

# PROFESSIONAL RESUME

## John Nicholson, AFSM, GFireE

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## QUALIFICATIONS

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Graduate Diploma, Institution of Fire Engineers

Currently completing an Associate Diploma of Professional Writing and Editing, at Victoria University.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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*Executive Program, Monash-Mt Eliza Business School*

*Looking Glass Program, Monash-Mt Eliza Business School*

*National Senior Command Course, Australian Assembly of Fire Authorities*

*Managing Risk in the Australian Public Service, Commonwealth of Australia MAB/MIAC  
Managing Risk Implementation Program*

USA Study Tour (3 weeks in 1988) visiting various fire services and fire research agencies, to study fire safety and advances in fire research and new technology related to fire prevention and suppression

Member of the 1997 Australia/New Zealand Rural Fire Management Study Tour of Canada and the USA

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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Corporate Member Fire Protection Association Australia

Member Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association

## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

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**26 March 1999 to date** Director, Community Safety Services Pty Ltd, consulting in fire and emergency risk management planning.

**July 1994 to 25 March 1999** CFA's first Director Risk Management, responsible for development of corporate risk management policies and strategies to ensure CFA implemented appropriate risk identification, evaluation and treatment programs.

Also responsible for development and implementation of risk communication based community education programs and fire safety programs addressing the structural, dangerous goods and bushfire environments.

## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

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**March 1967 to June 1994** Employed as an operational officer by the CFA, rising to Deputy Chief Officer in 1991.

## EXPERIENCE

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As Director Risk Management, managed the introduction of corporate governance and due diligence policies and procedures in CFA. Also managed an extensive corporate compliance scan to identify the various Commonwealth and Victorian legislation CFA must comply with.

Represented CFA at the Victoria Emergency Management Council (the peak body responsible for emergency management in Victoria) and at the State Emergency Prevention Committee.

Member of an Emergency Management Australia Steering Committee that managed the development of a disaster mitigation strategy for Australia.

Extensive emergency management and operational command experience to Deputy Chief Officer/State Operations Controller level.

## MAJOR CONSULTANCIES

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In 1995, reviewed the Western Australian Fire and Rescue Service structure and advised on how it could adopt a risk management and prevention approach to business, which it subsequently did.

In 1995, engaged by the Prime Minister's Department, Papua New Guinea, to assist with the development of terms of reference for a review of the PNG Civil Fire Service, which included a strong emphasis on prevention.

Since late 1999 have developed new all-risks Municipal Fire Prevention Plans for Surf Coast, Wellington, Melton, Moorabool and Colac Otway Shire Councils and City of Wyndham, and a municipality-wide risk assessment based wildfire sub-plan for Surf Coast Shire.

During 2001, assisted Freight Australia with the preparation of its fire prevention policy and implementation procedures for railway reserves.

Following the Canberra fires of January 2003, commissioned on behalf of the ACT government to undertake a review of the urban edge of Canberra and non-urban area of the ACT to assess the wildfire threat and determine if any areas should be designated *bushfire-prone* according to the Building Code of Australia.

## CAPABILITIES

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**Emergency Risk Management** Due to extensive experience carrying out fire risk inspections in the natural and built environments and fire investigation, am able to identify hazardous situations and practices in virtually all environments.

To prevent loss of life and property, I can assist with the preparation of comprehensive emergency management plans for all environments. I can also advise on emergency management related corporate compliance and duty-of-care planning, activities critical to the well-being of organisations and their directors and officers.

**Interpersonal and Facilitation Skills** I have the consultative and conflict management skills needed to collaborate effectively with a wide range of personality types inherent in the volunteer based CFA. I also have the facilitation skills to successfully conduct focus groups within and external to CFA

This capability is complemented by long experience as the statutory appointee representing government's fire interests on the Powerline Clearance Consultative Committee and the Minister's nominee on the Roadsides Conservation Advisory Committee, where a wide range of sometimes conflicting interests are represented.

**Legislation** Experience in the development of legislation and statutory rules.

**Statutory Planning** Extensive involvement over many years in land use and development planning matters involving fire prevention, particularly in the urban/bushland interface areas of Victoria. This involvement was at both policy and practitioner levels, and included extensive collaboration with public and private sector planners in the development of CFA's guidelines for subdivisions in bushfire-prone areas and other planning guidelines.

**Advocacy** Having successfully operated at Director level in the public sector, I have a good knowledge of the *modus operandi* of the bureaucracy. Also have considerable interview experience with television and radio news and current affairs programs and the print media, at regional, state and national level as CFA's fire prevention spokesperson. This, combined with extensive experience in public speaking and training delivery has equipped me to be an effective advocate for the risk management approach to emergency management.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

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**Risk Management in CFA** Developed and introduced the risk management approach to fire and emergency planning to the extent where it is now fundamental to all planning in CFA

**Strategic Planning** Development of CFA's Corporate Plan 1996–2000.

**Industry Brigade Legislation** Development of amendments to the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 and Country Fire Authority Regulations 1992 to enable the creation of industry fire brigades.

