



Australian Government
National Emergency
Management Agency

Australian Institute for
Disaster Resilience



RECOVERY EXERCISING TOOLKIT
CORE MODULE

AUSTRALIAN DISASTER RESILIENCE HANDBOOK COLLECTION

Recovery Considerations Over Time

Companion to *Community Recovery* (AIDR 2018) and *Managing Exercises* (AIDR 2017)

This document complements *Community Recovery* (AIDR 2018) and *Managing Exercises* (AIDR 2017). It is available as an online resource on the Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub: knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/recovery-exercising-toolkit

Attribution

Where material from this publication is used for any purpose, it is to be attributed to the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience as follows: Source: Managing Exercises: Recovery Exercising Toolkit – Fundamentals of Community Recovery (AIDR 2023).

In no event shall the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience be liable for any damages whatsoever, whether in an action of contract, negligence or other tortious action, arising out of or in connection with the use of or reliance on any of the information in this publication.

Contact

Enquiries regarding the content and any use of this document are welcome at:

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
Level 1, 340 Albert Street, East Melbourne Vic 3002

Telephone +61 (0) 3 9419 2388

Email enquiries@aidr.org.au

Description

Why run this module?

Recovery Considerations Over Time is a core module designed to be included in all recovery exercises. Recovery considerations that emerge over the long journey of recovery are explored in 3 separate sessions run throughout the exercise day. Each session focuses on community consequences and recovery strategies at particular points in time.

The timeframes for the recovery considerations sessions are:

- 3 weeks – 3 months
- 6 – 12 months
- 12 months and beyond.

Target audience

- Emergency Management Committees/Disaster Management Groups
- Recovery Committees
- Disaster management and recovery practitioners

How to use this module

Each session is supported by a slide deck to inform and set the context for recovery considerations. A discussion activity which allows breakout groups to explore recovery considerations across the 4 recovery environments (built, natural, social, environment) is a central component of these sessions. Outcomes from these discussions will be provided to council representatives after the exercise to inform ongoing recovery planning by local emergency management committees and agencies.

Session duration

Each session runs for approximately 30 – 40 minutes.

Aim

The aim of this module is to increase participants understanding of community consequences and recovery challenges across the short, medium and longer term phases of recovery. It aims to explore recovery strategies that can support communities throughout their recovery journey.

Objectives

Increase participants understanding of:

- community challenges and needs in the short, medium and longer term phases of recovery
 - how communities experience the different phases of recovery
 - how community recovery needs change over time
 - effective activities and strategies to support the different phases of recovery.
-

Pre-session planning for facilitators

The Recovery Considerations Over Time sessions have been designed to support breakout group discussions focusing on the 4 recovery environments (built, natural, social, environment). Facilitators should familiarise themselves with Recovery Considerations Over Time slide decks.

You may choose to have one facilitator run all 3 sessions, or a different facilitator to run each session.

It can be helpful to also pre identify breakout group facilitators for each recovery environment. The role of the breakout group facilitator is to provide support and direction to enhance discussions and keep focus on the discussion questions. Where you have more than one table group per recovery environment, the facilitator can move between tables as needed. Brief the facilitators on their role and provide copies of the Recovery Considerations slide decks (that include the discussion questions) before commencing the exercise.

Topic overview

The objective of recovery management is to provide effective and efficient coordination and delivery of programs, services and activities to support and expedite the recovery of affected individuals and communities.¹

While every disaster and subsequent recovery is different, our learnings and experiences over time have taught us that there are many challenges and needs that commonly occur, that would benefit greatly from preplanning. We do not have to wait for a disaster to occur and for the community to experience the issue/need before commencing recovery planning.

This module draws together the research, identified lessons from reviews and evidence-based practice as they apply to recovery considerations across the short, medium and longer term phases of recovery. Considering recovery issues across these timeframes allows recovery practitioners to anticipate challenges before they arise and have recovery strategies ready to activate when needed. Planning for known recovery challenges and having strategies and plans in place before a disaster event occurs is an important step in “being prepared for recovery”.

Pre-event recovery plans are part of the emergency risk management process and interface with other emergency plans. They provide a broad framework and governance for recovery. They establish and

¹ *Community Recovery Handbook (2018) p.56*

strengthen relationships between individuals, communities and organisations that will play a role in the event of an event.²

Outcomes from the Recovery Considerations breakout group discussions will be provided to council representatives after the exercise to inform ongoing recovery planning by local emergency management committees and agencies.

