



Australian Government  
Attorney-General's Department

# Living with Disaster

## Stories and Experiences from Disaster

# Teaching Guide

ACHIEVING A JUST AND SECURE SOCIETY



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# Living with disaster - Digital stories

## About the project.

The Emergency Management in Schools education program ([www.ema.gov.au/schools](http://www.ema.gov.au/schools)) is aimed at supporting the teaching of disaster risk and disaster management awareness.

The program promotes this process by providing nationally consistent educational resources to schools and teachers, ready to use in the classroom.

"Living with Disaster" was developed as part of the National Action Plan to build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security, and aims to provide young people from a variety of communities the chance to tell their own stories of how disasters have affected them, their families and communities.

Facilitated by the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), the project began in December 2008, eight of the stories are from young people involved and affected by the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria 2009 and two from young people affected by flooding near Newcastle NSW 2007.

They tell of their personal experiences using images, video and music. The resulting short videos are supported by teaching materials and activities to create a comprehensive learning resource, enabling teachers and students to have structured discussion about the issues and realities of such events and the activities have been designed to look at what preparation and awareness of disaster risk means for a variety of community groups.

The messages in these stories are the ones developed by the person themselves as part of ACMI's workshop process and the learning activities complement and expand on these reflections.

These stories from other young people, often ignored in media coverage, will allow students to connect to their own understandings of these events and relate to the experiences of other young people, their families and communities.

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Teaching guide and activities team: Fiona Jewell writer and Christine Evely coordinator

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Warburton Community Bank Branch of the Bendigo Bank : Geoff Vickers

The Octopod Association Newcastle : Christina Robberds, Ella McDonald, Djibril Ly, Kat Hay

## **Introduction**

These teachers' notes have been designed to assist teachers educate students about the occurrence and impact of natural disasters within a world, national and personal context. The activities are designed for students from Years 8-10.

Included in these notes are a number of activities that can be used to increase a student's awareness of potential dangers, their level of preparedness and strategies to cope with natural disasters. The kit provides a particular emphasis on the social diversity of the Australian community with specific interest to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

These notes have been designed with regard to the various Australian State and Territory curricula and essential learnings. Teachers should adapt and consider rephrasing the questions and activities to suit the particular terminology, curriculum foci and outcomes used in their school.

Some websites are suggested in this kit. It is recommended that before setting activities based on these, that teachers first visit the sites and access the suitability of the content for your particular school setting. The sites listed were accessed on 3 July, 2009 and the currency and relevance of information should be checked by teachers.

It is important to note that this material addresses the topics of loss, grief, family relationships, friendship and cultural differences. Careful consideration is needed and additional sensitivity may be required of teachers and classmates when selecting and orchestrating activities.

## **Rationale**

The activities in this kit are designed to assist students to develop understandings about different types of natural disasters and their effects upon communities and individuals.

The activities are intended to increase the student's empathy with those survivors of natural disasters who have undergone social and emotional upheaval. They complement a series of digital stories that give firsthand accounts of their experiences.

The activities in this kit to are designed to increase students' knowledge about preparedness, flexibility and resilience in the event of a natural disaster.

The activities focus on the stories and accounts of young people with supporting accounts of youth volunteers from the Country Fire Authority (CFA). It is intended that the personal and vivid nature of these accounts makes the experience of natural disasters and their impact more immediate and relevant to students.

The community focus throughout the kit encourages students to recognise and appreciate the diversity of Australian culture, value social cohesion and harmony and act responsibly with regard to all members of the community.

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# 1 ~ LEARNING AND TEACHING GOALS

## Key Learning/Subject Areas

This education kit is designed as a teaching resource to engage students from Year 8 to Year 10 across a number of key learning areas. The lessons have been designed to incorporate a broad range of aspects surrounding the experience of natural disasters and crises, particularly for young people in our culturally diverse society. Teachers are encouraged to select aspects appropriate to the needs, interests, level/s and prior experiences of their students.

Activities and experiences provided in this education kit will assist teachers to address learning outcomes from across a number of key learning areas and subject areas including studies of Society and Environment, Science, Health and Physical Education, the Arts and English.

Teaching and learning programs may follow the sequence provided or teachers may arrange experiences to suit individual curriculum and learning needs, as relevant for your own students, curriculum planning, assessment requirements and timelines.

## Curriculum and education authority links for each state and territory:

ACT

<http://activated.act.edu.au/ectl/index.htm>

<http://www.det.act.gov.au/>

NSW

[http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus\\_sc/](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_sc/)

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/secondary/index.htm>

NT

[http://www.det.nt.gov.au/education/teaching\\_and\\_learning/curriculum/ntcf/index.shtml](http://www.det.nt.gov.au/education/teaching_and_learning/curriculum/ntcf/index.shtml)

<http://www.det.nt.gov.au/education/>

SA

<http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/portal/learning.asp>

Tas

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/curriculum>

Vic

<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/essential/>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/>

WA

[http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/internet/Years\\_K10/Curriculum\\_Framework](http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/internet/Years_K10/Curriculum_Framework)

[http://k-10syllabus.det.wa.edu.au/project\\_home\\_view](http://k-10syllabus.det.wa.edu.au/project_home_view)

Qld

<http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/learning/574.html>

<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/scope.html>

## **Aims**

- The aims of this teacher kit are to assist teachers to:
- Actively engage their students in worthwhile educational experiences,
- Develop students' empathy with and understanding of the experience of trauma and social upheaval,
- Increase student preparedness in the event of a natural disaster,
- Broaden student understanding of the role of emergency services,
- Promote student discussion and reflection about important social issues,
- Develop higher order cognitive skills of reasoning, processing, inquiry and critical reflection,
- Encourage students to identify and connect with their own communities,
- Connect students' own experiences with the broader context of Australian society,
- Extend student understanding about the importance of communication,
- Illustrate the effectiveness of personal storytelling in conveying messages,
- Encourage student awareness and understanding of multi-media communication.

## **Key Concepts**

Questions and activities can be used to develop student self-reflection to increase resilience and preparedness in the event of a natural disaster.

The digital stories, filmed accounts and accompanying learning experiences can inspire discussion of people's preparation for and response to a natural disaster and how they might navigate any aftermath.

Extension activities encourage exploration of the themes of cultural diversity, community education, rights and responsibilities, family, friendship, relationships, understanding, tolerance, love, honesty, conflict management, emotional intelligence, loss and grief and social cohesion.

## **Understandings**

Participation in activities and discussion related to the digital stories and accounts offers opportunities to develop understandings that include:

The need for community education,

The need for preparation in the event of a natural disaster,

Personal stories are a powerful means to create empathy and understanding,

The need for community cohesion and inclusion.



## **Skills and Processes**

When students reflect on and discuss the digital stories and personal accounts, community and media responses and emergency services' advice they will be utilising skills and processes such as:

- **Thinking and Investigation**  
intellectual skills of reasoning, processing and inquiry, questioning, listening, reading, viewing, critical thinking, researching, seeking solutions, describing, analysing, considering cause and effect, seeking relationships, interpreting and evaluating data, constructing hypotheses, drawing conclusions, making informed judgments and decisions, critical reflection.
- **Creativity and Communication**  
seeking innovative alternatives and use of imagination to generate possibilities and make connections; use of various communication forms (e.g. spoken, written, graphical, statistical, visual, dramatic, electronic) involving both critical and creative thinking to gather, represent and present information for different purposes and audiences; undertaking a range of visual, audio and print media production activities to communicate ideas, feelings and experiences through making, creating, exploring, selecting, experimenting, presenting and performing; manipulation of ideas and organisation of media elements such as words, sounds and images, characters and sequences of events to create stories and present information.
- **Participation**  
confidence, self-direction, autonomy, ability to work flexibly both individually and in teams to complete tasks for example:
  - Brainstorming ideas
  - Working with partners and in small groups to share ideas
  - Collaborating in order to achieve an outcome.

## **Values and Attitudes**

Students will be encouraged to:

Appreciate that people's responses to crisis may differ from their own,

Appreciate the value of tolerance, compassion and empathy between people,

Be sensitive to religious and cultural diversity,

Respect the courage and determination required by some people as they overcome or face challenges or adversity.

## 2 ~ DEFINITIONS

### Activity – Create Your Definition of a ‘Natural Disaster’

To generate a discussion about natural disasters divide class into small groups and set a definition and quiz challenge. Provide each group with pen and paper.

