Disaster Recovery As Disorientation And Reorientation

As research on disasters in the tourism context matures, a more holistic understanding of how businesses and communities can recover is needed. Using the disorientation and reorientation framework, this study explores recovery as a place-based process. The perceptions and memories of key stakeholders of Binna Burra Lodge, which was affected by the 2019-2020 bushfires in Australia, are investigated and the analysis reveals two themes of disorientation and four of reorientation. It is proposed that various reorientation mechanisms can be deliberately activated to foster a smoother recovery process. Furthermore, this study shows that tourism-enabled social capital can assist disaster recovery in communities and that, through embracing traditional heritage, communities can not only deal with the loss but also prepare for future disasters.

Keywords: community, disorientation and reorientation framework, Binna Burra, bushfire, resilience,

1. Introduction

Tourism is increasingly vulnerable to the rising frequency and severity of disasters worldwide (Berbekova, Uysal & Assaf, 2021). In this context, it is crucial to understand how individuals, businesses and communities can respond to and recover from major disasters, i.e., external and unpredictable shocks that cause catastrophic changes (Faulkner, 2001, p.136). This understanding is increasingly important as disasters such as fires, floods, cyclones, drought becomes increasingly prevalent due to climate change (WMO 2019). This is particularly important for those reliant on or situated in the natural environment (Chan, Nozu & Zhou, 2021). The significance and pervasiveness of this issue in tourism is highlighted by recent literature reviews (e.g. Aliperti et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2017; Ritchie & Jiang, 2019), which generally reflect research with a social utility focus, often technical, operational or functional recovery frameworks (Pigeon & Rebotier, 2016).

Meanwhile, Marshall and Schrank (2014) acknowledge that business disaster recovery is a complex and iterative process taking place in the context of the recovery of individuals, families, and communities. To fully grasp how businesses and destinations recover, the lived experiences of individuals within the disaster's own context must be examined. This approach has been adopted in several tourism studies, with a focus on social capital (Guo, Zhang, Zhang, & Zheng, 2018; Wu, Gao, Cao & Papa, 2021), stakeholder engagement (Granville, Mehta & Pike, 2016; Fillimonau & De Coteau, 2019), stakeholder collaboration (Jiang & Ritchie, 2017) and resilience, more broadly (Cochrane, 2010; Lin, Kelemen & Tresidder, 2018; Yang et al., 2021). Less common are studies that focus on the actual place itself (i.e. spaces with their associated meanings, habits and symbolism). Place, through concepts such as place attachment, has been linked to community resilience in general (Cutter, et al., 2008;) and disaster recovery (Jamali & Nejat, 2016; Silver & Grek-Martin, 2015), including some in tourism disaster recovery (Adie, 2019; Zheng et al., 2019).

In line with Alperti et al.'s (2019) call for tourism researchers to engage with broader disaster literature, this paper adopts a disaster recovery framework developed by Cox and Perry (2011). They proposed that disaster recovery is an individual process of disorientation/reorientation within the context of place. Specifically, this study investigates the recovery of a tourism business at the heart of a rural community significantly impacted by the 2019-2020 Queensland (Australia) bushfires. Engaging community stakeholders and

drawing upon concepts of disorientation and reorientation from Cox and Perry's (2011) framework, this paper reveals how place-based elements of disasters affect the psycho-social recovery experience. In doing so, it attempts to bridge the reductionist thinking that makes recovery action possible and the complex and qualified approaches that embrace uncertainty and contradictions, opening up "better questions" as an alternative form of social utility in the disaster recovery process (Pigeon & Rebotier, 2016).

2. Literature review

2.1 Social utility and disaster recovery in tourism

The dominant approach to tourism disaster recovery often seeks to identify stages of recovery or tools that allow decision-makers to assess which actions should be undertaken and when. Mair, Ritchie and Walters's (2016) definition of disaster recovery as "the development and implementation of strategies and actions to bring the destination back to a normal (pre-event) condition or an improved state" (p.2) highlights this managerial focus. Widely accepted frameworks of tourism disaster management proposed by Faulkner (2001), Ritchie (2004), and Scott et al. (2007) fit in this broad category, for example identifying sub-phases of recovery, or roles for various stakeholders (e.g. Hystad & Keller, 2008). These frameworks have been applied to various disaster sites, for example, the 2015 earthquake in Nepal (Beirman, Upadhayaya, Pradhananga, & Darcy (2018), the Great East Japan earthquake (Henderson, 2013), Cyclone Larry in North Queensland (Prideaux, Coghlan & Falco-Mammone, 2008), the Australian bushfires in 2019 (Wen, Ying, Nguyen, & Teo, 2020) or more hypothetically, to investigate how to market destinations post-disaster (Okuyama, 2018). These efforts can be viewed within a social utility lens, seeking efficiency and efficacy in helping destinations evaluate their status and ability to recover from disasters. They are future-oriented, consequence-driven and policy-focused with a strong emphasis on cost-benefit analysis. Many of these take the form of assessment tools including the Tourism Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Destinations (Basurto-Cedeño & Pennington-Gray's, 2016) and Tourism Recovery Scorecard (Khazhai, Mahdavian & Platt, 2018). A central feature of these existing frameworks is their focus on the operational and solutionist aspects of recovery, as opposed to assessing the psychological dimensions of recovery.

2.3 Psycho-social aspects of disaster recovery in tourism

A second approach looks at the psycho-social aspects of recovery. Disasters are, at least, socially constructed (Cohen, 2007) affecting both places and people (Morrice, 2013). Recovery efforts should be community-centred with a focus on creating solutions that address the community's needs, taking social aspects into consideration and supporting the psychological recovery of individuals (Mannakkara & Wilkinson, 2014; Wright & Sharpley, 2018). Based on Ritchie and Jiang's (2019) analysis of the literature, these studies comprise only 5% of the research on tourism disasters, but this appears to be a growing area of research interest. This recent approach aligns more closely with the broader definition of disaster recovery as the 'differential process of restoring, rebuilding, and reshaping the physical, social, economic, and natural environment through pre-event planning and post-event actions' (Smith & Wenger, 2006, p. 237).

