

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Learning from the recent fires across the Southern Tablelands

15 March 2013

A major research program will begin this week to learn from the January grass fire which affected areas around Jugiong.

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.

"During January we saw fire danger like we've never seen before, with the Southern Tablelands experiencing some of the worst conditions," Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said.

"The Cobbler Road fire, which started under Catastrophic conditions, burnt quickly, spreading around 35 kilometres through 14,000 hectares, and causing significant damage to farming country including extensive livestock losses.

"A fire like this presents an opportunity to take a close look what people did before, during and after the fire, and learn from their experiences.

"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 and follows a similar research project in Coonabarabran, where 53 homes were destroyed in January.

"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 January bush fires, 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.

Affected residents can register their interest in taking part in the research by emailing office@bushfirecrc.com or calling 0404 463 612.

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