



Australian Capital Territory

ACT Community Recovery Sub-Plan

A supporting plan of the ACT Recovery Plan that details the arrangements for the provision of services targeted towards social recovery within the Australian Capital Territory

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AUTHORITY

This ACT Community Recovery Sub-Plan is a supporting plan of the ACT Recovery Plan, which is a supporting plan of the ACT Emergency Plan. It has been prepared in accordance with section 2.4 of the ACT Recovery Plan, and endorsed by the Security and Emergency Management Senior Officials Group (SEMSOG).

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In accordance with Section 147(2) of the *Emergencies Act 2004*, and under the delegation of the Minister for Policy and Emergency Services, I make this Sub-Plan as a supporting plan to the ACT Recovery Plan and Emergency Plan for the Australian Capital Territory.

Dominic Lane
Emergency Services Commissioner
ACT Emergency Services Agency

Date

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PART 1 – OVERVIEW

1.1 Preface

The Emergencies Act 2004 (ACT) defines an emergency as an actual or imminent event that requires a significant and coordinated response. This includes but is not limited to, fire, flood, storm, earthquake, accident, explosion, human or animal disease outbreak, shortage of electricity, gas, fuel or water.

The management of emergencies requires a comprehensive approach embracing prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Regardless of arrangements to mitigate disasters, it is not possible to protect communities from all hazards and there is a need for recovery activities to support the physical, social, emotional, psychological, economic, environmental and financial restoration.

The nationally agreed definition of disaster recovery is:

“The coordinated process of supporting disaster affected communities in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and the restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing”.

The purpose of providing emergency recovery services is to assist the community affected by a disaster with the management of its own recovery. Disaster affected people, households and communities understand their needs better than any of the professional, government, non-government or corporate agencies. There is increasing recognition that the processes used by government and other key recovery agencies to interact with communities are critical and can impact either positively or negatively on the capacity of the community to manage its own recovery.

Through the use of the six nationally agreed Principles of Recovery, communities affected by disaster are provided with tools to enhance individual and community recovery. The six Principles of successful recovery are:

- understanding the context;
- recognising complexity;
- using community-led approaches;
- ensuring coordination of all activities;
- employing effective communication; and
- acknowledging and building capacity.

1.2 Context

Under the ACT Emergencies (Emergency Plan) 2014 (No 1), the responsibility for Community Recovery is assigned to the Minister for Community Services. Responsibility for Community

Recovery and for the development and maintenance of the Community Recovery Sub Plan has been assigned to the Director, General, Community Services Directorate.

The ACT Community Recovery Sub-Plan applies to arrangements for community/social recovery before, during and following emergencies and disasters occurring in the ACT or that impact on residents of the ACT elsewhere in Australia or offshore. The terms community/social recovery are used interchangeably in this Plan.

The ACT Community Recovery Sub Plan is a supporting plan of the ACT Recovery Plan and should be read in conjunction with the ACT Recovery Plan and its three annexures:

- ACT Economic Recovery;
- ACT Infrastructure Recovery; and
- ACT Environmental Recovery.

This Plan should be read in conjunction with the “**Community Recovery Procedural Manual and Resource Kit**”. The manual is a ‘hands on’ document to support staff and volunteers following an emergency. The manual provides detail on the operational aspects of the Plan and includes a wide range of information, policies, and procedural documents, protocols, fact sheets, checklists and forms.

1.3 Aim

The ACT Community Recovery Sub Plan details the responsibilities, authorities and management arrangements for the coordination and provision, by the ACT Government and other agencies, of support and services targeted towards the social recovery of the affected community to an appropriate level of short, medium and long term functioning before, during, and after significant emergencies in the ACT.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the Plan are to:

- provide effective and efficient coordination and delivery of programs and services to support the physical wellbeing and psychological recovery of affected individuals and communities;
- begin the physical wellbeing and psychological recovery process of individuals, families, and communities as soon as possible;
- coordinate the provision of all basic and necessary community development services to affected individuals, families and communities as efficiently as possible and at the appropriate times so that recovery occurs effectively;
- coordinate programs and services which assist the recovery process;
- support community involvement and ownership of the recovery process; and
- provide clarity for all participating agencies on their responsibilities under the Plan.

1.5 Legislative Arrangements

The *Emergencies Act 2004* (the Act) establishes strategic and whole of government arrangements for emergency management within the ACT. The Act establishes the provisions for ensuring effective emergency management arrangements, including recovery, within the ACT.

The objectives of the Act are:

- a. to protect and preserve life, property and the environment;
- b. to provide for effective emergency management that—
 - i. has regard to the need to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from emergencies; and
 - ii. takes an all-hazards approach to emergency management; and
- c. to provide for the effective and cohesive management by the commissioner of the state emergency service, the ambulance service, fire and rescue and the rural fire service; and
- d. to recognise the value to the community of all emergency service members, including volunteer members.

This Plan supports the role of the Commissioner for Emergency Services under Section 174(1) of the Act whereby the Commissioner must assist in recovery from the effects of an emergency by supporting the activities of any entity working in the area of recovery and welfare in the role of assisting the community to recover. Further, under Section 174(2), without limiting subsection 174(1), the Commissioner must give support by:

- a. identifying people in the community to act as contacts in relation to the activities; and
- b. together with relevant entities:
 - i. establishing priorities for the short term recovery of infrastructure; and
 - ii. assisting in the re-establishment of infrastructure.

1.6 Resilience Building

Given its broad responsibilities in providing a range of human services to members of the Canberra community, including during times of emergencies, Community Services Directorate recognises the need to work alongside other agencies with preparing the Canberra community for a range of risks that may impact them. It is recognised that there are sections of the community who through circumstance, lack of knowledge, experience or choice are not aware of the many natural hazards or man made (terrorism) events facing Canberra's, or are not prepared to address these risks.

In support of the Emergency Services Agency, and specifically the Commissioner's statutory responsibility to "emphasise community education and preparedness for emergencies (4 (g)

Emergencies Act 2004)“ CSD undertakes a range of activities in preparing the Canberra community for emergencies, including:

joining ESA and the Rural Fire Service in community education and awareness programs in support of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan;

Producing, and disseminating (including in multiple languages) the CSD Think Ahead. Be Ready. Stay Safe Emergency Preparedness Guide, to assist vulnerable members of the community in considering their personal preparations for emergencies;

Working with a range of community organisations in preparing their clients groups for emergencies; and

Promoting the concept of family, friends and neighbours helping each other in preparing for, and responding to emergencies.

1.7 Cross Border arrangements

To ensure a consistent approach when assisting affected individuals and communities to recover from disasters which affect the ACT and immediate NSW region, for example flood and fire, the CSD will enter into appropriate arrangements with NSW for mutual social support of residents impacted by the event.

PART 2 – COMMUNITY RECOVERY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Community Services Directorate

The Community Services Directorate has been assigned responsibility for community recovery through the ACT Emergency Plan and Administration Arrangement Orders. CSD is responsible for the management and coordination of all community recovery functions, including a role in supporting the emergency response agencies in raising community awareness (building resilience) and preparedness for emergencies.

2.2 ACT Community Recovery Coordinator

The Community Recovery Sub-Plan establishes the Deputy Director-General of the CSD as the Community Recovery Coordinator. The roles and responsibilities of the Community Recovery Coordinator include:

- activating the ACT Community Recovery Sub-Plan;
- representing the Community Services Directorate in its community recovery role on a range of ACT emergency management committees;
- developing and maintaining the Community Recovery Sub-Plan;
- determining the needs of affected communities, in consultation with the response agencies, communities and the participating agencies; and
- managing and coordinating the community recovery functions.

