



bushfire&natural
HAZARDSCRC

NARROWING THE AWARENESS-ACTION GAP: CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF ROUTINE ALL-HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVES

MAKING “FIRE-FITNESS” A SOCIAL NORM

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Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Programme

WHY ARE WE INTERESTED IN

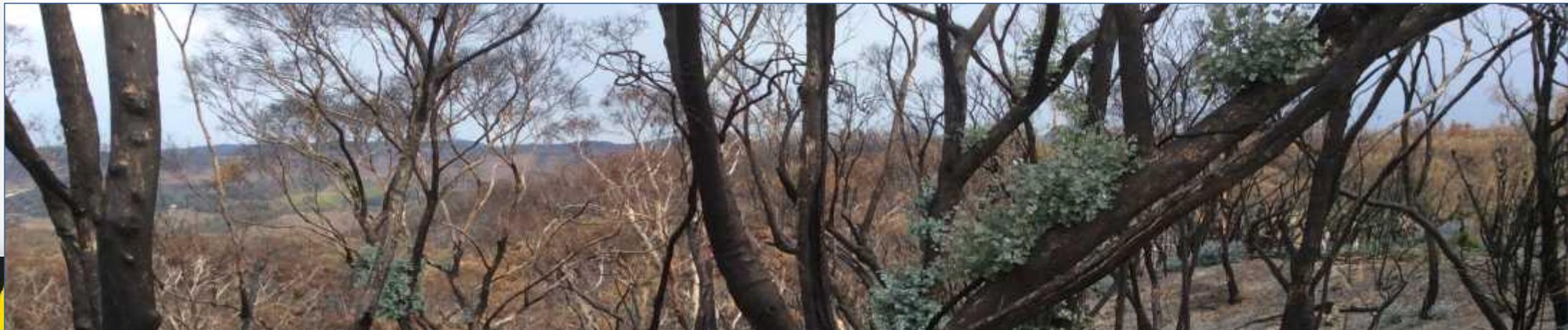
_____?

- Preparedness is *generally* suboptimal
- Prepared community (society) is a stronger and safer community
- Good preparedness → good DRR
- How is preparedness communicated
- New and/or different ways to make it better



THERE ARE A FEW GIVENS WHICH DON'T NEED ELABORATION

- Climate change
- New normal of extreme weather
- Sendai Framework For Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030
- Natural hazards are *non-routine social problems* (Drabek 2004)
- Improve human safety and well being - implicit in that is non-human and environmental safety & well being because that impacts directly on people...*One Health, One Welfare*

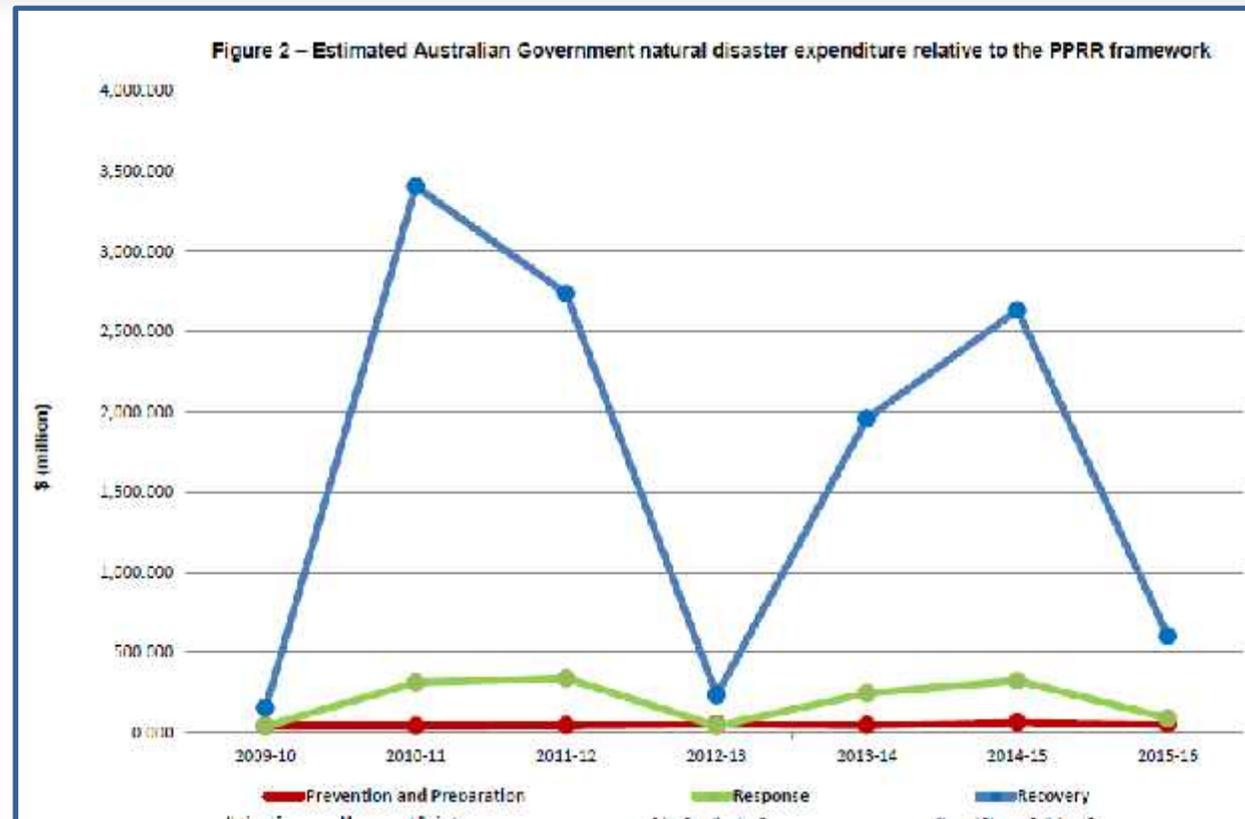


- **Achieving good preparedness is a multi-faceted exercise**
- **No one-size-fits-all**
- **Less costly than Response, Relief and Recovery**
- **Other advantages to being a well prepared society**



