

Improving the role of hazard communications in increasing residents' preparedness for bushfires and floods

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Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Programme

Project timeline



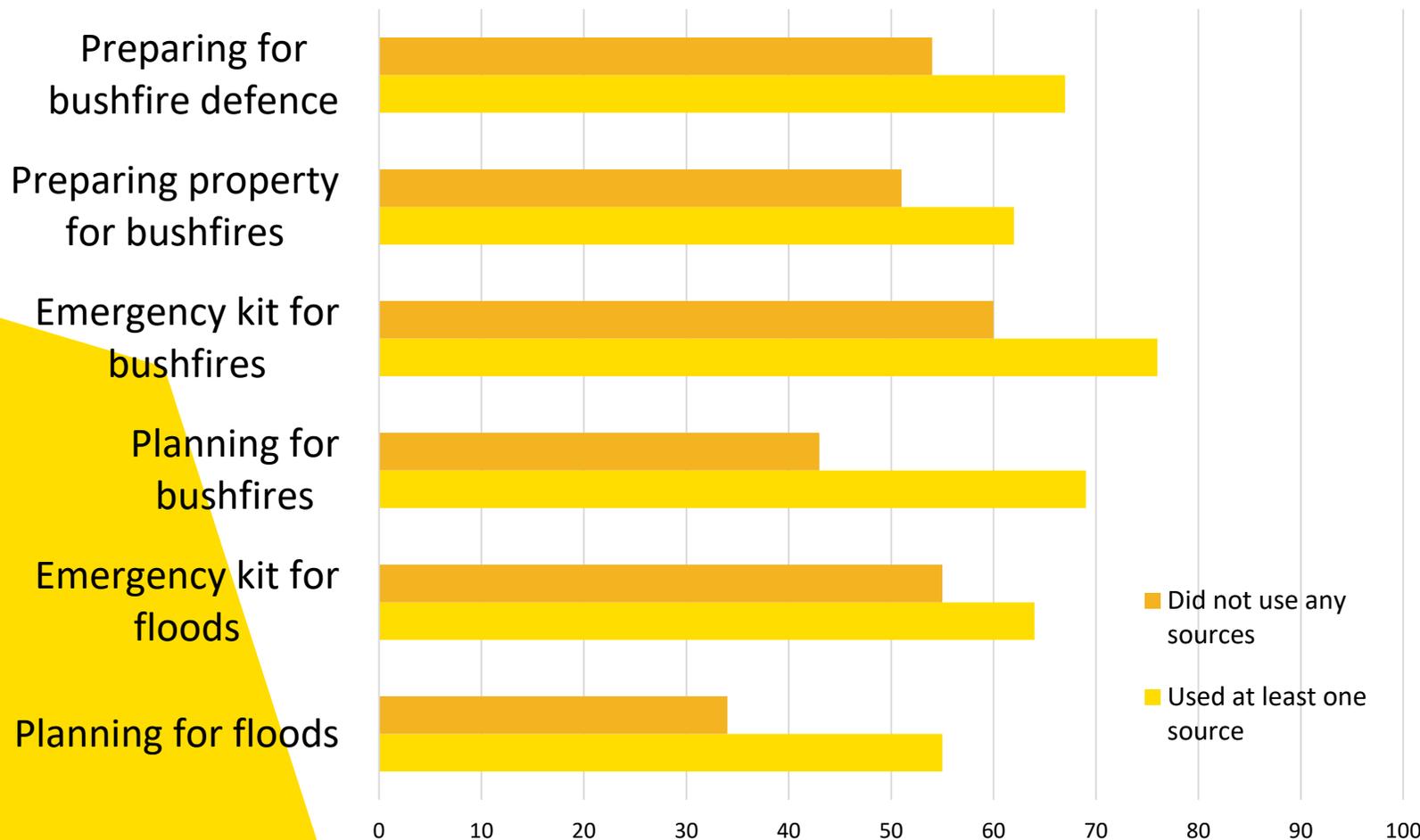
1. Defining Preparedness



Further reading (Technical Report): McNeill, I. M., Boldero, J. B., & McInstosh, E. (2015). Report on the selection of Preparedness and Planning measures for "Improving the Role of Hazard Communications in Increasing Residents' Preparedness and Response Planning for Recurring Natural Hazards".

