

Role of Community & Neighbourhood Centres After Disasters

The Sunshine Coast region is home to many community and neighbourhood centres, delivering a range of vital support services to local communities.

Our region is prone to storms, bushfires and flooding events, which can cause severe property damage and disruption across our communities.

Recent disasters in Queensland have identified community and neighbourhood centres as valuable recovery partners. The venues are well-known to the communities they serve, and they have the capacity to quickly identify local recovery needs. This connection can greatly assist council in the distribution of key information and delivery of recovery support.

Council has welcomed commitment from publicly and privately owned community and neighbourhood centres to be involved in disaster recovery. By council working together with these centres, effective and invaluable support will be available to help communities recover quickly from disaster events.

Community Recovery

During a disaster, council will activate the Local Recovery Group, sub-groups and recovery partner agencies to support the delivery of human-social, economic, environment and infrastructure recovery, and to fully capture the recovery needs of the community.

During this phase, community and neighbourhood centres can perform an important role to assist a community-led recovery, as follows:

- Checking, identifying and advising of impacts to individuals, families, clients with vulnerabilities, staff, volunteers and any specific needs. This will allow for the prioritising of recovery support.
- Identifying community leaders to assist in prioritising recovery needs.



- Assess the centre's capacity to continue community services.
- Assisting in the effective coordination of recovery activities and support services.
- Distributing key information to the community relating to the disaster event and recovery activities. This may occur following power and communication outages.
- Reporting any emerging recovery issues or impacts, such as referrals for additional support.
- Request support through established disaster management arrangements.
- Working collaboratively with recovery agencies to provide crisis and personal support.
- Sharing key information with recovery partners through the Recovery sub-group to assist with service delivery (E.g. Red Cross, GIVIT, St Vincent de Paul Society, Lifeline, Orange Sky, Salvation Army, refer to the 'Collaborating and Partnering section' below).
- If possible, support the coordination and distribution of various activities, such as volunteers, material aid, financial assistance, personal support services, crisis counselling and temporary accommodation.
- Assist with community activities such as public meetings, events, barbeques, memorials and commemorations.

Activating Support

Aligned with Council's existing disaster management arrangements, recovery support will be activated during the disaster, as follows:

- The appointed Local Recovery Coordinator will activate the Local Recovery Group and Sub-groups.
- The Local Human-social Recovery Sub-group will convene to initially conduct a needs assessment, prioritise key recovery support and develop an event-specific recovery plan.
- During this phase, community and neighbourhood centres can report on local disaster impacts, key issues and request support.
- Direct all requests to the Chair of the Local Human-social Recovery Sub-group or the Local Disaster Coordination Centre.

Collaborating and Partnering

During normal business activities, outside of disaster events, Council recognises the value in maintaining relationships with community and neighbourhood centres in the Sunshine Coast region. This will enable the development of recovery support, information exchange, training opportunities, identification of local and emerging issues and other recovery-related considerations.

Collaboration and partnerships can also be furnished in the following ways:

- Membership of the Local Human-social Recovery Sub-group (meets three times a year)
- Email and telephone contact with the Chair of the above group
- Linking with recovery partner agencies
- Partner with council and emergency services agencies to support community planning, preparedness and resilience-building activities
- Access to grants and funding offered by council, state and Commonwealth governments.
- Connecting networks

Considerations

When partnering with Council and recovery agencies, community and neighbourhood centres should consider the following after a disaster:

- Identify and report any damage to buildings and facilities
- Known local risks, such as closed roads and flash flooding
- Check forward bookings or events that may need to be cancelled
- Availability of existing resources and arrangements such as staff, volunteers, community group support
- Use of existing funding arrangements to continue. Additional requests for support are to be directed to the Chair of the Human-social Recovery Sub-Group.



Further information:

[Sunshine Coast Council – Disaster Hub](#)

[Sunshine Coast Council – Local Disaster Management Plan](#)

[What to do during a disaster or emergency](#)

[What to do after a disaster or emergency](#)

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