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Good afternoon. Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk to you this afternoon about the importance of recovery.

I'm going to talk generally about this often underestimated "R". Others will discuss the Gisborne earthquake in more detail.

The New Zealand Government has adopted the "4Rs" emergency response approach to risk management: reduction, Readiness, response, and Recovery.

I want to stress the holistic nature of recovery and put it in context with considerations:

- » Recovery is one of the critical R's;
- » Recovery is seen in the context of its four elements (Figure 1);
- » Recovery occurs when the four elements overlap and coincide;
- » Recovery requires planning and takes a long time;
- » Recovery is about the wellbeing of people;
- » Recovery creates opportunity; and,
- » Recovery needs leadership.

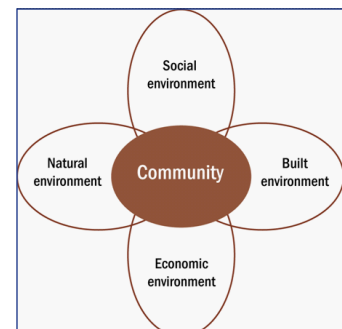


Figure 1: Cloverleaf Showing the Four Elements of Recovery

1 Description of Recovery

In my view recovery flows from the concept of '*resilient New Zealand - communities understanding and managing the hazards*'. Recovery is about the long-term well-being of individuals and communities affected by an emergency. It is about body and mind. It is about people recovering from the direct effects and the indirect consequences of emergencies. It is also about the ability of individuals and communities to develop such well-being in a post-event future. It must recognise that some have greater vulnerability than others and will need more help. Recovery stems from considering how one's communities are affected and how to "work around" these towards a position of long to well-being, and resilience. It benefits from planning. It must have leadership.

If you want technical details look in the following references:

- » Recovery Planning: Information for CDEM Groups (MCDEM 2004);
- » Focus on Recovery: a Holistic Framework for Recovery in New Zealand (MCDEM 2005); and,
- » Recovery Management: Directors Guidelines for CDEM Groups (MCDEM 2005).

Recovery is often over-looked until it is needed. In my view it is actually one of the two most important Rs (if there is such a thing!).

I was recently in Australia at a workshop addressing the Victorian bushfires and it was interesting to me that that some emergency management practitioners are starting to look at the four R's in this way – with the emphasis on the “size” of the R (capitals or lower case) giving some indication as to what individuals and the wider community can influence:

- » **reduction is lower case** - because political and economic factors often dominate. For example, developers and politicians often determine where people are “allowed” to live sometimes with limited individual input.
- » **Readiness is capitals** - because individuals can directly influence this often through simple and inexpensive ways of addressing readiness – and it makes a big difference. Most of us can look after our families and neighbours for at least a few days.
- » **response is lower case** - not because it isn't important: it is and we will always need it - but because in a large emergency (or heaven forbid a catastrophe), the event overwhelms even the best responders. There simply aren't enough resources to be brought in.
- » **Recovery is capitals** - because both people and each of the preceding “Rs” influence it. It is to a large extent a consequence of our own making.

Recovery requires each of the 4 Rs in the Cloverleaf. I believe the Cloverleaf needs to be redesigned a bit, and would like to suggest that effective and long-term recovery only comes when each of the four elements (social, built, economic and environment) overlaps. In other words while each element is critical none of the bits can of themselves achieve resilient recovery. They are not cumulative, and recovery requires that each is present. So in effect, recovery is more difficult to achieve than were it to be a cumulative model.

Recovery requires Leadership and coordination - of “community of interest” participation through planned processes. It involves people in the affected community from individuals, to central government, and sometimes to international. Vision is important.

Recovery is the “longest R” - it starts with planning before the event and is the last to finish. From both community and governments aspects, this planning needs to happen well before the event and continues until community well-being is achieved.

Recovery creates opportunities - and is not just about restoring or rehabilitating communities to their pre-event situation. It is about creating a new and better life in a changed environment from the aftermath of a disaster and a major emergency, such as the Victorian bushfires. The same will occur in New Zealand after a major emergency such a tsunami, earthquake, or volcanic outbreak (or for that matter a serious pandemic). Communities will be crafting their lives in a new environment. Many things will have changed

after such a significant event. There will be psychological needs and physical change in the community, noting that there may be people who want to “build back better”. Recovery aims to make the best for those affected. Not everything will be returned pre-event circumstances. Hopefully, the well-being of individuals and communities will eventually be “better” but not everyone will see it that way at the time and it will not be possible to alleviate the short term sufferings of all. But the focus must be on the future.

2 Conclusions

- » Recovery is about people - it can be short, medium and long;
- » Recovery requires an understanding of the community the symptoms, the networks and the dependencies;
- » Recovery occurs when all aspects of community well-being (body and mind) are addressed after an emergency;
- » Recovery needs to be planned well before an event;
- » Recovery needs to be led and coordinated from the time an event occurs;
- » Recovery needs adaptive leadership and management;
- » Recovery is a vital R - but often overlooked (until an event occurs);
- » Recovery will take a long time - particularly after a major event; and,
- » Recovery will create opportunities.

In other words, recovery is an holistic concept.

Use the references and these notes, but stay people focused. Who knows when recovery will be needed, where, and how much. Disasters and catastrophes do occur and are a way of life, but society will move on. We are the product of that fact; some may call it adaptive management. Every one of us has forebears who have come through some form of disaster and emergency. Recovery is a fact of life but depending on how we approach it we can either make it better or worse. It is holistic.

Let’s now hear about some of the Gisborne learnings so our recovery experiences will be better.

Thank you very much.