

**The Development of Community
Capacity as Applying to Disaster
Management Capability**

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Report

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Disclaimer

This report contains the findings of a research project conducted by Philip Buckle, Graham Marsh and Sydney Smale. As such the conclusions drawn and recommendations offered reflect only their assessment following the conclusion of their research and do not, necessarily, reflect the views of the agencies and institutions with which they are associated.

It is their hope that their findings and recommendations will, sooner rather than later, be superseded by further research, improved understanding and better practice.

This report is offered as a further step in the continuum of improvement and development demonstrated by the emergency management community in Australia and elsewhere in recent years.

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1. OVERVIEW

Disaster management is presaged on the assumption that communities will be actively involved in the processes of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. This assumption or principle is being given increased emphasis as the range and intensity of hazards expands in the face of technological development, climate change, terrorism and increased understanding of social, industrial and technological generators of risk.

However, risk and disaster management agencies are still too readily firmly committed to an approach to dealing with communities and local people that is hierarchical, strongly directional and assumes a limited suite of hazards, risks and copings strategies. This is despite a strong policy and programme commitment from Government and agencies. From Government in terms of endorsement of agency programmes, plans and arrangements. From agencies in terms of the development and implementation of programmes and services. Emergency Management Australia's principles endorse the concept of a "prepared community". In Victoria the Emergency Management Manual Victoria clearly identifies community as a key element in successful emergency management.

The principle underpinning all aspects of community recovery is centred on the need to enable the communities to take charge of their own recovery as quickly as possible.

The practice of risk assessment, rapidly gaining ground, also gives weight to community involvement through activities designed to create structures which will help to identify, assess and evaluate risks and then to participate in risk reduction and risk management activities.

With most if not all disaster planning and management arrangements whether at the State level, Regional or Municipal levels, emphasis on control, as a top down process is given much greater weight than more participative and devolved styles which engage and interact with the community (that is, those people most exposed to the risk). Whereas our research in Australia and also in England indicates firstly that local appreciation of hazards and disaster potential is put into a broader spectrum of risks confronting day to day life. And, secondly, that community preparedness and recovery is more than physical restoration it is about enabling, enhancement, community building in the broadest terms and for that to occur the local residents, or if you prefer, the 'community' must be involved at every level of decision making.

There is a degree of inevitability given that for most, if not all disaster manuals, whether it is at the State level, Regional or Municipal, the structure of the manuals is one of control, a top down process, a study in risk management rather than community recovery. The risk is managed, the fires are put out, the bridges and roads are rebuilt, the grants are made what else is necessary?

Where agencies do not understand either the breadth of risks or the ways in which people rank risks, their options for strategy development is reduced and limited to tradition, technical (based on the Disaster Plan) approaches to management.

Sometimes this is counter-productive, for it can lead to risk management strategies that are not only ineffective but also inappropriate.

Our research, both for this report and our previous projects auspiced by Emergency Management Australia, indicates that community level management activities have to be based upon community appreciation, understanding and acceptance along with the evaluating of risks and of management options. Locally, people and communities undertake, often implicitly, their own risk assessments and put in place their own management options. These in turn are based on locally held values and norms, local capacities and local priorities and through often long established networks. These networks may or may not work in conjunction with government and other agencies or even may not be known to them. They also may not work with each other and in fact may be in conflict with each other. A major problem for emergency managers and the like occurs when such networks do not even exist and residents live virtually isolated from one another. Disaster management agencies then, need to gain a better understanding of local assessment processes, and local priorities if they are to align, and to make more effective, their policies and programmes with those valued and held to be relevant by the very people at risk.

New constituencies and more informed if not new leaders in disaster management are required to guide this process and to ensure that, locally, regionally and nationally, communities and governments can respond to a changing risk and hazard landscape.

The concepts of community, capacity building (CCB) and social capital have been taken up internationally and locally. The United Nations, The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as well as Non Government Organisations (NGOs) such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies acknowledge the power, value and necessity of local participation in disaster management. At the local level, local authorities have placed emphasis on community development and capacity building programs for many years. All of these programs would have assisted in the development of a more resilient population. For example in the area of health, councils have promoted capacity building in health and well-being programs, working across departments and government sectors including schools, health and neighbourhood centres working with residents to promote a healthier society. These programs may not be emergency management specific but they do hopefully lead to a fitter healthier and more knowledgeable resident who is more likely to cope if disaster strikes. Much depends on how programs and policies are received and acted upon and therein lies the dilemma. The programs are only as good as the participants allow them to be.

Social Capital – popularised by Putnam a few years ago – has gained currency as a term which has use in describing social and other interactions between neighbours, within neighbourhoods and locales and even across broader communities. Capacity, generally the ability to access skills, knowledge and resources and to apply them effectively is a less well understood concept but appears to have value as a broad indicator of community, agency and government ability to respond to risks and disasters.¹

See appendix 2 for descriptions of Social Capital and for material from the State Government of Victoria on Community Capacity Building.

Capacity as it relates to disaster management is an attractive concept as it gives focus to efforts to build resilience and to support mitigation, rather than to address post-impact losses. The aims are to build on present strengths and reduce deficiencies. However, even within the field of disaster management it is not well defined. It is therefore an opportunity to link more established capacity development programmes and approaches, which are not related to disaster management, with efforts to reduce risk, hazards and loss potential.

The Concept of Community in relation to Community Building and Engagement.

During our initial discussions about the aims of this research we have heard questions as to whether or not one should be using the term 'community' and also questions relating to the community building processes now underway in Victoria in particular but also in other States of Australia and overseas. The concept of Social Capital is also questioned and we have taken note of these criticisms but still see the areas of social capital related to trust between individuals and networks and with these and authorities as being worth studying. We realise that government emphasis on social capital may be a way of doing things on the cheap and avoiding their responsibilities, which is just one of the criticisms. We also realise that trust for example is difficult to quantify. However, it is our belief that if resilience to disaster is to be present and at its optimum; if recovery is to occur successfully, then networks and trust need to be in place. It is also argued the Capacity Building is simply Community Development under another title and there is no doubt truth in this and many CCB programs are run by community development officers. In the end, whether 'capacity building' or 'development', the aims of such programs are to build up a more aware, supported, responsible, connected and trusting 'community'.

It is perhaps worthwhile at this stage to indicate a paradox. While much disaster management has a strongly hierarchical nature and many risk management options are based on technical approaches, the rural fires services and state emergency services in Australia have a strong volunteer component. These volunteers are drawn from local communities and derive their professional ethos from values which emphasise mutual support, local responsibility and self-reliance. Trust must also be present if these volunteers are to operate affectively.

Community as a local geographic community in particular is said to only exist as a myth. However, myth or not, community exists in the rhetoric and 'mind' of the citizens, the governors and the NGOs. Whether precisely defined, these terms and concepts are behind local and regional programmes on which, much money, time and effort is being spent to achieve sustainable and more vibrant 'communities'. It is therefore in the interests of those of us involved in risk management and the study of vulnerability and resilience to work with those governments, agencies and other bodies who are developing community building programs. This extends also to include the consultation and implementation processes of 'Best Value' as implemented for example within municipal and local boundaries in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and Victoria. If one can build a trusting relationship with communities and develop the capacities of communities with the development of 'social capital' there could be the consequential building of trust between residents. From this, the result will be that residents would be more resilient and thus less vulnerable to a disaster (see our later case studies).

These issues are critical because trust, mutual relationships, networks, available resources, skills and knowledge are each vital elements of prepared and safe communities. The evidence and experience clearly show that communities with shared values and a shared vision, with appropriate skills and adequate knowledge and access to necessary resources including leadership, which exist along with a willingness to commit their resources to programs, are better able to manage preparedness activities, to reduce risks, to contribute to support activities and to manage recovery than communities who do not have these resources or a willingness to commit them if/when they do.