Definition Challenge.

Each group is required to answer:

- Create a dictionary definition of ‘a natural disaster’,
- What is the difference between a manmade and a natural disaster?
- Divide your list into categories based on their causes.

Compare answers with the following definition and categories:

Natural disasters occur when natural hazards affect societies and individuals.

There are four categories of natural disaster:

1. *Geophysical causes, e.g. earthquakes and volcanic eruptions,*
2. *Weather causes, e.g. floods and storms,*
3. *Geo-morphological causes, e.g. fires and droughts,*
4. *Biological hazards, e.g. bacterial and viral infections.*

Quiz Challenge:

- Make a list of natural disasters (points are given for each).
- Make a list of well-known national and international natural disasters (points are given for each with additional points for correct dates).

Allocate points for quiz answers.

Natural disasters have an enormous impact on mankind. Share the following quote with the class.

“Since 1970, 5 billion people have been affected by natural disasters and 2 billion people have died. Seven times more people have been affected by natural disasters than armed conflict during this time.”

Brainstorm how individuals, communities and economies may be affected by natural disasters.

Definition and categories quoted from an interview with Henrik Svensen, geologist from The University of Oslo, author of *The End is Nigh: A History of Natural Disaster*.

ABC Radio National, Late Night Live, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2009

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/latenightlive/stories/2009/2550088.htm>

## Activity - Create Your Own Quiz

In allocated groups allow students to explore the websites below. Each group is to create their own game show quiz including general knowledge about various natural disasters, their causes and occurrence from the information they find on these websites.

Here are some suggestions to create variety:

- Questions should be divided into categories,
- Questions could begin with, "Is the following statement true or false?", "Which of the following statements is correct/false?", "Finish this statement..."

Write questions and answers on individual cards so that the questions may be used later in the unit of work for a board game or refresher quiz.

For further research about definitions and causes refer to the *Learn* section of Emergency Management in Australia education website.

The *In My Backyard* section outlines the history of natural disasters in Australia.  
<http://www.ema.gov.au/schools>

This Australian government cultural portal provides further information and links  
<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/naturaldisasters>

For additional definitions and a focus on the Asia–Pacific region go to  
[www.ga.gov.au/ausgeo\\_news/ausgeo\\_news\\_200806/disaster.jsp](http://www.ga.gov.au/ausgeo_news/ausgeo_news_200806/disaster.jsp)

## 3 ~ STORIES AND EXPERIENCES

### Response to Individual Stories

After watching individual stories, select from the following questions and activities to encourage students to reflect and express their response:

- What is the title of the story? Why was it chosen?
- Where and when does the story take place?
- Who is the story teller?
- What is the story about?
- What problem/s did the story teller face? How did the story teller resolve any problems?
- Did the story teller change due to their experience of the natural disaster?
- How did you feel during the screening of the story or stories?
- Was there anything that surprised you about the story?
- What do you think was the main message underlying the story?
- If you could meet the storytellers what other aspects of their experience would you like to ask them about?
- Do you think that you would have behaved in a different way if you were in the same circumstances?

Provide students with paint, textas or other media to create a personal response to a story they viewed.

- Share responses and encourage students to explain why they responded in the way they did,
- Encourage discussion about how the stories made them feel,
- Why did they feel this way?

Divide the class into groups. Ask them to discuss and debate the following questions:

- How did the choice of music or sound help to tell the story? What sounds were most effective? Why were they effective?
- What images were most effective in the films? Why were they effective?
- Did the pacing or editing of the digital story contribute to the story? If so, how?
- How would you describe the mood of the digital story? How did the story tellers create this mood?
- Did the story teller try to evoke particular feelings in viewers? If so, how?

## Response to the Stories in General

After watching a number of digital stories ask students to identify common threads of emotional and behavioural responses to natural disaster, evacuation and crisis.

- What emotions did many of these storytellers experience during the natural disaster?
- What emotions did they experience after the immediate threat?
- What strategies did they have to protect themselves?
- What strategies did they have to protect their property?
- What sources of information did they rely upon during the crisis?
- What did they value most during and after the event?
- After these experiences what do they plan to do differently in the future?
- As a class brainstorm and record words or phrases that sum up what students learned from the stories.
- Ask students to also suggest key messages and themes reflected in the stories, for example, perseverance, compassion, consideration, courage, generosity, co-operation, determination, honesty, enthusiasm, tolerance and kindness.
- Break students into groups and issue each group with a key 'value'. Ask each group to use a technique other than spoken word to communicate that idea.



# Black Ash ~ Bonnie Lumsden-Keys

Bonnie gives an effective account of the emotional reactions and behaviour of her family and community. It lends itself to the exploration of the immediate response by the community, community co-operation and potential conflict, evacuation, family stress and strategies and the reliance on friendship and family in the event of a disaster.

## “History in the Making”

Bonnie describes her Black Saturday experiences as “history in the making”. Some events make such a memorable impact that people will later say, “I remember exactly what I was doing when (an event) occurred”.

- Ask students to make a list of significant local, national and international events which have left a similar impact upon them.
- What information technology brought this news to you?
- Was the news accompanied by photographs or live footage, live interviews with people, sound recordings of the incidents?
- Ask students to make a list of the emotions triggered during these events which leave such a profound impression.

If students cannot recall a natural disaster which triggers an emotional response then go to *In My Backyard* in the Emergency Management in Australia schools website or the Australian Government Cultural Portal to investigate Australian natural disasters.

Ask students to express their emotional responses when they read about natural disasters.

<http://www.ema.gov.au/schools>

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/naturaldisasters>

## A Person or a Statistic?

Initially the scene of falling black ash seems surreal to Bonnie. Reality strikes home when Bonnie recognises one of the fire fighters in a passing fire truck. *“In a flash, two fire trucks go past. I know one of the fire fighters – he has a baby girl and I worry for him. I am scared.”*

This direct connection to someone made the threat to people very real for Bonnie. People relate to other people, not statistics.

- Imagine or remember a natural disaster or crisis that has happened close to your home with people you know. Write emotions and thoughts to describe how you feel.
- Do you remember seeing reading or hearing about a natural disaster or crisis that has happened a long way away? Write emotions and thoughts that you felt. Compare the emotional impact of the two scenarios.
- How would you expect to be warned of an impending disaster in your community? Are you, your family and friends aware of how and where any warnings might come from?
- Ask students to collect and interpret data and statistics about an Australian natural disaster. They may research a natural disaster of particular interest to them, one that has affected their region or a friend or family member. Visit [www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/Resources\\_DisastersDatabase\\_DisastersDatabase](http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/Resources_DisastersDatabase_DisastersDatabase)
- If possible students may interview someone who remembers or was personally involved in the disaster. (note: sensitivity will be required)

- Based on these recollections and the student's research, students are to retell the experience of the disaster from a personal, first person perspective.

### **The Moment of Realisation**

Bonnie initially describes an idyllic summer's day at the river. When the black ash begins to fall she states, "It is eerie, like something from a horror movie."

Ask students to create a list of emotions people might feel at the moment when something eerie begins to happen with a list of corresponding behavioural reactions.

### **Family and Community Stress**

Bonnie describes the chaos that ensued for her family and community over the next few weeks while they were on evacuation alert. Bonnie describes some of the stress for her family and her annoyance at other members of the community.

As a class, recall Bonnie's emotions at this time. What caused them?

What activities did Bonnie and her family undertake in preparation for evacuation?

Discuss the potential conflict between family members in these times of stress.

Bonnie was particularly annoyed with some members of the community. What was the cause for this annoyance? Discuss other potential conflict between members of the community.

### **Create a Play or a Story**

Collectively decide on a potential natural disaster. This could be a realistic natural disaster common to their region or an imaginary one.

Decide upon the themes of each act. For example,

- The moment of realisation of an emergency,
- Family scene: Discussing the strategies required to protect oneself and family,
- Community scene: Discussing the strategies required to protect the community,
- Resolution after the event.

Divide class into groups to create a four or five part play. Each group is required to explore the potential emotions, conflict and resolution which may occur during the event of a natural disaster or other crisis.

Alternatively, each student can write their own script for an act. The students or teacher can select a preferred script to perform.

These plays may be performed and filmed or recorded as an oral play.



