

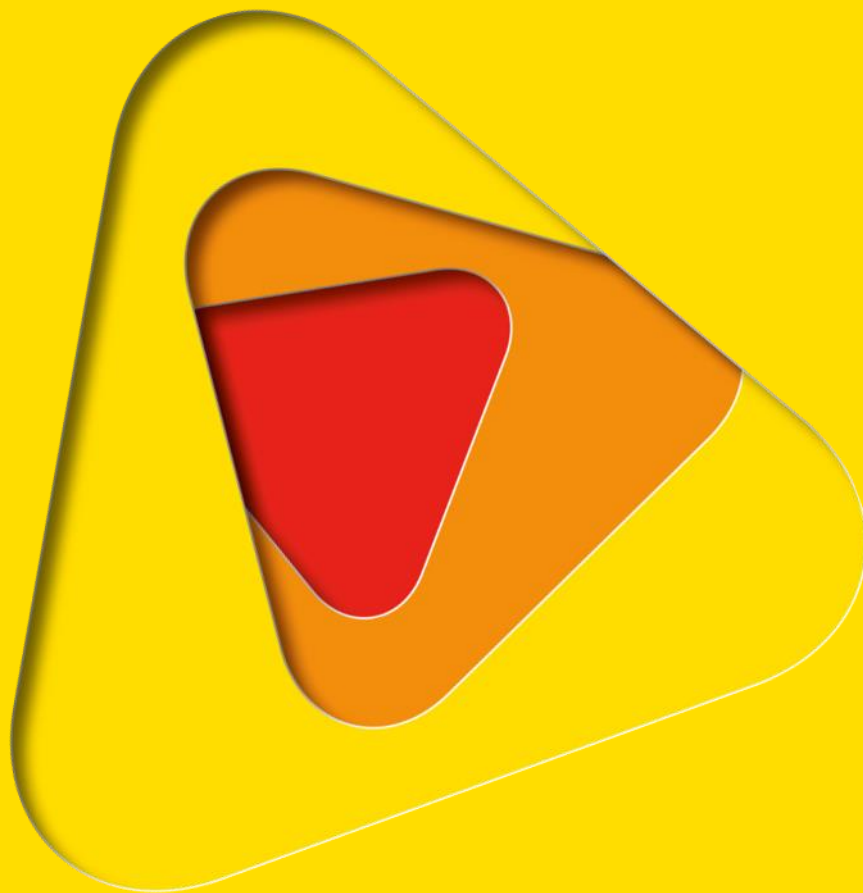


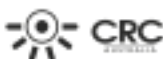
# **POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNANCE (PIGS) OF NATURAL HAZARDS**

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The Australian National University  
Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC

**Annual Report 2014**





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# Policies, institutions and governance (PIGs) of natural hazards



## 2013-2014 Annual Report

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### What is the Problem?

Institutional arrangements anticipated by the public and established by government to deal with risk are progressively struggling under the weight of preparing for, responding to and recovering from increasing threats from natural hazards that will impact upon greater numbers of people as well as from the challenges posed by expanding expectations and rapid advances in information technology. Integral to these challenges is the need to identify, clarify and balance the roles and responsibilities of governments, communities, the private sector and individuals.

### Why is it Important?

The *2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission* and the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* recognize that managing hazards is a responsibility that must be shared across all levels of government, individuals and communities. Whilst there is consensus on the need to move emergency management away from state centered response to a more holistic focus on 'resilience', how to achieve that goal is unclear.

### What we're doing about it?

This project is looking at institutional barriers to developing resilience. Barriers may be established by laws, policies and the institutions that are set up to govern relationships across society. We will consider what new governance arrangements may be called for to implement what other researchers (for example those engaged in other BNHCRC projects looking at community engagement) identify as 'best practice'.

This project will focus on:

1. Legal barriers to developing community resilience;
2. Perverse incentives in the emergency management policy environment; and
3. Learning from post-event inquiries.

## **Introduction:**

Institutional arrangements anticipated by the public and established by government to deal with risk are progressively struggling under the weight of preparing for, responding to and recovering from increasing threats from natural hazards that will impact upon greater numbers of people as well as from the challenges posed by expanding expectations and rapid advances in information technology. Integral to these challenges is the need to identify, clarify and balance the roles and responsibilities of governments, communities, the private sector and individuals. As evidenced through one inquiry and review after another, current policy and service delivery models are, in some instances, becoming unsustainable.

