Report on the Tasmanian East Coast Fires
Community Recovery
December 2006 – December 2007
Foreword

REPORT ON THE TASMANIAN EAST COAST FIRES

This report has been prepared by Red Cross to provide an account of the collaborative work undertaken by Red Cross and other key partners in the recovery of the Tasmanian East Coast communities that were significantly affected by the East Coast Fires December 2006.

This report therefore includes the key work undertaken by the partners represented in the Affected Area Recovery Committee throughout the initial 12 month period.

Whilst this is a report on the initial 12 months recovery period, all partners recognise that the community recovery is still continuing and for many people that process may keep going for some time yet.

TASMANIAN EAST COAST FIRES

Bushfires began on the East Coast of Tasmania on Sunday 10th. December 2006. On Monday 11th. December gale force winds in excess of 100 kilometres an hour drove the fires into Scamander. The fires extended across parts of the Break O’Day and Sorell Local Government areas and continued to burn for a further 11 days.

Over this period, 26 homes were lost and over 50 other properties were damaged in a number of communities across the two municipalities.

RECOVERY PROCESS

This report describes the journey of recovery for those communities, which felt the brunt of those fires and their achievement of recovery milestones over the past 12 months.

It tells how a partnership was formed between local communities, Break O’Day Council, Tasmanian and Australian Governments and Red Cross to respond to bushfire-affected peoples’ needs. This report recounts how the partners combined their resources and efforts to assist individuals, families and communities to commence their recovery from these devastating wildfires.

The report also explains how all partners (in recognition of national good practice for recovery processes) accepted the need for the local communities to manage their own recovery processes.

The recovery process to date has involved considerable rebuilding and restoration, which is still progressing. The efforts of all partners to attain local community involvement and ownership of recovery projects will enable those recovery projects to be continued into the future.

The recovery process has attempted to aim for achieving a better future for the people who live on Tasmania’s East Coast.

We believe that many aspects of this recovery process were very successful whilst other aspects provided opportunities for learning and further improvement. We also believe that the learnings from our experiences may add to the understandings about community recovery processes for Australia.

We commend this report in providing a succinct overview of the resources, processes and combined efforts that have been contributed and the community recovery milestones achieved.

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Executive Director, Red Cross

Robert Legge
Chairperson: Affected Area Recovery Committee
Mayor, Break O’Day Council

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Acknowledgements

Times of adversity often highlight the best in human attributes. The Tasmanian East Coast Bushfires of 2006 were no exception, with countless acts of selflessness, courage and generosity of spirit from across the community.

Whilst it is not possible to name and list everyone deserving mention, some should be acknowledged for their key roles in assisting the recovery process. These include:

- The local communities for their capacity to work cooperatively and help each other in times of crisis;
- Break O’Day Council for the establishment and maintenance of the evacuation and recovery centres, distribution of donated goods and services, dedication of their staff during the emergency, contribution of resources to the recovery coordination, ongoing support for the Community Recovery Reference Group and the commitment to ensuring all recovery projects will be finalised;
- Numerous agencies, businesses and individuals who assisted in the immediate response;
- The Tasmanian and Australian Governments for their timely financial support of the recovery process;
- The Affected Area Recovery Committee who took on overall strategic responsibility for the recovery process and their willingness to support communities in managing their own recovery;
- The Department of Human Health and Services for providing their recovery expertise and ongoing support for the recovery process including convening the community forums and developing the Community Recovery Plan;
- The community volunteers who participated on the Community Recovery Reference Group and commitment and efforts formed the backbone of this community led recovery initiative;
- Red Cross for their role in assisting with the initial emergency response, conducting the East Coast Bushfires Appeal 06-07, assisting with the development of the Community Recovery Plan, managing the role of the Disaster Recovery Coordinator and compiling and presenting this report on behalf of the key stakeholders involved in this recovery process;
- The University of Tasmania’s Department of Rural Health for their assistance in both the initial recovery planning and later in providing invaluable assistance to implement the Regener8 book of stories from the fires; and
- Greg “Wilba” Williams, George Keri, Lisa Neubecker and Howard Colvin for supplying photography and images used in this report.
1.0 Executive Summary

REPORT ON THE TASMANIAN EAST COAST FIRES - ITS PURPOSE AND AVAILABILITY

This report has been prepared by Red Cross to provide an account of the collaborative work undertaken by Red Cross and other key partners in the recovery of the Tasmanian East Coast communities that were severely affected by the East Coast Fires December 2006.

This report therefore provides a comprehensive account of the key work undertaken by the partners represented in the Affected Area Recovery Committee throughout the initial 12 month period.

Red Cross will endeavour to have this report accessible through installing it on their web site to enable ready access by all interested parties. The State Government and Break O'Day Council will also provide copies of the report electronically.

Red Cross has already provided a full report on the distribution of the East Coast Bushfire Appeal which can be viewed at: http://www.redcross.org.au/TAS/news_emergRespReports.htm.

IMPACT

The 2006 East Coast Fires devastated large tracts of land, destroyed homes, property and infrastructure and profoundly affected local communities across the Break O'Day municipality.

Many people had not experienced a bushfire previously and had limited understanding about the longer term impacts a fire of this magnitude would have upon them and their community.

INITIAL RECOVERY RESPONSE AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Initial recovery responses focussed on immediate humanitarian assistance for displaced residents.

Feedback from many affected residents and recovery stakeholders expressed strong satisfaction and appreciation with the range of initial recovery responses.

Particularly highlighted were the various Recovery Centres, the efforts of recovery staff especially from Break O'Day Council, Department of Health and Human Services, Red Cross and the performance of a wide range of agencies and organisations either providing recovery assistance or prompt re-establishment of essential services.

The Tasmanian Government made available Emergency Financial Assistance Payments and a range of state-based support arrangements to assist low-income families impacted by the fires.

The Australian Government provided a variety of financial assistance payments and in conjunction with the Tasmanian Government activated the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements including the Special Community Recovery Modules.

The Break O'Day Council oversaw the distribution of donated goods and services.

The East Coast Bushfire Appeal fund was established to support people affected by the bushfires and Red Cross was appointed to manage the fund.

RECOVERY GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

These fires were one of the most devastating faced by Tasmanian communities in recent times and required a strategic approach to ongoing community recovery.

The State Emergency Management Committee decided to establish an Affected Area Recovery Committee (AARC) as a long-term recovery committee to manage this process in accordance with the Tasmanian and Break O'Day Emergency Management Plans.

The establishment of an AARC was well received by all stakeholders, especially in terms of its ability to maintain direct access to all levels of government and facilitate cross-agency and organisation cooperation. The AARC also supported a community driven recovery process.

Coming out of early community consultations were clear messages that the community wanted to have greater input into the decision-making surrounding the recovery processes.
To facilitate that need, the AARC established a Community Recovery Reference Group (CRRG) to provide advice on recovery initiatives and represent bushfire-affected communities.

The ARRC funded the appointment of a Disaster Recovery Coordinator based upon a new partnership approach. This partnership involved ARRC approving the funding from the NDRRA – Community Recovery Fund for the role, Red Cross being requested to employ and manage the role, and the Break O’Day Council hosting the role locally within its offices.

The Coordinator’s role was to support the work of the CRRG and implement the Community Recovery Plan through the critical initial twelve months.

**Community Recovery Plan**

The foundation for a community managed recovery process was the development of a comprehensive Community Recovery Plan, strongly based on the expressed needs and concerns of the affected communities.

Following extensive community engagement a Community Recovery Plan was developed which identified over a hundred proposed community recovery activities and projects that merited further consideration.

The CRRG then undertook the job of further exploring these proposed community recovery activities to develop and prioritise recovery projects through further consultations with their communities.

CRRG recommended a comprehensive range of community recovery activities to the AARC, addressing all aspects of the Community Recovery Plan. Most of these recommendations were endorsed by the AARC, resulting in more than 60 recovery actions implemented, including 21 projects where NDRRA funding was allocated to assist in the implementation.

Of all the recovery projects which received funding through the NDRRA all except two were allocated to the Break O’Day Council to either directly coordinate or auspice through agencies such as the Tasmanian Fire Service.

**Learning from the Experience**

Community recovery following the 2006 East Coast bushfires was well advanced by the end of the initial twelve month period following the fires.

The Community Recovery Plan was implemented ahead of schedule, with almost all recovery activities implemented under that plan having emerged out of a process of community engagement and prioritisation.

This recovery process also demonstrated that community engagement through an organised structure, such as a CRRG, can be an effective way to ensure ongoing community input and ownership of recovery projects.

The model also showed the value of employing the Disaster Recovery Coordinator’s role through an independent third party employer and the benefits of hosting that role within local government for critical information transfer and partnership development.

As with any recovery process however, improvements could be made and lessons can be learnt.

There are a range of lessons learnt, issues identified and future recommendations included at the end of this report worth noting and the key recommendations have been included at the end of this Executive Summary.

One of the main tasks which required considerable effort from all the recovery stakeholders was the development and prioritisation of the community recovery projects for funding through the Special Community Recovery funds under the NDRRA. This report explains the considerable efforts taken to manage that process.

The East Coast Bushfire was the first emergency, event for which the NDRRA Special Community Recovery Funds were made available. Since then the Community Recovery Fund has been activated in a number of other jurisdictions. National learnings could be collected from these jurisdictions, to scope the ability to maintain nationally consistent allocations following disasters.
In that way recovery stakeholders will not be required to design systems to support that process whilst under the pressure of time and attempting to address the broader range of emerging affected communities’ needs.

Whilst this recovery experience recognises the importance and value of a community managed recovery model and the longer-term benefits for the affected communities, it needs to be noted that this approach does however require additional time to establish and maintain.

This is because communities do not always operate in a cohesive manner and may have historical barriers to the sharing of information, resources and power, which could be further exacerbated by a disaster.

At the end of this formal recovery process (when the additional resources and stakeholders have withdrawn) it is local government and local communities who will need to be able to progress the longer-term recovery work required.

This recovery process has aimed to further develop relationships at the local level built upon sound examples of community engagement processes.

The recovery stakeholders have now handed over the remaining recovery process to the local officials and wish them the best for the finalisation of the longer term community recovery.

Recommendations pertaining to the Recovery Assistance

The following recommendations are based on the outcomes of processes and work undertaken that proved to be successful, as well as learnings from recovery work which confirmed that if done differently greater outcomes could have been achieved.

