**Media Release**

**For immediate release**

**The new Australian book, ‘Wildfire Mountain’ captures our terrifying bushfire reality.**

‘Wildfire Mountain’ is a fiction based on true stories and science. It captures what has become the terrible reality of neighbours and friends facing death and loss amidst fires surging through forests, bush, and wildlands. A community confronting life and death choices and enduring the perils of a catastrophic blaze out of control has been a recent horrific reality in Hawaii, Canada, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. As the bushfire season approaches, Australia faces the most significant potential threat from bushfires since Black Summer in 2019/2020.

Together the book’s characters fight a raging inferno, desperately protecting the community they cherish. Each responds to the catastrophic threat in their unique way, moulded by their experiences and beliefs, to remake themselves through courage in tragedy. Despite fear and loss during this catastrophe, love, hope, and friendship nurture their survival on the mountain.

‘Wildfire Mountain’, written by Dr Ken Strahan, reflects his forty years of research and discussion with people who have experienced bushfire or live under its constant threat. Dr Strahan harnesses his and other internationally recognised research to give readers an insight into what it is like to be threatened by a bushfire inferno and the diversity of ways people try to protect themselves and their loved ones.

‘Wildfire Mountain’ is fiction based on the facts of catastrophic heating and drying of the environment that has made more frequent and extreme bushfires inevitable in the future. It is a story based on Dr Strahan’s bushfire archetype research about ordinary Australians living close to the bush on the urban interface, in the outer suburbs, fighting for their survival, for their homes and their livelihoods. The characters are people who you come across every day; people who together prepare their homes and evacuate; some who depend on others to help them escape the flames; those who have experienced the dangers of bushfire but stay to defend their property; and people who believe that they are in no danger and don’t need to do anything.

Dr Strahan said that as well as being a reality-based thriller, Wildfire Mountain’ has an informational purpose.

*My story puts the reader in the middle of a bushfire inferno on a catastrophically hot, dry, and windy day, with a group of ordinary people left without support from the emergency services. They must make life-and-death decisions in the most intense, complex and stressful conditions they will ever experience. The story is fictional, but it is likely to be an emerging reality for hundreds of communities around the world. By having readers consider how they might respond in a wildfire, I hope ‘Wildfire Mountain’ will encourage them to consider and better understand their attitudes and responses to a bushfire threat and, in so doing, motivate their preparation, planning and safe evacuation or property defence.*

Dr Strahan is a presenter at the AFAC 23 Conference from 22 to 25 August at the Brisbane Conference and Exhibition Centre.

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