2.3 Deputy Community Recovery Coordinator

The Senior Manager, Community Recovery, CSD, has been assigned responsibility for the day-to-day community recovery operations.

The Deputy Community Recovery Coordinator is the Chair of the Community Recovery Committee and has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the Community Recovery Sub Plan.

2.4 Community Recovery Network

CSD has established an internal network of experienced and skilled staff to assist the Directorate in meeting its obligations under this Sub-Plan. The Network will be utilised as first responders (in a recovery context) to an emergency.

2.5 Community Recovery Committee

The Community Recovery Committee is responsible for assisting the Community Recovery Coordinator with planning for and coordinating services to affected people in the event of

an emergency. The Committee comprises local representatives of participating agencies (government and non government) who have the ability to provide specific services required in the recovery process. The Committee meets four times a year at a time and place determined by the Chair.

The Committee will also be activated, as required, during emergency situations.

The role and responsibilities of members of the Community Recovery Committee include:

- Liaising between own agency and ACT Community Recovery.
- Activating own agency and resources in an emergency.
- Maintaining records of actions taken, decisions made and financial expenditure during an emergency.
- Training staff and volunteers in community recovery and the organisation's role in recovery.
- Ensuring preparedness to respond to emergency situations.
- Maintaining contact lists for own agency and provide regular updates to the Community Recovery Coordinator.
- Maintaining current knowledge of own agency's resources and deployment arrangements.

At the direction of the CSD, agencies that are not specifically designated as members of the Committee may assist the Committee in its community recovery activities following an emergency.

2.6 CSD Emergency Liaison Officers

There are three main Emergency Coordination Centres (Health Emergency Coordination Centre, Police Operations Centre, and Emergency Coordination Centre) within the ACT that may require CSD Liaison Officers to attend and act as the conduit between the management of the emergency and the establishment of recovery operations.

Liaison Officers are appointed and activated by the ACT Recovery Coordinator (or their delegate).

2.7 Recovery Managers, Personal Support Officers and administrative support staff

Staff from CSD and other ACT government agencies with training and experience in community recovery may assist the Community Recovery Coordinator in the coordination of the range of recovery services, including the establishment of Evacuation/Assistance Centres, provision of personal support and financial and administrative tasks.

PART 3 – FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

3.1. Accommodation

Coordinated by: Community Services Directorate

Responsibilities:

- coordinate the provision of emergency (immediate) accommodation through commercial or government owned sources, for people directly affected by a disaster event and rendered temporarily homeless as a result.
- assistance with the identification of longer term temporary accommodation.

Support Agency: ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency Australia Ltd)

3.2. Appeals and donations

Coordinated by: Community Services Directorate

Following an emergency there is a willingness within the community to donate goods, services and money to support those that have been affected. Donated goods are usually difficult to store and distribute and for that reason are generally discouraged, the preference being for money to be donated. Management arrangements for financial donations raised as a result of public appeals will be the decision of the government and may involve a role for the Public Trustee.

3.3. Catering

Coordinated by: The Salvation Army

Responsibilities:

- provision of meals and refreshments to people directly affected by the emergency and others who may be involved in the response, welfare and immediate recovery effort.

3.4. Care for Children and young people

Coordinated by: Community Services Directorate

Responsibilities:

- Take responsibility for unaccompanied minors who present at evacuation or other recovery/assistance centres until such time as a parent or approved caregiver arrives.

- liaise with appropriate participating agency/ies to meet the child or young persons immediate needs.

Support Agencies: CSD, relevant participating agencies.

3.5. Clothing and personal needs

Coordinated by: St Vincent de Paul Society

Responsibilities:

- provision of essential personal clothing, toiletry items to people affected by the emergency;
- procurement, storage and issue of goods to affected persons;
- maintenance of records and accounts of assistance provided for acquittal; and
- issue of approved Disaster Assistance Vouchers to affected persons, as agreed with Community Recovery Coordinator.

Support Agencies: Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT, Salvation Army, Smith Family.

3.6. First aid and medical support

Coordinated by: St John Ambulance

Responsibilities:

- provision of first aid assistance to people affected by the emergency at Evacuation/Assistance Centres or other sites as required.

Other Agencies:

ACT Medicare Local

- provide medical practitioners to support Evacuation/Assistance Centres when requested by ACT Health Controller.

Pharmaceutical Supplies

- assistance with the provision of pharmaceutical supplies for people who require urgent medication is available by request from Community Recovery Coordinator to ACT Health Controller.

3.7. Psychological Response and Support/Counselling services

Coordinated by: Chair of Disaster Recovery Counselling Sub-Committee, Executive Director of ACT Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services

Responsibilities:

- determine appropriate level of response, depending on type and extent of incident.
- activation of Counselling Sub-Plan.
- coordination of support and counselling services to members of the community who experience psychosocial or emotional problems as a result of, or in response to, the emergency.

Member Agencies include: CSD; Health Directorate; Relationships Australia; Lifeline; Centrelink; Education & Training Directorate; Centacare.

3.8. Telephone Counselling Services: Lifeline Canberra

Responsibilities:

- establish a situation-specific hotline service for telephone counselling of affected persons.
- at the request of AFP ACT Policing, establish a Personal Support Hotline for the provision of information and practical support.

3.9. Domestic animals

Coordinated by: Domestic Animal Services, Territory & Municipal Services Directorate

Responsibilities:

- temporary accommodation of pets until they can be reunited with their owners;
- assistance with management of pets whose owners attend an Evacuation/Assistance Centre.

Animal Recovery Control Centre (ARK)

Domestic Animal Services has two Animal Recovery Control Centre Trailers available for deployment at emergency/evacuation sites. The ARKs are capable of rapid deployment as self-supporting resources to provide a command and control point for the relocation and/or control of animals whose owners have been affected by a major event.

The ARKS are also available for quarantine sites in the event of an animal disease outbreak. The ARKs carry recording, identification and computer equipment in addition to portable stock-yards, boxes and cages for all types of animals.

3.10. Financial assistance

Coordinated by: Community Services Directorate

Responsibilities:

- provision of immediate cash assistance to emergency affected people in accordance with Disaster Assistance Grants;
- payment of temporary accommodation in accordance with Disaster Assistance Guidelines;
- liaison with ACT Treasury and Commonwealth agencies (eg EMA, Human Services) on other Australian Government assistance arrangements;
- payment of other emergency assistance as agreed by ACT Government. Refer to **Section 4.5** for more detailed information in relation to financial assistance measures.

Other Agency: Human Services

Human Services provides Australian Government financial assistance including ex-gratia payments, benefits and pensions in accordance with current legislation and policies. When a major disaster is declared by the Australian Government Human Services provides payments under the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment and the Disaster Payment.

3.11. Insurance

Coordinated by: the Insurance Council of Australia

The assistance provided by the insurance industry, for people with insurance policies, is a key economic driver for an affected community. The general insurance industry plays a crucial role in risk mitigation and subsequent recovery after a disaster in the Australian community.

3.12. Legal Assistance

Coordinated by: ACT Law Society

The ACT Law Society has developed an ACT Emergency Legal Assistance Response Plan (2012). The purpose of the plan is to describe how the ACT legal sector will resource and coordinate participating organisations in the provision of:

- ongoing normal legal services in the event of a significant emergency event; and
- legal services to meet additional community demand for essential legal services arising directly as a consequence of a significant emergency event.

The Community Recovery Coordinator may request activation of the plan from the Emergency Legal Response Group and will liaise with the group during the recovery phase of an emergency.

The ACT Emergency Legal Assistance Response Plan (2012) can be found at: <http://www.actlawsociety.asn.au/documents/item/134>

3.13. Linkages with local community

Coordinated by: CSD and Communities@Work

Regional Community Service Organisations provide links and information services to the community, particularly the most vulnerable members — as well as assistance if needed — with personal support, as part of their community development function.

