



Centre for Risk and Community Safety, School of Mathematical and Geospatial Sciences

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# **Visions of Sharing Responsibility for Disaster Resilience**

## **Account of a multi-stakeholder workshop**

29<sup>th</sup> March 2012

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This workshop was conducted in connection with the 'Sharing Responsibility' project. The project is a component of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre's research program and is being undertaken by researchers at RMIT University's Centre for Risk and Community Safety. It aims to support stakeholders of Australian fire and emergency management (FEM) to make decisions about sharing responsibility for community safety and disaster resilience. As the issue of sharing responsibility is a complex and multifaceted one that is prone to being framed in multiple ways, the project focuses on unpacking the meaning and the challenges of sharing responsibility and their significance for Australian FEM.

More information on the project and the issues raised in the workshop are available from the following sources:

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'Sharing responsibility for disaster resilience'  
blog

<http://sharingresponsibility.wordpress.com/>

'Sharing responsibility' project web page

Go to the Bushfire CRC website  
([www.bushfirecrc.com](http://www.bushfirecrc.com)) and follow these links:  
Our Research > Understanding Risk >  
Community Expectations > Shared  
Responsibility

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**Workshop attendees listen to a speaker reflect on key issues for moving forward with sharing responsibility for disaster resilience.**  
(Source: Nathan Maddock, Bushfire CRC)

# 1 Introduction

This one-day workshop examined the idea and practice of sharing responsibility for disaster resilience. The idea of ‘shared responsibility’ is shaping emergency management thinking in Australia. It has gained significant policy traction following the Victorian 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission and the release of the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience. Similar ideas have been circulating in other sectors for some time. Yet it is not clear what the idea really means or what its implications are for policy and practice.

The workshop, held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012, aimed to address two general questions:

- First, the idea: what does the idea of ‘shared responsibility’ mean, and what are its implications?
- Second, the practice: is it a useful policy concept, and if yes what needs to be done to implement it, and what could undermine it?

The workshop was hosted by RMIT’s Centre for Risk and Community Safety (CRaCS) in the School of Mathematical and Geospatial Sciences. It was organised on behalf of the Bushfire CRC and the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility’s (NCCARF) Emergency Management Network. Carbon credits were purchased to offset the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the event.

This public account of the workshop has been prepared so that others who were unable to attend the workshop can also see the range of issues and perspectives that were voiced at the workshop.

## 1.1 Workshop outline

Time	Session
9.00-9.10am	Welcome
9.10-9.30am	Expectations and perspectives
9.30-10.30am	Perspectives from current research
10.30-11.00am	<i>Morning tea</i>
11.00-12.30pm	Panel 1 - Community/local perspectives
12.30-1.30pm	<i>Lunch</i>
1.30-3.00pm	Panel 2 - Government perspectives
3.00-3.30pm	Afternoon tea
3.30-5.00pm	Open discussion and final Panel - <i>reflecting on shared responsibility</i>
5.00-6.30pm	Drinks
7.00pm - Late	Dinner

## 1.2 Attendance

The workshop was attended by over 80 people that are involved in some way – professionally, voluntarily or personally – in managing disaster risk, preparation, response and/or recovery. A decision was made to host the workshop as a free event so that cost was not a barrier to people being able to attend.

Many of the attendees wore a number of different ‘hats’, e.g. researcher and community member, volunteer and government official etc.

- Almost half of the attendees were affiliated with universities or other research institutions in Australia, including 7 postgraduate students
- 4 people were affiliated with universities outside Australia
- Over a quarter were affiliated with a state or territory fire and emergency service agency or land management agency – including agencies from Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland, and the Northern Territory
- Approximately five people were affiliated with other State government agencies from Victoria (e.g. Department of Transport, Department of Human Services)
- Approximately 10 people were affiliated with local governments or local government organisations
- About 10 people were members of community groups or centres, or were members of communities that have been affected by bushfire or flood
- About 6 people were affiliated with volunteer and other non-government organisations
- Three people were affiliated with Federal government agencies or departments (Attorney-General’s Department, Bureau of Meteorology)
- One person was affiliated with the media (ABC)

A complete list of the agencies, organisations, groups and communities to which attendees were affiliated is provided at the end of this document.

### 1.3 Schedule of speakers

Twenty-seven people participated in the workshop as speakers.

#### Welcome

- John Handmer (Director - Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University)
- Daine Alcorn (DVC Research & Innovation & Vice-President, RMIT University)
- Richard Thornton (Deputy CEO & Research Director, Bushfire CRC)

#### Expectations and perspectives

*Chair: John Handmer, Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University*

- Richard Thornton (Deputy CEO & Research Director, Bushfire CRC)
- Craig Lapsley (Fire Services Commissioner, Victoria)
- Anne Leadbeater (Kinglake community & Murrindindi Shire Council)

#### Perspectives from current research

*Chair: Mick Ayre, Assistant Director - Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service*

- Blythe McLennan (Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University)
- Michael Eburn (Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU)
- Barbara Norman (Urban and Regional Planning, University of Canberra)
- Leo Dobes (Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU)

#### Panel – Community/local perspectives

*Chair: Ian Mannix, Manager of Emergency Broadcasting and Community Development, Australian Broadcasting Corporation*

- Julie Molloy (Director of Social Engagement Initiatives, Volunteering Queensland)
- Vanessa Fabre (Manager - Inclusive Communities, Brisbane City Council)
- Sam Johnson (Founder of the Student Volunteer Army, Christchurch)
- Kate Lawrence (Macedon community & National Rural Women's Coalition)
- John Richardson (National Coordinator of Strategic Development - Emergency Services, Australian Red Cross)
- Briony Towers (Research Fellow, Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University)
- Malcolm and Jane Calder (Steels Creek community)

#### Panel – Government perspectives

*Chair: Blythe McLennan, Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University*

- Chris Collett (Assistant Secretary of the Emergency Management Policy Branch, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department)
- Mark Duckworth (Executive Director of Citizenship and Resilience, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria)

- Terry Hayes (Executive Manager Community Capability, Country Fire Authority, Victoria)
- Jeanette Pope (Manager of Strategic Research and Coordination, Department of Planning and Community Development, Victoria)
- Steve Oppen (Director of Community Safety, NSW SES)
- Russell Rees (Risk Advisor, Municipal Association of Victoria)

**Panel – Key issues for the future**

*Chair: John Handmer, Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University*

- Noreen Krusel (Research Utilisation Manager, Bushfire CRC)
- John Schauble (Manager Policy & Planning, Office of the Fire Services Commissioner)
- Chris Collett (Assistant Secretary of the Emergency Management Policy Branch, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department)
- Kate Lawrence (Macedon community & National Rural Women's Coalition and Network)
- Anne Leadbeater (Kingslake community & Murrumbidgee Shire Council)
- Barbara Norman (Head of Discipline - Urban and Regional Planning, University of Canberra)
- Peter Stanley (Head - Centre for Historical Research, National Museum of Australia)



## 2 Workshop summary

All the speakers in the workshop were asked to respond in any way they chose to one or both of the key questions:

1. What does the idea of ‘shared responsibility’ mean, and what are its implications?
2. Is it a useful policy concept, and if yes what needs to be done to implement it, and what could undermine it?

Each speaker was given 5-10 minutes to present their views. The workshop also prioritised time for group discussion with time allocated for discussion at the end of most sessions. In addition, there was 45 minutes for open discussion in the final session.

The summary of the workshop below highlights some of the key themes emphasised by speakers during the day. It was a difficult task to pick just a few key points out of the many important issues raised. More detailed ‘raw’ notes of these sessions are also included in the following section.

Only the people listed in the schedule of speakers are referred to individually by name below as they had agreed to speak publicly. All the speakers were invited to review and suggest changes to the notes included in this account to ensure that the notes reflect what each person said and meant as closely as possible.

### Expectations and perspectives

The first session of the day set the scene and got us thinking about the idea of sharing responsibility with perspectives from three people who are involved in disaster management in different ways: Richard Thornton is the Deputy CEO and Research Director at the Bushfire CRC, Craig Lapsley is the Victorian Fire Services Commissioner, and Anne Leadbeater is a member of the Kinglake community, which was one of the communities tragically impacted by the bushfires in Victoria in 2009. The session was chaired by John Handmer from the Centre for Risk and Community Safety at RMIT University.

Key themes in this session were:

- **An “all-hazards” focus** – Both Craig and Richard emphasised the importance of shared learning across different hazards and the need to move away from a fire-dominated discourse.
- **Shared values and meaning** – Richard Thornton asked us to think about and understand the historical legacy of the shared responsibility idea, and to work through what it means now that it has been linked to the concept of disaster resilience. He argued that it is about developing shared values, and that we need to consider how to start conversations about these. Issues of equity need to come into this conversation, which is about the sharing of outcomes – costs and benefits.
- **Need and opportunity for change** – Referring to the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, Craig in particular stressed that “we can’t do more of the same” and that “the community expects change” from agencies. He argued for more agile structures and processes that can respond to change. Craig and Anne both referred to the opportunity that exists to create such change. Craig spoke of the current “authorising environment” for change, while Anne argued that change is achievable because communities are inherently resilient.

- **Less (state) government control, more trust in local communities** – Anne argued that communities are engaged where they feel they can affect change. Hence a key to sharing responsibility lies in the freeing up of control, and in governments and agencies trusting in communities. Shared responsibility begins with an acceptance of risk. Similarly, Craig spoke of the need for state and territory fire agencies to support local empowerment and local government. Anne emphasised that sharing responsibility requires locally-designed and owned solutions. It needs local knowledge and respect for this knowledge by others. Richard emphasised the need for collaboration to set new agendas.
- **Mainstreaming** – Craig and Richard emphasised that disaster resilience is affected by government decisions made outside of the field of emergency management. Richard identified land use planning as one area where changes particularly needed to be made. Craig acknowledged that we are really talking about public safety, which is a broadly shared concern across many sectors of government. He suggested that we need to develop a peer group across government, and make emergency management a core part of all government agency business.
- **Honest communication and understanding of existing capacity**– Anne called for honest, accurate language, arguing that current communication from agencies is not resonating with people. This includes being honest about limits, acknowledging that people may be on their own for a time when disaster strikes and that people need to prepare for that. It also means understanding and respecting community points of view and community capacity. Craig acknowledged that agencies won't be able to reach or communicate with everyone, and hence will need to tap into existing community networks.

### Perspectives from current research

In this session researchers from different backgrounds commented on the idea of shared responsibility in the light of their research across social, policy, legal, economic and planning spheres. The session was chaired by Mick Ayre of the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service, who is the lead end user for a program of relevant research in the Bushfire CRC on 'mainstreaming fire and emergency management across policy sectors'. The first three presenters in this session work on three related themes within this program: Blythe McLennan (RMIT University) on the construct of 'sharing responsibility', Michael Eburn (ANU) on legal and policy aspects of mainstreaming, and Barbara Norman (Uni of Canberra) on planning dimensions. The final presentation by Leo Dobes (ANU) provided an economics-based perspective on people's willingness to pay for disaster management.

A core theme across these presentations was that the meaning of shared responsibility for disaster management is closely tied up with how we understand what we are trying to achieve with disaster management and how we are trying to achieve it. Working though what shared responsibility means requires that we revisit these questions.

- **Clarifying objectives** - Michael found that Chief Officers of fire and emergency service agencies did not have a clear, shared view of what the idea of shared responsibility means. He argued that in order to unpack it we need to ask: what are the objectives for disaster management and the means of knowing when we've achieved them? He argued that we need to work out what it is we are sharing and with whom and, further, that we need to identify the objectives of disaster management, pointing out that a resilient community is not one to which nothing bad ever happens, and raised the question: are we already resilient? Leo argued that we need to understand what people actually want when it comes to disaster management to avoid misallocating resources for a negative cost-benefit outcome. His research revealed that what people want may not be what we expect. He also found that people's expectations fell into two classes (those who believed individuals should be responsible for themselves and those who were more expecting of assistance). Differences in socioeconomic data could not fully explain this difference.

- **Coordinating and crossing boundaries** - By contrast, Blythe argued that the idea of sharing responsibility is less about determining what the end goals should be and more about developing relationships for greater coordination and collaboration so that we can collectively work out these end goals as well as develop more coordinated ways to achieve them. She held that it means moving towards a greater degree of coordinated, collective action and developing relationships that cross some of the traditional boundaries in emergency management and Australian society.
- **Balancing individual rights and public interest** - Barbara argued that shared responsibility is about finding ways to balance individual rights and the public interest/public safety. This plays out particularly strongly in the area of land use planning. Land use planning is widely recognised as a core element that we need to wrestle with, and yet our planning systems have not been changed substantially - yet.
- **A challenge to the status quo** – A final theme in this session was that the idea of shared responsibility presents a challenge to current disaster management thinking, structures and processes. Blythe argued that the idea will only be a useful policy concept if it is applied where it is most difficult: where it challenges the status quo. Barbara claimed that it means changing our planning system to be much more adaptive and risk-based, and to involve communities more directly.

### Panel – Community/local perspectives

This panel brought together people involved in different aspects of community-based disaster management. Julie Molloy from Volunteering Queensland described how her organisation supports and enables community disaster resilience through tailored, community-based programs. Vanessa Fabre from Brisbane City Council described her experience of coordinating the huge volunteer response to the Brisbane floods. Sam Johnson explained how the Student Volunteer Army in Christchurch used social media to coordinate thousands of young volunteers to assist in post-earthquake clean up. Kate Lawrence spoke from a background in community-based disaster preparedness about sharing power and the need for mutual respect in community-government partnerships. John Richardson from the Australian Red Cross spoke about emergency management that is local and personal in scale. Briony Towers from RMIT University spoke about learning from her research on children's understanding of disaster and risk. Malcolm and Jane Calder described the social basis of healing and recovery in their community of Steels Creek following the bushfires in Victoria in 2009. The session was chaired by Ian Mannix, who is the Manager of ABC Emergency Broadcasting and Community Development.

Some of the threads that ran through this session are given below.

- **We already share responsibility when disaster strikes** – The speakers in this session in various ways countered the idea that communities do not already share responsibility for disaster resilience with governments. Vanessa Fabre emphasised that it was impossible not to share responsibility following the Brisbane floods due to their scale and size. Sam's account of setting up the Student Volunteer Army highlighted that it is not only trained 'experts' who respond to disasters but that everyone who is affected directly and indirectly responds in some way. In Christchurch, the SVA provided an outlet for young people to engage with and in the response: this outlet was not available elsewhere. Briony made the point that, while some suggest children shouldn't be present when bushfire threatens a home, people will get caught out and so it is better for children to be included in discussions about coping before it happens. Yet children are largely excluded: they were not considered in the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. Kate emphasised that when disaster hits "the baton of responsibility" is passed to communities, which are told to be engaged, self-reliant and responsible. Along a different line, John described how there seems to be a greater sense of shared responsibility across society when the event is larger in scale but not as

much when it is smaller. In smaller-scale but still personally disastrous events, people who are directly affected can be left largely on their own.

- **Communities are inherently resilient: shared responsibility is therefore about empowering and enabling communities** - This was a strong theme across the session: Julie emphasised that people are survivors and not victims. For her the starting premise is that communities are inherently resilient and that the goal for agencies and NGOs is to enable and support this resilience. Sam described how community groups are more adaptive and less tied to formal processes and red tape than government agencies. Briony spoke of the agency that children can have if they are included in debates around disaster preparedness. However, Kate also argued that community resilience is being undermined by systemic and institutional factors that breed an expectation amongst people that someone else has control. This means they are not well-prepared for taking up the baton and dealing with disasters when they occur. To move past this we need to empower communities to participate and build ownership of the problem. John spoke during the discussion about the significant skills that already exist for community-led recovery. He suggested that we need to ask who is already a leader in the community: these people may not always be in high profile positions. Malcolm and Jane told stories that revealed their community's resilience following the devastation of the Black Saturday fires. Jane emphasised that resilience comes from self-reliance and that it is inherently social. She and Malcolm described the many and varied ways that community members came together to support each other. Malcolm emphasised that shared responsibility should be about empowering the community.
- **Overcoming tensions between formal and community-based approaches** – A number of speakers spoke of tensions between formal and community-based disaster preparation, response and recovery, and the need to overcome them. Julie described how Volunteering Queensland provides a conduit between communities and government, for example through its volunteer referral service (CREW). Vanessa spoke of the dilemma of working out when and how community can participate in disaster management when response and recovery is geared around a command and control model. She said that the experience in Brisbane showed that while there were risks and problems, the benefits of coordinating with community volunteers in the flood response far outweighed the costs. Sam described how no outlets existed for him or other young people to be involved in responding to the earthquakes. While the council was initially very wary of the Student Volunteer Army, they have since come to work more closely and cooperatively with them. Kate described how governments seek answers in the prolific research that is conducted on disasters and emergencies because it is easier to look there, but that the real answers lie in working directly with communities, which is more difficult to do. John spoke of a simplistic disaster narrative and the need to shift away from a focus on loss and disruption. For him, sharing responsibility requires trust and he directly linked the idea to overcoming tensions between community and government. Malcolm gave an example of government processes hindering a community-initiated development project. During discussion he acknowledged the difficulty for governments of engaging with communities that do not have hierarchical structures.
- **Building community-government partnerships** – The idea of 'partnership' as the appropriate way to formulate community-government relationships was a strong theme in this session. In particular, Kate argued that shared responsibility is about shared power, mutual respect, trust and partnership. It requires a leap of faith. We need good communication, creative participation, and to create avenues for activism and agitation. She argued that noisy, active and outspoken disaster activists are a KPI of community resilience and shared responsibility. Malcolm also directly linked the idea of shared responsibility to that of partnership.

## Panel – Government perspectives

In the second panel it was time for people with roles in government agencies to present perspectives on sharing responsibility for disaster resilience. Chris Collett from the Attorney-General's Department and Mark Duckworth from the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet talked about the ideas behind the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSDR) and the challenges for bringing about change. Terry Hayes from the Victorian Country Fire Authority described some of the changes in thinking and approach that have started happening in the CFA. Janet Pope from the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development talked about government's role in supporting community networks that underpin resilience. Steve Oppen from the NSW State Emergency Service spoke of the types of changes that are needed (but are not yet happening) in emergency management if the idea of shared responsibility is to be more than just empty words. Russell Rees is Risk Advisor for the Municipal Association of Victoria, and he talked about the significance of the core ideas of resilience and responsibility, and challenges they pose in practice.