Linking this to our previous research for Emergency Management Australia, we can see that the existence and availability of skills, knowledge and expertise may allow local people to transcend day to day issues and to look across a wider risk landscape.

For this research it is important to understand the categories of engagement that frequently occur across localities and who the 'players' are at this level. (See Figure 1).

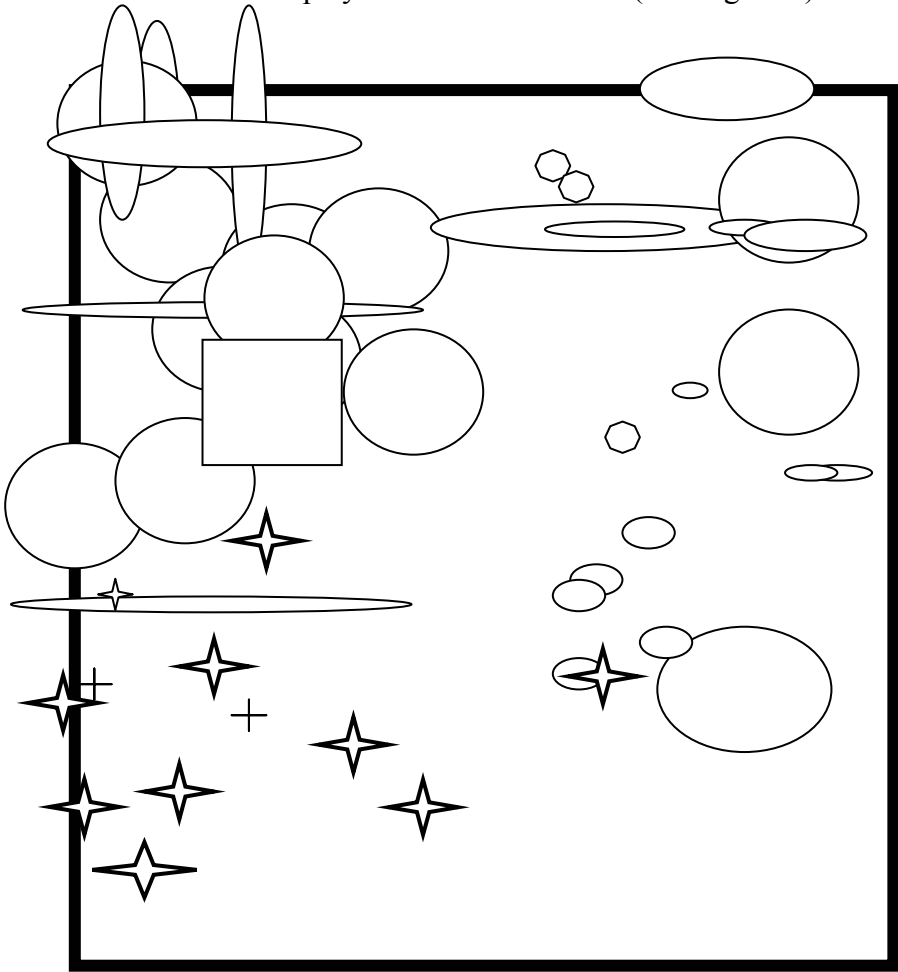


Figure 1

Community: This figure depicts in a simplified form some of the relationships that may exist within a community represented as a geographic area (such as a municipality). The rectangle is the geographic boundary. Circles represent groups of people, and overlaps indicate interests and often membership shared with other groups. These members of networks are the ones most likely to be involved in ongoing discussions with the authorities. Where circles (groups) extend beyond the rectangle this indicates that these groups share characteristics with groups from outside the geographic area. Narrow ovals indicate sectional and specific interests in the community. Stars are individuals or families who may have little or no contact with other groups in the community. Where the stars and circles or crosses overlap, for example with the very young and the frail

aged who both require specialist health services contact is made. Crosses represent caring groups and professionals and pentagons represent newly arrived groups developing linkages in the community.

First, there is the involvement of the social, political and economic interest groups. These generally consist of members of, for example, government and community agencies, voluntary associations, NGOs, churches, political parties. They have leaders who are empowered and co-opted and consulted by the broader community. As members of these groups and the other networks they are kept informed and are often members of the decision-making bodies. They are often volunteers and as such are frequently members of more than one of the local organisations. In small communities few citizens are involved and in larger communities the proportion of people who constitute these elites is small. It is usually from these networks that local 'community safety' committees and other such bodies are drawn.

Second, and this would appear to be increasing, many citizens are less willing to commit themselves on a long term basis so they commit themselves to 'one off' events or to the 'short term'. These people are usually more passive participants and are only occasionally consulted. They vote and sign petitions and indicate some awareness of local and more widespread affairs. They will come out on NIMBY (not in my back yard) issues.

The third category contains the bulk of the population. They rarely participate, rarely are consulted and are apparently content with this inactive role. Disinterest reigns and there is little or no search for information or the reading of same when it is delivered to their door. With contact with their political representatives, the governors, there is little engagement though there is more contact with the service providers. However, this does not mean that in the event of an emergency these people will be inactive or that they will not have local networks on which to build. But, nor does it mean that they have the desire to band together with others who they may or may not 'get along' with or that they will have adequate knowledge along with the necessary skills which would bring empowerment to their situation.

At the fourth level there exists those who are probably the most vulnerable due to their circumstances. These people may be newly arrived non-English speaking immigrants. Others may have physical or psychological 'problems'; have limited decision making capacity; or be at a stage in their life cycle when any participation or in depth community engagement is impossible. For this latter category, there is no participation and 'carers' and others often speak on their behalf.

With community building then, there is a need for better and more informed data concerning the nature and culture of the communities of interest and of the individuals that reside within the geographical boundaries of the municipality if the governors are to reach beyond category one for more inclusiveness in the approaches adopted. The residents also need access to such information so that they are able to make informed decisions whilst having a greater understanding of their locality.

In Putnam's (Bowling Alone 2000) terms, bonding social capital should be encouraged in the field of community engagement but not to the exclusion of the 'non-bonded' citizens. Good governance should involve not only a top down approach but encompass bottom up and bottom across as well. Empowerment hopefully is the result and with that a more

resilient ‘community’ able to deal with their risks and able to draw on their local resources, their social capital, in times of stress.

The Social Construction of Risk

Building on this need then for empowerment and community capacity building, and drawing on the work of Deborah Lupton, we live in a ‘risk society’ where we face a wide variety of risks but we too often fail to realise their significance and how much at risk we often are. Capacity building should operate alongside the development of a realistic understanding of the risks that we actually face. What we choose to focus on is what we’re aware of and worried about. Too often we remain blind to the more damaging risks e.g. tractor accidents and dust versus fire and flood in the bush and work and car related risks versus terrorism in the city. More Australians each year die from bee stings and car accidents yet we Australians along with overseas visitors are worried about sharks, spiders, crocodiles and snakes whilst taking these other normal, everyday events for granted. This was brought home to us when a visitor from Ireland, who had experienced it, said the I.R.A. bombing in Omagh was virtually taken for granted whereas the fear of the unknown (the snakes, spiders and sharks) in Australia was something her family was worried about on her behalf.

