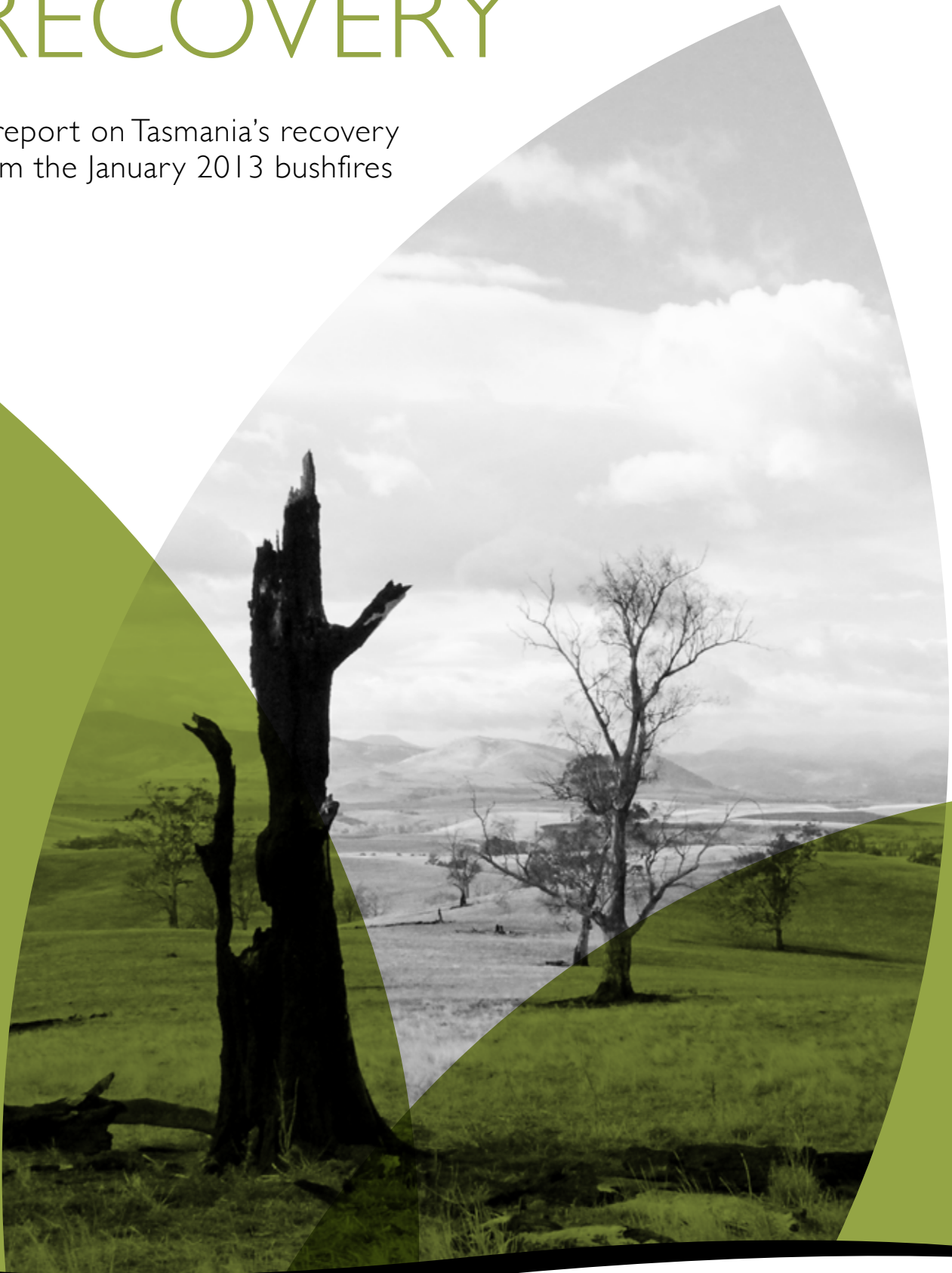


Transition to *Long-Term*
RECOVERY

A report on Tasmania's recovery
from the January 2013 bushfires



Cover photo by: Bushfire Recovery Unit

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Creating new memories

By Xanath Newbold

The first night we spent in our new house, my husband Trevor and I couldn't sleep. We hadn't expected that problem because we really liked the modern style of the build, and all of our furniture and appliances were brand new. Perhaps that was the problem. The house seemed more like a hotel than a home and it didn't feel like it was ours. Gradually, that's starting to change...

Over the years Trevor and I had sometimes talked about building a new house, or perhaps selling up and retiring in town. These decisions were forced upon us when we lost our home of 23 years in the 2013 bushfires. It's true that the rebuild gave us a focus; instead of thinking about what we'd lost, we began to look forward. But none of it seemed real until the day that the painters were finished and we put the covers on all the power points. It was such a little thing, but that's when it all began to sink in. And when it did, the house felt alien to us.

A month or so later our family visited for Christmas: we're talking all the children, our grandkids, and my parents and sister from the mainland. During the visit my grandson Max, who is two, ran a car along one of the walls. It left a mark – and I love it! To me, it's as if Max christened the house – in fact the whole family did because when they left, our house felt more like a home. The difference was that we'd started creating new memories. A home is not about the furniture you buy, but the people within its walls.

It's been a long road to this point with many, many bumps along the way. And while we do have a house, our yard is still a mess with no garden or grass or driveway or clothesline. We'll get there, in time. But what we have gained from this experience is a clear vision of what we want for the next chapter of our lives. We no longer talk of retiring in town; there's no way we're going anywhere. We may have taken things for granted before the bushfires, but Trevor and I have come to truly appreciate the value of everything we have in the Dunalley community and within the walls of our home.

MESSAGE from the CHAIR

This final report of the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce explains the journey from the damaging bushfires of January 2013, to the stage now where we have largely withdrawn from the task of supporting community recovery.

With any major setback, there will be identifiable stages in the recovery process. Initially there is uncertainty, with significant external support needed in the community. Gradually, the necessary levels of support and dependence lessens until the stage is reached where support services should, and ultimately must, withdraw, as independence and self sufficiency become the order of the day.

This report details how we have reached this stage, explains what lies ahead for the people and communities affected by the 2013 fires, and outlines the lessons we have learnt along the way.

Natural disasters and their impacts on the communities affected by them vary greatly. But the common experience is that natural disasters demonstrate the inner strength of the affected communities and the generosity of the wider community. I can say this with confidence because that has been demonstrated throughout our involvement in the recovery process.

The focus of the Tasmanian Government and all involved in this recovery process has been to encourage and empower the communities to lead and own the recovery process. I wish to congratulate and thank all members of the communities and their representatives for the way in which they embraced this task.

The State Government plans for emergency management and disaster relief and recovery were seriously tested for the first time by the fires of January 2013. Therefore much of what has been done, for the first time, should be examined to distil the lessons and, where necessary, improve our responses in the future.

For this reason, as we progressed through 2013 we took note of any changes or improvements we could make, and then conducted a rigorous review process at the end of 2013 and early 2014 to ensure that those involved in or affected by the recovery process could also add their comments and suggestions. This report identifies key learnings from that process to assist future efforts.

In brief, the speedy restoration of infrastructure and services, electricity, water, roads and access, the rapid and focussed clean up of sites through a single contract, and the erection of a temporary school all helped immensely. The volunteers, professionals, government staff, agencies and community representatives and residents and those from outside Tasmania who worked in the frontlines and stayed for the long haul deserve particular thanks, as do all the charitable and community organisations who, when marshalled, constitute a tremendous recovery asset. On behalf of the Taskforce, the Bushfire Recovery Unit and the fire-affected communities, I wish to thank all of you. You are too numerous to mention individually.

I also wish to record my appreciation for the support of the Tasmanian Government in every aspect of the recovery operations. The effectiveness, professionalism and dedication of the staff involved in the recovery process made a difficult task very manageable. Thank you.

Finally, I thank all members of the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce and the Bushfire Recovery Unit. The Unit was the 'engine room' of the recovery effort; it was led and all within it went about their tasks, particularly in the more challenging times, with drive and enthusiasm. We have learnt from the exercise, but the lessons for the future are considerably fewer than they might have been because of their skill and professionalism. It has been a privilege to work with you and among the no-nonsense problem solving members of the affected communities and their representatives.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Damian Bugg'.

Damian Bugg AM QC
Chairman
Bushfire Recovery Taskforce

THE TASMANIAN BUSHFIRES OF JANUARY 2013 WERE OF A SCALE UNSEEN IN THIS STATE IN ALMOST 50 YEARS. THE CATASTROPHIC WEATHER CONDITIONS THAT DROVE THE FIRES LIMITED THE POSSIBILITIES OF CONTAINING OR PREVENTING WIDESPREAD DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION AND LOSS. THE DAYS AND WEEKS FOLLOWING THE FIRES REVEALED THE FULL EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE – TO PROPERTIES, PEOPLE, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES – AND THE CONSEQUENT SCOPE OF THE RECOVERY EFFORT THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED.

On 10 January 2013, the State Government established the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce (the Taskforce) and associated arrangements to oversee recovery efforts across all areas of government and non-government sectors.

Since the formation of the Taskforce, a large number of programs have been developed and implemented to support the clean-up and reconstruction of infrastructure and property, the personal recovery of individuals and families, and the revival of businesses and the economy. At least 320 properties have been cleaned up, \$5.86 million of Red Cross Bushfire Appeal funding has been distributed to individuals and families, 28 community projects have been approved for funding and significant progress has been made on the rebuilding of community infrastructure and private homes.

The role of government in supporting this work and many other activities of the Taskforce, has been guided by the *Tasmanian Bushfires January 2013: Programs for Recovery* planning document, which was published in June 2013. *Programs for Recovery* is available at: www.dpac.tas.gov.au, and is a useful reference point if more detail is required.

This report is the final formal publication of the Taskforce. It provides an overview of the recovery framework, details the activity that the Taskforce has implemented through its five program areas since January 2013, and records significant learnings that aim to improve Tasmania's capacity to recover from future disasters. The Taskforce conducted a review of the recovery process, consulting widely with the community and speaking with those who have been involved with the planning, coordination or delivery of recovery services. Key lessons learned from this review are contained in this document. It should be noted that the review is not related to the 2013 *Tasmanian Bushfires Inquiry Report*, conducted by Special Investigator Mal Hyde.

The affected communities have shown great resilience and determination to bounce back from the aftermath of the fires. A significant number of individuals have contributed enormously to the recovery process by participating in committees or informal groups, leading projects, attending meetings, responding to surveys, and supporting friends, neighbours, family members and the community more generally. This has all been done in addition to the usual activities of a busy life, and in some cases, while rebuilding damaged or destroyed homes and businesses.

This report cannot hope to document the contributions of these individuals – the many community members who are recognised as the essential ingredient in the recovery process.

About this document

This report follows the structure used for the *Tasmanian Bushfires January 2013: Programs for Recovery* planning document, firstly addressing overarching issues in the section entitled 'A Framework for Recovery'. Subsequent sections are allocated to the five program areas that the Bushfire Recovery Unit used for planning and delivery of activity. Each of these sections outlines:

- What we have delivered; and
- What we have learnt.

The final section details the arrangements that have been made to continue those elements of the formal recovery process that have not yet concluded.



A Framework for Recovery

The *State Recovery Plan* provides a broad framework that can be tailored to the requirements of each emergency to support the affected community to manage its own recovery. Recovery activities will often begin spontaneously within a community, and it is the role of formal recovery operations to provide structure and resources to support these initial efforts and guide them over the longer term. The Department of Premier and Cabinet is responsible for providing overall management and leadership of recovery-related activities, where necessary and appropriate.

This section deals with overarching issues relating to the establishment of the framework and its operation from January 2013 to April 2014. It provides a brief outline of what was delivered and reflects on what was learnt.

What was delivered

Effective governance arrangements

As soon as the scale of the bushfires of January 2013 was understood, a Ministerial Subcommittee – headed by the Premier of Tasmania, the Hon Lara Giddings MP – was established to direct the multitude of urgent and critical tasks required to initiate the recovery. On 10 January 2013, the State Government established the Tasmanian Bushfire Recovery Taskforce to coordinate activities across government, communities and the private sector that would contribute to the recovery of the bushfire-affected areas.

The establishment of the Taskforce was an acknowledgement that the scale of the recovery was too great for individual local councils to manage without significant assistance from the State Government.

Under its Terms of Reference, the Taskforce has overall responsibility for ensuring that a community-led bushfire recovery is coordinated across government. The Taskforce has therefore taken the leading role to ensure that whatever needs to be done is done as effectively as possible to rebuild Tasmanian communities affected by the 2013 fires. To achieve this, the Taskforce ensured that strong links into the community were incorporated at every level of operation and governance.

The objectives of recovery from the bushfires have been delivered through five programs coordinated by the Taskforce and implemented in a collaborative way with all of the partners in recovery, including the affected communities.

Shortly after the establishment of the Taskforce, the Bushfire Recovery Unit was formed as a temporary operational team within the Department of Premier and Cabinet to provide dedicated resources to the recovery journey. The social recovery coordination resources of the Department of Health and Human Services were co-located with the Bushfire Recovery Unit in recognition of the close working relationship that would be required.

At the same time, the Commissioner of Police, as the State Controller, also established locally-led Affected Area Recovery Committees to support recovery in the Sorell/Tasman and Central Highlands areas. This was a key strategy to ensure close involvement of the communities in these key groups.

“As a community-led recovery, the Taskforce ensured that strong links into the community were incorporated at every level.”

Affected Area Recovery Committees

The Affected Area Recovery Committees (AARCs) were established under the *State Recovery Plan* to drive community-led recovery, to represent the communities, and to communicate their needs to the Unit and Taskforce.

Chaired by the respective Mayors of the affected areas, the AARCs drew together a number of recovery partners and community partners to address recovery needs by providing a coordinated and planned process that included:

- Oversight and coordination of activities to meet recovery needs related to social, infrastructure, economic and environmental elements. This includes arrangements for administration and disbursement of funds.
- Provision of ongoing opportunities for community consultation and participation.
- Communication.

AARCs were established for the Sorell, Tasman and Central Highlands municipalities. Local governments affected by the Bicheno and Montumana fires were of the view that their existing processes and resources were sufficient to undertake the recovery without the need for a formalised AARC. Areas affected by the Bicheno fires did however benefit from the Appeal funding and the property cleanup program.

The Central Highlands Affected Area Committee (CHAARC) was very active in the months immediately following the Lake Repulse fire, with members contacting all of the directly affected landowners and documenting damage and loss, as well as developing two significant community projects. The majority of CHAARC's activity was complete by mid-2013, however it continued to meet infrequently until August, at which point, having achieved its Terms of Reference, members recommended that the committee be formally disbanded.

Membership and Terms of Reference of the Sorell Tasman Affected Area Committee (STAARC) were revised in late July to take account of the progress made in recovery. This revision resulted in a significantly higher level of community representation and a corresponding reduction in the membership of government and other organisations. The activity of STAARC is documented more fully under relevant program sections.

See Appendix One for Terms of Reference for AARCs.

Effective operational arrangements

The Bushfire Recovery Unit has been integral to the implementation of the five programs for recovery, outlined in subsequent sections of this report. Mobilised in the aftermath of the bushfire emergency, the Unit was staffed by government officers with the required skills and experience to effectively initiate recovery activity from temporary locations and then establish a longer-term presence in the communities.

The Unit has provided advice, coordinated efforts and implemented the plan for recovery and rebuilding. It has worked closely with the communities, the Taskforce, Affected Area Recovery Committees, government agencies, the Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Distribution Committee and other recovery partners.

Establishment of the Information and Service Hubs at Murdunna, Dunalley and Sorell was a key strategy implemented as soon as possible following the fires to ensure a local connection and provide the community with easy access to a range of government and other support services. The Murdunna and Sorell hubs closed in May 2013; activity through these locations had declined significantly by that time. Recovery Unit staff continued to provide services at the Dunalley Information and Service Hub (the DISH) until February 2014, at which point staffing and operations were significantly scaled back and the transition to alternative administrative arrangements implemented.

The DHHS Social and Personal Support Unit will continue operating from the DISH until 30 June 2014.

Coordination of partners and activity

In order to effectively coordinate the range of tasks and processes involved in the recovery effort, a number of committees and other groups were established for particular purposes. The frequency of meetings of these groups was driven largely by need. Some met infrequently and on a small number of occasions, while others met regularly to resolve ongoing issues and support the implementation of active programs.

For key groups, regular meetings and close connection to the Bushfire Recovery Unit ensured that tasks were allocated to appropriate service providers or organisations, and that tasks were completed. Some examples of such committees, their membership and a brief description of the work undertaken by them are described in detail in relevant sections of the report.

Communication across a range of media

Throughout the recovery, the Taskforce, recovery organisations and local groups have focussed on communication as the key enabler for a community-led recovery. This has taken many forms, including:

- Information and Services Hubs
- The Bushfire Recovery website
- Flyers and information sheets
- Recovery News Newsletters (16 Sorell/Tasman editions and three Central Highlands editions were delivered to each household and to those displaced, and emailed to electronic subscribers)
- Traditional media, including television, radio and newspapers
- Word of mouth and casual conversations
- Blackboards that were maintained and updated by community members in Dunalley, Boomer Bay, Murdunna and Connellys Marsh
- SMS Phone Tree
- Community gatherings, such as barbecues and community meetings
- Social media (Twitter)
- Psychological recovery community meetings with Dr Rob Gordon
- Detailed publications (such as the *Building Back Better Guide* and the Dr Rob Gordon DVD)

Volunteer coordination

The January 2013 bushfires saw a strong response of offers to volunteer to assist in the clean-up and general recovery. To manage the huge number of people wanting to support the relief efforts, Volunteering Tasmania established a register of interested people and their volunteering preferences. Details of those registered were provided to government agencies and non-government organisations, which made direct contact with individuals on those lists. In addition, Volunteering Tasmania collected details of people interested in volunteering in future emergencies or recovery efforts and provided these details to emergency agencies (for example, the State Emergency Service, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army or Tasmania Fire Service) who have since recruited and trained many of those registered to not only support efforts in future disasters but also strengthen their current volunteer base.



Photo by: Bushfire Recovery Unit



Photo by: Sharmaine Gordon

What we have learnt

Key elements that contributed to the success of the framework for recovery include:

- The swift establishment of a high-level leadership structure, which enabled prompt and decisive action, particularly in the initial days following an emergency response.
- Visible and respected leadership in decision-making structures, with local representation to build community support.
- A formal recovery structure that built community involvement into all levels, enabling real communication among partners.
- Communicating openly and building trust with the community, which has led to strong relationships of trust.
- Employment of locals in the recovery team and the establishment of welcoming, well-resourced and convenient recovery centres to break down barriers and gain broad acceptance of government-run programs and assistance.
- Official communication that is regular and features the use of a variety of media and modes, from the grassroots through to the high tech.
- Early and clear messages to avoid rumours, confusion and uncertainty, which can lead to divisions in the community and angst for individuals.

Some things that might be helpful in future recovery programs include:

- Ensuring that exposure to stressful work conditions is managed carefully. This is particularly so with locals (either paid or voluntary) who may be dealing with more complex layers of stress than others.
- Quickly addressing the need for transparency of process for choosing local involvement in key committees, as this issue has the potential to fragment the community.
- Preparation of disaster-ready communications materials (e.g. newsletter and fact sheet templates) which would assist with urgent delivery.
- Ongoing use of social media by official response and recovery organisations.
- Supporting locally developed and led modes of communication, rather than replacing them with new approaches. These produced some of the great successes in this experience.

Effective governance arrangements

In the highly-charged environment after the 2013 bushfires, the fire-affected communities needed visible leadership to provide reassurance that recovery processes were being well coordinated and, most importantly, that those in charge were committed to understanding and responding to community needs. In these early stages the establishment of clear, high-level governance arrangements – including the Ministerial Subcommittee, the Taskforce, AARCs and the Unit – facilitated early decisive intervention in critical matters such as the restoration of power, the speedy commencement of the clean-up and the establishment of the temporary school.

The multi-sector membership of the Taskforce and AARCs and multi-agency make-up of the Unit brought different perspectives and a balanced approach to the recovery, with a clear community focus. As time passed, increased community involvement in the governance arrangements enabled the Taskforce to harness local knowledge and understand community priorities so it could ensure changing demands were met throughout the different recovery phases. This involvement allowed community members to build trust in the formal processes, as well as gain insights and provide input into decisions as they were being made.

Key appointments and balanced representation

Feedback to the review highlighted the importance of establishing functional governance arrangements and appointing the right people to key roles, particularly those in leadership roles. Feedback consistently indicated that key appointments to the Taskforce, the Unit and AARCs were viewed as having provided strong direction while allowing for the flexibility to respond to emerging community needs as they arose.

The broad representation, effective management and independence of the Taskforce were seen to have enabled balanced guidance and oversight of recovery decisions. Stakeholders also praised the Unit and the approach taken to manage its complex coordination role, including the collaborative methods used to sort through the diversity of issues in a timely and effective way. Early and close interaction with local governments was highlighted as critical for the successful rollout of recovery programs.

Links to the community

The early establishment of the AARCs was well received as a vital link between local governments, a broad range of Tasmanian government agencies, non-government organisations and as a forum for community representation so that appropriate decisions could be made to address the different recovery priorities for each of the fire-affected communities.

Membership of the AARCs was vitally important to ensure that the right organisations were represented and that community representatives were able to contribute effectively. The sensitive chairing of these committees and the balanced approach brought by members enabled targeted and well-considered responses to opportunities and issues, as well as responsibility for the implementation of key processes (such as community consultation and development of community recovery projects).

“There’s a lot of knowledge locally that you need to tap into for a successful recovery.”

