

**MANAGING THE EMOTIONAL FACE OF SUSTAINABLE WORK:
THE EXAMPLE OF BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY PRACTITIONERS**

ABSTRACT: *This paper examines the importance of managing the emotional face of sustainable work in ‘scrutinized’ occupations, which are often associated with negative emotions. We present a study of emergency management practitioners’ emotions in relation to a major bushfire incident known as ‘Black Saturday.’ By combining the work of Heidegger with the sensemaking literature we show how the emotional face of sustainable work can be managed across three different practice worlds.*

Keywords: emotions, emergency management, sensemaking

This paper examines the importance of managing the emotional face of sustainable work in ‘scrutinized’ occupations, such as emergency services, policing, child protection, etc. Working in scrutinized occupations is often associated with negative emotions (Langan Fox & Cooper, 2011) and if practitioners are to carry out their work in a sustainable manner – and not be paralyzed by emotion – they must manage them effectively. Scrutinized occupations involve multiple ‘practice worlds’ (Sandberg & Dall’Alba, 2009; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). Specifically, practitioners *perform* their professional skills e.g., emergency responding, policing, looking after children; *give accounts*, often when something has gone wrong during some kind of incident in their performing practice world; and *re-organize* their organizational practice world by implementing recommendations, ideally in ways that improve practices based on what has been learned. Managing the emotional face of sustainable work across all three practice worlds is, as a result, extremely challenging.

We present a study of bushfire emergency management practitioners who work in a highly scrutinized occupation. For example, at least ten inquiries and reviews were held between 2005 and 2015 in relation to bushfires in Victoria. We focused on a major bushfire incident known as ‘Black Saturday’, as well as the subsequent Royal Commission and the implementation of the Commission’s recommendations. We drew on the work of Heidegger (1962) as well as the literature on sensemaking (see Maitlis & Christianson, 2014) to examine how the emotional face of sustainable work can be managed.

EMOTIONS AND SENSEMAKING IN SCRUTINIZED OCCUPATIONS

Practice Worlds and Sensemaking in Scrutinized Occupations

A practice world means being a part of a particular entwinement of individuals and socio-material practices embodied in tools, language and shared practices (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; 2015a; 2015b). We argue that, in the case of scrutinized occupations, practitioners engage with three overlapping practice worlds: one in which they perform their professional skills; one in which they give accounts of incidents in their professional lives; and one in which they are responsible for re-organizing the larger world within which their professional life is situated. These three practice worlds are the means by which certain occupations are scrutinized insofar as regular duties and/or incidents are reviewed through various forms of inquiry; and those inquiries are expected to produce recommendations that will be implemented in organizations to improve performance and/or reduce the chance of incidents occurring again. Below, we explore each of these practice worlds in more detail and discuss the role sensemaking plays in each.

First, practitioners 'perform' in a primary practice world (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015a), where they deploy their professional skills. This might involve episodic actions such as responding to a specific incident, which could be some sort of accident, crisis or disaster (e.g., Madsen, 2009; Rerup, 2009). However, it could also be carrying out regular duties, such as flying aircraft (e.g., Catino & Patriotta, 2013) or taking children into protection (Elliott, 2009). When practitioners are 'performing' in their primary practice worlds i.e., when they are doing their jobs, they are typically engaging in 'immanent' sensemaking – carrying out routine activities, together with colleagues, using their usual tools in the usual ways, as dictated by their training and experience (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015a). Even when things 'go wrong' in some way, the initial response may be to respond and adapt – spontaneously and unthinkingly – as sensemaking takes the form of 'absorbed' or 'practical' coping (Tsoukas, 2010; Guette & Vandenbempt, 2016). If this form of sensemaking does not work and a breakdown occurs, more deliberate coping may be triggered as practitioners "retrospectively make sense of the disrupted activity in order to restore it" (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015a, p. S12; also see Guette & Vandenbempt, 2016). This often occurs during crises and disasters, when "the sense of what is occurring and the means to rebuild that sense collapse together" (Weick, 1993, p. 634).

