

## Survey



# Householder response to the February 7th bushfires

Dear resident,

We are asking you to participate in a survey of your experience of the February 7th Victorian bushfire. The survey has been sent to a sample of households in all areas affected by the bushfires. We recognise that many families have lost loved ones in the bushfires and we sincerely apologise for any distress receiving this survey may cause.

This survey is being conducted by RMIT University's Centre for Risk and Community Safety in conjunction with the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (Bushfire CRC). The Bushfire CRC undertakes research on behalf of all Australian fire and emergency service agencies. The results of this survey will form one part of the knowledge base that these agencies will use to help to improve community bushfire safety.

By telling us about your experience, expectations and knowledge of the bushfires, you will be making an important contribution to the prevention of bushfire disasters in Victoria.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. All information collected will remain confidential, subject to legal constraints. This project has been approved by the RMIT University Human Research Ethics Committee. Details of the project, ethical issues and risks, and confidentially are set out in the statement on page 3.

Should you require further clarification please contact the Centre for Risk and Community Safety on (03) 9925 9663.

Yours sincerely,

Professor John Handmer

Dr Katharine Haynes

Dr Joshua Whittaker



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This research is funded by the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre

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## Invitation to Participate in a Research Project

### Project Information Statement

**Project title: Householder response to the February 7th Bushfires**

#### Investigators:

- Prof John Handmer, Director – Centre for Risk and Community Safety, School of Mathematics and Geospatial Science. (Ph: 9925 2307) [john.handmer@rmit.edu.au](mailto:john.handmer@rmit.edu.au)
- Dr Joshua Whittaker (Research Fellow). Centre for Risk and Community Safety. Ph: 99252481. [joshua.whittaker@rmit.edu.au](mailto:joshua.whittaker@rmit.edu.au)
- Dr Katharine Haynes (Research Fellow). Risk Frontiers, Macquarie University. [katharine.haynes@rmit.edu.au](mailto:katharine.haynes@rmit.edu.au)

**You are being invited to participate in a study being conducted by the Centre for Risk and Community Safety at RMIT University and the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre.** The Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) is a major national coordinating centre for fire research and receives funding from all Australian fire and land management agencies, universities, CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology and the federal government.

This information sheet describes the project. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. You can contact the investigators listed at the beginning of this form to discuss any aspect of the survey or the research process.

This project has been approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee. It is supported by the Bushfire CRC and its members. ([www.bushfirecrc.com](http://www.bushfirecrc.com)).

#### Why have you been contacted?

You have been invited to take part because your property lies in an area that was affected by the February 7<sup>th</sup> bushfire. Your address has been randomly selected from a list of fire affected properties that was compiled using fire maps and government records. Your name has not been obtained.

#### What is the project about?

The aim of this project is to find out as much as we can about people's experiences of the February 7<sup>th</sup> bushfire disaster. We hope to develop a better understanding of how to improve community safety and the "Prepare, stay and defend or leave early" policy. The project focuses on various areas relating to bushfire community safety, including:

- How is the "Prepare, stay and defend or leave early" policy understood and implemented in fire prone communities?
- What were the experiences of people affected by the recent bushfires and what did people do before and during the fires?
- Were fire related warnings and information adequate and how could they be improved?
- What would have helped people manage better?

#### Which member of the household should complete the survey?

Any member of the household who is **over the age of 18** can complete the survey. Ideally, the survey should be completed by the person with the most detailed knowledge about the household's experience of February 7<sup>th</sup>.

#### What is involved in participating?

Completing the survey is **voluntary**. You are not required to answer any questions you don't want to, and you can end the survey at any time. The survey will ask you about your thoughts and actions before, during and after the fire. It can be completed any time it suits you over the next 21 days. It normally takes between 15 to 25 minutes to complete. When the survey is complete you may return it to the Bushfire CRC in the reply paid envelope provided. **Alternatively, the survey can be completed online. Just go to**

[www.bushfirecrc.com/research](http://www.bushfirecrc.com/research) where you will find a link to a fully secure survey website. Users of the online survey should be aware that the World Wide Web is an insecure public network that gives rise to the potential risk that a user's transactions are being viewed, intercepted or modified by third parties or that data which the user downloads may contain computer viruses or other defects. This project will use an external site to create, collect and analyse data collected in a survey format. The site we are using is SurveyMonkey. If you agree to participate in this survey, the responses you provide to the survey will be stored on a host server that is used by survey monkey. No personal information will be collected in the survey so none will be stored as data. Once we have completed our data collection and analysis, we will import the data we collect to the RMIT server where it will be stored securely for a period of five (5) years. The data on the surveymonkey host server will then be deleted and expunged.