# A Plan to be Safe ~ Carla Zekas

Carla is seven years old. Younger children often react differently to crisis than older children.

## Evacuation

- Carla packed things that were special to her. What were these things?
- Ask students to make a list of the things that they would pack in order of importance if they needed to evacuate quickly. Students are to select one thing from the list and write a short account of why this thing is important to them.
- Children often experience events and crisis differently to adults. Divide the class into small groups to discuss an experience from their childhood which they would view differently now. How did they react? Ask each group to share one recollection with the class.
- Ask students to prioritise the emotional requirements for young children in a crisis. This could be led as a discussion or students can create and prioritise a list.
- Carla needed to be evacuated and separated from her Dad which can be especially confusing and distressing for young children. Discuss how the adults in Carla's life helped to alleviate this stress?
- Young children need extra help when evacuating. What other groups in our society are also particularly vulnerable, especially in times of natural disasters? Why?
- Discuss who, in their own community, are particularly vulnerable during a crisis.
- Dealing with the effects of a natural disaster could have particular challenges if you are elderly and frail or have other disabilities. Ask students to brainstorm what additional difficulties these people may experience in the event of a natural disaster.
- Hold a class discussion about how it might feel to have a disability that affected one of your senses, such as your eyesight, or if you had an illness that was uncommon or life threatening. Encourage sensitivity and the idea of 'walking in the shoes of another person'. Ask students to consider:
- How might your life be similar or different from the life you live now?
- What additional difficulties might you have in the case of an emergency?
- How would you like others to treat you and relate to you?

## Pets and Livestock

- Carla also took her dog, Tui and her rabbit, Storm. Pets are very important in some people's lives. Students can discuss and list the particular problems people may encounter when catering for their animals during a natural disaster and the aftermath.
- After viewing the *Pets and Disasters* section in the Emergency Management in Australia schools website, ask students to imagine that they have gone away on holidays. Ask each student to write a letter to someone who is looking after their pets and livestock giving specific instructions in the case of an imminent disaster.



## **In a Knot ~ Eliza Kimlin**

Eliza begins her story with how her body felt and her emotions during a bushfire; “worried, excited, confused, tired, stressed, didn’t want the house to burn down, hot, cranky, felt sick, stomach in a knot, not hungry.”

- Discuss with students times in their lives when they have felt these sensations and emotions.
- Ask students to paint a picture or create a poem expressing these emotions.

### **Relationships**

Eliza says she “didn’t want to fight with family but did anyway.” Many of the digital stories refer to relationships between people. Some show love and caring between families and friends and some refer to potential conflict and its effects. The digital stories provide a rich source of content to enable discussions about trust and communication particularly under stressful situations.

### **Families, Communication and Conflict**

- As a class discuss what makes a group of people a family. Create family tree diagrams that show the relationships within their family.
- Family trees often refer to families by birth or marriage. Create a root system for your family tree that connects other important people to a family relationship such as doctor, classmates, basketball coach etc.
- List things family members do with one another; and for one another in the digital stories and in students’ own families.
- Create a class definition for ‘family’. Compare students’ ideas with a dictionary meaning.
- List different ways family members communicate with each other.
- Ask students to divide a page into two columns. In the first column ask students to create a list of the diverse ways we communicate with other people, for example, writing a letter, making a telephone call, SMS, chat, sending a fax or an email, using body language and facial expressions. In the second column ask students to write ways in which these forms of communication can be misconstrued.
- Ask students to recall a time when their well meaning gesture has been misconstrued by someone else..

## Identity, Place and Community

Eliza was frightened that she might lose someone that she loved. She was also worried that she might lose her house. A house 'shelters not only the body but also its inner life, memories and dreams', writes the Queensland architect Brit Andresen. (*ABC Radio National program 6 June 2009*)

Discuss this statement with students.

- Students to create a list of qualities which make a 'house' a 'home'.
- Create a class timeline showing milestones that people can achieve from birth through to adulthood, for example, smiling, sitting up, walking, losing first tooth, riding a bike, learning to swim, gaining a driving licence, leaving home, buying a car or home. How many of these milestones are experienced in your home?
- Have each student list things he or she does during spare time, favourite foods, music, books and films. Have pairs of students compare lists. How many of these activities centre on the home.

Eliza was also frightened of losing her links to her town, Warburton, which she says "is practically my life." Refer to *Me and My Community* on the Emergency Management in Australia schools website to select further activities for students to explore their identities and the importance of place and family in forming their sense of identity.



## Making a Difference

Eliza said, “I felt sorry for the people that lost their homes, friends, families, pets and more.” Many people in our community help those who have suffered due to a disaster or crisis. Some of the digital stories introduce people who volunteer to help others. These people make a difference to the lives of people around them.

Have students work in small groups to identify people in their communities they consider to be heroes. Share and discuss as a class.

Create a data chart with worksheet 1 to show people or organisations who try to make a difference to:

- Their own lives,
- The lives of other people,
- The natural environment.

Person or organisation	What do they do to make a difference in their own life?	What do they do to make a difference to the lives of other people?	What do they do to make a difference to the natural environment?

- Discuss: In each case what motivates them? Are they successful? Why or why not? What assists or blocks them as they attempt to make a difference? Would you have done the same things? Why or why not?
- In small groups have students discuss whether people who attempt to make a difference in Australia can be considered heroes? Why or why not? Share and discuss ideas as a class.
- Discuss what students think makes someone a hero. You might relate discussions to films and events reported in TV news or current affairs programs. List and display words or phrases students believe define hero.
- As a class consider the idea of everyday heroes; people in our lives who care for us and who ensure our wellbeing. Encourage students to share how the everyday heroes in their lives make them feel.
- Use a dictionary to establish the meaning of the word hero. Do you agree with the definition? Why or why not?
- Ask students to tell other students about the work of emergency management and volunteer organisations that they or their families may belong to or support.



# When Fire Comes to You ~ Lydia Romari

## Family History

Lydia describes the urgency with which she and her family evacuated. Lydia says they were all exhausted and worried so her father started to tell them about his own grandpa who rescued a family of three during the 1939 bush fires.

- Discuss with the students why Lydia's father decided to tell them these stories.
- Discuss the benefits of knowing how people responded and survived in past natural disasters.
- Lydia's father was passing on an oral history about her own family. Discuss if there are specific benefits in understanding your own family history, particularly in a crisis.

## Fire Plan

Lydia felt very frustrated that she didn't know what to do. She stated, "I wish I could have been like the older people and known what to do straight away. I wanted to be more helpful but my family had to tell me what to do."

Discuss:

- How can a fire plan help to alleviate Lydia's sense of helplessness?

Lydia says, "I'm glad we have a fire plan in our family...A fire plan can save your life."

Parts of Australia are very fire-prone. Students may not live in a fire prone-area but like all natural disasters, they may experience one while visiting other places.

Refer to the Emergency Management in Australia schools website. In the *Learn* section there is comprehensive information about different natural disasters.

Each natural disaster section provides information on how to develop an emergency action plan under the *Ready and Able- Learning and Preparation - Planning and Preparation* section.

## 'Not so Trivial' Pursuit

- Organise class into groups. Each group is to explore the Bushfires - Ready and Able section of the Emergency Management in Australia education website with the intention of gathering as much information for a game of 'Not so Trivial' Pursuit.
- Each group is to devise a list of questions to ask rival groups in a knockout quiz game. Students can invent the rules and scoring system for the game themselves.

## Information

Lydia says, "The TV tells you stuff that might happen, but never really tells you what to do if a fire does come." Discuss with the class:

- What three sources of information did the family rely upon?

Speculate

- What other technology might people rely upon in an emergency?
- In the event of an emergency what could compromise the reliability of these information sources? Think of the overload issues such as power line failures, etc...
- How can you ensure that your information source is as reliable as possible?

ABC Radio 774 was the official emergency radio station in the Victorian region during the Black Saturday bushfires.

- Find your local emergency radio station frequency.
- Practise tuning into your local emergency radio station.

### **Find More Answers**

Refer to the Emergency Management for schools website. In the *Learn* section there is the *Ready and Able- Learning and Preparation - Planning and Preparation* section.

- Ask students to check the Emergency survival kit contents.
- What vital forms of information and communication technology are recommended in this survival kit?
- Why do they include charged batteries and recharger in the kit?
- Familiarise yourselves with the various State and Territory Emergency Services listed in the *About Planning and Preparation* section. Become familiar with your local services so you know who to contact for information.





