

Translating science into management in NSW: the Hotspots Fire Project

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Through a coordinated program of research, training and education initiatives, Hotspots synthesizes the latest developments in ecological fire management and puts them into a management framework for land managers and regional communities.

The Hotspots team works with a diverse range of people interested in fire - from landholders and rangers to fire fighters, ecologists, government agencies and others. With the help of experienced ecologists, science communicators and trainers, the team is also creating a set of booklets and other resources.

The Hotspots team then ensures this information reaches key people through a series of practical workshops. Workshops improve the capacity of communities to work together to manage fire, and offer a hands-on approach to fire management within and between properties; an approach that addresses the goals of different land uses such as farm production and biodiversity conservation.

A pilot program of introductory workshops was held in the Northern Rivers region in the Winter/Spring of 2005. Over 130 landholders and community representatives participated. Each of the workshops was held in a different social community— from peri urban to large land holdings in excess of 10,000 ha; in different landscapes – from coastal dunes to the gorges of the Northern escarpment; and in differing vegetation communities – from heathland to rainforest. In addition, each workshop addressed a different suite of issues for each target community. The focus ranged from fuel loads in State Forest, to protection of dwellings immediately adjacent to National Parks, and protecting rainforest remnants on private property from the effects of fire.

Through a series of steps that test, refine and expand the project materials and methods, and in the context of the NSW political and regulatory environment; the Hotspots fire project is developing a framework, and a model for translating science into management for landholders in NSW.

Translating science into practice - ecological bushland management