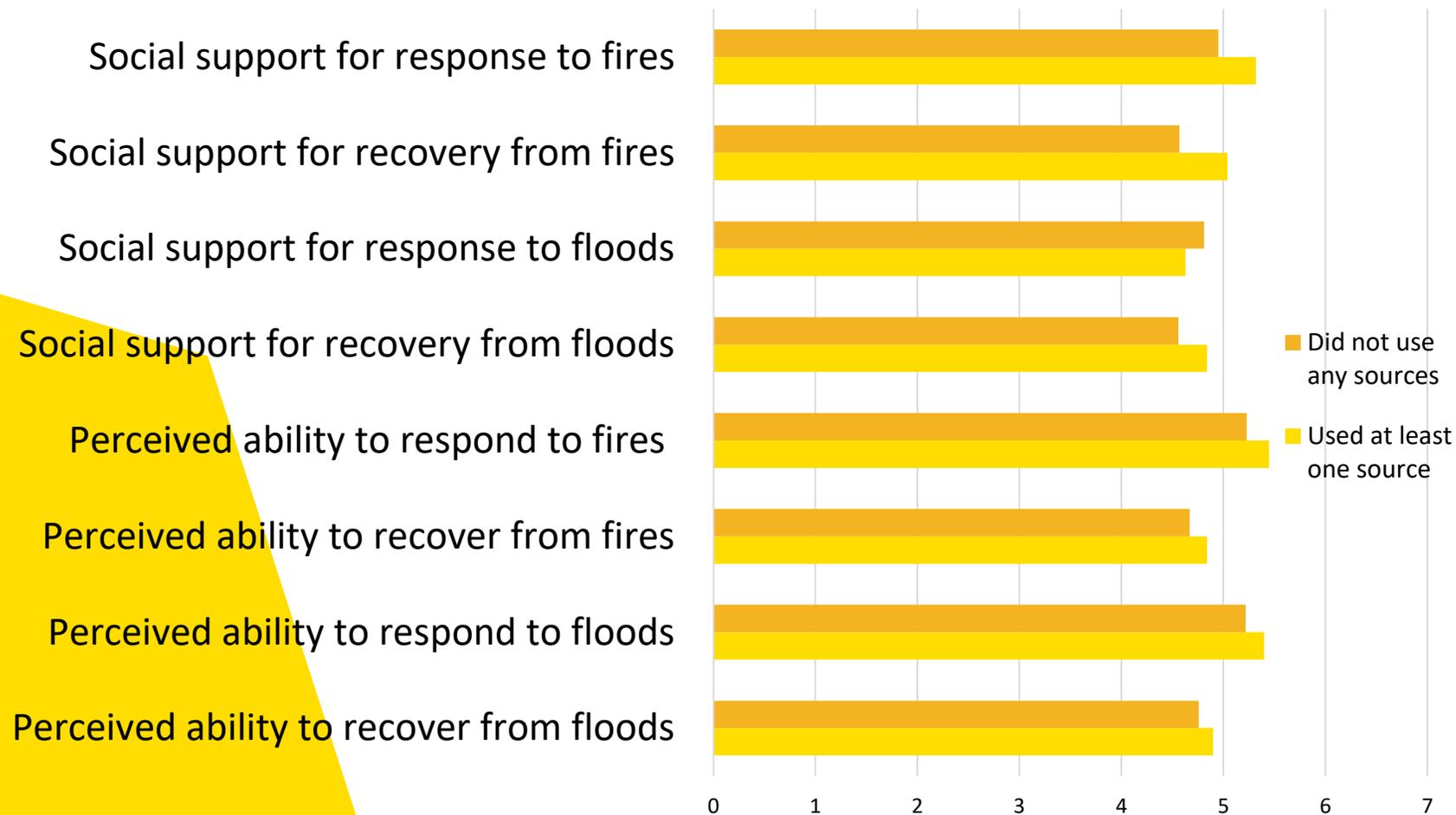
2. The effectiveness of information

Percentage of preparatory actions completed



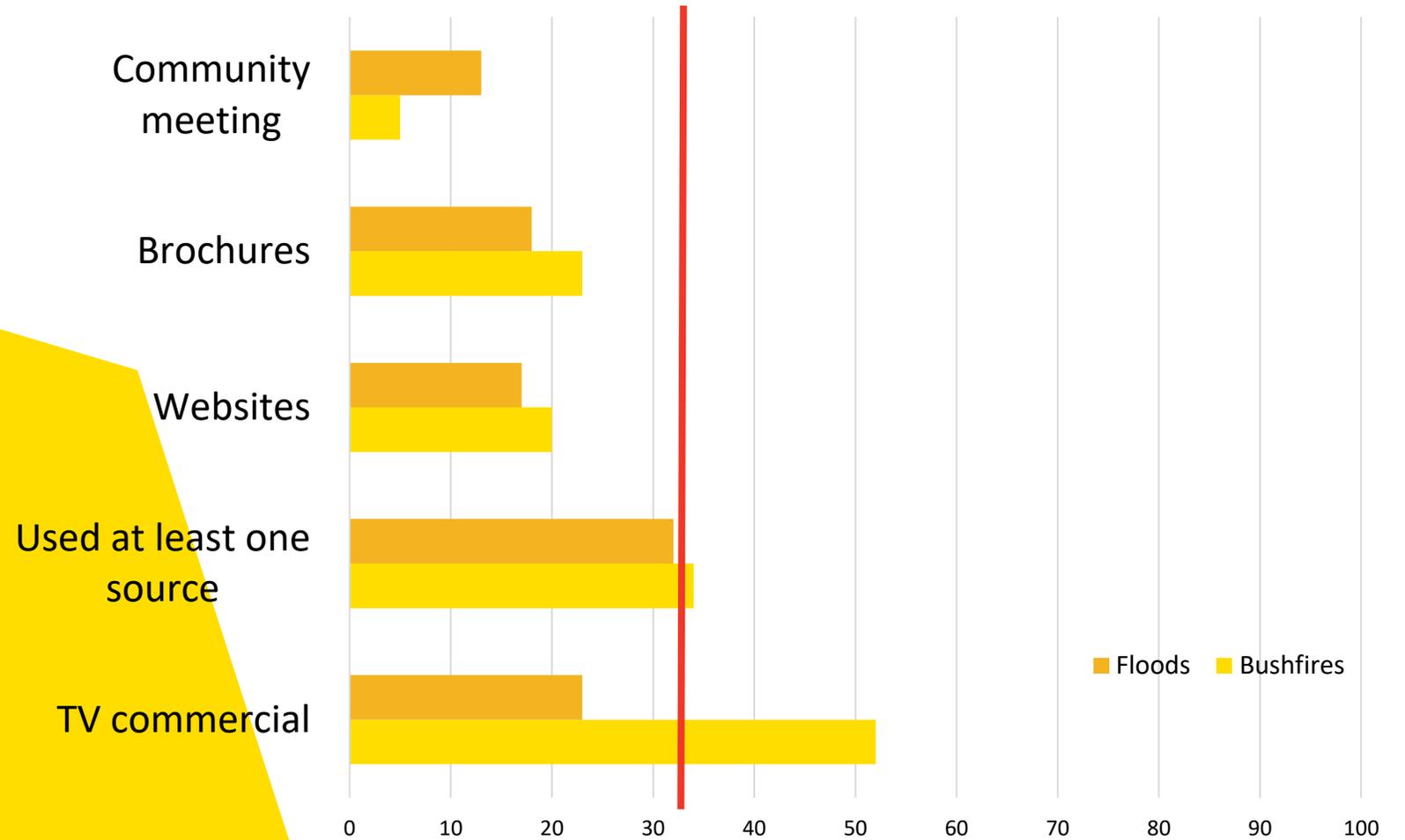
Further reading (Technical Reports): McNeill, I. M., Boldero, J. M., & McIntosh, E. (2016). Household preparedness for bushfires/floods: The role of residents' engagement with information sources

