MEDIA RELEASE – 18 March 2024

Flooded in 2022 or 2023? Share your experience to improve flood safety

A new research project seeks to learn from the experiences of people affected by flooding in Victoria, South Australia and south-western New South Wales between August 2022 and March 2023, to gather vital insights about the information, communication and response in their local communities.

Conducted by Natural Hazards Research Australia in partnership with RMIT University, Macquarie University, Monash University, as well as South Australian SES, Victoria SES and New South Wales SES researchers want to hear from anyone affected by the sudden-onset and longer lead time riverine flooding experienced by these areas.

By sharing their stories through an online survey, the experiences of anyone affected will help emergency agencies to better understand the short-, mid- and long-term effects of these floods, as well as help inform how information about future floods is communicated.

Residents of these areas can complete the survey online at naturalhazards.com.au/floods2022/sa-vic-nsw.

Lead researcher and occupational psychologist A/Prof Mel Taylor, from Macquarie University, said the views of anyone affected by the floods are important to build a detailed picture of flooding impact.

"Your experience is unique and can help make a difference during future floods. By contributing your personal experience to this research, you can help improve community safety strategies and influence future policy. This can help reduce flood risk in the future," A/Prof Taylor said.

"Every story is important as there were a wide range of flood impacts. Not everyone who was affected will have had water in their home or business."

"You may have chosen to spend the night away due to flood concerns, or perhaps your access roads were cut off by floodwaters and you were isolated for a period of time – all of these experiences are relevant," A/Prof Taylor said.

The severe weather experienced by Victoria between 12 and 14 October 2022 led to sudden onset and longer lead time riverine flooding for more than six months, until and even beyond March 2023.

Communities and townships affected include Ballarat, Bendigo, Echuca, Kerang, Mildura, Mooroopna, Rochester, Seymour, Shepparton and Swan Hill, and residents and visitors to these areas at the time are encouraged to complete the survey.

Dr Blythe McLennan, Node Research Manager from Natural Hazards Research Australia encourages residents of affected areas to participate in the research to help safeguard their communities from future floods.

"By sharing your story and experiences, you're providing valuable information that will arm organisations involved in emergency management with new insights about the best way to plan and respond to flooding in your area," Dr McLennan said.

"Communities' experiences from the January to July 2022 floods in Queensland and New South Wales are already being used by these types of agencies to inform planning, operational and recovery improvements."

This independent research is funded by Natural Hazards Research Australia and the results will be used to inform strategies to improve flood safety across Australia.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES – Dr Blythe McLennan from Natural Hazards Research Australia is available for interview, please contact Joanna Wood – 0430 633 234 or joanna.wood@naturalhazards.com.au

SURVEY PARTICIPATION – online at naturalhazards.com.au/floods2022/sa-vic-nsw.