

Disaster Recovery Guide for Councils



Acknowledgements

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Front cover: Bangor fires 2014 & Onkaparinga River 2016

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Introduction

Disasters can happen anytime. As key contributors to recovery, councils need to be ready to support the community and begin restoration immediately after the danger has passed.

Councils do not work alone in recovery: all levels of government, individuals, businesses and non-government organisations have a role to play.

Planning for recovery can be a complex and demanding process, involving a broad range of stakeholders and often exposing challenging issues to be negotiated. Usual processes and practices may not work in the recovery environment, and staff will need to be flexible and adaptable when responding to changing community needs.

Successful recovery requires planning and all councils should consider how they will meet their responsibilities under the State Emergency Management Plan. Working with other councils, the community and recovery partners to establish plans, will build relationships, increase collective capabilities and improve recovery outcomes.

Unfortunately, recovery planning can be seen as a low priority compared to more pressing or immediate issues. This is often the case for locations with low risk profiles or that have not been impacted by events for some time. However, pre-planning is critical to successful recovery.

Senior management support will help ensure appropriate collaboration, time and resources are invested in the process. Elected members should also be involved to ensure a whole of council commitment and understanding of the recovery process. Once plans and arrangements are established, ensure recovery resources are maintained, staff are trained and plans are tested.

By being prepared, council will be ready to participate in coordinated recovery efforts and provide leadership to the community after disasters.

“Recovery will have to wait” – but will it? – Learnings from Kangaroo Island

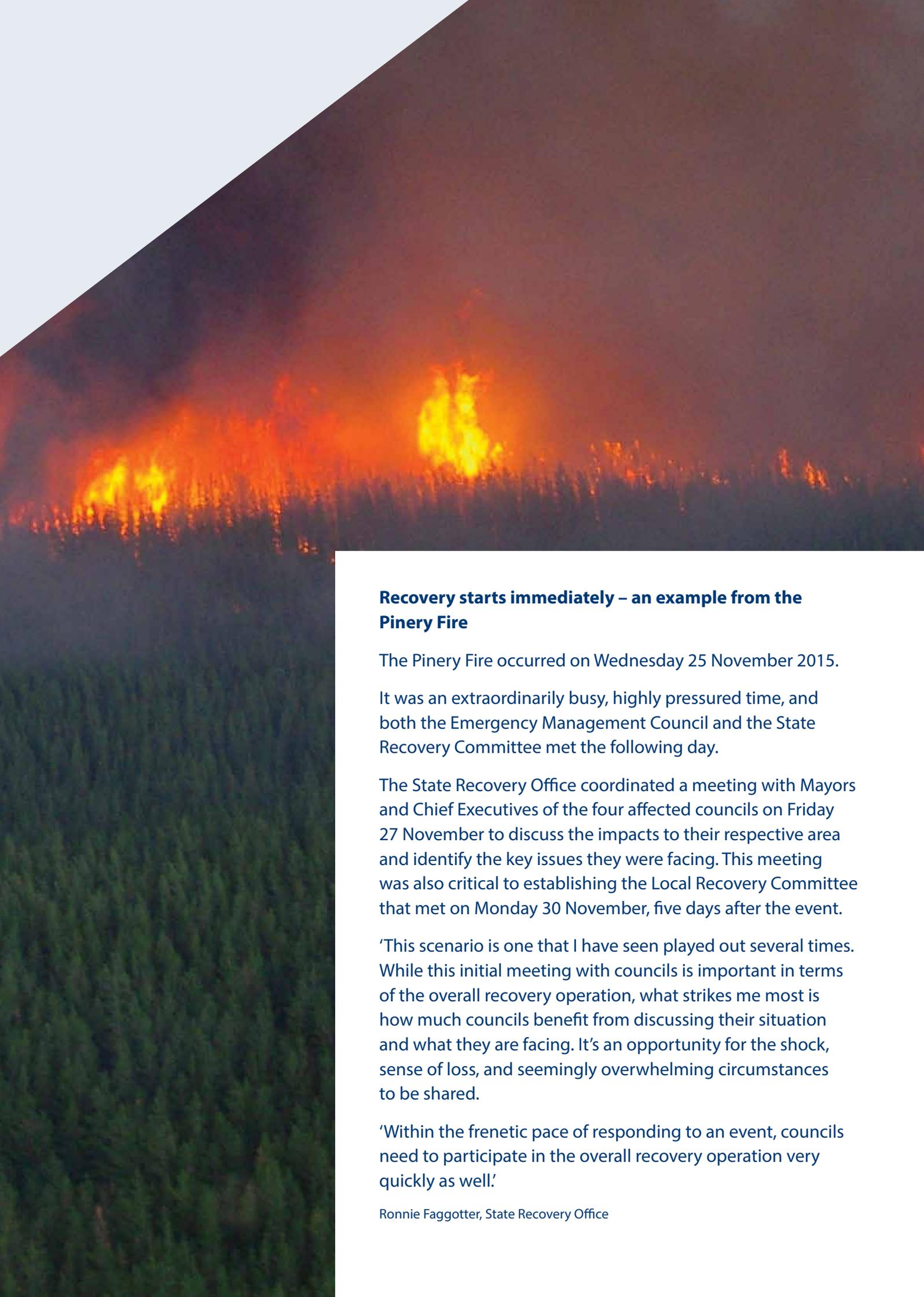
I will remember when Kangaroo Island was in the midst of the largest wildfire we had ever seen on the Island, and we were exhausted beyond reason, Ronnie Faggotter from the State Recovery Office rang me to say they would be on the Island the next day to help us implement the recovery process. I foolishly said, “but we are still fighting the fire, recovery will have to wait.” How wrong could I have been. While we were well prepared as a Council to assist in response, we were totally unprepared in understanding the critical role of recovery.

We have learned much! At a time of emotional stress and feelings of isolation and loss, the State Recovery Office provided overwhelming support, but our preparedness limited our ability and understanding of our critical role.

The importance of being prepared cannot be understated. Councils are closest to their communities and in times of crisis can make an overwhelming difference to the recovery of their residents. Local Government has well documented plans for both prevention and response, but planning for recovery is often overlooked. It allows for quick and effective support to be implemented at times when the need is the greatest. The Island now has a Recovery plan which provides us clear guidance and allows for immediate and coordinated support to be implemented.

The Island Community and the Council are now better prepared for the next event, and the learnings will carry forward to ensure we can fulfil our important role in times of need.

Jayne Bates, Former Mayor, Kangaroo Island



Recovery starts immediately – an example from the Pinery Fire

The Pinery Fire occurred on Wednesday 25 November 2015.

It was an extraordinarily busy, highly pressured time, and both the Emergency Management Council and the State Recovery Committee met the following day.

The State Recovery Office coordinated a meeting with Mayors and Chief Executives of the four affected councils on Friday 27 November to discuss the impacts to their respective area and identify the key issues they were facing. This meeting was also critical to establishing the Local Recovery Committee that met on Monday 30 November, five days after the event.

‘This scenario is one that I have seen played out several times. While this initial meeting with councils is important in terms of the overall recovery operation, what strikes me most is how much councils benefit from discussing their situation and what they are facing. It’s an opportunity for the shock, sense of loss, and seemingly overwhelming circumstances to be shared.

‘Within the frenetic pace of responding to an event, councils need to participate in the overall recovery operation very quickly as well.’

Ronnie Faggotter, State Recovery Office

Purpose of the guide

This guide is designed to help councils understand their role and contribution to recovery, consider recovery arrangements and build capability of their organisation, communities and recovery partners.

It is not intended to be prescriptive, provide all the answers or replace the need for councils to develop recovery plans and arrangements.

The guide is based on the premise that planning for recovery encompasses:

- developing plans and procedures
- documenting agreed options to manage risks, activities or issues (at both a council and zone level)
- building ongoing relationships with recovery partners (including other councils), and
- building capability and resources within council and the community.

While the guide references supporting elements such as risk mitigation, emergency response, resilience and business continuity, it does not discuss these beyond the immediate considerations to support recovery planning.

It is highly recommended that documents referenced in this guide, such as the State Emergency Management Plan and the relevant Zone Emergency Management Plan and Zone Recovery Operations Plan, are reviewed as they contain relevant information and detail the roles and responsibilities of all parties.



How to use the guide

The guide has two parts:

Part 1 provides an overview of the recovery context and South Australian arrangements, discusses recovery planning principles and provides a seven-step planning process.

Part 2 helps councils work through the planning process by providing information, posing recovery planning questions for consideration and suggesting activities.

Councils should consider arrangements that suit their organisation and community. Questions or proposed activities may not be relevant for every council. In many instances, existing policies, relationships and resources may be appropriate for the recovery context with minor adjustment, while other issues or challenges may require dedicated pre-planning and engagement.

Council should also review the LGA's iResponda framework as it establishes important processes for councils with regards to preparing for and responding to emergencies to ensure best practice, compliance and effective resource sharing.



Part 1: Recovery context and background

What is recovery?

Recovery is a complex social and developmental process that is part of emergency management.

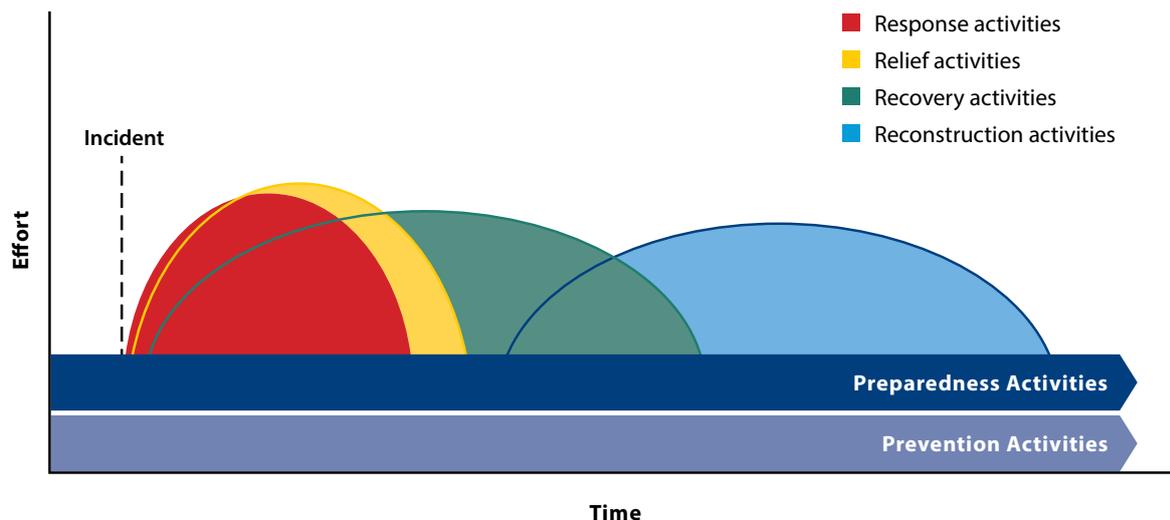
(AIDR, Handbook 2: Community Recovery).

In its entirety, emergency management includes:

- Prevention, which seeks to eliminate or reduce risk
- Preparedness, which establishes plans and puts people, training, education and equipment in place to cope should an emergency take place
- Response, which involves activating the plans, and
- Recovery, which involves community restoration after an event.

While the stages are largely sequential, recovery starts at the same time as response and becomes the primary focus once the threat has passed and initial response and relief efforts near completion.





Depending on the scale of the disaster, recovery can continue for weeks, months or even years as people and communities rebuild and restore their lives.

The South Australian State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) broadly defines recovery as restoring emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing, reconstructing physical infrastructure and restoring the environment.

Activities are designed to help people return to a 'normal' routine, and can include:

- restoring essential public assets
- restoring community facilities, services and social networks
- providing information, materials and other items to meet immediate and ongoing personal needs
- providing emotional support services
- recovering the natural environment, and
- providing support to help businesses and local industry recover.

These may not be usual services for councils and governments to provide, however after a disaster it may be necessary to provide services which support restoring personal, family and community structures that have been disrupted (*AIDR, Handbook 2: Community Recovery*).

National recovery principles

Nationally, six principles guide planning and implementing successful recovery.

1. Understanding the context: successful recovery is based on an understanding of the community context
2. Recognising complexity: successful recovery acknowledges the complex and dynamic nature of emergencies and communities
3. Using community-led approaches: successful recovery is responsive and flexible, engaging communities and empowering them to move forward

4. Ensuring coordination of all activities: successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach based on continuing assessment of impact and needs

5. Employing effective communication: successful recovery is built on effective communication with affected communities and other stakeholders

6. Acknowledging and building capacity: successful recovery recognises, supports and builds on community, individual and organisational capacity

The four aspects of recovery

There are four aspects of recovery which are nationally recognised and reflected in South Australia's arrangements:

1. Infrastructure and built – public and commercial buildings, roads, paths, essential services (power, water, communications) and other infrastructure
2. Social – people, families and communities
3. Economic – employers, industry, investment and job creation
4. Natural – land management, air quality, natural heritage, culture, history and ecological conservation.

Disaster events can impact one or all of these domains, each to varying degrees.

Councils contribute to these domains on a daily basis and routinely work with other councils, Federal and South Australian Government departments and community-based organisations to address the associated challenges. This collaborative approach is critical during recovery events.

Consider structuring council's recovery services and activities under the four recovery aspects

Emergency management arrangements in South Australia

South Australia has established a comprehensive, all-hazards emergency management framework that aligns with the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) agreement to adopt a 'whole-of-nation resilience-based approach to disaster management'.

Legislation

The *Emergency Management Act 2004* (the Act) provides the legislative framework for managing emergencies in South Australia. It ensures the State has the capability to effectively manage any emergency by clearly articulating key elements of the State emergency management arrangements, including roles and responsibilities.

The Act references section 7(d) of the *Local Government Act*, which states council must take measures to protect its area from natural and other hazards and to mitigate the effects of such hazards.

Plans and documents

The State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) sets out the State's arrangements for effective prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in accordance with the Act. All levels of government, households, community, business and volunteer agencies have a part to play.

Zone Emergency Management Plans (ZEMPs) outline the high priority risks, responsibilities, authorities and mechanisms to prevent, manage and recover from incidents and disasters within the zone.

Zone Recovery Operational Plans outline the responsibilities, authorities, mechanisms and resources to support recovery from emergencies within the Zone. These plans align with the ZEMP and are reviewed annually by the Zone Emergency Management Committee.

Local recovery plans, while not required under legislation, may be developed for specific local government areas, facilities or communities.

