

Public Attitudes to Bushfire Fundraising

Insights from national opinion poll 16-18 January 2020

In partnership with



The Professional Body for Australian Fundraising





Foreword

The 2019/2020 bushfire season on the east coast of Australia has been devastating for scores of communities and hundreds of thousands of people as well as serious impact on the Australian landscape and environment.

During crises like these, Australians prove time and again their incredible generosity, going deep in their pockets to give. As a result, by the middle of January 2020, with fires still raging and the season far from over, Australian charities and causes had already raised close to half a billion dollars in donations.

From previous studies after disasters like the 2004 Southeast Asia Tsunami, the 2011 Queensland Floods and the 2009 Victoria Bushfires, we know that people continued to give to their favourite causes while donating to the disaster relief effort at hand. Those studies suggest that rather than replacing their regular donations, Australians tend to give for a compelling and urgent need, in addition to their regular giving.

As the representative body for the \$9.9 billion fundraising sector in Australia, Fundraising Institute Australia was keen to understand more fully the impact that such incredible generosity has on ongoing fundraising by Australian charities. Would it negatively impact the day-to-day fundraising efforts of FIA charity members? What steps could we take to ensure that our regular giving programs are preserved, given that beyond these kinds of emergencies, the causes and needs which require Australian generosity continue to exist?

Partnering with More Strategic, Australia's leading fundraising, research and experience management consultancy, research was conducted to provide clarity for Australian charities on the impact of the bushfire emergency relief and guidance on the way forward with their regular fundraising activity now and into the future.

Katherine Raskob Chief Executive Officer Fundraising Institue Australia



Fast Facts

- 53% of Australians donated to a Bushfire Appeal
- 43% donated indirectly, through a collection organised on behalf of a charity
- 14% donated through Facebook, the majority for the first time and they expect to give this way again

The Rural Fire Service was the most mentioned appeal followed by the Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery.

- 37% were new donors to the organisation they donated to
- 36% were unsure how the funds donated would be used
- 86% are confident the organisation they supported will use donations wisely
- 88% expect donations to be used within the next few months

Donors were evenly split between supporting communities impacted, volunteer firefighters, those who have lost homes and to rescue animals

- **36%** trust the charity to do their best to minimise administration costs but 29% expect 100% of their donation to be used for the cause.
- 64% have not heard anything from the charity they donated to.
- \$50 median gift and \$121 average gift (across multiple appeals)
- 59% gave more than they would normally give
- 18% expect to increase their giving to other causes and 12% to reduce gifts. Higher value donors are more likely to say they will increase
- 95% were positive or neutral to "charities in unrelated areas still need to actively fundraise" with 43% somewhat agreeing and a remarkable 25% strongly agreeing.



Implications

For fundraising organisations - respectfully continue

Keep Calm and Carry on Fundraising

The majority of donors expect to continue giving the same amount to the causes they care about. More donors say they will give more in the future than say they will give less, despite their generosity towards the bushfire appeals.

Nearly all donors believe that charities in unrelated areas still need to be actively fundraising.

Facebook is the new normal

Over 1.3 million people donated to the extraordinary appeal by Celeste Barber on behalf of the Rural Fire Service. Our research suggests that for nearly 66% of donors, this was the first time they had ever given through Facebook. 85% of them are likely to give in this way again.

Form partnerships

43% of donors donated via a third party, not directly to the charity. These partnerships with celebrities, banks, supermarkets and the like, were a very effective way to capture new donors. In some cases, the partner was more important than the charity, with 30% of donors unsure which charity they were supporting. 80% of donors acknowledged that their decision of whom to support was influenced by the media, friends and social media. Charities must always remember; it is not about them, but the difference they make.

Embrace younger donors

The highest rate of giving to the bushfire appeal, at 64% of respondents, was amongst the 35-44-year-old's, with 25 to 34 and 45 to 54 next highest. This is a different audience to the traditional charity donor profile. 35-44-year-old's also had the highest average donation to fire appeals.

Be omnipotent

The most popular way to give to the fire appeals was online and direct to the charity (though this may underrepresent the Facebook appeal which some may interpret as direct or indirect). However, one in four people gave to the appeals using multiple fundraising channels and they had a higher average overall donation at \$116. A similar proportion gave to multiple appeals and, again, they had a much higher average gift.

Look long term

Trust in charities in Australia is high. 81% of people say charities make a real difference and 61% agree that charities are ethical and honest. But trust is a fragile thing. How the charity sector manages this crisis will influence the views on charities for years to come. Scientific research shows that giving makes people feel good – and 61% of the public agreed. The fundraising sector must do all it can to respect donors and protect public trust.



Stay focussed and authentic.

Beware of finding a tangential link to the bushfires to boost your fundraising. There are already signs that people are feeling overwhelmed by the number of appeals. 48% of people agree that there are too many bushfire appeals now. 66% believe some organisations are jumping on the bushfire bandwagon; these aren't necessarily charities, but this response suggests a degree of cynicism towards those who inauthentically align themselves to the Bushfire Crisis.

Get together

58% of the public think there should be a single entity to collect donations on behalf of all charities. People want to help. Make it as easy as possible. The public is perhaps less concerned about state borders than some charities are, with 18% of Victorian donors giving to the Rural Fire Service even though it doesn't operate in their state.

For donors – have realistic expectations

The time trade-off

88% of donors expect the donations to be utilised within the next few months. This presents a massive challenge to organisations who are not used to dispersing such huge amounts. Whilst there is a pressing urgency to meet the immediate needs of those most severely impacted by the fires, there is a trade-off between acting quickly, acting fairly and maximising impact. Accept that longer-term solutions may have a greater impact.

It costs money to manage money

Encouragingly, 36% of donors trust the charity they supported to do their best to minimise administration costs. However, another 29% believe every dollar should go to the purpose it was donated to. Given that organisations have minimal fundraising costs for this type of emergency, it makes sense that the amount that "gets there" is higher. However, wise organisations will still need to efficiently manage distributions and monitor the long-term impacts of the programs they run.