**Recommendation 1.** That information on the range of recovery assistance programs available for the affected communities needs to be repeatedly publicised in a coordinated summary to the affected communities.

**Recommendation 2.** That the timeframes, eligibility criteria and key contact details for recovery assistance programs be widely and repeatedly publicised in order to maximise equity of access across affected communities.

**Recommendation 3.** That (to the extent that privacy and confidentiality limitations allow) regular overviews of the assistance programs available and total funds distributed need to be broadly and repeatedly publicised to the affected communities.

**Recommendation 4.** That all agencies responsible for managing assistance programs following disasters, work together to develop a single entry registration point into recovery services to simplify collecting information regarding the needs of affected people.

**Recommendation 5.** That all agencies responsible for managing assistance programs following disasters, work together to develop streamlined application processes for affected people to apply for all available assistance programs (eg Public Appeals, Govt assistance grants etc).

Recommendations pertaining to the Recovery Governance Arrangements

**Recommendation 6.** That consideration be given to providing local government with additional support to assist them in meeting the communication requirements during a recovery process.

**Recommendation 7.** That recovery managers recognise the importance of having community representatives (including affected residents) involved at all stages of the recovery process.

**Recommendation 8.** That a structure such as a CRRG be recognised as an effective mechanism for providing local affected community input into community recovery management.

**Recommendation 9.** That arrangements for the incorporation of a CRRG (or alternatively existing community groups) into recovery management structures be captured within recovery plans so that community input can be achieved in a timely way following a disaster.
Recommendation 10. That the employment of a Disaster Recovery Coordinator by an independent third party (eg non-government agency) be recognised as an effective way to maximise the active engagement of all recovery stakeholders.

Recommendation 11. That the role of any such Disaster Recovery Coordinator be identified within recovery plans, so that following a significant disaster, a timely appointment can be made.

Recommendation 12. That local hosting (eg through Local Government) be recognised as offering significant networking and efficiency benefits for any independent third party employed Coordinator position.

Recommendation 13. That if an AARC is established membership and Terms of Reference should be publicised and readily available to all disaster-affected communities.

Recommendation 14. That if an AARC is established community representation be included, preferably drawn from a structure such as a CRRG.

Recommendation 15. That a community engagement strategy be developed immediately following a disaster and included as a standing agenda item for all recovery committee meetings.

Recommendation 16. That the East Coast Bushfire recovery stakeholders provide input into the review of the Tasmanian State Emergency Management Plan including recommendations regarding the governance arrangements.

Recommendations pertaining to the Community Recovery Plan development and implementation

Recommendation 17. That numerous (independently facilitated) small neighbourhood based Community Forums be considered as part of a strategy within Recovery Plans to enable community de-briefing following a disaster with key stakeholders present (eg Emergency Services) and to also identify community recovery issues and needs.

Recommendation 18. That following an emergency event it be recognised that there are high levels of community interest in how to better prepare themselves for another future emergency. Given this understanding, consideration should be given to the inclusion of emergency preparedness activities within Recovery Plans, which can be implemented during the recovery process.

Recommendation 19. That creative and expressive opportunities be planned for utilised and funded, to enable those affected by a disaster to ‘tell their stories’.

Recommendation 20. That information regarding the implementation arrangements for the Recovery Plan and reports on its progress, be widely and regularly disseminated across affected communities.

Recommendation 21. That National learnings regarding the allocation of the Special Community Recovery funds under the NDRRA funding be collected from this experience and other jurisdictions which have been involved in allocating those funds. These learnings could then be used to contribute to national agreed procedures that ensure consistent allocations following disasters.
2.0 Impact

2.1 Initial Impact

On Sunday 10th December 2006, gale force winds in excess of 100 kilometres an hour drove a bushfire into Scamander on Tasmania’s East Coast. Fires extended across parts of the Break O’Day and Sorell local government areas and continued to burn for a further 11 days.

Over this period, 26 homes were lost and over 50 other properties were damaged in a number of communities across the two municipalities.

The communities of Scamander, St Marys, Cornwall, Four Mile Creek, Falmouth and St Helens bore the brunt of the bushfires.

Most of the homes or property lost, the farmland and fences burnt and the stock killed or injured were in the Break O’Day municipality.

The speed and force of the wildfire caused many people to fear for their personal safety as well as being highly concerned for their family, friends and neighbours.

Many residents were evacuated from their homes to ensure their safety and many were traumatised by the rapid onset and impact of the fires.

Major tourist assets, community infrastructure and ecological and cultural assets were damaged or destroyed.

Power and communications were extensively disrupted. Electricity infrastructure was destroyed or damaged in many areas across the municipality, causing widespread disruption to household and commercial operations as well as loss of mobile and broadcast services. Community feedback reflected appreciation of the timely response of the Power Authority in repairing damaged power lines and reinstating the required community infrastructure.

The district’s economy also suffered. Many local businesses rely on summer turnover from tourists and holiday shack owners to carry them through the leaner winter period.

As the fires occurred at the commencement of that peak tourist season, the economic impact was extensive. Not only did the tourist operators loose current bookings, but also tourists were not attracted to holiday in the burnt out landscape following the fires.

As with most wildfire events, the impacts upon the community extend far wider than the visibly destroyed buildings and countryside.

Many people had not experienced a bushfire previously and had limited understanding about the range of impacts a fire of this magnitude would have upon them and their community.

Research shows that emergency events of this magnitude can diminish the broader social, spiritual, financial and physical wellbeing of individuals and communities. (Gordon, R., the Social Dimension of Emergency Recovery, www.ema.gov.au)

Therefore the recovery process recognised the extensive range of impacts upon individuals, families and communities and that the recovery process would be lengthy and complex.
2.2 Initial Recovery Response

Initial recovery responses focussed on immediate humanitarian assistance for displaced residents.

The Break O’Day Council had the overall responsibility to establish and maintain all of the evacuation and recovery centres which the Break O’Day Council staff managed for over 2 weeks.

An initial evacuation centre was established at St Helens to provide personal support, registration through the National Registration Information System, catering and emergency accommodation.

As the fires escalated, recovery centres were also established at St Marys, Fingal and Bicheno. Both the St Helens and St Marys’ centres operated 24 hours a day, while the other centres were activated at times as required by the movement of the fires across the district.

This involved significant additional resources and the deployment of personnel and volunteers from across the State. In all, around sixty Department of Health and Human Services staff supported Break O’Day Council in managing the initial response.

Support services were also provided by Anglicare, Centrelink, CGU Insurance, Council of Churches, The Department of Education, Fingal Neighbourhood House, Franklins Bus Service, Red Cross, Relationships Australia, St Vincent de Paul, The Salvation Army, The Victims of Crime Service, and the Meander Valley, Northern Midlands, West Tamar, George Town and Glamorgan Spring Bay Councils.

Feedback from the Evaluation Surveys:
We need to bear in mind that this was the first Tasmanian natural disaster since the 1967 Hobart bushfires that involved a widespread displacement of residents.

A core function of Red Cross at evacuation centres was to register displaced residents to re-connect separated families.

Red Cross deployed eleven teams of volunteers to the evacuation centres and registered over 700 people.

The Rotary Club of St Helens and the Salvation Army kept up a daily stream of meals during the fire fighting and relief operations. Counselling and emotional support services were also provided for the rescue teams and affected residents alike, as well as clothing and other essential items for families whose homes were burnt out or who lost property in the fire.

Accommodation in evacuation centres was not required as either friends, families or accommodation businesses pitched in to house evacuees, or alternatively emergency accommodation was sourced by Housing Tasmania.

Department of Health and Human Services provided Emergency Financial Assistance to people directly affected by the fires as did the Australian Government through Centrelink.

An outreach service was implemented into the affected areas towards the end of the first week of the fires with the advice of Tasmanian Police. Break O’Day Council staff with assistance from Recovery Centre staff and volunteers began the process of receiving, sorting and distributing an enormous quantity of donated goods, from small heartfelt gifts from very young children to extremely generous corporate donations.

On Friday 22 December 2006, eleven days after the initial fire report, progress with fire controls and improving weather conditions allowed fire-fighting operations to be scaled back. Recovery operations were consolidated at St Helens with on-call arrangements to deal with emerging needs.

2.3 Assistance Programs

The response to the extent of the bushfires was swift with all levels of government, the non-government sector and the local and broader communities wanting to do something to help these communities.

The Tasmanian Government made available a range of financial assistance specifically targeted to assist low-income families impacted by the fires.

Feedback from the Evaluation Surveys:
Responses highlighted how quickly the financial assistance packages were put in place and how well the government assistance and Red Cross Appeal worked.
The Tasmanian and Australian Governments activated arrangements under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) including the Special Community Recovery Modules. This included clean up and assistance grants for small business, primary producers and not-for-profit organisations and the establishment of a Community Recovery Fund to support community recovery efforts.

**Feedback from affected residents:**

One of the most consistent themes arising from the affected resident interviews was how much they appreciated the support they received from Council staff, churches, people in the community and the service agencies.

Many people talked of being overwhelmed by the kindness of others and stated they simply couldn’t have got through their ordeal without that help.

Donations of goods and money immediately started to be collected. Community donations and support were received from the local and broader communities and businesses.

Donations included: cash and goods from churches and organisations, over $25,000 in fencing materials from Tasmanian farmers, accommodation for evacuees as well as extensive public donations of money, goods and assistance.

The Break O’Day Council undertook the overall responsibility for the local distribution of donated goods and services which continued for over 8 months.

A Public Appeal fund was promptly established to support people affected by the bushfires and the Tasmanian and Australian Governments both contributed $50,000 each to Appeal.

Red Cross was appointed to manage the East Coast Bushfire Appeal, which was launched on 13 December 2006. Red Cross worked closely with the AARC to ensure that the distribution of Appeal funds was consistent with any other community recovery assistance.

Appeal funds were allocated by a steering panel chaired by Red Cross with financial services provided by Break O’Day Council.

A full report on the distribution of the East Coast Bushfire Appeal was written and distributed to all key stakeholders and may be viewed at: [http://www.redcross.org.au/TAS/news_emergRespReports.htm](http://www.redcross.org.au/TAS/news_emergRespReports.htm).

