A Black Saturday Perspective

Intense isolation and surrounded by raging fires, hearing of hopelessness, death and destruction whilst fire-watching for days and with the expectation for the return of the fire. The personal struggle to reinvent life and overcome the effects of trauma, sustained adrenalin and cortesol, low energy and demoralization continues.

January 2009

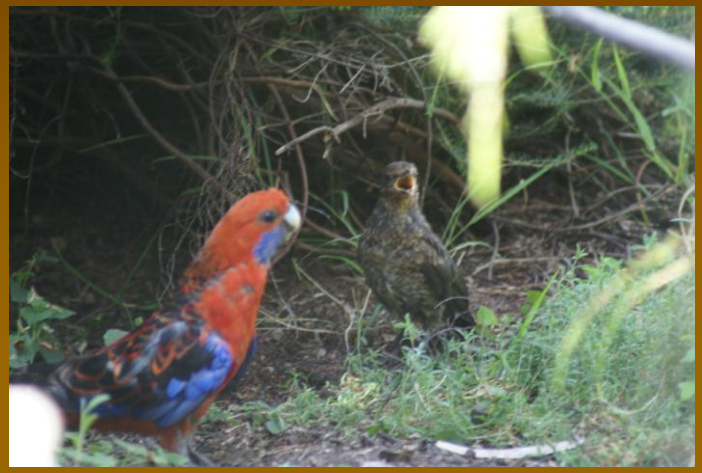
Temperatures of C40+

Leaves fell from trees

Grass died

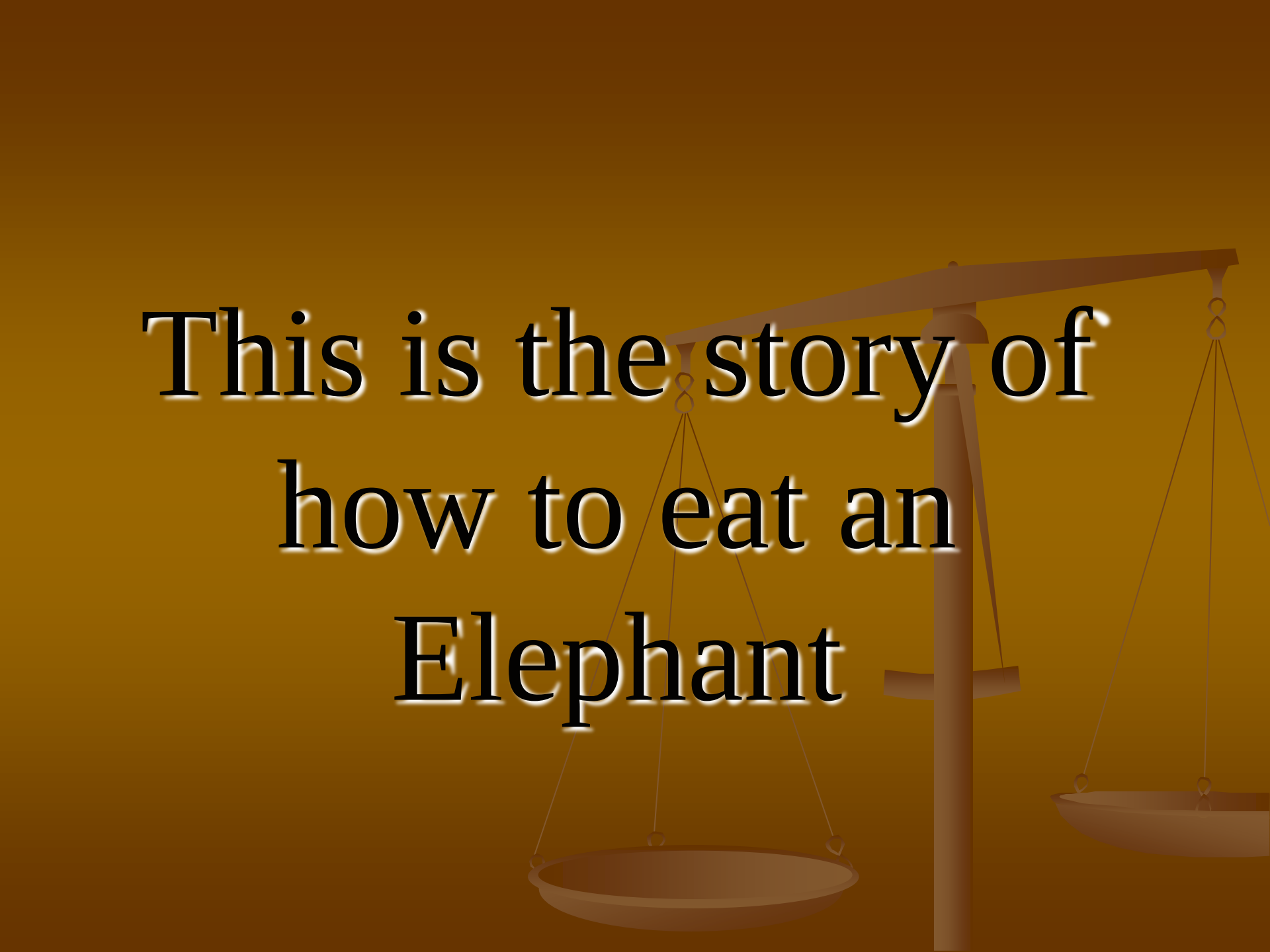
Everything suffered

in Taggerty tribal differences disappeared

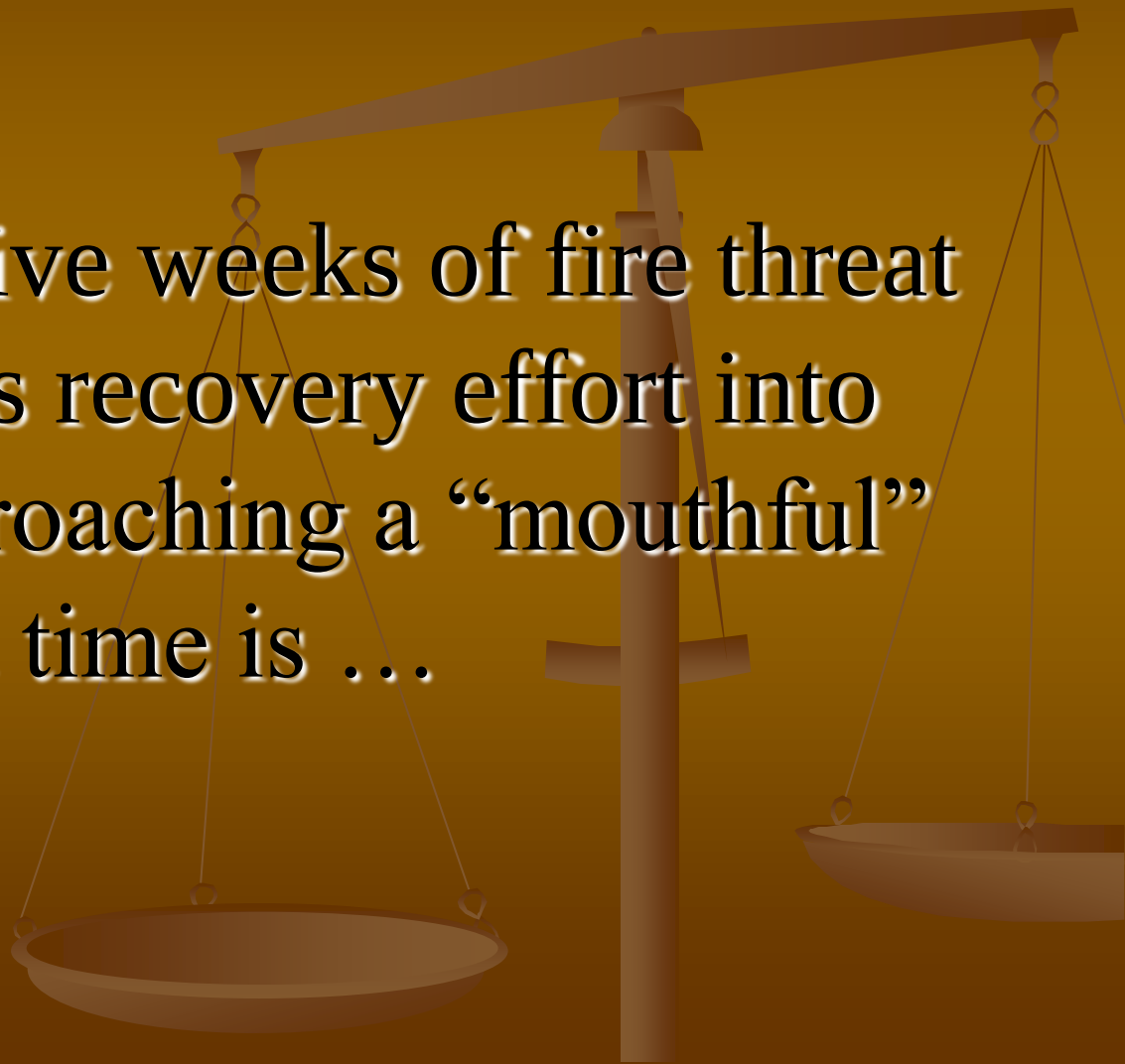