- NSDR is a real stimulant for change in governments** – Chris, Mark and Russell all emphasized that the linked ideas of disaster resilience and shared responsibility are very important ideas in government. For Russell resilience is not just a buzz word but is the centre of emergency management. He argued that the idea is important because our systems, processes and communities have lost resilience compared to the past. The ideas of resilience and shared responsibility also present significant challenges to the way that governments currently work. Mark argued that the challenge of the NSDR is to change the paradigm in which governments work: It is not enough to continue with more of the same approaches. He stated that we don't have all the answers but the issues faced are now being discussed directly in governments. Terry Hayes described examples of new initiatives that are opportunities for bringing about change in emergency management practice. He stressed that the CFA is committed to change despite the challenges. However, Steve questioned whether the idea is empty in practice: the words used without meaning. He used the issue of evacuation to highlight tensions between what is expected of emergency service agencies and what communities want to do. He asked some difficult questions about making choices and whether we are more concerned about inconveniencing people than about killing them. He implied more doubt that the ideas in the NSDR will lead to change, citing the small budgets for community engagement in emergency service agencies.
- Learning and adapting** – Mark emphasised that we can learn from what is already happening. People learn best from each other: from the example of successful groups. Chris argued that when larger groups of players come together a synergy develops and the results are bigger. In response to a question from the floor on learning, Mark stated that we need research on what works and what doesn't, and that communities learning from each other is better than governments producing a manual.
- Recognising and acknowledging challenges** – All of the speakers recognised challenges that need to be faced by governments to put ideas into practice. These include: The involvement of lots of players (Chris); The shorter timelines of political cycles compared to the much longer timelines of behavioural change (Chris and Mark); The need to work through many small projects and move beyond a one-size-fits-all model (Chris; Mark; Janet); How governments balance their responsibilities to be accountable with their responsibilities to support resilience-building and reduce red tape (Mark; Janet); Connecting with a large variety of communities without clear representatives that do not have hierarchies (Chris); Working out what it is that we are sharing and what we can expect from communities in emergency situations (Terry; Steve); Engaging better with

communities before events (Terry; Steve); Connecting with the faster, social, and unpredictable ways that communities act and respond (Janet); Getting the provisions of warnings and information to communities 'right' so people understand risks (Steve).

- **Government support, not control** – Chris acknowledged a tension in government about how to contribute to resilience-building without taking over. How do we encourage shared responsibility while ensuring government maintains appropriate roles? Mark emphasised that it is not about government telling people what to do but supporting what they already do. It is less about convincing people than it is about changing the way governments work. Terry talked about the need for authentic engagement before a bushfire happens. He stressed that fire brigades are well-placed to understand their communities and self-determine how best to address the challenges of sharing responsibility. The CFA is completely changing its approach to supporting communities from a top-down focus to one that focuses more on bottom-up approaches. Janet stated that government has a role in enhancing community resilience by supporting community networks, encouraging participation in local governance, and helping to overcome vulnerabilities. Government's role is more as an enabler than a provider. Steve argued that we need a leap of faith to move from a top-down to bottom-up distributed funding approach. Russell also suggested that the language we are using may not be right: that the idea of responsibility does not speak of partnership but of who "gets it" when things go wrong. Local government often ends up the meat in the sandwich between state/territory governments and communities. He argued that we need to move away from looking through the "play school" window of litigation, accountability, responsibility, and find different windows to look through. Russell also argued that one of the first pathways towards shared responsibility is to harden critical infrastructure. If we had more resilient, easily repaired infrastructure in place, we could then focus more heavily on social aspects.

### Open discussion and panel – reflecting on shared responsibility

Some of the key points raised in the **open discussion** were:

- We keep talking about "government" and "community", but these are overly abstract concepts.
- The risk appetites that governments and communities have are different.
- We often talk about resilience in recovery but not in preparedness – preparation is part of resilience
- Good things are happening in a lot of places with local government-community initiatives.
- There is a conflict between rhetoric/theory and what happens on the ground and between policy and action.
- Emergency service volunteers are a link through to community. A challenge is that volunteers join for the excitement of response and not for community engagement.
- It is difficult to turn an organisation around from top-down to bottom-up. It takes time and requires a genuine desire for change.
- Community engagement is a complex picture. Approaches by agencies are transitioning out of an education focus and away from a lack of genuine engagement skills. The majority of engagement has to happen outside of crises – this would build the trust needed for when the crises happen.

- Language can be alienating, e.g. “bushfire prone”: prone = happens regularly, which bushfires do not.
- Shared responsibility is about collaboration, about shared understanding. Need to focus on how we can bring about peer-to-peer relationships.
- To encourage shared responsibility we also need to share resources. There is an issue of how government would account for expenditure. Also who is ‘the community’ the funds would go to? There was discussion about what types of community institutions were best to manage resources.
- “Solutions to the problem” is an old mind set: This is an ongoing thing - enabling people to find their own way to deal with situations.
- Are we preparing to survive rather than preparing to recover?
- Do communities need legal protection if they have their own plan but it fails and people die? Chances of anyone successfully suing are very slim. The reality of the threat of litigation is not as big as we think it is.

Speakers in the **final panel** reflected on the views presented during the day and commented on key issues for moving into the future. The panellists were: Noreen Krusel (Bushfire CRC), John Schauble (Office of the Fire Services Commissioner), Chris Collett (Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department), Kate Lawrence (Macedon community & National Rural Women's Coalition and Network), Anne Leadbeater (Kingslake community & Murrindindi Shire Council), Barbara Norman (University of Canberra) and Peter Stanley (National Museum of Australia).

- **The idea of shared responsibility for disaster resilience:** While we all think of shared responsibility as a good idea, we don't really know what it means (Noreen). We need to think about the roles of government, collectives and individuals to help us tease out the idea further (Noreen). The idea resonates strongly (Chris). It is about shared understanding and knowledge/collaboration (Barbara)
- **Risk acceptance:** Emergencies are not problems that can be solved. They are not avoidable (John S). We measure them by counting so a good outcome becomes synonymous with a small number but this is deeply risk averse. Need to accept that some loss is inevitable (John S)
- **The practice of sharing responsibility:** How does it vary in time? How helpful is fixing and codifying it given dynamic environments (Noreen)? Examples of sharing responsibility in practice include brigades in small communities, the *gotong royong* concept of mutual aid in Indonesia (John S). A national level policy statement on cities and metropolitan plans in the context of climate change and disaster risk reduction is an example of positive action. So is Canberra Urban Rural Futures (CURF) (Barbara). We want it simple but it isn't (Anne).
- **Change within government:** We can't let government return to business as usual (John S). The National Strategy is an opportunity for change (Chris).
- **Community-government relationship:** Communities still define what government does: it's about process and enabling involvement (John S). We need to work on communication across communities, government, businesses etc. (Chris). Communities are diverse: who speaks for them? Who are the leaders? (John S; Peter). Can we shift to peer-to-peer

models that include government, universities, businesses and then move further beyond this? (Chris). We need more sophisticated processes. This workshop format perpetuates the division between government and community in the way it separates the issues (Kate). It isn't about behaviour change: it is about enabling. It's about democracy but not just ticking the boxes (Kate). We need to make money available but not make it too onerous to access (Kate). People have rights to make decisions (Anne); Qualities of mateship, trust, respect, support and participation are important (Peter).

- **Communication:** Governments can't lecture people (Kate): need to say "we won't always be there"/ you'll be on your own (Kate; Anne). Language matters: some messages don't resonate with lived experience (Anne). Language used in the workshop today was not always understandable: we need to use plain English (Peter)
- **Resilience in communities:** Communities are diverse: if they are strong before an event they will deal with it better (Peter). People often risk their lives to help others (Peter)
- **Research:** Do we need a different model for research: one that facilitates and motivates story-telling and peer-to-peer discussions? (Noreen). We need to get a handle on the cost of not planning (Barbara).
- **Culture:** How does shared responsibility fit into prevailing cultural norms and expectations; what narrative will we allow to be told about it? (John S). Taking care of ourselves is rooted in our culture, especially in rural Australia (Peter)
- **Mainstreaming:** The same people should not be having same conversations in a few years: more people and more sectors should be involved (Chris). We need to ensure future policy does not have counter resilience effect (Chris).
- **Measuring resilience:** How do we? Can we? E.g. work of Torrens Resilience Institute and University of Queensland (Chris).  
[Note: see <http://www.torrensresilience.org/measuring-resilience>]
- **Learning:** How do we learn lessons? (Chris) We can learn from Asia and developing countries (Kate) There are examples of shared responsibility in other places (John S). There are shared learning opportunities between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction about communicating the risks (Barbara).
- **Review of planning system:** It needs to be reviewed across regions, coasts, cities, Murray-Darling Basin (Barbara).
- **Policy-action gap:** Is widening and of real concern, e.g. growth boundaries (Barbara).





**Sam Johnson, founder of the Student Volunteer Army in Christchurch, joins in the open discussion. (Source: Nathan Maddock, Bushfire CRC)**

### 3 ‘Raw’ session notes

More detailed, ‘raw’ notes are provided below. The workshop summary given above is taken from these notes.

#### 3.1 Expectations and perspectives

**Richard Thornton**

*Deputy CEO & Research Director, Bushfire CRC*

- There are differences and similarities between hazards that we need to confront and learn about. Are similarities between government, NGO etc roles in managing different hazards.
- Need to work through the meaning of shared responsibility. It has a particular historical basis in Australia – we need to understand what that is.
- There are key legal, policy and practical issues to confront.
- Land use planning is central – stop inappropriate building, particularly where areas are already allocated to development.
- Is about shared values – requires conversations. How do we start that?
- Is also about sharing the outcomes – benefits and costs, equity considerations
- Many other policy decisions beyond emergency management that are related – e.g. in land use planning, health, infrastructure.
- The idea of shared responsibility has become linked to that of community resilience. But what is this? We haven’t really worked through this yet.
- Need to come out with a new agenda for where we want to head. We can’t do this without collaboration.

