

Cheney, Noel Phillip (Phil) (from IFA and Scientists for Sustainability websites)



Born to a fishing family on Phillip Island in Victoria. Graduated from Australian Forestry School 1962. Took a position with the Forest Research Institute, which later formed part of the CSIRO Division of Forestry. He was under the supervision of Alan McArthur, Australia's pre-eminent bushfire scientist at the time.

Was a senior Principal Research Scientist with CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products and Project Leader for Bushfire Behaviour and Management. Conducted research into forest and rural fires since 1965. Co-authored 5 books and published >90 papers. Carried out work for the United Nations on fire management in Africa and Turkey and was the selected expert on forest fires on the UN ad hoc group of experts that planned the International Decade for Reduction of Natural Disasters. Key advisor to ACT Coroner's enquiry in to the ACT January 2003 bushfire deaths.

In 2013, Phil Cheney, the former head of the CSIRO's bushfire research unit for more than 25 years, said complaints from the public about smoke from backburning had made it virtually impossible to conduct burns on the scale required to protect suburbs in Canberra.