

# Reducing the hazard and threat exposure of wildfires in australia

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Wildfires have the potential to be a severe natural disaster, rapidly spreading across a vast area in a very short amount of time to leave unsuspecting communities at a great risk of being completely destroyed by the raging flames. Wildfire often happens in dry countries during summer. Throughout Australia, Bushfires are common due to its climate which is generally hot, dry and prone to drought and different weather patterns of the continent. For the NSW, the peak risk is in spring and early summer. Globally, the risk of fire hazards is increasing due to climate change, which is influencing high temperatures and longer periods of drought. Wildfires have many instigators, these include human-caused, lightning strikes, volcanic eruption etc. The typically mild and moist forests and peatlands have produced large carbon stores which have provided ample fuel to produce large wildfires in ecosystems where they are ordinarily uncommon. This has the potential for negative ecological effects such as erosion, decreases in nutrient availability and invasion by non-native species that may take ecosystems years to recover from Flannigan.

Reports have also revealed a number of factors that increased vulnerability of people and assets to the negative impacts of the fire hazard, such as: congested distribution of buildings, poor access to properties, old and overgrown pine trees which allowed flames to spread easily between buildings, a poor public awareness of the fire risk, and a lack of local for such a large-scale hazard. All these factors could have been combatted with proper urban planning, better building regulations, a well-managed forest, and an increased hazard awareness through education of residents, employees, emergency workers, and tourists.

However, despite their rapid and unpredictable nature, hazard prevention procedures can be put in place to better prepare people for these disasters and ultimately reduce the damage and fatalities experienced by these communities. Backburning is a significant method that can be used to limit the potential of wildfires, through controlled burning in small targeted areas where wildfires are likely to occur. This restricts the growth of the wildfires and enables them to be extinguished quickly and efficiently. Fire bans imposed by the government are also effective in controlling wildfires to ensure that no fires are accidentally started through human activity. These can quickly escalate out of control and spread throughout suburban areas, claiming significant financial losses, extensive property damage and losses of life.

Another way of Reducing the hazard and threat exposure is by controlling the fuel. A fire requires three components which are “ Fuel, oxygen, and heat” often called the fire triangle by firefighters. To reduce, eliminate, or prevent fire incident from occurring it is vital to control or remove the fuel as the oxygen and heat cannot be controlled.

Area that is prone to bush fires should be taken into consideration that we should put in place fire regimes that work in that region, considering its wind patterns and fire patterns. Also if the area is prone to fires there should be construction which can withstand that amount of fire. Lowering the risk of this disaster can also be achieved by individuals through the use of a fire escape plan, preparing an accessible supply of adequate needs that guarantees their safety or the safety of their families. Furthermore

preventative measures might have an initial cost but will prove to be beneficial in the long run for the flora, fauna and the people living in that area.