



Community Recovery Toolbox

A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY RECOVERY COMMITTEES

East Gippsland Shire Council

This project coordinated by East Gippsland Shire Council is jointly funded by the Victorian Government through Victoria's Community Recovery Committee Support Package for Local Government Program and the Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements in response to the 2019-20 Eastern Victorian bushfires.



Australian Government



Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidawel people as the Traditional Custodians of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders past and present.



Source: WGCMA, Jones Bay, Photograph, Your Say East Gippsland, accessed 25 June 2024, <yoursayeastgippsland.vic.gov.au>.



Acknowledgement

East Gippsland Shire Council would also like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this document. An extensive literature review was undertaken to inform the document and keeps the document rich from the insights and information shared across the East Gippsland region by those involved in the Black Summer fires and other social, economic and environmental events. Your contributions have made the Community Recovery Toolbox richer for your experiences. We would also like to acknowledge the impacts of COVID on all recovery efforts.

East Gippsland Shire Council, 2024. Community Recovery Toolbox: A guide for Community Recovery Committees.

East Gippsland Shire Council supplied all photos used throughout the document.

Disclaimer: This document is general in nature and not intended to replace any specific advice. East Gippsland Shire Council and any employees (and brand derivations) disclaim all and any liability to any persons whatsoever in respect of anything done by any person in reliance, whether in whole or in part, on this report.



Table of Contents

List of Acronyms	5
Background	7
Part 1: Setting the Emergency Management Context	12
Part 2: Things to Consider Outside an Emergency Event	24
Wellbeing	27
Governance - When it's not an Emergency	29
Resources	41
Planning	44
Relationships	46
Communication	49
Engagement	53
Training	57
Part 3: In An Emergency	59
Step 1: Form or Re-form a Community Group	63
Step 2: Set Community Recovery Priorities	65
Step 3: Identify Delivery Needs	73
Step 4: Deliver Recovery Activities	75
Step 5: Check in on Progress	77
Step 6: Plan and Prepare for Future Emergencies	79
Further Reading and Resources	82
Appendix	88
References	110

List of Acronyms

List of Acronyms

CEMP

Community Emergency Management Plan

CoM

Committee of Management

Council

East Gippsland Shire Council

CRC

Community Recovery Committee

EOI

Expression of Interest

ERV

Emergency Recovery Victoria

LIMP

Local Incident Management Plan

MEMP

Municipal Emergency Management Plan

REMP

Regional Emergency Management Plan

SEMP

State Emergency Management Plan



Background

Who is the Audience?

This Community Recovery Toolbox has been developed for community members interested in emergency recovery after a disaster and who would like to participate in the community's response to recovery events within their community.

Purpose of the Toolbox

The Community Recovery Toolbox provides useful information to support communities across East Gippsland. It will help your local group establish and build recovery processes before and after an emergency. The contents of the Toolbox is based on feedback received from communities across the region. Nine key themes are identified:



Diagram 1: Nine key themes identified from community feedback.

This Toolbox also includes many templates, tools, tips, and tricks, as well as a list of Further Resources and Reading that might be helpful to you.

It can be read on its own or alongside other information, including:

- ✓ Community Recovery Toolkit (Emergency Recovery Victoria, 2023):
www.vic.gov.au/community-recovery
- ✓ Lessons Learned by Community Recovery Committees of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires (2011):
bit.ly/3XVDPzR



How to Read the Community Recovery Toolbox

This Community Recovery Toolbox's most important aspect is its many choices and options. We encourage you to find the right mix for your community because we acknowledge that every community's approach will differ.

We have divided the Toolbox into three parts.

Part 1

Part 1 covers general background information identified through feedback channels that may be useful in a guide like this document. It will cover the basics of community-led recovery, what a Community Recovery Committee is and what it does, who can help at a local level, and the well-being of you as a community group undertaking recovery activities and your community members.

Part 2

Part 2 covers the types of things that can be done outside an emergency if there is energy and time. This information has been grouped into nine key themes and may be useful to consider when there is no emergency.

Part 3

Part 3 provides some ideas of what to do in an emergency by introducing the six steps to Emergency Recovery, developed by Emergency Recovery Victoria (2023). While it is a linear approach to options for recovery, how your group decides to approach recovery is up to you.

The Appendix section contains tools, templates, and ideas, while Top Tips draws on examples from Community Recovery Committees that have experienced the Black Summer fires throughout East Gippsland in 2019 and 2020.

It is important to note that this document cannot cover every aspect of emergency recovery due to the flexible nature of community choices. It has also been written at a point in time, so information within this document may change.

New information may also be developed. Keep connected with Council to ensure you are updated with other information that may help your group and your community. A list of Further Reading and Resources can be found at the end of this document, with many links and papers you may find useful.



Part 1:

Setting the Emergency Management Context

Background Context and Information

This section of the Community Recovery Toolbox was written to reflect feedback from East Gippsland communities impacted by the Black Summer Fires in 2019/20, who graciously shared their knowledge and experiences.

This Community Recovery Toolbox builds on the Emergency Recovery Victoria document and adds extra options and considerations for community groups looking to engage in recovery activities.

What is Community-led Recovery?

Community-led recovery is about ensuring that impacted community members have a voice and are heard in their recovery efforts, while being supported in an adaptive and flexible approach that continues to build community resilience (Social Recovery Reference Group, 2021). To read more on community-led recovery, please refer to the Social Recovery Reference Group link in the Further Reading and Resources page.

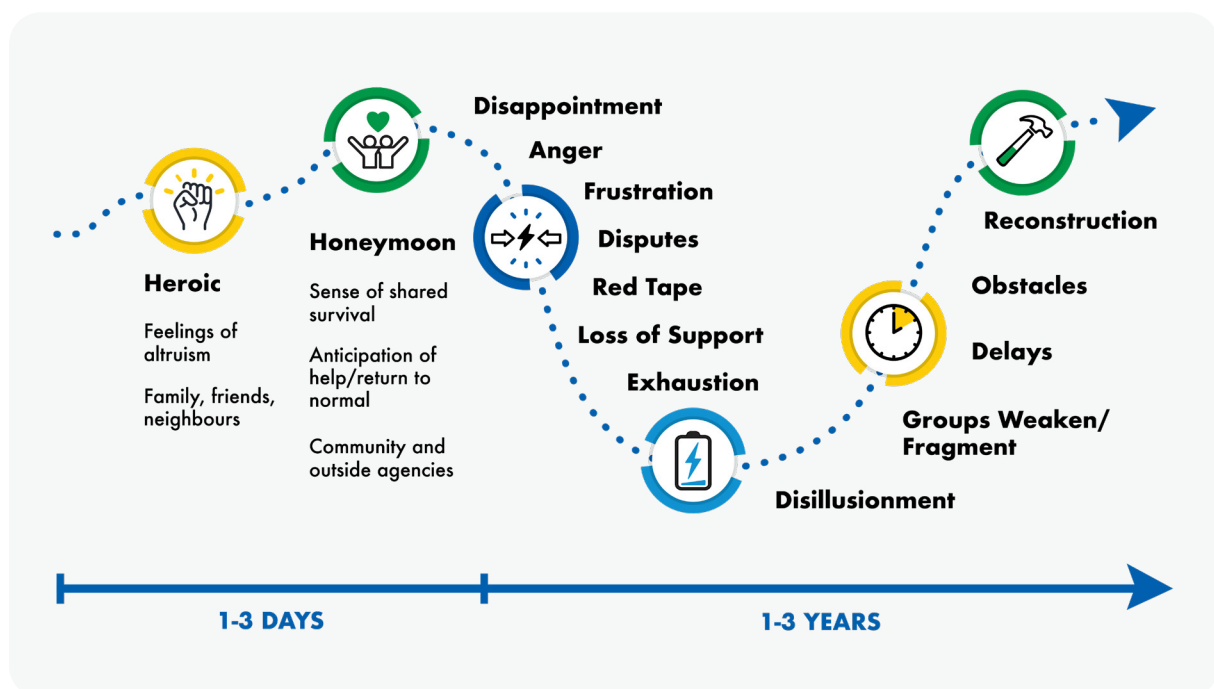
“Community-led Recovery is not a magic bullet or the fourth arm of government!”

“Ownership. Own your recovery.”

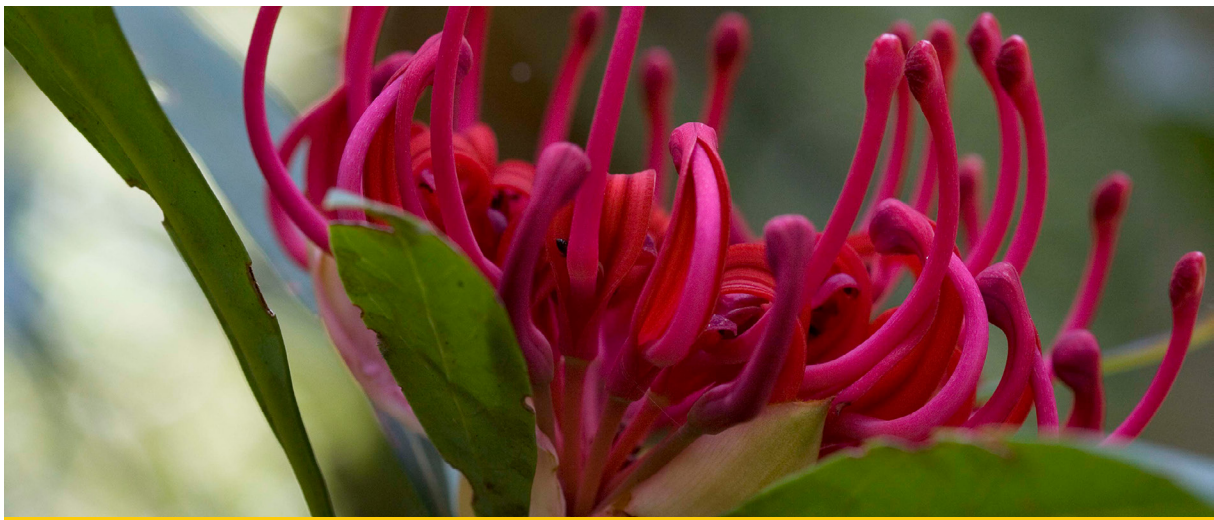


Recovery - Looking After Yourself and Your Community

Disasters vary in intensity and will impact individuals differently and over different timeframes. It is helpful to recognise the emotions and wellbeing of each other and your community. Diagram 2 depicts the different phases you can expect to see as you move through recovery. Reach out for help whenever you need it. Your individual wellbeing is of the utmost importance because without you operating at your very best as an individual and a community group looking after recovery activities, things may become challenging.



*Diagram 2: Phases that individuals may experience post the emergency response.
Adapted from Zunin & Myers, Stages of Recovery, as cited in DeWolfe (2000).*



Trauma-informed support can be obtained from your contact at Council as a starting point. The Further Reading and Resources Section of this Toolbox contains links that may be useful for supporting your community's wellbeing and health and include:

✓ Psychological First Aid: An Australian Guide to Supporting People Affected by Disaster

bit.ly/45Hbv68

✓ Emerging Minds Community Trauma Toolkit

bit.ly/3xyDRmo

✓ Phoenix Australia Disaster Hub

bit.ly/3RDcTko

✓ Travelling the Road to Recovery - Rob Gordon Videos

bit.ly/4eFMRGP



How does Emergency Management Work?

“Emergency Management involves the plans, structures and arrangements which are established to bring together the normal endeavours of government, voluntary and private agencies in a comprehensive and coordinated way to deal with the whole spectrum of emergency needs” (COAG, 2011).

Victoria has four state planning frameworks for emergency management (State Emergency Management Plan, 2021).



Diagram 3: An example of the Emergency Management Planning Frameworks at the state, regional, municipal and community levels. Adapted from VCOSS, 2022.

You can expect to see Local Incident Management Plans (LIMPS) at a community level for many communities. LIMPs contain information on what you can do when an emergency occurs, where the nearest assembly area is and other important information including what to expect at the assembly area.

East Gippsland Shire Council has developed LIMPs for many communities across East Gippsland. To find a LIMP nearest to your community, please click here: [Emergency Management \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\).](http://EmergencyManagement(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au).)

Below, Diagrams 4 and 5 provide an example of a LIMP. Your community has many opportunities to be involved in its development outside of an emergency environment and with extensive community consultation. Reach out to Council for more information.

Copies of the Local Incident Management Plan for Lakes Entrance and Noorinbee/ Noorinbee North have been supplied as an example.