For Fire Fundraising organisations – be accountable

Be transparent

Most people were inspired to give by the sheer enormity of the fires and the distressing stories on the news every night. How the funds were used was probably a secondary concern at the time of giving – people just wanted to help. Now though, they want to know if they made a wise decision trusting you with their money. 65% of donors say they have a clear or pretty good idea of how funds will be used. But 24% are not sure – and want to know! Explain what you have done with donations and what you will do – to maximise the difference every \$ makes. Explain why you need administration. Explain why there is a longer-term gain if using donations over a longer period.



Connect with your donors

88% of donors said they would give to the charity they supported again. Bearing in mind that nearly one in three donors had not given to the fire fundraising charity before (and this was over half of donors for the RFS), this creates an opportunity to build a strong and enduring relationship which will equip charities to manage future fire risk and impacts. However, only 23% of donors could recall receiving any communication from the charity – not even a thank you!

Listen to your donors

Right now, donors have an exceptionally high level of trust, with 86% confident their funds will be used wisely. But 40% want to know how donations have been and will be used. There is likely to be a difference of opinion on how funds are to be used between donors who want an immediate impact on a short-term problem compared to the charities who want to create longer-term more sustainable solutions. Only by listening to donors will you know if there is a gap between their expectations and your intentions. Charities cannot be donor led. After all, the charities are on the frontline, have the experience and the expertise, however they cannot keep donors in the dark.

For Australia

Be proud

The bushfire crisis brought out the best in us. 81% of the public agreed with the statement that 'the way everyday Australians respond to a crisis makes me proud'. In the months ahead, there will be questions about how funds were used, was it fast enough, was it effective. For now, let's remember how spontaneously generous Australians are.

A climate watershed?

52% of the public say they take climate change more seriously now as a result of the bushfires. Their beliefs varied based on voting intention, with 72% of Greens voters, 61% of Labour and 41% of Liberal voters agreeing or strongly agreeing. This was also reflected in how important climate change is when determining how to vote, with 36% of Greens intenders saying it completely guides their decision, compared to 15% of Labour and 11% of Liberal intenders. Conversely, it is not a factor at all for 28% of Liberal intenders, 15% of Labour and 4% of Greens voters.

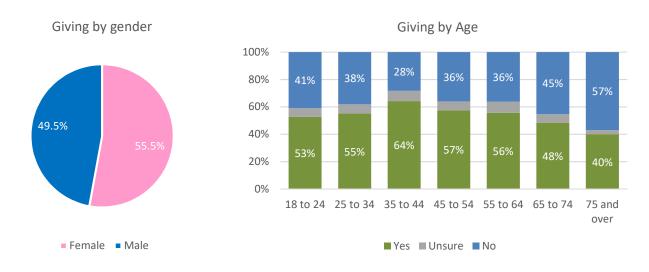


Who Donated?

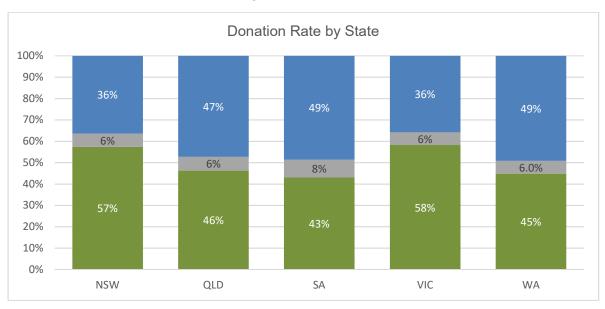
Whilst the newspapers were full of lists of celebrities and businesses giving huge and generous amounts to the appeals, ordinary everyday Australians also rose to the occasion.

Overall **52.7%** of people donated to an appeal.

In keeping with many other donation activities, women were more likely to have given than men.



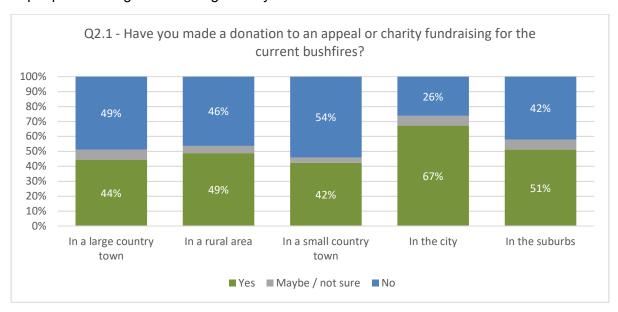
Those aged 35 to 44 had the highest rate of giving while those over 65 were significantly lower. Most charities would have a skew towards older donors as a result of their historical approaches to mail-based appeal programs.



Note: small numbers for ACT, TAS and NT are not statistically valid



Unsurprisingly, the States most impacted by the bushfires had the highest donation rate, with Victoria and NSW being around 14% points higher than the other larger States. Although the sample size is too small for the ACT to be statistically valid, the gift rate was 75% This is in keeping with other studies where ACT has a higher than average proportion of people donating to charities generally.



Those living in the city had the highest gift rate at 67% compared to the lowest at 42% living in small country towns.

Examining the rate of giving by the types of causes donors most like to support revealed that even though the most popular causes to support were Animal Charities (36%), Health and Medical Research (33%) and Children's Charities (31%), the highest donation rate was amongst those that support the arts, environment, aged care and animal charities (though numbers for aged care and arts are small with under 8% listing these as their preferred charities).

- Supporters of environmental (65% gift rate) and animal (61% gift rate) charities were more likely to have donated.
- Those that believe their financial position will improve (58% gift rate) were more likely to have donated.
- Those with children living at home (59% gift rate) were more likely to donate (this reflects the younger giving demographic).
- Those with a Postgraduate Degree (63%) or with a University degree (62%) were more likely to have donated.
- Those who said climate change has no influence on their voting decisions were least likely to donate (46.2%). There was no discernible difference in donation rates between those that support each of the main political parties.
- Those that said they gave less than \$20 to charity in the past 12 months had the lowest gift rate of 19%. As the amount of people who donated to charity in a year increased, so did the proportion of people giving to the bushfires, with those who donated more than



- \$500 in the past 12 months having a gift rate of 75%. This may suggest that few were "new" to giving.
- However, 37% of donors had not given before to the organisation they chose to support, suggesting that although they probably were not new donors per se, they were new to that charity.

