



# Community Disaster Recovery

## Navigating Uncertainty

### 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster

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**Research Question:** What is community-led recovery in the context of a bushfire disaster? **Research Design:** The constructivist grounded theory approach adopted by the researcher, constructed a theory grounded in the data that was collected from the research participants. **Research Findings:** The theoretical outcome of this research, 'Navigating Uncertainty' is built around resident's main concerns and what they did to resolve those concerns. **Research Usefulness:** This research offers an understanding of how people directly affected by disaster respond to that disaster, and shifts beyond concepts/ideas about 'community-led' or 'recovery' to illustrate a more pragmatic view of community disaster recovery.

#### THE BUSHIFRE: INITIAL PHASE



#### Community Member's Narrations

**LOSING THE FAMILIAR: Knowing about the fire 14.** *I think we could see we could see smoke and I said, 'I think the fire is fine, I don't think we are in any danger (107) Comprehending the gravity 9. It was almost like a switch had gone off and I started to feel that sick feeling in my stomach (104) Safeguarding responsibilities 12. 'There is a little rocky beach down on the right-hand side before you get to [place], go down there you'll be safe there because there is very little vegetation and it's right on the seaside'(106) Locating family and others 18. No that was the worst for me not knowing 17. My phone got wet on Friday night and that bugged that 18. And I couldn't get through to anyone on my phone because networks were down and that was my concern. And [name] we had no idea how our men were, that was really awful (110)*

#### THE DISASTER: SECOND PHASE



**RESTORING THE FAMILIAR: Recognising disparity 9.** *But it was like, well it was the same house, but it wasn't. Like we had a telegraph pole in the front yard and wires everywhere, there was nothing there ... It was just like this was in the middle of a place that we didn't recognise (104) Restoring affairs 22. I was trying to get everybody back home, and everybody back with their families was to me was quite important (113) Fulfilling role 21. When I first arrived, I rallied a few friends and family and said 'look we need to sort this' yeah yeah ... we had it looking so good, I must say, the department store thanks to the girls because so many women in the community got on board said, 'yep we'll help, we'll do it' (112) Seeking the familiar 24. Seeing that common goal of the school being back,*

*and kids go back to school, was a real milestone in terms of some sort of normality, if not routine was back in our lives and that was a good thing (115) Exceeding expectations 19. I felt that you need some strong leadership and normality like [name] said because I see behind the scenes, without mentioning names, people that are strong community leaders that probably weren't as strong behind closed doors 20. Yeah 19. Doing it tough ...so people need to see a bit of community spirit and resilience because even though they all put on a brave face they're not all doing it is easy as it looks (111)*

#### THE EVENT: FINAL PHASE



**LIVING WITH CHANGE: Comprehending change 38.** *It's people that are important and that turned out we were lucky with this fire. There was no loss of life or no injuries only very minor injuries, a lot of mental injuries. But that's something I can't understand the emotion side of it why people got so emotional over it where you look at some other disasters around the world, ours wasn't too bad at all really (205) Adapting to change 16. I would say 'well you have to move forward you cannot go back'. (109) Finding Place 13. But the community is a lot stronger, a lot more of the community know who lives in the community. And we feel we've got an identity 12. We've got an identity 13. I put in the last [Newspaper], Murdunna is no longer a place to drive through (106)*

Photos: The Bushfire - Mark Heather, The Disaster - Warren Frey, The Event - Fiona Jennings