



# FIRE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

RELIABLE INFORMATION. USABLE KNOWLEDGE. BETTER DECISIONS

## PROGRAM F: COMMUNITY OUTREACH (INCLUDING FIRE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK)

The Bushfire CRC's Community Outreach (Program F) is funded by the Commonwealth Government through the CRC program administered by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). The Program aims to promote, educate and communicate, to fire and land management agencies and the community, information about bushfire knowledge and current research both in Australia and internationally. It is doing this primarily through the development of a Fire Knowledge Network, including conducting regional and local CRC networking activities across Australia in conjunction with CRC partners.

The initiatives emanating from Program F complement activities under the Bushfire CRC's Program E: Education and Training. Program E has a strong focus on developing the next generation of qualified bushfire researchers, and facilitating the adoption of new CRC research by fire agencies so as to maximize the benefits of research outputs from Bushfire CRC's four research programs (A-D).



The Education and Training Program emphasises vigorous, proactive, targeted efforts to encourage adoption by CRC end user partner agencies of the specific results from new research, and Program F emphasises improved access to, and communication of, bushfire science more generally. Both programs are key features of the Bushfire CRC communication strategy.

### FIRE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

The Bushfire CRC's Fire Knowledge Network aims to assist those people who have an interest in, or responsibility for, improved fire and land management practices and community self reliance, through access to information on bushfire science, lessons from the past, major fire events, and a range of network activities.

With its target audience of fire and land management agencies that have the major responsibility for community education, the focus of the Network is on existing bushfire knowledge with 'other' fire research where that overlaps with bushfire. In the longer term the Network could grow beyond this to encompass broader fire and emergency services issues.

Feedback from CRC partners identified that the fire industry values and relies on formal and informal networks of colleagues and various reliable websites as its main source for information. To support this the Network will contain a variety of channels that demonstrate the 'people connection' as well as utilising the latest technologies as its key delivery mechanism.

As a developing focal point for fire knowledge in Australia, New Zealand and globally, the Network is bringing together leading national and international research. Its strength is its ability to strongly link research and knowledge to practice to create an inclusive community for the exchange of

information and experience. Its highest value to the fire industry will be in the way it synthesises fire information and provides tailored knowledge to decision and policy makers, practitioners, researchers, the media and general public.

### *Connecting people*

The ultimate success of the Network will be its wide acceptance by its users as a key factor in their ability to connect and share their fire science knowledge. Agencies are keen to exchange knowledge with other agencies, organisations and researchers. The Network strengthens this by linking people with like interests. It will provide a collaborative structure to facilitate the creation and transfer of bushfire knowledge. It will connect people through online collaboration and document sharing, moderated forums, face-to-face meetings, workshops and seminars.

### *The web*

The Network will provide easy access to an extensive knowledge base of information resources about bushfire science. It will do this by providing the structure, systems and processes to capture, store, access and disseminate bushfire related research to assist in the development of evidence-based policies and procedures. Using the latest technologies the Network will enable its users to keep up-to-date with bushfire related research. The Network will build on Bushfire CRC collaborations to synthesise information and produce issues based summaries that will be presented in a way that is useful and makes sense to the user.

### *Learning from experience*

The Network will facilitate opportunities to learn from past experiences in fire events to assist fire fighters and fire managers to identify similar situations and issues and respond appropriately.

Learning through the experience of others is a particularly valuable form of knowledge transfer. The Network will capture important lessons from inquiries, reviews, government investigations, case studies, fire histories and other reports and present the knowledge in a way that clearly articulates their potential application to fire agencies.

The Bushfire CRC envisages that the initial development work on the Network will provide the foundation for a lasting legacy of knowledge sharing of benefit to the fire and land management industry, researchers and the broader community.

### *Community Forums*

As part of the knowledge networking, the Bushfire CRC has a responsibility to engage and inform the public about its research.

The Bushfire CRC encourages communication through two-way flow of information of bushfire knowledge. This is achieved through a range of community activities, usually in conjunction with fire industry partners, greater awareness of bushfire research and the means of accessing it. These target residents in regional areas (especially communities that have been affected by bushfires), fire and land management staff, volunteers, other agencies, local councils, businesses and the wider community.

More information about the Bushfire CRC and the Fire Knowledge Network can be found on the website or by contacting the Project Manager.

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