

FIRE CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT GROUPS: Preliminary Results

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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT TITLE: 'The potential role and efficacy of community groups in bushfire management: A case study analysis of volunteerism on the urban-rural boundary of Norton Summit/ Ashton, South Australia and Kalamunda, Western Australia.'

This research is concerned with investigating the efficacy of bushfire planning and management through the potential establishment of 'Fire Catchment Management Groups'. This research will concentrate on how these groups might be established and the potential role of volunteers in effective bushfire management.

**'The brigade is very social, everyone is very open....
you can name people who you would put your life in their hands'**

**'We've moved in on the
vegetation...we've created
the problems with bushfires'**



**'The brigade will keep
going... it is strong and will
keep going'**



**'Most of the residents are aware of the
hazards of living in the bush'**

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Two case study areas have been selected, Kalamunda in WA and Norton Summit/Ashton in SA. Both case study areas are peri-urban and present a high bushfire risk. In recent months, interviews with volunteer fire fighters have been conducted. Although interview analysis is in its early stages, a number of key issues have emerged.

- Not one volunteer interviewed so far, as part of this research, has heard of the Bushfire CRC.
- Volunteers interviewed want the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) of WA & the SA Country Fire Service (CFS) to have more hands-on contact with their organisation.
- Volunteers interviewed want FESA & the SA CFS to take more responsibility for educating the community on bushfire preparedness.
- The volunteer fire fighters are held in incredibly high regard by their local community.

Further fieldwork is currently taking place. Two complete case study analyses are expected by early 2007.

Photos courtesy of Dept. of Primary Industries & Dept. of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria, Australia.
Quotes sourced from interviews conducted by Francesca Harris-Spence as part of PhD fieldwork 2005 & 2006.

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