



Media Release

Bushfire behaviour researcher recognised by peers (191103)

Ian Barnes, President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA), has announced that Noel Phillip (Phil) Cheney, bushfire behaviour researcher, has been awarded the N.W. Jolly Medal.

The N W Jolly Medal is the Institute's highest honour. The Award citation reads:

“Awarded as the Institute's highest and most prestigious honour for outstanding service to the profession of forestry in Australia.”

The award will presented to Phil Cheney at the Institute's AGM Dinner in Canberra on Thursday 20 November 2003.

Phil Cheney is Senior Principal Research Scientist with CSIRO's Bushfire Behaviour and Management Unit, Canberra ACT. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) and has maintained an active interest in its affairs over the years. He was Chairman ACT Division, 1973-75 and Member of the IFA National Council.

For the past 14 years Cheney has lead the way into research:

- into fire behaviour to understand how bushfires spread in the natural environment and develop models to predict the behaviour of fires in important fuel types;
- on fire meteorology to better understand weather phenomena affecting bushfires using numerical simulation and field validation;
- on management systems using fire behaviour knowledge to develop better and safer bushfire management.”

In recent times Phil Cheney has been a key adviser to the ACT Coroner's enquiry into the ACT January 2003 bushfire deaths and he had input into numerous inquiries, workshops and research documents released about bushfires in the ACT and throughout Australia generally.

The Unit provided experts to carry out consultancies in these areas. The Unit was incorporated into the Division of Forestry and Forest Products in 1989 as part of internal restructuring within CSIRO.”

Cheney has 40 years experience in bushfire research and management.

“His nomination for the Jolly Medal for 2003 was passed unanimously by the Institute of Foresters of Australia - an organisation representing the professional interests and development of foresters” Barnes said.

Supporting Cheney's nomination was an abundance of information covering numerous representations overseas lectures, consultancies and peer – reviewed professional papers and books.

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(Photo of Phil Cheney is available to be sent by email.)