Support Agencies: Regional Community Services.

3.14. Personal support

Coordinated by: Community Services Directorate

Responsibilities:

Provision of personal support services, (excluding counselling) to assist people affected by the emergency may include:

- basic care and comfort
- basic information and practical support
- referral to another service or agency
- accompanying to appointments
- providing practical assistance
- listening and relieving carers.

Provision of services to individuals affected by an emergency is based upon respecting their ability to manage their own recovery and their right to self-determination.

Support Agencies: Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT, Australian Red Cross, Pastoral Care Council, Salvation Army.

3.15. Pastoral care

Coordinated by: Pastoral Care Council of the ACT

Responsibilities:

Coordination of chaplains to attend to the spiritual needs of persons who request assistance.

3.16. Public health and communicable diseases

Coordinated by: ACT Health

The ACT Health Plan identifies that Public Health Officers are responsible to provide advice on, and monitor the measures taken in respect of, communicable disease control and safety of food and water, sewage and sanitation. The ACT Epidemic Infectious Disease Plan also includes a role for ACT Community Recovery in supporting ACT Health.

3.17. Registration

Coordinated by: Australian Red Cross, activated by AFP – ACT Policing

People affected by an emergency who present at an evacuation or assistance centre are encouraged to register in order to facilitate the response to inquiries about their whereabouts and wellbeing.

Responsibilities:

- establishment of registration and inquiry procedures using Register.Find.Reunite as agreed with Australian Federal Police – ACT Policing;
- establishment of registration function at evacuation sites and/or assistance centres upon request from AFP;
- response to public inquiries and provision of information to families and close friends on the location and safety of people affected by the emergency;
- provision of information about people registered with Register.Find.Reunite during emergencies in other States & Territories and outside Australia;
- provision of statistical information to Community Recovery Coordinator and/or AFP.

3.18. Translating and interpreting

Co-ordinated by: Community Services Directorate

Responsibilities:

Provision of translating and interpreting services for people from a culturally diverse background – including access to the telephone interpreting services (phone 131450) and, where possible and feasible, access to face-to-face translation services (phone 1300655082).

3.19. Transport

Coordinated by: ACTION in conjunction with AFP

Responsibilities:

Provision of transport for people affected by the emergency to Evacuation/Assistance Centres and other sites as negotiated between Transport Coordinator and AFP or Community Recovery Coordinator.

3.20. Volunteers

a. Management of volunteers

Coordinated by: Volunteering ACT

Responsibilities:

Volunteering ACT, through the implementation of the Emergency Volunteering Community Response to Extreme Weather (EV CREW) service, will:

- act as a central agency to register offers of assistance from individuals and organisations to volunteer in disaster preparation, response and recovery activities.
- refer registered volunteers, through low level matching of skills, location, and availability before, during and after disasters to organisations (NGOs and ACT Government) that have requested assistance from volunteers.
- conduct initial screening of requesting organisations, ensuring adequate protection and appropriate volunteer management processes are in place.

In times of disaster, Volunteering ACT will:

- activate the Emergency Volunteering Coordination Centre, utilising the EV CREW system. This centre will be the central coordinating point for incoming requests from organisations who are seeking volunteers, as well as from individuals who are pledging to offer their time.
- act primarily as an information provider and a 'gateway' to easily disseminate information to the general public and registered emergency volunteers of progress and areas where assistance may be needed.

b. Affiliated volunteers

Coordinated by: Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT, Red Cross, Pastoral Care Council of the ACT, Lifeline Canberra, St Vincent de Paul Society, ADRA, Salvation Army, St John Ambulance.

The support agencies rely on their volunteers to deliver the services that they have agreed to provide. These volunteers are coordinated, supported and managed by the agency with which they are affiliated.

3.21. People with Vulnerabilities

Coordinated by: *Government and non-Government agencies*

There are a number of individuals and groups with specific needs in any affected community, which may include people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, those with particular cultural or spiritual needs, non-English speaking people, as well as the aged and infirmed. These groups may experience greater disruption than that of the general community during and following a disaster.

In so far as building the resilience of the community, primary service agencies have a responsibility to provide equitable, accessible and appropriate services and must ensure that they are as equipped as possible to attend to the needs of people with vulnerabilities. All members of the community should be individually encouraged to prepare emergency plans and establish arrangements with family, friends, neighbours or other support networks to assist them and check on their wellbeing before, during and after a disaster.

ACTCOSS' Role:

Liaison with non government agencies and supporting community organisations to promote good management practices prior to emergencies and disseminate information during an emergency to community organisations.

PART 4 – COMMUNITY RECOVERY OPERATIONS

Recovery arrangements are established concurrently with the disaster impact (response phase) and continue well after the response phase is completed.

Planning arrangements for recovery must consider information about the response, including impact and needs assessment.

The transition from response to recovery needs to be carefully managed to ensure the best possible outcomes for the community in an effective and timely manner. The ACT Recovery Plan provides guidance on the management of this process, including the appointment of an ACT Recovery Coordinator.

4.1 Activation of the Community Recovery Sub Plan

The Community Recovery Coordinator is responsible for activating this Plan. Activation can occur at any time, and is generally requested by the lead agency responding to the emergency.

Activation may include all participating recovery agencies or specific agencies depending on the nature of the emergency. An SMS message to mobile phones will normally be the initial mechanism for alerting and activating community partners.

A three level classification system for emergencies will guide the most appropriate level of recovery response. It is important to note any incident can quickly escalate and recovery/operational managers must be thinking ahead about how the situation could escalate and the specific responses that may be required. In seeking the involvement of non-government agencies in particular, CSD is conscious of the voluntary nature of many agencies' response capacity.

Activation of community recovery services is a judgement call of the ACT Community Recovery Coordinator and is generally guided by:

- large numbers of deaths, casualties;
- large numbers of homes destroyed/damaged/threatened/inaccessible;
- significant numbers witnessing or affected by traumatic events;
- children involved;
- event resulting in deaths and injuries that occurs offshore, involving activation of The Australian Reception Plan (AUSRECEPLAN) or involving a significant number of ACT residents; and
- activation of other related plans for example, the Health Emergency Plan, and hazard specific plans such as, bushfire and flood plans.

Operational procedures for the alert stand by and activation of the Community Recovery Sub-Plan are provided at **Annexure A**.

4.2 Emergency Co-ordination Centre

The role of the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) is to support the operations of the Lead Response Agency during emergencies and the ongoing operations of supporting agencies in managing the consequences and impacts of an emergency.

The ECC is usually activated by the Lead Response Agency Controller. The ACT Community Recovery Coordinator will be notified of the activation and a request for CSD representation at the Centre. The Deputy Community Recovery Coordinator or a CSD Liaison Officer will fulfil this role.

4.3 Establishment of Disaster Specific Community Recovery Committee

The ACT Community Recovery Coordinator may request a community recovery committee be established to guide the strategic decision making process. The Committee should include representatives of participating community recovery agencies (government and community) who have key identified roles in the provision of support services to the community in the event of a disaster. It should also be noted that other agencies, which don't have an identified role may be invited to provide further value to aid the community's recovery. This Committee will feed into the planning and recovery response at a whole of Territory level.

4.4 Immediate Assistance following a disaster

4.4.1 Assembly areas

Coordinated by: AFP – ACT Policing

Assembly areas are locations, designated by Australian Federal Police and used for the assembly of emergency-affected persons. Provision of some services may be required – e.g. registration, light refreshment, personal support. AFP may establish a Forward Control Area for the assembly of affected persons and the subsequent movement of these persons. Assistance may be requested by the AFP to the Community Recovery Coordinator for the provision of resources to assist with support to affected persons, or others requiring assistance.

