Project C7 Research Team, Bushfire CRC
School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, RMIT University

# FINAL REPORT:
# BRAG (Bushfire Ready Action Groups) in Western Australia: Three Evaluative Case Studies

**John Gilbert and Graham Marsh**
January 2009

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background to research

Project C7 of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) is working towards the development of an overarching framework and methodology for evaluating community safety policies and programs. Supporting agencies to design and implement evaluations of community safety programs is an important component of the work.

The BRAG program first came to the attention of the project team in early 2007 when contact with FESA identified that there was interest for a study to be undertaken based on their program. The first stage of the work took place in February 2007 when a program theory workshop was held in Perth. This turned into being the first stage of what became a fairly protracted study of BRAG for the C7 research team. After the workshop findings were written up it was apparent just how large the scope for the evaluation was. Conversations between FESA and C7 towards the end of 2007 helped to clarify what would be practical and desirable to explore. This was in the context of a pending full internal review of BRAG being commissioned by FESA which would take place after this project had concluded.

In order to avoid duplication, and due to the constraints on what C7 could offer, it was agreed that this piece of research would not be a full program evaluation. Instead the approach taken would be evaluative case studies that would examine the principals behind the success of BRAGs in the case study locations. FESA, at C7's request, suggested three possible case study locations where BRAG had been established for some time and who would be willing to take part. These were Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup. Initially the plan was to select two of these as the case studies. But after careful consideration of the options it was decided to carry out fieldwork at all three.

At this stage a project scope was developed that outlined C7's proposal, including an outline of the timeframe, methodology and intended aims of the project. It was also suggested to FESA that a project reference group would potentially be of benefit as it would enable the research team to get feedback on the proposed methodology, interview questions and subsequently on the results and presentation of findings. FESA duly assisted in the setup and bringing together of a reference group made up of representatives from all three case study locations. The group first met at Mandurah in May 2008 to agree on terms of reference and to finalise the project scope.

The fieldwork for the research took place between May and July 2008 and was largely based around individual and small group interviews with a range of stakeholders. At the conclusion of the fieldwork, in August, the reference group reconvened to discuss an early cut of the results. Work then continued on the analysis and drafting of the report. A further presentation to members of the reference group was given at the start of November providing an update based on the finalised analysis of the data. At all stages the feedback generated from the reference group was extremely valuable to the development of the final report. It also enabled the research

team to give back something to the members of the reference group who had been so generous with their time and ideas.

**Report structure**
The report consists of five main sections in the body of the write-up and three appendixes:

- Section 1 provides an overview of the project and the aims and methodology used for the evaluative case studies.
- Section 2 provides additional background to the case study locations and provides a rationale for the way in which the analysis of the interview data is structured.
- Section 3 is the analysis itself, providing a commentary on the findings from the interviews examining the contexts, mechanisms and outcomes.
- Section 4 is the discussion of the findings from the analysis.
- Section 5 offers some conclusions and.
- The Appendix 1 and 2 provide additional background information for the evaluative case studies and the approach used.
- Appendix 3 contains the first cut of the data analysis, which covers both the areas within the scope of this project and additional topics that will hopefully be of interest to other people investigating BRAG or similar programs in the future.

The project findings are summarised below:

## Conclusions

- Diverse contexts are important in determining the appropriateness and success of BRAG.
- A “one size fits all” approach is not realistic as individual understanding and acceptance of the risk varies.
- Flexibility has become an important process in BRAG but requires skilled facilitators with the necessary resources and support.
- The facilitator is the major driver of BRAG in each location – this does raise the question of succession planning.
- Group activity (at least formally) is not as evident as in the traditional Fireguard model.
- Individual preparedness outcomes are more common than community level outcomes, e.g. residents considering their plans but not in consultation with neighbours.
- Resources, both in terms of print/media and people are vital to the groups for their ongoing success and maintenance.
- The socio-demographic make up of the groups studied was predominantly affluent, middle class Australians with small CALD and Aboriginal populations. It was not possible in this

research to examine whether the model would work for these communities. Or for that matter whether the findings in the three case study locations are reflective of other areas where BRAG is in existence.

- BRAG is generally dealing with conflict in the three case study locations, both amongst individual groups and between the groups and FESA (both central office, regional and local government). However there was some evidence to suggest the conflict has the potential to hinder groups in the future.

## Recommendations

- That BRAG in some form or another should be maintained where it is operating successfully and expanded to communities where it is not operating at the moment.
- That FESA should continue to provide and update the material resources available to BRAGs and should consider providing dedicated staff to resource the ongoing maintenance and development of BRAGs.
- That the communication lines between FESA central office and the local BRAG facilitators be improved.
- That FESA continue to evaluate and monitor the existing BRAGs in the light of socio-demographic changes occurring in local communities and to monitor the manner in which BRAG facilitators are trained in how best to manage these changes. For example: in the light of these changes BRAG facilitators should be trained in how to include CALD communities in their operations and appropriate multilingual material should be available to them from FESA head office.
- That, in the light of the importance of having committed facilitators if a BRAG is to operate effectively, FESA cooperate with the local governments in recruiting and training facilitators and coordinators to ensure the future continuation of these and other BRAGs.
- That training is tailored to the particular needs of these BRAG recruits: e.g. community education and communication perhaps for fire fighters and necessary aspects of fire fighting needed for non-fire fighters.
- That the potential for Regional BRAG Coordinators be explored by FESA as a way of more effectively providing support to existing groups and extending the program further.
- That the internal review of BRAG that FESA will commission considers the findings and implications of this research.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of this report would like to acknowledgement the contribution and input of a number of people that have been critical to the completion of this project.

Firstly, the authors wish to recognise the contribution of their former colleague at the Bushfire/Natural Hazards Research Team at RMIT, Kaye Stevens. Kaye was very much involved in the establishment and development of the project scope and in the undertaking of the fieldwork for the case studies.

Thanks also go to the other members of the Bushfire/Natural Hazards Research Team at RMIT who provided advice and feedback – Gerald Elsworth, Helen Goodman and Philip Buckle.

Secondly, the authors wish to thank Suellen Shea, Manager Community Engagement at FESA, for her and her team's assistance in the development of the project and for her feedback on the draft report.

Thirdly, the authors wish to thank the members of the reference group for their input into the initial project scope and advice provided about the case study sites.

And finally, a big thank you to all the members of BRAG groups, facilitators, street coordinators, local government staff, FESA regional staff, and the local brigades members in Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup for their willingness to take part in interviews and contribute to this project.

We hope that it will contribute significantly to the future development of the BRAG program.

# CONTENTS

FINAL REPORT: 1
BRAG (Bushfire Ready Action Groups) in Western Australia: Three Evaluative Case Studies 1
Background to research 2
Conclusions 3
Recommendations 4
1.1 Introduction 7
2. CASE STUDIES 15
Bedfordale 15
Yallingup 17
3. ANALYSIS 20
3.1 BEDFORDALE BRAG: MODEL ANALYSIS 20
TRUST AND SELF CONFIDENCE 30
CONFIRMATION AND RE-ASSESSMENT 32
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION 35
PLANNING, PREPARATION AND SAFE RESPONSE 37
3.3. YALLINGUP BRAG: MODEL ANALYSIS 52
4. DISCUSSION 67
4.1 Context 67
4.4 Street coordinators 76
5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 79
5.1 CONCLUSION 79
5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS 82
REFERENCES: 83
Appendix 1: Program Theory for BRAG **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Appendix 2: Example of Interview Schedule - facilitators 84
Appendix 3: Initial interview analysis 85

1. OVERVIEW

## *1.1 Introduction*

The Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) funded through the Australian Government's CRC program, commenced in 2003 and combines the efforts of more than 30 research, fire and land management agencies in Australia and New Zealand in undertaking research on bushfires. In its seven year life span it aims to better understand the complex social, economic and environmental aspects of bushfires.

The research program has more than 50 projects covering:

- Safe Prevention, Preparation and Suppression
- Management of Fire in the Landscape
- Community Self-Sufficiency for Fire Safety
- Protection of People and Property

It is also providing an education program that is helping to develop the next generation of fire researchers and helps to inform the public and special interest groups on the latest developments in bushfire knowledge.

Project C7, the "Evaluation Framework" project, forms part of the program called "Community Self Sufficiency for Fire Safety". Members of this project seek to examine the influences of formal programs and activities on increasing community safety, to identify influences outside of those programs, and to provide advice to the sector on both the most useful evaluation approaches for community safety policies and programs and the most effective way to engage the multiple stakeholders in these approaches.

### *1.2 Context*

Bushfire Ready Action Group (BRAG) is a program run in Western Australia by the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA). It is a community group program originally developed along the lines of the Community Fireguard model in Victoria. The program has been in existence since 1996, it was originally known as Community Fireguard but FESA changed its name to BRAG in 2001. At its peak there were BRAG groups in 38 locations across the state. This has diminished in the past couple of years. The program is now pending a full internal review by FESA.

BRAG has its origins in the Community Fireguard program. In 1993 the Community Fireguard program was developed by the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in Victoria. It pioneered a model of on-going group fire-safe programs that have since been adopted, and adapted, by many fire agencies around Australia. At the core of the concept was identifying residents in high bushfire risk locations, facilitating the formation and development of groups of local neighbours, equipping them with the knowledge and information to increase their fire safety and achieving a level of ongoing planning and preparedness for bushfires. The program developed in a changing

context of emergency management for bushfires. It was becoming increasingly acknowledged that community resilience was essential in high fire risk areas where it would not be possible to guarantee a fire truck at everyone's property during a major fire; that a house could protect its owners during a bushfire provided it was well prepared and actively defended (Wilson & Ferguson, 1984; Krusel and Petris, 1992; Packham, 1992); and that information provision prior to and during an event was essential for community safety.

The process a Community Fireguard group went through followed a pattern. After the establishment of a group, the residents met at one of their homes and went through a series of modules with a trained facilitator which increased their knowledge and understanding of many aspects of fire behaviour, their local risk and what they could do to become better prepared. Following the completion of the core modules the facilitator took a back seat providing additional support on request, such as the provision of brochures. In the model a successful group would remain active by continuing to meet prior to the fire season and making plans and preparations together.

The rationale behind the program is succinctly summarised as being:

> …about local people taking responsibility for their own fire safety. These people work in small community groups to develop strategies to cope with the local fire threat. These strategies are based on a solid understanding of wildfire safety issues. (Original Community Fireguard Booklet, in Ministerial Working Group, 1994)

Over the first 5 years about 400 active groups were established in Victoria (Boura, 1998). Evidence from program evaluations (Boura, 1998; Rohrmann, 1999) suggested that the program was having an impact at a number of levels. Individual participants were accepting responsibility for their own safety and undertaking preparedness activities (Rohrmann, 1999). At a community/organisational level Community Fireguard was going beyond education and leading to a level of ongoing engagement and a partnership between the CFA and communities (Boura, 1998). The Community Fireguard program continues to be an important component of Fire Ready Victoria in Victoria with 504 Fireguard sessions delivered in the 2007-08 period[1]. Given these findings and the weight of numbers of groups it is not surprising the approach interested other agencies who were also looking to implement programs that fostered partnerships with the community.

The model attracted attention in Western Australia as early as 1994 when a group formed in Bedfordale. This seems to pre-date the formal introduction of the 18 month pilot program in March 1996 in Darlington. This was a recommendation of the Ministerial Working Group Investigating the Darling Escarpment Fire Hazard (1994: 21). The investigation was prompted due to concerns about the awareness of communities living in this high-risk area of the state and a number of fires in the area in the preceding fire season. The pilot was developed and funded as a partnership between the Bush Fires Board, Western Power, the Fire and Rescue Service,

[1] CFA Annual Report (2008)

Department of Conservation and Land Management and WA Municipal Association. The funding provided for a dedicated program coordinator to promote and implement the program, initially in the Shire of Mundaring (where Darlington is), the Shire of Kalamunda and the City of Armadale (where Bedfordale is). A major difference in the operation of Community Fireguard in Western Australia was in terms of how facilitators were appointed to the program. They undertook a one day internal training course as opposed to the external diploma in community education required in Victoria.

It appears that even after the pilot finished there was continued activity in areas such as Darlington where the Community Fireguard program remained active. The Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia (FESA) came into existence in 1999, which prompted an assessment of the future direction of Community Fireguard and subsequently led to a change in the name of the program to Bushfire Ready Action Groups in 2001. Minutes from Darlington Community Fireguard group meetings offer an insight into this decision, stating that the change of name was due to "name negativity". BRAG was developed as an umbrella for a range of activities including Fireguard activities, street meetings and the summer media campaign. A significant change in the program that occurred when the program became BRAG is described by a FESA community safety coordinator:

…initially when it [Community Fireguard] was adopted from the east they maintained that sort of remuneration of facilitators. So they were provided with an annual bonus…But when it became BRAG that was stopped. So there was no money in the program whatsoever… (Fp2-4)

This change in financial commitment to the program coincides with the end of the funding arrangement with Western Power. Coordination for BRAG would occur from FESA central office but the activity would take place on the ground with support from the regional staff and local government. The coordination of the program went from being a full-time dedicated role at FESA to a part of a wider coordination role of the summer safe projects and other elements of the BRAG umbrella. The role of the coordinator in relation to BRAG is summarised as:

> Providing training for BRAG facilitators. Generally communicating with the facilitators on a fairly regular basis and, you know, resource development…So it was more that liaison and working obviously with our regional staff, our district managers, who looked after them [BRAG groups] on a local level. (Fp2-4)

**Figure 1: overview of key players in BRAG**

| VOLUNTEER BRAG FACILITATOR | BRAG STREET COORDINATOR |
|---|---|
| • Helps in the establishment and maintenance of BRAG group(s).<br>• Delivers BRAG modules to members.<br>• Facilitates meetings and street-walks.<br>• Distributes resources.<br>• Promotes BRAG within their local community.<br>• Participates in various FESA community safety strategies.<br>• Providing feedback to FESA. | • Promotes and maintains the program within their street and enlists the support of neighbours.<br>• Organises meetings and provides/organises a venue (their home, community centre, etc).<br>• Establishes and maintains a database on BRAG members within their group.<br>• Supports the facilitator as required. |

| FIRE SERVICES MANAGER | FESA COMMUNITY SAFETY COORDINATOR |
|---|---|
| • Identifies potential areas where BRAG would benefit the community.<br>• Identifies potential facilitators and explains what the role entails.<br>• Assesses and approves the facilitator.<br>• Supports the Community Safety Officer in delivering facilitator training (providing information on fire behaviour, preparedness strategies and other technical issues including matters specific to their local community).<br>• Works with the facilitator to set up the BRAG group.<br>• Provides on-going support to the facilitator and the BRAG program.<br>• Promotes BRAG within their region. | • Promotes and provides information on BRAG to the general community.<br>• Provides facilitator training on BRAG and BRAG related issues.<br>• Develops BRAG resources.<br>• Tracks and maintains the BRAG database.<br>• Sends out resource and campaign materials to facilitators.<br>• Supports the Fire Service Manager.<br>• Reviews and evaluates the BRAG program. |

FESA's coordinator of BRAG activities developed a database of groups and facilitators. In 2005 there were around 80 facilitators with varying levels of activity in about 40 locations across the state, the major concentration being close to the Perth Hills and in the South-West. However information about finer level details of participation at a street level was not available (at least centrally) other than anecdotally. This was in terms of what feedback the coordinator received and from attending BRAG meetings. "It'd never been measured or gauged in terms of who was on board and doing what in the community". (Fp4)

As the coordinator's role developed the amount of time dedicated to BRAG diminished, which presented challenges in terms of supporting the facilitators and coordinating the program. At the same time support from FESA operational staff varied considerably. Some District Managers embraced the concept and were active at promoting and supporting the BRAG program in their region, while others were far less interested and committed.

> Some managers were very much using it as a…as an important tool within the community with their brigade members. There were others that absolutely didn't have a clue. (Fp5)

From a FESA perspective another issue that emerged at this time was the background of facilitators. To begin with facilitators were recruited from the local bushfire brigades. Typically this would include volunteer brigade members who were getting too old for fire fighting duties

or volunteers with an interest in community education. At some point general community members were allowed to become facilitators. This appears to have been problematic because whereas the volunteer brigade members already had an understanding of fire behaviour the community members required a lot more training to cover these basics which couldn't easily be accommodated within the framework of the program. The lack of process for recruitment of facilitators also raised questions about whether FESA was opening itself up for scrutiny. It prompted a risk analysis study into the program in 2006 to identify this and other issues related to the running and delivery of BRAG, such as the accuracy of information facilitators are provided and the legal implications of recommendations made to residents.

Decisions about the future of BRAG have been uncertain since the risk analysis, pending a full external review of the program. FESA Community Engagement Directorate has continued to liaise with existing BRAG groups and support them on an ad hoc basis. In 2008 several changes have been implemented in response to a review of existing community education resources, including BRAG materials. A decision was also made to modify the name, as there had been some calls to simplify the acronym. Consequently the program is now being referred to as the Bushfire Ready program. However as this happened after the interviews for this project it will be referred to as BRAG for the purposes of this report.

It is against this historical background and rationale that the BRAG program came to the attention of the research team and subsequently formed the basis of this report.

### *1.3 Background to evaluative case studies*

In February 2007, Project C7 ran a program logic/theory workshop[2] with key personnel involved with the BRAG program. The result of the half-day workshop in Perth was an initial program theory matrix for BRAG based on the knowledge and experiences of key stakeholders. These included representatives from FESA head office, FESA regional staff, local brigades and members of the community actively involved in the program as facilitators.

The information generated from the workshop provided an initial overview of BRAG; its intended outcomes, the activities and resources involved, some of the causal process that possibly help in achieving the outcomes, the contexts in which the program appears to work best, and barriers that might hinder BRAG from working (see Appendix 1 for the program theory matrix). The first question asked of the group during the workshop was in broad terms to consider the key issues. That is, what they saw BRAG as intervention being in aid of and what is it seeking to address.

[2] The workshop involves the development of a program logic and a program theory. Program logic is a simplified picture of how the objectives of a program can be achieved through a series of outcomes. These are often represented in the form of a hierarchy of intended outcomes. A Program theory is an extension of the 'program logic' that helps to link intended outcomes of a program to the program activities and the underlying assumptions about how a program works. It helps to explain how the program elements are related and how they might work together to bring about the effects of a program. This is often usefully expressed in the form of a 'program logic' matrix. For a detailed account of the workshop approach, see Rhodes and Gilbert (2008).

Figure 2 shows the initial thoughts of the group which were then refined during the workshop. However they serve as a useful overview of the fundamental issues that those responsible for developing and implementing the program saw. Immediately it became clear just how broad and wide-ranging these were.

**Figure 2: BRAG 'Issues'**

- Preparing for bushfire
- Making residents aware of what they can do
- Hazard reduction
- Telephone tree
- Planning and preparation
- Knowing your neighbour and what's going on in your street (fire an off-shoot of this) – linked to neighbourhood watch
- Taking responsibility for living in a fire prone area
- Puts pressure on those in the community who don't do the right things
- Self-help
- Gives residents confidence in a fire situation (address uncertainty and early warning)
- Accurate information
- Ease resource issues on fire authority (not a fire truck for every property)
- Volunteer fire brigade (shift from BRAG program and better take up)
- Community complacency
- People's lack of understanding of how a bushfire behaves (empowering community, make informed decisions, behaviour change)
- Localise FESA's messages to help deal with local issues
- More effective distribution of FESA's information
- Actively encourage neighbours
- Program offers a buy-in to absentee land owners
- Peace of mind, know what to expect – address uncertainty (psychological preparedness)
- People moving into fire prone areas from city or other areas where bushfires aren't a high risk

The workshop also raised further questions about how BRAG works, its effectiveness and the particular circumstances in which it could be expected to achieve desired outcomes. It was proposed that further work be undertaken by C7 to gain a more comprehensive understanding of BRAG by testing aspects of the program theory through evaluative case studies of three "successful" groups: Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup. The decision to look at these groups was based on the recommendations of FESA and the willingness of the locations to be involved in the research. They also represented three of the most established, active and knowledgeable BRAG groups in the state and therefore had the potential for generating a large volume of information. The central tenet of the evaluation approach adopted by the research team is what works, for whom and in what contexts. Therefore, the suggested case study locations provided an opportunity to look at three areas where BRAG had been implemented and sustained over several years, to look at the contexts and settings the program has worked or not worked in, why and how.

The decision was taken by the research team, in consultation with FESA, that the work would not a full program evaluation per se, rather the approach adopted would be designed to examine the principles behind the perceived success of BRAG in the three case study locations. This would therefore compliment the intended full review of the program being commissioned by the agency.

A scoping document was developed by the reference group that outlined the proposed parameters of the work and the methodology. This was done in consultation with FESA Community Engagement Directorate. The decision was made to set up a project reference group comprising of people involved in BRAG in the three case study locations. Feedback was sought from FESA and a project reference group on the scoping document and the reference group have met on three occasions to provide input into the project.

### *1.4 Aims*

Key evaluation questions were agreed on in consultation with the FESA Community Engagement Directorate and the project reference group. These were:

1. What are the similarities and differences between the groups in terms of context, history, membership, inputs, processes and outcomes?
2. To what extent have the groups in the three case study locations achieved the intended program outcomes? (as outlined in the program theory model)
3. What unintended outcomes have occurred, both positive and negative?
4. What has supported or been a barrier to the achievement of outcomes and why?
5. What evidence is there that the outcomes are sustainable/what resources are needed to sustain them?

## *1.5 Methodology*

The basis of the case study methodology was interviews with a range of stakeholders, supported by relevant literature reviews and document analysis of publications related to BRAG and appropriate ABS data. The interviews used a semi-structured technique to generate a large amount of qualitative data. Interviews were conducted in each of the three case study locations. The interviews were either done individually or on a small group basis. Those interviewed included FESA, local government, local brigades and the community:

- BRAG facilitators
- Street coordinators
- Local brigade captains (VBFB)
- BRAG group members
- Regional FESA and local government staff involved with BRAG including Chief Bushfire Control Officers, District Managers and Community Fire Managers
- An interview was also undertaken with FESA Community Safety Branch including past and present community safety coordinators responsible for supporting BRAG.

**NB** In some cases interviewees held multiple roles and therefore provide responses in both their capacities. For example, a facilitator may also have been the local brigade captain.

Examples of the interview schedules are provided in Appendix 2. It was informed by feedback from FESA, an initial review of program documentation and the initial program theory workshop. Further refinement occurred after meeting the project reference group in May. Fieldwork took place in June over three visits. A total of 17 interviews were undertaken which amounted to more than twenty hours of recordings. The majority of the interviews were transcribed. Qualitative data analysis techniques were utilised such as coding of the data under relevant headings.

### *Limitations*

As previously stated the decision was made to focus on three areas where the program had been sustained for a number of years. While there would be value in future work that examined communities where BRAG had been tried but not sustained, it fell outside the parameters of this study. However it would certainly be a worthwhile future project. In addition there was also a need to focus the research on people who were involved with the program in the three case study sites rather than comparisons between members of the community who were participants and those who weren't. This decision was taken to focus attention of the study on where BRAG was having an impact in the communities. The fact that a full internal review of the program is pending meant that the research team could narrow their focus in order to explore in more details the workings of three successful groups.

The participant profile that was proposed in the scoping document did not take place when the fieldwork was undertaken. This was due to difficulties in getting a representative sample of BRAG participants to take part in interviews. Consequently it was decided to draw on ABS profiles for the three case study locations and the qualitative assessment of those who were interviewed.

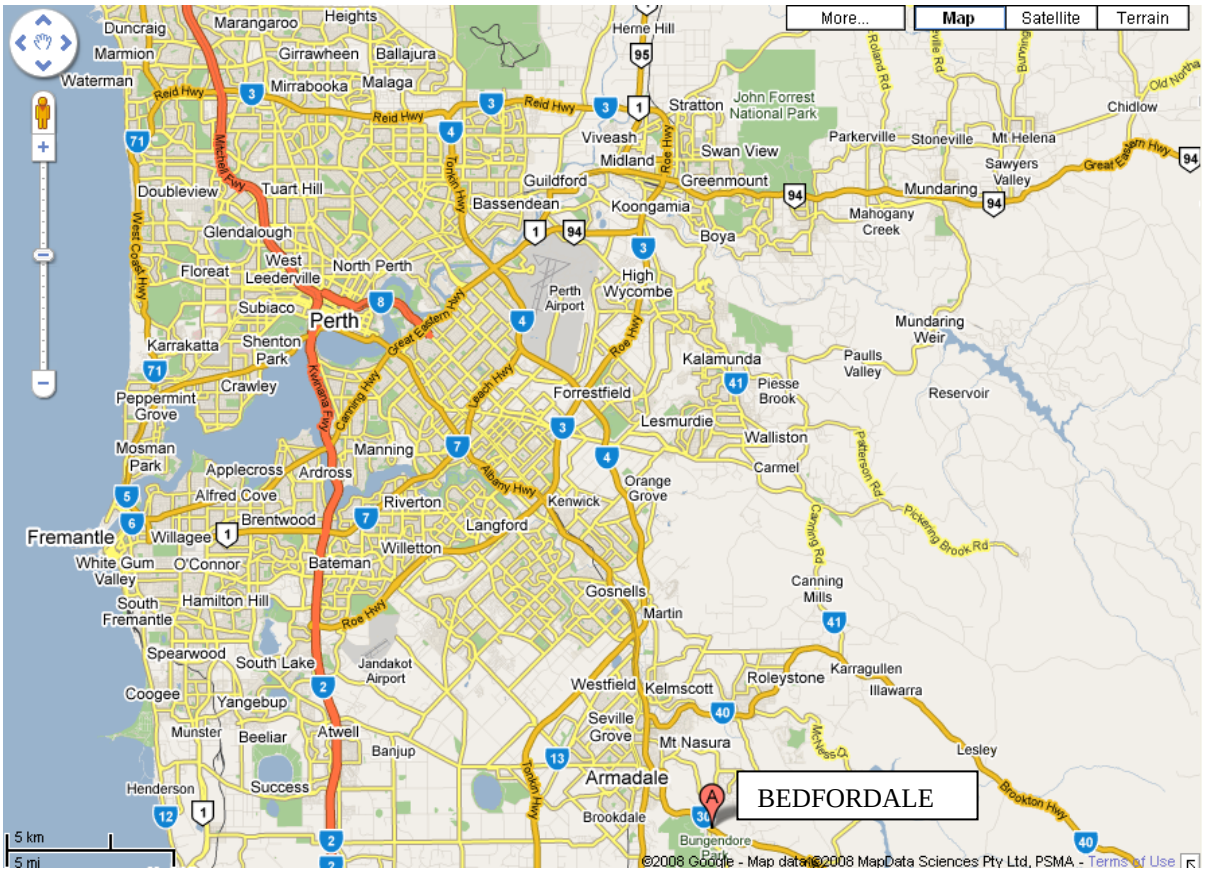
# 2. CASE STUDIES

## *2.1 Background Summaries*

This section provides a brief summary of the background to BRAG in Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup. Further information follows in the analysis and discussion related to each of the case study sites. The initial proposal for this project focused on two case studies. However it became apparent that it would be beneficial to broaden the scope out and examine all three locations.

### Bedfordale

**Map 1: Bedfordale and surrounds**




## *Location*

Bedfordale is located about 30 minutes south east of the Perth CBD and is under the Local Government jurisdiction of the City of Armadale. It is located in an area that is recognised as a growing regional centre and an urban community nestled amongst scenic parks, undulating hills and picturesque valleys. The City of Armadale was recently earmarked as one of the top five

growth regions in the Perth metropolitan area. Bedfordale is home to the Armadale Settlers Common which is a 383 ha bushland reserve, of which approximately 287 ha is vested in the City of Armadale, for the purpose of 'parks and recreation'. The Common lies on the Darling Scarp and is within the wider Darling Range Regional Park. Much of the bushland is in good condition and is used for recreational activities such as walking and hiking, orienteering, nature appreciation, picnics, exercising and nature photography.

## *History*

Bedfordale BRAG started in 1994 as Community Fire Guard with the original facilitator being Lyall Cotterall. Lyall was motivated to form a local bush fire awareness and education neighbourhood group following fires that occurred along Loch View and Carradine Road. Ian Thompson commenced his role soon after the group's formation and has been the facilitator since.

## *Darlington*

**Map 2: Darlington and surrounds**

## *Location*

Darlington is about a 40 minute drive from the Perth CBD in the LG jurisdiction of the Shire of Mundaring. The Shire covers an area of 644 sq. kms of which nearly half is State Forest or Reserves. Tourism is a vibrant and growing part of the region, with nature based activities and facilities a priority.

Darlington is a low density residential area, with significant parklands. It was named after the mountain range located in the area, Darling Range.

### *History*

Darlington BRAG was originally formed in 1994 under the auspices of the then Community Fire Guard program. The group's first facilitator was Colin James, who still retains this role.

## Yallingup

**Map 3: Yallingup and surrounds**

### *Location*

Yallingup is a coastal town located about 264 kilometres south of Perth and is in the Local Government jurisdiction of the Shire of Busselton. It is a popular holiday destination and is probably best known for its excellent surf. The Shire of Busselton is experiencing high rates of demographic and economic growth. The population of the Shire of Busselton now exceeds 26,000 people and this growth is predicted to continue. The west coastal area of the Shire, which includes Yallingup, contains some of the State's most famous surfing breaks and a number of the State's best known and most prestigious wineries and caves as well as large areas of national park and State forest.

### *History*

Prior to 2004, Yallingup had informal Community Fire Guard groups which rarely convened and whose arrangements are best described as "ad-hoc". Yallingup BRAG, in its current form, is the amalgamation of a couple of different BRAG units in the area – Yallingup Siding and

Yallingup Rural. There is an additional informal group in the centre of the town of Yallingup which is facilitated by Laurie Roach but this is not formally affiliated with the main group. Annie Palmer and Mark Standish are the main facilitators and both are members of the Yallingup Rural Bush Fire Brigade.

## *2.2 Approach to case study analysis*

The data gathered about BRAG from the case study interviews provided a vast amount of information to analyse. The focus of the evaluation was on 'what works for whom in what circumstances, in what respects and how'? Therefore to assist with the realist approach to considering how BRAG operates in Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup a framework was devised for the data analysis based on a model developed by Elsworth et al (2008: 46). The model in question (Figure 3) is an initial theory-based model of community education, awareness and engagement (EAE) initiatives that synthesises the knowledge about the effectiveness of community EAE program for bushfire, based on existing published evaluations of programs. It provided a useful structure for the analysis of information from the interviews and the subsequent write up.

**Context**

Diverse contexts are important in determining the appropriateness and success of specific community EAE initiatives for bushfire. These include:

- locality (urban fringe, rural township, rural)
- livelihood/lifestyle (commuter, small land-holder, farmer)
- community (existing ties, local organisations, local advocates, diversity – CALD, disabled, older residents)
- the nature of past and present events (recency, duration, phase (mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery)
- Prior level of engagement/interest in issue (resistant, motivated, active)
- inter-organisational relationships during planning/implementation (e.g. partnerships between response agency, land management agency, local government)
- intra-organisational relationships (e.g. response/community engagement officers)
- agency/community relationships (e.g. with local brigade or community fire unit)

**Engagement**

Individuals, households and families in bushfire prone localities in Australia are not necessarily strongly engaged with the risks and suitable safety responses. Programs *actively engage* their interest and motivation to enable participants, individually and collectively, to *think through* and discuss issues, *plan* and make *appropriate choices*. Strategies that encourage engagement include well-presented visual materials, 'first-hand' accounts, well-organised authoritative presenters, personal contact and *'localising' content to the participants' context*.

**Trust and Self-confidence**

A consistent message from fire agencies is that they cannot necessarily defend every property during an event. Programs *generate trust* in agencies to give *credible advice*, listen to and respect *local knowledge*, make sound decisions that *respect local concerns*, and do their best in challenging circumstances. Residents also develop *confidence and trust in their own capacity* to plan, prepare and defend their property and, where appropriate, assist in their community.

**Confirmation and re-assessment**

Residents *actively seek confirming and additional information* (e.g. when a warning is received, when a safety strategy is recommended) from both *formal and informal sources* and, where appropriate, *re-assess and re-negotiate* their planning, preparation, and response options.

**Community involvement and collaboration**

Residents *get to know neighbours and other community members* better, *understand* their needs and capacities, *learn* from their skills and experiences, *collaborate* during an emergency, and *generate a shared understanding* of agency advice and warning messages.

**Planning, preparation and safe response**

Residents *individually and collaboratively* within families develop *plans*, *prepare* their properties and *respond safely* during an event (leave early or actively defend their property). Residents *share* their response plans with neighbours and agency personnel, *support each other* (including vulnerable community members) and *act as a group* where appropriate.

**Figure 3: Preliminary theory model of community EAE initiatives (Elsworth et al, 2008: 46)**

The initial cut of the data analysis for the interviews is provided in Appendix 3. This provides additional information and levels of details that might be of interest to some readers.

# 3. ANALYSIS

## 3.1 BEDFORDALE BRAG: MODEL ANALYSIS

*Context*

Relationships between BRAG and FESA and the SHIRE and FESA can be tenuous at times as the following suggests: According to the facilitator, I.T. he'd offered to go anywhere to promote BRAG but he felt he was fobbed off by FESA. '… Go to these places, and just give my opinion on BRAG and how good it is. But, no, every time I ring up … I rang x when they had the big fires up there and I said are you going to have a meeting like we discussed? Oh, just … we're doing this and we're doing that and we're not going … and, well, I did offer.' FESA apparently is afraid also to make recommendations on such things as sprinklers on roofs according to this same interviewee: 'And a lot of people asked about sprinklers on roofs … And FESA won't recommend anything 'cause they say, oh well, if they … somebody puts something on and the house gets burned down they can sue us 'cause we told them put the …We just suggest it. Anything on your roof, anything you can do to stop the fire, is an improvement. You know, if you want to put sprinklers on your roof we can't tell you what to put. Talk to some of the local plumbers, some of them have done it, go ahead and do it. (Bp4)

Relationships and co-operation are not all that bad though: When asked about the relationship between his BRAG and FESA and who he would contact, the following was the response:

> I: I … no, (don't contact the regional officers) I just ring whoever is the safety officer or whoever it was, like say it was Mark Molnar, then Ruth Kramer, and now I believe it'll be Helen. And I just ring them and say look I need X amount of this or this pamphlets or this … whatever I need, and that's basically all I ever do on it. Like, you know, they'll send them on a courier next morning if they're urgent. Oh, yeah. I've never had any problem getting anything from FESA for my BRAG meetings. And I've had … I couldn't ever get x here. She always oh, I'm going to try, but she had young kids.' He always believes it's good to have FESA represented at meetings and one had been at the last coordinators' meetings at which only about half the coordinators were present as it is a quiet year with no fires. (Bp7)

As for training of the coordinators, FESA training material appears to be lacking and the belief was that while information is supplied,

> the training part they don't help us a lot with now': 'I: if there's training I've never found it. But there is a kit that FESA used to give me for the street coordinators and it'd tell them what was expected of them. And I haven't been able to get any of those lately, so … They thought it was useful. And they had a nice little bag that they could carry all the stuff around in and it told them what their role as a street coordinator was. And that was good. But I

> couldn't get any for the last couple of street coordinators I've had. I'll have to chase that up again I suppose. (Bp8)

Across and within BRAGs the use and perceived value of training programs would appear to be varied as is the view of what can be obtained from FESA as the following indicates:

> R: I never had the facilitators training did you?
>
> S: I didn't get the facilitators training until just before I left I think. I'm pretty sure it was in that last year before I left so for me, I already knew a lot of the stuff; it was sort of a learning process sort of thing for myself. But that … the facilitators … the file that they gave us, it had like the modules to go through with the rest, that was really good because I only knew fire fighter training and I didn't know sort of what residents might and might not need to know. And that's why talking to them and that sort of thing … so that information was good and getting resources from FESA, if you're persistent you'll get them, and really they have … most of the time listen to our suggestions and come out with some really good products so yeah. I don't know because Anne (a facilitator of another BRAG) was … was a bit … we don't get anything from FESA and … I don't know what her brigade's like maybe it's a bit different in that it doesn't have the same standing, maybe we've just got good … good representatives like PJ and that who … although their job is much more varied than just BRAG they will give you an ear and listen to you, to what you have to say so yeah.' (Bp9, 10)

And for the Shire's relationship with FESA, from the regional representative of FESA some of the barriers would stem from the differences of opinion between themselves and the local councils. Politics intervenes in this relationship. Though they do have better working relationships with some councils than others:

> A lot of it's to do with the perception I guess by local government of FESA. I mean, on a personal basis, a regional office basis, we get on very well. I mean, I get on well with the chief bushfire control officers and stuff out there. There's no problems there. But FESA's this big faceless thing, you know. So from the perspective of the region there's not any issues, but they have issues with FESA. So that's just the way it is. K: We have been hearing stories about how in some local government they actually don't support the … I'm going to get the name of the role wrong, but the … the bushfire control officer who is doing the infringement notices …
>
> P: Yeah.
>
> K: but in some councils they actually, yeah, seem to frown upon issuing infringement notices.
>
> P: Because it …Yes. It's a very political thing. Because if you're in a relatively, not size wise but the number of people wise, local government … and it is very much a … a parochial approach to things which, of course, FESA works to break down. And … and is

> not thanked for that. But it … but it's that type of thing where if, you know, you … you don't go out and infringe the … the local councillor for not having fire breaks. In fact … in fact the … the local councillor, if he doesn't think fire breaks for example are a particularly high thing on the agenda then he'll suggest that they shouldn't be issuing infringement notices for breaks, which is probably what you're referring to. It's a very political thing' (Bp4, 5)

Because BRAGS belong to local governments rather than FESA cooperation across local government boundaries would appear to be ad hoc and this would hinder the BRAGs learning from each other. (Bp5) It was also stated by the FESA officer that:

> The other issue too over here which, I don't know if the people have made you aware of, is that it's a bit different from over east. Some areas over east. We actually have no jurisdiction over local governments at all. We liaise with them. We can talk to them. Obviously try and engender things and all that sort of stuff. But local governments are independent of FESA, so FESA has no … and the local, the regional office, we have no jurisdiction over them at all. So basically if they decide that they want to go and do something a particular way, well, if it's not the way we think it should be done we'll go and talk to them about it, but if they decide they're going to do that anyway that's what they go and do. So the reason I mention that is that it, you know … they … they will quite often … like I've had no … no connection at all for example with the Oakford group. Because it depends on the local government. Serpentine Jarrahdale's very independent so they go out and they do their thing.
>
> K: Okay. And does that … sorry, doing their thing, does that involve supporting BRAG groups or …?
>
> P: Yes, it can do. If their chief bushfire control officer's of that mind, yeah, sure. If not, which you'll find in a lot of them, it never happens. And that's why a lot of the local governments don't have any involvement, really, with BRAG. Or there might be little fledgling things here and there, they come and go and they die, but it's not … unless it's supported by the local government, it's not usually a big thing. (Bp13)

For further discussion on the role of local government with BRAG and FESA see B pages 13-14 where the need for a regional FESA officer was recognised:

> They will respond if they get a request, as I understand it. If there's nobody actively pushing, you know, BRAG … and we certainly don't in the regions. And I think the point that the guys made quite telling … not tellingly, but vociferously, at the meeting that we had was that there really needs to be a what we used to call community safety officer or a … or somebody like that in the region …
>
> P: Whose job it is to go out and sort of push that and do those things.
>
> J: So from a BRAG perspective, what sort of roles would that … would that encompass?

> P: Well, I think they would … I think they would be the … see at the moment there's no targeting. We … we don't target areas and nor does community engagement. As I said, we … we respond. FESA's a very responsive organisation. We don't do a lot … we don't do enough I guess as far as sort of planning and … and that sort of stuff. And that would allow us to do that. (Bp13, 14)

The FESA officer noted how powerless FESA often were and how confusing the situation can be for all involved:

> K: So FESA don't … can't have much control over that situation. (issuing infringement notices)
>
> P: We have none at all. No. No control at all. Because the … over here there are three … three agencies that … that look after bushfire or are responsible for bushfire. One of them's the Department of Environment and Conservation. They look after stuff on … in state forests and all their land as well. The other one is local government and they look after everything which is outside the gazetted fire district. And FESA, if you like, looks after stuff inside the gazetted fire district, but we're also responsible for liaison with the local governments as well and DEC. So … but nobody's … it's not like in New South Wales, for example, where the Rural Fire Service is the top agency and National Parks and Wildlife and, you know, all the others answer to them if they declare a section 44. It goes nothing like that here in WA. If we get a fire, we have to work out, you know, whose area's started, whose area's going into, you know, is the … is where it started going to have a person in charge there or is where it's going into going to have a person in charge or … all that sort of stuff. It's a bit interesting' Importantly though, BRAGS can bring pressure to bear on local government. (Bp32, 33)

The way FESA operates is as follows:

> P: Sometimes. It's interesting because I … quite often we get … we get involved at a regional level in the sort of establishment. But once they're established and going we don't much need to be involved any more. For example, I've probably been to maybe two meetings in Bedfordale. And that was really it. You know they've been going for a long time and those two meetings I went to would've been years ago. And I haven't been since. So, yeah, it's … once they sort of get up, you know, and … and I think, as I've said to you on the day, I mean the really important thing with this is you've got to have the driver. If you've got someone like Ian who's really enthusiastic and prepared to go out and knock on doors and do all that sort of stuff it works well. If you don't though, then when Ian leaves or goes and does something else, unless he's passed it on to someone who's equally enthusiastic, then it sort of just dwindles away and dies.' (Bp12)

They continued on this theme: Having a committed 'driver' working with local government is important both for FESA and for BRAG:

> And if you you don't have a … you know, somebody there who's always pushing this, and that's why your driver's so important, then it very quickly folds up. And … and you've got to also have people … that's why it's important to work with the local government. I mean when people move in to an area, we wouldn't know, but local government does. They can notify the local BRAG person and go round and knock on the door and let them … talk to them and, you know, pick them up as they come in. Whereas if you don't have that facility there either well of course eventually you have a significant number of changes, people, falls down as well. (Bp13)

Originally FESA adopted a 'top down' approach firstly through a dedicated person with the idea of establishing BRAGs across the metropolitan region:

> K: Well, very interesting. It's … when community engagement had a dedicated person looking after BRAG, do you think it was different then or, again, the emphasis was on starting up groups?
>
> P: The emphasis was starting up groups, to my knowledge, but I think there was also the capacity there to provide more support because it was her job. Yeah. It … that's just from my knowledge. And FESA's tried to do it a couple of ways. Without sounding horrible, but at one stage, for example, they … FESA's approach to handling a situation was that they would … they came up with this grand plan about how they were going to establish … get all the BRAGs established in particular areas and sort of pretty well right throughout the surrounding outer metro, which was a good idea. But their method of doing that was basically we've got this grand plan, this is how we're going to do it, shoot it down to the regions, implement it. And we all went get lost. So it never happened.
>
> K: It's a dilemma, a top down process to start a bottom up group.
>
> P: That's right. So … and … and that was one of their … that was I think when they were having … 'cause they've got the same issues I guess as everybody else, you know. They … they don't have enough people to do what they have to do, so they were trying to rationalise things. (Bp27)

The question was asked whether facilitators needed to be members of the fire-brigade. The answer was that 'they don't have to be but it helps.' The discussion continued and also centred on the need for people skills and while selection of facilitators from the FESA perspective was not known the suggestion was that:

> P: I don't (know). The reason I don't is I don't have a lot of knowledge … I mean, except for some of the things that came out at our original meeting, like I think it's fairly obvious that the most successful groups are ones that are affiliated with bushfire brigade somewhere. So if the BRAG groups are run out of either the bushfire brigade or a fire service or something, or if it's … well, it would have to be for a bushfire reaction group. Yeah. Sort of … I was just sort of thinking a bit wider in emergency services stuff, but … but looking under here at bushfire would … would be, yeah, they're the most successful.

He continued in answer to the following question:

> K: Yeah. Peter, I'm thinking back to the discussion that was had at the reference group meeting where people were sort of tossing around whether it's best to have someone who's got lots of fire fighting experience setting up the groups you know in that community education or community safety officer role or whether to … you know, there's other people saying there was a preference for people who've got the community engagement skills and that sort of background.
>
> P: I think … I don't think … I think it's like a lot of things, I think it's advantageous if you have bushfire experience and knowledge because you can pass your experiences I suppose on to people easier. I don't think it's essential though. I think what's more essential is that you have a person who's keen, dedicated and has good communication and people skills and can … and good relationships with the community. Because you can always get the other stuff in…You can always get the fire knowledge in. You can always get you know whatever knowledge you want, you can ask them to come along and talk. You don't actually have to have that yourself, but it's … it's a bit like some of our you know fire officers, they've got great fire skills but they don't handle people too well.

Such people, acting as 'drivers', as was mentioned earlier are very important if people are to be kept motivated. (Bp29, 30)

### *Engagement*

If success is determined by how many turn up to a meeting, 170 residents turned up to one meeting which had already been organised and less than 50 had been expected because that was all the hall fitted normally. A fire in a nearby area was the reason for the high turnout as people were worried and wanted information about the pumps, (one of the proposed items for discussion already on the agenda) and on the fire from the BRAG/fire services people. 'They were getting showered with ash and … and that was worrying them.' Normally though the choice is to hold smaller meetings though it is still difficult to motivate and get people out if there is no fire danger. The barrier would appear to be complacency as people relax in quiet years. (Bp4)

This barrier based on complacency was confirmed in the 2nd interviews when the facilitators remarked

> S: That you just, especially with the meetings, I mean it was actually easier to begin with because we just put everyone on a base line and then just worked from there, whereas now it's harder because some groups are really into it, and within that group there are people you know who have everything, they have fire pumps they have you know and they're all really up to date and they ask you more technical questions. And then there are others that are like I probably should rake up my leaves, you know that's probably a fire hazard you know? So you just … it's like teaching anyone, you just have to gauge, you know there's a process that

> you have to go through to gauge what they know, what they don't know and what they want to know.

Again motivation was said to have been overcome when there was the threat of a large fire and 'a couple of hundred people' turned up at the meeting, confirming the report from the 1st interviews. The result of the BRAG meeting was that 'we wanted to get in there and sort of calm them down and all that.' (Bp4)

The Bedfordale BRAG would appear to operate on an educational, community safety basis rather than placing greater emphasis on community building as the following exchange indicates:

> Never. (in answer to the question: do groups get together and do things like working bees or is that…?) And I tell you what else that we don't do but we still … it still seems to work, we never have street walks. We never have street walks. I'll send crews around with the fire trucks, and a couple of lieutenants picked up on it and they wanted to do it, to look at houses and properties. If anybody wanted to, I'd just send the fire truck around on an evening as part of their training for them. More training for the fire fighters. And this is what you've got to look for. And I give them the … the list out of the … the BRAG book which FESA used to send us. And I never went on any of them. I've been on a couple of street walks at … at different other levels, but we don't run street walks. We never get asked for them. They're happy to come here and listen to me and Sam and Ray talk … and watch videos or something. Whatever we happen to have…
>
> K: Okay. I wondered whether the different BRAG groups, whether they … there's different things that they want from you or different things they want to know about or they're sort of happy to come along here … I: Well, basically … we've told them just about everything they need to know and … and the thing is to keep their interest up you really need something new every year.

Examples are given for such new things as fire retardants being tested by the brigade which are not really BRAG, but are still used to 'sell' BRAG to those who attend (130 residents at one meeting). (Bp6)

The way Bedfordale BRAG operates is very much centred on the facilitator who claims to know everyone in the town. He letter boxes the residents and holds public meetings where he claims to have just one failure and he rectified this by printing off and distributing 600 leaflets with the result that 50 residents turned up at a subsequent meeting. (Bp7)

As this facilitator tries to motivate people with something new every year, unless there's a fire as a motivator this becomes difficult. The following provides examples of how things operate in this particular BRAG:

> K: Yeah. So would the street coordinators be helping you to recruit new people? Like if someone new moved in to the street, would the street coordinator know …

> I: Oh, I'd say the street coordinators … if you've got somebody new moves in to your street, you go and talk to them. It's not my job. It's not really my job.
>
> J: What sort of changes have you seen in terms of people's … I guess both people's awareness and their preparedness in that sort of time?
>
> I: I think this year it's slipped a bit because we didn't have the individual street meetings with the groups. And also all we had, like, as a new product was Killfire. And that was … we like to show them something, something new, every year. And it's getting harder and harder because we've … you know, the PDOs … and DVDs and … like that DVD they made last year… There's stacks of them. I've given out hundreds. Everybody Bedfordale has at least one of those. And that's all pamphlets that FESA send me for BRAG…
>
> K: Do you think there's any danger that people get this DVD and then think they don't need to come to a meeting?
>
> I: Probably. (Ap13-14) … 'Everybody likes it. They … it's useful to them. And that prepared kit, you know, the little be prepared kit?
>
> J: Yeah. The leaflets? The three leaflets?
>
> I: Yeah, that was also a very good one that people were … that one. That was a very good kit. J: So when … in your meetings, do you reinforce the issues to do with stay and defend or … I: But we always have a video or something going and show video … or the latest video or whatever we've got … can get.

Discussion over stay or go does occur at these meetings and as well:

> I: And quite often I'll … I'll go to talk to people afterwards and they … they'll say 'can you come and take a look at my place? And it's not like a street walk where we … where a big group of us go. Sam or I or me and Ray now quite often we'll duck around to people's places…' As a fire officer as well as BRAG facilitator his roles overlap and in the former role he will often adopt an 'educative' rather than a punitive response when misdemeanours are committed. (Bp7)

This need for motivating the residents was highlighted by other facilitators in Bedfordale. For these other facilitators, keeping BRAG going is more a struggle now than it used to be: 'Like we find that keeping BRAG active and the movement going is still a struggle, there's no easy thing.

> K: Okay so even after this sort of length of time that you've been pretty active?
>
> S: Yeah it flows, it flows like even like the membership of the fire brigade will go in peaks and you know, and that's something I think that happens but you have to keep like getting new ideas and keep pushing it otherwise people would become complacent again. They're like I've joined the group, I've done my clean up it's done now, you know? Sort of they've done everything.

