



Navigating Uncertainty:
A qualitative study of resident involvement in the
2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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March 2018

The Elephant

Let us imagine a group of people who are blindfolded and then asked to describe an elephant. One person notes that it is tall, thick and round like a tree trunk (she has hold of its leg); another that this animal is long, thin and moves in a manner like a snake (he has hold of its trunk); a third person notes that this animal is flat, leathery and very flexible so that it can flap (she is holding its ear). All perceive the elephant in very different ways; all are describing the same animal. However, while each of these insights tells us something about the elephant, only by standing back and considering the animal as a whole do the separate parts make sense to that we may appreciate the contribution they make so the holistic nature of this animal (Hugman, 2009, pp. 1151-1152).

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Declaration

I certify that: except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Fiona Maree Jennings

14 March 2018

Abstract

This thesis is a grounded theory analysis of resident involvement in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. Friday 4 January 2013 was one of the most significant fire days in Tasmania since 1967. The fire threatened life and left a trail of destruction, animals perished, homes, livelihood and landscape were destroyed or damaged. Despite this there appeared to be a level of social structure and processes evident. Many residents carried out a range of actions and activities before, during and after the bushfire disaster. It appeared that residents had a way of doing things and these actions were significant. In the post disaster phase, many of these local processes appeared to be overlooked by the well-intentioned external help or overwhelmed by the visitor-related goodwill.

The analysis presented in this thesis focuses on the local social processes. The main question opening the inquiry was - What is community-led recovery in the context of a bushfire hazard and disaster? The qualitative research design involved in-depth interviews, to develop an explanatory account of the phenomenon of interest based on the analysis of people's experience and perspectives. The 40 people who participated in this study were residents of the small communities impacted by the bushfire disaster, external support volunteers, and representatives of local and state government and non-government services.

The constructivist grounded theory approach that was adopted by the researcher, constructed a theory *grounded* in the data that was collected by research participants. The grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' outlines processes of surviving a bushfire disaster. A psychosocial process represents an interpretive understanding of what community members encountered before, during and after the bushfire disaster. The substantive theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' is built around community members' main concerns and what they did to resolve their concerns; their decision-making and actions underpinned by the meaning they gave to their experience. In a context of uncertainty community members depended on processes and systems that were familiar to them which fostered a sense of stability and helped sustain them through a period of change. This research concludes it is necessary to understand the holistic nature of people's lived experience in disaster events. Recovery includes the way people interpret and manage their context throughout a bushfire disaster, not just the post-disaster phase. Furthermore, the research identifies the importance of safeguarding and sustaining social stability, and approaches that support the participation of community members in a way that is meaningful and respectful of their experience.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AASW	Australian Association of Social Workers
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEM	Australian Emergency Management Institute
BNHCRC	Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre
CHEAN	College Human Ethics Advisory Network RMIT University
ConGT	Constructivist Grounded Theory
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DPAC	Department of Premier and Cabinet
LGA	Local Government Association
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
TASPOL	Tasmanian Police
TFS	Tasmanian Fire Service
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University
RSL	Return Services League
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, Traditional Owners of the lands where this research takes place and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the people who kindly shared their time and unique individual perspectives of the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. This thesis is evidence of your willingness to participate in the research project, thank you.

Since August 2014, I have been on a journey of discovery both personally and academically undertaking the work required to complete this thesis and the related research. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Australian Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC) and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University (RMIT) for the provision of my PhD scholarship and support. A big thank you to the BNHCRC project people, students, researchers and end-users.

To my supervisors, Professor John Handmer (RMIT) and Dr Joshua Whittaker (UOW), I sincerely thank you for the support and guidance during my candidature. I appreciate your willingness and endurance to work with me in my development as a grounded theory researcher, and commitment to see this thesis completed.

The journey of this PhD research has involved a complexity of emotions, there were some difficult times. To move through this period, I reflected on what motivated me to conduct the research in the first place, to develop knowledge that would be useful and make a difference. I also drew great strength from my friends and family. Thank you to those people who have expressed an interest, provided support and encouragement, there is insufficient room here to mention everyone's names. I would like to acknowledge and give my everlasting thanks to Ann Hughes, my sister Marlene and study buddies Heather and Morgan. To my children, their partners and grandchildren, *Merci*. Acknowledgment to our cat Dave, for his paws of support and unintentional editing over the past few years.

To my husband and best friend Darren, thank you for your love, encouragement and confidence, the reason I made it to this point. Friday 4 January 2013 marked the start of a noteworthy chapter in our lives, where we faced adversity and shared a journey of endurance.

To those people who believed in me, thank you.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The 2013 Forcett Tasmania Bushfire Disaster

It was January in Tasmania – the festive season – bringing with it warm weather, the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and The Taste of Tasmania. These events attract many visitors to Tasmania. The Falls Festival, a three-day music event with approximately 12,000 attendees held at Marion Bay ended on 1 January 2013. Marion Bay is situated in the Sorell municipality, near the communities of Forcett, Copping and Dunalley. The Forcett bushfire disaster was only days away.

Friday 4 January 2013 was one of the most significant fire days in Tasmania since 1967. The Forest Fire Danger Rating (FFDR) and Forest Fire Danger Indices (FFDI) reached Very High to Severe in the south-eastern districts. The FFDR and FFDI are fire danger indices and ratings used to describe the degree of difficulty for fire suppression. A rating is provided for a location using the prevailing weather and seasonal conditions. These ratings are used by fire authorities to determine the chances of a fire starting. By 3pm, Catastrophic fire ratings, a rating of very high threat to life and property were recorded at five locations. Dunalley was one of those locations. There were numerous fires burning across the state. Among these were the fires in the Forcett, Lake Repulse and Bicheno areas. It was the Forcett fire that caused the most damage. Trekking along the Arthur Highway towards Port Arthur the fire devastated the small communities nestled alongside the highway and outlying areas (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a).

On Friday 4 January 2013, as temperatures soared to nearly 42 degrees, around 40 fires were burning across Tasmania. The fire weather conditions were as severe as during the 1967 fires and the danger rating reached 'catastrophic' in many areas. Over the course of the next four days the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) – with support from a range of emergency services, government agencies and volunteers – battled to contain a firestorm

that was driven by ferocious winds and low humidity (Department of Premier & Cabinet Bushfire Recovery Unit, 2013, p. 6).

The following chronicle of the Forcett bushfire emergency and disaster was created using information from the Tasmania Police (TASPOL) and Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) Forcett Bushfire Timeline recorded in the 2013 Tasmanian Bushfire Inquiry Reports (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a, Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013b). The abbreviations TASPOL and TFS will be used to reference the respective emergency service timeline.

Monday 31 December 2012

The Bureau of Meteorology predicts the worsening of fire weather on 3 and 4 January and advises relevant agencies. Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) prepare for the worsening fire conditions and a Total Fire Ban is declared for the southern region for 3 January. The following day a state-wide Total Fire Ban is declared for 4 January (TFS).

Thursday 3 January 2013

At 10.30am the TFS held a regional briefing on the fire and weather outlook. At 2.13pm Tasmania Police were advised that there was a fire burning at Forcett (TASPOL), the result of a smouldering stump after a campfire (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a). At 3.13pm there are 22 fire incidents across the state of Tasmania (TASPOL).

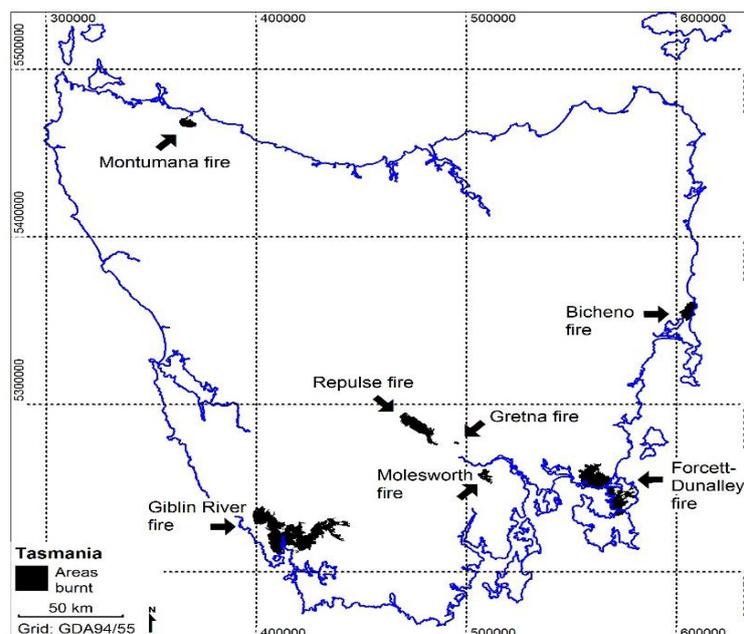


Figure 1. 1: Tasmania Area Burns. Source Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC

Friday 4 January 2013

At 2.34am a bushfire 'Watch and Act' message was activated for the areas of Forcett and Copping. Watch and Act is a bushfire information message issued by fire authorities in Australia. Fire authorities concern that the fire would jump the road and head towards Dunalley, triggered negotiations to close the Arthur Highway. By 11.30am local police had closed the road at Forcett and Dunalley (TASPOL) and between 12.00 and 12.30pm the fire crossed the Arthur Highway at several locations and headed in the south-easterly direction (Department of Justice, 2013a, p. 38). At 12.25pm TFS advises of the fire's potential to impact on Copping, Connellys Marsh, Primrose Sands, Carlton River, Boomer Bay and Dunalley. Two hours later a bushfire Emergency Warning Alert is issued for these areas (TFS). An Emergency Warning Alert means 'individuals, households and communities will be impacted and are in imminent danger. Action must be taken immediately' (Tasmania Fire Service, 2003).

At 2.52pm the bushfire reached the hills behind Dunalley and by 3.05pm fire spotting had occurred in Dunalley. Police were directed to leave road blocks and evacuate Dunalley residents (TASPOL). An emergency alert was issued for Dunalley at 3.08pm (TFS) and many people evacuated to the Tasman Peninsula, ahead of the firestorm (TASPOL). A TFS crew was positioned at the Dunalley Hotel to defend the large number of people who had taken shelter there. During this time, a massive ember storm had showered Dunalley and Boomer Bay. Fire behaviour experts claim this was probably caused by the fire reaching a lower fuel zone, which in turn would lower the heat generated and therefore restrict the upward movement of the lofting embers.

A high intensity and fast moving fire would have a high convection column and be lofting embers high into the atmosphere, and when this form of fire reaches a lower-fuel zone, its energy would be reduced, in turn lowering the convection column (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a, p. 39).

Fulham Road meanders about six km from Dunalley to Connellys Marsh, then continues its way towards Primrose Sands and Carlton River. At 3.37pm a decision was made to evacuate Primrose Sands. Connellys Marsh was directly in the fire path (TASPOL) and spot fires were reported at 4.33pm (TFS).

At 3.39pm, the fire was reported to have jumped the Dunalley canal (TASPOL) and an emergency alert was issued for the area between Dunalley and Eaglehawk Neck (TFS). Police arrived at Murdunna and advised residents along the Sommers Bay Road to evacuate. This exercise was considered necessary but quite risky as there was only one road in and out (Tasmanian Fire Service, 2013). By 6pm the small community of Murdunna had been impacted with homes destroyed and the fire headed south-east towards Eaglehawk Neck (TASPOL).

Due to demand, the Sorell Memorial Hall became Sorell Council's operation centre which evolved to an evacuation and then a recovery centre. Many visitors to Port Arthur Historic Site were stranded on the Tasman Peninsula, consequently the site was activated to an evacuation centre accommodating and catering for approximately 500 people. Many others had relocated to Nubeena.

The small township of Nubeena had a population of 274 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011f). A great number of people (estimated at 3000 to 4000) arrived at Nubeena to take refuge from the fire. The Tasman Civic Centre was designated the evacuation centre by the Tasman Council. The local infrastructure struggled with the demand and was reported to be overwhelmed. Boats were organised to ferry people to Hobart. The first boat left Nubeena at 11.30pm on 4 January with an estimated 800 to 1000 people being transported during the night which meant many evacuees left their personal or hired vehicles at Nubeena. On 5 January at 12 noon an information/recovery centre was established at Hobart's City Hall. The centre remained open for seven days, this played a key role in assisting those ferried from Nubeena (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a).

In the early hours of Sunday 5 January, there was a south to south-west wind change that stopped the fire heading south-east and directed it in an east-northeast direction. Large scale back burns were carried out and by 7 January the fire had been largely contained except for the Forestier Peninsula where its status was still 'active'. The fire was finally contained by Friday 18 January. Under Section 63A of the Police Offences Act 1935 the area impacted by the Forcett fire had been declared a crime scene. On Monday 7 January, this declaration was changed to that of a serious incident site under Section 63B of the Act (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a).



Figure 1. 2: Map of Forcett fire. Source Department of Premier and Cabinet (2013)

The Forcett fire burnt across 20,165 hectares and destroyed 193 dwellings with 186 other buildings destroyed or damaged (Boylan et al., 2013, Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a). Fortunately, there were no deaths attributed to this fire. However, the catastrophic fire conditions impacted significantly on people's lives. Many people survived a life-threatening experience, suffering injury, trauma and loss. The Tasmanian Ambulance Service recorded one of its busiest days on record. In Dunalley the primary school, police station, pistol club, locally owned sawmill, bakery and a wrecker's yard were destroyed. Other losses included livestock, vehicles, boats, caravans and farm machinery and significant infrastructure loss included telecommunications, the electricity network and roads (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013c).

The area had no town water infrastructure and many homes had lost their water tanks or were unable to use their tank water due to contamination. Up to 250 businesses were affected with a significant impact on the tourism, agriculture, aquaculture and viticulture industries. The clean-up provided by Tasmania's state government involved the removal of 42,000 tonnes of contaminated material from 320 properties (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2014).

This thesis narrates the story of the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster from the experiences and perspectives of the people involved in the event. The study aims to develop an understanding of what happened, how residents approached the event, and why, the importance and/or meaning of their involvement. This chapter provides a brief introduction to the preceding event, a personal account which motivated my interest to conduct the research. The chapter then describes the aim of the research, introduces the qualitative research method, the study context, an overview of the findings and concludes with an outline of thesis. Traditionally when reporting on qualitative research the writing is in the third person. Keeping in line with the ethos of constructivist grounded theory (ConGT), writing in first person acknowledges the researcher's presence in the research process and co-construction of knowledge.

1.2 A personal account of the bushfire disaster

In 2013, my partner and I had been living in Dunalley for 8 years, our work involved travelling to other municipal areas. My role as a rural community social worker was based on the East Coast of Tasmania. On Friday 4 January we decided to remain in Dunalley due to the forecasted catastrophic conditions, the location of our work and the knowledge that a bushfire was burning about 20 km away. The morning was spent carrying out a few fire preparations around our home, checking on neighbours and monitoring the fire movements via the radio. Our property was situated in the town centre near the primary school and we both had a level of confidence that the fire would not reach our property.

At the time a large hill blocked our view of the impending danger. A combination of the wind, embers and then flame becoming visible through the smoke in the sky, was our first sign of the fire hazard. We then realised the seriousness of the situation because the fire had moved fast. The realisation that our lives may be at risk motivated the hasty retreat through an almost empty town to the Dunalley canal. Within a very short time a wind squall that preceded the fire struck with incredible force and almost toppled us. The fire threat forced us to retreat and take shelter in Frederick Henry Bay where we spent over 4 hours beside and in the water. At times the intensity of the embers, smoke, heat and wind entailed sheltering in the water, protecting our bodies with wet towels and positioning our faces just above the water line to breathe.

When deemed safe to leave the bay we walked up to the hotel where many people had taken refuge. The setting is difficult to describe, with many people were understandably in shock and traumatised by the event they appeared very quiet or visibly distressed. Surprisingly there were also people acting with resolve and direction, carrying out various activities. I approached a person in uniform attempting to coordinate several emergency service personnel and introduced myself, mentioned my social work background and asked what needed to be done. They advised me to start registering people. A registration point was quickly established on the hotel deck which later transformed to an information point. Much like the person attempting to coordinate emergency services, the registration role appeared to provide a level of reassurance that someone was managing the situation. Over time this role evolved to Regional Social Recovery Coordinator of the social recovery program with the Tasmania Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) situated in the Bushfire Recovery Unit. The following account is a personal observation and perspective of what happened before, during and after the bushfire disaster that motivated the interest to conduct this study.

Leading up to, during and immediately after the event many of the communities were inaccessible due to the bushfire hazard and disaster. The roads into the fire zone were closed due to the impact of the fire and remained so for seven days. This effectively delayed the reaction time between acknowledging the extent of the emergency and the official recovery response into the disaster-impacted area.

During the emergency local people who for one reason or another remained in the fire impact zone, carried out various roles and actions. For example, a family who had taken shelter under a jetty were transported to the hotel about 11pm by local Ambulance volunteers. This family and many others were cared for by local people. Makeshift beds were organised on the floor of the hotel, food and water provided and the local charity shop which survived the fire was accessed to clothe people. People were accounted for with a registration and information point established on the hotel balcony. People shared resources that included food, torches and bedding. Early the next morning, isolated with the fire still burning, some of the local people located a barbeque and then fed over one hundred people. Over the next five days the hotel kitchen provided three meals daily to local people and visitors stranded in the area with this task mainly driven by local women with experience in hospitality. Residents who still had habitable dwellings accommodated neighbours, friends and relatives who had lost their homes.

The Dunalley Hotel developed into an evacuation point and refuge, emergency relief facility. A marquee was sourced from the Marion Bay Falls Festival and erected in a paddock adjacent to the hotel. The marquee provided a place to meet, access to provisions, information and support. People referred to the marquee as the Tent in the Paddock. It became the place to go, to help or get help. It was interesting watching the situation develop. For example, one day a small forklift turned up at the recovery centre. A local person presented with their forklift then carried out the task of shifting large items and crates around the paddock. Another local person, with experience coordinating a community centre presented along with her daughter, to help in the main marquee.

The material donations were being managed by a group of local people and as the donations grew so did the helpers. Local people arrived and took on the tasks of unpacking and sorting with minimal coordination or direction and collectively appeared energetic, motivated, demonstrating mutual respect and kindness, and resourcefulness. There were similar stories emerging from some of the other small townships.

There were stories of amazing feats, acts of courage and demonstrated resilience. It became evident that people who lived in these communities had a diverse range of skills, extensive knowledge and a broad base of experience that they could pull together and direct to the common benefit. Although the fire threatened life and left a trail of destruction there was a level of social structure and processes evident. It was as if an unspoken governance built on communal norms, together with a strong connection to place and social processes, provided meaning and purpose.

During the emergency and first few days post disaster, emergency personnel and a small group of external helpers worked alongside residents with what seemed to be a shared goal or vision. As time progressed the situation changed and on 11 January, the roads re-opened and people started to arrive from intrastate and interstate creating a convergence of interest, individuals, groups and organisations. It appeared that the volume of external help and bureaucracy, at times impeded resident involvement. A multitude of needs surfaced, within this appeared various motives and expectations. Energy and focus shifted to accommodating the influx of visitor related interest, donations, help and offers of goodwill. The external response also brought structures, systems, and activities which at times conflicted with the community's experience, some residents felt undervalued and excluded from decision-making. (see Appendix 1: Photographs of bushfire disaster).

1.3 Research Interest

My interest in generating knowledge to understand the local efforts in 2013 Forcett bushfire disaster stems from living and working at rural and remote locations in Victoria and Tasmania, Australia. As community social worker, a community development approach has been essential when working with individuals, families, groups and communities who may have experienced a multitude of complexities, critical incidents and events that occur in life. For instance, homes or businesses destroyed by fire, flood or drought, illness, death and other disasters.

In a disaster, it has been widely recognised that despite the best efforts of community members the need or problem will be greater than their ability to respond and resource the impact of the event (Guha-Sapir et al., 2004). The Australian Emergency Management (AEM) sector recognises the critical role community members play in the disaster management process. Community-led recovery is outlined as communities managing their own recovery, taking into consideration the concepts of sustainability, resilience and vulnerability and community development in recovery (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011).

In the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster event it seemed that residents 'needed help' and at the same time were not 'helpless'. Earlier studies have identified complications regarding organisational decision-making in community disasters which has been referred to as 'clashes' between established and emergent groups or 'conflict' over authority (Quarantelli, 1988). Recently, the term 'clash of cultures' was used to identify the different types of approaches utilised in community disasters, such as a community development or disaster management (Connor et al., 2013). It has been suggested that the dichotomy of flexibility and rigidity in approach is often driven by differing ideologies. The unrestrained growth or development of the natural environment (Kenny, 1994) juxtaposed against a complex policy driven environment (Connor et al., 2013). The differing ideologies of approach is useful to consider resident involvement in these types of events. In Australia, the call for a more flexible approach that supports the participation of people living with disasters has been echoed previously in the literature (Camilleri et al., 2007, Taylor and Goodman, 2014).

In the context of this study, the Wisner et al. (2004) statement corresponds aptly in that ‘we don’t want to romanticise ‘traditional’ or ‘local’ coping, and do not consider it to be necessarily sufficient, the best or the only kind of response to risk’ (p. 332). Wisner et al. (2004) argues the ‘mobilisation of knowledge and efforts at the neighbourhood and village level is critical. The starting point should be the achievements of ordinary people in ‘living with” hazards and disasters (p. 332).

1.4 Research Aim

This study aims to explain resident involvement in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster event based on the analysis of their firsthand experience and perspectives. To achieve this, the research aims to:

- learn about the local processes, what happened, how did community members approach the event and why, the importance or meaning underpinning their actions, and what supported or hindered their involvement;
- develop a substantive theory that helps understand a community’s experience of a bushfire disaster; and
- assist in refining ways of sustaining community member involvement in these type of disaster events.

Research Questions

What is community-led recovery in the context of a bushfire hazard and disaster?

- What community-led approaches were utilised in the 2013 Forcett bushfire disaster that helped facilitate recovery?
- What factors influenced community member involvement in the bushfire disaster event?

1.5 Research Method

In this study, I adopted Charmaz’s Constructivist Grounded Theory (ConGT) approach so that the research question could be answered by the development of a grounded theory or abstract understanding of the studied life (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory offered a practical method that shifted away from testing theory. It created an opportunity to generate theory and gain fresh insights into how people (social actors) interpret their reality (Suddaby,

2006). Grounded theory has the potential to illuminate common issues by providing opportunities that allow people to associate with the knowledge or theory around those issues and then apply it to daily life (Mills et al., 2006). A ConGT method is the systematic approach that involves data generation and analysis that is both inductive and abductive. It assumes that there are multiple realities and the subjectivities are acknowledged throughout the analysis with the view that knowledge is co-constructed. Participants' views and voices are fundamental and represented throughout this research analysis. A key feature of grounded theory is that it studies process, the what and the how questions, that will often give reason or answer to the why questions (Charmaz, 2014).

The place of the literature review has been the focus of significant debate in grounded theory studies. In this constructivist grounded theory study, I illustrated my own theoretical knowledge of the research topic early then attempted to the material lay idle until my categories and the analytical relationships between them were developed (Charmaz, 2014). The inductive and deductive nature of analysis requires a second literature review to link theoretical knowledge with the constructed substantive grounded theory (McGhee et al., 2007). The final review is tailored to fit the specific purpose and argument of the research report and used in a manner where it does not stifle 'creativity or strangle your theory' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 308). The differing views of when and how the literature is reviewed will be discussed further in Chapter 2.2: Preliminary Literature Review.

The ethos of ConGT acknowledges the researcher's presence and voice. 'It is not the research methodology that aims to discover a theory despite the researcher, but it is the researcher who aims to construct a theory through a methodology' (Ramalho et al., 2015, p. 6). The resulting theory depends on my input which is a critical part of the methodology, I'm not sitting outside or independent. This aspect of the research reality which considered my position, perspective, interactions contributed to my decision in using a ConGT approach. Reflexivity helped me remain alert to this subjectivity, earlier ideas and findings, scrutinising them throughout the analysis process. In the context of this study, the positioning of self and reflexivity is discussed later in Chapter 3.5: Methodology.

1.6 The Study

This research set out to gain an in-depth understanding of one community's response to a bushfire disaster. The study was situated in southeast Tasmania, Australia and took a community of place approach. In August and October 2015, I carried out two field trips to Tasmania and conducted 27 interviews. The 40-people who contributed to this study were residents, external support volunteers, and representatives of local and state government and non-government services.

The substantive grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' helps understand resident involvement in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. It outlines the psychological and social processes of surviving a bushfire disaster; such as decision-making, emotions, behaviour and interactions with others. 'Navigating Uncertainty', the theoretical outcome of this research is related to community disaster recovery.

The psychosocial process is characterised as 'Navigating Uncertainty' which encompasses three phases: Losing the familiar, Restoring the familiar and Living with change. Each phase represents a function in the journey through the fire hazard and disaster event. These phases are an interpretive view of the participants' differing realities gained primarily through my interactions with people and my learning about their experiences and perspectives. This method includes a research practice where data is scrutinised in a manner that preserved the evidence of the analytical ideas and identified actions (Charmaz, 2014).

The psychosocial process is built around the residents' main concerns and what they did to resolve these concerns. The main concern, the fire hazard, progressed to a perilous situation that threatened life, destroyed and damaged nature, homes and livelihood. The bushfire largely disrupted a context that for many participants was perceived as familiar, routine and safe. To resolve these concerns residents' decision-making, and actions were underpinned by individual and community values directed to safeguarding responsibilities, attending to needs and re-establishing the routine and regularity of everyday life. Acting on what was perceived as important provided purpose and the process symbolised the progression through a significant life event, multiple realities, unique and personal.

1.7 Thesis Structure

Chapter One: Introduction

The introduction chapter presents the study context and includes an account of the event that motivated the research interest. This is followed by the research aim and method. A brief outline of the study introduces the participants and a summary of the findings and the chapter concludes with a brief account on the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two: Preliminary Literature Review

The chapter preliminary literature review represents the non-committal phase of the literature review. In this phase literature related to the research topic was reviewed. The chapter begins with a discussion of the literature and of grounded theory then discusses hazards and disasters, vulnerability and resilience. The following sections presents a review of the literature on the various social responses, roles and responsibilities in emergencies and disasters.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The methodology chapter briefly discusses ontology, epistemology, and the epistemological view of objectivism, constructionism and constructivism. It presents the main theoretical perspectives used in grounded theory, positivism and interpretivism, and includes symbolic interactionism as a major theoretical perspective associated with grounded theory. Then the chapter briefly explores the history of grounded theory and introduces Constructivist Grounded Theory (ConGT). The chapter positions me as the researcher then explains reflexivity and its use throughout the research process.

Chapter Four: Place, People and Participants

The chapter titled Place, People and Participants sketches a picture of the 2013 Forcett bushfire disaster landscape, the people living in the small communities and other participants. It includes a brief discussion of Tasmanian fire history, demographic information and an interpretive portrayal of the small communities. The final section introduces the research participants and terminology used to represent them in the findings.

Chapter Five: Method

The methods chapter begins with a discussion of ethical considerations, including the voluntary nature of the study and the researcher's duty of care to the participants. The

second section discusses data generation and management, data analysis and theory building. This chapter includes memo writing, coding, theoretical sensitivity and saturation, category and theory construction.

Chapter Six: The Substantive Grounded Theory

The chapter introduces the substantive grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty'. The grounded theory suggests a process to understand community member involvement in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. The psychosocial process is an interpretive explanation of both psychological and social processes that were assumed to play a role in this bushfire disaster event. A basic flow chart outlines the process and the processes within that process. The substantive grounded theory is built around community members' main concerns and what they did to resolve those concerns. It further demonstrates how they interpreted and managed their individual context and why, by exposing the underlying meaning. This chapter is then followed by three chapters that explain the subcategories that epitomise the substantive grounded theory.

Chapter Seven: Losing the Familiar

The chapter presents the first phase of the psychosocial process. It illustrates the theory construction, grounded in the experiences and perspectives of those people participating in the study. The major process, termed *losing the familiar*, is presented in two sections. The first exemplifies the category construction and development of its properties; this includes focused codes and excerpts to preserve the participants' narrative voices. The second section introduces the subcategory, and its properties which explain the major process. This phase explains community members' main concern, the bushfire threat and the thinking, emotions and actions that related to their concerns. The presentation of the major process includes literature relevant to help clarify features and further develop the substantive theory.

Chapter Eight. Restoring the Familiar

The chapter presents the second phase of the psychosocial process. It is structured the same as the first phase and illustrates the theory construction and second major process, termed *restoring the familiar*, in two sections. This phase represents community members' main concern, the bushfire disaster, and the decision-making, actions and values that related to that concern. It explains how community members responded to the consequences of the fire to restore social stability and resume everyday life.

Chapter Nine. Living with Change

The chapter presents the third and final phase; the major process termed *living with change*. Like the previous two chapters it is presented in two sections. The first exemplifies the category construction and its emergent properties, along with focused codes and excerpts to preserve the participants' narrative voices. The second section introduces the main subcategory that explains the final major process. This phase explicates how community members perceived the overall event, this included how they recognised change and attached meaning to what had happened.

Chapter Ten. Augmenting the Categories

The chapter Augmenting the Categories presents data that augments the three subcategories presented in chapters seven, eight and nine. This data represents the perspectives and experiences of participants who were involved in the bushfire disaster but did not identify as community members: external support volunteers, representatives of local and state government and of non-government services. The interpretive views are presented under the substantive grounded theory subcategory headings to contextualise and augment the theoretical understanding and explanation of community members' involvement in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster.

Chapter Eleven: Discussion

The discussion chapter illustrates the major research findings, how the study has contributed to understanding the social phenomenon that was under investigation. The research context section revisits the research question and illustrates how the substantive theory contributes to theoretical developments. The final section in this chapter presents the study implications.

Chapter Twelve: Study Conclusions

The conclusion chapter evaluates the research efforts against the ConGT criteria of meeting credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness. The chapter answers questions, such as, has the researcher gained familiarity with the research setting? Does the knowledge present new or fresh insights? Do the research findings resonate with the people who shared their experiences? How might the research contribute to making a difference? (Charmaz, 2014). The final section concludes with some final remarks.

1.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced my research project. The narration of the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire emergency and disaster along with my own interpretive personal experience as a resident provide a foundation for this research. The chapter describes and explains what motivated my interest in studying the local processes undertaken by residents in this bushfire disaster event. The introduction posed aspects such as structures or processes that appeared to help or hinder some of the community participation. The research aim, questions and summary that introduces my chosen method that leads the direction of this study are then covered. The section that is titled 'the study' offers a sample of the research setting and findings aimed to elucidate the research context for the reader. This chapter concludes describing the thesis structure and how it is set out in the subsequent chapters. The next chapter presents the 'noncommittal' phase of the literature review, the preliminary literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the preliminary literature review. It begins with a brief discussion of grounded theory and the place of the literature review in the grounded theory approach, explaining the engagement and presentation of literature in this study. This discussion will be expanded in the Chapter Three. The second section will briefly consider the idea of hazards and disasters then explore vulnerability and resilience in the context of these concepts. The section following explores the community, and the people who make up the community, and the other informal and more formal institutionalised human responses to emergencies and disaster.

2.2 The Literature Review in Grounded Theory

The literature review has been the topic of debate throughout the evolution of grounded theory and continues to be a conundrum and controversial within the grounded theory discourse (Dunne, 2011, McCallin, 2003, McGhee et al., 2007, Mills et al., 2006). Classical grounded theory methods (Glasser and Strauss, 1967) encouraged researchers to enter the research field 'tabula rasa'. By the late 1990's there was a slight shift in this type of thinking, for example, Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasised using accumulated knowledge during GT data analysis and Bryant and Charmaz (2007) felt it was important to understand and situate one's work within the discourse surrounding the research topic (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007, El Hussein et al., 2017).

The Glassian grounded theory method encourages the researcher not to conduct a literature review in the substantive area until the grounded theory is nearing completion and it is then woven into the theory as data. Prior to this stage, only literature outside the topic area may be engaged with (Birks and Mills, 2015). There is a concern that *a priori* theory could impede

or limit the ability to make new discoveries (Yin, 2004). The taken for granted assumptions may influence the study resulting in the overall process ending up being a waste of time or not relevant to the substantive area (Birks and Mills, 2015, Dunne, 2011, McGhee et al., 2007). Others suggest that the rationale for an *a priori* framework or model is not empirically supported and 'the imposition of such background work risks contamination of the final theoretical product with intentional introduction of bias to the research process'. This could result in the trustworthiness of the study and its credibility being compromised 'through interference with the design and methodological approach to the research' (Nagel et al., 2015, p. 373).

Nevertheless, it is argued that 'rarely do researchers totally abandon prior substantive or methodological knowledge in the pursuit of understanding a complex social phenomenon' (Kools et al., 1996, p. 315). The possible benefits of an early review may include justification or provision of a rationale for the study or grounded theory, identifying gaps in knowledge and providing context for the study. Furthermore, it might assist in distinguishing the researchers starting and standpoints (theoretical sensitivity), help identify the people you might work with and stimulate the initial research question (data generation). It is the second literature review that is critical by linking the contemporary literature relevant to the research findings or new theory which is an important part of the theory building (Dunne, 2011, McGhee et al., 2007, Urquhart et al., 2009).

When adopting a ConGT method, it is important to develop an awareness of how the researcher uses their prior knowledge, for instance how one might grapple with the imposition of external frameworks. The key feature of this method is to avoid imposing a framework that results in data being analysed through a specific lens. The initial review can provide a reflective account of the ideas that the researcher is exposed to, for example, how other researchers may have addressed the problem. Memo writing, which is a central part of grounded theory could also be used during the initial review. This reflective process could offer a chronicle of how the researcher's thinking might change when exposed to differing ideas, values and context linked to the research topic (Dunne, 2011).

According to Urquhart and Fernandez (2006) the preliminary literature review examines what theory exists in the area and how other people may have addressed aspects of a research problem but does not then impose a

framework on future data collection. The literature review is revisited, and extended, once the theory has been generated from the data (p. 461).

The aim of ConGT is to generate an original theory, therefore the use of an '*a priori*' model or framework is discouraged. Customarily, the literature review in research helps identify a research problem, ascertain gaps and identify an appropriate research design. In grounded theory, deciding what literature to read is often fraught with contradictory statements such as it needs 'to be general but focused, yes, to look at some literature but no, stay away from the main area' (McCallin, 2003, p. 62). It appears that the purpose of the initial review is to contextualise the study whereas the purpose of the second literature review is to integrate the theory (Andrews, 2006).

Phasing (Martin, 2006) is an apt way of using the literature in a grounded theory research design. In phasing, the first phase is noncommittal where the preliminary literature review enables the researcher to develop understanding and locate the problem. The second phase is called integrative where the researcher integrates the relevant existing knowledge with the new theory thus making it more valuable (Urquhart and Fernandez, 2006).

In applying this concept to this research design, the noncommittal phase is the preliminary literature review. This is the noncommittal phase where the literature is oriented to contextualise the research topic, by looking at community members' involvement in disaster events and identifying some of the contextual issues. The second integrative phase involves reviewing and integrating literature relevant to the theory and will be presented in Chapter 6: The Grounded Theory and Chapter 11: Discussion.

2.3 Hazards and Disasters

When studying communities impacted by a bushfire disaster it is important to understand the concepts of hazards and disaster. An emergency is a forthcoming or actual occurring event that endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, requiring a significant and coordinated response (Emergency Management Australia, 2004). Hazardous events have been described as ones that are natural, technological or human-made that have an element of risk with a chance of injury or loss. Risk is defined as a situation where there is a level of exposure to danger (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2017). For example, natural hazardous

events would include bushfire, flood, earthquake and hurricane. The impact of the hazard generally depends on the elements of risk which is often difficult to estimate due to the level of uncertainty that comes with forecasting events and the associated levels of vulnerability. There are contributing variables such as population and physical structures, 'and their associated vulnerability to damage or change', that influence the element of risk (Australian Government Geoscience, 2016).

Fritz (1961) describes disaster as 'an event concentrated in time and space, in which a society or one of its subdivisions undergoes physical harm and social disruption, such that all or some essential functions of the society or subdivision are impaired' (cited in Lindell, 2013, p. 797). The perception that disaster is an event beyond human control has been contested with claims that 'disasters have become a policy problem of global scope precisely because what humans do, both in the normal course of their lives and in response to disasters, frequently magnifies the vulnerability of communities' (Comfort et al., 1999, p. 39). Disaster can cause serious disruption to the functioning of the community or a society and endanger life, property or the environment in such a way that recovery is unlikely without external assistance (Australian Emergency Management, 2004, United Nations Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2009, Wisner et al., 2004).

2.4 Vulnerability and Resilience

To further comprehend people and disaster, it is important to know the various types of hazards and levels of vulnerability that people, groups or communities may experience (Wisner et al., 2004). Whittaker et al. (2012) highlight the importance of the community context to understand the differing levels of vulnerability that may be present prior to disaster. Aspects that need to be considered in levels of vulnerability include the economic, social and political climate that impacts on the day to day lives of people (Whittaker et al., 2012). Turner et al. (2003) offer a vulnerability analysis framework where resilience is recognised as one of the three dimensions of vulnerability, with the other two components being exposure and sensitivity. A system may be perceived as very resilient though the degree of exposure and sensitivity may well increase vulnerability (Miller et al., 2010, Turner et al., 2003).

Miller et al. (2010) suggest that when comparing vulnerability to resilience there are similarities and differences in that both approaches are concerned with how systems respond

to stress and/or change. The differences are that vulnerability derives from a social theory constructivist approach and resilience from the ecological domain influenced by positivist epistemology, with each approach differing in analyses. Vulnerability has an actor orientated approach (action, decision-making and negotiation) and resilience a systemic approach (interaction of social and ecological processes). Generally, vulnerability focuses on how much a system can be disturbed, whilst resilience focuses on time taken to restabilise or be disturbed without changing (Miller et al., 2010).

It is suggested that disaster vulnerability is often measured by resources within the context of socio-economic structure and is apparently somewhat easier to recognise by outside institutions (Wisner et al., 2004). Coping is frequently mentioned throughout the disaster field, however despite this frequency the term is complex especially when it comes to people's wellbeing. Coping is attempting to manage a situation whilst under stress. Wisner et al. (2004) points out that 'coping is in essence a strategy reactive to events beyond the immediate control of the individual, household or "community"' (p. 120). A critical aspect of coping that needs to be considered is that when circumstances deteriorate an individual's reactive strategy may prove to be ineffective (Wisner et al., 2004).

Other studies have reflected people's reactive strategies. When a community witnessed many of their relatives being injured or killed in an earthquake in Turkey 1992 the magnitude of catastrophe disrupted the citizen response (Comfort et al., 1998, Helsloot and Ruitenbergh, 2004). Buffalo Creek is a narrow valley in West Virginia. In 1972, 132 million gallons of coal black water from a makeshift dam engulfed the 'tightly knit' community of five thousand people. One hundred twenty-five people were killed and destroyed the homes of four thousand people. A detailed social study of the 1972 Buffalo Creek disaster reported by Erikson (1976) identified how the local processes and sense of trust in the community were damaged due to the technical nature of the disaster. It seemed that the magnitude of the disaster event impacted significantly on the community's emotional shelter, the loss of 'community' influenced the notion that the collective can make a perilous world appear safe (Erikson, 1976).

Handmer (2003b) claims that the capacity to cope and adapt to change is a valuable concept and a shift from vulnerability, which is often perceived as 'the susceptibility to loss and the capacity to recover' (p. 56). The capacity to cope with the unforeseen or unanticipated could be perceived broadly as proactive adaptation hence the struggles and strategies of people

impacted by disaster and their ability to cope in adverse circumstances are often overlooked. This can lead to the capacity of a social system often remaining unnoticed and understudied (Wisner et al., 2004).

In more recent times, to increase our effectiveness to cope with hazards there has been a gradual shift in disaster management policy and practice from disaster response to disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness. This shift considers the resilience of a system. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines resilience as ‘the ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and way of functioning, the capacity for self-organisation, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change’ (UN-HABITAT, 2011, p. 149). This definition tilts towards coping and building resilience as a key factor by reducing poverty and improving the quality of people’s lives (UN-HABITAT, 2011). A resilient community or social system might demonstrate the ability to be self-sufficient and adaptive to change, by utilising local people, knowledge and resources until help arrives (Maguire and Cartwright, 2008, Price-Robertson and Knight, 2012).

Luther et al. (2000) refers to resilience as ‘a *dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity*’ (p. 543). Therefore, defining resilience is complex with two very different constructs in their assessment and application. Bernard (1991, 2004) highlights three environmental processes that may buffer risk and resilience: ‘(1) forming caring relationships, (2) maintaining positive and high expectations, and (3) providing opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution’ (cited in Bernard and Truebridge, 2013, p. 210). It is suggested that these processes contribute to the development of individual strengths, for instance, problem solving, autonomy and identity, sense of purpose and hope for the future, buffering risk and resilience (Bernard and Truebridge, 2013).

Welsh (2014) argues there is conceptual blurring with the concept of resilience, pointing out a duality. Traditionally resilience was understood to be the ability to withstand, rebound and recover to one’s original state. More recently it has been conceptualised as the ability to adapt and reconfigure, ‘bounce forward’ and develop self-securing agency. This view is supported by Reid and Botterill (2013) who highlight the term resilience has multiple, and often conflicting meanings, and is used in a diversity of contexts other than disaster management. Although it is important to have a clear definition of resilience in the context of disaster policy, it is far more valuable to focus on some of its characteristics common across

contexts - as an illustration, functioning well under stress, self-reliance, social capacity and successful adaptation (Reid and Botterill, 2013).

Frequently cited processes that emerge with resilience are adaptation, adaptive capacity or adaptability. Norris et al. (2008) claim that there will be a level of adaptation when the resources are sufficient to counteract or resist the immediate effects of stress. Levine et al. (2011) offer a conceptual framework for thinking about local adaptive capacity. This framework highlights five characteristics: asset base, flexible forward-looking decision-making and governance, innovation, knowledge and information, and institutions and entitlements. It is not possible to measure adaptive capacity but having these five characteristics is considered to reflect a high adaptive capacity.

In Australia, there is a whole-of-nation approach to disaster management underpinned by a resilience approach. There is agreement that the concept of resilience has four core features: functioning well under stress, successful adaptation, self-reliance and social capital (Price-Robertson and Knight, 2012). It is implied that a problem-solving process throughout the emergency would be more helpful than attempting to establish order in the chaos. A disaster will generally create an unstable, often chaotic and complex environment, requiring an open and flexible approach, and utilising problem-solving and integrative approaches that allow for adaptability, creativity and improvisation (Drabek and McEntire, 2003, Harrauld, 2006, Johnson and Hayashi, 2012).

The differing social capital theories are closely related to community disaster resilience (Dynes, 2002, Norris et al., 2008, Patterson et al., 2009, Reimer et al., 2013). Social capital highlights the importance of norms, values and networks that facilitate collective action (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000). The networks, norms and values that enable cooperation and coordination of mutual benefit, or social organisation, are perceived to be qualities of social capital. Social capital is closely related to community and has been referred to previously as the 'social glue', features of social organisation like mutual expectations that hold or bind the social relations in society, groups or the community together (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000, Frankenburger et al., 2013, Taylor and Goodman, 2014). Social capital is a product of interactions and it is best understood when situated in a framework of purposeful community activity. Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) conducted a study on social capital, looking at the interactive productivity of networks of a small rural community. This study presented a new definition of social capital:

Social capital is the product of social interactions with the potential to contribute to the social, civic or economic well-being of a community-of-common-purpose. The interactions draw on knowledge and identity resources and simultaneously use and build stores of social capital. The nature of the social capital depends on various qualitative dimensions of the interactions in which it is produced, such as the quality of the internal-external interactions, the historicity, futuricity, reciprocity, trust and the shared values and norms (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 23).

A study by Reimer et al. (2013) on managing social relations under disaster condition utilised an assets-based perspective of community capacity. It focused on four types of systems; market, bureaucratic, associative and communal-based norms and interpreted the ability of communities to manage a disaster. At a local level, it is critical in disaster planning to recognise the normative systems by which people act, confirming social capital contributed to resiliency (Reimer et al., 2013). It appears that to build social capital there needs to be opportunities for social interaction where there is a level of mutual expectation and alignment of values (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000). Furthermore, the community networks that emerge in a disaster contribute to the development of social capital and are perceived valuable in the recovery process (Hughes et al., 2007, Webber and Jones, 2012).

2.5 Community and Citizen Involvement

When attempting to define community, the process is often fraught and tied up in a plethora of terms and meaning. In 1955, Hillery identified ninety-four definitions of community, the paper concluded that beyond the concept there was no agreement as to the nature of community. There was some consensus that the concept of community was found within the broader concept of social interaction and common ties, with community consisting 'of persons in social interaction within a geographical area and having one or more additional common ties' (Hillery, 1955, p. 111). However, it is important to consider that identifying community from an external position doesn't necessarily consider the subjective nature of identity. When acknowledging the different theories and opinions amongst researchers, academics and writers in defining community, there appears to be some consensus on community of place or community of interest (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011, Emergency Mangement Australia, 2014, Hughes et al., 2007).

As highlighted in the previous section, hazards and disasters have a human factor where life, livelihood, property and other assets may be at risk of suffering, damage and loss (Quarantelli, 1999, Wisner et al., 2004). A simple definition of vulnerability in the context of disaster is:

By vulnerability we mean the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard (an extreme natural event or process) (Wisner et al., 2004).

When considering these characteristics there have been numerous studies and articles that raise awareness of the efforts of local people who demonstrate the ability to draw upon local resources, norms and values, roles and relationships and organise themselves during the different phases of disaster management (Camilleri et al., 2007, Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, Lindell, 2013, Marsh et al., 2004, Orange County Fire Authority, 2007, Proudley, 2013, Pupavac, 2012, Webber and Jones, 2012). It seems that often people experiencing emergencies and disasters will not stand about waiting for a higher authority to help them but will self-organise, work with others and problem-solve with heightened altruism and values that are centred upon the good of the community (Dynes, 1973, Patterson et al., 2009, Wositzky, 1998).

Hughes et al. (2007) argue that in the pursuit to find solutions for problems there is rarely one solution suitable for all situations and most solutions are best developed and implemented by those closest to the problem. To sum up this view the phrase 'local solutions to local problems' has been used (Hughes et al., 2007, p. 144). Ife (1995) suggests that 'a community enables valuing, production and expression of a local or community-based culture' (p. 91). There are unique characteristics associated with community that provide the opportunity for people to participate and be active creators in their culture, instead of passive consumers (ibid). 'One of the strong values and beliefs of the rural culture is that one must become part of the community and contribute to its existence' (Smith, 2013, p. 17). Other studies have considered how communities organise themselves this includes the system of governance that accords with a high validity of communal-based norms based on familial relations or geography (Reimer et al., 2013).

Richardson et al. (2014) considered 'communitas', a term coined by Turner in 1974, in their study. Communitas means a rich sense of community, exhibiting characteristics and dimensions that included the absence of hierarchy, status and distrust, not bound by class or cultural division, and rich with equality, solidarity and freedom. Communitas was used as a theoretical framework to study effective community recovery from disaster. The study focussed on a small coastal town in Texas USA that had been impacted by Hurricane Ike. The findings concluded that community members faced identity questions and the feeling of a common experience dissolved class and other dimensions. Furthermore, innovative behaviours led to 'new' community and the actions by community leaders fostered communitas (Richardson et al., 2014).

A study by Kusumasari and Alam (2012) looked at local wisdom-based recovery in an earthquake disaster and showed how the characteristics of local influence and participation in recovery efforts, aligned with community values leading to a speedier recovery. In 2006, the Bantul district Indonesia, was struck by an earthquake. The local government infrastructure was significantly damaged in the disaster which severely affected their ability to respond. The local government had a well-developed relationship with the community where they had challenged the culture of thinking that bureaucracy serviced the people. The time-honoured relationship between local government and the community resulted in a high level of participation and ownership in the community recovery process. What promoted this process was acknowledging local wisdom, recognising the key characteristics of flexibility, adaptiveness and creative leadership, and community leaders motivating the community during recovery efforts (Kusumasari and Alam, 2012).

The terms community and local are frequently mentioned to identify people who reside in places where hazards or disaster events occur. When exploring the disaster research literature there were a variety of descriptions used to identify individuals, groups, and community actions in emergency and disaster events. There were community and collective descriptions that included therapeutic, synthetic, utopian, altruistic, civil society, situational altruism and social capital. Several descriptions related to individuals, including ordinary citizens, good citizenship, first responder, heroic individuals, Good Samaritan, bystander, citizen, victim and affected victim, and volunteers, namely episodic, non-traditional, unorganised, spontaneous, unskilled, unaffiliated, and volunteerism. Many of these terms relate to the unorganised behaviour that often emerges in hazard and disaster events (Drabek and McEntire, 2003, Dynes, 1994, Fritz and Mathewson, 1957, Gurtner et al., 2011,

Harrald, 2006, Helsloot and Ruitenberg, 2004, Johansson, 2013, Kogut and Ritov, 2007, Majchrzak et al., 2007, Patterson et al., 2009, Rodriguez et al., 2006, Scanlon et al., 2014, Shaskolsky, 1967, Solnit, 2009, Wachtendorf and Kendra, 2004).

To contextualise some of these descriptions with those people impacted by disaster events, the meaning can often be multifaceted. Depending on the nature of the disaster there will often be a significant number of people involved directly or located nearby. The term 'first responder' has been used to refer to those first on the scene or present during the period when people may need to depend on themselves before help arrives. First responders will often fill gaps of unmet need or take on tasks not met by the official response (Scanlon et al., 2014). The term 'first responders' is also utilised in respect of the actions of emergency personnel, for example police, paramedics, emergency services and other government representatives (Gardner, 2008, Harrington et al., 2012). Although the term first responder is relatively self-explanatory meaning first on the scene, there appears to be some tension in role expectations. Wachtendorf and Kendra (2004) argue that the need to ascertain who with authority is in charge and centralising systems shifts focus from activities such as communication and coordination. This fosters a perception that sees 'government responders as the primary if not the only disaster responders' (p. 6). This approach fails to recognise the potential of individual or collective action taken by the first responders (Wachtendorf and Kendra, 2004). A report from the 2009 Victorian Black Saturday bushfire disaster highlighted the actions of community members who were first responders then provided an ongoing service to the community that lasted well past the initial response. The report highlighted community members' accounts of their difficulties in holding authority and claiming that 'experts' may disconnect and disenfranchise the first responders during the time between the initial relief and longer-term recovery (Taylor and Goodman, 2014).