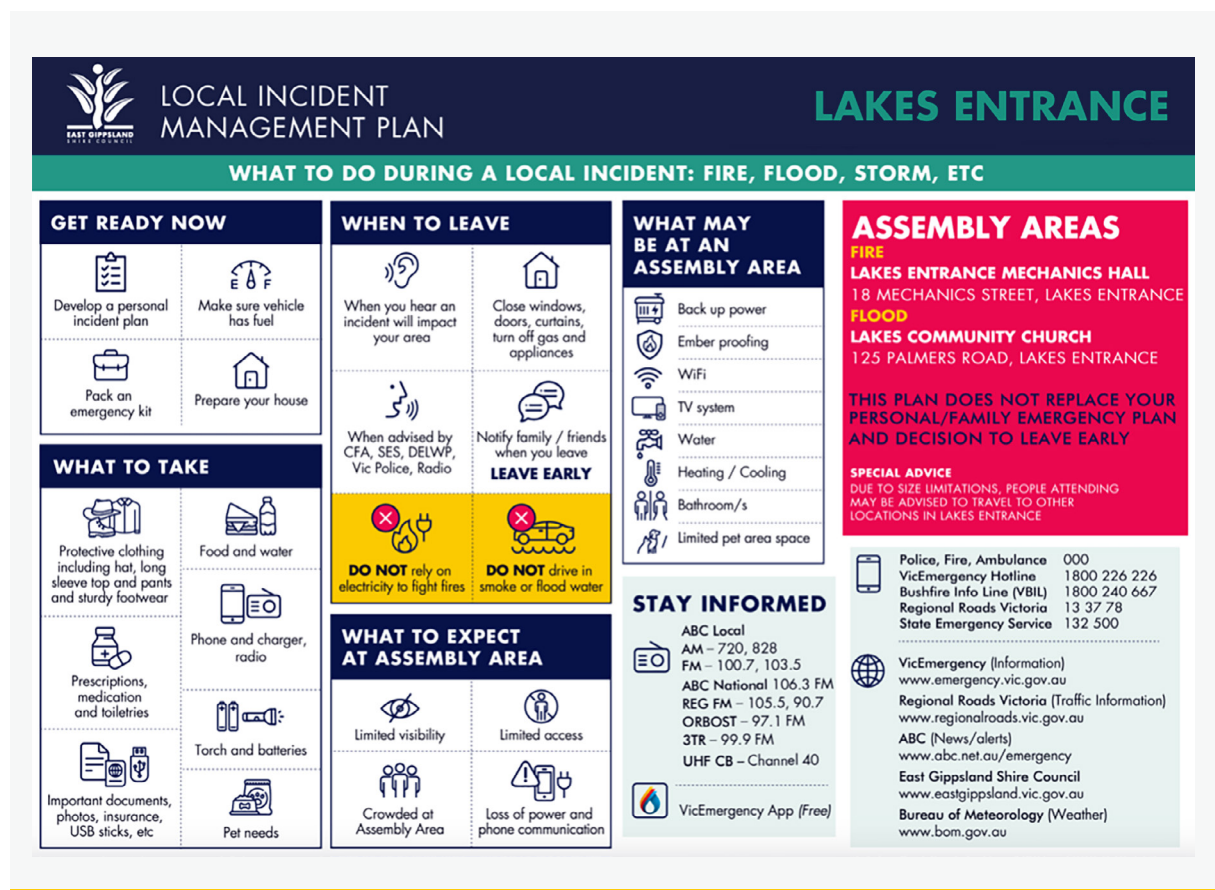


Diagram 4: An example of a Local Incident Management Plan.



LOCAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

NOORINBEE NOORINBEE NORTH

WHAT TO DO DURING A LOCAL INCIDENT: FIRE, FLOOD, STORM, ETC

PLAN EARLY - GET READY NOW				YOUR ASSEMBLY AREA DOES NOT REPLACE YOUR PERSONAL PLAN AND DECISION TO LEAVE EARLY		ASSEMBLY AREA	
 Develop a personal incident plan	 Stay informed	 Clear debris on property	 Check your fire pump and hoses	<p>Assembly Areas offer no guarantee that emergency services will be present during an emergency</p> <p>Assembly Areas may not prevent death or injury from fire, embers or radiant heat</p> <p>Assembly Areas are a place to gain information</p> <p>Assembly Areas are a place to support each other</p> <p>Assembly Areas make people feel less isolated</p> <p>Assembly Areas can be a place for Authorities to leave information and maps</p> <p>Assembly Areas can be place for Authorities to meet with community</p>		<p>P-12 SCHOOL 20-22 TAMBOON ROAD, CANN RIVER 3890</p> <p>THIS IS NOT A REFUGE</p>	
 Know your triggers to leave	 Prepare your house	 Remove flammables from outside house	 Make sure vehicle and pumps have fuel				
 Clear your gutters	 Fill your tanks						
PACK AN EMERGENCY KIT		WHEN TO LEAVE					
 Protective natural fibre clothing including hat, mask, long sleeve top and pants, sturdy footwear	 Food and water	 When you hear an incident will impact your area	 Close windows, doors, curtains, turn off gas and appliances				
 Prescriptions, medication and toiletries	 Phone and charger, portable radio and cables	 When advised by CFA, SES, DELWP, Vic Police, Radio	 Notify family / friends when you leave				
 Important documents, photos, insurance, USB sticks, etc	 Torch and batteries	 DO NOT drive in smoke or flames You waited too long SHELTER IN PLACE	 DO NOT rely on electricity to fight fires				
	 Pet needs						

Diagram 5: An example of a Local Incident Management Plan.



Community Recovery Committees

The Victorian Government (2024) defines a Community Recovery Committee (CRC) as people who work together to “keep local voices, know-how and expertise front and centre during recovery planning and delivery... This will ensure projects, grants and support programs developed over the coming months and years will be the right fit for that community”.

It is really important for CRCs to know:

- ✓ That they are closely supported by Council, who can assist with many facets of community recovery and link CRCs to those who are needed.
- ✓ That after an event, there are multiple funding sources to meet the needs of CRCs. Having a community plan or priority plan that shows you have engaged the community will be in a strong position to work with government to seek funding.
- ✓ That CRCs are the voice of the community and are respected as such. If something is not working, speak up.

“The community has vested us with authority to speak on their behalf. With this comes the responsibility to ensure we consult with the community and groups, and communicate community priorities and preferences to government agencies to make things happen.”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

It is completely fine not to be called a Community Recovery Committee! As long as your group can demonstrate that it is acting on behalf of your community through recovery, you can do what is best for you.

This Toolbox will interchangeably use ‘Community Recovery Committee’ and a ‘community group representing recovery’ to respect and reflect that communities will have different naming conventions.



Top Tip:

Establishing the right governance (process and structures) will be beneficial in the long run. So, when a community group focused on recovery is first established, seek support to ensure that the governance of your group is considered and will work for your community. Recovery is a marathon, not a sprint!

The Five Pillars of Recovery (Recovery Environments)

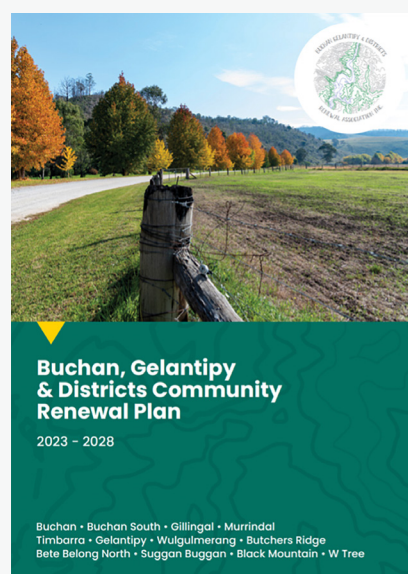
As a community group representing your community for recovery activities, you may be asked to consider recovery priorities and activities aligned with five pillars, including:

- ✓ People and Wellbeing
- ✓ Aboriginal Culture and Healing
- ✓ Environment and Biodiversity
- ✓ Business and Economy
- ✓ Buildings and Infrastructure

Emergency Recovery Victoria (2023).

It helps to align priorities that your community identifies against these pillars. It is also important to note that no one pillar will be more important than another. It just means that it is crucial to understand your community's priorities and work with the feedback members provide to you. The Guide to Post-Disaster Recovery Capitals (ReCap) (Quinn et al, 2020) might help you in considering these pillars further. Details of Quinn's (2020) work can be found in the Further Reading and Resources section of this document.

If you would like examples of how a Community Recovery Plan has adopted these pillars into its planning, visit [Recovering from an emergency \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](https://recoveryfromanemergency.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au).



“ Seize the day – a key challenge with any disaster process is the goodwill from individuals and organisations doesn’t line up with when communities are ready to receive the support. While smoke is still in the air, there are almost unlimited opportunities to do good with the support (money) available. But without the pre-planning, it is almost impossible to harness these opportunities. Communities with plans (even ideas) are much better placed to ‘get stuff done’. Of course it shouldn’t be like this, but the reality is – it is. ”

CRC Representative.



Roles and Responsibilities of Local, Victorian and Australian Governments and Other Organisations in Recovery

Defining roles and responsibilities in an emergency is important so that there is no misunderstanding of duties or 'scope creep'. Appendix 1 contains the full list of who does what at a local, state and national level. Table 1 below provides an example of who is responsible for what locally.

If you have any further queries, contact East Gippsland Shire Council first. Other people who may be able to assist include members from community groups involved in recovery activities.



This symbol indicates stakeholders with formalised roles in an emergency.

Local Level

Stakeholders with formalised roles

Role in Emergency and Disaster Recovery

Local Government: Municipal Councils



Coordinates local-level relief and recovery activities.

Lead agency for:

- ☒ Establishing and managing emergency relief centres and recovery centres/hubs
- ☒ Arranging emergency short term shelter for displaced households
- ☒ Forming and supporting Community Recovery Committees
- ☒ Coordination of secondary impact and needs assessments

Also responsible for:

- ☒ Vulnerable Persons Register
- ☒ Public health advice and community information
- ☒ Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Planning
- ☒ Hazard mitigation and prevention
- ☒ Provision of broader emergency planning, response, relief and recovery support, e.g., economic recovery

Table 1: An example of the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders at a local level. Adapted from the State Emergency Management Plan (2021).

“There is no ‘they’. ‘They’ will do this and they can do that’, you are the ‘they’.”

“Don’t be scared to ask for help. If you find someone who wants to help, work with them. Many people are paid to help you and if you don’t ask them often, they won’t do as much. There are some good eggs out there, people who really want to help. Make sure you make the most of those people.”

“We made a list of what we would do and wouldn’t do and agreed on it. It came in handy when we were asked to make decisions, or extend beyond the limits of what others wanted us to do.”

“Our group is here to advocate on behalf of our community for what is needed. Finding the right people and working with them is important.”



Community Recovery Committee,
East Gippsland.



Part 2:

Things to Consider Outside an Emergency Event

Our Region

East Gippsland is home to numerous communities that have endured the devastating impacts of natural disasters. While some areas have been directly or indirectly affected by destructive fires and floods, others have experienced emergency evacuations as a precautionary measure. This Community Recovery Toolbox considers recovery activities after an emergency – which could mean fire, storm, flood, or other natural emergency events.

It's possible that certain East Gippsland communities have not yet established a Community Recovery Committee and, therefore, may be uncertain about what it entails. The insights and observations of East Gippslanders who have been involved in recovery activities have been taken into account for this document, aiming to learn, provide support, and enhance the knowledge of all community members seeking to become involved in recovery activities.

An extensive literature review was undertaken in preparation for the development of this Community Recovery Toolbox. Documents, reports, discussions, policies, and submissions from the Black Summer fires were considered, and nine key themes were identified for inclusion in this document. The key themes were identified based on what has worked well for groups, what can be improved and key considerations that were made when making decisions.

As a community group, there are things that can be done before an emergency happens. The nine key themes in Table 2 on page 26 assists with some thinking to better prepare your community for an emergency event should one occur.

The nine themes are in no particular order and may be used as prompts to help think about various identified areas of interest that community groups have shared.

You may like to consider these when it's not an emergency or wait until an emergency happens. Whatever you choose as your options, it is good to check in with those you seek support from to see how you can bring your considerations to life.

“ Plan now so that things can be triggered if/when an emergency happens (like temporary accommodation). If we do that now, it can be mobilised quicker. ”

*Community Recovery Committee,
East Gippsland.*










Theme	What is important to consider out of an emergency?
 Wellbeing	How are we looking after ourselves outside of the emergency? What are we going to commit to in the next emergency to look after ourselves? Is there anything that has helped or that we have come across that needs to be captured and shared?
 Governance	How will we set up the CRC (will we form a new group, or use an existing one?) What will be the aim of the group? Who might we talk with to see if there is interest in being on the group? What skill sets are we looking for? How are we going to work together? Do we have people in our community that can write grants? Manage finances? Lead people? Communicate well? Understand governance? How are we going to manage our knowledge (where are we going to store everything so that everyone has access)? What does recovery success look like? How and when do we decide to wrap up the community group?
 Engagement	Do we need to engage or re-engage the community about anything? Is there time to write an Engagement Plan before the next emergency?
 Relationships	Who do we identify as important to our group? Who in the group holds the relationships? Do we have that written down anywhere? Have we touched base with everyone we need to, while it is a quieter time? Has anyone left their role that we need to get in touch with?
 Resources	If there was an emergency, what resources do we need? Do we need help from the start, like administration support, or funding to employ someone to help do things like write grants, audit our financials or project manage big projects? Where are our strengths?
 Role Clarity/ Roles and Responsibilities	Are we clear on our role if we stand up a Community Recovery Committee? Do we understand what everyone else does?
 Training	What skills do we have in the community? Where are our gaps? Is there training that is offered to help us fill the gaps?
 Planning	Does the existing priority list need to be reviewed? Does the group need help refocussing efforts on the priorities? Has anything new popped up that needs to be considered? Is there a Community Plan or Recovery Plan? When was our Community Plan last updated? Who can help write one if there isn't one?
 Communication	How are we going to communicate with everyone and within our team? Should we develop a Communication Plan? How are we going to communicate with our community if there is an emergency? What are we going to communicate about?

Table 2: Identifies the nine themes and the questions your community group may like to consider when you are outside of an emergency event.



Wellbeing

Wellbeing

The most important thing is the wellbeing of yourselves as individuals and your community. As outlined in Part 1- Background Context, there are a number of things that can be done well before an emergency event, including trauma-informed training, that can help ensure that the next emergency event is inclusive and prioritises wellbeing needs. Information regarding different options can be found in the Further Reading and Resources section under “Wellbeing.”

Red Cross, Dr Rob Gordon and the Emerging Mind Toolkits are all excellent resources for wellbeing and can be found in the Further Resources and Reading section of this document.

“Burnout is a key vulnerability for our community.”

“Many volunteers are fatigued due to the cumulative effect of natural disasters. We really need to look after ourselves first so we can help community later.”

“Volunteers are not always acknowledged within the public eye.”

“We need organisations to listen to us. The need to share can happen much later for some people, support must keep pace with us.”

“Create safe spaces so that people can share their stories.”

“We acknowledge that people struggle to prioritise and make time for their wellbeing when faced with financial, emotional, and other stressors post disaster. Having the right supports is critically important for organisations.”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.





Governance - When it's not an Emergency

Governance - When it's not an Emergency

Governance is an important topic for consideration, from setting up a community group to voting and managing potential conflict. You might like to spend some time considering how you will set up a group that is representative of your community needs outside an emergency rather than when an emergency happens. It is important to acknowledge that every community is different, and the energy, experience, and time commitment level will consistently change. Also for consideration is that when an emergency occurs, people who thought they may be able to contribute, could be too impacted themselves to take part as they may have liked.



What works for your community is the right choice; you can always change your position.

Building social capital into how you think about governance and working with your community may be a positive. Social capital (connections, shared values, trust and cooperation) helps you to work together as a group to achieve a purpose that is common to everyone and allows your community to function. Investing in skills (human capital) is also important. Think about the simple things you can do to prepare now (like learning how to use a laptop and the equipment at your local hall that will help if and when an emergency occurs).

“Governance encompasses the system by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it, and it's people, are held to account. Ethics, risk management, compliance and administration are all elements of governance.”

Governance Institute (2024).

Feedback from communities affected by the Black Summer Fires in 2019/20 indicated that governance was a big gap for them, and many were unsure how to start a group.

There are many ways to form a group that focuses on recovery activities. Some communities became sub-groups of established representative groups, some drew representatives from each of the existing community groups to come together and form a new group, and some rebranded existing committees.

Each group has its positives and negatives, and Table 3 helps you and your group understand what might be useful.

The governance section below covers things like:

- ✓ Options for setting up a group.
- ✓ Establishing the purpose and operation of a group.
- ✓ Terms of reference.
- ✓ Options for meeting agendas.
- ✓ Knowledge management.
- ✓ Incorporated associations.
- ✓ Management of conflicts.

Theme	Description	Authority	Influence
Informal	Participation through consultation platforms or events.	Valued perspectives.	Participation is open to all but relies on local council (and potentially ERV) to create opportunities for community input into recovery decision making.
Advisory group	Representative networks and advisory mechanisms (for example, Council Advisory Group).	Valued expertise. Accountable to Council.	Clear advisory role with a mix of expertise. Meets regularly to ensure community input into recovery decision-making.
Committee or sub-committee	Formal governance structure with open and transparent nomination process and clear terms of Reference (for example, as special committee of Council).	Valued expertise. Accountable to Council and community.	Clear decision-making role with balanced skills mix. Meets regularly to shape community engagement processes, consider community needs and priorities and assist in recovery decision-making.
Incorporated Association	A membership based organisation with a constitution including stated objectives and managed by a committee elected by the membership.	A separate legal entity (can hold assets and manage finances; can sue and be sued). Accountable to members and Consumer Affairs Victoria.	Meets regularly to shape community engagement processes, consider community needs and priorities and make recovery decisions. Advocates for recovery projects. May manage projects

Table 3: Examples of governance for consideration. Table adapted from the Regional Development Company, Succession Planning Leadership Forum for Black Saturday CRCs (2010).

Along with your key role of supporting community recovery, good governance is a critically important area for your consideration. Funders will be keen to see how well you can work with your community and partners to deliver priorities, and the list of priorities identified has been community-led. When considering governance, you may like to include:

- ✓ How you will set up your group.
- ✓ How you will hold your meetings.
- ✓ What will be your terms of reference?
- ✓ How are you going to make decisions?
- ✓ Tips to keep your meetings relevant and focussed.
- ✓ What support you may need to set your group up (including resources and succession planning).
- ✓ Financial responsibilities, including reporting and auditing.
- ✓ Reporting against your priorities.
- ✓ How you might manage diverse views.
- ✓ How might you identify, build or maintain your social and other elements of community (or recovery) capital?



Options for Setting up your Group

ERV (2023) contains some good information regarding setting up a group focused on recovery activities. Some groups may call for an Expression of Interest (EOI) to be a part of the group, some will naturally be selected due to their skills or roles they can help. To help make the community group as representative as possible of your community, your group may contain small business owners, individuals from a minority group and those with leadership roles in your community. If you choose to use an EOI process, some of the following information may assist.

- ✓ All Expressions of Interest applications should be accompanied by information that helps reflect the group's purpose and the types of knowledge and experience that will be useful. This thinking can be considered outside an emergency, so individuals may be identified early.
- ✓ The Expression of Interest opportunity should be communicated clearly and as early as possible so that all individuals have an opportunity to participate and nominate.
- ✓ Transparency of nominations is the key - if you can, seek help from outside your community to ensure that a transparent selection process is run.
- ✓ All new members will be required to commit the time and have the energy that is required to be a part of a community group with recovery activities.
- ✓ Seek support from someone with experience to assist if needed.

ERV has developed a template that you may like to consider (or make your own) as an option.

We are calling for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for community members wishing to be involved in the [Name] Community Recovery Committee to help shape our community's recovery planning. If you are interested in becoming a chair or committee member, or would like to nominate someone for Committee Chair or Committee Member, please complete the form below. Return the completed form by email or post. [Insert details]. The EOI process will close on [XX/XX/2020].

NAME:

ADDRESS:

OCCUPATION:

EMAIL:

MOBILE:

I'm interested in the following positions on the committee: [chair/member]

My relevant skills and experience includes:

This expression of interest is seconded by:

NAME:

DATE:

Diagram 6: An Expression of Interest template that can be used to form community groups. ERV (2023) page 16.

Establishing the Purpose and Operation of your Group

Once you have your group members and decide on the name of your group (noting information on Community Recovery Committee information in Part 1), establishing your purpose and how you will operate as a group is an important consideration.

Options for your group to consider include:

- ✓ Understanding your role as a community group focussed on recovery (and your individual roles within the group).
- ✓ Team building – understanding your group dynamics.
- ✓ Understanding the role of external support (this information can be found in Appendix 1 – role of state and commonwealth government).
- ✓ Deciding on how to run a process to identify priorities.
- ✓ Agree on how you will make decisions together, deal with conflicts of interest, and manage individuals' privacy and confidentiality.
- ✓ Understanding good governance.

ERV (2023).

Community groups involved with recovery activities through the Black Summer Fires in 2019/2020 also found that a 'First 100-day Strategy' helped. This strategy set out tasks that were identified as critical within the first 30, 60, and 100 days of formation. A template of a simple '100-day Strategy' can be found in Appendix 2.



Terms of Reference

A Terms of Reference establishes the group's purpose, responsibilities, roles, and governance. ERV (2023) has provided a template for your consideration. You can also contact other groups to consider theirs.

[NAME] COMMUNITY RECOVERY GROUP: Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Community Recovery Group will coordinate the community-led recovery process to support the recovery efforts of those impacted by the disaster affecting our community.

2. Functions

The Community Recovery Group will:

- Identify community needs, including the needs of specific groups, and make recommendations to our relevant council and recovery agencies on actions, activities and plans to support recovery
- Develop a community recovery plan
- Monitor, communicate and review local recovery activities
- Liaise, consult, co-ordinate and negotiate, where appropriate, on behalf of the community with recovery agencies, government departments, recovery providers and the council in order to implement recovery programs and initiatives
- Advocate, where appropriate, in conjunction with the community, including vulnerable groups and communities of interest (e.g. youth, small business, tourism)
- Conduct an evaluation of recovery operations at a point in time agreed by the committee as an informal or formal debrief, as required.

3. Membership

Group members will determine the chair and subsequent membership of the group. Secretariat support will be provided by [Name, Council, ERV, or by other].

4. Frequency of meetings

The Community Recovery Group will meet [frequency] either face-to-face or via teleconference.

Diagram 7: Template for setting up a Terms of Reference for a community group. ERV (2023).

Options for Meeting Agendas

Once you have decided the frequency of meetings (noting that these can be weekly at the start and then move to fortnightly or monthly), a consideration is how you structure your meeting, including minutes, decision notes and attendees. There are many different types of agendas available for you to consider. Appendix 3 considers two options however, there are many more!

An option to incorporate into your meetings might be a focus on wellbeing, achievements, and a bit of fun. Viv McWaters (2019) has a fantastic resource called “Bring your meetings to life”, which has a great combination of activities, tips for new and existing groups and the types of meetings you may have as options. You can find further information about Viv’s book in this Toolbox’s Further Reading and Resources section.

There is an expectation that if committee members represent your group in other forums, information from that meeting or forum is always shared back into the community group. That way, it helps everyone stay informed, and it is also a great way to potentially share knowledge and resources if people know what is happening from other experiences!



We ended up redesigning our agenda to include a strategic focus under the headings of recovery, preparedness and sustainability.



Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

Knowledge Management

How will everyone in your group gain access to minutes, agendas, and other important documentation?

It is important how you choose to hold and share the information your committee generates. By considering this now and setting it up, when and if you need to set up a recovery group, it will be available.

Some community recovery groups have used Google Drive for sharing, and others have used Microsoft365 or set up a website to house all the information (which is a great way to share information with your community). Others have used Dropbox. Some of these options may incur a cost or have restrictions. If you are unsure what will work best for your group, seek advice from other committee groups or Council.

Information on technology and knowledge management can be found in this Toolbox’s Further Resources and Reading Section.

Incorporated Associations

“Becoming an incorporated association means that the members have decided to give their organisation a formal legal structure. This also means that the club or community group becomes a ‘legal person’, which is a legal identity that stays the same even if its members change. The legal entity can enter into contracts in its own name; for example, to borrow money or buy equipment. Incorporation protects the individual members of the association from legal liabilities.”

Consumer Affairs Victoria (2024).

An Incorporated Association must have a set of rules. The rules are a good way to establish the group’s purpose, operations, and objectives. These rules are different to a Terms of Reference.

- ✓ Rules are a written document (and may also be referred to as a Constitution).
- ✓ Rules act as a contract between the association and its members.
- ✓ Rules list the rights and responsibilities of members and office holders.
- ✓ Rules guide how you will make decisions.

There are rules called ‘Model Rules’ – basically a catch-all set of rules if your group does not want to make up its own. If the community chooses not to develop a set of rules, the ‘Model Rules’ will be assumed to apply to the group’s governance. A set of ‘Model Rules’ and an example of ‘Rules of Incorporation’ from the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association Inc. can be found in this document’s Further Reading and Resources section. Model Rules can also be found on the Consumer Affairs Victoria website (2024). The link to the website can be found under the Governance section in the Further Reading and Resources Section.

Management of Conflict within a Group

You will be meeting with and working with a diverse group of people with various views and opinions. It is fair to expect that people will not agree all the time. Determining how you will manage conflicts can be written into a memorandum of understanding or terms of reference. Will you rely on a ‘vote’ to carry a decision forward? Does ‘consensus’ need to be reached, or are you comfortable with having some of the group disagree while moving a project forward? Traditionally, a consensus approach has been used to determine an outcome. If needed, a paid mediator can be brought in to facilitate an outcome if parties cannot agree on an outcome.

To support making decisions, most community groups use a traditional meeting approach where committee members can either vote for or against a motion. Apart from a short round of discussion before voting, there is little opportunity to engage with other committee members and understand other points of view, or share individual ones.

One approach to help the decision-making process is called the Love It or Loathe It activity (McWaters, 2019) where committee members are invited to rate a motion to support reaching an agreed position. This activity is helpful because if there are individuals who do not agree with the decision, they can be asked to rate it, and if they were to like a decision, a conversation can take place as to why it has been rated this way. An activity like this promotes a more healthy discussion about a decision, with views and reflections being invited. The Love It or Loathe It Activity can be found in Appendix 4.

“ We have looked to how other communities deal with divergent viewpoints. The key is not rushing decision making (where possible) and encouraging ongoing discussion and respectful dialogue until all parties can reach a decision they can live with. If a decision cannot be reached, our default position was “we will do no harm”. Our focus will be progressing community driven initiatives we know have the community backing. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

“ If requests for subcommittees and working groups to identify local solutions for aspects of recovery are not successful, our group will collate concerns and suggestions and forward to the relevant authorities seeking resolution. ”



Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

Other options for consideration are more traditional, including a voting system. ERV (2023) has provided some information in case voting is required and written into rules or a constitution.

Method	Conduct	Counting	Comments
Show of hands	Chair requests those voting in favour of the motion to raise a hand. The procedure is repeated for those voting against the motion.	Usually, the chair counts the hands and states whether or not the motion has passed. The result is recorded in the minutes.	Voting by show of hands might be difficult when there are a large number of people voting. It might also exclude those who could not attend the meeting but want to participate.
Voting by ballot	Council can help CRGs prepare a ballot paper to distribute at a meeting, in the mail or online. It will have instructions to members (e.g. timeframes to vote, placing a number 1 against their first preference).	<p>Council can help check that the ballot papers have been collected and help to count votes.</p> <p>Council can inform the chair of the result. The chair will then announce the result at a meeting or electronically.</p>	<p>Voting by ballot might be preferred where there are large numbers within the community, and for communities that are geographically dispersed.</p> <p>Ballot papers can also be completed anonymously, which means voters are less likely to feel pressured to vote a certain way.</p>

Table 4: *Voting methods for a community group to consider moving a decision forward.*
ERV (2023), page 19.

These include the following examples which have been developed with CRCs and other associated community groups, including:

-  MADRA Committee Manual which includes information on reporting requirements and committee inductions.
-  Orbost Exhibition Centre Volunteer Handbook, which features videos to assist with recruitment and support for volunteers. It will also include volunteer policies and examples of codes of conduct.

To see what other CRCs have developed, please head to *(website to be confirmed)* or reach out to Council for the most updated information.

“ We wish we could have met with other community groups to explore different operating models. What worked well and what didn’t. ”

“ We would say, explore collaborative opportunities with other community groups by

- Travelling exhibitions and events.*
- Grant applications.*
- Community news production service. ”*

“ All would have helped us. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.





Resources

Resources

Social capital refers to the connections, shared values, trust and cooperation among people and groups. (Putnam, 1995).

“Think of social capital as networks or glue that holds a community together and helps the community make things happen.”

(Beaulieu, 2014).

Why is social capital important? The journey to recovery is likely to be much smoother (and able to start quicker), where communities know who they need to communicate with, and who they can rely upon for help and other resources before, during and after an emergency. Research on recent disasters (Aldrich, 2017, Quinn et al, 2022) has also shown that social capital can save lives and help communities to stay together after a disaster.

Resources to support a community group can mean anything. It can mean funding (financial capital) to get things done (through grants) and people! Or it could mean other kinds of resources. There is a call for governments to be better funded to assist community groups to help with recovery. However, government funding is expected to decline as we experience more frequent and intense emergency events. It is wise to plan and cost out recovery activities in advance to assist grant applications. There are contractors that can help you do this (for a fee). Council and ERV can assist you with understanding any potential funding constraints.

Resources can also include people’s energy and contribution (people capital). The sustainability of people’s energy to contribute to recovery activities and the movement of people change. Questions like “What can our community members contribute to?” are important. Some individuals may want to assist with some activities or events but may not be able to contribute to being a member of an ongoing group. Everyone is different, and it will depend on individual circumstances as to how much people can contribute, so it is important to share the load. Training in retaining volunteers and planning for succession can also be available to assist community groups, and looking after individuals and group wellbeing can be made available on request.

Have a think about a ‘Job’s Card’ approach to fill some of the gaps to understand your community’s resources. If your group needs certain skills, describe the job that needs to be done, the skills that are needed, and a rough estimate of time it will take to complete and then circulate it through your community. An example of a Job Card can be found in Appendix 5.

“We found that rotating roles and responsibilities helped keep people fresh and engaged.”

Community Recovery Committee,
East Gippsland.

The Further Reading and Resources Section also has information on volunteer management, grant writing and succession planning.

- “ Building Skills and fostering leadership among young people by:*
- Training/use of mentors*
 - Encourage and support people to step up into roles*
 - Opportunities for volunteers without having an official role*
 - Increase volunteerism and foster an inclusive ‘culture of doers’*
 - Include young people in co-design of plans and processes*
- ”*

“ Conduct a skills audit and develop a database of local skills and resources that can be tapped into when needed for specific tasks or projects. Try and broaden the reach to family members who have connections with your community.

”

“ We proposed that there was a person or two to handle grant writing and roles of secretary or treasurer with support.

”

“ A campaign may be useful to highlight volunteer opportunities, including the individual and community benefits to help recruit new volunteers.

”

“ We found using information from the Bureau of Statistics and any information on population and demographics helpful when applying for grants.

”



Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.



Top Tip:

When setting up a community group, consider who may be able to assist. Is there a community mentor available? Does Council know anyone?



Planning

Planning

Planning outside an emergency can take many forms. It may be useful to continue the planning already started due to an emergency by checking in to see if the information collected is still relevant and a priority.

- ✓ If you have not experienced an emergency, it is a great time to think about everything you might do and need if an emergency is to occur.

Keeping documents in a way that everyone can access them is a good way to keep people informed. Your group might also like to consider how you communicate what your intentions are and how you can gain community feedback. Being prepared is the key. Taking the time to plan with support outside an emergency will be beneficial should an emergency occur.

“ Don’t be distracted by the shiny things. You are much better off closing your eyes to all the opportunities/grants/funding and working with the community to understand what they want (and need). Bring these ideas into a plan. Make the plan understandable by the community, but where possible (and practical), link the plan to government goals and themes! ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

“ If there is time, develop a way to capture information for residents so they don’t need to tell their story repeatedly. It can be really hard for people to do that. Organisations really need to be more trauma-informed. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.



Relationships

Relationships

Community groups, important partners and relationships (organisations and agencies to help you).

Considering who is important to the group and how to manage relationships with organisations and agencies is a key step in identifying who you need to help you get things done. Community groups leveraging identified relationships will be strong in an emergency. Having the relationships documented ensures that information discussed and gained can be provided to new community members should they join the group. Appendix 6 shares some ideas on how to identify all the different agencies, organisations and groups that can help your recovery and how you may be able to

keep a record of them, with a review/update every six months, noting changes that occur in staffing across all levels of government. Something like this activity can be used as a group, as every member will think about who will be important in recovery and why. If your group does not have the time or expertise, Council or a paid facilitator may assist you in bringing all these elements together. Information on strategies to help influence relationships can be found in this Toolbox's Further Reading and Resources Section.

“ It would be great for Council to play a role in coordinating services to help our members such as the relationships like First Nations people, Emergency Recovery Victoria and harder to reach groups. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

“ It would be great to have community groups provide information on their group to share who they are, their story and what they would like to advocate for! ”

Organisation.

“ Seek to use local organisations already in place that have responsibility for recovery processes. The aim is not to duplicate support, but maximise recovery activities. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

“ Keep learning from other community groups undertaking community activities - it is great to hear how they overcome challenges because it saves us time. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

“ Government need to recognise the value of consulting community through the recovery groups before making decisions that impact them. Working with established relationships will help ensure community voices are heard. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

“ Consider having government and organisations at your table when it works for you. Those community groups that worked well and could withstand the many changes of staff within organisations, had good relationships with government at all levels. ”

Organisation.





Communication

Communication

Communication is all about how we might get information across through writing or speaking. Many communities have identified that communication is one of the highest priorities to ensure residents know and understand what is happening inside and outside an emergency. Communication was identified as the top priority within the Black Saturday, Lessons Learned Report (2011). Within this theme, they identified the following:

- ✓ *Start communicating ASAP.*
- ✓ *Build trust and confidence through communications and constantly repeat key messages.*
- ✓ *Try and reach out to everyone in your community and use various mediums.*
- ✓ *Consider communications beyond your own community.*

Community Recovery Committees (2011), page 3.

“ *It is important to have open rolling information to inform everyone of what is happening.* ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.



Successful methods of communication experienced through the Black Summer Fires by communities included:

- ✓ Social media
- ✓ Print media (like newspapers)
- ✓ Blackboards
- ✓ Newsletters
- ✓ Radio
- ✓ TV
- ✓ WhatsApps
- ✓ Telephone Trees
- ✓ Communiques from meetings
- ✓ Websites
- ✓ Media
- ✓ Word of mouth
- ✓ Have a Post Office Box set up
- ✓ Mailouts
- ✓ Letter drops
- ✓ Events
- ✓ Information on USBs and hand-delivered

“Community-led communication is powerful and effective... we carefully considered content, delivery and consultation.”

Community Recovery Committees (2011), page 4.

Developing a Communication Plan outside an emergency may be useful to assist you when you are experiencing an emergency response. Communication Plans may also be useful when you are developing priorities for grant proposals or how you will keep your community informed of what is happening within the group.

If there is time and funding, a communications facilitator may be able to assist your group with developing a plan. The plan itself does not need to be comprehensive; it will build on the relationship work you may have developed. Appendix 7 provides a template you may like to consider as an option if your group prioritises communication as an important tool.

There are many examples your group can work through on the internet or seek examples or templates from Council.

Community Communication Plans

- ✓ Developing an effective two-way communication with the whole community, including those who may be hard to reach.
- ✓ Maintaining communication options for people affected by emergencies who have moved away from the area.
- ✓ Continuing activities that enable people to 'come back' even if they have left the area and don't want to rebuild, both recent and previous residents.

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

“ Instead of Recovery groups running events, support local communities to put on their own events. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.





Engagement

Engagement

If and when engagement becomes a priority outside an emergency event, many opportunities and options exist for engaging your community. *Shiel (2015)*, *IAP2 (Professional Engagement Organisation)*, *Womens Trust (2022)*. The Internet and Council will also have great ideas to actively engage your community should you wish to have a go.

Some community groups undertook engagement on their own, and some used the help of council members or paid facilitators. Whatever you choose, outside an emergency is a really great way of working through what help you may need, who you would like to model any engagement on, and whether your group contains the skillset or whether looking externally is the right option.

There are many opportunities to learn more about community engagement through training or independent community facilitators or mentors, particularly outside an emergency event.

If you are in an emergency, please consider Part 3 – Identifying Community Needs to learn more about engagement and the types of engagement you might like to consider in an emergency.



“ We were committed to ensuring that all community voices were heard and not led with personal interests. ”

“ Some of the useful techniques for engagement we used included:

- A call for submissions for recovery priorities (to help those who couldn't make it to face to face meetings).*
- Large community meetings.*
- Chapters of plans were sent to the community for comment via the local newsletter (hard copies were left at local pubs) and emailed.*
- Group meetings for focus groups.*
- Some meetings were recorded to help with sharing information.*
- Voting forms were made available at local establishments.*
- Community consultation questions and answers were developed. ”*

“ With more information on minority groups living within communities, consider fostering those relationships outside an emergency before disaster hits. ”

“ Make sure to encourage community to participate in the photo opportunities, not just the politicians and heads of services! ”

“ We visited the Keeping Place in Bairnsdale to better understand our Aboriginal History and culture as a Recovery Group. It helped us to think about how we engage with our First Nations People. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.



Case Study

To help engage our communities, the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association Inc (MADRA) identified gaps in recovery services and infrastructure. Once that was done, results were posted in the windows of the BRV Hub and the Genoa Pub. Paper copies were also made available of the results.

