



Social Construction of Fuels in the Interface

Two projects on understanding the places we live

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the greatest challenge in fire research is cultural
we need ... the distilled wisdom of past, inherited, learned experience
Tom Griffiths, We still have not lived long enough. Inside Story

Bushfire Risk Management

Bushfire Risk Management is a 'wicked' problem.

1. No win-win solutions
2. Conflicting societal values
3. Strong spatial dimension
4. Beyond 'what works'



Bushfire Risk Management

Bushfire Risk Management is a 'wicked' problem.

No straight-forward win-win solutions

Involves, particularly prescribed burning, resolving conflicting societal values:

- Community safety
- Public health
- Biodiversity conservation
- Economic interests

Dealing with these issues needs:

- more than knowledge of 'what works'
- judgements about 'what should be done' and
- Understanding of 'will it be accepted' by the community

Social Construction ?

1. **Social construction** => how individual & communities understand particular issues and their relative importance.



Social Construction

Social construction = how individual & communities understand particular issues and their relative importance.

This has a large impact on what is perceived as value and as hazard

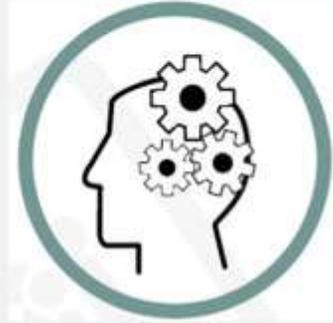
For vegetation and natural landscapes, this drives individual's motivation & understanding of bushfire risk, fuel hazard, biodiversity, landscape and amenity

Comprehending the perceptions these values & hazards is vital for effective sharing of knowledge about bushfire risk and for motivating collaboration in managing these risks

2 Projects – Increase our Understanding

1. Understanding conflicting values

- a) Amenity / landscape
- b) Natural value / biodiversity / nature
- c) Bushfire risk



2. Spatial understanding of values

3. Insights into how & where conflicting views are 'held'

Social Construction

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2 Projects – different aspects



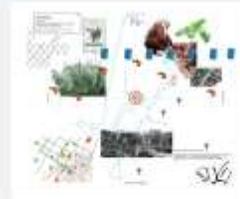
University of Wollongong



spatial overlap of conflicting perceptions
(cultural input to risk models)



University of Melbourne



Use 'place mapping'
(map centred interviews)

2 Projects – different aspects

University of Wollongong

Investigate the spatial overlap of conflicting perceptions arising from bushfire risk mitigation activities

Aims:

Clarify perceived conflicts to assist evaluation of mitigation options in making decisions

Increasing adoption & acceptance of risk mitigation activities

(via better informed decisions)

Methods:

Interviews with mapped outputs which can be used as inputs into risk models (another project)

Quantify / identify places of amenity 'value' & perceived conflicts with risk mitigation activities

University of Melbourne

Use 'place mapping' (map centred interviews)

Aims:

Explore & identify multiple values people associate with their landscape

Examine the scale of perception of landscape relative to bushfire

Develop/test an alternative approach to understanding community practices to living in landscapes with bushfire risk

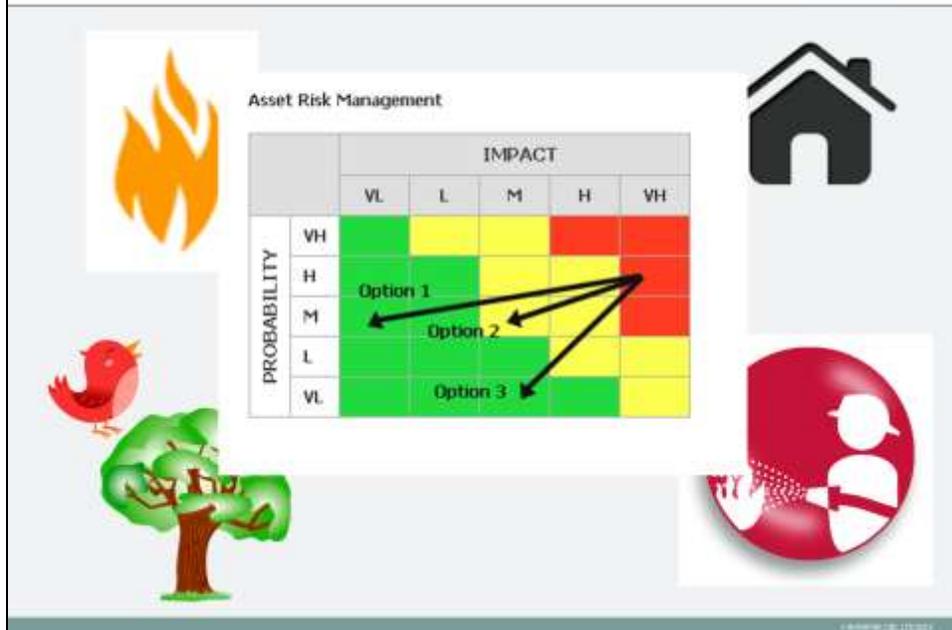
Methods:

Interviews where interviewees produce 'mud maps' of values & hazards in the context of their regular lives

Identify how people make 'sense' the environment/landscape in which they live

Identify how they live relative to the values & hazards identified

Project Outcomes



Projects outcomes

Activities to reduce the risk of bushfire impacts
more acceptable to community
in collaboration with the community