

Bushfire CRC Extension Program

Managing the Research Direction and Quality: An Overview

To effectively manage the broad variety of research programs included in the Bushfire CRC extension program, skills or experience are required in the areas of: project management, science leadership and practical implementation or research outputs. To get the best possible level of each of these skills, the CRC has specialists put in place in each area rather than try to find this range of skills in a single individual.

The Bushfire CRC program management for the extension projects is provided by a full-time research manager, a number of **principal scientific advisors** and clearly identified **user representatives**. Together this team advise and supports the Research Director in fulfilling the responsibility of managing the research program. The following briefly describes the way in which these roles work together. The attached diagram (Attachment 1) may also assist in understanding this approach.

Principal Scientific Advisors (PSA) The PSA is a research leader at Professorial level. Unlike the earlier project management approach where Program Leaders were attached to individual themes there are now four PSA;s working across the full research program. The role of the PSAs is to advise the Research Director on the research quality, research methodology and scientific outputs. Collectively, the PSAs will demonstrate leadership, and provide advice and guidance on the integration of scientific outcomes across the themes to ensure the delivery of user priority outcomes. They will also act as mentors for less-experienced project leaders and researchers to facilitate the highest quality research outputs from the theme.

The PSAs will be part of the CRC 'executive team', but will not have day-to-day management responsibilities.

The PSAs will report to the Stakeholder Council on the progress research direction and maintenance of research quality they may also speak publicly on behalf of the CRC in their area of expertise as required.

The PSAs are:

- **Professor John Handmer, RMIT University**
- **Professor Douglas Paton, University of Tasmania**
- **Professor Rod Keenan, University of Melbourne**
- **Professor Drew Dawson, University of South Australia.**

A copy of the role statement for the PSA's is attached for information. (Attachment 2)

User Representatives (UR) There will be a UR for each cluster of research projects.. It is expected that there will be up to 12 URs. It is expected that the time commitment for the role of UR will average 10-15%, which is expected to be an in-kind contribution from end-users.

The role of the UR will be to: act as a representative of the end-users in a national context; assist researchers in gaining access into agencies and ensuring ongoing support in establishing their research projects; act as a link between the researchers and the AFAC groups to distil directions and advice and facilitate research utilisation; ensure links between researchers and all end-users are established and maintained; and provide guidance and support in matching research outputs to user requirements. These URs will work closely with the PSAs, the Research Manager, research Utilisation Manager and Research Director.

A copy of the role statement and more detailed expectations of the User Representative is attached for information (Attachment 3). A call for expression of interest was made in late 2009 however there are still opportunities to become involved at this level.

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Research Manager (RM) Will provide the day-to-day project management of the research program and report to the Research Director, ensuring effective delivery of the outputs and compliance with the Commonwealth Agreement.

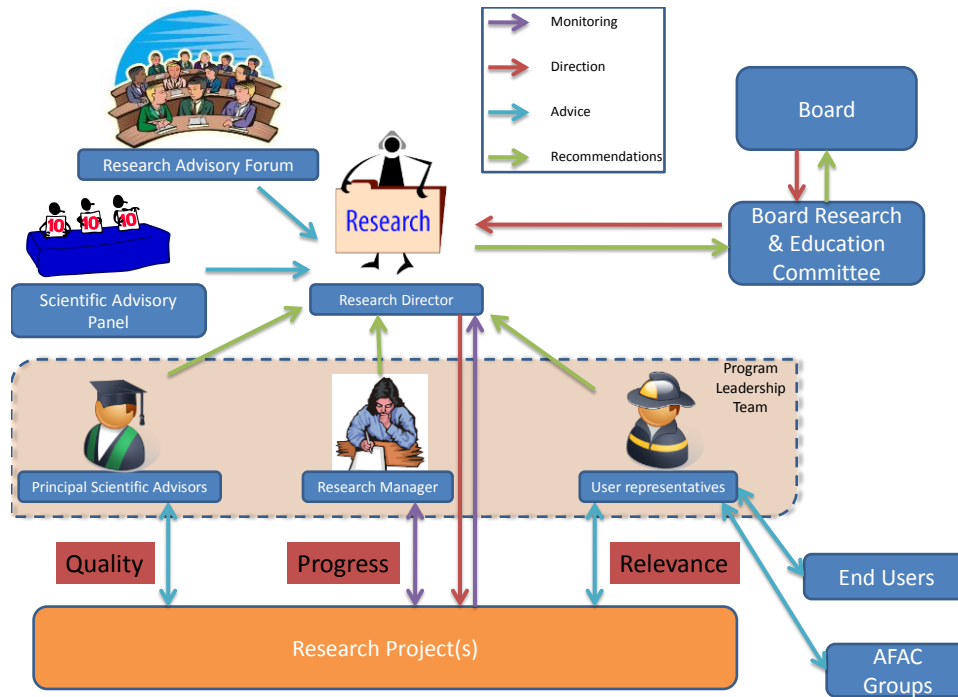
Research Advisory Forum (RAF) The RAF will receive progress reports and presentations from the research projects at least once a year. Partners will provide written feedback to the Research Director and CEO on progress, direction, relevance and quality of each project. The forum will meet twice a year, with half of the research projects presenting at each meeting. Each partner will have a seat at the RAF. There will be one advisory seat for all partners who meet a minimum contribution level. Other partners may act as observers at forum meetings. PSAs and URs will actively participate in the forum. The forum will be chaired by the Research Director and will provide reports to the Board through the Research and Education Committee.

