



## Clearinghouse Record Details

Record Number CHR15/1487

 CHRep38  
v 0.1

### Clearinghouse Record

**CHR number** CHR15/1487      **URGENT**

**Title** The Canberra Times

**Date created** 2/06/2015      **Data date** 1/06/2015

**Source type** Media      **Source** The Canberra Times

**Synopsis** Laura Hunter was too horrified by the sight of a blue flame as it licked her newborn baby's forehead to think about the fire that had engulfed her own body. Ms Hunter, of Amaroo, and her nine-week-old daughter Molly suffered horrific burns when a blaze tore through her sister's home on the NSW mid-north coast on April 17.

The women lit candles on the deck and were enjoying a girls' night at the North Arm Cove house when Ms Hunter's sister Paula added fuel to a decorative ethanol burner and it erupted in flames.

"I just remember catching fire and I looked down and Molly was on fire, there was a blue flame on her head," Ms Hunter said.

"I couldn't focus because I was on fire, my clothes were on fire and my hair was on fire. It was just heat all over my body."

Emergency services arrived to put out the blaze and rushed the three to hospital as the house burned to the ground.

Molly was flown to The Children's Hospital at Westmead and given two small skin grafts for burns to her left arm and leg. The flames had singed her tiny eyelashes.

Ms Hunter was airlifted to Royal North Shore Hospital where she spent nearly five days in intensive care with burns to 35 per cent of her body. She endured four surgeries to take skin from her back and legs to graft over burns which covered her left side except her face and breast. 'I've just got to keep fighting' The mother-of-two described the blaze as "horrific" and said memories were dim because her body seemed to shut down as a way of handling the pain.

"It's been a really yucky, up and down time and I don't wish it upon anyone. It just happened so quickly."

To be separated from her newborn for nearly five weeks was devastating.

"She giggles now and I missed that. It's horrible, it's not a nice feeling to miss out on that.

"But I'm here and I've just got to keep fighting. I just want to go home and be a mum again."

Ms Hunter was released from hospital this week but will undergo physiotherapy for months and must wear a full body compression suit for 23 hours a day for a year.

Molly, who has also left hospital, was "an absolute trooper".

"She's laughing, she's crying, she's acting like a normal baby."

Ms Hunter's friend launched an online fund-raising page and auction to help the family meet the costs of medical treatment and accommodation in Sydney.

**State occurred**

**From matter** n/a

**Current status** Assessed

**Assessed date** 8/07/2015



**Clearinghouse Record Details**  
Record Number CHR15/1487

CHRep38  
v 0.1

**Notes:**

"Wednesday, 3 June 2015 at 14:13:21 PM (GMT+10:00) Tillig, Louise:"  
Received a call from Mark Fullugar who advised that there was a process and why have they asked him to call me - I should be completing a GIPA on the services website. I explained what I wanted - information regarding the house fire at North Arm Cove and to confirm whether the fire was started from a woman refilling a decorative ethanol burner. Mark advised that if I could email him the request he will do what he can to provide the information. His email address is mark.fullugar@nfs.nsw.gov.au

"Wednesday, 3 June 2015 at 9:11:11 AM (GMT+10:00) Tillig, Louise:"  
Telephoned North Arm Cove SES 02 8741 5555  
Spoke with Lyndsay who put me through to the head office of the NSW Rural Fire Service.  
I spoke with Lorraine who put me through to the Manager Jim Blackmore. Jim advised that he would take my name and number and get the appropriate person to call me back.

**Clearinghouse Product(s)**

	<b>Regulated?</b>	<b>Usage</b>
<b>Name</b> Canberra mum and newborn burned in 'horrific' house fire caused by refueling an decorative ethanol burner	Unregulated	<i>Product did not fail</i>
<b>Description</b> Decorative ethanol burner		
<b>ICECI code</b> 7.03.15 Candle, candlestick		
<b>Identifying no.</b> -		
<b>Trader</b>		
<b>Manufacturer</b>		
<b>Made in</b>		

**Clearinghouse Injuries**

**Mandatory Report No.**

**Name of Injured Person** Laura Hunter

**Known Injuries** Burns to 35% of the body (Mother)

**Quantity Affected** 1

**Death?**

**Actual Age** -1

**Gender** F

**Injury Date** 17/04/2015  
12:00:00 PM

**Intent Code** 1) UNINTENTIONAL



**Mandatory Report No.**

**Name of Injured Person** Molly Hunter

**Known Injuries** Burns to head (Baby)

**Quantity Affected** 1

**Death?**

**Actual Age** -1

**Gender** F

**Injury Date** 17/04/2015  
12:00:00 PM

**Intent Code** 1) UNINTENTIONAL

**Clearinghouse Assessment**

**CHA Record No.** CHA15/905

**Hazard** Media Article reported that a mum and her baby were seriously burned when they were visiting family at the coast. The consumer's sister was refilling the decorative ethanol burner when it burst into flames injuring all three people.

**Justification**

- \* Injury Severity = 3
- \* Number of incidents or near misses = 26
- \* Assessment Matrix score = H

The NSW Fire Service have advised that they are unable to confirm that the incident was not caused by a decorative ethanol burner. Referred to the Ethanol Burner Project 46662.

**Type** STANDARD

**Risk** insufficient information

**Decision** Further Action - Existing

**Assessed Date** 8/07/2015

**Registered Date** 2/06/2015

**Assessor** Tillig, Louise

**Assignee** Tillig, Louise

**Track Project ID** 4662

**Notes**