**Craig Lapsley**

*Fire Services Commissioner, Victoria*

- The Victorian 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission made it very clear that we need to ensure that change happens.
  - The community expects change. We can’t do more of the same.
  - This provides an authorising environment for change
- Our structures and processes need to be more agile.
- Fire tends to dominate the discourse, but we can learn a lot from other hazard areas – from flood.
- It is all about the same thing - public safety
- Fire agencies won’t be able to reach/communicate with everyone but they can tap into existing community networks. Need to support local empowerment and local government.
- We talk about interoperability between agencies, but we need interoperability with communities.
- Shared responsibility is about government and communities. It is about all government agencies having emergency management as part of its business. We need a peer group to be there.

## **Anne Leadbeater**

*Kinglake community & Murrindindi Shire Council*

- Today Anne has been asked to talk from a community perspective – is not wearing the local government hat.
- This idea is achievable. Communities are inherently resilient.
- Shared responsibility needs to be accompanied by a freeing up of control.
- Analogy of a newly licensed P-plate driver – at some point we have to let go and let them get out there on their own even though there are risks. It starts with risk acceptance.
- It is also about agencies and government trusting communities in order to give up control. Communities are engaged where they think they have influence and can affect change.
- We need honest, accurate language.
- Shared responsibility is undermined by top-down, command-and-control approaches. It needs locally-designed and owned solutions. Needs local knowledge and respect for local knowledge.
- Don't silo the events/hazards
- Need to think about the end game and work back.
- In New Zealand – have a strong message that you might be on your own for 72 hours, we can help you prepare for that.
- Understand the strength and capacity from a community point of view. Respect what they are capable of, and resilience in all its manifestations.
- Current messages being put out by agencies are not resonating with people.

## 3.2 Perspectives from current research

### Blythe McLennan

*Research Fellow, Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University*

- Shared responsibility entails recognition that coping better, increasing resilience can't be done through uncoordinated action or with a small number of players.
- It is about increasing the degree of coordination, greater collective action, and wider range of actors being legitimately involved.
- In particular, it means coordinating and building relationships that cross some of the traditional boundaries in emergency management and in Australian society more broadly: boundaries between agencies and communities, public and private sectors, professional and volunteer activities, local and global levels, policy sectors and levels of government.
- It could be a very useful policy concept, but not if it is only applied where it fits comfortably. It is most useful where it challenges the status quo, changes thinking.
- There isn't a single answer for how to do it – disaster management is diverse and multifaceted and it involves processes with many elements, and different groups of parties working together towards a range of end goals.
- There will be different end points. We need to focus less on what the end goal ought to be and more on the process for sharing responsibility – the relationships that can support it.

### Michael Eburn

*Senior Fellow, Fenner School of Environment and Society/ LAW, ANU*

- Asked Chief Officers of fire and emergency service agencies about their understanding of shared responsibility – what they think it means. Responses showed that as a group they don't really know. Most thought that in general it is a good idea and we are working towards it, but there were different ideas about what it means.
- If it is not to be a policy statement without meaning we need to ask "sharing responsibility for what and with whom?"
- Chief Officers' answers tended to focus on response phase.
- Some thought that it is meaningless because at the end of the day, it is ultimately their agency's responsibility – "we're the experts".
- Some thought it was clear: it's our responsibility to tell people what to do and their responsibility to do it.
- Legislation identified many responsibilities of governments and agencies, but not often of individuals.
- The idea of mutual obligation made them feel more comfortable.
- We need to ask: what are the objectives and means of knowing when we've achieved them? This is not clear. What are we sharing and with whom?
- A resilient community is not one to which nothing bad ever happens.
- Maybe we are already resilient?

## Barbara Norman

*Head of Discipline, Urban and Regional Planning, University of Canberra*

- We need to be planning for risk and uncertainty; planning to minimise risk.
- In theory there are firm boundaries in urban planning. It is a challenge to adopt those boundaries – e.g. urban growth boundaries.
- We need to think about individual property rights vs the public interest and safety. The balance between these is the space of shared – or collective – responsibility.
- What does this mean in practice? Reviewing land use planning to have a much more adaptive, risk-based approach.
- Land use planning as a response – is a strong theme in inquiries.
- The relationship between urban and “scrub” is not black and white.
- We haven't yet been able to get a land use planning system that involves communities.

## Leo Dobes

*Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU*

- Works in area of economics and climate change adaptation. A lot more needs to be done in the area of measuring benefits in a conceptually rigorous way, including Stated Preference techniques.
- Financial costs alone are not a rigorous basis for social policy formulation, despite the current fashion for measuring benefits as damage costs avoided. Willingness to pay provides a more encompassing measure of people's preferences.
- If we don't understand what people want, resources are likely to be misallocated. There may even be a negative cost-benefit outcome. E.g., in the case of Hurricane Katrina more resources were used against looting than for recovery.
- Conducted a study in Cairns, Queensland, using Choice Modelling to estimate what people are willing to pay for a range of emergency services after a cyclone. 80 per cent response rate because Lions Club distributed and collected paper-based survey forms.
- One of the more surprising findings was that people don't want to pay for accommodating pets; don't care about pets as much as we thought?
- They did want to pay for faster resupply of fresh food and even more for reconnection of utilities such as sewerage.
- Results showed that many people had no trust in government. But there seem to have been two classes of respondents in the survey - those who stocked up on food and other measures supplies, and believe that individuals should be responsible for themselves; and others who seemed to expect provision of more assistance. Socioeconomic data (including household income) collected as part of the survey has not been able to explain this difference entirely.

## Discussion/ questions

- These presentations haven't clarified what shared responsibility means.
- What are the different contributions that the different groups can make?
- How do we shift the mindset of people from response to preparation and planning?
- Finding out what communities want is crucial; one size does not fit all.



**David Johnston, Director of the Joint Centre for Disaster Research (GNS Science/Massey University) shares some insights from New Zealand.**  
(Source: Nathan Maddock, Bushfire CRC)

### 3.3 Panel 1 – Community/local perspectives

#### Julie Molloy

*Director of Social Engagement Initiatives, Volunteering Queensland*

- Volunteering Queensland (VQ) 'Step Up' programme = building resilience. The premise is that community is resilient, and how can we identify the key players and create links.
- Disaster Readiness Index – on-line interactive tool for preparedness
- The 'Step up' programme has 6 projects for example for business, Aboriginal/Torres St, Elderly etc
- Agencies/Government need to stop asking and begin listening
- In setting up 'Step up', we looked internationally and did a lot of research. We asked how Volunteering Queensland can act as a conduit between community and government. The premise is to be well prepared, planned, mitigate, talk to your neighbours, share what assets are in the local community.
- Disaster Resilience Leadership Project – 2 days, talking about all hazards, fire, flood, oil spills etc.
- Volunteering Queensland maintains an emergency volunteering register called Community Response to Extreme Weather (CREW). This system enables them to provide a referral service between volunteers and natural disaster response agencies.
- People are survivors not victims
- We need to create a shared agenda in emergency management.

#### Vanessa Fabre

*Manager - Inclusive Communities, Brisbane City Council*

- Shared Responsibility – the size and scale of Brisbane floods 2011, it was impossible not to share
- Called on business, community and government – 22,000 residential properties, 7,600 business affected
- We are documenting our i) Volunteer management plan, and ii) Donation management plan – these provide a framework for governance
- Dilemma - response and recovery geared around 'Command and Control' so when and how can community participate?
- Overwhelming response volunteer to assist in clean-up of mud/debris. 24,000 registered and deployed. Benefits of being involved with coordinating community volunteer responses far outweigh the costs. There were only a handful of injuries. Expect attrition of volunteers after first week, to second and third.
- People are often concerned about liability with managing volunteers. However, Brisbane City Council received only 10 insurance claims out of approximately 24,000 volunteers. The cost to Council was not high.
- Brisbane has 19 Community Resource Centres, these worked well in organisational process of recovery.

- Worked with Habitat for Humanity. This organisation is not very large in Queensland, and so it did not have the same success as overseas, but there is potential to advance this type of relationship.
- How do Local Government and communities act in recovery and deal with traumas? We needed to do this much earlier than it occurred – we are learning.

## **Sam Johnson**

*Founder of the Student Volunteer Army, Christchurch*

- SVA have responded to 5 different events in Christchurch since first quake in September 2010, on-going tremors
- Sam was keen to respond and first registered with Local Council – who wanted to know what skills he had and was told in no uncertain terms he should not undertake response work – leave it to the experts
- Sam really keen, and not taking no for an answer – Face book and Twitter – Self Journalism calling on others to turn up at 'X' location – 150 young people 17-20 yrs old on the first day
- February 2011, managing the major quake, 9,000 different volunteers 1800/day Process - scan licence, given food/gum boots and assigned a job/location to suit, in small teams
- 'The skill of being unskilled' great desire to help, but authorities did not have a process to include spontaneous volunteers. Gen Y uses Face book, Twitter, but the people who need help don't necessarily use these. So they still needed to establish on-ground where the assistance was required.
- A bunch of students is not bound by the regulations, red tape, and insurance issues of Local Government
- Now in Christchurch there are some communities really well organised, strong leadership, but then in the next neighbourhood this may not be the case
- Big challenge now is to keep the volunteers involved – important that volunteering is relevant, cool and easy. A big Rock concert planned for October 2012, and to obtain a ticket requires 5-6 hours volunteering...so exploring ways to continue involving young people, keep them engaged

## **Kate Lawrence**

*Macedon community & National Rural Women's Coalition*

- Preparedness and shared responsibility is about shared power, mutual respect and partnership. It is about transparency. Is about a partnership between citizen/community and government.
- Is not about seeing the community as a problem or a risk, nor seeing government as a thing to take pot shots at. It is about developing mutual respect and trust. Requires a "seismic shift in the mindset of all of us"
- There are systematic and institutional factors that influence where we are at. Government has an overarching presence /control in our lives.



