

# Communities at the core of urban planning - Do they lead or are they misled?

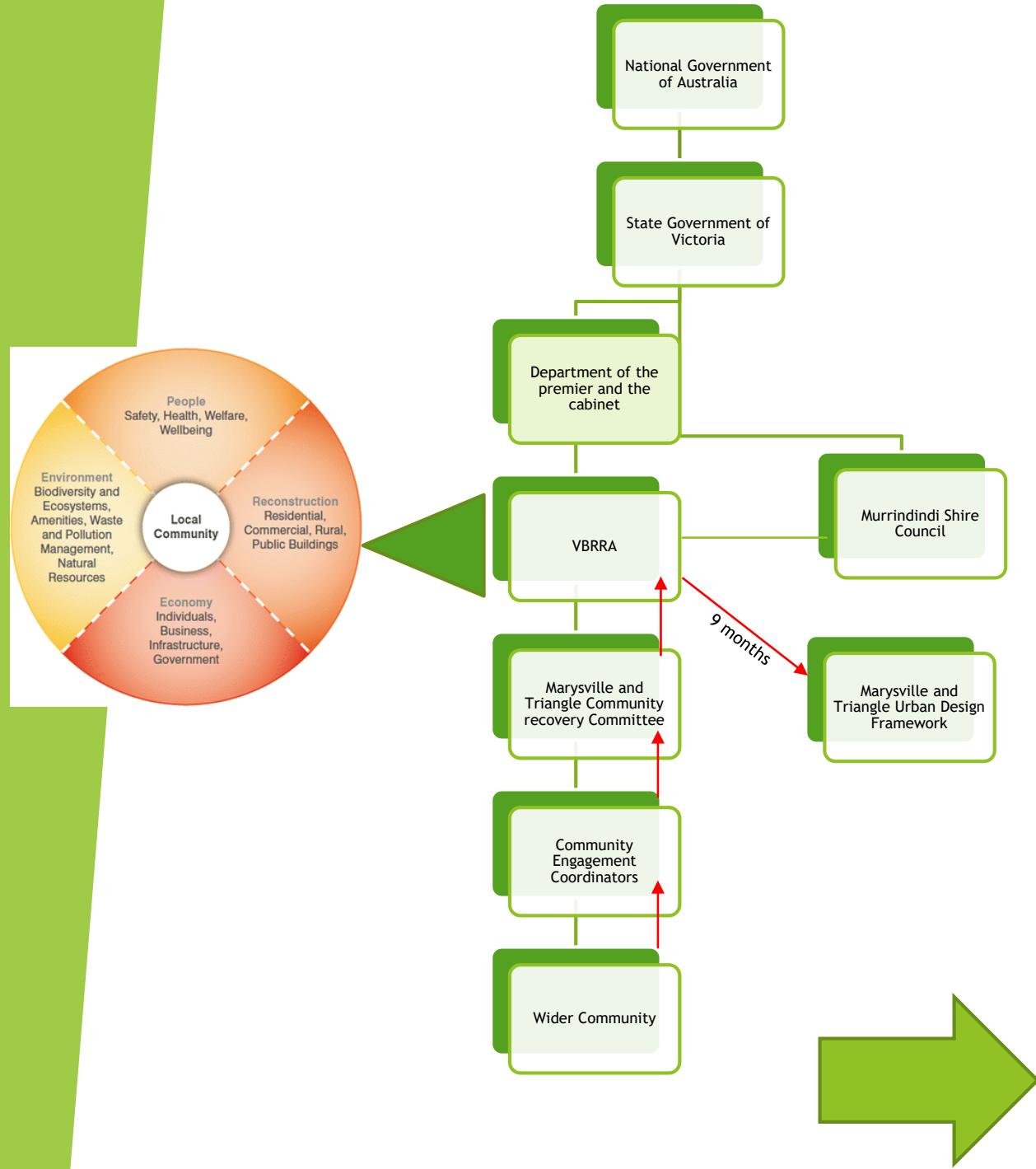
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## Introduction

Following Christchurch Earthquake (2010-2011) and Victoria Black Saturday bushfires (2009), both NZ and Australian governments opted for a community-led approach to rebuilding the cities. More or less a decade post-disaster, there is a question if the rebuilding that has taken place actually reflect the ideas of the residents of those cities or whether they serve the purpose they were intended to deliver.