Local government's role in emergency management

Councils, in partnership with State government, are responsible for contributing to the safety and wellbeing of their communities by participating in local emergency management. Under the SEMP, council's principal roles and responsibilities may include:

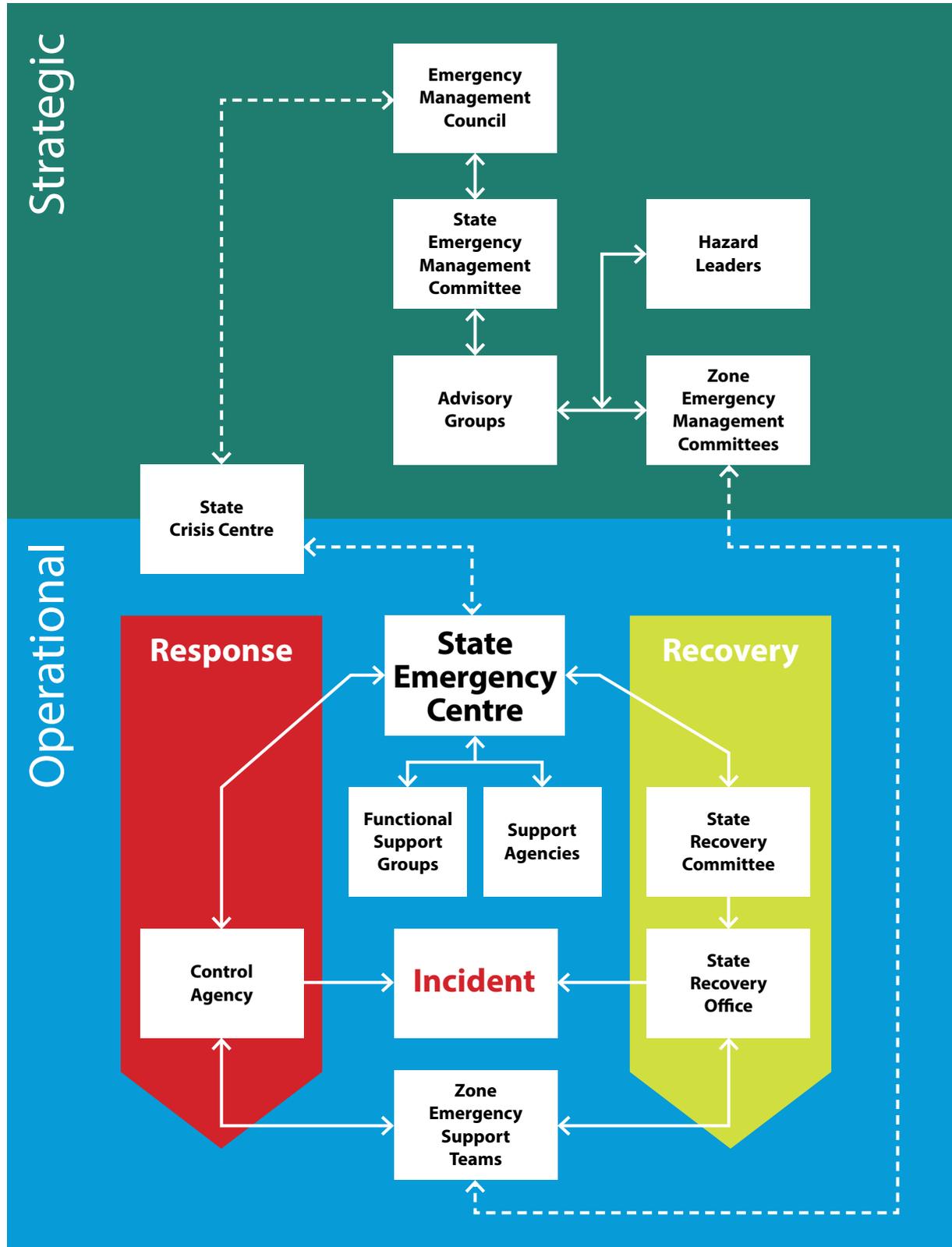
- building and promoting disaster resilience
- undertaking cost effective measures to mitigate the effects of emergencies on local communities, including routinely conducting emergency risk assessments
- systematically taking proper account of risk assessment in land-use planning to reduce hazard risk
- representing community interests in emergency management to other spheres of government and contributing to decision-making processes
- ensuring all requisite local emergency planning and preparedness measures are undertaken
- ensuring an adequate local council emergency response capability is in place, including resources for the local volunteers
- undertaking public education and awareness to support community-preparedness measures
- participation in recovery operations
- ensuring appropriate local resources and arrangements are in place to provide and support emergency relief and recovery services to communities
- participating in post-emergency assessment and analysis.

(State Emergency Management Plan, Part 2, p. 7-8)



Committees and governance structures

A range of committees and structures are designed to ensure that all agencies collaborate to manage emergencies through response and recovery.



Strategic committees and roles

The Emergency Management Council (EMC)

– a committee of Cabinet, chaired by the Premier

State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC)

– oversees emergency management planning in SA and is chaired by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The SEMC is supported by four advisory groups:

1. mitigation (covering prevention and preparedness)
2. response
3. recovery, and
4. public information and warnings.

State Recovery Committee (SRC)

– oversees recovery planning and capacity development, and coordinates recovery operations across government, as well as non-government organisations and local government. It is chaired by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, and has both a strategic and operational role.

Hazard leader

– the agency which has the knowledge, expertise and resources to lead planning for the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery associated with a specific hazard.

Zone Emergency Management Committees (ZEMC)

– each of the eleven emergency management zones has a ZEMC that is responsible for zone planning. Councils are represented on ZEMCs by senior managers who know local government emergency management arrangements and capabilities within the zone.

Operational groups or roles

State Emergency Centre (SEC)

– operated and supported by the SA Police, the SEC brings together all relevant agencies and support staff to coordinate a state level response.

Control Agency

– takes charge of the emergency and provides leadership to all other agencies responding to an emergency. A control agency is allocated for each disaster type.

Functional Support Group (FSG)

– a group of participating agencies (government and non-government) that performs a functional role to support response and recovery operations. Each FSG has a nominated lead agency.

Zone Emergency Support Teams (ZESTs)

– coordinate local resources to support resolving the emergency. Councils included in the zone should agree on which council will represent them collectively at the ZEST.

Further information on these committees and groups is available in the SEMP Part 2, State Supporting Structures/Committees/Facilities

The Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG) is led by the Local Government Association (LGA), which attends the SEC. LGA is also a member of the SRC.

During response, the local government sector is represented on the ZEST. During recovery, councils are members of the local recovery committee.

Recovery specific arrangements

Recovery is a collective responsibility and activities take place at many levels. The SEMP reinforces the importance of coordination and communication between all involved and the requirement for active involvement of affected communities. The established arrangements are detailed in section 7 of the SEMP – Part 2.

Recovery management structure during an event

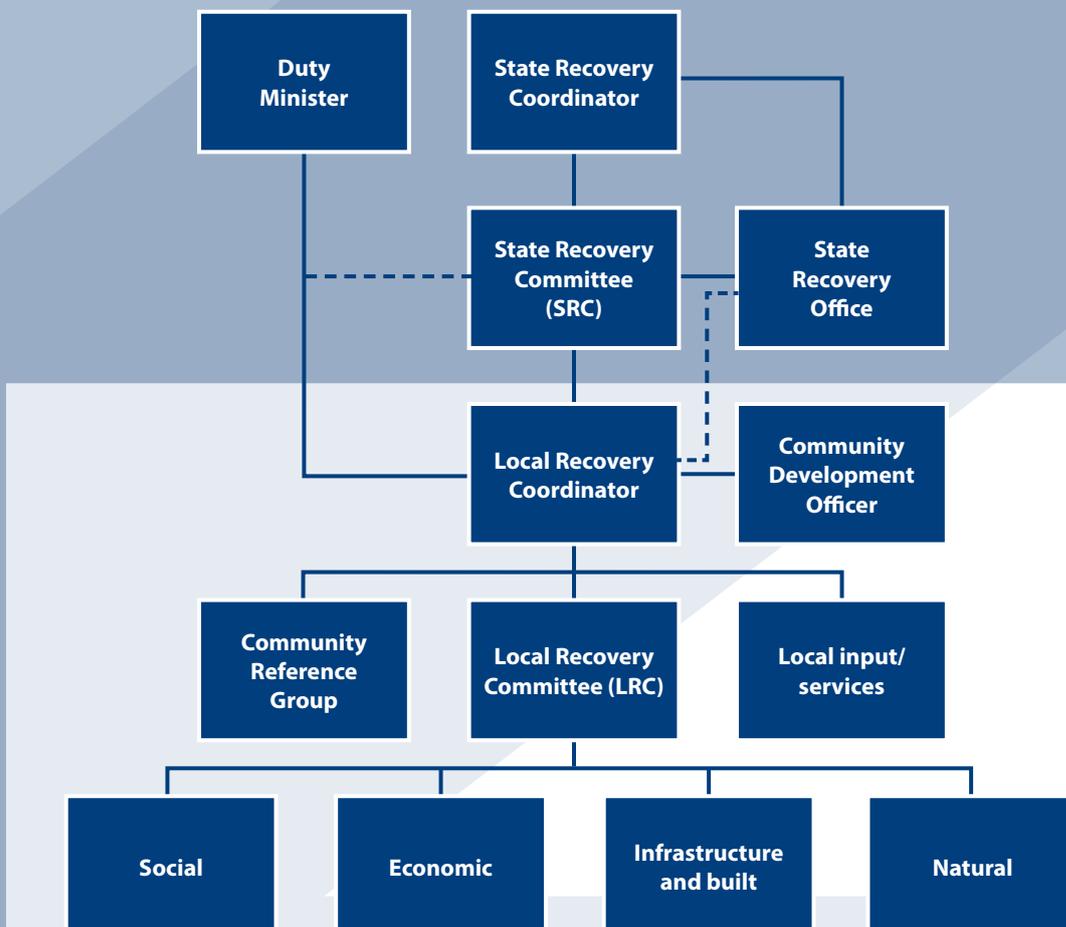
The recovery management structure used during events is designed to include the community, coordinate effort and connect with appropriate authority or expertise.

Structures established during response, such as the functional groups, carry over to recovery. The State Recovery Coordinator has ongoing responsibility for managing and coordinating recovery processes, and during events will chair special meetings of the SRC. These meetings focus on establishing recovery priorities, sharing and collecting information, identifying/resolving issues and consulting with key agencies and stakeholders involved in the recovery activities. Councils will be invited to participate in these meetings, particularly during the early stages, however council's primary, ongoing interaction will be with the Local Recovery Committee (LRC).

The State Recovery Coordinator or Local Recovery Coordinator establishes an LRC to help coordinate activities in impacted communities and facilitate community feedback and engagement. The LRC will include a range of local and state agencies, with membership dependent on community impacts and needs. Councils are key members of these committees and contribute to many activities the LRC coordinates. It is likely council will be asked to accommodate the LRC for its committee meetings and community forums.

The Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion may appoint a Local Recovery Coordinator who establishes local structures and networks, and works with the local recovery committee.

The diagram on the following page shows a 'typical' recovery structure for an event. The actual structure may vary according to the scale of the event and impacts on the community. Examples of structures used in recent events also appear in Appendices 4.



LGA's role in recovery

The LGA is a member of the SRC. As in response, the LGA engages with other functional support groups and agencies, as well as the councils that are impacted by the disaster or able to contribute to relief and recovery efforts.

Role of local government in recovery

The SEMP recognises that councils have specialised knowledge of their districts which positions them to determine and respond to local needs and priorities. It highlights the following recovery responsibilities councils should consider.

- Leadership, such as senior representation on LRCs and at community meetings, identifying impacts and liaising with state agencies to determine recovery services
- Community liaison, including communicating with the community, facilitating links with local service providers, supporting relief/recovery centres, supporting and coordinating local volunteer efforts, supporting liaison between the Local Recovery Coordinator and LRC, and
- Community development, such as helping the state identify areas of need, appointing a community development officer and implementing community development packages (if not provided by the state).
- Communities look to councils for leadership and support after disasters. What councils actually do during recovery will depend upon the requirements of each event and expectations of the community.
- For the purpose of this guide, council's role refers to their external activities and services, including:
 - participating in recovery committees and coordination (as per the outlined recovery structure)
 - delivering services or activities to help restore the community, and
 - engaging with the community and stakeholders.
- This is discussed in more detail in Part 2.



Above: Australian Government Mobile Service Centre Desert Pea at the Golden Grove Relief Centre providing access to Disaster Recovery Payments and Centrelink, Medicare and Child Support services during the response to the Sampson Flat Bushfire.

The importance of planning for recovery

Recovery is shaped by the initial experiences of individuals and communities immediately after the threat has passed. This means that recovery action needs to be swift and effective, embodying recovery principles from the moment a disaster strikes.

To do this successfully, recovery action has to be considered, planned and, as much as possible, practised before a disaster occurs. Starting to think about recovery after the disaster event is too late.

Council's local recovery planning should:

- establish the principles, structures, partnerships and approaches council will use to deliver recovery activities and work with the community
- identify how activities or functions will be delivered in the recovery context, and
- consider how council's corporate and operational arrangements will support the recovery context.

The importance of being prepared – a Council's perspective

The flooding event at Stockport in December 2010 occurred during the night hampering the response effort. Council staff were present throughout the night, and the Mayor and CEO attended a meeting in Stockport with community leaders and emergency services early that morning. One of the initial activities was the evaluation of the safety of buildings by the Building Inspector. Rapid Impact Assessments weren't available but this information was vital for the residents. Senior staff liaised with the State Recovery Office Director, emergency service members, Housing SA, Families SA and service agencies on that first day to help coordinate services required for recovery.

Septic overflow issues were addressed immediately with contractors organised to do the work as soon as properties were accessible. The works staff were quickly dealing with road clearing, blocking and signage. Residents were advised that Council would allow disposal of their debris free of charge at the Council's Waste Transfer Stations. Bulk rubbish skips were also provided for communal use.

Council needed the flexibility to be able to draw resources from everywhere to help the town of Stockport and our other towns which had been hit hard that night.

The original group of support agencies formed the ongoing Stockport Recovery Committee with members leaving as the needs of the community changed. Council had a permanent place on that Committee until it disbanded two years later.

Within their structures it is important for Councils to have staff who are available, flexible and resourceful to enable quick response to the needs of communities.

Roy Blight , Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council

Planning principles

Recovery plans should:

- be adaptable to all types of hazards and possible consequences
- be flexible and scalable to suit events with different degrees or 'size' of impact
- be inclusive and involve people within council and the broader community
- consider arrangements beyond 'business as usual' to meet extraordinary circumstances
- build on existing experience, processes, expertise and relationships
- establish accountabilities and engage decision makers
- encourage and guide problem solving.

The planning context

Recovery planning happens in two contexts, and will always involve collaboration with community and other organisations.



Context	Aim	Comments
1. Recovery preparedness Council's Recovery Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish how services or functions will be delivered to the community • Consider how council will operate internally during recovery 	Depending on requirements, this plan or series of documents would identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles and procedures • leadership, communication and reporting structures • services and functions to be delivered • community capacity and networks to be engaged • recovery-specific partnerships • how council will manage its workforce, resources, contractors and other matters. Refer to page 40 for information on recovery plans.
2. Event specific planning Recovery Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on event impacts • Set recovery priorities • Allocate responsibilities and resources • Map how activities will be coordinated and delivered. 	These plans are flexible and responsive, and are continually reassessed as the impacts are understood. Templates for these can be included in Council's recovery plan. Refer to page 41 for information on recovery action plans.

While recovery plans 'stand alone', they should complement other plans and activities associated with risk mitigation and prevention, response and resilience-building. Involving the community and stakeholders in the recovery planning process will improve preparedness and build community resilience and capacity.

Councils should also consider how to maintain critical functions/services throughout their area during recovery. Review recovery plans alongside business continuity plans to ensure they are complementary and do not compete for resources and effort.

A recovery planning process

Recovery planning starts with understanding the pre-existing state of the community, and the potential consequences of a disaster on that community (AEMI, Handbook 2: Community Recovery). The following planning process is designed to help councils establish recovery arrangements.



Step 1 Risk Identification

- What emergencies are likely to affect the community and council?
- What are the possible/likely consequences of each event?
- Are there event specific issues or unique features that will impact recovery?
- Which is the lead control agency for each hazard?

[Refer to page 17 for more information](#)

Step 2 Community Capacity

- What is the profile of the community?
- What community groups/networks exist and how can they be involved?
- How prepared is the community for disasters?
- What events has the community recovered from previously?
- What does the community understand about recovery and resilience?
- What would the community expect from council or other government agencies following a disaster?

[Refer to page 18 for more information](#)

Step 3 Council Capacity

- What recovery experience does council and its staff have?
- What is the council's level of preparedness for disaster recovery?
- What resources or arrangements does council have for recovery activities?
- What programs does council run to build resilience and capacity?
- What existing relationships/networks exist? What external support will be available?

[Refer to page 20 for more information](#)

Step 4 Councils Role & Operations

- Based on the risks, what is council likely to do to help restore the community?
- What leadership structure will council adopt – key roles and responsibilities?
- What structures and processes will be in place to engage the community?
- How will council coordinate its activities

and manage resources and people?

- Are special measures, agreements or procedures required?
- How will council work with surrounding councils to ensure consistent services and arrangements (for both staff and community)?

[Refer to page 21 and 24 for more information](#)

Step 5 Plans & Resources

- Develop a recovery plan with key stakeholders and document the supporting policies, procedures or processes.
- If necessary, document separate plans for complex or large scale activities.
- Develop the resources, toolkits and templates included in the plans.
- Review or establish supply contracts and agreements with recovery partners.

