



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2011-2014

AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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Publisher:

Bushfire CRC

April 2011

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CONTEXT

This *Communications Plan* is a framework to direct resources and priorities to support the *Communications Strategy 2011-2014*.

It complements the *Bushfire CRC Extension Strategic Directions 2010-2013* document and the *Research Utilisation Strategy 2011-2014*. Combined, all these documents articulate the collective vision, mission, values, goals and strategic directions of the Bushfire CRC.

The Plan Timelines at the end of this document map out the next year in detail. This Timeline will be updated on a regular basis and will be flexible to meet demands.

COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

Background

The high level *Communications Strategy 2011-2014* takes into account three overlapping phases of the Bushfire CRC:

1. the seven year original research program and the utilisation of this research
2. the research extension funding research program to 2013
3. the transition to an Australasian Fire Research Institute.

It assesses where the Bushfire CRC currently stands with its communications and what key elements it should build upon into the future. What does the Bushfire CRC stand for? What should it say? Who should it say it to?

The strategy

The strategy focuses on communications goals and objectives, how the Bushfire CRC should position itself, what are our key principles, who are our target audiences, what are our key messages, what tools and tactics should we use and how should we monitor and evaluate our strategy?

Goal - The communications goal of the Bushfire CRC is: *The Bushfire CRC is regarded as the leading Australasian centre that delivers real-world research to improve our ability to live safely with fire.*

Objectives - the objectives of the Communications Strategy are:

1. To demonstrate the CRC's achievements to ensure continued investment from government and stakeholders.
2. To communicate the CRC's research outputs to facilitate stakeholder adoption and advocacy.
3. To build the CRC's reputation as a leader in bushfire research among internal and external stakeholders.

RESOURCES

Three full-time staff:

Communications Manager

Tasks - Communications management and strategy, media liaison, publications (print and online) development.

Communications Officer

Tasks - Publications editor and writer (Fire Australia, Fire Note), online writer, media liaison.

Communications and Events Officer

Tasks - Event coordination, publications assistant, branding and merchandise.

GOALS

The *Bushfire CRC Strategic Directions 2010-2013* contained high level goals focussed on Partnership, Product, Process, People and Profile. The *Communications Implementation Plan* has input to all these broad goals, with a particularly strong focus on the Profile goal. This section details specific plans relevant to Communications.

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP GOAL

To recognise, value, build and nurture sustainable partnerships actively creating mutual benefits between researchers, end users, the Bushfire CRC office and the community using research to benefit society.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Develop a segmented partnership relationship plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Communications Strategy to identify and prioritise partner relationships • Tools and actions to be linked to each partner • Key individuals within partners to be identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners attendance at events (including Stakeholder Council and Annual Conference), is maintained or increased. • Contacts established within all partner Communications offices • Partner Communications staff provided with a briefing on key research outputs.
Develop new partnerships with SMEs and new partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New partners to be targeted for communications • Promote Bushfire CRC to Trade Expo at annual conference • Support and attend FPAA Annual Conference • Continue joint publication of quarterly journal <i>Fire Australia</i> with FPAA, IFE Australia and AFAC. • Attend and contribute to other key industry conferences as identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained prominent joint Bushfire CRC/AFAC stand - held informal networking meetings and distributed Bushfire CRC promotional material • Hosted a stand at FPAA annual conference • <i>Fire Australia</i> produced four editions each year • Developed conference attendance and participation plan within Bushfire CRC office

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PRODUCT GOAL

To deliver a product mix that is consistent with the expectations of all stakeholders.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
To complete, package and deliver research outputs for partner utilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a schedule that is coordinated with Research and Research Utilisation plans for all regular publications • Utilise innovative design and communications tools for better uptake of products • Upgrade website to best capitalise on multi-media capture of research outputs • Develop interactive and high quality events with a range of complementary content and post-event publications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication schedule 2011 completed by end of January 2011 - updated regularly. • New website fully functional by April 2011. • Appropriate staff trained on website CMS by April 2011. • Contracted expert design skills for specialist tasks. • Produced guide books, brochures, briefing papers or online resources targeted at event participants. • Produced post-event video content in DVD and online formats

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PROCESS GOAL

To provide quality research management and utilisation across the Bushfire CRC.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Actively manage resources to support our business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy and Plan finalised by April 2011. • Coordinate production schedule of <i>Fire Notes</i> and <i>Fire Australia</i> in consultation with Research and Research Utilisation priorities. • Provide Communications staff with professional development and direction on priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy and Plan approved April 2011. • Publications distributed to complement key events and outputs. • Publications Plan executed to schedule • Communications staff provided with an appropriate work plan

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PEOPLE GOAL

To build and enhance the capacity for research, research management and research utilisation within the sector.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Develop appropriate strategic alliances through our partners to identify needs and approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and liaise with key communications contacts within partner organisations. Identify opportunities at key events including annual conference, Research Advisory Forum, and Stakeholder meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacts in regular communication with Bushfire CRC and on our Contact list Establishment of communications network with AFAC and NSW partners for annual conference in Sydney 2011.

