

National guidelines for managing donated goods



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An Australian Government Initiative

National guidelines for managing donated goods

Strengthening the nation's disaster resilience

A National Emergency Management Project

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The Australian Government funded the development of these guidelines as a National Emergency Management Project. These projects help strengthen the nation's disaster resilience by supporting measures to strengthen communities, individuals, businesses and institutions to minimise adverse effects of disasters on Australia.

The State Recovery Office, Department for Families and Communities, South Australia developed the content for the guidelines based on extensive research and consultation with federal, state and territory government agencies, the corporate and community sector and disaster survivors.

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Foreword

Australians respond swiftly and generously when disasters occur.

Floods, fires, cyclones and other disasters can stir up strong emotions and a keen desire to help those affected.

No matter the location of the affected community, such disasters trigger a national response and attract enormous volumes of donated goods from individuals, communities and businesses.

Authorities responding to disasters must manage these donations, which are often impractical or exceed community needs. This sizable task can include the need to transport, store, sort and deliver donations as well as dispose of unneeded or inappropriate goods.

In 2010 a scoping paper was prepared which investigated this phenomenon and also researched how recipients felt about the donated goods they received. The paper recommended the development of national guidelines which are contained in this document. The *National guidelines for managing donated goods* provide a planned and cohesive national approach to support appropriate and timely donations. This ensures people wishing to help are encouraged to do so without unintentionally undermining recovery efforts.

Implementing these guidelines will enable all levels of government, the corporate and non-government sectors, communities and individuals to more effectively address the needs of disaster affected people.

The national guidelines support a more targeted, holistic and enduring response to disaster management. The intention is that they will drive best practice planning and positive change in the management of donated goods to strengthen community recovery and resilience.

Explanatory Notes

Donated goods

The term 'donated goods' refers to goods donated by the public or corporate sector following a disaster. Goods may include:

- material items (new or second-hand)
- vouchers to buy goods
- goods on tenure (for example, hire cars)
- tickets for entertainment or for holidays.

Goods do not include:

- offers of services e.g. plumbing etc.
- offers of accommodation e.g. caravans etc.

Donated goods program coordinator

A donated goods program coordinator is the person or organisation, decided by the state/territory that will be responsible for all management of donated goods.

Solicited and unsolicited goods

The national guidelines refer to both solicited and unsolicited goods donation.

- **Solicited goods** are items which have been expressly requested by the donated goods program coordinator and are based on the assessed needs of the disaster affected people and communities.
- **Unsolicited goods** are donated items which have not been requested by the donated goods program coordinator and may or may not meet assessed needs.

Recovery coordinator

The national guidelines refer to a 'recovery coordinator' role. Recovery coordinators can be state, regional and local. Each has different tasks, depending on different jurisdictional arrangements. The term recovery coordinator is used generically throughout this document to mean someone who has a role in coordinating recovery activities.

Money donations

Money donations are mentioned throughout the guidelines as the preferred option. However, these guidelines are not designed to provide advice on the management of donated money. Comments made are purely in relation to how donations of money may impact on donations of goods.

Domestic and international donations

The guidelines cover donations generated within Australia. They do not consider international donations between Australia and other countries.

1. Introduction

Why these national guidelines are needed

Public generosity and care following a disaster plays a significant role in individual and community recovery. It reflects broader community sentiment and helps those affected to feel supported, and more positive and confident about the rebuilding tasks ahead.

Money is the most useful donation because it provides flexibility and choice to meet immediate needs. It also circulates in the affected community, stimulating faster recovery for the local economy.

People affected by disasters report that thoughtful, personal donations and gifts lifted their spirits and even became precious family items.¹

However, much of the public's goodwill results in unsolicited donations of second-hand goods. This response is less helpful and can actually undermine recovery efforts and community resilience.

The influx of donated goods quickly exceeds actual need. The sheer quantity of donations often stretches resources and infrastructure, diverting efforts from other aspects of disaster response and recovery.

‘ The 2009 Victorian bushfires resulted in more than 40,000 pallets of goods from across Australia that took up more than 50,000 square metres of storage space. That is twice the size of the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) arena. The cost for storage, staff and transport amounted to more than \$8 million. Services in the fire affected areas were severely stretched as a result of donations of goods arriving without warning and without resources to sort, store, handle and distribute². ’

This situation is exacerbated by the fact that donated goods are often inappropriate and do not meet the specific needs of the affected community. In addition, the quality of second-hand goods varies and in many cases is substandard. The result is that critical resources are required to manage large quantities of donated goods that cannot be used.

‘ It was exasperating for the deployed personnel and volunteers to continually unload household goods in extremely poor condition...when they were acutely aware of the desperate need of victims who had literally lost everything.³ ’

¹ *Management of Donated Goods Following a Disaster*, scoping paper prepared for the Australian Government by the State Recovery Office, Department for Families and Communities, South Australia (A Natural Disaster Resilience Project, February 2010)

² *ibid*

³ *2005 Eyre Peninsula Bush Fire The Salvation Army Response & Recovery*, an evaluation by Major Anne Farquharson, March 2005

Donated goods impose a sense of obligation on survivors who may be struggling to cope with what has happened. This sense of obligation is difficult to reconcile when the goods are unneeded or of poor quality. Instead of helping, this can cause extra stress and be detrimental to recovery.

‘ I did feel overwhelmed by the amount people were giving us (and often strongly did not want) but felt we should always accept and be grateful because we were grateful for their generosity and caring, if not the goods.⁴ ’

‘ We were bombarded with carloads of other people’s old junk...it was awful and misguided generosity—all we wanted were a few new things of our own, not other peoples castoffs.⁵ ’

Receiving large amounts of donated goods can also depress the local economy. Local businesses are often struggling to rebuild after disasters. An influx of donated goods reduces the need for people to buy from their local businesses, whereas donations of money will mostly be circulated within the local community and assists the whole community towards an earlier recovery.

Implementing the *National guidelines for managing donated goods* will more effectively channel the natural public outpouring of support and sympathy to meet identified needs of disaster affected communities.

The guidelines promote and encourage better planning and coordination across states and territories and among all stakeholders involved in disaster response. There should never be a need for a general appeal for donated goods as this encourages donations of items that are unsuitable, unusable and in quantities that are often unmanageable. The aim of the guidelines is to modify behaviour, to achieve the best possible support to disaster affected people and strengthen community resilience. This should result in more thoughtful and useful ways for the public to assist.

The guidelines promote the following key activities:

- policy and planning development to embed best practice and incorporate the guidelines and lessons learnt into future responses
- pre-event planning to establish contacts and agreements in advance where possible, both between recovery organisations, non government organisations, community groups and with corporate donors
- awareness raising to dispel myths and explain more effective donated goods management
- appropriate and timely assessment of needs to guide and provide parameters for any appeals for donations
- early, consistent and clear communication informing why money is the most effective donation
- provision of clear explanations informing why unsolicited donated goods are not helpful
- offering suggestions about alternative ways people can help
- comprehensive post-event evaluation including feedback from recipients.

⁴ *Management of Donated Goods Following a Disaster*, scoping paper prepared for the Australian Government by the State Recovery Office, Department for Families and Communities, South Australia (A Natural Disaster Resilience Project), February 2010

⁵ *The health and social impact of the Ash Wednesday bushfires: a survey of the twelve months following the bushfires of February 1983*, SA Health Publication, May 1985

Who was consulted

The *National guidelines for managing donated goods* are based on extensive research and consultation with representatives from federal, state and territory emergency management and disaster recovery agencies, non-government organisations, the corporate sector and disaster survivors. During the research phase, all jurisdictions supported the development of national guidelines and associated strategies to promote, encourage and enable changes in the way donated goods are managed.⁶

Relationship to national and state/territory disaster management

This national approach to managing donated goods supports Australia's *National strategy for disaster resilience* adopted by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in February 2011.⁷

The *National strategy for disaster resilience* builds on recent collaborative efforts to reform Australia's disaster management approaches. Given the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters, Australia's governments recognise the need for a national, coordinated and cooperative effort to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies and disasters. The *National strategy for disaster resilience* acknowledges that disaster recovery is a shared responsibility for individuals, households, businesses and communities, as well as for governments. It is described as 'the first step in a long-term, evolving process to deliver sustained behavioural change and enduring partnerships'.⁸

These national guidelines recognise the responsibility vested in state and territory and local government for recovery. The guidelines are designed to complement state and territory emergency management plans, the national emergency manual series and related emergency management activities.⁹

2. Who these guidelines are for

These guidelines assist the many stakeholders involved in planning and responding to disasters and helping communities recover including:

- Australian Government
- state and territory governments
- local government
- recovery coordinators
- non-government/community sector including charitable organisations
- corporate sector
- community leaders and media.

⁶ See details of the Project team and full consultation list at Appendix 1

⁷ Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Communiqué, 13 February 2011 <www.coag.gov.au>

⁸ *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience: Building our nation's resilience to disasters*, National Emergency Management Committee, February 2011 <www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2011-02-13/docs/national_strategy_disaster_resilience.pdf>

⁹ Emergency Management in Australia, Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, <www.ema.gov.au>

3. How to use these guidelines

Purpose

All stakeholders, government and non-government, involved in managing donated goods can use the national guidelines to:

- inform policies, plans and procedures for recovery planning, to ensure that jurisdictions are well placed to manage the issue of donated goods
- inform and guide coordinated recovery activity by all levels of government
- inform and more effectively involve other influential stakeholders such as community leaders and the media
- inform and encourage corporate donors, governments and non-government organisations how to best work in partnership to meet the needs of affected communities.

Structure

It is acknowledged that despite all efforts to deter unsolicited goods it is likely that goods will be donated. The guidelines include principles for managing donated goods as well as steps to take before, during and after a disaster. The Appendices contain associated resources such as: policy and recovery plan considerations; a basic guide to setting up a material aid centre (warehouse); advice about disposing of unused goods; education tools in the form of brochure and presentation text that can be adapted to raise awareness; a communication strategy; a corporate donations strategy; and evaluation methods.

4. Guiding principles

National principles for disaster recovery

The national principles for disaster recovery¹⁰ underpin the numerous activities involved in the recovery process. The principles state that successful recovery relies on:

- **understanding the context**—successful recovery is based on an understanding of the community context
- **recognising complexity**—successful recovery acknowledges the complex and dynamic nature of emergencies and communities
- **using community-led approaches**—successful recovery is responsive and flexible, engaging communities and empowering them to move forward
- **ensuring coordination of all activities**—successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs
- **employing effective communication**—successful recovery is built on effective communication with affected communities and other stakeholders
- **acknowledging and building capacity**—successful recovery recognises, supports and builds on community, individual and organisational capacity.

The *National guidelines for managing donated goods* adhere to these principles. For more detail see Appendix 1.

¹⁰ <<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/pubs/Pages/Recovery.aspx>>

Principles for managing donated goods

The national guidelines for managing donated goods are based on principles that address issues raised through research and consultation:

- **firstly understand the needs**—the needs of disaster affected people and communities should always be the first consideration
- **explain money is the preferred option**—where the need for public assistance is identified, donation of money should always be the preferred option
- **communicate clearly**—a clear and transparent communication process should be used to inform workers (government and non-government), the community and the media about how best to assist the people and communities affected by disaster
- **establish an effective donations management system**—donation of material goods should be managed through an equitable, efficient and coordinated system
- **seek and consider recipients’ feedback**—a review which is inclusive of recipients’ views of the donated goods program, should occur after every disaster
- **plan ahead**—arrangements for donated goods should be encapsulated in national, state/territory and regional/local policy and planning.

Explanation of the principles for managing donated goods

PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING DONATED GOODS	EXPLANATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DONATED GOODS MANAGEMENT
<p>Firstly understand the needs—<i>the needs of disaster affected people and communities should always be the first consideration.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering disaster affected people creates resilience and leads to quicker and more effective recovery. • Experience demonstrates improved outcomes for people who feel they have been part of the decision making process for their own recovery.¹¹ • Providing choice for those affected (e.g. through vouchers or money donations) also creates empowerment and helps develop resilience. • In addition to choice, offering only requested goods that are in excellent or new condition helps avoid a sense of pressure or obligation to accept unneeded or poor quality goods. • It is important to provide assistance at the right pace for each person—depending on their level of trauma. Some people take longer to engage with the recovery process and may not be interested in early offerings of goods but may require them later. • Mechanisms that assist in confidence building are often needed because disasters can leave people feeling unable to manage even simple tasks. This may include working with people to help them understand what items they need. • Recognising cultural needs and where possible meeting those needs is very important. • When assessing needs, take account of how local economies can be disadvantaged by donations that could otherwise be purchased locally. Money spent locally can help recovery of the local economy.

¹¹ *Community recovery after the February 2009 Victorian bushfires: a rapid review* (An Evidence Check Review brokered by the Sax Institute for the Victorian Government Department of Health)

PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING DONATED GOODS	EXPLANATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DONATED GOODS MANAGEMENT
<p>Explain money is the preferred option— <i>Where the need for public assistance is identified, donation of money should always be the preferred option.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to explain why donating money is always more beneficial than donating goods. This is because it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – provides choice – promotes self-directed recovery – empowers people by promoting personal decision making – is more flexible – supports local economies by encouraging local buying – reduces the complicated, costly and time-consuming process of managing donated goods. • An early appeal for money donations gives donors choice and can reduce the amount of material goods donated. This means it may be necessary to either have systems in place for launching an appeal, or have them ready to be activated. • Suggesting ways donors can convert their goods to cash donations can also help reduce donations of material items.
<p>Communicate clearly—<i>a clear and transparent communication process should be used to inform workers (government and non-government), the community and the media about how best to assist the people and communities affected by the disaster.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people do not understand the serious problems associated with excess donations of goods. Many donors believe that anything will be of use. However, research shows that, to be helpful to community recovery, donated goods must be high quality and meet assessed needs. • Despite this, those involved in recovery efforts, affected people and communities often feel reluctant to offend donors by not accepting goods. • In addition, community leaders and the media often initiate appeals for donations. Social media sites are also playing an increasing role. • Awareness raising about this issue, before and during an event, can help to minimise the problem. It can also influence donations appeals to request money instead of material items as the best way to help those affected. • Raising awareness about which donations are most valued can also assist: <i>‘Some of our most treasured items are the ones that were made, with love, by complete strangers.’</i>¹² (See more details in Appendix 6—Communication strategy.)

