



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Fire & Emergency Services**  
**Rural Fire Division**



# Bushfires, climate change and local governments: best practice in Western Australia

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# The Challenge.....



Photo Tim McNaught



Photo Neil Burrows

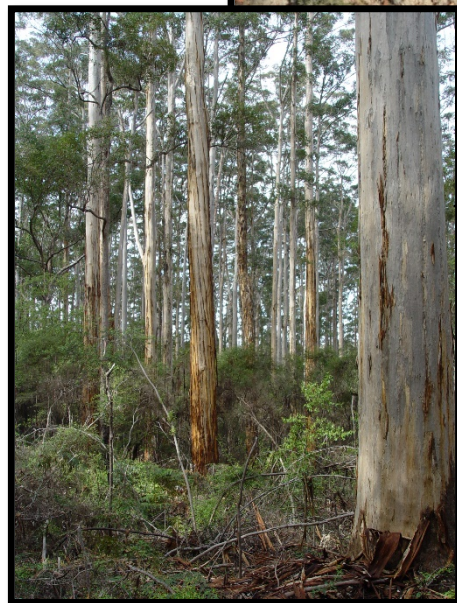
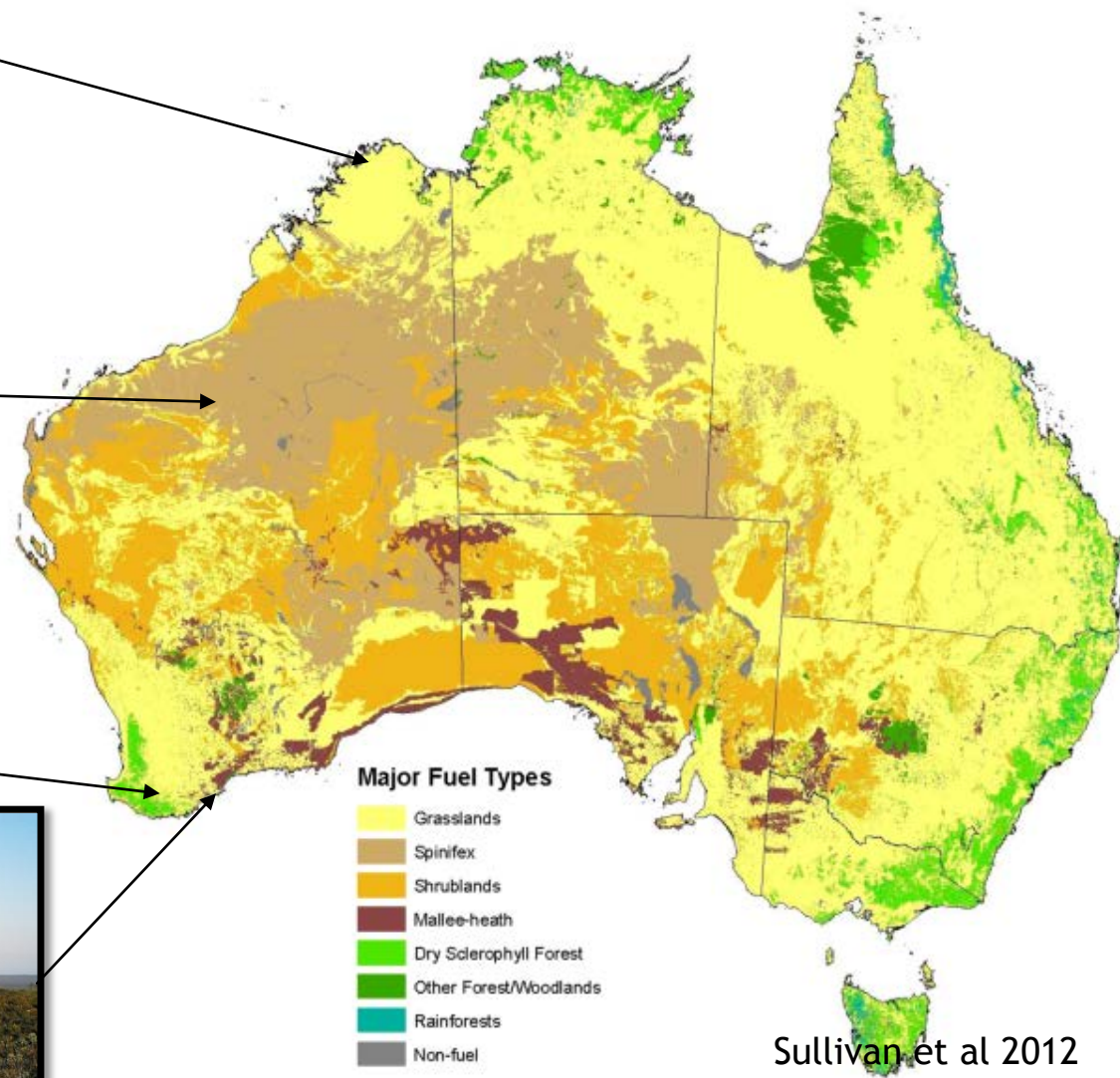


