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Project Title: Investigating the application of Protection Motivation Theory to animal owners and emergency responders in a bushfire natural hazard

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The expected benefit of this research is that new strategies for hazard preparedness will be identified and implemented for residents who may face a bushfire natural hazard. Improved hazard preparedness and mitigation links directly to the saving of human life, and improved outcomes for property and the environment. Enhanced community engagement and resilience enables healthier, more self-reliant communities not only to cope with natural hazards, but when they occur, to "bounce back" stronger than before. In the process of achieving this outcome, much valuable information will be available to help communities understand their behaviour in a bushfire hazard, and thus modify their behaviour accordingly. By helping people discover that strong community engagement and collaboration can synergistically build their ability to adopt and implement positive, adaptive actions, community efficacy and self-reliance should be enhanced and empowered.

Animal welfare is important, but should not be viewed in isolation. Instead, the animal is the "pebble in the pond" and the ripples emanating represent all the interconnected human issues of individual and community well-being.

Participants in this study may improve their personal knowledge of, and need for, hazard preparedness, strengthen ties and alliances with other members of the community, and build their own and their community's self-efficacy and resilience. An understanding of their own behaviour in a bushfire emergency, and of the positive outcomes which can result from collaboration with Emergency Services should enhance their ability to survive bushfire, or other natural hazards, and even to experience "post traumatic growth".