BUSHFIRE CRC EXTENSION PROFILE AND BRANDING GOAL

Actively enhance the profile of the Bushfire CRC.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Develop and implement a communications and marketing plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Strategy and Plan submitted to Board April 2011. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy and Plan endorsed by Board Strategy and Plan discussed at Bushfire CRC team strategic planning meeting March 2011.
Actively engage with partner activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish appropriate levels of communication with partners through publication distribution, event organisation and other networking activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sydney 2011 conference conducted with partner support. Distribution lists for <i>Fire Updates</i> and <i>Fire Notes</i> maintained and updated. Communications managers briefed on Bushfire CRC research.
Build and enhance the Bushfire CRCs multi-media and web presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website continues to be enhanced with new CMS system, additional features added as needed on a continuing basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website functional and used by partners and community. Hits and downloads increased over the year with spikes for major events. Online innovations acquired as needed.
Use conferences and events to enhance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual conference promoted as major bushfire research event for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked successfully with AFAC for media coverage, booth

profile	<p>Australasia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend or support other relevant conferences. • Promote and support Bushfire CRC and AFAC events program. 	<p>visitation and website hits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended or hosted booth at FPAA conference and others. • Events are well attended and promoted.
Maintain a proactive media engagement strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media relations plan to engage a range of different media across research program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media invited to attend conference and other events, supported by media releases. • Media continued to contact Bushfire CRC for expert comment. • Bushfire CRC increased mentions in trade and industry media.
Communication strategy to focus on use of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Notes to give priority to application of research • Stakeholder events to focus on end user application • Enhance Knowledge Web profile and relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End user statements provided for completed research projects to illustrate how research can be used • Stakeholder Council meetings to include end user presentations on research use. • Bushfire CRC research linked to Knowledge Web with statement of end-user relevance

AUDIENCES

TARGET AUDIENCES

The Bushfire CRC must communicate with a range of audiences for different reasons. Table 1 in the *Communications Strategy 2011-2014* identifies the primary audiences and provides guidance on what the CRC wants them to think and do as a result of interacting with the CRC. The table below assigns the most relevant communications tools and tactics to these audiences for maximum impact.

Audience		Tools	Tactics
A	Stakeholder Council	New phase brochure Institute brochure Achievements publication Fire Australia Stakeholder Reports Annual Report Fire Update newsletter	Stakeholder Council meetings (2) Partner visits Annual Conference Branding
B	AFAC Fire and land agency partner staff and volunteers	New phase brochure Institute brochure Achievements publication Fire Australia Stakeholder Reports Fire Notes Fire Update newsletter Website Social Media DVD/online packages Partner publications	Annual Conference Research Advisory Forum Research roadshow Branding
C	Research Institutes - University partners - Universities	New phase brochure Institute brochure Achievements publication Fire Australia Stakeholder Reports Annual Report Fire Notes Fire Update newsletter Website DVD/online packages Partner publications	Annual Conference Research Advisory Forum Research roadshow Branding
D	Bushfire CRC researchers	New phase brochure Achievements publication Fire Australia Fire Notes Fire Update newsletter Website DVD/online packages Social Media	Annual Conference Research Advisory Forum Research Roadshow Branding
E	Public/Community - High fire areas - Specific research areas - Broader community	Fire Australia Fire Notes Fire Update newsletter Website DVD/online packages Social Media	Community forums Media
F	Emergency Management Fire industry Fire volunteer associations Local Government	New phase brochure Institute brochure Fire Australia Fire Notes Fire Update newsletter Website DVD/online packages Social Media	Annual Conference Industry conferences
G	Related industries (Water, wine, tourism, agriculture, power, forestry,	New phase brochure Institute brochure Fire Australia	Annual Conference Industry conferences

	telecos)	Fire Notes Fire Update newsletter Website Social Media DVD/online packages Partner publications	
H	CRC board	New phase brochure Institute brochure Achievements publication Stakeholder Reports Annual Report	Annual Conference Board and Committee meetings
I	Federal/State Government - DIISR, Attorneys General, Ministers, DAFF, PMC.	New phase brochure Institute brochure Achievements publication Fire Australia Annual Report Website CRC Innovations publication	CRCA Conference Briefings