Of course, not everyone gave, and the primary explanations can be grouped into the following categories:

Fear

"Because most reports are saying the money is not getting to the people who need it"

"I don't trust the money to get to the people who really need it. i.e. given to the wealthier farmers etc." (Note farmers can access up to \$75k vs \$1k for individuals)

"Not sure money is going to the cause or administration"

Financial situation

"Can't afford it."

"I am struggling financially".

Action gap

"haven't got around to it"

"have not been approached"

"I 100% intend to, I will do it soon. The other thing is I don't know HOW or WHERE to do it."

Want to keep giving to their other selected charities

"Enough rich celebrities are donating, and I feel that my money would go a lot further in less fortunate countries or situations."

In bushfire area

Some reference but just a little

Government responsibility

"It's the Government's responsibility, as the bushfires are entirely because of their reckless climate change denial and lack of climate action."



How did they donate

As the fires raged, more and more organisations were involved in raising much-needed funds, using a wide range of fundraising activities. Donors were presented with many different ways to donate.

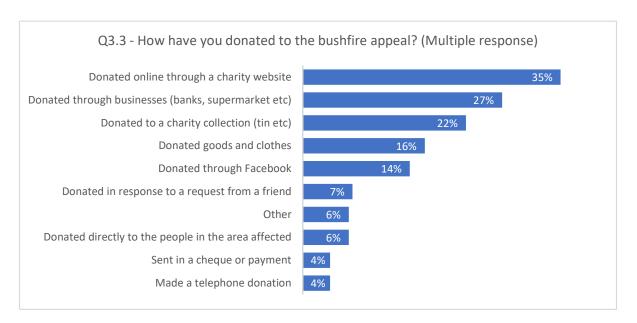
57% of donors gave directly to the charity and **43%** gave via a collection conducted by an individual or business.

Women were more likely than men to have given indirectly

Younger donors between 25 and 54 were more likely to say they gave directly to the cause (though there is some scope for interpretation regarding the Celeste Barber appeal).

City and suburban donors were more likely to give directly, as were those who are optimistic about their financial future and those with a higher level of education.

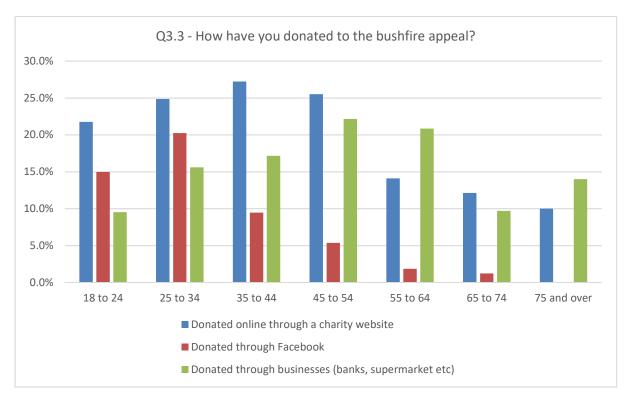
21% gave through two different channels and 5% gave in three or more different ways.



The Celeste Barber campaign attracted 1.3 million dollars in donations through Facebook. From the public research, 14% of donors gave through this channel, and for 63% it was the first time they had donated through Facebook. Importantly 85% of Facebook donors said they were likely to give through this channel again. Facebook giving just became normalised.

There were understandably significant differences in giving by age, with younger donors preferring Facebook and online donations and older donors choosing to give through collections via banks and supermarkets etc. Is this a factor of convenience and visibility rather than the influence of the person asking?





There were also minor differences in the channel of giving across the States, with NSW being higher on Facebook and Victoria higher on donating via a business. This may reflect the campaigns of Celeste Barber and Bendigo Bank respectively.

There were significant differences in the choice of giving channel based on the area people lived in, with a much higher proportion of people in the city giving online and through Facebook.

Those who felt more optimistic about their future finances and had a higher level of education were also more likely to have given online through Facebook, this may be a reflection of their age and location (35-44-year-old city dwellers).



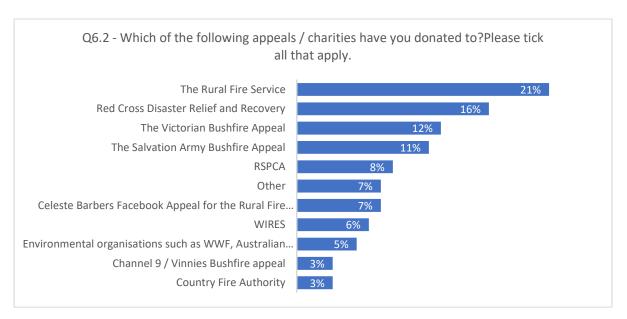
Who did they donate to?

Despite a large proportion giving indirectly, the majority of donors were confident they knew which charity they were supporting. However, 30% of those who gave indirectly were either unsure or did not know which charity they were contributing to.

23% of people gave to two of the listed appeals, and 15% gave to three or more.

Donors under 34, those living in the city and those with university qualifications were most likely to have given to multiple appeals. They were more likely to have donated directly and even when giving through indirect sources were more likely to say they knew which charity they were giving.

