HAZARDS, CULTURE AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

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ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA

• Where the majority of Aboriginal peoples live today
• Has always been the most densely populated part of Australia
• Often demographic minority within diverse intercultural communities
• Many small but significant land holdings often managed with other interests (e.g. co-managed national parks)
• Geographically variable and limited legal rights
• Interests in extending current access to publically and privately held lands
• Complexities of identity, knowledge and authority
PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Both for and with the sector and Aboriginal communities:

1. Investigate current priorities and engagement

2. Conduct collaborative research to improve engagement

3. Synthesise results for broader policy and practice utilization

The intercultural context requires an intercultural approach

View from Ngarri/Mt Egbert, 135 ha burn plot in Dja Dja Wurrung country/Murray-Goldfields
TWO EXAMPLES OF INTERCULTURAL POLITICS

FIRE
Why should cultural/traditional burns be supported?
What should their purpose be, and who decides?
How are these burns done, and by whom?
What knowledge and/or support is needed?
What is the ‘culture’ of conventional prescribed burns?

FLOOD
Who should make decisions about Aboriginal cultural heritage sites in flood zones?
How can traditional owners be included in flood responses?
What are the organisational benefits of different kinds of inclusion?
Our qualitative applied research approach means that ‘research utilisation’ occurs throughout the project and that includes the knowledge generation itself.

- Iterative learning: adaption of project methods and priorities based on feedback received and reviewed throughout.
- Case-study research for in-depth engagement.
- Co-generation of knowledge through co-authorship, and through supporting events and co-authoring their documentation.
- Utilisation products based on research results (industry/community papers & presentations, etc.).
KEY DELIVERABLES

• Two case studies

• Southern Australia practitioner study

• ‘State of play’ reporting – insights and comparative analysis

• Social-institutional diagrammatic maps

• Factors for success ‘guidelines’
Some publications and presentations to date…

Posters

Presentations
• Neale, T (2017), ‘Finding collaboration with hazards practitioners’, The Participatory Environmental Humanities, workshop, UNSW, Queen’s University and Arizona State University, Sydney, 18-19 July.
• Neale, T (2017), ‘Hazards, Culture and Indigenous communities’, Seminar, Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, University of Alberta, 24 August.
• Freeman, D, Taylor-Grant, J, Leavesley, A, Weir, JK, Neale, T, Babington, K and N Cooper (2017), Bringing Aboriginal knowledge into agency programs in Southern Australia, Presentation, AFAC/BNHCRC conference, 5-8 September, Sydney, NSW.
• Costello, O (2017). Engaging Aboriginal Communities in Cultural Burning on NPWS managed lands in NSW, Presentation, AFAC/BNHCRC conference, 5-8 September, Sydney, NSW.
Results summary

How engagements start:
• Rights to land and water
• Policy and regulation
• Local initiatives
• Natural hazard events

Why engagements occur (from the sector’s perspective):
• Imperative to engage ‘local people’
• Specific socio-economic vulnerabilities
• Bridge cultural difference
• Facilitate cultural heritage protection
• Indigenous knowledge

Dean Freeman and Jackson Taylor-Grant explaining cultural burning at ANU fieldtrip, February 2018
SOME EMERGING THEMES

Basic ingredients of collaboration and engagement?

- Obligations on government
- Will on both ‘sides’
- Funding for collaboration
- Cannot just be about traditional knowledge

Watch this space... ..

Dja Dja Wurrung peoples working with DELWP and CFA at grassland burns on Barapabarapa country
NEXT STEPS

- Develop literature review for publication
- Continue case study and end user engagement
- Commence southern Australia practitioner interviews
- AFAC 2018 presentation and poster

2018 upcoming events we are involved in:
- South-east Australia Aboriginal Fire Forum (Canberra, May)
- National Indigenous Fire Workshop (Bundanon, July)
- Deakin Aboriginal Fire Research Forum (TBC)
PROJECT TEAM

Dr Jessica Weir, Western Sydney University
Dr Timothy Neale, Deakin University
Dr Will Smith, Deakin University
Mr Oliver Costello, Firestick Initiative
Dr Brian Cook, University of Melbourne
A/Prof Tara McGee, University of Alberta
Prof Jeremy Russell-Smith, Charles Darwin University

END USERS

John Schauble, Emergency Management Victoria, Lead end user
Rowan Foley, Aboriginal Carbon Fund
Dean Freeman, ACT Parks and Conservation Service
Adam Leavesley, ACT Parks and Conservation Service
Aidan Galpin, Department for Environment, Water and Natural Resources
Simone Blair, Department of Land, Water and Planning
Rodney Carter, Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
NRM Committee, Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations
Simon Curry, NSW Rural Fire Service
Kate White, State Emergency Services Victoria
Stuart Gunning, WA State Emergency Management Committee

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QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK/INVOLVEMENT?

Come to the breakout session (14:50 in Red Cedar & Turpentine), or get in touch:

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