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| Social recovery |
| Recovering after a bushfire Ernie’s story video transcript |
| OFFICIAL |

# Transcript

sssERNIE:
- So the fire came up to the cathedral rock,

our back burn met it at the cathedral rock.

- Came home about two o'clock in the afternoon, decided I'd have a bit of rest.

I'd actually been on night duty the night before.

Literally laid down on the bed for five minutes and the alarms went off.

You couldn't tell whether it was two o'clock in the morning or two o'clock in the afternoon.

There was a constant wind at your back.

There was a constant roar.

So basically it was just a case

of run, run, run, run, run.

- All we could do was fight spot fires.

- It's like twilight zone.

You've gone from having your residential area with your gardens and bush every

direction you look, to walking out onto green grass with the house still there,

but everything around was black.

[Footage of Amanda talking]

AMANDA:

- Some of the challenges facing the Tamboon community was their remoteness, so access is via one road in, one road out.

They were cut off from the nearest town of Cann River, so trying to access services was difficult.

[Footage of Ernie talking]

ERNIE:

- We couldn't leave because the roads were blocked.

We couldn't get food because the roads were blocked.

Ended up being here, I think, a total of three months.

[Footage of Amanda talking]

AMANDA:

- There is a term called bushfire brain.

So people are confused, not retaining information.

They've got so much going on.

They're trying to deal with insurance companies.

They're trying to find somewhere to live

if they've lost their home.

So it's having someone else to take, carry some of that burden initially,

and then walk beside them for a period of time,

and just having that connection, someone to talk to when things get too much.

[Anne Leadbeater talking]

ANNE:

- Recovery support is the help that we get immediately after a disaster that

enables us to pick up and continue with our lives.

So it can be practical things like temporary housing or first aid or counselling.

It can be reconnecting with the community.

The aim is to help people to regain control of their lives after a disaster.

[Footage of Ernie talking]

ERNIE:

- Way before the fires, we decided we needed to have some sort of firefighting equipment around.

- At that stage, I was connected with Gippsland Lakes Community Health, Linda, and she would just ring me all the time and say what are you doing? Are you okay? What's going on? And it was consistent support. That was where you actually thought yeah, hey, someone's out there, you know?

I have one of those days where I wake up in the morning and I have been bashing

my head against the wall, I've got somebody to say, you know, stop it, you know.

Hey, what's going on? You know. Are you alright?

What's happening with the other rest of the people in the community?

[Footage of Anne talking]

ANNE:

- In this incredibly confusing environment of recovery when there's so much to do, so much information to take in and so many decisions to make, it can be really helpful to have someone walk alongside you through that process.

So being able to reach out and seek that help is gonna make a significant difference to the way your recovery progresses.

[Footage of Ernie talking]

ERNIE:

- As a group, as a community, we still talk about what occurred.

Prior to the fire, we were all friends with one another but we didn't really know one another that well whereas we know one another better.

We know what people's personalities are like, there hasn't been a timeframe for us.

We didn't have to adhere to an agenda.

We just had to make sure we were okay and that we got through it all.

[Footage of Anne talking]

ANNE:

- Everyone's experience is different but it's really important to have support after a natural disaster.

So speak to your GP and contact council to find out what support is available for you.

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