



After the Fires: Assessing the impact of the 2019-2020 bushfires on community responders

Participant Information Form – Survey

Invitation:

You have been invited to take part in a national survey of the wellbeing and resilience of employees and volunteers who responded to the 2019-20 bushfires. Fire and emergency service workers and volunteers along with local government authority staff are being asked to participate. The survey is being conducted by Roy Morgan Research and The University of Western Australia.

Aim of the Study (What is the project about?)

The impacts of major bushfires can be substantial and ongoing. In addition to the loss of life and property, the psychological impacts of bushfires can be common and long-lasting. Following the devastating 2019-20 bushfire season, where many local government authority staff were involved in responding to the fires, there is a critical need to monitor the impacts of the bushfires and associated events on those involved. In particular, this means understanding the supports needed by those who may have been affected by the fires and how to foster resilience and effective coping strategies.

Who can take part in the survey?

Over 5,000 employees and volunteers in fire and rescue and state emergency services as well as local government authorities across Australia have been invited to participate in the survey.

What does participation involve?

Participation in the survey involves answering a series of questions about your work and your health and wellbeing. The survey will take about 10-15 minutes on average.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, we hope that you will answer all questions. If you can't or do not feel comfortable providing an answer to any question, you do not have to do so, and can just move on to the next question.

Should you wish, you can withdraw from the survey at any time. As all data collected in the survey will be completely anonymous, once you have completed the questionnaire it will not be possible to withdraw from the survey.



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Your privacy

The information that you provide will be held securely and managed by Roy Morgan Research and The University of Western Australia. The information you provide will be collected anonymously. Information that could possibly identify you, such as name, date of birth or IP address will not be recorded. The survey software is provided by Roy Morgan Research and is completely independent of your organisation's IT environment. Your agency will not see or be able to access any information that you provide. All information that could potentially identify you will be removed before the data is analysed by researchers and used in any reports. Survey data will be securely stored on the University of Western Australia's Institutional Research Data Store for a minimum of seven years after the date of project completion.

Possible Benefits

Information from the survey will be used to inform the development of strategies and programs to build resilience and most effectively support the wellbeing of those who respond to major events like the 2019-20 bushfires. Results from the project will be made available online via our website www.uwa.edu.au/projects/after-the-fires

Health care and support services

The survey includes questions about any problems you may have experienced or services that you may have used. If participating in this survey raises any concerns about how you have been feeling, and you would like assistance, there are a number of services that you can contact.

You can visit your regular GP, or if you have seen a health professional before to help with problems, you may wish to make an appointment to see them again.

Your agency provides an employee assistance program, which may be contacted through your agency.

beyondblue support service has trained mental health professionals available to chat 24/7
1300 22 4636 or online text chat at www.beyondblue.org.au

Lifeline: 24/7 crisis support service
13 11 14 or online text chat at www.lifeline.org.au

Contacts

If you would like any further information about the survey, please call the research team on 1800 216 753 or email bushfires@roymorgan.com.au

Sincerely,

David Lawrence
Chief Investigator

Approval to conduct this research has been provided by the University of Western Australia with reference number RA/4/20/6214, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures. Any person considering participation in this research project, or agreeing to participate, may raise any questions or issues with the researchers at any time. In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the Human Ethics office at UWA on (08) 6488 4703 or by emailing to humanethics@uwa.edu.au. All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project.

