

WHAT ARE THE RECOVERY INITIATIVES THAT EMERGE FROM
DISASTERS? A CASE STUDY OF TOURISM BUSINESSES IN THE
VICTORIAN BUSHFIRES 2009

by

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Abstract

This study examines the recovery initiatives that emerge from disasters, based on a case study of tourism businesses affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires. The aim of this research is to understand the factors and elements that have impacted upon the recovery of tourism businesses in the Victorian town of Marysville after these bushfires. The outcomes from this research will contribute to the existing disaster recovery literature and will provide recommendations to tourism businesses of Marysville, Victoria.

The study consisted of semi-structured interviews ranging from 15 minutes to just over one hour. Twenty tourism businesses that had been affected by the bushfires in 2009 were chosen to participate as interviewees for the study. Five themes emerged from the 20 interviews. The five themes were media, infrastructure, economics and employment, trust and sense of community and communication.

Based on the findings presented in Chapter Five, the following conclusions can be made:

- There was a lack of forward recovery planning.
- Tourism businesses experienced impacts on their business, mainly related to tourism recovery in the region.
- Negative media attention, and not getting the right message out, impacted on tourism businesses and there was a lack of confidence that business would return to normal because of media and negative messages.
- The right government assistance and right advertising can help tourism businesses in the recovery process.

- Tourism businesses took longer to recover because of the slow rebuilding of infrastructure and, had the tourists returned earlier, businesses would have come back more quickly.
- Many businesses in the region rely on tourism, and many of these suffered from loss of income.
- A communication plan is needed before, during and after a disaster

Form B Certificate of Authorship of Thesis

Except where clearly acknowledged in footnotes, quotations and the bibliography, I certify that I am the sole author of the thesis submitted today entitled –

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I further certify that to the best of my knowledge the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

The material in the thesis has not been the basis of an award of any other degree or diploma except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

The thesis complies with University requirements for a thesis as set out in

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Signature of chair of the supervisory panel

Date:

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