The Australian Emergency Management Institute Recovery handbook utilises the term first responders to identify community members and their actions as emergent behaviours. It is the community's response that is a natural part of the recovery process.

Community members are the first responders during an emergency, and take actions to save and protect themselves, their families and their communities. These actions are *emergent behaviours* (Drabek & McEntire, 2003). In responding, disaster-affected communities spontaneously begin their own recovery processes. It is the role of formal agencies to provide

structured support, communication and coordination to assist these efforts
(Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011, p. 26).

Often individuals or groups that present to help will have no disaster experience, these activities or efforts have often been referred to as emergent behaviour (Gillespie and Perry, 1976, Helsloot and Ruitenbergh, 2004, Katirai and Simpson, 2009, Neal and Phillips, 1995, Schneider, 1992). Emergent behaviour usually takes place before, during and post disaster because of social processes. It appears that the looseness in the social processes can be a strength, allowing for greater flexibility in taking on new tasks and adapting to a changeable environment. These social processes can often be a relief to overstretched governments. This type of social process generally lacks the more dominant bureaucratic view of hierarchy and division of labour (Stallings and Quarantelli, 1985, Wisner et al., 2004).

Theoretically, emergent norms are based on symbolic interactionism, the meaning within social interactions and the formation of group norms (Reicher, 2001). Emergent behaviour is explained within collective behaviour structures where there are emergent social relationships and social organisation (Neal and Phillips, 1988). It has been suggested that a significant characteristic of emergence is its newness and that it has not been previously observed in a system or is a new normative structure that guides behaviour (Aguirre et al., 1998, Corning, 2002). Quarantelli (1966) and Dynes (1970) developed a fourfold typology that captures emergent disaster related social behaviour by considering the functions and structures of groups (Drabek and McEntire, 2003, Quarantelli, 1999).

Quarantelli (1966) and Dynes (1970) Disaster Research Centre (DRC)	
Established Regular tasks, old structures	Extending Non-regular tasks, old structures
Expanding Regular tasks, new structures	Emergent Non-regular tasks, new structures

Table 2. 1: Fourfold typology model

A study by Neal et al. (2011) that investigated emergent behaviour in the 2007 Kingston upon Hull (UK) floods, described residents as private citizens and organisational personnel as public officials. The private citizens worked alongside officials during the emergency and well into recovery in activities that included evacuations, sandbagging, emergency medical

assistance and caring. There appeared to be only a few tasks that residents were not involved in; these included, specific tasks such as traffic control, flood surveys, distribution of care packs and the assessment of flood damage which were carried out by public officials. The study claimed residents' emergent behaviours were considered constructive and overall timely, altruistic and persisted throughout the response and recovery (Neal et al., 2011). Stallings and Quarantelli (1985) suggest that 'emergent groups can be thought of as private citizens who work together in pursuit of collective goals relevant to actual or potential disasters but whose organization has not yet become institutionalized' (p. 94).

Volunteer is another term employed to identify those helping in the disaster efforts, with spontaneous volunteer representing the unstructured and unplanned volunteering that can occur in this situation (Eyre, 2006, Lowe and Fothergill, 2003). It is thought that spontaneous volunteering has the potential to be successfully integrated into coordinated responses, nevertheless the process often depends on an organisation's or authority's capacity and timing (Helsloot and Ruitenbergh, 2004). A study by Johansson (2013) looked at the affiliated and unaffiliated volunteer, and concluded the unaffiliated volunteer was both a resource and a problem. The unaffiliated or unorganised individuals were sometimes referred to as victims or as helpers and viewed as problematic by the professional responders whereas other studies have considered volunteers a valuable resource if harnessed, managed or coordinated (McLennan et al., 2016).

Quite often in disaster response, citizens, groups or the community will struggle for legitimacy in their role, actions or behaviours (Kendra and Wachtendorf, 2003). Dynes (1986) suggests there are often plenty of opportunities to assume the role of helper due to the nature of disaster. A significant problem that often arises is that there are often 'more persons willing to assume roles than there are relevant roles to assume' (p. 17). Therefore, it is important to consider power, or lack of, when there is generally little opportunity to bargain effectively, especially if the helper role is considered a commodity and socially valued. It might not be helpful to predict role behaviour or role expectations from the knowledge of position and that it is best observed in action, within a realistic context (Dynes, 1986).

Quarantelli (1996) points out how disaster research has for a long time held the premise that there are two different kinds of demands in the disaster, one created by the disaster itself and the other from the response. Disaster studies have identified that convergence can not only hinder rescue and relief but also impede the processes of social life (Drabek and McEntire,

2003, Fritz and Mathewson, 1957). Convergence is a universal phenomenon that explains the movement of people, information, and donations towards the disaster zone. It has the potential to magnify and complicate the relief efforts which has been echoed historically in the disaster literature (Fritz and Mathewson, 1957, Holguin-Veras et al., 2014, Kendra and Wachtendorf, 2003, Quarantelli, 1999, Scanlon, 1992).

2.6 Disaster Management

Internationally, there are policies and processes that largely involve the management and organisation of an interrelated set of norms, institutional actors, practices and resources for addressing the pre-disaster, trans-disaster and post-disaster phases (Tierney, 2012). Traditionally, there was a misguided understanding that disaster management was the government's responsibility and that it demanded a command and control approach. This was linked to an overshadowing theme that society had broken down and required strong leadership (Manyena et al., 2011, Neal and Phillips, 1995, Quarantelli, 1996). The command and control style of emergency management has gained considerable attention in the disaster field and it has been presumed that this type of management system is only suitable for predictable stable environments (Drabek and McEntire, 2003).

Dynes (2002) suggests the command and control model was built on unrealistic or false assumptions and a problem-solving model would be far more suitable for emergencies. Emphasising that 'emergencies do not reduce capacities of individuals or social structures to cope but only present them new or unexpected problems to solve' (Dynes, 2002, p. 14). Fan (2013) argues that 'traditional risk management implies a top-down perspective and is highly reliant upon experts and a bureaucratic manager in charge of a system' (p. 25). This paper suggests the government will often adopt a hazard reduction process that depends on an engineering and technical approach which often omits the inclusion of people's knowledge of risk (Fan, 2013). This view is supported by Pupavac (2012) who suggested sociological accounts of recognising human agency and therapeutic communities have been stifled by ecological accounts that focus on disaster damage and vulnerability to external risk.

Rural development offers a different perspective of governance, with community-led rural development regarded as a comprehensive shift from government to governance that will improve sustainability and promote local capacity. This shift regards communities as needing

encouragement to self-govern, to feel or act empowered and responsible, thus risk is understood to be the responsibility of the rural communities. However, the shift from government to governance where responsibility may be considered to rest with the community, could liberate a government from having any level of responsibility or risk (Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins, 2004).

Australian communities are faced with the prospect of being exposed to a range of natural hazards, typically, bushfire, flood, cyclones and other severe extreme weather events. Hazards have the potential to cause loss of life or injury. They destroy and significantly damage property, infrastructure and the environment. In Australia, there has been a considerable effort to incorporate community participation into emergency management policy. Under the constitutional arrangement each state and territory, has their own legal and administrative responsibilities within their jurisdictions (Emergency Management Australia, 2009).

This includes working in partnership, between the Australian 'state, territory and local governments; businesses and industry; non-government organisations; community groups; emergency management volunteer groups; emergency management volunteer organisations; and the community.

These partnerships aim to:

- build disaster resilience by minimising vulnerability to hazards
- protect life, property, and the environment
- minimise adverse social impacts during emergencies, and
- facilitate recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2014, p. 3).

The Australian Emergency Management Arrangements detail the principles, structures and procedures for prevention, preparation, response and recovery, and post emergency assessment and analysis. The principles highlight an integrated approach involving governments, individuals, businesses and other parties. The inclusion of individuals, families and the community in planning and preparedness, is emphasised, with the aim of attaining 'the highest degree of physical and financial self-reliance, before, during and after an emergency' (Emergency Management Australia, 2009, Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2014).

Each state has a constitutional responsibility to convene an authority or taskforce to mitigate emergencies, and to coordinate and support communities affected by a disaster event. These authorities provide structure and a range of processes that enable the community to reach a destination of recovery. This is achieved through a range of activities that are undertaken by those in the recovery centres, community reference groups or recovery committees, and the relevant support services. These activities require extensive and inclusive communication in respect of the clean-up and rebuild efforts, the existing and future local economy, the environment and the implementation of the recommendations that are generated from the learnings of the respective groups. The establishment of the community reference groups or committees largely involves representatives from state and local government, non-government, local community groups, leaders and local business representatives (McGowan et al., 2013, O'Neill, 2015, Taylor and Goodman, 2014).

The Australian Emergency Management Institute (2011) recovery handbook contains a series of clear statements that are set out to achieve the best outcomes, this includes supporting communities to manage their own recovery. However, some of the policy detail contradicts the principles. For example, the statements 'recovery is undertaken by recovery workers', and 'recovery managers manage the recovery process on behalf of the nominated lead recovery agency, taskforce or authority' undermine the principle that communities should be supported to manage their own recovery (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011, p. 5).

The Australian Emergency Management Institute (2011) defines recovery as 'the coordinated process of supporting affected communities in the reconstruction of the built environment and the restoration of emotional, social, economic, built and natural environment wellbeing' (p. 3). The national principles for disaster recovery represent a range of features that are believed important for a successful recovery (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011, pp. 22-25).

Understanding context	Acknowledge existing strengths and capacity, risk and vulnerability.
Recognising complexity	The diversity of need, responsive and flexible in approach, recognise stress and grief, conflicting values and priorities.
Using community-led approaches	Enabling, consider culture, community development approach, plans, flexible policy and service, partnerships

Ensuring coordination of all activities	Guided by expertise, evidence-based practice, coordinate and collaborate, inclusive.
Employing effective communication	Information timely, clear, accurate, two-way and repeated.
Acknowledging and building capacity	Assess gaps, support self-reliance, recognise and mobilise capacity, network and partnerships.

Table 2. 2: A summary of the six principles of disaster recovery

Winkworth et al. (2009) claim that community recovery has two components, what the communities do themselves and what the government does to support and actively facilitate the process. Recovery may be defined two ways, desired outcome and process leading to the desired outcome. Quite often there is a rush to return to normal or urgency driving the rebuilding process and once the rebuilding of infrastructure and homes has been achieved, the recovery process at an individual level is deemed ‘over’, often undermining the community recovery process (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, Proudley, 2013).

Communities experiencing natural disasters have reported in the aftermath that pre-existing formal and informal local processes are often not acknowledged (Taylor and Goodman, 2014) 2014) and that the ‘reservoir of skills, expertise and energy were not sufficiently tapped into by some institutions’ (Camilleri et al., 2007, p. 169). Taylor and Goodman (2014) claim that in the process of operationalising the concept of community-led recovery there are often gaps between ‘the policy rhetoric and the lived reality of its application’ (p. 176).

A considerable amount of government report documents feature work that has been undertaken by recovery taskforces or authorities, these reports primarily describe the emergency and recovery arrangements. The documents explain topics such as the structure and functions of government units, affected area committees and the activities undertaken in the recovery efforts, and the evaluation and learning’s of the activities, programs, projects, communication strategies, funding and expenditures (ACT Bushfire Recovery Taskforce, 2003, Department of Planning and Community Development, 2012, Bushfire Recovery Unit Tasmanian Taskforce, 2013).

There has been a significant number of studies on community recovery investigating the various functions and activities through the lens of the Recovery Taskforce Arrangements.

These studies generally focus on recovery committees and programs, such as health and wellbeing, social activities and groups, and the provision of services (Camilleri et al., 2007, Fielding, 1998, Hickson and Lehmann, 2013, Leadbeater, 2011, McAllan et al., 2011, Rowlands, 2013, Wositzky, 1998). However, a common thread throughout these studies is that they tend to investigate community recovery through the lens of an institutional model or framework of disaster management.

It appears that the principles of community-led approaches and community-led recovery are generally considered within the context of community recovery, with successful recovery described as 'responsive and flexible, engaging communities and empowering them to move forward' (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011, p. 23). Community-led recovery is detailed in the Community Recovery handbook and explains roles and assets that contribute to sustainability and guidelines for approaches. The concepts of sustainable, community, resilience and vulnerability, building resilience and community development are reported as key factors in community recovery (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011).

The preliminary literature review uncovered a scant discussion of the concept community-led. In the context of community development and research, community-led was defined as:

Undertaken, analysed and evidenced by members of the community themselves. It is therefore research OF and BY the community and not, as is traditional, ON and TO the community. This distinction is fundamentally important because in the community-led approach it is the community who define and carry out the research to gather evidence and make recommendations for change (Scottish Community Development Centre, 2015).

In the context of mental health, self-determination is highlighted as an important aspect of an individual's recovery. Parsons (2009), drawing from the work of Deegan (1996), offers the following concept:

Self-determination, or taking responsibility for one's own recovery, is the core component of recovery. Part of that responsibility involves the self-management of wellness...autonomy in one's life choices, and the

willingness to take informed and planned risks in order to grow (cited in Taylor and Goodman, 2014, p. 184).

Deegan (1988) argues 'recovery is not a linear process marked by successive accomplishments', it cannot be manufactured, forced or willed, and the most important ingredient is creating an environment where the recovery process can be nurtured (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, 2013, p. 22). A conceptual model of the recovery process identified four key processes in personal recovery; finding and maintaining hope, re-establishing a positive identity, building a meaningful life and taking responsibility and control (Andresen, Oades and Caputi cited in Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, 2013).

Self-determination is an integral aspect of recovery. It is 'having a sense of personal agency' and feeling in 'control of life' (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, 2013, p. 22). Nerney (2000) offers the following definition of self-determination:

The right of individuals to have full power over their own lives. Self-determination starts with the basic ideas of freedom to design a life plan, authority to control some targeted amounts of resources, support that is highly individualised and opportunities to be a contributing citizen of the community (cited in Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, 2013, p. 35).

People's first language is advocated in mental health recovery paradigms, recovery approaches adopt expressions that capture the lived experience of people and avoid descriptions that represent deficits or relationship to services (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, 2013). It has been conclusively shown that in the disaster literature that the word 'affected' is frequently used to describe individuals, families, households or communities impacted by disaster. For example, affected community, disaster affected people, bushfire affected families, disaster affected audience or Australians affected by disaster (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011, Bennett et al., 2010, Camilleri et al., 2007, Hickson and Lehmann, 2013).

This type of categorisation has the potential to overlook the dignity and capacity of people who experience or survive the disaster (Geale, 2012). Australian policy acknowledges people impacted by disaster should be recognised and where possible interventions should

emphasise empowerment (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011). Whilst emergencies and disaster can impact on the ability to manage, there is one important feature that stands out, in that ‘they allow for meaning by providing clear answers to life’s big question – what are you here for?’ (Golembiewski, 2013). If people can find a way to be meaningfully involved in the disaster response efforts, they can benefit from a whole range of positive outcomes (Golembiewski, 2012, 2013).

A human rights approach underpinning all phases of disaster management can ensure that the dignity of those impacted by the disaster is protected to support the process of moving beyond the event (Human Rights Commission, 2011). People experiencing the emergency and disaster are generally in most danger of not having their needs met (Krolik, 2013). A human rights approach encourages people impacted by disaster to actively participate in identifying and managing the needs and desires of their community. However, this sets up a conflict with a historically held culture of charity or needs framework where community members are passive beneficiaries of donations and services (Krolik, 2013). It appears that knowledge casts a gap between these two cultures ‘the helper’ and ‘the helped’. The power differences may be somewhat reduced through gaining a better understanding of what people, at risk of hazard can do in the context of identifying and managing their needs rather than just identifying what they don’t do or seeing them as victims.

In Australia, it has been previously suggested that it is people who live in rural areas and those on the urban-rural fringes who live with the threat of bushfires, are central to their safety and protection.

The fundamental institution of safety – and of economic protection – are the people themselves. People are blamed for where they live, how they live, what they wear when a fire is about and so on, but the published research effort on how to improve this situation is globally very limited (Handmer, 2003a, p. 147).

2.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter explained and justified the place of the literature review in this grounded theory study. It acknowledges different approaches that related to when, what, how and why. These ideas portray an ambiguous setting for the novice researcher which left me with the feeling

of standing at a crossroad with several signs pointing in different directions (Nagel et al., 2015). My approach considered the literature review required in grounded theory and my respective academic institution requirements. The preliminary literature review indicates the ideas that were studied and how they were put together, which contribute to the study's originality and context. The practise of reflexivity throughout the research process will monitor and guide my 'paradigmatic orientation and experience brought *a priori* to the research project' (Nagel et al., 2015, p. 368). Reflexivity will be explained further in Chapter 4: Method.

The preliminary literature review concentrated on people who reside in places that have been impacted by a disaster, along with varying ideas about their involvement in these types of events. This helped identify different ways of considering human responses to disasters. For example, how disaster is defined as an event in time and space that disrupts or harms society (Fritz and Mathewson, 1957) and a more contemporary idea considered as vulnerability and human capacity to cope (Wisner et al., 2004). Furthermore, the differing ideas about community involvement and how it is recognised within the field of disaster, and the notion of 'clash of cultures' in the different approaches between government and communities. These ideas will be monitored to scrutinise their influence during the research process. The initial literature review studied human involvement in hazards and disasters, however much of the existing research has not offered a psychosocial process that suggests how community members function in hazards and disasters. Therefore, it is timely and important to continue research that offers fresh insights of how residents cope or manage disaster events. The next chapter will introduce and explain the methodology that offered a practical method to help explain or understand community members' involvement in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology. Firstly, the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research process are discussed. It begins by introducing ontology and epistemology, followed by the differing perspectives that operate within these positions, the former objectivism and constructivism, and latter positivism and interpretivism. Symbolic interactionism is then discussed and situated within the theoretical perspective of interpretivism. This includes an explanation of symbolic interactionism, how it offers a theory-method package with a methodology that underpins ConGT. The fourth section looks at the history of grounded theory, explains ConGT and the rationale for this type of qualitative research design. The final section involves positioning myself as the researcher, expounds reflexivity and its use throughout the research process.

3.2 Ontology and Epistemology

The concepts of ontology and epistemology are theories of knowledge. Ontology is concerned with the study of social reality that is what is out there to know whereas epistemology deals with what and how we can know about it (Birks and Mills, 2015, Crotty, 1998, D’Cruz and Jones, 2004, Grix, 2002). Ontological and epistemological issues often tend to merge together, for instance Crotty (1998) says that when we talk about the ‘construction of meaning’ we are also taking into consideration the ‘construction of meaningful reality’ (p. 10). On the contrary, Grix (2002) argues that ‘ontology is wrongly collapsed together with epistemology’ and that ‘whilst they are closely related, they need to be kept separate, for all research necessarily starts from a person’s view of the world, which itself is shaped by the experience one brings to the research process’ (p. 170).

In the building blocks of research, ontology is the starting point of what is out there to know and is closely followed by epistemology which focuses on the theory of knowledge, how we gain knowledge. Our epistemological position, our understanding of the logic of scientific

inquiry or the ways in which knowledge is produced, guides our choice of methodological approach. The methodology is linked to one's research methods, which plays some significance in the process because the most appropriate research method is directed by the research question. 'A researcher's methodological approach, underpinned by and reflecting specific ontological and epistemological assumptions, represents a choice of approach and research methods and assumptions about the ways in which knowledge is produced' (Grix, 2002, p. 179).

According to Hay (2002), 'an individual's ontological position is their 'answer to the question: what is the nature of the social and political reality to be investigated?' (p. 63). Objectivism takes the view 'that things exist as *meaningful* entities independently of consciousness and experience, that they have truth and meaning residing in them as objects' (Crotty, 1998, p. 5). Whereas, qualitative research is based on constructivism which asserts that there is no objective reality and that social phenomena and their meanings are constructed by those people who experience the phenomenon of interest (Grix, 2002 and Kraus, 2005). Crotty (1998) describes constructivism as 'the individual human subject engaging with objects in the world and making sense of them' (p. 79). Constructivism is a social scientific perspective that incorporates subjectivity in how the realities are constructed. For example, when we describe or narrate a reality, we are merely accounting for how something was perceived or reacted to (Crotty, 1998).

Kraus (2005) claims that ontology involves the philosophy of reality, whereas epistemology is a philosophy of knowledge. Epistemology is term derived from the Greek language - *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (reason) (Grix, 2002). Epistemology is 'the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology' (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Interpretivism and positivism are two contrasting epistemological positions that lead to a methodology. Qualitative research is based on interpretivism which concedes that multiple realities exist, meaning lies in cognition and all research is subjective, influenced by the researcher's world view. Quantitative research is underpinned by positivism which assumes that 'the data and its analysis are value-free, observable and measurable, and independent of researcher (Grix, 2002 and Kraus, 2005).

3.3 Theoretical Perspectives

A theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance that lies behind our chosen methodology, it is the logic and criteria that substantiate our view of the social world and how it works (Crotty, 1998). The term paradigm in its sociological use derives from the work of Kuhn (1970). Bryman, (1998) drawing on Kuhn's (1970) work provides a formal definition of paradigm as 'a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted, and so on' (cited in D'Cruz and Jones, 2004, p. 28 & 29). Kuhn claims that the significant changes within science are not a consequence of new data being added or the development of an existing theory, but the radical shifts in the way reality is viewed by scientists (cited in Crotty, 1998).

3.3.1 Positivism and Interpretivism

Positivism and interpretivism are two theoretical perspectives frequently discussed in grounded theory. D'Cruz and Jones (2004) provide an explanation of these, acquired from the 'three paradigms – positivist, interpretivist and feminist (summarized from Peile et al., 1995)' (pp. 51-52).

Assumptions	Positivist	Interpretivist
Ontological	Behaviour can be explained in causal, deterministic ways. It has a mechanistic quality. People are to be manipulated and controlled.	Behaviour is intentional and creative. It can be explained but is not predictable. People shape their reality.
Epistemological	Knowledge arises from experiments and observations. It is grounded in the certainty of sense experience [that we know things through our senses and no other way] with the aim of arriving at universal claims to	Knowledge arises from interpretation and insight and is grounded in empathic communication with the subjects of the research. In-depth interviewing, participant observation and other qualitative methods are used.

	truth. Quantitative methodologies are highly valued.	
Ethical	A separation between knowledge and values. Science produces knowledge. How it is used is a value, ethical or moral question and is outside the concern of science.	Values are the subject of research. Moral or ethical relativism [different values and ethics, rather than absolute or single moral stances].

Table 3. 1: Two paradigms – positivist and interpretivist

Positivism

Although positivism has for many years been attributed to Auguste Comte (1798-1857), there is an established history evident in the writings of Francis Bacon (1561-1626). The term positivism has evolved over time but ‘for many adherents of positive science (‘positivists’, therefore), what is posited or given in direct experience is what is observed, the observation in question being scientific observation carried out by way of the scientific method’ (Crotty, 1998, p. 20). Although this offers quite a definitive meaning to the term there are many variations of positivism (Crotty, 1998). Positivist theorists generally seek causes and explanations that tend to emphasise generalisability and universality. Since the early to mid-1900’s positivism was the dominant epistemological research paradigm, and deemed the social world existed separate from the researcher and could be studied and measured objectively (Gray, 2004). This paradigm assumed:

- Reality consists of what is available to the senses – that is, what can be seen, smelt, touched, etc.
- Inquiry should be based upon scientific observation (as opposed to philosophical speculation), and therefore on empirical inquiry.
- The natural and human sciences share common logical and methodological principles, dealing with facts and not with values (Gray, 2004, p. 18).

Interpretivism

In contrast, interpretivism distances itself from positivism by its approach to social inquiry and claims that the natural and the social reality require differing methods. Interpretivism is a social science that looks for culturally and historically situated interpretations of the social

world. The social sciences deal with the unique meaning and actions of people; the focus of natural science is on consistencies in the data to deduce laws (Gray, 2004). Interpretive sociology tends to focus on the actions and interactions of people and the subjective nature of meaning and actions. The approaches of the differing paradigms would be in the case of the positivist, to seek explanation or make prediction, whereas an interpretivist approach would seek out understanding rather than explanation (Charmaz, 2006).

Our interest in the social world tends to focus on exactly those aspects that are unique, individual and qualitative, whereas our interest in the natural world focuses on more abstract phenomena, that is, those exhibiting quantifiable, empirical regularities (Crotty, 1998, p. 68).

Urquhart and Fernandez (2006) highlight the debate about grounded theory method and the philosophical baggage it carries and how it is influenced by the different underlying epistemologies. There does not appear to be any recommendations that suggest the right epistemology, with various commentators characterising grounded theory as both interpretivist and positivist. In the past, people have found it difficult to place the grounded theory method within their epistemological assumptions. The authors suggest it may be more helpful to move past these debates and recognise grounded theory is a method that helps us build theory (Urquhart and Fernandez, 2006).

As Thomas Kuhn (1962, p.30) said: 'It is a truism that anything is similar to, and also different from, everything else'. A good grounded theory study should be able to point out similarities and differences, and to produce patterns that are particular to the substantive field of the research. Yet, as with any methodology, and indeed any human activity, there are no certainties (Fernandez, 2005, p. 58).

Although there appears to be a dichotomy between positivist and interpretive views, the overall aim of grounded theory is 'to describe, predict, understand, and explain behaviour in ways that help us make sense of our world and that allow us to derive benefits' (Jaccard and Jacoby, 2010, p. 259). The value of an interpretive approach is that it recognises that stories and meanings may change in response to time or context and that meaning-making does not exist independent from the author. 'What becomes important is an understanding of how

meanings are made and how they influence the situation, both from the point of view of the ‘teller’ and the ‘reader’ (Fook, 2002, p. 68).

3.3.2 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism stems from George Herbert Mead (1934), a pragmatist philosopher and social psychologist who taught at the University of Chicago for over 40 years. To understand the position of symbolic interactionism it is important to understand the premise’s it rests upon. Building on Mead’s work, Herbert Blumer (1969) proposed the symbolic interactionism position rested upon three premises:

1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that things have for them.
2. The meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows.
3. These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (cited in Charmaz, 2014, p. 270).

A simplistic and fundamental assumption of Blumer’s symbolic interactionism, is that meaning-making precedes action. The construction of meaning, whether past or current, is achieved through acting. Generally, it is when we are faced with a problematic situation and our ‘taken for granted flow of experience’ is interrupted that we are required to reflect or rethink and take another course of action. During this process, we constantly converse with ourselves and others. This connection is a significant aspect of our collective identities and aligns our values and actions (Charmaz, 2014, p. 271).

Three additional premises by Charmaz (1980) and Snow (2002) clarified and developed Bulmer’s position:

1. Meanings are interpreted through shared language and communication (Charmaz, 1980, pg. 25).
2. The mediation of meaning in social interaction is distinguished by a continually emerging processual nature (Charmaz, 1980, pg. 25).
3. The interpretive process becomes explicit when people’s meaning and/or actions become problematic or their situations change (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 270-271).

Symbolic interactionism makes assumptions about human nature, in that people are social creatures and our ability to communicate with ourselves and others allows us to consider our views and actions, and where necessary align our actions with others. People can interpret information then choose a course of action based on this premise. Furthermore, situation may then be reinterpreted and ultimately lead to another course of action being taken (Charmaz, 2014).

Through their affiliations people learn – and absorb – routine meanings and practices. As life becomes routine, the interpretive process compresses and people engage less in an overt inner conversation to mull over their situation. They are unlikely to change either their practice or meaning unless their situations have become problematic and their habitual responses no longer work (Charmaz, 1989; Snow, 2002) or new, unanticipated situations or opportunities arise (Charmaz, 2014, p. 271).

Symbolic interactionism guides us in the study of the labelling process, it is the social interactions and mechanisms that society uses to participate or interact with in their world. An assumption of symbolic interactionism is that how we label, or name things influences what we know and how we know it. This directs the behaviours or actions we take, therefore 'we act according to how we define the situation' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 272). Naming and knowing is embedded in experience, it is our way of knowing. The only way in recasting or renaming is by changing one's relationship to what has been named which creates an opportunity to challenge and change our thinking, how we feel and our actions (Charmaz, 2014). In social work, critical reflection is a theory and process that involves looking deeply at thoughts, actions and emotions, to unearth and critically challenge individual assumptions about the social world. This process promotes the ability to modify the approaches in relation to social contexts (Fook and Gardener, 2007).

Symbolic interactionism offers the opportunity to combine theory and method in a manner that avoids forcing data and ideas into an established or prescribed set of concepts and harmonises a grounded theory method. Symbolic interactionism can inform the analysis of everyday experiences; whereas grounded theory provides the tools to make theoretical sense. Each can inform and advance the other. A theory-methods package draws our attention to language to understand how it shapes meaning, definition and emotions within our research settings (Charmaz, 2014).

A positive feature of symbolic interactionism is the implications for structural, cultural and societal issues and has a reputation for being on the side of the underdog or a social justice inquiry (Birks and Mills, 2015, Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory has the tools to move social justice studies beyond description, integrating subjective experience with social conditions. 'An interest in social justice means attentiveness to ideas and actions concerning fairness, equity, equality, democratic process, status and hierarchy, and individual and collective rights and obligations' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 326).

3.4 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology where data is used to evolve a theory. Whilst some grounded theorists tend to favour observation of natural settings to let theory emerge, others are more open to employing a range of heuristics or a more hands-on approach to evolve theory (Jaccard and Jacoby, 2010).

As Morse (2009) points out, grounded theory is not something that is 'performed' by different researchers in exactly the same way; every researcher will need to tailor the approach to suit their particular research purpose. This means that every researcher will generate their own version of grounded theory methodology in the process of conducting the research. And this, of course, is entirely in keeping with the spirit of grounded theory!' (Willig, 2013, p. 75).

3.4.1 History of Grounded Theory

It is important to acknowledge the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), Glaser (1978, 1992), Strauss (1987), Strauss & Corbin (1990, 1994, 1998), Charmaz (1995, 2000, 2014) and Clarke (2005). It seems that the collective works compiled by these authors are deemed seminal texts for their originality and contribution to grounded theory. This prestige was based on the citation rate of scholarly opinion (Birks and Mills, 2015).

The historical development of grounded theory flows through the currents of social scientific inquiry, seemingly through the tension between quantitative and qualitative research. Grounded theory was first developed in the 1960's by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss.

Glaser defined grounded theory as '*a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area*' (Glaser, 1992, p. 16).

In the 1960's, sociologists Glaser and Strauss conducted a qualitative inquiry on death and dying, they constructed their analysis on a set of strategies that were first articulated in their publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research in 1967*. The body of work by these authors was known as classical or traditional Glaserian, or evolved Straussian and by the 1980's both Glaser and Strauss had taken grounded theory in slightly different directions. However, many of the grounded theory principles have been attributed to Glaser, who has remained very consistent in his approach (cited in Charmaz, 2014).

It has been suggested by Birks and Mills (2015) that a major criticism of the early grounded theorists was that there was very little written about the grounded theory as a methodology, with attention directed on method. This gap was later rectified by Corbin and Strauss (2008) who presented the philosophical underpinnings of grounded theory method as symbolic interactionism and pragmatism. Glaser dismissed the applicability of a philosophical position and argued that focusing on method is what constituted a grounded theory. Glaser believed that by adopting a philosophical position it would decrease the potential of grounded theory.

By the 1990's grounded theory had gained a level of acceptance within the domain of quantitative research for its usefulness, rigour and positivistic assumptions which made it a valuable tool for projects requiring mixed methods. Another significant change during this period included the constructivist turn, with grounded theory moving away from positivism. Postmodern and narrative critics challenged the grounded theory method because of its outdated modernist epistemology. The assumptions of an objective external reality were challenged by claims that the authoritative voice of the researcher fragmented the stories of the people participating in the research. The method failed to account for the researcher's position, perspectives and interactions that play a part in the research reality or the interplay that occurs within a situation that is relative to context and time. This period in grounded theory has been identified as the constructivist turn, theory is viewed as constructed and the method requires a series of strategies. A significant strategy in ConGT is the use of reflexivity which illustrates theoretical sensitivity, it accounts for the researcher's decision-making and actions (Charmaz, 2014).

Evans (2013) provides a valuable insight into the confusing world of grounded theory in his rationale for using a classical grounded theory methodology. It is suggested that 'method mixing' or 'theory slurring' can occur in grounded theory, when little reference is made to explain the distinction between the different grounded theory models. The author highlighted the differing coding methods, for example; classic grounded theory (CGT) has two types of coding, substantive and theoretical, the former fractures and analyses, the latter selective coding to saturate core categories. Whereas constructivist grounded theory uses three types of coding, initial, focused and theoretical, and has an inductive-deductive method, with deduction occurring on the emerging ideas. The difference between CGT and ConGT relates to how concepts develop: one model proposes that concepts are discovered, the other, that they are constructed (Evans, 2013). ConGT coding will be illustrated in greater detail in Chapter 4: Method.

Nagel et al. (2015) discuss some of the challenges a novice researcher may encounter when navigating grounded theory. They draw attention to the amount of diversity in approaches and lack of congruity in the description and understanding of the grounded theory methodology. For example, there is a lack of (1) consensus on epistemology and ontology across the grounded theory traditions, (2) clarity in the methods and procedures, and (3) road maps. These authors consider that when the landscape (grounded theory, constructivist grounded theory, educational institutions and committees) does not provide clear directions and is ambiguous, it can be likened to standing at the cross roads (Nagel et al., 2015). Anecdotally, the phrase 'the best way to learn grounded theory is by doing it' is used to reassure novice grounded theorist researchers of the value of experiential learning. As novice researcher, it is important to select a grounded theory approach that suits one's philosophical position; understanding and analytical skills will develop in the process of involvement (Heath and Cowley, 2004).

Suddaby (2006) suggests that there is a growing divide between those who carry out grounded theory and those who write about it. The pragmatic core of grounded theory was a practical approach that would 'help researchers understand a complex social process. It was also designed as a method that might occupy a pragmatic middle ground between some slippery epistemological boundaries' (p. 638). The techniques are inherently messy, and it is not easy, with many of the techniques being developmental. It is an interpretive approach where the quality of its application develops with experience (Suddaby, 2006).

3.4.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory

Historically grounded theory has engaged with 'what', 'how' and 'why' questions. According to Charmaz (2008) most qualitative research has not answered the 'why' questions that generally rest with a positivist inquiry. The term grounded theory 'refers to both the research product and the analytic method of producing it' (p. 397). A social constructionist approach assists the involvement of 'why' questions. Where a constructionist grounded theorist attends to the what and how, the objectivist grounded theorist has its genealogy in positivism, aiming to attend to the why questions. The differing emphases that are not entirely mutually exclusive, attend to the understanding and explanation. Glaser and Strauss adopted a limited form of social constructionism, however 'their research reports emphasized generality, not relativity and objectivity, not reflexivity' (Charmaz, 2008, p. 399). The difference between constructionism and social constructionism is 'that one has an individual focus and the other a social focus on the world' (Evans, 2013, p. 45).

As indicated earlier, the postmodern theorists challenged the assumptions of CGT methods which 'spurred efforts to reclaim its strategies for social constructionist inquiry' (Charmaz, 2008, p. 401). To differentiate between objectivist and constructionist methods, it appears the former assumes a single reality in that the data is self-evident and there is an aim to generalise through abstractions. A constructionist's method assumes reality is multiple, processual and constructed, and that it occurs under the specific conditions. When applying this to practice, the interactions and positionality of both the researcher and research participants are considered, therefore, the research and reality are co-constructed (Charmaz, 2008). Constructionists aim for interpretive understandings of the studied phenomenon in the given context rather than an explanation. The constructionist approach requires the researcher to critically examine 'their construction of the research process as they seek to analyse how their research participants construct their lives (Charmaz, 2006)', advancing the objectivist approach by actively analysing their influence (Charmaz, 2008, pp. 402-403).

Charmaz (2014) coined the term constructivist grounded theory 'to acknowledge the subjectivity and the researcher's involvement in the construction and interpretation of data and to signal the differences between' her approach and the traditional social constructionism of the 1980's and early 1990s (p. 14). A more distinct feature of ConGT is that it treats research as a construction but recognises 'it occurs under specific conditions – of which we may not be aware and which may not be our choosing' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 13).

Constructivist grounded theory is defined as:

A contemporary version of grounded theory that adopts methodological strategies such as coding, memo-writing, and theoretical sampling of the original statement of the method but shifts its epistemological foundations and takes into account methodological development in qualitative inquiry occurring over the past fifty years (Charmaz, 2014, p. 342).

Charmaz (2008) highlights the four principles essential for a constructivist grounded theorist to reflect in practice. These are summarised as:

- 'treat the research process *itself* as a social construction' – 'responding to emergent questions, new insights and further information and simultaneously constructing *the method of analysis*, as well as the analysis';
- 'scrutinize research decisions and directions' – 'think through what they are doing and how and why they are doing it', reflexivity is essential to this revision and leads to,
- 'improvise methodological and analytic strategies throughout the research process'; and
- 'collect sufficient data to discern and document how research participants construct their lives and worlds' – 'to understand how research participants construct their world, researchers need to know that world' (p. 403).

A significant aspect of the constructivist approach to grounded theory is that researchers who adopt this approach, study how and sometimes why, while looking at how people view their situation. It is the theorising and interpretive work of people which results in a theory; interpretation developed from the researcher's view. The research reality is a situation that encompasses all the differing contextual and time realities; typically, the multiple realities, interactions, positions, beliefs and values (Charmaz, 2014).

The data that is collected will influence which phenomena the researcher sees and how they make sense of it. It is the process of coding that provides theoretical foundation of a conceptual infrastructure that integrates the participant's narrative. The process involves choosing words that constitute capturing our view of someone else's reality, thus we identify what we see as important, focussing on what people may say, and when and how they might say it in the coding process (Charmaz, 2006). During the analysis, the researcher interacts closely and delves deeply into the data, becoming familiar with the participants' perceptions

of the situation. Language is utilised to describe human experience and meaning, through observed realities. The coding process provides the opportunity to look at the data in another way and minimises the risk of the student researcher influencing the data with their own personal values and beliefs.

A ConGT emphasis is on studying processes, what people are doing to understand their actions and moving away from static analysis.

These layers could include a person's (1) stated explanation of his or her action, (2) unstated assumptions about it, (3) intentions for engaging in it, (4) effects on others, and (5) consequences for further individual action and interpersonal relations. Throughout the research process, look at action in relation to meaning to help you obtain thick description and develop your categories (Charmaz, 2015, p. 64).

Within a constructivist paradigm there is the belief that there are many truths and realities, and that people construct meaning from their own experiences, perceptions and desires, in the context of their environment. Therefore, it is important to remain open to all possible understandings and retain a level of openness and curiosity about the world. People construct data and though we may treat documents, stories, reports data, texts, historical records as facts, however it must be understood that these have been constructed by individuals (Charmaz, 2014).

As highlighted earlier, it is important to understand that all research starts with a person's view of the world because it shapes the whole research process. 'It is our ontological and epistemological positions that shape the very questions we might ask in the first place, how we pose them and how we set about answering them' (Grix, 2002, p. 179). In this study, the research question guided my decision to choose a grounded theory method and my ontological (constructivism) and epistemological (interpretivism) positions aligned with Charmaz's methodological approach Constructivist Grounded Theory.

3.4.3 What constitutes a Grounded Theory?

Fook and Gardener (2007) claim theories offer an account of what happens, the actions, process and meaning, and the relationships of the what, how and why that constructs these

accounts. 'Theories can vary between a single concept or idea or major set of interrelated concepts' and in type, 'one more a 'bottom-up test' of relevance and the other more a 'top down' test of applicability. One illuminates, the other helps predict' (Fook, 2002, p. 38).

The positivist objectives of theory include explanation and prediction, whereas interpretive definition emphasis is on interpretation and gives abstract understanding a much greater priority than explanation (Charmaz, 2008). Charmaz (2014) claims that 'constructivist grounded theorists aim for abstract understanding of studied life and view their analyses as located in time, place, and the situation of inquiry' (p. 342). Differentiating between formal and substantive theory, the former crosses across several substantive areas, whereas substantive is a 'theoretical interpretation or explanation of a delimited problem in a particular area, such as family relationships, formal organizations, or education' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 344).

Charmaz (2014) offers a summary of varied assumptions of what constitutes a theory in grounded theory: '1) an empirical generalization, 2) a category or core variable, 3) a predisposition, 4) an explanation of a process, 5) a relationship between variables, 6) an explanation, 7) an abstract understanding, and/or 8) a description' (p. 241). The author highlights five crucial points that grounded theory critics often miss about the method '(1) theorizing is an ongoing activity; 2) grounded theory methods provide constructive ways to proceed this activity; 3) the method involves abduction as well as induction; 4) the research problem and the researcher's unfolding interests can shape the *content* of theorizing, rather than the method presupposing the content; and 5) the products of theorizing reflect how the researcher acted on these points' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 244).

3.5 Positioning self

It was my world view that influenced what I thought needed to be researched and how knowledge is gathered and developed. My research question guided me towards a group of people who identified as community members and had been directly impacted by a bushfire disaster. I chose to concentrate on one disaster event and employ procedures that would gain a rich understanding of a community's response of surviving a bushfire disaster.

A critical feature of constructivist grounded theory requires the researcher to consider their own starting or standpoint and openly acknowledge preceding personal and professional

experience that influences their perspective or lens (McGhee et al., 2007). Research is a shared reality, it develops through the relationship or interaction between the viewer and viewed (Ramalho et al., 2015).

All research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Some beliefs may be taken for granted, invisible, only assumed, whereas others are highly problematic and controversial. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:22) (cited in Birks and Mills, 2015, p. 9).

My personal experience of a bushfire disaster and disciplinary background in social work in rural and remote settings, motivated my interest to focus on people who live in rural communities and their experience of a bushfire disaster. However, this represents only a small part of who I am, when I was born, my age, gender, beliefs, values, childhood, social roles, and life experiences all play a part in how I look at the world. Rather than talk about these features to illustrate my standpoint I offer an incident to help understand my perspective. As a social worker, my direct practice has involved working with people living in rural and remote areas, both individually and collectively to resolve or manage some of the many difficulties, problems and concerns that can occur with life. In early 2000, whilst driving to work I noticed that the Eaglehawk Neck community hall was on fire. Initially, I felt a great desire to act, run in, find a bucket or hose and help the fire brigade put out the fire, later I had thoughts about leading the rebuild. These feelings were aroused by my knowledge that the building had great significance for the community, it was the town's only meeting place and many hours had been devoted to its care. It took considerable effort for me to stand still, just for a moment, to recognise what was transpiring. The local volunteer fire brigade had the situation under control and there appeared to be little need for me to be there. A little later in the morning, after fielding some phone calls from concerned locals; I contacted a committee member to offer my support and discovered that the committee had gathered together. I learnt that they were sitting at the kitchen table, providing support and inspiration to each other, and a plan to rebuild was developing. Within 12 months, the community hall was rebuilt, primarily through the community efforts. This is one of many stories that recognised adversity and resilience in rural communities, and the value of a community development approach.

In summary, a great deal of my standpoint for this research is gained through the lens of my social work experience. My practice is informed by a human rights and social justice perspective. As a critical thinker I have an interest in how social systems work, I feel that it is important to understand how these systems might sustain benefit whilst at the same time dominate or marginalise some individuals, groups or communities in world. I dispute the idea that there is an objective truth and feel that subjectivity is central in the process of helping understand that there are multiple truths. I advocate the importance of listening, validating, and respectfully including the experiences of those people who may be for one reason or another be vulnerable or marginalised or silenced in the knowledge narrative.

3.5.1 Reflexivity

To respect diversity allows for new and inclusive ways of working by asking questions such as; who are the legitimate generators of knowledge? And whose knowledge is more important? Understanding how difference is constructed, knowledge is produced and the structures it sits in, allows for possibilities of new perspectives, empowerment and some flexibility in the representations of complexity in human life (Fook, 2002).

To position myself in the context of the relationship between the knower and what is known, requires a level of critical awareness, knowing that knowledge is constructed through the interaction of multiple realities attached to the phenomenon (Kraus, 2005). Fook (2002) argues 'whatever group controls the way things are seen in some ways also has the power to control the way things are. Whoever's interpretation gets accepted will doubtless control how the idea is enacted' (p. 37). For example, categorising can feed and maintain the dominant discourse, and in that process might silence or ignore 'the wealth of diverse meanings, experiences, and identities to be represented in our discourse' (Fook, 2002, p. 13). It is important to know that 'controlling the processes of what knowledge counts as professional knowledge, how it is made and how it is communicated' contributes to maintaining social dimensions of dominance or position (Fook, 2002 pg. 37). A postmodern discourse recognises there are many ways of knowing and that we as knowers, can 'participate in creating and generating the knowledge we use, and an appreciation of how knowledge is therefore contingent upon the holistic context in which it is created' (Fook, 2002, p. 41).

Research is a social process, therefore being aware of the differing ways of knowing is critical in understanding that what we know and how we know influences our actions. Therefore, an important element to be considered in differing ways of knowing is our connection to the realm of knowledge and locating ourselves in that space (D’Cruz and Jones, 2004). A critical reflective approach utilises the principles of critical theory, linking personal experience to the analysis of power, theory to practice and values the many ways of knowing and how people change themselves in relation social context and structure (Fook and Gardener, 2007).

The process of being able to locate oneself in the picture, understand how your presence and perspective influences knowledge and actions is a postmodern and critical approach utilised in social work practice. ‘Reflexivity can simply be defined as an ability to recognize our own influence - and the influence of our social and cultural contexts on research, the type of knowledge we create, and the way we create it (Fook 1999b)’ (White et al., 2006, p. 45). The process of reflexivity has been likened to a knee jerk, tapping the knee sends nerve impulses (information) to the spinal cord (mind) then returns to the knee producing a jerk (reaction) (McGhee et al., 2007). Reflexivity is an integral component of this PhD research project (see Appendix 2: Reflexivity Framework).

3.5.2 Assumptions

The assumptions listed below were recorded in my journal on 11 August 2015. This statement reflects some of my ideas about the research topic prior the commencement of data generation and analysis.

- The community’s efforts in emergencies and disaster are often overlooked in the broader response.
- Community approaches should be recognised in all phases of disaster management.
- Community-led recovery is a social concept manufactured by a bureaucracy.
- Community-led approach to disaster recovery is recognised in policy but different in practice.

These assumptions needed to be monitored throughout the research process using reflexivity.

3.6 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and data sources, as well as their interrelationship in the research process. I explained the theory of knowledge and how it is embedded in theoretical perspective. Interpretivism, the philosophical stance that lies behind my methodology, provides the logic and criteria that substantiate my lens on the social world and how it works. This theoretical perspective has a close relationship with constructivism and is attentive to understanding the actions and interactions of people and the subjective meaning connected to those behaviours. Symbolic interactionism tenders the opportunity to combine theory and method by informing the analysis of everyday experiences. Grounded theory provides the tools to make theoretical sense; it is the theorising and interpretive work of people which results in a theory.

I introduced the qualitative research chosen for this study. Constructivist grounded theory was chosen because it offered a practical method of understanding community members involvement in a bushfire disaster event. A constructivist approach to this social inquiry and analysis informs the way the research is carried out and how the data is viewed. The method recommends that 'we will do well to listen' (Crotty, 1998, p. 65). The methodology signified the comparable positions between constructivist research and social work. For instance, my social work position reflects the contextual nature of reality, interactive nature of knowing, differing perspectives required to make logic or meaning, and the tentative nature of knowledge (Fook, 2002). Finally, ConGT authenticated my position and influence as a researcher, the interpretive nature of the study allowed for reflexivity therefore my experience of the bushfire event and standpoint is made visible. The subsequent chapter will introduce the research setting followed by the research method.

CHAPTER FOUR: PLACE, PEOPLE AND PARTICIPANTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the methodology which leads to the research setting where the fresh insights into the realities of those people involved in the bushfire disaster rest. The first section briefly sketches the research landscape with acknowledgement of country leading to a brief historical journey from the European settlement in the early 1800's through to the regional municipalities of today (2017). This historical journey incorporates a summary of the history of fire in Tasmania, historical narratives from local identities and demographic data. An interpretive portrayal of the small communities that were significantly impacted by the bushfire disaster is also presented. The final section introduces the research participants.

4.2 Sketching the Landscape

Acknowledgement of Country

Shakespeare (2004) pertinently portrays Tasmania's exceptional beauty, remoteness and very dark past in his book 'In Tasmania' and more recently this tragic history has been referred to in 'The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania' by Lawson (2014). This novel describes the sad history where the Tasmanian Aboriginal people were nearly wiped out in the nineteenth century. The members of the Oyster Bay tribe known as the Pydairrme group are the earliest inhabitants of the Forrester Peninsula in southeast Tasmania. This group of Aboriginal people spent their time on the coast during the colder seasons and then journeyed up the east coast towards the midlands and central highlands when the seasons became warmer. In Tasmania for more than 35,000 years prior to European settlement, the Aboriginal people lived with a 'well developed cultural and social structure which utilised natural food sources in a sustainable manner' (Dunbabin, 2017, p. 3). Today, there are numerous shell middens located along the coastline that remind us of their traditional lifestyle.

European Settlement

In 1642, after a harrowing trip around the Tasman Peninsula, Abel Tasman's expedition anchored off the shores of the Forestier Peninsula for a short time. Whilst anchored and exploring the shoreline for food, the crew noticed smoke and signs of human occupancy. On 3 December 1642, a Dutch flag was hoisted on the terra firma of Forestier Peninsula, the act recalled in the name Tasman Peninsula. After a brief visit Tasman and his expedition left for New Zealand. This was the only place in what is now known as Tasmania that Abel Tasman landed during their entire voyage, the shores were not visited by Europeans again until 1772 (Dunbabin, 2017). In the present day the Tasman monument is located near the Dunalley Waterfront Café commemorating Abel Tasman's visit in 1642.

