



State Disaster Recovery Operations Guidelines

Purpose

This guideline describes the formal and informal mechanisms for coordinating stakeholders involved in recovery, including specific guidance on roles and responsibilities. It also outlines guidance for collaboration with other jurisdictions and coordination of multi-jurisdictional recovery events.

The objective of disaster recovery programs is to help communities reach a point where they are sustainable and resilient. By achieving these objectives, the government can withdraw from the recovery process and allow the community to manage its own recovery.

Scope

All emergency management arrangements in South Australia are governed by the *Emergency Management Act 2004* (the Act). The Act establishes the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) and lists its functions and powers. Strategic activities and initiatives of SEMC are primarily directed by the *SEMC Strategic Framework and Plan 2017-2022*.

This guideline is part of the *SA Disaster Recovery Coordination Framework* under the *State Emergency Management Plan* (SEMP) and is prepared under section 9(1)(b) of the Act.

This guideline is for recovery practitioners, decision-makers and those seeking additional guidance on the operational arrangements adopted in South Australia. This could include recovery workers across all sectors – public, private and non-government organisations (NGOs).

Guideline Details

This guideline explains the key elements of operational recovery, and includes the following components:

- State Government Coordinated Recovery Operations
- Community Coordinated Recovery Operations
- Recovery Activation for State Government Coordination
- Transition from Response Coordination to Recovery Coordination
- Logistics Management
- Management of Volunteers
- Management of Donated Goods and Services
- Immediate Support and Case Management
- Immediate Priorities
- Use of Domains for Scaling Operations
- Roles and Responsibilities.

State Government Coordinated Recovery Operations

Recovery from an event is state government-led in its coordination when the event is of a scale and complexity that exceeds the capacity of local government or requires greater support and oversight.

State government-coordinated recovery establishes the required state governance (as per Governance Guideline) and appoints recovery coordinator/s within the community to support and coordinate the recovery effort.

Coordination is expected to occur horizontally across stakeholders engaged in recovery from a disaster. However, in some instances, the severity of community consequences may warrant an expanded approach to coordination and a shift in the roles and responsibilities of key entities.

In considering when to engage in an expanded and/or state government-led approach to coordination, leaders at each level should collaboratively consider the following key benefits of escalating coordination systems and arrangements:

- Expanded and expedited access to additional or specialised resources unavailable locally during large-scale, enduring, and complex recovery efforts.
- Expanded and expedited access to additional or specialised advice to improve the precision of recovery planning and program delivery.
- A clearer view of parallel and complementary activities occurring across the recovery ecosystem to reduce duplication and inefficiencies across coordinated programs.

Table 1: Recovery Coordinators by Scale and Complexity of Event

	Localised event	Complex or large event (undeclared)	Declared event
Community Recovery Coordinator	Possibly Identified through engagement between state government, Local Government, and community. Not funded by state government.	Yes Appointed, facilitated, and funded through state government	Yes Appointed, facilitated, and funded through state government
Appointed State Recovery Coordinator	No	Yes Appointed and funded through state government	No
Assistant State Coordinator – Recovery	No	No	Yes Appointed and funded through state government

When an event is state government-coordinated due to scale and complexity, a dedicated State Recovery Coordinator is appointed via the SEMP. Where an event is declared to be an emergency or disaster an Assistant State Coordinator – Recovery (ASC–R) is appointed. This allows the ASC-R further powers under the legislation as per the *Emergency Management Act 2004*, which states:

The State Coordinator may, at any time after the declaration of an identified major incident, a major emergency or a disaster under Division 3, direct authorised officers to take specified action for the purposes of carrying out recovery operations in accordance with the SEMP.

It also notes:

An authorised officer may be assisted by volunteers in carrying out recovery operations under this section and may give such directions to a volunteer as the officer thinks necessary for that purpose.

Recovery Activation for State Government Coordination

Recovery from a large or complex event that exceeds local government capacity or requires greater support and oversight is typically coordinated by state government.