If further assistance is required an Evacuation/Assistance Centre may be established to provide for immediate to short term assistance.

An Evacuation/Assistance Centre is a centre established to provide temporary shelter and/or immediate assistance to members of the community who are affected by the emergency. The centre provides a congregation point for those affected where they can receive information as well as basic support, such as food and water, coordination of a range of services and practical advice.

4.4.2 Establishment of Evacuation/Assistance Centre(s)

Coordinated by: Community Services Directorate

Evacuation/Assistance Centres may be established if people affected by an emergency require evacuation from their physical location or when their homes are inaccessible due to the nature of the emergency. These Centres are generally established after consultation between the Lead Agency Response Controller and the ACT Community Recovery Coordinator.

The CSD maintains arrangements with a number of facility managers, including the Education and Training Directorate for access to senior Colleges, for the provision of suitable facilities for use as Evacuation/Assistance Centres. Arrangements are also in place to access a range of community facilities which provides for flexibility in choice of location of evacuation centres, that are often known, and accessible to the affected community.

Evacuation/Assistance Centres may include the following services:

- Registration to assist with reuniting missing family members and friends;
- immediate financial assistance and temporary accommodation;
- personal and practical support;
- psychological first aid;
- first aid for minor injuries and assistance with essential medication;
- refreshments (food and water);
- information and referral services to other support agencies;
- pastoral support;
- arrangements for pets;
- access to interpreter services;
- transport coordination; and
- assistance with applications for Australian government benefits.

When it has been agreed to establish an Evacuation/Assistance Centre, the Community Recovery Coordinator will immediately notify the facility manager responsible for the proposed Evacuation/Assistance Centre.

The Community Recovery Coordinator will appoint a Centre Manager who will have responsibility for establishing the Evacuation/Assistance Centre and staffing it.

The location of an Evacuation/Assistance Centre will be broadcast to the community through a range of media including radio, television, Canberra Connect, and ACT Government websites.

Evacuation/Assistance Centres ideally have the following characteristics:

- security from the effects of the hazard;
- all work health and safety standards can be maintained within the facility;
- adequate space for reception and for agencies to undertake their required functions;
- accessibility, with parking facilities available for fleet vehicles, staff and community;
- toilet facilities for both staff and public;
- well-equipped with communication equipment and backup power supply;
- sufficiently sized;
- resource table/stand for flyers, brochures etc.;
- catering facilities;
- child minding areas to allow a parent to access support in relative quiet;
- suitable for people with a range of special needs;
- suitable for safe keeping of pets for short periods;
- separate areas for private consultations and pursuit of religious/cultural beliefs and/or counselling;
- separate areas for staff breaks;
- adequate heating and cooling; and
- physically separate management and service functionality.

It may not always be possible to procure a site that meets all of these characteristics. The Community Recovery Coordinator, in consultation with the lead agency, may be required to prioritise the importance of these characteristics in order to procure the most appropriate site available at the time of the emergency.

Closure

Evacuation/Assistance Centres have a limited time-span (usually 24-48 hours) and should be closed once affected persons are able to return to their homes, when alternative accommodation is found or when a longer term Recovery Centre is established. Arrangements for ongoing counselling or referrals to other services should be in place prior to closure of Evacuation/Assistance Centre/s.

4.4.3 Recovery Centre

Coordinated by: Community Services Directorate

A Recovery Centre operates as a one-stop-shop for information, advice, services and support through the co-location of government, community based services and businesses that are relevant to the recovery of the affected community.

Following an emergency the Recovery Centre acts as a distribution point for many relevant services such as disaster relief grants, accommodation, clothing, food, property assessments, replacement of documents, legal advice, personal support, counselling, and income support.

Using case management and community development approaches, a Recovery Centre can provide direct services, link households with key services and facilitate community development activities and peer support.

4.4.4 Outreach services

An effective means of delivering many personal support services directly to the affected community is by outreach or visitation programs. These programs usually comprise home visits by representatives of the recovery program to offer support and information and, concurrently, to make an assessment of people's current circumstances.

Close liaison and coordination between staff from various agencies undertaking home visits is required to limit the number of times people have to tell their story. Responsibility for the coordination of outreach or visitation program arrangements rests with the Community Services Directorate.

4.5 Financial Assistance arrangements

The CSD is responsible for the management of financial assistance measures for people directly affected by an emergency.

4.5.1 Immediate cash assistance

The CSD oversees and coordinates the provision of immediate emergency financial assistance (usually within the first 48 hours) to people directly affected by an emergency, consistent with the ACT Disaster Assistance Guidelines, as determined by the circumstances of the emergency.

4.5.2 Temporary accommodation assistance

Temporary accommodation assistance is based on need for the initial period of 48 hours and is arranged by CSD through ADRA. The ACT Disaster Assistance Guidelines will apply in assessing claims for temporary accommodation assistance. Invoices from accommodation providers are paid by ACT Government.

If assistance is extended beyond the initial 48 hour period, a means test will apply with any payments made being subject to repayment, if insurance or compensation is payable.

4.5.3 Other financial assistance measures

Any other assistance measures, such as replacement of essential household contents, restoration of residences and support for business are also outlined in the Disaster Assistance Grants.

4.5.4 Australian Government Assistance

The Commonwealth Government, through the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Arrangements, supports the States and Territories through tailored assistance programs appropriate to the circumstances.

PART 5 - ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE EMERGENCY

5.1. Assisting individuals and groups with specific needs

No two people or communities will respond in the same way to a disaster and some individuals or groups may need additional support. People with specific needs should be identified through knowledge of the community and needs assessment processes.

People with vulnerabilities are more susceptible to the immediate, medium and long- term effects of disasters such as loss, injury, social dislocation and economic hardship. Previous disaster events in Australia, such as the Black Saturday Victorian bushfires, and from around the world have shown that people with vulnerabilities need a greater level of assistance and support than the rest of the community – before, during and after disasters¹.

CSD together with its community partners will work closely with the emergency response agencies to ensure appropriate planning is in place to identify and respond to people with vulnerabilities in the event of an emergency.

CSD aim is to identify, plan for and mitigate factors of vulnerability that may impact on an individual's or community's ability to cope during (and after) a disaster rather than vulnerability based on traditional demographics (ie age, disability).

PART 6 - COMMUNICATION

Coordinated by: ACT Public Information Coordinator, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Effective communication with the community, the media and across agencies and jurisdictions is a critical component in the effective management and resolution of emergency situations and incidents. The Community Communication and Information Plan (CCIP) establishes a framework for communication before, during and after an emergency incident and is based on timeliness, openness, preparedness and partnership.

The Public Information Coordinator (PIC) is the Officer having overall responsibility for coordination and management of all public information and media communication from all locations and agencies, and for providing advice to the EMC and incident coordinator(s).

Recovery information management develops timely, effective communication channels to gather, process, and disseminate information relevant to the recovery of the affected

¹ People with Vulnerabilities in Disasters, Environmental scan and gap analysis of projects/programs for people with vulnerabilities in disasters 2013, South Australian Government.

community. The principles of effective recovery information management rely heavily on the premise that an affected community has a right to all information relevant to its recovery.

It is essential that information is provided in an appropriate range of forms and languages to ensure accessibility by people with a disability or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The ACT Public Information Coordinator will assume initial responsibility for the establishment of a whole of government Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC), working with the Community Recovery Coordinator on ongoing recovery communication.

6.1. ACT Community Evacuation Policy and Guidelines

The ACT Emergency Services Agency and AFP ACT Policing have developed Community Evacuation Policy and Guidelines (**Annexure B**) for use by emergency response agencies in the Australian Capital Territory where life-threatening circumstances exist and it is necessary for the public to take urgent and immediate action to reduce potential loss of life or property.

