

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

CFA10 – EFFECTIVENESS OF ROADSIDE BURNING – CASE STUDIES OF PLANNED BURN/FIRE INTERACTIONS: PHASE 2

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST DUE 5:00PM AEDT, 17 DECEMBER 2025 TO
research@naturalhazards.com.au

CFA10 – Effectiveness of roadside burning – case studies of planned burn/fire interactions: Phase 2

Project aims and objectives	This project will build on existing research by producing case studies, based on documented and anecdotal evidence, detailing outcomes of when linear fuel breaks, primarily in the form of roadside burning, interact with bushfires during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 fire seasons. The aim is to: - improve understanding of how long these treatments stay effective and how fuel breaks influence bushfires, both directly (e.g., impacts on spread) and indirectly (e.g., use as control lines for backburning operations) - continue to build an evidence base that supports the strategic planning and prioritisation of roadside burns, as well as assess the effectiveness of roadside burns against their underlying objectives.
Estimated duration	12 months
Maximum available budget	\$48,950 (ex GST)
Centre contact	For any questions regarding this Call for EOIs, please email research@naturalhazards.com.au .
Submission of EOI	EOIs are to be submitted to research@naturalhazards.com.au by 5:00pm AEST, 17 December 2025.

STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Country Fire Authority's (CFA) outcomes framework commits to continuously improving our service delivery. In terms of burning, this requires that burns that provide maximum benefits be prioritised and methods should be applied that increase effectiveness. Despite large amounts of anecdotal evidence, to date, there has been no formal evaluation of how effectively CFA's roadside burning practices achieve their objectives.

CFA has undertaken work to document roadside burning practices across the state, quantify outcomes, and provide recommendations for improvements. A previous project, *Effectiveness of roadside burning*, focused on collecting observations at active roadside burn operations and evaluating the longevity of treatments. The second phase of the project, *Effectiveness of roadside burning – case studies of planned burn/fire interactions*, focused on areas where roads or other linear breaks have been augmented by CFA fuel treatment to better understand how the characteristics of linear breaks and conditions on the day affect fire behaviour. These case studies will be used to improve our capability to strategically plan and prioritise roadside burns, as well as assess the effectiveness of roadside burns against their underlying objectives. Case studies created as part of this phase spanned decades, from 1977 to 2024.

To continue this work, CFA intends to capture additional case study scenarios with a temporal scope narrowed to the 2024/25 and 2025/26 fire seasons. Previous case studies returned a breadth of knowledge, decision-making insights and outcomes across nearly five decades of roadside burning. In the 2024/25 season, augmented linear breaks were utilised in some form in at least six of the season's large fires. Capturing the interactions between roadside treatments and fire behaviour within single seasons will improve understanding of the longevity of treatment effectiveness and the various ways in which treated linear breaks directly (e.g., impacts on spread) and indirectly (e.g., use as control lines for backburning operations) affect bushfire.

This project aims to:

- collate information on the effects of linear breaks, prioritising those enhanced by roadside burning or other fuel treatments, on the ignition and spread of future fires
- refine the temporal scale of data collection to two fire seasons, thus demonstrating the outcomes of CFA's fuel treatment program via treated area/fire interactions with a more targeted approach.

By collating evidence on a key CFA risk management practice, this project will help CFA to better meet the strategic goals including:

- Evidence of CFA's contribution to reducing bushfire ignitions through prevention activities.

- Information to support fire risk mitigation planning to reduce the physical, social and environmental impacts of fires.
- Information to improve practices; in particular, increase the effectiveness of fire suppression and reduce impacts from fire management actions. This could include methods of the application of fire and how to improve the design of CFA resources.
- Evidence to support strategic planning to reduce bushfire spread and severity.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project will build on existing research by producing a minimum of six case studies based on documented and anecdotal evidence detailing outcomes of when linear fuel breaks, primarily in the form of roadside burning, interacted with bushfires during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 fire seasons. The aim is to:

- improve understanding of how long these treatments stay effective and how fuel breaks influence bushfires, both directly (e.g., impacts on spread) and indirectly (e.g., use as control lines for backburning operations)
- continue to build an evidence base that supports the strategic planning and prioritisation of roadside burns, as well as assess the effectiveness of roadside burns against their underlying objectives.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

A final report with a minimum of six case studies based on documented and anecdotal evidence detailing outcomes of when linear fuel breaks, primarily in the form of roadside burning, interacted with bushfires during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 fire seasons. Bushfires, whether single-day events or campaign fires, may interact with multiple treated linear breaks or with a single break in multiple ways. Where possible, each break/fire interaction should be documented. At a minimum, case studies should include:

- time (e.g., the date the fire intersected a linear break, the duration of treatment and return interval)
- location
- fuel state and condition
- weather conditions
- description of fire behaviour
- description of suppression activities

- time since treatment
- description of linear break characteristics (length, width, orientation in landscape, orientation to fire, etc.).

Where possible, information should be collected on the intention of the roadside burn intersected by fire. This may include:

- rationale for the nomination and approval of the burn as a treatment
- operational objectives of the treatment and whether those objectives were met at the time of the burn
- strategic objectives and whether those objectives were met at the time of the fire
- initial outcomes of the fuel treatment (continuity of remaining fuel, length of contiguous break, etc.).

