

# News Release

29 February 2008

Department  
for Environment  
and Heritage

## Bushfire research in SA's mallee bush

The mallee and heath landscape of Ngarkat Conservation Park in south-eastern South Australia will be deliberately set alight next week in one of the largest and most comprehensive fire research exercises undertaken in Australia.

Bushfire researchers from around Australia have converged on the park for a series of controlled burns under several separate research projects designed to improve fire management in South Australia and nationally.

The major part of the exercise is Project FuSE, a research collaboration between the South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) and CSIRO Forest Biosciences through the national Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre. The project aims to describe fuel dynamics and fire behaviour in two major fuel types – mallee and heath.

The final output of this study will be a prescribed burning guide for areas of similar vegetation type around Australia. Next week's burns at Ngarkat will build upon the data already gained from test burns in the area in recent years.

Other Bushfire CRC researchers in Ngarkat next week will study:

**Aerial suppression** – aircraft will drop a range of chemical suppressants (retardant, foam, gel) and compare the results.

**Fire fighter fitness and health** – crews working on the fires will be monitored for the amount of physical effort they expend to see how this affects factors such as heart rate, body temperature, and energy and hydration levels.

**Air toxics exposure** – researchers will be monitoring and analysing the composition of bushfire smoke to better understand what fire fighters are exposed to on the fire ground.

Researchers on the ground will be supported by staff and volunteers from the Department for Environment and Heritage and the SA Country Fire Service. Other agencies involved include the Country Fire Authority of Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria.

The media is invited to view the research burns.

- What** Aerial Suppression and fire behaviour studies under controlled field conditions.  
Interviews with researchers and personnel from DEH, CFS, CSIRO and Bushfire CRC .
- Where** Ngarkat Conservation Park, near Kirra.
- When** Wednesday 5 March 2008.
- Time** 10am
- NOTE** The decision to proceed with the tests on this day will be confirmed 24 hours in advance. Before travelling to the site, please call:  
08 8204 2123.

### Media contacts

*Adelaide –*

**Charles Maddison**

Media & PR Manager

DEH Corporate Communications

Phone 8204 2123

Mobile 0423 827 613

*Ngarkat Conservation Park –*

**David Bruce**

Communications Manager

Bushfire CRC

Mobile 0414 223 281

[www.environment.sa.gov.au](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au)

bushfire CRC