Lupton (p21) states that *risks that are seen to be rare but memorable tend to be overestimated while those that are considered to be common and less serious are underestimated. Risks that are perceived as familiar or voluntary are considered more acceptable and less likely to happen than those that are perceived to be new or imposed. People tend to be risk averse when faced with gains and risk seeking when faced with losses.*

We take reasoned action and attempt at mitigation according to our experiences, knowledge, and background e.g. our class, ethnicity, education, gender, belief system, and culture generally. We are also influenced and affected by demographic variables, community stability (or lack of same), the information gathered from the media, other people’s actions and by leadership (or lack of same). Social pressure will also impact on our views and responses to risk. Responses and attitudes to risk also vary over time and our actions are usually consistent with our belief systems.

Lupton (p25) again: *(some research would indicate that) members of social groups that are less powerful tend to be more concerned about risks than members of powerful social groups. Women compared with men, and non-whites compared with whites tend in quantitative surveys to rate their concern about specific risks more highly.*

Lupton (p25), when summarising where the various theorists’ differing views on risk come together noted that: *they see risk as having become a central cultural and political concept by which individuals, social groups and institutions are organised, monitored and regulated. The following insights are central to all three major perspectives: risk has become an increasingly pervasive concept of human existence in western societies; risk is a central aspect of human subjectivity; risk is seen as something that can be managed through human intervention; and risk is associated with notions of choice, responsibility and blame.*

How agencies respond to our needs will also often depend on certain variables such as class or gender. For example you are often viewed as being vulnerable if you are female or elderly or disabled or very young or come from a minority ethnic background. The “women and

children first” concept. Whereas we may all be at risk, depending on the circumstances e.g. the world trade center (where perhaps the blind were better off than many ‘abled’ persons but only a very few in wheel chairs escaped unassisted); the explosion at the petrochemical plant on Coode Island in Melbourne where the vagaries of the wind and proximity to the blast may be the deciding factors as to who exactly is at risk; cyclones, e.g. in Cairns, where usually it’s the poorer residents who are most at risk whereas the wealthy Cairns residents are more likely to suffer in a landslip; fire where again the weak for whatever reason may be vulnerable but all residents and fire-fighters as well may be at risk as was the case in Victorian fires in Ferny Creek (3 dead) and Lynton Country Fire Authority (CFA) 5 deaths).

There is also a difference in the social construction of risk, often based on where you live. If you live in Doncaster, a middle class suburb of Melbourne and you experience a police siege in your court, you may receive counselling as agencies might say you have a need in the recovery processes whereas it’s doubtful that residents would receive this assistance in inner city St. Kilda where outsiders, wrongly, expect such things to be a normal occurrence due to the perception by these outsiders that it is a ‘seedy’ suburb where crime, prostitution and drugs are ever present. Hazardous materials are rarely stored in the wealthy, leafy suburbs and the same with airports, tips and dumps which are destined to be placed in the working class and industrial suburbs. In the cities we are less responsible for dealing with our risks than are those living in the bush. E.g. with the city resident’s dependency on the fully professional Metropolitan Fire Brigade (M.F.B.) rather than on the volunteer C.F.A.

For social constructionists, (Lupton p30) *a ‘hazard’ or ‘danger’ itself is also seen as socially constructed, coming into social existence when human actors recognize and label it as such (fox 1999). Judgements about risk, therefore, are not simply cultural interpretations of objective dangers or hazards. What is deemed a ‘danger’ or ‘hazard’ in one historical or cultural context may not be so identified in another, and this has implications for how knowledge and understandings about risks are developed...Hilgartner (1992): to become risk objects, he claims, objects must first become constructed as ‘objects’, and then as ‘risky’, or identified as the cause of harm or danger. The process of defining harm or danger is a third construction in this linkage.*

Lupton (p32) *it is rarely lay people who play a major role in the construction of risk objects at the level of public debates. Rather, expert knowledges – particularly those emerging from science, medicine, the ‘psy’ disciplines (psychology, psychiatry, counselling), social work, the law and economics – embedded within organizational contexts and often mediated through the mass media, are central to the construction and publicizing of risk.*

Unless there is ownership by the individuals of the actual risks faced by them, along with a true understanding of what can happen to them, then risk management and mitigation along with ‘recovery’ is going to be a difficult process. This research then is an attempt to discover what the benefits are for a locality – ‘community’ for want of a better term – where there is a strong degree of ‘social capital’ present; where the networks are strong, knowledgeable and interlinked with other networks and agencies; where local leadership is recruited, trained and maintained. What are the disbenefits when all of this is not present? Are people enabled to be more resilient and less vulnerable than in the event of a disaster or crisis because they are strong beforehand?

2. INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT.

Municipal capability to carry out a range of disaster management functions is frequently assumed or taken for granted by disaster management agencies. Experience in disaster operations and risk management planning, as well as theory of community and organisational behaviour, suggests that this uncritical judgement may not be justified.

It is clear that the existence of a plan, however closely it conforms to existing protocols, standards and templates, is no guarantee, or even a reliable indicator, of municipal capacity or of municipal commitment. Further, municipal capacity and willingness to engage in public safety matters vary widely across time and across the country.

This often naïve approach to assessing municipal and local capacity appears, as a hypothesis, to be generating an unwarranted reliance on municipal skills, expertise and resources as well as on local community commitment. The assumptions that these exist and that where they exist that they are relevant and will be deployed in the event of a disaster are unproved. Indeed, there are no standards, methods or criteria by which to assess local capacity.

However, this research, which builds on our previous research on vulnerability and resilience, and which should be considered as a whole, aims to develop a method of assessing municipal capacity and to suggest appropriate meta-standards for assessing local community and municipal commitment, engagement and capability to constructively support all aspects of risk and disaster management.

Additional focus will be given to addressing this research question by a consideration of the roles played by volunteers and volunteerism across the spectrum of agencies from community groups, response and control agencies to support and recovery groups.

Aims.

- Assess the principal drivers and components of local and municipality Capacity.
- Develop Meta Standards for capacity and commitment
- Develop methods, techniques and tools to assess capacity
- Develop protocols and processes for assessing plans and Operational protocols
- To work in conjunction with agency and municipal staff, volunteers, community representatives and identified specialists to assess the tools and standards developed as part of this project.

Methodology

Firstly, we developed a list of local governments and other agencies that we intended to work with through focus groups and interviews with key individuals. These councils and agencies were drawn from inner and outer city Melbourne and country and regional Victoria. (See case studies choices below). We were able use the fact that Philip Buckle was in England during the period of this research to conduct two of the case studies in that country. This allowed a degree of comparative assessment and of triangulation. Philip Buckle and Graham Marsh were also able to gather material relevant to this research from U.K sources.

We then met and held preliminary discussions with three of the agencies/groups who we intended to work with at the latter stages. The aims and questions were discussed with them and then refined accordingly.

Along with the more formal research methods, we were able to visit a variety of localities/regions and informal discussions were held with shopkeepers and other business people and observation of affected areas also took place. During the fires, Syd Smale was able to observe and discuss issues in his role as the co-ordinator of the Victorian Council of Churches' (V.C.C.) Outreach Disaster Visitation Program during the period of the fires.

The previous research of the three researchers conducted with funding from Emergency Management Australia and the Victorian government Department of Human Services was also utilised in this study.

The questions, based on the aims outlined earlier were designed to elicit and describe local perception to key issues. We recognise that our use of the term "local" at this time may imply some circularity, may presuppose some answers or solutions. However, it is often in the nature of social science research to start from some more or less assumed concepts and to test these as the research progresses; methodology and conclusions may be revised accordingly.

These questions were also intended to draw out the meanings of key terms, to examine whether key terms have commonly agreed meanings, and to explore the nature, strength and frequency of interactions with communities (however defined). In the field, not all of these questions were asked of all of the respondents but they were used more as guidelines for the discussions so as to maintain the flow of the interviews.