# The Road Home ~ Philip Mitchell

Philip tells the dramatic story of his family's harrowing experience of separation and survival during the Black Saturday bushfires. He says that his family went "to hell and back".

## Separation

Philip also dealt with anguish as he tried to return home but authorities had blocked the road. Philip explains, "I tried to call my family but couldn't get through. We didn't really have much information."

- Ask the students to imagine the emotions they would feel in this situation.
- Form a circle of students and ask each one to say an adjective describing their emotions or thoughts in this situation. Students should not repeat previous adjectives already stated.

Philip had to find accommodation for the next few nights. Ask students to create a contingency plan if they were separated from their family.

- Who would they call?
- Where would they stay?
- How would they try to communicate with their family?
- How would they seek information in a crisis?

## "To Hell and Back"

In Philip's words his family went "to hell and back".

- Were the family well prepared for the fire?
- Ask students to recall how the family survived the fire front.

## Making Australia a Better Place

Fortunately Philip's family survived and were reunited; but they lost everything else in the process. Philip lost almost all his possessions in the fire. The only clothing he had left was the work uniform he wore on the day. However, he says, "The support and the donations from everyone has been overwhelming."

Investigate the work of government and other organisations in response to disaster like the February 7th, 2009 fires in Victoria and the 2009 flooding in Queensland or any other disaster event. What is the role of these groups? List other groups that help people to rebuild their lives after disaster? How do they provide help?

Investigate why people volunteer. Invite volunteers from local emergency services, such as the SES, the life saving club, or others. Have the guest explain their work and why they choose to do it. Encourage students to plan questions before the guests arrive.

Discuss how we can all make a difference in Australia through our actions at home, at school, or in our local or wider community? As a class list as many ideas as possible, whether crazy or practical, to help make Australia a better place.

## Resilience

Philip says, “They had fire fighting equipment but this was no ordinary bushfire. There was nothing they could do to save the three homes, the stock animals and the family farming business that had a history of four generations.” But later he states, “We will rebuild but it will be a long time before things are back to normal.” Philip and his family display enormous resilience in their determination to rebuild.

## Reflection and Response

Even for optimists adversity and suffering can quash hope and many people in the Phillip’s situation could not face starting over again. Encourage students to search the internet for stories and reports that identify how people rebuild their lives after facing adversity and use the research information to address the following;

- List adjectives to describe the characteristics or traits that many people have displayed in their response to the disaster?
- Think of resilient people you admire. They could be famous people, people in your community, family members or friends. Give examples of how they have overcome obstacles in their life.
- Reflect upon your own success in overcoming obstacles. When have your hopes and dreams been shattered? Write an advice column for an imaginary teen magazine giving advice to others facing similar circumstances to your own?
- Create a poster, brochure, story or poem to inspire others who might be facing obstacles in their life.

## Memories

Many of the storytellers said they gathered their photographs before they left their homes. Many of Philip’s family photos were destroyed with the houses. Philip finishes his digital story on a positive note, “The other day I realised that I had transferred some of the home movie footage at TAFE so some of our memories are not lost forever.”

Points for discussion:

- Why did people gather their photographs?
- Why are photographs so important in our lives?
- Why is Philip’s movie footage so precious to the family now?
- These digital stories rely heavily on photos and footage to help tell the story. It is said that “a picture paints a thousand words”. What is meant by this statement?
- Ask students to identify famous images in the media which have created a powerful emotional impact.
- The way people gather and store photographs have changed over time. How might today’s students’ store and share photographs? Is this different to the real photographic object? Is there a difference?

# Create a Digital Story: Storytelling Through Image and Voice

The digital stories created as part of this education kit were produced by the young participants. Working under the guidance of digital storytelling facilitators from the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, the young people scripted, visualised and edited together their digital stories.

Each participant was required to explore narrative structure as a way to craft their own story about their experience. Once their script was in place the participants sourced images and music and edited the stories together to produce their own digital story about what Black Saturday meant to them.

Digital Stories are a great way for students to represent their knowledge and share their stories through new media formats.

## Exploring Narrative Structure

- Ask students to explain what they think is meant by the word 'story'. Record and display ideas.
- Discuss and list ways students think print and film stories are similar and different.
- Digital stories are narrations that use multimedia -still images and moving image footage and text and are generally short in duration typically between one and three minutes. Ask the students to explain the advantages of a short story?
- Ask students to discuss and list the elements of an engaging digital story.

During the next few days have students work with a partner to discuss one or two books that they have read or discuss films they have viewed recently.

Encourage them to read worksheet 2 and to respond to the following questions.

## Telling Your Own Story

Books and films usually tell stories. As a class identify patterns in written stories and films. Encourage students to make statements, for example,

- Most of the stories start by telling us about the main character and where this character lives.
- The main character usually has a problem that needs to be solved.
- By the end of the film the main character has changed in some way.
- Many of the stories turn full circle using similar images and at the beginning and the end of the films.
- Stories are often based on traditional tales.
- In most films and books problems are resolved and there is a happy ending.

Introduce students to simple story structure and related terminology. Select one or two books read or films viewed by students and encourage them to identify the story core which includes the orientation, complication and resolution of each story. Record and display this information.

Digital Stories also follow the simple rules of narrative story structure with the orientation, a complication and the resolution as a model. An engaging digital story is always more than just a list of events it has a point to it, a focus. The story teller is connecting to the material by telling it from their own experience or their own point of view.

In shaping a digital story students can consider the notion of posing a 'dramatic question' this question can give the shape and direction to the story and can keep audiences interested. Answering the question also allows for the students to conclude with a reflection or a 'lesson learnt' which can be answered explicitly or implicitly.

A digital story works well when the story teller shows the story rather than tells it and devices such as the use of a surprise reveal or the use of active observational writing can allow the story to unfold. Utilising the multimedia elements of images sound and text can assist in implying and strengthening meaning.

View Phillip's story to assist in breaking down the elements of an engaging digital story and respond to the following questions;

- Explore Philip's digital story and get students to identify the dramatic question embedded in his story and or identify the story structure in relation to the orientation, complication and resolution model.
- Ask students to identify what devices Phillip uses to show his story rather than just telling his story.
- Economy is also a crucial to digital stories the less is more theory is important. Phillip's story is 3 minutes in duration and it is focused and to the point. Have the students consider examples in Phillip's story where he has employed an economy in the writing.
- What are some of the Phillips reflections or lessons learnt that Phillip shares in his story and has he transformed through his experience with the Black Saturday fires.

## **Making a Digital Story**

The multimedia aspects of a story allows students to establish a rich context for a subject quickly, it can evoke an era or show place and people. It can establish dramatic tension through music and sound and the dramatic pacing of the voice over.

Encourage students to create a digital story which would be precious and they would want to save in the event of a natural disaster. Choose a theme for the digital story, for example, 'My Special Place', 'My Family', and 'A Special Memory'.

## **Content Development**

### **Pre- Production**

Pre-production involves the steps that students need to follow before they begin formal production process.

### **Introduction to Autobiographical Writing**

If students are reticent about sharing autobiographical stories you can start with an ice breaker exercise. Ask students to write down a story or tell their story about how they got a physical scar. Encourage them to take the audience back to the event and moment it happened. To ensure economy set a limit on the writing or the recount making sure it is no more than ten lines or 1 minute. There are many other ice breaker exercises that can be used to make students comfortable about sharing life stories. The scar story works well for students as there is often a well remembered story behind how they acquired the scar obviously sensitivity is needed around this task.

Encourage the students to discuss their script ideas and responses to the selected themes.

### **Create the Story Map**

A story map allows students to prepare. Encourage students to annotate using key words and phrases documenting how the story will evolve showing the flow of emotion in a story. Teacher and peer review can be included at this stage.

### **Scripting the Story**

Encourage students to collect artefacts, photos, other images or drawings that relate to their story. Ask each student to create a sequence of words, phrases, objects and images that tell a personal story about their theme. Assist each student to use the sequence to write and polish a short narrative script (maximum one page of double-spaced 14 point text).

### **Storyboarding**

A storyboard is used to make sure that the story flows logically and sequentially. See worksheet 3, 4 and 5 for storyboard templates. Students need to limit the stories to around 3 minutes and to use the storyboard to encourage the students to read, listen and rewrite the narrative. Story boarding will identify the gaps in visuals so extra images and moving image footage may need to be sourced.

