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bushfire CRC

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2013

LARGEST CONFERENCE YET DRAWS 1900 DELEGATES

The final Bushfire CRC conference, held in conjunction with the AFAC annual conference, was full of highlights in Melbourne last week. Key aspects of the week included the full day Research Forum, as well as both the research utilisation and outstanding contribution awards.

Over 1900 delegates attended over the conference week; a record attendance for a Bushfire CRC and AFAC conference. The trade exhibition was also the largest exhibition size, with 111 separate trade displays covering the expo hall.

The latest research into fire and all natural hazards was presented during the Research Forum, which kicked off the conference. Showing why research and innovation are vital precursors for safer communities and better environmental management, 30 presentations took place throughout the day, emphasising the diversity of research being conducted across all hazards.

The 'Excellence in Utilisation of Bushfire CRC Research' award was again presented, with the NSW Rural Fire Service acknowledged for both using, and further developing, Bushfire CRC research on fire behaviour modelling, grassland curing and smoke plume modelling to improve their operational tools.

As it was the final conference for the Bushfire CRC, it was fitting that the contribution all researchers have made to your Bushfire CRC over the last 10 years was acknowledged. Two researchers, however, were recognised for their consistently high quality research outputs, reflected in their publications and high research uptake by agencies. Fabienne Reisen from CSIRO and Blythe McLennan from RMIT were both awarded the 'Outstanding contribution to the Bushfire CRC' award.

The Bushfire CRC was also represented in the poster awards. From over 140 posters, PhD student Sondra Dickinson from the University of Melbourne was judged to have the best poster by a panel of experts.

Valuable resources from the week will be the Research Forum presentations and posters. All are now online.

Also online is bonus content from the Research Forum, provided by conference co-hosts CFA, who broadcast live interviews via their website. Bushfire CRC researchers John Handmer, Bob Cechet and Mika Peace were all interviewed, as well as Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC CEO Richard Thornton and Communications Manager David Bruce. All interviews are available now on CFA's SoundCloud channel.

More than 80 posters from Bushfire CRC researchers were on display all week.

CEO'S BLOG
GARY MORGAN

Our annual conference is always a highlight of the year for the Bushfire CRC. Last week, our 10th and final conference was held in Melbourne. From my perspective, it could not have been a better week. Record representation from fire, emergency management and land management agencies heard all week the latest Bushfire CRC research presented across the entire program.

This is what your Bushfire CRC is all about: science and research presented to the industry for debate, discussion and ultimately, utilisation. The best value from the research is when it is taken up and understood by our end user partners.

It was pleasing all week to catch up with many of you, and to see many of you networking with our industry partners. These partnerships are a big part of the Bushfire CRC; their importance should not be underestimated.

Ten years ago we had a vision for the future. 'What would fire research look like in this country?' Much of this vision has been achieved as we move into a new era, with a new and bolder vision.

The Bushfire CRC has helped to pave the way for a great future for the industry.

Bushfire CRC student Sondra Dickinson receives the judges award for best poster from Draeger representative Christian Ferris.

Simon Heemstra accepts the Excellence in Utilisation of Bushfire CRC Research award on behalf of the NSW RFS from Gary Morgan.

SHOWCASE EVENT POSTPONED

The Bushfire CRC special event – 'Putting Research to Good Use' – has been postponed to early 2014. This major event to showcase the end of the Bushfire CRC was planned for late October 2013, but will now be held on a date to be determined after the summer bushfire season has concluded in 2014. It will be aligned with AFAC meetings where possible.

The Bushfire CRC apologises for any inconvenience this change of date may cause, but believes that the new date will be far more suitable for most people.