Summary of the activities

FIRST STAGE

1. To provide us with a deeper understanding of the issues and other research in the fields covered by our research, a survey of the literature available within Australia and overseas on the relevant topics was conducted. As the aim of this survey was more to inform us, much of it has not been incorporated into this Report. The search covered not only articles and books but also reports and minutes of meetings. An extensive search was conducted of the books available within the British Library covering the fields related to the topics of this research such as 'community capacity building', 'social capital', 'participation and local government', risk and disaster management'.

2. Focussed and unstructured interviews were conducted with key personnel operating within the relevant agencies and in the local communities, As well various individuals and organisations were contacted at the very beginning for ideas as to the direction the research should take. Consequent to this, refinements were made to the project's brief, for example:

- An invitation to address the annual workshop for the Coordinators of the Victorian Council of Churches, Disaster Ministry Program held in October provided the opportunity to share the substance and intent of this research project and note was taken of their suggestions.

- Members of the Victorian Local Government Authority's Community Development working party were also sounded out at the start of the project for ideas on directions to be taken.
- Individuals from the Victorian Departments of Justice and Human Services were consulted.

Half way through the project the storms in England and the outbreak of fires in the North East of Victoria and East Gippsland also in that State provided the opportunity to test out a number of our hypotheses regarding the capacity of municipalities to provide the necessary leadership and response to the threat and damage as a result of the fires and to highlight a defacto rather than dejure development. Over the past year there seems to have been a shift in focus from the Regional DHS providing the leadership in response and recovery arrangements to municipalities with the regional offices providing resources, advice and where necessary, leadership support (from a distance). Whether this is a strength but also a weakness will need to be evaluated over time. This shift in emphasis is consistent with the philosophy that underpins recovery arrangements, i.e., "to enable the community to manage its own recovery" (State Disaster Plan).

SECOND STAGE: CHOICE OF AND INTERVIEWS WITH FOCUS GROUPS AND KEY INDIVIDUALS.

The questions (see appendices) were directed firstly to service providers: including Response and Recovery agencies, various Victorian state government and local council officers involved in community services and development activities. Secondly, focus was on local community groups and individuals who included one Mayor and in some cases individuals who had been recently affected by a disaster and other individuals who were involved in NGO's. All of the agencies contacted have a defined and vital role to play in disaster management.

Along with recovery agencies' representatives such as those of the Victorian Council of Churches we met with key individuals who were state and regional government representatives (in the La Trobe Valley, Wodonga, Wangaratta and the South East of Victoria), councillors and council staff. Research was concentrated in the following localities and fields: Ballarat (Wendouree West where there was a Neighbourhood Renewal project, see appendix 3). Also visited were the Southern Grampians (including a focus group composed of local farmers), Alpine and Indigo Shires. The cities of Whittlesea; and Maribyrnong (Community Capacity Building (C.C B) project); the Victorian Local Governance Association's (V.L.G.A.) community building working group and various representatives of the C.F.A.; V.C.C and Emergency Managers. In the United Kingdom we met with council representatives including the mayor from Lewisham and various residents and agencies in Leonard Stanley, a village in Gloucestershire badly affected by a windstorm in October 2002.

In the case of the fires in the North East of Victoria, which occurred during the period of this research, we were able to evaluate, though somewhat superficially given the time restraints, what the impact of any early capacity building programs may have been on the various affected localities' coping strategies and whether there was a high degree of social capital

present prior to the fires². Because Philip Buckle was working in, and Graham Marsh was visiting, the United Kingdom we extended the research to be more comparative. As with the NE of Victoria, the opportunity to conduct further research was present in Leonard Stanley in the United Kingdom following severe storm damage to the area.

² For a greater examination of the impact of these fires and the community reaction see The Esplin Report.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Capacity Building

What became obvious to us during this research was that capacity building was occurring across all of the regions and local authorities whether or not a formal Community Capacity Building (CCB) program was in place. Our aim was not to critically analyse Social Capital (SC) or CCB as such but to see how these concepts were being applied in the chosen localities and how effective was the implementation of CCB. What was obvious was that while these terms were understood they were often being practiced under other names such as community development; neighbourhood renewal; community or public health planning and the statement was often made that such things were already happening and there was no need for anything formal or “we know what informal and formal networks exist and we can tap in to them when needed.” While this latter comment came from a council officer, one regional worker contradicted her and stated that they wanted “to build up capacity at a local level. It’s been seen as a need for some time. Councils haven’t given it much attention. It varies with the councils...Priority is to build up emergency response capabilities – to be pro-active.”

Emphasising what we’ve written earlier in this report, what should be said from the outset, is that there are many residents currently or often excluded from CCB and the consultation processes which are generally in place. We want to state here that this does not mean that blame should be placed on individuals or any particular authority. Though officers did warn that too often it’s those who speak the loudest or represent powerful vested interests who are more likely to receive the most attention while the less dominant people miss out. While groups and individuals may be excluded, this does not mean that they are lacking in Social Capital as trust was often to be seen to exist at quite high levels within various networks though the trust may not extend outwards to authorities or even to others in their localities. Some of these people were missed in the process others excluded themselves and apathy reigns supreme amongst many residents. What is obvious from the feedback from our respondents is that it is rarely useful to have a single vision or rigid plan when it comes to developing the capacity of residents to cope in any circumstance or in this research with a crisis/emergency. It is also too easy to blame the non-participant for not becoming involved. However, there was a positive trend evident that authorities were endeavouring to build up a two-way communication process and to empower residents more through incorporating them in to the decision making processes.

Certain terms, policy directions and needs kept re-occurring throughout our interviews and observations if a community’s capacity to cope generally and with a crisis in particular was to be developed and maintained. While these will be elaborated on after these dot points the terms, policy directions and needs were in summary:³

- the place of empowerment where it was not simply a ‘Top down’ nor even a ‘bottom up’ process but a partnership;
- Leadership and the need for building it up, particularly in the localities where there has been a decline in leadership and where this decline can be expected to continue with so many current and potential leaders moving out, ageing or dying;

³ These elaborations can only be summaries of our findings, due to the confines of such a Report and, in some cases, to confidentiality.

- The need for a centre where residents, networks, leaders could meet and isolation or distrust and misunderstanding for example could be broken down. There was associated with this the need for inclusiveness along with a feeling of ownership by the particular interest groups and individuals, potentially or presently involved there;
- Trust, in the local and government authorities, particularly the local council; the need for high levels of trust within networks and across networks with a desire to restrict conflict where possible; and the need for trust between individual residents;
- Development and maintenance of networks with the realisation that many are isolated from other networks. There exists the need to understand who is presently excluded from existing networks and programs, why this is so and how can they be included in the future? It was mentioned on a number of occasions that CCB was not in place where it was most needed as will be illustrated later with examples.
- The need to have in place effective communication processes that are two way along with the need to listen;

1) The place of empowerment where it was not simply a ‘Top down’ nor even a ‘bottom up’ process but a partnership.

All respondents recognised that a key aspect of CCB was empowerment which importantly went beyond the empowerment of ‘the few’ without which any program would founder (see the earlier discussion on community). The dilemma for participants in these processes of CCB was how to do this effectively and to as wide a range of residents and other key people as possible. Various strategies were presented to us with examples provided of attempts being made at the various levels across municipalities, to local towns or suburbs, to particular interest groups, to involvement in advisory or steering committees, to phone consultation and right down to attempts to empower residents at the street level or through local centres. There were a number of seeming success stories and in a later case study we’ve highlighted one of these - Wendouree West in Victoria where the residents actually hold the power on their steering committee and on all sub-committees. A similar strategy has been set in train in a project in Maribyrnong where the residents are to compose at least 50 percent of the members on sub committees. Lewisham, the South-East London Borough, has established a very complex variety of ways in which residents can be involved in the consultation processes which they hope eventually leads to a growing number of empowered citizens who can act as a conduit between the council and residents and residents and council.

