

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER MAY 2012

A PROGRAM FOR A DIVERSE CONFERENCE

More than 90 sessions have been packed into the program for the Bushfire CRC and AFAC annual conference in Perth in August.

The program was launched at a function last month, attended by AFAC member agencies, Bushfire CRC researchers and staff, and industry sponsors. This was an opportunity to highlight the conference program that addresses key issues facing our sector and contributes to a knowledge sharing and learning culture within fire, land management and emergency service agencies, and across the broader industry.

Fire and Emergency Services Authority of WA (FESA) CEO and Chair of the Conference Steering Committee Wayne Gregson, (pictured with Murray Carter, WA Department of Environment and Conservation) said FESA is delighted to be hosting the AFAC and Bushfire CRC conference this year.

“Our planning is well advanced and anticipation is mounting for the event which offers a comprehensive range of activities to make the trip out west very worthwhile.

“We look forward to welcoming all guests and delegates to our beautiful city on the Swan River, for what I am sure will be an enjoyable,



thought provoking and professionally rewarding experience,” he said.

Presentations for the two-day conference and Research Forum have been organised across four streams. With more than 90 sessions on offer, the program will have appeal across a diverse range of disciplines covering the full emergency management spectrum.

“The Research Forum will focus on the latest research from leading researchers and how it is implemented into policy and practice,” Mr Gary Morgan, CEO of the Bushfire CRC and host for the evening said.

Eight Professional Development events will be held on the final day (Friday 31 August) across a range of topics including an innovative Student Showcase of new and upcoming researchers.

REVIEW LOOKS AT PERFORMANCE

In mid-April a three-day Performance Review of the Bushfire CRC heard from a range of people including researchers, end-users and students – both in person and on the phone.

The Review was conducted by the Cooperative Research Centre’s Committee on behalf of the Federal Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science, Research and Tertiary Education.

The five-member Review Panel spent three days looking at all aspects of the Bushfire CRC’s governance and performance.

Following an overview of the Bushfire CRC by the Chairman Len Foster AO, presentations were given on financial matters, the research program, research utilisation, communications and the education program. The Panel was also keen to discuss options for ongoing research



funding when CRC funds cease in June next year. Mr Foster outlined the intention to transition the Bushfire CRC into an Institute for fire and other natural hazard research.

The Panel is preparing a report.

The CEO of the Bushfire CRC, Gary Morgan, thanked all researchers, end-users and staff involved in the review.

CEO’S BLOG

GARY MORGAN



Last month we concluded a three-day Performance Review of the Bushfire CRC.

The five-member Review Panel is preparing a report but at this stage, on behalf of the Chairman Len Foster, I sincerely wish to thank the many people involved in the preparation and presentation to the Review panel. I won’t name anyone personally as everyone, whether on the phone or in person, made an important contribution. We appreciated those who phoned in from the Human Dimensions of Wildland Fire Conference in Seattle, those on the phone from all around Australia and New Zealand, and those who made a particular effort to be in Melbourne to address the Panel personally.

My thanks goes to the students who spoke about the benefits of being in the education program, the researchers who enlightened the Panel on the vision and objectives of their projects, our partner representatives who emphasised the purpose and the utilisation of the research, the Board who spoke about governance and management structures, and the Bushfire CRC staff who presented overviews of their operational areas and managed the entire three-day Review program.

The Review took an enormous amount of time and effort for so many of us. Although it distracted us from the regular daily tasks of a research centre the real benefit out of the process is that it allowed us to focus on why we exist and where we want to be in the coming years.

I am positive that the Review Panel will be impressed by the enormous commitment by so many people to the Bushfire CRC, the genuine value that end-users place upon the quality research, the supportive education program and the good uptake of research outputs resulting in a positive cultural change throughout the industry.

EXCELLENCE IN UTILISATION OF RESEARCH

Now is the time to acknowledge agencies making outstanding use of Bushfire CRC research. Applications are now being sought for the new Bushfire CRC Research Utilisation Award – is your agency worthy of recognition?



The annual AFAC/Bushfire CRC national conference is the premier conference in Australasia for the fire and emergency services sector. Since 1997 the conference has provided a forum for the presentation of the industry achiever of the year award (the Laurie Lavelle award), and for the last few years the Bushfire CRC has presented awards to researchers 'In recognition of contribution to the Bushfire CRC'.

