A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE?
Fire management’s capacity to adapt to climate change: an institutional perspective

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Adaptation to climate change requires a capacity for reflexive learning.
In policy domains like fire management, this includes reflection upon how policy problems are framed. It is also influenced by formal & informal institutions* such as bureaucratic networks.

Using a case study of the fire management domain in Victoria, this research used institutional, frame & network analyses to:
• better understand how bureaucratic frames, networks & institutions might support or hinder reflexive learning in the sector
• identify how the sector might address barriers to, and support capacity for, reflexive learning; &
• explore the sector’s institutional capacity for adaptation to climate change

Participating bureaucrats broadly frame fire management as a problem in risk management, ecological management, or social-ecological ‘balancing’.
Each of these frames has certain assumptions about the causes & the legitimacy of ‘solutions’.
Exploring dissonance and convergence among policy frames can provide insight into barriers to, and opportunities for, reflexive learning. It also provides a more nuanced understanding of ‘policy conflicts’.

The above sociogram depicts some of the information & advice sharing networks between some of the various organisations involved in the sector.
Different colours = different organisations
The bigger the node the more ‘connections’ that node has.
While there is some clustering, the organisations are connected at a very human level.
At an informal level, information is shared quite well among these participants.

Adaptive capacity lies in social networks, including those between people & groups with different ‘frames’.
Diversity can avoid ‘path dependencies’, expand perspectives and provide a broader range of ideas about policy and governance options.

*By institutions we do NOT mean organisations