

Media Release

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FPA Australia supports UWS Bushfire Protection Program

FPA AUSTRALIA is playing a leading role in supporting a key postgraduate program in bushfire protection to the broader industry, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Western Sydney (UWS).

The UWS offers a postgraduate program which includes Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate in Bushfire Protection. FPA Australia administrates a professional accreditation scheme called Bushfire Planning And Design (BPAD) Certification Scheme.

The two parties recognise though the MOU each other's core business in the area of bushfire protection.



(L-R) Dr Betty Gill, Acting Executive Dean, College of Health and Science at the University of Western Sydney, and FPA Australia president, Mr Chris Orr, sign the MOU.

FPA Australia Chief Executive Officer, Mr Scott Williams, said the UWS' program underpins the qualifications required by the Association's BPAD Certification Scheme.

"The signing of the MOU is a significant step in helping industry to ensure that professionals receive the necessary education and training to achieve high level of competence in Bushfire Protection," Williams said.

"By doing this, we help ensure that we all live and enjoy a safe environment with the appropriate planning controls and construction to reduce bushfire risk." Said Mr Williams

Dr Yaping He, Head of the Bushfire Program in the UWS School of Engineering, said "Our bushfire protection program has been established for more than 6 years and is a unique one in Australasia. We recognise the importance of the current program and believe this MOU sets the foundation for close collaborations with FPAA for future development."

Mr Grahame Douglas, the Course Advisor, said students of the program gain a solid understanding of bushfire behaviour, fire fighting and the impact of bushfires on the natural and built environment.

"Students acquire the skills and knowledge to assess the risks of building sites and respond with tailored designs that meet the relevant standards to protect life, assets and the environment from bushfire.," Mr Douglas, said.

"Graduates are also able to provide advice on the development of alternative solutions for construction in bushfire prone areas and emergency management arrangements for special developments such as nursing homes, aged care facilities and schools."

FPA Australia president, Mr Chris Orr, believes the UWS program has the strength and breadth to set a national benchmark. "Following the tragedy of Black Saturday in Victoria in February 2009, there is an even greater need to ensure industry professionals and practitioners to have a superior level of understanding in the fundamentals of bushfire protection," Orr said.

“Evidence submitted to the Victorian Royal Commission into the Black Saturday fires highlighted a need for greater education, awareness and professional development for those designing, building and overseeing construction in bushfire prone areas.

“The UWS program together with the FPA Australia’s accreditation scheme facilitates the pathway to achieve this goal.”

The courses are based on distance learning with a flexible mode of delivery to cater for full-time employed professionals to undertake part-time study.

They attract students from all over Australia, including fire agency staff, building surveyors, architects, town planners, environmental practitioners and builders. The UWS is currently negotiating with the CFA the delivery of the program to its staff and will provide opportunities for those in local government and the private sector to participate.

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The Fire Protection Association Australia is the country’s peak body for fire safety, providing information, services and training to the fire protection industry and broader community. For more information, please see www.fpaa.com.au or contact FPA Australia – (03) 9890 1544.