

MEDIA ALERT
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Preparing psychologically for bushfires: Resources for the public

Experts from the Australian Psychological Society (APS) have stressed that psychological preparedness is a vital component of being prepared for any disaster such as a bushfire.

“In light of the recent and ongoing bushfires here in Queensland, it is important to acknowledge that being psychologically prepared can assist us to think more clearly and reduce the risk of serious injury and loss of life or property,” said APS President, Professor Bob Montgomery.

“A well practised household emergency plan will provide a greater sense of being in control in an emergency situation. This is a great start to being psychologically prepared when a bushfire is threatening and can help you feel more confident, in control and better able to think clearly about what you need to do to keep safe.”

A wide range of resources to assist bushfire-prone and bushfire-affected communities has been made available by the APS, along with practitioner resources for those working to assist these communities. Visit the APS website at www.psychology.org.au and click on the ‘Bushfire Resources’ link to access these resources.

Community resources include tips for preparing psychologically for bushfires and other disasters as well as guidelines and resources for coping with the distress and psychological reactions that typically emerge after a bushfire.

Practitioner resources are also available on the APS website. These resources have been developed to assist those working to assist bushfire affected communities, including counsellors, psychologists, GPs and other disaster relief workers and outline current best-practice strategies for helping individuals from bushfire affected communities cope with their immediate and short-term distress, emphasising the value of basic practical and emotional support.

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APS President, Professor Bob Montgomery, is available for interview.

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The APS is the largest professional association for psychologists in Australia, representing more than 17,500 members. The APS is committed to advancing psychology as a discipline and profession. It spreads the message that psychologists make a difference to peoples' lives, through improving psychological knowledge and community wellbeing.