

## Emergency Recovery Operations

Managing recovery from biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies is a whole of department responsibility to support individuals and communities in recovering from impacts. Recovery across biosecurity, primary industries and animal portfolio involves significant planning, organisation and operational implementation.

### Scope of role

The scope of recovery operations encompasses:

- Analysing impact to keep pace with an evolving and complex situation and determine ongoing recovery needs
- Identifying, engaging, involving and empowering impacted communities
- Identifying, acquiring and managing human and physical resources
- Managing engagement and communications
- Conducting recovery operations including attending recovery centres and recovery committees
- Identifying recovery needs and developing and implementing tailored recovery initiatives, recovery workshops and other recovery programs
- Processing emergency financial assistance
- Monitoring and evaluating outcomes to determine effectiveness and improvements needed.

### Recovery preparedness

To adequately plan for recovery operations the following activities assist with development and preparedness of recovery services to community:

- Risk assessment and treatment
- Community profiling and analysis
- Planning operational and resource requirements
- Communication and engagement with partners/stakeholders (including government and non-government organisations (NGOs))
- Recovery activity planning.

### Initial recovery operations

Following onset of an event and when response operations are underway, an officer for recovery should be appointed and be part of State Coordination or Local Control Centre. Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) 2017 recommends this officer is part of the incident management team (IMT) and is a deputy incident controller (recovery). Regardless of overall position within an IMT (if any), officer with responsibility for recovery should determine initial recovery actions including:

- Keep pace with an evolving and complex situation
- Identifying key stakeholders (including community) and engage partners in recovery
- Liaising with Department of Justice, Office of Emergency Management and State Emergency Recovery Controller (SERCON)
- Identify and implement immediate relief and recovery needs
- Prepare for transition from response to recovery including initial recovery plans.

For an overview of activities involved in initial recovery operations needs see [Appendix A](#) for immediate and short term needs.

## Transition from response to recovery

Dependent on the extent of an event, emergency response will transition from response to recovery. Decisions relating to transitioning from response to recovery will consider:

- The nature of the hazard and our role as combat/supporting agency
- The extent of impact and known level of loss and damage
- Resources required for recovery operations.

Conclusion of response implies the cessation of incident controller(s) responsibility, however, during the initial phase of recovery coordination our response services will most likely continue. Our teams will work cooperatively during the period of transition and provide each other with appropriate support. The following activities and tasks should be undertaken for transition:

- A briefing report from Incident Controller to NSW Department of Industry Recovery Coordinator
- Handover communication arrangements
- Identification of resources for transfer from response to recovery for continuity of services.

## Recovery operations

Following transition from response to recovery, when responsibility for recovery rests with SERCON, NSW Department of Industry will appoint a Recovery Coordinator responsible for working with recovery authorities to coordinate recovery services to community. NSW Department of Industry Recovery Coordinator has responsibility for:

- Assessment of impact and need
- Attend and represent at recovery centres and committees
- Community consultation, engagement and communication
- Contribute to/lead recovery action planning
- Developing and implementing recovery services.

For an overview of activities involved in recovery, after transition from response, see [Appendix A](#) for short and medium term relief and disaster resilience.

## Assessment of impact and need

### *Impact assessment*

Following onset of an emergency and whilst the early recovery operations are being conducted, combat agencies, functional areas and local government will carry out damage and impact assessments. The aim of damage and impact assessments is to identify economic, psychosocial, infrastructure and environmental impacts on community. The assessments provide data to inform analysis and identification of physical and financial resources needed for ongoing recovery. See [guide](#) on how to collate and assess impact to disaster.

### *Community needs*

A critical component in management of an effective recovery program will be to establish needs of community and work with them on a recovery planning process. It is necessary to establish what impact actually means for community and what it will need to recover in both short and long term. Systematic identification of community needs and development of a comprehensive strategy for long term recovery and resilience provide opportunity to improve overall quality of life for residents, enhance local economies and improve environmental conditions. Establishing community needs will set the scene for ongoing recovery operations supported by government, local community structures and plans. For guidance on how to conduct community needs analysis, see this [guideline](#) provided by NSW Office of Emergency Management.

## Recovery centres

In immediate days following an emergency, SERCON coordinating with local/region government representatives, may establish recovery centre(s) to provide “one stop shop(s)” for community to access a range of recovery services. The centre(s) will provide a single place for affected people to access support from government and non-government services including welfare, insurance, legal, agricultural and small business advice and assistance.

NSW Department of Industry will usually be represented at a recovery centre by Rural Resilience and/or Local Land Services team members. At recovery centres animal owners and primary producers can access information and support to help them recover from a disaster. Outreach may also be required as many farming communities will not access a formal Recovery Centre (see [outreach](#) in recovery services below).

## Recovery committees

In the event of disaster, government (local or state), acting on established emergency planning arrangements will form a recovery committee to coordinate recovery in accordance with [NSW Recovery Plan](#). Committees will initially be represented by members of Local/Regional Emergency Management Committee(s). After a period, and official transition from response to recovery, a Recovery Coordinator may be appointed as chair.