> R: Yeah. I did find that the way that we ran BRAG in the first place was when we had three coordinators meetings and then we had all of the … basically the street groups and that went well. But now what happens is there's not many street group meetings. We have just coordinators, and I don't think that works. That … that's my own personal view. The problem is if they're not having the meetings, the interest is … starts to slide away. I found when the brigade's been involved, there … it's more active. You know they think about it all the time.

> S: … I think one of the reasons why we started having just street … was because the numbers started dwindling in the street groups and then we sort of regroup like two or three groups together, because I mean you've got to think about it, you're giving your time. And then we sort of were doing the same presentations over and over again. Well not over and over again, but you know we sort of almost ran out of material. And then not very many big fires, which is a good thing but the people just … I think it was a combination of things which is why you know we started doing the street coordinators meetings so I think … I don't know, I don't know how you sort of go about solving that, but when products came out like the Kill Fire and … the interest is still there, yeah. (Bp8)

Interest in BRAG stems around the need to know what to do by way of preparation and how to use equipment, and this need does bring many people out to meetings. The idea comes up often for the need for training to use equipment but BRAG, for liability reasons, can't supply this, only FESA is able to do so and what they do supply is limited by resources. (Bp9) In order to keep BRAG operating you need a team of people (in this case from the fire brigade) willing to type up material including new lists, letterboxing and to contact FESA and get information – 'who will work and get it done' … 'But that … that … that's what it's like, it never stops. As long as there's new people there and if there wasn't somebody to chase up those new people the gap would get bigger and bigger.' A matter raised which followed on from the meetings' discussion was the need for resource material if they were to operate effectively. Training also came up but this, while useful for one facilitator, was less of a requirement:

> S: We did have the idea one … they said one of the DVDs that they would like to get like one of those packs to be available if you buy a house in the City of Armadale, well not down in the flats but you know in a bushfire risk area you automatically, whether you buy a house, whether you build a house, it's just something that you're given. So that idea has always been brought up and that's where the idea of the pack came in, but yeah you get people moving and … and everything like that and it just doesn't stay the same. (Bp9)

For the coordinator the changes that are occurring in his area with the high turnover of owners and as more people use the houses as weekenders or for renting out, has raised issues not present earlier on:

> Some people do buy and sell, I mean some stay, like me 10 years I've been in it, some have been there a lot longer of course. So that is something else we have to be mindful of. Now as

> an example, the sort of thing that happens in one of my streets, Albany Highway, somebody's been buying up properties and moving down the hill. Now of course there's about three homes in a row that are empty and so there's going to be no preparation done in some of those and if they do get people on a temporary basis renting them they're not going to be ... and they shouldn't feel obliged to do too much I guess. So there are going to be those sort of little issues, and I guess that's just part of the management role. And they can't expect things to be super stable but I think the turnover's probably a bit high. And I think there's ... and I've got to say I went through it myself, coming from the suburbs to a semi-rural area is that you're not really aware fully of just what the fire dangers are and the potential for there to be a major happening and with time I guess you pick that up. So when new people come in and you give them all the paperwork and talk about it and give them a bit of space so they can think about it and get back to you. I think it's often hard to get the message through that it is an ongoing process that's to their advantage to get involved with. (Bp15)

Other problems highlighted were with the so-called hippies:

> Yeah Roleystone's up the road, and they have tried. I think they have a few streets that are going but they just have no interest. I mean we like to call them hippies up there because they don't burn anything and just have trees right up to their house but anyway (laughs). They just don't seem to have the interest up there to … and it's not from the brigade's point of view they've definitely tried but yeah, so.
>
> R: They think it will never happen to them, and the trouble is you know like Karragullen was an eye opener and it's a wonder that no one was killed in Karragullen fire. S: That was a huge fire that we had.
>
> R: The BRAG took off after that, and it always does after a major incident. (Bp18)

Fear of the consequences - real or not – is used as a means of influencing people over whether they should join BRAG:

> Ian, have you got any thoughts on people who don't want to come along or don't want to get involved in a BRAG group? About what might be keeping them away?
>
> I: I've been asked that by people, what if we don't join your BRAG group? What happens to us? Well, when there's a fire coming we'll go to the next property and wait 'til it comes out of your place and stop it on theirs. And they look at you and K: No wonder you've got so many people involved.
>
> I: But you …
>
> K: Blackmail as a …
>
> I: …wouldn't …
>
> K: … strategy.

> I: … do it. You wouldn't do it obviously. They stop and think. They think oh, oh … and whether they believe me or not I don't know.'… 'But most people join BRAG groups and some of them don't participate very much. They put their name down to be on the telephone tree and then they do bugger all … And you accept that. That you're not going to get … like I say, I've got 100% of the area of BRAG, probably 90% of the people in Bedfordale have signed up to be on the BRAG. But you'd probably … in people are doing preparation you could drop back to 70% maybe that do the preparation. (Bp21)

There is a bottom up approach as well where a number of suggestions as to what BRAG can do come from residents and the meetings have structure but are informal at the same time.

The role of the street coordinators is not too onerous but it is time consuming and does involve much communication both with the residents and with the brigade:

> K: And what do you think street coordinators should cover? Obviously the telephone tree is a pretty crucial role?
>
> S: Yeah or any … some sort of communication, it doesn't have to be a telephone tree, but definitely like they are our next line, like our next step down to get the message out in a situation so they definitely would need to … they just need to be able to communicate between both the fire brigade facilitators and the members of the community. If they're sort of a very private person and just stay in their house you know they're not really going to meet their neighbours and arouse interest in that respect.' (Bp28, 29)

## TRUST AND SELF CONFIDENCE

For the regional FESA officer BRAG success, with some downsides, can be seen along with the trust the residents have in the BRAG facilitator as:

> But … I think in BRAG areas, they get a better identification of fires. Quicker. One of the downsides of that though is that we've got a … because we have a 000, as probably just about everywhere, 000 fire notification. One of the negative I guess aspects of BRAGs is that people don't ring 000, people will ring Ian. Okay. Because they know Ian. So they'll ring him. But on the positive side, you get the notifications I think quicker. I think … I don't think there's necessarily a correlation between BRAGs and less fires, because I think the majority of fires you could safely say are lit by people. So … and, you know, and … and it wouldn't be people who were involved in BRAGs, but it's going to be school kids, you know, the usual sort of stuff, and I don't think BRAGs have much effect on that.(Bp5)

More evidence of this trust in BRAG and its approaches and how the program can change the practices of residents can be seen in this exchange with a young brigade member who the key Bedfordale facilitator mentored and trained as a BRAG facilitator from the age of 13:

> I remember doing so many letterbox drops and speaking to people and running the meeting and I found it very, very personally satisfying because I got to see the reaction of people and

> especially that initial being able to get the message out and just seeing the misconceptions in the community and being able to stand up here and actually having people listen to you and really respect you for what you do I found that quite, quite satisfying so that's why I did it because I got a personal buzz out of it. So yeah and I did get rewarded for it with awards and medals and all that sort of jazz, so yeah that's why I started. (Bp22)

As with any community organisation anger and conflict can be present and unless this is dealt with then trust and confidence won't be built up. These Bedfordale facilitators dealt with these issues through the following strategies:

> S: Not get angry yourself, so don't fuel the anger, and you really have to … I think you have to be quite firm, because I'm not very, or my voice is not very authoritarian and that was … that's been a great learning curve for me I've had to diffuse situations because you don't want to make this experience especially in the fire shed a negative one or people going away thinking well that was very badly done all that sort of thing. So I would usually try and get the differing opinions and then move onto something else, I mean that's just the way I'd do it. So this person had this experience and that's what happened or they have this opinion on what should be done, I would give my opinion and then we'd … in theory that's how it's supposed to work but yeah just to try and diffuse the situation and move on, but some people would always come back to the same thing or be the loud mouths of the group or you know, you would always get that so it's just … it's learning how to do that as a facilitator and I don't know if that can be taught in modules or training.
>
> K: And I was imagining that you'd need a certain amount of support, particularly if it's a new role that you're taking on, that can be pretty hard to deal with sometimes if you've got angry people in front of you or …
>
> S: Well having Tomo there he'd just be like shut up so it was very good. \
>
> R: Get it off the floor, the support from the floor. Because you know those that are … you'll always get some that are negative and you'll get some that hate the neighbours. (Bp24)

The street coordinator spoke of the problem of motivation, partly due to the view that the current system is working effectively: 'those people now on the periphery of BRAG who were once more involved, turning up regularly to meetings when it was being set up, who now just want 'to make that one phone call' they don't attend as often now because they think they're in the system and the system seems to be giving them that assurance that things are okay and what the brigade's been doing. There's a bit of peace of mind there for us all.' 'As well, people turn off in winter.' (Bp24, 25)

For the coordinator, his two roles- as councillor and street coordinator coincided with each other and allowed for a consistent message to be presented. He was out there to listen, see concerns and then act upon them - hence the idea of placing BRAG related material in with the rate notices mentioned earlier. The coordinators are also amongst the most motivated of local

residents. He noted the importance of having committed and motivated facilitators addressing the public meetings as well:

> You know those sorts of things, but mostly ... less about fire fighting, more about avoiding the issue by preparing our homes. And that was the main focus. But what it did allow I think was people to sort of ask the whole range of questions, because it was really fairly informal although it was structured in terms of Ian knew what sort of message he wanted to get through. With his personality I guess it was really sort of fairly low key and people didn't feel that were in the classroom and it became quite conversational at times and people sort of felt they could ask question and find out without sort of sounding silly or feeling silly, sort of thing. And I think that was fairly positive. And I guess that's probably the easy bit because that's the sort of focus there. (Bp29)

A problem needing to be addressed by FESA would appear to be a lack of trust and confidence in FESA as the following indicates:

> K: Okay. So the council employs the fire chief.
>
> I: They … he's paid by the fire chief and he's appointed by the council.

Other councils have fire managers appointed by FESA whereas in Bedfordale the position is funded by the council which was felt to be a good thing as: 'He doesn't have to take some of the bulldust that comes from FESA hierarchy. You … you've got that all the time.'…

> It … that's right. It came down do we want a fire chief appointed by the council or a fire chief appointed by FESA? And the whole of Bedfordale and Roleystone said no, we want … by that time we were back only to two brigades left in … old Armadale West might've still been operating. No, we want one by the council. We don't want to become that close into FESA. (Bp32)

## CONFIRMATION AND RE-ASSESSMENT

Whether intended or not, one outcome from the facilitator/fire fighter's perspective is when you have BRAG covering the whole area you need fewer fire vehicles:

> I've got 100% of the area of BRAG, probably 90% of the people in Bedfordale have signed up to be on the BRAG. But you'd probably … in people are doing preparation you could drop back to 70% maybe, that do the preparation. It good. And that many people, you know, I reckon four people in the BRAGs worth a fire vehicle on the fire ground.…

Awareness is built up amongst residents through BRAG training where people are advised what to do in case of fire, even watching 'hazard reduction burns' where they see how these are handled. BRAG residents then would appear to be better prepared than would be the case if this training along with information distribution was absent. 'You just get to your fire so much quicker with the BRAG group operating it.' From the interviews it can be seen that resident

preparedness which includes the psychological as well as the physical is an intended outcome of the BRAG philosophy. (Bp2)

Residents seeking confirmation of what their intentions are in the case of a fire can be seen is this exchange:

> R: It's funny that the common question that they ask, how do I know if I'll be able to cope or stay if there's a fire, how do I actually know? They said to us you know you're a fire fighter, how did you know? Well it's only training and being out there, hazard reduction burning etc that introduces you to the fire's behaviour and smoke etc. They don't experience that and they've said that you know those that really want to find out say how do I experience that to know if I can stay?'

This discussion continued:

> S: Yeah but the good thing about BRAG is we're not saying to people you have to stay or you have to go, but it's just to be prepared. So … because I had a couple of residents you know when we first started doing the stay and go and they were like I want to go is that okay? And I'm like yes, but plan ahead, have that … in the summertime have that bag of things with all your papers and important materials and photos and stuff so you just get out and … and sort of go. So that … that's the good thing about being like flexible because yeah you're not actually saying to people you have to do this. Instead you're like well you should you know, these are the things you should do. And people, especially adults respond to that a lot better than just being told to do it.
>
> For the street coordinator an important outcome is the early advice obtained through the telephone tree. This is important as a means of knowing whether to stay or go. The outcome is a much higher preparedness amongst BRAG residents in particular. (Bp3)

Residents are keen for information and for extra resources which will help them deal with the risk of fire:

> Just see the public with that information, they're happy that they've got something. If there's something new ticking over all the time, if there's somebody comes up with some other design of at some stage of helping defend the homes, whatever. What products are available … maybe the government's helping them with a rebate or something to purchase stuff. Any of that sort of information that's valuable to them, even in times when we haven't got fires, it's enough that they're keeping them interested and they'll go to the ends of the earth to make sure they've got it because they don't want their homes to burn down. So basically they are concerned.
>
> S: Yeah, FESA's got like the basic bush fires manual and like a diagram of the house and how to protect the home, and all that basic stuff would be important to keep, but if they change or give new information and that's one of the keys because when we go to a meeting we don't just lay out all the usual stuff and they're like yeah got that, got that. But it's

> actually like yeah you know, this is new out or this is the way FESA sees this. Even like a list of plants like that are more fire retardant than others and that sort of thing is just really helpful so.' (Bp10)

FESA does work closely with the BRAGs at meetings, supplying information on such things as what it's really like to be in a fire and how to prepare for it psychologically. They are also involved in community engagement which can lead to the establishment of BRAGs or to residents joining up in current ones. (Bp12, 13)

A barrier for residents who actively seek information is how they are informed of such things as meetings, early warning and modern, time saving methods are now being used to advise people of coming meetings and likelihood of fire. SMS is used so that coordinators aren't being tied up allowing anyone without SMS facility can dial up normally. (Bp23) The telephone tree is also used to inform residents.

> The telephone tree was tested in recent fires with the following results: And I think the telephone tree gave people some peace of mind because they understood that they were going to find out what was happening. In the early days, there was a couple of fires, not necessarily nearby but the smoke had hit Bedfordale and people are thinking, there's a fire, where is it? And they started to ring the street coordinators. And then that was ... one of the members learning exercises I guess because after that if there was a fire which resulted in smoke in Bedfordale but wasn't threatening Bedfordale, the street coordinators would be informed. And then we would get the telephone tree active and say, yeah there's smoke here, the fire's four kilometres away, it's you know been contained, no real problems. And I think people got a bit of peace of mind out of that. (Bp25)

This need for providing quick and accurate information and the difficulties associated with delivering it was emphasized in other interviews where the need for an early warning system was suggested as a way of assisting residents in their decision to stay or go, but FESA was not so sure:

> R: That's the big thing … early warnings etc etc. There isn't any early warning code as such for a fire in a certain valley for fires. There is if we have a cyclone. Now why can't the same system be used? S: Or at least modified yeah.
>
> K: The one over the radio, the … the emergency warning signal? Yeah like up north we've got the red … blue, yellow, red is that right?… I mean but it's obviously easier … or easier to predict a cyclone than a fire, because that's one of the barriers because I was talking to x at FESA about it and she seemed to think that it was going to be too hard to do because a fire changes so quickly. But I was thinking of something not so categorical as the cyclone system, but just a way of saying you're in this radius of the fire, or you know whether it's a small or a large fire. If you're in a 5K radius or something like that, that would definitely help people because one of the things that doesn't happen is well … one of the things BRAG tries to improve on is the ability to get information out and that's one of the things that we

> struggle with, because you get so much going on at the station you … yeah.' Once the direction of the fire was known then the telephone tree could be activated. (Bp32)

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION

With regard to community involvement, it's not simply a matter of residents collaborating with each other, it's also a matter of residents pressuring their neighbours and differing authorities to prepare more adequately when it comes to the extensive hazard reduction program. This is where BRAG members are very useful:

> But your BRAG groups and your sort of community can apply pressure, because there's nothing worse than for the BRAG people when they're sitting there and they're cleaning up all their … round their house nicely and just over the fence is a piece of land which is owned by Water Corporation for example, hasn't got a fire break on it and it's got a whole heap of fuel on it. Well, they tend to get a bit vocal and upset when that happens and of course that starts to apply pressure. So, you know, that's a good thing.' (Bp5)

The BRAGs vary in their approach to community engagement. In Bedfordale, meetings are the main way the information is exchanged and all meetings including those called by the street coordinators are held in the brigade hall. However some coordinators do hold smaller local events: 'A couple of them have barbecues and breakfasts and things… the group together. And that always works as a good help'… 'and it's good because it gets them all together' (Bp6, 8)

The problem would appear to be to get and then maintain public interest in attending meetings – e.g. 10 out of a possible 30 turned up to one meeting and most in attendance were coordinators. This lead to the following comment:

> But I think there might not always be that critical mass to have a fully functional meeting. Because the groups ... you know, like with mine if a third of them front up, there's not really enough there to sort of provide that critical mass to make it a decent sort of get together and get a range of points of view.' It was proposed then to join 2 groups together so that a variety of views could be presented. (Bp11)

In relation to group collaboration and in response to the question: 'Do you get some groups sort of taking on like deciding to do something as a group, you mentioned people helping each other in the street or, I'm just wondering if it's mainly people come together, meet and get the information and discuss it and then sort of go away and individually do things to get more prepared or do ..? The following was the answer:

> S: I would say sometimes they do that but if they've got social networks already with their neighbours they would go and maybe help or … I have heard you know they'll go and prune … prune the trees, like get one mulcher or something and borrow each other's equipment and that sort of thing, so I have heard of that.
>
> K: So have a street clean up or something?

> S: Yeah and then there's that one road where they've had a street party, and that was an existing thing before BRAG so that was … it was good and they would just meet in here but I think most of the time they take it back to their own property because that's what they want to save in the end sort of thing, so it's not … but I know people … like there are some elderly people who would go and then they would speak to their neighbours- if you could, could you turn the sprinklers on the roof on? or you know if they've got young children then all the children will go to one house and then if the men of the house would go to the other house and that sort of thing. So there was definitely interaction, helping each other.
>
> K: Yeah, so people would talk about what their plans were?
>
> S: Yeah that's what we wanted, that's what we tried to initiate to get them …
>
> R: As long as they've got a plan. S: Yeah, not to say that not one's right and not one's wrong, it's just what you want to do and … and yeah in that respect like they say can you turn my pump on or just to let them know I've got this equipment available, I'm going to be out of here but … or if I'm at work you know because … or if I'm away or …' (Bp18, 19)

Though it's not always so straightforward: 'you'll always get some that are negative and you'll get some that hate the neighbours.' In these circumstances, the BRAG facilitators recognised the need to keep these residents on-side: '

> S: And sometimes you can bring a bit of humour into it or you know to try and diffuse it, and let them have their say for a certain amount of time but then … so you've heard them, you hear what they have to say and then you judge it on how relevant it is and then …
>
> K: Yeah because if you shut people down too soon then they never come back
>
> S: Yeah exactly because you don't want them to be like they're ostracised now they're not part of the group so you don't want that either…' (Bp24)

One important reason for the success of this BRAG is the apparent sense of community alongside the active involvement of members of the fire brigade:

> I: I think with the brigade being involved, and I'm talking about Bedfordale. Bedfordale's a very or a fairly close knit community. It's a lot like the old country communities. It's different from, I don't know, like Roleystone's a bigger sprawled out more one. And everybody knows the fire brigade. And we're a central focus of Bedfordale. They've been here for years apparently and even before I came. And I just think that that little bit of authority at the top and … and we're a fairly relaxed group really. And it just seems to work so well. I don't know the real reason, but just, it's a figurehead, you know, the fire brigade oh yes, and Bushfire Ready Action Group, well that all goes together. I've got nobody on my BRAG team at all that's not … oh, bar the street coordinator, but a lot of them are ex … ex ones. He was a fire fighter. He wasn't. He was in the country. (Bp22)

The success of this BRAG no doubt has a lot to do with past and present facilitators with Ian, the current one, claiming to know everyone at least by face in the area. He would know the area

well as for many years it was he and a few others who letter boxed all of the residences while the street coordinators have their own specific tasks:

> They, basically, they organise the telephone tree and … and they get that, you know, once there's a group going it's their job to get the telephone tree and … and get it back to me in … in that sort of form. So that we have a telephone … there's a file here that says BRAG which our station officer uses and it's got the … all the street coordinators, so wherever the fire we can ring the street coordinator, and a copy of every group so that we can … we can ring them from here. And it's pretty well up to date and that.
>
> K: Yeah. So would the street coordinators be helping you to recruit new people? Like if someone new moved in to the … in to the street, would the street coordinator know …
>
> I: Oh, I'd say the street coordinators … if you've got somebody new moves in to your street, you go and talk to them. It's not my job. It's not really my job. What all of this has meant is that, apparently, and this is Ian's greatest achievement to his mind, the whole of Bedfordale is covered by BRAG which makes the life of the brigade so much easier. He also puts this accomplishment down to the 'community spirit' present in Bedfordale. (Bp28)

Because the size of the groups is quite small, the BRAGs apparently work reasonably effectively in bringing residents together:

> R: Well this way they are meeting their neighbours because you're talking about a small group you know. The big group, you would never know who was at the other end really socially, but the small group you know you can go to your neighbour's and have a cup of tea or whatever and have a real free flowing talk between those groups. And that's why I said you have to keep the numbers down, and then you know the next lot up would do the same. So it's close environment that would always have contact whereas the long streets it's just lost.' (Bp29)

## PLANNING, PREPARATION AND SAFE RESPONSE

While perhaps not an indicator of who does the planning in the home, it should be noted that when viewing who is most likely to participate in BRAG more women than men attend the meetings and about one half of the street coordinators are women.

The Bedfordale BRAG had its origins in 1994 and was the result of a bottom up process: '

> I: Look, I'll tell you how we started it. We had Bob Tizard … we knew he was interested in having a group. And all we had was the … the Carradine … a locked view they call it. It's this long street here comes right through there and locked view is this road here. They had a big fire in … in '94 and they started a community fire group.' As just 3-4 individuals they drew up leaflets, walked the streets, held meetings. (Bp20)

Maintaining the momentum of the residents to plan ahead is an ongoing problem though a fire in the area does motivate them: '

> I think while it was all in front of us and really working to a goal of setting something up, I think people were sort of easier to get motivated. Where now they've got to a stage where they've sort of learnt about keeping their places low on fuel and to have relative spacings between a bit of bush and homes and all this sort of stuff. We call it the circle of safety and this sort of thing. And I think people, I don't think they're getting blasé but I think it's hard to keep that level of involvement up. Now what did happen, and I think it's been mentioned at one of the meetings that there was a fire, a big fire in Roleystone and that particular night, whatever it was had been arranged where Ray would talk about fire pumps.
>
> K: Oh, and that's when a couple of hundred people turned up. B: The little room where we were the other night, this particular meeting was about fire pumps but people came because there was a meeting at the fire brigade and there was this threat not that far away sort of thing and it was amazing and then after the fire's gone then I guess all those people we haven't seen since.' As well, people move out of the area. (Bp26)

## *3.2 DARLINGTON BRAG: MODEL ANALYSIS*

**CONTEXT**

The context for the establishing of the Darlington BRAG was as follows. This BRAG arose out of fear of fire and

> It was really initiated through the … the local Residents and Ratepayers Association. They felt that there was a need for such an organisation or an awareness more than organisation. The aim is to get the information out into the field to protect their own…(You) don't have to worry operationally with fire suppression where BRAGS are present – time is saved as the houses are set up properly. According to the local officers, the role of BRAG is to train people and make it clear what they've got to do (e.g.. they can use trailers in the mopping up and management of rubbish and waste) and recognise the dangers of (if they're not fire fighters) what they shouldn't do. (Dp1)

Frustration was expressed by the facilitators and local officers on a number of counts and these act as barriers to the success or not of the BRAGs. Firstly, for example, over a perceived lack of support from FESA: 'they (FESA) were saying on one hand, you know, we need to have a … but there didn't seem to be any … any drive from within FESA to actually deliver … what they wanted to deliver.' (Dp2)

Secondly, and this was more from the officers' perspectives,

> across the State, it's not known how many actual functioning BRAGS exist, (no records) nor how successful they are. These interviewees also noted that 'there's not too many BRAGs… the demand for them is not there… People can't commit themselves or they won't …' (Dp2)

And thirdly

> Time limits are a problem in carrying out tasks – need to share the work around. Consequently there's frustration on the part of facilitators that more streets are not involved

> as it's not expanding enough and more money needed to enable facilitators to carry out their tasks – 'budget just peanuts. (Dp2, 3)

With regard to FESA, further concerns were expressed: 'Problems occurred when political issues between the shire and FESA arose over ownership of the processes. Financial incentive – 'the only thing that got things moving, was taken away.' (Dp3) These problems point out the need for BRAGs to be adequately resourced and funded if they're to succeed. The difficulties associated with finding and/or replacing and then in enabling facilitators to carry out their tasks are then matters needing to be addressed. 'More time, money and people are needed. When people leave there's often no one with their skills to replace them. And, more support is needed 'as people feel on their own.'

Support from the authorities at the various levels was called for to assist in the maintenance of the BRAGs and the exchanges on this topic is provided in full:

> FESA people should be more permanent in the BRAG role 'from a fire brigade point of view it would make our life so much easier if we could see that people were going to hold their positions and take ownership of their responsibilities'. – building knowledge, which is lost as people want full time positions so they move on…The structures in their organisations need to work for them'.

> What I'd like to see is a dedicated person really, you know. Somebody who had no other function …but they do BRAG. I think once you start getting in to community education there are just so many different avenues of it, they can lose their focus just by demands from the public. If you say there's somebody there, whether it be full time, part time, whatever, their sole functionality is that they deal with BRAG. And then you would find that you would get an automatic growth in … in … because people, once they get started, they would see that they've got somebody to help them, you know, somebody to keep the momentum going.

This need for more staff was confirmed by the community fire managers:

> They need a dedicated … at least one, maybe two, dedicated officers just for BRAG really for it … because…it's a valuable resource in the very high and extreme risk areas, because their places are kept better than ones that aren't. Which means less stress for fire fighters. It's got to keep the place better …

Reasons for extra support staff are: if you haven't got a champion …

> A: That's the problem. It becomes where what we're doing is relying on volunteers out there to carry the can… with no day-to-day support for them on a reasonable basis. I mean, they don't need day-to-day supports per se, but they need somebody whose job it is to do that, just to keep the interest going and to keep … keep things moving in the right direction.

Brag for these managers is the right model but it does need more people resource back up (it doesn't have to be done by volunteers) and the cooperation of the Shire with the local community is necessary as they can enforce the Act,

> taking action against those who don't reduce the hazard… that's (coordination across the Shire) a pretty big task for someone to coordinate. And with current resourcing it won't happen. Consensus then is that more input is also needed from the Shire 'we're not getting a drive from the shire …Person…but… we would get as much support as we wanted to, but I think you would have to ask for it, yeah.

A structure is also needed where feedback can be provided to FESA as well as FESA advising the BRAGs:

> this structure somewhere where, you know, there is a consultative committee so that you've got this…opinions coming in from BRAG groups and also the outside areas as well. (Dp4, 5)

The impression was that although a particular district officer encouraged and supported BRAG, being glad it existed, he didn't 'drive it' nor see it as one of his 'core roles and there had been a breakdown in communication for about two years.' (Dp6) There's been frustration that two years ago BRAG was not going anywhere and any benefits could not be seen and 'FESA was totally non-committal'… The only enabling thing was that three groups had strong and committed leaders who kept persisting with a willingness to continue. (Dp9)

In Darlington, the shire awareness level would appear to be high (though not as much as the interviewees would like) with an excellent fire service. 'The regulatory approach the council is enforcing is more of a stick rather than a carrot… (Though there was some dissension as to whether a stick was used). 'They do encourage the … you know, they have the summer safe Sunday and all those sorts of things, you know, they … and they do readily support anything we do. But the only thing is that I'd say they don't actually drive it, you know, that's … if you wanted to … any sort of observation about it.'

The importance of the shire was also stressed in another interview: local government should be involved because it is their community.

> And … and so you really should have those three bodies together. So it's a matter of trying to coordinate that to look a bit bigger than just … just a BRAG group. And it's …important that local government are involved because they're the enforcement agency. And under the Bushfires Act, local government can take action against people that don't reduce their hazard. It doesn't just have to be done by the volunteers…' Later it was said that: '…we've just got to work in to the local government. (Dp16)

The obvious problem for the continuing of BRAGs to operate stems from the difficulty in finding volunteers to carry out the key roles of facilitators and street coordinators - 'you need a dedicated driver.' It was said on this point that:

> There would appear to be too few facilitators and street coordinators: 'and … whereas the original concept was that each street would have a leader and all that sort of stuff and that's how it would work. But that just isn't happening that way. We've got the guy in Darlington doing it, but he's not doing a street in Darlington, he's doing the whole thing.

You need such 'dedicated drivers…if you haven't got that they generally fall over. The people do it for a few years, get tired …don't want to do it anymore. And at the moment we're relying on the volunteers to …pick that driver up.' (This was in the context of needing more permanent staff to assist the BRAGs). All of this was confirmed in Interview 3 with it being noted that there was the danger of being over committed and with the current set up with the emphasis being so much at that sort of facilitator in the … the local community, if that person leaves then …

> A: It falls over.
>
> J: it falls apart …And I think you've got a serious issue in …over in Bedfordale with that. I think you've got two key players there that are really driving that, and in 10 years' time when they're gone …
>
> M: There's nothing.
>
> A … it'll fall over. You know, if you haven't got a champion A: That's the problem. It becomes where what we're doing is relying on volunteers out there to carry the can … with no day-to-day support for them on a reasonable basis. I mean, they don't need day-to-day supports per se, but they need somebody whose job it is to do that, just to keep the interest going and to keep … keep things moving in the right direction. Outside pressures make it difficult for these people to operate effectively as the problem lies in there being too many bodies involved and a lack of coordination. (Dp14, 16)

**ENGAGEMENT**

Engagement of residents in BRAG is variable and intermittent depending on financial situations and time available as well as commitment over time. The complexities and commitments of volunteerism act as disincentives to participation, according to the Community Fire Manager: to some of the members of BRAGs in that,

> you know, they have the meetings and they discuss all these great ideas about what they could be doing to enhance their preparedness, but at the end of the day there's I guess financial requirements that, you know, commitments they'd have to make and also coordinating within a street to … to, you know, to … to facilitate that. And that's where, you know, in some cases it seems to fall down a bit. Where, you know, those great ideas can't be developed because there's a … I suppose perhaps a lack of incentives to do so from a … from their own personal point of view. (Dp2)

How these local BRAGs operate, and the tasks don't appear to be too onerous, is as follows: they meet on a street by street system but on an irregular basis:

> I would say very irregular. I would say probably less than 5% of the streets would … this would just be my guess. I mean, at a street meeting if you ask them …it might be different, but I would say there's very few streets would meet on a yearly basis…Although, having said that, there are a couple of very keen streets … Edith Street where Mike Mackay is I know meet annually, just to go through the telephone tree just to make sure that the numbers are all current and all the information that is on those lists for, you know, where the fire pumps are and all of that … if they've got pets, dogs, old age people or whatever … that they put on theirs. I know that they meet annually so I would think there's only probably one or two.

Street contacts personally invite new residents to BRAG meetings while residents are letterboxed with information, invitations and 'there's an insert goes in to the review in October every year which has information on certain things, and has all the street contacts phone numbers.' The size of groups varies as does their commitment:

> they can be just about from a half a dozen people through to about 15, 20 people or houses and that …sort of thing. They're very … very large variation. Very … very large variation in the needs of the group. Very large variation in the commitment of the group. You know, you get some people who are just interested in knowing, and you get others that actually take it very seriously depending on who the contact is. Some … some contacts drive very hard and they ensure that, you know, any … you know, that any issues are brought up and … and make sure that every … newer members come in to the flock and all that sort of thing. So … and, you know, it just depends on the contact, you know, the coordinator. If they're enthusiastic then the whole group is driven by it and, I mean, that's good… (needs vary because) some of them are bordering on the national park. So they might perceive that their risk is really severe… I think some of them just have greater awareness or greater need. Some of them live in cut off roads, you know, cul-de-sac, which is very common in Darlington, you know, so (it's) very common, because of the structure of the land. (Dp3)

From the local fire brigade viewpoint it was said that it is essential to have the fire brigade involved in BRAGS:

> Plus it is essential that you have your fire brigade involved in the area, I think that is a key to it, again as Ken said, I was the same when I joined back in 1979, all I wanted to do was get in those trucks and drive with the siren going, get out and put a fire out. You know this preparedness and awareness ... no, no, no, no, somebody else can do that, not that it was around then, but I think in hindsight now we realise how important it is to have that is a very integral part of a fire brigade.

Even the Shire recognises this as they've appointed 'a community fire manager'. For these respondents, education with large scale awareness is the key:

> we're looking at, you know offering knowledge to people that need it, you know. I think that's what we're basically doing. It's the education, community education side of it and

> obviously if people do their bit, then when we go out there as fire fighters, we're not going to be faced with the trauma of which house do we save and which house do we let go, you know that type of thing. So that's the kind of difference that it could make.

Knowledge is a positive when dealing with fires. (Dp3). Whether the coordinators needed to be members of the fire brigade was debated as the following exchange over their role indicates: 'firefighters generally aren't interested in facilitating' 'it's very hard to get people to actually want to deliver training and actually want to be involved in the community'… BRAG Facilitators need much more ongoing commitment:

> I'll go to a school or I'll go to a community group and lecture, but people don't really generally want to make a big chunk of their … you know, spend a big chunk of their spare time doing that kind of thing. The role also includes them delivering new information such as the 'bushfire manuals to the street contacts while they rely on the street contacts to contact new residents and inform them on relevant information. The role can be carried out by anyone and you don't need fire fighting experience: 'I believe it can be done by anybody, particularly somebody's who's got good, you know good skills, you know, good people skills and presentation skills and that sort of thing. I think that's ... obviously they need the background knowledge and they need to understand their information, they need to understand that intimately…Credibility is the key.' (Dp13)

The FESA district manager outlined his role: 'It's a role of the district manager of the local bushfire brigades to look after the BRAGS":

> I'm the one that gets involved with BRAG in basically getting information from the department out in to the field and promoting it … the concept, basically. And I'm only new in to this area, but I've … my previous role was in Perth south coastal and I was involved in the setting up of BRAGs down there. And we ran training courses and what have you down there to get those up and running. So yeah, pretty much that's my role is it's sort of in the background support role to the BRAG groups themselves, yeah… And they get involved as well, but we're the … we're the regional link. We canvass the area to find out who wanted to be involved in the BRAG group, and that involved going to the local brigade meetings and also to the fire advisory meetings, to get that information out in to the group. And then from that we've received information back from the brigades as to where they wanted to form BRAG groups. And most of the BRAG groups were … are being run by brigades. They're not run by a street.
>
> Even though the BRAG concept is basically to get an individual street organised, the ones that I've had anything to do with that have kept going are the ones that are run by the brigades themselves. So because of that fact, I tend to be fairly involved with them on a more regular basis when they're there. So basically we've … we got the concept going, then we set up training for the guys to come down and learn what they've got to do to run their BRAGs and all that sort of stuff. And we have the people from Perth come out and do the

> delivery to it. And then when they have an activity going around, like they've been doing the … the stay or go plan … that's … we've been involved in … in the logistics behind that. And that's about where I've drawn the line, yeah. I … we don't have much time to do much else at that point.
>
> J: So the resources from central office, they provide them to you and you disseminate them.
>
> A: That's right, yeah.

Initial contact is through the local community fire manager and the following occurs:

> What happens, the initial contact's usually through myself. I'll have a resident that will phone up and they've either heard something or wanting to know what they can do. So I give them a run down on BRAG, just a very brief overview of what BRAGs about, and then I give them a contact in Perth. After they contact the people in Perth they will … they pay the … the interested person a visit, and if they're still interested I'm involved in the first and quite often the second meeting where we get all the street together. And I find out what the … you know, what their concerns are, what the risks are, and the expectations. We've got some BRAG fliers and we give them the fliers … fliers to, you know, protecting your home and all that sort of stuff. So just the usual material.
>
> And then after that that's … I really cut my ties because I … I haven't got any time whatsoever to … to … even though they're very … they do a great job, they're a very important area, but it depends on the risk and who's the driver. But after two visits that's generally the end of my association with the BRAG groups…

The process then is for this manager to provide advice from a professional fire fighter's perspective working with the BRAG facilitator if there is one. They usually meet in a lounge room (once in a hall) where people feel comfortable and can see the risks and benefits as they are shown around the house and burning programs and mitigation processes are described. 'And if they're in the BRAG, generally the BRAG facilitator or the FESA employee will go in to that detail, you know, the phone tree and the advantages and the resources.' (Dp4)

BRAG for these managers is the right model but it does need more people resource back up (it doesn't have to be done by volunteers) and the cooperation of the Shire with the local community is necessary as they can enforce the Act, 'taking action against those who don't reduce the hazard… that's (coordination across the Shire) a pretty big task for someone to coordinate. And with current resourcing it won't happen.' Success comes with training and people need to know they're not firefighters…they can use trailers as that's one area they are usually skilled at but not necessarily in panic situations so even this area needs proper management.

Information in Darlington was distributed in the following manner with the following results: 'a monthly review is used to disseminate information and to recruit new members to BRAG':

> One thing that we have within Darlington is what we call the Darlington review. That's a monthly review in a local magazine, which comes out, as I say, monthly. In that I write articles and invite streets to participate, want me to come, or just give them information on what is occurring and things that they should do from a BRAG perspective. And we … and then also every year we have a Darlington Arts Festival here in November, and the brigade run a bushfire … bushfire expo… in that expo we've had a stall. The FESA … BRAG. It's just a display type of …Just a display of BRAG …And … materials. And with people available to consult and give advice and that sort of thing. Information is distributed at street meetings where the community fire manager adopts the following approach: 'in the lounge room, very relaxed atmosphere, as you go through and … yeah, it's not even a PowerPoint, I just get up there and talk. And usually I have … I'll print out … I take … get … print out large maps of the area so they can get an overview of the shire and an overview of their particular place. Everyone likes looking at their own place, so they … but they can see the risk in their … around their place. And I can point it out and they can … they can physically see it then. It has a bit better impact than trying to describe.
>
> J: So do you think the sort of credibility of having someone like yourself there is a very important factor in it sort of getting off the ground?
>
> M: Very much so, I think. You … you need that initial I suppose professional fire experience there for a starter, so they have a clear understanding that if … if they're a major risk or not, if they're really wasting their time or not.

Brochures, magazines and an 'excellent' DVD which 'is quite confronting' are used to distribute information and create awareness.

The brochures whilst seen as being well presented were not in themselves so useful: 'I think that's all it is, you produce this many brochures, we've got a new brochure, yeah, they're all good, no question about that but ... no good unless somebody's reading then or somebody is interpreting them or ...

> K: Absolutely, and glossy brochures only reach so many people, we all get ...
>
> C: Other than also those who are already involved.
>
> P: And it's well known you can stick brochures in people's letterboxes and that was the whole reason for it in the first place. It'll all finish up in next week's recycling. You need someone to say 'this is important.' New information from FESA is delivered to street contacts who deliver it to all the houses in their streets. They may/not meet to discuss things later. (Dp6)

While it is possible to log-in to an area through the internet for information and fire alerts which are updated by FESA, it was felt that information is poorly disseminated in some cases:

> And the other major problem that we find within BRAG is the lack of information, fire information, being available to the community. Thankfully in the last couple of years that

> has improved. Not as well as what I believe it could… There is a long lag, seems to be, before the notices are up on the … the web or over the ABC. And people need to know, it's a bit like the cyclone, you can see it building … and with fires you need to know that information so that you can make the choice you're going to leave early or …need to do all those things. So I think fire information and awareness again is a really crucial … and it's not being done well enough at the moment. And the website's probably about the best thing nowadays because, you know, so long as it's kept updated regularly, it's something that doesn't require phones or … well, it requires a line, a connection, but you can get that without phones and so on, so you know you can get that on laptops with wireless and all sorts of things now. So a website would be the ideal if somebody could, you know…' You need a variety of methods including telephone trees to get the message across it was said. (Dp6, 7)

How the training/information sessions using the 'wow' factor of the DVD as the discussion starter were run was as follows: the DVD works as 'it's quite confronting'. It and other material is discussed over 2 week nights and weekend day. The sessions cover generally:

> go through the videos, question and answers, target specific focus areas of interest, you know. So like it might be house survival, bushfire preparation, and the last one is personal survival and those sorts of things, you know. And to how, you know … and then the final one would be a day time and you would examine a house which … which is still in there…'During actually a facilitation meeting where you're doing … running a group, people will ask things you know about how they can … how they can deal with this or that or whatever. Within the group, you know, it makes it easier because you can just simply refer has anybody else got that experience, you know, being an instructor and that sort of thing. You can just simply bring it out of the group, you know, well you guys tell him you know. You just sit back and they can … they can share their experiences with it.
>
> But if nobody in the group seems to know you just throw in a few extras of your own, you know, so that … about how things can be addressed you know and you encourage them to get together and do, you know, work … busy bees type of thing you know to collectively … you know, if somebody says they don't have a trailer or … well, does anybody in this group have a trailer you know. Okay that's solved, you know. We can … you can collectively … has somebody got this kind of tool, that tool, okay. You've got the resources at the fire brigade and things like that, you know. And so you've got these … these options to deal with it and you've also … option of burning or whatever. And, you know, on … in that one meeting you know collectively you can often get the result. Or otherwise they go off and somebody says oh, I know … I've got a contact here, I can find out. So, yeah, usually within a group you've got the answers.

Some people choose not to continue with the group:

> they're mainly happy that … that they know enough or they're satisfied with the way the group's operating and that their … that … that their issues are being dealt with and …And again I suppose also as we have the BRAG review, it comes out monthly, in my notes I write about things that people should do around their homes to prepare for the … the summer fire season. So, again, there is an awareness within the community of … and then also each November the shire have a … a green waste collection within this locality which we advertise, and it enables people then to … to put out just prior to that collection period, hopefully clean up their … their yard to some degree anyway.

> For obvious reasons, those living near National Parks were those most interested in what BRAG had to offer. Differing risk perceptions meant different needs which lead people more motivated and committed while others have a less sense of urgency. It was suggested that a good size of a group is around 7-15 houses (or a dozen) with the original ideal being 9-10. This is a good number as: 'when you're conducting the sessions you don't have hordes of people asking questions all the time. I mean, the larger the group the better in the … in the sense that you're delivering more information. That … that's good, and you know you … you're addressing more houses with your time so it's very cost effective time wise. But smaller groups work extremely well. So I think an ideal would be about 10…' and with a group this size the telephone tree is easier to operate. (Dp9)

While the Darlington BRAG eventuated due to residents calling for a meeting with the local organisers, it would appear that initially it's a top down process using the structures already in place with e.g. coordinators sending out invitations and calling twice yearly meetings. The top down process is more from the fire services rather than from the shire who have very little input into the BRAGS. (Dp12)

**TRUST AND SELF CONFIDENCE**

Trust and self confidence needs to be developed and maintained. In the BRAG context trust is present to some degree but does need to be further developed. There does appear at the moment to be some antipathy between BRAG and central FESA that needs to be addressed if trust is to be developed at that level and for BRAG to have confidence in what they're doing now and into the future. Similarly with relations with the Shire where consensus then is that more input is also needed from the Shire 'we're not getting a drive from the shire …Person…but… we would get as much support as we wanted to, but I think you would have to ask for it, yeah.' (Dp5)

With FESA relationships, it was felt that a structure is needed where feedback can be provided to FESA as well as FESA advising the BRAGs:

> this structure somewhere where, you know, there is a consultative committee so that you've got this…opinions coming in from BRAG groups and also the outside areas as well. The Western Powers, the … the Westrail people, all of those that … who are involved with fires. And the necessity to be able to … to have input to … to something to have a structure saying yeah, this is what we think should occur to reduce the hazards around or to try and prevent

> the outbreak of major fires, other than just a suppression unit, I mean, as FESA is. I mean that's … that really what FESA is, a suppression unit...

This view was supported by the Community Fire Managers:

> I believe it's got to be a coordinated effort between the police with neighbourhood watch, so looking for criminals, the BRAG which is bushfire and the winter safe, you know, for your winter activities, and tying it in to your local government, police and FESA. You need … it goes back to the green waste again. Your BRAGs aren't going to function too well if it's going to cost them, which it will with the green waste, trying to neat … tidy their place up. So we've just got to work in to the local government. And I like talking about the compliance. Compliances, you know, they should be dealt with by the local government as well. But just working on the BRAG or the … or the BRAG program, or a … or a community program like that, it needs somebody … it definitely needs an employee, probably with FESA, to liaise with the local government and say the benefits and even if they … it's difficult with your green waste, if they're a BRAG group and functioning, they can get the green waste picked up, you know, by the local government. You know, that sort of thing. So … which is improving the safety of, you know, the residents. They can build on it from the ground floor I suppose. But you need those … those three areas really. If they can come together that …I think that'll be the key. And especially local government. (Dp5)

There is though a large degree of self-confidence present particularly through the work of the local officers and BRAG facilitators in advising residents what their options are: From this advice, group members realise that they are not dealing with the problems alone but as a group:

> They have more power, more strength, and they're more likely to get a resolution. Except the neighbours who don't want to do anything. Well, sometimes they're stuck with that. The people go away from the meeting with information and the realisation that they can deal with issues and physical needs collectively. (Dp9, 10)

To the question whether it's necessary for BRAG to work to have firefighters as facilitators? The response was:

> I don't think it matters, we're just fortunate here within Darlington that the BRAG groups sits as a sub-unit of the brigade so we're very fortunate and again all the facilitators have been brigade members. I personally don't think it's a necessity as long as you've got someone who's prepared to champion (it). The facilitator needs good people skills and presentation skills and that sort of thing. I think that's ... obviously they need the background knowledge and they need to understand their information, they need to understand that intimately. But as I said it's hard to get fire fighters who are prepared to do it but it's not hard to get a fire fighter to sit there with somebody who's facilitating.

Filling in the gaps and 'giving credibility to the facilitator.' Problems do occur over ownership and the funding in some areas of volunteers with political issues intervening in the processes. Friction between some of the brigades, FESA and the shire meant things fell in a heap. Yet, still,

the BRAG program does work and the level of awareness has increased with fire brigades being called in earlier for small fires. But it is variable and works better in some areas than others. (Dp10)

Security in the face of a fire would appear to be

> BRAG's greatest aspect…coming out of the BRAG programs now. Just giving people that level of comfort and awareness and, again, then if they say they're going to stay they stay, having taken all of the necessary precautions like getting out elderly people or evacuating early and doing all those things which the DVD and literature tells us to do. So I think that that's been another very positive aspect of the … of the programs. And, again, giving people surety. Because, I mean, your house is your greatest asset that you own, other than your family of course. (Dp17)

**CONFIRMATION AND RE-ASSESSMENT**

The initial aim was to review Darlington residents' awareness of fire risk in their suburb and for the facilitators, to also take the concept of Community Fireguard to its streets as this was being implemented at the same time: 'there was a structure in place coming out of the community.' This BRAG arose out of fear of fire and

> It was really initiated through the local Residents and Ratepayers Association. They felt that there was a need for such an organisation or an awareness more than organisation. The aim is to get the information out into the field to protect their own…Don't have to worry operationally with fire suppression where BRAGS are present – time is saved as the houses are set up properly.

According to the officers, the role is to train people and make it clear what they've got to do (e.g.. they can use trailers in the mopping up and management of rubbish and waste) and recognise the dangers of (if they're not fire fighters) what they shouldn't do. (Dp1)

It was said in Darlington that street stalls are often the useful way to attract street coordinators with the best being during or following an actual fire:

> some people have come up and we've said this is what … we'd like you to be a street contact, and we've had a couple this year do that. So … and they're the mechanisms by which we try to attract, but again the best one, of course, is to have a major fire in the area and then everybody wants … well, not everybody …but most … most people become …when people discover that they do have issues. I think that prompts them to find out what they can do to deal with those issues. And then they discover that there is something available and … and motivates them to actually do something, you know, constructive …See, that's … that's how you get fire fighters too, because people realise how vulnerable they are. (Dp2)

Very little was mentioned in Darlington on the representativeness of the residents in BRAG, Although the following does indicate that there is apathy towards preplanning on the part of some residents: the local BRAG was initiated through: 'the local Residents and Ratepayers

Association. They felt that there was a need for such an organisation or an awareness more than organisation.' And, people are prompted to enquire about BRAG but even then not all residents are concerned: 'the local people don't seem to want to care too much about it other than those that were already in the system so you feel a bit despondent...' (Dp8)

And again on this theme of involvement in pre-planning etc: the role of the street coordinator is also important, with some being more enthusiastic than others:

> They're very … very large variation. Very … very large variation in the needs of the group. Very large variation in the commitment of the group. You know, you get some people who are just interested in knowing, and you get others that actually take it very seriously depending on who the contact is. Some … some contacts drive very hard and they ensure that, you know, any … you know, that any issues are brought up and make sure that every newer members come in to the flock and all that sort of thing. So, you know, it just depends on the contact, you know, the coordinator. If they're enthusiastic then the whole group is driven by it and, I mean, that's good. Being in a high risk area also concentrates the thinking of the residents. (Dp13)

It was said though that since the inception of the BRAGs there's been a high level of preparedness where they have been established according to all of the interviewees for example: "How do you measure that [preparedness] ?

> K: Good question.
>
> C: We've not lost a house. Not had a major fire in Darlington. So it must be working very well…
>
> P: Well, we've had houses that have said that when a fire went through their area that they felt that … their preparedness as a result of the BRAG education or Fireguard education as it was then, has saved their house…'

FESA has now recognised that people should stay in there in the event of a fire and where BRAGs exist the house will be secure and the people know how to handle it. In 2001 when the police were forcibly moving residents out of their homes and the various Acts are in conflict as to their right to do this and according to the Health Act they could but not according to the Bushfire or Police Acts. For one BRAG member this was the last straw and he left…

> They were evacuating people on foot. People had no vehicles or whatever and they were telling … and they said okay, where do I go, what do I do, you know. They're walking in smoke.
>
> K: I mean, a disorganised …
>
> P: That was …
>
> K:… evacuation …
>
> C: Oh, it was shocking.