## Findings

Stakeholder engagement flow in Marysville



Vibe Hotel and Conference Centre (AUS\$28Mn)  
A boutique hotel with 100 rooms and 5 event rooms with a capacity for 350 attendees



### Features of Marysville's public engagement strategy

- Workshops and planning days fed into a community recovery plan for Marysville
- BCG, an economic consultancy firm suggested the need of a hotel and convention centre for economic regrowth rather than the town's Community Recovery Committee(CRCs)
- CRCs agree the community welcomed the idea of a hotel because the fires destroyed the two accommodation facilities that Marysville had pre-fire

**Planning**  
• No public engagement or consultation due to 'compressed time frames' once the projects were given Ok

**Execution**  
• Citizens rally against demolition of existing pool to make way for Hotel

**Control**  
• Politicians wanted to sort out the disaster before election hence control measures were overlooked

**Completion**  
• 6 years after the bushfires(with a delay of 1 year)

**Outcome**  
• Employs ¾ of locals in its staff and sources local produce for its day today operations  
• Both the hotel and the conference centre are operating at less than its capacity and was put on market in 2016 after just a year into operation  
• 6 out of 8 respondents feel that the overall experience is more than satisfactory  
• 4 out of 5 residents questioned feel the facilities are too grand for the small town.  
• Increased council rates for the residents

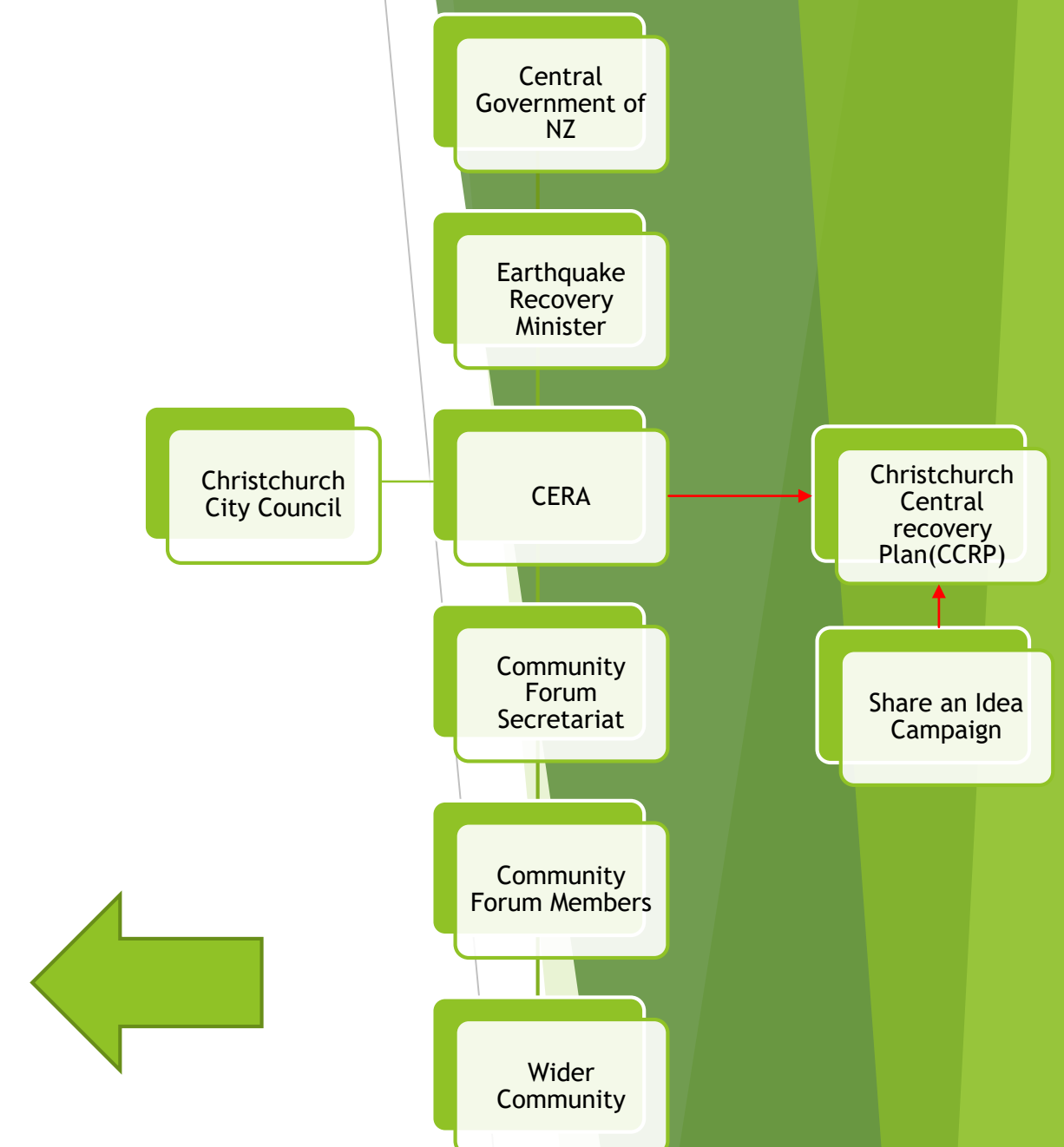
## Case study focus

This poster shows how residents' views have been incorporated to overall city rebuilding process and how those shaped the construction outcome of Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct (CJESP) and Vibe Hotel and Conference Centre, Marysville which were given prominence in rebuilding those cities, as catalyst or anchor projects.

