

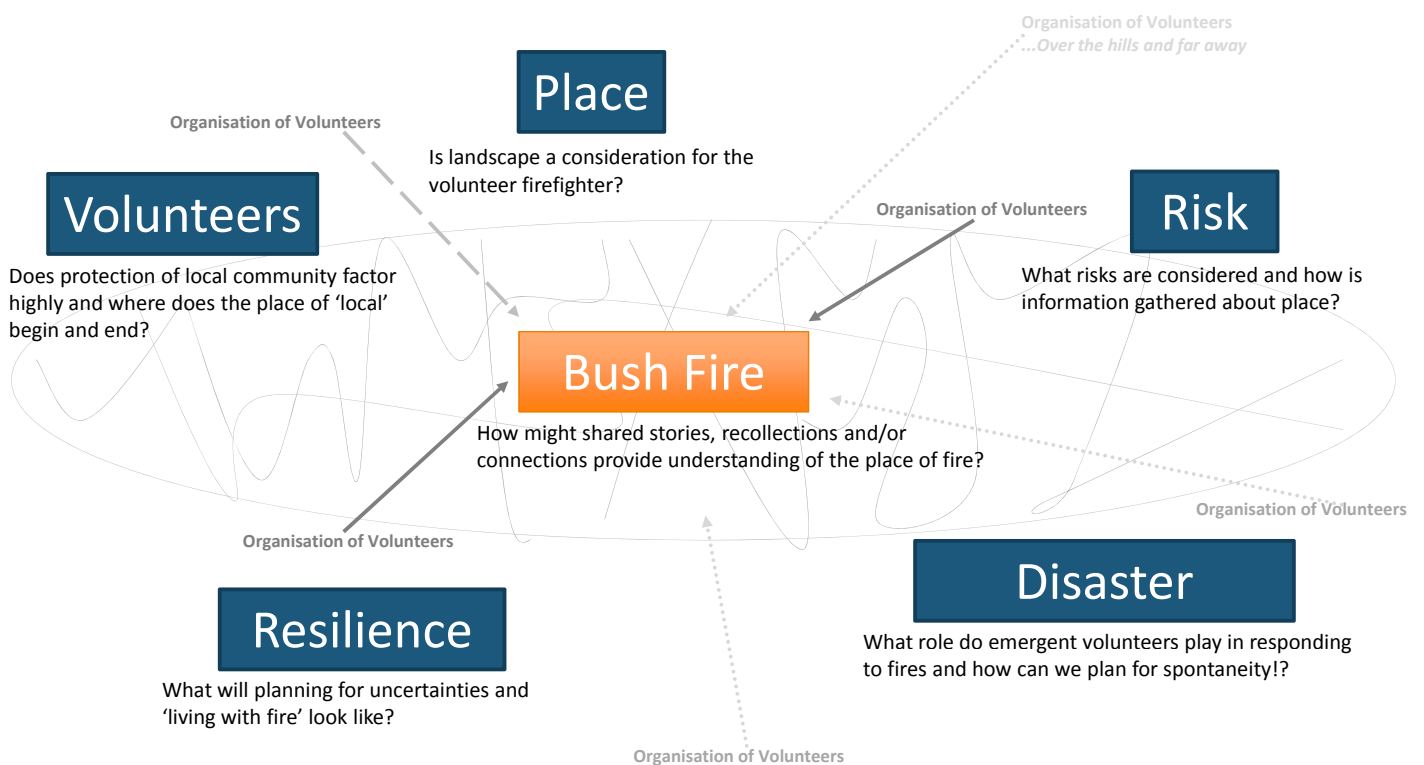


EVERYDAY PRACTICES: VOLUNTEER ORGANISATIONS AND COMMUNITIES ENGAGED IN THE PLACE OF BUSHFIRE

Tarnya Kruger¹, Dr Ruth Beilin¹, and Dr Rod Keenan¹

¹Melbourne School of Land & Environment, University of Melbourne, Victoria

During fire events there are multiple groups of volunteers: those who are part of the local place with all their varied experiences and readings of the landscape, those who are part of deployed emergency response teams, and those who are trained firefighters from ‘somewhere else’ sent into the area to assist, some encountering a very different landscape from their own.



Historically, 19th century Australian fire brigades were established at the local level. In the late 20thC and now early 21stC, volunteers are being asked to respond to larger fires further afield ‘surge capacity’, and with forecast impacts of climate change, the scale and intensity of fires in Australia is likely to increase.

This research will investigate the interaction between volunteers and the landscape. The approach will be based on qualitative inquiry including focus groups, in-depth interviews and narratives, with selected fire management organisations and community volunteers in contrasting localities in south-east Australia.

Key question: Is the command and control response most appropriate or are there better ways for longer-term adaptation to the fire-prone landscape?