¹² *Needed donations can change lives*, Susan Kim, Disaster News Network, 14 April 2000, <www.disasternews.net/news/article.php?articleid=2937>

PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING DONATED GOODS	EXPLANATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DONATED GOODS MANAGEMENT
<p>Establish an effective donations management system—<i>donation of material goods should be managed through an equitable, efficient and coordinated system.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even with planning and education before an event, some unsolicited donations will still occur. Being prepared to manage these donations effectively—including having systems for diversion, identification, receipt, storage, distribution, recording and disposal of goods is essential. • It is important to consistently and constantly reinforce key messages to encourage money donations and discourage or divert unsolicited donated goods (See details in Appendix 6—Communication strategy). • Work with the local community to develop an equity plan for how goods are prioritised and distributed to disaster affected people/communities e.g. for the 2009 Victorian bushfires a point system for allocation was developed in relation to higher value goods. • Quickly removing any dumped items from public view discourages others from also leaving items. • Pre-event planning with potential corporate donors, as part of a corporate donations strategy, can help to target their assistance in the event of a disaster. (See more details Appendix 7—Corporate donations strategy.) • Be prepared for the logistical and public relations issues associated with disposing of excess and unwanted goods after the event. Recycling and redirecting to local charities as much as possible and providing honest and timely information via the media can mitigate negative publicity and donor/community ill will.
<p>Seek and consider recipients' feedback—<i>a review which is inclusive of recipients' views of the donated goods program, should occur after every disaster.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debriefing and evaluation of lessons learnt are normal processes for emergency management. • Ensure reviews cover all the activities undertaken to meet the material needs of the disaster affected communities and individuals. • Importantly, seeking recipients' views, opinions, concerns and feedback informs future planning. • This is best done as soon as possible following the recovery program and may be via survey, focus groups, in-depth interviews or a combination as per previous planning.
<p>Plan ahead—<i>arrangements for donated goods should be encapsulated in national, state/territory and regional/local policy and planning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research demonstrates that jurisdictions worldwide are unprepared for the major influx of donations that occur after a large disaster. • This is why it is important that pre-event planning and preparation includes raising awareness for those involved in recovery efforts, community leaders, the media and the general public about the problems and the positive alternative ways of helping disaster affected communities. • Planning enables jurisdictions to be prepared to channel public assistance in the form of money donations or specific, requested items to meet identified needs. • Regardless of the location, disasters trigger enormous volumes of donated goods in all jurisdictions. By adopting these national guidelines, and incorporating them into forward disaster/recovery planning, jurisdictions will be more effectively able to support one another when a disaster occurs. • This includes having appropriate arrangements in place, consistent with these guidelines, to deter those who wish to donate unsolicited goods across borders. • The cross border issues can be addressed in policy and recovery planning, through public education and effective communication strategies.

5. Steps to take

The following tables provide information about activities that may need to be undertaken. All jurisdictions operate slightly differently therefore both the tasks and the person who undertakes these activities will be dependent on local jurisdictional arrangements.

Steps to take: planning and preparation (pre-event)

WHAT TO DO (pre-event)	THINGS TO CONSIDER	MORE DETAILS
<p>Include arrangements for donated goods in local, state/territory and national policy and planning.</p> <p>Launch and circulate these national guidelines.</p>	<p>This ensures that information is contained in corporate memory and reduces the need to rely on prior experience.</p>	<p>Appendix 2—Policy considerations</p> <p>Appendix 3—Recovery plan considerations</p>
<p>Ensure funding arrangements are in place to cover the management of donated goods.</p>	<p>Organising funding after a disaster has occurred, can result in significant delays to managing the donations of goods.</p>	
<p>Plan and document systems for managing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solicited donations in response to specific appeals if needed • unsolicited donations. 		
<p>Establish appropriate arrangements with other jurisdictions to deter people who wish to donate unsolicited goods across borders.</p>	<p>Jurisdictions need to support each other to prevent the donation of unsolicited goods.</p>	
<p>Establish a needs assessment process which can be activated immediately if an event occurs.</p>		<p>Appendix 4—Donated goods needs assessment and sample list of possible needs</p>
<p>Agree which organisation will coordinate the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public donated goods program • corporate donations program. 	<p>Pre-planning reduces time to get the program underway. It is crucial that messages go out very early as it is much more difficult to stop the goods donation once it has begun.</p>	
<p>Where appropriate, scope available warehouse space that may be used as a material aid centre for storing, sorting and distributing donated goods.</p>	<p>Despite all efforts to deter unsolicited donated goods it is likely that there will still be items donated. Requested items will also need to be stored safely, so warehouse accommodation may be required.</p> <p>Warehouse space can be difficult to find in the aftermath of a significant disaster.</p>	<p>Appendix 5—Basic guide to warehousing donated goods</p>
<p>Seek professional assistance for setting up a warehouse. Research applicable federal and relevant state/territory regulations and standards and develop a warehousing plan.</p>	<p>There is considerable legislation covering activities in warehousing. The activity is complex and there are many pitfalls.</p>	<p>Appendix 5—Basic guide to warehousing donated goods</p>

WHAT TO DO (pre-event)	THINGS TO CONSIDER	MORE DETAILS
<p>Develop a communication strategy.</p> <p>Organise a timely forum (e.g. just before bushfire or cyclone season) to educate community leaders, media and recovery workers about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why money is always the preferred donation • problems caused by excess, unneeded and inappropriate donations of material items • how disaster affected people appreciate and get psychological benefits from <i>appropriate</i> support provided by the general public, that is support that encourages resilience and confidence. <p>Distribute a media release/organise media interviews explaining these guidelines and the 'new policy' on donated goods.</p> <p>Call a meeting of key recovery personnel and ensure everyone has the same information so that a consistent message is delivered (this could be done through an existing forum such as a state recovery committee).</p> <p>Post donated goods information on websites. Include information about recovery processes and likely needs of the disaster affected people and communities. Link to these guidelines.</p>	<p>A well thought out and thoroughly planned communication strategy can result in a better informed public and more appropriate donations.</p> <p>Educating media people about the issues may reduce unnecessary appeals for donated goods and deter 'championing' of community people who collect items to deliver to the disaster site.</p>	<p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p>
<p>Where possible, develop partnerships with corporate donors in advance, so that arrangements to meet some expected needs are pre-existing.</p> <p>Develop information packages explaining recovery processes, the national guidelines and indications of likely needs, to assist potential corporate donors with decision making.</p> <p>Include frank 'myth busting' information and evidence about how donations of goods are used and how donations of money are distributed.</p> <p>Ensure corporate donors are aware of the need to discuss potential donations with the donated goods program coordinator as well as the corporate donations program coordinator.</p>	<p>Where corporate donors are aware of the systems that support recovery and aware of likely needs of disaster affected communities they are in a better position to support and work in partnership to assist recovery.</p>	<p>Appendix 7—Corporate donations strategy</p>
<p>Set up a system that separately tracks expenditure on management of donated goods.</p>	<p>Such a system assists with later evaluation of the program, and is required if costs are to be reclaimed.</p>	
<p>Develop a strategy for disposal of any left-over donations of goods.</p>		<p>Appendix 8—Disposal of unused items</p>
<p>Do the preliminary work for a registry for diverting offers of donated goods if this is part of your plan.</p>	<p>If initial work is completed, registries can be set up quickly after the disaster has occurred.</p>	<p>Appendix 9—Common arrangements to support management of donated goods</p>

Steps to take: responding and reacting (during event)

WHAT TO DO (during the event)	THINGS TO CONSIDER	MORE DETAILS
<p>Appoint coordinator/s for the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> public donated goods program corporate donations program <p>from the agreed organisation/s.</p>	<p>Having a nominated person from the beginning of recovery, supports rapid organisation and establishes consistency of messages early in the program. It also provides a focal point to encourage discussion about appropriate donations.</p>	<p>Appendix 7—Corporate donations strategy</p>
<p>Start the assessment process to ascertain material goods required by the disaster affected community.</p> <p>Prepare lists of likely goods to aid discussions with people who need help to identify their needs.</p> <p>Develop plans to help those who are uninsured, underinsured or in dispute with insurance companies and who will need to be catered for through donations.</p> <p>Ensure plans take cultural needs into account as far as possible.</p>	<p>Initial help in this area will assist the building of confidence for individuals.</p> <p>These people could need to rely heavily on assistance from the public as their own resources may be exhausted</p>	<p>Appendix 4—Donated good needs assessment and sample list of possible needs</p>
<p>Publicise details about who to contact in relation to corporate donations.</p>	<p>This allows discussions to occur so that corporate donors can support the recovery effort effectively.</p>	<p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p> <p>Appendix 7—Corporate donations strategy</p>
<p>Establish and maintain a relationship with key media at local, state and national level (as appropriate) to help the media understand and support necessary messages.</p> <p>Agree on media spokespeople according to jurisdictional arrangements and ensure they are equipped with key messages.</p> <p>Distribute a media release/organise media interviews encouraging money donations and explaining why money is the preferred option.</p> <p>Suggest ways donors can convert their goods to cash, which can then be donated, to help reduce donations of material items.</p> <p>Explain that charitable organisations play a key role in providing assistance, reducing the need for additional goods to be donated separately.</p> <p>Update website and other online information (including social media).</p> <p>Activate the agreed system for managing money donations.</p>	<p>A good relationship with media is more likely to lead to appropriate messaging.</p> <p>If communities can be influenced to join together in running sales (bring and buy, boot, or garage sales) of items which would otherwise be donated, and then donate the money this would help significantly in reducing quantities of goods.</p> <p>Activation of systems to collect money very early in recovery gives alternatives to the community and helps in reducing numbers of items donated.</p> <p>Ensure the fund clearly states how money will be used. If payments are going to be means tested or directed to a particular region, or for a particular program, then make sure this information is explicit.</p>	<p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p>

WHAT TO DO (during the event)	THINGS TO CONSIDER	MORE DETAILS
Actively discourage any general calls for donations of goods by community leaders or media.	The impact of such appeals can be devastating in terms of the quality and quantity of items donated.	Appendix 6—Communication strategy
If anyone insists on making a public appeal despite advice to the contrary advise them that they need to negotiate a strategy for sorting, storing and distributing.	Giving this information up front may deter some of the inappropriate appeals.	
Activate systems for managing donations effectively—including systems to identify, receipt, store, distribute and record goods. If a registry for diverting offers of donated goods has been agreed, activate it and inform the media. If using a brochure to promote the registry, print and circulate, as per pre-event planning.	This will ensure more informed decision making.	Appendix 9—Common arrangements to support management of donated goods Appendix 10—Education tools
Ensure all volunteers and workers in recovery are aware of the national guidelines and key messages which need to be given to the public and corporate sector. Make sure recovery centre/recovery call centre staff have prepared scripts to respond to calls from the public.	Consistency in messaging is crucial to changing public behaviour.	Appendix 6—Communication strategy
Set up and maintain an ongoing operational log in relation to all activities regarding donated goods (either as part of or separate to the registry, depending on the pre-event plan). Keep details of all associated costs.	As well as assisting with day-to-day management, this helps with post-event evaluation.	Appendix 9—Common arrangements to support management of donated goods
If necessary, proceed with setting up the warehouse in line with pre-event planning.		Appendix 5—Basic guide to warehousing donated goods
Ensure the system is in place to efficiently receive and administer any required goods.		Appendix 5—Basic guide to warehousing donated goods Appendix 9—Common arrangements to support management of donated goods
With the help of the affected community, develop an equity plan about how goods are prioritised and distributed to disaster affected people/communities.	Inequities in distribution can lead to divisiveness in communities. Community decision making helps prevent this outcome.	
Ask service organisations/non-government organisations if they can help meet assessed, specific, material needs. If not (<i>and only then</i>) organise a media appeal for any specific items that needs assessment has indicated are required. Limit the appeal to the likely number of items required and accept only new or excellent condition.	This is preferable to making a media appeal as stopping such an appeal once a target has been reached is very difficult.	Appendix 6—Communication strategy
Prepare a media release and short announcement for local radio to stop the appeal as soon as specific needs are met or there is an excessive response.		

WHAT TO DO (during the event)	THINGS TO CONSIDER	MORE DETAILS
<p>Decline goods that do not meet the assessed need, reinforcing the message that only donations in excellent condition that meet the specific needs are being accepted.</p> <p>Thank donors and suggest ways to turn goods into cash (e.g. garage sale, charity shop, auction).</p>	<p>Poor quality items are likely to lead to slower recovery of individuals and communities.</p> <p>Declining unwanted goods as they are delivered will save effort and costs in sorting, storing and transporting to the disaster area.</p>	<p>Appendix 11—Donated goods flow charts</p> <p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p>
<p>Check that any donations from corporate donors meet an assessed need and are not disadvantaging local businesses. Inform corporate donors that gifts without caveats or conditions attached are the most useful because these can be distributed where there is most need.</p>	<p>Where prior discussions have occurred it is less likely that inappropriate items will be offered.</p>	<p>Appendix 7—Corporate donations strategy</p>
<p>Ensure that corporate donors are aware that any donations must be labelled, arrive with an inventory list and be delivered <i>when and where</i> required.</p>	<p>Corporate donations can be quite large and take up excessive amounts of storage space.</p>	<p>Appendix 7—Corporate donations strategy</p>
<p>Redirect the public who wish to donate unsolicited goods to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate non-government/ community sector organisations that have capacity to take material items • a registry, if one has been set up <p>or suggest ways they could turn their goods into money</p>	<p>It is important to be respectful and courteous to people offering goods as their support is appreciated by disaster affected communities and helps in the recovery process for individuals.</p>	<p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p>
<p>If goods are dumped, immediately remove them from public view.</p>	<p>Leaving dumped goods in public view encourages further dumping.</p>	
<p>If pattern of dumping continues, make a public announcement about what types of donations are required (i.e. money or specifically targeted items as assessed).</p>		<p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p>
<p>Regularly inform the public and corporate donors about how goods and money are being distributed.</p>	<p>Regular information reduces suspicion about mishandling or misuse of donations.</p>	<p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p>

Steps to take: reviewing and improving (post-event)

