

Understanding Communities Living with Bushfire: The Thuringowa Bushfire Case Study

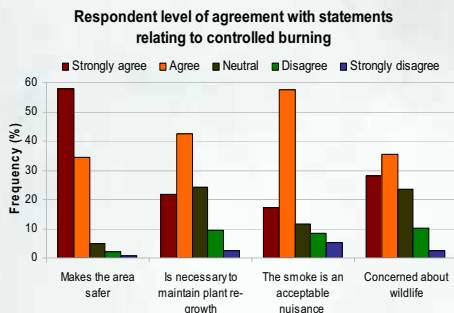
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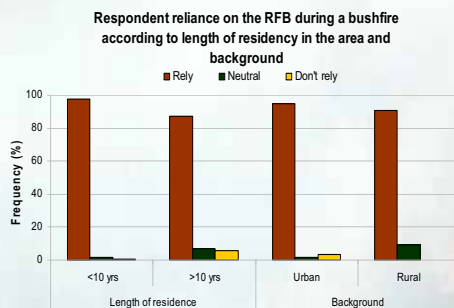
The Thuringowa Bushfire Case Study is one of the first in a series of community case studies to be undertaken in bushfire-prone areas around Australia; the studies will provide fundamental information in the development of a framework for fire service providers to better understand fire issues in their community.

Issues Identified by the Rural Fire Brigade (RFB)

The RFB indicated a lack of understanding and community support for controlled burning.



“City people” in particular were considered an at-risk group by the RFB.



The RFB were concerned about people dumping rubbish over their back fence and therefore increasing the risk of bushfire.

Survey Results

There were some misconceptions about controlled burning, and also some conflict relating to whether respondents were notified or not. Overall respondents were supportive and many indicated that controlled burning was a prompt to prepare their homes for bushfire.

While there were few differences between people living on suburban or rural blocks, there were important differences between newcomers and long-term residents and those with an urban or rural background. For example, newcomers and respondents with an urban background were more likely to rely on their local fire brigade during a bushfire.

Some respondents were dissatisfied with council waste disposal services; increased costs and reduced accessibility may prevent people from using these facilities.

Implications

Disseminate information to the community about controlled burning that:

1. notifies residents of controlled burns in their locality;
2. provides educational material about bushfire; and
3. acts as a prompt for all residents to prepare their homes for bushfire.

Develop and test strategies to increase the resiliency of at-risk groups, particularly newcomers.



Improve RFB, council and community liaisons and therefore address such issues as waste disposal.

The Thuringowa survey clearly defined fire issues in the Thuringowa community. In understanding such issues fire service providers can more efficiently and effectively direct their resources to ultimately increase community resiliency to the bushfire risk.



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