

1. Fire in the Australian High Country

As a result of the 2003 Alpine Fires:

- almost 2 million hectares burnt
- 68% of the Alps National Parks burnt
- 551 houses were destroyed
- 4 people died in the ACT
- at least 38 alpine huts were destroyed

The 2003 Alpine Fires are the most extensive in the Australian high country since the 1939 Black Friday Fires.



Photos and maps taken from the DSE website

Following the devastating fires of 2003 the debate around land management became intense with many opposing views, most of which were unsupported by scientific research.

The CRC will, through the HighFire project, create an evidence-base that can be drawn upon by land managers in formulating future policy and practise.

2. Research Scope

Project 1: Fuels and Ecosystem Functions

This project will address the impacts of wildfire and fuels management on:

- Fuel accumulation
- Carbon & Greenhouse gases
- Water
- Weeds and
- the interactive effects of all of the above in addition to effects of climate change



Project Leader:
Mark Adams
(UNSW)

Project 2: Living with Fire

This project will:

- develop ways of improving the implementation of evidence-based policy
- document local experience and values
- develop ways of improving local resilience



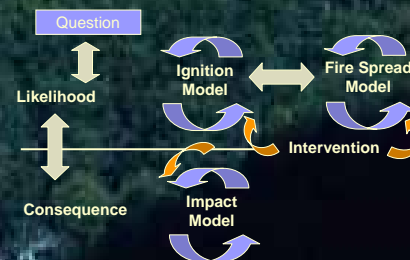
Project Leader:
John Handmer
(RMIT)



Source: DSE website

Project 3: Management of Bushfire Risk

This project will develop an evidence-based model for analysing Bushfire Risk in high country Areas



An example of a model used to analyse Bushfire Risk. Source: Metis Associates (2005)

Project Leaders



Rick McRae
(ESA-ACT)



Rodney Weber
(UNSW)

3. Defining boundaries of the High Country

A range of Boundaries



Figure 1. Australian Alpine National Parks. Source: DEH website



Figure 2: Alpine areas defined by ruggedness. Author: Rick McRae.

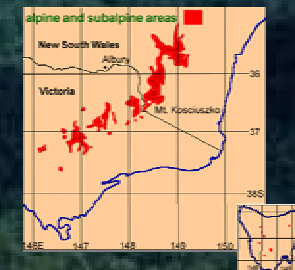


Figure 3. Alpine & Sub-alpine areas. Source: Lost

There is no definitive way of defining boundaries of High Country areas (see Figures 1 to 3). However, in the context of effective fire management the HighFire project defines the high country to include all ecosystem types and terrains including:

- alpine (1600m+)
- sub-alpine (1300-1900m)
- Montane (300-1500m)
- Tableland and Foothill Forests (300-900m)