



Media release

More research into forest fires needed

The Institute of Foresters of Australia is calling on the Federal and State Governments to fund further scientific research into the important and complex role that fire plays in the evolution and maintenance of Australian ecosystems. The Climate Council reports that bushfires already cost about \$100 million every year in NSW and the ACT alone.

Bob Gordon, National President of the Institute, said, 'Fire has potential to significantly affect not only the environment but community's social, economic and cultural development.

'Foresters from the Institute know that more needs to be done in systematic monitoring and review of fire management - including fire impact mitigation, with the results being made available to policy makers, land managers, fire services and the community.

'Fire is an essential element of the Australian natural environment but uncontrolled fire can also be destructive, potentially leading to deaths, damaged infrastructure, loss of habitat, and degradation of other forest values such as recreation and timber harvesting. The impact of fire can also extend beyond the burned area with smoke having potential to adversely affect human health and damage to crops such as wine grapes.

'To protect life and biodiversity, fire must be managed by professionally trained, experienced and accredited forest managers, not just emergency service agencies; at a landscape scale and over long timeframes even though the impact can be local and immediate', said Bob.

The IFA considers that:

- Every fire management program should be objectives-based and outcome-focused. With objectives that cover the protection of human life, property, economic and cultural values, social function and environmental values.
- The Australian, State and Territory governments have a responsibility to provide adequate resources for coordinated research and systematic monitoring of the behaviour, environmental effects and social impacts of bushfires and use of fire for managing forests and woodlands, and to provide inter-generational continuity of skills, capability and resources.
- The use of fire in the landscape by many Traditional Owners is acknowledged. Traditional knowledge and burning practices have great potential to contribute to positive social and environmental outcomes. Fire management can be used to reintroduce traditional knowledge to communities where it has been lost.

More can be read on the IFA website at www.forestry.org.au/about-ifa/ifa-policies

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