bushfire CRC

A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE?
Fire management's capacity to adapt to climate change: an institutional perspective

Karyn Bosomworth & John Handmer
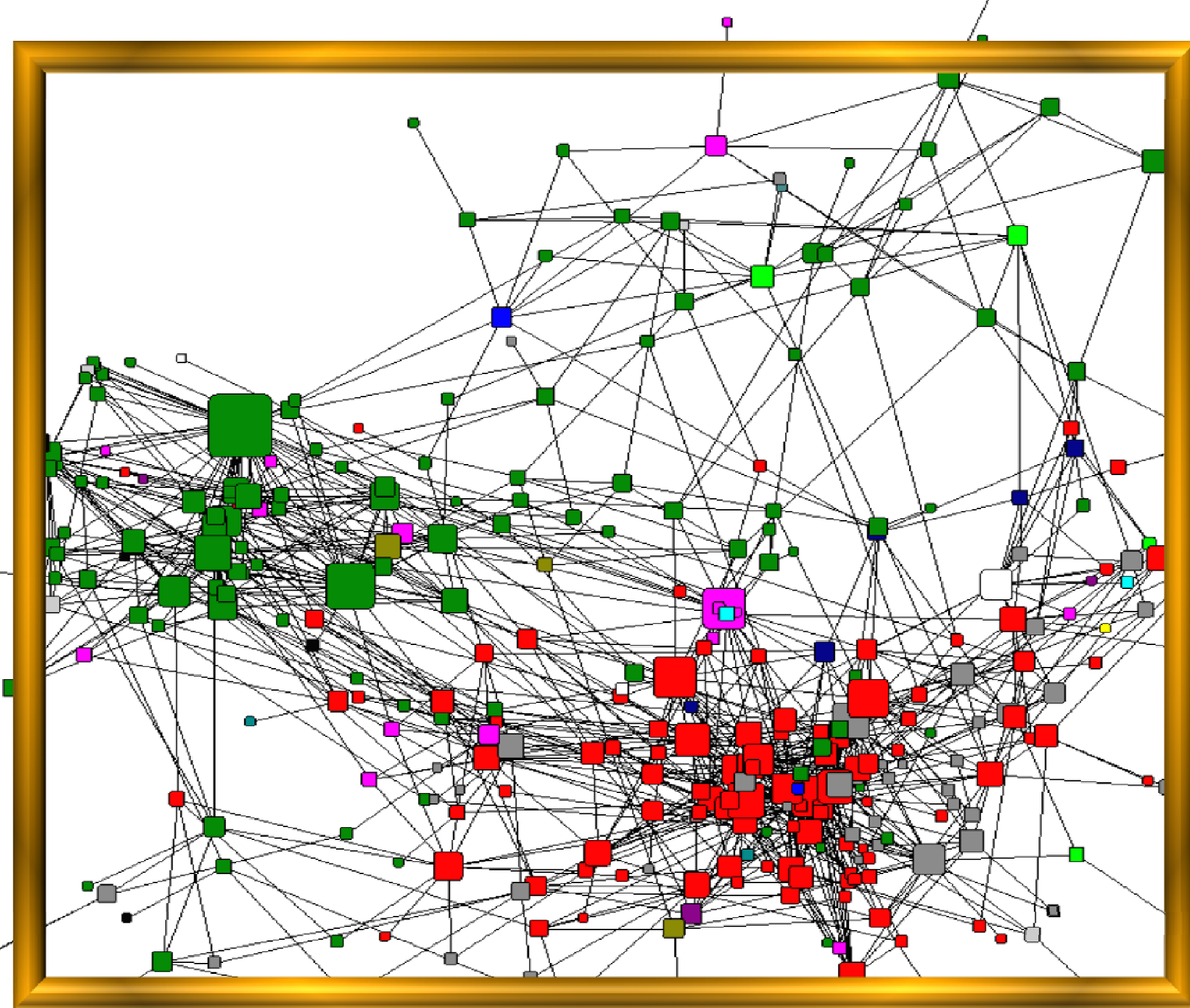
RMIT, Centre for Risk and Community Safety. Victoria

Adaptation to climate change requires a capacity for reflexive learning.
 In policy domains like fire management, this is includes reflection upon how policy problems are framed. It is also influenced by formal & informal institutions* such as bureaucratic networks

Using a case study of the fire management domain in Victoria, this research used **institutional, frame & network analyses** to:

- better understand how bureaucratic frames, networks & institutions might support or hinder reflexive learning in the sector

- identify how the sector might address barriers to, and support capacity for, reflexive learning; &

- explore **the sector's institutional capacity for adaptation to climate change**

Participating bureaucrats broadly frame fire management as a problem in **risk management, ecological management, or social-ecological 'balancing'.**

Each of these frames has certain assumptions about the causes & the legitimacy of 'solutions'.

Exploring dissonance and convergence among policy frames can provide insight into barriers to, and opportunities for, reflexive learning. IT also provides a more nuanced understanding of 'policy conflicts'.

The above sociogram depicts *some* of the information & advice sharing networks between some of the various organisations involved in the sector.

Different colours = different organisations

The bigger the node the more 'connections' that node has.

While there is some clustering, the organisations *are* connected at a very human level.
At an informal level, information is shared quite well among these participants.

Adaptive capacity lies in social networks, *including* those between people & groups with *different* 'frames'.

Diversity can avoid 'path dependencies', expand perspectives and provide a broader range of ideas about policy and governance options

* By institutions we do NOT mean organisations