

# FIRE UPDATE

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## PROJECT VESTA VALIDATION

Project Vesta is a study of forest fire behaviour undertaken in the Jarrah forests of Western Australia, using the resources of the Department of Environment and Conservation Western Australia (DEC), and ENSIS Bushfire Research section of the CSIRO. The objective is to update the knowledge of wildfire behaviour and develop models to better predict wildfire spread and spotting distances.



data collection. In the course of this process, a decision was made to increase the scope of knowledge collected. As a result, data is being collected that will be useful for a range of fire behaviour projects, including the validation of the Vesta model.

To assist in this work, two data collection forms have been developed with the assistance of fire researchers within the Department of Sustainability and

Environment Victoria (DSE), and overseen by Dr McCaw.

An interim Field Guide has been produced and is available from CSIRO Publishing: [www.publish.csiro.au/pid/5993.htm](http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/5993.htm)

### BACKGROUND

The Bushfire CRC is now managing the collection of data to be used to validate the Project Vesta model in a range of forest types.

Dr Lachie McCaw, a fire research scientist with the DEC, provided briefing sessions to interested organisations throughout Australia during 2008.

Project Vesta now requires field validation throughout Australia to determine its suitability to various forest types.

At an industry meeting, hosted by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) Rural and Land Management Group in November 2008, it was agreed to instigate a national approach to

Environment Victoria (DSE), and overseen by Dr McCaw.

**Form 1** is intended for use by fire crews to provide basic fire behaviour information.

**Form 2** is for fire planners to provide detailed information on forest types and wildfire behaviour

A second intention is to develop a database of information that fire researchers can access to further the understanding of fire behaviour.

DSE has agreed to provide its ARGUS database system for the collation of national data. Access to this database is open to anyone who wishes to register with the DSE and will enable the user to input data and access the stored data.

This is the first time in Australia that a national database of this type has been developed.



▲ ABOVE: PROJECT VESTA FIELD VALIDATION LED BY DR LACHIE MCCAW NEAR HOBART LATE LAST YEAR.

## DATA COLLECTION FORMS

Data collection forms are available from state contacts, or through the ARGUS website [fireweb.dse.vic.gov.au/argus/dms/login](http://fireweb.dse.vic.gov.au/argus/dms/login)

## VALIDATION

The validation of Project Vesta will be an ongoing process with the model becoming more robust as more information on wildfire behaviour in differing forest types becomes available.

The data collection forms will be reviewed periodically to ensure information collected meets the ongoing requirements of Australian and New Zealand researchers

## PROJECT TIMETABLE

Nominations for data analysis team,	April 2009
Season 1 data analysis,	May 2009
Season 2 data analysis,	May 2010
Initial Recommendations,	June 2010

## STATE CONTACTS/INFORMATION

**Project Contact:** David Robson - Forestry Tasmania, [david.robson@forestrytas.com.au](mailto:david.robson@forestrytas.com.au)  
**Western Australia:** Dr Lachie McCaw - Department of Environment & Conservation  
**Rick Sneeuwjagt** - Department of Environment & Conservation  
**South Australia:** Mike Wouters - Department for Environment & Heritage  
**Victoria:** Alen Slijepcevic - Department of Sustainability & Environment  
Francis Hines - Department of Sustainability & Environment  
**New South Wales:** James Lonergan - Department of Environment & Climate Change  
Superintendent Peter Kinkead - NSW Rural Fire Service  
**Queensland:** Steve Rothwell - Queensland Fire & Rescue Service  
Inspector Bruno Greimel - Queensland Fire & Rescue Service  
**Tasmania:** David Robson - Forestry Tasmania  
Paul Black - Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service  
**New Zealand:** Murray Dudfield - New Zealand Fire Service  
For information on the DSE ARGUS system, contact: ARGUS Team at [Fire.Monitoring@dse.vic.gov.au](mailto:Fire.Monitoring@dse.vic.gov.au)