CCB was most successful when the residents were involved in the processes. It was often stated that the locals are more likely to know what the local problems are and what the best solutions to deal with them are. Though we recognise that such knowledge may not always be the case the residents still needed to be included in the processes as soon as is practicable. In one case in particular the empowerment initiatives came from a resident group of farmers themselves but generally the CCB initiatives came from the authorities. With these farmers, because of their education, their experiences (one comment was that many of them had been sent off to boarding schools and this had developed their strong coping mechanisms) and their close ties and professional interests they no doubt had a head start in the empowerment stakes, but they still had to make the effort. What was evident was that many if not most people do not make this effort, or they may be excluded from the process. In many cases residents may want to be involved but they are afraid of authorities which may be as a result of a lack of trust due to past experiences which then leads to an avoidance of participation. Often coupled

with this they may perceive themselves to lack skills/abilities which can lead to a lack in confidence and possibly self esteem. When all of these are coupled with a high level of anxiety and a feeling of being 'unsafe' with the consequent loss of trust then empathic outside assistance is usually essential. Much community development, communication and education is needed to overcome these perceptions. With the successful CCB programs in Wendouree West and Maribyrnong/Braybrook, both in so-called very under privileged localities where anxiety levels were high, the initial involvement of community development officers and government ideas and strategies were a necessity if the projects were to get off the ground. The residents just did not at that stage have the ideas or the skills even when they had ideas to ensure that CCB was possible. Nor did they usually have the confidence in government that they would be listened to. Too often this was based upon negative experiences or perceptions of the past including in the case of the immigrants and refugees, experiences in their countries of origin.

In Lewisham in South East London, it was recognised that a variety of CCB methods needed to be used but even then it was recognised that there would still be residents not involved. They set in place a citizen panel which was turned over every three years; a public engagement forum with 1,000 in attendance and street leaders (or wardens). They also realised that key players in the networks needed to be brought in at different stages, particularly when dealing with vulnerable groups. The processes are seen as involving a reinventing of civic duty and empowering a significant number of residents who, while after three years may leave the panel, will have learnt how the system operates and hopefully would educate others in the process. Their belief is that investing in resilience and capacity building leads to an increase in citizens' aspirations along with them working together for the common good and to sustaining their city as a place worth living in. We were informed that one of the mottos of Lewisham was that "experience determines resilience" and their aim was to use CCB to bring this into affect.

Also evident was that successful CCB doesn't come cheaply. Resources such as time, committed authority personnel (willing to work out of hours and to go to the people), committed residents, suitable and accessible meeting places as well as all of these being properly resourced money wise were essential ingredients for capacity building. It just won't work otherwise, we were informed. A danger is when the CCB money runs out or the community development officers are no longer employed before the empowering processes are complete. The funding therefore must be adequate for the tasks and ongoing or at least until local leadership is established and social capital built up.

Expectations for empowerment of the citizens were rarely unrealistic. All of the respondents recognised the difficulties involved in first of all establishing relationships based on trust; bringing interested parties together and while many thought their model was effective they still acknowledged that in most cases it was more of a top down process where the initiatives came from the local authorities or from a number of key individuals. There were usually those excluded from the processes (see the later discussion on who is excluded).

Our research has led us to believe that empowerment with the consequent mobilisation of local resources in partnership with government should lessen dependency on authorities and overcome at least some vulnerability as a more self-reliant group of citizens grows. From our case studies this is not an easy task to achieve - CCB. Small and often faltering steps towards

capability development and the accompanying changes in attitudes and actions, if that, were more the norm than smooth sailing towards growth in capacity to cope. Such small steps were to be seen as a result of the efforts of all of the authorities, residents and leaders where interviews were conducted. Such small yet positive steps within empowerment processes were to be seen in Lewisham, for example, where the panel only met for three years before a new one was in place. There was a continuous education and training process in train there. The Community Centre in Braybrook in Maribyrnong appears to have achieved similar results but with differing methods of involvement but with the overall aim being the development of more inclusive and empowering processes.

As we were informed by a number of respondents, disasters can also be empowering for those involved. Having to cope brought many people out; they worked together and developed the idea that they should become more involved in local action including looking out for each other through Neighbourhood Watch. Even disappointment in the manner in which government departments etc managed an event brought residents together as they expressed their frustration at meetings and through their networks. Just as easily though, the disaster can break up previously successful networks (see later comments). So from our research we also found that an emergency or crisis did not necessarily lead to the development of extra coping capacity or empowerment. Reports from community development officers and others involved in the post fire recovery processes varied in this regard. Some officers, and particularly those with strong local knowledge, recorded quite successful outcomes as they were able to use the emergencies to strengthen the communities. In one region residents who had not communicated with each other apparently for many years, following the post fire consultations, were seen chatting amicably with each other over coffee. In other cases the divisions caused by the aftermath of the fires made any CCB program difficult to establish and the divisions reached even into the school ground.

In concluding this section, the comment from one resident actively involved in Wendouree West activities was particularly apt. He pointed out that to “impose” something “wont work. You have to work with us.” These residents recognised that this was the only way in which they could be and had been empowered.

2) Leadership and the need for building it up, particularly in the localities where there has been a decline in leadership and where this decline can be expected to continue with so many current and potential leaders moving out, ageing or dying.

Our research indicates quite strongly that effective CCB programs are very dependent upon competent, e.g. informed, skilled, open and inclusive leadership. Where we saw present the signs of strong coping capacity there was always strong leadership present. Usually, but not in all situations, such leadership involved an equal partnership between representatives of the authorities and the residents or local groups. The leaders could then effectively represent the views of those they represented and be trusted to deliver on the policies where possible without the feeling of tokenism or of domination by one side being present. Leaders needed to be strong without being too dominating. Ongoing recruitment and training of the next generation of leaders was also essential as was the need to reach beyond the narrow band of interest group leaders who were usually involved in the consultation processes. There was also the need, both the literature and the informants noted, to hear what others were saying and to train leaders where they did not already exist.

A down side of our finding is mentioned in the heading of this section, there is an increasing problem most evidently found in rural Victoria, exacerbated by government and business policies and economic trends. The amalgamation of rural councils and schools along with the closure of many banks (for example) has led to the decline in local leaderships (as well as jobs). With these changes there is no longer the ongoing replenishment of social capital through these potential leaders who have professional skills which enhance the local 'community's' ability to cope. Shops and local facilities close as residents shop and bank and attend schools in the larger towns thus furthering the decline. The ageing population has to continue in leadership roles whether they wish to or not and this was particularly evident in many of the rural voluntary associations such as the Red Cross, CFA and SES.

However it is not all 'doom and gloom'. Initiatives were being taken by not only the local authorities but the residents were also often involved in very positive ways. There were examples given of authorities in both Australia and England recognising that the role of religious and ethnic leaders was important if the various communities of interest were to be included in any ongoing consultation and CCB. They recognised social capital present in these interest groups which they could tap into. Though it was to be found in other areas as well, in Wendouree West and Lewisham in particular leaders from the locality down to street level in Lewisham, were targeted and encouraged to work with the authorities and their fellow residents to inform both sides of what the key issues were, acting as go betweens and serving on various committees. They were thus able to help alleviate conflict and perhaps warn of areas where conflict might occur before it arises.

