Co-working in disaster recovery

2015 National Disaster Resilience Roundtable Report

8 September 2015
Sydney, Australia

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AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

Contents

Executive summary

In 2009 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to adopt a whole of nation, resilience-based approach to disaster management and later released the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSfDR) in 2011.

This strategy acknowledged that disaster resilience relies on society as a whole and not solely government, emergency services agencies and local authorities. It recognised that a national, coordinated and cooperative effort was required to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies and disasters.

Australian Red Cross held the third National Disaster Resilience Roundtable to further explore practical suggestions for enhancing coordination and cooperation in the emergency management sector. The Roundtable provided an opportunity for emergency management stakeholders to discuss, explore and action co-working in disaster management in Australia with a focus on the recovery phase. Co-working was considered as a very practical expression of improving coordination, cooperation and collaboration.

This Report summarises the 2015 National Disaster Resilience Roundtable, which took place on Tuesday 8 September 2015 in Sydney. It was attended by 46 emergency management stakeholders, including federal, state and local government representatives, emergency management organisations, the private sector, community groups, and not-for-profit organisations. The 2015 Roundtable was kindly hosted by Insurance Australia Group at their national headquarters in Sydney.

Co-working was found to be a practical and useful way of working in disaster response and recovery settings, providing concrete steps to strengthen collaboration and cooperation in disaster management in Australia. The advantages of co-working outweighed the disadvantages in most contexts however it was acknowledged that the applicability of co-working in disaster recovery rests on a number of specific criteria. This Report will detail these issues as well as providing some guidance on the enablers, barriers and risks to co-working in disaster recovery settings in Australia.

Recommendations

Participants identified four recommendations to further the co-working in recovery initiative:

1. Develop operational principles and guidance for the ANZEMC Recovery Sub-Committee's consideration.

2. Strategic level endorsement of co-working as an effective method of enhancing collaboration and cooperation in the Australian emergency management sector.

3. Document the evidence base for co-working in recovery, including some case studies of existing co-working arrangements, for the development of future business cases for co-working in disaster recovery settings.

4. Include co-working arrangements in disaster management simulation exercises.
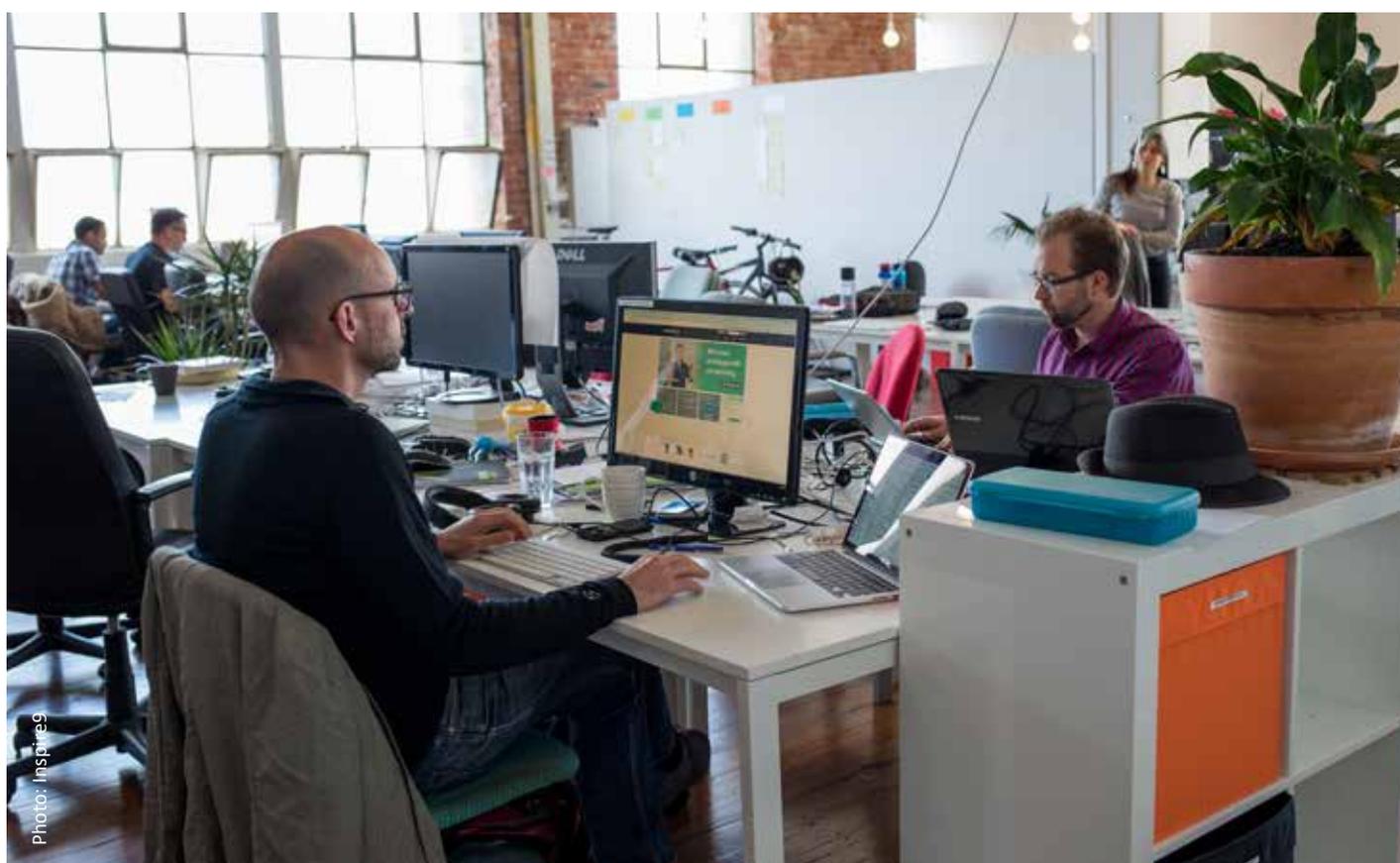
Aim

To bring together diverse emergency management stakeholders from around Australia to discuss an innovative, practical approach to enhancing coordination and cooperation in disaster management settings, specifically through co-working.