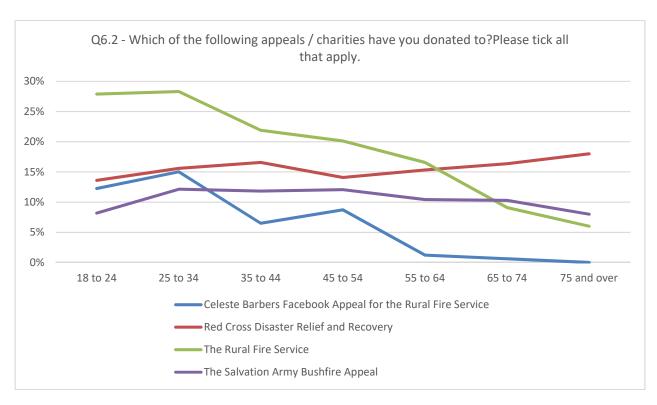
The RSPCA and Wires were least likely to be the sole recipients of donations, whereas the Celeste Barber appeal had the greatest proportion of people who donated to a single appeal, closely followed by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal.



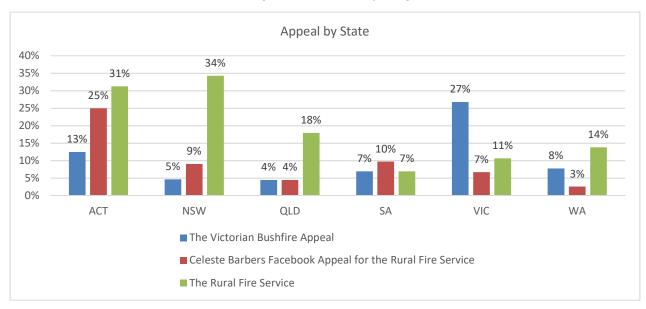
Others included a range of animal hospitals, local charities and collections as well as some broad categories (such as Koalas).

Men were more likely than women to donate to the Red Cross, and women were more likely than men to donate to WIRES.





The Red Cross had a slightly older skew, and Salvation Army had universal appeal across the age categories but the Rural Fire Service, whether supported directly or through the Celeste Barber Appeal, had a far stronger support from younger donors.

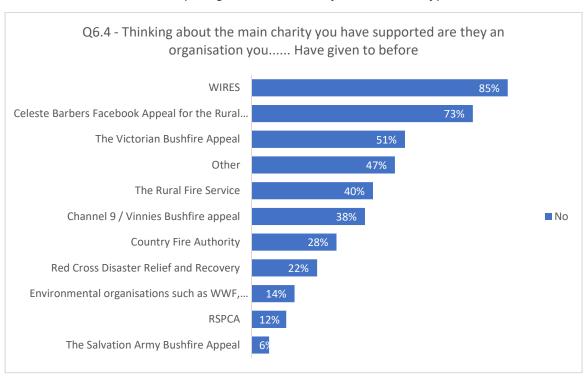


There was a reasonable State focus in people's giving decisions. Whilst 5% of NSW donors donated to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal, 18% of Victorians donated to the Rural Fire Service NSW. West Australians were the most likely to have donated to WIRES and RSPCA.



Those who expect to vote Green were more likely to have supported WIRES and less likely to have given to the Red Cross. The Channel 9 / Vinnies appeal was somewhat more supported by those intending to vote Liberal.

37% of donors had not given before to the organisation they donated to for the Bushfire Appeal. There was a significant variation in the proportion of new donors, with only 6% having not given to the Salvation Army before and 85% being new to WIRES. It should be noted that Celeste Barber was fundraising on behalf of the RFS and 19% say they have donated to the RFS before (though almost certainly not in that way).





What do they donate to achieve?

It is vital to understand community expectations of how funds will be used to avoid any future controversies. Previous mass appeals have shown that after great donations comes great scrutiny. It is likely that most donors gave as a reaction to what was presented to them in the daily news rather than as a result of deep thought as to how the funds would be used. Having given from an emotional need to help, many donors (and the media) will look for a post rationalisation to reassure themselves they made a wise choice giving to the organisation they did.

Most donors are confident they know "enough" about how donations will be used, but one in four people want to know more.



Younger donors under 44 were more likely to say they had a clear or pretty good idea of how funds will be used compared to those over the age of 55.

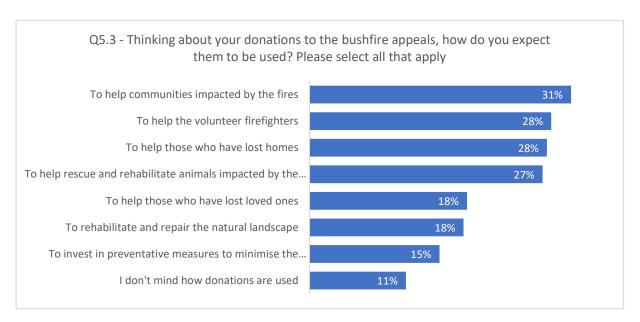
Those in NSW and Victoria were more likely to say they have a pretty good idea.

Those in the city were much more likely to say they were very clear.

Those with University level education were both more likely to have a pretty good idea or to be unsure and want to know. Either way, they need a rational justification for their decision.

The overall results give a sense of the immediacy of help required





Women were somewhat more likely to express a preference for animal rescue, helping the firefighters and those who have lost their homes.

The 24-35 group donors were more likely to select more options across the categories. Note they were also more likely to have supported multiple appeals.

Victorians were a little more likely to want to support those who have lost homes whilst NSW donors were more likely to want to support the firefighters.

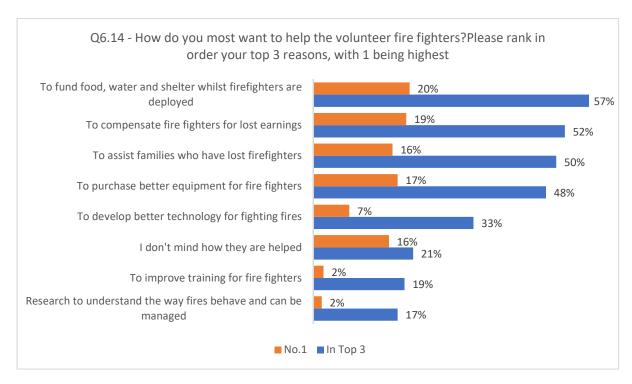
Those in the city were more likely than others to say they wanted to support investment in measures to reduce the impact of future fires.