### **Record the Voice Over**

The voice over is the backbone to the digital story and needs to be recorded before the production process begins. Voice overs can be recorded a number of ways through independent microphones or through the editing software with either an onboard microphone on the computer or an independent microphone.

### **Digitising the Media**

All the photos artefacts, and moving image footage students have collected need to be in digital form so some images may need to be scanned and images and video footage will need to be transferred onto the computer.

### **Production**

Students should have their completed storyboard with the voice over and media digitised and ready to assemble the story for the production of the digital story.

### Setting Up the Project

Depending on the class room environment a range of softwares can be utilised from imovie or moviemaker or final cut pro or premiere. The project needs to be set up and all digital files can be imported ready to build the story.

### Laying Down the Voice Over

The voice over is the back bone to the story and is laid down as the first step of the production build.

### Rough Cut

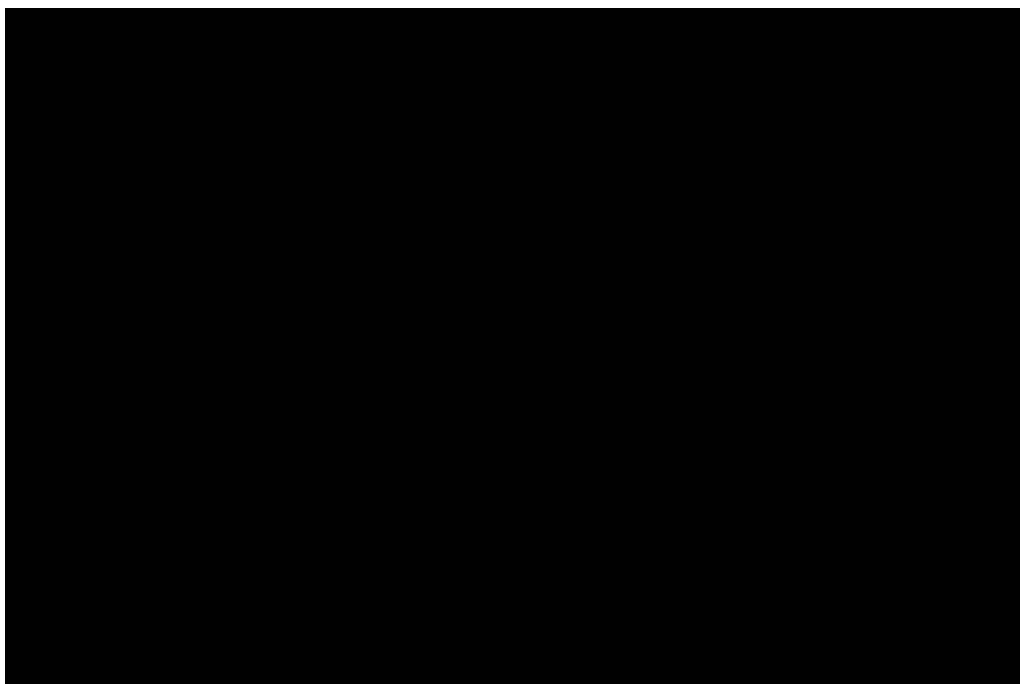
Students add the visual media to support the narrative voice over with no transitions. This is an important stage and will show students the overall structure and length of the story and like the storyboard will identify if there are any gaps in the visual material.

### Fine Cut

Is the final layering and building stages of creating a digital story. All sound, music should be added and visual transitions such as cross fades and image pans and zooms are also added – note all software programs have transitions built in. Titles and end credits and citations should be created in the fine cut stage. A word of caution, ensure students use transitions with purpose so it does not detract from the story, which can so easily happen if over used. Once all the media elements have been added to the story, students can mix the audio ensuring nothing drowns out the narrative and also work on the pace of the visual information, making sure it is on screen for the right length of time to support the voice over narrative. Fine tuning the overall pacing of the piece is important so it creates the right dramatic tension. Any review and screening process can happen as part of the fine cut.

### Export the Final File

Students need to create a movie file that can be seen independently of the software they used to create it. This is generally referred to as "exporting the file" and is a command in most of the editing softwares. The files can be burnt onto DVD's or streamed as digital files.



# Fire Threat ~ Sarah Davy

## Dealing with Challenges

Sarah begins her story, “What do you do when your life finally begins to be bearable again and then you get that dreaded phone call no one wants to hear?”

Her question implies that Sarah has already had hardship and emotional distress in her life.

Points for discussion:

- Identify particular problems or challenges faced by people in the digital stories. What advice would you give to help solve these difficulties?
- Think of a problem or challenge you have faced. Did you overcome it? If so, how? If not, how might you have used the advice ‘if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again’ to help you?
- What particular challenges do young people face today? How can young people deal with the challenges they face? Who can help them if the challenges get too complicated?
- Talk about some of the people in the digital stories who reflect key values such as compassion, courage, generosity, friendliness, determination, honesty, enthusiasm, tolerance, consideration, fairness and kindness.
- Make a collage of articles in papers and magazines which explore particular challenges for people in the community.
- Identify groups in the community who face particularly difficult challenges.
- Work in groups to plan and film interviews for a short documentary about students in your class coping with or overcoming a challenge. You will need to think about all the steps required to plan and shoot a film and the jobs each person will be required to do. Consider also how you will shoot your credits and who will be acknowledged. Worksheet 3 or 4 may be used to create a storyboard before filming.

## News and Media

Sarah says, “It’s one thing to hear this news but it’s another thing to see your town panicking.”

- Discuss: Have you experienced a newsworthy event? Was it depicted accurately in the news?
- Evacuation if you have to evacuate do you have a place to go to?
- Sarah was shocked and upset by the events of Black Saturday. News often describes events or things but rarely the human emotions involved. Create small groups to discuss books, magazine articles or films that students have read or seen that describe human suffering and emotions in a convincing, compelling way? Ask each group to create a list of recommended viewing and reading for the rest of the class with a five star rating system.
- The media has been criticised, however, for exploiting some people when they have recently gone through an emotional turmoil or crisis. Discuss and debate the ethics of responsible reporting. Cite hypothetical examples to generate discussion of when media reporting is justified and when it is not.

Sarah talks about good experiences growing up like her love of Spot the dog. She also describes her bad experiences of Black Saturday and its aftermath. She says, “I just hope that Rachel never has to experience this again in her lifetime...”

- Divide class into two teams to debate and discuss, “Crisis and disasters can bring about positive experiences.”

### Identity, Location and Stereotypes

For many of us the media is a primary source of information about other people. The media may describe the experiences and behaviour of other people and based on this we form opinions and stereotypes.

A stereotype is a word relating to the expected characteristics of a person like how they walk, behave, think, even the clothes they wear, depending on their gender, male/female, age, job, role in the family, ethnic or cultural background. Stereotypes are often conventional and oversimplified conceptions, opinions, or images based on the belief that there are attitudes, appearances, or behaviours shared by all members of a group. For example, all grandmas knit and bake scones.

Sarah refers to the different experiences of living in the city and the country. She says, “bushfires, droughts, losing livestock, these are things you heard on the news, not the day to day struggle of people around you.”

- What does Sarah mean by this statement?
- What other things do we hear about the experiences of country people?
- What things might people from the country ‘hear on the news’ about life in the city?
- People have many preconceptions and myths about how other people live. Create a chart to examine some of these preconceptions including the preconception that CALD communities only live in metropolitan areas. Students may interview friends and parents to complete the following chart (worksheet 5).

Positive aspects of living in the city	Negative aspects of living in the city	Positive aspects of living the country	Negative aspects of living in the country

- With the information gathered generate a discussion about the reality of these opinions. How realistic are these assumptions?



- Create a similar chart (**worksheet 6**) exploring the behaviour of these different populations.

Behaviour of people living in a city	Behaviour of people living in a small country town

Choose a group of 'scribes' or reporters and ask them to write key adjectives while the rest of the class discuss their preconceptions. From these adjectives identify stereotypes surrounding city, and country people.

Sarah is a young mum. Young mums are often stereotyped by the media.

- Discuss:
- What are the stereotypes surrounding young mums in the media?