Background

There has been only limited research undertaken on co-working arrangements in disaster recovery settings. However there is growing support for co-working in disaster management agency (or 'grey') literature, including from Emergency Management Victoria and the Canadian military. There is also an increasing number of case studies in Australia and internationally using co-working in disaster response and recovery settings as a tool to enhance coordination, cooperation and collaboration.

There is a growing amount of supporting evidence for the benefits of co-working outside the disaster management sector. While still relatively new, there is currently research being undertaken internationally and domestically to further explore the benefits, challenges and practicalities of co-working, especially in the software development, creative and start-up industries. The Briefing Note for the 2015 Roundtable (Appendix B, Page 22) has more information regarding existing literature and case studies.

This report will contribute to the body of evidence regarding co-working in disaster recovery settings.

Photo: Inspire9

The 2015 Roundtable

The 2015 National Disaster Resilience Roundtable was facilitated by Andrew Coghlan, National Emergency Services Manager for Australian Red Cross. The day began by acknowledging the Gadigal peoples of the Eora nation as the traditional owners of the land that the Roundtable was held on.

As Roundtable participants introduced themselves, they were asked to identify what they considered to be major challenges in disaster recovery. These involved:

preparing to recover

pre-empting next steps   politicisation

evidence to practice

flexibility   coordinating

investing in preparedness   community-led recovery

trust   collaboration

adapting   practice to evidence

organisational awareness

capacity building   integrating response and recovery

working dynamically   workforce planning

recovery to resilience   understanding roles

efficient resource use

To build on the information found in the Briefing Note (Appendix B, Page 22), the day began with five short presentations. The presentations provided Roundtable participants with a deeper understanding of co-working in disaster recovery from the perspectives of:

- Daniel Long, Recovery Manager at Blue Mountains City Council and Danielle O'Hara, Recovery Project Officer at Australian Red Cross: discussing the experience of co-working together during the recovery phase in the Blue Mountains

- Anne and Fiona Leadbeater: speaking from experience of being community members in an area where co-working was used after the Black Saturday fires

- Elizabeth McNaughton, Executive Director of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Lessons Learned programme of the New Zealand Government: drawing from co-working examples from Christchurch, New Zealand

- Dr Steve Curnin, University of Tasmania: discussing research of co-working and building trust very quickly, across different organisations

- Mykel Dixon, Cultural Architect at Inspire9: speaking from experience facilitating co-working in a business environment.

After lunch, participants broke into group discussions to further explore the issue and address the following aspects of co-working in disaster recovery:

- Its applicability, now and in the future
- The advantages of co-working in disaster recovery
- The risks of co-working in disaster recovery
- Enablers of co-working in disaster recovery
- Barriers to co-working in disaster recovery

Importantly, Roundtable participants highlighted some follow-up steps they saw as key to furthering the co-working- in recovery initiative – to take practical steps to embed this innovative way of working in emergency management in Australia.

The day ended with a brief summary of each aspect of co-working in disaster recovery and a commitment to follow-up the Roundtable with this Report and to outline next steps.

Blue Mountains bushfire recovery

Daniel Long
Recovery Manager at Blue Mountains City Council

Daniel acted as the Blue Mountains City Council's recovery liaison officer following the Blue Mountains bushfires in October 2013. Initially, the NSW State Government managed the recovery efforts but, following a funding package, the Blue Mountains City Council took this role on and Daniel was appointed as recovery manager. He was responsible for setting up and managing the recovery team, implementing the recovery governance structure and dealing with a wide range of day-to-day recovery issues.

Danielle O'Hara
Recovery Project Officer at Australian Red Cross

Danielle is the Blue Mountains recovery project officer for Australian Red Cross. She has experience in and a comprehensive understanding of a range of not-for-profit sectors, including emergency management, conservation, disability and environmental education. Most recently she has been coordinating the Red Cross Recovery Program in the Blue Mountains. She holds a bachelor of arts in political and international relations from the University of New South Wales and a master of education in social ecology from the University of Western Sydney.

Three large bushfires destroyed more than 180 homes in the Blue Mountains, NSW, during October 2013. The area had experienced bushfires in the past but none with such ferocity. Daniel was working at the Blue Mountains City Council during this time and quickly transitioned from his operational background to working in recovery, becoming the Council's Recovery Manager.

Blue Mountains City Council and Australian Red Cross established co-working arrangements early on thanks to existing trust between them and strategic insights from colleagues in both organisations. A shared understanding of the complexity of recovery—its emotive, unpredictable and stressful nature—led to the two organisations uniting around their common focus on the psychosocial wellbeing of the community. This was the existing core business of the Red Cross but the Council had to find ways to integrate this into their existing business. The Council acknowledged early on that they could not work in a business-as-usual manner and gave Daniel the mandate to work beyond the normal council ways of working. Co-working with Red Cross gave the Council access to lots of additional and complementary resources, people and advice.

Practically, co-working had numerous advantages for both organisations. The nearest Red Cross office was 40 minutes' drive from the Blue Mountains, so co-locating with the Blue Mountains City Council enabled Red Cross easier access to the community and mitigated the risk of being seen by the community and community organisations as an outsider. The Council had immediate access to a different perspective from the Red Cross and access to their existing community recovery after bushfires knowledge, networks and resources. The Council also had access to the community's perspective through the information gathered during Red Cross outreach activities. Each fed off the other's access to community organisations and networks.

