

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2012

CONFERENCE SHINES IN PERTH

In a week of highlights, the Research Forum, Student Showcase and research utilisation award were proud moments for the Bushfire CRC at our joint annual conference with AFAC in Perth in late August.

Around 1300 delegates attended over the conference week, with 141 trade expo displays. Featuring 37 presentations that covered the full range of fire and natural hazards, the Research Forum opened the conference week, and provided a great opportunity for the research community and emergency management personnel to engage in focused discussions. Bushfire CRC PhD student based at the Bureau of Meteorology, Mika Peace, was voted best presenter by attendees.

The Bushfire CRC introduced a new award, the Excellence in Utilisation of Bushfire CRC Research award, which acknowledges agencies demonstrating effective uptake of Bushfire CRC research into their business. The inaugural award was won by the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service for its utilisation of Bushfire CRC expertise in working toward changing workplace culture to become a high reliability organisation. The Bushfire CRC was also pleased to commend the efforts in research utilisation at the Western Australian Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. The International Association of Wildland Fire presented a scholarship to Bushfire CRC



Gary Morgan presents the research utilisation award to the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service's Adrian Pyrke.



Bushfire CRC student Rachel Carter receives an IAWF scholarship from IAWF board member Ron Steffens.

student Rachel Carter (La Trobe University) for her research into insurance and fire.

On the last day, Bushfire CRC PhD students were given the opportunity to feature their projects during the Student Showcase. Held in a more relaxed 'interview-style' environment, the showcase gave 16 students the chance to discuss what their research had uncovered to date, and what the next steps would be.

All the Research Forum presentations and posters are now online www.bushfirecrc.com/research/event/2012-annual_conf

BOOST FOR FIRE RESEARCH

Bushfire research in Victoria has been enhanced with a series of new projects investigating fire behaviour, fire weather, smoke emissions and fire ecology to be undertaken by the Bushfire CRC.

The \$6.45 million package of projects is funded by the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, with the Bushfire CRC engaging research partners from across Australia and New Zealand over the next three to four years.

Bushfire CRC CEO Gary Morgan said the new projects complemented the current national research program.

"This targeted contract research work, while clearly aimed at Victoria's requirements, will be an additional benefit for our partners, the

fire and emergency service agencies across Australia."

The contracted projects under this new agreement cover the following broad areas: bushfire climatology, severe fire behaviour characterisation, Black Saturday and other large fires, landscape moisture modelling, fire severity rating, fire transitions across urban boundaries, probability of fire ignition and escalation, smoke impacts on community health and social perceptions, smoke transportation and emissions modelling, managing scale and uncertainty in fire management planning and growth stage and habitat analysis.

As each project develops, information will be at www.bushfirecrc.com/research/contract

CEO'S BLOG

GARY MORGAN



The breadth of topics at our three day annual conference in Perth at the end of last month was quite astounding, even more so considering none were repeats of last year's conference, and in Melbourne next year, a whole new set of issues will be presented.

Despite the amount of activity currently underway, it is still appropriate to stop and think about areas that are not being fully discovered by our scientific research efforts.

The Bushfire CRC was funded to examine the main issues arising from the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria. Many of these issues are relevant across Australia and New Zealand, but there are many other important questions that need to be addressed.

The Bushfire CRC is well advanced in its planning to move towards a national research institute for fire and other natural hazards. This new research program will expand on current projects and branch into new fields including: engineering and aviation, legal and policy matters, economics, communications and media, incident management, global change impacts, carbon impacts, northern savannah fire, indigenous burning, occupational and fatigue management, human physiology, epidemiology, history and cultural studies, data management, and public health.

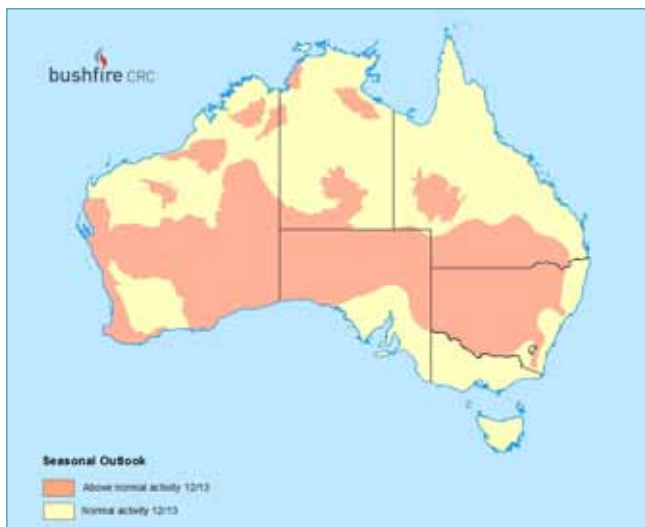
The research outputs will have relevance for a range of sectors beyond the traditional target audience of fire and land management agencies.