6.2. Information hotline services

A range of telephone information and advice services may be set up immediately following an emergency. These services will be coordinated in collaboration with ACT Public Information Coordinator, AFP – ACT Policing, CSD and Lifeline Canberra and may include:

6.2.1. Canberra Connect

Canberra Connect (13 22 81) will serve as a first point of contact for members of the public seeking information and general assistance through its call centre which, during an emergency, will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, its website and shopfronts.

6.2.2. Personal support hotline

An information hotline for personal and practical support and referrals, established by AFP – ACT Policing and staffed by telephone counsellors provided from Lifeline Canberra, with links to a Community Recovery representative.

PART 7 - ADMINISTRATION

7.1 Privacy

Territory Privacy Principle 5 - Privacy Notice: The Community Services Directorate (CSD) is obliged to handle personal/private information openly, transparently and in accordance with the Territory Privacy Principles set out in the Information Privacy Act 2014 (ACT). All ACT Government Directorates are compelled to apply the Territory Privacy Principles.

CSD staff will explain to affected persons how personal/private information is collected, used, shared, and stored and how community members can access and correct their information held by CSD. CSD's privacy policy can be viewed at www.communityservices.act.gov.au

If an individual completes a CSD form that seeks disclosure of their personal/private information, this information will be collected and handled by CSD. This information is necessary for CSD to provide appropriate support and services. If an individual does not consent to supply CSD with their personal/private information CSD may be limited in the level of support able to be provided.

CSD will not use or disclose an individual's personal/private information for another purpose, without the individual's consent, unless the individual would reasonably expect CSD to use or disclose the information for a related purpose or disclosure is required by another law.

Special provisions for the disclosure of personal information apply when an emergency declaration (declared by the Prime Minister) is in force in relation to an emergency or disaster. Sections 80 J-P of the Privacy Act allow an entity to collect, use or disclose personal information relating to an individual within specified boundaries.

7.2 Record keeping

Record keeping is a critical function of disaster recovery. Agencies are required to ensure that records of actions taken and money expended or committed during an emergency are maintained and that all decisions are documented.

7.3 Financial accountability

Financial accountability following an emergency will be in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1996* and the Community Services Directorate's Financial Instructions.

7.4 Support for staff and volunteers

Emergencies place stress on staff and volunteers who provide services during response and recovery phases. During a disaster recovery phase it is likely that some staff and volunteers will work additional and extended hours.

In addition, staff and volunteers will witness consequences of disasters for those they are assisting. Managers and supervisors need to be vigilant about the consequences of these events on individual staff and volunteers to ensure that appropriate support is provided and that staff and volunteers experiencing grief and loss or overwork are rostered off duty and offered appropriate support.

Important aspects in the provision of support to staff and volunteers include ensuring they are appropriately trained in providing recovery assistance, ensuring sufficient breaks are provided between shifts, and ensuring appropriate briefing and debriefing is available.

7.4.1 Training

CSD coordinates ongoing training for the Community Recovery Committee and staff and volunteers. Recovery training is provided to ensure that those with a role under this Plan are familiar with the role and the concepts of recovery. CSD liaises with the Emergency Services Agency and the Australian Emergency Management Institute to facilitate the availability of recovery appropriate training.

Participating agencies with a role under this Plan are responsible for the provision of volunteers and to ensure these volunteers receive appropriate recovery training as well as psychological support during and after an emergency event.

7.4.2 Rostering

Shifts should be of a defined duration with adequate rest time between shifts. Staff and volunteers should be required to leave the service area after completion of their shift to enable them to rest.

7.4.3 Briefing and debriefing

A briefing session should be held at the commencement of each shift and a debriefing at the end of each shift. The briefing session is an opportunity for all staff and volunteers to be made aware of the current status and to ensure that consistent information is being provided. The debrief is intended to enable paid staff and volunteers to talk about their experiences, raise issues and resolve problems.

7.4.4 Access to counselling

Access to individual debriefing sessions or more intensive counselling should be available for paid staff and volunteers that experience stress symptoms or need additional support.

7.5 Formalising arrangements with community partners

The roles and responsibilities of participating agencies articulated in this Plan provide the basis for agreement over the form of assistance provided during emergencies. Where appropriate, individual agencies may approach the Community Services Directorate regarding a more formal role, for example, establishing a Memorandum of Understanding, or other form of agreement.

7.6 Planned and timely withdrawal

One of the most critical aspects of the recovery management process is the final withdrawal of external support services. A planned withdrawal enables community involvement and ensures a void will not be left following withdrawal.

Stand down arrangements will be communicated to participating agencies and the affected community by the Community Recovery Coordinator.

PART 8 – SUB-PLAN ADMINISTRATION

8.1 Amendments

Proposals to amend the ACT Community Recovery Plan should be forwarded to the:

Senior Manager
Community Recovery and Emergency Planning
Community Services Directorate
GPO Box 158
Canberra City ACT 2601.
Phone: (02) 620 72343
Email: DHCSACTCommunityRecovery@act.gov.au

Version Number	Amended Pages and details	Amended by	Date

8.2 Distribution

Organisations listed below will be issued with printed and electronic versions of the Sub-Plan. Additional copies may be provided on request to the CMTEDD.

Agency	Title
ACT Government Directorates	Directors-General, Emergency Management Business Units
ACT Emergency Services Agency	
ACT WorkCover	
Canberra Connect	
Justice and Community Safety Directorate	Director, Security & Emergency Management Branch

8.3 Training, Exercising, Review and Maintaining this Sub-Plan

The ACT Community Recovery Sub-Plan is the responsibility of the CSD. The CSD is supported by the Community Recovery Committee in reviewing and maintaining the Community Recovery Plan. Where possible, the Community Recovery Plan is tested through exercises conducted by ACT emergency agencies or through national exercises.

Decisions about the allocation of responsibilities and the content of the Community Recovery Plan are the ultimate responsibility of the CSD. The Community Recovery Plan is to be reviewed:

- after each full activation;
- after each major exercise to test its effectiveness;
- in the event of deficiencies being identified; and
- at least every five years.

Amendments to the Community Recovery Plan are submitted to the Community Recovery Committee and the Director-General, Community Services Directorate, prior to ratification by the Emergency Services Agency.

8.4 Glossary

ACT Emergency Plan: the Australian Capital Territory Emergency Plan. The aim of the Emergency Plan is to ensure the coordinated response to emergencies by all agencies having responsibilities and functions in emergencies

Agency: a government agency or a non-government agency. (Source: Emergency Management Australia Glossary).

Chief Minister: the Chief Minister of the ACT.

Chief Officer: Chief Officer of one of the ACT Emergency Service Agency's four services being the:

- ACT Ambulance Service;
- ACT Fire and Rescue;
- ACT Rural Fire Service; or
- ACT State Emergency Service (Source: *Emergencies Act 2004*).

Chief Police Officer: the Chief Police Officer of the Australian Federal Police, ACT Policing.

Community: a group with a commonality of association and generally defined by location, shared experience or function.

Community Recovery: the process of providing coordinated support and services targeted towards the recovery, to an appropriate level of short, medium and long term functioning, of psycho-social and health impacts on individuals and the community within the ACT.

Community Recovery Coordinator: the person delegated to coordinate the community recovery following an emergency.

Critical Infrastructure: those physical facilities, supply chains, information technologies, and communication networks which, if destroyed, degraded or rendered unavailable for an extended period, would significantly impact on the social or economic well-being of the Australian Capital Territory.

Economic Recovery: the process of providing coordinated support and services targeted towards the recovery, to an appropriate level of short, medium and long term functioning, of business activity within the ACT.

