



## NEWSLETTER MAY 2015

### Partners

We would like to begin this newsletter by thanking all of our research participants and the partners who have supported and allowed us to get to this point within our research project. Their contribution is extremely important in enabling and guiding this research. The following are a list of our partners who have supported Beyond Bushfires from the beginning: the many community organizations and community member partners from within our study communities, Australian Red Cross, Australian Rotary Health, Victorian Department of Health, Federal Department of Human Services (Centrelink), Flinders University, University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, Swinburne University of Technology, Phoenix Australia: Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, Central West Gippsland Primary Care Partnership, Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership, North East Primary Care Partnership, Outer East Health and Community Support Alliance, Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership, and Central Hume Primary Care Partnership.

### Presentations

We have presented at many forums over the last month: Australian Rotary Health Meeting, Qualitative Methods Conference, Australia and New Zealand Disaster Management Conference, and a seminar within The University of Melbourne.

Upcoming presentations: Population Health Congress, Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) Conference, and the International Social Network Conference.

We would like everyone to know that we are more than willing to come to your community, perhaps to attend group meetings, to learn about current local issues and to chat about learnings from the study. It is important for us to stay connected with our participating communities so that we can make sure the research remains relevant. Just email: [snowdone@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:snowdone@unimelb.edu.au) to arrange.



*A pot that survived the fires with new growth.*

## Publications

We are continuing to work hard on the analyses of the Beyond Bushfires data, and developing research papers and presentations from the findings. We will let you know when other publications become available. Currently we are working on publishing our social network findings and appreciate the time participants put into answering these questions and hope you can understand the complexity needed to analyse this data. We should have some publications on this data soon.

Feel free to visit our website for copies of the following articles:

[www.beyondbushfires.org.au/findings](http://www.beyondbushfires.org.au/findings)

### Published

1. Gibbs L, Waters E, Bryant R, Pattison P, Lusher D, Harms L, Richardson J, MacDougall C, Block K, Snowdon E, Gallagher H C, Sinnott V, Ireton G, Forbes D. (2013) Beyond Bushfires: Community, Resilience and Recovery – A longitudinal mixed method study of the medium to long term impacts of bushfires on mental health and social connectedness. *BMC Public Health*. 13:1036
2. Bryant R, Waters E, Gibbs L, Gallagher C, Pattison P, Lusher D, MacDougall C, Harms L, Block K, Snowdon E, Sinnott V, Ireton G, Richardson J, Forbes D (2014). Psychological Outcomes Following the Victorian Black Saturday Bushfires. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*. 48 (7) 634-643.
3. Gibbs L, Snowdon E, Block K, Gallagher HC, MacDougall C, Ireton G, Pirrone-Savona A, Forbes D, Richardson J, Harms L, Waters E. (2014) Where do we start? A proposed post disaster intervention framework for children and young people. *Pastoral Care and Education*. 32 (1): 68-87
4. Block, K, Gibbs, L, Snowdon, E, & MacDougall, C. (2014). Participant guided mobile methods: Investigating personal experiences of communities. *SAGE Research Methods Cases*. London: Sage Publications, Ltd.
5. Forbes D, Alkemade N, Waters E, Gibbs L, Gallagher H C, Pattison P, Lusher D, MacDougall C, Harms L, Block K, Snowdon E, Kellett C, Sinnott V, Ireton G, Richardson J and Bryant R. The Role of Anger and Ongoing Stressors in Mental Health Following a Natural Disaster. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*.

### Submitted and undergoing review

- Children and Young People's Wellbeing Post-Disaster: Safety and Stability are Critical. (Journal Article - Submitted)
- Conceptualising post-disaster recovery: Incorporating experiences of grief and loss. (Journal Article – Submitted)
- Post-Bushfire Relocation and Personal Wellbeing: A Case Study from Victoria, Australia. (Book Chapter – Submitted)
- The Effects of Separation From Close Family Members on Mental Health and Attachment Styles in a disaster\* (Journal Article – Submitted)
- Separation and Reunification in Disasters: The Importance of Understanding the Psycho-Social Consequences\* (Book Chapter – Submitted)

\*Two versions on separation during the bushfires will be published – one from a psychological lens with a technical focus and the other from a practical approach with the lead author being a practitioner who has worked in the field of disasters for many years.

## PhD Students

Below are details on two of our PhD students, for information on other PhD projects – visit: [www.beyondbushfires.org.au/about/staff](http://www.beyondbushfires.org.au/about/staff)

Marian Lok is in the final stages of her PhD. Read about her study on technology use in the post-disaster period:

### **Crisis Informatics from the Internet user's perspective - An exploratory study of individual online experiences following a disaster.**

Marian Lok ([lok@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:lok@student.unimelb.edu.au))

Advances in technology have enabled individuals affected by a disaster event to proactively go beyond the geographical space of the disaster and seek what they require online. 'Crisis informatics' refers to disaster research that investigates the implications of technology in the context of the full disaster life cycle. The study aims to contribute to the articulation of the needs of individuals and communities affected by disasters. It proposes that the active creation and modification of thoughts, meanings and understandings related to the disaster are the result of personal and social experiences that occur within the socio-cultural context of the Internet. The research design incorporated a web-based survey (n= 216) and open-ended blog entries (n=13) of Internet users affected by an Australian or New Zealand natural disaster recruited through Google Adwords and Facebook. The findings illuminate why self-motivated individuals enter the Internet's online space in a post-disaster context.

We have another student in the early stages of her PhD– please see the invitation below to decide whether you would like to be involved:

### **Parenting After a Disaster: Experiences Since Black Saturday, is about understanding the experience of being a parent in the years following a disaster.**

Lauren Kosta ([lauren.kosta@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:lauren.kosta@unimelb.edu.au))

A new research study is underway at the University of Melbourne conducted by Lauren Kosta for her PhD in Social Work. The aim is to find ways to help support parents and children in similar circumstances. We will be conducting interviews to hear what it has been like to be a parent since Black Saturday including what has been difficult, what has gone well, and if there were supports or information that helped or would be helpful.

We are currently looking for people who would like to be part of this research. You are eligible to participate if:

- You are a mother, father or primary caregiver of a child(ren) over the age of 6, and
- You were living in an area affected by the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires.

If you are interested in hearing more about this project or finding out how you can participate in an interview please contact Lauren at 0412 060 438 or by email at [lauren.kosta@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:lauren.kosta@unimelb.edu.au)

The research is being supervised by Associate Professor Lou Harms (Deputy Head, Department of Social Work), Associate Professor Lisa Gibbs (Deputy Director, Jack Brockhoff Child Health & Wellbeing Program), and Dr David Rose (Lecturer, Department of Social Work) at the University of Melbourne.

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