



UNIVERSITY *of*  
TASMANIA

Tuesday 22 October 2019

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## Californian bushfire expert in Tasmania

A world-renowned authority on severe bushfire risk - and its increasing impact on insurance costs - will deliver a public seminar at the University of Tasmania on Tuesday, 29 October.

Ecologist Dr Alexandra Syphard, chief scientist at Sage Insurance Holdings in the US, will speak on invitation from the University's Fire Centre Research Hub. His lecture is titled **Why do houses burn in California wildfires? The state of the science and the future of the insurance industry across rapidly changing landscapes.**

"Dr Syphard is a world authority on understanding how landscape can be analysed to assess risks of catastrophic bushfire impacts on urban environments," Fire Centre Director Professor David Bowman said.

"She uses a range of sophisticated statistical tools to assess these risks in California, a region prone to severe bushfire disasters.

"Her analyses feed into calculations used by the insurance company she works for. Her perspectives and experience will be invaluable in helping Tasmanians prepare for worsening bushfires, and illuminating the growing risk of a major fire disaster in Hobart that could match the notorious 1967 event."

The event will be opened by Lord Mayor of Hobart, Councillor Anna Reynolds.

Dr Syphard's lecture will be followed by a panel discussion facilitated by Professor Bowman, and including City of Hobart bushland manager John Fisher, Dr Chloe Lucas and Dr Kate Booth from the University of Tasmania, and Sandra Whight from the Tasmania Fire Service.

On Wednesday, 30 October, Professor Bowman will lead stakeholders, including local government representatives, on a field trip within Hobart for a first-hand look at the fire threat facing Hobart.

Professor Bowman warned the current forecasts for the coming Tasmanian fire season were cause for concern.

"All the near-term outlooks are bad," he said.

"The climate is on a prolonged drying trend, and unless there is substantial rain soon, the bush is likely to be extremely combustible this summer.

"The early start of the bushfire season in southern Queensland and NSW is a very good reason for heightened awareness of bushfires this coming summer."

Dr Syphard will speak at the Stanley Burbury Theatre from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 29 October.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/feeling-the-heat-bushfire-and-hobarts-insurance-risk-tickets-72475751925>

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