During high-risk periods South Australia’s recovery operations utilise four levels of activation:

- Ready
- Lean Forward
- Stand Up
- Stand Down.

Table 2: Activations and Activities

Activation	When	Activities
Ready	When high-risk weather is approaching or when State Emergency Centre is stood up in preparedness	<p>A review of preparedness arrangements and existing plans, including preliminary scoping for future recovery planning and resourcing should also occur at this time.</p> <p>Concurrently, agencies and organisations will undertake activities to support the response, such as data collection, communication, engagement and, potentially, scenario planning.</p> <p>Emergency Relief Functional Support Group (ER FSG) reviews existing plans and undertakes preliminary scoping for future relief planning. The commencement of relief centre planning should also occur at this time.</p>
Lean Forward	During the early stages of response to an event	<p>Community information and demographics are collected for the general area, information from response agencies is reviewed and analysed, discussions with possible service delivery agencies are undertaken, governance arrangements are confirmed and recovery planning to develop recovery options is underway.</p> <p>ER FSG implementation of relief centre planning and staff rostering should occur at this time.</p> <p>This constitutes the disaster phase of the recovery life cycle.</p>
Stand Up	When intelligence indicates the event is large and complex, and recovery agencies are required to provide	<p>Recovery commences immediately and continues for as long as required for state government coordination. ER FSG transition from relief centres to recovery centres and recruitment to contract roles should occur at this time.</p>

Stand Down	resources to the community	This constitutes the relief, short-term recovery and longer-term recovery phases of the recovery life cycle.
	When impacted individuals and the community is placed to lead the ongoing planning process, and is staged and conducted in conjunction with an appropriate public information strategy	<p>Organisational arrangements are wound down at this time, and responsibility for completing outstanding tasks and actions are formally assigned to, and accepted by, the relevant agency or authority.</p> <p>Recovery groups identify, during discussions throughout recovery operations, triggers for commencing Stand Down. These discussions should be informed by the review of recovery plans and reports from functional recovery groups.</p> <p>This constitutes the transition to community in the recovery life cycle.</p>

The nature of a disaster determines the length of response and recovery operations. While the timing to transition from one level of activation to the next can be arbitrary (as it is based on specific and evolving circumstances), trigger points help guide this decision.

Agencies that have key recovery operations roles should be in the **Ready** level of activation when a disaster is imminent to ensure recovery strategies and arrangements are established and embedded.

- A review of preparedness arrangements and existing plans, including preliminary scoping for future recovery planning and resourcing should also occur at this time.
- Concurrently, agencies and organisations will undertake activities to support the response, such as data collection, communication, engagement and, potentially, scenario planning.

In the early stages of activation for response operations, agencies with recovery roles and responsibilities will move to the **Lean Forward** level of recovery activation.

- At this time information from response agencies is reviewed and analysed, discussions with possible service delivery agencies are undertaken, governance arrangements are confirmed and recovery planning to develop recovery options is underway.

When intelligence indicates that recovery agencies are required to provide resources to the community, recovery shifts to the **Stand Up** level of activation.

- This constitutes the relief, short-term recovery and longer-term recovery phases of the recovery life cycle.
- Individuals, groups, functions and communities are likely to be at varying stages of recovery. Accordingly, recovery arrangements must be flexible and dynamic to meet the emerging and evolving demands of the community.

The **Stand Down** from formal recovery structures for the impacted individuals and community is part of the planning process and is staged and conducted in conjunction with an appropriate public information strategy.

- Organisational arrangements are wound down at this time, and responsibility for completing outstanding tasks and actions are formally assigned to, and accepted by, the relevant agency or authority.
- Recovery groups should identify, during discussions throughout recovery operations, triggers for commencing **Stand Down**. These discussions should be informed by the review of recovery plans and reports from functional recovery groups.

Transition from State Government Response Coordination to Recovery Coordination

The transition from response coordination to recovery coordination is influenced by the nature of the disaster and, as a result, requires substantial flexibility. For example, the transition from response to recovery in large-scale or geographically dispersed events may be staged, with response and recovery operations being undertaken concurrently.

