



The second round of surveys are about to begin, so we would like to give you an update on the Beyond Bushfires study

Over the last six months we have been busy exploring and analysing the data collected from surveys and in-depth interviews completed so far. It was great to have everyone involved and there are important findings emerging from the data already collected. Overall we have found that most community members are free from significant mental health burdens 3-4 years after the 2009 bushfires. This suggests that overall, communities are resilient. However, there are ongoing issues for a small but significant proportion of the affected individuals, who need access to health services and support in the longer term after the bushfires. Our surveys have shown that social connections and involvement in local community organisations tend to be associated with positive outcomes for individuals, while there is an increased risk of poor mental health outcomes associated with anger responses and other major life stressors (that occurred after the fires).

To understand more about what is influencing recovery, we need your input once again. Anyone who completed our survey between December 2011 – January 2013 will be contacted soon and asked to be involved again. By contributing a second time, we can better understand how health changes over time, and develop better ways of assisting people and communities in their recovery. Not everyone will remember participating, but don't worry – if you completed the first survey you will be contacted and invited to complete the survey again. All previous participants are encouraged to respond again – including your partner, spouse, friends, housemates and family members.

We would love to provide you and others who are interested with more findings and updates on our study as they come to hand – if you know someone that would like to be added to our mailing list – please advise them to email their details to: info-beyondbushfires@unimelb.edu.au

We are also planning a one day event in Melbourne on the 30th October showcasing the first round of research findings. Save the date if you are interested and we will circulate more details shortly.

If you have moved or haven't heard from us in the next few weeks and you completed the initial survey, please call **1800 799 841** to find out more information.

Please note: at the moment we aren't inviting new survey participants, only those who have already completed the first survey.

Best Regards,
The Beyond Bushfires Team

Website: www.beyondbushfires.org.au
Email: info-beyondbushfires@unimelb.edu.au
Phone: 1800 799 841

