



ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP

NEWS RELEASE

27 March 2007

015/2008

GOVERNMENT FUNDS 'SMART SPARX'
COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION KIT

Mr Damian Hale MP, Federal Member for Solomon, has launched the 'Smart Sparx' Community Fire Safety Education Kit today at a presentation at Parliament House in Darwin.

The alert system was developed with the help of funding worth \$90,000 provided by the Australian Government's *Working Together to Manage Emergencies* initiative.

Representing Attorney-General Robert McClelland MP, Mr Hale said, "In all communities, there are vulnerable groups and individuals for which more detailed planning is required to assure their safety. We expect that the project developed through this grant will result in a reduction in the number of Territory children who are hospitalised with burn injuries each year."

The 'Smart Sparx' kit is aimed at primary school students and includes classroom activities and homework designed to involve parents.

"By working together with local government and volunteer agencies, the Australian Government is helping to build their capacity to deal with emergencies and disasters," Mr Hale said.

"The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory, in conjunction with the Northern Territory Department of Education, Catholic Education and the NT Fire and Rescue Service, have shown considerable commitment to the safety of Indigenous children through the development of the 'Smart Sparx' project."

"I also gratefully acknowledge the financial contribution made by Conoco Phillips, Alcan-Gove, Macarthur River Mines and TIO to help develop the project."

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[version 29 October]

Talking Points on 'Smart Sparx'

A/DGEMA has asked for a follow-up to his discussion with Adviser s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

1. Background notes on Smart Sparx

The 'Smart Sparx' project was funded through the Local Grants Scheme (a program within the Australian Government's wider *Working Together to Manage Emergencies* program) in 2006/07. The project was managed by the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory in conjunction with the Northern Territory (NT) Fire and Rescue Service. Notes on the project are attached.

2. Relationship of Smart Sparx to other RICAC work

..... from s. 22(1)(a)(ii) (to be advised)

3. Relationship of Smart Sparx to similar work in other jurisdictions

Smart Sparx is one of several similarly targeted programs in Australia for example the Safer Country program (WA) – a program which works with indigenous communities to explain emergency management and the PPRR concept, assist the communities in identifying their risks and treatment strategies for those risks.

4. Relationship of Smart Sparx to MCPEM November paper on 'Nationally Agreed Community Awareness' and the RMIT Stocktake of All Community Awareness Programmes

The Smart Sparx program is an example of the substantial number of community preparedness campaigns already in existence at jurisdictional level, however there is no nationally consistent approach.

To avoid duplication and fragmentation of effort, a national approach has potential benefit for all jurisdictions and is reported to November MCPEM-EM. Adoption of all elements will not be obligatory on states and territories.

The Smart Sparx program is included in the RMIT stocktake of All Community Awareness Programs which will be finalised in December 2008 and then reported to AEMC.

5 Next Steps – specific suggestions that the AG could make

- a) Smart Sparx is a fine example of a safety message delivered locally and adapted for local conditions and could be presented to Ministers by the NT on the invitation of the Attorney.

This would be a follow up to the NZ presentation at the previous meeting on “What’s the Plan Stan”.

- b). To be nationally effective, significant funding and resources will be required to implement an on-going Australian public education campaign on community disaster preparedness based on a nationally agreed strategy.
- c). Pending review of the RMIT Stocktake by AEMC, the Attorney could suggest, as a first step, the provision of funds to the NT to offer the Smart Sparx program materials to other jurisdictions.

Attachment A

Research undertaken by the NT Department of Health and Community Services in 2005 on 'Mortality, Morbidity and Health Care Costs of Injury in the Northern Territory 1991 – 2001' identified a need for education within remote Indigenous communities on a range of health areas. In particular, the fire data from the report noted that of the 1,327 people hospitalised over that period with burn injuries, 732 were Aboriginal. Therefore, while comprising only 27% of the NT population, 55% of all burns patients in the Territory were Aboriginal. The report also identified that 14% of Aboriginal burns patients were aged 4 years or younger.

The study suggested that an education program was required to address the issue and reduce the number of Indigenous people hospitalised with burns.

Against that background, the 'Smart Sparx' project sought to develop a culturally appropriate community education program for Indigenous communities aimed specifically at school children in the lower grades. The project was designed to reduce the number of Territory Indigenous children who are hospitalised with burn injuries and also aims to involve the parents of Indigenous children in homework type activities, thereby attempting to get the same message to adults through their children.