The transition procedure at the state level requires the State Coordinator to ensure that the State Recovery Coordinator (or the ASC – R if appointed), is kept informed about the response operation, including damage and impact assessments that will be used as the basis for preliminary recovery planning.

At a time agreed by the State Coordinator, the State Duty Commander and the State Recovery Coordinator (or ASC-R if appointed), transition to recovery will occur through a formal briefing from the State Coordinator and the State Duty Commander to the State Recovery Coordinator (or ASC-R). The State Coordinator and the State Duty Commander will provide a comprehensive briefing on all relevant issues, including, but not limited to:

- incomplete actions and identified risks
- resources allocated for response and their availability for the recovery phase
- an impact assessment of the disaster, including key issues from the four domains of recovery and any overlapping issues
- a summary of areas or situations that may re-escalate after the disaster.

The control agency will advise the impacted zones, including ZESTs and/or local government areas of the transition and reporting change.

The Control Agency will activate and endorse a safe location for the Emergency Relief FSG to immediately establish relief centres.

The State Recovery Coordinator (or ASC-R), along with agencies with recovery responsibilities will develop a detailed impact assessment for comprehensive recovery planning.

The transition from response to recovery will be complete upon endorsement of the formal handover brief from response leadership (State Duty Commander) to recovery leadership (State Recovery Coordinator or ASC-R).

The key recovery activities undertaken during the lean forward and initial stand up phases are critical to success. These activities and the responsible agency or role are detailed as attachments to this Guideline.

Community Coordinated Recovery Operations

Where an event is localised or within the capacity of local government or community arrangements, recovery will be coordinated at the community level.

State government department will provide initial advice and access to tools in support of community coordinated recovery. These tools and advice seek to complement (not replace) any community recovery plans that may exist through such groups as emergency management zones or local community groups.

When a smaller and less complex event occurs, local government must inform the State Recovery Coordinator via the Local Government Association Functional Support Group (LGA FSG) or State Disaster Recovery within state government within 48 hours of the event.

Where the State Recovery Coordinator is informed of an event, they will seek assurance from those operating in the community that recovery is being coordinated to a level the State Recovery Coordinator deems appropriate. This may be through local government, state government, or community groups.

Transition from Local or Regional Response to Community Coordinated Recovery

At a time agreed by the control agency and the Community Recovery Coordinator, transition to recovery will occur through a formal briefing from the Regional Duty Commander (or control agency equivalent) to the Community Recovery Coordinator. When required, this process is facilitated by state government and/or LGA FSG.

The timing of the transition at the community level, and the need to undertake such a process, will be informed by local circumstances.

The transition will be guided by:

- control agency sitreps which contain the specific evidence required for the de-escalation of response operations to recovery
- status of response, immediate recovery and relief operations
- impact and needs assessments
- response and early recovery situations that may escalate
- anticipated recovery issues and risks
- level of recovery coordination required.

The Regional Commander will provide a comprehensive briefing to the nominated community recovery coordinator on all relevant issues, including, but not limited to:

- incomplete actions and identified risks
- resources allocated for response and their availability for the recovery phase
- an impact assessment of the disaster, including the key issues from the four domains of recovery and any overlapping issues
- a summary of areas or situations that may re-escalate after the disaster.

During a community coordinated recovery event, support is made available by State Disaster Recovery in the form of advice and toolkits. Broader state government functions such as Logistics Functional Support Group are not available for use in such events, unless specific circumstances require it. The use of such FSGs and state government services will likely incur a cost from the requesting organisation.

Community Recovery Coordinator

To support coordinated recovery in events across all sizes, a locally based coordinator may be appointed. For large or complex events in which state government recovery coordination is required, a community recovery coordinator will be appointed by the State Recovery Coordinator and report to the State Recovery Coordinator or their delegate. In this circumstance, this position is funded by state government.