CRRG recommended a comprehensive range of community recovery activities to the AARC, addressing all aspects of the Community Recovery Plan. Most of these recommendations were endorsed by the AARC, resulting in more than 60 recovery actions implemented, including 21 projects where NDRRA funding was allocated to assist in the implementation. **Please refer to Appendix 4 which outlines the overall amount of financial assistance provided, and Appendix 5 on distribution details.**

**Feedback from the Evaluation Surveys:**

Having a one stop shop arrangement for service providers appeared to be a great help to the affected residents.

A highlight of the initial recovery response appears to have been the way Break O’Day Council, DHHS, Red Cross and all of the other services came together with the broader community to help those affected by the fires.
3.0 Recovery Governance Arrangements

3.1 Statutory Context

Due to the extent of the impact from the bushfires all levels of government recognised the far-reaching effects of the emergency on these communities and enacted legislation to establish a coordinated effort.

Under Tasmanian legislation, the Break O’Day Emergency Management Plan fits within a state framework coordinated through the State Emergency Management Committee.

Within that framework it is recognised that the coordination of medium to long-term recovery is best managed at a municipal level by a body, which can deal with local needs.

The development of community recovery programmes to address the economic, social, infrastructure and environmental issues, needed to be a collaborative process that involved key stakeholders from the communities, Local, State and Commonwealth Governments and non-government organisations.

State Emergency Management Committee decided to establish an Affected Area Recovery Committee (AARC) as a long-term recovery committee to assist the community manage this process.

3.2 East Coast Fires Affected Area Recovery Committee

For a full list of names and agencies please refer to the Appendix 6 East Coast Fires - Affected Area Recovery Committee (AARC) Membership

An AARC was duly established and first met on 9 January 2007.

The Committee was chaired by the Break O’Day Mayor and included representatives from Local, Tasmanian and Australian Governments, as well as non government organisations and community representatives.

The AARC approved:

- The employment of the Disaster Recovery Coordinator;
- The establishment of the CCRG;
- The Community Recovery Plan;
- The process to assess applications and distribute assistance under the NDRRA Community Recovery Fund; and
- All final decisions regarding the allocation of those funds.

In the twelve months following the fires the AARC met regularly and was committed to continuing its operations until the longer term recovery initiatives were completed.

3.3 Community Recovery Reference Group

Following the bushfires many affected people expressed a lack of understanding about the available recovery services and did not seem to know how to have an input into recovery processes. This was despite the many media releases and newsletters explaining the new range of recovery services available for bushfire-affected people and the governance arrangements.

Also at that time (as has similarly occurred within other recovery processes) a new bushfire affected support group started to emerge, which met to provide people with an opportunity to share their experiences. This group was also expressing some frustration in understanding the recovery services available and how decisions were being made.

A key task at that same time was to undertake a broad community consultation process to identify the key recovery challenges facing the community into the future and develop a Community Recovery Plan.

What emerged from all those forms of community consultation was a clear message from the community that they needed a broader understanding about recovery services and wanted to have greater input into the decision-making surrounding the recovery processes.
Options for achieving greater community engagement in the governance arrangements were explored in a discussion paper titled ‘Options for Strengthening Community Involvement with the AARC’.

This was then presented to the AARC for their consideration with the following options:

- **Option 1:** Integrating community recovery with existing community groups;
- **Option 2:** Establishment of a formal local Community Recovery Reference Group; or
- **Option 3:** Ongoing Community Recovery Forums with open community invitation.

At its February meeting the AARC selected *Option 2* as their preferred approach and approved the establishment of a Community Recovery Reference Group (CRRG).

Criteria were then developed for the selection of community representatives and the nomination process was widely advertised through local media and newsletters etc.

Nominated representatives were selected on their ability to represent bushfire-affected communities and to provide effective two-way communication between the AARC and those communities.

The CRRG was made up of a total of 9 residents representing the four communities that were significantly affected by the fires. These were: Scamander (3 reps), St Marys / Cornwall, (3 reps), Four Mile Creek / Falmouth (1 rep) and St Helens (2 reps).

The CRRG was initially convened in May 2007 and they immediately worked on and finalised their Terms of Reference, which were then approved by the AARC: listed in Appendix 1.

The CRRG was to be an advisory group to AARC and to specifically:

- Assist their communities to identify emerging recovery needs and plan appropriate recovery actions;
- Develop and prioritise recovery projects to achieve the actions identified in the Community Recovery Plan;
- Assist with implementing and coordinating recovery projects being undertaken in the community;
- Use local networks to share information with the community about the recovery process, resource allocation and decisions and projects planned; and
- Foster community ownership of recovery projects and support for individuals to become involved in local initiatives and leadership roles.

The Community Recovery Plan was completed prior to the establishment of the CRRG. The Community Recovery Plan identified over a hundred proposed recovery initiatives that merited further consideration. The process to further consider these initiatives necessitated the CRRG having ongoing engagement with at least seven local communities.

The CRRG in keeping with their ‘Terms of Reference’ undertook to maintain “close engagement with their communities to develop and prioritise initiatives and resourcing options that achieve the actions as identified in the East Coast Fires Community Recovery Plan”. For further details refer to *Appendix 2 – Community Recovery Reference Group Terms of Reference*.

This work also meant the CRRG members required an agreement by their communities as to which recovery projects would be recommended to the AARC for potential funding.

The CRRG also needed to ensure the prioritised recovery projects submitted to the AARC for funding would improve community cohesion and not result in community divisions over where recovery funds were expended. *The prioritisation process is described in Section 3.3.*

The group asked the Disaster Recovery Coordinator *(see 3.4 below)* to convene their meetings for the duration of the Coordinator’s...
At the completion of the Coordinator’s role the AARC appointed a member of the CRRG to chair the group.

In total twelve CRRG meetings were held over the first eight months to the end of 2007.

All of the members attended in a voluntary capacity and put in many hours of dedicated work to produce the finalised community recovery projects.

The members of the CRRG are highly commended by all the partners involved in this recovery process for their continued commitment and support of the recovery process.

3.4 Disaster Recovery Coordinator

Emerging from the early community consultations was the understanding that the recovery process for these communities was going to be long and complex. As a result of the completion of the Community Recovery Plan it became obvious that an appointment of a Disaster Recovery Coordinator was required.

A proposal was presented to the AARC requesting the allocation of resources from the NDRRA funding for the appointment of a Disaster Recovery Coordinator to support the longer-term recovery.

It was proposed that this role would complement the work of the Break O’Day Council and other significant stakeholders involved in the recovery process.

The Coordinator’s role was also designed to facilitate greater community participation in the recovery process and implement the Community Recovery Plan.

ARRC agreed to the proposal and a partnership approach grew out of further discussions. This partnership involved ARRC approving the funding from the NDRRA resources for the role, requesting Red Cross to employ and manage the role, and the on-site office to be provided by the Break O’Day Council.

This arrangement afforded the highly regarded credibility of Red Cross in managing the Coordinator, whilst also providing the opportunity for the role to be based in the Break O’Day Council and be able to work beside their staff.

By having the Coordinator employed by Red Cross it also gave the position access to the extensive Red Cross recovery networks and expertise.

It was understood by all partners that the recovery process would take longer than the 12-month appointment of the Coordinator’s position.

Therefore it was important for the Coordinator’s role to continue supporting the role of the Break O’Day Council as the main coordinating stakeholder for local recovery.

The Coordinator commenced work out of the Break O’Day Council offices at St Helens in May 2007.

A professional support team was established to provide guidance to the Coordinator and met mostly via teleconference on an ‘as needs’ basis.

The professional support team was made up of the Break O’Day Community Development Officer, the Health and Human Services officer responsible for the Community Recovery Plan and two Red Cross Emergency Services staff.

The Coordinator worked with the affected communities and in particular supported the work of the CRRG throughout the critical initial twelve months to implement the Community Recovery Plan by:

- Developing and maintaining strong community ownership and drive of recovery initiatives;
- Monitoring the expenditure of community recovery grant money;
- Developing and implementing a communication strategy;
- Advocating for, and representing, affected persons in a range of forums;
• Engaging key stakeholders involved in recovery processes to develop sustainable relationships for designing and implementing recovery initiatives;
• Ensuring adaptive change management addresses emerging community recovery needs;
• Assisting community groups to seek appropriate funding for recovery initiatives;
• Liaising closely with the local government staff and community agencies involved in fire recovery activities;
• Providing regular reports to the AARC, CRRG and Red Cross as directed; and
• Providing an on-going evaluation of activities to the AARC, CRRG and Red Cross.

4.0 Community Recovery Plan

4.1 Initial Consultation

Following activation of the Special Community Recovery Modules under the NDRRA to support community recovery efforts, the AARC then had the primary role to implement these initiatives.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) through the Tasmanian Recovery Coordinator provided advice to the ARRC regarding how to most clearly identify the key challenges facing the bushfire-affected communities and develop recovery programmes for the longer-term recovery.

DHHS released experienced personnel from their normal roles to work with Break O’Day Council staff, and with the support from Red Cross they cooperatively developed a community engagement process. This process identified how community consultations would be utilised to develop a Community Recovery Plan.

The cooperation and support from the Break O’Day Council staff was essential to vouch for the other workers from participating agencies. The Break O’Day Council staff introduced these new workers to local people, small businesses and groups as trustworthy workers.

Local Council staff phoned all the people who had lost their homes or had been significantly impacted by the bushfires to ask if they would like to participate in an interview. If so, the workers could visit them or they were welcome to come into the council.

A range of questions were developed to prompt reflections, opinions and input into future community recovery needs.

Teams of 2 workers (comprising staff from Break O’Day Council, DHHS, Red Cross and the University of Tasmania’s Department of Rural Health) undertook these interviews with individuals, families, small businesses, community groups and services who had agreed to participate. Workers also attended many community meetings and posed the same questions to those meetings. Over 75 separate interviews were conducted.

A database was developed which captured this information following the interviews.

Simultaneously 7 small local community forums were held which provided an opportunity for the communities to debrief with Tasmania Fire Services and Tasmania Police regarding the fire scenario. The forums also provided an information exchange regarding recovery assistance available, as well as posing the key questions (the same as used in the interviews) to gauge the opinions and input from those present.

All the information and proposed community recovery initiatives (over 100) gathered through this consultation process were used to inform the development of the Community Recovery Plan.