WHAT TO DO (post-event)	THINGS TO CONSIDER	MORE DETAILS
<p>Implement strategy for disposal of left-over donations.</p> <p>Be prepared for the logistical and public relations issues associated with disposing of excess and unwanted goods after the event. Recycling and redirecting to local charities as much as possible and providing honest and timely information via the media can mitigate negative publicity and donor/community ill will.</p>		<p>Appendix 8—Disposal of unused items</p> <p>Appendix 5—Basic guide to warehousing donated goods</p> <p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p>
<p>Ensure a general thank you goes out to the public and media.</p>		<p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p>
<p>Make information about how donations were distributed readily available to anyone who is interested.</p> <p>Publicise the location of this information.</p>		
<p>Provide information and stories to the media that illustrate which donations were most valued by recipients.</p>	<p>This is a further opportunity to change attitudes and behaviour.</p>	
<p>Prepare a thank you list of corporate donors and display this widely (e.g. on website, promote to media)</p>		<p>Appendix 7—Corporate donations strategy</p> <p>Appendix 6—Communication strategy</p>
<p>Assess the donated goods program using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the operational log previously set up evaluation questions for recovery workers feedback from corporate donors survey of recipients of donated goods. 	<p>Recipients of donated goods have rarely been approached for their opinions of what was offered to them. Their responses are crucial in determining future activities.</p>	<p>Appendix 12—Evaluation methods</p>
<p>Debrief and use this to review and refine plans.</p>		<p>Appendix 14—Evaluation methods</p>

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Appendix 1—Relationship between the national principles for disaster recovery and these guidelines

NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR DISASTER RECOVERY	RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING DONATED GOODS
<p>Understanding the context—<i>Successful recovery is based on an understanding of the community context.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first step in successfully managing donated goods is to assess the immediate needs of affected individuals and communities. • Recovery workers need a comprehensive understanding of a disaster affected community before making decisions about what material aid may be required. • There are two periods of need—immediate and enduring. Communities require very different things depending on timing. Immediate needs are likely to be food, water, clothing and shelter while later needs are for resettlement and re-establishment of lives. • It is also important to assess pre-existing ways in which community members seek or receive support to ensure that recovery efforts do not undermine independence and resilience.
<p>Recognising complexity—<i>Successful recovery acknowledges the complex and dynamic nature of emergencies and communities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs of affected communities are diverse, changing and not easily summarised. • Initial assessment provides information that is relevant for a brief period only. Continual re-assessment is necessary to recognise and respond to changes as recovery progresses. • Management of donated goods needs to reflect such changes. This means constant adjustment and flexibility is necessary when applying these national guidelines. • Activities encouraging the flow of donated goods may occur outside the disaster area and may also be out of the recovery coordinator’s control. • Implementing these national guidelines may need to occur rapidly, in a dynamic and high pressure environment.
<p>Using community-led approaches—<i>Successful recovery is responsive and flexible, engaging communities and empowering them to move forward.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially, affected communities may have limited capacity to prioritise their own needs, therefore it is important to encourage and support people to be involved in the assessment process. • Using pre-existing community organisations, networks and relationships is the key to mobilising emergency and ongoing support services for disaster survivors. This means those distributing goods need to collaborate with local groups and service providers, genuinely offering choice, engage individuals and listen to their views. • Use this information to direct decision making. Feedback loops that where appropriate connect disaster affected communities to the source of donations are an important partnership step that helps both survivors and donors understand needs.

NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR DISASTER RECOVERY	RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING DONATED GOODS
<p>Ensuring coordination of all activities— <i>Successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing donated goods is a complex and multi-dimensional task with implications for the successful recovery of the affected community. • Effective management is characterised by solid planning and coordination, harmonious partnerships, good leadership, decision making and continual assessment. • Donated goods are directly connected to strategies for community re-establishment and must work in concert with those activities. • Because it is not possible to directly control the flow of donations, the national guidelines reinforce a planned and coordinated approach which minimises the potential problems, monitors the impact and enables change strategies (e.g. messages to the public) to be implemented as needed.
<p>Employing effective communication— <i>Successful recovery is built on effective communication with affected communities and other stakeholders.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication with clear messages about donated goods is vital to managing expectations of donors, recipients and facilitators. • Communication needs to be internal and external so it reaches all those providing assistance in the recovery program as well as the public. • All recovery workers need to provide consistent, clear and respectful messages. • It will be necessary to work with the media to provide effective public information. • It is also necessary to establish ways to receive feedback from donors and recipients.
<p>Acknowledging and building capacity— <i>Successful recovery recognises, supports and builds on community, individual and organisational capacity.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging individuals, companies and communities to donate appropriately to those in need exemplifies and strengthens existing goodwill and capacity of communities to support each other. • Developing systems and processes that provide alternative ways for the broader community to contribute (rather than donating goods) builds national capacity to respond appropriately and effectively to disaster affected people. This further strengthens community resilience. • Alternatives to donating goods include fundraising efforts, volunteering time when this is needed, and turning goods into cash through various activities such as garage sales or auctions. • Working with the community to develop plans for distributing donated goods based on need and equity reduces the likelihood that distribution of goods will unintentionally cause ill will. • Donated goods can sometimes reduce the income of local businesses, which may also have been affected by the disaster. It is important to manage donations in a way that does not undermine local economies. • Experience also tells us that the process of recovery occurs differently for different people—some recover quickly while others are more shocked and take longer to deal with the issues. Some people become dependent on goods that are made available and find it difficult to transition to self sufficiency and resilience.

Appendix 2—Policy considerations

When including arrangements for donated goods in national, state/territory and regional/local policy and planning, it is important to take into account:

- the philosophy and principles which will support the management of donated goods—including the fundamental principle that the needs of those affected by the disaster are always the first consideration
- arrangements for supporting other states/territories experiencing a disaster
- funding for the donated goods program
- the need to track expenditure on donated goods management so future costs can be estimated more accurately
- processes to encourage money donations and arrangements with financial institutions to accept donations
- systems to deter unsolicited donations
- the need for a communication strategy
- the need for good coordination and planning
- policies for validating community collectors of donated goods, both existing and emerging, to prevent fraudulent collection of donations
- liability and risk management for donated goods
- ownership of donated goods (i.e. Who does the item belong to? Does it belong to the government, the recipient, a community agency? Who bears responsibility?)
- taxation considerations for private and corporate donors
- a rationale for whether or not a registry will be set up for diversion of unsolicited goods
- the need to plan for and address the needs of the broader, vicariously affected community to contribute to disaster relief
- innovative ways that the public may be able to assist as an alternative to providing donated goods
- accountability frameworks
- monitoring and evaluation processes, and the need to include recipients in these
- processes for deciding how to use money raised from the sale/recycling of excess items at the end of the recovery program
- a process for deciding how to dispose of inappropriate and unusable goods.

Appendix 3—Recovery plan considerations

When including arrangements for donated goods national, state/territory and regional/local policy and planning, recovery plans should address:

- Governance:
 - authority, structure and procedures in relation to donated goods
 - key people/agencies with roles and responsibilities including appointing a lead agency that coordinates all activities relating to donated goods
 - funding arrangements, for management of donated goods – agreed prior to events where possible
 - a system to track expenditure on management of donated goods (e.g. separate cost codes).
- Education:
 - pre-event education of recovery workers, public figures, the media and the general public
 - ongoing education through use of appropriate scripts, media releases and public messages.
- Communication and media relationships:
 - processes and messages for encouraging money donations
 - a plan for working cooperatively with the media
 - methods and consistent messages to deter unsolicited donated second-hand goods
 - messages to support donated goods programs after disasters in other states/territories.
- Coordination:
 - integration of donated goods with impact assessment approaches
 - development of a comprehensive online strategy
 - dispute resolution processes.
- Strategies to engage the general public in assisting the disaster affected community other than by providing donated goods
- Plans for diverting/converting goods so they are not delivered to inappropriate locations (e.g. establishing a registry, referring to agreed charity shops)
- Ownership rights of donated goods
- Disposal of unusable donations which have not been diverted.

Appendix 4—Donated goods needs assessment and sample list of possible needs

Needs assessment is a critical element in managing an effective recovery/appeal program within any community.

Donated goods should be used to meet identified needs created by the size/complexity/intensity of an event and identified gaps within existing arrangements.

What a needs assessment identifies

A needs assessment of the affected community identifies:

- the most urgent needs and the areas in which those needs are greatest
- general needs that can be met from within the affected community and those that can only be met with outside assistance
- specialised needs of the affected community for recovery, the resources available to meet those needs from within the community, and the external assistance that may be needed
- remaining resources and those in close proximity that may more efficiently be used to relieve the situation
- availability and capacity of community structures that can provide assistance
- transport and communications infrastructure needed and available for appeals.

Influencing factors

Each event creates different needs depending on its type, size and effects. The demographics of the community also greatly affect needs, as does availability of local resources and the psychological state within the community. Consequently, initial needs assessments look at:

- disaster effects
- community demography
- available resources
- pre-existing psychological state of the community.

Where information comes from

An initial needs assessment helps establish basic recovery services and identify gaps where donated goods may be of assistance. Initial assessments are based on:

- the impact assessment completed during the response phase
- relevant data from the impacted community and those working with them.

Recovery/appeals occur in rapidly and ever-changing environments, which require frequent and continuing assessment of community need. The sources of data to determine the needs within a community are many and varied and also change over time. The most likely sources for gathering needs data include:

- emergency service personnel
- police
- local government

- health workers
- social workers
- mental health workers
- recovery agencies and workers
- welfare workers
- community agencies
- (and most importantly) affected people and the local community.

Take care to avoid 'over-servicing' some groups to the detriment of others.

Who should undertake the assessment

While arrangements may vary among jurisdictions, it is important to ensure that one agency has responsibility for leading the needs assessment process. Impact assessments may inform this process and a means for integrating information should be in place. This should be pre-determined as part of local preparedness and planning activities.

Sample list of possible needs of disaster affected people

It can be helpful to prepare lists of likely goods both to aid discussions with people who need help to identify their needs and build their confidence and also to assist planning for recovery. Items needed in the first days following a disaster should have already been pre-planned by jurisdictions.

The following sample list is compiled from information provided by recipients of donated goods as part of the scoping study that informed the development of these national guidelines.

Needs in the first days

Essential items:

- a system for accessing medicines (e.g. not able to get them without doctor's approval and chemists are sometimes unsure about what to do)
- bottled water/water supplies
- food (including baby food)
- pet food
- baby hygiene such as disposable nappies, baby wipes, creams
- first aid items
- battery-operated torches and radio (when no power available) and batteries
- portable toilets.

Personal items:

- bedding
- personal hygiene items such as comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, face washer, soap, tissues, toilet paper, feminine hygiene items
- towels, night wear, change of underwear (new), change of clothes (new or excellent condition)
- cash donations/emergency money
- petrol for car/transport

- mobile phone and charger (access to internet and email could serve a similar purpose) to enable family/friends to communicate
- toys
- accommodation for pets
- essential information package including what to do, where to go, access to grants, how to tackle clean up (e.g. what gloves to use, where to get help) etc.
- basic stationery supplies (e.g. writing paper, pens, envelopes, stamps) and including something such as a folder in which to keep important documents.

Needs in the first weeks

Essential items:

- groceries
- bottled water for drinking plus other water (for washing etc.) in large quantities
- portable gas stove or a power source (e.g. generator)
- skips, somewhere to put rubbish
- work boots, clothes and gloves.

Personal items:

- bags/cases
- children and teenagers' entertainment (e.g. movie tickets for children/teenagers, rented portable video games, vouchers for book stores)
- good condition second-hand furniture
- prepared meals (to remind people to eat, as they often do not feel hungry until food is placed in front of them)
- basic kitchen items
- good condition second-hand linen
- new pillows
- lockable storage (e.g. shipping containers for farm equipment, smaller for household goods)
- plastic storage boxes (with wheels if possible) or any kind of storage equipment
- schoolbooks/school clothes
- phone and internet access (for work purposes)
- washing machine (especially for families)
- tarpaulins
- rags
- vouchers for massage (to assist sore backs, muscles after heavy work, relieve stress).

Needs in the first months

Essential items:

- household items such as fridges, washing machines
- kitchen tools (e.g. new saucepans, frying pans, cutlery, plates, cups)
- additional skips for rubbish removal.

Personal items:

- good clothes for work/university/school
- sewing kits

- recipe books
- tools.

Needs in the first year

Personal needs:

- plants and fruit trees (people nurture these until they are ready to move into new homes and they can become a symbol of new life and moving forward).

Community needs:

- community functions
- community projects such as community halls, sporting equipment and facilities, children's playgrounds, community buses.
- telecommunication tower maintenance and repairs
- mitigation activities (e.g. cleaning drains, culverts)
- project management services
- memorials.

Specific needs on farm properties

Essential:

- medication, treatment, food, water needed to keep stock alive
- agistment for animals and an immediate safe place.

Ongoing needs:

- extra food to feed volunteers cleaning up a farm
- large water tanks with water delivered and new piping
- supplies such as fencing posts, wire etc
- shipping containers or lockable storage.

Appendix 5—Basic guide to warehousing donated goods

This basic guide to warehousing donated goods covers establishing and managing a warehouse following a disaster.

To operate successfully, warehousing and logistics require considerable skill. If it is necessary to establish a donated goods warehouse, seek professional expertise.

If it is not possible to use a professional service to set up and manage the warehouse, be cautious and plan carefully around the following issues.

The following background information on planning and operating a donated goods warehouse has been adapted with permission from the *International Red Cross Warehouse Manual*. It also draws on *Donated Goods Management Planning: Civil Defence Emergency Management Best Practice Guide (BPG2/06)* and *The Salvation Army Stores (Salvos Stores) Emergency Response Blueprint Plan*.

For more comprehensive information, the full *International Red Cross Warehouse Manual* is at: <<https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources-and-services/disasters/logistics/>> (registration is required on this site).

Understanding local regulations

A large number of Australian government and state/territory regulations and standards govern different aspects of warehousing (e.g. occupational health and safety, food handling, hazardous substances, local government regulations, forklift usage). It is essential to research local requirements *before* setting up a warehouse.

Location

Try to find a warehouse as near as possible to the site of the disaster/ultimate destination point to save transport costs and time, and to reduce possible damage from double or multiple handling.

If this is impossible, set up a distribution point close to the disaster site and ensure transport is available to move items from the warehouse to the distribution point.

Regional warehouses are normally used to store large quantities of goods for mid- to long-term storage (one to six months), whereas local warehouses are usually used for short-term placement and distribution of limited amounts of donated goods.