In smaller or less complex events, a Community Recovery Coordinator (CRC; previously known as the Local Recovery Coordinator) may be appointed to support the community's recovery plan. In these cases, state government recovery representatives, relevant community members, and LGA FSG will review the need for a CRC together immediately after an event, in line with the below:

- CRCs may be drawn from a variety of sources, such as local government, community leaders, community organisations, or regional state government staff
- CRCs may operate on a part-time or full-time basis
- The identification and/or appointment of a CRC in a non-state government coordinated recovery event will not attract state government funding.

Logistics Management

During state government coordinated recovery operations, logistics activity is undertaken by the Logistics Functional Support Group, led by South Australia Fire and Emergency Service Commission. This activity includes:

- Coordinating the provision of non-agency specific goods and services requested by the State Recovery Coordinator or delegate during recovery operations.
- Providing advice on the provision of goods and services requested by the State Recovery Coordinator or delegate during recovery operations.

Where the State Recovery Coordinator and/or delegate identifies logistics requirements on a scale beyond individual agency management, a request is made via the written form to Logistics FSG. Logistics FSG support compliance with the Emergency Situation Procurement Policy (version 3.1 September 2016) and the South Australian Industry Participation Policy.

Management of Volunteers

After an event, volunteers play a critical part in helping to deliver recovery activities, within government, non-government and via emergent groups. Engaging with and harnessing this goodwill can facilitate meaningful and useful assistance to communities if, and when, needs exists.

Volunteers are individuals, groups or organisations that offer to assist communities impacted by disasters. They provide crucial support and surge capacity to recovery efforts, facilitating community-led recovery and supporting community resilience. Volunteers can be a planned and structured part of the recovery process, with volunteers identified and pre-registered as part of the preparedness phase of recovery. Volunteers can also be spontaneous in nature and express interest to support those impacted one of three ways: face-to-face by turning up at a disaster site, via phone, or online registration.

During a state government coordinated recovery effort in South Australia, Volunteering SA&NT (VSA&NT) manage and coordinate spontaneous volunteers. The State Recovery Coordinator (or ASC-R) and/or delegate will activate these arrangements when the need to register and manage volunteers is evident.

In addition, there are a range of NGOs across South Australia, including community and social service organisations, not-for-profit, charities, local community groups, faith-based organisations and service clubs – all of which are integral to effective recovery. They contribute to initial and longer-term recovery activities, development of policy and practice, and the provision of a range of services for affected communities.

During community coordinated recovery, volunteers may provide significant assistance and coordination of volunteers may require additional attention.

Management of Donated Goods and Services

Following disaster events, the broader community may offer assistance to affected individuals and communities in the form of financial donations or donated goods and services. These offers of assistance provide important support to the people and communities affected by a disaster event. They can play a critical role in relief for affected communities and often form part of a comprehensive recovery program coordinated by jurisdictions.

Unless specific goods are required to assist recovery operations, the public will always be encouraged to donate money in preference to goods. This ensures impacted individuals can obtain what they require and also supports the local economy. Within South Australia, St Vincent De Paul manages the sorting and removal of donated goods where necessary.

The corporate sector also plays an important role in recovery planning and management. They are embedded in the affected community in the form of electricity providers, insurance companies, banking, telecommunications, local media, retail outlets, private health providers, private education providers, major employers, etc. Ideally, these providers are engaged in recovery plans and processes to support whole-of-community recovery. Channelling, coordinating and using the expertise and knowledge of the private sector is part of ongoing improvement in South Australia's recovery program.

Philanthropy is where a community of funders, social investors and social change agents work to achieve positive social, cultural, environmental and community change by leveraging their financial assets and influence to support individuals and communities recover from disaster events.

Recovery managers should be familiar with philanthropic and charitable funding sources. Philanthropic support can, through partnering, enable the capability of the private sector to support communities in their capacity and capability to adapt and respond to impacts of disasters.