The role of the recovery committee will be to assess impacts, work with community to establish needs, and coordinate activities to rebuild, restore and rehabilitate the social, built, economic and natural environments of impacted community/ies and improve health and wellbeing. The recovery committee will guide decisions about priorities, resource allocation and management in establishing a recovery action plan.

## Recovery sub-committees

Once a recovery committee is established they will consider forming sub-committees to address community needs across each recovery environment (see [Appendix B](#) for description of recovery environments). Sub-committees may be formed with expert representation from community, private sector and NGOs. Sub-committees will contribute to and implement items in a recovery action plan.

In a situation where there has been significant impact to primary producers, an agricultural sub-committee has been formed. These have been represented by Department of Industry Regional Directors or other Department of Industry staff.

## Community consultation, engagement and communication

Easily available, accurate information to communities who need support after an emergency provide notification on where and how to get help. Good communication can bring people together and assist individuals and community return to normal more quickly. For an overview and guidance see [Communicating in recovery](#).

## Consultation groups

To ensure recovery is led by community, for community, a strategy may be to establish community consultation groups to enable people affected by the event and representatives from community to meet and to provide input and advice to the recovery process. These groups provide a mechanism for enhancing communication and feedback loops within communities.

## Community engagement

Determining who should be involved (industry groups, NGOs and community) and how they can be engaged is essential. Engagement will involve identifying appropriate communities, understanding their needs and risks, and partnering with leaders to establish trust. This will be achieved using existing (or rapidly collating) community profiling and applied through processes identified by community consultation groups.

## **Communication and Public Information Strategy**

A two-way conversation with the community is required to ensure resilience strategies are understood and owned by the community. Following an emergency a [Media and Public Information Strategy](#) will need to be developed. The strategy will identify community, develop means for reaching them and create an engagement process via which information can be developed and disseminated, and feedback can be provided which informs the recovery committee and subsequent recovery action plans.

## **Recovery planning**

### **Recovery action planning**

[Recovery actions plans](#) are informed by impact and community needs assessments and lead to development of specific recovery activities that have measureable outcomes, responsibilities and timelines associated with them. The needs of community will change as time progresses and recovery evolves. Recovery action plans must have strategies robust yet fluid enough to change to address evolving needs. A recovery action plan will outline processes and resources required for recovery and facilitate identification, development and implementation of activities that will build resilience.

A recovery committee will have responsibility to develop strategies and tactics that provide effective delivery of programs, services and activities to affected individuals and communities that enable recovery. It is likely that the recovery action plan will include activities across all recovery environments aimed at restoring, and rebuilding communities and providing services that are needed to do this.

It is likely strategies will be divided into recovery environment and the responsibility for implementation is given to the appropriate sub-committee.

### **Sub-committee action plans**

In previous disaster events impacting on primary industries and / or animals, agriculture sub committees have been established and chaired by NSW Department of Industry. This trend should continue, and recovery action plans should be evolved and adapted as required.

## **Recovery services**

### **Emergency financial assistance**

Emergency Management Unit, in consultation with State and Local coordination centres will determine scale of impact and scope affect to community and make recommendations to government on requirement for and levels of financial assistance. Rural Resilience Authority, a statutory authority within NSW Department of Primary Industries, administers financial assistance to affected landholders.

NSW government can activate a range of financial assistance measures designed to address impacts on animal owners and primary producers. Information and advice on claiming financial assistance should be made available in recovery centres and via the Media and Public Information Strategy.

### **Outreach**

NSW Department of Primary Industries, as Functional Area for Agriculture and Animal Services is part of NSW Welfare Services Functional Area Committee (as a sub-committee to the State Emergency Management Committee). The committee comprises of the principal government and NGOs that facilitate welfare services to community following disaster. Through the committee outreach services can be coordinated.

To determine whether outreach is required, issues to be considered include need for specialist counselling, material aid, accommodation, financial assistance and social, recreational and domestic facilities.

In recovery, outreach is a service used to:

- Identify community members in need and provide psychosocial support
- Undertake information collection and distribution

- Assessment of relief/recovery needs
- Distribution of timely information about relevant local services
- Allow for referrals to local support services.

### *Recovery events*

An event, whatever the type, is a unique opportunity to share knowledge and skills that fall within the primary industries and animal services portfolio of responsibility. Workshops, barbeques, information sessions or seminars allow us to connect with individuals and community in an environment that promotes learning, recovery and resilience. Whatever the event it is important that it facilitates a two way conversation and participants have an active role in the session.

Things to consider when planning a recovery event:

- Engage professionals to provide expert advice
- Consult with the community you are targeting to ensure that the workshop is relevant for the audience
- Keep the group size relatively small so that there is maximum participation from attendees
- Select a good facilitator
- Encourage the facilitator to use plain language, jargon and acronym-free throughout the workshop.

### *Finance arrangements*

Recovery services, activities and extraordinary costs are not recoverable under state and commonwealth arrangements. This means that in the first instance costs associated with recovery need to be covered by NSW Department of Industry.

