

MessageMatrix



May – June 2009

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Black Saturday

Royal Commission

The first round of public hearings for the Royal Commission into the Victorian bushfires concluded on the 7th July.

Over the 35 days of hearings, a total of 87 witnesses have been called, including 29 residents and survivors. Interim findings are due on the 17th August.

Check out the website for updates, submissions and transcripts.

www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au

Bushfire Cleanup

The official bushfire cleanup has essentially ended. About 3000 properties have been cleared by the government contracted Grocon.

Recovery and Reconstruction

The Bushfire Recovery and Reconstruction Authority released a '100 Day Report' outlining their achievements so far. The report is on their website (good luck finding it). There are also links to what is happening in each affected community, grant and resource information and various other bits and pieces. www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au



Fire Designs

The Victorian government has launched an online catalogue of house blueprints that promotes architects' pro-bono efforts to bushfire victims. The catalogue features

nineteen architect-designed models that comply with new bushfire building codes and embody sustainable principles.

View them at www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au On looking at them, one wonders if living in a house called 'Hayball' is a good idea in a fire prone area.

The 2009 State of Design Festival is on at Federation Square 15-25 July. Of interest to us bushfire types is a free event, 'Design for Fire' on Friday 24th July, 9.30-11.30am, BMW Edge Federation Square. There is a public forum and a competition for building in bushfire prone areas. The website is hopeless to navigate, but give it a go anyway. www.stateofdesign.com.au

The Carbon Counting Game

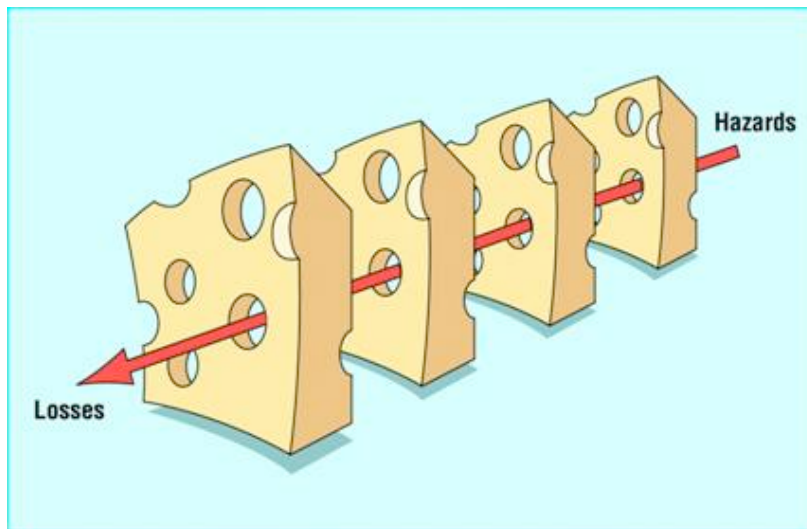
Australia has requested that carbon emissions from natural disasters, such as bushfires, not be counted in the countries overall tally for carbon accounting.

The 2003 fires in Victoria, NSW and ACT produced approximately 200 megatons of CO₂. Although this sounds reasonable, it would mean that carbon credits would still be claimed even if fires destroy large stands of trees being used as carbon offsets.

Where's the cheese?

Over the past couple of months Terramatrix (thanks Jon) has adopted the concept of risk controls as slices of Swiss Cheese (always a way to turn a conversation to something about food!) with a safety management system a block of cheese (think Emmentaler or Jalsberg) consisting of many risk controls stacked side by side.

The 'Swiss cheese model of accident causation', also referred to as the 'cumulative act effect', was first proposed by British



psychologist James T. Reason in 1990. Since this time it has gained widespread use, particularly in the healthcare and aviation sectors.

For the purposes of bushfire management, the model likens a risk control to a slice of Swiss cheese with each hole representing weaknesses. These weaknesses vary in size and position in all slices. An accident or tragedy occurs when all the holes in each of the slices momentarily align allowing a hazard to pass through all the holes in all the risk controls, resulting in impacts upon

people. To illustrate this I have provided a lovely diagram (thanks again Jon).

There are a number of scenarios which see management systems fail. The worse the design and implementation of a control the more holes it has. The fewer controls (or slices of cheese) that are in place the more likely it is for the holes to line up and a potential hazard to pass through. The greater the reliance on a single control, the greater the chance of tragedy if that control is found to be inadequate – either flawed in design or implementation.

Thus, a robust bushfire safety management system is constructed of multiple overlapping controls. When all these controls are stacked together, even imperfect controls are remarkably effective and it is better to add additional imperfect controls than to try to perfect a single control. Even well designed and implemented controls will fail for some people in some situations.



Birds Australia Mid Year Appeal 2009: Life after the fires

Wildfires are a key threat to many birds whose survival depends on appropriate fire management. Several of Birds Australia's ongoing projects specifically examine the effects of bushfire on our birdlife.

By making a donation to Birds Australia, you will help them to understand the processes of regeneration and recolonisation, which will help in rehabilitation efforts after future bushfires.

For more information go to www.birdsaustralia.com.au

And in the office...

Busy would be the only word to describe us. Very very busy, which is good, very good, isn't it everybody!

Work stuff

The gang has been traipsing about Victoria with site assessments. The Otways, Macedon Ranges, Dandenongs and over Mt Hotham to Omeo have all been subjected to Terra-attention. Nancy, has taken to site assessments like a duck to water.

Site assessment highlights include several four wheel driving experiences and feeling snow fall on Mt Hotham on the first day of the snow season.

Other ways we have been spending our time include:

- Adopting as many management buzz words and politically correct phrases into our workplace as humanly possible.
- Reviewing, updating, improving and streamlining our internal processes (as part of our continual improvement program!).

We are planning and preparing to begin the preseason rail audit for 2009/10.



"I told you we should have gone left at the last intersection"

New work includes:

- The development of wildfire prevention and preparedness plans for five of Manningham City Council's Reserves and Open Spaces.
- Undertaking a strategic risk assessment of the City Of Monash bushland reserves.
- Working with the CFA to assess the Community Safety Directorate Managers in achieving the Advanced Diploma in Public Safety.

New Skills

Kayla can now look after us when we are out in the field. Completing an Advanced Wilderness First Aid course gaining competencies in provision of first aid, provision of advanced first aid response, respond to emergency situations and follow defined occupational health safety policies and procedures. Good work!



And these two are respected in the industry!

Terrasocial

We are always a sociable bunch, but I feel we need to flaunt the highlight - dinner at the swanky Cutler and Co. Actually, really this is just an excuse for amusing photos! He he.



Love the sock action!



Terrababes - is that PC?