Comprehensive School Safety:
Developing a participatory approach to school bushfire risk management.

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Within the Australian school setting there is currently no nationally coordinated approach to the teaching of disaster resilience education (DRE) and the delivery of student focused and participatory disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs.

The recently developed UN-level Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) framework (UNESCO/UNICEF, 2014) provides a detailed and coordinated approach to reducing all hazard risks to the education sector.

The CSS provides a guiding framework that can be customised to the Australian school setting to facilitate the development of a participatory approach to school bushfire safety

The CSS outlines that school safety rests on three pillars:

Pillar 1: Safe learning facilities
Pillar 2: School disaster management
Pillar 3: Risk reduction and resilience education

The research will be carried out in selected Victorian secondary schools with a recognised bushfire risk.

A participatory action research methodology will be applied implementing a *plan, act, observe, reflect* research cycle.

(Source, Global Alliance for Disaster Risk reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector, 2014)

Research Aims:

1.Using the CSS framework as a template, investigate the development of innovative approaches to integrating DRE/DRR and emergency management planning (EMP) for bushfire in schools.

2.Scope a policy and practice-level framework that enables a systematic and nationwide approach to scaled, sustainable implementation of bushfire safety programs in schools.

3.Investigate the future design of child participatory, site specific school emergency management planning enabling schools to better prepare for, mitigate, respond to and recover from the impacts of bushfire.

Through the development of a participatory approach to school bushfire safety, and the adoption of a school safety framework specifically designed for the Australian school setting, school communities can work towards reducing their bushfire risk.