

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Learning from Coonabarabran fires

14 February 2012

A major research program will begin this week to learn from the recent bush fire in the Coonabarabran area which destroyed more than 50 homes.

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) has engaged the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre to conduct the research, which will focus on people's preparation, decision making and actions during the fire.

"A fire of this size, intensity and impact presents an opportunity to take a close look at what people did before, during and after the fire, and learn from their experiences," said NSW RFS Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

"We've seen during recent fires, including the January fire in the Warrumbungle Shire near Coonabarabran, how important preparation, information and warnings can be.

"This research is part of the continuing relationship between the NSW RFS and the national Bushfire CRC, which helps all agencies better understand people's actions and ensure lessons are learned," said Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

Bushfire CRC CEO Gary Morgan said the research was of national significance.

"The data gathered will inform not just the people of New South Wales and the NSW RFS, but communities and fire agencies across Australia and New Zealand," Mr Morgan said.

"The Commissioner of the NSW RFS, Shane Fitzsimmons, and his senior staff, have been in regular touch with the Bushfire CRC since the bush fires occurred, to seek the expertise of the Bushfire CRC in gathering data on the ground to inform this important work.

"The vital research that follows major fires is only possible through the national approach taken by the Bushfire CRC. This collaboration was not available 10 years ago, before the Bushfire CRC was formed," said Mr Morgan.

Research teams from the NSW RFS and Bushfire CRC will begin interviews with affected residents in the next week.

Affected residents can register their interest in taking part in the research by emailing info@bushfirecrc.com or calling (03) 9412 9600.

For more information please contact the State Duty Media Officer on 9898 1855.