

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER MARCH 2012

REGISTRATIONS OPEN FOR CONFERENCE

With the Call for Papers now officially closed, the Bushfire CRC and AFAC have declared that Early Bird Registrations for the annual conference are now open.

More than 150 abstracts have been received. The Conference Program Committee met this week to consider the papers for inclusion into the conference program. Successful authors will be contacted in late March.

With more than 1000 delegates expected to be in Perth for Australasia's leading emergency management and research conference, delegates will hear from leading international and Australian experts such as the Hon. Barry Jones, demographer Bernard Salt, research psychologist and Bushfire CRC researcher Professor Carmen Lawrence, Chief James Schwartz of the Arlington County Fire Department, and many more. A full list of speakers can be found on the conference website www.afac2012.org

Tuesday 28 August is the Bushfire CRC Research Forum which will feature research across all hazards in the emergency sector. Former Bushfire CRC Board member Professor Robyn Owens, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at University of Western Australia, will be the opening Keynote speaker, and will officially open the Research Forum. She will be followed by Professor Steve Dovers, from the Australian National University. Professor Jean Palutikof, Director of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility at Griffith University, will be the closing keynote speaker for the day. Many other Bushfire CRC researchers will be on the program for this day. This will be followed by the conference Welcome Ceremony, which will lead into the main conference. The two-day main conference will be held on Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 August, and will include a large trade Expo with the Bushfire CRC and AFAC stand as a central feature.

A showcase of our student research projects will be a feature of the professional development day for delegates – this day concludes the



conference on Friday 31 August. This will be an enlightening and entertaining presentation of the PhD research for all delegates to participate in at the end of the busy week. Other opportunities for the PD day are on the conference website. An addition to this year's conference in Perth will be a series of optional one and two-day field trips for delegates to explore the diversity Western Australia has to offer, commencing Monday 27 August.

Early Bird registrations are open to 26 June 2012. <http://www.afac2012.org/registration>

SCIENCE ONLINE

The formal proceedings of the Science Day held as part of the Bushfire CRC and AFAC 2011 Conference in Sydney are now available on the Bushfire CRC website. These papers have been anonymously reviewed and published as formal proceedings.

<http://www.bushfirecrc.com/news/news-item/proceedings-bushfire-crc-afac-2011-conference-science-day>

KEY DATES FOR 2012

- **27 March:** *Fire in the Landscape* field excursion, NE Victoria
- **17 and 18 April:** DIISR Review of Bushfire CRC
- **23 and 24 May:** Research Advisory Forum, Hobart
- **27 June:** Stakeholder Meeting, Adelaide
- **27 August to 1 September:** AFAC & Bushfire CRC Conference including Science Day, Perth
- **24 and 25 October:** Research Advisory Forum, TBA
- **22 November:** AGM and Stakeholder Meeting, Melbourne

CEO'S BLOG

GARY MORGAN



SPREADING THE WORD TO ALL OUR PARTNERS

Our Federal Government funders show a great interest in how we interact with what they refer to as the Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) sector. While we regularly demonstrate strong links to our "bigger" partners – the fire and land management agencies, CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia, and more than a dozen universities – our links to the "smaller" parts of the sector are nonetheless strong and well maintained.

Here are two good examples of this.

Firstly, the Fire Protection Association of Australia (FPAA) is now a member of the Bushfire CRC, representing more than 3000 small and medium-sized businesses in the fire



safety and protection industry. A tangible aspect of this relationship is the *Fire Australia* magazine (pictured above), published jointly by the Bushfire CRC, FPAA and AFAC. Secondly, our annual conference attracts around 100 businesses to the trade exhibition, where the broader fire industry can meet with researchers and agency staff.

This weekend I will be talking to our colleagues about communications and technology in emergency management at the APCO Australasia conference in Queensland. I have spoken at APCO conferences in the past, and also at FPAA conferences, and have been greatly impressed by the enthusiasm across the board for new research outputs. This will be another excellent opportunity to spread the word about our good research progress and how it is relevant to the many parts of the fire industry, including the SMEs.

IN BRIEF

FIELD TRIP

The Bushfire CRC is leading a Fire in the Landscape field excursion as part of its professional development event series, on Tuesday 27 March 2012.

Touring research sites at Myrtle Creek, Stanley and Mudgegonga, in Victoria participants will learn more about current projects attempting to determine the affects of fire in the landscape.

