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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>During the recent bushfires that almost surrounded Wingham/Taree I was a relatively new resident of Wingham. I had lived in the Blue Mountains in the early 2000s so I had some sense of how best to be prepared and to be up to date with the latest local fire ground news. I am pleased to say I also kept in close contact with friends I have made since living here, and we kept each other updated re wind changes etc. I have also been fortunate enough to have had no damage to my property in Wingham town, though my brother's farm out of Marlee had the fire burn right up to the house on two fronts. It was a very frightening time for us all.</p>
<b>1.1 Causes and contributing factors</b>	<p>There have been many warning signs that this fire season would be like nothing we had ever experienced. We did not heed them. The governments (State + Federal) did not listen to the ex fire chiefs when they asked for meetings regarding how we would deal with the coming season. This was many months prior, and</p>

the Greens have been asking for more resources for NSW Parks + Wildlife. This being contrary to the often held belief that we are against back burning per se. Climate change has had a real impact-being a major cause of the drought we have endured, and the lack of appropriate water management throughout the state only contributed to this problem further. The fuel was there and ready to go.

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**1.2 Preparation and planning**

It has been apparent over the last decade throughout NSW that the NSW Parks + Wildlife people have had their budgets slashed. This in turn has meant the tidying up, back burning that could have been done more often could not be. We need to learn from our First Nations people of how they manage the land in this kind of extreme situation. They can teach us a lot. The local council needs more resources put into being able to appropriately council land owners on the removal of excess fuel. Clear communication and co-ordination between the two is vital in these times.

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**1.3 Response to bushfires**

As someone living on their own, and new to the area I was relying heavily on the ABC local radio for updates, as well as the NSW RFS website. I found both very reliable and reassuring. However it was clear that the RFS site was under resourced and not always totally up to date. A lot of ABC person power went into the regular updates live to air re the fire zones. In this respect it is vital that in these times of high emergency government employees like defence force personnel be called in to fill the gaps re communications/coordination etc. It is not appropriate to rely on volunteers, many saving their own homes as well and utterly exhausted. Those government employees should also be involved in the actual firefighting, as they must surely have some basic training in this kind of thing anyway.

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**1.4 Any other matters**

If it weren't for the dedication to their communities that the RFS volunteers had there would have been far more serious loss of life and dwellings. This must never go unrecognised and ideally should not have to be repeated.

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**Upload files**

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