



MEDIA RELEASE

Survey response shows impact of flood on mental health

As we approach the anniversary of the 2017 floods on the Northern Rivers, a study has found that the flood had a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing.

The University Centre for Rural Health will release the initial findings of the *After the Flood* survey at a seminar on Thursday March 22.

Across the Northern Rivers region more than 2,500 people responded to the survey, providing valuable insights into the extent of flood damage and how it affected them.

Project Co-ordinator Dr Veronica Matthews said almost everyone who did the survey reported being affected by flood damage.

“Our findings show that the mental health risk was higher for people who had a number of places flooded, and the risk increased the longer someone was displaced from their home.

“We would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the survey, and we know it was challenging for some people to think back on their flood experience.

“We will have more survey findings in the future on aspects such as the impact on specific groups, and factors that may build resilience.”

UCRH Director Ross Bailie said it’s important that the information from the survey is used to help us better prepare for and respond to natural disasters.

“We promised to report the survey results back to the community, and the research seminar at UCRH on 22 March is part of this process.

“We have briefed our State MPs and other community leaders about the initial survey findings, and highlighted the importance of mental health impacts of natural disasters to planning and policy making.

“Our community advisory groups, made up of representatives of business, residents groups, volunteers, government and non-government agencies have begun working on responses to this research.”

The initial findings will be presented at a health research seminar at the University Centre for Rural Health on Thursday 22 March 2018 at 5pm.

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