## **The Project:**

This research project will shed invaluable light on current policy, institutional and governance arrangements with a view to developing new approaches to shared responsibility (COAG 2011) to increase community resilience to all natural hazards. The research will pursue, in detail, important issues exposed for the first time in recent work in Bushfire CRC and NCCARF projects by the researchers. It will, in three related themes, consider issues of policies, institutions and governance across the entire “Prevent, Prepare, Respond and Recover” (PPRR) spectrum. Each theme will draw on the expertise of the entire team to contribute to, and inform the research. They are presented here as a single project to reflect the mutual contribution the researchers will make and the synergies between the themes. Although each theme would, standing alone, contribute to the development of national resilience, the project, in its entirety, will provide invaluable insight into efficacy of Australia’s current policies, institutions and governance arrangements.

## **Research theme one: Mitigating the risk.**

Research theme one will identify how current emergency management policies, institutions and governance arrangements impact upon the ability of communities (including the private sector) to play an active role in preparing for and responding to natural hazard events. It will identify whether these arrangements help, or hinder “[local] governments, business and community leaders, and the not-for-profit sector” to adopt the necessary “emergency management and advisory roles” (COAG 2011, 1.2). For example, current state emergency management plans allocate responsibilities to various government and non-government agencies. This may be a barrier to local enterprises contributing to the resilience of their own community and stimulating post-disaster economic activity. There are opportunities to learn from other jurisdictions in this respect, for example the United States.

## **Research theme two: Financing recovery and future resilience.**

Current arrangements provide perverse incentives on individuals, governments and communities to avoid taking steps to reduce their exposure to future hazards. Whether it is failure by insurance companies to assist in home owner mitigation and adaptation or a refusal of the Commonwealth to allow Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery arrangement funding to be spent improving resilience either before or after an event, means that scarce financial resources are wasted. Research theme two will expose perverse incentives that are hidden in current policies, institutions and governance arrangements.

## **Research theme three: Post-event review arrangements.**

Policy, institutional and governance arrangements cannot become fixed in time so it is important to review and learn from past events, however current post-event review arrangements such as Royal Commissions and coronial inquests and inquiries are not adequate to identify and respond to future threats, challenges and vulnerabilities. This theme will look, in detail, at the post-event review process to identify, with learning from other industries, how best to review the impact of natural hazard events to facilitate learning and adaptation and to help communities prepare for the next impact, rather than focus on the last one.

## What's been happening?

The research commenced at the start of 2014 with some delays due to administrative issues. These have been resolved and the project is underway.

The project is supporting two PhD students who have commenced studies at the ANU and who are recipients of BNHCRC scholarships:

1. Sue Hunt is engaged on a project exploring 'Growing disaster resilience: are arrangements for implementing the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience fit-for-purpose?' and builds on her prior experience with the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department. (Sue's supervisors are Michael Eburn, Karen Hussey and Professor Stephen Dovers). Sue has also been engaged as a research assistant on the *Policies, institutions and governance of natural hazards* project because of the close relationship between her work and the project's theme 1.
2. Caroline Wenger's project is '*Flood management in a changing climate: integrating effective approaches*' and develops earlier work undertaken as part of an NCCARF Research Project (Wenger, C, Hussey, K, Pittock, J. (2013), *Living with floods: Key lessons from Australia and abroad*. National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast. pp. 264. Available at: <http://www.nccarf.edu.au/publications/living-floods-key-lessons-australia-and-abroad>). (Caroline's supervisors are Jamie Pittock, Michael Eburn and Katherine Daniell).

## Publications

It is early days yet, so there have been no publications but work arising from the project will be presented at the annual AFAC/BNHCRC joint conference to be held in Wellington, New Zealand in early September:

1. Karen Hussey will present 'Protecting and managing critical infrastructure under a changing climate: roles, responsibilities and the allocation of risk'. This paper, co-authored with Professor Stephen Dovers, will report selected findings from initial research into roles and responsibilities for critical infrastructure in the context of climate risk and disaster and emergency management. This research has been undertaken in collaboration with the Australian Government and CSIRO, and will inform ongoing work in this project.
2. Michael Eburn will be presenting a paper, co-authored with Professor Stephen Dovers and two ANU students, David Hudson and Ignatious Cha, entitled 'Learning from adversity: What has 75 years of bushfire inquiries (1939-2013) taught us?' This paper will report initial findings from work undertaken as part of theme 3: Post-event review arrangements. The project team has been invited to contribute this work to a special issue of the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* on the lessons management process. This is expected to publish in early 2015 with papers due for review by the end of the year. It is yet to be decided whether this work will be presented as one or two articles for that journal.

