Men on Black Saturday

Risks and opportunities for change

Vol. 1 Executive Summary and Recommendations

Vol. 2 The Men's Accounts

Vol. 3 Men, Masculinity, Disaster: A literature review – online

The Black Hills

Like people of Pompeii
They stand and often lean
Upon each other, immobilised
By the momentary inferno.

I strain my ears to catch
A call of a bird or
The sounds of brushing leaves …
A memory of a canopy.

I strain my eyes to gather
The few fringes of green,
Newborn and perfectly formed,
Clinging to charry hosts.

I strain my heart to be
As optimistic as the trees,
Life will return to these black hills
This is no cemetery.

By Dianna Thomas

Acknowledgements

Our deep appreciation to the 32 men who informed this research. Each one took a leap of faith and trusted us with their experiences, perceptions and feelings. Their motivation for attending the interview was always to prevent others' suffering by improving disaster responses and the way communities are rebuilt in their aftermath. In participating, they took yet another risk.

This research project is the result of a partnership between Women's Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE) and Monash University's Injury Research Institute (MIRI), with funding from the National Disaster Resilience Grants Scheme (NDRGS). Sincere thanks to our engaged, resourceful and always supportive Advisory Group: Frank Archer, Emeritus Prof. Monash University (Chair): Joe Buffone, Deputy Chief Officer, CFA; Dr Elaine Enarson, Independent Scholar, US; Stephen Fontana, Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner; Craig Lapsley, Fire Services Commissioner; Prof. Bob Pease, Chair SW, Deakin University; Mark Somers, Manager, Regional Operations and Emergency Management, East Region, Victorian State Emergency Service; Daryl Taylor, Kinglake Ranges Community Recovery-Resilience Committee; Andrew Wilson, Information Management, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Fire Division DSE.

WOMEN'S HEALTH
GOULBURN NORTH EAST
Challenging inequity, embracing diversity.

MONASH University
Injury Research Institute

Disaster Resilience
Initiative

Women's Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE) was established in July 2000. Previously known as NEWomen, Women's Health Goulburn North East is the specialist women's health service for the Goulburn Valley and north east Victoria, funded by the Victorian Department of Health. PO Box 853, Wangaratta, Victoria, 3677.

Phone: 03 5722 3009 Fax: 03 5722 3020

whealth@whealth.com.au

www.whealth.com.au

The information contained in this publication is copyright. When copying or reproducing any part of this document, please acknowledge Women's Health Goulburn North East as the source and include the title, year and page number.

Commitment to caring for the environment: In consideration of the environment, this document and associated resources may be downloaded without charge here: *www.whealth.com.au/environmentaljustice*. Please refer to the website for Vol. 3 and Appendices.

Written by Claire Zara and Debra Parkinson.

© Women's Health Goulburn North East, 2013

Cover painting: 'On a clear day' by Syd Tunn *© (03) 9712 039*

Contents

Vol. 2 The men's accounts 1

During Black Saturday: 'A filthy, extreme day' 1

Men's experiences on a surreal, apocalyptic day 2

After Black Saturday: 'A hell of a lot of anger' 9

Disempowerment, grief and homelessness 9

Community leadership and community consultation 11

Side-lined by outsiders 16

Workplaces and self-employment 18

Relationships: 'One affects the other, one influences the other' 21

Violence within relationships 22

Risks Black Saturday Posed and Risks Men Took 25

'Stay or go' – averting risk? 26

Providing and protecting 27

Acting like a man – and taking risks 28

Recovery help on offer to men 35

Action on knowledge: Men and women making change 45

Conclusion 46

References 48

Appendices – online 50

Vol. 3 Men, Masculinity, Disaster: A literature review – online 50

Appendices and Vol. 1, 3 and 4 – Available on the WHGNE website

During Black Saturday: 'A filthy, extreme day'

There were many seasoned fire-fighters amongst those interviewed. One man had spent 32 summers on duty in his job with the DSE. These men, and others in the sample, were acutely aware of the dangerous weather conditions on the 7th February, 2009. Official warnings could not have been clearer. Yet the bushfires on Black Saturday were unlike other fires. 'Surreal' is the word that seems to capture the enormity and seeming unreality of the day. Men used this word to describe the atmospheric conditions that preceded the fire storm, and the hours and days that followed as its tragic impacts became apparent. The chaos of the day (well documented through the Royal Commission process) led to frustration with authorities and inadequate communication, particularly regarding and lack of clarity on local circumstances:

> *There was probably a bit of indecision in a lot of areas because nobody really had the answers of what to do and where to send people. (Adam)*

> *There was a lot of talk like the 'pub's gone', 'no it hasn't'. A lot of hearsay and there was no news on the radio. (Dean)*

> *Our house was burnt down, no it wasn't, yes it was, lots of news coming through about people that were killed, people that weren't. It was just chaos. (Cliff)*

For some men, the team environment, and command and control regime offered some small security in this day of unknowns. The fire-fighters' physically and emotionally exhausting work was regularly punctuated by worry for others, especially for their own families and homes.

> *It was important for me as the Commander to keep everyone on track. It was getting increasingly hard, everyone was sort of starting to break ranks and come home. (Chris)*

Concern for those at home could not be easily blocked out to focus on the fire at hand, as CFA training requires. At other times, the men's own lives were at risk, and fearing death, their actions were halted by urgent calls to say goodbye to loved ones.

Some participants had made plans with their partner well ahead and drove out with relative ease, unfortunately often to return to burnt-out homes and property and lost livestock and pets. For too many, the drive out was fraught with danger and traumatic events. Apart from the imminent likelihood of accidents in the low visibility, fallen trees and chaos on the roads, the danger of petrol tank explosions in the heat and ember attacks were equally present. Decisions about when to leave were complicated by the notion of leaving as a family. Often it was the man delaying and wanting to stay, as noted in the literature. On occasion, it was the woman. Decisions as to which way to go were literally life and death choices and a right answer was only possible in retrospect. Sometimes wives or partners drove. Choices on Black Saturday inevitably returned to haunt survivors. As did the sight of cars, burnt-out or crashed. Such sights were inescapable for those driving past and many participants spoke of this.

You'd drive past these cars and you could see what was in them ... my first thought was, 'Why would you put logs inside of the car?' It was people inside of them. (Todd)

On and immediately after Black Saturday, the CFA sheds assumed enormous significance to community members and authorities. They stood like beacons and attracted distressed and uneasy people looking for security. Despite the chaos all around, people gave any support they could, offering first aid, moving cars, cooking barbeques. Some CFA sheds had Critical Incident Support present, with counsellors or peers providing opportunities for people to talk.

The men spoke of doing what they could to survive on their own or with family, friends and neighbours, and pushing through exhaustion to do what they could to save homes, animals and property using the resources at hand. Some people in the fire affected areas were on high alert for three weeks after Black Saturday, running on adrenalin and sporadic sleep as conditions posed a continual threat. As the events of Black Saturday unfolded, and in the days and weeks that followed, the men described hearing of the loss of human life, animals and property. It was an ongoing attack, exacerbated in the months after by the suicides of people known to them.

People told me that their partners or their children had died ... or grandchildren had died ... Another bloke told me he was frantic because his father had died. And it didn't just stop at that night it actually went on for quite a few days. (Steve)

Two of the men were called upon to assist the Coroner's staff with identification of human remains. Their local knowledge was essential in a landscape where road signs were destroyed and names had to be matched with properties. This was traumatic work, as known and sometimes loved, neighbours and acquaintances were identified.

Men's experiences on a surreal, apocalyptic day

Edward described 'a series of increasingly hot 46, 45,46,47,48 degree days in a row' in the lead up to Black Saturday. Some participants spoke of monitoring every possible communication about the progress of the fire, and tracking it from their own observations. Many travelled to vantage points and used their CFA training, or previous bushfire experience, or expertise from other fields to 'size up' the fire to assess its progress, future path and speed. Many remembered their responsible approach:

I thought as long as we were careful and diligent we'd be fine. (James)

I was reasonably confident that we would be OK. I was even confident that we'd be able to protect the house – and all of that was misplaced, of course. (Vincent)

Other men were not fire-fighters, but had decided to stay and defend either their own homes or those of close friends or extended family. For some, it was a well-planned decision, backed up by rigorous preparation with equipment suitable for most bushfires.

We did the CFA training and we equipped ourselves. We bought heavy duty pumps, hoses, rakes as recommended by the CFA. All of my fire-fighting piping is underground with strategically located standpipes. [My wife] and I both had heavy duty overalls, helmets, goggles, facemasks, leather gloves, and boots and

at the time we bought them it seemed as though it might have been a bit of overkill but in the event it was probably a lifesaver. (Lee)

Others seemed less committed to a plan, deciding hour by hour on their course of action. The enormity of the fire changed plans, and indeed, cast some doubt on the wisdom of the 'stay and defend or go' policy. Proven to save property with little risk to life in most bushfires, the policy was not adequate in the catastrophic conditions on Black Saturday.

[My wife and I protected] the house for what seemed a reasonable amount of time but was probably only 20 minutes. All around me I could see the fire moving towards our sheds [and] they caught fire. I had fire pumps and hoses everywhere but before we knew it, it was into the ceiling and so it was all over. (Vincent)

[A friend] was holding the kids under a blanket, under a rug and she could barely hold on to [my small son. He] kept running away and saying, 'Mum! Mum! Dad! Dad!' And trying to get to us. [We] were putting out fires around the place and then the fire came in through the east side... There was one moment where I thought, 'Oh jeez, this is fucked. I have killed my whole family'. (Edward)

Matthew explained the technicalities behind the fire he witnessed:

It was a firestorm and the flames were, some of them were blue, so it was a really high temperature. My area is relatively cleared [and] we have 20 kilometres of forest next to us. There is a huge fuel load and it's moving really, really quickly. It's a big, gaseous mixture that lacks oxygen sucking air in and just goes 'boom'. It reignites so really the sky's on fire. Just flames everywhere. It scared the hell out of me. (Matthew)

Even fully equipped fire trucks were helpless in the force of the fires on Black Saturday. With two CFA trucks parked in the driveway, Lee spoke of his terror and panic scrambling through the fire front and battling conditions of zero visibility, fearing for his elderly father and teenage son who were following. The fire truck was in survival mode, bunkered down with flashing lights on, horns sounding and silver fire shields down:

The driver poked his head out of the window and said, 'Fuck this we are going to die here'. [The local fire station had said], 'We're not coming up there to get you, it's not safe'. The ... crew declared a mayday, as the comms said 'No, no-one's coming up there to get you'. We just didn't think we were going to get out of there. The truck driver was crying. (Lee)

Stuart spoke of one of the crew leaders who 'lost the plot... he just totally lost it', when having to drive through the fire front. He was 'screaming and yelling and crying'. The firestorm tested the logic of decades of fire knowledge and experience. Adam described his relatives' extensive preparations prior to the fire. Tragically, they died in their home:

They were trained CFA fire-fighters. They had everything in place and [they had said], 'Don't worry about us. We're fine If we've got to go we can just get in the car and go'. They had proper fire-fighting type clothes on. They had heavy boots on. They had the whole thing. They had gloves on. Everything in the house was

full of water. The bath was full. All the sinks and everything were full. They had water going. They had hoses and everything going. They were consumed by the worst thing we've ever seen. (Adam)

There was a sharp distinction between before and after. Innocence pervaded the men's narratives of going in, feeling prepared, ready to do the job they had trained for. Too soon, their experiences of the firestorm destroyed any semblance of control.

[T]he three of us that had brought these ambulances up to Kinglake, [by the time] we got back down into Whittlesea after half six, seven o'clock in the morning ... I remember all these comments: 'Where the hell have you been? We've been waiting'. We couldn't say anything. We had no idea what we'd been through. We were just absolutely shattered. (Tom)

Echoing this, men who had responsibility with the CFA or who had fought previous major fires reflected on any confidence going into Black Saturday as delusional.

I thought we had protection and I was just kidding myself. (Patrick)

'Surreal' was one word that seemed to capture the enormity and unreality of the day. 'Apocalyptic' was another. Men used these words to describe the atmospheric conditions that preceded the fire storm. Gerald described watching a 1,400 metre wide fire wall destroy Strathewan. Instead of the expected ember attack, alight branches and logs became missiles in the air. Water boiled in flasks. Helicopters dropped water from 600 feet instead of 200 because the heat prevented closer proximity. The water evaporated before hitting the flames. Total darkness and disconcerting silence immediately preceded the assault of the firestorm.

We drove into town and cars were all lined up. Then we just sat there while the town burned. We heard the bangs and booms. The [petrol] station was shooting jets of fuel into the air. It was just a real apocalypse experience. People – dirty, burnt, smoke covered people – carrying babies and children, just walking or driving in, I reckon 1000 to 1200 people. The whole area between the shops and the CFA was absolutely packed with people. It was really surreal, emotional. For me it just all seems like it was out of an apocalyptic movie. Terminator was the one I thought of where there's charred ground with robots stomping over bodies. That's what it was like, that's what the landscape was like just charred landscape full of dead bodies and burnt out cars, fallen down buildings. (Edward)

We were stuck in this noxious environment. The smoke was really bad and then as it got dark, I still remember the moon coming up and it was like something out of Lord of the Rings, like Mordor. Every ridge that you could see from anywhere to the north of Yarra Glen was on fire. It's a huge Melbourne wedding capital of the world so there's people in ball gowns – quite surreal. And chaos. No-one knew what was going on. (James)

If you remember the Michael Jackson 'Thriller' video with the cemetery and those dead people come out of the cemetery – that was Kinglake on that night at about one in the morning. There were people walking just sort of covered in a blanket. They had very few clothes on and they came up to me and they just

couldn't really talk. And I remember one guy just saying to me, 'Water, water'. (Tom)

Almost too late

Some men followed their usual routine in the morning, driving away to workplaces or other commitments and checking in on family members as the day proceeded and fires grew more threatening. Others stayed home, continuing with plans they had made for the day's activities. Carl had a party planned and, as he was in the CFA and had a very prepared home, considered they would be able to defend the property.

First thing I did when I got home I just pulled out [the fire equipment] and just checked that everything was there. And then we just watched it on the computer. And then all the people started rocking up for our party and next thing you know we were all drunk and I can remember us all being in the pool, looking over in the distance. (Carl)

Several men reported their wives' or partners' concern emerging before their own. As in other literature, it seemed that the adult with primary caring responsibilities was most keen to leave. Even in this sample, though, there were exceptions. Jason had headed in to work in the city early that morning and warned his wife when he became aware of the fire. She was home with their toddler.

By the time she got home [from the nearby store] it was almost pitch dark, choking smoke everywhere. She had no time to pack anything, I'd been telling her all bloody day to pack, 'Nah, nah, nah, it's safe, it's miles away'. I was like, 'Just pack'. She wouldn't bloody listen so I'm still a bit angry with her about that. (Jason)

And Edward said:

I was waiting for Jane to leave with Jim*, and I don't think she was going to. She kept saying, 'I'm just packing the car, I'm just packing the car', but she never actually got organised. (Edward)*

Ambivalence to authority

For some, the day was marked by frustrations with directives from authorities on roadblocks and in command centres. Nobody had sound advice to give about local and surrounding conditions and predictions. Pre-Black Saturday procedures seemed unsuited to the extreme conditions. In life and death situations, following rules and suppressing individual judgements at times meant the men could not save, or attempt to save others. The hope was that the rules were right.

