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Centre for Risk and Community Safety

Annual Report
Year 2 of the Sharing Responsibility project

1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012

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bushfire CRC

Contents

1 Highlights in year 2

Date		Description
July 2011	◈	Submitted final report on Stage 1 – "*Framing the challenges for sharing responsibility*"
Aug- Sept 2011	◈	Presented a paper at the AFAC/Bushfire CRC annual conference in Sydney – "*Framing responsibility-sharing for risk management and community safety*"
	◈	Presented a poster on the project's progress that won the Judge's Poster Award.
Sept 2-11	◈	Invited to present at a CFA Community Safety Professional Development Day – "*What's the problem with sharing responsibility?*"
Oct 2011	◈	Submitted final report on Stage 3 – "*Mechanisms for sharing responsibility*" (Commonwealth milestone 1.1.1)
Nov-Dec 2011	◈	Presented at the Australian Sociological Association Annual Conference – "*Formal institutions and social capital in community bushfire safety: a missing research agenda?*"
Jan 2012	◈	Article published in the <u>Journal of Environmental Hazards</u> (vol 11, issue 1) – "*Reframing responsibility-sharing for bushfire risk management in Australia after Black Saturday.*"
March 2012	◈	Workshop with lead end user (Mick Ayre) and member of the 'Mainstreaming fire and emergency management' research projects to discuss project integration and future activities (Commonwealth milestone 1.1.3)
March 2012	◈	Conducted a stakeholder roundtable on spontaneous volunteers and emergency management involving volunteering NGOs, government agencies that manage emergency management volunteers and researchers.
March 2012	◈	Conducted a major one-day stakeholder workshop – "*Visions of sharing responsibility for disaster resilience*" attended by over 80 people
April 2012	◈	Organised and presented at a special session at the 3rd Annual Human Dimension Conference of the International Association of Wildland Fire, Seattle – "*Shared responsibility for community wildfire safety in Australia: What it is, how we do it and how we might do it better.*"
April 2012	◈	Article published in the <u>Australian Journal of Emergency Management</u> (vol 27, issue 2) – "*Changing the rules of the game: Mechanisms that shape responsibility-sharing from beyond Australian fire and emergency management*"

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2 Lead end user report

"The past twelve months have been extremely productive and in this period substantial work has been completed to interpret the perceptions of a wide range of stakeholders about what constitutes a shared responsibility. The research program scored a very important success in March of this year when it organised a one day stakeholder workshop in Melbourne on the topic of "Visions of sharing responsibility for disaster resilience" and quickly had to move to limiting participation because of the high level of interest shown by stakeholders. The session was a resounding success as participants from a wide range of State and Commonwealth government agencies, private sector not for profit organisations with an interest in emergency management, and community interest groups shared their views on this important topic.

The research team has also developed several articles and published a number of papers, and gave a presentation at the 2012 International Association of Wildland Fire Conference in Seattle in April.

Throughout this past year, the team has worked tirelessly to ensure that end user groups are consulted and informed, and I commend their efforts over this period."

- Mick Ayre
Director, Bushfires NT

3 Project overview

The *Sharing Responsibility* project is a component of the 'Understanding Risk' research program of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC). It falls within the Bushfire CRC's '*Community Expectations (Mainstreaming fire and emergency management across policy sectors)*' research group (see http://www.bushfirecrc.com/category/projectgroup/1-community-expectations).