[Refer to page 44 for more information](#)

Step 6 Build Relationships & Capacity

- Work with partners and stakeholders to understand processes and roles.
- Establish regular engagement with recovery partners in 'peace time'.
- Identify skills gaps and deliver or coordinate training for staff and recovery partners.
- Run exercises to test plans, build knowledge and explore potential issues.
- Deliver programs to build community resilience and preparedness.

[Refer to page 46 for more information](#)

Step 7 Do & Review

- Enact plans when needed and participate in the state arrangements.
- Develop recovery action plans based on the disaster impacts using the established principles and arrangements.
- After each event, debrief with staff and recovery partners.
- Share lessons learnt and celebrate success with the community.
- Each year, review documentation, test systems and plans, and assess progress of ongoing recovery and resilience programs and level of preparedness.

[Refer to page 48 for more information](#)

Part 2: The recovery planning process

Part 2 is based on the recovery planning process on page 16. It provides more information about each step and asks questions to help councils consider arrangements that are appropriate for the organisation and community.

Remember, recovery planning does not start from scratch: each council will have previous experience and existing processes, arrangements and relationships which will be transferable to the recovery context with some adjustment or flexibility.

The community, other councils and recovery partners should be engaged throughout the planning and preparation process.

Step 1: Assessing risks

National approach

Understanding and communicating risk is an important first step in planning. The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience emphasises the importance of building a shared understanding of risks and the responsibilities that communities, individuals, businesses and all levels of government have in building resilience.

State risk assessments

In line with the national strategy, the South Australian Government conducted a risk assessment that identified the highest priority risks for the state:

- animal and plant disease
- bushfire
- flood
- heatwave
- human disease
- storm
- terrorism, and
- urban fire.

Other high priority risks include earthquake and escape of hazardous materials, while riverbank collapse was assessed as a medium priority risk.

The National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG) were used to assess all hazards, except for terrorism which uses a different assessment criteria. For each hazard, NERAG considers impacts on people, environment, economy, public administration, social setting and infrastructure.

Councils can access the State Risk Assessment, SEMP and ZEMPs on GovDex. To request access, email safecom.emergencymanagement@sa.gov.au



Local considerations

The likelihood and potential impact of these hazards will vary across the state, and an area might have additional risks that warrant consideration. Risk assessments have been conducted for each zone and ZEMPs will include information about the priority risks for each area.

Understanding the hazards most likely to impact the local area, as well as possible consequences for council and the community, will help identify what plans are needed and the types of recovery issues to consider.

While plans should have an all hazards approach and be adaptable to different scenarios, some types of events have unique features and consequences. A council might tailor its planning towards the most likely disasters, while also considering other hazards relevant to the area.

Understanding the local risks could also help council identify mitigation activities (such as infrastructure improvements and community education campaigns) that could reduce the impact on the local area and improve council's and community's ability to recover. Bear in mind that demonstrating natural disaster mitigation plans is a condition for receiving maximum assistance for restoring or rebuilding essential public assets through the Local Government Disaster Assistance Guidelines.

Recovery planning questions

- What hazards are likely to affect the community and council?
- What are the possible/likely consequences or impacts of each hazard?
- Are there event specific issues or unique features that will impact recovery?

Step 2: Understanding the community and its capacity

To facilitate community-led recovery, it is important to know the profile of the community, understand its recovery experience, existing capacity and expectations, and be able to identify the networks and leaders to work with. By understanding the community's existing strengths and capabilities, the SRC, LRC and council will better understand what services and support may be required.

Zone Recovery Operations Plans contain an annex with detailed lists of supporting organisation across the State. Refine this list to identify potential resources within the council and surrounding areas.

Community profile

A community profile highlights key information across the social, economic, built and natural domains. The information is critical for the SRC and other organisations that provide recovery services but are not familiar with the area. Profiles might include demographics, socio-economic information, cultural backgrounds, key local industries, significant regional or state infrastructure, critical transport links, a summary of government facilities (such as schools and hospitals) and sites of significance (cultural, heritage or natural).

Previous disaster experience and resilience programs

Understanding the community's previous recovery experience can identify potential solutions, highlight service needs, inform public messaging and identify community groups who can contribute. Importantly, the community may have expectations of the services and support they will receive based on previous events.

Where possible, review recovery reports from previous events to identify what worked well and issues that required more attention from the community's perspective. Identify what has been done to resolve these and be aware of unactioned items or unresolved issues.

Identify what resilience programs and mitigation measures have been delivered within the community, either by council or other organisations. Also consider emerging issues that could impact residents' ability to recover and the level or type of services they may require.



Community networks and organisations

Every community has established networks that support and connect residents, such as service clubs, sports clubs, charitable organisations, land care groups and special interest groups. While each individual club or group may be small and have limited resources, their collective capacity can be powerful, particularly considering their connections into different segments of the community.

Many of these groups proactively look for how they can contribute after a disaster. Involving them in planning will increase coordination and communication, potentially identify new solutions to recovery challenges and build common operating principles.

Zone emergency and recovery plans include profiles at the zone level. Use this to inform what the local community profile may include and highlight any gaps or community specific information. During events, the State Recovery Office, recovery partners and the SRC may ask council for this additional detail to plan activities.

Talk with groups to understand their resources, facilities and membership, previous recovery experience and capacity to help. Remember that groups may be able and willing to undertake a range of activities. For example, while a group may usually provide catering or food services, their volunteers may also be willing to help clean up yards for vulnerable residents, pack emergency food hampers or use a club bus to drive impacted residents to recovery services. Clarify what support groups may need to enable them to undertake agreed tasks and build relationships.

The information gathered might also help council identify members for a LRC.

Recovery planning questions

- What is the community's profile?
- What disasters has the community recovered from previously, and what were the key learnings?
- Are there actions or issues still outstanding from previous event debriefs? Are they still relevant and how will they be managed?
- What mitigation and resilience programs are being delivered in the community? Will this impact on the types of recovery services the community may need?
- What skills, experience and capacity is available through existing clubs, charities and non-government groups in the community?
- What are the existing networks that reach into certain segments of the community?

Use a simple mapping tool to collate information about community networks and organisations. An example is provided in Appendices 5.



Above: Community members talking to City of Playford Mayor Glen Docherty after the Gawler floods.

Build trust and respect

“The Rockleigh Fires in 2014 demonstrated the importance of knowing and understanding the fabric of our smaller rural communities. The Rockleigh, Monarto and Callington communities had faced five fires in twelve months destroying valuable cropping land, homes, buildings, animals and scrub.

While we were able to respond and provide assistance to emergency services based on existing relationships, the key challenge was to understand how we could help the community.

We were faced with many demands from people outside the affected community, outside the council area, and even outside the State. These demands created confusion and left us unsure as to what was actually required by whom.

In talking to community members after the fire, they just wanted to talk to and have connection with people in council who knew them. To address this we have worked to build effective relationships within the community. We recognize the knowledge of local CFS Captains and formal and informal leaders in each of our communities. Our aim is to continue to build trust and respect within our communities and along with our partners in Emergency Services to tap into those networks as required.”

Ros Kruger, Rural City of Murray Bridge

Step 3: Understanding council's capacity

Council's experience and capacity to provide recovery services will vary over time. As with the community, understanding council's internal capacity will confirm organisational strengths and abilities, identify services and resources to be sourced externally and highlight staff training needs.

This step will identify existing resources, processes and skills which can be included as part of the recovery plans and arrangements.

Documentation and plans

Undertake a desktop survey to identify existing emergency and recovery plans, as well as established procedures and processes relevant for recovery. Review the ZEMP and Zone Recovery Operations Plan.

Previous disaster experience and resilience programs

To understand council's previous experience in recovery, talk with staff and review reports from any previous events. This will highlight what worked well and what needs further work and consideration.

Undertake a staff skills audit, as experience and skills may not be apparent in existing roles and staff may have valuable experience from previous jobs. In many cases, skills are transferable to the recovery context with some additional training. This is also an opportunity to understand staff's ability to participate in recovery work, taking into account their personal circumstances and existing volunteer commitments. Maintain a register of staff who volunteer in local response agencies and community groups – this may help with future planning.

Locations and facilities

Ensure council has a comprehensive list of its sites and facilities, including information about bathrooms, kitchens, network cabling, generators, offices and communal areas. Council may be asked to provide or recommend sites for various purposes, including an LRC office, community meetings, relief centres, evacuation centres or base-camps for visiting volunteer groups. Some council services or operations may also need to temporarily relocate if buildings are damaged or essential services are not available.



Resources and equipment

Review existing asset and resource registers to identify council's equipment that could be used to support recovery activities. Remember council may be able to offer equipment (and staff) to help other councils during recovery. Share equipment and machinery lists with neighbouring councils and through i-Responda and LGFSG to assist with zone planning.



Step 4: Councils role during recovery (external activities)

What councils actually do during recovery will be different for every event, however in broad terms their role will include:

- participating in recovery committees and coordination,
- delivering services or activities to help restore the community, and
- engaging with the community and stakeholders to support community-led recovery.

Participating in recovery committees and coordination

Within days of a disaster, impacted councils will most likely be asked to participate in SRC meetings, and when the LRC is established, council will be a vital member of this group. Each affected council will be asked to provide a suitable representative for these committees and participate in developing a recovery plan for the event.

Council representatives will also be expected to attend community meetings during recovery and participate in discussion on behalf of the council. Ensure this is factored into planning and key role definitions.

Delivering services and activities to help restore the community

Councils provide or contribute to many activities following a disaster. While some services are predictable or part of core business, such as clearing trees, managing waste and repairing roads, others will be less obvious. Many organisations working in recovery do things outside their everyday business, based on local relationships and networks, existing capabilities, available resources or transferable skills and services.

Identify the types of services and activities council is likely to be involved in by:

- considering the likely hazards and consequences (Step 1)
- reflecting on previous events (Steps 2 and 3), and
- referring to zone emergency and recovery plans to confirm what commitments council has made.



Focus on community needs

“When I was appointed to the Sampson Flat Fire Local Recovery Committee, I had a good understanding of emergency management and a limited exposure to and appreciation of recovery and community development. It soon became apparent to me that local government needed to have a collective focus on and appreciation for the community’s needs.

The biggest take away I gained, both professionally and personally, is every individual impacted by a disaster has different and unique needs.

This experience was insightful for me. It highlighted the necessity to have empathy, accept and appreciate individual differences, put yourself in the shoes of the community and model the behaviour that we are proactively listening and remembering that significant events such as the Sampson Flat Fire are not just a story in the history books.

With this new experience and wisdom, I feel empowered to ensure that recovery elements have a focus in Local Government Emergency Management Planning”.

Rosemary Munslow, Playford City Council

For each activity, work through potential scenarios to identify how council might deliver it in the recovery context. Include local community groups and networks where appropriate. In the recovery situation, it might be necessary to adapt everyday operations to meet the differing demands. For each activity consider:

- key tasks or steps required to set up and deliver the service or activity
- who will work on the activity/service and what role will they play, including council staff, contractors, local non-government organisations or community groups
- potential locations or facilities
- required resources, equipment or materials and where to get them
- legislative requirements and related authorities and delegations if applicable
- how the plan will be communicated and who the key audiences are.

Some activities may need a dedicated plan due to their complexity, scale and necessary coordination.

The table on pages 26 & 27 indicates activities councils might undertake during recovery. It has been compiled from Zone Recovery Operations Plans and Reference Group Members' experiences. Some unusual activities are included as examples of work councils have done, coordinated through local networks or contributed to in previous events.

Each council's capacity is different for many reasons. It is not implied that council is required to do all activities on their own. In many instances, council might contribute to activities which other agencies lead.

There are some activities councils may feel compelled or expected to facilitate, such as accepting and distributing donated goods, raising money or providing grants. These activities have complex administrative requirements and require significant resources to manage. It is strongly recommended that councils channel these activities through established state or national arrangements. If those arrangements are activated during recovery, council can promote them to the local community.



Expect the unexpected - some experiences from Sampson Flat.

From the onset of the fire and through the years of recovery, there was no shortage of unexpected challenges, issues, problems and requests Council needed to manage. – here are just a few examples.

- Be prepared to quickly run out of staff. In the early stages of recovery, just about everyone in Council was involved from field services, administration, regulatory services, planning and development, environmental health, community development and so on. Managing their fatigue and welfare was challenging.
- Be ready for the unexpected. It was reported to council that 'non-locals' were collecting fire wood from burnt trees on roadsides, and this was considered to be at the expense of locals who had lost their own fire wood supplies during the event. This quickly became a resource intensive and ongoing issue for Council to manage, but was also an opportunity to proactively support local residents.
- Be wary of the 'business as usual' approach. Normal statutory requirements and timelines were the last thing residents impacted by the fire wanted to hear. Manage the enforcement of statutory requirements carefully and be prepared to be flexible.
- Routine services must go on. A small number of people not impacted by the fire demanded their requirements or requests continue to be met when in reality they were a very low priority compared to the issues facing the fire affected community. While challenging, the conflicting needs of the community needed to be met.

Adelaide Hills Council

Recovery planning questions

- Based on the local hazards and their likely impact, community expectations and council's previous experience, what activities or services might council deliver?
- Which ones align with usual business? Can usual arrangements (including facilities, processes, suppliers, stock levels etc) be adjusted to meet increased demand, be relocated or operate with reduced council staff, remembering staff and their families may also be affected by the event?
- For activities that are not usual business, can council do them either in full or in part? Is there a lead agency council should work with to clarify roles and associated issues or requirements? Do processes, procedures or training need to be developed for staff? Are there suppliers, contractors or community groups who need to be involved?
- What written plans or documentation are needed? Do any of the activities require detailed plans based on their size or complexity?
- Are there any contracts, agreements or partnerships council should establish? Remembering recovery is most successful when it's community-led, consider including community leaders, local organisations and community groups where appropriate.
- What activities can council refer to other agencies or state/national arrangements? Will council formally adopt this as part of their disaster recovery planning?



For more information on arrangements for the State Emergency Relief Fund, managing donated goods and volunteer coordination contact the State Recovery Office on 8415 4302 or dcsi.staterecoveryoffice@sa.gov.au

Financial support for residents

After the Wangary fires in 2005, Council was conscious that impacted residents were experiencing financial hardship while working to re-establish their homes and daily routines. To support residents, Council decided to:

- Offer impacted landowners an initial deferral of rates for a period of 12 months, with fines and interest applicable to this period waived.
- Subsequently extend the rate deferral by allowing them to enter into a 'fire affected ratepayer payment plan', effectively deferring rates without penalty for a further unspecified period, subject to written applications setting out individual circumstances (Interest and fines were applied from the date of default where ratepayers did not meet the timeframes for payment as agreed.)
- Receive fire damaged building material, including asbestos in a controlled environment free of charge at a re-opened former waste site.
- Waive development application fees, with the aim of processing those for replacement buildings within 24 hours.
- Contribute \$100,000 of Council funds towards the clean-up effort, in addition to funding received from the State Government and donations provided to Council. These funds were used for:
 - clearing council roads of fallen trees
 - private property building and vehicle clean up
 - farm fencing works
 - fodder handling, and
 - reimbursing land owners on a pro rata basis for costs incurred in engaging contractors before council announced it would help with clean-up.

District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula



Disasters can happen anytime. As key contributors to recovery, councils need to be ready to support the community and begin restoration immediately after the danger has passed.



Potential recovery activities

The following table highlights functions or services council may be involved in, either as the activity leader or a contributor. Where several councils are affected by one event, councils are encouraged to work together to provide a consistent approach and service level for residents. For each service or function, consider who the stakeholders, recovery partners or expert advisors might be. Also consider what hazard types the activity might relate to.

