



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

### Participant Information Form – Survey

#### Invitation:

You have been selected to take part in a national survey of the wellbeing and resilience of Australia's first responders following the 2019-20 bushfires. The survey is being conducted by Roy Morgan Research and The University of Western Australia and will build on information collected in the 2018 Australian study, Answering the call: The National Mental Health and Wellbeing Study of Police and Emergency Services.

To help plan and provide services and supports for the emergency services sector it is important to understand the health and wellbeing of all employees and volunteers. A range of employees and volunteers from across Australia have been randomly selected to participate.

#### 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.

#### Who can take part in the survey?

Over 5,000 employees and volunteers in fire and rescue and state emergency services across Australia have been invited to participate in the survey. Participants have not been chosen on the basis of their wellbeing, but have been selected at random. This is important so the survey can build up a picture of the needs of the whole emergency services sector.

#### 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 20-25 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. 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. 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 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.

## Longitudinal follow up option

We are interested in learning about the ongoing impact of working or being a volunteer in fire and emergency services. As a voluntary option we are inviting participants to provide their email address to be contacted again in approximately 12 months' time. If you do provide your email address, it will be stored securely for 12 months and used to contact you again, after which time it will be deleted.

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](http://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](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

Lifeline: 24/7 crisis support service  
13 11 14 or online text chat at [www.lifeline.org.au](http://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](mailto:bushfires@roymorgan.com.au)

Sincerely,  
David Lawrence  
Chief Investigator

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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](mailto: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.