Supporting Firefighters

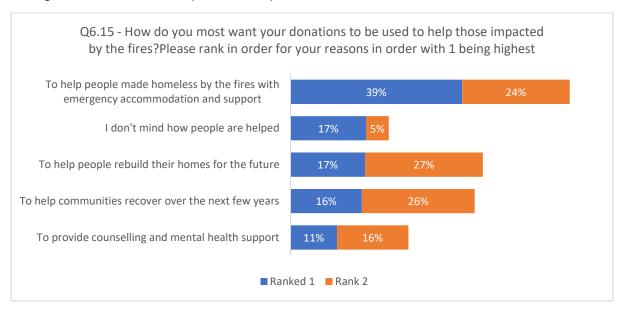
Those who expressed a desire to help the firefighters were asked how they wanted their donations to be used. There is a reasonably consistent pattern between the top ranked wish and the top three rankings (though those who don't mind were very likely to put this first).

We see a strong preference for immediate action with a focus on practical support, compensation and then help for those who have lost loved firefighters.



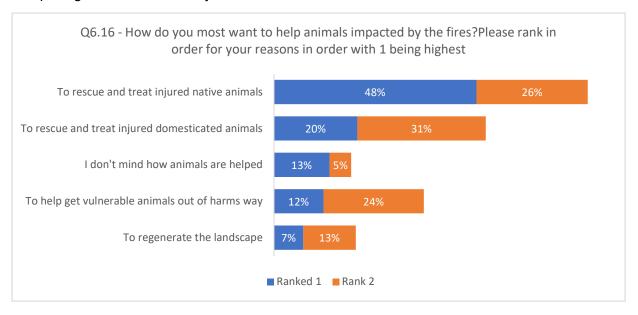


Similarly, those who (also) wanted their donations to be used for community activities had a strong focus on immediate, practical help for those most affected.





The sense of immediacy is also true for those who wanted to help animals, though there is a preference for native wildlife over domesticated animals. Landscape regeneration will be essential for the long-term sustainability of vulnerable species but is clearly not as compelling as the rescue of injured individual animals.



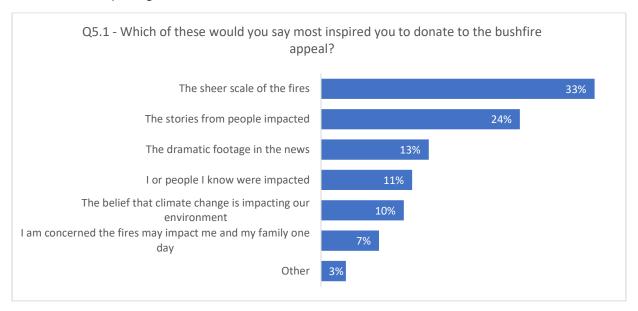
There are different expectations associated with each of the specific appeals and this data will be shared with the relevant organisations.



Motivations, perceptions and expectations

Reasons for giving

For most people giving was not driven by personal experience or concern, despite proximity to the holiday areas of NSW and Victoria. The enormity and stories from people in the news were most compelling.



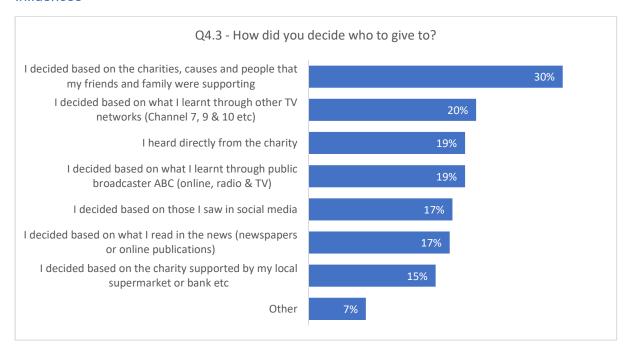
Women, those under 34 and those in the city were more likely than others to say they gave because climate change is impacting our environment.

People in NSW were somewhat more likely to say they knew people impacted.

Postgraduate educated respondents were more likely to cite climate change, whereas University educated were more likely to say they knew people impacted.



Influences



Women were somewhat more likely to say they decided based on the causes family and friends were supporting.

Those under 34 and those in the city were more influenced by social media.

Those with a higher education were more likely to be influenced by the ABC and what they read in the newspaper. They were also more likely to hear directly from the charity – this reflects the higher level of education amongst charitable donors revealed in other studies.

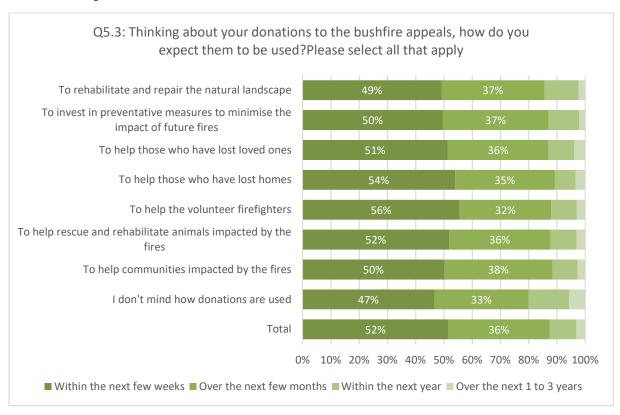
Distribution of Funds

There are probably unrealistic expectations for how rapidly funds will be allocated, with 88% of donors expecting funds to be distributed in the next six months. This is a reflection of the urgency in the confronting images in the news and the sense of immediacy in the areas people want to help. It can be challenging to distribute large amounts of donations and deliver maximum impact at the speed people are hoping for. People have been so generous that it now creates a real challenge for the recipient organisations to live up to donor expectations.