Photo DBCA



Photo DBCA



Sullivan et al 2012



# Fire prone landscape and population distribution

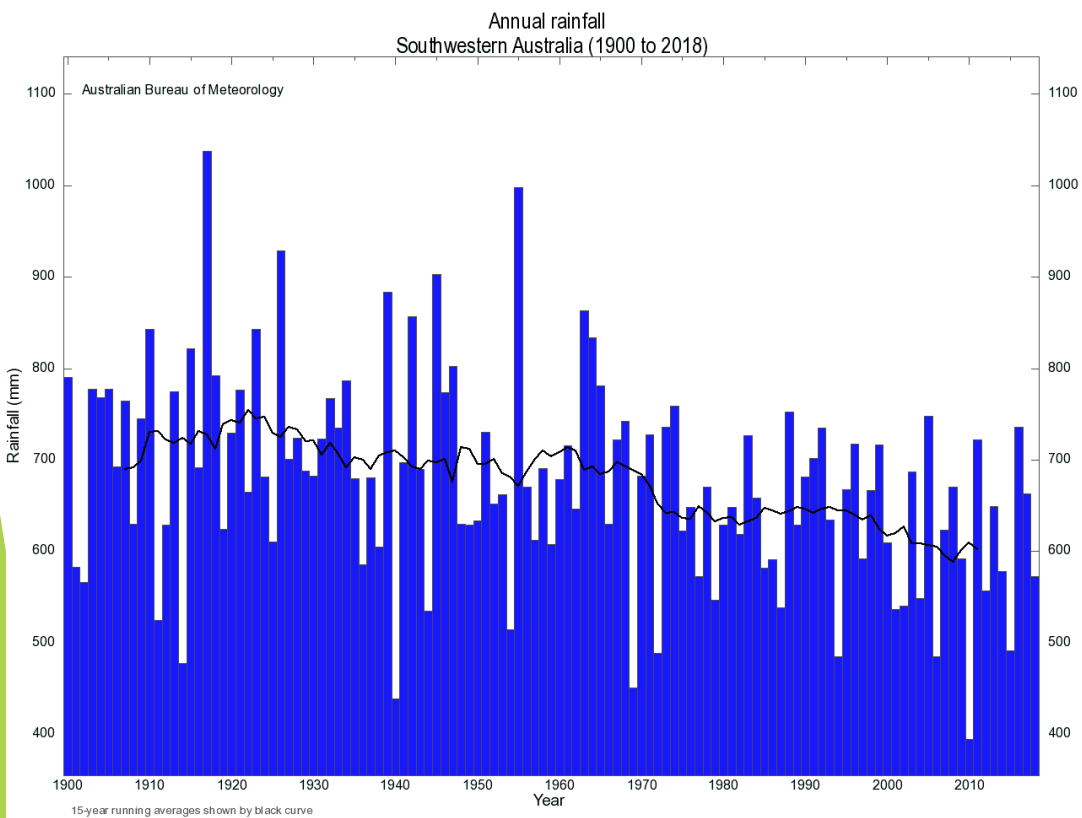
- ▶ Fire is part of the landscape - comparative frequency across Kimberley versus South West Land Division (SWLD)
- ▶ SWLD contains highest proportion of population and heavy forest fuels
- ▶ Economic Infrastructure spread across state (wheatbelt, grazing, mining, tourism)
- ▶ Some fire sensitive communities exposed to hotter more frequent fires