Yang et al. (2021) argued that tourism and community resilience studies usually focus on the relationship between tourism and community resilience or on building a community resilience framework. Indeed, many such studies overlap with the aforementioned managerial

approaches, by exploring for instance how to facilitate stakeholder engagement (Granville, Mehta & Pike, 2016; Fillimonau & De Coteau, 2019), collaboration (Jiang & Ritchie, 2017) and communication (Carter & Taylor, 2020). Others look at the role of capacity building (Tsai et al., 2016) and social capital in the resilience of destination communities (Guo et al., 2018;), with a view to providing managerial recommendations for enhancing community resilience.

As this area of study matures and the impact of disasters grows, there is arguably a need for increasing recognition of holistic and nuanced approaches to understanding how tourism destination communities recover from disasters, moving away from solely quantitative survey research techniques, towards narratives of place (Zheng et al., 2019), narratives of transition and hope (Tucket, Shelton & Bae, 2017), and studies of the co-creational ethos of recovery (e.g. Lin, Keleman & Tresidder, 2018). Sanders, Laing and Frost (2015) provided an early account of this approach by studying the role of post-disaster community events, acknowledging the importance of "grieving events" to rebuild community in the aftermath of Victoria's (Australia) 2009 Black Saturday fires.

2.3 Disorientation and reorientation framework

Cox and Perry (2011) proposed a disorientation and reorientation framework that captures the psycho-social processes following a disaster. They argued that *"the reorientation process emphasizes the critical importance of place not only as an orienting framework in recovery but also as the ground upon which social capital and community resilience are built"* (p.395). This framework may be particularly useful to understand how tourism-based communities (where the place is a central feature) recover by integrating core concepts of place, social capital and resilience, that are already understood as central to the recovery process in the existing tourism disaster recovery literature. To our knowledge, this is the first tourism study to adopt this framework, which has been adopted largely in the health-based approaches to disasters (e.g. Silver & Grek-Martin, 2015; Scannell, Cox, Fletcher, & Heykoop, 2016; Tagliocozzo, 2015).

Disorientation following a disaster occurs because there is direct and indirect loss of man-made and natural markers within a place, as well as psychological losses (e.g., displacement, distress) through the disruption to one's home and identity that are shaped by that place (Cox & Perry, 2011; Malone et al., 2011). The focus here is on the relationship to place in the context of disasters which dramatically transform landscapes or city scapes, independently of their nature. This can include a wide range of events such as tsunamis, bushfires, terrorist attacks (e.g. 9/11) or other events with similar outcomes (e.g. the Beirut explosions in 2020). As suggsted by Cox and Perry (2011) the question "who am I?" cannot be disconnected from the question "where am I?". Accordingly, the authors found that salient changes to familiar landscapes often resulted in psychological trauma such as disbelief and distress, regardless of whether individuals experienced direct or indirect losses or injuries from the disaster. Using a similar approach Malone, Pomeroy and Jones (2011) described the experiences of disaster survivors of Hurricane Katrina in Austin, Texas, and explored feelings of loss and grief, which further emphasised the significance of understanding disorientation, and its effects, on long-term recovery, as well as the importance of ensuring that survivors are not rushed into navigating their new reality.

The reorientation phase is a process of reconstructing one's identity and getting one's bearings within a previously familiar landscape or community that has been changed by a

disaster (Cox & Perry, 2011). While external agencies may focus on economic recovery efforts, local communities will seek to reorient themselves, first and foremost, vis-à-vis physical places, such as through seeking places to come together to share information and experiences. For example, Silver and Grek-Martin (2015) examined the impacts of the Force 3 tornado in Ontario, Canada and explained that physical changes to the damaged landscape had a considerable effect on the recovery process for residents. In addition, they found that efforts, such as volunteerism, re-greening and community activism to rebuild natural and manufactured structures, are community initiatives that renew feelings of togetherness and social cohesion for residents affected by disasters.

The disorientation and reorientation framework provides a more nuanced and lived understanding of the disaster recovery experience, helping those affected to move on from the disorientation caused by disasters. Managing disorientation and reorientation, therefore, has implications for service providers and destination leaders in communities engaged in supporting disasters survivors (Cox & Perry, 2011). In particular, Silver and Grek-Martin (2015) highlighted the value of the disorientation and reorientation framework in conceptualising disaster recovery as a cyclical process. Therefore, the framework helps to explain why residents report strong feelings of connectedness and community well after the disaster has passed, as the need for increasing social cohesion re-emerges repeatedly. The disorientation and reorientation phases have also been compared to the two different ways of coping with bereavement (Stroebe & Schut, 1999) which is beneficial for understanding the phases of loss and depression, followed by actively reconstructing life within a community.

The disorientation and reorientation framework has strong parallels in the wider disaster management literature. Various aspects of the disorientation following disasters have been investigated in existing literature under different labels including emotion-related concepts. For example, Ekanayake, Prince, Sumathipala, Siribaddana and Morgan (2013) examined loss and grief experienced by survivors of the 2004 Asian tsunami in Sri Lanka. Adie and de Bernardi (2020) and Morrice (2013) examined nostalgia felt by second home-owners affected by Hurricane Sandy and evacuees from Hurricane Katrina, respectively. Similarly, reorientation processes or themes have been explored in topics such as meaning making (Park, 2016) and identity (Baker & Hill, 2013) in the recovery stage.

