



# Applying the National Principles for Disaster Recovery post-disaster

The review of the National Principles for Disaster Recovery ('The Principles', published 2018) confirmed that they continue to provide the foundation for successful community recovery. This checklist can assist to identify strengths in your approach to recovery and capture stories that can be shared nationally about the application of the National Principles.

Recovery refers to both the approach and the outcome, as they are interdependent and the Principles can be applied before and after the event by agencies, or be used and adapted by interested parties in communities:

1. When pre-planning for recovery (before disaster) The Principles can be used as a guide, for example by re-framing each of them into questions: "How can we use community-led approaches in our community?", "How can implementation be guided by the community's priorities?", and "Who do I need around the table to help me make appropriate decisions and plan for my community?".
2. In the review of post-disaster recovery planning and implementation, The Principles can then be applied as criteria, for example: "How effectively did we as an agency build collaborative partnerships with community?", "How did we assist individuals, families and the community to actively participate in their own recovery?", and "How did we ensure the voice of all community members was heard, including the most vulnerable?".
3. Similarly, communities might examine some of the skills, knowledge, strengths and wisdom they require to plan disaster recovery, through the lens of The Principles.

The Principles have been turned into questions on the following pages to enable reflective practice and continuous improvement by agencies and organisations involved in community recovery post disaster. Note: Social impact might be replaced by public value and is potentially related to the National Recovery Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. If the impact is not a positive one, this can be framed as a learning.

## The Principles:

- **Understand the Context**
- **Recognise Complexity**
- **Use Community-led Approaches**
- **Coordinate all Activities**
- **Communicate Effectively**
- **Recognise and Build Capacity**

If you would like to share your insights, please return any feedback about the use of the National Principles for Disaster Recovery to Louise Mitchell, SRRG National Consultant Disaster Recovery, [louise.mitchell@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:louise.mitchell@dhhs.vic.gov.au).

**Checklist for applying the National Principles for Disaster Recovery during post-disaster recovery planning**

<b>Understand the CONTEXT: Successful recovery is based on an understanding of the community context, with each community having its own history, values and dynamics.</b>		
<b>Did we apply this?</b>	<b>How did we apply this?</b>	<b>What are we seeing as a result?(Social Impact)</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledging existing strengths and capacity, including past experiences;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Appreciating the risks and stressors faced by the community;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Being respectful of and sensitive to the culture and diversity of the community;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting those who may be facing vulnerability;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognising the importance of the environment to people and to their recovery;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledging this process as requiring a long term, sustained effort as needed by the community;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledging the impact upon the community may extend beyond the geographical boundaries where the disaster occurred.		

*Table 1 of 6: Understand the Context*

**Recognise COMPLEXITY: Successful recovery is responsive to the complex and dynamic nature of both emergencies and the community.**

Did we consider the factors related to complexity:	How did we apply this?	What are we seeing as a result?(Social Impact)
<input type="checkbox"/> Disasters lead to a range of effects and impacts that require a variety of approaches; they can also leave long-term legacies;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Information on impacts is limited at first and changes over time;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Affected individuals and the community have diverse needs, wants and expectations, which can evolve rapidly;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Responsive and flexible action is crucial to address immediate needs;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Existing community knowledge and values may challenge the assumptions of those outside of the community;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conflicting knowledge, values and priorities among individuals, the community and organisations may create tensions;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies create stressful environments where grief or blame may also affect those involved; and		
<input type="checkbox"/> Over time, appropriate support for individuals and communities, from within and outside, can cultivate hope and individual and collective growth.		

Table 2 of 6: Recognise Complexity

**Use COMMUNITY-LED approaches: Successful recovery is community-centred, responsive and flexible, engaging with community and supporting them to move forward.**

Did we apply this?	How did we apply this?	What are we seeing as a result?(Social Impact)
<input type="checkbox"/> Assisting and enabling individuals, families and the community to actively participate in their own recovery;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognising that individuals and the community may need different levels of support at various times;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Being guided by the communities priorities;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Channelling effort through pre-identified and existing community assets, including local knowledge, existing community strengths and resilience;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Building collaborative partnerships between the community and those involved in the recovery process;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognising that new community leaders often emerge during and after a disaster, who may not hold formal positions of authority; and		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognising that different communities may choose different paths to recovery.		

Table 3 of 6: Use Community-led Approaches

**COORDINATE all activities: Successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach, between community and partner agencies, based on continuing assessment of impacts and need.**

Did we apply this?	How did we apply this?	What are we seeing as a result?(Social Impact)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring we have clearly articulated and shared goals based on desired outcomes;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Flexible, taking into account changes in community needs or stakeholder expectations.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Being guided by those with experience and expertise, using skilled, authentic and capable community leadership;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Working recovery at the pace desired by the community, and seek to collaborate and reconcile different interests and time frames;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Reflecting well-developed community planning and information gathering before, during and after a disaster;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Using clear decision-making and reporting structures and sound governance, which are transparent and accessible to the community;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and authority of organisations involved and coordinate across agencies to ensure minimal service provision disruption;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating that we are part of an emergency management approach that integrates with response operations and contributes to future prevention and preparedness; and		
<input type="checkbox"/> Being inclusive, availing of and building upon relationships created before, during and after the emergency.		

Table 4 of 6: Coordinate all Activities

<b>COMMUNICATE effectively:</b> <b>Successful recovery is built on effective communication between the affected community and other partners.</b>		
Did we apply this?	How did we apply this?	What are we seeing as a result?(Social Impact)
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognising that communication should be two-way, and that input and feedback should be encouraged;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring that information is accessible to audiences in diverse situations, addresses a variety of communication needs, and is provided through a range of communication channels and networks;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Establishing mechanisms for coordinated and consistent communications between all service providers, organisations and individuals and the community;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring that all communication is relevant, timely, clear, accurate, targeted, credible and consistent; and		
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifying trusted sources of information and repeat key recovery messages to enable greater community confidence and receptivity.		

Table 5 of 6: Communicate Effectively

**Recognise and build CAPACITY:  
Successful recovery recognises, supports and builds on individual, community and organisational capacity and resilience.**

Did we apply this?	How did we apply this?	What are we seeing as a result?(Social Impact)
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessing capability and capacity requirements before, during and after a disaster;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting the development of self-reliance, preparation and disaster mitigation;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Quickly identifying and mobilising community skills, strengths and resources;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing networks and partnerships to strengthen capacity, capability and resilience;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Providing opportunities to share, transfer and develop knowledge, skills and training;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognising that resources can be provided by a range of partners and from community networks;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Working with the Acknowledgement that existing resources may be stretched, and that additional resources may be sought;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Working with the understanding that additional resources may only be available for a limited period, and that sustainability may need to be addressed;		
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating an understanding of when and how to step back, while continuing to support individuals and the community as a whole to be more self-sufficient when they are ready; and		
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating our input into the community's recovery to provide learning for future disaster and improved resilience.		

Table 6 of 6: Recognise and Build Capacity