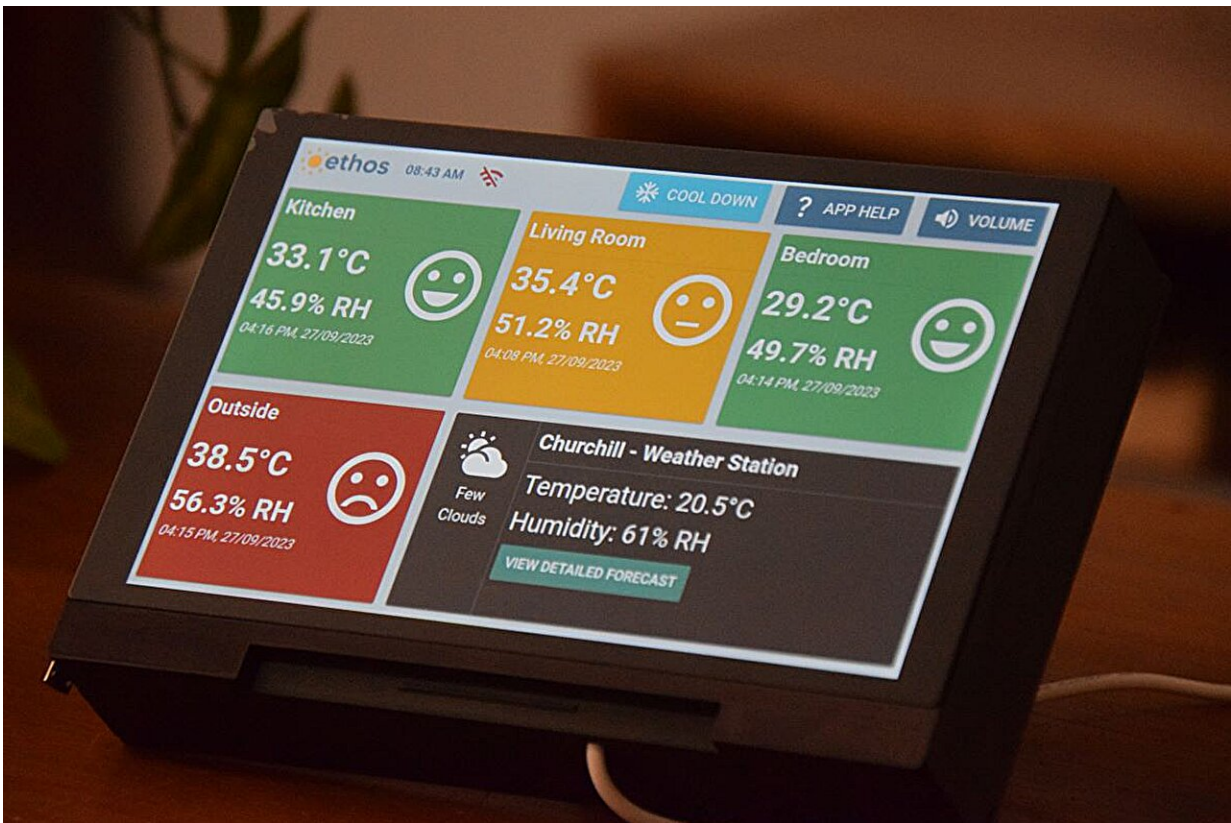


# Likelihood of more ambulance callouts in Australia as heat wave conditions continue

January 29 2024, by Emma O'Connor



Heat data. Credit: Griffith University

As Australia swelters through a long, hot summer, the effects of heat waves and the likelihood of ambulance callouts is at the heart of new Griffith University research.

The paper "[Preparing for a hotter climate: A systematic review and meta-analysis of heat waves and ambulance callouts in Australia](#)" has been published in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. It used a [systematic review](#) and meta-analysis to gauge the number of ambulance callouts in Australia due to heat waves.

Lead author and Senior Research Assistant Mehak Oberai from Griffith's School of Medicine and Dentistry said the heat waves are known as silent killers and have been the cause of death for more people in Australia than any other natural disaster.

"Not only does this lead to increased mortality, but also leads to an increase in morbidity with added pressure on the health care system," Oberai said.

"We found a statistically significant increase in the likelihood of ambulance callouts for all causes by 10%."

The study also found an increase in the likelihood of callouts by five percent for cardiovascular causes, and the rate and risk of ambulance callouts increase with the increasing intensity of heat waves.

Dr. Aaron Bach said this data will undoubtedly have an impact on Australia's public health system, especially the number of heat wave days set to increase.

"As these searingly hot days continue across the country, we'll see a further rise in the likelihood of [ambulance](#) callouts which will shine a spotlight on the real burden that heat waves place on our already stressed health system," Dr. Bach said.

"This research is further proof of the need to be proactive in this space and establish research initiatives and holistic heat health awareness

campaigns that encompass individuals, the community and the health care system to create a more resilient Australia."

Dr. Shannon Rutherford, a co-author on this paper, also leads Griffith University's [Ethos](#) project, an extreme heat warning system for older Queenslanders.

"This new study feeds into the work Ethos has underway which aims to provide in-home solutions to allow [older people](#) and their caregivers to monitor heat exposure, identify heat risks in their home, and respond to those risks using accessible cooling strategies," she said.

**More information:** Mehak Oberai et al, Preparing for a hotter climate: A systematic review and meta-analysis of heatwaves and ambulance callouts in Australia, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.anzjph.2023.100115](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anzjph.2023.100115)

Provided by Griffith University

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