

3.4 Community Recovery

Principle

- 3.4.1 Effective community recovery involves Whole-Of-Government with its recovery partners in planned and coordinated activities for psycho-social, economic, infrastructure and the environmental elements applying the national principles for disaster recovery (Detailed in Appendix 5.12).

Legal Requirements

- 3.4.2 The general legislative requirements relevant to community recovery in Tasmania are outlined here and incorporated in the arrangements described later in this section. A summary of other legislation that is relevant to Tasmanian emergency management is provided in Appendix 5.3.
- 3.4.3 The *Emergency Management Act 2006* outlines emergency powers (Schedule 1) and special emergency powers (Schedule 2) for authorised officers (Section 31).
- 3.4.4 The SEMC (Section 9) and the State Controller (Section 11) can request debrief reports for the benefit of emergency management.
- 3.4.5 Section 46 requires councils to use their resources and make them available for managing emergencies in their municipal area, in accordance with the municipal plan (this includes community recovery).

Current Tasmanian Arrangements

Overview

- 3.4.6 Community recovery is an integral part of emergency management. It occurs through effective communications with emergency affected communities and can provide an opportunity to improve these aspects beyond previous conditions, contributing to a more resilient community (ie restoration of facilities and services may not be the most valuable course of action).
- 3.4.7 Community recovery is usually managed initially in close collaboration with emergency response efforts and then, if needed, transitions into a longer term effort that is community-centred, enabling the community to actively participate in their own recovery. This can take time, and may even occur over a number of years. It is also acknowledged that full recovery does not always occur.
- 3.4.8 Community recovery requires a holistic approach that includes consideration of the following elements:
- psycho-social
 - the economy
 - infrastructure (including the restoration/re-supply of goods, services, and conditions)
 - the environment.
- 3.4.9 In Tasmania, community recovery services are provided through partnerships between local, State and Commonwealth Governments and Non-Government Organisations, and generally include the following activities:
- management of community recovery at the municipal level with the affected community/s
 - ongoing assessments of consequences affecting the community
 - maintenance of transparent and flexible relief assistance packages.

- 3.4.10 Tasmania also supports recovery of other communities by maintaining broad arrangements to complement activation of COMRECEPLAN by the Commonwealth.
- 3.4.11 Councils are responsible for maintaining community recovery arrangements including appointing workers to coordinate recovery activities. Often the workers holding community/economic development roles are appointed as Municipal Community Recovery Coordinators and Deputies. The Municipal Community Recovery Coordinator usually chairs the Municipal Community Recovery Committee (which is a sub-committee of the Municipal Emergency Management Committee). These roles provide a conduit between emergency affected people and State Government agencies for community recovery support, usually in collaboration with Regional Emergency Management Committees and Sub-Committees. Where a council worker is not nominated for recovery coordination, the Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator is the initial point of contact for community recovery matters.
- 3.4.12 The Department of Health and Human Services coordinates the nomination of Regional Community Recovery Coordinators and a State Community Recovery Coordinator. The Regional Community Recovery Coordinators work closely with the Regional Managers of the State Emergency Service and the Municipal Community Recovery Coordinators, and they chair the Regional Community Recovery Committees (which are sub-committees of the Regional Emergency Management Committees).
- 3.4.13 The typical considerations in community recovery include, but are not limited to:
- assessing community recovery needs across the four elements, and prioritising the actions required
 - developing, implementing and monitoring the provision of community recovery activities that are aligned as much as possible with municipal long term planning and goals
 - enabling communication with the community and community participation in decision making
 - where possible, contributing to future mitigation requirements or improvements to planning requirements (eg through debrief processes).

Immediate Recovery

- 3.4.14 In the immediate aftermath of an emergency, community recovery is mostly focused on supporting affected persons to deal with the immediate consequences of the event, and in particular to meet basic personal needs (eg food, water, shelter).
- 3.4.15 Councils undertake the primary role in providing community recovery services in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, and can be supported by a number of State Government agencies and Non-Government Organisations, depending on their capacity and the presence of support services in the area. Council assistance is usually provided in any of three main ways:
- councils provide the assistance that is required
 - councils coordinate the provision of the assistance that is required
 - councils request that the Regional Community Recovery Committee coordinates provision of the assistance. This request is made by the Municipal Community Recovery Coordinator to the Regional Managers of the State Emergency Service (as Executive Officers of the Regional Emergency Management Committees).
- 3.4.16 This assistance is delivered, wherever possible, from recovery centres and councils may establish a community-based recovery group to coordinate these recovery activities (usually chaired by the Municipal Community Recovery Coordinator). The Tasmanian Emergency Information Service can also be activated to support the provision of information to affected communities, especially where they are spread over substantial geographic areas or in isolated situations. See paragraph 3.3.50 for more information.

- 3.4.17 Impact assessments that were initially coordinated by the response Management Authority provide indicators of the impact on the community and can assist to prioritise community recovery activities. Ongoing assessments are carried out as required by councils/the community based recovery group, and these assessments inform the need to consider an appropriate governance structure that will assist councils in the longer term recovery process.

Longer Term Recovery

- 3.4.18 Longer term recovery focuses on assisting the community to manage its own recovery through a coordinated and planned process that draws together the relevant recovery partners to address the needs created by the emergency, governed by an Affected Area Recovery Committee.
- 3.4.19 Affected Area Recovery Committees can be established through the functions and powers provided in the *Emergency Management Act 2006* at State/regional level (Section 9, 11/18). The decision to establish an Affected Area Recovery Committee can result from advice/requests from:
- the SEMC members
 - Regional Managers, State Emergency Service (can be assisted by the Regional Community Recovery Coordinators).
- 3.4.20 Affected Area Recovery Committees operate under the protection of the Act when the Regional/State Controller accepts the Terms of Reference developed by the committee. Guidance for this is provided in Appendix 5.4 and a model Terms of Reference for Affected Area Recovery Committees' is available at www.ses.tas.gov.au
- 3.4.21 The Affected Area Recovery Committee's role is to coordinate community recovery activities through information sharing and collective decision making. The typical membership of this committee is outlined in Appendix 5.4 and it is usually chaired by the Mayor of the affected council.
- 3.4.22 A priority focus of the Affected Area Recovery Committee is to identify appropriate processes and structures to fully engage the community during the recovery process.
- 3.4.23 The committee is responsible for arranging and monitoring a communications program for the duration of the community recovery program. It can include but is not limited to:
- forums/information sessions for the community
 - debriefs for community recovery workers
 - progress reports for council, the community, the SEMC, and any other agency/organisation as agreed. As appropriate this includes progressive summaries/analysis of records (financial and information).
- 3.4.24 The Department of Premier and Cabinet can coordinate State Government community recovery efforts to assist Affected Area Recovery Committees.

Elements of Community Recovery

Psycho-Social Recovery

- 3.4.25 Psycho-social recovery focuses on assisting the community manage its own recovery, rebuilding emotional, social and physical well-being through a coordinated and planned process that can also include other community recovery partners.

- 3.4.26 Councils deliver or coordinate a range of services to meet the emotional, social and physical well-being needs of emergency affected people within the municipality, under the guidance of the Municipal Community Recovery Coordinator. The Department of Health and Human Services, through the Regional Community Recovery Coordinators support councils' arrangements and can coordinate additional services from within the region or from within the State.
- 3.4.27 The Department of Health and Human Services either delivers directly, or has arrangements in place to coordinate, a range of services to support the emotional, social and physical well-being of emergency affected people. Regional Community Recovery Coordinators are appointed, and through the Regional Community Recovery Committees, a state of preparedness is maintained for the community recovery function with specific plans, training and exercises. Typical services provided and the relevant Support Agencies are noted in Section 2 of this plan (Table 5).
- 3.4.28 The Tasmanian Relief and Recovery Arrangements include a Personal Hardship and Distress package that can provide individuals and families with financial assistance following an emergency, in line with established criteria and guidelines. See Appendix 5.8 for more details.

Infrastructure Recovery

- 3.4.29 The need for coordinated infrastructure recovery efforts (including the restoration/re-supply of goods, services, and conditions) varies with each emergency. This includes but is not limited to:
- a. water quality (especially the supply of potable/drinking quality water)
 - b. waste and storm water systems
 - c. other infrastructure that supports environmental and public health
 - d. power (electricity, gas, hydro, wind)
 - e. telecommunications
 - f. transport networks (repairs to roads, bridges, rail, air and sea ports)
 - g. public/Government owned and operated facilities (eg schools, health care)
 - h. point of sales for food and water for households and livestock
 - i. postal, banking, medical
 - j. garbage disposal
 - k. public transport
 - l. community radio and television
 - m. management of demolition and clean-up processes
 - n. provision of temporary replacement services so that environmental health and workplace standards can be maintained.
- 3.4.30 Environmental health conditions are an important component of community recovery as they address health issues that can arise as the consequence of an emergency (eg disease, acute illness and infections) from any number of sources including but not limited to:
- a. failure of waste water infrastructure
 - b. contamination of drinking water
 - c. polluted waterways
 - d. waste that can rot
 - e. loss of power affecting the capacity to store food safely
 - f. noxious fumes/radiation issues from leaks/spills
 - g. deceased stock and other vermin (eg small animals/other pests).