Both Daniel and Danielle acknowledged the success of their co-working arrangements was due in large part to the flexibility of their organisations, as well as the support and understanding they had from their respective teams.

The main risk identified was that the organisations would struggle to maintain their independence. However, the Council and Red Cross overcame this by clearly stating the roles and responsibilities of each as well as their limitations and capacities. Keeping management structures (and reporting lines) separate enabled the organisations to work closely together but maintain their independence.

An unexpected benefit of co-working was that both organisations gained new links to networks in other disaster affected communities. The Blue Mountains City Council considers its experience co-working with Red Cross to have improved its recovery capacity and is happy to share its experience with other councils. The Red Cross considers its experience co-working with the Blue Mountains City Council to have been highly valuable and to have greatly strengthened its ability to support the community's recovery. Both the Council and Red Cross consider the experience of co-working in disaster recovery to have greatly enhanced mutual trust and they intend to continue working together beyond the end of this formal co-working arrangement.

Kinglake community

Anne Leadbeater
Leadbeater Consulting

Anne Leadbeater was a resident of Kinglake and an employee of Murrindindi Shire Council when the Black Saturday Bushfires hit Victoria in February 2009. On behalf of the council, Anne became heavily involved in coordinating the initial recovery efforts for the Kinglake Ranges communities and emerged as a strong community leader in the recovery process. The recovery model that was developed was subsequently highlighted as a case study in the final report of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. In 2013, Anne won a Medal of the Order of Australia for her services to bushfire recovery. Anne still lives in Kinglake today.

Fiona Leadbeater
Leadbeater Consulting

Fiona Leadbeater works with Anne at Leadbeater Consulting. Fiona and her son Daniel lost their home in Kinglake, Victoria during the 2009 Black Saturday fires. She has extensive experience in disaster recovery both personally and professionally.

Anne and Fiona discussed their experiences of co-working from the community's perspective and highlighted that from their perspective, co-working in disaster recovery was a great success. Their experience of using services provided by organisations that were co-working came from the 2009 Victorian Bushfires in and around Kinglake, specifically from engaging with government services in the Recovery Hubs set up there.

The government and community organisations that co-worked in Kinglake after the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires encouraged easy access for the community to the services on offer and to recovery information. Co-locating in the Recovery Hub also provided the opportunity for sharing client information between organisations, thus reducing the need for community members to repeat their stories multiple times, although in Anne and Fiona's experience this did not work as planned. Two major concerns from their perspective of organisations co-locating in Recovery Hubs were the security of their personal information and their privacy, especially as there was little consideration of the risk of 'other' organisations hearing community members' personal stories. Anne and Fiona raised the ironic dilemma of information sharing in co-working settings. Due to organisations' privacy policies, community members were required to fill in multiple different forms containing personal information. However, in practice, in the Recovery Hubs, there was little real privacy because of the close, shared working settings where personal stories could easily be heard by others. This is an issue they identified to be thought through in the future.

Co-working enabled the staff of each organisation to feel supported and secure far from their regular offices and the rest of their teams. In Anne and Fiona's experience, it encourages a systems perspective that keeps the community at the centre of all recovery work and one that can strengthen existing structures. The risk is that co-working with organisations far from their regular office locations can instil a sense of group think and thus be a barrier to meeting community needs. Acknowledging the importance of working collaboratively in disaster recovery, Anne and Fiona suggested that respect for each other is the foundation of working together harmoniously.

Finally, Anne and Fiona identified the importance of organisations recognising what was existing prior to the disaster in the community. This is critical in regards to existing organisational structures and relationships but also community space. The location of where organisations co-work must be considered prior to beginning new co-working arrangements. Organisations must consider the space in which they plan to co-work as it may have previously been used by the community and ongoing occupation of shared community space can negatively impact the community's recovery – in Anne's words "when you occupy the best space in town…well, you occupy the best space in town". Co-working must go beyond merely co-locating and must always keep the community at the centre of all co-working initiatives in disaster recovery.

Co-working after the Canterbury earthquakes

Elizabeth McNaughton
Executive Director of the
New Zealand Government's
Canterbury Earthquakes
Lessons Learned Programme

Elizabeth is the executive director of
the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery
Lessons Learned programme at the
Department of the Prime Minister
and Cabinet. Prior to this role she
held senior leadership positions at
New Zealand Red Cross as the general
manager of strategy and government
relations, and national recovery
manager. She has worked with the
New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence
and Emergency Management, where
she was seconded for six months to
the Department of Prime Minister and
Cabinet's Recovery Policy Team in the
wake of the Christchurch earthquakes.
She has also worked for the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs and Trade on the Pacific
regional programme. Her international
experience includes working for the
International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies based in
South Asia.

Elizabeth began her presentation by setting the context in New Zealand. After the Canterbury earthquakes of late 2010 and early 2011, physical space was at a premium as large parts of Christchurch CBD were rubble.

Many organisations in and around Christchurch began co-working out of necessity e.g. schools sharing spaces, café and nightclubs sharing the same space, the Re-Start mall. Elizabeth identified one such initiative: EPIC, a new building that provided space for 22 displaced information technology companies to come together under the one roof. The EPIC co-working space was designed to enhance collaboration amongst different companies, to encourage working together and advice-seeking. The Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT) used a similar collaborative model to bring together five different engineering and construction firms in an umbrella organisation to work toward the same goals.

Elizabeth recalled how the leaders of SCIRT and New Zealand Red Cross were introduced to each other and soon began discussing their shared purposes in supporting the recovery of Christchurch. Duncan and Elizabeth identified their collaborative anchor – what bound their organisations together – to be 'in service of people'. They spent twelve months discussing how they could best collaborate to further their services to the people of Christchurch and took the decision to co-locate in a purpose-built office. Innovative leadership was integral to the success of the co-working arrangements. Everything was intentional: the initial meeting of teams, the shared events, the design of the office, and even the location of the water coolers.

