



Comprehensive School Safety: A participatory approach to school bushfire emergency management planning.

Matthew Henry

Central Queensland University, School of Human Health and Social Sciences, QLD

Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, VIC

Supervisors : Professor Ken Purnell & Dr. Briony Towers

A participatory approach to school bushfire emergency management planning.

Although schools have an emergency management plan for bushfire to keep students, staff and the broader school community safe, are these plans effective during a bushfire event?

This research will examine the degree of involvement of the principal, students, staff, parents and community stakeholders in school bushfire planning, how concerned each group are about bushfire risk and whether the school community believe they could be more involved in school bushfire planning. The project will use a participatory action research (PAR) methodology to work collaboratively with the school principal, teachers, students, parents and members of the school community to investigate effective participatory approaches to school bushfire planning.

The UN-level Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) framework (UNESCO/UNICEF, 2014) provides a detailed and coordinated approach to reducing all hazard risks to the education sector. The CSS provides a guiding framework that can be customised to the Victorian school setting to facilitate the development of a participatory approach to school bushfire emergency management planning.

Research questions

1. Are current school bushfire emergency management planning policies and practices sufficient to be effective during a bushfire event?
2. Does the development of a participatory approach to school bushfire emergency management planning have the capacity to improve planning effectiveness?

Research Aims

1. Examine current school policies and practice related to school bushfire emergency management planning.
2. Investigate opportunities for the implementation of a participatory approach to effective school bushfire emergency management planning.

The research will involve:

- A Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis (PCVA) Focus group interviews with students
- Transect walk with students/school staff
- Risk and resource hazard mapping exercises
- Semi structured interviews with the school principal teaching staff, parents/carers, community stakeholders

A participatory approach to school bushfire emergency management planning, and the adoption of a school safety framework specifically designed for the Victorian school setting, has the potential to enable school communities to better prepare for, mitigate, respond to and recover from the impacts of bushfire.



• (Source, GADRRRES, 2014)