Clear lines of communication between STAARC and other formal and informal groups and committees were cultivated by ensuring that there was cross-over in membership. Activities and initiatives of a variety of groups, as well as concerns and issues raised by them, were frequently noted, discussed and acted on by STAARC, and vice versa.



Support for locals in visible recovery roles

The engagement of locals in key positions within the recovery process was highly valuable in terms of staying connected to the needs of the community and providing pragmatic sources of feedback on programs. Many members of the community were highly motivated to be involved in recovery activities. They also provided vital insights and solutions to local issues that emerged throughout 2013.

However, it is recognised that involvement in recovery processes placed a significant burden on individuals that were themselves, working through their own personal recovery. Dedicated, early and continuous provision of training and support for locals with highly visible recovery roles, both paid and voluntary, would help to strengthen community capacity and lessen the ongoing burden on these individuals.

Suggestions included providing all staff and key volunteers with formal induction and regular, mandatory debrief or counselling sessions, and encouraging locals to return to normal community involvement once the initial recovery phase has passed.

Some concern was voiced by the community about the way in which community representatives were selected; there were suggestions that a more transparent process, rotations, and/or wider selection might have improved the breadth and depth of community input. When establishing longer-term AARCs, it was suggested that provision for changing membership may help communities to encourage and strengthen local capacity, help avoid member fatigue and ensure effective stakeholder involvement.

Partly in response to these suggestions, membership of the Sorell Tasman AARC (STAARC) was reviewed in July 2013 and community representation was expanded to include broader participation from different segments of the community.

In a less formal setting, issues emerging within the community were picked up by staff at the Information and Service Hubs and discussed in daily conference calls involving most of the Unit staff. Establishment of these communication routines helped to resolve many issues and ensure that the entire team was able to stay informed. The conference calls also provided an indirect link to the community and helped central office staff to assist the team working out of Dunalley. Staff on the ground were also able to stay informed of central office developments so they could provide advice to the community or act quickly to dispel myths.

“A lack of knowledge for locals, and even staff, just starts the rumour mill.”



Effective operational arrangements

Staffing of the Bushfire Recovery Unit

The Bushfire Recovery Unit brought together necessary skills and expertise, from a range of government agencies to plan and coordinate recovery activities. The willingness of agencies to provide staff secondments to this temporary unit enabled a highly motivated, engaged team to be formed at short notice. Several staff members were 'locals' or had close connections with the fire-affected areas. Their networks provided valuable insight into local issues and effective engagement strategies for the broader community.

Co-location of core agencies within the governance structure of the Unit enabled better understanding and coordination of the different work being done and facilitated effective and regular communication regarding progress on priority activities. The arrangement enabled recovery priorities to better integrate with relevant agencies' other work, and made for higher levels of accountability and reporting. Feedback to the review also suggested that agency staff who were co-located felt more integrated into the Unit and had a greater appreciation of how their work contributed to the overall recovery effort.

The experience clearly demonstrates that coordination of programs was more difficult when co-location arrangements were not in place. This suggests that in future, achieving co-location of all core agencies should be a high priority. This could operate on a part-time basis, as the need dictates.

Early setup of the Information and Service Hubs in Dunalley, Sorell and Murdunna, in the heart of the fire-affected areas, provided a range of general and expert advice and services. The friendly and inviting atmosphere of the hubs was seen to be a key ingredient for ensuring a successful relationship between government, non-government organisations and the community.

Communicate openly, consistently and often

People and communities recover at different stages and times, and communication needs to be varied and frequent to accommodate multiple needs. A regular flow of key messages, often repeated across many channels, was needed to ensure they got through to people when they were ready to hear them. Importantly, people in the community were also encouraged to share their thoughts and use communication channels open to them so recovery decisions could be adjusted to meet their priorities.

A comprehensive communication strategy was implemented and supported during the early months of the recovery process. The communications function was centrally located to ensure that messages from government were clear, targeted and accessible by a wide range of audiences. This was considered to be one of the key success factors for the recovery program.

With routines disrupted and letter boxes gone, it was hard to reach everybody. Traditional media – such as television, radio and newspapers – were useful to reach a wide audience, however it was also important to recognise the value of individuals and community groups with well-established networks for disseminating key messages, particularly early in the recovery. The local hubs, newsletters, fact sheets and pamphlets, blackboards, 1800 number, Phone Tree, local networks and meetings were all recognised as important communication tools. The effectiveness of the formal recovery effort in tapping into these informal networks relied on sensitive and respectful communications with well-networked locals, and was largely successful in linking in to the local avenues without overwhelming them.

Print media

Feedback indicated that people both directly and indirectly affected by the fires valued the regular editions of the newsletter *Recovery News*. The useful information and positive stories helped them through the recovery process. Editions were expected, kept, re-read, and handed around. For those who had to move away temporarily, *Recovery News* was delivered or emailed to help them stay connected. Recovery organisations also realised it was an excellent tool to aid their understanding of community context and need, as well as being a good conduit for getting their own messages out to the community. This was particularly so in the Sorell/Tasman area, which continued to receive editions until late October 2013.

Fact sheets and other publications, such as the *Building Back Better Guide*, were also considered useful because they could be taken away and read when the need arose or when time permitted.

Web site

The Bushfire Recovery website (www.bushfirerecovery.tas.gov.au) was a well-used communication portal, providing online access to a range of information and resources, with more than 76 000 page views between January 2013 and January 2014. The most popular pages during early days included information about financial assistance and recovery grants; advice and registration forms for the clean-up; and information about ways to donate and volunteering. In later months, interest moved to events; advice about wellbeing; the various community assistance grants rounds; and finally, the Bushfire Recovery Review. Public feedback was addressed throughout the year to ensure important information, relevant to the recovery phase, was located up front so it was easy to find.

Social media

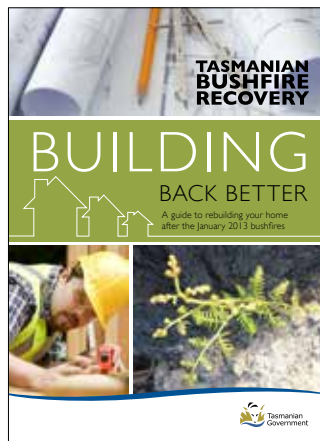
While the Bushfire Recovery Unit's Twitter account had 600 followers and was highly valued by recovery organisations, it quickly became apparent that social media was to play a much broader role in the recovery process. The 'Tassie Fires - We Can Help' Facebook page was a high profile example of the way that social media can support recovery efforts, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the fires. The response to the 'Tassie Fires - We Can Help' page highlights the significant role that social media is likely to play in future emergencies.

Significant work has been undertaken by emergency response agencies and the Department of Premier and Cabinet in progressing their social media presence, including the launch of the TasALERT website. This work will ensure social media is used effectively to deliver important public information and warnings quickly and accurately during emergencies.

It is clear that there is further work to do in developing an understanding in government and across the community of the role that social media plays in government communications, compared to the role it plays in broader network-based community communication. The work of the Tasmania Fire Service and Tasmania Police in using social media, and the recently launched TasAlert webpage, will go some way to capitalising on these communication avenues for future emergencies.

Identify key people within stakeholder groups

The number of organisations involved meant that it was sometimes difficult to keep messages consistent. Feedback to the review showed that communication worked best when key people were identified within organisations to keep messages consistent when working with others and the community. This highlights the value for agencies, organisations and communities to have contact lists prepared in advance and widely available from the outset to reduce confusion. It was also identified that local councils, swamped with requests for information, could benefit from dedicated communications support.



Other Key Learnings

Proximity to Hobart

It was recognised that the greatest impact from the 2013 bushfires was in the south and proximity to the Hobart office provided relative ease for the coordination of activities. Even so, the distance between locations had communication issues. Feedback shows the importance of ensuring early integration of Information Technology (IT) systems and routine communication channels to help staff feel more connected.

If a large-scale emergency were to occur in a different part of the State, feedback suggests that certain functions could occur in a central office in Hobart but that a regional base for planning and coordination would need to be established, drawing on local expertise and relocating staff from Hobart to key positions if needed.

Coordination of partners

Many formal and informal clubs, groups and individuals provided important local knowledge and support throughout the different phases of the recovery. Appendix Two provides a timeline of the main activities undertaken, and while not all activities are included in the timeline, it illustrates the high level of interaction and provides an indication of the planning and coordination required to enable these activities to occur.

The Active Partners Program was developed early in the recovery process as a mechanism to engage and collaborate with the broad array of organisations involved in the recovery process. In many areas, the process was highly successful and allowed the State and local governments to work effectively with community groups. At the margins, however, further attention could be given to ensuring that all of those involved in the recovery process are aware of activities and have the opportunity to have input into programs. For future emergencies, consideration could be given to dedicating resources to this program to more effectively capture the benefits of broad engagement and collaboration.

Recovery roles and responsibilities

The *State Recovery Plan* and the arrangements established under the *Emergency Management Act 2006* provide the framework for the coordination of recovery at the State, regional and local levels. During the early days of the recovery process, however, it was apparent that recovery roles and responsibilities were not as clearly defined as was required and that many stakeholders experienced confusion and concern about who was doing what and how they could best contribute.

While these issues were quickly resolved, it would be beneficial for the smooth transition to recovery to more regularly discuss and update registers of key positions and organisations that are available to support the recovery process. There was widespread agreement that an annual pre-fire season audit would be a useful planning exercise to:

- Identify recovery partners, local clubs, committees and other groups, and to update key contact details.
- Confirm which groups in each region or community have the capacity to fulfil distinct recovery roles.
- Confirm roles and prepare a register of agreed responsibilities.
- Confirm availability of relevant recovery infrastructure and equipment (such as generators, stretcher beds, and so on).

Hearing from the community

The Taskforce was committed to hearing from the community to ensure recovery activities were addressing community priorities. As Dr Rob Gordon, Consulting Psychologist said, "we need to listen more than we have time for."

Forums for providing feedback

Feedback from the community was gathered through the formal governance representation at forums such as STAARC. Community meetings, community consultations and surveys were also conducted at various intervals. Organisations involved in the recovery regularly talked between themselves to organise and share resources.

Community consultation

Some community members felt, at times, they just wanted to 'get on with things' – they were over-consulted and surveyed-out. Others felt they wanted more opportunity to contribute. Balancing this conflict was difficult and it became clear that different forms of consultation were important to meet the various needs and preferences of community members.

During November 2013, almost a year after the fires, a telephone survey was conducted with 300 community members as part of the review recovery processes. Almost all who were contacted were very pleased to contribute their views (refer Appendix Three for summary of results). Paper and online forms were also widely distributed at this time through as many channels as possible, but had a very low uptake. This indicates a preference for sharing such views orally, rather than by filling out yet another form.

However, for other consultations, such as the feedback process for the Community Assistance Grants, people preferred paper forms to read, ponder and respond in their own time.

Informal feedback

The community also voiced their stories and opinions informally, and often this provided the greatest detail and information. Regular drop-ins at the Information Service Hubs were encouraged; locals were invited to have a cuppa and a chat and to let the staff know what was happening. Daily teleconferencing link-ups between the DISH and the Bushfire Recovery Unit in Hobart meant that locals' concerns were translated quickly into action at the appropriate level within government.

Asking questions

Conversations with Bushfire Recovery staff and other organisations on the ground provided an opportunity to dispel myths that sometimes circulated. The 1800 number provided people with easy access to voice their immediate concerns or to ask questions – allowing staff to provide advice and clear up misinformation on the spot or, where necessary, seek follow up.

Keeping the community updated

Community representatives brought wider community views into formal meetings such as STAARC. However, some members of the community reflected that it was difficult to know what happened during the meetings when dissemination of key messages relied on a limited number of busy people. It was suggested that short summary updates of important messages could be produced by Unit staff and disseminated online, via email, Phone Tree or posted on bulletin boards at the hubs. This would make regular updates simple and easy and keep communities informed of key decisions while taking the pressure of community representatives and hub staff.

Although STAARC did receive this feedback and act upon it in mid-2013, it is acknowledged that the routine of sending out communiques following each meeting has not occurred regularly, usually due to time constraints and other priorities. This should be considered a priority in future emergencies.

Grassroots communication

The community survey undertaken for the review revealed that for many people, it is community spirit that is getting them through. This was fostered with grassroots communication and a range of activities organised by the community throughout the region.

Community-managed blackboards were placed in prominent places; they fostered community expression and collective understanding. The SMS Phone Tree – where an SMS message ended with the phrase "Please Forward" – let people stay in touch with key messages. Some people organised themselves into groups and started to meet either formally or informally.

All of these techniques helped the community stay informed, know what and how to get things going, and stay connected with each other.

The ‘can do’ champions of the community

“You sometimes don’t notice the true extent of community spirit unless something goes wrong,” the Mayor of Sorell Council, Kerry Vincent, recently reflected. In January 2013 a devastating bushfire was the something that ‘went wrong’ and it’s the spirit of the fire-affected communities that continues to illuminate the road ahead.

Kerry, along with the Mayor of Tasman Council, Jan Barwick, was the Chair of the Sorell Tasman Affected Area Recovery Committee (STAARC). This 12-member team, which was set up to support and help coordinate the bushfire recovery efforts initially included Mat Healey, the Director of the Bushfire Recovery Unit, and community representatives Caroline Bignell and Graham Millar*. A similar group was also organised in the Central Highlands in the wake of the Lake Repulse bushfire.

STAARC has given – and continues to give – the opportunity for everyone in the community to have a central body of communication with State and Local Government (and vice versa).

“This sort of community consultation has been at the forefront of the recovery,” Kerry said. “That will remain exactly the same as we look forward to the next stage of the journey.

“But what I think will change slightly is the focus of the efforts. The first 12 months were largely about people getting back on their feet and deciding what they wanted to do next. 2014 will be more about the recovery of community infrastructure. We’ll see projects such as the walkway through Dunalley, the Primary School and the Community Hall all start to come to fruition.”

Jan Barwick agreed that community volunteers were the true heroes of the fight against the bushfire inferno and that it is the same ‘can do’ attitude that will spearhead ongoing recovery efforts.

“We all applaud the residents of the fire-affected communities for their courage, strength and determination through this difficult time,” Jan said.

“We have been very fortunate to have several outstanding champions within these communities who have led by example. They have rallied to ensure that instead of being victims, we’ve all adopted a ‘can do’ attitude to help make our communities stronger and better than ever. These champions have advocated on the behalf of others, willingly given a helping hand when needed, lent a sympathetic ear, and laughed and cried with the rest of us.

“I have no doubt that the recovery of our communities would not be as advanced without them. There is no way we could ever repay them for all that they have done.”

**membership of STAARC was revised to include more community representatives in August 2013. See Appendix One for detail.*

On the 4th of January

I was up really early. I couldn't sleep and the bad feeling from the day before had not gone away. I was at the fire station at 6.30am and we left for the fire front round 7.00am.

The fire at Copping was pretty bad. I remember the fire around the machinery shed there. There were chemicals in the shed that they couldn't identify for us.

When the fire got away we knew it was time to head for Dunalley. The township was directly in the path of the fire. For many of us, we had left our families there.

I had left my wife and daughter at Dunalley. They were still there, in the house. We'd prepared the house, and I thought we knew the bushfire plan, but when it came down to it, we hadn't decided where they would go. I sent them to Murdunna. I thought that would be the best place. I thought they would be safe. I hoped they would be safe.

When the fire hit Dunalley it went pitch black dark. We could see the fire. We could hear the roar of it. We felt the wind like a tornado whipped up by the firestorm.

The embers stick in my mind. I've never seen embers like it. It was like being in a snow storm. I remember looking over towards my house and it was being absolutely hammered by embers. It was like a snow storm of fire burning down. A firestorm of big, hot embers everywhere. They were flying across our place and down over the water. They weren't just little embers these were big embers – like a volcano.

The school was a priority for us and all the others that were there fighting the fire. We checked the school, we checked it quite a few times, and we thought it would be OK. We'd driven in, we'd been there two or three times. Others had checked it too.

It was pretty intense for a while. We got back to Craigs Hill Road around midnight. They didn't think we'd come back, but I'd made a promise that we would. We'd been there earlier and had some of the young boys cleaning off a roof to protect the places later when it hit. The locals were there, all working to save their homes. When we got back there, the fire was hitting hard and we just kept hitting it with water, and knocking it down.

We tried to save houses. At one stage we told a couple of people they would have to choose which house we would save as we could only save one – they had to choose. That was pretty hard.

Aurora workers were amazing. They cleared the poles from the road and we were able to get fresh fire crews in. We got four crews. I've never been so glad to see fresh crews coming in. They met us and we took them in. We'd been working all day and all night so fresh crews really helped.

The worst flash-over hit us going into Boomer Bay. We went to Boomer to see what we could save there. Going round the top corner into Boomer, the fireball hit. I knew the road so I just kept driving. If we had stopped well ... who knows...

I remember thinking then, if a crew from out of the area had been here, they would have been incinerated in the trucks because they wouldn't have known the road.

I told my nephew to put his seatbelt on. I thought we might hit a car – we couldn't see. As soon as I said it, we met a car coming at us on the corner. We missed the car by centimetres.

It was so hot. When the flash hit us, it was just so hot. We could feel it in the truck. The heat was coming in through the passenger side. It was a wall of flame and smoke as we came round the corner. Heat was coming in through the windscreen but I just kept driving. I knew the road so I kept driving.

We were lucky, we got through. The flashover heated the water in the back of the truck so it was boiling hot. The suction hoses we were carrying had melted flat. A bottle of water on the dashboard had melted, flat, the air all sucked out. We were lucky to get through that one.

It was so hard. My feet were all blistered, my right foot was pretty bad.

At one stage I was sweating so much that it was like someone had turned a hose over my head and water was just running off it. There were other times when I don't remember sweating at all – that's a really bad sign.

I remember taking my pulse and wondering how fast it could get before my heart stopped beating. It was fair racing – probably doing 180 beats a minute I reckon. I didn't think the fire would get me, but I wasn't sure how much my body and organs would take before they said 'enough I'm done'.

We had no cold water or food. The water we had was hot and was giving us a gut ache. I managed to get some cold water round 11.00pm from the pub. The bunch of bananas I'd grabbed from home earlier was pretty handy, that kept us going.

We got to the pub pretty late and we were offered a stainless steel container full of food. I went to shine my torch on it but they said 'no don't do that, just eat it'. It was fish and chips and fried stuff, but it was the best food I'd ever eaten.

When I got back home I looked out the window from my place and I just couldn't believe what I was seeing. House after house was gone, burnt. I just could not believe what I was seeing.

I found it hard to look people in the eyes after the fire. I hadn't been able to save their homes.

Volunteers and career fighters alike – we did the best that we could.

An excerpt from writings by Carolyn Daly



Photo by: Jessie Daly

Programs for Recovery

Consistent with recovery efforts in other locations, the Taskforce has endeavoured to ensure that planned activities are directed at key areas of need and led by the affected communities themselves. The *Programs for Recovery Plan*, which was released in June 2013, outlined five program areas that provided a structured approach to the work of the Taskforce and its partners.

This section outlines the delivery of these programs over 2013, examining what was delivered in each program area and what was learnt.

PROGRAM ONE: Supporting individuals, families and the community

Aim: To support individuals, families and communities by rebuilding emotional, social and physical wellbeing through community-led, coordinated and planned processes.



Key recovery data

- \$8.7 million raised through the Red Cross Tasmania Bushfire Appeal.
 - » \$5.86 million in Red Cross Appeal Funds distributed to individuals and families.
 - » \$1.74 million allocated to community projects.
 - » Specific grants of \$400 000 to beyondblue for the Tasmania Child and Family Disaster Response project.
 - » \$300 000 to the Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House for the Garden Restoration and Revegetation Project.
 - » \$400 000 allocated as a reserve for long-term recovery.
- \$7.5 million in Disaster Recovery Payments by the Australian Government.
- \$864 247 in Housing Assistance grants from the Tasmanian and Australian Governments.
- \$828 475 in Emergency Assistance grants from the Tasmanian and Australian Governments.
- \$1.3 million allocated by the Department of Health and Human Services in 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years to Public and Environmental health and Social Recovery. This included environmental health support for Sorell and Tasman Councils, help for non-government organisations, and community education and support, as well as individual support, case management, rebuilding community structure, service coordination and information provision.
- On 21 January the DISH was opened to provide information, services and a friendly face.
- Between January and December 2013, individual support was provided on 905 occasions at the DISH, involving counselling, advocacy, crisis management, personal support or other assistance
- Other assistance at the DISH was provided on over 400 occasions per month in the first half of 2013.
- Clinical psychologist Dr Rob Gordon, a national disaster recovery specialist, visited the Sorell-Tasman area five times and gave community seminars.
- 180 families were provided with temporary housing by Housing Tasmania (everyone who required assistance).

What was delivered

The task of supporting individuals, families and communities in their recovery has been jointly undertaken by the Australian, Tasmanian and relevant local governments in conjunction with non-government organisations, the private sector and the affected communities themselves. This program has been designed and delivered in a way that acknowledges that individuals, families and communities cope in different ways and therefore need a variety of personal and social services that take their circumstances into account.

Social and personal support

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has the lead role for delivering social and personal support for individuals and families. DHHS has dedicated resources to these activities until 30 June 2014, including several dedicated staff in the Social and Personal Support Team located at the DISH:

- A State Operations Manager who was co-located in the Unit to coordinate activities and avoid duplication or gaps in services.
- A Regional Social Recovery Coordinator located at the DISH.
- Three part-time Community Recovery Workers, located at the DISH, to support and link individuals with other service providers.
- Two part-time administrative support staff.

Over the year, the Social and Personal Support team provided information or advice to hundreds of community members, as well as ongoing support to 235 clients. This support included advocacy, counselling, outreach visits, practical support (for example, help accessing housing, material goods, filling in forms, accessing Centrelink services, and referrals) and community development. The main issues addressed by the team related to ongoing grief and trauma, dislocation from the community, financial and accommodation issues, and the loss of property and personal belongings.