> K: … is dangerous.
>
> P: That … and so it was actually putting people at greater risk by evacuating them. And we felt that, you know, we were really left in the cold with that one. We … we were seeking advice … and this is where if you had a BRAG person they would've clarified that very quickly and they would've said okay, you … you know, instead of us …(Dp17)

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION**

As to community involvement, for the BRAGs to function adequately and for community collaboration to occur the following was noted: It was suggested that a good size of a group is around 7-15 houses (or a dozen) with the original ideal being 9-10. This is a good number as

> when you're conducting the sessions you don't have hordes of people asking questions all the time. I mean, the larger the group the better in the … in the sense that you're delivering more information. That … that's good, and you know you … you're addressing more houses with your time so it's very cost effective time wise. But smaller groups work extremely well. So I think an ideal would be about 10…' and with a group this size the telephone tree is easier to operate. (Dp9)

The groups are then able to work effectively as they have local people involved:

> Every incident management team will comprise of people of the local knowledge. And they will be able to know what risks are and what … which people are affected and which people need to know. Yeah. I mean, if there's evacuations going on or if there's … then they can … then they can say recommended evacuation from … if you live in this area here or … or whatever, well, prepare for evacuation. Those sorts of things are the sort of things that people look for. (Dp10)

Important for maintaining this community cohesion is the facilitator. The Facilitators' (Street Co-ordinators') roles include liaising with FESA and facilitating meetings and in Darlington one facilitator in particular apparently held the group together: 'P' said

> …but because of your persistence, I think, and the fact that the groups here do have a … a willingness to, you know, continue … and they have, through you, had somebody to actually be person in the meat in the sandwich in between and trying to push FESA in to, you know, providing what we need. (Dp13)

Peer pressure is also of great importance in the process of developing community awareness and for maintaining the properties:

> You will find that the ones that are more enthusiastic, they collectively get together, they sometimes try and do a bit of peer pressure on the ones that aren't lifting their game. But they're … some of the groups have that other issue of that they … there are some houses that won't participate and won't get involved and then they have to sort of try and work around them. But with peer pressure … peer pressure they try and get things happening there, but ultimately no. And the other things that they do is that they put pressure on or collectively

> get together to try and get things happening like some of the burns, so hazard reduction burns in the area, and Colin encourages them to bring them through themself to the BRAG meetings. And that gives them an added incentive to be there, that they can actually present their priorities and see if they … see how they rated within the shire's priorities. Also … yeah, other issues … it gives them an opportunity to ask questions about how they can deal with things, you know, whose responsibility … who owns this and how they can … how they can deal with it. So, collectively, if they've got an issue with a section … a parcel of land that is a risk to everybody, they can sort of come to the meeting and find out how that works and then collectively they have the power to put pressure on the owner or whatever as a group rather than as an individual, which they'd have probably no chance. (Dp13)

**PLANNING, PREPARATION AND SAFE RESPONSE**

How the residents can best receive information that they can act upon and the role of the firefighters in this dissemination was discussed along with the positive outcomes of BRAG's existence: 'it's very hard to get people to actually want to deliver training and want to actually get involved with the community. They might do a little bit here and there and they say well, you know, that's it …' whereas BRAG people are 'quite different in terms of the ongoing …commitment.' Success can be seen in that the most positive outcome is that in the event of a fire, BRAG members are comfortable 'that they're doing everything right, they are prepared.. and their house will be secure' and more money needed to enable facilitators to carry out their tasks – 'budget just peanuts.' BRAGS are 'more successful when requests come from the group as the following indicates: 'because it came in as a group, you're inclined to favour them because they're pulling their weight so, yes, I'll…I did move them up a slot. And the council will do the same. If it comes in as a group, if it's a compliance issue, it'll be dealt with a lot swifter than a one independent person. But that's …that's the only real pull they've got, you know, because they're a group and generally know what they're talking about. And they have some built up expertise.' BRAGs are also valuable resources as their places are kept better which means less stress for fire fighters.' (Dp2)

Some groups are more self motivated than others and Street coordinators take control with limited input from the facilitators and the former's enthusiasm will make it happen even though the facilitator would run things more effectively. Other groups rely much more on the facilitator. (Dp13) This input from the facilitator and BRAG generally is important as it would appear to be difficult to get a number of residents to comply with the regulations. They move to high risk areas and think 'that it won't happen to me.' State government pressure is needed 'on local governments to set – stick by the rules (of the Bushfires Act) – but it's political and they won't go and lean on (them). 'So BRAG groups are important as one way of getting things done on the ground floor.' (Dp16)

## *3.3. Yallingup BRAG: model analysis*

**CONTEXT**

A worrying aspect which kept coming out in the discussions was an apparently perceived breakdown in the relations with FESA, particularly with the Perth office but less so with the

regional officers. Support was seen to be lacking as other strategies such as a TV commercial were seen by FESA as being able to reach more residents, making more homes safer at less cost than was the case with the very labour intensive methods adopted by BRAGs: 'For the amount of money and major, coordinated across the state, effort a TV commercial would lead to more cleaned up gardens than BRAG achieved in the whole state.' (Yp5) Annie, the key facilitator believed that FESA wanted to 'can' the BRAGs without any feedback on what had been achieved by the Yallingup BRAG. She had just received an award from the Premier – recommended by the shire for services to the local fire brigade and to BRAG. (Yp3) And FESA also wanted 'to turn BRAG into something else.' (Yp4&14) A further breakdown in communication was when the group wanted to develop a BRAG related website and was told: No! Yet at Bedfordale, the BRAG there had just gone ahead and successfully developed one – 'he just did it.' (Yp3) and for a fuller explanation of this rejection see Yp30) Similar requests for BRAG signage at properties and the use of BRAG calling cards were also greeted with a N0! (Yp2)

The feeling also expressed was that even without the support of FESA this particular BRAG would continue, i.e. be 'self-sustainable,' with the support of the local residents and this was mainly due to the hard work of Annie the facilitator and it would continue as long as someone like her was around. (Yp4, 13) A particular problem perceived was that there was a high FESA staff turnover along with a lack of interest from Perth. (Yp6) The following exchange indicates both the success of the local BRAG and the frustration felt over the breakdown in communication with FESA Perth:

> T: Yeah, I mean 90% of the community does understand but I think they ... so you know ... and I suppose part of when they invented BRAG, it was just another idea of how to get the message out and you know ...
>
> G: Let me ... let me say and I'll only say it once, BRAG in the Yallingup area is very fruitful. It works well and it only works well because of one woman and that's it. And she puts a lot of time and effort into it. I don't think ... I believe she doesn't get enough backing from Perth and that's something that needs to be looked at seriously. 'Cause she gets very frustrated sometimes and I can see when ... when I talk to her about things I can see where ... where she's getting frustrated. Like you know she'll send them an email and six months later she still hasn't got an answer to that email, you know? And ... and this needs to be sorted because if ... if you want something to work properly you've got to have the backing and if the backing's not there, people are going to lose interest and subsequently ... (Yp27)

The need was expressed for a FESA full time member of staff, perhaps coming from the Community Engagment Directorate – or someone 'with a public education degree' - at the regional level to support BRAG. There is also the need for such a person to produce new materials such as up-to-date pamphlets. (Yp27, 28, 32) It just needs

> someone someone who's prepared to be the person ... you know who's doing the first contact with FESA who can just say, or FESA come to them and then say, yeah we've got new stuff on, there's now a new policy, there's new regulations or whatever, new ideas. Then that can get distributed out, so as far as it's in place, in a small community like ours, I think it's ... it will stay unless someone drops out or leaves or whatever. And as far as ... I mean just around BRAG as far as what we need, I think it is very much up to the individual group. But it does need good communication especially between, and it needs to be ... it needs to be you know made aware that it's being supported by FESA, by the authorities, that this is ... we're right behind you and not for Annie to have to go and say, I'm not getting any feedback guys, what's happening M: Which is what's happened in the past. (Yp13)

One reason for the establishment of this BRAG was the high number of 'nuisance and other calls' to fires which should not have started but the brigade still had to attend. Success for the efforts of this BRAG were seen in the much lower number of calls for such turn outs since its establishment – due to the much higher degree of awareness present in the locality. There was no such call for the brigade last year. (Yp3)

It was felt that BRAG would only work areas 'where there's small settlements' where there's a 'cluster of houses' but 'you're wasting your time in farming areas.' (Yp5)

The shire sees great benefits in having a BRAG presence ('It's beneficial for the shire, it certainly is') and they've offered Annie, the facilitator various supports printing admin etc., but she hasn't had the need for it as yet. Though she did ask for a BRAG calling card but that was rejected by FESA. (Yp22)

The Yallingup area has particular socio-demographic features which makes it difficult to reach all residents with fire safety information as these 'sea change residents' move in to the area from urban environments where 'fire and ambulance services are on offer' whereas 'these are served by volunteers and may be based some distance away.' (Yp9) Hence they 'have very little fire knowledge.' (Yp34)A further problem is that many house owners are only there at weekends or at other limited times of the year and won't receive the information regarding what's required of them as far as land clearance is concerned while others are renters who also don't receive the rate notices which have this information. The council website was said to be poorly designed and hard to understand, making it difficult for some residents to comply with the regulations. (Yp31)

There have been no major fires in this BRAG area since 1962 and 'complacency has set in and every year we don't have a big fire means we're closer to having a big on: because of the fuel build up.' People take risks and 'aren't quite on the ball' as regards preparedness. (Yp35) It was also said that: 'One of the shire's greatest problems' is 'the Perth people's apparent lack of concern as they 'go back to Perth and forget about their property'

> T: So ... and ... and they're that wealthy that when they do come, laws don't exists and money's not an issue… (Yp35)

Apparently though at the emergency services level there is now better communication and coordination between these services since FESA brought them all together. (Yp31)

**ENGAGEMENT**

As mentioned above, many of the newer residents are not fire aware and consequently the BRAG facilitators have experienced difficulty in reaching these people with information, so it is most probable that these people in particular are less likely to be 'strongly involved in organisations such as BRAG. This doesn't mean however that all longer term residents will join. Where neighbours are in conflict the development of groups was said to be hindered. (Yp2) Each neighbourhood, despite the best of intentions and even when there's been a fire, will differ and brigade members may fail to establish a viable BRAG. See the example of 180 houses on an island and there was no success (Yp4) yet following another fire elsewhere 150 turned up to a meeting. However 2 years later this hasn't meant that the momentum continued. (Yp5)

The most powerful tool for influencing local residents to become BRAG members, creating awareness, is apparently the DVD which was produced by FESA and has been widely distributed. All street coordinators have copies and any of the residents can take them home. This DVD along with other videos is seen as being so powerful that little needs to be said though discussions are usually held following the showing of them, but not always. (Yp2, 8, 11) Packages however which were 'once available (from FESA) have apparently run out and haven't been replaced' so the DVD has become the major tool for creating awareness. (Yp2)

The process of keeping BRAG operating is very labour intensive as the following methods adopted by street coordinators indicate. As well as uses meetings and the DVD as the major tools in informing residents as well as BRAG members, street walks are used as a non-threatening' way of advising residents what the risks are and what they can do to prepare their house and land in case of fire and whether their property conforms to regulations. Neighbours also become aware of what their fellow neighbours needs are. Though not all residents are happy with this 'intrusion' it was said. The aim is for residents to become self-motivating. (Yp9 & 18)

One street coordinator kept local interest up by constantly following up matters with his residents in his area. Phone calls were made but emails in particular were used to inform and keep up interest. Anyone who had expressed interest in BRAG but may not have actually joined up were included in the emails. He tried not to harass people. Some people will then join up whether 'out of guilt or conscience or whatever they jump into it.' as they appreciate the information provided while others are just willing to stay on the mailing list for information. BRAG T shirts have been used along with fire brigade uniforms have been used as something that has worked in attracting interest in bushfire safety and BRAG. (Yp10) Individuals want to 'know more about fire' and ask for the coordinator to go and talk to them. They are told about BRAG and if they're interested it 'goes on from that.' (Yp11) The telephone tree is an essential tool for maintaining communication links and mobile phones have made this form of operation simpler to perform and dissemination of information is so much simpler. It's centred on the

facilitator and permeates out from her as residents are contacted with relevant information. People ring in also if worried. All occupants of BRAG households are 'aware of what to do and who to call.' (Yp24)

From the shire's perspective, an approach currently in use to encourage self-motivation is the stick approach of infringement notices where residents who fail to obey the regulations are fined $250. It's the fear approach. (Yp5) This stick approach hasn't been effective with the 'greenies' 'as they were not worried about their houses burning down as long as the environment was left alone and they were also not interested in joining BRAG.' (Yp5, 6) Responses to the approach vary but one has seen the shire rangers referred to as 'the fire Nazis.' (Yp31)

The policies and the importance of BRAG to the shire was elaborated upon further:

> we've got to have a good program and I'm hoping out of this there'll be something which we can grab hold of and run with for a while to get some good results out of 'cause you don't want to be throwing resources and money at something where one person leaves and the whole BRAG collapses. And that's the way we're at the moment in ... in here, you know? Like I said before, from my ob ... observation there's a lot of people that are willing to jump onboard as a community group but no one's willing to lead them and ... and I think a lot of that's come from people who'd say it's a heavy handed approach. We've done it in our firebreak inspections but it's needed. It was a ...a pretty bad condition so I think that's filtering through to the community that are very scared of the rangers and that ... that we're going to come in and fine them, so working together. And I know we've been handing out and/or giving advice out for that. Some of the stuff I'd like to see long-term which is only small things but once you get BRAG groups up and running in streets, I'd like to be able to put signs up in the street and say BRAG group, contact this number and come back to the shire so we tell you what street you're in, give the zone and hand it out there.

He also expressed the view that BRAG members did not have to 'dob in' their neighbours if they were breaking any of the rules 'because we're going to find them anyway. (Yp16)

Related to the work of the shire, a major concern that arose in these interviews was centred on the problem as to whether residents actually received or understood 'fire notices' which were sent out with their rate notices. For various reasons a number of residents did not receive these notices or the local paper where the council advertised – they may have been renters and the landlords dealt with the rates or accountants dealt with them on behalf of owners or they only came to the properties occasionally and didn't receive the local paper. For others the notices are 'pretty well unreadable … and the website is badly designed' according to the BRAG facilitator. To overcome this Annie, the facilitator gets a bundle of notices from the shire and 'literally hands them out' to residents who have just moved in and introduces herself and if they need advice here's my phone number. (Yp18 & 19)

The answer to the following question about the 'stick' approach provided a divided response:

> So would you say that that stick from the shire's been an added motivation for some people to get involved with BRAG or ..?
>
> D: I think so, probably.
>
> H: Probably the other way round perhaps ... the shires ... because of the activities of volunteers, people like yourself.
>
> M: I think it's a good point quite frankly. I don't reckon the shire's acted off their own bat at all, I reckon they've been sort of ... struth look at these guys. Shamed into it.
>
> M: Shamed into it, yeah absolutely. And you can quote me on that one. (Yp12)

This stick approach isn't followed by the BRAG facilitators in Yallingup as they prefer the more subtle approaches of neighbours working with neighbours in a process of education. It's an empowering approach leading to a feeling of responsibility on all sides as awareness is developed through discussion and observation of properties over what's required for community safety. The approach avoids conflict where possible and is used often in conjunction with the DVD. For the firefighters it's time well spent as 'one hour spent here is going to save me 10 hours on the ground.' (Yp7) Residents are made aware that the fire truck may not be available at their property and this awareness is more likely to lead to preparedness. (Yp7 ,8)

The approach adopted varies with the facilitators and its success can be variable.

> There have been mixed reactions from residents who have attended training courses with putting energy in that rubbed off on others who could see the potential and 'went away and give it a go'…
>
> A: And not everyone did.

These latter residents came for a few meetings and then stopped thinking they'd obtained all the information they needed. (Yp8)

As for the manner in which they operated on the following indicates that there was a degree of flexibility present and that FESA training package materials which they think are useful was not always followed to the letter as the following indicates. It also indicates the need to tailor the message to fit the locality, the different ways people learn and the facilitator's own expertise. The DVD as was constantly mentioned has a great impact and much of the discussion at the meetings will centre around that:

> A: … the actual training package, I had my doubts about, of how to do it. But the idea of it and how … and I did try, my first few groups, I tried to do what they said, follow it by the book. But …
>
> M: Cause I lost the book shortly after the first course, but …But the concept was there.
>
> A: Yeah, the concept was fine.

> M: So I've never actually followed any sheet. Just gone with the basic agenda of what you're trying to achieve, and then have it so that it's a quick talk.
>
> M: Bit of a DVD, and then some group discussion about practical things that happen … And so that … use that as a sort of starting point then for once you've got your basic messages across to them, have a bit of a discussion and then discuss what you can do down the track. So what … these are the problems, these are some of the problems and talk about solutions along the way but then if the group's keen, you organise another group too and try and keep it to two hours…' Another less confident facilitator needs the structure of the manual and works his way through it – seeking advice from 'Annie' as to what to do next. (Yp8)

Because the coordination at the different levels needs not only organised persons who are able to do such things as run the phone tree and organise meetings but they must also have to time to commit themselves to BRAG. Both Yallingup facilitators have 'fobbed off' people in the past (suggesting on occasions they join other BRAGs rather than run one themselves) as they knew that they would not have the time. Others are reluctant but with a nudge and follow up they will take on the tasks. Others are just straight unsuitable for the role or even to be a member of the group and in one case the person was 'kicked out.' It's often then difficult to find suitable coordinators and for one group a coordinator was found after five or six attempts and that competent high school teacher found them not the other way round. From these discussions it can be seen that coordination at the various levels is hard, time consuming work which needs a quite competent communicator to make it work. Both of these people were upset that they were not receiving the support and feedback they believed to be their due from FESA. (Yp25, 26)

### *Trust and self confidence*

As inferred earlier, trust and confidence between BRAG and the Perth based FESA appears to be lacking at the moment but a level of trust does exist at the regional level as the following exchange indicates: 'A plus for these people was at last there is an officer working for FESA but contracted by the shire: 'He's a top bloke, anything you need now, we ring him up and say, Andy this doesn't work, this didn't work, something's going wrong here, that firebreak's stuffed or whatever. He gets straight onto it. Now that's ...' Things for these people working both in BRAG and as firefighters is getting easier – whereas before they had to 'beg and grovel' to get things despite the fact that they were volunteers.

> M: Absolutely, guys like Andy Thompson made a massive, massive difference. And it is getting better but it could always be better.' (Yp11, 12)

As well as using the 'stick' approach the council ranger has used past fire experiences (e.g. how the fire was stopped from burning a person's house down) in high risk areas to build up awareness working 'with them on an education basis.' Whilst letting people know he's not 'snooping' trust is being built up. (Yp4) The need as the ranger saw it is to adopt a non-threatening approach as the view residents often hold of the 'blue light' services is negative:

> M: It's good to be able to approach them in a non-threatening way, you know, without pips on your shoulder and all that sort of thing as well. Most people's reaction to lights and sirens and cars and you know, ranger uniforms, blue ones, is police which sort of puts them on the defensive mode a little bit. (Yp7)

As for appropriate planning on the part of the residents, the DVD plays major role in this. They become aware that the fire trucks may not necessarily be available to save their house and they realize they have to use the time available to them to prepare for the fire 'and hopefully the fire trucks will come with it.' (Yp7, 8) The whole point then about BRAG is that it is self-motivating and this applies to them as a group and in the way residents prepare for the future. BRAG doesn't need a lot of resources once the initial thing is established. (Yp9) One resource though which is greatly needed is the access to a person or persons to assist the BRAGs in carrying out their tasks so a plus for these people was at last there is an officer working for FESA but contracted by the shire: 'He's a top bloke, anything you need now, we ring him up and say, Andy this doesn't work, this didn't work, something's going wrong here, that firebreak's stuffed or whatever. He gets straight onto it. Now that's ...'

Things for these people working both in BRAG and as firefighters is getting easier – whereas before they had to 'beg and grovel' to get things despite the fact that they were volunteers. 'M: Absolutely, guys like Andy Thompson made a massive, massive difference. And it is getting better but it could always be better.' The cooperation between the brigade and BRAG was again mentioned as a plus and all three of these interviewees are members of the brigade. They also have the support of the local brigade captain. All this has meant that when a meeting is held – or at least at the beginning – most of the street coordinator's group would attend – 30 or 40. People are much more aware now and comfortable with the idea of a fire breaking out. (Yp11, 12)

The roles of BRAG and the rangers were discussed (Yp2) and there was no agreement on whether BRAG should be simply an 'advice thing about how to do it' while the ranger does the inspections and 'books them' and so on. There was agreement though on the biggest problem which is getting people to run the groups and the council does encourage residents to join:

> W: Or is there an opportunity here, Geoff, to encourage their own BRAG group while you're there?
>
> G: Yeah. Well, this is it, yeah.
>
> W: If we can get the right paraphernalia out and say well here, think about this with your neighbours, you know? It's all about being pro-active, isn't it.
>
> G: Well, that's it, you know. I've taken Annie a couple of times with me and you know it does her good too. (Yp17)

In the light of too often resident apathy, having committed facilitators – in some cases charismatic ones – would appear to be important if resident trust is to be developed in the local BRAG. Knowledge of firefighting appears also to be a motivating force for attracting

facilitators. One reason given for becoming a facilitator was that they as fire fighters had been going to too many 'silly fires' and 'were tired of seeing so many burnt sheep' for example and they wanted to inform people, creating awareness in order to change their practices. 'But it just … the same motivation of not wanting to go to fires on Christmas Day, I don't want to have to go and kill a kangaroo with a shovel or go and beg somebody to kill a kangaroo for me, have to pay them half …' The reasons for joining BRAG then arose out of this belief that there was more to their role as fire fighters than putting out fires.' (Yp25) Facilitating is not an easy task but the role is somewhat easier the longer the BRAG has been established. The role of the facilitator and the time one is willing to spend and the confidence needed to not only run meetings but to confront often disgruntled residents means a fairly committed person is needed to carry out the tasks. Annie – a key facilitator - according to M has been very successful whereas it's more of a slog for him as they noted:

> A: Oh, well I don't have to go and find BRAG groups now, BRAG groups come to me. I mean I do have some BRAG groups, I …
>
> M: It's having a go-to person. Because, you know, I'm great at presenting them but as far as checking them up and all and [unclear] goes, I get sick of putting in the leg work which you've got to. And you have to really bully and barge people until they front up, you know. (Yp25)

With council officers being referred to as 'fire Nazis' due to their fining of residents for breaking the regulations the officers realise that BRAG is needed, providing an alternative approach to the problem. This BRAG have had to deal with angry residents and the facilitators would rather use education leading to self-motivation rather than the 'big stick' approach current being used. The council officers now realise that they need BRAG and are more relaxed about the group now. (Yp31) The end result of BRAG's presence then according to the interviewees is that Compliance seems to be more present where BRAGs are located:

> K: So Tim, if I could just back track a minute, in ... in areas where BRAG is active and I know in ... that's not most of the shire but where it is ... have you noticed any difference in terms of number of infringement notices and ..?
>
> W: Yeah, look, especially this year. Yeah, yeah, look this year we did notice a big difference and last year we didn't get to all of it ... of the whole of the shire so while the infringements are on a same amount this year, actually I had the availability to hire Jeff and someone else to help us out to get to more of it. We actually probably did 99% of the shire. Last year we probably only did 65-70% of the shire. We still got the same amount of infringements. We did a lot more inspections. (Yp32)

The facilitators are brought in to deal with often difficult situations, for example:

> A: They're jumping up and down and they'll say Annie would you go and talk to this person and I'll go and talk to them and give them information, give them the DVDs, tell them about BRAG but they … if they've been fined three times they don't really want to know about

> BRAG … they're not expecting me to do it, they're just saying there's this person there that wants to know more, if you have the time, can you do it. (Yp11)

The end result of this activity is that people are much more aware now and comfortable with the idea of a fire breaking out. This attendance and awareness is also no doubt partly due to the $250 spot fines imposed by council rangers for breaking the rules such as not mowing the grass and building codes. (Yp12)

**CONFIRMATION AND RE-ASSESSMENT**

It would appear that BRAG's existence has lead to a reassessment of residents' plans for fire as the following indicates:

> H: So there's an awareness now, which probably wasn't there before.
>
> M: Yeah. Very much so.
>
> J: And that's really been quite a rapid change, just a couple of years?
>
> M: Oh yeah, a lot of people have gone from being completely ignorant of the danger and no idea at all and doing things that ... to someone who's found out, I didn't know it all, well none of us knew it all. Have always known it all but we've learned doing things ... we look at it and go gee, oh careful what I say ... struth, can't believe you're doing that. You know to being you know much more aware of it so you can bring people up to speed. Radical, radical turn about for some people I'd say over two years. (Yp21)

For residents, reassessment of plans and the joining of BRAG often comes about due to the heavy hand of the council. So from the council perspective, again:

> W: But infringements are a part of education. It's a big part because we ran a really heavy media campaign for the last two years with lots of ads in the paper, warning people what we were going to do, stories and that and full-page ad at the beginning of the fire season with all the fire requirements, ads in there. So I'm not sure what else you can do. We invited all these people to an expo and in that expo was there for opportunity to come speak to us, BRAG, or anybody else about their fire requirements.
>
> T: I think the only way dealing with this issue is that it's got to be part of in the BRAG campaign, that if you don't comply, in the end, the rangers will get you because being a member of BRAG do ... doing nothing isn't going to give you any protection.
>
> W: No, we're not biased.
>
> T: And so we don't scare the right sort of people away from BRAG we've got to be able to say you know, you need to do this and you know you can help your neighbours to do this.'… 'It comes down to Good cop, Bad cop: 'W: We have a lot of issue with wineries and chalets and accommodation and there which is really, really some grey areas and ... and I'm well aware that I'm not very popular out on the ridge area and a lot of people don't but at the end of the day, if we ever get a fire there and it probably saves it, perhaps they might. And that's the only ... the only way they're ever going to see it and someone has to be the baddie.

> Because if we're the baddie and then encourage BRAG's or support BRAG on another hand, make them look the goodies, well, at the end of the day we're going to find an even balance. That's what it's about. (Yp31, 32)

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION**

Collaboration between neighbours is not always as simple to achieve as one hopes. One barrier to success would be when there's conflict between neighbours, often over whether the neighbour has cleaned up their property or has trees too close to the dwelling or is using the firebreaks illegally. While it has nothing really to do with BRAG in the sense that it is a council and fire concern, it still does hinder the development of groups where neighbours are in conflict. (Yp3)

A lack of community concern about preparedness, or at least being prepared to form or join a BRAG, was discussed at length in a fairly frank exchange, on how difficult it is to establish a BRAG and then what makes a BRAG function successfully, occurred with the 3rd interviewees from the FESA regional office and later with a council officer where the following was said:

> They tried [to form a BRAG] but the people that did it, didn't have the awareness of it all so it withered on the vine and it died that one. And historically, this year we had a decent house fire on Molloy Island which is an island in the middle of the river and a lady, she's a ... there's a female chief in Margaret River, and it was her brigade so she tried to run one of these things. Did all the normal PR stuff, nobody comes to the meeting. A hundred and eighty houses there, you know? They just had this fire in the middle of summer and so you know she rang me up and said oh God, how do we do it? And I said ... so it's not that simple. And I'm not sure that I'd ever know the answer but it's to do with the type of people.
>
> But after the Bridgetown fires a couple of years ago, there was a big fire nearly burnt the town down, a huge fire, and we ... regionally we thought the way to try and get these things to start is we've got to you know overhead package and all that sort of stuff. And went down there to a packed house of oh, like 150 people three months after the fire and basically the story about how to do it and all that. Two years later you wouldn't find anyone that was prepared to do it. And so you know part of that means is that you can get some interest after a big fire but it doesn't mean you get continuation and in fact Annie's one has never had a big fire to drive it. It's always a threat of the big fire and it has got to do with she's got good back-up from the brigade and the shire and we had some good people. (Yp4, 5)

BRAG membership would appear to provide residents with confidence to approach neighbours who might be flouting the regulations while in the past they may have sat back from it all:

> A: We go back to the question of motivation, it's just, to me it's just kind of like, I don't know, just neighbourliness I suppose and one of the things I say to BRAG people is if they see someone piling up a pile of wood and they're going to burn and it looks like it's not the time now, this time of the year, fine, but it's not the time of the year to burn and they see it

> starting to build up, it's just say hey, when you're ready to burn that next winter, give us as yell and we'll give you a hand.
>
> Just giving them some strategies to how to approach the problem instead of … one of the BRAG groups that … and so they were all over various barking dogs and other things, the neighbours just weren't talking to each other. And then you get the other thing is when you've got friends next door to each other and you see your friend, that's your neighbour that you want to stay on the right side with, and they're burning on the wrong day, you're not going to dob them in, you just sit there hoping that the fire's not going to get away. Whereas now they, well Hartley seems to think … that Hartley said that you know, he's got a much …
>
> M: He's gone over the yard and approached them on …
>
> A: They all feel much more, I don't know what's the word, empowered is not a good word but something along those lines, they feel like they have a responsibility to …
>
> M: It's good to be able to approach them in a non-threatening way, you know, without pips on your shoulder and … all that sort of thing as well. Most people's reaction to lights and sirens and cars and you know, ranger uniforms, blue ones, is police which sort of puts them on the defensive mode a little bit. (Yp7)

Motivation to join or even form a local BRAG can come from more than just a bushfire, particularly as there have been no major fires for some years. There have been 'spin offs' in that the BRAG system was used for other than bushfires – when a child was lost – and the following resulted:

> M: We had the spin-off.
>
> A: … the police ring me and say Annie, can you get people in this area which happened to be this area where I live. So I rang a BRAG group and they all went into action. So then somebody else who was involved in that came and said well this is fantastic, we want this. So their introduction to it was a community group going to solve a problem and was nothing to do with fire. So then I said to them well this is what it's about. And they were quite happy to go on with it and it did become a BRAG group [unclear –diction]. And a lot of them are motivated by the social side of it. I've had a lot of people that … Avril rang me up and she said you know, my friend so and so has got this BRAG group going and we're, I don't know any of my neighbours and we haven't any sense of community, we need something like that. And she wasn't motivated by fire at all. (P9)

Once BRAG is in operation the hope is that it will continue, particularly as residents realise its value that goes beyond bushfire preparedness.

> M: I think it's pretty ... yeah I think it's pretty much self-generating.
>
> D: I mean all we can do is ...

> M: Self-perpetuating rather, so once ... so now it's got going I think it keeps going, again largely comes down to the people on the ground and people involved, not so much ...
>
> D: We can let everyone know when there's a meeting if there's going to be a meeting or new DVD that comes out or ... that doesn't take much. That takes ... shoot off a few emails like we did that time, we got a lot of response, get a lot of people down the fires station, which is a great place to do it. Because you know you've got the machinery down there and you've got a room and the fridge with beer and all the rest of it and coffee and whatever. So ... and well set up with the DVD….

The beauty of BRAG is that they all know their neighbours and can make suggestions to each other and also help each other when needed and shame each other into taking action on their own properties. A spin off is that this all supplies a sense of security as it acts as a form of neighbourhood watch and people worry less if they're absent from their properties for a while. Though for this cooperation to continue occur the facilitator central role in the running of the BRAG is important:

> M: Even if everything ... all the support completely disappeared from FESA overnight, tomorrow they just showed no interest at all, it's to our own benefit as I think I mentioned earlier on this evening, it's to our own benefit to make our neighbours fire aware. So I think we would probably keep it ... we'd probably keep it going anyway and particularly with people like Annie who are very motivated and have a real sense of doing the right thing, the community thing. I think ... I'd like to think we'd keep going in some way, shape or form regardless of the support we were getting from FESA.
>
> H: I certainly wouldn't be as prepared and aware as I am now if it hadn't been for Annie and Annie's interest. (Yp14)

The importance of the facilitator was raised constantly throughout the second set of interviews. Annie appears as a quite charismatic leader who has inspired those around her to not only join but to take on roles themselves – 'she's done a fantastic job' (See Bps 1-2,4,20,30-31 for examples)

Community awareness is developed as the coordinators go about their tasks. The coordinators themselves as mentioned earlier will commit themselves to knocking on doors and generally acting as good neighbours. They even develop methods for dealing with absentee residents and making sure that they themselves are not too overcommitted:

> D: I don't now I think it's just hanging ... I've just hung a plastic bag with a kit in it, easy to read thing on the doorknob if they're not there. If they are there well that's fine but most people ... I say most people, the majority of people are aware of that. Because there are more people moving into the area who are retiring permanently or living permanently to the ... maybe to the house that they've been keeping as a holiday house, but are now moving in. And even if they're not there's always somebody who's next door and not far away, so it's good with BRAG, it's got to be really local, local, you know it's got to be literally your

immediate neighbours I think. Because if you ... for the person coordinating it or you know ... it's just if ... you can only go so far and ...

M: You spread yourself too thin and you just don't ... people don't contact ...

D: Not doing the contact properly unless you get someone else involved who will say, yeah, I'll do this street. And you just keep in ... it's basically just communication, keeping the lines open all the way through and if somebody new comes on, a new brochure comes out of a new video, you just say I've got half a dozen of these, do you want to spread them around, you know. And I think it's just ... that's how it best works in our little area and I think it would ... it's not an awful lot of work you know it's just you know especially in ... it is a new area…'(Yp26)

**PLANNING, PREPARATION AND SAFE RESPONSE**

An example of residents planning for the future was provided in the following response from Annie where the problems they have in working with FESA was highlighted:

So I did it, I just made it myself, never made a website in my life before and put it on a … I hosted it myself and then I thought I need to do this properly, I'll ask them for some money. And they said no, you can't have one. You just can't have it. Why can't I have it? Because we won't support a website that's giving out information because then we're accountable for that information and people take the information and come back at us. Well how come all these other fire brigades have got websites? Oh because, well oh I don't know about that, well I don't know they do. Now, in the Karragullen fire when the FESA website crashed and you couldn't get on to it, everybody was using the Darlington … Glen Forest, Glen Forest website which was providing information to communities because the FESA one didn't. So I mean they're there. And they're all … they've got FESA all over them and the quote that they said to me is you can't have any acknowledgement of FESA on it. (Yp3)

Planning for the future is very dependent on the particular household's needs and the following exchange is worth quoting in full:

J: Is Stay or Go a big issue down here or do most people tend to want to stay and defend?

M: I think ... Stay and Go is a big issue, I think it depends too on perhaps some people may ... you know the age of the people has a big bearing, if you know you're ... well it's hard to say what age, but you know if you're sort of elderly you may not be too ...

D: Or with kids, or young kids.

M: Or yeah, and the opposite, if you have very young kids, babies or whatever you might be influenced to leave but if you're fit and maybe your kids aren't very little and you know you may be more of the idea that you're able to handle ... more capable to be able to stay and do something about it. Yeah I think it is a bit of an issue ...

J: So for example in your area Hartley, as part of your communication line, have people said whether they're planning to stay or given an indication?

H: Have a fairly good idea of who's going and who's staying.

D: I think maybe Theresa across the road might.

H: She's going.

D: She's going. Yeah said I'm not staying, I'm buggering off, yeah, which is fine 'cause you know ... but there'll be still making their house as safe as they can, but it's just not.

M: I think people, if they're fit enough and capable enough will stay because there is a ... you have a very high chance of saving your house, very high in a bush fire, in our area. You know maybe if you're on the side of a mountain in New South Wales or Victoria it might be a different story, but yeah.

D: If you've got a hose, got a good hose like ...

M: If you're set up you have a very ... around our area if you're set up with all the right gear, you have a very high chance of saving your house I think.

J: So that's the sort of advice you'd give to people when you're talking to them? It's their choice, isn't it

M: Yeah, very … I'd be very reticent to say, oh no you should stay. Because I'd ... because if they stayed and you know someone died in the fire or ... might also be very reticent to go, we make it very clear I think when we tell people that ...

D: Well the booklet makes it very clear.

M: And the booklet makes it easy. You decide, you know it's very much a personal thing, you decide. I wouldn't dream of suggesting people do one or the other actually.

K: Do people ever ... within the little BRAG groups, do they plan amongst themselves? For example the ... you know if you're not home I'll take your dog or ...

D: Well that's the idea of it, I mean there's the neighbourly thing that you know we ... most people's properties ... we've been in you know to several people's property and we know where the pump is and know how to start it if they're not there and you know where the hose is and we can figure it out. So that ... not everybody's comfortable with that but most people think that if they value their property would be happy for their neighbour to come in and say, yeah okay, where's your pump? Where's your hose and ..?

M: We have an arrangement like that, Doug and I are close and absolutely if it was ... if Doug wasn't there I'd be over there at his place and I'm sure visa verse, you know. And we also try and make one of the things is that anyone who may leave or ... everyone ... not just people may leave, but they make us, the brigade, aware of where their things are and so forth. Where they keep their fuel or whatever have you. That's really handy for us at the

> brigade, we go fighting bush near a house and for some reason the pumps run out of fuel, we may know where they keep their fuel. So we can go and get the pump going again, or whatever, you know. (Yp13)

According to the second interviews, properties in each street coordinator's group are kept to a manageable size from around a dozen down. This enables them to have 'the time to get people involved'

> H: We've got a really good communication set up now, people will sort of ring me. We've had a couple of instances this year of mainly kids coming down from the city, two instances with a rental property near one of the people who are in my group who lit bonfires basically out of season, and we were able to sort of get that nipped in the bud straight, so attended to those.
>
> M: I think you rang me once.
>
> H: People have called you know to say look, there's a fire, there's smoke around, do you know where it's coming from and rang Douglas or whoever, Annie and usually it's somewhere 300 miles away.
>
> M: Yes, they're doing a burn off in Esperance.
>
> H: So there's an awareness now, which probably wasn't there before.
>
> M: Yeah. Very much so.
>
> J: And that's really been quite a rapid change, just a couple of years? M: Oh yeah, a lot of people have gone from being completely ignorant of the danger and no idea at all and doing things that ... to someone who's found out, I didn't know it all, well none of us knew it all' (Yp21)

# 4. DISCUSSION

## *4.1 Context*

There are a variety of contextual factors to consider in Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup as well as similarities and differences between the case study locations. These are important in determining the appropriateness and success of BRAG at different levels.

### *Locality*

Bedfordale and Darlington are both rural-urban fringe locations in the Perth Hills area with high risk properties bordering state forests and reserves. The steep slopes and vegetated properties add to the risk to many of the properties. They are both established suburbs in growth areas of the Perth metropolitan area. Yallingup, in the South-West of Western Australia is a rural township on the coast surrounded by national park and state forest. In addition there is also a large amount of agricultural land in the vicinity including wineries, orchards and grazing land. The three case study locations vary in size with the following populations: Bedfordale 1,831,

Darlington 3,447, and Yallingup 1,061.[3] Median house prices in Darlington and Bedfordale are considerably above the regional average.[4]

### *Livelihood/lifestyle*

Bedfordale and Darlington have large commuter populations living on a variety of small and medium sized blocks. There are some small land-holders and farms bordering the suburbs, particularly in Bedfordale. However there are also a growing number of housing developments with a more suburban feel. Yallingup has a large weekender population with about a 50% absentee landowner rate. The properties vary from small holiday shacks through to large seaside mansions. The implication of a large percentage of holiday homes is that there may be many properties unattended before and during the fire season. There is also the potential for the properties to be leased by the owners or borrowed by friends or family who may not have experience or understanding of bushfires. It also presents a challenge in terms of targeting owners with information about BRAG who may either be absent in the build up to the fire season or in holiday mode when they are in Yallingup and less likely to feel a desire or interest to get prepared for bushfires. Of those who live there permanently there is a mix of small landholders and farms and a number of housing developments on large blocks of land. Many can be labelled sea change residents who have moved to the area from metropolitan areas, especially Perth and have often had little or no experience with bushfires or been accustomed to being serviced by full-time paid fire and ambulance services.

### *Community*

The local brigade forms an important part of the community in Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup. In both Bedfordale and Darlington the fire shed is in a central location in the township. The local brigades have a proud history and many volunteers have been involved for a long period of time. In Yallingup the brigade underwent an amalgamation with the rural brigade in Yallingup Siding recently. This has increased their response area considerably including more rural properties. Issues pertaining to community in the three case study locations are further discussed in the next section.

### *The nature of past and present events*

Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup are all considered to be high fire risk areas in Western Australia, although within each area there is a considerable variety in the level of risk. This necessitates targeting of high risk properties for BRAG, particularly in Darlington. None of the case study locations have been impacted by a major bushfire since the involvement of BRAG by their respective local brigade. However there have been fires in the Perth Hills region that have come into close proximity with Bedfordale and Darlington. The Perth Hills fire in January 2005 came close to Bedfordale with residents reporting ash landing on their properties. The last major fire to affect Yallingup was in 1962 but as in the case of Bedfordale and Darlington, there have

[3] 2006 ABS census data

[4] Bedfordale median house price $730,000 (region $420,000) and Darlington median house price $545,000 (region $410,000) – figures from suburb profiles on www.domain.com.au

been a whole series of small incidents and the annual threat each summer. Table One[5] shows a breakdown of reported tree, scrub and grass fires between 2000 and 2007 in each of the case study locations. None of these appear to have turned into major events but clearly presented a level of risk to the immediate community.

**Table One: Number of reported tree, scrub and grass fires reported from 2000 to 2007[6]**

| BRAG LOCATION | Number of Tree, Shrub, Grass Fires | Period |
|---|---|---|
| Yallingup | 75 | 2000/07 |
| Bedfordale | 115 | 2000/07 |
| Darlington | 160 | 2000/07 |

*Membership*

At the time of the interviews involvement with BRAG in the three case study locations was as follows: in Yallingup seven street level groups had been established since 2004; in Darlington 42 streets were involved in the BRAG program which commenced as Community Fireguard in 1996; and in Bedfordale the main facilitator and his support team had "covered" all 600 properties in Bedfordale between about 2001 and 2006. By "covered" the facilitator means they had invited all residents to participate in BRAG, estimating about 80% of properties have become involved to some degree or other. This ranges from being on a telephone tree list for the street, through to active street level groups. In all there are 35 street coordinators in Bedfordale, either covering a street or part of a street.

## *Prior level of engagement/interest in issue*

Prior to this, levels of engagement with the community had been minimal in all three locations. No formal programs had been in existence in Darlington and Bedfordale prior to Community Fireguard's adoption from the eastern states in the mid-1990s. In Yallingup there had been some involvement in BRAG prior to 2004 but this had not been a great success, which was attributed to in the interviews as being a result of not having a facilitator in place who could keep BRAG going. Interest in the issues prior to the program was predominantly at a local brigade level where the focus was principally on response. The increasing emphasis on community safety for bushfire, the driver for piloting Community Fireguard in townships such as Darlington was symptomatic of an increasing acceptance amongst fire brigades of the benefit of engaging with communities and making residents better prepared. Certainly this has been the case in the three case study locations where portions of the local brigades have got behind the initiative and seen the merit in it.

[5] Data supplied from FESA records – there are no data available for the period 1996-1999

[6] While in terms of total numbers Darlington had the most reported tree, scrub and grass fires during the period 2000 – 2007 in relative terms as a percentage of the population there have been fewer reported incidents there than in Bedfordale or Yallingup. However there are also a range of other factors that may impact on the numbers, such as the reporting and classifying of incidents.

### *History*

Further contextual issues related to the history of BRAG are covered in the introduction to this report.

### *Relationships*

Relationships are an important contextual factor for BRAG at a range of different levels: *inter*-organisational relationships during planning/implementation of the program; *intra*-organisational relationships; and agency/community relationships.

There is a diversity of players involved in the BRAG program which became clear from the interviews. However, these roles are not always clearly defined or distinct. In fact in some cases multiple roles were carried out by a particular individual.

At a local government level there is a responsibility to residents in their LGA to ensure they are prepared for a range of hazards including bushfires. In the three case study locations this means Busselton Shire for Yallingup, the City of Armadale for Bedfordale and the Shire of Mundaring for Darlington. It is therefore the responsibility of Community Fire Managers and/or Fire Prevention Officers and Chief Bushfire Control Officers to promote BRAG in the case study locations and provide on-going support to the facilitators. Interviews with the respective managers highlighted the time restraints that they had in terms of providing the ongoing level of support to groups.

Getting the support of operational staff is clearly an important issue for FESA central office. This includes those based in the operations directorate in Perth and in the regional offices. The interviews with FESA staff revealed that there had not always been full backing for the BRAG program from operations, or that it had not been considered of importance to them. Getting a level of buy-in at this level was seen as crucial for encouraging FESA staff with an operational background at all levels to champion the cause and lend support to facilitators and BRAG coordinators.

## *4.2 Activities and Resources*

In the way that BRAG operates today in Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup there are a number of elements to the program. These can be considered in terms of formal elements and informal elements. At a formal level these include print media and other resources (e.g. leaflets, brochures, DVDs) that are provided through BRAG and at meetings targeted at the general public or specific BRAG street groups. At an informal level there are day-to-day interactions between people involved in BRAG and various social gatherings. Lying somewhere between the formal and informal is a general BRAG community presence in the three case study locations.

### *Print media & DVDs*

At a formal level a variety of print media and other resources are distributed through BRAG. Some of these are specifically designed by FESA for the BRAG program, while others are more generic resources that are available outside of BRAG as well as to participants. Examples of the latter include the “Bushfire Stay or Go Kit” and the “Be Prepared” DVD. Both these products are made available to the public through FESA’s website and through other channels (e.g. at

council offices and on request). However they have also been disseminated through BRAG groups and this appears to have been an effective strategy as it has provided the information in the context of fire preparedness at a time when the audience (BRAG participants) have been taking an active interest in the issues. In the interviews it was reported that a common occurrence at BRAG meetings was a viewing of the Be Prepared DVD, followed by a discussion between the facilitator and the people present. This was seen as extremely beneficial in terms of helping people to think about the preparedness issues that they needed to consider and stimulating considerable discussion. It therefore made the DVD a far more interactive resource than would be the case if it were simply mailed to residents in high-risk locations and left to the individual or family to utilise.

Similarly BRAG participants also saw the Stay or Go Kit as being of great value as something tangible that could be taken home after a BRAG meeting and discussed with family members. The kit contains three leaflets with information designed to help residents make a decision about staying and defending, or leaving well in advance of a fire in line with the current national position on the stay or go policy[7]. The first leaflet explains what staying and defending entails and what residents would need to do in terms of preparation and preparedness prior to the fire season and what actions would need to be taken to actively defend a home during a fire. The second leaflet focuses on the decision to leave early and what that involves in terms of the importance of not leaving at the last minute and the appropriate items to pack. The third leaflet then provides the template for developing a family plan. These are all issues that are covered and discussed through the BRAG program - certainly in the three case study locations BRAG participants interviewed mentioned them frequently. As with the DVD, the kit helps to reinforce the information provided through BRAG meetings and sparks conversation amongst participants as well as offering a resource to take away and consider. Once again the consensus from the interviews was that BRAG participants were able to get much more out of the kit once they had been actively engaged with the issues and were more motivated to make use of the resource.

In fact the interviews identified just how important it was to have new resources for BRAG meetings. This desire was both amongst BRAG participants and BRAG facilitators. In the case of facilitators they see the importance of having a “hook” to entice people to their meeting. This

[7] The Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (2005) Bushfires and Community Safety. This paper sets out the position that householders should ‘stay and defend or leave early’. The recommendation is now “widely endorsed, at least on paper, by most Australian fire authorities and other emergency services” (Handmer and Tibbitts, 2005, p. 82). It is based on the view that in the event of fire, residents are less vulnerable if they stay with their prepared property and defend it, or leave well in advance of the fire front arriving. Australian research has shown that most fatalities in bushfires have been the result of people fleeing at the last moment, either in vehicles or on foot, and succumbing to the intense radiant heat (Krusel & Petris, 1992). Research has also shown that a well prepared home that is actively defended by able-bodied residents before, during and after a bushfire has a high probability of survival and provides a safe refuge while the main fire front passes (Wilson & Ferguson, 1984). Given that not everyone is capable, either physically and/or mentally, of actively defending their property, leaving well in advance of a bushfire is a necessary alternative strategy and for many is a far safer option. The message is complex and success is likely to depend on a mix of factors including an understanding of what ‘stay and defend or leave early’ actually means, being able to plan accordingly, and the nature of the particular circumstances that are confronted before and during a fire.

is particularly important where a BRAG street group has been operating for several years. Facilitators reported the challenge of keeping residents interested and motivated to attend, especially prior to the fire season or when there has not been much fire activity. Resources help to keep people interested and involved in thinking about bushfire preparedness. However the emphasis on always having something new to present to participants clearly presents challenges to FESA both from a resource perspective and for message integrity. The key safety messages that BRAG advocates are a fairly constant entity, therefore there are only so many ways that they can be presented. It can become detrimental to the effectiveness of the program if they are modified. Even if budgets were not an issue it would be difficult to provide facilitators with new ideas and products. While the facilitators may understand this, their experience of coordinating the program in their locality has been enhanced when they have had a new resource to offer.

Across the three case study locations these print materials and DVDs were the same, which is to be expected, as they are FESA resources. There did appear to be some differences in the experiences of the facilitators in terms of obtaining a regular supply of available resources. This appears to have been particularly problematic since the 2006 Risk Analysis and subsequent controls placed on the program pending the full review. In particular the facilitators in Yallingup have on occasion found it hard to get the requested resources from FESA central office.

### *Meetings*

Meetings, as previously mentioned, are an important element of BRAG at a formal level. This is both in terms of the initial establishment of BRAG in the case study locations and the ongoing activities of BRAG in a location. Several different forms of meeting were identified through the interviews. These included general public meetings, street level group meetings and street coordinator meetings.

The general public meetings are typically open to all residents and held at the local brigade. These have been used in Bedfordale quite extensively especially when a fire is nearby and the facilitator feels that it would be a good opportunity to update residents, as well as cover some of the BRAG topics. This type of meeting has also been used in Bedfordale in the initial program introduction for identified streets. Meetings of street level BRAG groups were mentioned in Yallingup and Bedfordale. In Yallingup these have mainly taken place at a resident’s property whereas in Bedfordale all meeting focus on the local brigade as the venue. The street coordinator meetings are particularly prevalent in Darlington, where the BRAG facilitator calls meetings of the street coordinators prior to and after the fire season. This is also done in Bedfordale but in a less formal way than in Darlington where minutes have been recorded for the meetings. In both cases the meetings of street coordinators serve as a way to pass on information to street level participants as well as discussing strategies and ideas for BRAG. As the street coordinators are predominantly local retired brigade volunteers the meetings often form an extension of other local brigade activity.

