

# Review – Efficacy of recovery governance

Report 1: 2018-19

**This review finds the State has the structures, arrangements and plans in place to manage and support community-led recovery. Structural adjustments will improve efficiency and communication. There is an opportunity to change the culture about recovery, to make this long, complex stage of disaster management work even better for the benefit of all Queenslanders.**

## Document Details

<b>Security Classification</b>	PUBLIC
<b>Security Classification Review Date</b>	28 June 2019
<b>Author</b>	Inspector-General Emergency Management
<b>Authority</b>	Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management
<b>Document status</b>	Final
<b>Version control</b>	V1.01
<b>ISSN</b>	2204-969X

## Content

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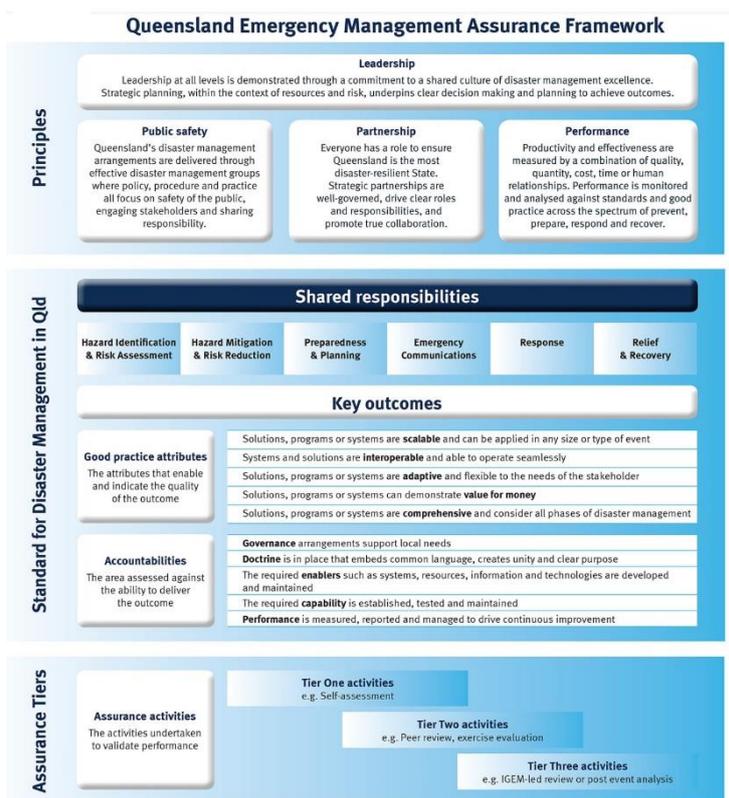
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# **Efficacy of Recovery Governance**

# Contents

Contents.....	6
Executive Summary .....	8
Observations, Findings, and Recommendations .....	10
Introduction .....	18
Purpose of the review .....	19
Scope.....	19
Methodology .....	19
Approach .....	20
What is recovery?.....	21
What is governance?.....	24
Community outcomes in recovery .....	26
What we expected .....	26
Achieving recovery outcomes.....	33
What we expected .....	33
Milestones that shaped recovery .....	38
A review of Queensland’s recovery arrangements .....	42
Community Recovery at the local level .....	42
The community – its roles and responsibilities .....	43
Local planning .....	48
Leadership .....	50
Supporting authorities .....	53
Recovery capability .....	55
Recovery capacity.....	56
What is being done .....	68
Further enhancements.....	69
District-level arrangements .....	71
State-level arrangements.....	77
State-level bodies in recovery .....	82
State operational recovery plans .....	88
Individual appointments .....	92
Further enhancements at State level.....	97
State level culture .....	98
Conclusion.....	102
<b>Appendix A: Legislation</b> .....	104

<b>Appendix B: Definitions</b> .....	111
<b>Appendix C: Consultation and engagement</b> .....	112
<b>Appendix D: Queensland’s recovery history</b> .....	114
<b>Appendix E: Resourcing Human and Social recovery</b> .....	120
<b>Appendix F: Acronyms and abbreviations</b> .....	121
<b>Endnotes</b> .....	122

# Executive Summary

The scale of recovery can make it stand out from other disaster management stages. Over the past 10 years, 60 per cent of the total economic cost of natural disasters in Australia, has been in Queensland. It is likely in the next 10 years that again, communities in this state will need to recover. It is therefore important that the resources applied to recovery are used and managed to best effect. This review set out to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of recovery governance, and to identify enhancements that would lead to better local-level community recovery and community outcomes.

We looked first at what made recovery successful and how that success was best achieved. Our expectations statement set the measures for our review. The review examined data from specially-commissioned research, current legislation, plans and guidelines, a survey, and many interviews. In these we started with the stories of those who have been involved in recovery.

The community has a central place in recovery, but how it 'shares responsibility' in legislative and practical terms is less clear. Many approaches exist under the term 'community-led recovery', and clearer definitions may help better understanding. There is an opportunity to develop tools to help practitioners support community participation in recovery.

Recovery planning has evolved and improved. We expected it to start early. The planning process after Tropical Cyclone (TC) Debbie and the plan itself met our expectations, but we heard time pressure could be a challenge. Opportunities remain to improve planning, primarily through partnerships with business.

If planning is to be implemented effectively, it needs leadership. The leadership style most effective in recovery is different from response, and needs separate development. This difference is apparent in the approaches used by state recovery coordinators in recent years.

Supporting authorities have a key role in empowering people and communities. Plans and guidelines set out what should be done. Many local governments are developing the capabilities for effective recovery - a mixture of knowledge, leadership, planning/organising, facilitation and engaging/working with others. The capacity to deliver the capabilities is a bigger challenge. Turnover of staff, the need to scale up and return to business-as-usual all contribute.

Options exist to help councils. Memoranda of understanding with other councils work for some. Community-based organisations and volunteers are further options. These options make engaging emergent workforces an important skill. Donations may also help but need careful management.

We saw time as a further dimension of capacity. We found that time constrained recovery; if transitions into and out of recovery did not suit the community, if community timeframes weren't respected, or if funding ended at a fixed point. Greater flexibility in time would better meet community aspirations.

District disaster management groups help link local recovery to state arrangements mirroring the flexibility in guidelines. They are now active in recovery preparation. Local governments like district group support, but some uncertainty about their formal role needs to be clarified.

Several bodies and individual appointments are assigned responsibilities for coordinating recovery in Queensland. On paper, there appears to be some overlap. We see opportunities to improve the clarity of coordination and reporting responsibilities and to ensure capability supports state-level leadership and enhanced information-sharing.

Two individual roles have different and complementary responsibilities in recovery. The State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator is strategic and year-round; the State Recovery Coordinator operational and event-specific. Appointments to this latter role have taken many forms over recent years; perceived as effective and well-received by recovering communities and local governments.

The role of State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator, has been in place for more than one year, with the underlying approach to recovery having changed since its introduction. We see potential for further enhancements. To best support community-led recovery, the recovery functions of some agencies should be identified, defined and documented in plans. The rewrite of the *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan* and guidelines will help here.

A greater challenge for the role will be to change the cultural approach towards recovery; so those on the periphery actively strive to become involved. Efforts should centre around ensuring recovery is given appropriate priority by all agencies. Our recommendations are aimed at those key aspects that government should influence directly. More broadly, there is scope to reach out further:

- educating the sector about the value of the role that everybody can play in recovery
- emphasising the need for, and enhancing, recovery leadership at all levels
- supporting regular community activities, to build knowledge, trust and strengthen bonds within communities
- encouraging regular activities and recovery exercises for supporting authorities.

Much of this is common to the resilience agenda, emphasising the links between recovery and resilience we heard through interviews during this review.

By and large, the State has the structures, arrangements and plans in place to manage and support community-led recovery. There is room for some structural adjustments to improve efficiency, and ensure clearer communication at the upper coordination levels.

But most of all, there is the opportunity to change the culture about recovery, to kindle the determination to make this long, complex and emotionally-charged stage of disaster management work even better for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

## Observations, Findings, and Recommendations

Observation	Finding
<b>Introduction</b>	
	Further work to recognise, and address, the longer-term health impacts of disasters for those with existing chronic disease would be a valuable contribution to community recovery.
	There is not as strong a claim in the Disaster Management Act (2003) for local government to manage recovery, as there is for response.
<p><b><u>Recommendation 1.</u> Greater clarity about responsibilities for recovery at the community, local, and district levels should be considered in any future review of the Disaster Management Act (2003).</b></p>	
<b>Milestones that shaped recovery</b>	
The role of community development officers in recovery has proven to be of value, reflected by some positions becoming a permanent part of some councils.	Queensland's recovery past illustrates the importance of local-level recovery. The location, scale and emphasis may change but the 'local' nature never varies.
	Queensland's recovery arrangements have continued to evolve and improve, integrating learnings from previous events, and in turn demonstrating an approach to recovery that is adaptable and scalable.
<b>Community-led recovery</b>	
In Queensland, there are many operational interpretations of community-led recovery.	A range of different approaches are applied in Queensland under the heading of 'community-led recovery'. These differences may ensure recovery activity fits the situation. It may also result in challenges to understanding and applying good practice community-led recovery across the range of Queensland's recovery contexts.
	For community-led recovery there is much guidance on <i>what</i> should be achieved but not so much on <i>how</i> it should be achieved. While most locations recognise the role local government and other authorities undertake in community recovery, the level of engagement with communities, and recognition of their role is less well established. Except for a few sites, processes that enable community leadership and build community recovery capability are maturing.

Observation	Finding
<p><b><u>Recommendation 2.</u> Practical guidance on what community-led recovery means, and how it can be best implemented should be captured and shared with all who have responsibility for it. This should be done to help individuals and communities to take the lead in recovery and so that community-led recovery becomes the norm following disasters and other events.</b></p>	
<p><b>Local level recovery (planning)</b></p>	
<p>Planning for recovery, particularly at the local level, benefits from recognition of business continuity risks, close connection to those managing the response, and close integration with those agencies on which recovery depends.</p>	<p>Planning for recovery has evolved and improved over recent years. 'Statement of Intent'-style plans are important to set out arrangements and recognise risks. Event-specific operational plans are important to set out the route to, and achievement of, community recovery outcomes. Focusing on measures that are locally important to the transition out of recovery has a greater chance of building resilience long-term.</p>
<p><b>Recovery leadership - What is being done</b></p>	
<p>Recovery leadership development is being addressed by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to enhance the skills and expertise to deliver stronger recovery outcomes.</p>	<p>There is a difference between the skills and style required of response leadership and recovery leadership. This difference is apparent in the approaches used by state recovery coordinators in recent years.</p> <p>If approaches are to be community-led, there is an opportunity to develop leadership skills for recovery across the full breadth of the community.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation 3.</u> Participatory leadership models should form the basis of recovery leadership training and education to support and enhance community-led recovery. Mechanisms should be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of recovery leadership and capture relevant learnings.</b></p>	
<p><b>Recovery Capability</b></p>	
<p>Local recovery capability is enhanced when councils have a strong focus on recovery, drawing upon local knowledge and experience, supported by trained dedicated disaster management and community development roles.</p>	<p>Good recovery practice is evidenced by skills, knowledge and attitudes that reflect the importance of community participation in recovery. Core capabilities required within a recovery 'team' can be described by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevant knowledge and expertise about the recovery environments, resilience, and community</li> <li>• collaborative operational leadership and decision-making amid uncertainty, time and resource constraints</li> <li>• communication / facilitation / training skills</li> <li>• planning / organisation / time appreciation skills</li> <li>• ability to work with diverse others with a focus on the community</li> </ul>

Observation	Finding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>capacity to focus on resilience and building community.</li> </ul>
<b>Recovery Capacity</b>	
<p>Two main strategies help to augment local government resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>memoranda with other councils</li> <li>mixed external and local teams.</li> </ul> <p>The new approach to the ready reserve seeks to resolve historical issues of availability and deployment to support human and social recovery.</p> <p>There is a view in the not-for-profit sector that a more flexible approach to the allocation of funding will result in better service delivery in disaster management.</p> <p>There are significant capacity issues in managing spontaneous volunteers. Related challenges exist for not-for-profit agencies in managing skill levels and minimum standards in volunteers.</p>	<p>The partnerships formed in recovery are fundamental to the recovery process. Of particular note, is the value of emergent recovery workforces. Across all sites there was evidence that there was a rich capacity to draw upon. Tapping this capacity is limited by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the lack of structures to manage, facilitate and support emergent recovery workforces</li> <li>increasing restrictions on funding flexibility, and the effect this has on the not-for-profit sector</li> <li>state staffing support to a single (human and social) recovery function.</li> </ul> <p>Recovery capacity at the local level can be supported by financial assistance, government staffing support, donations of goods and services, and corporate sponsorship. Despite work to improve guidelines and policy, and considerations about an engagement strategy, planning for such assistance continues to challenge local governments.</p>
<b>Donations and appeals</b>	
	<p>There is opportunity to provide greater guidance around appeals for donations, from activating an appeal through to its closure, irrespective of the appeal type.</p> <p>There is a need for policy guidance to manage the sensitivity around donations. Guidance should address the different expectations of donors and the appropriate response from the Queensland Government.</p> <p>The development of partnerships and MOUs with organisations prior to an event provides an opportunity to ensure governance arrangements for public appeals are consistent, and robust enough to withstand scrutiny.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation 4.</u> There remains a need to maximise the effect of all offers of assistance to recovering communities. This recommendation presents an</b></p>	

Observation	Finding
<p><b>opportunity to resolve any outstanding aspects of Recommendation 4 and Actions in Response from the Cyclone Debbie Review Action Plan:</b></p> <p><i>The Queensland Offers of Assistance Policy, particularly for corporate donations, should be updated and exercised prior to the next season.</i></p>	
<p><b>Time and transitions</b></p>	
	<p>A documented transition process from response to recovery exists at the state-level, but is not widely understood. Implementation of the process does not result in agreed triggers, or conditions, being identified to mark, either the end of response, or recovery.</p> <p>A formal handover brief, including a statement to mark the transition, and the transfer of responsibilities, would be useful if it were widely shared.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation 5.</u> Recovery plans at all levels should include transition arrangements. They should be implemented during recovery. The arrangements should:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. allow for the fluid and overlapping nature of phases of disaster management.</b></li> <li><b>b. show the process to identify conditions for the transition from response and relief activities to recovery, and from recovery to business as usual. Operational plans should set out the conditions.</b></li> <li><b>c. contain protocols for a formal and documented handover of responsibilities and issues.</b></li> <li><b>d. set out how transitions will be clearly communicated to all stakeholders.</b></li> </ol>	
<p><b>District level recovery</b></p>	
<p>Local governments have identified the value of district groups continuing to work after response to assist with recovery coordination, communication and resourcing.</p>	<p>District disaster management groups do good work to support locally led recovery. However, there is a lack of clarity about whether district groups or the Queensland Reconstruction Authority are responsible for coordinating state support to local governments during recovery operations. Greater clarity will strengthen support to locally led recovery.</p> <p>A challenge for any supporting authority is to extend partnerships and attention to more distant local governments in their remit.</p> <p>Recovery works best when there are connections, strong partnerships and attention to affected communities by supporting authorities. District groups are well-placed to</p>

Observation	Finding
	foster these as members are mostly state employees often with local links.
<p><b><u>Recommendation 6.</u> State arrangements for on-the-ground support to recovering local governments should be in line with Queensland’s disaster management arrangements, and ensure the best balance between local relationships, suitable capability and sufficient capacity.</b></p>	
<p><b>State-level arrangements - Individual appointments</b></p>	
<p>State-level operational recovery measures tend to be defined in terms of services delivered.</p>	<p>Several individual appointments and bodies have similar responsibilities for coordinating and reporting on recovery. The documented arrangements at state-level are therefore complex, and may not be clearly understood by all stakeholders.</p> <p>Recovery outcomes in Queensland have improved since the creation and implementation of the role of State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator. This is evidenced operationally in the coordination of recovery operations since the role commenced. It is also evidenced in the suite of work being undertaken by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to build recovery capability across Queensland.</p> <p>In the sector, there remains a lack of clarity and understanding about how the three roles of State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator, Chief Executive Officer Queensland Reconstruction Authority and appointed State Recovery Coordinator/s work together. This extends to the role of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority itself. Greater understanding will support future recovery efforts at all levels of the arrangements.</p> <p>The State Disaster Coordination Group, its attendant liaison officers and the information-sharing facilities of the State Disaster Coordination Centre provide a strong basis for response coordination. An equivalent capability does not exist for recovery.</p> <p>There is value in emphasising, at State-level, measures that capture the extent to which the community has truly recovered, acknowledging that relevant data may not be available in the early stages of recovery.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation 7.</u> The state’s arrangements for disaster management, including recovery, are articulated in the Disaster Management Act (2003), the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act (2011), the State Disaster Management Plan and the Queensland Recovery Plan. To enable state-level arrangements to better support</b></p>	

Observation	Finding
<p><b>community-led recovery and to improve Queensland’s recovery governance arrangements:</b></p> <p><b>a. State-level roles and responsibilities of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i. the Leadership Board Sub-committee (Recovery)</b></li> <li><b>ii. the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator</b></li> <li><b>iii. the State Recovery Coordinator</b></li> <li><b>iv. the Queensland Reconstruction Authority</b></li> <li><b>v. functional recovery groups</b></li> </ul> <p><b>for coordinating and reporting on recovery should be made more distinct from each other, and any overlap between them removed for greater clarity. Roles and responsibilities should be published on relevant websites.</b></p> <p><b>b. A capability that delivers the effectiveness of the State Disaster Coordination Group and its supporting apparatus for response should exist for recovery. The capability should support coordination and reporting, and improve communication arrangements and sharing of operational information between functional recovery groups and agencies. Such a capability may be established by revising the State Disaster Coordination Group terms of reference and membership, or investigating the capacity for Queensland Reconstruction Authority to deliver it.</b></p>	
<p>There is currently different capacity across the functional recovery groups at the state and local levels. The level of capacity within them affects their ability to collaborate and engage.</p> <p>When we saw investment in functional recovery groups, we saw more development of good practice initiatives and processes in recovery.</p> <p>Detail about the role that individual entities play in recovery is needed to ensure support for functional recovery groups, but the detail is not apparent in the documents we reviewed.</p>	<p>Variations in communication and collaboration limit the combined effectiveness of functional recovery groups to engage others. These variations are between members within individual groups, across groups and vertically between levels.</p> <p>The absence of clear communication and engagement strategies between the groups may create silos and unintentionally bypass interactions with other state agencies.</p> <p>The level of communication, collaboration and engagement depends on investment and the capacity it brings.</p> <p>The functional recovery group structure is sound; in Queensland, the five pillars reflect the State’s geography and context. There is value in identifying, in each functional recovery group, the required capacity to meet recovery needs.</p>

Observation	Finding
<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b> The basic capacity needs of each functional recovery group and how this can be scaled up should be identified. Plans for functional recovery groups should reflect this in clear statements for every level of the system, for all relevant entities about their required function, role and responsibilities during recovery.</p>	
<p><b>Recovery culture</b></p>	
<p>While the responsibilities of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority are clearly articulated in the <i>Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011</i>, the role of other agencies in recovery is not always as evident.</p> <p>In places where good practice recovery was occurring, there was a positive recovery culture, supported by local capability, processes and structures suited to the recovery environment.</p>	<p>The strong focus on community-led approaches to recovery across some agencies and stakeholders is not found in all. The value placed upon community-led recovery by all operating at the state-level, and the approaches that follow are pivotal to recovery success. It should be supported and enhanced in all agencies and stakeholders.</p> <p>The greatest opportunity for enhancing recovery lies in the way it is perceived. Mechanisms to enable this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• giving value to the role that everybody can play in recovery</li> <li>• regular year-round activities that build trust, and strengthen the bonds within communities, providing a launching pad for future recovery</li> <li>• making the link between successful recovery and our wider way of life in Queensland.</li> </ul> <p>The measure of success in this will be whether those on the periphery, or not involved, actively want to play a part.</p>

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# Introduction

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*This section covers the purpose of the Review,*

*‘to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of recovery governance and to identify enhancements that would lead to better local-level community recovery and community outcomes’*

- *It covers the scope, which dictates the structure of the review that follows.*
- *It covers the methods and approach that we used to conduct the review.*

*For the purposes of this review it defines:*

- *Recovery and*
  - *Governance*
- 

Recovery arrangements have evolved over recent years in Queensland. They have been a focus in post-event reviews following Tropical Cyclones (TC) Marcia and Nathan in 2015. They have been the subject of departmental and external functional reviews. In two of the past three years, our annual assessment of local and district disaster management plans (DDMP) showed less confidence in recovery than in other areas of the *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland* (the Standard). However, confidence has improved in the latest assessment in 2017-18. The period between TC Marcia and TC Debbie has seen a review of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA), the appointment of its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC), an interim State Recovery Plan and, most recently in August 2017, the endorsement by the Queensland Disaster Management Committee (QDMC) of the Queensland Recovery Plan. In 2017, *The Cyclone Debbie Review* heard commentary from stakeholders, both about the planning for recovery, and the transition to it. This commentary and the recent changes highlight the importance of the sector understanding how recovery arrangements work and where there may be opportunities for improvement.

## Purpose of the review

The purpose of this review is to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of recovery governance, and to identify enhancements that would lead to better local-level community recovery and community outcomes.

## Scope

The review aligns with the functions of the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (the Office) as outlined in section 16 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld) (the Act). In line with its purpose, the review included:

- identifying best practice community outcomes in a recovery context
- identifying recovery best practice elsewhere and how the conditions for recovery are best set
- reviewing recovery arrangements and practice in Queensland in the last five years
- examining how the governance of local and district recovery arrangements intersects with the state arrangements including any scope for improvement
- mapping current recovery arrangements and communication paths in Queensland from existing roles, responsibilities and plans, including the SRPPC and CEO QRA
- comparing previous arrangements with those that have evolved since the appointment of the SRPPC and put in place during TC Debbie.

Planning for the review ruled three areas out of scope. The review does not consider either the structure of the QRA, or the performance of resilience measures unless directly connected with in-scope considerations. Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and funding were also out of scope for this review.

During the review interviews, we heard much about recovery from drought. We do not down-play its serious effect on communities. We acknowledge that many of the lessons and good practice that we uncovered about recovery from sudden-onset natural disasters relate to drought-stricken communities as well, and vice versa. However, drought is not mentioned in connection with an event in the Act. It is not mentioned in the Queensland State Natural Hazard Risk Assessment 2017 and it is not covered under the NDRRA. We therefore consider it out of scope for this review.

## Methodology

The scope in the preceding paragraphs helps map the methodology and structure for this review. Section 16 C of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* provides the Office with the authority to undertake this review. The review process aligns with the [Emergency Management Assurance Framework](#). Specifically, this review is considered against the [Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland](#) (the Standard).

We considered a range of information and collected evidence to inform this report and its findings. The sources of evidence for this review have included:

- engaging with 130 stakeholders across the sector, including 16 local governments, 11 state government agencies and seven non-government organisations
- reviewing legislation, policy, plans and other associated data that supports recovery governance, management and activities:
  - Disaster Management Act 2003
  - Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011
  - The Queensland Recovery Plan 2017
  - The State Disaster Management Plan 2016
  - The PPRR Disaster Management Guideline 2018
  - Role descriptions for:
    - the State Recovery Coordinator (State Recovery Coordinator Guide), and
    - State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator
- surveying disaster management sector (14% response rate)
- researching good practice evidence and case studies to inform identified themes for improvement
- analysing effectiveness stories, utilising 'open story' methodology, collected through stakeholder interviews (see figure 1)
- analysing barriers, enablers and good practice collected through document analysis and stakeholder interviews
- consulting individuals with expertise in community recovery
- considering previous reviews undertaken by the Office and other entities that have commentary on recovery.
- analysing an environmental scan commissioned by the Office to:
  - describe contemporary (since 2010) disaster management recovery best-practice, nationally and internationally
  - identify those components that contribute to, or develop, best-practice recovery governance models
  - enable a comparison with recovery governance arrangements in Queensland
  - include emphasis on local level recovery with a particular focus on community-led processes and outcomes.

## Approach

To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the governance arrangements for recovery in Queensland, we started by looking at outcomes. We first looked at what made recovery successful; we reviewed documents, commissioned academic research and held a series of interviews across Queensland. Having understood what effective recovery looks like, we investigated how these outcomes were most successfully achieved. Again, we used research and information from interviews to seek out examples and views on how best to achieve it.

These two elements – optimum outcomes and good practice methods to achieve them – help define our expectations for effective recovery governance. These expectations, as always in our reviews, are based on the Standard, including its good practice attributes of scalability, comprehensiveness, interoperability, value for money and adaptability. These attributes have been

applied to help define good practice examples. In our review of governance, we also considered plans and guidelines for recovery, noting that they have changed, both in recent years and during the course of the review.

This review was started one year after the appointment of the SRPPC. As this was a significant change to recovery governance, we were interested to compare previous arrangements with those that have evolved since that appointment. We therefore looked at the history of Queensland's recovery arrangements over recent years and compared them with recovery following TC Debbie. During our interviews for this review, it became apparent that memories of recovery stretched back further than the past five years. Useful lessons about recovery were evident from these stories and we include them where relevant. As recovery arrangements have continued to evolve since TC Debbie we have updated the report as far as possible to reflect this.

The topics we thought important for recovery covered six overlapping areas. We sought information on planning, governance, models and principles, community engagement and participation, capability and exercising, and operational aspects of recovery.

Recovery stories were collected across a total of 130 stakeholders including representatives from local governments, state government agencies, non-government organisations, the private sector and community members. Figure 1 outlines the 'open story' process utilised for this review.

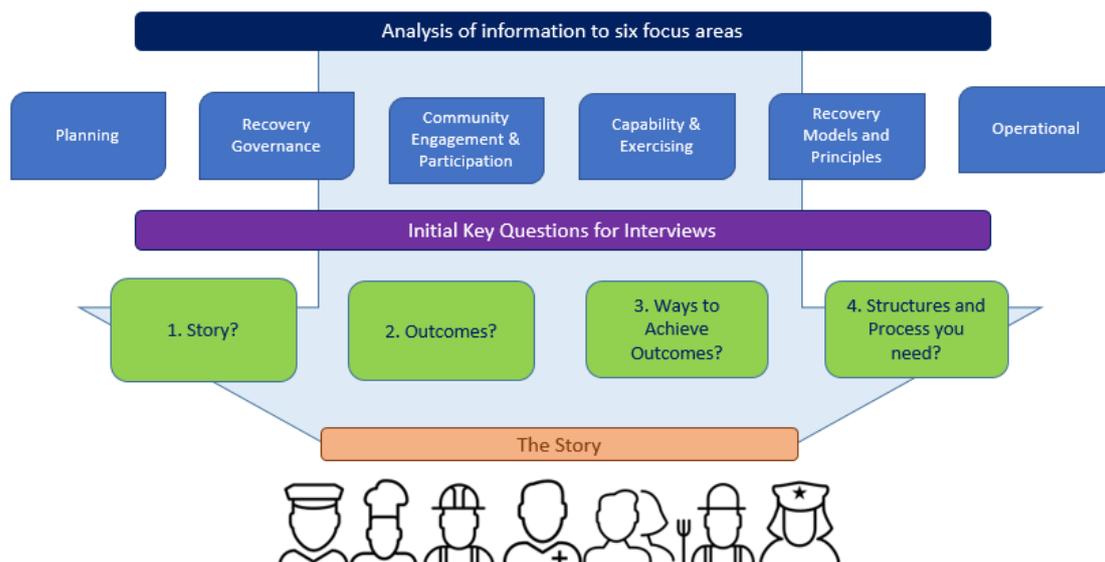


Figure 1: Review of recovery governance interview process.

## What is recovery?

We found the definition of recovery differed across the disaster management sector. For this review, we have used a definition recently agreed to by sector members through the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management Lexicon working group:

'The coordinated process of supporting disaster-affected communities' psychosocial (emotional and social), and physical well-being; reconstruction of physical infrastructure; and economic and environmental restoration'.

The words early in this definition – ‘supporting disaster affected communities’ - provided a local focus to this review: on the recovery of communities.

Recovery differs from relief, which is the effort to meet the immediate needs of persons affected by a disaster, to minimise further loss through the provision of immediate shelter and basic human needs. Recovery is a longer-term process. It is more than the replacement or rehabilitation of what was destroyed, but is a complex social and development process providing the opportunity to improve aspects beyond previous conditions.<sup>1</sup> Recovery is intertwined with other disaster management stages, of prevention, preparedness and response. Depending on the nature of the event, many recovery activities have an apparent start point as part of the initial response, or shortly after. This operational start point, though, should be based on planning and preparation that is continuous throughout the year.

The scale of recovery also makes it stand out from those other stages. Estimates from the Australian Business Roundtable suggest that 60 per cent of the total economic cost of natural disasters in Australia has been in Queensland over the past 10 years, at \$11 billion per year.<sup>2</sup>

While the estimates above highlight the tangible cost, in this review we also recognise the related intangible costs. Results from a Geoscience Australia survey of people affected in Ipswich and Brisbane in the 2010-11 and 2013 floods, indicated that for many people the main impact was on their mental health.<sup>3</sup> Stressors due to financial concerns, loss of possessions, and loss of identity were all cited as extensive and long reaching, with some people saying their lives had changed forever.

*“Since [the] floods, [I] require medication for stress and anxiety. I have started to cry for no reason. I fear rain and panic about being flooded again. [I] Worry about reaching my family if another disaster happened...”<sup>4</sup>*

We heard stories that reflected similar psychological and emotional impacts that have continued for years. While these impacts are recognised, the impacts resulting from the closure or damage to key public health infrastructure is less understood. Recent research in the healthcare sector, has shown an increase in the indirect mortality and morbidity due to an exacerbation of noncommunicable diseases following natural disasters.<sup>5</sup> For example, during Hurricane Katrina, 33 per cent of people exhibited symptoms of chronic disease exacerbation when arriving at shelters and one year later there was a 33 per cent reduction in cancer treatment services – evidence of an increase in cancer-related deaths.<sup>6</sup>

While the economic cost is significant, the ongoing emotional, psychological and social recovery from disasters far outlasts the repair of the visual damage.<sup>7</sup> These combined impacts are illustrated in figure 2. It highlights the tangible and intangible costs to the community, and the complexity of recovery.

### **Finding**

Further work to recognise, and address, the longer-term health impacts of disasters for those with existing chronic disease would be a valuable contribution to community recovery.