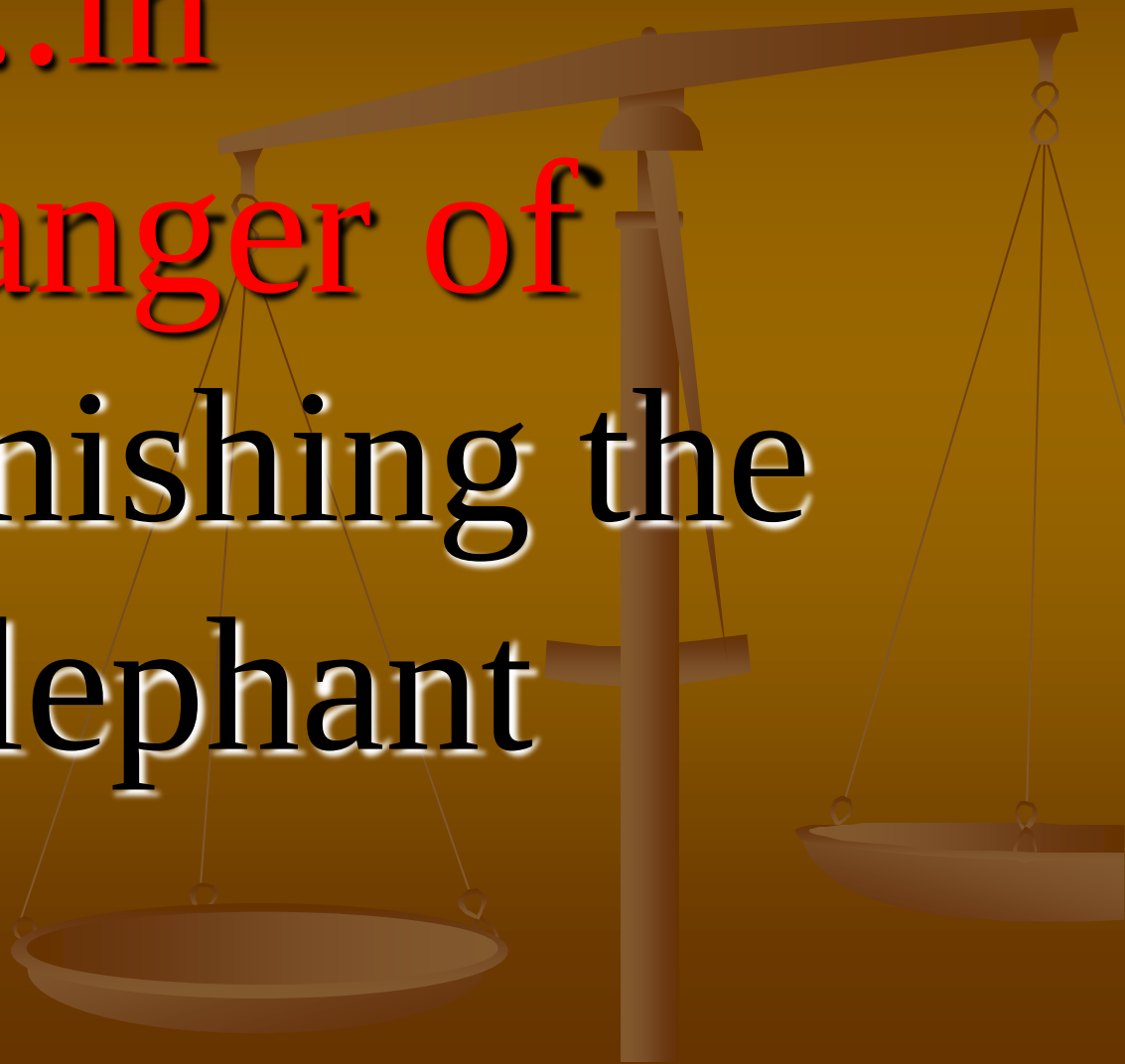
February 7th

At Barwon Heads
fruit cooked on trees,
even Ivy singed


This is the story of how to eat an Elephant

To reduce our five weeks of fire threat and 20 months recovery effort into something approaching a “mouthful” at a time is …





…in Danger of Diminishing the Elephant

Sarsens Tun 16:00 hrs

Unannounced

Spot fires began

North and South of us

rising in seconds

as the main fire travelled toward Narbethong the valley filled with smoke

Taggerty towards Midnight

Morning

Sunday morning February 8th

Taggerty

Taggerty

80
FIRE DAMAGED
SIGNS AND POSTS

Police
