

# FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2012



The panel sessions were a popular addition to the forum program.

## SUMMIT ON FIRE SAFETY

Fire safety was the main point of discussion at the 12th International Wildland Fire Safety Summit held in Sydney at the end of October. Sponsored by the Bushfire CRC, the summit attracted more than 100 delegates from around Australia, New Zealand, North America and Europe.

The Bushfire CRC had a small but popular display of research reports, pocket field guides and other publications on show.

## FORUM INFORMS RESEARCH

More than 75 researchers, end users, PhD students, land managers and industry representatives attended the seventh Bushfire CRC Research Advisory Forum on 23-24 October, held at the NSW Rural Fire Service headquarters in Sydney.

Featured at this forum were updates on Bushfire CRC research into firefighter health and safety; risk communication; shared responsibility; extreme fire development; greenhouse gas emissions and its environmental effects, plant physiology; environmental impacts of prescribed and wildfire; fire ecology and water; economics

and future fire scenarios; and fuels and risk planning. Summaries on the stage of each project are available [online](#).

Feedback indicates that the forum was valuable for both presenters and attendees; presenters were able to gain feedback and discuss research direction with end users, while attendees valued the chance to hear a progress report on each project and discuss how the research can be used by their organisation.

Presentations from each project are available on the [Bushfire CRC website](#).



Rocky Ansell, president of the Alaska Fire Chiefs Department and Safety Officer for the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, with Bushfire CRC Communications Manager, David Bruce.

## CEO'S BLOG **GARY MORGAN**



New thinking and new relationships – that's the rationale driving the Bushfire CRC's Public

Benefit Conversation Series, the first of which took place last week in Melbourne. By bringing together a diverse range of people to talk about the future and the role of emergency management agencies, we hope to increase our understanding of how community, business, government and industry can be better prepared and more resilient to natural hazards.

The two-hour round table discussion with 19 thought leaders provided an insightful overview of just how complex society



has become when it comes to educating communities and resourcing our responses to multiple emergencies.

Feedback from the participants was positive, with comments such as: "there was some good collaborative dialogue occurring particularly in relation to the community and its involvement", "you are dealing with complex issues and talking around all the

corners and angles is useful", and "the role of private industry is often overlooked, but not at this meeting".

A report on the first Public Benefit Conversation will be on our website soon. It will contain suggestions for further discussion at more events in other cities and ideas for shaping the ongoing research program.

## FRENCH CONNECTIONS

**Bilateral bushfire research and development has been strengthened with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Bushfire CRC and Pôle Risques, a French risk management organisation.**

Hosted in Australia by the Bushfire CRC, the Director of Pôle Risques, Richard Biagioni, signed the MOU with Gary Morgan, Bushfire CRC CEO, in the presence of the French Ambassador to Australia, Stéphane Romalet, in Canberra on 22 October.

Mr Biagioni led a delegation of French bushfire researchers in their week long trip to Australia, where they toured the areas impacted by the Canberra bushfire in 2003 with then ACT Emergency Services Commissioner Mark Crossweller and Bushfire CRC lead end user Neil Cooper, attended the



*Richard Biagioni, Director of Pôle Risques, and Bushfire CRC's Gary Morgan at the MOU signing. Photo: Embassy of France – Press and Information Dept. Claire Dupré.*

Bushfire CRC Research Advisory Forum, met with the NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW Fire and Rescue Service and participated in the International Association of Wildland Fire Safety Summit.

### RESEARCH BLOG

#### RICHARD THORNTON



Recently we held our 7th Research Advisory Forum at the Headquarters of the NSW

Rural Fire Service in Sydney. This allowed researchers to present their latest work to a critical audience of end users and fellow researchers. All presentations were extremely well received.

The same week the International Association of Wildland Fire, of which I am a Board Member, held its 12th International Safety Summit in Sydney, sponsored by the Bushfire CRC. This attracted leading researchers and practitioners from Australia, the United States and France, who discussed many firefighter safety issues and shared research results. The Bushfire CRC's researchers were well represented and presented extremely well. It did illustrate that Australia is up with the leading people in this field, and illustrates the value of the capability building we, at the Bushfire CRC, have achieved.

At both the Research Advisory Forum and the Safety Summit a delegation of French researchers attended, hosted in Australia by the Bushfire CRC. This followed an extensive research project undertaken in July, which saw an Australian incident management team pit their skills alongside a French team in an incident simulator in France. The joint presence of the French as well as American researchers at the Safety Summit has led to the development of a tripartite research plan, which will see a similar exercise incorporating French, US and Australian incident teams next year alongside the Bushfire CRC/AFAC conference in Melbourne.

### IN BRIEF

#### AGM ON 22 NOVEMBER

The Notice of Meeting for the Annual General Meeting has been sent to all members of the Bushfire CRC. The AGM will take place at 3pm on 22 November in Melbourne, and by teleconference. Please RSVP to [beth.whelan@bushfirecrc.com](mailto:beth.whelan@bushfirecrc.com) if you have not already done so.

#### THREE CHEERS

Helen Daily has had her thesis accepted by the University of Tasmania. Helen's research has provided detailed algorithms to continue the advancement of grassland curing estimation and prediction. Her work has advanced the knowledge and understanding of curing in grasses and could be used by model developers to improve existing pasture growth models.

Alireza Abbasi has had his thesis accepted by the University of Sydney. Alireza's work evaluated social network analysis measures that effect coordination, aiming to improve incident coordination within and between

organisations in crisis by exploring complex adaptive coordination behaviour.

Brenda Mackie, from the University of Canterbury, has been awarded the Claude McCarthy Fellowship. The Fellowship enables New Zealand university graduates to undertake original work or research in literature, science or medicine. Through the scholarship, Brenda will present at the Natural Hazards Workshop in Colorado.

#### BUSHFIRE COMMUNITY SURVEY

A widespread survey seeking information about bushfire preparedness has been distributed to communities in South Australia, New South Wales, Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. The research, part of the *Information processing under stress: community reactions* project led by researchers at the University of Western Australia, seeks to understand how residents intend to prepare for a bushfire, and their subsequent preparations. The results of this project will shape safety messages to assist residents to prepare for a bushfire.

### COMMUNICATIONS BLOG DAVID BRUCE



Outputs, events and activity – if it felt like a busy year for all then the proof is now in our Annual Report for the past financial year, which has just been submitted to our Federal masters.

The formal publication output of the Bushfire CRC included five books, 21 book chapters, 43 articles in scholarly refereed journals and 33 written conference papers. A record 85 posters were on display at our annual conference in Sydney in August 2011. Research output after 10 years now totals 1162 publications – all are available online.

In the midst of this, the Bushfire CRC was reviewed an unprecedented three times during the financial year by the Commonwealth Department of Innovation, Industry, Science, Research and Tertiary Education – a Three Month Visit, First Year Visit, and a Performance Review. On each occasion the assessment was overwhelmingly positive, with some solid Commonwealth advice on future directions for our research.

What else? How about: 32 events with more than 2500 participants, including our biggest ever annual conference; 45 PhD students, now beyond the target of 41; sound financials with all participant contributions paid in full. The numbers are now starting to stack up well. The Annual Report is now [online](#).