It is interesting to note that the original Community Fireguard approach of the facilitator holding a meeting with a street level group is currently only in evidence in Yallingup. This may be in

part explained by the relative recency in the establishment of many groups in Yalingup, compared to Bedfordale and Darlington. Street coordinators at their own discretion may organise street level group meetings in Darlington and the facilitator in Bedfordale organises meetings at the local brigade for two or three groups at a time. However the notion of street level groups working systematically through BRAG modules over several facilitated meetings has largely disappeared from the original program approach. It has been replaced with what on the surface appears to be a much more ad hoc approach to program delivery. The approach taken by the facilitator depends on what seems to work for them and what they perceive most suits the participants in their community. In the case of Yallingup the facilitator has found that working at a group level and running meetings accordingly works well. The fact that there are only seven groups helps make this approach viable. It also requires a level of cooperation and willingness amongst group members to invite people to their homes. Therefore, existing levels of community, or friendly neighbours, are a necessity for this to work. Interviews in Darlington revealed that there are groups there where this level of community mindedness is absent. In addition, in Bedfordale where the facilitator takes a very active role in each street level group the numbers of meetings that would be necessary to hold makes it impractical for one person. Therefore the solution was to hold meetings for a couple of groups. This also relates to the broader question of what can be practically achieved (or realistically expected) by one, or a small group of volunteer facilitators.

There are a couple of other factors that also help explain the use of street level group meetings in Yallingup. Several of the groups that have been established are in new areas of housing with quite a high percentage of new arrivals to the area. The properties are on large blocks and therefore, the nearest neighbours may be a considerable distance away. The establishment of BRAG groups and meetings at residents' homes have been a good way for these people to get to know their neighbours and find out about local issues. BRAG is the first such community group in the area and as such has been a useful way for people to meet as well as discussing important fire issues. The groups are also relatively new - some have met for the last two or three fire seasons but some are considerably newer. It may be the case that once the initial core topics have been covered group meetings will become less of occurrence. There is evidence from Community Fireguard in Victoria that shows that some established groups are a lot more active than others. For some this means meeting regularly while others are content to have infrequent contact and rely more on other means of communication. The facilitator in Yallingup uses email a lot to stay in contact with the street coordinators. For some street level groups this is the best way to communicate as finding time for meetings is not always possible. This is particularly the case for part-time residents.

Attendance at meetings appears to fluctuate enormously. General public meetings have on occasions drawn large crowds, particularly when the spectre of nearby bushfires has motivated people to find out more information. From the analysis it was apparent that the facilitators struggled to maintain interest amongst the public when there were no major fire threats or after a

couple of "quiet" years for bushfires. This has an impact both on the establishment of new street level groups and the maintenance of existing groups, with complacency and apathy both mentioned as a challenge to overcome. Of course the sheer number of people present at a meeting doesn't always correspond to the success. This can be especially true with street level group meetings, when a small number of people is often more conducive to a discussion between members of the group and the ability of the facilitator, or other brigade members, to answer peoples' questions. The importance of local context is also well illustrated by this point. The local relevance of the information being relayed to participants was mentioned as an important factor in the acceptance of the risk and understanding of what residents can do to be better prepared. This can be enhanced when a meeting is held at someone's property in a way that is less possible if the meeting is held at the local fire brigade shed. However, advantages of holding meetings at the shed were also put forward in the interviews such as the symbolism of the local brigade in the community. In addition, in the case of Yallingup where the local brigade is situated quite a long way from the township, getting people to come there highlights the fact that the brigade would not be able to be at a resident's property immediately a fire breaks out

As well as the participants, facilitators and street coordinators there are additional people who may be present at meetings. This includes FESA central office personnel, regional staff and members of the local brigade. In the initial setup of groups FESA central office and regional staff, such as the District Managers, may attend a BRAG meeting to provide support to the facilitator and to answer questions from the participants. In terms of FESA central office this was more of a regular occurrence when there was a full time BRAG coordinator. Bedfordale and Darlington both benefited from having such support in the early years of the program. The fact that the FESA community safety officer role now encompasses and supports a range of other activities and hazards makes it harder for them to make it to meetings. A further hindrance is that BRAG meetings on the whole take place outside business hours, which is not always practical for a community safety officer with a family and home commitments. The District Managers interviewed reported attending initial meetings but being unable to continue to attend after that due to their own time limitations and other responsibilities.

### *Other BRAG activities*

In all three case study locations BRAG activities go beyond meetings and resource dissemination to a broader presence in the community at local brigade events, local festivals and other events. The facilitators use these events to raise awareness of the bushfire risk and how to get involved in BRAG. It also helps to raise the profile of BRAG in the community. They make use of static displays with posters and hand out BRAG information brochures and other resources to interested members of the community. For instance, in Darlington mention was made of the annual arts festival as an important opportunity to recruit members of the public to BRAG and garner additional support. Local brigade events are also important for raising the profile of BRAG. This is particularly important for the recruitment of street coordinators, many of whom have ties to the local brigade. An important role of the facilitator is to identity potential street coordinators who can help generate interest in the program amongst their neighbours.

As well as these more formal events that provide an opportunity for BRAG activities and the distribution of BRAG resources there is also the more informal BRAG presence in the community. This is harder to document and less well defined than the formal program activities but equally important to the maintenance of BRAG. A common characteristic across the three case study locations is the ability of the facilitator to find ways to promote the program among the community. They are resourceful, dedicated and enthusiastic about BRAG and actively encourage people to get involved. In Bedfordale the facilitator hand delivers invites to meetings about BRAG and has a strong presence in the community. He interacts with residents in his local brigade capacity as well as in his role as BRAG facilitator. Away from the brigade he also has a lot of contact with local residents through his work as a fencing contractor. This constant presence helps to instil interest in the program amongst residents in Bedfordale and appears to be the driving force behind the program. In Yallingup the facilitator is also a strong presence in the local community, as well as the local brigade. She spends a lot of time speaking to residents and often broaches the subject of BRAG with them. In addition she emails information to BRAG participants about a wide range of fire related issues. Lines of communication are similarly extensive in Darlington where once again the facilitator has a strong presence in the local brigade that spreads to other parts of the community. He uses local media outlets, such as the village newsletter to spread information about BRAG, which helps to broaden the audience.

### *4.3 Facilitators*

As mentioned above the characteristics of the facilitators play a vital role in the three case study locations. They are the driving force behind BRAG and their position within the local brigade helps to ensure good local support. However a lot of the day-to-day responsibilities inevitably fall on their shoulders. This responsibility includes identifying possible new groups or getting new residents involved in existing groups as well as helping to maintain existing groups and keep them active. They are local champions in their community and appear to be well known and respected in their respective townships. The way they use their local knowledge is extremely important for getting street level groups started and finding ways to encourage resident involvement. For example, in Yallingup the facilitator is well aware of when new people move to the area and uses the opportunity of introducing herself as a chance to also make the resident aware of BRAG. Similarly in Bedfordale one of the facilitators, who is also the brigade captain, is a plumber by trade and has strong ties with local plumbing businesses. He has been able to utilise this network to hold presentations on fire pumps at the local fire station and provide BRAG residents with discounts on purchasing fire pumps. This type of activity has proved extremely popular amongst some of the more affluent and enthusiastic members of BRAG street level groups.

The main facilitator in Bedfordale has also played an important role in the development of younger members of the local brigade by encouraging them to take an active role in BRAG. He identified one girl at the outset of his involvement with BRAG who agreed to help out with delivery of flyers about meetings and keeping records of street level groups. He then encouraged her to get involved in BRAG meetings, presenting information on bushfire preparedness to the

participants. He has also played a similar mentoring and encouragement role with some other young people involved in the brigade. Unfortunately from the perspective of BRAG's long term future in Bedfordale the youngsters who have been brought through have moved away from the area. However it still is an excellent example of a broader outcome of the program that was made possible by the qualities that the facilitator brought to the role.

In all three case study locations a question mark remains about the sustainability of the program if the facilitator were to leave their role. Their influence appears to be integral to the continued involvement of residents in BRAG and the qualities that they bring to the role. This is backed up by their background as volunteer fire personnel. It does not make easy to find replacements within the local brigade or wider community. There was no shortage of praise in the interviews for the role the three main facilitators play in their communities and a lot of the perceived success is attributed to them.

### *4.4 Street coordinators*

The role and responsibility of street coordinators varied considerably across the case study locations. In Darlington the vast majority are local brigade volunteers, whereas in Yallingup most are not brigade members. In Bedfordale traditionally they were but this has changed in more recent times as larger groups have been divided to make numbers more manageable.

They are typically the most aware and prepared members of a street level group which may be made up of residents who are very actively involved in BRAG and others who have their name on a contact list but have very little other involvement. They are clearly pretty motivated and interested in bushfire safety and this has prompted their involvement. The facilitators appear to work quite hard to identify people who enjoy socialising with their neighbours and who seem able to encourage people to get involved.

### *Telephone trees*

A recurring activity of the BRAG street level groups interviewed was the use of telephone trees at a street level. The main responsibility for these fell on the street coordinator to organise and implement. It appears that very little direction is provided in the BRAG information about how the telephone tree works, they are simply offered as a desirable group activity. Interviews with street coordinators highlighted some of the challenges they found in getting them to work properly, although they were seen as a useful and important element of bushfire planning and preparation. There was the issue of setting them up in the first place and encouraging everyone in the street level group to join. In some instances street coordinators reported that they came across residents who felt it was an invasion of privacy and therefore wished to stay out of it. Once the tree is established the next challenge is keeping it maintained as peoples' contact details change and there is also a movement of people in and out of the streets. Related to this is the fact that there is a need for multiple points of contact for each person as the tree may need to be alerted when people aren't necessarily at home. Testing of the telephone tree is seen as vital to making sure that they provide an effective early warning system. However this does not seem to be a regular occurrence for most street level groups.

A minority of street coordinators interviewed indicated that they had found additional uses for the telephone tree that had helped to keep it up to date and functioning. Such examples were in Bedfordale where an established group's coordinator uses the tree to advise neighbours of planned burn offs. The coordinator is contacted by the local brigade and is then able to distribute the information through the telephone tree. This has proved quite an effective strategy for this group. There are also examples of the telephone tree being put into use for other emergencies than bushfire. Yallingup provides a case in point where a group were able to utilise their tree to get information out about a missing child in the vicinity. Therefore, there is the potential for it to become a useful network and it helps to stream line the flow of information during an emergency.

A key factor is the size of the telephone tree. One street coordinator's experience was that it took about an hour to relay a message to 7 homes. The feeling was that in order for a tree to be effective the size could not exceed about 8-10 people. Weak links in the chain were reported where residents are unable to pass on the message in a reasonable amount of time. An issue with testing is that if people know it is not a real emergency they tend not to take the whole exercise very seriously. There is also an issue with consistency of the message as it passes through the group. Issues that exacerbate this are where residents do not know the people they are responsible for calling, or not everyone in the household is familiar with the telephone tree. Consequently there are a number of problems associated with this form of information dissemination that can be particularly challenging when a group is not well established or known to each other. It therefore calls into question the ubiquitous development of telephone trees by street coordinators unless there is the collective will amongst residents to utilise it effectively and responsibly.

## *4.5 Causal processes and outcomes*

### *Awareness*

From the interviews there was the general sense that BRAG was helping to increase awareness of the bushfire risk in each of the locations, although the level of buy-in by residents and associated preparedness activities varies enormously at both an individual level and at a street level.

The information booklets, brochures etc. were generally well received by participants, coordinators and facilitators. BRAG appears to be a more effective distribution mechanism for these resources as it helps to put the information into the local context and encourages people to actually read and act on the information. There is always a danger with passive forms of education that people will not actually read the booklet or watch the DVD. However BRAG, either through a public meeting or a street level group meeting appears to enhance the likelihood that the information will be listened to, understood and acted upon. A lot of benefit appears to come from discussion, for example, after watching a DVD being able to talk about the implications with neighbours and friends.

There seems to be an ongoing demand for new materials and resources with facilitators needing new information (or new ways of presenting information) in order to encourage BRAG participants to attend meetings and take note.

DVDs as an interactive medium appear to be particularly useful and popular. The Tenterden DVD was mentioned in most of the interviews as motivating BRAG participants to take action as it effectively brought home the need for families to plan for a bushfire.

### *Preparedness*

The interviews gave an indication of the preparedness activities brought about by BRAG in the three locations. At a street level, activities varied enormously. For some residents, being in BRAG meant simply being on a telephone tree list. For others it was much more than that.

Setting up of telephone trees was a commonality across all groups. There were several issues that emerged about them. Regular maintenance and testing appeared to be essential and formed a major focus of meeting prior to each fire season. There were reports that the testing of telephone trees had not always run smoothly and that there were concerns about whether in the case of an actual major bushfire it would work efficiently. This has implications for the street coordinator who has a level of responsibility for getting information about a fire threat to the residents. There were some privacy concerns as well about having personal details on a public list. However, these appeared to be fairly isolated incidents. Size of the group had been mentioned with eight to ten residents considered by most to be an optimal size for a telephone tree. However, some groups were considerably larger, while others had split into two or more groups for this reason. There also was mention of the potential application for telephone trees to other emergency situations, such as lost persons and other disasters.

Meetings of street level groups, especially in Darlington and Bedfordale, were quite limited and up to the street coordinator to arrange. This is certainly a major difference from the Community Fireguard model that develops ongoing meetings of street level groups. This also reflects that outcomes of BRAG in terms of preparedness are more focused at the individual level rather than collectively. Residents involved in BRAG reported undertaking clean ups around their property and increasing their personal preparedness by buying equipment. However, there were few examples of groups of residents undertaking working bees or even having much of an understanding of their neighbours stay or go plans. Where groups have existed for a number of years, ongoing activity has either tended to plateau at best, or in other cases dwindle.

At the other extreme there was a street level group in Yallingup who had bulk purchased pumps and who knew each other’s properties. This level of collective preparedness went beyond fire preparedness to other aspects of safety, more akin to Neighbourhood Watch. There were also isolated examples of this more developed group approach in Darlington and Bedfordale. However in all cases this was the exception rather than rule.

A common theme to emerge from the interviews was the desire for accurate and up-to-date information amongst residents, both during bushfires and also when the local brigades were

carrying out hazard reduction burns. This has been done through the telephone trees. It also appears to be apparent in the increased communication between those responsible for fire safety (local brigades and local government) and the community. This desire for information amongst groups is well illustrated in Bedfordale where plans for an SMS-based warning system have evolved out of BRAG.

The local brigades in each of the three locations are an important part of the community. For example, in Bedfordale the fire shed is a major focus of community life, and in Yallingup BRAG is one of the first community groups that have been established. BRAG is an extension of the brigade into the local community and is helping, to some extent, to spread information about the importance of engaging with the fire risk and becoming better prepared.

The focus in each of the locations is on shared responsibility and creating more of a partnership approach with community. There is a desire to enhance self-reliance by getting residents to plan and prepare in the knowledge that the fire service cannot guarantee to be at their home in a major bushfire. In addition, increasing the community's responsibility for maintaining defendable spaces around their homes and minimising "silly" fires are positive outcomes of BRAG. A regulatory approach may well help to enhance the effectiveness here as well through council fines. Consequently BRAG in the three locations needs to operate in conjunction with other types of programs and interventions to be most effective.

## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

### *5.1 Conclusion*

BRAG has in some ways evolved into a flexible and community-driven program in Bedfordale, Darlington and Yallingup. The program has evolved considerably from the original Community Fireguard model introduced to Western Australia in the mid 1990s. A greater emphasis has been placed on creating an environment for groups to develop in a way that meets their needs. Therefore it is to be expected that BRAG in some towns will have progressed further than others, and this also applies at the individual street group level. In the three case study locations unique qualities and a level of self-government are in evidence. This is largely driven by a core of interested and active people who have a passion for their community and have invested a large amount of time and energy in BRAG. The members of the BRAGs in each of these locations have a responsibility to decide when, where and how often to meet and what components of the program they wish to use. Thus a complex picture of program outcomes emerges as a result.

The interviews undertaken for this work have proved a rich and valuable source of information and offered insights into the program that expand well beyond the parameters of this study. At the core of the analysis work for this project has been the consideration of the contexts, mechanisms and outcomes in evidence in each of the three localities.

Diverse contexts are important in determining the appropriateness and success of BRAG in Yallingup, Bedfordale and Darlington. The long association with BRAG in Darlington and

Bedfordale, combined with the consistency in facilitators driving the program has helped to embed the program and the ethos of community safety among significant portions of the respective populations. However, ongoing challenges remain in terms of keeping interest levels high and moving from short/medium term outcomes (e.g. attending meetings and watching DVDs - individual activities with merit in their own right) to longer-term outcomes centred on the notion of sustainable preparedness and a culture of partnerships between the community and brigades. In Yallingup the timeframe of involvement with BRAG is somewhat smaller, but the level of impact in the community is no less.

The contrasting context of a new and expanding community in a rural/coastal setting has brought some different challenges., not least the prevalence of part-time residents. But the facilitators have been able to generate a considerable amount of involvement and interest in BRAG. The fact that that this was one of the first community groups in the area bodes well for its longevity. It may well also act as a building block for other community based activities, some of which is already in evidence with the expansion of the idea from bushfire focused groups to all-hazard groups. However there is the sense that here too a lot rests on the ongoing commitment of a few.

It is apparent from the study that a “one size fits all” approach in the case study locations is not realistic as individual understanding and acceptance of the risk varies. Whilst this may not be palatable in terms of replicating the approach elsewhere it highlights the importance of understanding the needs and requirements of individual communities and offering a package that can address their needs. At present there are not the resources to do this at a regional level or in a centrally administered fashion from FESA central office. A recurring response in interviews to this challenge was the need for regional BRAG coordinators who would have the time to support existing BRAGs and identify and develop new ones. This clearly has financial implications but in terms of enhancing the ability of FESA to offer a flexible Bushfire Ready approach it offers significant advantages over the current situation.

Flexibility has become an important process in BRAG but requires skilled facilitators with the necessary resources and support, as well as an appropriate structure. The qualities of the facilitators in each of the case study locations are a major factor in the success of the groups. However, while some of these are qualities that can be taught (e.g. bushfire behaviour, presentation skills, etc.), others are very hard to replicate. The wealth of experience, commitment to community safety and passion for what they do are vital to the presence of BRAG in Darlington, Yallingup and Bedfordale, and cannot be underestimated. As the facilitator is such a major driving force in BRAG it raises the dilemma of succession planning if these individuals were to move on. It also means that consideration must be given to how such individuals can be identified in other communities and whether some of these qualities can be passed on to others through training. A further complication is that it is by no means one set of skills or backgrounds. Therefore just as flexibility is needed in the development of groups, so is flexibility needed in identifying and nurturing potential facilitators.

At an outcomes level a major contrast between the original Community Fireguard model and the present situation in the case study locations is the level of group activity reported. It has long been argued that the rationale behind CFG in Victoria requires the careful adherence to the program logic and that deviations from this undermine the likely attainment of the desired outcomes. The focus of Community Fireguard remains of developing groups who, after the initial core units and training, continue to meet and carry out activities to become better prepared for bushfires. Group activity along these lines is not as in evidence with BRAG in the three case study locations, at least in the formal sense. Much of what goes on by way of preparedness activities appears to be at an individual/householder level. The telephone tree tends to be the most formalised group activity but little in the way of working bees or regular group meetings is apparent.

Individual preparedness outcomes are more common than community level outcomes. A good example of this is that residents interviewed reported considering their plans but not in consultation with their neighbours. Even amongst the longest running groups there was not a great deal of movement beyond improving individual levels of preparedness, in a tangible sense. However in other areas there was a sense that neighbours involved in BRAG were at least talking to each other about bushfire related matters and had a better sense of the needs of their immediate community. It has to be acknowledged that the development of self-sufficiency amongst communities does take time and that programs like BRAG do not offer an overnight solution, but rather need to be used in conjunction with a suite of other initiatives to maximise their impact.

Resources, both in terms of print/media and people are vital to the groups for their ongoing success and maintenance. This is particularly the case when used in combination with other activities. For instance, it became apparent from the interviews that the DVD and booklets were much more effectively utilised by BRAG participants when done so as part of a BRAG meeting. A desire for new and updated information by participants and facilitators was a common theme. The need to have a “hook” to keep people interested and give BRAG meetings a clear focus was apparent. And it also acts as a conduit back into households and families who can then discuss the implications of the content. Inevitably resources come at a cost and, as has been touched upon above, it requires an ongoing level of commitment from FESA to enable this. It is also worth re-emphasising that it does not appear to be an either/or situation in terms of either funding for resources or funding for people. A combination of both is necessary for BRAG in these case study locations to continue to be a viable proposition.

A further important contextual factor in the case studies was the issue of conflict. BRAG is generally dealing with conflict in the three case study locations, both amongst individual groups and between the groups and FESA (both central office, regional and local government). However there was some evidence to suggest that conflict has the potential to hinder groups in the future. This relates to a number of issues ranging from the access to resources for facilitators, through to the support and backing for BRAG amongst FESA operations. There was

little evidence in the interviews to suggest that this was causing major impacts or negative program outcomes. But it does suggest that careful consideration of these matters needs to be given to managing conflict for the future success and sustainability of the program.

Finally, in the case study locations the socio-demographic make up of the townships was predominantly affluent, middle class Australians with small CALD and Aboriginal populations. It was not possible in this research to examine whether the model would work for communities with differing demographics. Or for that matter, whether the findings in the three case study locations are reflective of other areas where BRAG is in existence. This reinforces the importance of viewing this research in the light of offering insights into the BRAG program in Darlington, Yallingup and Bedfordale, where it has clearly had a significant impact on community awareness and preparedness for bushfires.

### *5.2 Recommendations*

- That BRAG in some form or another should be maintained where it is operating successfully and expanded to communities where it is not operating at the moment.
- That FESA should continue to provide and update the material resources available to BRAGs and should consider providing dedicated staff to resource the ongoing maintenance and development of BRAGs.
- That the communication lines between FESA central office and the local BRAG facilitators be improved.
- That FESA continue to evaluate and monitor the existing BRAGs in the light of socio-demographic changes occurring in local communities and to monitor the manner in which BRAG facilitators are trained in how best to manage these changes. For example: in the light of these changes BRAG facilitators should be trained in how to include CALD communities in their operations and appropriate multilingual material should be available to them from FESA head office.
- That, in the light of the importance of having committed facilitators if a BRAG is to operate effectively, FESA cooperate with the local governments in recruiting and training facilitators and coordinators to ensure the future continuation of these and other BRAGs.
- That training is tailored to the particular needs of these BRAG recruits: e.g. community education and communication perhaps for fire fighters and necessary aspects of fire fighting needed for non-fire fighters.
- That the potential for Regional BRAG Coordinators be explored by FESA as a way of more effectively providing support to existing groups and extending the program further.
- That the internal review of BRAG that FESA will commission considers the findings and implications of this research.

## References

Australasian Fire Authorities Council (2005). Position Paper on Bushfires and Community Safety. Melbourne, Australia: Australasian Fire Authorities Council Limited.

Boura, J. (1998) *Community Fireguard: Creating Partnerships with the Community to Minimise the Impact of Bushfires.* AJEM, 13, pp. 59-64.

Elsworth, G, Stevens, K., Gilbert, J., Goodman, H. and Rhodes, A. (2008) *Evaluating the Community Safety Approach to Bushfire: An Initial Theory-based Synthesis of Research on Seven Australian Initiatives.* Paper presented at the European Evaluation Society Conference, Lisbon.

Handmer, J., & Tibbits, A. (2005). *Is staying at home the best option during bushfires? Historical evidence for an Australian approach.* Environmental Hazards, 6(2), 81-91.

Krusel, N. and Petris, S. (1992) *Staying Alive: Lessons Learnt from a Study of Civilian Deaths in the 1983 Ash Wednesday Bushfires.* Fire Management Quarterly, 2, pp. 1-20.

Ministerial Working Group (1994) Report of the Ministerial Working Group investigating the Darling Escarpment Fire Hazard. Western Australia, pp. 20-21.

Packham, D. (1992) *Bushfires in Australia: What is the Risk?* Australian Planner, 30.1, pp 8-12.

Rhodes, A. and Gilbert, J. (2008) *Using Program theory in evaluating bushfire community safety programs.* In Handmer, J. and Haynes, K. (Eds.), Community Bushfire Safety (pp. 129-138). Collingwood, Victoria: CSIRO Publishing.

Rohrmann, B. (1999). *Community-based fire preparedness programmes: An empirical evaluation.* The Australasian Journal of Disaster and Trauma Studies, 1999-1(1).

Wilson, A. and Ferguson, I. (1984) *'Flight or flee? A case study of the Mount Macedon bushfire'.* Australian Forestry, 47, pp. 230-236.

# Appendix 1: Program Theory for BRAG

| **Outcomes**<br>What does the program try to achieve? | **Activities & resources**<br>What is done to achieve these outcomes? | **Mechanisms**<br>How does the program work to achieve these outcomes? | **Circumstances**<br>When, where and with who might the program work? | **Barriers**<br>What factors might hinder achieving the outcomes? | **Success Criteria**<br>How would we know if the outcomes are achieved? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Residents have peace of mind/confidence<br>Improved informal communication amongst community<br>BRAG has knitted the community together | An accumulation of all the group building activities<br>More opportunities for face to face communication; social activities e.g. BBQ, morning teas with local brigade members and managers<br>Active members; successful response to an incident (order, control, confidence, responsible action) | Ownership & sense of joint purpose in program at all levels<br>Effective two-way communication between FESA & BRAG groups<br>Optimal balance between top-down and bottom-up communications<br>BRAG facilitators are fire personnel<br>Empowerment of BRAG group<br>Credibility, knowledge & skills of facilitator<br>Empowerment of facilitators to take initiative (e.g. restructure groups) | Existing sense of community<br>Urban-rural interface communities (fairly populated areas)<br>After a recent fire<br>Active brigade willing to get involved<br>Local FESA manager is supportive<br>Only where there is a fire risk | Too many agencies involved in the information about fires<br>Commuter localities (but not always a problem)<br>Fire risk ratings for localities (debatable) | |
| Raises profile of the fire services | Increased interaction with local brigade members and local fire managers;<br>Brigades offer home fire safety audits | | | | |
| Increased preparedness in the community | Print media; communication materials, information pack; DVD; internet; community meetings | | | | |
| Increased awareness in the community | Print media; communication materials, information pack; DVD; internet; community meetings | | | | |
| The community group has a conduit to the brigade (partnerships) | Regular meetings; annual meeting – BRAG, brigade; BRAG facilitator (brigade); building – fire station; 4 street coordinators; meeting room, TV, projector; video/DVD footage – 'Be Prepared'; mail outs; regular contact by brigade (e.g. newsletters) | | | | |
| Groups become a cohesive working group and develops links with other groups<br>Flexibility – BRAG is adapted to suit needs/style of group and locality | Regular meetings; telephone lists – updated regularly; street coordinators; resource dissemination by street coordinators; contact by street coordinators to other BRAG groups; networking – utilising local resources<br>Ability of brigade to recognise different solutions; experienced brigade member; street coordinators being flexible and experienced; ensure knowledge of other BRAG groups (brigade) | | | | |
| Provides necessary knowledge and information about how to prepare<br>Increased communication between neighbours is formalised with a telephone tree (serves various purposes e.g. street coordinator known)<br>Encourages 'self help' | Meetings:<br>Spring for groups; at the end of the season residents BBQ; street coordinator meetings – end of season wash up and plan for next season; open days; displays (with materials and resources)<br>Communication is initiated at meetings – letter box drops to invite people to meetings; personal visits – especially to new residents (BRAG flyers distributed & use of brigade vehicle to be recognisable); register of residents attending meeting; explain telephone tree system; on-going communication from FESA with updated info.<br>Stay or Go resources from FESA; equipment information (self-sourced); personal safety (sourced from BRAG materials); BRAG/brigade members prepare presentations in own time; brigade has equipment (av) to be accessed; assessments | | | | |
| Group is formed within a community | Have a meeting; define groups & allocate roles; provide information about BRAG & general fire safety information; disseminate resources – a 'take home' for attendees to review (e.g. bushfire survival manual, stay or go); attendees can access home inspections; opportunity to ask questions and get answers | | | | |
| Residents acknowledge and identify a problem exists and raises fire awareness | FESA involvement: HR; $; educational material; program framework; identify local champions; promote the program via local brigades, media, letter box drops, other associations & groups; provide support; sustainable effort<br>Local community members: presentations; face to face communication; manning static displays; word of mouth; sustainable effort | | | | |

## Appendix 2: Example of Interview Schedule - facilitators

How did you become involved as a BRAG facilitator?

- What motivated involvement
- How long involved?

What does the role of facilitator involve?

- Contact with street coordinators – individually and in groups?
- Contact with BRAG members – individually and in groups
- Information dissemination – how often, how
- Convening meetings
- Are FESA and/or community expectations of your role realistic?
- How many street coordinators/groups (B 35/D 34/Y 10)
- How many members in each group?

How are new groups started?

- Who (or what circumstances) initiates the formation of a new group?
- How do you go about starting a new group?
- How are street coordinators recruited?
- What is the role of street coordinators

Differences/similarities between groups

- Are the types of people involved very different between groups?
- Differences in how groups communicate/interact/plan
- How active are individual groups
- Do activities vary much between groups/to what extent do groups determine their own priorities for information/activities?
- Differences in terms of activities at community vs individual level?
- Is it harder to get groups established in new developments?

Maintaining groups

- How stable are groups?
- What is important for maintaining interest in BRAG?
- Have many groups disbanded/become inactive - if so what factors have contributed to this?

What supports/sustains you in your role as a facilitator?

- Support and resources at community level?
- Support and resources from brigade at local level?
- Support and resources from FESA?
- Support from other sources?

Training for facilitators

- Have you attended facilitator training offered by FESA?
- Was the training useful?
- Was training prior to, or after beginning in role as facilitator?

Training/education offered to BRAG members

- Have FESA resources been useful?
- Have you developed any training material that you use with groups?
- Is there a sequence that is used with groups as they join – eg start with making a plan?

What in your experience are the achievements of the program?

How will these achievements be sustained over time?

- What's needed at a local level
- What's needed from FESA?
- If you were to leave as facilitator, do you think BRAG would be sustained in x?

What works well/doesn't work well – what supports of hinders the program?

- How important is a 'local champion'?
- Is the program vulnerable if this champion leaves?
- How important do you think it is for facilitators to have operational experience?

Is there anything that you would change in the initial program theory?

- How important is the telephone tree?
- In what ways is BRAG helping participants be more prepared?
- Is the program flexible enough to meet the needs in x?
- Do you see it as a partnership between the community and brigade?
- Has it helped raise the profile of the brigade in the community? What benefits has this brought?
- Has it helped developed links in the community beyond being bushfire ready?
- How important is it that BRAG facilitators are local brigade members?
- Do you, as a BRAG facilitator, feel empowered and able to take initiative?
- Have you seen a difference in the sense of community in x since BRAG started?
- Describe the challenges of running BRAG in a rural area/in an interface zone.

How could BRAG be improved?

# Appendix 3: Initial interview analysis

BEDFORDALE

THEMES AND AREAS OF ANALYSIS: WHAT WORKS?

WHAT ARE THE INTENDED/ACTUAL OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM? (SHORT/MEDIUM/LONG TERM)

Whether intended or not, one outcome from this fire fighter's perspective is when you have BRAG covering the whole area you need fewer fire vehicles:

> I've got 100% of the area of BRAG, probably 90% of the people in Bedfordale have … have signed up to be on the BRAG. But you'd probably … in people are doing preparation you could drop back to 70% maybe, that do the preparation. It … it's good. And … that many people, you know, … I reckon four people in the BRAGs worth a fire vehicle on the fire ground.'… 'Well, those people have got the properties prepared. A lot of them have got pumps. There's a tremendous … the pump man would give me anything I wanted for nothing for about two years he sold that many pumps … down there. And set up that many sets of sprinklers and pumps and things around the place. … (Ap23-24)

Awareness is built up amongst residents through BRAG training where people are advised what to do in case of fire, even watching 'hazard reduction burns' where they see how these are handled. BRAG residents then would appear to be better prepared than would be the case if this training along with information distribution was absent. (Ap31-32) 'You just get to your fire so much quicker with the BRAG group operating it.' (Ap44)

From the perspective of two younger facilitators there has been a welcome change in the expectations of the residents in their areas after BRAG was introduced to their streets:

> It was positive to see that it was … for me … that to see what it was doing for the community and being in the fire brigade, seeing that it would benefit us as well you know in … not just lightly but I could see it as a fairly significant change for us. And it's all about we don't really want to be here all the time, we … we'd rather just get things out and go home and on with our jobs again because it is voluntary. So to see that, to see how happy the

> community were that someone actually was really looking after them. I think before they felt a bit lost, and they also, when we spoke to them they also thought there was going to be a fire truck in every driveway when there's absolutely not a chance at all. So that was a big turnaround, big eye opener for myself too when you get everyone after a big, significant fire like we had and you come back and you think like all those residents are all different. … And to see that if they could change … look after themselves a little, change their line of thought on the way that they address their problems. It still is an issue, not from BRAG's side of it, but clean up from the shire side of it because they're limited for the amount of litter that they get rid of. (B14)

From these comments it could be seen that resident preparedness which includes the psychological as well as the physical is an intended outcome of the BRAG philosophy as the following exchange indicates:

> K: Yeah so it's focus on the psychological preparedness sort of thing?
>
> S: Yeah because that's it as well, it's not just all the physical stuff you know? And we bring up things you know people on certain medications and that who in a stressful situation might not … you know they think they can cope if everything was dandy but then we sort of … you know you can't keep your head in a box, you have to sort of talk to people and … and things just come up. People just see a piece of information and they … and they think oh well in this situation what would happen? And then we sort of discuss that so.
>
> K: Okay so it's a discussion that's as valuable as the formal sort of presentation? S: Yeah I … well we try … I guess the meeting is formal because we come in our uniforms and we might have the laptop going and stuff, but it's informal in the way that I don't like just standing here and … and telling people what to do, I'd prefer to actually say well what do you think or what would you do and that sort of thing. And also because I just wouldn't want to come and spend my evening with someone just telling me what to do sort of thing, so that's just my way of learning but yeah.
>
> R: It's funny that the common question that they ask, how do I know if I'll be able to cope or stay if there's a fire, how do I actually know? They said to us you know you're a fire fighter, how did you know? Well it's only training and being out there, hazard reduction burning etc etc that introduces you to the fire's behaviour and smoke etc. They don't experience that and they've said that you know those that really want to find out say how do I experience that to know if I can stay?' (B14-15)

This discussion continued:

> S: Yeah but the good thing about BRAG is we're not saying to people you have to stay or you have to go, but it's just to be prepared. So … because I had a couple of residents you know when we first started doing the stay and go and they were like I want to go is that okay? And I'm like yes, but plan ahead, have that … in the summertime have that bag of things with all your papers and important materials and photos and stuff so you just get out

> and … and sort of go. So that … that's the good thing about being like flexible because yeah you're not actually saying to people you have to do this. Instead you're like well you should you know, these are the things you should do. And people, especially adults respond to that a lot better than just being told to do it. (B14)

All of this preparedness has meant that residents are more aware now of what to do and who to contact. From the brigade perspective:

> BRAG … without doubt BRAG's created us to be far less. We had this year twice the number of incidents as last year, so … and we … on the ground we spent half the amount of hours we did last year. (Bp17)

For the street coordinator an important outcome is the early advice obtained through the telephone tree. This is important as a means of knowing whether to stay or go. (Cp8) The outcome is a much higher preparedness amongst BRAG residents in particular:

> I know myself I've got more awareness of what issues are and what I need to do and how I can make my place safer. And how that I guess impacts on others. And I think for those people involved in BRAG that's fairly common. Because invitation has been extended to any of them to ... Ian Thompson and others, will come to your property and have a look at it and will assist you in assessing where your risks are and what you might do about them and some of them can be quite practical and not expensive to do. So I would say, without a doubt, and I just watch the guys that are in the brigade how they are now reacting, they just feel a lot more comfortable in terms of what's out there, in terms of preparedness from the point of view of these people being aware of the fire. But also, what they do in terms of reducing fuel load in their own properties. (C12-13)

ARE THEY SUCCESSFUL OR NOT? WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS/FACILITATORS?

According to I.T. he'd offered to go anywhere to promote BRAG but he felt he was fobbed off by FESA.

> … Go to these places, and just give my opinion on BRAG and how good it is. But, no, every time I ring up … I rang x when they had the big fires up there and I said are you going to have a meeting like we discussed? Oh, just … we're doing this and we're doing that and we're not going … and, well, I did offer. (Ap1)

FESA apparently is afraid also to make recommendations on such things as sprinklers on roofs according to this same interviewee:

> And a lot of people asked about sprinklers on roofs … And FESA won't recommend anything 'cause they say, oh well, if they … somebody puts something on and the house gets burned down they can sue us 'cause we told them put the …We just suggest it. Anything on your roof, anything you can do to stop the fire, is an improvement. You know, if you want to put sprinklers on your roof we can't tell you what to put. Talk to some of the local plumbers, some of them have done it, go ahead and do it.(Ap2)

If success is determined by how many turn up to a meeting, 170 residents turned up to one meeting which had already been organised and less than 50 had been expected because that was all the hall fitted normally. A fire in a nearby area was the reason for the high turnout as people were worried and wanted information about the pumps, (one of the proposed items for discussion already on the agenda) and on the fire from the BRAG/fire services people. 'They were getting showered with ash and … and that was worrying them.' (Ap2-4) Normally though the choice is to hold smaller meetings though it is still difficult to motivate and get people out if there is no fire danger. The barrier would appear to be complacency as people relax in quiet years. (Ap6-7 &19)

This barrier based on complacency was confirmed in the 2nd interviews when the facilitators remarked:

> S: That you just, especially with the meetings, I mean it was actually easier to begin with because we just put everyone on a base line and then just worked from there, whereas now it's harder because some groups are really into it, and … and within that group there are people you know who have everything, they have fire pumps they have you know and they're all really up to date and they ask you more technical questions. And then there are others that are like I probably should rake up my leaves, you know that's probably a fire hazard you know? So you just … it's like teaching anyone, you just have to gauge, you know there's a process that you have to go through to gauge what they know, what they don't know and what they want to know. (Bp4)

Again motivation was said to have been overcome when there was the threat of a large fire and 'a couple of hundred people' turned up at the meeting, confirming the report from the 1st interviews. The result of the BRAG meeting was that 'we wanted to get in there and sort of calm them down and all that. (Bp8)

From the regional representative of FESA some of the barriers would stem from the differences of opinion between themselves and the local councils. Politics intervenes in this relationship. Though they do have better working relationships with some councils than others:

A lot of it's to do with the perception I guess by local government of FESA. I mean, on a personal basis, a regional office basis, we get on very well. I mean, I get on well with the chief bushfire control officers and stuff out there. There's no problems there. But FESA's this big faceless thing, you know. So from the perspective of the region there's not any issues, but they have issues with FESA. So that's just the way it is.

> K: We have been hearing stories about how in some local government they actually don't support the … I'm going to get the name of the role wrong, but the … the bushfire control officer who is doing the infringement notices …
>
> P: Yeah.

K: but in some councils they actually, yeah, seem to frown upon issuing infringement notices.

P: Because it …Yes. It's a very political thing. Because if you're in a relatively, not size wise but the number of people wise, local government … and it is very much a … a parochial approach to things which, of course, FESA works to break down. And … and is not thanked for that. But it … but it's that type of thing where if, you know, you … you don't go out and infringe the … the local councillor for not having fire breaks. In fact … in fact the … the local councillor, if he doesn't think fire breaks for example are a particularly high thing on the agenda then he'll suggest that they shouldn't be issuing infringement notices for breaks, which is probably what you're referring to.' 'It's a very political thing' (Dp5)

For this FESA officer BRAG success, with some downsides, can be seen as:

But the … I think in BRAG areas, they get a better identification of fires. Quicker. One of the downsides of that though is that we've got a … because we have a 000, as probably just about everywhere, 000 fire notification. One of the negative I guess aspects of BRAGs is that people don't ring 000, people will ring Ian. Okay. Because they know Ian. So they'll ring him. But on the positive side, you get the notifications I think quicker. I think … I don't think there's necessarily a correlation between BRAGs and less fires, because I think the majority of fires you could safely say are lit by people. So … and, you know, and … and it wouldn't be people who were involved in BRAGs, but it's going to be school kids, you know, the usual sort of stuff, and I don't think BRAGs have much affect on that. What else

K: I'm just thinking, presumably if the fires are being … if you're being notified earlier, they're smaller when you get to them.

P: Yeah, I think that's … that's very true. I think they're smaller. We also have a pretty extensive hazard reduction program that goes on over here in the west. So BRAG ties in to that quite well.

J: In what ways, sorry?

P: A couple of ways I guess. One is that they do tend to put pressure on local government departments which is one of our, I guess, issues in little … with a little I, is that local government departments have got protection of the Crown. So they don't … well, most of them do put in fire breaks and things like that. Keep the fuel down. They don't have to. So if you strike a … a department that doesn't want to play ball it can be an issue. But your BRAG groups and your … your sort of community can apply pressure, because there's nothing worse than for the BRAG people when they're sitting there and they're cleaning up all their … round their house nicely and just over the fence is a piece of land which is owned by Water Corporation for example, hasn't got a fire break on it and it's got a whole heap of fuel on it. Well, they tend to get a bit vocal and upset when that happens and of course that starts to apply pressure. So, you know, that's a good thing. (Dp8-9)

Because BRAGS belong to local governments rather than FESA cooperation across local government boundaries would appear to be ad hoc and this would hinder the BRAGs learning from each other. (Dp20-21)

## How are they achieved? What activities/resources required? What processes take place?(individual/household/community) what happens and why?

### *How is information disseminated to fellow residents?*

In Bedfordale, meetings are the main way the information is exchanged and all meetings including those called by the street coordinators are held in the brigade hall. However some coordinators do hold smaller local events: 'A couple of them have barbecues and breakfasts and things the … the group together. And that … that always works as a good help.'(Ap8)

I.T. and his daughter have trained residents in how to use the telephone tree, and they have a file on the different groups in the brigade office as the following indicates: 'that's one of the groups and how they did up their … and they send it to every member. A map of the block, where they are, and some of them have even got copies of the … of the telephone tree and … and how it works with the groups.' (Ap9)

The way they work is as follows:

> Never. (in answer to the question: do groups get together and do things like working bees or is that…?) And I tell you what else that we don't do but we still … it still seems to work, we never have street walks. We never have street walks. I'll send crews around with the fire trucks, and a couple of lieutenants picked up on it and they wanted to do it, to look at houses and properties. If anybody wanted to, I'd just send the fire truck around on an evening as part of their training for them. More training for the fire fighters. And this is what you've got to look for. And I give them the … the list out of the … the BRAG book which FESA used to send us. And I never went on any of them. I've been on a couple of street walks at … at different other levels, but we don't run street walks. We never get asked for them. They're happy to come here and listen to me and Sam and Ray talk … and watch videos or something. Whatever we happen to have…
>
> K: Okay. I wondered whether the different BRAG groups, whether they … there's different things that they want from you or different things they want to know about or they're sort of happy to come along here … I: Well, basically … we've told them just about everything they need to know and … and the thing is to keep their interest up you really need something new every year. (Ap9)

Examples are given for such new things as fire retardants being tested by the brigade which are not really BRAG, but are still used to 'sell' BRAG to those who attend (130 residents). (Ap10)

The way Bedfordale BRAG operates is very much centred on the facilitator who claims to know everyone in the town. The following exchange is his description of how BRAG operated over the past year:

> But … and so we didn't have individual street meetings this year, we had this big open day and then I called two open BRAG meetings. And I had my first failure in seven years.
>
> K: And why … why do you call it a failure?
>
> I: Because it was only me and Ray and one bloke from Killfire and one resident.
>
> I: I've never had a meeting that was that bad.
>
> K: What do you put it down to?
>
> I: I advertised in the local little … what they call a blurb magazine that it was … open meetings were on. And obviously people don't read it very thoroughly… We had two set, one for one Wednesday and one for the following Wednesday. So on Thursday I came down here and I cranked up that printer and I'd written a … I went home that night after having a failure and I wrote it out rough draft and Sam's (his daughter who started with BRAG at 14 and is now a facilitator) not with me any more so I've got a lady that lives just around the corner from me who does good with computer … I don't know, I haven't got a computer. I haven't … I can't use a computer. I'm clue … she printed it all up for me and I came down here and I printed out 600 copies and I delivered one to every property in Bedfordale. And the next week I had 50 people sitting in this room. It's the individual letterbox drops that work for us. That's … that's what we find.
>
> K: And in … do the … do the street coordinators, would they do the letterbox drops for you?
>
> I: I've never asked them.
>
> K: What do the street coordinators do?
>
> I: They, basically, they organise the … organise the telephone tree and … and they get that, you know, once there's a group going it's their job to get the telephone tree and … and get it back to me in … in that sort of form. So that we have a telephone … there's a file here that says BRAG which our station officer uses and it's got the … all the street coordinators, so wherever the fire we can ring the street coordinator, and a copy of every group so that we can … we can ring them from here. And it's pretty well up to date and that.
>
> K: Yeah. So would the street coordinators be helping you to recruit new people? Like if someone new moved in to the … in to the street, would the street coordinator know …
>
> I: Oh, I'd say the street coordinators … if you've got somebody new moves in to your street, you go and talk to them. It's not my job. It's not really my job. (Ap11)

He continued to describe the past year – the longest group in the area had been operating for 7 years:

J: Have … what sort of changes have you seen in terms of people's … I guess both people's awareness and their preparedness in that sort of time?

I: I think this year it's slipped a bit because we didn't have the individual street meetings with the groups. And also all we had, like, as a new product was Killfire. And that was … we like to show them something, something new, every year. And it's getting harder and harder because we've … you know, the PDOs … and DVDs and … like that DVD they made last year… There's stacks of them. I've given out hundreds. Everybody Bedfordale has at least one of those. And that's all pamphlets that FESA send me for BRAG…

K: Do you think there's any danger that people get this DVD and then think they don't need to come to a meeting?

I: Probably. (Ap13-14)

Everybody likes it. They … it's useful to them. And that prepared kit, you know, the little be prepared kit?

J: Yeah. The leaflets? The three leaflets?

I: Yeah, that's … that was also a very good one that people were … that one. That was a very good kit.

J: So when … in your meetings, do you reinforce the issues to do with stay and defend or …

I: But we always have a video or something going and show video … or the latest video or whatever we've got … can get.' (Ap16) Discussion over stay or go does occur at these meetings and as well: '

I: And quite often I'll … I'll go to talk to people afterwards and they … they'll say can you come and take a look at my place? And it's not like a street walk where we … where a big group of us go. Sam or I or me and Ray now quite often we'll duck around to people's places…' As a fire officer as well as BRAG facilitator his roles overlap and in the former role he will often adopt an 'educative' rather than a punitive response when misdemeanours are committed. (Ap17)

When asked about the relationship between his BRAG and FESA and who he would contact, the following was the response:

I: I … no, (don't contact the regional officers) I go … I just ring whoever is the safety officer or whoever it was, like say it was Mark Molnar, then Ruth Kramer, and now I … I believe it'll be Helen. And those … I just ring them and say look I need X amount of this or this pamphlets or this … whatever I need, and that's basically all I ever do on it. Like, you know, they'll send them on a courier next morning if they're urgent. Oh, yeah. I've never had any problem getting anything from FESA for my BRAG meetings. And I've had … I couldn't ever get x here. She always oh, I'm going to try, but she had young kids. Did you meet Ruth last year with …' He always believes it's good to have FESA represented at meetings and

> one had been at the last coordinators' meetings at which only about half the coordinators were present as it is a quiet year with no fires. (Ap18-19)

In Bedfordale the coordinators are a 'pretty stable bunch' with not a lot of turnover and things are planned to occur at different times of the fire season:

> I sort of say to them right, now you're going in to winter. What you do, you go and find out anybody new in your street, because there's a lot of people moving in to the area and moving out, you know. It's a lot more changeover than there was five years ago actually.
>
> K: Yeah. So you might have people not used to living in a bushfire … I: That's right. You go talk to them, upgrade your telephone tree, tell them what they've got to do. And I'll have another one at the start of summer next year … or before summer
>
> I … I'll have a street coordinators' meeting in … in probably October, early October and … to see what they've done through the winter. And have a little parties if they want. Some of them are getting keen on this idea of having a barbecue and things with the … the near neighbours. And … and it's good because it gets them all together. (Ap19-20)

As for training of these coordinators, FESA training material appears to be lacking and the belief was that while information is supplied, 'the training part they don't help us a lot with now':

> I: if there's training I've never found it. But there is a kit that FESA used to give me for … for the street coordinators and it'd tell them what was expected of them. And I haven't been able to get any of those lately, so … They thought it was useful. And they had a nice little bag that they could carry all the stuff around in and it told them what their role as a street co ordinator was. And that was good. But I couldn't get any for the last couple of street coordinators I've had. I'll have to chase that up again I suppose.'(Ap21 & 38)

For the other facilitators, keeping BRAG going is more a struggle now than it used to be:

> Like we find that keeping BRAG active and the movement going is still a struggle, there's no easy thing.
>
> K: Okay so even after this sort of length of time that you've been pretty active?
>
> S: Yeah it flows, it flows like even like the membership of the fire brigade will go in peaks and you know, and that's something I think that happens but you have … you have to keep like getting new ideas and keep pushing it otherwise people would become complacent again. They're like I've joined the group, I've done my clean up it's done now, you know? Sort of they've done everything.
>
> R: Yeah. I did find that the way that we ran BRAG in the first place was when we had three coordinators meetings and then we had all of the … basically the street groups and that went well. But now what happens is there's not many street group meetings. We have just coordinators, and I don't think that works. That … that's my own personal view. The

> problem is if they're not having the meetings, the interest is … starts to slide away. I found when the brigade's been involved, there … it's more active. You know they think about it all the time.'(Bp1-2)
>
> S: … I think one of the reasons why we started having just street … was because the numbers started dwindling in the street groups and then we sort of regroup like two or three groups together, because I mean you've got to think about it, you're giving your time. And then we sort of were doing the same presentations over and over again. Well not over and over again, but you know we sort of almost ran out of material. And then not very many big fires, which is a good thing but the people just … I think it was a combination of things which is why you know we started doing the street coordinators meetings so I think … I don't know, I don't know how you sort of go about solving that, but when products came out like the Kill Fire and … the interest is still there, yeah.
>
> R: Well those … those that we had who I thought were good, you know those groups of three, four?
>
> S: Like four streets together?
>
> R: Yeah, yeah they were good because you've got not only that, that you're letting people that they didn't normally and it's surprising you know they do talk on how things are working in their lot and (pause) things to make each other's … some might be struggling and then they'll get together and help each other, that was good.
>
> S: And just even different experiences in the fires and stuff you know that had different perspectives and … and that sort of thing to get them talking so yeah. (Bp2-3)

Interest in BRAG stems around the need to know what to do by way of preparation and how to use equipment, and this need does bring many people out to meetings. The idea comes up often for the need for training to use equipment but BRAG, for liability reasons, can't supply this, only FESA is able to do so and what they do supply is limited by resources. (Bp3-4)

In order to keep BRAG operating you need a team of people (in this case from the fire brigade) willing to type up material including new lists, letterboxing and to contact FESA and get information – 'who will work and get it done' … 'But that … that … that's what it's like, it never stops. As long as there's new people there and if there wasn't somebody to chase up those new people the gap would get bigger and bigger.' (Bp12)

Small group meetings, while more time consuming are seen as being useful as people are more confident to speak. There was some discussion on the appropriate size for educating the residents:

> So that … that big group you get in here and they'll be talking and you know the characteristics of it, but then the characteristics of it are changing because people are moving in and out at the same time. So I don't know because if you were really trying to teach them something a smaller group would probably work better like if we try and do the module on

how fire works and that sort of thing. But I think it's a general discussion or … on pumps or something like that, I think a bigger group … I mean big by filling up this room, not big that's so big that you know it's too big, but yeah.

