

**catalyst**

# Don't Panic



## Surviving Extremes



**ABC1 SUNDAY DECEMBER 01, 2013 AT 7.30PM**

On the first day of summer ABC1 will broadcast a TV event like no other.  
How would your family cope in a Category 3 tropical cyclone?  
Or a catastrophic bushfire?

Two volunteer Australian families – two terrifying natural disasters.

In a one-hour Catalyst special, Dr Jonica Newby uncovers the links between climate change, human psychology and disastrous bushfires and cyclones.

**CATALYST** is produced by ABC TV. Series Producer: Ingrid Arnott; Producer: Dr Jonica Newby.

Publicity Images: [abc.net.au/tvpublicity](http://abc.net.au/tvpublicity)

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SPECIAL ONE-HOUR FEATURE

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## Surviving Extremes

ABC1 Sunday December 01, 2013 at 7.30pm

**HIGH ALERT** – Sunday December 01, 2013 - two Australian families will be simultaneously hit by a Category 3 tropical cyclone and a catastrophic bushfire. Are they ready? ... And are you?



What would you do if a natural disaster was heading for you? Would you panic? We like to think we'd react well, but the truth is, most of us wouldn't – for a very basic reason - our brains partially shut down, and we can react in really weird and potentially dangerous ways.

But as our climate changes, Australia will experience more extreme weather events. To drive home these twin messages from brain science and climate science, CATALYST's Dr Jonica Newby has come up with an audacious plan to help every Australian family be better prepared.

In this ABC TV disaster special, two spectacularly-staged disaster scenarios will be thrown at two unsuspecting Australian families.

On the first day of summer, Tropical Cyclone Jonica will hit Dale and Paul and their four kids at their waterside home at Tweed Heads, while simultaneously a catastrophic bushfire will explode upon the Matthews family in a leafy suburb on the urban fringe of Sydney.

As these simulated disaster events unfold, Jonica discovers first-hand how the brain reacts in a disaster. She also explores survival stories from recent tragedies, and taps the vast experience of Australia's emergency services experts for life-saving tips to help us all cope better.

The bushfire and cyclone disaster scenarios featured in **DON'T PANIC** have been created in consultation with top experts from the Bureau of Meteorology, NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW State Emergency Service, Disaster Australia, Geoscience Australia and the Floodplain Management Association.

CATALYST has also teamed up with Ian Mannix from the ABC's Emergency Broadcasting Service and expert trauma psychologists Dr Rob Gordon and Professor Sandy McFarlane. Weatherman Graham Creed and newsreader Juanita Phillips from ABC News and Current Affairs present tailor-made, hyper-real news updates and weather reports.

By the end of this special episode of CATALYST, every Australian family will know how climate trends are influencing Australia's weather extremes, how our brains react when faced with an emergency, and why we should all make time in our calendar to prepare our plan.

Don't panic, but Australia, let's get prepared to survive extreme weather.

# catalyst<sup>•</sup> Don't Panic

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## The Host



**DR JONICA NEWBY** has been a founding member of the Catalyst team since 2001 and has a reputation for totally immersing herself in her stories. Following on from her special, *Taking Australia's Temperature* in 2012, Jonica felt compelled to make a programme that would help all Australians better prepare themselves for life-threatening extreme weather events.

## The Contributors

**DR ROB GORDON** is a clinical psychologist with over 20 years experience working with people affected by floods, fires and disasters. During this time, he has advised governments and numerous relief agencies on how to help communities as they rebuild and recover.

**PROFESSOR SANDY MCFARLANE AO** is a psychiatrist specialising in managing the impact of traumatic events and disasters. He is the Director of the University of Adelaide's Centre for Traumatic Stress Studies and a senior advisor in mental health to the Australian Defence Force.

**IAN MANNIX** heads ABC Local Radio's Emergency Broadcasting Service and is responsible for the radio coverage of national disasters nationwide. A veteran journalist and author of *Great Australian Bushfire Stories*, Ian provided extensive behind the scenes and on camera expertise.

**INSPECTOR BEN SHEPHERD** is a Media officer for the NSW Rural Fire Service and a familiar face on our TV screens when fires flare up across the state. He played a pivotal role in the bush fire scenario and is an expert on bush fire plans.

## The Two Unsuspecting Volunteer Families

### CYCLONE SCENARIO: (BLUE) FAMILY from Tweed Heads

Dale, her daughter Bridget (15) and son Elliot (13) and partner, Paul and his daughters, Eboni (15) and Neekah (18) had no idea that their home would be deluged by water fire hoses for over three hours.



### FIRE SCENARIO: (RED) FAMILY from a leafy suburb on Sydney's urban fringe

Rod and Margaret Matthews and their two boys Liam (15) and Riley (13) were a little taken aback when a pyrotechnics team invaded their backyard.