Co-working quickly led to a shared understanding of goals and the leadership used the Stanford Design Thinking Process to identify projects they could work collaboratively on. SCIRT engineers joined Red Cross teams on outreach visits, seeing the community's perspective first-hand. Red Cross gained a deeper understanding on the pressures placed on the SCIRT teams and could help manage community expectations. Their collaborative anchor strengthened both organisation's focus on the people they were trying to support, the communities of Canterbury.

Elizabeth noted that the co-working arrangements helped staff from both organisations move beyond pre-conceived notions of 'the other' and towards seeing the potential in different ways of thinking. The access the two organisations had to a much greater variety of skills, thinking and experience enabled solutions to existing complex problems. She highlighted that leaders can be the brokers between teams, realising organisational potential by working together, across disciplines, and being generous with trust.

When reflecting on lessons she would use in future events, Elizabeth identified that establishing co-working earlier could have led to even better work being done. Other lessons include planning an exit strategy from co-working arrangements from the beginning and highlighting the practical benefits of co-working (such as shared expenses and more office space) in addition to the bigger vision. Finally, Elizabeth highlighted that communication and trust are critical to effective co-working in recovery.

Building 'swift trust' during disaster recovery

Dr Steve Curnin
University of Tasmania

Steve is a part-time research fellow at the University of Tasmania. He works in a team at the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre on a project that's investigating strategic decision making during emergency events. He also works in industry as an emergency management advisor, drawing on over 16 years of operational and policy experience in worldwide emergency management arrangements and working for or with state and national government agencies, not-for-profit organisations, multinational corporations and the military.

Steve noted that disaster recovery is a high consequence environment; some may say even more high consequence than disaster response. In such a high stakes setting, it's critical that people work well within their own teams as well as across different teams and organisations. Typically, people and organisations must work together without having previously met or known each other. There can be cultural barriers to collaborating in recovery and distrust of other organisations is relatively common.

Steve's research has identified that establishing and facilitating trust between organisations is critical to the success of co-working in disaster recovery. Trust is usually built over long periods of time and is most obvious in familial and friendship relationships. He posed the question: How does one build trust quickly outside of these relationships, such as is required in a disaster recovery setting?

Research in this area has focused on the idea of 'swift trust': focusing on how to build trust very quickly. Various militaries around the world have also examined this and they have found that swift trust is facilitated by clarity of roles and relationships as well as clear communication of abilities and limitations. People need to know what each other's roles are, what their relationships are with each other (and within their organisations), and what they can and cannot contribute to shared goals.

Steve outlined how many cultural barriers between organisations can be overcome by investing in swift trust. Liaison officers in each organisation can facilitate this, spanning organisational boundaries to communicate roles, relationships and shared goals. He noted that further research into swift trust in disaster settings will be able to shine more light on the mechanics of facilitating collaboration and co-working in disaster recovery settings.

The co-working industry

Mykel Dixon
Cultural Architect, Inspire9

Mykel is a speaker, author and advisor on creativity, innovation and organisational culture. Currently the cultural architect in residence at Inspire9, Australia's oldest community-led co-working space, he's on a passionate crusade to liberate individuals and organisations from limiting beliefs, outdated ideologies and archaic work environments. He believes the co-working, co-living, co-everything movement is the beginning of a bold new world.

Inspire9 is a co-working business designed to bring people together, facilitating innovation, collaboration and creation. It was founded eight years ago and has doubled its membership every year since. The layout and design of the physical space is important but the role of Cultural Architect is the glue that binds the co-working community.

Mykel explained that the role of the cultural architect is as a community broker, using methods such as the rule of three (introducing new members to at least three different people already working in the space within three minutes of arriving), to connect people. This is critical to not only build on the sense of community but also to provide a sense of safety and trust. It is their job to amplify the vibe of the tribe. The job description outlined by Mykel includes previous experience as an optimist, very high levels of empathy, and as a masterful connector with and between people.

Mykel identified co-working, as an expression of collaboration, works best when it is intentional; it should be planned and facilitated by someone with the qualities of a Cultural Architect. It is about creating a safe space where people feel comfortable being themselves and are given permission to do so. He also highlighted that food is central to collaboration – 'bake it until you make it'.

Mykel suggested that if an organisation is trying to set up co-working arrangements quickly, provide clarity of intent and expectations, and anchor the idea to a common set of goals. He emphasised that co-working can help overcome differences in organisational cultures, breaking down barriers and enhancing a sense of community.

Emerging themes

The five presentations provided five different perspectives on co-working and its ability to enhance collaboration and cooperation in Australia's emergency management sector. Despite the differences in perspectives some common themes emerged:

- Intentional co-working was critical to it being successful, as was the centrality of establishing trust quickly.
- The success and utility of co-working in recovery hinged on it always being people-centred; of anchoring a shared understanding on people, and
- The physical space of where co-working occurs can dramatically alter its success and utility in the community.

The discussion further explored these themes and others in four topic areas. Each group focused on particular aspects of co-working in recovery:

- Its applicability as a method to enhance collaboration and cooperation, now and in the future
- The advantages and disadvantages of co-working in recovery
- Enablers of co-working in recovery
- Barriers to and risks of co-working in recovery

The following is a summary of group discussions.

Defining co-working in recovery

Co-working in recovery is temporary by nature, with two or more organisations sharing a unique location for a fixed period of time and working towards at least one shared goal. It is more than just sharing an office space; it is organisations sharing a space, working across organisational boundaries with the intention to achieve a shared vision. In a disaster context, this shared purpose must always include supporting the affected community recover from the disaster.

