

FIRE UPDATE

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RESEARCH AT THE FIREGROUND

RECENT BUSHFIRES HAVE PROVIDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSHFIRE CRC RESEARCHERS TO GATHER NEW FIELD DATA

Bushfire CRC researchers have been conspicuous at many fires in south-eastern Australia in recent days.

As dozens of bushfires arrive early in the season researchers and fire agencies have seized the opportunity to work together to gather valuable data from real life operations.

Researchers in the field include:

Research project A 3.1 Matt Plucinski from Ensis Bushfire Research and Greg McCarthy from the University of Melbourne have been moving around the Gippsland region in eastern Victoria observing operations for their project Evaluation of Air Suppression Techniques and Guidelines. Earlier Matt was at the Blue Mountains in New South Wales and is now at Tumut in New South Wales.

A 4.1 Kevin Tolhurst, from the University of Melbourne, is working at the Department of Sustainability and Environment Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) in East Melbourne on fire behaviour prediction. Kevin's Bushfire CRC project is developing a fire characteristic mapping model.

A 1.4 Grant Pearce, from Ensis Bushfire Research in New Zealand, is also helping

with fire behaviour modelling and observation at the DSE ECC.

Highfire - Jenny Indian and Amalie Tibbits from RMIT University have been attending community meetings and working with CFA community liaison groups as observers in north-east Victoria. Both are looking into local knowledge in communities as part of the Highfire project Living with Fire in the High Country. Mike Kemp, research officer with Highfire, has been actively defending his own property near Whitlands.

C 6 Alan Rhodes from the CFA and a researcher on the Stay or Go policy project has attended numerous community meetings across the Gippsland area.

D 2.1 Matt Phillips from the University of Melbourne is collecting data on fire-fighting physiology from fire-fighters returning from the fire ground at Dargo. Project leader David Nicholls from the CFA is a Situation Unit Leader at the CFA State Emergency Coordination Centre.

D 2.2 Fabienne Reisen from CSIRO and Dane Hansen from RMIT University are collecting

smoke data at Dargo and Bairnsdale for their project Air Toxics Exposure and Management.

D 3 Adrian Birch, Latrobe University researcher with the Enhancing Volunteerism project, has been active in his capacity as a volunteer with his local CFA brigade in the Heyfield area in Gippsland.

D 7 Christine Owen, Ian Dwyer and Greg Hickey, University of Tasmania, observed the ECC then Ian and Greg attended the Traralgon Integrated Fire Coordination Centre in Gippsland for their project Enhancing Emergency Incident Management Team Effectiveness.

Many of these Bushfire CRC researchers are not only collecting valuable data but are also assisting with the operations and strategies to manage the bushfires.



▲ ABOVE: WHILE LOOKING FOR DATA ON SMOKE INHALED BY FIRE FIGHTERS DANE HANSEN CAPTURED THIS SMOKE CLOUD NORTH OF BAIRNSDALE IN EASTERN VICTORIA.

◀ BELOW LEFT: AERIAL SUPPRESSION RESEARCHER MATT PLUCINSKI TOOK THIS PHOTO FROM THE AIR OVER BLACKHEATH IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS, NSW, IN LATE NOVEMBER.

▼ BELOW: THE KING VALLEY BUSHFIRE REARED CLOSE TO THE PROPERTY OF HIGHFIRE RESEARCHER MIKE KEMP NEAR WHITLANDS

