

Bushfire survivors in Blue Mountains tell of losing homes

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As Sue Dunlop stood in the blackened rubble of the home she lived in for the past 41 years, the ferocity of Thursday's firestorm became painfully clear.

"You live in the bush. You live by the rules of the bush, and that's it," Mrs Dunlop reflected, as trees and scrub continued to burn around her in her backyard on Friday morning.

Still, that did nothing to ease the pain of knowing that she would have to rebuild her home on Buena Vista Road in Winmalee, one of the worst-hit streets in Thursday's inferno.

At least she and her husband, Phil, had escaped with their lives.

"We stayed throughout the whole fire. You fight for your home. We are too old to be starting again," she said.

Mrs Dunlop described how she and her husband had used a garden hose in desperation to douse the flames that raced towards their home and their aviaries.

Their efforts proved futile.

"A car explosion blew our windows out and that's when we knew we'd lost the house," Mrs Dunlop said.

"My husband came up to me and he said, 'Look, we've had all the windows blow up, the house is on fire. We're not going to save it'.

"He still did try, he tried so hard," she said.

Mrs Dunlop's tale could be repeated by others up and down her street, where at least 43 homes were lost in Thursday's unforgiving blaze.

At first light, many red-eyed residents, holding pets and each other's hands, walked down Buena Vista Road to see if their homes had survived.