

# Participatory technology for bushfire disaster preparedness in communities

## Participant information & consent form

Research team

Chief Investigators: Dr Chloe Lucas & Aidan Davison

Student investigator: Andrew Orange

Research Advisor: Dr Cara Stitzlein

You are invited to participate in a Smartphone App trial conducted by PhD Student Andrew Orange, from the University of Tasmania, investigating how apps could assist residents living in bushfire prone areas prepare and reduce their bushfire risk.

### What is the purpose of this study?

Recent bushfire events in Australia showed that many households and communities are inadequately prepared for bushfire. This research examines how bushfire preparedness can be maintained and improved by citizens' use of technology such as smartphone apps and websites.

### Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to take part because you have downloaded this app created by the University of Tasmania for Bushfire Preparedness. Your involvement in this study is entirely voluntary, and there will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate, or if you withdraw from the study at any time by deleting the app.

### What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to use and explore the various features of the smartphone app and provide periodic feedback via online surveys. Surveys will occur when you first start the application, as you use new features, periodically (every 3 months), and when the research ends, or you choose to leave the study. Your usage of features within the application will be recorded but no personally identifiable information or personal information will be linked or associated.

The smartphone app is planned to be available for two fire season. Your involvement in the study is entirely voluntary and there will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate. You may withdraw from the study at any time by deleting the app, but as your data is not identifiable, we cannot remove any data you have contributed up to that point. The privacy of participants is ensured (personal details will never be disclosed in any published material).

Survey data will be collected via the Qualtrics Survey Platform ([General Terms and Conditions - GTCs - Qualtrics](#)) and records then stored in accordance with UTAS Data

Management policy. Smartphone App usage data will be stored in accordance with UTAS Data Management Policy.

With your consent we will use your feedback and usage data of the application to further inform our research.

The information will be used as part of a national research project funded by the Australian Research Council. During your use of the application, you will be requested to provide feedback. All your responses will be treated by the researchers as confidential and anonymous. If we quote your words in a research publication, it will be under a pseudonym (a made-up name). The research findings will be published in peer-reviewed academic journals. If we quote your words in a research publication, it will be under a pseudonym (a made-up name).

### **What will happen to the data when this study is over?**

Your data will be de-identified, meaning that your name and any identifiable information will not be stored or associated in any way with your responses. Your responses will be collated together with the responses from other participants and analysed to explore overall themes and patterns. The research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania password-protected computers.

### **Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?**

By participating, you will gain access to tools and information that may help you to be better prepared for bushfires. You will also be contributing to a better understanding of community bushfire preparedness across Australia, and the development of technology to assist community bushfire preparedness.

### **Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?**

You will not be asked for personal or sensitive information.

While discussion of sensitive topics is not anticipated, bushfire can be an emotionally distressing issue. Should you require support, your General Practitioner, Beyond Blue or Lifeline provides support: call Beyond Blue 1300 224 636 or Lifeline 13 11 14 or see <https://www.lifeline.org.au/Get-Help/>.

### **What if I have questions about this study?**

Feel free to ask any questions you have about the study to the research team [link provided].

This study has been approved by the University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, you can contact the Executive Officer of the HREC on (03) 6226 6254 or email

human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive concerns or complaints from research participants. You will need to quote Project ID: 27971.

Many thanks for your time and assistance in this research investigation.

By proceeding, I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet.