



Social Recovery
Reference Group
AUSTRALIA

Recovery Snapshot

A message for the recovery workforce

After a career working in the emergency management community, I have learnt that there is no uniform path for how people came to work in the emergency management sector. This is certainly the case for the disaster recovery workforce. Our communities see the recovery workforce swell in a disaster event. In 'peace-time' many of the highly-skilled recovery practitioners may work in other parts of government or recovery management policy roles, or prepare to volunteer as part of a jurisdiction's surge capacity in an emergency. However a recovery worker becomes part of the workforce, it is essential to harness the skill set of this group for the best possible recovery outcomes to be secured. Disasters are inevitable across all of Australia. It is beholden on all of us to work together to strengthen the nation's capacity to deal with disasters through strong leadership and coordinated efforts and maximise benefits from sometimes limited resources.

I am passionate about the Australian emergency management sector positioning itself to improve our capability to better plan for, respond to and recover from severe to catastrophic level disasters. People will know that I am determined to see our emergency managers use imagination and initiative to make the necessary adjustments and arrangements to cope with the 'unknowns' a disaster may throw up. When we accept the inevitability of a severe disaster event, and transition to imagining and planning for that event, we begin to position ourselves to prepare well. In this instance, the

recently completed project, the Community Recovery Workforce Development package, is the sort of project that harnesses and assists with coordination of national recovery efforts. The project has identified the need to develop the capacities of our disaster recovery workforce to ensure successful longer-term recovery.

It is only by engaging our collective physical resources, knowledge, skills, experience, creativity and innovation – before, during and after an inevitable event – that solutions to complex natural disasters form.

The Community Recovery Workforce Development package is a national first, and is a great contribution to achieving the vision for community recovery supported by flexible, skilled and sustainable workforce that is responsive to community needs and scalable for national emergency capability.

I commend to you the featured recovery workers' comments in this pamphlet. Their stories tell of lived experiences and each draws out the variety of backgrounds and different skills pathways for our recovery workforce.

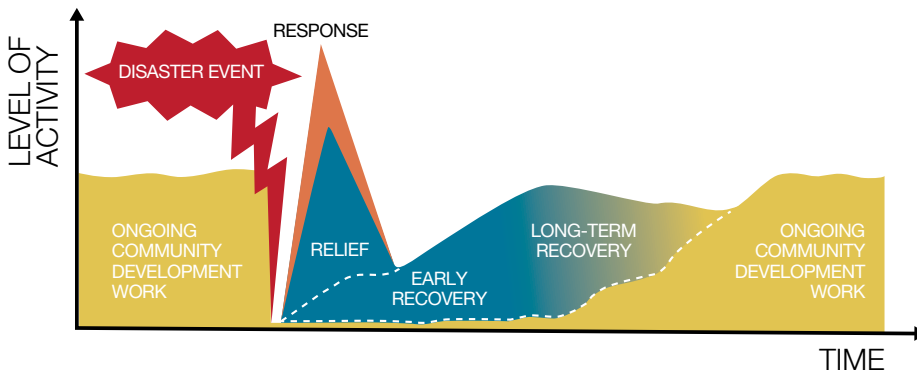
Lastly, I thank you for your commitment to the recovery of Australian communities following disasters and invite you to join the emergency management sector in imagining and planning for what is to come.

Mark Crossweller AFSM

Director General, Emergency Management Australia

Disasters and Community Recovery

Disasters impact community in a range of ways across the social, built, economic and natural environments.



This diagram shows the difference in the time it takes for a disaster event to be brought under control during the response phase, compared with the time it takes to restore a community during the recovery phase. Recovery is the coordinated process of supporting an affected community in the restoration of the emotional, social, economic, built and natural environment. Recovery is most successful when there is a high degree of community involvement in the recovery efforts. This is a complex, challenging and time intensive process. This work can take many years.



