



Shoalhaven Community

Recovery Into Resilience Project (RRP) Action Plan

October 2020



The Shoalhaven Local Government Area **Vision**

Council's vision is for Shoalhaven to emerge from the impacts of the recent bushfires and to prepare for future disasters in a better, stronger and more resilient position than it was prior to the bushfire emergency.

How? The Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements and the NSW Independent Inquiry into the 2020 Bushfires both identified, and Council recognises, that Community-led Resilience is the foundation of our residents', ratepayers' and visitors' preparation, readiness, response and recovery from disasters and environmental challenges.

Community-led Resilience is underpinned by ownership, partnership and leadership of planning with Council, research and Emergency Response agencies. Resilience is fundamentally dependent on both access to and availability of timely and authoritative sources of information and reliable power supply.

Important Shoalhaven **Messages**

Internal

①

Council's aim is to make Shoalhaven a **resilient City**, promoting Community-led Resilience to plan, prepare, respond and recover from emergencies and disasters.

②

Council's **coordination role** to facilitate community-led Resilience is our 'business as usual'.

③

Safety is the first and foremost outcome in all Community-led Resilience planning and implementation. Second- and third-order consequences inform our assessment of the **best possible outcome** for our City and its people.

Shoalhaven City Council's **Aim** for the Recovery Into Resilience Project (RRP)

Shoalhaven Council's aim is to grow Community-led Resilience to plan, prepare, respond and recover from emergency and disaster situations.



Amanda Findley
Mayor



Stephen Dunshea
Chief Executive Officer

External

1

Shoalhaven City is a resilient Community, forged in fire and flood and is ready to welcome you – **come, explore, stay.**

2

Our Community-led Resilience planning and preparation is ready for the wellbeing and safety of all residents and visitors. Our air, water and sea are clean and safe – **come, explore, stay.**

3

We want your business; we would love your business to be here – **come, research, move in!**

What is the Shoalhaven Community Recovery Into Resilience Project (RRP)?

The Shoalhaven Community RRP responds to community expectation and needs following many environmental and social challenges including the Currowan Bushfire and COVID19. The Shoalhaven Community RRP develops and establishes partnerships with research, commercial and academic providers to grow our Community's confidence to strengthen its Resilience.

Utilising these partnerships, Council will coordinate the growth of Community-led Resilience and establish 'Information Hubs' by upgrading power and communication reliability to its amenities and facilities across Shoalhaven City's 4,600 square kilometre area.

Why is the RRP necessary?

Long-Term (10-20 years) and Short-Term (immediate future) Community-led Resilience planning enables Community visibility, ownership and certainty. When facilitated by regular interaction and engagement with Council, Community-led intent and plans build an informed, confident and focussed Community. Plans can be scaled and evolved to accommodate existing Community capacity and resources. Long- and Short-Term planning is, by necessity, co-dependent.

The primary tools of Community Resilience are reliable power supply and communications. Unreliable power and poor information flow in times of emergency and stress cause uncertainty and undermine community confidence. Dependence on the main grid for power, and land-based or copper connectivity for communications is susceptible to disruption due to winds, flood, fire, road accidents or anti-social behaviour. Disruption to both can be mitigated. Power can be harvested and stored utilising existing technology to ensure availability.

Communications utilising non-land-based transmission, such as digital satellite internet connectivity, offer more reliable alternatives/complements to wireless/land-based mast relays. Most importantly, available, inexpensive and modern technology options are easily connected to Central Emergency Operations facilities and can be monitored digitally for disruption and accommodated accordingly in times of emergency.

How will the RRP work?

The Recovery into Resilience Project (RRP) is a risk assessment and needs-based activity seeking to prioritise and address urgent and basic community expectations. Understandably, each Community's perspective and perceived needs will vary across the diverse geography of Shoalhaven's 4,600 square kilometres. Council's commitment is to complement existing work while making the most effective use of available and emerging resources – both within existing Council budgets and emergency-based funding and grants.

Three Project Activity Streams have been presented and approved by Council and its Executive Management Team. Each Stream intersects and complements the other two, is scalable and can be updated or expanded in the future.