Economic Recovery Coordinator: the person delegated to coordinate the economic recovery following an emergency.

Emergency: an actual or imminent event that due to its scale or nature, presents a significant danger to people, animals, property or the environment in the ACT, or presents a significant risk of disruption of essential services in the ACT, requires a significant and coordinated response. Examples of such events include:

- fire, flood, storm or earthquake;
- accident or explosion;
- epidemic or animal disease; or
- shortage of electricity, gas, fuel or water.

Emergency Controller: person appointed to be the Territory Controller for a declared state of emergency under section 159 of the Emergencies Act 2004.

Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC): the Emergency Coordination Centre is established to coordinate the ACT support to Emergency Management operations and is located at the Emergency Services Agency Headquarters at Fairbairn, ACT. The ECC brings resources of organisations together to meet requirements imposed by the threat of hazard impact.

Emergency Coordination Centre Coordinator: the ECC Coordinator will lead the agencies represented in the ECC in providing the necessary support to the lead response agency.

Emergency Management: the establishment of plans, structures and arrangements to coordinate the resources of agencies and other entities in a comprehensive approach to emergency risks; and the prevention of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from, emergencies. (Source: Emergency Management Australia Glossary).

Emergency Services Agency: a business unit of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate, established under the Emergencies Act 2004 with the specific functions and powers determined by the Act.

Emergency Services Commissioner: appointed by the chief executive in accordance with section 7 of the Emergencies Act 2004.

Emergency Services Organisation: AFP-ACT Policing, ACT Fire and Rescue, ACT Rural Fire Service, ACT Ambulance Service, and State Emergency Service.

Environmental Recovery: the process of providing coordinated support and services targeted towards the recovery, to an appropriate level of short, medium and long term functioning, of the environment within the ACT.

Environmental Recovery Coordinator: the person delegated to coordinate the environmental recovery following an emergency.

Evacuation: a risk management strategy, which may be used as a means of mitigating the effects of an emergency or hazard on a community. It involves the movement of people to a safer location. However, to be effective in must be correctly planned and executed. (Source: ACT Evacuation Policy).

Exercise: simulation of emergency management events, through discussion or actual deployment of personnel in order to:

- train personnel;
- review/test the planning process or other procedures;
- identify needs and/or weaknesses;
- demonstrate capabilities; and
- practise people in working together.

Hazard: relates to a thing (including an intrinsic property of a thing), or a situation, with potential to—

- cause the death of or harm to a person; and
- damage property or the environment.

Incident: a localised event, either accidental or deliberate, which may result in death or injury, or damage to property, which requires a normal response from an agency, or agencies.

Incident Controller: the individual responsible for the management of all incident operations.

Incident Control Centre: the Incident Control Centre will draw upon liaison staff and other specialist support as necessary to manage the overall incident and to support the functions of the Lead Response Agency Controller.

Infrastructure Recovery: the process of providing coordinated support and services targeted towards the recovery, to an appropriate level of short, medium and long term functioning, of infrastructure within the ACT.

Infrastructure Recovery Coordinator: the person delegated to coordinate the infrastructure recovery following an emergency.

Lead Response Agency: an organisation which, because of its expertise and resources, is primarily responsible for dealing with an identified hazard. (Source: Emergency Management Australia Glossary).

Minister: the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Mitigation: the measures taken in advance of, or after, a disaster aimed at decreasing or eliminating its impact on society and environment. (Source: COAG Review into Natural Disasters in Australia, August 2002).

Natural Disaster: a serious disruption to a community or region caused by the impact of a naturally occurring rapid onset event that threatens or causes death, injury or damage to property or the environment and which requires significant and coordinated multi-agency and community response. Such serious disruption can be caused by any one, or a combination, of the following natural hazards: bushfire; earthquake; flood; storm; cyclone; storm surge; landslide; tsunami; meteorite strike; or tornado. (Source: COAG Review into Natural Disasters in Australia, August 2002).

Non Government Agency: means a voluntary organisation or any other private individual or body, other than a government agency. (Source: Emergency Management Australia Glossary).

Police Commander: is responsible to the Chief Police Officer for the overall management of the incident. (Source: National Counter Terrorism Plan).

Police Forward Commander: is responsible for establishing unified command and takes responsibility for the operational and tactical application of resources at the scene.

Police Forward Command Post (PFCP): is the location from which the PFC exercises command, facilitates control and coordinates allocated resources. A PFCP can be established at any time when a situation presents a physical threat requiring a police response. It can range from a police vehicle, to a room or facility containing sophisticated communication and computer equipment.

Police Operations Centre: a centre established to control and support police operations. It is the location from which the Police Commander directs the overall operational response to an incident. (Source: National Counter Terrorism Plan).

Preparedness: in relation to an emergency includes arrangements or plans to deal with an emergency or the effects of an emergency. (Source: Emergency Management Australia Glossary).

Prevention: in relation to an emergency includes the identification of hazards, the assessment of threats to life and property and the taking of measures to reduce potential loss to life or property. (Source: Emergency Management Australia Glossary).

Public Information Coordinator: is responsible for oversight of public and media information activities for emergencies in the ACT.

Public Information Coordination Centre: a centre maintained in readiness to coordinate development, clearance and delivery of information through multiple channels, including forward media briefing sites, internet, media/social media and Canberra Connect.

Recovery: in relation to an emergency includes the process of returning an affected community to its proper level of functioning after an emergency. (Source: Emergency Management Australia Glossary).

Response: in relation to an emergency includes the process of combating an emergency and of providing immediate relief for persons affected by an emergency. (Source: Emergency Management Australia Glossary).

Risk: a concept used to describe the likelihood of harmful consequences arising from the interaction of hazards, communities and the environment. (Source: COAG Review into Natural Disasters in Australia, August 2002).

Risk Assessment: the process used to determine risk management priorities by evaluating and comparing the level of risk against predetermined standards, target risk levels or other criteria. (Source: COAG Review into Natural Disasters in Australia, August 2002).

Risk Management: the systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the tasks of identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating and monitoring risk. (Source: COAG Review into Natural Disaster in Australia, August 2002).

State of Alert: a declared alert by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services under section 151 of the *Emergencies Act 2004* in circumstances where there is a potential significant danger or emergency that is likely to happen across all or part of the ACT.

State of Emergency: a declaration by the Chief Minister under Section 156 of the *Emergencies Act 2004* for all or part of the ACT when an emergency has or is likely to occur.

Supporting Plan: a document describing roles and responsibilities and arrangements for the performance of a key response or recovery function in support of the ACT Emergency Plan to an identified hazard. Generally focused on functional arrangements to provide support to lead response agencies.