The diagram above shows how these four environments constitute community. In terms of how communities operate the four environments are intrinsically linked, contributing to the sustainability and wellbeing of communities recovering from disaster. The profiles of people in this brochure focus on the social recovery workforce supporting the community recovery. Interviews with people working in social recovery show that these workers are in different roles, are from different professional backgrounds and aspire to different futures working for community recovery.

STORIES FROM RECOVERY WORKERS

Corinne Waddell

Current role

Senior Policy Officer, Emergency Management, Victorian Government.

Professional background

Masters in Social Science (International Development), Associate Diploma in Engineering (Cartography), Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Years working in emergency management/recovery

Since 2005 with a number of career diversions

My story

A cartographer by trade, my introduction to emergency management and recovery occurred as a volunteer in Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake followed by a longer stint in Java, Indonesia after the 2006 earthquake and subsequent eruption of Mount Merapi.

A placement with Australian Volunteers International in Jakarta in 2007 introduced me to the importance of capacity building communities to identify and manage their own recovery outcomes and this has been my mantra ever since. Building the capacity of locally-engaged project teams to achieve some ambitious objectives has been a common thread throughout my professional career.

With a unique perspective on how emergencies are managed in developing countries, I returned to Australia in 2009 to join the Victoria State Emergency Service as a Community Education Coordinator expanding on the FloodSafe and StormSafe community awareness programs. While the focus was on emergency preparedness, the relationship between preparing for and recovering from an emergency is intrinsic.

Professional development

I am fortunate to have emergency management qualifications obtained while at VICSES and often reflect on my training in humanitarian aid through RedR Australia. However, it has been the lessons learnt in the field and the mistakes I have made that has had the greatest influence on my chosen career path. Whether it was a result of misguided intentions or naivety on my part, it has been the ability to listen to the stories and experiences of others that has been the levelling ground for me.

*Who are
recovery
workers?*

*Where
do they
come
from?*



PATHWAYS INTO RECOVERY ROLES

A new agreement to share resources for community recovery

Have you seen the TV stories where a contingency of fire fighters is heading off to assist firefighting efforts in another state?

Well there are now national arrangements in place between commonwealth, states and territories to provide interstate community recovery assistance when needed following significant or multiple disasters.

These mutually beneficial arrangements break new ground for recovery and follow similar arrangements to those operating in other emergency services such as fire and police.

Protocols have been developed that ensure channels of communications and procedures run efficiently and eligible staff are deployed interstate in a safe and planned manner. The personal attributes, knowledge and skills of workers selected for deployment have been carefully thought through and the feedback from recovery workers who were deployed interstate in recent years has been included.

The roles that are often needed to meet surge capacity in community recovery work are for those working directly with affected communities in health, welfare and community development roles and those working in leadership and coordination roles.

STORIES FROM RECOVERY WORKERS

Ryan Hamblion

Current role

Senior District Emergency Services Officer, WA Government training recovery staff for evacuation centres and providing recovery support during emergencies; preparedness and planning role for local emergency management committees and local welfare coordination.

Professional background

Bachelor of Arts: direct care worker, child protection, court liaison officer, foster care and placement services.

Years working in community recovery

8 Years

My story

I was first taking on roles following the Carnavon Floods, Cyclone Owen and Yarloop Fire. I am particularly proud of working with the remote Aboriginal community at Warmun, East Kimberley, rebuilding after the 2011 floods. The community was temporarily housed in another town which presented many cultural and spiritual challenges for both the displaced and hosting communities.

Professional Development

I mostly learned on the job through seasonal secondments across WA; also learned through exercises and mentoring from more experienced colleagues.

Jolie Wills

Current role

Director at McNaughton & Wills – An independent consultancy company that puts power in the hands of individuals and organisations to recover from disaster.

Professional background

Masters of Science (Cognitive Psychology).

Years working in community recovery

7 years

My story

I am a cognitive psychologist. I didn't come looking for disaster, it came looking for me. In 2010, disaster came knocking on my door, or you could say gave it a good rattle. I am a survivor of the Christchurch earthquake and lived disaster recovery with my family first-hand. I started as a volunteer and found myself providing psychosocial support to my fellow citizens. I was then employed to develop and lead Red Cross' Psychosocial Recovery Programme. I am proud of the quality of programmes we developed and the support we provided despite the huge pressure. I am now a director at McNaughton & Wills delivering training, developing strategy and supporting individuals and organisations through disaster recovery.

Professional development

My own greatest support came from Australian Red Cross colleagues who shared their wisdom and understood the challenges. I was awarded a Churchill Scholarship to study support strategies for those working in recovery and have since co-authored a guide on recovery leadership www.preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery



A snapshot of recovery work in recent years

Following disasters, those who work in community recovery undertake a myriad of tasks and roles with some working for a few days or weeks and others working for months or years.

The work includes: providing financial assistance, emergency accommodation, psychological first aid and clean-up activities; providing economic, legal and business advice; organising social and community activities and fund-raising events; providing health services, emotional support and counselling; managing injured animals and providing agricultural and environmental advice and assistance; and providing extensive behind the scenes work including planning, coordination and disaster management.

Thousands of community recovery workers have worked in the disasters shown on the map above, with recovery work continuing today in many places including Christchurch, N.Z.



New national professional development program

Do you ever wish you had an extra pair of hands when working long hours in recovery?



Do you spend all your time working on planning for a disaster and would like some on the ground experience?

The Community Recovery Mentoring Program provides opportunities for people working in recovery roles across States and Territories and in participating agencies to gain broader experience. The program is designed for senior managers, planners and policy workers as well as those being developed for recovery fieldwork roles. Working across agencies, participants will share expertise, knowledge, training and best practice in community recovery.

Participants would get to know each other outside operational activation and would set up the arrangements and establish a mutual learning contract. During a disaster event, the mentor may have an additional pair of hands or team member and the mentee could gain on-the-ground experience.

The mentoring program factors in the speculative and dynamic nature of emergency management and recovery; the personal circumstances of participants at the time of an event; business continuity and operational imperatives. The program could be extended to joint training exercises, strategic planning and strategic management activities when not operational.

The program supports the vision of creating a more competent recovery workforce. For further information contact louise.mitchell@dhhs.vic.gov.au

STORIES FROM RECOVERY WORKERS

Anne Minion (nee Ellis)

Current role

Community Development Officer, Emergency Services, Red Cross.

Professional background

Adv Diploma Community Services; Cert IV Assessment and Training; Community Development Officer, Local Government; Community Development Officer for Sampson Flat Bushfire Recovery, SA.

Years working in Community Recovery

9 years

My story

As a community development officer with one of the local councils affected by the 2015 Sampson Flat

Bushfires in SA, I was able to bring my knowledge and grassroots experience of the community to the local recovery efforts.

I am particularly proud of being able to assist the community rebuild connections through events and grass roots projects. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of the place-based projects which have brought people together and which will create a lasting record of the story of recovery in this area. I am learning recovery on the job but am easily able to apply community engagement and development frameworks into a disaster recovery context. I learn so much from more experienced recovery practitioners who have acted as mentors. I am now interested in undertaking further study in this area.

Professional development

I am learning Recovery and its complexities on the job and am able to apply community development strategies into a disaster recovery context. I learn so much from the lived experience of other Recovery practitioners who have supported me as mentors, Anne Leadbeater for example. I am now interested in undertaking further experience and study in this area.

STORIES FROM RECOVERY WORKERS

Nick Smith

Current role

Emergency Management Planning Officer, Primary Industry and Regions, South Australia.