There was a lot of great work done by the local units and when the outside units came in, the Incident Controller up here was from [somewhere else and] didn't know the area. Knew fires, knew how to command his people, didn't know the local area. Again, they didn't listen to people who had local knowledge... You have the old DSE and CFA and Parks, fighting amongst themselves while the actual disaster's happening ... They're working out who is in charge. (Lou)

While the team environment, and command and control regime nevertheless offered a measure of security to some in this day of unknowns, yet others followed the directions of those in authority, only to regret not following their own gut instincts:

> *And you sort of try and do what the CFA tells you. That's the first and last time I'll ever do that. (Todd)*

Completely exhausted, both physically and emotionally, after helping his friend save her house, and fighting to survive the fire that destroyed every other house in the street, Gerald described his feelings of frustration and powerlessness:

> *There were about eight or nine fire trucks coming in from Whittlesea. I stopped all of them and I said, 'Can you give me one truck just to help put this last tree out?' 'Oh no we can't help you' ... I said, 'Every house is gone. This is the only house in the street and I'm worried of losing it. I've given everything I've got to survive and save the house but I can't'. I had no control of nothing and there was nothing I could do. (Gerald)*

The morning after Black Saturday, as a CFA Commander, Chris made the journey to [a central town] to advise the state of his area.

> *I've taken control of both [fire trucks ...] I had my radio reprogrammed on the spot, so that I could get what we call 'trunking' which is like a mobile phone component to the radio. That was working. Then we had a directive saying you're not allowed to use it. Ignored that one. (Chris)*

The directive, Chris advised, resulted from an overloaded network state-wide, but it was the only means of communication available to them. CFA strike teams were sent to check reports of people trapped. Chris had 30 places on his list and referred to 'wishful thinking' that search and rescue may be appropriate. For some, the sights they saw kept them awake years later.

> Horrific sights
>
> There was a woman and her two children. The children were perished in the back of the car, and she was sitting in the car like this. And I just thought she was dead, and then I was about to walk off, and she like, her face was like melted wax, it was the radiant heat that had killed them, and the kids had suffocated. She actually turned and opened her eyes, and her face, the way it was, and her eyes, I must admit, I sort of jumped back. And I was actually sitting on the road, I've burnt my pants and everything. And she just looked at me, and she said, 'Please save my children'. And I sort of looked at her, and I sat with her for a minute or two, and she took her last breaths ... What I see in images now is that mother abusing me, 'Why didn't you help me earlier?' You know, and the kids going, 'You left us'. This is my silly brain turning something that was bad enough, then fighting me, because I suppose this is guilt ... . I keep saying, and it's a very important word, 'if only'. (Lou)

Effects on men

The effect on many of the men was of being shaken to their core. Their bodies overcame gender conditioning as they spoke of publicly crying in the face of such immense fear and tragedy.

> *I remember being extremely exhausted and teary. I was quite overwhelmed with the scale of the disaster. (Matthew)*

Edward related taking a call from his boss in the main street and breaking down as he spoke on the phone.

> *As I was talking about it I burst into tears. I was just telling her about it. I said, 'It's massive, there's hundreds and hundreds of people dead, thousands of homes gone.' (Edward)*

He spoke of his concern that his small son was with him, and was very quiet throughout. Another man said:

> *I came up to Whittlesea and I had no idea, I was just walking around and [a friend] said, 'What you doing babe?' I just stood there. I think there were thousands of people there and I just started crying. I didn't know what I was there for. (Todd)*

Todd had earlier described the things he would like to have taken with him as his 'security blankets' some autographs, stamps, coins rare journals. He was able to take none of them. He spoke of offering solace to those around him, but, perhaps because he is a man, no-one offered reassurance to him.

> *I was just trying to convince them I wouldn't let them die, especially the little girl and she was bloody terrified [I said],' I promise you I'm not going to let you die' and I just kept saying that over and over again. There's nobody around to say it to me, is there? (Todd)*

Chris spoke of the stress he felt during the week following the fires. The destruction of communication infrastructure meant he was alone in a position of great responsibility, without knowing the extent of damage and who was left. The extent of the personal damage to him is underplayed in his narrative:

> *I started driving around looking at what was going on. Tried to get a good picture of what was really happening in the area. So I went around Buxton, Narbethong, then Marysville. Got to Marysville, and I guess that's when it started to hit me. I started coming across bodies everywhere. Of 36 bodies, I think I ended up finding 24. (Chris)*

Gerald spoke of being haunted by the things he saw:

> *I should have just stuck my head up my bum and put a wet towel over my head and not witnessed nothing. But I had a job to do and I just didn't think that it would affect me that much ... I wouldn't do it again. I've always been strong minded and I don't scare easily but that scared the shit out of me. (Gerald)*

Kindness and nurturing of men

The men's concern for others was clear in a number of their reflections.

> *We had one of the kids who'd been at my school. I think he was only 19. He was on one of the trucks going around identifying bodies in the community that he lived in. Even if he wanted to he shouldn't have been allowed to. That's a dumb thing to do and that is part of that macho thing of, 'Well, we've got a job to do' and without thinking about, 'Now what might the consequences of this be to his development?. (Vincent)*

As a CFA Commander, Chris ensured the men who gathered at the CFA the day after Black Saturday were in the right state of mind to help. His concern extended to protecting others from the trauma of identifying bodies.

> *[We] did a 'stop and check' and see how everyone was travelling ... Day three we started getting police ... starting to search for people ... And because of what I'd seen already, I said to the other guys in the brigade, 'You guys look after the fire-fighting, I'll go out with the police, and tell them where people live'. I don't want to expose others to that sort of stuff, there's no need. (Chris)*

Edward spoke of being hyper-vigilant of his small son's wellbeing during the 'horrendous' drive out of Kinglake the day after Black Saturday. He related a story from the night before, where his gentle concern for others was clear:

> *I remember holding [him] and saw this couple walk up saying, 'My baby hasn't moved'.... I said, 'Sit down'. Once we got them out of the wind everything was different, sat them down beside our car and I remember Jim having a little look: 'Is there a baby?' And the baby looked at Jim and gave him a smile and the girl just started crying, burst into tears. (Edward)*

Lou was driving a bus full of young men when they heard of the fire. He wanted to drop them off and hurry back to his property. One young man heard that his sister and mother had died, amongst the earliest victims of Black Saturday.

> *[They] said, 'Can you drop him off?' I said, 'No I haven't got time'. And they explained to me what had happened, and I said, 'Shit yeah, of course'. This poor kid was just a screaming wreck. A couple of the others came with him to sort of comfort him on the bus. (Lou)*

About two-thirds of the men interviewed did not have formal fire-fighting roles on Black Saturday yet several described being identified as having local knowledge and being informally conscripted to help, or offering their help as they became aware of the immensity of what was happening around them. While preparing to defend his own home, Matthew heard on the CFA radio that the fire had crossed the freeway and realised the danger and together with other CFA members, developed a plan to warn neighbours. Concern for neighbours meant delaying their own urgent plans for survival in order to share information, advice, and protective clothing with others.

> *The last place I went to was my neighbours, who I didn't know really well. They were having a kids' party so they were still in full swing and looking at the big*

smoke stack which is getting towards Kinglake by that stage. My next-door neighbour had a can of beer in his hand and drinking, he wore only his board shorts and I said to him, 'Well look, you've got to get the people out of here. What are you going to do'? He says, 'Oh I'll stay here. So I organised to give him some stuff I said 'Look we haven't got time for [me to bring it] because [the fire is] not that far away. I'll hand it to you over the fence'. (Matthew)

After the fire passed, Matthew found his neighbour, still wearing just shorts, in a fishpond, his feet badly burnt. He organised a way to get both his neighbour and dog back to the full bath in his own house.

We walked down to my place with his dog and made the dog comfortable. I got onto my girlfriend who's ...a nurse and she told me what to do as far as looking after him goes and I also rang 000. (Matthew)

After Black Saturday: 'A hell of a lot of anger'

Men, as well as women, pay a price for male privilege (Dowd, 2010a) and constant efforts to live up to Western ideals of manhood can lead to stress, illness and early death (Greig, Kimmel, & Lang, 2000; Jalmert, 2003; Medrado & Lyra, 2003). The period after disaster has its own tensions, psychological problems that persist tend to be related to events in the aftermath rather than the disaster itself (Borrell & Boulet, 2009).

Many people from all the fire affected areas said after Black Saturday that the recovery and rebuilding process – because of false promises and bureaucratic 'push back' – was worse than the fires. I subscribe to that view. (Lee)

The practical imperatives coexisted with emotional turmoil for some as they reflected on what they had and hadn't done on Black Saturday, and the consequences of the disaster for themselves and those around them. After surviving the fire, surviving the aftermath presented a further challenge.

Disempowerment, grief and homelessness

In the first days before roads were open and authorities were able to begin the recovery, local people stranded in the areas devastated by the fires organised themselves out of the chaos. Participants who were part of these efforts conveyed a sense of achievement in what they had been able to do with scarce resources. People found each other and formed teams, seeking direction where they could from authorities and others in the outside world where communications were possible. They found clothes and food for each other, prioritised remaining transport options for the sick and injured, cleared roads, destroyed suffering animals and began search and rescue activities.

Months later, much of this initiative had been lost. The explanations were layered. First, overwhelming grief for lost neighbours and friends and a lost innocence set in. The sadness was overwhelming. The burden of funerals and memorials became unbearable and somewhere along the way, many spoke of decisions to stop going. One after another man spoke of entire streets wiped out. Vincent said, 'You've got 35 people who died in your community and you know all of them. He told of 'sensitive blokes' expressing their grief. In contrast, other men related avoiding speaking of the fires, avoiding conversations altogether, and even avoiding community. Communities inevitably changed as only some returned to the burnt landscape, ruined infrastructure and fractured relationships. Loss of place was deeply significant (Proudley, 2013). Within

only a few months, the early drive and initiative in the first days was overcome by personal pressures from every angle:

> *People were at very different places than they were six months prior in how their relationship unfolded, their emotional status, all the different stressors they faced … of being unemployed, of being homeless, of grieving lost friends and family, all of those different things that are high on your normal stress list but all compounding and all happening together. (Paul)*

There was 'a lot of moving', as single men, couples and families chose housing amongst the least worst options. Rentals were more insecure than usual as landlords of the few remaining properties saw opportunities for sale or re-development. The kindness of strangers and relatives in offering short-term housing was necessarily time-limited, forcing moves before alternative accommodation was a reality. Some stayed with others – friends or relatives – many kilometres from their work or children. (This was particularly hard when relationships broke down and parenting was shared across different households.)

> *For the first five and a half months ... my wife and I and a cat lived in a 10 foot by 10 foot room and slept on a single bed. My two boys and a dog lived in a 10 foot room and slept on a single bed as well. (Bernard)*

Small spaces, traumatised residents, and cohabitation with other displaced people, and barking dogs 'drove everyone nuts'. A village care-taker said, 'There'll be a troublemaker in every village'.

> *A lot of these people were stuck, they were building houses or they were trying to get into houses, almost two and a half years after they still hadn't moved in. Living in a caravan with your wife and kids for two years is going to do it to you ... So you've got the 'trailer white trash' amongst the average working everyday blokes and of course in a fenced, tight little community, of course they're going to get aggressive. (Dean)*

Homeless and displaced locals wishing to re-build on their land faced costs that were inconceivable before the fires. In a free market economy, builders perceived a situation where needs were high, supply was low and funds were available from grants and insurance. Speculation builders bought cheap land in the immediate aftermath and built display homes. Locals, keen to get back to normality and with grant or insurance funds in the bank, paid what was asked. This real estate speculation caused an increase in house prices. Competition to contract a builder was high, too, so even before consideration of plans, prices were at a premium and work standards questioned. Added to this were the new building requirements designed to afford greater protection to people living in areas prone to bushfire. Builders, unused to the new protocols and offering estimates and quotes for untried materials and unknown methods of installation, added buffers to cover the indeterminate costs. Often, participants despaired at the red tape and bureaucracy that delayed or prevented their early rebuilding. For two of the men interviewed, four years on, their plans are only now allowed to proceed. The end result of high costs no matter what method of re-establishing, meant that frustrations abounded and some locals could not afford to move back.

> *They're still a bit rattled and they're not thinking clearly and there's so much competition to get a builder ... the builders are picking and choosing because*

there's 300 houses to build or something in this little locality and they're all charging extra to come up the hill. They're loading it up for everything they can think of and it really did cause a little mini bubble. (Scott)

We then went through this extraordinary period of (a) trying to find a builder, (b) trying to comply with the new regulations, which I didn't actually find difficult or offensive, until you actually started pricing things and getting builders to look at what that might cost them to do. Because they were unsure of what they were faced with they said, 'This might cost us more', so they added a premium. (James)

The cost of rebuilding in these areas has led to prices above the market value of the finished house, adding a financial impost to the frustration and powerlessness men and women felt at being blocked at every turn in trying to re-establish homes and lives. Four years on, some people are still living in sheds, caravans and containers, and, in the meantime, many relationships have broken down.

Community leadership and community consultation

Those consulted in this, and other reports (see Gunter, 2011), believed that while governments and departments listened they did not actively hear the main issues or solutions provided by the communities. While the National Principles of Recovery directs that communities must be an integral part of recovery, there is a strong perception in this sample of men that only lip service was accorded to community consultation.

Disagreement with decisions made by authorities through the recovery and reconstruction stages – and attendant frustration – soon set in. An example given by several men was Murrindindi Shire Council's early decision to ask the army to withdraw. This left locals questioning Council's wisdom, and more practically, leaving them to cope without the basics of life. The arrival of the army seemed to be universally welcomed by community members in desperate need of essential services. The army was organised and efficient, asking what needed to be done and doing it.

It was really supportive having the army here [because] there was nobody in charge, they were all separate. The police were doing the police thing, the fire brigade were still running around putting out fires, the Shire had no idea. (Steve)

Waves of discontent with bureaucratic decisions from Council, the Victorian Government and VBRRA seemed to characterise the post-disaster period. Early management of exclusion zones and road blocks was a primary cause of friction. There was a sense of that people's fundamental rights to access their homes and properties were contravened. Tree management was contentious, whether it was removal (to widen roads) or planting (deciduous or native). Both attracted criticism. The 'buy-back' scheme – where the Victorian Government aimed to buy land abutting the National Park that is now considered unsafe for dwellings – remains contentious too. Objections were not related to the aim, but to the ongoing management of these properties. Land bought by the Crown was considered to have been inadequately managed to reduce fire risk. The building of community assets was another contentious issue – the architectural styles used, their locations and purposes. For example, the modern styles used in Marysville and Kinglake, and basketball stadiums and tennis courts:

> *It's sort of like, 'We're going to put a tennis court here, we're going to have a cricket pavilion, we're going to do this and we're going to do that' and you sort of think, 'Hang on, did anyone ask us?' (Vincent)*

The initiative and drive of the locals in the early days was smothered by a recovery process described as overlooking local knowledge and expertise in community leadership. The effect was one of disempowering local people and marginalising them from real decision-making processes. Their sense of being disenfranchised runs counter to the appearance of deep community consultation.

> *What we found in the aftermath of the fires was that people were assuming authority ... it was 'power over' rather than 'power with'. We found the same with police, and emergency services staff, state government staff, local government staff, professionals ... It's profoundly disempowering. (Paul)*

Such issues have been documented elsewhere, but are touched on here as men described the *effect* of what they saw as lack of genuine consultation. The sense of being patronised and controlled engendered anger. Meetings were described as 'top-down':

> *I went there with a copper, which was probably a mistake. He was a guy that had a whole heap of stuff on his shoulders, and he stood there with his hands on his hips, 'If you guys don't settle down, we're just going to frigging leave'. Some sort of authoritarian. He didn't want to hand the microphone to me, he says, 'No, they're an angry crowd, you can't talk to them'. (Chris)*

In many communities daily meetings were held at first, gradually becoming less frequent but always regular. It is not an easy task to 'ask the community'. Communities are essentially people with necessarily different opinions. There is no *one* community opinion to be sought and implemented. Yet, participants in this research suggested there are more genuine ways to consult, most simply by offering practical support to allow local fire-affected people to contribute meaningfully and thereby contribute to both their own and their community's recovery (Gunter, 2011). The men acknowledged the effects of the fire, using terms of 'fire-brain', even 'fire-fucked', of feeling exhausted, with little energy or capacity beyond what was required of them in their home and workplace. They noted one effect of personal pressures in the aftermath of the traumatic experience of Black Saturday was that capable people were often unable to function at their normal level.