Functional service area	Potential activities
Waste management	Domestic waste <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household collection services to support clean up (including additional mechanisms such as skip bins for residents to use) • Collection arrangements for household hard waste, home building and fencing materials, hazardous chemicals, etc • Dumping fees (waive, reduce or subsidise) • Replacing damaged or lost wheelie bins etc
	Specific arrangements for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposal of hazardous waste (such as asbestos, chemicals, etc) • Arrangements for disposal of sandbags • Arrangements for disposal of excess green waste • Arrangements for recyclables • Car body removal
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and restore local council infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, shore line facilities (boat ramps), river and levee banks etc • Assist with repairing driveways and private fencing (in discussion with the control agency where damaged occurred during mitigation measures)
Planning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on structural engineering • Fast track development applications, noting a potential increase in demand
Community Waste Water Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess capacity of effluent systems immediately after the disaster • If required, identify process for pumping effluent such as using generators, supplementary pumps or contractors
Storm water management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of drains, storm water swales and road verges • Pumping water off land

Functional service area	Potential activities
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise on food safety and disposal – residents and business • Pumping out septic tanks and assisting with on-site waste disposal systems • Advise on potable water safety (rain water tank and bore contamination) and supply potable water if required • Inspect dwellings to assess whether they are habitable from an environmental health perspective • Mosquito management
Natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoring council parks and gardens • Removing or pruning hazardous trees (from both public and private land where they pose a threat to public space) • Coordinate and approve distribution of firewood from roadside clearing for community use • Assessing hazardous trees on private land
Animal management	<p>Domestic pets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue and capture of domestic pets at large and reunification with owners • Establishing options for residents impacted by the disaster to safely secure their animals <p>Livestock</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with removal or burial of carcasses
Vulnerable and aged residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to vulnerable and aged people in councils owned facilities • In conjunction with the LRC, contribute to the recovery and outreach services for vulnerable people, particularly where council has an existing connection to them • Delivering messages to isolated residents known to council
Community information and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and share critical recovery information with the local community, including relief centre locations, fact sheets about cleaning up or available grants, via social media and websites or at council offices • Contribute to public information and media activities being undertaken by the SRC or LRC • Support community engagement activities by identifying established local networks, providing input into LRC and providing advice on how to reach particular parts of the community
Community development and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host/accommodate the LRC and community development officers supporting the recovery • Undertake community events and activities which support community needs • Monitor emerging issues and coordinate support services to the community when they are required • Provide access to pre-identified council facilities/locations for other agencies or groups providing recovery services to the community • Integrate disaster recovery and resilience activities into usual community development program
Financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider deferral of rates payments or waiving fees/levies for impacted residents, ideally in collaboration with other affected councils for a consistent approach

Engaging the community and stakeholders

Community and stakeholder engagement is fundamental to overall recovery. After a disaster, getting involved helps communities make decisions about their recovery and gives them a sense of being 'back in control' which is an important part of the healing process. The process of engaging and interacting can also help create a more resourceful and resilient community in the future.

Community-led recovery

The principle of community-led recovery is critical. It acknowledges and supports the resources, capacity, resilience and leadership already present within individuals and communities. The aim is to maximise opportunities (and minimise barriers) for individuals and communities to lead their own recovery.

It is not always possible to restore parts of the community, landscape or facilities to their pre-disaster condition. Recovery can present positive opportunities, however it may take time for the community to accept that a 'new normal' is required. Involving them in developing recovery strategies and goals can provide a sense and level of control over their own lives and environment.

With close community links, councils play a key role in both facilitating and demonstrating community-led recovery. Councils, along with other government agencies, should:

- understand, represent and support the needs of emergency affected communities
- help communities identify their own needs and capabilities to identify recovery priorities and actions, and
- model and reflect good practice in community leadership and engagement.

The role of community engagement

Engagement ranges from simple one-way provision of information through to fully empowering and supporting people to plan their own objectives and address their own needs.

In the first weeks after a disaster, engagement is focussed on collating and sharing information about impacts and needs, ensuring the community understands how they will be supported and providing information on short term recovery activities. As time passes, communities can become more involved in developing visions and plans and collaboration can deepen.

As a partner in state-led recovery activities, council's role in community engagement after a disaster is three-fold:

- Participating – as a community member and representative, council will participate in and represent the community in state-led engagement activities.

- Leading – the community will look to council for information and guidance after a disaster. Council will also coordinate engagement for council-led recovery activities.
- Enabling – supporting community-led initiatives and helping address issues to enable communities to recover.

Why community engagement is different following a disaster

Engaging and communicating with the community is different after a disaster because of the event's impact on capacity and wellbeing, and the focus on community-led recovery. While councils are experienced in community engagement, usual processes might need to be adapted to meet the changing needs of individuals and communities.

Disasters affect people's lives in many ways including:

- physical harm or threat of harm to themselves or close ones
- damage to their homes or property
- the loss of other things they value – tangible or intangible
- destruction of a valued environment, and
- disruption of routines, relationships and familiar patterns of daily life.

This is incredibly stressful, and after a disaster people may not be able to participate in engagement activities or access information for many reasons.

- Those who have suffered loss and trauma might struggle with 'bureaucratic processes'.
- Many will be using extra energy and resources doing normal daily activities, which have become harder, more complex or more time consuming.
- Many will be under financial stress.
- Some people will be physically separated from their community, living in alternative accommodation, cut off due to damaged roads or absent from the area.
- Pre-existing isolation of some community members due to disability, age or culture might be exacerbated by the disaster.
- Timeframes, needs and priorities change rapidly, especially in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.

Fluctuating moods, energy and ability to control their own circumstances will influence people's understanding of recovery tasks and capacity to do what is required.

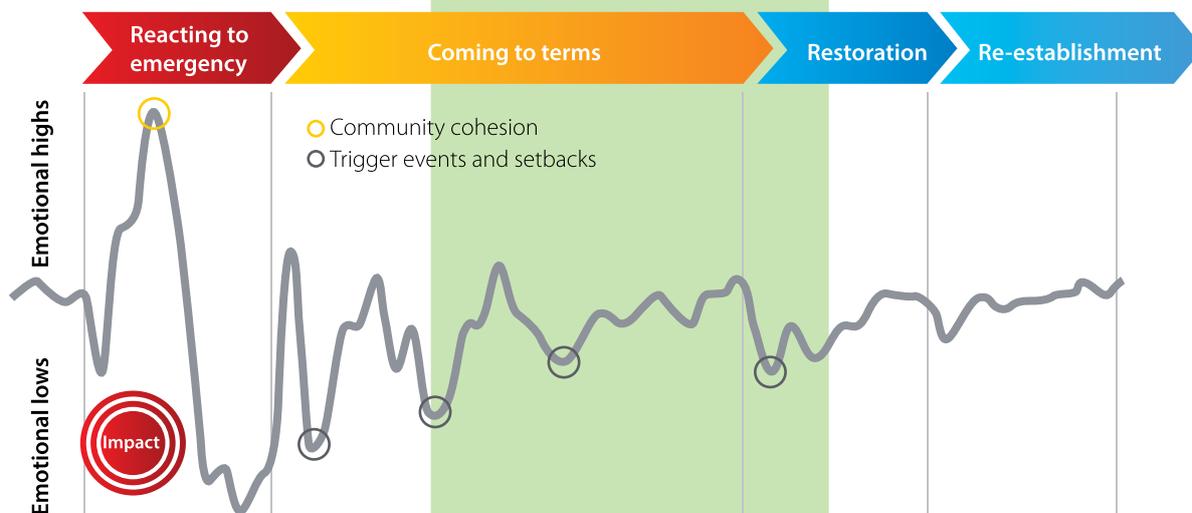
Throughout the recovery process, morale and energy rise as people become more self-reliant and independent, and dip as anxiety and stress are retriggered by practical setbacks and lingering grief. The following model illustrates how this might look over the course of recovery for a single person.



“As part of the coordinated outreach program, the Australian Red Cross provided trained personnel to support Adelaide Hills Council staff who undertook home visit outreach for approximately 200 residents affected by the Sampson Flat fire. Outreach teams provided Council information to community and collected information on community needs to inform recovery planning. Red Cross personnel were able to provide psychological support and connect people into other recovery support services.

The outcomes were Council staff learnt great support skills, the community felt valued and supported by Council and Red Cross was able to connect and refer to other services where appropriate. A great outcome for all.”

Australian Red Cross



Emergency Management Victoria, Disaster Recovery Toolkit for Local Government: Understanding Disaster Recovery, p.11

Working together – a joined up approach

Community Development Officers (CDO's) play an important role in supporting affected communities to recover. Through the Sampson Flat and Pinery Bushfire Recovery, the Community Development Officers worked closely with Red Cross recovery workers to plan and run programs and events, and make connections with recovery experts and people with lived experiences from previous disasters. This approach recognises all emergencies are different and draws on collective expertise, networks and resources to support the affected communities based on their needs.

Australian Red Cross

People will not necessarily move through these stages at the same pace. For some, recovery might take several years or might never be fully attained. Nonetheless, working with the community is vital and it contributes to successful recovery by:

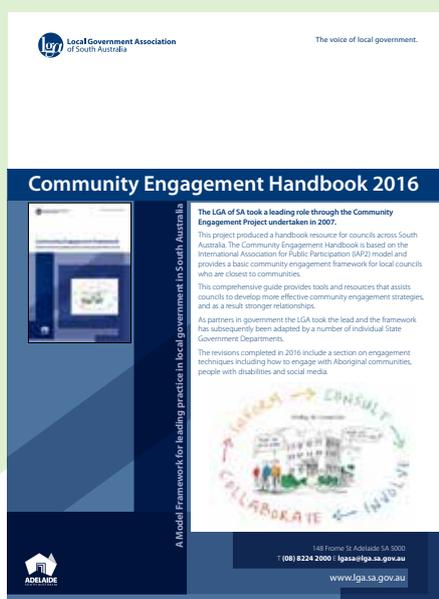
- enabling people to participate in and manage their own recovery
- using and developing community knowledge, leadership and resilience
- seeking to address the needs of all affected communities
- considering the values, culture and priorities of affected communities
- recognising that communities might choose different paths to recovery
- helping ensure needs are met with flexible and adaptable policies, plans and services, and
- building strong partnerships between communities and those involved in the recovery process. (AIDR, Handbook 2: Community Recovery).

Successful engagement can also:

- create goodwill and trust between the community and council, which can be hard to restore if it is damaged
- minimise community divisions and formation of disaffected groups, which can derail community efforts and stretch limited resources, and
- support the spread of reliable information.

Useful tips for engaging with communities after a disaster

- Recognise the different state of mind of people affected by the disaster.
- Be proactive in reaching out to affected individuals and communities.
- Use objective, fair and accessible processes that do not favour certain individuals or groups over others.
- Maximise information sharing and help people understand the basis for decision making.
- Ensure that you can and do deliver on promises.
- Validate the views and input of different groups in the community.
- Identify and engage with local community leaders and emerging leaders to help disseminate information to their networks. Refer to the organisations identified in Step 2.
- Be aware of individuals who put themselves forward as spokespeople – they may not necessarily represent community views or be part of the local community and could unduly influence decision making. By proactively engaging them to ensure they are properly informed, these people can become leaders.
- Where possible, base timeframes on the capacity and needs of the affected communities, rather than bureaucratic timeframes or processes.
- Be aware of engagement fatigue and where possible coordinate engagement with the LRC and other agencies.
- Be prepared for dormant issues to emerge as groups may blame each other for the disaster or the extent of the impact.
- Be prepared to explain processes and documentation many times to affected people and make sure paperwork and information is simple and easy to read.



Community Engagement Handbook resource available from the LGA's website

'Be mindful of over promising and raising the expectations of the affected community or recovery workers.

Don't promise what can't be delivered – no matter how well intentioned this will lead to further disappointment and can erode trust within and between recovery services and the community.'

IAP2, Disaster Recovery Guide, p.14

The IAP2 Disaster Recovery Guide may be a useful reference for councils when thinking about how to adapt engagement with disaster affected communities.

Sampson Flat Fire outreach

"After the six days of the Sampson Flat fire in 2015, we decided to door knock homes in the Playford area that were in the fire footprint to check on impacted people.

The purpose was to make contact with isolated people to ensure they knew where to go for specific needs, ensure that their properties were still offering the basic needs of water, sewerage and electricity, and more importantly that buildings were structurally safe to be occupied. Over the two day period, our crews of EHO Officers, Building Surveyors and senior managers visited 92 properties to advise on rainwater tank quality, septic tank function, removal of deceased livestock, structural damage and other general matters, as well as redirecting residents to the relevant relief agencies.

This proved to be an invaluable exercise. It provided an opportunity for people to debrief and for staff to connect directly with affected residents to offer support and direct them to the relevant services available."

City of Playford

A note on stakeholder engagement...

Every day councils work with stakeholders and community members on various works programs, projects and activities. While engagement after a disaster will focus on recovery, remember to inform stakeholders about the disaster and how it will impact on existing work. Even if they are not directly involved in the recovery activities, notifying them will contribute to stronger relationships, facilitate positive re-negotiations when business returns to normal and may uncover new opportunities or offers for support.

Public information and media

Councils are considered trusted and reliable sources of information about events and issues that are important to the local community.

During and after a disaster, residents will look to council for information, updates and referral. Ensure information is timely, accurate, relevant and consistent. Council should only share verified or accurate information. Share or link to information issued by other agencies rather than re-writing it, so that updates and corrections are made automatically.

Ensure council's website and social media channels are kept up to date, and remember to keep the disaster splash page active as it will provide links to important community information. Provide information to local media, about council's activities and other important recovery information. When council representatives talk to the media, stay factual, focus on council's role in the recovery activities, acknowledge the work of recovery partners and do not speculate.

Provide call centre and reception staff with updated information throughout the recovery process. Residents will call council or visit council offices looking for information, so front-counter staff must be prepared to answer a range of questions. Develop a simple question and answer style script, with links to relevant websites, for them to use. This can also be provided to other staff working in the field who may receive questions, such as outreach workers and community engagement officers.

Council's media staff should maintain contact with the State Recovery Office to ensure consistent information and collaboration. Normal protocols associated with VIPs and inter-government announcements will apply and there will also be requirements to appropriately acknowledge funding sources.

During recovery, it is important to share positive stories about the community's progress. Include good news stories in council's regular community publications and the website, and work with the LRC to identify other opportunities. This is a positive way for residents to share their stories and celebrate progress or milestones.

Recovery communication after the flood

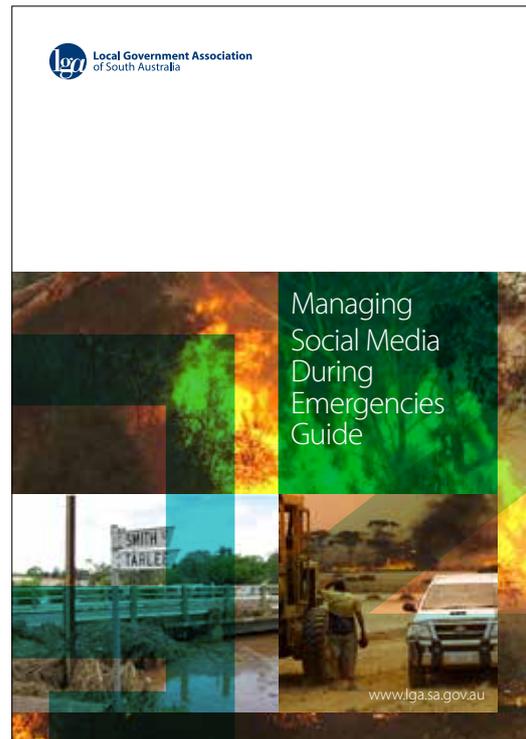
After the June 2013 floods, the Kangaroo Island Flood Recovery Committee kept in contact with affected residents via a newsletter and weekly road updates. The newsletter included a range of information, including updates from council and other recovery agencies, resident experiences and observations, road work updates, advice on flood impacts and support information such as articles about dealing with feelings. Regular community meetings were held at the local MacGillivray Cricket Ground, which was also where a social cricket match was held between the Kangaroo Island Meyer Shield Team and players from the Redbacks and Strikers.

