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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>This summer is one I will never forget, the trauma that this incident has caused to my daughter and myself is unimaginable. For weeks I watched the spread of the fire in our area, all the way from Nelligen to Nowra and then as it spread south to my property. I knew we were in for terrible weather on 31.12.19 but had no police and no rfs come to my home to advise us to leave either the day before or any day. So we were relying completely on the rfs map to watch as this monster grew in size. The updates to the map on the 31.12.19 were way too slow we had no idea how close the fire really was.</p> <p>At 8 am my gut instinct was to get my 11 year old daughter and my animals off my property while myself, my tenant and my boyfriend stayed behind. We were well equipped with fire hoses and water pumps and even had the for thought to put a pump into the swimming pool incase our other lines burnt.</p> <p>By 10 am still nobody came to tell us it was unsafe to be here, and my daughter who I thought I had sent to a safe area was</p>

actually now separated from me and in a fire zone. Her messages to me were that of panic and she just wanted her mum but by then road access was closed and I could not get to Batehaven to get her. So I spent all morning hosing my property down and felt we were going to be able to hold our own if the fire did come through.

By 11 am I was anxious and stressed beyond belief I had my daughter calling me constantly crying that she was scared and wanted me and I could not get to her due to closed roads. I also was watching the plumes or smoke get bigger and closer and by 11.10 my gut instinct was screaming at me to get out. Still no call or advice from anyone we were on our own. I decided to leave and go to the Moruya evacuation centre. When I drove up my drive to the top of the hill all I could see was kilometres of fire tree high. I called my tenant and told him and my partner to get out now. They had no idea this fire was so close as I live down in a gully.

By the time the men got their car keys and turned my water pumps off they were surrounded by fire. Finally a helicopter flies over blasting his alarm, this is the first time we have had any warning and this came way too late as by now the men are surrounded in fire.

The trees that I had contacted Eurobodalla shire council about asking could I cut them down to make it safe if we need to leave the property were now on fire, as even though we were under a section 44 at this time council refused to allow me to cut the trees. So my partner and my tenant drove out through flames to get out. How there was not loss of life is beyond me. Luckily they both drive diesel cars and managed to get to the evacuation centre where I was.

I was still receiving terrifying messages from my 11 year old daughter begging me to come and get her and she was sending me photos showing me how scary it was for her in Batehaven and there was nothing I could do to help her. The biggest trauma to myself in this whole situation was that I sent my daughter and animals into a zone that I thought was safe and she ended up being in as much danger as myself and separated from the one person who has kept her safe her whole life. I kept trying to calm her down even though inside I was breaking badly and terrified for my daughter. And then the unthinkable happened, we lost all phone contact as phone lines went down. This had a major affect on both my daughter and myself to the point where we are seeing my local dr regularly and I had to use Valium to calm my anxiety through out the day and still to this day am not mentally well. I am having nightmares of being trapped by walls of flame and only a waist high wall to hide behind but fire is coming from all directions so there is no escape. I have severe anxiety and hate leaving my property. I also have had to get support from my daughters school to slowly ease her back into school as she was terrified of leaving me.

I was fortunate my home survived, probably because we had watered it down and prepared for this monster to hit us at some point for over 3 weeks. I had major damage to our buildings, retaining walls, all fencing gone, but luckily and it is only luck that we all survived. We now just carry scars that seem impossible to heal and am seeing my dr again today to get professional trauma counselling.

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#### **1.1 Causes and contributing factors**

The thing that has made me most angry about this fire is the lack of advice from any authorities telling us we were unsafe to be here.

The other issue that I am extremely angry about is the fuel load that was left on the ground by forestry after they raped and pillaged all the land around us. Mogo which is 4 km away had that much fuel on the ground from forestry logging and taking what they wanted leaving the rest on the ground. Same at the back of my place all through the back of mison road, the fuel load was that high we did not stand a chance. Mogo had major losses

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with no support by the rfs and we also had major losses in Bimbimbie with once again no support from anyone. My neighbour down from me called 000 to say his sprinklers had stopped working on his timber house he had 3 people in that house they needed help. No help came. Three days after the fire 2 men arrive in white suits they are police officers to look for dead bodies in the houses that had burnt to the ground. The rfs mapping system of the fire was incorrect and not updated quickly enough. I feel completely let down by the system in every way. The council also need to update their organisational skills as there was absolutely nothing at the evacuation centre. No generator, no food, no water, no help just a number of people sitting in cars with total shock and trauma on many peoples faces. I left the evacuation centre after 3 hours and went back to my home and put our spot fires that were everywhere. This fire caused \$80,000 damage to my property and mentally broke me.

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

Eurobodalla shire council had no planning they were even encouraging tourists to come to our town for a holiday knowing there was a major risk of them ending up trapped, as highways were being closed suddenly and the kings highway was closed until further notice. But they still told people to come holiday here and then days before the monster changed my life they suddenly decide all tourists must leave, so suddenly our roads are congested with people trying to escape but where do they escape to as this fire is closing in fast on our town and towns further down the coast.

The bushfire hotline also was not much help at all I called it a number of times but once again was not told the danger we were in, most didn't even know where Bimbimbie is.

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

I feel totally let down by the system in so many ways. I feel the fire should have been got ontop of a lot quicker with water bombing aircraft etc. instead it grew and grew because of the fuel load on the ground all around us thanks to forestry nsw. I feel our fire fighters did the best that they could under horrific conditions. I do not feel this is anything to do with climate change. Yes we have been in drought this makes things a lot dryer and yes we had some terrible weather days, but had there been a quicker response maybe things would have been different.

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

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