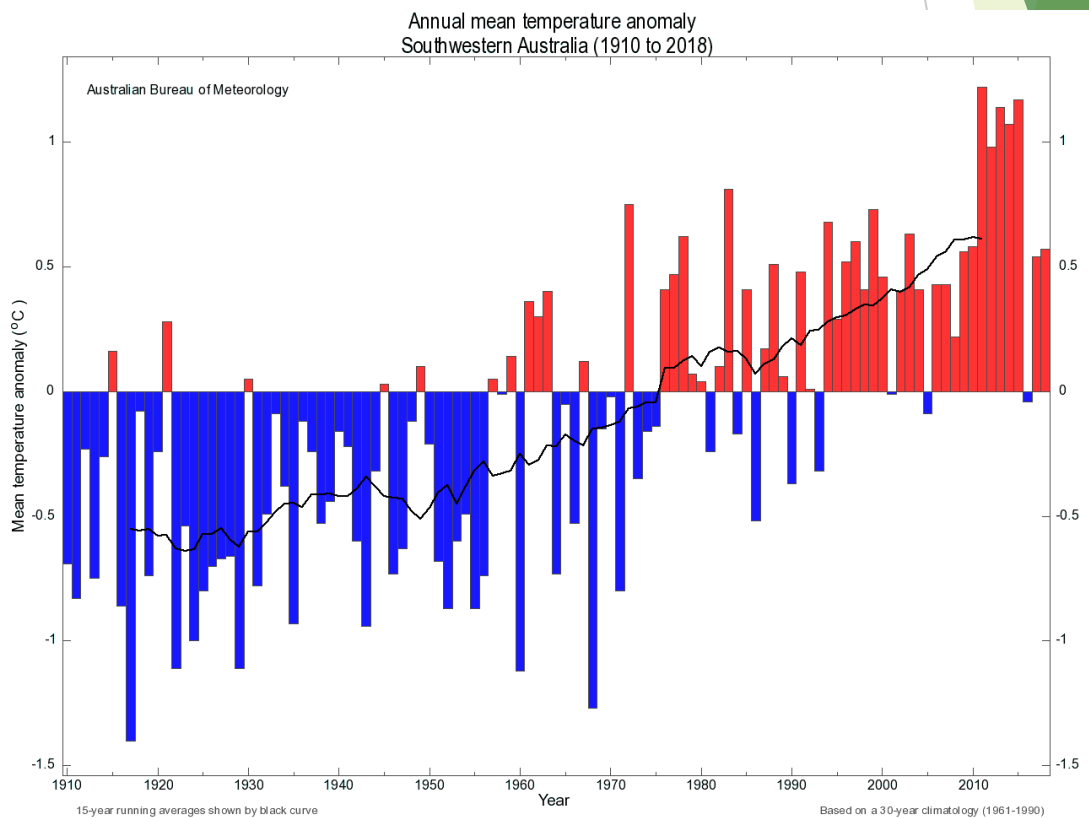
Image ESRI

# Changing climate of the South West Land Division

## Declining Rainfall Trend



## Warming Climate Trend

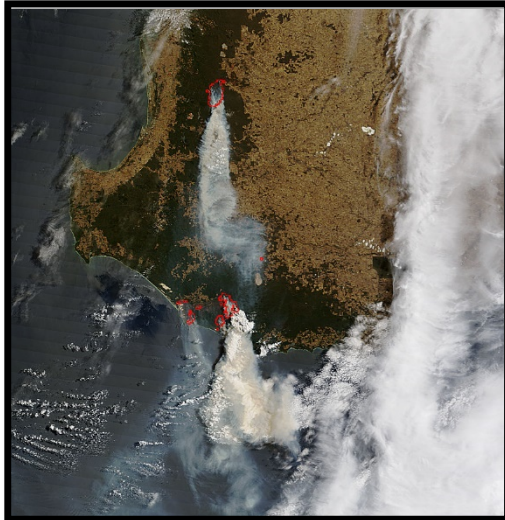




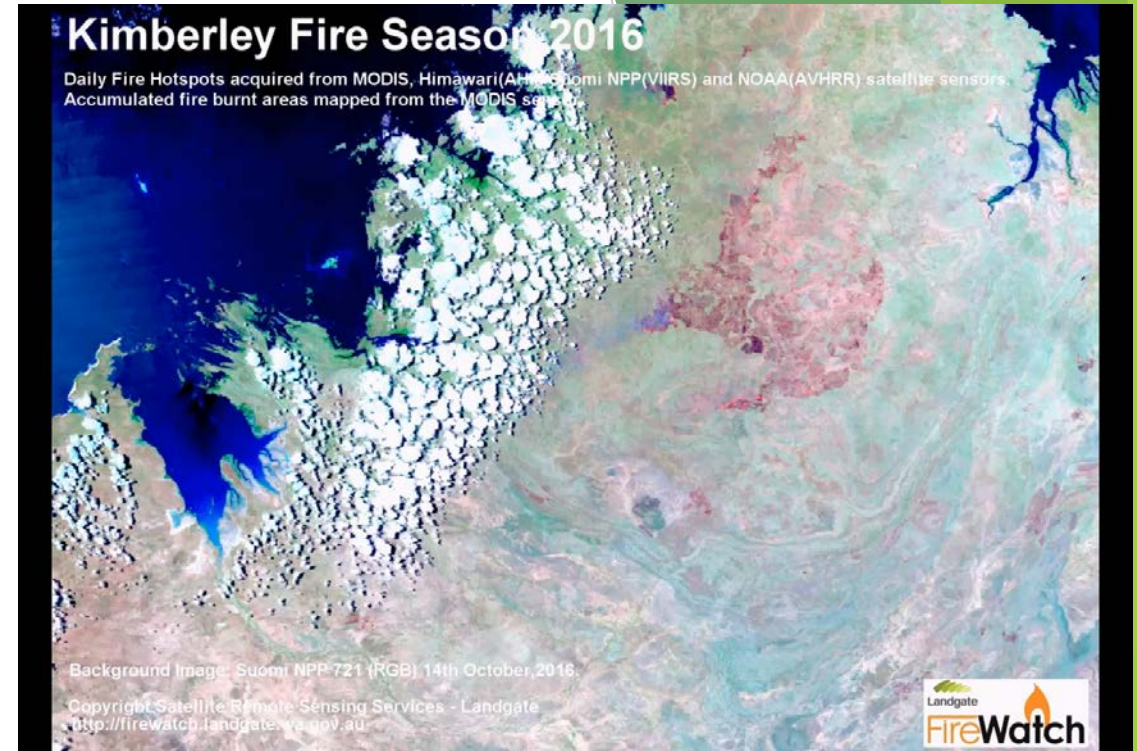
## More, bigger fires with bigger impacts in WA



Esperance Nov 2015. Photo AAP



Boddington and Northcliff Bushfires Feb 2015.  
Image NASA



Waroona Jan 2016. Photo Annemarie Bell

# Seasons are changing and forcing adaption

- ▶ Late autumn fires South West and Great Southern Regions 2018
  - ▶ More than 200 fires (5% gvt, 95% private)
  - ▶ Dry soil, warm air mass, strong winds, variable rainfall following
  - ▶ Varied preparedness across state and local governments
- ▶ A new normal, requires a reprioritisation of efforts and strategy



Torndirrup NP Bushfire, Albany 23 May 2018. Photo Brad Smith

# Western Australia approach to share the responsibility?

- ▶ Using a flexible and multifaceted risk based approach to suit the WA context-policies, programs and incentives
- ▶ Applying Preparedness, Prevention, Response and Recovery (PPRR) model to bushfire management
- ▶ Preparedness and prevention leadership at State and Local Government level
  - ▶ Collaborative models (effective utilisation of resources, tenure blind risk assessments, smoke management, Bushfire Centre of Excellence)
  - ▶ Support models - strategic planning (Map of Bushfire Prone Areas, Bushfire Risk Management Planning), Guidance (Bushfire Centre of Excellence, application of Bush Fires Act 1954, Emergency Services legislative review)
  - ▶ Funding - \$50M mitigation (2017-2023), \$18M Bushfire Centre of Excellence