Kangaroo Island Council



Recovery planning questions

- Are council's engagement procedures appropriate for the recovery context? Are engagement staff suitably trained or experienced for the recovery context?
- Who are the trusted sources of public information? Do you have a suitable platform or mechanism to monitor their online content during events?
- How does the community access information? Are there locations that people will visit looking for information?
- Does council's website link to important information? Does Council have processes to share timely and important information with the community through web and social media?
- Who will be a spokesperson for council during events? Do they require media training?
- Do existing media or publication approval processes suit the recovery environment? Are there any other organisations who need to review/approve public information before it's distributed?
- Are media staff and call centre/reception staff briefed on their role and trained to deal with residents who may be in distress?
- Are staff ready to write positive stories about recovery outcomes, both for council's use and the local recovery committee newsletter if one is established?



Managing social media during emergencies guide resource available from the LGA's website



Left & above: Clare & Gilbert Valley Council reverted to using old technology when no power & damage caused by severe weather system Sept 2016

Step 4: Council's role during recovery (internal activities)

Once a disaster hits, some internal structures and processes will need to change or be catered for in different ways as they might not support the pace and scale of recovery activities or hinder efforts and add pressure on staff.

As such, council should consider how organisational and corporate matters will be managed in the recovery context. This will deliver significant benefits and reduce the likelihood of compliance, record keeping, reporting and workforce issues during or after an event.

Pre-planning should focus on establishing principles and frameworks for staff to operate in, exploring options and ensuring altered procedures comply with legislation and regulations. For example:

- What measures will council put in place to capture all costs associated with the recovery effort? Do these measures take into account the Local Government Disaster Recovery Assistance Guidelines?
- What policies are needed to manage staff rostering and fatigue, taking into account employment conditions and existing legislation?
- Which staff members have skills and experience which are transferable to recovery activities, and what training do they need to operate effectively in the recovery environment?
- Are there additional work, health and safety requirements for staff during this time, such as additional personal protective equipment (PPE), check-in procedures for staff travelling through impacted areas or psychological preparation to deal with the gravity of some issues?
- Are staff and volunteers trained to interact with people who are distressed?
- Are regulations or provisions needed to ensure staff have appropriate authority to deliver certain functions?
- What processes or procedures can council adjust to meet increased demand or speed up approval processes, such as those building or development applications?
- Are current mobile phone and data packages suitable for the increased use? Will staff use their own email accounts or should generic accounts be set up for certain functions?

It can be difficult to balance enabling fast, responsive and flexible operations with good governance, compliance and administrative accountability. This pressure tends to ease in medium to longer term recovery programs.

To help with planning for recovery, the following pages suggest key questions to ask about important organisational and corporate functions. The questions are a guide and may not be appropriate for all councils. In many instances, there are very simple steps councils can take to accommodate the different requirements associated with recovery.

Key aspects of council's operations to be considered include:

- Leadership and key roles
- Internal coordination and communication
- Information sharing
- Human resources
- Financial management
- Asset and resource management, and
- Work locations, IT and other requirements.

Leadership and key roles

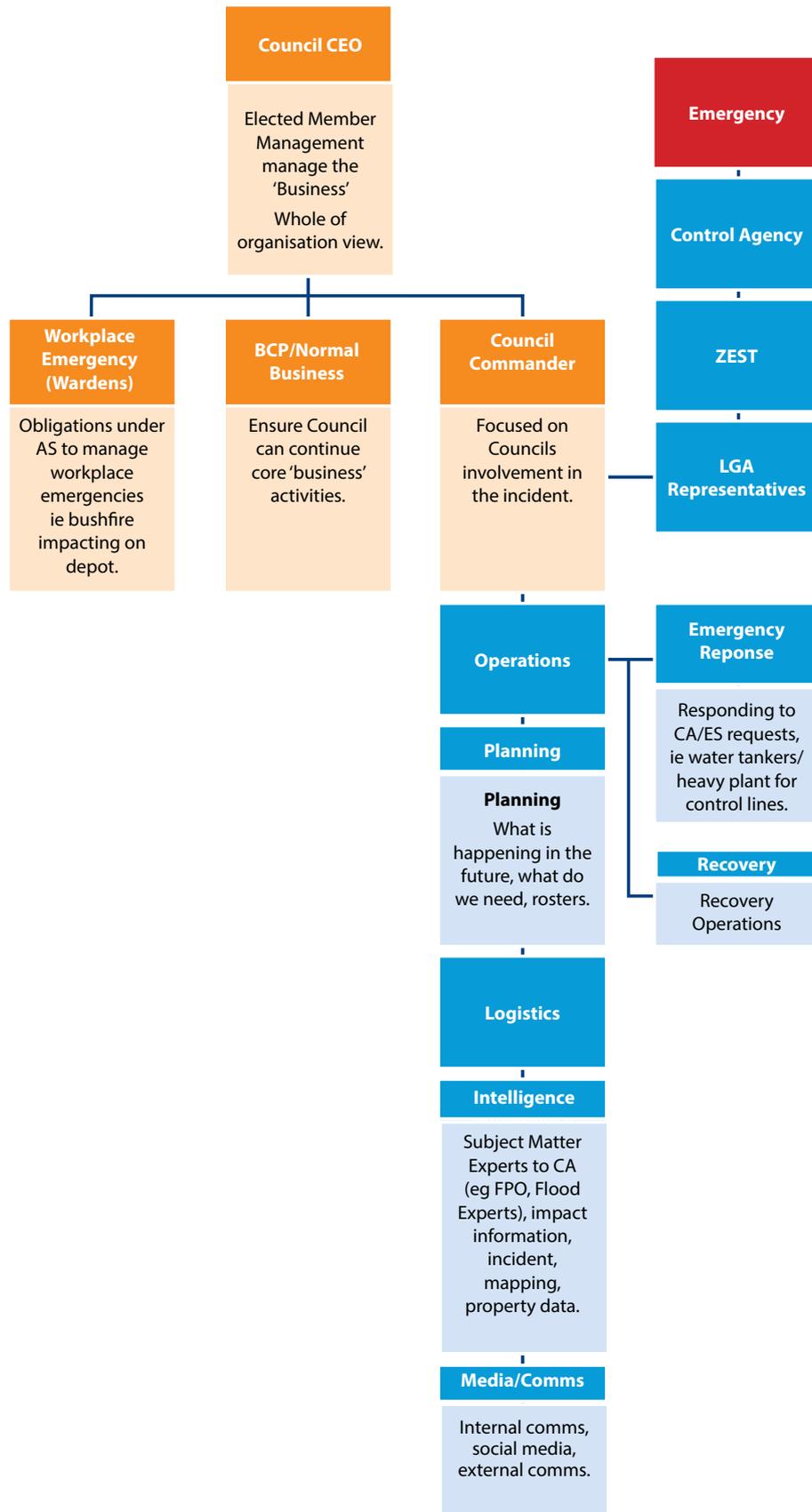
Council's ability to quickly adapt to the recovery environment will require a pre-determined leadership structure with assigned roles and functions. It is important that affected councils show leadership and coordination to inspire confidence, support community initiatives and engage with recovery partners at all levels. Leadership structures may need to be modified, particularly over the medium to longer term as the effort evolves in response to community needs. An example structure is provided on the following page.

For each identified recovery role, provide a role definition which includes decision making parameters and how to deal with exceptional circumstances. Ensure the structure indicates links to the community and external committees and partners.

It is recommended that council nominate one role to liaise with external committees and partners, and represent council at meetings and briefings. During the immediate relief and early recovery phases, meetings can be very regular. This can seem time consuming but is necessary to ensure coordination, especially while the impact is being assessed and recovery priorities are established. Councils can use these forums to seek assistance for emerging issues, advocate solutions and provide feedback from the community. This liaison officer is unlikely to have capacity to 'do the doing on the ground' and processes will need to be established so they can share information with other recovery staff in a timely manner.

While elected members do not have an operational role, they play a key role in providing comfort, maintaining morale, facilitating communication, advocating for their constituents and making strategic decisions. They will likely have a strong appetite for briefings and information about council activities. Ensure elected members are appropriately briefed on what the community will be going through post-disaster and how this may impact their leadership roles.

Schematic of possible council organisational structure to manage a significant emergency



Recovery planning questions

- Who will lead/oversee council's recovery operations (CEO or Executive Director) and do they already have an appropriate level of accountability and authority?
- Who will pick up the usual duties of council's recovery leader (and other key roles) so they can focus their time and effort?
- How does the proposed recovery structure measure against principles such as span of control and does it support fast decision making and collaboration?
- Does the structure separate strategic planning roles from operational 'on the ground' roles? Dedicated planning roles maintain longer-term direction and strategic focus. This may be more challenging for smaller councils so carefully consider how people will separate their time and energy.
- At an operational level, how can functions/activities be grouped to support management processes and gain operational efficiencies? The four domains (social, economic, built and natural) may provide a suitable basis.
- How will elected members be involved?
- Are there roles that are optional depending on the scale of the event, such as an executive officer for council's recovery leader or dedicated purchasing officers?
- Does the structure include recovery partners, stakeholders and the community? Will there be a 'recovery coordination team' which can include external partners? How does the community feed into decision making?
- Which roles require local knowledge or authority, and which could be effectively delivered by contractors, visiting staff or volunteers?
- If long term reconstruction or recovery is needed, consider how an ongoing recovery team might fit into council's structure. Can duties be embedded in 'usual' roles, or should dedicated positions be established?



Coordination and communication

Effective internal coordination and communication is essential. Immediately after a disaster, there is heavy demand for information and data to be collected and shared from a range of sources. Some recovery staff might feel 'information overload'.

Regular meetings and briefings are important for building shared situational awareness, setting recovery priorities and resolving issues, however when meetings are too regular there can be little progress towards actions. Conversely, if they are not often enough critical information and decision points can be missed and coordination will suffer. As recovery progresses, the frequency of meetings and briefings usually reduces.

Recovery planning questions

- How will council coordinate activities and share information?
- How often will meetings be held and written reports provided?
- How will decisions and tasks be recorded and updated? Will recovery action plans assist with this?
- What critical information will the CEO and elected members need?
- What information will council need to report to external committees? What statistics or information should be collected, and how will that happen?
- Who are your community leaders and partners, where will they be and how will you engage with them?

Information sharing

Councils hold important data about its community and facilities and sharing information with other recovery agencies can enhance recovery and increase safety and wellbeing for the community. Some types of data and information are not usually shared with other agencies.

The Ombudsman SA has developed Information Sharing Guidelines for promoting safety and wellbeing while upholding privacy. They apply to state government agencies, NGOs and councils, and provide clear guidance for information sharing to support better coordinated services. Ensure staff understand the guidelines in the recovery context.

Recovery planning questions

- What information or data does council have that would help in recovery planning?
- Are there any barriers to council sharing information?
- What information would council find useful from other agencies or partners?
- Do council's information sharing processes align with the guidelines?
- What data collection processes can council support, such as the impact assessment process?

Human resources

Staff make significant contributions to recovery activities and the community, and are often council's greatest asset. Councils can put in place processes, principles or policies to ensure workforce issues are well managed and staff are well supported during recovery. Council can predict which areas of the workforce will be most impacted after disasters, however there are many less obvious or less public activities staff will do such as administrative and executive support for recovery committees/meetings or ensuring council vehicles and equipment is appropriately maintained.

It is important to remember that some staff will not be available as expected after a disaster – their family may have been directly impacted or they may be volunteers for organisations involved in the response. Ensure the details of suitably trained and willing staff are registered in iResponda. Templates (refer to Attachment 6) are available to capture necessary information and help coordinate staff between councils.

Staff will have increased confidence in recovery roles that use existing skills. Conversely, expecting staff to perform roles they are not skilled, trained or resourced for can be very stressful. Establishing clear structure, expectations and support mechanisms for staff will help them manage in the unpredictable, complex recovery environment.

For information on training and capacity-building refer to Step 6.

Established leadership on Kangaroo Island

"In the event of a large scale bush fire on Kangaroo Island, Council activates four pre-determined key roles to coordinate their response and immediate relief and recovery activities: Council liaison, Incident Controller, Operational Supervisor and Welfare and Logistics Officer.

A Recovery Committee, with members from different agencies and the council, is established during the response phase.

Having set roles suits the council and ensures it can respond to its community's needs and work effectively with other agencies and community groups during disaster events. Staff are trained in specific roles and while each event is different, the predetermined structure means people understand what they need to do and what their priorities are. There is also a level of assurance that key activities such as staff welfare, communication and coordination are being addressed."

Kangaroo Island Council

Rostering

It is likely that 'normal hours' will not cater for recovery, particularly during immediate relief. Establish a roster system which provides suitable staffing levels throughout recovery, while maintaining staff welfare and managing fatigue. There will often be a concentration of effort in the first days after a disaster and staff will be highly motivated to contribute, however ensure staff do not burn out during this time.

Recovery planning questions

- What guidelines should rosters follow to manage fatigue and support staff welfare and safety? Consider:
 - Maximum number of consecutive work days / minimum number of days off, which may vary for different functions/roles.
 - Standard length of recovery shifts, which also may vary for different functions/roles
 - How rosters allow appropriate handover between staff
 - Minimum numbers of people to be rostered on for each function/location
 - If using non-council staff or volunteers, acceptable ratio of council employees and non-employees. (ie one council supervisor to six volunteers).
- Do the rosters comply with relevant awards, employment conditions and legislation?
- How will staff record their hours? Remember, electronic systems may not be easily accessible, so paper based records might be more appropriate.
- Who will manage rosters during the event and ensure staff are best matched to the skills needed each day/week?
- Has council consulted with staff and unions on roster procedures?

Activating staff and providing briefings

Staff need to know how they will be activated and notified of recovery duties. They will also need to be briefed on the event and their role.

Recovery planning questions

- Who can activate staff for recovery activities – does the CEO need to approve mobilisation of staff?
- How are staff released from their usual duties? Is this automatic or negotiated with managers on a needs basis?

- Does council have contact lists for core recovery staff, including after hours contacts and scheduled annual leave?
- Should council have an on-call or 'first responders' group? Will this group stay at work while the disaster is impacting locally or will they be pre-positioned at alternative locations (subject to safety)?
- What is the process for staff to confirm their safety and availability immediately after the event, remembering staff may be unavailable for many reasons?
- When will staff receive briefings and who will deliver them?
- How will staff who are unable to attend the briefing receive information?
- What, at a minimum, should a staff briefing include?
 - Where they are going and what they will find there, if applicable
 - What their role will be and how it interacts with others
 - The limits of their responsibilities and decision making
 - Who they are accountable to
 - Who they report to in the field and back in the office if appropriate
 - Where they get advice or decisions
 - What the arrangements are for the end of their shift and debrief/handover.

Remuneration

It is most likely that staff will work additional hours during recovery. Staff should know how they will be compensated for this additional effort and whether there are specific allowances or provisions council will provide.

Recovery planning questions

- How will council compensate staff for additional hours worked during events, and what are the implications of these options?
- Can staff have a choice in how they are compensated?
- Will standard allowances for things like travel still apply? Do these need to change?
- Are there additional costs council will reimburse, such as parking at alternative work locations or meal allowances on extended shifts?
- What are the arrangements for staff who are unable to attend work due to the impact of the disaster?
- If time in lieu is offered, is it necessary for staff to take the time before returning to their 'normal' duties?
- If you are sharing staff with other councils, talk collectively about arrangements for overtime and allowances. It can be very disheartening for staff performing the same duties to receive different benefits or support.

Refer to the Information Sharing Guideline decision making steps available on the Ombudsman SA website.

Welfare of staff and self-care

Emergencies do not happen every day, so while staff, volunteers and community groups have excellent skills and capacities, they might not understand the complex environment they will be operating in. For recovery workers, this creates additional demands and increased stress, potentially on top of dealing with personal impacts or loss. People need to understand stress and the outcomes of sustained stress and vicarious trauma so they can mitigate associated negative health outcomes. Workers should be supported in identifying potential triggers, adopting a healthy work/life balance and helping their peers. Stress and poor self-care can hinder recovery.