Community members were then invited to add to the list via an email or a letter. Suggestion boxes were also added in Genoa and Mallacoota.

This approach worked well.

“ Not all community members want to engage. To overcome this, we adopted a values-based approach to recovery based on a mutual love of our people and a desire to keep the pristine wilderness environment. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.





Training

Training

A number of training opportunities often present outside of an emergency for community group members to experience. There may be opportunities through the Council or other training providers.

Undertaking an activity like a 'Skills Audit', whereby understanding where the strengths of the group lie and where the gaps are, can inform the type of training that is needed. When preparing to transition the group, it may also be a good opportunity to assess what has worked well and understand gaps to help inform the training that might be needed for your community and your group.

CRCs identified a number of training opportunities after Black Summer including:

- ✓ Recruiting and training volunteers
- ✓ Creating promotional material using Canva
- ✓ Attracting and engaging volunteers
- ✓ Technology tips for community groups
- ✓ Grant writing training
- ✓ Working together to optimise our time and effort
- ✓ Governance/succession planning
- ✓ Recruiting and retaining volunteers – setting up a succession plan
- ✓ Governance training for community groups
- ✓ Succession planning and mobilising our strengths
- ✓ Attracting, engaging and recruiting volunteers
- ✓ Engagement techniques
- ✓ Community Leadership
- ✓ Psychological First Aid
- ✓ First Aid (Level 1 and 2 with CPR)
- ✓ Engagement training (IAP2) as an example
- ✓ Meeting and advocacy skills
- ✓ Potential leaders to develop skills and confidence
- ✓ Gippsland Community Leadership Program
- ✓ Conflict resolution for community groups

There are many opportunities to upskill outside an emergency, all you need to do is ask!

Part 3:

In an Emergency

An Acknowledgement

An acknowledgement is made that individuals in the community are often under extreme pressure due to many demands at once. It is ok to say no to outside requests while you are helping your community recover. In the Black Summer fires, many communities said yes to many things, which likely put them at greater risk of fatigue, trauma, and exhaustion due to the fear of missing out. There is no one size fits all in the recovery journey, every community is unique.

Some communities will respond well to understanding the key themes (as in Part 2) and apply them to their operations. Some communities, like the ERV framework, will respond well to a linear approach. How you would like to use them is up to you.

The following part of the Toolbox steps you through the recovery process that occurs during or immediately following a disaster. It includes a summary of the steps and more detailed descriptions of each step.



The Emergency Recovery Framework

Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) has identified six steps to recovery (2023). Depending on your community, you may like to add more or remove some.



Diagram 8: Six Steps to Recovery. Adapted from Emergency Recovery Victoria (2023).

The Six Steps of Recovery - Summary

While it is noted that the ERV (2023) has six steps, where you choose to start within the “steps” is completely up to your community group, depending on where you are at. You may like to start at plan and prepare or start at the start! It is completely up to you and your group.

Step 1: Form or re-form a community group

Form or re-form a community group that listens to the needs of your community.

Step 2: Set community recovery priorities

Set community recovery priorities to help consider the impacts of the disaster and challenges. This is also a great time to consider a shared community vision to help guide priorities and reflect them in a Community Recovery Plan. Engagement with your community is a really important consideration in Step 2.

Step 3: Identify delivery needs

Once the priorities have been considered and agreed upon, identifying delivery needs is an important step. This step identifies what priorities are worked on to understand what actions need to happen and what resources are required to bring the priorities to life (like funding, contractors, grants, etc).

Step 4: Deliver recovery activities

This is when the ‘rubber hits the road’. If funding is available for assistance from a paid contractor to help with the project delivery, great! Oversight of the delivery of recovery activities is a key requirement for community groups. What ‘oversight’ looks like is what will work for you. Some community groups pay for project leads or project managers as a part of the project. Some have the skills within the group who can lead the work voluntarily. Whatever this looks like to you, it is important to keep good records of expenditures and updates for the project are provided to the community group to ensure good governance.

Step 5: Check in on progress

Check in on progress to ensure the community knows where the project is and how it is proceeding, and that your group can identify and manage any risks that may present.

Step 6: Plan and prepare for future emergencies

This includes understanding what can be learned for next time and documenting these. There is also space here to understand what may be done outside an emergency, including the progression of priorities and reporting back to your community, funders, and organisations who have supported you.

STEP



Form or Re-form a Community Group

Step 1: Form or Re-form a Community Group

There are some useful questions to consider that might help you set yourselves up in an emergency event (hopefully your community has discussed this outside an emergency, but if it hasn't – that's ok!).

Here are some things to think about.

- ✓ What was the impact on our community?
- ✓ Who was flame-affected or non-flame-affected/directly or indirectly affected (if other emergency events)?
- ✓ Are we looking at our community group as representative across a larger area (much like Cann Valley, which took in smaller surrounding communities as well as Cann River), or are we going to consider a smaller footprint (like Sarsfield or Clifton Creek, which had clear delineation of the area they were working within)?
- ✓ How is everyone in the community doing? Would they prefer a more formal approach (making plans for short-, medium - and longer-term recovery) or an informal approach (meeting individuals where they are at and responding to assistance when it is needed)?
- ✓ Who might you need support from?
- ✓ When do we transition away from a community group managing recovery? How do we go about doing that?

Part Two of this Toolbox - 'Outside an Emergency Event' provides information on forming or re-forming a community group. The Governance section provides information on how a community group may like to organise itself (formal or informal) and the options available to you.

“There are many people who have experience in setting up groups and can be available to guide the community to help in the initial phase. These include independent facilitators, community mentors and East Gippsland Shire Council.”

STEP



Set Community Recovery Priorities

Step 2: Set Community Recovery Priorities

Setting community recovery priorities is an important step towards recovery. If a community group has been overseeing recovery activities as a result of previous emergency responses, it is important to pay attention to prior recovery priorities and other work that is happening locally.

If a group has been set up due to a new emergency event, seeking input from the community to guide recovery is crucial. Understanding community recovery priorities ensures that all cultures, perspectives, and values have been understood.

Emergency Recovery Victoria (2023) has identified five things to consider when preparing for community recovery:

- 1** Identify your community's cultures, perspectives, and values and how they will be considered in prioritising recovery priorities.
- 2** Seek to understand prior community recovery planning that has been undertaken, you may not need to start from the beginning!
- 3** Ensure that immediate, short, medium and long-term needs are considered.
- 4** Put community needs first – the needs of government, while important, are not the priority.
- 5** Consider your support including the options of mentors, independent facilitators, and paid administrative support. Having independent support can also remove the issue of bias or perceived 'personal agenda' setting.



Engaging with Your Community

As previously discussed in Part 2 of the Toolbox under “Engagement”, a continuous conversation with your community outside an emergency event will assist you in determining community priorities.

Your community contains many identities, values, strengths, cultures, ages, populations, and genders. Capturing these can take time. It is also acknowledged that many individuals will engage at a time that is right for them. Hearing from everyone who wants to or can contribute is the key to ensuring a community recovery plan that is representative of the whole community.

East Gippsland Shire Council has built relationships over many years with different parts of your community, including older people, young people, children, people experiencing vulnerabilities, First Nations

people, people with different abilities and support needs, and migrant and refugee communities. It is important to connect with the East Gippsland Shire Council to ensure that any specific request for community feedback can be strengthened through their work and connections with various groups.

We also have many First Nations people, Traditional Owners, and people from the Torres Strait Islands living in our communities. Emergency Recovery Victoria has developed a Strategy for Aboriginal Community-led Recovery, which provides information regarding the key priorities for Aboriginal community-led outcomes with help from government, Council, and delivery partners. More information can be found in “Further Reading and Resources” on considering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in recovery activities.



How do we Engage with our Community?

There are many methods of community engagement available to you. The decision to 'engage' will be highly dependent on what the purpose of your engagement is. Are you engaging to find out some information? Is your purpose of engagement to get people involved in decisions that affect them? Are you engaging because you want to share some information? Or is it because you would like some feedback? Would you like it to be formal or informal? Mapping your networks and their communication preferences will help you plan your engagement.

Some examples of different ways you can engage your community include:

Method	Benefits or Limitations
Public meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows the views of individuals and community groups to be expressed.• Good platform for simple, consistent information and key messages to large numbers from a community.• Might be scope to break up into smaller discussion groups or provide information-feedback booths.• Not a strong forum for dialogue.• Meeting facilitation skills needed to channel energy productively.
Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Useful with relatively homogeneous groups. Suited to smaller interest and population groups.• Good for generating and canvassing ideas rather than decisions. Allows for creative thinking, if well facilitated.
Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can produce structured exploration of issues, options and ideas and future vision, direction and actions.• Larger groups and broader agenda possible.• Format can include smaller groupwork fed back to the whole group. Needs skilled facilitation.
Roundtables and forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A joint planning/decision making forum between council and key stakeholders with expertise about a specific issue.• Helps to establish a collaborative process from the outset. Suited to dealing with topics with technical content.• Can prepare informed recommendations for broader community consideration.• Challenges in achieving a representation.

Method	Benefits or Limitations
Electronic surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide opportunities to reach specific audiences where they live. Can work well for both small and large interest and population groups, provided communications and stakeholder engagement strategies are tailored and delivered appropriately. • Face to face interpretation is not possible so what is requested must be very clear and brief. • Good for gathering ideas and canvassing options. • Excludes groups of the communities who do not participate online.
Vision surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide opportunities for input from people who are more visually orientated. • Suited to broad invitation, particularly engaging children. • Suited to dealing with a specific built or natural environment matters with cultural or heritage implications. • Useful to feedback visual depictions of options.
Onsite engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can produce structured exploration of issues, options and ideas and future vision, direction and actions. • Larger groups and broader agenda possible. • Format can include smaller groupwork fed back to the whole group. Needs skilled facilitation.
Roundtables and forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could include walking a roadside with the community and horticulture expert to consider roadside vegetation management / clearing options. • Expertise is on hand to explain and discuss technical aspects. • Suited to dealing with a specific built or natural environment matters with cultural or heritage implications.

*Table 5: Different engagement methods to assist with identifying community priorities.
Adapted from: Emergency Recovery Victoria (2023).*

Part 2 of the Community Recovery Toolbox also contains information on additional techniques for engaging your community.

Many facilitators, mentors and consultants can help guide you through this aspect of community engagement.

Engagement with you as a Community Group

How organisations and agencies engage you is a big consideration for your group. How do you want to be engaged? How do you want to spend your time with organisations and agencies? What do you need them to know and stick with? Understanding this as a group, reflecting the voice of the community is important.

- ✓ Spending time working through how you want organisations and agencies to engage with you will strongly assist your group's relationships, well-being and project delivery.

“Community-generated solutions to recovery issues are more cost-effective, fit for purpose and enduring, and reflect community values.”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

“Think like an entrepreneur!”

Independent advocate.



Top Tip:

Keep providing feedback to agencies and advocate for the time-frames to work for your community – so that you can keep pace with your own recovery and that of your community.

A Word About Community Recovery Plans

A Community Recovery Plan is a document that holds all the communities' priorities and other information. It can include how a priority might come to life, who might be responsible, timelines you have set, resources (including how you might get the funding like a grant or voluntary contribution), and how you might evaluate it. There are many different ways to develop a Community Recovery Plan, and it may take time to refine, reflecting that priorities may change depending on where your community is in your recovery and whether a project is an immediate need, a short-term, medium-term or long-term priority.

There are a few examples of Community Recovery Plans within East Gippsland. You will note that they are all different. The Wairewa Community Recovery Committee's initial Recovery Plan in November 2020 is shown in Diagram 9. Other recovery plans were finalised between 2021 and 2024 (for example, Buchan, Omeo, Sarsfield, and Mallacoota). Copies of these plans can be found on the Further Reading and Resources page and on the Council website.

There is no right or wrong way to develop a community plan (or template). As long as your plan represents your community priorities, how it is developed or written can take many forms.