# Collaborative models

- ▶ Effective integration of state government, local government and volunteers
  - ▶ State funded roles in local government, DFES staff supporting planning and execution of mitigation activities, volunteer liaison officers within DFES
  - ▶ DFES led reviews of enforcement mechanisms with WALGA, LG representatives (Bush Fires Act - permit to burn and s33 fire break notice)
  - ▶ Bushfire Risk Mitigation Planning - tenure blind planning
  - ▶ Smoke management - partnering with Asthma Foundation WA, BOM, Dept. Health, Dept. Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and Dept. Fire and Emergency Services
  - ▶ Bushfire Centre of Excellence - training



# Strategic Planning - Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas and Bushfire Risk Mitigation Planning



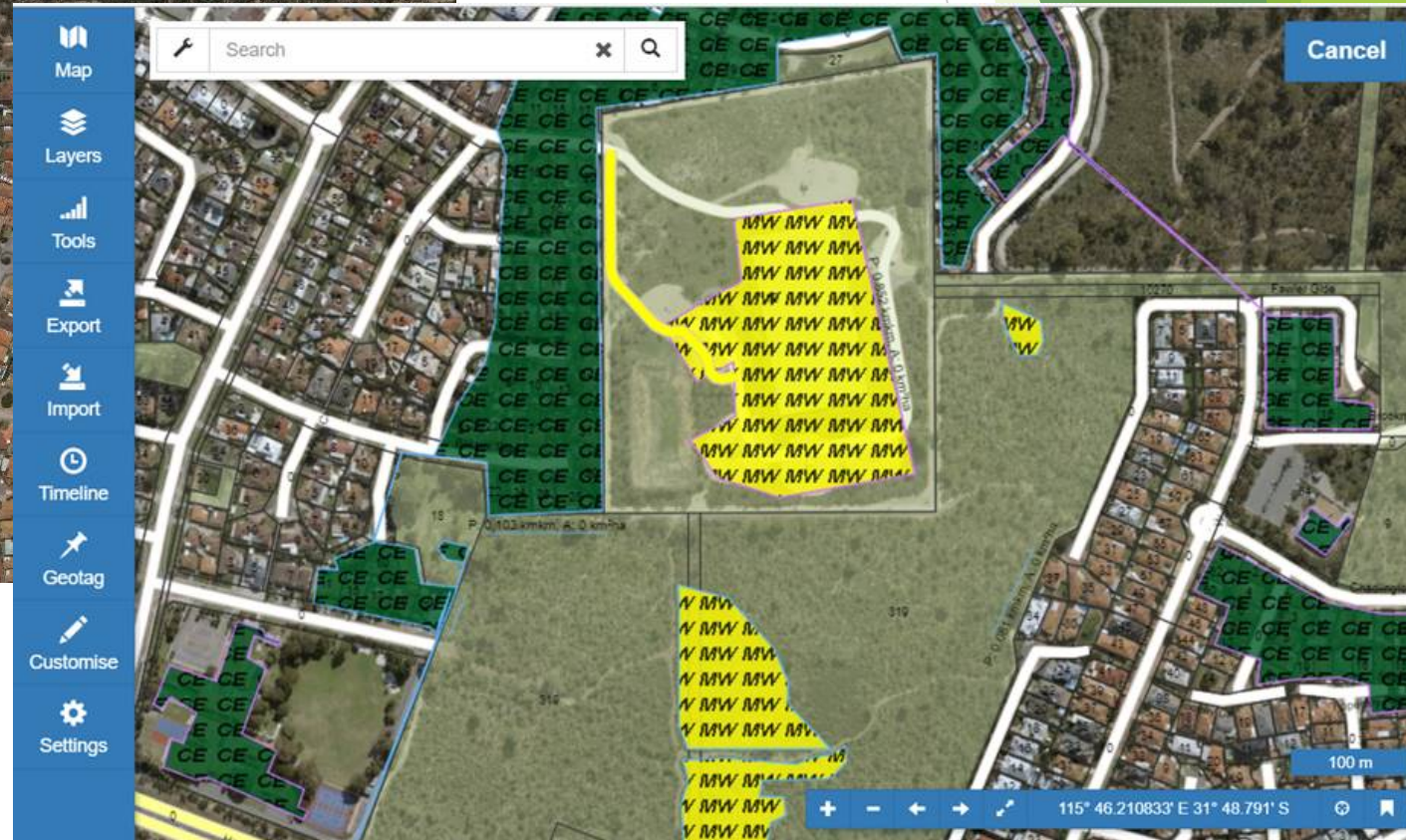
Perth Metro - pink bushfire prone area



City of Joondalup



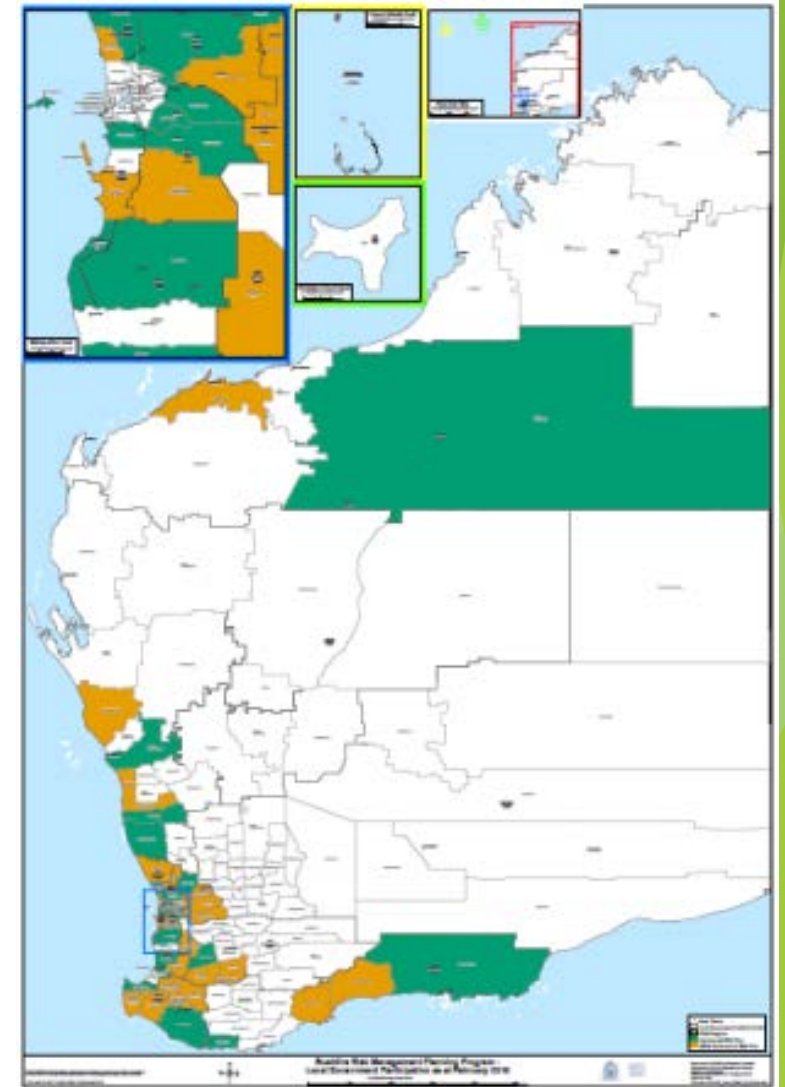
# Bushfire Risk Mitigation Planning (BRMP)





# Funding models - smoothing the peaks and troughs

- ▶ Funding tended to follow major bushfire events (responsive)
- ▶ Government now adopted a preventative approach i.e. fund mitigation
- ▶ \$15M Mitigation Activity Fund 2017 to 2020
- ▶ \$35M Emergency Services Levy support BRMP roll out and funding of mitigation works 2018 to 2022



Status of BRMP rollout Feb 2019



# Measuring and reporting a changing risk profile

- ▶ 99 of 137 local governments reported to Office of Bushfire Risk Management for 2017/18
- ▶ 14 Commonwealth, State or Non-government Organisations reported for 2017/18
- ▶ Supporting a more complete picture of activity and its role in mitigating bushfire risk
- ▶ Through implementation of multifaceted approach we are identifying trends, strengths and opportunities for improvement with the strategies

# Bushfires are part of our landscape, its how we manage their impact

- ▶ Western Australia's strategy will be tested! It is being built to support adaption to changing climate and political landscapes
- ▶ How can you fulfil your role more effectively in leading adaption to a changing climate and managing the changing bushfire related risk?

Thankyou

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