

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER MAY 2011



The NSW Minister of Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Michael Gallacher MLC, launched the conference to a backdrop of volunteers from different agencies.

The Sydney City historic fire station No 1 was a fitting venue to launch the AFAC and Bushfire CRC annual conference that will be held in Sydney later this year, themed around 'New World, New Thinking'.

NSW Fire and Emergency Service Commissioners, senior personnel and the Minister of Police and Emergency Services NSW, the Hon. Michael Gallacher MLC, were on hand to support the launch.

Now in its eighth year, the annual conference has grown to be the pre-eminent knowledge sharing event for the fire and emergency service sector in Australasia. More than 1100 delegates are expected to attend from around the world with key note speakers confirmed from Europe, the UK and USA. They will be supported by national and internationally recognised experts and researchers.

Mr Gallacher noted that the conference program covered not only natural disasters such as fire and flood but also "man-made disasters", such as the 2005 London bombings. He said it was important to learn from a broad range of events and organisations.

"You must have dialogue with other agencies and within your own organisation and within the domestic framework of this country if we are ever going to be able continue to work out what has gone wrong in the past and put in place measures to prevent it occurring in the future.

"A conference such as this with well over 1000 delegates attending does show that this is the significant conference of its kind in this area."

The Commissioner for the NSW State Emergency Service, Mr Murray Kear, said the conference theme was most appropriate – New World, New Thinking.

NEW THINKING LINED UP FOR CONFERENCE

"When you think of the world over the last couple of years and what we have seen with the fury of mother nature and earthquakes and cyclones and the impact they have on communities, it really does seem we have shifted another gear with natural disasters and their impact on the world.

"And I think for emergency services that requires new thinking. Not that we have been thinking old thinking in the past but we need to continually keep on top of and review how we deliver services to communities.

First of all to try to prevent emergencies and where we can't prevent them from occurring certainly trying to prepare communities for their impact. Then, we have to respond to our communities when all else fails.

"So certainly, new world new thinking is an appropriate title for the conference."

The trade show with more than 100 exhibitors taking over 7000 square metres in floor space, will be the largest trade expo for the emergency services sector in the Southern Hemisphere this year.

The conference will be staged at Darling Harbour from 29 August to 1 September. Early bird registrations close 30 July.

The full conference program is available on the conference website at www.afac2011.org.au, or follow us on twitter #afac2011

CEO'S BLOG

GARY MORGAN



SPREADING THE WORD FROM BATHURST TO SOUTH AFRICA

During May I will be representing the Bushfire CRC at the Wildfire 2011 Conference in South Africa.

In a week that promises to be full of activities, this is an excellent opportunity to further develop collaborative research projects, particularly with researchers in the US and France, in topics including rural-urban interface fire, IMT simulation, and social science.

Over the years, the Bushfire CRC has entered into cooperative agreements with several international research partners that have resulted in Memorandums of Understanding. I intend to hold discussions with these partners in South Africa in order to advance these agreements into our current research program. This continued support for our research from such important partners will be invaluable as we move towards a longer term vision for the Bushfire CRC.

In late April I was in NSW, firstly for the media launch of the annual conference. Then I spent time with NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers and paid staff. I was pleased to be invited to deliver the opening keynote address on our bushfire research at the NSW Rural Fire Service 2011 Leadership Forum in Bathurst, which was supported by the NSW Rural Fire Service Association.

The audience included both senior paid staff and volunteers and followed the RFS Young Members Forum. Clearly, NSW is making good use of Bushfire CRC research in recruiting and maintaining their volunteer fire brigades.

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

BUSHFIRE SCIENCE EVENT AT STAWELL

It's been raining everywhere – but what does this mean for bushfire risk and household preparations for the next fire season? Bushfire CRC researchers will discuss bushfire behaviour, risk, and how to best communicate information at a free public event at the Stawell Entertainment Centre on Wednesday 11 May, from 7pm.