ROAD CLOSED
TRAFFIC HAZARD AHEAD
PREPARE TO STOP

Taggerty homes lost

Sheep leave the stable after 5 days

Sun for a while, listening to memorial service, while fires rage nearby, are we forgotten?

We cancel dental app.

Cathy, our dentist, comes to help electrify fence for rescued cattle & food for CFA

Lyne brings CFA food from Bendigo, & Glenda from Melbourne

Cattle arrive after ABC Radio called for help

“Perfect teats” escapes

5 days to recapture

2 months to go home

Fires continue in the Blue Range

We are not sure where the fire is, as new plumes keep appearing

At night mighty pyres surrounded us for days

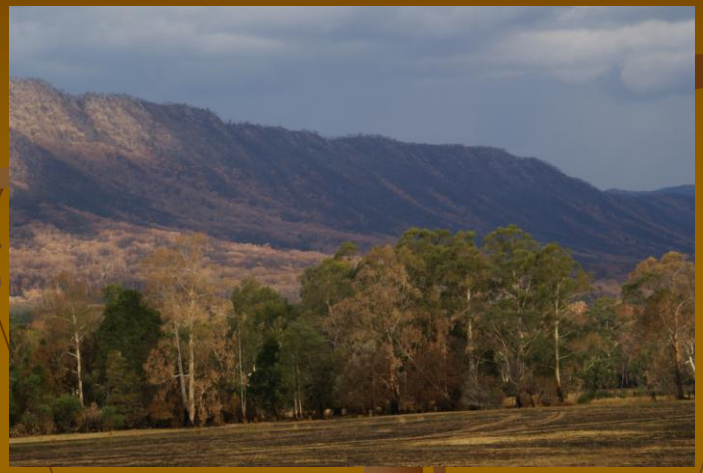
Fires break through containment lines

Winds change

We find more friends alive

Yea & normality

Taggerty lost 43 rural houses



March 5th Patrick & Geoff are dead too, and it rains

Recovery starts as fires reduce

Community activities

- CFA shed breakfasts
- Talking to dispossessed and fire fighters
- Cattle housing
- Ambulance posts for Marysville & Buxton, DSE rescued in Rubicon for helicopter evacuation
- Burned tree clearing for friends
- Plantaid – nursery created, shaded, irrigated, catalogued, distributed
- Created support group for local farming women