It is now timely to acknowledge those demonstrating effective uptake of Bushfire CRC research into their business. AFAC presents an innovation award to individuals - this award is for agencies, and is specifically focused on Bushfire CRC research utilisation.

The first award will be presented at the AFAC/Bushfire CRC 2012 conference in Perth in August, then subsequently at the 2103 and 2014 conferences.

The applications will be assessed in confidence by the Research Utilisation Manager, tabled at a meeting of the Research Utilisation Committee

with advice provided to the CEO. An agency's achievements will be assessed against a range of selection criteria.

For more information go to <http://www.bushfirecrc.com/opportunities>

Applications (signed by the nominating person and the agencies CEO/Head) should be submitted to Noreen.Krusel@bushfirecrc.com by **Friday 15 June 2012**.

NEW ONLINE

Many publications and presentations by our researchers have been put on the Bushfire CRC website recently. These include:

- When residents come under imminent wildfire threat.
- Eucalypt ecosystems predisposed to chronic decline.
- Simple models for stomatal conductance derived from a process model: cross-validation against sap flux data.
- The emerging legal issue of failure to warn.
- The relationship between fire behaviour measures and community loss.
- First year of the Urban and Regional Planning for Risk and Uncertainty project.
- Validating 'fit for duty' tests for Australian volunteer fire fighters.
- Gender matters: Applying a gendered analysis to bushfire research in Australia.

RESEARCH BLOG

RICHARD THORNTON



With the DIISRT review behind us, it's time to focus again on more 'normal' activities. The

Research Advisory Forum is immediately ahead on 23-24 May in Hobart. This forum is always a great opportunity to hear the progress on research projects.

The annual conference is rushing towards us and the program is looking great. I am particularly looking forward to the Research Forum on day one, which will help to set the scene for the rest of the conference. This will allow practitioners and researchers to hear the latest research from across the Bushfire CRC; from other researchers and end-users. The target audience is researchers and those in agencies with responsibility for understanding the latest breakthroughs. Also watch for a number of targeted activities, Prof Marty Alexander, from Canada, will be presenting a seminar in Sydney, on 18 June covering topics around fire danger rating and reasons for fire research. The North Australian Fire Manager's Forum meets in Townsville in mid-June, and the Bushfire CRC is sponsoring a session at the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility's annual conference in Melbourne in late June.

RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG NOREEN KRUSEL



The many presentations during our just completed Performance Review highlighted a

few things on how our research utilisation is tracking. Overall, our key research utilisation activities are going strong.

Collaboration – there is a high involvement in forums and through AFAC Groups.

Awareness – our website, publications such as Fire Notes, posters and presentations are well received. **Engagement** – professional development events are well attended.

Capability – new knowledge is being embedded into training and education.

One question remains – our research inputs and outputs are great but what's the outcome? In the Review, we struggled to demonstrate clear outcomes.

GUEST BLOG MICK AYRE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service hosted a seminar on firefighter cooling last month with sponsorship and support of the Bushfire CRC and assistance by James Cook University.

The event brought together representatives of Bushfires NT, St John Ambulance, AirServices Australia and the NTFRS - 25 people participated.

The presentations highlighted the extraordinary range of effects on firefighters working in extreme conditions in tropical environments and under heavy workloads. In particular, it highlighted the impact of good hydration, medical monitoring and adequate recovery programs on the ability of firefighters to quickly return to active duty with a reduced likelihood of physical or mental impairment.

GUEST BLOG DAMIEN KILLALEA, DIRECTOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE

The 3rd Human Dimensions in Wildland Fire Conference was held in Seattle on 17-19 April 2012.

Given that a great deal of related research is being conducted in Australia by the Bushfire CRC, our Dr Noreen Krusel was on the conference steering committee. In all, there were 17 presentations from Bushfire CRC researchers and end-users.

These focussed on policy developments in Australia and the findings from social research projects at RMIT, Melbourne and Latrobe universities, ANU and the University of WA.

It seems that there is strong support for a 'stay and defend if well prepared' approach for those faced with a manageable bushfire threat.