- 3.4.31 Environmental health considerations have particular consequences for populations with existing vulnerabilities, or those who develop vulnerability due to the emergency.
- 3.4.32 The Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for overseeing and monitoring environmental health standards through its Public and Environmental Health Service staff, and with councils' Environmental Health Officers.

Economic Recovery

- 3.4.33 Arrangements for economic recovery are coordinated by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism as required. The Department of Primary Industries and Water administers compensation arrangements that may be applicable in some bio-security emergencies subject to established criteria and guidelines. These activities are supported by Department of Premier and Cabinet and Department of Treasury and Finance.
- 3.4.34 These activities are usually undertaken in consultation with affected councils, businesses, industry groups and other relevant stakeholders and can include:
- provision of information to the business sector
 - development and implementation of an economic recovery strategy
 - delivery of relevant relief packages activated as part of the Tasmanian Relief and Recovery Arrangements.
- 3.4.35 The Tasmanian Relief and Recovery Arrangements include Local Government and Emergency Works and Community Recovery Assistance packages. See Appendix 5.8 for more information.

Environmental Recovery

- 3.4.36 As required, arrangements for environmental rehabilitation are coordinated by the Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts in consultation with owners/managers of relevant property/premises, affected council/s and the community. This includes but is not limited to consideration of:
- flora
 - fauna
 - air/water/soil conditions
 - Aboriginal heritage sites.

Other Assistance and Mechanisms

- 3.4.37 There are a range of financial relief and assistance mechanisms that can support recovery following an emergency, including:
- private insurance arrangements and Insurance Council of Australia's response arrangements
 - guided self-help
 - Commonwealth Government assistance.

Insurance

- 3.4.38 Individuals and businesses arrange private insurance on a risk basis. Maintaining appropriate private insurance is encouraged.

- 3.4.39 Insurance Council of Australia maintains a set of arrangements to coordinate insurance related information following a significant emergency to:
- increase the effectiveness of insurers' efforts for their clients
 - improve and simplify liaison with jurisdictional emergency management systems.
- 3.4.40 In the preparedness phase the Insurance Council of Australia's work is mostly achieved through the membership on State Sub-Committees. In the response phase, the plan is largely triggered by monitoring the number of claims made by clients. For State emergency management purposes, the Insurance Council of Australia provides valuable early advice of likely costs incurred by emergency events for the Tasmanian Government.

Guided Self-Help

- 3.4.41 As noted in the response section, information services to promote self-help and recovery can be supplemented by activation of the Tasmanian Emergency Information Service (Refer to paragraph 3.3.50).

Commonwealth Government Assistance

- 3.4.42 While the primary responsibility for community recovery rests with State and Territory Governments, the Commonwealth Government, working within the parameters of the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Arrangements, administered by the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Committee supports the States and Territories through tailored assistance, appropriate to the circumstances. Based on advice from the Tasmanian Premier, the Prime Minister may activate Commonwealth arrangements and develop an assistance package (with communication and/or financial elements).
- 3.4.43 The Minister for Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in consultation with the Prime Minister, has the authority to activate the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment when considered appropriate. This payment provides one-off financial assistance to Australians adversely affected by a major disaster (currently \$1000 to an eligible adult, and an additional amount for each child for whom the adult is the principal carer). These payments are usually arranged by Centrelink and details of the payment's availability (or otherwise) will be advertised on www.disasterassist.gov.au. Factors relevant to the consideration are the:
- scale of the emergency
 - impact on individuals
 - extent to which the emergency is unusual
 - capacity of the State/Territory to respond.
- 3.4.44 The Commonwealth Government also administers a system of financial assistance to States and Territories for natural disasters, known as the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements, which are usually triggered once a State's expenditure on natural disasters exceeds established thresholds. Tasmania's Relief and Recovery Arrangements are aligned with these thresholds. Council community recovery arrangements provide the conduit for this assistance to be delivered with a State Government partnership. The Department of Treasury and Finance is responsible for collating eligible costs for emergency events and submitting claims to the Attorney-General's Department.
- 3.4.45 Where agencies incur extraordinary expenditure during recovery efforts, established State arrangements for the Requests for Additional Funds process are used to seek supplementary assistance.

Summary

- 3.4.46 Figure 6 shows a summary of community recovery processes for emergency management in Tasmania.

Figure 6: Summary Processes for Community Recovery for Tasmanian Emergency Management