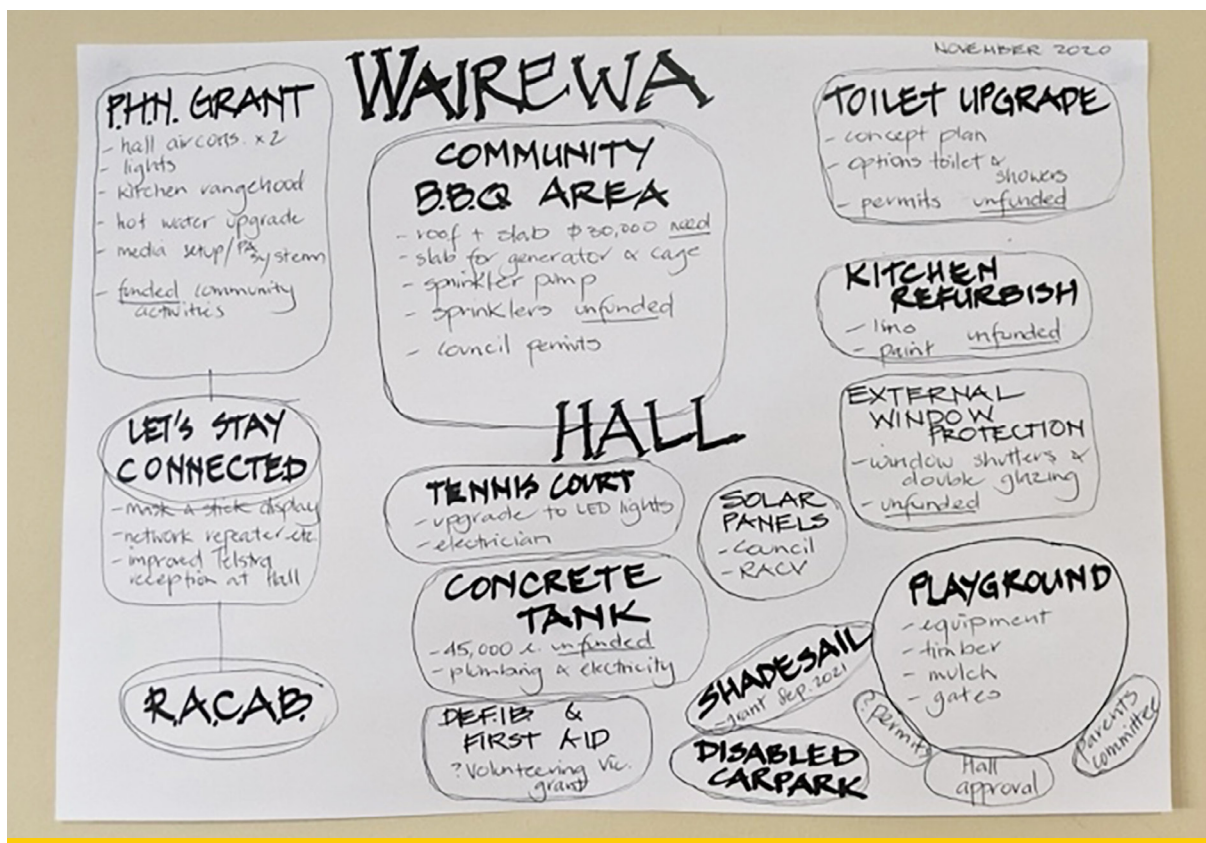


Diagram 9: A copy of the Wairewa Recovery Plan from November 2020.

There is no rush and take as long as needed. Having assistance at the community engagement stage to identify needs that are important and, where possible, align with the five pillars of recovery will be helpful.

As a reminder, the five pillars are:

- ✓ People and Wellbeing.
- ✓ Aboriginal Culture and Healing.
- ✓ Environment and Biodiversity.
- ✓ Business and Economy.
- ✓ Buildings and Infrastructure.

Emergency Recovery Victoria (2023).

Your community group can develop the plan, with support from a community mentor, or you can seek funding to have a consultant run the community engagement and planning process for you. ERV (2023) has provided a template to assist you in collecting the most important information (priorities) to inform a Community Recovery Plan. It can be found in Appendix 8.

“It is important to have a community endorsed recovery plan and comprehensive voting report. These provide context and evidence of a transparent process and community preferences and priorities. Not having a community voice means recovery solutions will be imposed.”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

“The worst we can be told is ‘no’. It is good to be aspirational for the community as we can compromise but not bargain up.”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.

STEP



Identify Delivery Needs

Step 3: Identify Delivery Needs

Once you have moved through Step 2 and have an idea of the community priorities, you can work to identify the delivery needs.

An example proforma is available in Appendix 9 which might help identify what is needed, including:

- ✓ Money.
- ✓ People.
- ✓ Experience.
- ✓ How you may get a project up and running.
- ✓ Having help from volunteers in the community, organisations and agencies you have identified.

Many websites are available to assist with the beginnings of project management and what may be needed. There may be members of the community willing to provide support to the project or deliver the project. If there is an option to share the skills you seek to help the project succeed because you have undertaken this planning, now is the perfect time to share the project and seek help.

Being clear on what you need to deliver the project will assist in who you can ask for help. If you need to develop a grant for your project, a simple checklist has been developed (Appendix 10) for things to consider when developing your grant. While each grant will be different in its needs and information may vary, having the key

areas of your project understood will assist with framing a grant application. (Happy Changemakers, 2023). Other resources on writing applications can be found in the Further Reading and Resources section.

Ensuring agencies and organisations partners aware of your needs at this point is also a good option. They may be aware of opportunities for funding, mentors or grants that may have been missed or you have not heard of.

It is absolutely okay for community members to meet on their own without organisations or agencies present, especially if the group feels that partners may constrain conversation. This is your community's group. You have the right to invite anyone you feel needs to be involved.



Top Tip:

If you are developing a grant for a priority project, add a cost for a 'celebration' so that everyone in the community can come together and enjoy the achievement.







STEP



Deliver Recovery Activities

Step 4: Deliver Recovery Activities

Delivering recovery activities is where the action happens, once the planning for the project has been done (Step 3). ERV (2023) suggests the following list to consider when you are delivering projects.

-  Provide good governance for the project; ensure the community group meets regularly and the project lead provides updates on activities, risks, and issues. This can be done as a standing agenda item (something that is discussed at every meeting) before progressing into the main business.
-  Continue to communicate project updates. You can develop a “Communication Plan” for each project, which will determine who you will communicate to and the method of communication (social media/newsletter) as examples.
-  Review all projects at least quarterly to determine whether the priorities are being met and whether any new priorities have emerged.
-  If needed, continue engaging with your communities and partners to ensure you, as a group, are working with the most up-to-date and relevant information.
-  Advocate your interests and for support when needed.
-  When the priority has been delivered, celebrate your achievement!

Appendix 11 provides information as a checklist for you to use as a reminder.

STEP



Check in on Progress

Step 5: Check in on Progress

At the right time that suits your community and your group, you may like to consider a more holistic view of how the group is going. To help with reflections and insights, you may like to consider thoughts from your group, the community, and the organisations supporting you with these three questions:

- 1** What has worked well, positively contributing to the recovery process?
- 2** What improvements can be made to better support recovery activities?
- 3** What still requires our ongoing attention?

When the group is ready, questions like these can be profound and enlightening. An option so that everyone can contribute might be the opportunity to have an independent facilitator lead the conversation. It will allow everyone's views to be captured and allow feedback to be provided if you choose to ask people outside your community group (like community members and organisational partners). An example of gaining insights can be seen in the Lessons Learned from Black Saturday (Community Recovery Committees 2011), found in the Further Reading and Resources section.

Deciding what to do with the information that you have collected

Once you have collected feedback on progress, you can draw on these insights and reflections and share them however you like (provided you have permission from those who have provided feedback). They may be good to hold onto when debrief opportunities occur or to write a more formal 'progress report' and the areas you seek to continue, stop or keep and then share with your community. Sharing back to the community who have provided information, in all steps, is a crucial way of ensuring they feel that they have been heard. There are many ways to use the information, and it will be your community group's choice to decide what you want to do.

STEP



Plan and Prepare for Future Emergencies

Step 6:

Plan and Prepare for Future Emergencies

Using the information gathered in Step 5, you may seek to build on the feedback and use it to help plan and prepare for the next emergency.

For some community groups, evaluating the effectiveness of the overall recovery effort may be useful by determining 'To what extent have recovery goals been achieved?'.

Some individuals in the community may have evaluation expertise and can help your group do an evaluation like this. Many expert evaluation specialists who work as consultants can also assist in helping to gather, analyse and present this information. Deciding on what and how to use the evaluation outcomes will help determine what kind of support you may need in the future.

Example evaluation framework

Purpose of the evaluation:

GOAL

(e.g. To ensure those affected by the disaster are provided with opportunities to reconnect with their communities.)

MEASURES

(e.g. Number of events; participation levels in community events; community perceptions of community connectedness.)

INFORMATION

(e.g. Schedule of events; records of attendance; survey of community perceptions.)

RESPONSIBLE

(e.g. Community Development Officer.)

TIMEFRAME

(e.g. Progress Report due December 2020; Final Report due June 2021.)

1.

COMMUNICATION

(e.g. All stakeholders will be advised of intention to undertake the evaluation. Key stakeholders will be invited onto an Evaluation Reference Group. A presentation of key findings will be delivered to a senior executive group. A copy of the final report will be available to all stakeholders.)

RESOURCES

(e.g. The evaluation will be conducted internally, led by the Community Development Officer. \$10,000 will be budgeted for the evaluation process.)

Diagram 10: Benefits and Limitations of Community Engagement Methods, EMV Disaster Recovery Toolkit, Book 8.

Transitioning of a Community Group after an Emergency

Transitioning a community group away from recovery to other things will differ for each group. For example, the timing of transition, if milestones and projects have been delivered and how they went, community planning processes and moving away from recovery activities will differ for each group.

It is wise to consider this when a community group for recovery is set up. Some groups may continue to exist in the same way, still exist but in a different way, or decide to dissolve. Dissolving a community group that has been looking after recovery within a community can take many forms. Some group members may transition back into the existing community representative group and some stayed on as a group looking after recovery. Another option to consider is how you will handover or transition your knowledge, especially any insights, reflections, minutes and financial information.

“ Auspiced by a local organisation that provides an active voice for community, we have coordinated recovery planning post Black Summer. Our plan is to remain like this post recovery. ”

Community Recovery Committee, East Gippsland.



Further Reading and Resources

Further Reading and Resources

Lessons learned from previous events, both inside and outside East Gippsland

Lessons learned by Community Recovery Committees of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires May 2011:

bit.ly/3XVDPzR

Children and Young People with a Disability:

www.cwanwg.com.au

Emergency Management Information

Strategy for Aboriginal Community-led Recovery:

www.vic.gov.au/strategy-aboriginal-community-led-recovery

Community Recovery Toolkit – Emergency Management Victoria:

www.vic.gov.au/community-recovery-toolkit-0

Victorian Council of Social Service (2021) Who's Who and What do they Do? Recovery from Emergencies and Disasters:

bit.ly/4bk1tZL

Social, Community and Recovery Capital

Aldrich 2017. The Importance of Social Capital in Building Community Resilience. (PDF) The Importance of Social Capital in Building Community Resilience:

www.researchgate.net

Quinn et al (2020). Guide to Post-Disaster Recovery Capitals (ReCap). Pilot - Australian edition. Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne:

www.recoverycapitals.org.au

Wellbeing

Psychological First Aid: An Australian Guide to Supporting People Affected by Disaster:

bit.ly/4eGmYXk

Emerging Minds Community Trauma Toolkit:

bit.ly/4eGmYXk

Phoenix Australia Disaster Hub:

www.phoenixaustralia.org/disaster-hub

Travelling the Road to Recovery. Rob Gordon Videos:

services.dffh.vic.gov.au/travelling-road-recovery-video-series

White et.al. (2020). A Perspective on the Effects of Stress on Decision Making Following Disaster:

bit.ly/45FaR8Y

Engagement

Victorian Women's Trust. (2022). Kitchen Table Conversations, A Guide for Sustaining our Democratic Culture, Melbourne:

www.vwt.org.au/projects/kitchen-table-conversations

International Association for Public Participation:

www.iap2.org/mpage/Home

Dr Helen Sheil and the Study Circle Kit. Centre for Rural Communities, The CRC's Vision is of People and Place Existing in Harmony:

www.ruralcommunities.com.au

Governance

Training from ACNC:

www.acnc.gov.au/tools/online-learning

Annual Report Templates:

www.acnc.gov.au/tools/templates/annual-general-meeting-templates

Governance Support and Meeting Planning, Processes Example:

www.communitydirectors.com.au/tools/annual-board-compliance-calendar-template

Auspicings:

www.nfplaw.org.au/free-resources/working-with-others/what-is-auspicings

DGR Status:

www.acnc.gov.au/tools/factsheets/deductible-gift-recipients-dgr-and-acnc

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action - Committee of Management Guidelines:

www.deeca.vic.gov.au/boards-and-governance/committees-of-management

Mallacoota and District Recovery Association Inc. (MADRA):

www.madrecovery.com/

Model Rules – Consumer Affairs Victoria:

bit.ly/4cwiMZ7

Community Recovery Plans and other information including Local Incident Management Plans

Buchan, Gelantipy and Districts Renewal Association Inc (2023). Buchan, Gelantipy and Districts Community Renewal Plan 2023-2028:

[Community Recovery \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au)

Mallacoota and District Recovery Association (2022). Community-Led Recovery Plan V2:

[Community Recovery \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au)

Omeo Region Community Recovery Association (2024):

[Community Recovery \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au)

Sarsfield Community Association (2023). Sarsfield 2030:

[Community Recovery \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au)

Local Incident Management Plans:

[Emergency Management \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au)

Data Collection and Impact/Outcome Measurements. Opportunities for the Future:

[VCOSS](http://vcoss.vic.gov.au)

Technology and Knowledge Management

Technology including Project Management, Minutes, Records and Reporting
Recommended that each CRC (or Centralised Governance/Project Support) has a Google Drive/Email/Website or MS 365 for File Storage and Sharing.

