

COMMUNICATING IN RECOVERY GUIDELINES

State Emergency Management Committee
Public Information Reference Group



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The WA Police Force, on behalf of PIRG, has facilitated the development of the guidelines through the Recovery Communication Project Advisory Group. The advisory group member agencies include PIRG representatives from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, the Office of Emergency Management, the Western Australian Local Government Association, the Water Corporation, the WA Police Force and representatives from the Australian Red Cross and an independent panel member.

These guidelines have been developed using the 'National Principles of Disaster Recovery' and to be used in conjunction with the 'Communicating in Recovery' resource book first published by the Australian Red Cross in 2011. This guide is available online at www.redcross.org.au

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1.0 Introducing Communicating in Recovery

1.1 Recovery in Western Australia

Recovery is defined as 'the support of emergency affected communities in the reconstruction and restoration of physical infrastructure, the environment, the community, psychosocial and economic wellbeing', Section 3 of the Emergency Management Act 2005 (the EM Act).

Recovery is the last phase of the comprehensive approach to emergency management which also includes prevention, preparedness and response. Local government in Western Australia are prescribed in the *EM Act* to manage recovery following an emergency.

Local governments lead, manage and coordinate community recovery at the local level and undertake these responsibilities in close cooperation with or directly supported by State Government departments and supporting agencies.¹ Recovery management commences during the response to an emergency, with the start of activities in recovery coordinated during the response phase.²

Local government are best placed to provide specialist knowledge and support to the affected community during and after an emergency. Local governments have well developed community links and community support mechanisms, as they know the local environment and demographic features of their communities.

“Recovery is too important to be left to chance. Recovery needs to be planned, exercised and regularly reviewed, with considerable resources, both financially and with people, dedicated to this important task. Recovery also must be long term and led by the affected community. Our people deserve nothing less.”

Steve Joske CSC, State Recovery Coordinator

¹ State Emergency Management Committee, 2016a, p. 17

² State Emergency Management Committee, 2016b, p. 36

1.2 Communicating in recovery

Recovery communications refers to the practice of sending, gathering, managing and evaluating information in the recovery stage following an emergency.³ Communication in recovery is about continuing the dialogue with the affected community that started during the response phase. If local government can continue to use and support effective communication channels then it can facilitate important social processes within the community during this time.⁴

Poor communication in emergencies during response and recovery from formal organisations has been highlighted as a constant barrier for communities. Communities immediately need a great deal of information, but they may not know what they want, or need, and are often unable to act on the information they are provided, based on high levels of stress and anxiety⁵

Both receiving information and seeking information is perceived as difficult by those affected by an emergency.⁶ However ongoing dialogue is essential for understanding the diverse needs of the affected community and providing them support during recovery.⁷

Successful communication in recovery is about connecting with people by enabling access to clear, relevant, targeted and high quality information to assist them build their own capacity and gain a greater understanding of community needs in the process. Good recovery communications is not only about sending information out, it's about engaging in two-way dialogue. This means that local government and emergency management agencies have to be able to find ways of receiving and seeking information from the community.

During the response phase, the Hazard Management Agency (HMA) has the task of managing communications in an emergency. The HMA officially hands this responsibility to the relevant local government/s leading the recovery via the Comprehensive Impact Assessment, in the transition to the recovery management phase. Coordinating the affected community in recovery, including communications, rests with the local government.

Local government are best placed to coordinate recovery as they are the closest level of government to the community, who is the focus of their work at all times. To support effective recovery, local government should provide regular, up to date information about the recovery effort and engage in constant ongoing dialogue using a community-led approach.

“Embrace every opportunity to connect people with each other and the services available, this may be through regular morning teas, shared dinners or breakfasts.”

Melissa Howard, Shire of Harvey Recovery Team

³ Australian Red Cross, 2010, p. 14

⁴ Australian Red Cross, 2010, p. 14

⁵ Nicholls, 2012, p. 49

⁶ Gould, 2013, p. 54

⁷ Nicholls, 2012, p. 49



1.3 Principles of communicating in recovery

Communicating with an affected community needs to be carefully planned and managed, and should be done so based on the key principles outlined in the 'National Principles of Disaster Recovery'.⁸ The most relevant principle for recovery communication is the need to employ effective communication strategies with affected communities and other stakeholders. The principle is based on the following:

- Messages need to be clear, relevant, accurate and timely;
- Communication needs to be two-way;
- Information needs to be accessible to a wide-ranging audience, including those with special needs;
- Have well-structured communication networks, both with individuals and organisations; and
- Adopt strategies to reiterate key messages.

In support of the National Principles of Disaster Recovery, the Australian Red Cross specifically outlines nine principles of recovery communications⁹ which ensures people are carefully considered during a stressful and disruptive time in their lives. These include:

- Public information, not public relations;
- The right to know;
- Respect people;
- Build on local assets;
- Ask the community how they want to receive information;
- Repeat information;
- Remember the 'unaffected';
- Acknowledge the impact; and
- No spin.

⁸ Attorney General's Department, 2011, p. 24

⁹ Australian Red Cross, 2010, p. 18 - 19

1.3.1 Community reactions

It is important to understand the common reactions that individuals and the affected community as a whole, move through, when they are touched by an emergency. Understanding the psychosocial impacts of emergencies can provide insight to assist people get back on their feet and to re-establish their post-emergency life.

Figure 1 below illustrates the four-stage cycle that explains the emotions and behaviours that usually occur in people after an emergency. This process is indicative only. It should not be read as a sequential process, but as a guide to help anticipate predictable challenges in the recovery phase.