As the affected communities were closely involved in the development of the Community Recovery Plan, its broader acceptance and potential to be effectively implemented was strengthened.
4.2 Community Recovery Plan Structure

The East Coast Fires Community Recovery Plan is structured around ten overarching recovery objectives, ie:

1. Coordination of the Recovery Effort;
2. Strengthen Community Participation and Ownership of Recovery;
3. Enhance Communication and Information;
4. Ongoing Assessment, Planning and Evaluation of Community Recovery Strategies;
5. Increase Community Preparedness for Emergencies;
6. Focus on Personal and Community Support;
7. Focus on Environmental Recovery and Development;
8. Focus on Economic Recovery and Development;
9. Focus on Infrastructure Restoration and Development; and
10. Focus on Future Development.

Each objective then had a range of implementation strategies developed, together with a total of fifty suggested recovery actions.

4.3 Community Recovery Plan Implementation

The initial focus of the AARC was distributing emergency financial and other assistance to the people most affected by the bushfires. Once this task was in hand, the AARC oversaw the development and implementation of the Community Recovery Plan. Appendix 5 provides an overview of the stages and timelines for the distribution of assistance following the bushfires.

The AARC acknowledges that concerns were raised regarding the perceived delays in the finalisation of the Recovery Plan and the establishment of the Community Recovery Reference Group. The communication strategy employed by the AARC during the early stages was evidently less effective than planned.

It is noted that these perceived delays created a sense of growing community impatience.

The CCRG with assistance from the Coordinator developed a structured process to identify the most urgent and highest priority recovery projects.

Using the results from the community forums and consultation interviews, fifty-two recovery activities or projects were identified and chosen by the CRRG to be of urgent or obvious community need and not requiring any further community consultation.

These recovery activities or projects were immediately recommended to the AARC for funding and implementation approval.

Most of the remaining proposed projects involved a greater demand for funding or required further input from the local communities.

After further development, the remaining proposed projects were prioritised through a rating system, which considered how well a project would:

- Improve public amenity value;
- Improve community well being and harmony;
Be widely supported;
Increase local social capacity;
Provide a visible or tangible outcome;
Improve fire preparedness; and
Offer value for money.

Feedback from the Evaluation Surveys:
CRRG feedback identified that the community sees preparedness as essential not only for prevention, but also for recovery.

Later, when further differentiation was required, additional criteria were introduced to consider:

- The potential to source alternate resourcing;
- The urgency of the activity; and
- Prior distribution of recovery resources across the affected communities (equity).

An indicative list of additional recovery projects was then submitted to the AARC for comment. Following the AARC feedback, these were refined and re-submitted to the AARC.

Twenty-five of those recovery projects involved recommendations for allocating the estimated $265,000 of government recovery funding expected to be available for community recovery proposals.

At its August meeting the AARC endorsed the CRRG’s recommended recovery projects and chose to defer final consideration of four proposals pending the availability of further information.

The additional information was provided shortly afterwards, with the final consideration of the remaining recommendations occurring in mid-December 2007.

Most of the approved community liaison and information activities identified within the Community Recovery Plan did not require separate funding and were allocated to the Coordinator for implementation.

Examples of a community fire preparedness projects:

Property Management Planning
It is becoming a standard practice for primary producers to develop property management plans for their properties, integrating the agricultural, business planning and environmental management aspects of their operations into one overall plan.

With the recent development of a Tasmanian property management planning (PMP) framework there now exists an opportunity to include fire management into that planning process.

As part of the recovery activities a fire management module is being developed for the Tasmanian PMP framework. Over time, adoption of fire management planning will become integrated into property plans across the state, providing an invaluable improvement in fire preparedness throughout Tasmania.

Pine replacement partnership
An innovative partnership between a local community group and a forestry plantation company is seeing some pine plantations being replaced with native forest. Under the agreement Rayonier Ltd is allowing North East Bioregional Network to manage the regeneration of some of the pine plantations around the township of Beaumaris back to native ironbark forest after the pines have been harvested.

In support of this innovative and widely supported initiative a recovery activity was put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach they are using. This will provide both parties with the information they need to plan how far this approach can be extended and what sort of community resources will be needed.

Of all the recovery projects which received funding through the AARC, all but two were allocated to Break O’Day Council to either directly manage or to auspice through agencies such as the Tasmanian Fire Service.

The diversity and quality of recovery projects recommended by the CRRG were highly valued by the communities, with recovery projects ranging from improved fire preparedness, to personal support and facilitation of economic, environmental and social recovery.
For example, a large number of recovery projects aimed to improve the sense of safety and reduce vulnerability to future fire events by developing community fire preparedness.

Activities to develop community fire preparedness included:

- ‘Prepare your property’ workshops and information sheets;
- Development of a fire management module to fit into the state property management planning framework;
- Evaluation of a pine replacement initiative; and
- Widespread promotion of personal fire risk awareness and planning.

Personal recovery was supported through additional counselling services, promotion of emotional stress recognition, support services, facilitation of a number of community social recovery events and direct contact and advocacy support for affected residents.

At a community level, social recovery was accelerated through a number of recovery events ranging from informal barbeques to concerts and exhibitions.

In addition, physical infrastructure to encourage community interaction was planned and community training was proposed in areas such as event management and evacuation bus driver training.

Economic recovery was supported through business recovery grants.

Environmental recovery was facilitated through activities such as providing access to weed management support, revegetation advice and assistance and promotion of environmental recovery events.

A full list of the Affected Area Recovery Committee endorsed recovery activities is contained in Appendix 1.

Feedback from the Evaluation Surveys:

Feedback suggested that visible recovery indicators should be progressed as quickly as possible, with speedy infrastructure repair and development needing to be facilitated through streamlined planning and approvals.

Example of a community cohesion project

Schools based propagation project

One of the recovery challenges was in finding ways to include young people in the recovery activities. One very effective project involved students growing seedlings to help affected residents re-plant their properties.

Students from schools across the affected areas are collecting seed from bush near then fire affected areas and learning how to germinate that seed into seedlings. Apart from re-connecting them with a landscape they may have started to see as threatening, involving them in visiting affected residents with a gift or recovery they have grown themselves is a powerful way of renewing community cohesion.

4.4 Communication Strategy

With the emphasis on building the communities’ capacity to manage their own recovery, community engagement processes needed to be further developed.

This engagement needed to be based upon effective, open and trusting communication between all stakeholders.

The CRRG and Coordinator immediately developed a communication strategy and identified the existing communication channels within the bushfire-affected communities to be utilised.

Print and radio media were used to ensure that critical recovery information and progress updates were available to the widest possible audience.

At the same time community input on priority recovery needs was primarily sought through the CRRG’s local networks within the affected communities.
Examples of the range and extent of recovery communication and engagement activities undertaken through 2007 included:

- The initial community consultation including the interviews and community forums in the various bushfire affected localities;
- Follow up visits by the Coordinator to all residents who lost their homes in the fires;
- A total of sixteen fire recovery newsletters released over the year through Break O’Day Council;
- Weekly progress interviews with the Coordinator on the local radio station Star FM;
- Use of regional talk back radio to raise awareness of emotional stress and enable broader community members to ring in and discuss stress issues with a mental health worker;
- A number of articles on recovery issues in local and regional newspapers and newsletters;
- Liaison with twenty seven local organisations by the CRRG members;
- Regular contact meetings between the Coordinator and key stakeholder groups across the region;
- Briefing reports to Break O’Day Council, the AARC and the State Disaster Recovery Committee; and
- Wide advertising of the Coordinator as a first point of contact for inquiries about recovery matters.

The Community Communication Strategy document is listed at Appendix 3

4.5 Delivery Progress of the Community Recovery Plan

Within several months of the AARC and CRRG formation, recommended recovery projects were in place to address all fifty recovery actions listed in the Community Recovery Plan.

As previously listed under the Community Recovery Plan Structure, the plan had 10 overarching objectives. Recovery projects or activities that produced outcomes against the following objectives were all substantially completed by the end of 2007:

1. Coordination of the Recovery Effort;
2. Strengthen Community Participation and Ownership of Recovery;
3. Enhance Communication and Information;
4. Ongoing Assessment, Planning and Evaluation of Community Recovery Strategies;
6. Focus on Personal and Community Support; and
7. Focus on Environmental Recovery and Development

Recovery projects or activities to produce outcomes against the remaining objectives listed below had all been initiated by the end of the first 12 month period, however many are still in progress:

5. Increase Community Preparedness for Emergencies;
8. Focus on Economic Recovery and Development;
9. Focus on Infrastructure Restoration and Development; and
10. Focus on Future Development

These activities typically involved longer timeframes for delivery, especially where physical infrastructure works were involved, and were expected to extend some time into 2008.
While activities were identified and initiated to realise all ten of the recovery plan objectives, two areas presented particular challenges and were perhaps less extensively addressed than other areas.

**Environmental rehabilitation** works were ineligible for NDRRA funding which created some difficulties for the CCRG.

Other funding streams are available to cover such works; however their extended application timelines and lack of availability for weed management (one of the most significant post fire environmental issues) made it a challenging area to address within this initial twelve month timeframe.

Progress against this objective was therefore constrained to facilitated access to those existing Natural Resource Management projects and resources already operating in the region.

**Economic Recovery and Development** was the other area where further progress would have been desirable.

Initial economic recovery was supported through businesses recovery grants, event support and promotion of the region as a visitor destination. This approach would appear to offer great potential to help drive long term economic recovery however is expected to take some time to fully implement.

*Appendix 1 includes a listing of the progress status for each endorsed recovery activity.*

### 4.6 Transition Arrangements

The Coordinator’s position was targeted to support the crucial initial recovery stages (up to 12 months). This was to be followed by a full transition to locally coordinated recovery for longer-term strategies.

With the Coordinator commencing in May 2007, the twelve-month appointment would have meant this transition would have occurred in early 2008.

A mid term progress review of the East Coast Community Recovery Plan in November 2007 however identified that most of the outcomes were either progressing well or had already been achieved.

The review also recognised that the majority of the recovery projects, which were funded through the AARC, were now allocated to the Break O’Day Council to implement.

As the Coordinator’s role had continued to support the role of the Break O’Day Council as the main coordinating stakeholder, it was appropriate to recommend an earlier transition.

Red Cross prepared a transition plan to support the recommendation to AARC for an earlier transition. In developing this recommendation Red Cross also considered recovery progress indicators such as community Milestone events.

By the end of 2007 the bushfire-affected communities would have experienced a number of milestone events, including:

- Anniversary exhibitions and events;
- Fire preparedness workshops; and
- Release of the Regener8 book of stories from the fires.

These milestone events would highlight the progression of local recovery and help communities to feel that their recovery was sufficiently advanced for local structures to fully take over.

