Reducing bushfire risk through improved household decision making.

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‘Disasters work like a magnifying glass, showing what is good and what needs work in society. The problems before a disaster are the problems after a disaster, only worse, and this is as true of gender issues as any other issues.’ [1]

What are the issues?:
- 6 of the 9 Wangary fire fatalities were women and children fleeing the fire in vehicles
- Gender issues play a key role in the application of the ‘stay and defend or go early’ policy
- The role of women in bushfire is often seen as quite passive
- What is an effective approach to educate women about the dangers of late evacuation?
- How can the bushfire resilience of women be enhanced?
- How can we integrate women meaningfully in the process that protects communities?

Wangary Fire Case Study:
Primary material will be drawn from interviews and focus groups. Participants will include:
- households that experienced the Wangary fire
- female fire fighters from the Lincoln and Tumby Bay Brigades
- representatives from the two fire-affected Local Government Areas
- CFS staff who conduct fire education programs in South Australia
Fieldwork will commence in Spring 2006

Research aims:
- To put gender issues in the foreground
- To further explore, and learn from, women’s experience of the Wangary fire
- To recognise women’s coping capacity and resilience
- To determine if women have access to the information that they need and/or want