3. Methodology

1. *Study context*

Founded in 1933, Binna Burra Lodge is recognised as one of the first nature-based tourism businesses in Queensland (Australia), adjacent to the trailheads of UNESCO's World Heritage Listed Lamington National Park (Figure 1, Cotterell et al., 2021). Located at the end of the road that connects to the rural town of Beechmont, the lodge is a commercial tourist destination that has attracted millions of domestic and international visitors. Its accommodation facilities include 1930s-50s timber-shingled cabins, self-contained apartments (built in 2012) and camping accommodation. Before the bushfire, the lodge was renowned for its restaurant offering stunning views across the Coomera Valley, where many Queenslanders celebrated their wedding and/or honeymoon, as well as for its historic library that served many generations of the local community. The extensive design landscape retained considerable evidence of its early layout of accommodation and facilities making Binna Burra Lodge an important heritage-listed landmark in Queensland that demonstrated the evolution of the nature tourism industry.

In September 2019, the first bushfires sparked in several places across Queensland due to severe prolonged drought and unfavourable wind conditions. Although some fronts would be extinguished in a rather timely manner, other early fires and new ones would not be extinguished before early 2020. Furthermore, severe bushfires also started burning in several other Australian states which experienced extensive devastation and state of emergency (Richards et al. 2020). Overall, the Black Summer bushfires ravaged around 30 million hectares, destroyed over 5,900 buildings and killed 34 people (Binskin et al, 2020).

Binna Burra was impacted from the very start of the 2019-2020 bushfire season when , 42 original heritage-listed timber cabins and the lodge, together with 11 nearby homes and portions of the World Heritage natural habitat were lost to the bushfires on 8th September 2019. Binna Burra Lodge closed, as was its single access road, due to severe damage. During that period, a temporary café run by the lodge opened in nearby Beechmont, until the COVID-19 pandemic forced its closure. Eleven months later (August 2020), the access road was re-established, and soon after the lodge reopened. This study was carried out following the reopening, approximately one year after the bushfire.

Figure 1 Location of Binna Burra Lodge (Source Binna Burra Lodge).

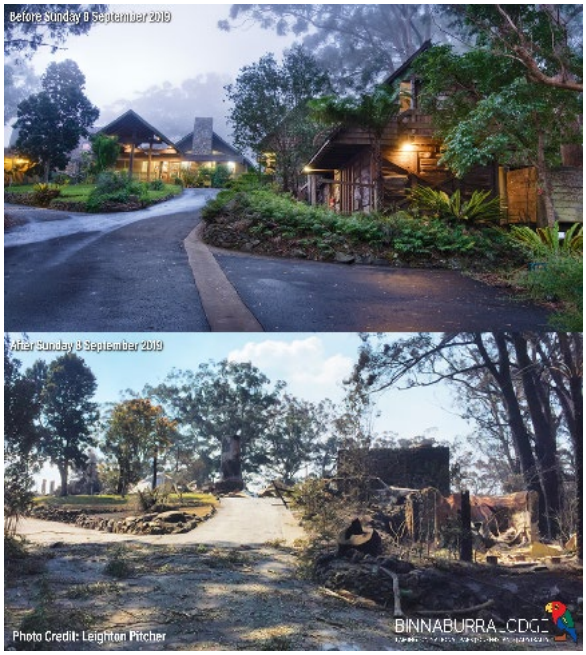

Figure 2 The Binna Burra Lodge before and after the bushfire (Source: Binna Burra Lodge; Photography by Leighton Pitcher)

2. *Methods*

A qualitative method, guided by an interpretivist paradigm, was employed to allow multiple voices to be heard (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Data were collected in the form of interviews to facilitate the gathering of detailed personal narratives of experiences and beliefs (Silver & Grek-Martin, 2015). Both purposive and snowball sampling strategies were used to recruit participants in order to capture a variety of perspectives within the different stakeholder groups affected by the disaster.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, either face-to-face or online, depending on the participants' preference. Participants were asked to describe their memories, stories, feelings, and thoughts in relation to the bushfires. The interview script was organised in four sections: socio-demographic, perceptions and preparation in lead-up to the bushfires, immediate reactions and impacts and the post-bushfire period. Following the core principles of qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2016), the interviews began with a set of open-ended questions to understand the participants' relationship with the region affected by the bushfires. During the interviews, researchers regularly repeated the interviewees' responses to ensure validation and credibility. A total of 29 interviews were undertaken, with various stakeholders (Table 1), lasting 30-120 minutes, recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Table 1. List of participants and their status within the community

#	**Description**
1	Second-home owner/visitor
2	Second-home owner/visitor
3	Local Business
4	Second-home owner/visitor
5	Staff member / Shareholder

~~6~~	~~Staff member / Shareholder~~
~~7~~	~~Staff member / Shareholder~~
~~8~~	~~Staff member / Shareholder, local business~~
~~9~~	~~Volunteer & Government / Emergency Services~~
~~10~~	~~Volunteer~~
~~11~~	~~Local resident & Volunteer~~
~~12~~	~~Staff member / Shareholder, local Resident~~
~~13~~	~~Local resident & Volunteer~~
~~14~~	~~Local Business & Local Resident~~
~~15~~	~~Government / Emergency Services & Local Resident~~
~~16~~	~~Volunteer~~
~~17~~	~~Volunteer~~
~~18~~	~~Local Resident~~
~~19~~	~~Second-home owner/visitor & Volunteer~~
~~20~~	~~Staff member / Shareholder~~
~~21~~	~~Local Resident~~
~~22~~	~~Local Resident~~
~~23~~	~~Government / Emergency Services~~
~~24~~	~~Government / Emergency Services & Local Resident~~
~~25~~	~~Government / Emergency Services & Volunteer~~
~~26~~	~~Government / Emergency Services~~
~~27~~	~~Second-home owner/visitor~~
~~28~~	~~Volunteer~~
~~29~~	~~Second-home owner/visitor & Volunteer~~

