

Policy capacity to support community bushfire resilience in light of climate change

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Background

As climate change increases the risk of bushfire weather, the question of what this may mean for community bushfire resilience and therefore for fire management policy, is highlighted. It is generally argued that supporting or building resilience will reduce vulnerabilities to an increasing risk of hazards such as bushfire. Concepts of community and natural resource resilience are unlikely to be foreign to most fire agencies, some of which have a suite of policies aimed at achieving such goals.

Yet climate change involves complex processes and interrelationships. The effects it may have on pertinent variables, such as general 'community resilience' are not well known. Our ability to predict consequential effects is therefore limited. This challenges typical policy development approaches that rely on the past as a guide to the future and it demands reflection as to whether current policy suites will support community bushfire resilience as our climate changes.

Research Aim

To characterise frameworks that can be used to assess whether bushfire policy suites are robust, able to support community bushfire resilience in light of climate change and its associated uncertainties



Research Approach

This study will be guided by two concepts: robust policy and social-ecological resilience. It will draw upon knowledge and experience of practitioners, experts and other relevant parties, via literature reviews, policy document analysis, interviews, and workshops to:

- Review the implications of climate change for community bushfire resilience;
- Identify 'robust policy' criteria for bushfire management;
- Characterise and test frameworks or models that fire management agencies might practically use to analyse and inform their policy suite - within the concept of social-ecological bushfire resilience; and
- Evaluate the capacity of at least one suite of bushfire risk management policies to support community resilience to climate change (in case-study location/s)

Research Output

Climate change and community bushfire resilience. K. Bosomworth and J Handmer. In *Community safety for bushfire*. CSIRO Publishing. (2007).