

A new direction for community engagement in fire safety

Kristen Daisy Cleland, Country Fire Authority

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) in Victoria has developed the 'Bushfire Safety for Workers' online training module to meet increased demand from employers wanting to enhance safety for workers who travel through or work in high bushfire-risk areas.

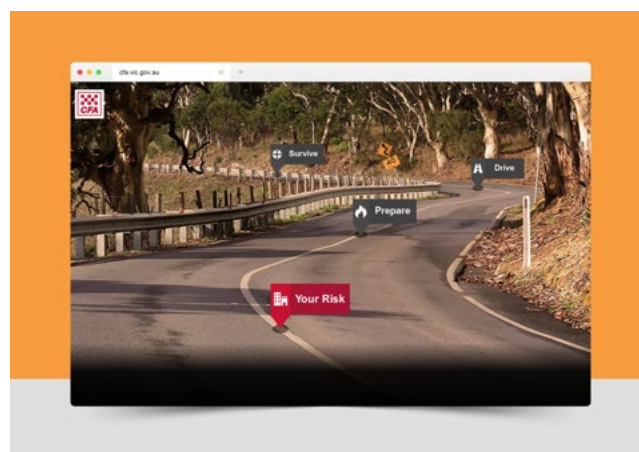
CFA bushfire safety programs have traditionally considered residents living in high bushfire-risk areas as the primary audience. However, people also travel through and spend significant time in these areas for their work. Over the last ten years, there has been increasing demand for bushfire safety sessions for workers, particularly in the health sector (the largest growing employment sector in Australia) and in many other sectors of employment across Victoria. CFA has embraced technology to develop an interactive online training module, which has been adapted from sessions that were previously delivered face-to-face.

A new Bushfire Safety for Workers program was released in October 2018 and is the first public-facing online training offered via the CFA Learning Management System. The online module delivers safety information and learning to an expanded audience in a format that allows participants to learn at their own pace and convenience.

The program's content covers four main areas: 'Your Risk', 'Prepare', 'Drive' and 'Survive'. It includes interactive scenarios, videos and questions for participants to answer to test their knowledge about bushfire safety. This information helps users understand what to do during the Fire Danger Period and what to do if caught in a bushfire.

Since its release in 2018, CFA has gathered feedback from participants, which will inform improvements to the module. The aim is to deliver the right experience to the right person at the right time in a flexible way that meets user needs in an environment of increasing and competing demands.

Some limitations of online training delivery is that it removes classroom-style interactions and the ability for individuals to ask specific questions. The training cannot be tailored to specific audiences or circumstances and may not meet the needs of all who undertake it. For this reason, a 'blended' approach was chosen to deliver the module. This allows for both the online module and a



The Bushfire Safety for Workers module is available online as well as via face-to-face and covers topic areas of Your Risk, Prepare, Drive and Survive.

Image: Country Fire Authority Learning Hub

face-to-face program to be delivered if it is needed and if capacity exists.

To date, over 1825 people have taken part in the module and more than 1460 have completed the program. Feedback shows 93 per cent of those completing the module are satisfied with the content, would recommend it to others and believe undertaking the training it was worth their time.

Recent data highlights:

- 96 per cent of those who completed the module said the program held their interest
- 98 per cent understand how to apply what they learnt in the module
- 96 per cent of participants responded they would be confident in applying what they learnt in their roles
- 95 per cent agreed that they were overall satisfied with the training they received.



The Country Fire Authority Bushfire Safety for Workers is meeting an increased demand for online training.

Source: Country Fire Authority Learning Hub

While this early data is promising, how it translates into behaviour change and action by participants is yet to be evaluated. CFA will conduct robust evaluation of the approaches to engage communities about fire safety.

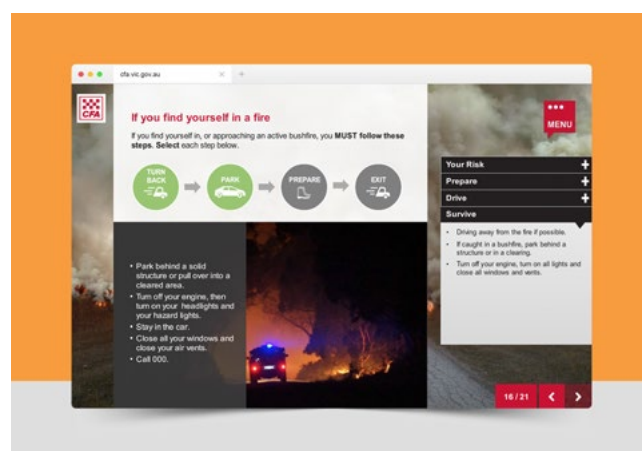
To deliver services that meet the specific needs of customers and improve customer satisfaction, we need to engage citizens in the design process. This means we better understand their needs and can create customer-centric programs and services on a range of platforms, to achieve better outcomes for our customers – the Bushfire Safety for Workers module has achieved this.

Karen Enbom, CFA Manager Community Engagement

CFA has anecdotal evidence of changes employers have made in work processes after participation in Bushfire Safety for Workers, such as improved safety procedures for staff on the road during high-fire-risk days.

For now, CFA will monitor the use of the module, promoting it to employers as a good way to educate staff working in high-risk-bushfire locations. There are also plans to embed the online module into CFA induction and training for technical and administrative members who may not have received operational training and may travel and work in bushfire-risk areas.

Access the CFA Bushfire Safety for Workers online training at <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/bushfire-safety-for-workers>.



The online modules include scenarios so users can understand the information quickly.

Image: Country Fire Authority Learning Hub