A second practice world concerns the inquiries and reviews that are regular events in scrutinized occupations. They may take the form of an ad hoc, high profile, public inquiries commissioned by governments following an incident – a crisis or disaster, a rare or extreme event of some kind, or even a ‘near miss’ – in order to investigate what happened through various investigative and deliberative measures that allow inquiry participants to reflect on the incident in question (e.g., Brown, 2000; 2004; Gephart, 1993; 2007). Inquiries may also take the form of reporting ‘mishaps’ and debriefing sessions (Catino & Patriotta, 2013), as well as ‘after-action’ and ‘post-project’ reviews designed to review safety and enhance learning (Ron, Lipshitz & Popper, 2006). For practitioners in scrutinized occupations, ‘account-giving’ during such reviews and inquiries is a regular part of their work. Actors involved in this practice world engage in sensemaking through theoretical coping (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015), as they seek to weld individual, partial accounts into a holistic body of abstract knowledge that can be used to improve practice and reduce the likelihood of errors (cf. Hardy & Maguire, 2016).

A third practice world is the one in which where the original, failed activity took place, and where the practitioners are charged with implementing the inquiry’s recommendations. This is closely linked to, but encompasses more than, the primary practice world of individual practitioners: ‘re-organizing’ to improve practices is a very different affair than simply carrying out the practice *per se*. It not only involves performing the practice, but designing, evaluating and coordinating it, as well as boundary spanning (such as with customers, regulators, media, suppliers), developing organizational strategies and professional policies, committee work, as well as the hiring, training and evaluating of practitioners. Sensemaking in this practice world is conducted by practitioners who take the sense made by the inquiry (its recommendations), make their own sense of it, and incorporate this sense into new organizational processes, structures and cultures (Dwyer & Hardy, 2016). The recommendations may not be straightforward: proposed solutions may not be easily implementable within an organizational setting or they may have unintended consequences. As practitioners wrestle with what the inquiry means in terms of implementation, they start to disengage from their activities in order to better reflect on them, as sensemaking comes to rely on detached coping (cf. Tsoukas, 2010).

Emotions and Sensemaking

Emotions seem likely to figure in each of the practice worlds associated with scrutinized occupations. First, research indicates that incidents – crises and disasters – tend to give rise to negative emotions. Fear, anxiety, panic, helplessness and vulnerability are often manifested in such turbulent environments (e.g. Dougherty & Drumheller, 2006; Kayes, 2004; Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, 1990; 1993). A high degree of emotion is also associated with the execution of risky tasks in extreme environments, such as anticipatory feelings of anxiety and fear, while mistakes can result in blame, guilt and low self-esteem (e.g., Catriona & Patriotta, 2013). Second, insofar as inquiries assign blame (e.g., Boudes & Laroche, 2009) and often lead to scapegoating (Rijpma, 2003), they are likely to give rise to negative emotions. Moreover, witnesses may experience disappointment and anger if their personal, subjective experiences of the incident are subordinated to expert knowledge (cf. Ainsworth & Hardy, 2012). Third, in relation to implementing recommendations, the research on organizational change suggests that it often leads to negative emotions (see Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). Implementation can, then, also be emotionally fraught.

Research suggests that negative emotions may hinder sensemaking because they consume cognitive resources and reduce the ability to notice and extract important cues (Cornelissen, Mantere & Vaara, 2014; Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010; Stein, 2004). They may also divert attention from task-related activities to address previous errors as individuals concentrate, instead, on coping with their emotions (Catinto & Patriotta, 2013). It is important, therefore, that practitioners in scrutinized occupations are able to manage their emotions in a way that does not hinder the sensemaking necessary in each of the three practice worlds.

We draw on the work of Heidegger (1962) on anxiety (*angst*) to explore whether and how practitioners in scrutinized occupations experience emotions and the effects different emotions have. Rather than see anxiety as ‘negative’, Heidegger refers to it as being ‘extraordinary’ because of the way it makes visible possibilities within the practice world that would otherwise remain hidden (Boedeker, 2013).

