



bushfire&natural
HAZARDSCRC

HAZARDS, CULTURE AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Dr Timothy Neale, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and
Globalisation, Deakin University

Dr Jessica K Weir, Institute for Culture and Society, Western
Sydney University

Dr Will Smith, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and
Globalisation, Deakin University



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Programme

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY




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



View from Ngarri/Mt Egbert, 135 ha burn plot in Dja Dja Wurrung country/Murray-Goldfields

The intercultural context requires an intercultural approach

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?

KNOWLEDGE GENERATION, UTILISATION AND ENGAGEMENT

*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’



KCFS lighter and cultural burn at Nowra fire workshop
2017

Some publications and presentations to date...

Posters

- Weir, JK, Neale, T, Carter, R, Cook, B, Costello, O, Curry, S, Dore, J, Freeman, D, Gooding, O, Gunning, S, Leavesley, A, Mackintosh, L, McGee, T, Nugent, D, Russell-Smith, J, Schauble, J, and K White, 2017, 'Hazards, Culture, and Aboriginal peoples in Southern Australia', Poster, BNHCRC Showcase 2017 – Research Driving Change, Adelaide, 4-5 July, and, AFAC/BNHCRC conference, Sydney, NSW.
- Freeman, D and JK Weir, (2017) 'Cultural burning – join us for a fireside chat in chilly Canberra', Poster, AFAC/BNHCRC conference, 5-8 September, Sydney, NSW.

Presentations

- Neale, T and JK Weir, (2017), 'Hazards, Culture and Indigenous Communities', BNHCRC Showcase 2017 – Research Driving Change, Adelaide, 4-5 July.
- 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.
- Freeman, D (presenter) with Williamson, B and J Weir (panel), (2017) 'Summary Aboriginal Cultural Burns in the ACT 2015/2016', 'Bushfire Management – Balancing the risks', ACT Conservation Council symposium, Canberra, 21-22 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.



Jackson Taylor-Grant, Dean Freeman and Tim Neale (L to R) presenting at AFAC 2017 conference

CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW OF CANZUS CONTEXTS

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

QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK/INVOLVEMENT?

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

Tim Neale

t.neale@deakin.edu.au

Jessica Weir

j.weir@westernsydney.edu.au

Will Smith

will.smith@deakin.edu.au