Satellite Imagery - Canberra bushfires - 18 January 2003

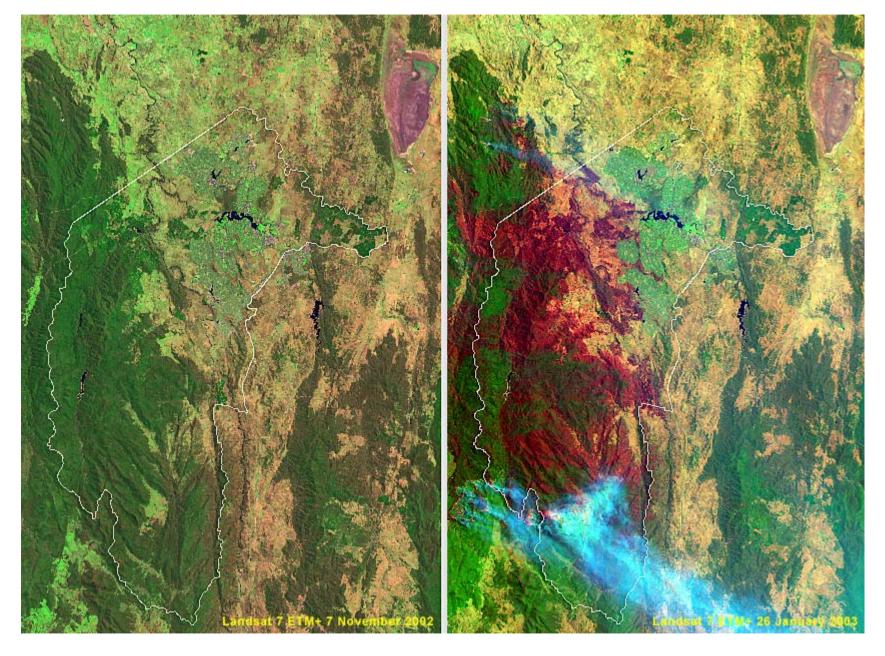
Satellite imagery is a very useful tool in managing fires and their effects. In the lead-up to the fire season, images are used to assess fuel loads and to plan access points and fire breaks. Images are also very useful in mapping the extent of fire scars and assessing damage.

Geoscience Australia acquired a number of satellite images that clearly show the effects of the fires that swept through the south-western suburbs of Canberra on 18 January.

The two Landsat ETM+ images below were acquired on 7 November 2002 and 26 January 2003 at approximately 11am (AEST). They show the contrast between large areas of healthy vegetation in November and the burn scars caused by the fires in January.

The images show land cover across the Canberra region in pseudo-natural colour (Landsat ETM+ bands 2, 4, 7 are displayed as Blue, Green, Red). The bushfire smoke can be identified as pale blue in colour. Healthy vegetation shows as green and burnt areas show as dark red-brown.

The geographical extent of the images covers Lake George, from the top right of the images, to the Victorian border, in the lower left corner.



The two Landsat ETM+ images pictured below were acquired on 10 January 2003 and 17 January 2003. These images show the development of 'minor' fires in the 10 January image (left) to extensive fire-fronts in the 17 January image (right). Encouraged by high temperatures and winds, these fires combined and swept through Canberra on 18 January.