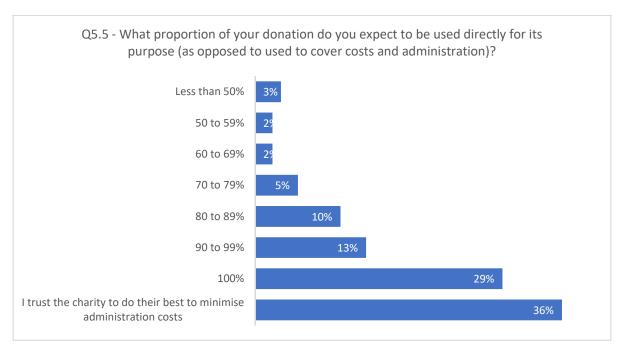
There was surprisingly little difference in expectations across the different outcomes that donations might achieve.





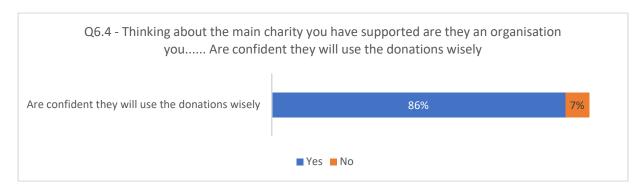
Covering overheads

Emergency fundraising requires very little investment due to the extensive media coverage; however, to efficiently deliver funds to have maximum impact will still entail some costs. It is heartening to see that 36% of people trust the charities to work to minimise their costs. The fact that 29% expect all their funds to be directly deployed misses the costs of managing application processes, assessing need, developing long term solution and the monitoring of the difference donations make.



Confidence

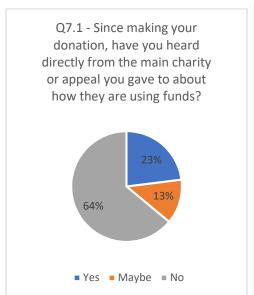
Donors are very confident in the organisation using funds wisely. This is not surprising, and we have seen in other studies a far higher confidence in the charities they support than in charities in general. It will be important for those receiving funds to monitor the confidence levels of their donors – especially given the potentially unrealistic expectations of when funds will be used.





Communications

The vast majority of donors do not recall having heard from the charity yet. This is understandable given the focus is on providing immediate relief. To retain the confidence of donors, the charities will need to not only say "thank you" but demonstrate how funds are being used. This is not only essential in order to encourage future giving to their charity but to uphold the public trust in the entire charitable sector.



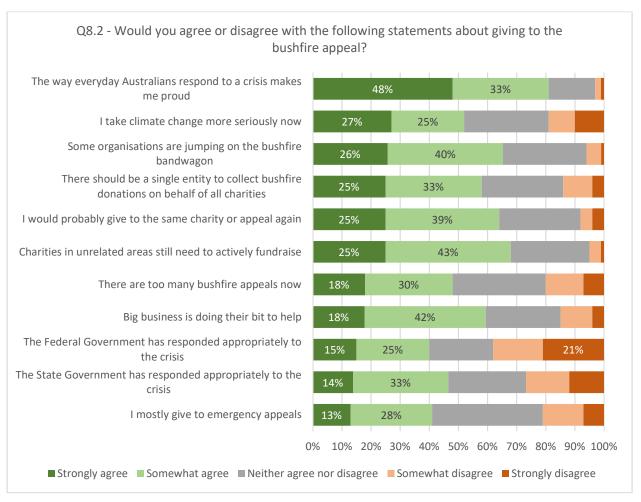


The needs donors have from charity communications is fairly consistent and unsurprising – "Did my donation make a difference?". Knowing which donors want to help more and know more will help build appropriate relationships, but charities must respect the wishes of the 20% who do not want to be contacted again.



Attitude to the Crisis

Respondents (donors and non-donors) were asked their views on a range of statements regarding the crisis. These reveal a high sense of pride in everyday Australians and perhaps some disappointment with Government responses (especially at a Federal level).



These responses also reveal a risk for those wanting to associate with the bushfire appeals as the public already feel that there are too many appeals, that some organisations are jumping on the bandwagon and there should be a single organising entity for such appeals.



How much did people donate?

Previous research has shown the donors are reasonably aware of how much they give to specific charities and appeals. A study conducted in 2017 revealed that 75% of donors recorded their gift accuracy to within 25% of their actual donation amount. This means we can use self-reported giving to asses relative generosity across appeals and motivations.

Whilst a lot of attention was given to the huge contributions from celebrities and big businesses it could be argued that every day Australians gave a greater proportion of their wealth. Analysis of tax data has previously suggested that this is the case. We should applaud the every day donor as much as the superstars of giving.

The average donation to the bushfire appeal was \$122

The Median donation was \$50

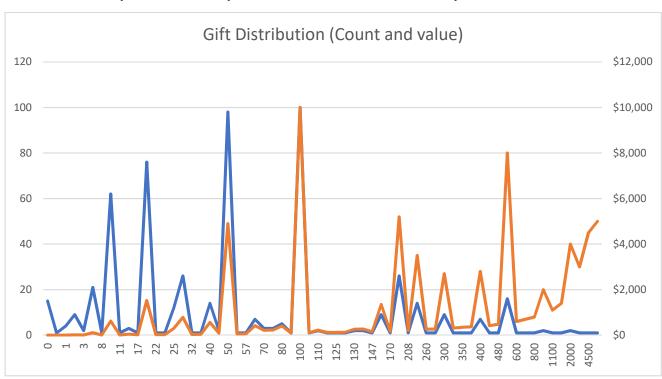
The gift range was from \$1 to \$5,000

80% of donors gave under \$100 and 98% under \$500

The respondents to the survey collectively contributed \$71,421

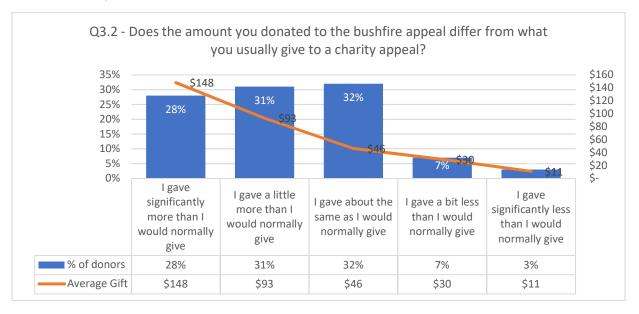
There is a significant difference between the average and the median due to a highly uneven distribution and the impact of a small number (n= 12) donors who collectively donated \$23,100

The most commonly used gift points were \$50 and \$100 which were chosen by 17% of donors followed by \$20 selected by 13% of donors and \$10 chosen by 11% of donors.