# Home Again ~ Kat Hay

## “It Was So Quick.”

Sometimes natural disasters can happen without warning. Kat says, “Nobody knew there was something happening on that day. I was actually out shopping and I drove home. I was driving through about half a metre of water. By the time I got home I couldn’t even park outside my house.”

- What did the family begin to do as the water built up outside?
- How did the house fill with water?

Kat expresses her confusion, “You’re not really sure what to do with yourself.”

Refer to the Emergency Management in Australia schools website, *Learn – Floods - Ready and Able* section.

- How was/could KA have been warned?
- What could Kat and her family have done to prepare for the flood?
- List what important things need to be done once a flood is imminent.

Getting the Message Through: Creativity Challenge

- Divide the class into groups. Allocate each group a natural disaster from the list in the Learn section of the EMA website. Ask each group to present the dangers and risks of each natural disaster with a comprehensive emergency plan.
- Ask students to present their plan in a novel and entertaining way. For example, they could present the plan in a rap song, jingle or poem, in a collage or poster, in a video, radio commercial, documentary, do a play, act or skit.

## Damage and Repairs

“The next day when we returned to the house it was so overwhelming seeing how much damage that had been done.”

Discuss:

- What damage had been done?
- How did the floods disrupt Kat and her family’s life afterwards?
- What did Kat find frustrating while waiting to return home?
- Imagine having to live away from your home while your house was being repaired/rebuilt. What would you miss most about living in your own home?
- Where could you live during the repairs of your home?
- Why didn’t Kat like it when she first went home after the repairs to her home?
- Kats says her experience of the Newcastle floods “puts everything into perspective”. What did Kat learn from her experience of natural disaster?

## Needs and Wants

The digital stories suggest the things that are most important in people's lives. Some are needs (such as security, friends, family, sleep, shelter,), while others are wants.

- In groups of three or four have students discuss and list the things all people need in order to grow up healthy and happy. Share ideas, record and display.
- Type and copy lists and ask each group to sort items into categories. Move amongst groups questioning students to assist them to sort items. Encourage students to think about the concepts of needs and wants.
- Create a class 'needs and wants' list. What is the difference between needs and wants?
- Encourage students to further sort items in the needs category into things that are needed for:
  - Survival, such as air, water, food, sleep
  - Safety, for example, a safe home, rules, adults to care for them
  - Love and belonging, including families, friends, clubs.
- As a class discuss what needs and wants a community may have?

Time to 'put things into perspective'. Ask each student to form their own personal list of needs and wants. Ask everyone to prioritise this list from most to least important.

Ask each student to create a list of items they would want to take in case of an evacuation if they were given,

- three hours to pack
- thirty minutes to pack
- three minutes to pack

Did any of the digital stories give the audience messages about needs and wants? If so, what were they and are these important messages? Explain your response.



# When the Flood Comes ~ Djibril Ly

Djibril describes the devastating impact of floods in Mauritania, in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Djibril says, "There's a lot of flood...it is very dangerous."

Discuss:

- What are the particular dangers that Djibril outlines when there is a flood in Mauritania?
- Many people die each year in Africa as a result from malaria. How many children die each year from these causes?

## Malaria: Research and Respond

Bacterial and viral infections are natural disasters. Malaria, in particular, causes widespread death throughout the world.

By conducting a web-search ask students to research and report upon:

- The causes of malaria.
- Current treatments for malaria.
- The numbers of deaths worldwide from malaria.
- The number of deaths in sub-Saharan Africa.

Ask students to create an advertisement to raise funds for mosquito nets in third world countries.

- They will need to script, story board and film the advertisement.
- Alternatively students can design a logo or poster to raise awareness about malaria. Display posters around the school.

Recommended websites:

[www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/aug/16/kenya](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/aug/16/kenya)

[www.guardian.co.uk/.../2008/.../internationalaidanddevelopment.medicalresearch](http://www.guardian.co.uk/.../2008/.../internationalaidanddevelopment.medicalresearch)

[www.unicef.org/media/media\\_39453.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_39453.html)

[www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2008/.../index.html](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2008/.../index.html)

## Differences Between Mauritania and Australia

Djibril finds Australia different to Mauritania in several ways. He says, "They make the suburbs good (in Australia) not like Africa."

- How did he describe the differences between to two places?

Djibril also said that the emergency services were different in Australia.

- What emergency authority did Djibril say you could call in Australia?
- What advice did Djibril give when there is a threat of a severe storm?
- How would experiencing a disaster change the way you behave?
- What would it feel like a second time?

## Know your Origins

The population of Australia is made up of many culturally and linguistically diverse people. About a quarter of Australia's population was born overseas. Some of us come from several culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This gives us a very broad cultural heritage. Each culture has its own folklore and legends about natural disasters and how to deal with them.

Discuss:

- What cultural and linguistic background/s do you come from?
- What are the prevalent natural disasters in this culture's place of origin?
- Just as Djibril may one day tell his grandchildren about the floods in Mauritania, your grandparents may have passed on stories from their childhood and culture. Do you know any stories from your family's past about natural disasters?

## Know Your Community

What cultural demographic makes up your community?

- As a class find the five most common origins for the people in your community. Statistics can be found on the website cited below.
- Given the total population of your community, calculate the percentage of these cultural groups in your community.
- Survey your classmates to identify their cultural heritage. Calculate the percentage of different cultures represented in the classroom. Do these correspond with your broader community?
- Divide the class into groups to investigate what natural disasters these regions have experienced in the last 50 years.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Website provides summary tables from the 2006 Census. Basic community profile data for a specific area in Australia can be obtained by clicking on a map, selecting links for regions then sub-regions or by using the website search engine.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310108.nsf/>

Perhaps members of your class have access to family oral histories. (See *When Fire Comes to You* by Lydia, Family History in this kit). Students may like to interview older members of their family to gain firsthand accounts of natural disasters. For this activity and others refer to *Lesson Plan: Experiences of Emergencies* in the *People, Get Ready Lessons* section of the Emergency Management in Australia education website.

Refer to *Me and My Community, Lesson Plan: Take the Communication Mission* on the Emergency Management in Australia schools website to select further activities for students to explore communication with culturally and linguistically diverse members of our community.

# A Day to Remember ~ Jo Metz

Jo spent her 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday recovering after fighting fires. She had been working with the CFA from 6.30a.m. the previous morning till 11.00 a.m. the following morning.

Jo's family appear to be very close. They also share some of the same interests. Jo said, "*My entire family was involved in the CFA and I just got involved through that.*"

Discuss and debate:

- What are the benefits of sharing common interests amongst the family?
- What are the disadvantages?
- What interests do class members share with their families? Do they believe this makes them a closer family?
- What interests in volunteer organisation or charities do some class members share with their families?

## Preparation and Training

Jo recalls, "We get told the process of a mayday procedure and you never ever think about actually having to give one."

Preparation and training are vital in an emergency.

Reflection

- Discuss the importance of training and preparation for Jo and the other CFA volunteers, police and other emergency service workers.
- What other kinds of work do emergency services do?

Practice and training can seem boring and unnecessary but in an emergency people can become stressed and disorientated.

- Discuss the possible different conditions, for example visibility, weather conditions, injuries that can occur during emergencies.
- Discuss the importance of emergency drills in schools and the work place.
- Discuss the importance of actively creating an emergency plan with family, friends and colleagues and enacting it as part of your preparation for a disaster.

## Feelings: Sadness, Fear, Loss and Grief, Death and Dying, Memories

Jo said "I had my Dad and a couple of really close friends who were out there. It was really difficult being at the station and not being able to help. Just sitting and listening to them call for help on the radio and being helpless to do anything."

Jo was very lucky not to lose any of her family members during the fires. Many other people did.

Many people who have been affected by natural disasters experience feelings of sadness, fear, loss, grief and bewilderment related to changes in living arrangements, family circumstances, or to death and dying. Sometimes the cause of sadness or grief cannot be changed; but often ways can be found to help cope with such feelings or with a sad or troubling situation. Strategies may include sharing feelings, crying or taking some form of personal or social action.

Encourage students to talk about times when they have felt sad or unhappy. Ask how they found ways to cope with the situation? Discuss how different people in our lives can help us when things are not going so well. Encourage students to talk about people they can talk to when feeling unhappy, who can help you to solve the problem or to cope with difficult feelings.