For local or regional warehouses, it is preferable to use buildings specially designed to be leased for storage. However, this is not always possible. Depending on the volume of donated goods and the length of time they are to be stored, existing commercial warehouses or converted public, community or even private buildings can be used. In emergencies or for short-term storage where no suitable facilities can be found, warehousing can be improvised—for example, using cargo containers or tents. Take care that improvised storage facilities are properly established and weather-proofed.

Access

If the warehouse is also to be used as a distribution point, it will need sufficient secure space (inside or outside, depending on type of distribution and weather conditions) to distribute donated goods to the public.

Availability

The warehouse must be available for long enough to ensure goods do not have to be moved when the lease runs out. This is very costly and time consuming. The warehouse should be available for at least six months with an option to extend. Warehouses used for donated goods in the Victorian Bushfires were in use for 18 months to two years.

Other considerations

Considerations when choosing a warehouse include:

- size of the warehouse (possibility to expand or reduce storage area, preferred)
- separate office space, preferred
- staff space for changing, washing and eating, preferred
- appropriate access for trucks of various sizes
- proper loading and unloading facilities
- adequate parking for trucks within the compound
- building conditions (type of construction, proper ventilation, storage capacity and protection against humidity, extreme temperature fluctuations and local weather conditions/hazard)
- basic utilities (water, electricity, sanitary facilities and telephone access)
- security of the general environment (type of neighbourhood, isolation, condition of access road etc.)
- security of building and compound facilities (fences, secure gates, lockable doors and windows, exterior lighting)
- ownership of the warehouse.

Warehouse size

The size of the warehouse required depends on the amount of donated goods expected (wanted or unwanted) and is determined by the maximum quantity, in tonnage and volume, of supplies to be stored there at any one time. This can be difficult to predict, but consider the number of beneficiaries, the lead-time needed to replenish local distribution warehouses, the type of distribution system and the frequency of the distributions (e.g. monthly, weekly).

Only about 70 per cent of the total storage area of a warehouse should be taken up with goods, leaving the remaining 30 per cent clear for ventilation, passageways, handling and repacking.

It is not possible or practical to fill a warehouse to the roof, nor is it recommended. Therefore, storage capacity should be calculated at least a metre below the actual height of the warehouse ceiling. Additionally, to avoid damage to the goods or the risk of stacks toppling over, few items can or should be stacked higher than 2.5 metres.

Management

Ideally the warehouse should be managed by an organisation with the relevant expertise and experience. Good recovery planning includes identifying an organisation to take on this task and having Memorandums of Understanding in place to ensure that everything is clear and not subject to conflict or ambiguity as staff change. Any such plan should document relationships, cost arrangements, costs, reimbursements and related details.

Ensure those chosen to manage the warehouse are available for a reasonable length of time. If using a non-government organisation for this job, ensure there are sufficient personnel and resources to continue to manage the warehouse over time.

Keep the number of warehouse staff to a reasonable minimum, for example:

- a warehouse manager (oversees physical warehouse issues, contracts, deliveries etc.)
- a storekeeper responsible for receiving incoming supplies, releasing goods for dispatch, caring for the goods in stock, keeping all stock-movement records, organising the handling of supplies, maintaining a security system and managing all other warehouse personnel
- a team of warehouse workers
- security staff (optional, see below).

Security

Keep warehouse security in mind. Donated goods can be of considerable value in terms of both their cost to the donor, and their value for the beneficiaries and the local economy.

- Access to the warehouse should be restricted to authorised personnel only (storekeepers, security and warehouse workers).
- If the warehouse is also used as a distribution centre, the area should be clearly separated from the storage area.
- There may occasionally be a need to hire security guards for overnight protection.

Occupational health, safety and welfare issues

Serious accidents, sometimes even death, can result from inappropriate activities in a warehouse.

- Always prominently display appropriate signage.
- Mark out walkways where goods are not to be stacked using chalk, painted lines, tape, barriers, cones etc. and ensure these areas are kept clear.
- Forklift trucks require sufficient space for turning and clear vision for the driver.
- Goods must be handled carefully, as physical injuries are likely if lifting and carrying heavy loads without proper instruction.
- Ideally, stack all items between shoulder and knee height and use lifting equipment where available. If space is at a premium and no lifting equipment is available, then:
 - stack small, light items above shoulder height
 - stack heavy items between shoulder and knee height.
- Wear gloves when handling second-hand goods.
- Smoking must be prohibited in the warehouse and the warehouse compound. Fire-fighting equipment must be available onsite in case of fire, and a plan posted which includes escape routes and actions to be taken in the event of fire.
- All personnel working in the warehouse need to be trained about these issues.

Occasionally it is necessary to store items which require special attention:

- Always check and comply with regulations when storing hazardous materials.
- Inform all warehouse personnel of the specific hazards associated with the dangerous goods in store and provide training on how to deal with accidents and spills.
- Post clear instructions on how to deal with hazardous substances and spills, including who should be notified.
- Follow warning instructions on package labels carefully.
- Stack hazardous materials with due care, post signs that prominently display their dangers and warnings to all those who have access to the storage area.
- Store flammable substances separately, away from the warehouse building.
- Do not permit smoking, cooking or open flames of any kind within 10 metres of the storage areas. Keep fire extinguishers and sand buckets nearby.
- Substances which vaporise easily, whether flammable or toxic, must be kept cool.
- Never store chemicals such as fertilisers, pesticides or cement in a warehouse where food is or will be located.

Preparation and maintenance of a warehouse

Before using a warehouse, thoroughly check, clean and repair the floors, ceilings, doors and frames. Clear the exterior compound of weeds and rubbish to avoid attracting rodents and insects. Where necessary, treat walls and floors with an approved, food-safe insecticide.

Discuss and plan the warehouse layout in advance, before the goods arrive. Divide the warehouse into several clearly marked and identifiable zones according to the status of the goods to be kept there, for example:

- goods to be inspected
- goods in storage
- goods to be dispatched
- goods to be disposed of.

The simplest method is to mark the placement of each stack by chalking lines on the floor. In addition to multiple storage zones for stacked goods, other essential warehouse zones include:

- reception area where goods are received and controlled before being entered into stock
- quarantine area for goods awaiting inspection or treatment
- preparation/repackaging area
- dispatch area
- office space and staff area, where no separate facilities exist.

Warehouses should be cleaned regularly, and a cleaning schedule and record of cleanings should be posted and regularly updated. Here is an example of a warehouse management protocol.

At the end of each:

- *day*, the floor should be swept and the sweepings disposed of
- *week*, the walls and the sides of each stack should be cleaned
- *month*, the entire warehouse should be thoroughly cleaned.

Have rubbish skips delivered to the site for immediate disposal of non-recyclable donations of such poor quality that they are unusable.

Storage issues

Most donated goods, especially food, need to be protected from sun, rain, humidity and high temperatures, therefore, it is best to avoid using open, uncovered storage areas. If this is not possible, open storage should be limited to short periods, and only for those supplies not immediately affected by such exposure. Remember that even unsolicited and unwanted donated goods should be properly stored, at least initially, as the image of goods being damaged or ruined can create public relations problems for the organisations involved in the response and recovery effort.

Wherever possible, stack goods on pallets (or their equivalent), not directly on the floor, to avoid contact between the goods and water or floor-level humidity. Where the number of pallets is insufficient, prioritise bagged foodstuffs rather than canned or bottled products, which are less susceptible to humidity. Where no pallets are available, temporarily stack bags on plastic sheeting.

If it is not possible to limit stack heights to 2.5 metres use a pyramid-stacking method.

The nature of some donations (e.g. used and soiled items, food) creates an ideal environment for pests and vermin. Use pest controllers to establish bait stations and provide ongoing assessments.

Record keeping

Keeping records of items received and distributed is important, especially in relation to corporate donations. Any donations should be recorded when they arrive, as it may be impossible to 'catch up' later. Also record any movement of items so that there is accountability in relation to donated items. This is particularly important in the case of valuable goods (such as new white goods).

The storekeeper should establish a system to oversee the movement of donated goods entering and leaving the warehouse. Assistance of a commercial warehouse provider is invaluable in this area.

The International Federation of Red Cross has a well established system in relation to recording receipt and transfer of goods. See <<https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources-and-services/disasters/logistics/>> for further information (registration is required on this site).


When the warehouse is also used as a distribution centre, families or individuals who receive assistance from the warehouse also need to be recorded. Staff will need to:

- be aware of the required documentation that allows disaster affected people to access goods
- if there is a particular system, such as a points system, for allocation of goods.

Communication and coordination

Establish clear lines of communication with any local recovery coordinator/s and recovery committee/s. It will also be necessary to develop and maintain good relationships with other charity organisations operating in the area to avoid duplication.

If the warehouse is likely to receive calls from the general public then staff/volunteers taking these calls must be familiar with these *National guidelines for managing donated goods*, and appropriate



responses for members of the public who wish to donate. Make ‘scripts’ available for staff to ensure that the message going out is consistent. Similar care will need to be taken if the public attend the warehouse to deliver donations (see Appendix 8—Communication strategy).

Media announcements or public comments should generally only be made if this has been agreed with the local recovery coordinator and by whoever has been appointed to manage media issues. It is useful to communicate where donations are going and how they can be used, to reassure the public that appropriate distribution is occurring.

Keep all staff and volunteers regularly updated about what is going on. Things change rapidly, and daily quick meetings will keep people up-to-date and also reduce risks of mistakes due to ignorance about specific issues.

Appendix 6—Communication strategy

Introduction

The purpose of this communication strategy is to help implement the *National guidelines for managing donated goods* and it needs to be read in conjunction with the guidelines.

The strategy is for use by volunteers, workers and managers within the recovery system as well as public figures and community leaders (including government). It includes key messages for different groups (target audiences) that can affect the management of donated goods following a disaster.

The intention is for state/territory and local government to use the resources in this strategy to develop tailored communications about donated goods, linking into existing recovery communication strategies.

When the strategy needs to be activated, it may be useful to appoint a coordinator who can take responsibility for implementation.

It is also a good idea to agree in advance on who will be the spokesperson, or spokespeople, for media announcements, queries and interviews (according to jurisdictional arrangements and protocols).

Issue

Strategic and planned communication about donated goods is essential to explain why unsolicited donations can cause problems and how people can help in other ways. It can also help to counter negative public reaction to refusal or disposal of unneeded or excess goods. Donated goods program coordinators cannot change existing behaviour by acting alone. They need cooperation from community leaders, the media, recovery workers and volunteers and the public. Communicating to these groups is therefore, an essential component of this strategy.

Aim

The aim of the communication strategy is to promote the principles for managing donated goods by:

- providing information about the issues caused by unsolicited donations
- discouraging unsolicited donations in a timely and sensitive way, to moderate behaviour without alienating potential donors or diminishing the public's capacity for generosity
- encouraging the donation of money
- helping to keep the broader community positive and motivated about their part in the aftermath of disaster.

Communication approach

Communication about donated goods should:

- always consider the needs of disaster affected people and communities first
- be respectful, transparent and sensitive
- use consistent, agreed key messages (see key messages matrixes below) that align with the guiding principles

- not involve, or encourage, general appeals for donated goods. However, there may be targeted appeals for specific items identified through the needs assessment
- suggest alternatives to donating goods
- engage all stakeholders.

Target audiences

- **The affected community**—The affected community has a right to understand and be consulted regarding any decisions about activities designed to assist them. While they may be uninformed about the broader issues associated with donated goods they are the experts on what is best for themselves, their families and their community. Their wishes need to be taken into consideration in whatever communication strategies are to be put in place.
- **Public figures and community leaders (including government leaders)**—This group has a significant influence on the way the public responds. They provide leadership in launching appeals, provide positive messages of appreciation to the public, and can be influential in bringing about change. However, they may have limited knowledge about the potential issues associated with donated goods and could make announcements without checking on the affected community's needs. They may also be reluctant to offend the public by refusing what is offered.
- **The media**—The media is very powerful in shaping opinion and has a major interest in capturing community attention. The media often provides leadership in launching appeals and can help to promote a positive environment which assists recovery. However, the media may lack knowledge about the potential issues and their impact and can make announcements without checking the affected community's needs. Media coverage promoting individuals, who collect goods en masse, as 'heroes' can also encourage further donations.
- **Managers, workers and volunteers in recovery**—This group is immediately in touch with disaster affected people and has knowledge about what people need. This group is also important in providing appropriate, consistent messages to the public. However, they may find it difficult to refuse what is offered, can lack knowledge about the potential issues and their impact, and could unintentionally hinder the recovery efforts.
- **Corporate donors**—Corporate donors can feel responsibility towards the affected community and want to help. They usually provide new and good quality items. They may provide vouchers that allow families to meet immediate needs or ease the burden on affected communities by sponsoring community projects to boost morale during difficult times (e.g. by providing tickets to events, holiday packages etc). However, corporate donors may not have knowledge about the potential issues and their impact and a small number of businesses may want to get rid of outdated stock for the tax incentive, or may use the event to gain market advantage. When corporate donors can only provide limited numbers of items it can also create equity problems for the community. Corporate donors sometimes offer large items which require substantial storage space and/or significant cost to install. Corporate donations may slow financial recovery for the affected business community by providing items that would otherwise be purchased locally.
- **The general public**—When a disaster occurs, many people become emotionally involved and feel a need to assist. This is very helpful for the disaster affected people because the demonstrated public response is a morale booster for the community. Personal, thoughtful, crafted items can become lifelong treasures for disaster affected people and help them develop resilience and maintain a positive outlook during their recovery. Unfortunately, there is a widespread lack of public knowledge about the potential issues caused by donated

goods, and people do not always think about or check what the affected community actually needs. A small number 'dump' unwanted and unusable items, which can have a demoralising impact on the recipients.

- **Social media**—It is estimated that over nine million¹³ people in Australia use social media (including Twitter, Facebook, blogs and electronic news) for networking and sharing information. Although these people are not a homogeneous group, it is becoming increasingly evident that this form of communication has great influence on the way people react. The rapid movement of information across the population who use these tools is both a positive and negative—positive because information spreads so widely and rapidly (faster than traditional media) but negative because if the information is incorrect or outdated it can still be accepted by many as accurate and this can cause difficulties.

