

Marysville *Black Saturday* Bushfire Survivors' Experiences of Preparedness, Survival, Attachment, Loss, Grief, Resilience and Recovery.

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Background:

The 7th of February 2009 *Black Saturday* bushfires devastated the town of Marysville. Over 90% of buildings were destroyed and 36 people died.

David Barton and his wife Jennifer lived in Marysville and experienced the nightmare of *Black Saturday* with other town residents.

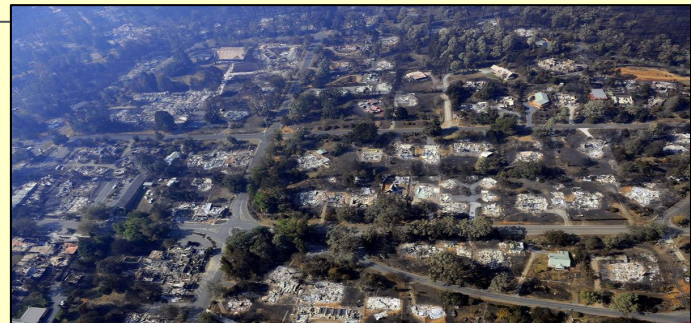
Marysville is a microcosm of both pre and post-bushfire experience making it a valuable location for in-depth retrospective post-disaster research.

Approach & Method:

The project shall explore Marysville residents' experiences of their changed circumstances, the physical and social changes within their community, personal relationships, and their loss and replacement of personal possessions.

A systematic investigation, including interviews, will be undertaken with a wide variety of respondents to

Black Saturday
Marysville: photo taken the day after, on the 8th of February 2009.



discover and assess key experiences, issues, and challenges that faced residents before, during and after *Black Saturday*.

The project is a qualitative ethnographic biographical study using the techniques of Naturalistic Inquiry, Inductive Grounded Theory and Inductive Data Analysis.

The research will explore the residents' experiences of attachment, loss and grief, and of how such experiences, issues and challenges have affected their lives, relationships and community by way of resilience and recovery.

Research Questions:

- 1) What were *Black Saturday* survivors' experiences of 'community', including bushfire preparation, in the town of Marysville before the fire?
- 2) What were the survivors' experiences on *Black Saturday* (including how and when they were warned and how they responded)?
- 3) What were the survivors' experiences immediately after the fire and what did the survivors lose (and gain) as a result?
- 4) What are the survivors' experiences of attachment, loss, grief, resilience and recovery since the *Black Saturday* event?

Project Significance:

The project will provide a better understanding of what drives human behaviour before, during and after a bushfire, and assist in understanding how communities can be more resilient in recovering from such an experience. It will provide insights into the health and wellbeing of a post-bushfire community along with information regarding individual and community resilience and recovery after such a major bushfire disaster.



David & Jennifer Barton's home, and antiques shop. After extensive renovations, the shop opened in November 2007, only to be destroyed on the 7th of February 2009.

