

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2013

BOOKS STRENGTHEN BUSHFIRE SAFETY

Highlighting the breadth and depth of Australia's national bushfire research program, two books were launched by the Bushfire CRC on 23 October in Melbourne.

Hosted by Bushfire CRC Chairman Len Foster and launched by AFAC CEO and Bushfire CRC board director Stuart Ellis to the fire, land management and emergency service industry, the two books display the extensive reach of Bushfire CRC research, and are very different in both content and style. They are:

- *Handbook of Disaster Policies and Institutions – Improving Emergency Management and Climate Change Adaptation* by Bushfire CRC research leaders Professor John Handmer from



Ebook author Dr Briony Towers at the launch.

RMIT University and Professor Stephen Dovers from the Australian National University.

- *Making a bushfire survival plan? Involve your kids!* ebook by Dr Briony Towers from RMIT University.

“Both products demonstrate that the Bushfire CRC research program has breadth, depth and a multitude of potential audiences,” Mr Ellis said.

Aimed at policy makers and operational personnel, the updated and revised second edition of the *Handbook of Disaster Policies and Institutions – Improving Emergency Management and Climate Change Adaptation* includes new coverage of climate change adaptation, which has rapidly become central to disaster and emergency planning and management. The book is an essential handbook for practitioners across the world seeking to improve the quality, robustness and capacity of their disaster management mechanisms.

The ebook is based on the PhD research of Dr Towers. Funded by the Bushfire CRC, Dr Towers completed her PhD in 2011, investigating children's understanding of causality and prevention as applied to the bushfire context. Dr Towers also examined the role of parents, friends, and teachers in the development children's bushfire understanding. Designed for parents to help discuss bushfire preparation and safety with their children, the ebook is interactive and engaging, outlining how the whole family can help prepare for bushfire. The ebook is only available from the [Bushfire CRC website](#) by searching for 'ebook', or can be downloaded [here](#). It is a free download, and viewable on any tablet device or PC.

CEO'S BLOG

GARY MORGAN



After the upcoming Annual General Meeting on 21 November in Melbourne there will be a bonus event for Bushfire CRC partners. A half-day showcase, placed immediately after the AGM, will emphasise the advances in knowledge since Black Saturday across all scientific disciplines, as well as the achievements of the Bushfire CRC PhD student program to all partners.

The afternoon will highlight the impact the research program has had on the fire and land management sectors, as well as reflect on the contribution of student PhDs in adding depth and breadth to the entire research program.

This student program has been an important aspect of the Bushfire CRC; it was a key reason for establishing the Bushfire CRC, with a national shortage of bushfire researchers and the absence of a national succession plan for the few fire scientists that remained in the early 2000s. The Bushfire CRC has achieved this: by the end of this year, close to 100 Bushfire CRC-sponsored PhDs will have finished their studies.

Don't forget that the special Bushfire CRC event 'Putting research to good use', will take place in 2014 at the conclusion of the summer bushfire season. Both this event, and this month's AGM showcase, are important events for presenting the final research outputs to Bushfire CRC partners.

TASMANIA RESEARCH RELEASED

The report of a Bushfire CRC task force following the January 2013 Tasman Peninsula bushfire has been released as part of the 2013 Tasmanian Bushfires Inquiry.

The Bushfire CRC task force, commissioned by the Tasmania Fire Service, was led by Professor Timothy Skinner and Professor Jim McLennan. The task force interviewed 245 residents across the Tasman Peninsula.

Interviews were undertaken with residents in both the affected and surrounding areas, focusing on people's preparation, decision-making and actions during the bushfire.

Researchers were from the University of Tasmania, the University of Western Australia, La Trobe University and RMIT.

View the Tasmania task force report on the [Bushfire CRC website](#).



Canadian expert Mike Wotton addresses the symposium.

BUSHFIRE SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

The latest fire behaviour science was presented at a symposium attended by 140 fire and land management operational practitioners and researchers in Canberra in October.

Hosted by CSIRO Ecosystems Science, in partnership with the Bushfire CRC, ACT Parks and Conservation, ACT Rural Fire Service and NSW Rural Fire Service, the Fire Behaviour – The State of the Science symposium updated the skills and knowledge of fire and land management practitioners.

The symposium not only signified 60 years of fire behaviour research at CSIRO, but discussed the latest findings from 10 years of fire behaviour research by the Bushfire CRC.



Kevin Tolhurst explains the latest developments of Phoenix Rapidfire.

Bushfire CRC research was presented by Andrew Sullivan, Jim Gould, Miguel Cruz and Matt Plucinski from CSIRO, Jeff Keperth from the Bureau of Meteorology and Kevin Tolhurst from the University of Melbourne.

IN BRIEF

AGM ON 21 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 on 21 November in Melbourne, with a half day research showcase to follow. Please RSVP to vaia.smirneos@bushfirecrc.com if you have not already done so.

IN THE MEDIA

Bushfire science and research has been discussed in the media in recent months following the fires in New South Wales, with many Bushfire CRC experts in demand. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC CEO Richard Thornton had an opinion piece in the *Financial Review*, while *The Conversation* has carried pieces by Ross Bradstock, Karen Reid, Douglas Brown, Matthias Boer, Fay Johnson and Richard Thornton. View them at theconversation.com

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTED OVERSEAS

Bushfire CRC researcher Michael Eburn from the Australian National University recently visited the Emergency Planning College in the UK to present on his emergency law research. Watch an insightful interview with Michael about the research on [YouTube](#).

Also presenting to the UK recently was project leader Jeff Keperth from the Bureau of Meteorology. Jeff presented an overview of the Bushfire CRC work into enhancing weather predictions under extreme conditions via video conference from Australia to the UK Met office.

RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG **NOREEN KRUSEL**



In July I commissioned research into the role of the Bushfire CRC Lead End User (LEU) – aiming to learn from the experience of the LEUs and to find out if the conduct of role matched the functions described in the role statement.

The research found that: LEUs were successful as research leaders highly valued the LEUs' industry knowledge, industry contacts, intellectual challenge and contribution and support; industry respondents valued the LEUs' role in matching research outputs to user requirements and the translation/interpretation and communication of the research into 'industry speak'; and the LEUs themselves are now a cohort of 'research savvy' people within the industry.

The key issues identified were an incomplete appreciation of the role, including time commitment by the LEUs themselves and lack of acknowledgment of and support for the role.

Improved support for this role in the future will assist in the successful conduct of the important functions performed. The current Bushfire CRC LEUs need to be supported and involved in utilisation efforts, which will continue well after the research program winds down in June 2014. Read the full lead end user report on the [website](#).

COMMUNICATIONS BLOG

NATHAN MADDOCK



It has been another busy year for the Bushfire CRC, full of outputs, events and activity. All are

available for viewing in our [Annual Report](#) for 2012/2013, which was submitted to the Federal Government at the end of October.

The formal publication output of the Bushfire CRC included three books, five book chapters, 43 reports, 115 articles in scholarly refereed journals and 18 written conference papers. An impressive 84 posters were on display at our annual conference in Perth in August 2012. Research output after 10 years totalled 1555 publications – all are available online.

But there is more: 25 events with more than 2000 participants; 61 active PhD students; 19 *Fire Notes* (including a milestone *Fire Note* 100); continued growth in our social media channels and sound financials enabling operations to be carried out through to July 2014. It's been a very successful 12 months.