

# Post Disaster Temporary Housing Literature Review



Social Recovery  
Reference Group  
AUSTRALIA

**Summary Report** - the full report is available at <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/social-recovery-reference-group>  
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## Purpose

There are currently significant challenges in supporting displaced people with timely and equitable access to emergency and temporary accommodation and assisting them on a path to stable housing in the aftermath of a disaster. This report seeks to support agencies and decision makers to formulate and implement appropriate approaches to post-disaster housing, factoring in the scale of a disaster and varying community cohorts.

The central research question underpinning this report is:

**What should government consider in order to improve planning and decision making for accommodation needs after a disaster, and to support people's transition to stable housing?**

The full report was commissioned by the Social Recovery Reference Group (SRRG) and undertaken by Esther Charlesworth and John Fien through the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). The findings and recommendations may be utilised by stakeholders.

## Findings

### 1. Leading practice in disaster housing recovery

The analysis of leading practices in housing recovery led to the development of a checklist of actions that could be used to identify appropriate actions by housing recovery officers and their agencies in providing and managing emergency and short-term accommodation and temporary housing. The checklist was developed from research and contains criteria for achieving eight categories of leading practice: Community Engagement & Participation, Location, Safety, Health, Comfort & Privacy, Cultural & Special Needs, Community & Connection, and Social & Technical Support Services.

### 2. Innovative approaches to temporary housing

Innovative approaches to effective temporary housing practices are based upon the concept of resilient housing recovery, which has at least five dimensions: Wellbeing, Liveability, Sustainability, Community Connection, and Viability. This change of focus has two major implications:

- The planning of post-disaster housing and infrastructure programs needs to become one of the priority strategies in pre-disaster preparation; and
- Strategies are needed to establish Temporary Housing as the first step in the design and construction of on-site Stable Housing to minimise the social, economic and environmental costs incurred when displaced people spend extended periods of time in Temporary Housing.

These implications are explored through strategies and tools for pre-disaster planning and the development of a two-phase model for constructing Stable Housing through a "temporary-to-permanent" construction strategy.

### 3. A decision-making framework for resilient housing recovery

The Framework seeks to integrate the steps in project management and to use the housing process as a lever for overall recovery. This involves aligning decisions at strategic and operational levels and managing the trade-offs between issues of location, tenure, housing types and procurement.

There are nine such decision categories in the Framework: Consultation, Pre-Disaster Planning for Housing Recovery, Situation Analysis after a Disaster Event, Recognising Cohorts of Displaced People with Different Needs and Assets, Identifying and Selecting Housing Model Options; Providing Agency Wrap-Around Support Services; Using Housing Decisions to Promote Local Economic and Social Recovery, Program Design and Delivery, and Monitoring and Evaluation.

# Recommendations

## 1. Terminology

Develop a standard set of terminology to describe the phases and types of accommodation displaced people may access on the path to stable housing and to be adopted by State and Territory recovery agencies. The terms recommended for consideration are: Emergency and Short-Term Accommodation, Temporary Housing and Stable Housing.

## 2. Principles

Adopt common principles of leading practice in post-disaster housing recovery including community connection, wellbeing, liveability, viability, and sustainability, for deciding accommodation and support options for people.

## 3. National Principles

The Commonwealth and State/Territory governments should extend the agreed principles of disaster recovery to include principles of resilient recovery.

## 4. Guidelines

Develop resources and guidelines to support planning and operational response for post disaster temporary housing.

## 5. Capacity Building

Develop capacity building resources and programs for State/Territory agencies and local governments to support pre planning for disaster temporary housing.

## 6. Funding

Recognise different cost implications of temporary housing programs including indirect costs. Develop funding streams to address the priority needs.

## 7. Further Research

Undertake research into post disaster temporary housing topics such as:

- Improving housing resilience through land-use planning and building codes.
- Learnings from previous disasters on suitable approaches for different communities and contexts.
- Utilisation of innovative construction technologies, materials and methods.
- Utilising permanent prefabricated housing modules that transition from temporary to permanent.

## 8. Pilot Project

Resource, trial and evaluate a pilot program to identify ways of achieving a two-phase approach to assisting home-owners and renter households into stable housing.

## 9. Decision Making Framework

Adopt the outline of a Decision-Making Framework for Disaster Housing Recovery provided in this report to provide a basis for the development of tools that can be used by multiple stakeholders in housing recovery programs and projects across different parts of Australia.

## 10. Capturing Learnings

Establish a national repository of evaluation reports and support processes for regular cross-case analysis.