Key research personnel on the project are Prof John Handmer (Project Leader) and Dr Blythe McLennan (Research Fellow) from the Centre for Risk and Community Safety in the School of Mathematical and Geospatial Sciences at RMIT University. The Lead End User for the project is Mick Ayre, Director of Bushfires NT.
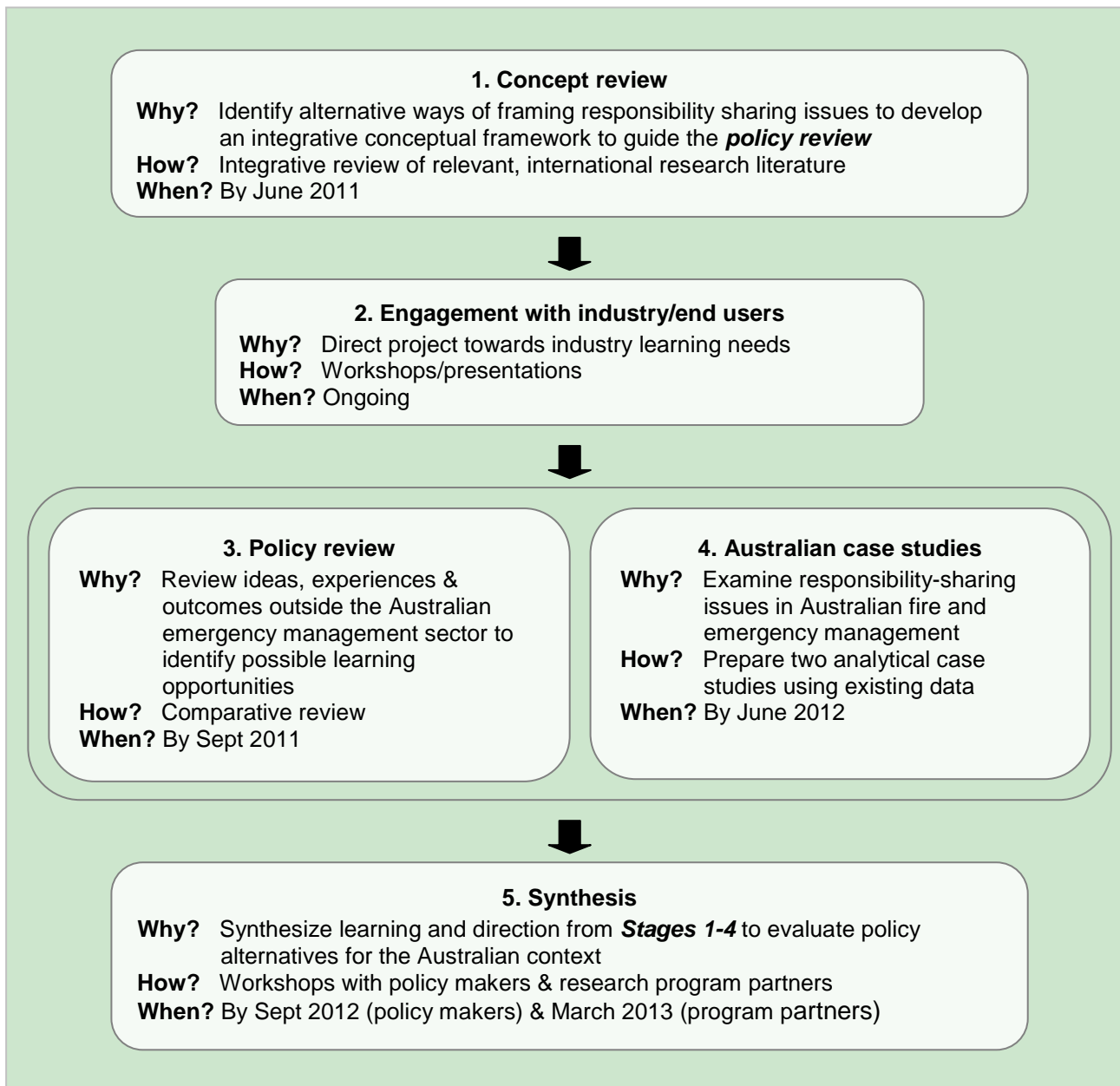
The overarching goal of the *Sharing Responsibility* project is to support the Australian fire and emergency management sector to make decisions about sharing responsibility to manage risk and community safety. A principle of shared responsibility has guided Australian fire and emergency management practice since the late 1990s. Yet sharing responsibility effectively in practice remains a significant challenge today, and issues of responsibility-sharing underpin many controversies and conflicts in Australian fire and emergency management.

