



# Child injuries and fatalities from fire: reducing the risks

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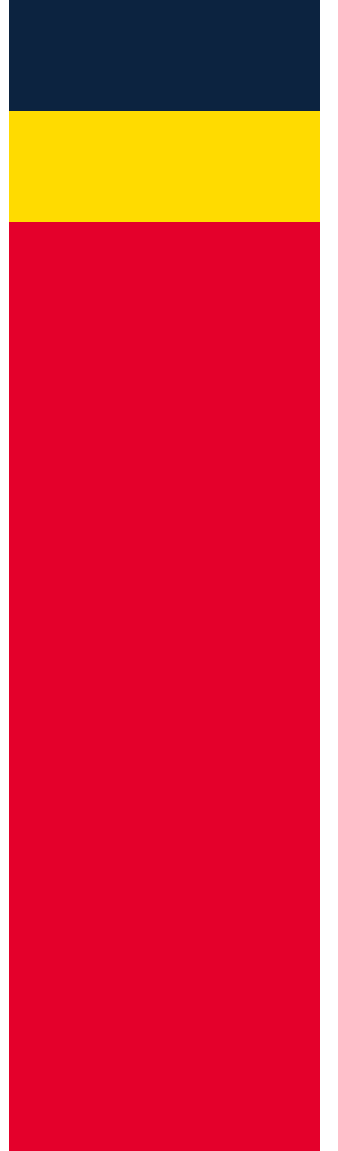
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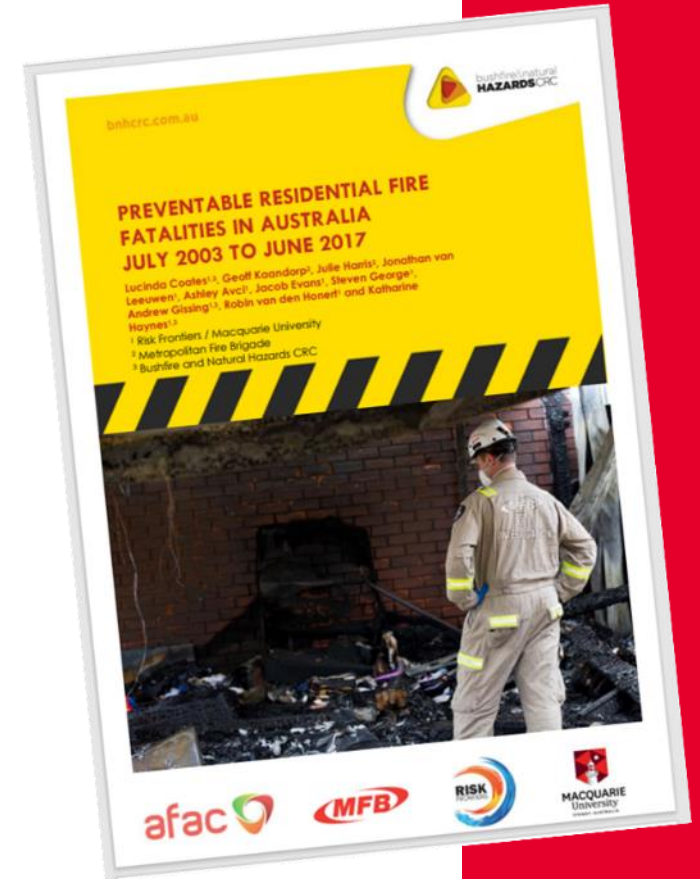
# Overview

1. Fire and burns – Leading causes of preventable child fatality and injury
2. Identifying and responding to fire risks in the home
3. Next steps – Redeveloping the Early Fire Safe program