For Heidegger, anxiety is a deeply disconcerting, rare, and potentially profound experience that may arise even in the midst of our most common and familiar practices. That in the face of which we are anxious is not a particular entity. What elicits anxiety,

in other words, is not something that we encounter in our worldly existence, but rather our very own existence, our being-in-the-world. (Elpidorou & Freeman, 2015, p. 666).

Through anxiety, one's world initially becomes meaningless: it is encountered in an unfamiliar and disconcerting way as entities are disconnected from everyday uses and meanings (Ratcliffe, 2013, and as we become incapable of understanding ourselves "vis-à-vis the social and practically oriented world" (Elpidorou & Freeman, 2015, p. 667). While deeply disconcerting, anxiety nonetheless provides access to the previously taken-for-granted practice world whose nature and structure can only be glimpsed when something out of the ordinary occurs (Boedeker, 2013). Anxiety does not blind us; rather, it allows us to 'see' and to understand our predicament differently (Freeman & Elpidorou, 2015). In this way, the practice world is brought into view and made accessible to philosophical study (Ratcliffe, 2013).

In this way, Heidegger shows that problems are experienced emotionally – with a sense of estrangement and existential anxiety (Segal, 2010) – can nonetheless be resolved. "Anxiety brings one into the mood for a possible resolution... [it] holds the moment of vision at the ready" (Heidegger, 1962: 394).

The process of coming face to face with being-in-the-world itself occurs in a paradoxical moment of ... resoluteness which is the power to embrace the powerlessness that is experienced in moments of the anxiety of breakdown" (Segal, 2010, p. 381).

In this way, anxiety's seemingly negative influence can be positively incorporated (Magnini, 2006) through 'understanding' which, for Heidegger, also involves using that understanding to do one's work or carry out one's practice (Critchley, 2009).

This review of the literature gives rise to the following research questions that form the basis of our study: what role does anxiety play in the three practice worlds associated with scrutinized occupations; what form does it take and what effects does it have?

METHODS

The 'Black Saturday' bushfires on 7th February 2009 were one of the worst natural disasters ever experienced in Australia. Soaring temperatures, dry undergrowth, gusting winds, lightning strikes and arson attacks led to a number of ferocious fires that were extremely difficult to control, despite over 4,000 emergency management personnel being on the ground and in incident control centres.

Ultimately, the fires took the lives of 173 people and resulted in an estimated \$4 billion worth of damage. Two days after the tragic incident, the Victorian Government announced a Royal Commission, officially referred to as the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (VBRC), to inquire into the causes of the fires and make recommendations on how they could be avoided in the future. Commissioners and witnesses were represented by legal counsel (Pascoe, 2009) and 155 days of evidence hearings were held in a courtroom environment. The Royal Commissioners compiled a four-volume report, which made 67 recommendations to reduce the chances of a similar incident arising again. The Victorian government agreed to implement all but one of the final recommendations, handing over responsibility for the associated organizational changes to the relevant emergency management practitioners.

Data Collection and Analysis

In 2014, the first author conducted semi-structured interviews with 62 emergency management practitioners who worked in different organizations related to bushfire management during. They included 20 senior managers, 21 middle managers and 21 functional experts. Senior managers had overall responsibility for coordinating fire-fighting efforts. Middle managers had regional/unit-level responsibilities and line authority over varying numbers of subordinates. Functional experts had specialist expertise e.g., information officers, planning officers, and operational fire-fighters. We identified these particular individuals as a result of them being named in media and inquiry documents, through their formal responsibilities, and through the personal networks of the first author. Only one of those contacted with a request for an interview declined to participate. Interviews took place mainly in individuals' offices, lasted between 30 and 90 minutes and resulted in 65 hours of interview recordings which were fully transcribed. Interviewees were asked semi-structured questions about the lead up to Black Saturday, the day itself, and their reactions to it. They were also questioned about the Royal Commission – whether they appeared before it and/or were responsible for preparing for it – and how they felt about the process. They were asked about their opinion of the Commission's report, what it meant for their organization and role, and their experiences of implementing its recommendations.

