

THE AUSTRALIAN

Victoria fire model helped save Qld town

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AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS

10:29AM NOVEMBER 29, 2018

Queensland authorities have credited a fire prediction model developed in Victoria for their quick response to rapidly unfolding fire threats across the state.

In particular the evacuation of the community of Gracemere south of Rockhampton on Wednesday has been hailed as an example of the simulator's success.

Fire Inspector Andrew Sturgess said the Phoenix map allowed them to immediately realise that a small fire reported to triple-zero west of Gracemere on Wednesday afternoon had the potential to turn into a massive blaze which could engulf the town.

"They were predicted to impact the township of Gracemere, and that's what happened," Insp Sturgess said

"The good news is that complete picture isn't what transpired, that's what we want to see with our predictions. We had an incredible suppression effort."

Eight thousand people had less than half an hour to get out of the community, but it's believed the evacuation might not have gone so smoothly if the fire had gotten any closer before the order to leave was given.

Insp Sturgess said the system was developed in Victoria which is "one of the most fire prone places in the whole of the world."

"We had a little taste of that yesterday," he said.

"They were good enough to share that simulation software with us, and we have to build the inputs to that.

"So we have the software but the inputs are uniquely Queensland. Queensland weather forecasts, Queensland fuels, Queensland terrain, and we've spent years refining, and that's an ongoing process, because any model is only as good as the data."

He said the software predicted the path and intensity of the fire very well on Wednesday although Gracemere was saved only due to the efforts of fire crews on the ground.