Timing

Different messages need to be conveyed to the target audiences at different times:

- **Pre-event**—There is an opportunity at this time to educate target audiences to assist appropriate understanding of the impact of unsolicited donations. This means that when an event does occur, and there is less time to spend explaining and educating, people may have a more useful and thoughtful approach to how they will donate.
- **During the event**—Immediately after an event has occurred, or while it is still unfolding, it is important to reinforce all the planning and pre-event messages through clear instructions to the public about the most useful way to assist, and what will or will not be accepted by the organisation coordinating donations. As the recovery program progresses, communication needs to continue to reinforce those early messages. The messages may also target specific needs identified through the assessment process.
- **Post-event**—This is the time to thank everyone for their efforts to assist disaster affected communities, provide recovery stories and reinforce the messages about not sending unsolicited goods. It is also an opportunity to engender more responsible approaches to donated goods in future disasters.

The following key message matrixes contain information to convey to specific target audiences.

The information included provides consistent and clear messages to help inform the range of audiences. It may be adapted for a variety of communication methods and tailored for each state/territory to meet the needs of their particular strategies.

¹³ Nielsenwire report, 23 March 2010 <<http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/global/australia-getting-more-social-online-as-facebook-leads-and-twitter-grows/>>

Key message matrix: pre-event

STAGE	TARGET AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATION METHOD	KEY MESSAGES (pre-event)
Pre-event	Community leaders and public figures	Place information on state/territory websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donate money rather than goods because it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is more flexible – provides choice – promotes self-directed recovery – can more accurately target a need – circulates money in affected communities, which stimulates a quicker recovery for the local economy. • In contrast, donating unsolicited second-hand goods is not helpful because it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – creates significant work and costs for the recovery effort – diverts resources of workers and volunteers – can slow down delivery of crucial services to disaster affected people – rarely provides enough benefit to make the donation worthwhile – can impact negatively on the local economy by depressing sales – can undermine recovery efforts and community resilience. • If people really want to donate something other than money: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – handmade, thoughtful, considerate gifts can be uplifting to the spirit (e.g. handmade quilts, family recipes, ‘care packages’ of aromatherapy bath salts, artwork, craft supplies). • Disaster affected communities greatly appreciate public care, generosity and thoughtfulness. It is a significant part of recovery process. We can all still contribute in ways that are far more helpful than donating unsolicited goods.
	The media	Hold an awareness raising forum for an invited audience (see Appendix 12— Educational tools)	
Pre-event	Recovery workers and volunteers	Launch the guidelines as a one-off event which could occur in each state/territory and/or local region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donate money rather than goods because it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is more flexible and provides choice – promotes self-directed recovery – can more accurately target a need – circulates money in affected communities, which stimulates a quicker recovery for the local economy. • Corporate sector donations of goods and services can be of great value to disaster affected communities and play a significant role in the recovery process. • If there is a targeted appeal for specific items identified in the needs assessment, corporate donors can be most helpful if they only offer what is requested and remember that unsolicited items cannot be accepted. • It is worth developing partnerships in advance with state/territory and local authorities, to discuss possible needs and how money donations are distributed, and to establish contacts and arrangements.
	The public	Encourage media articles or interviews	
	Corporate donors	Place information on state/territory websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donate money rather than goods because it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is more flexible and provides choice – promotes self-directed recovery – can more accurately target a need – circulates money in affected communities, which stimulates a quicker recovery for the local economy. • Corporate sector donations of goods and services can be of great value to disaster affected communities and play a significant role in the recovery process. • If there is a targeted appeal for specific items identified in the needs assessment, corporate donors can be most helpful if they only offer what is requested and remember that unsolicited items cannot be accepted. • It is worth developing partnerships in advance with state/territory and local authorities, to discuss possible needs and how money donations are distributed, and to establish contacts and arrangements.
		Hold a workshop to discuss issues and establish partnerships in advance	
		Distribute the guidelines	

Key message matrix: during the event

STAGE	TARGET AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATION METHOD	KEY MESSAGES (during the event)
During the event	Community leaders and public figures	<p>Place information on state/territory websites</p> <p>Direct contact by email or phone</p> <p>Distribute media release</p> <p>Circulate brochures</p> <p>Encourage media interviews</p> <p>Contribute articles to community newsletters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If assessment indicates that specific donated goods are needed then appeals will be targeted to those requirements. Encourage the public to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – donate money as the preferred option – if there is a targeted appeal, respond by only offering good quality items that are requested. • Donating items other than those specifically requested results in large volumes of goods which take significant resources to sort, store and distribute. This can divert resources from more urgent work with disaster affected people. • A substantial amount of unsolicited donations remain unused because they are excess or do not meet actual needs of the affected community. • Instead of donating unsolicited goods, the public can help by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – selling items they wanted to donate and then donating the money instead – organising fundraising activities.
	The media	<p>Update Twitter and Facebook information</p> <p>Distribute the guidelines</p> <p>Hold a media briefing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The media has an important role to play in helping the recovery effort. Please: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – encourage money donations – discourage donations of unsolicited items – if there is an appeal for specific items that have been identified as needed, encourage the public to donate only good quality items that are requested – check with the recovery authorities coordinating donated goods <i>before</i> launching any appeals – if making or supporting an appeal, limit it to the specific items or assistance requested by the recovery authorities or organisations coordination donate goods – suggest ways people can change goods into money so the proceeds can be donated to the appeal fund (e.g. garage/boot sale, auction, donate to charity shops) – encourage fundraising efforts.

STAGE	TARGET AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATION METHOD	KEY MESSAGES (during the event)
	Material aid workers and volunteers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base all appeals for donations on assessed need. • You can help change and correct public understanding of what is helpful by providing consistent messages that encourage needed items and discourage unsolicited items. • Explain why certain goods may not be needed such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – there are already enough of those items available – these items are not needed right now (e.g. winter clothing in summer) – there is no spare storage space – to be useful, such items need to be new or in excellent condition. • Refuse unsolicited donations tactfully by thanking people for their care and concern and suggesting other ways they can help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – redirect donors to local charity shops if (<i>and only if</i>) those shops have the capacity to accept goods – direct donors to a registry if this has been set up – suggest ways to turn unneeded donations into cash (e.g. garage/boot sale, auction) – suggest alternative ways of assisting such as running fundraising events and applying to become a volunteer (if volunteers are required).
	Corporate donors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donate money rather than goods if possible. • Ensure donations meet assessed need. If not, consider donating money instead. • Talk to the donated goods program coordinator prior to donating to ensure that what is being offered will be of value and meets an assessed need. • Talk with the donated goods program coordinator to discuss timing, delivery and how best to present goods.
	The public		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money is always the most useful donation. • Donated goods can only be accepted if they meet an assessed need. • Public interest and kindness are important to help people and communities recover and become resilient. • If you want to donate goods, then it is important to wait for a specific appeal. • If there is no specific appeal, consider joining with friends or neighbours to raise money which can be donated to the recovery fund. For example, you might do this by holding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an auction with friends – a fundraising dinner – a garage or boot sale – a street market. • Consider connecting with your local non-government organisation or charity (such as Salvation Army, St Vincent De Paul or the Australian Red Cross) for a ‘bring and buy’ sale or other fundraising events. • Check with the authority responsible for issuing licenses and permits for raffles and fundraising <i>before</i> holding a fundraising event. This will ensure your event complies with relevant legislation.

Key message matrix: post-event

STAGE	TARGET AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATION METHOD	KEY MESSAGES (post-event)
Post-event	Community leaders and public figures	Place information on state/territory websites Distribute media releases Update Twitter and Facebook sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the public and corporate donors for their kindness and generosity. • Thank the media for their support and for encouraging appropriate donations. • Explain what has happened with the donations and how they have helped. • Remind everyone that disaster affected people continue to need support long after the disaster has faded from the news.
	The media		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for encouraging appropriate donations to disaster affected people. <i>[Provide positive and interesting stories about the donations.]</i> • <i>[If the media has been particularly helpful...]</i> Your influence has greatly enhanced the experiences of those recovering from the trauma of this disaster. • Recovery efforts continue long after the disaster has faded from news headlines.
	Corporate donors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for your support and assistance to help the with the recovery effort. <i>[A public thank you is important. Also, providing as much information as possible about how donations were distributed helps satisfy companies that goods have not been misused and dispels other myths.]</i> • Disaster affected people continue to need support long after the disaster has faded from the news.
	The public		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for your generosity in helping the people impacted by the disaster. • Your care and contribution has provided important encouragement and support to those affected. <i>[Where possible give explanations of what has happened to donations.]</i> • Remember that recovery often goes on long after the event has faded from the news.

Scripts for public announcements by community leaders and public figures

These scripts can be used as the basis for media releases and/or talking points for interviews and public announcements.

Pre-event

Disasters like fires and floods, stir up enormous public sympathy—we all want to help those affected.

Often we think to help by donating our second-hand clothing and goods. But, what many of us don't realise is that these types of donations rarely provide the benefits we assume they will for disaster affected communities.

Research clearly shows that, rather than helping, such donations create significant extra work for authorities and can actually distract recovery efforts and undermine community resilience.

Dealing with unsolicited donated goods takes time and focus away from the very important work that needs to be done with disaster affected people.

Large quantities of donated goods in a disaster affected location can also seriously depress the sales of local businesses and delay recovery of the economy.

In addition, donated goods can impose a sense of obligation on survivors who may be struggling to deal with what has happened. This sense of obligation is difficult to reconcile when the goods are unneeded or of poor quality.

However, public care and support is very important to disaster affected people. It helps them feel more positive and confident about the task that lies ahead.

The most effective way we can all help is by contributing money. Donating money is always the best option because it more flexible, provides choice, promotes self-directed recovery and more accurately targets need. It also stimulates local economies, leading to a quicker recovery for the community.

During a disaster, authorities quickly assess what is needed and targeted appeals may be launched for particular items. We can all help significantly by waiting for those appeals and only offering good quality items that are requested.

During the event

If you want to help *[affected community]*, donating money is the best option.

This allows the people affected by this disaster to make choices about what is best for them to help their recovery. This also puts money back into the local economy which assists early recovery for the whole community.

Donations can be made at *[details]*.

We really appreciate your support—but at this stage we do not require donations of second-hand clothing and other goods. The local charity shops have enough to meet current needs.

Authorities are assessing the needs of those affected. If specific items are required, a targeted appeal will be announced.

If you have goods you wish to donate, please consider turning your goods into cash instead. For example, have a garage sale, boot sale, a fun auction among friends or sell items online. Then you can donate the money raised to the recovery effort.

Your support and encouragement are very important to the people who have been affected by this disaster.

After the event

Thank you for your care and support to help *[affected community]*.

The response has been magnificent and we received many items which have helped to meet the needs of those affected. Appeals for specific items worked well and much of what was donated has been of great value to the affected community.

We still have a large quantity of items left over, which will be recycled wherever possible. Some items may be sold and the proceeds donated to the recovery program.

Scripts for recovery personnel responding to public enquiries

These scripts can be used as the basis for responding to phone calls and other public enquiries about how people can help. They may also form the basis of media releases and/or talking points for interviews and public announcements.

This is important to recognise people's concern and acknowledge the importance of their help, while directing their assistance so it can be most useful.

Response to people wanting to help

Thank you for thinking of the people who have been devastated by the *[disaster]*.

Your interest and kindness are very much appreciated by *[affected community]* and really makes a difference to the recovery of those who have been affected.

The best way you can help is by donating money because this allows us to more precisely meet the needs of the people who have been affected.

Or you may be interested in approaching one of the charitable organisations to offer your time as a volunteer or get involved in fundraising.

If you have goods that you wanted to donate, consider selling these and donating the money instead. There are a number of ways you may be able to turn goods into money, such as:

- linking up with a local charity and running a 'bring and buy' or boot sale
- holding a social event with your friends to auction off items you have to give away
- holding a garage sale.

Response to people wanting to donate goods

Thank you for thinking of the people who have been devastated by the *[disaster]*.

Your interest and kindness are very much appreciated and public support makes a big difference to community recovery.

However, there is no need for donated goods at the moment, and unfortunately we have no storage space to keep items in case they might be needed down the track.

If we identify any particular needs we may launch a targeted appeal for specific items, so please watch out for that.

If you have goods that you wanted to donate, consider selling these and donating the money instead. There are a number of ways you may be able to turn goods into money, such as:

- linking up with a local charity and running a 'bring and buy' or boot sale
- holding a social event with your friends to auction off items you have to give away
- holding a garage sale.

[Local charity shop/s] may be looking for items that you have to donate. Here is the phone number ***[only suggest this if you know the shop has capacity and is willing to take items]***.

Response to people delivering their own donations or donations they have collected

Thank you for thinking of the people who have been devastated by the *[disaster]*.

Unfortunately, there is no need for these items at present and we do not have the storage space to hold them in case of future need.

If we identify any particular needs we may launch a targeted appeal for specific items, so please watch out for that.

[The local charity shop/s] may be looking for items like those you have to donate, and this may help them to assist *[affected community]*. This is the phone number ***[only suggest this if you know the shop has capacity and is willing to take items]***.

Your interest and kindness are very much appreciated and public support makes a big difference to community recovery. You may still be able to help. Have you thought about trying to sell these items and then donate the money to the disaster appeal?

Appendix 7—Corporate donations strategy

Introduction

In 2010/2011, as part of the work undertaken to develop the guidelines, research was conducted on the role of corporate donors. This was prompted by the 2009 Victorian Bushfires where the significant response by the corporate sector resulted in the need to establish a specific work unit to manage corporate donations. Some of these donations were of high value to disaster impacted communities, some were not usable, donations of tickets to events required immediate action and other donations had caveats attached that made them difficult to organise. Considerable effort was necessary in managing these donations.

The research methods included: a phone survey of 200 South Australian businesses; focus groups with large Melbourne and Sydney businesses; and informal conversations with individuals with suggestions and solutions about possible ways to manage corporate donations.

The corporate donations strategy has been developed from the results of the research and is for use by agencies involved in disaster recovery and community resilience. The intention is for state/territory and local government to use the strategy to develop tailored activities to encourage partnerships and achieve improved community outcomes through appropriate corporate donations.

When the strategy needs to be activated, it may be useful to appoint a coordinator who can take responsibility for implementation.

Issue

Just as the public is motivated to donate unsolicited goods following a disaster, the corporate sector often wants to offer immediate assistance. Sometimes this also takes the form of unsuitable or unnecessary goods, which create significant problems for recovery coordinators. By raising awareness and establishing partnerships in advance, corporate support can be directed to more positively assist disaster affected communities. Having pre-arranged contacts and agreed processes and structures for requesting and receiving corporate donations means plans can be quickly activated when needed.