We are only scratching the surface with our current research program but the long term vision is far broader than that.

BUSHFIRE OUTLOOK FOR SUMMER

Large areas of southern Australia, from the east coast to the west coast, face above average fire potential for the 2012-13 fire season, despite the extensive fires in some parts of the country over the last 12 months. The above average forecast is due to the abundant grass growth from the high amount of rain from two strong La Niña events seen in the past two years across the eastern seaboard and South Australia.

More details on the fire season for southern Australia are in the Bushfire CRC's *Southern Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook Fire Note*, covering Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, South Australia, southern Western Australia and southern Queensland.



The Outlook provides information to assist fire authorities in making strategic decisions such as resource planning and prescribed fire management, and to reduce the negative impacts of bushfire.

STUDENT BLOG **LYNDSEY WRIGHT**



The Student Showcase was one of my favourite aspects of this year's conference, and was well

received by both those who presented and attended. For me, I really relished hearing from each student where their project is heading, and what they had uncovered so far. The interview style format, coupled with

the relaxed lounge room setting (the bean bags were a big hit) was just that little bit different.

I would like to thank all the students who presented, as well as those that attended – students, researchers and end users, and guest host David Lawrence. The interaction between the students and the industry is a key part of the learning and knowledge sharing culture of the conference.

I look forward to next year's Student Showcase – see you there.

RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG **NOREEN KRUSEL**



At this year's conference the Bushfire CRC introduced a new award for Excellence in Utilisation of Bushfire CRC Research, acknowledging agencies demonstrating effective uptake of Bushfire CRC research into their business. Congratulations to the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service for

taking out the inaugural award.

Another highlight of the conference for me was the professional development session on how to run successful events. This session highlighted to all in attendance the importance of interactive and engaging events as tools to support the sharing of information and creation of knowledge, as well as utilisation of Bushfire CRC research. One participant noted "this was an absolute highlight of the conference and an excellent use of my time".

Coming up on 25-26 October is the 12th International Wildland Fire Safety Summit in Sydney. I encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity and attend. For more information, go to www.iawfonline.org/Sydney2012/index.php

RESEARCH BLOG

RICHARD THORNTON



Wow, what a week! The Bushfire CRC and AFAC conference was one of the best ever.

There were so many highlights. It was great to see so many of our researchers engaged and enjoying themselves.

The posters were all great this year; as one of the judging panel members it was so hard to determine the winner. But in the end, well done to our PhD student David Barton, who won the judges' award. This year we also had a people's choice award for the best presentation at the Research Forum, won by our Mika Peace, a very well received presentation on a great topic.

The Research Forum was a real buzz this year – what a difference having it at the start of the conference makes. All the presentations were of very a high standard and all the feedback I got was that it was a great day. For all those of you who missed it I would strongly encourage you to get there next year.

And finally, the Student Showcase, which was held during the PDP day, was a real highlight. I wish I was as confident and articulate as these PhD students when I went through my studies. Well done to all those who took part.

Now it is back to the normal business! If you have any thoughts, observations or suggestions for next year's conference in Melbourne, please drop me a line.

COMMUNICATIONS BLOG **DAVID BRUCE**



Not only is our annual conference a forum for discussion and debate amongst ourselves, it also provides a great platform to promote the research of the Bushfire CRC out into the wider community.

In Perth at the end of last month, our annual conference attracted around 1300 delegates. Media interest in the conference is always extremely high and this year was no exception with our researchers and agency partners run off their feet with demands for interviews from various print, online, radio and television journalists around the country. Many links to these articles are on the Bushfire CRC website.

In addition, the Bushfire CRC website and the AFAC Knowledge Web both serve as a post-conference comprehensive resource of presentations, formal papers, abstracts, posters and photographs.

Media coverage and online resources are excellent ways for the research to reach a broad audience across Australia and internationally.