The event is being hosted by The Royal Institution of Australia (RiAus) and is part of its Talking Science in Regional Victoria

program. Booking can be made at <http://freerangescience.org.au/>

Two Bushfire CRC speakers have been lined up for Stawell – Dr Chris Weston, of the University of Melbourne, and a Bushfire CRC Lead End User, John Schauble, of the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner. Also on the bill is Michael Boatman, Manager of Community Safety, CFA, Grampians Region. The host for the evening is Matt O'Sullivan, Content Director for ABC Rural in Victoria.

COMMUNICATIONS BLOG

DAVID BRUCE



The Bushfire Science event in Stawell on 11 May (see story above) is supported by the Bushfire CRC and

follows a similar event in Adelaide late last year. This is a new partnership for public science for the Bushfire CRC and we are hoping it continues with more events across

Australia. The plan is to make our science as accessible as possible to all audiences and to show the link between what happens in the universities and how that is transferred to action around the house.

Why Stawell this time? This town in western Victoria is in the heart of bushfire territory, with the most recent serious fires in 2006 threatening much of the area around the Grampians. More recently, the region has been hard hit by flood and heavy rain. Later in the year we will be seeking a venue in another part of the state – suggestions welcome.

RESEARCH BLOG LYNDSEY WRIGHT



Talk about a quick impact. This week Cara Lord (pictured right), of Deakin University, was offered a Bushfire

CRC scholarship to support her PhD studies. With the ink barely dry we then learnt that her journal article based on her honours thesis had been accepted for publication in an A* journal. This is an excellent result and clearly shows that it is possible to achieve this high level of recognition in journals while still a student. Congratulations Cara!

Cara, who was also a Bushfire CRC vacation student, will now continue her research efforts in her PhD under the guidance of Dr Brad Aisbett and Dr Sally Fergusson in her project: Developing a task based assessment for bushfire suppression. We look forward to seeing her work as it progresses over coming years.



RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG

NOREEN KRUSEL



Over the past few years the Bushfire CRC and the fire and emergency management industry have worked closely

together to build new research into the policy and practices of the industry. This has been encapsulated in the AFAC Approach to Knowledge Management and is reflected in our new Research Utilisation Strategy.

In practical terms, this means that time taken to consider the meaning of new research is a valuable step in the creation of new knowledge.

Here are two recent examples:

- The new AFAC Learning and Development Strategy has 'Research adoption and utilisation in learning and development' as one of its five priorities. It is supported by action including the incorporation of all relevant Bushfire CRC research into the appropriate learning and development frameworks and materials.
- A recent workshop was hosted by the AFAC Community Safety Group in

RESEARCH BLOG

RICHARD THORNTON



The Research Advisory Forums – or RAFs as they have become known in the

corridors – are proving to be an excellent way for us all to be involved in the ongoing progress of our research.

We have long had an annual conference and Stakeholder Council meetings in order to keep everyone updated on different types of information. Over the last year we have added the missing piece – the RAF as the twice a year forum for presentations on a select range of projects and in-depth discussion between researchers and end-user partners.

This is what being involved with a CRC is all about – broad participation in the evolution of the research.

This month on 25 and 26 May the RAF will be held at the QFRS headquarters in Brisbane. Those required to attend have already been notified.

The format for the meeting will be similar to those held before – that is a presentation from a series of research projects followed by time for questions. On this occasion we are also including presentations from a number of our new students, which I am sure will be of interest to many. In response to the requests of various individuals (and recognising the distance to travel) we have arranged for this gathering to take place over two days. This gives us the opportunity for an informal gathering on the Wednesday evening.

Researchers who presented at the October RAF will not generally be required to present again, although, there may be one or two exceptions.

Launceston for the purpose of considering some of the Bushfire CRC research on Risk Communication and on Evaluation of Community Education Programs (two projects from the former Program C). Two researchers, Professors Douglas Paton and John Fein, presented an overview of the research findings. There was robust discussion about what it meant to the agencies, both individually and as a group. It was agreed that there was value in having the researchers involved in this conversation and that there were implications that should be addressed at the national level.