



Title	Mr
First name	Terrance
Last name	Channells

I am making this submission as	Resident
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Submission type	Personal
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Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	
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Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	
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Consent to make submission public	Public
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Your story	<p>My property is situated in a small area 8 kms west of Macksville. I have lived here approx 8 years with my wife of 41 years Jennifer. Wards Lane has 7 dwellings with the smallest property being 5 acres. The largest approx 100 acres.</p>
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We were engulfed by fire at approx 4:30pm on the 8th November 2019 in a savage and speedy manner which brings me to my reason for writing this submission. Does community spirit exist or is it selective to the chosen elite? This is my story!

On the 8th of November 2019 at approx 4:30pm, without any warning, either by phone or physical warning, we were engulfed in Wards Lane by a savage fire. As the aftermath clearly shows it had been heading straight at us for an amount of time. Our Utungun fire station is approx 3kms away to the south west where a greater population exists. As we hoped and prayed for a fire brigade we soon realised we were on our own. No help was

to come even as history shows we were the most at risk in this community. Each household in Wards Lane had to fend for itself. The wife and I battled the fire as best we could, putting embers out, blocking gutters, using our limited tank water. Our 1,000 litre fire fighter ran out and so did our main water tank. We still had some water in our gravity feed tank which helped. After 2 hours we restricted our fire fighting to 2 metres from the house.

The septic tank to the south was ablaze, our shipping container 3 metres to the west was ablaze, we were losing. After some hours I was near collapse as I suffer badly from rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis so when an area to the east caught fire approx 20 metres long got to within 3 metres of our house we decided we had to go but to our relief a helicopter dropped 2 quick loads from a nearby dam and doused the eastern fire and 1 load to the west of the house. We were so lucky as I believe we only had a minute or two up our sleeves.

At about 11pm a fire truck from yarrahapinni (some 30kms away) with two men drove into Wards Lane. All earlier help like Scotts Head truck and utility truck were required elsewhere. They didn't have the manpower to help much as 5 or so hours had passed but they did fill my fire fighting tank. There were many trees alight producing showers of embers all night but we got through.

The next day, Saturday the 9th November 2019 was also difficult. Not having any water left I organised a water delivery man to bring loads of water all day to the Wards Lane residents and one designated load to put directly on fires as trucks were not available. Back up trucks were in the main Utungun area as some fence posts were under threat there.

By Saturday night trees started to fall and it was another long evening as access had to be maintained and still no help came.

Sunday was about clearing around the house and getting more water as the 13,000 litres from Saturday was nearly gone.

Monday morning Utungun fire brigade finally arrived and didn't enquire about anyone but instead gave me a lecture about being aware of dangerous trees (as if I was an idiot). About 2 hours after they left a large tree, approx 4 metres round and very tall, came down and it was burning. It completely isolated 4 homes so us residents came together to try and remedy it as best we could. We called council for help whom promptly sent someone but we were informed it was too big and on a private access road so not their job. The tree was on fire so we tried to get the fire truck but were told they were too busy. Luckily I knew an excavator owner whom came out straight away with his excavator and the water cart driver came back out and all hands pitched in to make the road accessible again. The Utungun fire truck came back about 2 hours afterwards, put some water on the stump, and left again.

In the wash up of the fire we lost a 22,000 litre water tank, our septic system, our shipping container with stored assets, a lot of irrigation, the post that our metre box was on as well as damage to the box itself, our driveway pipe, a lot of garden, approx 20 fence posts, a chicken house and incidentals. Elsewhere in our lane 2 cattle yards were lost, heaps of fencing, another water tank, a shed partially burnt, crop and paddock damage. The main part of Utungun lost a couple of fence posts.

The questions I want answered are as follows:

1. Why did no one in Wards Lane get warnings when the main part of Utungun had been evacuated by 3pm? They had been monitoring the situation from earlier in the day (I have photographic proof of this from social media posts).
2. Why no help for Wards Lane but plenty for the main part of

Utungun during the fire? (Again I have photograhic proof from social media posts)

3. Why council could help one part of Utungun with excavator, loader, trucks and water carts but not us? (Once again I have photographic proof from social media posts).

4. Does it matter who lives where as to treatment given? The main part of Utungun has a Nambucca Shire councillor as a resident, famous Australian actors live there, long term school teachers live there. Our lane is mainly retirees.

A week after the fire my excavator returned home from a friends and I lent it out to those that had no help. Sometimes with an operator or I operated it myself if I was well enough. The machine has done over 240 hours work on fire victims jobs at no charge. I only tell you this to say I don't expect the world to help but I just want fairness in the community for me and my fellow Wards Lane residents from community based organisations.

Thank you

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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