The 'Smart Sparx' project deliverables comprise:

- an interactive DVD with short clips addressing each area of fire safety discussed. The DVD is introduced by Andrew McLeod, a footballer with the Adelaide Crows
- an audio CD, including a number of songs with a fire safety message. One song was written and recorded by Mr Ted Eagan, former Administrator of the NT
- the Big Book, comprising the core of the fire safety message
- Flash Cards for classroom work
- Fold-out Cards
- Fire Bands
- a Board Game
- Puppets
- a Teacher and Fire Fighter Resource Kit
- a Data CD

The majority of the funding (\$90,000) was provided by the Australian Government. The following corporate sponsorship was also secured and enabled LGANT to finalise work:

- Connoco Phillips	\$20,000
- Territory Insurance Office	\$2,000
- Alcan Gove Pty Ltd	\$10,000
- Macarthur River Mine (Xstrata)	\$10,000

In-kind contributions were also made by both LGANT and the NT Fire and Rescue Service.

Smart Sparx has been presented at the AFAC / Bushfire CRC conference in August 2008 and a presentation has been made to AFAC Community Education Group. A number of jurisdictional fire agencies have expressed interest in adapting this program to their own environment.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Glenda Ramagge

Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service

Remote Community School Based Fire Safety Education Program



Community Education Officer
Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service

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Research undertaken by the Department of Health and Community Services identified a need for education within remote indigenous communities in a range of health areas. With regard to fire, the data from this research indicated that of the total number of people hospitalised through burns injuries 55% were Aboriginal. With Aboriginal people making up only 27% of the Northern Territory population this figure is significantly out of proportion to that of the rest of the Territory community. Particularly disturbing were the statistics in relation to indigenous children. These statistics demanded urgent action and were the motivation behind the development of this package.

In consultation with fire service staff, educators and aboriginal community members a teaching package was designed to enable the core elements of the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service (NTFRS) fire safety program to be taught in remote communities.

The program is designed to reflect the fire safety and awareness needs of indigenous children in remote communities, with particular emphasis on campfire safety and fire lighting in bush areas. The entire package brings a culturally appropriate fire awareness and fire safety training program to young school aged children in the wider indigenous community throughout the Northern Territory.

The NTFRS believe the program will have greater success if delivered by indigenous people within their own communities and will approach indigenous people in each community i.e., Aboriginal Community Police Officers, Teachers; to teach the program in community schools.

The aim of the program is to reduce the number of Territory indigenous children hospitalised each year due to burns injuries and also to involve the parents of indigenous children with the program.

Because fire is such a destructive element, it is very important to teach students at the earliest possible age to respect fire. Students need to understand that fire can be destructive and harmful. They need to learn fire safety measures and how to protect themselves and others in the event of a fire.

This School Based Fire Safety Education Program is for Transition to Year 2 students aged 5 to 7 years. The program is run in conjunction with the Fire Service, ensuring that there is interaction between the school, teacher and the Fire Service before beginning the Program.

The Program is an integrated unit of work with Outcomes listed at Key Growth Point 3. Focus outcomes relate directly to Promoting Individual and Community Health with links to English, Math, Science and Studies of Society and Environment within the Department of Education Curriculum Framework.





The following learning activities have been provided in lesson plan format with examples of reinforcement activities supplied.

Each lesson plan is linked to and supported by the Smart Sparx DVD and CD.

The lesson plans are designed to be a guide and can be modified to suit the particular needs of the target audience, the sequence is a suggestion only the program can be conducted in any order.

Lesson 1a	What is Fire?
Lesson 1b	Good Fires / Bad Fires
Lesson 2	A Match is a Tool not a Toy
Lesson 3	Stop, Drop, Cover and Roll
Lesson 4	Crawl Low In Smoke
Lesson 5	Campfire Safety
Lesson 6	Staying Safe in Bushfires
Lesson 7	Smoke Alarms and EDITH
Lesson 8	Protective Clothing



Extra chapters on DVD –

The Role of Firefighters in the Community

Fire Service Appliances and Equipment

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Stage 1	Organization
Stage 2	Fire Fighter visit to school if possible
Stage 3	Classroom teacher to follow program (four to five weeks)
Stage 4	Station visit if possible
Stage 5	Awarding of Certificates



Stage 1: The Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service (NTFRS) will make contact with your school via letter or email, inviting your class to participate in the Smart Sparx program.

The unit of work will run for approximately 4 to 5 weeks. All supporting lesson plans, reinforcement activities, instruction and picture cards, DVD, CD, game, puppets and story book in the Smart Sparx package are provided by the NTFRS on a library loan basis.