- Is a consequence of hierarchical, adversarial, consuming systems – governments are defensive
- Sheer size of society means there has to be rules, but comes at a price.
- We think we can control our environment – we tend to technological fixes and forget to invest in people, to empower them.
- This situation has led to mistrust. Government is overly risk adverse.
- One source – one message is government catch cry in emergency management, which doesn't allow for difference – there is not one truth.
- There is a proliferation of research, lots of information is gathered, but it languishes because of political paralysis. There are few new initiatives actually delivered.
- Like Nasrudin in story from the Middle East, government is looking for answers to understanding and working with communities where there is light – where it is easier to look - in research. But the community is over here.
- Communities and citizens have become dependent and disconnected from own determinism/responsibility. Are overly regulated and so we expect that someone else is always in charge.
- Yet when disaster hits “the baton of responsibility is suddenly thrust at us”. We are told to be engaged, responsible, self-reliant. Then the baton cannot be handed back neatly – we want to keep holding it.
- Shared responsibility policy would be useful. What would undermine it is if it is only paid lip service, could make people even more dependent or more fiercely independent and mistrustful of government.
- Few communities are well-prepared for disaster. Government needs to let go and enable communities to think for themselves. Communities are locked out of developing own projects. Is no avenue for activism and agitation – democracy.
- Is a fear that communities will get it wrong: that misinformation will spread. But this is only worse when there is a gap between citizen and government.
- Must empower communities to participate, build ownership of the problem. It needs to be said by Government “We don't know how to protect you all the time”. Requires a leap of faith. It happens in other area, e.g. Landcare groups etc. but not with a focus on disaster.
- We need really good processes for communication and creative participation. Noisy, active outspoken community is a good sign – a KPI – of community resilience and shared responsibility.

### **John Richardson**

*National Coordinator of Strategic Development - Emergency Services, Australian Red Cross*

- In response to Michael Eburn's question – Does it really matter, have we got a problem? Yes at a personal level, the loss or impact experienced is a big problem – events can be personally disastrous even if not large in scale.
- The neighbourhood scale is very important. Local Government is best placed as is in the community and can pick up at a neighbourhood scale. The scale is an issue. With major

disaster, there are appeals/fund raising to assist communities. For example, \$400 mil was the largest ever donated for the bushfires in Victoria in 2009 – an example of shared responsibility. However, for a small scale disaster you might be on your own.

- The disaster narrative is pretty simplistic. It is typically about the bungling government official, the survivor as depicted by the media. But the reality is much more complex. How do we understand the true essence of disaster? We need to shift from a focus on loss to disruption and what this means for individuals, community. Yet government and media like this focus because it can be measured.
- Disaster management shouldn't be event-based. It should be part of the on-going community approach. "Prepare for Life" - prepare to recover, prepare to be resilient. How can we achieve this on an on-going basis, everyday of the week?
- Shared responsibility – requires trust, investing in social capital and overcoming the tension between community and government.

## **Briony Towers**

*Research Fellow, Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University*

- Children understand disaster – interviewed 131 children living in areas at risk of bushfire to examine how they participate in bushfire planning; what they know about the risks; what would undermine their preparedness.
- Emergency Managers are always amazed how much children know
- It is important to honour children's right to participate in disaster risk protection
- There are dilemmas about how much parents share with young children. Key things – children do have agency if they learn about risk. They are able to know how to protect against radiant heat, can describe the process of house protection – extinguish embers, retreat to house as fire passes etc
- Some suggest children should not be present during bushfire but this may not always be possible. Can get caught out. So it would be better to have discussions with children about coping before the event.
- Children continue to be kept out. They were not considered in the Victorian 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission. They do not have any say in School Closure policy on Code Red Days, which might leave some kids at home whilst parents have to work.
- Shared responsibility - Children need to be part of the debate, rather than being excluded.

## **Malcolm and Jane Calder**

*Steels Creek community*

### **Malcolm Calder**

- Black Saturday 130 residents in Steels Creek – 10 lost their lives
- The Saturday after at community market where usually 10-20 people, 100 turned up. One month later at a community BBQ, there were 200 people

- Things change: fire creates change. Some people find it difficult to accept that things are not going back to the way it was before.
- Shared responsibility implies partnership.
- Community Centre at the old school – run by 10 people 60% community comes to events, whilst the other 40% not interested in participating. On the face of it a coherent community
- In September 2009 there was a meeting to decide on how to use fire donation funds. 30 people turned up, proposed a walking track between Yarra Glen and Steels Creek. Local government took time (about 3 yrs) to plan and then get back to community. When they finally did, some in the community were not happy. They felt the plan was imposed. It has now gone to VCAT.
- Shared responsibility – should be about empowering the community.

### Jane Calder

- Comment on Briony's research – if there is more information for children, they may be less inclined to fear fire, be good to establish an embedded understanding
- Steels Creek community after the fire – 'Humans are sociable' and needed to come together e.g. community market. Women tend to be much more sociable, and things like the Men's Shed are really good.
- There are new opportunities to get together, may not have previously considered e.g. singing group
- The counselling services, groups have been great. For example Dr Rob Gordon, able to explain "bushfire brain" and the whole group relieved that they are normal!
- Can work toward everything being OK, the social aspect creates resilience. Resilience comes from self reliance - such things as growing vegetables. Gardening is strong in our community. There was a great response from gardening groups all around Australia – donating supplies for revegetating.
- It is challenging when people ask what you want – decision-making after a disaster is a tough one. Some people turned up and just pitched in, which was great.
- Steels Creek stitchers group created a quilt that involved 17 people that depicted recovery. This was a healing process. [Jane displayed the quilt at the workshop]
- The Community Centre was saved from the fire and this provided much heart in the recovery.
- Not everyone chooses to be involved in the community and that is OK too.

### Discussion/ questions

- **Mark Duckworth:** I don't know anyone in government who would disagree with Kate's points. The media seeks to find blame.
- **Kate Lawrence:** challenge is the systematic nature of the problem. I don't have an answer to the issues of the media. Part of me thinks we need a revolution. We need to be creating our own conversations.

- **Ian Mannix:** One issue is that ABC is not able to participate in pre-season planning. Emergency management does not let the ABC in, even though they are a part of all disasters/events.
- **Malcom Calder:** In Australia there is a prevailing mentality that “they should have done more”.
- **From the floor:** Consultation for the new community centre in Marysville did not amount to much – was lip service. The architects and bureaucrats have their own ideas that are imposed on the community and the community is not getting what it thought it was.
- **Malcolm Calder:** There is a problem regarding what is community because there is no single community authority. In Steels Creek it is more of a social group. So the structure is not clear for government and this is difficult in the recovery process.
- **Vanessa Fabre:** We need flexible funding arrangements around recovery. Do the communities know what they need? In the response phase, government is good with the command-and-control part. During the recovery it needs a community-based approach on a by-needs basis.
- **Sam Johnson:** People should communicate what they can get out and do. It doesn't have to be led from the top.
- **John Richardson:** People have significant skills for community-led recovery. Others have a lot of good will and being able to support this is important. Funding for community-led endeavours always requires accountability. Most often community groups just need someone to help with administration/organising/book-keeping.
- **Anne Leadbeater:** One of the challenges is that what communities look like is so varied. The place to begin is with what was happening before the disaster and understand where people were coming from before the event. There is a danger of community-led recovery being coopted. Community recovery should be hard. It takes time and if it is easy it is probably not going right.
- **Jane Calder:** A lot of this reminds me of how we treat Aboriginal communities – we can impose on them. Community leaders can get burnt out.
- **John Richardson:** Need to ask who in the community is leading already and is well-connected. These people are not always in high profile positions, could be people on the school council etc.
- **Julie Molloy:** Longer-term planning is required to bounce back and then some.



**Malcolm and Jane Calder show the quilt made by the Steels Creek stitchers group**  
(Source: Peter Stanley)

### 3.4 Panel 2 – Government perspectives

#### Chris Collett

*Assistant Secretary of the Emergency Management Policy Branch, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department*

- The case for resilience is well-established. The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience is a framework for sharing responsibility within and amongst governments and the broader community. It is changing the way we think about disasters. Change takes time.
- Resilience/ shared responsibility constitute a new policy space for the Federal Government and is dominating a lot of discussions in other sectors besides disaster management, e.g. countering violent extremism and critical infrastructure. We can learn from these discussions and the ideas generated in these other sectors.
- The context of disaster management is changing, as the way in which we are living in this country is changing e.g. tree-changers bring urban expectations of government to rural areas, rising costs. Governments need to ask where they need to change.
- Long-term behaviour change as a policy goal is difficult because it can take decades, e.g. drink-driving, smoking.
- Shared responsibility is about increasing honesty about disasters and disaster risk reduction. It is not about governments avoiding responsibility. It is about governments being honest about what they can and cannot do.
- The National Strategy is unique and challenging because it aims to bring together so many different players. When these players come together and share, a synergy develops and the results are bigger. An example of this that is underway is TISN (the Trusted Information Sharing Networks for Critical Infrastructure).
- There is a tension in government about how to contribute to shared responsibility without taking over. How do we encourage shared responsibility from the position of big government?
- Tackling the hard stuff is very important. Going beyond one-size-fits-all is a real challenge, as is dealing with communities and groups that do not have clear hierarchies/ representatives that governments can link into. This is challenging but it is critically important for governments to confront.

