

# FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2012



*Bushfire CRC CEO Gary Morgan discusses the importance of natural hazards research with Channel 10.*

## CONFERENCE LEARNINGS AVAILABLE

**Resources from the Bushfire CRC and AFAC annual conference are now available for ongoing learning and training in the emergency services and for the broader research community.**

The conference in Perth at the end of August featured more than 100 presenters over three days. A significant amount of knowledge that was transferred across the fields of fire and natural hazards from knowledge experts to delegates is now publically accessible online.

The Research Forum, which began the conference, covered the latest research across all hazards, as well as the directions being taken in the future. All the presentations from the Research Forum are on the [Bushfire CRC website](http://bushfirecrc.com).

Days two and three were the main conference, featuring keynotes from Bernard Salt and

national icon Dr Barry Jones AO, as well as international speakers Jerry Williams and James Schwartz. All papers and panel sessions are available on the [AFAC Knowledge Web](http://bushfirecrc.com).

This year saw a record amount of posters displayed, including 84 from Bushfire CRC researchers and students – all are available on the [Bushfire CRC website](http://bushfirecrc.com).

In addition, many photos were captured during the week by a professional photographer. Take a look at the highlights [online](http://bushfirecrc.com).

The conference also generated widespread media interest across all mediums – print, radio, TV and online. A number of Bushfire CRC researchers and staff were interviewed, and an ABC radio journalist was stationed at the conference for three days. Links to the media clips are on the [media](http://bushfirecrc.com) section of the Bushfire CRC site.

## SHAPING THE WAY FORWARD

**The first in a series of Bushfire CRC Public Benefit Conversations will take place on 29 October, aiming to generate new ideas and new thinking about communities and emergency management.**

With the support of Maddocks Lawyers, the first public benefit conversation will feature a small group of invited diverse thinkers contributing to an open discussion on shaping a way forward for

emergency managers, community leaders and researchers under the Bushfire CRC.

The group will specifically discuss “What does success look like for emergency service organisations in 2030?” A new conversation will take place every few months, with attendees from a range of disciplines, not just emergency service organisations. A report will be written after each conversation.

### RESEARCH BLOG

**RICHARD THORNTON**



Last week I had the pleasure of spending time with an international visitor, Ron Steffens, from the United States, who is a fellow Board Member of the International Association of Wildland Fire. Ron has a strong interest in education and natural resource management.

I had the pleasure of taking Ron out to the areas affected by the Black Saturday fires to see the recovery of some of the worst affected places. It had been some time since I had visited areas around Marysville and Lake Mountain, and the changes are quite dramatic. The area is still very obviously devastated by the fires, with many blocks still undeveloped, but the vegetation is bouncing back with a vengeance; the widespread resprouting of the eucalypts and the dense understory of wattles and eucalypt seedlings are amazing. It is a true testament to the resilience of Australian flora.

We took the chance to also look at the areas around Kinglake and St Andrews, where similar levels of regrowth are visible. One thing that really struck me was the almost total lack of any grass growth in the hottest areas. This is three and a half years after the fires.

Ron was over here for the Bushfire CRC and AFAC conference and for the upcoming IAWF Safety Summit in Sydney.



*Vegetation is regenerating strongly in some Black Saturday areas.*



The stakeholder workshop attracted more than 80 participants.

## SHARED RESPONSIBILITY CONCEPTS DOCUMENTED

**Shared responsibly and what this means was discussed at a stakeholder workshop conducted by the Bushfire CRC, RMIT University and the Emergency Management network of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility earlier this year.**

More than 80 researchers, partners, non-government organisations, community members and representatives from across government shared their responses to two questions: 1) what does the idea of 'shared responsibility' mean, and what are its implications? 2) Is it a useful policy concept, and if yes, what needs to be done to implement it and what could undermine it?

A written account of the March workshop captures the richness of the day's talks and discussion. It is a valuable resource for anyone who is wrestling with the implications of the 'shared responsibility' idea for emergency management. It is available for download at the [Bushfire CRC website](http://Bushfire CRC website).

### KEY DATES

**23 and 24 October:** Research Advisory Forum, Sydney.

**25 and 26 October:** Safety Summit, Sydney.

**22 November:** AGM and Stakeholder meeting, by teleconference.



### GUEST BLOG TINA BELL

The number of tertiary level subjects related to fire that are available in the United States far outweigh what is on offer at universities across Australia. To investigate how these subjects are taught, the students that take them and what careers they can lead to, I am on a six week fact-finding mission up and down the west coast of the United States.

This research is being funded by a 2012 Gottstein Fellowship, the Bushfire CRC and the University of Sydney and I will be visiting a range of universities in California, Colorado and Arizona.

I can already discern a difference in the expectations of students graduating from different universities. Students choose the courses they do and the subjects they take according to whether they want to work in fire management agencies as wildland firefighters, to enhance their current career trajectory, or to pursue further research such as a PhD. As expected, cost of tuition, location of the campus, university entrance scores and lifestyle each have a role in choices made.

*Tina is project leader for the Fire in the Landscape projects*

### RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG NOREEN KRUSEL



The investigation of incidents, their analysis and the handling of associated reporting processes is a sensitive and complex matter for organisations and all involved. To support their own people and to meet broader community and legal expectations, agencies need not

only to understand what happened and why, but more importantly – to improve and to learn.

The upcoming 12th International Wildland Fire Safety Summit in Sydney presents a great opportunity for organisational improvement and learning, as well as to hear Bushfire CRC research exposed on the international stage. Throughout the two day Summit on 25-26 October, Bushfire CRC researchers Jim Gould, Jim McLennan, Michael Eburn and Christine Owen will be presenting, along with Bushfire CRC end user Sandra Whight and students Cara Lord and Grahame Douglas. In addition, the Bushfire CRC is sponsoring the delegate conference bags.

This event is a must for researchers and emergency management practitioners involved in community safety. More information is available on the [IAWF website](http://IAWF website). I hope to see you there.

### STUDENT BLOG LYNDSY WRIGHT



It hardly seems anytime since we took on the first cohort of students into the Bushfire CRC Extension, and now many are nearing submitting their thesis for examination. We congratulate Alireza Abbasi who has the honour of being the first of this cohort of students to submit.

To our students, there are a number of ways the Bushfire CRC can assist you in this stage.

Obviously our first priority will always be to support you toward the completion of your studies. But as you begin to consider life beyond submission, there are two particular ways we can help out.

The first is to work with you to package and communicate the outcomes of your research to help agencies understand your work, and to consider how this might influence (either directly or indirectly) their policies or practices.

The second way we can assist is to let others know the sort of role you might be looking for when you graduate.

Please think about these matters so we can talk about them as part of our progress review discussions.