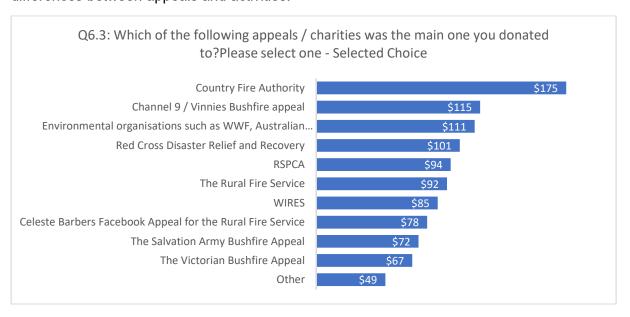
Relative Giving



The majority of donors say they gave more than they would normally donate. This is reflected in the average gift levels (see disclaimer below). Those who gave what they would normally give made donations of around \$45, those who gave more than normal \$93, and those who gave significantly more donated on average \$149.

Average Gifts

To remove the undue influence of the small number of high-value donors from the data set, these outliers have been removed from the following section. It therefore only uses the data from those giving between \$5 and \$500. Removing the small number of donors who gave >\$500 reduces the average gift to \$89 and the total contributed by respondents to \$48,284. The numbers listed below are therefore not statistically significant but indicative of the differences between appeals and activities.





There was a wide spread of average gifts across the different appeals ranging from \$175 to \$67. These may be somewhat influenced by some remaining outliers as the median gift range was somewhat narrower.

Direct donors to the charity gave significantly more (\$109) than those who gave via a collection (\$64)

Those who gave indirectly and were unsure who the charity was had a significantly lower average donation at \$33. This suggests the charity brand or knowledge is still influential on gift value for indirect giving.

Those who decided based on what they read or heard from the ABC had a higher average gift than those who decided based on what they saw from their local bank or supermarket or what their friends were doing.

Whilst the numbers were small, the people who donated because they thought they may be impacted (\$147) and the belief that climate changes is impacting our environment (\$101) had higher gift levels.

People with a very clear idea of how funds will be used donated (\$131) more than double the amount from those that were not really sure and didn't need to know.

Donation averages by outcome only varied slightly with animal rescue at \$80 and helping the firefighters at \$95



Demographic breakdown of average gifts

Q1.1: Are you:		Average		Median	
	Total	\$	89	\$	50.00
	Female	\$	79	\$	50.00
	Male	\$	101	\$	50.00
Q1.2: Which age band are you in?		Average		Median	
	Total	\$	89	\$	50.00
	18 to 24	\$	65	\$	30.00
	25 to 34	\$	96	\$	50.00
	35 to 44	\$	122	\$	70.00
	45 to 54	\$	77	\$	50.00
	55 to 64	\$	82	\$	50.00
	65 to 74	\$	75	\$	50.00
	75 and ove	\$	90	\$	30.00
Q1.3: Where do you currently live?		Average		Median	
	Total	\$	89	\$	50.00
	ACT	\$	133	\$	75.00
	NSW	\$	98	\$	50.00
	QLD	\$	72	\$	50.00
	SA	\$	81	\$	50.00
	TAS	\$	87	\$	25.00
	VIC	\$	93	\$	50.00
	WA	\$	68	\$	50.00
Q1.4: Would you describe the area you live as:		Average		Median	
	Total	\$	89	\$	50.00
	In a large o	\$	80	\$	50.00
	In a rural a	\$	57	\$	50.00
	In a small	\$	63	\$	35.00
	In the city	\$	135	\$	100.00
	In the sub	\$	78	\$	50.00
Q12.1: If there was a Federal election tomorrow	w, which par	1 Average		Median	
	Total	\$	88	\$	50.00
	The Green	\$	90	\$	50.00
	The Labor	\$	91	\$	50.00
	The Libera	\$	104	\$	50.00



Multiple and single givers

Those who gave to multiple fire appeals gave almost twice as much (\$147) as those who gave to a single appeal.

Those who gave in more than one way gave a little more (\$116) than those that gave in a single way.

Those who give to charities in many ways in the past year gave nearly twice as much (\$142) as those who supported charities in only one way

Comparing how much people gave in the past 12 months to how much they gave specifically to the bushfire appeals shows that those who gave the largest gifts to the appeal were giving a significantly higher proportion of their normal annual giving.



Future Giving

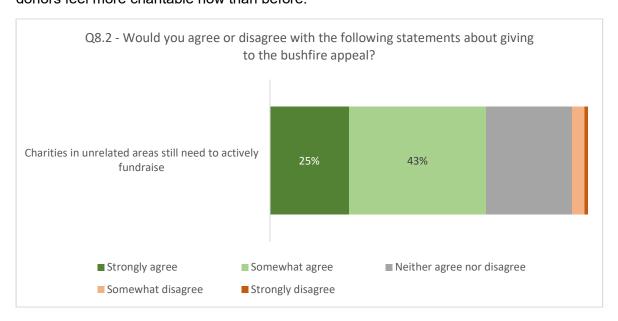
To Bushfire Fundraising Organisations

Donors to the Bushfire Appeal say they are likely to give again to the same organisation. This creates a great opportunity for these charities to build a sustainable source of income to address and reduce the impact of future fire emergencies. However, we know that the vast majority of "emergency" donors do not go on to give again. It will be vital for these organisations to understand and exceed their donor expectations and create appropriate communications to inspire them to continue their support beyond the immediate crisis.