Further details of the role of the RAF are attached (Attachment 4)

Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) The centre will also establish a Scientific Advisory Panel of eminent researchers to help ensure research quality and provide guidance to management and the Board.

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Attachment 1: Research Management



Attachment 2: Role statement Principal Scientific Advisors

Principal Scientific Advisors

Across the CRC Program there are four Principal Scientific Advisors (PSA's). These are an in-kind contribution from our research partners and were appointed following a call for expression of interest during the CRC bid process.

The four Scientific Advisors (PSA's) for the Bushfire CRC Extension Program are:

- Professor John Handmer
- Professor Rod Keenan
- Professor Douglas Paton
- Professor Drew Dawson

The role of the Principal Scientific Advisors is to advise the Research Director on the research quality of the project proposals, research methodology and scientific outputs of the projects. They will act as mentors for less experienced project leaders and researchers to facilitate the highest quality research outputs from the program.

Collectively the Principal Scientific Advisors will demonstrate leadership, and provide advice and guidance on the integration of scientific outcomes across the themes to facilitate the delivery of user priority outcomes. It is expected that the Principal Scientific Advisors will publish (or facilitate the publishing) material in both the themes and the priority outcome areas in collaboration with the relevant researchers.

The Principal Scientific Advisors will be part of the CRC "executive team" but will not have day-to-day management responsibilities have not taken on the role of project leader or lead researcher.

Attachment 3: Role Description Lead End-User Representatives

Lead End-User Representatives

There will be a Lead End-User Representative for each cluster of research projects. Clusters may be formed from within a theme or cut across a number of themes. It is expected that there will be up-to 12 Lead End-User Representatives at this level.

The role of the Lead End-User Representative will be to:

- Act the link between the researchers and the AFAC groups to distil directions and advice on research and facilitate research adoption activities.
- Act as a representative of the end-users in national context
- Assist researchers in:
 - gaining access into agencies and
 - ensuring ongoing support in establishing their research projects;
- Facilitate links between researchers and all end users are established and maintained;
- Provide guidance and support in matching research outputs to user requirements, (conducted together with the Principal Scientific Advisors and the Research Director)

Lead End-User Representatives must have recognised knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and of the user needs in the nominated area and a demonstrated ability to engage with industry representatives at both senior and operational levels.

Nominations for the role of Lead End-User Representative must be supported by the line manager and CEO of the home agency. It is expected that the time commitment for the role of Lead End-User Representative average 10% or approximately 2 days per month, which is expected to be an in-kind contribution from end user agencies.

This role is different from the end-user leader role in the current CRC in that the focus is on a cluster of projects rather than a program. This means there will be more Lead End-User Representatives, providing greater opportunity for a wider cross-section of involvement from our partners.

Attachment 4:

Research Advisory Forum Terms of Reference

The Research Advisory Forum (RAF) is an important part of the partner engagement in the establishment and monitoring of the research projects for the Bushfire CRC Extension Program.

The RAF provides guidance to the Research Director on the research portfolio and its progress. It also ensures there are regular opportunities for all partners in the Bushfire CRC to collectively gain an understanding of the status of all research projects and enable them to report back to their organisations. The forum also gives the researchers an opportunity to discuss possible obstacles and data requirements with other partners.

Each partner organisation (research and agency) will have a seat in the Research Advisory Forum. There will be one advisory seat in the RAF for all significant financial (cash and in-kind) contributors. All other partners may act as observers at RAF meetings. Principal Scientists and User Representatives will actively participate in the RAF.

The Research Advisory Forum will be chaired by the Research Director who will report to the Board through the Research and Education Committee.

The RAF will have two distinct phases. The first (initiation) will focus on the establishment of the new research program, and the second (monitoring) involves the ongoing oversight of the research projects. The role of the RAF will be slightly different between these two phases, *viz.*

Initiation Phase (Nov 2009 & May 2010 meetings):

To evaluate and provide suggestions on each research project as to direction, focus and scientific quality, with an aim to ensure that the projects are started in the right way and have effective engagement with partners. At these meetings the research projects will be presented, and feedback sought to assist in refinement of the project plans and to enable recommendations to the Research Committee of the Board for endorsement of research budgets and plans.

Monitoring Phase (all future meetings)

To receive reports and presentations from the projects and provide an evaluation of progress, direction and quality, to enable effective management of the outcomes. The feedback from the forum will provide guidance to the management team of the Bushfire CRC and will be combined with other sources of advice and fed back to the Research Committee of the Board.

In the monitoring phase the RAF will receive progress reports and presentations from the research projects. As part of the forum each partner organisation will be asked to provide written feedback to the Research Director on the progress, direction and quality of each research project (not just those their organisation is an active participant in).

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Each research project will present to the RAF at least once a year. It is anticipated that the RAF will meet twice a year (May and November), with half of the research projects presenting at each meeting.