Farming continues

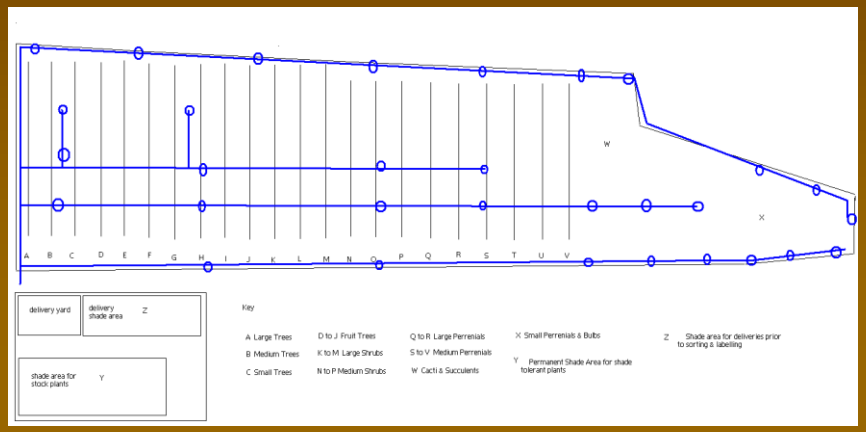
Taking the rough with the smooth

Personal Recovery

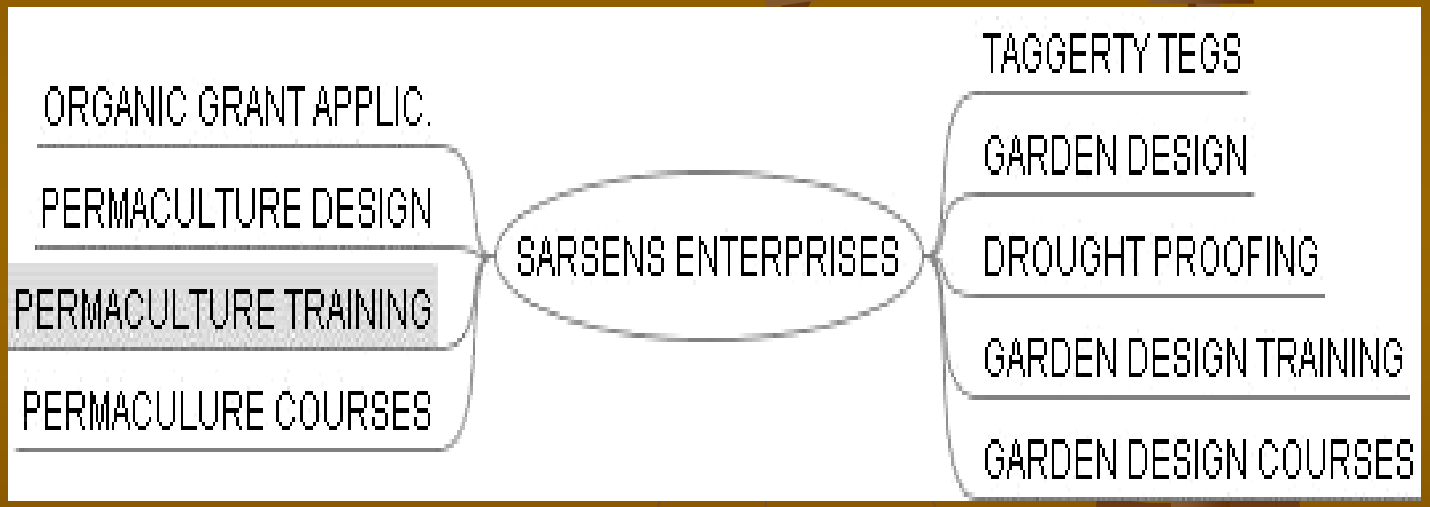
- Bushfire Case Managers, grants & donations
- Plantaid & work lost forever
- volunteers
- Vinnies, Salvos, Women on Farms & Women in Agriculture
- Generator & new house tank for Summer 2010
- Counseling and reading, Rob Gordon talks, Rural Financial Counselor & researching ideas