Tasmanian Bushfire History

Fire has been an integral feature of the ecosystem, and used by Aboriginal Tasmanians for land management, hunting and biodiversity (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a). Since European settlement in the early 1800's there have been significant bushfire events in Tasmania and historical accounts of fire in Tasmania suggest early settlers were often unfamiliar with the conditions that contributed to the spread of fire (McNeice, 2006). Fire hazards were not isolated to the state of Tasmania. In South Australia the Lieutenant Governor introduced a Bush Fires Act in 1854 to 'make provisions against the danger of Bush and other fires' at certain times of the year (State Government of South Australia, 1854, p. 99).

Bush Fires Act (No 14 of 18, Vic, 1854)

1. No fire shall be lighted for the burning of stubble, hay, or grass between the first day of December and the fifteenth day of March, unless between the hours of six and ten in the afternoon (State Government of South Australia, 1854, p. 99).

In Tasmania, a large bushfire burnt in the Huon and Port Cygnet areas in 1854 and in the summer of 1897, fires burnt in and around the Hobart area. Many people died, homes were destroyed and there was extensive damage to property and infrastructure (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a).

Copping is situated in the Sorell municipality, it was impacted by the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. Current local resident, Barry Featherstone was born in Copping and his

family were early settlers in the area. Early European settlers often had small acreages with a few animals and vegetable gardens, nevertheless to survive, many men were required to work away in sawmills. Barry recalls a story he read in the Mercury newspaper where a journalist travelled to Copping on the mail coach in the early 1900's to write an article on a bushfire. Barry claims that:

About the tenth of June 1908 a big bushfire came through here cleaned everything out burnt right to the water...Simon Brown he took a land grant originally 15 acres....Anyway they cleared that land and built a little house there and that sort of thing. Well the day the fires came through, it burnt the cow's udders and burnt his spud crop, yeah, anyway, they saved the little house they had there the people from down here, they must have come up and helped them apparently in this article, and because that is how they lived. There were no handouts in them days they had to live on what they produced so the people of the district virtually gave them a hand out (B Featherstone 2015, pers. comm., 17 August 2015).

The 1967 bushfire in southern Tasmania, commonly referred to as the '67 fire', was deemed one of the worst bushfire events in Australia's history. The bushfire impacted significantly on Hobart and the adjacent areas. By midmorning on 7 Feb 1967, there were more than 100 fires burning across southern Tasmania. 62 people died and a further 900 were injured with about 1,400 homes and 128 other buildings destroyed. This disaster severely disrupted communication and power facilities, damaged farms and pastures, and caused stock losses. The resemblances of the 1967 bushfires have been compared to the fire event experienced on 4 January 2013. The similarities included the catastrophic conditions, fire authorities dealing with many fires at one time and the fires travelling to rural and seaside towns (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2013a).

Tasman and Sorell municipality

In 1827 Governor George Arthur instigated the building of penitentiary at Port Arthur on the Tasman Peninsula and the first convicts arrived by boat in the 1830's. The Port Arthur penal colony influenced the establishment of the small settlements bordering the Tasman Peninsula. The land supplied food for the penal settlement and the shoreline offered vantage points for whale spotting by the local whaling industry. The Dunalley canal almost separates the Sorell and Forestier Peninsula and is located near the boundaries of the Tasman

Peninsula municipality. Prior to the construction of the canal, to avoid the treacherous waters surrounding the Tasman Peninsula boats were hauled across the narrow piece of land (Dunbabin, 2017, Tasman, 2017).

George Whitehouse, known as the local historian, was born and raised in the area. George recalls the history of moving boats across the isthmus prior to the canal being built:

Dunalley was originally East Bay Neck because they had a guard on the neck there, when the Port Arthur Penal settlement functioned... Anyway, the East Bay Neck Guard there, they had a causeway, they call it a causeway, but I suppose a set of plywoods running out into the water on either side of the isthmus. And when they were, these officials I mean, when the officials were heading north to Maria Island and coming south from Maria Island going back to Hobart town, there would be a long boat maybe two long boats that would be crewed by convicts with oars, possibly had a mast and sail, but anyway I am not sure. They would have the convicts pull the long boats over the isthmus, up onto the logs, over the ground and then back into the water, on the other side and off they went (G Whitehouse 2015, pers. comm., 17 August 2015).

The Denison canal was built to improve maritime transport and to avoid the long and often treacherous trip around the Tasman Peninsula. It was officially opened in the 1830's. The canal is mainly used for smaller craft these days due the difficulty in keeping it dredged. Over summer holidays when travelling to and from the Tasman Peninsula vehicles are often kept waiting at the canal bridge, whilst boats make their passage through the canal.

An estimated 280,000 people visit the Port Arthur Historic Site annually, travelling through Copping, Dunalley and Murdunna (Tasman, 2017). The number of holiday makers increases significantly during summer with intrastate and shack owners spending time at the Tasman Peninsula, Marion Bay and Connellys Marsh. Dunalley is almost half way between Hobart and Port Arthur and offers a stopping point, with public amenities and cafes (Sorell Council and Riley, 2013).

The Sorell Municipality area is 583 square kilometres, situated southeast of Hobart in Tasmania. In 2011, the population was 13,194. The main employment by occupation for the

Sorell municipality was health care and social assistance (687), retail trade (675), public administration and safety (633). The labour force status for males employed were 2,293 and unemployed 228, females employed 2,861 and unemployed 193 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011h).

The Tasman Municipality area is 660 square kilometres and encompasses the Forestier Peninsula. In 2011, the population was 2,355. The main industry of employment for the Tasman municipality was agriculture, forestry and fishing (133), accommodation and food services (121), and arts and recreational services (94). The labour force status for males employed were 461 and unemployed 49, females employed 398 and unemployed 28. The Tasman municipality is more remote than Sorell. This is evident in income with the Sorell municipality median total household income \$949 whereas the Tasman municipality income being \$683. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011g).

4.3 Appreciating the Communities

This section introduces the communities that were significantly affected by the fire. Whilst Murdunna is situated on the Forestier Peninsula it is included in the local government area of Tasman. The other towns recorded are situated in the Sorell municipality. In between these towns many resident's homes nestled along the Arthur Highway were also threatened, damaged or destroyed by the fire. The table below provides demographic data pertaining to the towns in the research setting from ABS census (2011) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011g, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011h). The dwellings unoccupied were not occupied full time, therefore likely to be holiday shacks.

Area	Medium Age	Weekly income	Employment	Unemployment	Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander	Dwellings Occupied Unoccupied
Boomer Bay (Marion Bay)	48	\$736	46.7%	13.3%	7.5%	O80 U40
Copping (Kellevie)	40	\$831	51.9%	9.6%	1.7%	O153 U29
Connellys Marsh	47	\$1104	56.6%	5.6%	3.3%	O69 U44
Dunalley	49	\$842	47.6%	9.5%	6.6%	O117 U40
Forcett	40	\$1,152	33.5%	7.2%	4.6%	O215 U21
Murdunna	47	\$711	45.2%	7.4%	4.5%	O 147 U 204
Tasmania	40	\$948	54.5%	6.4%	4.0%	

Table 4. 1: Demographic data of communities

On Thursday 3 January 2013 the Regional Fire Operations Centre determined that the fire incident at Inala Road Forcett fire had the potential to be greater than the local resources available to combat it. The main concern of Andrew Skelly, the Acting District Officer of the East Coast District, was the Inala Road fire and its potential to threaten homes located near Inala Road, Gangells Road, Kellevie Road and Copping. On Friday about lunchtime the fire jumped the Arthur Highway and was heading towards Dunalley. Copping was the first town situated in the path of the fire (Tasmanian Fire Service, 2013).

Copping

Copping's population of 417 includes the Kellevie area (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011d). A statue of a police officer waving situated at the Vines and Designs Café and Museum captured the attention of people travelling through the Copping township. Many travellers turn left at Copping to make their way to the Marion Bay Falls Festival each year. Approximately 12,000 music goers celebrate the New Year in the picturesque setting of Marion Bay.

The township of Copping – with its rich agricultural history – is closely connected to the little communities of Bream Creek and Kellevie. Bream Creek showgrounds host the monthly Bream Creek farmers market showcasing local harvest and wares and is the meeting place for many residents and visitors from outside the area. The name Copping is linked to Captain Copping, a seafaring man who took residence at Rochford Hall in Kellevie in the mid to late 1800's. Local lore suggests that Copping was named upper Carlton then later Coppington, but the 'ton' was dropped sometime prior to 1930. The fire destroyed and damaged dwellings and property on the outskirts of Copping as it moved towards the tiny settlements of Boomer Bay, Connellys Marsh and the township of Dunalley.

Boomer Bay

Boomer Bay is nestled alongside Blackman Bay. The population of 199 includes the Marion Bay community (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a). Boomer Bay has for a long time been regarded by some residents a part of Dunalley. It is situated northeast of the Arthur Highway about 3.4 km from the township of Dunalley. A talking point for many travellers is the large castle on the isthmus named Boomer Island in Blackman Bay, this castle was built and owned by Gunter Jaeger. The Boomer Bay area has gained recognition through the efforts of the Daly family who run a potato farm producing gourmet potatoes and more recently Hellfire Bluff vodka. There were three oyster farms situated along the road that runs through Boomer Bay leading to Marion Bay. In the 2013 bushfire disaster two of the oyster farms were destroyed.

The Boomer Bay settlement cascades down to a popular boat jetty where watercraft can access the bay or ocean via a channel known to the surfing community as the Boneyard. People evacuated to the Boomer Bay jetty and surrounding car park during the firestorm. Residents, Jock and Del were airlifted to safety from the jetty whilst the fire was raging through Boomer Bay. They claimed that the helicopter pilot required guidance when landing and take-off due to the smoke affecting visibility and the overhead power lines (ABC Radio, 2013).

Dunalley

The hill behind Dunalley is often referred to locally as 'Africa' due to the small cleared patch of terrain resembling the shape of the African continent. According to local lore a family lived there in days gone by, remnants of the hand built stone fences were still visible after the bushfire. The hill was burnt regularly by its owner then this practice ceased in the 1990's.

The Kelly's sawmill was a family owned business located at the base of Africa on the north-western edge of Dunalley. The local sawmill manufactured and supplied hardwood and high-quality kiln dried timber direct to the public and to wholesalers. The sawmill, a source of employment in the local area and 'one of five major operators in the southern region of Tasmania', was destroyed in the bushfire disaster and not rebuilt (Sorell Council and Riley, 2013, p. 12).

Africa provides a sweeping view of Dunalley, the bays and Denison canal. The Denison canal that connects Blackman and Frederick Henry Bays almost separates the municipalities of Sorell and Tasman. The waterways were no match for the force of the firestorm. Flames were airborne and fast-moving, and embers still alight travelled across the canal and bays. The bridge over the canal had been problematic the previous week. The bridge operators resorted to manually shutting the bridge by towing it. If it jammed open, vehicles could not use the road. During the emergency, the local police officer had the foresight to contact the bridge operator and 'gave them crystal clear instructions that the bridge remains closed until further notice' (Tasmanian Fire Service, 2013, p. 9).

The Dunalley Hall was built in 1898 and the primary school in 1885. These buildings along with the Return Services League (RSL) building and police station were destroyed in the bushfire. Dunalley was situated in the main path of the firestorm which destroyed or damaged a considerable number of dwellings and other structures.

Dunalley is within a 50-minute drive of Hobart and has a population of 274 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011c). It is one of the largest rural towns in the Sorell Municipality and provides a range of services to the neighbouring communities and the outlying settlements and homes, sprinkled along Marion Bay Road, Arthur Highway and Fulham Road (Sorell Council and Riley, 2013).

Connellys Marsh

With its population of 179 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011b) Connellys Marsh is a small settlement with permanent residences sheltered on the edge of Frederick Henry Bay. It is a popular recreation destination for Tasmanians and the existing holiday homes are generally part of a long line of generational ownership. George Burrill believes Connellys Marsh has not changed much over the years other than the addition of a few more permanent residents and fewer fish caught. Geoff purchased his shack in 1968. He is unsure when Connellys

Marsh was first established but could recall his 90-year-old cousin talking about his visits as a young person. The Burrill's have fond memories of their holidays at Connellys Marsh (G Burrill 2015, pers. comm., 6 October 2015). In 1975 when the bulk carrier, Lake Illawarra, crashed into two pylons of the Tasman Bridge, Hobart was cut in two, however the family's holidays continued (City of Clarence, 2012). The Burrill family caught the ferry at Bellerive wharf to travel to Hobart for work and other activities.

When the bridge went down, you had to catch the ferry and go across. I remember one holiday, I must've been doing piano lessons, and remember having to go up and get the ferry to go to piano lessons and come back down (J Burrill, pers. comm., 6 October 2015).

The Burrill family lost their shack in the bushfire and rebuilt a more modern holiday home to continue the family tradition (G Burrill, pers. comm., 6 October 2015). Approximately twenty-four dwellings were destroyed or significantly damaged. Sloping Island can be seen from Connellys Marsh. Three other small islands, Fulham, Smooth and King George Islands are a part of the Sloping Island group situated close to the southeast coast of Tasmania. These small islands provided shelter for many who evacuated in their boats during the fire, King George Island is only a few kilometres from Murdunna.

Murdunna

It would be easy to drive through Murdunna when travelling to Port Arthur and notice a few homes, general store and the newly built playground in the rest area. Murdunna is believed to be the aboriginal word for 'place in the stars' (Geocaching, 2012). Murdunna had a post office from 1910 until its closure in 1969, and a state school between 1912 and 1948. Murdunna has a population of 357 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011e) and is approximately one hour from Hobart. This appears for a growing number of residents to be an acceptable distance to commute daily to Hobart for work.

A right turn at the general store leads along Sommers Bay Road. Many dwellings situated along the road are occupied by permanent residents and shack owners overlooking Norfolk Bay. Sommers Bay Road meanders about 5 km west to the coastal holiday settlement of Sommers Bay, an area known for its picturesque coastline and is a popular spot for holiday makers and fishing enthusiasts. During the firestorm, locals reported 'balls' of fire or flame travelling across the neck of the bay. Approximately fifty dwellings were destroyed or

damaged, predominately along Arthur Highway between Dunalley and Murdunna and one large section on Sommers Bay Road.

People representative of these rural townships, and others proffer fresh insights of their lived experience of a bushfire disaster. These insights will help understand how they managed or dealt with this problematic situation, and what was important in that process.

4.4 Participant Profile

Characterising the participants

The study topic encapsulates the word 'community' when seeking to understand resident's involvement in the bushfire disaster. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, there are numerous characterisations that define or distinguish people impacted by disasters. The term community is beleaguered with a diversity of meanings, 'many of which carry strong ideological connotations' (Kenny, 1994, p. 8). In Australia, research has recognised that (1) people deeply value relationships and friendships, (2) in small rural towns people will generally know each other, and (3) modern social processes are influencing the way the community is produced (Hughes et al., 2007). Fairbrother et al. (2013) claim that community is a contested concept with its definition repeatedly challenged in three central ways. Since the 1980's, it has been redefined as imagined, symbolised and subjective.

In this study participants identified their community status in their story telling or accounts of the bushfire disaster. The following verbatim excerpts illustrate the multiple standpoints participants used to acknowledge, distinguish or recognise their classification or meaning of community.

Participant 12: Community member

A participant identified them self as a part of community, based on their claim of knowing their local community.

12. You could say that they are either at Nubeena or they were still in the residence's or in the community and I think that was the situation. I mean I knew our community of Murdunna (A1106).

(A1106 – August Interview, number 106)

Participant 18: Community member

This participant described the township of Dunalley as a place they call home. Their status defined by place and lineages.

18. Home is not the house, home is Dunalley. So, it is [name] dad, mum and dad have been here all their lives, home's just not the house, it's Dunalley (A1110).

Participants 28 and 29: Community members

These two participants were new to the area prior to the bushfires. They recognised it would take time to be accepted in a rural community but felt the bushfire event sped the process up.

28. Because of the fire, we know a lot more people now. It's actually sped up the process of actually becoming involved. You know becoming being accepted by community, so in that sense it's a positive thing 29. Yes, bizarrely enough (A1117).

Participant 11: Local government representative

This participant had an allocated role in the disaster management and perceived their position to be midpoint management situated between the community and higher-level management.

11. They lacked the knowing exactly what people are feeling on that given day. They saw it as a management of a disaster. Where I saw it as a management of community affected (A1118).

Participant 34: Non-government representative

One participant used their connection to the Tasman Peninsula as a form of authenticity, they felt being viewed as a local assisted their organisational role to support the community in the recovery efforts.

34. I told a little white lie a couple of times, when I was in my position because I said I'm from [town]. You know my [name] has been part of [town] all his life 35. Yes 34. And we are there every weekend. So, I do actually call our shack at town [town] and home at [town]. And that really helped for when people came

through the door. If I didn't say it, announce that every time but in conversation because I just felt there was, naturally people in this overwhelming state of mind, they were more, I think accepting of assistance, if they knew it was someone who was local (OI203).

(OI 203 – October Interview, number 203).

Participant: 36: Government representative

This government representative identified themselves as a professional with state responsibilities.

36. *So, we set ourselves up with, firstly we got some people out of the [organisation] and a few other areas and said to go down and insert yourself in the community and find out what needs to be done (OI204).*

Forty people participated in this study (see Table 4.5 Participant characteristics). The forty participants came from diverse geographical and social backgrounds. To contextualise community members' involvement in the bushfire disaster, other people who did not identify as residents, such as external responders or helpers were also invited to participate (Charmaz, 2014).

This study aims to understand community members' involvement in the Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. The fire event was regarded as the 'Forcett fire' because it started at Inala Road on the outskirts of the township of Forcett, towards Copping. Consequently, people who resided in the rural communities impacted by the fire were invited to participate in this research. Residency aimed to understand the differing lived realities in each of the rural communities. Residents from the six towns significantly impacted by the fire: Copping, Boomer Bay, Dunalley, Connellys Marsh and Mudunna were included, as well as towns Bream Creek and Marion Bay which are included in the ABS local area data.

The voices of participants, who were involved in the disaster event but lived outside the disaster zone, were included to contextualise and augment the resident perspectives and experiences (see Table 4.6 Participants locality). Involvement meant understanding how people participated, those who contributed or played a part in the event either individually or in the broader efforts. An effort was made to include people's different roles and their functions and responsibilities, including residents, external support volunteers,

representatives of local and state government and non-government services. The age group of participants ranged from 30 – 74. There were no participants under 30 which had not been intentional. There were many of the 30 plus age group interested in participating in the study.

Some basic characteristics of the 40 research participants.

Gender	Men	18	(45%)
	Women	22	(55%)
Age	30 – 35	2	(5%)
	36 – 40	3	(7.5%)
	41 – 45	5	(12.5%)
	46 – 50	1	(2.5%)
	51 – 55	11	(27.5%)
	56 – 60	5	(12.5%)
	61 – 65	8	(20%)
	66 – 70	2	(5%)
	71 – 80	3	(7.5%)
Place	Murdunna	6	(15%)
	Dunalley	13	(32.5%)
	Connellys Marsh	2	(5%)
	Boomer Bay	2	(5%)
	Marion Bay	1	(2.5%)
	Bream Creek	2	(5%)
	Copping	4	(10%)
	Dodges Ferry	3	(7.5%)
	Forcett	1	(2.5%)
	Other	6	(15%)
Time in area	0 – 4 years	6	(15%)
	5 – 14 years	10	(25%)
	15 – 24 years	6	(15%)
	25 – 50 years	7	(17.5%)
	50 + years	4	(10%)
	Other - unknown	7	(17.5%)

Table 4. 2: Participant characteristics'

4.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter sketches a picture of the research setting. It accounts for the earliest inhabitants, the Oyster Bay tribe known as the Pydairrerm group, and the European settlers who made their way to Tasmania by boat. The settlers transformed the landscape with the development of municipalities and industry, this also meant managing significant events like

bushfire disasters. This chapter allowed for sensitivity through the portrayal of the communities situated in the Sorell and Tasman municipalities that were impacted by the fire. The landscape, dwellings along the main roads or adjacent the scenic bays, the people, local industry, tourism and culture, that included aspects of the fire event. This was followed by a brief discussion regarding the term community and how participants defined their community status in their interview transcripts. The profile on research participants represents those who have contributed to this study, who voluntarily participated, offered their time and accounts of how they were involved in the bushfire disaster. This chapter aimed to provide context and sensitivity to the research setting, by describing place and people which adds richness to the storyline and sets the stage for the next chapter, the research method.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHOD

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the small communities impacted by the bushfire disaster and the research participants. This chapter presents the research methods. It begins with a discussion on the research ethics, including ethical approval to conduct the study, the voluntary nature of the study, confidentiality and duty of care to the participants. The second section reflects on gathering and management of data, participant involvement, the interview processes, theoretical sampling and its function in data analysis. This section describes in detail the analysis technique and progression such as coding practices, constant comparison, memo writing, construction of categories and theory development.

5.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are essential when engaging in research. The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University in Australia communicates ethical responsibilities and clear guidelines on how to approach and conduct research. RMIT policy and my professional membership with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) which has policies and documents such as AASW Code of Ethics (2010) and AASW Practice Standards inform and guide my research practice. Social work operates at the interface of people and their environment; engaging in research requires specific ethical requirements. It considers the researcher's approach to ensure the research has merit and integrity, the interests of participants are placed above the interests of the research project, and research findings are published and disseminated (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010) (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010). Ethical approval was sought and gained for this study from the RMIT University of Science, Engineering and Health, College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN) on 27 July 2015. BSEHAPP 18-15 (see Appendix 3: Ethics Approval). Ethical considerations play an integral part in qualitative research due to the close relationship between the researcher and participants. Reciprocity recognises a power sharing relationship in the generation of knowledge (D'Cruz and Jones, 2004).

Participation in this study was voluntary and each participant received an information package explaining the study. The rights of participants were set out in the participant information document which were communicated when I invited people to participate in the study and at the commencement of each interview (see Appendix 4: Participant Information Letter). Permission to audio record the interviews was obtained from individual participants. A detailed explanation of what would happen to participant's information was outlined in an information sheet, provided in hard copy and communicated at each interview. Consent forms were completed and signed by each participant and the researcher (see Appendix 5: Participant Consent Form). Audio recorded interviews were transcribed and a draft copy was emailed, posted or hand delivered to participants for consideration in October and December 2015. A covering letter reiterated participant confidentiality and the consultation process if any data were deemed of a sensitive nature to ensure no harm was done.

5.2.1 Confidentiality

All information was treated in a confidential manner. Participant's information was stored on a computer that was password protected and hard copy data was kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in my office. Names and addresses were recorded only on the consent and participant profile documents. Audio recordings were kept on a password protected computer, with each recording and corresponding transcript identified by a code linked to each participant's profile. For example, August interviews codes identified as AI (August Interview) commencing at 101 (AI101). Each participant had a code e.g. AI101:2, AI101:3, and October interviews were coded OI201:32 through to OI208:41. At the completion of the study physical files and electronic data will be stored at the School of Science, Mathematical and Geospatial Sciences, RMIT University, Swanston Street Campus, Melbourne for a minimum of five years after publication.

5.2.2 Relationship

Establishing a rapport with participants in a manner that is respectful and dignified is essential in the process of entering their worlds to learn about their views and actions. Furthermore, to gain an interpretive understanding of the participant's world a relationship of reciprocity that includes reflexivity is required. A constructivist approach acknowledges the subjectivities in the relationship between researcher and participant. Personally, my experience of the

bushfire event afforded me a level of merit that required reflexive practice to respect the differing power differentials. This experience proffered an enriched understanding, aligning with the values of constructive grounded theory method (Birks and Mills, 2015, Charmaz, 2014).

The bushfire disaster event also contributed to the development of relationships. I felt that the dynamics of these relationships added an element of trust, with many people willing to share their story and speak openly and honestly about their experience. These relationships also carried a higher level of accountability to ensure people did not feel obligated to participate in any way. My experience of working and living in rural communities has often required proficiency in balancing the personal and professional, a particular challenge of ethical practice in a rural context.

5.2.3 Wellbeing

Respect for people is a core value of social work, acknowledging that every human being has unique and inherent equal worth and a right to wellbeing (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010). A duty of care to participants was paramount. The research approach considered that many people had experienced a life-threatening experience and endured varying degrees of injury trauma and loss. Although the research topic focussed on participant's approaches, capabilities and capacity, they often presented various emotions: sadness, happiness, or in some cases frustration when retelling their story. Participants were informed and offered the opportunity pause or stop the interview at any time. The necessary procedures were taken to ensure that participants were well informed and resourced, with information relating to the counselling and support services in the southeast of Tasmania provided in the participant information letter.

5.3 Gathering Grounded Theory Data

Early texts on grounded theory stipulate the researcher should look for basic social processes when gathering data. Generally, there are two levels of interest: (1) what are the basic social processes and (2) what are the basic social psychological processes? The main question looks at psychosocial processes of 'what is happening'. Charmaz (2014) suggests that the definitions of social process may differ from various positions, perspectives and experiences.

Defining a social process may limit our understanding, offering an idealised picture of what is happening whilst omitting some of the struggles people experience in life. When gathering grounded theory data, the following approach should be adopted to construct data:

- Attending to actions and processes as well as to words
- Delineating the context, scenes, and situations of action carefully
- Recording who did what, when it occurred, why it happened (if you can ascertain the reasons), and *how* it occurred
- Identifying the *conditions* under which specific actions, intentions, and processes emerge or are muted
- Looking for ways to interpret these data
- Focusing on specific words and phrases to which participants seem to attribute particular meaning
- Finding taken-for-granted and hidden assumptions of various participants; showing how they are revealed through and affect actions (Charmaz, 2014, p. 35).

5.3.1 Sensitising Concepts

A grounded theory study will often commence with sensitising concepts to assist the process of finding a place to start. This is a tentative tool that guides the initial data generation and analysis. In this study the sensitising concepts of community-led recovery helped shape my research questions, prepare the initial interview guide and stimulate data generation and analysis, to develop ideas and processes (Charmaz, 2014, Elliott and Higgins, 2012). Community-led recovery provided a starting point to look at the data. Nevertheless, during the data generation and analysis it was important to remain as broad and natural as possible to learn what the participants' experiences and views were, to define key terms from data and not extant definitions (Charmaz, 2014).

5.4 Data Generation and Management

Software

NVivo software was initially contemplated and evaluated as a tool for data management and analysis. Its use in grounded theory reflected a diverse range of perspectives. Many researchers reported the program was useful 'up to a point' with most then resorting to work

with paper, post notes and white boards to further their analysis (Birks and Mills, 2015). The appraisal of NVivo, and my preferred tactile learning style and desire to fully experience the data, influenced my decision to use other tools and strategies to assist with data management and analysis. This included the use of printed material, colour paper, sticky notes and whiteboards which were helpful during the data analysis.

5.4.1 Participant Involvement

The logic of grounded theory guides the data gathering method. It requires approaches that assist in gathering data to promote the theoretical development of the analysis. The credibility of a grounded theory study is founded on the quality of data, gathering rich data helps illuminate the properties and develop categories and their relationships to depict a full picture of the topic (Charmaz, 2014).

Recruitment was based on the 2013 Forcett bushfire disaster with purposeful and snowballing sample strategies based on the following criteria: residency (disaster area) and involvement (emergency and disaster). There were minimal difficulties in gathering data, due to the relationships established through my involvement in the bushfire disaster event and resident status. I contacted people by phone or email and invited them to participate in the study, others had taken an interest in the study and volunteered to participate. Approximately seven interviews were organised prior to my field trip utilising purposeful sampling techniques, the remaining generated through snowball sampling during the field trip. The first field trip in August 2015 resulted in 19 interviews with 30 participants over seven days. Interviews varied in number of participants. For example, one interview comprised a family of four, others involved either one or two participants', either related or known to each other, such as friends or neighbours.

In October 2015 the second field trip was conducted. The purpose of this field trip was to gather a broader range of data to gain a rich situational understanding of a community's response to a bushfire disaster. This included people who had lost their dwelling and those who didn't, evacuated or chose to stay during the emergency and represented each of the small communities situated in the disaster zone. As well as external support, those who do not live in the area but may have volunteered or were a part of the official emergency management response. During this second field trip, eight interviews were conducted over five days with a total of ten participants. In total, 27 interviews were conducted with 40

participants. The shortest interview was approximately 30 minutes and the longest about one and three quarter hours, the median time of the 27 interviews was 62 minutes.

A ConGT method includes a strategy of theoretical sampling where the researcher will revisit participants to reinterview them to follow new leads or acquire greater clarity when developing and building of categories (Charmaz, 2014). In this study theoretical sampling was hindered by geographical access to the participants and time considerations, the time between the bushfire event and conducting the interviews; this resulted in two collection events (Birks and Mills, 2015). Furthermore, many participants had experienced imposition throughout the disaster in differing ways or wanted to put the event behind them and get on with life. These factors are identified as tensions between the logistics of theoretical sampling and situational demands, and the interactional reciprocities (Charmaz, 2014). Theoretical sampling is explained further in section 5.5.1 of this chapter.

5.4.2 Participant Interviews

Constructivist grounded theorists pay attention to the interview context, the relationship, what participants do say and don't say in the construction of their story and construction of interview (Charmaz, 2014). In the interview schedule the first question provided a comprehensive account of what happened and how participants responded (see Appendix 6: Interview Schedule 1). The first question allowed participants to tell their story with minimal influence of it being directed or shaped by guiding questions. Interestingly, it provoked an account of the participants' experiences from a start point that they identified with in respect to the bushfire event.

To provide an example; I asked the question

- 1. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of the bushfire disaster or emergency?*
- 22. So, for me it started on the Thursday afternoon (Community member, AI113) and;*
- 3. We were here, and we got a phone call from our daughter to say that the Forcett fire was coming down (Community member, AI101).*

The timeline varied with participants spending more time talking about the 'before and during' the bushfire whilst others focussed on the 'during and after'. The comprehensive account entailed participants telling a story that reflected individual and collective actions that they and others undertook, the decision-making or reasoning that underpinned actions, capabilities and strengths, differing relationships, individual values and beliefs, problem solving abilities, various emotions, struggles, knowledge of local resources and networks. The interview approach seemed significant in that it enabled each participant the space and time to reflect on their experience and perspective of what happened. To elicit their own definition of terms, situations, activities and events and most importantly revealed assumptions, meanings and unspoken rules (Charmaz, 2014).

The questions reflected participants' language and individual experiences (Charmaz, 2015). When designing the interview schedule one question included the term community-led recovery. This provided a valuable learning opportunity, discovering that many participants were not familiar with the term, and others related it to recovery process and emotional wellbeing or self-determination and the community approaches. This highlighted the practice of a critical stance to avoid forcing the data into preconceived ideas or frameworks. Theoretical sensitivity assisted this process with the use of reflexivity. The interview guide was treated as a flexible guide that was revised during the data generation process. Although not totally dismissive of the concept community-led recovery, it was later deemed irrelevant and somewhat dismissed during the analysis. Over time the interview schedule was adapted to suit the participants' responses and topic. For instance, the question 'how did what you were doing change over time' was removed because this was incorporated into participants' accounts of what happened (see Appendix 7: Interview Schedule 2).

A symbolic interactionist social constructionist perspective favours in depth interviewing to gather data (Charmaz, 2014, Minichiello et al., 1999). Intensive interviewing suits grounded theory 'because it facilitates conducting an open-ended, in depth exploration of an area in which the interviewee has substantial experience' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 85). The task is to balance the goals of analytical exploration with listening to the story, to create a sharing space where collaboration fosters an egalitarian exchange. It is important to recognise and work with participants' language and concerns which required a range of interviewing skills. These skills included listening to what was significant to participants, as well as respecting silence during the interview, softening a question, paraphrasing, incorporating words, and non-verbal

behaviour by nodding my head, facial expression, eye contact and body posture (De Jong and Kim Berg, 2013).

Reflexivity illuminated the emotional element of the interview, it stimulated the co-construction by recognising the interviewing practice and questioning (Charmaz, 2014). During the first few interviews, I felt it was important to establish my interviewing position which involved directing my attention away from the question sheet or monitoring the audio recorder. I also needed to acknowledge the potential influence of power and manage these situations appropriately. I recognised that my various positions or standpoints as a resident, government recovery worker, social worker and researcher demanded the practice of reflexivity to concede that they may restrict, hinder or aid the conversation in some way. This involved acknowledging the relationships and the research topic with the aim of establishing a safe and supportive environment where each participant could share their account of the event. Reassurance was offered to participants by imparting 'our paths may be similar or differ, but the time was to hear your story or account of what happened, and there is no right or wrong'. As well, I highlighted how unique experiences could increase the richness of the research. At times, to aid participant comfort I suggested that participants might consider the interview a conversation or chat about the bushfire event. My insight of the event entailed a level of awareness, understanding who and what participants were talking about which often required clarification. Many participants pointed out that they valued having the opportunity to share their stories and were interested in the research outcomes. For example,

37. I think you've actually helped us bring out a lot of feelings that we haven't expressed and that before, so you've helped us a bit fair bit today and 38. Who is going to be using this information, what's going to happen to this information after you put it together? (Community members, OI205).

Prior to transcribing the audio recordings, each interview was listened to and notes taken which turned out to be a time-consuming but a valuable process in becoming acquainted with the data. A total of six interviews were transcribed prior to the second field trip to Tasmania which assisted the theoretical sampling process. The second batch of data was managed in the same manner as the initial data gathering exercise, such as listening to each audio recorded interview and note taking. These notes acted as my field notes, recording words, statements, or themes that could be reflected upon at a future stage. The field notes complemented memo writing with questions, thoughts and reflections. Whilst various

grounded theorist researchers take notes during interviews or have transcribing carried out by an independent party, these audio interviews were personally transcribed. The benefits of this process included preserving the rich situational detail and enhancing my understanding of how the interview was constructed and the actual data that it contained.

5.5 Data analysis

5.5.1 Theoretical Sampling

Contemporary grounded theorists define theoretical sampling as a method for making the process emergent, whereas the constructivist theorist defines theoretical sampling as a process of identifying and pursuing clues that arise during analysis in a grounded theory study (Birks and Mills, 2015). In ConGT, initial sampling starts the process of gathering data and theoretical sampling guides the direction of where to go. It is viewed as the analytical handle for examining and understanding ideas, and in that process, identifies gaps and allows for possibilities by leading to new directions. Theoretical sampling prompts and predicts, and involves abductive reasoning, making inferences about the experience and then comparing them against further experience. Memo writing is what spurs theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2014). Theoretical sampling is purposeful sampling, based on theoretical development, it provides direction and helps you obtain data to explicate your categories and when they are full, they will reflect the qualities of the people's experience (Charmaz, 2006).

5.5.2 Memo Writing

As previously mentioned, memo writing leads the researcher directly to theoretical sampling, a process that is strategic, specific and systematic. Memo writing assists in the building of full-bodied conceptual categories and helps facilitate the interpretation of relationships between categories. Memo writing continues as a strategy throughout the research process, preserving the evidence of analytical ideas and recording the path of theory construction. As the memo-writing moved through the analysis and beyond individual cases, it encouraged me to focus on codes and data, and to document reflective thought such as questions, observations, connections, perspectives, encounters and comparisons which guided further actions (Charmaz, 2014). Memo writing also provides a chronological record of the

methodological journey; treating the memos as analytical by recording codes and categories, links, gaps, questioning the usefulness of a code or category, conveying data and theorising and analysing to develop ideas (Birks and Mills, 2015).

The analytical memo writing contained words, statements or activities that caught my attention or sparked an idea. For example, accounting for family appeared to be significant; leading up to, during and immediately after the fire hazard, the knowledge that family were safe was liberating. It increased one's capacity to focus on other important matters or concerns. I recorded these ideas and reflected on them and this process prompted me to ask a series of questions. What might this mean? How could I look at this idea from a different vantage point?

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The accounting for family was something that has stood out throughout the process of listening to audios, transcribing, and now in the initial stages of coding. How does it relate to participation – it appears to be something that was important that residents were considering during the emergency. For the men to do their job the women needed to be accounted for, evacuated or in a safe location. Be accounted for. Some women felt that by them staying it would have caused extra worry for their husbands, something they didn't need to have, because they were defending homes, property and livelihood.

Figure 5. 1: Research journal entry

I developed four memo writing files titled coding memos, operational memos, analytical memos, and red flag memos. The coding memo explored coding and operational practices, the operational memos recorded steps in the research process and my reasoning for decision-making. The analytical memos recorded what was happening in the data, to explain, examine and conceptualise the data, and 'red flag' memos illustrated a significant analytical point when breaking up the data. The analytical memo file was used for data analysis, it included the focused codes and tentative categories for the theory construction. As the analysis evolved the coding and operational memos were integrated due to the difficulty of separating the two activities (Birks and Mills, 2015).

Each memo had a title, date and number with approximately 270 analytical memos which account for the theory construction (Birks and Mills, 2015). Memo writing, in line with the

analysis progression, involved shifting from ‘asking what was going on’ and ‘what were people doing’, to ‘exploring beliefs and assumptions’ that supported the developing categories, the connections between data and codes, and categories (Charmaz, 2014).

Date 18th August 2016	Memo: 150 Memo Title: Conversing customary
	<i>‘just chatting and just being normal’ (A1101:8)</i> This may sit in gathering people together, however it is about the unsaid ‘having the opportunity to do normal things’ in an abnormal situation. It seemed those processes may have been ‘taken for granted’ or ‘were familiar’ prior to the disaster in relation. It was the normal, people desired to gain some familiarity. Back to the familiar and unfamiliar, people were needing familiar. Linked to moving forward to the familiar Category 4.

Figure 5. 2: Analytical memo system

A significant feature of ConGT is the ability to tolerate ambiguity. Memo writing and mind mapping assisted in defining my categories and explicating my ideas, events and the processes in my data (see Appendix 8: for Mind Map example). The strategies of free writing and clustering were also used in the earlier stages of data analysis.

5.5.3 Theoretical Sensitivity

Charmaz (2014) describes theoretical sensitivity as ‘the ability to understand and define phenomena in abstract terms and to demonstrate abstract relationships between the studied phenomena’ (p. 161). Gerunds foster theoretical sensitivity during data analysis. Gerunds are verbs used as nouns, concluding with an ‘ing’ (Birks and Mills, 2015). Grounded theory is embedded in action. Coding with gerunds allows us to stay close to the data and obtain a sound understanding of action and sequence, reflecting the insider language in describing the phenomenon (Charmaz 2006).

The initial or line by line coding interrogated the data by looking for new ideas using gerunds, such as ‘comprehending the severity’, ‘remaining blasé’, ‘locating family’ and ‘stepping up’. Line by line coding with gerunds is a heuristic device that helps draw the researcher into the data, interacting with the fragmented data. Looking at the fragments of data was a valuable tool that nudged my attention away from the participants’ topics, themes and structures to

focus on actions and processes, and assisted in developing an analytical sense of what was happening; for instance, showing consideration for the meaning people gave to time in their community roles. A resident's position was not perceived as operating nine to five with a level of responsibility that one was always available, akin to familial roles. Another example of meaning was the function of residents honouring the charitable efforts of others. The moral obligation of being grateful continued even when the burden became greater than one's capacity to manage this duty. Coding with the gerunds allowed me to look at this process from a different perspective, it spurred memo writing and flagged the relevance of the community ethos. Gerunds described the participant's actions and the sequence of those actions, a valuable method to present the data in a new light or differently and illustrate meaning and the analytical points rather than narrative (Charmaz, 2014). A gerund list that originated from a grounded theory workshop I attended was developed further and referred to this during the initial coding process.

5.5.4 Reflexivity

Theorising fosters seeing possibilities, asking questions and making connections. To achieve this, demands the ability to stop and think; memo writing and reflexivity helped stimulate the theorising process (Charmaz, 2014). As discussed previously in chapter 3.5.1, reflexivity is a self-critical strategy that questions how knowledge is created, the subjectivity and the multiple interrelations of power (D'Cruz and Jones, 2004). Reflexivity recognises how aspects of self and context influence this research and requires a response that involves asking questions about what we see, look for, find, and our interpretation and emotions that may affect our knowledge (Fook and Gardener, 2007).

Research journal writing helped monitor and question how my knowledge, power, beliefs, values, language and actions might influence the research. There were times when the research raised issues that related to my experience of the bushfire event which required reflexivity when analysing the data. An example was when coding the data identifying with participants' feelings of physical exhaustion. This incident was acknowledged in my journal,

When people talked about feeling exhausted I could relate to their experience. I could feel a certain heaviness threaded through the data (Research Journal Entry, 18 May 2016).

This validated and positioned my experience, it enabled me to set it aside, then continue to hold a level of awareness and monitor its influence. Reflexivity monitored the presence of this knowledge by utilising questions of significance and analytical relevance of data to the participant and topic. This also required a level of awareness to be mindful that participants' experiences or perspectives would not be disregarded because they resonated with my experience.

5.5.5 Constant Comparison

Constant comparison involved comparing the data, codes to codes, codes to categories, codes to incident, incident to incident and categories to categories commencing from data generation until the grounded theory is constructed. The method of abductive reasoning combined inductive and abductive thought throughout all stages of the research. It generated 'high-level conceptually abstract categories, rich with meaning, possessive of properties and providing an explanation of variance through categorical dimensionalization' (Birks and Mills, 2015, p. 90).

5.5.6 Coding

The initial or line by line coding interrogates the data, looking at segments for new ideas. Coding reduces the likelihood of applying pre-existing categories, making conceptual leaps and focusing on data rather than the person or story. This type of coding allows for thinking in actions and processes, rather than topics, themes and structures (Charmaz, 2014).

Line by line coding helped me develop questions and move the material forward, by breaking the data up into fragments and looking at the parts. The coding process is a heuristic device for learning about data and taking a different look at it. It allowed me to enter the phenomena; look at the tacit assumptions, acknowledge the different points of view, ominous moments or self-defined points, phrases, or what might have been helpful. The line by line coding generated a lot of codes. The procedure required selecting codes that stood out or meant something to make a story or attain some cohesion out of them; something descriptive that lead to the development of categories (Charmaz, 2006, 2014, 2015).

I commenced the line by line coding with six transcripts. These interviews provided a starting point for the initial coding and subsequent selection of codes that could be raised or turned into a pithy category. The interview transcripts represented 11 participants, six men and five women. These participants had identified themselves as community members. An example of my coding practice is provided below.

A grid sidebar was inserted on the right side of the word document for the codes.

<p>who did the role for a while, they wanted a recovery coordinator but they also needed like a policy writer, so they needed someone to liaise with town government and themselves, but they also needed someone to do the policy writing and the documents up, which I have no</p>	<p>Needing policy writer Needing liaison Emphasising policy writer Admitting no knowledge</p>
--	---

Figure 5. 3: Initial coding

Line by line coding was a time-consuming process with a couple of transcripts 29 pages in length or 20,000 words. The initial coding interrogated the data looking for new ideas, however at times it was a challenge not to summarise paragraphs with a gerund that best described a section of data. I felt it was important to resist this action and applied the principles of reflexivity which was a valuable tool in this process and on reflection, this occurred about four or five times when I struggled to find a gerund to explain the action.

<p>Participation Capacity What is this person doing or saying right now?</p>	<p>During the line by line coding process a sign was placed above the computer to constantly remind me of the following questions ‘what is this person doing or saying right now?’</p>
--	--

Figure 5. 4: Strategies to identify initial codes

Focused coding was the second major phase. It provided analytical directions, by synthesising, analysing and conceptualising larger segments of data and concentrating on what the initial code might say, imply or reveal, and compared codes with codes. Questioning the data; does this code represent a widely-shared definition or unique view? Are there gaps or patterns? Does one coded action or event illuminate another? Comparing a coded action against another for intensity and impact to explore and discover different meanings (Charmaz, 2014). Analytical directions meant looking for something to work with from the very start to move forward. It is legitimate to go through the process of inferring something to consider if the code holds up, if not, then it is discarded (Charmaz, 2012).

Focused coding required selecting the initial codes and elevating them to a higher level and testing the data against codes. It is critical to check how codes or categories hold up against earlier data to ask analytical questions, break up the data to evaluate what constituted or defined it. What did it mean in the day to day life of the participant, the taken for granted meanings? Analytical questions meant shifting theoretically to construct and define a category whilst retaining a level of openness and curiosity by asking what is it that participants were talking about? (Charmaz, 2013).

The six transcripts produced approximately 4,000 initial codes. I then commenced focused coding by working with the initial codes by coding the most analytical, frequent and significant initial codes to direct the analysis: analytical in their layers of meaning, frequent as in repeated throughout and significant in that they aligned well with the research topic (Charmaz, 2014).

Significant Frequent Analytical	Once again, I used the strategy of placing the words significant, frequent and analytical above my computer to refer to whilst coding.
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Figure 5. 5: Strategies to identify focused codes

Focused coding condensed and sharpened the initial coding and progressed the analysis.

they also needed like a policy writer, so they needed someone to liaise with town government and themselves, but they also needed someone to do the policy writing and the documents up, which I have no	Questioning meeting job criteria
--	----------------------------------

Figure 5. 6: Focused coding

Throughout this process I constantly asked questions; what did my codes imply? Did they retain the voice and language of participant? A set of questions were kept close to my computer to check coding practices (Charmaz, 2014).

Questions to ask myself –

- how does my coding reflect described experience?
- Do my analytical constructions begin from this point?
- have I clear connections between data and codes?
- have I guarded against rewriting – and therefore recasting – the studied experience into a lifeless language that better fits our academic and bureaucratic worlds than those of our participants?

Figure 5. 7: Questions for coding practice

The most analytical code or *in vivo* code acted as a heading of each group, for example 'running the gauntlet', 'having a meeting place' or 'absorbing time'. *In vivo* codes are terms, language or words that preserve significant meanings. They may symbolise participants' actions or concerns or represent shared views and add depth to the analysis. Focused coding concentrated on what the codes were saying, comparisons were made, and meanings defined. Memo writing was an integral part of this process. The focused codes were then used to synthesize, analyse and conceptualise larger amounts of data in the other transcripts (Charmaz 2014.).

Peer checking was carried out with my supervisor and another grounded theorist. This practice is not necessary in ConGT nevertheless felt it practical to check that my coding reflected the described actions and meanings in the data.

e that it was	Challenging stigma	
hem. So the	Reluctance to seek help	
m to accept the help,		Encouraging community
ned somewhere else		accept donations
to get out & engage with		Working in role long time
ed community		Evolving role on need
ow long I did that for		
So my role with St		
ing responsibilities		
ing to changing needs		
then we moved into,		Suggesting getting
temporary portable	Accessing materials	terrapiin
we		Locating terrapiin
ly should have them,		Utilising local
e sitting somewhere.		
doing a lot of the		
orporates/local business		

Figure 5. 8: Peer checking

Various grounded theorists will work with a frame and use a technique called axial coding; applying a frame provides a pre-set structure which explains when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences. In ConGT the analytical strategies are emergent, following leads that they define data in the empirical materials. Those who can tolerate ambiguity and prefer simple and flexible guidelines do not need to use axial coding (Charmaz, 2014). This study did not involve axial coding; I was content to endure the ambiguity.

The focused coding resulted in 784 codes from the 4000 initial codes. The focused codes were transferred to coloured cards to progress the analysis and construct the categories. Each transcript had its own colour code, for example, red cards; transcript AI112 focused code 'Stepping up' and the transcript page 9 and green cards AI116; 'Needing something to do' page 4.



Figure 5. 9: Focused codes on coloured card

Incident by incident

The next step involved grouping the focused codes within their respective transcripts and comparing incident with incident or transcript with transcript. The 784 focused codes raised from the initial coding amounted to 92, 98, 100, 147, 148 and 200 respectively for each of the six transcripts. The 784 focused codes were then sorted into groups which resulted in twelve groups and I elevated the most analytical focused code that best described a cluster of codes to represent the group.



Figure 5. 10: Grouping focused codes

Memo Title: Focused codes	
A1115:24 & 25 Turning a blind eye Experiencing a shift in thinking Knocking wind out of the sails Kicking things into action Being the good soldier Seeing it as a watershed moment Managing risk widely Thinking they were helping Donations rolling in Questioning usefulness Absorbing time Living conduit for giving Paying tribute depleted energy Juggling extra roles and responsibilities Feeling grateful to be in community Surviving the burden of receiving/giving Going forward with community Preparing for the unknown Motivating in the unknown	A1110:17 & 18 Being equipped to assist Knowing family was safe Working a long time Feeling helpless Having a meeting place Going over and above Getting back to normal life Having less deep-rooted ties Living here all my life Feeling guilty creating business Giving people something to do Making it easy to participate
	A1111:19 & 20 Knowing about the fire Getting in a state of readiness Needing a clear head Kicking it up the chain Knowing what to do

The focused codes that represented each subgroup captured a storyline in each transcript. These subgroups were then compared; storyline with storyline, focused code with focused code, incident with incident, simultaneously memo and journal writing.

Figure 5. 11: Focused codes subgroups

Incident with incident coding is a close relative of line by line coding (Charmaz, 2014). In this study aspects of this technique were adapted to compare within each incident (setting), then incident (setting) with the other five incidents (settings). This activity included comparing focused codes, actions with actions, identifying processes and patterns and looking for difference and gaps.

When I had exhausted comparing incident with incident, the 784 focused codes on the coloured cards were analysed individually. For three days, I compared and grouped codes, paying attention to the context, whilst continually asking questions of the data; What was the action? What did it mean? What was the analytical point?



Figure 5. 12: Analysing codes

Focused coding acted as a descriptive tool to view and integrate data. Raising the focused codes moved the analysis forward, providing the analytical framework to construct my categories. This was achieved through ‘two critical steps: (1) it establishes the content and form of your nascent analysis; and (2) it prompts you to evaluate and clarify your categories and the relationships between them’ (Charmaz, 2015, p. 72).