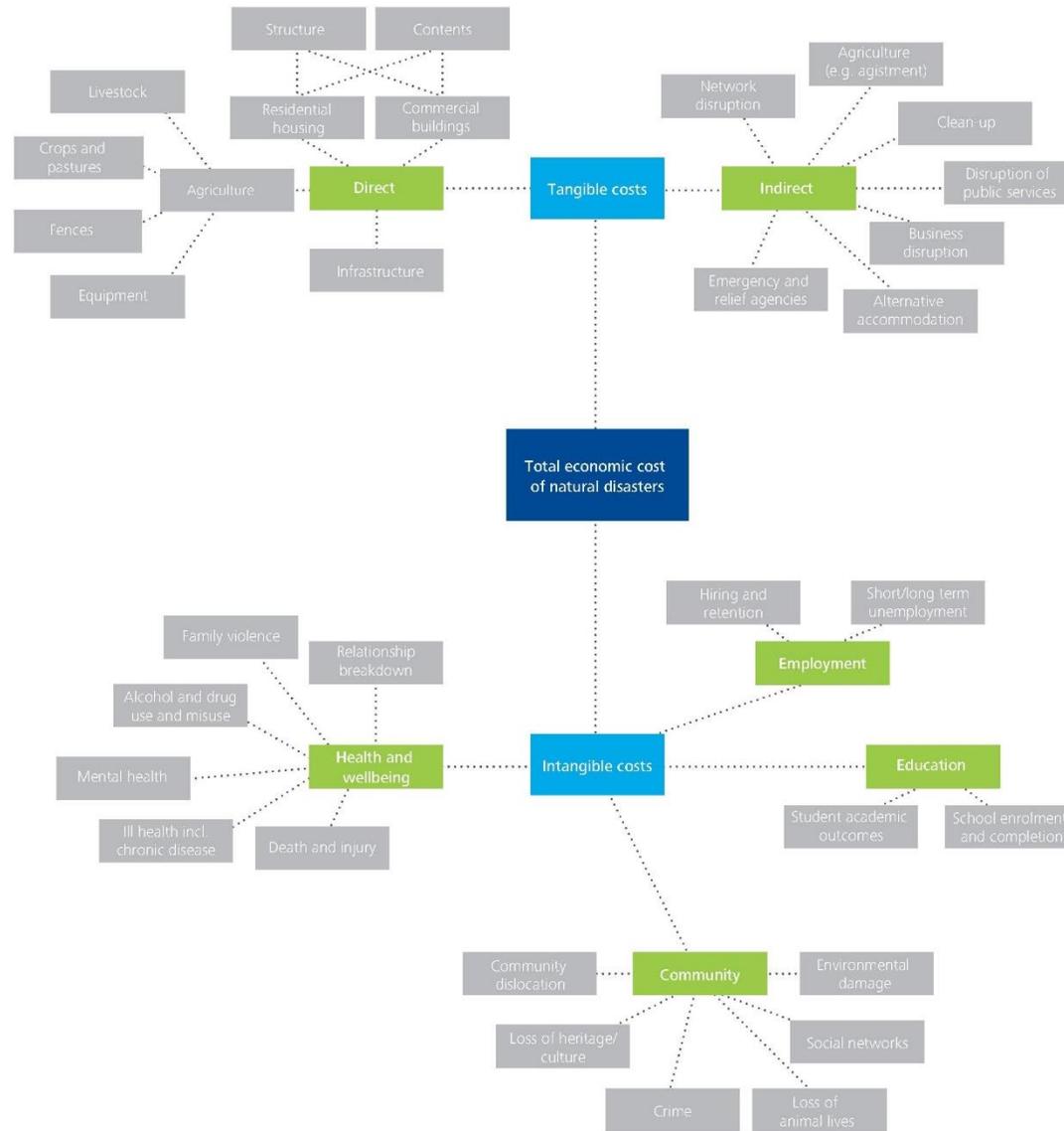


Figure 2: Impacts of natural disasters.<sup>8</sup>

## What is governance?

This review is about governance. We noted the definition of governance applying to entities in the Standard and Queensland's Good Governance Framework for a government body.<sup>9</sup> However, recovery reaches beyond entities and Government. We have found the view from UNESCO's Education website has a closer fit with the intent of recovery governance:

'Structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation. Governance also represents the norms, values and rules of the game through which public affairs are managed in a manner that is transparent, participatory, inclusive and responsive. Governance therefore can be subtle and may not be easily observable. In a broad sense, governance is about the culture and institutional environment in which citizens and stakeholders interact among themselves and participate in public affairs. It is more than the organs of the government.'<sup>10</sup>

In Queensland, governance for recovery is set up through legislation, plans and frameworks. The Act establishes the legislated requirements for disaster management and disaster operations. It authorises the preparation of plans and guidelines, and the establishment of disaster management groups, and the Office of the IGEM, whose functions include the making of standards.

The Act has a more specific emphasis on disaster operations than on recovery, as a phase of disaster management. We encountered a common presumption that the Act sets up local government to manage recovery. Our analysis, at Appendix A, is that there is not as strong a claim in legislation for this as there is for response, which the local group does have the function to manage.

Much therefore hangs on what is said in the Queensland Recovery Plan, as a subplan of the State Disaster Management Plan and a supplementary document to the Strategic Policy Statement, and the PPRR Guideline, created in accordance with the Act's Section 63.

### Queensland Recovery Plan

'Queenslanders have a bias towards resilience. This is borne from our experience and capacity to adapt to our changing circumstances and recover from disasters in a relatively short amount of time. Recovery from disasters is a key component of our pathway to resilience in a disaster context.

The Queensland Recovery Plan harnesses this bias towards recovery and resilience by aligning with international recovery frameworks and adopting the principle that successful recovery relies on a community-led approach.

The Recovery Plan... informs local governments, Local Disaster Management Groups, District Disaster Management Groups, Queensland Government agencies, government-owned corporations, statutory bodies representing the state, non-government organisations and other disaster recovery stakeholders of good recovery practice that should be employed across all entities during recovery operations and planning.'<sup>11</sup>

### PPRR Guideline

'LDMGs are responsible for leading recovery efforts post disaster.'<sup>12</sup>

We agree with the Queensland Recovery Plan's emphasis on community-led recovery which should remain the centre of attention in Queensland's recovery arrangements.

**Finding**

There is not as strong a claim in the Disaster Management Act (2003) for local government to manage recovery, as there is for response.

# Community outcomes in recovery

*This section uses broad **research, case studies** and the **Standard** to develop our expectations of recovery - in particular **‘what’ best-practice community outcomes** should look like.*

## What we expected

To understand how well recovery governance is working in Queensland, we felt it important to first understand what makes recovery effective. Since 2008, best practice approaches to community recovery in Australia have been underpinned by the National Recovery Principles (national principles), the latest of which are shown in the box opposite.<sup>14</sup> We expected to see evidence or influence of the six principles and their interconnection in underpinning successful recovery.<sup>15</sup>

### National Principles for Disaster Recovery

- Understanding the context.
- Recognising complexity.
- Use community-led approaches.
- Coordinate all activities.
- Communicate effectively.
- Recognise and build capacity.<sup>13</sup>

In 2012, a review of relief and recovery payments for the Council of Australian Governments revealed that the effectiveness of disaster assistance programs was not well measured or reported. The review resulted in the *National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs* in 2016.<sup>16</sup>

### National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework – Recovery Outcomes

#### *Social recovery outcomes:*

- Adequate housing is available to community members at appropriate times in the recovery process.
- Community members have access to and are able to meet their health needs (including mental health) arising from the disaster.
- Community members have access to; psychosocial support, education services, appropriate and coordinated social services
- Households, families and individuals can act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process.
- Community members feel sufficiently safe and secure following a disaster to engage in social activities and interactions with other members of the community.

#### *Built environment recovery outcomes:*

- Infrastructure that relates to the provision of services or support to the community, by infrastructure owners/operators including water, sewerage, electricity and gas, transport, telecommunications.
- Education, health, justice, welfare and any other community infrastructure/buildings (private or public owned assets).
- private infrastructure including residential, commercial/industry and rural assets.

#### *Economic recovery outcomes:*

- Economy as a whole.
- Community members are able to meet their material and service needs and participate in the economy.
- Business and industries in the local economy are able to operate and trade in line with broader economic trends.

#### *Environmental recovery outcomes:*

- The environment has returned to pre-disaster state, or to a state that is acceptable to the community.<sup>17</sup>

While still being trialled in two states, the framework draws on the national principles and, among other things, aims to provide a common understanding of what successful disaster recovery 'looks like'. It states that *'the objective of disaster recovery programs is to help communities reach a point where they are sustainable and resilient'*. It distinguishes between these two aspects: a sustainable community has the capability and capacity to manage its own recovery, while a resilient community is better able to withstand future disasters. It notes some overlap, but also possible trade-offs and differences in timeframes between them. Although recognising that recovery will continue at the local level, it takes a government perspective and marks achievement of these objectives by government withdrawal from recovery. We therefore expected to see recovery outcomes would have elements of sustainability and resilience, and include government withdrawal from programs.

The *National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs* also identifies recovery outcomes across four functional domains: built environment, economic, social, and environmental.<sup>18</sup> Social outcomes are oriented towards people; acting to contribute to recovery, feeling safe to start community social activities, and with access to housing, health, education and social services. Built environment outcomes relate to the infrastructure required

to provide these social outcomes. Economic outcomes focussed on both people and businesses being able to participate in economic activity to meet their various needs, while environmental outcomes are achieved when the social heritage and eco-systems have returned to a standard 'acceptable to the community'. We therefore expected that recovery outcomes would also be organised along functional lines.

A broader scan of the recovery environment identified several factors that were consistently identified as enabling successful recovery. These included the central role of community in recovery, and the importance of trust.

Empowerment of communities and local authorities are central to both the 2005 Hyogo and 2015 Sendai Frameworks.<sup>20</sup>

Overseas and in Australia, considerable effort is being applied to engage communities in emergency management. When this works, its effects can be powerful. The accompanying case studies make the point that such community-led initiatives, often in extreme recovery circumstances, can challenge existing arrangements - and sometimes arise because of them. The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) Handbook No 2 makes the point that 'there is increasing recognition that the processes used by government and other key recovery agencies to interact with communities are critical and can impact either positively or negatively on the capacity of individuals and groups to manage their own recovery process.'

#### **The Cardwell District Community Association**

Following Cyclone Yasi, the Cardwell community felt that the recovery plan didn't specifically address Cardwell. '*The feeling of being overlooked or ignored triggered bottom-up initiatives.*' The community established a new community group, the Cardwell District Community Association, which developed the Cardwell Strategic Action Plan.

Utilising local knowledge within the community, the Cardwell Strategic Action Plan sought to harness local knowledge, address local concerns and developed a shared vision for the future development of Cardwell which resulted in a revitalised sense of community.

'Although the recovery process is long term, difficult, extensive and ongoing, many interviewees spoke of the process to develop the Action Plan as creating new sense of community and enthusiasm aimed at improving community and economic resilience.'<sup>19</sup>

#### **Broadmoor - New Orleans 2006**

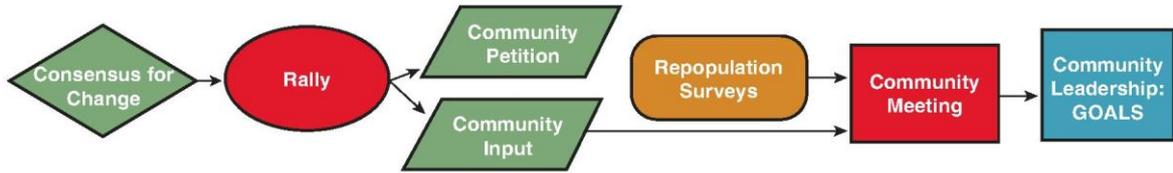
Broadmoor is a small mixed income neighbourhood in New Orleans that sustained severe flood damage from Hurricane Katrina. It encompasses both a relatively affluent, largely white area and a poorer, largely African American community that had been troubled by poor housing and crime.

The New Orleans Urban Planning Committee, charged with reconstruction, had printed a map which indicated low lying areas that could be turned into parks and greenspace. One of those areas covered Broadmoor.

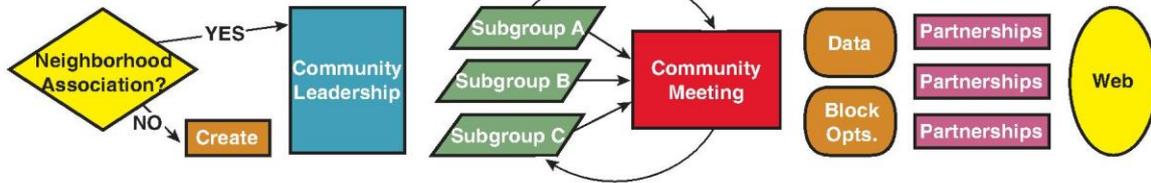
Local residents came together to challenge this plan and, through community-led initiatives, eventually succeeded in organising itself and building the capacity to manage its own recovery, rebuilding Broadmoor as a residential neighbourhood. In 2007 the residents of Broadmoor, in conjunction with Harvard University, published the Broadmoor Guide for Planning and Implementation (see figure 3). They did so to share their lessons and give a sense of how '*residents have come together and taken the project of recovery into their own hands*'.<sup>21</sup>

# COMMUNITY PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION: PROCESS MAP

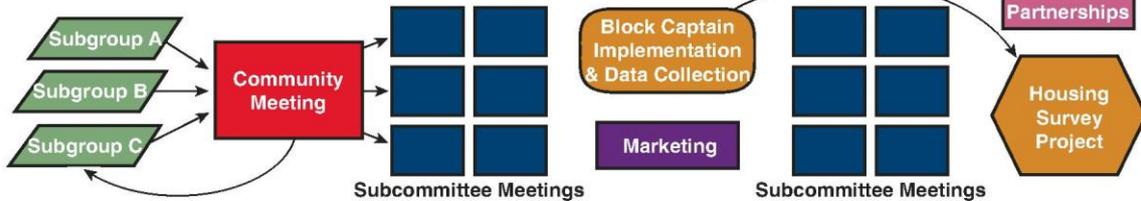
## PHASE 1: IMPETUS FOR CHANGE



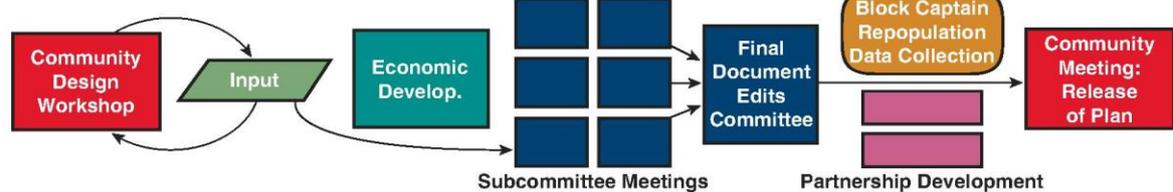
## PHASE 2: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



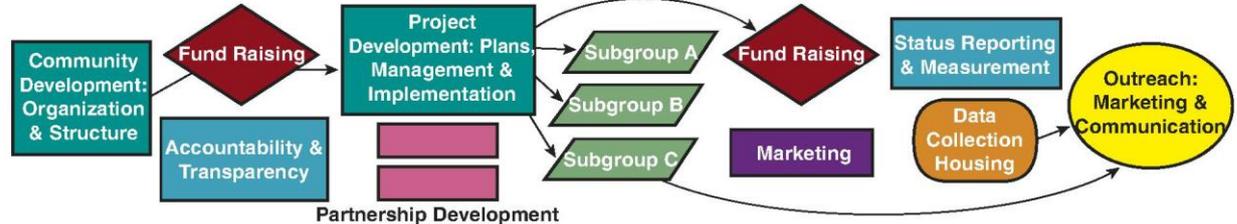
## PHASE 3: MEETING & CONSENSUS-BUILDING



## PHASE 4: DESIGN, DRAFT, & RELEASE OF PLAN



## IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: FUNDING & PROJECTS



## MAPPING LEGEND



Figure 3: Extract from *The Broadmoor Guide for Planning and Implementation*.<sup>22</sup>

### **Strathewen Community Renewal Association - “bottom-up” leadership**

The small community of Strathewen, Victoria was one of many devastated by the Black Saturday bushfires on 7 February 2009. This community suffered the highest death toll per head of population on Black Saturday, with 27 of the population of 200 residents being killed and 85% of homes destroyed. Strathewen residents reported that in the days following the disaster they felt that they were being overshadowed by coverage of larger settlements such as Kinglake and Marysville. While Victorian government and non-government agencies had commenced an enormous recovery effort, Strathewen residents felt that they needed to establish a local voice.

‘This need was reinforced by a very distressing and difficult meeting held by local government and attended by approximately 500 people from Strathewen and surrounding areas in the days after the fires (Petrie 2009). Some interviewees felt that the grief, acrimony and outrage engendered by this meeting and the ensuing ‘release of pent-up anger’ was key in reinforcing the need for a bottom-up approach, not only within the community but also with local government and recovery agencies as well. One respondent described ‘the need to stand up in order to re-establish a sense of community’ as ‘a defining moment’.

Anne Leadbeater, Community leadership in disaster recovery: a case study, Australian Journal of Emergency Management, Vol 28

Public meetings were held and a steering group established to draft a constitution for an incorporated association. The *Strathewen Community Renewal Association* (SCRA) came into existence on 28th June 2009. This provided legitimacy within the community and with other organisations. The work of the SCRA was recognised nationally in 2010, winning the volunteer section of the Australian Safer Communities Awards and is acknowledged as a best practice example of ‘bottom-up’, community-led recovery.<sup>22</sup>

The appearance of citizen-groups with a strong sense of place coming to terms with the need to re-establish their neighbourhoods and formulating their own recovery plans is increasingly evident.

- Victoria’s Community Based Emergency Management approach empowers community members to explore the impact of potential emergencies and considers how community strengths can support improved resilience in these situations.
- In Christchurch and Lismore, communities developed innovative frameworks for recovery assistance and future disaster planning in conjunction with official emergency management agencies.

Major-General Chris Field, State Recovery Coordinator after TC Debbie, wrote that ‘community recovery is optimised when communities lead and take credit for community achievements.’

The case studies above, illustrate the ability and effectiveness of communities leading arrangements for their own recovery – when leaders emerge from within a community capable of galvanizing wider action, and setting priorities for what the community wants. This may not always happen if the recovery circumstances are not so extreme. The importance, though, of communities taking the lead in their own recovery permeates this report and is the foundation for its recommendations. Queensland’s arrangements should allow for it, and prepare for it to become the norm for recovery.

Literature around good practice recovery also identifies that trust enables or disables this process of empowerment. Trust is multi-faceted; by those in authority of the community, and by the community of those in authority. Such trust is deemed essential by some communities engaging in the recovery process. It involves trusting relationships, trusting communities to know what's best for them, and trusting that community leaders will naturally emerge to drive recovery from the ground. Trust between agencies is also essential in order to agree upon and work with others towards a common aim. *'Mutual trust and understanding are the fundamental building blocks of effective multi-agency operations'*.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, our expectations of good practice recovery outcomes were influenced by the Standard. It states the key outcomes for recovery are:

- *affected communities receive recovery information that is timely, credible and relevant to their context, and*
- *community recovery planning and delivery are integrated across entities, locally coordinated and appropriate to the scale of the disaster event'.*

The Standard also contains good practice attributes of scalability, comprehensiveness, interoperability, value for money and adaptability as marking an effective disaster management system. We expected, therefore to find these themes reflected in recovery outcomes.

Attribute	Definition
Scalable	Able to be applied to any size or type of event and across all levels of Queensland's disaster management arrangements
Comprehensive	Considers all phases of disaster management, all hazards and an all agencies approach
Interoperable	Promotes interoperability of systems, programs and resources to enable integration seamlessly across the sector
Value for money	Ensures services and systems are able to be delivered by mechanisms that best represent value for money
Adaptable	Able to adapt to a changing environment and remain flexible to the needs of the community

Table 1: Good practice attributes from the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.<sup>24</sup>

Across these areas - literature, an environmental scan and the Standard - we found that effective recovery was defined by a blend of both 'endstate' measures – *'schools are open'*, and 'ongoing' measures – *'services are being provided'*. We also learned about the importance of phases within recovery; that the short, medium and long-term timescales are recognised. Queensland stakeholders additionally wanted trigger points or endpoints that marked and enabled transition, particularly out of recovery and into normal business.

Based on this analysis, there is merit in distinguishing between outcomes that reflect the endstate of recovery and those that enable it to be achieved. For this review, our expectations statement – in effect our measures for best practice community outcomes in a recovery context – starts;

*Best practice community outcomes for recovery are achieved when the outcomes themselves have first been defined by the community that is trusted by, and which trusts in authorities and the integrated, value-for-money support that they provide. Outcomes take account of functional lines of recovery, and are based on information that is timely, credible*

*and relevant to their context. Second, they have been delivered to a standard that is appropriate to the scale of the disaster event and acceptable to the community. As a result, the community is capable of sustaining its own recovery without government support programs and realises its post-disaster new normal. It is also more resilient, in the built environment, and social, economic and environmental domains, to similar events happening again.*

The [next section](#) addresses our expectations of how these outcomes are best achieved or, in other words, how the conditions for effective recovery are best set.



# Achieving recovery outcomes

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*This section builds on our expectations of best practice community outcomes.*

- *It uses the Standard, and international and Australian resources to develop our expectations of ‘how’ best practice community outcomes **are best achieved.***
- 

## What we expected

Perspectives on how community recovery outcomes are best achieved are both different and complementary. To ensure the best outcomes, it is important to understand **what the critical themes of a recovery approach are that will enable a community to build the capability and capacity to manage its own recovery as effectively as possible after an event and to be more resilient to the next.**<sup>25</sup> We drew on the Standard, and international and Australian resources to identify key themes. These themes informed our expectations about how best to create the space for good recovery to occur.

**Community as the ‘centre of gravity’ for recovery.** Central to most recovery plans, guides and activities in Australia are the National Recovery Principles. Of note was the focus and importance placed on the role of the community. Good practice approaches, outlined in resources such as the AIDR Handbook 2, *Community Recovery* reinforce that the purpose of providing recovery services is to assist the affected community towards management of its own recovery.<sup>26</sup> This approach leans more to community-led recovery, rather than a more government-centred services-led recovery.<sup>27</sup> Baker Ripley, a not-for-profit organisation that operated extensively in the recovery efforts in New Orleans and more recently Houston, describe their approach as placing community central to all their recovery planning, thinking and action. ‘*Working side-by-side with community leaders and residents, we discover their strengths, craft a collective vision and design a plan to make their aspirations a reality. Simply put, we build upon what works.*’<sup>28</sup> We expected community-centred approaches to be reflected across recovery.

**An empowered community.** Community-led reflects a bottom-up empowerment of action and responsibility, driven from the community.<sup>29</sup> This shift towards an empowered community has been driven by a recognition that (a) recovery is best achieved when the affected community is able to exercise a

high degree of self-determination, (b) there is an improved awareness of hazard risk among citizens and (c) policies articulate a diminished role for the state in service provision. Community-led recovery is best achieved when the affected community, including the private sector, can **exercise a high degree of self-determination and citizens can take part in planning and decision making for recovery** at its own pace.<sup>30</sup> Such activities can build resilience and raise community circumstances and preparedness above their pre-disaster status. We expected an authorising environment that will enable those recovering to determine the nature of their recovery, planning for and deciding on priorities and a timeframe – what to do and when.

**Leadership at the local level.** As the most immediate service provider, local government is best placed to interface with members of a local community. While the enabling, guiding and coordinating roles of state and national governments remain essential, it is necessary to **empower local authorities and local communities to make decisions regarding recovery**. We expected to see empowered local leadership - both in authorities and in the community - in recovery.

**Authorities' 'support and facilitate' role.** The *National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs* pose that the placement of the 'affected community' at the centre of recovery creates a very specific **role for government, that being to 'support and facilitate recovery by building community capacity and capability'**. It further poses that this will result in a stage where recovery continues without government assistance.<sup>31</sup> We expect that efforts of authorities will support and build community capability and capacity.

**Capabilities to enable community-led.** Working alongside communities in ways that empower and facilitate recovery requires a range of skills, knowledge and behaviours. The environmental scan identified several key capabilities for good recovery practice: including;

- participatory leadership skills
- engaging emergent recovery workforces
- well-developed systems and processes
- investing in and maintaining good local knowledge
- skills to work alongside communities and multi-disciplinary teams
- community development and engagement skills
- sensitivity to the needs of diverse cultural groups
- debriefing skills to identify lessons.

We expected to see that recovery capabilities are in evidence where needed, matched to the circumstances and context.

**Partnerships across all involved.** Consistent across national and international literature is the important **role partnerships play in strengthening recovery**. AIDR Handbook 2, *Community Recovery*, identifies that in many events communities spontaneously begin their own recovery processes that need support from a range of partnerships.<sup>32</sup> Good partnerships enable the responsibility for disaster recovery to be shared among all sectors of the

community - individuals, families, community groups, businesses and all levels of government. Businesses are often both key service providers and community members. Involving them with other partners early in recovery planning is important. Recovery processes undertaken in partnership can also strengthen existing local resources, improving the implementation of recovery plans and in turn strengthening local resilience.<sup>33</sup> We expect a partnership approach is enabled across all involved in the recovery and resilience of a community; individuals, families, community groups, businesses and all levels of government alike.

**Communication.** Our environmental scan showed that it is often the role of formal recovery agencies to **provide structured support, communication and coordination to assist community efforts**.<sup>34</sup> Community engagement is a two-way process that enables a greater understanding of a given situation. It relies on good communication and can help foster trust and the development of solutions appropriate to the needs within the specific community.<sup>35</sup> As stated in the Standard, *affected communities receive recovery information that is timely, credible and relevant to their context*. We expect communication processes that are timely, credible and relevant to their context, and that contribute to building trust and partnerships among those involved.

**Strategy alignment.** We recognise that all levels of government have their own agendas that require attention. Agencies supporting the recovery will have their own authorising environment that is distinct from the affected community. From the literature, it is evident that the outcomes in recovery are best achieved when **strategies of those supporting recovery align with outcomes identified by the affected community**, and where the community is involved in the delivery of those outcomes. Given the impacts of events, we would also expect that recovery outcomes would be organised along functional lines. For this to occur there must be a **collaborative, coordinated, approach from both the authorities and the community**. The approach must be adaptable and scalable according to the event. We expect the partnerships involved in supporting recovery to work collaboratively to align strategies for the benefit of the community.

**Early integrated, and adaptable planning.** Planning is the basis for all stages of disaster management. For recovery, we also expected to see the Standard's outcome on recovery planning achieved: *that community recovery planning and delivery are integrated across entities, locally coordinated and appropriate to the scale of the disaster event*. We expected its indicators relating to entities with the skills and capability to plan and recovery plans and strategies that are developed in partnership with stakeholders to be evident in practice. The Standard's good practice attributes include adaptability, and the *Queensland Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline* (PPRR Guideline) reflects that. The process of involving stakeholders should commence at the pre-disaster preparedness phase and include the local council, district and local recovery committees, community members and groups and business leaders. Early involvement of all stakeholders accelerates the recovery process, given that community members are often the first

responders.<sup>36</sup> We expect that **planning should involve stakeholders and start early, through processes that are sufficiently adaptable to deal with the needs of the impacted community regardless of the nature of the disaster**.<sup>37</sup>

**Transitions and timeframes that reflect experience.** Recovery takes time, as do recovery processes. The Standard's indicators of recovery include: '*The phases of recovery and the transitions between response, relief and recovery are documented and agreed across all entities*'. Our research revealed that both Queensland and other jurisdictions view the formal transition into, and later from, recovery as important. Planning and discussion about triggers, or conditions for change, should occur early.<sup>38</sup> Engaging the public and whole communities in actions that enhance recovery can be difficult and time-consuming, but is the most important part of community centred approaches. Allowing time to connect and to support the work of the community also builds trust that people are being heard and solutions won't be imposed on them.<sup>39</sup>

Our research showed a gap between projected and actual recovery timeframes. The Regional Australia Institute found that the recent trend of establishing short-term recovery authorities runs the risk of creating perceptions that the recovery process is complete after two years, reinforcing the notion that the recovery phase ends with the completion of reconstruction activities.<sup>41</sup> They make the point that four years after Black Saturday, Marysville was still struggling to get back on its feet. Residents estimate the recovery process will take anywhere between 10 to 25 years. This experience is well documented internationally (see text box).<sup>42</sup> While the time required differs from location to location, influenced by the context and extent of disaster impacts, 'recovery is a long-term undertaking, comprising overlapping stages in a process of renewal and adaptation to a new equilibrium.'<sup>43</sup> We expect that recovery timeframes and processes take account of the transitions, and can be scaled and adapted to reflect the complexity and context of the recovery required.

#### Recovery timeframes

- Christchurch proposes a 10+ year recovery horizon.
- Eastern Japan prefectures propose a 10-year reconstruction period and up to 40 years for full rehabilitation of Fukushima.
- New Orleans proposes a 10-year recovery.
- Kobe proposed a 10-year horizon.<sup>40</sup>

**Lessons learned.** A **culture of learning**, drawing on consistent approaches to debriefing and practice improvement was also identified as key to ensuring an evolving and dynamic recovery space. This should identify issues from all partners involved in the recovery process. A way of obtaining views from the whole community should be developed.<sup>44</sup> We expect that lessons from past recovery experiences should inform and guide recovery arrangements at every level – and be available to others.

The paragraphs above led us to the second part of our expectations statement, or measures for activities that support recovery. The expectations statement

concludes with themes that describe how the conditions for recovery are best set.

**Community recovery outcomes are best achieved by:**

- *community-led approaches that*
  - *underpin recovery*
  - *recognise, support and encourage the community to manage their own recovery*
  - *are adaptable, at their own pace and in response to their communities needs and priorities.*
- *supporting authorities that will:*
  - *enable local and community leadership*
  - *align strategies with outcomes identified by the affected community*
  - *enable those recovering to determine the nature of their recovery, planning for, and deciding, on priorities and a timeframe – what to do and when*
  - *support and build capability and capacity*
- *partnerships that are supported, built or established:*
  - *through good communication that brings trust*
  - *to enable the involvement of all in the recovery of a community - individuals, families, community groups, businesses and all levels of government*
  - *to work collaboratively to align strategies for the benefit of the community*
- *planning that should start early, and use processes that are sufficiently adaptable to deal with the needs of the impacted community regardless of the nature of the disaster*
- *timeframes, and processes that*
  - *plan and agree triggers, or conditions, for transition into, and from, recovery*
  - *respect the needs and approach of the community*
  - *respond to the context and complexity of the recovery required*
- *lessons from past recovery experiences that inform and guide recovery arrangements at every level which are available to others.*

# Milestones that shaped recovery

*This section explains the context for recovery in Queensland.*

- *It ensures the milestones and lessons of our recent history are recognised, and contribute to future direction.*

We expected that lessons from past recovery experiences should inform and guide recovery arrangements at every level, ensuring an evolving and dynamic recovery space. Our scope included reviewing recovery arrangements and practice in Queensland over the last five years as well as a comparison of previous arrangements with those evolved since the appointment of the SRPPC and put in place during TC Debbie. We asked stakeholders about recovery over this period, however their memories went back further. In fact, there is much to learn from these stories and we have included earlier lessons where relevant.