Image:
Bushland recovery in
the Shoalhaven

Three Activity Streams of the RRP

1. Long Term Community-led Resilience

This Activity Stream involves the 10 to 20 year view of Community-led resilience embracing Community human and economic wellbeing, and the Community's vision for the local environment, emergency and disaster management. It will be a completion of previous work from Griffith University's research in the Sussex Inlet area and continuing its study through other Shoalhaven Communities. It will be conducted under Council supervision with assistance of the Federal Recovery Support Officer, currently seconded to SCC for the next nine months.

2. Short Term Community Readiness 'the crocodile closest to the canoe'

This Stream involves preparing for next season with the necessary published information and checklists designed to better inform Communities of the signals, messages and protocols to educate the Community and visitors in the event of an emergency. This will be conducted under close supervision of Council with assistance of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) and NSW Community Recovery Officer, seconded to SCC for twelve months from mid-October.

3. Highest Risk/Most Urgent Need

The most evident needs were outlined in the many statements and testimonies to the Royal Commission into Natural Disasters, NSW State Government's Independent Inquiry into the Summer 2020 Bushfires and many press and academic commentaries. The flow, or lack thereof, of authoritative, accurate and continuous information was a significant cause of community concern. The primary disruption to communications generally were the significant vulnerabilities to power and communications.

Both of these disruptions, invariably, were the main causes of poor information flow and understandable feelings of helplessness and fear in the Community, given the fires' proximity and significant presence of heavy smoke.

Using a risk-based assessment consistent with principles of AS/NZS 4360 Risk Management, Council's critical infrastructure and amenities have been identified and assessed to determine the greatest risk and, therefore, priority of need for the allocation of resources to address vulnerabilities experienced during the fire but, most of which, are not fire-specific and prevalent throughout the year's variety of emergencies (flood, wind, accident, fire).

Examples of Project Activity may include power and communication redundancy options involving renewables, existing micro-grid applications, emergency power generation and digital satellite-based internet. Direct involvement of Shoalhaven's City Lifestyles Directorate will explore lawful and accountable partnerships with providers whose innovation assisted greatly during the Currowan Fire (such as Endeavour Energy and NBN Skybridge), in concert with potential commercial providers of relevant digital, electronic and electrical devices.

Underlying Principles of the RRP

When addressing urgent and priority shortcomings, “perfection is the enemy of ‘good enough’”. Existing, affordable and fit-for-purpose options are preferred in the first instance to emerging technologies and future possibilities which may have some way to go before they become affordable and available.

Emerging technologies and future possibilities will be monitored to measure their progress as future development paths and appropriate partnerships built for achievement. If an 80% solution exists now, it will be taken and utilised

to get the Community’s Resilience and Council’s project coordination moving in a positive direction to build upon the good work of the Recovery and Get Ready successes.

Adherence to lawful and legal activity, the Local Government Act and funding arrangements is paramount to prevent any misunderstanding or improper outcomes. A close relationship with Council’s City Lifestyles Directorate will assure a positive outcome.

Look After Vulnerabilities and Threats will Largely Take Care of Themselves

All decisions are to be made utilizing AS/NZS 4360 Risk Management principles. This ensures that the primary assessment of need is truly based on Recovery into Resilience and not just a ‘nice to have’ community beautification activity. There is room for both, however, the urgency is to mitigate risk and treatment of residual risk as much as possible.

To this end, a ‘Pilot’ location will be selected to initiate, implement and prove the concept of the RRP. A successful Pilot identifies ‘bugs’ early and offers confidence for the RRP to rectify any problems before expanding into other geographic locations. The RRP Pilot has a target of no more than 60 days to prove the concept successfully.