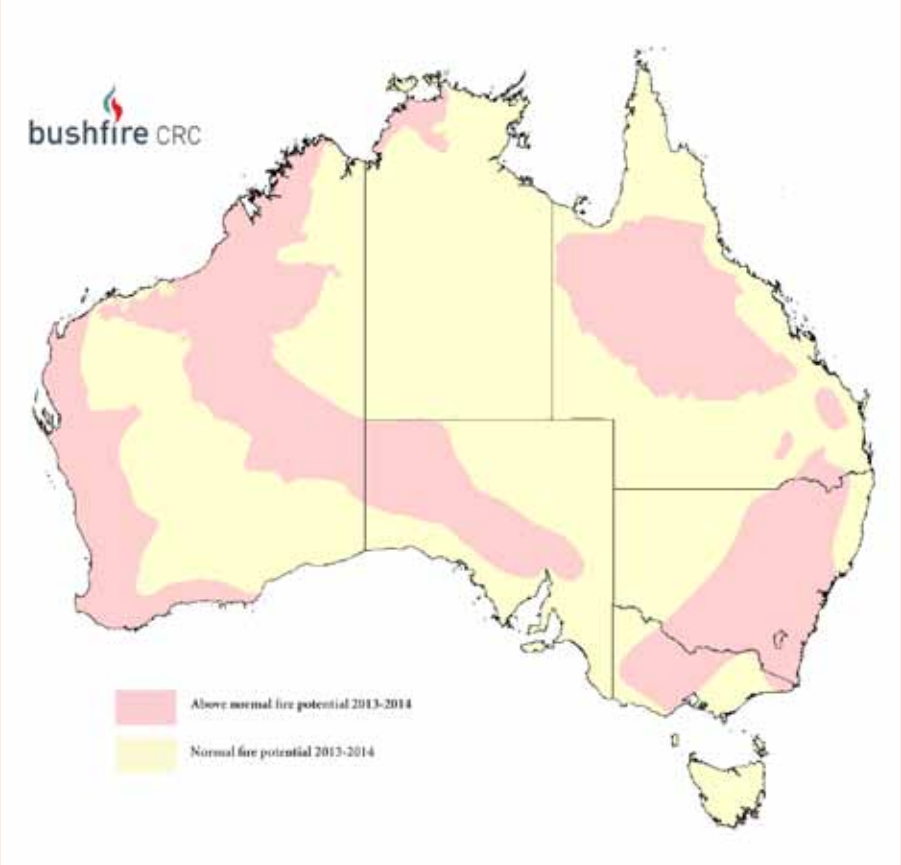
Record numbers attended both the Research Forum and the annual conference last week in Melbourne; a fabulous show of support from the industry. It would be difficult tocall on such support again for another event so soon. Similarly, the Bushfire CRC sponsored CSIRO Bushfire Science Symposium is being held in mid-October and the Bushfire CRC Stakeholder Council AGM is in mid-November.

With many projects still active, it was deemed premature to declare the end of the Bushfire CRC so early, with a full eight months remaining. Holding the Bushfire CRC showcase event in 2014 will allow for better discussion on completed research that is ready for use by all partners.

The Bushfire CRC anticipates the 'Putting Research to Good Use' event will be well attended by our partners and other interested parties. A longer lead time will enable a venue of appropriate size and comfort for two days of presentations and discussions to be sourced.

The 'Putting Research to Good Use' showcase will be a major final event for all Bushfire CRC partners and well worth attending. All partners will be kept informed of the date and venue via email and future newsletters.

SUMMER BUSHFIRE OUTLOOK



Large areas of southern Australia, especially along the east and west coasts extending inland, face above normal fire potential for the 2013-2014 fire season, despite the extensive fires in some parts of the country over the last 12 months.

However, the area most at risk does not extend right across the country, as was seen in 2012-2013. The above normal forecast is due to abundant grass growth across inland Australia, due to above average rainfall since May 2013. These conditions, coupled with above average temperatures across the country since January 2013, have resulted in a build-up of fuel in grasslands. These higher temperatures have also seen forests begin to dry out.

More details on the fire season for southern Australia are in the Bushfire CRC's Southern Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook *Fire Note*, covering Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, South Australia, southern Western Australia and southern Queensland.

The Outlook provides information to assist fire authorities in making strategic decisions such as resource planning and prescribed fire management, and to reduce the negative impacts of bushfire.

COMMUNICATIONS BLOG NATHAN MADDOCK

The annual conference presents an excellent avenue to promote Bushfire CRC science – not only to industry representatives present, but through the media too. Over the conference week we were run off our feet helping the media communicate bushfire research and the conference on TV, radio, on the web and in the newspaper. Interest is always high, with coverage on the major news channels, newspapers such as *The Australian* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* and right across ABC radio. Coverage such as this helps to communicate our messages to the wider community.

Don't forget you can view the Research Forum presentations on the Bushfire CRC website, and the broader conference proceedings on the AFAC website. Both are great resources to help delegates make the most of their time at the conference.

HOW DOES FIRE DST WORK?

A short new video now online highlights the exciting developments that the Fire DST proof of concept software program has achieved. Describing how Fire DST builds on existing fire mapping products, the four minute video details the key aspects of Fire DST.

Developed as part of the *Risk assessment and decision making* project, Fire DST will provide fire agencies with valuable new information into the future. Watch the video on the Bushfire CRC website.