Most people are likely to recover from a traumatic event without formal intervention, but some may need support. In the immediate days and weeks following the disaster, the Social and Personal Support program provided psychological first aid: informal, simple and practical support that aimed to establish safety and security. Support was also directed at reducing stress-related reactions and normalising/validating reactions and responses. In the following weeks and months the program provided more formal support to prevent long-term trauma effects and behaviours, and the development of trauma and grief management skills. There were a small number of people who received trauma-focused therapy, having been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The program also provided educational sessions on a range of topics such as insomnia, memory and relationships, as well as relaxation and general support groups. This recognised that there are various levels of psychosocial support needed within the communities. Consideration was also given to longer term support for those people who may delay processing their emotional responses until they return to their 'new normal' of routines and home rebuilding.

The Social and Personal Support team also accessed experts from around Australia when necessary. For instance, clinical psychologist Dr Rob Gordon was instrumental in explaining to the community how other communities have experienced the recovery process and what this community may expect, as well as how to deal with it. This explanation of the 'new normal' helped individuals, Unit staff and other organisations develop a better understanding of what the community was going through and develop appropriate responses. Dr Gordon also worked with the team to make a series of short videos about dealing with stress and trauma. The videos are available on YouTube as well as on DVD.

“It was like Rob was reading me ... everything he said was what I had been feeling.”

Community Member at the Dunalley School
Gym Community Meeting, July 2013

The Social and Personal Support team at the DISH provided a friendly face and a central place for information. As an indication of the volume of visitation to the DISH, in March 2013 more than 500 people popped in for information, assistance, or just some social interaction.

The DISH also functioned as a community space for a number of informal groups to congregate, and as a meeting place for several committees involved in recovery activities. Significantly, the DISH has also acted as a base for a range of related services, including the St Vincent de Paul Op Shop, Salvation Army Outreach Program and the Lions Club Tool Library. All of these activities contributed to the social and personal support of local people.

Where possible and appropriate, services were coordinated with other organisations, such as the Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House (DTNH), to ensure that overlaps or gaps were minimised. In many cases, this coordination simply involved cross promoting events and services, where staff from both organisations regularly dropped in to provide updates of flyers and brochures so that community members were aware of what was going on in the area.

A significant part of the informal coordination through the community occurred through the activities of a small group of residents of the affected areas. Simply known as the 'Locals Group', they initiated a multitude of activities with their weekly meetings and coordinated many ongoing tasks, including the Phone Tree and the blackboards. The impact of the efforts of this hard-working group on building community well-being is impossible to overstate, and their tireless dedication is recognised as another key ingredient in community recovery.

Australian Red Cross support

As detailed in the *Tasmanian Emergency Management Plan*, the Australian Red Cross plays a significant role in disaster recovery efforts, and was particularly active in the first half of 2013. Their contribution following the bushfires involved more than 150 Red Cross staff and volunteers assisting response, relief and recovery agencies through activities that included:

- Assisting in refuges or evacuation centres at Ouse, New Norfolk, Nubeena, Sorell, Hobart and Swansea, offering personal support and registration services.
- Registering 1 850 of the evacuees and responding to more than 1 570 inquiries from friends and relatives across Australia and internationally who were seeking news of their loved ones' safety.
- Working closely with government agencies to support outreach delivery in fire-affected communities. The Red Cross volunteers visited 442 homes to provide personal support and recovery information to those affected in the Tasman Peninsula and Dunalley areas.
- Providing data to inform recovery service planning by DHHS and developing specific mapping products to enable a coordinated approach to the delivery of outreach activities by DHHS and Red Cross personnel.
- Providing personal support and recovery information to more than 460 bushfire affected people, at the Information Service Hubs at Sorell, Dunalley and Murdunna through until May 2013.

Client management system

The Major Incident Support System (MISS) was developed very quickly following the January 2013 bushfires. MISS is a comprehensive client management system that can be used for client registration, client record keeping, and information sharing for disaster recovery. The two main aims of MISS are:

- To manage information about the financial assistance programs provided to disaster-affected individuals and families.
- To case-manage clients through the recovery process.

The system has the ability to record registration and personal details of individuals affected by disaster. MISS provides the potential for coordinated case management by enabling various stakeholders to access and update clients' details, record information about services provided to clients within and across organisations, and to refer clients to other services.

After the January 2013 bushfires, MISS was populated with registration data received from the Red Cross and information on property losses and damage in the affected area by Property Identification Number. Data about financial assistance provided to affected individuals through the Red Cross funding rounds was also entered into the system. However, there were a number of challenges associated with the roll-out of the system, which resulted in it being set aside for this recovery process.

Monetary and material assistance

Distribution of monetary assistance

The Red Cross Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal raised more than \$8.7 million. The distribution of the majority of those funds to individuals and families took place over four rounds and aimed to ensure that assistance was both targeted and timely, while ensuring legislative compliance concerning the distribution of charitable funds. The Tasmanian Government covered all the costs of administration and distribution of the Appeal funds, to ensure that the affected communities saw the maximum benefit.

A portion of the funds were reserved for community projects, which are explained in further detail in the following section.

In the initial distribution rounds for individual assistance funding, a relatively uncomplicated approach was taken to funds distribution. The final rounds (Round 4a and 4b) required rigorous assessment methods to ensure individuals and households met a defined threshold to ensure an appropriate distribution of funds. Executing this complex task required all applicants to be interviewed so that their personal circumstances could be appropriately documented and funding allocations made on the basis of need and capacity to recover. Table 1 provides a summary of distribution of the Red Cross Appeal funds.

Table 1. Distribution of the Red Cross Appeal: Monetary assistance provided to Individuals and Families

Round	Date	Approved applications	Total distributed (\$)
Stage 1	January 2013	151	819 000
Stage 2	February 2013	142	1 249 998
Stage 3	March 2013	99	434 843
Stage 4 – Part A	June 2013	298	1 594 262
Stage 4 – Part B	October 2013	221	1 494 693
Stage 4 (Temporary accommodation assistance)	June 2013	17	269 140
Total to individuals and families	-	-	5 861 936

NB. In addition to funding allocations outline in Table 1, 20% of all Appeals funding raised was allocated to community projects as described on page 33.

Bushfire Monetary Donations Sub-committee

The Bushfire Monetary Donations Sub-committee (BMDS) was established to ensure a collaborative approach to the provision of financial assistance to affected households using funds outside of those raised by the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal. Membership of the sub-committee included Rotary Tasmania, Lions Tasmania, St Vincent de Paul Society, Uniting Care, the Salvation Army and Red Cross, and meetings were held monthly since May 2013.

Individuals and households were referred to the BMDS, which would allocate an appropriate point of contact from among the committee members. Through this process, approximately 40 individuals and households have been directly assisted by member organisations through the provision of counselling, payment of bills and resolution of bushfire-related problems or damage that were beyond their capacity.

Member organisations have also provided direct funding for a range of community initiatives, and the regular meetings have enabled discussion about particular needs in the community and resolution as to an appropriate course of action or follow up.

Other forms of financial relief

Financial relief was also provided through extensions to land tax, rate remissions, and remission/waiver of planning, building and plumbing fees. The Australian Government also provided Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy (DIRS) assistance.

Donated goods

The Tasmanian bushfires of January 2013 sparked an outpouring of goodwill from the general community that resulted in donations of large quantities of clothing and household items from across Australia and beyond. St Vincent de Paul Society had the lead role in the management of donated goods, which was a significant task, given the huge volume and highly variable quality of unsolicited donated goods.

Owing to the significant management issues in terms of sorting, storing and distributing items, the Taskforce established the Donated Goods Sub-committee to assist with coordination. Donated goods were made available through the St Vincent de Paul Society Assistance Centres (located behind the DISH and at the Showgrounds) and the Salvation Army Op Shop. The St Vincent de Paul Society also organised a register to match donated items with those in need and worked with other organisations such as Rotary Tasmania and the Salvation Army to coordinate the recovery and distribution of donated goods. Other donated goods were distributed by service providers throughout the recovery where and when required.

Collaborative partnerships

There were many organisations involved in providing support to individuals, families and communities, including: the Tasman Community and Health Service, the Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House, Lions Tasmania, Red Cross, Rotary Tasmania, Anglicare, Copping Community Care Centre, Rural Alive & Well, the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society and Uniting Care. Many of these organisations were part of the Active Partners Group.

A full list of these of these organisations and their involvement is provided in Appendix Four.

These collaborative partnerships led to the delivery of many programs to support community recovery. The breadth of these programs is indicated in the list below however it is acknowledged that many local organisations, especially the Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House, Tasman Community and Health Service and the Copping Community Care Centre, continued to run their vast array of programs above and beyond this.

- A Tool Library, funded by the Lions and Rotary Clubs, was coordinated by many volunteers at the DISH. The Tool Library has since been used by other organisations involved in recovery, such as Dad's Army and BlazeAid.
- Dad's Army, a recent addition to the recovery landscape, has helped with odd jobs around town for those unable to complete the tasks themselves. Both members and recipients have found that completing small jobs around the house can be very rewarding and it sets people up to tackle the big jobs themselves later on.
- On-ground Assistance program is an informal grouping of several of the 'odd-jobs' programs (eg Dad's Army, Neighbourhood House Garden Restoration and Revegetation Program), who maintain a joint list of jobs and meet weekly to ensure coordination of fencing, odd jobs etc.
- Community organisations have also supported community events, such as the Murdunna fortnightly barbecue. Supported by the Tasman Rotary Club, the event helps members of the community reconnect with each other.
- Financial and Legal Aid has been provided at the DISH with organisations like Anglicare and Legal Aid locating there on a weekly basis until mid-2013. These organisations have helped people get through life's usual challenges while also dealing with recovery stresses.

- The beyondblue Child and Family Disaster Program has operated since early 2013 and is due for completion in mid-2014. By early 2014, the program had screened 222 individuals and provided support to a proportion of these people. The program has also developed resources for teachers and the general public, some of which are available on the YouTube Tasmanian Child and Family Bushfire Response channel. This program was funded through the Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal.

Lions and Rotary Services Clubs

The local branches of Rotary and Lions Clubs have provided support in several key areas. Members of these clubs played crucial roles in coordinating volunteer effort and both Rotary Tasmania and Lions Tasmania provided financial support to a range of initiatives. Their involvement has provided a level of flexibility to the style of assistance that has been delivered, as their organisational structure is less constrained than government and many of the non-government organisation partners.

Assistance with temporary accommodation

Many of the households who lost their homes in the fire chose to live in temporary accommodation until an alternative was available. The Bushfire Recovery Unit made contact with all people displaced by the fires, discussed their circumstances and then provided appropriate follow up where required. Most of the households did not require any particular assistance, however ongoing contact was maintained with those who accepted the offer.

Some people continued to live on their land in caravans or other temporary dwellings. Direct assistance was provided to 17 households whose temporary accommodation did not meet basic sanitary, security or health standards. A coordinator was employed to oversee the work of contractors and was able to provide personalised assistance to households struggling to regain shelter.

Lions Tasmania delivered the purpose-built Community Amenities Unit located in Bay St Dunalley, next to the Fire Station. The \$150 000 facility contains showers, toilets, washing machines and clothes dryers for those who lost their homes. Lions Tasmania also established a Tool Library in Dunalley. Used after the 2009 Victorian bushfires, the library provides a variety of tools on loan to local residents. Rotary Tasmania also provided pallets of fresh water and donations of clothing and furniture.



What we have learnt

Community spirit, assistance and support are key ingredients to keep communities buoyant throughout a recovery. There is no 'one size fits all' method for social and personal recovery after an emergency and a wide-ranging approach is needed to ensure people feel safe, secure and supported throughout all recovery stages.

Key elements found to help deliver the right combination of support to affected communities include:

- Local Information and Service Hubs to provide timely, accessible social and personal assistance via a mix of local friendly staff and other expertise and guidance.
- Information provided in a variety of forms to instil hope and help community members to know what they might expect as they establish their own 'new normal'.
- Locally-driven community events, especially those involving food, to encourage local interaction, strengthen friendships and foster community spirit.
- Ensuring donated goods are stored and sorted in a central offsite location, to be matched with local needs without placing the burden of coordination on people within the affected communities.
- Collaborative partnerships to first and foremost support and strengthen local capacity, then fill identified gaps.

Some things that might be helpful in future recovery programs include:

- A single registration process for those affected by the fires to ease the burden of repeated form filling and enable streamlined service provision.
- Clear messages to encourage donors to give money, not goods, as the most effective form of support.

What we have learnt (cont.)

Social and personal support

The diverse needs of individuals and families directly and indirectly affected by the fires demanded a wide-ranging approach to deliver adequate social and personal support in the weeks and months following the fires. Staff involved in delivering these services were absolutely committed to meeting this demand, and widespread feedback is that they were very successful in doing so.

During November 2013 a representative sample of community members in the fire-affected areas were asked via a telephone survey what worked well for them, and what they thought could have been done differently throughout the recovery. The most common response when asked what worked well was community spirit, assistance and support, and almost half of the respondents could not think of any aspects of the bushfire recovery process that could have been better. This provides a clear indication of general satisfaction that the wide-ranging recovery needs of the broader community were met (refer Appendix 3 for a summary of survey results).

Timely and accessible assistance

Support provided at the DISH was particularly well-received by many within the community because of its accessibility and its stable, inviting environment. It was a friendly 'go to' centre, with a range of dedicated staff to provide counselling, answer queries or broker relationships with other service providers. In conjunction with other providers, local and further afield, most issues or queries that arose were able to be quickly resolved. Similar assistance was provided until May 2013 at Sorell and Murdunna.

A 'new normal'

Feedback also shows that personal recovery was greatly enhanced by helping the community to understand what to expect during the different emotional and physical stages during their personal recovery journey – most importantly that 'normal' means different things to each individual. The many forms of communication used to engage different parts of the community at different times, such as *Recovery News*, fact sheets and the DVD from Dr Rob Gordon, supported this process by providing messages of hope and restoration, and ways for individuals and communities to establish their 'new normal'. These resources were made available via the Recovery website.

Community events

Events, activities and gatherings – particularly those that involved food and refreshments – brought people together and enabled informal conversation and relationship building. Feedback shows that the early establishment and regularity of events, such as the fortnightly barbeques at Murdunna, were highly valued with the lasting impact of strengthened friendships within the community.

Acknowledgement of the needs of other members of community spurred community-driven ideas such as the Winter Woodchop and Dad's Army, which provided ways to usefully engage men and address recovery needs within the community. Similarly, youth programs, local craft and environmental groups engaged other members of the community with activities suited to their needs and preferences.

The events initiated by the community were viewed as the most successful and government support, where needed, included provision of financial, promotional and organisational assistance. These events served to foster community spirit, build local capacity and promote community resilience.

Client management system

Feedback from the review suggests that a single client database system such as Major Incident Support System (MISS) has potential to be a very useful system if it is developed and planned in advance, with concern for client confidentiality and informed consent, and only if it is adequately resourced to be ready at the time of the emergency. Attempting to implement this new and untested system during the period of most intense activity was not ideal.

It will require resourcing for MISS to be kept current and ready to be rolled out in a disaster – including a System Administrator who can manage the system and make modifications as required, as well as an ongoing commitment to training and support for the staff and organisations that will provide services to affected individuals in the case of a disaster.

Single registration

A clear call for a 'single registration process' was received by those affected by the fires and echoed by service providers working within the community. Enabling clients to register basic information, including the degree of impact from the disaster, would eliminate the need for them to revisit the trauma by repeatedly telling their story.

This registration process would ideally be catered for by the MISS. An alternative or additional suggestion to improve this process includes utilising Red Cross to enhance their registration process so they can also collect baseline information needed by government agencies for funding and other purposes such as the clean-up process. This way, clients would only need to register this information once, thereby streamlining all future information transactions.

Reduce service duplication

A central client management database would also help to reduce duplication of services. A particular concern frequently raised by members of the community was the intrusion of constant doorknocking. Others wanted more contact; for some members of the community, having someone knock on their door was the only contact they received. A central database recording individual contact, by whom, and visiting preferences would reduce angst and enhance the ability to meet the needs of those who are hard to reach. Again, this function would ideally be covered by the MISS.

Collaborative partnerships

The local presence of staff and social workers at the recovery hubs complemented a range of other community organisations such as the Neighbourhood House, local churches and other groups across the affected region. Together, these organisations were able to support different members with varying needs within the community. Friction between the various organisations has emerged on occasions and is a clear indicator that sensitivity must be exercised, particularly when implementing new services where providers are already operating similar activities.

A common sentiment was that the 'transition to long-term recovery' begins from day one and external resources should first and foremost support and strengthen local capacity. Only then should they fill identified gaps, with exit strategies managed and effectively communicated. Feedback through the review provides a clear message that more time and effort should have been dedicated to defining roles and responsibilities, building key relationships and working on these strategies with the Neighbourhood House, among others.

Additionally, a strong message was that prolonged presence in a community must be managed carefully to meet needs without creating a dependency.

Making the most of external resources

A host of services and assistance such as business, financial, legal and rebuilding support was provided at the hubs and other local centres. This meant that services were convenient for people to access advice or assistance, and many comments were received to reflect the importance of this in reducing the stress related to seeking such help independently.

Those who delivered recovery services found that the greatest success occurred when they built on existing relationships or strengthened the services already familiar to the community. For those stakeholders that did not have pre-existing relationships within the community, such partnerships enabled them to leverage known networks to quickly establish trust among locals.

Solving complex problems

More formal partnerships on committees such as the Red Cross Distribution Committee, Monetary Donations Sub-Committee and the Donated Goods Sub-Committee served to strengthen relationships among stakeholders and provide transparency and balanced guidance on some very complex issues. Although the activity of these committees was low profile, over the last year the community benefited greatly from their work. The members of these groups have been unanimous in the view that the collaborative approach has greatly assisted with the delivery of their programs and brought a much higher level of integration than would otherwise have been achieved.

What we have learnt (cont.)

Monetary and material assistance

The overwhelming display of goodwill by way of donations to those affected by the 2013 bushfires in Tasmania was testament to strong media coverage and other forms of communication that spread the news of the devastating effect on the fire-ravaged communities. Money and goods quickly flooded in, even from international donors.

While the scale of goodwill was greatly appreciated by recipients, dealing with the sheer volume of unsolicited donations of second-hand clothing and goods created significant extra work for local people and took the time and focus of service providers (who could have been dealing with other essential recovery tasks). It was found that large quantities of donated goods can have a negative impact on local businesses and delay economic recovery.

“Give money, not goods – please!”

A key learning is the need to send out a strong, clear message to the public that the most effective way to help is to give money, not goods. This gives recipients flexibility and choice, promotes self-directed recovery and more accurately targets need. It also stimulates local economies.

However, it is acknowledged that many people wish to respond to an emergency through giving and not all are in a position to give money. Therefore, clear and well understood mechanisms to deal with material donations are imperative. As a result of the lessons learnt, new Tasmanian guidelines for managing donated goods are currently being developed.

Options for donating money

For many fundraisers tax deductibility was not a concern, for example those providing gold coin or larger donations at benefit concerts or other fundraising events. For others, tax deductibility is an important incentive when choosing a charitable channel for their donations, many of whom chose to donate through the Red Cross Appeal.

The tight legislative constraints of registered appeal funds shaped the distribution of funds, and some donors and community members expressed thoughts about who they felt should be entitled to funding. For example, it was clear that many people struggled to accept the reasoning behind the ineligibility of fire-affected shack owners and businesses that were not entitled to receive funding from the Appeal. In terms of managing expectations of both donors and recipients, feedback suggests that communicating clear options for giving early and widely would help, particularly in terms of outlining tax deductibility and how each fund can be used.

The work of the Monetary Donations Sub-Committee was invaluable for coordinating assistance from other charitable Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to those households and individuals whose needs exceeded what was able to be provided through the Appeal funding. The work of this Sub-Committee continues, with approximately 15 households receiving a variety of levels of assistance in the early months of 2014.

Distribution of monetary assistance to individuals and households

The importance of robust methodology for the distribution of monetary donations could not be more highly emphasised. The Appeal Distribution Committee spent considerable time taking into account the diversity of needs raised by the community. A comment received during the review was that “equity wise, the methodology used for the final round of distribution could be described as a first class example of applied economics”. This valuable resource is under consideration by the Red Cross for use in future disaster situations across the nation.

Assistance with temporary accommodation

Housing Tasmania housed many of those who had lost their homes in temporary accommodation and this appeared to have worked well for many. All of the people that required this solution were able to access it, and short-term arrangements were extended in many cases, to ensure that people using this option were not pressured to move on at the end of their initial lease period.

Staying on the land

For some people after a disaster, it is important to stay on their land and in their communities, and their proximity to the area can contribute to overall community recovery. There were a number of people affected by the fire that made this decision, and the review identified that the needs of these people should be assessed as a priority, particularly before the winter months set in. Although this certainly did occur in the Sorell/Tasman area, more immediate consideration could perhaps be given to such people to ensure that their basic needs are met, just as those of people who decide to move away.

As an example, the review identified that although Lions Tasmania’s donation of laundry and ablutions facilities was greatly appreciated, the complexity of approvals and planning meant that this excellent initiative was delayed considerably. Anticipating this complexity and developing ways of dealing with it may have helped establish the facilities more quickly, and should be considered if they are needed in the future.

PROGRAM TWO: Engaging the community in decisions that affect them

Aim: To ensure bushfire-affected communities are informed and involved in the recovery processes so actions and programs match their needs.