We began our analysis of these interviews by examining the interview transcripts for instances

where interviewees talked about their emotional experiences, used particularly emotive language, and/or displayed strong emotion during the interview. We used this data to develop a parsimonious set of different emotions (cf. Maitlis & Ozcelik, 2004). We found that interviewees made many references to emotions that could be described as *anxiety* i.e., accounts of feelings of worry, concern, shock, alarm, disbelief at being unable to control what was happening. We differentiated anxiety from other negative emotions, which were directed at particular targets i.e., *fear* at potential loss of life and property; *sadness* at actual loss of life and property; *anger* at how the Royal Commission treated emergency management practitioners who were witnesses; and *apathy* linked to expressions of ‘going through the motions’ during implementation. We then conducted further analysis of the interview transcripts to link particular emotions to particular points in time i.e., in relation to the original incident, the inquiry, and the implementation of the recommendations (see Table 1). We also identified more positive emotions – *confidence*, *trust* and *happiness*, which individuals associated with having been able to play an active role in Royal Commission and implementing recommendations.

– Table 1 here –

We then focused more closely on anxiety and identified three different types. *Existential* anxiety describes how interviewees talked about anxiety in the context of the incident i.e., accounts of feeling powerless and taken-for-granted understandings about bushfires breaking down. These accounts conformed to typical accounts of existential anxiety (e.g., Holt & Cornelissen, 2014). When interviewees talked about anxiety in the context of the inquiry, however, their accounts were quite different. Here, they were far more likely to express worry and concern at not being allowed to ‘tell their story’ to the inquiry. We refer to this form of anxiety as *representational* to reflect disquiet among interviewees that practitioner views, experiences and knowledge were not fully represented in the Commission’s deliberations. Finally, *practical* anxiety was inferred from interviewees’ accounts of feelings of overwhelmed by what were, at the time, confusing organizational changes needed to implement the Commission’s recommendations.

We also traced a ‘path’ of *resoluteness* as individuals talked about how they had managed their anxiety, which in turn allowed them to make sense of the three practice worlds (cf. Critchley, 2009). In the case of the incident, sensemaking involved individuals reflecting back on events through

deliberate coping (Tsoukas, 2015) – articulating and reinterpreting amongst themselves what had happened on Black Saturday to produce *situated* knowledge i.e., knowledge that reflects the particular, local conditions in which it was produced (cf. Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow, 2015). In relation to the inquiry, we found that sensemaking was associated with the emergency management practitioners being involved in *theoretical* coping (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015) to produce *abstract* knowledge (Tsoukas, 2015). In relation to implementation, sensemaking involved *detached* coping (Tsoukas, 2015), as individuals started to strategize more proactively as to what was required in the organization if it was to produce knowledge that could be *embedded* “in the design of the systems, structures, and procedures of the organization” (cf. Crossan, Lane, White & Djurfeldt, 1995, p. 347). This path of resoluteness appeared to be associated with positive emotions, as practitioners felt able to understand and act in all three practice worlds. In contrast, the negative emotions – fear, sadness, anger and apathy – were clearly associated with paralysis in interviewees’ accounts. Table 2 shows how we coded for the various categories.

– Table 2 near here –

SUSTAINABLE EMOTIONS AND SENSEMAKING IN THREE PRACTICE WORLDS

The Incident

Anxiety takes different forms in each of the three practice worlds in which practitioners are situated. In the performing practice world, if an incident does arise and the skills and training of practitioners prove to be inadequate, *existential* anxiety is likely to be the result.

When I went to the Incident Controller he just looked at me with a blank face. Everyone was just in shock. This was a disaster and there was nobody in a position where they knew what they were doing. He was trying to work out what to do but everyone’s face was just in shock (Community Engagement Manager 1).

If practitioners are to be resolute, rather than paralyzed, meaning must be restored through a sensemaking process involving *deliberate* coping whereby practitioners are able to reflect more consciously on their experiences of incident to make sense of what went wrong.

We needed to rearrange the warning system, the emergency code red. The emergence of idea that should be saying that it’s highly risky ... if you stay. We always had it there, but it [Black Saturday] made some things more explicit (Fire Planning Officer 1).