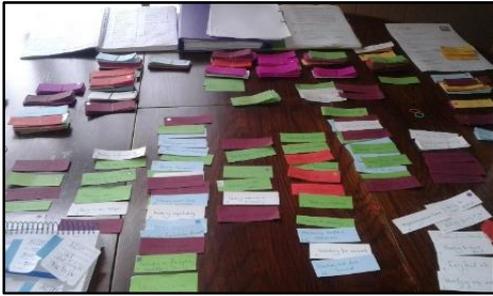


Figure 5. 13: Raising the focused codes

I worked with the 784 focused codes and constructed six tentative subcategories, as well as some possible gaps that required further exploration.



Figure 5. 14: Constructing the tentative subcategories

5.5.7 Constructing Categories



I recorded the tentative subcategories on sticky notes and continued working with them, comparing and identifying the relationships which included recognising relationships that occurred at a different time.

Figure 5. 15: Comparing and identifying relationships

For instance, recognising the difference in safeguarding family helped explain the process. It occurred leading up to and during the bushfire threat and occurred after the main threat had passed, family returning to place was important; reunifying family was related to safeguarding family.

Standing back to look at the subcategories helped interpret actions and meaning; 'safeguarding family' and 'reunifying family' was related to 'accounting of family members and others', this action lessened the level of concern and responsibility. When community members knew their family were safe it enabled them to focus their energy on other critical matters, for instance protecting home and livelihood. These focused codes helped understand a process of safeguarding family and others.

The focused codes and raised codes, memo writing and checking of excerpts, advanced the properties and construction of my tentative subcategories. These were identified as: (1) contemplating the bushfire, (2) tempering the worry, (3) comprehending and responding to the evolving need, (4) assuming role, (5) inspiring solidarity and (6) enduring the effort and emotion.

The focused codes were transferred onto a template. This process spurred the analysis further by identifying the focused codes that best represented the differing properties and linking those codes to the subcategory heading. I would ask questions like does this subcategory best represent all the differing codes? For example, the action of 'committing to help' represented those who stepped up to assist. How did they commit? What about those who didn't or couldn't commit? What might have stopped or restricted this committing?

Questions	Raised Focused codes	Subcategories	Category 4
Precedence over own home needs? Provided meaning? Had the means or felt some level of obligation or need to help, having a house was having the means to assist? Didn't lose your house - it meant that you had not been affected?	Stepping up for role - 112:3, Hopping in and helping - 116:10 Seeing it had to be done - 106:19, Doing what's important - 112:2 & 7, Giving people something to do 110: 7, Needing to be involved 110:7, Needing direction - 101:5 Having capacity to help 101:7, Having a house (A1107:5) (103:6) Feeling guilt having a home 110:6 Having somewhere to go (A1102:3), Not wanting to stay home (107:4), Seeing it as a way of coping (A1107:6)	Committing to help	Inspiring solidarity in the unfamiliar

help' represented those who stepped up to assist. How did they commit? What about those who didn't or couldn't commit? What might have stopped or restricted this committing?

Figure 5. 16: Category template

I created a template for each subcategory and their properties (focused codes that represented processes and actions) and listed several questions. The templates for six tentative subcategories were placed on the wall above my computer for the next coding exercise.

Date 16 th August 2016	Memo 95 Memo Title: Subcategory - Foretelling the bushfire - 66 Tentative Category 1 - Contemplating the bushfire
	<p>Knowing about the fire 111:1 Predicting a bad bushfire 116:1</p> <p>Foretelling the bushfire, what is happening here? Knowing about the bushfire 'we got ready on the Thursday because we thought it would probably come' (110:1). 'Well we knew it was coming' there had been a fire in the area, and 'it looked like it was going to be a bad fire because I had seen a plume of smoke like that once before... that turned into a terrifically bad fire' (116:1).</p> <p>Drawing on knowledge of the fire and previous experience of a fire in the local area a few years earlier. This knowledge was a topic of conversation for some with a local person who had official role in the emergency consulting with local knowledge, 'it grew throughout the day from talking with some locals about possibilities, facts and projections' (111:1). There is something about a sense of knowing and getting ready the day before or considering the situation, statements like, thought it would come, knew it was coming and it was going to be a bad day.</p> <p>Where does this thinking, or knowing come from? An awareness of the fire or hazard, existing knowledge based on previous fires in the local area, and contributing factors like whether forecast. What was not being highlighted is the conversation that is occurring locally whilst comprehending the situation. Is this the local conversation about possibilities, facts and projections? It was this foretelling that was linked to the decision making of stay or go and then if staying, preparing for the fire, and comprehending the severity.</p> <p>What voices are missing? Complacency? 'there were spirals of fire going up and like some buildings were burning but even at that stage I did not think there was this massive big bushfire was coming' (112:1) female, other family members were actively preparing for bushfire.</p>

I simultaneously wrote memos, sorted and compared codes, and constructed the categories. Analytical memos helped further develop and saturate my categories and look for gaps or omissions.

Figure 5. 17: Constructing the categories

Second batch of transcripts

The focused codes in my tentative categories were then used to comb through larger batches of data in the remaining transcripts. I looked for data that illustrated analytical points to saturate or fill subcategories, connections or different viewpoints. During this coding process the following questions were placed above the computer to act as prompts. What is going on here? What are people doing? What are the connections? What process is the issue here? Under what conditions? What are the consequences? (Charmaz, 2014).

I coded the transcripts of another seven community members, remaining alert to similarities, connections, differing meanings, and any potential gaps. When carrying out this procedure I continually questioned how or in what way did codes relate to the topic. At times I needed to recommence line by line coding for; different or new actions and meaning, to break down what was happening or to retain the participant's language. For example, 'getting out' and 'having a house' represented differing meanings in the process of committing to help. For one participant, committing to help meant 'getting out' of their small temporary accommodation during the day, they perceived it was a way of looking after their mental health. Another participant felt that keeping busy was their way of coping, whereas others felt not losing their home was a motivator to help. Every attempt was made to represent the differing significance that represented participants' meaning to provide a rich understanding of their involvement. I extracted verbatim data that highlighted gaps or supported existing categories and recorded the developing analysis in my analytical memos.

Working with the data as with the first six transcripts, I transferred the focused codes to coloured cards then sorted them into sub groups. My logic was, the codes written on cards

could be positioned on the table, moved around, thus offering a different view point. Work continued with the focused codes, building the categories from the focused codes. This included the tasks of comparing, grouping, moving, sorting, linking, matching, associating, clustering, classifying, shifting, relating, questioning and assessing. Theoretical sampling helped fill out the properties with important or essential qualities of the studied experience, using any data that would explicate, clarify or explain the developing categories and kept the analysis moving forward (Charmaz, 2014).

At times codes offered a perspective or action from an alternative view point. For example, 'knowing about the fire' and the different perceptions of 'knowing'. A code to describe one couple's experience of knowing about the fire was described as 'knowing but not knowing' because one participant stated that they were completely oblivious about the fire and the other claimed they were aware and monitoring it. The two participants lived in the same household with differing forms of 'knowing'. This meant asking questions of the 'knowing' or awareness, teasing out the properties such as; when does knowing commence? Under what conditions? Does knowing vary or change? What precedes or follows knowing? Is this about the level of awareness of the bushfire hazard and what triggered actions?

Category 1 - Contemplating the bushfire - Foretelling the bushfire			
Transcript excerpt	Initial Code	Questions	Focused code
<p>Knowing about the fire</p> <p><i>27. we were completely oblivious</i></p> <p><i>28. to a certain extent. I knew it wasn't looking good. I'd have to say, I did never expect what actually did actually happen, but the conditions weren't good quite clearly not good. And there was a nasty fire there was a nasty fire already in Forcett (117:1)</i></p>	<p>Not knowing</p> <p>Knowing</p> <p>Recognising the threat</p> <p>Failing to predict severity</p> <p>Knowing conditions were not good</p> <p>Worrying about a serious fire threat</p>	<p>This is about differing perceptions of knowing. A couple, one that felt they were completely oblivious, yet the other knew about the fire and had been paying attention?</p> <p>What is knowing?</p>	<p>Differing perceptions of knowing</p>

Figure 5. 18: Theoretical sampling

5.5.8 Theoretical Saturation

Theoretical saturation involved saturation of a theoretical concept, a product derived from research analysis. This main emphasis in this process is to progress the property saturation 'by definition', rather than 'by claim', such as saturating the story. For example, hearing the same story over and over is saturation by claim, whereas when there are no new properties that might help define the concept means it has reached saturation 'by definition'. When there are no new properties emerging or you have exhausted the enquiry, you can stop. The properties and concepts may change but no more data is required (Charmaz, 2006).

The seven remaining community member transcripts were coded one at a time, I focused on memo writing and defining my subcategories, and flagging contextual factors. At times working with meaning provided its challenges like 'comprehending' what was happening between the disaster zone and outer area. The meaning appeared significant, with participants 'grappling' with the 'disparity' or 'difference' within the disaster zone as well as the normality outside the zone.

The next step involved working with the analytical memos and saturating the properties to define categories. I returned to early memos and reflecting on how the categories had emerged, monitoring codes that might not have stood up to the analysis, or were perhaps overshadowed, had a stronger relationship, or even fitted another subcategory. (Charmaz, 2014). The remaining six transcripts were coded akin to the preceding twenty-one transcripts. These transcripts provided the contextual information that helped contextualise the categories in the construction of my grounded theory.

5.6 Theory Construction

Throughout the analysis the focused codes that best represented the multiple viewpoints, actions or experiences were used to build the subcategories. These subcategories remained tentative until the properties were well defined. The focused codes provided the structure or frame for category construction, asking analytical questions and interrogating the data helped define the category properties. I reassessed my 27 coded transcripts, memos and notes to ensure that data relevant to the categories had been exhausted. Once the categories and their properties were conceptually defined and links made between categories, they were

then sorted and examined against the contemporary literature, with inferences made about the empirical experience which is the deductive part of grounded theory.

According to Charmaz (2014) a formal theory is 'a theoretical rendering of a generic issue or process that cuts across several substantive areas of study' (p. 343). These theories generally deal with issues resembling the experience of immigration and processes similar to the construction of culture. A formal grounded theory is developed at a higher level, such as the work '*Status Passage*' by Glaser and Strauss published in 1971 (Birks and Mills, 2015). As a novice researcher, my aim was to study 'a specific phenomenon in the context of a clearly identified groups of individuals. Such research is regarded as *substantive* as it is produced for the purpose of understanding a tangible phenomenon in a clearly defined situation' (Birks and Mills, 2015, p. 150). The substantive theory is an interpretation of the studied phenomena through the lens of the theorist, that helps us understand actions and meaning, and how people construct them (Charmaz, 2014).

'Symbolic interactionism assumes that people are reflective, creative, active, and social creatures' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 270). The codes provided the theoretical foundation or conceptual infrastructure arising from symbolic interactionist sensibilities that incorporated the narrative. In grounded theory, storyline is generally used in interpretive methodologies (Birks and Mills, 2015); the story is perceived as a service to our analysis, its power 'rests on the scope, incisiveness, and usefulness of the analysis' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 317).

The methods and activities detailed throughout this chapter facilitated the construction of a core category characterised as 'Navigating Uncertainty' that encompasses three subcategories: (1) Losing the Familiar, (2) Restoring the Familiar and (3) Living with Change. 'Navigating Uncertainty' is the theoretical outcome of this research, it outlines the psychosocial processes of surviving a bushfire disaster and is related to community disaster recovery. The interpretive theory construction is detailed in the subsequent chapter with supporting verbatim excerpts. This chapter precedes the substantive theory presented where the relevant existing literature helped clarify ideas and further develop the theory.

5.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter outlined the method used in this research, detailing my practice in data generation and analysis, and theory construction. It started with ethical considerations, an integral aspect of research that provides a guide and standard for decision-making and practice. The research questions and sensitising concepts such as community-led recovery galvanised the interview schedule development and data generation. In this process, I remained flexible and open to participants' experiences and views to allow discrete storytelling about their involvement or participation. Transcribing the audio recordings helped increase my familiarity with the data. A step by step account of data analysis that included how the data was coded, strategies that strengthened the analysis such as theoretical sensitivity, memo writing, and theoretical sampling illustrated the technique and procedures used in the analysis and category construction. The use of gerunds allowed me to remain close and help interrogate the data, to understand action and sequence. Theorising cultivated opportunities and possibilities; I continuously asked questions of the data, looked for connections and using reflexivity helped stimulate the analysis by questioning my own thinking and actions. The final section explained how the categories were constructed, theoretical saturation and introduced the core category and subcategories constructed from participants' experiences and perspectives. The ConGT method, detailed throughout this chapter facilitated the construction of a substantive grounded theory. The next five chapters introduce the research findings, exemplified in the substantive grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty'.

CHAPTER SIX: THE GROUNDED THEORY

6.1 Introduction

This ConGT study was designed to develop a theoretical understanding of community members' involvement in the 2013 Forcett Tasmanian bushfire disaster. The previous chapter outlined the method used to construct the theory which involved the cyclical processes of data generation and analysis. This chapter presents the theoretical outcome of this research and is the first of five chapters. It introduces the substantive grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' and provides diagrams that summarise and symbolise the psychosocial processes of one community's response to bushfire disaster. The process is an interpretive explanation of both the psychological and social processes that were assumed to play a role in this bushfire disaster event. The substantive grounded theory is built around community members' main concerns, what they did to resolve that concern. The main concern was the bushfire hazard that resulted in a disaster, community members were required to navigate this phenomenon. It further demonstrates how they interpreted and managed their individual context and why, exposing the underlying meaning. This chapter concludes with an overview of how the next three findings chapters are presented.

6.2 Navigating Uncertainty

The substantive grounded theory: 'Navigating Uncertainty' is an interpretive understanding of community members' decision-making and actions before, during and after the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. The substantive theory is built around community members' main concerns and what they did to resolve these concerns. The psychosocial process of 'navigating' helps understand what community members encountered, how they interpreted and managed their individual contexts, and why their actions were significant. In this research, the word 'navigating' was used to define the 'process' that community members pursued throughout an unaccustomed event and terrain, the bushfire hazard and disaster. The Oxford Dictionary of English (2010) defines the term 'navigating' as to sail or travel carefully or with difficulty over a stretch of water or terrain. The word 'uncertainty' represents

'context' the event, circumstances or terrain. Uncertain is defined as not to be depended on or changeable in the Oxford Dictionary of English (1984). In this study community members relied on processes and systems that were familiar to them which helped sustain them through a period of uncertainty and change and fostered a sense of stability.

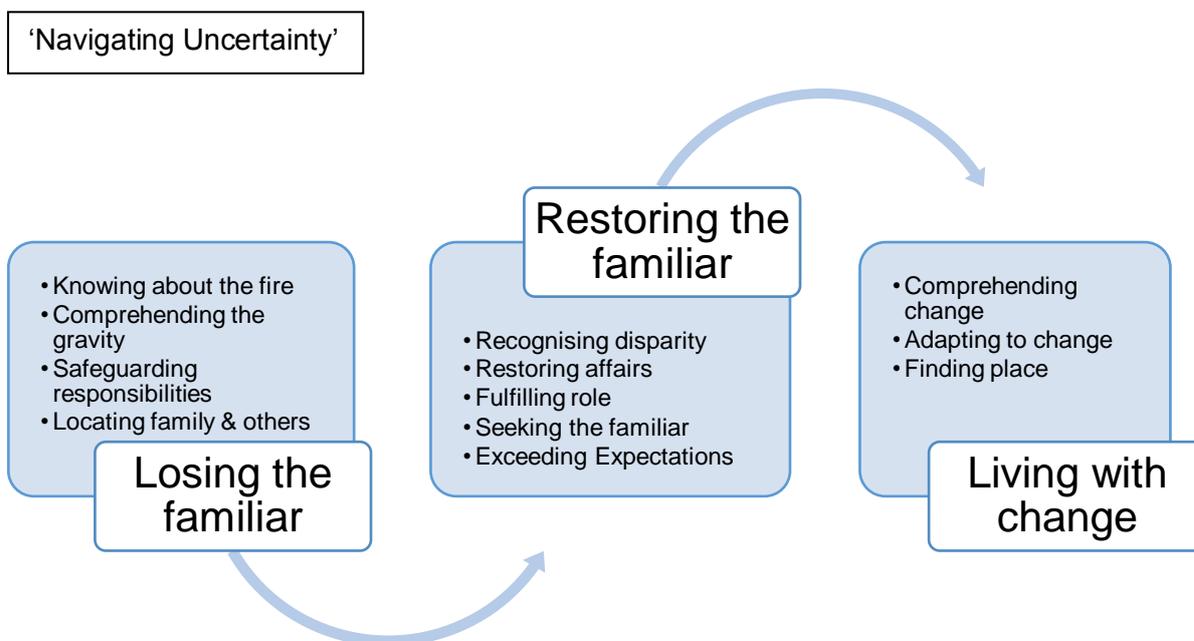


Figure 6. 1: The grounded theory: 'Navigating Uncertainty'

The constructivist grounded theory approach adopted, constructed a theory *grounded* in the data that was collected from the research participants. The grounded theory titled 'Navigating Uncertainty' suggests community members experienced three different phases characterised as Losing the Familiar, Restoring the Familiar and Living with Change. Losing the Familiar was the initial phase and the beginning of the community members' journey, this phase is marked by community members losing many aspects of their familiar context. Many struggled to reconcile what was happening because the experience was situated outside their normative framework. An awareness of the bushfire signified the start of this phase. Knowing about the fire was linked to comprehending the gravity and severity of the situation and influenced the course of actions that centred upon safeguarding life, family, friends and animals and protecting place. The safeguarding responsibilities involved decision-making such as whether to stay or go and knowledge of place, and the actions of relying on established networks, utilising local resources. As well as these measures, key components of the exercise included contemplating the level of risk by monitoring and assessing the fire threat and taking into consideration the local topography. During this process knowing the

whereabouts or accounting for family and others was paramount, it lessened the worry and allowed individual efforts to be directed towards other priorities or concerns. Community members were assessing and reassessing their context and responding with actions underpinned by their values.

Although there was no clear line that defined the shift from the bushfire hazard to the disaster, community members' thinking and actions started to alter which was manifested in the widening of their efforts, moving from refuge, returning to place and assessing the impact. When the main fire front had passed, community members needed to comprehend what had happened. In this phase they were reinterpreting an unfamiliar milieu. There were two main forms of disparity: place and the outside world. The disparity of place and their experience was contrasted with the outside world and it was jarring to see the normality.

Restoring affairs was the subsequent course of actions undertaken by community members in this phase. This was expressed by paying attention to immediate needs and working towards Restoring the Familiar and involved managing recognised needs as they arose, prioritising the demand and adapting efforts with the resources available at the time. Community members fulfilled existing roles, created new roles, took on extra roles and responsibilities with many of these efforts aligned with community members' capabilities, capacity and values. Unifying with those who had experienced the event proved to be significant because the shared experience presented an unspoken understanding of an indescribable event and very little had to be said or explained. Adrenalin and instinct provided momentum to move forward and purpose to reconcile and restore regularity or what was familiar, and individual and the community values provided guidance or direction of where to go. These efforts aided the community spirit nevertheless involved a need to contribute a large portion of self because there was the demand to deal with the added chaos and complexity generated by the disaster. The extra demands imposed on the community in managing the convergence of interest and donations and the moral obligations that often came with those functions became a burden leading to exceeding expectations and exhaustion.

In the final phase of Living with Change, community members appraised their experience of the bushfire event. Comprehending change required evaluating and attaching meaning to what happened. The bushfire event exposed life and landscape while subjecting aspects to be viewed in a different light, it illuminated the best and worst in people by providing a platform

for egocentricity and altruism. There was a recognition and appreciation of the necessity to move forward, to accept that one could not go back and to adjust to change and to achieve this, it meant choosing one's attitude. This type of thinking enhanced the process of adapting to change. Community members acknowledged the loss, damage and trauma, as well as changes perceived as renaissances. Stepping back from the grim or murky details of the disaster required recognising and appreciating other aspects or features of the event. It forced people to step outside their routine lives and connect, help and support each other and appreciate humanity. This created the opportunity for the development of new and changing relationships. For those who were relatively new to the area, it was perceived that the bushfire disaster 'sped up the process' of becoming accepted by the community. Many community members felt being directly involved helped foster friendships; a common bond shaped by the disaster event. This process helped adjust community members' storylines by aligning attributes with one's own beliefs and values and contributing to finding place, providing a sense of hope for the future, validating their efforts and the reasons why they chose to live where they live.

6.3 Presentation of Findings

This chapter introduced the substantive grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' which encapsulates the psychosocial process. The subcategories titled Losing the Familiar, Restoring the Familiar and Living with Change are presented in the next three chapters. Each chapter is divided into two sections; the first section exemplifies the category construction where the interpretive data situates participants' main concern and the decision-making and activities that related to their individual circumstances. It illustrates the category structure and the development of properties which includes focused codes and excerpts to preserve the participants' narrative voices and contribute to the research originality and integrity. The second section presents major process within the psychosocial process. It explains the individual properties which includes the differing forms of properties, the relationships within these properties, and introduces extant literature to strengthen the categories.

Chapter seven introduces the initial phase of 'Navigating Uncertainty'. This subcategory implies a major process termed Losing the Familiar which involves the properties: 1) knowing about the fire, 2) comprehending the gravity, 3) safeguarding responsibilities, and 4) locating

family and others. This phase explains how community members gained an awareness of the fire, recognised the severity and undertook actions that related to their existence.

Chapter eight, establishes the second phase of 'Navigating Uncertainty'. The subcategory implies a major process termed Restoring the Familiar which involves the properties: 1) recognising disparity, 2) restoring affairs, 3) fulfilling role, 4) seeking the familiar, and 5) exceeding expectations. This phase explains how community members responded to the consequences of the fire to restore social stability and resume everyday life.

Chapter nine presents the final phase of 'Navigating Uncertainty'. This subcategory implies a major process termed Living with Change which explains the properties: 1) comprehending change, 2) adapting to change, and 3) finding place. This phase explains how community members looked back on the overall event, recognised change and attached meaning to the overall bushfire disaster event.

Chapter ten presents the interpretive data from the non-resident participants involved in the 2013 Forcett Tasmanian bushfire disaster. This data was gathered from those participants who were involved in the bushfire disaster but did not identify as community members: external support volunteers, representatives of local and state government and non-government services. This chapter offers contextual standpoints to augment the major processes of the theory where features of these standpoints are used to help strengthen or elucidate differing or similar perspectives or experiences.

Chapter eleven revisits the research questions and situates the findings, the substantive grounded theory within the existing literature. The discussion clarifies, compares, connects, extends and challenges existing knowledge with the new grounded theory constructed in this study. Followed by the implications of study for community, practice, education, research, policy and theory development.

Chapter twelve presents the evaluation of grounded theory which is presented in four sections usefulness, resonance, credibility and originality and contributes to the conclusion of this study.

In this study my practice of reflexivity method was recorded in a journal. An abridged example of my questioning during the category construction is provided (see Appendix 9: Category Construction - Questioning example).

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the substantive grounded theory: 'Navigating Uncertainty'. The theory signifies the psychological and social processes experienced within three phases that represented community members' journey through a significant life event. The development of this theory helps understand community members' decision-making and actions before, during and after the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. The substantive theory is built around community members' main concerns, what they did to resolve that concern and why, the values or meaning. These questions are tangible explicating the substantive theory, demonstrating process analysis, the processes within the processes. This chapter also provides an overview of the structure of the chapters that present the three major subcategories, augment the categories, situate the substantive theory within the body of existing knowledge and present research implications.

CHAPTER SEVEN: LOSING THE FAMILIAR

7.1 Introduction

Chapter six detailed the substantive grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty'. Chapter seven presents the initial phase of three phases and introduces the major process termed Losing the Familiar in two sections. The first exemplifies the category construction and development of properties, this includes focused codes and excerpts to preserve the participant's narrative voices.

The second section introduces the subcategory, and their properties which explains the major process. The major properties for this subcategory are: 1) knowing about the fire, 2) comprehending the gravity, 3) safeguarding responsibilities, and 4) locating family and others. The following questions have been used in the category construction to exemplify the process and processes within that process. What happened? What was the main concern for community members? Why, what was significant about their involvement? Each phase represents community members' main concern and the decision-making, actions and values related that circumstance. The second section will commence with a summary that introduces the major process.

7.2 Interpretive Category Construction

Property 1: Knowing about the fire

The level of awareness in the community differed with some community members oblivious that a fire was burning, whilst others noticed smoke, even so far as checking the fire the night before. A few community members were unconcerned and believed it was only a little fire (112:1 & 109:1) that it would not lead to anything, possibly even a non-event (104:1), and felt no threat or danger (107:1).

Acting blasé

9. *I remember the 1967 bushfires as a child. I was in about grade 4 but I can remember it was hot right from the word go, and you knew something was going to happen all day that day. But for me and I think I was comparing that in my head (104 Community member, 2015, p. 1).*

Thinking the fire was no threat

14. *In the morning I was walking the dogs and I met a friend who also had a dog, [name] who is out of the area now. And we were talking about the fire that was on Red Hill and the fire in Forcett. 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'. And she said, she was in the bushfire down at Snug some years ago and she moved to Dunalley because she said, it was the last place that would she believed would ever be affected by fire and we went 'see you later' (107 Community member, 2015, p. 1).*

A few community members were aware of the fire burning at Red Hill near Forcett and felt was important to pay attention and monitor the potential threat. These efforts included staying abreast of emergency services activities and warnings (103:1), speaking with local people about the facts and projections (111:1), appraising smoke shape and weather conditions (116:1) and fire position (113:2). A few community members had an inkling, gut or foreboding feeling (113:2) that something was going to happen, but not expecting a disaster (114:8).

Individual insight influenced the actions of community members leading up to the event. This included continuing with routine activities, going along with the actions of others and preparing whilst thinking they were overacting (104:1) or carrying out preparations and feeling the need to be organised (116:11, 117:1, 206:1, 110:1, 111:1).

Setting up each summer

26. *I always felt that I needed to be prepared for it. I always, like years ago I bought a plastic tank for my ute and I've had our pump set up, and every summer I set myself up. With that I just know you're better to be prepared, probably you've always got have backup plan for that sort of situation. I grew up in the tropics and have experienced cyclones, so I think when it comes to the*

weather you've just got to be prepared for anything (116 Community member, 2015, p. 11).

Some community members had systems in place and felt they were prepared, with grab bags, plans or set up each summer whereas others prepared early with a desire to feel organised, however most preparation happened alongside comprehending the severity of the hazard.

Feeling equipped

26. And so that was probably by the Thursday night prior to the fire, I think it was that the evacuation plan was in place. And then by that night I was more or less had made the decision I was going to stay, and I thought I had enough resources to protect our home, our sort of little precinct around our homes. As well as having plenty of water although I was didn't quite have enough petrol to run everything, but we got through (116 Community member, 2015, p. 1).

As the intensity and threat of the impending hazard increased, consequently so did the level of monitoring, this included listening to the radio and tapping into customary networks. Community members considered warning signs and information, analysed this information, consulted with others, planned and responded.

Property 2: Comprehending the gravity

The process of sensing and assessing information entailed comprehending the gravity of the situation. Community members attempted to understand what was happening then aligned thinking and feeling with actions. A participant described this experience comparable as to the tightening of a screw (111:2), over time a growing intensity and slow realisation of the gravity. Others claimed it was like a switch going off and signified a point in time upon processing information such as the smell of smoke, seeing billows of smoke, the power switching off or hearing concern in someone's voice. There was a realisation that the situation was serious, and comprehension was affected (107:1, 105:2).

Losing a sense of calmness

9. I remember vividly the wind picked up and it all happened at once. The wind picked up, the power went off here with a bang, and smoke came, and it was all like it went from nothing to, and I remember when the power went off and I

looked at [name] and said, 'oh my god, it is really actually happening' and it was at that point that I lost being calm. It was almost like a switch had gone off and I started to feel that sick feeling in my stomach. I started to get really anxious, I started to be quite irrational about - if I had left packing to that point, I would have been completely hopeless. The fact that I had organised everything while I was still calm and thinking it wasn't going to happen was a good thing (104 Community member, 2015, pp. 2 & 3).

Many community members struggled to make sense of what was happening, they grappled with evaluating what they were experiencing against their rationality.

Comprehending what was happening

22. *One of the things I remember quite clearly is I couldn't believe that I'd seen, that I'd read, I'd seen movies, you know news bulletins all our lives, we'd seen it, communities get burnt out. I could not believe it was happening to us, I vividly remember it going from my mind 'bloody hell this is our town' and that was when I was driving back down the road. I was on my own and I thought you know 'how can this be happening to us?' but it is (113 Community member, 2015, p. 19).*

Comprehending severity (out of area)

16. *It was still, wasn't real. I mean [name] came over [name] came up from Seven Mile and our other son was still here and he kept ringing and trying to put the, he saved one of the cars. I just told him to save himself and not to worry and he said, 'but you know everything is burning' and it still didn't sink in (109 Community member, 2015, p:1).*

The fire behaviour was incomprehensible. The sound it made was likened to 40 jumbo jets reversing at Tullamarine [airport] (106:3) with images of a fire ball travelling across the water (103:4) and language that described fire 'jumping from the sky' and 'barrelling through all the bushland' linked to feelings like being stunned by the force and speed (116:1).

Seeing a fireball go across water

6. *It came across the bay, it was probably 500 metres, this fire ball just went straight across the water like I never seen anything like that before in my life. I*

have seen fires and that sort of thing but for water, for fire to travel over water to that extent is phenomenal (103 Community member, 2015, p. 4).

The situation that transpired didn't register for many community members and they struggled to comprehend what was happening and likened the experience to a dream. It was happening, but they were not there, felt numb (103:12) or it resembled shut down mode (107:2). Community members questioned their survival and encountered feelings of shock, disbelief and trauma.

Recognising effects of shock

40. I guess I was in shock because I'd probably didn't register from what [name] said to me during the time 'I don't think you realise how serious this is' and I was looking at it and hearing it and feeling it, but I felt like I was wasn't really there it was sort of weird (207 Community member, 2015, p. 3).

Property 3: Safeguarding responsibilities

Knowing about the fire and comprehending the gravity of what was happening, entailed safeguarding people, protecting family members and kith and kin. Community members used individual customary networks; accustomed relationships and bonds that people had in their lives. Adult children from outer areas heeding warnings communicated through the media or witnessing the plume of smoke from Hobart and surrounds, contacted their parents and warned them of the fire and urged them to leave (101:1, 104:2, 205:4, 103:1, 205:4).

Contacting parents

7. The radio was still talking about it quite heavily and that point I rang mum and dad and said, 'you need to probably really think about what's happening' 5. packing some things and getting 7. mum was a little, let's say, ah blasé about it (laughter), a little bit blasé (um) 'get dad, mum, put dad on the phone (laughter) dad will listen'. Dad is bit more responsible on the emergency front I might say, and just sort of said 'hey guys, you probably need to be packing some things up in the car' and then when the radio sort of said it is getting close, they need to evacuate. I said to these guys 'just jump in the car grab what you can, the dog, don't forget [name] and head to my place' thinking Murdunna was far enough distance away there wouldn't be too much to worry about there at that point (103 Community members, 2015, p. 1).

The customary networks symbolised relationships of trust, this often influenced many community members' decision-making of whether to stay or go. When community members planned their course of action it generally involved some form of discussion within the familial and customary networks.

Making decision to stay

10. *We discussed it with our neighbours, and initially thought things would be okay and then things sort of took a turn very quickly and the wind came up. Our immediate next-door neighbour said she was evacuating because she had her grandchildren with her and the people next to her, so two doors down, they came up and said, 'we are going to go too, what are you doing?' and we said, 'we are going to stay' and they said, 'we will stay with you' (105 Community member, 2015, p. 1).*

Advice through their customary networks included; a local fisherman telling a participant to watch the direction of boats moored in the bay when the boats changed direction signified the time to leave (108:1).

The judgement of when to leave or go to a safe area differed greatly. Community members organised others; advised their wife or children to go to Hobart the day before (111, 116), or told them to go to Nubeena as the fire threat increased (110:1) or heeded a warning by a helicopter pilot telling them to leave.

Making decision to leave

4. *I was ringing (name) and he said, 'just stay there' and then the fire came down the hill, and the man in the helicopter was yelling at me to 'get out', and I thought 'oh I'll ring (name) again', 'the man said the fire is coming down the hill' and he said, 'oh no, do what you want' and I thought 'oh'. Then the birds started falling from the sky and hitting the ute and hitting the ground and I thought 'very much time to leave' (102 Community member, 2015, p. 1).*

Other community members left of their own accord when it was accepted that their efforts or capability of protecting their properties were futile (106:3 & 4).

During the fire threat, when positioning or moving to safe areas, community members considered the fire, smoke, and topography in their decision-making, they identified their proximity to water, bushland, and the road exit points. Water was a dominant feature when considering one's safety, with a desire to stay close to water. Other elements included the extent and proximity of forest, type of vegetation and meadows, road direction and destination.

Wanting to go to the water

9. You should be safe at Murdunna, I really wasn't comfortable of going there, because I kept thinking that 'all the trees and there was not a lot of water there, if I needed to get into the water' (104 Community member, 2015, p. 3).

Identifying safe area

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 Community member, 2015, p. 2).

As the gravity of situation intensified, so did the connection with and dependence on others. Community members checked 'at risk' people (11:5, 106:3), and pleaded with people to leave (206:5) or moved their family to safety (113:3, 102:1, 112:1). In the process of safeguarding family and others, roles adjusted. Adult children took on the responsibility of advising their parents what to do or depended on others to make decisions or govern the situation. This reliance required a degree of trust and faith in another person and in the relationship (104:3, 207:4).

Relying on others

5. We drew our strength, we've always known I'm probably the minority, I know if I crack first of all, [name] won't crack before me. She is tougher than me, no seriously you are and then [name] is tougher than her, sort of thing, these two feed off each other and they will always make sure and I knew that. And I think that is comforting in the disaster, to know that you have someone a bit stronger than you so if things do go wrong you will be okay. It is important to have that you might feel drained and scared and everything but right down deep these two are here I will be alright (103 Community members, 2015, p. 8).

In conjunction with the actions of protecting life, protecting home and livelihood was deemed important by many community members. This often depended on an individual belief in self or others with an appreciation of risk to self, other individuals' capabilities, resources available and knowledge of the local area (111:2). When considering risk to self and others, community members noticed power lines across the road and turned back to the hotel or recognised it was too unsafe to respond to help other people (117:7, 207:4).

Recognising too unsafe to assist

40. *They were in dire straits and they are in the water and they needed someone to help them by boat and could we do it [name]. And [name] made that decision together that they couldn't do that it was too unsafe and that was a really difficult decision for them (207 Community member, 2015, p. 3).*

Community members were astounded by the intentions of those who wanted to place their own lives at risk (206:6, 113:9). One participant realised their decision to stay based on feeling organised and equipped to protect livelihood, may well have been the wrong decision emphasising that the night was long.

Questioning staying

17. *It was pretty ordinary for a while but (pause) it was a long night. 1. So what were you thinking when that was happening? 17. We shouldn't be here (pause) but we was though (110 Community member, 2015, p. 2).*

Elderly people on boat ramps looked after children and animals, while others ferried buckets of water to put out spot fires nearby (103:12, 103:3), others felt a level of efficiency to protect their own street (110:2). These efforts depended on capabilities and the resources available. This included utilising a bulldozer to protect a local industry (113:17) and interchanging vehicles dependant on the task and demand, such as ploughing with the tractor then moving to a utility equipped with a water carrier to extinguish fires (116:4).

Taking care of people and animals

7. *The cluster of people on that boat ramp that day was amazing, everyone was doing something. You know mum with her heart condition, we sort of didn't want her running around everywhere, she stayed on the jetty with animals and kids, there were a number of kids and anyone, it depended on capabilities. I*

guess we had a few old people on the jetty as well you know, who couldn't do anything, but they were making sure the dogs on their leads and were not running off into the fires, keeping kids in floaties, and making sure they weren't going to drift out to sea and things like that. And those, that of us that could, were on buckets and towels, just trying to keep the fire from the door, not doubting yourself, you want to make sure you can do what you can do (103 Community member, 2015, p. 12).

Property 4: Locating Family and Others

When responding to the evolving situation, knowing where family and others were and that they were safe, was paramount. This also included the reassurance of significant others outside the fire zone, to let them know one was alive, safe and not to worry (117:6).

During the fire threat, knowing the whereabouts of family members, or that family had evacuated, reduced the worry and lessened their feelings of responsibility. It was a bonus not having to worry (106:15, 112, 116), contributed to less stress and a clearer head (111:3). Women who evacuated felt they would have been a hindrance to their partners if they had decided to stay, believing their evacuation reduced the necessity of protection (111:3) and allowed their partners to concentrate on looking after themselves and others and protecting place (110:12).

Being a hindrance

18. I think evacuation was good. I knew I needed to be away so [name] wasn't worry about me because I knew I be a hindrance. I'd be panicking about him and the boys which I was anyway but not being able to see it was better for [name]. And I knew that he didn't have to worry about me he could concentrate on looking after himself and our boys (110 Community member 2015, p. 12).

Another factor that helped reduce the worry for others was sticking to plan. This meant people were accounted for even disregarding your own rationale with the trusted advice of others (104:4). When given a direction or stated what one intended to do there was implicit meaning linked to relationship and trust. For example, a participant was advised by their partner to drive on a no through road surrounded by forest to the next small town. When driving past Dunalley beach, the participant felt the urge to stop and take shelter near the

water but kept driving, they stuck to an agreed plan because their partner would know where they were and could contact them at their destination (104:4).

Sticking to plan

5. *Then I thought I've told [name] I am going to Murdunna and if I don't go to Murdunna then he tried to contact me, it will give him an added stress that he doesn't need to have. We kept on going, so we went past Dunalley beach and I really wanted to stop there. I think in my head that is where I would have gone (104 Community member 2015, p. 4).*

Knowing where people were and that they were safe and to remain in contact was important, various methods were established to make contact and keep in touch. A message sent to a family member via Facebook to a daughter who forwarded the message to the person's wife (113:17), a plug-in landline phone (103, 104:4) or a family member's home outside the fire zone became the place to phone and share information (106:1). Community members valued their customary networks to keep connected and mitigate their worry.

Staying connected with family

13. *I went helped [name] and gave her a break and minded their kids, but in doing that [name's] mum got really upset that day because then she didn't really know where any of us were, she did but she didn't if you know what I mean. And mum had been through the 67 fires, so she really remembered all that for [name]. So, then I went back to [name's] mum and stayed with her and yeah and so in some way then mum's place became the place to ring and find out how everything was because there was phone calls all the time (106 Community member, 2015, p. 1).*

Knowing about the fire, comprehending the severity and gravity of the situation signified the beginning of this phase. Awareness and comprehending the seriousness of the situation influenced community members course of thinking and actions that were centred upon individual concerns. This included safeguarding of people, animals and protecting place. This process required making decisions, carrying out actions, relying on others, considering risk and knowledge of place.

7.3 The Bushfire: Initial Phase



Photograph 1: Dunalley 4 January 2013. Source: Mark Heather

Knowing about the fire and comprehending the severity and gravity of the situation, signified the beginning of **Losing the Familiar**. Awareness influenced the course of thinking and actions that were centred upon customary processes of safeguarding of people, animals and protecting place. This process involved making decisions, carrying out actions, relying on others, considering risk and knowledge of place.

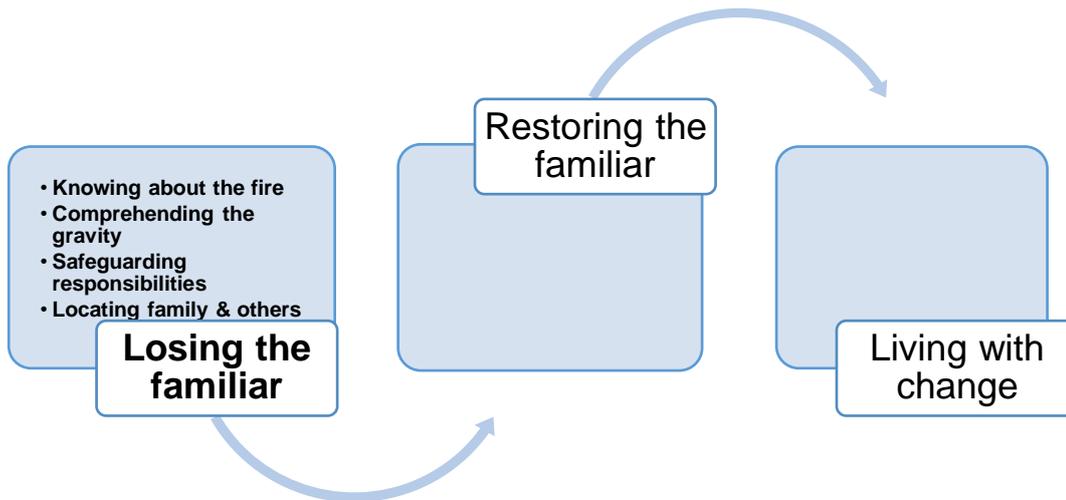


Figure 7. 1: Initial phase: Losing the Familiar

What happened? What was the main concern for community members?

The problem or concern that community members faced was the bushfire hazard which largely diminished a context that was familiar, routine and safe. It created a level of uncertainty and disrupted the regular everyday way of life.

Knowing about the fire

Knowing about the fire encompassed becoming aware that there was a fire and interpreting the risk. The differing forms of knowing included:

- Not knowing
- Acting blasé
- Not concerned
- Paying attention
- Seeing the signs
- Tapping into intuition
- Monitoring bushfire
- Considering plans

There were varying degrees of awareness which were linked to actions. Some community members were aware there was a fire but acted blasé, believing the bushfire was no threat and therefore, not feeling concerned or paying little attention. Conversely, others were

proactive and assessed and acted on the potential fire threat by making predictions, tapped into their intuition, monitored, planned and prepared.

Knowing about the fire meant community members had gained an awareness of the fire. This awareness was in community members' conversations, such as the discussion that occurred between two community members out walking their dogs on the morning of the fire when the likelihood of the fire impacting the town was talked about and dismissed. Others noticed the fire burning on their travels to Hobart and thought nothing of it or felt quite optimistic that everything would be okay. This consideration prompted some community members to go about their everyday activity. One couple who lived in the same household differed greatly in their awareness, one person was comprehending the fire threat whilst the other claimed they were unaware.

Knowing and not knowing about the fire

29. *We were completely oblivious* **28.** *To a certain extent I knew it wasn't looking good. I'd have to say, 'I did never expect what actually did actually happen', but the conditions weren't good, quite clearly not good. And there was a nasty fire, there was a nasty fire already in Forcett (117 Community member, 2015, p. 1).*

Previously, Franklin (2009) Franklin (2009) highlighted 'how optimism can take advantage of uncertainty, delaying tough calls until there are no longer any safe options' (p. 132). In Australia, the 'prepare, stay and defend or leave early' policy which was often referred to as 'stay or go' advised people about the actions they could take during a bushfire. Founded in 2005, it was a nationally endorsed position based on the requirement of individuals, groups or communities to accept primary responsibility for their bushfire safety (McLennan and Handmer, 2012). Since the 2009 Victorian Black Saturday bushfire disaster this policy has changed, when it was identified that many people perished sheltering in houses or other structures. It is now known as 'Prepare. Act. Survive' and has a greater emphasis on what is deemed the safest option, for people to leave early. However, 'research has demonstrated that community response to bushfire risk is extremely complex and people often embrace a hierarchy of strategies in term of preparedness, response and decision making' (Blanchi et al., 2015, p. 2).

The level of awareness community members had also included reflecting on their intuition, this included waking up on the morning of the fire and indicating feeling uneasy about the day ahead. For others, a role in emergency services increased their level of awareness with a sense of onus that influenced decision-making and actions to monitor and prepare for the fire hazard. The term onus represented the differing meanings community members felt in their level of responsibility, obligation or duty. This sense of onus has been identified previously in research on local knowledge and place for firefighters, local fire fighters had a sense of duty and commitment to the community which might compel them to take on a greater responsibility to protect place in a bushfire (Kruger and Beilin, 2014).

Community members' level of awareness was influenced by indications of the bushfire hazard, the interpretation of cues or signs against their own reality then acted upon accordingly. This included past bushfire experience, the weather conditions and surrounding topography to determine the level of risk. Community members recalled memories of events they had experienced or stories such as the Tasmanian 1967 bushfires and compared the incoming information. Some gauged the temperature with their memory of the 1967 bushfire or a 'nasty' fire that had burnt in the area years before that had a similar plume of smoke.

Community members interpreted what was happening in their individual situation, this influenced their reasoning about the level of probability and subsequent actions. Previous research has discussed the cognitive stages that influence people's behaviour in response to threat (Sorensen and Mileti, 1988). An individual's level of awareness and attentiveness in monitoring a bushfire, planning and preparation, and making decisions about safeguarding self and others are key facets in these stages. It was twofold in that as the indications of fire threat increased so did community members' awareness, the fire status gradually became the focal topic of conversation. The indications of fire, such as noticing smoke being factors that motivated residents' actions, has been reported previously by Boylan et al. (2013).

In this phase, state government representatives liaised with emergency services to monitor the fire status which then progressed to managing the fire hazard and its consequences. Local government representatives comprehended roles, activated management plans and assisted with the safety of livestock. Other government and non-government representatives and external volunteers were on holidays, whilst some monitored the hazard there were others who gave it minimal attention or were unaware. In this study, what appeared to

influence individual decision-making and actions was proximity of hazard and the level of responsibility in role. (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints).

Comprehending the gravity

Knowing about the fire is linked to comprehending the gravity, and comparable like the process of gaining awareness it occurred at different points in time for different community members. The differing forms of comprehending the gravity were identified as a gradual increase in the intensity of the situation likened to the 'tightening of a screw' or rapid 'like a switch going off'.

- Gradual – 'tightening of a screw '
- Rapid – 'a switch going off '
- Grappling with the severity
- Feeling astounded by fire behaviour
- Experiencing disbelief

Comprehending the gravity was marked by a point in time when community members recognised their circumstances had worsened, the threat of fire was serious and had a level of danger. Cues or signs that signified the seriousness of the situation included noticing the wind pick up, power going off, unfamiliar fire behaviour or birds fall from the sky or hearing concern in someone's voice and being told to leave. The situation was positioned outside many community members' familiar meanings, considered unforeseen with unaccustomed circumstances such as the unfamiliar fire behaviour and prevailing conditions.

Comprehending the gravity involved the interpretation and reinterpretation of what was happening helped verify the seriousness of the fire hazard.

The situation had progressed into a serious situation with considerable risk. The language many community members used to account for the fire behaviour, illustrated the feelings of an incomprehensible experience. Community members felt overwhelmed by the unpredictability of the fire behaviour, seeing a ball of fire travelling across the water, fire jumping out of the sky or a snowstorm of embers, it had a profound impact on the senses. Boylan et al. (2013) study highlighted that many residents who chose to remain in the area 'stated that they were not prepared for the ferocity, heat, noise and speed of the bushfire' (p. 33).

Some community members compared their circumstances to being in a movie or having a bad dream. The realisation of shock for one community member was described as hearing and feeling but not being totally present. The trauma suffered in a car accident was one community member's account of this experience. The experience generated feelings of numbness, shock and disbelief. During this time many community members were 'losing' or unable to find, much of their normative framework; they interpreted, reinterpreted and dealt with an ever-changing and uncertain context, and questioned their and others' survival.

A 'film like' sensory experience has been used previously to describe people's experience during a bushfire emergency (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011). Generally, when we experience an emergency our sensory ability is reduced, leaving us unhindered by intense body sensations thus allowing us to deal with any possible threat. If we sense that there is a potential threat then 'we tend to "dissociate" from the body to varying degrees', this is viewed as 'a coping mechanism that allows us to fight or flee potentially threatening situations' (Cayoun, 2015, p. 53).

How did community members resolve their concerns?

Knowing there was a bushfire and comprehending the gravity influenced community members safeguarding responsibilities. Gaining insight about the seriousness of the situation influenced the community members decision-making and actions that were centred upon safeguarding life, accounting for family and others, and protecting place.

Safeguarding responsibilities

The differing forms of safeguarding responsibilities included:

- Preparing and planning
- Reviewing plans
- Relying on customary networks
- Considering stay or go
- Factoring topography
- Considering risk and safety
- Taking into account capabilities
- Protecting life and livelihood

Safeguarding responsibilities involved aligning actions with individual knowledge, beliefs and values and prioritising what was important or significant.

Concurring with this comprehension of risk came the responsibility to act, by monitoring, planning, and/or preparing. Whilst some community members felt prepared with their grab bags, check lists, equipment and escape plans, others were preparing, considering their family's safety, capabilities, capacity and resources. Decision-making in preparation necessitated thinking and assessment of what needed to be done and the type of resources that were required. Tractors, trucks, pumps, tanks of water, and practicalities that included access to water, a base to work from and back up plans were major considerations in the process. Community members carried out a multitude of tasks, they packed their cars, filled baths with water, cut grass, hosed their homes, cleared gutters, organised their pets and opened gates for animals. Those community members with some degree of fire experience appeared to be better prepared.

The decision to wait and assess the level of fire threat has been raised in earlier studies (Blanchi et al., 2015, Boylan et al., 2013, Whittaker et al., 2013). Australian bushfire research from the Bushfire and Natural Hazard Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC) identified that a significant number of people discussed what they might do but chose to wait and see, and generally positioned their decision-making on the level of threat (Every et al., 2016, McLennan, 2015, Trigg et al., 2014).

Leading up to the emergency, feeling prepared, influenced community members' decision to stay and defend their home or livelihood. A sense of being equipped or physically prepared with firefighting resources and water contributed to feeling capable, this included aptitude and capacity. The degree of resident preparedness, forms of preparedness, and contributing factors like bushfire knowledge and rural living experience has been reported previously. A study by Every (2016) on emotional preparedness and its link to gender, identified that males claimed they felt prepared, which involved being physically prepared. This emotional preparedness related to decision-making on whether to leave or stay as did an understanding of bushfire risk and safety.