> *It was really interesting, especially for men, that men who had leadership roles in this community before the fire, if they were heavily impacted by the fire – like if they lost everything – they were stuffed ... I was just so emotionally and physically rooted that I actually couldn't devote the intensity of thought to those kind of things [community recovery committees] that I had before. (Brad)*

A significant barrier to this man's ongoing participation was the travel involved in attending meetings three or four times a week, particularly as detours and road blocks added hours on to each trip. Another practical barrier was simply the lack of administrative support to community groups. In the absence of community leaders through loss of life in the fires, or their relocation for housing, the huge workload in the aftermath of the disaster landed on fewer shoulders.

> *Most community organisations were having to do five times as much work with only half the membership and half the committee available. We really needed people to come in and [offer] support ... We had 67 community organisations and we genuinely needed secretaries and treasurers, people willing to take responsibility for minuting meetings, for following up actions and for making sure the budget was OK. (Paul)*

The men's cynicism of the way community consultation was handled was clear in their discussions of the political underpinning of decisions made during the reconstruction after Black Saturday. They pointed to timelines apparently dictated by media events or elections, and a focus on rebuilding achievements rather than ensuring community input. The ongoing effect has been an increased rate burden for Shire residents as the ongoing maintenance of new infrastructure is borne by the Shire and its rate payers.

> *All these things that government have offered us and thrown us, it's like feeding school children lollies to keep them pacified. All they've done now is put a huge burden on the communities of increasing rates. (Eric)*

> *We had all these consultation meetings, which basically amounted to nothing because the bureaucrats, government, architects, still went ahead and did what they wanted anyway. So people refused to go to those meetings in the end and refused to participate. So that basically left government and planners a free hand to do what they want. (Brad)*

The disaster's aftermath saw a change in leadership in some communities as people who had this role before Black Saturday were unable to continue through personal grief and demands. In the void, others – mostly men – took on leadership roles, for example, as heading Community Recovery Committees. As people aligned with those of similar values, factions emerged, intensifying community aggression and division, even to physical aggression and violence. Points of difference arose over the direction of community rebuilding, and local- and state-government decisions that directly impacted on people's daily lives as they tried to re-establish. Leadership in the community inevitably 'percolated' up and down as new leaders emerged in the void left by over-burdened, previous leaders. Mostly, they were men. Trust was won and lost depending on the actions behind intentions and rhetoric.

> *You can liken it to the Monty Python movies, where ... he stands up, 'I've got nothing to say' ... If somebody put their hand up to be a leader, then that person was a leader, up until the point that they did something stupid, or they did something that was counter to everybody's else's desires. (Chris)*

Chris went on to describe one such situation where a local leader lost all support after he attempted to sell donated goods:

> *He had a lot of anger towards him, nobody would talk to him [... or] listen to him, people were close to throwing things at him at a public meeting. (Chris)*

The corrupt or immoral behaviour of community members was a source of community division and anger. It was men who were spoken of as acting improperly. Jack noticed equipment had been taken from the burnt ruins of his home, and from his neighbour's property – sold for scrap metal by another neighbour. Gerald's anger, too, was evident:

Someone said to me one day that I don't deserve to get help so I just felt like bashing the shit out of him because I knew he was going around collecting [donated equipment] and you get blokes like me who get nothing because people were just rorting the system and it sickened me. (Gerald)

A myriad of different community groups emerged, often competing for funding and leading to 'instability, bickering', and 'unhappy people'.

After the honeymoon period of cooperation and collaboration, about six months in, people shifted from turning to one-another to turning away from one-another and to turning on one-another. (Paul)

It actually became very personal where people didn't speak to each other. Very nasty where people threatened other people, made obscene gestures at people, derogatory ... remarks at people in the street because they didn't agree. (James)

Layer upon layer of inequity and dishonesty fuelled the discord. The unfairness and seeming capriciousness of grants and insurance drove much community anger. It seemed to come down to good fortune in having an effective case manager, having an insurance company that did not 'rip you off', and being considered deserving of a grant. Apparent 'obsession' with funding domestic housing over business was of concern to several men interviewed:

Insured, uninsured, it didn't matter, just money turned up in their accounts ... [there was] a real disparity here of needs being met ... If I was sitting in Spring Street I'd be saying, 'Well people donated ... this money to help people. Okay, this guy's lost his joinery shop, he's the only one on the hill, he's fairly useful when they're doing rebuild'. There was a mechanic ... who had his shop burnt down, his workshop. There was a sawmill, all these things were just left to dissipate into the ether. They're just gone now. (Scott)

Winning through violence

We tried to organise meetings ... [and] then we forced a meeting with our local association president by going around to her 'house' in the temporary village. Then her husband and this guy turned up, the one who'd told me to piss off over the phone. It turned into real, nose-to-nose. He was saying, 'You're a fucking this and you're a fucking dickhead and you haven't got a clue. Let's get our cocks out'. I remember going, 'What the fuck are you on about?' and this guy was like, 'Let's get out cocks out, see who's got the biggest dick shall we?' I thought he was going to hit me ... I went to many meetings, they were just so full of testosterone ... There was a lot of other discussion, often with women, starting maybe 18 months later about, 'How can we participate in our community when we've got this handful of men who are being extremely aggressive, but extremely successful in their aggression?'. These men were getting rewarded by state and local governments for being the most aggressive and dominant members of the community. They still are ... [T[his was actually happening within families that this dominance was coming out, for some reason it was an effective strategy for many men. .. You could see them puffing up as they got more funding and more positions in the community ... like steam locomotives that weren't going to be stopped ... [F]or a while, I had a lot of people coming and seeing me as somebody who was bright and confident and

> capable and saying, 'How do we stand up to this, how do we stand up to this?' but then I gave up. I just quit. I didn't have the time or the energy for a losing battle ... I'm about to cry. That was the worst part of it. I really thought that that wasn't how you won in our society. But that's what winning's become. And that's how you win. And I can't do it, so I'm not going to win. I won't do it, so I'm not going to win. So I went elsewhere. It's probably quite symptomatic that I focused on my acre. I can win here. I can build my house, create my dream here for my family. (Edward)

Activist John Stoltenberg (1989) argues that men possess two types of identity that are fundamentally in conflict: a gender identity, which sees men in constant competition with each other and involves the oppression of weaker males and women in order to preserve an acceptable masculine self, and a 'moral identity', reflecting a self that is unaffected by social ideals of masculinity. He challenges men to choose to follow their moral identity. Edward's narrative encapsulates his struggle to do just that. Kahn (2011), too, notes the strength in not following a designated way to be a man, urging men to see the gap between their view of themselves and the ideal man as prescribed by society, and then accepting that their failure to meet the ideal standard is no failure at all.

The importance of improving disaster response cannot be over-estimated when community division and violence is the consequence. The impotence felt by local people at times turned to rage. Most men spoke of their own anger or frustration – four had suicidal ideation, with two of these planning to 'take out' others along with them. Many, too, spoke of other men's anger, bullying and violence:

> *And that was only half a dozen people, four families essentially, who wanted exclusive power over the community. One of them was our local councillor – the guy that got beat up. (Paul)*

Anger and aggression in community meetings spilled into the streets:

> *Absolutely out of the blue [he] started ripping right into me, 'You're an arsehole, blah, blah, blah. We don't want people like you in this town. Why don't you get out of here?'... I think his parting words were, 'Why don't you just piss off?' and then walked out the door ... To this day I have absolutely no idea what it was about, none whatsoever ... I think for a lot of people that stuff is just percolating away below the surface and I think it will take a long, long time. (Brad)*

Social gatherings, too, were more likely to erupt than before the fires. The tumult of the fires had consequences that were not directly related to changed behaviour of traumatised people. Men reflected on their communities changing from quiet places where people valued their privacy to almost forced communality with newcomers. One man mentioned having intervention orders against other community members.

> *With all the people going to functions and all getting together, it just seems to be everyone's a lot rowdier, everyone's a lot noisier and you can see the violence happening. (Eric)*

> *Well, it was definitely threatening. Verbal abuse and physical abuse as well. I can remember walking from the big tent to the main street with a person who I'd known for the best part of 10 years. I was challenging him on a particular issue that he was taking a leadership role in, and that exploded into violence. It was outside the police station so the police were very quickly there. (Paul)*

Side-lined by outsiders

The enormous task of 'the clean-up' was controversial from the outset with the tender given to Grocon. Once the tender was granted, local men and women were side-lined from participating in the official clean-up for a number of reasons. Perceptions of 'fire-brain' affecting those fire-affected sat alongside Grocon's inflexible work and employment practices for the clean-up, which demanded their workers work 10-hour days for five or six days a week. Local people – with the complex and unrelenting pressures of rebuilding a life in communities devastated by trauma and tragedy – were practically and emotionally ill-equipped for such a work-load away from their own properties and families. Although the literature points to men more than women benefiting from recovery employment, the men who did the bulk of the paid clean-up after Black Saturday were predominately from outside the area. Few locals benefitted. Side-lined by 'outsiders', research participants described watching others do work they could, and perhaps should, have done.

> *'Oh no, you stand back out of the way, we'll bring the other people in from outside... Grocon, they need the money, better help them out.' Yeah, get [people who've] got nothing to do with this area ... off the stupid pipeline project, off some mine project somewhere else. (Scott)*

Instead of a gradual return to work and a hands-on role in the clean-up, local men were relegated to returning to, or finding other work, and re-establishing homes and property after hours. Many faced only unemployment when their jobs were lost through fire damage directly or its ripple effect, or through their own traumatic response to the disaster and inability to concentrate and do what they had previously.

> *I wasn't able to get any full-time employment in the aftermath of the fires ... I lost my business and our source of income. There were unprecedented economic opportunities that pretty much all went elsewhere and this is one of the reasons I think men have got very, very pissed off. (Paul)*

Many men interviewed spoke of this in terms of the ultimate insult. It was their 'back-yard' and they were overlooked as potential paid employees. Instead, they watched helplessly – 'polishing their arses' – as other men from outside did their clean-up. Property owners had to be present during the demolition and removal to prevent broad scale wipe-outs. Edward said, 'You needed to be on hand all the time. If we weren't it could've been just crushingly disappointing'. What was handled as a time-efficient exercise by the contractors was instead a significant and hurtful event for survivors of Black Saturday. The clean-up contract was viewed as a triumph of political agendas over the best interests of survivors. The bitterness of men side-lined in this way is strong:

> *Disempowerment, disenfranchisement. People who needed the work after the disaster, both for financial reasons and for emotional psychological recovery reasons, weren't getting the work. And yet they were sitting here in their town watching all these trucks track in from all over the place every day with outside contractors coming in to do all the work ... the way these contractors operate is hugely demoralising. And given that most of the blokes around here are tradies, that was a huge issue for them. (Brad)*

The overlap between occupation and identity is strong for everyone, perhaps stronger for men in a society that has seen men typecast as breadwinner, and women as

nurturer. Patriarchy is bad for men's health – the 2013 National Male Health Policy notes that negative effects on health and wellbeing often follow the loss of the traditional masculine role of provider for the family. Men took unemployment personally – because, for most, it was personal:

> *I actually got a phone call one night ... an offer of 'would you like to project manage this part of the clean-up?'. I said, 'I'll take it on ... no problem, yeah I can project manage this, it's just a demolition job, there's nothing complicated about it, done far more complex things than that...' Sent them an email with all my particulars ... no doubt they offered it around to a few people, but did they give it to anybody [local]? No. No. (Scott)*

> *Some of these people were given the absolute run around. They were told they had to get their red card and their green card and their blue card [and by] the time they got those tickets, most of the work had been done [and] they were still not offered the work anyway. (Brad)*

Other men spoke of the many local tradespeople and local businesses who could have been employed in the clean-up:

> *One of my friends who lost everything, he lost his business as well, and it was an excavation business. He wasn't allowed to do it because Grollo were doing it ... He went out and bought all new equipment so ... why couldn't he have been someone who benefited from the clean up? ... I look at the Mountain Monthly, there's half a dozen different excavation [businesses]. (Carl)*

Locals, they suggested, could have benefited emotionally and psychologically as well as financially from being identified as the best people to do this work. A different approach to the work could have been taken. The long days of work were tough even on men who had not endured the trauma of Black Saturday:

> *When we were working up here, we were doing massive days. It was one of the weirdest things I'd ever experienced because you can see no end to it ... it was just dawn to dusk. (Luke)*

Survivors could not be expected to work in this manner. Yet a gradual return to work with half-days or half-weeks, in theory, could have assisted in the recovery of individual men and the recovery of community. Echoing prior studies on gender and work in disasters, these accounts show that the traditional role of men as bread-winner and providers persists, going to the heart of male identity and self-esteem. The men we interviewed imagined a better way the clean-up could have been managed:

> *We were incredibly disappointed because so many practical men – tradies, farmers, industry workers – could have been engaged. Grocon hardly employed any local men. If you look at Yarra Glen, Marysville, Kinglake, Kinglake West, Flowerdale – less than 10. And partly it was because they and the government expected people to work a 10-hour shift. Our men had other responsibilities to family and to community as well. If we had run that process, even if it was in partnership with Grocon, with the infrastructure that they could bring, we would have had people on five-hour shifts ... and we would have been able to provide a*

wage and a meaningful experience for so many more people instead of having half of our people on welfare. (Paul)

Workplaces and self-employment

Supportive and unsupportive workplaces

Participants spoke of the benefits of getting back to a normal routine, although the sheer workload in achieving a liveable space, replacing essentials, completing forms for bureaucratic requirements, participating in the community recovery and managing personal relationships made this difficult or seemingly impossible. A supported return to work would have prevented inevitable resignations or dismissals, and the negative effect on health and wellbeing that accompanied turbulence in managing employment.

In the immediate aftermath, when donations and media coverage were at their height, employers were generally supportive, as appalled as the rest of the country at the tragic circumstances that had affected their employees. Some men were fortunate to have supportive workplaces, and where workplaces were calm and colleagues aware of what Black Saturday survivors had been through, early return to work was helpful.

I thought, 'Well bugger this. I'm going to go back and hide at work because I know ... the people that I work with are going to understand what I'm going through' ... and I was impossible to live with. (Adam)

I went back to work two ... weeks after the fire just to see what it felt like. People were really good and sensitive, even people that you actually don't like much (laughs) I found it peaceful. I got given this envelope of money. (James)

Nevertheless, the workplace itself held the potential to traumatise despite best efforts. Working as a health professional, James reported his 'biggest fear was to go into work and find people that were burnt'. Insensitive work colleagues were another threat to equanimity. Tom was affected by his colleagues' vicarious interest in his experience of Black Saturday, asking inappropriate and insensitive questions.

I didn't want to talk about it but they did. And they wouldn't let it go, which is why I ended up going home that day ... And I just couldn't believe it. You can't answer those questions. You get angry and you don't want to get angry at the person, so I just turned my head and walked away. (Tom)

For many, too, employers' good intentions were time limited. Initial support was clear as time off in the early days was met with understanding. However, the usual platitudes of 'What are you doing here?', 'Take as much time as you need', were sooner rather than later replaced by business as usual. Even those workplaces where employees genuinely felt supported quickly refocussed to their own priorities:

I went to go back to work a week after and I've never felt symptoms of anxiety but ... I got halfway down the highway and was sweating and almost physically vomiting and I thought, 'What the hell's going on here?' ... When I did go back [after two weeks] there was a lot of crap to deal with ... a lot of pressure. (Cliff)

With a magnanimous offer of a week to get organised, Brad struggled for many months after the fires in a high pressure job, resigning after a few months:

My boss gave me ... a week off to get ourselves organised, and then it was back to work. And I was working in a very high-pressure job at the time under enormous ... pressure at work, it was just ridiculous. (Brad)

Vincent, too, was asked to commit to work he was ambivalent about taking, preferring instead to 'deal with the stuff that I needed to deal with'. He did it as a favour and suspected the man who asked him thought it would be beneficial in his recovery. However, his reflections about a friend's experience reveals the lack of understanding Black Saturday survivors seem to face in the workplace:

They gave him two weeks' leave and then they wanted him back ... There was no understanding of what he'd really been going through. (Vincent)

Matthew had committed to starting a new job just one week after Black Saturday. His experience sits along many others who stated they were not able to recover when balancing high pressure jobs:

I was probably in a pretty bad state but not physically showing it... I did that job for about two months. I couldn't cope. I had to get up at ... 4.30 in the morning ... and I wasn't sleeping, so I just couldn't cope with it. (Matthew)

In two accounts, the men spoke of their employers' extraordinary insensitivity. Both were asked to undertake work that revived their traumatic bushfire experiences. It was confronting for the men, and beyond what should reasonably be asked of workers returning after a disaster experience.

Our business was asked to do a quote for someone who lost [a family member]. I was told right from the start it was going to form part of the bushfire inquest Royal Commission that's happening up here and I said, 'I'm not sure I can' ... . I don't think [my boss] was thinking of it in the track that, what Aaron's been through, but in the fact of my skills. So that's what he did, and I said to this bloke straight away, 'Look I've probably got a conflict here, I might not be able to do it'. I said this to [my boss] and the consultant, and the consultant went to the lawyers and asked them if they want me to be removed from the case. They said, 'No that's all right'. Probably [makes] it a bit more personable …So I may or may not be called. (Aaron)

Aaron concluded by saying, 'It was all right – I sort of felt privileged that I had a part of that too, in an indirect way'. Yet his narrative indicates that he asked to be removed in a way that preserved his professionalism and did not reveal a reluctance that could be interpreted as 'weakness', and this was taken at face level by his boss, the consultant and the lawyers who seem to have decided it might improve the chances of winning the case. Having completed the job, it is still on Aaron's mind 12 months later as he waits to see if he will be called to the Royal Commission. As an employee, and as a man wanting to appear to be in control, Aaron did what he could to protect himself from further trauma, but in the end was directed to undertake this work.

Chris helped police and the forensic team locate and identify the bodies of local people who were killed in the disaster. He worked long hours for more

than a month, with interrupted sleep and constant pressure from community members and CFA colleagues. After two weeks break, he returned to work and, with an injury, was placed on light duties. As his usual supervisor was away, he was directed to work on evidence-gathering from the 000 tapes for the Royal Commission. The already significant trauma of identifying bodies of people he often knew was immeasurably increased by his assignment when he returned to his workplace.

It's one thing to listen to audio tapes. It's one thing to see dead bodies. It's different to actually put the conversation that you're having to the image ... That was the straw that broke the camel's back. The listening to the tapes by itself, I'd been doing that for two years up to that point, listening to murders and all that sort of stuff on the other end of the phone, and some of that was pretty upsetting, but it's part of the job ... Guess the old school of 'suck it up'. That's what the job is, if you don't want to do the job, then don't ... the guy I was working for at the time was really supportive – difficulty was, he was on holidays when I got assigned to do this, and he came back the next week, and said, 'What are they thinking?' (Chris)

Self-employed and small businesses

Those self-employed, although theoretically able to determine their own time to return to work, were driven back by financial imperatives. Diminishing funds meant there was no choice even if it felt too soon for their health and wellbeing.

> *I took the first week off to deal with the immediate issues, so then I needed to go back to work. No ifs or buts, I needed to support the family. I needed to take control of the business again. (Carl)*

Financial stress was unrelenting for some, and after a lifetime of work, some who had retired before the fires had to return to work simply to survive financially after their losses in the disaster. The thought of living from 'handouts' or 'on welfare' was unacceptable to them. Several men raised the issue of inequity for people who owned businesses, and the lack of attention to their losses in the fires (See also Gunter, 2011). They spoke of not being able to meet the stringent criteria for grants and of watching business people, who had assisted others in the aftermath of the fires, denied assistance. Adding to the inequity, once local businesses closed, grants were available to new owners willing to run the same kind of businesses in fire-affected areas.

> *It took probably five months of being told, 'No'– because I hadn't had a house burnt – down before I said, 'Oh I'm sick of being told no, I'm not going to bother with that anymore' ... it's just annoying endlessly being told 'No' just because you hadn't sunk everything into a house. The [business] asset didn't mean anything basically. (Scott)*

> *The government and the bureaucrats made it so hard to get money from that fund that it was a joke ... Nearly every business in the community has changed hands now ... and the funny thing was, the government could not give them any assistance to keep their business going but when they sold out, the people that bought the businesses because they were new owners, they could get government assistance... and a lot of businesses really did support the community as much as they possibly could, giving stuff away. (Eric)*

Go and shake a tin

We were on our phones to our families and pretty much saying goodbye ... I didn't get to my place for at least a day and a half ... I got there and everything had gone. I was suicidal for probably a year. We'd been told that people had donated $200mil and weeks later it was $400mil and I'm thinking, 'It's not right. The feedback I'm getting from talking to people is not too positive for me. I asked [politicians] directly at a public event, and [an employee] from the Shire rang me up and started tearing shreds off me, almost accusing me of, like one of those people that were just trying to cash in on a situation. He said, 'Mate, you don't even live [here]' and I said, 'I've lived here for 15 years... You can't speak to people like that who have just come out of hell. You can't say that they're a liar' and I was beside myself. He said, 'Mate if you want help, you go and shake a tin out the front of Bunnings in Eltham'. I was just beside myself ... It made me homicidal, suicidal. I wanted to track [him] down and give him a hiding just for his lack of empathy, lack of consideration for what people had been through **...** I didn't sleep for nine or 10 months.... I was travelling around on my motorbike at 200kms per hour and looking at trees thinking, 'That's my tree'. I threatened the government ... [I] would have blown up half of Melbourne. I was bitter. I wanted to say, 'Well I don't care if you kill me or whatever, I'm already dead, I just don't know it' and that was my state of mind ... You are mad and you just think, 'Well I've just lost $300,000 and you government don't seem to care so if I go and blow up a couple of billion dollars' worth of stuff in the city. Then they'll know how it feels.' I'm shocked at myself thinking that way back then but when you're hung on a butcher's hook it's not nice. (Gerald)

Relationships: 'One affects the other, one influences the other'

Just over two-thirds of the men (24) were in settled relationships on Black Saturday, and four had separated at the time of the interview. About a third of the men (12) described very committed and loving relationships and one who was separated before the fires spoke of his ex-wife as a great friend who provided emotional support. They spoke of their wives or partners in the highest terms and with evident respect. The admiration of one man for the courage and capability of his wife was evident as he told of how she protected their home where many others were also sheltering. They had flipped a coin to see who, of the two of them, would stay and who would go on the CFA truck. And another, Lee, said:

> *[She] was absolutely like a rock all through that crisis. She didn't flinch the whole night, she was so tough and reliable. That brings tears to my eyes thinking about that because it was seriously life threatening and she didn't even flinch. (Lee)*

These men spoke of their relationship with their partner as the foundation of their lives. Phrases like, 'we're a unit', 'joined at the hip', 'knackered without her' 'there for each other' indicated their affection and love. One spoke of his wife's sound logic and said that she was his protection against anxiety, and another that his wife was always there, with support 'on tap' if he needed it:

> *She was strong and that's encouragement for the person standing next to her to be strong also. You know what I mean? We were each other's ... strength. (Eric)*

One man explicitly stated that he worked at being a loving husband, and refused to give up on their relationship or their family. Several spoke of trying to protect their wives or partners, save them from worry, and of not wanting to upset them with their own concerns. They did this by hiding the extent of the fire's effect on them, saying they

were fine and that they didn't think about the day much at all. Several men said they participated in this research because their wives had suggested it – these men felt their wives wanted them to speak to someone (anyone) about what they'd been through. It seemed, from the men's words that their partners were attempting to break through their silences. However, one man said he was clear to his wife that he felt Black Saturday was over, 'done ... dusted', and it was time to move on.

Others, however, wanted to talk to their partners but felt constrained to speak of their own suffering – and felt constrained from speaking to others, because their partner 'valued privacy'. These men questioned whether women are, in fact, intrinsically better at communication, quoting their wives and partners' attitude as, 'Just get over it'. As relationships deteriorated, they described merely 'existing' side by side, and drifting apart and away. Paul said only three couples are still together from their friendship network of 16 couples. The aftermath exacerbated prior. Pressures meant there was less time, less money, more demands, all leading to less time and energy for communication. Even stable, solid relationships were swayed by the 'ongoing crisis situation'. Some people changed, and, even for close couples, the stress of future fires was problematic as they described different opinions on what to do 'next time'. Their interpretations of the danger and actions needed were different. Some couples separated over opinions on where to live after experiencing Black Saturday, and the wisdom of returning to the place they had endured so much.

> *The magnitude of the disaster reframed, 'what next?' for them. And for a lot of them, 'what next?' was to separate … People who were travelling in parallel before the fires, one of them might have responded by becoming hyperactive and involved in community and the other one might have responded by withdrawing and being catatonic almost. (Paul)*

Violence within relationships

Disaster can remove any semblance of being in control of the environment or the future, and men who feel that loss may resort to focusing on control in the home (Greig et al., 2000). Male privilege gives some men a sense of entitlement and authority over women and may result in some men using violence against them. Violence against women after disasters was documented in Australia after Black Saturday (Parkinson, 2012; Parkinson & Zara, 2013) and internationally (Austin, 2008; Sety, 2012). Some of the men interviewed had heard of an increase in domestic violence after the fires:

> *I have [heard of it] ... A little bit outside of my direct experience so it's only anecdotal, second hand. But not so much the actual physical violence stuff but I know that a lot of people had arguments and there was shouting and stuff, and people being very, very stressed out. (Brad)*

> *Personally I've seen a little bit of stuff but I haven't seen actual violence ... I've seen the aftermath. I've seen the verbal abuse [and I would say] 'Hey, hey, that's your wife mate. Just cool it. Calm down'. (Bernard)*

Another was told of domestic violence as an issue when he took on a role of responsibility where it was relevant to his job:

> *All that information was brought forward to me...[So actual physical fighting?**]** I think there were a few, yeah. Definitely a lot of domestics. (Jason)*

And others commented:

> *I didn't witness any myself but you'd hear different things ... So some things might have increased a bit but there's also a lot of stuff beforehand that people didn't know about. (Lance)*

> *There was an elevated level of anger that was playing its way out through families not necessarily as violence ... But I would anticipate that that could have been the case. (Vincent)*

Mostly, the men who had not observed an increase in domestic violence were not interested in a further discussion and had little concern. There were important exceptions to this general response, however.

> *For some reason there seems to be a reluctance to step in now. I mean lots of guys have got different opinions about violence towards women, particularly their wives and family but personally that would be one thing that I absolutely wouldn't be pussy-footing around. (Rod)*

Two men spoke with a depth of feeling about their personal experience through family, neighbours and friends, and the effect it had. Rod spoke of the dramatic effect of the fire on his son-in-law and the subsequent concern he has for his daughter and grandchildren.

> *The police were called on numerous occasions ... The police were very understanding, much more so than I think he perhaps deserved ... [He] had a virtual permanent binge drinking and he was aggressive ... I was concerned about [our daughter's] and the kids' safety because you hear things of blokes going completely off the rails and killing their families and then killing themselves ... we certainly felt it was a distinct possibility, not so much of the beating up on but we thought he might go over the top and top the lot of them, including himself. (Rod)*

The ripple effect of domestic violence on others is clear from the concern expressed, and from Rod's attempts to talk to his son-in-law, when he said he had to watch his 'Ps and Qs'. His efforts to protect his daughter and grandchildren had risks:

> *There were times I felt threatened because he's built like a brick toilet and I was always aware that if he did decide to take a swing, I'm not as quick as I used to be and I probably wouldn't be able to get out of the way in time and there'd be absolutely no question that he'd flatten me with one punch ... he was never overtly aggressive but there was always a simmering, what appeared to be resentment. (Rod)*

Domestic violence after Black Saturday

Our street was replete with domestic violence. There was no protection for one of our neighbours whose partner, their relationship deteriorated to such a point where violence was a major part of it. We heard it, we were incredibly frustrated with the services so I, along with some others advocated for intervention through the police and also through community health services. It took eight weeks for a

> referral to be responded to. We felt the police were minimising the violence. We had local coppers and they have their own strong social relationships and I think that they were at sometimes inappropriately protecting perpetrators and inappropriately protecting people who were drinking or using drugs, et cetera. So I don't think that they really realised the vulnerability of children and partners at home and I think at least some of them thought they could just plaster over it and it would go away. And I think it was also very uncomfortable ... I would say it certainly had the potential to exacerbate pre-existing family violence, or where there were issues, or where the relationship wasn't running smoothly. And I think also it put people who otherwise would have coped fine under incredible stress ...The prolonged presence of the emergency services command and control kind of systems, I think they also have an influence on family and community life as well. So instead of valuing the local resources and making a commitment to collaboration and partnership, this 'imposition upon' kind of sends reverberations throughout communities, and families become more likely to revert to a lowest common denominator – command and control. (Paul)

Men's aggression or violence in the home led to immeasurable damage to women and children (and learned violence inter-generationally), and often resulted in family breakdown. Although none of the men interviewed spoke of violence as a contributor to problems in their own relationships, they described stressed relationships:

> *I'm a bloke and I've got a family, of course you shout at people. (Bernard)*

> *I think for myself and certainly for many, many other people that I know of, other blokes, it's only just below the surface ... And it doesn't take much poking with a sharp stick for it to bubble out. I find that myself – that there might be something that happens, just some little thing and I'll just lose it. (Brad)*

Yet perhaps it is prevalent notions of 'the private domain' that explain the lack of interest or intervention that characterised the post-disaster period. Consideration of men – who may have been acted heroically in the fires and suffered badly in their aftermath – was sometimes privileged over the rights of women and children to life free from violence, as elaborated in the previous research with women after Black Saturday (Parkinson, 2012; Parkinson, Lancaster, & Stewart, 2011). Tolerance of violence increased. It is critical to note that disasters do not 'cause' domestic violence. After all, only some men choose violence. Disaster researcher Houghton (2009) noted that stress is more a rationale or aggravating factor in domestic violence and that 'the root causes of abuse are deep and complex'. As Enarson (Enarson, 2012, p. 79) writes:

> *[I]t is important to refute wrong-headed ideas based on stereotyping or misinformation. The most significant of these is the notion that stress causes violence, and that both simply increase in disasters.*

The chaos of catastrophic disaster not only magnifies what is good and bad in society (Quarantelli, 1994), but also offers the chance for change – which may be progressive or regressive (Birkmann et al., 2010). One theory is that 'the most significant determinants of violence against women are the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women [and] an adherence to rigidly defined gender roles' (VicHealth, 2007; 2011, p. 1). The tendency for gender roles to be strengthened after disaster exacerbates unequal power relations between men and women, and is clearly unhelpful for all.

This chapter and the last draw heavily on the men's words to describe their perceptions of the Black Saturday fires as they raged and in the devastation and chaos after. The next section will consider the implications of their experiences.