If successful, this sensemaking leads to new, *situated* knowledge i.e., knowledge derived from

practitioners' specific experience of the incident. This knowledge is inevitably idiosyncratic – partial and local and, quite possibly, embodied and tacit insofar it is the result of how individuals make sense of their particular experiences of the incident (cf. Hardy & Maguire, 2016; Sauer, 2002).

Well we were going okay up until lunchtime [on Black Saturday] but then it went badly wrong. There was arsonists and failure of powerlines which meant tinderbox areas just went up in flames in a matter of seconds. We just couldn't get or receive information because all calls were being routed into the State control centre. Something which never happened before. It was like all the things that were wrong with operational coordination came home to roost. Our systems hadn't been modernized and different agencies were basically doing things their own way (Assistant Chief Officer 1).

The development of this situated knowledge redresses the powerlessness associated with existential angst by providing a basis for revising and adapting actions in the performing practice world. In contrast, if more negative emotions such as fear, sadness and grief are fuelled by the tragedy of the incident, sensemaking will be inhibited, meaninglessness will intensify.

There'd be new updates about the number of deaths. You'd basically get into your car at the end of each shift and just cry. There was a lot of fear everywhere that the fires could blow up again. I think everybody just turned off their televisions in the end. It was absolutely horrible, and I think we all felt the guilt even though it wasn't [us who had caused the fires] (Project Manager 3).

The result of these negative emotions is paralysis and powerlessness.

For many people, working in a fire role had been quite benign. For two years [prior to Black Saturday] there had been no major fires. People felt safe. But after Black Saturday, people were just absolutely shocked and shattered. There were a number of instances where people didn't want to work in their roles any more, which created difficulties because we were still in the middle of a very busy fire season and we needed people to do shifts (Logistics Officer 1).

Work becomes unsustainable, because practitioners cannot make sense of their experiences.

The Inquiry

In the event that practitioners are required to bring their situated knowledge to an inquiry, they enter another practice world – that of account-giving. This practice world becomes bereft of meaning if practitioners are not able 'tell their story,' generating *representational* anxiety.

The first thing they [the Royal Commissioners] asked was for a fricking courtroom to be built because it's familiar for the legal fraternity. I think there's a case for a Royal Commission when there has been an attempt to subvert the cause of justice. What the courtroom did was make people look like liars (Senior Fire Officer).

Nonetheless, there was evidence of resoluteness on the part of practitioners who set about to ensure that they were fully involved in the inquiry and able, as a result, to tell their stories. In doing so,

practitioners were able to participate in the *theoretical* coping (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015) conducted by the Royal Commission.

So, we [interviewee and a colleague] talked about incident controller qualifications and the structure of the reporting structure ... We were both in [before the Royal Commission] together, and what we did, we put up a model for what we thought may work ... and it became part of the recommendations ... We actually said; 'Well, this a way we think we could fix it.' We were more proactive than just saying; 'Oh we've got a problem, we've got a problem – you come up with the answers, right.' And then we influenced the recommendations ... there was a lot of good questions from the Commission itself ... and in the end 90 percent came out in the recommendations as we wanted it to be (Deputy Chief Officer 2).

Theoretical coping allows meaning to be restored. We “experience knowing on the basis of our own personal stories, the enactment of such knowing is always a matter of negotiation. The interplay between knowing and competence gives all constituents opportunities” (Nicolini et al., 2015: 14), but *only if* all constituents are included. If successful, this leads to new, *abstract* knowledge which can be made explicit and transferable (cf. Nonaka & von Krogh, 2009), but also ensuring that it is informed and contextualized by situated knowledge.

I think if that [less adversarial] approach is adopted, people will open up, people will offer their contribution to input into the review which gives us an honest and open appraisal of what actually happened and where they think improvements could be made. So even in the [Black Saturday] report, [there are examples where] people can see that; 'Ah my comments are reflected in here, de-identified in the report. So, [although] we don't know who has actually made those comments, the point has been made. It's been picked up on: there's a finding and there's a recommendation for implementation (Firefighter 2).