Key recovery data

- Formation of the Sorell Tasman Affected Area Committee (STAARC) and the Central Highlands Affected Area Committee (CHAARC).
- \$1.74 million approved for 28 Community Assistance Grant projects by March 2014.
- More than 500 community submissions during the Community Assistance Grant projects consultation phase.
- Consultation for the Dunalley and Environs Structure Plan, and Dunalley and Murdunna Concept Master Plans, completed by Inspiring Place and Sorell and Tasman Councils.

What was delivered

The Recovery Hubs

The central strategy for the implementation of this program was the establishment and support of the Information and Service Hubs. As discussed earlier, this ensured that local input was given a central role in all deliberations regarding recovery.

Local presence

Establishment of the Information and Services Hubs at Murdunna, Dunalley and Sorell was a key part of this program to ensure a local connection and easy access to government services. The Murdunna and Sorell Hubs closed in May 2013 as activity through these locations had declined significantly by that time. Recovery Unit staff continued to provide services at the DISH until early 2014, at which point staffing and operations were significantly scaled back and the transition to alternative administrative arrangements implemented.

The diversity of activity at the hubs assisted in creating a welcoming atmosphere where people were comfortable to drop in for a conversation – an atmosphere that was actively cultivated by staff. This enabled an informal way to capture the mood and issues faced by the community throughout the different phases of recovery. Staff were able to pass these messages on to the Unit and AARCs to ensure decision-making was informed by the local experience. It was an effective way of engaging the community without formality.

Keeping people connected

Finding ways to keep people connected was most important. The establishment of an informal lending library, the Tool Library and the Vinnies Op Shop were all ways of giving residents a further pretext for paying a visit to the hub. This enabled them to stay in touch and often resulted in them being informed of new programs and developments, of which they may have otherwise remained unaware.

Community-driven project development

The Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Community Assistance Grants provided funding from the Tasmanian Red Cross Bushfire 2013 Appeal to support community projects that would help rebuild and revitalise fire-affected communities. Up to \$1.74 million was made available for these community projects from the Tasmanian Red Cross Bushfire 2013 Appeal fund.

Projects for the Sorell/Tasman area were developed over three rounds, with 28 projects approved for funding following an extensive public participation process. This process was guided by a flexible, phased Public Participation Plan. All projects were developed by community members, assessed for eligibility by a community panel, subjected to community feedback, and then recommended by STAARC to the Bushfire Appeal Distribution Committee for funding.

An online survey tool was used to collate and analyse community opinion regarding individual project proposals, and by the close of the consultation period for the final round, 520 individual submissions had been received. Table 2 shows the number of projects received and those approved by the community through the public participation process. The complete list of approved projects is provided at Appendix Five.

Table 2. Community Projects

Community Projects	Submissions received	Approved through public participation	Allocated funding (\$)
Round 1	18	10	126 200
Round 2	13	9	153 460*
Round 3	12	6**	1 320 050
Central Highlands projects	3	3	151 245
Total community projects	46	28	1 750 955

Figures accurate as of 20 May 2014

* \$57 680 of approved Round 2 funding was not required, and was therefore re-allocated in Round 3

** Included in this total is one large Dunalley Parks, Pathways and Playgrounds project that will have a number of components. Another two recommended projects from this round were funded from St Vincent de Paul Society and the Salvation Army.

There was a wide range in the scale and scope of projects – from bush dances for young people, through to walkways and cycle paths. In some cases project implementation will take some time owing to the need to secure development consent and the support of the landowner and land managers.

These projects represented a significant opportunity for the communities to improve recreational and other infrastructure, enhance the general liveability of the district and improve resilience to future bushfires. Recognising the opportunity to coordinate proposed community projects with the replacement of keystone infrastructure, such as the Dunalley Primary School and Community Hall, the Sorell and Tasman Councils engaged consultants to conduct community consultations and then present possibilities on concept masterplans, which were displayed for public comment.

This process gave further depth to the consultation of community members and demonstrated the level of commitment on the part of the council to achieve optimal outcomes. The masterplans are available for download from the Sorell Council website.

In the Central Highlands area, three community projects were recommended for funding by the Central Highlands AARC in response to feedback given through a number of public forums held in March 2013. The most significant of these projects is the upgrade of AM radio broadcast range in the area, enabling residents to tune in to local ABC radio to hear emergency warnings (among other things). This addressed a critical emergency communications issue that was identified by community members. The other projects were an upgrade of the community hall facilities in Ellendale that may be used in an evacuation, and a community noticeboard in Westerway.

In addition to the community projects, funding from the Red Cross Appeal was also made available for two recovery support grants. Table 3 details the distribution of the Red Cross Appeal funds towards community projects and grants.

Table 3. Distribution of the Red Cross Appeal: Community grants

Community Grants and Projects	Allocated (\$)
Community Project Grants	1 750 955
beyondblue Tasmania Child and Family Disaster Response Project	400 000
Neighbourhood House Revegetation and Garden Project	300 000
Total for community grants and projects	2 450 955



What we have learnt

The importance of community involvement at every level and every stage is imperative to help shape the recovery activities that address each community's unique priorities. Local leadership, enhanced and supported through central resourcing and coordination, ensures that local governments can provide the best recovery outcomes in their affected municipalities.

Key elements found to help support local input include:

- Formalised local input into all aspects of recovery plans and activities via community representation on Affected Area Recovery Committees, chaired by the Mayors and central to decision-making.
- Informal local input via casual conversations at the local hubs, where staff could gauge the mood of the community, distil and elevate concerns for appropriate action, or promptly dispel myths.
- Local engagement and participation of communities to develop, select and implement community recovery projects via a phased and integrated community grants program.

Some things that might be helpful in future recovery programs include:

- Additional support mechanisms in place to help reduce fatigue of community representatives.
- Improved communication to the broader community of key decisions made at AARC meetings.

Affected Area Recovery Committees

The Affected Area Recovery Committees (AARCs) were central to decision-making that affected communities. They provided the mechanism to ensure councils were plugged firmly into both central operations and the community. The genuine involvement of all involved in the AARCs has enabled a smooth transition to long-term recovery, a process that began as soon as the emergency was over.

A more complete description of achievements and learnings regarding the AARCs is provided in the earlier Framework for Recovery section.

Information and Services Hubs

Feedback shows that the hubs were considered to be comfortable and accessible centres, providing value to the community beyond just being a place to retrieve information or access services. The hubs were a connection point where community members felt listened to and given individual attention; the informal approach being a good example of the value of minimising bureaucracy. Community members appreciated the 'human' touches, and people who would normally be reluctant to contact government with their concerns felt comfortable accessing the hubs. Where appropriate, concerns raised were elevated, sometimes resulting in amended decisions regarding funding or service provision.

The co-location of a range of key services was also greatly appreciated to both keep people informed and provide a way for them to feed back their experience. The value of the close links of this local presence with access to central decision-makers was appreciated by many members of the community.

Community-driven project development

The rollout of the community assistance grants process garnered a mixed response from the community. Many who lost homes or had significant property damage did not feel ready or able to make a valuable contribution to the process. Others felt that the process enabled those indirectly affected to contribute energy and time and take the burden from those who were busy with their personal rebuilding projects. Further to this, there was significant external pressure for early and visible activation of recovery projects to promote feelings of hope and renewal within the community.

A hunger to help those in need

The potential of the Community Care Centre at Copping to support locals who are doing it tough has been enhanced by the installation of a cool storage room, funded by a \$13 500 Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Community Assistance Grant. Pastor Kerry Chilcott, from the Community Church at Copping, said the not-for-profit outreach group was eager to build a cool room/freezer to ensure they're good stewards of the resources that are donated to them.

The Community Care Centre currently has around 200 people on their books from the Sorell and Tasman regions, but these individuals and families don't always need assistance every week. A cool room allows the Centre to store the healthy foods (fruit, vegies, dairy products and some frozen goods) they receive from groups like SecondBite and Foodbank, and enable a wider range and larger volume of groceries to be accepted when available.

"There are many in the community who find there's not a lot left in their wallets at the end of the day," Kerry said. "They may be pensioners, single parent families, those who've lost their jobs, or even people suffering illness who are struggling to pay medical bills.

"What we desire to do is to help lift a burden from their lives – the stress of not being able to feed their families. We don't want that sort of stress to become a major factor in their lives because it can lead to family breakdown and dysfunction, and low self-esteem."

The Community Care Centre at Copping has been providing a service to the community for many years but local need increased dramatically following the 2013 bushfires. As well as providing second-hand goods, clothing, and fresh grocery items, the Centre distributed close to \$20 000 that was donated by churches and organisations across Australia.

What we have learnt (cont.)

Grant process

For the Central Highlands, announcement of funding for the three projects followed reasonably closely after approval processes were completed within Central Highlands Council. This was well received by the community and progress was underway shortly after the formalities had been attended to. For the Sorell/Tasman area, the response required a flexible, phased approach to provide a balance between community readiness with activity. Smaller projects were initially funded and the community workshops, consultations and stories of progress helped to promote the process for the larger, final rounds, which included all of the significant infrastructure projects.

Owing to concern regarding people's readiness to engage in the process, the decision was made to revise timelines entirely. This meant that while some large infrastructure project submissions were received in the second funding round, consultation and decisions were delayed until the final round in order to provide the community maximum time for consideration of the projects.

Additional consultations, including 'walk and talk' style gatherings, were held by the council and design consultants to demonstrate how the plans might look and feel if they were developed. Feedback shows that the extension of time was appreciated both by the community and councils.

Workshops

Community workshops were an important way for community members to discuss their project ideas and test concepts before providing full proposals. Communities valued the targeted approach, with a total of 12 workshops held for particular locations or themed in such a way that discussions could be concentrated on specific community needs.

Community feedback

Community feedback was an important part of the grant process and the consultation aimed to capture views from as many community members as possible to ensure that funding recommendations were actually addressing the priorities and desires identified by the affected communities. The level of interest in the community projects was demonstrated by a strong response (over 500 responses) to the feedback process.

An online survey tool was used to collate responses. It collected sufficient personal information to confirm that the range of individual responses received for the projects was representative of the community in terms of age and geographic spread. This gave Sorrel Tasman Affected Area Committee (STAARC) confidence when making recommendations that they had indeed canvassed the community to an appropriate degree for each round, but particularly important for the final round, which saw the distribution of the bulk of funding on infrastructure projects that will have significant long-term effect on the communities.

Long-term infrastructure projects

Some of the larger projects will take time to complete and STAARC is well placed to oversee their completion once the Bushfire Recovery Unit is wound up. Through STAARC, local governments and community representatives have been included throughout the entire funding process, making this an easy transition and allowing communities to fully own the process.

PROGRAM THREE:

Restoring homes, business and community infrastructure

Aim: To assist the community to restore homes, businesses and local infrastructure in a timely manner through the provision of coordinated services and advice.



Key recovery data

- The clean-up of 320 properties and removal of 42 000 tonnes of contaminated material.
- The re-survey of 129 properties, at a cost of \$140 000.
- Award-winning *Build Back Better Guide* for those planning to rebuild.
- The Building Expo, a collaboration between government and industry, attended by 90 fire-affected home and shack owners.
- Temporary accommodation for 120 people and direct assistance for 17 households staying on their land.
- Re-establishment of a temporary Dunalley Primary School, while plans progress for the permanent rebuild.
- Planning and design of the Dunalley Community Hall.
- Consultation and development of the Dunalley and Environs Structure Plan.
- Provision of an additional Environmental Health Officer to assist Sorell and Tasman Councils.

What was delivered

Restoration of homes

The keystone activity in this program was the property clean-up program delivered under a single contract between the Tasmanian Government and Hazel Brothers. Completed by the end of May 2013, the program was managed through a partnership between Bushfire Recovery Unit and the Department of Infrastructure and Energy Resources (DIER) and achieved the clean-up of 320 individual properties and the removal of at least 42 000 tonnes of material. A key consideration in choosing this course of action was the need to ensure safe and secure removal of asbestos and other hazardous materials in a coordinated way.

This initiative saved residents and businesses considerable expense and effort, as well as avoiding potential issues that often arise when there is a sudden large demand for limited specialised services.

A further avenue of assistance to fire-affected residents was provided through the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) boundary resurvey program, which re-established survey pegs on properties and updated the cadastre. This enabled property owners to proceed with design and development applications for their new buildings, as well as positioning of fences etc. In cases where surveys had already been paid for by residents, the costs were reimbursed. The program coordinated the resurvey of 116 properties and provided reimbursement for 13 surveys conducted prior to the implementation of the program, at a total cost of approximately \$140 000.

Recognising the complexity of rebuilding destroyed homes, the Taskforce published the *Building Back Better Guide*, which aimed to address issues common to people rebuilding their

dwellings (in simple and easy to understand language). The Unit also organised a building expo, held in the Dunalley Primary School gym.

In terms of rebuilding of private infrastructure, the establishment of new homes was quite noticeable in the later months of 2013. To the end of 2013, Tasman Council had processed a total of 38 development applications for the fire-affected areas. Thirteen of these were for dwellings, with the balance for sheds and other outbuildings. Sorell Council had processed a total of 109 development applications, of which 52 were for dwellings.

Restoration of community infrastructure

Reconstruction of the Dunalley Police Station, temporarily relocated to the Ambulance and Fire Station, is expected to commence in April 2014 and be completed in September 2014. A master plan for the new school has been through community consultation and has had a positive reception. The development application was submitted to Sorell Council for approval in late January 2014, and is an exciting opportunity to reconfigure the entire site.

Similarly, planning for the Dunalley Community Hall is well underway, although completion of the new building is unlikely to occur until well into 2015. The planning process for the hall has included considerable community consultation, ensuring that when complete the site and the hall will be integrated into surrounding community infrastructure.

Sorell and Tasman Councils coordinated several initiatives relevant to the restoration of community infrastructure more generally. Most notable among these has been the development of the Dunalley and Environs Structure Plan, which aimed to coordinate the future use and development of the area. It also sets out to identify options to economically revitalise the area, providing for local employment and wealth-generating activities. Again, this included a component of community consultation, including a community meeting on 21 August 2013, which was well attended and gave confidence that the final draft plan submitted to the Tasmanian Planning Commission was in tune with public sentiment.

Public and environmental health

An additional Environmental Health Officer was employed by Sorell and Tasman Councils to provide dedicated support to residents of the area. This enabled a prompt response to the multitude of public health concerns and issues, including dust and other contamination, septic systems, tank water and drainage. The Environmental Health Officer was also able to advise residents rebuilding their homes regarding aspects of environmental health and other relevant considerations.



What we have learnt

The community needed immediate assurance that decisive action was taking place towards the restoration of homes, businesses and important community infrastructure. Decisions were made at the highest level to bring rapid restoration of essential services such as electricity and telephones, visible relief through the contracted clean-up and a sense of stability for families through the temporary school rebuild. Together, this enabled people to feel confident that the big ticket items were being taken care of, so they could get on with the task of rebuilding their lives.

Key elements that supported the restoration of homes, businesses and infrastructure included:

- The early establishment of effective governance structures which mobilised a rapid restoration of essential services such as power and schooling.
- A single contract quickly awarded to ensure a safe, regulated and consistent clean-up approach to all fire-affected areas, which utilised local contractors and suppliers wherever possible.
- A successful building expo and associated information to guide people through the complex process of rebuilding.
- An integrated restoration process for large community infrastructure, which used a consultative approach to weave community desires and priorities into long-term planning outcomes.

Some things that might be helpful in future recovery programs include:

- Clearer communication regarding the involvement of qualified local contractors in clean-up operations.
- Early and ongoing provision of assistance to make the process of rebuilding more straightforward and less stressful, where possible.
- Earlier establishment of property boundary resurvey program.
- Flexibility in approvals processes for development and building, which made a complex process simpler for many residents wanting to rebuild.

What we have learnt (cont.)

Restoration of homes

The speed with which power and telecommunications were restored to the Sorell/Tasman area following the fires was noted and appreciated by most people. Aside from the obvious convenience factor, many people identified this, along with the re-establishment of the Dunalley Primary School, as a significant morale booster in the days immediately following the emergency.

Hazell-Bros clean-up

The review identified that most people regarded the Hazell Bros and DIER-managed clean-up as a key success story in the 2013 recovery efforts. The decision to contract a single company ensured that the clean-up progressed in a coordinated and safe way so that individuals and families could get on with the task of rebuilding. While there were some criticisms, mainly regarding property rehabilitation, householders in general were extremely grateful for the clean-up assistance and its speedy arrival.

It is recognised that the rapid deployment of clean-up contractors comes at some cost (particularly in the early periods) to the ability to coordinate consent from insurers and land owners, and efficiently direct resources. Some stakeholders expressed the view that further time would have been useful prior to the commencement of the program. This should, however, be carefully weighed against the significant benefits to community confidence and reassurance associated with early and decisive recovery action from government.

A clear message throughout the entire process was the importance of the affected communities to know that their local contractors and suppliers would be incorporated into the process. While this was the intention, and local businesses were utilised wherever possible, the lack of initial communication of this caused some concern. This highlights the need for clear communication and regular progress updates on who was doing what.

Property re-survey

The review highlighted that most people were pleased with the resurvey work that was provided at no cost to them. Some people thought that the program could have been coordinated earlier, to allow them to get back on with the task of rebuilding sooner. Feedback suggests that the parameters for the resurvey work, in terms of block size and settlement area, were provided but the messages about the scope of the program could have been communicated more clearly so property owners knew whether or not they could access the service. Other property owners, who contracted the work privately before the program was announced, were thankful to be reimbursed.

Collaboration between government and industry

Collaboration between government and industry contributed to the *Building Back Better Guide*, which recently won a 'Commendation in the Best Planning Ideas' from the Planning Industry Association of Tasmania, which recognised the benefit of having comprehensive advice in such a format.

The Building Expo, attended by many of those who had lost homes and shacks in the fires, is another example of good collaboration between government and industry following the fires. In particular, it assisted many fire-affected home owners to make contact with the relevant organisations and individuals who were then able to provide ongoing help with their building activities.

Restoration of community infrastructure

The speedy establishment and opening of the temporary Dunalley Primary School was widely recognised as being a boost for the morale of the whole community, and it has served its intended purpose very well. For the reestablishment of permanent infrastructure, the community has been very vocal about the benefits of a more thorough, consultative approach. Proposals, consultation and integration of community-led infrastructure projects through the Community Assistance Grants program added another layer to the restoration of the settlements.

The importance of planning

As with any community, there were differing views on how best to rebuild community infrastructure, such as the community hall and school. Some people and community groups thought they should just "get on with it", whereas others wanted more time to plan, understand and contribute to the process. These varied views are difficult to reconcile and indicate the need for high levels of community engagement and coordination between recovery organisations, community groups and local government.

Community consultation

It is important to recognise that normal methods for consultation and established timeframes need to be adjusted during difficult times. With more than 500 submissions in response to the selection of community projects, this indicates that the consultation undertaken was important to the community. It was particularly important to ensure funding distributions were aligned with the recovery priorities identified by the people who live and spend time in the fire-affected areas.

Local governments have enormous technical and project expertise and links into the community which must be harnessed by the recovery effort from the outset. A number of initiatives involving community consultation and implementation of projects may have benefitted from more effective coordination of these various elements. Concern was expressed by community members that all of the consultation was at times somewhat bewildering, which suggest that there was room for greater streamlining of planning and consultation on significant projects and initiatives.

PROGRAM FOUR: Helping the local economy to rebound

Aim: To encourage revitalisation of the economy by working with local businesses to determine the most effective forms of assistance and support.



Key recovery data

- \$816 863 of grants to 60 small businesses assisted by the Economic Development Officer and funded under Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).
- \$974 938 worth of grants made to 47 eligible primary producers to assist with property clean-up and restoration, managed by DPIPWWE under joint Federal and State Government NDRRA.
- \$75 580 worth of grants to seven not-for-profit organisations.
- \$510 000 Winter Assistance Package to assist with re-fencing, re-seeding and fodder.
- \$1.364 million allocated to five loans funded through the Bushfire Recovery Loans initiative.
- Provision of an Economic Development Officer from the Department of Economic Development to work specifically with bushfire recovery for 12 months, and the development of a long-term and strategic economic recovery plan.
- \$250 000 tourism advertising program that created the Tassie Comeback Tour.
- \$50 000 in cooperative promotion with Tourism Tasmania and local tourism businesses.
- \$30 000 DEDTA grant to fund the Dunalley Cove Marina Feasibility Study.
- \$20 000 DEDTA grant for the Dunalley and Environs Structure Plan.
- More than 300 km of fencing rebuilt by BlazeAid.
- At least 650 km of fencing constructed with Government assistance, including 137 km through the Tasmania Prisons Service work crews.
- Formation of the Sorell Tasman Economic Recovery Group (STERG).

What was delivered

Support to local businesses

In the first half of 2013, assistance was provided directly to tourism operators, primary producers and other businesses to give short-term relief from the cost pressures of clean-up and disruption to business. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism and the Arts (DEDTA) focussed its Southern Region Office on the Sorell/Tasman area to ensure that sufficient support was provided to businesses requiring assistance with strategy and planning. Through this arrangement, DEDTA based one officer in the DISH to work closely with industry groups, non-government organisations, governments, local leaders and community groups to achieve long-term economic development rather than simply addressing shorter-term economic recovery.

Between January and September 2013, DEDTA worked with an estimated 150 businesses and not-for-profit organisations in the area, leading to the successful application for a range of grants totalling \$2 291 381 that will underpin recovery, innovation and future growth of the recipients' businesses. The close working relationship has also assisted to build the capacity of several small businesses to establish credentials and qualifications, which will provide them with legitimacy that will be of benefit over the longer term.

Recovery of economic infrastructure

DEDTA provided \$20 000 to Sorell and Tasman Councils to commission Structure and Environs Plans for Dunalley and Murdunna respectively. Now complete and adopted by the Councils, the structure plans will inform the development of the new Sorell and Tasman Planning Schemes and provide a strategic planning framework for Dunalley that encourages connectivity, access, quality and non-duplication of services. This is particularly relevant for the rebuild of the Dunalley Primary School and Dunalley Community Hall, as the framework will help to ensure that these and other projects integrate with the overall strategic development of the town in terms of design, function and location.