- **Is it possible to concentrate?**

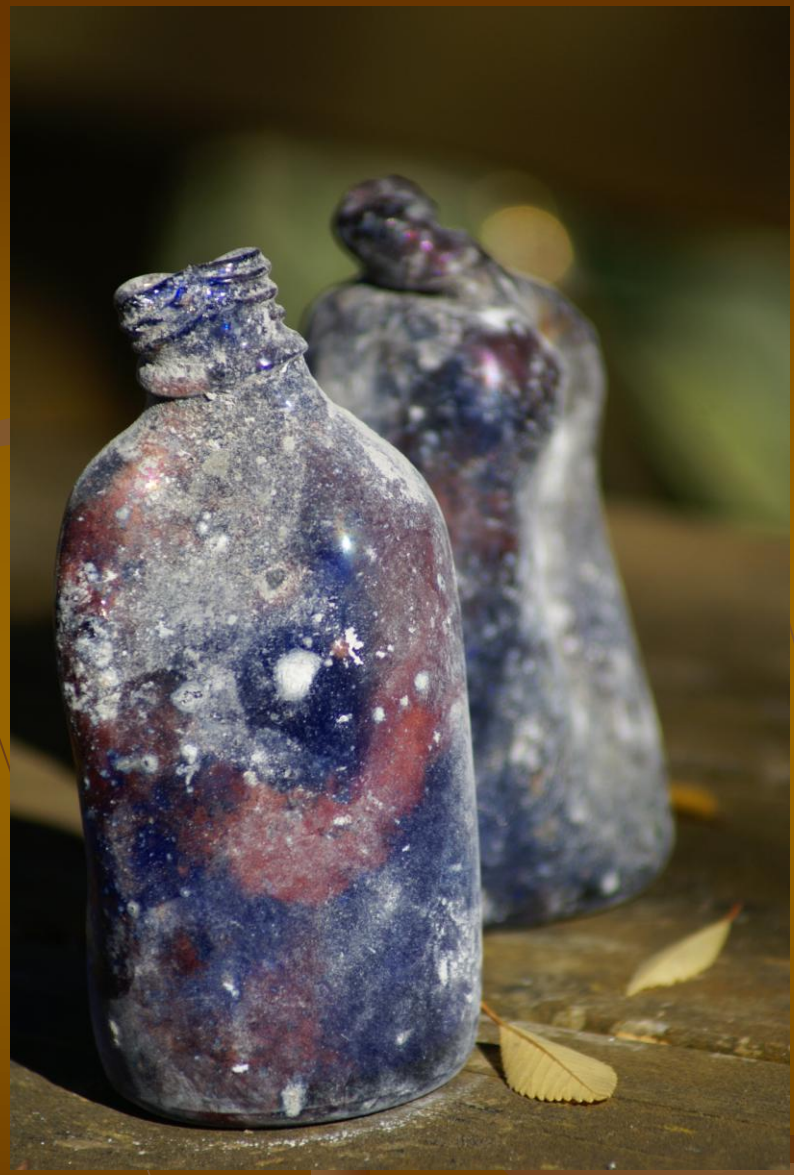
New work found elsewhere



New income creation ideas in progress



Personal & Business Recovery

- Bushfire Case Managers, grants & donations
- Cert IV Training & Assessment - return to teaching or on-farm training courses?
- Business Mentor – our livelihood lost
- Counseling and reading, Rob Gordon talks, Rural Financial Counselor & researching ideas
- CAD software for return to Garden Design
- Design studio created in Chalet
- Diploma in Permaculture due February 2011

- **Is it possible to achieve a clear desk?**