#### Mark Duckworth

*Executive Director of Citizenship and Resilience, Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)*

- Shared responsibility is really taking off as a central idea in government. It is not about government telling people what to do; it's about harnessing and supporting what's already happening, and people learning from each other. We can use successful groups as examples for all of us.
- Agrees with Chris Collett that a key challenge is the shorter timeframes of political cycles versus the longer timeframes needed for sustained behavioural change. Behavioural change is less about convincing communities and more about changing how governments engage with communities on these issues.
- The work that emergency service volunteers do is fantastic. That dedication needs to be joined up with other groups and government can contribute to the same aim.

- There is no silver bullet: the only way forward is through lots of small projects. Each community is different and this diversity is a challenge for government.
- Another big issue that governments need to face in doing this is accountability. How can governments be both enablers of what other groups do as well as being accountable for spending government funds? We don't have the answer to this, but it is an issue that is being talked about in government.

## **Terry Hayes**

*Executive Manager, Community Capability at the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA)*

- New Victorian Planning provisions that came into effect in November require that local governments take account of bushfire risk when making planning decisions and take advice from local fire services. This is a new and big challenge for the CFA - and an opportunity for fire services to design out some bushfire risk.
- The CFA is working to build the idea of fire into school curriculum – this is an opportunity for stimulating behavioural change.
- Authentic engagement before bushfire happens enables good response and quick recovery.
- Shared responsibility is a concept that exists in fire policy. It is not new: we have had it in other areas for years, such as roads. With fire it is difficult because we are not clear about what we are sharing. What happens when people have differing capabilities etc.? These are questions we are confronting now.
- There is no legislation that says people have to share responsibility. When did we agree with the community to share responsibility? When did we test their capacity to meet their responsibilities? Decision-making under stress is often poor: we are placing a lot on people in emergency situations.
- Fire brigades are ideally placed to understand communities. We can invest in training and enable them to self-determine how they want to address this challenge.
- The CFA is completely changing the way it does things in order to support communities rather than to do things to them from the top down. It is difficult but we are committed to this change.

## **Janet Pope**

*Manager of Strategic Research and Coordination - Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)*

- DPCD already measures community resilience but not in relation to disasters.
- Community resilience is related to networks within communities and networks that extend outside the community. Networks are built through participation. Government has a role in encouraging participation. We want to foster general participation but especially participation in local governance.
- Community issues are complex and can only be addressed by bringing together technical knowledge, local knowledge and government resources.

- One size does not fit all – different communities have different strengths and weaknesses. Vulnerabilities are a big issue. Work to improve networks on this front is exciting.
- The role of government is more as an enabler than as a provider.
- All community planning helps people to be more prepared for disasters and to make them more resilient. Government can fund activities like sport. It can fund assets like community centres. It can also fund programs that build the capacity of local government and that provide information and research.
- Communities are pro-social and move faster than governments. They are very able to respond. You cannot really predict community networks, which is a challenge for government.
- Community networks draw people back after a disaster, which helps with rebuilding. Government should reduce the red tape but the need for government accountability is a challenging issue.

### **Steve Opper**

*Director of Community Safety - NSW State Emergency Service (SES)*

- While understanding the theory behind the concept of shared responsibility – it has become a policy mantra. Some people use the words but the meaning is empty.
- Is it possible that the concept could be used to excuse government failure? Distributing responsibility can dilute accountability.
- Prior to Black Saturday shared responsibility was not on the radar. The Royal Commission said that in emergencies the safest place to be is not there. This is in conflict with the community that wants to stay and fight. There will be a decision point – but how do choose what to do?
- Is evacuating 100% risk aversion? Where do we evacuate to? Are we more concerned about inconveniencing people than about killing them? What do we do when people do not want to evacuate? This happened to the NSW SES recently with the town of Hay. The issue is not unique to recent events and a NSW North coast survey in 2009 showed that 30% of the residents in Grafton and Kempsey had no intention of ever evacuating. Yet evacuation is the most effective option that the SES has: when people don't do it, does this mean that the SES has failed?
- Key to resilience is warnings and information. It is reasonable for people to expect warnings. Warnings include: what is coming? How might it affect you? What do you need to do?
- For the SES the challenge is engagement to ensure that people understand and accept the risk. Yet only 1.5% of the NSW SES budget is committed to community education. For the NSW Rural Fire Service the percentage may be less given that their budget is larger than that of the NSW SES but the RFS community engagement resource does not appear to be proportionally bigger.
- Shift from a top-down to bottom-up (distributed funding) approach needs a leap of faith.



## Russell Rees

*Risk Advisor, Municipal Association of Victoria*

- Resilience is not just a buzz word: it's the centre of emergency management. An important concept.
- Why do we even have to do this? Because our communities have lost resilience compared to the past. Our systems and processes have moved away from being resilient.
- We only ever look through the play school window of litigation, accountability, responsibility. We need to look through a different window.
- "Responsibility" speaks of a concept not of partnership but of who "gets it" when things go wrong. Local government is the meat in the sandwich.
- We always talk about resilience post event. The biggest impediment to recovery is essential things that have been damaged. Things change but you need hard assets that are more resilience and easier to repair. One of the first pathways to moving towards shared responsibility is to harden critical infrastructure so then social stuff can from there.

## Discussion/questions

- **From the floor:** Can governments accept what community says even when it doesn't work?
  - **Response - Mark Duckworth:** it isn't about anybody doing less, it's about everyone doing more. Government putting in more money isn't the answer. Shared responsibility isn't equal responsibility. So what happens when emergency management services tell people to evacuate and they don't and then are badly impacted? This is a fundamental issue. Resilience isn't about being stupid.
- **From the floor:** During post-Black Saturday rebuilding VBRRA (Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority) said it would give \$1.7 million for tourism recovery in the area but it wanted to deal with a single community organisation. There were two organisations in Marysville that did not want to amalgamate and the process caused conflict in the community.
- **From the floor:** Learning is important: how do we implement it?
  - **Response - Mark Duckworth:** We get research on what works and what doesn't. Governments and communities can learn from each other. While governments can produce materials, communities learning from each other is just as important.
- **From the floor:** Information and warnings are designed to elicit behaviours but they are not well targeted. What do you think about general information and specific warnings?
  - **Response – Steve Oppen:** Information processes need a strategy around specific group needs but you shouldn't get too clever. We need good information about relationships between hazards and outcomes to provide people with warnings about what is coming.
- **From the floor to Steve Oppen:** Legal consequences of forcibly evacuating town of Hay?
  - **Response – Steve Oppen:** Unclear, but would be messy

- **Response from the floor** – Perhaps perceived as better media-wise to rescue with helicopters later rather than drag people from their homes.
- **From the floor:** Context is very important when giving warnings/information. Not only information about what will happen.
- **From the floor:** Is subsidiarity considered?
  - **Response – Janet Pope:** We need community institutions and to equip them.
  - **Response - Mark Duckworth:** Localism/ subsidiarity is central to the whole thing. Underpins much of what is in the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience and subsidiarity was discussed in depth during the drafting.

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**Note: What is subsidiarity?**

“It is a key principle in discussions about federalism that decision making should be devolved to the most local level possible; or, conversely, decision making should only be centralised where it is necessary to do so. This is known as the Principle of Subsidiarity” (p. 4)

(**Source:** Wilkins, R. (2010). Federalism and the emergency services: paper developed from a speech presented at the AFAC/Bushfire CRC 2009 conference. Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 25(1), 3-6.)

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**Julie Molloy from Volunteering Queensland responds to issues raised by speakers in the final panel.**

(Source: Nathan Maddock, Bushfire CRC)

## 3.5 Open discussion and Panel – Reflecting on shared responsibility

### 3.5.1 Open discussion

Key points raised in the open discussion:

- **Government/community as abstract concepts:** We keep talking about government and community as abstract concepts – it disguises the importance of the thinking, decisions and relationships of individuals involved. Are there really such things as “government” and “community”?
- **Risk appetites:** The risk appetites that governments and communities have are different. May get greater risk aversion in government.
- **Preparation and resilience:** We often talk about resilience in recovery but not in preparedness – the fabric that makes community before and after an emergency. Preparation is part of resilience
- **Local government-community actions:** Good things are happening in a lot of places. Local government programs are working with communities E.g. community groups that sought \$ and now are involved in community planning for emergencies
- **Rhetoric vs action:** There is a conflict between rhetoric/theory and what happens on the ground – there’s an assumption of trickle-down effect to street-level, practitioners that does not always play out.
- **Emergency service volunteers:** There are benefits of small teams with few layers of hierarchy in emergency management structures. This allows communication to volunteers through to community. A challenge is that volunteers join for the excitement of response and not for community engagement.
- **Organisational change takes time:** It is difficult to turn an organisation around from top-down to bottom-up. It takes time. Some work is happening in this direction already in fire agencies. We need to step back from the process and let community do the planning. Organisations can provide expertise when required. This requires a genuine desire for change.
- **Genuine vs token change:** Communities can tell the difference between genuine or token attempts. We have to take what genuine steps we can - even if small.
- **Policy-action disconnect:** Is there a disconnect between policymakers and those on the ground? They’re not aware of the tools and it’s extremely difficult to mix ‘spontaneous volunteers’ and management into policy.
- **Community engagement:** It’s a complex picture...engagement has been transitioning. Before it was community education and there was a lack of genuine engagement skills. The majority of engagement has to happen outside of crises – this would build the trust needed for when the crises happen.
- **Virtual communities:** What about virtual communities – lots of people are connected into these. How can we communicate with them?
- **Living in “bushfire-prone” areas:** Language can be alienating. Bushfire-prone means different things to the public. Prone means happens regularly, which bushfires do not. Seems to be an assumption that people choose to live in bushfire-prone areas, which may not be the case.