In addition to this, DEDTA provided \$30 000 to Sorell Council for the Dunalley Cove Marina Redevelopment Feasibility Study, which aims to explore the potential of commercial opportunities to enhance the liveability of Dunalley, increase visitation activity and grow the local economy. The study's recommendations will constitute a coherent set of coordinated actions and strategies for Sorell Council to work with. A project working group has been formed and work is in its early stages.

The Sorell Tasman Economic Recovery Group (STERG) was created to assist with the delivery of Southern Regional Economic Development Plan in the area. Mostly comprising local business operators from a range of interests, the group met a number of times and provided a useful reference point as concepts for economic recovery were developed. A review workshop in June 2013 concluded that STERG had completed its initial agreed tasks, and it has not met since that time. The group is likely to re-form in the first half of 2014 with a view to working with DEDTA to make a contribution to longer-term economic development, consistent with the Southern Regional Economic Development Plan.

The Tassie Comeback Tour was an advertising program managed by DEDTA to encourage Tasmanians back to the local area. Featuring local identities and recognisable locations, the television commercial aimed to boost visitor numbers through the area and create flow on effects for local businesses that had suffered a very poor season to that point.

Assistance to primary producers

The destruction of more than 6 000 km of fences, plus crops, stock and infrastructure impacted seriously on a large number of primary producers and their ability to create income. The initial work carried out by BlazeAid volunteers in the months following the fires had a huge impact, both in terms of length of fences repaired and the morale of the farmers who received this extraordinary gift of generosity, often from interstate visitors giving up their holiday time to lend a hand.

Following on from BlazeAid's fantastic start, the Primary Producers Winter Assistance Package (Winter Package) was coordinated by the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) and NRM South, using funds provided by the governments of South Australia and Western Australia, and Rotary and Lions Tasmania. The Tasmanian Government coordinated fencing crews from the Tasmania Prison Service (TPS) and provided funding for overall program coordination.

The program, launched on 20 June and concluded on 21 October 2013, was overseen by a steering committee comprised of representatives from the Unit, TFGA, TPS, Sorell Council, Central Highlands Council, NRM South, Rotary Tasmania and Lions Tasmania.

Direct assistance was provided to farmers across the fire-affected area, including stock feed and 4.5 tonnes of grass seed to re-sow damaged pastures. TFGA coordinated the fencing program, which provided 566 km of fencing material to 37 property owners, with a total materials value of \$256 000. Rotary had previously provided seed for many farmers in the fire-affected areas, and also provided 24 farm gates for farms in the Central Highlands.

The TPS provided two work crews and supervised the works program, erecting 137 km of fencing from between the start of the program and the end of April 2014, averaging approximately 650 m of high quality fencing per day. The crews also assisted farmers to plant tree shelter belts, construct fire breaks, remove bushfire debris and erect stock yards. These crews will continue their work on bushfire-affected properties until at least the end of April 2014.

The Winter Package followed on from an earlier initiative led by the TFGA that provided approximately \$100 000 towards fencing costs for primary producers.

Finally, NRM South has recently committed \$30 000 to oversee a project that will evaluate options to manage fire-destroyed tree plantations. This project will be carried out in collaboration with DEDTA and DPIPW.



What we have learnt

Understanding the economic landscape of affected regions is essential to understanding how best to proceed with economic recovery assistance and activities. The provision of small injections of immediate or short-term assistance to enable businesses to get back on their feet needed to be balanced with a good understanding of the economic nuances of the region to support a robust long-term strategic economic recovery plan. Business mentoring enabled business owners and operators to understand sustainable options for their individual circumstances.

Key elements that supported the economic recovery included:

- Local presence of a trusted and respected economic development officer to provide advice, mentoring and long-term solutions for business owners.
- Harnessing the motivation and generosity of volunteers to enable invaluable practical support to farmers.
- The availability of funds that had greater flexibility and enabled the implementation of programs to assist businesses, including primary producers, where other charitable funds were not able to be used for this purpose.
- A tourism promotion to bring people back into the region, galvanise community spirit and support local businesses.

Some things that might be helpful in future recovery programs include:

- Clear pre-season communication to business owners of the need for safe, backed-up record keeping.
- Availability of 'giving' options so donors who wish to support local businesses can do so.
- Provision for a small business and/or social enterprise grants program to support long-term strategic outcomes for the affected region.
- Uniform assistance to all primary producers for use in re-fencing, fodder and re-seeding without 'hardship' constraints.
- Quality control and distribution of donated stock feed through a single coordinator, such as Rotary Tasmania.

Economic development presence

Those interviewed through the review were very positive about the role and benefits of having an experienced economic development officer with excellent local connections based at the DISH to provide mentoring and business advice. As a result of this work, most respondents agreed that a long-term and strategic approach to economic recovery was preferable to limited short-term assistance.

Financial assistance

The review highlighted that some business owners thought that some of the rigorous assessment processes made access to financial assistance difficult. Some grants required supporting evidence that had either been destroyed or was unable to be produced, and this made administration of the grants complex and time-consuming.

There is an obvious need for the processes to be rigorous to ensure that decisions regarding funding are sound and transparent. There is no suggestion that the standards of evidence and assessment should be loosened, so this highlights the need for messages about safe record-keeping to be widely communicated to business owners before an emergency. Further to this, business owners must be reminded that following an emergency, expenditure receipts should be kept so that they may claim for legitimate expenses.

Tax constraints of funding

Another reason affected businesses found it difficult to access funding was partly due to legislative constraints concerning the disbursement of funds from registered charities. It was suggested that the consideration of immediate assistance for small businesses could be improved in future recovery efforts if certain tax implications were waived in instances of disaster recovery.

Because funds donated by the governments of South Australia and Western Australia were not from registered charities, they were able to be used for the Winter Package, which directly supported primary producers to recover their operations. This source of funding gave greater flexibility and enabled the implementation of programs to assist businesses, where other charitable funds were not able to be used for this purpose.

As previously noted, this also highlights the usefulness for donors to be given options for giving. Those who do not require tax deductibility of their donation may prefer the option to donate to businesses.

Social enterprises

A further avenue that some respondents to the review raised was the provision of start-up funding and training support for social enterprise ideas which would help with recovery efforts. It was felt that either through Appeal or Tasmanian Government funding, the multiple benefits of this approach warrant exploration in this context. Outcomes could include provision of local employment, building entrepreneurial and business skills, as well as meeting social needs within the community.

Tassie Comeback Tour

The review found that the Tassie Comeback Tour advertising campaign was well received and successful at bringing people back into the region and in particular, galvanising community spirit and support for the benefit of the local businesses. This initiative was recognised as a worthwhile investment, as it had a noticeable effect on passing trade.

Recovery of economic infrastructure

Sorell Tasman Economic Recovery Group (STERG)

After its establishment in February 2013, STERG achieved its initial goals but found that short-term progress on the ground was difficult to bring about. Feedback suggests that STERG is seen to have potential as a driver for collaboration between both of the municipalities and considerable opportunity to contribute to the long-term economic recovery of the region, but that it was not necessarily the best vehicle for immediate assistance. The role of STERG going forward will continue to develop in collaboration with DEDTA according to the response to this opportunity by the local business community.

What we have learnt (cont.)

Assistance to primary producers

Income threshold for primary producers

The provision of assistance through several major recovery programs targeted primary producers, as defined by the proportion of income derived from primary production being more than 51 per cent. This income threshold is agreed between Australian and State Government guidelines for disbursement of disaster relief funding for the clean-up and assistance grants.

While it is recognised that such a threshold is important, in some circumstances it did have the effect of excluding certain producers with mixed sources of income and newly established farms from recovery assistance programs. As this group of producers also provide an important economic contribution to regions, it was suggested that some flexibility should be considered when determining eligibility for future recovery programs, with regard to the long-term strategic economic focus of each region.

Financial assistance for primary producers

The financial assistance for primary producers and use in re-fencing, fodder and re-seeding was well received in general, although there were exceptions. It was repeatedly noted that it was difficult to help primary producers when assistance was couched in 'hardship terms'; one respondent said, "You had to badger [farmers] to take some money." Additionally, some respondents noted that the delivery of the Winter Assistance Package may have been more useful in providing the desired outcomes if it had been provided earlier.

Coordination of volunteers

In the period immediately following the bushfire, rural landowners were inundated with offers of assistance for restoring damaged and destroyed fences, clearing vegetation and other similar tasks. The impressive effect of this voluntary assistance can be measured in terms of kilometres fenced, for example, but feedback indicates that a higher value may have been in the morale boost provided to the recipients of this generous assistance.

While Volunteering Tasmania, BlazeAid, and Landcare Tasmania all worked hard to coordinate action for priority areas and supply volunteers with work and materials, the review identified that such efforts can prove very challenging. For example, at times BlazeAid volunteers were short on fencing materials and were therefore unable to

progress with much needed works. Feedback suggests that there is scope to improve coordination and motivation of volunteers across the different phases of the recovery so that their extraordinary generosity can be best utilised in times and places of most need.

A similar contribution has been made by work-crews supervised by the Tasmania Prison Service. Originally initiated through the Winter Assistance Package, the program was extended twice, with a current conclusion planned for the end of April 2014.

This program has obvious benefits for the primary producers who receive assistance, and also provides an opportunity for the participants to build practical skills and make a contribution to the recovery effort. The success of the partnership is a reminder that collaborations can sometimes occur with unlikely partners.

Fencing

Over the longer term, the enormity of the task and high cost of repairing fences has become increasingly apparent. These factors caused additional hardship for people whose properties were damaged by the bushfires and in some cases may have impeded their recovery. Assistance with costs and through provision of labour to affected landowners may reduce this ongoing impact and be of benefit to the broader community.

In addition, the added complexity of fence ownership and replacement costs when neighbouring land is publicly owned continues to cause concern. This issue may warrant further consideration, to ensure that fencing costs for repairs and replacements are equitable for all landowners, regardless of their neighbour.

Fodder for farmers

In the period immediately following the bushfires, there was an acute need for stock feed and this was donated and organised on an ad-hoc basis by a number of individuals. While this was provided largely through donations, it was thought that the collection and distribution of this feed would benefit from a coordinated approach to provide quality control and ensure that donated feed is delivered to areas of greatest need. Subsequent discussions indicate that Rotary Tasmania would be well placed to be tasked with this role for future emergency and recovery efforts, having coordinated delivery of around 1 000 bales of feed in the early days after the fires.

PROGRAM FIVE: Supporting environmental recovery

Aim: To support environmental recovery of affected areas by assisting landowners with information, advice, and monitoring and rehabilitation projects.



Key recovery data

- 42 000 tonnes of hazardous waste removed from fire-affected properties.
- \$80 000 grant provided to NRM South to re-establish pasture and shelter belts.
- DPIPWWE assistance to 22 properties with high conservation value land.
- \$300 000 Community grant for the Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House Garden Restoration Program.
- 160 gardening course participants and 30 home gardens assisted by Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House.
- \$280 000 in vegetation clearance grants distributed from the Red Cross Appeal Funds.
- Partnerships between NRM South, Volunteering Tasmania, Landcare, Plant Aid and Weed Aid.
- \$40 000 allocated to weed control in the latter half of 2014.

What was delivered

The clean-up of properties delivered by Hazell Bros provided substantial environmental benefits by removing hazardous materials from the fire-affected areas, as well as enabling residents to commence rehabilitation of their private properties.

The Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal provided further assistance to private property owners through the Revegetation and Garden Restoration Program, which is being led by the Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House. The program aims to assist households in the community to begin the re-establishment of gardens affected by the fires by providing advice and information, as well as hands-on assistance in some circumstances.

In 2013, the program conducted 38 working bees at 30 properties and facilitated 17 gardening-related courses, with approximately 160 participants attending. The most popular courses have been fruit tree maintenance and post fire care, fruit tree grafting, native plant propagation, the trip to the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, and Spring Garden Design. A further seven gardening courses were scheduled across the summer months.

Assistance was also provided to primary producers dealing with environmental issues, either caused or worsened by the fires, through an initiative led by NRM South and delivered as part of the Winter Assistance Package. An allocation of \$80 000 was made to re-establish pasture and shelter belts, repair internal fencing and protect remnant native vegetation. This built on an earlier initiative led by NRM South which used Australian Government funding, making a total of 24 properties funded for these works across the fire-affected areas. Funding was also provided to community and Landcare groups to conduct a variety of activities including weed mapping, field days and weed eradication.

Finally, in recognition of the fact that weed problems are likely to emerge in future months and years, \$40 000 has been reserved for expenditure on weed control for the spring of 2014. This allocation will be managed by DPIPWWE in collaboration with relevant partners, including the local governments.



Photo by: Bushfire Recovery Unit

What we have learnt

Responding appropriately in the wake of environmental destruction after the bushfire was an enormous challenge for those involved in environmental recovery roles. Balancing the need for visual rehabilitation with safety and resource availability saw collaborative efforts that activated both vegetation clearance and revegetation programs. Mobilising and keeping volunteers engaged, coordinating green and hazardous waste activities, and providing relevant environmental recovery advice, required a concerted effort from a number of different recovery agents.

Key elements that supported the environmental recovery included:

- A coordinated, safe and uniform clean-up of hazardous waste by a single operator;
- Strengths-based collaborations with existing organisations to provide optimal environmental recovery outcomes for revegetation and weed management programs.
- Generosity of volunteers and neighbouring councils to provide immediate help where it was needed most.

Some things that might be helpful in future recovery programs include:

- Provision of clear council guidelines and environmental recovery information to help affected residents understand vegetation clearance protocols and rejuvenation techniques specific to their area.
- Greater attention to clearance of dangerous or unsightly burnt vegetation from public spaces.
- Methods for harnessing initial groundswell of volunteer motivation to inspire commitment to longer-term environmental recovery assistance, often needed months and years after the emergency.

Hazardous waste

Feedback to the review highlighted a general consensus that the single, government-appointed contractor for the clean-up provided an effective way to manage the environmental hazards of asbestos and treated pine found in many of the buildings. The review unearthed anecdotal evidence that in the small number of cases where property clean-ups were managed independently, environmental and workplace safety was not always guaranteed. This coordinated initiative was viewed as a fundamental success factor of the clean-up and should be given consideration in any future large-scale disaster recovery exercise.

Vegetation clearance

Following the fires, burnt trees – dead or alive – dotted the landscape and generated much concern throughout the community. Some thought them an eyesore and wanted them removed, others wanted to see them rejuvenate as time went by and others still were concerned by their risk to safety.

During the early days, an unmonitored immediate reaction saw a number of people chopping down many of the trees on their property and surrounding forests, despite the fact that burnt trees are not necessarily dead and would recover in time. Many people found this reaction to be very distressing and wanted to know more about the best ways to help the environment to recover. There was a general perception that clear Council guidelines must be in place so people know what they can and cannot do, particularly concerning tree removal after a fire.

Vegetation clearance was such an important issue for residents and landowners and these messages came through from the community consistently throughout the year. The Appeal Distribution Committee took this into account and allocated approximately \$280 000 through Round 4 payments to assist eligible residents with the costs associated with removal of burnt vegetation.

Information on environmental recovery

There is a host of information about what to expect as the environment recovers, how to control weeds and what to replant in fire-affected areas. Several organisations responded by developing and disseminating information sheets with key messages for landowners. It was suggested that additional support could have been provided by the Unit in communicating these messages widely. The review also indicated that information specific to the Tasmanian environment could be prepared in advance to aid in the immediate aftermath of future disasters.

In addition, it was felt that more work could be done about vegetation clearance in public spaces. The generous support of neighbouring councils by way of roadside trimmers and green waste removals was greatly appreciated in the Sorell and Tasman municipalities, but it was felt by the community that more support could be provided by local government and other groups to inspect and remove unsafe burnt trees on public land. In addition, some felt that more measures could be taken to ensure that those trees that would rejuvenate with time were identified as such so they could be left alone.



Collaborative and strengths-based approach

Effective environmental recovery was enabled through collaboration between DPIPWE, NRM South and local groups working in the fire-affected region. The review identified that each organisation brings unique environmental recovery expertise. For example, DPIPWE and NRM South were able to provide landscape modelling and work with large landholders for their best outcomes. The Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House, Landcare Tasmania and The Understorey Network appeared best placed to galvanise community volunteers and undertake various revegetation and weed management projects on the ground.

In particular, the review identified that the work undertaken by Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House was well regarded by the community. This strengths-based approach should be encouraged in future recovery efforts, and could be further enabled through the pre-season planning and mapping of community resources for recovery roles, as suggested in other sections of this report.

One contributor to recovery activities said: “I feel privileged to be able to coordinate the generosity and compassion that results in good for those who need it – you end up being the Postman for the gift: all it takes is coordination to deliver it.”

Preparing your land for bushfire

Some local governments provide free green waste collection weeks both pre- and post-fire season. It was felt that these provide timely opportunities to communicate bushfire-preparedness messages to residents. Similar action by local governments across Tasmania could be encouraged.

Managing volunteers

The review identified some issues in managing volunteer expectation and motivation, and the volunteers themselves – particularly with aspects of environmental recovery. On the one hand, BlazeAid is an example of a highly successful initiative particularly concerning issues such as volunteer registration, coordination and retention. However some environmental projects, despite an initial groundswell of support, had difficulties in retaining the motivation of volunteers due to delays and complications experienced by many environmental recovery projects. In many ways this situation was most apparent in environmental recovery as it provides many opportunities for relatively unskilled volunteering, particularly at the individual property scale.



Where to from here?

The Taskforce recognises that the process of recovery from the January 2013 fires may take many years for families, individuals and communities, and may never be complete for some people. However, the major organisational tasks associated with the recovery are now either complete, or well advanced towards completion.

This section outlines plans for those structures and services that will remain in place for a defined period, and other processes and programs that are being handed over to appropriate organisations to manage longer term.

Governance

Tasmanian Bushfire Recovery Taskforce

The Taskforce has discharged the roles and functions for which it was established, and has made appropriate arrangements to formally conclude as a Ministerial Committee under the *Emergency Management Act 2006*.

Red Cross Appeal Distribution Committee and other committees

As detailed in earlier sections, the Red Cross Appeal Distribution Committee has approved funds for a variety of purposes and has therefore concluded the majority of its responsibilities. A relatively small amount of funding remains unallocated, and the Committee will be called upon at some point in the future to finalise decisions in connection with this. The Office of Security and Emergency Management (OSEM) will coordinate any required secretariat or other processes to enable this to occur.

The Bushfire Monetary Donations Subcommittee will continue to operate until it has completed the tasks relevant to its terms of reference. The collaboration between the various representatives on this sub-committee is highly valued and may continue for some time, with the involvement of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) as a coordinating body.

Central Highlands Affected Area Recovery Committee

With the disbanding of the Central Highlands Affected Area Recovery Committee in August 2013, governance of all activity related to bushfire recovery returned to the usual approach. The Central Highlands Council and the Tasmanian Government, along with non-government organisations, have managed the transition.

Sorell Tasman Affected Area Recovery Committee

Sorell Tasman Affected Area Recovery Committee will continue to operate under its terms of reference, which were updated in August 2013 to reflect the evolving nature of the work required and a higher level of community involvement. The group continues to meet regularly and fulfil its role of coordinating recovery activities.

Over the next 12 to 18 months STAARC will play a central part in guiding the variety of projects taking place throughout the district, including those that have been funded through the Community Assistance Grants provided from the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal.

Sorell Council is coordinating a master planning process for Dunalley, which has involved community consultation and the creation of a number of concept drawings that have assisted in generating interest in possible future developments for the area. This echoes the approach taken for Murdunna by Tasman Council in connection with the proposed upgrades to community infrastructure.

STAARC will continue to play a role in guiding these projects, although the contract management will be carried out by DPAC and much of the project oversight and management will be undertaken by the relevant council.

Operational

Bushfire Recovery Unit

Staff seconded to the Unit have generally returned to their substantive positions, or an alternative role. Between April and June 2014, arrangements are in place for staff who will have responsibility for finalising transitional arrangements, managing remaining Social and Personal Support staff, and coordinating the closure of the DISH. A further small number of DPAC staff have continued involvement in Unit duties, as the need arises.

Beyond June, any emerging bushfire recovery related issues will be addressed through OSEM, or referred to an appropriate department or service provider. The Unit's 1800 toll-free number will remain in place until the end of June 2014 to ensure that bushfire-affected individuals retain easy access to government services. The use of this service will be monitored so that a decision regarding closure or appropriate alternative arrangements can be made at that time.

DPAC will continue to cover the operating costs of the DISH, and will do so until the end of June 2014. At that time, DPAC will coordinate tasks associated with the closure of the DISH, such as concluding the lease.

Social and Personal Services

DHHS's Social and Personal Support program continues to operate out of the DISH, although its services are gradually reducing. From the end of January 2014, the DISH reduced its operating hours to four days per week, with a further reduction to three days taking effect at the end of April. The Social and Personal Support team will transition the services that they provide across to an alternative provider or providers between May and June, so that all service provided by DHHS from the DISH will conclude by the end of June 2014.

DHHS will continue to provide a supporting role between NGOs, local government and government services beyond June 2014 to ensure that the effective collaboration between the organisations continues. DHHS will also be involved in the transition to existing recovery resources and relevant committees post-June 2014.

Existing clients of the Social and Personal Support program will continue to receive services that are appropriate for their needs, and services will be available for new clients. No end date has been determined for this service as interstate experience has shown that the need for counselling and other personal support services can extend for several years beyond an event such as a bushfire.