Customary networks played a significant role in their level of awareness. Community members depended on their customary networks to keep informed. They conversed with their neighbours and friends, discussed the likelihood of the fire reaching the town, made

plans together and recognised what needed to be done. These networks often influenced the decision-making and actions of others. A few community members received phone calls from their concerned adult children situated in the outer areas. For instance, Hobart or Port Arthur could see the large plume of smoke and/or had been keeping abreast of the situation and contacted their parents in the fire zone and advised them to pay attention to the bushfire threat, prepare or leave. Adult children appeared to be monitoring the hazard closely and took on a level of responsibility in the safeguarding of family. This may be linked to differing use of communication mediums, familial responsibilities and/or cues by seeing the plume of smoke.

A good deal of community members relied on advice from trusted local sources. The local fisherman advised one community member to watch the wind and the boats, if the boats changed direction, they recommended that it would be time to leave. This fisherman shared his knowledge about the boats moored in Blackman's Bay and the wind as a warning signal. The community member deemed the advice was trustworthy and reliable, with considering the fisherman's role and residency. Community members also relied on knowing who to contact for information about the status of the bushfire. Gaining information from a friend, a trusted source located in a fire tower, was instrumental in the community member adapting their safety and evacuation plan.

Information channels, social norms and trust have been previously identified as forms of social capital, these are regarded as important in disaster preparedness and response (Fairbrother et al., 2014). These active connections amongst people help bind networks and communities, and contribute to collective action (Yoshitake and Deguchi, 2008).

Safeguarding self, family, and others was a priority. A good deal of community members acted on their understanding of vulnerability and duty to others. This process involved ensuring other residents had evacuated or were safe or required knowledge of who was staying or leaving. Earlier studies identified that people will consider their own vulnerabilities as well as others in the community (Every et al., 2016).

The timing of community members' decision-making on whether to evacuate generally depended on their interpretation of information received from others, the credibility and source of that advice or warning signals. The method of decision-making varied from a

shared agreement, administered by a household or family member, or on their own accord, this often took into consideration mobility, gender and age.

Making the decision to stay or go

27. *It was a hard decision to know whether you stay or go but you sort of it made sense for me to stay but like I sort of made [name] go because she is a little bit older than me (116 Community member, 2015, p. 2).*

A few female community members were advised to or told to go by their husbands. One community member felt they had little choice in the decision-making, whilst others felt that it was what was expected of them. Alternately others recognised it was time to leave on their own accord. There were a few community members who appeared not to discuss being separated, and either evacuated or remained in the fire zone together. These findings are echoed in earlier studies that looked at household communication and gender in bushfire planning and preparation (Fairbrother et al., 2014, Proudley, 2008).

Some community members who felt prepared or had a plan, assessed the level of threat and then altered their plans. One couple had prepared their bushfire plan with friends who lived in their neighbourhood, their plan included a designated safe house. This necessitated reassessment and was altered due to the fire threat; after conferring with their friends, they proceeded to take shelter on a boat which was deemed another safe option in their group bushfire plan.

The local topography was regarded as an important factor in community members' interpretation and decision-making, their proximity to water being a crucial feature in level of risk and safety. A few community members identified areas that they felt were safe and utilised this knowledge when advising others to seek shelter. They assembled in areas where there were groups of other people, fundamentally near the water, on the local jetties or on boats. Many community members considered the direction the fire was travelling, main road exit points and bush/forest in their risk assessments. The importance of people understanding and acquiring knowledge of their local environment has been mentioned previously in research. Placed-based social and ecological knowledge is vital and has the potential to liberate and empower communities living in fire-prone areas (Shepherd and Williams, 2014, Taylor and Goodman, 2014).

A community member with a fire-fighter's role felt torn between the responsibility of fulfilling the community role and their commitment to their family role. They juggled their concern for loved ones. Knowing that their family had to deal with the emergency without them was difficult. At one point in time they realised the fire was heading towards their home town and felt a conflict in role, the desire to protect their own family, home or livelihood and community/place. This offered another perspective to decision-making and obligations when comprehending and responding to evolving demands as a community member with a sense of obligation and onus in role.

These findings have been echoed in a previous study aptly identified as the 'push and pull' of place where fire-fighters described what was an ethical dilemma between the personal and professional role, family and fire duty. The conflicts of duty with fighting a local fire or protecting own family and property, was a weight of responsibility (Kruger and Beilin, 2014). Responsibility in role is linked to the properties of 'locating family and others' where in their role men reported felt liberated knowing that their family or loved ones were safe and accounted for. These findings demonstrate the gendered culture roles that are often embedded in rural communities (Smith, 2013).

The sense of responsibility was shared by community members, drawing on their aptitude to do what they could with the available resources at the time. This involved rallying up local support to help warn residents and others, manage traffic or road closures, door knocking whilst keeping ahead of the fire front or protecting livelihood, homes and their own streets. Door knocking was reported as a valuable form of warning in previous research as many residents claimed that they were relying on emergency services to let them know when it was time to leave (Boylan et al., 2013).

Community members' decision-making involved the consideration of local issues. At the time of the bushfire the Denison Canal swing bridge had been problematic with the potential to jam open. A decision to keep the bridge closed was valued in that it ended up the main exit point for evacuation. In the height of the emergency many community members considered their own safety, and when possible carried out actions to safeguard others. There was a powerful instinct in trying to help others, whilst juggling a mental list of ever-changing priorities that required their full attention and energy. This involved coordinating actions to what was deemed important to at the time, situated in an individual's specific context. Community members worked collaboratively and recognised individual capabilities to designate specific

tasks or determine what they could do. This form of collective mobilisation that occurs in localities can contribute to the process of community building. It is centred upon social networks, the relationships when engaging in activity or exchanges related to the threat of bushfire (Fairbrother et al., 2013).

Why? What was significant about their involvement?

There was an overall sense of onus to protect life, home and livelihood. The bushfire threat endangered people and place, and significantly disrupted the routine of everyday life. Community members were required to alter their actions which depended on differing individual and collective values.

The protection of place extends to constituents of the environment that are known to you, with which you have a personal relationship and shared history, as *against* the unknown forces of disorder that lurk beyond the range of the familiar (Ingold, 2005, p. 506).

Locating family and others

Community members' awareness and comprehension of the severity of the bushfire threat was linked to safeguarding responsibilities and locating family and others. The differing forms of locating and accounting for family and others involved knowing the whereabouts and safety of people and keeping connected.

- Reducing the worry
- Feeling distressed not knowing
- Knowing people's whereabouts
- Staying connected

Locating family and others involved knowing that significant others were accounted for and safe. It tempered the worry and felt liberating.

Communication during the emergency was hampered by the bushfire. Numerous community members who evacuated on advice from family, the police or on their own accord reconciled they would be back in no time and everything would be back to normal. When community members were separated from significant others situated inside and outside the fire zone their distress and anxiety increased. They conjured up different scenarios, with many

deliberating on memories of the 1967 Tasmanian and 2009 Victorian Black Saturday bushfire disasters where there was great loss of life.

Not knowing

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. You had, sort of people had better phones I suppose. And then you hear awful stories and had no way of confirming them and you didn't sort of want to ring too much because you knew they were busy people (110 Community members, 2015, p. 3).*

It seemed difficult to have logical thought in a situation which did not make any sense. The separation or not knowing about the safety of loved ones amplified community members' apprehension. Incorporating stored images or stories of other bushfire tragedies, served to intensify the anxiety and distress. Staying connected was extremely important. It has been previously shown that separation from loved ones during and directly after the fires is highly stressful and a risk factor in subsequent mental health problems for people (Gibbs et al., 2016). Separation from family during a disaster event has shown to impact people's longer-term mental health. In the Beyond Bushfires study those people separated from close family members reported higher disaster impacts, major life events and chronic health conditions (Richardson et al., 2016).

Separation from family and others prompted community members to be creative that resulted in a variety of communication strategies. They located areas for mobile network connections, sent messages via other family members, utilised email, a plug-in landline or designated a relative's home as the main contact point. Many relied on their customary networks to locate and determine the safety or wellbeing of others.

Not knowing what was happening

23. *Everybody was trying to ring obviously, the only place you could really talk to anybody was you walked over to the actual school and there was a patch there and if you're lucky you could get out on the phone to find out what was going on (114 Community member, 2015, p. 1).*

To locate family and others was a high priority and it reduced or lessened worry, anxiety and distress. As reported in previous studies, people separated from family members because of the bushfire reported high levels of stress. Communication, loss of power and physical access hampered connections and people relied on multiple methods to resolve uncertainty, relying on usual modes of communication, such as face to face and phone contact and word of mouth (Richardson et al., 2016).

Communication not only provided reassurance about wellbeing, it tempered the worry which influenced the level of capacity to deal with other worries and responsibilities. Male community members who remained in the fire zone felt that by knowing the whereabouts and safety of their family meant they didn't have to worry, which freed up a level of their mental capacity and energy. This was liberating in that it lessened their level of responsibility and enabled energy to be directed to the situation they were managing. The language used to describe this included 'needing a clear head' and 'being a bonus not having to worry'.

These findings extend previous research on bushfire physical and emotional preparedness that identified men were more likely to feel emotionally prepared with the reassurance that their families were safe. Feeling emotionally prepared has been linked to gender, understanding of bushfire risk and safety, stay or go, physical preparedness and managing anxiety and stress (Eriksen and Prior, 2013, Every, 2016, Every et al., 2016). Another factor that might be included in psychological preparedness is the link to increased capacity, resulting from liberation of familial responsibilities.

In contrast, some female community members felt it was important not to be a burden or a hindrance to their husbands, claiming they did not need the 'added stress' or 'have to worry' about them whilst busy with fire related duties. This also involved sticking to plan even when it disregarded one's own rational thinking. The notion of family members feeling 'released' from familial obligations and thus able to take on increased occupational responsibilities during the emergency has been identified previously in research. The freeing up of family responsibilities played an important part of the greater community mobilisation.

This wasn't exclusive to spousal relationships, as demonstrated by community members who discounted the evacuation advice of emergency services and placed greater trust in their adult children's advice. This trust was based on the adult child's knowledge, experience of bushfire and local topography, and their relationship. These findings resonate with previous

research that identified that residents were uncomfortable with the advice provided by authorities to evacuate further south as, they feared they would be trapped (Boylan et al., 2013). Other community members spoke about their faith in friends to govern a situation, friendship was time honoured and trustworthy. Many community members appeared to know who they could rely on or had confidence in those who took a lead role.

Trust involved expectations on others and has a close link to honesty. An expectation that another person or people will act accordingly, not only will they keep an agreement but will be reliable and honest is reassuring. Although trust can vary greatly, generally in rural communities' trust in local people is higher. This has been attributed to people knowing each other personally or by reputation, as well as familiarity and a degree of visibility through higher levels of local involvement. Familiarity promotes higher levels of trust, and generally is highest with one's immediate family and lowest amongst strangers (Hughes et al., 2007, Webber and Jones, 2012).

7.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the initial phase of the psychosocial process. Losing the familiar was a process where community members experienced a threat to their existence, they felt a level of instability triggered by the fire hazard. The beginning of this process was the recognition of a bushfire and how community members interpreted the level of probability. It was this interpretation that influenced individual behaviours. The differing forms of behaviour depended on individual standpoints and varied from paying little attention to monitoring the threat closely. As the indications of fire threat increased so did community members' level of attention and feelings of uncertainty. This was evident in the differing ways community members realised the seriousness of the situation, varying from a gradual increase in trepidation to instantaneous. The reality of what had transpired was situated outside many community members' familiar meanings, considered unforeseen with unaccustomed circumstances.

During these processes, community members coordinated their actions to what they deemed important to them at the time and in doing this many relied on their customary networks and knowledge of the local topography. The fire hazard endangered life and place which prompted community members to protect life, home and livelihood. Decision-making

throughout this process was based on values; as the fire threat increased community members prioritised what was important with survival foremost. Within this context of uncertainty, not knowing the whereabouts and safety of others heightened community members' levels of stress. The knowledge that family and others were protected, unharmed and their whereabouts was critical as it lessened the trauma and increased emotional capacity, emotional, mental and physical energy could be directed to other significant matters. The following chapter presents the second phase where the main fire threat had passed, and community members adapted their focus and efforts: from preservation to the devastation.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RESTORING THE FAMILIAR

8.1 Introduction

Chapter seven introduced the first subcategory of the substantive grounded theory characterised as *losing the familiar*. This chapter presents the second phase, introducing the second major process termed *restoring the familiar*. Like the previous chapter, it is presented in two sections; the first exemplifies the category construction and its emergent properties, this includes focused codes and excerpts to preserve the participants' narrative voices.

The second section introduces the main subcategory and properties that explain the major process. The major properties for this subcategory are; 1) recognising disparity, 2) restoring affairs, 3) fulfilling role, 4) seeking the familiar, and 5) exceeding expectations. Once again, the following questions were used to exemplify the process and processes within that process. What happened? What was the main concern for community members? Why, what was significant about their involvement? Each phase represents community members main concern and the decision-making, actions and values related to that circumstance. The second section commences with a summary that introduces the major process.

8.2 Interpretive Category Construction

Property 1: Recognising disparity

Once the main fire front had passed community members comprehended what had happened, they noted the quietness, disparity and disbelief (117:8). A participant outside the disaster zone struggled to process information they received about the damage and destruction. Many others were upset thinking they had lost their homes or that the service station, school and hotel had burnt down; some of this information was misinformation (111:4, 108:2). Community members felt that in the organised briefings by the police, a uniform provided credibility (104:5). A lot of the information community members received about the bushfire disaster was described as unbelievable and they felt a need to see what had happened for themselves (115:2, 101:4, 105:5).

Needing to see school gone

11. *Well I think over time we discovered the extent of what had happened, and I think the next day we went because I needed to see what had happened particularly. I had heard the school burnt down and, so we went to Dunalley 10. Which was a traumatic experience because they wouldn't let us back 1. Really 11. Yeah yeah the police got all heavy-handed and said this is a crime scene you can't go back, and anyway we kind of insisted and then [name] from the [business] came and said they are actually locals. So, then they escorted us back to our place halfway back (105 Community member, 2015, p. 5).*

Many community members in the disaster zone struggled to understand what they observed visually and likened the images to a war zone or the end of the world, they described the feeling as surreal (113:11, 108:3, 115:4). They questioned how something that was such a large part of their lives now looked incredibly different, ash and rubble (115:4). Community members reflected on what was; they compared and reconciled memories of place before with the after which was significantly unrecognisable. They looked for something familiar, for instance a shed, house, gate or steps, to help make sense of place (110:5, 115:4, 109:2, 104:9 & 10).

The stark contrast of an unfamiliar place was used to compare the world outside the disaster zone. Community members who evacuated to Nubeena and later ferried to Hobart emphasised their arrival, they felt bewildered by what was happening. It was the New Year and there was much festivity which felt contradictory (117:6).

Feeling quite surreal

29. *It's just really funny getting into Hobart at 1am in the morning there, bedraggled, there's 200 bedraggled people, cats, and dogs and god knows what and there's all the party going on people and music and it was really 1. It was probably a bit surreal 29. It was, it was surreal 28. It was it was [name] she laughed as she told me, she told me she said, 'there I am getting off the boat smelly stinking clothes after three days you know grubby as hell and desperate need of the toilet and a wash and there is this girl tottering around on her high heels' laughter 29. And music blaring and everyone having a party (117 Community member, 2015, p. 6).*

This disparity was also felt by a participant who travelled in and out of the disaster zone daily and compared the disaster zone to a line or curtain that defined the contrast.

Needing to take a big breath

20. *It's all green and pretty and nice and then you know, you get to Forcett it and it would be take a deep breath, we're going to look and see all this (111 Community member, 2015, p. 12).*

This disparity felt weird and uncomfortable because only 30 minutes away from the disaster zone other people lived their life routinely. This was compared with life in the disaster zone, a life that had been turned upside down (105:6). A participant felt that citizens living outside the disaster zone should have recognised what had happened to them without being told, the experience felt so great.

Recognising the disparity

40. *We went to Sorell, that was weird, it was very weird, we went, [pause] it just was strange. It was like we had been through this massive thing and Sorell was, there weren't many people in Sorell it was very quiet, and people were just sort of, I wouldn't say going about their business because that was a different story, but it was just something weird about coming out of that and being in Sorell. Like, I felt like people were, they didn't know where we come from, but they could see us in our uniform and I thought people should be coming up to us and asking us, if we were alright sort of thing. It was sort of really weird. I thought people should be coming up to us and asking us if we were alright sort of thing, it was sort of really weird (207 Community member, 2015, p. 11).*

Property 2: Restoring affairs

Restoring of affairs involved re-establishing familial systems or relationships, returning home or retrieving family members. The community members who had evacuated felt an overwhelming desire return home, to reconnect with place and people, provide support, assess what needed to be done and get things organised (113:22, 114:7, 104:9).

Getting people back home (restoring the norm)

22. *You've lost you know, what was the word, the old norm wasn't it? 1. The old 22. The old norm was it; the old norm was that what they called it? 1. the old norm 22. So, you've lost that one, that's gone, so gotta try and get it back. In the first instance, I was trying to get everybody back home, and everybody back with their families was to me was quite important. Even though I didn't have much of a role in that it was in the back of my mind (113 Community member, 2015, p. 22).*

Community members felt motivated, evident through their efforts and resourcefulness to return to place. Individual efforts included navigating and negotiating a way for self or retrieving family (112:2) and others. Family members borrowed boats and travelled distances to retrieve family or other people. A participant paid a fisherman to transport them home by boat (108: 2&3). Others navigated the road blocks travelling from Nubeena or Hobart (107:3) and utilised various ad hoc strategies. A few people, including elderly relatives who required amenities waited until the roads had reopened (106 & 110:4).

Needing to return

15. *We paid a fisherman to take, well these lovely people let us get on the boat with them, they paid a fisherman to take them to Eaglehawk Neck. So, we gave them some more money and they let all our dogs and four of us get on this quite small boat (108 Community member, 2015, pp. 2 & 3).*

A couple who were staying temporarily with relatives struggled emotionally when they needed to leave their place of residence. They felt place was reminiscent and it was extremely hard to leave (205:5). Another participant likened the experience to an extended holiday with the desire to return home (109:2).

Wanting to be back home

37. *We should be down there and that was really, really hard, to be down here and even though there was nothing here, it still felt at home. And then you had to go and leave it and go up to, it was absolutely beautiful at [name] but it wasn't home. It really wasn't home, but I mean 38. There's a lot of people worse off than we were, they had to go and live in rentals with nothing around them but no family anything around them. In general, we were pretty well off 37. We were*

really lucky, a lot luckier than a lot of other people (205 Community members, 2015, p. 5).

Restoring affairs also included paying attention to the immediate needs, community members helped each other, looked out for each other, cleared the road and organised generators. Community members assisted neighbours whose home had been destroyed by fire by offering a place to stay or bedding (105:5). They helped each other which included a cooked meal for neighbours with a participant preparing meals for the men working in their neighbourhood. (106:13, 103:7). Neighbours helped each other (205: 4&5) without direction, one participant stated that they did not know why, other than the necessity or need to pitch in (107:6).

A participant recognised the roads required clearing to enable emergency services access into the disaster zone, they utilised their loader to carry out this task (110:3). Another participant recognised the need for fuel to run machinery and contacted the fuel company of their local service station and organised a generator to dispense fuel for the 10 days there was no electricity (116:13). A generator was wired up at a general store and rotten and decaying material from the freezers was dispensed (106:9).

Acting in response to the evolving demands signified getting the place running properly (106:13). Response to the immediate needs included recognising what needed to be done, utilising and adjusting the familiar skills (207:6). Community members who had experienced trauma themselves were caring for others and demonstrated the ability to adjust their capabilities and cope with circumstances, and in the process learnt about shock (207:14).

Helping people make decisions

40. But seeing that look in their eyes, I don't know what to do, I don't know how, I don't know what I want, I don't know how to get up, to get what I want sort of thing. I'm not explaining it very well but over the next 10 days of helping people get some supplies to live day by day, I realised that decision-making was really, really difficult, and I had to help them make really simple decisions and not ask them to many questions and I learnt that as the week went on. But that first night to see that those people, so debilitated by shock and fear and loss, to not be able to know what they wanted to eat, sort of thing, but just being so grateful for somebody cooking a meal or having or having some food for them. And I

think it could have been 100 people they served that night and yeah just people coming and going you know (207 Community member, 2015, p. 7).

Community members adjusted their responses to the varying demands (101:2), this included identifying and assessing a situation, prioritising actions and adapting their responses. These efforts signified their attempt to survive or cope with the circumstances (106:13).

Property 3: Fulfilling role

These efforts required community members undertaking differing roles which included stepping up for a role, recognising what needed to be done and responding, offering or asking what needed to be done, seeing a need that required extra help or tapping into established networks (112:4).

Community members accessed their established networks, with names, contact numbers or email addresses and communicated information or requested support. These customary networks were an integral part of getting things done (106:18, 112:4, 104:10).

Organising local women

21. When I first arrived, I rallied a few friends and family and said 'look we need to sort this' yeah yeah. And then when [organisation] came on, I thought 'gee I'm really going to have to get a bit more organised it's not going to be just a day or two'. And 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 Community member, 2015, p. 3).

Fulfilling role or various responsibilities differed amongst community members and for many it was a desire to contribute or do what they could (112:2). Other community members felt they had the capacity or time on their hands due to retirement or a sense of duty being part of the community (101:7). A few felt that they had managed to get off relatively scot free with minimal or no damage to their property and had skills that may be useful (117:12) or had the capacity because the fire had not destroyed their home (103:6).

Some felt a level of confidence in their knowledge and customary networks (104:12) and one participant perceived their efforts as a way of coping (107:6). Alternatively, a few community

members who lost their home felt it was important to keep busy, doing nothing would allow time to be miserable (109:10).

Others reflected on why they didn't help, claiming they could have but felt guilty for still having their home (114:4) or were a little selfish justifying their main priority was to rebuild their home and return to work (205:10).

Questioning offering to help

23. In retrospect maybe I should have you know stuck my hand up and said, 'hey' you know. And I probably could have gone and done that myself in or gone to the pub and said, 'look I am around I can help'. But I, you know, I'm just a bit, just felt better stay out of it you know. And it's like we had our house and still like you know, it's still a bit like that and I think it'll always be like that (114 Community member, 2015, p. 4).

Over time as conditions evolved similarly so did community members' method, they took on more specific roles in response to the perceived needs. As the differing demands arose, actions were adapted, shifting from the essential, food, safety and shelter, to the functional, communication methods and coordinating support. These roles were generally characterised by the need or demand matched with individual capability, capacity, associations, and the available resources.

Organising blackboards was perceived as a practical method of communicating information, large blackboards placed strategically on the edge of each of the towns impacted by the bushfire (106:18). The phone tree was another communication system that was developed at grassroots level, deemed a functional and valued system.

Sending out messages

5. Not only did I send out the first message, then people sent it out to their people and so everybody was working at getting the word out, and it worked was amazing really that was one of the good things (103 Community member, 2015, pp. 13 & 14).

A participant heard information about the interest in using local tradespeople in the rebuild, upon hearing this information they developed a local trade business directory.

Developing tradies list

18. *We sort of went around many businesses as we could, thinking of carpenters, plumbers, sparkies, landscapers, painters, plumbers, everybody. We sort of drew a line at Forcett basically and if you lived Forcett down. We drew up the list and it said what you did, and had them going out in a newsletter and at the pub. The publican actually said, you know 'people are saying, where can I get a sparky, where can I get an electrician, and can you get me a list of people' which is how it eventuated (110 Community member, 2015, p. 8).*

Roles evolved with need, a participant carried out a few different roles that depended on their capabilities and perceived need; coordinated visiting services (206:11) and distributed money that was donated locally (206:17). Others applied for funding to build walking tracks (114:4) or attempted to establish groups, some deemed successful others unsuccessful (103:16).

Community members were contacted directly by external services and asked what was required. A doctor from Sorell contacted a participant to enquire about the need for medical support which resulted in a medical clinic in being established at Dunalley. A regional community group contacted a participant and asked what they could do to help, an action that resulted in community BBQ's (101:5) and, a tool shed and amenities block being established in Dunalley for community members (109:9).

Community members with existing roles in education, emergency services, health and business maintained their roles, but the composition changed with additional or shifting responsibilities. The preparation and commencement of the school year involved the establishment of a temporary school at the fire station which was later moved into temporary buildings (115:8). Community members on local committees felt an added sense of obligation due to the intensifying and growing demands (106:16 & 17).

Fulfilling committee roles

13. *It was like stuff at church that had to be fixed and yeah then there was stuff to work out about the hall. And the flower show was upcoming and so because that was March, the first week in March, and that was only two months. So, you had start 8 weeks out for that, which is January. So, there was running around where are, are we going to have the flower show, what are we going to do? And the church, were wanting to allow people to use the church. So, it was like what do*

we with the stuff in church that might not want to be used so, that was talk about that and the church were also wondering who needs help, and what can we do? So, you sort of yeah, on the phone and think about that and it all just kept, there was one thing, another thing, another thing (106 Community member, 2015, pp. 16 & 17).

A participant who owned a business also found that their priorities had shifted (116:10). Those community members whose homes and businesses were not destroyed by fire took on greater roles supporting the formal sector response; by accommodating emergency service personnel (104:10, 103), providing local knowledge and supporting the establishment of a command centre (117:8) or offering a business premises as centre of operations (110:5).

Helping set up command centre

28. *I helped set up the, the police at the golf club, found them, found them a generator and lights and all sorts of bits and pieces, so they can get themselves away from the public and to do what they wanted to do, yeah. So, I spent a bit of the night doing that first-aid, carting people around. Basically, I did more as an SES volunteer than I did as of fire brigade person' (117 Community member, 2015, p. 8).*

To meet the demand of restoring affairs, community members felt it essential at times to break rules established by others (104:9), act strategically (115:5) or navigate road blocks for supplies and resources, connect with significant others (112, 106, 114, 113), dump spoiled goods (106:9) or challenge bureaucracy.

Breaking the rules

9. *I found that we broke rules that I would never have broken. Yet you had to break the rules, just to survive because other people who put the rules in not us. I heard afterwards that people, you know fought with police at the road blocks and I can understand. These were people that had never broken the law in their lives. But you know this is your life, your family and you have other people telling you what you should do. So, I get that, I absolutely get why people got angry at the road blocks and why we broke the rules (104 Community member, 2015, p. 9).*

Whilst community members acted to meet their essential needs similarly so did the humanitarian relief, with donations and people arriving in the disaster affected area. Material donations flooded into the area, however there was insufficient time to sort through nor the infrastructure to store items. Community members felt an overwhelming sense of obligation to accept and honour donations or help being offered (115:8 & 9) and were often required to support visitors from out of the area who felt distressed or overwhelmed by what they observed in the disaster zone (112:5 & 6).

Restricting good Samaritans

21. *I mean with the help of so many people, we needed that but I liked the road closed because it meant those people donating and feel good Samaritans, which they were great, weren't here and we didn't have to deal with them. Once they opened the roads, for me that made it a little bit harder because not only were you then dealing with your volunteers that were getting highly emotional as well, because in a community where everyone is volunteering they knew everyone affected. What was I gonna say about that and then you've got really emotional people coming down donating, wanting to actually see where their goods are going, see the traumatised people, see the devastation and then actually get really traumatised themselves (112 Community member, 2015, pp. 5 & 6).*

Reconciling with the citizen humanitarian reaction was the formal sector emergency management response which influenced community member roles. Formal roles in the recovery efforts were varied for community members and often happened by default; specific government and the community knowledge/skills (104:10), existing government position (105:9), transitioned from a volunteer to employee (112:7) or selected as the community representative on the regional recovery committee (106:16).

Managing the donations

25. *The donations for the actual school started rolling in 24. Rolling in 1. Rolling in 25. In that [Venue]. Thinking back now it was a nightmare really 24. Well that was the disaster after the disaster and 25. Dealing with 1. Can you tell me a little bit about that now that you've brought it up? 25. Well you know people are very kind, but we got so much stuff and we still have so much stuff in the [storage] that is just not usable. And I suppose because we had we had to*

spend so much time sorting through it and working out whether or not we could use it all, where we are going to store it because there was nowhere to store it other than the containers that were bought in. So, then it was a bit of dilemma, suppose a moral dilemma, you know that people have donated this stuff in good faith and elderly [profession] have donated old [item] that stuff, that's obviously precious to them and was very useful to them, but for us to sort through and try and make sense of it, at that particular time was not helpful, at all (115 Community members 2015, pp. 8 & 9).

Over time roles changed. A participant who fulfilled a formal role felt that they were unable to meet position expectations and others felt their efforts and knowledge were dismissed by visiting services (206:12) or that there had been little or no consultation (105:8).

Losing ownership

11. *What I found difficult was, what I found really difficult, that was quite difficult but just going there to confront it also, there were these other people that came in [service] sent in and it felt like they'd taken over my role in it. And I can remember feeling quite angry about it, that I had some control over what was actually, I felt like it was my [workplace], and I had a relationship with the people and between us we could work it out, what needed to happen, but it sort of got taken away and that was really quite difficult (105 Community member, 2015, p. 7).*

For a few community members being an employee in the recovery efforts was difficult. For one participant their desire to bring both their professional and their community expertise was unsuccessful, their professional position guided what they could do and say.

Losing control of life

9. *I found that all of a sudden, I had gone from someone who was completely in control of my life. I decided, where I would have coffee, who I was friends with, I decided who knew my business, you know, who came here. To being, this person that all of a sudden, I was told where I had to go, what places I was allowed to go to, that we are going to have a community event, that you know, it is going to be here, and you're going to come along, because it is expected (104 Community member, 2015, p. 18).*

Carrying out a role also appeared to counteract perception or judgement that some community members had been affected by the bushfire.

Blurring of boundaries

11. *For me it felt like there was a blurring of the boundaries, because I had been through the fire, and then I was going in being with them, there was good and bad points to that. So, there were good points in that I'd been in through it too. And they all knew I had been through it too, that gave me a certain trustworthiness in their eyes, in that I had been through it too. and I understood and we kind of like, we became much closer (105 Community member, 2015, p. 7).*

One participant noticed a shift in the community attitudes when their house was boarded up. They felt that their partner's emergency service role in some way concealed that they too were affected by the fire and claimed it took a visual cue regarding damage to their property for the community to acknowledge that the couple had also been affected by the bushfire disaster.

Sensing a shift in attitudes

20. *It was 'oh, did you lose stuff? Oh, are you okay? Oh, so you haven't been living there? It was oh you are'. Like a change, there was a real shift and a real change with the way people's attitudes were, I think. It just wasn't something that they thought of, that we had been affected, that [name] hadn't been affected, because he was just the [role] (111 Community member, 2015, p. 15).*

Losing one's home for some community members appeared to be based on something that was visible, quantifiable or measurable.

Not needing to verify hardship

2. *Well that was good 3. That the [community service] were a big help. They were the ones that actually you didn't have to prove yourself that you were in dire straits or been affected by the fire (101 Community member, 2015, p. 3).*

The term 'affected' was commonly aligned with having one's home or business destroyed by the fire and linked to funding and charitable efforts. The standard question residents were asked was 'did you lose your home?'. It seemed that if a person's home was not destroyed by the fire they were considered not affected in a visual or quantifiable manner and therefore unscathed.

Weighing up being affected

23. *I don't think it's done deliberately but...go to town and you know buy something after the fires and they find out where you live and it's like 'oh you lost your house', then were you affected by the fires, then and it's like, you know, everybody was affected by the fires. Whether you lost your house or not, whether you lived in Dunalley or Murdunna or Marion Bay, wherever you lived everybody was connected, affected by the fires. And I think that question really bothered me (114 Community member, 2015, p. 6).*

Property 4: Seeking the familiar

The efforts to restore affairs and fulfil role embodied seeking the familiar, simple, accustomed and recognisable practises of the local community. It was important to know what was going on and remain well informed about happenings. The content of information had to be kept simple; short messages conveyed in a language in local rather than government language (104:13). Practical communication systems such as the blackboards, phone tree, and opportunities to connect and talk with other residents who had experienced the bushfire disaster were valued by community members (101:4, 106:23, 115:12 & 13).

Relying on simple things

2. *Relying on simple things like a blackboard and chalk for a while and it worked. And then the gathering, getting people together and explaining to them face to face (101 Community member, 2015, p. 4).*

To unite with those people who had survived the event, was supportive (105:7, 108:7, 205:8 & 9) and likened by one participant as a pillar or a mast for the boat they were rowing (102:3). Community members valued having people they knew involved, their customary networks or faces they knew. At the Dunalley hotel community members recognised people who were driving things, someone who they may not have known but had seen before or knew them

(103:13, 109:3). With the convergence of citizens in the disaster response, community members would often seek out familiar faces.

There was an awareness of knowing that was important, understanding place, people and how things functioned, offered a sense of reliability and security (102:1&2, 104:12). Community members valued any opportunities to connect and bond (115: 14 & 15). Locations that community members were acquainted with and activities that brought people together were valued. For example, local cafes that had survived the fire were places to go for coffee or share a meal (108:3, 105:5, 206:15).

Valuing opportunity to share experiences

10. *[Business] opened up and basically provided free, free space to hang out but also and free coffee and free food, they just, they just opened their place up. Almost like it was a recovery centre, almost and a lot of people went and spent time down there. Was a great opportunity, just to go around, share experiences, talking to people and feel the connection, feel the bond which helped people (105 Community member, 2015, p. 5).*

Connecting with others

39. *If they need six rolls of toilet paper and we've got it, they can take it. And if they need something else and you know they're still got a house, they are really needing just to connect with other people and this is their way of connecting. And they have got to feel like they're got something because they feel like they've nearly lost everything (206 Community member, 2015, p. 15).*

The community members whose homes were destroyed by the fire that were staying in temporary accommodation elsewhere, felt disconnected from their community and missed out on opportunities to connect and feel a part of the community moving forward (205:5).

Missing out on community stuff

38. *I took about a week off after the fires because it was our busy time at work. It was [trade] time, work had to be done... I missed out on a lot of stuff that I would have been involved in, community stuff. And a lot of stuff was going on that because we were away, we didn't know what was going on, we missed out on a lot of stuff (205 Community member, 2015, p. 5).*

Gaining a level of normality was a common goal for many community members. This meant the school needed to be rebuilt, the community hall and most importantly people's homes. The school was perceived by one participant as the '*mixing point in communities*' (115:18). It was the heart of the community and fostered a sense of community, an integral part of many community members' history (113:23). The desire to rebuild homes and expert advice of not to rush this process proved to be a challenge (205:11).

Needing home back

37. Yeah, things that we went to of his and he was saying time and time again 'don't rush into building your home'. And looking back now you can see why he said that but also you do it, you have to do it, because you need your home back. You just don't want to be living in a shed and caravan all the time (205 Community member, 2015, p. 11).

Property 5: Exceeding expectations

The disaster generated momentum, community members were energised with adrenalin and instinct to rebuild and restore everyday life. One community member described this process as moving without thinking (110:10) whilst another felt like they moved on fast forward, everything happened very fast, almost a blur (115:7) surmounted on adrenalin and instinct (103:11, 106:11).

Moving without thinking

18. I don't think I thought too much back then you know, I think for me, I don't think I thought too much on about anything, I just, just moved. And for me it was too hard to think too much because it sort of, got deep down and I didn't want to go there. So, I just think more surface than anything deep at that time. I just soldiered on, didn't want to make too much of it, didn't want to think about why. Probably just brushed to the side more than anything, it was too hard to think too much, if that makes sense (110 Community member, 2015, p. 10).

It seemed that instinct and expectations motivated community members to keep going. To go that little further signified taking on extra tasks to help others (115:14). A participant who had a role on the hall committee claimed it wasn't just about rebuilding the hall, there were numerous responsibilities such as the purchase and installation of a kitchen right down to testing ovens and crockery (109:6).

Many community members' positions exceeded the 9am to 5pm working hours of most occupations (112:8 & 9). A participant believed the community was their extended family. Within these relationships there was a sense of reciprocity (112:11).

Underpinning these beliefs was the acknowledgement that there were many other people that were far worse off than you (106:16). To see others toiling away, and to not hear anyone complain or take sick leave led to the assumption they were doing okay (115:22, 111:11). To take a day off for one's own desires and well-being was weighted with guilt and felt like letting others down (207:9).

Putting on a brave face

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 Community members, 2015, p.11).*

There was a shift to what one participant described as 'surviving day to day' (115:14). The struggle to keep going was driven by a belief that that what you were doing was valuable for the community (116:9). Community members were also required to deal with the extra demands and moral obligations that came with the charitable efforts (115:10 & 11).

Paying tribute depleted energy

24. *I've got my old laptop here would you love it? And I think the laptop was 10 years old...and one of the terrible things was that because you said 'yes please, we'll take it thanks', you'd honour the donation really well and the goodwill, but that took up so much energy (115 Community member, 2015, pp. 10 & 11).*

Some community members felt a weight of exhaustion dealing with the overall event. For one participant they would often have four or five people present at their home first thing in the morning (111:10). As time went on visiting services concluded and left the area, there was little interest from the media and the feelings of specialness disappeared (115:15). Some

community members recognised they had to step back, establish boundaries whilst others felt they needed to keep going (112:10, 107:8).

Establishing boundaries

21. *I did in the end start to put up barriers and say, 'look if give me a call tomorrow or you know, yes this has happened, but we'll sorted out tomorrow' (112 Community member, 2015, p. 10).*

What community members strived to achieve remained somewhere in the distance, many felt there was still so much more to do. Others felt guilty because contributing to the broader community efforts meant they had neglected their own familial responsibilities (112:12, 104:10, 111:11, 115:14) or started to realise that they felt exhausted and the event had impacted significantly their life.

Stepping back

21. *So, pause, so I probably left earlier than I probably would have left but it was a good time to go anyway. The need in the community had died down and it was good for me to step back. And it was quite easy to do really, to go from being, you went from being a community member that had volunteered, to working for the organisation in high need, to winding down a bit, to then stepping out of that and the community realising that you were now exhausted, and you needed to step back (112 Community member, 2015, p. 11).*

Whilst a few community members stepped back (112:11) others felt they had to reduce the community expectations, they assumed the community expected them to continue their role (206:20). Community members tended to fall in a heap at different times (103:12, 207:10). A participant suggested that the ability to monitor one's own functioning in these types of event was impaired, and felt this task required impartial monitoring and support (112:12). Two years on, the recovery was supposedly over and those community members who had been busily involved in the broader response felt they had missed out on the support (104:15).

Missing out on support

9. *So, it's just, it's when you stop doing the stuff that you realise that you lost that you've missed out on that because you've been so busily in it. And once the recovery is over it is actually too late, too late to tap into that. And people*

don't understand then, because it is 2 ½ years down the track, it was two years down the track or whatever and everyone's getting on with their lives. And it is like most of the people are, but the people that have been, when I look around at the people that I've worked with that were in similar situation, too many, it looks very similar too yeah yeah. I don't feel the same about the community and even hindsight, I wonder if I would have done it (104 Community member, 2015, p. 15).

8.3 The Disaster: Second Phase



Photograph 2: Dunally 5 January 2013. Source: Warren Frey

Reconciling the bushfire disaster signified the beginning of the second phase. Once the firestorm had passed there was a process of comprehending what had happened, the disparity and shock. Restoring affairs was the subsequent course of actions and activities undertaken by paying attention to immediate needs and working towards **Restoring the Familiar**. This involved managing recognised needs as they arose, prioritising the demand and adapting efforts with the resources available at the time. Unifying with the recognisable tendered vitality and purpose to move towards a common goal, security and normality. Managing the foreseeable and unforeseeable, and moral obligations contributed to exceeding expectations and lead to exhaustion.

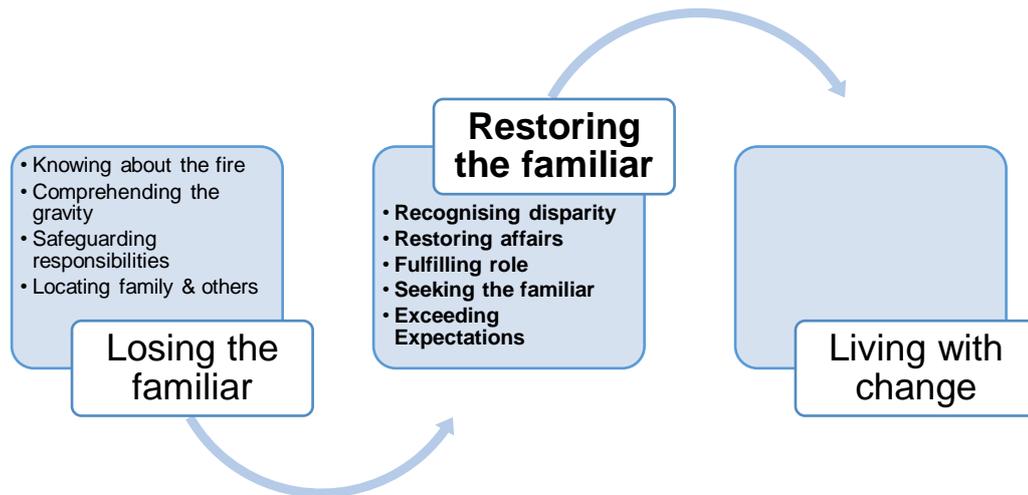


Figure 8. 1: Second phase: Restoring the Familiar

What happened? What was the main concern for community members?

In emergency situations meaning can be defined whatever is of critical importance to the subjects. It means concern for life, for the people they care about, and sometimes for significant cultural constructions like religion, history and tradition. Meaning is what creates the desire to stay alive. And the desire to stay alive keeps people alive. Meaning comes from anywhere and everywhere, but there are some sources that are especially potent. Sometimes the emergency effort itself can contribute to meaning, after all, being needed is a big one (Golembiewski, 2012, p. 45).

Community members' main concern in this category was the bushfire disaster, the destruction, damage and disparity which directed their efforts on the restoration of everyday life. Normality offered a level of certainty or stability and safety.

Once the firestorm had passed many community members struggled to reconcile what had happened; they noticed the disparity and had suffered trauma. Although there was no clear line that defined the shift from the bushfire hazard to the disaster, community members adapted their efforts from preservation to the devastation. In the disaster zone community members emerged from their place of refuge whilst others broadened their efforts. They connected with others and moved around their locale to assess the damage and put out spot

fires. They noticed the quietness and described the atmosphere as deathly quiet. Many experienced a feeling of dread about what had happened and what might lay ahead, they anticipated loss of life, destruction and damage, and felt distressed and disoriented by the unfamiliar milieu.

Recognising the disparity

There were two main forms of recognising the disparity; place and the outside world, and comprehension to process what had happened.

- Comprehending what had happened
- Comprehending news received
- Needing to see what happened
- Trying to make sense of place
- Recognising disparity - Place and outside world

Recognising the disparity entailed the comprehension of what had happened, the unfamiliar milieu, silence and devastation.

The characterisation of place involved language. Eerie, the end of the world, unrecognisable, war zone, surreal and unbelievable became commonplace descriptors of the tortured and fire ravished landscape. This disorientation has been mentioned in previous disaster recovery research, where it was 'characterized by a general and sometimes profound sense of distress, bewilderment and grief, and a sense of unreality or what several described as a "surreal experience."' (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, p. 399).

Community members outside the disaster zone struggled to grasp the information they received and yearned to know what had happened. The misinformation about what had happened in the disaster zone was distressing. To hear you had lost your home or have viewed photos that depicted your home burning but later learnt it was the buildings behind was upsetting. A community member felt that the 'thought' that they had lost their home, exacerbated their trauma. Community members were required to decipher what they deemed credible information and not misinformation. The information received via the organised emergency services briefings was valued, the uniform provided credibility in the source and accuracy in the information.

To understand what had happened generated a powerful desire to observe the disaster zone with their own eyes. This involved returning to place to fully comprehend the extent of the information they had received because hearing the detail didn't suffice, it made no sense and was unbelievable. To view the setting helped make it factual and helped community members interpret the situation.

Upon their return to the disaster zone community members attempted to understand or make logic of what they were seeing. They described this experience as if their home had been placed in a different setting because very little was familiar. The walk or drive down the main street of Dunalley was for one community member the most bizarre 10 minutes of their life. Community members looked for clues in the ash and rubble to make sense of what had been their place. As highlighted in previous disaster research 'the illusion of permanence, predictability, and stability that is established through routines and the structuring of familiarity was unmasked' (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, p. 400).

Trying to make sense of place

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. Where trees, our house had been secluded here, like people didn't even know the house was here, because of the trees. And we were right next to the [building] but you would never have known, and everything was gone. It was just like this was in the middle of a place that we didn't recognise (104 Community member, 2015, pp. 9 & 10).

The familiar setting of place in its new context of being the scene of a major bushfire disaster was unsettling. The disparity of place and experience within the disaster zone was contrasted with life outside the fire affected area which had not altered or been touched directly by the event. Some community members felt that citizens who resided outside the disaster zone ought to distinguish what had happened just by looking at them, they felt no words were needed. The intensity of the experience was immense. It seemed that the emotions associated with the experience felt formidable enough to be detected visually and necessitated acknowledgement of their wellbeing. The disparity provided context for understanding a significant life event, the emotions substantial enough to be visible to others.

How did community members resolve their concerns?

The fire hazard and disaster revealed that the world was not a safe place. It created a level of disparity in community members' lives, by disrupting a context that made sense. The routine of community members' everyday life, and familiar terrain that corresponded with those social processes, was different. The threat and disruption to life energised and motivated community members to direct their efforts towards re-establishing the equilibrium, stability and routine. In their approach, community members unified with the recognisable which offered purpose and vitality, to move towards restoring everyday life.

Restoring affairs

Recognising the disparity is linked to restoring affairs. The differing forms of restoring affairs included:

- Retrieving family
- Needing to return home
- Attending to immediate needs
- Getting place organised
- Tapping into customary networks
- Collective efforts
- Acting strategically

Restoring affairs involved the approach undertaken by community members; it focussed on re-establishing interactions, the familial systems and other relationships, place and way of life.

To return to place was important, community members felt a strong desire to return to place and unify with familial networks. The sudden displacement of families, separation, emotional stress and reunification has been discussed previously (Blake and Stevenson, 2009, Chung and Blake, 2014).

When meaning becomes problematic and decreases, this is a signal for people to pay more attention to their formal and informal social ties and to reaffirm and/or reconstruct them (Weick, 1993, p. 643).

The main roads into the disaster zone were closed for approximately seven days. The road closure created a level of frustration and stress for residents as it impeded their ability to meet their needs such as obtain resources or necessities. Numerous community members fostered ad hoc strategies to navigate the road blocks, to return home or meet their identified needs. When navigating road blocks, they felt rules established by others needed to be broken. Generally, these rules would not have been broken but the situation warranted decision-making and actions that related to one's survival. Many community members demonstrated initiative, they utilised their connections and position or unpatrolled back roads and tracks to manoeuvre road blocks to obtain what they felt were essential items. For example, generators, groceries or to gain access into the disaster zone. Community members felt they were often required to act strategically to meet their demands/needs. Another perspective was having the roads closed for ten days offered a level of sanctuary for many residents, it offered an opportunity to sort out one's own needs and get things together.

A local government representative expressed their concerns in relation to the decision-making concerning the road closures and questioned political or economic motives over best interests of the community (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints). Resident concerns about the road closures and authorities have been raised in earlier study of the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster by Boylan et al. (2013). The road closures caused frustrations and heightened stress amongst residents, by impeding their ability to access essential resources, check on pets and gain access into the area. The issue of residents not gaining access to their properties after evacuation or being able to leave and return, and at times, hostility towards the authorities have been identified previously in other Australian studies. Access and authorisation, based on the needs of residents and their safety have 'emerged as a highly contentious and emotion-charged issue in every post-bushfire study conducted by the Bushfire CRC' (McLennan, 2015, p. 31).

In the disaster zone community members attended to their immediate needs. Many surveyed the damage and destruction in their locality, sought and connected with others, sharing information and resources, and aided others. Those community members whose homes had survived the fire offered beds or accommodated their friends, neighbours and relatives. Other priorities involved determining which residents had health requirements, locating their whereabouts and attending to their individual needs. Cases of this nature included seeking the whereabouts of an elderly resident with diabetes who relied on insulin or negotiating a boat trip to Hobart for a woman in her final trimester of pregnancy. Furthermore, residents

and business owners instinctively organised perishable items such as meat or bread that had not been damaged or destroyed by the fire to be dropped off at the Dunalley hotel. This produce was packed and stored in the hotel cool room then used to feed people. Community members rallied together, organised meals and offered their support.

Community members who had experienced the emergency and trauma firsthand cared for other residents or citizens who were distressed or required support. One community member learnt about the effects of trauma by reflecting on their interactions with others, they recognised an impairment of decision-making. They felt this was due to shock which necessitated their assistance to make decisions and an awareness to not ask too many questions. Whilst some community members attended to individual requirements, others demonstrated the foresight to manage practical matters such as clearing the road of debris to enable emergency services access into the disaster zone.

Residents adjusted their actions to the identified demand, they recognised problems, prioritised tasks then matched their capabilities and the resources available. Cases included the fences destroyed by fire, risk to livestock and utilising damaged power poles by cutting them into fence posts then delivering them to farmers. Community members identified needs like power for the fuel station or general store, and worked out ways to resolve these problems, utilising their knowledge, relevant networks and resources in their local area.

Getting in touch with fuel company

26. *We got in touch with [business name] petroleum to get them to see if they could get a generator hooked up to this service station to pump fuel. Eventually after a few phone calls they did. One of the previous owners of the service station he came down to run it. So, it was a cash only thing, but we could get fuel which everybody needed to run their machinery that was the 10 days we didn't have any electricity (116 Community member, 2015, p. 13).*

Neighbours and neighbourhoods have been recognised previously as significant in carrying out collective action, such as sharing resources, caring for animals and providing emotional support to each other. These findings are consistent with the field of research that people impacted by these types of disaster events will not stand around and wait for help but will work with others with heightened altruism based on the good of the community (Dynes, 1973,

Whittaker et al., 2012). These social processes were identified and discussed in the preliminary literature review (see Chapter 2.5: Community and Citizen Involvement).