Perceived social support and ability to respond/recover

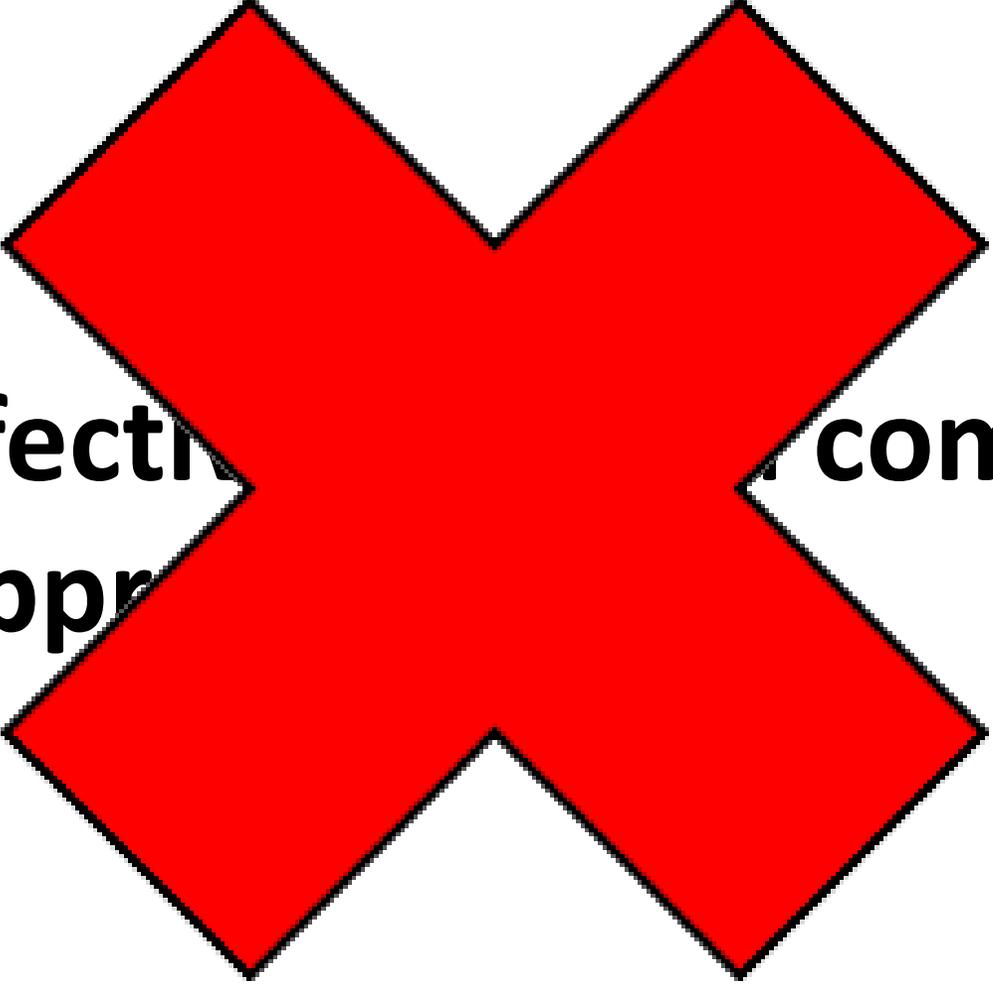


Further reading (Technical Reports): McNeill, I. M., Boldero, J. M., & McIntosh, E. (2016). Household preparedness for bushfires/floods: The role of residents' engagement with information sources

People (%) engaging with information source



Further reading (Technical Reports): McNeill, I. M., Boldero, J. M., & McIntosh, E. (2016). Household preparedness for bushfires/floods: The role of residents' engagement with information sources



3. The effectiveness of community led planning approaches

Lessons learned about survey methodology

Survey length needs to match interest/perceived importance.

Minimize seemingly irrelevant questions unless you're willing to pay people for their time.

*For personal questions (e.g. income):
clearly state that one can choose to skip the question.*

Timing of media attention.

Use CRC media team instead of University team.

Training of door-knocking volunteers.

*Create clear and motivating elevator-pitch
about survey purpose.*

Further reading (Technical Report): McNeill, I., Boldero, J., & McIntosh, E. (2016). September 2015 community led planning study: Lessons learned in relation to the low response rate.

On worry and household composition

Unconstructive

- Broad focus
- Comparison
- Sustains anxiety
- Tied to procrastination

Reduced preparedness for bushfires.



Worry



Constructive

- Process focused
- Problem solving
- Motivator
- Reduces anxiety

Increased preparedness for bushfires.



Further reading: McNeill, I.M., & Dunlop, P.D. (2016). Development and preliminary validation of the CUWQ: A measure of individual differences in constructive vs. unconstructive worry. *Psychological Assessment*, 28, 1368-1378.

Household composition



Less motivated, and report more difficulties with preparing, and greater lack of time.



Reduced property preparedness for fires at start of season, and reduced planning throughout season.

Further reading: McNeill, I.M. & Ronan, K. (2017). Children in disasters: the role of household preparedness. *Natural Hazards*, 89(3), 1239-1254.

4. What about community culture?



Social norms > Attitudes

If other residents are doing more to prepare, so will I.

***If other residents are doing more to prepare,
I can count on more social support during response and recovery.***

Other residents want me to prepare, so I will.

**The local council and fire agency want me to be prepared.
Somehow this is tied to me feeling more able to respond to fires,
even though I don't actually carry out more preparatory actions...**

Further reading (Technical Reports): McNeill, I. M., Boldero, J. M., & Vargas-Saenz, A. (2017). Community culture and bushfire preparedness: The role of attitudes and social norms.



Social norms > Attitudes

If other residents are doing more to prepare, so will I.

***If other residents are doing more to prepare,
I can count on more social support during response and recovery.***

~~*Other residents want me to prepare, so I will.*~~

**The local council and fire agency want me to be prepared.
This is tied to me feeling more able to respond to and recover from floods.
And to be fair, it motivates me to prepare a bit better too.**

Further reading (Technical Reports): McNeill, I. M., Boldero, J. M., & Vargas-Saenz, A. (2017). Community culture and flood preparedness: The role of attitudes and social norms.

Project reflections

Research focused reflections:

- Community interventions and sample size issues
- Large disparity in approaches and priorities across agencies.

Utilization focused reflections:

- Information helps those who access it, but not many actively do.
- Social norms may play an important role, but we need to consider who's presenting the norm and in what way.
- Stressing under-preparedness by fellow residents may be counterproductive.

Thank you