Other services provided at the DISH include the St Vincent de Paul Op Shop and Lions Club Tool Library. The Op Shop will close in June 2014 as the other services are concluding. Arrangements for storage and access of goods are still being finalised, with the aim of retaining the convenience of a local outlet. Similarly, the Tool Library will be relocated to a convenient and secure alternative location.

Community Infrastructure

The Department of Education advises that the rebuild of the Dunalley Primary School is likely to be complete in time for opening in 2016. The temporary classroom facilities will continue to operate until such time as the new developments are operational. The school gym redevelopment, which includes a fully equipped teaching kitchen is expected to be complete and operational by mid-2014.

Similarly, planning and approvals processes for the Dunalley Community Hall are well advanced. The new building is likely to be complete and operational in early 2015. It is recognised that in the meantime, the Dunalley community has no dedicated facility for meetings and functions, however the Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House, the Dunalley Primary School and the Halls and Reserves Committee have all agreed to make their respective facilities available on request, until the Community Hall is open.

Community projects

Projects that have been funded through the Community Assistance Grants provided from the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal have been formalised in contracts (usually Grant Deeds) with DPAC representing the Crown. As such, responsibility lies with DPAC to ensure that the terms and conditions are met, the project activities are completed and any audit, reporting and acquittal requirements are fulfilled. As the timeframe for conclusion of these tasks is likely to be up to two years, the Unit is transferring oversight of these responsibilities to OSEM, with support from the Community Development Division of DPAC, which will see them to conclusion.

The day-to-day management of the projects will remain in the hands of the project proponents, and STAARC and the local councils will play an active role in ensuring that the activities are completed. The largest of the projects are being led by the councils, and arrangements have been made to closely manage these projects to conclusion, and to facilitate appropriate involvement of the community. An allocation of funds has been made available from the Appeal for this purpose.



New school built on community foundations

The civic focus of Dunalley Primary School's building plans is reflected in the new Community Kitchen, which was the first of the permanent construction projects to begin at the once bushfire-ravaged site.

Elizabeth Knox, Chair of the Dunalley School Association, said the most exciting aspect of the design of the new school is that the facilities will be shared with the wider community. For instance the commercial kitchen, located within the school gym, will not only enhance the experiences of students but also provide modern facilities for community functions and small business enterprises.

Building work on the Community Kitchen began late 2013 and should be completed in March 2014. The construction of the rest of the school is due to start this Spring and is expected to take 12 months to complete.

"The plan for the rebuild has been a great collaboration between the School Association, the School, the Department of Education, and the architect, Mark Dunbabin," Elizabeth said. "Our focus has been on designing a school specifically for rural education, but one that also has a strong community element.

"The new design will also make us one of the first Tasmanian schools to achieve a five-star Green Star rating through the Green Building Council of Australia. This rating assesses the project against a broad range of environmental criteria, and considers factors such as its energy consumption through materials used in construction and operation, natural daylight, indoor air quality, water recycling, and land use."

Only 40 days after the January 2013 bushfires levelled the site, Dunalley Primary School opened its gates to a temporary school for 130 students. This mammoth effort by locals, teaching staff, the Department of Education and construction crews became a powerful symbol of a community that refused to be broken.

Elizabeth said the community's sense of optimism and security was further enhanced by the speed of the State Government's commitment to rebuild.

"There was a need to bring things together for the children and to alleviate their concerns by returning their school to normal, as much as possible," she said.

"The redevelopment of the school has also been a chance for the children to be part of the future, and for them to feel the level of support that our community received. They've very much been part of the new school design by presenting the design team with ideas and thoughts about what is important for them in their learning journey. That has given them permission to get excited about the future.

"Quite frankly the last year from January 5 onwards, to me, has been amazing. We've seen our community pull together as we recognised our love of this place we call home, and it has resulted in many new and strengthened friendships. In many respects, as we accept the losses brought about by the fires, we are able to embrace the opportunities that have been presented to us. That in itself is an important and powerful part of our recovery."

Appendices

1. Membership for Committees and Terms of Reference if applicable

- » Tasmanian Bushfire Recovery Taskforce
- » Affected Area Recovery Committees

2. Timeline of Events

3. Community Survey Questionnaire and Telephone Survey Results summary

4. NGOs involved:

- » Service Providers
- » Other NGO organisations, Landcare etc.
- » Other organisations

5. List of Approved Community Projects



Tasmanian Bushfire Recovery Taskforce Terms of Reference

Role

Harnessing the individual talents and expertise of some of Tasmania's leading business and community figures, the Tasmanian Bushfire Recovery Taskforce will take a leading and coordinating role to ensure that whatever needs to be done is done as effectively as possible to rebuild Tasmanian communities.

Function

The Tasmanian Bushfire Recovery Taskforce is established formally under the *Emergency Management Act 2006*. Its role is to:

- Provide advice on and approve an action plan for the State recovery from the 2013 bushfires, drawing on existing Tasmanian emergency management arrangements and plans;
- Provide regular progress reports to the community, government and media on the recovery progress;
- Provide advice to the Government on the needs of the people, groups, businesses and other organisations affected by the bushfire and appropriate responses;
- Provide guidance to the Bushfire Recovery Unit;
- Provide guidance to the AARCs;
- Facilitate community and expert reference groups to support the Taskforce and the AARCs;
- Work with the State Bushfire Recovery Coordinator, and the chairs of the AARCs to tackle specific issues or resolve outstanding problems; and
- Report regularly to the Ministerial Bushfire Committee.

Membership

The Taskforce comprised:

- Chair, Damian Bugg, QC, former Director of Public Prosecutions
- Steve Gunn, Blundstones Chief Executive Officer
- Barry Easter, President, Local Government Association of Tasmania
- Dr Ian Burke, Australian Red Cross Executive Director
- Jan Davis, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Chief Executive Officer
- Darren Hine, Tasmania Police Commissioner
- Rhys Edwards, Department of Premier and Cabinet Secretary
- Michael Stevens, Tasmanian Bushfire Recovery Coordinator.

Sorell/Tasman Affected Area Recovery Committee (STAARC) Terms of Reference

Background

The Sorell/Tasman Affected Area Recovery Committee has been formed to plan and lead the long-term recovery from the consequences of the major bushfires that affected the Sorell and Tasman Municipal Areas in January 2013.

Role

To assist the communities of the Sorell and Tasman Municipal Areas to manage their own recovery following the major bushfires in January 2013. Specifically this includes:

- Providing advice to the State Government, Sorell and Tasman Councils to ensure that recovery programs and services meet the needs of the communities impacted by the fires;
- Overseeing the delivery of projects that support social, infrastructure, economic and environmental recovery to ensure that they are community-owned and targeted to best support the recovery of impacted communities;
- Providing a central point of communication and coordination for the actions of the wide range of recovery-related services and projects being progressed outside of the direct control of the Committee;
- Providing input into evaluations concerning the recovery process; and
- Responding to recovery-related issues that arise in the community and ensuring that appropriate action is taken.

Functions

The work of this Affected Area Recovery Committee will include:

- Reviewing recovery-related services and programs and identifying gaps;
- Providing advice and recommendations to government and non-government organisations on priorities for investment to support the environmental, social, infrastructure and economic recovery of impacted communities;
- Maintaining arrangements to ensure that organisations involved in the recovery process can communicate with each other and align programs and projects for maximum benefit to the community;
- Where required, requesting individuals or organisations to oversee delivery of projects that support recovery;
- Providing advice to government and non-government organisations on actions required to address issues as they arise; and

- Seeking input from members of the community on recovery needs and communicating with members of the community regarding recovery-related services and program.

Membership

Members

- Kerry Vincent, Mayor, Sorell Council (co-chair)
- Jan Barwick, Mayor, Tasman Council (co-chair)
- Robert Higgins, General Manager, Tasman Council
- Mathew Healey, Director, Bushfire Recovery Unit, DPAC
- Caroline Bignell, community representative
- Elizabeth Knox, community representative
- Fiona Jennings, community representative and Local and Regional Social and Personal Support Recovery Coordinator
- Geoff Martin, community representative
- Graham Millar, community representative
- Joanne Curran, community representative
- Roseanne Heyward, community representative
- Tony Ryan, Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts
- John Harkin, Community Recovery Manager, Bushfire Recovery Unit

Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson

It is expected that the Chairperson will:

- chair meetings of the Committee;
- coordinate the development and delivery of the meeting agendas, reports and advice, and work program, including maintaining an accurate Terms of Reference; and
- provide leadership and direction to the Committee.

Executive Officer

It is expected that the Executive Officer will:

- manage and coordinate the administration of meetings, and provide secretariat support (including the distribution of the Terms of Reference);
- act as a primary point of contact and liaison for the committee members, stakeholders and proxies (if required); and
- arrange for reports to be provided as and when required.

Members

It is expected that members will:

- attend and participate in each meeting using existing skill and knowledge sets, and available resources to support the affected communities' recovery;
- actively maintain communication and relationships to achieve the Committee's purpose, including liaising in a timely way with relevant stakeholders and proxies;
- contribute to setting the agenda for meetings, developing key reports, plans and these Terms of Reference; and
- actively participate in setting and supporting the agreed recovery activities.

Proxies

It is expected that proxies will:

- fulfill their member's obligations to the Committee; and
- participate in working groups as directed by the Committee.

Stakeholders/ Guests

Guests, including stakeholders, may address the Committee and contribute to Committee discussions. Guests may not participate in the decision making of the Committee.

Practices and Protocols

Stakeholder Management

The Committee will undertake detailed stakeholder analysis and participation planning. Stakeholders to be considered should include, but not be limited to:

- Communities and individuals within the affected areas
- People affected by the bushfires external to the affected area, eg tourists;
- Councils;
- Local industry / businesses / environmental / community groups;
- Southern Region Emergency Management Committee;
- Southern Region Community Recovery Committee;
- Sorell Municipal Emergency Management Committee;
- Tasman Municipal Emergency Management Committee; and
- Non government organisations, volunteer/charity groups

Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference are the instrument of authorisation for the Affected Area Recovery Committee. It is accepted by the State Controller at the outset of the Committee's work and will be reviewed at regular intervals while recovery activities are being supported no less than every six months. Material changes to the Terms of Reference are endorsed by the State Controller, as required.

The Executive Officer is responsible for arranging distribution of the updated Terms of Reference (this includes sending a copy to the State Emergency Service).

Meeting Frequency

The Committee will meet fortnightly.

The Committee may alter this schedule according to need.

Standard Meeting Arrangements

The Committee will follow standard committee practices, keeping minutes and circulating agendas and meeting papers in a timely manner prior to scheduled meetings

Decision Making and Quorum

A quorum is no fewer than three members including the Chairperson, the Executive Officer and one other member. Decisions of the Committee shall be arrived at by consensus. In the event that consensus cannot be found, the Chair will have the final say.

Arrangements for out-of-session decisions should align with the following points:

- The Committee can make resolutions without meeting in person as long as a quorum indicates they support the written resolution.
- To indicate support, the paper containing the resolution must be signed by the quorum (hand or electronic signature).
- Multiple copies of the same paper with individual signatures are considered to be one paper.

Reporting

The Committee will report to the Tasmanian Bushfire Recovery Taskforce. This Committee aims to provide a written report that includes outcomes achieved, and will note any emerging issues/future directions.

Other reports will be made as required to other stakeholders and the affected communities.

Central Highlands Affected Area Recovery Committee (CHAARC) Terms of Reference

Role

To assist the Central Highlands community to manage their recovery following the major bushfires in January 2013 and to seek feedback from the community and others on actions that could be taken to improve the community's resilience to bushfire.

Specifically the purpose includes:

- Understanding the impacts of the Lake Repulse fire on the Central Highlands community;
- Considering assistance that could be made available to assist the Central Highlands community to recover from the fire;
- Providing advice to the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce and other relevant committees regarding specific needs of areas affected by the Lake Repulse fire;
- Providing a decision-making forum for the distribution of any available Federal or State funding for recovery initiatives; and
- Seeking input from the community and others on what arrangements may assist to build resilience in the community to future bushfires.

Function

The work of this Affected Area Recovery Committee will be characterised by collaboration with stakeholders, information-sharing and collective decision-making.

Membership

The CHAARC shall comprise:

- Deirdre Flint, Mayor, Central Highlands Council (Chair)
- Mathew Healey, Director, Bushfire Recovery Unit, DPAC
- Ann Jones, community representative
- Richard Downie, representative from the TFGA.

Secretariat support

Jan Monks, Executive Officer.

Frequency of meetings

The first meeting of the Committee was held on Thursday, 24 January 2013.

The Committee will determine the frequency of meetings based on the nature of actions agreed.

Procedures

A quorum is no fewer than three members including the Chairperson, the Executive Officer and one other member.

Arrangements for out-of-session decisions should align with the following points:

- The Committee can make resolutions without meeting in person as long as a quorum indicates they support the written resolution.
- To indicate support, the paper containing the resolution must be signed by the quorum (hand or electronic signature).
- Multiple copies of the same paper with individual signatures are considered to be one paper.

Timeline of events during the recovery

Phases of the emergency and recovery

Immediate Response: 4 – 14 January 2013

Jan	Event
4	TEIS (Tasmanian Emergency Information Service) fully operational telephone hotline
4	DHHS provides Emergency Assistance Grants: Children and Youth Services, immediate cash assistance released: \$200 per adult, \$100 per child, maximum of \$750 per family
5	Overflow telephone calls to TEIS commence being forwarded to the National Emergency Call Centre between 10.00pm and 8.00am.
5	Australian Government sent formal notification from the State of an eligible natural disaster under the Australian Government Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) in the Local Governments Areas of Sorell, Tasman and Glamorgan-Spring Bay
5	Announcement that assistance with the extraordinary costs of the bushfires be provided to the Local Government Areas of Sorell, Tasman and Glamorgan-Spring Bay under the Tasmanian Relief and Recovery Arrangements (TRRA).
5	Public Information Unit operational until BRU Community Engagement team established. Over the period 5 Jan – 21 Jan, 26 staff worked in shifts from 7.00am to 11.00pm
6	Prime Minister announces Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payments (AGDRP) financial assistance for people affected by bushfires in the Local Government Areas of Sorell, Tasman and Glamorgan-Spring Bay: \$1 000 per adult, \$400 per child
6	Personal Hardship and Distress Policy of Tasmanian Relief and Recovery Arrangements (TRRA) activated
6	Multi Agency Recovery Committee (MARC) established
6	Bushfire Recovery pages goes live on Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) site
6	Official Red Cross Tasmanian 2013 Bushfire Appeal announced
7	Bushfire Recovery Unit (BRU) established
7	Premier tours Dunally with the Prime Minister
8	Appointments for the Interim Bushfire Recovery Committee announced
9	Prime Minister announced Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payments (AGDRP) financial assistance for people affected by bushfires in the district of Ellendale
9	Tasman Emergency Recovery Management Committee (TERMC) established
10	Australian Government Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) notified for the Local Governments Areas of Circular Head, Central Highlands and Derwent Valley.
10	DPAC/OSEM assume responsibility for secretariat support to the Security and Emergency Management and Advisory Group (SEMAG)
10	Red Cross Appeal raises more than \$2 million in less than one week
10	PIU provides information sessions for residents returning home to Sorell/Tasman/Nubeena

Immediate Response: 4 – 14 January 2013

Jan Event

11 Establishment of Affected Area Recovery Committees (AARCs) and first meeting

- 11 Stand-alone Bushfire Recovery Unit website goes live
- 12 State Government engages Hazell Bros to commence clean-up
- 13 Arthur Highway reopened for all traffic

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Jan Event

- 14 Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Distribution Committee Chair and members announced
- 14 Call to register for clean up of properties
- 14 Murdunna Information and Services Hub opened
- 15 Helicopter fly over of Dunalley by Premier, Taskforce Chair, Recovery Coordinator and Fire Chief
- 15 Sorell Information and Service Hub opened
- 14-15 Dr Rob Gordon presents in Hobart, Sorell, Dunalley and Nubeena
- 16 Bushfire Recovery Taskforce holds its first meeting

17 Sorell Tasman Affected Area Recovery Committee (STAARC) – first meeting

- 21 Red Cross Appeal Distribution Committee holds its first meeting
- 21 BRU Community Engagement Team established
- 21 Dunalley Information and Service Hub (DISH) open
- 23 Clean-up of properties underway by Hazel Bros: 266 properties registered

23 Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Distribution Committee announces Stage 1 distribution: Destroyed or Damaged Homes Tenants Contents (including boarders)

- 25 Edition 1 of Sorell/Tasman Recovery Newsletter published, 5 000 copies, including Summary of Services available to bushfire-affected residents
- 30 Central Highlands Affected Area Recovery Committee holds its first meeting
- 25 Australian and Tasmanian Governments announce Clean-up and Assistance Grants. Short-term targeted assistance for clean-up, removal of debris and restoration of property:
Tier 1 – upfront lump sum payment with a maximum grant of \$10 000
Tier 2 – grant of up to \$15 000
- 25 Aurora Energy Assistance Packages \$1.3 million package released
- 26 Dunalley Phoenix Festival fundraising event featuring the Angels

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Feb	Event
1	DHHS Information Session for NGO and Government Service Providers involved in Social and Personal Support held at Sorell Health Centre
4	Boomer Bay residents meeting at Dunalley Waterfront Café, held by community representative Caroline Bignell and attended by Sorell Mayor
5	Active Partners Program established, with Terms of Reference provided to Taskforce for approval. Community Assistance Grants, Community Workshops, CHAARC
5-6	Community meetings at Ellendale
6	Media event Hazel Bros clean-up
7	Milestone: Hazel Bros clean-up of properties - 18 properties cleared
8	Community BBQ held at Connellys Marsh
12	Vinnies Mobile Assistance Centre open for business at the Dunalley Information and Services Hub (DISH)
12	Sorell-Tasman Recovery News – Edition 2 published
13	Tasmania Bushfire Recovery Community Engagement Strategy, Communications Strategy, and the Public Participation Plan provided to the Taskforce for approval
13	Dunalley Primary School re-opens
14	Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Distribution Committee - Stage 2 announced: Destroyed Homes, Tenants Contents, Community Assistance Grant \$10 000 for people whose primary residence had been totally destroyed \$5 000 per household for tenants, including boarders Community Assistance Grants – Expression of Interest circulated
18	Central Highlands Recovery News – Edition 1 published
18	State Government provides \$100 000 towards fencing from funds donated by South Australian and Western Australian Governments
18	NDRRA Australian/State Government Grants up to \$25 000 available to farmers in Central Highlands and Derwent Valley
18	Business mentoring support available – Department of Economic Development, Tourism & the Arts
20	Milestone: Hazel Bros clean-up of properties - 45 properties cleared
24	Milestone: BlazeAid - 108 bushfire-affected properties registered for assistance, 240 km of new fences, 1 645 volunteer days, more than 600 volunteers involved
25	Sorell-Tasman Recovery News – Edition 3 published
27	Tasmanian Bushfire Recovery Taskforce Interim Action Plan released

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Mar	Event
4	Red Cross Appeal - Stage 3 announced: (allocated \$422 843) Damaged Homes, and External Structures Grant Grant up to \$5 000 for owners whose primary residence or external structures on site had been damaged
4	Central Highlands Recovery News – Edition 2 published
4	Neighbourhood House Re-vegetation and Garden Restoration Program launched (\$300 000)
4	Red Cross Appeal raises over 6.4 million
7	Bushfire Rebuilding Reference Group holds its first meeting
7	Prime Minister announces Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payments (AGDRP) financial assistance for people affected by bushfires in the the Local Government Area of Central Highlands
9	Community Assistance Grants – Round 1 and 2 released (Dunalley/Tasman/Central Highlands) Round 1 – Small Projects (up to \$15 000) (close 29 April) Round 2 – larger projects (close 31 June) Workshops – 18 March, 15 April, 13 May, MR – 22/3
12	Dr Rob Gordon Presentation to Service Providers held at Dunalley Church
12	Milestone - 100th property cleaned up
12	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News – Edition 4 published
14	Bushfire Social Recovery Reference Group holds its first meeting
14	Sorell Tasman Economic Reference Group (STERG) holds its first meeting
16	Opening of Refurbished Fire Station at Ellendale and community BBQ
19	Taskforce Chair - Interview with Guardian newspaper on the recovery
20	Murdunna Community Meeting
21	DISH Official Opening BBQ
24	True Island Spirit community event
25	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News – Edition 5 published
25	Phone Tree Network set up online (200 community members signed up)
25	Active Partners Program – Donated Goods Sub-Committee holds its first meeting
27	Community Arts Meeting at the DISH to discuss community grants process
27	Red Cross Tasmanian Bushfire 2013 Appeal officially closed: \$8.8 million raised
27	Community Forum Dunalley School Gym facilitated by Dr Rob Gordon
28	Dr Rob Gordon Service Providers Meeting held at Dunalley Church Tassie Comeback Tour - Campaign run over March / April

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Apr	Event
3	Milestone: Hazel Bros clean-up of properties - 137 properties cleared
3	Central Highlands Recovery News - Edition 3 published
4	Appointment of former South Australian Police Commissioner, Malcolm Hyde to head Bushfire Recovery Inquiry
8	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News - Edition 6 published
8	Accommodation for Displaced Residence Assistance Program commenced
12	Public Participation Plan - Implementation community engagement / public participation – Phase I of the rebuild and revitalize consultation concluded
12	Community Assistance Grants – Expressions of Interest Close Round I
15	<i>beyondblue</i> public meeting held at the Dunalley School Gym – Children's Recovery
16	Launch <i>beyondblue</i> School Program (\$400 000)
19	<i>Building Back Better Guide</i> released
20	Connellys Marsh Beach Working Bee
22	Hobart City Council allocated \$30 000 to Tasman and Sorell Councils towards restoring and improving community infrastructure
25	Anzac Day Dawn Service held at Dunalley, 150 community members attended
27	Dr Rob Gordon presentation held at Dunalley Gymnasium
29	Australian and Tasmanian Governments announce Interest Free Loans (between \$50 000 and \$500 000) offered to businesses affected by the bushfires (40 businesses severely damaged or destroyed).
29	Expressions of Interest for Community Grants close in the Central Highlands
29	New Bushfire Recovery Unit website launched
29	Milestone: Hazel Bros clean-up of properties - 220 properties cleared