Risks Black Saturday Posed and Risks Men Took

On Black Saturday, the gendered risks posed to men included all those identified in the disaster literature and key amongst them was the vulnerability of their sense of identity as men, when protecting and providing proved impossible. Gendered risks to women included their safety both during and after the disaster, and their economic viability in its aftermath when responsibility for (often traumatised) children was primarily theirs (Borrell, 2011; Borrell, Vella, & Lane, 2011).

Social construction of masculinity has historically positioned men at the front line for harm during disaster in Australia. The most obvious disaster risks to men on Black Saturday were of dying, serious injury and trauma, and of depression, anxiety, PTSD and suicide in its aftermath. On 7th February, 2009, 100 males and 73 females died. However, until this firestorm, the gap between the numbers of males and females dying in bushfires in Australia was closing (Haynes et al., 2008). Globally and in developing nations, women die at greater rates than men in disasters – the difference exacerbated by pronounced gender inequalities, and cultural constraints which limit escape and survival (Neumayer & Plumper, 2007). Some men saw clearly how cultural constraints in Australia, too, endangered women:

> *Look, there are a lot of tough women up here that made brilliant decisions, and are a little bit more logical than a lot of the blokes up here. But in general, the percentage of the women that would have said, 'Right, no, you're not staying, get in the car, we're going, it's only a bloody house', would have been 1 or 2%. Most of the blokes would have said, 'This is my bloody house, I built it, I worked my arse off the last 25 years, I'm not leaving this joint, blah, blah'. And the wife would say, 'Are you sure we're going to be alright?' 'Yeah, yeah, we'll be alright'. And I know a few families that perished like that. (Lou)*

Women are at risk where unequal power characterises relationships and survival depends on who makes the decision when transport options are limited:

> *I have first-hand knowledge that there are women, wives, on Black Saturday who wanted to leave town and their husband said, 'No, we're staying to fight this'. And they stayed to fight and they both died. (Brad)*

For men, gendered risks posed by Black Saturday went directly to men's autonomy. There is an intrinsic contradiction for members of top-down traditional 'command and control' organisations to be so clearly out of control and at the mercy of the fire storm that raged on Black Saturday.

> *With SES events we're always in control of the situation, but with what happened to me I wasn't in control. And that was probably the hardest thing I've had to deal with – that I had no control over what was happening to me. (Aaron)*

> *I think it's about the self ... and if one feels in control one feels that one's life is in control ... Or if one loses control of the things around them, your house, your community, then you feel out of control yourself. Adrift. (Edward)*

In the way gender is constructed in rural Australia, men were expected to measure up to the fire-storm in their behaviour and to not break down in its aftermath. Without the disaster of Black Saturday, the men interviewed would not have been propelled into the situations of powerlessness they described. None had ever experienced a fire like that before. Most had never been viewed as a victim in any aspect of their life before the fires. Nor relied on others for the basics of life. Their loss of control during the fire lived on in continuing loss of control in its aftermath. The cost of male privilege is most apparent in these circumstances. Catastrophic disasters test men's ability to live up to the impossible hegemonic male role expected of them – to be brave, heroic, decisive, unemotional and stoic. There are consequences for those judged to have failed:

> *Individuals ... who do not conform to these stereotypes, may experience varying degrees of rejection and marginalization, including verbal and physical harassment, victimization, isolation, and potentially traumatic wounding of their sense of self. (Ballou, Hill & West, 2008, cited in Kahn, 2011, p. 66)*

Masculinities theorists identify that patriarchy ultimately damages men who aspire to and closely conform to notions of the ideal man (Kahn, 2011). Along with male privilege come poorer physical and mental health than women and higher levels of alcohol abuse and loneliness (Connell, 2005; Kahn, 2011; Kimmel, 2002). Some men, brought up not to cry and not to seek help, reacted to their own failures or their trauma with anger and aggression, or turned to the solace of drugs and alcohol, with results that sometimes exacerbated abusive or harmful behaviours and increased risk to women and children.

'Stay or go' – averting risk?

The 'stay or go' policy, severely tested on Black Saturday, has limitations in that the application of a fire plan is not always practical. The easy solution to days of extreme fire danger suggested by many – to just leave early – does not work for people with petsand livestock. Much blame directed at Black Saturday survivors and victims who did not 'leave early' does not take into the account, for example, the responsibility many country dwellers have for animals – both pets and livestock. Nor does it take into account the circumstances of people (mostly women) with responsibility for children (some sick or with disabilities) or elderly or disabled dependents when there is day after day of extreme fire danger. In practical terms, what are rural residents meant to do each day, with the realities of employment, school, appointments, and the responsibilities of animals and livestock? Where do they go, day after day?

Several men in this research spoke of competing demands in attempts to protect and save animals – an area of growing theoretical interest – and the implications this held for the safety of themselves and other people, including children.

> *It's a grazing property so we were concerned about our house obviously, our assets – our cattle in particular. (Vincent)*

> *We've got horses agisted [elsewhere] what do we do with those? We've got a dog, a couple of cats and we're taking those as well ... Under my insistence, we left the cats at home [while attending to the horses] because it was 46 degrees and I didn't want the car running stationary and potentially overheating [but then with impending bushfire and the family in the car, we had to] go back and get the cats. (James)*

The difficulties in enacting 'stay or go' extends to travellers. Life does not simply stop on extreme fire danger days, as Chris pointed out: 'On that particular day, [say] you guys are visiting me at my place. Well you haven't got a plan, you're not part of my plan', raising the question of why aspects of fire safety education for CFA volunteers could not be extended to the broader population.

Providing and protecting

The notion of 'women and children first' in disaster is a myth, as proven in one study after another (Elinder & Erixson, 2012; Rivers, 1982; Scanlon, 1997), and just as this myth thrives despite the reality, expectations of manly, 'heroic' behaviour are alive and well too. Masculinity theorists find that men's lived reality of privilege coexists with subordination (Kang, cited in Dowd, 2010b), and privilege with misery (Pease, 2012). As Connell writes, there is bitterness as well as the pleasure in gendered experience (Connell, 1995, cited in Austin, 2008). The concept of cowardice is one levelled squarely at men (Kang, cited in Dowd, 2010b).

> *Men ... are supposed to have some sort of masculine, paternal role in managing any sort of situation ... where, when the fire starts, you just flick the switch and they become robotic. And I don't think you're meant to have feelings. (Adam)*

Men were expected to control the crisis, be strong, stoic, 'man up', 'get over it and get on with it'. Some observed that many men are now refusing to participate in fire training because of these expectations. As Dean said:

> *Well there's that typical male thing that you've got to be the provider and you can't. You've failed in your duties to protect your property, your family, whatever ... Everybody felt helpless. (Dean)*

Others, too, commented on the disparity between expectation and feeling:

> *'Macho. Tough. We can handle it. We look after the women folk.' It's bullshit of course. (Todd)*

> *Every man thinks there are expectations on men to stand up and be brave and be the stalwarts of the family and all those kind of somewhat Aussie ocker images ... [Instead] I think a lot of people were absolutely shit scared and didn't realise that that was a perfectly natural and normal feeling ... but I'm sure a lot of those who were, feel it was a weakness. (Rod)*

Vincent described a policing of the convention of males as family, and reflected on how culturally ingrained the notion is. Others remembered the demands on them in the disaster's aftermath:

> *Why haven't you got it together? Why haven't you got your garden fixed? Why haven't you got your house done yet? What are you doing with your life? Why haven't you gone back to work? Why haven't you? (Bernard)*

> *Expectations? OK, to get things back to normal, to make things better, to rebuild, and I think to appear effective ... And Christ, the [men] really needed to appear as if they were effective, productive, constructive members of the community. (Edward)*

James, too, recalled the layered and competing demands of him, and reflected on the impossibility of knowing what to do in a future fire:

> *You're supposed to either prevent it from happening [or] protect your family from it … I'm in two minds about it ... we're all acutely aware it could happen again [and] that if it does, there's a lot of people who aren't going to hang around and do brave things or silly things. We just have to go, because we know what it's like – but then you're torn, you're going to lose all this again. (James)*

Acting like a man – and taking risks

The risks to men's health that emerged from hyper-masculine and risk-taking behaviours held the potential for physical injury and death on Black Saturday as men were sometimes overly casual in response to the impending threat, and sometimes unnecessarily took themselves into dangerous situations. In its aftermath, drug and alcohol use, reckless driving and extreme sports temporarily relieved men's suffering in an acceptably masculine way. Over-work was common.

> *One [friend] in particular, he's done a magnificent job, rebuilt his home ... and now ... he just can't stop. His way of managing is to just keep working. (Bob)*

> *We were all driving around drunk, which we shouldn't have done but ... I think the police ... just thought, 'Let these guys do their thing'. Because how do you get it out of their system? (Luke)*

> *We had to be careful we weren't going to go down the path the 'Lord of the Flies' thing, but [a potential looter] was 'looked after' by the police, which probably gave him a harder time than ... if he'd been caught by fire-fighters. I think his car was left in a position where flames were going to get it, so there was a little bit of that sort of stuff happening ... We heard that police actually drew their guns at the roadblock, because they were so threatened. So there was a lot of that sort of stuff. (Chris)*

Despite the danger to men's health, these were tolerated and even rewarded behaviours, with labels of 'heroism' and awards of bravery medals. Media coverage of individuals who were 'heroes' were very much focussed on notions of masculine heroism, overlooking the heroism of women in traditional female supportive roles. This was galling to those who had different perceptions of events.

> *If you're talking about men and fighting bushfires, never forget there's a fair bit of ego in it for them. There is. (Walter)*

Tell someone who cares

The risks to men's health that emerged from their denial of hurt and a reluctance to seek help led some men to depression, isolation and reclusiveness. Several became withdrawn and two gained weight through disordered eating habits:

> *I just had to stay here and shut the door. It's just not healthy ... then I surprised myself by attacking comfort food, and you know it's bad for you. (Todd)*

In spite of the devastating effects of denial and not seeking help, these behaviours are acceptable and even lauded as masculine behaviours. Men must avoid appearing vulnerable or weak because it undermines the status quo (Coston & Kimmel, 2012). Although men are silenced, avoidant and ultimately isolated, this fits with our understanding of what men are like – or even *should* be like. Boys are raised to be like this because the strong, silent type is one of the preferred masculinities.

> *I remember my dad [would tell us], 'Blokes don't cry, get on with it' (Bill)*

> *[My sister] could stand there and tell Dad off [and my brothers and I would] be like, 'Oh he'd be belting the shit out of us by now' ... As my wife used to say, I'd put a wall up ... [Things are actually] pretty crap and I'm not ready to talk about that ... I'm just working towards soldiering on. (Cliff)*

> *Men by their nature are [a] fairly closed book ... they're fairly covert with those things ... I'm just a bloke, we're not that sensitive to this stuff either. (Scott)*

One man mentioned the ironic saying, 'Tell someone who cares' neatly capturing the rules for behaviour that he had internalised. Physical manifestations of stress were preferred to expressing the pain:

> *He had this big rash here the same as me and he's in his 30s. As soon as I saw it I said, 'Stress?' '[He said] 'What are you talking about, stress? Bullshit, I don't suffer stress'. (Todd)*

The disconnection men are encouraged to develop from their emotions, for example, in preparing for positions of authority where ruthlessness and manipulation is a strength contributes to the mental health costs borne by men (Pease, 2012). Yet, it is only those emotions considered feminine or unmanly that are dissuaded (Dowd, 2010a). Emotions of anger and excitement and jealousy are masculine, and therefore allowed. The men's narratives reflect the pressure to act like a man, to live up to expectations of manly behaviour.

> *From a male's perspective we all feel like we should be able to look after ourselves. There's that stigma and expectation as a man ... there's too much at stake. Whether it's stigma related, whether it's about the need to look strong, not so much just to be a male and strong but a responsibility of being Dad and being able to not show weaknesses for my kids. I've got three boys. (Cliff)*

> *Because men, as we know, are not supposed to have feelings. (Brad)*

> *Men think they've got to be men... just tough. Dust yourself off and get up and go. (Dan)*

> *Where do you go, what do you do as a bloke? You're meant to be the tough strong one aren't you? ... I think when you say 'depressed' it means that you're weak, mentally weak I suspect. (Luke)*

The men observed other men getting on with things but seeming sad, and not talking about things, not complaining, 'suffering in silence', 'keeping it to themselves'. Another spoke of 'going into his cave'. There was pressure to get over the fires, and men spoke of

throwing themselves into work or distractions, avoiding people or situation, going silent, thereby coping and still inhabiting prescribed 'masculinity':

> *The anniversary of the day I avoid now... it's not something I want to remember ... We're all a bit lost. (Dan)*

Several men described their awareness of using silence and avoiding particular conversations so they could stay in control of their emotions:

> *It's a bit of the nature of the beast ... a lot of [men...] don't want to share that they've been affected ... Yes, I even have to say today I was almost thinking, 'Well how am I going to do this? I don't want to get to that stage [of crying in the interview]' ... But like I said I'm brushing over stuff ... I can tend to feel like I'm getting close to stuff and skip because ... I don't want to bare all. (Cliff)*

> *I feel it's quite stupid of me to be ... showing such emotion even after all this time ... you've got to get over it, don't you? ... It's ridiculous because I can be in a social gathering and I catch my speech, have long pauses while I regather my ability to be able to speak ... I feel it's a weakness ... I'm sure that a woman could get away with it a lot easier than a man. (Rod)*

> *Years ago I would've told you to pull your socks up and just get on with life...And I think a lot of men have done that. They've tried to keep it together and not shown emotion ... as those bloody adverts come on, the ones where you ... see a silhouette of smoke, I switch it off straightaway ... I'm not watching that, no ... because then I become very emotional. (Bill)*

Todd and Walter spoke of repressing emotions to save face.

> *I've never been a public, emotional person until this, and that's why I shy away from it, I don't want to talk about it out there, I don't want to embarrass myself. (Todd)*

> *We started to see fire trucks, a few odd fire trucks and I just bawled ... Well, for the first three or four days I switched it off. I thought if I don't, it's going to overcome me. (Walter)*

Another man described his strategy of 'hiding at work' and preventing communication:

> *Run away from the emotional stuff and try and get yourself bogged down into work ... I've got a great theory on working relationships with people. 'Don't bloody talk to me because I've had a bad start to the day. I've got the shits on. Will you leave me alone?' And everybody knows. (Adam)*

In living up to the masculine script, men were denied opportunities to express their feelings. They were expected to manage their emotions – at least the emotions that are considered feminine – and they did that mostly through pushing them down. The latitude for anger, however, was much greater than for tears.

Aggressive and violent behaviour

There were risks from men's *aggressive and violent behaviour* in the community:

> *There was a lot of anger around town and a lot of anger to the CFA, and a lot of anger to everybody to be honest. I think there were too many people blaming too many other people. (Carl)*

Recriminations led to anger and violence. For example, blame was levelled at the DSE, with allegations of insufficient fuel reduction burning contributing to the intensity of the fires. The CFA was criticised for not being in 'everyone's backyard'. In Kinglake particularly, recriminations against the CFA were strong, perhaps stemming from a decision to send the fire trucks off the mountain to help other brigades.

Much reportage has focussed on system failures during Black Saturday, and the blame that followed spilt over to individuals. Criticism was levelled at individual members of the CFA, for example, for prioritising their own family's safety and leaving early, or protecting their own property.

