



RESEARCH UTILISATION STRATEGY 2011 - 2014



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Publisher:

Bushfire CRC

Feb 2011

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CONTEXT

This document complements the Bushfire CRC Extension Strategic Directions 2010-2013 document, which articulates our objective, vision, mission, values, goals and strategic directions. The Bushfire CRC Commonwealth Agreement details the research programs and projects as well as the responsibilities and obligations of partners and supporting legal context.

The objective of the Bushfire CRC is to provide research that enhances the management of bushfire risk to the community in an economically and ecologically sustainable way. The formation of the Bushfire CRC in 2003 and the subsequent commitment to provide further funding for another three years is recognition of the importance of this research. There is also significant interest in and commitment to securing sustained funding for an Australasian Fire Research Institute. The Bushfire CRC and its extension have the following;

Vision - Sustainable Fire Research Providing the Science for Safer Communities, and

Mission- To reduce the risk to the community and to fire fighters in an ecologically sustainable and economic way.

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION

The Bushfire CRC Extension has three funded programs of Research;

Understanding Risk, which aims to support a reduction in losses through better community understanding of the risk from fire;

Communicating Risk, which will facilitate a reduction in the loss of life through better communication of fire risk; and

Managing the Threat for Safer Communities, which ultimately will contribute to a reduced loss of life, assets, and adverse environmental impacts, while reducing the marginal cost of service deliver through better management of extreme events.

These programs have 12 project areas, many of which involve multiple research partners. High level project outlines and milestones have been documented, and supporting project plans are under development. This research utilisation strategy outlines the key approaches that will be pursued to facilitate the usage of the research deliverables (as articulated in the Submission to the Commonwealth Agreement, and replicated in Attachment One of this Strategy).

The research outputs have been integrated into seven 'usage' themes:

- Integrated fire related policy, practice and legislation
- Risk assessment tool box
- Communication tools and information

- Better incident management systems and practices
- Impact of fire in the landscape
- Better utilisation of scarce resources
- The health and fitness of staff.

The utilisation approach aims to maximise the likelihood of successful impact.

A detailed research utilisation plan will be built around each of these themes consistent with the requirements of the Board and Commonwealth.

BUSHFIRE CRC

The Bushfire CRC had four key research programs;

Program A, Safe Prevention, Preparation and Suppression,
 Program B, Fire in the Landscape,
 Program C, Community Self Sufficiency for Fire Safety, and
 Program D, Protection of People and Property.

Four integrated outcome areas were identified;

- Aerial Suppression,
- Protecting Fire Fighters,
- Prescribed Burning, and
- Community Safety.
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A Research Adoption Plan (Bushfire CRC Research Adoption Plan 2009-2010) was developed around these areas.

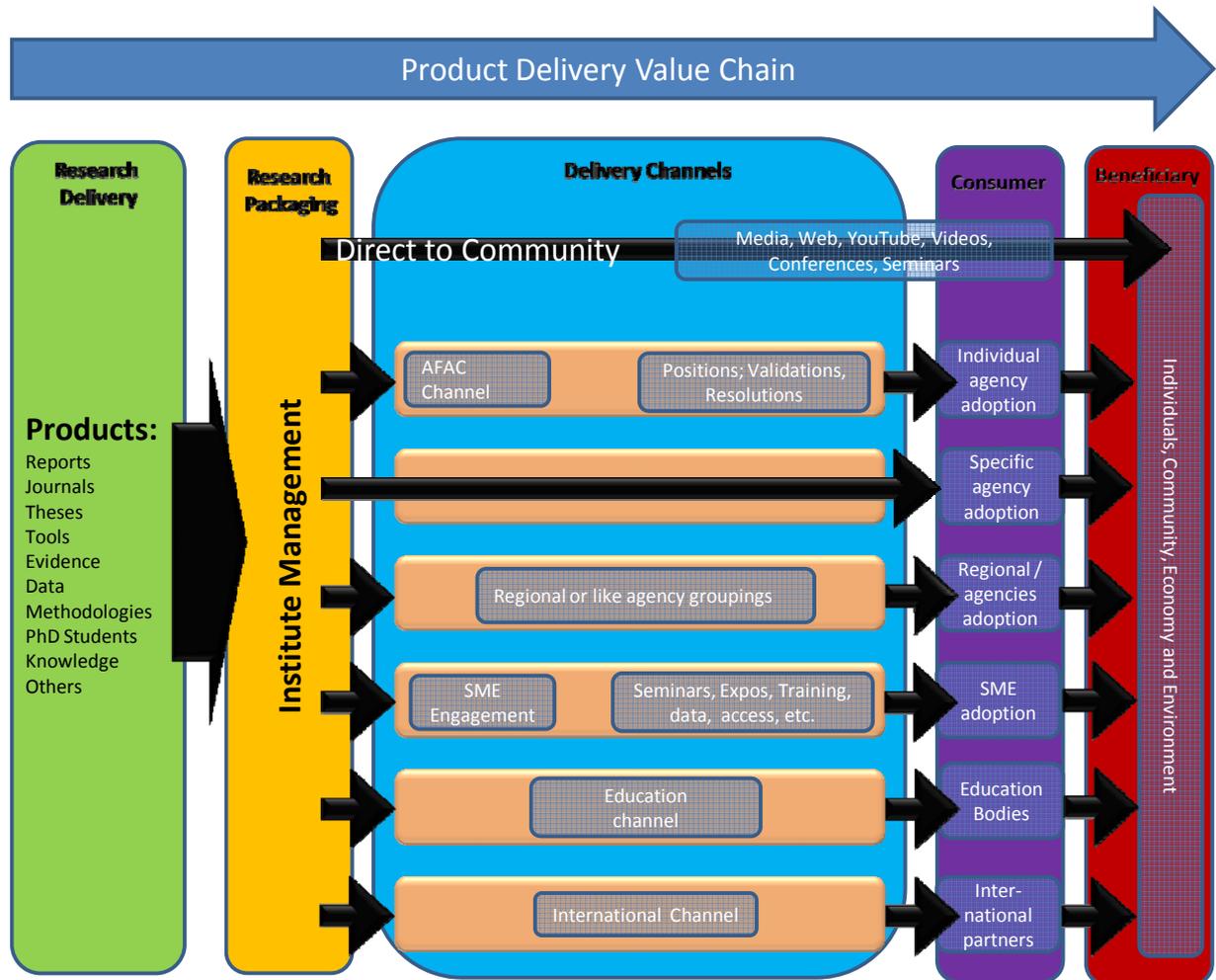
The utilisation of research can take many years and good practice research emerging from another CRC suggests that "...research findings need to be integrated and diffused to industry over time and specific applications need to be formulated and reformulated in response to ..changing needs.." (Beesley, 2005:3).