When significant recovery efforts are needed, through the recovery committee, requests can be made for support from government under Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) – Category C - Community Recovery Package. Under Category C recovery projects and human physical resources can be funded in order to deliver recovery services to community. Any submission for Category C should be undertaken in conjunction and with support of NSW Department of Justice, Office of Emergency Management.

## Appendix A

### Recovery prioritisation

#### Identifying, planning and implementing recovery needs

Recovery can take months to years. The needs of the community will change as time progresses and the recovery environments evolve. Recovery priorities must similarly change to address these evolving needs. Recovery prioritisation will identify the needs of the community and the processes needed to facilitate recovery. Prioritisation will occur through identifying:

1. Immediate relief needs over the first 10 days
2. Short-term needs of the community during the first 12 weeks
3. Medium-term community needs over the first 12 months
4. Ongoing recovery and resilience needs.

The below tables indicate recovery actions to consider as part of identifying, planning and implementing recovery needs.

#### Immediate relief 0 – 10 days

The actions identified in the immediate relief and recovery stage are centred on ensuring the essential needs of affected residents and community are rapidly identified and met.

Recovery environment	Priority
Social	Ensure safety and wellbeing of evacuated producers, animal owners and animals
	Coordinate and conduct damage and impact assessments
	Conduct recovery needs assessments
	Develop a co-ordinated communications and Public Information Strategy
	Monitor emerging issues and effectiveness of communications
	Identify the local networks in place including Rural Support Networks, Industry Groups and farming groups
	Provide information to primary producers on support available
Built	Identify isolated communities
Economic	Assess logistics/transport supply impacts
Environment	Coordinate support to primary producers, animal holding establishments and the community including rescue, evacuation, emergency care of animals and the assessment, humane destruction and disposal of affected animals
	Supply emergency fodder and water

#### Short-term 10 days – 8-12 weeks

The actions identified during short term recovery are centred on returning affected persons to their homes, and structures are implemented to make arrangements for sustained recovery.

Recovery environment	Priority
Social	Conduct recovery needs assessments
	Participate at local / regional recovery committees
	Communicate public information
	Connect affected people to recovery support services
	Participate at Recovery Centres and coordinate outreach
	Conduct, collate and report damage and impact assessments

Recovery environment	Priority
	Plan and deliver targeted recovery workshops
	Engage with community and industry leaders
	Determine support available including government and NGOs i.e. Blazeaid
Economic	Conduct economic impact assessment and modelling
	Provide financial assistance to eligible businesses and individuals
Environment	Supply emergency fodder and water
	Develop and implement primary industry recovery plan

### Medium-term 3 – 12 months

The actions identified during medium term recovery are centred on preparing a community to return to normal.

Recovery environment	Priority
Social	Implement arrangements for individual and community services and activities
	Arrange ongoing outreach services
Economic	Conduct economic impact assessment and modelling
	Provide financial assistance to eligible businesses and individuals
	Seek investment and development opportunities
Environment	Create and improve plans for remediation of priority areas for agriculture
	Develop long term plans for air, water, land and soil, plants and animal's evaluation and restoration
	Conduct ongoing soil and water quality monitoring

### Disaster resilience (Long-term recovery planning)

Supporting fundamental principles for emergency management includes ensuring community is better prepared and resilient for future emergencies. Long-term recovery planning will take into account emergency management activities that mitigate hazards, build community resilience and decrease vulnerability. This involves increasing capacity to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from impacts of future events. Building resilience will require planning for strategic mitigation including consideration of:

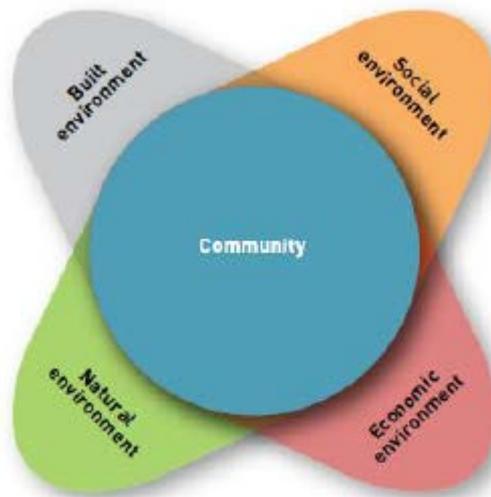
- Property, farm and business continuity planning
- Improvements to existing infrastructure
- Land use planning requirements now and in the future
- Emergency planning requirements
- Community engagement, resilience and capacity building.

## Appendix B

### Recovery in NSW

Recovery is one part of the emergency management Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery model. The range of impacts of emergency on a community can be described across the social, built, economic and natural environments.

Recovery is: "...the process of returning an affected community to its proper level of functioning after an emergency". ([State Emergency and Rescue Management Act](#), Section 5(d)). Effective recovery can be achieved by supporting affected communities in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and the restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing. Community recovery is best achieved within a holistic and integrated framework that encompasses the community, the four recovery environments and supports the development of community resilience, as depicted below.



Integrated & Holistic Recovery (EMA Community Recovery Handbook 2011).