damage. We lost fridges of food, a shed full of our things and the beloved trampoline. There was damage to our retaining wall, verandah roof and furniture etc. We were very lucky to have our home the fire burnt around it within a metre. The evacuation centre was not set up for the disabled or elderly. You had to go upstairs to register or to see anyone official. No one made an effort to be down stairs for these members of the community to help them and i know some just went back home and hoped for the best it was their only choice. I realise power was out but it put peoples lives at risk. I couldn't take my youngest upstairs as she has low vision, down syndrome and sensory issues and the evacuation centre was noisy and crowded it just freaked her out. We have not been able to access any government help. These fires were around for a long time before....why did it all go so WRONG.

<b>1.1 Causes and contributing factors</b>	Fuel Not enough care taken of the land
<b>1.2 Preparation and planning</b>	There appeared to be none
<b>1.3 Response to bushfires</b>	Poor from high up in government especially
<b>1.4 Any other matters</b>	Need for broader thinking as more of the elderly and people who are disabled are no longer in institutions they are in our communities and we need to make things MORE accessible.
<b>Upload files</b>	