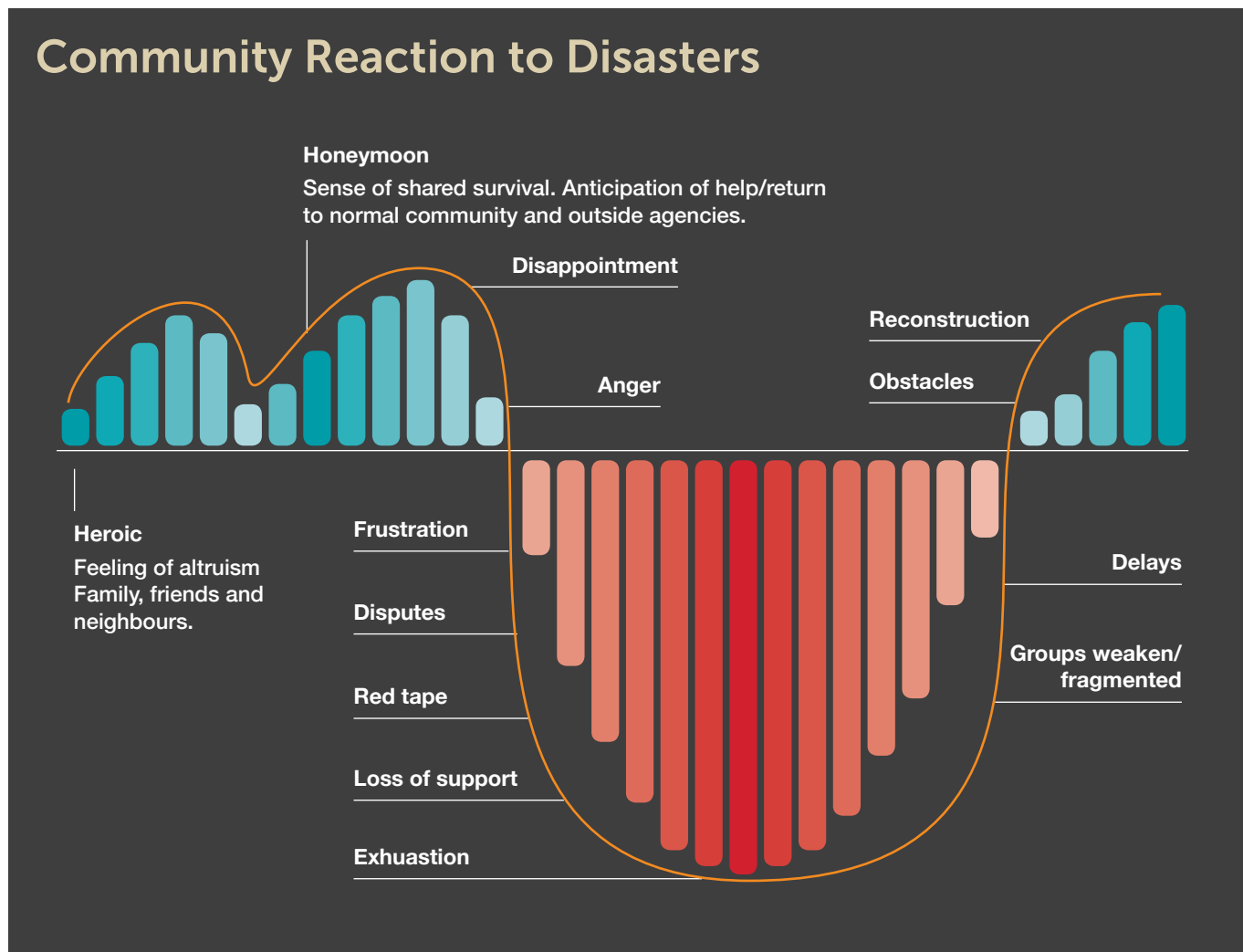


Figure 1: Community reaction to disasters.¹⁰

All recovery communications must take into account the normal reactions that people encounter after an emergency and be mindful of this cycle. By understanding this, recovery

communications can be carefully tailored to suit the community as they move through each phase.

“Communication must be two-way. Provide avenues for impacted residents to have their say, a simple way is to provide blank forms such as “make statement” or “ask a question.”

Melissa Howard, Shire of Harvey Recovery Team

¹⁰ Attorney General's Department, 2011, p. 95

1.4 About these guidelines

In Western Australia, the legislative responsibility for recovery rests with the local government/s impacted by the emergency. As previously mentioned, good communication between the local government and their community is a key component of successful recovery.

Not all local governments will be equipped to undertake the recovery communications role. These guidelines have been developed to assist local governments to support organisations and communities, in sending, gathering, managing and evaluating information in the recovery stage of an emergency.¹¹

The guidelines provide:

- advice about the key functions that are required within a recovery communications team in a large recovery effort;
- advice about the most appropriate flow of information at particular stages of recovery;
- templates for recovery communications activities;
- information on how to activate State Government advice to support recovery communications; and
- information about the Australian Red Cross 'Communicating in Recovery' resource book.

“Recovery is about people. It is critical that everyone connected to recovery understand what this simple statement means. Road blocks, anxiety and frustrations popped up whenever those involved did not understand that recovery was about people and what this actually meant.”

Gail Ipsen-Cutts, Director Community Services, Shire of Manjimup

¹¹ Australian Red Cross, 2010, p. 14

1.5 How to use the guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to support local government with recovery communications activities, at each stage of an emergency – BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER.

BEFORE

- Ensure all communications staff have read and understood these guidelines.
- Ensure the communications officer/person/team is capable of undertaking the recovery communications role. For example, attend the ‘Communicating in Recovery’ course provided by the Australian Red Cross.
- Ensure a copy of the ‘Communicating in Recovery’ Australian Red Cross resource book has been obtained.
- Assess the local government capacity and capability to resource the recovery communications role and/or functions based on business continuity and workforce plans.
- Pre-plan for communications staff according to the **Recovery Communications Functions** described in Section 2.

DURING

- Ensure the communications officer/team/person is briefed by either the Local Recovery Coordinator or local government liaison officer as part of the Incident Support Group or has contact with the Public Information Officer within the HMA so they can be briefed on communications issues during the emergency.
- Assess the local government’s capacity and capability to resource the recovery communications role and/or functions based on information received from the Hazard Management Agency.
- Download copies of the **Recovery Communications Templates** in Section 4.

AFTER

- Reassess the local government’s capacity and capability to perform recovery communications and determine additional requirements.
- Ensure the communications officer/person/team has determined which **Recovery Communications Functions** are required based on information received during the emergency.
- Ensure the communications officer/person/team is aware of the **Recovery Communications Stages** as described in Section 3, to assist with recovery communications planning.
- Commence development of a Recovery Communications Plan to be included in the Operational Recovery Plan.
- Consider using the ‘Communicating in Recovery’ resource book and **Recovery Communications Templates** in Section 4.
- Consider additional assistance to support recovery communications by enacting any regional or neighbouring local government support through a current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- Contact the State Recovery Coordinator (usually through the District Advisor from the Office of Emergency Management) to activate state level **Recovery Communications Advice** at Section 5, if required.