Description	Number of Participants	Interviewee Code
Staff member / Shareholder	4	1, 2, 3, & 4
Staff member / Shareholder / Local Business	1	5
Staff member / Shareholder / Local Resident	1	6
Volunteer	4	7, 8, 9, & 10
Local Business	1	11
Local Business / Local Resident	1	12
Local Resident	3	13, 14, & 15
Local Resident / Volunteer	2	16, & 17
Second-home owner/ Visitor	4	18, 19, 20, & 21
Second-home owner/ Visitor / Volunteer	2	22, & 23
Government / Emergency Services	2	24, & 25
Government / Emergency Services / Local Resident	2	26, & 27
Government / Emergency Services / Volunteer	2	28, & 29

An abductive reasoning approach (Pierce, 1978), which combines elements from both deductive and inductive reasoning, was adopted in this study. Abduction allows an inference to the best explanation of observed data. Thus, no *a priori* assumptions are made about the phenomenon in question, while also ensuring that existing knowledge ~~is not ignored~~ that could explain the observations arising from the data collection is not ignored. According to

this approach, existing theory guides the analysis of the data while leaving room for other themes to emerge (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Given its potential, the use of abductive reasoning has been increasing in tourism research to elucidate theory using data (Milwood & Roehl, 2018) and to generate new knowledge (Tussyadiah, 2014).

In a similar way to Cox and Perry (2011), the goal of the analysis was to identify the core concepts related to disorientation and reorientation to enable a better understanding of the recovery process. This analysis began with multiple readings of the transcripts, so that researchers became immersed in the data. The contents were then coded by a team of three researchers. The initial codes were then grouped to allow the identification of categories or themes related to the disorientation and reorientation stages. In order to ensure transparency, trustworthiness and credibility of the data several steps were taken including the initial independent coding of data, the use of thick descriptions and inter-coding checks (Goodell, Stage & Cooke, 2016). Subsequently, the contents were shared and discussed among the project researchers to validate common themes in relation to disorientation and reorientation, in addition to allowing new themes to emerge. Presentation of the data takes the form of "thick descriptions" to present "detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another" or in this case to place (Denzin, 1989, p. 83). This serves to illustrate how the elements of disorientation and reorientation translate into a lived context; this context is considered most appropriate here given the subject nature of the research topic.

4. Findings

The analysis revealed two disorientation themes - (1) disbelief, distress and confusion; and (2) feelings of loss – and four reorientation themes - (1) sense of community; (2) visionary and adaptative leadership; (3) links to Indigenous cultural heritage; and (4) gratitude and appreciation.

1. *Disorientation themes*

1. *Disbelief, distress and confusion*

The initial response to the impending bushfires, and in the immediate aftermath of the event, was a feeling of disorientation, caused by the disruption to regular life. People reported feeling distressed, confused, and uncertain about what was happening as roads were closed off and the landscape changed from familiar to threatening. Respondents used terms such as *incredulous* (R229), and *worried and scared* (R243) to describe their feelings at that time. One of the most profound initial emotional responses was distress. As one respondent recalled '*we got a knock at 12 o'clock in the night to say, well, the fires have approached (…) so now the fire could even come to our house. And at that point, it became very real that we were at danger'* (~~R21~~R14). Even firefighters, used to dealing with the threat of fire, had a difficult time with the situation. One participant recalls the dramatic situation:

> *The fire was raging all around us, it was, you know, burning embers, and for the first time in my entire firefighting life I, I actually lost my nerve. I remember getting out of the truck and the wind was just howling around us, you know, 65-70 kilometre per hour winds out, howling around us, and I thought 'what, what are you doing here? Why are you here?' (*R285)

With the evacuation of the lodge and several houses in the community, local residents experienced the stress and confusion of gathering belongings with very little time, deciding

what to pack and facing the fear of returning to a home that has been destroyed. One respondent explained this feeling, stating: *'And in our minds, we didn't know what was important, what was precious, because that is such a short time to understand and pick up what's precious, what's important* (~~R21~~R14).

At the same time, respondents noted that continuation of their daily life with local events still going ahead added to the confusion for them, as explained by one participant:

> *I remember my husband said to me in the morning I needed to pack, to pack a bag. This is not, this is not looking good. (…) And then I was checking, I said that the sports carnival [a sporting competition] was going ahead. It can't be that bad if the carnival is on. And all the kids are going to school. And the parents are all going to [the] carnival. It can't be that bad* (R17~~3~~).

The preceding quotes illustrate how respondents were very challenged by the immediacy of the situation and were confused because aspects of their regular life (such as a sporting carnival, going to school, etc.) continued as usual, while other parts were significantly disrupted by the urgent reality of a dramatically changing place, represented by the proximity of the fire, the embers, the howling wind, and road closures. Feelings of disorientation resulted in most notably, negative emotional responses of distress and anxiety. The confusion caused by the fire also heighten feelings of being out of control and disbelief that the fire event was happening to them at that moment, and this resulted in them feeling disorientated from normal life.

4.1.2. Feelings of loss

Feelings of loss~~,~~ were strongly felt by individuals~~,~~ resulting from changes to the places around them. ~~,~~T ~~t~~he destruction of the lodge was seen as '*an incredible loss'* (~~R16~~R8), or '*the biggest life interruption ever'* (R1~~5~~). A local resident remembers the moment he realised the lodge had burnt down:

> *he was standing near the bottom of the drive at the fire shed (…) he just looked at me and said it's gone. And of course, he was referring to Binna Burra, so we had a hug and a cry. That was the toughest moment once we realised Binna Burra had burnt down.'* (~~R14~~R12). The use of the phrase "it's gone" is particularly poignant in this quote that expresses the loss of place.

