

NAVIGATING A BUSHFIRE DISASTER



bushfire&natural
HAZARDSCRC

‘WAYS OF KNOWING’

Fiona Jennings

PhD Candidate, School of Science, RMIT University Melbourne, Victoria

Out of Uniform: building community resilience through non-traditional emergency volunteering project

Email: fiona.jennings@rmit.edu.au Twitter: @fionajennings11

4 January 2013 - one of the most significant fire days in Tasmania since 1967. The Forcett fire burnt 20165 hectares, 193 dwellings destroyed and 186 other buildings destroyed or damaged.

Research question: What is a community-led approach to disaster recovery? This study aims to understand a community's experience of the 2013 Forcett bushfire disaster in southeast Tasmania. Constructivist grounded theory offered a practical method to gain insight into understanding local processes, actions and meaning. The 40 people participating in this study were residents of the small communities impacted by the bushfire disaster, external support volunteers, representatives of local and state government and non-government services.

The developing theory suggests a core category that encompasses three phases that depict processes that the community members experienced. The three phases are: LOSING THE FAMILIAR, RESTORING THE FAMILIAR and LIVING WITH CHANGE. The community's experience was the journey, and individual values and actions influenced, motivated or directed people on that journey.

These insights will assist in refining approaches that value and support people, groups and communities impacted by these types of natural hazard events in a way that is meaningful and respectful of their experience.



“The findings from this research will potentially provide valuable insights into the process by which communities transfer from the response to recovery phase” (Tasmania Fire Service, 2014).



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RESEARCH SUPERVISORS

Professor John Handmer, RMIT University and
Dr Joshua Whittaker, University of Wollongong.