K: So not a couple of hundred people, it's more …? So it might be a couple of streets meet here at the one time or ..?

S: Yeah. (Bp12)

A matter raised which followed on from the meetings' discussion was the need for resource material if they were to operate effectively. Training also came up but this, while useful for one facilitator, was less of a requirement: '

S: We did have the idea one … they said one of the DVDs that they would like to get like one of those packs to be available if you buy a house in the City of Armadale, well not down in the flats but you know in a bushfire risk area you automatically, whether you buy a house, whether you build a house, it's just something that you're given. So that idea has always been brought up and that's where the idea of the pack came in, but yeah you get people moving and … and everything like that and it just doesn't stay the same.

R: At least it fits in the letterbox now.

S: Yeah I know they originally did it, the worst thing and you can't really bend it and we'd shove them in, taking them apart and …yeah.

K: Speaking about the resources that FESA provide, do you find the training module useful, you know the … I suppose there's two, one is the facilitator's training that FESA provided but second is the resources that they provide for you to train the group, so I've seen there is a list of modules that the groups can go through is that … I'm wondering if you use … if you think of it and can use it?

R: I never had the facilitators training did you? S: I didn't get the facilitators training until just before I left I think. I'm pretty sure it was in that last year before I left so for me, I already knew a lot of the stuff, it was sort of a learning process sort of thing for myself. But that … the … the facilitators … the file that they gave us, it had like the modules to go through with the rest, that was really good because I only knew fire fighter training and I didn't know sort of what residents might and might not need to know. And that's why talking to them and that sort of thing … so that information was good and getting resources from FESA, if you're persistent you'll get them, and really they have … most of the time listen to our suggestions and come out with some really good products so yeah. I don't know because Anne was … was a bit … we don't get anything from FESA and … I don't know what her brigade's like maybe it's a bit different in that it doesn't have the same standing, maybe we've just got good … good representatives like PJ and that who … although their job is much more varied than just BRAG they will give you an ear and … and listen to you, to what you have to say so yeah. (Bp12-13)

Residents are keen for information and for extra resources which will help them deal with the risk of fire:

> Just see the public with that information, they're happy that they've got something. If there's something new ticking over all the time, if there's somebody comes up with some other design of at some stage of helping defend the homes, whatever. What products are available is it … can they buy some of the stuff from certain areas at a … maybe the government's helping them with a rebate or something to purchase stuff. Any of that sort of information that's valuable to them, even in times when we haven't got fires, it's enough that they're keeping them interested and they'll … they'll go to the ends of the earth to make sure they've got it because they don't want their homes to burn down. So basically they are concerned.
>
> S: Yeah they've got like … FESA's got like the basic bush fires manual and like a diagram of the house and how to protect the home, and all that basic stuff would be important to keep, but if they change or give new information and that, that's one of the keys because when we go to a meeting we don't just lay out all the usual stuff and they're like yeah got that, got that. But it's actually like yeah you know, this is new out or this is the way FESA sees this. Even like a list of plants like that are more fire retardant than others and that sort of thing is just really helpful so. (Bp13-14)

The following lengthy exchange is worth having in full as it details the program as it moves through the year:

> K: With the models that FESA put out, if you had a new street group and … I suppose I'm still trying to get clear about whether you've got new groups forming. I know you've got new people moving in but I also sort of know that most of your streets are covered in some way. But with the … with the groups, the street groups, would you sort of systematically work through modules in a certain order? Like would you do fire behaviour and then stay and go or a property inspection, or does it vary according to what the groups' interested in or how does that sort of play out? S: Initially it varied I think. Well we sort of had … I don't know like some … some seasons we'd sort of do the … the same thing every meeting roughly, but it would change like we wouldn't really follow a …
>
> R: Yeah we did have for a while inspections, for those only of course who wanted them, that didn't really know or … or to explain what you need, what the requirements are. If then they're still unsure they contact us, we'll do an inspection for them so you're not tied up doing an inspection for everybody and that was the drama because that could really hold you up. To go through the modules, yeah we … we went through and discussed bit by bit and as something new, if a new group of information come up we'd hold another meeting. It's a good chance for them to hold another meeting.
>
> K: And when you say another meeting, is that another meeting for each street group?

R: Yes. The whole process starts again. Something new comes up, more meetings. And we try and keep that down to the residents would have basically two in a year.

S: Yeah one before the season and one after the season. That was really all we could …

K: It could still be about 50 meetings though couldn't it or how many meetings would that end up being?

R: Because you do them to groups of three …

S: Yeah you group them together. Because it's hard because they were like building up so initially yeah but I … I reckon …

R: Five days for three weeks.

K: Okay, 15. And that … that would be at the start and the end?

R: That's for all the street groups, 15 meetings.

S: Yeah so we would … yeah and then we'd do that at the start of the season which would obviously attract more attention than … but sometimes we had a really business then we'd have a lot of people wanting to sort of … even to just get out what they were thinking or what they experienced you know to let that out so … but now we really only do isn't it just before the season, because after the season it doesn't really … or is it the other way around?

R: It's before, before the season so they're prepared so they're getting things ready for the season. You'll find that if there was a fire in any area, it's a good time when they discuss what happened at that event. And that really gets a lot stirred up because someone did experience it. You know we don't have many fires and we bring up the stats too, like the last fires. I mean slowly but surely you know we've had … compared … even like last year's we thought we were well down on hours out on the field putting out fires, we spent more on BRAG, but we spent a lot less putting out fires because of the early warning and the intervention of BRAG people themselves. You know those that have extinguishers, those that have hand tools.

S: And know how to use them yeah, if it's just a small fire they're not going to call the fire brigade they're just going to put some dirt on it.

R: They're going to put it out. Not that we want them to do anything dangerous they still are told call 000, not triple Tomo, alright. So they call 000 usually we get the call, we go out there, the majority of the time they've got it out basically. And not only that but it wasn't obviously very big when it was called, so they're watching out all the time, because they know the risk, they're prepared you know it's … the clock's ticking over.

K: So you've seen definite changes in level of preparedness and BRAG's had a ..?

R: Yeah definitely. (Bp16-17)

As a means of getting information across various methods are used e.g. these facilitators arrange for every house in their areas to be letter boxed with a Bedfordale specific newsletter, especially during the fire season – on orange or green paper so that I stands out and won't be binned. They will talk with the residents about specific dangers (e.g. ember attacks) and how to deal with them. (Bp24)

The street coordinator, who is also a councillor, stated that the council was underway in producing an A5 flyer about BRAG which would be targeted to residences in the hills and go out with the rate notices. (Cp2-3) For him, street coordinators meeting are a useful way in distributing information and for exchanging ideas between coordinators. Even on a Saturday evening, to turned up:

> Yeah it was interesting that it was a Saturday night but it seemed ... well I guess 10 out of whatever it is, 30 something probably wasn't as good as I was expecting. And I had hoped that there would be a few more members that weren't street coordinators so they could give you a different point of view but I guess in one way we're all members anyway. By being involved at a street coordinators level, you get a bit more information because you're chewing over the fat over a number of issues, and like this process I guess has [unclear] a fair way too.' (Cp3) For him, the FESA handbook was 'fantastic.' (Cp6)

The way his group meets on an annual basis is as follows:

> What's happened is, because there are more and more groups forming and because there are restrictions I guess, constraints on time that Ian Thompson has, what he's tended to do in more recent years is have sort of two and sometimes three groups meet together. And that's not bad because it means that there's a few more people there and again the members themselves can share their experiences. So there is that bit of cross fertilisation there if possible.
>
> But I think from a practical point of view too to have the individual groups convene, there's just not enough nights in the week for the facilitators. But I think there might not always be that critical mass to have a fully functional meeting. Because the groups ... you know, like with mine if a third of them front up, there's not really enough there to sort of provide that critical mass to make it a decent sort of get together and get a range of points of view. So that's where bringing together more than one group would work. And I'm not sure that we had one of those last year, we have been having them reasonably regularly and I'm not sure if we had them last year, so that may be the exception. But I think it's something that we'll persevere with for sure. But again, on a joint basis, you know two or three groups together. (Cp12)

The role of FESA at public meetings is to provide information not readily available through television etc.:

> P: The things I guess … the things that I highlight I guess are the importance of … because the group itself does things like highlighting things like importance of having clean areas

and all that sort of stuff. I tend to concentrate more on them having a … I guess a plan beforehand about what they want to do and really making a decision early about whether they want to go or not. And explaining to them that while it's easy to sit in the I guess the room inside the house and … and sort of, what would you say, visualise I suppose what a fire might be like, unless you've actually experienced one it's usually a lot different. I think that people's views of … of fires, because they see them on television … and I'm … I'm not talking about the news, I'm talking about just the way fires are portrayed in movies and that sort of stuff is … is quite wrong, of course, because it has to be done that way for the filming. So I … I accentuate things to them like the fact that it's going to get obviously very hot and it's going to get very smoky. One of the things that they tend not to notice too much is it gets very, very noisy and becomes overall pretty frightening. And while you can sit in the room and say oh, yeah look, I'm all okay, I've got stuff there, on the actual day you might panic. So you need to be aware beforehand about what those factors are.

K: Okay. So you're sort of emphasising the psychological preparedness …P: Yeah, more the psychological I think. Because the BRAG groups do the other things pretty well. They also do the … you know, we also have to look at you know who's in the family and they cover that pretty well as well. About whether they're young kids or whether they're old people or whether they can move or they can't. That sort of stuff. Yeah, so it's … it's mainly that I think side of things that … that we tend to accentuate with them.'(Dp2)

The way FESA operates is as follows and it's worth including this in full:

P: Sometimes. It's interesting because I … quite often we get … we get involved at a regional level in the sort of establishment. But once they're established and going we don't much need to be involved any more. For example, I've probably been to maybe two meetings in Bedfordale. And that was really it. You know they've been going for a long time and those two meetings I went to would've been years ago. And I haven't been since. So, yeah, it's … once they sort of get up, you know, and … and I think, as I've said to you on the day, I mean the really important thing with this is you've got to have the driver. If you've got someone like Ian who's really enthusiastic and prepared to go out and knock on doors and do all that sort of stuff it works well. If you don't though, then when Ian leaves or goes and does something else, unless he's passed it on to someone who's equally enthusiastic, then it sort of just dwindles away and dies.

K: Peter, have you been involved in trying to set up groups … there's … two questions came to mind. One is how do you prioritise where to support the establishment of a new group? Is it, you know, if there's interest on the ground or if you identify that it's a high fire risk area.

P: Well, all my areas are high, if I … without trying to sound pedantic all my areas are high fire risk areas. So I don't have that issue 'cause all of my areas are … are down the scale which are considered to be the … the high fire risk for the metro. Most of our … most of our initial BRAG stuff isn't driven by the region. It's driven by a community engagement

branch. And what quite often happens is somebody will ring up, as I understand it … this is third hand here … but somebody will ring up and say they're … is there a local group or … or whatever, and someone from community engagement will talk to them, pardon me, put them on to a local group if there's one there or alternatively sort of suggest well, it sounds like a good idea, would you be interested in forming one and so on. And then they will contact us usually.

K: The region.

P: The region. And say that there's been a meeting arranged. They actually arrange the initial meeting, community engagement. They usually liaise with somebody. They … they used to have a … they used to have a person who was dedicated to BRAG, they don't any more I don't believe, and that person would usually do all the organising. So they'd organise letterbox drops and all that sort of stuff. And really all we would do from the regions, we would come up on the day and they would say ... they would show a … a video or whatever and ask us to talk about fire and ask us to answer questions and that sort of stuff. And then once that was done we were sort of gone. So while it's arguable that it's something that we should be more involved in, frankly we don't have the time or the resources to do it. So we tend to let it come to us I guess, rather than sort of go out.

The other … the other issue too over here which, I don't know if the people have made you aware of, is that it's a bit different from over east. Some areas over east. We actually have no jurisdiction over local governments at all. We liaise with them. We can talk to them. Obviously try and engender things and all that sort of stuff. But local governments are independent of FESA, so FESA has no … and the local, the regional office, we … we have no jurisdiction over them at all. So basically if they decide that they want to go and do something a particular way, well, if it's not the way we think it should be done we'll go and talk to them about it, but if they decide they're going to do that anyway that's what they go and do. So … the reason I mention that is that it, you know … they … they will quite often … like I've had no … no connection at all for example with the Oakford group. Because it depends on the local government. Serpentine Jarrahdale's very independent so they go out and they do their thing. And …

K: Okay. And does that … sorry, doing their thing, does that involve supporting BRAG groups or …

P: Yes, it can do. If their chief bushfire control officer's of that mind, yeah, sure. If not, which you'll find in a lot of them, it never happens. And that's why a lot of the local governments don't have any involvement, really, with BRAG. Or there might be little fledgling things here and there, they come and go and they die, but it's not a … unless it's supported by the local government, it's not usually a big thing. (Dp3-4)

Having a committed 'driver' working with local government is important both for FESA and for BRAG:

> And if you, you don't have a … you know, somebody there who's always pushing this, and that's why your driver's so important, then it very quickly folds up. And … and you've got to also have people … that's why it's important to work with the local government. I mean when people move in to an area, we wouldn't know, but local government does. They can notify the local BRAG person and go round and knock on the door and let them … talk to them and, you know, pick them up as they come in. Whereas if you don't have that facility there either well of course eventually you have a significant number of changes, people, falls down as well.' (Dp10)

As part of a confused response, which seemed to indicate not much would be available from the region, to what resources BRAG needs on an ongoing basis the following was said:

> Whether you're going to … community engagement at the moment generally are in the same boat as us. They will respond if they get a request, as I understand it. If there's nobody actively pushing, you know, BRAG … and we certainly don't in the regions. And I think the point that the guys made quite telling … not tellingly, but vociferously, at the meeting that we had was that there really needs to be a what we used to call community safety officer or a … or somebody like that in the region.
>
> K: Yeah. And you said and best located in the region rather than more head office or …
>
> P: Whose job it is to go out and sort of push that and do those things.
>
> J: So from a BRAG perspective, what sort of roles would that … would that encompass?
>
> P: Well, I think they would … I think they would be the … see at the moment there's no targeting. We … we don't target areas and nor does community engagement. As I said, we … we respond. FESA's a very responsive organisation. We don't do a lot … we don't do enough I guess as far as sort of planning and … and that sort of stuff. And that would allow us to do that.'(Dp14-15)

Once a BRAG is established, local government would appear to have a big role to play in the ongoing work of each BRAG according to FESA:

> Once FESA gets called on to provide … sort of start up and provide documentation and provide handouts and all this sort of stuff … videos and things like that, and hands it over to someone usually from the local brigade, local community. Well, what you're doing there is FESA's then passing it over the fence to local government. And then local government runs with it or doesn't run with it, okay?
>
> K: Okay. So you see local government can …
>
> P: Yeah. Because it's not … like I said, FESA doesn't … BRAGs are not FESAs. BRAGs are local governments.
>
> K: Oh, okay. Oh, well that's interesting, because I hadn't … sorry, I didn't … that didn't fully sink in when you were saying that earlier. I certainly got that the level of support local

government provides has a big impact on how well the BRAG operates, but you actually think that that's … it's a straighter, more direct relationship than that.

P: Yes, I think it does.…

P: Oh, yeah, very much so.

P: If you talk to, which you have I guess … talking to Ian. If you talked to Ian and you said Ian, you know, who do you … who do you let know how BRAG's going and what's happening and all that sort of stuff, he'll tell you he tells local government. And he does. He doesn't … he doesn't tell us, because it's not really our group. It's their group.

K: So if he's wanting some DVDs or extra …

P: Oh, yeah, he'll come to us for all those. No, we're sort of the logistical supply. Or we're an initial start up. But once that's done it's a local government thing.'(Dp19-20)

## How representative are the participants? Is there a difference between homeowners and renters, for example?

Little mention of these differences by the facilitator but what was noted was the different attitudes between longer term residents, who had experienced earlier fires and therefore were keen on BRAG and the more recently arrived who were less keen. (Ap24-25)

For the coordinator the changes that are occurring in his area with the high turnover of owners and as more people use the houses as weekenders or for renting out, has raised issues not present earlier on:

Some people do buy and sell, I mean some stay, like me 10 years I've been in it, some have been there a lot longer of course. So that is something else we have to be mindful of. Now as an example, the sort of thing that happens in one of my streets, Albany Highway, somebody's been buying up properties and moving down the hill. Now of course there's about three homes in a row that are empty and so there's going to be no preparation done in some of those and if they do get people on a temporary basis renting them they're not going to be ... and they shouldn't feel obliged to do too much I guess.

So there are going to be those sort of little issues, and I guess that's just part of the management role. And they can't expect things to be super stable but I think the turnover's probably a bit high. And I think there's ... and I've got to say I went through it myself, coming from the suburbs to a semi-rural area is that you're not really aware fully of just what the fire dangers are and the potential for there to be a major happening and with time I guess you pick that up.

So when new people come in and you give them all the paperwork and talk about it and give them a bit of space so they can think about it and get back to you. I think it's often hard to get the message through that it is an ongoing process that's to their advantage to get involved with. (Cp7-8)

## What settings? What are the key events associated with each activity/outcome?

Much of the material relating to this topic has been covered elsewhere, particularly under How are they achieved? What does stand out in all of the interviews is that if there's a fire then interest in BRAG rises and it declines in the years in between.

## What works for whom? In what contexts and settings has the program worked/not worked? Why? How?

Again, much of the material relating to this topic has been covered elsewhere, particularly under "How are they achieved?"

## HOW? Flexibility in BRAG program

From the 1st facilitator's interview there was very little actual mention of flexibility but from reading the notes it would appear that the way he operates is flexible as he adjusts the meetings etc. to fit the circumstances of the time, as can be seen in the next topic on ways groups have developed.

From the 2nd facilitators' interview, there was some mention of the need to be flexible due to change occurring and to the differences in the various residents' attitudes to risk:

> … and I think it's just one of those things, it's ever changing. You can't have one thing in place, I mean as we talked about on the Wednesday, you can't have one thing in place in … in and just say that's applicable to every area. It's something that's got to be able to be … maybe set principles or ideas, but it has to be … be able to be moulded and changed depending on the residents. Because I think we had so much support here for it and that's why it blossomed. People like in Roleystone, they've started to get streets started there …Yeah Roleystone's up the road, and they have tried. I think they have a few streets that are going but they just have no interest.
>
> I mean we like to call them hippies up there because they don't burn anything and just have trees right up to their house but anyway (laughs). They just don't seem to have the interest up there to … and it's not from the brigade's point of view they've definitely tried but yeah, so.
>
> R: They think it will never happen to them, and the trouble is you know like Karragullen was an eye opener and it's a wonder that no one was killed in Karragullen fire.
>
> S: That was a huge fire that we had.
>
> R: The BRAG took off after that, and it always does after a major incident. (Bp7)

The flexibility discussion continued later:

> K: Can I ask about differences and similarities between street groups? Do you find that there's a lot of variation?

S: All different types.

R: Every … every single one are different.

S: Yes, just what the street coordinator's like, what … what blocks are there, so whether they're more hippy or city or … and I don't mean to stereotype but you sort of get those different characteristics in … in groups.

R: That's why people use them isn't it basically?

S:Yeah so it does depend and it is ever changing. But …and I think to be effective you've just got to realise those changes and not have your head set in one direction and go from there so. There's nothing really specific, like you can't really say, I mean some groups are bigger, some smaller, some are quieter, some are more interested and you always get variations within that then. So it's really hard to say that yeah, this group's different or this group's better or worse or … because they're all good in their own way so yeah.

K: Sure. Do you get some groups sort of taking on like deciding to do something as a group, you mentioned people helping each other in the street or, I'm just wondering if it's mainly people come together, meet and get the information and discuss it and then sort of go away and individually do things to get more prepared or do ..?

S: I would say sometimes they do that but if they've got social networks already with their neighbours they would go and maybe help or … I have heard you know they'll go and prune … prune the trees, like get one mulcher or something and … and borrow each other's equipment and that sort of thing, so I have heard of that.

K: So have a street clean up or something?

S: Yeah and then there's that one road where they've had a street party, and that was an existing thing before BRAG so that was … it was good and they would just meet in here but I think most of the time they take it back to their own property because that's what they want to save in the end sort of thing, so it's not … but I know people … like there are some elderly people who would go and then they would speak to their neighbours you know if you could, could you turn the sprinklers on the roof on or you know if they've got young children then all the children will go to one house and then if the men of the house would you know go to the other house and that sort of thing. So there was definitely interaction, helping each other.

K: Yeah, so people would talk about what their plans were?

S: Yeah that's what we wanted, that's what we tried to initiate to get them …

R: As long as they've got a plan.

S: Yeah, not to say that not one's right and not one's wrong, it's just what you want to do and … and yeah in that respect like they say can you turn my pump on or just to let them

> know I've got this equipment available, I'm going to be out of here but … or if I'm at work you know because … or if I'm away or …' (Bp22-23)

## Way groups have developed – telephone trees, regular meetings with group, local brigade meetings - top down or bottom up

The Bedfordale BRAG had its origins in 1994 and was the result of a bottom up process and it's worth noting the fuller version of the discussion:

> I: Look, I'll tell you how we started it. We … we had Bob Tizard … we knew he was interested in having a group. And all we had was the … the Carradine … a locked view they call it. It's this long street here comes right through there and locked view is this road here. They had a big fire in … in '94 and they started a community fire group.

As just 3-4 individuals they drew up leaflets, walked the streets, held meetings:

> So we do a letterbox drop and we … I write a rough draft and Sam used to do it up on the computer. We've got a interest in your area and a BRAG group, and then we'd explain what BRAG did and what it was. And we'd literally letterbox drop the whole area that we wanted to get in that. I'd do them. We'd print them out … that's our photocopier, we'd print them out on that and I would deliver them all to the letterboxes that wouldn't … and we're going to have a meeting on such and such a date at … at the fire station 7:30, you always kick off at 7:30. We never get started at 7:30 but we always say we're going to. And … and Bob would turn up and I think we had five people came to the first meeting. And I thought well, that's not bad. And they were all keen. All keen, oh yeah, it's a good idea. And we've run a video … we had a couple of old videos that Lyle had had. Run a video through 'cause we've got an overhead projector. We didn't have then, we had a TV and a … a DVD and a … all of that.
>
> K: So … sorry if I'm interrupting. Was this before FESA had the training for BRAG?
>
> I: Yeah. That was before I'd even been to a … a facilitator's course. And that was the first … yeah, and then what happened was those people were interested so I said right, well we'll call another meeting in a fortnight. Do another letterbox drop, oh we've had a … interest from your area in BRAG and there was a meeting at such and such a date and they want to form a BRAG group. Again, tell them what BRAG does, and the next meeting 10 or 15 people turn up. And we did that with every single street. But that was … Bob was the second group in. And he took in a whole area … we call it Bedfordale Central, but it took up all of this area up to here, cut down near all of this area through here. Picked up all of that. A hell of a big area. But we had a group going and … well, I … Sam, this works. So straight away we started on another area. And we just slowly picked up the areas through Bedfordale. Over a period of … probably took us, oh, a good three years to get every area in Bedfordale into it. And we did the same. We got … find somebody in the street that was interested and know that at least you're going to have one person at the meeting … And … and just went from

> there. And it … and … and it really is, I don't know what you want to call it. It's not cheating, it … it's conning the people into coming or … or what did PJ say yesterday, bullying the people into coming?' more 'encouraging.' (Ap6)

As Bedfordale's BRAG membership grew the size of the groups had to be halved in order for them to be manageable for the street coordinators:

> I: If groups get too big they don't work. The smaller that you can keep your group the better.

At the same time, meetings would involve two of the groups coming together so that the facilitator could manage his time better. (Ap7)

Fear of the consequences - real or not – is used as a means of influencing people over whether they should join BRAG or not:

> Ian, have you got any thoughts on people who don't want to come along or don't want to get involved in a BRAG group? About what might be keeping them away?
>
> I: I've been asked that by people, what … what if we don't join your BRAG group? What … what happens to us? Well, when there's a fire coming we'll go to the next property and wait 'til it comes out of your place and stop it on theirs. And they look at you and
>
> K: No wonder you've got so many people involved.
>
> I: But you …
>
> K: Blackmail as a …
>
> I: …wouldn't …
>
> K: … strategy.
>
> I: … do it. You wouldn't do it obviously. They stop and think. They think oh, oh … and whether they believe me or not I don't know.'… 'But most people join BRAG groups and … and some of them don't participate very much. They put their name down to be on the telephone tree and then they do bugger all … And you accept that. That you're not going to get … you … like I say, I … I've got 100% of the area of BRAG, probably 90% of the people in Bedfordale have … have signed up to be on the BRAG. But you'd probably … in people are doing preparation you could drop back to 70% maybe that do the preparation. (Ap22-3)

There is a top down approach as well where a number of suggestions as to what BRAG can do come from residents and the meetings have structure but are informal at the same time:

> Actually, a lot of our BRAG groups want to come on hazard reduction burns with us and see how we handle a hazard reduction burn. And I've got to finally ask the chief, as long as they're not touching the … because he's got the worry that they wouldn't be insured. That if anything happened they're not insured. But they can come and stand close and watch what you do as long as they're … aware and as long as you're aware that they're there…

> K: Can you think of other things that the BRAG members have … have said to you that they want to do over the years?
>
> I: Oh, I … not off hand. They … they basically do what they want to do and we just talk to them at meetings and answer any questions they have. Give them any advice that we can. But our meetings are very informal. We run through the BRAG book that we've … that FESA sent us. And we pick out a … a segment of it and we sort of give it to each different member. Like Sam, what … she used to have … hers was always going or staying and … and she would talk on that. Ray always talks about water pumps and … and how they work. And there's Brett Butler that joined FESA on me the other week. [Chuckling]. Well, about a month ago. He's training now. He used to talk on personal safety. And young Dale that ended up a ranger, he … he picked out … because I used to give them the book, pick out an item out of that you want to talk about. And they did up … they did them up themselves on computers that would come through on to the board. I couldn't do it, you know, I just talk. And they just show different things. And Mike Famco, our president, he did up a … for Lyle who … Lyle was his actually brother-in-law … when he was running the community fire guard, on how wild fires spread and … and different things. He got all of that off … and he just prints it though the computer and it comes up on the big screen and he'll talk that through. And we've got all of those things that we do at BRAG meet. And we vary every BRAG meeting and try not to get the … the same group and the same thing that you've got to think oh, gawd, shit what did I talk to them about last year, you know? And being me, I don't take enough notes of course. (Ap32-33)

Young people are also encouraged to join up and take responsibility (Ap33-35):

> I've always got people coming on. The thing is, like PJ said the other day, oh I push it. Well, maybe I do, but I know now that if I back out, if I stopped, if I dropped dead tomorrow BRAG would still keep running in Bedfordale. It … it's going that well. 'I've always got people coming on. It … it's going that well. (Ap33-35)

Young children are also encouraged to attend:

> But I've had parents bring kids as young as … well, 10 and 12, that are interested. One lady down there, she brought us and she … can my son come? Yeah. She said he's … he's only 11. That's alright, he can come. He might have to be a … might be all that you've got at home one day to help you. Oh … oh, yeah, I never thought of that, you know. And they see the videos and … and the DVDs or whatever we've got showing and … and they listen to the talk. But it … it's basically the … the … oh, no, I wouldn't even say the … the men of the house. There's a … there's more women come to my … our meetings than the men do. Yeah. (Ap35)

One important reason for the success of this BRAG is the apparent sense of community alongside the active involvement of members of the fire brigade: 'I: I think with the brigade being involved, and I'm talking about Bedfordale. Bedfordale's a very or a fairly close knit

community. It's a lot like the old country communities. It's … it's different from, I … I don't know, like Roleystone's a bigger sprawled out more one. And everybody knows the fire brigade. And … and we're a central focus of … of Bedfordale. They've been here for years apparently and even before I came. And I … I just think that that little bit of authority at the top and … and we're a fairly relaxed group really. And it … it just seems to work so well. I … and I don't know the real reason, but just … it's a figurehead, you know, the fire brigade oh yes, and … and Bushfire Ready Action Group, well that's all goes together. I've … I've got nobody on my BRAG team at all that's not … oh, bar the street coordinator, but a lot of them are ex … ex ones. He was a fire fighter. He wasn't. He was in the country. (Ap39)

During the 2nd facilitators' interviews 'Sam' related how she became involved which is possibly atypical of the other facilitators as she was involved from such a young age:

> I started as a cadet when I was about 13, so about 2000 and then I was very new in the fire brigade so about 2002 I reckon something like that Tomo said do you want to help with BRAG? And I really had … I thought it was more of an order than an ask. I really had … I honestly had no idea what BRAG was or what it encompassed and didn't really know much about what the sort of predecessor to the community fire guard, he sort of started the idea in Bedfordale. Didn't really know what it was about because as a cadet you can't go out to emergency fires you can only do the basic stuff and I thought I'd help out.
>
> And then from there it's just grown, with Tomo I remember doing so many letterbox drops and speaking to people and running the meeting and I found it very … very personally satisfying because I got to see the reaction of people and … and especially that initial being able to get the message out and just seeing the misconceptions in the community and … and being able to stand up here and actually having people listen to you and really respect you for what you do I found that quite … quite satisfying so that's why I did it because I got a personal buzz out of it. So yeah and I did get rewarded for it with awards and medals and all that sort of jazz, so yeah that's why I started. (B6-7)

The way BRAGs were developed generally was also discussed:

> K: I'm interested in the comment that initially there was sort of more street meetings and that's not happening as much, what ..?
>
> S: Well I'm sure Tomo's told you like initially how we started a group, we'd go out and do like … he would usually identify like one person in the street who would sort of be street coordinator, and then we'd do one meeting of the group and that would be so-so in turn out and the message would sort of spread. And we'd do letterbox drops and almost stop at every person's door and … and sort of say you know … in our fire brigade uniform saying you know come … come along. And then the meetings got really big and we would do … have probably a couple of DVDs and I would do a presentation. And that … that lasted for maybe two seasons like, because we used to have meetings before and after the season of groups, plus the street, and the street coordinators meeting came about a couple of seasons after we

sort of started. So that street coordinators meeting wasn't initially … that was just an idea yeah.

R: We didn't really have them did we? There really wasn't many street coordinators initially, sort of knock-knock on every single door, you had to go through and … and let everybody know you know, are you aware of the risks you know that you … you face etc etc. So it was basically talk to every householder.

K: Yeah so that one to one contact?

R: Yeah you have to be one on one and go door to door, organise a meeting for everyone who's interested to come, it is in their interest and there's a checklist. You can actually go around the house and there's a checklist. And as you tick it off and you say you know would you like me to look around your house and tell me what sort of you know things that you have to fix, and they get a list and it's a mile long, they know that they're in big trouble and they'll go along to have a listen, because a lot of it they just fix themselves. Well nearly all of it.

S: Yeah well we're not asking them to like yeah spend a lot of money or anything which is another good thing I used to say to people.

R: Yeah and then when you get them here and they're all … all together, and it's a matter of you know then you bring up, and it was only after like you said Sam, the second or whatever meeting that you're saying well you know … they were discussing about getting messages and all this and then you need a street coordinator because there's just too … it's too big and the street coordinator forms this little booklet, which I've showed you, you know what the street coordinators do. So we've got everyone listed in the street, their phone numbers etc etc and they take responsibility for X for that street. The problem is that become too large. You know Albany Highway consists of …

K: Yeah you'd split it up. (Bp8-9)

Modern, time saving methods are now being used to advise people of coming meetings:

R: Well it's getting the message back is the problem and that's what we have here. It needs to be a one in … I'm … I'm saying one street coordinator as in who looks after a certain section who is willing, because we're talking about acreage, we're still talking about acreage here, that covers seven. Seven is a very manageable, quick contact, even if you couldn't get anybody because they wanted to do this phone tree. You know if you failed to get one it wouldn't take long to get to the seven. And now what we're looking at and what I'm going to present to them tonight is we will multi SMS from that computer there, there will be a brief message typed out and we'll send that. So those that have got mobile phones will get SMS. There will be a pop up … a pop up for those that … maybe the elderly that don't have mobiles.

> There is a couple there that we know of still that are in those homes that really can't even do their own gardens, so really high risk in case of fire, those pop ups will pop up to those streets. We can manually ring them to let them know but instead of manually ring them, I thought well the police trialled that phone system where there's a basic message and it would go out to … just like we activate our streets and we might say it's Carradene Road for instance, you activate Carradene Road, there will be a message fire in your area on the phone, contact coordinator. Right so anyone that's unable to get their SMS will not tie us up, they will be able to contact their coordinator, which is only seven lines. So you're not tying your coordinator up. (Bp10)

Much effort has gone into making sure this SMS system works, as the following exchange indicates. Also addressed is the need for BRAG to closely work with the brigade as that is where many of the resources – physical including IT and human:

> M: You can get it, their records, their SMS everything from a computer program?
>
> R: Yeah we've already trialled it, it works.
>
> S: Not elderly but older and that's one of the things is, is integrating technologies that would be … that would be suitable to a wide member … like range of people so, I mean even to start with I mean I had to sort of practice with Cam a lot you know ringing the first number on the phone tree and where to get the … the files for the BRAG groups and that sort of jazz. So it's … it's very much that not only does the brigade have to go out to the community but the members of the brigade involved in BRAG have to get back to their brigade, like we would present a report at our monthly meetings, just to let them know that … and also to let them know like yeah what they're doing and if … if we need help at a community event or something like that and … and to keep the communication channels open. Because so many things, I get told here and there you know you really have to be quite clear in what's going on and that, yeah. (Bp11)

As with any community organisation anger and conflict can be present and these facilitators dealt with it through the following strategies:

> S: Not get angry yourself, so don't fuel the anger, and you really have to … I think you have to be quite firm, because I'm … I'm not very, or my voice is not very authoritarian and that was … that's been a great learning curve for me I've had to diffuse situations because you don't want to make this … this experience especially in the fire shed a negative one or people going away thinking well that was very badly done all that sort of thing. So I would usually try and get the differing opinions and then move onto something else, I mean that's just the way I'd do it. So this person had this experience and that's what happened or they have this opinion on that should be done, I would give my opinion and then we'd … in theory that's how it's supposed to work but yeah just to try and diffuse the situation and move on, but some people would always come back to the same thing or be the loud mouths

> of the group or you know, you would always get that so it's just … it's learning how to do that as a facilitator and I don't know if that can be taught in modules or training.
>
> K: And I was imagining that you'd need a certain amount of support, particularly if it's a new role that you're taking on, that can be pretty hard to deal with sometimes if you've got angry people in front of you or …
>
> S: Well having Tomo there he'd just be like shut up so it was very good.
>
> R: Get it off the floor, the support from the floor. Because you know those that are … you'll always get some that are negative and you'll get some that hate the neighbours.
>
> K: Yeah or want their neighbours to trim their trees.
>
> R: Yeah you know and we had one that argues over the dogs that were at a BRAG meeting and they're worried about the dogs. You just have to say well harden up you know, just harden up.
>
> S: Or give them other avenues to say well there's council's number, call them you know and really try and bring it back to the point this is a BRAG meeting.
>
> R: Yeah that's it at the end of the day we're not here to argue about dogs, we're here to worry about your properties and how you're going to defend them, and if he's on your street tree, are you going to ring him? If there's a fire I expect him to ring you, would you ring him? Well yes. Well what's the dogs got to do with it at the end of the day? The dog's got nothing to do with it. But they'll argue over the dogs, the dog barks half the night. Well harden up, we've just said in front of the meeting you know just harden up and everyone has a bit of a laugh and he shuts up.
>
> S: And sometimes you can bring a bit of humour into it or you know to try and diffuse it, and let them have their say for a certain amount of time but then … so you've heard them, you hear what they have to say and then you judge it on how relevant it is and then …
>
> K: Yeah because if you shut people down too soon then they never come back
>
> S: Yeah exactly because you don't want them to be like they're ostracised now they're not part of the group so you don't want that either
>
> R: Yeah they just lost track of what they were there for. S: They just had something to vent and sometimes if all the neighbours are there, perfect time to vent about the trees or the dogs or chickens or something like that. (Bp25-26)

The street coordinator spoke of the problem of motivation:

> those people now on the periphery of BRAG who were once more involved, turning up regularly to meetings when it was being set up, who now just want 'to make that one phone call' they don't attend as often now because they think they're in the system and the system seems to be giving them that assurance that things are okay and what the brigade's been

> doing. There's a bit of peace of mind there for us all. As well, people turn off in winter. (Cp4).

He himself became involved as a coordinator following a fire and after attending a community fireguard meeting:

> I was aware of it because I tended to go to a few of the fire brigade functions, like each year they have a barbeque and that sort of stuff and a few times there'd been talk about the old Community Fire Guard then and Lyle Cottrell was the guy's name. He spoke to me a couple of times and I guess one night there he then put the heavies on me and said listen we're going to start some more groups, are you interested? And I guess because of all that I had some background and I understood the process reasonably well and I guess broadly anyway. And so, I said yeah, I was quite happy. I had the time and I wasn't on the council then, had a bit more time… so I sort of picked it up from there, so I was a bit fortunate that I did have that sort of level of introduction, I understood what had happened and how it had come together and what it was about. (Cp5)

The role as he saw it was:

> I suppose I said what does a street coordinators do? And the answer was, well try to bring people together. And I guess the initial role was one of recruitment, so it was a matter of ... there was an area specified and I sort of went and ... there were some of those A5 flyers, the ones issued by FESA, not the more recent ones with Ray on it, there was an older one. It said much the same thing but probably wasn't as good, it's been refined. So it was a matter of dropping those in letter boxes and talking to people on an opportunity basis. I mean some I didn't know and sort of had to knock on doors and get phone numbers and whatever but I mean not all joined up of course as happens. And so, on that basis, we sort of did recruitment and then it was a matter of organising meetings from there to sort of bring them up to speed and I mean I'm not the trained fire fighter.
>
> K: Facilitator.
>
> B: You know I'm really just there to help make the process work, liaison point between I guess the residents and the volunteer brigade, facilitator as you say. And so it was a matter of sort of going through that process and then once we sort of got them to meetings it was a matter of getting their personal details and we made up lists, names, addresses, mobile phone numbers, you know a whole range of things, emails and whatever, points of contact. And then we run up a map, with the help of our people downstairs here and it was a matter then of putting names on these maps. (Cp6)

The telephone tree was tested in recent fires with the following results:

> And I think the telephone tree gave people some peace of mind because they understood that they were going to find out what was happening. In the early days, there was a couple of fires, not necessarily nearby but the smoke had hit Bedfordale and people are thinking,

> there's a fire, where is it? And they started to ring the street coordinators. And then that was ... one of the members learning exercises I guess because after that if there was a fire which resulted in smoke in Bedfordale but wasn't threatening Bedfordale, the street coordinators would be informed. And then we would get the telephone tree active and say, yeah there's smoke here, the fire's four kilometres away, it's you know been contained, no real problems. And I think people got a bit of peace of mind out of that. There was one fire that got a bit close about three kilometres up the road and was likely to sort of be a problem because it was pushed with easterly winds. And again, we were able to give people sort of an early warning to sort of say, it's not a problem yet but be prepared for the fact that it may be. Later on when it seemed to be contained, we were told about that then. So they said the pressure's off, and that's only happened a few times but it's probably often enough to give people peace of mind that the system did work.

He went on to describe problems with maintenance of the group which do occur and which need to be attended to:

> There have been breaks in the chain and I guess that's the sort of thing that we have to work on. And I think that's the difficult bit now, is the maintenance, I think while it was all in front of us and really working to a goal of setting something up, I think people were sort of easier to get motivated. Where now they've got to a stage where they've sort of learnt about keeping their places low on fuel and to have relative spacings between a bit of bush and homes and all this sort of stuff. We call it the circle of safety and this sort of thing.
>
> And I think people, I don't think they're getting blasé but I think it's hard to keep that level of involvement up. Now what did happen, and I think it's been mentioned at one of the meetings that there was a fire, a big fire in Roleystone and that particular night, whatever it was had been arranged where Ray would talk about fire pumps.
>
> K: Oh, and that's when a couple of hundred people turned up.
>
> B: The little room where we were the other night, this particular meeting was about fire pumps but people came because there was a meeting at the fire brigade and there was this threat not that far away sort of thing and it was amazing and then after the fire's gone then I guess all those people we haven't seen since. As well, people move out of the area. (Cp6-7)

He stressed the importance of bringing in new residents and of maintaining the telephone tree:

> I think it's often hard to get the message through that it is an ongoing process that's to their advantage to get involved with. So yeah, but not that it's a major hassle as such, it's just that it's something that we have to work at and as well as maintaining interest in those who seem to have it fairly well under control. And the one that I do think that we do need to work at regularly is the telephone tree. Because if people don't practice and you've only got to have one leak link in that chain and of course it all stops. And there could be half a dozen people below that that aren't getting that early advice and I think people are making decisions on the basis of whether to stay or go based on the fact that they're going to get early advice.

> And then they can say my house is vulnerable, I'm going to get out of here, take the kids and animals and whatever. So that's where it's really important, I mean it's important anywhere when people are relying on it for whatever reason, but I think with this stay and go approach it's very important. (Cp8)

A further problem for maintaining the tree is an important one if it to operate effectively:

> Part of the problem that we encountered early too with the telephone tree was ... and it might be one member of the family that comes to the meetings and then gives us all the information and participates fully. But then you ring them and the husband's home or the wife's home and they haven't become part of it or some older teenage kids are home and wouldn't even know what BRAG was about. Where are your mum and dad? Don't know, so you know there were a few things like that where we had to encourage them to incorporate all members of the household, so that you know the core process was not interrupted by sort of one household participating. (Cp9-10)

It is also essential he believed for the telephone tree to be tested on a regular basis – his own group 'haven't done it recently so we need to go down that path. (Cp11)

From the FESA perspective, much of what applies here has been covered in the earlier topics, however the following is relevant to how FESA sees the development of BRAG and the fact that there is no longer an officer dedicated to supporting them, nor do FESA have the resources to supply ongoing support:

> P: And say that there's been a meeting arranged. They actually arrange the initial meeting, community engagement. They usually liaise with somebody. They used to have a person who was dedicated to BRAG, they don't any more I don't believe, and that person would usually do all the organising. So they'd organise letterbox drops and all that sort of stuff. And really all we would do from the regions, we would come up on the day and they would say ... they would show a … a video or whatever and ask us to talk about fire and ask us to answer questions and that sort of stuff. And then once that was done we were sort of gone. So while it's arguable that it's something that we should be more involved in, frankly we don't have the time or the resources to do it. So we tend to let it come to us I guess, rather than sort of go out. The other issue too over here which, I don't know if the people have made you aware of, is that it's a bit different from over east. Some areas over east. We … we actually have no jurisdiction over local governments at all. We … we liaise with them. We can talk to them. Obviously try and engender things and all that sort of stuff. But local governments are independent of FESA, so FESA has no … and the local, the regional office, we have no jurisdiction over them at all.
>
> So basically if they decide that they want to go and do something a particular way, well, if it's not the way we think it should be done we'll go and talk to them about it, but if they decide they're going to do that anyway that's what they go and do. So … the reason I mention that is that it, you know … they … they will quite often … like I've had no … no

> connection at all for example with the Oakford group. Because it depends on the local government. Serpentine Jarrahdale's very independent so they go out and they do their thing. And …
>
> K: Okay. And does that … sorry, doing their thing, does that involve supporting BRAG groups or …
>
> P: Yes, it can do. If their chief bushfire control officer's of that mind, yeah, sure. If not, which you'll find in a lot of them, it never happens. And that's why a lot of the local governments don't have any involvement, really, with BRAG. Or there might be little fledgling things here and there, they come and go and they die, but it's not a, unless it's supported by the local government, it's not usually a big thing. (Dp4-5)

Originally FESA adopted a 'top down' approach firstly through a dedicated person with the idea of establishing BRAGs across the metropolitan region:

> K: Well, very interesting. It's … when community engagement had a dedicated person looking after BRAG, do you think it was different then or, again, the emphasis was on starting up groups?
>
> P: The emphasis was starting up groups, to my knowledge, but I think there was also the capacity there to provide more support because it was her job. Yeah. It … it …That … that's just from my knowledge. And FESA's tried to do it a couple of ways. Without sounding horrible, but at one stage, for example, they … FESA's approach to handling a situation was that they would … they came up with this grand plan about how they were going to establish … get all the BRAGs established in particular areas and sort of pretty well right throughout the surrounding outer metro, which was a good idea. But their method of doing that was basically we've got this grand plan, this is how we're going to do it, shoot it down to the regions, implement it. And we all went get lost. So it never happened.
>
> K: It's a dilemma, a top down process to start a bottom up group.
>
> P: That's right. So … and … and that was one of their … that was I think when they were having … 'cause they've got the same issues I guess as everybody else, you know. They … they don't have enough people to do what they have to do, so they were trying to rationalise things.'(Dp22-23)

## Importance of local champions – facilitators and street coordinators. Emphasis at street coordinator level or individual involvement. How have these people been chosen?

The success of this BRAG no doubt has a lot to do with past and present facilitators with Ian, the current one, claiming to know everyone at least by face in the area. He would know the area well as for many years it was he and a few others who letter boxed all of the residences while the street coordinators have their own specific tasks:

> They, basically, they organise the telephone tree and … and they get that, you know, once there's a group going it's their job to get the telephone tree and … and get it back to me in … in that sort of form. So that we have a telephone … there's a file here that says BRAG which our station officer uses and it's got the … all the street coordinators, so wherever the fire we can ring the street coordinator, and a copy of every group so that we can … we can ring them from here. And it's pretty well up to date and that. K: Yeah. So would the street coordinators be helping you to recruit new people? Like if someone new moved in to the … in to the street, would the street coordinator know …
>
> I: Oh, I'd say the street coordinators … if you've got somebody new moves in to your street, you go and talk to them. It's not my job. It's not really my job. (Ap12)

What all of this has meant is that, apparently, and this is Ian's greatest achievement to his mind, the whole of Bedfordale is covered by BRAG which makes the life of the brigade so much easier. He also puts this accomplishment down to the 'community spirit' present in Bedfordale. (Ap44-45)

The role of the street coordinators is important to the 2nd interviewees so keeping the groups of a manageable size is very obvious:

> K: I'm just thinking in terms of sustaining BRAG, how you find it with recruiting or maintaining street coordinators and also I'm really conscious of the workload on the facilitators and whether that's a challenge too?
>
> R: I think if you keep the groups down in size, in numbers, you're not giving them too much to do. They sort of seem to be happy with, like some groups here … well one that comes tonight, hers hadn't been divided up and I think she's got 37 residents or something you know and that's a massive amount on … and not only that she says my tree doesn't work, I wonder why?
>
> S: It is really hard to work with such a big number yeah.
>
> R: And that's why we're making the change and trying to help them out with that activating the tree.
>
> K: When you do want to split a group is it hard to get someone to volunteer to be the street coordinator or generally ..?
>
> S: I mean usually people don't put up their hand and be like I want to be street coordinator, you know like they're not very …
>
> K: But if you tap them on the shoulder they'll respond?
>
> S: Yeah sort of thing and you just have to be really vigilant in picking …
>
> R: Electric prodder.