Aim

The aim of this strategy is to guide interaction with the corporate sector to ensure:

- corporate donors are well informed and engaged in advance
- corporate donations are targeted and appropriate
- corporate donors are appropriately recognised and thanked.

Pre-event activities

- **Make contact**—establish contact with the corporate sector to engage potential corporate donors and make contacts that could lead to mutually acceptable arrangements to assist disaster affected communities in the future. Options include:
 - approach professional business associations (e.g. local Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and ask to be included on the agenda for upcoming meetings
 - set up a workshop and advertise widely in the media or through professional associations, and use this forum to engage with potential corporate donors

- contact large companies and speak with the Manager/Director for Corporate Social Responsibility or Sustainability
- advertise in major newspapers asking interested companies to provide contact details and follow up personally.

After this initial engagement, develop strategies to maintain corporate interest and involve them more directly in disaster recovery planning (see the point ‘Build relationships’ below).

- **Develop information packages**—compile an information package ready for distribution to any interested companies. Include:
 - an explanation of the recovery process
 - information about the needs of disaster affected people
 - the *National guidelines for managing donated goods*
 - ‘myth busting’ evidence about the impact of unsolicited donations of goods
 - the facts about how money donated by the community is used to assist
 - clear messages about why donations of money are always preferred.
- **Establish a state/territory webpage**—post the information package online including links to the national guidelines. This can be used to reinforce the message that donating money is the best option for corporate donors as well as the general public.
- **Build relationships**—develop pathways and encourage relationships between the corporate sector, charities and government. Options include:
 - have conversations with Corporate Social Responsibility Managers/Directors
 - invite companies and charities to attend a forum to discuss the issues
 - invite potential corporate donors to be involved in disaster recovery planning.
- **Investigate other roles potential donors could undertake**—in the aftermath of disaster there may be several ways in which corporate donors can assist (e.g. donations of time and expertise, setting up a register or providing premises to assist with recovery activities).
- **Establish systems**—be prepared to manage corporate donations. This includes decisions about:
 - which organisation will have overall responsibility
 - how unsolicited donations will be redirected or managed
 - how a storage facility (if required) will be financed, set up and maintained.
- **Engage local government**—inform and fully engage local government in all activities by:
 - ensuring local government is part of any forums that are set up with potential corporate donors
 - using local government networks to contact local companies
 - including local government in any planning activities.


Actions to take during the event

- **Appoint a designated coordinator**—agree on who will coordinate all offers from the corporate sector (corporate donations program coordinator). This may be the same individual or agency that is coordinating public donated goods. If separate, good communication between the two is essential. Make sure the coordinator’s details are widely publicised among agencies involved in the recovery effort. The corporate donations program coordinator will need to be very clear about the needs of the affected individuals and community as assessed by the local recovery coordinator.

- **Develop media messages**—develop messages for the corporate sector that encourage patience, encourage donations of money, discourage donations of goods, and advertise the person/unit to contact (see more details in Appendix 6—Communication strategy).
- **Be clear about appropriate donations and appropriate arrangements.**
 - only accept corporate donations when they meet an assessed need within the affected community. If this is not the case, negotiate with the donor to see if the company would be willing to offer money or other support instead (e.g. expertise, use of premises)
 - take particular care not to disadvantage local businesses by accepting donated items that could be supplied locally
 - corporate donations that can only be given to a few households often cause divisiveness within communities. Take care to establish and operate a distribution process that will not create this difficulty. If this situation cannot be avoided, decide whether or not to accept the donation
 - some donations are made with conditions, caveats or specific instructions by the donor as to the end use. When this occurs carefully consider whether the cost to meet those expectations outweighs the value of the gift. Corporate giving is most useful when there are no expectations about how goods are to be distributed.
 - ask corporate donors to store goods they donate until they are required
 - when donors are offering items on tenure (e.g. hire cars) ensure formal arrangements are in place including timeframe, insurance, etc
 - for corporate donors to get tax concessions from their donation, they must either declare the donation as a business expense, or make the gift to an organisation that is listed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (in this instance the event must be a ‘declared disaster’).
- **Disseminate information to the companies already engaged**—reinforce existing relationships with regular information, and disseminate messages further to the broader corporate sector using professional business associations as a conduit.
- **Work with the donated goods program coordinator**—ensure that, once donations from corporate donors are agreed, there is a delivery system and distribution plan in place.
- **Work with the communication strategy coordinator**—acknowledging offers and thanking corporate donors is important and may require liaison with the coordinator of the communication strategy for media or public announcements.
- **Identify donations**—label all goods for easy identification and tracking. Provide a detailed inventory with the shipment. Warranties and guarantees for goods must also be provided.
- **Record what happens to donations**—this enables feedback to corporate donors about how donations are assisting (general details not specific personal information).
- **Manage smaller, localised events in a similar way**—the expectation is that mostly local companies would be contacted in the case of smaller localised events.
- **Keep donors updated**—keep all donors informed about what has happened to donations and keep up the ‘myth busting’ messages to discourage unsolicited goods donations.

Actions to take post-event

- **Thank corporate donors**—prepare a ‘thank you’ list of corporate donors and display this widely. Other options for acknowledging corporate donors include presenting certificates, and thanking donors publicly in a newspaper, a business publication or on a website, and promoting the ‘thank you’ list to the media.

- 
- **Distribute final updates**—update the community and the corporate sector including detailed information about how money was spent and goods distributed. If this update is on a website, widely publicise the URL.
 - **Seek feedback**—feedback from corporate donors, affected communities and individuals about their experience of the donated goods program informs planning and improvement. This may be through formal surveys, in-depth interviews, focus groups or informal discussions.
 - **Write a final report**—including recommendations to assist future events.
 - **Continue engaging the corporate sector**—this is important to keep improving future communication and organisation/arrangements in the event of another disaster.

Appendix 8—Disposal of unused goods

Experience shows that there is almost always a large quantity of unused donated goods left at the end of the recovery program.

This is a logistical problem and potentially also a public relations problem as it may attract negative media and community attention.

It will be necessary to find acceptable ways to recycle or dispose of unneeded donations.

The donated goods program coordinator should have operational plans in place to mitigate potential negative publicity. For example:

- Be open with the media, ready to respond to any queries and explain the situation and process
- Be aware of local recycling organisations so that as much as possible can be recycled rather than going to landfill
- Have agreements with local charity organisations to take unused excellent quality goods
- Investigate the growing industry in exporting clothes, soft toys and bric-a-brac overseas to developing countries
- Ensure a policy has been previously developed about how any funds gained from resale or disposal of goods will be used. Make this clear to the affected community, the media and the public.

Appendix 9—Common arrangements to support management of donated goods

Solicited donations

- **Planning**—During pre-event planning processes it is possible to predict and list likely requirements for disaster affected people by disaster type and based on time, for instance on the first night and during the first week after a disaster.
 - All jurisdictions are encouraged to develop such lists (see Appendix 6—Donated goods assessment and simple lists of possible needs).
 - This forward planning make it possible to investigate how such goods can be best sought and distributed, through existing community organisations.
- **Targeted appeals based on needs assessment**—if the initial needs assessment indicates a strong need for a particular type of item (e.g. work boots):
 - Aim to manage the request without using the media where possible (e.g. check if a local charity or corporate supplier can assist, directly approach local service organisations such as Rotary and Lions).
 - When an appeal to the media is necessary it should be very specific (e.g. ‘We need 100 pairs of work boots in excellent or new condition, sizes 8 to 12 delivered to ...’).
 - It is important to be ready to contain or curtail excess donations such as having a media release or radio announcement ready to go as soon as the target has been reached.
 - The lead organisation conducting the appeal should have everything in place to efficiently receive and administer the donations of goods. Good record keeping is critical.

Unsolicited donations

Jurisdictions use a range of methods to divert unsolicited donated goods following events. These vary depending on the jurisdictions and event, but include options such as:

- diverting goods to charities where they have capacity to assist
- advising donors to hold local garage sales or similar and then donate the money raised
- suggesting other options by which people can sell goods to gain money to donate
- using a registry or database
- encouraging churches, non government organisations and service clubs to take leadership in the community in organising auctions, sales and fundraising events

Donated goods registries

There are various methods for establishing a registry.

- **Newsletter**—this may be appropriate in a smaller event. It works like a trading paper, where people who wish to donate goods ‘advertise’ them in the newsletter and possible recipients can then contact the donor. A council newsletter may be an option or linking in with a newsletter that has been established for the recovery period.
- **Office/call centre**—this is a scalable option, with the size of the event dictating the number of staff needed to manage and operate the office/call centre.
- **Online registry**—as more and more people use the internet for information, an online registry could be a good option. An online registry where the donator and recipient liaise

directly with each other is the option that requires the least human resources. However, some administration is still required to set up and monitor the site.

- There are numerous existing online registries that provide examples including bridal, clinical and animal registries. In addition, exploring online auction and sales sites can prompt useful considerations when setting up such a system for managing donated goods.
- Note, this system may not work as well with larger or corporate donations and would need to be monitored carefully in these situations.

In a significant event, several agencies may set up registry systems designed for particular purposes. These can be similar or quite varied (e.g. one registry could be targeted at assistance for animals; another may be targeted at multi-nationals). It is essential to take these registries into account when setting up and managing another system during the same event.

Benefits of using a registry

A registry can be an excellent tool for managing donated goods. Benefits include:

- enabling effective management of donated goods
- keeping a record of what is donated and received
- providing recipients with the ability to request specific items
- allowing for a more streamlined system of matching donations with recipients
- informing donors that their contribution is of support to a recipient in a specific event
- saving time
- operating an online registry gives 24-hour access to both donors and recipients
- assisting in direct distribution without the need for warehousing
- assisting in allocating resources
- establishing a communication network
- assisting with collection of data.

Issues to consider

Technology

It is important to have a high quality, user-friendly information technology application when developing an online registry or a database administered through an office or call centre. The information technology application is a key element in the success of a registry or database. An uncomplicated and easy-to-manage system allows for a streamlined process of entering and extracting information.

Access to registry

It may be necessary to provide internet access to those affected by disaster as most will have lost personal access to computer. It may be possible to provide this in recovery centres.

Resourcing

Resources can be a significant issue. Even for online registries, administrators are still necessary for behind-the-scenes management including processes, checking, handling phone calls etc.

Consider whether it would be beneficial to partner with other organisations, for example, in order to use their premises as a call centre or their staff as administrators.

Recognition

It is worth considering whether it is possible to officially recognise donors for their contribution through the registry (e.g. on a webpage if the registry is online).

Corporate donations can be quite significant and it is important to acknowledge them (see more details in Appendix 9—Corporate donations strategy).

Confidentiality and privacy

For various reasons, people donating and people affected by a disaster may wish to remain anonymous, thus confidentiality becomes an essential aspect of a donated goods registry.

- If the registry is managed by an office, it is necessary to develop confidentiality guidelines for the administrators.
- For an online registry where donors and recipients enter information and are able to liaise with each other, a system with usernames and email contact details enables all parties to disclose only as much as they wish about their identities. It is advisable to encourage anonymity in the FAQ or similar information area of the site.

Disclaimers, terms and conditions

Unfortunately no system is fool proof, and it is important to include a disclaimer and a section on 'Terms and conditions' either on the registry website or in hardcopy material. It is recommended that legal advice be sought for these issues.

Example disclaimer:

- The *[Name]* registry is not responsible for transactions generated by this registry. Please take all necessary precautions to ensure the validity of both donor and recipient.

Topics covered in terms and conditions may include:

- ownership of goods
- privacy
- user conduct
- content
- disclosure of content and personal information
- information rights
- indemnity
- disclaimer of warranties
- exclusions and limitations
- liability limitations
- modifications to service
- severability
- refusal or discontinuation of service
- breach of agreement
- copyright.



Transparency

Transparency is vital for a fair system for managing donated goods. It is necessary to have clear policies regarding transparency and a relevant statement clearly displayed, either on a website or in hard copy material.

Promotion/communication

The success or failure of any of the abovementioned methods for matching donors with recipients relies on people knowing about it. Availability of the tools to those affected by the disaster needs to also be considered. Therefore an effective communication strategy is vital. (See more details in Appendix 6—Communication strategy.)

Appendix 10—Education tools


The national guidelines recommend pre-event awareness raising forums to help educate community leaders, media and recovery workers and corporate donors about the issues associated with managing unsolicited donated goods. The guidelines also suggest raising awareness through public/media announcements and circulating brochures during an event with contact details for donations.



The core brochure and presentation talking points provided here can be customised as needed by jurisdictions. The online version of these guidelines includes a copy of the brochure and a PowerPoint file of the presentation. These are available on the Department for Families and Communities website in South Australia (<http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/default.aspx?tabid=196>) and on the Emergency Management Australia website (<http://www.ema.gov.au/>).