Professional background

Bachelor of Arts, Australian Army Officer for 20 years involved in warfighting, peacekeeping and reconstruction in East Timor, Iraq and Solomon Islands

Years working in Community Recovery

3 years

My story

When I left the military, I was looking for career options that would enable me to further support people in communities less fortunate than my own. I was not

looking specifically at disaster recovery when I moved into Program Management with the State Recovery Office, South Australia, I simply fell into it because my current position opened up at the same time I was looking. Although the world of disaster recovery was new to me – the way we plan and prepare for disasters, the training exercises, the coordination of agencies towards achieving a common goal – was very familiar to me. I was able to transfer my project management skills, and apply the community engagement and capacity building approaches used in peacekeeping and post-war reconstruction to disaster recovery. After 5 years in the State Recovery Office I moved to Primary Industries as an Emergency Management Planning Officer in Biosecurity. I will continue to incorporate what I now know about Community Recovery in this space.

Professional development

I completed the Manage Recovery Functions and Services nationally accredited course and the mentorship provided through engagement with more experienced recovery workers was particularly critical to preparing me for recovery operations.

Recovery competencies added to community development qualifications

Since 2016, the Diploma of Community Development and the Certificate IV in Community Development includes community recovery and emergency management in the bank of electives. The competencies include:

- Work in an emergency management context
- Facilitate community involvement in recovery
- Deliver emergency relief services
- Manage recovery functions and services.

Entry-level pathway

The community development qualifications provide an entry-level pathway for community development workers to gain competencies in disaster recovery. In regions where disasters are more frequent, and in rural and remote areas, these qualifications could be promoted at local TAFEs and other registered training organisations as a long-term strategy to building a supply of community development workers with emergency management and recovery skills and knowledge.

STORIES FROM RECOVERY WORKERS

Carolyn Daly

Current role

Community member Dunalley. Has now returned to a different workplace in a non-recovery role, in a non-government organisation. Writer and illustrator.

Professional background

Communications Manager

Years working in Community Recovery

Commenced as a volunteer community liaison officer following the Dunalley Bushfires in 2013; was on the Community Recovery Committee then seconded into the Bushfire Recovery Unit in a formal communications role.

My story

I learned about recovery through the experience of being a long term resident of a community devastated by the bushfire. So I learned on the job and it has been a journey of grief, survival and small triumphs. Traversing the dual role of community resident and government worker, liaising between community and state recovery, was one of the most difficult things I have done in my life. Working in recovery was not a sought after job for me but one where I thought I could help to make a difference. While the role was essentially 'invisible' support, senior government workers have since told me that the links into the community that I provided were invaluable. My previous workplace restructured at the same time as I took on this role and this compounded the impact of the disaster, and my eventual return-to-work. Working on personal art and writing projects has been really positive and given me a new direction and way of contributing.



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Are you prepared for interstate deployment?

Community Recovery is not a holiday opportunity.

You've seen the devastation on the nightly news: families distraught, towns destroyed, loved ones missing and livelihoods lost. Your workplace is calling for volunteers to join interstate assistance teams. Not all deployments are hardship destinations but it won't be a holiday either.

So, how prepared are you for a bit (or a lot) of discomfort?

Take this quick quiz by selecting the answer in each category that is closest to you (don't take it too seriously).

1. Accommodation

- a. The idea of sleeping in a caravan for 10 days is okay with me
- b. 2 star accommodation is my idea of roughing it
- c. I have only ever stayed in a resort or a 5 star hotel

2. Environment

- a. I could sleep anywhere
- b. I am okay in any weather condition if I have the right clothing on
- c. I can't stand hot, humid weather and must have air-conditioning to sleep

3. Diet

- a. I'm happy to eat anything, almost
- b. I prefer vegetarian or gluten free, but would eat what was served if I had to
- c. I'm a really fussy eater and must have a totally healthy diet

4. Communication

The thought of no access to my smartphone for 10 days...

- a. ...would be a nice break
- b. I'd miss it but could cope
- c. I'd have a meltdown without access to Facebook and Instagram

Are you prepared for deployment?

Mostly a You're on standby... now how are your people skills?

Mostly b With the right kind of support you may be OK... maybe an overnight camping trip will get you in training

Mostly c Your services will be appreciated at home... consider sending a donation