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I am making this submission as	General public
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>I tender this submission with hope that this and other submissions may lessen the severity of fires we have seen this season.</p> <p>I was a firefighter for nearly 30 years with NSW FR. I was an Inspector and positioned as Duty Commander in various bases around the state, so hopefully some of my opinions may be useful for this process.</p> <p>Id like to start by identifying the KISS principle (keep it simple). I heard this throughout the media coverage and being applied to the fire triangle (fuel heat air/oxygen). If we look at how a campfire is made we first add kindling in the form of paper small twigs etc to start the fire then as it grows it is sustained by adding bigger pieces. So it would be fair to say if we remove the rubbish and kindling the propagation of fire is reduced. The tricky part is how do we do this on a massive scale that aids state and country.</p> <p>In the media coverage of the Batemans Bay fire, with a very</p>

established fire approaching i saw that councils and local farmers and residents were rushing to clear land. Removing rubbish from surrounds, stockpiling fallen trees into safer areas etc. Hopefully others thought as I did, "why wasn't this done sooner". This act of rubbish removal is hazard reduction.

These fires will be investigated and without having all the facts and figures, with experience I assume that a high number of homes destroyed had loose material rubbish, cars, rubbish bins etc in close proximity to their homes.

I believe its fair to say that the removal of kindling and the creation of buffer zones will reduce the impact of a wildfire.

So how do we achieve this;

Emergency Services

By name they respond to an emergency situation and try to normalize and reduce the impact to the community without installing fear and panic to the community.

Our country is very good at recovery but the 4 stages of emergency management is PPRR Preparedness Preparation Response and Recovery. I feel we have failed in the first 2 and our focus on preparedness has diminished to much.

On media coverage Commissioner Fitzsimmons when discussing Hazard Reduction clearly stated it was hard, that he gets complaints about smoke, or the weather was wrong, or local crews were not available. Personally i thought, "wow just give up".

Our Indigenous Heritage shows that hazard reduction has been done through the ages to protect community flora and fauna. It is simple in its method and creates buffer zones and can dictate the direction of which a wildfire may burn. This was generally done on a smaller scale, so how do we do this on a larger scale.

Most Fire trucks have a drip torch but to often I would say grass and bushfires burning in the cooler months are just extinguished quickly so all can return to the comfort of the station. Maybe more education is needed there as they sadly miss an opportunity to conduct hazard reduction. The Milperra fire should've been hazard reduced months before these disastrous temperatures. The Bargo Picton fires i've seen fires there in the cooler months extinguished quickly and without the thought of controlling it and hazard reducing a larger area.

These areas are covered by on staff fire stations 24/7 but i believe have forgotten the initial role of emergency management Preparedness.

Mitigation of all hazards should be a priority and its not. Next time you're driving in a local area, how often do you see a factory or warehouse with a stockpile of crates, tyres, gas cylinders, forklifts etc closely positioned to the structure. You have to wonder why someone hasn't told them to remove it.

We need to firstly better utilize the resources we already have.

On a recent drive through the central coast of NSW, Gosford, Avoca and surrounds I was amazed at what people haven't learned. The number of homes within an urban bush interface that had so much growth around their homes. The stockpiles of rubbish, garden waste, old cars, closely built sheds with loose timber all this kindling around their homes and if alight would destroy their homes. Those areas had not been impacted by bushfires.

On the media coverage I was ashamed that, not only a firefighter but an Australian openly abused our Prime Minister. This should have never been aired. It seemed to give a platform for people to appoint blame to our politicians. Our State and country have the resources in place to protect our country and its our politicians primary function to maintain this and for the best part they do. From these Fires i imagine our councils and politicians will review policy for land owners and land management with regard to bushfire mitigation. Surely they will look at the facts and figures

and include this in the policy.

Removal of waste, cars, rubbish bins etc from close proximity to homes. Increase the number of council clean up days so rubbish can be removed. State and National parks to create buffer zones to reduce spread of fire. Is there enough onus on land owners to manage lands so to contain or limit the spread of fire from their properties. If a property that is cleaned and maintained, why should that property be under threat because neighbors had stockpiles of materials that burn readily. On the media coverage this looked very apparent to me and maybe that's where the firefighter should have vented his frustrations.

I refer back to Commissioners Fitzsimmons comments that Hazard reduction is to hard to do at times.

Lets try to address this

Establish Bush Fire Mitigation Centres around the state. A centre will service a divisional area. The centre should house a fully staffed bushfirefighting station permantly manned with 4 tankers and 4 shifts of a crew of 16 working a 10/14 roster.

Duties include

response to bushfires and support local crews.

Communicate with land owners and land managers to within a divisional area to conduct hazard reduction and create buffer zones within state and national parks.

To communicate and train local RFS stations and NSW Fire & Rescue in bush firefighting techniques and mitigation within their station area. To conduct Liaise with stations and set schedules for hazard reduction and utilize both fire services so a more efficient resource is maintained.

To inform and educate the community on how to reduce hazards pertaining to bushfires around the home and property within the divisional area.

Bushfire Mitigation Centres can also be utilised as evacuation centres and should be built with this in mind.

At a glance of our state map centres and divisional areas could be set up in Batemans Bay, Queenbeyan, Wollongong, Mittagong, Newcastle, Muswellbrook, Coffs Harbour and Armidale geographically protecting and conducting bushfire mitigation in all bushfire prone areas.

Lastly the media need to realize or understand they have a role to play. Other broadcasters need to look how the ABC manage a crisis in our community. They led the way in informative coverage of this fire. The other broadcasters seemed hellbent to sensationalize personal loss and tragedy and instill fear in those watching.

I,m sure something good will come from these devastating fires and with all the moneys raised i hope and look forward to a better land managed country and a better bushfire fighting resource.

Thankyou

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

1.2 Preparation and planning

1.3 Response to bushfires

1.4 Any other matters

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