To further this initiative, participants noted more clarity is required when defining co-working in disaster recovery settings, i.e. what separates it from just working together? What is the difference between just co-locating and co-working? Finally, is co-working in recovery only possible (or desirable) in a physical space, i.e. is virtual co-working a possibility?

Relevant contexts

The contexts in which co-working can be an effective collaboration tool share some similar characteristics:

- Complex environments involving 'wicked' problems[1]
- Environments where different, flexible ways of thinking are required
- Situations where it is desirable to share expertise
- Situations where the rapid sharing of information, formal and informal, is desirable

Clearly, disaster recovery contexts in Australia meet these criteria. Participants gave examples of co-working happening in other sectors e.g. in the health sector in the Northern Territory (where it is often necessary because of limitations of resources/space).

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[1] A wicked problem is a social or cultural problem that is difficult or impossible to solve for as many as four reasons: incomplete or contradictory knowledge, the number of people and opinions involved, the large economic burden, and the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems.

Advantages of co-working in recovery

The participants agreed and reinforced the idea that effective co-working is a highly practical method of improving coordination, cooperation and collaboration during the disaster recovery phase of an emergency in Australia.

Participants noted that the biggest advantage of co-working is that it encourages strategic coordination of recovery programming, leading to better outcomes for disaster-affected communities. In addition to this, a myriad of operational advantages to co-working in recovery were identified. It can:

enable different perspectives
streamline communication
improve knowledge transfer build trust quickly
provide professional development
vision
increase diversity of skills
build capacity
strengthen coordination knowledge
improve streamline access
efficiencies
create shared vision facilitate information sharing
strengthen community engagement
establish shared purpose

Risks of co-working in recovery

During the discussions, some risks of co-working in disaster recovery contexts were noted. These have been categorised by which co-working stakeholder bears the risk: affected community, leaders, the host organisation, and the guest organisation/s[2].

For the community	For leaders of co-working organisations	For the host organisation	For the guest organisation	For both the host and the guest organisations
Displacing community meeting spaces	Distracting from independent organisational goals	Losing organisational / professional identity - Brand risk - Reputational risk	Losing independence	Contagious stress
Confidentiality, privacy and security of personal information	Challenges to established processes / norms	Resource inequity / capacity	Being pulled away from core role	Lending legitimacy to less credible organisations
Access: can seem intimidating to community	Overly complicated way of working when not needed			
	Harmony constrains innovation - Group think - Over-bonding amongst co-working staff			
	Intellectual property			
	Difficulties in exiting thus staying longer than the community needs / wants			
	How to measure success? May have to change traditional measures and reporting mechanisms			

[2] The 'community' refers to the geographic affected community; 'leaders' refer to leaders within co-working organisations; 'host' refers to the organisation that is the predominate user of the co-working space; 'guest' refers to the organisation/s that are the minority users of the co-working space (usually the organisation/s with the fewer number of staff).

Barriers to co-working in recovery

Barriers to effective co-working in disaster recovery can also fall into the same four categories: barriers in the time before co-working arrangements begin, leadership barriers, barriers in how people work, and barriers to do with the actual functioning of co-working arrangements. Participants identified barriers in the planning phase as:

- co-working not being formally recognised in emergency management, thus making it more difficult to use a different way of working.
- a lack of planning co-working arrangements before they are required, i.e. before an event.
- a lack of trust across the emergency management sector and amongst different organisations.
- a deficiency of appropriately trained staff.
- restrictive workplace health and safety policies (e.g. difficulties in re-arranging office spaces).

Participants noted that leaders that are not supportive of co-working can be significant barriers. Different organisational cultures and organisational resistance to change can further reduce the efficacy of co-working arrangements. They highlighted that leaders also have a responsibility to try to keep well-trained, competent staff during co-working arrangements—high turnover of recovery staff being another barrier.

People's attitude to collaboration and cooperation can be a significant barrier to effective co-working, e.g. considering co-working to be only co-locating—only sharing an office space.

Finally, participants identified the availability of funding and resources as a possible limitation of co-working in recovery. Different organisational systems, procedures and policies can make working together difficult; especially if there have not been any existing agreements in place to ensure their flexibility. Participants noted this is especially true for simple systems, such as printing networks and security procedures.

Enablers of co-working in recovery

Participants categorised enablers for effective co-working in recovery in to four categories:

- those that should happen prior to an event.
- those for organisational leaders.
- those concerned directly with people.
- those to do with the operations.

In addition there are obvious physical enablers to quality co-working which need to be taken into account, such as the co-working space being organised on an open-plan basis, and everyone co-working to have access to the co-working building, technology etc.

Enablers prior to an event

- the willingness of potential co-working staff and organisations to co-work with other organisations
- the permission to co-work with other organisations
- incentives for co-working arrangements in disaster recovery contexts, where possible
- leaders who understand the organisational landscape they exist in and who build relationships with potential co-working partners
- investment in training staff to be comfortable co-working with different organisations with different skills, experience and resources
- plans of co-working, containing exit strategies and staff social gatherings to build mutual trust, remembering that in a disaster recovery context, there may be benefits to slowing down timeframes to allow for this, rather than rushing in too quickly.

Enablers for organisational leaders

Leadership is central to enabling effective co-working in disaster recovery contexts. A champion, or champions, of co-working can facilitate co-working arrangements and lend strategic support. Supportive and engaged leaders can:

- Ensure shared visions and purpose across co-working organisations
- Emphasise the independence of co-working organisations
- Provide clarity of each organisation's contributions and limitations to the shared vision
- Provide clarity of expectations of the arrangements
- Ensure strong links and involvement of community leaders

Ideally, leaders and organisations wishing to co-work in recovery should do so in the early recovery phase, i.e. in the weeks following an event. This enables shared goals to be established early on, enhancing collaboration and cooperation amongst emergency management organisations.

