



After the Fires: Supporting the wellbeing and resilience of Australia's Emergency Services

Participant Information Form – Follow up Survey

Invitation:

Last summer you completed the After the Fires survey which was a national survey of the wellbeing and resilience of Australia's first responders following the 2019-20 bushfires. Over 4,000 personnel from fire and rescue, rural fire and state emergency service (SES) agencies across Australia participated in the survey. A report of findings was written and sent to all agencies that participated in this study. You may have received a report via email. The full report can be found at <https://www.uwa.edu.au/projects/after-the-fires>

We are interested in learning about the ongoing experiences and impact of volunteering and working in fire and emergency services. On completing the survey, you indicated that you would be willing to be contacted to complete a follow up survey to see how you are going.

The survey is being conducted by Roy Morgan Research and The University of Western Australia and will build on information collected in the 2020/2021 After the Fires survey.

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 volunteer and career first responders have played major roles in fighting the fires and supporting affected communities, there is a critical need to monitor the impacts of the bushfires and associated events on first responders. 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. We would like to see if things have changed for you over time and what the experiences and long-term impacts are of volunteering and working in fire and emergency services.

Who can take part in the survey?

All participants in the first After the Fires study who provided an email address and indicated that they would like to be recontacted are being invited to complete the second After the Fires survey.

What does participation involve?

Participation in the survey involves answering a series of questions about your work or volunteer work and your health and wellbeing. The survey will take about 15-20 minutes on average. You can stop the survey at any time, and complete it later using the link you have been provided.



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. All data collected in the survey will be completely confidential. You may take a break from completing the questionnaire and resume later, or resume on another device, using the link you have been provided.

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 confidentially. Information that could possibly identify you, such as name, address or date of birth 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.

Information you provide will be combined with all other participants in the study and the results will not identify you in any way. None of the information you provide will ever be shared with your agency.

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 Australia's first responders. 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.