Inclusions

- Data collection, which will necessitate field visits.
- Consultation with Regional Vegetation Management Teams, CFA volunteers and Incident Management Teams.
- Synthesis of case studies based on anecdotal and historical evidence provided by consultees.

Exclusions

- Spatial data analysis and modelling.
- Independent verification of third-party information.
- Development of quantitative models of fuel treatment effectiveness.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- Provide a basis that will be used to understand the extent to which roadside burning contributes to risk mitigation.
- Provide measurable insight into the value of the roadside burning program.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The funding for this project is **not a grant**. Researchers are expected to undertake the research using a collaborative approach to assist in the translation and transfer of knowledge to end-users and to ensure the project meets their needs. Researchers are encouraged to outline their approach to ensuring effective collaboration, which could include embedding researchers within CFA for a period of time. An engagement plan in line with the project milestones is

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expected, in which the specific input required from the fire agency working group and other stakeholders is clearly presented for each milestone (i.e., milestone – updated project plan, engagement – feedback and endorsement of the updated project plan is sought at the working group meeting/s).

TIMELINES AND MILESTONES

Key steps for the research provider	Lead	Due date
STAGE 1		
1. Inception meeting	The Centre	January 2026
2. Finalised project plan	Research organisation/The Centre/CFA	February 2026
3. Identify case studies for investigation CFA will identify fires that have potential linear break/fire interactions and for which case studies may be relevant. CFA and the Research Provider will determine which case studies to pursue, with CFA having final approval.	CFA/Research organisation	February 2026
4. Engagement plan	Research organisation	February 2026
5. Update meeting with steering committee	Research organisation	March 2026
6. Delivery of first tranche of case studies	Research organisation	May 2026
7. Update meeting with steering committee	Research organisation	May 2026
8. Delivery of second tranche of case studies	Research organisation	August 2026
9. Update meeting with steering committee	Research organisation	August 2026
10. Draft report	Research organisation	September 2026

11. Update meeting with steering committee	Research organisation	October 2026
12. Final report submitted to project team	Research organisation/CF A	November 2026
13. Project findings presented at Vegetation Management Service Delivery Group forum	Research organisation	November 2026
14. Project closure	CFA	December 2026

QUALITY CONTROL AND REPORTING

Final report and other project outputs

It is the expectation of the Centre and our client CFA that the materials delivered as part of this project will meet the highest standards and will be suitable for internal and external distribution.

It is a requirement that all reports (and any supporting material) be submitted to the fire agency working group's satisfaction (see under Project Governance). To ensure the final report meets this expectation, it will be subject to up to two rounds of review (with a minimum of two weeks for each review) by CFA. Project teams are required to ensure an internal peer review process is undertaken before the draft final report is submitted for CFA consideration.

Project teams should ensure that sufficient time is included in the proposed project timeline for review of the draft final report by CFA, revision and completion of the final report. This may take up to two months.

Communication

To further assist with the quality assurance, it is expected that:

- the project team will utilise a consultative approach and demonstrate this by documenting engagement activities within the relevant reports
- the project team will work collaboratively with CFA and the Centre in developing any public communications about the project
- the project team leader will give periodic presentations (e.g., annually) to key stakeholder groups to gain critical feedback on project milestones.

Any further quality control processes that are required for this piece of work, as well as key success measures, will be agreed upon with the CFA Research Lead as part of the planning process.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PROCESSES

Contractual arrangements

This project is being delivered under an Agreement in place between Natural Hazards and Disaster Resilience Research Centre Ltd, t/as Natural Hazards Research Australia (the Centre), and the Country Fire Authority (CFA). The contract put in place between the Centre and the Lead Provider Organisation selected to undertake this work will reflect the terms of the Agreement between CFA and the Centre.

This contract should be reviewed as part of the EOI process.

This is a standard agreement, and any changes will be at the sole discretion of the Centre. If you would like to request amendments to any of the terms and conditions set out in the proposed contract, details of the proposed changes and the reason the changes are requested must be included with the submitted response. In considering this contract and proposing changes, please note the Centre has been advised by CFA that (i) changes to provisions relating to the ownership of Intellectual Property will only be varied to take account of substantial in-kind contribution from the successful Provider Organisation/s, and (ii) no changes can be made to the publications approvals processes.

In the case of consortiums, the Centre requires one consortium member be nominated as Lead Research Provider Organisation for contractual arrangements.

Project governance

Fortnightly meetings between the research team and the fire agency working group will be held to build relationships, provide updates and discuss project-related decisions and research, results and implications. A monthly meeting between the research team and the project team will be held to discuss the project's progress, planning for working group meetings and ensure that the project remains on track for producing practical outcomes for agency use.

Each project is carried out under the supervision of a Project Control Board (PCB) and in accordance with the governance arrangements agreed between the Centre and CFA.