> *I've had some stand-up, not arguments but discussions where people were angry. 'These fire brigade people ... They just sat in the oval'. That's what some people have said, and that's awful for them. I said, 'Look, they're not superheroes, they just happen to be wearing orange overalls, doesn't make them any different. They're just as scared as you or I would be'. (Dan)*

Ironically, other men were criticised for putting their own families at risk if they did go on the fire trucks. Decisions had to be made about fighting the fire on the home front or with the CFA. Yet, recriminations from these decisions persist even four years later:

> *He went to protect his own home, and that's fair enough. I have no problem with what he did. The community did [though]: 'It's his job, he's supposed to be there'. There were quite a lot of angry accusations flying about that, and that's to a degree still going ... We had an incident two months ago ... where two guys got into a punch-up ... It got to the point one time, I walked in and locked the door behind me, and said, 'If we're going to have a blood bath here, we're going to have a blood bath – if that's how we feel, that's how we feel'. (Chris)*

While some men were physically injured, for others, there was embarrassment or humiliation in the public realm. 'Mob mentality' was the term used to describe some behaviour in the community meetings:

> *I saw people behaving badly, really being abusive, domineering ... we're a fairly dysfunctional group ... Men are combative, competitive, aggressive, by nature ... there's a lot of horizontal violence since the bushfire. (Steve)*

> *I just saw men, big hurly men, shouting at people, telling people what their towns needed. And bullying's a very good word. Harassment's another. (Tom)*

With public displays of emotions – such as crying – out of the question, instead 'manly emotions' of acting out, being aggressive or physically provocative, yelling and domineering were observed. Men described their own anger:

I was about that far from assaulting somebody one night, I just was ready to drag him across the table at a meeting in public and beat the crap out of him. (Scott)

I had to apologise to one of my colleagues ... So I took him aside and he said, 'I just can't work with you. You're just so on edge all the time, we don't know what you're going to do next.' (Adam)

Yet other men spoke of being on the receiving end, trying to be understanding but in the end, withdrawing to avoid the verbal aggression:

I tried to let it flow over me, tried to say ...'Yes, you've gone through all of this ...' [but] I just got to a point where I didn't want to go to work. (Dean)

Physical violence and aggression is generally associated with masculine behaviour, and often rewarded politically and publicly. Perceptions of toughness influence who is considered 'leadership material' and who is promoted and rewarded:

They seem to always be supportive of the most aggressive or the most powerful ... They're often believed and [yet] they've been outright destructive and aggressive to other people, to other men. (Steve)

One of the best person managers, he missed out on a job once and he was told that he didn't get the job because he didn't have enough mongrel in him. (Adam)

Punishment for not being 'man enough'

In contrast to the acceptance of men's aggression, men's *unacceptable* behaviour was that which diverged from the expectations of traditional and hegemonic masculinity towards traditionally 'feminine' behaviours of expressing emotion and seeking help. For volunteer fire-fighters and those employed in fire-fighting roles, the implications were that their future roles within the CFA or the DSE could be limited by perceptions that they had 'not coped'. Like the women who stated they were expected to 'suck it up and act like a wife and mother', men had to 'suck it up and act like a man'. The parameters of expected and acceptable behaviours were defined for individuals by their gender first.

Men who were perceived as not coping were stigmatised. Those men who had not been able to present a convincing and long-lasting appearance of getting on with things – men who let the trauma of the day and the tragedy of events get to them – were somehow relegated to a lesser status. They were apparently judged as not quite measuring up to the manhood expected by the hegemonic masculinity that characterises emergency services, despite the absurdity of this expectation on a day like Black Saturday, and in its aftermath, marked by chaos and grief. There is a perception, or perhaps an understanding, that accessing such individual counselling may affect future prospects within emergency service organisations.

People would be worried about the confidentiality, whether there was any feedback that came around the back saying, 'Keep this guy away from big fires'. (Matthew)

When the Works Coordinator was away [I used to be on higher duties]. When I took that month off, which I took off as stress leave, ever since then there's been nothing. (Stuart)

Rather than provide effective support, employing bodies often failed to offer accessible and personal debriefing or ongoing and confidential access to counselling. Alternative work roles were rarely an option. Organisational responses suggested the men who needed help as a result of their emergency management role were perhaps not really suited to the role and could be removed, rather than seeing their circumstances as worthy of attention and likely to happen to anyone. An institutional paradigmatic shift could achieve better support for men in the aftermath of disaster and address their needs, rather than fail to support this generation of fire-fighters and emergency management professionals:

I don't care how many psychologists and psychiatrists everybody sees ... the only way this stops with anybody ... is when you die. The next generation won't know it ... they're going to be left with the stress of memories [but] not the living part of it. (Eric)

Stigma associated with seeking counselling and men's reluctance to talk about either their trauma or their treatment emerged as a strong theme. This has been described in the literature as double jeopardy – the masculine ideal is impossible to meet but help cannot be sought because real men do not admit any 'weakness' such as PTSD or depression or anxiety (Addis & Mahalik, 2003, cited in Kahn, 2011). One leader within the CFA tried to cut through this by sharing that he needed assistance to deal with the trauma, but was met with some disdain:

I've talked about how I got depressed, and how I took medication and all that, just to try and show, that hey, this guy that they seem to respect is okay with it, so why shouldn't you? A few of them sort of scoffed when I was saying it, and that's okay, but the point I guess is that there is a stigma attached to seeking counselling. (Chris)

Hurtful work culture

I get really, really angry [about] things that happen in our work environment [that] are just so frustrating ... Some of our people have been treated abysmally and a lot of that started in 2003 [with] the Great Alpine fire ... We just got bashed and bashed by the media ... Then we skip through to 2006/7 and we'd learnt a few lessons from that so we started to engage the community more and talk to them about things. But you've always got a minority group that wants to blame somebody for anything ... We've got to suffer that crap through the media ... I'm sick of it. I've had enough of it. I don't believe the organisation anymore. The really, really good people that are in the organisation that know how to put out fires, know how to treat people and know how to work in good teams have been forced backwards, so you virtually end up believing that you're no good at it anyway. And that frustrates me. [So, after 33 years fire-fighting] I went home and I said to my kids, 'Well I've made a decision, boys. I've given fire away. I'm not doing fire anymore.'... Both boys came and cuddled me. [A couple of years on] I'm still working beside people that fight fires and I'm still watching them getting frustrated with the same sort of stuff that we tried to resolve five years ago, 10 years ago. (Adam)

Health effects of 'coping' like a man

The men in this research spoke of a range of physical injuries they sustained in the fires and their aftermath – lead poisoning, burnt eyeballs, sight problems, heart palpitations, stress rashes. Those who faced imminent death described their fear and that of others. They described exhaustion and trauma. Some suffered burns and other physical injuries. There were risks to mental and emotional health, too. Tom spoke of being psychologically affected by his Black Saturday experience of trying to help a young man find his family, only to later find out they had died in the fire. Another described anxiety 'unsettling down the core of your body', haunted by flashbacks and, even now, unwilling to travel 'into the black'. Others felt depressed, describing an unexpected and abnormal lack of motivation, and their strategies for dealing with it:

> *I go through really heavily depressed states ... I'm normally trapped in it for a couple of weeks. ... There were a couple of times there where I got my bags packed and ready to go ... I can feel myself getting into this depressive state ... and see how the world's against me. (Carl)*

> *The word 'black' comes to mind ... I really didn't think I was depressed, just had this unreasonable anxiousness ... I just tell myself to stop being a stupid bloody idiot and get on with it. (Rod)*

Some men's words conveyed their separation from the usual demands of life:

> *When it got bad for me [for a couple of months] I didn't actually want to get out of bed... My wife would come home ... with our son and it was like, 'Are you still in bed?' ... The neighbours would come and knock on the door and you'd pull the blankets up. (Bernard)*

> *I probably pinched myself hard every day for seven months because every time I woke up I thought this was a dream and I thought that I was just a ghost. I just didn't see anyone for weeks after the fires. (Gerald)*

> *Yesterday I had a whole episode of being in a world I wasn't in ... My life was going on and I wasn't even in it. (Luke)*

> *It's been weird. It's like you might want to fix your house up and improve it or whatever but ... the inspiration's not there ... 'Doing alright.' That why I keep saying it because if you don't keep saying it to yourself, you'll end up hanging on the end of a rope off a tree of something. And I mean it. I'm not going to go down that path. (Eric)*

Suicide

Several men spoke of their concern for the number of people committing suicide. They believed the suicides resulted from either their disaster experiences or the pressure that the fires added to already complex lives and vulnerable mental health. Vincent told of the suicide of a man he knew:

> *His issues were pre-fire of course but his capacity post-fire to live with everything that had happened was clearly challenged and certainly I class him as he should have been added to the list of people who died because of the fires. (Vincent)*

There's been a lot of suicides and they don't publicise it, of course ... They got killed in the fires and they just didn't know it ... About four months ago, in about four weeks there were five people committing suicide. (Todd)

We all knew of personal instances. Like there was one guy that had [small] children that committed suicide ... [and] there were numerous cases of threatened suicide. (Rod)

Suicide attempts add to the evidence of suffering after the fires. One man spoke of his [relative] having a hanging noose in his accommodation and police attendance to prevent his suicide. Another man spoke of meeting the suicide risk criteria but gave assurances that it was not something he would ever do:

For months when I'd tick all the boxes for the psychologist and the doctor ... they'd say, 'Are you suicidal? ... You're about the highest score we've had'. (Eric)

Four men said they had felt suicidal: *(False names removed for confidentiality.)*

I was lucky enough [to be seen] at the right time otherwise I would have done stupid things to myself or to other people ... When you're in a suicidal/homicidal state you really haven't got many tools to keep you on a level field.

I'm pretty vulnerable. I've got a history in my family on both sides of suicide ... so I've had a determination to fight that. But ... I found that when I was really negative, [when] it got that bad that it was getting, I couldn't find a way of telling anyone.

Well, when we went back to work and everything had settled, I haven't even told [my wife] this ... Anyway, I come home and I was just sitting in the car out there, nothing was built or nothing and I just felt like hanging myself. So I just sat there ... You are the only two I've told. I've told no-one else.

There have been very, very many times where I've certainly thought about ending it all and, 'This is just not worth it', or, 'How many people can I kill?'... I'm quite happy for it to be on the record, I've felt very suicidal on very many occasions, especially that period, 2010, 2011, 2012 and that's very confronting kind of stuff. To get up in the morning and think to yourself, 'Why am I bothering to do this? What's left?' Because there's nothing left.

Recovery help on offer to men

Seeking help was often preceded by unexpected emotional fragility, and being exhausted and teary, overwhelmed with the scale of the disaster and the devastation. Warning signs seem to come out of nowhere. At times men would respond to a hot day, or wind, or a siren with a visceral bodily reaction – its roots in Black Saturday. The men recognised they needed help, aware of tension and emotion that couldn't easily be pushed away.

Going past just rows of burnt homes and I just broke out in tears. So it was fairly lonely, just felt pretty hopeless really. (Matthew)

Men were aware that other people found their emotion frightening and unexpected:

> *I could frighten people when they rang, with my emotions ... emotions you can't control ... I'd break down with [friends] as well ... There's probably two that I broke down with good mates and I think that surprised them ... That would be a silent weakness if that was my father, 'cause he's of that era where you don't tell people your personal problems. (Aaron)*

The tears were not always private:

> *One of the first indicators for me that I was really impacted by was ... about two weeks after the fire ... and the fellow from Community Welfare asked me a simple question like, 'Where do you live?' and I burst into tears, and I've never done that in my life. (Lee)*

> *When it first happened I can still remember going back to the office and one of my mates was there. He and I had been on the crew ... and he said, 'What the hell's wrong with you?' And I just exploded into tears and cuddled him ... Most people went around for a long, long time just shell-shocked and sad. (Adam)*

A significant emphasis and substantial resources were devoted to the psycho-social recovery of Black Saturday survivors. In the three years to 2012, 50 information sessions on aspects of recovery were run for communities; 17,772 VBAF psychological counselling vouchers and 12,744 VBAF wellness vouchers were issued; and $1.8 million was provided to Australian Red Cross to provide outreach and other support activities (Victorian Government, 2012, p. 9). The men spoke of the enormous generosity of people towards them, and some were very satisfied with the services received. Self-help and mutual support were common in the aftermath. Some of the men interviewed spoke of staying with friends for the company, or of walking or working with others and allowing the possibility of incidental conversation to deepen over the hours of spending time together. Bernard recalled '[We'd] just go sit on a lump of timber or something and have a good old yak and watch these people working over there'.

Mentoring

Five of the men spoke of mentoring, in one form or another, as potentially being valuable to men struggling after disaster. It was not considered an easy task to formalise what they had observed to naturally and somewhat fortuitously emerge. Mentors must be available in the long-term and ideally, be a local. Trust must be earned, and 'mentors' must have characteristics and personality traits that allow a connection with the other man – 'someone who's seen a bit and done a bit, who's wise' (Luke).

The distinction between mentor and friend is fine. Perhaps the advantage in a formalised mentor program is that it allows a legitimate reason for people to get together. One man spoke of a mentoring program for women in business where 'the men sort of got sucked into it too'. Dinner once a month allowed relationships to begin. Previous methods of connecting with others, such as working on community festival committees, were less attractive to people who were rebuilding, overworked and tired. Instead, he spoke of reaching out in low-key ways, like having a regular coffee with men he noticed were isolated.

Two men spoke of purposely seeking out a mentor, one through his church. A third envisaged a mentoring arrangement that paired 'natural nurturers, networkers and

nourishers' with a professional counsellor, seeing that such a relationship would ground the theory of emotional support within social relationships and a particular community.

Medication and alternatives

Medication was part of the psychological help that was provided for bushfire affected people. While it was not for everyone, some found it brought about a positive shift and kick-started their recovery:

> *I don't like medication ... I never saw myself taking that [but] look, for me, it got me out of that dark hole they keep referring to, and once you can see that there's light at the end of the tunnel, you're right. (Chris)*

A welcome government initiative was the provision of alternative therapy vouchers, where people could see naturopaths, massage therapists or other therapists. In addition, the men mentioned an enormous range of events and courses offered in the period since the fires. Inevitably, some events were inaccessible because of work commitments, however, those that were flexible and interest-based were valued. Such offerings included bike clubs, bike rides, creative writing workshops, the 'Steel Pan Band', music clubs and venues, library nights, barbeques, footy nights, fishing trips, 'Horses for Hope', Men's Sheds, and tool libraries, and the ironically named, 'On the Couch':

> *A couple of librarians bring out a pile of books and we sit around and listen to all the new stuff they've got on their shelves, and it's just so much fun, we have a glass of wine and cheese after and it's terrific. (Dan)*

> *[What is valuable is] 'hands-stuff' but also 'talk-stuff'. Like the mosaic thing was terrific. All around the table, all talking. (Patrick)*

Drugs and alcohol as self-medication

Alcohol and drugs were readily accessible and private, offering those suffering both solace and risk. Risks to health through alcohol and drug abuse are well documented, as is the tendency for many survivors of disasters to 'self-medicate' in this way.

> *We'd get rolling drunk and terribly stoned and talk. For hours and hours and hours about it, and I think I consciously did my processing then, in that moment where everyone's bonded and connected and able to hear strange things from other people. I was able to just be honest about how I felt and what I thought ... 'This is how it is for me'. I remember a couple of times I'd say stuff and there'd just be silence in the room and everyone would go really quiet and I'd go, 'I hope I haven't said too much'. Then the conversation starts up again ... I don't see it as an issue, I'm quite happy about that. Quite contented. I was fine, for that period I really enjoyed getting drunk and really, really stoned. (Edward)*

Others, too, described their use of drugs and alcohol allowing them to release painful memories or ease into difficult conversations to help process what had happened. Others remembered long, slow weeks of inactivity before they could return to work or begin rebuilding, when they were able to come to terms with their traumatic experiences with the help of substances and friends.