Recovery Into Resilience **Project Team** (RRPT)

The Shoalhaven Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC) will be the Recovery into Resilience Project Coordinator (RePCO) and Chair. RePCO will interact and connect as necessary with:

- Council
- Existing/potential partners
- Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC)
- State / Federal Government Agencies

to advance the Project and keep Council informed through the Mayor and Council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The RRPT will meet weekly and comprise the following membership:

1. Recovery into Resilience Project Coordinator and Chair (RePCO)

2. Long Term Community-led Resilience Action Team (LTCO)

- Federal Recovery Support Officer (FRSO)

3. Community Readiness Action Team Lead (ComReadiness)

- NSW Community Recovery Officer (NSWCRO)
- Local Emergency Management Officer (LEMO)

4. Comms and Power Coordination Team Lead (CoPCO)

- Council Power SME
- Council IT/Comms SME

A standing invitation exists for the RRPT Governance Lead (Interim Director City Lifestyles) to attend any or all meetings. Secretarial/administrative support minuting meetings and progress will be in attendance. The Team will invite, as necessary, any specialist advice to attend meetings as appropriate.

RRPT Governance and Role

The RRPT shall:

- Report to CEO SCC
- Be chaired by the Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC)
- RRPT members will interact and connect with relevant internal/external agencies to achieve the aims of their respective Streams
- Facilitate/Inform/Conduct communication to Council (through Mayor and CEO), Shoalhaven Community and to State/Federal Government
- Meet weekly or as required as circumstances demand

RRPT Work

Except for the foundation of priority allocation in accordance with Risk Management principles, the approach of the RRPT is not conservative or over-cautious. The RRPT and its members have the authority to get things done. The respective 'to do' lists of each Stream are not included in the published form of this Recovery into Resilience Action Plan. The 'to do' lists belong to each Stream Lead and are the responsibility of each Lead to update, keep current and, by design, include Community interaction.

Equally, the RRP does not seek to discourage or deter individual Communities from pursuing alternative funding solutions to their respective identified Community-led Resilience goals. For this reason, RRPT work is dynamic and will change frequently, eg, when alternative sources of funding at the Community level are realised, thereby altering the priority order of tasks to be completed.




Image:
Budgong - School Creek Bridge
reopening ceremony

Communication and Engagement

Community input is the best way to inform Council and is the foundation of the RRPT information flow. Accurate and authoritative information is essential to the Project's success.

The best sources to rely upon are:

- Shoalhaven City Council website:
shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/recoveryintoresilience
- Service NSW and NSW Government agency information (accessible through SCC website)
- Regular community contact with Councillors, Council, Community Consultative Bodies (CCB's), Shoalhaven Bushfire Health and Wellbeing Network
- Media engagement through local radio, newspapers
- Shoalhaven City Council Facebook page

Communication Weekly Rhythm

Tuesdays

- Weekly RRPT meeting

Wednesdays

- Mayor media engagements through local radio (2ST, ABC Illawarra 97.3, and others when invited)

Thursdays

- SCC Council e-newsletter
- List successes
- Prepare important advice/messages for publication
- Schedule Community meetings for subsequent weeks' Councillor Briefings

The SCC Recovery into Resilience webpage and Shoalhaven City Council Facebook page are updated as soon as information is released at any time during any week. Council will be updated monthly at its Ordinary Council Meeting.

What will **Success** Look Like?

Success for Recovery into Resilience Project looks like:

- Established, working and frequently-tested Community Resilience solutions
- Regular and frequent interactions between Council, it's partners and with Shoalhaven's numerous Communities which produce tangible outcomes as intended by the Community-led Resilience long and short term aims
- Successful upgrade of Shoalhaven City's facilities and amenities into Information Hubs with power and communication surety, including connectivity to the Emergency Operations Centre
- Community ownership of outcomes achieved and identified people, within each, capable and willing to be their Community's monitor/s of the Information Hubs

Councillors Consultative Group

The Councillors Consultative Group (CCG) work from the Currowan Bushfire Recovery continues within the community, providing assistance and support. The CCG remains committed to a stronger, better and more resilient Shoalhaven.

WARD 1



Annette Aldrick
Councillor



Nina Digiglio
Councillor



Andrew Guile
Councillor



John Wells
Councillor

WARD 2



Joanna Gash
Councillor



John Levett
Councillor



Mitchell Pakes
Councillor



Greg Watson
Deputy Mayor

WARD 3



Kaye Gartner
Councillor



Mark Kitchener
Councillor



Bob Proudfoot
Councillor



Patricia White
Assistant Deputy Mayor



Image:
Murrumbidgee regrowth

Shoalhaven
City Council



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