Recovery planning questions

- Are council staff provided with self-care information and training, either as part of their recovery training or induction?
- Are managers and staff trained to monitor others for signs of fatigue or inability to 'switch off'?
- If the disaster has a warning period, can recovery staff be stood down to tend to personal preparations and rest?
- Do your recovery staff understand that time off is for rest? Does council expect staff to respond to emails, phone calls and the like when they are off duty? As part of this, consider whether mobile numbers will be designated to certain recovery roles and redirected to oncoming staff.
- Does council have an employee assistance program or arrangements with external providers for staff counselling or support during an event? Have all staff been encouraged to access it, even if not directly involved in recovery work? Is this support also available for volunteers?
- Does council have established peer support mechanisms (formal or informal)?
- Is there a debriefing process for the end of shift where staff and volunteers can raise concerns?

Staff identification

Councils should ensure staff are appropriately identified when carrying out recovery operations to ensure they are easily recognised by the community, emergency services and recovery partners. Options could include photo ID, council branded clothing and marked vehicles.

Recovery planning questions

- Do staff on the front line need identification that reflects their recovery role (not their usual role)?
- What types of ID will council use? For example, will staff working in community liaison roles wear council shirts with name badges? Remember staff may not be working in normal conditions so usual uniforms may not be appropriate and work health safety (PPE) requirements must be followed.

- Do all authorised officers have suitable identification, particularly if there are additional authorised officers during recovery?
- What form of ID will you provide to staff from other councils or volunteers?

Leave planning

It is important to ensure there is a suitable number of recovery staff available at all times, especially during peak disaster seasons. Consider mechanisms to avoid having all staff nominated for key roles on leave at the same time. This is especially important in larger organisations where recovery staff are drawn from different teams or divisions. Consider recall arrangements and discuss these with staff. Be mindful that some staff may feel a level of guilt if they are on leave when a disaster hits and are not able to contribute to the immediate relief efforts, so ensure they are reassured when they return.

Recovery planning questions

- Are recovery requirements considered during leave planning? For example, if three executive staff are trained to lead recovery operations do they coordinate their annual leave to ensure at least one is available at all times?
- Are there 'quieter' times when recovery staff can be encouraged to take leave?
- Is there a mechanism to recall staff from leave in disaster circumstances?
- Have staff been consulted about these arrangements?

"It's important for anyone who may be working in recovery or interacting with people impacted by emergencies to have an understanding of the psycho-social impacts of disasters. We have been able to train Adelaide Hills Council staff and Elected Members on how disasters impact people, how to provide support and importantly, how to look after staff and their own wellbeing."

Australian Red Cross

Financial resources

Capturing costs and seeking financial support

During and after each event, council will need to report on actual and estimated expenditure. Elected members will require this information when considering ongoing budget impacts. It is extremely difficult and time consuming to identify costs after an event. Having reliable financial information about events also helps with future planning and can inform decision making about mitigation, resilience and capacity building activities or investments.

Some costs may be eligible for external funding arrangements such as the Local Government Disaster Recovery Assistance (LGDRA). This assistance helps councils manage costs associated with:

- Restoring or replacing essential public assets (which may include roads, bridges, tunnels, footpaths, levees and stormwater infrastructure)
- Counter disaster operations (such as protecting residential properties through sandbagging, constructing temporary levees or establishing bushfire control lines, undertaking general clean up work such as removing debris and hazardous materials, tarping damaged roofs or providing consumables such as tarps, ropes and chainsaws used during eligible activities)
- Administering community recovery, development and capacity building initiatives (for example employing community development workers, community information initiatives or community commemorative events or memorials).

When applying for LGDRA for essential public assets, councils need to demonstrate specified criteria, including:

- the asset relates to community welfare, health, education or transport
- damage to the asset is the result of the disaster event
- the asset has been maintained in good condition (where assets were in less than good condition the level of state support could reduce)
- it is impractical/uneconomic to insure the asset
- council has disaster mitigation strategies in place, and
- council has robust procurement and accounting policies.

Council will need to adequately demonstrate pre-disaster and post-disaster condition of assets. Ideally this would be in the form of photos with GPS coordinates and date stamps. The LGDRA guidelines, issued by the Department of Treasury and Finance, are available on line.

Councils are encouraged to use the Emergency Assessment Reporting System (EARS) available through the LGA. EARS is designed to help councils capture real time information to improve response and recovery planning, and is useful when seeking funding. It can record voice and video and processes rapidly snapped photos with inbuilt GPS which allows the information to be displayed spatially. A flow chart of the recommended application process using EARS is available in Appendices 8. Council is encouraged to understand these arrangements during recovery planning so necessary processes, mechanisms and staff training can be established.

Recovery planning questions

- What mechanism can council put in place to track all recovery costs? Can a dedicated cost code be set up?
- What costs can be included in funding applications (particularly the LGDRA)? Does council need to categorise the types of costs differently to normal processes?
- Are council staff trained to use EARS to record disaster impacts?
- Do purchasing staff know about the recovery specific codes and requirements?

Purchase and procurement procedures

Recovery can require fast, increased levels of purchasing and council will often require different services or products from alternative suppliers. The expectation remains that council will be responsible with its purchasing during events. Strong relationships with suppliers and pre-established agreements or contracts will be very helpful.

Recovery planning questions

- Do usual purchasing and procurement processes need to be adjusted during disasters?
- How will purchases be made? Who holds corporate credit cards, will they be available to assist after a disaster and should the credit card limits be increased during recovery?
- Do existing financial delegations cater for recovery activities and responsibilities?
- Do existing supply contracts include provisions for increasing or reducing supplies/services during disaster recovery and fee structures for call outs and after hours supply?
- If they are local suppliers, what are their business redundancy arrangements? Remember they may be impacted by the disaster and unable to deliver as expected. Council may need to have alternative suppliers or arrangements in place.
- What arrangements are in place for goods or services only required during recovery?

Asset and resource management

It is not unusual for assets and resources to be deployed to different locations, shared with other councils, used more and used differently after disasters. New equipment may be purchased or leased, while some items may be gifted to council. Council needs to track where and how their assets are being used, what resources are unallocated at any one time and ensure proper maintenance and running requirements are considered.

Recovery planning questions

- Does council maintain its equipment register in iResponda (Refer to Appendices 7)? Do the right staff have access?
- Does council maintain the LGFSG resource database? Do staff know how to update it and access it?
- Is council's asset register kept up to date? Does council routinely record the condition and maintenance of assets and equipment?
- From previous experience, what types of vehicles, plant and equipment were needed? What arrangements in place to secure these during an event?
- Is there a consolidated list of resources and equipment included in recovery plans? Are there identified suppliers or sources for these?
- Are processes in place to ensure vehicles and equipment are regularly checked and maintained during disasters?
- Is there a suitable supply of fuel, batteries, spare parts and the like for vehicles, machinery and equipment? Does council check these supplies routinely? Do stocks need to be increased during high risk times?
- How will new equipment and assets be registered during an event? This is especially important for portable items such as chainsaws.
- Does council have a register of staff who are trained or licensed to use certain vehicles, machinery and equipment? How will this be checked during an event? Remember some staff will be very driven to help in a variety of capacities and, with the best intentions, may offer to do things they are not trained or licensed to undertake.

Work locations, IT and other requirements

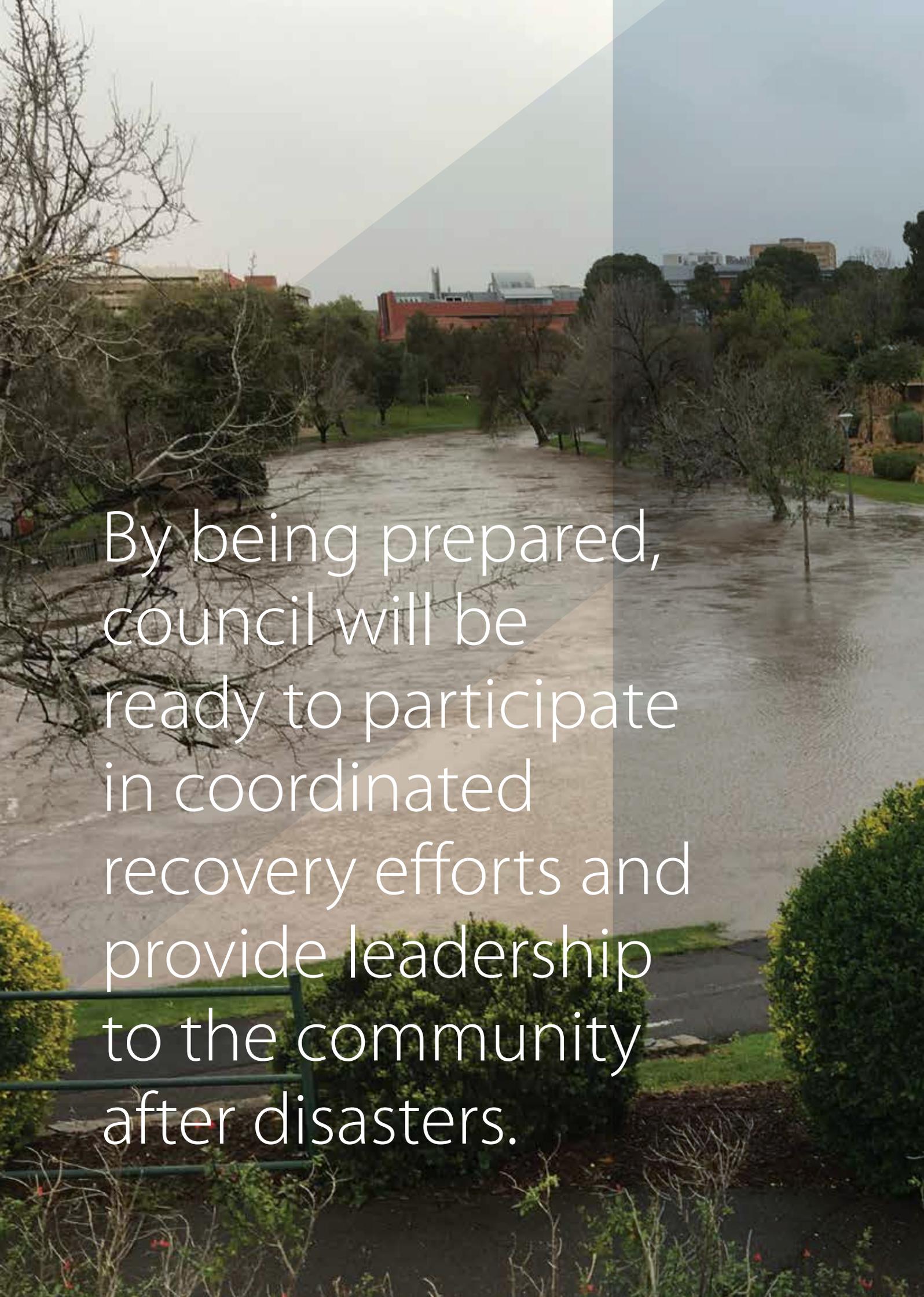
It is important to nominate where recovery staff will work from and whether the location has the room and facilities required. Staff may be able to work in their usual workplace, however this may not always be possible. While it can be unsettling, moving key recovery staff into a common location increases coordination and also helps them separate from the demands of their usual roles. Consider a few locations in case council offices are impacted by the disaster.

Council might be asked to host staff from other recovery agencies. If possible, consider having a few spare work stations available. Some staff will also need to work in the field or remotely, and this might require different resources than normal.

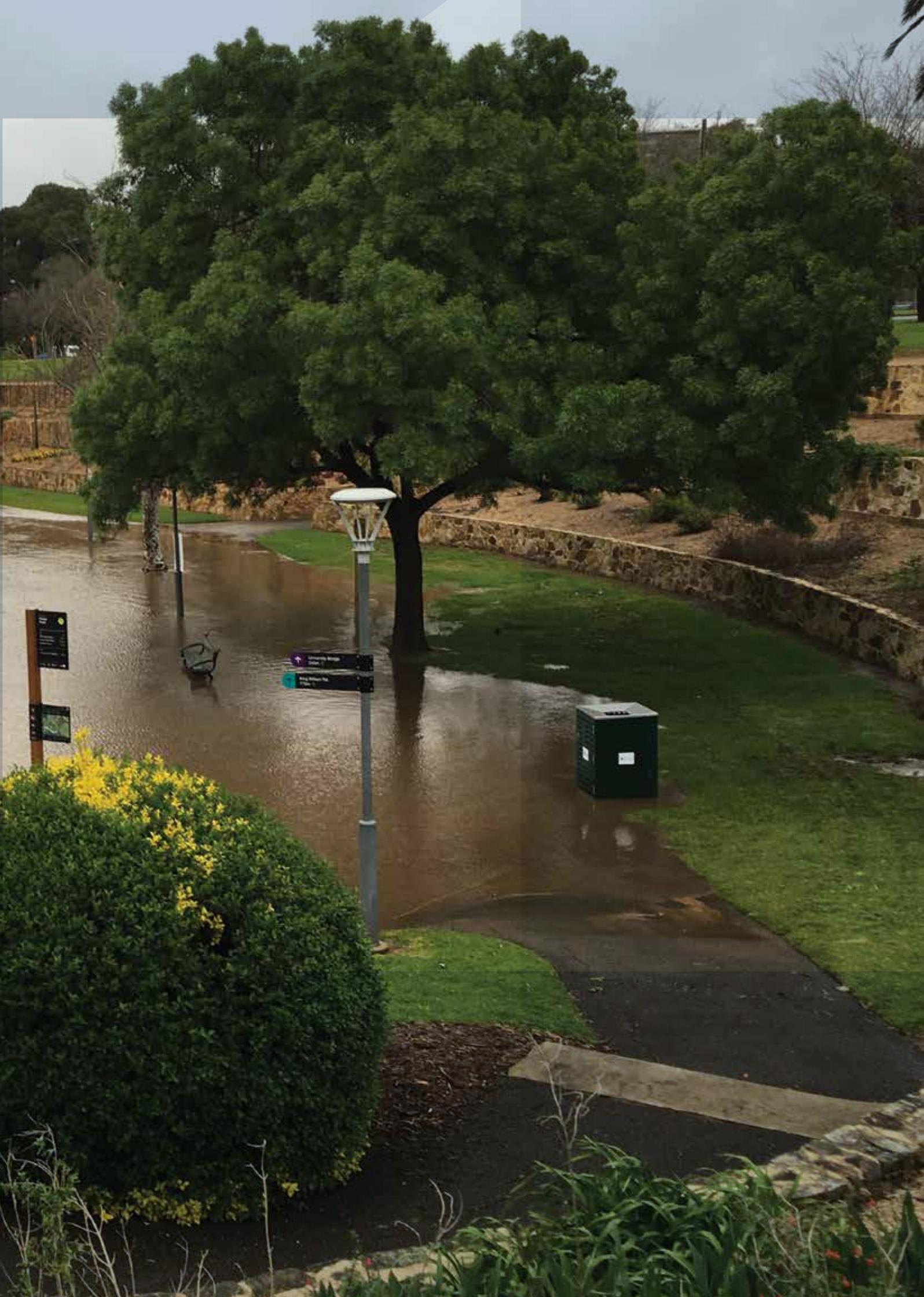
As discussed in the staff welfare section, council may decide to have mobile phones or numbers dedicated to recovery roles, as opposed to individuals. Having generic email accounts for the recovery team ensures incoming communication is addressed, irrespective of who is on duty at the time. It also helps staff rest on their time off as they won't feel compelled to keep checking their own email accounts or phones.