This module covers:

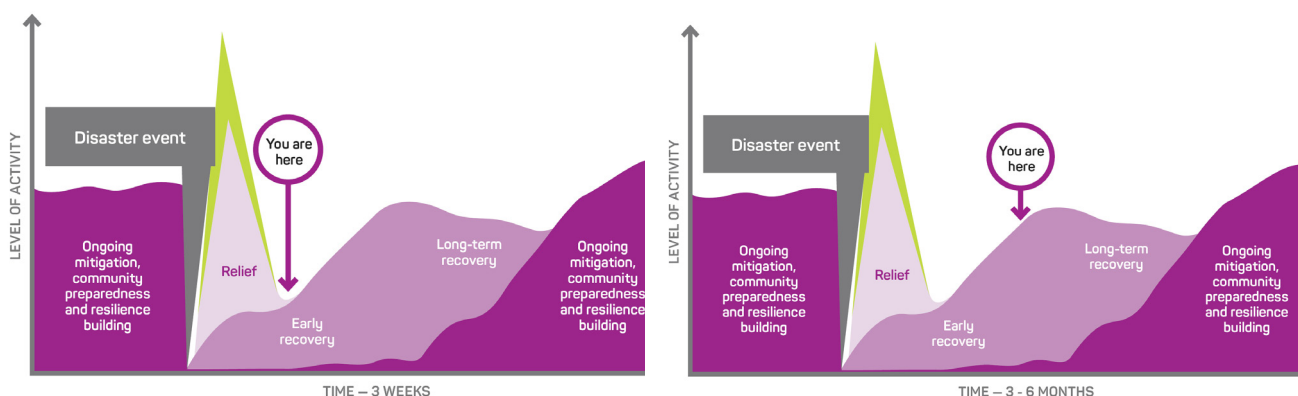
Recovery over time

The path to recovery is rarely ‘smooth sailing’ and does not proceed in an orderly, stage-like manner. However, community recovery activities can generally be categorised into five broad phases:³

- activation
- relief—typically immediate
- early recovery
- medium to longer-term recovery
- transition from recovery to mainstream services/ ongoing community development, renewal and regeneration.

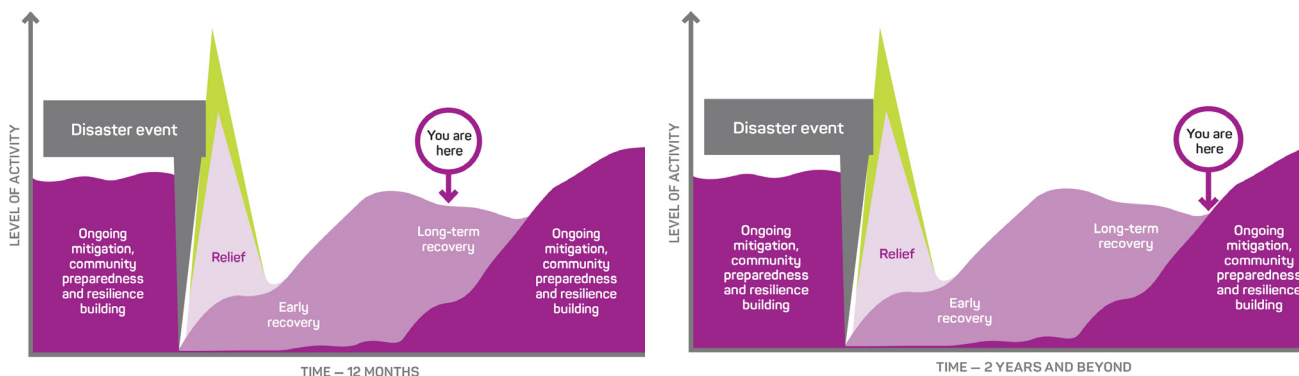
Recovery activities commence when a community first experiences disruption or is impacted by a disaster event. This is usually at the same time as response activities are underway. However, for the purpose of this recovery exercise, the focus begins at early recovery - 3 weeks post the scenario disaster event. This helps to keep the exercise focus forward looking, from the early, to medium and longer term phases of recovery.

In this exercise the recovery journey explores the community consequences and emerging issues that communities are likely to face over time. Each session presentation begins with this slide, with the ‘You are here’ marker indicating a point in time. This helps participants anchor themselves in a particular time period, while also retaining the broader view of the recovery journey.