There was a lot of drinking, a lot of drinking. The pub every night, people just sit around ... It just takes your mind off the bad shit for a while. (Jason)

Well, not necessarily trained counselling but sitting around over beers and stuff and getting plastered. (Tom)

Just getting together and having a chat over a few beers probably helped a lot more people than staying at home not talking to anyone at all and not having a drink, sort of thing. (Lance)

Still, four years on, several spoke of being aware of drinking more:

I think all of us have increased our alcohol consumption since the fires, I know mine has. (James)

I drink a little bit more, I try to keep it under control. This is why staying home and being bored [is when] I will go and have a drink [and] instead of having a drink at three o'clock in the afternoon you might be out there having a drink at 10 o'clock. (Jack)

Drinking alcohol is often part of enacting masculinity in Australian society, and becoming 'tired and emotional' is more accepted in men when they are drunk.

I think the whole drinking thing can be destructive, the culture of drinking, go down the park any day of the week. Or go on Australia Day and have a look at what men think it is to be Australian ... you'll see how their patriotism takes shape. It's incredibly destructive. (Steve)

The men described people drinking a lot more, and commented on the use and overuse of alcohol in football clubs, bike clubs and in our culture generally. Meetings were often held in pubs and alcohol was donated. Several men made a purposeful decision to drink less or not at all, wanting to be good role models or maintain some control, or so they could function effectively at work. Some had observed friends or acquaintances with alcohol problems, drinking to excess: 'He was drinking up to six slabs a week and a bottle of bourbon' or 'binge-drinking'. They spoke of the risk of drinking turning social events 'bad', and Rod spoke of trying to address a family member's problem drinking:

We talked about his excessive drinking many times and he just denied that he was drinking excessively, even though he might have a tumbler of wine out of a cask in his hand and even in his accommodation he might have two or three casks of wine. (Rod)

I think there was a bit of hitting the bottle, I think that happened a bit with a fair few people for a while. (Brad)

Lots of alcohol, yeah lots of alcohol ... So we might get back early afternoon, 2-3 o'clock, so it would start then and wouldn't stop until I was passed out basically, for four weeks ... It was just something that made the pain a little easier. (Aaron)

Some favourably compared the value of a chat over a beer in a social setting like a pub to counselling. The lure of alcohol and its ability to offer some relief from the relentless pain was problematic for many. Cliff had particular insight:

> *I drink. I never used to drink. I used to for many years be a bit anti-alcohol drinking ... just with my father being an alcoholic and my brother suffering from it, so I was really mindful of that and often kept pretty fit ... But I have a couple of times slipped in to going to the bar. I'll have drinks and write myself off just because I can go to a room where there's people and I can talk to them ... in the last few months I've just consciously been making myself not have drinks because I've been wanting to have a drink every day. (Cliff)*

In two other narratives, the link between alcohol abuse and harm was apparent:

> *We saw people just get into patterns where, 'Fuck, I can't sleep, what do I do? I drink and self-medicate'. So rather than be engaged in more holistic processes that help them gain a realisation ... they were using alcohol. They were even using speed. We had a lot of speed come in, within five weeks there were speed dealers in our community. So I've got friends who are in prison now as a consequence of becoming speed dealers or stealing stuff because they had a speed habit. It was tragic watching them deteriorate. (Paul)*

> *There was a group of people that basically hung around the hotel, the pub, and they set up their own little group of people, they put a tank on the back of a truck, and they tried to be their own pseudo-fire-department, and they'd turn out under the influence with stubbies and shorts, and we had a few altercations with them in the context of, 'Guys you're not safe. If you want to do this, come down to the fire station, we'll give you some gear', and that sort of thing. 'No, we don't want that sort of crap'. And it got into those sort of situations where you're trying to argue with someone who's drunk. (Chris)*

Alcohol, in particular, played an enormous role in the aftermath of Black Saturday. For some, this method of self-medication was a viable alternative or addition to medication or counselling. For others, it was problematic.

Debriefing and peer support

Some of the women interviewed in previous research after Black Saturday, 'The Way He Tells It,' wanted counselling for their partners who were emergency service workers and for themselves and their children in the immediate post-disaster period. Both men and women spoke of debriefing that was perfunctory or focused only on operations. The way emergency management organisations ran debriefing varied from one to another, and from one locality to another. What was meant by 'debriefing' varied too.

> *In the context of CFA [it] will be, 'What happened? What did you do, what can we do better?' ... [Debriefing] needs to be available, but that doesn't seem to be in place. I think in the case of organisations like the CFA, maybe more peer type programs might be better. So if I had to talk someone, I could talk to someone else who's in a CFA uniform, or at least with a CFA badge on their shirt. And they're a fire-fighter. (Chris)*

Debriefing could mean a group discussion of the practicalities of what worked and what didn't after attending an incident, or it could be peer support in groups or one to one. In theory, most organisations seemed to offer some kind of professional debriefing or counselling if required. However, although attempts were made by emergency services such as DSE and CFA to offer counselling or individual debriefing, confidentiality was not assured and accessing it was problematic. In one organisation, it not only lacked confidentiality but involved hours of wasted time:

> *[They said] 'If you want to hang around and see [the counsellor] after the meeting, you can...' The other person's sitting there waiting, and there might be another person waiting, so that could lead into a couple of hours. (Stuart)*

In one case, a valued counsellor failed to follow up appointments and it was eventually revealed that her contract with the organisation had been cancelled some time earlier though none of the employees seeing her had been advised. This provoked further hurt and feelings of futility in attempting to recover.

Peer support can be an alternative for men who feel there is stigma attached to seeing a counsellor. Immediately after Black Saturday, some fire-fighters found themselves back at their CFA shed or at their post, unable to rest because of adrenalin and their knowledge of the extent of damage – despite their own exhaustion. The informality of this support was highly valued, and men reported that they appreciated being able to speak confidentially to a colleague who understood what they were grappling with.

> *I probably got the most value out of having a conversation with Steve* and Owen*, at the station that Sunday morning. The people that I felt I could connect with, I didn't have to explain everything, I could just say, 'Do you remember that?' He goes, 'Yeah' ... You didn't have to go through all the stuff to get the connection. (Tom)*

> *You've got to find a peer, that's someone who's just as hard and tough and mad as you are. And say 'Look ... .it's only human-nature what you're experiencing, you're not weak, you're not soft, you're not crazy. You've been through a terrible experience ...' (Lou)*

One man appreciated the peer support but felt he needed more:

> *They had a peer support person and she called in to see me ... It's kind of friendly but it's not really professional, not someone actually diagnosing where you're at and what you're going through and professionally explaining to you what's happening. (Matthew)*

While the notion of debriefing is controversial and its value contested, the absence of meaningful debriefing was clearly a loss. If emergency service organisations were required to offer holistic debriefings, in place and confidential, employees and volunteers might access the services more freely (See Rose, Bisson, & Wessely, 2002; Tuckey, 2007; Tuckey & Scott, 2013). The stigma associated with seeking out counselling also holds ramifications for volunteers, henceforth perhaps seen as not coping, and for paid workers who may not be promoted.

Counselling

The men interviewed also reflected on the value of counselling they had taken up, both inside emergency management organisations and in the community. It is generally understood that the psycho-social recovery of fire survivors was well resourced and, in theory, should have been adequate. However, the men spoke of problems emerging in the professionalism of individual counsellors (understood here as a generic term also including psychologists and psychiatrists), the approach taken by the individual counsellors, and lack of connection with their counsellor. About a third of the men reported that, having overcome personal barriers to seeking help as well as perceived stigma and paperwork hurdles before receiving funded services, it was not a useful exercise. After struggling alone for so long, when they finally did reach out for help, it wasn't there. Some waited weeks for an appointment only to find the service they received to be unprofessional and damaging. Luke said, 'I think it's all the promising of help and service and then there isn't anything. So you've backed yourself into your own way of surviving I suppose'. Others, too, felt they had only themselves to rely on.

> *You've just made a big step to go in this door and speak to a GP about how you could be a fruitcake ... and they say, 'Just go next door'. I walk into next door and it was the dentist clinic ... So she knows I'm a fruitcake as well. So then you go ... up there, see [the right] receptionist and she says, 'Come back in two weeks'. Everybody else thinks I'm a fruitcake for two weeks and I've got to try and deal with it on [my] own ... You think, 'Why did I bother?' (Luke)*

> *They ring you up and they go, 'Okay, are you suicidal?' and eventually they sent someone down. I think a psych nurse was doing rounds in the area and she said she comes every week and calls in on people, and she called in once and just really talked about what other neighbours are doing and that was it. Never saw her again. (Matthew)*

> *I went through this really painful 45 minute interview over the phone with some woman to see if I needed to see someone. That someone was based in Sydney which is always really helpful. Then ... I had this appointment with this woman [in Melbourne] who said, 'I can't see you today, I have laryngitis' then she never contacted me again. So I said, 'You know what? I can't be bothered.' (James)*

Once during a counselling session, Aaron found the unprofessionalism of his counsellor added further to his trauma:

> *He was just unloading ... about what he observed, and what he told me was very upsetting ... In my role as an SES volunteer, I've seen a lot of death myself but his descriptions of what he saw after the fire was pretty confronting to me. (Aaron)*

Another source of dissatisfaction was the clinical approach used, which did not always sit comfortably with the men interviewed.

> *I was expecting some kind of process, I was expecting some kind of analysis, some kind of discussion, some kind of identification of issues. None of that happened ... I think it was largely crap and particularly unhelpful. (Brad)*

At the time I probably had post traumatic symptoms ... and his approach was, 'When these thoughts come into your mind' – my flashbacks – 'just recognise them, acknowledge it and put them to one side, so don't let them distract you'. In hindsight that's not the best approach for me. (Matthew)

When the psychiatrist spoke to me he just wanted to get back into my background and all that sort of stuff and I can't handle it, you know, I can't handle that type of thing. (Jack)

The men described responding in a range of ways to treatments, having specific needs and engaging differently with counsellors depending on their personality. For example, some preferred couples counselling as they were both dealing with the disaster and saw their relationships as pivotal to their recovery together. Brad concluded:

There are going to be various people who connect well with some people and don't connect well with others and that's just the way it is. But what that really says is that you have to have a bit of a range of people with a range of skills and a range of personalities and a range of experiences. (Brad)

The level of connection the men felt with their counsellors seemed to determine how satisfied they were with their psychological support. Some said their counsellor was well-intentioned but, with no real connection and no outcomes, the men they saw remained unconvinced of the value of their sessions. Many commented on the lack of dialogue and apparent lack of empathy from their counsellor.

I went once. ... This was in a miserable bloody office in Melbourne. She listened. She let me tell the story. She watched me get upset. She couldn't put me back together. She tried but I think she kind of went, 'Oh shit, you've really got both spades out now and you've dug a big hole for yourself' ... I didn't find it helpful ... So that ended pretty quick. (Tom)

After six visits of him listening to me with no advice ... I basically said to him, 'Well did your parent's pay for your education so you could do this?' He said, 'Yeah, they assisted' and I said, 'I think they wasted their money' ... He was listening and, all right, it's really good to talk to someone, but he had no solutions or suggestions. (Eric)

There was no compassion. I think she distanced herself from my feelings.... She was asking a set of questions ... generic questions and they weren't tailored to what I was going through [and] there would be no follow-up on my answers, she'd just go to the next question. And it just didn't sound like it was personable. Not much engagement at all. (Aaron)

Perhaps a greater gender-awareness of men's resistance to traditional one-on-one counselling by the counsellors could have helped the therapeutic relationships. Cliff felt that the kind of psychological help available was better suited to women, and that there was an acceptance bythe community and the mental health profession of men's reluctance and avoidance. Others agreed that sitting in an office is not appropriate to all:

Just talking, talking is not enough. There was so little time available to people where they could actually get together and do things collaboratively because of people's shift work and driving out of the area. They were very, very keen to be action oriented anyway, physical ... The things that were offered were very much around talking therapies, cognitive behavioural therapy. (Paul)

Care and respect needed

The 32 men – partners, fathers, sons, co-workers – stated they wanted to feel cared for:

There's a handshake, there's a slap on the back and a genuine interest in what's happening. (Bill)

Actually talking about what I went through – I didn't have that opportunity to really do that. Someone to actually sit down and say, 'Well okay, how did you feel about that?' ... Probably more focus on how are you, like basic questions of 'Are you sleeping, are you eating correctly and how often do you think about the fire?'. (Matthew)

The preference for different approaches to counselling clearly extended to different kinds of counsellors and, indeed, personalities and technologies. Telephone helplines are a useful adjunct, although only one man mentioned using them. To be effective, such calls would be free, could be made from a mobile, and might involve the use of Skype or similar options with the use of video.

There is clearly no *one* way to support men, or to support women. Each situation is unique and some will prefer speaking with strangers, others a religious leader or highly qualified psychologist, and yet others simply a peer. On the whole, the naming of support as 'counselling' felt stigmatising. Some men suggested finding a different word to cover the support they need – support that is not necessarily in a room with two people sitting in a hierarchical relationship with one person seeking the counsel of another. Men spoke of valued support coming from conversations as they worked alongside each other, or as they watched a game or attended a community event or community dinner. Doing something while talking seemed easier. They wanted to feel included and respected. They wanted to be with friends, people with shared histories and memories, to have trusted relationship with people – someone to go for a walk with. One participant suggested a way to increase the possibility of this:

I think men need to be more conscious about who they are, what they are, why they are. I think it's a really good attribute for men to think of themselves as kind and caring. And I think that men just don't think of themselves like that. (Steve)

One man wondered why there is not a greater focus on proactively understanding the world and our place in it:

Trying to help other men

One of my workers was going really well, he was a hunter – like a fair dinkum, put bushes in your hat and go crawling around the dirt for the weekend – and he got really, went in his shell, a couple of weekends he got really pissed, on the phone telling everybody what he thought and one day he was talking about his life and his parents and blah, blah, blah, and how bad he felt, wasn't worth living and all this.

> And I thought, 'I don't need this'. That was my first reaction because I'm a bloke, haven't been taught how to be a counsellor or anything else. So I chatted on the phone a bit then I rang a copper mate of mine, I said, 'I've got a funny feeling about this, this isn't good. I know where he lives, blah, blah, blah, I know he's got guns but he's not in a good place at all. I'm not a psychologist, I don't feel right'. And it got the better of me, and the copper mate said, 'It's up to you, these are the scenarios, you can go and get a mental thing and a services check'. I said, 'I don't think it's like that'. But then he rang me up again that night very distressed. In the end I said, 'Look, I think you should go and get his guns'. In the end they took the dog squad there ... took the guns away, got assessed, told to go and do counselling and all that ... What's life about? ... Why don't we talk about these things? Why do you have to wait until you're bloody 50, pulling your hair out and then it all turns to shit and there's yelling and screaming and carrying on? (Luke)

The men who shared their thoughts and feelings with us also called for government-funded or community sourced help that is low-cost or free, at flexible times, with casual attendance. Committing to programs of six weeks or longer was not possible and long lead-in times allow for planning to attend. It follows that a service that allows men to drop in for health checks with specialist men's health professionals in attendance would be useful, which is the kind of holistic health that, in the past, specialist women's clinics had been funded to provide.

Community initiatives

As the literature suggests, the tumult of disaster provides an opportunity to re-make community – for better or for worse (Dasgupta, Siriner, & Partha, 2010; Quarantelli, 1994). In the post-disaster context, community meetings, for example, provided environments to begin such connections. Lou spoke about a possible first step in affirming people after the disaster:

> *Pull them all in and say, 'Right, what's just happened is the ugliest thing that you'll probably go through during your life. Those of you who left, well done, you left and you saved your families ... Those who stayed, well done too, because you managed to survive, you're probably a bit crazy for doing it, but on the day we all made a decision, whether it be the right decision or wrong decision. If you left, don't think of yourself as being weak or being a coward. You left for a reason.' You know, someone who can sternly stand over them and say, 'Don't be ashamed of what you did, you're here to talk about it, look at the 173 people who are not here'. (Lou)*

This approach recognises the value of a communal response to a communal disaster. Some believe that recovery may best be undertaken in the same way.