> S: You just have to be really vigilant picking someone out and explaining sort of even … yeah just explaining like they don't have to do the world, they just have to do a few simple tasks, and that's you know if that can be defined out of this research about perhaps what a street coordinator would generally cover, then they realise taking on this they don't have to protect everyone's house or be responsible in an emergency sort of thing so … and the people would come up … yeah so I think I've had one person ask to be a street coordinator out of all the groups. (B18-19)

The role of these coordinators is not too onerous but it is time consuming and does involve much communication both with the residents and with the brigade:

> K: And what do you think street coordinators should cover? Obviously the telephone tree is a pretty crucial role?
>
> S: Yeah or any … some sort of communication, it doesn't have to be a telephone tree, but definitely like they are our next line, like our next step down to get the message out in a situation so they definitely would need to … they just need to be able to communicate between both the fire brigade facilitators and … and the members of the community. If they're sort of a very private person and just stay in their house you know they're not really going to meet their neighbours and arouse interest in that respect.
>
> R: Well this way they are meeting their neighbours because you're talking about a small group you know. The big group, you would never know who was at the other end really socially, but the small group you know you can go to your neighbour's and have a cup of tea or whatever and have a real free flowing talk between those groups. And that's why I said you have to keep the numbers down, and then you know the next lot up would do the same. So it's close environment that would always have contact whereas the long streets it's just lost. (Bp19-20)

The facilitators don't have to be in the brigade but it helps. (Bp26)

For the coordinator, his two roles- as councillor and street coordinator coincided with each other. He was out there to listen, see concerns and then act upon them - hence the idea of placing BRAG related material in with the rate notices mentioned earlier. (Cp2) The coordinators are also amongst the most motivated of local residents. (Cp4) He noted the importance of having committed and motivated facilitators addressing the public meetings as well: 'You know those sorts of things, but mostly ... less about fire fighting, more about avoiding the issue by preparing our homes. And that was the main focus. But what it did allow I think was people to sort of ask the whole range of questions, because it was really fairly informal although it was structured in terms of Ian knew what sort of message he wanted to get through. With his personality I guess it was really sort of fairly low key and people didn't feel that were in the classroom and it became quite conversational at times and people sort of felt they could ask question and find out without sort of sounding silly or feeling silly, sort of thing.

And I think that was fairly positive. And I guess that's probably the easy bit because that's the sort of focus there. (Cp6)

Selection of facilitators from the FESA perspective was not known but the suggestion was that:

> P: I don't. The reason I don't is I … I don't have a lot of knowledge … I mean, except for some of the things that came out at our original meeting, like I think it's fairly obvious that the most successful groups are ones that are affiliated with bushfire brigade somewhere. So if the BRAG groups are run out of either the bushfire brigade or a fire service or something, or if it's … well, it would have to be for a bushfire reaction group. Yeah. Sort of … I was just sort of thinking a bit wider in emergency services stuff, but … but looking under here at bushfire would … would be, yeah, they're the most successful. (Dp8)

He continued in answer to the following question:

> K: Yeah. Peter, I'm thinking back to the discussion that was had at the reference group meeting where people were sort of tossing around whether it's best to have someone who's got lots of fire fighting experience setting up the groups you know in that community education or community safety officer role or whether to … you know, there's other people saying there was a preference for people who've got the community engagement skills and that sort of background.
>
> P: I think … I don't think … I think it's like a lot of things, I think it's advantageous if you have bushfire experience and knowledge because you can pass your experiences I suppose on to people easier. I don't think it's essential though. I think what's more essential is that you have a person who's keen, dedicated and has good communication and people skills and can … and good relationships with the community. Because you can always get the other stuff in…You can always get the fire knowledge in. You can always get you know whatever knowledge you want, you can ask them to come along and talk. You don't actually have to have that yourself, but it's … it's a bit like some of our you know fire officers, they've got great fire skills but they don't handle people too well.'(Dp16-17)

Such people acting as 'drivers' as was mentioned earlier are very important if people are to be kept motivated. (Dp10)

One problem for FESA is as mentioned earlier, feedback from a BRAG is more likely to be to local government rather than to FESA

## Are there intended /unintended outcomes? (positive/negative)

Again nothing specific came up that I could see that had not already been covered elsewhere.

## Other contextual factors – compliance measures

This BRAG doesn't have a lot to do with the local council, although:

> The council, not a lot, but there's … see … our chief, chief of Bedfordale and Roleystone, is also head of ranger services and he's paid by the council. Because I … when Mike Famco was chief he was a volunteer chief of the whole of Armadale Shire. And at that stage we had Forestdale had a brigade, West Armadale had a brigade, Kelmscott had a brigade, Bedfordale and Roleystone. And that … was a voluntary job. And … and we just … we were the ones that actually spat the dummy. Mike wanted out. He'd … he'd … it was just killing him trying to work and plus do that. And that's when we said the council have got to have a paid fire chief. And … and it's gone right through the state now I think. They're just about all paid fire chiefs now. There's very few fire chiefs that are voluntary any more.
>
> K: Okay. So the council employs the fire chief.
>
> I: They … he's paid by the fire chief and he's appointed by the council.

Other councils have fire managers appointed by FESA whereas in Bedfordale the position is funded by the council which was felt to be a good thing as:

> He doesn't have to take some of the bulldust that comes from FESA hierarchy. You … you've got that all the time.… It … that's right. It came down do we want a fire chief appointed by the council or a fire chief appointed by FESA? And the whole of Bedfordale and Roleystone said no, we want … by that time we were back only to two brigades left in … old Armadale West might've still been operating. No, we want one by the council. We don't want to become that close into FESA. Because FESA, look, I get on with FESA blokes really great. But … But there's somewhere in FESA that's got too much fire and rescue in it. And there's a definite clash between the bushfire boards, or the old bushfires board, and then the fire and rescue. And now it's all FESA, so we're all supposed to be the same. We all wear blue shirts. We wear different badges on our arms. And it's just that little clash. And … and it's still … it's still on. You see, fire and rescue want to break out on their own apparently again and go separate from FESA. (A27-29)

In the 2nd interviews, the need for an early warning system was suggested as a way of assisting residents in their decision to stay or go, but FESA was not so sure:

> R: That's the big thing and … and early warnings etc etc. There isn't any early warning code as such for a fire in a certain valley for fires. There is if we have a cyclone. Now why can't the same system be used?
>
> S: Or at least modified yeah.
>
> K: The one over the radio, the … the emergency warning signal? Yeah like up north we've got the red … blue, yellow, red is that right?… I mean but it's obviously easier … or easier to predict a cyclone than a fire, because that's one of the barriers because I was talking to x at FESA about it and she seemed to think that it was going to be too hard to do because a fire changes so quickly. But I was thinking of something not so categorical as the cyclone system, but just a way of saying you're in this radius of the fire, or you know whether it's a

> small or a large fire. If you're in a 5k radius or something like that, that would definitely help people because one of the things that doesn't happen is well … one of the things BRAG tries to improve on is the ability to get information out and that's one of the things that we struggle with, because you get so much going on at the station you … yeah. Once the direction of the fire was known then the telephone tree could be activated. (Bp5-6)

The FESA officer noted how powerless FESA often were: 'K: So FESA don't … can't have much control over that situation. (issuing infringement notices)

> P: We have none at all. No. No control at all. Because the … over here there are three … three agencies that … that look after bushfire or are responsible for bushfire. One of them's the Department of Environment and Conservation. They look after stuff on … in state forests and all their land as well. The other one is local government and they look after everything which is outside the gazetted fire district. And FESA, if you like, looks after stuff inside the gazetted fire district, but we're also responsible for liaison with the local governments as well and DEC. So … but nobody's … it's not like in New South Wales, for example, where the Rural Fire Service is the top agency and National Parks and Wildlife and, you know, all the others answer to them if they declare a section 44. It goes nothing like that here in WA. If we get a fire, we have to work out, you know, whose area's started, whose area's going into, you know, is the … is where it started going to have a person in charge there or is where it's going into going to have a person in charge or … all that sort of stuff. It's a bit interesting. But because of the …' (Dp6)

Importantly though, BRAGS can bring pressure to bear on local government. (Dp9)

## Fire history

Again nothing specific came up that I could see that had not already been covered elsewhere.

## Demographics including socio economic, even membership of other volunter groups if information is available

More women than men attend the meetings and about one half of the street coordinators are women. (Ap35-36)

There would appear to be an overlap of membership of voluntary groups, for example members of the fire brigade collected for the Red Shield Appeal and at the same time talked about BRAG whilst collecting. (Bp12)

While not really demographic it's a lot harder now getting volunteers from the new estates to join the brigade as more people are working elsewhere and are not available. (Bp18)

## Darlington

### Themes and areas of analysis: what works? What are the intended/actual outcomes of the program? (short/medium/long term)

*Aims:*

The initial aim was to review Darlington residents' awareness of fire risk in their suburb and for the facilitators, to also take the concept of Community Fireguard to its streets as this was being implemented at the same time: 'there was a … a structure in … in place coming out of the community' (Ap3-4). This BRAG arose out of fear of fire and 'It was really initiated through the … the local Residents and Ratepayers Association. They felt that there was a need for such an organisation or an awareness more than organisation.' The aim is to get the information out into the field to protect their own…Don't have to worry operationally with fire suppression where BRAGS are present – time is saved as the houses are set up properly. (Cp50)

According to the officers, the role is to train people and make it clear what they've got to do (e.g. they can use trailers in the mopping up and management of rubbish and waste) and recognise the dangers of (if they're not fire fighters) what they shouldn't do. (C p20)

Are they successful or not? What are the barriers/facilitators?

With firefighters,

> it's very hard to get people to actually want to deliver training and want to actually get involved with the community. They might do a little bit here and there and they say well, you know, that's it …' whereas BRAG people are 'quite different in terms of the ongoing …commitment' (Ap8).

Success can be seen in that the most positive outcome is that in the event of a fire, BRAG members are comfortable 'that they're doing everything right, they are prepared... and their house will be secure' and more money needed to enable facilitators to carry out their tasks – 'budget just peanuts' (Ap44-45)

BRAGS are 'more successful when requests come from the group as the following indicates:

> because it came in as a group, you're inclined to favour them because they're … they're pulling their weight so, yes, I'll…I did move them up a slot. And the council will do the same. If it comes in as a group, if it's a compliance issue, it'll…it'll be dealt with a lot swifter than a one independent person. But that's …that's the only real pull they've got, you know, because they're a group and generally know what they're talking about. And they have some built up expertise. (Cp5)

BRAGs are also valuable resources as their places are kept better which means less stress for fire fighters (Cp5)

Street stalls are often the useful way to attract street coordinators with best being an actual fire:

> some people have come up and we've said this is what … we'd like you to be a street contact, and we've had a couple this year do that. So … and they're the mechanisms by which we try to attract, but again the best one, of course, is to have a major fire in the area and then everybody wants … well, not everybody …but most … most people become …when people discover that they do have issues. I think that prompts them to find out what they can do to deal with those issues. And then they discover that there is something available and … and motivates them to actually do something, you know, constructive …See, that's … that's how you get fire fighters too, because people realise how vulnerable they are. (Ap6)

The complexities and commitments of volunteerism act as disincentives to participation, according to the Community Fire Manager:

> to some of the members of BRAGs in that, you know, they …they have the meetings and they discuss all these great ideas about what they could be doing to enhance their preparedness, but at the end of the day there's I guess financial requirements that, you know, commitments they'd have to make and also co ordinating within a street to … to, you know, to … to facilitate that. And … and that's where, you know, in some cases it seems to fall down a bit. Where, you know, those great ideas can't be developed because there's a … a … I suppose perhaps a lack of incentives to do so from a … from their own personal point of view. (Cp21)

Barriers: Darlington:

> Across the State, it's not known how many actual functioning BRAGS exist, (no records) nor how successful they are. (Cp18) These interviewees also noted that 'there's not too many BRAGs… the demand for them is not there… People can't commit themselves or they won't … (Cp6)

Time limits are a problem in carrying out tasks – need to share the work around (Ap8).

There's frustration on the part of facilitators that more streets are not involved as it's not expanding enough and more money needed to enable facilitators to carry out their tasks – 'budget just peanuts' (Ap10-12).

There's the feeling expressed by the facilitators that there's a lack of support from FESA: … they were saying on one hand, you know, we need to have a … but there didn't seem to be any … any drive from within FESA to actually deliver … what they wanted to deliver (Ap9).

## How are they achieved? What activities take place? What processes take place? (individual/ household/community) what happens and why?

They tend to meet on a street by street system but on an irregular basis:

> I would say very irregular. I would say probably less than 5% of the streets would … this would just be my guess. I mean, at a street meeting if you ask them …it might be different,

> but I would say there's very few streets would meet on a yearly basis…Although, having said that, there are a couple of very keen streets … Edith Street where Mike Mackay is I know meet annually, just to go through the telephone tree just to make sure that the numbers are all current and all the information that is on those lists for, you know, where the fire pumps are and all of that … if they've got pets, dogs, old age people or whatever … that they put on theirs. I know that they meet annually so I would think there's only probably one or two. (Ap19-20)

Street contacts personally invite new residents to BRAG meetings while residents are letterboxed with information, invitations and 'there's an insert goes in to the review in October every year which has information on certain things, and has all the street contacts phone numbers.' (Ap21)

The size of groups varies as does their commitment:

> they can be just about from a half a dozen people through to about 15, 20 people or houses and that …sort of thing. They're very … very large variation. Very … very large variation in the needs of the group. Very large variation in the commitment of the group. You know, you get some people who are just interested in knowing, and you get others that actually take it very seriously depending on who the contact is. Some … some contacts drive very hard and they ensure that, you know, any … you know, that any issues are brought up and … and make sure that every … newer members come in to the flock and all that sort of thing. So … and, you know, it just depends on the contact, you know, the coordinator. If they're enthusiastic then the whole group is driven by it and, I mean, that's good… (needs vary because) some of them are bordering on national park. So they might perceive that their risk is really severe… I think some of them just have greater awareness or greater need. Some of them live in cut off roads, you know, cul-de-sac, which is very common in Darlington, you know, so 9it's) very common, because of the structure of the land. (Ap22)

For the Fire brigade respondents it is essential to have the fire brigade involved in BRAGS:

> Plus it is essential that you have your fire brigade involved in the area, I think that is a key to it, again as Ken said, I was the same when I joined back in 1979, all I wanted to do was get in those trucks and drive with the siren going, get out and put a fire out. You know this preparedness and awareness ... no, no, no, no, somebody else can do that, not that it was around then, but I think in hindsight now we realise how important it is to have that is a very integral part of a fire brigade.'

Even the Shire recognises this as they've appointed a community fire manager. For these respondents, education with large scale awareness is the key: 'we're looking at, you know offering knowledge to people that need it, you know. I think that's what we're basically doing. It's the education ... community education side of it and obviously if people do their bit, then when we go out there as fire fighters, we're not going to be faced with the trauma of which

house do we save and which house do we let go, you know that type of thing. So that's the kind of difference that it could make.' (Bp4)

Knowledge is a positive when dealing with fires. Problems occurred when political issues between the shire and FESA arose over ownership of the processes. Financial incentive – 'the only thing that got things moving was taken away. (Bp4-6)

It's a role of the district manager of the local bushfire brigades to look after the BRAGS:

> I'm the one that gets involved with BRAG in basically getting information from the department out in to the field and promoting it … the concept, basically. And I'm only new in … to this area, but I've … my previous role was in Perth south coastal and I was involved in the setting up of BRAGs down there. And we ran training courses and what have you down there to get those up and running. So yeah, pretty much that's my role is it's sort of in the background support role to the BRAG groups themselves, yeah…
>
> And they get involved as well, but we're the … we're the regional link… we canvass the area to find out who wanted to be involved in the BRAG group, and that involved going to the … the local brigade meetings and also to the fire advisory meetings, to get that information out in to the group. And then from that we've received information back from the brigades as to where they wanted to form BRAG groups.
>
> And most of the BRAG groups were … are being run by brigades. They're not run by a street. Even though the BRAG concept is basically to get an individual street organised, the ones that I've had anything to do with that have kept going are the ones that are run by the brigades themselves. So … so because … because of that fact, I tend to be fairly involved with them on a more regular basis when they're there. So basically we've … we got the concept going, then we set up training for the guys to come down and learn what they've got to do to run their BRAGs and… all that sort of stuff.
>
> And … and we have the people from Perth come out and do the delivery to it. And then when they have an activity going around, like they've been doing the … the stay or go plan … that's … we've been involved in … in the logistics behind that. And that's about where I've drawn the line, yeah. I … we don't have much time to do much else at that point.
>
> J: So the resources from central office, they … they provide them to you and you… disseminate them.
>
> A: That's right, yeah. (Cp1-2)

Initial contact is through the local community fire manager and the following occurs:

> What happens, the initial contact's usually through myself. I'll have a resident that will phone up and they've either heard something or wanting to know what they can do. So I give them a run down on BRAG, just a very brief overview of what BRAGs about, and then I give them a contact in Perth. After they contact the people in Perth they will … they pay the … the interested person a visit, and if they're still interested I'm involved in the first and

> quite often the second meeting where we get all the street together. And I find out what the … you know, what their concerns are, what the risks are, and the expectations. We've got some BRAG fliers and we give them the fliers … fliers to, you know, protecting your home and all that sort of stuff. So just the usual material. And then after that that's … I really cut my ties because I … I haven't got any time whatsoever to … to … even though they're very … they do a great job, they're a very important area, but it depends on the risk and who's the driver. But after two visits that's generally the end of my association with the BRAG groups… (Cp2-3)

The process then is for this manager to provide advice from a professional fire fighter's perspective working with the BRAG facilitator if there is one. They usually meet in a lounge room (once in a hall) where people feel comfortable and can see the risks and benefits as they are shown around the house and burning programs and mitigation processes are described. 'And if they're in the BRAG, generally the BRAG facilitator or the FESA employee will go in to that detail, you know, the phone tree and the advantages and the resources.' (Cp2-3)

## What resources are required to sustain brags?

More time, money and people are needed. When people leave there's often no one with their skills to replace them. And, more support is needed 'as people feel on their own.' (Ap8-12) and more money needed to enable facilitators to carry out their tasks – 'budget just peanuts'. (Ap10)

More not fewer Green Waste collections are needed: the brigade as a whole are quite concerned about the fact that people might reduce their maintenance if they've got a limitation on the number of tip passes and that sort of thing. So …that is seriously going to be a … an issue for people who become complacent about their fire risk …because of saving a few dollars. (Ap18-19)

FESA people should be more permanent in the BRAG role 'from a fire brigade point of view it would make our life so much easier if we could see that people were going to hold their positions and take ownership of … of their responsibilities'. – building knowledge, which is lost as people want full time positions so they move on…The structures in their organisations need to work for them'. (Ap26-27)

> What … what I'd like to see is a dedicated person really, you know. Somebody … somebody …who had no other function …but they do BRAG. I think once you start getting in to community education there are just so many different avenues of it, they can lose their focus just by demands from the public. If you say there's somebody there, whether it be full time, part time, whatever, their sole functionality is that they deal with BRAG. And then you … you would find that you would get an automatic growth in … in … because people, once they get started, they would see that they've got somebody to help them, you know, somebody to keep the momentum going. (Ap33-35)

This need for more staff was confirmed by the community fire managers:

> They need a dedicated … at least one, maybe two, dedicated officers just for BRAG really for it … because…it's a valuable resource in the very high and extreme risk areas, because their places are kept better than ones that aren't. Which means less stress for fire fighters. It's got to keep the place better … (Cp5-6)

Reasons for extra support staff are: if you haven't got a champion …

A :That's the problem. It becomes where what we're doing is relying on volunteers out there to carry the can… with no day-to-day support for them on a reasonable basis. I mean, they don't need day-to-day supports per se, but they need somebody whose job it is to do that, just to keep the interest going and to keep … keep things moving in the right direction. (Cp14)

BRAG, for these managers, is the right model but it does need more people resource back up ('it doesn't have to be done by volunteers') and the cooperation of the shire with the local community is necessary as they can enforce the Act, 'taking action against those who don't reduce the hazard… that's (coordination across the shire) a pretty big task for someone to coordinate. And with current resourcing it won't happen. (Cp16 and 21-25)

Consensus then is that more input is also needed from the Shire 'we're not getting a drive from the shire …Person…but… we would get as much support as we wanted to, but I think you would have to ask for it, yeah.' (Ap30)

A structure is needed where feedback can be provided to FESA as well as FESA advising the BRAGs:

> this structure somewhere where, you know, there is a consultative committee so that you've got this…opinions coming in from BRAG groups and also the outside areas as well. The Western Powers, the … the Westrail people, all of those that … who are involved with fires. And the necessity to be able to … to have input to … to something to have a structure saying yeah, this is what we think should occur to reduce the hazards around or to try and prevent the outbreak of major fires, other than just a suppression unit, I mean, as FESA is. I mean that's … that really what FESA is, a suppression unit... (Ap33)

This view was supported by the Community Fire Managers:

> I believe it's got to be a coordinated effort between the police with neighbourhood watch, so looking for criminals, the BRAG which is bushfire and the winter safe, you know, for your winter activities, and tying it in to your local government, police and FESA. You need … it goes back to the green waste again. Your BRAGs aren't going to function too well if it's going to cost them, which it will with the green waste, trying to neat … tidy their place up. So we've just got to work in to the local government. And I like talking about the compliance. Compliances, you know, they should be dealt with by the local government as well. But just working on the BRAG or the … or the BRAG program, or a … or a community program like that, it needs somebody … it definitely needs an employee, probably with FESA, to liaise with the local government and say the benefits and even if

> they … it's difficult with your green waste, if they're a BRAG group and functioning, they can get the green waste picked up, you know, by the local government. You know, that sort of thing. So … which is improving the safety of, you know, the residents. They can build on it from the ground floor I suppose. But you need those … those three areas really. If they can come together that …I think that'll be the key. And especially local government. (Cp27)

Success comes with training and people need to know they're not firefighters…they can use trailers as that's one area they are usually skilled at but not necessarily in panic situations so even this area needs proper management. (Cp19-21).

## How is information disseminated to fellow residents?

In Darlington, a monthly review is used to disseminate information and to recruit new members to BRAG:

> One thing that we have within Darlington is what we call the Darlington review. That's a monthly review…in a local magazine, which comes out, as I say, monthly. In that I write articles and invite streets to participate, want me to come, or just give them information on what is … what is occurring and things that they should do from a BRAG perspective. And we … and then also every year we have a Darlington Arts Festival here in November, and the brigade run a bushfire … bushfire expo… in that expo we've had a stall. The … the FESA … BRAG … It's just a display type of …Just a display of BRAG …And … materials. And with people available to … consult and give advice and that sort of thing. (Ap5)

Information is distributed at street meetings where the community fire manager adopts the following approach:

> in the lounge room, very relaxed atmosphere, as you go through and … yeah, it's not even a PowerPoint, I just get up there and talk. And usually I have … I'll print out … I take … get … print out large maps of the area so they can get an overview of the shire and an overview of their particular place. Everyone likes looking at their own place, so they … but they can see the risk in their … around their place. And I can point it out and they can … they can physically see it then. It has a bit better impact than trying to describe. J: So do you think the sort of credibility of having someone like yourself there is a very important factor in it sort of getting off the ground? M: Very much so, I think. You … you need that initial I suppose professional fire experience there for a starter, so they have a clear understanding that if … if they're a major risk or not, if they're really wasting their time or not.' (Cp3-4)

Brochures, magazines and an 'excellent' DVD which 'is quite confronting' are used to distribute information and create awareness. (Ap11-12) The brochures whilst seen as being well presented were not in themselves so useful:

> I think that's all it is, you produce this many brochures, we've got a new brochure, yeah, they're all good, no question about that but ... no good unless somebody's reading then or somebody is interpreting them or ...
>
> K: Absolutely, and glossy brochures only reach so many people, we all get ...
>
> C: Other than also those who are already involved.
>
> P: And it's well known you can stick brochures in people's letterboxes and that was the whole reason for it in the first place. It'll all finish up in next week's recycling.' You need someone to say 'this is important.' (Bp12-13)

New information from FESA is delivered to street contacts who deliver it to all the houses in their streets. They may/not meet to discuss things later. (Ap19)

There would appear to be a problem with communication between FESA and BRAG members as was reported in 2 sets of interviews. Firstly:

> K: Yeah. Look, in … in the interviews that we've done it has emerged that communication from FESA is a problem. I mean, at one stage some people were thinking BRAG wasn't continuing.
>
> C: Mm. Oh yeah, I agree. Totally agree. We just … this hiatus, you know, when I got … again, going back to two years when they just weren't talking to anybody…No one was talking to us, and no one …(Ap27-28)

And, secondly,

> We just … this hiatus, you know, when I got … again, going back to two years when they just weren't talking to anybody. No one was talking to us, and no one …We didn't know where we were going and so, you're right, it's just … as I say, going back to one of my earlier comments, I don't think that FESA really puts enough emphasis on the importance of it. I mean, they may talk about it, but it's hands on, doing something, and again I know … I know we've got good CFMs and we've got good district officers, but they don't push to the best of my knowledge. Does Mike Scott push BRAG? No, I think he's … I think he's pleased that it exists. I think he encourages it, he supports it, but I don't believe he drives it but he doesn't see it as one of his core roles. (Ap27)

While it is possible to log-in to an area through the internet for information and fire alerts which are updated by FESA, (Bp1) it was felt that information is poorly disseminated in some cases:

> And the other major problem that we find within BRAG is the lack of information, fire information, being available to the community. Thankfully in the last couple of years that has improved. Not as well as what I believe it could… There is a long lag, seems to be, before the notices are up on the … the web or over the ABC. And people need to know, it's a bit like the cyclone, you can see it building … and with fires you need to know that information so that you can make the choice you're going to leave early or …need to do all

> those things. So I think fire information and awareness again is a really crucial … and it's not being done well enough at the moment.' 'And the website's probably about the best thing nowadays because, you know, so long as it's kept updated regularly, it's something that doesn't require phones or … well, it requires a line, a connection, but you can get that without phones and so on, so you know you can get that on laptops with wireless and all sorts of things now. So a website would be the ideal if somebody could, you know …(Ap51-53).

You need a variety of methods including telephone trees to get the message across. (Ap54)

## How representative are the participants? Is there a difference between homeowners and renters, for example?

Very little was mentioned in Darlington on representativeness of the residents in BRAG. The local BRAG was initiated through: 'the local Residents and Ratepayers Association. They felt that there was a need for such an organisation or an awareness more than organisation.' (Ap3)

And, people are prompted to enquire about BRAG but even then not all residents are concerned: 'the local people don't seem to want to care too much about it other than those that were already in the system so you feel a bit despondent...' (Ap6 & 12)

## What works for whom? In what contexts and settings has the program worked/not worked? Why? How?

There's been frustration that two years ago BRAG was not going anywhere and any benefits could not be seen and 'FESA was totally non-committal'… The only enabling thing was that three groups had strong and committed leaders who kept persisting with a willingness to continue. (Ap6-7)

As mentioned earlier the DVD works and has a 'wow' factor as 'it's quite confronting'. It and other material is discussed over 2 week nights and weekend day. The sessions cover the following generally:

> we go through the videos, question and answers, target specific focus areas of interest, you know. So like it might be house survival, bushfire preparation, and the last one is personal survival and those sorts of things, you know. And to how, you know … and then the final one would be a day time and you would examine a house which … which is still in there. (Ap12 & 15)

> During actually a facilitation meeting where you're doing … running a group, people will ask things you know about how they can … how they can deal with this or that or whatever. Within the group, you know, it makes it easier because you can just simply refer has anybody else got that experience, you know, being an instructor and that sort of thing. You can just simply bring it out of the group, you know, well you guys tell him you know. You

> just sit back and they can … they can share their experiences with it. But if nobody in the group seems to know you just throw in a few extras of your own, you know, so that … about how things can be addressed you know and you encourage them to get together and do, you know, work … busy bees type of thing you know to collectively … you know, if somebody says they don't have a trailer or … well, does anybody in this group have a trailer you know. Okay that's solved, you know.
>
> We can … you can collectively … has somebody got this kind of tool, that tool, okay. You've got the resources at the fire brigade and things like that, you know. And so you've got these … these options to deal with it and you've also … option of burning or whatever. And, you know, on … in that one meeting you know collectively you can often get the result. Or otherwise they go off and somebody says oh, I know … I've got a contact here, I can find out. So, yeah, usually within a group you've got the answers. (Ap41)

Some people choose not to continue with the group:

> they're mainly happy that … that they know enough or they're satisfied with the way the group's operating and that their … that … that their issues are being dealt with and …And again I suppose also as we have the BRAG review, it comes out monthly, in my notes I write about things that people should do around their homes to prepare for the … the summer fire season. So, again, there is an awareness within the community of … and then also each November the shire have a … a green waste collection within this locality which we advertise, and it enables people then to … to put out just prior to that collection period, hopefully clean up their … their yard to some degree anyway. (Ap17,18)

For obvious reasons, those living near National Parks were those most interested in what BRAG had to offer. Differing risk perceptions meant different needs which lead people more motivated and committed while others have a less sense of urgency. (Ap22.23)

It was suggested that a good size of a group is around 7-15 houses (or a dozen) with the original ideal being 9-10. This is a good number as:

> when you're conducting the sessions you don't have hordes of people asking questions all the time. I mean, the larger the group the better in the … in the sense that you're delivering more information. That … that's good, and you know you … you're addressing more houses with your time so it's very cost effective time wise. But smaller groups work extremely well. So I think an ideal would be about 10… and with a group this size the telephone tree is easier to operate. (Ap36,37)

The facilitators see their role as being advice givers, talking the issues through e.g. over issues such as land tenure and whether they are breaking the law:

> We don't force people. We don't … we don't impose our values on people. All we can do it just say well, this is how it should be. This is … these are your options.

(Ap38) From this advice, group members realise that they are not dealing with the problems alone but as a group: 'They have more power, more strength, and they're more likely to get a resolution. Except the neighbours who don't want to do anything. Well, sometimes they're stuck with that.' The people go away from the meeting with information and the realisation that they can deal with issues and physical needs collectively. (Ap40,41)

The groups work effectively as they have local people involved:

> Every incident management team will comprise of people of the local knowledge. And they will be able to … to know what … what risks are and what … which people are affected and which … which people need to know. Yeah. I mean, if there's evacuations going on or if there's … then they can … then they can say recommended evacuation from … if you live in this area here or … or whatever, well, prepare for evacuation. Those sorts of things are the sort of things that people look for. (Ap57)

Where things are not working is that

> … all the way through the whole organisation, everyone's in acting positions. Nobody has tenure in their position and therefore nobody is able to take ownership of what they're doing. They're constantly handing over to somebody else, moving up, moving out, wherever.

The structure makes it difficult for people to build up a rapport or to make decisions. (Ap26)

To the question whether it's necessary for BRAG to work to have firefighters as facilitators? The response was:

> I don't think it matters, we're just fortunate here within Darlington that the BRAG groups sits as a sub-unit of the brigade so we're very fortunate and again all the facilitators have been brigade members. I personally don't think it's a necessity as long as you've got someone who's prepared to champion (it).' The facilitator needs: good people skills and presentation skills and that sort of thing. I think that's ... obviously they need the background knowledge and they need to understand their information, they need to understand that intimately. But as I said it's hard to get fire fighters who are prepared to do it but it's not hard to get a fire fighter to sit there with somebody who's facilitating.' Filling in the gaps and 'giving credibility to the facilitator. (Bp1,2)

Problems do occur over ownership and the funding in some areas of volunteers with political issues intervening in the processes. Friction between some of the brigades, FESA and the shire meant things fell in a heap. Yet, still, the BRAG program does work and the level of awareness has increased with fire brigades being called in earlier for small fires. But it is variable and works better in some areas than others. (Bp4-6)

## How?

### *Flexibility in BRAG program*

Not much was covered in this area apart from the comment that the groups are flexible about when they meet and what is discussed (Ap2)

Way groups have developed – telephone trees, regular meetings with group, local brigade meetings - Top down or bottom up

See earlier comments for related coverage of this topic, however, while the Darlington BRAG eventuated due to residents calling for a meeting with the local organisers, it would appear that initially it's a top down process using the structures already in place with e.g. coordinators sending out invitations and calling twice yearly meetings. (Ap2,4) The top down process is more from the fire services rather than from the shire who have very little input into the BRAGS. (Cp5)

Importance of local champions – facilitators and street coordinators

Emphasis at street coordinator level or individual involvement

The Facilitators' (Street co-ordinators') roles include liaising with FESA and facilitating meetings and in Darlington 'C' apparently held the group together:

P said:

> …but because of your persistence, I think, and the fact that the groups here do have a … a willingness to, you know, continue … and they have, through you, had somebody to actually be … be the person in the … the meat in the sandwich in between and trying to push FESA in to, you know, providing what we need. (Ap7)

Firefighters generally aren't interested in facilitating 'it's very hard to get people to actually want to deliver training and actually want to be involved in the community'… BRAG Facilitators need much more ongoing commitment: 'I'll go to a school or I'll go to a community group and … and lecture, but people don't really generally want to make a big chunk of their … you know, spend a big chunk of their spare time doing that kind of thing. (Ap8)

The role also includes them delivering new information such as the 'bushfire manuals to the street contacts while they rely on the street contacts to contact new residents and inform them on relevant information. (Ap19-21)

The role can be carried out by anyone and you don't need fire fighting experience:

> I believe it can be done by anybody, particularly somebody's who's got good, you know good skills, you know good people skills and presentation skills and that sort of thing. I think that's ... obviously they need the background knowledge and they need to understand their information, they need to understand that intimately…Credibility is the key. (Bp1,2)

The role of the street coordinator is also important, with some being more enthusiastic than others:

> They're very … very large variation. Very … very large variation in the needs of the group. Very large variation in the commitment of the group. You know, you get some people who are just interested in knowing, and you get others that actually take it very seriously depending on who the contact is. Some … some contacts drive very hard and they ensure that, you know, any … you know, that any issues are brought up and make sure that every newer members come in to the flock and all that sort of thing. So, you know, it just depends on the contact, you know, the co ordinator. If they're enthusiastic then the whole group is driven by it and, I mean, that's good.' Being in a high risk area also concentrates the thinking of the residents. (Ap22)

And again:

> You will find that the … the ones that are more enthusiastic, they collectively get together, they sometimes try and … and do a bit of peer pressure on the ones that aren't lifting their game. But they're … some of the groups have that other issue of that they … there are some houses that won't participate and won't get involved and then they have to sort of try and work around them. But with peer pressure … peer pressure they try and get things happening there, but ultimately no. And the other things that they do is that they put pressure on or collectively get together to try and get things happening like some of the burns, so hazard reduction burns in the area, and Colin encourages them to bring them through themself to the BRAG meetings. And that gives them an added incentive to be there, that they can actually present their priorities and see if they … see how they rated within the shire's priorities. Also … yeah, other issues … it gives them an opportunity to ask questions about how they can deal with things, you know, whose responsibility … who owns this and how they can … how they can deal with it.
>
> So, collectively, if they've got an issue with a section … a parcel of land that is a risk to everybody, they can sort of come to the meeting and find out how that works and then collectively they have the power to put pressure on the owner or whatever as a group rather than as an individual, which they'd have probably no chance. (Ap23)

The facilitator also has the important role of contacting FESA which is particularly important when FESA has not kept the BRAG informed:

> C: But again then from a FESA perspective, I mean one of the things that we use our pre and post fire season meetings for is to get a two way communication with the FESA community safety. Regretfully, they've not attended our last three meetings, so we've had no advice from them on what the programs that are coming up have been and, again, I was very concerned about this and wrote to the CEO, Jo Harrison-Ward, about the lack of attendance from FESA officers, again getting back to the fact that there seemed to be only one officer available and, unfortunately, she took sick so nobody else could …come to the meetings. (Ap24)

Some groups are more self-motivated than others and Street coordinators take control with limited input from the facilitators and the former's enthusiasm will make it happen even though the facilitator would run things more effectively. Other groups rely much more on the facilitator (Ap42,43)

The facilitators' positions are filled by a core bunch of people who are usually highly committed and difficult to replace and you just have to hope someone else will put their hand up. (Bp2,3)

> You need a dedicated driver: 'There would appear to be too few facilitators and street coordinators: 'and … whereas the original concept was that each street would have a … a leader and all that sort of stuff and that's how it would work. But that just isn't happening that way. We've got the guy in Darlington doing it, but he's not doing a street in Darlington, he's doing the whole …thing.' 'You need such 'dedicated drivers…if you haven't got that they generally fall over. The people do it for a few years, get tired …don't want to do it anymore. And at the moment we're relying on the volunteers to …pick that driver up.' (This was in the context of needing more permanent staff to assist the BRAGs). (Ap7,8)

All of this was confirmed in Interview 3 with it being noted that there was the danger of being over committed and with the current set up with … with the emphasis being so much at that sort of facilitator in the … the local community, if that person leaves then

> A: It falls over.
>
> J… it falls apart …And I think you've got a serious issue in …over in Bedfordale with that. I think you've …got two key players there that are really driving that, and in 10 years' time when they're gone …
>
> M: There's nothing.
>
> A… it'll fall over. (Cp13)

'You know, if you haven't got a champion':

> A: That's the problem. It becomes where what we're doing is relying on volunteers out there to carry the can … with no day-to-day support for them on a reasonable basis. I mean, they don't need day-to-day supports per se, but they need somebody whose job it is to do that, just to keep the interest going and to keep … keep things moving in the right direction. Outside pressures make it difficult for these people to operate effectively as the problem lies in there being too many bodies involved and a lack of coordination. (Cp14,15)

## How have these people been chosen?

Not much was stated about how the street coordinators were chosen; in fact it would appear that not much is known about them generally as the following indicates:

> J: There's been a couple of issues mentioned with the way I guess at a regional level there's nothing known about the people who end up being say street co ordinators.

M: Yeah, nothing at all. There's no records, there's …nothing there. No.

J: Is that a concern with …your program?

M: Well, it is. You don't know what's going on in your own patch. You don't know where … where … where they are even.

M: It's worked very much in isolation. The local government doesn't know either. It's worked somewhere in FESA how … whoever did coordinate it, and that's it. So it's very … so I think it's on a low priority basis as well.(C P 17)

## ARE THERE INTENDED /UNINTENDED OUTCOMES? (POSITIVE/NEGATIVE)

This has been covered more generally under other categories

## Other contextual factors: compliance measures

In Darlington, the shire awareness level would appear to be high (though not as much as the interviewees would like) with an excellent fire service. (Ap24)

The regulatory approach the council is enforcing is more of a stick rather than a carrot… (Though there was some dissension as to whether a stick was used). (Ap31) They do encourage the … you know, they have the summer safe Sunday and all those sorts of things, you know, they … and they do readily support anything we do. But the only thing is that I'd say they don't actually drive it, you know, that's … if you wanted to … any sort of observation about it.' (Ap32)

The importance of the shire was also stressed in another interview:

local government should be involved because it is their community. And … and so you really should have those three bodies together. So it's a matter of trying to coordinate that to look a bit bigger than just … just a BRAG group. And it's …important that local government are involved because they're the enforcement agency. And under the Bushfires Act, local government can take action against people that don't reduce their hazard. It doesn't just have to be done by the volunteers…(Cp16)

See also Cp27 where it was said that:

…we've just got to work in to the local government. And I like talking about the compliance. Compliances, you know, they should be dealt with by the local government as well. But just working on the BRAG or the … or the BRAG program, or a … or a community program like that, it needs somebody … it definitely needs an employee, probably with FESA, to liaise with the local government…' Land tenure 'is a problem because of the fact that it could be either in a Department of Planning goal or in the shire's vested reserves, and

P: It could be DEC or

> C: Yeah, They're the areas of concern …
>
> P: Department of Environment and Conservation. Yeah. Or it's land administration…Government bodies, they often own chunks of land and … yeah.
>
> C: And failing to do their own fire breaks … and say well, you …know, if they don't do them why should I do it? You know. And … and so well, unfortunately, the … the act says you shall have … it doesn't seem to be applied to government …agencies though. (Ap39)

There is the need also for people such as community safety officers to understand the context they're working in:

> But where you've got a serious issue, like some of the Darlington areas and Bedfordale and all that sort of stuff where there is a definite issue that needs to be dealt with in a concentrated basis, then yeah, it's … it's what you've got to have. But you've got to have somebody that's regionally based that understands the … the region as to how it's functioning and what people you've got there'… They need also close links with local government and to be regionally based as the work can't be done from out of the Perth office. 'You need a … you need a Perth office base coordinator that coordinates the state's direction. But when it gets down to the details on the ground it's got to be coordinated from the region. And you can't … you can't use the assets that are out here at the moment because they're fully committed now. So, you know, if … if they want to get serious they've got to lift the …lift the game a bit. (Cp11,12) (See also Cp13-16 for more details on the various roles and overlaps between departments and authorities which have been covered elsewhere in this document.)

It would appear to be difficult to get a number of residents to comply with the regulations. They move to high risk areas and think 'that it won't happen to me.' State government pressure is needed 'on local governments to set – stick by the rules (of the Bushfires Act) – but it's political and they won't go and lean on (them). 'So BRAG groups are important as one way of getting things done on the ground floor.' (Cp24-26)

## Fire history

Since the inception of the BRAGS there's been a high level of preparedness where they have been established according to all of the interviewees for example: How do you measure that? (Preparedness)

> K: Good question.
>
> C: We've not lost a house. Not had a major fire in Darlington. So it must be working very well…
>
> P: Well, we've had houses that have said that when a fire went through their area that they felt that … their preparedness as a result of the BRAG education or Fireguard education as it was then, has saved their house…' (Ap43)

FESA has now recognised that people should stay in their in the event of a fire and where BRAGS exist the house will be secure and the people know how to handle it. In 2001 when the police were forcibly moving residents out of their homes and the various Acts are in conflict as to their right to do this and according to the Health Act they could but not according to the Bushfire or Police Acts. For one BRAG member this was the last straw and he left…

> They were evacuating people on foot. People had no vehicles or whatever and they were telling … and they said okay, where do I go, what do I do, you know. They're walking in smoke.
>
> K: I mean, a disorganised …
>
> P: That was …
>
> K: … evacuation …
>
> C: Oh, it was shocking.
>
> K: … is dangerous.
>
> P: That … and so it was actually putting people at greater risk by evacuating them. And … and we felt that, you know, we were really left in the cold with that one. We … we were seeking advice … and this is where if you had a BRAG person they would've clarified that very quickly and they would've said okay, you … you know, instead of us …(Ap46)

Security in the face of a fire would appear to be

> BRAG's greatest aspect…coming out of the BRAG programs now. Just giving people that level of comfort and awareness and, again, then if they say they're going to stay they stay, having taken all of the necessary precautions like getting out elderly people or evacuating early and doing all those things which the DVD and literature tells us to do. So I think that that's been another very positive aspect of the … of the programs. And, again, giving people surety. Because, I mean, your house is your greatest asset that you own, other than your family of course.' (Ap46)

The lack of fire information being available to the community is a major problem but that has improved over the last couple of years (see also Information dissemination). (Ap51)

Residents moving to new subdivisions where trees can't be pulled down and more are planted are creating fire risks for the future:

> You're … you're there for the environment, so … or for the trees. And to live in amongst the extreme risk, including myself, we've got a few acres … but it … it's … yeah so it's not rapid … it is developing quite fast, but not like the coast and not like the flat lands where they're, you know, everything's built … they're just concrete, you know. This is in amongst the trees. The risk is increasing every year though because what's happening with every subdivision they're allowing is actually … most of it is in the pastured areas. And people set up their houses. They're … they're not the little square blocks. You're looking at probably a

> half acre, acre, to five acres. The first things they do is they move to the hills for the trees, so they plant trees. So seven to 10 years' time you've got an extreme fire risk, from a high to extreme again, because it's full of trees. So it's actually the … the risk over the years, especially in the next 15 years, is going to actually increase dramatically up there. I've been through that with the council actually and they … some realise, some bury their heads. They don't … there's a bit of an understanding there, but not much.' People think it won't happen to me. (Cp24)

It was felt that unless the authorities aced the situation could only get worse, particularly with the changes already present with global warming:

> M: Yeah. And it's going to become increasingly important, because I believe the risk will increase. Especially with the climate change. With …frost will increase your leaf litter, inclined to drop more. Your vegetation's actually drying out … this year's not too bad, but last year with consecutively dry winters we were actually getting … middle of winter with my winter burns, I was actually getting fire spiralling up trees. And that's the middle of winter. Because the … the vegetation was actually dry. It hadn't got enough moisture. It's not so bad this year, but we need another reasonable winter to bring it back to nearly as normal. It's … so you've got an increasing risk with the weather change, you know. And it's … and it's just getting drier and (phone rings) and it's colder. (Cp26)

## Demographics, including socio economic, even membership of other volunteer groups if information is available

Virtually nothing was available in this category apart from the obvious that most facilitators were members of fire brigades. The vast majority of people referred to were male.

## Yallingup: Are they successful or not? What are the barriers/facilitators?

One barrier to success would be when there's conflict between neighbours, often over whether the neighbour has cleaned up their property or has trees too close to the dwelling or is using the firebreaks illegally. While it has nothing really to do with BRAG in the sense that it is a council and fire concern, it still does hinder the development of groups where neighbours are in conflict. (Ap38-40)

A further and more worrying barrier for these BRAG facilitators which kept arising during these interviews arose from a perceived lack of support from FESA, not so much from the regional office, where on officer in particular appears to have been very supportive, but from Perth. Such things as resources to help start up new groups were just not forthcoming. Packages that were once available have apparently run out and haven't been replaced though the DVD has been very useful. (Ap42-44) While success can be seen in that Annie, one of these facilitators was recommended for an award for her BRAG work by the shire and she received it, this work she doesn't perceive has been recognised by FESA which wants to 'can' BRAG as the following exchange indicates:

> They went to the effort to give me this award where I was a state volunteer fire fighter of the year for doing BRAG and they said, I mean I was nominated by the Shire, the Shire said this is successful and we're seeing positive outcomes from it. So this is not me patting myself on the back. Somebody must have thought well it's worthwhile. Okay, you're asking us what we're doing and that, but between then and now, don't you think someone in FESA might have said well Annie Palmer seems to be getting … you know, what are you using?
>
> What am I saying in the … when all those emails saying we're reviewing this because we are reviewing it, couldn't they have said would you give us some feedback on it?
>
> K: Well absolutely. I mean I would have thought that they'd need to do that to review it, they'd need …
>
> A: No, they've never, ever, ever asked me what I do and how I do it.
>
> M: Oh, no, no, they're a government department and say let's get an external independent audit from …you guys.
>
> A: Well that's a different thing. I can see that as quite a different thing. But you know, between there and then … and you know, when this woman said to me … BRAG's a failure and we're canning it … I mean, I … so then well are you telling me that BRAG's a failure? No. What … I mean why … you know, they just … if they had just … if they hadn't have given me the award I could have lived with it, you know, they just okay, we had this idea, we had this money, we've lost interest in it, you know, that happens all the time, oh God, I'm a teacher, you know, you're going to do this, this is our focus for the year and then in the end we don't do values education any more, that's gone out the thing, you know, whatever it is. But you know, why didn't they … why did I get to have lunch with the Premier, why did they waste so much money and time, this thing. (Ap44-45)

A further sign of conflict over BRAG's directions with FESA arose over developing a BRAG related website and over signage at BRAG properties:

> A: Well that, I thought it was really interesting in the meeting was that it came from Hartley's group when they asked for the signs on the houses that they belonged to the BRAG group and FESA said to me no, you can't do that, you cannot do it, you know, don't do it, strictly. And the guy from Bedfordale, they've just done it. Now that … I spoke to him afterwards, he just did it. He just did it.
>
> M: Yeah, exactly. That's what … I mean that was the answer, until they say no.
>
> A: Yeah, and he just said it. And you know, that's why I say, I mean at Eagle Bay we used to put a yellow dot on the kerb of the houses that we weren't going to die for, you know, if they didn't have a turn around, you just did that. We did that and everyone all knew that you couldn't turn around in those houses. I mean you just have to do it. But anyway, so the website's there and so I thought … I sent it to the various people who have been doing

> BRAG saying I'd really like some feedback on this, do you think this is, whatever. They have never ever …
>
> Tony Moran is the only person who acknowledged it. Tony Moran said I look at it Annie, it's great, you know, I'm happy with what you're doing. And I get a lot of emails from it. I get people from all over the world, all over, not a lot from all over the world but a lot from all over Australia, people saying I really like this one here, other brigades say can we just use this, can I just take this from it. And I start with a sentence, you know, something along the line that I'm a simple fire … so fire fighter, mum, teacher, granny and I don't want to go to fires on Christmas Day, if you want to be prepared for fire, you might find some resources here that will help you. And I don't … I don't say anything that's out of my mouth, you know, after that. (Ap47)

Earlier Annie had said:

> So I did it, I just made it myself, never made a website in my life before and put it on a … I hosted it myself and then I thought I need to do this properly, I'll ask them for some money. And they said no, you can't have one. You just can't have it. Why can't I have it? Because we won't support a website that's giving out information because then we're accountable for that information and people take the information and come back at us. Well how come all these other fire brigades have got websites? Oh because, well oh I don't know about that, well I don't know they do. Now, in the Karragullen fire when the FESA website crashed and you couldn't get on to it, everybody was using the Darlington … Glen Forest, Glen Forest website which was providing information to communities because the FESA one didn't. So I mean they're there. And they're all … they've got FESA all over them and the quote that they said to me is you can't have any acknowledgement of FESA on it. (Ap46)

If success can be gauged by the impact on the local fire brigade having to attend nuisance and other calls, particularly due to increased awareness on the part of the residents through their education on fire matters, then BRAG could be considered to be successful as the following exchange indicates:

> K: Can I ask you about, and look tell me if you've got to go or stop or we're running over time, but you mentioned earlier on that one of the reasons that you were interested in getting involved in BRAG was that you were going to so many silly incidents, stupid fires that shouldn't have started. Have they stopped and wondering what you've noticed since BRAG in terms of actual increased awareness or increased preparedness or fewer fires.
>
> M: Oh yeah. I think that is a fairly quick statistic to pull up in the Shire. They've had a bit of a look at it.
>
> A: The Shire seemed to think they have. M: So you've got to compare it relative to other Shires as well. But in the last two, three years, how long have we been running BRAG? Sort of three summers or something? The incidents have gone, just call outs in this Yallingup rural brigade area and again this is just me having a guess at the figures, but we were

> probably doing 20 call outs in here. Now we didn't actually have one in this brigade last year. Four the year before. From about 20. I mean this is the sort of number of call outs of silly incidents relative to what were actually main events. Now I noticed the same thing happened in my brigade without BRAG, prior to BRAG. I started … I got two fires in the one street in one year and I said hang on a minute, bit of a trend here. So I just drove around and I went and talked to a few people as I was driving around.
>
> Anyone that was home I said oh look, you know, listen, I'm around here and I'm snooping. Now, I don't write out infringement notices if you go to a fire and everyone's there, hang them, and the lynch mob. They're all … and I'm going no, no, talk all that down, stop, stop, leave it, because if you can talk to them, removing that threat from them and saying well listen, just quietly, there's bushes right up to your house. Now if the fire was coming it would have gone. Like if we hadn't have stopped it, if we hadn't had an excavator 500 metres away that we could put in there and just clear a whole lot of bush around there, your house would not be here now. So now what are we going to do about it? And you just work through them and do you know … and work with them on an education basis. So then I started going around everyone else because it was that … and it was a high risk area and with limited exits and this problem sort of stuff. And all of a sudden it went quiet, wow.'(Ap79-80)

For the second group of coordinators the feelings about FESA representing one of the barriers to BRAG's success were also raised, as was the reason for the local BRAG's success being largely due to Annie the facilitator's efforts:

> K: Any last thoughts that you have about BRAG, something pressing that we haven't covered that you think we should know?
>
> D: No, I just hope ... I'm pretty sure it's going to continue and it will get the support ... even if it doesn't really get the support of FESA, you know. FESA just want to sort of turn it into something else and ... you know I think that we've started something that will be able to ... be up to us to continue on, you know. But it's ... and that makes it a bit tough maybe for Annie if she doesn't get support but it just depends what their workload and what their manpower and where it is up in the head office, you know, it's just how they handle it I think. But as far as we're concerned I guess we can ... yeah we need to get a little bit of feed through from the top end down all the time.
>
> M:Even if everything ... all the support completely disappeared from FESA overnight, tomorrow they just showed no interest at all, it's to our own benefit as I think I mentioned earlier on this evening, it's to our own benefit to make our neighbours fire aware. So I think we would probably keep it ... we'd probably keep it going anyway and particularly with people like Annie who are very motivated and have a real sense of doing the right thing, the community thing. I think ... I'd like to think we'd keep going in some way, shape or form regardless of the support we were getting from FESA.