2.0 Recovery Communications Functions

2.1 Introduction

During the recovery phase of an emergency there are eight key functions that may be required during recovery communications. These will help support a local government managing recovery to engage in meaningful dialogue with their community following a large-scale emergency.

Key responsibilities have been assigned to each of the eight functions so people understand the types of tasks that will be required to undertake.

The team member/s will support the work of the Local Recovery Coordination Group (LRCG) and relevant sub-committees, which are set up to assist the local government to manage recovery following an emergency.

How these functions will be performed needs to be carefully considered and planned prior to an emergency. This will ensure effective recovery communication supports important social processes between individuals, groups and the community.¹²

Recovery communications support may be required for weeks, months and even years.

2.2 Scalable functions

The eight listed functions can be performed as one person during recovery, if the event is of a small scale, and the person performing the role has considerable experience in either recovery and/or communications. The functions are scalable, so that there may be a person performing each function, or one person performing all functions, depending on the extent of recovery and the length of time local government is participating in recovery.

Some functions may be combined if there is a lack of resources. Suggested combinations include:

- Media Liaison and Community Liaison;
- Media Liaison and Ministerial Liaison;
- Community Liaison and Stakeholder Engagement;
- Publications and Social Media; and
- Internal Communication and Publications.

IMPORTANT: Any combinations of the above functions are appropriate so long as consideration is given to the skills, ability and experience of the person/s in the role/s.

The 8 functions are scalable, which means one person or a team may be able to perform all or some of these functions at the same time.

¹² Australian Red Cross, 2010, p. 14

2.3 Communications functions

All of the following recovery communications functions may be performed by one person or a person may perform each function within a team.

2.3.1 Recovery Communications Manager or Coordinator

The Recovery Communications Manager/Coordinator function leads and manages the recovery communications work and team. The role should be part of, or have access to, the senior management or executive team; be included in the Local Recovery Coordination Group and relevant sub-committees; and report to the Local Recovery Coordinator.

Responsibilities

- Lead recovery communications team;
- Establish resourcing requirements for the recovery communications team including rosters and additional staffing support;
- Ensure resource requirements take into account fatigue management issues that may arise;
- Keep abreast of all communications related to the emergency (from its outset) from the HMA and other sources;
- Provide support to the Local Recovery Coordinator;
- Advise the Local Recovery Coordinator on any additional resource requirements for communications;
- Ensure timely briefing and debriefing for team members is completed;
- Develop a Recovery Communications Plan;
- Develop and coordinate time critical recovery messaging for the community;
- Coordinate and prioritise recovery messaging for the local government; and
- Be a member of the Local Recovery Coordination Group or sub-committee.

2.3.2 Community liaison

The community liaison function undertakes direct liaison with key community groups. This includes obtaining and providing information and messages received to and from the affected community via the recovery centre, telephone line, outreach and any other methods. This function can have a direct link to the Community Liaison Unit within the Hazard Management Agency (if utilised by the HMA) and the Community Development/Engagement team or officer with the local government.

Responsibilities

- Gather, coordinate and maintain community contact lists;
- Maintain liaison through various channels such as the recovery centre, telephone line and outreach;
- Coordinate key information analysis from the Community Liaison Unit (where available) and the local government community development/engagement team or officer;
- Coordinate public information messaging and gathering at community events such as public meetings;
- Contribute to key recovery messaging using intelligence gathered from community liaison activities and provide to the Local Recovery Coordination Group;
- Provide input to the Recovery Communications Plan; and
- Be part of briefing and debriefing with team members.

2.3.3 Stakeholder engagement

The stakeholder engagement function coordinates with key agency, organisation and local government stakeholders and keeps them informed, engaged and involved. The stakeholders may be assisting directly as a member agency of the Local Recovery Coordination Group or relevant sub-committee or outside of this arrangement supporting recovery activities within the affected community.

Responsibilities

- Coordinate and maintain key stakeholder contacts;
- Ensure information flow is coordinated from all agencies and organisations in and out of the local government;
- Ensure relevant organisations who are integral to the recovery effort are represented at appropriate times on the Local Recovery Coordination Group;
- Contribute to key recovery messaging using intelligence gathered from liaison with stakeholders;
- Provide input to the Recovery Communications Plan; and
- Be part of briefing and debriefing with team members.

2.3.4 Media liaison

The media liaison function has direct contact with media stakeholders and support key messaging in recovery.

Responsibilities

- Coordinate and maintain media contact list;
- Coordinate media opportunities for the local government with the media;
- Brief local government spokesperson before and after media interviews and conferences;
- Contribute to key recovery messaging using intelligence gained from liaison with the key media contacts;
- Provide input to the Recovery Communications Plan; and
- Be part of briefing and debriefing with team members.

2.3.5 Social media

The social media function provides expertise in social media applications that may be utilised by the local government in communicating with the affected community during recovery. This function requires the use of social media to gather intelligence and to provide up to date information and engage with the community.

Responsibilities

- Coordinate and maintain social media platforms utilised by the local government to engage with the community;
- Monitor community led social media sites to gather intelligence to contribute to recovery decisions by the Local Recovery Coordination Group;
- Contribute to key recovery messaging using intelligence gathered from social media platforms;
- Provide input to the Recovery Communications Plan; and
- Be part of briefing and debriefing with team members.

2.3.6 Internal communication

The internal communications function coordinates information and messaging about what is happening in recovery to keep staff within the local government informed. Internal reporting mechanisms are used as appropriate, to support staff dealing with the affected community in a face-to-face, customer service and on the ground environment on a daily basis.

Responsibilities

- Coordinate and maintain information to staff on relevant platforms utilised by the local government for internal communications;
- Contribute to key recovery messaging using intelligence gathered from staff members who have direct liaison with the community;
- Provide input to the Recovery Communications Plan; and
- Be part of briefing and debriefing with team members.

2.3.7 Publications

The publications function is to develop, produce and maintain key documentation used in recovery to support communications within the affected community such as newsletters, pamphlets, flyers, website etc.

Responsibilities

- Develop, produce and maintain documents to support the local government's recovery activities;
- Ensure key recovery messages are included in the recovery documents produced;
- Provide input to and document the Recovery Communications Plan; and
- Be part of briefing and debriefing with team members.