As mentioned in the last section, authorities had established procedures which were assisting the development of leadership capacities particularly through the inclusion of residents on the various committees and sub-committees where in some cases they had the majority of votes. Still, problems were obviously present in some rural areas where the current leadership was ageing and the younger population was moving out to further their education and job opportunities. As well, in some areas those moving in to the locality may have differing values and expectations from the more established rural residents. This could lead to exclusion (including self-exclusion) from the local organisations and the consultation processes but also they may not see the need to join and adopt leadership roles in the CFA for example as their idea of what was expected of residents differed from the local norms. Even within the one local authority area, CCB leadership programs need to be tailored to the particular locality as what works with one group may not work with another. The problems, the socio-demographics along with previous experience and the skill levels present will vary so the solutions will vary and the CCB programs need to be adjusted accordingly. The Australian Bureau of Statistics data should be utilised to note trends over time and the programs tailored accordingly. Not only are there differences between rural and urban residents but there are other demographics which need to be taken into account. Are the differing genders represented? Are the different socio-demographic groups represented? Are the various ethnic and indigenous communities represented? Are the youth and the aged?

In the larger cities and often with the newly arrived ethnic group members, leaders might be incorporated into the consultation processes and trained and are able to act as a conduit into their groups but then they move out of the locality for better housing, jobs etc. replacements need to be trained up to take their places. In cities such as Maribyrnong there is always another newly arrived ethnic group to be contacted, advised and trained up at the same time as

other contacts are moving. What is recognised is that there is still a residual of the earlier groups to be worked with and their needs should not be neglected while the newly arrived groups' needs take precedence.

In some of the localities where Councils and/or residents have been able to tap in to government programs such as Neighbourhood Renewal, community development or other community building program funds available from various levels of government it has been easier to establish and maintain CCB programs. These can be quite costly but the reward can be a rise in the level of social capital present in the community with subsequent long term, financial benefits for that community.

An example where leadership was enhanced subsequent to funds being injected in to a locality occurred through the Maribyrnong “**Reaching Out, Linking In**” project. The intention was to provide:

1. Personal development skills training,
2. Access to information pathways,
3. A program of speakers/service providers explaining the concepts of leadership,
4. Task based training, i.e. how to handle the media, and use technology.⁴

Reports on this project to date would indicate that not only have they been very successful in meeting these aims through the participants but subsequently the broader community has benefited from the Leadership Skills course.

Another example was to be found at Wendouree West where the government officer most involved in implementing the project stated that their policies covered the following⁵:

- 1) To work with facilitators and to put residents forward wherever possible. Residents are always involved when she is asked to speak. Every time they speak they grow a little. The policy is to “work with to make things happen”
- 2) To develop mentoring which is seen as being an important part of leadership. It leads to self-sufficiency and is all a process of learning. The mentors were originally outsiders but now its four residents who have taken on the role.
- 3) To develop an interchange-ability of roles so if everyone involved at the moment walks away then the skills and the support will still be present within them. Excitement is catching so there are always others wanting to be involved.
- 4) To encourage youth who also are showing signs of leadership.
- 5) Education (including in schools) is the key to everything they do.
- 6) Target, initially, high-powered residents.

The research would indicate that leadership in the developing and implementing of projects and policies mostly came from a top down process although this was not always the case. Councils and government departments would provide the initial leadership and ideas and would then seek out leaders and networks with whom they could work. In one council, we were informed that leadership was often at its strongest when it went across groups.

The importance of local leadership in community development and capacity building was evident in Leonard Stanley in England, yet even there, where positive actions occurred there were some negatives. For example, W is a local leader who finds it difficult to generate

⁴ W Fuge, Evaluation of the Community Leadership Skills Course. For the Maribyrnong City Council 2002

⁵ Lecture to RMIT students by representatives from Wendouree West, 18/9/2003

broad, local support. This mirrors the Australian experience of local leaders cycling through a series of community groups. It would be our contention that local, inherent leadership must exist prior to development initiatives, at least as a seed or anchor for further development. Without this, any recovery process will be hampered whilst networks are established or tapped in to and leaders are trained or brought to the fore.

The Lewisham and Leonard Stanley communities have supported local initiatives in capacity building and in developing Disaster Management (DM) capacity. But these efforts have been in support of local initiatives or local capacity, which existed, in embryonic form prior to municipal involvement. This suggests a role for government of support and strengthening and resorting rather than of leadership.

Issues of professionalism of volunteers and exhaustion of local leadership may counter efforts to improve capacity where they drain or impose unnecessary constraints on local volunteers. The process of empowerment may also estrange the empowered from their communities when, as is often the case, leaders are co-opted into the system or where the residents see the leaders as, for example, having left the moral high ground behind.

The approach of one emergency manager emphasises how much community building and the use of local leadership need to operate across council departments and at the same time may have positive spin offs for the council. He uses council resources to minimize the risks and an integral part of this is in the use of consultation in the planning processes. His council dedicates resources to get a message out to effective individuals who can manage what they do. It makes his job easier but there's the need to advocate for an outcome, to achieve something, to help someone if the process is to be effective.

3) The need for a centre where residents, networks, leaders could meet and isolation or distrust and misunderstanding for example could be broken down. There was associated with this the need for inclusiveness along with a feeling of ownership by the particular interest groups and individuals, potentially or presently involved there.

Centres of various types and sizes, formal and informal, existed across all of the areas we visited. From major community centres to shop fronts to houses to local halls and a 'shed'. They existed as important places not just as a place of meeting but also as places where two way communication, education, cultural exchange and policy development could occur for example. However, what must be kept in mind according to one council worker is that there are often inherent problems with council buildings. They may be too formal and regulated for some residents. There may be the need to supplement the formal with such places as less formal drop-in centres such as a shop with rooms attached allowing for the needs of a variety of participants to be met.

We were informed in Maribyrnong of the wide ranging, long-term impacts on the ability of the council and residents to develop networks, trust and social capital, which were present when an important centre closed. In this case it was the Migrant Multicultural Resource Centre. Other agencies and centres have had their resources stretched to the limit in their endeavours to fill the void in the delivery of services and advice to the ethnic communities left by this closure. The most at risk people in the city were major users of this centre, i.e. the

newly arrived non-English speaking refugees and immigrants. Luckily, the Braybrook Community Centre operating with different policies has been able to meet some of the needs, but not all residents in such a large and diverse city can utilise the resources at this centre, nor are there sufficient language resources available and it's not always easy to reach such centres with the gross inefficiencies of the public transport systems. Social capital may be high in this centre but what is also needed is more financial capital.

What we discovered across a number of centres across the state of Victoria and within England is that these were places where residents and authority workers could come together for the exchange of information, to ease conflict, to plan for the future, to share cultures, to play and practice their arts and on and on.

One centre may service all of these purposes, wants and needs but in many cases it is unrealistic to assume that just one centre can service all of the community as there are usually too many disparate groups around needing to be serviced. However, we did see examples where such centres did exist and appeared to meet the desires of the residents, or least most of them, but they were to be found mostly in rural areas with another on a government housing estate and these were generally mono-cultural areas. The scale of the area and the fitting of the centre into the desires and needs of the residents are important. A feeling of ownership of the centre is useful if the centre is to operate affectively. As well, for these centres to be most effective if CCB was to occur within them, this sense of ownership needed to operate alongside a feeling of responsibility for the surroundings and in the future of the centre. Leadership can also be developed in such centres and they can not only be a meeting place but a training ground for future leaders.