GENEVA, 27 April 2017 -
Australia estimates that its annual economic losses from disasters will **triple** to US\$17.7 billion by 2050

<https://www.unisdr.org/archive/52874>



PREVENTION & PREPAREDNESS

RESPONSE

RECOVERY

Attorney-General's Department Submission Productivity Commission inquiry into natural disaster funding arrangements June 2014 p 14 5

The
CART
BEFORE
THE
HORSE
Syndrome
?



See my blog post on the UNISDR DRR Voices blog page:
(details in handout)

<http://www.preventionweb.net/experts/oped/view/54363>

What Comes First? Building DRR By Cultivating A Preceding Culture Of Preparedness As A 'Social Norm'

Inherent conservatism –

Don't frighten the horses!

Innovative public policy has to overcome **conservative** public policy and bureaucracy, policy makers, government & a culture of consumerism



TO REITERATE THE PROBLEM

- Uptake of preparedness behaviour is generally (still) low
- Preparedness is a **PUBLIC HEALTH** issue
- Barriers to achieving good preparedness:
 - too hard, too big, too \$\$, too time-consuming
 - I don't know where to start
 - I don't know how to get help
 - It won't happen to me
 - I know I should get around to it
- **ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL**

CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

Make preparedness **ROUTINE** - as routine as **putting fuel in the car** or **buying the groceries**



PREPAREDNESS therefore becomes a **SOCIAL NORM**

PROMOTING PREPAREDNESS through NEW POLICY

1. Catastrophic Day Leave (CDL)

2. Financial incentives

- Insurance policies**
- Municipal fees and charges**
- Best practice rewards**
- Property value adding**

3. Farming practices, fuels and firebreaks

CATASTROPHIC DAY LEAVE

Formal workplace agreement between employer/employee

- “Trade” other leave or entitlements (e.g. recreation leave, overtime, Time-Off-In-Lieu (TOIL) days, Flex days
- Written into individual employee contracts
- Moves **preparedness** into the day-to-day **public realm**





FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Discounts on council rates or insurance policies for attending fire safe seminars

Awards and public recognition – “Bushfire Best Prepared”

Value adding for the sale of compliant properties



FARMING PRACTICES

Review the use of firebreaks & spraying fence lines

- a by-law??
- something to burn back to
- trials of chemical firebreaks

Conservation farming is a good thing

- no-till, no burn, retain soil organic matter
- greater crop density and productivity

Crop & fuel types – oilseed vs cereal vs grass

MEDIUM - LONG term changes to public health & safety policy

- Catastrophic Day Leave - optional but FORMAL workplace leave
- Give new people easily accessible fire safety information and reward them for joining in.
- Publicly acknowledge best practice.
- Give farmers incentive to put in firebreaks, and think about crop placement.

New, straightforward public policy, can help achieve this so that effective fire-fitness becomes just another part of daily life.

My name is **Rachel Westcott**

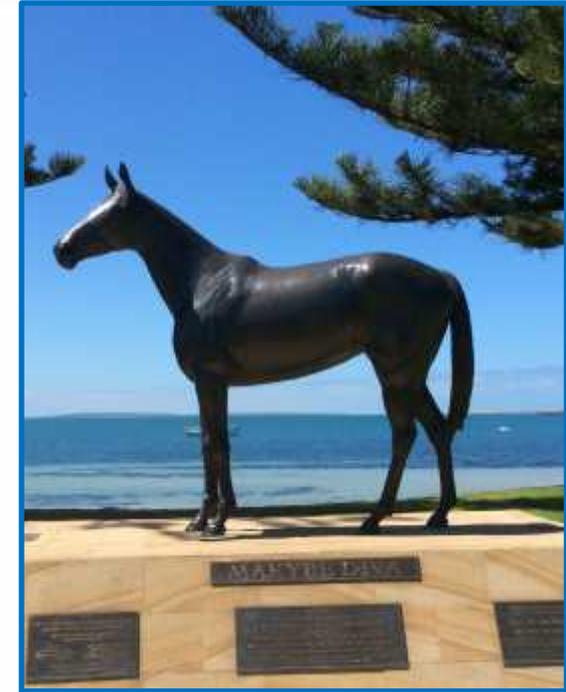
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Details in the handout



Some PhD Publications 2017

WESTCOTT, R., RONAN, K., BAMBRICK, H. & TAYLOR, M. 2017b. Expanding protection motivation theory: investigating an application to animal owners and emergency responders in bushfire emergencies. *BMC Psychology*, 5, 13.
DOI 10.1186/s40359-017-0182-3

WESTCOTT, R., RONAN, K., BAMBRICK, H. & TAYLOR, M. 2017a. Don't Just Do Something.....Stand There! Emergency Responders' Peri-Incident Perceptions of Animal Owners in Bushfire. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, 4, 34.
DOI 10.3389/fvets.2017.00034

UNISDR Prevention Web *DRR Voices* blog

<http://www.preventionweb.net/experts/oped/view/54363>

What comes first? Building DRR by cultivating a preceding culture of preparedness as a 'social norm'.