

Fire Catchment Management Groups

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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 (SA) and Kalamunda, Western Australia (WA).

OUTPUTS

- A thorough examination of past bushfire research and community-based natural resource projects, resulting in an enlarged historical understanding of both.
- Two intensive case studies have been developed, based on the urban-rural boundary of Norton-Summit/Ashton (SA) and Kalamunda (WA), consisting of:
 - 40 semi-structured in-depth interviews with volunteer fire fighters and;
 - 342 questionnaires completed by members of the local communities.
- Interviews with past and present volunteer fire fighters have allowed greater insight into the culture of volunteer fire-fighting, communities and bushfire preparedness.
- This information has been used to develop a draft community action plan and bushfire catchment model.
- This research provides:
 - the first examination of decentralised environmental management in relation to fire management;
 - a detailed empirical analysis on a topic dominated by normative and theoretical discourses;
 - ideas useful for the management of fire.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This research is concerned with investigating the efficacy of bushfire planning and management through the establishment of 'Fire Catchment Management Groups'. This research has examined two volunteer fire fighting brigades and their communities in Norton Summit/Ashton in the Adelaide Hills as well as Kalamunda in the hills suburb to the east of Perth. In addition to local volunteer fire fighting organisations; local governments, communities and land management agencies were encouraged to contribute to the potential establishment of 'Fire Catchment Management Groups', and work towards the development of community action plans. This research has concentrated on how to establish these groups and their potential for effective bushfire management. This is the first ever investigation into the management of bushfires at catchment level that explores the role of volunteer groups and local communities.

This research contributes to our knowledge of past, present and future community-based natural resource management, bushfire history and research, and more generally the decentralisation of governance. It also strongly supports the main philosophy of the Bushfire CRC to 'deliver research outcomes that have economic and social benefit of national significance.'