



NEW TEAM MEMBER

We would like to welcome a new member to the Beyond Bushfires team. Alana Pirrone has been part of the Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program for 5 years and has just come back from a period of maternity leave with her gorgeous baby boy Blake. We are delighted that Alana has been able to join the Beyond Bushfires team for three days per week. Alana has particular skills in communications, design and event management which will be particularly helpful in keeping in touch with all of our interested stakeholders and helping us to present and disseminate the many findings coming out of the research. Alana will be organising a final symposium in April 2016 for us to share and discuss the latest round of research findings. More information will be circulated when the details are finalised.

Alana's contact details are:

Phone: (03) 8344 9147 | Email: apirrone@unimelb.edu.au

Alana will be in the office on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.



VALE ELIZBAETH WATERS



We are so very sad to have to announce the passing of our dear friend and colleague Professor Elizabeth (Liz) Waters. She has been unwell for some time but was so passionate about her work that many were unaware of how ill she was.

Liz Waters was instrumental in bringing together the Beyond Bushfires study and partners, securing funding, and guiding the development and conduct of the study. Those of us who work closely with her feel so fortunate to have been able to experience her warmth, generosity, incredible intellect, and passion for making a difference. She was an inspiring leader who changed our lives and the lives of countless people and communities who have benefited from her research program – the Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program. She is also renowned internationally for her contribution to evidence through the Public Health Group of the Cochrane Collaboration. A memorial event will be held for Liz on Monday 26 October at 6pm. Details are attached.

While we feel Liz's loss deeply, the entire team of investigators and partners is committed to the continuation of the Beyond Bushfires study and translation of the research findings into meaningful changes in policy and practice. Additional funding is being sought to support opportunities for extensions of this work. Associate Professor Lisa Gibbs has been appointed Acting Director of the Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program and will lead the Beyond Bushfires study to completion.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

We are so fortunate to have so many talented researchers conducting PhD studies that are linked to the Beyond Bushfires research. Two of them are in the process of seeking participants at the moment:

- Lauren Kosta is interested in speaking with parents about their experiences of parenting after a disaster to help find ways to support parents and children in similar circumstances. Lauren has previous experience in researching the experiences of parents with a seriously ill child. Further details about her study are attached.
- Kate Brady is asking people who have experienced a disaster to write a letter to their past, current or future self. Many of you will know Kate from her role as National Recovery Coordinator for Australian Red Cross. Kate is currently doing her PhD with the University of Melbourne. The study is called – ‘This is what happens after’ and is looking at what people have found helpful and unhelpful when recovering from the impacts of a disaster. Kate has already started receiving letters from people impacted by the Canterbury earthquakes, the 2009 Victorian fires, the Tasman Peninsula fires and Ash Wednesday. If you would like to participate, or would like more information, please go to www.thisiswhathappensafer.com or email Kate at kbrady@student.unimelb.edu.au

RECENT PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Our most recent Beyond Bushfires publication draws on the interviews we conducted and highlights the impacts of the Black Saturday bushfires on all aspects of children’s lives and the strategies used by families to restore a sense of safety and stability.

Gibbs L, Block K, Harms L, MacDougall C, Snowdon E, Ireton G, Forbes D, Richardson J, Waters E. Children and young people’s wellbeing post-disaster: Safety and stability are critical. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction. 2015; doi:10.1016/j.ijdr.2015.06.006

Children, young people and parents from communities affected by the February 2009 bushfires in Victoria, Australia, were interviewed four to five years post-fires as part of the Beyond Bushfires research study. Participant-guided mobile methods were used, in conjunction with interviews, with 35 people aged 4–66 years, to explore their current sense of place and community. Analysis of their stories revealed how children and young people sought safety and stability in the aftermath of a disaster experience in their home, school, social, recreational and work environments. For some families, this was a significant factor in a decision to move away from affected communities, whereas for others the familiarity of the local environment and community members counteracted the post-disaster disruption. The interplay of child, parent and grandparent mutual support and protection was evident, with friends, schools and communities also providing important support in creating safe environments for children.

This paper is still listed as ‘in press’ but is very close to final. The full publication can be accessed from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2015.06.006>

Best Regards,
The Beyond Bushfires Team

Website: www.beyondbushfires.org.au
Email: info-beyondbushfires@unimelb.edu.au
Phone: 1800 799 841

www.beyondbushfires.org.au