Recovery planning questions

- Where will recovery staff work from? Are there suitable facilities and are redundancies in place for essential services?
- Will staff need to bring anything with them? If so, is there a checklist ready and are staff aware of this?
- What phone and computer equipment will staff need to do their jobs? Is it currently available or will council need to supply these when needed?
- Are 'field kits' required for some positions or team leaders that are always ready and stocked? Who is responsible for maintaining them and are they easily accessible for the staff who need them? Consider these for people who need to work remotely or will be coordinating activities out in the field. These could include sunscreen, hand sanitiser, stationary, forms relevant to the position, copies of processes or procedures, first aid kits, water bottles and phone chargers.
- What additional IT facilities would be useful? Consider things like satellite phones, external batteries for devices, multiple device chargers, car chargers, headsets for phones and remote modems.
- Will usual call and data plans be suitable? How can they be increased quickly when a disaster is imminent?
- Is there a schedule in place to regularly check and charge the items likely to be used during an event?
- Do staff have remote access to the systems they may need to work effectively?
- What is council's position on staff accessing work emails from their personal devices?
- Will generic/shared main accounts be used? If so, are they set up and ready for use?

A photograph of a flooded park area. The water is murky and covers a large portion of the ground. In the background, there are several buildings, including a prominent red one. The sky is overcast. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

By being prepared,
council will be
ready to participate
in coordinated
recovery efforts and
provide leadership
to the community
after disasters.



Step 5: Developing plans & resources

After working through Steps 1 to 4, there will be a significant amount of information, options and arrangements to form the recovery plan. Remember the key principles (page 15) when writing plans, and ensure they align with State and Zone plans.

How arrangements are documented will vary depending on the needs of each council and community. Where internal operations and processes need to change during recovery, ensure these are documented appropriately.

Given disasters can happen at any time, it is important to document recovery plans and arrangements, and store them in a way that is accessible to all staff.

It's also important to ensure any toolkits or resources included in plans are developed and ready for use at all times.

Ensure council's plan is formally adopted and shared with staff and elected members.

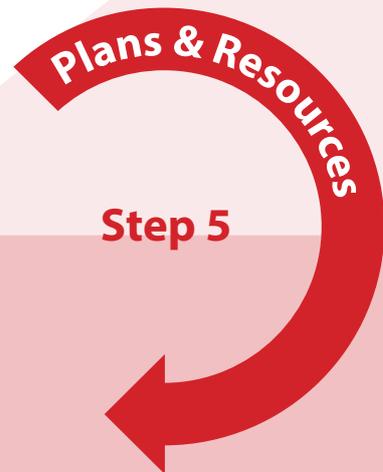
Elements of a Recovery Plan

The content and structure of recovery plans will vary depending on the council and community they are designed for and whether it will be a stand-alone document (supported by necessary attachments) or a section in a broader emergency management plan.

The plan establishes what recovery will focus on and broad recovery goals.

A recovery plan usually includes:

- Recovery goals
- Council's role in recovery
- Community profile (presented using the four environments)
- Recovery functions/services council may deliver (using the four environments)
- Critical success factors
- How council will receive and contribute to event intelligence and situational awareness
- Council's recovery management structure (including reporting lines)
- Key roles and responsibilities
- Information about local community groups (contact details, networks etc) and how they can contribute
- Communication processes (internal and external)
- Frameworks for engaging with the community
- Potential locations for council's recovery team to work from and community outreach points.



Council could develop a community recovery plan designed specifically for community consumption. This document can include broad recovery priorities, identify community partners and networks that will be involved, indicate the types of services that may be available to residents, reinforce how households can prepare for disasters and explain how information will be provided.

Sharing a community plan will help the residents understand how they can contribute to recovery, and what individual arrangements they should consider before events.

The recovery plan may be supported with a range of attachments:

- Plans or arrangements for specific recovery activities or services council will coordinate
- Contact details for key stakeholders, such as the LGFSG coordinator, State Recovery Office and local senior officers in agencies such as SAPOL, CFS, MFS, SES, PIRSA, Housing SA and SA Health
- Staff contact lists
- Contact details for recovery partners and other organisations
- Contractor or supplier details, with a brief summary of services available and considerations when engaging them in disaster recovery events
- Critical recovery processes or procedures
- Summary of resources or IT arrangements as outlined in plans such as dedicated mobile phones, field kits, equipment and machinery, generic email accounts
- Checklists for key roles
- Checklists for tasks to be undertaken in the first 24 hours
- Templates for use during recovery such as the recovery action plan, rosters or recovery briefs.

Where plans or arrangements involve other organisations or partners, ensure all contributing groups receive approval from their management and brief their staff appropriately.

Recovery Action Plan template

A recovery action plan is used after the disaster to record council's priorities and the activities it will undertake to restore the community. Given disaster impacts can take time to fully assess and issues emerge for some time, this plan will need to be updated regularly.

It is recommended that council develop a recovery action plan template to track its own recovery activities, both short and long term. The plan should link to SRC or LRC priorities and set goals for each domain.

This template should be a simple planning and tracking tool, reflecting the four domains, and can include:

- Objectives or goals
- Actions needed
- Resources needed
- Responsible officer
- Lead agency or activity partner
- Timeframe
- Status

As activities are completed, they can be moved to the end of the document as a record of the services and activities council undertook. This will be an important reference point for debriefs and associated reporting requirements.

An example recovery action plan template is included in Attachment 9.

Recovery plan control and storage

Recovery plans and their associated documents should be stored in a way that provides staff with easy access to all current documentation they will need in one handy place.

Options to consider include keeping all final documents:

- electronically in one place on the network which is accessible by all staff,
- on a dedicated part of council's intranet,
- on USB sticks, and
- in hard copy in disaster recovery folders, with copies given to key staff.

There is a high likelihood of power outages associated with disasters, so a combination of electronic and paper-based options should be used.

Assign the task of updating documents to one person to ensure staff always have access to the most recent approved versions.

Developing recovery resources and following up agreed actions

Ensure all resources and tools included in plans (such as templates, checklists, field kits, mobile phones, staff inductions, equipment and generic email accounts) are established or purchased. Consider how these will be stored and maintained so they are accessible and supporting information, such as PINs, is on hand.

Establish a task list to ensure the activities that require further work are assigned to appropriate staff members and completed in a timely manner. Some activities, such as establishing agreements with suppliers, researching IT solutions or developing equipment registers, can take time and will need to be monitored.

Recovery planning questions

- What will council's recovery plan include, and what attachments or documents will support it?
- Who will update information in the plan and supporting documents (particularly contact lists) and how often?
- How will council store the documents so they are readily accessible by all staff?
- Will a version of the plan be developed for the community? How will the community be informed about recovery arrangements and how they can be involved?
- Have all plans and agreements involving other organisations been approved by their management?
- Has a recovery action plan template been developed?
- What resources need to be developed or actions followed up as part of recovery preparation? Who will oversee and track progress?

Step 6: Build relationships, skills & capacity

Having mapped external and community recovery partners (Step 2), identified current staff skills (Step 3) and who will fill key roles (Step 4), consider what training is needed.

Training might be in the form of formal training, attending workshops or presentations, holding information sessions, adding recovery information into staff inductions and running exercises. Factors influencing council's choice of training approaches will include internal training capacity, priority that is placed on recovery preparedness, amount council is willing to invest, level of training required and access to trainers or training services.

A recovery information session for staff and partners is a simple way to reinforce key aspects of working in recovery, and could form part of disaster season preparations.

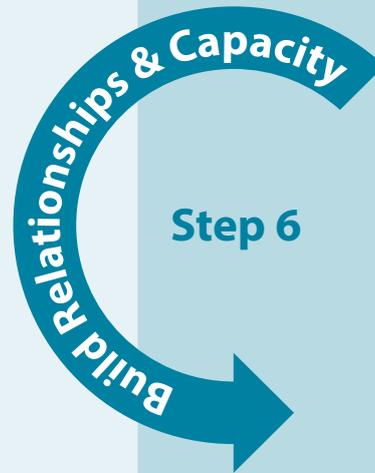
A session could include:

- what recovery is
- disaster response and recovery structures and operating arrangements (such as the role and responsibilities of councils, control agencies etc)
- council's recovery structure
- impact of disasters on wellbeing and the likely emotional or psychological experiences people may go through
- how staff and volunteers can conduct themselves to help individuals and the community recover
- how staff can look after themselves and their co-workers.

Additional sessions could be held for managers and staff who will be in leadership roles. These may address how to provide welfare support, leading in complex environments, accountability, clear decision making and involving the community in recovery.

Consider conducting training with nearby councils and local recovery partners to build shared knowledge and common operating procedures. Developing relationships outside of events, builds trust and understanding.

Participating in exercises or talking through scenarios can deepen staff and volunteer understanding about roles and provides an opportunity to test plans and systems, identify potential issues and explore solutions. When invited, participate in exercises held by control agencies, the LGA or other councils. After each exercise, ensure lessons and actions are captured and followed up.

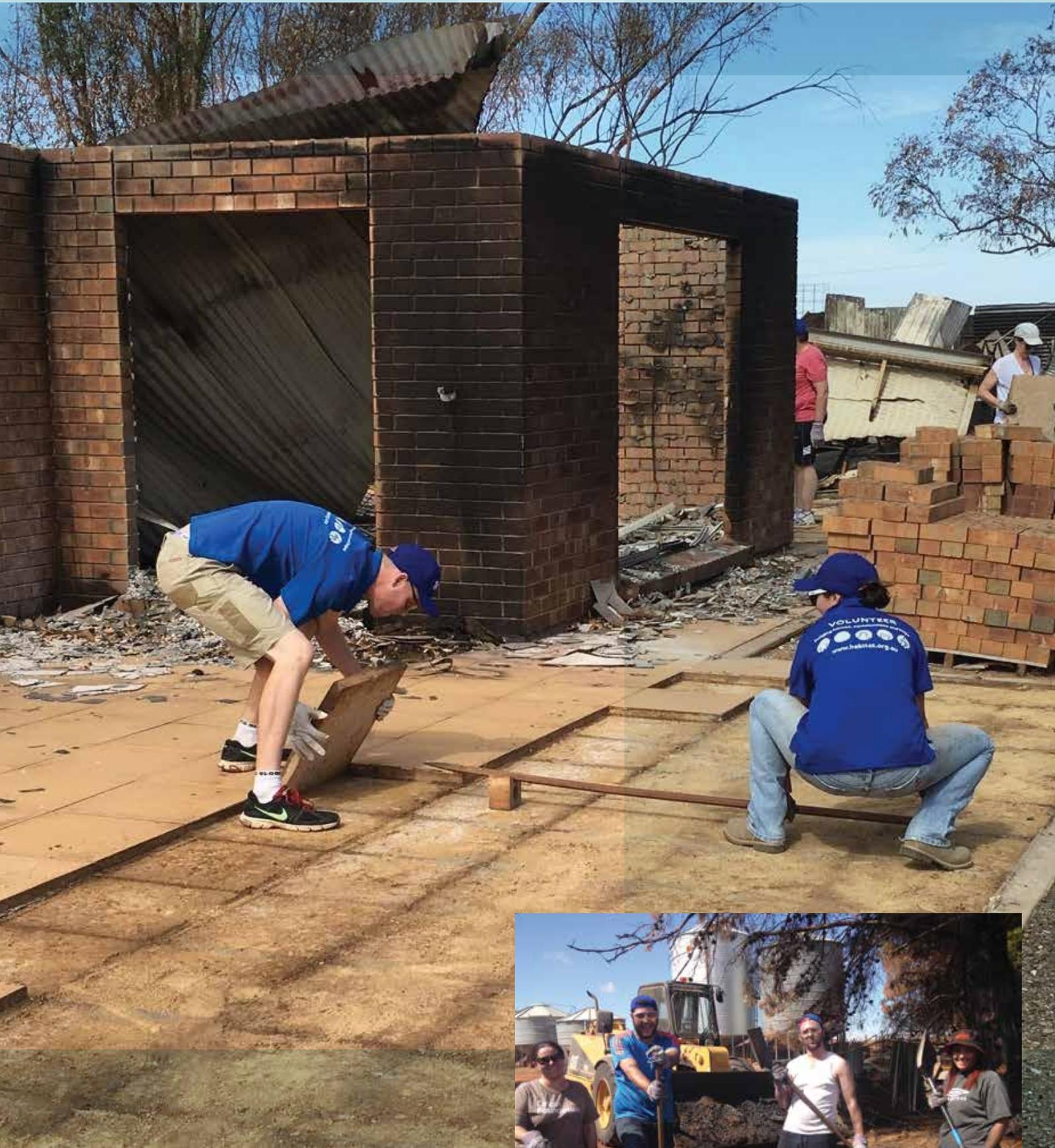


If appropriate, council may consider including some recovery information as part of other resilience building activities or pre-season emergency information sessions delivered in partnership with control agencies.

Ensure staff records, both council personnel files and the iResponda register (refer to attachment 5), are maintained and updated to reflect completed training.

Recovery planning questions

- What skills and experience within your workforce match recovery roles or functions? Bearing in mind council's role, what are the skills gaps?
- Will council create a pool of disaster recovery specialists? Will staff be trained for pre-assigned recovery roles?
- What recovery training is needed for staff and volunteers? Are training needs generic for all (such as self-care training) or role specific?
- Can council's training activities be made available to recovery partners to build relationships, increase capacity and reinforce multi-agency cooperation?
- Are recovery functions included in position descriptions?
- Is information about recovery responsibilities and community reactions to disasters in staff induction programs?
- Does council have an 'in-time' recovery induction for staff or volunteers who do not ordinarily work in recovery or within your community?
- How will visiting staff or volunteers will be managed: who will cover liabilities, how will they be accommodated, what induction will they receive, what support will they receive, who do they report to?



Above: Volunteers from Habitat for Humanity assisting with the rebuild following the Pinery fire. Image courtesy Habitat for Humanity

Step 7: Do and review

When disasters hit

The success of recovery will largely depend on recovery preparations.

For some hazards, such as fire, extreme weather or floods, warnings or alerts are issued. At this time, council will often be involved in mitigation activities led by the Control Agency and staff who volunteer with response agencies will be activated.

This is also a chance for council to quickly review recovery arrangements, put recovery staff and partners on standby, provide 'in-time' recovery training if necessary, preposition and prepare equipment and resources, and provide readiness reports the LGFSG when requested.

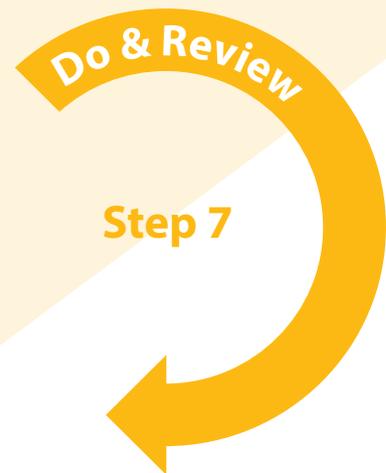
When a disaster hits, council will need to respond quickly to:

- confirm the single point of contact for the LGFSG and SRC
- understand the impacts and contribute to the impact assessment process
- understand the recovery priorities of the SRC and ZEST, and clarify council's recovery priorities and actions
- activate operational plans and liaise with community networks to confirm their post-disaster capacity and plan immediate works, and
- share information with staff, elected members, recovery partners and community.

Immediately after disaster strikes

Immediately after, communities will be disrupted to varying degrees. Reaching communities across large areas and vulnerable residents may be challenging, especially if communication networks are impacted. As a local leader, residents and visitors to the area will look to council for information so maintain media and information activities.

Call council staff together and start building situational awareness – the LGFSG and ZEST representatives will be able to supply information to council. Remember council will also be a reliable source of information for the control agency, SEC and SRC. Report verified and reliable information, via the LGFSG, to assist immediate relief and recovery planning.



When it is safe to do so, start immediate recovery and restoration activities. Use EARS or other appropriate methods to record damage to essential public assets. Remember that plans are a guide and should be applied flexibly to each event: don't miss opportunities just because they don't appear in a plan. Record councils priorities and actions in a Recovery Action Plan.

Inform existing stakeholders if the disaster has impacted current projects and initiatives. New opportunities may emerge to support long-term plans or improve community infrastructure.

In the first few days

- Monitor the impacts of the event and community needs
- Engage with the State Recovery Office and Local Recovery Coordinator (once appointed), and participate in LRC meetings
- Document council's priorities and actions in the recovery action plan
- Review and update the recovery action plan regularly and distribute to staff
- When necessary, clarify council's role, responsibilities and accountabilities when delivering local services in partnership with or on behalf of other government agencies.

