

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER APRIL 2013

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM LAUNCHED

More than 1400 delegates will come together in Melbourne from 2-5 September to discuss the latest challenges and trends in emergency management at the biggest and most important all hazards conference of its kind in Australasia, the 20th AFAC and 10th Bushfire CRC conference.

Launching the conference program on 17 April, Country Fire Authority Chief Officer and Chair of the Conference Steering Committee, Euan Ferguson, said the conference theme *Shaping Tomorrow Together* recognises the need for emergency services to work together collaboratively with the community and other partners from the education, health, business and research sectors, and all levels of government, to shape our future.

"I can assure you the program is of an extremely high calibre. In addition, this will be the biggest emergency management trade expo held in the southern hemisphere, with many businesses showcasing their products that help us protect the communities we serve.

"CFA, MFB, Parks Victoria, VICSES and DSE look forward to hosting this milestone conference," Mr Ferguson said.

Bushfire CRC CEO Gary Morgan believes the conference and Research Forum, which begins the conference week, will show why research and innovation are more important now than ever.

"Emphasising the diversity of the research being conducted across all hazards, the science on show across the week will highlight the significant work the Bushfire CRC is delivering to emergency service agencies. The conference and Research Forum present a great



Country Fire Authority Chief Officer and Chair of the Conference Steering Committee, Euan Ferguson (above left), Bushfire CRC CEO, Gary Morgan (above), and some of the guests (left) at the launch of the conference, which will have the theme *Shaping Tomorrow Together*.

opportunity for all emergency management practitioners to learn what we are discovering about the biggest challenges in emergency management across Australasia, and finding ways to use this knowledge every day to make our communities safer," he said.

As in years past, the conference will include

the popular research poster display. Bushfire CRC researchers and students will soon be notified about the process on submitting their poster and other details on the registration process.

For the full conference program and speaker list, visit afac2013.org

SCIENCE ON SHOW IN WA

A series of key Bushfire CRC events will take place in Western Australia during May. The first, the biannual Research Advisory Forum, will be held on 14-15 May and hosted by WA's Department of Conservation and Environment (DEC). The Forum will feature research updates from around half the current research program. Immediately following is the Fire Weather Workshop, taking place in

Busselton. Held in conjunction with DEC, WA's Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Bureau of Meteorology, the workshop aims to bring weather, fire modelling and risk assessment researchers together with forecasters and fire officers to discuss a wide range of issues, with an emphasis on transfer of research to operations. The last workshop in this series was held in Bowral, NSW in 2011.

AFAC GROUP DISCUSSION

Bushfire CRC research is regularly presented for discussion at AFAC Groups as part of an ongoing engagement between researchers and the industry. Recently this interaction included:

Community Safety Group – Damien Killalea, TFS Lead End User, facilitated a workshop with end users to get feedback and input into models of community preparedness being developed by Professor Tim Skinner's UTAS team. PhD student Cathy Cao (pictured right) conducted an interactive discussion on her research into information processing under stress: community reactions.

Community Engagement Sub Group – this included a session on providing feedback on and advising on utilisation of RMIT University's Community Education Guidelines project led by Richard Phillips.

Rural and Land Management Group – the Group signed-off on the terms of reference for the Fire Weather Technical Group, which includes



consideration and coordination of relevant research and training. A workshop was also undertaken considering the implications of the four Bushfire CRC carbon and water projects.

Business Management Group – this Group hosted two speakers: La Trobe University's Rachel Carter on insurance and ANU's Melinda Mylek from the Economics project – the Group was very interested and requested to stay appraised of project developments.

Learning and Development Group – La Trobe University's Peter Hayes spoke on his pre-formed incident management team PhD research. Peter McHugh (DSE) spoke on the Cobaw staff ride, which was evaluated by the Bushfire CRC. This Group is also considering support for 'train the trainer' workshops on Human Factors.

RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG

NOREEN KRUSEL



As the current Bushfire CRC research program nears completion we are keen to provide maximum

opportunities for end user agency partners to understand the research that is relevant to their needs. Over the next 12 months, a speakers program is planned, with researchers presenting their research to end user partner agencies.

Matching the end user agency with the most appropriate speaker, the Bushfire CRC will work with researchers, their research organisations and end user agencies to implement this program through to June 2014.

Presentations will be suitable for seminar or forum format, and include time for questions and interaction. If your agency or research project is interested in this opportunity of gaining the most from the diverse knowledge built up during the last decade, please contact me on noreen.krusel@bushfirecrc.com

RESEARCH BLOG

RICHARD THORNTON



It has been quite a while since I wrote a blog. What a busy four months it

has been! In February I gave a keynote presentation at the International Association of Wildland Fire's Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. I spoke about the research undertaken at the Bushfire CRC over the last decade and how it is of interest and value worldwide, not just in Australia and New Zealand.

The conference theme, 'At the crossroads: looking toward the future in a changing environment', was timely as it coincided with the recent announcement of the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC. It is a changing environment, with research to be expanded to cover other natural hazards.

Many of you will be aware that I have taken on the part-time Interim CEO role for the implementation team for the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, working together with former AFAC CEO and Bushfire CRC Director Naomi Brown, who is Interim Chair. The implementation team have been extremely busy since mid-March undertaking all the things required to establish the new CRC from scratch by July this year; something that normally would take a year or more. There has been a strong focus on the development of the research agenda, and there is now a public call for research proposals.

IN BRIEF

RESILIENT PLANNING AT CONGRESS

13 Bushfire CRC researchers were among the 45 attendees at the recent Planning Institute of Australia's National Congress in Canberra. An event highlight was the Resilient Urban Design roundtable, which was sponsored by the Bushfire CRC and was led by our researchers Jessica Weir and Professor Barbara Norman from the University of Canberra. The roundtable also included Bushfire CRC researchers Professor Stephen Dovers and Dr Michael Eburn (Australian National University), Professor John Handmer and Dr Blythe McLennan (RMIT) and lead end user Andrew Stark (Chief Officer ACT RFS).

CONGRATULATIONS

Peter Hayes has had his thesis accepted by La Trobe University. Peter's research investigated the teamwork and decision making differences between familiar (pre-formed) and unfamiliar (ad hoc) incident management teams (IMTs).

Peter's thesis examined the ways in which the performance of pre-formed IMTs was clearly superior to that of ad hoc IMTs, and identified ways that fire agencies can assist members of ad hoc IMTs quickly become more familiar with each other.

A *Fire Note*, a short video and other project outputs are available on the [Bushfire CRC website](http://www.bushfirecrc.com).

BUSHFIRE PLANNING AS A COUPLE

How relationship dynamics influence the bushfire preparations of couples is the research focus of Bushfire CRC PhD student Mary Cadeddu. The La Trobe University student's research aim is to gain an insight into understanding how couples arrive at their choices regarding long-term bushfire planning. Specifically targeting high bushfire risk areas in Victoria, Mary is investigating what processes influence decisions made by couples through a mail-based survey.

If you're part of a couple and live in a bushfire-prone area in Victoria, you're eligible to complete the anonymous survey and assist in this research. Either member of the couple are able to participate, both do not need to complete the survey together. For more information and to receive a copy of the survey, contact Mary at dcadeddu@students.latrobe.edu.au.