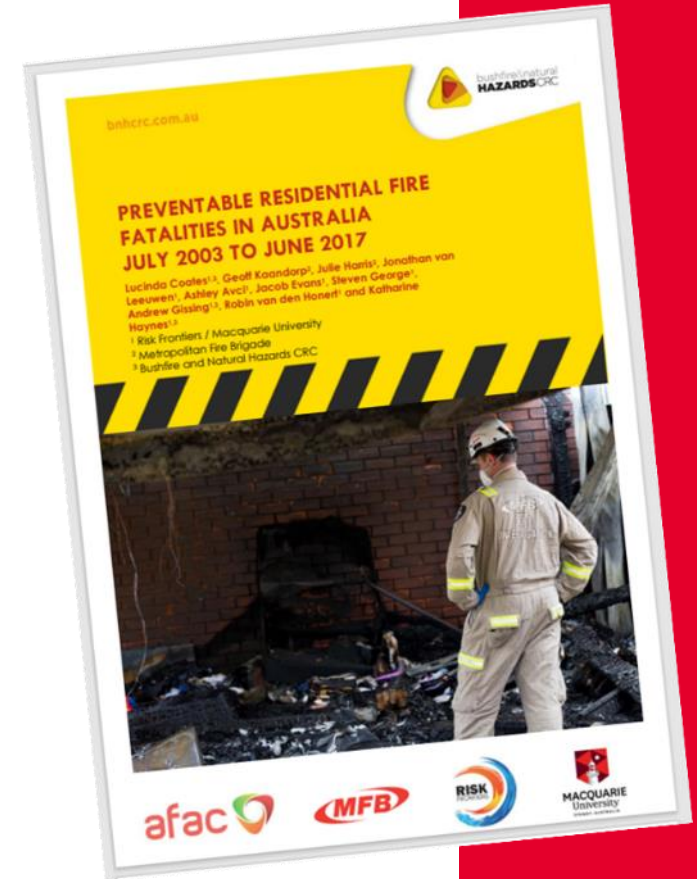
# Evidence of the risk – home fire deaths

- For the Australian dataset (900 fatalities), children aged 0-4 years old comprised 7.8% (n=70) of fire related fatalities.
- The cause of fire was more often lighters or matches (n=31)



# Evidence of the risk – home fire deaths

- A significant link to social and financial disadvantage
- Almost half (48.6%, n=34) of deaths in the 0-4 age bracket occurring in locations in the top 10% of greatest socio-economic disadvantage
- and 87.2% of fatalities occurred in the top 40% of locations of greatest disadvantage.



# Evidence of the risk – burn injuries

- In Victoria, children under 5 years had the highest rates of presentation and admission to hospital for scalds and contact burn injuries.
- Strong link to socio-economic disadvantage.
- These are largely preventable injuries.
- Effective first-aid can lead to significantly better outcomes.



## Case Study – Child fatality in Fitzroy North, 2020

- DVR was a 3-year-old male, his parents were from Sudan
- Incident occurred in a public housing unit
- Probable ignition was a small soft ball, lit on the stove, then placed under a couch
- Lighters and smoking materials observed by Fire Investigators

### *Possible contributing factors*

- Access to ignition sources
- Possible poor supervision
- Lower socio-economic circumstances
- Possible low fire safety literacy



## Case Study – Multiple child fatality incident in Corio, 2023

- 3 children deceased, one seriously injured, all under 5 years old
- The children were playing in a shed when the incident occurred
- A lighter was implicated as a possible ignition source

### *Possible contributing factors*

- Possible access to ignition sources
- Possible poor supervision
- Lower socio-economic circumstances
- Possible low fire safety literacy



# Identifying fire risks in the home



## Prevent

Reduce the chance of a fire starting.



## Detect

Have working smoke alarms.



## Escape

Make a plan that's right for you.

The three pillars of home fire safety



# Identifying fire risks in the home

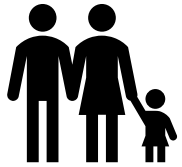


Key things to be on the look out for, that indicate an elevated risk:

- No working smoke alarms
- Smokers in the home – access to lighters and matches
- Use of open fireplaces, candles or incense
- Use of heaters in children's bedrooms
- Unsafe/ ad-hoc electrical, cooking and heating
- Presence of hoarding and clutter
- Adults who may be slow or unable to self-evacuate



# Responding to fire risks in the home



In the first instance – discuss the risk with the parents/ guardians.



Your fire services – FRV and CFA – are a resource that you can access for FREE fire safety information, advice and support:

[AtRiskGroups@frv.vic.gov.au](mailto:AtRiskGroups@frv.vic.gov.au)



# Next Steps



## Early Fire Safe Program

- Fire and burns prevention with in-person delivery by CFA to new parent groups.
- The program is now under review.
- How can we best influence the knowledge and behaviours of new parents?
- How can we help you to help us?
- Please complete the short online survey. The QR codes will take you to it directly.
- <https://forms.office.com/r/zWzDFPEcYh>



# Thank you

## Let's keep the conversation going



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