Focus Group Information Form

Project Title

Climate Attribution of Wildfire Smoke Impacts on Priority Population Health in Southeast Asia and Australia (CANBREATHE)

Lead Researcher

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What is this study about?

We are carrying out a research study to learn more about how wildfire smoke affects people's health—especially the health of children, pregnant women, and Indigenous communities. We are particularly interested in how climate change is making wildfires and smoke worse in parts of Australia and Southeast Asia.

We want to hear directly from people in local communities about how they experience smoke events and how they protect themselves and their families. This information will help us find better ways to support communities and inform government policies.

Who is funding this research?

This study is funded by Wellcome Trust, a global organisation that supports research to improve health and respond to climate change.

Why am I being invited?

You live in a region affected by wildfire smoke and may have important experiences to share. You may also be a parent, community leader, or health worker. Your input will help shape solutions and improve public health responses.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be invited to take part in a focus group discussion or a one-on-one interview with members of the research team. These sessions will be relaxed and informal and held in a safe and comfortable local space.

You will be asked to share your views on:

- How wildfire smoke has affected your health or daily life
- What you know about the risks of smoke exposure
- What actions you take to stay safe
- What support you think communities need

Each session will take about 1 to 1.5 hours. You don't need any special knowledge or preparation.

Do I have to take part?

No. Taking part is completely **voluntary**. You can say no, skip any question, or stop participating at any time without giving a reason. This will not affect your relationship with the researchers or anyone else.

What are the risks?

There are no major risks from participating. Some people might find it emotional to talk about past experiences, like pregnancy or health impacts during smoke events. If you feel uncomfortable, you can stop the discussion at any time.

While we will keep your information private, other focus group participants will hear what you say, so full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in a group setting. We will ask everyone to respect each other's privacy and avoid sharing others' comments outside the group.

What are the benefits?

There may be no direct benefit to you, but your input will help us understand what people are going through and what support is most useful. Your experiences may help shape health messages, tools and policies that can protect your community and others in the future.

How will my information be used?

Everything you share will be treated as confidential. We'll remove names and personal details from the data. Results may be used in reports, presentations or research papers, but no one will be identified.

Will my information be kept private?

Yes. Everything you share will be kept confidential. Your name and personal details will be removed before anything is published. Only the research team will have access to your full data. You can ask to withdraw your information at any time before the findings are published.

How will my data be stored?

The information collected will be stored securely on a password protected computer throughout the project and then stored at the University of Canberra or the lead organisation in each jurisdiction for the required five year period after which it will be destroyed according to university protocols.

You can request that your data be withdrawn from the study at any stage prior to publication.

We will ask for your permission to store your contact information and study results for a minimum of 5 years so that we will be able to contact you about future research projects. You do not have to give permission for your contact data and study results to be stored, you can include your decision in the consent form.

We will permanently remove all identifying information from your data after holding it for the required minimum of 5 years from completion of the research in accordance with the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council and the provisions of the Australian Privacy Act 1988.

Will my data be used in future research?

If you agree, the information collected during the conduct of this research may be used in future research projects on related research areas. Any future use of your data will comply with any conditions imposed by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Canberra.

Ethics Committee Clearance

The project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Canberra (HREC14589).

Queries and Concerns

Queries or concerns regarding the research can be directed to the researcher and/or supervisor. Contact details are at the top of this form.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the University of Canberra's Research Ethics & Integrity Unit team via telephone 02 6206 3916 or email humanethicscommittee@canberra.edu.au or researchethicsandintegrity@canberra.edu.au

If you would like some guidance on the questions you could ask about your participation please refer to the Participants' Guide located at https://www.canberra.edu.au/research/graduate-research/current-research-students/integrity-and-ethics/ethics/accordion/human-ethics/human-ethics-documents/Agreeing-to-participate-in-research.pdf