

Educate the child, educate the community

Nathan Maddock, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC

Primary schools students across NSW are now front and centre in state-wide bushfire plans, based on research that identified the importance of involving children in active bushfire preparations for the benefit of the whole community.

Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC research is supporting bushfire education for primary school students in NSW. The NSW Rural Fire Service is using findings, along with the knowledge, skills and experience of researchers, to develop a bushfire education kit.

The 'Guide to Working with School Communities' is being rolled out to all schools by the NSW Rural Fire Service. The guide follows the earlier publication of the *Making a bushfire plan? Involve your kids!* ebook, available nationally and based on the same principles; if you educate children on hazards safety, their families and the community will also benefit.

This line of research is being led by the CRC's Dr Briony Towers at RMIT University. It has already provided

fundamental insights into how children learn about bushfires and how they share those learnings with their families. Collaboration with the NSW Rural Fire Service is continuing and the team will evaluate the guide over upcoming fire seasons. Evaluation will gather data to measure its impact on community safety.

The team ensures that collaboration is at the heart of the research at every stage. Researchers and end-users are involved in all aspects of the study, from undertaking the research to developing usable plans and writing journal papers. This collaboration will produce benefits when the study reaches maturity and is embedded across the country.



NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons launches the 'Guide to Working with School Communities'.

Image: Ben Shepherd, NSW Rural Fire Service