

Effective Wildfire Communication in New Zealand: target the audience, tailor the message and tune the method

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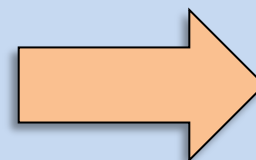
Effective communication is key to minimising human-caused fires and hence impact wildfires hold for New Zealand communities.

Method

- analysed communication strategies
- case studies in 3 rural and rural-urban interface communities
- 80 community and key respondents.



Target the audience
Tailor the message
Tune the method



Effective communication

Target the audience

Non-fire users

- Most New Zealanders do not use fire or pose any risk of starting a fire
- increase levels of awareness
- increase preparedness for wildfire

Rural and semi-rural fire users

- Largest group of fire users
- Light fires for vegetation clearance
- Generally good levels of awareness and knowledge
- information on fire restrictions
- maintain awareness of fire risk, prevention and preparedness.

Recreational users/visitors

- Visitors to rural areas (light campfires, use fireworks etc.)
- Pose considerable risk
- Often lack awareness or knowledge
- increase awareness and fire prevention.

Cultural fire users

- Fire used to cook food (e.g. hangi)
- Good knowledge
- information on fire restrictions
- maintain awareness of fire risk, prevention and preparedness.

Tailor the message

- awareness of risk
- information on restrictions (permits, fire seasons etc.)
- fire prevention
- preparedness for wildfires.

Tune the method

- limited use of traditional broadcast approaches (one-way communication)
- increase communication via conduits to disseminate
- increase face-to-face communication with individuals and groups (allows two-way dialogue).



Messages required	Non-fire users	Rural & semi-rural fire users	Recreational users	Cultural users
Awareness of risk	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information on restrictions		✓	✓	✓
Prevention		✓	✓	✓
Preparedness	✓	✓		✓