In Queensland, the story of recovery has always been present. Before European colonisation Aboriginal peoples felt the force of, and recovered from, significant natural disasters. Historical evidence also indicates that traditional Aboriginal societies ‘possessed a high degree of resilience to environmental change and variability’.<sup>45</sup> Coping and adaption strategies were underpinned by local knowledge, and informed everyday life, culture, stories and migration patterns - all approaches worth applying today.<sup>46</sup> More recently recovering from disasters has become the ‘new normal’ across Queensland.

Many recollections during our interviews go back before this, to TC Larry in 2006. A fuller history of recovery is at Appendix E. What we

## Past recovery

In a recent workshop to assess the risk of flood in North Burnett, QRA’s flood map approach revealed for the first time to participants the confluence of four creeks and rivers. The simultaneous flooding of all four hadn’t happened in European recorded history, but if it did, the effect would be disastrous for downstream communities. It emerged from discussions that such a flood had happened, but well before colonisation. Teaching from the Dreamings tell of a huge flood across all four rivers, causing a great serpent to snake its way to the sea – presumably down what is now known as the Burnett River to its mouth at Bundaberg. The fact the teaching exists shows that recovery, even from extreme events, has been a constant part of Queensland’s history.

found to be the major milestones on the evolution of recovery are described below.

**On-the ground management; the establishment of a recovery task force.** In 2006, recovery planning after TC Larry was spontaneous and organic. Three factors characterise recovery at that time.

- The appointment of General Cosgrove – as chairman of the Recovery Task Force ‘*to drive the recovery, through the efforts of the public service and other specialists*’.<sup>47</sup>
- The establishment of the Operation Recovery Management Group (ORMG) of all agencies, based on the ground in Innisfail, that provided ‘*operational management in the delivery of recovery*’ in line with policy and community expectations’.<sup>48</sup>
- A high-level of investment from national and state governments into recovery, reflecting the economic conditions before the global financial crisis.

**Locally-led; a specialist for a specialist task.** In 2008, following ex-TC Helen and its effects in Emerald, the local government led the recovery for approximately two years, under the Recovery Plan for Central Queensland. After the housing damage following the 2008 floods in Mackay, and recognising the specialist nature of the recovery, the President of the Masters Builders was appointed to help oversee the rebuilding of Central Queensland towns.

**Emergence of a standardised local plan.** In March 2009, floods caused by ex-TC Ellie and high tides affected Ingham. ‘The Hinchinbrook Plan’ named after the local government area, was modelled on the Recovery Plan for Central Queensland from the previous year. It emerged as the benchmark for recovery plans for the period. Its governance structure was of four pillars; human-social, economic, built environment, and natural environment.

**The State Recovery Coordinator.** In 2010, following an independent review of legislation and policy, the Act was amended to include the role of the State Recovery Coordinator (SRC). The role, to be filled as necessary, is to oversee community recovery operations following an event.<sup>49</sup>

**The QRA and reconstruction.** In February 2011 following the Queensland Floods and TC Yasi, the QRA was established, initially for two years ‘*to manage and coordinate the Government’s program of infrastructure reconstruction and recovery within disaster-affected communities*’.<sup>50</sup> Operation Queensland, the State Community, Economic and Environmental Recovery and Reconstruction Plan was developed which outlined the road map for reconstruction centred on six lines: human and social, economic, environment, building recovery, roads and transport, and community liaison and communication. Except for community liaison and communication, the remaining five lines have remained consistent in Queensland’s recovery arrangements ever since.

**Funded community development.** The events of 2010-11 resulted in NDRRA Category C Community Recovery funding activated for the first time.<sup>51</sup> This

activation included a \$20 million project to enable 17 of the most devastated communities to employ community development workers for the next 2 years. We found the successful legacy of this - local governments focussed on the importance of community development – in some places we visited six years later; Lockyer Valley, Tablelands, and North Burnett.

### Observation

The role of community development officers in recovery has proven to be of value, reflected by some positions becoming a permanent part of some councils.

**Local focus; resilience emerges.** In 2013, following ex-TC Oswald, three Disaster Recovery Coordinators (DRCs) – more locally focussed roles – were appointed to provide on-the-ground attention to the affected areas of Northern Queensland Region, Bundaberg/North Burnett Region and Southern Queensland Region. The 2013 Flood Recovery Plan set '*the context for improved enhancement of resilience across the functional areas of recovery and aims to improve the State's ability to withstand, and bounce back from, future natural disaster events*'. It '*encouraged [affected local governments] to develop a local recovery plan to document their recovery strategies and objectives*', where possible including initiatives to enhance the community's resilience to future disasters.

**Resilience; a growing emphasis.** In early 2015, following TC Marcia and TC Nathan, the emphasis on resilience in recovery grew. *The Severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia Recovery Plan*, aligned with the goals, outcomes and guiding principles of the *Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience*, aimed to ensure that resilience was embedded in recovery activities. The growing emphasis is reflected by the increased usage of 'resilience' in successive QRA annual reports; once in 2011-12, seven times in 2013-14 and 16 in 2015-16.

**Reviews; efficiency, clarity and broader planning.** 2015 also saw two recovery-related reviews that shaped recovery arrangements. In June 2015, a review by the former Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) explored opportunities to improve the operations of community recovery. The 36 recommendations were internally focussed, covering roles and responsibilities, collaboration, capability-building, information and processes, streamlining grants and payments, and creating efficiencies with service provision partners. The report has been the catalyst for much work in the human and social recovery sector. In August, a KPMG report into the QRA's operational performance found that the Authority was effective and well-regarded.<sup>52</sup> It also pointed to potential enhancements in the areas of prioritisation, greater engagement and liaison beyond infrastructure and reconstruction, data collection and distribution, more clarity about roles and responsibilities of agencies, and planning across recovery functions other than building and infrastructure. The report's recommendations included the need for greater role clarity and representation for the QRA in disaster management.

**Policy and planning year-round.** In June 2016, the CEO QRA was appointed as the permanent SRPPC, a different role from the temporary but more operational one of the SRC following an event. Recovery planning and policy development was seen as essential to ensure the efficient transfer from response to recovery and to optimise recovery outcomes.

In 2017, the *Cyclone Debbie Review* ruled recovery out of scope, as recovery was still in its early stages. The review did find examples of planning for the transition to recovery. These included:

- considerable preparation by the former DCCSDS and QRA in the months before TC Debbie
- Whitsunday local group's early activation and approach to "worst case planning", anticipating a direct impact on the area
- Rockhampton Regional Council's implementation of betterment projects to reduce the effects of flooding on the city
- Ipswich local group's scenario planning approach to possible rainfall events, and its readiness for an event on the scale of the 2011 flooding.

### **Findings**

Queensland's recovery past illustrates the importance of local-level recovery. The location, scale and emphasis may change but the 'local' nature never varies.

Queensland's recovery arrangements have continued to evolve and improve, integrating learnings from previous events, and in turn demonstrating an approach to recovery that is adaptable and scalable.



# A review of Queensland's recovery arrangements

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*This section is the majority of the report.*

- *It explains what the review team found, and includes more background detail, where appropriate.*
  - *It is in three main sections:*
    - *Community Recovery at the local level*
    - *District level arrangements*
    - *State level arrangements.*
  - *Abstracts of each are included below.*
- 

## What we found

With clear expectations about what marks effective recovery, and the strategies and activities needed to achieve it, we set out to review recovery arrangements and practice in Queensland. Our expectations statement is aimed, above all, at community outcomes.

## Community Recovery at the local level

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*This section reviews how recovery happens on the ground at community and local level.*

- *It starts with the role of community in recovery and how the broad term of 'community-led recovery' is interpreted and put into practice.*
  - *It looks at local plans for recovery, and at planning processes that lead to them.*
  - *It looks at leadership, the part played by experience, the traits needed in recovery, and the importance of the right people.*
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- 
- *It covers the importance of the role played by supporting authorities, and the governance that underpins them.*
  - *It covers the capabilities needed in recovery, and the challenges in some smaller councils of finding the capacity to do all that is required. It considers capacity from four perspectives:*
    - *Structures - and management.*
    - *People - and the challenge of emergent recovery workforces.*
    - *Resources - particularly donations.*
    - *Time - particularly the transitions into and out of recovery.*
  - *It covers what is being done through QRA's Recovery Capability Development Project.*
  - *Finally, it reflects the strength of feeling we heard about the need for mutual trust in recovery, and for a change of culture to give recovery a higher profile in the priorities of those on the periphery.*
- 

Our expectations drew us to the central place community has in recovery, and that recovery always has a local context. In examining how the governance of local and district recovery arrangements intersects with the state arrangements, we start by reviewing how recovery happens at the community and local level. We have categorised our analysis under the following headings:

- the community
- local planning
- leadership
- supporting authorities
- recovery capability
- recovery capacity.

### **The community – its roles and responsibilities**

We expected an authorising environment that will enable those affected to determine the nature of their recovery including planning for, and deciding on priorities and timeframes. We expected that efforts of authorities will support and build community capability and capacity. We found that the term 'shared responsibility', which underpins the Arrangements, reinforces this and articulates how disaster management responsibility is shared across agencies. However, how the community shares in this responsibility is often less clear.

Aligned closely to recovery, the *Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience* provides some of this clarity. It states that 'Queensland communities and individuals are encouraged to:

- build healthy levels of community connectedness, trust and cooperation
- understand their exposure to local risks
- carry out activities to plan and prepare for all hazards.<sup>53</sup>

It goes on; *'many Queenslanders have a better understanding of their local disaster risks than anyone else, and are often best placed to identify and, with support, act on opportunities to reduce their vulnerability and exposure to hazards.'*<sup>54</sup> As implementation of this strategy continues, there is value in further defining how the community will share the responsibility.

Different views exist about how to describe the model of recovery being implemented. Community-led recovery is widely used in Australian documents. In the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA) the term 'community development' is more commonly used in recovery approaches - often linked to the role local councils and committees play in recovery.<sup>55</sup>

In Queensland, while some stakeholders used the terms community-led or community development, others preferred to use terms such as 'locally-led', 'local council led', 'community inclusive', or 'community stakeholder led'. All of these approaches reflect the importance of recovery being led locally, and ensuring community engagement. They differ in how and where decisions are made.

Several councils acknowledged that the approach they were using was more aligned to 'locally-led' where decision-making lay more with community representatives. Such community representatives can include key stakeholder groups and community leaders who know and understand the social norms and expectations of that community. It was also noted that locally-led recovery is successful when all community groups are involved. 'Local council led' was also discussed as best describing what happened in many councils, with council leading decision making activities. Two councils with a very strong understanding of 'community-led' have moved towards using the term 'community inclusive' recovery, as they felt it recognises the central role of the community while acknowledging the varying capacity of communities to lead after a disaster.

#### Community-led recovery

'Community-led' reflects a bottom-up empowerment of action and responsibility, driven from the community.<sup>56</sup> This shift towards an empowered community has been driven by a recognition that:

- recovery is best achieved when the affected community is able to exercise a high degree of self-determination
- there is an improved awareness of hazard risk among citizens
- policies articulate a diminished role for the state in service provision.

Community-led recovery is best achieved when the affected community, including the private sector, can exercise a high degree of self-determination and citizens can take part in planning and decision making for recovery at its own pace.<sup>57</sup> Such activities can build resilience and raise community conditions and preparedness above their pre-disaster levels.

We recognise that locally-led approaches, based on community engagement, consultation and participation, is the current model for recovery in many areas of Queensland. Our view, though, is that, whatever model is used, community-led recovery should remain the focus of attention.

**Observation**

In Queensland, there are many operational interpretations of community-led recovery.

As illustrated in figure 4, the *Queensland Recovery Plan* reflects the priority of the disaster-impacted community by placing it at the top of the governance arrangements. It states that local governments, through the local disaster management group (LDMG) and their community, are best placed to understand and identify their community’s recovery needs.<sup>58</sup> It also highlights the shared responsibility of the community and the value of community-led initiatives in building community resilience and sustainability.<sup>59</sup>

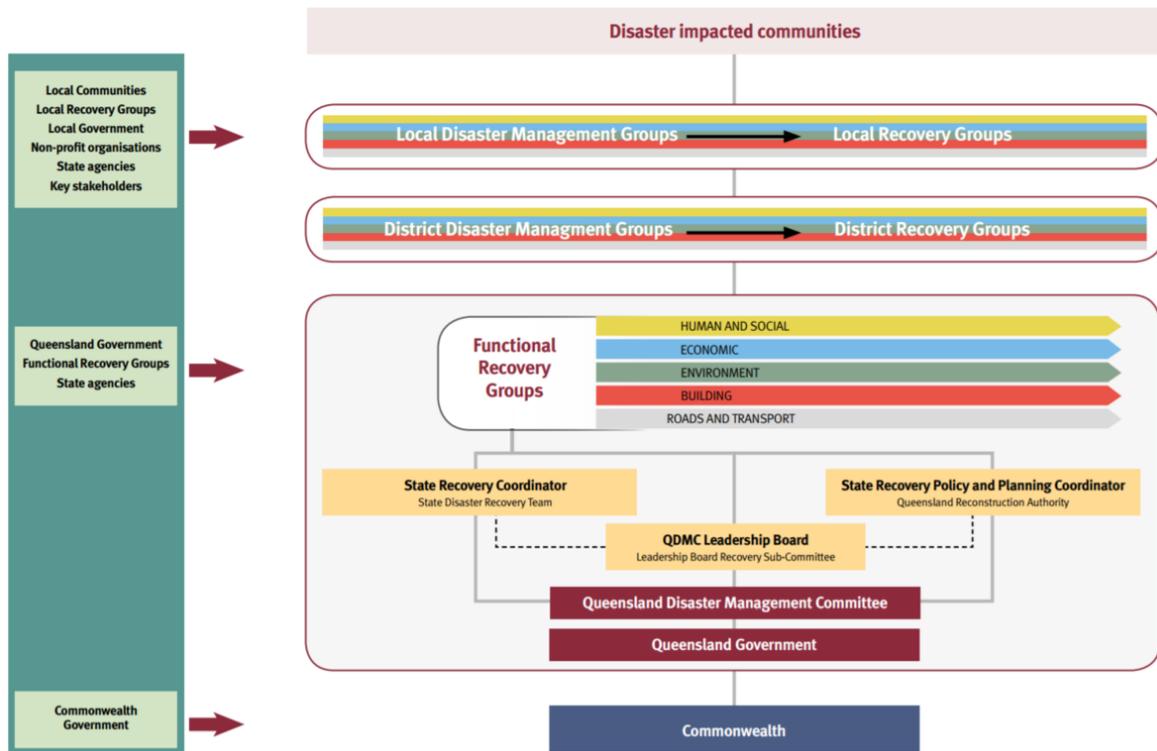


Figure 4: Queensland disaster recovery arrangements

**Finding**

A range of different approaches are applied in Queensland under the term community-led recovery. These differences may ensure recovery activity fits the situation. It may also result in challenges to understanding and applying good practice community-led recovery across the range of Queensland’s recovery contexts.

The central role of community as first responders is recognised and the *Queensland Recovery Plan* encourages the community to be engaged and actively participate in the recovery process. This approach supports what we heard repeatedly in interviews in Queensland; that recovery processes that worked alongside communities in ways that empower them were pivotal to long-term successful and sustainable recovery outcomes. The plan appropriately sets out the arrangements, concepts, and sequence for recovery. It does not cover – nor should it – how this might be done; how community leadership, capacity-building or development skills can be identified and harnessed. We did not find this guidance elsewhere.

Avenues for community leadership or community-led approaches have therefore largely been left to local areas to interpret, design and implement. As noted above, this has led to a range of models and approaches to recovery. One stakeholder summarised the current approach as:

‘In Queensland, we look at the damage and then what service delivery we need to give. Queensland [recovery] has a service delivery model, not a community development model. The risk of service delivery is that you are always meeting the basic needs of the highly vulnerable, not achieving a continued sense of community belonging - resilience. It is ‘transactional support and services’; ticked off; but how are these assessed on a true measure of outcomes for the community?’

The national focus on community-led models recognises that where recovery utilises community development approaches there is a greater chance of strengthening the resources, capacity and resilience of a community.<sup>60</sup> This approach contrasts to service delivery models that position communities as receivers of a service, often resulting in the unintended expectations of what should be done ‘for them’. As flagged in the AIDR Handbook 2, there is increasing evidence that the recovery processes used by government and key agencies can positively or negatively impact on the community’s ability to manage their own recovery.<sup>61</sup> We found evidence of this service-delivery approach in state-level measures of the operational recovery plan, which we cover [later](#).

We heard several practical challenges to implementing community-led approaches. These include:

- a lack of shared understanding of community-led practice and how to make it happen
- the appropriateness of the model or approach
- the trust in the local level to undertake these approaches.

Recent research into how community-led recovery might be developed shows that ‘there are no easy answers ...’, but reveal some suggested approaches.<sup>62</sup>

‘Preliminary suggestions could include that governments are transparent with communities about possibilities and constraints, listen to the diversity of views in a community, ensure that those who are vulnerable

have a voice and are looked out for, and that community strengths and assets are acknowledged and built upon.’<sup>63</sup>

Our environmental scan showed other approaches already in place.

- An emphasis on business continuity planning in the UK.
- New Zealand’s focus on community engagement options.
- The work of Houston-based Baker Ripley, building on what community is most proud about rather than a ‘needs assessment’ approach.

In 2007, psychiatrist Professor Sir Simon Wessely, speaking in Brisbane, highlighted the importance of communities’ participation and an understanding of the wider purpose associated with their involvement.<sup>64</sup>

‘[In the Blitz], civilians proved more resilient than planners had predicted, largely because they had underestimated their adaptability and resourcefulness, and because the lengthy conflict had involved so many in constructive participant roles.’

This is also reflected in our case studies of [Cardwell, Broadmoor, and Strathewen](#) earlier.<sup>65\*</sup>

The *Queensland Recovery Plan* endorses community-led recovery in principle. In practice, we found that the approach is often service-delivery-centric. Where there was evidence of community-led practice, both in Queensland and nationally, knowledge of these approaches, and ability to tap into them were limited. Those responsible for implementing community-led recovery would benefit from greater practical guidance. There is scope for work to seek out and monitor initiatives world-wide, identify good practice, and adapt it to Queensland. Practical guidance, whether it be sharing or shadowing current approaches or the development of easy-to-use manuals, activities and toolkits, would all be beneficial in supporting the work for on-the-ground practitioners.

### Finding

For community-led recovery there is much guidance on *what* should be achieved but not so much on *how* it should be achieved. While most locations recognise the role local government and other authorities undertake in community recovery, the level of engagement with communities, and recognition of their role is less well established. Except for a few sites, processes that enable community leadership and build community recovery capability are maturing.

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\* Our parallel research report commissioned for this review ‘*Environmental Scan of Best Practice in Recovery Operations*’, has more case studies of recovery practice.

## Local planning

We expected that planning would start early, and use processes that are sufficiently flexible to deal with the needs of the impacted community, regardless of the nature of the disaster. A local plan should be a guide to who manages what and why, enabling flexibility to respond to the community at the time of the event.

We found that local recovery plans differed extensively in terms of content and quality. Some sites have specific recovery plans, while in others recovery planning is incorporated in the local disaster management plan.<sup>66</sup> Recent research has identified the correlation between a community with strong connections, and the propensity to plan and care for each other before, during and after an event.<sup>67</sup> We heard from one Mayor *'we are more than roads, rates, rubbish – it's about residents'*.

Planning for disasters for the Cook Shire is part of business as usual. The Mayor spoke about engaging the tourism industry year-round, specifically around the closure of the Daintree National Park for the wet season. We heard that four-wheel drive tour buses can carve up the main road heading north after rain. This can impact the community and tourism sector, as it may take up to 12 months to fix the road again. Although weather patterns are changing, and the park is now open later in the year, and staying closed into February the following year, the council engages with local tour operators to discuss closures to minimise any long-term damage.

We also heard, and found, that some recovery plans were more in line with a statement of intent rather than providing much operational guidance. We also heard that recovery plans are most useful once exercised and lessons from them are implemented. This cyclical learning is important as it builds in flexibility.

We know that recovery depends on the event. Having a plan that describes the intended arrangements for recovery is useful, however there are often elements of an event that dictate the development of event specific operational plans. As one interviewee stated, *'Planning frameworks and recovery plans are not action plans. If you turn it on its head and [build] plans from recovery principles, you would have greater chance of building resilience long-term. The plans should not be driven by agency functions as this limits opportunity for innovation'*.

The PPRR Guideline makes the point that risk assessment should be part of the planning process, for all phases of disaster management, including recovery. The 'Cyclone Debbie Review' commented on the importance of community infrastructure restoration as a key enabler of a community's recovery, and how business continuity planning can make a difference to this. The implication for planning is the opportunity to address the greatest recovery risks by identifying prudent mitigation activity well before an event. There should be few surprises if risk is understood and pre-impact analysis is sound. Plans should go further than statements of intent.

We heard examples from prior to 2011 that recovery planning was separated from operations. Those trying to write the recovery plan were doing it 'on the run', often in isolation from what was happening in the Local Disaster Coordination Centre. Following TC Yasi and the Queensland floods in 2011, there was acknowledgement that early recovery considerations could have been better designed and informed by community capability and historical

impacts. The importance of recovery planning being in touch with response operations was a further learning. Physical proximity was important in this regard.

**Observation**

Planning for recovery, particularly at the local level, benefits from recognition of business continuity risks, close connection to those managing the response, and close integration with those agencies on which recovery depends.

Eight years on – after the introduction of the SRPPC role in 2016 – we see greater engagement with community. During the recovery of TC Debbie, we heard that the SRC talked to community members and mayors. The eight councils impacted ranged from very large through to small diverse councils. This demanded the development of recovery plans shaped by local governments and reflective of the local context. The approach to developing local recovery plans was to steer away from weighty documents, and to produce a plan that could be understood by the community. The ‘plan on a page’ was developed as a tool to assist and communicate the focus of recovery, rather than as an accountability/reporting document. An example is shown in figure 5 from the plan for Livingstone Shire Council.

We spoke to three councils involved in the development of the recovery ‘plan on a page’ developed for TC Debbie. Of the three, one identified it as a positive experience, one felt it had some challenges and the third did not express a view. Strengths identified included brevity of the document, and providing council with a template for future events. The addition of Australian Defence Force planning and facilitation skills enhanced engagement in the document, and its quality. The plan was also identified as a useful tool to share information with the community. ‘*The Mayor references the document very regularly in engagements with the community*’.

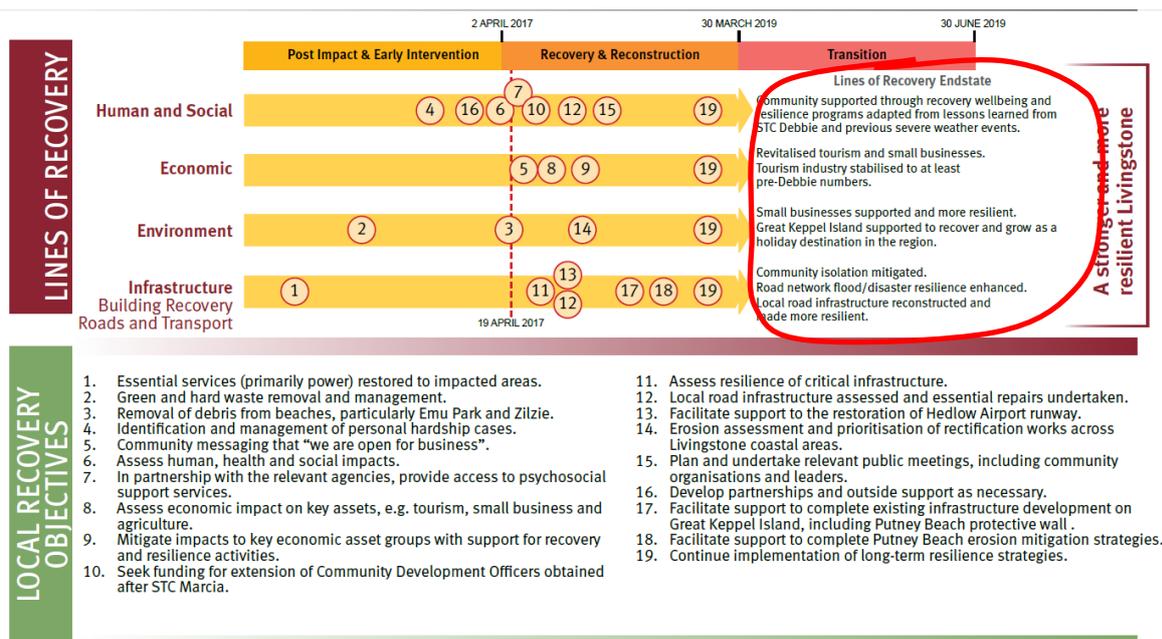


Figure 5: Extract from Livingstone Shire Council Local Recovery and Resilience Plan.<sup>68</sup>

Time pressure in creating the ‘plan on a page’ was the biggest challenge, with one council reflecting that with more time and capacity to engage with the community they would have been in a better position to develop a higher quality document. This was supported by a state agency who identified that closer integration with the planning process would have enabled a fuller contribution.

Opportunities to improve planning remain. One of the indicators of good practice planning in the Standard involves engagement with all stakeholders. We heard of the critical importance of having pre-event relationships and knowing who key people are and how to access them; a point reinforced by Major-General Chris Field, State Recovery Coordinator in 2017, in his article on community recovery capabilities following TC Debbie.<sup>69</sup> There is acknowledgment that local governments cannot provide all the resources, and recovery planning needs wider involvement than just them. Our expectations focused on the importance of partnerships. Stronger partnerships with industry and business are needed and should be documented within plans. But we recognise that plans are just a means to an end, and that the ongoing planning process is equally, if not more, important. For both to be effective, they need leadership and decision-making.

### Finding

Planning for recovery has evolved and improved over recent years. ‘Statement of intent’-style plans are important to set out arrangements and recognise risks. Event-specific operational plans are important to set out the route to, and achievement of, community recovery outcomes. Focusing on measures that are locally important to the transition out of recovery has a greater chance of building resilience long-term.

***‘If you only plan and don’t give people the decision-making ability, then these communities will do worse at recovering than those communities who haven’t planned.’***

Jacki Johnson, Group Executive, IAG, Building Resilience to Natural Disasters in our States and Territories launch speech, Brisbane, November 2017

### Leadership

We expected to see empowered local leadership – both in authorities and in the community – in recovery. We expected community leadership to determine the nature of the recovery approach and decide on what to do and when. The role of elected officials is central to recovery leadership at a local level. In several communities, we saw how the leadership of mayors and councillors played a significant role in how recovery was understood and undertaken, in many places enabling stronger community engagement. We heard though, that turnover, both of elected officials and council staff also affects corporate knowledge and experience. One council that has often had severe and frequent events noted that currently only 30 per cent of councillors have experienced a large-scale event in the region, and the entire executive leadership team has not been through a major event. Examples like this emphasise the importance of councils having the right people in place, with the right skills for recovery.

# HOW IS RECOVERY LEADERSHIP DIFFERENT?

Leadership in recovery is different. It is chaotic, where black and white becomes many shades of grey. It will require more from you as a leader than any other role you've ever had. It's a horrible opportunity.

You will think harder and faster. You will do more, feel more, learn more than ever before. It will require all the skills you have and all the skills you don't yet have. Recovery is not business as usual. It is challenging on every level and deserves superb leadership.

## UNCERTAINTY

You have to try to imagine the future when you are in an environment that is uncertain and rapidly changing. You have to make important decisions with limited evidence and do it with confidence.

The recovery environment is always changing and there are threats and surprises. Constancy and certainty are not there.

John Richardson, Australian Red Cross

## SCALE

The size and complexity of what needs to be done can be overwhelming. Every aspect of life changes. You need to super-size your thinking, your energy and your vision.

It is a big gig, and I don't know anyone who did it easily.

Fiona Leadbeater, community worker and volunteer, Victoria, Australia

## TIME

Constantly making decisions between competing priorities, all of which are important but cannot be done simultaneously. Trying to find creative solutions under great pressure to deliver. Budgets diminish without reductions in expectation.

Decisiveness and the ability to make good decisions quickly. Part of that is making everyone feel included in the process. It's a balancing act between those things.

Sir John Hansen, Red Cross Earthquake Commissioner, Christchurch

## PSYCHOLOGY

Impacted populations work differently. Chronic stress negatively impacts relationships, problem-solving, creative thinking, ability to take on information... As people get worn down, trust, cohesion and niceties can be lost.

Some are so tired. They eventually forget how to be empathic and effective.

Kate Brady, Australian Red Cross

## ENDURANCE

Demands and expectations are unrealistically high. It is difficult to maintain high velocity and high performance over many years.

This is not a marathon, this is not a sprint, this is not a relay. It's every horrible endurance event that you can imagine all rolled into one.

Dr Sarb Johal, clinical psychologist, New Zealand



Figure 6: Extract: *Leading in Disaster Recovery – A Companion through the Chaos* – New Zealand Red Cross.<sup>70</sup>

We heard that the right leadership style in recovery is also important if community-led recovery is to be effective. Former Victorian Police Commissioner Christine Nixon's view from the Victoria bushfires was that:

'Community leadership genuinely needs to be representative and representing the community - rather than people who think they ought to be the leaders. [We need to] leave time for them to emerge.'

Command and control is imperative in a time of crisis and fits the response phase where time and risk pressures are such that there is a need to transform thinking and problem solving into coordinated action in short timeframes. In recovery, the tempo changes. Pressure does not reduce, but leadership needs to take account of longevity, supporting ever more diverse teams, and the importance of leading with empathy.<sup>71</sup>

Our environmental scan of good practice identified four key leadership qualities for recovery. Their breadth is borne out [later](#) in this review in our analysis of the SRC role in past events:

- participatory leadership
- leading multi-disciplinary teams
- being sensitive to the needs of culturally diverse groups
- communication and organisation skills for facilitating community engagement.<sup>72</sup>

We heard several examples of leadership emerging from within the community, as well as leadership from non-government agencies, such as businesses and community groups. Several stakeholders made the point that leadership skills should also match the needs of the community.

At the local level, leadership responsibility falls to the Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC).<sup>73</sup> The Queensland Recovery Plan states that the LRC is appointed by the Chair of the LDMG after consultation with the SRPPC and the SRC, on an as-required basis. It also states that, where possible, the person appointed as LRC should not be the same person appointed as the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) though both positions should liaise regularly during the operations. The indicative role of the LRC includes a strong focus on coordination and reporting to the SRPPC on recovery operations.<sup>74</sup>

The role of the LRC, as separate to the LDC, was identified by some stakeholders as needing greater clarification, while for others it was more about socialisation of the approach at the local level. Several sites have a pre-appointed LRC, however we heard that the level of interest, and in some instances, commitment to the role, varied. We also found that in some places the LDC and LRC were the same person. One site identified that this may affect recovery capability, particularly in the planning stage, given that recovery planning often starts when response activities are high.

We also heard that current processes may not always enable the identification and recruitment of the right people to match the identified recovery skill sets. Often the appointment of key recovery roles draws on existing disaster management practitioners, or in some places the same person, with response and recovery roles requiring different skill sets. Decisions on recovery and response often also have quite different priorities and drivers. This impacts negatively on an individual's capacity to hold both roles at a time of high demand. Smaller councils expressed their limited ability to find a LRC and provide appropriate training to sustain the role year-round. Regional sites saw the value in having a pre-determined list of LRC candidates that would provide

### Participatory Leadership

Participatory, participative or democratic leadership models aim to include people in the challenges facing them. They are aimed at involvement, and innovation and are based on empowerment, brainstorming and conversation. They focus on fresh thinking and bring participation to the creation of goals and strategies. Different models exist for the final decision, from autocratic to consensus. In all, the leader is more the facilitator.



Figure 7: Generic model of Participatory Leadership (after [psychologia.co](http://psychologia.co/participative-leadership/)).  
<http://psychologia.co/participative-leadership/>.

specialist skills in a disaster event, but also saw the challenge in both ensuring and maintaining the level of training required.

The QRA is currently leading work into developing the leadership capability within recovery. Their approach recognises the differing levels, places and approaches where recovery leadership emerges and can be developed. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) is undertaking work to align the two recovery training modules within the Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework with the new PPRR Guideline. The revision will also see enhancement to recovery capability to incorporate stronger community-led approaches which will support greater understanding of leadership approaches. The alignment of these developments is pivotal to ensuring recovery leadership truly enables community-led recovery approaches.

### **Observation**

Recovery leadership development is being addressed by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to enhance the skills and expertise to deliver stronger recovery outcomes.

### **Finding**

There is a difference between the skills and style required of response leadership and recovery leadership. This difference is apparent in the approaches used by state recovery coordinators in recent years.

If approaches are to be community-led, there is an opportunity to develop leadership skills for recovery across the full breadth of the community.

## **Supporting authorities**

Supporting authorities are an important enabler of recovery at the community and local level. We use the term ‘supporting authorities’ here, instead of government advisedly. In recovery, support is given to the community by a variety of authorities. The local authorities – council, and the LDMG that it chairs – are the pre-eminent ones, and we focus on them in the following sections. But they are not the only authorities, and are often supported by District, State, Commonwealth, not-for-profits, businesses and other entities. While all support, they may have different underlying agendas. The extent to which supporting authorities can enable recovery depends on their capabilities and their capacity. Our expectations below therefore extend across this and the following two sections; Recovery capability, and Recovery capacity.

We expected that supporting authorities will:

- enable community leadership
- empower those recovering to determine the nature of their recovery, and to plan for, and decide, what to do and when
- support and build community capability and capacity.

We expected that this would result in a community that is capable of sustaining its own recovery without government support programs, and one that is more resilient to similar events happening again. We expected the partnerships involved in supporting recovery would work collaboratively to align strategies for the benefit of the community.

We found the authority for local government and the LDMG in Queensland is governed by three pieces of legislation, the Act, the *Queensland Disaster Management Regulation 2014* and the *Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011*. This legislation, and accompanying plans and guidelines, imply that the Arrangements apply across all phases of disaster management. The *Queensland Recovery Plan* acknowledges that local governments, through LDMGs and their communities, are best placed to understand and identify their needs for recovery. Both the *Queensland Recovery Plan* and the PPRR Guideline indicate that local groups are responsible for managing recovery in their area.

The outline of how they should do this is most clearly set out in the *Queensland Recovery Plan*.

It specifies that the role of LDMGs is to ensure that recovery arrangements, in consultation with the community, are prepared for, planned for and implemented to support the relevant local government area. It also refers to the discretionary formation of local (and/or) district recovery groups, to provide coordination and oversight of functional recovery sub-groups. The scope, membership, and responsibilities are flexible to allow these groups to adapt to circumstances, but detailed enough to give sound guidance on the governance and authority needed.<sup>75</sup>

The authority that councils and LDMGs should have is central to community-led recovery. It enables operations to be developed in close association with those most affected. The *Queensland Recovery Plan* suggests that the LDMG or Local Recovery Group (LRG) have in place relevant policies, strategies and reporting mechanisms that will enable the operationalisation of recovery. These include the development of a recovery plan/sub-plan, identification of a LRC

### **Recovery-related responsibilities of local bodies**

#### **Local Government (Council)**

- primarily responsible for managing events (response)
- establish, and chair, a local disaster management group
- prepare a local disaster management plan.

#### **Local Disaster Management Group**

- assist local government to prepare a recovery plan
- lead recovery efforts post disaster
- provide reports, make recommendations and advise district group
- may establish a local recovery group
- may appoint a local recovery coordinator.

#### **Local (also district) Recovery Group**

- develop a recovery plan for a specific disaster
- facilitate recovery operations for functional recovery areas
- monitor and report the progress.

#### **Local Recovery Coordinator**

- coordinate the community recovery.

and suitable group membership, reflecting the key functional recovery areas. But there are practical challenges in developing the capability to do some of this, especially for smaller councils.

## Recovery capability

### Capability...

our collective ability to reduce the likelihood and consequences of an emergency before, during and after.

### Capacity...

the extent to which the core elements of capability can be sustained, before, during and after an emergency.

Emergency Management Victoria Capability Blueprint 2015-2025.<sup>76</sup>

We expected to see that recovery capabilities matched the circumstances and context for recovery actions. Many councils are developing and enhancing their recovery capability. Those that had experienced repeated recovery operations demonstrated a depth of capability in their systems and processes. More importantly they had knowledge and understanding of good practice recovery, how it operated best and how council and community had a shared responsibility in enhancing community recovery. This has led to significant changes in how these councils see their role, and the resources they now invest in recovery.

We heard how the capability to deliver recovery outcomes is dependent on a range of factors. These include location, economic drivers, and connectedness of people. In recent years, some councils had created community development and disaster management recovery positions. In these areas, we heard how community development has become part of the culture of council. We heard how other councils wanted to do the same, but did not have sufficient resources to do so.

As our research progressed, and more stakeholders told their stories, several key elements emerged that practitioners identified as capabilities that would enable good practice recovery. Many match our expectations:

- skills, knowledge and attitude that reflect the importance of a community-led recovery

### Core components of good practice that may underpin recovery capability

- Knowledge of the four recovery environments: natural, built, social and economic.
- Skills for working alongside communities.
- Sensitivity to the needs of diverse cultural groups.
- Skills in working in multi-disciplinary teams, including alongside paid and voluntary workers.
- Participatory leadership skills.
- Communication and facilitation skills.
- Organisational skills.
- Stakeholder engagement including skills in eliciting views of all stakeholders and identifying unresolved issues.
- Skills in debriefing and lessons learned processes at key milestones.
- Decision-making when faced with challenges of uncertainty, time and resource constraints.

IGEM Environmental Scan.<sup>77</sup>

- procedures and arrangements that adapt to the changing environment and remain flexible to meet the recovery needs of the community
- recovery planning that reflects realistic recovery timeframes to help manage community expectations, to achieve true community involvement in planning and plans and the recognition that quicker was often not better
- capacity for a greater focus on resilience and building community
- recovery training (short and long-term recovery) for all people involved
- an ability to engage recovery workforces utilising their skills, knowledge and abilities
- system-level support and endorsement that enables recovery to be led locally, based on mutual trust, and particularly when capacity is stretched.

### Observation

Local recovery capability is enhanced when councils have a strong focus on recovery, drawing upon local knowledge and experience, supported by trained dedicated disaster management and community development roles.

### Findings

Good recovery practice is evidenced by skills, knowledge and attitudes that reflect the importance of community participation in recovery. Core capabilities required within a recovery team can be described by:

- relevant knowledge and expertise about the recovery environments, resilience, and community
- collaborative operational leadership and decision-making amid uncertainty, time and resource constraints
- communication / facilitation / training skills
- planning / organisation / time appreciation skills
- ability to work with diverse others with a focus on the community.
- capacity to focus on resilience and building community.

## Recovery capacity

We expected that the efforts of authorities will support and build community capability and capacity. We found solutions to the issues of recovery capacity for councils fell into four distinct areas: structures, people, resources and time.

### *Structures – and management*

Capacity refers to the system's ability to enact and sustain the necessary skills across all levels and phases of recovery. This is not always easy. We found that the experience of recovery is very different across sites and events; this was specifically reflected by stakeholders from rural and remote settings. Five rural councils told us that the effect of staff turnover on capacity was a serious issue. A significant economic downturn in local industries in another region led

to a loss of residents. This in turn affected the council's internal staffing, diminished its recovery experience and disrupted the stability of relationships in the area.

Some councils said they planned for scalability during response to an event, yet managing capacity into recovery was an ongoing challenge. This was particularly so in smaller communities where the same people were often involved in both response and recovery. A council's capacity to undertake recovery activities is often directly linked to the ability to access assistance. One council expressed that the speed in which recovery occurs is crucial to rebuilding community resilience and without visible signs of rebuilding, a community may have difficulty moving forward.

Many councils spoke of the difficulties they face; that of dealing with the extra pressures across the whole of the council generated by recovery. One rural council noted that during recovery their infrastructure team alone required the hiring of an additional eight staff members. This pressure also comes when councils are supporting a return to normality for the community through the continuity of business-as-usual services.

'Council activities got back to business as usual very quickly – as really only one third of the community was impacted. For those in the community that weren't impacted, life is no different and they maintain the same expectations of council services.'

These demands are often not factored into the operational considerations of recovery, yet are critical planning and preparedness considerations, as they go to the heart of the complex environment councils operate in following disaster events.

#### **Local government good practice**

There is an opportunity to share good practice and ideas from local governments that have achieved good practice community outcomes in recovery. Some of the factors that local councils have undertaken to support and enhance effective local recovery capacity include:

- adapting management structures and membership to the sites and events
- acknowledging early that the significant scaling up of local council activities and resources will require new and additional management structures
- development of specialist units to deal with specific issues
- development of recovery as a separate branch to ensure focus
- separation of the recovery branch from the general business of council in recognition of:
  - the dedication needed for the community's recovery
  - the need for councils to repair the often-significant damage to council infrastructure and get back to business as usual.

## **People – and partnerships**

We expected a partnership approach is enabled across all involved in the recovery and resilience of community; individuals, families, community groups, businesses and all levels of government alike. We expected the partnerships involved in supporting recovery to work collaboratively to align strategies for the benefit of the community.

**Emergent recovery workforces.** Over recent years, temporary recovery workers, both paid and unpaid, have emerged to assist following large-scale events. These include volunteers through pre-existing or spontaneous processes and paid staff redeployed within departments or organisations to undertake assigned recovery roles. While we heard that these groups created a range of challenges, they are also a valuable asset of skilled and available resources to draw upon. Writing after his role as State Recovery Coordinator in the TC Debbie recovery, one of Major-General Chris Field's six ideas to close 'intent-to-capability' gaps was to '*enable charities and volunteers*'.<sup>78</sup>

**Government sector.** We heard that using external resources to aid capacity, similar to practices in response, was useful, but sometimes hard to apply. Skills required can often be extremely varied and not readily available. Smaller councils with fewer or limited resources have difficulty engaging contractors with specific skills to perform recovery activities, as they lack funds or need NDRRA recovery funding approvals.

Some solutions are being trialled. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Gympie Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council and Noosa Shire Council has been established to assist with resource sharing when required. Another agency told us their approach was to develop teams that included local people as well as people external to the community right from the beginning. This helped ensure local knowledge but also extended the capacity of the local team. One council noted that Australian Army resources were useful in providing additional capacity when coordinated through the council. A recent SRC recognised that while Australian Army resource contributions are good, they need to be used in ways that do not risk undercutting local resilience. It is rare that they can contribute to long-term recovery.

### **Observation**

Two main strategies help to augment local government resources:

- memoranda with other councils
- mixed external and local teams.

**Ready reserves.** The Queensland Government Community Recovery Ready Reserve (ready reserves) program enables an immediate human and social recovery workforce surge capability during disasters.<sup>79</sup> It is a workforce of specially trained public servants from Queensland Government agencies who travel to disaster areas to provide individuals and families with information, personal support, financial assistance and access to other services. The ready reserves program is managed by the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS).<sup>80</sup>

Deployment is the biggest issue around ready reserves, both prior to and during an event as generally only 25 per cent of the ready reserve cohort is available when an event occurs. During TC Debbie, ready reserves were activated and deployed across impact areas with six out of ten ready reserves deployed being new to the program. While there are challenges in maintaining a steady level of suitable and trained reserves to deploy, we heard from councils that the ready reserve staff were well trained and skilled, and a good resource to be called upon.

The ready reserve strategy has been reviewed and agreed by all Queensland Government agencies; staff are to be nominated for specialised roles, and senior deployment coordinators nominated for each state agency.<sup>81</sup> New deployment targets have also been agreed to and will be negotiated.<sup>82</sup> A new suite of training modules has been developed to complement the updated strategy.<sup>83</sup>

There seems an opportunity to leverage local governments' positive response to the ready reserve concept, and develop a strategy to allow State Government staff to be deployed as an additional workforce, to fill other capacity gaps at local level. Such a strategy would require resourcing, commitment about deployment, and have HR implications. It could, though, contribute to better recovery outcomes.

#### Interstate assistance

For the first time in TC Debbie, DCDSS used the Social Recovery Reference Group *National Guidelines for Interstate Assistance*. The guidelines facilitated the provision of 142 recovery workers from other states and territories to supplement the Ready Reserve workforce. Although good practice was observed, it was also highlighted as a challenge due to external resources' lack of knowledge and expertise of the local community.

#### Observation

The new approach to the ready reserve seeks to resolve historical issues of availability and deployment to support human and social recovery.

**Not-for-profit and private sector.** Research by the Community Services Industry Alliance identified the significant role community based organisations play in disaster management, particularly recovery. The research recognises that there were many examples of community-based organisations focusing whole teams and organisational infrastructure to support recovery after an

event. These organisations can bring well established networks, engagement with vulnerable communities and a proven track record in responding to communities.<sup>84</sup>

Not-for-profit organisations from the human services sector consulted in the review identified that while they supported community-led recovery, there were challenges that impacted on their ability to respond locally and to work in ways that were innovative. Many not-for-profits are contracted to deliver services as part of normal business. These contracts come with obligations, the breaking of which affect funding. Support to maintain the skills and minimum standards required of staff and volunteers was one key challenge. Another was broader policies and funding arrangements outside NDRRA that often limited their ability to support community recovery priorities. An example cited by the sector was the availability of specific counselling services such as financial counselling. In response to previous events, agencies redeployed staff to the affected area. However, changes in funding and contractual arrangements meant this was no longer an option that could be offered. The consensus view was that a more flexible approach to resources and arrangements for their day-to-day work would ease time restrictions, increase staff deployments, expand options for service delivery, and allow roles and outputs in recovery to become more community focussed.

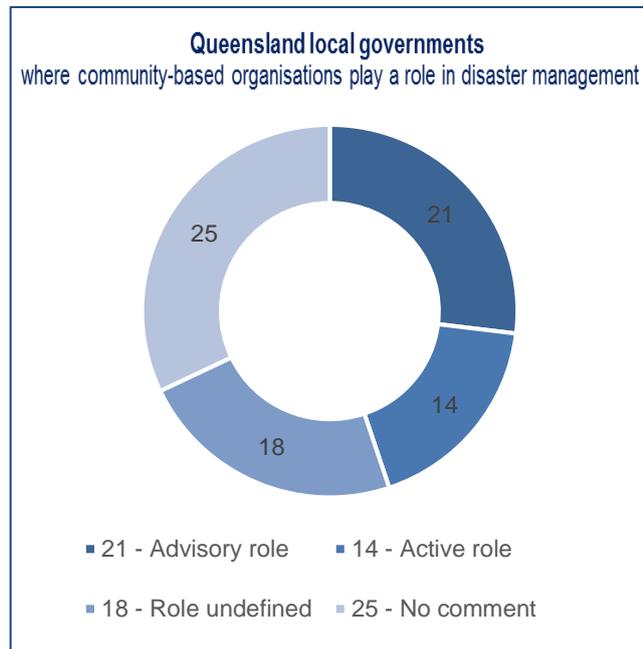


Figure 8: Number of LGAs where community-based organisations are involved in disaster management

The need for more flexibility in the use of resources, including allowing scope for modified roles and outputs before, during and after an event was also identified by the Community Services Industry Alliance as a key strategy that would enable greater engagement of not-for-profit organisations.<sup>85</sup> While the changes undertaken by DCDSS regarding the contracting of recovery services was recognised and supported, challenges remain given the broad range of funding sources and departments that not-for-profits rely on (Appendix F has further information on these changes). For the purposes of this review, we only heard from not-for-profits who engage with the state-level Human and Social Functional Recovery Group (FRG). Similar issues may also be impacting on not-for-profits engaged in other recovery areas, such as housing and the environment.

### Observation

There is a view in the not-for profit sector that a more flexible approach to the allocation of funding will result in better service delivery in disaster management.

**Spontaneous volunteers.** Volunteers have been a long-standing way to boost local capacity during recovery. While traditional volunteer groups have a part to play in recovery, other forms are emerging. Spontaneous volunteering gives people that want to help a sense of being a part of the solution – and the community an opportunity to participate. In Brisbane in 2011, more than 23,000 ‘Mud Army’ volunteers registered to help impacted communities’ clean-up once the flood waters receded.<sup>86</sup> While delivering the critical surge capacity, the organisation of spontaneous volunteering poses a challenge, first felt by local government.

Effective volunteer management needs, first, a thorough understanding of the local area, how volunteers may be deployed in support, and where they will not be needed. Second, it needs pre-existing arrangements. The PRR Guideline identifies that ‘*volunteers are the responsibility of the organisation for which they volunteer*’. In times of disaster Volunteering Queensland (VQ) matches the offers of spontaneous volunteers with the needs of councils or agencies seeking support. The council or agency then take on responsibility for their management and associated costs. Direct volunteer management on the ground is not the role of VQ.<sup>88</sup>

**Spontaneous volunteers...**

‘individuals or groups who are not skilled or trained to perform specific roles in disasters and are often not affiliated with an emergency or community organisation but are motivated to help.’

The PRR Guideline.<sup>87</sup>

As one council recognised, this type of volunteering will occur, regardless of support from the local government. Risks will arise though when spontaneous volunteers are unmanaged. These include their arrival in affected towns under-prepared for post-disaster conditions, lack of safety or work equipment, food supplies or appropriate accommodation.<sup>89</sup> Volunteers often expect these requirements will be met – unrealistic when councils are already challenged with other aspects of recovery.

‘It is worth noting that practice in coordinating spontaneous volunteers has tended to be more procedurally oriented, while social research, in sharp contrast, tends to support more enabling approaches’<sup>90</sup> – approaches better aligned to resilience.

We found mixed opinions about who, or what organisation, is best placed to manage spontaneous volunteers.<sup>91</sup> Many councils recognise that they have limited capacity, and believe external organisations are better placed. Some have MOUs with outside agencies. There are numerous organisations at community level that councils could set up pre-existing relationships with. But there is a need for caution here. MOUs should recognise the capacity of the external agency, the possible need for scalability, how additional staff will be taken on and how arrangements for normal business of the agency will fit with the MOU. Relationships, built and regularly renewed, are important to keep such MOUs relevant and workable.

As the peak industry body for volunteering in Queensland, VQ has worked with local governments to provide guidance to develop arrangements with local organisations for the management of volunteers. In order to support locally developed and locally based models, VQ are developing guidelines to assist local governments to build on local capabilities to manage spontaneous volunteers.<sup>92</sup> Within the guidelines three models emerge:

- Model 1. Managed by local government; that is accountable and responsible for the management and coordination of spontaneous disaster volunteers.
- Model 2. Managed by one key nominated agency or organisation, which is then accountable and responsible for the management and coordination of spontaneous disaster volunteers.
- Model 3. Managed by a consortium of agencies or organisations who are then accountable and responsible for the management of spontaneous disaster volunteers.<sup>93</sup>

Councils also spoke of the need for a consistent approach, led by State government, more support for councils, and greater clarity about volunteers and public liability<sup>†</sup>. Much work has already been done on this subject; the 2016 Queensland Offers of Assistance Policy and Guideline cover volunteers; the national Spontaneous Volunteer Strategy; and AIDR Handbook 12 Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers all provide guidance. A holistic solution to spontaneous volunteer management, though, is most likely to emerge through locally-developed solutions and agreements with organisations with volunteer management expertise. The AIDR Handbook 12 sums up the issue.

‘The inevitability of spontaneous volunteering means that it should be an integral part of emergency planning... there may be organisations that will have a stake in helping to coordinate or manage spontaneous volunteers.... Organisations should consider their capacity to engage ... partner with key stakeholders to pre-emptively plan for spontaneous volunteers. The establishment of memoranda of understanding can be a useful way of determining and recording roles and responsibilities in advance of any emergency.’<sup>94</sup>

It was also identified that when entire streets banded together to help each other (without any council management), this created strong social bonds that didn’t exist beforehand. The resulting interactions with neighbours are, perhaps, a better way of building a culture of support for recovery and longer-term resilience.

Stakeholders also encouraged a broader consideration of volunteering within recovery; ‘*what are we trying to accomplish with the volunteer management strategy?*’ As one site flagged, the risk of enabling episodic and spontaneous volunteers is that we may stifle traditional ongoing volunteer groups such as SES, Lifeline and Salvation Army whose memberships are shrinking. Such traditional volunteering models do provide rigour in induction, training, workplace health and safety, risk management and insurance. It is important to note the critical role traditional volunteer groups play in disaster recovery.

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<sup>†</sup> Following TC Debbie, the Queensland Government announced that WorkCover would protect Mud Army volunteers, if injured, when helping the clean-up.

### Observation

There are significant capacity issues in managing spontaneous volunteers. Related challenges exist for not-for-profit agencies in managing skill levels and minimum standards in volunteers.

### Findings

The partnerships formed in recovery are fundamental to the recovery process. Of particular note, is the value of emergent recovery workforces. Across all sites there was evidence that there was a rich capacity to draw. Tapping this capacity is limited by:

- the lack of structures to manage, facilitate and support emergent recovery workforces
- increasing restrictions on funding flexibility, and the effect this has on the not-for-profit sector
- state staffing support to a single (human and social) recovery function.

Recovery capacity at the local level can be supported by financial assistance, government staffing support, donations of goods and services, and corporate sponsorship. Despite work to improve guidelines and policy, and considerations about an engagement strategy, planning for such assistance continues to challenge local governments.

## **Resources – finance and donations**

**Financial capacity.** A council's capacity to undertake recovery activities is often directly linked to the ability to access assistance. A repeated theme raised by councils during the review was that recovery exceeded normal budget and resources. While the review identified NDRRA and funding as out of scope, we heard much about NDRRA and its impact on capacity. As a new disaster recovery funding model was released on 1 July 2018, we note the issues raised, and the significant amount of change occurring in this area.<sup>95</sup>

**Donations.** Donations, particularly physical goods and monetary offers, are intended to help disaster-affected communities to recover. We heard from many that, while they are appreciated and recognised as part of the recovery process, they do pose challenges for the community and local government; of arrival of unannounced goods, storage, distribution and acquittal. Many donations may negatively affect the recovery of the community; free goods reducing sales when businesses need them most.<sup>96</sup> Caveats on donations can help rebuild businesses and their resilience. 'Accepted only if bought locally' worked in North Burnett in 2011. But making such caveats work requires new rules, and their policing at a time when local resources are busy elsewhere.

Monetary donations can assist more, keeping cash flowing in local businesses.<sup>97</sup> But the consequences of acceptance must be thought through. Following TC Yasi in 2011, Woolworths food vouchers, donated to the Cassowary Coast community, diverted customers from the local IGA, at an already critical time for the business.<sup>98</sup>

The Queensland Policy for Offers of Assistance sets out the principles and relevant entities' roles for the management of offers of money, goods and services, and volunteering. The PPRR Guideline outlines in more detail than the policy, options for setting up appeals for monetary donations. The Queensland Government may activate two types of disaster relief appeals:

- the Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal Fund, administered by the government
- a donation to a range of non-government organisations (NGOs) who administer the appeal on behalf of the state.<sup>99</sup>

In recent years, we have seen appeals being outsourced to NGOs, rather than their management within government. The PPRR Guidelines make the point about the precedence appeals can set, the resourcing their management requires, and the risk of 'appeal fatigue' if several events and appeals occur in one year. The 2016 Queensland policy for Offers of Assistance contains detail about the considerations and steps needed if an appeal is to be set up. The development of partnerships and MOUs with organisations prior to an event occurring (similar to that with GIVIT) would provide an opportunity to ensure governance arrangements for public appeals are consistent, and robust enough to withstand scrutiny.

In addition to state government appeals, the PPRR Guideline also outlines that LDMGs may set up their own Mayoral Appeal Fund. Similar to state government appeals, these can be administered internally or outsourced.<sup>100</sup>

### **Finding**

There is opportunity to provide greater guidance around appeals for donations, from activating an appeal through to its closure, irrespective of the appeal type.

Since 2011, the Queensland Government has partnered with GIVIT to manage offers of donations. GIVIT operates a virtual warehouse to match goods and services, including corporate offers of assistance, to requests. In 2013, this partnership was extended to include offers of services, such as counselling, cleaning and laundry. Some councils have done the same; either identifying partner organisations to assist with donations management, or having formalised agreements with GIVIT for the benefit of the community.<sup>101</sup> Their message now is not to send items but to send money or vouchers.

In the Tablelands region, following the Ravenshoe café explosion, GIVIT became the face of the Ravenshoe appeal, collecting monetary donations. An independent appeal committee was set up to determine the methodology for dispersing the funds to support victims and families as they recovered. Despite such initiatives, the challenge remains for local community charities who continue to receive large amounts of donated goods.<sup>102</sup>

A gap identified was the lack of a clear policy position on how Queensland intends to promote financial donations and manage expectations. Big donors need special handling, particularly if they want their name recognised, or association with a particular project. Often there is a need to manage the expectation of donors, both corporate and individual, against the prioritised needs of the community affected. We encourage focussed attention during any preparation for recovery on how plans and guidelines about donations work at local level by those responsible for their management. Local recovery would benefit from increased effort to minimise the arrival of physical donations in the disaster area, if not requested.

There are instances of success stories regarding donations throughout Queensland's historical events. We note the ongoing successful partnership between the Queensland Government and GIVIT, and we acknowledge several guidelines, manuals and elements of plans relating to donations that exist at the State and national level, and recent work to update such documents since the Cyclone Debbie Review. Such work is worthwhile, as challenges in this area still exist.

The PPRR Guideline covers financial assistance, volunteers, and goods and services, and, to an extent, corporate offers of assistance. The 2016 Queensland Offers of Assistance guidelines contains more detail, including the need to ensure an engagement strategy is established and implemented for each of these. There is an opportunity for such a strategy to be combined for all elements, and to include other capacity support options, such as the ready reserves.

There is existing practice addressing similar issues. The UK's government-NGO Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum aimed to identify and maximise the voluntary sector contribution to UK civil protection arrangements and is a move in this direction. It provided a framework for engagement between the government, emergency services, local authorities and voluntary organisations. A broader ongoing Queensland forum, covering all potential donors could lead to better integrated deployment and more efficient use of assistance, benefitting both donor and receiver. It has potential to be part of the resilience agenda.

Such a forum might lead to a future environment where emergent assistance of any form; volunteers, NGOs, government 'ready reserve' staff, funding streams, donations of goods or services, and corporate sponsorship; were acknowledged, directed or put on hold in the most effective way to support the recovering community. For the receiving local government, the challenge of how to best use the resources is the same, whatever their origin.

### **Findings**

There is a need for policy guidance to manage the sensitivity around donations. Guidance should address the different expectations of donors and the appropriate response from the Queensland Government.

The development of partnerships and MOUs with organisations prior to an event provides an opportunity to ensure governance arrangements for public appeals are consistent, and robust enough to withstand scrutiny.

### **Time – and transitions**

We expected that recovery timeframes and processes can be scaled and adapted to reflect the complexity and context of the recovery required. The [Achieving recovery outcomes](#) section illustrated its typically long-term nature. Recovery is a long-term process which continues well after the two years initially allocated under NDRRA.<sup>103</sup> It should be measured by the achievement of outcomes as identified by the community. The Community Development and Recovery Package (funded under Category C of NDRRA) was offered for a maximum of two years after the 2010-11 events. This constrained the capacity of councils to continue community development approaches past the funding period.<sup>104</sup> One spoke of a significant loss to community and recovery activities when the funding for a previous recovery community development worker finished.

Time frames for recovery are often longer than the two years allowed for under many NDRRA funding measures. In March 2014, for example, over a year after TC Oswald in North Burnett, the council released an advocacy plan ‘to influence those who hold government, political or economic power to implement public policies and projects’. These public policies and projects were encouraged to address the key impacts identified in reports council had commissioned about the economic impact and future mitigation measures. The plan spoke about the council’s ‘unique challenge’ of providing leadership ‘at a time when the region is facing the unenviable task of recovering’.

Some sites we spoke to indicated that recovery continued well after funding ceased and, in some places, it will be a continuing thread for years. We also heard that the frequency of events saw some communities in constant and often parallel phases in recovery from a previous event, while responding to a new event. The phases of disaster management may be linear for an event, but not linear within that community’s context.

**Transition points.** Current guidelines don’t specify timeframes for recovery. They do give guidance on recovery phases which allows recovery to be scaled and adapted to circumstances. The State Plan, the *Queensland Recovery Plan* and the PPRR Guideline outline the three phases of disaster recovery, as illustrated in figure 9 opposite:

- post-impact relief and early recovery
- recovery and reconstruction
- transition.<sup>105</sup>

The *Queensland Recovery Plan* covers the transition process in some detail. Effective transition to recovery requires considerable planning, and negotiation to ensure a seamless delivery of services to the community. It is shaped by the



Figure 9: Phases of recovery.

nature of a disaster, informed by local circumstances and governed by the chairs of relevant LDMGs or District Disaster Management Groups (DDMG).<sup>106</sup> It primarily focuses on the transfer of responsibilities from an environment of command/control to a collaborative and participatory environment, with many government and community response agencies remaining involved. Early planning for transition, alongside clear and agreed triggers, are hallmarks of good practice. Transition will vary across regions and locations. As per the example below, there is recognition that response, relief and recovery should operate in parallel in a collaborative, coordinated and integrated manner.

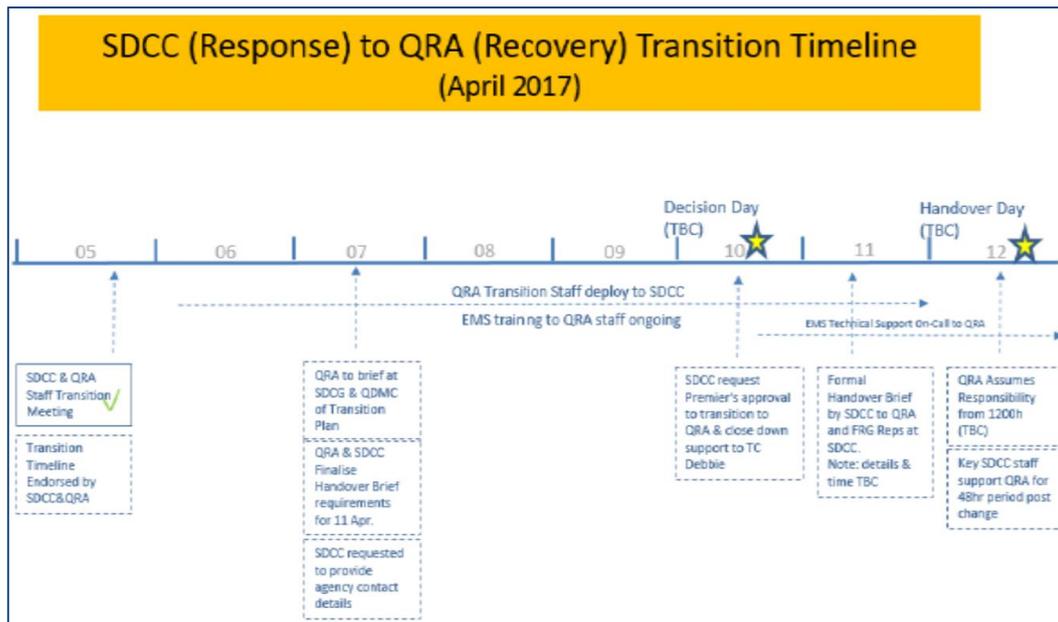


Figure 10: Transition Process Example State Level – Queensland Recovery Plan

How and when an impacted area moves between the phases of recovery should be based around community needs and reflect the context. While there were some stakeholders who identified that the transition from response to recovery in TC Debbie was too rapid, largely across both local and state levels, we also heard that the transition to recovery was the best so far.<sup>107</sup>

A clear start to recovery, agreed locally, is critical to an orderly handover of responsibilities and activities. Environment regulations, for example, that are relaxed for response, are reinstated for recovery. Clarity of when recovery commences, as well as when it ends, is therefore important. Repeatedly, we heard the need for clear and agreed trigger points for both. This is not to say such triggers, or conditions, should be the same for all recovery operations; but that the process to define them, agree them, and amend them, if necessary, for each event should be implemented as an early part of recovery planning.

Formalisation of the transition to recovery process has been implemented in Victoria. A series of events just prior to 2010-11 prompted the development and implementation of documents and processes that formalised the handover of responsibilities utilised in recovery in 2010-2011.

Emergency Management Manual  
Victoria<sup>108</sup>

The *Queensland Recovery Plan* and the *PPRR Guideline* outline a clear process for transition. It is not clear that this is being implemented as fully as it could be; we heard of the need for more formalised and documented transition statements accessible to key stakeholders.

‘There needs to be formal handover of themes, issues and strategic objectives. This was not apparent; planning was tactical not outcome-based.’

New South Wales have established the appointment of Recovery Public Information Officers in recognition of the need for widely shared information.

Our observations at exercises reinforced what we heard during interviews. While on paper there are clear stages of transition, there were those who feel that operationally there is a lack of clarity. One stakeholder stated the start often feels like we are *‘drifting into recovery’*.

Transition was not the only issue we heard associated with time. We also heard from some sites that there was an opportunity for a better shared understanding about the timeframes for the post-impact and early recovery phases. Some participants in exercises viewed them as within the first 24 hours to a few days, others, as the first two weeks, and yet others seeing it in terms of weeks and months.

## Findings

A documented transition process from response to recovery exists at the state-level, but is not widely understood. Implementation of the process does not result in agreed triggers, or conditions, being identified to mark, either the end of response, or recovery.

A formal handover brief, including a statement to mark the transition, and the transfer of responsibilities, would be useful if it were widely shared.

## What is being done

The QRA’s *Recovery Capability Development Project* picks up this point about timeframes for recovery, with an early headline that *‘community recovery from disasters can be a complex and often lengthy process, with different communities recovering at different rates and in different ways.’* It outlines six points for success in recovery: understanding the recovery challenge, enabling community-led recovery, promoting leadership and coordination, supporting effective communication, undertaking a risk informed approach to recovery planning and recovering to a more resilient future. These points



Figure 11: Guiding Principles to achieving Recovery Capability Outcomes.

mirror the sentiments in this report. Its five Guiding Principles to achieving Recovery Capability outcomes again reflect the best practice we found independently. We look forward to seeing how this project addresses the opportunities we identified above.

We conclude this section on local community recovery by referring back to our expectations. We expected community-led approaches that support the community to manage their own recovery. We heard of some communities that are managing their own recovery. We also found the need for better definitions to help build understanding of the ways of doing this. There is also the opportunity to develop tools for practitioners to help facilitate community participation in recovery. If approaches are to be community-led, there is an opportunity to develop leadership skills for recovery across the full breadth of the community, and to train selected prospective leaders from clubs, non-government organisations and the private sector.

### **Finding**

If approaches are to be community-led, there is an opportunity to develop leadership skills for recovery across the full breadth of the community.

We expected partnerships to enable the involvement of all. We found that many are already involved in recovery, and that there is a further opportunity to partner with business before an event. Such a partnership will help build the relationships that are an enabler of recovery. We expected that planning would start early. We found that it did, and was accepted. We look forward to seeing it used as a way of building partnerships with business.

We expected supporting authorities to help build local capability and capacity. We found local governments are already building their own capability. Capacity for councils is the real challenge in the areas of structures, people, resources, and time. Structures, people and resources challenges have existing or emerging solutions. Time is less well addressed. More emphasis needs to be put on the communities' need for time for recovery and the triggers for transition.

### **Further enhancements**

We asked local stakeholders to identify one priority that they believed, if strengthened or improved, would significantly enhance recovery. Most responses fell naturally into three areas. Two we expected to hear about; one was different. Many comments were about capability, or arrangements, covered above. The one that stood out was that of culture. This focus on culture was also reflected by state agencies, and we cover this [later](#).

**Culture.** Overwhelmingly, stakeholders identified the need for system-level support and endorsement that would enable recovery to be led locally based in a culture of mutual trust. Ten of the 16 sites interviewed said they would like to see changes to how local level recovery is supported, evidenced by a demonstrated trust in the community and the local council. They sought greater trust:

- in the local community and the people who work there
- of councils; they have a vested interest to do the best by the community
- of council decisions; to start repairs and recovery before State approvals.

**Culture...**

*the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a society*

Oxford Living Dictionaries.

*the collective accepted practices of the people within an organisation which relate directly or indirectly to the purpose of the organisation*

Macquarie Dictionary.

As we unpacked this story further we found that recovery culture varied across Queensland. There were divergent and often unspoken attitudes and beliefs that reflected how recovery is understood and valued across all levels of the system. These attitudes and beliefs act as a lens through which recovery is viewed, shaping interest, effort and recovery approaches.

At times, we heard of a lack of interest or a reluctance to be involved in recovery. Some stakeholders spoke of the challenge to get people to take up recovery roles like LRC or in getting people to attend recovery events or exercises. We also heard of the need to have a greater focus on recovery; that often the focus was on response. One stakeholder told us that when there was more discussion on recovery it increased interest and capability. Stakeholders who had been involved in long term community recovery also spoke of the culture around how quickly recovery should be completed. When this didn't eventuate per the plan, there was a sense that those who haven't 'recovered' were somehow lagging, or taking advantage of the system.

More often, though, we found stories that reflected the pride people have in their efforts to recover. For many stakeholders, recovery was deeply personal, *'local workers are also community members. It has an impact, it's [our] community... our town'*. These stories illustrated the value of community joining together, trusting that as a community they will build back what was damaged or lost. This was also a strong reminder to build on what was working well. In Lockyer Valley, for example, the NDRRA-funded two-year community development officer had been made permanent by council as they saw the value in organised activities year-round that built connection and mentally prepared people for 'next time'.

Our expectations did not catch this cultural aspect, because the sentiments we ascribe to culture were not about recovery itself. Instead they are about the place of recovery in the wider approach to disaster management and how it relates to the normal business of agencies. Perhaps the real challenge for those leading recovery is to change the culture so those on the periphery, or not involved, actively want to play a part.

## District-level arrangements

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*This section covers the role of **disaster districts** in recovery.*

- *It notes that the flexibility in districts' documented role is the reason for uncertainty about how this should be put into practice.*
  - *It notes overlap between the roles of districts and the QRA.*
  - *It recognises the value that local groups put on districts' support of recovery when this happens, and the utility of a whole-of-government state entity on the ground in recovery.*
  - *It recognises the importance of strong partnerships at this level.*
- 

In Queensland, district groups form the bridge between 'local' and 'state'. At one end, district group staff are often on the ground in local communities, experiencing the same environment, geography and often the effects of local events. At the other end, the district group is primarily made up of those employed by State government. The value is their ability to concentrate State resources in an area where they are needed most.

District groups are a supporting authority for community-led recovery. We therefore expected to see a partnership approach to recovery, with a district group supporting and facilitating recovery through the LDMG or LRG. Like other involved entities, we expected district groups should have the skills and capability to plan for and manage recovery programs including agreed and documented roles and responsibilities.

Starting with documented roles and responsibilities, the PPRR Guideline recognises that '*disaster districts enable a more efficient and effective operational service delivery in support of local communities and address the size, complexity and diversity of Queensland.*' The PPRR Guideline further defines a disaster district group's function of '*providing coordinated state government support when required and requested by local governments through their LDMGs.*'

The *Queensland Recovery Plan* outlines the role of the DDMG is to:

- 'ensure that recovery arrangements are prepared for, planned for, and implemented to support LDMGs in their applicable district
- promote council to council arrangements to facilitate recovery operations and investigate opportunities for local government collaboration with other councils, to build resilience and recovery resource capacity
- provide support and resources as requested by the LDMG.'

The *Queensland Recovery Plan* and the PRR Guideline provide the strategic approach to recovery and allow for district group flexibility and adaptability, dependent on the disaster event. The same points about the discretionary formation of recovery groups is made about districts as it is for local government - to provide coordination and oversight of functional recovery. But there are no criteria about whether or when one should be formed. Recognising the focus of recovery operations is at the local level, the scope, membership, and responsibilities are again flexible to allow adaptation.

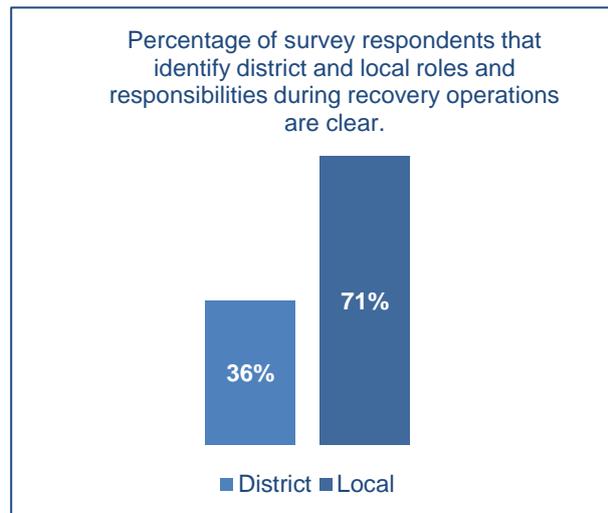


Figure 12: Clarity of roles and responsibilities during recovery operations.

This flexibility is perhaps part of the reason for some of the uncertainty we heard regarding the role of the district group in recovery. Results from a survey of practitioners across Queensland show the difference in clarity of the roles and responsibilities between the local and district groups. Another contributing factor may be older doctrine. A review of doctrine and guidelines prior to the appointment of the SRPPC reveals considerably less detail and clarity on the district group's role in recovery as compared to preparation and response. Some recovery governance diagrams omitted district groups altogether. Stakeholder memories of these documents may have added to the confusion we heard. Even now the *Queensland Recovery Plan* shows that state-level FRGs participate in, and gather information from, *local* recovery groups through a *district*-level delegate from the lead functional agency.<sup>109</sup> We saw nothing formal about keeping the district group informed.

We expected that a district recovery plan would perhaps fill in that detail. The *Queensland Recovery Plan* sets some general expectations for district planning.

'Arrangements and strategies to coordinate support for local recovery operations within the district are reflected in DDMPs (section 53 of the DM Act). The DDMP should address the district's recovery strategy, developed in consultation with the relevant LDMGs and include coordination arrangements for recovery across the functional areas at the district level.' – *Queensland Recovery Plan*

An analysis of selected DDMPs showed the same flexible approach to recovery, but with enough detail in the templates to allow workable arrangements and committees should the need arise, and a focus on supporting local groups.

'As Local Disaster Management Committees have a lead role in the disaster recovery process, any District Recovery Committee's operational or action plans will be developed to supplement and support the LDMG Disaster Recovery Plan. The Recovery Committee will operate closely with any LDMG to assist in the recovery process.' – Bundaberg DDMP

When reviewing the roles of the district group we also noted that there is potential for significant overlap in responsibilities with QRA. Both the QRA and district groups have an identified role in coordination and communication with state-level FRGs. In response to a specific event, the QRA and district group both have a role in planning and the development of plans. The QRA's current role in the coordination of planning for specific events comes through direction of the QDMC, implying a strategic approach. In TC Debbie though, QRA, in conjunction with the SRC, provided direct coordination and support to the eight affected councils. This on-the-ground-operational approach may also add to confusion about the role of the district group.

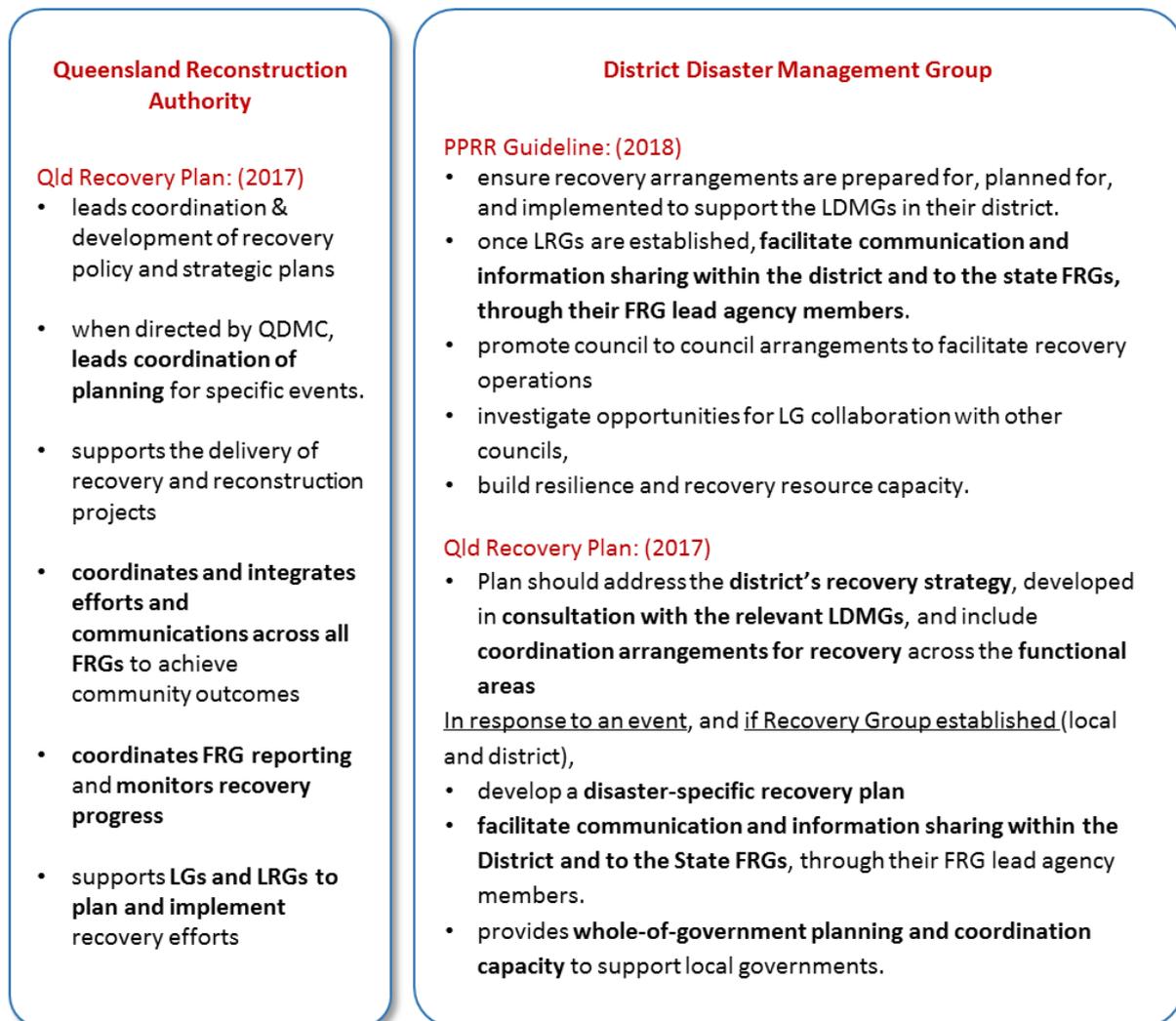


Figure 13: Summary comparison of QRA and DDMG recovery roles and responsibilities

Amid this slight cloud of uncertainty and inconsistency in their roles during recovery, our review of practice showed district groups mostly rising to the task. We found support to local recovery occurring well in pockets across the state. Local groups identified the value of district groups continuing after response to assist with coordination, communication and resourcing. Following TC Debbie, the Mackay DDMG morphed into the district recovery group,

conducting fortnightly meetings, and undertaking case coordination with the three local governments.

In Cairns, the council views the district as a local ally, and as the nexus between local and state, delivering support through the Arrangements, advocacy on issues, and as the communication channel to filter information. In Bundaberg, we heard the value that existing relationships add to the recovery context. The LDMG and the DDMG co-location during past recovery operations has ensured fast decision-making and collaborative solutions sought prior to escalation to the state level. One stakeholder reflected *'the personal relationships built during peace times means there are no egos during an event.'*

#### Observation

Local governments have identified the value of district groups continuing to work after response to assist with recovery coordination, communication and resourcing.

#### Finding

District disaster management groups do good work to support locally led recovery. However, there is a lack of clarity about whether district groups or the Queensland Reconstruction Authority are responsible for coordinating state support to local governments during recovery operations. Greater clarity will strengthen support to locally led recovery.

We also heard though that support by the district groups could vary. Some smaller councils identified that when larger centres in the district were affected, they received limited support. Distance plays a part here. The same councils said they did have strong relationships with the district group. They also noted that the DDMG proximity to the key centre, and the reality of resources prioritised to the greater population resulted in less access for them to district support.

#### Finding

A challenge for any supporting authority is to extend partnerships and attention to more distant local governments in their remit.

The Office's *Review of State Agency Integration at a Local and District level (2015)* highlighted the opportunity to provide further clarity on the roles and responsibilities at all levels.<sup>110</sup> This was also echoed by a senior stakeholder who identified that while doctrine is useful, clarity is needed of what each level – community, local, district, state – is responsible for in recovery.

Recovery history in Queensland shows the utility of a whole-of-government state entity on the ground in recovery. During the recovery from TC Larry, the ORMG fulfilled many of the roles as those above.

‘This Task Force structure provided in short order a very senior and tight knit leadership group to drive the recovery, through the efforts of the public service and other specialists. There was public service coordination both in the region through the ORMG and in Brisbane through the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG)’ – The Final Report of the Operation Recovery Task Force - TC Larry

Recently, many district groups have taken an active preparatory role in the recovery space. In the last 12 months, seven DDMGs reported leading or participating in recovery exercises.<sup>111</sup> Recovery exercises were the second most common exercise in the district with most involving local groups.<sup>112</sup> District recovery planning was identified as having the greatest improvement in confidence in the Office’s recent work on disaster management plans.<sup>113</sup>

It is important to note that there has already been work undertaken to provide more clarity and direction on the role of district groups, evident in the *Queensland Recovery Plan* and the PPRR Guideline.<sup>114</sup> It will be important that these documents continue to keep abreast of this changing environment and that both respond to, and inform, the clarification and socialisation of district groups’ role in recovery.

Challenges at this level may still arise in the future. Larger districts supporting several distant local governments may be one. We also heard from one council that the perennial issue of boundary alignment remains; that the difference between state agency boundaries and disaster district boundaries was a challenge during recovery. In 2004, the Auditor-General’s report No 2 found that:

‘Unless a consistent whole-of-government approach to the demarcation of areas within the State is taken, the resources within the disaster management system may not be appropriately allocated across the regions’.

It recommended that authorities:

‘review the current disaster district boundary framework and its relevance to the regional boundaries established by other public sector lead entities to ensure that resources within the Disaster Management System are economically, efficiently and effectively allocated across Queensland.’

This recommendation about the need to review disaster district boundaries was reinforced by reports in 2009, 2011 and 2013, and the point made again by Major-General Chris Field, State Recovery Coordinator in 2017, writing in the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* in 2018<sup>115</sup>. In 2014 an internal review, largely based on local views, resulted in the trial merger of the Cairns and Mareeba Disaster districts but no other change. Section 28A of the Act allows the establishment of a temporary disaster district for a disaster that has

occurred in two or more adjoining disaster districts. Such an arrangement may help support the role of the disaster district in recovery.

In summary, recent district activities generally met our expectations. We expected to see a partnership approach to recovery, with a district supporting and facilitating recovery through the LDMG or LRG. Like other entities, we expected district groups should have the skills and capability to plan for and manage recovery programs including agreed and documented roles and responsibilities. As noted above, there appears to be an overlap between the district group and QRA roles. We saw generalist, but adequate, documentation about their role in district plans. We heard positive but differing approaches about how district groups operated during events. The greatest value of district group involvement was identified as coordination and communication, and providing scalability of resourcing. There is an opportunity for the best of these approaches to be drawn from all to ensure that a regionally based recovery group for state resources can support locally led recovery activities in several places at the same time, making best use of assets and therefore providing value for money.

**Finding**

Recovery works best when there are connections, strong partnerships and attention to affected communities by supporting authorities. District groups are well-placed to foster these as members are mostly state employees often with local links.

## State-level arrangements

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*This section covers state-level arrangements, defined here as bodies or individual roles, mainly Brisbane-based, with the authority to direct or influence recovery outcomes.*

- *It covers the roles of the main bodies at State level, the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, the Leadership Board Sub-committee, the five Functional Recovery Groups, and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority.*
  - *It maps current recovery arrangements and communication paths, focussing on coordinating and reporting.*
  - *It gives additional attention to three areas:*
    - *the balance between strategic and operational leadership*
    - *communication, both hierarchically, and across levels*
    - *the capacity of functional recovery groups.*
  - *It covers the State's operational recovery plans and associated measures of recovery.*
  - *It looks at the individual appointments of the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator, State Recovery Coordinator, and the CEO QRA.*
  - *In 'further enhancements'... it looks at the importance of role clarity for agencies for whom recovery is not core business.*
  - *It links greater role clarity, to increased attention, and a redefined cultural approach to recovery.*
- 

This review set out, in part, to examine how the governance of local and district recovery arrangements intersects with the current state arrangements, and separately to compare previous arrangements with those that have evolved since the appointment of the SRPPC. Both aspects require an understanding of state-level recovery operations. This review recognises that state government officials are present at all three levels of the disaster management system, but

uses the term state-level to refer to those, mainly Brisbane-based, with the authority to direct or influence recovery outcomes.

We expected that state-level authorities should focus on communities sustaining their own recovery and becoming more resilient to similar events. State arrangements therefore should promote and enable community-led recovery, and have the capability of working *with* the community as they determine its nature. State-level efforts should support and facilitate the building of capability and capacity in communities. We expected that the partnerships implied here should be built through good communication that engenders trust. We expected that the State would act proactively to trust those recovering to do what is in the best interests of their community. We expected that strategies reflecting the varying agendas across all authorities would be aligned to the benefit of the community. Finally, the Standard identifies that entities should have the skills and capability to plan for and manage recovery programs including agreed and documented roles and responsibilities. To see how these expectations are met, we look first at the documented state-level roles and responsibilities.

The most relevant document for State-level recovery is the *Queensland Recovery Plan*. It acknowledges the priority given to the impacted community and the lead role of the LDMGs and LRGs. Reflecting the importance of community-led recovery, the *Queensland Recovery Plan* uses similar words to the *National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs* stating that successful recovery is ‘*responsive and flexible, engaging communities and empowering them to move forward*’.<sup>116</sup> This mirrors the good practice attribute of scalability and adaptability, and emphasises the importance of community-led recovery.

As illustrated in figure 14, responsibilities for recovery at state-level in Queensland are spread across a number of committees, groups, agencies (bodies) and individuals. We look first primarily at the bodies.

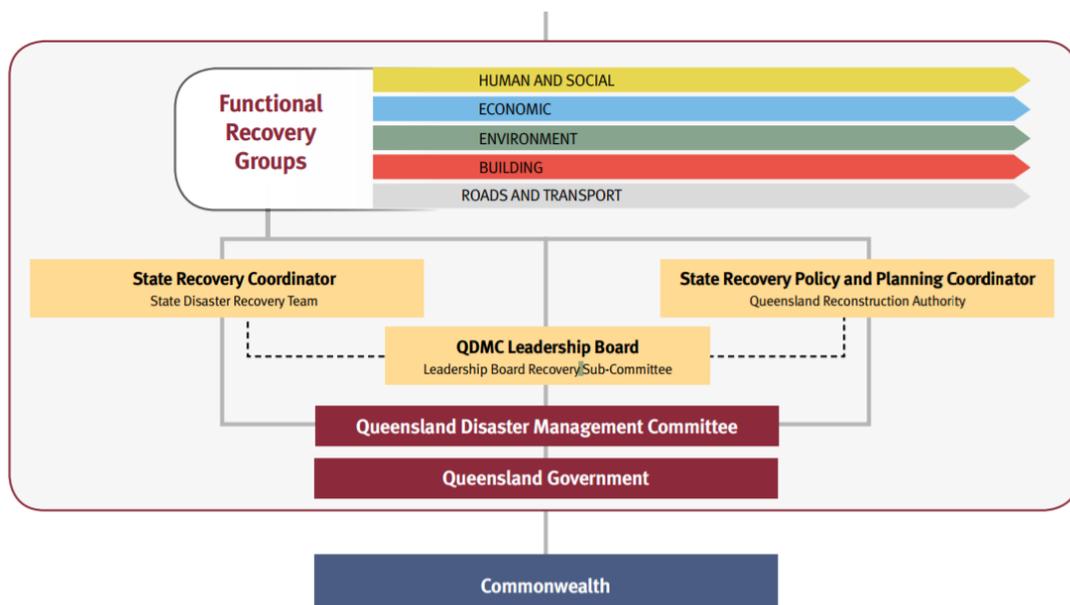


Figure 14: Queensland disaster recovery arrangements.<sup>117</sup>

### CEO - Queensland Reconstruction Authority

#### Qld Reconstruction Authority Act (2011)

- Ensure the Authority performs its functions.
- **Undertake** or commission investigations, **prepare plans** or **take steps the Minister directs**, or the chief executive officer considers necessary or desirable to ensure proper:
  - **planning, preparation, coordination and control of development** for the **protection, rebuilding and recovery** of affected communities.

### Queensland Reconstruction Authority

#### QLD Reconstruction Authority Act (2011)

- Decide priorities for community infrastructure and services.
- Work closely with communities to ensure needs are recognized.
- Collect and collate information about infrastructure affected.
- Develop an arrangement for sharing data across all levels.
- Coordinate and distribute financial assistance.

#### Qld Recovery Plan (2017)

- Lead development of recovery policy and strategic plans.
- When directed, leads coordination of planning for specific events.
- **Coordinates and integrates efforts and communications across all FRGs** to achieve whole of community outcomes/activities.
- **Coordinates FRG reporting** and monitors recovery progress.

### Queensland Disaster Management Committee

#### PPRR Guideline (2018)

- **Governs recovery at a strategic level**; regular reporting from:
  - the Deputy Chairperson of the QDMC
  - the SRPPC
  - the SRC and their deputies, if appointed.
- **Directs recovery planning** for a specific disaster (guidance from SRPPC).

#### Qld Recovery Plan (2017)

- **Governs recovery at a strategic level**, with regular reporting from:
  - the Minister responsible for recovery and reconstruction,
  - the SRPPC and
  - the SRC/Deputy SRCs, if appointed.

### Leadership Board Sub-committee

#### PPRR Guideline (2018)

- **Provides oversight** on the planning and implementation of community recovery on functional lines.

#### Qld Recovery Plan (2017)

- Oversees the implementation of the Qld Recovery Plan and event specific disaster recovery plans.
- Provides oversight on the planning and implementation of community recovery on functional lines.
- Provides the mechanism to **manage and coordinate the recovery activities of the FRGs**, including crosscutting issues.
- Identifies issues and canvasses policy solutions across the FRG.
- Pre-empts and raises emerging issues highlighted by the FRGs and/or the SRC and escalates to the Leadership Board and/or QDMC through the SRPPC for action, as required.
- Provides assurance and monitoring of recovery efforts.
- **Reports on recovery activities to the QDMC.**
- Ensures FRGs help develop the (event) recovery plan with QRA.

Figure 15: Recovery-specific State-level responsibilities and accountabilities - paraphrased.

### State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator

#### PPRR Guideline (2018)

- **May establish a task force to centrally coordinate, support and provide direction for resource allocation.** Roles & responsibilities are determined by the Minister responsible for recovery and reconstruction.
- **Will lead recovery planning in consultation with the five FRGs,** other govt agencies, the impacted councils, LDMGs and DDMGs and LGAQ.

