**Abstract – Latin American Fire Agencies - *Community engagement and messaging around wildfire risk***

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Over CFA’s history we have seen many major bushfires that have had large impacts on the Victorian Community. Many people have died in bushfires because they didn’t know how to stay safe. CFA’s goal is “we put the community at the centre of everything we do”. We do that by investing in a wide variety of community engagement programs, services and activities that ensure our communities have a better understanding of fire and are empowered to manage their own risks. While we will always respond to and fight the fire, we have come to learn the importance of not only informing the community during a fire, but more importantly engaging and educating the community before a fire.

How does CFA engage community about bushfire risk

* **Prevention Education Programs and Resources**
	+ Investing in the development of home fire safety and bushfire related Community Engagement Programs and Services that support the community to prepare for, respond to and recover from fire. Aiming to educate them about how to identify their local risks and support and change the community's behaviors to manage their fire risk.
* **Building Community Engagement Capability in our members**
	+ Investing in training and resources for our members to ensure that they have the right skills and knowledge to effectively engage their local communities about fire.
* **Working directly with communities**
	+ Involving communities in the development of our programs and services, particularly multicultural communities.
	+ Our brigades build strong relationships and trust, locally.
* **Partnering with other agencies to engage the community about fire**
	+ Other agencies such as local government, not for profit and other emergency services also have emergency management responsibilities. We work together, combining our efforts, knowledge and budgets to ensure better outcomes for the community. The fire agencies don’t need to do this alone.
* **What are the challenges**
	+ Fire safety is not something that all people understand or want to know more about.
	+ Communities are diverse and need information in many formats and delivered in different ways. It can be complex and expensive to try to engage with everybody we need to.
* **What have we learned**
	+ We need to make the information as easy to understand as possible and provide it in varied formats such as face to face, websites, short videos, animations, infographics, publications, social media, and online learning.
	+ Accessible information that can be understood by all people who live in our community. Multicultural, low literacy, young people, older people, hard of hearing etc.
	+ The need to tailor and target our communications and messaging to individuals and groups.