This field trip is a good opportunity for Bushfire CRC end-users and researchers to interact and discuss how current field-based research activities by Bushfire CRC researchers at University of Melbourne and University of Sydney deliver useful information on fire impacts on hydrology and erosion.

Please note that the number of participants is limited, so act fast and secure your place today. For more information contact **vaia.smirneos@bushfirecrc.com**

MASTERS

Scholarship opportunities are available for students undertaking the research component of Masters by Coursework studies. This is a rare opportunity for researchers and Bushfire CRC partners alike to support the future of bushfire research at this level.

The Bushfire CRC is encouraging researchers to promote the opportunity amongst students whose research projects would be relevant to the Bushfire CRC, as well as the across the wider university community.

Manager of Research at the Bushfire CRC, Lyndsey Wright, said the scholarships also provide a great chance for Bushfire CRC partners to assist their staff who may be undertaking relevant courses. 'Scholarships like these aren't easy to come by, so we encourage everyone to apply so their hard work and enthusiasm can be supported,' she said.

Applications must be received by 18 March 2012. Contact **annette.allen@bushfirecrc.com** for more information.

AUSTIMBER 2012

AUSTimber 2012 – the biggest forestry and timber expo in the Southern Hemisphere – comes to Australia every four years and this year it is being held in the forest – between a plantation of blue gums and radiata pines, 29-31 March 2012, at Mount Gambier, South Australia. Bushfire CRC board member Ewan Waller, Chief Fire Officer, Victoria, will be speaking at the AUSTimber Forestworks' Conference – Precision Forestry in Action. His topic is Fire Detection and he will be addressing the use of science and technology to make better decisions for fire and land management.

www.austimber2012.com.au

RESEARCH BLOG

RICHARD THORNTON



Recently we held a joint meeting of some of the Principal Scientific Advisors

(Professors Rod Keenan, Drew Dawson, and Douglas Paton) and the Board's Research and Education Committee (Ewan Waller, Murray Dudfield and Professor Alistar Robertson) to discuss the concept of research quality.

We discussed what constitutes research quality and how it can be measured, in the context of a CRC and particularly at the early stages of a research program. There are many lagging indicators, H-index, citations, etc.; but very few lead indicators. The group discussed this and came up with few ideas based around the quality of the research teams, on the basis that, if they have done good work before then it is a fair assumption they will continue to do so in the future. It is important to the CRC though that we are also seen to be developing new researchers, so having a mix of researchers is important.

However, the concept of research impact measures is a much more vexed one which has yet to be determined in a national sense and will continue to be debated by us and others.

Just for the record, my initial evaluations based upon H-index scores for most of our key researchers would put us largely on par with most of our international peer researchers, which is a good sign

I am happy to hear from anyone who has thoughts on which measures are important to a user focussed research organisation such as ours.

STUDENT BLOG **LYNDSEY WRIGHT**



With the Bushfire CRC and AFAC 2012 Conference coming up in August this year, I thought it best

to inform everyone that we will be conducting a student showcase on the final day of the conference, Friday 31 August, as part of our Professional Development Program.

Students attending the conference are invited to present information on their current

projects in a small group interview-style setting with an interviewer and two or three other "guest" students.

The showcase is open for everyone to attend, giving end-users and fellow researchers a chance to see where research is heading and what progress is being made by their peers.

It is also a great opportunity for more students to be involved and exhibit their material, as unfortunately there are never enough spaces in the main program for all those we would like to have participate.

COMMUNICATIONS BLOG **DAVID BRUCE**



Last week I attended the Australian Science Communicators conference in Sydney on behalf of the Bushfire CRC.

The purpose of the event was neatly summed up by Paul Willis, the new Director of the RiAus, an organisation dedicated to the promotion of science which has as its motto "bringing science to people and people to science".

In a post-conference blog, Paul wrote: "The message has come down from above that scientists need to get their message out to the wider audience of

the Australian public. No longer can scientists beaver away undisturbed in some hidden laboratory conducting research largely at the public expense. If the research is paid for out of taxes, then the scientists ought to give an account as to how those dollars have been spent."

Much of the research in the Bushfire CRC is now entering a stage where we are ready to do a good show and tell. A field trip to north-east Victoria, a seminar series at RMIT, a new video explaining the Fire DST project – these are only some of the activities happening now that are proving that Bushfire CRC researchers are not hiding in their labs.

Our scientists are indeed "bringing science to the people and the people to science" and there's going to be a lot more of it in 2012.