

Bringing the Code Alive: The Wildfire Season of 2005/2006 in South Eastern Australia

Russell Rees and Ewan Waller¹

Abstract

The summer period of 2005/2006 was a period of significant fire activity within Victoria, Australia, involving 70 large fires, including 80,420ha of farmland and 108,400ha of public land with the total area consumed of 188,400ha. Two firefighters lost their lives, 56 houses and 3,298 livestock were lost.

These fires involved a very significant commitment from a range of agencies in preparation, response and recovery to the emergency. The presentation will use the fire scenarios of that period as a backdrop to bring the key principles of the Draft Fire Management Code alive. In particular, the presentation will show how the principles relating to community sustainability, the protection of life and assets, the minimisation of economic loss and the multi-stakeholder approach (including the use of effective community engagement and programs) limited the impact of the fires and ensured an effective process of recovery and rehabilitation.

The Code places particular emphasis on cooperation and partnerships, both within agencies and with key stakeholders. Examples of the effectiveness of such arrangements will be discussed and the strengths of the implementation presented as examples of effective operations. The delicate balance that exists across a range of issues, including forest and agriculture, productive forestry vs conservation, aggressive and non-aggressive fire strategies, and legal and policy frameworks will all be discussed.

¹ Estilo de la nota al pie del autor (utilizar números de nota diferentes para autores en diferentes lugares). Incluir dirección postal e e-mail.