

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER DECEMBER/JANUARY 2010-11

NEW FIRE COMMISSIONER BRIEFS BUSHFIRE CRC ON THE CHALLENGES AHEAD



Victoria's new Fire Services Commissioner, Craig Lapsley, has briefed Bushfire CRC staff on the issues and problems he wants to overcome to ensure uniformly high performance standards from firefighters across the state's different agencies.

Mr Lapsley was formerly Director, Emergency Management, of Victoria's Department of Health and Human Services and before that Deputy Chief Officer of the Country Fire Authority. He was appointed to his new role following a recommendation by the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission for the creation of a fire commissioner as an independent statutory officer who would be the senior operational firefighter in Victoria.

The legislation creating the position, which took effect on 1 December 2010, sees him sit in seniority above the operational chiefs of the state's CFA, MFB and DSE fire services.

"We will be a small group of people, not some big bureaucracy, who will work with the other agencies," Mr Lapsley told his audience of staff from the Bushfire CRC, AFAC (Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council) and the National Aerial Firefighting Centre at their joint premises in Melbourne. Mr Lapsley is pictured second from left with, from left, CEOs from the Bushfire CRC Gary Morgan, AFAC Naomi Brown, and NAFC Richard Alder.

Mr Lapsley said one of his top priorities was fire prevention across private and public land. Others included working with different organisations to ensure a clarity and consistency of policies and messages and achieving consistent incident management systems across the three fire agencies.

"A big point will be getting the three services working off common standards and training. What it's got to be about is sustainable, long-term reforms."

CEO'S BLOG

GARY MORGAN



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

This year the Bushfire CRC was in the unique position of having the completion of one suite of research projects overlapping with the beginning of another – while the momentum was building for a more longer-term, broader-based research agenda.

Meanwhile, the general business of this research centre kept on producing tangible outputs for the industry. And a calendar of events promoted the research – including a refreshingly different conference in Darwin in September and an intensive week of ideas sharing with our US colleagues in June.

Clearly, the past year was one of enormous challenge and transition for the bushfire research community.

The completion of the initial seven year research program was a significant milestone. This was the collection of research projects that the Bushfire CRC began with much promise back in 2003. By end of June this year we had substantially delivered on that promise with most projects achieving, and in some cases overachieving, on their early aims.

On behalf of the Board and the staff at the Bushfire CRC office, a big thank you to all those in the wider Bushfire CRC community for the efforts you have put in over the past year.

My very best wishes to you and your family for a Happy Christmas and a safe and successful New Year.

Find the full blog at www.bushfirecrc.com/fireupdates

BOARD MEETS IN NEW ZEALAND

Our New Zealand partners hosted the last Board meeting for 2010 in Christchurch in early December. Led by Board member Murray Dudfield, of the New Zealand National Rural Fire Authority, the Board was provided an overview of New Zealand bushfire research in addition to matters of general business.

Several guests were invited to present to the Board. Dame Margaret Bazely spoke on the issues being considered by the New Zealand

Fire Services Commission. Paul McGill spoke about the response of the New Zealand Fire Service to the Christchurch earthquake of earlier this year. Former Board member Brian Richardson spoke on Scion bushfire research. Dr Max Kennedy from the NZ Foundation for Research Science and Technology spoke on the role of the NZ Government in funding of science. And Prof Andy Sturman from the University of Canterbury spoke on the university's research capabilities.

RESEARCH BLOG

RICHARD THORNTON



This year has been a significant one for all associated with the

Bushfire CRC, we have finished the first version and are now well on the way with the new research program. It has been an interesting and exciting ride and I thank everyone who has been able to help in some way. Now the serious work begins!

The last month has seen a number of major initiatives following the Research Advisory Forum we held in November. Many of the research projects have now been signed and are actively recruiting the new researchers. We have signed up a considerable number of new students, and we are starting to see the results from a number of the early starting projects.

I recently attended a research workshop in Christchurch New Zealand co-ordinated by Scion, where many interesting pieces of work were presented, the attendance and engagement from across the New Zealand fire sector was impressive and provides a good model from which the Bushfire CRC could learn.

I am looking forward to an equally exciting 2011, and I look forward to meeting as many of the researchers and end-users as possible during the coming year in the meantime please have a happy Christmas break and a safe New Year.

As ever, any questions, drop me a line.

RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG

NOREEN KRUSEL



Partners in the Bushfire CRC have recently have been emailed a *Fire Note* outlining the Seasonal Wildfire

Outlook for New Zealand 2010-11. The *Fire Note* is also on the Bushfire CRC website. Here is a research utilisation "spin" on the Outlook.

The Christchurch workshop in early December brought together New Zealand fire managers and researchers and meteorologists and climate scientists. It was facilitated by Mark Chladil of the Tasmanian Fire Service. This was similar to the Australian seasonal northern and southern workshops that have been held annually since 2006.

So why should I mention this? In my view the release of this product represents the culmination of a few things that I think are important to the utilisation of this research:

- The research conducted under the Bushfire CRC Fire Danger – Fire Weather project led by Graham Mills, recently retired from the Bureau of Meteorology, is relevant to end user stakeholders.
- This project developed a facilitated process (regular workshops) based on objectives that were clearly defined early on.
- The workshops resulted in tangible and useful products (a report and *Fire Note*).
- There is strong collaboration between researchers, experts, managers and practitioners.
- There is a sense of enthusiasm in the subject matter that leads to better utilisation.
- Ownership and leadership has emerged from within the end users on this issue, potentially leading to sustained utilisation.

So, I challenge readers to think not only about what the research might be telling us, but who might be interested in the subject and how can we encourage wider participation?

STUDENT BLOG LYNDSEY WRIGHT



Making a presentation to your colleagues? Whether this is a formal confirmation of candidature or a student seminar let us know when you are presenting. We have been to a number of these in recent months and welcome the opportunity to

interact with you in the university environment and to hear how your research is progressing. We can't make all of these events but it is often possible to attend these in conjunction with other meetings. So, please let us know when such events are taking place.

Some of you may be aware that not long ago we began informal annual reviews with all students. This gives us a chance to touch base with both yourself and your supervisor and just see how things are going. It is not intended to replace or duplicate the formal academic review process.

Feedback so far has been good – the reviews are a good opportunity for students to let us and their supervisors know where they need some additional support. One fantastic outcome has been to hear that many students are much closer to submission than we had thought.

COMMUNICATIONS BLOG DAVID BRUCE



Thanks for all the useful comments on our new website. The reality is that websites are always a work in progress and good suggestions for improvement can often be implemented fairly quickly.

The main work still to be done is on the pages that have resources for higher education course providers and on the bibliographic citations list – we will be working solidly on these in the New Year as key parts of our general business. Also, there are still many gaps just waiting to be populated with nice photos. Calling all researchers and end-users that have not provided us with a headshot – please send it to us as soon as you can.

If you haven't already done it, check out the Publications section. Many of our research products – DVDs, books, field guides – can be ordered here. And there is also the latest Annual Report, for summer time reading.