This is applicable to the adoption of the research outcomes from the first seven Bushfire CRC research programs. Guided by the Research Adoption Strategy 2008-2010, the Research Adoption Plan 2009-2010, outlined the adoption (or utilisation) activities that were planned and conducted to support the utilisation of the research by the industry. Whilst the roll out of this plan has been completed, additional benefits may be realised from further engagement with industry. This additional work will be included in the forthcoming Research Utilisation Plan 2011-2014.

RESEARCH UTILISATION APPROACH

Our approach to Research Utilisation was broadly outlined in the submission to the Commonwealth (insert web link). It commits to:

- **Integration** across programs and projects into 'usage' areas and a striving to maximise the impact of the research (as detailed in Attachment One).
- Building on the successful high-level **partnership** with the peak industry body, AFAC, and its business groups as well as expansion to include the engagement of the strategic partner bodies identified in the Bushfire CRC product delivery chain (see diagram below)



Informed by the Research Utilisation Survey 2010 and subsequent workshop with end user stakeholders, this Research Utilisation Strategy 2010 - 2014 continues to build on the use of the products and mechanisms developed to support research utilisation over the past few years, namely:

- passive information mechanisms (e.g. Web Site, Fire Notes),
- Interactive information and awareness mechanisms (conference posters and presentations);

- Interactive **engagement** mechanisms (professional development events such as forums, workshops, and seminars);
- end user-research **collaboration** mechanisms (AFAC working groups and meetings); and
- embedding of new knowledge into industry training, professional development and other education.

In addition, the critical review of the research adoption approach to date provided by the survey and its analysis identified the need to emphasise the following areas as critical to success

- **Relationships and partnerships**
- **Engagement and active involvement**
- **Nurturing of a responsive and learning culture** within end user agencies
- **Building of research utilisation capacity and capability** within end user agencies
- **Creation of high quality products** to support utilisation
- **Supporting agencies to make the research meaningful** for their context.

For Consistency with the current Bushfire CRC Strategic Directions 2010-2013 document, these Utilisation Strategies are elaborated within in the overarching Goals. A more detailed plan of Research Utilisation activities and milestones to complement the Research Projects is under development and will closely follow the finalisation of the Projects.

The responsibility for implementing the proposed strategies is one that is shared between the Bushfire CRC, AFAC and individual agencies and lead responsibility has been noted.

Importantly, it has been identified that *the* key barrier to the utilisation of the Bushfire CRC research by the end user agencies is related to the internal processes that are in place to manage research utilisation. During the consultation it was identified that a culture that embraces change, learning and risk is one that is important if there is to be change. Underpinning Bushfire CRC research utilisation success is a requirement for agencies to be open to new ideas and ways of doing things. This requires building responsive cultures within agencies that. This context must be appreciated and is outside of the sphere of influence of the Bushfire CRC to address.

