

# **Wildland Fires in Australasian Region: The UNISDR Regional Wildland Fire Network Activities 2011-2015 – Progress and Prospects**

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## **Abstract**

During the reporting period, the region experienced both strong La Niña and El Niño climatic events. Heavy rainfall across the arid heart of Australia resulted in very high grass fuel availability, resulting in wildfires across massive areas. Many individual fires were greater than a million hectares. Drought conditions in the temperate zones fueled many high intensity fires that resulted in significant structure losses and significantly disrupted communities. Compared to the previous period, relatively few lives were lost as a result of wildfire (10 compared to 195).

The wildfire research effort has been re-invigorated by the creation of the Bushfire Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Center (CRC) that will continue the good work of the former Bushfire CRC. The new research program has been commenced and looks at fire monitoring, prescribed burning and fire modelling. The new all-hazard approach allows emergency management research to be integrated and efficient.

The regional networks are strengthened by visits to and from the North American Fire Management Working Group, FAO Committee of Forestry, and Pole Risques. Ties have been maintained with Africa, South Africa and the Pacific Islands. Resource sharing has occurred with Canada and the United States of America. New Zealand and Australia take joint positions on many national issues and have commonly shared response resources.

The region supports the development of an International Fire Strategy and continues to collaborate on training, science and technology exchange.

***Key words:*** *Wildfires, Regional Wildland Fire Network, Forest Fire Management Group, AFAC, Global Wildland Fire Network, Bushfire Natural Hazards CRC*