#### Qld Recovery Plan (2017)

- Ensures better preparedness of government and the community.
- Manages and resources a newly appointed SRC.
- Before and during disaster operations:
  - attends QDMC and SDCG meetings
  - liaises with the SDC
  - works with the SDC to ensure smooth transition from response operations to recovery operations
  - works with stakeholders to collaboratively implement the delivery of resilience building measures.
- **Regular reporting on recovery progress to QDMC.**

### Functional Recovery Groups

**Five;** Human and Social, Economic, Environment, Building, Roads and Transport.

#### PPRR Guideline (2018)

- Support local and district recovery groups as required.
- Develop, for incorporation into broader recovery plans, a plan of action for their recovery function to support recovery operations at the local, district and state levels.

#### Qld Recovery Plan (2017)

- Provide a platform to coordinate effort by all agencies involved in recovery.
- **Lead and coordinate the planning** (based on community needs) and implementation of **lead agency functions.**
- **Report through the Leadership Board,** or Sub-committee (Recovery) to the Chair of the QDMC or delegated minister.
- **Report in to** or participate in the **LRGs** through a district level delegate from the functional lead agency.

### State Recovery Coordinator

#### PPRR Guideline (2018)

- **Facilitates the sharing of information between** impacted councils and their LDMGs, DDMGs, the SRPPC and the Queensland Government, including the state level FRGs.
- Consults with the FRG to develop an impact assessment for recovery planning.

#### Qld Recovery Plan (2017)

- **Coordinates the recovery and reconstruction efforts.**
- **Reports regularly to QDMC** on progress.
- Provides strategic advice on disaster recovery operations to government agencies performing these operations.

#### State Recovery Coordinator Guide (2018)

Relating to disaster recovery operations

- **Coordinates for the QDMC.**
- **Reports regularly to QDMC.**
- Ensures QDMC strategic decisions are implemented
- Provides advice to Govt agencies.
- **Reports regularly to the SRPPC**
- **Facilitates the sharing of information..**
- **Liaises with agencies to coordinate overlapping recovery issues**
- **Coordinates operations in accordance** with the event's State Recovery Plan

Figure 16: Recovery-specific State-level responsibilities and accountabilities - paraphrased.

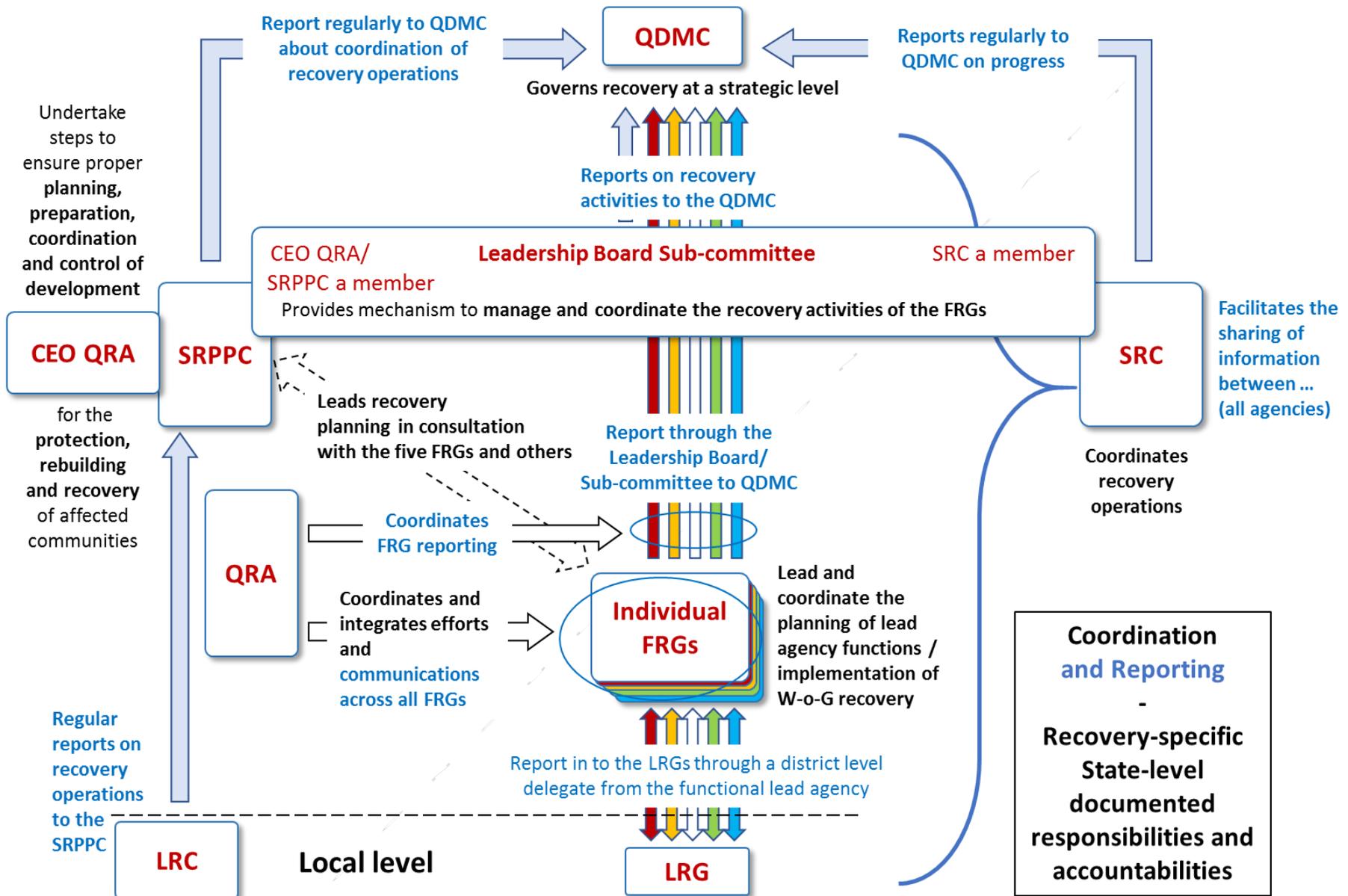


Figure 17: Recovery-specific State-level coordination and reporting responsibilities.

## State-level bodies in recovery

The Act, and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act (2011) set legislative responsibilities for recovery. Drawing their authority from the Act, two further documents expand on the legislation: the *Queensland Recovery Plan* (2017), a sub-plan of the current 2016 State Plan, and the PPRR Guideline, released in early 2018.

From our work assessing disaster management plans, we know that documents alone do not do justice to how arrangements work. In order to understand the relationships better it was important to understand how they operate in practice.

We mapped current recovery arrangements and communication paths in Queensland from existing legislation, guidelines and plans, where most appropriate. We included the SRPPC and CEO QRA. This mapping is outlined in figures 15-17 and later at 18. Figures 15 and 16, *Recovery-specific State-level responsibilities and accountabilities* illustrate how recovery responsibilities interconnect across several key roles and committees, often blurring the distinction between them. We assume that the relationships between those operating at state-level will work in ways to ensure that effective recovery is achieved. It is also clear, from our interviews, that the current arrangements require a shared understanding of, and clarity about leadership, processes and responsibilities that is not always evident to those working in the system.

Others we heard from found it difficult to understand the arrangements. On paper, they appear complicated. Implementing them is even more challenging. UNESCO's definition of governance that we used for this review puts first; '*Structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency...*' Key components of governance are communication and decision-making, yet we did not find it easy to access minutes to key committees, providing explanation of reasons for decisions.

We identified three key areas here that deserve additional attention:

- the balance between strategic and operational leadership
- communication, both hierarchically, and across levels
- the capacity of functional recovery groups.

### ***The balance between strategic and operational leadership***

Under the *Queensland Recovery Plan*, senior strategic leadership for recovery and resilience is provided by the QDMC. The QDMC governs recovery and is chaired by the Premier, Deputy-Premier or Minister responsible for recovery and reconstruction.<sup>118</sup> Reporting to it, the Leadership Board Sub-committee (Recovery) (the Sub-committee) is responsible for oversight of the *Queensland Recovery Plan* and whole of community recovery. It currently comprises Directors-General from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and

the five state-level FRGs, the Police and Fire Commissioners, the Under-Treasurer, the SRPPC and the SRC.

In the recent sector review of the *Queensland Recovery Plan*, the role and responsibilities of the Sub-committee were expanded, giving it a greater focus on overseeing the plan's implementation and for event-specific disaster plans. The *Queensland Recovery Plan* also outlines several responsibilities for the Sub-committee that relate to operational level coordination. These include:

- pre-empting and raising '*emerging issues highlighted by the FRGs and/or the SRC [and escalating them] to the Leadership Board and/or QDMC through the SRPPC for action, as required.*'
- providing the mechanism to '*manage and coordinate the recovery activities of the FRGs*', including crosscutting issues.<sup>119</sup>

While on paper the Sub-committee has an operational focus, we heard in practice both the QDMC and the Sub-committee largely operate at the strategic level; the former governing recovery, the latter overseeing it. As the QDMC has largely stood down by the time the Sub-committee is in full operation, the view is that it naturally fills the strategic space. Stakeholders noted that this often left a gap at the operational level.

The role of the state-level FRGs is to '*lead and coordinate the planning and implementation for whole of government recovery after significant disaster events*'.<sup>120</sup> We heard at a state-level, that during TC Debbie there was limited engagement of state-level FRGs with the SRC and deputies, as current processes had the state-level FRGs reporting directly through to the leadership group. This relied on operational issues being raised and discussed at the Sub-committee and then communicated to relevant parties. While we understand that this did occur, we heard that this was often on high-level issues or where a concern pertaining to a particular state-level 'FRG' or agency had been identified.

Stakeholders felt that this meant there was no real space to proactively work together on the ongoing cross-cutting operational issues, or for discussion on the coordination and management of recovery activities, that in turn would enable the development of good practice recovery to emerge. We do not propose an expansion of the Sub-committee. Yet there is potential to further investigate the requirements of the Leadership Board Sub-committee from the perspective of its reporting groups. This might identify ways to ensure that both the operational and strategic requirements are met.

The *Queensland Recovery Plan* also outlines operational and coordination responsibilities for a number of other bodies and roles. These include:

- The **SRC** '*coordinates the recovery and reconstruction efforts*' and facilitates '*the sharing of information between ...councils, ...districts, ...FRGs, the SRPPC and the Queensland Government*'

- The state-level **FRG's** '*coordinate effort by all agencies involved in recovery*'
- The **QRA** '*coordinates and integrates efforts and communications between and across all FRG's and coordinates FRG reporting.*' When directed by QDMC, QRA also '*leads coordination of recovery planning*'.<sup>121</sup>

In this context, we heard that, in response, one of the strengths of the State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG) and its liaison officers was its strong focus on coordination, through processes, visibility of actions and decisions. The 2017 *Cyclone Debbie Review* agrees about the effectiveness of SDCC and the SDCG.<sup>122</sup> Several stakeholders identified an opportunity to replicate in recovery, the clarity of communication, liaison and decision-making produced by the SDCG in response, and that the Sub-committee would benefit as a result from greater support in how it coordinates, connects and communicates across the state-level FRGs.

### Finding

The State Disaster Coordination Group, its attendant liaison officers and the information-sharing facilities of the State Disaster Coordination Centre provide a strong basis for response coordination. An equivalent capability does not exist for recovery.

### Communication both hierarchically and across levels

The communication loop between LRGs, DDMGs and state-level FRGs is regarded by the *Queensland Recovery Plan* as '*a crucial element of the current governance arrangement*'.<sup>123</sup> If the links between the state-level FRGs and the state-level bodies are included, it is also a rather complicated one.

The current reporting lines according to the *Queensland Recovery Plan* are illustrated in figure 17 and include:

- The **Leadership Board Sub-committee** '*reports on recovery activities to the QDMC*'.
- The **SRP** '*reports regularly to QDMC on progress of recovery operations*'.
- State-level **FRGs** report, '*through the Leadership Board, or the Leadership Board Sub-committee (Recovery) when established, to the Chair of the QDMC or delegated minister*'.
- **FRGs** also '*report in to*' LRGs and thus will receive sector-specific reports from their local contacts.
- The **SRPPC** '*...regularly reports on recovery progress*' to QDMC.
- The **QRA** '*coordinates and integrates efforts and communications between and across all FRGs and coordinates FRG reporting*'. When directed by QDMC, QRA also '*leads coordination of recovery planning*'.<sup>124</sup>

The local recovery coordinators report to the SRPPC, supplementing the reporting lines from the LRGs to the FRGs.

In practice, we note that QRA produced comprehensive recovery reports following TC Debbie, including activities aligned to the FRGs, and that the whole-of-government recovery dashboard on the North Queensland Low in

March 2018, and more recently in May 2018, was distributed to all Directors-General for onward passing to the relevant Minister as necessary.

The PRR Guideline identifies that *'the FRGs, through their representatives on the DDMGs, establish a formal reporting relationship with the relevant LRGs to ensure effective information sharing'*. While clear in the documented process, there are variations on how FRGs are engaged and connected at a local level. The level of investment in local processes was influenced by the local capacity and competing priorities. In some areas during TC Debbie there was low attendance of state representatives at local and district meetings. It was raised by several sites that there was often not enough collaboration or engagement by local and district with some FRGs. This would have a direct impact on communication and reporting in both directions. State agencies also spoke of a lack of visibility of information being shared, often being asked for input with little visibility of the purpose of the information request. Although the sharing of data may be more of a systems issue, the fact that data is shared inconsistently or not shared, and is derived from many different sources, adds to the issue of unclear procedures.

We heard repeatedly from FRG members both at state and local level that there is scope to improve arrangements across FRGs. Several state agencies reported that in TC Debbie the first they heard of issues was when they had been advised by their Director-General. They noted that often these issues were raised to the leadership group without first being raised with the FRG locally or at a state level. Raising issues at the local or even district level, we were told, may have resulted in quicker resolution. Other comments we heard related to varying capacity within FRGs, challenging some agencies to effectively represent their agencies on the ground in recovery.

Some stakeholders told us that coordination structures utilised in the response phase do not operate in recovery, in turn impacting on communication. *'[In Tropical Cyclone Debbie] we stood up beautifully as SDCC is operating, then when SDCC stood down – communications ceased, leading to a huge gap'*.

While it is recognised that other structures were enacted, such as recovery leadership groups, stakeholders identified that these often did not have the clarity of procedures and capacity as has been developed in response. This gap was particularly identified at a state level with many state agencies noting that recovery information did not filter down to the agencies. Without the equivalent of a recovery 'SDCG' body, operational information was not visible across agencies, impacting on the awareness of activities and issues faced by other state-level FRGs.

### **Findings**

Variations in communication and collaboration limit the combined effectiveness of functional recovery groups to engage others. These variations are between members within individual groups, across groups and vertically between levels.

The absence of clear communication and engagement strategies between the groups may create silos and unintentionally bypass interactions with other state agencies.

### ***The capacity of functional recovery groups***

In Queensland, five FRGs provide an '*integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to needs analysis, consequence management, community engagement, planning and service delivery*'.<sup>125</sup> Fifty-nine departments and agencies, not including local governments, are listed in the *Queensland Recovery Plan* as contributing to the five FRGs. Only three are common to all five; the DPC, the Local Government Association of Queensland, and the QRA. We acknowledge that agency contribution is determined by the location, scale and scope of the recovery effort needed and by the nature of the community. These considerations do imply some latitude in agency involvement in recovery. In any event the five state-level FRGs are led by the relevant Director-General for Human and Social, Economic, Environment, Building, and Roads and Transport; leadership appointments that also have responsibility for their own departmental service delivery.

The state-level FRGs are responsible to '*lead and coordinate the planning and implementation for whole of government recovery after significant disaster events*'.<sup>126</sup> In more detail, one Terms of Reference document describes the FRG role as to coordinate:

'the efficient and effective information exchange, issues identification and resolution between government agencies, local government, industry and insurance providers to ensure efficient and prioritised use of available resources...'

The document goes on to show collective functions but does not set out requirements for member agencies – a gap that may explain the capacity and investment issues below.

State-level groups have a direct link to LRGs, typically through a district-level delegate. The groups '*establish a formal reporting relationship with the LRGs to ensure effective information sharing*'. In this local context, some questioned the variation, in Queensland, from the widely-understood four functions of recovery, described in the AIDR Handbook 2. More consistently, though, we heard of how the FRG structure and approach enables a good focus on each individual area of recovery.

Within the state-level FRGs themselves, we heard examples of recovery that were well organised. For example, stakeholders from the agricultural sector spoke about how their well-established and functioning Agricultural Coordination Group (ACG) was the key to intelligence and information flow during response and recovery operations. Information from the ACG is reported to the state-level Economic and Environment FRGs as well as to Department of Agriculture and Fisheries staff in the regions. In essence, the ACG worked as a one stop shop for the sector, and reduced the need for industry groups to go to several meetings to collect information on all lines of recovery. A similar model might be usefully adopted, where applicable, in other state-level FRGs.

We heard of the varying capacity within FRGs at the state level, including the challenge for some agencies to adequately resource recovery, particularly to effectively represent their agencies on the ground. During TC Debbie, we heard of low attendance of state representatives at local and district meetings, that affected collaboration and engagement between LRGs and some FRGs. One stakeholder noted that the spread from local to state was often a challenge for their FRG, given the focus and resources available in that FRG.

We saw further evidence of this through lead agency involvement in our interviews for this review. We note that the capacity of the different state-level FRGs ranged from specific teams whose core business was to focus on recovery through to recovery as just one of many tasks to be undertaken. Sometimes this focus reflected the nature of the agency, for example where core business closely aligned to emerging recovery tasks - such as repair of infrastructure. In these cases, recovery often used existing business-as-usual processes, with the major challenge being the additional capacity needed to scale up in any given event. This compared to other areas where the event often resulted in the development of new and additional processes to manage the human or environmental impact.

We heard how the state-level Human and Social FRG has worked effectively in past events, given the greater investment in their recovery approaches during planning. We also saw that this investment has not only been into the operational aspects, but also the investment into partners. Work alongside the Community Services Industry Alliance has resulted in resources and training to small not-for-profit agencies, who are often front line responders yet have had little formal input into disaster management and recovery.

While the level of resourcing is guided by a range of factors outside the scope of this review, we did observe where additional capacity has enabled the development of greater recovery capability. Recent research by the Office into environmental recovery also shows how one function can have significant links across others. While we heard the current approach of FRGs, by and large, was working well, we note that additional investment in processes outside the dynamic environment of an event has led to innovation and greater capacity by some state-level FRGs. The capacity of each state-level FRG comes down to the individual capacity and commitment of the partner agencies. A clear understanding of the capacity needs for each FRG is important in order to ensure recovery needs are met in

#### **IGEM Environmental Recovery Research Project**

The interconnectedness of the lines of recovery and the importance of sharing information across FRGs is illustrated in an IGEM Environmental Recovery Research Project. The final report highlights the benefits and impacts that environmental recovery has to all lines of recovery.

- It gives an opportunity for responsible land use planning in the built environment.
- It has a proven strong link with community health in the human and social environment.
- It can create resilient environments...
- ...leading to resilient industries that reduce the economic risk for an area.

a variety of circumstances, and also to enable ongoing development of good practice.

### Observations

There is currently different capacity across the functional recovery groups. The level of capacity within them affects their ability to collaborate and engage.

When we saw investment in functional recovery groups, we saw more development of good practice initiatives and processes in recovery.

Detail about the role that individual entities play in recovery is needed to ensure support for functional recovery groups, but the detail is not apparent

### Findings

The level of communication, collaboration and engagement depends on investment and the capacity it brings.

The functional recovery group structure is sound; in Queensland, the five pillars reflect the State's geography and context. There is value in identifying, in each functional recovery group, the required capacity to meet recovery needs.

## State operational recovery plans

A further way of looking at the practice of state-level recovery is through its operational plans. The most recent and extant operational recovery plan is the *State Recovery Plan 2017-2019 - Operation Queensland Recovery*, in response to TC Debbie.<sup>127</sup> Its objectives are aspirational and uplifting. Its focus on the community is in line with our expectations for authorities that will enable local and community leadership, enable those recovering to determine the nature of their recovery, and support and build capability and capacity. The Plan's mission sums this up.

'The Queensland Government will work with local governments and communities to facilitate locally-led efforts to recover, reconnect and rebuild stronger communities following the impacts of STC Debbie'.

In detail, the State's operational plan is more focussed on operational tasks. Its measures, seen through the state-level FRGs, focus on state-level service delivery, reflecting the earlier views about Queensland's service delivery-led approach, and our point about the differing agendas among those involved in recovery.

**State Recovery Plan 2017-19 – Operation Queensland Recovery**  
Selected examples<sup>128</sup>

**Objective:** The Plan lifts the confidence of Queenslanders by prioritising restoration of essential services to communities. The Plan will focus on getting impacted individuals, communities and businesses back on track as soon as possible.

**Metric:** Communities are supported by additional psychological first aid/counselling / financial aid/counselling services.

**Measure:**

- Number of new clients receiving personal support/psychological first aid services as a direct result of STC Debbie
- Number of hours of service provision from funded personal support / psychological first aid services as a direct result of STC Debbie
- Number of new clients receiving support from funded counselling services as a direct result of STC Debbie.

A recent example is the recovery measures for the state-level Human and Social FRG after TC Debbie (see table above), with measures reflecting the number of services, clients or hours provided.<sup>129</sup>

While our review did not specifically consider the metrics that could underpin operational recovery, our interviews identified the value of measures that reflect progress in achieving community recovery outcomes, not just the delivery, or restoration, of a service. These measures of response are important - they reflect *how* the endstate measures are being achieved. But there is also value in including, at State-level, measures that capture the changes that have occurred through the provision of this response - the extent to which endstate measures have been achieved and the community has truly recovered.

***‘Unquestionably, the reconstruction of buildings and infrastructure is a key component of disaster recovery. But...‘input rebuilding’ does not equal ‘output recovery’.***<sup>130</sup>

Anne Leadbeater OAM - Community leadership in disaster recovery: a case study

This difference is illustrated by another example from one community about schools. They identified that the restoration of schools, and getting students back in education is an important milestone, but it doesn't show the whole picture.

‘There has been a steady decline in literacy and numeracy. Farmers are needing to spend more time fixing up their property. There are a lot of unhappy, unstable children following a disaster and it's not just about [getting] children back to school...after six months everything ‘returns to

normal’ regarding support - and that’s when things crash and families need support – kids dealing with stress at home’.

We recognise that recovery is substantially led at the local-level, and that measures are both complex and interconnected. The investment by the state warrants clear measures that indicate the outcomes achieved as a result of state services delivered. The trial *National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs* offers some good examples of outcome measures that focus on identifying changes as a result of the services provided.<sup>131</sup> For example:

***National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs***  
**Social recovery outcomes<sup>132</sup>**

High-level outcomes	Mid-level outcomes
Community members have access and are able to meet health needs (including mental health) arising from the disaster	Community members have the knowledge, skills and resources for dealing with health issues related to the disaster experience The community is not experiencing excessive stress and hardship arising from the disaster.

Our review of local arrangements, above, and research that formed our expectations both highlighted the long-term nature of recovery. The State’s operational plan is designated 2017-19; the transition out of recovery in local plans for TC Debbie show end dates around June 2019. Both reflect funding timeframes rather than final outcomes. One way to broaden the State’s focus from service delivery, to connect it more tightly to community recovery, and to bring a formal sense of longevity to recovery, might be for the State plan to include a measure about local progress towards their recovery outcomes.‡

**Observation**

State-level operational recovery measures tend to be defined in terms of services delivered.

**Finding**

There is value in emphasising, at State-level, measures that capture the extent to which the community has truly recovered, acknowledging that relevant data may not be available in the early stages of recovery.

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‡ We heard that work subsequent to this review has seen more of a focus on local progress towards recovery outcomes.

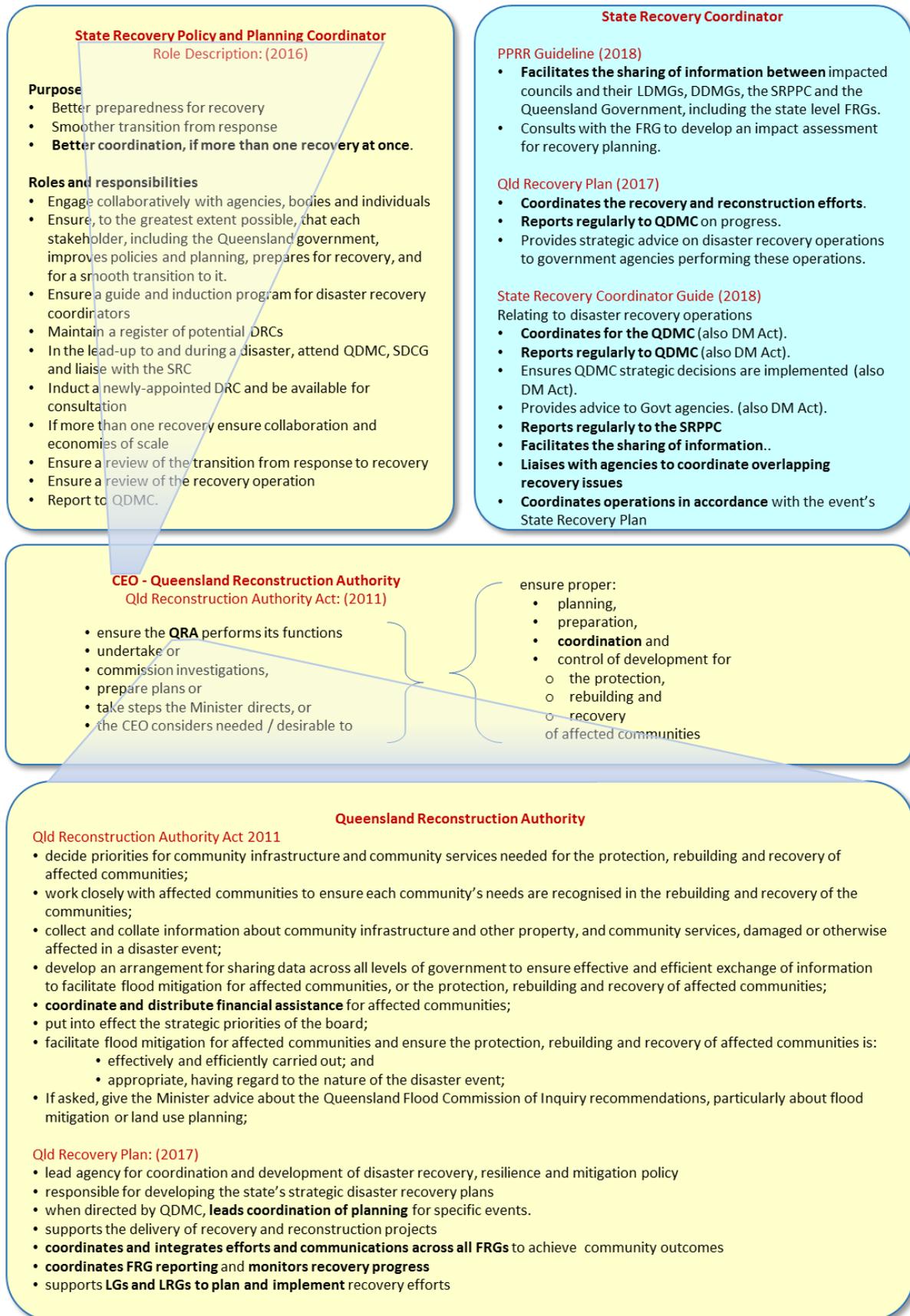


Figure 18: Summary comparison of individual recovery roles and responsibilities. (Related roles colour coded)

## Individual appointments

The scope of this review included a comparison of previous arrangements with those that have evolved since the appointment of the SRPPC and put in place during TC Debbie. The Standard identifies that entities should have the skills and capability to plan for and manage recovery programs including agreed and documented roles and responsibilities. In this context, we look first at the role of SRC that has existed since 2011, and then at how the SRPPC fits with it, and at perceptions of the difference since its introduction. The CEO QRA was appointed as the SRPPC by the Premier in June 2016. While we saw nothing that permanently ties the two appointments together, we considered understanding the responsibilities of the CEO QRA was important in this context.

The two separate and distinct roles of the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC) and the State Recovery Coordinator (SRC) have different responsibilities, but together provide both strategic and operational leadership in recovery.<sup>133</sup>

- Established in 2016, the **SRPPC** provides a year-round focus for recovery. In the absence of an event, the role is the standing SRC. The objectives of the position are:
  - better preparedness, by government entities and the community, for recovery operations
  - smoother transition from response operations to recovery operations
  - better coordination between recovery operations, in the event that more than one recovery operation is underway at the same time.
- The **SRC** is a legislated position in the Act, appointed by the Chair of the QDMC when they are satisfied that it is necessary. The *Queensland Recovery Plan* also provides the authority for one, or more SRC and deputies to be appointed after an event. The key functions of the role are:
  - to coordinate the disaster recovery operations for the state group
  - to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that any strategic decisions of the state group about disaster recovery operations are implemented
  - to provide strategic advice on disaster recovery operations to government agencies performing them
  - to report regularly to QDMC on progress of recovery operations,
 and, under the plan's governance arrangements:
  - to facilitate *'the sharing of information between affected councils, disaster districts, the state level Functional Recovery Groups, the SRPPC and the Queensland Government'*.

In 2016, QRA released the *Disaster Recovery Coordinator Guide*.<sup>§</sup> The guide provides information on the role, responsibilities, training and induction, management arrangements and operational issues for the SRC.<sup>134</sup> It was noted as very important by the most recent SRC, Major-General Chris Field.

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<sup>§</sup> These guidelines identify that they apply to the DRCs, legislated in section 21D of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* as the 'state recovery coordinators'.

The intersect between the two positions is best expressed in the SRPPC role description:

‘This [SRPPC] proposed role is not the role of the State Recovery Coordinator established by the Act. The Act sets out a disaster-specific state-wide operational role [i.e. the SRC] which has proven effective following numerous disasters since it was inserted into the Act in 2010. In short, the existing role coordinates recovery *operations* following a disaster. This new role will ensure the coordination of recovery *policy and planning*, throughout the year’.

We note in other jurisdictions that many have a recovery coordinator / manager, with the position being permanent in some agencies and only event-specific in others.

### The State Recovery Coordinator (SRC)

A SRC has been appointed for many significant events since TC Larry in 2006. Across the interviews there was good awareness of the SRC role, with most respondents having some engagement with, or knowledge of, the SRC.