The heavily resourced Wendouree West Centre is outlined in the case study but one rural centre is worth mentioning as well as it operates very effectively on a very minimal budget in serving the needs of the surrounding farmers. The resident farmers, who along with their families have used the local memorial hall as a meeting place for a number of generations, centre many of their activities there whether its meetings, celebrations, a meeting place for the CFA or other groups. All this occurs despite the demise of sporting teams and a church, which once used the hall and its surrounds. The maintaining of the hall physically through working bees and fund raising events helps in the maintenance of the network itself and a high degree of trust was evident at the focus groups held there. In any emergency the hall is the centre of activity and all of the locals would know it as the place to meet. It exists with very little outside support and that self-sufficiency appears as one of its major strengths. As was the situation in other areas the network of farmers are able to "keep tabs on each other", in the good sense of the term. This latter situation can be essential in the outlying regions of Victoria such as in the 'high country' where there is no place to meet around. They have nothing as a centre and the nearest meeting place may be thirty minutes away.

4) Trust, in the local and government authorities, particularly the local council; the need for high levels of trust within networks and across networks with a desire to restrict conflict where possible; and the need for trust between individual residents.

From both the literature and this research, trust is a very important component in CCB and in 'social capital' in particular. For Delhey and Newton (2003 p105)⁶ trust can be defined "as

⁶ Delhey, J and Newton, K. 2003, *Who Trusts,? The Origins of Social Trust in Seven Societies.*

the belief that others will not, at worst, knowingly or willingly do you harm, and will, at best, act in your interests...(it's) encapsulated interest". For these authors (P110), "two sorts of variables seem to be most consistently associated with trust – conflict and safety, and a network of friends...trust appears to be greater in societies where people believe that social conflicts are not acute, and where they believe that levels of public safety are high." Trust then between citizens is important for the development of a less vulnerable and of a more resilient society because:

- If there's conflict present in a community then trust is low. If residents trust their neighbours and feel safe in the neighbourhood then trust rises. It is necessary (Delhey and Newton P111) to develop informal social networks and reduce as much conflict as possible for trust to develop. While interaction doesn't necessarily lead to trust, and in fact it often leads to conflict, informal networks rather than the more formal variety are important if social trust is to be developed. Small towns, we were advised, where interaction is a way of life will have more trust present than is often the case with larger cities but, while that may generally be true, even in the small towns conflict can be present over differing ideologies. For example, environmentalists versus loggers, traditional and long term residents versus newly arrived residents from larger cities including single parents. Many urban councils and Lewisham in particular were endeavouring to develop and to establish contact with networks at the street and neighbourhood level thus replicating the type of informal network environment as seen in the small towns.
- Again according to Delhey and Newton and to our own findings, the more anxiety was present the more distrust was likely to be present and this was to be seen in a number of the regions following the 2003 bushfires. Anxiety can also arise where income is lacking and reliance on others can diminish trust whereas success and well-being can lead to trust. However, within a number of our case study regions this anxiety, which could be associated with low income, could be overcome as CCB programs were successfully implemented. As well as the Wendouree West and Braybrook studies' successes, in the Southern Grampians we were informed programs aimed at establishing relations with and between the single mothers had also met with success and the women were more integrated into the locality now than ever before. This was not the case in one of the other regions where the authorities were still trying to deal with 'these people' who too often were not accepted into the 'community' and 'they', or 'their children', were seen as being the cause of many problems and were being 'blamed' rightly or wrongly for a rise in delinquent behaviour. The anxiety which appears to be present on all sides along with a lack of trust in each other and the inadequacy of previous CCB practices would make the situation intolerable for all concerned. The feeling, valid or not, would exist then that they were living in an unsafe environment. The vulnerable are therefore even more vulnerable whereas the success in Wendouree West and Braybrook has produced a more resilient 'community', despite the low income of the residents.
- We were constantly informed that good working relationships between council and the networks and between the networks themselves were an essential component of CCB. Trust on such scales may be present on some occasions but not in others. Pockets of trust may exist between some networks but not others. Councils and other authorities may think they have built up trust but as we saw with one government department, this trust can evaporate overnight if an emergency or its aftermath is mishandled. In this latter case,

it would appear from the respondents' comments that the local officers of that particular department were trusted as "they knew the situation" but this did not apply to the head office workers where many of the decisions were made. At one public meeting apparently the public was informed that their comments were close to being libellous, such was the anger.

5) Development and maintenance of networks with the realisation that many are isolated from other networks. There exists the need to understand who is presently excluded from existing networks and programs, why this is so and how can they be included in the future? It was mentioned on a number of occasions that CCB was not in place where it was most needed.

Many of the points relating to the importance of networks have already been covered under the earlier headings. However some other points do need to be made:

- Maintaining good working relationships with existing networks is a key component of CCB. Where they don't exist or where it's felt that some people are not associated with those that do or where they may be excluded from them for various reasons then the local authorities need to work with the residents or with established or potential communities of interest to develop appropriate networks or expand them. Communication including feedback should then be a two way process with all sides being informed of what's in their best interest.
- While it was often a necessity networks do not always need to be established and nurtured from the outside or as part of a top down process. In a number of the shires self-sustaining and motivated networks existed and from appearances they would be quite resilient in times of emergencies. During and after the 2003 fires, in the Indigo Shire in one town with the CFA shed as the 'centre', all of the farmers got together as a group attending all of the community recovery meetings. These networks though were too often not to be found in other localities within this and the other shires although the Farmers Federation was very active. In one of Victoria's shires, The Alpine Shire, which contains some of the potentially most isolated people during an emergency, we were informed that in one long established tourist town "normally most people or someone in the family belongs to something. Even retired people would belong. Whereas in a very remote area which had been purpose built as a tourist place there were just thirty permanent residents with up to two thousand at peak times. There were no service clubs or formal structures there. Though this does not mean that there are not strong informal networks. There is however no formal organisation with whom Shire officers can work and the latter are endeavouring to help develop such organisations. In one of the other shires affected by the fires it was the other way around. The Shire according to respondents did little for some time after the event (the situation was not helped by the sheer isolation of those affected or by the extent of the fires) however the Lions and then the Rotary clubs and CFA members from outside of the area came together with caravans, building fencing and so on. The people's "minds were blown by this."
- There needs, we were informed constantly, to be openness and more inclusiveness to the processes. The representativeness of the networks varied. In a number of the rural areas

the networks were representative as they were in long established and close knit localities. They were virtually mono-cultural. Most residents belong to these local networks assuming this is what they wish. “The sort of person who exists there, in the smaller communities, know each other well; what they’re capable of doing. While some individuals chose not to be involved after the fires most groups came out to help, to build fences etc” – report from one Inter Church Council member. He also said that: “members of churches are also members of other service and sporting organisations. While the church congregations don’t come together collectively in the smaller areas everyone comes together. That’s their strength.” Gaining such representativeness was almost impossible in the more diverse localities and particularly in the large cities. In one regional city membership of existing networks did go across networks but one has to ask if these networks did represent all of the citizens and it may simply have narrowed down the representativeness of these groups. Consultation would then be with a small perhaps sectional interest group of residents or simply with a few, usually male, powerful individuals. Most respondents if not all recognised the need to build on existing networks and to be inclusive of as many residents as possible, recognising also that not all residents have a desire to join with others. Ideological differences are only one reason for non-cooperation and inclusion. Traditional enmities are another. Regional officers interviewed four months after the 2003 fires recognised the difficulty in dealing with residents from different towns. “You wouldn’t get some towns to work together but people would work together in their own town.” One has to discover, they felt, the appropriate agencies that could come together; what resources exist; what the existing networks are; what demographic changes are occurring and what are the capacities of the particular area and move from there. There was the perceived need then to build up relationships between the networks “soon” while concern was present. The need was present to help dissipate anger and build up social capital – trust between the various groups.