H: I certainly wouldn't be as prepared and aware as I am now if it hadn't been for Annie and Annie's interest.

D: Oh yeah

M: Absolutely. '

H: Basically knocking on doors just to see who might be interested.'(Bp30-31)

In a fairly open and frank exchange on how difficult it is to establish a BRAG and then what makes a BRAG function successfully occurred with the 3rd interviewees form the FESA regional office and later with a council officer the following was said:

They tried but the people that did it, didn't have the aware of it all so it withered on the vine and it died that one. And historically, this year we had a decent house fire on Molloy Island which is an island in the middle of the river and a lady, she's a ... there's a female chief in Margaret River, and it was her brigade so she tried to run one of these things. Did all the normal PR stuff, nobody comes to the meeting. A hundred and eighty houses there, you know? They just had this fire in the middle of summer and so you know she rang me up and said oh God, how do we do it? And I said (chuckles) ... so it's not that simple.

And I'm not sure that I'd ever know the answer but it's to do with the type of people. But after the Bridgetown fires a couple of years ago, there was a big fire nearly burnt the town down, a huge fire, and we ... regionally we thought the way to try and get these things to start is we've got to you know overhead package and all that sort of stuff. And went down there to a packed house of oh, like 150 people three months after the fire and basically the story about how to do it and all that.

Two years later you wouldn't find anyone that was prepared to do it. And so you know part of that means is that you can get some interest after a big fire but it doesn't mean you get continuation and in fact Annie's one has never had a big fire to drive it. It's always a threat of the big fire and it ... it has got to do with she's got good back-up from the brigade and the shire and we had some good people. The staffing comes and goes 'cause regionally we don't do much more than introduce it. If somebody comes along and says they want one or we try and promote one in November, the community safety staff are the ones who comes along and ... and ... and how we got Annie from memory I think we ran a walk-around down here years ago it was called and ... and the girls came down from Perth and there might have been a bloke too and ... and a lot of it came out of them. Now I don't know whether it's ... that's what made it work or whether it was just that Annie was that type of person that made it work, so there's a bit of that sort of thing. But since then we've had piss poor bloody support from Perth. Staff changes in the government at the moment is chronic and we're back to zero at the moment.' (Cp1-2) Again the success of Annie's BRAG was mentioned and this is despite the fact that her area has not had a major fire for many years.

From these interviews barriers which were mentioned in the previous interviews would appear to stem from a lack of support from FESA in Perth, partially due to the lack of people to support BRAG but also due to a change in attitude towards keeping them going. The argument presented was that for the amount of money and effort major, coordinated across states effort to produce a TV commercial would lead to more cleaned up gardens an BRAG achieved in the whole state. (Cp1-3) One reason given for a lack of success in establishing and maintaining BRAGs was that

> W: From my experience in dealing with ... Tony, that there's a lot of followers, no leaders in BRAG's.
>
> T: Yeah.
>
> W: So why ... and I've been involved in a couple of the AGM meetings or information night meetings and ... and been there and spoken to people. A lot of people want to start but no one wants to run it. So that's the issues. I ... I don't see issues with getting groups and streets in but who's going to coordinate it? The individual coordination they ... I ...
>
> T: Well, you see the ... then the whole thing's philosophise on the Annie's coordinating it, not the me or the you.
>
> W: Yeah, you know. No, we offer support as much as we can.
>
> T: Yeah, and like we've got four or five other officers that have had various goes at it and I mean at the moment like things to do with Margaret River and Busso, we've just got more that type of people plus that type of scenery. But we've had more success here but I don't think it's to do with me. I think it's just to do with the type of customer we get.
>
> W: And I think it's putting the fear on ... into them that we're out there every summer, issuing infringements. No ... no back down. If you ... and we're very hard. And that we're very hard on what we do and ... and so now they're fearing. They're saying well, how do we go and get ... join your BRAG groups? So we've pushed it along like that and I think that's ... I do believe ... '(Cp5-6)

The view expressed was that:

> G: So ... but see the ... the BRAG situation will only work in places like Yangarra, Yallingup, anywhere where's there's a small settlement. Once you get out into the farming area, it won't work in the farming area.
>
> T: Yeah, yeah.
>
> W: Yeah, no.
>
> G: There's no way it'll work in the farming area. It's got to be where you've got a cluster of houses like out at Yallingup and Injidup. There's clusters out there. It'll work in those areas but if you start going right out into the farming area you're ... you're wasting your time. W: But I don't think that's what BRAG's set-up for, is it?

T: No, no.

G: No, it's set-up for the ... the cluster houses.

W: And that's what I said.' (Cp20)

The ideas were expressed also about what would make people join BRAG stem from the educative side alongside the infringement side. It's a matter of finding the balance between the two and threat has been used to encourage people to join BRAG in the past. The problem of how best to develop working relations between the council FESA and BRAG and the 'Greenies' was also discussed were the stick approach was not working as they were not worried about their houses burning down as long as the environment was left alone and they were also not interested in joining BRAG. (Cp23-25)

## How are they achieved? What activities/resources required? What processes take place? (individual/household/community) what happens and why?

What appears to work for the two facilitators is a process of education of residents through non-threatening approaches which motivates the resident, rather than the 'big stick approach' now being adopted by the shire through the distribution of infringement notices:

A: We go back to the question of motivation, it's just, to me it's just kind of like, I don't know, just neighbourliness I suppose and one of the things I say to BRAG people is if they see someone piling up a pile of wood and they're going to burn and it looks like it's not the time now, this time of the year, fine, but it's not the time of the year to burn and they see it starting to build up, it's just say hey, when you're ready to burn that next winter, give us as yell and we'll give you a hand. Just giving them some strategies to how to approach the problem instead of … one of the BRAG groups that … and so they were all over various barking dogs and other things, the neighbours just weren't talking to each other. And then you get the other thing is when you've got friends next door to each other and you see your friend, that's your neighbour that you want to stay on the right side with, and they're burning on the wrong day, you're not going to dob them in, you just sit there hoping that the fire's not going to get away. Whereas now they, well Hartley seems to think … that Hartley said that you know, he's got a much …

M: He's gone over the yard and approached them on …

A: They all feel much more, I don't know what's the word, empowered is not a good word but something along those lines, they feel like they have a responsibility to …

M: It's good to be able to approach them I a non-threatening way, you know, without pips on your shoulder and … all that sort of thing as well. Most people's reaction to lights and sirens and cars and you know, ranger uniforms, blue ones, is police which sort of puts them on the defensive mode a little bit.' (Ap7-8).

The advice at meetings often takes on practical discussion: ‘

> M: It’s too confusing. I don’t want to get into planning and design rules at that stage, you know, because the horse has already bolted, so to speak. So what you got to say is when you’re doing walks, these are the design features to look out for or to put special maintenance factors on. If you’ve got a straight hip roof it’s easy ‘cause there’s no valleys. If you’ve got valleys in your roof where the roofline changes corner, the valleys collect leaves. So look in there. And if you look in there you’ll see leaves so then you’ll pull it out. I mean that’s got to become part of the sort of thing … underneath your decks, you know, just be conscious that’s where cigarette butts can fall through. So if you’ve got a deck, great, let me come over have a drink on it. But …
>
> K: Yeah, but put gravel underneath or keep it clean.
>
> M: Vaguely conscious of the depth of the leaf litter underneath there, you know.’ (Ap10-11) See (Ap10-15) for further examples of suggestions provided to the residents on what precautions should be taken by them. The idea is to keep them engaged …. The processes used are aimed at educating the residents on what the likely outcomes of a fire are and what are the benefits of putting in initial effort:
>
> M: You have to really be able to see the benefits from a management point of view of how it all works and once you’ve got the concept, you’ve just got to say well hell, this is going to save me, you know, one hour spent here is going to save me 10 hours on the ground. So if I can stop all these idiot things happening I can give it 10 hours and save myself 100. That’s the multiplier effect that you get. A: And the DVD reinforces the idea that a lot … everyone thinks the fire’s coming, there’s going to be a fire truck parked out front of their house waiting for the fire. Of course it’s not, it’s going to be there. And then how will I know the fire truck will come to me? Well it mightn’t be because it actually might be better for your house for the fire to stop there. And then the next thing they go is they go okay then, I’ve got this period of time where I’ve got to be prepared for the fire to come and hopefully the fire trucks will come with it. (Ap54)

There have been mixed reactions from residents who have attended training courses with putting energy in that rubbed off on others who could see the potential and ‘went away and give it a go’…

> A: And not everyone did. They’re so … a lot of people didn’t, they went to that thing and went away and didn’t do very much. And I don’t, I mean …
>
> M: I think they more or less picked that out from the meeting. Cause, you know …basically we got up and gave the first two presentations and the rest sort of faded off pretty quickly. And they kind of picked that from the meeting but that was about … because part of the

> facilitator's training course was to see well who's going to get up, who's got the skills on their feet to be able to talk it through. (Ap53)

The way these facilitators operate does not go by the rule book for BRAGs as they use the FESA materials which they think are useful and conduct their approach according to local needs and their own expertise, The DVD as was constantly mentioned has a great impact and much of the discussion will centre around that:

> A: … the actual training package, I had my doubts about, of how to do it. But the idea of it and how … and I did try, my first few groups, I tried to do what they said, follow it by the book. But …
>
> M: Cause I lost the book shortly after the first course, but …But the concept was there.
>
> A: Yeah, the concept was fine.
>
> M: So I've never actually followed any sheet. Just gone with the basic agenda of what you're trying to achieve, and then have it so that it's a quick talk.
>
> M: Bit of a DVD, and then some group discussion about practical things that happen … And so that … use that as a sort of starting point then for once you've got your basic messages across to them, have a bit of a discussion and then discuss what you can do down the track. So what … these are the problems, these are some of the problems and talk about solutions along the way but then if the group's keen, you organise another group too and try and keep it to two hours…Because you don't want to go too long, everyone's … you lose engagement or they're running off on a thousand different ideas and yeah, just short, sharp and focused.
>
> A: And I just found that the couple of the videos, the DVDs, are just so powerful, you don't really need to say very much before, you know, you just say oh, but you've got to say enough so that they're not terrified. You do get people that you know, you know, you hear people sob, you hear people … people say the hair's standing up on the back of my neck and you don't want them to feel … (Ap17-18)

Later in the discussion it's mentioned that one facilitator isn't so confident and for him the structure provided in the training manual is useful and he works his way through it – seeking advice from Annie as to what to do next. For the two facilitators they tailor the meetings to meet the needs of the particular people as different people learn differently. For example some people won't just be shown the DVD or simply given it, as is it's the discussion which is important whereas for others she 'just gives them the DVD – 'it's really that dynamic.' I mean people aren't stupid.' 'Other people will learn from reading.' Each facilitator will structure the meetings according to their background and experience in standing up before an audience. (Ap20-24) And further on:

> M: Comes down to … picking people all the way through and picking them on your feet as to how to engage them too, you know, so that everyone feels like they've contributed

> something to the meeting and how to get a bit more out of it. Helps everyone get a lot more out of it actually that way.
>
> A: And the other thing is letting the meeting not be a meeting. It's a bit like when the interview's not an interview, you know, sometimes it's just got to turn into a wine and cheese night. And that's it. And you can, you know, sometimes I stay, sometimes I stay and maybe a little conversation I have on the side is worthwhile so my resources are limited as well. So sometimes I don't, I just leave them to party on. (Ap34)

What is obvious from these interviews is that the 'sea change' residents who have moved in to the area from urban areas have often little knowledge of what services – fire and ambulance for example – are on offer and that these are served by volunteers and may be based some distance away. Creating awareness of what's possible and what precautions they need to take is a major task for the BRAG groups. (Ap34-37)

Motivation to join or even form a local BRAG can come from more than just a bushfire, particularly as there have been no major fires for some years. There have been spin offs in that the BRAG system was used for other than bushfires – when a child was lost – and the following resulted:

> M: We had the spin-off.
>
> A: … the police ring me and say Annie, can you get people in this area which happened to be this area where I live. So I rang a BRAG group and they all went into action. So then somebody else who was involved in that came and said well this is fantastic, we want this. So their introduction to it was a community group going to solve a problem and was nothing to do with fire. So then I said to them well this is what it's about. And they were quite happy to go on with it and it did become a BRAG group [unclear –diction]. And a lot of them are motivated by the social side of it. I've had a lot of people that … Avril rang me up and she said you know, my friend so and so has got this BRAG group going and we're, I don't know any of my neighbours and we haven't any sense of community, we need something like that. And she wasn't motivated by fire at all. (Ap38)

Street walks have been used as a way of informing in a non-threatening way what the risks are for the various properties, how they can prepare the land and houses in case of a fire and also to advise how the property conforms to regulations. Neighbours are aware as well as to what their neighbour's needs are. Not all residents are happy with this' intrusion' but the BRAG facilitators try to make it non-threatening. It's a good way of educating people on what the rules are with regard to 'burns' and distance of trees etc. from the dwelling as well. (Ap55-58) The aim is for the residents to become self-motivating without the need for these facilitators to be around:

> A: So you know, to me, BRAG is self-motivating, it doesn't really need a lot of resources once the initial thing. And I don't even think they said the issue of … you know, will it exist without Mark and I? I don't really think it would be a problem.' (Ap59)

The manner in which these BRAGs operate is as follows:

K: And sometimes the challenge is to reach the people who don't go to any meetings, who don't have kids at school or, but I suppose that's potentially where a street coordinator come in because they'd know their little local area. And I wondered if you could talk to us a bit about how the groups are similar and different. I'm getting the sense that …

A: They're very different.

K: … that the … do the street coordinators convene … these are basic questions, but do they convene the meeting? I know you've mentioned flexibility that you'll hold a meeting where new people from … different groups come?

A: Sometimes I do. Yeah, sometimes they'll say, because you know, I try to leave one meeting with the next one at least, even if it's going to be like six months away, so you know, we're having this meeting because there's a fire and everyone's very interested and everything. And we finish the meeting and I'll say okay well, before we finish, what's the next step? And let's say okay, September, October school holidays we'll do our preparation for the next fire season and we'll repeat the meeting for them. And then so then it'll take … sometimes the coordinator will ring me back and say okay, well you know we haven't … we said we're having this meeting in October, would this date suit you? What do we want to do?

Or they may even have an idea this is what we want to do. Or I might just say, ring them and say hang on, I haven't heard from you guys, what's happening? Email, always email. And you know, I do just general emails, especially if anything topical comes up, I'll send an email saying time to think about what you're going to do the next time.

M: And that's just a little bit of follow up, keeping touch.

A: Yeah, and I send those emails to quite a few people that aren't in BRAG groups, anyone that's contacted me about BRAG and if I get the email off them, I'll … I just keep on sending it to them because you know, I just kind of keep the interest and that, and they might, even if they've rung me up and said, sometimes people have rung me up and said I've heard about this BRAG, I'd like to have a meeting. Okay, well how about would you like to come here, or I'll come to your place, see you 10 o'clock next Tuesday. Nine o'clock they ring and I've got to go to Perth, I'll get back to you, and then they don't.

But I don't harass people on the phone, but if I've got their email I feel you don't even have to open and email if you see it's from me. It's not too intrusive. But yeah, so it's just like a … I guess it's like being a salesman or something, or a real estate agent, you know, just keeping the pot boiling, keep the interest without intruding and without annoying them and hopefully the moment will come for them, or you know, well they had …

M: Well then you've got something that does specifically relate to them and you can pick up the phone and talk to them directly.

M: [unclear], and they'll go oh yes, well I have been reading all your emails and yes, it is time and yeah, so here we go. And then you … so it's not cold, it's at least, you know, and then out of guilt or conscience or whatever, they jump into it.

A: There's a couple of people though that don't want to belong to BRAG groups, they're just for whatever they like and they just don't want to, but they want the information. A: So they just stay on the mailing list for information …

A: I haven't done the, you know, get the coordinators together which the Bedfordale people have done. And kind of at the meetings thought oh, why didn't I think about that, I should have done that. They tried, a group of them tried to do a … they decided that they wanted to do something to thank the fire brigade. They decided that they thought it would be good to have, because they liked having their little communities so they suggested that we got … they wanted me to put them together so that they could organise something and it kind of fell flat and it didn't and even the brigade wasn't really interested in it, you know, they came up and they were saying oh picnic up at the lake on the first Sunday of October and all the volunteers could go and the community would be thanking the …

M: And the brigade are thinking oh, another fire brigade event, yeah.

K: Another obligation.

A: Yeah, so it kind of fell flat.' (Ap61-62)

One thing that has worked has been having BRAG T shirts which help advertise BRAG at public events. (Ap63-64) Also when visiting it's useful to wear the yellow fire uniform as you're more likely not to be seen as an official from the shire for instance. (Ap72)

How this BRAG started was that:

K: Can I backtrack and ask about starting new groups. And I remember when we were at the meeting a couple of weeks ago someone had a diagram up and they were showing that they get contacted by FESA who contacts the District Manager and it goes down the line that a new groups needs to start. It sounds as though it's quite different here.

M: No, that's not how it worked at all.

A: No.

K: That was the Yallingup one, yeah, but another group had a different sort of thing off the side, but how a new group is initiated.

A: How it starts. I could have anything, I could have, there's someone from the Shire contact me and say we've had a phone call from Mrs Bloggo who lives in this street and they want to know more about fire. Would you go and talk to them? And I'll go and talk to them and say, tell them about BRAG and if they're interested, that goes on from that. It could come … mostly it just comes from individuals.

M: Yeah, the FESA initially contacted us or the fire brigades in general and we …

A: Are you talking about how BRAG started, or individual groups started?

M: That's how we started as facilitators, but from that point FESA don't talk to us, or haven't, as you see, haven't talked to us much. It all comes from the Shire and … and the fire brigade …

A: Yeah, no well as I said, a number, just a couple have started from somebody ringing the Shire or someone being fined. But a lot of those haven't actually turned into BRAG groups. So you know, a person's been fined three times in a row and the third time … M: Of course they're jumping up and down 'cause it means …

A: They're jumping up and down and they'll say Annie would you go and talk to this person and I'll go and talk to them and give them information, give them the DVDs, tell them about BRAG but they … if they've been fined three times they don't really want to know about BRAG.

K: So that's not the Shire saying to the person you should contact Annie because if you get involved you might not get fined again? It's actually …

A: Well they sort of might …

K: … the Shire contacting you to say we've got this recalcitrant person, go and …

A: No, no, oh no. It's the first thing. They said to them, you know, what can … the people say well I don't know what to do. And they say well you know, this is … and they're very … when they would ask me they know that they're very, they're not expecting me to do it, they're just saying there's this person there that wants to know more, if you have the time, can you do it. (Ap71-72)

Everyone of the street coordinators has the FESA DVDs and any of the residents can take them home and these coordinators use them and other methods to create awareness:

H: I think the main thing was we went to the fire station and watched didn't we.

M: Yeah, our weekend at brigade also tried to put the fear of God into everybody.

H: The other thing, which occurred, was ... not this season but a previous season Douglas and Mitch came around to my place and all the people ... well most of the people in my group came to my place and we did an inspection of several homes, didn't we. They just pointed out fire risk. You know someone had firewood stacked up against his tank and all that sort of stuff. That's all been cleared off and people with trees in dangerous positions, they sort of pruned them or whatever, we're much more fire aware.

M: Absolutely.

H: It's been fantastic, I reckon.

M: And also I think ...

> H: Annie's been the key, I reckon she's the one ... the system "nagger", if you like.
>
> M: Yes, I think another thing that's had a massive impact are the fires over east.
>
> M: I think watching ... I was glued to the television, the fires of how long ago north of Sydney, all up ... half the east coast was on fire, how long ago was that, four years, five years? I found that just terrifying and I think a lot of ... and the more recent ones, I think a lot of people have watched it on the news or whatever and they realise, gosh, you know I'm living in the country, in the bush. I think that's probably impacted, I think on people.' All of these methods are aimed at showing the residents what can be prevented. (Bp4)

Fire then they went on to state is a big motivator, citing a fire at 'Fisherman's Hut and

> Oh and before that, gee back in about 1994, 1995, there was a fire down Abbey Farm Road started in a vineyard down Abbey Farm Road. That probably motivated the fire authorities plus the shire, plus the police plus everybody else to get coordinated with communication and all the rest of it.' (Bp5)

A plus for these people was at last there is an officer working for FESA but contracted by the shire:

> He's a top bloke, anything you need now, we ring him up and say, Andy this doesn't work, this didn't work, something's going wrong here, that firebreak's stuffed or whatever. He gets straight onto it. Now that's ...' Things for these people working both in BRAG and as firefighters is getting easier – whereas before they had to 'beg and grovel' to get things despite the fact that they were volunteers. 'M: Absolutely, guys like Andy Thompson made a massive, massive difference. And it is getting better but it could always be better. (Bp6-7)

The cooperation between the brigade and BRAG was again mentioned as a plus and all three of these interviewees are members of the brigade. They also have the support of the local brigade captain. All this has meant that when a meeting is held – or at least at the beginning – most of the street coordinator's group would attend – 30 or 40. People are much more aware now and comfortable with the idea of a fire breaking out. This attendance and awareness is also no doubt partly due to the $250 spot fines imposed by council rangers for breaking the rules such as not mowing the grass and building codes. One thought expressed was that:

> J: So would you say that that stick from the shire's been an added motivation for some people to get involved with BRAG or ..?
>
> D: I think so, probably.
>
> H: Probably the other way round perhaps ... the shires ... because of the activities of volunteers, people like yourself.
>
> M: I think it's a good point quite frankly. I don't reckon the shire's acted off their own bat at all, I reckon they've been sort of ... struth look at these guys. Shamed into it.
>
> M: Shamed into it, yeah absolutely. And you can quote me on that one ' (Bp8-10)

How new members are recruited was also covered:

> K: Sure, yeah. When people are sort of introduced to BRAG does that tend to be a one-on-one introduction? If there's a new person in the area, will you go and knock on their door or ... how does that happen?
>
> D: Yeah pretty much, I think it's up to myself or whoever is ... you know we say ...
>
> H: I've been around and knocked on doors and told people ... now we've got all their emails and that sort of stuff there's less of that now. More electronic communication I suppose.
>
> M: I've bumped into people just ... not so much knocking on doors but maybe I don't know, meeting them socially or bumping into them in town or whatever or a friend of a friend who's just moved into the area. And I quite often will say, you know have you heard about this ... conversation, make it around, are you in the fire brigade? Oh yeah and have you heard about this BRAG thing sort of thing, stuff like that.
>
> D: Yeah it's always good as an excuse to go and introduce yourself and you know more houses being built and more people around but ... there's a sense of community now especially up around, I say up around Shallow's Ledge and up around Sheoak and up around there. And so people are always going to be you know forced into the neighbourly thing by the sort of ... like a neighbourhood watch almost you know, it's the same thing as that I reckon. (Bp10-11)

The following lengthy exchange is a useful example of how BRAG can influence residents in what decisions they should take in the case of a fire and also what resources are available:

> J: We've seen a number of the resources, which I guess are things you distribute through BRAG such as the DVD that you mentioned and also the sort of Stay or Go booklets.
>
> D: Yes.
>
> J: Is Stay or Go a big issue down here or do most people tend to want to stay and defend?
>
> M: I think ... oh sorry ... I think Stay and Go is a big issue, I think it depends too on perhaps some people may ... you know the age of the people has a big bearing, if you know you're ... well it's hard to say what age, but you know if you're sort of elderly you may not be too ...
>
> D: Or with kids, or young kids.
>
> M: Or yeah, and the opposite, if you have very young kids, babies or whatever you might be influenced to leave but if you're fit and maybe your kids aren't very little and you know you may be more of the idea that you're able to handle ... more capable to be able to stay and do something about it. Yeah I think it is a bit of an issue ... J: So for example in your area Hartley, as part of your communication line, have people said whether they're planning to stay or given an indication?
>
> H: Have a fairly good idea of who's going and who's staying.

D: I think maybe Theresa across the road might.

H: She’s going.

D: She’s going. Yeah said I'm not staying, I'm buggering off, yeah, which is fine 'cause you know ... but there’ll be still making their house as safe as they can, but it’s just not.

M: I think people, if they’re fit enough and capable enough will stay because there is a ... you have a very high chance of saving your house, very high in a bush fire, in our area. You know maybe if you’re on the side of a mountain in New South Wales or Victoria it might be a different story, but yeah.

D: If you’ve got a hose, got a good hose like ...

M: If you’re set up you have a very ... around our area if you’re set up with all the right gear, you have a very high chance of saving your house I think.

J: So that’s the sort of advice you’d give to people when you’re talking to them? It’s their choice, isn’t it

M: Yeah, very … I’d be very reticent to say, oh no you should stay. Because I’d ... because if they stayed and you know someone died in the fire or ... might also be very reticent to go, we make it very clear I think when we tell people that ...

D: Well the booklet makes it very clear.

M: And the booklet makes it easy. You decide, you know it’s very much a personal thing, you decide. I wouldn’t dream of suggesting people do one or the other actually.

K: Do people ever ... within the little BRAG groups, do they plan amongst themselves? For example the ... you know if you’re not home I’ll take your dog or ...

D: Well that’s the idea of it, I mean there’s the neighbourly thing that you know we ... most people’s properties ... we’ve been in you know to several people’s property and we know where the pump is and know how to start it if they’re not there and you know where the hose is and we can figure it out. So that ... not everybody’s comfortable with that but most people think that if they value their property would be happy for their neighbour to come in and say, yeah okay, where’s your pump? Where’s your hose and ..?

M: We have an arrangement like that, Doug and I are close and absolutely if it was ... if Doug wasn’t there I’d be over there at his place and I'm sure visa verse, you know. And we also try and make one of the things is that anyone who may leave or ... everyone ... not just people may leave, but they make us, the brigade, aware of where their things are and so forth. Where they keep their fuel or whatever have you. That’s really handy for us at the brigade, we go fighting bush near a house and for some reason the pumps run out of fuel, we may know where they keep their fuel. So we can go and get the pump going again, or whatever, you know. (Bp16-17)

Again, during the discussion on how the local BRAG operates and what resources are needed the discussion centred on the key role Annie plays in its success:

J: So in terms of resources and what sort of is required to both maintain what you're already doing and to develop it ... other ways you'd like to develop it so that ... how many resources would you really need to do that?

D: It's hard to say ... what do we need?

M: What do we need to keep it going?

J: Yeah, I mean is it self-sustainable, do you see it as self-sustainable as it is?

D: I think it's self-sustainable, if you know ... we always have someone like Annie around. And someone who's prepared to be the person ... you know who's doing the first contact with FESA who can just say, or FESA come to them and then say, yeah we've got new stuff on, there's now a new policy, there's new regulations or whatever, new ideas. Then that can get distributed out, so as far as it's in place, in a small community like ours, I think it's ... it will stay unless someone drops out or leaves or whatever. And as far as ... I mean just around BRAG as far as what we need, I think it is very much up to the individual group. But it does need good communication especially between, and it needs to be ... it needs to be you know made aware that it's being supported by FESA, by the authorities, that this is ... we're right behind you and not for Annie to have to go and say, I'm not getting any feedback guys, what's happening

M: Which is what's happened in the past.

D: The thing that's happened in the past ...

M: Definitely the locals ... people like Annie etc are the ones who keep it going and I think that if it was left entirely for say, head office of FESA to keep it going, wouldn't happen.

D: Yeah, so you'll get all this tomorrow when you see ... you've seen Annie or you're going to see Annie?

K: We're seeing Annie tomorrow, yeah.

D: So yeah I think it's in place and it's ... so I mean because we're ... well you know I work from home but my work is just concentrating on what I do. And so I don't necessarily have that luxury of a lot of time to go off and you know be able to ... I mean go to fires for sure, but do any more than sort of coordination of just keeping in contact with my local neighbours up and down the street and we can do that. I mean that's fine because Annie just emails me and ... or gives me things and I can just distribute it.

So it's not a huge workload, I mean time wise, but that's the one thing that maybe folk who've got more time perhaps, who love to get involved in that sort of thing and there are and they like to use their expertise of what they're good. At management coordination, you know even engineering, even whatever, they now how things work, or if they've been in that

> sort of job during their working life perhaps, you know that's always good to have those sort of people involved. We've got plenty of them in our area, we've got quite a few. So yeah I think now it's in place, it's ... it works okay.
>
> M: I think it's pretty ... yeah I think it's pretty much self-generating. D: I mean all we can do is ...
>
> M: Self-perpetuating rather, so once ... so now it's got going I think it keeps going, again largely comes down to the people on the ground and people involved, not so much ...
>
> D: We can let everyone know when there's a meeting if there's going to be a meeting or new DVD that comes out or ... that doesn't take much. That takes ... shoot off a few emails like we did that time, we got a lot of response, get a lot of people down the fires station, which is a great place to do it. Because you know you've got the machinery down there and you've got a room and the fridge with beer and all the rest of it and coffee and whatever. So ... and well set up with the DVD….' (Bp19-21)

The beauty of BRAG is that they all know their neighbours and can make suggestions to each other and also help each other when needed and shame each other into taking action on their own properties. A spin off is that this all supplies a sense of security as it acts as a form of neighbourhood watch and people worry less if they're absent from their properties for a while, (Bp27-29)

Will BRAG continue to function? The answer was:

> D: … I just hope ... I'm pretty sure it's going to continue and it will get the support ... even if it doesn't really get the support of FESA, you know. FESA just want to sort of turn it into something else and ... you know I think that we've started something that will be able to ... be up to us to continue on, you know. But it's ... and that makes it a bit tough maybe for Annie if she doesn't get support but it just depends what their workload and what their manpower and where it is up in the head office, you know, it's just how they handle it I think.
>
> But as far as we're concerned I guess we can ... yeah we need to get a little bit of feed through from the top end down all the time. M: Even if everything ... all the support completely disappeared from FESA overnight, tomorrow they just showed no interest at all, it's to our own benefit as I think I mentioned earlier on this evening, it's to our own benefit to make our neighbours fire aware. So I think we would probably keep it ... we'd probably keep it going anyway and particularly with people like Annie who are very motivated and have a real sense of doing the right thing, the community thing. I think ... I'd like to think we'd keep going in some way, shape or form regardless of the support we were getting from FESA. H: I certainly wouldn't be as prepared and aware as I am now if it hadn't been for Annie and Annie's interest. (Bp30)

There's an ever increasing need for BRAG was the belief:

M: And then there's going to be an ever increasing need for that because there's more and more people coming down here.

H: I mean I don't know all the politics of everything like that but I can't imagine a big organisation in Perth being terribly interested in 40 or 50 new homes in Notable Downs or ...

M: There isn't an organisation ...

H: Which is ... I mean that's just a huge accident waiting to happen there isn't it? So whether there's ...

T: But I mean you know you don't ... nothing surprises you at the moment. So ... and I suppose as far as ... see, we don't actually say right, we want to ... like for this summer when we were talking about that ... running that thing in October, there's a few target people. There's a lady in Nannup that I will bring along and I'll get somebody out of Margaret River, whether it's the high management officer and the lady chief or you know, we'll hunt around. The principle how we would as a staff try and chase it up is ... is that.

We'd say let's have a seminar or ... or ... or a just a thing like this. We might get six interested people, get the girls down from Perth and explain it and then you know number one person says well, I'll have a go in my street. So we probably don't go then. We'd probably get the girls to sort of give them another hand from community safety and expect it to self-propel with the help of the FMO which is the equivalent of Andy. And after that what we see our position is ... is at the end of the season you know how to engage. And I used to go and have a coffee with Andy and ... with Andy and say you know, how'd it go?

And we'd talk about new ideas and stuff to sort of tell Perth and to get. So that's how I saw our role and that's how we you know hope it would ever be because otherwise we just don't have the time to do it. That's really what it amounts to. And I suppose the other thing is ... and I always say you know well, I've been in it so long and you do all sorts of things, like we used to collect money off the shires. So we've got 15 shires and we'd collect a little bit of money off each of them and we'd match it and then we'd go to the local radio station and say, give us twice as much air time as this is worth. And they'd do that and you'd have a whole lot of little ads and then to measure these things is effort verse you know cost.

And I mean these ... doesn't really cost much to run these but the effort is significant man-hour and you know other than wasting our bloody time in the broad spectrum of things, it's always been the question. And ... and I'm pretty sure that it has to be low involvement from us and not so much ... I mean the community safety only ever has you know three or four people to do ... it's probably only relevant from you know say Wanneroo to Walpole because the rest of the state is probably out of their grasp. But ... but whether you know ... and measuring these things, and I think one of the key things you guys can help Perth with is ... is if you try something with X amount of staff hours which is you know everybody from ... from Tim's mob, to my mob, to the girls in Perth, to the volunteer hours, then measure that.

> The end result is either yeah, we do a bit and we get some continuing input on the ground 'cause our thing is if they don't do it every year, it's a waste of bloody time so ... and we ought to forget it and go and try some other thing or you know you put in 100 hours and volunteers put in 200 hours. It's worth the effort. There needs to be some sort of formal measurement thing. (Cp2-3)

Resources in the form of personnel on the ground were lacking according to the earlier interviewees and this was confirmed in the 3rd people, who noted how hard it was to train up and then keep such people: '... if somebody said, you've got to get three Andy's a year for 10 years, that would take a lot of time you know 'cause it takes a lot to time to get them up and I think ... yeah. K: And I ... I imagine if they keep ... if you keep trying and they keep not ... not staying up ... T: Well, that ... well, that's what happens here.

K: ... you know you become demotivated.

The council officer expressed the following view on BRAG and how they work together – the council with BRAG:

> W: (I'm the) co-ordinator and ranger of Fire Services for the Shire of Busselton. The job is running the range as well as overseeing the fire service unit. As the HMA for outside gazetted district it's a delegated authority down to me. So under that we have a joint position as a FMO, Andy Thompson, so it's joint-chaired and he works pretty much under my day-to-day direction or advice and whatever in through there. So my contact with BRAG's been fairly limited. Prior to Andy we had Percy and there ... there's a little bit limited as well, didn't have a lot but they've had a lot more contact than what I've had, certainly well aware of it and certainly encouraging to try to expand it.
>
> We ran a fire expo last year down at Dunsborough and based it around the BRAG there so we had a BRAG stand there. Annie was up at Perth getting an award so we actually helped run it with a couple of the other members there so certainly trying to get it promoted. Like I said we've offered admin support when they get them up and running but we're not going to throw good resources at ... at a bad situation at the moment where it's you know stagnant at the moment.
>
> Been to a couple of the meetings for introduction for residents trying to come in and meet them. Certainly got some good ... not some good ideas, got some ideas of my own which I'd like to help in the long-term when we get here. It's certainly trying to promote it somehow and we certainly would be giving advertising in the paper for her which we'd pay for in our community column to try and get things up and going.
>
> But like I said, we've got to have a good program and I'm hoping out of this there'll be something which we can grab hold of and run with for a while to get some good results out of 'cause you don't want to be throwing resources and money at something where one person leaves and the whole BRAG collapses. And that's the way we're at the moment in ... in here, you know?

> Like I said before, from my ob ... observation there's a lot of people that are willing to jump onboard as a community group but no one's willing to lead them and ... and I think a lot of that's come from people who'd say it's a heavy handed approach. We've done it in our firebreak inspections but it's needed. It was a ...a pretty bad condition so I think that's filtering through to the community that are very scared of the rangers and that ... that we're going to come in and fine them, so working together. And I know we've been handing out and/or giving advice out for that. Some of the stuff I'd like to see long-term which is only small things but once you get BRAG groups up and running in streets, I'd like to be able to put signs up in the street and say BRAG group, contact this number and come back to the shire so we tell you what street you're in, give the zone and hand it out there.

He also expressed the view that BRAG members did not have to 'dob in' their neighbours if they were breaking any of the rules 'because we're going to find them anyway.' (Cp7-8)

The importance of the DVD was again stressed as being an excellent learning tool, but this was followed up by a dialogues about the pro and cons of BRAG and what was working:

> T: And I suppose what ... what Tim's talking about is then the problem is that these BRAG's hit such a small area, there's only a matter of blocks up there. You get 50 or 80 done and you put in X amount of effort, you've got to say, is it worth all the friggin' around? And you bet, you know?
>
> W: Long-term it will be, you know?
>
> T:Yeah, but I mean maybe ... maybe. That's what I say. I mean without a measuring thing you sort of struggle. G: Well, we ... well we ...I'd can probably measure a little bit, Tony, because the amount of repeat offenders this year was very minimum. T: I know but that's because you pinged them not because Annie suggested to them that ...
>
> W: I know, but how did they maintain it? It's through the BRAG group.
>
> T: Oh yeah. Now that's ...
>
> W: So that's very encouraging.
>
> T:But maybe BRAG needs to be modified so that it's just an advice thing about how to do it because when he goes out and books them all, the next thing they're actually ringing Annie or if the message was going, if you want to know how to do it, you know catch up with Annie. Well, the original principle of Annie was that you'd go out and by the time the rangers came to inspect, there was nothing to do. But maybe it should be looked at the other way as part of the deal that perhaps the community people ...
>
> W: Yeah
>
> T: ... they don't actually have to visit properties and inspect, that are experts at advising how to clean up, you know? You can save this tree and you can't do that 'cause ...
>
> W: But we do do that. We offer a service currently.

> T:Yeah, but what I'm talking about is turning these people into volunteer advice on how to do it instead of you know ...
>
> W: Andy already arranges to go out.
>
> T... so the rangers go around and threaten to book them and then eventually book them.
>
> W:We go out prior to the seasons and give advice.
>
> T: Yeah, but we actually have volunteers out there that have been trained on ... this is what you need to do to your garden and so that the customer comes to them … instead of what we're currently doing. I don't know. I mean it's just thinking about you know is thing got a lifetime or should it be modified to have a lifetime? And I mean you know when you talk to the mobs up there I will hear some stories not similar that if you've got a good ranger there's some action in cleaning the joint up. And if you haven't got a good ranger, there's plenty of work for BRAG. (Cp11-12)

The biggest problem is getting people as was mentioned earlier to run the groups and the council does encourage residents to join:

> W: Or is there an opportunity here, Geoff, to encourage their own BRAG group while you're there?
>
> G: Yeah. Well, this is it, yeah.
>
> W: If we can get the right paraphernalia out and say well here, think about this with your neighbours, you know?
>
> G: Yeah, it's ... it's ...
>
> W: It's all about being pro-active, isn't it.
>
> G: Well, that's it, you know. I've taken Annie a couple of times with me and you know it ... it does her good too. (Cp16-17)

## How is information disseminated to fellow residents?

The suggestion was made that more use should be made of the ABC and that FESA could assist more by producing a DVD similar to one produced in Tasmania.

One of the matters raised, which have been mentioned earlier, is how residents gain knowledge and this has concerned these two facilitators for some time and is one of the reasons for their joining and facilitating BRAGs:

> A: And the level of lack of knowledge was amazing, like you know, you get the fire notices with your rates and you say to people, you can't burn, well how do I know you don't burn, you know. You make these silly rules, how are we supposed to know? You get the fire notice with your rates. 'Now no one ever contemplated that there are people who do not pay their rates, their rates go to their accountant and the accountant pays their rates or in one …

M: Yeah, or they're paid by the landlord and not the tenant.

K: That's what I was thinking, the tenants as well, yeah.

A: Yeah. Or one guy, the house is one of our neighbours, the house is owned by a family trust and everybody in the family just uses it. They're the sort of people that would, you know, paying rates is something that wouldn't cross your mind is the reality. So just battling with the Shire to say well these need to … and the rate notices are pretty well unreadable. I have a pretty high literacy level and I teach reading and I find them very difficult to read. They use five fonts, nine colours, they underline everything, underline capitals, it's not logical. You can say to people go to the website to get the fire notice and it's … the website's badly designed and it changes from year to year.

M: It brings out my favourite point that good English is hard to write, but it's easy to read, so good English has got to the be the outcome.

A: You can pay people to write good English.

M : There is a way of doing it.

A: Yeah, and there are people who can write for different reading levels and for different … and you know that they don't see that's important. So getting that knowledge out to people, and that's one of my biggest tools is I get from the Shire a bundle of these and when I say to people, have you seen the notice, just give it to them, I just give it, you know, I just literally hand it to them. I see people moving in, there's a new house being built on the corner, and I'll just stop, introduce myself, I'm a neighbour, here's my phone number, if you're looking for a … one of the troubles down here is trying to find a tradesman, and so people are always highly motivated to have a connection where they can find people. (Ap5-6)

Much of the 'on the ground' communication is left to the local BRAG facilitators in particular:

K: And I was thinking that if messages like the you know 20m clearance are out there but are not explained and people just sort of get an ... an initial impression that that means I can't have anything growing within 20m you know like I can't have a veggie garden or I can't ... then you'll ...

T: Yeah. Well, that's ... and ... and that's explained to the BRAG people originally when they came down and basically in effect had that little seminar which is really only just half a day thing about how to do it. And they walked through the bush and say well, this is alright, that's not, and had a look at a few houses. They drove around various houses and said well ... so that's part of what our role is now.

W: Yeah, I agree.

T: That's down to Annie's level. Then when Annie finds some street helpers, she has to pass that knowledge on to the next level down and so that's how that is supposedly. Because in

> the 20m you can have a tree you know, a great big hairy jarrah tree, so long as it doesn't overhang the building ... (Cp26)

## how representative are the participants? is there a difference between homeowners and renters, for example?

There was very little information on this topic but it was mentioned that as important notices were sent out by the shire with rate notices and through the free press many absentee/holiday/weekend house owners and tenants didn't receive these notices for various reasons. Consequently they could be fined for infringing regulations they knew nothing about. (Ap5-6)

## What settings? What are the key events associated with each activity/outcome?

Little on this topic as it was covered elsewhere.

## What works for whom? In what contexts and settings has the program worked/not worked? Why? How?

According to the second interviews, properties in each street coordinator's group are kept to a manageable size from around a dozen down. This enables them to have 'the time to get people involved'…

> H: We've got a really good communication set up now, people will sort of ring me. We've had a couple of instances this year of mainly kids coming down from the city, two instances with a rental property near one of the people who are in my group who lit bonfires basically out of season, and we were able to sort of get that nipped in the bud straight, so attended to those.
>
> M: I think you rang me once.
>
> H: People have called you know to say look, there's a fire, there's smoke around, do you know where it's coming from and rang Douglas or whoever, Annie and usually it's somewhere 300 miles away.
>
> M: Yes, they're doing a burn off in Esperance.
>
> H: So there's an awareness now, which probably wasn't there before.
>
> M: Yeah. Very much so.
>
> J: And that's really been quite a rapid change, just a couple of years?
>
> M: Oh yeah, a lot of people have gone from being completely ignorant of the danger and no idea at all and doing things that ... to someone who's found out, I didn't know it all, well none of us knew it all. Have always known it all but we've learned doing things ... we look at it and go gee, oh careful what I say ... struth, can't believe you're doing that. You know to

> being you know much more aware of it so you can bring people up to speed. Radical, radical turn about for some people I'd say over two years. (Bp3)

From the council perspective and for motivation to join a local BRAG, fear is what works to a large extent. However the BRAG's support would not always be present, particularly when FESA in Perth becomes involved:

> W: And I think it's putting the fear on ... into them that we're out there every summer, issuing infringements. No ... no back down. If you ... and we're very hard. And that we're very hard on what we do and ... and so now they're fearing. They're saying well, how do we go and get ... join your BRAG groups? So we've pushed it along like that and I think that's ... I do believe ...
>
> T Yeah, I think ... I think that was ...
>
> W ... that's what would just put the fear of ... into them. Not even the 250. Then we're telling them that they're in an extreme fire area which we're lucky that we've had the shire zoned and our building codes. And then how do you reduce the fuel around the building codes? Well, to reduce your building cost you've got to do this around it. And how do I maintain it? Through your BRAG groups so, yeah.
>
> T: So it probably ... I mean without costing anything in local government efforts where you know it can be there in your firebreak notice and in your ... in your ... when the ranger does ping you, that if you want to learn how to do this, here's somebody to do it, but you've got to have that somebody first, you see? If you go to Margaret River and tell somebody that, there ain't one at the moment. So it's finding you know ... it's finding the people is ... is the first issue. And like I was saying to Andy up there, I mean what happened at Margaret was this girl had it going good for two or three years and it just died when she pulled out and succession is ... be the same thing out here. May be or not may be, although you know Andy's probably got it ticking along better, but you know you don't know until the day comes sort of thing.
>
> K: And it is vulnerable if it's say depending on one person.
>
> W: Yeah, yeah. That's right, and I mean from the corporate point of view, if we put all that effort in but they fall over every time, then is it worth the effort in the long-term? It's ... it's you know what it's all about.
>
> W: And I do think the shire's got a role to help drive it in some ways, you know through through the FMO?
>
> T: Oh, yeah.
>
> W: And look, we've offered Annie and admin support, if she needs any fliers printed up ... printer out, we'll do it. Send it into us. And she hasn't had the need for it at the moment but we're willing to support them in admin to a reasonable amount, you know? So ... and photocopying and anything else. It's beneficial for the shire to have it, it certainly is.

T:There was no doubt ...

W: It's a great bonus.

T: She asked last year whether she could have a calling card or you know if I've been in your spot and you're not around, a BRAG card. And Perth for whatever bloody reason oh, I don't like the idea of that. It was weird and it was to do with giving people who weren't employees a thing saying, FESA's supported this visit to your place. Along ... the risk management, oh we don't know who they are in the end because we meet Annie, but we don't meet the people that Annie makes street coordinators, so then this street coordinator walks around and checks all the sheds and then he says right, I'll come back next week and knock that stuff off. And I think that was the avenue that they took and I don't know. Today, they still haven't allowed it. (Cp5-6)

An area needing to be worked upon noted from all sets of interviews if BRAG is to be totally effective is the education of the absentees, the sea change people and probably the renters. These people are the least likely to know what is necessary and to clean up etc where there is often 'a total lack of understanding. (Cp20)

## How? Flexibility in brag program

Little on this topic as it was covered elsewhere.

## Way groups have developed – telephone trees, regular meetings with group, local brigade meetings - top down or bottom up

It would appear that the development of this BRAG was a mixture of top down and bottom up as some groups were formed at the instigation of residents. What seems obvious though is the dynamism of Annie the facilitator is what keeps the groups involved going, as was evidenced by her receiving her award mentioned elsewhere.

The telephone tree would appear to be an essential manner in which these BRAGs operate. The advent of mobile phones has made the process so much simpler to operate: 'J: Do all groups have telephone trees or is it …

A: Yeah, all mine do, yes. And the police have …

M: Oh, your BRAG groups?

A: Yes. M: You're talking about … and fire brigades have their own call out methods. I prefer a list because I can get anyone to give them a list because the person actually ringing up and making the calls doesn't need to know a lot of details except where it is and get your arse there.

A: And whether they're going or not, yeah.

M: Yeah. Yes or no. I mean I prefer if one person did that …

A: The BRAG groups like …

M:… and then I check in with them every …

A: … and so that's a real motivator for them.

M: … when I need to know who is out.

K: Yeah, otherwise you need someone to coordinate

M: I was going to ask the …

K: And the number of people that are doing it, yeah

M:… activities which obviously you chose the groups to say …

M [unclear] get three people, so they ring me back when they've got three people and

M: Or they might get the three …

A: Most trees, most groups …

M: Of these things.

A: Most groups, the coordinator, who is the organised person 'cause I've chosen them as an organised person, does the phone tree and they are just that kind of a person that do it. (Ap29-30)

For the street coordinators, they all have telephone trees and how they operate is:

K: Speaking of that sort of communication, are telephone trees a common thing that are set up in this area with BRAG groups?

D: Yeah we've got each other's telephone numbers, or we wrote them all down.

H: I've got a list of all my people and their contact details. I think that's the idea basically, that there's one spot where they can all come and similarly disseminate stuff that Annie might send me or Douglas and Mitch might want something out that hasn't sort of been a regular thing. We can ... I just keep contact either by phone or by email and ask them to acknowledge.

K: I suppose I was thinking too in the event of a fire, would people …?

H: Certainly, I think ... and the way I understand it works is that if the others aren't aware anyway but I'll be contacted and then I contact all my people.

D: People just like to ring up and make sure myself or whatever ... and say there's a lot of smoke outside, should we be worried? You know I say it's alright it's just a burn off, it's okay, because those little things are just ... they usually get in contact with ...

M: New people ... there's a good chance that people would probably call us if there was a fire, people start calling us before we ever get a chance ... then again also if there is a fire Douglas and I are probably gone.

D: Yeah.

M: From our homes, but our wives also are pretty ... probably ...

D: They know where we are.

