



## Background

### From small beginnings ...

In March 2013 Bert Dorgelo, the Manager of the Tasman Health and Community Service (also a member of the Bush Fire Recovery Committee) approached 'Out on a Limb' (OOAL) to ask if the organisation would be willing to collaboratively organize and fund a small photographic competition and exhibition to be held at the Tasman Health and Community Service in Nubeena. The exhibition opened on 21st June 2013 and finished at the end August 2013.

Out on a Limb (OOAL) is the Tasman Branch of Tasmanian Regional Arts.

Judges for the initial photographic exhibition (that did not then contain any art works) were professional photographers, Ian Wallace and Alice Bennett and local artist Marian Larnar. Alice Bennett and Marian Larnar are both residents of the area. The initial exhibition would not have been possible without the support of Tasman Council, Bream Creek Vineyard, Stallard Camera House, the Tasman Health and Community Service, The Tasman Gazette/Sorell Times and OOAL.

### From little things big things grow ...

The title "Out of the Ashes" was chosen so that the focus of the exhibition would be on the recovery process - upon the healing journey following the catastrophic bush fires at Forcett and on the Tasman and Forestier Peninsulas in January 2013.

Since that THCS exhibition OOAL have secured (extremely gratefully) sponsorship and funding to expand and tour the exhibition that now includes additional photographs from the community as well as drawings done by children during the evacuation process at Port Arthur Historic Site and art works from a selection of local artists on the theme.

The intention of the exhibition was to provide members of the Forestier and Tasman communities with a voice - a platform - an opportunity for creative expression. By focusing on positive changes and aspects of their own as well as the community's journey since the fire OOAL hoped that the exhibition could make a positive contribution to the recovery and healing process. The potential power of creative expression - '*art as therapy*' - in psychological health and wellbeing is well documented. Each image is also accompanied by a short descriptive paragraph or story that firmly roots the image in the experience and adds another dimension to the exhibition. The images take us on a literal and/or symbolic journey; the short stories an intimate personal journey.

The exhibition was open to all members of the Tasman community. We hoped that by encouraging community members to participate in the event it could provide them with an opportunity to develop new skills or upgrade existing skills and provide participants with an opportunity to chart a process from its initial inception to its final conclusion in the form of a well-presented exhibition suitable to tour.

OOAL hopes that it has provided the community members with an opportunity to capture and document precious moments throughout the recovery process not only for themselves and their families but the wider community and possibly future generations. The exhibition also provides members of the community with an opportunity to share their poignant stories with the wider Tasmanian and interstate community.

The expanded touring exhibition – that seems to have a life of its own - has been organised by OOAL with support from Port Arthur Historic Site. The touring exhibition is funded by Tasmanian Regional Arts and sponsored by The Bendigo Bank, Focal Printing, Port Arthur Historic Site and The Tasman Gazette & Sorell Times and is also supported by Tasman Council. The Tasman Health and Community Service is *not* involved in the touring exhibition.

The community has put considerable emotional and creative investment into the project and is excited about the prospect of a touring exhibition. OOAL have applied to tour the exhibition state wide with Tasmanian Regional Arts and is currently awaiting the outcome.

Although this exhibition features creative works from members of the Forestier and Tasman Communities, OOAL think it is important to mention that the Tasman and Forestier Peninsulas were not the only areas affected by bush fires over the summer of 2013. Other communities within Tasmania and also interstate were also devastated or affected by bush fires and visitors and tourists were also impacted by their wrath.