- **Types of government-community relationships:** Shared responsibility is about collaboration, about shared understanding. Need to focus on how we can bring about peer-to-peer relationships.
- Preparation exercises often only include 'expert' groups; when will whole communities be able to participate? – But cost can be a huge barrier to participation (thanks to the organisers of this event for making it free).
- **Sharing resources with communities:** To encourage shared responsibility we also need to share resources. Idea was raised of part of tax base going directly to local community disaster management funds without need for application – would government be willing to allow this?
  - Landcare is an example where resources are being shared for self-directed community planning – but they still apply for funding
  - But how would government account for expenditure? Who is 'the community' the funds would go to?
  - Could communities establish institutions to manage expenditure of such resources? In rural and remote Victoria local governments are not necessarily local/ community-based since amalgamation – geographic areas are too large. They are also under-resourced. So might not be best place to place resources?
  - Why not work with existing institutions? E.g. Steels Creek: community works as a committee of management for the Shire. It can get money from local government, CFA, etc
  - We can incorporate groups, so why not incorporate a local disaster management group? – A group that has its own policy with local government?
  - Do we really need to create another layer of institutions for managing the situation?
- **Change takes time:** Radical, quick changes often lead to bad "solutions" imposed on us. Cultural change takes time.
- **"Solutions to the problem" is an old mind set:** This is ongoing. Enable people to find their own way to deal with situations by building existing networks, having good facilitators, developing a different skill set. One of the small steps we could take is to consult, create and facilitate those skills in NGOs, govt and communities
- **Education and children:** New Zealand has a children's awareness program - "What's the plan Stan"? Need resources for curriculum. There were only minor injuries for kids in schools during the Christchurch earthquakes (building structures also played a part in that)
- **Emergency management in government agencies:** Many government departments beyond fire and SES are bringing emergency management into the core of their business.
- **Community spontaneous responses:** Keep it organic and flexible by using existing institutions such as local government, the school, local tennis club etc. Liability is a concern for community groups organising spontaneous volunteers – experience has been to muddle through.
- **Surviving vs recovering:** Are we preparing to survive, not preparing to recover?
- **Community group liability:** What happens if we assume the community can be identified and has their own plan but the plan fails, people die? What legal protection do people have?
  - Chances of anyone successfully suing are very slim. The reality of the threat of litigation is that it is not as serious as it is often portrayed.

### 3.5.2 Panel 3 – Key issues for the future

**Noreen Krusel**

*Research Utilisation Manager, Bushfire CRC*

- We all kind of think shared responsibility a good idea but aren't really clear on what it is: responsibility for what, with whom?
- We need to understand better, communicate more
- People, neighbourhoods, communities respond differently
- Has not been much mention of time: that shared responsibility will vary in time
- Fixed policy positions are difficult in a dynamic environment: shared responsibility between whom and for what? Will codifying it help or hinder?
- With responsibility comes the notion of obligation and responsibility for others
- Thinking about roles of governments, collectives and the individual – might help to tease out who has responsibility for what
- Research – there is a gulf between research nuts and policy idealists. We may need a different model of research - more of these types of events facilitated or motivated by researchers and research projects, case studies, stories and peer to peer discussions.

**John Schauble**

*Manager Policy & Planning, Office of the Fire Services Commissioner*

- The question of culture wasn't really tackled today - A lot is tied up in culture and behaviour – how does shared responsibility fit into the prevailing cultural norms?
- Whose responsibility, how much is shared?
- Are people expecting to be rescued (cultural)? Are we building this expectation?
- How will we allow the narrative to be told? How allow others to tell it for us? The media, governments, etc
- There is a tendency to define emergency as a problem with a solution but emergencies are not avoidable.
- We measure them by counting - trucks, deaths, money at the end, so that a good outcome becomes synonymous with a small number. This is deeply risk averse and is not accepting that some loss is inevitable.
- Communities are diverse. Some people assume to speak for a community when they may not be able to.
- There are some examples of sharing responsibility in practice.
  - Brigades are small communities in and of themselves
  - Indonesian example of the *gotong royong* concept of 'mutual aid' - working together for a shared objective - was a principle for the establishment of the nation
  - In China, volunteering has a totally different interpretation
  - E.g. of the culture - What we need to do is take spontaneity out of spontaneous volunteering.

- Communities still define what government does. It's about process and enabling involvement.
- It is a challenge to include something to support this in curriculums with 7 different jurisdictions - this is no excuse.
- We can't allow government to return to business as usual

### **Chris Collett**

*Assistant Secretary of the Emergency Management Policy Branch, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department*

- This issue resonates – oversubscription to this workshop is a good indicator of this
- The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience is an opportunity
- Work needs to be done around understanding risk and how we live with Australian events. It has to be built into our technology. Work needs to be done around how we communicate across communities, government, businesses, etc
- We are saturated by information. How do we maintain effective messages years after a disaster?
- The question of mainstreaming – if in a few years, the same people are having the same conversation we're in trouble
- We need to ensure that future policy doesn't have a counter resilience effect. E.g. how do we swing from recovery into preparedness? Insurance is complicated and this can reduce people's incentives for preparedness – government has a role in influencing this
- How do we measure disaster resilience?
  - Is it longitudinal change?
  - How do we measure if we're successful?
  - Are there objective measures? (E.g. work by the Torrens Institute and University of Queensland)
- How do we learn lessons?
- What opportunities do we have to preach to the unconverted?
- Can we shift to peer to peer models that include government, universities, businesses and then move beyond this?

### **Kate Lawrence**

*Macedon community & National Rural Women's Coalition and Network*

- We need more sophisticated processes. This workshop format perpetuates the division between government and community in the way it separates the issues. We need to mix it up. It's messy and hard.
- Process input – democracy, but can be too easy to tick the box
- More complex, there are bigger problems than the solutions suggest
- There is some change but it's not about behaviour change but about enabling
- Preparedness is central

- Bushfire resources – we have lots to stop them (but not earthquakes), maybe that's why we don't spend the money on people's preparedness?
- Not everyone is going to do something. There may be smart people who are willing to take on things and learn
- Make money is available through programs etc but do not make it too onerous to access, not too many checks and balances
- Government needs to say "we can't always be there"
- Don't lecture people about what to do
- Look to Asia to learn - to developing countries because they don't have the bureaucracy (or resources) and so they focus on community

### Anne Leadbeater

*Kinglake community & Murrindindi Shire Council*

- There is so much to take from this conversation today
- Prepare to be on your own for 3 days in NZ, 2 weeks in Japan, yet we had 8000 attempted calls to 000 on Black Saturday that trickled into Sunday – there is still much to do in reinforcing a message of self-reliance
- "Don't risk your life on last minute decisions" – doesn't resonate with the lived experience as some people's lives were saved by their ability to make last minute decisions, to think on their feet and respond to a dynamic and evolving situation
- Language matters
- Government and agencies say "The community want it simple" Well, of course, but it's not simple and there is little to be gained by trying to make it so.
- Anne quoted a survivor from Mt Macedon talking about recovery after Ash Wednesday:

*...no-one can take away our right to make our own decisions or to interfere with those we have made...we don't need everything done for us, as we are neither useless nor helpless. We want to help ourselves and play a part in helping the community. All we need is a bit of a hand to kick us off and some support along the way...A chance to tell you our problems before you come up with your solutions.*

Kenworthy, M. *Aftermath of Fire: a people's triumph*, 2007, p. 59

### Barbara Norman

*Head of Discipline - Urban and Regional Planning, University of Canberra*

- Today was a good learning exercise
- Shared responsibility = shared understanding and knowledge/ collaboration
- Cost-benefit needs to include everything – this is a really long list that will identify the value of planning beforehand. Is a need for planning before the fact – looking forward/future focussed
- Better communicating the risks – there are shared learnings from climate change adaptation. E.g. IPCC thought the science would be enough to instil change. We can share communication ideas between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

- Coasts, cities, Murray-Darling Basin – we need to review the planning system of the country
- National level policy statement of cities/ metro plans in the context of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction – this is positive action – may lead to changes in the planning system
- Of real concern is the widening gap between policy and what's happening on the ground – an example is the abolition of the urban growth boundaries
- Research should get a handle on the cost of no planning – life, impact on cities etc
- CURF – Canberra Urban Rural Futures – is an example of efforts to start to get to grips with some of this.