Enablers concerning people

Participants identified that people are also key enablers to effective co-working in recovery—the right person for the right role. They highlighted that only having people with technical competencies was not enough; people with the following characteristics enable effective co-working:

- Flexibility and open-mindedness
- A sense of humour
- Openness to change; to working with differences
- Honesty and transparency

Positions such as the 'cultural architect' can play a significant role in enabling co-working arrangements as they can strengthen the glue that binds the different co-working organisations, encourage collaboration and build trust. That said, participants identified that it's important not to rely on just one or two people to encourage collaboration and keep co-working arrangements functioning. They noted the importance of supporting staff to 'come back' to the original organisation from where they have been seconded from. Finally, clarity of roles and tasks are important enablers in co-working to avoid any confusion or overlap in responsibilities.

Enablers in operations

In addition to the enabling roles of leadership and people, there are operational enablers for effective co-working in disaster recovery contexts. Regular communication within and across teams (perhaps even internal social media) can enable greater information sharing and collaboration. Flexible systems and processes, including budgeting and finance, are relevant practical enablers. Finally, each role must have the permission and support to continue working on their own organisation's tasks as well as those contributing to the shared goals.

Anne (L) and Fiona (R) Leadbeater presented their experiences of co-working from the community's perspective and highlighted that from their perspective, co-working in disaster recovery was a great success.

Summary of important considerations when co-working in recovery

Discussions among participants suggested the following considerations to form the basis of a guidance note for different stakeholders co-working in disaster recovery contexts.[3]

Community	Leaders	Host organisation	Guest organisation
Clarity of co-working location – respect existing community spaces	Strategic thinking of implications of co-working	Respect location and space of co-working (e.g. existing community uses of space)	Respecting host location and space of co-working
Plan for exit at the beginning of co-working	Know when to leave co-working / location	Plan for exit at the beginning of co-working	Plan for exit at the beginning of co-working
Ensure links with community leaders	Plan for people to return to organisation after co-working	Recognise co-workers as a new community	Plan for how you 'come home' back to your organisation
Ensure clarity of expectations	Ways to acknowledge co-working efforts	Clarity in budgets, costs	Put forward ideas for how to be acknowledged for working collaboratively
Highlight confidentiality, privacy and security of personal information issues	Awareness that staff may 'come back' with new and different ideas	Being deliberate about the way you co-work	Think about 'coming home' with new and different ideas
	Recognise key performance indicators of staff may be difficult to determine	Continual feedback loop—what's working, what's not—between host and guest	Continual feedback loop—what's working, what's not—between host and guest
	Clarity on administration, e.g. who to call when sick, who pays for what	Manage practical stuff, e.g. photocopiers, network access, site access	Establish tools to minimise risk of group think
	Ensure the right person for the right role and identifying when its not working as it should		
	Have the trust to work on behalf of your organisation (and others should do the same)		
	Establish internal trust within your own organisation		
	Identify system structures for co-working to work		

[3] The 'community' refers to the geographic affected community; 'leaders' refer to leaders within co-working organisations; 'host' refers to the organisation that is the predominate user of the co-working space; 'guest' refers to the organisation/s that are the minority users of the co-working space (usually the organisation/s with the fewer number of staff.

Attendees

Chair

Andrew Coghlan   Australian Red Cross

Presenters

Daniel Long   Blue Mountains City Council
Danielle O'Hara   Australian Red Cross
Anne Leadbeater   Leadbeater Consulting
Fiona Leadbeater   Leadbeater Consulting
Elizabeth McNaughton   New Zealand Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Steve Curnin   University of Tasmania
Mykel Dixon   Inspire9

Facilitators

Angela Sutherland   Australian Red Cross
Kate Brady   Australian Red Cross
Leisa Bourne   Australian Red Cross
Erin Fuery   Australian Red Cross

Participants

Adelaide Hills Council	David Waters
Australasian Fire Authorities Council	Jill Edwards
Anglicare	Esther Singenstreu
Australian-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee	Ben Brungs
Attorney General's Department	Wendy Kelly
Beyond Blue	Kelly Wilson
Blue Mountain City Council	Sue Johnson
Blue Mountain City Council	Daniel Long
Department of Justice	Mandy Moore
Emergency Management of Victoria	Joe Buffone
Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal	Natalie Egleton
Hands Up	Dan Jebamony
Hands Up	Sebastien Maupas
Insurance Australia Group	Anna Kilmartin
Insurance Australia Group	Lee McDougall
Insurance Australia Group	Anna Taperell
Mountains Community Resource Network	Kris Newton
NSW Ministry of Police and Emergency Services	Nadine Hulme
NSW Ministry of Police and Emergency Services	Rachel Nibbs
NSW Ministry of Police and Emergency Services	Allison Rowlands
Northern Territory Government	Robyn Green
Optus	Geoff Hoad
Queensland Department of Communities	Tammy Myles
Red Cross	Diana Bernardi
Red Cross	Rachel Flitman
Red Cross	Jessie Huard
Red Cross	Antonia Mackay
Red Cross	Jai O'Toole
Regional Development Victoria	Jess Freame
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	John Handmer
South Australia Department of Children and Social Inclusion	Ronnie Faggoter
Salvation Army	Eddy Holman
University of Melbourne	Lisa Gibbs
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Briefing Paper for 2015 Resilience Roundtable

Executive Summary

In 2009 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to adopt a whole of nation resilience-based approach to disaster management. This approach was selected with a view of strengthening society long-term. COAG acknowledged the inherent capacity in people and communities and committed itself to further strengthening and increasing capacity to withstand the effects of adversity.