M: They're aware of what to do and who to call and ...' (Bp17-18)

## Importance of local champions – facilitators and street coordinators.

## Emphasis at street coordinator level or individual involvement. How have these people been chosen?

One reason given for becoming a facilitator was that they as fire fighters had been going to too many 'silly fires' and 'were tired of seeing so many burnt sheep' for example and they wanted to inform people, creating awareness in order to change their practices. (Ap5)… 'But it just … the same motivation of not wanting to go to fires on Christmas Day, I don't want to have to go and kill a kangaroo with a shovel or go and beg somebody to kill a kangaroo for me, have to pay them half …'(Ap15) The reasons for joining BRAG then arose out of this belief that there was more to their role as fire fighters than putting out fires:

J: And how did you hear about BRAG to instigate it? Was it …

A: I think we were approached by …

M: We got notice of a training course for facilitators.

A: Just the same as you get in any …

M: So for some reason, yes, we either …

A: We turned up.

M: We either … we turned up, basically yeah, I just got back from a bash and was fully beered and rotund.

A: We'd had the community fire guard before, and the community fire guard had kind of died out, that was Terri Delroy. And I think because she was … Terri's female. And because in our brigade, the community fire brigade it had been a female, that when she pulled out the assumption was that I would do it, that was kind of just the assumption.

M: I've never heard of these things, so I don't know, but I saw it and when I read …

A: But I think that's why I got asked to.

M: the background of what BRAG was, I thought this is exactly what I'm looking for because …

A: So we were in different brigades then. So he … we were in two different brigades. So Mark went representing his brigade and I went representing ours. And now we've …

J: We had a facilitator's course.

M: We merged, yeah, the brigades have merged, you know, that was something that was …

A: And I just saw …

M: Just expedient. For administration. A: As soon as I saw it … the actual training package, I had my doubts about, of how to do it. But the idea of it and how … and I did try, my first few groups, I tried to do what they said, follow it by the book. But …

M: 'Cause I lost the book shortly after the first course, but …

A: Yeah, oh, it just very …

M: But the concept was there.

A: Yeah, the concept was fine.' (Ap16-17)

The role of the facilitator and the time one is willing to spend and the confidence needed to not only run meetings but to confront often disgruntled residents. Annie according to M has been very successful whereas it's more of a slog for him as they noted:

A: Oh, well I don't have to go and find BRAG groups now, BRAG groups come to me. I mean I do have some BRAG groups, I …

M: It's having a go-to person. Because, you know, I'm great at presenting them but as far as checking them up and all and [unclear] goes, I get sick of putting in the leg work which you've got to. And you have to really bully and barge people until they front up, you know.' (Ap22-23)

Because the coordination at the different levels needs not only organised persons who are able to do such things as run the phone tree and organise meetings but they must also have to time to commit themselves to BRAG. Both facilitators have 'fobbed off' people in the past (suggesting on occasions they join other BRAGs rather than run one themselves) as they knew that they would not have the time. Others are reluctant but with a nudge and follow up they will take on the tasks. Others are just straight unsuitable for the role or even to be a member of the group and in one case the person was 'kicked out.' (Ap30-32)

It's often then difficult to find suitable coordinators and for one group a coordinator was found after five or six attempts and that competent high school teacher found them not the other way round. (Ap35) From these discussions it can be seen that coordination at the various levels is hard, time consuming work which needs a quite competent communicator to make it work. Both of these people were upset that they were not receiving the support and feedback they believed to be their due from FESA as referred to earlier:

A: So you know, but, I think it would be having people there that said, that understood our needs and our … you know, it's just that kind of care and respect more than things. Far more.

K: So someone checking in occasionally and saying how's it going Annie, you've got so many groups, that's great, and yeah.

A: Yeah, and not … and the invitation that they sent me, you know, this gobbledygook and all that sort of stuff, I mean I'm used to it from work at all but you just sit there and think who do these people think they are and there's no acknowledgement is that the meeting that Mervain and … came down to, you know, that took me 54 phone calls to get the people to that meeting. And there's absolutely, I don't expect money or anything for that, you know, there's no acknowledgement of that. And just acknowledgement.

A: And does that … that sounds really pathetic and immature that you want acknowledgement, but…

K: No. M: I think if you've done this work a little bit at least it'd go a hell of a lot further than nothing.

A: I just sort of feel that there's this kind of almost a disdain, that's like … and I've been a volunteer before, I've been in Surf Life Saving and I've been in other things and never had this feeling that I've had from FESA.' (Ap50-51}

The importance of the facilitator was raised constantly throughout the second set of interviews. Annie appears as a quite charismatic leader who has inspired those around her to not only join but to take on roles themselves – 'she's done a fantastic job' (See Bps 1-2,4,20,30-31 for examples)

The coordinators themselves as mentioned earlier will commit themselves to knocking on doors and generally acting as good neighbours. (Bp11) They even develop methods for dealing with absentee residents and making sure that they themselves are not too overcommitted:

D: I don't now I think it's just hanging ... I've just hung a plastic bag with a kit in it, easy to read thing on the doorknob if they're not there. If they are there well that's fine but most people ... I say most people, the majority of people are aware of that. Because there are more people moving into the area who are retiring permanently or living permanently to the ... maybe to the house that they've been keeping as a holiday house, but are now moving in. And even if they're not there's always somebody who's next door and not far away, so it's good with BRAG, it's got to be really local, local, you know it's got to be literally your immediate neighbours I think. Because if you ... for the person coordinating it or you know ... it's just if ... you can only go so far and ...

M: You spread yourself too thin and you just don't ... people don't contact ...

D: Not doing the contact properly unless you get someone else involved who will say, yeah, I'll do this street. And you just keep in ... it's basically just communication, keeping the lines

> open all the way through and if somebody new comes on, a new brochure comes out of a new video, you just say I've got half a dozen of these, do you want to spread them around, you know. And I think it's just ... that's how it best works in our little area and I think it would ... it's not an awful lot of work you know it's just you know especially in ... it is a new area, it's not like Darlington perhaps or it's not like Bedfordale, which is fairly old and established I would imagine, you know. And I would say it's higher risk than here, in the Perth hills it's ... 'cause you've got ... yeah well you've got bigger risks and you've got different weather patterns, you've got strong easterlies. (B12)

These street coordinators believe it's not too big a workload. (Bp20). For all of the officers interviewed, the importance of good leadership was mentioned often and good leaders such as Annie referred to almost referentially but they also noted that good leaders were hard to find and when found to replace when they were no longer present. People it was said were more likely to be followers than leaders. As mentioned earlier, in contrast Annie makes things work, often without the total support from FESA in particular. (Cp1,5,8&15 for examples) Again this problem of a lack of support was later referred to:

> W: And just listen to us all here, the only people that understand fire and the dangers is us. The community doesn't understand.
>
> T: Yeah, I mean 90% of the community does understand but I think they ... so you know ... and I suppose part of when they invented BRAG, it was just another idea of how to get the message out and you know ...
>
> G: Let me ... let me say and I'll only say it once, BRAG in the Yallingup area is very fruitful. It works well and it only works well because of one woman and that's it. And she puts a lot of time and effort into it. I don't think ... I believe she doesn't get enough backing from Perth and that's something that needs to be looked at seriously. 'Cause she gets very frustrated sometimes and I can see when ... when I talk to her about things I can see where ... where she's getting frustrated. Like you know she'll send them an email and six months later she still hasn't got an answer to that email, you know? And ... and this needs to be sorted because if ... if you want something to work properly you've got to have the backing and if the backing's not there, people are going to lose interest and subsequently ...
>
> T: And that ... and see when Sue-Ellen came back, I think that's why you guys are here is because they really ... the people around them five years ago which knew what it was about all disappeared and then people came along and had no friggin' idea about the whole philosophy of it. So she came down to Annie and ... and Andy who runs the thing to actually learn what it was 'cause she came from somewhere else. And that's the problem, corporately we're just lost for bloody staff at the moment. I mean the firemen stayed put but the actual public servants go through them like a bloody dose of salts. It's just a ... the whole public servants at the moment, they're all climbing each other's shoulders but when they get to a

> certain height they jump off into bloody mining companies and ... and then you've got to staff ... (Cp28-29)

For the last word on Annie and the operations of FESA:

> J: A... a local champion like Annie is you know it's clearly priceless to this whole program.
>
> T: That's right.
>
> G: She is. She is.
>
> J: A question for you is what would you sort of need at a regional level to be able to have the resources to find that sort of person?
>
> T: Yeah, that's right.
>
> J: There must be others out there like her.
>
> T: Well, that's right. I mean while we ... I don't know. I mean we expect the skills to come out of that community safety division 'cause that's where it used to be. And when we were talking about trying to get staff down here, we said we don't want another firemen or you know an officer. We want somebody that's done a you know public education degree or a ... you know there are all sorts of degrees. Marketing, community ... you know one of the daughters of somebody I knew, where she did something I'd never heard of it. Sounds like something Hitler would use but it was mass communications I think it was called. And I mean there are degrees in this crowd and they should be putting those people on to foster this stuff because we do our job which is to train firemen, make sure they've got trucks and these guys are the firemen and Annie is the public that's prepared to be educated but it's ... we've got to get those mass communication people or whatever their bloody skills are into the system to make these things work. And I'm sure when it did work we had by chance probably more than design people up there that had it. 'Cause I mean it's always been community safety or whatever similar name and they always try and employ those sort of people. Well, you know then when the shortage goes on and we get some other clown that thinks they want to do something else, they go and employ the wrong sort of person, so it just staggers off into ... I mean I don't think we've designed a pamphlet for about two or three years and it all comes out of there, you know?

## Are there intended /unintended outcomes? (positive/negative)

Very little on this not covered elsewhere.

## Other contextual factors – compliance measures,

The saga of the website conflicts between FESA and the local BRAG is worth outlining in full here as it indicates how the bureaucrats are more likely to stick to the rules thus stifling promising innovation:

A: Oh, for the tape. I decided, well people keep asking me questions. So they'd ask me where to get the fire regulations, what sort of pumps to buy, whatever. And I was forever writing out, oh this is a great website, or the other thing is they ring you up and say oh, there's a lot of smoke to the south, where's the fire? And I'd say to them do you know about the Sentinel site, you know, if you look on the Sentinel site you can see there's big fires down at Scott River and that's where the smoke's coming from. Oh, I don't believe you that the smoke's coming from that far.

And I said well you know, watch it, look at it every now and then and when you see there's a fire on the news, go to the Sentinel site and you'll see, the smoke can go a thousand kilometres. And so anyhow, so I was forever writing out websites and everything and typing stuff out and not having the stuff in the car with me to give people. So I thought, mm, website.

And so all I wanted to do was just put all these links in there so people could go there and have … it went straight to the, they dared me to wade through the Shire website to find it amongst the dog regulations that would be there. There's lots … there's so many wonderful resources out there and a lot of the resources were from other fire brigades, Darlington Fire Brigade had an excellent one. S

o people would ask me, I want to know about fire proof plants and I'd ring up FESA and they'd say oh, they said, we don't like to recommend any because you know, we've got to be accountable, we might get sued if we say the wrong thing and anything. But someone in Darlington has put them up. So I could just send people to that. Stuff I didn't know. So I did it, I just made it myself, never made a website in my life before and put it on a … I hosted it myself and then I thought I need to do this properly, I'll ask them for some money.

And they said no, you can't have one. You just can't have it. Why can't I have it? Because we won't support a website that's giving out information because then we're accountable for that information and people take the information and come back at us. Well how come all these other fire brigades have got websites? Oh because, well oh I don't know about that, well I don't know they do. Now, in the Karragullen fire when the FESA website crashed and you couldn't get on to it, everybody was using the Darlington … Glen Forest, Glen Forest website which was providing information to communities because the FESA one didn't. So I mean they're there. And they're all … they've got FESA all over them and the quote that they said to me is you can't have any acknowledgement of FESA on it.

M: Yes, so I suspect they asked someone else in FESA because the straw poll from you asking that at the meeting the other day was that some agreed with what you said that there's no way FESA would allow that. And the other lot said oh yeah, of course. And they've all got it on and that's how we did it. But we asked someone else, or …

A: Well one of the interesting things at that meeting was … M: Had bullying people to get the right answer.

> A: Well that, I thought it was really interesting in the meeting was that it came from Hartley's group when they asked for the signs on the houses that they belonged to the BRAG group and FESA said to me no, you can't do that, you cannot do it, you know, don't do it, strictly. And the guy from Bedfordale, they've just done it. Now that … I spoke to him afterwards, he just did it. He just did it.'(Ap46-47 and more examples follow on the following pages)

Annie feels that she 'operates in spite of (FESA)' particularly as their material is often dense and irrelevant to residents.' (Ap48) The working relationship then with the central office of FESA would appear from these interviews to be problematic as was mentioned in earlier topics.

One thing mentioned in the first two sets of interviews and referred to in Information distribution earlier was that it's difficult to comply with regulations if you don't receive the notification of your responsibilities and it was also mentioned that the council website is poorly designed so it was hard to understand. (Ap5-6) Despite this the council in recent years has been fining more people for infringements such as those relating to fire breaks. The rangers were referred to as 'the fire Nazis.' This will also be referred to later in the discussions with the shire officer. This BRAG have had to deal with angry residents and the facilitators would rather use education leading to self-motivation rather than the 'big stick' approach current being used. The council officers now realise that they need BRAG and are more relaxed about the group now. (Ap6-9) (and Bp9)

Another example of problems with council regulations – though most of these problems are more brigade related rather than BRAG but the interviewee found it difficult to differentiate between their dual roles – is the following:

> But they had to get authority from the shire chief to be able to cut fences and start going in there and they couldn't do that until they got authority and they couldn't get hold of them and there was just chaos, you know. There wasn't enough coordination. After that things really started to get into shape in this area, it probably already was in place in other areas. But after that communications became much better and they're improving all the time because they're going ... there's going to be different communications now in the trucks apparently and all the rest of it. So things have moved along and of course the volunteers have always been volunteers and they've been given more resources. But still always struggling for more resources, this is always the bugbear… (Bp5)

The best thing about FESA is that they have brought all of the emergency services together but there's still no common communication channel with the police. Things do come together though when there's a need (Ap67)

From the council perspective, again:

> W: But infringements are a part of education. It's a big part because we ran a really heavy media campaign for the last two years with lots of ads in the paper, warning people what we were going to do, stories and that and full-page ad at the beginning of the fire season with all

the fire requirements, ads in there. So I'm not sure what else you can do. We invited all these people to ... to an expo and in that expo was there for opportunity to come speak to us, BRAG, or anybody else about their fire requirements.

T: I think the only way dealing with this issue is that it's got to be part of in the BRAG campaign, that if you don't comply, in the end, the rangers will get you because being a member of BRAG do ... doing nothing isn't going to give you any protection.

W: No, we're not bias.

T: And so ... so we don't scare the right sort of people away from BRAG we've got to be able to say you know, you need to do this and you know you can help your neighbours to do this. 'Cause the regional Bushfire Action Group and I think it's probably still in some of the texts was that if there's five houses in their street, it was okay. You ... you were the greenie and you were the bloody tree-lover and the rest us weren't cleaning their gardens up and when the fire came, you'd all come over and we can jump into Jones' bunker.

And it was ... that was actually portrayed that that was okay. Well, of course it's not okay according to the law because the law says we'll all be treated equally and you two will get booked. So maybe that needs to be modified in there if it still exists that the ... that was part of the deal, you know? Look after your street and ...

W: 'Cause the problem the local government has is that if a fire comes through there and your bushfire notice says, that's what you got do, and we don't enforce that and fire comes in and we get death or whatever, who do you think the coroner's going to go after?

G: The shire.

T: Or everybody but including the shire. (Cp9-10)

Compliance seems to be more present where BRAGs are located:

K: So Tim, if I could just back track a minute, in ... in areas where BRAG is active and I know in ... that's not most of the shire but where it is ... have you noticed any difference in terms of number of infringement notices and ..?

T: Yeah, yeah.

W: Yeah, look, especially this year. Yeah, yeah, look this year we did notice a big difference and last year we didn't get to all of it ... of the whole of the shire so while the infringements are on a same amount this year, actually I had the availability to hire Jeff and someone else to help us out to get to more of it. We actually probably did 99% of the shire. Last year we probably only did 65-70% of the shire. We still got the same amount of infringements. We did a lot more inspections ...

G: Yeah.

W: ... and we ... our work orders were higher than they were last year because there was only moderate work needed to be done, you know? Like people just hadn't quite done it properly to someone who'd just completely ignored it, got an infringement. If ... but even if you make an effort and it's still not a good effort you know and we feel that they've taken a shot, they will get something from us.

T: Yeah.

W: But you know if you've generally done a good job and it just needs a bit of a tidy up here and there and it might be just a work order or even just verbal advice saying this week I'll come back. If you haven't done it then we'll give you something, you know?' (Cp13-14)

It comes down to good cop, bad cop:

W: We have a lot of issue with wineries and chalets and accommodation and there which is really, really some grey areas and ... and I'm well aware that I'm not very popular out on the ridge area and a lot of people don't but at the end of the day, if we ever get a fire there and it probably saves it, perhaps they might. And that's the only ... the only way they're ever going to see it and someone has to be the baddie. Because if we're the baddie and then encourage BRAG's or support BRAG on another hand, make them look the goodies, well, at the end of the day we're going to find an even balance. That's what it's about. (Cp14)

The concluding comments from the three officers outline the dilemmas facing the future of BRAG and its relations with the various levels of government. All this plus the neeed for extra resources:

W:I certainly would like to see a ... a regional person or a south-west coordinator of BRAG operating out of ...

T: Oh well, only when this side of hell freezes over.

W: Yeah, I know. And ... and we're just hoping this report might help is that identify well yeah, the south-west region, the potentials there are really operating BRAG but there needs to be a paid employee working with local governments, their FMO's and the BRAG groups there who can ...

T: And I mean there are millions of things.

W: While Andy does a good job, he's got a thousand other jobs to do as well.

T: Yeah, I mean there are millions of things that ... it's like down at Margaret and I suppose you guys got one, the shire has a girl whose job is you know shire public (mobile phone rings) sort of you know information. She's in corporate and ... you know? W: Well, we got one of them but we need to get the structure in place to operate and again you know from my point of view, I ... I think it's a state government [unclear – diction] should be ... nothing should be ... everything shouldn't be unloaded to local government ...

G: Yeah, yeah. W: ... because our's ... state government issue 'cause we get a major wild fire they're ... they're going to send resources out and it's going to cost them and ... as well. It's not us. Little fires cost the shire. Big fires are going to cost them in water bombers and that which cost $3,000 an hour. So there's an opportunity and I know you're reporting back to Sue-Ellen. She's a very lovely lady.

G: You crawler.

W: I've had many a late nights with her. There is ... I mean at what point do we ... I don't know how it operates in the eastern states but there's an opportunity to base someone in the south-west and probably operating out of Bunbury or out of our office. I'll certainly make enough space for them, to work with all the local governments, FMO and that in correcting and helping produce and with your Annie Palmers and ... and everybody else. So there's one contact to them. You know that one person has got their finger on the pu ... pulse, not given a real big district but you know six/seven shires each.

G: But I don't believe you can sit in Perth and run it. You've got to have somebody physically in ... in that area to do it.

W: No, we've got to give Sue ... Sue-Ellen a chance. She's only new on the job and she's done good already and so ...

T: No, but what I was talking about when I was talking about that, the shire sees a need to do that and so they don't go and buy a you know retired bloody CEO or ranger or something. They go and buy a person trained in that skill. And when you say what does the area managers need to make the system work? They need them to employ people skilled in you know public communication or whatever the ... the title is.

## Fire history

There's been no major fire in the area since 1962. The area has grown hugely since then and with very few fires there than in the other two case study areas there is almost no local memory of what a fire can do to that region. Many of the residents have also moved in from urban areas with very little fire knowledge. The environment is also changing as new plantings such as vines and having more haystacks and this could impact on the types of fire taking place e.g. lightning strikes along the vines or haystacks. (Ap1-3) The lack of recent fires has meant that complacency has set in and

every year we don't have a big fire means we're closer to having a big one. Because of the fuel build up …

D: And also just people's ... not quite as on the ball, prepared. I think because we haven't had one is partly awareness, you know about this generally in the area. We've got more people, always more people living here, not necessarily the homeowners themselves, it's often relations or friends. So that is a sort of risk in many ways because of their awareness of

what ... the timing of fire bans and barbeques and just generally ... you know people come and say let's put all this stuff together, have a good old fire, a bonfire.

M: They build a fire on a semi-cold summer night in the rental property and clean the fireplace out, throw hot coals out in the bush and start and fire ... seriously.

D: Yeah, definitely awareness. I mean obviously there's ... but whether it's any more risky that it used to be, I'm not quite sure, but certainly there's more power lines which have to be kept clear and there's more roads which act as fire breaks themselves. But there again there's more chance of cigarette butts being flicked out.' (Bp21)

## Demographics including socio economic, even membership of other volunteer groups if information is available

Differences in approach was said to be dealing with men and women for instance when Annie is dealing with largely men she 'gets the blokes in to talk to them.' (Ap12) Reference was also made to a video after the Tenterden fire where:

A: It's powerful and it's very focused on women. I mean it only looks at women and it comes up with a couple of really good, or lots of things, but one of the things they probably never intended is that people feel very supportive of the fire brigade and they come away saying well what can we do for your fire brigade.' Women come up after viewing video asking what can we do for you… There is more of a link up now then with other voluntary associations now that the CWA doesn't exist anymore and many of the BRAG members in some streets are also members of Zonta – a worldwide group made up of professional women for instance. (Ap18-19) Membership will also overlap with the P & C., (Ap60) the challenge however is to reach people who don't belong to any organisation.

The third interview emphasised concerns raided by all the interviewees and that was over the Perth people's apparent lack of concern as they 'go back to Perth and forget about their property'– 'one of the shire's greatest problems' …

T: So ... and ... and they're that wealthy that when they do come, laws don't exists and money's not an issue. So I mean if ... if they knew they had to clean up, so it's a lot to do with understanding or not understanding 'cause in Perth it's not an issue.

W: That's why we've got to keep encouraging the fire expo and get the message out there.

T: Yeah, and ... and ... and things like the fire expo and ... and like when the rangers go around or when somebody rings Jonesy, they ... those sort of people need a product ...

W: I agree.

T ... to ... to explain. So you know we're always going to need a pamphlet of some sort and as things, so BRAG probably is an extension of that. It's just another point like you know Jonesy can give it out or he can say well, I'm busy, ring Annie. (Cp18)

## FESA

### What are the intended/actual outcomes of the program? (short/medium/long term)

The origins and role of the BRAGS can be seen in the following exchange during the interviews with the FESA officers:

> So our summer safe projects and also dry season in the north. So BRAG played a big part sort of within that. Providing training for BRAG facilitators. Generally communicating with the facilitators on a fairly regular basis and, you know, resource development, that sort of stuff. So it was more that liaison and working obviously with our regional staff, our district managers, who looked after them on a local level. So …
>
> J: So your … is your role as a … a community safety coordinator?
>
> R: Yeah. Prior … I guess the … the person before me had taken on the role as co ordinator, and before that it actually had someone dedicated to that …permanently, so we were trying to sort of slot our work with BRAG in with our normal role.
>
> J: But just sort of as a … a starting point, I mean obviously as I … as I mentioned before, BRAG really began as community fireguard …
>
> R: Fireguard. Yeah. I think it was ’98 it was adopted here. And reviewed in 2001 where it became BRAG.
>
> J: Okay, 2001 was … yeah, because I … I think when we were speaking to someone down in … in Bedfordale they mentioned a … a group back in 1994? H: That would be right…
>
> J:...to sort of best of …your knowledge, what sort of was the … the motivation for really developing a program like that in the first place?
>
> R: Well, it all evolved from Ash Wednesday really, and it was just the case of they’re all doing it, you know, so I think that what … the west had to be doing something similar as well.
>
> J: Yeah. Sort of …I guess the … the model being used in …Victoria and …also South Australia had adopted it so I guess …through that. And … and clearly elements of the program needed to be modified to make it more relevant to the Western Australian …environment. And, yeah, obviously I’m still asking you to reflect on things which weren’t …really your involvement …but just from your point of view, sort of what were the … what was the main … main sort of modifications that were required?
>
> R: Well, initially when it was adopted from the east they maintained that sort of remuneration of facilitators. So they were provided with a … an annual bonus or some … a monetary amount. But when it became BRAG that was stopped. So there was no money involved in the program whatsoever as incentives or …anything…And the idea was that it was run as a … as a program I think … I guess from headquarters, and they provided that

> coordination, but a lot of the activity, it all really occurred out in the community with the support of regional staff. (Fp2-4)

In the initial stages, the BRAGS appear to have been very successful but as will be seen from these interviews, the support from FESA diminished over time and the knowledge of, for example, how many BRAGS' facilitators are still operating is minimal:

> R: It was actually … it was ticking along really beautifully. The … at the time there was about 80 facilitators who … quite a lot of them were actually active, involved with groups in their community. We had no idea in terms of street co ordinator groups or sort of branches from those main groups of how big the actual program was. It'd never been measured or gauged in terms of who was on board and doing what in the community. The percentage of time that I guess initially I was dedicating to the program would've been about 75% of my time. But as … then as my role grew in other areas, that had to diminish. So it … it became more and more of a challenge I guess to provide the level of support and, you know, coordination I guess that … that it required. But we were doing training then. I would go to all the BRAG meetings. So I'd be out quite a … quite a lot actually going out and …visiting them and, you know, sort of doing stuff on the ground and being that sort of person that they knew they could call on and … and, you know, sort of work with.'(Fp4)

## Are they successful or not? What are the barriers/facilitators?

From a FESA view there would appear to have been mixed messages coming out of their organisation of what the role of BRAG was. Proper process was also lacking. This obviously could aid or hinder the development of BRAGs in different areas:

> H: Ruth, at that time, what was the level of support like from the op staff … the DMs and other operational staff?
>
> R: Their … their view was very … their … their understanding of the program was very mixed. You have some managers who were very much using it as a … as an important tool within the community with their brigade members. There were others that absolutely didn't have a clue. And when it came to those facilitators who weren't existing brigade members, it was very fragmented. And that's where the problems started to emerge, where initially it'd been all brigade members, then they started to allow others to come in. And it changed the need for the training, you know, it … it changed everything about what the program was based on. So … 'cause you would expect brigade members to have that foundation information, you know, we … we weren't needing to provide that to that level. But, yeah, when community members became involved it obviously … it did change 'cause they didn't have that same support mechanism as well. So the brigade … the normal meetings that they had with the operational services and the connections I guess that were already there.
>
> J: And was that sort of shift a sort of conscious decision or it just sort of evolved that way?

> R: Well, I think it was a case of they had community members that actually asked to be … to be involved and … without saying you need to become a brigade member. It was like oh, well, yeah and … you know, we can let anyone do it. We didn't have a framework for it to say who can and can't do it. There was no rules or … or anything really to … to be able to follow that stipulated that. It was no … there was no paperwork in terms of people joining who qualified. So criteria that managers out in the … you know, like operational managers, could look at a particular individual and say well, you have all the qualities that, you know, would be valuable for a facilitator or, you know, maybe you should just think about a street coordinator role. So …
>
> R:… what I saw when I first came on board with the program. It was just like well there's … there's no … there's no process. And that was where when we did the risk analysis the … the bells and … and alarms started to off because it really opened the organisation … (Fp5)

The major barrier to success would appear to be the difficulties facilitators have in motivating people to attend even once a year meetings. Particularly when there haven't been a lot of fires. It's better where the residents are loyal to a particular facilitator but when this is not present only 3 residents may turn up. Something new has to be used to get the people in. (Kp21)

A further barrier would be:

> J: And I guess the issue also revolves around, yeah, finding the right sort of facilitators who can understand operating in that environment … whilst also FESA perhaps being a bit more flexible in its approach as well.
>
> S: And also getting …the support of op staff. Because, you know, it was quite … clear at the workshop …difficult though. S: … that they're just too busy. And the CFMs are too busy …' (Kp24)

With 7 new staff coming on board a problem is that internal capacity is lacking:

> …we've identified we've never built the internal capacity of our managers to be able to understand the program, to be able to deliver the program, what it entails. I mean, that was where one of the resources we identified as being important was a … like a … a manual or something that managers (FESA operational managers, district managers, area managers, those … community fire managers) would be able to … So … because there's no resource for them. And because they do move around a …a fair bit …the chances are that someone one day is going to be in an area where BRAG's obviously heavily involved …They won't know anything about it. R: Because there's a lot of misconception I think that BRAG is hard work, but it really isn't. You get a group and initially you've got to do a bit of hand holding … but you've got no more interface with that group than what you would have with your brigades. And really there's really no more extra work. (Kp25-26)

A good BRAG is where the community engagement model is used:

> … where you … you go in, you know, you help it get established and … but then you need to gradually take that …step back. It's like with any brigade …you know, they … they are constantly … they've got to liaise with them, they've got to work with them. So it … it's part of their … it should be part of their core business. (Kp27)

The lack of full time staff committed to supporting the BRAGs when compared with the Eastern states though recognising that there they have a much more varied role dealing with other hazards as well as fire. In Victoria there are 12 staff whereas in W.A. only 2 hours per fortnight would be spent on BRAG. It's 'not a priority because there's many other important stuff that has to be done.' 'It's ad hoc.' 'It's very reactive.' (Kp32-34)

This lack of time and resources has meant that the actual number of active BRAG facilitators covering a wide area from Perth to Albany is unknown. (Kp35)

A real challenge to the success of BRAG, they concluded, was:

> … around how do we control what's happening on the ground level? You know, how do we know what … what messages are being delivered? And that's a real challenge for us. So that consistency.
>
> R: And that … I guess that will be a fundamental part of how much, you know …
>
> S: Training.
>
> R: … how much training and how much we're involved. S: But you can still tell a person to put a square peg in a square hole and …they'll go try … putting a round one in.
>
> J: And … and related to that really, you know, so in … in an ideal world, how could the capacity of BRAG be enhanced from … from your perspective?
>
> S: I think either that there's dedicated positions responsible for that …
>
> H: I was really hesitant to say that, but I really firmly …believe that, that you need a BRAG coordinator. At least one.'

They continued on this point:

> I would just have a person just doing BRAG. You know, BRAG would be a part of their role and BRAG supports our bushfire season strategies. The risk with that is succession planning and the loss of that knowledge if the person goes. The other option I would look at is … is it out of this directorate and is it a CFM responsibility and then we work with the CFMs. So that's more tangible for us because we know who they are …we're able to reach them, we know their currency, and that they've got those local relationships. (K54-57)

## How are they achieved? What activities/resources required? What processes take place?(individual/household/community) what happens and why?

FESA would attend information and training meetings along the following lines and with the following purposes in mind:

> I guess you could divide them in to three meetings. You would have your open sort of community meeting where there wasn't a group already operating in the area and it was identified as something that, you know, you had a champion that wanted to start up a group. So we would do it more of as an information session, where I would go along, provide the community members with that information about the program and the benefits. Then there would be meetings where we had set BRAG groups that would come along, they'd do their pre-season meeting and, you know, they'd talk about what they're going to do or some of the issues or, you know, sort of do a bit of a debrief in terms of what happened last bush … bushfire season and what they could do this year. And then there'd be your just facilitators or … or street coordinator meetings. So … yeah.
>
> J: And sort of was it an important part of the meeting that you, a sort of FESA central office person, were … were present for it? What sort of dynamic did that play?
>
> R: Where the information about the program was needed, that was where I played a key role. As that sort of information specialist. Where people like Ian Thompson from Bedfordale, I was a support person. I would be there to support him and Ray and … so I'd be there really as a person that they could, you know, identify, you know, we really need some information about such and such or … or whatever. So it was more about supporting them as a … you know, as … as them being a facilitator in the program and identifying stuff I guess that I could provide to them, whether it be resources and whatever. (Kp6)

In the discussion of the role of FESA and the directions it should take, the following conclusions were reached:

> is it our role? When … when we look at increasing CFMs, community … fire managers, that are 50% funded by the local government and 50% funded by FESA, and there's a local government responsibility to ensure that their residents are … are ready and that they've addressed their hazards. Is it a central role that needs to be played? And is the role that we play just working with the CFMs to ensure that they're skilled … and given the …the support that they need. And then it's part of their responsibility to work with the BRAGs, train the BRAGs … you know, recruit …whatever, you know.
>
> So we need to start questioning about what's more effective, because they have the relationship on the ground. They have the contacts, they know the local … issues, local solutions. Where us driving it from a central point of view, is that as effective and are we building the … the resilience as opposed to how a CFM could do? So, you know, you could look at it a totally different way that it's not … our responsibility to be doing it.

> J: In that sort of model would FESA be providing the resources to the CFM …
>
> Yeah. And then the CFMs drive it. And even at a level below the facilitators, the sort of street coordinator, street contacts … some level of appropriate training … for them seem … would seem to be a … a useful thing …particularly as groups have grown and … and …diversified. Some … it appears from some examples that quite a lot of responsibility is with the street coordinators to … to keep the … the groups going and to …and to, you know, run …
>
> R: Exactly.
>
> J: … run them. (Kp38)

The lack of full time staff committed to supporting the BRAGs when compared with the Eastern states though recognising that there they have a much more varied role dealing with other hazards as well as fire. In Victoria there are 12 staff whereas in W.A. only 2 hours per fortnight would be spent on BRAG. It's 'not a priority because there's many other important stuff that has to be done.' 'It's ad hoc.' 'It's very reactive.' (Kp32-34)

This lack of time and resources has meant that the actual number of active BRAG facilitators covering a wide area from Perth to Albany is unknown. (Kp35)

It would appear that training programs have been put on hold, though a training program was developed, the whole program was shelved and is awaiting review. Stop gap measures are in place 'getting people just to deliver the stay or go stuff' is all they've been able to facilitate. (Kp42-43)

Training programs for potential facilitators were an essential role for FESA but the respondents did note a number of areas for improvement and they don't appear to have been held in recent years despite calls to hold them:

> One of the things I guess when I was involved with the program was doing the training, and we would try to do training in the winter months when it was, you know … when it was obviously more ideal for them. And things would start to ramp up for them around October where they're sort of coming to the end of their … their quiet time. But one of the things that we talked about was training would be fairly ad hoc and it would be just when I guess we … we were approached from a … either a … a manager or, you know, a group of potential facilitators.
>
> And then one of the things we thought would be better to do would be to coordinate training in a more proactive approach by saying well, okay, calendarise it so that we know in July we're going to have training in the northern suburbs. So for any brigades in the north of Perth then we would do the training at one sort of central location. And we'll do it then, and we'll do the east, and we'll go down south and we'll do that sort of stuff. Because what was happening was you'd get one brigade and you'd have them wanting to do training but you'd have 12 people, you know, wanting to do training because we would do a minimum of eight

> to run the training. And it was like well, these people had never clearly been identified as actually potential facilitators with the skills required to do that role. It was just like well, we need eight, so they …
>
> You know, sort of try to rally people around to do the training and then, you know, half of them wouldn't end up carrying it on. They'd just sort of move through the brigade and not really do anything. So that was where one of the … I guess one of the issues with people being active, you know, we had them on a database but then they wouldn't end up doing anything because really you didn't need that many people within that sort of brigade doing the facilitator training. It was … it was more … it should've been more at a regional level. But you know, that was, you know, difficult to coordinate at the time. But that was something we identified that we would certainly do. (Kp36)

The lack of resources within FESA has meant that they 'physically have not been able to do everything that's been asked of us.' What they do however is the following:

> …It's more about resources.
>
> H: Yeah. It's pretty much just supporting them through resources and attending meetings when we can.
>
> S: And I suppose for … me it's developing that future stuff. So, you know, my attention goes in to being proactive and, you know, working with them around just before bushfire season … starts, again, around bringing them in together, regaining that commitment, doing a bit of training and professional development. Trying, I suppose, you know … trying to … to predict some of the issues before they actually arise. And, you know, like Helen had a conversation with Annie the other day and just simple things, you know, like pads with BRAG on the top that she wanted and, you know, they'd be easy for us to develop and they feel like we're giving them something and …
>
> S: The BRAG database is another thing. I'm putting a letter together, which I've done with our JAFFA one, all our databases were the same, where we'll write out to them and see if there's still a facilitator and get their current details. The frustrating thing for me dealing with a lot of these groups, because they're volunteers they're not on email, so it's just really labour intensive. And you get very little response from a letter generally. So then, you know, you've got to chase it up with a phone call and emails …
>
> R: Oh, you'd be lucky to get 20% return …
>
> S… so trying to get your data correct is I suppose something that I'm trying to do. (Kp47-48)

## How is information disseminated to fellow residents?

There have been a number of programs over the past few years, particularly those related to 'bushfire strategies' and 'summer safe' campaigns. There were education programs in schools

and more recently there's been the development of the DVD and other resources and BRAG played an important role in all of this planning and training. Again though the lack of resources does hinder what they would like to achieve:

> It was like well, we need a DVD and we need … and then the campaign I guess grew around that. But BRAG was always the focus. That was … that was summer safe. That was what it was. You had your … the clean up days and they had, you know, all sorts of stuff happening around BRAG. But it was always low level. BRAG was never really marketed from an organisational perspective… And even now …
>
> R: Because we couldn't support it. Because it was … as my percentage of my time … diminished, it was almost like well, you can't promote it because we can't give it the level of support that it needs for one person to be able to coordinate it as a whole. (Kp8-9)

As 'stay or go' is now a national position' it's now easier to embed these types of programs and much information is also readily available on the internet. However FESA is having difficulty in delivering 'current and consistent messages because of the (lack of) capacity of their people to deliver through workshops as they've done in the past - particularly necessary where messages are confusing and complex. (Kp17-18)

One idea which has been canvassed is to have 'sponsorship packages' to provide money to FESA with BRAG programs in there to spend on resource development and sponsoring bushfire strategies. 'The pitfall in the past has been they want to own us and they want blood out of a stone.' (Kp49)

## how representative are the participants? is there a difference between homeowners and renters, for example?

This topic has not been covered in these discussions.

## What works for whom? In what contexts and settings has the program worked/not worked? Why? How?

What works, but not always with FESA approval, in some BRAGs depends very much on the initiatives of the facilitator as the following indicates:

> And speaking to Ian, even he was saying that, you know, it's … he's always got to find something new to draw them in. …
>
> S: A pull.
>
> R: … you know, he's quite savvy and he'll organise someone from the local hardware store to bring … their fire fighting equipment in, you know. That sort of thing. Now, as an organisation we would never condone that really, would … But for him, that's what they want to know.' (Kp21)

As well as dealing simply with fires and limiting their organisations potential, some BRAGs have used their networks to deal with other needs making them more holistic:

> R: So … and I guess one of the things that we identified early on with BRAG was that it had so much potential to be I guess for … for the organisation, certainly something that could be quite holistic in terms of preparing for emergencies. So we're … you know, we're not talking about just bushfires. So those people, you know, would still talk about some of the issues I guess that face them surrounding security … and sort of other hazards. And … and neighbourhood watch was a classic example where you had groups hand in hand. So you had BRAG and the neighbourhood watch … all sort of … working together.
>
> H: Well, one of the BRAGs, I know when I was down at Bedfordale the last time, they were saying, and I think they mentioned it as well at the focus group that we had, that not only have they been involved in searches and use their telephone tree when … when … kids have gone missing … but they've used it … they've utilised it when storms have occurred. And they've said oh, you know, they got on the telephone tree and … and rung everybody and said there's a storm coming our way, it's really severe, make sure you batten down the hatches. So yeah, it is that more holistic approach … and all hazard approach.' '… if the framework was there … I mean bushfire should just be one part of that. And that was where the more people started to talk about it, I guess their role as a facilitator, the more easily you could see it being a, you know, a conduit to other things as well. You know, and neighbourhood, security and … you know, because those … those networks are very important. (Kp18-20)

One idea put forward from these discussions was that local government should be more involved in the processes, working with FESA:

> And what would be enticing to local government, when you look at the local governments in that area, instead of FESA using the … their money around salary costs and producing publications and the travel that we do, is you know would it be more viable to establish a grant scheme where the local governments have access to that grant if they establish a BRAG and there's parameters around it and how it operates. And then the CFM, you know, is linked in to that grant process, that they're the owner of that grant and driving it.'(Kp39)

Each facilitator will have different problems and needs according to their neighbourhood:

> S: I think that the recent challenge but for BRAG is that sea tree change culture …that we have. And … and even in the hills here the … you know, the people that are … are living up there. But, you know, Annie's facing that in Yallingup, that they're not even there, you know.
>
> R: Yeah. Hobby farmers … who are there probably on the weekend, or those people that want the isolation.

> S: So what's … that social capital investment of that individual? You know, it's not very high.
>
> R: You know their risk management strategy is insurance, in short. That … and that's it. There's no perception of risk.' (Kp45)

The need to recognise the passion about community safety of facilitators and work with them to extend their skills and to provide recognition was also suggested:

> a lot of the knowledge and information that we have as coordinators, often we don't have the opportunity to filter it down to their level. But it's having those … that professional development, having … you know, giving people the opportunity to have skills that they can use in their everyday lives or work or whatever, you know, I think that's really important. Because … you know often they don't … they don't want the monetary reward. It's not … it's about … it's about, you know, what's valuable to them and … yeah. Recognition. Pat on the back and …
>
> J: some of the facilitators that I've encountered, yeah, the … they're not … their motivation isn't for any sort of financial gain or even … being, you know, reimbursed for their time or fuel or anything. (Kp53)

## How? Flexibility in BRAG program

The need for a less formalised, more flexible approach was recognised by FESA. While at times, such flexibility can cause problems for FESA, one of the strengths of BRAG though can be where a balance between flexibility and conformity applies, particularly as locals are able to address issues which FSEA cannot:

> And I think that flexibility is the key otherwise people just won't take part. My concern is that there needs to be a balance between the flexibility and ensuring the correct information is disseminated. That people are trained effectively. That they possess the right amount of knowledge in order to disseminate that information. And I have a concern that there are BRAG facilitators and street … coordinators out there that are kind of doing their own maverick thing and telling people what they like. And again, I know that was an issue that came out of last … February. The workshop that was done across the road with Sharna. That that was an issue that was leaving the organisation wide open to all sorts of liability issues. Yeah. So …R: Especially … sorry … especially where bushfire brigade members were involved. Because we'd have no jurisdiction over … them. So they had stuff on their website about … rooftop sprinklers and
>
> H: Yeah. Which we don't enforce.
>
> R: and fire retardant plants. And we're like oh …you know.

Maybe as a bushfire brigade member, you know, you believe you can say that. But as FESA we can't say that.

> H: And … but there does need a balance, doesn't there, between the flexibility and the formal process type …
>
> R: Because the … because the average community member won't know … the difference. (Kp12-15)

FESA is also 'struggling' to find the right balance in informing the community on what it 'wants to know' whilst working within an 'increasingly litigious culture' (Kp23)

Flexibility between different BRAGs and how they adapt differently according to differing circumstances and facilitators can be seen in the following exchange:

> J 'originally a particular BRAG, I guess the … the idea was a … of a street or an … an area within the, you know, proximity. But now it sort of seems to be more of a … just sort of a, you know, a BRAG in say … having a BRAG in a particular …
>
> S: Suburb.
>
> J: The … the … so what, you know … that … that sort of balance has changed a bit. Is that just to reflect this sort of increased flexibility in … in the program, or … S: I think it comes … down to the BRAG facilitators. That they're a champion. So, you know, when you look at …
>
> R: Thommo, who's done the whole of Bedfordale. You've got every street involved in … in some way … within the program.
>
> S: But … but then when you look at Annie … Annie's like the super facilitator down there because there's some other BRAG groups happening, but she sort of plays the guiding role over the top of them. So she's sort of expanding hers and growing it, but also doing it in a different way. So she sort of has some … facilitators that report in to her. So I think it's about what works locally for … them. And it's about that individual champion, you know.'(Kp40-41)

## Way groups have developed – telephone trees, regular meetings with group, local brigade meetings - top down or bottom up

The following provides insight into how the groups first started:

> H: Ruth, when new groups started, how was interest identified? Was that through operational staff or did members of the public contact you or other FESA staff? How …
>
> R: Mixed, a mixture of ways. We had a community … like we … we would be approached by members of the community who'd heard about it and there was nothing existing in the area, so that's why they were interested. And that's what I guess triggered that having non-brigade members involved with the program as facilitators. Brigade members who did approach us sometimes, but often went through their manager. And then some managers did approach us about using it as a strategy, but more often not it was brigade members. (Kp6-7)

At the grass roots level where FESA worked BRAGs didn't necessarily form but they still did much the same work:

> R: I mean a lot of my work … I mean I was involved with ratepayers and progress associations. And where, you know, they didn't form a BRAG, it was still … they were actually doing the same things, they just didn't call themselves a BRAG. You know, there … there's groups that, you know, like your … your Annie Palmers, who tied it in with her wine connoisseur group and so there was a lot of activity out there, but it just … you know, oh we're a BRAG, it … it … it didn't necessarily operate like that. It was, you know, it … it was tapped in and as you know, we used other groups as that conduit to oh, here's some information about whatever. So …
>
> J: And it's very useful from our perspective to have that understanding, because on paper … you can sort of see …BRAG and it's easy just to think of it …more in terms of the say CFA community fireguard where it has had more of that. (Kp10)

The approach has been one of a top down approach with 'initial hand holding' along the 'community engagement model', but then stepping back. District managers and others have to liaise with the BRAGs as part of their 'core business'. (Kp26-27)

FESA tends to be reactive when it comes to requests and will respond to attending meetings according to whether anyone is available or not. (Kp46)

## Importance of local champions – facilitators and street coordinators. Emphasis at street coordinator level or individual involvement. How have these people been chosen?

The importance of there being local champions to facilitate BRAGs was noted earlier and two in particular were cited but the fact that there are no checks of character was raised as a matter of concern, as was the fact noted earlier that some facilitators went their own way:

> J: Yeah. And given the flexibility and … what sort of minimum … are there sort of minimum expectations, or is it something that needs to be decided upon as to a set of minimum expectations of a particular BRAG to constitute that's what they're doing? Because I guess currently if they've got free reign to develop it as they wish, you know, you …I guess there's no way to really know whether they are meeting certain criteria.
>
> H: Yeah.
>
> S: And we haven't imposed that. You know, all we've done is the training and produced the resources for them … and, you know, watching the sessions that are delivered. You know, I've seen the one in Yallingup and it was, you know, spot on and very good and well engaged. And she put her own little spin on it. But, you know, there's no … and this is … this is a horrible thing to say, but there's no assessment of the individual characteristics of the person as well. And when you look at volunteers in brigades and … and, you know, quite often those volunteers are the ones that are the arsonists. You know, what character check to

> we do of the person leading the … as a facilitator? We don't. There's no … there's no check at all. So there's nothing. I want to be a facilitator, they're trained, they get the support of the … the ops person, and that's it. (Kp41)

The FESA people saw their role as working with these facilitators as 'a support person, identifying stuff I guess that I could provide to them, whether it be resources and whatever.' (Kp6) Those facilitators who were also community fire managers were also particularly valued by FESA as 'they're trusted' and 'believed' as and people see them as 'the brigade person' out in the community 'putting out fires'. (Kp14-16)

While it was noted that it was difficult to motivate people unless there was an actual threat of fire, with one of the most motivated of facilitators 'it's different because there's loyalty there' but even he has difficulty as was mentioned earlier and has 'always got to find something new to draw them in.' (Kp21-22)

District managers need to develop local knowledge - understanding communities using community profiling and 'BRAG could help them with that.' (Kp28)

If the groups are to be successful, 'to be kept going' the need for training even at the local street level was also noted if these coordinators 'who have quite a lot of responsibility' were to carry out their tasks. (Kp39)

## Are there intended /unintended outcomes? (positive/negative)

This has been covered elsewhere, though there was little actual reference to this topic.

## Other contextual factors – compliance measures.

Again, surprisingly this topic was not dealt with at much depth; however the lack of coordination and cooperation across agencies is evident in the following where officers could not 'sell' the concept of BRAGs at a public meeting even though the actual topics being discussed were BRAG related:

> …within the agencies there's particular areas that do particular bits of business. And tonight, for example, there's a big town meeting up in Mundaring. And it's showing residents about when to burn off their properties, those on large hectare-age properties, and they'll do some demonstration burns. Now, that's an ideal opportunity for us to talk about BRAGs, but we're not allowed to talk about them there because the person running this … this is about their business. So the agency doesn't interlink opportunities. And you've got a town hall full of people that have just gone through a bad bushfire last year. Where there are existing BRAGs up there, but it would be a good opportunity to spread that within that area… But they don't want to confuse the messages and, you know, today's about moisture level, fuel levels, wind velocity. Where even our stay and go and DVD it's, you know, oh don't know if we really want you to bring it, it might confuse them. But … so instead of informing the public … so I

> think there's still an agency resistance to …work together. There's a lot of …competition around that.
>
> J: So is that sort of at a local brigade level, that resistance to …S: No. At a agency level. In this building… So at a directorate level. (Fp9)

This view was elaborated on later in the interview:

> And because …you need …what you're working with …a lot of the …time is the politics within …FESA because the fire service has never embraced FESA and don't want to be … part of FESA and would like to be separate to FESA. And then you've got the career fire fighters and the volunteer fire fighters differences … and the bushfire brigades. So, you know, we're working amongst the politics of that as well. So … where it's not … it's not a personal thing, but it's like well, you're FESA … you know. It gets that … it gets that petty …that when we did our smoke alarm campaign and we sent out materials to the stations and we wrote FESA station officer, they returned to sender …because we're not FESA station officers.
>
> R: They're fire and … rescue.
>
> J: Yeah. But it is this sort of complete organisational … shift that's …
>
> S: And that cultural change …hasn't happened… And, you know, we … we are still quite a number of years behind what some of the other agencies … are doing in terms of progressing … progressing that, and I think that we … we can't … we can't run out in to the community and promote BRAG in such a way that it's not going to be … viable … because of our own people.' (Kp30-32)

## Fire history

Again, little mention was made in this area

## Demographics including socio economic, even membership of other volunteer groups if information is available.

Socio economic factors were referred to but not gone into (Kp45-46) though hobby/weekend farmers, people living isolated lives and people in expensive cliff top homes subject to landslip were mentioned. Membership of the fire brigade was a key involvement for many.