



level 13, 200 queen street, melbourne, 3000
ph: +613 8648 6552
fax: +613 8648 6480
ABN: 76 142 984 110
www.rosemaryhardham.com.au

briefing document

organisation: Bushfire & Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre

position: Independent Chair

location: East Melbourne

date: December 2018



the organisation

introduction and overview:

The Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC (BNHCRC) has established itself as the national research centre focusing on the mitigation of, response to and recovery from natural hazards in Australia. It is addressing a COAG national strategy – The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, which in turn is aligned to the United Nations' Integrated Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Sendai Framework for Action 2015-2030. The BNHCRC was established in 2013 and under its Commonwealth Agreement runs until mid 2021.

The BNHCRC is focused on innovation in the public and private sectors to reduce the impact of natural hazards on the Australian economy, environment and society. This is being achieved through the creation of knowledge and tools to improve the development of policy, the delivery of emergency services and through community resilience. The CRC is working with and will continue to build upon a number of private sector players, particularly in the insurance sector to broaden the impact of the CRC's work.

The problem the BNHCRC is addressing is large and is linked to the financial, economic and social impacts of natural hazard events. These events cost the country around \$9 billion per annum. The work of the BNHCRC is focussed on the reduction of these costs particularly through research into better mitigation options and social programs.

vision:

"The preferred and trusted source of research and knowledge in bushfire and natural hazards"

The Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC will continue to build on its networks to become the preferred and trusted source of research and knowledge on natural hazards.

The challenge presented to Australasia from natural hazards is an ongoing one, and the Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC will work with its partners and governments to establish a sustainable research capability for the nation and the region.

mission:

BNHCRC's mission is to provide valued, high-quality research and advice on natural hazards to:

- reduce risk
- enhance disaster resilience
- reduce negative social, economic and environmental impacts
- build an internationally renowned Australian and New Zealand research and utilisation capacity and capability

The core business of the Centre is to undertake research and provide advice to address key challenges highlighted by its partners. The shared aims are to reduce the risks associated with bushfires and other natural hazards, through a better understanding and mitigation of the hazards, the exposures and the vulnerabilities.

The Centre forms a critical part of the implementation of the Council of Australian Governments' National Strategy on Disaster Resilience. The Centre seeks to reduce the impacts of hazards through the **application** of better knowledge and the **creation** of core national datasets.

strategic goals:

The Board of the CRC has set a series of strategic goals for the Centre:

- **create a durable resource for the industry**
The requirement for the ongoing input of new research, knowledge and understanding into the industry is accepted. It is a goal of the Centre to ensure that a durable resource capable of meeting this need is established
- **generate knowledge through high-quality research**
A core aspect of the CRC is to create new knowledge that can stand up to the most intense scrutiny from scientific peer-review or through the many inquiries that beset this industry
- **build enduring partnerships for effective conduct and use of research**
The Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC is a partnership that has been formed to achieve the aim of conducting research that is used. The strength of the Centre is its partnerships. The CRC exists because partners can achieve more together than they can achieve alone
- **translate the research through to adoption**
It is not enough to undertake research; it is critical that the work is translated into knowledge that is adopted. The Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC will enable the adoption and use of its research through translation into industry-ready products
- **contribute to the delivery of a disaster-resilient Australasia**
It is a shared belief by all jurisdictions that Australasia needs to become more resilient to the increasing shocks and disasters it will endure in the coming years. The Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC is a significant part of the enabling this

The Board believes it is well on-track in delivering on the goals of research and knowledge generation, maintenance of partnerships and establishing processes for research translation. While these strategic goals remain important, over the period 2019 to mid-2021 the major strategic issues for the Board will be ensuring that new knowledge translates into impacts on policy, in the community and among emergency services partners and that an on-going research capability is established to serve the nation post-mid-2021

the position

position: Independent Chair
reports to: Members of the Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC

The Independent Chair of the BNHCRC Board drives the CRC's successful contribution to the national disaster resilience agenda. The Chair exercises leadership over the Governance Board to ensure the organisation is well governed, meets all its statutory and fiduciary responsibilities and delivers value for its Members and stakeholders. The Chair leads, facilitates and encourages others in the achievement of the company's objectives.

governance board:

The number of Directors constituting the Governing Board including the Independent Chair will be no less than seven and no more than 10 elected in accordance with the BNHCRC Constitution. There are currently nine Directors comprising the Governing Board. The Board has five set meetings per year.

term of office:

The BNHCRC is funded until June 2021 and typical appointments are for three-year periods. An Independent Chair is able to be re-elected.

Independent Chair:

In accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth Agreement, the Chair must not:

- be an employee of any Participant; or
- have any business or other relationship that could materially interfere, or could reasonably be perceived to materially interfere with, the exercise of their unfettered and independent judgement

specific duties and responsibilities:

The role of Independent Chair requires the time and commitment to:

- Lead the Governing Board, including moulding the team, attracting and retaining the best people for the Board
- Ensure the Board achieves its strategic goals and actively develops and reviews performance and priorities
- Chair all Board and Member meetings, including the annual general meeting and extraordinary general meetings
- Create a governance and management environment characterised by accountability, trust and respect
- Mentor, cultivate and maintain strong communications channels with the CEO
- Monitor the CEO's performance against established criteria | measures of financial and operating performance, in conjunction with the Board
- Take command of difficult situations when the need dictates
- Initiate policy decisions with the CEO and the Board
- Maintain the culture, ethical values, and attitudes of the Company
- Ensure that probity is maintained in accounting, reporting and all other compliance obligations

the person

skills and attributes:

Relevant tertiary and professional qualifications including graduate standing of the Australian Institute of Company Directors

competencies:

- **knowledge of corporate governance** – the ability to facilitate the governance processes and ensure compliance with applicable laws and obligations
- **stakeholder management** – ability to build, manage and sustain lasting and constructive relationships in a complex stakeholder environment
- **facilitative leadership** – the ability to inform and brief fellow Directors on current company matters and strategies and the ability to lead constructive and timely discussion and debate, drawing on the expertise of the Board
- **people management** - experience in evaluating performance, succession planning and executive remuneration, and developing people
- **integrity** – fulfilling a Director's duties and responsibilities, acting ethically, having appropriate independence, putting the organisation's interests before personal matters. Astute, independent judgement and ability to make tough decisions
- **strategic vision** – ability to ensure that the established strategic goals of the organisation are achieved
- **collaborative leadership** – able to engage in an ongoing, robust working relationship with the CEO. Able to inspire individual contribution and participation of each Board member to use their collective expertise in the best interests of the company. Ability to influence other institutions in delivery of a disaster resilient Australia
- **experience as a Director, ideally as Chair** - previous experience as a Director or Chair of a Board and an understanding of the legal responsibilities and liabilities of a Director and a Board
- **professional standing** – strong and effective powers of persuasion, respected and highly regarded
- **commercial astuteness and business acumen** – demonstrate good business instinct and acumen and be able to use this in a variety of situations