COAG later released the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSfDR) in 2011. This strategy acknowledged that disaster resilience relies on society as a whole and not solely government; emergency services departments and local authorities. It recognised that a national, coordinated and cooperative effort was required to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies and disasters.

The purpose of this Briefing Note is to further explore concrete suggestions for enhancing coordinated and cooperative efforts in the emergency management sector in Australia. It will focus on co-working arrangements as one important and innovative approach to improving coordination, cooperation and collaboration in the sector.

This Briefing Note will highlight the domestic and international contexts of co-working and disaster recovery and provide an overview of the existing relevant literature. Three case studies will illustrate possible contexts in which co-working can add value as well as highlighting some of the practical advantages of such an approach. This Briefing Note will then summarise the main aims of the 2015 National Disaster Resilience Roundtable.

For the purposes of this Briefing Note and the subsequent Roundtable, co-working refers to personnel from two or more organisations sharing the same office/working space with the intention to improve resources, information sharing and understanding of each other's overarching goals. The academic and grey literature uses the following phrases almost interchangeably: co-working, co-habitation, co-location.

Domestic context of co-working

In Australia there are three themes relevant to this discussion. The first is the emphasis on coordination and cooperation in the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience of 2011. The second is the growth in organisations co-working in disaster recovery. And, in parallel, the third is the growth of the co-working industry with dozens of businesses and initiatives springing up around the country, all aiming to foster greater collaboration and cooperation amongst their clients.

In 2009 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to adopt a whole of nation resilience-based approach to disaster management. This approach was selected with a view to strengthening society long-term. COAG later released the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSfDR) in 2011. This strategy acknowledged that disaster resilience relies on society as a whole and not solely government; emergency services departments and local authorities. It recognised that a national, coordinated and cooperative effort was required to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies and disasters. Over the last decade, Australia has seen an increase in co-working in disaster contexts, such as in disaster response arrangements but increasingly in disaster recovery and longer-term environments.

In the private sector context, co-working is what happens when a group of independent workers carry out their various tasks in a shared workspace. Co-working offers collaborative workspaces where freelancers and small businesses use shared workspace facilities and connect with each other in exchange for paying a monthly membership fee. The Australian co-working industry is growing rapidly – in 2011, there were only a handful of co-working spaces however as of February 2015 there are now over 140 co-working spaces, work hubs and incubators across Australia. Examples include Inspire9 in Melbourne, The Hub in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne, and SpaceCubed in Perth.

The confluence of these three themes is well expressed in the new Victorian State Control Centre, managed by Emergency Management Victoria. The SCC is a dedicated space that facilitates multi-agency response to emergencies around the state.

It does this by bringing in dozens of different organisations to the same physical space, designed to enhance coordination and cooperation during the immediate response to an emergency. By being physical located in the same space – within metres of each other – agency representatives quickly and efficiently exchange critical information, rapidly come to an agreed understanding of shared goals and execute multi-agency response plans in multi-agency teams. As noted above, this practice has existed in the response phase for some time as well as in the early recovery phase (e.g. in recovery centres), however it is also an increasing trend in longer-term recovery settings.

International context

Internationally, the same three themes are expressing themselves similarly but are somewhat more advanced. The emphasis on coordination and collaboration has been institutionalised in the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA). The co-working industry is also more developed, with more than 9,000 co-working spaces internationally (most in the USA) and predictions of more than 1 million members of co-working spaces by 2018. An example of these themes coalescing is the recent humanitarian response and recovery efforts in the Philippines (discussed below).

UN OCHA is the part of the United Nations Secretariat and is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies. UN OCHA plays a key role in coordination in crisis situations, including assessing situations and needs; agreeing common priorities; developing common strategies to address significant issues; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring progress. UN OCHA is the custodian of the global cluster system, a way of structuring the coordination of a disaster and one based on similar principles to those of co-working, i.e. bringing people from different sectors and organisations in to one room greatly enhances the sharing of relevant information, promotes innovation to problem solve, and supports effective multi-sector action.

The international co-working industry has experienced double-digit growth since it first became a phenomenon in the early 2000s. The number of co-working spaces globally is now estimated at 9,000 with the prediction that there will be 1 million co-workers by 2018. This demand for co-working spaces has largely been driven by the increasingly contingent workforce and their desire for those individuals to connect with each other.

A good example of these themes meeting is that of the international response to Super Typhoon Haiyan, in the Philippines. Co-working was central to the humanitarian response and was valued very highly by all stakeholders, continuing in to the longer-term recovery phase. In Roxas City, dozens of humanitarian organisations were co-located in the Mayor's Office, in City Hall, along with international military forces there to provide extra support. The Canadian military identified the co-working arrangements of the response critical to the high functioning civil-military coordination and has since recommended co-working/co-location for any future contexts where such coordination and collaboration is required. As detailed in the After Action Review of United Nations' Civil-Military Coordination, the benefits of co-working include: efficient, fast and transparent sharing of information, increased coordination effectiveness, and maximisation of communication with stakeholders.

Another good example of co-working in international recovery contexts is the arrangements of the New Zealand Red Cross co-locating with the Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (see Case Study below).

Disaster recovery

Traditional concepts define post-disaster community recovery as the return to normal life as quickly and efficiently as possible. This definition, however, fails to recognise the complex non-linear process of emergency recovery that can see progress then suffer set backs over a long period of time. This definition also fails to recognise that lives may never return to a pre-disaster 'normal'.

Recovery is a process and there is no fixed point at which recovery can be said to be 'finished'. Recovery has been achieved when the individuals, families and the community repairs or develops social, political and economic processes, institutions, and relationships that enable it to function in the new context within which if finds itself. This process takes time; the length of time differs for every community. Whilst recovery continues long after response and relief operations cease, it is important that recovery activities begin at the time of impact of the emergency and that all response and relief operations incorporate recovery considerations.