2.3.8 Ministerial liaison

The ministerial liaison function supports the role of the State Recovery Coordinator to ensure coordination and consistent messaging between the relevant ministers, local government and the affected community. It supports dealings with the local government and contact with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Premier, Ministers, Ministerial Advisers, Members of Parliament and local members.

Responsibilities

- Coordinate and maintain ministerial contact lists;
- Maintain liaison with relevant departments, Ministers and Ministerial Advisers;
- In conjunction with the State and Local Recovery Coordinators, coordinate ministerial visits to the affected community and community venues;
- Contribute to key recovery messaging by gathering intelligence from Ministers and local members who have direct contact with the community;
- Provide input to the Recovery Communications Plan; and
- Be part of briefing and debriefing with team members.

3.0 Recovery Communications Stages

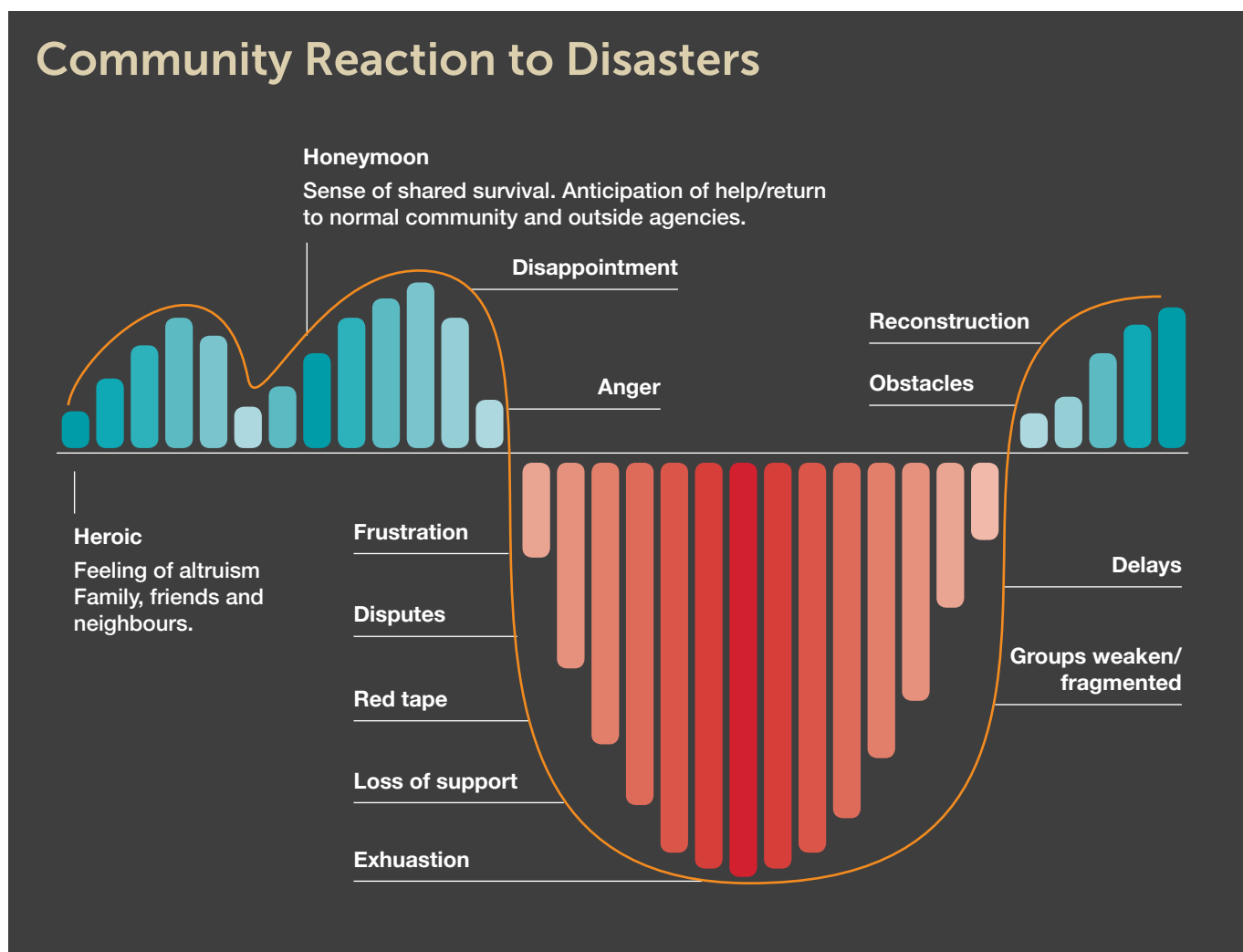
3.1 Introduction

This section describes the typical communications activities required during each recovery stage. For each stage the guidelines offer key considerations and ideas for local governments to assist them in communicating effectively at these times.

Consistent with the National Principles of Disaster Recovery the principle, 'employing effective communication' advises that it is important ensure that all communication is relevant, timely, clear, accurate, targeted, credible and consistent.¹³

Specific recovery messaging can adhere to simple rules of recovery communications by the Australian Red Cross which asks; is it relevant, is it clear and is it targeted?¹⁴

The four-stage community reactions cycle, as outlined in section 1.3.1, will be important to remember as you move through each recovery communications stage. This model helps in understanding the emotions and behaviours that usually occur in people after an emergency.



¹³ Attorney General's Department, 2011, p. 95

¹⁴ Australian Red Cross, 2010, p. 16-17

3.2 Stage One - Response (during the emergency)

The Recovery Communications Manager or Coordinator, or someone within the recovery communications team will need to action some or all of these items in the response stage of the emergency.

- Consider locating the Recovery Communications Manager/Coordinator within the Incident Support Group, alongside the Local Recovery Coordinator.
- Local Recovery Coordinator or Recovery Communications Manager/Coordinator to gather key communications information and track all key communications activities by the Hazard Management Agency (HMA) during the emergency.
- Recovery Communications Manager/Coordinator to make contact with the HMA Public Information Officer located within the Incident Management Team.
- Establish a recovery communications team within the local government.
- Conduct a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA).¹⁵

Key communication information and messaging is gathered from the Incident Support Group meetings to assist the local government manage their communication information. This sets up early interaction between the HMA and the local government to ensure that local government messaging is included, and flows on from response messaging by the HMA.

3.3 Stage Two - Response to Recovery hand over period

The Recovery Communications Manager or Coordinator or team member within the recovery communications team will need to action some or all of these items in the response to recovery hand over period.

