

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER MARCH 2013

PM BOOSTS FUNDING FOR FIRE AND NATURAL HAZARD RESEARCH

The Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre welcomes the Australian Government announcement to create an expanded national centre for research into bushfires and natural hazards.

The Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced in February \$47 million over eight years for a new Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre from 1 July 2013.

Ms Gillard said the new CRC will build on the work of the Bushfire CRC, ensuring that the valuable work done by the Bushfire CRC can continue, while developing a complementary natural hazards research program into flood, earthquake, cyclone and tsunami events.

The expanded focus of the new CRC appropriately reflects the impact of broader

natural hazards on the Australian community. The new CRC will conduct coordinated and interdisciplinary research, including work with communities, to improve disaster resilience and reduce the human, social, economic and environmental costs from bushfires and other natural hazards.

The Commonwealth contribution is contingent on the states and territories making similar commitments to this expanded research activity, at a level equivalent to current state financial support for the existing Bushfire CRC. State and territory governments have been closely involved in the Bushfire CRC and the federal government expects that they will be prepared to make a substantial contribution to the new CRC.

TASK FORCE UPDATE

Australia's leading bushfire researchers will be deployed to more fire-affected areas in New South Wales next week, following the recent Bushfire CRC research Task Force in Coonabarabran.

The New South Wales Rural Fire Service has requested an independent research Task Force to focus on community preparedness strategies and community response to warning messages after bushfires across southern NSW in January.

Analysis of interviews undertaken at Coonabarabran, as well as similar research in Tasmania in January, continues.

Right: The Bushfire CRC research task force visited the Siding Spring observatory, near Coonabarabran in NSW.



LEARN FROM FIRE WITH STAFF RIDE

A collaboration between the Bushfire CRC and the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service aims to assist fire agencies learn from a bushfire with a Staff Ride – a practical learning activity in analysing response to a fire.

Applying research expertise, a series of videos and a manual have been developed based on a Staff Ride the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service conducted following an escaped prescribed burn in May 2009. A Staff Ride is two or three days of professional learning,

with the first day spent touring the fire area, followed by workshops on failure points for the remaining days. It is a highly effective way of developing an understanding of the issues and developing strategies and commitment to change.

The manual and videos are designed so that any agency can develop the skills to run a Staff Ride. Bushfire CRC expertise is available if required. View the Staff Ride resources on the [Bushfire CRC website](http://www.bushfirecrc.com).

CEO'S BLOG

GARY MORGAN



Towards the end of a busy fire season, the Prime Ministerial \$47 million announcement that has secured bushfire research funding for a further eight years was a welcome relief.

This funding has long been sought by the fire and land management sector and researchers. We know that developing new knowledge and learning is a fundamental requirement to doing our jobs better. No industry can be satisfied that what it knows today will be enough to carry it through into the future, with all the challenges that are brought with changes in population, climate and environment.

By the end of June this year, the Bushfire CRC will have completed a decade of research into fire. But it was never the intention that the research outputs gather dust on academic shelves. That is why the utilisation of the research has been so important in recent years and will now continue well into 2014 with a mixture of publications, guides, conferences, workshops, videos and many other communication tools that meet the needs of each particular audience.

I wish to thank the many researchers, students and end users who actively contributed to their Bushfire CRC to make it a success.

While this utilisation program is rolled out, we will also be working closely with partners around Australia on building a research program for the new Cooperative Research Centre for bushfires and other natural hazards.

Much of the new CRC research program will build upon the decade of outputs of the Bushfire CRC, but much will also take us into new territory to cover cyclones, storms, tsunamis and other natural hazards.



US Consulate staff at the Bushfire CRC.

IN BRIEF

SCIENCE TO AMERICA

US Vice Consul to Australia, Kala Carruthers Azar, and US Consulate staff were given a bushfire science presentation last week by Bushfire CRC CEO Gary Morgan, highlighting the research undertaken in Australia and New Zealand since 2003.

FEEDBACK WANTED

Want to comment on a blog? They're all on the Bushfire CRC website - leave your feedback by accessing the blogs from each staff members profile page.

VALUE TO RESEARCH

Participants in the Social Construction of the Landscape project workshop at the University of Melbourne (pictured right) were given hands-on experience of the 'place-mapping' research method in February. The research

aim is to provide land managers and planning authorities with a better understanding of what people value about living in bushfire areas, and how this affects the way they consider bushfire preparation. The project is led by Dr Ruth Beilin and Dr Karen Reid, with Mike Wouters from South Australia's Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources as the Lead End User.



RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG

NOREEN KRUSEL



A recent survey of end users indicates that we have made significant progress in Research

Utilisation since 2010. Feedback from end users highlights they are satisfied with the collaboration opportunities, information products and the interactive events offered by the Bushfire CRC. These survey findings are documented in the Research Utilisation Consultation report, undertaken in December 2012.

However, there is still work to do. The Research Utilisation Strategy has been revised, placing more emphasis on helping to build research utilisation capacity within end user partner agencies. This will be achieved by a range of measures, including providing professional development in how to run events for utilisation purposes and encouraging and supporting the development, writing and sharing of case studies demonstrating research impacts. In response to end user demand, there will be a continued focus on user-friendly information products, particularly *Fire Notes*.

STUDENT BLOG LYNDSSEY WRIGHT



I am sure researchers and students have bad days when they wonder if their research

will ever be completed, and if their hard work will be utilised. These days do pass and others have been in this place before you and have come through the other end. Dr Briony Towers is a good example of how this happens. Briony recently completed her PhD with a Bushfire CRC scholarship, and can attest to both the ups and downs of the journey, but more importantly the interest her research into the way in which children understand and can participate in bushfire preparedness has generated. Throughout the 2012/2013 fire season, Briony has spoken to the media on many occasions about her research into communicating bushfire risk to children, resulting in both radio interviews and online coverage. So while some days may seem harder than others, the science that all Bushfire CRC researchers and students are undertaking is of great value, as this example shows.

COMMUNICATIONS BLOG

DAVID BRUCE



Wildfire magazine is determined to become more global in its content and vision, and Australia

is playing a leading role in making that happen. The January/February edition of *Wildfire*, out of the US-based International Association of Wildland Fire, was an important one for advancing bushfire research in Australia. The edition featured two articles on the latest thinking on sheltering from bushfires. The first was by John Schauble, Bushfire CRC lead end user from the Victorian Fire Services Commissioner's office. The second was a detailed article on the work of Bushfire CRC postgraduate student Douglas Brown, from the University of Sydney. The cover photo

of regrowth following fires on the coastal vegetation at Prevelly, Western Australia, was taken by Bushfire CRC communications officer Nathan Maddock.

This edition also marked my first as a member of the Editorial Advisory Board. In future editions, I will be seeking more content from Australia and other lands on issues of interest to our sector. So, feel free to let me know what you would like to read about in *Wildfire*. See www.wildfiremag.com Bushfire research is also making regular appearances in other international publications including the UK-based *Asia Pacific Fire* and *International Fire Fighter*, whose editor attended our conference in Perth last year.

Many of our partner agencies are requesting content for their in-house publications. We are able to supply articles across a range of current Bushfire CRC research projects – contact us for more information.