**Municipal Fire Prevention Planning** Development and introduction of guidelines for an all-risks, community participative approach to fire prevention planning based on risk management principals.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**  
**continued**

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**Audit of Municipal Fire Prevention Planning** Development of CFA's initial procedure for auditing municipal fire prevention plans in accordance with the requirements of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958.

**AWARDS**

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Awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in the Australia Day Honours 1994, principally for leadership and services to CFA and the wider community in the field of fire prevention.

**PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES**

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Nicholson, J. 1983, *Guidelines for Municipal Fire Prevention Officers*, CFA

Nicholson, J. 1985, *Planning Guidelines for Subdivisions in Bushfire Prone Areas*, CFA

Nicholson, J. 1994, *MASS EVACUATION: is total evacuation of a community threatened by wildfire a sound strategy?* Institution of Fire Engineers (NSW Branch Inc) 1994 State Conference.

Petris, S., Potter, P., Lavelle, L., & Nicholson, J. 1995, *A Review of all State and Federal Reports on Major Conflagrations in Australia During the Period 1939–1994 and A National Bushfire Preparedness Strategy*, Australian Fire Authorities Council and Emergency Management Australia.

Smith, P., Nicholson, J. & Collett, L. 1996, *Risk Management in the Fire and Emergency Services*, Papers presented to the IDNDR Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, Queensland, September 29 - October 2, 1996.

Nicholson, J. 1997, *Why Risk Management?* Paper presented to Disaster Mitigation Workshop, Emergency Management Australia, Mount Macedon Paper # 5/1997

Nicholson, J. 2001, "Fire Protection and Heritage Buildings in Victoria", *Fire Australia*

Nicholson, J. 2003, "Bushfire Shock and Awe – Will We Ever Learn?", *Fire Australia*

Nicholson, J. 2004, "Residential Smoke Alarms – are they really up to the task?", *Fire Australia*

# PROFESSIONAL RESUME

(Abbreviated Version)

## NAME

John Nicholson

## QUALIFICATIONS

Graduate, Institution of Fire Engineers

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Corporate Member, Fire Protection Association Australia  
Member, Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Employed by CFA for thirty-two (32) years as an operational officer, rising to the rank of Deputy Chief Officer and possessing extensive knowledge and actual experience in the structural fire and wildfire environments, hazardous materials emergency management, and specialising in wildfire (bushfire) prevention and impact mitigation.

For the last five (5) years of my career with CFA (1994 to 1999) I was Director Risk Management and amongst other matters responsible for development and implementation of risk management based wildfire prevention and mitigation programs across Victoria.

Since early 1999, I have consulting extensively in wildfire loss prevention planning, including assessing wildfire risk and developing risk management plans in accordance with the requirements of VPP Clause 44.06 Wildfire Management Overlay and *designated bushfire-prone area* solutions in accordance with Clause GP5.1 and Clause P2.3.4, BCA. Note that in this area of expertise I represented the Australian Association of Rural Fire Authorities and CFA on Standards Australia Committee BD/64 that was responsible for developing much of the contents of AS 3959—1991. Currently, I represent Fire Protection Association Australia on Standards Australia Committee FP-020 Bushfires (*AS 3959 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas*).

During my career with CFA and since then as a private consultant I have acquired extensive experience assessing residential development proposals with the objective of preventing loss of life and property due to wildfire.

Amongst my major undertakings, following the Canberra fires in 2003 I was commissioned by the ACT government to review the urban edge of Canberra and non-urban area of the ACT to determine the wildfire threat and whether any areas should be designated *bushfire-prone* according to the Building Code of Australia.

## RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

- Nicholson, J. 1983, *Guidelines for Municipal Fire Prevention Officers*, CFA
- Nicholson, J. 1985, *Planning Guidelines for Subdivisions in Bushfire Prone Areas*, CFA
- Nicholson, J. 1994, *MASS EVACUATION: is total evacuation of a community threatened by wildfire a sound strategy?* Institution of Fire Engineers (NSW Branch Inc) 1994 State Conference
- Petris, S., Potter, P., Lavelle, L., and Nicholson, J. 1995, *A Review of all State and Federal Reports on Major Conflagrations in Australia During the Period 1939 –1994 and A National Bushfire Preparedness Strategy*, Australian Fire Authorities Council and Emergency Management Australia
- Nicholson, J. 2003, "Bushfire Shock and Awe, Will We Ever Learn?", *Fire Australia*

A detailed resume can be viewed at [www.communitysafety.com.au](http://www.communitysafety.com.au)