Managing Resources including Grant Management, People and Funding

Volunteer Management - Aligned with National Standards for Volunteer Involvement:

www.volunteeringaustralia.org/nationalstandards

Grant Writing:

[How to write a grant application | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Succession Planning (can be adapted to fulfill community group needs):

[Develop your succession plan | business.gov.au](#)

Relationships

Culture and Code of Conduct/Ethics:

www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda-code-of-ethics

Collaborative Governance:

www.regenerativecommunities.com.au/collaborative-governance

Appendix

Appendix 1

Local, State and Federal information adapted from VCOSS (2022).



This symbol indicates stakeholders with formalised roles in an emergency.

Local Level

Stakeholders with formalised roles

Role in Emergency and Disaster Recovery

Local Government - Municipal Councils



Lead agency for:

- ☒ Establishing and managing emergency relief centres and recovery centres/hubs
- ☒ Arranging emergency shelter for displaced households
- ☒ Forming and supporting Community Recovery Committees
- ☒ Coordination of impact and needs assessments

Also responsible for:

- ☒ Vulnerable Persons Register
- ☒ Public health advice and community information
- ☒ Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Planning
- ☒ Hazard mitigation and prevention
- ☒ Provision of broader emergency planning, response, relief and recovery support, e.g., economic recovery

State Level

Stakeholders with formalised roles

Role in Emergency and Disaster Recovery

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV)

The central body for emergency management in Victoria, EMV leads emergency management arrangements by maximising sector collaboration and capacity.

EMV supports the Emergency Management Commissioner to lead and coordinate emergency preparedness, response and recovery across the sector and strengthen community capacity.

- ✓ Coordination of government policy and the implementation of sector reforms
- ✓ Strategic coordination of spontaneous volunteers
- ✓ Administers the Victorian Natural Disaster Financial Assistance scheme and other government financial assistance schemes

Bushfire Recovery Victoria *



Responsible for coordinating state and regional bushfire recovery. Established in 2020 after the Black Summer bushfires, BRV's role continues to evolve across all types of disaster recovery.

- ✓ Leads and coordinates recovery frameworks, planning and programs for wrap-around service systems for affected people
- ✓ Works with communities, local government, state departments, Federal Government and other organisations to ensure appropriate and integrated recovery supports
- ✓ Administers recovery grants in coordination with Commonwealth, state and local governments
- ✓ Works with local government to establish and operate Recovery Hubs and Community Recovery Committees

* Name may be changed.

State Level *continued*

Stakeholders with formalised roles

Role in Emergency and Disaster Recovery

Vic Police



Providing information and education for resilience and long-term recovery.

During **response** and in consultation with the control agency, Vic Police are responsible for:

- ☒ Evacuation
- ☒ Traffic management
- ☒ Provision of media coordination
- ☒ Registration of evacuees, in conjunction with Red Cross
- ☒ Food supply and critical infrastructure damage or disruption
- ☒ Deceased person identification

Ambulance Victoria



Response: Relief coordination agency for health and medical assistance and first aid.

- ☒ Coordinates pre-hospital care
- ☒ Establishes field primary care clinics or other health relief assistance

Vic SES



A volunteer-based organisation providing emergency assistance to minimise the impact of emergencies and strengthen capacity to plan, respond and recover.

Recovery: Providing assistance and advice to communities affected by flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake or landslides.

Response: Control agency for storm, flood, earthquake, tsunami and landslide throughout Victoria, also involved in road rescue.

State Level *continued*

Stakeholders with formalised roles

Role in Emergency and Disaster Recovery

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)



Responsible for the prevention and suppression of fire in Melbourne and major regional centers in the FRV fire district.



Provides incident assistance and advice to people impacted by fire and other emergencies



Provides support for recovery activities

Response: Control agency for fire on private land in country Victoria, fire and explosion and hazardous materials incidents.

Country Fire Authority (CFA)



Volunteer-based emergency service responsible for the prevention and suppression of fire in country areas of Victoria.

Recovery: Assists farmers to repair and restore fences and replaces essential water used for fire operations.

Response: Control agency for fire on private land in country Victoria, fire and explosion and hazardous materials incidents.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)

Works to mitigate the impact of emergencies on the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals and those at greater risk.

Lead agency for:



Coordination of case support services



Coordination of housing and accommodation, psychosocial support, individual and household assistance



Administers emergency financial assistance through the DFFH Personal Hardship Assistance Program



Arranges emergency financial assistance through the DFFH Personal Hardship Assistance Program



Provides psychosocial support through information, practical assistance, emotional support, assessment of immediate needs and referrals to support agencies and services

State Level *continued*

Stakeholders with formalised roles	Role in Emergency and Disaster Recovery
Department of Health (Part of previous Department of Health and Human Services)	<p>Works to minimise the impact of emergencies on individuals, communities, and the health system.</p> <p>Lead agency for: health services and public health protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coordinates training and deployment of additional health professionals ✓ Provides advice on accommodation standards, safe drinking water, food, waste management and communicable disease ✓ Maintains access to primary and acute health services
Family Safety Victoria	<p>Lead agency for family violence services and information with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.</p> <p>For current statewide services visit <i>Family Violence Services</i></p>
Department of Premier and Cabinet	<p>Whole of Victorian Government leadership and collaborative response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coordinates state response to cyber security incidents ✓ Advises Premier on power to declare State of Disaster ✓ Advises Premier to activate additional Disaster Recovery Financial Assistance ✓ Lead agency in organisation of state-wide public appeals

State Level *continued*

Stakeholders with formalised roles

Role in Emergency and Disaster Recovery

First Peoples: State Relations

(Newly established group within Department of Premier and Cabinet)

Works with First Peoples to support the protection, management and rehabilitation of First Peoples' cultural heritage on public land.

Inspector General Emergency Management

Provides an independent statutory role appointed under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*.



Undertakes reviews, evaluations and assessments of sector arrangements, performance, capacity and capability for assurance to government and the community



Monitors the implementation of recommendations and actions to ensure they are effective and sustainable in the long term


National Level

Stakeholders with formalised roles	Role in Emergency and Disaster Recovery
National Recovery and Resilience Agency (Division of Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet)	<p>Provides national leadership and coordination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Combines expertise in natural disaster recovery and resilience. Works closely with affected communities and all levels of government and industry ✓ Disaster risk reduction and recovery functions of the Department of Home Affairs (below) ✓ Administers Australian Government Grants ✓ Rural Financial Counselling program
Emergency Management Australia	<p>The national government disaster management organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coordinates and collaborates with State Government who have emergency responsibilities in their jurisdictions ✓ Administers financial assistance to state governments to support costs (Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements) and Australian Government's Disaster Recovery Payments to individuals

Appendix 2


100 Day Plan

This template may assist you with setting your goals, tasks or actions to achieve your goals and keep your group focussed on the things that matter. It may also assist you when discussing your needs and timeframes with your organisational partners so they are aware of your plans and timeframes.




100 Day Plan


By Day 30

**Key goals**

By Day 60

**Key goals**

By Day 100

**Key goals**

Appendix 3

Meetings and meeting agendas

There is a vast array of information about how to hold a meeting and the support you may need to do that.

Work with East Gippsland Shire Council to see if additional resources can be arranged to assist with your meetings, including taking notes, hiring rooms, and coordinating invitations. Or better still, if there is funding to work with a project officer to support your group's administrative duties.

Agendas and meeting running can be as flexible as the community group requires. It is important to ensure the group agrees on the structure and frequency of meetings, and a process for making decisions, noting that there may be areas that must be done (like financial reporting).

Below are a couple of examples of agendas for consideration.

Example 1: A more inclusive approach

Ask everyone present to take **their own notes** of the meeting.
Propose the Secretary captures:

- ✓ Date
- ✓ Meeting Intention
- ✓ Attendees
- ✓ Key Decisions
- ✓ Tasks and Ownership



Ten minutes before the meeting is due to wrap up, attendees review and agree on what has been captured.

Thinking about capturing details this way prevents the often prolonged follow up needed to 'approve' minutes (Brown, 2018). In summary – it will potentially save time because sending out minutes for everyone to approve will be minimised. This approach may not be an option as you are setting up your group, however when things are running well, it may assist.

Reflecting the key decisions, tasks and ownership may look like this (Example 1)

Date:	_____
Attendees:	_____
Acknowledgement of Country:	_____
Intention of the Meeting:	_____

[illegible]

Review and agreed by: _____

We agree that this document will be kept...

Example 2: A more standard approach

Another example of a meeting agenda may cover important insights and be themed or list what the group thinks are the most important things to cover in the early days.

An agenda may look like the example below.

Date:

Attendees:

Time of meeting:

Venue:

Agenda Item	Who	Time
1: Welcome, housekeeping and Acknowledgement of Country	Chair	5 mins
2: Apologies	Chair	5 mins
3: Standing Agenda Items: Minutes of the last meeting and actions Wellbeing update Project updates Financial report Risks/Mitigations 100 day plan	Chair	Decide how long this will take
General Business	Chair	TBC
Next meeting date and items	Chair	TBC
Wrap up and Close	Chair	TBC

We agree that the document will be kept:

Appendix 4

Love it or Loathe it Activity

A decision-making approach described by Viv McWaters (2019), page 28.

Love it - Loathe it

A sociometric decision-making approach.

PURPOSE:

- ☒ Making decisions.
- ☒ Revealing people's positions regarding a decision.

TIME: 5 - 30 minutes

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: 5 - 30 minutes

SUPPLIES: Prepare a life-sized scale as follows:



ACTIVITY FLOW

- ☒ Introduce the decision that has to be made.
- ☒ Introduce the scale.
- ☒ Ask people to stand up.
- ☒ Re-state the decision to be made and invite people to stand on the scale according to their choice.
- ☒ Lead a discussion amongst participants while still standing on the scale about what their choices mean.

Appendix 5

Job Cards

Example:

Job Card

Project name:

Brief description of the role/s:

Skills required:

Time commitment:

Are you interested?

Please contact (name of lead person) from the (name of group) on (email address/phone number).



Appendix 6

Identifying and documenting key organisational relationships

This exercise can help you identify the different agencies, organisations, and groups that can assist you in your community's recovery journey. Below are a couple of examples of agendas for consideration. This is an important step in building your networks (social capital).

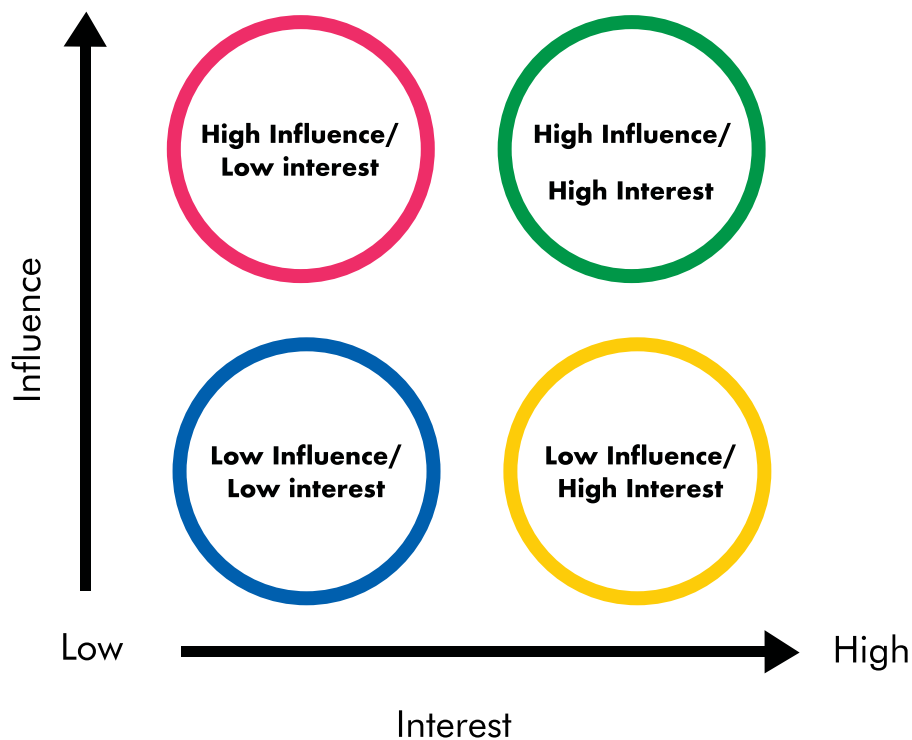
Top Tips:



- ✓ Try to gain funding so you can work with an independent facilitator to help you understand your organisational partners.
- ✓ Approach your organisational partners early, even outside an emergency. This will help you track who is doing what, especially if staff change within organisations and agencies. Try and review the organisations your community are working with yearly.