- Talk to students about the need for trusted people to help cope with difficult times.
- As a class consider the advantages and disadvantages of having a pet to help you cope with difficult times. What does a relationship with a pet offer — perhaps a way of unloading thoughts and feelings?
- Have each child trace around their hand and then write the name of a person they can trust to help them when they feeling sad or unhappy on each finger and thumb. Aim to empower each student by identifying people to whom they can turn so they do not need to deal with difficult issues on their own.
- Discuss ways people cope with sadness and grief when someone dies, for example, having a funeral or service to celebrate the person's life, placing notices in newspapers, hugging one another, placing a headstone on a grave. Encourage sharing of traditions, rituals and coping strategies from various family or cultural backgrounds.
- As a class discuss the power of memories. Consider how memories can help us to cope when someone or something we love or care about may no longer be part of our everyday lives. List some of the different ways people can remember the life of someone they can no longer see through death or even if they have moved away.





# Into the Flames ~ Simon Roylance

Simon Roylance is an experienced fire fighter. He joined the CFA at the age of eleven and at sixteen he became a senior member. By 2009 he had spent 15 years associated with the Wallan CFA.

## Preparation for an Emergency: Expect the Unexpected

Simon knew in advance that Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 2009 was going to be a particularly dangerous day for bushfires. He recalls, "We had been told for about a week beforehand that this was going to be the worst day in Australia's history for fire fighting and definitely for Victoria."

Discuss:

- What were his particular concerns in his area?
- What did he do for preparation?

Despite his preparation and extensive experience, Simon was surprised by the events of Black Saturday.

Discuss:

- What factors hampered Simon's efforts?
- What had Simon never seen before in his bushfire fighting experience?

Despite this element of unpredictability, Simon continued to do his job. He was not overwhelmed. He continued to make vital decisions and deal with the situation.

Discuss:

- What elements of Simon's preparation enabled him to remain focused and effective?
- What elements of Simon's character and the situation enabled him to continue performing in his duties?

## Roadblocks

An additional cause for stress is separation from loved ones and property. Once an emergency is underway people may not be allowed to move freely in an affected area.

Discuss:

- Ask students to list the possible reasons to inhibit movement.

Sometimes being an emergency worker or volunteer can be a thankless task. Some workers were abused and assaulted by members of the public as they manned roadblocks. As part of his job as leader, Simon needed to intervene and try to calm people down.

- Why would some people be so abusive at roadblocks?
- Ask the students to imagine the emotions they would feel as an emergency services volunteer in this situation.
- Form a circle of students and ask each one to say an adjective describing their emotions or thoughts in this situation. Students should try not to repeat previous adjectives already stated.
- Discuss with students what they would say to these members of the public if they were in Simon's situation.
- How would you counsel your CFA crew in this situation?

## The Aftermath

### Trauma

Simon speaks of the long-term trauma and pain that locals experienced during and after the fires, "It still hurts for them a lot and I think it will, they are never going to get over it, they are never going to forget it."

Not only do people who lost loved ones and property suffer trauma. Simon provides a glimpse of the enormous pressure he and others like him were under when trying to respond to an emergency.

He recounts, "At the same time our pagers were constantly going off. A house with fifteen or sixteen occupants from a street that had fled their houses and gone to another person's house that were now trapped by fire and needed help. You could hear on the radio, you could hear the crews' distress trying to get to those calls but they couldn't make it. I guess it's something I think about on a day to day basis."

Ask students to research the effects of stress with enquiry questions such as:

- What is post-traumatic stress disorder?
- What are the signs of depression and anxiety?
- What services are available for people dealing with stress related mental health issues?
- What advice is provided for carers and friends of people with stress related mental health issues?

## Recovery

### 'One Big Family'

Simon refers to the locals' response in the aftermath of the Black Saturday fires, "Since the Seventh occurred, I've noticed, especially in our own town for the first couple of months that the township itself was a huge community, like one big family."

People can live along side each other and technically be 'a community'. But Simon's observation of his township implies a different, more behavioural definition.

- Ask students to give a more precise definition for the type of community that Simon may be referring to.
- Simon equates the community to 'one big family'. Create a list of the qualities that successful communities and families have in common?

Simon explained some of the impetus for people to rebuild, "But they want to stay there, they want to rebuild there because that's what they know. That's where their family and friends are, that's where all their memories are."

Sometimes our families, homes and community are not perfect, but we love them anyway and would not want to be parted from them.

Ask students to write a poem or piece of prose expressing their attachment to their

- families,
- homes
- and/or community

## **Comparisons Between the Victorian 1939 ‘Black Friday’ and the Victorian Black Saturday Bushfires of 2009.**

The bushfires of January 13 1939, known as the ‘Black Friday’ fires, were the result of a long drought and a severe, hot, dry summer. Fanned by extremely strong winds, these fires swept rapidly across large areas of Victoria, and caused widespread destruction.

Three weeks after the bushfires, a Royal Commission was convened. Judge Leonard E. B. Stretton was selected to lead the Royal Commission. He was instructed to inquire into the causes of the January 1939 fires, measures taken to prevent the fires and to protect life and property. Judge Stretton also investigated the procedures put in place to protect life and property in the event of future bushfires.

After the fires Judge Stretton wrote; “When millions of acres of the forest were invaded by bushfires which were almost state-wide, there happened, because of great loss of life and property, the most disastrous forest calamity the State of Victoria has known. These fires were lit by the hand of man”

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/nrenfoe.Nsf/linkview/c4bca40c95a4c061ca256d960014420d8ac9c23269fa53b4ca256dab0027ecc4>

Get students to view the Department of Sustainability and Environment or the ABC website to extrapolate the following;

- Recommendations made by Judge Leonard Stretton’s royal commission report after the 1939 fires.
- Human response to the fires.

Below are some suggested questions for each topic which may be further expanded upon.

- What similarities existed between the build-up to the 1939 (Black Friday) January bushfires and 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2009 bushfires (Black Saturday)?
- Calculate the percentage of Victoria’s population who died due to the Black Friday bushfires?
- Compare this figure to the percentage of Victoria’s population who died from the Black Saturday fires. (Note: the final death toll was 173)
- Stretton describes the fires hauntingly. In groups share Stretton’s most powerful and surprising descriptions of the 1939 fires.
- Simon Roylance refers to what he thought were ‘meteors’. Read the following description by Stretton and compare with Simon’s observation.

“The speed of the fires was appalling. They leaped from mountain peak to mountain peak, or far out into the lower country, lighting the forests six or seven miles in advance of the main fires. Blown by a wind of great force, they roared as they travelled. Balls of crackling fire sped at a great pace in advance of the fires, consuming with a roaring, explosive noise all that they touched.

"Houses of brick were seen and heard to leap into a roar of flame before the fires had reached them. Some men of science hold the view that the fires generated and were preceded by inflammable gases, which became alight. Great pieces of burning bark were carried by the wind to set in raging flame regions not yet reached by the fires.” (Last 2 paragraphs under the section heading ‘The Fires’ )

[http://www.abc.net.au/blackfriday/royalcommission/index\\_findings.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/blackfriday/royalcommission/index_findings.htm)

## **'No ordinary fire'.**

Divide the class into groups. Each group is a team of scientists. Number or name the groups. Each group is asked to speculate on and answer the following questions and write their answers on a piece of paper.

- What is the name given to this extraordinary type of bushfire?

Geoscience Australia - What causes bushfires?

Short precise explanations are given for relatively 'normal' bushfires.

[www.ga.gov.au/hazards/bushfire/causes.jsp](http://www.ga.gov.au/hazards/bushfire/causes.jsp) - Cached

- Speculate on a theory. What makes the Australia bush particularly prone to large, cataclysmic fires? After brainstorming list the many contributing factors to bushfires on the board.
- Research and investigate. Students can now view the following websites and program to determine if they correctly identified many of the contributing factors to bushfire.
- Before watching the catalyst program also speculate about the factors in house and garden design which may make a home more prone to fire.

## Firestorm

This website provides diagrams and explanations of firestorms, a conflagration which attains such intensity that it creates and sustains its own wind system.

[www.sciencedaily.com/articles/f/firestorm.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/articles/f/firestorm.htm)

## Catalyst: "Canberra Firestorm" - ABC TV Science

This program would be of particular interest to science and geography students as it demonstrates the process of investigation. It provides excellent footage of the fires in Canberra suburbs during the bushfire of 2003.