The expressed emotions of grief related to different realms including the loss of natural heritage, cultural heritage and livelihood. From a natural heritage perspective, participants felt the impacts on the national park noting that '*Binna Burra is such a beautiful nature reserve, and, you know, it's terrible to think that so much of it has been destroyed'* (~~R16~~R8) and showed concern *'for the flora and fauna that has been lost"* (R20~~4~~), remembering that '*there was a lot of forest birds there, there were koalas that succumbed unfortunately'* (~~R3~~R11).

Regarding cultural heritage, respondents keenly felt the loss of the heritage buildings that comprised the lodge, as well as the items and documents that disappeared with the fire: '*we've lost all that heritage, building practices from that era*' (~~R12~~R6). This was described by another participant: '*Losing those iconic buildings and all of the artifacts (all those small items are important because they tell a story of the generations of effort that went into maintaining this gateway to the natural environment*' (R4~~20~~). Lastly, from a livelihood perspective, Binna Burra Lodge was the area's largest employer before it burnt down. Nearly

sixty staff members lost their jobs through the destruction of the lodge; consequently, the economic and psycho-social effects on the local community were very significant. Similar effects were also felt by the Friends of Binna Burra, a volunteering organisation that assists Binna Burra. One of its members reflected, '*part of our common goal, if you like, has disappeared'* (~~R16~~R8).

The widely reported feelings of loss revealed the strong emotional ties of individuals to the lodge and its surroundings. The long history of the lodge as a place that brought together bushwalkers, families and school camps coupled with the cohesion it provided within the local community's social fabric meant that individuals had a panoply of memories associated with it, either directly or through the lived experiences of loved ones. According to participants, Binna Burra '*almost felt like a second home'*(~~R3~~R11), it '*held a lot of memories'* (R4~~20~~) given that '*a lot of important events in people's lives occurred here; they met here, they had their honeymoon here, they were conceived here, they got buried here*' (R~~3~~117).

This emotional connectedness to the place, the associated buildings and landscape and consequential loss were also felt by previous Binna Burra Lodge staff, who in some cases travelled long distances to grieve with the community. For instance, one respondent was overcome with emotion when he witnessed the reaction of a past staff member seeing the destroyed site for the first time, stating: '*I went up to him and I could see he was crying. He worked here in the 1970s and he helped build the barn, he helped to do the extensions on here. (...) He lives in Moravian northern Cairns; he came down to see the place'* (R16~~1~~). Furthermore, the emotional connectedness to the place was also noticeable in residents' descriptions of the area, which included references to its uniqueness and the surrounding nature. As described by one participant: *'I feel a connection with the nature here that is hard to articulate with words. Yeah, I think there's a, there's something about this mountain in particular', a lot of the people that I'm friends with on the mountain, they know exactly what I'm talking about. There's particular energy that I that I feel quite connected to'* R (R15~~22~~).

2. ***Reorientation themes***

1. *Sense of community: here and beyond*

The strongest reorientation theme was related to the role of community in the healing and recovery process. The term 'community' is used here to describe not only local residents but also the wider community which extends beyond the geographical boundaries of the region to include past visitors, as well as current and past volunteers and staff residing in other areas.

A key aspect that reflected the reorienting effect of community was the sharing of grief. As one staff member reflected, '*there were a lot of people going through the same thing and I think that was the biggest support (...) just knowing that everyone was feeling the same'* (~~R5~~R1*).* The value of shared grief was further emphasised by a member of the volunteering organisation linked to the lodge who organised a gathering after the fire: '*that was really nice because we just needed to see each other and talk about it and everything else, you know, you need to grieve together*' (~~R16~~R8). While the original gathering places had disappeared, new places were being created, building new meaning for many within the community to allow for reconnection within a changed landscape.

Ultimately, the shared grief appeared to ignite a stronger sense of community which was noticeable across two levels. At the local level, a stronger connection was established as new links among the residents were developed because of the disaster. Interviewees reported

developing new and more meaningful connections, being more aware of each other and this engendering a '*huge desire to connect with [the] community'* (R9~~17~~). Participants also reported there was a closer relationship between the lodge and the local community, who engaged more actively with the lodge after the reopening. There was also an enhanced understanding of one's individual role in the collective community as reflected by a comment from a staff member:

> '*Understanding our business role, community and my role in the business and how I connect with community up here. (…) I met so many people that I hadn't met before. I understand what their role is in community and what they do, I understand how they perceive Binna Burra, what they expect from Binna Burra'* (R1421~~1~~).

On a global level, it was apparent that the Binna Burra community extended beyond the immediate physical place of the forest and the lodge to include people from all over the world. This is perhaps somewhat different from other studies of disorientation/reorientation in the aftermath of disasters and highlights the special role of tourism in recovery. The sentimental value of Binna Burra for people across the globe became more evident as past visitors and staff reached out to those affected through social media. The following interviewee exemplified how important this was to those close to the lodge, stating, *'I'm just realising today what Binna Burra is, it's a lot more than just a collection of buildings, it's a community, it's a feeling, it's a whole lot of stuff, memories, people who've been coming up here for forever'* (R3~~7~~).

Emerging from the discourse related to closer connections and a tight-knit community was a term describing the recovery efforts of Binna Burra - *solidarity tourism*. The expression was used to elaborate on how tourism businesses can leverage their social capital in the recovery. As mentioned by a staff member, '*when you are recovering, you tap into markets where there is a loyalty factor, people will keep coming back'* (R16~~1~~). The significant booking rates reported by staff after the reopening of the lodge confirmed that visitors wanted to reconnect with Binna Burra, and this contributed to its recovery. The business further capitalised on that solidarity by opening a temporary café in the nearby township of Beechmont. Locals praised the initiative, seeing the café as a place to come together and share memories, again highlighting the importance of linking physical places with social capital and resilience in disaster recovery.