Some questions to get you started:

- ✓ **Who:** Who are the agencies, organisations and groups, what are their contact details and their role?
- ✓ **What:** What support do you need from them?
- ✓ **How:** How do they need to be involved with your group?
- ✓ **Risks:** What are the risks to having this relationship?
- ✓ **Influence:** What is the level of influence for this person with your group?



- High influence/low interest:** These partners have no real interest however, when they do become interested, they may use their influence to change the outcomes.
- High influence/high interest:** You may like to really invest in the relationships within this circle. Keep the partners engaged and actively involved in what you are doing.
- Low influence/low interest:** You may like to keep these partners well informed and provide opportunities of how to keep involved.
- Low influence/high interest:** These partners are unlikely to need a heap of time spent with them. They may be happy enough with simple communication like a newsletter or information on a website.

Adapted from Vogwell (2003)

Management strategies by Vogwell (2003) for each 'interest' can be found in the Further Reading section.

Appendix 7

Activity - Communication Planning

Considering a communication plan? Several components exist to developing a communication plan. These include:

- ✓ Understanding your intended audience (remember, you can use the information you gained through the Relationships Activity) or if you are starting out, try and spend some time first on the Relationships Activity.
- ✓ Which method will you use to get your message out there? Will it be in the local paper or newsletter? Written on the blackboard, social media or all of the above!
- ✓ What is the actual message you are trying to share? Be really clear on this point – and how will it be written up?
- ✓ Decide who you will get to represent the message; some media outlets may like to speak to someone in your group – who might that be, and what message do they need to know so they can speak confidently to the purpose?

An example of a Communications Plan Template is below:

Partner	Key Messages	Method	Timing	Responsible Group Member	Notes
We are working on identifying recovery activities and we need your help.	We are working on identifying recovery activities and we need your help. Meeting at local hall on XX date and XX time. Those that are not available, you can still get involved by...	Newsletter. Blackboard. Social Media. Website.	To be sent 3 weeks before the event.	Chair to be spokesperson. Members responsible for communication to place on nominated methods.	Important to reach all members of the community to help with identifying priorities. Local paper are keen to be involved.

Other information on communication plan development can be found in the Further Resources and Reading Section of this Toolbox.

Appendix 8

Community Recovery Plans

A Community Recovery Plan Template (medium- and long-term recovery planning guide), from EMV Disaster Recovery Toolkit, Book 8.

This template allows you to change the heading to reflect the five pillars or collate your community priorities and align them to what makes sense for your community group. Sharing this back with the community is critical! Collecting community priorities and having them in a place where they are accessible and reflective of the work you have done is really important. Documenting the priorities and how your group has engaged with your community might also help attract resources to assist you in completing the work.

Our Community's Recovery Vision Line of Recovery: e.g. People and Wellbeing					
Goal	Actions	Responsibility	Timelines	Resources	Measures
What changes are required to address need?	What projects and initiatives will achieve goals?	Who is responsible for the project?	What are the timeframes?	What is the estimated cost or resourcing required? How will it be funded?	What information will indicate progress of actions?
Example: To ensure those affected by the disaster are provided with opportunities to reconnect with their communities.	Example: Produce a Recovery Concert.	Example: Community Arts supported by Council's Community Arts Officer.	Example: Scheduled within six months.	Example: Scheduled within six months.	Example: Participation rates in events.
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

Appendix 9

Project Planning

Having a way to plan a project can really help identify what is needed and how it can be implemented.

An example Project Planning Canvas (Happy Changemakers, 2023) is provided below.

Project Planning Canvas				Completed by:	Date:	Version:
Project Name:	Project ID:	Start Date:	End Date:	Funding:		
Project Sponsor:		Project Manager:		Key Stakeholders:		
Project Overview & Alignment		Project Scope: (in/out)		Resources:		
Success Measures:	Deliverables:	Milestones:		Reporting & Review Process:		
Risks:	Assumptions:	Issues:		Dependencies:		

Appendix 10

Project Planning Checklist

This project planning checklist (Project Planning Canvas Notes) might help with developing ideas for projects (Happy Changemakers, 2023).

Project Planning Canvas Notes



- 1** **Project Name:** Write down the chosen name for your project. This name should be descriptive, unique and easily recognisable for all team members.
- 2** **Project ID:** Assign a unique identifier or code for the project. This ID will be used to reference the project in all related documentation, communications, and databases. It's a critical tool for keeping project information organised and easily accessible.
- 3** **Start Date and End Date:** Write the scheduled start and end dates for the project. This will give everyone a timeline to work towards.
- 4** **Funding:** Detail the sources and amount of funding available for the project. Include all known or expected financial resources, grant, donations, or in-kind support that will contribute to the project's budget. If funding is anticipated but not yet secured, note this clearly. This will provide a clear understanding of the financial resources supporting the project and may identify any necessary fundraising or grant-writing activities.
- 5** **Project Sponsor and Manager:** Write the names of the project sponsor (key decision maker) and the project manager (who will lead the project's execution).
- 6** **Key Stakeholders:** Make a list of all individuals, groups or parties who have an interest in the project or who might be impacted by it, including the community and any other key stakeholders.
- 7** **Project Overview & Alignment:** Write a summary of the project, including its purpose and intended outcomes. Additionally, describe how the project aligns with broader strategic objectives, such as regional marketing strategy or organisational goals.
- 8** **Project Scope:** Outline what is included in the project, as well as what is not. This will set clear expectations and boundaries for the project.
- 9** **Project Resources:** List all resources needed for the project including human resources, equipment, finances, and contributions such as meeting rooms or volunteer hours. This ensures understanding of available assets and highlights areas needing additional resources.



- 10** **Success Measures:** Clearly define what success will look like for this project. What are the key indicators or outcomes that will signal the project's goals have been achieved?
- 11** **Deliverables:** Make a list of all the concrete outputs or outcomes to be produced by the project.
- 12** **Milestones:** Identify and list the major progress points or phases of the project. These milestones will break the project down into manageable parts and ensures it keeps moving forward.
- 13** **Reporting and Review Process:** Describe the process for communicating progress, including the frequency and channels for updates and reviews.
- 14** **Risks:** Identify potential risks or issues that could negatively impact the project. Include both the likelihood of each risk occurring and the potential impact it could have.
- 15** **Assumptions:** List all assumptions that have been made during project planning. These are presumed to be true for the purposes of planning, but could impact the project if they turn out to be incorrect.
- 16** **Issues:** List all assumptions that have been made during project planning. These are presumed to be true for the purposes of planning, but could impact the project if they turn out to be incorrect.
- 17** **Dependencies:** Identify any tasks or parts of the project that are dependent on the completion of the other tasks, and list them here.

Appendix 11

Reminder Checklist for Managing Projects

Here are a few things to keep in mind when managing projects.

Managing Projects Checklist



Are you providing good governance and oversight for the project? Ensure you are providing regular updates on activities, financials, risks and issues as a 'Standing Agenda Item'.



Have you added a communication plan to your project to ensure your community and partners are kept informed of your progress?



Have you reviewed all projects quarterly (or another regular timeframe) to determine if everything is being met and whether you require extra support?



Have you thought about continuing engagement to ensure you are up to date with information that you may require to help inform your planning?

References

References

All websites were checked in 2025.

Aldrich (2017). The Importance of Social Capital in Building Community Resilience. (PDF) The Importance of Social Capital in Building Community Resilience. www.researchgate.net

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (2018). Australian Disaster Resilience Community Recovery Handbook. Commonwealth of Australia, Third Edition.

Australian Red Cross (2019). RediCommunities: Community-Led Resilience for Emergencies, a Guide and Toolkit for Communities. Australian Red Cross.

Beaulieu (2024). Promoting Community Vitality and Sustainability. [Promoting Community Vitality & Sustainability: The Community Capitals Framework \(CV2243\) \(nds.edu\)](http://Promoting_Community_Vitality_&_Sustainability:_The_Community_Capitals_Framework_(CV2243)_nds.edu)

Brown, Brene (2018). Dare to Lead. Penguin Random House.

Buchan, Gelantipy and Districts Renewal Association Inc (2023). Buchan, Gelantipy and Districts Community Renewal Plan 2023-2028. www.buchandistrictsrenewal.com.au/index.php/committee/community-recovery-plan

Community Recovery Committees (2011). Lessons Learned by Community Recovery Committees of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires May 2011.

Consumer Affairs Victoria (2024). www.consumer.vic.gov.au/clubs-and-fundraising/incorporated-associations/running-an-incorporated-association/secretary-committee-and-office-holders/committee-and-committee-members

Council of Australian Governments (2011). National Strategy for Disaster Resilience. Council of Australian Governments, Commonwealth of Australia.

East Gippsland Shire Council. Local Incident Management Plans. [Emergency Management \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](http://Emergency_Management_eastgippsland.vic.gov.au)

Emergency Recovery Victoria (2023) Community Recovery Toolkit. State Government of Victoria.

Emergency Management Victoria. (2019). Resilient Recovery Strategy. Melbourne: State of Victoria.

Emerging Minds Community Trauma Toolkit. [Community trauma toolkit - Emerging Minds](http://Community_trauma_toolkit_-_Emerging_Minds)

Gorden, R. Travelling the Road to Recovery. [Travelling the road to recovery – video series - DFFH Services](http://Travelling_the_road_to_recovery_-_video_series_-_DFFH_Services)

Governance Institute. (Accessed 7 April 2025). [Home - Governance Institute of Australia](http://Home_-_Governance_Institute_of_Australia)

Happy Changemakers (2024). www.facebook.com/happychangemakers

McWaters, Viv. (2019). Bringing Your Meetings to Life – a Guide for Community Groups. www.creativefacilitation.com

Mallacoota and District Recovery Association (2022). Community-Led Recovery Plan V2. [Community Recovery \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](http://Community Recovery (eastgippsland.vic.gov.au))

Omeo Region Community Recovery Association (2024). [Community Recovery \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](http://Community Recovery (eastgippsland.vic.gov.au))

Phoenix Australia Disaster Hub. www.phoenixaustralia.org/disaster-hub

Putnam, R.D. (1995). Bowling Alone: Putnam, R. D. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. Journal of Democracy, 6(1), 65–78. www.muse.jhu.edu/article/16643

Red Cross - Psychological First Aid: An Australian Guide to supporting people affected by disaster. www.redcross.org.au/globalassets/cms-migration/documents/emergency-services/psychological-first-aid-an-australian-guide.pdf

Sarsfield Community Association (2023). Sarsfield 2030. [Community Recovery \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](http://Community Recovery (eastgippsland.vic.gov.au))

Shiel, Helen (2015). Building Community Futures Through Cooperation. Centre for Rural Communities Inc in Partnership with the East Gippsland Network of Neighbourhood Houses.

Social Recovery Reference Group (2021). The Co-Production Journey to Community-Led Recovery. (Accessed 7 April 2025). [Social Recovery Reference Group \(SRRG\) \(aidr.org.au\)](http://Social Recovery Reference Group (SRRG) (aidr.org.au))

State of Victoria (2021). State Emergency Management Plan. Melbourne: Emergency Management Victoria.

State of Victoria (2024). Community Recovery Committees. [Community recovery | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](http://Community recovery | vic.gov.au (www.vic.gov.au))

Victorian Council of Social Service (2022). Who's Who and What do they Do? Recovering from Emergencies and Disasters. Victorian Council of Social Service.

Victorian Women's Trust (2022). Kitchen Table Conversations – A Guide for Sustaining Our Democratic Culture. Melbourne.

Vogwell, D. (2003). Stakeholder Management. Paper presented at PMI® Global Congress 2003—EMEA, The Hague, South Holland, The Netherlands. Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute.

Zunin, L. M., & Myers, D. (2000). Training Manual for Human Service Workers in Major Disasters. 2nd Ed. Washington, DC: Center for Mental Health Services.

This project coordinated by East Gippsland Shire Council is jointly funded by the Victorian Government through Victoria's Community Recovery Committee Support Package for Local Government Program and the Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements in response to the 2019-20 Eastern Victorian bushfires.