GOALS

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP GOAL-

To recognise, value, build and nurture sustainable partnerships actively creating mutual benefits between researchers, end users, the Bushfire CRC office and the community using research to benefit society.

Research Utilisation Perspective-

The independent fifth year review of the Bushfire CRC remarked on the benefit of the user-leverage available through the strategic **partnership** with AFAC. This partnering provides access to over 300 agency experts, but also provides a forum through which research can be translated into industry-wide positions, guidelines or procedures. There is also a need for the Bushfire CRC to partner with end user agencies directly. The Bushfire CRC Extension introduces new partners (outside of AFAC) with which strategic **relationships** need to be developed and maintained. Further, the incorporation of research into education requires new collaborations with universities and education providers. Successful partnerships require **trust** and can come in many forms depending on their purpose. Thus in addition to supporting the high-level partnerships identified as critical channels in our value chain, more dynamic, responsive and meaningful partnerships (or relationships) focused on the research projects also need to be given opportunity to develop and grow.

Strategies:

Maintain meaningful strategic and industry-wide relationships with AFAC

Nurture and develop partnerships with individual agencies

Develop new partnerships with SMEs and new partners

Formalise and support relationships with key education partners

Support Project-level relationships through supporting and developing Lead End Users (LEUs)

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PRODUCT GOAL-

To deliver a product mix that is consistent with the expectations of all stakeholders.

Research Utilisation Perspective-

The Bushfire CRC Extension Commonwealth Agreement and Project Plans outline some products explicitly; in other cases the appropriate products will emerge out of ongoing conversation and, dialogue between the researchers and the end users and will not be apparent now. Products developed through this strong interaction are likely to reflect the context of the users, who have formed their own **understanding** of what the research might mean and hence how to best utilise it. Additionally, there will be a range of products that are actually processes that support **engagement and active involvement** (such as forum, seminars, workshops and other events. There will also be ones that involve the embedding of research into industry practice (such as training, professional development and other education pathways). Products will be high quality; that is, they will be

targeted and relevant, practical and usable, and engaging. They will also be accessible not only to our end user partners, but also to communities, and the packaging of research into 'user friendly' information products such as Fire Notes and materials for the Web Site remain a key plank of the Bushfire CRC's research utilisation effort.

Strategies:

- Explicitly include research utilisation milestones into research project plans
- Develop a Research Utilisation Plan 2011-2014 to support delivery and packaging of research outputs for partner utilisation
- Encourage the conduct of high quality interactive and engaging events
- Provide professional development to support research utilisation
- Incorporate use of innovative communication tools into Bushfire CRC Communications Strategy

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PROCESS GOAL-

To provide quality research management and utilisation across the CRC.

Research Utilisation Perspective-

The research utilisation program is fully integrated with the systems and processes of the Bushfire CRC. Its documentation into detailed plans will be consultative, open and transparent and will be reported on.

The evaluation of research utilisation and understanding the impact of the research is desirable to both demonstrate continuous learning and value for investment.

Strategies:

- Research Utilisation Plans and documents transparent and publically available
- Conduct monitoring and review processes commensurate with good governance
- Develop and apply methods to better understand impact of research outputs

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PEOPLE GOAL-

To build and enhance the capacity for research, research management and research utilisation within the sector.

Research Utilisation Perspective-

Robust and effective research utilisation requires strong engagement and participation between researchers and end users at all stages; from the instigation of the need, to development of the research proposal through to understanding the implications and finally to making change to utilise the research appropriately. The research

utilisation survey and consultation revealed that it is important that agencies develop the skills to understand the impact of the research and to **build the capacity** to translate these into improved policies, products and procedures. Mentoring and **good practice** guidance can enable the development of agency research utilisation practices.

The research utilisation survey and subsequent workshop also identified that a key component to the effective utilisation of research lies with the culture of the agency being one that is responsive, risk taking and learning.

Strategies:

Support agencies in developing their research utilisation capacity

Work with Lead End Users to develop industry capacity for Research Utilisation

Continue strategic alliance with the AFAC Knowledge Management Group to develop, identify and share examples of good practice of research utilisation suitable for our industry

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PROFILE GOAL-

Actively and deliberately enhance the profile of the Bushfire CRC.

Research Utilisation Perspective-

The core of the Bushfire CRC's business is around conducting research. Conversely, the ultimate measure of success relates to the impact of the research, which is greatly enhanced by effective utilisation. The most powerful advocates for the Bushfire CRC are the end users who can articulate and demonstrate the impact the research has had to their business - which is basically about minimising the impact of bushfire on life, property and the environment. For this reason it is critical that the communication and marketing activities of the Bushfire CRC emphasise the use of the research.

Strategies:

The Bushfire CRC Communication Strategy will have a focus on use of research

Provide incentives for end users to showcase how they have used the research

Enhance the profile of research utilisation through an ongoing strategic alliance with the AFAC Knowledge Management Group

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