Many community members knew where to go, what had to be done and who to contact within their own environs. Community members' established relationships were important, augmented by time-honoured friendship or acquaintanceship, an understanding of situation and abilities which cultivated trust, credibility and the alignment of the community values. Knowledge and identity resources have been discussed previously in the context of social capital, the relationship of knowing someone might have a skill or resource is often underpinned by reciprocity, trust and values. In the past these have been identified as indicators of local social processes and features of collective identity (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000, Shepherd and Williams, 2014, Webber and Jones, 2012).

Community members assisted emergency service personnel who had been deployed from out of area and utilised their local knowledge to assist personnel in their efforts to establish a command centre at the Golf Club. Local knowledge helped identify an appropriate building that had survived the fire, source a generator and organise lights to make the unpowered club useable and operational. Other situations where community members assisted emergency service personnel included accommodation or a base to coordinate specific support services.

The evacuation centres established by local government in Sorell and Nubeena had evolved into relief centres. Local government representatives assisted on the periphery, managing media or utilising their status to help essential services (water carriers) gain access into the disaster zone. A few state government and non-government representatives who were sent to the disaster zone recognised the work that was being achieved locally and offered their support. An external volunteer filled their boat with donations and navigated their way via Norfolk Bay to the disaster zone to provide goods and support to the people impacted by the disaster. The state government responsible for driving the recovery arrived four or five days into the disaster, recognised the value of the community self-activating without a rigid decision-making structure. Nevertheless, they identified that in the absence of a well-designed supporting government mechanism there were quite a few frustrations exposed and less than ideal communication processes employed (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints).

The Forcett bushfire disaster gained considerable media attention throughout the state, nationally and internationally which contributed to the immense interest and humanitarian efforts directed into the disaster zone. In the past it has been suggested that media will often report and reflect images that reinforce the cultural myths of disaster that everything has been destroyed, previously termed the Dresden syndrome (Dynes, 1994, Solnit, 2009). Issues raised in previous research, recognised the need to keep the public informed with a balanced range of ethical dilemmas, such as interacting with those people impacted, what to publish and competing pressures (Muller, 2010).

Citizens utilised back roads and the waterways to transport donated goods and offer help. Many residents who had experienced the event firsthand encountered citizens who wanted to travel to the disaster zone to physically witness the devastation and give directly to those affected by the event. At times citizens and service personnel ended up distressed at the sight of the devastation and needed to be comforted by the residents.

Earlier research suggest community recovery can be disrupted by the convergence of people and organisations, indicating such actions as over servicing and the invasion of privacy (Fielding, 1998). It seems that the number of people wishing to assist in the relief and recovery efforts can, at times exceed the identified need (Kendra and Wachtendorf, 2001).

The external efforts and goodwill generated extra duties and at times, moral dilemmas for community members. The timing, volume and quality of material donations was problematic. Community members were appreciative of the kindness and generosity, on the contrary it also created an added burden. There was a sense of moral obligation to accept and honour the visitor-related goodwill. Managing the volume of donations in the disaster zone took time and energy, sorting and storing items in a setting with limited infrastructure was an immense and challenging task. These findings have been echoed extensively in previous research, with recommendations to develop policy and procedures that feature strategies for convergent management and control. (Holguin-Veras et al., 2014).

Local government and non-government representatives also valued the good intentions of citizens donating goods, nevertheless it became the 'disaster after the disaster.' There was a perception that social media (Facebook) distorted the actual need, thereby shifted what was perceived a manageable necessity to an unmanageable necessity.

Finding, social media a headache

30. *Somebody overheard the conversation, got on Facebook and the next day we literally had hundreds and hundreds, and hundreds of tins [baby food/formula], nappies donated to us. Now it takes it from being a manageable necessity to an unmanageable necessity and taking up a lot of space (118 Government representative, 2015, pp. 3 & 4).*

Material aid flooded into the disaster zone and local council relief centres which developed into an all-encompassing dilemma and required additional physical effort, time and resources to administer. Non-government representatives recognised their efforts focused on managing the donations which they felt was not their key role. They attempted to redirect efforts to supporting the community and, in this process, noticed that citizens were bypassing established mechanisms to donate directly to residents, they then tried to act as a buffer or remove some of that burden. State government and non-government representatives felt distressed that citizens or groups wanted to be recognised for their giving. Well known identities and groups wanted to visit the disaster zone and meet with local people. A government representative felt that although the intentions were good, they hadn't considered the timing and welfare of residents. Quite often residents were expected to fit in with the desires of those offering the goodwill and accommodate or honour the visit. One representative described distress seeing the need to be recognised for giving, visitors would convey their importance then leave with evidence of their goodwill (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints).

Distressing seeing the need to be recognised for giving

31. *People want to be recognised that they're giving. I just found that really distressing and they didn't necessarily go 'oh what's needed?' They'd come down and say we're here doing this and the fact that there might've been a barbecue or a drink session a day or two before, oh no they have to come on that day, it's the only day they can come. So, all of a sudden, you've got to round up some bloody locals, what an absolute joke and it wasn't about the people, the victims at all. It was about the bloody company (119 Government representative, 2015, p. 4).*

Disaster tourism is one phenomenon that is mentioned in the literature, however it is generally related to citizens visiting the area to see and experience the disaster impact. Disaster

tourism is a term used to describe a visitor-related issue, where people have an intense desire to visit the disaster site, this behaviour has been likened to journalism as fact finding (Tierney, 1998). The phenomenon generally emerges 'immediately after a disaster when the media attention is high, people may visit the affected area to see and experience what has happened' (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011, p. 187).

Fulfilling role

In the process of restoring affairs, community members fulfilled roles and responsibilities. Specific roles materialised such as someone to coordinate the material donations. As the situation evolved, similarly so did the roles and responsibilities. The differing forms of fulfilling role included:

- Responding to need
- Fulfilling existing and new roles
- Supporting external services
- Juggling extra duties
- Managing convergence interest/goods
- Shifting priorities
- Diminishing role
- Blurring of boundaries

Fulfilling role involved meeting a need, demand, desire or custom. This was generally matched with individual capability, capacity and available resources.

The volume of donations at the hotel generated the necessity for a coordinator. As the quantity increased so did the demand for extra help. A community member who stepped up to coordinate the donations rallied a few friends and family to assist them. When the designated state recovery organisation arrived in the disaster zone there was an expectation that the community would lead the coordination of donations and goods. The service personnel stated they were able to support the community efforts but were unable to provide volunteers to help locally due to road closures. A community member realised the demand would be greater than one or two days and felt it essential to feel more organised. This involved tapping further into their local networks, the organisation of rosters and establishment of what they termed a 'department store' full of donated goods. The helpers were predominantly female residents who were required at times to return home and help protect their properties which continued to be threatened by fire in the days after.

Roping people in to help

12. I said to [name] 'where's your barbecue' he said, 'it's out the back'. Right, so I went and got the barbecue. There was another guy there, I roped in [name], said [name] 'you come and help me your place is fine there's nothing else you can do, so you can come and help [name]'. So, he helped me do the fridge's at [building], [name] by that stage which was the father of the couple that I dragged out of the boat, he'd turned up by boat, so I dragged him along to the [building] and I said, 'here start cooking the sausages' (106 Community member, 2015, p. 8).

Role improvisation in disaster events has been previously recognised as an integral component of community leadership (Richardson et al., 2014). Other studies have recognised the characteristics such as leadership, creativity, flexibility and adaptiveness and use of local networks as important features in the way communities manage disaster events (Kusumasari and Alam, 2012, Reimer et al., 2013).

The bushfire disaster disrupted the customary communication mediums. Mobile phones were problematic with unreliable power and network issues which hindered communication systems. The few plug-in landline telephones distributed throughout the disaster zone became critical links to the outside world, this and the increased activity in a very unaccustomed setting heightened the need to keep informed. For a period, the disaster setting was likened to a carnival atmosphere generated by the interest and activities. A group of residents acted on an idea of utilising blackboards to communicate information, they felt blackboards offered a practical method of communicating small pieces of information to the community. Community members planned to place the blackboards strategically on the edge of small towns in the disaster zone. This grassroots idea went to the regional area recovery committee for attention but ended up entwined in bureaucracy which resulted in small 'A frame' blackboards that were deemed 'useless' by a community member. It resulted in a community member taking it upon themselves to build and erect the large blackboards as first planned. This accomplishment generated two functions for community members, maintenance of boards and up to date information.

Other grass roots communication systems were initiated to keep residents informed. A phone tree system that communicated local events, meetings and activities which required the

function of an administrator. The phone tree was regarded significant by many residents evident by the number of people attending events and activities.

Other community members recognised and responded to individual or community needs relating to the bushfire disaster as they arose. A conversation that identified an issue between a community member and a business owner prompted an idea to develop a 'tradies list'. The community member felt they had the ability and connections to organise the list. These three initiatives were examples of identified needs compatible with a community members interest, their capabilities and available resources.

Further initiatives that were established from residents' interest, with some interpreted as successful and others unsuccessful. The approaches varied but ultimately depended on leadership, interest and capacity of residents. Community members also took on functions that were not clearly defined. A multitude of functions that involved recognising gaps and aligning one's area of interest or expertise such as the administration of financial donations directly to residents because citizens wanted to bypass charity organisations. These findings help understand emergent roles, the transformative nature of networks and their underlying qualities which has been recognised in previous Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC research (Fairbrother et al., 2014).

Service groups approached community members to ask what was required or offered activities. What stood out was the approach offered through established connections. For example, a medical representative contacted a community member to enquire about and offer medical support or service groups contacted community members directly to offer to the community a barbeque event. The differing salient aspect of this approach was the mode of communication; by asking or offering and type of interaction, the connection was personal. This appeared to be in line with the ethos of a community development approach where the power was given over or located with community members (Kenny, 1994).

This leads to the other variant embedded in restoring affairs: community members' functions and responsibilities that grew in conjunction with the disaster interest and the humanitarian efforts. The constitution of existing roles changed, community members undertook additional responsibilities that were directed by changing priorities and other forces. The multiple functions to manage the consequences of the disaster often went beyond the capacity of community members' normal existence, their day to day routine role or usual duties.

Community members with existing volunteer roles such as members of the church, hall and cemetery committees juggled the personal impact of the disaster and the consequential layers of their community obligations. The rebuilding of the community hall or new-found demand to use the church building for meetings meant extra responsibility and duties on some of community members. Customary activities like the annual flower show required attention to attend to the added logistics of locating a new venue as its usual abode, the community hall, was destroyed in the bushfire. The added weight of deliberating whether to have the flower show or not, this decision-making was influenced by values. The flower show was a customary event and it had greater significance because of the circumstances. It was a small piece of normality crucial in restoring the normative framework.

Fulfilling role involved the juggling of multiple roles and responsibilities. If a community member attended a meeting they would often need to deal with several other tasks, on top of what they were already doing. There were multiple new and unfamiliar tasks such as a rebuilding their home or the community hall, restoring historical cemetery records and coordinating burials. Others felt their priorities had shifted with one community member taking on a greater role in their hospitality business which moved their focus away from their farm which was damaged in the bushfires. This led to facing new challenges both physically and economically, whilst feeling the weight of other tasks that were neglected and still required time and attention. Community members demonstrated their organisational skills when involved in the broader efforts. They recognised and assessed need, prioritised, planned and strategised, and accomplished. In their approach they drew on their individual expertise and strengths which were underpinned by the community values. This situation depended on the individual; roles and expertise varied with interest and capacity. These social processes are comparable to some of the common characteristics of resilience such as functioning well under stress, self-reliance, social capacity and successful adaption identified in the preliminary literature review (see Chapter 2.4: Vulnerability and Resilience).

Interacting with the citizen humanitarian response was the sector emergency management recovery response which also influenced roles and some community members felt that they lost a level of ownership in their roles, their expertise was not recognised or utilised, or they were unable to meet the role expectations of organisations. There were several roles that developed in the sector recovery response and were filled by community members. Over time, many of these roles transformed. Some community members felt they were unable to fulfil position expectations when functions were modified to align with organisational values.

One community member perceived this shift nullified their community identity. Another community member considered they had the ability and capacity for their new position, the time and energy, and access an extensive local network. The voluntary position was replaced by a paid position which steadily demanded a different skillset such as policy writing and liaising with government, it was felt that expectations of role expanded outside their abilities.

Community members with an existing position within state government felt that being a community member with expertise in a certain area was valuable in that they had something to offer both the state and the community. Nevertheless, their aim to bring both the professional and personal aspects to the job was a challenge. They felt that the expectations of their professional role nullified their community identity. The professional role, a paid position, changed over time with the development of certain obligations and expectations. They felt a loss in control of their life, and the freedom to make decisions about their own needs and desires. In the loss of the community identity to professional role, being a paid staff member automatically set up a conflict, one lost ability to self-determine. There was a perception that voluntary positions kept their community identity and voice, in that they couldn't be silenced. The rhetoric in the concept of community development and the difficulty of linking, participation, empowerment and capacity building into practice has been identified as problematic in earlier research (Webber and Jones, 2012).

To contextualise and offer a differing perspective to fulfilling role, it appeared that a state government strategy in the recovery program included an operational action to purposefully create jobs for community members or involve them in projects. This strategy was viewed as helping residents manage their recovery grief, a way of venting or contributing so they felt significant again (see Contextual Standpoints Chapter 10:2).

Occupation in some way offset the experience of a community member being impacted or affected. It seemed that partaking in role often neutralised the perception or judgement of being affected and it blurred boundaries. One community member felt there was a blurring of boundaries when working therapeutically with others impacted by the disaster. Although they could identify value in their established professional relationship with the community which was time-honoured and trustworthy, they too were travelling a similar journey and were affected by the event. Other community members with occupations felt they were often not perceived to be affected until there was physical evidence to suggest so. They reconciled

that 'affected' wasn't something that other community members had appreciated, they assumed that community members identified them as their 'occupation'. In the process of assuming role was a struggle with dualistic roles such as insider/outsider and victim/survivor.

A few community members felt that the context required them to justify their position of being affected. This was predominately assessed by what one had physically lost, a duality based on something quantifiable. Some perceived there was a general perception that there was a division between those who lost homes and those who didn't, suggesting that those who lost their homes could justify being affected and take advantage of the support without any guilt. The term 'affected' appeared to be commonly aligned with losing something physical, quantifiable and linked to funding and charitable efforts. A few community members felt a level of guilt to not lose their home or that they had to verify or justify their hardship. One community member claimed that the standard question they were asked was 'did you lose your home' which defined who was affected by the disaster. Others claimed that their attempts to help were turned down because they were perceived victims and needed help.

These issues have been raised in earlier literature and identified as the labelling and categorising of victims in the hierarchy of grief, linked to some people being more affected or worse off than others (Eyre, 2006). Another term includes the hierarchy of losses, where the dominant discourse displaced the home from its symbolic and socially constructed meaning, to a physical form of shelter and economic investment (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, Proudley, 2013). Previous research suggests the disaster experience is completely subjective, the disaster is tangible but the consequences to people's psyche are intangible. The experience cannot be measured in loss of life or homes or by anything quantifiable (Solnit, 2009).

Why? What was significant about their involvement?

Seeking the familiar

The differing forms of seeking the familiar included:

- Keeping communication simple
- Unifying with those who lived the event
- Looking for familiarity
- Valuing places to connect
- Knowing what needed to be done
- Attaining the customary

The bushfire disaster had turned people's lives upside down and community members grappled with the significance of the event, and the process of restoring everyday life. Seeking the familiar tendered a level of safety in what was an exposed setting and signified aspects of normality which provided a level of comfort. Community members shared experiences and support this contributed to the spirit of community and social stability.

Many community members sought features that were familiar. One community member felt mentally fraught and scanned a sea of unfamiliar faces in the marquee set up in the hotel paddock for a familiar face. Community members valued seeing familiar faces, even the faces of residents they had seen around town but didn't know or knew only by name.

Needing to see a familiar face

4. *It seemed like there was just a sea of faces there and I think you are not in a good mental place, and you just want to see a familiar face (102 Community member, 2015, p. 5).*

Some community members and their families who lost homes chose to remain in the community close to extended family and place, it was something they understood, and it was familiar. Others felt it was difficult to leave the area for work commitments and those community members whose homes were destroyed by fire yearned to return to place. It was important to stay close to place and take shelter. The feelings of 'unsettledness' that community members experience in these types of events and the meaningful role of 'place' have been identified in earlier studies (Proudley, 2013).

One state government representative likened the impact of disaster to someone moving to a new city or town, they pointed out how everything was different and there was a process where a person needed to familiarise oneself with their new environment, to find some routine and familiarity (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints).

Generating some routine and familiarity

36. *Everything about your life, when you move, becomes a lot more difficult. And it's exactly the same, I think but 300-fold following an emergency. So, it's not just that you've lost your house, it's not just that you've lost your clothes...So being able to generate some routine or some familiarity or some comforts to replace what they've lost, I think is critical for a community trying*

to recover. Let me not think, let me not have to think about every aspect of my day, let me find a routine where I can walk in without the fear of what am I going to say or are the people that I walk into the room going to like me or what conversation should I have or what happens if there is an awkward silence. Give them some routine and comforts (204 Government representative, 2015, p. 16).

To unify with those who had lived the bushfire disaster was meaningful. The bushfire had threatened people's existence, the shared experience of endurance and vulnerability tendered an unspoken understanding of a catastrophic event. This explicit understanding, of shared experience meant very little had to be said or explained, and opportunities to connect and interact were valued. One community member claimed being jammed in at the fire station created a sense of togetherness, collegiality and provided impetus into the unknown. Venues where residents could gather to share experiences in a customary manner, such as the local cafes that survived the disaster were valued and respected. This collegiality provided unity and strength in the unknown, and motivated efforts to attain social stability.

These findings resonate with earlier research on the 1972 Buffalo Creek West Virginia flood disaster where people sought emotional shelter because the blurring of logic and collapse of meaning provoked a sense of feeling exposed and alone (Erikson, 1976). Unity has also been echoed in previous research (Drabek and McEntire, 2003). Solidaristic behaviour and its role in helping strengthen 'people's sense of community, social cohesion and social capital' has been identified in previous studies (Imperiale and Vanclay, 2016, p. 216).

There was a compelling drive to get things back on track and this involved getting things in order and the place running properly. What appeared to help this process was understanding and responding to local demands. Knowing what to do was almost natural in that community members carried out many activities without direction or explanation. They noticed something needed to be done and felt a need to respond. In the knowing what to do there was an air of confidence in one's ability for the specific task, this confidence and skills often aligned with individual and the community values.

It has been identified previously that shared values promote cohesiveness. People come together because they have similar desires, priorities and purpose. This union fosters a belief

that by joining together they might be in a better position to satisfy these needs and acquire the support or assistance required (McMillan and Chavis-George, 1986, Smith, 2013).

An important part of this process was an understanding how the community functioned, who was who, the networks, norms and language. The difference was reflected in reference, such as when a state government organisation suggested to meet in town, many community members assumed that signified Hobart, not locally. One community member felt that at times the meaning in communication was often lost between the community and government officials, they would communicate in a manner that that was difficult to understand. It was felt the language needed to be kept simple and not confuse people. It appears that in times of stress, familiar processes and structure is an important consideration in these types of events. According to Johnston et al. (2012) a more recognisable and less stressful environment for participatory decision-making fosters empowerment.

State government and non-government representatives observed what they felt was a gap in their understanding of what was happening in the disaster zone between those working on the frontline and those based in Hobart and surrounding areas. One representative felt that in the initial days of the disaster 75% of the workers were from urban areas, and at times this hindered a comfortable fit between service providers and recipients. They suggested rural practice required a unique skill set that included the ability to adapt. There was a recognition that rural communities were unique (often wary of strangers) and efforts need to focus on understanding the community and moving gently (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints).

To gain a level of normality was a common goal for many community members. To rebuild homes, the school and the community hall were perceived paramount as these places spawned customary life, they were more than buildings and allowed for predictable actions and routine. Many activities and social interactions that occur in these places contribute to people's normal existence. The importance of a meaningful community setting has been previously highlighted in the literature, it was recognised as critical when considering loss of social life, the disorientation and disconnection of familiar life (Erikson, 1976, George, 2013).

The loss of the school was significant, and evident in many community member stories. The school was perceived as the hub of the community, the heart or institution that connected the community and was also a vital part of many residents' history. The collective goal of

rebuilding the school meant the children and their families could re-establish routine and normality. Expert advice or knowledge that suggested community members postpone the rebuild of their homes often clashed with a powerful desire to have their home again. To leave temporary accommodation, return to place or resettle was important because rebuilding your home denoted the recommencement of traditional practices, such as having the family members visit for dinner on Sunday night.

Gaining some normality

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 Community member, 2015, p. 18).*

Family culture is symbolic throughout these findings and it appears that for most people, place has been identified as one of the strongest sources of identity. People will generally ascribe place to where they were born or from, and where they live, 'and the place with which they identify through their parents and kin group' (Hendry and Underdown, 2012, p. 116).

There were differing reasons why community members felt the desire to do something or contribute to the broader community efforts, with involvement generally dependent on individual ability, capacity, and motivation and responsibility to fix things or deal with the situation at hand. Many community members felt a sense of duty to participate in the efforts of restoring place, others felt a desire to do something, the capacity to assist, or perceived it as a way of coping.

Community participation before, during and after an event has been known to reduce anxiety and trauma (Johnston et al., 2012, Solnit, 2009). This type of involvement might support earlier research on communities by disaster expert Charles Fritz (Fritz, 1961). Fritz argues that communities impacted by disasters naturally develop therapies that mitigate losses, trauma and hardship privations (cited in Pupavac, 2012). Fritz also claims that disasters provide some respite from worry and anxiety, past or future, people's lives became moment by moment (cited in Solnit, 2009).

Having the capacity to assist included your home not being destroyed or having suffered minimal damage or loss equalled or underpinned by a sense of guilt. Quite often community

members self-directed themselves to help. Participating in the collective efforts was also seen as a way of coping because sitting at home or in temporary accommodation was perceived detrimental to their mental health, helping was perceived as a way of coping with an overwhelming situation.

Not everyone chose to assist in the broader community efforts. Some community members felt that their main priority was to rebuild their home and fulfil other obligations such as working out of area. A few community members claimed that they were not involved in the broader community efforts because they felt a level of guilt that they had a home or had not been asked.

Contributing to the broader community efforts was recognised and valued. There was a perception that community participation helped create a sense of community spirit and provided momentum to move forward. This community spirit was often fuelled by adrenalin and underpinned by individual and community values, there appeared to be a sense of duty in 'what one must do', and it was a highly valued function of community.

Exceeding expectations

The disaster generated momentum and energised many community members with adrenalin, instinct and purpose to move forward, rebuild, reconcile, restore regularity and familiarity. This momentum was underpinned by responsibility, obligation or duty to self, family and others, and to place because there were others who were perceived as a lot worse off.

Although the resilience aided the community spirit and created a context for moving forward, it subsequently appeared to undermine individual vulnerabilities. Exceeding expectations necessitated the contribution of a large portion of self, to deal with the extra demands, moral obligations, changing roles and the added complexity the disaster generated.

The differing forms of exceeding expectations involved:

- Working on adrenalin and instinct
- 'Putting in the extra yard'
- Feeling sense of obligation
- 'Smiling on the outside'
- Running on empty
- Balancing values

- 'Falling in a heap'
- Missing out on support

When community members talked about their or others' involvement in the disaster efforts, what stood out was the meaning community members gave to time and their expectations. Numerous community members used descriptive language such as how they survived on adrenalin, life felt like it was on fast forward or moving without thinking. To think about what happened was too hard and comparable to acting on auto pilot. One community member felt that the days turned into a blur dealing with the volume of donations that kept rolling in and the nitty gritty of each day. There was little time for planning or thinking too much, and that took energy that community members couldn't afford.

A community member's role or function wasn't a 9am – 5pm job. To assist in the broader community efforts, it was seven days a week and anytime of the day. The work would often continue until the job was done, priorities shifted or demands changed. Community members worked weekends and after hours and were often accessed at their home or in the community. The differing expectations for community members, mirrored values of doing what was required, to give that little bit more, juggle the extra jobs, make an extra effort and put in the extra yard.

This commitment seemed to be motivated by individual and the community values about kinship with people and place. There are various explanations that suggest evidence of traditional communities where the distinctions between the public and private are not separate where 'individuals are known to each other as people rather than roles. In such a society, "community" is a much richer, deeper and more real experience, and forms the basis for all social interaction' (Ife, 1995, p. 16). When helping others, emotional labour is quite often the hidden part of the workload. There has been earlier research conducted on the relationship between emotion work and burnout. A study found that emotion work produces both positive and negative outcomes, such as personal accomplishment and, interpersonal exchange. It also identified how 'the downside to the "masks of impression management"' (Brotheridge & Lee 2003, 377) is a tendency towards stress and burnout' (Newman et al., 2005, p. 26).

The extra demands generated by the disaster were emotionally and physically demanding for community members. This cumulative effect depleted energy and many struggled with

their emotions and felt exhausted, much of this was kept private and not shared. The sense of responsibility implied there was little time to stop and converse or share one's private struggles. This created an appearance that everyone was doing okay, however it was a difficult time. A community member felt that because no one else had gone on stress leave they assumed others were coping which influenced their efforts to soldier on.

Smiling on the outside

25. People felt, I think lots of people felt, what they need to do is to keep going, because everybody else was in our context. Anyway, like I know there were times when I thought 'oh god I wouldn't have a clue what I am doing tomorrow'. I'm you know but you just think 'well no one else is gone off on stress leave I'll just keep going too'. And I think that's how everyone felt at [place] wasn't it
24. Yeah 25. I mean they felt they just had to keep 24. Keep going 25. Stepping up (115 Community members, 2015, p. 22).

The necessity for someone's peers to perceive that that one was coping has been identified in earlier research (George, 2013). In a study that looked at community leadership in the 2009 Victorian Black Saturday bushfire disaster supporting community leaders and their roles was identified as important. Project respondents acknowledged that *'even the best leaders, faced with huge responsibilities and who feel and take on those responsibilities incredibly seriously can end up in a place that is not terribly good'* (Leadbeater, 2011, p. 25).

The disaster cultivated many unanticipated functions for community members and left many physically and mentally drained. If money or goods were donated there was generally a story attached. Time and effort went into the acceptance of donations or help, gifts needed to be acknowledged and gratitude expressed. On occasions, the quality or usefulness of a donation was questionable, this was an added burden with tasks like sorting out whether an item could be used or worthy of the limited storage space.

A study involving the 2011 Queensland floods found voluntary help was met with gratitude and a complexity of emotions. There was a 'mounting sense of obligation that accompanied the acceptance of assistance and the strong desire to repay kindnesses that had been shown to them' (George, 2013, p. 49). This complexity of emotion that corresponded with visitor-related goodwill was similar in 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster with some community members feeling a sense of obligation to accept and honour the goodwill.

Over time the carnival atmosphere generated with the arrival of services, activities, visitors, and media started to diminish. Within a matter of months, the specialness was gone at a time when many community members started to fall apart. It then became a 'hard slog' knowing that there was still a long way to go. It was about the six-month mark that community members started to experience exhaustion, holidays were taken, boundaries set, positions were left, finished or community members stepped down. As the broader community demands lessened, similarly the external response, timed with demand and capacity to meet the need. For many community members it was about waiting one's turn as they felt the demands of the broader community outweighed their own desires, and often their family duties. Earlier studies have demonstrated that important psychosocial processes and unmet needs may be disregarded in the urgency to rebuild, with a recovery process that places more emphasis on economic than social needs (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, Leadbeater, 2011, Proudley, 2013).

The sense of moral obligation was enmeshed with individual beliefs and values, some community members juggled guilt about their functions such as neglecting family duties or the sacrifice of one's own wants over others. The community role often involved placing one's own desires secondary which came at a cost. When those involved in the broader efforts felt they could stop or needed support it was no longer there. The timing of external support did not meet everyone's requirements.

At the seven or eight-month mark, state government and non-government representatives recognised that the people working in the front-line recovery efforts started to burn out. Non-government representatives recognised they had to step back in and provide more support to the community volunteers who assisted in the recovery efforts. In this study the non-government organisations ascertained the need for a system to care for those people 'working on the ground' (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints).

Learning a lesson

35. *We definitely learnt the lesson about, if there are local people involved, being able to support that involvement (203 Non -government representative, 2015, p. 15.).*

8.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the second phase of the psychosocial process. Restoring the familiar was a process where community members experienced a disruption to their everyday way of life. The fire had threatened community members' existence, destroyed and damaged animals, buildings and landscape which included homes and livelihoods. The fire impact generated a level of psychological and social instability. Community members experienced varying degrees of trauma and disorientation and disruption to their everyday routine, an unfamiliar context. Although there was no clear line that distinguished the shift from hazard to disaster, community members adapted their efforts to the restoration of everyday life, normality offered certainty and safety. The beginning of this process was the comprehension of what had happened, what aided this process was to individually witness the devastation firsthand and hear reports from trusted and credible sources. The disparity of place was contrasted with memories and the outside world. The need to appraise what had happened influenced the motivation and drive to return to place, and restore the equilibrium, stability or routine.

Like the initial phase individual values guided community members' responses, in that process they often depended on their own capabilities to direct what actions they undertook. They navigated their way through the complexity of what needed to be done by prioritising, adapting and adjusting their efforts to the hierarchy of needs. The disaster necessitated a great deal of involvement from both from the community and externally which increased the complexity. There were differing demands and at times, competing values. Community members juggled extra roles and responsibilities to manage their individual needs, the community demands and the external interest. These needs varied from routine to unaccustomed and were at times complicated. The degree of involvement varied from the desire to concentrate efforts on one's own circumstances to a sense of responsibility in the broader community efforts.

There were differing individual meanings for being involved in the broader efforts, the main reasons being a sense of duty and desire to restore normality. There was a strong desire to connect with what was familiar; routine, people, venues, and activities, all of which fostered a sense of community spirit. The disaster generated momentum to restore stability, this was underpinned by individual and the community values, and expectations providing a sense of purpose. Over time the disaster demands lessened and there was evidence of social

stability. However, many community members who had been involved in the broader community efforts felt exhausted, with some feeling that they had missed out on external support. The following chapter presents the final phase where community members looked back on this significant life event, considered change and the disaster consequences.

CHAPTER NINE: LIVING WITH CHANGE

9.1 Introduction

Chapter eight presented the second subcategory of the substantive grounded theory characterised as *restoring the familiar*. This chapter presents the final phase, the major process termed *living with change* and like the previous chapters it is presented in two sections. The first section exemplifies the category construction and its emergent properties, along with focused codes and excerpts to preserve the participant's narrative voices.

The second section introduces the main subcategory that explains the final major process. The major properties for this subcategory are: 1) comprehending change, 2) adapting to change, and 3) finding place. Like the two previous chapters the following questions exemplify the major process and processes within that process. What happened? What was the main concern for community members? Why, what was significant about their involvement? This phase explicates how community members perceived the overall event, and in that process recognised change and attached meaning to what had happened. Like the previous chapters, the second section commences with a summary that introduces the major process.

9.2 Interpretive Category Construction

Property 1: Comprehending change

One participant described the efforts of some residents as heroic but deemed the self-centred actions of others as selfish (113:25). It was perceived that this common goal lasted a while then, over time changed, with one participant claiming that the community trickled back to its traditional ways.

Trickling back to a bickering town

24. *Two years on. So, last year it was back to being a basic old bickering country town ...the family feuds. So, you know and there are still, there's still evidence of all that happening now (115 Community member, 2015, p. 19).*

A participant likened their experience to stepping off the world axis for a while and turning on a different orbit for a period, then needed to return to the world (112:15). Others reconciled that change was inevitable and regarded the length of people's residency might have influenced their resistance to change (101:6).

Struggling to accept change

3. *I think maybe long-term residents, some of them were saying that they didn't want change, 'we want it back the way it was'. I mean it was never going to happen, something was going to change, it has to change, the ones that are having trouble, is I suppose or had trouble accepting that, were the ones that, wanted what was there before (101 Community member, 2015, p. 6).*

Others believed that the community failed to return to how it was and felt it was more segregated, with many residents' private lives exposed and judged (102:6). A few community members felt the financial assistance marked a turning point, influencing individual values on equity and claiming that with assistance came dependency (204:14).

Recognising a turning point

9. *It did change initially. I don't know, it did change you. It became harder, it actually became harder at about the sixth month, a bit before the sixth month mark, it was. I think once things started happening, financial stuff came into it, once the funding, the [organisation] funding became available and starting to get money, and people were getting used to having things done for them, people became more aggressive about things. I can remember one of the turning points for me was the community meeting that we had that community meeting was really, really difficult for me, there were people there that were aggressive (104 Community member, 2015, p. 14).*

A few community members described feeling a physical pain in their chests to see the burnt landscape (117:10 & 11) and mourned the loss of landscape (205:16). One participant

highlighted the past fire management practices, stating that up until 1988 a farmer would burn a low intensity fire that meandered its way down the hill over several days and claimed it caused no harm to the possums, birds and kangaroos (113:26).

Community members valued the fact that no lives were lost in the bushfire (109:13, 114:7). Many adopted an attitude or way of thinking to reconcile their experience of the bushfire disaster. For instance, it was about 'making the best of a bad situation' (106:4) or accepted that the community and state were both ill-equipped to deal with or control the bushfire disaster (116:14). This attitude along with a willingness to adapt, helped people cope in a way that many were happy to make do with what resources were available to them at the time until they could get a little more organised (207:7).

Willingness to make do

40. We don't really have a lot of water, don't really want to have to wash all this cutlery up, but I've only got limited supply of plastic cutlery, you know how do we, how we going to do this? So, that became an issue and people would go they're happy eat with their fingers, don't worry about it (207 Community member, 2015, p. 7).

Property 2: Adapting to change

In many ways the community came together with a willingness to adapt and respond to the ever-changing demands. This approach was likened to the experience of camping, living in rural communities that requires practical skills and a reliance on each other (109:11, 106:14, 103:8, 206:18).

Possessing the ability to adapt

7. I'm pretty lucky. We always have kind of been a camping family. Mum did take joy in camping. A fairly practical family when it comes to being outdoors kind of people. So just, I guess having the ability to be able whip out a BBQ when I went home that day. The instinct that the power would go off, and years of living on the Peninsula knowing that every time someone blinks the power goes off, being able to remote access the garage by turning the roller off, and things like that. So, we could get in there and get the BBQ and get all sorts of things fuel and things we had stored in there, I guess being that kind of the outdoors 5. I think we are very logical; I've always believed 7. A practical family

5. Practical family and I think of things that could happen not being pessimist or anything like (103 Community members, 2015, p. 8).

Community members recognised that initially there was a need to be involved due the road blocks and fire threat (115:19). A participant described what happened in the first hours and days after the event, bubbling up and the community responding evidence of community-led.

9. Morphing up from the need within the community (104 Community member, 2015, p. 7).

Community members claimed that residents came together and helped each other with no instruction or plan (107:9). Another participant felt it was about controlling one's own destiny and claimed that this process was important because people had no control over the bushfire disaster. Therefore, it was important to make decisions and manage their lives, it promoted dignity and self-worth (112:13).

Controlling own destiny

21. We all like control of our own destiny. We don't like people to do things for us. Most humans like to be able to go to work manage their own lives. So, that's no different than a recovery. A community wants to have control over what is happening in their community, they didn't have control over the disaster, they didn't have control over the fire brigade or saving a house, or doing whatever, they loss complete control. So, to actually give them back a bit of pride, self-worth they needed to make some of the decisions in their recovery (112 Community member, 2015, p. 13).

There was a recognition and appreciation to move forward, to accept that one could not go back, a need to adjust to change and celebrate the little steps.

Property 3: Finding place

A participant felt that when '*looking at the bigger picture*' (111:8) the community came together quite well. Many community members acknowledged the loss, damage and trauma, as well as the changes. They felt that the towns looked aesthetically better, no longer the 'sleepy kind' of places and had been given an injection of life (108:7, 109:11), whilst others felt that their town developed an identity (106:24 & 25).

Gaining an identity

13. *Now the community is totally changed. There is still some community, doesn't matter what it is 90% of it will be together, 10% couldn't give a shit about anybody else, only themselves, you will get that no matter where you go. But the community is a lot stronger, a lot more of the community know who lives in the community **13**. 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 Community members, 2015, pp.24 & 25).*

The disaster compelled many community members to shift their thinking (116:9), it provided the opportunity for different relationships (206:20).

Shifting ways of thinking

27. *Plus, also the intensity of the event, you get a certain awareness that sort of often you can shift sort of ways of thinking. Like I was saying [name] very different to me but we got to be quite good friends just from being there for couple of days when the fire was sort of happening and doing stuff. Cutting down lawns on the properties near us, so you reduce sort of that wouldn't have that much, but if you can improve something 1%, you know. So, like you get to sort of have a different relationship with people from that point of view it was really good (116 Community member, 2015, p. 9).*

Those community members relatively new to the area, felt the bushfire disaster 'sped up the process' of becoming accepted by the community (117:7, 107:7, 103:9, 105:12) this was positive spinoff (101:13) and one participant felt more Australian having experienced the bushfire disaster (107:9).

Valuing getting to know people

14. *I think overall, the great thing for me, in a way was you got to know a lot of people. Everyone was much more open and people pulled together much more as a community really. It felt that the whole community was united in a way that it never was. It'd disjointed because there were the people who been there all their lives and newcomers like us. We were sort of welcomed but we weren't welcomed with open arms and I think going through the fires gave us all something to join together. And people were more open, people more*

generous, if you needed anything we went to [business proprietor name] and we could fire up our phones because we had no power and he had the generator, and I think that's gone on from there. I've got a lot of good friends (107 Community member, 2015, p. 7).

Community members recognised that their involvement helped foster friendships (207:16). Those who had lived in the area recognised changes in the community and felt the fire had forced residents outside their individual lives to connect with others within their community (110:11).

Creating a chance to meet people

17. I wouldn't know half the people that live in Dunalley now, you know, because people come and go all the time, you know like the original roots are still here but there's a lot of people come for work and go, and you never get a chance to meet them. Where after that fire everybody, well everybody was sort of together and you met everybody that was living here at that time 18. And you had no choice but to meet really (110 Community members, 2015, p. 11).

Being involved strengthened relationships and a degree of confidence to know the community would be there for them, if needed (112:15). Community members reflected on the results of adversity and concluded; it enabled residents to discover new connections for themselves (116:9) or that they learnt a lot about resilience (207:17). When there was the time and space to reflect upon the overall experience, many community members were able to include other consequences of the bushfire disaster. Looking back this helped many community members to gain perspective, they aligned different attributes with their own values and beliefs.

9.3 The Event: Final Phase



Photograph 3: Community Blackboard. Source: Fiona Jennings

Comprehending change meant appraising and attaching meaning to what happened. Mourning the loss, grappling with change and the willingness to adapt contributed to **Living with Change**. Attitude influenced the ability to recognise change, acknowledgement that one could not go back, only move forward. Looking at the bigger picture required standing back to gain to perspective and align different attributes with one's own values and beliefs, a process that fostered finding place.

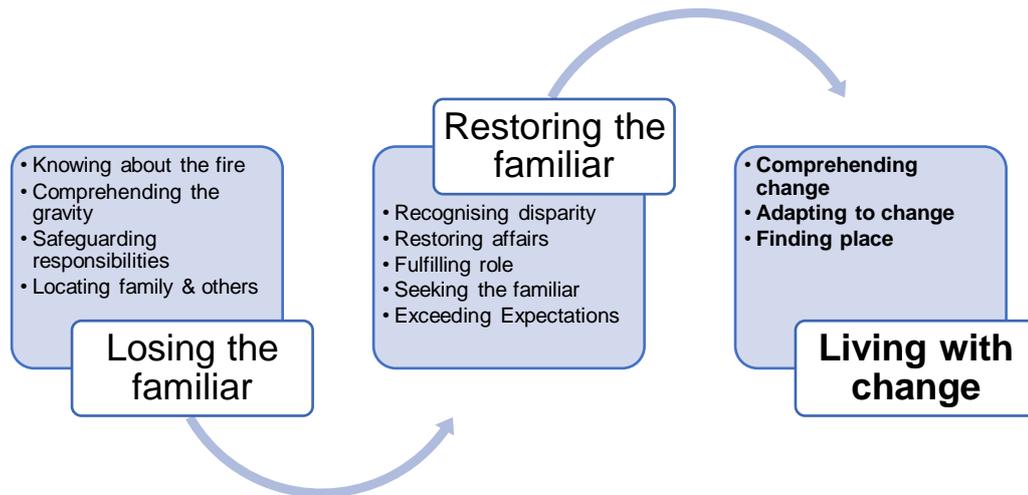


Figure 9. 1: Final phase: Living with Change

What happened? What was the main concern for community members?

Navigating this significant life event symbolised each community member's experience in its entirety; their meaning and approach, unique and personal. Their involvement in this event influenced their individual, and their community's recovery journey.

Comprehending change

Comprehending change involved standing back and looking at the big picture to gain perspective. The differing forms of comprehending change included:

- Seeing the best and worst in people
- Grappling with change
- Mourning the loss of landscape
- Valuing no loss of human life

Comprehending change entailed reflecting on the overall event and its consequences, to attach and construct one's own interpretation. Recognising change signified the dualistic aspects of life and incorporation of differing values. Human life is fluid, we do not stay in the same part of the polarity for too long and shift with context (Charmaz, 2015). A study by George (2013) pointed out the importance of remembering, they shared a perspective of someone involved in their study which might support this concept.

Looking back is important if we're going to learn how to move forward. We need to remember the lessons we've learnt along the way and not simply the objectives we achieved at the end. He also argued that this remembering doesn't have to be sorrowful, but can also be a hopeful process that encourages us how we can cope better in the future (p. 54).

A few community members felt that the disaster exposed the best and the worst in people, egocentricity and altruism. One community member described the efforts of community members in a positive context but deemed the actions of others self-centred and selfish. They compared the gallant efforts of some residents who protected the lives of others during the emergency against those residents who were only interested in protecting their own livelihoods. This retribution was carried through to the 2013 Tasmanian Bushfire Inquiry which fractured some relationships within the community. In small communities, these attitudes and differences can run deep and be long lasting.

The bushfire disaster forced numerous people to step out of their homes and usual routines and question their beliefs and values. Community members rationalised their loss by comparing their situation to others who they felt were far worse off and considered the consequences of the 1967 Tasmanian and 2009 Victorian bushfire disasters. Whilst one community member attempted to rationalise their circumstances with other events, they struggled to understand the emotional impact that was sustained in the 2013 Forcett bushfire disaster. They grappled with the mental injuries they had experienced with the fact that no human lives lost in the fire emergency and inferred what they had endured '*wasn't too bad really*'.

Valuing no lives lost

38. *But you do realise that material things don't mean anything really. So, all those knickknacks and things that you've had for years and years collected over the years, really are not important. 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 Community member, 2015, p. 4).*

A few community members felt that their efforts of safeguarding life and place during the emergency, assisted their recovery process and judged the protection of life, homes, street and livelihood as good management and fortune. One community member felt that their decision to stay and protect home and livelihood during the emergency was twofold, they experienced feelings of vulnerability nonetheless it meant they protected their assets which aided their resilience. Protecting their business during the fire was valued, deemed an essential resource during and after the fire emergency. It was used as depot for the power company and emergency services in the days and weeks after the emergency.

One community member claimed that had there been human lives lost due to the bushfire the situation would have shifted to a different level. There were diverse perceptions of loss, with a general appreciation that most things could be replaced. What mattered was what could not be replaced, things that they worked hard for or the meaning that was attributed to something. When reflecting on recovery, one community member described the disaster event as 'stepping on another orbit' for a period. Whilst many residents returned to everyday life, others struggled to follow, the community member deliberated whether some people may have been having trouble with everyday life prior to the fire and they had just not noticed.

It was felt by many community members that there was a common goal for a while and that it brought their sleepy small villages together. Some recognised turning points when the altruistic behaviour and feeling of a common goal started to wane, or old lifestyles re-emerged. Community members valued the humanitarian and government assistance; some attributed the turning point to the timing of financial assistance becoming available. They were conscious that some residents' behaviours changed with what they felt was an increased dependency on assistance which fostered high expectations. Others believed that residents grew accustomed to having things done for them, creating a level of dependency and diminishing the potential to empower residents to do things for themselves. The situation changed, and some residents exhibited judgment and negativity towards others, for example if a resident purchased a new car or something similar, there was an assumption it was gained through disaster assistance. Residents' lives were exposed visually, individual values that related to equity and the distribution of benefit, financial and material aid surfaced, and caused fractures in the sense of common purpose. In their study of community and disaster resilience in the 2011 Queensland floods, George (2013) identified fractures in the community relationships and rivalries emerged from the conflicted values of entitlement to community assistance.

Government and non-government representatives also recognised a point in time when the community started to fracture (4-6-month mark) and attributed it to the psychological trauma processes and the shifting of values brought about by the distribution of financial assistance. There was a perception that the distribution of appeals money disempowered community members. Their focus was repositioned from how they could help themselves to what they were entitled to or a feeling of injustice (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints).

Certain community members felt that within two years the place had drifted back to the ways of the past being a small country town with the usual family feuds. The rebuild presented a variety of problems that involved changes in house designs which now blocked views and fractured neighbourhood relationships. Some residents who lost their homes chose not to return to the area and others decided to leave whereas a few community members felt that 'the place' failed to return to what it was before the fire. They gave weight to this notion by claiming that prior to the bushfire everyone talked to each other but acknowledged the closed ranks which made it a little difficult for strangers to fit in.

There was a perception that the long-term residents endured a greater struggle to accept change and they exhibited a desire to have their life back the way it once was. A newcomer to the area considered that they were more accepting of change and attributed this to making a conscious decision to live in the area. They claimed that a good number of the longer-term residents were born in the area or connected by kin therefore did not have the same level of self-determination in where they lived. Other community members disputed the belief that after disaster life would go back to how it was and had summarised that something had to change.

A handful of community members mourned a landscape with what they claimed was marked with lifetime scars. They felt the loss of what once was and described their memories of the landscape when they had driven places or stepped out their back door and felt a physical pain in their chest to see all the beautiful trees gone. This loss generated greater meaning for the mature aged community members who claimed they would not live to see the bush regenerate in their lifetime. These community members wove memories of people, animals and traditions into their stories about the landscape and firmly believed the bush was the overriding reason they lived in these areas of such natural charm and appeal. One community member who prior to the bushfire had encouraged family from overseas to visit the beautiful place they lived in, agonised over a desire to sweep the devastation all under

the carpet. Another community member acknowledged the value of fire management practices that were used by residents in years gone by which reduced the fuel load with minimal harm to nature.

How did community members resolve their concerns?

Adapting to change

Many community members adopted an attitude or way of thinking that reconciled the circumstances they had experienced in the bushfire disaster. There was a general preparedness to make the best of a bad situation.

The differing forms of adapting to change included:

- Adapting to circumstances
- Working co-operatively
- Adjusting, accepting and moving forward
- Celebrating little steps

Adapting to change involved an individual's approach or attitude to what was encountered. The position or stance community members adopted influenced how they adapted to change, and/or moved forward. One's attitude, and the subsequent emotions and behaviours that came with that, helped many community members with the process of living with change.

There are three main avenues on which one arrives at meaning in life. The first is by creating a work or by doing a deed. The second is by experiencing something or encountering someone.... Most important, however, is the third avenue to meaning in life: even the helpless victim of a hopeless situation, facing a fate he cannot change, may rise above himself, may grow beyond himself, and by so doing change himself. He may turn a personal tragedy into a triumph (Frankl, 2011, pp. 117-119).

There was a well-formed idea by one community member that the small communities and the state government were ill-equipped to deal with the hazard, and that it was about everyone doing what they could. Furthermore, in Australia we live in fortunate times where people are not isolated for too long. A few community members appreciated their and others ability to deal with and adapt in the situation, and attributed this to their upbringing, the

development of basic survival skills and living with in a rural environment. A community member who helped with meals at the hotel in the relief efforts, pointed out residents' willingness to make do. A concern about the lack of means to wash cutlery was met with reassurance from people saying that they were happy to eat with their fingers and not to worry. Many of the survival skills used were attributed to life experiences such as camping, living in a rural context where the electricity could be unreliable, and the willingness to make do with what you had and a healthy desire to rely on each other. The language community members used to describe their ability to adapt and survive in a situation without conveniences and limited resources, included such terms as worldly, down to earth, logical, practical and outdoors.

There was a recognition and appreciation by many community members of the ambition to move forward, to accept that one could not go back and that there was a need to adjust to change and celebrate the little steps. Moving forward involved the recognition one could not go back. Attitude was important, it was factor that enriched one's purpose and a sense of hope for the future. There was a general acceptance that there would be difficult times, but one could adjust to the changes, and there were aspects of the bushfire disaster that helped move the town forward.

Moving forward

16. I would say 'well you have to move forward you cannot go back'. As much as you say, 'I had, that you want that, and I wish I still had it'. The reality is, it's gone and for the sake of everyone around you because we are all in the same boat. As I said before you need to support each other and say we'll move forward and build another future and just keep doing that especially if you're in a small community like we are (109 Community member 2015, p. 12).

Personal construct theory offers a lens to understand individual meaning making. It suggests that if people have an opportunity to explore their own meaning structure they can learn how they perceive themselves in the context of their world. This process helps us understand what is created and how we are free to change these interpretations. What determines our behaviour is not what happens to us but how we interpret what happens to us, it is the meaning we make of things that is significant (Butt, 2005).

Some community members related the community's approach in the early phases of the event as community-led when there was little outside help in the disaster zone. It was constructed gradually through community members responding to the needs of others; people came together with no instruction, no plan, worked together and relied on each other.

