

Home fires burning: A case study of community engagement in a fire-prone region

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This thesis investigates how the strategic policy direction of 'better community engagement' is understood and implemented across organisational levels of the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA). In recent decades, and particularly since the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, fire managers have been under increased pressure to better engage communities with bushfire risk. This is ultimately a strategic attempt to reduce loss of life and property through bushfire events. However, it also relates to reducing community expectations of fire services and lessening the vulnerability of Victorian fire-prone communities.

This thesis examines the extent to which adaptive governance informs the trend towards better community engagement in bushfire management policies. This research explores whether 'community engagement' refers to engagement with bushfire *risks* or engagement with bushfire *management*. This thesis concludes that there is capacity for the CFA to develop more holistic approaches to risk management through working with local government and other fire agencies.