This abstract knowledge redresses the powerlessness associated with representational anxiety, as well as providing a firmer basis for successful organizational changes that are grounded in the specific experiences of practitioners. This increases the chances that recommendations can subsequently be embedded into the organizational context. In contrast, if more negative emotions, such as anger, are fuelled by the blaming and silencing that is associated with many inquiries (e.g., Boudes & Laroche, 2009), sensemaking will be inhibited, meaninglessness will intensify, and the likely result is paralysis and powerlessness.

Some people haven't stepped back into [emergency co-ordination] ... because they were hammered by the Royal Commission (Assistant Chief Officer 1).

In this case, work becomes unsustainable for the practitioner, because they are unable to use the inquiry to make collective sense of what happened and how such incidents might be avoided.

Implementation

Practitioners are expected to take this abstract knowledge that constitutes the inquiry's recommendations back into a third, re-organizing practice world. However, this practice world becomes meaningless if practitioners are not able to envision how abstract recommendations translate into specific, new organizational routines, structures, processes and culture, thereby generating *practical* anxiety.

But the 67 recommendations – the span of the recommendations to me doesn't span [all] the issues that it could have. So, the breadth of the recommendations, and then the shape of the recommendations often wasn't [clear]. It's like; 'Oh, that's curious, you're sort of chipped off a bit of the side of that issue, rather than nailed it.' And, yes, I think there's a whole other discussion around then how agencies and Departments respond to recommendations. You know, what you then do with those recommendations (Incident Controller 3).

If practitioners are to be resolute, meaning must be restored through a sensemaking process that encompasses *detached* coping.

The recommendations have resulted in degrees of changing the culture, changing the thinking, changing the approach for a whole range of things that weren't ostensibly part of the recommendations per se. [Instead, this] has come out of – how can we do this better [organizationally] thinking? (Project Manager 4).

If successful, the abstract knowledge produced by the inquiry can be contextualized, and *embedded* in the organization (Crossan et al., 1995), leading to successful implementation.

There have been some absolutely good things that came out of tragedy in the way that we work much more closely together now, and it's a much more coordinated approach (Emergency Coordination Manager 1).

This outcome was typically associated with positive emotions, such as confidence, trust and happiness. In contrast, if more negative emotions, such as apathy are fuelled by the uncertainty associated with abstract recommendations, as well as insincerity associated with 'face-saving' inquiries (e.g., Birkland, 2009), sensemaking will be inhibited, meaninglessness will intensify, and the likely result is paralysis and powerlessness.

A number of people actually just fell under the pressure of implementation (Public Information Officer 1).

In this case, work becomes unsustainable for the practitioner because they are unable to implement the organizational changes that will reduce the chances that another incident will occur in the future.

CONCLUSION

Our study shows how the emotional face of sustainable work can be managed across three different practice worlds (see Figure 1). Black Saturday was characterized by a breakdown in practical coping in the performing practice world – institutionalized routines and practices normally used during a bushfire failed. This practice world lost meaning, leading to existential anxiety as, as well as fear and sadness. Resoluteness appeared to be associated with more deliberate coping on the part of some practitioners during and after the incident, which in turn enabled them to develop knowledge about what had gone wrong from the vantage point of their situated position in the fires. Fear and sadness, on the other hand, appeared to paralyze individuals. The account-giving practice world also became meaningless when practitioners were not able to tell their stories to the inquiry. This led to representational anxiety, as well as anger. Resoluteness was associated with practitioners being involved in theoretical coping, which helped to transform their situated knowledge into the more abstract knowledge that constituted the recommendations. Anger on the other hand, appeared to paralyze individuals. Finally, the re-organizing practice world became meaningless when practitioners failed to understand how they could implement the recommendations, leading to practical anxiety as well as apathy. Resoluteness occurred as individuals took steps through detached coping to strategize and enact the changes that transformed the inquiry's abstract knowledge into knowledge embedded in the organization. Apathy, on the other hand, was more likely to be associated with paralysis.

– Figure 1 near here –

In sum, anxiety did not appear to prevent practitioners from successfully managing the emotional face of sustainable work, although some other emotions did. Practitioners in this scrutinized occupation could and did respond to anxiety with resoluteness: overcoming meaninglessness through various forms of sensemaking which, in turn, allowed them to transform situated to abstract to embedded knowledge. As knowledge was transformed, it became threaded through the practice world, providing a sustainable basis for practitioners to overcome problems and improve practices. Having said that, this was a fragile situation – more extreme emotions were all too easily stirred up during incidents, inquiries and implementation, resulting in paralysis and panic for some practitioners.

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Table 1: Summary of Analysis of Emotions

Emotion:	Identified from:	When experienced:	Linked to:
<i>Anxiety</i>	Accounts of feelings of worry, concern, shock, alarm, disbelief at being unable to control what was happening	During Black Saturday During the Royal Commission After the release of the recommendations	Severity of fires Adversarial nature of questioning and blaming Not knowing how to implement the recommendations
<i>Fear</i>	Accounts of feeling afraid of specific events	During Black Saturday	Potential loss of life/property
<i>Sadness</i>	Accounts of feelings of sorrow, despondency, grief	During and immediately after Black Saturday During the Royal Commission	Actual loss of life/property Treatment of colleagues
<i>Anger</i>	Accounts of indignation, outrage and displeasure	During the Royal Commission	Adversarial nature of questioning
<i>Apathy</i>	Accounts of indifference and listlessness	During the implementation of recommendations	Being made to go through the motions of implementation when they would be facing the same difficult set of circumstances again
<i>Confidence</i>	Accounts of self-assurance, self-regard	On playing an active role in Royal Commission On successfully implementing recommendations	Success in influencing deliberations and recommendations Success in enacting organizational change to improve emergency management
<i>Trust</i>	Accounts of closer bonds and improved working relationships	On successfully implementing recommendations	Closer working relationships Changes are seen as improving bushfire emergency management
<i>Happiness</i>	Accounts of contentment and pleasure	On successfully implementing recommendations	Changes are seen as improving bushfire emergency management

Table 2: Coding Categories

Category	Theoretical description	Inferred empirically from:
Anxiety		
<i>Existential</i>	The practice world of the incident becomes meaningless as individuals experience a sense of powerlessness in terms of being able to control the incident	Interviewees talk about not being able to control the fire through standard procedures during the incident
<i>Representational</i>	The practice world of the inquiry becomes meaningless because individuals do not feel able to participate equally in it	Interviewees talk about not being able to control the inquiry process or tell their story during the inquiry
<i>Practical</i>	The practice world of implementation becomes meaningless because individuals do not feel the changes will make any difference	Interviewees talk about not being able to control the organizational change process during implementation
Coping		
<i>Deliberate</i>	Individuals consciously and retrospectively reflect from their specific vantage point on what went wrong in their primary practice world	Interviewees talk about a new understanding of how to carry out their work during an incident
<i>Theoretical</i>	Individuals use technical expertise to examine what went wrong and/or provide a holistic explanation for future reference	Interviewees talk about a new understanding of what firefighting involves as a result of the inquiry
<i>Detached</i>	Individuals institute organizational changes to support and institutionalize solutions	Interviewees talk about the organizational changes that need to be implemented.
Knowledge		
<i>Situated</i>	Knowledge is idiosyncratic, local, tacit and partial, reflecting the particular conditions in which it was produced	Interviewees who played a direct role in the bushfires talk about their particular experiences and what they learned as a result
<i>Abstract</i>	Knowledge is explicit, objective, holistic and transferable; typically expressed in technical or expert terms	Interviewees talk about general lessons learned from the Royal Commission process
<i>Embedded</i>	Knowledge is incorporated into the organizational systems, structures, processes, etc.	Interviewees talk about specific organizational changes that will prevent previous situations from reoccurring.
Resoluteness	Allows individuals to understand their situation Makes other possibilities or ways doing things visible Provides power to allow individuals to address the meaninglessness engendered by anxiety	Interviewees talk about having made sense of what happened Black Saturday and developing new practices that will prevent the same problems from occurring again
Paralysis	Individuals are unable to escape the meaninglessness engendered by anxiety	Interviewees talk about the same issues that led to/associated with Black Saturday happening again

Figure 1: Model of Emotion, Sensemaking and Practice Worlds