8.5 Acronyms and abbreviations

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AFP-ACT Policing	Australian Federal Police - ACT Policing
ACTAS	ACT Ambulance Service
ACTF&R	ACT Fire and Rescue
ACTRFS	ACT Rural Fire Service
ACTSES	ACT State Emergency Service
AGD	Australian Government Attorney-General's Department (Commonwealth)
AHPPC	Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (Commonwealth)
AIIMS	Australian Inter-services Incident Management System
ANZCTC	Australia and New Zealand Counter Terrorism Committee (Commonwealth)
ANZEMC	Australia and New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (Commonwealth)
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear
CMTEDD	ACT Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
CPO	Chief Police Officer

COAG	Council of Australian Governments (Commonwealth)
CSD	ACT Community Services Directorate
EC	Emergency Controller
ECC	Emergency Co-ordination Centre
EMA	Emergency Management Australia (Commonwealth)
ESA	Emergency Services Agency, JACSD
ESDD	ACT Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate
Health	ACT Health Directorate
IC	Incident Controller
ICC	Incident Control Centre
IMT	Incident Management Team
JACSD	ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate
PIC	Public Information Coordinator
PICC	Public Information Coordination Centre
POC	Police Operations Centre
SEMC	Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet
SEMSOG	Security and Emergency Management Senior Officials Group
SEMPG	Security and Emergency Management Planning Group
SEMB	Security and Emergency Management Branch, JACSD
TAMSD	ACT Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

ANNEXURE A - OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR THE ALERT, STANDBY AND ACTIVATION OF THE COMMUNITY RECOVERY SUB-PLAN

Three level classification system for a recovery response to an emergency:

LEVEL 1		
<i>Low risk to life, property or the environment but with the potential to escalate</i>		
DESCRIPTION	RECOVERY RESPONSE	PARTICIPANTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time limited recovery response required. <p style="text-align: center;">and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated incident affecting small number of members of the community, aspect of the environment, minor economic / property loss in a confined geographical context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed by the lead response agency with CSD as a participating agency, minimal agency support required (within existing operational capacity). • Services provided could include: liaison officer presence at Emergency Coordination Centre; personal support, outreach visits, information, advice and referral. • Follow up referral to existing support services or counselling if required. • Enduring efforts and issues to be managed as part of business as usual for relevant agency(ies). 	<p>Typically, the incident is managed within the capacity and resources of the lead recovery agency with minimal requirement from external participating stakeholders.</p> <p>Potential engagement of Canberra Connect.</p>

LEVEL 2

Medium risk to life, property or the environment

DESCRIPTION	RECOVERY RESPONSE	PARTICIPANTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The duration of the recovery activities are expected to extend for longer periods (weeks/months). <p style="text-align: center;">and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential or actual declaration of State of Alert. <p style="text-align: center;">and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact on a local region of the community, moderate environment impact or moderate economic / property loss. <p style="text-align: center;">and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of an exclusion zone. <p style="text-align: center;">and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery response expected to continue for several days to several weeks. <p>Note. Level 2 could involve one to all of these descriptors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator alerts recovery managers and key contacts in participating agencies to be on standby. • Activation of all or parts of the Community Recovery Sub Plan. • Recovery Coordinator or Deputy - attendance at Emergency Coordination Centre at ESA, AFP – ACT Policing, or Health, depending on the nature of the emergency. • Commencement of planning for possible escalation of incident, including identification of resources required, both human and infrastructure. • Involvement with AFP – ACT Policing & ESA re potential evacuation, identification of people with vulnerabilities in the community. • Work closely with Communications Manager, CMTEDD re public broadcasting of information to the community including hotline numbers, location of Evacuation/Assistance Centres. • Identification of suitable sites to be used as Evacuation/Assistance Centres. • Establishment of Evacuation/Assistance Centre (dependent on the nature of the emergency). • Provision of financial assistance, temporary accommodation under the Disaster Assistance Guidelines. • Activation of CSD Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Plans. • Daily briefing of recovery partners involved with written status report provided. • Planned withdrawal of services and transition of affected persons to existing community supports where required. • Operational debrief. • Review of Community Recovery Plan 	<p>Incident beyond the capacity of a single agency with the requirement for multi-agency coordination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating agencies placed on alert/stand by or activated as appropriate. • Activation of relevant agencies that may support. • Potential Commonwealth Government liaison and/or representation.

LEVEL 3		
<i>High risk to life, property and the environment</i>		
DESCRIPTION	RECOVERY RESPONSE	PARTICIPANTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The duration of the recovery activities are expected to endure for longer periods (months/years). <p style="text-align: center;">and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential or actual declaration of “State of Emergency”. <p style="text-align: center;">and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will impact significantly on parts of the community, environment and/or result in major economic / property loss. Will affect all elements of recovery (social, economic, environmental, and infrastructure recovery). <p style="text-align: center;">and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended exclusion zone. <p style="text-align: center;">and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged recovery response. <p>Note. Level 3 could involve one to all of these descriptors. Typically level 3 will involve a combination of these descriptors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All relevant Recovery Plans are fully activated. • Community recovery network activated • Participating agencies activated. • Liaise with AFP – ACT Policing & ESA re potential evacuation, identifying vulnerable groups in the community. • Work closely with Communications Manager, CMTEDD re public broadcasting of information to the community including hotline numbers, location of Evacuation/Assistance Centres. • Identification of suitable sites to be used as Evacuation/Assistance Centres and arrangements for registered volunteers. • Establishment of Evacuation/Assistance Centre/s (dependent on the nature of the emergency). • Provision of financial assistance, temporary accommodation under the Disaster Assistance Guidelines. • Activation of CSD Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Plans • Territory Controller appointed to manage the “State of Emergency”, all directions received through the controller. • Evacuation/Assistance Centres or longer term Recovery Centres operational. • All media and public information managed by a Public Information Controller. • Daily briefing of recovery services involved with written status report provided. • Establishment of Recovery Centre (dependent on the nature of the emergency). • Outreach / visitation to affected community. • Needs assessment and community development role to aid longer-term recovery. • Management of Public Donations. • Planned withdrawal of services and transition of affected persons to existing community supports where required. • Operational debrief. • Review of Sub-Plan. 	<p>Multi agency and multi-jurisdictional response required with significant potential for cross-border issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation and coordination of relevant agencies that may support. Majority of recovery agencies will be already on standby and/or activated. • Typically Commonwealth Government liaison and/or representation.

ANNEXURE B - ACT EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Capital Territory can experience any number of hazards, both natural and those with human influence. The evacuation of people from a threatened area to a place of safety is one strategy that may be employed by Emergency Service personnel to mitigate the potential loss of life, or harm to life. However to be effective it must be correctly planned and executed.

Experience has shown that the evacuation of people is not always the optimum solution to managing the risk. Alternative strategies to evacuation such as stay and shelter or the control and restriction of movement of people should also be considered.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the ACT Emergency Evacuation Policy is the protection and preservation of life and property in the ACT from an all hazards approach to enhance effective decision-making, coordination and whole of government management of evacuation.

LEGISLATION

Forced evacuations

There are no offence provisions empowering forced evacuations in the ACT.

The *Emergencies Act 2004* provides the authority surrounding evacuation in the ACT.

Section 34 of the *ACT Emergencies Act 2004* provides powers for Chief Officers of an Emergency Service which include the ability to;

- Evacuate people or animals from an area to another place;
- Give directions to regulate or prohibit the movement of people, animals or vehicles; and

Section 189 Direction to leave fire area is the only offence supporting Section 34, however this only relates to a person who is at or near premises that are on fire.

There are no other offences supporting Section 34 should a person refuse to evacuate or comply with the direction.

State of Alert and State of Emergency

In the event that a State of Alert (Section 150C) or State of Emergency (Section 160A) has been declared; the Minister or Chief Minister can authorise the Emergency Controller to;

- Direct the movement of people, animals or vehicles within, into or around the area to which the State of Alert or Emergency applies;
- Give directions regulating or prohibiting the movement of people, animals or vehicles within, into or around the emergency area.

A person commits an offence if the person fails to comply with a direction given under Section 150C (2) (a), (b), or (c) and 160A (2) (a), (b), or (c) of the *Emergencies Act 2004*.

Although in these circumstances members can direct the movement, regulate or prohibit the movement of persons, it does not articulate that such direction includes the physical removal of persons.