Brochure

folded panel	back panel	front panel
<p><i>'The generosity of people was hugely important to our recovery but I personally did not want "stuff". So I think the key is to be given encouragement and choice.'</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Donation recipient</i></p> <p><i>'It was exasperating for the deployed personnel and volunteers to continually unload household goods in extremely poor condition, clothing suitable only as rags, and other goods that were inappropriate...when they were acutely aware of the desperate need of victims who had literally lost everything.'</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Recovery organisation</i></p>	<p>CONTACTS</p> <p>Donations of money</p> <p>phone:</p> <p>email:</p> <p>web:</p> <p>Donations registry</p> <p>phone:</p> <p>email:</p> <p>web:</p> <p>General information</p> <p>[general information URL]</p>	<p>HOW YOU CAN HELP PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISASTER...</p> <p>You can help the MOST by donating money.</p> <p>You can help by NOT donating goods.</p> <p>You can help by responding to specific appeals and offering ONLY good quality items that are requested.</p> <p>You can help by turning your goods into MONEY to donate.</p>
inside left panel	inside middle panel	inside right panel
<p>Your interest and kindness are much appreciated and very important. Public support helps people recover and rebuild their lives after a disaster.</p> <p>You can help the MOST by donating money.</p> <p>This is because money donations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable recovery workers to more precisely meet the changing needs of the affected community allow people to make choices about what is best for them to help their recovery help the local economy recover. 	<p>You can help by NOT donating goods.</p> <p>Often we think to help by donating second-hand clothing and goods. But, what many of us don't realise is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> managing such donations takes time and resources away from the important work of helping those affected donated goods rarely meet actual needs and are often wasted. <p>The recovery coordinator will appeal for specific items if needed, once they have assessed the situation.</p> <p>You can help by responding to specific appeals and offering ONLY good quality items that are requested.</p>	<p>You can help by turning your goods into MONEY to donate.</p> <p>Consider turning your goods into cash by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> having a garage sale holding an auction with your friends working with a local charity to organise a 'bring and buy' sale finding a charity shop that can take your goods. <p>Another option is to participate in the donations registry at [details].</p>

Presentation speaking notes

slide	speaking notes
<p style="text-align: center;">Managing donated goods</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[name]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[date]</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <p><i>[Introduce speaker, thank people for attending etc]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm here to discuss the <i>National guidelines for managing donated goods</i> and explain why we need them. • Disasters trigger a national response and attract enormous volumes of donated goods from individuals, communities and businesses. • This means authorities responding to a disaster must also manage the influx of donations, which can be impractical or excess to community needs. • The guidelines provide a planned and cohesive national approach to support appropriate and timely donations. This ensures people wishing to help do not unintentionally undermine response and recovery efforts. • Implementing these guidelines will enable all levels of government, the corporate and non-government sectors, communities and individuals to more effectively address the needs of disaster affected people.
<p style="text-align: center;">When disaster strikes we want to help</p>	<p>Why people donate goods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disasters like fires and floods stir up enormous public sympathy—we all want to help those affected. • Experience shows that, no matter the location of the disaster, people respond nationally by sending enormous volumes of donated goods. • There is a general belief that in a disaster any donations are useful and should be appreciated—so people think they are helping by sending second-hand clothing and other items. • But what they don't realise is that their donations rarely provide the benefits they assume for disaster affected communities.
<p style="text-align: center;">Unsolicited donated goods divert time, resources and focus from helping those affected</p>	<p>Impact on recovery efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In fact, research clearly demonstrates that, rather than helping, such donations create significant extra work for authorities and can actually distract recovery efforts and undermine community resilience. • Dealing with unsolicited donated goods takes time, resources and focus away from the very important work that needs to be done with disaster affected people. • The influx of donated goods quickly exceeds actual need. Authorities are often unprepared for the truckloads of donations that turn up.
 <p style="text-align: center;">photo courtesy VBRRRA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage space is often limited or unavailable. • The sheer quantity of donations often stretches resources and infrastructure, diverting efforts from other aspects of disaster recovery. • It takes about twenty people three days to unload one semi packed with goods. This usually involves unloading a jumble of goods—new and old items mixed together, left and right shoes separated, furniture, kitchen items, toys and clothes all in one load. • If there are already access issues due to the disaster, trucks bringing in donated items can add to traffic chaos and potentially block or delay other assistance from responding.

slide	speaking notes
 <p data-bbox="288 667 518 696">photo courtesy VBARRA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2009 Victorian bushfires, for example, resulted in more than 40,000 pallets of goods from across Australia that took up more than 50,000 square metres of storage space. That is twice the size of the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) arena. • This required three central warehouses, five regional distribution points, around 35 paid staff, equipment and transport. The cost amounted to more than \$8 million. • In addition, more than 1,500 volunteers helped in the first three months through 40 store fronts. • The Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority reports that resources in the fire affected areas immediately after the event were stretched as a result of material aid arriving without warning and without adequate resources to sort, store, handle and distribute.
 <p data-bbox="288 1160 518 1189">photo courtesy VBARRA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This situation is exacerbated by the fact that donated goods are often inappropriate and do not meet the specific needs of the affected community. For example, winter clothes and woollen blankets in summer, broken equipment and electrical items and, in one case, pallets of blue hair dye. • Also, the quality of second-hand goods varies and in many cases is substandard. The result is that critical resources are required to manage large quantities of donated goods that cannot be used. • Not only does this divert resources away from the real effort of helping those affected, it also has a negative impact on recovery workers. • This is clearly illustrated in 2005 a Salvation Army recovery evaluation report: <i>'It was exasperating for the deployed personnel and volunteers to continually unload household goods in extremely poor condition, clothing suitable only as rags, and other goods that were inappropriate (too many bicycles and too many baby prams/strollers and all in poor condition) when they were acutely aware of the desperate need of victims who had literally lost everything.'</i>¹⁴
<p data-bbox="209 1368 600 1435">Disposing of excess goods takes time and resources</p> <p data-bbox="213 1473 595 1541">It can create negative publicity and community ill will</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of recovery efforts, there are usually many excess goods that need to be sold, recycled or disposed of. This also requires time and resources. For example, after the 2005 Port Lincoln fires in South Australia, the Salvation Army sent items to local charity depots, sold off electrical goods to another charity store, sent two semi-trailers full of clothing to a rag dealer, recycled aluminium and scrap metal at the local dump, returned two semi-trailers and one forty-foot container of mixed clothing to Adelaide for use in the 'Family Stores'—and there still remained huge quantities of clothing and household goods that had to be disposed of. • Disposing of excess goods can create negative publicity and community/donor ill will.

¹⁴ 2005 Eyre Peninsula Bush Fire The Salvation Army Response & Recovery, an evaluation by Major Anne Farquharson, March 2005

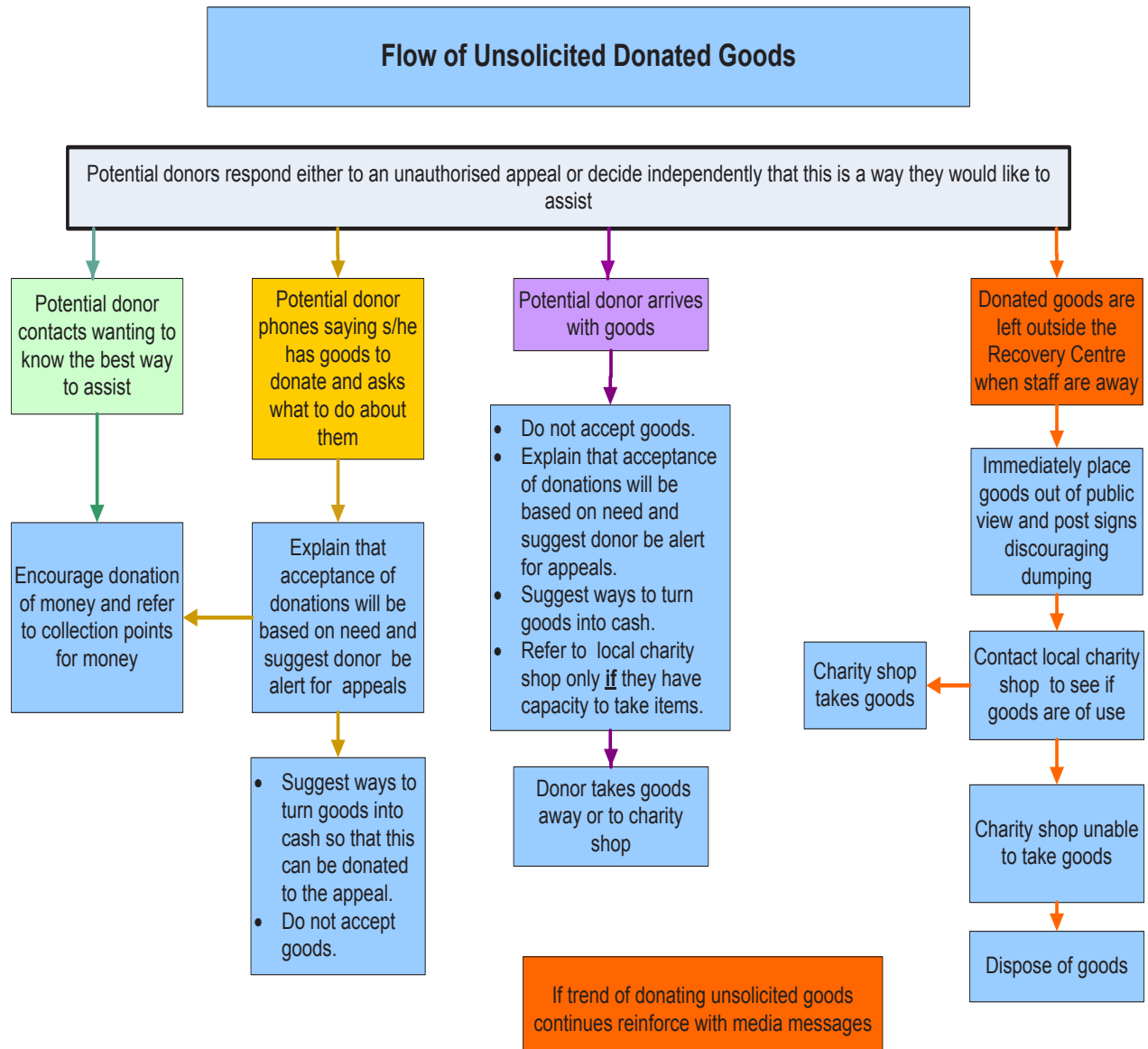
slide	speaking notes
<p>No one wants to offend donors</p> <p>People feel obliged to accept donations regardless of quality or actual need</p> <p>People who receive poor quality and inappropriate goods take longer to recover</p>	<p>Impact on recipients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donated goods impose a sense of obligation on survivors who may be struggling to deal with what has happened. This sense of obligation is difficult to reconcile when the goods are unneeded or of poor quality. Instead of helping, this can cause extra stress and be detrimental to recovery and resilience. • The primary concern is often not to offend donors by refusing to accept inappropriate or unneeded items. This inadvertently puts the needs of donors before those affected by the disaster. • For example, a family was offered a caravan for temporary accommodation, if they collected it. This involved several days travel for the father, with associated petrol and accommodation costs, when he wanted to be helping on the family farm which had been devastated. He arrived to find the caravan in such poor condition that it was not suitable for anyone to live in. Trying not to offend, he towed it home. Inside, he found a note from a child who had obviously used the caravan as a cubby house saying that she hoped it would make a nice home. So added to the costs and time to collect the van, and the need to dispose of it, this meant the recipients felt obliged to accept responsibility for the donor's feelings, because a child had given up her cubby. • Other examples include recipients feeling obliged to accept donations of half used cosmetics and toiletries. • And one Canberra bushfire survivor was told she should accept poor quality items with good grace because it 'helped the donor to heal'. • A report on the health and social impact of the Ash Wednesday Bushfires included this comment from a recipient: <i>'We were bombarded with carloads of other people's old junk...it was awful and misguided generosity—all we wanted were a few new things of our own, not other people's castoffs'</i>. • It is not surprising, then, that research indicates people who receive poor quality and inappropriate goods take longer to recover. They are more likely to continue to see themselves as victims when they consistently receive—and, in some cases, even begin to think they only deserve—poor quality and second-hand goods.
<p>Distribution can cause competitiveness and division in communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are also potential issues with new and valuable items. For example, experience shows that distribution of valued items such as whitegoods need to be carefully managed so it is seen as equitable and does not cause competitiveness and division with the affected community.
<p>Large quantities of donated goods can depress local economies</p>	<p>Impact on local economic recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large quantities of donated goods in a disaster affected location can also seriously depress the sales of local businesses and delay recovery of the economy. • As long as 18 months after the Victorian bushfires, some people were still coming back to the warehouses each week to collect things, as if doing their weekly shopping but at no cost.

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<p>The media and community leaders impact on how people respond</p>	<p>Role of the media and community leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media coverage of disasters has an impact on how people respond. Research shows that public response is influenced by the number of people affected and the extent of media coverage. In addition, disaster reporting impacts on attitudes and public behaviour—for example, members of the public can also feel traumatised and identify with survivors. Public officials making general appeals for donations and media stories about local heroes collecting donated goods can send the wrong message about how to help.
<p>Public care and support is important for disaster recovery</p> <p>Thoughtful, handmade and considerate gifts can be uplifting</p>	<p>How donated goods can help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite all this, public care and support is very important to disaster affected people. Disaster affected people appreciate and get psychological benefits from <i>appropriate</i> support provided by the general public—that is, support that encourages resilience and helps them feel more positive and confident about the task that lies ahead Handmade, thoughtful, considerate gifts can be uplifting. Examples include handmade quilts, artisan gifts, family recipes, and ‘care packages’ of luxuries such as aromatherapy bath salts. Port Lincoln women affected by the 2005 Eyre Peninsula bushfires were sent what they called ‘shoe boxes of love’. These were packs of luxury items like aromatherapy and bubble bath. They all found this uplifting.
<p>Local people can understand and respond to local needs</p>	<p>The advantages of local support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local people can often see what is happening and are able to respond in a way that is valuable. For example, in the 2011 Queensland floods an evacuation centre was set up for nursing home residents. They arrived with nothing and were initially housed in a hall with mattresses on the floor. The patients had no toiletries, change of clothes, bedding, towels or food. This was all supplied by the local community. Goods came from local people who responded to requests by producing needed items, but not in massive quantities. If the wider community had become involved, the small hall (already stretched to house the nursing home patients) would have been inundated and staff, who were there to look after the patients, would have had to start managing the donations.
<p><i>National guidelines for managing donated goods</i></p> <p>Based on research and consultation</p> <p>Steps to take before, during and after a disaster</p> <p>Associated resources</p>	<p>The National guidelines for managing donated goods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>National guidelines for managing donated goods</i> address these issues. The Australian Government funded the development of the guidelines as a National Emergency Management Project. These projects help strengthen the nation’s disaster resilience by supporting measures to strengthen communities, individuals, businesses and institutions to minimise adverse effects of disasters on Australia. The guidelines are based on extensive research and consultation with federal, state and territory government agencies, the corporate and community sector and disaster survivors. The guidelines include steps to take before, during and after a disaster. They also include associated resources such as information on setting up a warehouse and disposing of unused goods, a communication strategy, a corporate donations strategy and an evaluation questionnaire.