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

May	Event
6	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News - Edition 8 published
8	Rebuilding Expo held at Dunalley: 90 attended
14	Community Assistance Grants Round 2: Projects released for public comment
17	Red Cross Appeal - Stage 4 announced: Part A - Immediate Financial Hardship Part B - Ongoing Financial Hardship
15-18	Dunalley and Environs Structure Plan and community input workshops run by Sorell Council
18-19	Winter Warmer Weekend – Charity Firewood Drive and Community Open Day – Dunalley
21-22	<i>beyondblue</i> seminars - practical suggestions about children's emotions and behaviours after the bushfire

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

May	Event
23	Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy (DIRS) payments available to assist eligible employees, small business owners and farmers
27	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News - Edition 9 published
27	Tasman Emergency Recovery Management Committee (TERMC) dissolved
27	Bushfire Rebuilding Bonus announced by Tasmanian Building & Construction Industry and Training Board: \$10 000 available to builders in the Sorell /Tasman area for employing a new apprentice
30	Hazel Bros clean-up completed: Total of 306 registered properties cleared Clean-up cost totals \$6.9 million – Tasmanian and Australian Governments share cost of clean-up under Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements 306 properties completed in just over four months 47 Hazel Bros employees 56 subcontractors employed, many from the local area 42 000 tonnes = 3 000 truckloads of material
31	Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Distribution Committee – Progress Report (January – May 2013) published
31	Murdunna Information and Service Hub closed

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Jun	Event
3	DHHS announces \$1.3 million Social Recovery Plan for bushfire-affected communities to provide ongoing support services for residents over 12 months
17	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News - Edition 10 published
18	Round 1 Community Grants - 10 community projects approved by Appeal Distribution Committee in the Sorell and Tasman districts Closing date for AGDRP payments: 7 000 payments made totalling \$7.9 million
28	Launch of Primary Producers Winter Assistance Package: \$510 000 \$200 000 to purchase materials to repair fences damaged or destroyed Tasmanian Prison Service provides two supervised crews to assist farmers with labour Lions Club provides tools to assist fencing work - 'Tool Library' established \$30 000 provided by Rotary Tasmania and Bendigo Bank for a second round of re-seeding \$50 000 provided by Rotary Tasmania to supply stock feed \$80 000 provided by the State Government to NRM South for farm recovery planning and rehabilitation
28	Funding Round 2 - Community Assistance Grant Funds close
30	First Vinnies Market Day held by St Vincent de Paul
30	Australian and Tasmanian Governments Clean-up and Assistance Grants close

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Jul	Event
	Nissan Navara utes lent for six months to help organisations and businesses affected by the January bushfires.
2	<i>Programs for Recovery</i> launched
3	Official opening of Community Amenities Block at Dunalley – Lions Club
8	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News - Edition 11 published
8	Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) payments closed
15	Winter Assistance Steering Committee held its first meeting
29	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News - Edition 12 published
31	Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Distribution Committee - Stage 4 closes

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Aug	Event
2	Tasmanian Fire Service secured five firefighting aircraft for 2014 summer season to be used for water bombing, mapping, transporting crews and equipment
12	By the 12 th of August, the following distributions had been made: Over \$10.88 million in financial assistance distributed by Tasmanian and Australian Governments \$828 457 Tasmanian Government in Emergency Assistance Grants \$864 247 Tasmanian Government in Housing Assistance Grants \$7.5 million Australian Government in Disaster Recovery Payments Over \$1.69 million Tasmanian and Australian Governments in Clean-up Assistance Grants
19	Sorell Tasman Recovery News - Edition 13 published
21	Structure Plans community meetings held at the Dunalley School Gym and the DISH
27	Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Distribution Committee approves three community projects in Central Highlands

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Sep	Event
2	Community projects – feedback sought on 20 submissions under Round 2 Tasmanian Red Cross Appeal Community Assistance Grant
9	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News - Edition 14 published
24	STAARC and Local Government, Community Forum: Peter Kenyon – Community and Economic Renewal
25	Community forum with Dr Rob Gordon: 'What to expect nine months on.'
29	Second Vinnies Market Day held by St Vincent De Paul for bushfire-affected locals to access donated goods
30	Sorell/Tasman Recovery News - Edition 15 published

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Sep Event

- 30 DVD – Dr Rob Gordon “After the Fires” released
 - 23 Pride of Australia Awards for Dunalley/Dodges Ferry Volunteer Fire Brigade and Dunalley Ambulance
 - 30 Round 2 Tasmanian Red Cross Appeal Community Assistance Grant - feedback closes
- Milestone: Bushfire Rebuilding Bonus initiative: 11 locals employed as apprentices since May

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Oct Event

- 7 Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy (DIRS) applications close
 - 8 Planning Institute of Australia commendation for *Building Back Better Guide*
 - 13 Tasmania Fire Service Community Forum held at Eaglehawk Neck
 - 15 Bushfire Inquiry Report released by Mal Hyde
 - 28 Last edition of the Sorell/Tasman Recovery News published - Edition 16
- Newsletter transition to the community: *The Bridge*

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Nov Event

- 8 Bushfire Recovery Taskforce Review – Community feedback commences
- 12 Bushfire Recovery Taskforce Review – Stakeholder feedback commences

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Dec Event

- 2 Community Assistance Grant Fund - Final Round closes
- 12 Community feedback process for Final Round Community Assistance Grants
- ? Dunalley concept plan walk and talk community event held.

Recovery Phase: 14 January 2013 - 4 January 2014

Jan 2014 Event

- 4 One Year On – Dunalley Tree Planting

Community Survey

The communities' perception of the recovery forms a critical element of the Review. Community members were invited to provide feedback on the things they thought stood out as working well and activities they believe could have been done differently. They were also asked to provide further suggestions of things that could be included to help in future recovery programs. Community feedback was sought during November 2013 using:

- Community feedback forms:
 - » inserted in the final edition of the Recovery News and distributed by direct mail to over 4 000 households;
 - » located at the DISH, Council offices and other contact centres such as local shops and service stations, Neighbourhood House etc; and
 - » online community survey.

- Telephone survey of a representative sample of 302 directly and indirectly-affected community members across the four municipalities, conducted by EMRS and using the same questions as the feedback forms. A summary of results from the telephone survey is included in this Appendix.

The community feedback form is included below.

TASMANIAN
BUSHFIRE
RECOVERY

HAVE YOUR SAY

HELP US REVIEW OUR RECOVERY PROCESSES

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Your experience of the recovery process since the January 2013 bushfires will help us plan for recovery from future emergencies.

The comments you provide in this survey will help us review our recovery processes so we can respond to future events in the best possible way.

PLEASE PROVIDE COMMENTS BY 30 NOVEMBER 2013

This survey is open to all who were directly or indirectly affected by the January 2013 bushfires. In particular, we want to receive your comments about the recovery processes that followed the initial emergency, in the days and months after roads were reopened and people were able to return to their properties.

So that we can link your comments with future planning, please help us with the following details:

Was your home destroyed? Yes No

Was any part of your property damaged? Yes No

Was your shack destroyed or damaged? Yes No

Did a family member/friend lose their home? Yes No

Was your local community affected? Yes No

Gender: Male Female

Age: U18 18-35 36-50 51-65 Over 65

Which fire-affected communities do you live or spend time in?



What things stand out as working really well in the recovery process after the fires?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Are there recovery activities that could have been done better?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What can you suggest should be included to help in future recovery programs in Tasmania?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Need more space to tell us why?
Attach a piece of paper or complete the online version at www.bushfirerecovery.tas.gov.au

Return this survey to:

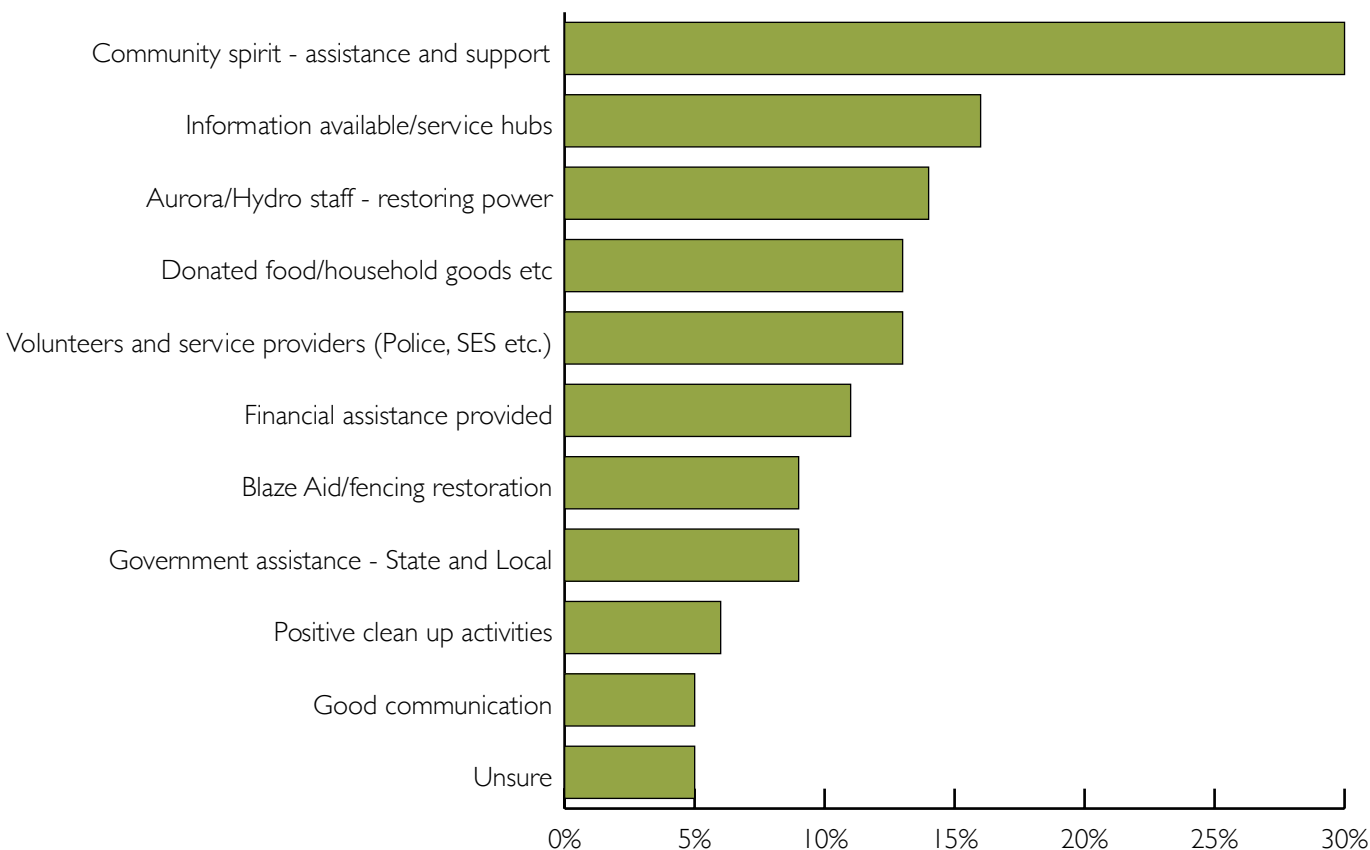
- The Dunalley Information and Service Hub (the DISH)
- Sorell, Tasman or Central Highlands Council
- Bushfire Recovery Unit
Reply Paid 83020, Hobart 7001 (no stamp required)
- Call us on **1800 567 567** to complete the survey over the phone

For further information, please call 1800 567 567

Results from Community Telephone Survey

Positive aspects of the recovery process

“What are three things that stand out as working really well in the recovery process after the fires, and why?”



*Percentages do not sum to 100 as it was possible to give multiple responses.

† Issues mentioned by less than 5% of respondents are excluded.

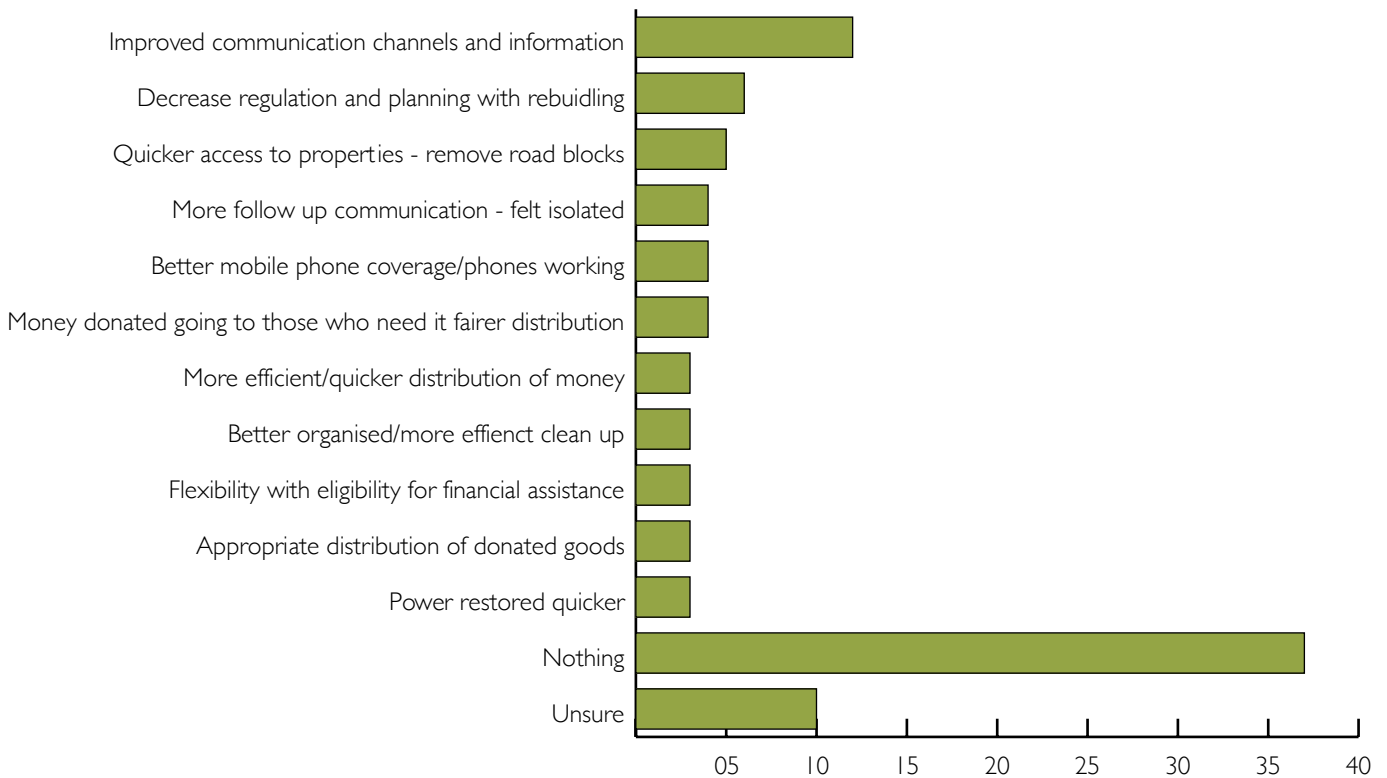
Without prompting, almost one in three (30%) respondents mentioned “community spirit – assistance and support” as an aspect that had worked well in the recovery process. Other positive aspects mentioned frequently were “information available/ service hubs” (16%), Aurora/ Hydro staff - restoring power” (14%), “donated food/ household goods etc” and “volunteers and service providers (eg Police, SES etc.)” (13% each).

Respondents from Lake Repulse were far more likely than other fire-affected areas to have mentioned “Blaze Aid/ fencing restoration” (40%).

Results from Community Telephone Survey

Aspects of the recovery process that could have been done better

“What are three things that could have been done better in the recovery process after the fires, and how?”



* Percentages do not sum to 100 as it was possible to give multiple responses.

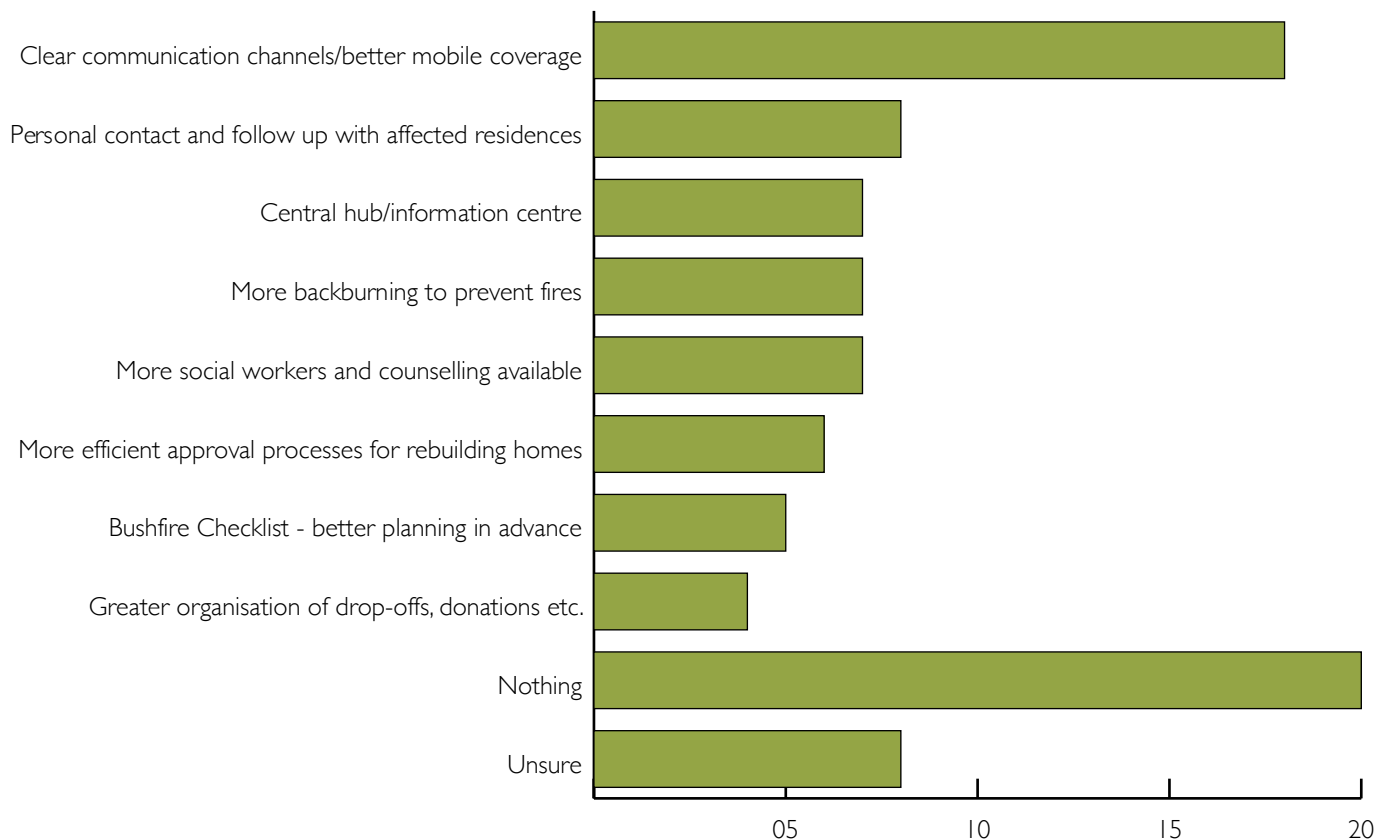
† Issues mentioned by less than 4% of respondents are excluded.

Overall, almost one half (48%) of respondents could not think of any aspects of the bushfire recovery process that could have been done better, giving an answer of either “nothing” (37%) or “unsure” (10%).

The most common response when asked what could have been done better centred around “improved communication channels and information” (12%). A further 6% identified a need to reduce or “decrease regulation and planning with rebuilding” to allow people to recover in a more timely manner.

Suggestions to help improve future recovery programs

“What can you suggest should be included to help in future recovery programs in Tasmania?”



*Percentages do not sum to 100 as it was possible to give multiple responses.

† Issues mentioned by less than 4% of respondents are excluded.

More than one quarter (28%) of all respondents could not offer any suggested improvements to enhance future recovery programs, giving an answer of either “nothing” (20%) or “unsure” (8%).

Similarly to the previous question, the most frequent suggestion identified a need for “clear communication channels and better mobile coverage”, with almost one in five respondents (18%) mentioning this issue.

Other suggestions included “greater personal contact and regular follow up with affected residents” (8%), as well as “central hub/ information centre”, “increased back-burning for prevention” and “more social workers and counselling available” (all mentioned by 7% of respondents).

Community Organisation and Partners involved in the Recovery

Anglicare

Anglicare provide a number of services via their Mental Health Stream, Financial Counselling stream and The Family and Relationship Services.

Australian Government

The Australian Government provided a range of assistance. This included financial assistance under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements to individuals, primary producers and small businesses and additional services from Commonwealth Agencies such as the Department of Human Services. Through the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Government also assisted by transporting generators to Tasmania to help restore the electricity supply to the peninsula in the days immediately following the fires.

Australian Red Cross

The Australian Red Cross is running the Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal at the invitation of the Tasmanian Government in order to provide assistance to those affected by the bushfires. The Tasmanian Government and Red Cross have established an independent Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Distribution Committee. The Committee's key responsibility is to oversee the distribution of public donations made to the Appeal.