PRINCIPLES OF EVACUATION

1. The ACT Emergency Evacuation Policy needs to strike a practical balance to protect and preserve life and property. It reflects the following key planning principles;
 - Early evacuation, if possible to ensure higher levels of safety allowing residents/occupants to remain if adequately prepared;
 - Enabling responding ACTP and ESA personnel to direct evacuation in more hazardous situations when it is evident that loss of life or injury is imminent;
2. All emergency incidents will have an Incident Controller, consistent with the concept of Unified Command. The title of this individual may differ depending on who is the lead agency and the scale of the incident; however the responsibility for deciding to evacuate people will rest with the Incident Controller.
3. Response Agencies are required to be prepared to undertake immediate and planned evacuation during higher threat situations where the safety of the community is at risk.
4. The community will be advised (strongly if required) to evacuate, however, and in general, response agencies will not physically force people to evacuate and will adopt a common sense approach.
5. Consideration needs to be given to persons that may refuse to comply with a direction to evacuate and the practicalities of dealing with such situations. In any incident requiring evacuation; appropriate consideration of the needs of the evacuees must be applied.

6. The Community Services Directorate (CSD) is the lead agency for the Community Recovery function, including responsibility for the identification, establishment and management of evacuation centres. (See Attachment A)
7. Where possible, communication of warnings and situation information during emergencies will be provided to enable a coordinated approach by ESA and ACTP for timely assistance to the community;
8. Safety during any evacuation is a high priority for Emergency Services. The risks involved in safely moving people through a disaster or emergency zone can be very high. Evacuation needs to consider safe access and egress to members of the community and Emergency Services members.

SHOULD EVACUATION BE CONSIDERED

Should Emergency Service personnel attend an incident and consider evacuation as an option; it is important that an evacuation plan is completed. This plan needs to be developed in consultation with attending Emergency Service personnel and approved by the Police Forward Commander or Police Commander in cases where a Police Forward Command Post or Police Operations Centre has been established.

EVACUATION TYPES

Immediate Evacuations can apply to localised incidents such as a bushfire, or to a major area emergency such as flooding.

Planned Evacuations will be managed by command, control and coordination and delivered by responding officers.

EVACUATION METHODS

Self Evacuation – members of the community may elect to evacuate from threatened areas in response to an increase alert or an emergency. This particularly applies to individuals or groups with special needs. Members of the community are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety and that of their property and to make their own arrangements for evacuation. Based on this premise, self evacuation from risk is a matter for the individual subject to their assessment of the situation and their level of preparedness.

Directed Evacuation – responding officers can direct evacuation from an affected area in certain circumstances (see Legislation section). When a decision is made by an agency other than the lead agency to direct an evacuation, that agency accepts responsibility for that determination. When such a decision is made, the agency making such a decision must notify the lead agency of their decision as soon as practicable.

EVACUATION MEANS

Self Evacuation – people may choose to move from the risk area to a place of safe refuge. This may include an assembly point, evacuation centre or to friends and families using their own transport. This can include people who have not adequately prepared for the emergency or who believe they are not capable of enduring the trauma associated with an emergency.

Supported evacuation – may occur when coordinated movement is required by ACT Policing if roads are closed or access is restricted to designated areas. Supported evacuation planning will include provisions for approved persons to enter the evacuated area to assist with self evacuation.

Special needs evacuation – may occur when people concerned are unable to self evacuate because of the situation or through special needs. This may involve evacuation movement under ACT Ambulance Service arrangements for sick or otherwise incapacitated persons. It may also involve movement under ACTION Bus Service arrangements when buses are provided to move large numbers of persons from affected areas. Extreme situations may require movement by foot to Assembly areas.

COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

ACT agencies respond to a wide range of incidents and emergencies on a daily basis. The majority of these responses involve only one agency however; large scale, long duration and complex incidents or emergencies require a coordinated multi-agency response.

Emergency Coordination - a Centre to coordinate the emergency may be established when the complexity of incidents exceeds the capacity of the Lead Response Agency to coordinate the necessary resources to support incident response (including evacuation).

The establishing of a Centre may not necessarily be required in all circumstances where evacuations occurs (e.g. a small number of people) however, if a Centre is established, it will be the mechanism by which support to the lead agency for evacuation is provided, including assisting in the establishment of an evacuation centre by the Community Services Directorate, transport and road closure.

Public Information

Communication in relation to evacuation will be undertaken in accordance to those arrangements and mechanisms set out in the Community Communication and Information Sub Plan, either using standing agency arrangements or through the activation of the Public Information Communication Centre (PICC)

The establishing of a PICC may not necessarily be required in all circumstances where evacuations occurs (e.g. a small number of people) , however, if a PICC is established, it will be the mechanism by which all incident related information is co-ordinated.

In all messages, alerts or recommendations relating to evacuation; the affected person/s should be advised to take all necessary medication/s, pets and sufficient personal belongings commensurate to the emergency.

EVACUATION CENTRES

The decision to open an Evacuation Centres and the location of the Evacuation Centres(s) is the responsibility of the Community Recovery Coordinator in consultation with the Lead Response Agency.

The establishment of the Evacuation Centres will be coordinated by the Community Services Directorate. See Protocols for the Establishment of Evacuation Centres at Attachment A.

COMMUNITY PREPARATION

Emergencies affect all aspects of a community. Individuals and communities should be aware of the local hazards and support evacuation arrangements. This policy requires the community to be involved in the evacuation preparation process.

Members of the community should be encouraged, through community education programs and other means, to prepare their households for evacuation by having an evacuation plan and evacuation kit, and putting in place procedures to ensure they take essential personal items including medication, when they leave. Having an identified place to go – friends or family – would also assist in a prompt response to a directive to evacuate.

REVIEW

Responsibility for the management and review of the ACT Emergency Evacuation Policy rests with the Commissioner Emergency Services Agency and the Chief Police Officer, AFP- ACT Policing.

The ACT Emergency Evacuation Policy should be read in conjunction with Directorates and Agencies policies and guidelines.

Attachment A – Protocol for the Establishment of Evacuation Centres

Background

1. CSD is the lead agency for the Community Recovery function, including responsibility for the identification, establishment and management of evacuation centres
2. CSD has arrangements in place with various agencies to maintain a database of suitable/ available evacuation centres for use in emergency situations – the range of potential centres available gives flexibility to respond to the size (in terms of affected people), nature and geographic context/ constraints of the emergency situation
3. Potential evacuation centres include senior ACT Colleges, CIT campuses, community facilities and CSD workplaces (eg Child and Family Centres) some of which are adjacent to town centres and major shopping centres and public transport routes, which offer complementary support to the centre and the services the centre offers
4. The Community Recovery Plan, an Education and Training Directorate Operational Plan, among other documents, include commentary on the process to establish evacuation centres
5. Arrangements by which Community Recovery activates evacuation centres are underpinned by the Community Recovery Plan, operational plans and/or MOU's as appropriate, with the managers/providers of the various facilities
6. Community Recovery maintains a database of potential evacuation centres, including after hours contact details for access/activation. The Community Recovery Plan provides details of the majority of potential evacuation centres
7. All potential evacuation centres have been assessed by the Rural Fire Service under catastrophic fire danger arrangements, and 3 centres are recommended for closure under catastrophic declarations

Process

1. The decision to identify options for an evacuation centre(s) rests with the lead agency and Community Recovery (CSD) taking into account expected numbers of affected personnel, locational issues, prevailing conditions and access issues (eg road closures as result of the emergency event)
2. The decision on whether to open an Evacuation Centre is usually made by Police or Emergency Services. If the need for evacuation is urgent Police and/or Emergency Services will establish an Assembly Area as an interim measure until the location of the Evacuation Centre is agreed.

3. Once a suitable site is agreed, Community Recovery contacts the facility manager to ascertain availability and will then activate necessary agencies and resources to effectively respond to the needs of affected people
4. Details of the chosen evacuation centre/s will be made known through the lead agency and if activated, to the PICC and broadcast to the community through existing arrangements, eg media outlets, Canberra Connect, websites (ESA, ACT Policing) and social media.