

Los Angeles residents lose their homes to raging wildfires

Nick Grimm: In the US city of LA, deadly wildfires are continuing to rage as the city's most destructive blaze in its history has now seen the destruction of properties reaching into the thousands. More than 150,000 Los Angeles residents have been forced to evacuate their homes, some unable to do anything. But watch on as flames burn their homes to the ground. Kathleen O'Connor begins our coverage.

Kathleen O'Connor: The LA wildfires have been unprecedented, fierce and rapid.

Jane Parrot: Within minutes I could see it through my living room window, just like the full blaze shot up.

Kathleen O'Connor: Jane Parrott was in her Altadena home northeast of downtown Los Angeles when she suddenly noticed a red glow outside.

Jane Parrot: It was just a wall of red smoke and flames. I've seen other fires but this just took off extremely quickly and it was right next to our house. It was really, I've never seen anything like that.

Kathleen O'Connor: Her and her housemate grabbed their two cats and fled, but they couldn't save the house.

Jane Parrot: There's nothing to salvage so it's totally gone. I just wanted to make sure I left alive.

Kathleen O'Connor: Maddy Power also lives nearby. She's only just discovered her home burnt to the ground.

Maddy Power: It was just rubble that was still hot and steaming. I found a shovel in what used to be my garage or part of a shovel and I was able to kind of dig through things and I found, you know, part of my favourite mug that I used to drink coffee of every day.

Kathleen O'Connor: The tornado-like winds pushed the flames to neighbouring Pasadena, where resident, Tortress Bailey lives. At four in the morning she got notice to evacuate so she took her son and left. 24 hours later, her home was gone.

Totress Bailey: And I had to just stand there and watch it burn because the firemen had ran out of water at that time so they weren't putting water on the house at all. And it's burnt down to the ground.

It's gone. It's unbelievable. Like, I don't have a house, I don't have a place to go. You know, I have nothing.

Kathleen O'Connor: It's a similar story for many in her community.

Totress Bailey: There are 28 people from my church alone that lost their home. There's about 15 people from my job that lost their homes.

Kathleen O'Connor: Further east, the Palisades fire now stretches more than 19,000 acres. 5,000 structures have been destroyed. Resident Jennifer Begakis says no one imagined the fire would get that close to the ocean.

Jennifer Begakis: Our property, we have one brick wall standing and I shared some photos and video as well on X just within this last hour. And he went to go retrieve whatever he might be able to, including we have a large safe and he was able to open it and it was nothing but ashes. It looks like a war zone and it is.

Kathleen O'Connor: Tanner Charles is a storm chaser who spent hours trying to defend his friend's home from the approaching Palisades fire.

Tanner Charles: We started dousing his whole house in water as much as we could with fire hoses that we had, or not fire hoses, but just these regular garden hoses that we had. There was one in the back and one in the front. So early took the charge in the back, I took the charge in the front. And so we were just dousing all these plants, you know, all these, because what I noticed is that the vegetation would get on fire first, not the house. And so I was like, OK, get the vegetation first and then start spraying around the house if we could.

Kathleen O'Connor: The sunset fire burnt 42 acres and smoke is still visible in the area. Subsiding winds are now giving firefighters a chance to try and bring the raging fires tearing across Los Angeles under control.

Nick Grimm: Kathleen O'Connor reporting.

Link:

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/worldtoday/los-angeles-residents-lose-their-homes-to-raging-wildfires-/104804050>