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## High country fire management and long-term research

Residents and workers of north-east Victoria have the opportunity to find out more about bushfire research in the region with two community events planned for early next month.

**Tuesday 5 June, 12.30pm** - the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (Bushfire CRC) is launching its HighFire research project at the Howmans Gap Alpine Centre and has personally invited people who have a close interest in that study to meet the research team. The media is also welcome to attend this launch, which will include a short walk to a research site and a commissioning of the state-of-the-art monitoring equipment.

**Wednesday 6 June, 6.30pm** - the Bushfire CRC is hosting a public forum at the Playhouse Theatre in Wangaratta. The public is encouraged to come along and hear an update of a range of bushfire research projects that are making a difference to people in north-east Victoria, including the HighFire project. There will be time for questions and discussion with the researchers. All welcome.

The Federal Member for Indi, Mrs Sophie Mirabella, will attend both these events.

As part of the response to the devastating 2003 alpine bushfires in south-east Australia the Australian Government provided funding for fire-related research in the high country. Given the limited scientific evidence available at that time on fuel management in high country landscapes the Bushfire CRC HighFire Project began the task of filling these gaps in our knowledge.

**The HighFire Project** has leading Australian and international researchers working on a range of projects. HighFire research is underway in the Kiewa and Ovens valleys in Victoria, the Snowy Plains in NSW and in the ACT.

Research outputs of the HighFire Project will support decisions confronted by land managers and the general public in coming decades, such as:

- The effects of wildfire on ecosystem processes, health and distribution
- The effects and effectiveness of fuel management practices, such as prescribed fire and grazing, to mitigate wildfire and therefore protect assets and values (including fire-sensitive ecosystems);
- Managing bushfire risk in the high country
- Training the next generation of fire researchers
- The role of local knowledge

The HighFire Project is one of the first studies to move land management in Australia towards an ecosystem approach that includes people as part of the ecosystem they manage. The management of Australia's high country ecosystems is dependent upon policy that is supported by research.

The Bushfire CRC was established in 2003 under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centre program to improve understanding of the complex social, economic and environmental aspects of bushfires. Its partners include fire and land management agencies across Australia and New Zealand, universities, and government agencies including the CSIRO, Emergency Management Australia and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology.

*For further information contact*

*David Bruce, Communications Manager, Bushfire CRC, 03 9412 9606 or 0414 223 281.*