We heard that the SRC and the Deputy Recovery Coordinators, bring a problem-solving approach, garnering attention for impacted areas, getting action on what often appeared to be intractable problems, working with businesses, connecting people and state agencies, and working with insurance companies to rectify issues. Furthermore, we heard they added a level of objectivity and independence, and brought their own personal leadership style. We observed that the right person, with the right skills and knowledge, is essential. While there is clear role description and guidance for the SRC, we heard ‘*the role changes in every event – how it is enacted is always very person specific regarding their style.*’ The differing styles we conclude that were important and reflected in appointments are:

#### Recovery positions in other jurisdictions

**NSW.** The State Emergency Recovery Controller is a permanent position required by statute, held by the Secretary of the Department of Justice who is also responsible for controlling recovery from an emergency.

**Victoria.** A permanent position of Director Relief and Recovery reports directly to the Emergency Management Commissioner.

**WA.** A permanent position of State Recovery Coordinator exists; for specific events, a State Recovery Controller may also be appointed.

**New Zealand.** The National Recovery Manager is a permanent appointment; for a specific event a National Controller Recovery Office can be appointed who reports to the National Recovery Manager.

**UK.** A permanent position is established through the Cabinet and a Recovery Coordinating Group is set up by the relevant Local Authority. It is assumed to work in conjunction with a multi-agency sub-national Strategic Coordination Group, either based in London or locally, depending on the scale of recovery operations needed.

**USA.** FEMA has a permanent Recovery Officer at the national level; at the state level, responsibility for recovery is covered by the relevant emergency coordinating officer or by a senior government official from outside emergency management.<sup>135</sup>

- **diplomat** - stature and respect that instils confidence
- **community developer** - a whole of community perspective
- **capacity builder** - work alongside councils to build local capacity
- **operational deliverer** - deliver in X timeframe
- **uniter** - of government, non-government and community to achieve outcomes
- **resolver** - of challenges, not weighed down by bureaucracy or politics.

While most stakeholders saw the value of a lead person or 'figurehead' for recovery, there were mixed views on the current approach of appointing an external person or why the SRPPC did not undertake the role. One respondent pointed out the advantage:

'By removing the role from a department, it is seen by the public as separate. You can also cross over areas a little freer.'

Others pointed to the opportunity lost and the benefits of a 'local' official:

'[By] externally bringing in people I think we are missing a really important chance to build trust in our system with the community.'

'Having a local [SRC] working alongside was really beneficial. The SRC managed one of council's challenges. It would have taken a long time to get traction if that position wasn't there...'

Yet others thought that coupling the external SRC with Deputy Recovery Coordinators who had more Queensland knowledge was important. Communication skills were considered critical:

'The Deputy Recovery Coordinators during TC Debbie had great community skill. You needed a deputy in the north and the south. They were superb, and layers of connection – hearing issues and fixing them. Worked very well'.

'The Deputy Recovery Coordinators worked well as the intermediary between the state and local government. Council didn't feel like the Isaac region was forgotten'.

We expected that community outcomes would be achieved by enabling those recovering to determine the nature of their recovery through planning for, and deciding on priorities and a timeframe for their recovery activities. Additionally, it would be necessary to build partnerships that were based on good communication to develop trust and enable the involvement of all the community and the collaboration of strategies for recovery to benefit the entire community. We found our expectations here met through the stories we heard of the work of SRCs and their deputies. It is evident from them that successive SRCs have contributed to recovery improvements over time.

### **The State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC)**

The vision for the role, as articulated by the current SRPPC, places the focus squarely at leading and embedding innovative and forward-reaching recovery practice across all levels.

'[I see] the SRPPC role as reaching across government, helping develop people's understanding of recovery and resilience. Crafting conversations about recovery before it comes, so recovery doesn't just sit with QRA. [Alignment with] the CEO role and QRA brings leverage to the SRPPC role - due to the link to NDRRA, especially in the short-term period after event.... The SRPPC role makes it clear for people that there is a lead agency for the policy and planning work – in other jurisdictions it's not clear - lessons learned fall off. [The] SRPPC [role] ensures there is a key focus'.

The role description sets out in more detail the roles and responsibilities of the SRPPC. All stakeholders from state agencies were aware of the SRPPC, with some state agencies commenting that they had seen key policy changes and improvements at both state and local levels that they felt the role had contributed to or led. These included greater quality in the recovery plans, recent state recovery exercise, key projects being delivered and an increasing focus on Asset Based Community Development.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is a community-led approach, originally developed by John McKnight and John Kretzmann, that is built on four foundational elements, it:

- focuses on community assets and strengths rather than problems and needs.
- identifies and mobilises individual and community assets, skills and passions.
- is community driven – 'building communities from the inside out'.
- is relationship driven.

While there was some awareness at a state level of the role of the SRPPC, at a local level only a few stakeholders knew that the role had been created or why it had been created. Consequently, we heard limited comment from the sector on the achievements of the role or its broader value. Engagement at the local level is important, given that both the SRPPC role description and the *Queensland Recovery Plan* identify clear areas of cross over between local and the SRPPC. This includes the requirement that the appointment of the LRC 'is appointed by the Chair of the LDMG after consultation with the SRPPC and the SRC if appointed'.<sup>136</sup>

At times, we also heard some confusion about the difference between the SRPPC, the SRC, their deputies and the CEO QRA. The confusion may be reflective of the SRPPC role having only been implemented 12-15 months before our conversations. One respondent thought 12 months was too short a timeframe to see its potential. Another thought that it may also be due to a general lack of clarity across the sector as to the role of the QRA in recovery. Soon after TC Debbie we heard:

'People are familiar with QRA in the context of NDRRA but there is less knowledge out there about their role in recovery planning and policy.'

The terms of reference for the SRPPC and the CEO QRA responsibilities under the QRA Act, show scope for overlap. Figure 18 shows this in summary. This blurring of lines between CEO QRA, the SRPPC, and the QRA itself is also apparent in the 2016-17 QRA annual report. The opening statement from the CEO QRA includes:

'In my first year as the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC), QRA has led the delivery of TC Debbie recovery operations and reporting and provision of resources to support recovery operations and planning in the most significantly impacted local government areas.'

The activities of the SRPPC in TC Debbie may also be adding to misconceptions, given that the SRPPC role description puts the SRC responsible for the coordination of recovery operations. The nuances between what makes an event-specific activity and what is needed for long-term development may not be clearly understood.

One of the three purposes of the SRPPC role was to ensure smoother transition from response operations to recovery operations. The *Cyclone Debbie Review* reported the transition to recovery at the state level after TC Debbie as the smoothest yet. We found other clear changes over the last 12-15 months. These include an observable increase of energy around recovery, through consultations for redrafting the *Queensland Recovery Plan*, the first SDCG-level exercise on recovery, and the start of a recovery community of practice. However, for the reasons above, we are unable to distinguish between these changes being solely due to the introduction of the SRPPC, or to the ongoing role of the QRA and its CEO.

During recovery from TC Debbie neither the SRC or SRPPC identified issues regarding coordination roles. Both individuals saw value in the two roles, and how the roles were complementary. Others agreed. One saw the value in one role focused on the operational 'public view' enabling the other to focus on the systems and processes to support recovery. Another respondent saw the transition between the two roles was also well handled, with the SRPPC taking up the mantle as the SRC and deputies scaled down.

### Findings

Several individual appointments and bodies have similar responsibilities for coordinating recovery. The documented arrangements for coordinating recovery at state level are therefore complex, and may not be clearly understood by all stakeholders.

Recovery outcomes in Queensland have improved since the creation and implementation of the role of State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator. This is evidenced operationally in the coordination of recovery operations since the role commenced. It is also evidenced in the suite of work being undertaken by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to build recovery capability across Queensland.

In the sector, there remains a lack of clarity and understanding about how the three roles of State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator, Chief Executive Officer Queensland Reconstruction Authority and appointed State Recovery Coordinator/s work together. This extends to the role of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority itself. Greater understanding will support future recovery efforts at all levels of the arrangements.

## Further enhancements at State level

We expected that strategies reflecting the varying agendas across all authorities would be aligned to the benefit of the community, focused on communities sustaining their own recovery and becoming more resilient to similar events.

While the responsibilities of the QRA are clearly articulated in the *Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011*, we found that the role of other agencies in recovery is not always as evident. For example, the State Plan 2016 outlines the role of QFES in disaster management, but in detail, their contribution to recovery is not as clearly articulated as it is for response, despite their being a member of three state-level FRGs. The same is true for other agencies, for whom recovery is not core business.<sup>137</sup> As one stakeholder stated ‘...*lack of clarity on role in recovery - so people don’t also see their responsibility. A lack of clarity of mission impacts on responsibility across levels, authorising levels*’.

The Office has completed other recent work where the importance of detail about an entity’s role across all phases of disaster management has been clear. This work also highlighted the need for clarity on how disaster management functions are delivered at all levels of the system. The *Queensland Recovery Plan* covers roles for state-level FRGs that are clear and comprehensive, but it does not go down to the detail of what individual participating agencies are expected to do. We looked for this level of detail in several FRG-related and agency recovery documents but couldn’t find it. We therefore reiterate the need for more detailed articulation of the roles and responsibilities of any entity with a recovery responsibility in future versions of their plans.

### Observation

While the responsibilities of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority are clearly articulated in the *Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011*, the role of other agencies in recovery is not always as evident.

Developments in state-level guidance were also seen as important to driving changes at local level. As one stakeholder noted, when the Arrangements were formulated there was not much of a focus on recovery. The rewrite of plans and the new PPRR Guideline are imperative to integrate state support and to helping the sector ‘*interpret the legislation and how recovery should be done*’. We noted earlier the Recovery Capability Development Project, aimed at local government and disaster districts, and we look forward to seeing the results of this initiative.

Queensland’s approach to managing disasters is one of local responsibility first. ‘*Local governments should primarily be responsible for managing events in their local government area,*’ according to the Act’s Section 4A, Guiding principles. They do so ‘*under policies and procedures decided by the State...*’ Capability at a state level crucially supports the work being undertaken at a local level. A key focus of state agencies is to find innovative ways to provide support, inform and, in many ways, ‘clear the path’ to enable community development to operate at a local level.<sup>138</sup> But what we heard the State needed to do for recovery was already known and in practice for response.

‘Follow the QDMA and let the locals lead recovery. In most events, council are told what we need and what we should do, generally from people who have never been here and have no understanding of the community.’

The State’s role, in the views of many at local level, is already set out in the Arrangements. They provide for an initial capability and capacity at a local level. When the local level needs assistance, the Arrangements enable a progressive escalation of support and assistance through the three tiers of district, State and Commonwealth government. We found from *The Cyclone Debbie Review* that these arrangements work well in response. We heard strong views from both local governments and state agencies about the need for the Arrangements to be more closely followed during recovery.

## State level culture

We expected that efforts of authorities will support and build community capability and capacity. As a key partner, we also expected to see collaborative approaches that align strategies for the benefit of the community, built through good communication that engenders trust.

We have already written about the culture of recovery from the local perspective. While the strongest focus on culture at the local level was on the issue of trust, this was less evident at a state level. While one stakeholder did reflect on the importance of mutual trust across all levels and agencies, the greater focus was on how recovery was valued or perceived.

We heard about the different culture around response as compared to recovery. Response was described as having a clear culture, aligned to roles and accountabilities - ‘a clarity of mission’. This differed to recovery. For some agencies, there was a lack of clarity of their role that, in turn, impacted on how they viewed recovery. This lack of clarity flowed through in practical terms to attention paid to succession planning, depth of cover beyond one or two staff members, and coordination across recovery within an agency. One stakeholder felt that the ‘lack of disaster culture’ was because it wasn’t the core business of the agency and this flowed through to investment in disaster-related positions.

This lack of clarity of role and culture was also reflected in comments that recovery was more the domain of QRA or human service agencies like DCDSS. Even if recovery was identified as important, some stakeholders did not see they had a role, did not know what their role was, or did not want a role. Stakeholders in one agency reflected,

‘[The] role for [the agency] is more in response, winding up and then moving on. Ultimately shouldn’t jump in too deep [into recovery], [staff] should be returning to normal [operations]’.

Without this clarity in role for agencies, aspects of the strategy alignment and partnerships that we expected community-led recovery to depend upon, will not happen.

We heard that ‘*what is talked about is what is focused upon*’. It was clear across state agencies that current leadership approaches shaped how an agency approached recovery, which in turn influenced the broader system. The leadership that the former DCCSDS, now DCDSS, demonstrates in recovery was noted by a number of stakeholders from both government and non-

government partners. We heard at local level that conversations and activities like recovery exercises increases both engagement and interest. At state level, we observed that the attention recovery receives often affects how it is valued and resourced. QRA noted that, in contrast to response, capability around recovery is not well understood. They spoke of the need to better map strengths and assets at the local level to inform the integrated support offered by State or Federal governments.

The value of community-led recovery is that it provides a framework that enables resilient communities to emerge. As one site stated, *'recovery isn't just rebuilding infrastructure. It's about giving people back their control. If people feel like they're losing control, their dependency on others increases'*. By communities regaining control after a disaster, they not only shape their future but build confidence, skills and empowerment in the process. By utilising community-led recovery there is greater potential for the creation of resilient communities able to cope with future events. All at state level have a part to play. To support this change, a concerted effort is required across government to redefine our cultural approach to recovery. This, perhaps, can be achieved by leveraging the already strong resilience agenda.

### Observation

In places where good practice recovery was occurring, there was a positive recovery culture, supported by local capability, processes and structures suited to the recovery environment.

### Findings

The strong focus on community-led approaches to recovery across some agencies and stakeholders is not found in all. The value placed upon community-led recovery by all operating at the state-level, and the approaches that follow are pivotal to recovery success. It should be supported and enhanced in all agencies and stakeholders.

The greatest opportunity for enhancing recovery lies in the way it is perceived. Mechanisms to enable this include:

- giving value to the role that everybody can play in recovery
- regular year-round activities that build trust, and strengthen the bonds within communities, providing a launching pad for future recovery
- making the link between successful recovery and our wider way of life in Queensland.

The measure of success in this will be whether those on the periphery, or not involved, actively want to play a part.

## **Management of floods – tying recovery to resilience - a case study of Queensland**

The release of the Flood Risk Management in Australia paper in 2008, aimed to provide guidance on the responsibility of all levels government and the community in the effective management of flood risk for local communities. It highlighted the need for catchment cooperation, establishing responsibilities in legislation (including those for making communities aware of the risks they faced, the management of those risks through development planning, warnings and response, and recovery after a flood).

At the time, Queensland still had some way to go to match these aspirations. Recovery from flooding during the 09/10 season resulted in a request from the Premier to improve the State's ability to forecast floods, particularly in the South and North West areas of Queensland, by undertaking a review of the Queensland flood gauge system. The (then) Department of the Environment and Resource Management audited Queensland's flood risk management activities. The audit highlighted the advantages in betterment investment during recovery to improve the resilience to flooding. It suggested that plans to minimise flood risk might be a future precondition for such investment.

The Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry (QFCI) Final Report pointed practitioners to the then current guidance; that arrangements need to encourage a cooperative approach across governments to manage flood risk before events happen, rather than focus on response and recovery.

With that in mind, Queensland has advanced considerably in its approach to flood recovery, both during and since the QFCI. On 17 September 2011, the (then) Premier released for consultation the guideline Planning for stronger, more resilient floodplains - Part 1. Part 2 – Measures to support floodplain management in future planning schemes, followed in January 2012. Part 2 provided guidance on undertaking flood investigations, land use strategies for development and example planning scheme provisions, developed from the land use strategies – all helping build resilience in communities.

In August 2014, State government engaged PwC to provide an initial assessment of the floodplain risk management arrangements in Queensland, in comparison to best practice principles. In April 2015, their work was extended to cover comprehensive stocktake of Flood Risk Management arrangements, and to identify recommendations for strengthening these arrangements.

Coinciding with the PwC report, in February 2015 the Queensland Audit Office published its report on the Flood resilience of river catchments. The report observed that since 2002–03, over one third of the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements funding allocated to the State was spent on recovery from floods alone. Using the experience of the four councils involved in the Brisbane River Flood Study, it made the point that disaster management plans that are response and recovery focussed are insufficient to address flood risk. Flood recovery, it appears, is best dealt with by increasing the resilience of communities through the development of flood plain management plans.

Follow-on work has designed upgraded flood warning networks for high priority settlements in over 40 council areas, and provided local government areas with the basis for investment plans.

In 2017 the State released the Strategic Policy Framework for Riverine Flood Risk Management and Community Resilience. Its purpose is to guide riverine flood risk management in Queensland and provide strategic direction for state government policy. For the first time, it drew together in one strategic document the legislation, guiding principles, roles and responsibilities, and key objectives to be achieved. The efforts aim to enhance resilience and reduce the need for recovery.

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# Conclusion

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*Our conclusion is that:*

- *mostly our expectations have been met, but there is scope for some improvements.*
  - *we anticipate the QRA's Recovery Capability Development Project will address many of the findings and practical opportunities*
  - *the greatest opportunity for enhancing recovery is through the way it is perceived – particularly by those on its periphery.*
- 

This review set out to review the efficiency and effectiveness of recovery governance and to identify enhancements that would lead to better local-level community recovery and community outcomes. It aimed to do this through a range of perspectives:

- identifying what better community outcomes look like, and how they can be best achieved
- looking back at Queensland's recent experience
- examining how recovery governance in its broadest form works from the community, and local to state levels
- examining how arrangements, structures, communication paths, and individual roles all contribute.

Our research and review of Queensland's current arrangements both point to the importance of the role of the affected community, and their participation in the recovery process. This, coupled with our broad view of governance in a recovery setting, have led us into some detail of aspects of how recovery works in Queensland.

Early and wide research led us to clear expectations of recovery outcomes and the activities needed to get to them. We have referred back to these expectations during our review of recovery arrangements, on paper and in

practice. We found that mostly they have been met, but there is scope for improvements in some areas.

- There are a range of interpretations of community-led recovery; capturing and sharing what works through agreed definitions would help share approaches.
- Engaging the community so that they participate in recovery remains a challenge. Practical guidance, based on examples of success, would aid practitioners in the community.
- The capacity for some local governments to deliver recovery outcomes is a challenge in four areas; structures, people, resources, and time. Greater attention to, and flexibility in, time for recovery will better meet our expectations.
- There is scope to rationalise and augment responsibilities for recovery at state-level to enable clearer information flow and action on direction.

We anticipate that the QRA's *Recovery Capability Development Project* will address many of the findings and practical opportunities that we have identified at local level. Our review of how local governance intersects with state arrangements shows there may be benefit for adapting it to those operating at state-level.

The greatest opportunity for enhancing recovery, though, lies in enhancing the way it is perceived. From many at local level we gathered the impression of recovery as a 'poor cousin' to response. From some at state level we heard uncertainty or disinterest about roles in recovery. Connecting successful recovery to our lifestyle in Queensland will be important to changing the culture around recovery for all, whether they are at its forefront or on the periphery.

With this in mind, our recommendations are steps towards this opportunity. They aim to ensure that community-led recovery is central to recovery thinking following disasters, and support a change in culture so those on the periphery, or not involved, actively want to play a part.

We commend all those involved in recovery, and preparing for it, to embrace the ideas here gleaned from many, and continue their work to enhance better local-level community recovery and community outcomes.

## Appendix A: Legislation

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The following pages outline the Office's observations drawn from the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

The principles, definitions, responsibilities, and appointments are set out below to show how the Act explains responsibilities for recovery.

The Office's observations from the legislation are:

- A disaster is caused by an event and requires a response to help communities recover.
- Under the Act's principles, **events** should primarily be managed by local governments.
- The **events** listed in legislation appear to have a beginning and an end.
- **Recovering** from a **disaster** includes measures where the end is unclear; 'restoring the environment...', 'providing health care...'.  
**Commentary**  
 The management of **events** may not include aspects of recovery.
- '**Disaster operations**' are activities before during or after an **event** to help reduce loss or damage. It is not apparent that the term relates to **recovery**.
- Under the Act's principles, the description of 'appropriate measures to **respond**' aligns with the definition of **disaster operations**.
- '**Disaster operations**' are specifically assigned to local groups to manage. The formation of local groups is a responsibility of local governments. District groups and the State group should provide support to local governments for disaster operations.  
**Commentary**  
 Local governments are responsible for managing **disaster operations**, but this does not appear to include **recovery**.
- Under the Act's principles, **disaster management** is planned across phases that include the taking of appropriate measures to **recover** from an event.
- The State group, district groups and local groups have responsibilities for aspects of **disaster management**. Those of district and local groups are very similar.  
**Commentary**  
 No group is specifically assigned the responsibility for **disaster management**, in the way that local groups are for **disaster operations**.
- The State Recovery Coordinator is assigned the function to coordinate the disaster recovery operations - defined as the 'phase of **disaster operations** that relates to recovering from a disaster' - for the State group.  
**Commentary**  
 No phase of **disaster operations** appears to relate to **recovery**.
- There is not as strong a claim in legislation for the local group to manage **recovery** this as there is for **response**.

Disaster Management Act 2003	IGEM observation
<p><b>4A Guiding principles</b></p> <p>This Act is to be administered according to the following principles—</p> <p>(a) disaster management should be planned across the following four phases—</p> <p>(i) the taking of preventative measures to reduce the likelihood of an event occurring or, if an event occurs, to reduce the severity of the event;</p> <p>(ii) the taking of preparatory measures to ensure that, if an event occurs, communities, resources and services are able to cope with the effects of the event;</p> <p>(iii) the taking of appropriate measures to respond to an event, including action taken and measures planned in anticipation of, during, and immediately after an event to ensure that its effects are minimised and that persons affected by the event are given immediate relief and support;</p> <p>(iv) the taking of appropriate measures to recover from an event, including action taken to support disaster-affected communities in the reconstruction of infrastructure, the restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing, and the restoration of the environment;</p> <p>(b) all events, whether natural or caused by human acts or omissions, should be managed in accordance with the following—</p> <p>(i) a strategic policy framework developed by the State group;</p> <p>(ii) the State disaster management plan;</p> <p>(iii) any disaster management guidelines;</p> <p>(c) local governments should primarily be responsible for managing events in their local government area;</p> <p>(d) district groups and the State group should provide local governments with appropriate resources and support to help the local governments carry out disaster operations.</p>	<p><b>[inserted Nov 2010]</b> Principles distinctly include recovery.</p> <p>Indicates the local government is primarily responsible for <b>managing events</b>, with district and State groups providing resources and support during <b>disaster operations</b>.</p> <p>‘Event’ is mentioned in each of the four phases of disaster management implying the local government is primarily responsible for managing recovery.</p> <p>Principle 4A(a)(iii) ‘respond’ is similar in to the definitions of disaster operations below. There appears to be a strong link between ‘response’ and ‘disaster operations’.</p> <p>Could be interpreted as resources to help local governments with recovery come from a different source.</p>
<b>Definitions</b>	
<p>(1) An <b>event</b> means any of the following—</p> <p>(a) a cyclone, earthquake, flood, storm, storm tide, tornado, tsunami, volcanic eruption or other natural happening;</p> <p>(b) an explosion or fire, a chemical, fuel or oil spill, or a gas leak;</p> <p>(c) an infestation, plague or epidemic; Example of an epidemic— a prevalence of foot-and-mouth disease</p> <p>(d) a failure of, or disruption to, an essential service or infrastructure;</p> <p>(e) an attack against the State;</p> <p>(f) another event similar to an event mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (e).</p> <p>(2) An event may be natural or caused by human acts or omissions.</p>	<p><b>[original 2003]</b></p> <p>Management of events is primarily a local government responsibility.</p>
<p><b>Disaster</b> is a serious disruption in a community, caused by the impact of an <b>event</b>, that requires a significant coordinated response by the State and other entities to help the community recover from the disruption.</p>	<p><b>[original 2003]</b> <b>Disaster</b> is caused by an <b>event</b> that needs a <b>response</b> to help communities <b>recover</b>.</p>

	Implication: those managing a <b>disaster</b> are indirectly helping a community <b>recover</b> .
<b>Disaster management</b> means arrangements about managing the potential adverse effects of an <b>event</b> , including, for example, arrangements for mitigating, preventing, preparing for, responding to and <b>recovering</b> from a disaster.	<b>[original 2003]</b> Distinctly includes <b>recovery</b> . By implication, responsibilities for disaster management include responsibilities for recovery. Reinforces that <b>management of an 'event'</b> can be taken to include <b>management of recovery</b> .
<b>Disaster operations</b> means activities undertaken before, during or after an event happens to help reduce loss of human life, illness or injury to humans, property loss or damage, or damage to the environment, including, for example, activities to mitigate the adverse effects of the event.	<b>[original 2003]</b> <b>Disaster operations</b> activities are undertaken to reduce loss or damage. Activities appear to be include mitigation, prevention, preparation, response, but <u>not</u> <b>recovery</b> .
<b>Disaster recovery operations</b> means the phase of <b>disaster operations</b> that relates to recovering from a disaster.	<b>[inserted Nov 2010]</b> Unclear. There does not appear to be a phase of <b>disaster operations</b> that relates to recovering from a disaster.
<b>Disaster response operations</b> means the phase of <b>disaster operations</b> that relates to responding to a disaster.	<b>[inserted Nov 2010]</b> See above. Disaster operations already appears to be all about response.
<b>Disaster response capability</b> , for a local government, means the ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the local government, to effectively deal with, or help another entity to deal with, an <i>emergency situation</i> or a disaster in the local government's area.	<b>[original 2003]</b> The implication for local government is to provide resources to effectively deal with... a disaster (which indirectly supports a community needing to recover).  NB this definition, in the original version of the Act, came immediately before <i>Part 6 - State Emergency Service</i> . The first function of the SES was to perform rescue or similar operations in an <i>emergency situation</i> .
<b>Responding to a disaster</b> includes, for example, the following— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) issuing warnings of a disaster;</li> <li>(b) establishing and operating emergency operations centres;</li> <li>(c) conducting search and rescue missions;</li> <li>(d) providing emergency medical assistance;</li> <li>(e) providing emergency food and shelter;</li> <li>(f) planning and implementing the evacuation of persons affected by disasters;</li> <li>(g) establishing and operating evacuation centres;</li> <li>(h) carrying out assessments of the impact of a disaster.</li> </ul>	<b>[inserted Nov 2010]</b>

<p><b>Recovering from a disaster</b> includes, for example, the following—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) providing relief measures to assist persons affected by the disaster who do not have the resources to provide for their own financial and economic wellbeing;</li> <li>(b) restoring essential infrastructure in the area or areas affected by the disaster;</li> <li>(c) restoring the environment in areas affected by the disaster;</li> <li>(d) providing health care to persons affected by the disaster, including temporary hospital accommodation, emergency medical supplies and counselling services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>[inserted Nov 2010]</b></p> <p>Only includes limited examples of recovery.</p> <p>Both district and local groups are both responsible for ensuring the community is aware of ways of...recovering from a disaster.</p>
<p><b>Responsibilities for disaster management, and disaster operations</b></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Functions of the State group</b></p> <p>18 Functions</p> <p>The State group has the following functions—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) to develop a strategic policy framework for <b>disaster management</b> for the State;</li> <li>(b) to ensure effective <b>disaster management</b> is developed and implemented for the State;</li> <li>(c) to ensure arrangements between the State and the Commonwealth about matters relating to effective <b>disaster management</b> are established and maintained;</li> <li>(d) to identify resources, in and outside the State, that may be used for <b>disaster operations</b>;</li> <li>(e) to provide reports and make recommendations that the State group considers appropriate about matters relating to <b>disaster management</b> and <b>disaster operations</b>;</li> <li>(f) to prepare, under section 49, the State <b>disaster management</b> plan;</li> <li>(g) to coordinate State and Commonwealth assistance for <b>disaster management</b> and <b>disaster operations</b>;</li> <li>(h) to perform other functions given to the group under this or another Act;</li> <li>(i) to perform a function incidental to a function mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (h).</li> </ul>	<p>Through their responsibilities for disaster management, the State plays an underpinning and supporting role for mitigation, prevention, preparation, response and recovery.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Functions of a district group</b></p> <p>23 Functions</p> <p>A district group has the following functions for the disaster district for which it is established—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) to ensure that <b>disaster management</b> and <b>disaster operations</b> in the district are consistent with the State group's strategic policy framework for <b>disaster management</b> for the State;</li> <li>(b) to develop effective <b>disaster management</b> for the district, including a district <b>disaster management</b> plan, and regularly review and assess that <b>disaster management</b>;</li> <li>(c) to provide reports and make recommendations to the State group about matters relating to <b>disaster management</b> and <b>disaster operations</b> in the district;</li> <li>(d) to regularly review and assess— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the <b>disaster management</b> of local groups in the district; and</li> <li>(ii) local <b>disaster management</b> plans prepared by local governments whose areas are in the district;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(e) to ensure that any relevant decisions and policies made by the State group are incorporated in its <b>disaster</b></li> </ul>	<p>District group responsibility for <b>response</b> (through <b>disaster operations</b>) includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying resources</li> <li>• planning the use of resources</li> <li>• providing reports and recommendations.</li> </ul>

<p><b>management</b>, and the <b>disaster management</b> of local groups in the district;</p> <p>(f) to ensure the community is aware of ways of mitigating the adverse effects of an event, and preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster;</p> <p>(g) to coordinate the provision of State resources and services provided to support local groups in the district;</p> <p>(h) to identify resources that may be used for <b>disaster operations</b> in the district;</p> <p>(i) to make plans for the allocation, and coordination of the use, of resources mentioned in paragraph (h);</p> <p>(j) to establish and review communications systems in the group, and with and between local groups in the district, for use when a disaster happens;</p> <p>(k) to ensure information about an event or a disaster in the district is promptly given to the State group and each local group in the district;</p> <p>(l) to prepare, under section 53, a district <b>disaster management</b> plan;</p> <p>(m) to perform other functions given to the group under this Act;</p> <p>(n) to perform a function incidental to a function mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (m).</p>	<p>Responsibilities for response and <b>recovery</b> (through <b>disaster management</b>) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring consistency with policy</li> <li>• developing effective arrangements</li> <li>• preparing plans</li> <li>• community awareness.</li> </ul> <p>These four responsibilities are the same as those for a local group.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Functions of a local group</b></p> <p>30 Functions</p> <p>A local group has the following functions for its area—</p> <p>(a) to ensure that <b>disaster management</b> and <b>disaster operations</b> in the area are consistent with...</p> <p>(b) to develop effective <b>disaster management</b>, and regularly review and assess the <b>disaster management</b>;</p> <p>(c) to help the local government for its area to prepare a local <b>disaster management</b> plan;</p> <p>(d) to identify, and provide advice to the relevant district group about, support services required by the local group to facilitate <b>disaster management</b> and <b>disaster operations</b> in the area;</p> <p>(e) to ensure the community is aware of ways of mitigating the adverse effects of an event, and preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster;</p> <p>(f) to manage <b>disaster operations</b> in the area under policies and procedures decided by the State group;</p> <p>(g) to provide reports and make recommendations to the relevant district group about matters relating to <b>disaster operations</b>;</p> <p>(h) to identify, and coordinate the use of, resources that may be used for <b>disaster operations</b> in the area;</p> <p>(i) to establish and review communications systems in the group, and with the relevant district group and other local groups in the disaster district of the relevant district group, for use when a disaster happens;</p> <p>(j) to ensure information about a disaster in the area is promptly given to the relevant district group;</p> <p>(k) to perform other functions given to the group under this Act;</p> <p>(l) to perform a function incidental to a function mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (k).</p> <p><b>80 Functions of local government</b></p> <p>(1) The functions of a local government under this Act are as follows—</p> <p>(a) to ensure it has a disaster response capability;</p>	<p>Local group responsibility for response (through <b>disaster operations</b>) includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• management</li> <li>• providing reports and recommendations</li> <li>• use of resources.</li> </ul> <p>Local government must also have a disaster response capability.</p> <p>Responsibilities for response and recovery (through <b>disaster management</b>) includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring consistency with policy</li> <li>• developing effective arrangements</li> <li>• preparing plans</li> <li>• community awareness.</li> <li>• advice on support services</li> </ul> <p>The first four responsibilities are the same as those for a district group.</p> <p>The implication of disaster response capability is that local governments should have resources to effectively</p>

