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HAZARDSCRC

TOWARDS MESSAGE EFFECTIVENESS: THE ROLE OF EFFICACY-BASED CONTENT AND IMAGES IN BUSHFIRE AND FLOOD EMERGENCY WARNINGS

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Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Programme



APPROACH

- Focus on instructional messaging (Sturges, 1994)
- Value of social media research
 - Australian industry-sponsored national review of warnings highlighted the importance of social media and images to support community decision-making during natural hazards (National Review of Warnings, 2014)
 - Message sequencing/ordering effects
- Value of self-efficacy (see for example Dorsey et al, 1999; Verroen et al, 2013)
- Approach to industry-funded research
 - Comparison of existing + modified messages

METHODS

Online survey of 1,442 participants, divided across two hazards

Stimuli

- Fictional state emergency management agency
- Official warnings
- Facebook warnings (+ text-based image)

Bushfire survey participants

- Rural sample

Flood survey participants

- National sample

INDICATIVE STIMULI



Bushfire EMERGENCY WARNING for your area
Issue date: 10:03AM 15/1/2017
Next update: 11:00AM 15/1/2017
A bushfire EMERGENCY WARNING has been issued for people in your area. You are in danger and need to act immediately to survive. There is a threat to lives and homes.
For more information <https://www.sefs.gov.au>

[ABC Emergency](#) | [Main Roads](#) | [State Police](#) | [Police Station](#) | [District Police](#) | [Local Council](#)

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- If you cannot leave, shelter in your home or property.
- If you are not home, do not return.

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- Leaving now is the safest option for your family's survival—check for road closures and plan your route, notify family of your intentions.
- If you cannot leave, get ready to shelter in your home or property:
 - Identify safe spots to shelter, preferably in brick buildings, that are away from windows and doors and the direction of the fire—these safe spots will provide you with the best protection.
 - Close all doors and windows, turn off evaporative air conditioners and seal doorways with wet towels—these actions will reduce smoke inside your property.
 - Drink and store nearby plenty of water—fill empty containers and baths with water.
 - Bring pets inside.
- If you are not home, do not return—it is too dangerous for you and your family.

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INDICATIVE STIMULI

BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY WARNING

You are in danger and need to act immediately to survive.

#SEFS #FireAlert

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FINDINGS

Bushfire v
Flood

Official v
Facebook

Text-based
image

Efficacy +
calls-to-action

Message
order