3.3.1 Leadership

- Confirm who the local government spokesperson is.
- Ensure spokesperson is briefed on the current situation and is prepared to be quoted in the media and ready for any media conferences.
- Ensure Recovery Communications Manager/Coordinator as a member of the Local Recovery Coordination Group.

3.3.2 Identify communication gaps

- What is the affected community telling you?
- What do the affected community need to know?
- What additional information does the local government need?

3.3.3 Methods

- What communication methods and channels will be used to gather and receive information from the community and key stakeholders?
- What methods are being used at present?
- What methods are appropriate in this recovery?
- Evaluate what methods are working well and those that are not.
- See **Recovery Communications Templates** in Section 4.

¹⁵ Australian Red Cross, 2010, p. 29 - 31

3.3.4 Messaging

- What are the key messages required for the affected community?
- What are the key messages required internally?
- Make sure that all information provided adheres to the Giuliani method of communicating information which includes:
 - what we know;
 - what we don't know;
 - what we are doing; and
 - what we want you to do.
- See 'Status Update' in **Recovery Communications Templates** in Section 4.

3.3.5 Recovery communications plan

- Develop a Recovery Communications Plan if needed, for this emergency – the what, how, who, when and where in a coordinated and detailed plan that includes a two-way feedback loop of communication with the affected community.
- This will need to be included as part of the overarching Operational Recovery Plan.
- See 'Recovery Communications Plan' in **Recovery Communications Templates** in Section 4.
- Prepare Recovery Communications Plan to be tabled at the Local Recovery Coordination Group meetings for discussion.

3.4 Stage Three – Recovery (after the emergency)

The Recovery Communications Manager or Coordinator or team member will need to action some or all of these items in the first four weeks after recovery has been handed over.

3.4.1 First week

- Determine the key listening posts that will be used to gather intelligence and information about community needs in recovery to ensure a two-way feedback loop is established.
- Consider additional resources to support the recovery communication effort. Review the local government Business Continuity Plan and Workforce Plan to meet operational requirements. Consider the use of volunteers or community members with communications experience to support the workload.
- Speak to the Local Recovery Coordinator about additional support required through the State Recovery Coordinator.
- Develop the first 'Status Update' at **Recovery Communications Templates** in section 4 with timely and accurate information regarding issues such as deaths and injuries, homes and properties destroyed, road blocks, water and electricity supplies, donated goods, spontaneous volunteers, recovery centre location, community meetings and outreach. Some of this information can be sourced from the Comprehensive Impact Assessment document provided by the HMA.
- Develop the 'Talking Points' document at **Recovery Communications Template** section 4 to be utilised as the basis for all forms of communication. Update as new information becomes available.
- Prepare first 'Media Release' at **Recovery Communications Template** section 4 and gain approval from the designated local government spokesperson.
- Prepare for first media conference in recovery in conjunction with the local government spokesperson at **Recovery Communications Template** section 4.
- Develop or refine 'Recovery Communication Plan' template at **Recovery Communications Templates** in section 4.
- Consult with the Department of Communities and other key stakeholders such as the Australian Red Cross, regarding the potential need for an immediate outreach program to assess, determine and prioritise community needs, including communication requirements.
- Set up a database for local government to gather all communication requirements with all community members.
- Ensure all messaging adheres to the Giuliani method of information communication which includes information to the community that is:
 - what we know;
 - what we don't know;
 - what we are doing; and
 - what we want you to do.

Establishing a network of key listening posts is essential to understand community needs in recovery. Communication is two-way so each local government should consider ways to gather information to assist with decision making in recovery.

3.4.2 First three months

- Review the key listening posts being used to gather intelligence and information about community needs in recovery.
- Ensure 'Status Update' and 'Talking Points' are being reviewed regularly.
- Maintain community meetings and make certain they are being held as regularly as the community requires. Ensure information that is conveyed during community meetings is in line with the 'Status Update' and 'Talking Points'.
- Local government should coordinate an outreach program that meets the needs of the community in conjunction with key non-government, not-for-profit and state government agencies and organisations to assist with an Outreach Impact Assessment.
- Review 'Recovery Communication Plan' to ensure effectiveness in current situation. Review all methods of communication and timings.
- Prepare media releases and press conferences in line with 'Status Update' and 'Talking Points'. Generate positive and good news stories to assist with the recovery effort.
- Review communications capacity and fatigue issues within the local government communications team to assist with the organisation of additional resources to support communications.
- Consider the need for a community thank you event to celebrate achievements since the emergency. Ensure direct dialogue with the community to discuss the suitability and subsequent arrangements, if required.

3.4.3 Three to twelve months

The Recovery Communications Manager or Coordinator or team member will need to consider some of the emerging challenges in the three to twelve-month period.

- Review the key listening posts being used to gather intelligence and information about community needs in recovery.
- Ensure 'Status Update' and 'Talking Points' are being reviewed regularly.
- Confirm the Recovery Centre (if determined appropriate) is operating effectively and in a long-term strategic location for the affected community.
- Maintain community meetings and make certain they are being held as regularly as the community requires. Ensure information that is conveyed during community meetings is in line with the 'Status Update' and 'Talking Points'.
- Review 'Recovery Communication Plan' to ensure effectiveness in current situation. Review all methods of communication and timings.
- Prepare media releases in line with 'Status Update' and 'Talking Points'. Continue to generate positive and good news stories to assist with the recovery effort.
- Commence communication arrangements with the affected community to discuss commemorating the first-year anniversary of the emergency at 12 months.

3.4.4 One year and beyond

Long-term recovery in large or emotional emergencies can take many years, and even a generation before a sense of normality is restored within the affected community. At the one-year anniversary the Recovery Communications Manager or Coordinator will need to take into consideration the issues that will emerge within the affected community.

3.4.4.1 Anniversary

- The first-year anniversary of the emergency brings back memories for the community so it is essential that the commemorations are sensitive to community needs. Be aware that the media may be interested in these events so consider necessary and respectful approaches to the affected community are discussed.
- What will be acknowledged/commemorated?
Where and when?
Who should attend?
How will this be communicated?
- Ensure staff or volunteers trained in psychological well-being attend the anniversary event to provide psychological and emotional support to the family, individuals and community members.
- Communicate to the affected community the feelings and emotions they may experience in the lead up to and during the anniversary events, and let them know that these are normal. A reminder that how it is commemorated by people may be different and this is also normal.

