

Press Release

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FireWatch Welcomes Government Trial of New Technology

An Australian company – FireWatch Australia Pty Ltd – has welcomed the upcoming trial of its 21st Century bushfire detection system in the Otway Ranges of Victoria and near Tumut in NSW.

One of three systems to be trialled and developed by the German Aerospace Institute (DLR), FireWatch is the world's only bushfire detection technology that automatically detects bushfires over an area of 700-1,000 square kilometres, dependent upon the terrain, and works night and day, seven days a week.

It allows the location of the fire to be precisely determined before the human eye can detect it, enabling emergency services authorities to deploy the right resources to the precise location to extinguish the fire.

FireWatch Australia Managing Director, Mr. David Goodrich, said "We must change the way we think about bushfire detection as part of the overall strategy for living in an ever dryer climate. We have to change the way we think about bushfire detection and seriously consider establishing a network of early warning systems to ensure that rapid and accurate response is possible via the coordinated efforts of fire authorities and other emergency services agencies".

Now available in Australia, the patented FireWatch technology was first employed by the German Aerospace for NASA's Mars Pathfinder Project to map the planet's surface, and its success has seen the technology deployed in over 190 locations over the past eight years in Germany where over 1.1 million hectares of forest are monitored. The system is also in France, Portugal, Estonia, Czech Republic, Greece, Lithuania, Holland, the US and Mexico.

By detecting the differences between 16,384 shades of grey, FireWatch can tell the difference between smoke, clouds or mist, and if smoke is detected, the unit automatically and instantly sends an alarm to the FireWatch Control Room. The user friendly system then makes it possible for detailed analysis to be performed by fire fighting personnel.

The sophisticated FireWatch technology is three times more sensitive than any other bushfire detection system including infra-red and CCTV, and is more effective than manned towers, as it can operate even at night. In Germany over the past eight years the area burnt by fire since FireWatch was installed has been reduce by over 90%. "The potential to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from this type of performance in Australia is mind boggling".

For further information on FireWatch visit www.fire-watch.de or call:

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