#### **What are the benefits of participating?**

There may not be any direct benefit to you. However, the results of the survey will be passed from the Bushfire Co-operative Research Centre to the fire agencies. The results of this survey will form one part of the knowledge base that these agencies will use to help to improve community bushfire safety. By completing the survey you will be making an important contribution to the prevention of bushfire disasters in Victoria.

#### **What are the risks associated with participation?**

This survey will ask you to recall the events of February 7<sup>th</sup> in some detail. This may cause you some distress. If you require support in managing your reactions to the survey, you can access free counselling and support services through the **Service Access and Care Team (ph: 1300 773 352)**. You can also obtain information about your local recovery centre and the counselling and support services they provide by contacting **Professor John Handmer, Project Leader (ph: 99252307)**.

#### **What will happen to the information I provide?**

Your responses to the survey will remain **anonymous** at all times and you will not be identified in any research output. We are not collecting names and your survey will be identified only by a code that is linked to your address in a password protected file. Only the researchers undertaking the analysis of the survey will have access to this file. Your address will only be disclosed to others if (1) it is to protect you or someone else from harm, (2) a court order is produced, or (3) you provide the researchers with written permission.

The results of the survey will be used to produce a report on experiences and responses during the recent fires for the Bushfire CRC. The report will also show how the "Prepare, stay and defend or leave early" policy was applied during the bushfires and how community bushfire safety can be improved. The first report will be available well before the next fire season. More detailed analysis will follow with reports in 2010. There will also be presentations to bushfire agencies. We will provide you with a summary of the major findings of the survey upon request.

Because we are using a mail-out survey, we are not obtaining written informed consent. We assume that by completing and returning the survey you are giving your consent to participate.

#### **What are my rights as a participant?**

You have the right to: i) withdraw your participation at any time; ii) have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed (provided it can be reliably identified); and iii) have any questions answered at any time.

#### **Who should I contact if I have any questions?**

You can contact John Handmer or Josh Whittaker at the addresses listed at the start of this form, or Dr Richard Thornton of the Bushfire CRC on 94129600.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor John Handmer, BA (Hons), MA, PhD**

**Dr Joshua Whittaker, BSocSc (Hons) PhD**

**Dr Katharine Haynes, MSc PhD**

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Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001.

Details of the complaints procedure are available at: [http://www.rmit.edu.au/research/hrec\\_complaints](http://www.rmit.edu.au/research/hrec_complaints)

# Section 1

## How the bushfires affected you and your property

1. What is the postcode of your bushfire-affected house or property?

Postcode:

2. If known, in what year or decade was the house built? (e.g. '1962' or '1960s')

Year or decade:

3. What is/was your bushfire-affected house made of?

Timber	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellulose cement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brick (other than mud brick)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mud brick	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aluminium siding	<input type="checkbox"/>
PVC siding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Was your house damaged or destroyed during the bushfire?

No, my house was not damaged	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q7</b>
Yes, my house received minor damage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, my house received major damage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, my house was destroyed	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. If known, how did the bushfire **FIRST** ignite your house? **Please select ONE only.**

Embers blew onto or into the house and set it on fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flames burnt up to the house and set it on fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other buildings or structures near the house caught fire and it spread to the house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trees or bushes near the house caught fire and it spread to the house	<input type="checkbox"/>
The bushfire did not ignite the house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. Was the house damaged by wind at any time during the bushfire?**

Yes, before the fire arrived	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, as the fire passed over the property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, after the fire had passed	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. To what extent do you think the following factors influenced how the fire affected your home and/or property? Please rate each factor.**

	Not at all	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Don't know/ Unsure
The actions I took to prepare before February 7th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My actions on the day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The help of family, friends or neighbours on the day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The construction of my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The position of my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire agencies firefighting activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire agencies fuel reduction activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fuel (e.g. trees, bushes, leaves on the ground, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Topography/ Landscape (e.g. hills, valleys, rivers, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Temperature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Luck or chance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8.** Have members of your household experienced any of the following as a result of the fires?  
**You may select more than one.**

A member of my household perished in the fires	<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of my household was injured in the fires	<input type="checkbox"/>
My household has experienced financial strain because of job loss or loss of livelihood	<input type="checkbox"/>
My household has experienced financial strain due to a lack of insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationships between members of the household have been more strained than usual because the fires	<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of the household has felt more nervous or anxious than usual because of the fires	<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of the household has felt more sad or depressed than usual because of the fires	<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of my household has suffered health problems because of the fires	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

**9.** Please use the box below if you would like to add anything about the affects of the fires on your household.

## Section 2

### Information and warnings

In this section we'd like to ask you about information and warnings you received before and during the February 7th bushfire.

The next few questions are about the information you received BEFORE February 7th.

**10.** In the 12 months before the February 7th bushfire, did you get any information about how to prepare your household for bushfires from any of the following sources? You may select more than one.

ABC Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency personnel (for example, police, firefighters)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family, friends or neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA website	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA Community meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA Community Fireguard	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA 'Living in the Bush' workbook	<input type="checkbox"/>
DSE website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victorian Bushfire Information Line	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not get any information	<input type="checkbox"/>



**11.** In the 12 months **before** the February 7th bushfire, did you get any information about **what to do during a bushfire** from any of the following? **You may select more than one.**

ABC Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency personnel (for example, police, firefighters)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family, friends or neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA website	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA Community meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA Community Fireguard	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA 'Living in the Bush' workbook	<input type="checkbox"/>
DSE website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victorian Bushfire Information Line	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not get any information	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Now we'd like to know about the information or warnings you received ON THE DAY of the February 7th bushfire.**

12. Did you know that February 7th 2009 was a day of Total Fire Ban?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**13.** How did you **FIRST** find out that the February 7th bushfire was in your town or suburb? **Please select ONE only.**

Heard radio announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learned from the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saw television announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Told by family, friends or neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Told by emergency personnel (e.g. police, firefighters)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smelled or saw smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saw fire approaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saw embers landing near the house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saw fire burning near the house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**14.** After finding out the fire was in your town or suburb, how long was it before the fire reached your house?

A few minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than half an hour	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between half an hour and one hour	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
The fire did not reach my house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know/Don't remember	<input type="checkbox"/>

**15.** Did you **EXPECT** to receive an **OFFICIAL** warning if there was a bushfire in your town or suburb? **OFFICIAL** warnings include those from authorities such as the CFA, the police, other emergency services and ABC Radio.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**16.** Did you actually **RECEIVE** an **OFFICIAL** warning from any of the following? **You may select more than one.**

ABC Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency personnel (e.g. police, firefighters)	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA website	<input type="checkbox"/>
DSE website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victorian Bushfire Information Line	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA Community meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not receive an official warning	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q22</b>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**17.** Which official source was the **MOST IMPORTANT** in helping you to respond to the bushfire?  
**Select ONE only.**

ABC Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency personnel (e.g. police, firefighters)	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA website	<input type="checkbox"/>
DSE website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victorian Bushfire Information Line	<input type="checkbox"/>
CFA Community meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**The next four questions are about the source you selected as MOST IMPORTANT in the previous question (Question 17)**

**18.** Was the information you received about the **LOCATION** of the fire clear enough for you to understand the danger to your household?

Very clear	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unclear	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warning gave no information about location	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know/Don't remember	<input type="checkbox"/>

**19.** Was the information you received about the **SEVERITY** of the fire clear enough for you to understand the danger to your household?

Very clear	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unclear	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warning gave no information about severity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know/Don't remember	<input type="checkbox"/>

**20.** Did you receive the warning in enough time to respond to the bushfire safely?

Ample time to respond safely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Just enough time to respond safely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not enough time to respond safely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know/Don't remember	<input type="checkbox"/>

**21.** How long AFTER you got the warning did the fire reach your house or property?

A few minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than half an hour	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between half an hour and one hour	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
The fire did not reach my house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know/Don't remember	<input type="checkbox"/>

**22.** Did you receive an UNOFFICIAL warning about the fire from family, friends or neighbours?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**23.** Please use the space below to describe any issues or difficulties you had with information or warnings before, during or after the bushfire.

## Section 3

### Before the bushfire

In this section we'd like to find out about your planning and preparations for bushfires **BEFORE** February 7th.

**24. Before** the February 7th bushfire, how likely did you think it was that a bushfire could occur in your town or suburb?

Very unlikely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unlikely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Likely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very likely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hadn't thought about it	<input type="checkbox"/>

**25. Before** the February 7th bushfire, how significant did you think the threat from bushfires was to life and property in your town or suburb?

Very low	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low	<input type="checkbox"/>
High	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very high	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hadn't thought about it	<input type="checkbox"/>

**26.** Which of the following best describes your level of planning for bushfires **BEFORE** February 7th?

Never thought about what I would do if a bushfire occurred	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knew I should think about what to do, but hadn't	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had thought about it but was still deciding what to do	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had thought about it and decided I didn't need to do anything	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had decided what to do and was thinking about how to make it work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had made a firm plan about what to do if a fire occurred	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**27.** At the beginning of last summer, which of the following did you think you were **MOST LIKELY** to do if a bushfire occurred in your town or suburb? **Select ONE only.**

Stay and try to protect your property throughout the fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do as much as possible to protect your property but leave if threatened by the fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wait to see what the fire is like before deciding whether to stay and defend or leave.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wait for police, fire or emergency services to tell you what to do on the day	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leave as soon as you know there is a fire threatening your town or suburb	<input type="checkbox"/>
You would not be at home because you intend to leave on days of high fire danger	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hadn't thought about it	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**28.** Given what you intended to do if a bushfire occurred in your town or suburb, had you...

	Yes	No	Not applicable (single person household)
Discussed what you would do with all members of the household?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thought about what each person would need to do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered how things could change if some members of the household were not at home during a fire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Written down important things to do and remember?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Let relatives and neighbours know about what you intended to do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**29.** Which of the following had you done to prepare for bushfires? Please indicate whether the action was taken prior to February 7th or on the day of the fire. If you took an action both PRIOR TO and ON FEB. 7 please tick both boxes.

	PRIOR TO Feb. 7	ON Feb. 7	Action not taken	Not Applicable
Cleared leaves, twigs and long grass for a distance of about 20-30m around the house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Removed bushes close to the house and cut back overhanging tree branches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Used landscaping or the layout of garden to reduce the fire risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moved combustible materials such as firewood and wooden garden furniture away from the house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleared gutters of leaves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Installed gutter protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Covered underfloor spaces to prevent embers and flame entering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Covered all gaps and vents to reduce the risk of embers entering the house or cavities (e.g. roof, wall, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtained and prepared fire fighting equipment (e.g. hoses and a pump)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtained and prepared equipment such as ladder, buckets and mops to put out spot fires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Installed seals and/or draft protectors around windows and doors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Installed a sprinkler system on or around the house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Installed shutters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepared a kit of personal protective clothing for each member of the household	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtained a battery-powered radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stored important documents and possessions off-site or in a fire safe compartment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**30.** How would you rate your preparedness for the February 7th bushfire?

Very high	<input type="checkbox"/>
High	<input type="checkbox"/>
Average	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very low	<input type="checkbox"/>

**31.** Did you want to be more prepared than you were?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q33</b>

**32.** What prevented you from being more prepared?

**33.** Please use the space below if you would like to add any comments about your experience of preparing for bushfires.



# Section 4

## During the bushfire

In this section we'd like to find out about what your household did during the February 7th bushfire.

**34.** If known, at what time did the bushfire arrive in your town or suburb?  
(e.g. "4.10pm" or "About 4pm")

Time:

**35.** Before we ask you about what YOU did during the bushfire, we would like to know what OTHER MEMBERS of your household did.

How many household members took each of the actions below? Please tell us by placing numbers in the relevant boxes. You may leave the other boxes blank.

If you live in a one person household please go to Question 37.

<b>A.</b> Left before the fire arrived in my town or suburb	<input type="text"/>
<b>B.</b> Left when the fire arrived in my town or suburb	<input type="text"/>
<b>C.</b> Stayed and actively defended the house and property.	<input type="text"/>
<b>D.</b> Began defending the house and property from the fire but left when they felt the danger was too great.	<input type="text"/>
<b>E.</b> Stayed to actively defend the house and property, but the fire never arrived.	<input type="text"/>
<b>F.</b> Did not actively defend the house or property but stayed throughout the fire and sheltered inside the house.	<input type="text"/>
<b>G.</b> Did not actively defend the house or property but stayed throughout the fire and sheltered in a structure (other than the house) or vehicle.	<input type="text"/>
<b>H.</b> Did not actively defend the house or property but stayed throughout fire and took refuge somewhere outside.	<input type="text"/>

**36.** Were there members of your household who needed looking after during the fire?

**You may select more than one.**

Yes, infants or children	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, elderly person/s	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, disabled person/s	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, ill person/s	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, other able-bodied adults who became ill or stressed during the fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, other <b>(please specify)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**37.** Which **one** of the following best describes what **YOU** did **DURING** the bushfire?

**Select ONE only.**

<b>A.</b> Left before the fire arrived in my town or suburb	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q38</b>
<b>B.</b> Left when the fire arrived in my town or suburb	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q38</b>
<b>C.</b> Stayed and actively defended the house and property.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q51</b>
<b>D.</b> Began defending the house and property from the fire but left when I felt the danger was too great.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q51</b>
<b>E.</b> Stayed to actively defend the house and property, but the fire never arrived.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q51</b>
<b>F.</b> Did not actively defend the house or property but stayed throughout the fire and sheltered inside the house.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q51</b>
<b>G.</b> Did not actively defend the house or property but stayed throughout the fire and sheltered in a structure (other than the house) or vehicle.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q51</b>
<b>H.</b> Did not actively defend the house or property but stayed throughout fire and took refuge somewhere outside.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q51</b>

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU ANSWERED "A" or "B" TO QUESTION 37.**

**38.** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'very early' and 5 is 'very late', when did you leave your home or property? (Please circle)

Very early

Very late

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

**39.** If known, at what time did you leave? (e.g. "4.10pm" or "About 4pm")

Time:

**40.** To the best of your knowledge, how long before the fire arrived in your town or suburb did you leave?

More than 8 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between 4 and 8 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between 2 and 4 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between 1 and 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between 20 and 60 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between 10 and 20 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than 10 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
The fire had already arrived	<input type="checkbox"/>

**41.** Why did you leave your house or property on Saturday February 7th? **You may select more than one.**

Left for other reasons (e.g. work or visiting friends)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Go to Q45</b>
Left because it was a day of high fire danger	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Left because I saw/smelled smoke nearby	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Left because I saw flames nearby	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Left because there was fire in the immediate vicinity of my property	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Left because police, fire or emergency services told me to leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Left because relatives, friends or neighbours told me to leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Left because I wanted to remove other household members or visitors from any potential danger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Left because I felt it was too dangerous to stay and protect my house	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Left because my house caught on fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**42.** Where had you originally planned to go?

Another house nearby	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another building, such as a hall or a store	<input type="checkbox"/>
An open area, such as a reserve or oval	<input type="checkbox"/>
A nearby town that is safe from the fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**43.** When you left, where did you actually go?

Another house nearby	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another building, such as a hall or a store	<input type="checkbox"/>
An open area, such as a reserve or oval	<input type="checkbox"/>
A nearby town that was safe from the fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**44.** How did you get there?

In my car	<input type="checkbox"/>
In someone else's car	<input type="checkbox"/>
On foot	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**45.** When you left your house or property, did you feel that the danger was...?

Very high	<input type="checkbox"/>
High	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very low	<input type="checkbox"/>

**46.** When leaving, did you experience difficulties associated with any of the following? **You may select more than one.**

Poor visibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>
Embers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flames	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fallen trees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car ran out of petrol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had a car accident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Official road blocks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

**47.** How long after the fire passed through your town or suburb did you first attempt to return?

Less than 1 hour	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – 2 hours later	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 – 6 hours later	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 – 12 hours later	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 12 hours later	<input type="checkbox"/>

**48.** Why did you return? **You may select more than one.**

I felt the threat had passed	<input type="checkbox"/>
To defend my house and property	<input type="checkbox"/>
To see if my house had survived	<input type="checkbox"/>
To check on the safety of family and friends	<input type="checkbox"/>
To check on the safety of pets or livestock	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was concerned about looting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**49.** When returning, did you experience difficulties associated with any of the following? **You may select more than one.**

Poor visibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>
Embers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flames	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fallen trees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car ran out of petrol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had a car accident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Official road blocks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <b>(please specify)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

**50.** If there was another similar fire in your town or suburb would you take the same action in leaving?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why/why not?

**YOU HAVE NOW FINISHED THIS SECTION. PLEASE SKIP THE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS AND GO DIRECTLY TO QUESTION 72**

**THIS SECTION IS FOR PEOPLE WHO STAYED ON THEIR PROPERTY THROUGHOUT THE FIRE OR BEGAN DEFENDING THEIR PROPERTY BUT LEFT WHEN THEY FELT THE DANGER WAS TOO GREAT. ONLY COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU ANSWERED C, D, E, F, G, OR H TO QUESTION 37**

**51.** What was the main reason you stayed with your home or property during the bushfire?  
Please select **ONE** only.

Stayed to protect my house, property and/or livestock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stayed because the fire didn't reach my house or property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stayed because I felt it was too late to leave	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stayed because police, fire or emergency services advised me to stay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stayed because relatives, friends or neighbours advised me to stay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stayed because my attempts to leave were unsuccessful	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**52.** If known, from which direction did the fire approach your house or property? You can use descriptions such as 'South-west' or 'The fire came up through Smith's Gully'.

Direction:

**53.** Did the fire reach your house or property?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q56</b>

**54.** If known, at what approximate time did the fire reach your house or property?  
(e.g. "4.10pm" or "About 4pm")

Time:

**55.** How long did it take for the fire to pass over your property?

Hours:

Minutes:

**56.** How safe did you feel while staying at your house?

Very safe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither safe nor unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/>

**57.** As the fire approached your property on February 7th, how confident were you that you...

	Very confident	Confident	Not very confident	Not confident at all
Could do what was required to protect yourself and others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could do what was required to protect your house and property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would get help from other people? (e.g. Neighbours, friends)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would get help from fire or emergency services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**58.** Did you receive help from any of the following sources when staying with your house? **You may select more than one.**

Other household members	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family, friends or neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire or emergency services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>



**59.** Did you experience any difficulties while staying with your home or property? (e.g. lost electricity, suffered smoke inhalation etc)

**60.** Did you leave your property at any stage during the fire?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q70</b>

**61.** Why did you leave your house or property? **You may select more than one.**

Left because I saw/smelled smoke nearby	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left because I saw flames nearby	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left because there was fire in the immediate vicinity of my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left to get things that were needed to defend the property (e.g. petrol pump, generator, petrol etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left because police, fire or emergency services told me to leave	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left because relatives, friends or neighbours told me to leave	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left because I felt it was too dangerous to stay and protect my house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left because I sustained an injury while defending the house (e.g. smoke inhalation or burns)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left because I wanted to remove other household members or visitors from danger	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left because utilities (e.g. water, electricity) or equipment (e.g. generators, pumps) failed and I was unable to defend my property without them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left because my house caught on fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**62.** Please use the box below if you would like to add comments about **why** you left your property.

**63.** Where was the fire when you left your house or property?

On my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than 100m from my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between 100m and 500m from my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 500m from my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**64.** When you left, where did you go?

Another house nearby	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another building, such as a hall or a store	<input type="checkbox"/>
An open area, such as a reserve or oval	<input type="checkbox"/>
A nearby town that was safe from the fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**65.** How safe did you feel when travelling to your chosen location?

Very safe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither safe nor unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/>

**66.** When leaving, did you experience difficulties associated with any of the following? **You may select more than one.**

Poor visibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>
Embers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flames	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fallen trees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car ran out of petrol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had a car accident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Official road blocks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

**67.** When did you return to your property?

Before the fire reached my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
As the fire reached my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – 2 hours after the fire had reached my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 – 6 hours after the fire had reached my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 – 12 hours after the fire had reached my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 12 hours after the fire had reached my property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**68. Why did you return? You may select more than one.**

I felt the threat had passed	<input type="checkbox"/>
To defend my house and property	<input type="checkbox"/>
To see if my house had survived	<input type="checkbox"/>
To check on the safety of family and friends	<input type="checkbox"/>
To check on the safety of pets or livestock	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was concerned about looting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**69. When returning, did you experience difficulties associated with any of the following? You may select more than one.**

Poor visibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>
Embers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flames	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fallen trees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car ran out of petrol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had a car accident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Official road blocks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>

**70.** If there was another similar fire in your town or suburb, would you take the same action in staying to protect your home or property?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why/why not?

**71.** Please use the space below if you would like to add any comments about your experience of staying with your home or property during the bushfire.

# Section 5

## Information about you and your household

In this section we would like to find out about your household as it was on February 7th 2009.

**72.** Are you male or female?

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

**73.** Which of the following age groups do you belong to?

18 – 24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 – 34	<input type="checkbox"/>
35 – 44	<input type="checkbox"/>
45 – 54	<input type="checkbox"/>
55 – 64	<input type="checkbox"/>
65 – 74	<input type="checkbox"/>
75+	<input type="checkbox"/>

**74.** On February 7th, what type of property did you have?

House or unit on residential block	<input type="checkbox"/>
House on a hobby farm -or small acreage	<input type="checkbox"/>
House on a large farm or other large property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land without a house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**75.** How much of your time were you spending living on this property?

Full time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part time (holidays or weekends etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not live at property	<input type="checkbox"/>

**76.** How long had you had this property?

0 – 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 – 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 – 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**77.** How long had you been living in this town or suburb?

0 – 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 – 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 – 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**78.** Did you own your property or were you renting?

Owned or was buying house or property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**79.** What kind of insurance did you have on February 7th 2009?  
You may select more than one as appropriate.

House and contents	<input type="checkbox"/>
House only	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contents only	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outbuildings (e.g. sheds)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farm insurance (e.g. livestock, machinery, fencing)	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>

**80.** What is the composition of you household?

Couple with children or other dependents	<input type="checkbox"/>
One adult with children or other dependents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Couple without children or other dependents	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q82</b>
One person household	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q82</b>
Shared house with other adults	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Go to Q82</b>
Other ( <b>please specify</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

**81.** In the boxes below, please indicate how many children or dependents in each age category live in your household.

Infants and very young children (0-5 years old)	<input type="text"/>
Young children (6-11 years old)	<input type="text"/>
Adolescents (12-18 years old)	<input type="text"/>
Elderly or aged (65 years old and greater)	<input type="text"/>

**82.** On February 7th were you registered as a CFA volunteer?

Yes, I was registered	<input type="checkbox"/>
No, but I had been registered in the past	<input type="checkbox"/>
No, I had never been registered	<input type="checkbox"/>

**83.** On February 7th were you a member of a CFA community fire guard group?

Yes, I was a member	<input type="checkbox"/>
No, but I had been a member in the past	<input type="checkbox"/>
No, I had never been a member	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thank you for completing this survey. Please post it back to us in the reply paid envelope provided within the next 21 days. If you no longer have the reply paid envelope it can be posted, free of charge, to the address below:**

**Bushfire CRC/RMIT Research Project  
Reply Paid 12278  
A'Beckett Street, VIC, 8006.**