Although not directly part of this project the following publications by Professor Dovers will continue to inform ongoing work in this area and this project:

Dovers, S. and Handmer, J. 2014. Disaster policy and climate change: how much more of the same? In: Ismail-Zadeh, A., Urrutia-Fucugaugh, J., Kijko, A., Takeuchi, K. and Zaliapin, I. (eds). *Extreme natural hazards, disaster risks and societal implications*. pp348-58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bosomworth, K., Handmer, J. and Dovers, S. 2014. Learning from analyses of policy frames and informal institutions in the fire management sector of Victoria, Australia. In: Glovovic, B.C. and Smith, G.P. (eds). *Adapting to climate change: lessons from natural hazards planning*. pp269-89. Dordrecht: Springer

## Overseas travel

It had been intended that Michael Eburn would travel to Colorado, USA to present this research to the annual Hazards Workshop hosted by the University of Boulder (project output 1.4.4). This trip was to be joined with a visit to the US Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Centre (WFLLC). Discussions with the team at the WFLLC identified that it would be more useful to visit that centre in February 2015 when they would be holding a course on 'Facilitated Learning' and where all the national leaders who have been instrumental in moving the US away from punitive, 'auditing' type post-event reviews to a focus on learning to enhance performance, would be at the one venue. In discussions with the BNHCRC it was agreed that with limited funding for overseas travel, the visit to Colorado would not be funded but the funds used to visit the WFLLC in February (project output 3.2.3).

## Field Work

The project team was invited to participate in forum and workshop hosted by the City of Greater Bendigo on "*Community Disaster Resilience Building*" on 21 June. This project involved, amongst other things, a focus group of identified community leaders who the Council were looking to work with to enhance community resilience. It was intended to survey delegates on legal and policy barriers that inhibited the development of community resilience. In total 55 surveys, along with reply paid envelopes, were distributed. Surveys were to be posted to Bendigo Council (at Council's expense) and they would forward them to the research team. The response rate has been disappointing and we will have to rethink our strategy in this area but on the other hand, we have been sent the data from a more comprehensive survey that Bendigo city administered. Our first review of that data does indicate that there will be material that will inform both this project and Sue Hunt's PhD. We will shortly turn our attention to analyzing that data to determine relevant legal and policy issues.

## Other activities:

1. During the first half of 2014, Over the first half of 2014, Steve Dovers served on the Expert Reference Group that assisted with review of Victoria's Bushfire Management Reforms.
2. 18-19 March 2014: Stephen Dovers and Michael Eburn attended the inaugural BNHCRC Research Advisory Forum (RAF) in Adelaide.
3. 30 April 2014: Michael Eburn travelled to the Australian Emergency Management Institute at Mt Macedon to give a presentation to the National Security and Emergency Management Knowledge and Lessons Management Workshop. His presentation was entitled: '*Learning lessons from disasters: alternatives to Royal Commissions and other quasi-judicial inquiries.*'
4. 6 May 2014: Michael Eburn gave an invited presentation on 'Emerging legal issues for the sector...' at the Australian & New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference, 'Earth Wind and Rain', on Queensland's Gold Coast. Whilst there Michael attended the BNHCRC display to discuss the work of the CRC with interested delegates.

5. 8 May 2014: Michael Eburn was invited to the University of New England, Armidale to present the annual Drummond Memorial Lecture. The theme of his lecture was *'Disaster Resilience: Making the National Strategy Local'*.
6. 23 May, Steve Dovers co-presented an AFAC professional development course (with Prof David Pannell) "Firefighting with economics" in Melbourne, communicating results from previous Bushfire CRC work, which included discussion relevant to the governance and 'shared responsibility' themes of the new research.
7. 26 May 2014: Michael Eburn travelled to Parramatta to sit on the selection panel for a researcher to be employed by the University of Western Sydney as part of the project team working on the BNHCRC project 'Scientific diversity, scientific uncertainty and risk mitigation policy and planning'. This project is being led by Dr Jess Weir and is the other project in the *Economics, Policy and Decision-Making* research cluster.
8. 27 May 2014: The ANU hosted Sam Chard from the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and a project end user, for morning tea. Sam met the project team as well as other interested colleagues to discuss the Productivity Commission's inquiry into National Disaster Funding Arrangements as well as giving an overview of the Commonwealth's arrangements in this area.
9. 8 June 2014: Michael Eburn was invited to present at the joint Emergency Management Australia/Australian Maritime Safety Authority Executive Masterclass, held in Darwin.

## Project team members:

**Cluster Lead Researcher**  
Professor Stephen Dovers



**Cluster Lead End User**  
John Schauble, Office of the  
Emergency Management  
Commissioner, Victoria.



## Researchers

Dr Michael Eburn







Dr Karen Hussey



Dr Jamie Pittock





PhD Students	
Sue Hunt	
Caroline Wenger	
Others who contributed	
David Hudson (PhD student)	
Ignatious Cha (Undergraduate student)	

**Project end user panel:**

Sam Chard	Commonwealth Attorney General's Department
Clare Speechley	Department of Premier and Cabinet, South Australia
Ed Pikusa	South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM)
Chris Irvine	Tasmania State Emergency Service
Christine Roach	NSW Rural Fire Service