Red Cross proposed to AARC (which was subsequently endorsed) that an earlier transition to full local recovery coordination be achieved by the end of 2007.

This would also provide the further benefit of freeing up additional funds from the NDRRA for allocation to local community recovery projects.
5.0 Learning from the Experience

5.1 Evaluating community recovery processes – limitations and stakeholders

The challenges of trying to undertake an effective evaluation of the recovery process were hampered by the following issues:

- Key personnel being too closely involved in delivering recovery services or projects;
- Limited access to external research support, additional resources or formal evaluation tools; and
- Lack of nationally agreed community recovery indicators.

These issues combined meant that a comprehensive evaluation of the Tasmanian East Coast recovery was going to be limited.

Extensive community input was collected during the early phases of developing the Community Recovery Plan. Since then Red Cross has continued (during the term of the Coordinator’s employment) to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the community led recovery model.

Red Cross was keen to obtain reflections, insights into the effectiveness of the recovery process, as well as provide the opportunity for people to make comments about what worked well for them and what didn’t.

The key stakeholders involved in managing the recovery process were the CRRG and AARC. The membership of these two groups represented all the bushfire-affected communities and the major agencies and organisations involved in the recovery process.

Given their responsibilities and long-term view of the recovery processes, these two groups were ideally placed to comment on the recover process.

The AARC and the CRRG members were surveyed in January 2008 on how they felt the recovery process had progressed.

Seven recovery areas were considered, with the respondents commenting on the overall performance, strengths, shortfalls and suggested delivery improvements for:

- Initial recovery responses;
- Governance and communications;
- Community engagement;
- The Community Recovery Plan;
- Transition to local coordination arrangements;
- Financial assistance programs; and
- How effectively the learning opportunities from this experience were identified and acted upon.

Just over half of the CRRG members responded to the survey, and a third of the AARC members responded.

Overall input for evaluating this recovery process and presenting the following recommendations have been gained from:

- Initial community consultations undertaken to develop the Community Recovery Plan;
- Notes from discussions from site visits and interviews undertaken by the Coordinator with residents affected by the fire;
- Surveys of the key stakeholders in CCRG and AARC regarding the recovery delivery; and
- Direct input from the Coordinator.

A compilation of this combined input has been threaded throughout this report and a summary of the issues and recommendations identified are provided in the following section. A comprehensive response from the AARC to the issues raised has not been included.
5.2 Observations and Recommendations

i. Overall Findings

Community recovery following the 2006 East Coast bushfires has been well advanced by the completion of the funded period for the Coordinator’s role.

A comprehensive Community Recovery Plan was established, strongly based on the expressed needs and concerns of the affected communities.

The Community Recovery Plan has been substantially implemented (some initiatives ahead of schedule). This has been achieved under the direction of the AARC, with the advice of an active CCRG representing the various affected communities and supported by the Coordinator.

CCRG members commended the work of the Disaster Recovery Coordinator.

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i. Recovery Assistance

*Please refer to section 2.3 Recovery Assistance for a full description of the processes.*

Feedback from many affected residents and recovery stakeholders expressed strong satisfaction and appreciation with the range of initial recovery responses.

Particularly highlighted were the various Recovery Centres, the efforts of recovery staff (especially from Break O’Day Council, DHHS and Red Cross) and the performance of a wide range of agencies and organisations either providing recovery assistance or prompt re-establishment of essential services.

**Issues raised pertaining to the Recovery Assistance**

*Lack of clarity and understanding regarding the financial support available*

Closure of services across the Christmas period following the Bushfires caused concern for some residents who appeared unaware that arrangements had been made for all services to be available on an on-call basis.

In respect to initial assistance grants, some respondents stated that assistance allocations appeared to lack consistency.

There was considerable feedback from a number of people who had been confused between the various assistance available through Tasmanian Government, the East Coast Bushfire Appeal managed by Red Cross and the monies allocated through the NDRRA.

There appeared to be a lack of clear understandings about the different funds available, different application processes and how to apply etc.

Some respondents raised concerns regarding a perceived lack of a third party oversight authority to monitor how the various recovery assistance programs were expended.

Some agencies believed that if combined service agency meetings occurred it would have enabled a more concentrated case management approach and identified service gaps for individual and families etc.

A perceived lack of planned coordinated communication strategies regarding assistance available to affected people following a disaster.

Some recipients of assistance programs did not believe those programs were able to meet their needs.

People who experienced either property damage or a loss of their homes due to the bushfires and were not insured or underinsured expressed a need for low interest rebuilding loans as part of the recovery assistance.

All the following recommendations are based on the outcomes of processes and work undertaken that proved to be successful, as well as learnings from recovery work which confirmed that if done differently greater outcomes could have been achieved.
Recommendations pertaining to the Recovery Assistance

Recommendation 1. That information on the range of recovery assistance programs available for the affected communities needs to be repeatedly publicised in a coordinated summary to the affected communities.

Recommendation 2. That the timeframes, eligibility criteria and key contact details for recovery assistance programs be widely and repeatedly publicised in order to maximise equity of access across affected communities.

Recommendation 3. That (to the extent that privacy and confidentiality limitations allow) regular overviews of the assistance programs available and total funds distributed need to be broadly and repeatedly publicised to the affected communities.

Recommendation 4. That all agencies responsible for managing assistance programs following disasters, work together to develop a single entry registration point into recovery services to simplify collecting information regarding the needs of affected people.

Recommendation 5. That all agencies responsible for managing assistance programs following disasters, work together to develop a streamlined application processes for affected people to apply for all available assistance programs (e.g. Public Appeals, Govt assistance grants etc).

ii. Recovery Governance Arrangements

Please refer to section 3.0 Governance Arrangements for a full description of the structures established.

In overall terms the Governance Arrangements have mostly been well accepted by local residents and key stakeholders.

The establishment of an AARC was primarily well received, especially in terms of its ability to maintain direct access to all levels of government and facilitate cross-agency and organisation cooperation.

The AARC’s support for implementing a community driven recovery process was also positively acknowledged.

The role of the CCRG in sustaining the community managed recovery model was recognised for producing sound outcomes for the local communities as indicated by the:

- High level of community input achieved in the community recovery planning; and
- Readiness with which all recovery projects have been either managed and/or completed under local management.

The employment, placement and role of the Coordinator’s position has also resulted in positive community outcomes as demonstrated through the:

- Productive working relationship achieved between the Coordinator and the CRRG;
- Methodology developed by the Coordinator and CCRG to further identify, develop and prioritise community recovery projects;
- Level of community support for the position being employed through Red Cross; and
- Extent to which the position was able to provide a conduit to national recovery expertise through Red Cross.

Benefits arising from Local Government hosting the Coordinator’s role were also evident. Such an arrangement provided the benefits of excellent informal networking and communication linkages, and cost effective office resourcing.
Issues raised regarding the Recovery Governance Arrangements

Timelines
From the community’s perspective the establishment of the CRRG and the appointment of the Coordinator’s position seemed to take too long. It was felt that after the initial recovery response and development of the Community Recovery Plan, few recovery activities occurred until the CCRG and Coordinator were in place.

The AARC acknowledges that its immediate focus on providing financial and other assistance for people most affected by the Bushfires resulted in the AARC not communicating with the community as effectively as possible regarding the additional work being undertaken by the AARC to finalise the medium to long term Community Recovery Plan.

Feedback from CCRG members included their concerns about the apparent suddenness of the withdrawal of the Coordinator’s position and the handing over of the full management for recovery work to Local Government. Some community members felt they lacked information or enough time to assist them regarding this transition.

Communication and cooperative recovery processes
All recovery stakeholders recognise that the significant expectations on local government regarding its ongoing role throughout the recovery process could potentially exhaust its available resources.

In particular, the community need for local government to continually provide a range of information about the disaster and recovery process produced considerable pressure on a relatively small organisation.

Equity of representation from the affected communities in any CCRG is an important issue to many community members.

CRRG members stated there was no direct contact between the AARC and the CRRG and believed it would have been good to have at least one combined meeting at the commencement of the recovery process.

Some community members expressed a lack of understanding about who were on the AARC and its Terms of Reference.

Some community members expressed a belief that they were limited in their ability to engage with their Local Government and valued the role of the Coordinator to undertake that communication.

Recommendations pertaining to the Recovery Governance Arrangements

Recommendation 6. That consideration be given to providing local government with additional support to assist them in meeting the communication requirements during a recovery process.

Recommendation 7. That recovery managers recognise the importance of having community representatives (including affected residents) involved at all stages of the recovery process.

Recommendation 8. That a structure such as a CRRG be recognised as an effective mechanism for providing local affected community input into community recovery management.

Recommendation 9. That arrangements for the incorporation of a CRRG (or alternatively existing community groups) into recovery management structures be captured within recovery plans so that community input can be achieved in a timely way following a disaster.

Recommendation 10. That the employment of a Disaster Recovery Coordinator by an independent third party (non–government agency) be recognised as an effective way to ensure the active engagement of all recovery stakeholders.

Recommendation 11. That the role of a Disaster Recovery Coordinator be identified within recovery plans, so that following a significant disaster, a timely appointment can be made.
Reccommendation 12. That local hosting (for e.g. through Local Government) be recognised as offering significant networking and efficiency benefits for any independent third party employed Coordinator position.

Reccommendation 13. That if an AARC is established membership and Terms of Reference should be publicised and readily available to all disaster-affected communities.

Reccommendation 14. That if an AARC is established community representation be included, preferably drawn from a structure such as a CRRG.

Reccommendation 15. That a community engagement strategy be developed immediately following a disaster and included as a standing agenda item for all recovery committee meetings.

Reccommendation 16. That the East Coast Bushfire recovery stakeholders provide input into the review of the Tasmanian State Emergency Management Plan including recommendations regarding the governance arrangements.

iii. Community Recovery Plan

Please refer to section 4.0 Community Recovery Plan for a full description of the processes for the development and implementation of the plan.

Overall the East Coast Fires Community Recovery Plan appears to have been very well received, with the AARC and CRRG also readily accepting it as an appropriate blueprint for community recovery.

The community consultation undertaken during the Community Recovery Plan’s development and implementation were highlighted by many community residents who provided feedback. Their feedback contained specific reference to highly valuing the post fire Community Forums and information sessions.

Community recovery projects

Often singled out for comment within the feedback was an appreciation that the Community Recovery Plan recognised future emergency preparedness as a valid component of community recovery.