In the coming weeks and months

- Maintain involvement in coordination committees, such as the LRC.
- Adjust recovery activities as community needs change in the weeks and months after the disaster.
- Represent the community's needs and work with other agencies and organisations to find solutions to unusual problems.
- Involve the community in decision making where possible and identify ways to keep them involved in recovery.
- Communicate with the community and stakeholders about recovery progress and potential impact on scheduled projects or work programs.
- Continue to monitor the community's wellbeing throughout the recovery process.
- Be prepared to support ongoing community development associated with the event. This could include hosting a dedicated officer.
- Where possible, reflect established visions, goals and priorities in recovery activities. Involve existing advisory groups or committees in planning, especially if the recovery process presents opportunities which support with longer term council and community goals.

Debriefing from events

After each event, hold a debrief to identify what worked well, what needs more work for future events and the unique issues and challenges encountered. Debriefs also provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on the recovery process and provide feedback in a supported, structured manner.

Depending on the length of the recovery program, it may be appropriate to hold an initial debrief once the immediate relief and early recovery efforts are complete. Delaying debriefs can result in lost information as staff move back to usual roles and their event recall declines.

All staff should have the opportunity to contribute, either in writing or by attending the meeting.

Council may also be asked to provide information to or participate in other debriefs and reviews held by groups such as the LGA or SRC.

Reviewing plans

Recovery plans and arrangements should be formally reviewed and updated in partnership with community networks and recovery partners. It is recommended that annual reviews are timed to coincide with peak disaster season preparations and zone planning cycles.

Ensure this task is assigned to an appropriate staff member and scheduled into annual work plans.



Above: Council participating in the Pinery Bushfire lessons learnt workshop at Kapunda

Appendices



Appendices 1: Useful references and links

[2014 South Australian State Emergency Risk Assessment](#), SAFECOM

[AlertSA](#)

[Animals in Emergency Framework](#),
Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA

[Emergency Assessment Reporting System](#),
Local Government Association of South Australia

[Emergency Management Act 2004](#)

[Guide to engaging in disaster recovery](#), IAP2 Australasia

[Handbook 2, Community Recovery](#), Australian Emergency
Management Handbook Series, Australian Institute of
Disaster Resilience (AIDR)

[iResponda](#),
Local Government Association of South Australia

[Local Government Act 1999](#)

[Local Government Disaster Recovery Assistance
Guidelines](#), Department of Treasury and Finance

[Local Recovery Toolkit: A resource guide for local
communities recovering from an emergency](#), Office of
Emergency Management, NSW Government

[Managing Social Media During Emergencies Guide](#), Local
Government Association of South Australia

[National Disaster Recovery Principles](#)

[National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines](#),
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

[Resources about disasters for agencies](#),
Australian Red Cross

[State Emergency Management Plan, SAFECOM](#)

Zone Emergency Management Plans, available on GovDex

Zone Recovery Operations Plans, available on GovDex

Appendices 2: Acronyms

COAG	Council of Australian Governments
EMC	Emergency Management Committee
FSG	Functional Support Group
LGFSG	Local Government Functional Support Group
LRC	Local Recovery Committee
SEC	State Emergency Centre
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SRC	State Recovery Committee
ZEMC	Zone Emergency Management Committee
ZEMP	Zone Emergency Management Plan
ZEST	Zone Emergency Support Teams

Appendices 3: Control Agency - Response

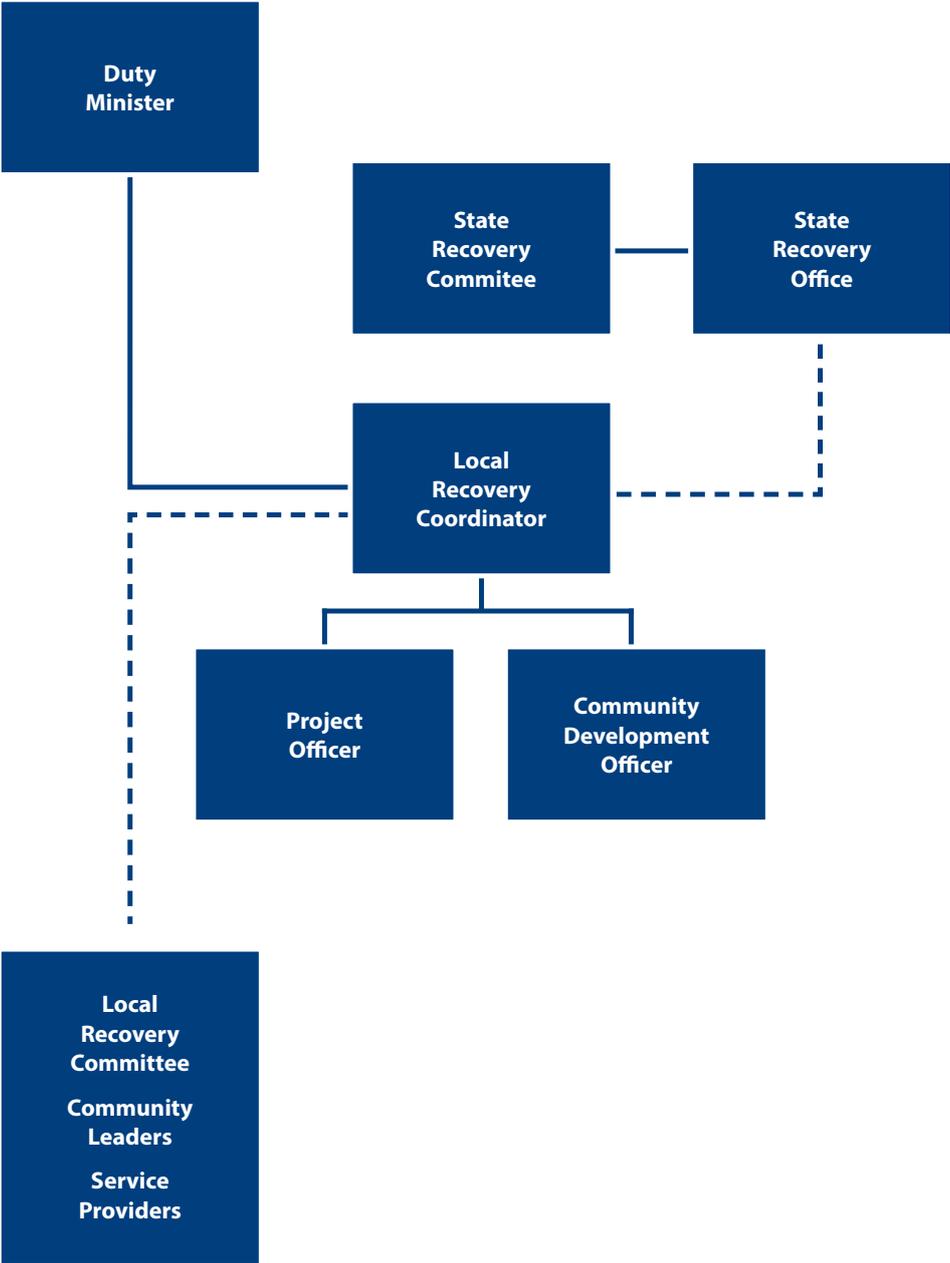
Control agencies are those agencies nominated in advance to take charge at an emergency.

The control agencies are as follows:

Types of Emergency Incident	Control Agency
Aircraft accident	SA Police
Animal, plant and marine disease	Primary Industries and Regions SA
Bomb threat	SA Police
Earthquake	SA Police
Extreme weather	SA State Emergency Service
Fire - Country	SA Country Fire Service
Fire - Urban	SA Metropolitan Fire Service
Flood	SA State Emergency Service
Food/drinking water contamination	SA Health
Fuel, gas and electricity shortages	Department of State Development
Hazardous materials emergencies	SA Country Fire Service or SA Metropolitan Fire Service
Human epidemic	SA Health
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) failure	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Marine transport accidents	SA Police
Marine pollution	Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
Rail accident	SA Police
Riverbank collapse	SA Police
Road/transport accident	SA Police
Search and rescue – land and sea	SA Police
Search and rescue – structure (USAR)	SA Metropolitan Fire Service or SA State Emergency Service
Siege/hostage	SA Police
Terrorist incident	SA Police

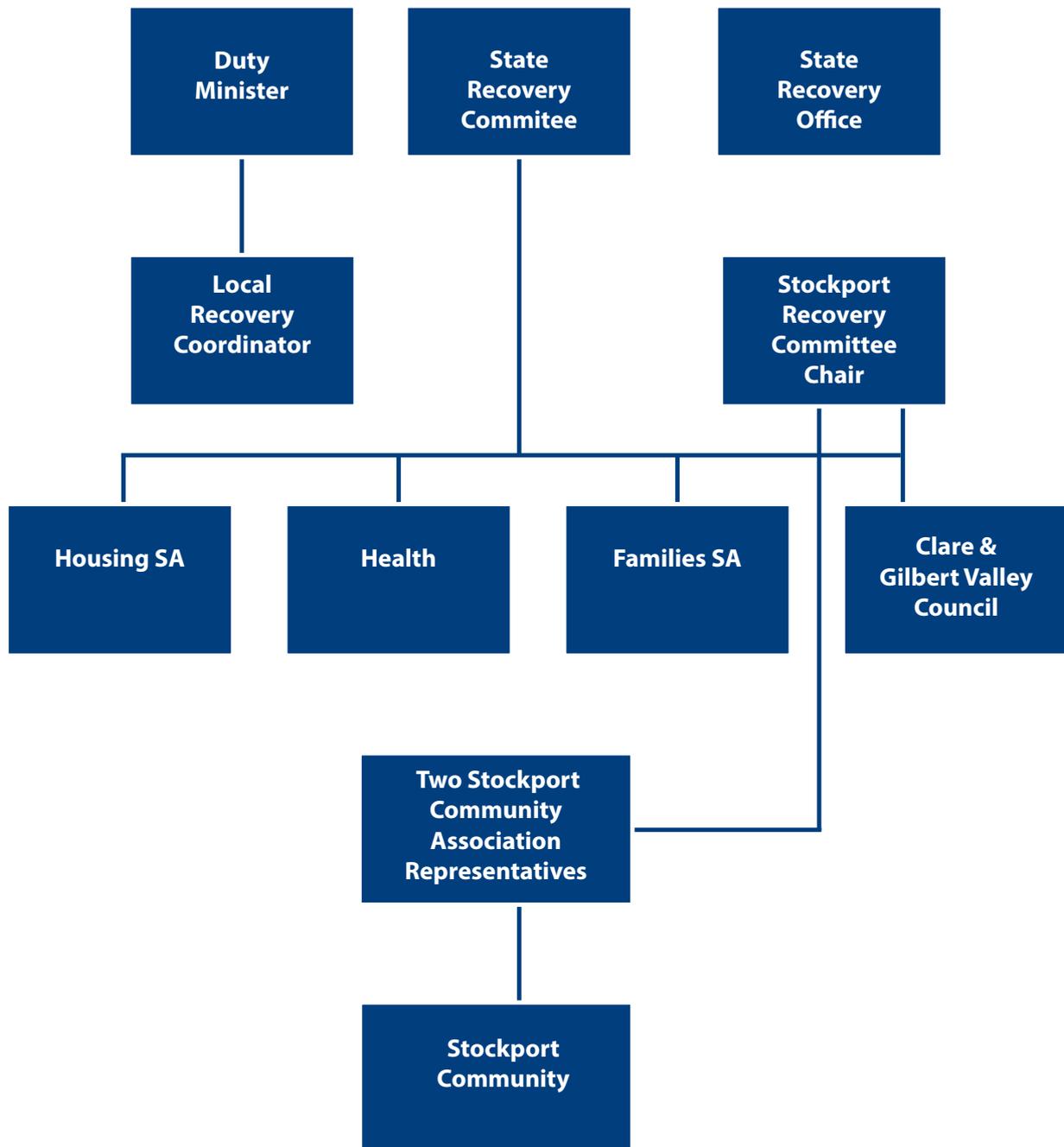
Authority to control carries with it the responsibility for tasking and directing other organisations according to the needs of the situation.

Appendices 4: Examples of recovery structures - Pinery Fire Recovery Structure



Appendices 4 cont.:

Examples of recovery structures - Stockport Flood Recovery Structure



Please note:

This flowchart was correct at the time of the incident - specific organisation names may have changed subsequently.

Appendices 5: Community mapping tool

Organisation	Role or interest in community	Member or resident group	Potential recover role or contributions	Potential community engagement role	Formal agreement	Contact officer
ABC Environment Group	Environment protection Landcare Education	LMN community	Equipment suitable for replanting small to medium plants Volunteers	Links to member network	N	
HIJ Community Hall committee	Leisure and recreation Local heritage Tourism	Xx community Tourists and visitors		Public meeting venue Venue for recovery services	Y	
RST Cultural Society	Language education Cultural support	People of XXX background	Support to XXX community	Translating services	Y	
XYZ member service club	Outreach and community connection Fundraising for local initiatives Meals for people sleeping rough		Mobile food/BBQ facility Volunteers	Links to member network		

Appendices 6: i-Responda Emergency Response Support Register

To access the i-Responda register go to www.lga.sa.gov.au



Appendix R1 Emergency Response Support Register

{Insert Council}

Registered Person	
Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)	
Council	
Council role & title (including Duties)	
Council Address	
Council Contact Details	
Council email	
Personal Contact Details	
Residential Address	
Telephone (AH)	
Mobile	
Current Qualifications & Skills	
Plant - Qualifications/Accreditation	
To support the following Control Agency (ie SACFS/SES)	
Relevant Induction & Training of i-Responda has taken place	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Council Authorisation	
Approved/Denied for the following activity	
.....	
.....	
Signed (Council Employee):	Date:.....
Signed (Council CEO):.....	Date:.....

Appendices 7: i-Responda Emergency Services Plant and Equipment Register

To access the i-Responda register go to www.lga.sa.gov.au




**Appendix R2
Emergency Services Plant & Equipment Register –
{Insert Council}**

Plant & Equipment							
Council	Type	Model / Asset Number	Year of Manufacture	Standard Function	Minimum Operator Qualification Requirement	An Operator Available/Registered?	Name of Operator (WORKER)
						<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
						<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
						<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
						<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
						<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	

Council Authorisation

Approved/Denied for use (see over for Terms & Conditions of use)

Signed (Council CEO):..... **Date:**.....

LGA i-Responda framework Version: 14.1 (October 2014)	Owner: LGA of SA Revision due: July 2015	ECM 610420 © LGA of SA	Page 21
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Appendices 8:

Process to access Local Government Disaster Financial Assistance for remediation of un-insurable infrastructure



Appendices 9:

Recovery Action Plan template

To download the Disaster Recovery Action Plan template in MS Word™ format please visit www.lga.sa.gov.au

Disaster Recovery Action Plan					
Name of event: (insert document name)		Action Plan prepared on: (insert date)		Current SRC/LRC recovery priorities	
Date of event: (insert date)		Approved by: (insert name)		1. 2. 3.	
Current council priorities and activities					
Goal or objective (what does council want to achieve?)	Actions needed (list the steps needed)	Resources needed (List the resources needed)	Actioned by (officer response for overseeing activity or agency activity has been referred to)	Timeframe (Time or date)	Status (update to reflect current status)
Infrastructure and built					
Reinstate or replace infrastructure that is critical to delivery of recovery services and functioning of community.					
Review waste management policy/practice and amend if required to suit the needs of the event.					
Support residents wanting to rebuild by fast tracking appropriate council processes					
Social					
Understand the needs of the community and provide residents with information about relief and recovery services they can access					
Assist agencies or non-government organisations providing services or support to impacted residents					
Economic					
Attract customers or tourists back to the area					
Natural					
Restore and rehabilitate natural environment					
Completed work					
Infrastructure					
					Completed on date
Social					
					Action referred to xxx on date. Nil further response required.
Economic					
					Completed on date
Natural					

Adapted from Local Recovery Toolkit: A resource guide for local communities recovering from an emergency, Office of Emergency Management, NSW Government



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