

# FIRE CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT GROUPS

## The future of bushfire management?

### PROPOSED RESEARCH

#### What is my proposed research?

*'The potential role and efficacy of community groups in bushfire management: A case study analysis of volunteerism on the urban-rural boundary of Burnside, South Australia and Kalamunda, Western Australia.'*

This research is concerned with investigating the efficacy of bushfire planning and management through the potential establishment of 'Fire Catchment Management Groups'.

Two volunteer fire fighting brigades and their communities will be examined.

- A) The Burnside Country Fire Service (CFS)
- B) The Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

Local governments, communities and land management agencies will be encouraged to contribute to the potential establishment of:

- 1) 'Fire Catchment Management Groups' and
- 2) Community action plans.

This research will concentrate on how these groups might be established and the potential role of volunteers in effective bushfire management.

The overall aim of the project is to investigate the following question:

*"How might volunteer community organisations best be utilised in the management and prevention of bushfires?"*



A photo of Burnside CFS Volunteers. (Photo courtesy of Burnside CFS)

### METHODOLOGY

#### How will this research be investigated?

This project will use a case study research strategy, developing two intensive case studies in Burnside, SA and Kalamunda, WA.

Why Burnside and Kalamunda?

Burnside and Kalamunda have been selected as case study sites for three reasons.

- 1.) They are considered peri-urban
- 2.) They are high bushfire prone areas
- 3.) They both have established volunteer fire fighting organisations.



A map of case study site 1: Burnside, SA.



A map of case study site 2: Kalamunda, WA.

#### Fieldwork Components

- Historical Investigation
- Media Content Analysis
- Participant Observation
- Interviews
- Questionnaire
- Community Action Plan
- Bushfire Catchment Management Group Model
- Participant Review

### OUTCOMES

#### What will this research achieve?

The project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- 1) Identification of major issues in the formation and operation of volunteer community organisations in bushfire management;
- 2) An assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of using volunteer community organisations in bushfire management;
- 3) Identification of impediments to coordinated state and non-state coordinated action in bushfire management;
- 4) Contributions to the literature on decentralised environmental governance and our understanding of the role of communities in fire safety, and finally
- 5) A model for facilitating development of & utilising 'Fire Catchment Management Groups' in bushfire management.



A photo of a response vehicle from the Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade (KVBFB). (Photo courtesy of KVBFB)

#### Why is this research significant?

- 1) It will be the first examination of decentralised environmental management in relation to fire management, and
- 2) This research will be able to provide additional data and results that will contribute to determining the appropriateness and effectiveness of the "Stay or Go" policy.

### FIELDWORK AND RESULTS PLAN

