

Fire Stick Farming

Lance Short

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First published 2020

ISBN 9781925714807

Illustrations and prepress: Dean Maynard
Text/editor and producer: Sharlene Coombs
Publisher: Robert Watts

Series information: **History of the First Australians**

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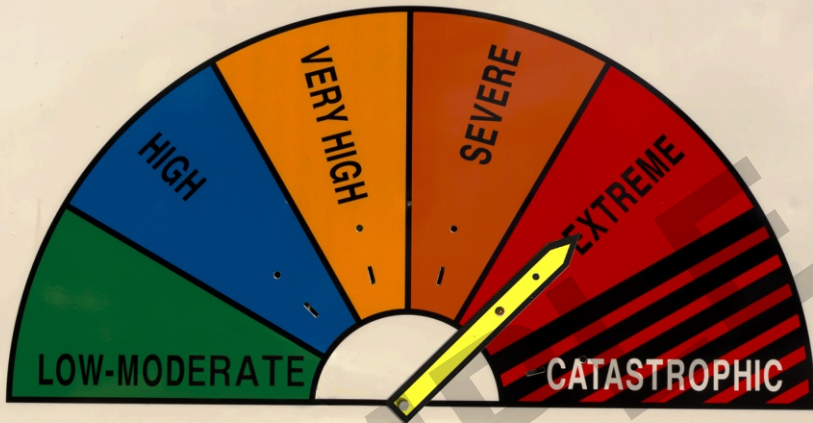
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Dean Maynard: Cover watercolour art of Fire Stick farming, insert see p.21
Shutterstock: ID: 280562249 Fire Danger Rating Display Board, Queensland p.1, ID:1314222044 NSW Fire fighters p.9, ID: 1102350437 Koalas p.11, ID: 19547836 Boonah Volunteer firefighters (insert) p.13, ID:98100029 helicopter p.15, ID:1561290997 burnt ember leaves p. 17, ID:1500952685 Firefighters attending a fire p.19, ID: 618511232 Kakadu National Park, ID:1454484179 Regrowth of grass after fire p.23, **Earth Nullschool**, Hawaii, November 2019, p.19 (insert box) **ABC** image #11739084 used as inspiration for watercolour. **Victoria Museum:** Early colonial painting. 01 - early aust landscape, p.3 p.5 Black Thursday painting of Victoria, p.7

FIRE DANGER RATING TODAY



• PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE. •

The First People hunted across grasslands. There were many patches of grasslands across the country. The first British explorers saw the First Peoples setting fire to large areas of tall grasslands. This is called Fire Stick Farming!

SAMPLE



These fires allowed green grass to grow. It stopped the forests from growing and kept the country as grasslands. When Fire Stick farming is stopped, the grasslands grow into forests very quickly. The dead grass and forest leaves build up on the forest floor. The trees spread to the grasslands, and there is no food for the kangaroos.

SAMPLE



Black Thursday was the first terrible firestorm in the new colony. In February 1851, the fire burned across a quarter of Victoria. Many people lost their homes, farms and animals. Many people also died. This painting was created in memory of the Victorian Black Thursday victims. Why did the forest burn so hot and across so many lands? Was it the build-up of grass, leaves, and trees after the First Nations' People stopped Fire Stick burning?



Word bank

Australia

vast

sections

patches

grasslands

British

explorers

kangaroos

Victoria

colonial

terrible

difficult

koalas

injured

habitat

helicopters

firefighters

dangerous

volunteers

receive

kilometres

firebreak

usually

wonderful

destructive

retardant

specially

Reading Recovery Level: 23

Word count: 685

Content: Non-fiction information report

ACARA F-10 references:

Learning Areas: English; Science and Social Sciences.

General Capabilities: Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability; Intercultural Understanding.

Cross Curriculum Priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures; Sustainability.

Teacher Notes:

Fire Stick Farming helps to explain the history and traditional land management practised by the First Nations' People of Australia. This outline is based on the narration from Lance Short and his father, Duncan 'Sunshine' Williams, and forms a background to bushfires in Australia. Soil carbon is not lost. The deadly and tragic forest fires in Australia are explained, in comparison with traditional processes to reduce their severity and damage with regular fuel reduction burnings in cooler months.

Discussion points for consideration:

- 1/ Do you think that fire stick burning will stop all major fires in Australia?
- 2/ What were the benefits of fire stick farming?
- 3/ If you reduce the amount of grass, leaves and sticks to burn will the forest still burn? Will the fire get to the same heat?

Difficult words to be introduced and practised before reading this book:

Australia, vast, sections, patches, grasslands, British, explorers, kangaroos, Victoria, colonial, terrible, difficult, koalas, injured, habitat, helicopters, firefighters, dangerous, volunteers, receive, kilometres, firebreak, usually, wonderful, destructive, retardant, specially, practised.

Acknowledgement of the First Nations' People: We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Sensitivity Notice: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are **warned** that the following series may contain images - photographs and illustrations and text about deceased persons.

Fire Stick Farming

Fire Stick Farming helps to explain the history and some of the traditional land management practices held by the First Nations' People of Australia. Fire Stick farming has been done for many thousands of years in Australia. The plants and animals are fire tolerant and also in many cases, dependent on fire for germination and growth. This outline is based on the narration from Lance Short and secondly, gives some background to bushfires in Australia.

Author's Bio:

Lance Short is from Brisbane, Queensland. He is a Wulgurukaba man from the Townsville area of North Queensland. Their totem is the carpet snake and they are called the 'canoe people'. Lance and his father have promoted the importance of Fire Stick Farming to reduce the severity of Australia's bushfires.

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