

<b>Title</b>	MS
<b>First name</b>	PHILLIPA
<b>Last name</b>	HOLLENKAMP
<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>My husband and I had been monitoring the bushfires since early December, we prepared our home for the imminent fires mid December. We cleared debris/trees/overhanging branches, gutters, leaf debris build up for weeks. We installed an under the verandah sprinkler system connected to the town water supply. Had 4 static water supply stations with fire pumps (swimming pool/water tank/cubes) positioned around our two homes, one currently under construction, BAL rated 29, and our two sheds on our 5 acre property. The hoses were primed and ready to go at a moments notice. We are also connected to town water. We removed all outdoor furniture, pot plants, mats, baskets anything flammable from balconies and verandahs mid December. We stored fuel supplies in an open paddock away from structures. We had our fire plan in place, were mentally and physically able to defend our home and had a final fall back plan of leaving and</p>

driving to our cleared paddock in the event it was a hopeless cause. We had our cars positioned for this escape and had all the gates open.

We looked at the predicted fire spread map on 30/12/19 which indicated ember attack only near the highway turnoff at Conjola Park. this is where we live. The morning of NYE my husband and I decided not to go to work by 7.30am, due to the conditions on the day. Our reasons were: Proximity of a backburn at Porters Creek Rd to our property, predicted wind conditions for the day (north westerly winds then a southerly early afternoon), listening to the RFS scanner, the forecasted catastrophic conditions for the day, visually checking at high spots from the highway, liaising with our neighbours. At 8.30 am we noted 12 firetrucks heading south to Batemans Bay. This gave me a false sense of security that maybe we would be OK.

At 10.28am we received our first seek shelter text message, this did not include the suburbs of Conjola Park or Lake Conjola. The second text message to seek shelter was sent at 1.56pm again no mention of Conjola or Conjola park. See attached pictures. We ran our verandah sprinklers for 30mins at around 10am. We had no town water 20 mins before the fire arrived.

The fire came into my property 47D, from the North down the hill, through Egans Farm Lane at 11.48am, multiple fire balls were sent ahead of the main front into our property, the village, paddocks etc, the main fire front came through the forest fully in the canopy, through our cleared APZ easement, at the second home under construction (BAL rated 29). Just prior, 15 mins 2 helicopters were dumping dam water 3 x collected from our immediate neighbours property and dumping it up on Quigly's farm upon the ridge at Egans Farm Lane, sirens blaring. Then they left immediately. My husband and I shared all 4 pump stations defending the structures and swapping between sharing/dragging the hoses. Our property has up slope forest which made the fire go up towards the main rd. Our neighbours house at 47C was on fire at some point and my husband jumped the fence and manned their fire pump, hosing their property. They had fled during the fire, and could not get out on the highway and returned, even though we are approx 500m from the highway turn off, they sought shelter at 47B, a pole house, whilst inside they noted the fire had got under the ridge capping on all three levels and the house was on fire from the inside. The property owner was able to extinguish these fires inside the home.

All three properties in our private rd were saved by the 3 couples that own them, including ours. Our first neighbour at 47A lost their home, they were out for the morning. Every house from 47A onwards on Lake Conjola Entrance Rd to the Kurrajong Rd turnoff has been lost, maybe 20 or so. We are one of 7 remaining properties in our whole street.

We were able to stop actively fire fighting at 1.27pm. My husband had burnt his eyes and could not see properly for 24hrs. The afternoon was spent mopping up, putting out fires in trees, fencing and logs, mulch etc and the whole night was spent putting out small fires around the property. Houses in the village were still burning during the night. Late in the afternoon we had a visit from an RFS person getting statistics about what structures were lost. We still have not seen a fire truck to date.

We lost 5 acres of fencing, a shipping container full of vintage furniture, all garden structures, pergolas, gazebos, garden furniture, 95% of the park like gardens, 30 year feature tree lined driveway, mature hedging, retaining walls, tractor and slasher, box trailer and are claiming \$50,000 in loss with our insurance company. Currently we have spent \$5000 on tree removal to date, and still have a further \$5000 to spend on further arborist work. These costs are not covered. To replant our gardens would cost \$100,000, this money we do not have.

We had no water for 3 days, no power for 9 days, no telephone or internet for at least 7 days. As we are self employed I went

back to work on day 6, my husband an electrician spent 9 days installing and uninstalling generators to peoples properties around the village,wiring them in safely to the switchboards, then disconnecting when power became available. The morning of NYD brought a melee of helicopters and media,no food or water mind you. The roadblocks were set up and manned by highway patrol police who were rude, had no empathy and were incapable of making practical decisions regarding residents getting food, water, fuel. We were unable to get out to go to the shops,or if we did, come back in. The general duties police who also manned the the roadblocks should be commended for their practical thinking during this time helping the residents.

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**1.1 Causes and contributing factors**

Poor decisions in sending so many trucks south to Batemans Bay on the morning of NYE leaving the village exposed and unmanned. 1 fire truck was in position in West Lake Conjola on NYE.  
The wrong information on the fire prediction map issued by the RFS on 30/12/19, for Conjola Park area, when this fire prediction map is meant to be "worse case scenario". More residents may have stayed at home to fight the fire instead of going about daily activities.  
Back burning a day before catastrophic fire conditions and also leaving this back burn unattended on the night of 30/12/19 was wrong. How could this achieve anything 24 hours before?

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**1.2 Preparation and planning**

More scrub removal and cold burning in National Parks, State Forests and private property.  
BAL ratings should be enforced on existing properties not just new builds.  
Mandatory/forced clearing around homes, trees and shrubs.

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**1.3 Response to bushfires**

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**1.4 Any other matters**

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**Upload files**

47d-Lake-Conjola-entrance-Rd-after-the-fire.jpg - [Download File](#)  
Fire-Prediction-Map-for-31st-December.jpg - [Download File](#)  
text-message-1.jpg - [Download File](#)

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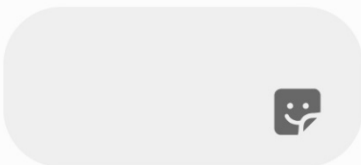
# Major Fire Updates



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BUSHFIRE  
WARNING  
Fishermans  
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Surrounds





Liz Collins



CONJOLA PARK: NSW. AUSTRALIA  
POST NYE 2019



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