3.4.4.2 Memorial

- Does the family or families want a memorial event for their family member that was lost during the emergency? If so, this must be done in direct consultation with the family or families and should include attendance of staff or volunteers trained in psychological well-being.
- Does the community want to host a memorial for anyone from the community that was lost during the emergency?
- Where will this be held?
What time and date?
What will the event consist of?
How will this be communicated?
Who will be invited?
- Ensure staff or volunteers trained in psychological well-being attend the event to provide psychological and emotional support to the family, individuals and community members.
- Consider the recommendations for planning for memorials located at https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/media/fellows/Whitton_S_2015_Mmethods_of_planning_and_managing_disaster_memorials.pdf

3.4.4.3 Ongoing community needs

- At the twelve-month anniversary of the emergency it is important that the community members are aware and reminded of the support that is available to them, as they may be experiencing unusual feelings, emotions and reactions at the anniversary period.
- The local government/s should work with the Department of Communities and the Australian Red Cross to determine the needs of the community and how best to address these.

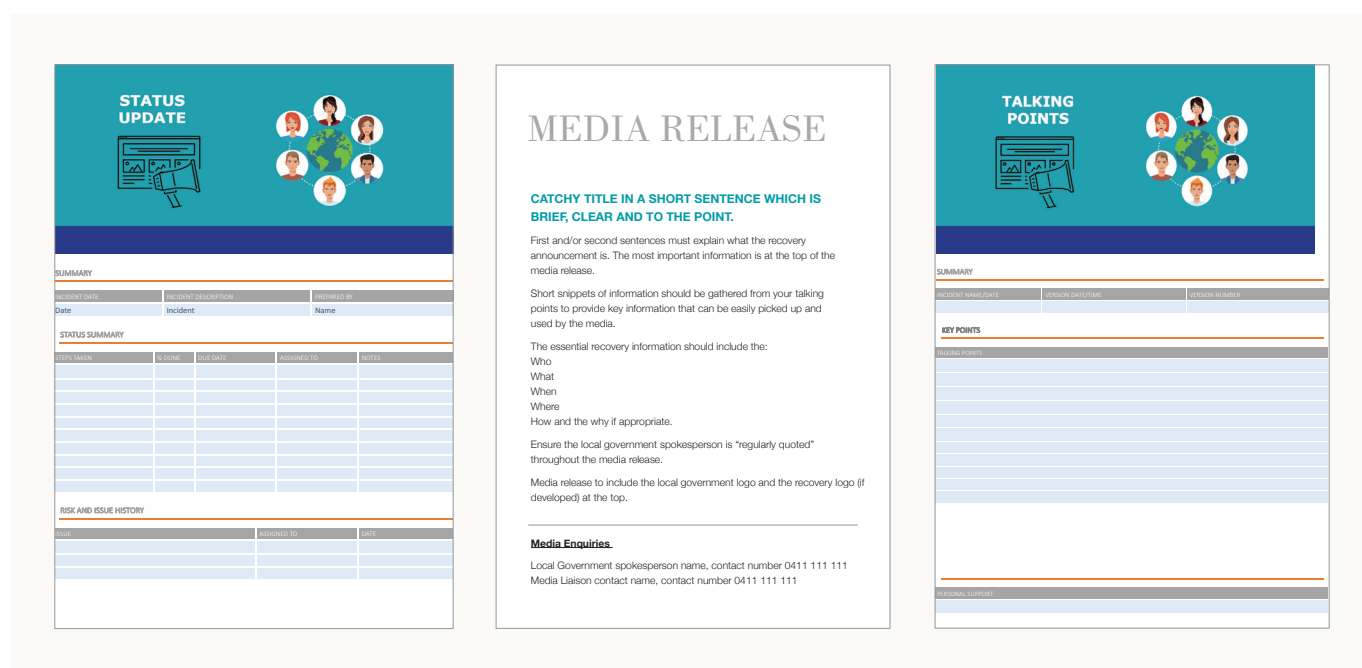
4.0 Recovery Communications Templates

Introduction

The Recovery Communications Templates provide ten commonly used templates of different methods that may be used in recovery communications, to assist or support existing methods already used by local government. The templates are generic in nature and must be adapted to suit the local government, the community needs and the recovery effort. Using unique branding developed for recovery information will provide relevance and recognition relating to recovery efforts in communication

The templates may be used in conjunction with the Australian Red Cross 'Communicating in Recovery' resource book which provides an analysis of the strengths and limitations of some of these methods.

The templates referred to in this section are available in multiple formats on the USB provided with these guidelines.



4.1 Status update

The status update is the first information assessment about what is happening, which provides crucial information about the emergency and recovery efforts. These are maintained on a daily basis in summary form, which are used to inform key talking points for use by local government.

STATUS UPDATE




SUMMARY

INCIDENT DATE	INCIDENT DESCRIPTION	PREPARED BY
Date	Incident	Name

STATUS SUMMARY

STEPS TAKEN	% DONE	DUE DATE	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES

RISK AND ISSUE HISTORY

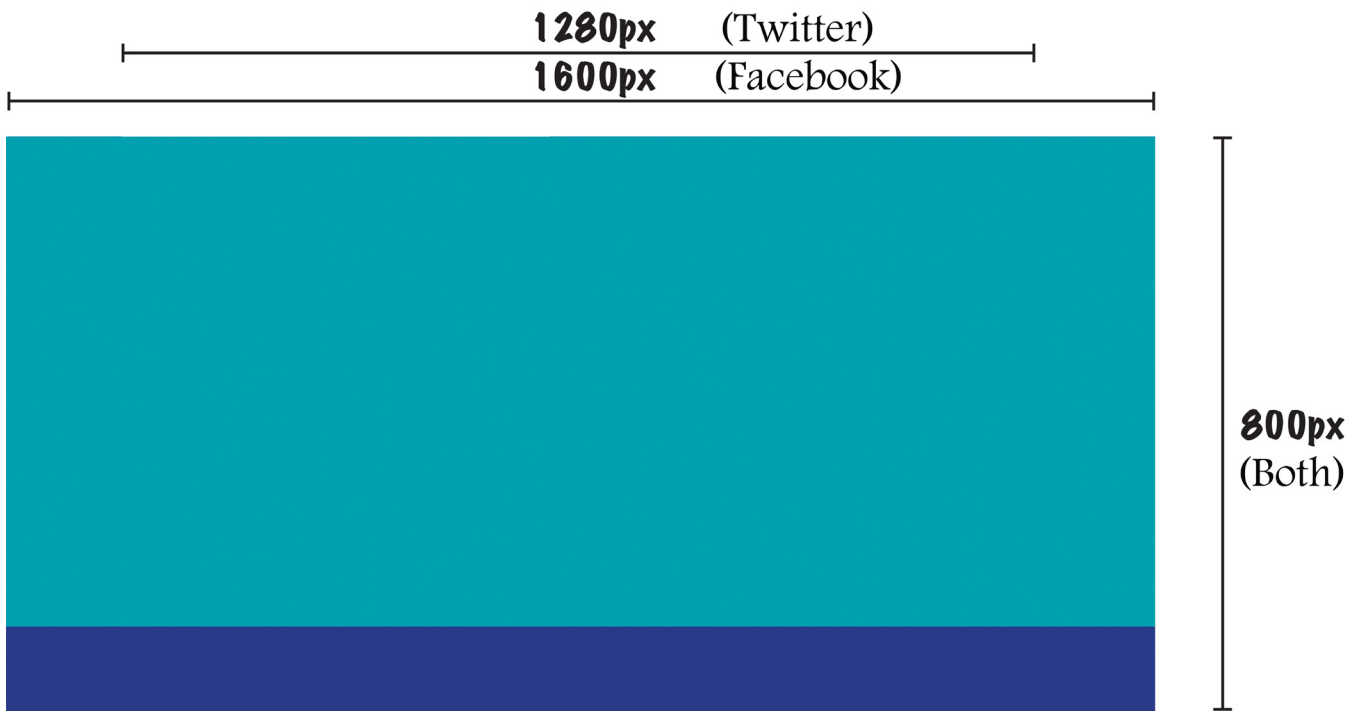
ISSUE	ASSIGNED TO	DATE

4.3 Social media applications

Social media can be used effectively as an engagement tool with the community in recovery. A commitment by local government to the regular use, monitoring and reliable updating must be made to use this medium effectively.

If using these mediums consideration must be given to:

- Graphics that are developed need to be designed in a way where they can be used for both Facebook and Twitter; and
- Using correct dimensions and dead space, a Facebook graphic will automatically be adjusted to suit Twitter.



Some examples of social media templates. All templates are available on the USB provided with these guidelines.



4.4 Media release

Media releases can provide a vital way of providing instant information that can be picked up by the local newspaper or radio station. The designated local government spokesperson must be used in the media release.

Local government should consider co-branded media releases that relate to a specific stakeholder in the early stages of the response to recovery phase.

MEDIA RELEASE

CATCHY TITLE IN A SHORT SENTENCE WHICH IS BRIEF, CLEAR AND TO THE POINT.

First and/or second sentences must explain what the recovery announcement is. The most important information is at the top of the media release.

Short snippets of information should be gathered from your talking points to provide key information that can be easily picked up and used by the media.

The essential recovery information should include the:

Who

What

When

Where

How and the why if appropriate.

Ensure the local government spokesperson is “regularly quoted” throughout the media release.

Media release to include the local government logo and the recovery logo (if developed) at the top.

Media Enquiries

Local Government spokesperson name, contact number 0411 111 111

Media Liaison contact name, contact number 0411 111 111

4.5 Community meetings

Community meetings are essential in response and recovery as it is important to address the community in a face-to-face setting early on, to earn the trust and respect of the affected community and engage in meaningful dialogue.

Community meetings may involve many state government agencies such as the Hazard Management Agency, along with local government and community organisation representatives. It is important that the Master of Ceremony and spokesperson are delegated by the local government.

4.5.1 Community Meeting Checklist

BEFORE

- Determine the Master of Ceremony (MC) and local government spokesperson. This may be the same person or different, depending on the local government and the community.
- Ensure key speakers from the Hazard Management Agency (HMA), combat agencies, support organisations and local government are included, invited, allowed to contribute to the agenda and briefed.
- Invite relevant Community Liaison Unit from the HMA to attend meeting to support the community with their information needs during the response phase.
- Select an easy, central and significant location for the community meeting.
- Prepare a clear agenda using talking points, time frames and input from all agencies.
- Determine a question and answer feedback option for community members during and after the meeting.
- Advise and notify community members of the meeting details including location, time and agenda.
- Organise audio visual requirements, parking, seating, catering, record of attendance and feedback capture.
- Test all audio equipment, electrical outlets and sound system. Consider filming the speakers to be hosted on the local government website, if appropriate.
- Brief and prepare local government spokesperson by practising answers.
- Plan for the presence of media at the meeting.

DURING

- MC to communicate agenda to the audience and introduce speakers. Agenda is used as a structure for the meeting but allow for other issues at the end of the meeting to be discussed.
- MC to review previous community meetings including any issues and updates that need to be communicated. MC to advise when the next meeting will be or how often the meetings will continue for.
- Determine community members preferred communication methods. Consider using a voting system with dots/stickers/post it notes on the walls to get a clear picture of preferred methods.
- Assign a person who will take notes, action issues and advise the recommended completion or action time to the community. Advise how these will be distributed or communicated after the community meeting.
- Ensure all speakers adhere to the Giuliani method of information communication which includes information to the community that is:
 - what we know;
 - what we don't know;
 - what we are doing; and
 - what we want you to do.
- Allow questions from the community using a roaming microphone.
- MC to thank attendees and advise of availability of refreshments after the conclusion of the meeting.

AFTER

- Ensure speakers are available for further discussion or any contact details available or point of reference for further information.
- Ensure the Department of Communities and other support agencies, such as Australian Red Cross are attending the community meeting to provide psychological well-being to community members if required.
- Provide follow up ways to gather information for any audience members that were unable to ask questions during the meeting.
- Upload recording of the meeting to the local government website or provide a summary of the information presented.

4.6 Notice boards

A central notice board at a key location in the community can be used to provide information in recovery. This may be a location already being used or one that is decided that is best placed for the recovery effort.

- The information must be general, local and provide people with call to actions such as contact numbers and places to go for additional information.
- The notice board may also be used to gain feedback directly from the community, if required.



4.7 Media conference

A media conference can be utilised if there is public and media interest after the emergency and can be used to get specific messages across the media, general public and the community.

