



# This should be of **ALARM** to everyone.

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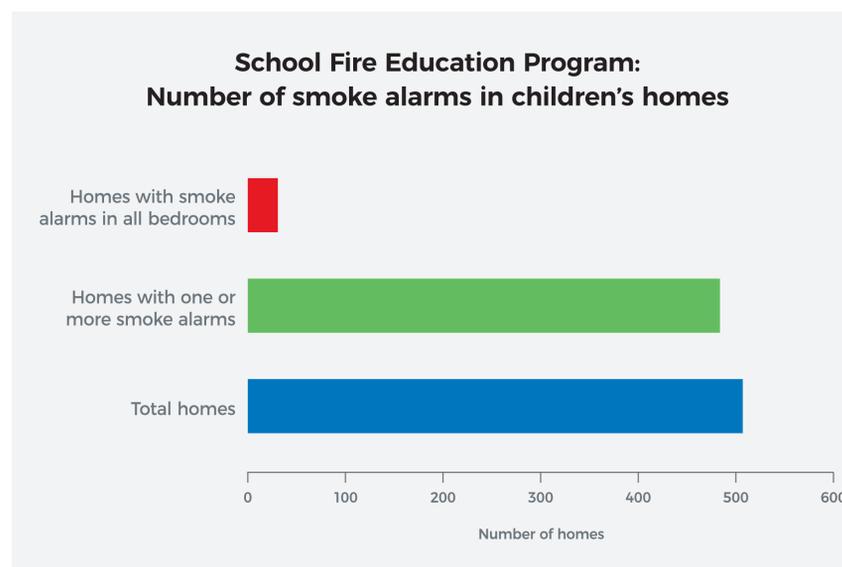
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For a number of years, Australian emergency service agencies have developed education programs to teach children and adults how to keep safe during an emergency. However, the available literature suggests the content and messages delivered in these programs are never effectively evaluated or tested. Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) are going through a rigorous process of evaluating their School Fire Education Program and as part of this process, they are updating the key fire safety messages to reflect research and best practice. This poster highlights one such example.

It is widely accepted that “for [key safety] messages to have credibility, legitimacy and strong impact in a particular national or local context, they need to be standard and consistent, backed by a consensus of key stakeholders and based on the **best knowledge available at the time**” (IFRC, 2013 p. 11). It is true that twenty years ago the **best knowledge** regarding the installation of smoke alarms was that “functioning smoke alarms [should] be located outside bedrooms to alert sleeping occupants and allow them time to exit the burning home safely” (Harvey, Sacks, Ryan, & Bender, 1998 p. 463). However twenty years later, the **best knowledge** now suggests that “to achieve early detection and provide adequate notification, smoke alarms are necessary in every room and should be interconnected” (Moinuddin, Bruck, & Shi, 2017).

TFS undertook a small survey of homes in Tasmania through their School Fire Education Program in 2017 (see graph opposite). What they discovered was that the Key Fire Safety Message of ‘Only working smoke alarm saves lives’ had been successful in its implementation over the last twenty years. However with the update in recommendations for smoke alarms to now be in every bedroom, Tasmania appears now to be a long way behind. TFS has now implemented a targeted education campaign to inform the community of this change to the Key Fire Safety Message to ‘install a smoke alarm in every bedroom’.

This example of end users using research to improve their programs and keep their community safe needs to become more common place if these types of programs are going to remain relevant and effective.



### References

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Moinuddin, K. A. M., Bruck, D., & Shi, L. (2017). An experimental study on timely activation of smoke alarms and their effective notification in typical residential buildings. *Fire Safety Journal*, 93, 1-11.