At the completion of the unit the package is returned to the nearest fire station. An officer at this station will be assigned to you as your contact officer for the duration of the unit

Stage 2: An initial visit by firefighters to your school will take place at this point. Lesson Plan 7 – Smoke Alarms and EDITH and Lesson Plan 8 - Protective Clothing, can be delivered by firefighter/s on this visit if your school is in an area accessible to a local fire station.

These lesson plans can be given by the class teacher in the event your school is too remote for a firefighter visit.

Stage 3: Classroom teacher to follow program (four to five weeks)

Stage 4: At the completion of the unit students will receive an award from the Fire Service. A list of the names of the students who have completed the unit should be provided to your fire service contact officer who will arrange award certificates.

If your school is in an area accessible to a fire station, the students will be invited to visit the station and receive their certificates. If your school is too remote for the students to visit a fire station, awards will be delivered to the class teacher for presentation.

Stage 5: Awarding of Certificates





The **Program Aims** to:

- ❑ introduce messages that promote fire safety;
- ❑ communicate with all primary schools and encourage participation of the Program by Transition to Year Two students annually;
- ❑ provide an educational program for fire safety which is tailored appropriately for this age group;
- ❑ enhance current curriculum as prescribed by the Department of Employment, Education and Training;
- ❑ facilitate the Programs' partnership between the NTFRS and remote locality schools;
- ❑ provide regular professional development and quality support materials for teachers.

The **Program Objective** is for students to be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- ❑ the difference between a safe fire and an unsafe fire .. (Good Fires, Bad Fires)
- ❑ the dangers of matches and cigarette lighters (Matches are Tools not Toys)
- ❑ the safest method to exit a smoky environment (Crawl Down Low, Go, Go, Go)
- ❑ the appropriate action to take if clothing catches fire (Stop, Drop, Cover & Roll)
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and to express confidence in firefighters and their roles in the community by:

- ❑ displaying confident behaviour around firefighters in uniform;
- ❑ displaying confident behaviour with firefighters wearing breathing apparatus;
- ❑ communicating positive feedback of firefighters to parents / guardians / caregivers;
- ❑ communicating positive feedback of the program to parents / guardians / caregivers.

The core elements of this package are listed below with a brief overview of each.

○ **Interactive DVD**

An interactive DVD that emphasises and validates the teaching points within the proposed fire awareness program.

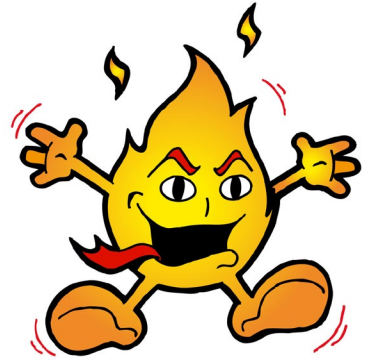


- **Audio CD**

Comprising 10 songs children can learn and enjoy singing.

- **Big Book (42cm x 60cm)**

A beautiful story about a little boy walking through his community learning as he goes. Illustrated by Aboriginal artist Bronwyn Bancroft. Provision for the story to be written in local dialect on each page if required.



- **Good Fire Bad Fire Flash Cards (A3)**

Series of 14 cards in sets of 2 displaying good fire/bad fire

- **Illustrated instruction cards (A2)**

These cards are used by both children and teachers to encourage dialogue and establish the correct order in which actions should take place i.e., Stop Drop Cover Roll. Provision on each card for the displayed word to be written (write on wipe off format) in local dialect if required.

- **Board Game**

Hoses and Ladders is a colourful game played on a metre square fabric "board". The game can be played with up to four teams of two or a minimum of 2 single players. Similar to snakes and ladders with ascending ladders and descending hoses, the game has the addition of hot spots and fire trucks that require an answer to multi-choice questions or collection of a chance card before the player can proceed.

- **Hand Puppets**

A series of four delightful hand and arm puppets, these characters are for role playing and are linked with lesson plans and songs.

- **Teacher Resource Kit**

Folder containing lesson plans, directions and ideas for reinforcing each lesson, activity sheets, fact sheets and curriculum framework program outcomes.

- **Kit Packaging**

Packaging comprises travelling bag with embroidered Smart Sparx logo, wheels and a pull out handle for ease of transport.





The original project name (Community Education in Indigenous Communities) has now been refined to Smart Sparx NTFRS Fire Safety Education.