2. *Visionary, adaptive leadership*

Different aspects of recovery were facilitated by leadership, with participants strongly expressing their appreciation for the efforts demonstrated at various levels. At the organisational level, having a vision with a focus on achieving practical outcomes and maintaining a positive outlook was viewed as crucial as highlighted in the following quote, '*it is extremely important that you have practical and visionary leadership. Somebody who, who can just work through this and systematically take the staff with wisdom'* (~~R16~~R8). The leadership, drive and passion of the chairperson of the lodge was seen as a key contributor in the reorientation phase. It was further suggested that such leadership was extremely important in inspiring and guiding the response of the community. further reinforcing the previous theme of a sense of community. An interviewee commented, '*I think people can work together because someone helps them to work together. There may have been a community response, but in this particular case, there was at least one key person galvanising that response'* (R18).

From the perspective of Binna Burra, respondents also reported various leadership efforts across the different facets of recovery. For example, to help the staff made redundant because of the fire find new employment opportunities, the lodge's management organised a jobs fair with local employers. Another initiative was gaining funding support from the government to rebuild the single road leading to the lodge that was destroyed by the fire.

Leadership in the local community was also considered fundamental to the response and recovery phases, again with particular reference to place – as one respondent put it: *'just holding that place to be'*, a phrase reminiscent of "holding space" often used in the healing arts. This respondent was describing the significant role that a local volunteering organisation, the Beechmont Country Women's Association played in the response, noting '*the way they rallied around to support these firefighters with food and making sure that you know, just holding that place to be, and I thought that was beautiful leadership'* (R14~~21~~). The efforts and leadership from the firefighting community, volunteer groups, local government, and even single individuals coordinating the response to the fires, managing the logistics and donations, and communicating effectively were extremely valued.

Overall, effective leadership at an individual, organisational and community level emerge as critical to support reorientation following a disaster event. Leadership can take various forms from creating spaces for reflection and grief to galvanising support and leading the rebuilding of both infrastructure and morale, highlighting the close ties between physical space and elements of social capital and resilience. Furthermore, the leadership efforts also enable other reorientation themes.

3. *Linking to Indigenous cultural heritage*

Another reorientation theme expressed by participants was the link to Aboriginal cultural heritage, particularly relating to fire and land management. The analysis of the discourse of participants unveiled the belief that understanding the relationship and connection between Indigenous people and the land is critical in the reorientating phase in assisting participants to move forward and enhancing preparedness for any future bushfires.

The link to Aboriginal cultural heritage took different forms. At one level, individuals sought knowledge and meaning from Aboriginal traditions and were able to find comfort and solace in the Indigenous approach to managing country and fire over many generations. As recalled by one participant, the Indigenous Peoples *'know the land and the fire; and those were the voices I wanted to hear […] First Nations voices in terms of fire on the land'* (R15~~22~~). In this movement towards Indigenous heritage and the search for meaning through a connection to place, several participants highlighted the differences between the traditional and the modern approach to responding to fire. The following excerpts demonstrate such differences, highlighting the perceived need to change the contemporary relationship with fire and accept its role in nature:

> *If you ask our Indigenous people who live here, it's happened; they call onto the fire, they burn. So it's quite natural in the Australian landscape. We don't need to be scared. I think we just need to know how to work with (it).'* (R14~~21~~); '*there's respect, but it's not feared. So I've been having lots of conversations with her (Aboriginal elder) and doing a lot of research into the role fire plays in traditional life and how we've moved so far away from that* (R1~~73~~).

Interviewees also noted the importance of learning from these traditional approaches as part of the reorientation of the disaster and the need for '*Indigenous mentoring, support and wisdom'* (R1522) for reducing the likelihood and severity of future disasters. In addition, the disaster was seen as a significant opportunity to establish closer links to the Indigenous culture and to re-connect the place with its cultural origins. For example, one interviewee stated: '*we have this incredible opportunity now to say, look to the Indigenous culture and communities and say 'Hey, we need help, what can we do? And how do we do it?' And then we educate people.'* (R285). while another noted, '*And there is so much evidence that the way fire was used by people who've lived so much longer than all the Caucasians. (…) Let's really take the lessons from that'* (R816). Initial steps in that direction have already been taken by Binna Burra Lodge with one interviewee commenting '*The other thing we're moving into big-time now is a Reconciliation Action Plan. (….) We really want to ingrain that in the new Binna Burra, in the master planning and the culture'* (R12R6). Another interviewee stated:

> '*There's a renewed contact with the local Aboriginal people, and that you know that healing ceremony where you were, that was incredibly moving and if, we are capable of something that has been so incredibly difficult in this country to establish, if we at Binna Burra are capable of really developing a good relationship and building things together and showing that it's possible, wouldn't that be wonderful?'* (R816).

The findings of this study therefore reinforce the importance of linking to the original custodians of the land, who hold such a strong sense of place. In particular, drawing from the knowledge of Indigenous peoples was seen as a way to explain and recover from this disaster, providing an orientation to assist understanding and learning from this tragedy. This is all the more noteworthy as place is a fundamental identity concept for Indigenous Australians, underpinning resilience (Smith, 1999).

4. *Gratitude and appreciation*

The last reorientation theme evident in the narratives concerned a shift of mindset, reflecting a sense of gratefulness which positively contributed to the recovery trajectory. When remembering the response efforts, interviewees mentioned numerous stories of support, initiative and kindness by emergency services, residents, visitors and strangers. As one respondent stated, '*people's willingness to get in and help and do whatever they can, that was just brilliant, you know, we couldn't have done it'* (R161), with another further emphasising that this '*ability to dig in and do it was amazing and often nearly brought us to tears'* (R1028). These feelings of gratefulness were strongly linked with the theme of community where the efforts of others were highly valued, and the gratitude helped cement the sense of community.