<p>(b) to approve its local disaster management plan prepared under part 3;</p> <p>(c) to ensure information about an event or a disaster in its area is promptly given to the district disaster coordinator for the disaster district in which its area is situated;</p> <p>(d) to perform other functions given to the local government under this Act.</p>	<p>deal with... a disaster (defined as work needing a community to recover).</p> <p>A local government must also approve its plan.</p>
<b>Appointments</b>	
<p><b>State</b></p> <p><b>21B State disaster coordinator</b></p> <p>(1) The chairperson of the State group must appoint one of the following persons as a State disaster coordinator to coordinate disaster operations for the group—</p> <p>(a) a deputy commissioner of the police service;</p> <p>(b) another person the chairperson decides, after considering the nature of the disaster operations, should be appointed to coordinate the operations.</p> <p>(2) The chairperson must consult with the commissioner of the police service before making the appointment.</p> <p>(3) The appointment must be in writing and may only be terminated in writing.</p> <p>(4) The chairperson may only appoint a person, other than a deputy commissioner of the police service, as a State disaster coordinator if the chairperson is satisfied the person has the necessary expertise or experience to perform the functions of a State disaster coordinator.</p> <p><b>21C Functions of State disaster coordinator</b></p> <p>(1) The State disaster coordinator has the following functions—</p> <p>(a) to coordinate the disaster response operations for the State group;</p> <p>(b) to report regularly to the State group about disaster response operations;</p> <p>(c) to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that any strategic decisions of the State group about disaster response operations are implemented;</p> <p>(d) to provide strategic advice on disaster response operations to district disaster coordinators.</p> <p><b>21D State recovery coordinator</b></p> <p>(1) The chairperson of the State group may appoint a person as the State <b>recovery</b> coordinator for a disaster if the chairperson is satisfied that—</p> <p>(a) it is necessary for a State <b>recovery</b> coordinator to be appointed; and</p> <p>(b) the person has the necessary expertise or experience to perform the functions of the State <b>recovery</b> coordinator.</p> <p><b>21E Functions of State recovery coordinator</b></p> <p>(1) The State recovery coordinator has the following functions</p> <p>(a) to coordinate the disaster recovery operations for the State group;</p> <p>(b) to report regularly to the State group about disaster recovery operations;</p> <p>(c) to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that any strategic decisions of the State group about disaster recovery operations are implemented;</p> <p>(d) to provide strategic advice on disaster recovery operations to government agencies performing disaster recovery operations.</p> <p><b>District</b></p>	<p>In legislation, the State's responsibilities for both <b>disaster operations</b> (mitigation, prevention, preparation and response), and separately for recovery are embodied in the mandatory appointment of <b>State disaster coordinator</b> and the optional appointment of <b>State recovery coordinator</b>.</p>

<p>S25A, S26A and DM Reg S6. The Commissioner of Police appoints the Chairperson of the District Groups who is the District Disaster Coordinator.</p> <p>S26. The chairperson of a district group has the following functions—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) to manage and coordinate the business of the group;</li> <li>(b) to ensure, as far as practicable, that the group performs its functions;</li> <li>(c) to report regularly to the State group about the performance by the district group of its functions.</li> </ul> <p>S26A. The function of the district disaster coordinator is to coordinate <b>disaster operations</b> in the disaster district for the group.</p> <p><b>Local</b> DM Reg 2014, S10.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) For section 34(2) of the Act, the chairperson and deputy chairperson of a local group are the persons appointed by the relevant local government for the local group to be the chairperson and deputy chairperson.</li> <li>(2) The chairperson must be a councillor of a local government.</li> </ul> <p>The chairperson of a local group has the following functions—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) to manage and coordinate the business of the group;</li> <li>(b) to ensure, as far as practicable, that the group performs its functions;</li> </ul> <p>DM Act 2003, S35.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The chairperson of the local group must, after consulting with the chief executive, appoint the chief executive officer or an employee of the relevant local government as a local disaster coordinator of the group.</li> <li>(2) The chairperson of the local group may appoint a person mentioned in subsection (1) as a local disaster coordinator of the group only if satisfied the person has the necessary expertise or experience to be a local disaster coordinator</li> </ul> <p>S36. The local disaster coordinator has the following functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) to coordinate <b>disaster operations</b> for the local group;</li> <li>(b) to report regularly to the local group about <b>disaster operations</b>;</li> <li>(c) to ensure, as far as practicable, that any strategic decisions of the local group about disaster operations are implemented.</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>chairperson of district group</b> is, by implication, responsible for ensuring arrangements, and plans for <b>recovery</b> are consistent with State policy, and for community awareness about recovery.</p> <p>The appointment of district disaster coordinator is focused on <b>disaster operations</b> – and, by implication, not on recovery.</p> <p>The chairperson of a local group is, by implication, responsible for ensuring arrangements and plans for recovery are consistent with State policy, for providing advice about support services and for community awareness about recovery.</p> <p>The appointment of local disaster coordinator is focused on <b>disaster operations</b> – and, by implication, not on recovery.</p>
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## Appendix B: Definitions

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<b>Best practice</b>	A procedure that has been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption – Merriam-Webster Dictionary.
<b>Capability</b>	Our collective ability to reduce the likelihood and consequences of an emergency before, during and after. <sup>139</sup>
<b>Capacity</b>	The extent to which the core elements of capability can be sustained, before, during and after an emergency. <sup>140</sup>
<b>Community-led</b>	Reflects a bottom-up empowerment of action and responsibility, driven from the community. This shift towards an empowered community has been driven by a recognition that: recovery is best achieved when the affected community is able to exercise a high degree of self-determination, there is an improved awareness of hazard risk among citizens and policies articulate a diminished role for the state in service provision.
<b>Culture</b>	The ideas, customs and social behaviour of a society - Oxford Living Dictionaries. The collective accepted practices of the people within an organisation which relate directly or indirectly to the purpose of the organisation -Macquarie Dictionary.
<b>Good practice</b>	A practice that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model. It is a successful experience, which has been tested and validated, in the broad sense, which has been repeated and deserves to be shared so that a greater number of people can adopt it. <sup>141</sup>
<b>Governance</b>	Structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation. Governance also represents the norms, values and rules of the game through which public affairs are managed in a manner that is transparent, participatory, inclusive and responsive. Governance therefore can be subtle and may not be easily observable. In a broad sense, governance is about the culture and institutional environment in which citizens and stakeholders interact among themselves and participate in public affairs. It is more than the organs of the government. <sup>142</sup>
<b>Recovery</b>	The coordinated process of supporting disaster-affected communities' psychosocial (emotional and social), and physical well-being; reconstruction of physical infrastructure; and economic and environmental restoration'.
<b>Resilience</b>	A system or community's ability to rapidly accommodate and recover from the impacts of hazards, restore essential structures and desired functionality, and adapt to new circumstances. <sup>143</sup>

## Appendix C: Consultation and engagement

	Functional Recovery Group member				
	Human & Social	Economic	Environment	Building	Roads & Transport
AgForce Queensland		✓			✓
Australian Defence Force					
Australian Red Cross (regional)	✓	✓			
-----					
Brisbane City Council					
Bundaberg Regional Council					
-----					
Cairns Regional Council					
CaneGrowers					
Cassowary Coast Regional Council					
Central Highlands Regional Council					
Community Services Industry Alliance					
Cook Shire Council					
-----					
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries		✓	✓		✓
Department of Housing and Public Works	✓			✓ Lead	
Department of the Premier and Cabinet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Department of Transport and Main Roads		✓			✓ Lead
(Former) Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services	✓ Lead				
(Former) Department of Environment and Heritage Protection		✓	✓ Lead		
(Former) Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning	✓	✓			✓
(Former) Department of State Development		✓ Lead	✓		
-----					
Ergon Energy (regional)		✓			
-----					
GIVIT	✓	✓			
Good Shepard's Micro Finance	✓				
Grow Com					
Gympie Regional Council					
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Isaac Regional Council					

	Human & Social	Economic	Environment	Building	Roads & Transport
Individual contributions:					
• Katie Edmiston - Former coordinator, LGAQ community recovery project 2010-11					
• Tegwan Howell - Flood survivor, researcher, and disaster recovery advocate					
• John Mayfield					
• Christine Nixon - Former Chief Commissioner, Victoria Police and former Chair, Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority					
Ipswich City Council					
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Local Government Association of Queensland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lockyer Valley Regional Council					
Logan City Council					
-----					
North Burnett Regional Council					
Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland					
-----					
Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation					
Queensland Disaster Management Committee Secretariat					
Queensland Farmers Federation		✓			
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	✓	✓	✓		
Queensland Police Service		✓			
Queensland Reconstruction Authority	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Salvation Army	✓				
Scenic Rim Regional Council					
St Vincent De Paul Society	✓				
-----					
Tablelands Regional Council					
-----					
Uniting Care Community	✓				
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Whitsunday Regional Council					
Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council					

## Appendix D: Queensland's recovery history

### 2006 Tropical Cyclone Larry

The damage bill from TC Larry in March 2006 was over \$1.5 billion.<sup>144</sup> In the view of some, it marked the start of a significant transformation in how recovery has been understood in Queensland. The Premier appointed former General Peter Cosgrove AC, MC as the Chair of the Operation Recovery Task Force to oversight and deliver the recovery program.<sup>145</sup> The Task Force continued past the initially planned period of October 2006 and was in place through the 2006-07 wet season.<sup>146</sup> The governance for the recovery operation following TC Larry is illustrated below. It included an ORMG of all agencies that provided 'operational management in the delivery of recovery management arrangements in accordance with Government policy and community expectations'.<sup>147</sup>

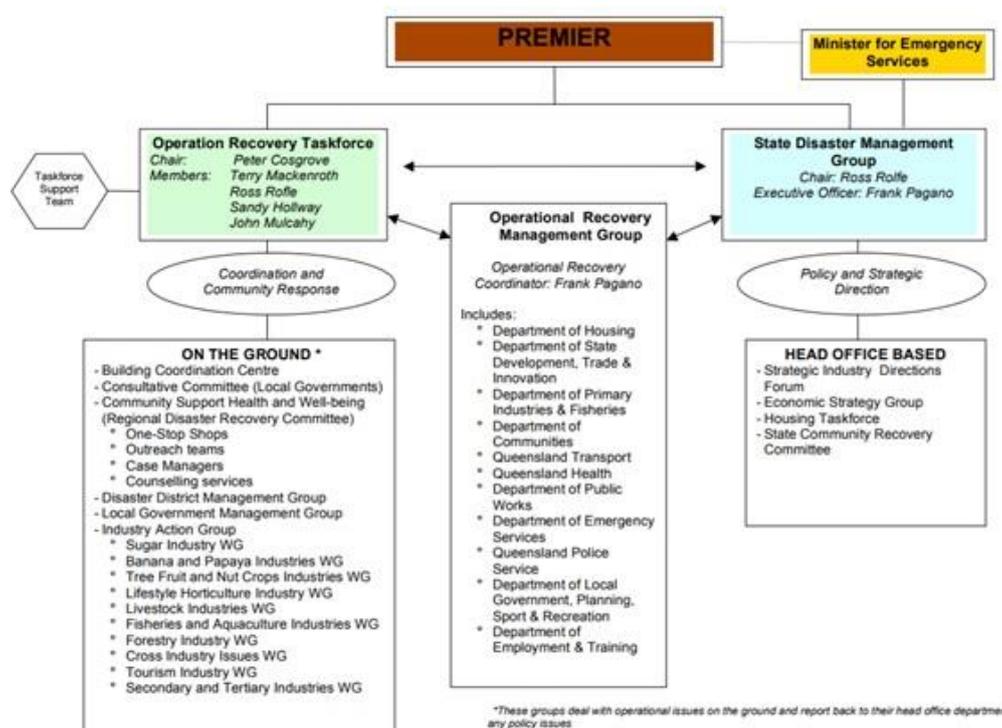


Figure 19: Operation Recovery Governance Framework.<sup>148</sup>

Recovery following TC Larry marked three notable aspects in Queensland's recovery approach:

- The appointment of General Cosgrove as chairman of the Recovery Task Force 'to drive the recovery, through the efforts of the public service and other specialists'.<sup>149</sup>
- In an economic climate before the 2008 global financial crisis, a high-level of investment from national and state governments into recovery.
- High level coordinated approach between national and state agencies.

## 2008 floods and local government amalgamations

In January 2008, ex-TC Helen brought heavy rainfall, strong winds and major flooding across Central Queensland.<sup>150</sup> Emerald’s housing and surrounding livestock were flood-affected.<sup>151</sup> Under the Recovery plan for Central Queensland, the local government led the recovery for approximately two years.<sup>152</sup> The 2008 recovery events in Emerald went on to inform other recovery process and structures.

On 15 February 2008, Mackay experienced extreme rainfall that led to damage to more than 4,000 homes - about 10% of Mackay’s households.<sup>153</sup> Recognising the mainly specialised nature of this recovery, the Premier appointed the President of the Masters Builders to help oversee the rebuilding of Central Queensland towns. The Queensland Building Services Authority acted as the coordinating body to help builders undertaking repairs.

The March 2008 reforms of the state’s local government boundaries led to 157 local government areas reduced to 73.<sup>154</sup> The change resulted in staff movements and potential knowledge loss across some councils, with the lessons from recent events imperfectly captured and transferred.

## 2009 Ingham Floods

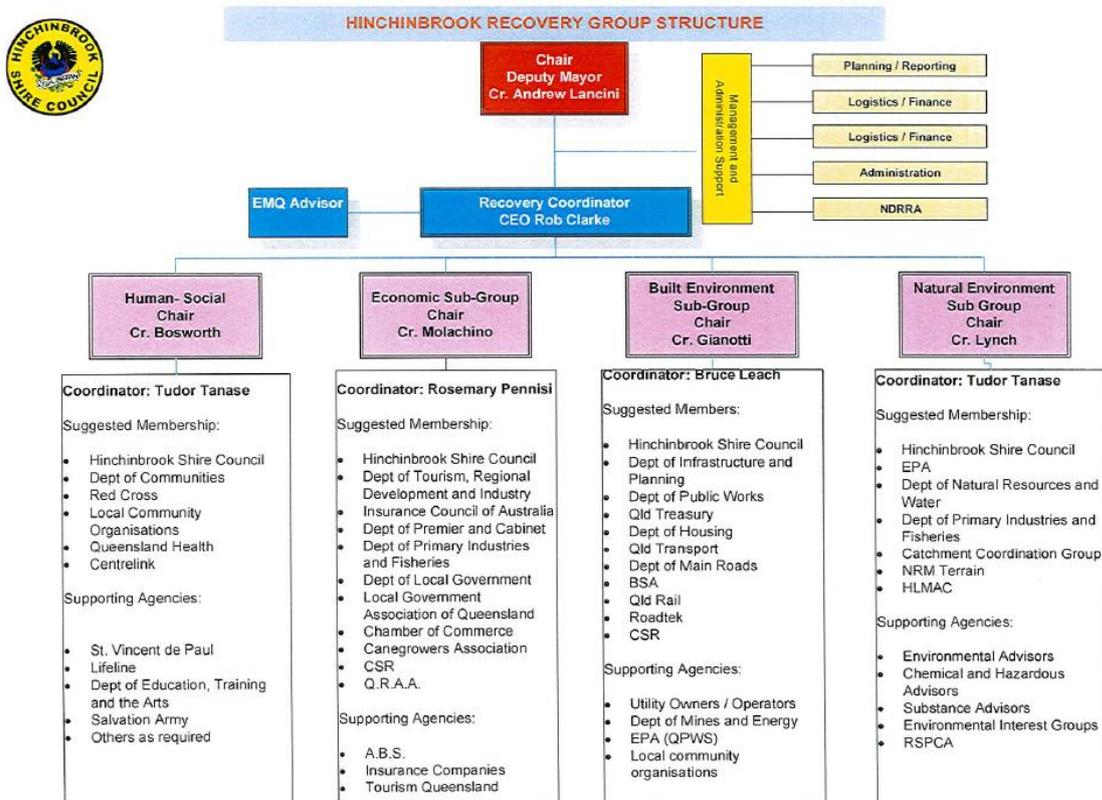


Figure 20: January–February 2009 Queensland Floods / TC Ellie - Hinchinbrook Recovery Group Implementation Plan dated 12 February 2009, Hinchinbrook Shire Council.

In March 2009, ex-TC Ellie and higher than normal tide activity caused extensive flooding in Ingham. 'The Hinchinbrook Plan' named after the local government area, was modelled on the Plan for Central Queensland from the previous year. It emerged as the benchmark for recovery plans for the period. Its governance structure, of four pillars; human-social, economic, built environment, and natural environment, is shown above.

### 2010-11 summer season

In November 2010, further enhancements were implemented, including realigning the Disaster District areas to the police districts and creating the role of State Disaster Coordinator.<sup>155</sup>

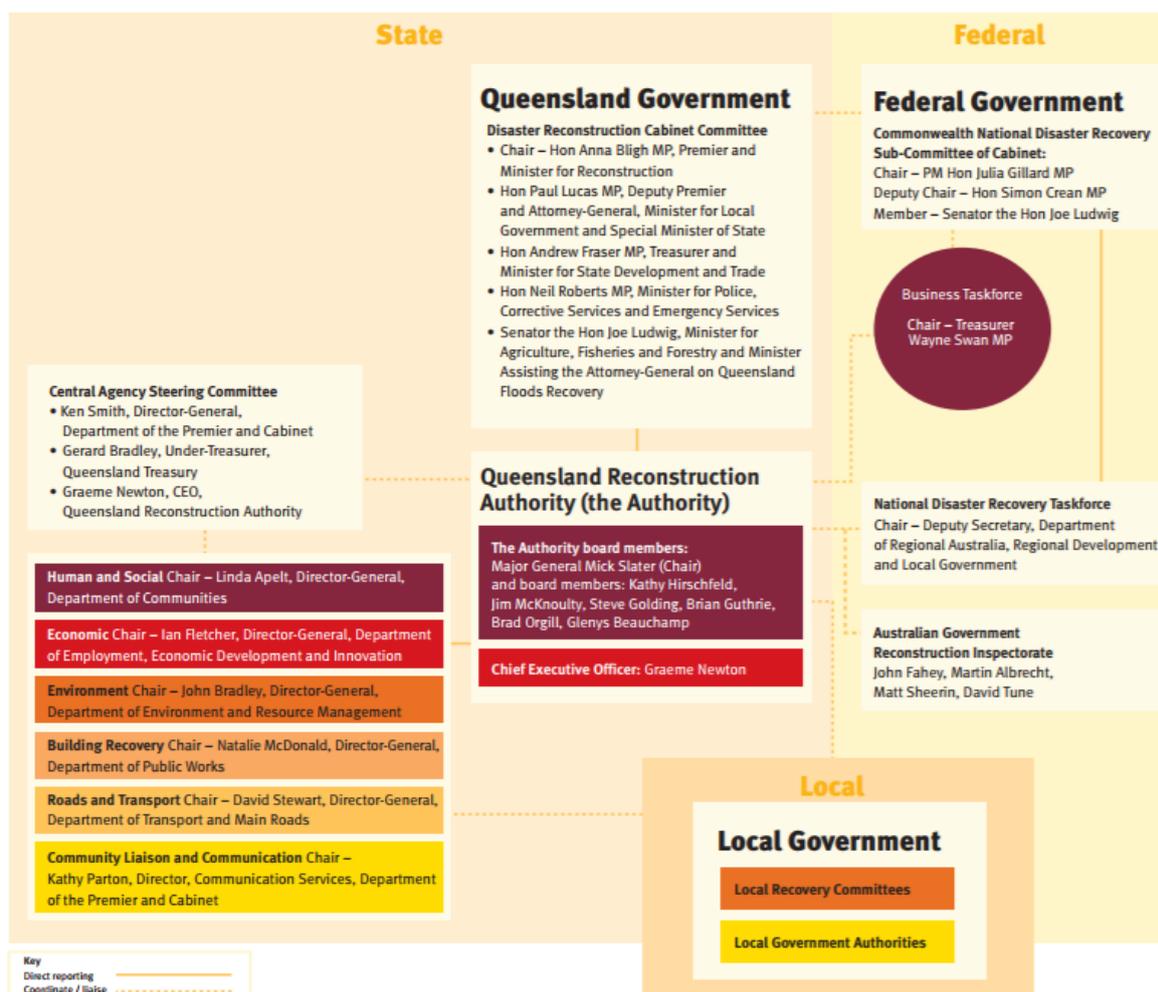


Figure 21: Queensland Reconstruction Authority governance map 2011.<sup>156</sup>

The flooding in the spring and summer of 2010-11, and the powerful TC Yasi that followed, contributed to Australia's costliest year for natural disasters.<sup>157</sup> An independent Commission of Inquiry was announced to examine the flood disaster. NDRRA were activated in all 73 of Queensland's local government areas with Category C Community Recovery funding activated for the first time.<sup>158</sup> The activation included a \$20 million project to enable 17 of the most

devastated communities to employ community development workers for the next two years.

In February 2011, the Queensland Government established the QRA; the first such recovery governing body in Australia. Major-General Michael Slater was appointed Chair of the QRA with the objective to oversee and coordinate the recovery and reconstruction efforts.<sup>159</sup> Reporting to the Disaster Reconstruction Cabinet Committee, the QRA, through Operation Queenslander, the State Community, Economic and Environmental Recovery and Reconstruction Plan, established six lines of reconstruction: Human and Social, Economic, Environment, Building Recovery, Roads and Transport, and Community Liaison and Communication.<sup>160</sup> From 2011-2014, the State Recovery Group, subgroup to the SDMG, was responsible for recovery.

The QRA initially had a sunset clause of two years, extended first to June 2014 and later to June 2015. Still later, in 2015, in the aftermath of TC Marcia, the Queensland Government announced the permanent establishment of QRA.

### **2013 Flooding and Tropical Cyclone Oswald**

In January 2013, ex-TC Oswald tracked southeast down the Queensland coast producing widespread flooding, most severely in Bundaberg. Disaster situations were declared for Bundaberg, Gladstone, Maryborough, Ipswich, Dalby and Brisbane disaster districts and the local government area of Rockhampton. NDRRA was activated for 57 local government areas.

Under a new Government, recovery arrangements for the event changed slightly. Governance for the Queensland 2013 Flood Recovery Plan was provided through the Disaster Management Cabinet Committee (DMCC), established to make strategic decisions about prevention, preparation, response and recovery for disaster events, and to build Queensland's resilience to natural disasters. A CEO Leadership Team (CLT) Sub-committee – Community Recovery and Resilience was established to mirror the DMCC and to oversee the five state-level FRGs of:

- Human and Social Recovery
- Environment Recovery
- Economic Recovery
- Building Recovery
- Roads and Transport Recovery.

Instead of a SRC, three DRCs were appointed for the affected areas of Northern Queensland Region, Bundaberg/North Burnett Region and Southern Queensland Region.

### **2015 Tropical Cyclone Marcia**

On 20 February 2015, TC Marcia crossed the Queensland coast north of Yeppoon, bringing with it destructive winds and heavy rainfall.<sup>161</sup> NDRRA activations occurred across 14 local government areas in central Queensland.

The recovery operation was again managed by five state-level FRGs reporting to the CLT Sub-committee – Community Recovery which reported to the Deputy Premier.<sup>162</sup> The governance structure is illustrated below.

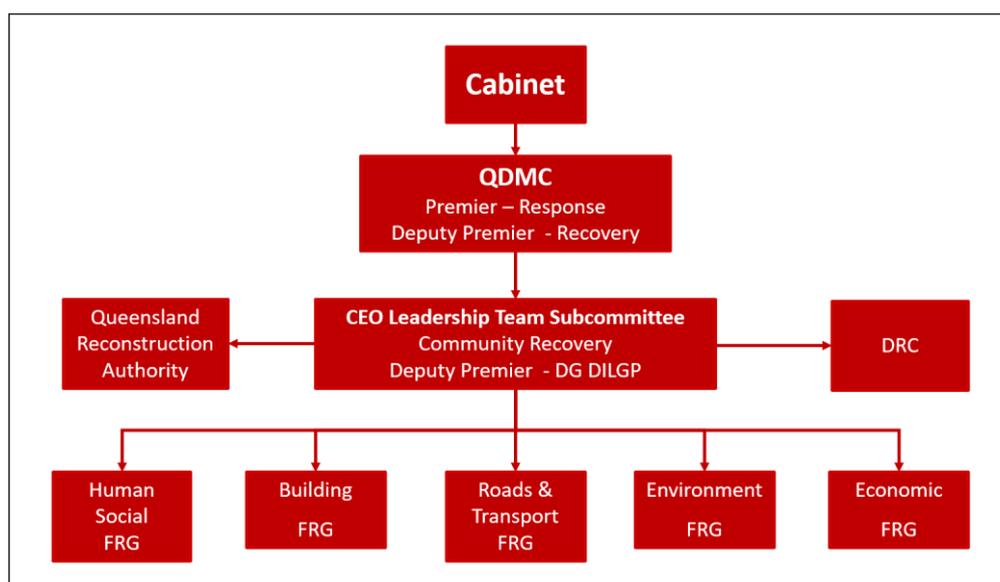


Figure 22: TC Marcia Recovery Governance Arrangements.<sup>163</sup>

The Deputy Premier and the Director-General Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP) provided updates on the recovery progress and work performed by the CLT and the FRGs to the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, comprising both elected members and public servants.<sup>164</sup> A Chief Superintendent was appointed as DRC. Following TC Marcia, the CEO Leadership Board assumed the functions of the CEO Recovery Sub-committee which was disestablished.<sup>165</sup>

### 2016 Creation of the SRPPC

In June 2016, the Premier appointed the CEO QRA as the permanent SRPPC, differentiating this role from the more operational one of the SRC, following an event. Recovery planning and policy development was seen as essential to ensure the efficient transfer from response to recovery and optimise recovery outcomes.

The Interim Queensland Recovery Plan and the Disaster Recovery Coordinator Guide were developed and released in 2016.

### 2017 Tropical Cyclone Debbie associated rainfall and flooding

On 28 March 2017, TC Debbie crossed the Whitsunday coast with strong winds and heavy rain immediately felt by local communities and Mackay. Significant damage occurred to homes, infrastructure and agriculture across the region. Intense rain and strong winds continued as TC Debbie continued to track south into Northern New South Wales with the south east corner of Queensland experiencing rapid-onset flooding. TC Debbie resulted in three concurrent events across Queensland:

- cyclonic impact and consequential damage including major flooding
- rapid-onset flood events in the south eastern corner of the state
- slow-onset flood events in Central Queensland, particularly Rockhampton.<sup>166</sup>

In total, 36 local government areas were activated for NDRRA with more than a billion dollars in damage to industry and infrastructure across the state. Brigadier Christopher Field AM, CSC led the recovery effort as SRC supported by two DRCs, one in the north and one in the south east region. The operational recovery plan, *State Recovery Plan 2017-2019 - Operation Queensland Recovery*, was developed in response to TC Debbie and includes local recovery plans for the eight worst hit areas.<sup>167</sup>

## ***Appendix E: Resourcing Human and Social recovery***

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Noting that NDRRA is out of scope for this review, it is one of the primary funding mechanisms through which the NGO sector receives recovery resourcing. There has been significant work to examine funding arrangements through the former DCCSDS.

During 2015, the former DCCSDS completed a review of all operational aspects of Human and Social Recovery to identify opportunities for continual improvement. Recommendation 5 of the Community Recovery Review 2015 was to “Review agreements for Community Recovery services provided by NGOs to ensure value for money through maximising their capacity under existing funding allocations and embedding consistent service pricing for additional recovery services above these obligations, with consideration to broader, more flexible procurement arrangements such as Standing Offer Arrangements”. The scope of this review was subsequently broadened to include consideration of all relevant purchasing arrangements across Queensland Government agencies to provide a consistent approach between service providers and over time.

Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS), in conjunction with the local community, determine the capacity and capability of the existing community service system to meet the needs of affected community members. Where capability and/or capacity are exceeded and there is a requirement for extraordinary services to supplement the system, DCDSS purchases the required services from existing local providers or community recovery partners who provide specific relief, recovery or resilience focussed services. Systems are now in place for this to balance the need for transparency and accountability with the need for flexible and effective service delivery.

## Appendix F: Acronyms and abbreviations

ABCD	Asset Based Community Development
AIDR	Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLT	Chief Executive Officer Leadership Team
DCCSDS	Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
DCDSS	Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
DDMG	District Disaster Management Group
DDMP	District Disaster Management Plan
DILGP	Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
DPC	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
DRC	Disaster Recovery Coordinator
EMAF	Emergency Management Assurance Framework
FRG	Functional Recovery Group
IGEM	Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management
LDC	Local Disaster Coordinator
LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group
LG	Local Government
LGA	Local Government Authority
LRC	Local Recovery Coordinator
LRG	Local Recovery Group
NDRRA	Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements
NGO	Non-government organisation
ORMG	Operation Recovery Management Group
QDMC	Queensland Disaster Management Committee
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
QRA	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
PPRR Guideline	Queensland Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline
SDCG	State Disaster Coordination Group
SDMG	State Disaster Management Group
SRC	State Recovery Coordinator
SRPPC	State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator
TC	Tropical cyclone
The Act	Disaster Management Act 2003 (Qld)
The Office	Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management
The Standard	Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland
VQ	Volunteering Queensland

# Endnotes

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