Of all of the recovery projects undertaken, the ‘Regener8’ exhibitions and stories from the fires book bear particular note as a recovery mechanism.

Of vital importance to the success of the “Regener8” exercise however was the communities’ ability to access professional expertise for production of the stories from the fires book and adequate financial resourcing to allow for a quality printing of the final product.

Regener8 book of stories

Giving people a chance to tell their stories can be a powerful way to deal with the personal effects of an emergency. The East Coast communities were given such a voice through the Regener8 project which shared peoples’ experiences from the fires through stories and art.

The Regener8 book published stories and poems from over sixty people affected by the fires into a professionally produced colour publication.

The community benefits from this exercise have been widespread.

It was not unusual to find participants who were initially unsure whether they had anything to say, finding they wanted to keep contributing.
Demand for the book from the wider community has been enthusiastic, with the organisers already needing to look at a re-print.

To compliment the collection of stories, the Regener8 organising committee also arranged a series of art exhibitions, featuring paintings, photography, textiles and sculpture themed around the fires and the community regeneration that had followed. These exhibitions were also very popular with the wider community, with both galleries extending the displays by an extra month.

Issues raised pertaining to the development and implementation of the Community Recovery Plan

**Community input:**

Preference was given for the use of ‘out of town’ workers to undertake the interviews with affected residents and community groups (to ensure openness in responses).

**Timelines and lack of momentum:**

Feedback expressed the view that recovery momentum built through the initial Community Forums waned quickly and then took some time to become re-established.

To some respondents there appeared to be a hiatus of activity for some time following these Community Forums. This was believed to be due to the time lapse between initial activity and the appointment of the Coordinator, establishment of CRRG and the lack of ongoing engagement with the community.

Some concerns were expressed regarding the time to allocate funds to community recovery projects due the extensive community consultation process adopted.

**Allocation of funding through the NDRRA for community recovery projects:**

Opinions were expressed that due to the amount of time required by the Coordinator to assist with this process, this work may have detracted from the Coordinator’s time available to work on developing community cooperation for longer term community recovery initiatives.

Questions were raised in respect to whether too much time and energy was exerted by all recovery stakeholders in finalising and developing proposals for the allocation of funds at the expense of time and energy being expended to develop and implement broader community development initiatives and outcomes.

Inevitably in any recovery process the distribution of funds across the community is one of the most challenging tasks. Equally in this recovery process at the community level there were mixed perceptions regarding the decision making processes and the distribution of funds

**Recommendations pertaining to the Community Recovery Plan development and implementation**

**Recommendation 17.** That numerous (independently facilitated) small neighbourhood based Community Forums be considered as part of a strategy within Recovery Plans to enable community de-briefing following a disaster with key stakeholders present (e.g. Emergency Services) and to also identify community recovery issues and needs.

**Recommendation 18.** That following an emergency event it be recognised that there are high levels of community interest in how to better prepare themselves for another future emergency. Given this understanding, consideration should be given to the inclusion of emergency preparedness activities within Recovery Plans, which can be implemented during the recovery process.

**Recommendation 19.** That creative and expressive opportunities be planned for utilised and funded, to enable those affected by a disaster to ‘tell their stories’.

**Recommendation 20.** That information regarding the implementation arrangements for the Recovery Plan and reports on its progress be widely and regularly disseminated across affected communities.

**Recommendation 21.** That National learnings regarding the allocation of the Special Community Recovery funds under the NDRRA funding be collected from this experience and other jurisdictions which have been involved in allocating those funds. These learnings could then be used to contribute to national agreed procedures that ensure consistent allocations following disasters.
### 6. Appendices

**Appendix 1 – Community Recovery Reference Group Recommended Recovery Activities and Projects (as endorsed by the Affected Area Recovery Committee)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recovery Activity and brief description</th>
<th>Funding Allocation</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Key outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE 1. COORDINATION OF THE RECOVERY EFFORT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Recovery Coordinator - appointment</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordination and implementation of the East Coast Fires Community Recovery Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and employment of a Disaster Recovery Coordinator – to work with Local Govt and be employed by RC.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery Engagement Strategy - coordination and consultation</td>
<td>$700</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Developed a framework for a strategically planned community engagement process with all fire affected communities. Established ongoing input into recovery Planning from local communities and key recovery stakeholders. Provided tools and processes for ongoing information distribution about disaster recovery activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of a community Engagement Strategy submitted to the AARC and subsequently implemented.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery Project Planning</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td>AARC endorsed recovery activities and projects that were identified and supported by affected communities through the Community Recovery Reference Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying and documenting a recovery funding allocation process, approved by the AARC, development of project proposals with the CRRG and community. Preparation of a list of recommended projects for recovery funding approved by the AARC.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stakeholder Briefings</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key stakeholders are kept informed of progress and emerging issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator providing regular updates and briefings to BODC and the ARRC.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Funding Strategic Support</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhanced capacity for affected communities to drive their own ongoing recovery processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic assistance to stakeholders in accessing alternate funding support where CRRG endorsed recovery activities were not covered by recovery funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE 2. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND OWNERSHIP OF RECOVERY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Recovery Reference Group - convene</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fire affected communities had ongoing input and ownership of recovery planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convening the CRRG. Developing Terms of Reference, CRRG calendar of meetings and operating processes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Recovery Reference Group - induction</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td>A rapid start up for the CRRG and development of effective operating arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and delivering induction for the CRRG members.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building Approach</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td>The strategic drafting and delivery of recovery initiatives designed to enhance local community development capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of a capacity building approach so that assistance and support is provided to local entities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Benefit</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE 3. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Recovery Newsletters</strong>&lt;br&gt;Producing and distributing recovery newsletters.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Affected communities kept informed of recovery issues and progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Consultation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Identifying and accessing community forums suitable for communicating recovery matters.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Affected communities provided with two way communication opportunities regarding recovery issues and progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recovery Progress Media Exposure</strong>&lt;br&gt;Facilitating the publication of good news stories that will reach a broad section of the community.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Community recovery and morale boosted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE 4. ASSESSMENT, PLANNING AND EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY RECOVERY STRATEGIES</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Disaster Recovery Program Evaluation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Developing a means to evaluate the effectiveness of the community recovery program.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Funding providers, supporting agencies and future recovery coordinators able to build on the learnings from this recovery approach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fire Preparedness Timeline Planning</strong>&lt;br&gt;Identifying key fire preparedness timelines and milestones for recovery activity development.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Delivery of recovery activities timed to suit fire preparedness timelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity Evaluation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ensuring all recovery initiatives include an evaluation component.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Improved ability to evaluate delivery of recovery activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recovery Consultation - community groups</strong>&lt;br&gt;Establishing and maintaining contact with key stakeholders.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Key stakeholders inform and are informed by recovery program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism Impact Monitoring</strong>&lt;br&gt;Liaising with the tourism sector to track the potential impact of fires on visitor numbers.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Economic development stakeholders supported in economic recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE 5. COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCIES</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Evacuation Planning for Mobility Challenged</strong>&lt;br&gt;Liaison with emergency and health services to ensure evacuation plans include the mobility challenged.</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Improved emergency response plans with provision for identification and evacuation of the mobility challenged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Input into Fire Management Planning</strong>&lt;br&gt;Facilitating community engagement into ongoing fire management planning.</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Improved community informing of and confidence in fire management planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Involvement in Public Lands Fire Buffer Management</strong>&lt;br&gt;Liaison with public land managers to ascertain where</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Local communities provided with an enhanced understanding of public land buffer zone management and the extent to which community involvement can occur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Coordination</td>
<td>Outcome/Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Inter-Agency Emergency Services Field Day</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Improved capacity for efficient inter-agency planning and management of emergency situations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating and if suitable facilitating establishment of an annual emergency services field day to support inter-agency interaction and provide opportunities to demonstrate to the public emergency procedures such as fire extinguishing, flares etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Risk Management Info Packs for New Residents</td>
<td></td>
<td>Improved resident knowledge of fire risk management.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and instigating a fire management info pack for inclusion in new owner info kits (as part of fire preparation info sheets project)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Defence Preparation Workshops</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>Improved ability by residents to implement wildfire risk reduction at a property level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field days demonstrating property preparedness planning and techniques</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Defence Preparation and Recovery Info Sheets</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>Improved ability by residents to implement wildfire risk reduction at a property level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing and disseminating information materials on re-vegetation, property defend-ability assessment, buffer zone red tape, lessons learnt common mistakes, mains power- independent water systems and general fire preparedness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Defence Success Factors Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>An improved understanding of what did and didn’t help in defence of local properties in these fires.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis and dissemination of the critical factors in defence of the properties that did/didn’t survive the fires.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evacuation Access Road Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>A better understanding of where evacuation road limitations might apply and solutions facilitated where practicable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of fire fighting and evacuation access road arrangements in regional fire plans and updating of the plans as needed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Warning Mechanisms</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>Improved ability to notify communities of pending emergencies including the identification and publicising of emergency meeting points.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved emergency warning mechanisms and knowledge of emergency gathering and communication points.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushland Road Signage and Maps</td>
<td></td>
<td>Improved ability of emergency services to navigate bushland roads.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with public land managers to improve road signage in bush areas and forestry road maps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis Gully Road Emergency Access</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>Enables fire fighter access and resident evacuation for the Davis Gully community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a lockable access for the top end of Davis Gully Road to allow for emergency service access and resident evacuation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with SES / TFS to identify any learnings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
from the fires that should be incorporated in local emergency plans and facilitate their incorporation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Fire Learnings Review - Agencies</th>
<th>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</th>
<th>Agencies response to fires and other emergencies informed by the lessons learnt in dealing with these fires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post Fire Learnings Review - Agencies</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Improved resident ability to determine and improve their property defend-ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Fire Learnings Review - Agencies</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Improved active membership of and support for volunteer brigades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Fire Learnings Review - Agencies</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Improved township fire protection through strategic fire abatement management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Fire Learnings Review - Agencies</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>District fire plans updated to define strategic township buffer zone location and maintenance arrangements as well as fire trails and emergency fire break lines where relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Fire Learnings Review - Agencies</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Completed Feedback from fire affected residents informs recovery planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornwall Fire Buffer Zone - Crown Land Cleanup Planning</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Improved firebreak management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornwall Town Water Supply - Tanker Draw Off</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Improved dependability of the Cornwall town water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Accommodation Identification</td>
<td>Already in place</td>
<td>Ensuring best possible emergency accommodation arrangements for residents displaced during disasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumaris hinterland fuel risk reduction trial</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE 6. PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Trauma Workshops - Emergency Services</td>
<td>Under Break O’Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Improved post event support for emergency service volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Fighter Memorial</td>
<td>$1,000 Under Break O’Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Enhanced general community and family specific recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Engagement in Recovery Activities</td>
<td>$20,000 Under Break O’Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Reduced levels of community wide post traumatic stress through improved post-fires social interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rener8 recovery book</td>
<td>$11,000 Completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery Health Service Delivery</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Ensuring that best possible personal support and counselling services are available to affected communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Support and Counselling Services - Access Promotion</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Improved community wide awareness of, and preparedness to utilise, personal support and counselling services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**OBJECTIVE 7. ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fire Control in Property Management Planning</strong></td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Improved fire management planning at a property level in rural properties across the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Involvement in Public Lands Fire Recovery Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Under Break O'Day Council coordination</td>
<td>Community members, where relevant, being able to contribute to public lands post fire recovery activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetation Regeneration Information Provision</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Improved vegetation management response in the vulnerable post fire clear earth period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fire Management in Coastal Re-Vegetation</strong></td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Reduced coastal wildfire risk through improved land manager knowledge in respect to coastal vegetation management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weed Management Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Improved weed management response in the vulnerable post fire clear earth period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regeneration Recovery Progress Reporting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Improved community knowledge of public lands recovery progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Environmental Recovery Monitoring</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Enhanced community engagement in and knowledge of, environmental recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Recovery Engagement - Schools Based Propagation Program</strong></td>
<td>$4,200</td>
<td>Under way - Two year project</td>
<td>Reduced post traumatic stress amongst target school children. Improved social cohesion and recovery arising from cooperation and acts of goodwill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Break O'Day NRM Liaison</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Key local stakeholder group informs and sets direction for environmental recovery activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scamander River Speed Limit Signage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Reduced bank erosion along the fire denuded lower Scamander reaches.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OBJECTIVE 8. ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning From Other Disaster Recovery Programs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Improved Tasmanian disaster recovery capacity. Relevant disaster recovery learnings made available to DRC / recovery stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
include relevant learnings from other disaster recovery programs.