A key reason for this situation is the complex nature of risk management, and challenges for sharing responsibility are encountered across a range of sectors involved in risk management worldwide. Risk management is influenced by a wide range of social, economic, political and environmental factors that lie beyond the traditional purview of emergency management. It also involves a wide range of parties that include those who are responsible for managing residual risk, those who are at risk, and those who influence the level and distribution of risks in society. Managing risks effectively requires ongoing coordination between these groups. However, in practice this is complicated by the fact that responsibilities can be overlapping, interdependent, ambiguous and often conflicting. Determining how responsibilities can be shared in order that communities are as safe and resilient as possible is therefore an important undertaking for Australian fire and emergency management. This was reiterated recently in the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, which emphasized "a need for a new focus on shared responsibility" (p. 2)

The *Sharing Responsibility* project will contribute to this undertaking by identifying alternative ways of framing responsibility sharing issues in both research and practice, and evaluating strengths and weaknesses of alternative approaches to address these issues. Framing refers to the way that individuals or groups may 'see' an issue in a particular way, for example by highlighting some aspects more prominently than others. Framing the issues that complicate responsibility-sharing too narrowly can overly restrict what problems and solutions we envisage, and what learning we are able to take away from past experiences. It may also exacerbate social conflict over the goals and practice of risk management when multiple ways of framing the same issue exist in society at the same time. This project therefore seeks to open up new ways to 'see' responsibility-sharing issues in order to identify a wider range of potential alternative solutions to address them. In the Australian context, surprisingly little attention has been given to unpacking the ideas and assumptions that underlie the central principle of shared responsibility. Hence the project also seeks to generate opportunities for researchers and decision makers to reflect on and evaluate the ideas and practice of responsibility-sharing in the Australian context.

The project has five key stages summarised in Figure 3.1, over page. It is unfolding in a progressive and cumulative way, with the results of each stage informing the design and approach of following stages, culminating in a synthesis of the learning from across the project in the final stage. Major outputs from the project are being produced and distributed in each of the five stages.

Figure 3.1: Overview of the *Sharing Responsibility* project

1. Concept review

Why? Identify alternative ways of framing responsibility sharing issues to develop an integrative conceptual framework to guide the *policy review*

How? Integrative review of relevant, international research literature

When? By June 2011

2. Engagement with industry/end users

Why? Direct project towards industry learning needs

How? Workshops/presentations

When? Ongoing

3. Policy review

Why? Review ideas, experiences & outcomes outside the Australian emergency management sector to identify possible learning opportunities

How? Comparative review

When? By Sept 2011

4. Australian case studies

Why? Examine responsibility-sharing issues in Australian fire and emergency management

How? Prepare two analytical case studies using existing data

When? By June 2012

5. Synthesis

Why? Synthesize learning and direction from *Stages 1-4* to evaluate policy alternatives for the Australian context

How? Workshops with policy makers & research program partners

When? By Sept 2012 (policy makers) & March 2013 (program partners)

4 Recap of year 1

An annual report on year 1 of the project is available on the Bushfire CRC website. Key activities in year 1 included:

- Laying the groundwork
  - o Exploring the general context of sharing responsibility in Australia fire and emergency management, including the 'Shared Responsibility' principle of the Victorian 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission. A manuscript based on this work was submitted to the Journal of Environmental Hazards.
  - o Unpacking important foundational concepts including Risk, Responsibility, Resilience, Governance, and Frames.
  - o Evaluating methodologies for reviewing research. A discussion paper on reviewing research for policy and practice was produced and made available through the Bushfire CRC website.
- Progressing the research
  - o Stage 1 concept review - Undertaking the Stage 1 review of ways that the underlying challenges for sharing responsibility are framed conceptually in research studies from across a range of disciplines. A draft report on this stage had been prepared and circulated for peer review at the end of year 1. A final report was in preparation.
  - o Stage 2 engagement – key engagement activities in this year included presentations at a number of Bushfire and AFAC meetings, a poster presentation introducing the project at the AFAC/Bushfire CRC 2010 annual conference in Darwin, and a project team meeting with the lend end user (Mick Ayre)
  - o Stage 3 policy review – Research conducted in stage 3 examined mechanisms used to share responsibility amongst multiple parties in a range of risk management and community safety contexts. A draft report had been prepared at the end of year 1 and circulated for review.

5 Key activities in year 2

The key activities undertaken in year 2 were divided across three stages of the project:

- Stage 2 - engagement
- Stage 3 – policy review
- Stage 4 – Australian case studies

5.1 Stage 2 engagement

Engagement with a range of stakeholders is an important ongoing component of the project. This ensures that the project remains relevant to industry learning needs and priorities and that learning from the project is shared as widely as possible.