Immediate Support and Case Management

Immediately following an event, it is critical to capture the circumstances of affected individuals and families to provide relevant and targeted relief assistance and ultimately recovery services and activities. During state government coordinated recovery events, information is collected in person at Relief and Recovery Centres and via the Recovery Hotline. This information is used in state-level reporting, to determine community needs and deliver case management services within the Recovery Centre.

Management of Relief and Recovery Centres

All emergency management arrangements in South Australia are governed by the *Emergency Management Act 2004*. South Australian Housing Authority is the lead agency managing relief and recovery centres in relation to their responsibility under the SEMP.

The ER FSG is responsible for opening and managing emergency relief and recovery centres and coordinating outreach operations during state government coordinated recovery efforts.

Relief centres are established to provide a safe shelter, information, psychosocial support and, more generally, meet the immediate needs of communities, families and individuals directly following a large emergency event.

Recovery centres focus on long-term case management of impacted communities. Recovery centres can be in place for months, if not years, after an event depending on the scale and complexity.

Immediate Priorities

Immediately after an event, there are several priorities that may need to be addressed to support relief and recovery programs. Where a natural disaster has significant scale and complexity, some or all of the below coordination aspects may be considered.

Disaster Waste Management

Where significant structural loss has occurred, early coordination of property clearing, and safe removal of waste is required. In large-scale events Green Industries SA will lead a coordinated clean-up process in line with *State Disaster Waste Management Guidelines*.

Carcass Coordination

Immediately after a disaster where significant livestock has been lost, early coordination of safe mass burials and euthanising is required. In large-scale events Primary Industries and Regions SA may appoint a carcass coordinator and in conjunction with Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) will identify safe burial processes and locations in line with the *Managing Animals in Emergencies: A Framework for South Australia*.

Water Replenishment Coordination

Immediately after a disaster where water use for firefighting has left water for human consumption and/or or stock water significantly low or entirely depleted, coordinated water replenishment may be beneficial. In state government coordinated recovery

efforts, the State Recovery Coordinator may specifically appoint a water replenishment coordinator in a part-time or short-term full-time capacity.

Use of Domains for Scaling Operations

Effective recovery requires an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to needs analysis, community engagement, planning and service delivery. Aspects of recovery are conceptually grouped into the following four interrelated functions, applicable in an all hazard environments:

- Human and social
- Economic
- Built
- Natural

Individual recovery functions have the potential to either negatively or positively impact the outcomes sought by other recovery functions. Accordingly, each function must undertake recovery activities in the spirit of cooperation, collaboration and integration, with a focus on mutually beneficial outcomes across multiple functions.

During the immediate aftermath of an event, the State Recovery Coordinator (ASC-R) and/or their delegate may seek to create formal and informal mechanisms to ensure operations and tasks are undertaken. In large-scale events, sub-groups based on domains may be generated to resolve immediate- or medium-term matters.

Table 3 below articulates the issues considered within domains and the themes that are likely to sit within each domain offering a snapshot of formal and informal mechanisms that may be created by the State Recovery Coordinator (or ASC-R) to support scalable operations.

Table 3: Domain focuses that may guide formal and informal committees

Domain	Stakeholders
<p>Social</p> <p>The Social domain considers the impact an event may have on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. This domain is primarily concerned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Shelter • Health • Psychological wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing services • Relief services, including individual and household financial support • Health and medical assistance • Psychological support • School support • Community development

Economic	
<p>The Economic domain considers the direct and indirect impacts that an event may have on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Primary production • Tourism • Broader economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Agriculture • Economic confidence and support
Built	
<p>The Built or Infrastructure domain considers the impact on essential infrastructure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential services • Commercial and industrial facilities • Public buildings and assets • Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT & telecommunications • Water and waste water services • Transport • Gas, electricity, fuels • Buildings and private infrastructure
Natural	
<p>The Natural domain considers the impact that an event may have on a healthy functioning environment, which underpins the economy and society. Components of the natural environment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air and water quality • Land degradation and contamination • Plant and wildlife damage/loss • National parks • Cultural and heritage sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural environment, public land and waterways • Environmental hazard advice • Coordinated waste management, including fences, trees, houses, debris, green waste • Advice and information to the community

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for all aspects of emergency management, including disaster recovery, is shared between governments, individuals, industry, NGOs and communities. While the responsibilities may not be equal, they all have a responsibility to work collaboratively with the impacted community to provide a range of recovery activities, programs and services.