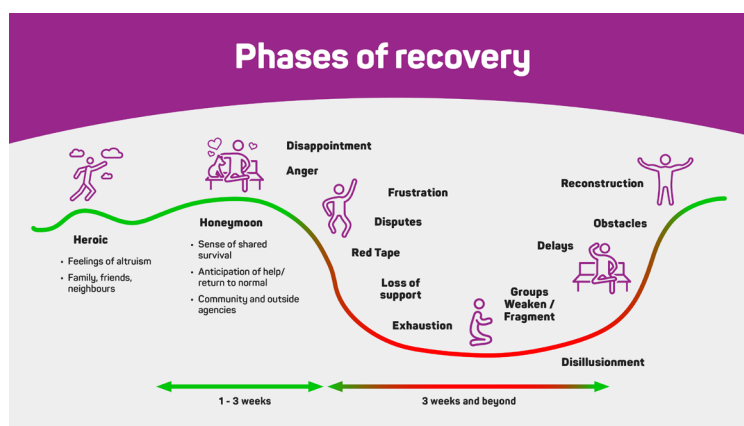
² *Community Recovery Handbook (2018) p.57*

³ *Community Recovery Handbook (2018) p.60*



Expected phases of recovery

There are a number of phases that individuals and communities often experience as they move through their recovery journey. The path to recovery is not linear or smooth. Setbacks can be distressing but are part of a normal process. The Phases of Recovery figure is included in each of the Recovery Consideration sessions, to help participants understand common experiences at each point in the recovery journey and inform the development of recovery activities in light of this trajectory.



What is happening in the community now?

- 3 weeks – 3 months
- 6 months – 12 months
- 12 months and beyond.

Each session considers the impacts, community consequences and community needs as they evolve over time and across the 4 recovery environments.

Recovery considerations group discussion activity

Each Recovery Consideration session contains a presentation and a discussion activity for breakout/recovery environment groups. The group discussion activity is a key component of these sessions and provides participants with an opportunity to consider the emerging issues and strategies that need to be developed in their respective recovery environment group.

Core recovery strategies

In the Recovery Considerations slide decks there are 2 core recovery strategies slides, preceding the Discussion Question Slide. They provide a starting point to inform breakout group discussions and thinking around required strategies for each recovery environment, in each time period.

They are not a comprehensive list of strategies, are generic in nature and not tailored to any disaster scenario. They are not designed to be addressed in detail during the presentation, but rather used as a resource for breakout group discussion.

- Preparation: Print out copies of the 2 core recovery strategies slides in each of the 3 presentations, for each table group.

Discussion Questions

Considering the community consequences and emerging issues at this stage of recovery:

1. What are the priority planning actions in response to these issues?
2. Which organisations/representatives do you need on, or linked to your recovery subcommittee? How does membership change over time?
3. Communications: What does the community need to know now?

Reporting back on group discussions from the 3 sessions is held over until the group plenary session.

Recovery Considerations Group Discussion Template

The Recovery Considerations Group Discussion Template provides a consistent and thematic way for discussion outcomes to be captured. These completed templates can then be retained and provided to councils and emergency management committees to inform ongoing recovery planning. Encourage participants to take photos of the completed templates for their own records.

- Preparation: Print out double sided A3 copies of the template in sufficient numbers for each table group to record outcomes of the discussion groups across the 3 sessions

Group plenary session

The group plenary session provides an opportunity for the recovery environment discussion groups to share key findings from the 3 Recovery Consideration sessions.

Plenary discussion questions:

1. In each time period, what was a key recovery challenge and what were your priority actions?
2. What issues have you identified that would benefit from further planning for inclusion in recovery plans and strategies?

The plenary session also provides an opportunity to identify the connections and interdependencies across the different recovery environments. Encourage participants to look for these and facilitate these discussions.

As an example; recovery issue = need for housing.

- Human/social: homelessness, mental health and community dislocation
- Infrastructure: temporary housing solutions/program, homeowner building advisory services, land buy back schemes

Readings and Resources

Community Recovery Handbook (2018) – Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection

[Community Recovery Handbook \(aidr.org.au\)](https://aidr.org.au)

Guide to Post-Disaster Recovery Capitals (ReCap) (Quinn et al, 2021)

The Recovery Capitals (ReCap) Guide contains resources for people, organisations and governments managing emergency recovery.

www.phoenixaustralia.org/disaster-hub/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ReCap_2021.pdf

10 Years Beyond Bushfires: Community, Resilience and Recovery

[10 Years Beyond Bushfires \(unimelb.edu.au\)](https://unimelb.edu.au)

Other Modules that link to this topic can be found on the AIDR

[Recovery Exercising Toolkit page](#)

a



Australian Institute for
Disaster Resilience

www.aidr.org.au

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
Knowledge Hub

www.knowledge.aidr.org.au