Six key partnerships for engagement actively pursued by the researchers are with:

- The lead end user, Mick Ayre (Bushfires NT)
- Research colleagues in the 'Community expectations' research group
- Fire and emergency management (FEM) industry
- The fire and emergency management (FEM) research community
- Community groups and volunteering NGOs (added since first year annual report)
- Broader research community beyond FEM (added since first year annual report)

Key engagement activities in year 2 of the project are summarised below in Table 4.1. In addition, many of the written project outputs have been made widely available to stakeholders and partners on the Bushfire CRC website and the AFAC Knowledge Web. An informal project blog was also

established to share material related to topics discussed at the March workshop
(http://sharingresponsibility.wordpress.com/).

Table 4.1: Key engagement activities undertaken in year 2

Event/ activity	Partnerships
◈ Australian Sociological Association Annual Conference, Nov-Dec 2011	Broader research community; FEM research community
◈ CFA community safety professional development day, August 2011	Industry groups
◈ AFAC/Bushfire CRC annual conference in Sydney, Aug- Sept 2011	FEM research community; research colleagues; FEM industry
◈ 'Mainstreaming' cross-project team meeting with lead end user, March 2012	Lead end user; research colleagues
◈ Stakeholder workshop – "*Visions of sharing responsibility for disaster resilience*", March 2012	Lead end user; research colleagues; FEM research community; FEM industry; Community and NGO groups
◈ Stakeholder roundtable on spontaneous volunteers and emergency management, March 2011	FEM research community; FEM industry; Community and NGO groups
◈ 3rd Annual Human Dimensions Conference of the International Association of Wildland Fire, Seattle, April 2012	FEM research community (international)
◈ Article about the 'visions of sharing responsibility' workshop included in the Autumn edition of *Fire Australia*	FEM industry
◈ Attendance by the Research Fellow (McLennan) at a number of executive committee meeting for the Be Ready Warrandyte project	Community and NGO groups

Two major engagement activities undertaken in year 2 are described in more detail below: a
stakeholder workshop and participation in a community-led bushfire planning project.

5.1.1 Visions of sharing responsibility for disaster resilience workshop

This one-day workshop examined the idea and practice of sharing responsibility for disaster
resilience. Held on Thursday 29th March 2012, it aimed to address two general questions:
1. First, the idea: what does the idea of 'shared responsibility' mean, and what are its
   implications?
2. Second, the practice: is it a useful policy concept, and if yes what needs to be done to
   implement it, and what could undermine it?

The workshop was hosted by RMIT's Centre for Risk and Community Safety (CRaCS) and
organised on behalf of the Bushfire CRC and the National Climate Change Adaptation Research
Facility's (NCCARF) Emergency Management Network. It was attended by over 80 people that are
involved in some way – professionally, voluntarily or personally – in managing disaster risk,
preparation, response and/or recovery. Twenty-seven people participated in the workshop as
speakers by invitation.

Three of the speakers at the workshop were partially sponsored to travel to Melbourne to
participate: Julie Molloy (Volunteering Queensland), Vanessa Fabre (Brisbane City Council), and
Sam Johnson (Founder of the Christchurch Student Volunteer Army). They also shared their
experiences with managing spontaneous volunteers in the Brisbane floods and Christchurch
earthquakes at a roundtable forum held the day before the workshop and attended by 16 people
from research, NGOs and government agencies that coordinate emergency volunteers in Victoria
and South Australia.

Key topics covered in talks and discussions throughout the day included: the need and opportunity for change in government in this area, risk acceptance and the sharing of control with communities, balancing individual rights and public interests, the inherent resilience of communities, and tensions between government accountability and its role in enabling community resilience.

