Social ties matter - experiencing and recovering from bushfires

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The Beyond Bushfires study findings provide insights into the impacts of the Black Saturday disaster experience and what made a difference to mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Both the disaster experience and the subsequent major life stressors were shown to have a direct and prolonged impact on mental health and wellbeing. A particularly strong finding in terms of recovery was that social ties matter. Close emotional ties, social networks and involvement in local community groups and organisations all contribute in different ways to resilience and recovery.

Associate Professor Lisa Gibbs is Deputy Director of the Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program at The University of Melbourne. She leads a range of large, complex community-based child and family health studies exploring sociocultural and environmental influences on health and wellbeing. For the past 5 years she has had a particular focus on leading a disaster recovery research program.