The Red Cross's contribution following the bushfires involved more than 150 Red Cross staff and volunteers assisting response, relief and recovery agencies through activities that included:

- Assisting in refuges or evacuation centres at Ouse, New Norfolk, Nubeena, Sorell, Hobart and Swansea, offering personal support and registration services.
- Registering 1 850 of the evacuees and responding to more than 1,570 inquiries from friends and relatives across Australia and internationally who were seeking news of their loved ones' safety.
- Working closely with government agencies to support outreach delivery in fire-affected communities. The Red Cross volunteers visited 442 homes to provide personal support and recovery information to those affected in the Tasman Peninsula and Dunalley areas.

- Providing data to inform recovery service planning by DHHS and developing specific mapping products to enable a coordinated approach to the delivery of outreach activities by DHHS and Red Cross personnel.
- Providing personal support and recovery information to more than 460 bushfire affected people, at the Information Service Hubs at Sorell, Dunalley and Murdunna through until May 2014.

beyondblue

beyondblue takes a public health approach, which focuses on improving the health of the whole population, across the whole lifespan.

BlazeAid

BlazeAid is a volunteer-based organisation that is working alongside farmers and families to help rebuild fences that have been damaged or destroyed in the bushfires.

Colony 47

Colony 47 offers a cash program to assist with bond and rental payments, a crisis program to help with emergency accommodation and a wide range of services for youth and families.

Copping Christian Fellowship

The Copping Christian Fellowship Community Care Centre assists individuals, communities and families experiencing hardship. The Centre has been providing an outlet for secondhand and donated goods since 2005. In 2008 the Centre expanded its services to provide food relief owing to a significant need in the community.

Community Based Support South

Community Based Support South provides in-home, centre-based and community-based personal support to frail older people and people with a disability, as well as respite for their carers, to enable them to remain living independently in the community.

Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House

The Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House provides a range of support services and activities for the local community, including community education programs, community activities, school holiday programs, information and referral and facilities and services such as community internet access and assistance with form and grant applications. In response to the bushfires, the Neighbourhood House also provided: hot showers, a washing machine, free financial planning advice through a local advisor, and the Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House Revegetation and Garden Restoration Program.

Foodbank

Foodbank is a non-denominational, charitable organisation that sourced donated and surplus food and other essential items, such as generators and gas bottles, from the food, grocery and retail industry to support people in need following the Tasmanian bushfires. These resources are currently being distributed directly to affected communities via existing Foodbank networks, including welfare and community agencies.

Hobart Show Ground

The Hobart Show Ground offer temporary housing of animals and supplied donated animal feed for livestock owners from bushfire-affected areas. The Showground also provided storage space for St Vincent De Paul to store donated goods.

Insurance Council of Australia

The Insurance Council of Australia is the representative body of the general insurance industry in Australia. The Council is working with the Tasmanian Government to support bushfire-affected communities through the process for claiming insurance and working with other key organisations such as the Master Builders Association of Tasmania to resolve issues that may arise during the reconstruction phase.

Landcare Tasmania

Landcare Tasmania sent regular updates regarding bushfire recovery actions to their membership and contacts network (for example, volunteer and donation opportunities, support for farmers, information on post-fire land issues). To support communities in need, Landcare Tasmania raised funds for priority, on-ground Landcare projects in fire-affected areas.

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania provided free legal advice to bushfire-affected residents.

Lifeline

Lifeline provides telephone crisis support through their confidential 24-hour Telephone Crisis Support Line.

Lions Tasmania

Lions Tasmania responded quickly to the bushfire emergency with members of the Tasman and Sorell Clubs active at fire refuges, assisting with food preparation and relief distribution. As part of the BlazeAid re-fencing project, Lions supported catering needs for the volunteers, providing more than 3 000 hot evening meals and funded breakfast (as well as other food) requirements. Lions also delivered the Community Amenities Unit located in Dunalley. The \$150 000 facility in Bay Street (situated on land made available by, and next to, the TFS) features showers, toilets, washing machines and clothes dryers for those who lost their homes in the January bushfires. Lions have also relocated to Dunalley a Tool Library, used after the 2009 Victorian bushfires, which provides a variety of tools on loan to local residents. Lions continues to be active in the farm rehabilitation program, the replacement and repair of emergency service equipment, and in the support of community projects in fire-affected areas.

Mission Australia

Mission Australia offers advice, support and referrals. It also provides access to family, youth and disability support services.

Okines Community House

Based at Dodges Ferry, the Okines Community House provides a safe and friendly environment for the whole community to meet, share information and resources and strengthen community networks.

Rural Business Tasmania Inc - Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS)

The RFCS offers independent assistance free of charge to primary producers, fishers and agriculturally-dependent small businesses in rural areas who have been impacted by the bushfires across Tasmania to achieve commercial recovery of their primary production enterprises. RFCS is able to assist any farmers, fishers and agriculturally dependent small rural businesses who are experiencing the pressures of financial hardship to determine the loss value of farm assets and discuss possible recovery options.

Rural Alive and Well

Rural Alive and Well is a not-for-profit initiative formed to raise awareness of men's well being. The committee consists of community representatives including TFGA, Southern Midland, Glamorgan Spring Bay and Central Highlands Councils, public health, church groups, Sheep Connect, Department of Primary Industries Parks Water and Environment, and other interested community persons.

Relationships Australia

A psychologist from Relationships Australia was made available at the Dunalley Neighbourhood House one day a fortnight and one half day per fortnight in Sorell.

Rotary Tasmania

Rotary Tasmania has funded the fortnightly community barbecues at Murdunna, provided equipment for firewood/log splitting, helped to supply provisions (such as water) for distribution by the DISH and contributed food and accommodation for visiting Rotarians volunteering on local properties. Rotary has also helped to fund wellbeing projects for firefighters, purchased a computer and printer for the Dunalley Hall and Recreation Committee, and donated funds through BlazeAid to primary producers for fencing tools and materials used on the Tasman Peninsula and at Ellendale. In addition, Rotary provided \$21 000 for pasture re-seeding and has earmarked \$200 000 for a new Community Centre at Dunalley. Rotary also coordinated the supply of equipment from Rotary Victoria such as a truck, trailer, skid steer loader, post-hole digger and a log splitter for use by visiting Rotarian volunteers – and also distributed a 40-foot container of goods, which was donated by Rotarians in Victoria.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army responded to the immediate bushfire crisis with the distribution of 19 000 meals to affected people, emergency staff and volunteers. They also provided immediate cash support, clothing, food vouchers and supplies such as petrol. For 17 days after the fires, the Salvos assisted 233 clients with 571 services, with average support in finance or in-kind support/goods to an estimated value of \$112 740.

The Salvation Army has employed a part-time bushfire recovery worker in the region for 12 months to be available for case management support. The Salvos are also working closely with staff from other local welfare and Church groups to provide counselling services. There is a 12-month allocation from funds donated nationally and locally from the community to The Salvation Army for bushfire relief. The Salvos have also been allocated a \$30 000 grant from the Australian Government for additional emergency relief to assist people affected by the bushfires.

South East Community Care

South East Community Care provides community nursing, domestic assistance and home maintenance based on individual client needs.

St Vincent de Paul Society

St Vincent de Paul Society has the lead role in the management of donated clothing and household items. The Society responded in the following areas:

- Collection and distribution of donated goods including operating the Showgrounds Collection and Assistance Centre;
- Provision of services from the Dunalley Emergency Recovery Centre;
- Operation of other Emergency Recovery Centre points (Nubeena, Sorell and Hobart);
- Dunalley Assistance Centre located at the DISH;
- Coordination of community events (Dunalley Winter Warmer Woodchop, Markets and School Fair);
- Providing financial assistance to families and individuals; and
- Supporting community projects

St Vincent de Paul Society will assist with the long-term recovery of the communities affected by the Tasmanian bushfires, helping them to rebuild their lives with financial and material aid.

Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA)

TFGA is coordinating emergency response services to support farmers in bushfire affected areas. This includes maintaining a database of affected farmers and their needs; as well as offers of assistance and donated goods and services. Donations to the TFGA Emergency Relief Fund will be directed to assist in the rebuilding of Tasmania's farming community.

Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI)

TCCI offered free support to businesses affected by the bushfire. The support includes workplace relations and human resource advice, business advice and assistance.

Tasman Community and Health Services

Social workers from Tasman Community and Health Services are available at the Dunalley Information and Service Hub on a daily rostered basis. They are able to provide information and support, referral and advocacy and can offer personal support and counselling. Home visits or contact by phone. Services are confidential and free of charge.

Tasmanian Council of Churches

The Tasmanian Council of Churches provided/provides pastoral care and personal support for people affected by the bushfires.

Tasmanian Medicare Local

Tasmanian Medicare Local provides easy access to Allied Psychological Services for people affected by the bushfires. See Relationships Australia for details.

Tassielink Transit

Tassielink Transit is the Government-contracted bus service provider between Hobart and the Tasman Peninsula. Tassielink Transit is working with the State Government and local communities to review its service to the Tasman Peninsula to ensure that it meets the needs of residents, who may need more regular transport to and from Hobart during the period of recovery and reconstruction.

UnitingCare Tasmania

UnitingCare Tasmania delivers family and community services that support and assist vulnerable families, children and young people across Tasmania. They provide emergency assistance and have staff who have been trained as pastoral care officers and are available to bushfire-affected community members. UnitingCare supported the delivery of donated goods by making its big op-shop bus and smaller op-shop support bus available as part of the material aid program to bushfire affected areas.

Volunteering Tasmania

To manage the huge number of people wanting to support bushfire relief efforts, Volunteering Tasmania established a register of interested people who wished to assist in relief efforts. People on this register were asked to support a range of organisations that required volunteers.

Community Projects funded by the Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal Fund

Title	Overview	Approved funding	Proponent	Sponsor
Basketball Slab and Hoop	The Murdunna Playground has become a community recovery hub whereby school children are picked up and dropped off for the bus; travellers stop to use the amenities and take a break; and parents come here to rest while their children play. The playground caters for younger children and a need has been identified to develop a recreational outlet for older children and maybe even adults. The focus of this project is for basketball however the slab can also be used for other sporting activities due to the ability to remove the pole. The proposed slab size is 15m x 8m.	\$9 900	Aaron Millar	Tasman Rotary (Marian Larner)
Community Bush Dance	Six community bush dances over a 12 month period to bring the fire-affected communities together - family friendly, alcohol and smoke free. Held at Copping Hall, no entrance fee, community encouraged to bring a plate for supper. Project to be led by a small group of local youths with mentoring from parents and friends.	\$7 380	Phillip Wherrett	Vines & Designs P/L
Community Noticeboard at Westerway	This waterproof noticeboard will be positioned at the Westerway Post Office to serve the communities of the Central Highlands and the Derwent Valley.	\$935	Central Highlands Council	Central Highlands Council
Community Water Storage for Emergency Fire Fighting	To establish permanent storage tanks for water to be used for emergency fire fighting in the areas of Copping, Connellys Marsh and Sommers Bay where there is no access to a water supply.	\$15 000	Dunalley Fire Brigade Kevin Daly	Dunalley Fire Brigade
Construction of Multi-Purpose Pavilion at Bream Creek Show Grounds	The proposed pavilion will provide a permanent multi-purpose under cover structure for the use of the Bream Creek Show and the many community groups who regularly use the facilities; the monthly Farmers Market, other community events and private functions. The aim is to encourage community cohesion and provide valuable support and a sense of belonging for those struggling to rebuild their lives in the wake of the fires.	\$23 780	Bream Creek Show Society Inc. Brigid Ritchie	Bream Creek Show Society Inc.

Title	Overview	Approved funding	Proponent	Sponsor
Copping Community Care Cool Room Facilities	Acquisition and installation of cool room facilities for perishable foodstuff, enabling a wider range and larger volume of goods for an increased number of clients experiencing hardship. The Copping Community Care Centre actively engages with bushfire relief agencies to address identified community needs, including material and personal support to those with immediate and short term need, foster community cohesion and resilience and transition clients to a state of wellbeing and independence.	\$13 500	Apostolic Community Care Kerry Chilcott	
Dunalley Fit	The project will fund professional gym equipment available for the community to use under the guidance of trained supervisors in the Dunalley Primary School gym. The project aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the Dunalley Community through fitness and exercise and to provide effective opportunities for the wider community to come together in a positive, inspiring manner.	\$15 000	Brett Perry/ Dunalley Neighbourhood House	Dunalley Neighbourhood House
Dunalley Parks, Playgrounds and Pathways	<p>The Dunalley Foreshore Parks, Playgrounds and Pathways project will provide places where community can come together and support one other and enjoy recreation in and around the beautiful foreshore setting of Dunalley.</p> <p>The Dunalley Foreshore Path will provide a much-needed place of tranquility and beauty for the community and visitors for recreation, relaxation, exercise, etc. It will not only bring social inclusion and community development benefits but also economic benefits to the small businesses providing food and drinks, and Dunalley in general as more people use Dunalley as a social and shopping hub. The path will include seating, viewing / fishing platforms and BBQ and picnic areas.</p> <p>Council has been working with students at Dunalley Primary School for nearly 12 months to develop a concept plan for the Imlay St park, which takes into account the ideas and vision of the students, as well as the surrounding landscape and environment.</p> <p>There will also be provision for skateboarding and other opportunities for teenagers to get involved in outdoors recreation.</p> <p>These various elements will be connected to each other and to other community infrastructure such as the Primary School and the new Community Hall.</p>	\$988 000	Jaybena Rose, Gillian Biscoe, Danielle McBride	Sorell Council

Title	Overview	Approved funding	Proponent	Sponsor
Dunalley School Community Kitchen	Fitout of a multi-use community kitchen and storage facility to be annexed to the School Hall, this project will help address both current economic and social needs. Functions would include a whole of community function centre; recommencement of a whole of school cooking program; commercial kitchen facilities for local food production businesses and Bream Creek Farmer's Market; all ages educational centre; ability to host specialist programs including arts; breakfast club facilities; facilities to support regular / annual fundraising events.	\$40 000	Elizabeth Knox - Dunalley School Association	Dunalley School Association
Dunalley Sports Ground	To upgrade sporting facilities - both on ground and off ground - providing an outlet for exercising and socialising which will benefit the health and well being of bushfire-affected communities. Included: enclosed practice nets; resurfacing of sports ground area; ground surrounds and off ground facilities.	\$15 000	Dunalley Cricket Club Hayden Cleaver David Petrie	Dunalley Cricket Club
Dunalley Tennis Courts	Build two "super grass" tennis courts and lights to replace those lost in the January 2013 bushfires. Build courts at golf club in order to enhance a community sporting-base. Children in town have been left with less outlets for sporting participation. Enhance viability of golf club. Foster community spirit.	\$30 000	Dunalley Golf Club	
Eaglehawk Neck Community Hall Upgrade	To upgrade the toilets, purchase and connect diesel generator, relocate and connect additional water tank, and gravel the licensed area (Parks & Wildlife Service) around the hall to provide a better parking and reduce future potential fire risks. Will provide improved evacuation and community facilities, along with environmental, economic and social benefits for the community.	\$23 500	Eaglehawk Neck Community & Hall Association Inc. Dave Moser	Eaglehawk Neck Community & Hall Association Inc
Grave Island Foreshore Day Use	The area of foreshore at the north-eastern corner of Murdunna Bay is a place of considerable beauty with a safe beach and shallow waters ideal for children and family groups. At low tide one can walk to Grave Island. The proposal is that this spot would make a great day-use area. Properly sign-posted and with good landscaping and some simple furniture, tables seats and perhaps cooking facilities, all sensitively designed, this place could become a lovely stopping off point where children could safely play in a natural landscape/seascape	\$14 500	Murdunna Bushfire Recovery Group	Tasman Council

Title	Overview	Approved funding	Proponent	Sponsor
Mobile BBQ / Event Facilities	During the Dunalley Fires (Forcett fire) a countless number of meals were cooked at the Dunalley Hotel on a large commercial barbeque which was of great benefit to the community. Our proposal is for the purchase of a large, high quality, mobile barbeque; two medium sized, high quality marquees with side walls; and a set of two trestle tables. This equipment could be stored at the fire/ ambulance station for the purposes of loaning the equipment at no charge to community groups who would benefit from the use of the equipment to create a lifted community spirit or creation of a fundraising opportunity.	\$6 800	Aaron Millar	Dunalley Volunteer Fire Brigade
Murdunda Foreshore Walkway	The walkway is central to the coordinated community development of the Murdunda strategy fitting in as it does with the launching ramp and car park development at its western end and the footbridge and picnic area at its eastern end at the junction of the Arthur Highway and Sommers Bay Road	\$194 850	Murdunda Bushfire Recovery Group	Tasman Council
Murdunda on the Water	This project seeks to provide equipment, watercraft and storage including kayak/ dinghy storage rack and cover, equipment, trailer, kayaks, pfds and safety equipment for Murdunda and surrounding communities. The aim is to directly assist individuals, families and community who have lost watercraft and equipment in the January bushfires while providing an opportunity for all of the community to participate in recreational activities on the water.	\$15 000	Angela Lowe	Peninsula Acquatic Club - Mary Woods, Treasurer
Native Wildlife Nestboxes	To build nestboxes to support native wildlife, including bats, ducks, possums, owls etc, whose habitat has been adversely affected by the bush fires. The proposal is to involve the community, affected land owners and wildlife experts to provide artificial nesting sites in areas where vegetation has been lost.	\$8 200	Roaring Beach Wildlife Rescue	Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House
Nubeena Evacuation Centre	The project aims to develop the facilities in the Civic Centre at Nubeena which was used during the recent bushfires as an evacuation centre. This building, an unfinished project, would bring the community together in a good way and equip it for future emergency use. As well as developing community spirit it would make more space for recreation and social interaction, promoting healthy living. Once the space has been prepared, the proposal is to develop a gym and climbing wall for community use. After the bushfires many members of the community are in need of a project that will bring the community together in a positive way.	\$56 000	Tasman Council	

Title	Overview	Approved funding	Proponent	Sponsor
Refurbishment of the Ellendale Community Hall	This refurbishment will provide the community with enhanced facilities including lavatories, that may be used in an emergency, as well as for ongoing social interaction that may assist with building community connectedness and resilience.	\$50 000	Central Highlands Council	Central Highlands Council
Restoration of Pedestrian Access to Connellys Beach from Beach Road	To restore reliable and safe pedestrian access - including wheelchair and child strollers - to Connellys Beach from Beach Road. Beach access is a very important amenity for residents and visitors and having the footpath restored will contribute significantly to the long-term sense of recovery for the community.	\$15 300	Connellys Marsh Bushfire Recovery Group Chris Lloyd-Bostock Chris Cowles Julia Knight	Southern Beaches Landcare and Coastcare Incorporated
Sommers Bay Road Car Park – Landscape & Footpaths	Upgrading and enhancing the immediate area on and around the car park at the junction of Sommers Bay Road and the Arthur Highway has the potential to substantially lift the town profile and will provide a much needed landscaped area where locals and visitors can relax and enjoy the scenic amenity. The landscaping will include short low-impact paths to the rivulet and to the proposed foot bridge across the creek. This area will also be the starting point for the Foreshore Walkway planned for Murdunna.	\$15 000	Murdunna Bushfire Recovery Group	Tasman Council
Sounds Rivulet Footbridge	The proposal is for the construction of a foot bridge across the Sounds Rivulet at Murdunna. This footbridge would provide a safer pathway across the rivulet than the hazardous main road crossing. Residents to the north of the rivulet find it particularly difficult to walk across the main bridge and now that traffic volumes are increasing, so too is the danger.	\$15 000	Murdunna Bushfire Recovery Group	Tasman Council
Symbols of Bushfire Recovery	This project aims to lift the spirits of the communities affected by the bushfires through a series of community arts workshops and the subsequent use of the end products for long-term use. All members of the community will be invited to participate and learn new or enhance existing skills. Experienced artists will develop a well-structured series of workshops that will result in visual symbols of recovery.	\$14 300	Christopher Cowles and Di McPherson	Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House
Upgrade of the Belchers Tier Transmission Tower	This upgrade will ensure that the existing transmission tower provides ABC coverage to an extended area. This will enable all residents in the areas affected by the Lake Repulse 2013 fires to tune in to the ABC emergency coverage in future years. The project cost provides for five years of maintenance.	\$100 310	Central Highlands Council	Central Highlands Council

Title	Overview	Approved funding	Proponent	Sponsor
Upgrade Pedestrian Access from Sommers Bay Road to Sommers Bay Jetty	Currently, there is no pram or wheelchair access via the existing pedestrian access from the Sommers Bay Road to the Sommers Bay Jetty. The project is to upgrade this pedestrian access for wheelchair and prams, permitting mothers and small children as well as people with a disability to gain access to the jetty, pontoon, table, and beach area.	\$15 000	Sommers Bay Jetty Association	Sommers Bay Jetty Association
WILDFIRE	A book recording the experiences of those affected by fire, with contributions from all welcome. A cross section of stories has already been received ranging from volunteers to those who lost everything. A book provides a tangible record of the historical event, the social cost, humorous stories, devastating losses, incredible bravery and community spirit. In addition to the written text, this publication will display the spectacular images captured by the community during and after the fires. This publication is part of the recovery and regrowth of our community.	\$36 200	Joanne Curren/ Dunalley Neighbourhood House	Dunalley Neighbourhood House
Youth Involvement Program	The project will design and implement a range of programs to involve teenage youth in the Dunalley area. The programs will involve sporting activities and a range of other creative pursuits and will be developed in collaboration with the target audience. The funding will enable initial engagement with the target audience, and will provide for a number of youth activities. Funding will also be allocated to cover expenses (e.g. travel and accommodation) for recognised youth 'champions' (e.g. sports people, musicians etc) to participate and lead engagement activities.	\$12 500	Caroline Bignell Nell DeGrassi	Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House

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