To other charities

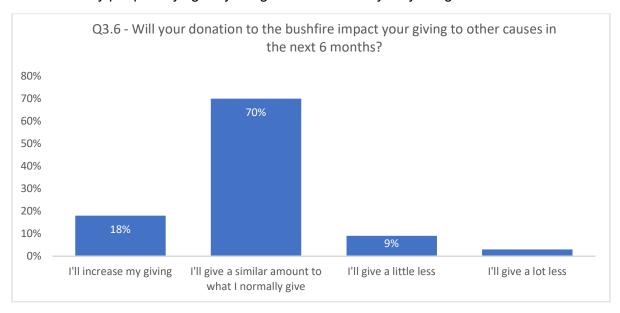
Donors understand that there are other important causes and they expect those charities to continue to fundraise. Most charities have already taken steps to avoid making donation requests in the fire-affected areas but there is no reason to stop asking – in fact, many donors feel more charitable now than before.



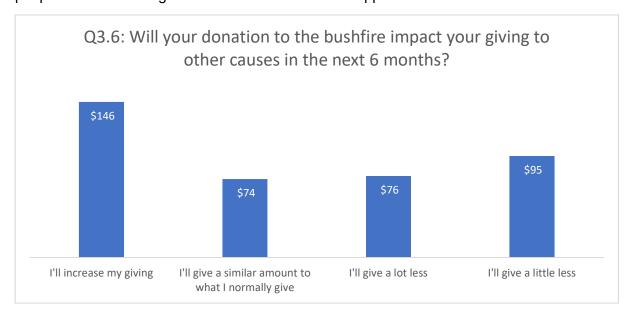


Future giving

From other research, we have consistently seen a slight preference for stating an intention to give more in the future. However, the magnitude of the benefit here is greater with almost twice as many people saying they will give more than say they will give less.



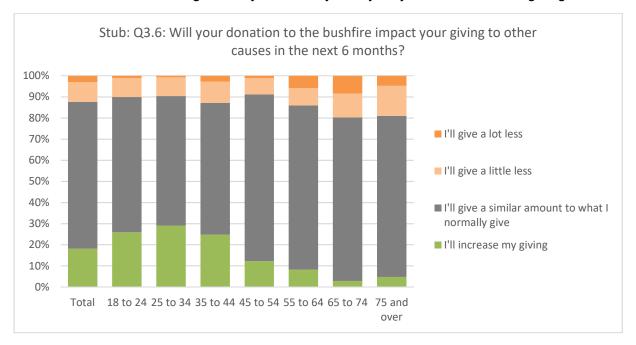
Encouragingly for the charity sector, those who say they will increase their giving are the people who had the highest donation to the bushfire appeals.





Women were a little likely to give a little less

Donors under 44 were all significantly more likely to say they will increase their giving.



Those in the city were significantly more likely to increase their donations in the future.

The likelihood to increase giving is correlated to the level of financial optimism. Those who believe their financial situation will improve (largely younger and the well-educated) also say they are more likely to increase their donations. Charitable giving is therefore influenced by consumer confidence. Other studies have also shown this to be true for more significant donations and the inclusion of a charity with a gift in their will.

Those intending to vote Liberal were more likely than Labour voters to say they will increase their gifts.

Reasons to give more

Respondents were asked their reasons why they may give more or less in the future; these can be grouped into the following reasons:

It's not over:

"I have more and more friends getting involved and I'm expecting more opportunities to become available through businesses"

"Our country is on fire so we need to do everything we can"

Opens my mind to giving (be more empathetic to others):

"It's given me an insight as to how my money can support other charities. Although I don't have much, I'm a lot better off than a lot of other people. Every little bit helps, no matter what the charity."



"It has shown me how small contributions by many can lead to a big change in others wellbeing"

Realise how fortunate I am:

"Just makes you realise what you really have when others are losing out and how much those few extra dollars really help."

Mental accounting:

"The bushfire donation was extra to my usual donations"

Reasons to give less

Perceived wealth:

"Finances are tight at the moment"

"I am a pensioner and can't afford too much"

Extraordinary circumstances mean people dig deep:

"Because I have a very low-income job, I can't really afford to donate to any charity however I like to help make a difference where I can"

Mental accounting:

"I have a limit to how much I donate each year"



About the Study

A representative sample of Australians completed an online survey between the 16th and 19th January 2020. Participants were sourced through Qualtrics XM. Qualtrics removed any spurious responses (straight-line answers, unlikely gift amounts etc.). More Strategic created the questions, programmed the survey and conducted the survey using Qualtrics Experience Management software.

More Strategic

More Strategic is Australia's leading fundraising, research and experience management consultancy specialising in insight-driven strategies for not-for-profits.

More Strategic has conducted research on behalf of many of Australia's largest and most respected charities. We have a particular passion for collaborative research that is beneficial to the whole charity sector.



The Author



Martin Paul is one of Australia's most experienced and respected fundraisers. He has a passion for evidence based decision making in the not for profit sector and always wants to understand *why people do what they do*. With a background in economics and marketing Martin led fundraising teams at WWF, The Heart Foundation and Cancer Council before co-founding More Strategic in 2008. Martin is a popular presenter at fundraising conferences in Australia, Europe and Asia.

www.morestrategic.com.au

Please get in touch with More Strategic if you would like to understand charity specific insights or research your supporter base in the context of Bushfire Appeal Fundraising.







The Professional Body for Australian Fundraising

FIA is the largest representative body for the \$9.9 billion fundraising sector. FIA members include charities and other fundraising not-for-profits operating domestically and internationally as well as the organisations and professionals that provide services to them. FIA advocates for the interests of the sector, administers a self-regulatory Code, educates fundraising practitioners, promotes research, and creates forums for the exchange of knowledge and ideas. For more information visit www.fia.org.au





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