With forensic examination the scientific investigators present information on the behaviour of firestorms in creating their own weather patterns, the speed and nature of the fires and additional risks of house and garden design. CSIRO scientists discuss their findings and residents are interviewed on site. It is particularly relevant to Simon Roylance's digital story as it refers to fireballs, pine plantations and the incredible speed of certain fires.

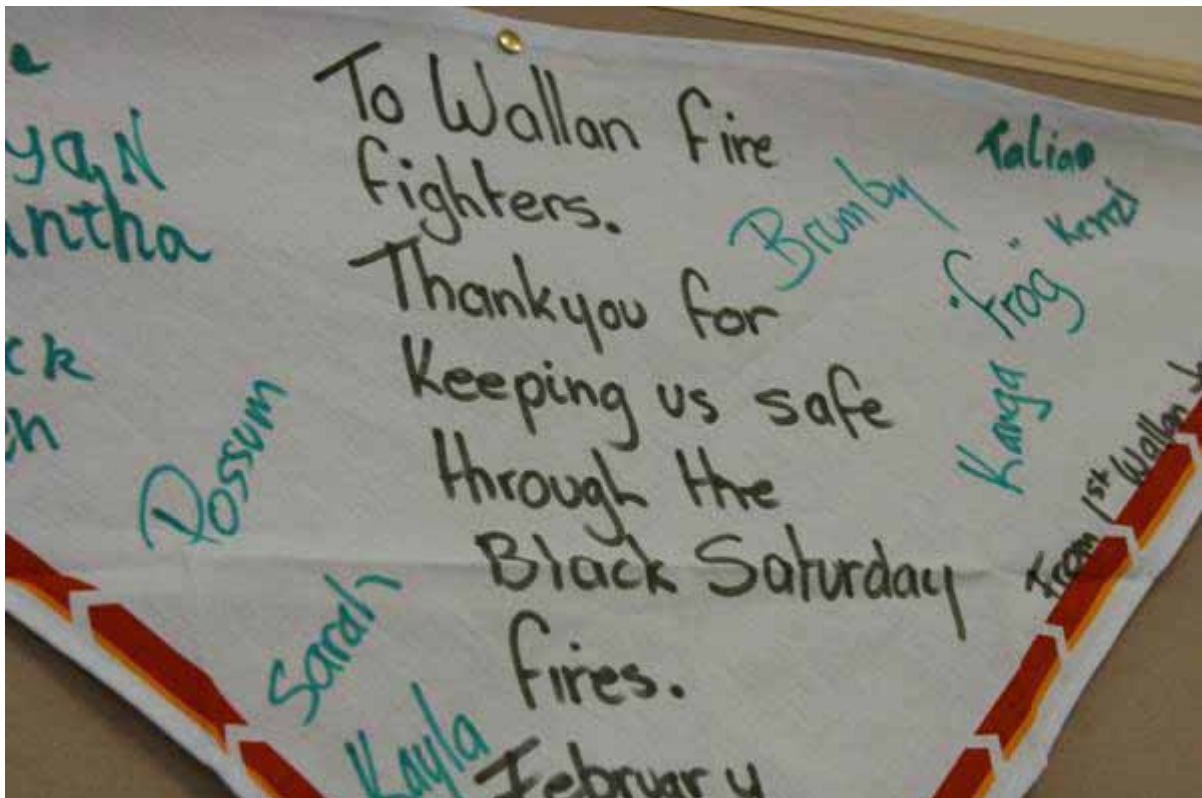
[www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/s794270.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/s794270.htm)

## Recommendations Made by Judge Leonard Stretton's Royal Commission Report After the 1939 Fires.

- What investigation took place after the 1939 fires?
- What investigation took place after the 2009 fires?
- What recommendations were made by Stretton?
- How have some of these recommendations not been carried out recently?
- Discuss some alternative approaches to forest management practices.

## Human Response to the Fires.

- Give examples of community response after the Black Saturday fires from government, charity organizations and individuals.
- What are the dilemmas for the media reporting on the tragedy of the Black Saturday fires?
- Outline some of the different responses to grief and loss described in the article.



# Ready and Able

Interviews with Fire Fighters from CFA Region 14 and Community Members

## The Leadership Challenge: Be Prepared

Emergency services personnel are trained to do preparation and so can be relied upon to make good decisions in a crisis and maximize their survival and the survival of others. On the other hand, while preparation is recommended for members of the public, people are often completely unprepared for emergencies.

Discuss:

- What emergency procedures do you have in your school?
- How often are they practiced?
- What emergency procedures do you have in your home?
- How often are they updated, reviewed and practiced?

View "Ready and Able: Interview with Fire fighters from CFA Region 14 and Community Members" and complete the listening sheet (Worksheet 7).

## The Leadership Challenge: Be Prepared

CFA volunteers and other emergency services personnel have taken a leadership role to protect the community. However, there are times during disasters and emergencies when they will not be available to help. In times like these people must be self-reliant. The underlying message from all of the digital stories and interviews has been the need to be prepared. As young adults, perhaps it is time for the class members to take a leadership role as Simon did at sixteen. Taking the initiative to be a leader may help protect your family, neighbours, friends and classmates by being prepared.

Now it is your opportunity to take the initiative and create an emergency plan.

Watch Ready and Able: Interview with Fire fighters from CFA Region 14 and Community Members again and complete worksheet 8.

When devising your plans refer to the About Planning and Preparation section of the Emergency Management in Australia schools website where you can find important information on:

- How to develop an Emergency Plan
- Pets and Disaster
- State and Territory Emergency Services
- Emergency survival kit

Note: Refer to *Me and My Community* on the Emergency Management in Australia schools website to select further activities for students to explore and extend communication with culturally and linguistically diverse members of our community.

# WORKSHEET 1

Name: .....Date / /

Person or organisation	What do they do to make a difference in their own life?	What do they do to make a difference to the lives of other people?	What do they do to make a difference to the natural environment?

# WORKSHEET 2

Name: .....Date / /

## Common elements of narrative structure

Most stories, whether print or film, are a complete unit with a beginning (orientation), middle (compilation) and an end (resolution).

A narrative usually begins by telling the reader or audience when and where things are taking place, and creates an expectation about something that has or will take place. This beginning is called the orientation.

The story then moves through a series of events, one of which causes some change or disruption to the characters. Usually this disruption involves a problem, a conflict or an issue to be resolved. This change is known as the complication.

The remainder of the story usually sets about resolving the problem. A good story only includes details relevant to the expectations set up in the beginning of the story. The story ends when the events are restored to some sort of order.

It is the quality of the story, which maintains our interest when reading or viewing a film story. Stories may be presented in many ways but they generally have a structure similar to the following:

### Orientation (beginning)

- Introduces when and where the story takes place and often introduces the main character or characters.

### Complication (middle)

- Something happens, usually a problem that has to be solved in some way.
- The story continues as the hero or heroine tries to resolve the problem.
- There can be more than one complication in a story.

### Resolution (end)

- The problem is solved and the story ends. (A moral, message or lesson may be evident.)

Can you identify these elements of narrative structure in any of the digital stories you have seen?

Create your own documentary, digital story or short film with clear messages about natural disasters. Include setting, realisation of the event, emergency plans, evacuation, relocation and returning home.





**WORKSHEET 3** Name: .....Date / /


Simple Storyboard



**WORKSHEET 4** Name: .....Date / /

Alternative storyboard with corresponding script

	
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**WORKSHEET 5** Name: .....Date / /

Positive aspects of living in the city	Negative aspects of living in the city	Positive aspects of living in the country	Negative aspects of living in the country

**WORKSHEET 6** Name: .....Date / /

City - country

Behaviour of people living in a city	Behaviour of people in a small country town

# WORKSHEET 7

Name: .....Date / /

## Listening Sheet

What was the Key Message?	Give detailed information. For example, why is this message important? What can go wrong? What are the benefits?

# WORKSHEET 8

Name: .....Date / /

## The Leadership Challenge: Be Prepared

CFA volunteers have taken a leadership role to protect the community. Perhaps you can take a leadership role in your family to help protect your family, neighbours, friends and classmates by being prepared.

Message	What will I do
Have a Plan	
Write out your plan	
Know your local area	
Take responsibility and involve all family members	
Responsibilities for younger family members	
Information and preparation for people from diverse backgrounds	
Have a contingency plan	