- A media conference should be managed by the Media Liaison function located within the Recovery Communications team.
- The announcement will need to be prepared, the spokesperson chosen and briefed and the time of the conference chosen to suit relevant media deadlines.

4.7.1 Media Conference Checklist

4.7.1.1 Before

- Consider the news cycle timings.
- Make a media invitation list and send invite via email.
- Select an easy access location for the media conference.
- Arrange for parking and catering requirements (only if remote and needed).
- Arrange seating so all media have clear access to the spokesperson – if this is a small event, media can be standing.
- Position local government logo on the podium or behind the spokesperson – if this is a small conference, a podium and the logo may not be needed.
- Test all audio equipment, electrical outlets and sound system.
- Brief and prepare local government spokesperson by practising answers.

4.7.1.2 The day of and during

- Greet media and show them where to set up.
- Prepare and distribute any information to give to the media.
- Arrange catering (only if needed).
- Start exactly on time.
- Introduce local government spokesperson or they introduce themselves.
- Ensure cut off time is adhered to, including time for questions.
- Thank the media for their attendance.



Image courtesy of the Shire of Northam

4.8 Community newsletter

A community newsletter that is printed or emailed is a simple and easy method of communication in recovery.

Community News

2 August 2018

Issue No. 32

Key Issues

Ensure that key information from the status updates and talking points are located in the newsletter.

Short, brief and with a call to action.

Each key issue should be in colour and include a photograph or graphic if possible.



Lake Yealering image courtesy of the Shire of Wickepin.



Information update

Ensure the newsletter is kept to 1-2 pages in total.

Contacts

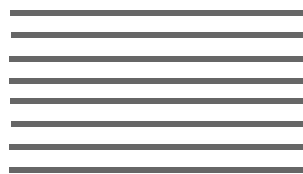
Key recovery contacts including phone numbers, emails and website.

Where to find copies of the newsletters and other information.

How to get in touch with the recovery team or the local government with information updates.

Information update

Repeat information where necessary.



Lorem newestus epsimus 25.10.2017

4.9 Newspaper article

A newspaper article may be picked up by the newspaper from the media release that has been issued, the local government may be given a regular space each week to address the issues in recovery for the community or be able to place paid advertising within the newspaper.

The Daily News

SPECIAL EDITION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2017

www.thedailynews.com • 99¢

Catchy title in a short sentence

Which is brief, clear and to the point.

Name of person/reporter.



An opening sentence or paragraph (around 25-40 words) providing the most important information first which includes the: who, what, when and where of the emergency and recovery efforts.

Additional sentences or paragraphs (around 30 – 40 words) which has ideas and facts that must be accurate and balanced about recovery.

Sentences include a local government spokesperson where quotes, comments, opinions or statements can be provided.

Use photographs, maps, illustrations or graphics to add additional information and interest to the article (see top).

Details are given in the order of importance so the most important information is given in the beginning, with the least important down towards the end.

The end of the article must summarise the event.

4.10 Recovery communications plan

A recovery communications plan details the local governments' strategy on communication and consultation with the affected community in recovery.

Vision

Recovery vision for the affected community.

Mission

Mission of the recovery communications plan.

Why?	
Who?	
What?	
When?	
Where?	
How?	

Background

Brief detailed description of the emergency events.

Communication Objectives

Clear, measurable and achievable objectives.
No more than five.

Key Target Audience

Who are the key community members that are being targeted and how is this being done?

Who is responsible for the communication method and by when?

Target Audience	
Descriptions	
Actions	
Who	
By When	

Key Messages

What are the current key messages and how are they being distributed, to whom?

Message	
Method	
Who	

Actions

What communications are being undertaken to which stakeholder group and how is this being done?

Who has responsibility and how often will they be distributed and/or updated?

Stakeholder Group	
Communication	
Method	
Who	
Frequency	

Monitor and Evaluate

How is each communication method being monitored and evaluated for effectiveness?

How often will they be monitored and evaluated?

Method	
Monitor and Evaluate	
Frequency	

Communications Budget

How much money has been allocated to be spent on each communication method?

Keeping up to date records of how much is being spent against the budget is essential.

Method	
Amount allocated	
Amount spent/Date	

Communications Plan Review

Who is responsible for monitoring the complete recovery communications plan, what date was it reviewed and what were the major changes that were made?

By Whom	
Date	
Major changes	

Adapted from: Shire of Harvey Recovery Communications Plan 2016

5.0 Recovery Communications Advice

5.1 Introduction

State government may assist local government manage their recovery communications efforts if the emergency and subsequent work in recovery is large-scale. The support will be in the form of telephone advice during office hours from communication advisors from State Government and members of the SEMC Public Information Reference Group (PIRG) trained in recovery communications. The support is provided under the State Emergency Public Information Plan.

The advisors will be activated by the State Recovery Coordinator, if and when needed. The support provided will be negotiated between the State Recovery Coordinator (SRC), the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator (SEPIC) and the local government on a case-by-case basis.

5.2 Procedure

- Local government must make contact with the State Recovery Coordinator to ask for assistance in support of their recovery communications requirements, based on the level of recovery needs. This may be done in a number of ways for example through the District Advisor at the Office of Emergency Management, by the Local Recovery Coordinator or the Chief Executive Officer directly to the State Recovery Coordinator.
- State Recovery Coordinator contacts the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator (SEPIC) to activate and advise what communications assistance is required.
- SEPIC ensures coordination of recovery communications advice as per the State Emergency Public Information Plan.

5.3 Process

- SEPIC makes contact with relevant State Government and PIRG members to ascertain availability for office-hours support to be provided to the local government via telephone. Costs associated with this support will be incurred by the State government / PIRG member agencies.
- If local government requests support onsite this may be negotiated with the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator on a case by case basis. All costs associated with any deployment will be at the expense of the local government making the request.
- This support and advice would be provided during the initial stages of recovery to assist the local government in recovery communications.
- State Recovery Coordinator to advise local government once negotiation is complete the details of the support to be provided, including when this will commence.

6.0 Conclusion

The 'Communicating in Recovery Guidelines' has been developed to support the work of local government in recovery, specifically in recovery communications.

If as a result of reading these guidelines the reader has additional questions a member of the State Emergency Management Committee - Public Information Reference Group (PIRG) may be able to assist.

Please contact the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator (SEPIC) listed in the State Emergency Public Information Plan (SEPIP) on the Office of Emergency Management website for further information and assistance.

7.0 References

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