The National Principles for Disaster Recovery include: understanding the context, recognising complexity, using community-led approaches, ensuring coordination of all activities, employing effective communication, and acknowledging and building capacity. The complexity of recovery, the large number of organisations involved and the long-term nature of recovery all suggest that collaboration and cooperation is central to efficient and effective recovery support. In other words, these suggest that co-working arrangements are highly suitable to disaster recovery contexts in Australia.

Existing evidence supporting co-working in disaster recovery

There has been limited research undertaken on co-working arrangements in disaster recovery setting. Curnin and Owen at the University Of Tasmania have been the main contributors to the body of evidence supporting co-working arrangements in disaster recovery settings in Australia through their work with the Bushfire Natural Hazards CRC. Along with this academic work is the growing support for co-working in disaster management in agency (or 'grey') literature, including supporting documentation at Emergency Management Victoria (EMV 2015; Fire Services Commissioner 2013). The New Zealand Red Cross has also documented some of the advantages of co-working in their 2015 Leading in Recovery resource and will be publishing more on this soon. Internationally, the Canadian Military is recommending greater use of co-working arrangements to facilitate collaboration between civilian emergency management organisations and military units.

There is a growing amount of supporting evidence for the benefits of co-working outside the sector. While still relatively new, there is currently research being undertaken internationally and domestically to further explore the benefits, challenges and practicalities of co-working, especially in the software development, creative and start-up industries. Much of the current literature focuses on the business possibilities of co-working rather than providing practical guidance for implementing co-working arrangements in the sector.

The report in this year's Resilience Roundtable will contribute to this body of evidence regarding co-working in disaster recovery.

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New Zealand Red Cross and the Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team

A 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck the Canterbury region of the South Island in New Zealand on 4 September 2010. More than five months later, on the 22 February 2011, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck the same area. The city of Christchurch and surrounding towns suffered catastrophic damage, with hundreds seriously injured and 185 fatalities. Red Cross supported the immediate response to the earthquake and has had a large recovery program in place for the last four years.

The Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT) is responsible for rebuilding the city's roads, fresh water, waste water and storm water networks. Red Cross and SCIRT realised that they were often engaging the same communities in their work and that collaboration between the two organisations would be mutually beneficial. Discussions were held in April 2014, an externally facilitated introductory workshop followed and the two organisations moved in together in September 2014.

Since the co-working arrangements began, the two organisations have completed at least four joint projects, adding value to each other's programming and saving both time and resources in doing so. Two of these projects are particularly illustrative: the Zipper Plan - aiming to matchup key points of contact throughout SCIRT and NZRC and develop a plan to 'zip up' the two organisations to provide a more collaborative approach in the future; and, Humaneers - aiming to further explore the partnership between humanitarian workers and professional engineers e.g. by reviewing the lessons learnt from how engineers and the NZRC managed the emergency response phase and how a more coordinated response might deliver a better outcome in future scenarios.

The advantages for Red Cross included:
• Increased understanding and use of information systems, including GIS data
• Increased logistics capacity
• Increased knowledge of planned engineering works and their possible impacts
• Sharing of office resources

The advantages for SCIRT included:
• Increased understanding of the human impacts of their infrastructure projects
• Increased ability to communicate effectively with affected communities
• Sharing of office resources

An illustrative quote is from Haidee Scott at SCIRT: "We spent about an hour and a half doorknocking together on Marlow and Doreen Streets in Aranui on Friday (July 24). Because Red Cross are asking questions about how people are coping on a day-to-day basis, for me it was an eye-opener, and I shed a few tears both during and after the experience. I'd love for our engineers to hear some of the things said by residents."

The mutual understanding gained from these co-working arrangements was highlighted by staff from both organisations as the most valuable aspect of the arrangements. Additionally, the immediacy of sharing information and the use of complementary skill sets were identified as valuable outcomes of co-working together.

Red Cross and the Mundaring Shire Council (Western Australia)

On 12 January 2014, fires swept through three communities in the hills east of Perth. Once the bushfires were contained, 386 hectares of bushland had been burnt, 57 homes destroyed but no fire-related fatalities. Red Cross was involved in supporting the community throughout the fires and established a recovery program in the weeks following.

Based on previous experience of the 2011 Margaret River fires, the Red Cross team asked the Mundaring Shire Council if they could locate one Red Cross staff member in the Council Offices. The Council agreed and one Red Cross staff member sat with the Community Recovery team for six months.

This had numerous advantages for Red Cross:

- Greater understanding of the Council's perspective and goals
- Greater access to staff and thus large time savings (especially travel times)
- Greater knowledge sharing and information exchanges
- Greater opportunities to influence and more chances for advocacy
- Lower overhead costs thanks to the liberal sharing of Council resources

The Shire Council also benefited from:

- More (and more timely) technical recovery support and advice
- More support for the Community Recovery Team, including support for council staff self-care
- More support for, and at, community events
- More opportunities to leverage off the Red Cross brand

These co-working arrangements were facilitated by a flexible attitude from both organisations. Both organisations recognised the opportunities born from working together, in the same office space. However, some challenges arose.

The main challenge was in balancing the needs of two separate organisations and maintaining their independence. This included marrying different ways of working and support systems. Some of these difficulties may have been pre-empted had there been existing documentation guiding the process of establishing a co-working arrangement.

Overall, the feeling was that the co-working arrangements worked very well. Both organisations worked well together, especially the Red Cross and the Community Recovery Team within the Shire Council. They felt they had a common understanding of the major issues affecting the community and how best to tackle these. In addition, the access to key decision-makers and thus the ability to influence and advocate on behalf of the community led to the creation, for the first time in that area, of the Resilience Advisory Committee, comprised exclusively of community members and designed to advise the Council on all recovery matters.

Acknowledgements

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