

# FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER JULY 2013



◀ The ebook is for parents and details how to talk to kids about bushfire preparation and safety.

## EBOOK FIRST FOR FIRE SAFETY

The Bushfire CRC has produced an ebook for parents on how to talk to children about bushfire preparation and safety.

The ebook, *Making a bushfire plan? Involve your kids!* is based on the PhD research of Briony Towers from RMIT University, which

has been presented in many research and industry forums in recent years.

The ebook is designed as an interactive PDF that can be read on a computer or any tablet device, as well as printed. Download it for free at the [Bushfire CRC website](http://bushfirecrc.com).

## RESEARCH BLOG

**RICHARD THORNTON**



It has been a while since I last wrote a blog - things have been moving

quickly with the development of the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, but more on that later.

The Bushfire CRC chairs the annual meeting of the North Australian Fire Manager's Forum; this year held in Darwin in mid-June. The meeting is a critical opportunity for fire and land managers across northern Australia to get together to discuss topics that are unique to their working environments. It is also the meeting where the northern Australia seasonal bushfire outlook is discussed and agreed.

This year's outlook, to be released as a *Fire Note*, is currently in preparation and will be issued shortly, but it is fair to say the unusual wet season and the impacts of unseasonal rain in June have impacted on preparations this year. Other major topics discussed at the meeting were the dramatic impact of introduced weed species of grass, particularly Gamba grass which is already affecting the way in which fire weather warnings are issued in parts of rural Darwin. Important discussions were also held regarding the culturally and environmentally appropriate training needs of indigenous rangers for the delivery of the many carbon abatement projects now underway or planned across the north.

This brings me nicely back to the work of the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, as the new CRC will have a node based in Darwin to address a number of these issues found in our tropical north. The topics around the unique hazards experienced - particularly related to the management of fire - will lead the development of some of the remote sensing approaches. These will have application to the southern parts of the country as well.

## FIGHTING FIRE WITHOUT FIRE

Firefighting simulations as part of the *Awake, Smoky and Hot* project are still underway and continuing throughout 2013.

The research is investigating how the exposure to smoke and high temperatures, coupled with little sleep, can impair firefighters' mental and physical capacities on the fireground. This is achieved by simulating bushfire suppression activities indoors, controlling temperature, carbon monoxide levels and the sleeping environment.

A short video that shows the simulation in action can be viewed on the [Bushfire CRC YouTube channel](http://bushfirecrc.com).

Additionally, a *Fire Note* on the project has recently been published. Firefighters who wish to volunteer to participate in the study can view the study schedule, as well as download an information pack on the [CQ University website](http://cquniversity.edu.au).



▲ The simulation has been designed by firefighters to ensure realism.



▲ PhD student Veronique Florec, from the University of Western Australia, presents on her studies into an economic analysis of prescribed burning.

## WORKSHOP ON ECONOMIC COSTS OF BUSHFIRES

End users joined researchers at ANU in Canberra in early June for a workshop on the *Economics and future scenarios* project.

This project has used evidence-based knowledge to recognise the broader economic costs of bushfires, and provide a basis for better understanding between fire modelling, science, economics and policy groups.

Research into how bushfires in the future will impact communities, the environment and our economy was also discussed.

An improved understanding aims to improve government policy and inform decision making within stakeholders and selected industries, such as insurance companies and water providers.

### IN BRIEF

## MORE RESEARCH FOR VICTORIA

New research covering risk communications, the relationship between science and policy, the environmental and economic impacts of fire and understanding how fire affects tourism will be investigated by the Bushfire CRC as part of contract research undertaken for Victoria's Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

These research projects are in addition to the contract research already underway into fire behaviour, fire weather, smoke emissions and fire ecology. The studies are targeted to DEPI's requirements, but will provide additional benefit to all Bushfire CRC partners.



### EXPERIENCE COUNTS

The winter issue of *Fire Australia* (above) is out now, featuring the task force research conducted in Tasmania and New South Wales in recent months on the cover. Work undertaken to develop a new science-based fire danger rating system, as well as the *Social constructs of fuels in the interface* project is also highlighted.

### RESEARCH FORUM PROCEEDINGS

The full proceedings from the 2012 Research Forum are now available. Held as part of the annual conference in Perth, the Research Forum focuses on the delivery of research findings across different disciplines for emergency management personnel who need to use this knowledge for their daily work. View the full papers on the [Bushfire CRC website](http://WWW.BUSHFIRECRC.COM).

### RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG

#### NOREEN KRUSEL



Does your agency make use of Bushfire CRC research? The answer should be 'yes', and we

want to acknowledge this! Last year marked the presentation of the first Bushfire CRC Research Utilisation Award at the Bushfire CRC and AFAC annual conference. The award acknowledges agencies making

outstanding use of Bushfire CRC research, and was won by the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service for its utilisation of Bushfire CRC expertise in working toward changing workplace culture to become a high reliability organisation.

We are once again running this award, with applications now sought. If your agency is worthy of recognition, I'd like to hear from you.

Applications (signed by the nominating person and the agency CEO/Head) should be submitted to [noreen.krusel@bushfirecrc.com](mailto:noreen.krusel@bushfirecrc.com) by **1 August 2013**. For more information go to <http://www.bushfirecrc.com/opportunities>

### STUDENT BLOG

#### LYNDSAY WRIGHT



One of the things I love hearing about is the progress of our PhD students. The first highlight is of course

hearing about the commitment to do a PhD, then confirmation of candidature. While these first hurdles are challenging, I do not underestimate how hard it is to finish a PhD. Everyone at the Bushfire CRC is so thrilled

when we hear that someone has submitted, and even more thrilled when we hear that their thesis has been accepted. In recent weeks I have heard that both James Minas and Rowena Morris have been advised their thesis have been accepted and they will be admitted to the Degree by their respective universities. Congratulations to both James and Rowena.

I am also hearing some very positive stories of students who are inching closer to completion – to each of you we offer our support and encouragement. Always be mindful your research is valuable to the Bushfire CRC and the broader industry.