## Data collection

18 face to face interviews were carried out with the planners, designers, consultants, contractors, operational staff and end users that are involved in anchor projects in Christchurch and 13 with those involved with catalyst projects in Marysville, to understand the level of community involvement in bringing these projects to life. Desktop research was used to validate the findings and some areas were explored further.

Stakeholder engagement flow in Marysville



### Features of Christchurch's public engagement strategy

- No input from Community forums to CCRP and latter takes suggestions from 'Share an Idea' campaign instead
- All 18 respondents agreed that community participation was present upto the point of designing the 17 anchor projects and not beyond
- Pre-planned projects emerge
- CJESP emerge as a government-initiated project

**Planning**  
• No public consultation after the projects are finalised  
• All 3 operational staff interviewed agreed that their inputs were incorporated into detailed design

**Execution**  
• Public backlash over lack of transparency and stakeholder engagement in the execution phase

**Control**  
• No revisiting of original brief due to political pressure to achieve completion.  
• Design issues from complexity of unifying justice related services

**Completion**  
• 6 Years after the earthquakes(with a delay of 3 years)

**Outcome**  
• End users questions fitness for purpose  
• All 3 operational staff interviewed agree that the design has streamlined service delivery  
• Some aspects of design remain barriers to optimal operational capacity of the building  
• Development of surrounding environment as a result of the precinct design has not taken place as anticipated even though, in 2019 returning of law firms to adjoining roads is evident  
• All respondents agree the design is future-focused



CJESP costing NZ\$300mn brings together all justice and emergency services under 1 roof.

## Conclusion :

- Anchor projects often emerge as pre-planned projects that fit post-disaster needs
- Community involvement is only evident during the planning phase and are mostly limited to one way communication beyond that. i.e. communicating progress or giving updates and it decreases overtime
- Lack of engagement and transparency result in non-ownership of project after completion
- VBRRA's public engagement resulted in CRCs having a direct effect on the outcome of Urban and triangle design framework and it appreciated the emotional recovery stages that residents experienced(arranged a day of celebration at three months and a 3 day planning session at four months post-disaster)
- VBRRA attempted to localise its catalyst projects to suit each town but the end products mismatched the image of the individual towns
- CERA's approach is catering to national goals
- CERA's misalignment of input from CRCs and final blueprint is evident of wasted effort of public consultation
- Time pressure prevents anchor/catalyst projects engaging in public consultation
- Continued government support is needed to achieve strategic relevance
- Realisation of positive effects of catalyst projects may take a decade or more post-disaster

## Considerations for successful public engagement

**Community Recovery Committees (CRCs) for each town**

- Is there a presence of self-selected members + Council appointed members representing diversity of the community including members of the business community and community leaders to plan for their respective cities rather than a national or local government led approach?
- Is there a public place i.e. a community hub available to ensure continuity and ease of meeting up for future gatherings?
- Have CRCs determined methods of continuous communication of progress to the wider community?

**Where are we now?**

- Have the CRCs undertaken situational analysis including risk and need analysis considering population data, past usage behavior of similar facilities and the building environment post-disaster?
- Do the plans consider long-term strategic relevance?

**Where do we want to be?**

- Initiation :** 1. Determine a list of anchor projects  
2. Recruit members from the community who are directly linked to the fields that these anchor projects cater to
- Planning :** 1. A pre-determined budget that demarcates the scale of projects for each town and finalizing on financial responsibility of each project  
2. Invite relevant members of CRCs to get feedback into initial/concept design changes to current urban landscape i.e. demolitions and land acquisitions  
3. Transparency around demolitions and land acquisitions  
4. Find alternatives for projects that are dismissed and offer justification for decisions made by the planners

**Are we there yet?**

- Monitor and Control :** 1. Feedback that is linked to initial plan and necessary alterations and engaging with CRCs to discuss detailed design stages  
2. Have a contingency plan for each anchor project their initial plan fail so that there is greater accountability in spending tax payer's money.
- Execution :** 1. Periodic and continuous updates
- Completion:** 1. Celebrate and emphasize on community ownership of project