Roles and responsibilities through recovery operations are exercised by virtue of the *Emergency Management Act* and the State Emergency Management Plan and high level roles and responsibilities are set out within the SA Disaster Recovery Framework.

Role descriptions relating to Recovery Operations can be found within the Recovery Governance Guideline.

Table 4: Roles and Responsibilities

Community Recovery Coordinator	Appointed following a disaster to lead recovery at the local level by the relevant Minister, but administratively accountable to the State Recovery Coordinator.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the local recovery structures including recovery coordination and chair the local recovery committee. • Ensure progress and completion of outcomes identified in community recovery plans, strategies or other recovery objectives. • Provide regular reports on the recovery efforts. • Establish and maintain effective communication processes with the public and with other organisations and services working in the recovery effort. • Lead the development of strategies, plans and actions in the recovery process in a unified, efficient and cost-effective way with a common focus and objective. • Establish and maintain effective strategic partnerships with welfare agencies, local councils and government agencies.
Local Recovery Committee Chaired by the Community Recovery Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect, analyse and communicate the key issues for recovery within the disaster affected area. • Create a two-way dialogue that seeks feedback and input from the community about the most pressing issues to be addressed. • Identify priorities for action across the domains of social, economic, natural and built environment. • Develop a community recovery and evaluation plan in response to the disaster.
Community Recovery Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work alongside the affected community to identify, assess and plan to meet the needs of the community in early stages of recovery. • Assist the community to develop a community recovery plan.
Community Development Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work alongside the affected community to help build capacity, coordinate programs and activities and monitor their effectiveness.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the local recovery committee and reference groups to achieve the outcomes of the community recovery plan.
Carcass Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work alongside affected primary producers and EPA to ensure safe burial and removal of dead or injured livestock.
Water Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work alongside affected property owners who require water replenishment to facilitate easy replacement of water for drinking purposes or livestock.
Social Recovery Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the social recovery sub-group and coordinate with various state recovery groups and State Recovery Coordinator.
Infrastructure Recovery Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the infrastructure recovery sub-group and coordinate with various state recovery groups and State Recovery Coordinator.
Economic Recovery Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the economic recovery sub-group and coordinate with various state recovery groups and State Recovery Coordinator.
Environmental Recovery Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the environmental recovery sub-group and coordinate with various state Recovery groups and State Recovery Coordinator.

Related documents

- [Emergency Management Act 2004](#)
- [State Emergency Management Plan \(2019\)](#)
- State Disaster Recovery Framework (parent document)
- National Recovery Framework v10 (grandparent document)
- [National Principles for Disaster Recovery](#)
- Terms of Reference State Emergency Management Committee
- Terms of Reference State Recovery Coordination and Planning Group
- Terms of Reference State Recovery Operations Group
- Terms of Reference Local Recovery Committees
- [Community Recovery Handbook 2018](#)

Acronyms

Acronym	Words
ASC-R	Assistant State Coordinator – Recovery

Acronym	Words
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
ER FSG	Emergency Relief Functional Support Group
FSG	Functional Support Group
LGA FSG	Local Government Association Functional Support Group
NGOs	non-government organisations
SEMC	State Emergency Management Committee
VSA&NT	South Australia, Volunteering SA&NT
SEMP	<i>State Emergency Management Plan</i>
ZESTs	Zone Emergency Support Team(s)

DOCUMENT CONTROL:

Approved by: Jon Gorvett	Title: Executive Director, Intergovernmental and Diplomatic Relations
Contact person: Georgie Cornish	Telephone: 0438903451
Division: Intergovernmental and Diplomatic Relations	Date of approval: 30 September 2020
Revision number: 0.0	Date of review: -
Next review date: July 2021	