There were differing perceptions of community-led recovery amongst state and local government and non-government representatives. This included thinking of community-led as ensuring community members felt heard and were involved in the decision-making processes otherwise it would be bureaucratic-led. There was a level of authority and duty to establish and drive the recovery process at a pace balanced between government and the community. Furthermore, there was a supposition that in disaster affected communities may not have the capability or capacity to coordinate their own recovery (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints).

Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins (2004) identified attitude as an important feature of taking responsibility for one's own destiny. They suggested 'that the notion of risk provides a crucial focal point for exploring sociologically the expert knowledge, categories and techniques through which communities are encouraged to think of and manage themselves as 'self-governing', 'empowered' and 'responsible'' (Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins, 2004, p. 289).

Why? What was significant about their involvement?

Finding Place

Finding place is the final property in the subcategory living with change and is linked to comprehending and adapting to change. The differing forms of finding place included:

- Looking at the bigger picture
- Gaining an identity
- Finding place
- Building community
- Shifting ways of thinking

Finding place involved looking at the 'bigger picture' to factor other aspects or features of a significant life event, to acknowledge the loss, damage and trauma as well as the renaissances. When community members stepped back from some of the grim or murky

details of the bushfire disaster they considered other aspects or features and, they acknowledged the revitalisation of place and a sense of kinship resilience.

In previous research this process has been referred to as post traumatic growth, the positive changes people may recognise when they have experienced a traumatic event (Eyre, 2006, Gibbs et al., 2016). Traumatic life events can leave some people at risk of depression or a post-traumatic stress injury. 'For other individuals, a traumatic experience can serve as a catalyst for positive change, a chance to examine life priorities or develop strong ties with friends and family' (Updegraff and Taylor, 2000, p. 3). Solnit (2009) claims that 'disaster reveals what else the world could be like - reveals the strength of that hope, that generosity, and that solidarity' (p. 312).

Community members acknowledged that while they would not wish a bushfire disaster of this nature on other people and their communities, on the contrary, however they did perceive developments that were valued. There were positive aspects about such a tragedy that were considered a binary considering the pain and suffering the event had caused, it flouted decorum. This meaning is comparable to the moral dilemma of goodwill, where community members struggled with a complexity of emotions when prioritising others' needs over their own. An obligation to accept the goodwill regardless because to refuse the kindness and compassion of others would be disrespectful.

Many community members felt that the towns looked aesthetically better, they were no longer a sleepy kind of place and had been given an injection of life. A couple felt their town had gained an identity. It was now recognised as a destination, not a town that people travelled through on their way somewhere. The factors they attributed to the township's identity were unity and hard work, these provided the momentum in creating a stronger sense of community. Many community members had an increased appreciation of their community and place. There was an assumption that there were very few residents who did not care about anybody else other than themselves, but the majority did care. The generosity of others and the hard work that contributed to making the place look aesthetically better was valued. It was felt that prior to the bushfire people didn't see the need or have the motivation to carry out these tasks.

This disaster forced a shift in reluctant thinking to view the situation in a different light. It forced community members to step outside their comfortable lives to connect, help and

support each other and appreciate humanity. The most significant feature was it created opportunities to connect and have different relationships with others, develop friendships and heal long-standing disagreements and disparities. The importance of understanding social and collective disaster experiences (Erikson, 1976, 1991, 1994) has been highlighted in the earlier literature. Erikson (1994) researched communities impacted by disaster and identified two forms of trauma; individual (a blow to the psyche) and collective (a blow to the tissue of social life). The enormity of these trauma experiences affects meaning and the world is looked at in new and different ways (cited in Eyre, 2006).

For many newcomers the bushfire disaster was a turning point in their feelings of belonging. Many community members felt that 'because of the fires' they got to know a lot more people. Those community members who were relatively new to the area believed that the bushfire disaster had 'sped up the processes' of being 'accepted' by the community. Prior to the bushfire disaster event one couple claimed they knew very few local people, kept to themselves and felt a bit lost. Others described their experience as one of being welcomed but not with open arms and marked the difference between friendly and close, and acknowledged many were people who had lived in the place all their lives. One community member who migrated to Australia, claimed that they felt more Australian to have experienced a bushfire disaster.

The friendships that developed from the experience of the bushfire event made a huge difference to community members' lives. Some recognised that moving to a rural area was a hard adjustment, they had left established friendships and moved to a place where they knew no one, and one participant felt sad that it took a disaster for friendships to develop.

Finding a place in community

5. I think what changed first of all, it changed the community, hugely it changed us, our place in the community hugely. Before the fires we didn't know many people here because we hadn't been here that long. We were still finding our feet I guess, you know and finding where we belong. We had (name) here as family and I knew people but not real close friends you know. Whereas today, I can say I have some of the loveliest friends here and that has mainly come about because of the fires because we all got together 7. It made a huge difference 5. Well you know what we were like before a bit lost, we had so many friends on the mainland and came here and nobody knows you. It is a hard

adjustment and it is sad to think you have a disaster for that to happen I think (103 Community members, 2015, p. 9).

Feeling more Australian

14. *'I feel more Australian because of I've been through a disaster' ... 'I feel more part of the country' (107 Community member, 2015:9).*

A strong feature of rural culture is belonging, with one's identity often connected to how one integrates into the community. For the community to exist to some extent it requires people who have shared values and beliefs (Smith, 2013). Hughes et al. (2007) claim that 'there is a strong sense of belonging and of local community where people work together, solve problems together and celebrate together' (p. 26).

Those community members who had lived in the area all their life talked about how many years ago they would have known every resident in the area. They compared this knowledge to a time just prior to the bushfire and claimed they wouldn't have known half the residents that lived in their home town, and believed people now arrived and left more often or spent time travelling away for work and this restricted the chance to meet them. The fragmentation in rural communities has been referred to in earlier studies. The main influence of this change has been linked to an increase in the mobility of people and their ability to travel to larger towns for services or work (Hughes et al., 2007).

Community members noticed a change in this fragmentation; the bushfire forced everyone to step outside their routine lives and connect, it seemed they had 'no choice but to meet really' (110:11). Community members who had lived in the area for a length of time felt there was a stronger sense of community after the bushfire disaster, they developed and strengthened relationships.

A community member felt proud to see the four little communities work together, they observed many residents put aside their judgements about where people lived or the type of person they were. They felt there was an opportunity to heal disparities and disagreements, however they recognised over time how it would be easy to slip back into old habits. The significance of the overall event created a reason to connect with others, this helped shift ways of thinking by having different relationships with people. One community member pointed out how they were different from their neighbour but during the emergency they

worked together clearing adjacent properties to protect their homes from the bushfire. In this process got to know each other and are now good friends. The working together allowed them to have a different relationship which contributed to a better understanding and appreciation of each other. The opportunity for the establishment of diverse relationships in a disaster event has been recognised in other cultures. In Japan after the 2011 Great Sendai Earthquake and tsunami disaster, community members of a small fishing village valued opportunities to interact with different people and were more accepting of other people, in the process challenging the culture of closed community (Blackman et al., 2017).

To survive, cope, deal with or muddle through the event, required community members to connect and rely on each other, illustrated in one of the community members' statements.

Knowing people

29. *Yes, and you know who you can trust, who can rely on, who to go to, what's what, you just know a little bit more about the whole set up around the place, which we didn't know before. So, you know as I say it's a positive thing for us almost in a bizarre sort away (117 Community member, 2015, pp. 17 & 18).*

It was generally recognised that being directly involved also contributed to the development of friendships, strengthened relationships and a sense of belonging. One couple who had been new to the area felt that although their position kept them somewhat separated from the community, the event had contributed to a greater sense of belonging. They made good friends and had earned a level of respect from the community generated from their involvement in the overall event. There was a perception that the bond and friendship was based on the bushfire disaster. A stronger sense of community was gained through this shared experience; it fostered relationships through their efforts and need to rely on each other and reciprocate behaviour that was helpful and kind. These types of gestures allow for increased opportunities to carry out actions that are for the good of the community. This creates an opportunity for people to see that there are universal values and how these shared values provide a sense of belonging and unity (Dynes, 1973, Shepherd and Williams, 2014, Taylor and Goodman, 2014).

A community member believed that 'community' denoted belonging to an extended family, it was their support network. The relationship was reciprocal and there was a sense of investment, they could rely on the community to support them because they had been there

for others through difficult times. Reciprocity has been described as a quality of relationship, based on acts of benefit that may be returned at an unspecified time in the future. The act conducted without any expectation of a return, based on the idea that 'if I help someone now, there is a greater chance that I will be helped sometime in the future when I am in need' (Hughes et al., 2007, p. 74).

Community members reflected on the results of adversity and concluded that the process enabled people to discover new connections and learn a lot more about resilience. By looking at the bigger picture, community members could choose an attitude that allowed room for other disaster consequences. According to Charmaz (2015) 'our ability to reflect and interpret makes us creative and allows for change' (p. 58). This enabled the alignment of attributes with one's own values and beliefs, altering individual meaning, narrative or account of a significant life experience. This process contributed to finding place, gaining hope for future, validating their efforts and confirm why they live where they live.

A volunteer participant recognised the value of a collective effort, and respected that there would be those community members who chose to participate and others who decided not to. They felt a level of privilege being a part of and witnessing how the community approached the bushfire disaster. Government and non-government representatives felt their understanding of the community had improved by learning how the community works. There was also a perception that the disaster helped many people in the community realise that place mattered, generating feelings of a sense of pride and enthusiasm that replaced complacency (see Chapter 10.2: Contextual Standpoints).

Thinking that place mattered

32. *I think it made the community realise they wanted to be a community there. In Dunalley they kind of had a crossroads point where they could have decided not to rebuild and that they didn't really care that much about it for whatever reason. It was too hard, we'll walk away, and the community just sort of disintegrates but people said, 'no actually it really, it does matter to me this place, it matters to me'. So, I think there's a sense of pride about the place and a sense of enthusiasm about how it can be and that maybe we were kind of a bit complacent previously (201 Government representative, 2015, p. 14).*

Sense of place has been previously identified and discussed in disaster studies (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, Proudley, 2013, Tierney and Oliver-Smith, 2012). Other studies have considered the relationship between people and place. Dam and Eyles (2012) explored sense of place amongst Vietnamese refugees of the Boat People crisis in Canada. In this study culture and family were an integral part of home. The authors' concluded:

If sense of place speaks of belonging and home, then for the former Vietnamese refugees their sense of belonging does derive in part from place but it is mediated by family, resettlement, and memories of past places. Home for our respondents and for the first author is embodied in shared experiences which are authored and "authorized" by self and others journeying through place and time (Dam and Eyles, 2012, p. 21).

9.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the final phase of the psychosocial process. Living with change was a process where community members looked back on their significant life event and considered change and the disaster consequences. They appraised the bushfire disaster, and in that process, the interests of others, against their own beliefs and values. The humanitarian and government assistance were valued, nevertheless many felt it created a level of dependency and diminished the potential to empower residents to help themselves. In some way the disaster exposed landscape and residents' lives visually, the distribution of assistance was monitored and often judged with conflicting values about entitlement. This contributed to fractures in relationships, and what was recognised as a turning point or shift from the feeling of a common goal to a more individualistic goal.

Community members' attitude greatly influenced their ability to adapt to change and move forward, and there was an appreciation for individual basic survival skills attributed to one's upbringing and to residing in a rural environment. There were differing perceptions of community-led recovery which ranged from the efforts of the community coming together with no plan, instruction and working together, to an approach that required coordinating, and involved decision-making and a level of authority.

There was an attitude that one had to move forward and accept change, however this differed depended on individual standpoints and generally related to social networks. This was

reflected in the property 'finding place' where community members stepped back and looked at the bigger picture and factored other aspects or features of this event. There appeared to be a binary of loss and gain, the benefit for many was an increased appreciation for the community and place.

The disaster forced community members to shift their thinking and view their situation in a new light, it created the opportunity for different relationships and appreciation of humanity. The stronger sense of community was fostered through community members' involvement, an opportunity to connect and collaborate with, and rely on others in the community. This sense of belonging was significant and connected to one's identity. Looking back was valuable in the process of recognising the many differing aspects of the bushfire event which contributed to finding place, validated their efforts and helped confirm why they live where they live.

This is the final phase in the psychosocial process, the next chapter presents the differing perspectives and experiences of those participants who represented the external response or involvement. Data from this chapter has been included in this chapter and chapters seven and eight to augment the theoretical explanation of community members' involvement in the event.

CHAPTER TEN: AUGMENTING THE CATEGORIES

10.1 Introduction

This section presents data to augment the subcategories presented in the previous three chapters. This data is gathered from those participants who were involved in the bushfire disaster but did not identify as community members. They were external support volunteers, representatives of local and state government and of non-government services. Features of this chapter are presented in the findings, chapters seven, eight and nine. The interpretive views in this chapter are presented under the subcategory headings to contextualise and augment theoretical understanding and explanation of community members' involvement in the 2013 Forcett Tasmanian bushfire disaster.

10.2 Contextual Standpoints

The Bushfire

Losing the Familiar: (1) Knowing about the fire, (2) Comprehending the gravity, (3) Safeguarding responsibilities, (4) Locating family and others.

In the days leading up to the event, state government officials received advice from emergency services, this progressed to managing the consequences of the bushfire disaster (204:1). Locally based government representatives activated disaster management plans whilst comprehending their own roles and what was expected of them (118). Another assisted by helping their friends safeguard and manage their animals (201). While some other government and non-government representatives were on holidays and paying little attention, others living nearby or holidaying in their shacks were aware and monitoring the hazard (119, 202, 203).

The Disaster

Restoring the familiar: (1) Recognising disparity, (2) Restoring affairs, (3) Fulfilling role, (4) Seeking the familiar and (5) Exceeding expectations.

One government representative felt that the size of Tasmania may have hindered the state from having more established and rehearsed emergency management arrangements like the other states and territories.

Needing to activate arrangements

36. *So, you're getting people on to do this task as quickly as you can, but the reality is you need to activate arrangements a lot faster than you can hope to change, your capability or re-direct your capability into those spaces. Bigger States that would do this more frequently, I think would be able to do it more effectively or they would have more established and rehearsed arrangements for doing it but a small State that doesn't have emergencies of that scale (204 Government representative 2015, p. 2).*

They felt this influenced the time it took to organise the human resources, such as establishing a call centre and recovery units (204:2 & 3).

Activating call centre

36. *We had activated and staffed a call centres starting to take calls. Incredibly hands-on experiences, we're such a small State so there are no people sitting around making decisions and directing people to do things, everyone is just hands-on on the wheel trying to do what needs to be done (204 Government representative 2015, p. 2).*

A few government representatives were sent to the disaster zone to offer their help and put a few processes in place (202). One non-government representative claimed that they were unable to supply organisational volunteers initially in the disaster relief phase because of the road closures, however they recognised the work that was being achieved locally and offered organisational support (203).

Citizens decided to volunteer and help in various ways; one volunteer packed their boat with material donations and navigated their way via the bay to the disaster zone. They had

transported what they felt were essential items and arrived at Dunalley jetty knowing the name of one resident obtained from social media site, Facebook. This relationship prompted their decision to remain in the disaster zone and help with the relief efforts, they utilised their knowledge and experience of organising events and festivals (208). Other roles like helping on the disaster zone periphery to assist residents with their animals developed into coordinating a fodder depot. One participant felt it was an integral part of their position as a local government representative (201).

The state government took on responsibility for driving the recovery response about four or five days after the bushfire disaster. When reflecting on the timing of response a government representative pointed out the value of the community self-activating without a rigid decision-making structure. Nevertheless, they felt that in the absence of any well-designed supporting government mechanism there were quite a few frustrations and less than ideal communication processes (204:3).

Taking responsibility for the recovery process

36. *[Name] and myself basically took responsibility for driving the recovery process. Pretty quickly we realised that we needed to find a balance between running a program that was led by the community and running a program that delivered what we think we need or what the community needed (204 Government representative, 2015, p. 5).*

In the role of driving the recovery process it was a challenge to decide what responsibility government should take and what they wanted the community to drive. The government decided to manage the distribution of the funding which removed the onus from the community and provide a level of transparency and accountability for decision-making (204:7).

A local government representative recognised and valued the efforts of state government throughout the overall process but felt they had arrived a little late. There was a perception that local people and local government had managed the situation during the most difficult circumstances, then on Monday morning, three days after the Friday disaster, the state government arrived. They felt that the state government failed to acknowledge the efforts of local government (118:2 & 3).

The state government established two regional based recovery committee, the Sorell and Tasman Affected Area Recovery Committee (STAARC). Initially, the committee largely comprised of government employees and although it had a community voice, it was not locally led and there was a need to consider the people who were impacted by the disaster when establishing a locally led decision-making group (204:6).

Establishing local committee

36. *It was a local reference group but it was still largely had government people on there. A community voice was there, and it was strong, and it was bold, but it wasn't really a locally led group. I'd have to think it a little bit more to say whether or not I would change that or whether I would've thought it was the right approach for the start, given that you couldn't just go into a community like the one that had been impacted and just start dragging people out to create a locally led decision-making group. I think that would be difficult as well (206 Government representative, 2015, p. 6).*

Another recovery operational action implemented by state and local government was to purposefully create jobs for residents or involve them in projects, to help with the management of their recovery and grief and give them an opportunity to feel significant again (118).

Doing a lot of people management behind scenes

30. *One of the other recovery parts of the operation, we were very mindful of the people we put on at the [service], got involved with various projects to manage their recovery grief and what they needed to be doing, to have something meaningful. And we purposefully created jobs for some people so that they had some way of venting or just doing something, so they felt they were significant again. So, there were a lot of people management going on behind the scenes (118 Government representative, 2015, p.10).*

A local government representative had a range of responsibilities which included acting on behalf of the state government, they negotiated the offers from well-known identities and groups that wanted to visit the disaster zone and meet with local people (201). The representative felt that although the intentions were good, the visitors had not considered the

timing and welfare of recipients. For example, very few children attended an organised event when a sporting team visited Dunalley because parents had taken them out of the area (201).

Thinking it was a good thing

32. *But hardly any kids showed up because the parents had taken them out of that area understandably. So, that's a funny approach, as well. Government thinks that will be a good thing but sometimes it doesn't really work because your target audience isn't even there anymore (201 Government representative, 2015, p. 9).*

A few participants expressed their concerns about the road closures and gaining access into the disaster zone, this concern included the decision-making processes related to access. They questioned the political or economic motive over the best interests of the community (201 & 118). A local government representative felt concerned about the timing of the roads reopening; houses hadn't been fully searched, there was potential risk with livestock wandering on the roads, and an invasion of residents' privacy. They felt another day or two was required to 'get the house in order' (118:7).

Expressing concern about opening roads

30. *Hardest thing was controlling everybody trying to get down there through the police lines too. All the houses hadn't been fully searched at that stage, I had big arguments with the Government regarding opening the road back up. I felt it was a wrong thing to do (118 Government representative, 2015, p. 7).*

Local government representatives valued the good intentions of citizens donating goods, nevertheless it was the volume of donations that caused issues and it was felt that social media contributed to the problems encountered. For example, when they attempted to organise a few packs of nappies and baby formula locally, the need was posted on Facebook and resulted in a manageable necessity becoming unmanageable and a burden (118:1). Another dilemma attributed to social media related to citizens overloading boats and flooding material goods into the disaster zone, this created pandemonium and added a higher level of risk of citizens drowning than being injured by fire (118: 4 & 5).

The donations become all-encompassing work for the non-government organisation (NGO) designated to oversee donations under the state social recovery program. Initially, the

organisation's intention was to support the community however it shifted to managing the donations which was a very time-consuming effort and a considerable drain on resources. Over time, the organisation realised what was happening and made a conscious effort to redirect their focus back to supporting the community, they also recognised that the visitors had specifically targeted residents with donations and felt this was a huge weight of responsibility and did their best to act as a buffer or remove that burden (203:5).

Becoming a huge weight on the community

35. *There were people saying to me that they were receiving donations to distribute* **34.** *Direct* **35.** *So, people directed into the community and said, 'look you know who's the best person to give that to' and that became a huge weight on the shoulders of people in the community* **34.** *Yeah so true* **35.** *Because they were having that responsibility as well. So, I think that it really was about how you could best support the community and take away all of that. What was happening in a sense provide a buffer, so that trying to remove that aspect for the community (Non-government representatives, 2015, p. 5).*

Many visitors attempted to bypass the organisations that had the established mechanisms to make financial and material donations, to give directly to residents impacted by the disaster. This placed an incredible responsibility on those impacted by the bushfire disaster and required legitimate processes in place to ensure accountability (118).

Seeing reluctance to donate

30. *I found during this fire was that a lot of people rang me saying they didn't want to give the money to [Organisation] who could they give it to and I did feel that I was playing god with a lot of money for a long time (118 Government representative, 2015, p. 14).*

A state government representative felt distressed watching visitors or groups express their need to be recognised for their giving. There were instances where individuals or groups either representing themselves or an affiliation arrived in the disaster zone, conveyed their importance and then left, generally with evidence of their goodwill. This meant residents had to fit in with the expectations of those who offered their goodwill like accommodating the visit (119:4). A non-government representative expressed their concern about the volume of

visitors who presented in the disaster zone wanting to donate goods directly to residents impacted by the bushfire disaster and then be acknowledged for their giving.

Non-government representatives suggested there was a need for someone with a level of authority to govern the overwhelming volume of donations; they claimed that considerable effort went into balancing the moral, physical and economic cost of managing the material donations. A dilemma for the designated organisation was they were unable to say 'no more donations' because that was their core business in the rest of the state (203:15).

Taking donations back to Hobart

34. *One night this lady just banged on the roller door ... she had a truck full of donations from the [location] area. So somehow, she talked her way through the police barrier and got it delivered there and so then I had to organise a truck to come. When the truck came down for the things we needed, I asked them to take all that truckload back ... So, that was happening quite a lot. It was just you know, because people want to be thanked by someone personally that's involved with that* **35.** *And I had to go to [location] and thank that person personally (203 Non-government representatives, 2015, p. 9).*

Participants talked about their efforts in striving to learn from the community by listening and moving gently and slowly in what they called a hectic context (203:7). A few participants emphasised how one's approach was important in that rural people don't appreciate strangers telling them what to do. They felt that this approach was a skill and viewed it as a personal attribute that is essential to work with the community (202:9).

Getting the right people

33. *I suppose the other thing that should be raised about getting the right people in is if you are in a small community in Dunalley or a small community, there is I think a bit of like, I don't want you coming in telling me what to do. So, you know that was the approach, we talk, you tell us what you want us to do. So, that an important personal attribute (202 Government representative, 2015, p. 9).*

Government representatives felt there was disparity in the knowledge of workers who understood or knew what was happening in the disaster zone with those situated outside or

in Hobart (119:7, 202:10). In the initial days after the bushfire, a participant perceived that 75% of the external responses were from urban areas which lacked a comfortable fit for both the service provider and recipients. They felt rural practice was a unique skill set that included the ability to adapt (119:7). What helped a comfortable fit was a familiar face, having lived in the area previously or owning a shack in the region (203). One volunteer employed strategies such as taking a local person with them when distributing donated goods and claimed that community members were more open to accepting charity with encouragement from a trusted source (208).

Taking a local person

41. I took [name] who is a local down there and he actually knew all the people.... we had a mixture of livestock products we had food and things and milk, just day-to-day stuff. And it was interesting watching people's reaction to that because if I had a got out on my own they would have just been, no I'm fine, leave me (208 Volunteer, 2015, p. 3).

To understand the social setting in the disaster zone, one government representative likened the disaster to an atomic bomb or a jigsaw puzzle with pieces everywhere, each piece needing to be gathered then placed back together. This process meant each piece of the puzzle needed be understood (119: 5 & 6).

A government representative drew a parallel between the impact of disaster and someone moving to a new city or town, they pointed out how residents needed to familiarise themselves with their different environment. They emphasised the importance of generating routine or familiarity in an environment where people have experienced so much loss, damage and destruction (204).

Government representatives recognised how at the seven or eight-month mark people were starting to burn out (118 & 201). The recovery efforts also created extra jobs and responsibilities for local government representatives, the desire to support residents impacted by the fire led to staff working long hours and weekends. A few government representatives recognised the need for a system to be in place to look after those people working on the ground in the disaster zone (119:10, 202:3, 203:7).

The Event

Living with Change: (1) Comprehending change, (2) Adapting to change and (3) Finding place.

Government representatives recognised a point in time when the community started to fracture, they attributed this to the trauma processes and the shifting of values in the distribution of financial assistance. A state government representative claimed that trauma influenced how much capacity people had to absorb extra information, this psychological process and the distribution of funding commenced approximately four to six months after the bushfire (119).

There was a perception that the distribution of appeals money disempowered community members' capacity, shifting from what people could do for themselves to what they were entitled to. A government representative struggled to reconcile why those residents who appeared capable and well-resourced were so aggrieved when those who were less fortunate received assistance. They felt it shifted residents' ability to control or take ownership of their own circumstances to focus on what could be done for them and recognised this as detrimental to community members' pathway of recovery (203:14).

Diminishing ownership

34. *A classic example was when [service] started putting gravel down on people's driveway's, there were highly capable, highly capable individuals that certainly had the resources and the means and the physical capacity, furious that [service] didn't put \$150 worth of gravel on their driveway, because [service] put it on the guy's driveway down the road. So, people were no longer focusing on how they can help themselves, they're focusing on why is that guy getting more than I am. And I think that's really damaging somebody's own pathway to recovery because the only way they are going to recover is when they take ownership of their own circumstances and actually take, pride is the wrong word but actually get strength out of their own ability to control their own circumstances. I think I am not a psychologist (204 Government representative, 2015, p. 14).*

There were differing perceptions about community-led recovery that included; creating a space for the community to feel heard, and community-led rather than bureaucratic-led

(201:12). A state government representative who agreed the community should be involved in the processes and decision-making arrangements, nevertheless felt government should establish and drive the recovery, at a pace that was balanced accordingly between government and the community. It was about making sure things were done where the community might not have the capability or capacity. They felt that it would be an enormous mistake to let the community establish processes and make all the decisions to coordinate their own recovery, feeling that it would fracture communities and impede the recovery process (204:12).

Community coordinating recovery

36. *I think it would be an enormous mistake for someone to confuse community-led from being just, okay let's make that that the community make all the decisions and they can set up their own processes to coordinate their recovery. I think that would be a recipe for very slow recovery processes fracturing communities, significant infighting and really poor outcomes (204 Government representative, 2015, p. 12).*

A volunteer valued a collective effort and understood there would be community members who chose to participate in the broader efforts and others who chose not to, and they felt privileged to be involved in the collective efforts and to witness how the community approached the bushfire disaster (208:5).

Recognising everyone's part large or small

41. *I suppose it's a team effort. Yes, you can have some people rising above others but as long as everyone plays a part, not everyone but the people that wish to play a part do, and also that they understand their role no matter how important or how minuscule it might be, the fact is that they're doing that they're freeing up someone (208 Volunteer, 2015, p. 5).*

A local government representative recognised a shift in their own thinking because their understanding of the community had improved, they had learnt how a community works and understood what constitutes community and equated this to the social fabric (118:16).

Helping people value life

30. *I think it made everybody value life a lot more. So that's a good thing. I think it made people appreciate friends and family and neighbours and we saw people that just went about their day-to-day operations stand up to be counted and that's what a community is, people standing up when they're needed, and I think we saw that. So, to me the fire has taught me a lot of respect for how small communities work. Doesn't matter how small they are, taught me a lot about the fabric of the community that I probably didn't understand or had really thought about too much before (118 Government representative, 2015, p. 16).*

There was a perception that the disaster helped many people in the community realise that place mattered, community members now had a sense of pride and enthusiasm that replaced their complacency (201).

10.3 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the interpretive data that represented the perspectives and experiences of those people who resided outside the disaster zone. The interpretive data and excerpts were gathered from external support volunteers, representatives of local and state government and non-government services who were involved in the Forcett bushfire disaster.

The substantive grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' is the theoretical outcome of this thesis, the theory evolved from the research. The studied phenomenon is based on residents' lived experience of the bushfire disaster. The data gathered from this group of people was not necessary, however I felt that it could offer different vantage points to understand community members' concerns and their ways of resolving those concerns.

In the initial phase many of these participants were going about their everyday activities, unless through proximity or responsibility they were monitoring the bushfire. As the fire threat increase so did some of their involvement, but this was generally related to their role in disaster management or connection to the community. In the second phase there was a significant increase in activity with various forms of responsibility such as governance, service provision or charitable efforts. The differing perspectives about governance were valuable to

contextualise the experiences of community members. There were also comparable features like the feelings attributed to the overwhelming number of donations and in the final phase the recognition of the change of the community expectations with the distribution of disaster funding. The differing perspectives of community-led recovery offered interesting vantage points to compare, clarify, question and strengthen the understanding. The next chapter presents the discussion which is followed by the study conclusion.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: DISCUSSION

11.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the study. The chapter begins with the research context where the original research questions are revisited, then presents a series of questions to prompt dialogue about the findings. The first question reflects on the suitability of the research questions by asking if they explored my topic and were appropriate to the participants experience. The next two questions situated the research findings by asking what contribution 'Navigating Uncertainty' might make to the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and how might this new theory challenge or support existing theories or frameworks. The discussion illustrates the major findings (a) by offering a pragmatic view of how people directly affected respond in a bushfire disaster and (b) how these findings may resist, challenge, extend or support existing theories, frameworks or practice. The final section discusses the implications this study might have for people living in fire-prone areas and the disaster field in respect to practice, education, research, policy and theory development. The chapter finishes with a summary of the fundamental inferences.

11.2 Research Context

This is a qualitative study of resident involvement in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. The constructivist grounded theory approach that was adopted by the researcher offers a voice to the experience of people affected by disaster.

In this study, the preliminary literature review focused on people who had been impacted by disaster and the differing ideas about their involvement. This knowledge helped establish a starting point and contextualised some of the differing human responses to hazards and disasters. There appeared to be little knowledge that offered an in-depth understanding of how people directly affected respond to a bushfire disaster from their perspective. The term

'community-led recovery' offered a starting point for data generation because it implied the involvement and recovery of people directly affected by the disaster.

(a) Were the research questions suitable and if not, what does this say about my assumptions?

The main research questions for this study were:

What is community-led recovery in the context of a bushfire hazard and disaster?

- What community-led approaches were utilised in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster that helped facilitate recovery?
- What factors influenced community members' involvement in the bushfire disaster event?

These questions provided the foundation for the interview schedule which comprised of a series of open-ended questions intended to garner the narratives of research participant's substantial experience of their involvement and what it meant to them.

The first question on my interview schedule invited participants to share their experience of the event.

Q 1. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of the bushfire disaster or emergency?

The first question largely addressed most of the other questions listed on the interview guide which related to community member's involvement. This question enabled participants to share attributes of their experience that was significant to them. It was a valuable open-ended question because it enabled a one-sided conversation that explored the participant's substantial accounts of their experience. Participants determined where they wanted to commence and finish, and direction of the story telling. I felt that this question tendered the richest data because it included individual's decision-making and the meaning that guided their behaviour throughout the event, their reality, context and meaning. The narratives from this question indicated 'points in time' that maintained explicit significance for participants. For example, the starting point for each participant generally related to the moment in time when they became aware of the fire hazard. In addition, participant's candid accounts

encapsulated the time before, during and after the bushfire disaster. I reflected on these implicit interpretations and juxtaposed community-led recovery.

One question on the interview schedule aimed to explore the participant's meaning of community-led recovery.

Q 10. What does community-led recovery mean to you?

The response to this question predominantly depicted individual beliefs and values on topics such as self-determination, governance, psychological and physical recovery situated in the post disaster phase. It seemed that the terms 'community-led' and 'recovery' were reflected upon as something that happened after, once the event has been deemed a disaster. On the contrary, participant's narratives encompassed the time leading up to, during and immediately after the bushfire emergency.

At a different level, when I discussed my research interest of community member's involvement in a bushfire disaster within the disaster field, my topic was often positioned in the context of recovery situated in the post disaster phase. Furthermore, in the literature 'community-led recovery' is considered a policy framework generally used in community recovery, the post-disaster phase (Taylor and Goodman, 2014). I reflected on how these frameworks or concepts might be good in theory but, might place a division in the holistic nature of people's lived experience in these types of events.

I remained alert to this thinking and recorded it in my research journal, while alongside this reviewed the grounded theory literature and consulted with other grounded theorists to clarify and confirm the inductive method of grounded theory. It was made very clear that the aim of grounded theory is to generate an original theory that is 'grounded' in the data, and not to impose '*a priori*' theories or frameworks. Therefore, terms such as 'experience' and 'involvement' proved to be valuable, elucidating participants' interpretation of their experience and not imposing pre-existing theories or frameworks such as 'recovery' and 'community-led'. This process highlighted the value of research reflexivity in the ConGT method and contributed to the development of a new theory that helps understand the holistic nature of people's lived experience in a bushfire disaster.

11.3 Situating the Findings

(a) What contribution does 'Navigating Uncertainty' make to the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation?

The constructivist grounded theory approach adopted in this study constructed a theory *grounded* in the data that was collected from the research participants. 'Navigating Uncertainty' outlines processes of surviving a bushfire disaster. It helps understand how people directly affected respond to a bushfire disaster and the factors that helped or hindered their efforts. This study offers a unique theoretical contribution to existing knowledge by shifting beyond ideas/concepts about 'community-led' and 'recovery' to illustrate a more pragmatic view of resident involvement in a bushfire disaster.

Navigating Uncertainty	
Subcategory/properties	Explanation
LOSING THE FAMILIAR Knowing about the Fire Comprehending the Gravity Safeguarding Responsibilities Locating Family and Others	Knowing about the fire and comprehending the severity and gravity of the situation, signified the beginning of LOSING THE FAMILIAR . Awareness influenced the course of thinking and actions that were centred upon customary processes of safeguarding of people, animals and protecting place.
RESTORING THE FAMILIAR Recognising Disparity Restoring Affairs Fulfilling Role Seeking the Familiar Exceeding Expectations	Once the firestorm had passed there was a process of comprehending what had happened, the disparity and shock. Restoring affairs was the subsequent course of actions and activities undertaken to work towards RESTORING THE FAMILIAR . This involved managing recognised needs. Unifying with the recognisable tendered vitality and purpose. These efforts involved exceeding expectations and exhaustion.
LIVING WITH CHANGE Comprehending Change Adapting to Change Finding Place	Comprehending change meant appraising and attaching meaning to what happened. Mourning the loss, grappling with change and the willingness to adapt contributed to LIVING WITH CHANGE . Attitude influenced the ability to recognise and accept change.

Figure 11. 1: 'Navigating Uncertainty'

The problematic situation

'Navigating Uncertainty' is built around community member's main concern and what they did to resolve that concern. The main concern was a bushfire that progressed to a perilous situation where it threatened life, destroyed and damaged the natural landscape, homes and livelihoods. The severity of the bushfire created conditions that were outside the normative frameworks of many community members and largely diminished a context that was regarded as familiar, routine and safe. To resolve this concern called for decision-making and actions that were underpinned by individual and collective values that involved safeguarding responsibilities, attending to immediate needs and restoring affairs to reconcile with routine life. Individual and the community values influenced, motivated and directed this process, it provided purpose and was a journey not a destination. Community members depended on processes and systems that were familiar to them which helped sustain them through a period of change. The journey symbolised each person's experience in its entirety; their meaning and attitude, unique and personal.

A simplistic assumption of the first premise of symbolic interactionism is that meaning-making precedes action, people assess and reassess things that they encounter or experience by thinking about them. People spend little time reflecting or thinking about situations with a good part of life being routine and acting accordingly. When people interact with their social world then they generally adopt collective identities and values which guide individual actions. These too become routine unless a situation becomes problematic (Charmaz, 2014). For example, people '1) find themselves torn between conflicting desires, demands, or directions, 2) their current practices do not resolve the situation, and/or 3) the problem lies outside their existing normative framework' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 271). Therefore, we act accordingly until faced with a problematic situation and our taken for granted meanings or 'habitual responses no longer work (Charmaz, 1980, Snow, 2002) or new, unanticipated situations or opportunities arise' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 271). When this occurs, we then reinterpret what is happening and change our practices or meanings, interpret what things mean as they happen. The actions we take are based on these meanings (Charmaz, 2015).

The bushfire hazard/disaster generated a problematic situation, decision-making and actions in response to this situation were underpinned by individual and collective values and beliefs. Values are what infuse life with purpose, they are qualities that guide the actions of human beings. Values are all about trying to achieve something, what we want or choose how to behave when pursuing life goals. They are not feelings or rules. Feelings affect our emotions

and how we act, where rules tell us how to live, the right and the wrong (Harris, 2009). To reach our values we ask “what do I want to stand for in the face of this? How do I want to act in response to this event or situation?” (Harris, 2009, p. 193). Values have been likened to a compass as they provide the direction we want to travel, as well as keep us on the path as we travel. Acting on our values is comparable to heading north on the compass, it doesn't matter how far we go we will never get there, it is not a destination, it is about the journey which is directed or guided by our values (Harris, 2009).

'Navigating Uncertainty' helps understand some of the individual and communal psychological and social processes applied during the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. This thesis considered the purpose and meaning that underpinned community member's decision-making and actions, evident in all three phases. Although the concepts of resilience, vulnerability and social capital help us understand the ways individuals and communities respond to hazards and disasters, they are often interpreted as functions that are measurable or tangible. In this study, the psychosocial processes highlight the intangible nature of meaning and subjectivity which may influence these concepts, for instance norms, values and beliefs that are often difficult to recognise or observe.

Community member's decision-making, actions and values made up their experience and a significant aspect of a unique journey that defined who they are in the context of their everyday lives. Discrete experiences, such as illness, loss of a loved one or job, marriage or birth of a child can cause disruption to an individual's usual or normal activities and will often result in change and readjustment. Whilst the experience of adversity is linked to people's vulnerabilities 'it can also serve as an opportunity for personal change, growth, reassessment, and a chance to deepen people's appreciation of themselves, their life, and their loved ones' (Updegraff and Taylor, 2000, p. 21).

(b) How might 'Navigating Uncertainty' challenge or support existing knowledge?

Resilience and Vulnerability

This study recognised the characteristics of individual and collective resilience and vulnerability. The ability and capacity of people to respond and adapt individually, and collaboratively with others when encountering a significant life event that threatened life and disrupted their normative frameworks and social systems. When individual and the

community core values were at risk, resilience demanded the ability to respond and adapt to the uncertain context generated by the bushfire.

Existing literature that explains resilience as the ability and capacity of individuals and their communities to respond to new and unresolved problems that hazards and disaster present, is comparable to the findings in this study. In the context of disasters, resilience predominately correlates with the capacity of people and their communities, to manage, adapt and respond to extraordinary stresses, demands, challenges and losses associated with disasters (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, Norris et al., 2008). The differing features of resilience included creativity, wisdom, such as what is known, and established respectful connections (Dynes, 2002).

Weick's (1993) reanalysis of Norman Maclean's book titled 'Young Men and Fire' (1992) about the 1949 bushfire at Mann Gulch, Montana USA, examined the role structure and sensemaking in organisation (social and cultural behaviour). The study demonstrated the value of virtual role systems, it helped understand how the social construction of reality is near impossible amidst the chaos of fire. Nevertheless, organisation can occur in the form of social construction inside an individual's mind. Weick (1993) discusses four sources that contributed to organisation being more resilient '(1) improvisation and bricolage, (2) virtual role systems, (3) the attitude of wisdom, and (4) respectful interaction' (p. 638). This study shifts the focus from vulnerability to resilience, by moving the discussion from 'what went wrong at Mann Gulch, to a discussion of what makes organizations more resilient' (Weick, 1993, p. 10).

The shift from vulnerability to resilient approaches is valuable, to recognise people's capacity to cope, and their ability to adapt to change, be self-reliant and consider social capital. Handmer (2003b) claims 'people can do many things to reduce their vulnerability and the more they do the more resilient they become in the face of (most) hazards – or to use the expressions gaining currency, the greater their coping or adaptive capacity' (p. 55). Furthermore, it has been suggested that planning could take into consideration what people can or will do in an emergency rather than fitting them into a plan (Dynes, 1983 in Neal and Phillips, 1995).

When comparing vulnerability and resilience there appear to be certain similarities and differences; both are concerned with how a system responds to stress or change. Whilst

these concepts help clarify systems and processes, they are often difficult to define. In the very broadest sense vulnerability focuses on how much a system can be disturbed, whilst resilience focuses on time taken to restabilise or be disturbed without changing (see Chapter 2.4: Vulnerability and Resilience). In the past, resilience models have generally focussed on the ability of individuals or the community to bounce back, however people's lives rarely return to how they were. There are aspects of life that do shift or change in people's lives or around them. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that a person's coping abilities and attitudes can influence the loss suffered (Wisner et al., 2004).

Unfamiliar terrain

The findings highlight the psychological, emotional and social processes of people directly affected by a bushfire disaster. Many community members experienced an 'out of the ordinary' event which resulted in threat to life and a significant disruption to their way of life, with the sudden loss of routine and an unfamiliar setting. 'Navigating Uncertainty' helps understand the disorientation residents faced in a context of disruption, uncertainty and unfamiliarity. The properties 'comprehending the gravity', 'recognising the disparity' and 'comprehending change' help understand the active process of adapting to change that occurred in each of the three phases.

Previous grounded theory studies have acknowledged how the sudden loss of routine and/or familiar setting affects the lives of people who experience these types of disaster events. Cox and Elah Perry (2011) examined the role of place, identity and social capital through the lens of community disaster recovery and resilience in the 2003 McLure forest fire in British Columbia, Canada. The study found that aside from the material losses, the fire contributed to residents experiencing a sense of disorientation which began as the fire approached and continued throughout the course of the event. This disorientation wasn't restricted to the people in the disaster zone, it included those who were evacuated or had lost connection with their familiar milieu and relational networks. This disorientation coincided with the uncertainty of the threat to life. The findings indicated a psychosocial process of reorientation where 'individuals and communities navigate the psychological, social and emotional response to the symbolic and material changes to the social and geographic place that result from the fire's destruction' (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, p. 395). This process emphasises the significance of contextual and cultural factors which influence the recovery process, and the need for the organised external response to recognise the disorientation that people impacted may undergo in these types of events. This study recommended the need for further research

to investigate the psychosocial processes that people experience following a disaster and ways to support these processes.

Interestingly, these types of reactions to an unfamiliar environment appear to be comparable to the theory 'culture shock', a term founded in social and experimental psychology on cross-cultural transition and adaptation. The literature on the psychology of culture shock draws attention to the cognitive and behavioural outcomes when people are suddenly exposed to a completely unfamiliar setting and feel largely overwhelmed by it. People may experience responses such as confusion, anxiety, bewilderment and disorientation. The earlier formations of culture shock (Orberg, 1960) were regarded as a 'negative, passive reaction to a set of noxious circumstances' (Ward et al., 2003, p. 270). Over time these theories have evolved and now regard people's reactions to unfamiliar cultural environments as an active process in dealing with change (Ward et al., 2003).

Self-righting

As highlighted earlier, the bushfire hazard and disaster disrupted people's normative frameworks and social systems. Many were psychologically and emotionally overwhelmed by an unfamiliar life-threatening event. When individual and the community core values were at risk, community members acted on what they felt was required and deemed important in the context of their experience, demanding the ability to respond and adapt in the process of change.

These findings provide an opportunity to consider different ways of thinking and approaches. Psychosocial models such as the post-disaster response by Cohen and Ahearn (1980) and DeWolfe (2000) were developed to help understand the emotional and physical responses of individuals impacted by disaster events (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011). This recovery model has the potential to lean towards advocating practices or responses where individuals or communities affected by disaster are perceived as vulnerable and therefore as requiring help. These approaches have the potential to overlook resilient processes that occur in response to stress and change. Resilience is generally demonstrated in the context of a challenge to the equilibrium, like adversity, disaster or loss.

Furthermore, this notion reinforces contemporary thinking of positive psychology which places an emphasis on people having the capacity to adapt to change. Historically, mental health systems have shifted from a deficit model to national frameworks that focus on

recovery orientated approaches. Contemporary mental health literature has described recovery as a natural process of self-righting where people generally unconsciously act on the 'difficulties and distress that interrupt the status quo of daily life' (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, 2013, p. 21).

In the disaster literature, Olshansky et al. (2012) builds on this notion by suggesting that it is 'not reasonable to expect to devise a grand theory of postdisaster recovery, because recovery is just real life, in all its complexities, on fast forward' (p. 177). Conceptualising the psychosocial needs of people in the phases or stages of disaster management may help understand responses to these types of events, however they may not fit individual experiences or necessarily be situated in recovery (Eyre, 2006).

In this bushfire event the psychological and social processes provided meaning and purpose in a context of uncertainty and disruption to life, which collectively contributed to the structures and processes that supported the foundations of social stability. This happened at multiple levels; individual, family, group and the community. There was underlying meaning in the rebuilding of physical structures it was about restoring familiarity, routine life, the sense of community, culture, and traditional practices that provided certainty and social stability.

Social stability

Social stability was a significant feature in the phase 'restoring the familiar'. Local processes and systems are a feature of social capital and support the foundations of social stability. Social capital is valuable in that it may well have suffered less damage in a disaster event than other forms of capital (Dynes, 2002). Social capital theory is where 'involvement and engagement in community life lays the foundation for social cooperation, civic engagement and trust' (Fairbrother et al., 2014, p. 3).

In the past, social capital has been viewed as a principal element of resilience which aids the understanding of normative systems and the intangible features which occur at a local level, for instance community-based norms (Reimer et al., 2013). It has been suggested that person and communal strengths can be therapeutic in the process of mitigating the losses and trauma in disaster events (Pupavac, 2012). The findings in the present study are consistent with the findings by Weick (1993):

When meaning becomes problematic and decreases, this is a signal for people to pay more attention to their formal and informal social ties and to reaffirm and/or reconstruct them. These actions produce more structure, which then increases meaning, which then decreases the attention directed at structure (p. 16).

This study demonstrates the significance of social networks and relationships throughout the various phases of navigating a bushfire hazard and disaster. The consequence of social interactions contributed to community members' meaning; that is, a shared experience that warranted a collective effort. Reciprocity and trust were important aspects of the established relationships. The sense of 'community' and unspoken expectations on self and others, played a significant role in restoring normative systems.

In recent times, it has been pointed out that the significance of social networks in emergencies is underexplored and a poorly understood phenomenon. This literature highlights the need to further our understanding of how social networks, roles and their relational processes such as reciprocity and adaptive capacities happen in disaster preparation and response (Fairbrother et al., 2014).

This study supports previous research that echoes the need to find opportunities to deliberate over approaches that increase social networking opportunities, rather than thinking that one can build community (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000, Fairbrother et al., 2013). The normative systems at a local level were drawn upon throughout the disaster event and were valued by community members. To unify with the accustomed was trustworthy and reliable, tendering vitality and purpose to move forward and establish a sense of community spirit. The uncertainty generated by the bushfire hazard, disrupted people's normative frameworks which intensified the significance of familiarity. Community members' valued opportunities to connect and bond with people they knew or were familiar with in places they were accustomed to. The disruption to normative frameworks meant personal relationships and shared histories were paramount in the unknown forces of disorder situated beyond the range of familiar (Ingold, 2005). Previous literature has shown that people tend not to abandon their social histories in times of adversity. Eyre (2006) suggests that when experiencing 'uncertainty (such as in and after disasters), people and organisations function best in relation to those systems and processes with which they are already familiar' (p. 85).

An important issue that emerged in this study was the external response and its impact on the natural processes of restoring social stability within the disaster zone. Coinciding with the second phase, 'restoring the familiar' when community members were in the process of self-righting there was a convergence of outside interest in the form of people, donations and information. An external response was required, but there appeared to be a tipping point when response exceeded need. This occurred at a critical period when many community members were still grappling with a sense of disorientation because their status quo of daily life was disrupted. It appeared that the convergence of external interest was twofold in that the 'carnival atmosphere' communicated altruism but it intensified the level of disruption to social stability or way of life community members were striving for (Kendra and Wachtendorf, 2001).

The external interest also generated additional responsibilities and complexities for community members, with functions like accommodating the overwhelming interest and donations, dealing with unfamiliar structures and bureaucratic processes where the term 'affected' was often quantified in economic terms. Some community members prioritised the desires of others over their own in the interactions of charity. For example, some visitors wanted to give directly to those physically affected by the disaster or well-known visitors might stipulate their requirements regarding day, time, reception, activity and media. For community members, these interactions involved a sense of moral obligation to accept and honour the altruism. As highlighted earlier, disaster tourism, the intense desire to visit the disaster affected area has been identified as previously in the literature (see Chapter 8.3: The Disaster). Nevertheless, disaster tourism does not appear to account for visitor-related behaviour and the interactions of accepting and honouring the goodwill.

The encumbering disaster interest generally arrives in economic terms such as money and goods, with human aid inadvertently diminishing the likelihood of community members helping each other and leading to conflict over the values of equality (Cox and Elah Perry, 2011, Wisner et al., 2004). The term 'social cleavage planes' (Gordon, 2009) recognises the differences that will often arise in the post disaster environment due to competing values on equity (George, 2013). Earlier research takes into consideration how the everyday lived experienced of disruption and insecurity in disaster events can often be overlooked, with the disaster management literature generally focusing on measuring social system resilience through reciprocal obligation (George, 2013).

Community-based roles

This disruption and insecurity are also linked to community-based roles. The research findings considered the social and cultural meaning of community members' fulfilling a community-based role in these types of events. The findings in this identified a shift from the community social/cultural values to the agency or service values. It helps understand the intangible meaningful social and cultural processes of the community identity and the tangible economical and administrative processes of professional identity based on accountability, outcomes or reward. The personal identity of a community member was often silenced or diminished by their professional role.

Those fulfilling professional/community role were presented with a duality, underpinned by professional and community values. The values and beliefs of community members in a community-based role were connected to a broader support network, defined by relationship, a sense of belonging, trust, reliability and authenticity and reciprocity. For example, one community member took on a community role in the post disaster phase based on their capacity and capabilities, underpinned by community values of reciprocity and without any expectation of reward. Their role evolved into a professional paid role and shifted to a centralisation of authority and professionalisation of task, a role then governed by organisational values. The complexity came with meaning of role and juggling the community and organisational values. It caused a blurring of boundaries between their community and their professional role in the context that they too had been impacted by a significant life event.

