Cooperation or Legislation? Bushfire Preparedness in Victoria Post-Black Saturday.

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Research Aim
This project explores whether the introduction of greater legislative responsibility for individuals in bushfire preparedness programs can be acceptable to the general public (see Winter et al., 2009; Schoennagel et al., 2009).

Leading to a PhD, this work examines whether legislation would use a useful compliment to Victoria’s existing fire programs.

Research Context
This PhD aims to build on the debate between Coleman (1988) and Burt (1992) on the formation of social capital, assess the appropriateness of the community engagement approach given the significant demographic changes that have occurred in at-risk communities.

What’s Significant?
Demographic changes in at-risk communities – in-migration and population growth – have led to the formation of structural holes in the social networks present in interface communities and, therefore, to the weakening of social sanctions that previously enforced individual bushfire preparedness.

Other Alternatives to Consider
It is early days – as well as the potential of a legislative approach, the pre-Black Saturday focus on community engagement and social capital in efforts to mitigate the risk of fire will also be considered.

Comments and inputs are invited.

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References: