

Clearing the smoke with motion comics

Supporting the mental health of young people impacted by bushfires by meeting their information needs

Researcher: Hi, I'm Dr. Erin Walsh from the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (NCEPH) at the Australian National University (ANU). For this study, I'm working with my colleagues from NCEPH: Dr. Tsheten and Professor Cathy Banwell; and my colleagues from other places at the ANU: Liz Drummond and Calo Huang from the College of Health and Medicine, Dr. Will Grant from the Centre for Public Awareness of Science; and Dr. Zoe Leviston from the School of Medicine and Psychology, and Erin Barry from the ACT Youth Coalition. This research has been supported by the Brooke Bushfire Research Fund. We have partnered with the ACT Youth Coalition for this research.

General Outline of the Project: This project is about meeting the unmet information and mental health needs of young people like you who are effected by bushfires. So far, we have talked to young people aged between 15 and 19 years, to understand their experience of bushfires, and made some new resources to help explore and support the impact of bushfires on their health and wellbeing. We have some more questions relating to those topics which were raised in those focus groups. We would also like to share what we have made to get your feedback on what works, what doesn't, and how we can make it better.

Participant Involvement:

Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal: participation in the project is **voluntary** and you may, without negative consequences, decline to take part or withdraw from the research without providing an explanation. **You do not need to participate in this research if you do not want to. You can stop at any time, and no one will be upset with you.** If you are part of a focus group, we won't be able to remove the comments you have already provided from the audio recording, but we will stop the recording so we don't listen to anything more you say. If you are in an interview, we will delete the recording and not use anything you have said.

What does participation in the research entail? We will ask you to come to the ACT Youth Coalition and participate in a focus group with 10-20 of your peers. You can choose to have an interview if you would prefer not to be in a larger group. We will ask you to write down your age and

gender, and then discuss your lived experience of finding out health information relating to bushfires. We will also show you some sketches and ideas for a motion comic on this topic. The questions will include things like “What is your experience of bushfires?” and “What do you know now which was helpful, or you wish you knew sooner?”. If you want to, you are welcome to draw or write notes instead of speaking in front of the group. All of this should take about one and a half hours.

Location and Duration: We will do this in a large room at the ACT Youth Coalition, a safe space where the discussion is private and we can be COVID-safe.

Remuneration: All participants who attend the focus group or interview will be reimbursed for travel costs, and will be provided with food. Please let the ACT Youth Coalition know ahead of time if you have any dietary requirements. All participants who attend the focus group or interview will be given \$50 in cash, even if they chose to withdraw during the focus group or interview. For accounting purposes, will ask you to sign a receipt to confirm you received the cash. Your signatures will be stored separately from the research data, and will be thrown away once the project funds have been reconciled (likely January 2025).

Risks: You may experience distress during the focus group or interview. In focus groups, someone may disclose something that is harmful to themselves or others. Other members of the focus group will hear what you say, or may know you personally. Please try not to mention any confidential or defamatory information, or information about illegal activities during focus groups, and please keep focus group discussions confidential. We will not tell your parents or guardians what you told us, unless you ask us to. BUT if you tell us if you feel unsafe, we will have to share what you have said with adults who can help you get the support you might need.

Benefits: it is unlikely that you will personally benefit from participating in this research. We hope that what we learn will help other people make better resources for young people impacted by bushfires, and that the resources we make help support young people impacted by bushfires.

If you are 17 years old or younger, please talk to your parent or guardian about this study. They can help you decide if you want to participate. If you do decide to participate, they should know about this study and what you will be doing as part of it.

Exclusion criteria:

Participant Limitation: Only people aged 15 – 19 with lived experience of bushfires in Australia can participate.

Confidentiality:

If you agree to participate and are still OK with how it went at the end of the focus group or interview, we will share your answers with our research team. We will not tell your parents or guardians what you told us, unless you ask us to. BUT if you tell us if you feel unsafe, we will have to share what you have said with adults who can help you get the support you might need. Confidentiality will be protected as far as the law allows.

Privacy:

Australian privacy rules require me to tell you how my University handles your private information, and you can ask me to give you more details of that or how you can find out what information we have about you and to fix it if it is wrong. You can read the ANU privacy policy here: https://policies.anu.edu.au/pp/document/ANUP_010007 . We will be asking some questions that could be considered 'personal or sensitive' according to the Australian Privacy Act 1988, specifically your age and gender identity. We ask about this demographic information because people of different ages and gender identities may have different lived experiences and have been impacted differently by bushfires, and so we can compare our findings with other studies with young people. We will only report this information at the level of the group (e.g. "participants were aged 15-19, average age of [number]. [number]% identified as female, [number]% as male, [etc for disclosed gender identities]."

Data Storage:

Where: We will take an audio recording of our discussion and turn it into text using the automated service [otter.ai](https://help.otter.ai/hc/en-us/articles/360048258953-Data-security-and-privacy-policies) <https://help.otter.ai/hc/en-us/articles/360048258953-Data-security-and-privacy-policies>. A robot will turn your voice into text and then delete the audio file, but for a while the audio will be on a server in the United States. We will remove any identifying information from these text transcripts, so they won't have things like your name, age, the names of friends you may mention, or where you go to school. When the transcript is done, we will put all of your answers on an ANU password-protected computer. We will also leave a physical printed copy with the Youth Coalition, who will keep it in a locked secure box or filing cabinet. If you want to review what you said in your transcript, you can arrange a time with the Youth Coalition to read the printed copy, and let us know about things you had said that you would like removed. Once analysis begins, we will shred this physical copy. We may include a direct quote from you in the final reporting, if what you say is a good example of

something we have found in lots of people's responses. So, if you consent to participate, you are consenting to us quoting you. We will say "a participant" said the quote, so it will not be presented with any details that might make you easy to identify. Once we have talked to everybody, and got all of the transcripts, we will put all of their answers together and analyse them. We will delete the audio recording as soon as analysis is complete.

How long: We will store everyone's de-identified transcripts in ANU's preferred storage solution, OneDrive, or Microsoft Teams or Dropbox, and also in our email. If you want to learn more about the data security of any of these things, here are some links:

Qualtrics: <https://www.qualtrics.com/security-statement/>

OneDrive: <https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-gb/privacystatement>

ANU email and IT: <https://www.anu.edu.au/privacy>

Microsoft teams: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/security-compliance-overview>

Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com/security>

We will share what we find from everyone's answers in places like scientific journals, and our website <https://nceph.anu.edu.au/research/projects/clearing-smoke-motion-comics>. We will update this page within six months of data collection to share what we have learned, and will likely update it after that whenever publications relating to this project are released.

We will keep the de-identified text transcripts indefinitely for future research purposes, and share it with our colleagues for research purposes in the future. They may not be looking into the same topic as this project. The restriction on future access to the data is that the requester is deemed to have a legitimate research purpose (e.g. is not a scammer or advertiser) by a member of the research team.

Queries and concerns:

If you experience distress during the focus group, please let the research team or people from the ACT Youth Coalition know so we can pause the discussion and check in with you. If you are experiencing distress at the end of the discussion, we can help you access your support services by doing things like calling a family member or friend to come and pick you up. Here are some other places you can go to seek support:

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

Headspace 1800 650 890

Beyond Blue, 1300 22 4636 with online forum <https://forums.beyondblue.org.au/>

Reach out <https://au.reachout.com/>

Because some of you will be minors the research team would rather not have access to your contact details. If you have any questions, please ask the ACT Youth Coalition and if they don't know, they will ask the research team for you. Their contact details are 02 6247 3540, office@youthcoalition.net If you wish to contact the researchers directly, Erin's contact details are erin.walsh@anu.edu.au, +61 2 6125 8291

During the focus group and interview, you are welcome to ask Erin or any member of the research team.

Ethics Committee Clearance:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2023/1376). If you or your parents/guardians have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au