In addition, when coping with the loss, participants demonstrated a clear effort to put things in perspective and acknowledge what was protected. For instance, when describing their gratitude, one participant mentioned:

> *We've got people who have been displaced from their homes (...) This has happened before, it's happened again now, with [the] bushfire. But we have the privilege of being able to go back, so there's a gratitude there; but also respect and understanding of the history and the fact that we are not the first people who have been displaced* (R1522)

Seeing evidence that some elements of Binna Burra were not destroyed by the fire and retaining the opportunity to reconnect to these places was also instrumental in recovery. For

instance, an interviewee commented, "*I'm so glad that I came up here to see some of the things are still there. Groom's cottage is still here; those big trees leading up to the lodge are still there"* (~~R3~~R11). There was also gratitude for the recovery efforts that made the return to Binna Burra possible. When describing the process of reopening the only access road to the lodge, one participant stated '*It's very clear why it took so long and, you know, we can only be grateful that you know so much money from, you know, public money has been spent to create recreate access'* (R8~~16~~).

Lastly, when reflecting on the disaster and its implications, respondents reported a renewed sense of gratitude, as well as an enhanced attitude of not taking things for granted and accepting a new reality. This was observed in a few excerpts: '*I got a bit more of time to appreciate what I have and the people around me'* (~~R8~~R5); *'I definitely have a higher value and a whole level of appreciation and respect for what we have and what we could have lost"* (~~R14~~R12). Thus, having a sense of gratefulness for what was not lost) in the fires, for the recovery efforts and the community, as well as for the opportunity to return and reconnect was also present when individuals described the disruption caused by the fires and how it changed them as individuals.

5. Discussion and Implications

By adopting a psycho-social approach this study aligns itself with recently emerging paradigms in the disaster recovery literature (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019), and extends previous tourism research by specifically focussing on the role of place in linking resilience, social capital, and disaster recovery. The disorientation and reorientation lens provides a powerful framework for how individuals and communities recover from disasters in tourism destinations, using place as the space in which people orient themselves and providing the context within which social capital and community disaster resilience emerge (Cox & Perry, 2011). We argue a need for a better understanding of how place influences emergent practices that are required to deal with complex, evolving situations. We~~It~~ also suggest~~s~~ that adaptive leadership, which is tightly linked to local conditions and emergent practices, is crucial in dealing with increasingly complex issues associated with disaster response and recovery in tourism destinations (Breakspear, 2017).

~~From a practical perspective, this lens is useful for tourism community stakeholders' efforts to minimise disorientation effects and to maximise the effectiveness of reorientation processes. Understanding the psychological and social processes following a disaster can assist prevention and intervention efforts (Park, 2016). Unveiling the disorientation themes and their contributors can lead to the creation of tailored initiatives that assist individuals and tourism communities through this challenging time. Likewise, the reorienting themes can be fostered through adaptive management, emergent practice and strong adaptive leadership by communities to enhance their overall resilience to crises and disasters independently of their nature. Ultimately, an enhanced understanding of how individuals respond to and recover from disasters can lead to what Pigeon and Rebotier (2016) refer to as better questions that can aid in more effective management of response and recovery efforts (Cox & Perry, 2011).~~

From a theoretical perspective, very few articles if any, have investigated the linkages between disorientation/reorientation and tourism. Our study is the first tourism study to adopt this framework and therefore contributes to tourism and place attachment bodies of knowledge as well as the wider disaster management literature. Knowing that the effects of climate change are increasing risk from disasters and thus situations of

disorientation/reorientation in tourist areas, this study shows that further research is needed, noticeably in identifying what the role of tourism is in empowering community recovery and resilience. This could also open new tourism avenues for visitors, founded on a place-based knowledge and desire to contribute to community well-being, of the sort recommended by regenerative tourism (Becken & Kaur, 2021).

This paper identifies two disorientation themes - disbelief, distress and confusion, and feelings of loss – and four reorientation themes - of sense of community, visionary and adaptative leadership, linking to cultural heritage, and gratitude and appreciation, – experienced by stakeholders following a disaster. The primary disorientation themes are aligned to those identified in previous studies (Cox & Perry, 2011; Malone, Pomeroy & Jones, 2011) with the tourism context of Binna Burra adding an extra layer to the disorientation caused by a disaster. As noted by Morrice (2013), disasters affect not only the physical structures of places but also the emotional attachments people have to those places. The stress and confusion in the immediacy of the situation were also felt by visitors who need to be evacuated, and, to a lesser extent, by those who follow the events from a distance. This cannot be compared to the distress experienced by residents directly affected by the fires but it needs to be acknowledged. Similarly, feelings of loss post-fire were felt by current and past visitors and staff. The notion of loss felt by those connected to Bina Burra and its surroundings was similar to the nostalgia described by Adie and De Bernardi (2021).

In addition to the similarities regarding the disorientation experienced, some of the reorienting themes including – a sense of community, gratitude - build upon existing research on individuals and communities experiencing the disruption of a disaster (Cox & Perry, 2011; Silver & Grek-Martin, 2015). This study also extends this literature by identifying the reorientation potential of Indigenous cultural heritage, a highly localised, place-based theme, as well as how emotional connection to the destination extends well beyond the local community through tourism and social media.

Overall, these findings reinforce the notion that recovery is a multifaceted psycho-social process that ties the physical recovery of space to the mental wellbeing of a community as well the importance of understanding the intricacies of such processes to assist the community to re-establish itself physically and emotionally after a disaster. The study also demonstrates that the place's ability to foster social capital and resilience can assist economic recovery and the sustainability of businesses. Whilst the role of communities and their ability to assist in disaster recovery has been widely discussed in the literature (Coles & Buckle, 2004; Cox & Perry, 2011), this research highlights that key recovery ingredients such as sharing and dialogue are key to recovery (e.g. Jiang & Ritchie, 2017) should be considered through the creation of spaces and initiatives to allow individuals in the community to come together (c.f. Sanders et al., 2015). Furthermore, the tourism context here is unique in that the notion of community extends beyond those individuals located within the geographical boundaries of the disaster. The community includes former visitors, both locally and internationally, ~~affected indirectly~~, who may have an emotional connection to the place, returning to support its recovery.

