

Register for session at Emerald Community House

**Date & Address:** Sunday March 25<sup>th</sup> 2018, 356-358 Belgrave-Gembrook Rd, Emerald

**Sessions:** 10am, 11:30am, 1pm (space limited)

**RSVP required:** 03 5968 3881 or emhouse@inet.net.au

## WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK. COMMUNITY TESTING AND REHEARSALS

The Immersive Bushfire Experience is currently undergoing final testing before being launched to the general community in September 2018. We are seeking the support of community members who are interested in being involved in rehearsals during March and April 2018.

The Immersive Bushfire Experience is a unique mobile learning space that aims to help you better understand what being in a bushfire is actually like, to learn how you will respond to the threat and what you can do to better manage your response and emotions.

The real-life events of two families during the 2009 Victorian bushfires have been drawn on to assist development of the experience. Through careful and sensitive examination of their first-hand accounts, a 'gap' was identified between people's expectation of bushfire and the reality of a bushfire.

In behavioural science, this 'gap' is referred to as psychological or emotional preparedness. This is the extent to which people are aware of and are able to anticipate what it would be like to be in a very frightening situation under threat, as well as have the ability to effectively manage thoughts, emotions and behaviours to respond to danger appropriately.



*Illustration only*

### How will it work on the day?

Upon arrival, you will be welcomed by a host, who will discuss with you what to expect and provide a written description of the experience before you sign an informed consent. Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to change your mind and decide not to participate at any point.



You are then guided through a forty-five minute – 1 hour session that helps you explore the reality of a bushfire and your natural reactions. It has been designed to assist you to become better informed so that more realistic expectations can be built into bushfire preparedness activities and decision making.

It is designed to activate, augment and 'springboard' people toward current or additional information sources, agencies community engagement programs (CFA Community Fireguard etc.) or inspire the communities to gather their own resources – all with a much better sense of what they are planning and preparing for.

### An outline of the experience is provided below

1. You are welcomed, are provided with the informed consent form to read and sign if you are happy to proceed.
2. You will then be asked to complete Part 1 of the evaluation questionnaire.
3. You are briefed by our Chief Psychologist Dr Rob Gordon who describes the experience and how to get the most from your participation.
4. You are then involved in an interactive discussion about decision making.
5. You will be introduced to the central part of the experience, which is the sensory soundscape of a bushfire story. The soundscape is supported by lighting sound effects, wind and heat. This helps replicate the experience of a bushfire. This section is around 10 minutes long.
6. You will again be briefed by our Chief Psychologist Dr Rob Gordon. Rob will set the scene for the de brief and discussion about the experience.
7. You are then asked to complete Part 2 of the evaluation. This is critical for us to continue to learn, refine and improve the experience.
8. You will then have the opportunity for a tea or coffee supplied by the local community host, and to continue to discuss your experience and what you will now do differently as you prepare for bushfire.

### Who are we looking for to be involved?

We are looking for a wide variety of people from all walks of life, however you need to be over 16 years of age. You may live in a bushfire risk area, you may have experienced fire or not. We are particularly keen to get people that have never experienced a bushfire as the whole experience is designed to close the gap between what you expect it will be like, and a realistic replication of what it really will be like.

### Who should not participate in the experience?

It is strongly recommended that should any of the following apply to you, then you do not participate in the IBE:

- If you are under 16 years of age
- If you have a heart related medical condition, raised blood pressure, asthma, breathing difficulties, unpredictable allergies.
- If you suffer from a mental health condition including anxiety responses to enclosed spaces.
- If you suffer from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder or have recently experienced a traumatic event