> *It was really obvious that clinical practice was treating everyone as a boiled egg, an individual [... but] really we were all scrambled eggs. We'd been through the same event. We'd already been interlocked and intermeshed as a consequence of our collaborative response in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. (Paul)*

Paul explained an alternative theory to the individual approach called 'mutual self-help':

> *The ideal is to establish dynamics ... shared responsibility rather than dependency and parent-child relationships ... On the Burma-Thai Railway*

Australian soldiers survived at four and a half times the rate of the American, Dutch and English colleagues. They survived because Laurens van der Post and Weary Dunlop set up education processes inside the camps. And it was the meaning making that men did together by teaching each other all of their knowledge and skills, like how to play a violin or an element of history. And they just constantly did this every day and they built trust and they built community and they shared skills. This is mutual self-help, building collective self-reliance and making meaning together. (Paul)

This approach, he suggests, could still include individual measures, but additionally engage psychologists, sociologist and anthropologists to work with community development workers at a community level, facilitating groups and engaging people where they are, at sporting clubs, community halls at pubs, cafes.

Action on knowledge: Men and women making change

The risks posed to men and women on Black Saturday were gendered as a result of socially and culturally prescribed roles for each sex. Just as social constructed patterns of masculinity have historically positioned men in the front line for harm during disaster in Australia, the designated role for women brings different risks. It is worth remembering that women comprised 42 per cent of those who died on Black Saturday.

As one male fire-fighter observed, 'The women left because they weren't fire-fighters. Now, it might have been stereotypical that they [hadn't] been trained as fire-fighters pre the fire, therefore that set the stage for what would ultimately happen'. Equally the result of stereotypes is that men stayed because they had someone to look after children and other dependents (for decision-making in families, see Proudley, 2013). Vulnerable groups have been identified by emergency management, among them people with disabilities, older people and children. Women, too, should be included, as many women live with family violence from current or previous partners, and face other socially constructed disadvantages. Until women are equally educated in practical skills that assist survival in disaster conditions, such as chainsaw and fire equipment use,[1] until men have equal responsibility for dependents, and until women have equal access to resources such as cars, disaster indisputably brings significant immediate and long-term risks to women.

Both sets of harms, organised by gender, can be mitigated by gender equity, where roles are equally valued and not prescribed purely on an arguable dichotomy of male or female, but on skills and interest. More fluid movement for men and women between roles and responsibilities and more equal rewards would relieve men of the pressure of hegemonic masculinity, and relieve women of unrelenting nurturing and discriminatory treatment in paid employment. The way this would play out in future disasters is yet to be seen. But change is underway.

[1] The 'Fiery women' program, specifically targeted at women to increase their bushfire preparation knowledge and skills has demonstrated success in this endeavour (deLaine, Pedler, Goodman, & Rowe, 2008). For other models in Australia and internationally, visit the website of the Gender and Disaster Network: www.gdnonline.org

A lot of the girls on the trucks up here did a fantastic job ... some stubborn, hard-headed bloody women that wouldn't relent ... This girl, young kid she would have been about 19, and we'd been going about 36 hours straight, I said just go and lay down, she said, 'Well if you're not going, I'm not going'. She was asleep on her feet. She was standing holding her hose like this, but she was going to tough it out. (Lou)

This report argues for fewer expectations of hegemonic 'strong and silent' masculine behaviour to contribute to men's health and wellbeing, so it would be regressive to expect women to behave in this same mould. Instead, expectations of 'heroic masculine behaviour' from both men and women must be lowered in disaster situations, and equal numbers of men and women employed in emergency services. Currently, women's front-line fire-fighting – as well as their representation in management positions – appears to be dependent on the attitude of the men in charge.

Women did things during the fires that are just as comparable to a male. It was more about the individual, not the gender ... a woman might be more organised and logistically better, but a man might be practically and physically able to do stuff. I think that's the difference. It comes back to stereotyping, but what ended up playing out in the fire station in the weeks after, was that the guys would be on the fire truck, and the women that were in town would come in and look after us. ... it's less about the sex, it's more about their ability ... I've got many examples of female fire-fighters who are in leadership roles ... and I know during fires were in leadership roles as well. And that was less about the gender, it was just about the individual. [That's] the context that I've seen, and that comes from the environment of Ambulance [too] where 45% are now female ... I've got as many [women] in the brigade now as I've got men. I can honestly say that two captains ago, there was a rule that you would not be a female fire-fighter on the [...] truck. So, I turned that around in [our town], and targeted women in one respect. We've got quite a good team now. I think a lot of that [resistance] came from the old school. (Chris)

Conclusion

The increasing risk of more catastrophic disasters resulting from climate change dictates that planning, response and recovery move beyond the stereotypes and myths of strong, silent men protecting and providing. Men, no matter how closely they fitted the image of the ideal, hegemonic male, were helpless in the path of the firestorm on Black Saturday. For men, a huge risk in the aftermath of the fires was the risk of not managing emotions. The men's narratives illustrate the ways they were punished for apparently being out of control, crying in public, or struggling with grief and loss in the workplace. The stigma they felt led to perceptions that they were being side-lined, no longer thought of as reliable, and not promoted. Some had internalised this as their own failure to live up to the prescribed hegemonic male role, not realising that few men ever do.

A cautionary note: While less stringent delineation between men's and women's roles would reduce the costs of patriarchy to men, particularly as they relate to expectations of men being the 'ideal' strong, silent protector and provider, there is a further risk to women in extending expectations and workload without a corresponding take-up of traditional female tasks by men, such as care of dependents, housework and emotional support. (Branch-Smith & Pooley, 2010; McLennan & Birch, 2006).

A related risk is of men continuing to hold the great majority of positions of authority as currently exists in Australian emergency management and government and among voluntary fire-fighters (McLennan, Birch, Beatson, & Cowlishaw, 2006). While this has been noted for some years, serious attention to the inclusion of women at senior levels is overdue. The concept of men sharing front-line roles in emergency services with women, however, has been in progress for some years.

> *The whole brigade, Kinglake West is run by women now ... Captain ... 2IC ... Comms Officer. (Bill)*

Greater gender equality will relieve men of the 'unreasonable expectations associated with these unrealisable and unrealistic models of masculinity' (Paul). As Pease writes, 'It is only when we understand that social inequalities are human creations designed to benefit a few that we can see the possibilities for challenging inequality' (2010, p. 14). With more women playing equal roles in emergency management and more men taking up caring responsibilities, many of the gendered risks described in this chapter and in other disaster research will be reduced. The lived experience of gender equality in disaster and in the home is yet to be known, but the gendered risks as explored in this and other research suggest such a move will benefit both men and women. Clearly, breaking down expectations of 'ideal' and 'manly' behaviour can only increase the health and wellbeing of men as well as those around them.

References

Austin, D. W. (2008). Hyper-Masculinity and Disaster: Gender Role Construction in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina. . Retrieved from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p241530_index.html accessed 24/04/2013

Birkmann, J., Buckle, P., Jaeger, J., Pelling, M., Setiadi, N., Garschagen, M., . . . Kropp, J. (2010). Extreme events and disasters: a window of opportunity for change? Analysis of organizational, institutional and political changes, formal and informal responses after mega-disasters. *Natural Hazards, 55*(3), 637-655.

Borrell, J. (2011). Rupture, Loss, Identity and Place following the 2009 Victorian Bushfires: A theoretical exploration. *New Community Quarterly, 9*(2 (Issue 34)), 14-22.

Borrell, J., & Boulet, J. (2009). Disaster Recovery & Sociality: a preliminary exploration of black saturday's aftermath, drawing on service provider perceptions. *New Community Quarterly 7*(2).

Borrell, J., Vella, L., & Lane, S. (2011). Kildonan Uniting Care Bushfire Response and Recovery Evaluation (Vol. 3): Summary, Themes & Recommendations: Kildonan UnitingCare.

Branch-Smith, C., & Pooley, J. A. (2010). Women firefighters' experiences in the Western Australianvolunteer bush fire service. *25, 3*, 12-18.

COAG. (2011). National Strategy for Disaster Resilience: Building our nation's resilience to disasters. Barton, ACT: Council of Australian Governments.

Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities* (2 ed.). Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Coston, B. M., & Kimmel, M. (2012). Seeing Privilege Where It Isn't: Marginalized Masculinities and the Intersectionality of Privilege. *Journal of Social Issues, 68*(1), 97-111. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.2011.01738.x

Dasgupta, S., Siriner, I., & Partha, S. D. (Eds.). (2010). *Women's Encounter with Disaster*. London: Frontpage Publications.

deLaine, D., Pedler, T., Goodman, H., & Rowe, C. (2008). *Fiery women: consulting, designing, delivering and evaluating pilot women's bushfire safety skills workshops, paper presented at the* Paper presented at the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre and Australian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council Conference, Adelaide Convention Centre, Australia. .

Dowd, N. (2010a). Asking the man question: masculinities analysis and feminist theory. *Harvard Journal of Law & Gender, 33*, 415-430.

Dowd, N. E. (2010b). Asking the man question: masculinities analysis and feminist theory. *33 Harvard Journal of Law & Gender*, 415, from http://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/facultypub/83

Elinder, M., & Erixson, O. (2012). Gender, social norms, and survival in maritime disasters. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 109*(33), 13220-13224. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1207156109

Enarson, E. (2009). Women, Gender & Disaster: Men & Masculinities Gender Note #3. Retrieved from Gender and Disaster Network website: http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/GDN_GenderNote3_Men&Masculinities.pdf

Enarson, E. (2012). *Women confronting natural disaster: From vulnerability to resilience*. Boulder, Colarado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Enarson, E., & Morrow, B. H. (1998). Why gender? Why women? An introduction to women and disaster. In E. Enarson & B. Morrow (Eds.), *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes*. London: Praeger.

Enarson, E., & Phillips, B. (2008). Invitation to a new feminist disaster sociology: integrating feminist theory and methods. In B. Phillips & B. H. Morrow (Eds.), *Women and Disasters: From Theory to Practice* (pp. 41-74). USA: International Research Committee on Disasters.

Eriksen, C., & Gill, N. (2010). Bushfire and everyday life: Examining the awareness-action 'gap' in changing rural landscapes. *Geoforum*(41), 814-825.

Eriksen, C., Gill, N., & Head, L. (2010). The gendered dimensions of bushfire in changing rural landscapes in Australia. *Journal of rural studies, 26*(4), 332-342.

Erikson, K. (1976). Loss of Communality at Buffalo Creek. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 133*.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.

Greig, A., Kimmel, M., & Lang, J. (2000). Men, Masculinities & Development: Broadening our work towards gender equality. *Gender in Development Monograph Series,* (10). Retrieved from http://www.engagingmen.net/files/resources/2010/Caroline/Men_Masculinities_and_Development.pdf

Gunter, L. (2011). Along the road to recovery – the journey: The communities' perspective.

Haynes, K., Tibbits, A., Coates, L., Ganewatta, G., Handmer, J., & McAnerney, J. (2008). 100 years of Australian civilian bushfire fatalities: Exploring the trends in relation to the 'stay or go policy'. Melbourne: Bushfire CRC RMIT University.

Houghton, R. (2009). 'Everything became a struggle, absolute struggle': post-flood increases in domestic violence in New Zealand. In E. Enarson & P. Chakrabarti (Eds.), *Women, gender and disaster: global issues and initiatives* (pp. 99-111). New Dehli: Sage.

Jalmert, L. (2003). *The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality – some Swedish and Scandinavian experiences.* Paper presented at the Expert Group meeting on "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality", Brasilia, Brazil. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/men-boys2003/EP13-Jalmert.pdf

Kahn, J. S. (2011). Feminist therapy for men: challenging assumptions and moving forward.(Author abstract)(Report). *Women & Therapy, 34*(1 2), 59.

Kimmel, M. (2002, 2002 November-December). Toward a pedagogy of the oppressor. (Education). *Tikkun, 17,* 42+.

Lancaster, C. (2009). *A note on bushfire/family violence intersections post February 7th 2009 bushfires*. Women's Health in the North.

McLennan, J., & Birch, A. (2006). 'Survey of South Australian Country Fire Service Women Volunteers: South Australian Country Fire Service Report Number 2006 :1. Bushfire CRC Enhancing Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Project (D3)' [Book Review]. *Australian Journal on Volunteering, 11*(2), [81].

McLennan, J., Birch, A., Beatson, R., & Cowlishaw, S. (2006). Volunteer firefighting: A suitable job for a woman? Retrieved from http://www.bushfirecrc.com/resources/poster-presentation/volunteer-firefighting-suitable-job-woman

Medrado, B., & Lyra, J. (2003). *Men, Masculinities and Gender Violence*. Paper presented at the Expert Group meeting on "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality", Brasilia, Brazil. United Nations expert group meeting on "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality" retrieved from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/men-boys2003/OP3-Medrado.pdf

Neumayer, E., & Plumper, T. (2007). The gendered nature of natural disasters: the impact of catastrophic events on the gender gap in life expectancy, 1981–2002. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 97*(3), 551–566.

Parkinson, D. (2012). The Way He Tells It: Relationships after Black Saturday (Vol. Vol. 1: Relationships After Black Saturday). Wangaratta: Women's Health Goulburn North East.

Parkinson, D., Lancaster, C., & Stewart, A. (2011). A numbers game: women and disaster. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 22*(3).

Parkinson, D., & Zara, C. (2013). The hidden disaster: domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 28*(28-35).

Pease, B. (2010). *Undoing Privilege: Unearned advantage in a divided world*. London & New York: Zed Books Ltd.

Pease, B. (2012). The politics of gendered emotions: disrupting men's emotional investment in privilege. [Report]. *Australian Journal of Social Issues, 47*(1).

Proudley, M. (2013). Place matters. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 28*(2), 11-16.

Quarantelli, E. L. (1994). DRC Preliminary Paper 228: Draft of a Sociological disaster research agenda for the future: Theoretical, methodological and empirical issues. Newark, Delaware: Disaster Research Centre, University of Delaware.

Rivers, J. (1982). Women and Children Last: an essary on sex discrimination in disasters. *Disasters, 6*(4), 256-267.

Rose, S., Bisson, J., & Wessely, S. (2002). Psychological debriefing for preventing post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Cochrane Review). *The Cochrane Library*(4).

Scanlon, J. (1997). Human Behaviour in Disaster: The Relevance of Gender. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management, The, 11*(4), 2-7.

Sety, M. (2012). Domestic violence and natural disasters. [Thematic Review]. *Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse* (3 (February)), 1-10.
Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
Stoltenberg, J. (1989). *Refusing to be a Man*. Portland, OR: Breitenbush Books.
Tuckey, M. (2007). Issues in the Debriefing Debate for the Emergency Services: Moving Research Outcomes Forward. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 14*.
Tuckey, M., & Scott, J. (2013). Group critical incident stress debriefing with emergency services personnel: a randomized controlled trial. *Anxiety, Stress & Coping: An International Journal, DOI:10.1080/10615806.2013.809421*.
Tyler, M., & Fairbrother, P. (2012). Gender, masculinity and bushfire: Australia in an international context. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 28*(2), 20-25.
VicHealth. (2007). Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria. Carlton South: Victorian Health Promotion Association.
VicHealth. (2011). Preventing violence against women in Australia: Research summary Addressing the social and economic determinants of mental and physical health. Carlton South, Vic: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.
Victorian Government. (2012). Victorian Bushfire Recovery Three Year Report. Melbourne: Victorian Government Regional Development Victoria.
Wiser, B., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T., & Davis, I. (2003). *At Risk: Natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters 2nd Ed.* London: Routledge.

Appendices – online

VOL. 3 MEN, MASCULINITY, DISASTER: A LITERATURE REVIEW – ONLINE

Appendices and Vol. 4 – Available on the WHGNE website