The analysis undertaken suggests that the severity of the impacts of a disaster, and, at the same time, the potential for recovery, are particularly accentuated in tourism destinations, given this broader notion of community. It was noted that Binna Burra is a special place with strong links to various communities, such as Friends of Binna Burra and past staff as well as visitors from various parts of Australia and the world. These links were important in the

recovery where stakeholders found comfort in support from that extended community. Shared memories of the place provided through messages and emails of solidarity were important but leveraging the emotional attachment people have to Binna Burra was pivotal in attracting visitors back when the site reopened. Such findings highlight the potential of the extended community and its solidarity in the recovery process. Social media can also play a vital role in maintaining relationships and building new, and extending existing, networks to assist recovery. The importance of place attachment has been highlighted previously, but rarely in tourism recovery studies (one example being Zheng et al., 2019), although it is sometimes alluded to through other similar constructs (e.g. Wakil, Sun & Chan, 2021; Adie & Bernardi, 2021). It is however strongly present in the bushfire risk literature, for example, Lohm and Davis (2015) and Reid, Beilin and McLennan (2020). We argue that it is important to extend this place-based approach to the literature on disaster recovery in tourism.

From a practical perspective, this paper also highlights a number of key elements arising from the analysis. Central amongst these is the role of leadership in the recovery process of tourism businesses and communities. Our findings are relevant for improving understanding of the relevance of leadership traits and actions that can better support communities and tourism destinations as they recover from disasters. In the latter phases of the recovery process, the renewed sense of gratitude felt within the community highlights the importance of a mind shift among individuals dealing with the impacts of disasters. Understanding the loss and healing process and valuing what remains is crucial to allow individuals and communities to recover. Furthermore, communities can enhance their resilience by having discussions about the assets (e.g., cultural heritage, natural environment, buildings, fauna and flora etc.) that are highly valued and how to protect them. Overall, a strengthened sense of community, place and togetherness can be harnessed to enhance resilience in the face of future crises and disasters.

Furthermore, this paper addresses calls in the previous literature to engage more meaningfully with traditional knowledge in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery (Elias, Tran, Nakashima & Shaw, 2009; Miller, 2020). The present study highlights the value of embracing Indigenous knowledge and traditions to assist recovery from fire disasters. Results suggest that Aboriginal approaches and knowledge can facilitate the healing process, assist individuals in understanding fire and its meaning, and enable the development of a non-fear-based relationship with fire in the environment. Such findings are quite significant for tourism communities, where future tourism experiences can be developed to foster that relationship. Such developments are relevant for Australia, but also for other countries that have been fortunate in retaining Indigenous knowledge and heritage. Besides the emotional contribution, it was emphasised that the cool burns associated with cultural burning techniques can have a significant role in the prevention or at least reducing the impact of future fires as noted by others (Freeman et al. 2021). This belief adds to the overall argument for the need to better integrate Indigenous knowledge in fire management processes.

Overall, ~~this~~the disorientation/reorientation lens is useful for tourism community stakeholders' efforts to minimise disorientation effects and to maximise the effectiveness of reorientation processes. Understanding the psychological and social processes following a disaster can assist prevention and intervention efforts (Park, 2016). Unveiling the disorientation themes and their contributors can lead to the creation of tailored initiatives that assist individuals and tourism communities through this challenging time. Likewise, the reorienting themes can be fostered through adaptive management, emergent practice, and strong adaptive leadership by communities to enhance their overall resilience to crises and

disasters, independently of their nature. Ultimately, an enhanced understanding of how individuals respond to and recover from disasters can lead to what Pigeon and Rebotier (2016) refer to as better questions that can aid in more effective management of response and recovery efforts (Cox & Perry, 2011).

6. Limitations, directions for future research and concluding remarks

The main limitations of this study relate to the focus and timing of data collection. While gathering the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders, the focus of this study was on a single location - Binna Burra in South-East Queensland, Australia. However, we believe that this place-based approach to assessing how a nature-based tourism business directly impacted by devastating bushfires can recover provides valuable lessons for similar operations elsewhere, nationally and internationally. The lessons learned here provide a platform for future research that builds on descriptive case studies to provide a more detailed investigation of recovery from various types of disasters, across communities to investigate points of commonality and distinction. Such a broad investigation could explore which features and processes contribute most to resilience.

A second limitation of this study was the timing of data collection. Data were collected around the first anniversary of the fires, which might explain the stronger evidence of reorientation themes. While respondents were still able to recount their perspectives associated with the distinct phases of the disaster, future research should collect data at multiple points in time to explore how individuals and communities react throughout the multi-stage process of dealing with disasters. For example, the immediacy of the disaster may generate stronger feelings within the community in the initial stages as opposed to how they may recall these feelings once more removed from the time of the disaster.

Finally, future research could expand on the notion of solidarity tourism to understand how destinations and businesses can leverage their existing networks to enhance their recovery process. In particular, how can tourism be leveraged to enhance social capital in communities and thus strengthen the relationship between tourism and resilience? This is particularly significant in the current COVID-19, "#newnormal" context, where many scholars and responsible tourism advocates are wondering whether tourism should be re-localised in the context of the dual threats of the pandemic and climate change. A re-localisation of tourism has obvious impacts on place attachment, and thus how we might leverage the orientation themes identified here in dealing with disaster recovery.

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