| Economic Recovery - Events Support | $2,000 Under BOD Business Enterprise Centre coordination | Increased Break O’Day capacity to manage and market local events with regional economic returns arising from increased visitor numbers |
| Economic Agency Liaison | Completed | Improved economic recovery through better identification and knowledge of economic trends and potential initiatives for the region |
| Monitoring Economic Recovery | Completed | Improved economic recovery through better identification and knowledge of economic impacts arising from the fires |
| East Coast Economic Recovery Liaison | Completed | Local economic development stakeholders supported in driving local economic recovery |
| Small Business Recovery Support | Completed | Improved economic recovery through better identification and knowledge of economic impacts arising from the fires |

**OBJECTIVE 9. INFRASTRUCTURE RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

<p>| St Marys Emergency Services Centre fit out | $54,400 Under Break O’Day Council coordination-completed | Improved emergency services operation through enhanced facilities for inter-agency interaction, local delivery of training and briefings, as well as through increased participation and improved morale of staff |
| Fire Preparation Building Information Support | $500 Under Break O’Day Council coordination-completed | Improved resident preparation for wildfires |
| Cornwall Park Amenities - shelter and BBQ | $28,500 Under Break O’Day Council coordination | Significant improvements to local community amenity, frequency and extent of social gathering and to tourist visitation and experience |
| Scamander Mouth Public Amenities - Part A | $40,700 Under Break O’Day Council coordination | Significant improvements to local community amenity, frequency and extent of social gathering and to tourist visitation and experience |
| Beaumaris to Scamander Multi Use Path - Planning | $15,000 Under Break O’Day Council coordination | Feasibility planning in place for the ‘Beaumaris to Scamander Multi Use Path’ |
| Beaumaris to Scamander Multi Use Path - Construction | $55,000 Yet to commence | Separation of cyclists and walkers from vehicular traffic on the Tasman Highway, improved health outcomes for the residents of both towns arising from increased exercise levels, improved access to popular coastal features, better access to shops and facilities for Beaumaris residents and improved social interaction opportunities for the youth of both towns |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four Mile Creek Bridge Replacement - Community Liaison</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Enhanced Four Mile Creek community endorsement and appreciation of final FMC estuary bridge replacement design arrangements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Four Mile Creek Environs Management Planning</strong></td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Improved fire risk preparedness and catchment planning for the Four Mile Creek community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of a Four Mile Creek environs management plan to include: 1 - a review and update of the existing FMC catchment management plan to encompass changes in planning schemes and land tenure and condition. 2 - a FMC specific fire management plan. (remaining components not AARC supported)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Loss Resident Rebuilding Support - Red Tape Mitigation</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Reduced stress and improved personal recovery outcomes for fire affected residents in respect to navigating the building planning and approvals process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with BODC to minimise fire affected owner difficulties in preparing and lodging their re-building approvals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OBJECTIVE 10. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

| Community Training – Partnership Development | $2,500 | Improved community harmony and social productivity arising from a better understanding of community partnership principles. |
| Delivery of a social capital / community capacity building workshop to help build communication, trust and cooperative behaviour across the affected communities. |

| Community Training and Skill Development | $5,000 | Improved community evacuation capacity for the frail and immobile |
| A license training and testing initiative to establish a team of community evacuation bus drivers. |

| CRRG Facilitation of Local Input into Project Planning | Completed | Recovery activities reflect affected community priorities and aspirations |
| CRRG members facilitate local involvement in prioritising and implementing recovery projects. |

| Integration Efficiencies Through Delivery Coordination | Completed | Improved efficiency of recovery funds utilisation through integrated activity development and delivery |
| Liaison with communities and service providers to maximise efficiency in use of recovery resources. |
Appendix 2 – Community Recovery Reference Group Terms of Reference

1: Introduction
In December 2006 the Break O’Day Municipality was affected by a significant bushfire resulting in considerable damage and loss of property in several communities across the Municipality.

2: Affected Area Recovery Committee (AARC)
Following the fires an Affected Area Recovery Committee was established to facilitate and support the effective coordination of the community recovery process. The AARC has representation from key agencies with roles in either resourcing and / or delivering recovery services.

The purpose of the AARC is to lead and facilitate the efforts of a ‘whole of government’ response to assist the affected communities to recover from this disaster.

This committee aims to maintain a high level of briefing on current and emerging recovery issues to be able to quickly grasp issues to formulate advice to all levels of government.

A recent key task of the AARC has been a community consultation process to identify the key recovery challenges facing the community now and into the future. The information and ideas gathered through the consultation have been used to inform the development of the East Coast Fires Community Recovery Plan. The AARC will now have the responsibility to make decisions on allocation of East Coast Fires Community Recovery Funding to support the implementation of that Recovery Plan.

3: Definition of Recovery
As defined within the Recovery Manual, Emergency Management Australia:

“Recovery is the coordinated process of supporting disaster affected persons in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical well-being.’

In keeping with this definition the AARC accepts the following Recovery Principles; “Disaster recovery is most effective when...

- Management arrangements recognise that recovery from disaster is a complex, dynamic and protracted process;
- Agreed plans and management arrangements are well understood by the community and all disaster management agencies;
- Recovery agencies are properly integrated into disaster management arrangements;
- Community service and reconstruction agencies have input to key decision making;
- Conducted with the active participation of the affected community;
- Recovery managers are involved from initial briefings onwards;
- Recovery services are provided in a timely, fair, equitable and flexible manner; and
- Supported by training programs and exercises.

In accordance with those Principles, it is the AARC’s intention to ensure all community development work undertaken will be done in a manner which empowers individuals and communities in the management of their own recovery from the disaster of the East Coast fires.

4: Role of the Community Recovery Reference Group
To achieve a greater level of community input into the recovery processes the AARC has approved the establishment of a Community Recovery Reference Group.

The Community Recovery Reference Group’s key role will be to support community input into the recovery process by advising the AARC and facilitating community stakeholder engagement in the development and delivery of recovery actions.
5: Membership of the Community Recovery Reference Group

The Community Reference Group will be comprised of community representatives from each of the following areas where there has been a major impact including;

- Scamander
- St Marys/ Cornwall
- Four Mile Creek / Falmouth and
- St Helens.

Community representatives selected to participate in the Community Recovery Reference Group will be required to demonstrate that;

- They are involved in community activities and are prominent members of their community or an established community group; and
- Have the ability to interact with community members and are articulate.

6: Goals of Community Recovery Reference Group

The Community Recovery Reference Group members (with the assistance of the Disaster Recovery Coordinator), will support the recovery process through:

- Providing a robust and open communication channel between the AARC, BODC and their local communities;
- Undertaking to closely engage with their respective communities in order to advocate for their community's recovery needs to the AARC;
- Assisting their communities to identify emerging recovery needs and plan appropriate recovery actions considering social, economic, environmental, and physical recovery needs in the medium and longer term;
- Close engagement with their communities to develop and prioritise initiatives and resourcing options that achieve the actions as identified in the East Coast Fires Community Recovery Plan;
- Development of recommendations based on the above priorities and submitted through Break O'Day Community Development Officer and the Disaster Recovery Coordinator to the AARC, including where relevant recommendations for allocation of East Coast Fires Community Recovery funds.
- Providing an understanding to the AARC, on the level of support and capacity by the community and BODC to work in partnerships to implement those recommended initiatives;
- Assisting with implementation and coordination of recovery initiatives being undertaken in the community;
- Provision of advice, support and feedback to the AARC, BODC and their respective communities on the progress for the implementation and evaluation of the East Coast Fires Community Recovery Plan;
- Utilisation of local networks to share information with the community about the recovery process, resource allocation and decisions and activities planned; and
- Fostering of community ownership of projects and support for individuals to become involved in local leadership roles.

7: Guidelines for the prioritisation of Community Recovery funding

Initiatives recommended for East Coast Fires Community Recovery funding support should support the achievement of actions contained in the East Coast Fires Community Recovery Plan and be prioritised on the basis of:

- Improving community amenity, well being and harmony
- Having strong support from their respective local communities (through both implementation partnerships and broad endorsement)
Improving the community development capacity of local communities
- Providing tangible ongoing community benefits
- Encouraging community coordination and cooperation

8: Term of the Community Recovery Reference Group

The Community Recovery Reference group will agree to operate for a 12-month term, which is also the term of appointment for the Disaster Recovery Coordinator.