5.1.2 Be Ready Warrandyte project

In the second quarter of this year the project team were approached by community fireguard leaders in the community of Warrandyte to assist them with developing a community-led project to support bushfire planning amongst Warrandyte residents. A community working group was successful in applying for a Fire Ready Communities Grant from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) to fund the project, now named "Be Ready Warrandyte".
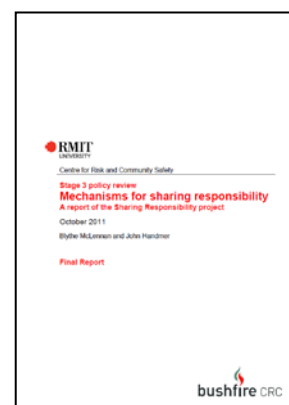

The executive committee for the project is itself a case study in-action of sharing responsibility. Members of the committee represent community fireguard groups, a community association, two CFA district fire brigades, CFA community safety, two local governments, local businesses, and DPCD. The Research Fellow (McLennan) is a member of the executive committee and has provided advice on the development of a community survey to gather baseline information about local risk awareness and preparedness to inform project activities. The survey is scheduled to be run across August and September 2012.

5.2 Stage 3 policy review

A final report on Stage 3 of the project was completed. This report presents findings from a review (largely undertaken in year 1) of different types of mechanisms that have been used to influence the way responsibility for risk management is shared amongst different parties across a range of contexts.

Seven general types of mechanisms were identified, all of which have been used or proposed to shape institutions for sharing responsibility in collective risk management. They are: vision statements, 'hard' laws and regulations, 'soft' interventions, contracts and agreements, collective inquiry and decision-making, organisations and associations,

and social norms). The report discusses each of these and considers how the different mechanisms reflect different ways of framing the problems, processes and relationships of sharing responsibility.

5.3 Stage 4 – Australian case studies

The main piece of work undertaken for this stage in year 2 was an analysis of responsibility-sharing challenges reflected in public submissions to the Victorian 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission.

5.3.1 Analysis of public submissions to the Royal Commission

The public submissions to the Royal Commission into the February 2009 bushfires in Victoria have much to say about responsibility in relation to these tragic fires. They present a rich source of data for investigating the multi-faceted nature of the challenges for sharing responsibility for risk management between *those in authority* and *those at risk*.

In this case study, we used multiple conceptual 'windows', to analyse the responsibility-sharing challenges reflected in these submissions. This enabled us to develop a more layered and holistic yet also structured picture than would be possible using just one conceptual framework. The ten theoretical responsibility-sharing challenges identified in the Stage 1 Concept Review were used to guide this analysis. 62 randomly selected but relevant public submissions were analysed in order to answer three core questions:

1. Which of the ten theoretical responsibility-sharing challenges were reflected in the public submissions?
2. In which areas of bushfire risk management and community safety, and at what scales, was each type of challenge most strongly reflected?
3. What do the ten conceptual windows reveal overall about the responsibility-sharing challenges reflected in the public submissions?

All ten of the theoretical responsibility-sharing challenges identified in Stage 1 were reflected in some way in the public submissions. Some were far more prevalent and polemic than others. Most of the challenges in the submissions concerned risk reduction, and particularly the preparation and planning that precedes a bushfire event. This focus was likely due to the particular terms of reference of the Royal Commission as well as its timing in relation to the event and recovery activities. It was also evident in this study that challenges for sharing responsibility occurred at a range of organisational or social scales.

This analysis showed that while the idea of 'shared responsibility' is a singular, overarching principle in Australian fire and emergency management, when it comes to sharing responsibility in practice, stakeholders face a multitude of diverse yet overlapping and interacting challenges. It also highlighted that responsibility-sharing is not a problem to be fixed but an inherent and ongoing part of managing bushfire risk.

6 Project outputs in year 2

Note: Links to downloadable versions of most of this material can be found at
http://www.bushfirecrc.com/projects/1-3/sharing-responsibility-component-mainstreaming-fire-and-emergency-management-across-pol

Presentations

◈ McLennan, B. J. & Handmer, J. (2011). *Framing responsibility-sharing for risk management and community safety*. Paper presented at the AFAC and Bushfire CRC Conference, 29 Aug-1 Sep (Sydney, NSW).

◈ McLennan, B. J. (2011). *What's the problem with sharing responsibility?* Presentation at the CFA Community Safety Professional Development Day, 22nd September (Burwood, Vic).

◈ McLennan, B. J. (2011). *Formal institutions and social capital in community bushfire safety: a missing research agenda?* Presentation at TASA, the Australian Sociological Association Annual Conference, 29th Nov-1st Dec. (Newcastle, NSW).