### **Peter Stanley**

*Head - Centre for Historical Research, National Museum of Australia*

- Many times today I didn't know what people were talking about - language is important. Please use English.
- Peter has an upcoming book called Black Saturday at Steels Creek: Fire and an Australian Community. There are many good books about the bushfires in Victoria in Feb 2009 already but this one was written in close collaboration with the community: "it's my book but it's their story". The draft was checked with them and amended as they suggested.
- The subtitle of the book is "fire and an Australian community" – it looks at before, during and after the fire; the lived experience of the Steels Creek community as a microcosm of the Australian experience
- Malcolm spoke of several qualities – mateship, trust, respect, support and participation
- Leadership was largely left out today – who is the community and who should speak for it?
- There are different neighbourhoods within Steels Creek – one of them is a single street. It had an informal phone tree from neighbourhood watch that grew into a sophisticated fireguard group. Communities like this that are strong before an event deal with disasters better.
- People often risked their lives to help neighbours, family and friends
- More research? "Taking care of ourselves is rooted in the culture of this country...especially rural Australia".



## 4 Attendee responses

We invited those who attended the workshop to respond to the two key questions posed to the speakers on the day:

- 1) What does the idea of 'shared responsibility' mean, and what are its implications?
- 2) Is it a useful policy concept, and if yes what needs to be done to implement it, and what could undermine it?

The responses we received are included in full below. Please be aware that, just as is the case with the speakers in the workshop itself, these responses reflect personal views. They should not be interpreted as representing the official stances of any organisation or agency.

- “For me, shared responsibility means something similar to that expressed by some of your panellists on the day. I think that communities, government and agencies, must collaborate for disaster prevention, preparation and response to be effective. The possibility of a successful top down 1950s approach, has long since passed. The hazard centred 50s paradigm was a hierarchical and highly militarised approach to disaster management and recovery which privileged linear and singular processes determined by “dominant masculine culture” As a country that is likely to continue to be battered by the effects of climate change, we need to resist the natural desire to attempt to eliminate risk and instead work to understand and support individual and community need. As one presenter so eloquently elucidated on the day... 'when disaster hits the baton is handed to the community'. The community are the respondents to disaster, and those of us working with disaster need to keep that knowledge front and centre in considering the way we work. We need to embed ourselves within communities and find what each individual and community needs to plan effectively for disaster, and provide that support. Indeed, following that path will likely allow for a dialogue with communities about risk reduction and best practice response, allowing them to consider their best options.”

- *Connie Kellett, PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne*

- “1) I was fascinated to hear the different ideas that people had about the concept of sharing responsibility – I had always thought it was sharing the responsibility (and hence accountability) for my safety and that of my family and friends and community BEFORE, AFTER and DURING and event – in effect not being dependent upon others. As a result of the workshop I can see that others may understand this as transferring responsibility at different stages – interesting and equally relevant way of understand this, just not the way I had done so.

So as a result of the workshop I see this idea of sharing responsibility as less tightly constructed than I had previously considered.

- 2) It is a supremely important and useful policy construct ... but the different interpretations are likely to undermine it – and are something that will need a lot of thought.”

- *Lyndsey Wright, Research Manager, Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre*

- “1) Shared responsibility should actually be mutual obligation and acceptance that, if you choose to live in the shark pool, at some stage you may get bitten and that no-one else should be at fault because of it.

2) It would be useful if it was part of a package of social policy. Shared responsibility / mutual obligation is only as good as its supporting mechanism, which at this stage of community development is disjointed. Litigious society, conflicting environmental and land use planning objectives and the expectation that ‘someone else’ (government?) will always fix somebody’s problem does not help. Given a relative lack of major emergencies that threaten or impact our communities as a whole, people prefer the day to day rules that govern their life rather than ‘draconian’ ones that suit only when a rare event occurs.”

- Graeme Armstrong, Regional Commander, Country Fire Authority - Eastern Metropolitan Region

- “1) In an EM context, shared responsibility means the acceptance that the outcomes of an event will be dependent on the actions taken by individuals, communities, governments and other agencies. These groups have interdependencies. Each can influence the actions of another but cannot control them.

2) Yes, it is important that policy recognise the limitations of the contribution that each group makes in determining outcomes. This could be undermined by the fear that this may be perceived as government avoiding its responsibility. Also, politics usually means the presentation of policy in a way that says to the community “this is what we are doing for you”. The message “this is what you need to do....we can’t do it for you” may be seen as too unpalatable for the electorate.”

- Justin Murray, Executive Officer Emergency Management, Nillumbik Shire Council

- “The only point or question that I'd reinforce is about the opaque-ness that arises from the shorthand of framing shared as being about 'the community' and 'the government'. A framing is a choice and tends to reveal/highlight some aspects of a situation or question, while disguising others.

The naming of community and government as 'things' can imply that each is a distinctly-defined entity with a single mind. They aren't. Neither is distinctly defined, and both involve multiple individuals each of whom thinks differently. Indeed many individuals are part of both 'groups'. Indeed is a CFA volunteer agency or community? Is anyone not part of community in some way?

What does 'the community' think? It thinks many different things simultaneously, and often those things are contradictory. How does it engage in an agreement to share responsibility? It can't. Only some further construction of it can.

At face value government and authorities have more semblance of central control, but they too involve multiple individuals who make daily and hourly choices. Even within (or despite) a government policy, individuals (who are knowledge workers) must make many choices such as who to appoint, whether to attend a workshop, whether to send an email, and how to allocate resources.

We are probably stuck with using the shorthand, but I think we should keep stating and reminding ourselves that we make that choice, and that it has implications. While one may assume that people will always realise that one is intended to mean the other, I seriously doubt in practice that that is wise.

At a practical level, a powerful design-principle of the Fire Learning Network is that each person comes to the conversation as themselves rather than as a representative. FLN is able to see it that way because it does consciously think and act past the label.”

“The idea of 'shared' is meaningless except in relation to the two or more parties who do the sharing. Thus the question of who the parties are is fundamental. If we are to make something useful of 'shared responsibility' then the 'who' question can't be dismissed and the answer can't be trite.”

*- Andrew Wilson, Manager Fire Knowledge and Learning, Fire Division, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment*

- “1) The idea is about the sharing of responsibility for decisions, costs and accountability for the bushfire prevention, response and recovery, where the purpose is the protection of things we value – e.g. human life and health, private property, public infrastructure, landscape amenity, ecosystem condition.

What it actually means in practical terms, that is, who has responsibility for what and how do we know when responsibility has been met, seems to be inherently social and political and will be very much influenced by social values such as social welfare, equity and expectations and acceptance of risk.

Who holds responsibility, and is thus accountable, definitely seems to be an idea that is only given meaning through dialogue, reflection and agreement and acceptance between all parties concerned – all levels of government, individuals/households, private landowners, community groups, and the private sector. In this sense, the meaning of shared responsibility seems very fluid and inherently social and political, and in this way the idea seems to be analogous to the idea of ‘duty of care’, which can be partially expressed and implemented through legislation but the legislation will evolve and reflect values that are defined within a socio-political context.

I think part of the idea might also really be just about achieving better clarity and transparency around where existing responsibilities lie between government and individuals, and if these need to be changed to achieve outcomes we care about in terms of community safety and wellbeing, economic wealth, environmental quality etc.

2) I think it could be a very useful policy concept on a pragmatic level if clarification of responsibilities and capabilities for managing bushfire risk leads to more effective and efficient bushfire management and improved community safety.

I think the clarification of where government responsibility around bushfire risk mitigation and recovery starts and ends could be very useful in allowing individuals and community groups to make more informed choices about how much they are willing to invest in their own safety and wellbeing in the context of bushfire risk.

I think it is important that any social and political processes for establishing and clarifying shared responsibility (in practical terms) are supported by the integration of technical and scientific (biophysical, social and economic) understanding – I think this is needed as part of the process of identifying who is best positioned to take responsibility for different aspects of bushfire risk management and recovery, and what institutional/policy arrangements are needed to support this.”

*- Helena Clayton, Research Fellow, The Fenner School of Environment and Society, The Australian National University*

## 5 Attendee affiliations

- Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Council (AFAC)
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- Australian Government Attorney-General's Department
- Australian National University
- Australian Red Cross
- Brisbane City Council
- Australian Bureau of Meteorology
- Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre
- Country Fire Authority, Victoria
- CSIRO
- Department of Human Services (Victoria)
- Department of Planning and Community Development (Victoria)
- Department of Premier and Cabinet (Victoria)
- Department of Sustainability and Environment (Victoria)
- Department of Transport (Victoria)
- Fire and Rescue NSW
- Fire Services Commissioner (Victoria)
- GNS Science (New Zealand)
- Greater Warrandyte community
- James Cook University
- Karalee Community Association
- Kinglake Ranges community
- Latrobe University
- Leadership Plus - Disability and Social Change
- Marysville community
- Mount Macedon community
- Macquarie University
- Massey University (New Zealand)
- Monash University
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Murrindindi Shire Council
- National Museum of Australia
- National Rural Women's Coalition
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW State Emergency Service
- Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner
- Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
- RMIT University
- Roberts Evaluation Pty Ltd
- State Fire Management Planning Support, Victoria
- Steels Creek community
- Surf Lifesaving Australia
- Tasmania Fire Service
- University of British Columbia (Canada)
- University of Canberra
- University of Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany)
- University of Melbourne
- University of Southern Queensland
- University of Western Australia
- Victorian Centre for Climate Change Adaptation Research (VCCCAR)
- Victorian State Emergency Service
- Volunteer Army Foundation (Christchurch, New Zealand)
- Volunteering Queensland
- Yarra Ranges Shire Council



Photo supplied by Malcolm Calder