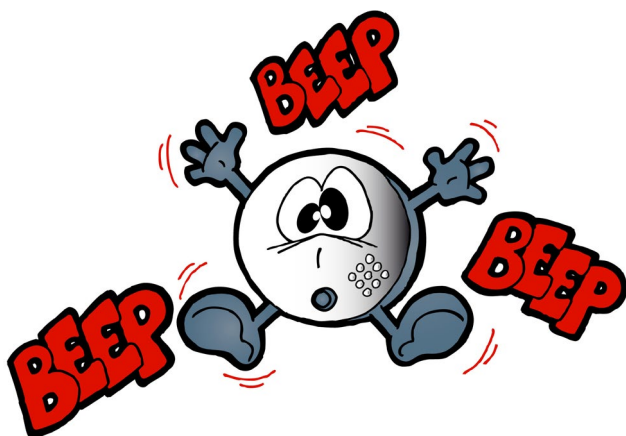
A distinctive logo designed to be highly recognisable to children has been developed in two versions, the first can be seen on the front of this report, the second in the footer of each page. The logo is the registered trade mark of the entire package. It is anticipated that the logo will eventually be used in other areas, for example, as membership badges to the Smart Sparx Club, on certificates and awards.

Note: The spelling of Smart Sparx is a result of Trademark restrictions.

The two people playing Firefighter Max and Firefighter John are in fact real firefighters who gave of their time and talent to support this project.

The characters displayed throughout this document were developed to support the lesson plans and for use in any future fire safety education initiatives. They are Firefighter Max, Jock the Fire Truck, Beeper the Smoke Alarm and Flicker the Naughty Flame.

Please contact Glenda Ramage, Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service, on 89 464 128 or 0401116567 or by email on glenda.ramage@nt.gov.au for clarification on any of the above information.



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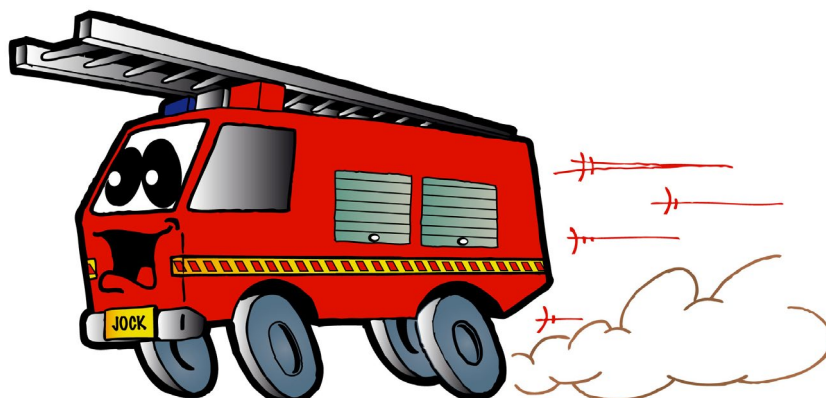
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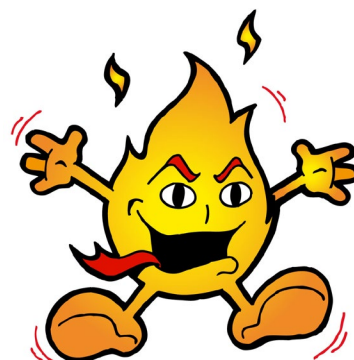


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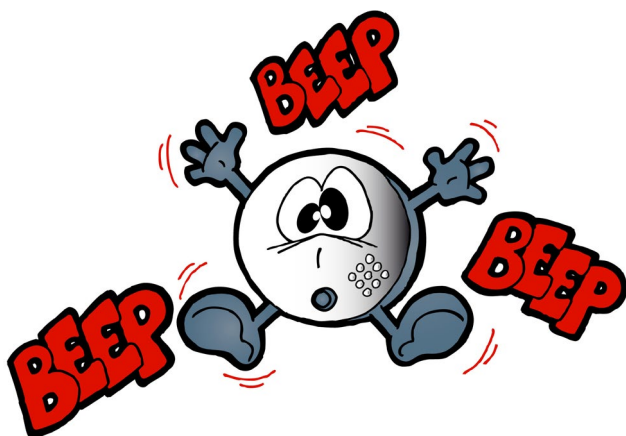
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National Winner (joint):
Northern Territory Fire and
Rescue Service

Entry:
'Sparx'
Rural Communities Fire
Education Program



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Emergency Management Australia



AUSTRALIAN
SAFER
COMMUNITIES
AWARDS

Education Training
Research

Response & Recovery