◈ McLennan, B. & Handmer, J. (2012). *From risk to resilience? Reframing shared responsibility in Australian disaster policy*. Presentation at the 3rd Annual Human Dimension Confernce of the International Association of Wildland Fire, 17-19 April. (Seattle, USA) (Note: Extended abstract also accepted for the conference proceedings)

Conference posters and papers

◈ McLennan, B., & Handmer, J. (2011). *What is the problem with sharing responsibility?* Poster presented at the annual conference of the AFAC/ Bushfire CRC conference, 29 Aug-1 Sep. (Sydney, NSW).

◈ McLennan, B. J., & Handmer, J. (2011). *Framing responsibility-sharing for risk management and community safety*. Paper presented at the AFAC and Bushfire CRC Conference, 29 Aug-1 Sep (Sydney, NSW). http://knowledgeweb.afac.com.au/research/community/plesd/Framing_Responsibility-sharing_for_Risk_Management_and_Community_Safety

Reports

◈ McLennan, B., & Handmer, J. (2011). *Framing the challenges for sharing responsibility.* Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University & Bushfire CRC. Melbourne, Australia. (Stage 1 concept review)

◈ McLennan, B., & Handmer, J. (2011). *Mechanisms to share responsibility in risk management*. Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University & Bushfire CRC. Melbourne, Australia. (Stage 3 policy review)

Journal articles

◈ McLennan, B. J., & Handmer, J. (2012). Reframing responsibility-sharing for bushfire risk management in Australia after Black Saturday. *Environmental Hazards, 11*(1), 1-15.

◈ McLennan, B. J., & Handmer, J. (2012). Changing the rules of the game: Mechanisms that shape responsibility-sharing from beyond Australian fire and emergency management. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 27(2), 7-13.

7 Looking ahead

7.1 Works in progress at the end of year 2 (June 2012)

◈ Written account of workshop
   o A written account of the "visions of sharing responsibility for disaster resilience" workshop is being prepared. It is being reviewed by the workshop speakers and it will constitute one of the case studies for Stage 4.

◈ Stage 4 case study
   o A report is also being prepared on the analysis of responsibility-sharing challenges reflected in public submission to the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

◈ Manuscripts in preparation for submission to peer-reviewed journals
   o McLennan. B. J. & Bosomworth, K. (*forthcoming*). From risk to resilience: the shifting frames of shared responsibility in Australian disaster management discourse.

   o Eburn, M. & McLennan, B. J. (*forthcoming*). Understanding shared responsibility and resilient communities; seeing the problem from an 'others' perspective. *International Journal of Wildland Fire, Special Edition – A focus on the role of social science for learning, adaptation and transformation* (Note: abstract has been accepted by editors.)

◈ AFAC/ Bushfire CRC conference 2012
   o A presentation and paper are being prepared for the AFAC/Bushfire CRC 2012 conference in Perth in August on "*Visions of sharing responsibility: outcomes of a multi-stakeholder workshop*". The paper will be submitted to the proceedings of the Research Day.

7.2 Key activities for year 3

◈ Stage 5 - workshops
   o Workshops with stakeholders that integrate stages 1-4 of the project will be held between September 2012 and April 2013.

◈ Final project report
   o A final report of the project will be drafted by December 2012 and circulated to key stakeholders for comment. A final version will be prepared after the Stage 5 workshops have been completed and submitted in May 2013

◈ Cross-project integration
   o Workshop - A major cross-project workshop with stakeholders is planned for March 2013 at the Planning Institute of Australian (PIA) Annual Conference in Canberra.

   o Report – An integrated cross-project is scheduled for completion by 30 June 2013.

◈ Two additional manuscripts are also planned for year 3:
   o A review of theoretical frameworks for analysing responsibility in risk management that will draw on the research conducted in Stage 1. (Authors: McLennan, Handmer)

   o An analysis of linkages between responsibility, control and risk in social theory and application to Australian disaster management. This will draw on the Stage 4 case studies. (Authors: McLennan, Handmer)

   o A publication on key cross-over themes between the three mainstreaming projects is also scheduled to be submitted by 30 June 2013.

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8   Research team contacts

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More information and project documents can be found on the Bushfire CRC website:

www.bushfirecrc.com

(Follow links to: *Our Research > Understanding Risk > Community Expectations > Shared Responsibility*)