

CRAWFORD SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND GOVERNMENT

Learning to live like Australians: reflections on the Victorian fires

Andrew Campbell

Tuesday 24 March 2009
12.30 - 1.30pm
Seminar Room 4
First Floor, Crawford Building
Light lunch will be provided

The recent bushfires in Victoria have sparked (no pun intended) an at times acrimonious debate in the media and beyond about why these fires led to such a tragic loss of life and property. Conservationists and 'green policies' supposedly against fuel reduction burning have been a popular target for such noted fire management experts as Germaine Greer, Andrew Bolt and Amanda Devine. The drivers behind the size, ferocity and consequently the impact of these fires were multiple, interacting, complex and systemic – a classic recipe for media to simplify into an unhelpful polarisation into two opposing camps. This seminar will attempt to unpack these drivers, exploring the wider public policy implications of what these fires reveal about how well adapted contemporary Australian society is for living in this continent now – and as southern Australia becomes even hotter, drier and subject to more extreme weather events. The seminar will draw upon an essay that can be found at www.triplehelix.com.au

Andrew Campbell is the Managing Director of Triple Helix Consulting (www.triplehelix.com.au). He was the Executive Director of Land & Water Australia for seven years to 2006, has been a senior executive in the environment portfolio, and was instrumental in the development of Landcare. Andrew has written widely on sustainability and knowledge management issues and has professional training in forestry and rural sociology from the University of Melbourne and Wageningen Agricultural University in The Netherlands.

CRAWFORD SEMINAR