From a government perspective, community members were involved because it was a way of managing their grief and helping them feel significant again, efforts were made to involve community members in the state recovery efforts as a volunteer or employment to assist their recovery process. For some community members, accepting a role defined by organisational values diminished their community significance, their role was based on a position description, governed by duties, responsibilities and policy, and had an economic value.

Previous disaster research has advocated the need to move towards a more inclusive orientation of new community-based models in policy and practice, to recognise the relationship between citizen disempowerment and learned helplessness, with the latter perceived to potentially develop alongside 'centralisation of authority and professionalisation of tasks' (Taylor and Goodman, 2014, p. 203).

Community-based worker burnout

In this grounded theory study community members juggled the differing expectations of personal and professional responsibilities, such as the meaning of time and standpoint. The professional role in many cases entailed a 9am to 5pm job, whereas the community role would commonly sit outside these times, with the demand to juggle work-related matters after hours and represented being accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The exhaustion that many community members experienced was related to their involvement in the disaster event, evident in the multiple roles and responsibilities they undertook and cultural values around exceeding expectations in the disaster recovery response. There appears to be potential gap that might require further investigation, to understand the personal and professional role in the context of working with the community in these types of events, as well as understand the added burden imposed on community-based roles in the post disaster phase, and its link to work burnout and exhaustion.

Burnout or exhaustion has been previously recognised for staff servicing the community (Taylor and Goodman, 2014) whilst for community members, there is generally a focus on health and wellbeing related to the trauma of the event (McAllan et al., 2011). Physical exhaustion has been recognised in the different phases that individuals may experience post disaster and described as a typical reaction to emergency or disaster. It nestles in the trough of 'disappointment and disillusionment' which generally occurs one to three years post disaster (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011). The acknowledgement that community members might experience physical exhaustion similarly to staff servicing the community, challenges the assumption of a 'typical reaction to an emergency or disaster'. This can offer a different perspective to understand this problem, identify and challenge dominant power constructs and foster opportunities for change. For example, practices that mitigate burnout or exhaustion for community members based on labour or service could be considered rather than the present community disaster recovery models or theories on loss and grief.

Community disaster recovery

The findings from this study build on earlier studies that demonstrated the significance of community members' involvement in these types of events, offering purpose and meaning and the potential to reduce anxiety and trauma. The concept of coping or having agency to resolve life's difficulties has the potential to foster a sense of empowerment and hope, and

more importantly reduce stress and facilitate recovery. It was evident that structures, systems and processes that are familiar and recognisable cultivated a safe and less stressful environment and were deemed important. The psychosocial processes in this study help understand how some community members responded in an event that threatened their existence. The concern for life, exposed individual and the community values which influenced decision-making based on what was important or significant, this included the cultural constructs such as tradition and relationship with place.

This study highlighted the differing values that guide or direct individuals and their social systems, such as the community and agency culture. Traditionally, in the post disaster phase community-led recovery has been utilised, however this is often burdened by whose role it is to administer the leading.

Much of the government literature talks of the need for services and agencies to be collaborative, but often there was no reference to how or where 'community' fitted in. There was a paradox in this – that the policy has community at the centre, while much of the focus, energy, resources and decision making were focused on 'institutional' structures. 'Community' was not in frame as partners in collaborative effort (Taylor and Goodman, 2014).

This thesis highlights some differing perceptions of community-led recovery. In the disaster field community-led is generally coupled with the emergency and disaster management concepts. Community-led and recovery are two different concepts. Community-led defines an approach and recovery refers to a process, coupled together it is described as a framework situated in community recovery. Community-led advocates the notion that communities impacted by disaster events have the power to self-govern or coordinate their own recovery. This terminology has the potential to create divisions in that it demands a level of exchange of power. When a system, group or the community is exposed to a hazard and/or disaster generally there is a level of physical and social vulnerability that requires emergency management intervention (Lindell, 2013). There is a formal system, a sanctioned entity encompassing its own structures and processes for dealing with these types of events, and an informal system, culturally attached to place with its own set of structures and processes to deal with everyday life, and at times significant incidents. Each system is valuable in their response to assess, mitigate, protect and manage, however the governance in the formal and informal systems potentially generates conflict.

To reduce this opposition or tension between the two systems, terminologies can be valuable tools. The findings in this study recognise the psychosocial processes of people from their respective communities responding to a bushfire disaster event, an event required a formal emergency management intervention. The use of terms such as a 'community centred approach' where the 'centred' signifies focussed and aligned and involves community members might be more helpful than 'community-led recovery'. It shifts the idea that there is the necessity for the community to lead which has the potential to reduce the power indifferences that surface in these types of situations.

11.4 Research Implications

(a) What kind of implications might this study have for future education, practice, research, policy and theory development?

The research findings offer a range of implications that might be relevant to people living in fire-prone areas and the various stakeholders who represent the domain of hazards and disaster. Whilst not all people and communities who experience these types of events will relate to all properties of this theory, there are features that will resonate and validate their experience.

The constructivist grounded theory (ConGT) approach that was adopted by the researcher, constructed a theory *grounded* in the data that was collected from the research participants. The grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' outlines the psychosocial processes of surviving a bushfire disaster. This knowledge helps us to understand how people directly affected respond to new and unresolved problems, the subjective and holistic nature of people's lived experience and contributes to a more pragmatic understanding of concepts such as resilience, vulnerability and social capital.

The three sub-categories of the grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' are characterised as:

- Losing the Familiar - The Bushfire: Initial Phase,
- Restoring the Familiar – The Disaster: Second Phase, and
- Living with Change – The Event: Final Phase.

The differing properties featured in the three distinct phases impart a range of implications for people living in fire-prone areas, disaster management policy, bushfire prevention and preparation, response and recovery (PPRR), education and future research.

Losing the Familiar

The Bushfire: Initial Phase

'Knowing about the fire' influenced community members' decision-making and actions which were centred on safeguarding people and animals, and protecting place. The varying degrees of an individual's awareness was influenced by 'indications' of the bushfire hazard which helps improve our understanding of the way people respond in a bushfire emergency. This knowledge has implications for education and policy development related to Emergency Management and the PPRR model of risk management.

The property 'comprehending the gravity' advances knowledge of the psychosocial processes involved in fire awareness and fire danger, community members' interpreted and reinterpreted information which verified the seriousness of the situation and influenced their decision-making. Some community members identified how their capacity to think in a planned and thoughtful manner shifted when they realised the seriousness of hazard. This knowledge is relevant to policy and practice linked to PPRR and has the potential to offer a very pragmatic understanding of the psychological aspects of trauma in emergency situations.

Awareness of the fire and the level of danger influenced community members' actions towards safeguarding life, accounting for others and protecting place, captured in the property 'safeguarding responsibilities'. The characteristics of this process enhances knowledge about the sense of responsibility and expectations that community members experienced and how their decision-making and behaviour was influenced by their world view, social interactions and the impending hazard. Customary roles and responsibility shifted during the emergency, some community members appeared to cope adeptly under stress which meant others felt a sense of trust or reliance on their governance. These interactions are linked to responsibility and expectations,

'I think that is comforting in the disaster, to know that you have someone a bit stronger than you so if things do go wrong you will be okay (see Chapter 7.2: Interpretive Category Construction).

An awareness that significant people in your life were safe and accounted for tempered the sense of responsibility, many of the male community members felt liberated because they could then focus and direct their energy to other important matters such as protecting life and property. This knowledge helps understand some of the main concerns that community members held during the bushfire emergency and the differing roles and responsibilities they experienced which contributes to place-based social and ecological knowledge and comprehension of risk. There might be a need for further research on emotional preparedness and safeguarding responsibilities in community disaster recovery.

The final property 'locating family and others' helps enhance our understanding of the value in social networks (relationships and trust) leading up to and during an emergency which has the potential for future education in the area of trauma and psychological wellbeing. The customary networks, familial obligations and customary communications were significant in the process of knowing the whereabouts and safety of significant others. To be separated and not know the whereabouts of significant others intensified community members' emotions namely of anxiety and fear, which caused worry and distress.

Community members resourcefulness in the process of connecting with significant others has the potential to help understand the process of community building centred upon social networks. This knowledge provides a pragmatic understanding of social networks, separation and trauma, and has the potential to build on existing knowledge about approaches to support social capital. For instance, identifying social norms, information channels and established trusted relationships that are familiar or routine to people living in communities affected by bushfire disaster has the potential to cultivate capacity and contribute to wellbeing.

Restoring the Familiar

The Disaster: Second phase

This study suggests that the magnitude of the fire, its destruction of landscape and disruption to normal routine resulted in many community members feeling a sense of disorientation. In this phase 'recognising the disparity' was a psychosocial process that involved comprehending or making sense of what had happened. Previous research has identified psychosocial responses, such as disorientation and reorientation to the symbolic, material changes to the social and geographic nature of place that can result from a bushfire hazard and disaster. 'Navigating Uncertainty' builds on this knowledge and compared it to the theory

of 'culture shock' which in present day regards reactions to unfamiliar environments as an active process of dealing with change. There is the potential for further research to investigate this active process of managing change in the context of a bushfire disaster. This study has the potential to offer a practical understanding of the psychological impact these types of events can have on people. For instance, the intangible nature of emotion associated with an experience that felt formidable enough to be visible to others has implications in respect to understanding and responding to trauma, and how we support self-righting or psychological recovery processes. The process of self-righting was discussed earlier in this chapter.

The findings suggest that reunification of the social networks was a priority because community members proceeded to re-establish their familial systems, social interactions and way of life. What appeared to hinder the process of 'restoring affairs' was physical access to the disaster zone which in the past has emerged as highly contentious and emotion-charged. However, many community members demonstrated their resourcefulness and used local knowledge to bypass road blocks in the process of attending to their individual concerns or need. The issue of access and its management may also need to be considered in the self-righting process to enable community members to reaffirm or reconstruct their formal and informal social ties as reunification plays an important function in individual and community disaster recovery.

This study helps us understand the significance of reunification and returning to place, and how it influences social stability or restoration of normative systems. To reunify familial and friendship networks helped restore a level of community culture. Restoration of familial systems and social stability, and ways to support the psychosocial process of restoration in community disaster recovery might require further research. Richardson et al. (2016) supports this by claiming there is minimal research about separation and reunification of familial/friendship networks.

As highlighted earlier, theoretically these findings may assist the interpretation of concepts such as resilience, social systems and culture in community disaster recovery. For example, resilience is evident in the various approaches community members undertook such as 'restoring affairs' and 'fulfilling role'. To resolve their concerns helped invigorate social stability. Furthermore, the value of individual social networks and capabilities was a significant attribute in this study, and this knowledge may assist in education, policy and

practice relevant to people living in fire-prone areas. For example, the ability to recognise and support local leadership helped strengthen people's disposition and increase community capacity, and the importance of re-establishing formal and informal ties helped invigorate familiarity and restore way of life.

In the process of 'fulfilling role' community members filled a multitude of roles and juggled multiple roles and responsibilities in their response to customary, new and unfamiliar tasks. They applied their individual expertise and strengths, underpinned by individual and community values to manage or cope with an everchanging context. This knowledge offers a pragmatic understanding of community leadership, culture and values that may be helpful to people living in fire-prone areas and possible implications for education and policy development related to Emergency Management and the PPRR model of risk management.

Some community members felt that their community role was at odds with their professional role because their ability to self-determine as a community member was undermined by meeting the obligations of their professional role. These findings imply an issue in the duality of role and self-determination and further research might be required to help understand community-based roles in these types of events. It might be helpful to explore the functions and values of the personal and professional role, the meaning of individual and organisational identity, and the multiple roles that occurred above normative roles. This knowledge may have the potential to help understand community-based roles, the reaffirming and reconstructing of social and cultural identity, and the dichotomy of personal and professional roles in these types of events and further develop approaches that sustain community resilience. The dichotomy of community members' personal and professional roles in an emergency and disaster has implications for community disaster recovery, community education, practice and future research.

These findings resonate with previous disaster research on the topic of emotional safety which suggests that people seek emotional shelter because the blurring of logic and collapse of meaning evokes a sense of feeling exposed and alone (Erikson, 1976). In this study, community members valued opportunities to unify with something or someone familiar and this appeared to provide a sense of emotional shelter.

'It seemed like there was just a sea of faces there and I think you are not in a good mental place, and you just want to see a familiar face' (see Chapter 8.3: The Disaster: Second Phase).

To unify with someone familiar generated a sense of cohesiveness amongst community members and explicates the intangible meaning emotional safety, solidarity behaviour and safety. Venues that survived the fire hazard were valued as they allowed for routine functions and contributed to a sense of community spirit and to moving forward. An important feature of this process was knowing how the community functioned, its networks, norms and language. Community members valued opportunities to connect and interact with each other through customary functions, such as meeting at the local café for coffee or the hotel, or school resuming.

Gaining a level of normality was a common goal for many community members. Expert advice that suggested community members postpone the rebuild of their homes contradicted with their individual values because rebuilding a home was more than the physical structure - it denoted the recommencement of traditional practices and routine life. This process helps understand how a meaningful community setting engenders normal existence and mitigates the loss and disruption of social life and may be of value for future practice, education, policy development and research in community disaster recovery.

During the self-righting process, there was an overwhelming number of visitors to the disaster zone. Whilst assistance was greatly needed and appreciated, community member's time and effort were often directed towards the acceptance and acknowledgement of charity. This process appeared twofold in that it helped the community to know that people cared but it also hindered the self-righting processes and social stability because the interactions involved physical and moral obligations. For example, an obligation may have been felt to accept the goodwill because it was the right thing to do, even if it wasn't needed at the time or at all, and at times there were expectations from the donor to be acknowledged for their giving. These findings suggest there might be a hidden moral burden in the interactions of goodwill in disaster events.

'I've got my old laptop here would you love it? And I think the laptop was 10 years old...and one of the terrible things was that because you said 'yes please, we'll take it thanks', you'd honour the donation really well and the goodwill, but

that took up so much energy' (See Chapter 8.2: Interpretive Category Construction).

This knowledge is important because people affected by disaster can experience social, physical and economical vulnerability and their values may be undermined or prioritised over the requirements of those with agency or influence in society. The timing, volume and ethics of charity in community disaster recovery might need to be investigated further. George (2013) claims that there is minimal dialogue in the disaster management literature about the interaction between the recipient and providers of help or assistance.

At a practice level, representatives of local and state government and non-government services may need to consider convergent management and control to protect the self-righting processes of community during these types of events. For example, the authority of government might be valuable in counteracting or controlling the convergence of interest and material aid before it reaches the point of being unmanageable. This action might help reduce the level of secondary trauma/disturbance which is often referred to as 'the disaster after the disaster'.

Although, community-based roles were an important quality of leadership and invigorated community spirit, quite often the responsibility of these roles exceeded an individual's capacity, evident in the property 'exceeding expectations'. Community member's efforts were valued, nevertheless it often necessitated the contribution of a large portion of self to deal with the complexity of extra demands, such as juggling personal and professional roles, community and external visitor needs, managing change and ethical dilemmas, modifying roles and responsibilities. This knowledge has the potential to enhance education and community development approaches by providing practical strategies to support community-based roles and monitor burnout. Such strategies may include identifying community members' leadership and professional roles, creating opportunities for them to connect and support each other to promote camaraderie and as well as strategies to monitor and support them.

Living with Change

The Event: Final Phase

The property 'comprehending change' entailed community members reflecting on the consequences of the overall disaster event to construct their own interpretation and to attach

meaning. Looking back has been described in the literature as a valuable process because it has the potential to help people move forward and recognise new knowledge or learnings (George, 2013). In the process of looking back community members reflected on what happened and rationalised some of things that were significant to them. This process appeared to be helpful or cathartic in that it created the opportunity to reflect on individual experience and the 'big picture' to gain some perspective. This understanding has the potential to contribute to the discourse of long-term community disaster recovery where simple strategies, such as an opportunity to share an individual's narrative, can assist the processes in recognising a change, and developing new knowledge and meaning.

As highlighted earlier, what often determines our behaviour is not what happens to us but how we interpret what happens to us. An individual's attitude or way of thinking affected the way that they reconciled the circumstances they had experienced in the bushfire disaster. Some community members converted a personal tragedy into a triumph or adapted to change whilst others resisted change or mourned their losses. In this study many community members attributed their resourcefulness and attitudes to rural living. The interpretation of what happened is reflected in the community members' narratives, for example there was a general preparedness to make the best of a bad situation, a willingness to make do, a healthy desire to rely on each other and an ability to adapt and survive without conveniences and with limited resources.

'Years of living on the Peninsula knowing that every time someone blinks the power goes off, being able to remote access the garage by turning the roller off, and things like that. So, we could get in there and get the BBQ and get all sorts of things fuel and things we had stored in there, I guess being that kind of the outdoors 5. I think we are very logical; I've always believed 7. A practical family' (see Chapter 9.2: Interpretive Category Construction).

The property 'adapting to change' helps understand the psychological processes in community disaster recovery. These findings provide a pragmatic understanding of how a person's world view shapes their meaning and behaviour, and how life experience and rural culture influenced the capabilities and capacity of community members before, during and after the bushfire disaster. This knowledge may be also be helpful for theoretical approaches such as community development.

'Finding place' meant looking at the 'bigger picture' which factored in other aspects or features of this significant life event. This process has previously been referred to as post traumatic growth, the positive changes that people might recognise when they experience a traumatic event. A significant feature of this process suggests the bushfire disaster forced community members to step outside their normal, routine, familiar and often comfortable way of life. The importance of social and collective disaster experiences has been discussed earlier (see Chapter 9.3: The Event: Final Phase). Communities impacted by disaster can experience two forms of trauma, individual and collective, and the enormity of these experiences can affect our meaning in relation to how the world is interpreted in new and different ways. The bushfire hazard and disaster created opportunities where community members connected and experienced different relationships with other residents. For many newcomers the bushfire disaster 'sped up the process of being accepted' because it fostered a sense of belonging and challenged the often-considered culture of closed community.

'I knew people but not real close friends you know. Whereas today, I can say I have some of the loveliest friends here and that has mainly come about because of the fires because we all got together 7. It made a huge difference 5. Well you know what we were like before a bit lost, we had so many friends on the mainland and came here and nobody knows you. It is a hard adjustment and it is sad to think you have a disaster for that to happen' (pp. 184 & 185).

A stronger sense of community developed from a shared experience where there was an opportunity to witness universal values, this promoted a sense of belonging and unity. A sense of place and belonging was fostered through the development of friendships.

This knowledge has the potential to further our understanding of individual and collective disaster experiences and meaning, and recognise the function of individual beliefs, values, behaviour and community culture. This knowledge suggests that creating opportunities for community members to have differing relationships within their community has merit in building social capacity to mitigate future disaster events. Individual values in the context of community disaster recovery might be worthy of further research, to explore the intrinsic nature of values and purpose when navigating the difficulties and distress of tragedy that interrupts the status quo of daily life.

Community disaster recovery

It is well recognised that people impacted by these types of events can often experience an overwhelming feeling of powerlessness, therefore interventions should emphasise empowerment (Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2011). The grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' constructed in this study helps understand the holistic nature of people's lived experience in a bushfire disaster and the natural processes of self-righting that occurred when the status quo of daily life was disrupted. 'Navigating Uncertainty' challenges the dominant discourse where people directly impacted by these types of disaster events are reflected through the lens of dominant constructs of emergency and disaster management.

The constructs of disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery are valuable entities for those people on the outside. They help provide an understanding and a way of responding to hazards and disasters. Nevertheless, these concepts might place a division in community members' lived experience that is otherwise not there for them. By way of illustration, in the initial phase, community members' awareness of the threat and decision-making influenced their actions to safeguard life and place and locate family and significant others.

Policy makers could consider altering the terminology from community-led recovery to a community centred approach. A community centred approach has the potential to respect and position the needs of those people impacted by these types of events at the forefront. This terminology epitomises the way community members deal or manage their context, with the potential to appreciate locally based; leadership, knowledge, capabilities and capacity, and culture. This term also has the potential to recognise and acknowledge residents' involvement throughout all phases of emergency and disaster management.

The main implications of this study are summarised in a series of points below:

Community: For people affected by disaster, this research offers the opportunity to moderate, challenge or collaborate with plurality of discourse to provide a more inclusive outcome for those people impacted by disaster. For people who experience these types of events, 'Navigating Uncertainty' illustrates what can be potentially concealed about their experience of a bushfire disaster event by the dominant structural processes.

Theoretical: Theoretically, 'Navigating Uncertainty' may help to understand the holistic nature of people's lived experience in these types of events, and to appreciate how the many separate parts can contribute to the whole person's or the community's experience.

The knowledge of the different phases of people's lived experience in these types of events can help others understand the complexity and diversity of experience and meaning. The findings in this study illustrate the intangible nature of meaningful social and cultural processes, and significance of place, and how these link to individual and the community identity. This may assist in developing an interface between theoretical, structural and the community responses.

Policy: In the realm of policy, 'Navigating Uncertainty' has the potential to challenge how recovery is conceptualised. This study suggests that recovery happens throughout all phases of a bushfire emergency and disaster and is evident in community members' inherent processes such as protecting, restoring, and valuing their normative systems. Policy might consider recovery as people making decisions, undertaking actions, finding purpose and a sense of hope during the complexities or significant events that occur in life.

For policy these findings could further understanding of community members' involvement in all phases of disaster management. This might assist in enhancing approaches that foster a more collective rather than competing, responsibility. Policy makers may like to consider changing the terminology from community-led recovery to a community-centred approach. This terminology epitomises the way community members deal with or manage their context, with the potential to recognise and acknowledge community member's involvement throughout all phases of emergency and disaster management.

Practice: In the field of practice, 'Navigating Uncertainty' might assist workers and educators to further develop approaches that support community members in the process of restoring their normative social systems.

They could do this by:

- recognising the value of kinship or local relationships in these types of events, use of customary networks and reunification of people and place.
- recognising places where community members can connect with each other.

- identifying ways to keep those community members who are separated from place or the community, well informed and connected.
- developing strategies that monitor and govern the external interest by looking at approaches that might buffer the encumbrance on community members.
- devising strategies that might collectively monitor and manage worker burnout for community-based workers.

11.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presents the theoretical and practical implications of the substantive theory 'Navigating Uncertainty'. This thesis respects the process that people undertake when responding to some of the difficulties and distress that might interrupt the status quo of daily life. It explains the local processes community members employed and highlights the intangible nature of meaning and subjectivity. The research context section critiqued the initial research question by exploring its role, value, challenges and learnings. Chapters six to ten presented the newly constructed theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' which was further developed with existing knowledge relevant to the new theory. Situating the findings discusses some of the main issues and how it might support or challenge existing knowledge, theories and frameworks like resilience, vulnerability, social capital, social stability, community-based roles and community disaster recovery. An example is, the consequence of the community networks and relationships, and the community-based norms, which are often immeasurable, influencing people's capacity to cope. In a practical sense this means that promoting or sustaining opportunities for social networking can influence individual and community capacity.

This study highlights the importance of recognising and sustaining social stability in disaster events, and the need to identify ways of safeguarding permanence and community-based roles in a disaster, as well as worker burnout. It also considers the term 'community-led recovery', 'community-led' being an approach and 'recovery' a process, coupled together it is described as a framework situated in community recovery. It also highlights the value of the differing systems and the potential for conflict through the need to govern. This chapter finishes with the implications this study, the differing properties of 'Navigating Uncertainty' were discussed in relation to future practice, education, policy and theory development and research. The main points are summarised to highlight the significant implications of this study for community, theoretically, policy and the field of practice. As highlighted this

research is valuable because it gives a voice to the experience of people affected by disaster and helps understand the importance of the inherent psychosocial processes that occur when their daily lives are disrupted significantly by a bushfire disaster event. In the final chapter, the research efforts are evaluated against the ConGT criteria, credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness.

CHAPTER TWELVE: STUDY CONCLUSIONS

12.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the research methodology and outcomes. It is presented in four sections: usefulness, resonance, credibility and originality. Firstly, usefulness describes the research versatility, opportunities for further research and the value of the research. Secondly, resonance considers the fullness of studied experience, meaning and how the research might resonate with participants. Thirdly, credibility looks at aspects such as familiarity with setting and enough data to merit the suggested claims. Finally, originality explores new insights and knowledge, and social and theoretical significance (Charmaz, 2014).

12.3 Evaluation of Grounded Theory

A review of the criteria for grounded theory studies is offered to demonstrate the research efforts in meeting usefulness, resonance, credibility and originality (Charmaz, 2014).

In September 2017, I presented my PhD research to approximately 170 people in two states of Australia. Firstly, I presented at the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) Conference in Sydney, followed by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), Tasmanian branch 'Green Social Work' professional development day at Campbell Town Tasmania, and then to community members and other interested people at Copping and Dunalley Tasmania.

The findings were presented to a wide range of stakeholders that included research participants, their family members, friends and other interested people involved in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster, as well as emergency services, government and non-government representatives, social work practitioners and students, and experts in the disaster field. These presentations provided an opportunity to discuss my findings and gain valuable feedback.

Usefulness

This activity was extremely beneficial in that it provided clarification of the research usefulness and utilisation. At one event social work students and practitioners discussed the importance of social stability and its role in recovery, then explored creative ways of working with the community to re-establish routine and regularity. For example, if a school building had been destroyed there could be other ways to bring children together such as running a class elsewhere, even under the shade of a tree. This identifies the value in restoration of the children's normative system, routine and regularity and the rippling effect that has on reaffirming and reconstructing social ties.

Resonance

Although this research focused on a single bushfire disaster event, it was encouraging to hear that the findings resonated with people who had lived through other bushfire disaster events in Australia. Many people residing in the research setting claimed the findings resonated and validated their experience. Community members also spoke about matters relating to the evacuation, resources, donations and bureaucracy. A defined point of interest to many community members was how the severity and impact of the 2013 Forcett bushfire was totally unexpected. The discussion that followed contemplated the upcoming fire season with community members feeling that a level of complacency had stealthily returned, with one community member suggesting that 'people have short term memories'. A few community members suggested including an addendum to the thesis that included my experience, community members also discussed how the research could be simplified for practical day to day use. Finally, several community members verbalised their appreciation of my return to present the research findings; this undertaking meant a great deal to them.

Credibility

There was an undertaking to present this thesis in a manner that retained a level of intimacy with the research setting and participants that coupled with satisfying the requirements of research integrity. This is illustrated throughout the thesis with the presence of the voice and experience of the participants and the researcher. My involvement in the disaster event tendered a level of authenticity, generated by the shared experience of the event and a level of trust with participants. Several participants stated it was personal and professional credibility that influenced their motivation to participate in the study. These principles fostered a level of trust, safety and intimacy in the research environment. My experience as a resident and recovery worker enabled me to grasp the participant's individual understandings and

perspectives. This is evident in the interview process where the knowing or familiarity of certain features of participants' stories was helpful. Observational data contributed to the richness of the analysis, as did the differing views and experiences shared through the interactions between couples, friends and family groups who participated in the interviews. The oral history interviews by four community members assisted in understanding the layers of stories that helped sketch a picture of the small communities located in the research setting. Orienting myself with a broad range of disaster related literature in the initial review helped develop my awareness of the research phenomena. A range of activities that assisted this process included sorting and storage of references on EndNote, creating Excel tables to record and compare previous studies, and using card systems to record literature relevant to the topic of interest.

In this study a limitation was the geographical constraints hindering theoretical sampling. Tasmania, a state of Australia, is a small island across the water, travelling there from my base in the Australian mainland, required a trip by boat or plane. This restricted the opportunity to return regularly to further explore or confirm meaning or interview other family members who may have been an integral part of a participant's shared experience. The two field trips to Tasmania did generate a broad range of perspectives and experiences. Adding to this several interviews transcribed prior to the second field trip, helped me consider possible gaps, voices and, experiences that could further amplify the analysis. For example, an effort was made to include the voices of community members not involved in any broader community efforts, who represented a different geographical standpoint, and the voices of those who didn't identify as community members but were involved in the event in some way.

Another limitation that might be considered is that the 18 – 30 age group was not represented, with participants' ages ranging from 30 to 80. The length of residency was relatively sound with the shortest time being less than six months through to those people who had lived in the area 'all their life'. However, considering these limitations, the study aim was to generalise a theory not a population. Another limitation might include the length of time that had elapsed, the bushfire disaster occurred in January 2013 and interviews were conducted August 2015. My initial concern about the amount of time and potential for problems of recall appeared to be somewhat dismissed, with many participants claiming their recall improved when they started talking about the event. Only a few struggled with recall of specific days, dates and time during the emergency and initial post disaster phase. Overall participants appreciated the opportunity to share their stories.

Empirical observations helped provoke a series of questions to delineate the context of the community reconciling their past and present lives having experienced a bushfire disaster. The constant comparison of observations, notes, codes, incidents, memos and categories evident in the dense analysis account for participants' dissonances or differences. The chapter on interpretive category construction is supported with verbatim excerpts. The findings are presented in a manner that enhances the data source. For example, use of focused codes account for the foundations and structure of the theoretical understanding, intended to strengthen the research credibility.

The final strategy that supports this PhD research credibility is the use of critical reflection and reflexivity. Reflexivity strategies used throughout this study recognised my influence as a researcher in the research design, interview schedule, literature review, analysis and theory construction. This process involved reflecting and recording my thinking, generating questions about the data, questioning of assumptions, and locating and accounting for my own experience and power.

Originality

The substantive grounded theory 'Navigating Uncertainty' provides an interpretation and conceptual understanding of resident involvement in a single bushfire disaster event, therefore might not be relevant to other disaster events. As highlighted earlier the data gathered does not represent the experiences and perspectives of those people who live in other parts of Australia or the world impacted by similar types of events. The data is generated from those people impacted or involved in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. Nevertheless, there are conceptual aspects of a theory that may be useful and utilised in other significant events or situations that impact the everyday lives of people, families, groups and communities. Various strategies were employed to resist forcing the data into extant theories or concepts.

12.4 Concluding Remarks

This study aimed to understand the experiences and perspectives of people living in the small communities impacted by the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. To achieve this a constructivist grounded theory method sought to construct an interpretive understanding of the inherent psychological and social processes employed to deal with a bushfire hazard and

disaster through the lens of those people with lived experience of it. A grounded theory method is underpinned by symbolic interactionism which assisted in preserving participants' language, actions and meaning throughout the research. The significance of this research is demonstrated in the psychosocial phases and their properties illustrating the rich understandings of what happened leading up to, during and after the bushfire disaster.

'Navigating Uncertainty' outlines processes of surviving a bushfire disaster. It offers an understanding of community disaster recovery in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania bushfire disaster. Whilst individuals acknowledged their adversity in this event, they also illustrated their capacity, leadership and strengths, and the significance of their capabilities and social ties. The findings also raise awareness of normative systems within rural communities and the structural factors that can occur during disaster events. This thesis demonstrates how the concepts of vulnerability, resilience, social capital and rural culture play a critical role in these types of events. Finally, this thesis offers a unique theoretical contribution to existing knowledge by shifting beyond ideas and concepts of community-led recovery to illustrate a more pragmatic view of the holistic nature of people's lived experience in a bushfire disaster.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Photographs of the bushfire disaster



Photograph 4: Dunalley. Friday 4 January 2013.

Source. Mark Heather



Photograph 5: Dunalley Primary School. Saturday 5 January 2013.

Source. Warren Frey



Photograph 6: Residents' efforts. Sunday 6 January 2013

Source. Fiona Jennings



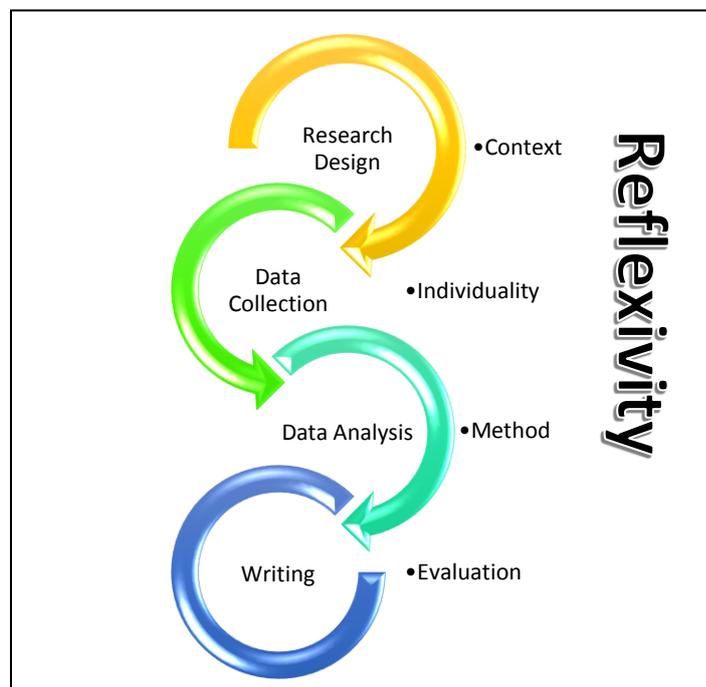
Photograph 7: Marquees, Dunalley hotel paddock. January 2013

Source. Fiona Jennings

Appendix 2: Reflexivity Framework

Constructivist Grounded Theory Research – My Reflexivity Framework

- 1. Context (knowledge creation is influenced by structural and political context, and is a part of the tools we use to create knowledge)**
 - What was my role in noticing or considering what was important? I wonder why I saw it in those terms.
 - What was the influence of power?
 - What were the different perspectives, any missing or silenced perspectives?
- 2. Individuality (who I am and how does that influence the way we create knowledge)**
 - How does who I am influence my understanding?
 - Where does this come from?
 - What was I thinking and feeling?
- 3. Method (as a research tool, how did I influence the setting, the means or process in creating knowledge)**
 - What language patterns did I use?
 - What might have restricted me or others?
 - How is this different or does it always happen this way?
- 4. Evaluation (how does my norms and beliefs, influence the knowledge we create and believe in)**
 - What assumptions am I making here?
 - Where do they come from?
 - What made me think of this/that?



This framework was developed from the work of Fook, J. and Gardener, F. (2007) '*Practicing critical reflection: a resource handbook*', England UK Open University Press. Reprint 2008, Smith, A. and Maxwell, J. (2008) '*Critical Reflection*', Master of Social Work Practice, UTAS. and my social work experience.

Appendix 3: Ethics Approval



27th July 2015

Joshua Whittaker
Building 12 Level 10, Room 7
School of Mathematical & Geospatial Sciences
RMIT University

Dear Joshua

BSEHAPP 18-15 WHITTAKER-JENNINGS Community-led Recovery in the context of emergencies and disaster: A case study of community-resilience in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania Bushfire'

Thank you for submitting your amended application for review.

I am pleased to inform you that the CHEAN has approved your application for a period of **2.5 Years** from the date of this letter to **27th January 2018** and your research may now proceed.

The CHEAN would like to remind you that:

All data should be stored on University Network systems. These systems provide high levels of manageable security and data integrity, can provide secure remote access, are backed up on a regular basis and can provide Disaster Recover processes should a large scale incident occur. The use of portable devices such as CDs and memory sticks is valid for archiving; data transport where necessary and for some works in progress.

The authoritative copy of all current data should reside on appropriate network systems; and the Principal Investigator is responsible for the retention and storage of the original data pertaining to the project for a minimum period of five years.

Please Note: Annual reports are due on the anniversary of the commencement date for all research projects that have been approved by the CHEAN. Ongoing approval is conditional upon the submission of annual reports failure to provide an annual report may result in Ethics approval being withdrawn.

Final reports are due within six months of the project expiring or as soon as possible after your research project has concluded.

The annual/final reports forms can be found at:
www.rmit.edu.au/staff/research/human-research-ethics

Yours faithfully,

Dr Falk Scholer
Deputy Chair, Science Engineering & Health
College Human Ethics Advisory Network

RMIT University

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Appendix 4: Participant Information Letter



Interview information for participant.

Project Title: Community-led recovery in the context of emergencies and disaster: a case study of community resilience in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania Bushfire.

Dear

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by RMIT University and the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC). Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask one of the student researchers.

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?

The student researcher is Fiona Jennings, a PhD scholar undertaking a Higher Research Degree with RMIT University, in the School of Mathematical and Geospatial Sciences, Melbourne. This is a part of the research project, 'out of uniform: building community resilience through non-traditional volunteering' with the BNHCRC.

Fiona has lived and worked in rural communities most of her life, in Victoria and Tasmania. A career in social work, with the past 10 years as a specialist rural community social worker, has generated a genuine interest in the ability to recognise, acknowledge and support resilience in rural communities.

Why have you been approached?

You have been approached to participate in this research having been involved in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania Bushfire Disaster. The student researcher utilised local knowledge and networks to obtain your contact details. People under the age of 18 will be excluded.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?

On 4 January 2013, a bushfire burnt a significant area in South East Tasmania, it was categorised as a disaster due to the magnitude of the devastation. The roads into the fire affected zone were closed for number of days, effectively causing a 'gap' in time between the emergency and the official recovery response.

The small communities utilised local knowledge and resources to protect and care for others and their livelihoods. It is critical that we mobilise this knowledge from a ground level, by looking at what has been achieved by people 'living with bushfires'.

The research aims to answer these questions: What is community-led recovery in the context of emergencies and disasters? What is a community-led approach to disaster recovery? How do the different understandings of community-led influence the recovery process? What community-led approaches were utilised in the bushfire disaster to facilitate recovery?

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

If you agree to participate in the research project you will be involved in semi-structured interview, lasting approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours. Interviews will be held in locations that are accessible and private.

With your consent the interview will be audio recorded. The recording will be transcribed, then you will be provided with a copy for consideration and be able make changes if needed. Your signature will indicate that you agree that the information you have provided may be used. If you decide to withdraw from the study, you can have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified. Participants will have the opportunity to view the interview questions at least two days before the interview.

What are the possible risks or disadvantages?

Participation is voluntary. There should be no specific risks from participating in this study. The only potential risk or discomfort that may arise is through the discussion of experiences. You can contribute only the information that you feel comfortable with. If you become distressed during an interview, we can interrupt or stop the interview. Support or counselling is available from:

Sorell Community Health Centre.
Sorell Medical Centre
Relationships Australia.
Lifeline (24hr)
Mensline (24hr)
Rural Alive and Well Inc (RAW)
Life Link Samaritans (24hr)

What are the benefits associated with participation?

The research has the potential to contribute to disaster resilience by recognising and encouraging local wisdom and capacity, and a human rights approach in community-based disaster management. A starting point in mobilising knowledge is to look at the achievements of local people with firsthand experience of living bushfire disaster. This knowledge will help further understanding of a community-led approach to disaster recovery, and identify ways the emergency management sector can recognise, engage and support community-led processes in disaster management.

What will happen to the information I provide?

All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research. The interviews for this research will be transcribed by the student researcher and stored on NVivo, a secure software program that stores, manages and organises data for analysis. The data collected will be analysed utilising codes to identify actions and processes that will help explain or predict community-led disaster management, in community-based disasters.

Names and addresses will not be recorded on the interview transcripts which will be identifiable only by a code. Only the research student and the researchers listed on this information sheet will have access to the code that links the data to participants' names and addresses.

Physical files that have been transferred to NVivo, will be stored in a secure locked filing cabinet at the School of Mathematical & Geospatial Science, RMIT Swanston St Campus, Melbourne. Electronic data will be on a PASSWORD protected network and will only be accessible to the researchers involved in the project. Once we have completed our data collection and analysis, data will be kept for a minimum of five years after publication.

The data and findings from the research will be used to prepare reports about the experiences, opportunities and challenges of community-led disaster management. It may also be used to develop policy and inform future practice. The results of this research project are likely to inform a range of publications, including articles, presentations, conference and a thesis report. The results will be published in the RMIT Online Repository which is publicly accessible online library. The student researcher will provide each participant with a summary of findings.

Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if it is to protect you or others from harm, if specifically required or allowed by law, or you provide the researchers with written permission.

What are my rights as a participant?

It is important that you understand involvement in this study is voluntary. We will respect your right to decline, with no consequences for you, if you decide not to participate. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation.

Your rights include:

- to withdraw from participation at any time
- to request that any recording cease
- to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified,
- to have any questions answered at any time.

If you have any questions about the research project you can contact any of the researchers listed above or, if you prefer, the BNHCRC Research Manager.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Jennings

Appendix 5: Participant Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Community-led Recovery in the context of emergencies and disaster: a case study of community-resilience in the 2013 Forcett Tasmania Bushfire.

-
- I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this project.
 - The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
 - I understand that the study involves a semi structured interview for approximately 1- ½ hours, to explore community-led recovery in the 2013 Forcett bushfire.
 - I am also aware that the interview will be audio recorded.
 - Any questions that I have asked, have been answered to my satisfaction.
 - I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.
 - I understand that the researchers will keep my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher (s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.
 - I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I can withdraw at any time, and have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified.

Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

Statement by Student researcher

I have explained the project and the implications of participation to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

If the student researcher has not had an opportunity to talk to participant prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

The participant has received the Information Sheet where the student researcher contact details are recorded, to have the opportunity to make contact if necessary prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name of Student researcher: Ms Fiona Jennings BSW, MSW, PhD candidate.

Signature of Student researcher:

Date

Appendix 6: Interview Schedule 1

August 2015

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little, about your experience of the bushfire disaster?
2. When, if at all, did you first notice residents' helping themselves or others, or contributing in the disaster efforts?
3. Who, if anyone locally, was involved? When was that? How were they involved?
4. How, if at all were you involved? If so, what motivated you to be involved?
5. When thinking about the person you are what personal qualities and experience did you draw upon?
6. How did what you were doing change over time? How do you think that happened?
7. If you were to go through this experience again what would you do differently?
8. Can you tell me if your views have changed? If at all, what may have influenced this change?
9. After having these experiences what advice would you give to others?
10. What does community-led recovery mean to you? How if at all is this different to your experience?
11. What do you think are the most important ways to help communities affected by disaster?
12. How might you describe your view of the community before the event?
13. How, if at all, might your view have changed now? Could you tell me what may have influenced your change in thinking?
14. During our conversation today is there anything that might have occurred to you that you might not have thought about?
15. Is there something else you think I should know to help me understand better?
16. Is there anything you would like to ask me? (Charmaz, 2014).

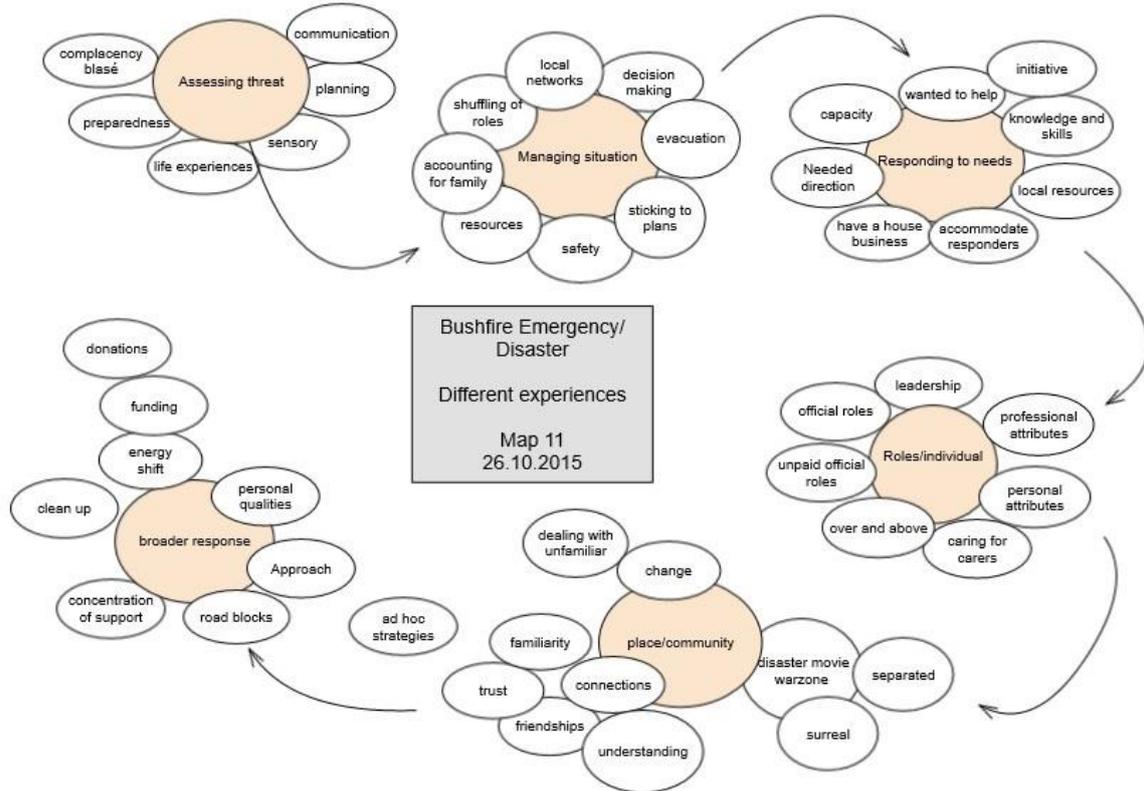
Appendix 7: Interview Schedule 2

October 2015

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little, about your experience of the bushfire emergency and disaster?
2. How, if at all were you involved? What motivated you to be involved?
3. When thinking about the person you are what personal qualities and experience did you draw upon?
4. How did what you were doing change over time? How do you think that happened?
5. When reflecting on your experiences what advice would you give to others?
6. What does community-led recovery mean to you?
7. What do you think are the most important ways to help communities affected by disaster?
8. How might you describe your view of the community before the event? What is your view of community now?
9. Is there something else you think I should know to help me understand better?
10. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Appendix 8: Mind Map example



Appendix 9: Category Construction – Questioning example

A brief example of the questioning that occurred during the interpretive category construction.

Losing the Familiar

Knowing about the fire, comprehending the gravity and locating family and others.

1. Knowing about the fire

Questions

How does this compare to the sense of knowing? Was it about the level of paying attention or needing to stay on top of the emergency, noticing or looking for different signs or indicators? Was there a differing responsibility? How does this knowing differ? Does it have something to do with gender or role? What does this mean? Is this linked to safeguarding people and place? In what way? Were people expecting someone to let them know? What didn't they know or pay attention too? Do I need to explore this further to help define foretelling? The what, how and why? What might be the possible gaps? What about people who were paying little attention or were unaware of the situation? People who had evacuated or elsewhere? What voices are important or need to be included? In what way, would including the voices of those who were out of area not directly contemplating the bushfire, help define this category? And who's voices, residents?

2. Comprehending the gravity

Questions

There was no one else, everybody had gone, left alone. In what way did feeling alone influence actions and decision-making? Was this a feeling of vulnerability? Feeling unaccompanied or without help? What would have been going through people's minds when this was happening? How does this link to participation? Does this relate to fire knowledge and response or managing a situation that they may have never encountered before?

3. Locating family and others

Questions

Does this translate to recovery? By lessening the worry, people could focus on other things? What about those without family? Was it about friends, family living elsewhere and work and broader networks? Do I need to interview someone who was on their own and see who they contacted? What was happening for them? Do I have data that will help explain this or a code to strengthen this category? Perhaps significant others? What is not being said here? Is it around gender and role? Could it be about the energy it takes to attend to something, caring and protecting the children and wife? Does this energy or distracts from other responsibilities? What about a person who didn't stick to plan? Is this about relationship? What may be missing?

Restoring the Familiar

Fulfilling role, seeking the familiar and exceeding expectations.

4. Fulfilling role

Questions

Is this about needing to provide physical evidence to demonstrate one is marked by the event? Is this linked back to the notion fulfilling role as victim or sufferer? Does this influence the distribution of support and assistance? If you stepped up does this mean that you were a survivor, tough or robust and not needing support or assistance? Where does the criteria or measures, conditions arise to determine need? In what way does this relate to participation, if at all? Does this relate to if you didn't lose your house - it meant that you had not been affected? If someone has a role are they perceived as role not person? In what way does this relate to participation? If someone takes on a role are there differing expectations from community, perceived as resilient not vulnerable or affected? What is happening here, is this about expectations on official roles or leaders, or about the energy that people have cognitively in processing or assessing impact? Were people experiencing a sensory overload—something about the ability or capacity to comprehend? Visually able to see gauge impact? Was this thinking related to community members or the broader community? Is this a gap? Perhaps if you are capable or participate, have the means or capacity, this may well deem you as not affected? In what way, does taking on a role impact on the person and their relationships, in their ability to care for community, family, partner and self? Is this linked to the subcategory – navigating roles and responsibilities?

5. Seeking the familiar

Questions

Is there something motivating or restorative about coming together? Feeling safe? Is this what kept people going? Is this why people were they juggling extra roles and responsibilities? What were they working towards? Needing to connect with others who have been through the same experience or is it about that familiarity? What is not being said about the coming together and having a place? Is it familiarity faces, routine, shelter from the unfamiliar? Why was keeping things simple important? Is it about keeping it simple, to enable people to process the information? Is it more about the actions? Is this to do with language or culture? Understanding the grassroots? Is this about moving forward towards the familiar? What does having local knowledge mean? What does it mean for these participants? Did this contribute to motivation? Were people holding each other up in some way and at what cost? Once you stepped up for a role, were there expectations from self or comparing to others?

6. Exceeding expectations

Questions

Is the going over and above relevant here? What is going on? Was there a need to look at community leaders as resilient and strong? Under what circumstances does this process develop? What was going on behind closed doors? Seen to be strong in community, and then struggling in silence? Is this about the job or positions, obligations to fill the role and responsibilities? What you must do or is needed to do? How does this differ to the culture of the official response? What is not being said? There was so much that needed to be done in community, did it take precedence over own needs? Is this about giving it your all, every bit of energy to make things right again. In what way was putting on a brave face related to fulfilling role expectation? In the end people were just moving and doing, losing ground? Is there a greater sense of responsibility because of the connection to place? A sense of the extended family? In what way, does this if at all happen at other times?