

Media Use During the Grampians Fires - 2006

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Research Question

How do individuals and communities use their local, regional, and state-based media to understand the risks of bushfires, and obtain information about ongoing fires?



Background- Horsham Fire District Four significant Fires-

Griffin Track (21st December 2005), Deep Lead (31st December 2005), Yallakar (19th January 2006), Mt Lubra (20th January 2006).
Total of 142,558ha burnt (private & public land)

Methodology

Focus Groups sessions (Laharum–Wartook area). Use of recorded ABC radio audio segments in order to generate discussion of the topic.

Main Outcomes

- Media reports based on local knowledge are essential
- Official warnings fail where local knowledge perceived to be absent (mispronunciation of road names, use of old maps)
- ABC-Radio main source of information before and during fires
- Generic sensational media reports create anxiety
- Mass media use is only one part of a comprehensive process of information gathering from different sources
- E-mail and the Web are an important source of information and communication before and during fires

