



Australian Institute for  
**Disaster Resilience**

# **National Recovery Workshop**

Summary Report

2017



**Australian Red Cross**  
THE POWER OF HUMANITY

Red Cross would like to thank the workshop advisory committee members, the speakers, AIDR and Red Cross support staff for their assistance in bringing the workshop together.

## Background

On 7-8 August 2017, 80 people from around Australia came together for two days in Melbourne for the National Recovery Workshop.

Hosted by Australian Red Cross in partnership with the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience, the objective of the workshop was to undertake discussion and debate with the aim of refreshing the Australian recovery agenda. The workshop was timed to coincide with the first meeting of the Australia New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) Community Outcomes Recovery Subcommittee (CoRS) meeting, which was held in Canberra on 9-11 August.

To encourage discussion at a higher thematic level, the workshop had a focus on looking at:

- the major changes in recovery since the year 2000 to the present, and
- what participants considered to be the opportunities and challenges from the present to 2030.

Participants were invited through nominations by the previous ANZEMC Recovery Sub Committee, and represented a range of views, perspectives and experiences.

## Workshop format

The workshop was structured to first allow people with a range of experience and perspectives to speak via panel discussions and short presentations. Discussions and presentations were arranged into topic areas linked to key components of recovery.

Key issues identified from these presentations was then used to engage participants in small working group discussions on the second day. The working groups were given the task of articulating the key issues facing recovery in Australia, and their causes and effects.

## Impact

The workshop took a three pronged approach to ensure that issues identified as challenges facing recovery in Australia were pursued:

1. Influencing the national level emergency management committees - the ANZEMC, and the ANZEMC subcommittee CoRS. The workshop aimed to provide participants who were ANZEMC CoRS members an opportunity to hear from a range of voices on issues involved in recovery, with a view to influencing policy through the work of the committee.
2. Developing a summary of the key issues facing recovery in Australia. The summary in this report of the key issues as discussed by participants can be used by recovery organisations to assist in the development of their strategy and work.
3. Direct action – participants at the workshop were asked to make a personal commitment to specific actions that they could undertake in their roles.

## Outline of key issues facing recovery in Australia

On the second day of the workshop, participants were asked to participate in three working group sessions each. The working group topics were identified from the issues raised in day one of the workshop (see Appendix A of this report).

There were a total of eighteen working groups over three sessions, with some of the working group topics repeated in a number of sessions to allow participants to take part in high interest working group topics.

Participants in each working group were directed to use a problem tree model, and were asked to identify:

- The problem
- Causes of the problem
- Effects of the problem
- Possible next steps

The information below is a summary of the issues raised. Please note, where there was repeated / recurrent feedback from the sessions, some of the information was joined together into a broader topic area – for example, there were sessions specific to NDRRA funding and climate change, and these issues were similar to broader areas so were incorporated elsewhere.

### Challenges identified

1. The formal recovery system<sup>1</sup> and communities impacted by disasters need to be better connected.
2. The existing evidence is not consistently used in recovery policy and practice.
3. Recovery planning needs to be based on community consultation and inclusion prior to disaster events.
4. Recovery needs to be better integrated with preparedness, response and broader resilience efforts.
5. A nationally consistent approach to lessons management would improve recovery policy and practice.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'formal recovery system' is used in this report to include Government, Emergency Management organisations, NGO's and Community Service Organisations who have a role in emergency management arrangements.

## High relevance themes

There were several themes which were repeatedly raised across many of the working groups which are worth noting. These themes speak to complex underlying issues within the recovery sector.

- The nationally agreed definition and indicators of successful recovery should be community focussed.
- Community members and locally based community organisations need to be better included in processes and practice.
- Resources to support appropriate planning and training for recovery prior need to be identified and accessible.

## Summary of recommendations

1. Resourcing should be available and identified for pre-disaster recovery planning.
2. Training in community development approaches should be identified and available for emergency managers.
3. Recovery funding systems be more flexible and needs driven.
4. Future recovery funding should be evidence based.
5. Funding to be made available for recovery research which has practice driven outputs.
6. BNHCRC needs to invest a larger portion of their available funds to recovery focussed research.
7. Recovery research should be prioritised by jurisdictions, including through the BNHCRC.
8. Recovery workforce needs to be able to have access to evidence based professional development, training and resources.
9. AIDR to investigate recovery lessons sharing forums.
10. States to advocate for recovery to be incorporated into emergency management exercises.



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