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<p><i>Guiding principles</i></p> <p>Understand the needs</p> <p>Explain money is preferred option</p> <p>Communicate clearly</p> <p>Establish an effective donations management system</p> <p>Consider recipients' feedback</p> <p>Plan ahead</p>	<p>The guidelines are based on guiding principles that address issues raised through research and consultation. These principles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • firstly understand the needs—the needs of disaster affected people and communities should always be the first consideration • explain money is the preferred option—where the need for public assistance is identified, donation of money should always be the preferred option • communicate clearly—a clear and transparent communication process should be used to inform workers (government and non-government), the community and the media about how best to assist the people and communities affected by disaster • establish an effective donations management system—donation of material goods should be managed through an equitable, efficient and coordinated system • seek and consider recipients' feedback—a review which is inclusive of recipients' views of the donated goods program, should occur after every disaster • plan ahead—arrangements for donated goods should be encapsulated in national, state/territory and regional/local policy and planning.
<p>Best practice</p> <p>Establish contacts and agreements in advance</p> <p>Raise awareness</p> <p>Meet assessed needs</p> <p>Early, consistent, clear messages</p> <p>Comprehensive evaluation</p>	<p>The guidelines promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy and planning development to embed best practice and incorporate the guidelines and lessons learnt into future responses • pre-event planning is also encouraged to establish contacts and agreements in advance where possible, both between recovery agencies and with corporate donors • awareness raising (like today's presentation) to bust myths and explain how we can better manage donated goods • appropriate and timely assessment of needs following disasters to guide and limit any appeals for donations • early, consistent and clear messages about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – why money is the most effective donation – why unsolicited donated goods are not helpful – alternative ways to help. • comprehensive post-event evaluation including seeking feedback from recipients.
<p>Strengthening community recovery and resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>National guidelines for managing donated goods</i> support a more targeted, holistic and enduring response to disaster management. They will drive best practice planning and positive change in the management of donated goods to strengthen community recovery and resilience. • Thank you—and I'm happy to take your questions.

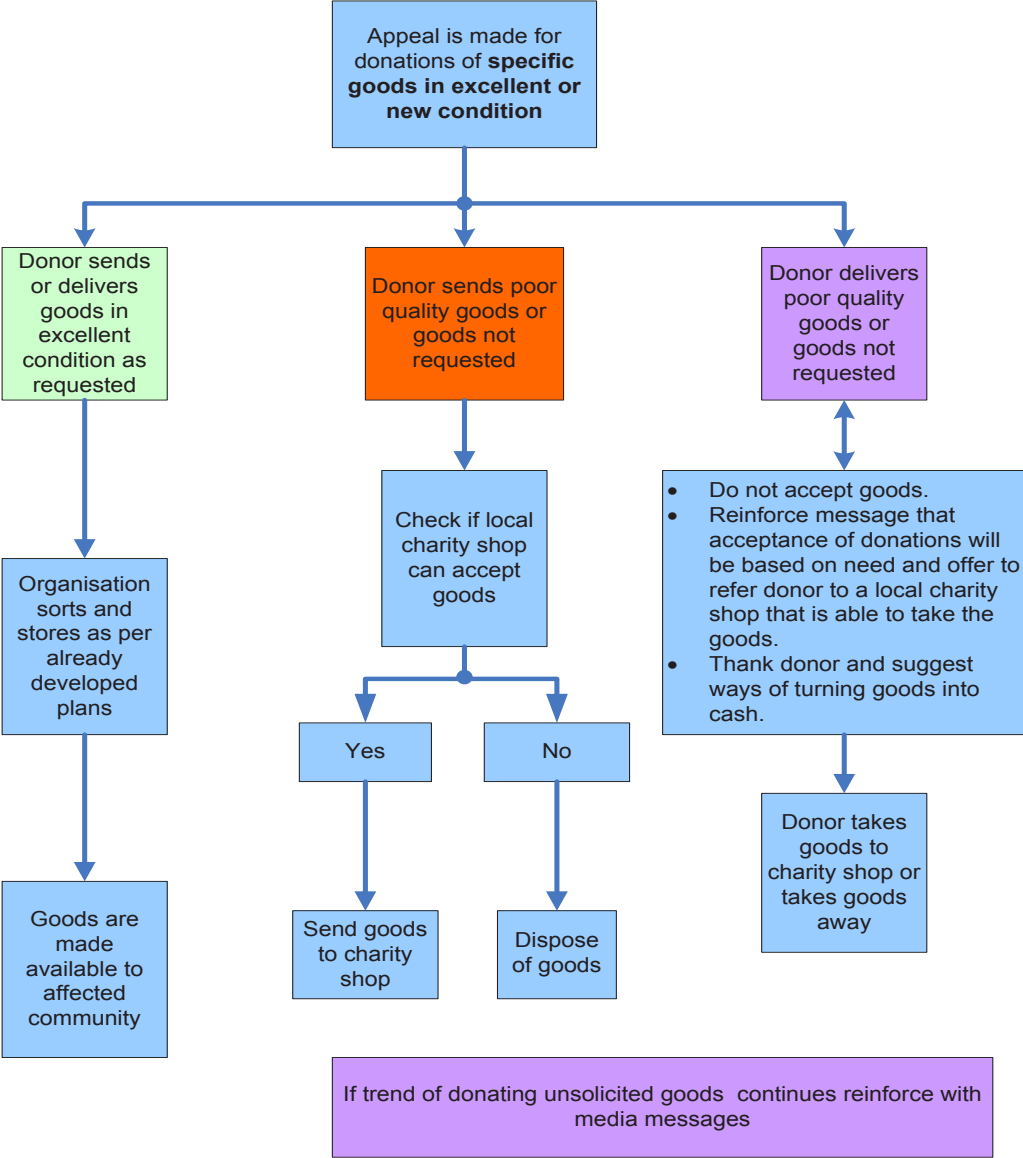
Appendix 11—Donated goods flow charts

The following charts are provided as a quick reference guide to how to manage solicited and unsolicited donations of goods.



'Scripts' to guide recovery workers responding to these situations are included in Appendix 6—Communication strategy.

Flow of Solicited Donated Goods



Key messages to help communicate this process are included in Appendix 6—Communication strategy.

Appendix 12—Evaluation methods

A post-event review should occur as soon as practicable. It is important to do this at the right time for disaster affected communities. If it occurs too soon it may further traumatise individuals but if it is too late, people may have lost interest and be less inclined to participate.

It should include assessments of operational logs, costs, logistics and all other activities undertaken to meet the material needs of the disaster affected community. In addition, post-event reviews should consider the opinions and experiences of recovery workers, recipients of donated goods and corporate donors. Use the information gained and lessons learnt to examine and refine policies and plans.

This appendix includes a sample checklist to help the debriefing process with recovery workers and volunteers and a sample survey questionnaire for recipients of donated goods.

Steps to take:

- **Questionnaire**—send, email or give the questionnaire to recipients of donated goods. This could include those who received items of furniture, household goods, farm or other equipment, vouchers or services in kind.
- **Checklist**—talk with workers, volunteers and managers in the donated goods program, using checklist to prompt questions/discussion.
- **Other evaluation opportunities**—whenever possible it is recommended that evaluation includes any additional opportunities to engage with recipients such as individual conversations, focus groups and other surveys.
- **Corporate donor feedback**—it is also recommended that evaluation include corporate donor views which may be gathered through formal surveys, in-depth interviews, focus groups or informal discussion.

Sample checklist to guide the debriefing with recovery workers

The checklist is organised around the guiding principles for managing donated goods.

PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING DONATED GOODS	QUESTIONS TO PROMPT/GUIDE EVALUATION DISCUSSION WITH RECOVERY WORKERS, VOLUNTEERS AND MANAGERS
Firstly understand the needs — <i>the needs of disaster affected people and communities should always be the first consideration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What are your general impressions of how the needs of disaster affected people were met? ✓ Did you feel that affected people and communities were always the first consideration? Illustrate with brief case examples? ✓ Is there anything you would do differently next time?
Explain money is the preferred option — <i>where the need for public assistance is identified, donation of money should always be the preferred option</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Did all public statements encourage the donation of money? If not, which group/s could be better targeted for education before future events? ✓ How did the public respond to the message about the preference for cash? ✓ Is there anything you could do differently to improve outcomes in the future?
Communicate clearly — <i>a clear and transparent communication process should be used to inform workers (government and non-government), the community and the media about how best to assist the people and communities affected by disaster</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Did the awareness presentation reach the appropriate audience? Who attended? ✓ Were messages to the public sent out very early in the event? When did this happen? ✓ What information went out, in what form, and to whom? ✓ Did recovery workers who were in direct contact with the public use the scripts provided in the guidelines?

PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING DONATED GOODS	QUESTIONS TO PROMPT/GUIDE EVALUATION DISCUSSION WITH RECOVERY WORKERS, VOLUNTEERS AND MANAGERS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Were the education tools appropriate/useful? ✓ Did media outlets comply with requests? What was reported in the media? ✓ What amount of goods were donated? ✓ Who donated the goods? Locals or the wider public? ✓ Is the community talking about the issues and beginning to understand the difficulties associated with unsolicited donated goods? ✓ Was information provided to the public about how donated money was used? ✓ Did the broader community cooperate and continue to assist by running auctions/sales etc. to raise money to donate? Give details. ✓ What would you do differently in the future in relation to communication?
<p>Establish an effective donations management system—<i>donation of material goods should be managed through an equitable, efficient and coordinated system</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Were decisions about donated goods made early enough in the event to have an impact on the way the public responded? ✓ Was one organisation/individual appointed to manage all the donated goods? ✓ Did the organisation run smoothly? ✓ Was the coordinator able to have an impact on colleagues' attitudes about donated goods? ✓ What were the costs associated with managing donated goods? ✓ Did a large amount of donation need to be disposed of? ✓ Could you recycle most left over items or did you need to send some to landfill? ✓ What could you do differently to assist more efficient management?
<p>Plan ahead—<i>arrangements for donated goods should be encapsulated in national, state/territory and regional/local policy and planning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Does your local/regional/state/territory policy contain information about donated goods? ✓ Does your local/regional/state/territory plan indicate how donated goods should be managed? ✓ Does this policy or planning now need revision after your experiences with donated goods?

Sample survey questionnaire for recipients of donated goods

Recipients have rarely been approached for their opinions on the impact of the donated goods they received. It is important to include this in any post-event review, to ensure that donations to recipients are meeting their needs as they perceive them. Be mindful that this activity needs to be undertaken at a time that is beneficial for the disaster affected individuals.

It is assumed that jurisdictions will adapt this questionnaire as required for their specific needs.

MANAGEMENT OF DONATED GOODS IN DISASTERS—RECIPIENT SURVEY

We are evaluating the way donated goods were managed after the recent *[event]*. An important part of this evaluation is feedback from people who received donated goods. Please note, your answers are strictly confidential and you do not have to provide your name. The survey should only take a few minutes. Thank you for participating.

1. What is your living arrangement?

Family with children Family, no children Individual

2. What age/s are the people in your household?

Adults, how many?

18 – 25 26 – 35 36 – 46
 47 – 55 56 – 65 Over 65

Children, how many?

0 – 5 6 – 10 11 – 14 15 – 17

3. Do you own a farm that was affected by the disaster?

Yes No

4. Do you own a business that was affected by the disaster?

Yes No

5. What were your property losses? (the items you have lost not the value e.g. house, stock, fencing, personal items, vehicle etc)

6. What kinds of items did you receive in donations? Could you please briefly list?

7. Were you asked what goods you required?

8. Were the items you received either in excellent or new condition?

Yes No

9. Did you feel you had sufficient choice in the items that were made available to you? Please comment.

10. Were all members of your household equally well catered for? Please comment.

11. On the following chart, please indicate the impact of these donations on your confidence and ability to rebuild your future?

	Please tick whichever is most appropriate
Very positive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moderately positive	<input type="checkbox"/>
No impact	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moderately negative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very negative	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any further comments?

12. Do you have any suggestions about how donations could be managed better or differently in the future?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
 Your answers will help us improve future responses to those affected by disaster.

Appendix 13—Project team and consultation list

Project team

Pauline Cole	State Recovery Office, Department for Families and Communities, South Australia
Ronnie Faggotter	State Recovery Office, Department for Families and Communities, South Australia

With assistance from the State Recovery Office, Department for Families and Communities

Rachel Tebbett	Executive Administrative Assistant
Peter Nixon	Senior Project Officer
Lea Rebane	Senior Project Officer
Vicki Cornell	Principal Project Manager
Tony McLoughlin	Principal Project Manager
Ross Pagram	Principal Project Manager
Fern Raintree	Business Continuity Coordinator
Paul Saffi	Project Officer

Working group

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David Barker	The Salvation Army, Victoria
Andy Bevan	Emergency Management Branch, Department of Human Services, Victoria
Jason Collins	Emergency Management, The Ministry for Police and Emergency Services, New South Wales
Jill Peters	Community Recovery Unit, Department of Communities, Queensland
Helen Rowlands	Statewide Services, Department of Communities, Queensland
Mike Taarnby	St Vincent De Paul Society, Canberra/Goulburn Central Council
Paul Thorn	Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority
Terri Reid	Emergency Management Capability Development Branch, Attorney General's Department, Canberra
Pauline Cole	State Recovery Office, Department for Families and Communities, South Australia

Many people offered suggestions and assisted in the production of this document. In particular, the project team and working group would like to acknowledge the input from the following people.

Reference group

Dina Bellwood	Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Branch, Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Collene Bremner	Department of Health and Families, Northern Territory
Kim Dean	Emergency Services, Department for Child Protection, Western Australia

Catherine Freriks Prue Harley	Department for Families and Communities, South Australia Emergency Management Capability Development Branch, Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, Canberra
Hori Howard	Australian Government Disaster Recovery Committee, Not-For-Profit Advisory Group
Kevin O'Loughlin Sally McKay	Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania National Consultant, Disaster Recovery Sub-Committee, Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council
Kerry Symons Kerry Webb	The Australian Red Cross, South Australian Branch Community Recovery and Emergency Planning, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, ACT

Users reference group

Sally Deslandes
Karen Downing
Cheryl Gregory
Phyllis Myers
The Pike Family
Heather Pope

Corporate donor focus group participants and other corporate donors

Lil Barac-Macey	Foster's Group Limited
Michael Beckwith	Stockland
Sarah Buckley	Price Waterhouse Coopers
Lauren Cassar	Stockland
Rebekah Earp	Woolworths Limited
Renee Hancock	Australia New Zealand Bank
Teresa Hanlon	Target
Michelle Hayward	Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Ferdi Hepworth	Price Waterhouse Coopers
Louise Martin	Citi Group
Donna Mullins	KPMG
Katerina Persic	Toyota Australia
Emma Pickett	Unilever
Ian Robertson	Stockland
Nancie-Lee Robinson	Telstra
Cameron Schuster	Wesfarmers
Rebecca Sherwill	National Australia Bank
Suzie Upcroft	Stockland
Phil Wilson	The Salvation Army

Appendix 14—References

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