While the contractual relationship for the delivery of this project will be between the Lead Provider Organisation and the Centre, there will also be a strong relationship between the project team, CFA staff and staff from CFA's partner agencies. This group will be formed after the project's inception meeting and will be referred to as the fire agency working group. Communication is an important element of the success of this project and providers will be

required to maintain strong links with the CFA Research Lead, the fire agency working group, and the Centre Project Manager throughout the project.

As part of the data collection and preparation process for each case study and to the extent possible/reasonable, the commissioned researcher(s) will be expected to consult with CFA members who were involved in the planning and execution of the fuel reduction treatment (i.e., Vegetation Management Officers, Vegetation Management Support Officers, Planned Burn Operations Officers, brigades) as well as personnel present at the subsequent fire to build a narrative that encompasses the rationale, objectives, and outcomes of the fuel reduction treatment; underlying fuel and weather conditions at the time of the fire; and the impact of the linear break on fire behaviour and suppression activities

A governance plan has been prepared which shows the roles and responsibilities of each of the participants: the fire agency working group, Natural Hazards Research Australia, and the Provider Organisation/s. The successful research team will be required to comply with the processes and expectations as set out in that document.

Project planning

The project overview included in this document describes the way the CFA subject matter experts believe the project can most successfully be undertaken. Alternative approaches can be considered. Any alternative approaches must ensure the delivery of the required outputs, including any intermediate outputs identified in this document.

Following acceptance of a project proposal, the successful research organisation must prepare a detailed project plan and risk treatment plan using the CFA template. This plan must be approved by the CFA Research Lead and will become an attachment to the contract

Reporting

The successful project team will be required to make at least one presentation (and possibly two) annually to the Project Control Board or other nominated CFA group during the life of the project.

In addition to the Expected Outputs listed above, the project team will also be required to:

- provide a fact sheet within three months of signing the contract between the research organisation and the Centre (Safer Together template)
- provide detailed Quarterly Progress Reports
- contribute to a Project Evaluation Report.

Dates for submitting Quarterly Progress Reports:

Period covered	Report required
1 July to 30 September	October
1 October to 31 December	January following calendar year
1 January to 31 March	April
1 April to 30 June	July

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS EOI

Project teams responding to this Call for Expressions of Interest are required to submit their response, including:

- A project proposal of up to eight pages, clearly addressing the requirements of the specifications set out in this document, including governance approach. The proposal should include an introduction, a project plan for delivery, a detailed project budget and a summary of staff and skills. Proposals must include achievable timelines, which will be used to monitor progress.
- Project budget, including details of any in-kind contribution from the research organisation. A statement of acceptance of the terms and conditions of the proposed contractual arrangements. If such arrangements are not acceptable, details of any changes must be included with the submitted response.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In responding to this Call for Expressions of Interest, advice should be provided on any known or anticipated impacts of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions or human resource risks on the timely delivery of the project. Where appropriate, risk management for the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions should be incorporated into the EOI.

Any proposal, once submitted, will be treated as commercial in confidence.

Applications must be submitted to: research@naturalhazards.com.au by 5:00pm AEDT, 17 December 2025.

Frequently asked questions

Additional information provided to individual respondents will also be published on the Centre website to ensure access to all interested parties. Respondents are encouraged to check the website for any additional information via these published FAQs, prior to the closing date.

Evaluation criteria

After the closing date, Natural Hazards Research Australia and the CFA Research Lead will review proposals against the evaluation criteria below and recommend the State's Representative to the most appropriate organisation/s to undertake this work. The evaluation criteria indicate those matters that should be included in the project proposal and associated documentation – details are provided in the table below.

You will be advised **by mid-January** if your application has been accepted, and it is expected work on the project will commence upon signing of the contract.

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The decision of the Centre and our client CFA will be final. The Centre reserves the right not to offer the work or only allocate a proportion of the available funding if a proposal does not meet the client's needs. The Project Control Board reserves the right to invite any other specific providers as it sees fit to submit proposals before or after the closing date.

Evaluation criterion	% weighting
Research capability and capacity: The research provider must demonstrate they have the capacity and capability to deliver an excellent applied research project in a Victorian environment and deliver the required outputs within timelines. If the project requires a specialist development activity (e.g. electronics, instrumentation, non-production software), the provider has the appropriate skills to provide this.	25
Project proposal: A clear demonstration that the project team understands the project scope and desired project governance via the development of a feasible approach that meets defined objectives. The proposal must include an indicative timetable of work and interim milestones/project outputs as described in this document. Relevant outline of a collaborative approach to assist in the translation and transfer of knowledge to CFA and to ensure the project meets their needs.	45
Industry engagement: Track record of industry engagement with evidence of providing findings and outputs that have been utilised by government agencies.	15
Value for money: Likelihood of delivery of required outcome within available budget along with the ability to leverage the funds provided with in-kind contributions or supplementary opportunities, including demonstrated ability to leverage co-funding and partners for technology development, use and evaluation. The evaluation team will consider the membership of the project team and the proposed roles and time commitment. A plan for the production of academic research publications will be considered as additional value.	10
Social and environmental values: Evidence that the research provider promotes and prioritises socially and environmentally responsible approaches within their organisation.	5

Attachments

- [Draft contract can be found here.](#)