The Community Recovery Reference Group will review their operation at 6 months to ensure they are operating within these Terms of Reference and at that time plan for their completion and finalisation and winding down of recovery initiatives.

9: Community Engagement and Communication Strategy

In conjunction with the Disaster Recovery Coordinator the Community Recovery Reference Group will develop and distribute a Community Engagement Strategy that explains the tools and processes for achieving ongoing open communication between all key stakeholders involved in the recovery process.

The Community Engagement Strategy will also outline the process to be undertaken for the Community Recovery Reference Group members to work with their communities to prioritise initiatives as identified in the East Coast Fires Community Recovery Plan. This process will ensure that recommendations can be made to the AARC for support from East Coast Fires Community Recovery funding.

10: Administrative Support

The Disaster Recovery Coordinator will provide administrative support to the Community Recovery Reference Group and will:
- Prepare and circulate agendas;
- Prepare and circulate minutes; and
- Arrange meeting venues, including light refreshments.

11: Meetings

Initially the Community Recovery Reference Group have selected to meet fortnightly to enable them to quickly develop activities to support the recovery processes. At a time to be determined by the group, meetings could then be altered to suit progress and the urgency of the recovery process.

Meetings will be kept to less than two hours and a finish time will be determined at the beginning of each meeting.

Meeting venues will move around the region as suits the members to share travel requirements.
## Appendix 3 – Communications Strategy

### MISSION STATEMENT
To undertake an effective community engagement process which aims to establish open communication and trust between all stakeholders involved in the bushfire recovery process. The Community Engagement Strategy will also facilitate a process that enables all levels of government and citizens to collaboratively develop recovery initiatives that address local needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIM</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>TIMELINES</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure local communities are given recovery process updates and encouraged to provide feedback.</td>
<td>Ensure open and effective communication by disseminating information to the community and stakeholders about the recovery process and the resources available. Accessibility to information should be provided for all people in the community including those isolated and with special needs.</td>
<td>Disaster Recovery Coordinator, in conjunction with Community Recovery Reference Group, to use a full range of media such as newsletters, local noticeboards / billboards, local community and ABC radio and local and regional print media to disseminate information. Disaster Recovery Coordinator, in conjunction with Community Recovery Reference Group to meet and discuss recovery process with local community groups.</td>
<td>Commenced – ongoing</td>
<td>Range and relevance of communication pathways (e.g. newsletters, forums, media outlets etc) identified. Overall number of information notices, interviews, newsletters, etc produced / delivered. Extent to which available communication pathways are utilised, e.g. local publications, community gatherings etc. Number of community meetings attended and geographic area covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and maintain strong communication links between service providers focusing on personal support and the social, economic, infrastructure and environmental aspects of community recovery.</td>
<td>Establish formal and informal exchange of information.</td>
<td>Disaster Recovery Coordinator to identify in conjunction with the Community Recovery Reference Group the local key stakeholder groups. Community Recovery Reference Group and the Disaster Recovery Coordinator to liaise with these identified local key stakeholder groups, and agencies.</td>
<td>Commenced – ongoing</td>
<td>Overall level and amount of contact between Community Recovery Reference Group, Disaster Recovery Coordinator with the identified local key stakeholder groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide and receive accurate, timely and current information to and from the affected communities and all key stakeholders using the most effective combination of communication.</td>
<td>Utilise communication mechanisms relevant to the respective local communities and stakeholders. Identify opportunities to link in with community activities and forums across the BOD Municipality to provide updates about community recovery activities.</td>
<td>The Disaster Recovery Coordinator with the assistance of the BOD Community Development Officer to fully utilise local structures, networks, communication channels and key personnel to disseminate information as required. Communicate stories which highlight the successes, ‘feel good’ events and general progress of the recovery.</td>
<td>Commenced – ongoing</td>
<td>Number of contacts with affected residents and community groups regarding feedback. Number of regular reports provided to Community Recovery Reference Group, BOD Municipality, AARC etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>TIMELINES</td>
<td>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Involve communities in the publication of communication materials.</td>
<td>Commenced – ongoing</td>
<td>Number of “stories” in each locality (target 3 per locality by December 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disaster Recovery Coordinator to attend all Community Recovery Reference Group and AARC meetings.</td>
<td>Commenced – ongoing</td>
<td>Level of contact between and support obtained for ongoing BOD community activities and the recovery process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide two way communication links between ongoing BOD community activities and recovery activities</td>
<td>Commenced – ongoing</td>
<td>Level of support achieved for the BOD Municipality to implement recovery activities with the respective communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The BOD Community Development Officer to ensure that two way communication links exist between ongoing BOD community activities and the recovery process and that this information is provided to the Disaster Recovery Coordinator.</td>
<td>Commenced – ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Disaster Recovery Coordinator and Community Recovery Reference Group to develop and manage a program of consultation with the affected local communities to identify emerging recovery needs.</td>
<td>To develop in early 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To develop in early 2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>From the range of needs and suggestions already identified by the community, the Community Recovery Reference Group will first identify the initiatives that are of a clearly urgent nature or which require no further community consultation before being implemented. These urgent initiatives will be recommended to the AARC for immediate implementation.</td>
<td>For June 07 AARC meeting</td>
<td>Level and consistency of community engagement undertaken with the respective communities to prioritise initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The remaining proposals will be prioritised by the Community Recovery Reference Group according to their Terms of Reference, and with support from the Disaster Recovery Coordinator, will be publicised widely within the affected communities for comment. After considering and acting on feedback from their communities the Reference Group will then recommend a further set of recovery initiatives, through the Break O’Day Community Development Officer and the Disaster Recovery Coordinator, to the AARC.</td>
<td>2 months- (By Aug 07)</td>
<td>Level of community support achieved for the recommendations presented to the AARC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Throughout its term of operation, the Community Recovery Reference Group will continue to monitor community recovery progress and, through the Disaster Recovery Coordinator and BOD Community Development Officer, provide direction to recovery activities.
Appendix 4 – Financial Assistance

Financial assistance to date is summarised in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Program</th>
<th>No of recipients assisted</th>
<th>Assistance delivered to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Assistance</strong>&lt;br&gt;Costs shared equally by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA)</td>
<td>296 applications representing 685 individuals</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency payments of $200 per adult and $100 per child (maximum of $750 per family). To help people through the first 24 to 48 hours of an emergency. Not means or asset tested.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Hardship and Distress Assistance</strong>&lt;br&gt;Costs shared equally by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments under the NDRRA</td>
<td>&lt;50</td>
<td>$210,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency relief grants for low income families. Assists with temporary living costs and replacement of essential living items. Temporary living grants of up to $7,300 (over a maximum period of 6 months) to assist with living expenses; Essential household goods grants to $5,600 per family (plus $500 per person) nett of any insurance claims to assist with the replacement of essential household items; and Repair/replacement grants of up to $7,300 to assist with the reestablishment of the principal place of residence. Administered through Housing Tasmania and is means and asset tested.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Recovery Package</strong>&lt;br&gt;A funding allocation of $700,000 by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments ($350,000 ea) under the NDRRA</td>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>$285,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance grants for eligible small businesses, primary producers and not-for-profit organisations of up to $15,000 to assist with costs associated with clean-up and repair of property not covered by insurance. These grants were administered by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water (DPIW), the Tasmanian Department of Economic Development (DED) with payments effected through the Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance. Community Recovery Fund to help restore social networks, functioning and community facilities. Expenditure was aimed at community recovery, community development and community capacity building for the future. The process included initial community consultation to scope proposals then the further development of these proposals through the work of the Community Recovery Reference Group with the support of the Disaster Recovery Coordinator. The prioritising and fine tuning of these proposals occurred with further community consultation. Proposals then progressed into final recommendations and presented to the Affected Area Recovery Committee (AARC). The AARC made all final decisions regarding allocations of funds for recovery projects.</td>
<td>Still in progress. See Appendix 2 for list of recovery projects</td>
<td>$415,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Red Cross East Coast Bushfire Appeal</strong></td>
<td>112</td>
<td>$445,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General aid for immediate humanitarian needs and to help people get back on their feet. From $500 to $15,000 per household depending on circumstances. The East Coast Bushfire Appeal report can be viewed at <a href="http://www.redcross.org.au/TAS/news_emergRespReports.htm">http://www.redcross.org.au/TAS/news_emergRespReports.htm</a> 112</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 joint contribution by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) provides immediate, short-term financial assistance to Australians affected by a major disaster. On 14 December 2006, the Prime Minister announced assistance would be made available under the AGDRP for the bushfires in the State of Tasmania during the period 1 December 2006 to 31 January 2007. A one off payment of $1,000 per eligible adult and $400 per child was made available to people whose principal place of residence was destroyed or rendered uninhabitable as a result of damage caused by these bushfires.</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>$ 342,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5 – Financial Assistance Distribution

Footnote: to the Community Recovery arrow of $415,000 above – this figure is approximate based on Funding Allocated to Community Recovery Initiatives.
# Appendix 6 – East Coast Fires – Affected Area Recovery Committee (AARC) Membership

## Break O'Day Council
- **Mayor**: Robert Legge
- **Community Recovery Officer**: Chris Hughes
- **General Manager**: Brian Inches / Tony Walker

## Tasmanian Government
- **State Emergency Service**: Chris Beattie
- **Premier and Cabinet**: Matthew Healey, Nick Atkins
- **Health and Human Services**: Kevin O'Loughlin, Rod Meldrum, Patsy Burgess

## Australian Government
- Neil Mahoney / Veronica O'Brien / Kevin Reece / John Hargrave

## Red Cross
- Ian Burke

## Community Representative
- Lindsay Harris
- Acting Inspector Jason Elmer - Tasmania Police

## Other attendees who provided support to AARC were:

### Break O'Day Council
- Corporate Services Manager
  - Adam Wilson - supported the allocation of funds for the Appeal

### Tasmanian Government
- Susan Powell DHHS - provided reports and recommendations

### Red Cross
- Dennis Daniels - supported the allocation of funds for the Appeal
  - Howard Colvin - Disaster Recovery Coordinator provided reports and recommendations on behalf of CRRG