

Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference

David Bruce, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC

Research from the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC and case studies from the emergency services, local government, education and health sectors, featured at the Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference on the Gold Coast in May.

Keynote presentations from Commissioner Katarina Carroll, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, referenced disasters in Australia and in the United States to illustrate points on leadership in crisis situations.

Jonathan Coppel, Productivity Commissioner, presented an overview of the Productivity Commission's review of Australia's Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements.

Other presentations covered the topics of health and local government including building resilient cities, mental health of medics and first responders, training

and higher education in emergency management, volunteer recruitment and management, and public communications.

There were discussion sessions around case studies on communities, recovery and collaboration following the 2013 New South Wales Blue Mountains fires, the 2015 Ravenshoe Café explosion, and other recent disaster incidents.

The conference is a joint initiative of four not-for-profit organisations, being the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, the Australian Institute of Emergency Services, the Australian and New Zealand Mental Health Association Inc. and the Association for Sustainability in Business Inc.

Conference information is at www.anzdmc.com.au.

Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference

David Bruce, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC

A joint panel discussion between experts in Australia and the United States on fuels management was a highlight of an International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF) conference in April. The conference theme was 'Wicked Problems, new solutions: our fire, our problem'.

The program for the fifth Fire Behaviour and Fuels Melbourne conference was hosted in both Melbourne, Australia and Portland, Oregon, with the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC and its Victorian partners hosting the event.

Around 280 people attended in Melbourne, with a further 350 in Portland. The time difference between Melbourne and Portland allowed for some sessions overlapping with live presentations at one venue linked to the other by video. On Wednesday, keynote presentations by the IAWF's Ron Steffens (in Portland) and Dr Kevin Tolhurst (in Melbourne) were shared. On Thursday, the joint panel session discussed the international aspects of planned burning and took questions from the audiences at both venues. The full program featured 76 speakers, an international panel session, and three PhD 'Three Minute Thesis'.

The week started with two workshops at the Bureau of Meteorology on grassland fuels and fire weather. The conference ended with two field trips to assess bushfire

risk in the Dandenong Ranges or to view the mountain ash forests hit by the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

Videos of the keynote speakers and the panel are on the conference website at www.firebehaviorandfuelsconference.com.



Field trips were important to help assess bushfire risk.