- Loss of leadership of a network can also lead to its demise hence the importance of encouraging the joining of younger people and of fostering leadership training and skills development where these are not present. The local leadership needs to see itself as being part of the processes and not merely serving on committees as token representatives. Hence the significance of the Wendouree West and Braybrook projects where the aim is to have the locals in the majority on committees and sub-committees with voting powers which could over rule the outsiders on the committee. They thus have a feeling of ownership and of contribution to the policies and projects they are participating in. All this doesn’t mean that the outsiders don’t have their way as they bring insights and knowledge of procedures, which can overwhelm the less skilled and knowledgeable locals. Splits can occur which can be detrimental to CCB setting it back if conflict is allowed to fester or is fostered.
- Anger, along with anxiety or fear we were informed can also lead to the formation of networks. The bush fires which followed on from five years of drought have lead to “angry” residents unifying and banding together where networks were hard to establish earlier. One reason is anger at how they see themselves as having been treated by the authorities in the aftermath of the fires. In the region of the ‘high country’ apparently people respond to emergencies then interest dissipates. While networks were growing across the whole area there were interesting contrasts: some people have stayed

together; one group organised themselves after the fires; there were “earlier divisions over the floods and now some people are excluded because they didn’t suffer fire damage (less so than in the period of the floods); the networking of communities is greater than ever before.”

- Excluded from the processes leading to the development of networks were such diverse groups as youth (who could hardly be called a group as there is such diversity there), drug takers and dysfunctional families. Though as has been shown in our case studies even these people can be incorporated in to the system when the most appropriate to the situation methods are used and where trust is developed.
- The comments from the Indigo shire officers interviewed were very pertinent to this section on networks. “Society has lost a lot of its neighbourliness. There’s the need to connect service clubs etc to the elderly to support them in the next season. Community building is what needs to be dealt with.” The existence of service clubs and their effectiveness varied greatly across this and the other shires. One small town’s residents were most likely “to meet around the CFA shed but there’s a need to look beyond this.” The variation between attitudes in nearby towns to community spirit and the changes that could come through an ‘event’ was to be seen in that same shire where we were informed of the following: in one town which was growing fast with young active families there was a lot of community activity whereas in a nearby town there had been a “lack of self-worth, of togetherness and no one spoke to each other.” There had been no cohesion and the plight of the isolated elderly was often ignored. “Now there’s more willingness to join in (e.g. neighbourhood watch) whereas they didn’t want to six months ago.”

6) The need to have in place effective communication processes that are two way along with the need to listen.

As mentioned earlier, communication including feedback should be a two way process with all sides being informed of what’s in their best interest. If this feedback had been present then a number of authorities’ officers would have heard what we were informed of, for example, that “councils can think they’re close but...” Such information came from not only residents but also in one case from the mayor himself.

Constantly we were informed that communication was an essential element in the work of those involved in risk management and community recovery, in fact one officer saw it as “the most effective way to deal with all types of emergencies”. Yet while it is regarded as being essential in this field and the CCB processes generally, communication in a city (Maribyrnong) with at least sixty different language groups is now more difficult to establish and maintain than ever before. Similarly in a borough such as Lewisham in London with a wide variety of socio-demographic, racial, ethnic and language groups with a population twice the size of any cities in Australia and much more complex duties to be administered, communication with residents and particularly with the most vulnerable will always test the resources and imagination of all involved. From earlier research by Marsh, (1997) residents just too often do not read material relevant to them, won’t open the door to unknown surveyors or even fellow residents wanting to advise them of what might be of concern to them while others believe many of the urban myths that abound that are full of misinformation. Even in more mono-cultural areas consultation and general communication

can be difficult for such reasons as apathy and anxiety. In rural areas we were informed that distance was a major hurdle needing to be overcome. Officers and others including councillors would often go to the towns but would miss the residents living in outlying, often very isolated areas. Some residents even complained that “it is too far for councillors and council officers to come to us for meetings” so they are expected to go the same distance to the town centre for meetings, it being not too far for the farmers to travel in this case. The consultation processes succeed or fail on such precarious threads.

Yet when the most appropriate communication processes are in place then positive outcomes including an increase in ‘trust’ can result. Trust can be built up between councils and residents in simple but in retrospect, obvious ways. During the 2003 fires one affected Shire’s information call centre was manned by locals. They knew exactly where locals were from and had local personal knowledge which led to confidence in the Shire and the CFA. Good relationships between the CFA and the residents and the CFA had been established earlier through the community fireguard program and people were more prepared for the emergency.

It is important that all potential participants or at least representatives of the various demographics, where necessary, are involved early in any discussions. An example of where quite good plans can come to grief was to be seen at one workshop in rural Victoria where plans were being discussed as to how to help an aboriginal community to redevelop their reserve. One suggestion was made that this could include reflooding the surrounding area which was a dried up lake and now was being used for farming. It was argued by one, non-affected farmer from a nearby area that this CCB plan was doomed as there was “no way the farmers would agree to the plans”. The discussions should have evolved to include all of those most affected instead of it being seemingly presented as a *fait accompli* at the time. Compromise may then have been possible.

Positive examples of good practice were presented to us from a number of respondents. These were most effective when the process not only involved communication but also assisted in the development of skills and led to a feeling of ownership and eventually to “part of the mentality” of all involved and not just of those at the ‘top’. In one case a form on resilience was to be discussed and in another a lengthy report. In both cases it was decided that these objects were not suitable to be taken to a committee or to take beyond the committee. The concept was new to the people in the first case and too impenetrable and irrelevant in the second. In both cases the documents and concepts behind them were workshopped and suitable alternatives acceptable to all resulted. There was no directive from above stating, “thou shalt do this...” and the feeling of ownership of the alternatives was present. Evident was that many traditional methods of communication were less than effective. Brochures for example where the effect, according to one council officer, was negligible whereas direct contact (in his case through the ‘bushfire blitz’) was more effective but time consuming. With councils, if they are implementing the policies of other governments then they, let alone the public, have to first perceive the relevance of the policies and such things as the brochures. The same officer noted again the need for community ownership of the object in question and that it was best to target affected or smaller areas as the ‘blanket approach’ to communication does not necessarily get the message across and nor does it allow/provide for feedback. For example for this officer “you have to come down to local needs. A municipal package should

have a generic; overall section with the latter pages covering the local situation with for example their risks and vulnerabilities.

In this next section, we cover areas where CCB may be less successful and how some categories of residents may be missed or exclude themselves from the processes despite all of the good will and careful planning. Obvious groups who were less often to be seen participating in CCB were those composed of more recently arrived immigrants. It was not just language that could lead to exclusion from the processes but attitudes to authority as well. Trust or social capital may be present within these ethnic groups but one can't always assume this is the case given the traumatic situation from which many immigrants to Australia have come. Distrust of authority when coupled with a lack of knowledge and the feeling of being unsafe could be seen when we were informed that in one municipality, Maribyrnong, some Vietnamese even in dire emergencies were reluctant to dial the emergency number 000 attempting to, for example, put out the fire themselves due to this fear of authorities. Similar fears accentuated by language difficulties and a lack of bi-lingual workers and support infrastructure applied to immigrants from 'Horn of Africa' countries in that same city. Maribyrnong council officers were attempting to build up trust between themselves and the differing ethnic networks and the Centre mentioned elsewhere was seen as a success story in this regard. Similar attempts were being made in the London authority where interviews were conducted. Again cultural expectations and prejudices were barriers needing to be overcome. We were advised in both of these authorities that in CCB there will always be difficulty in involving the most recent arrivals in the consultation and development programs but one should not assume that all of these groups will have the same approaches to authority or to mixing with members of other groups nor that the same ideas will be present within all members of the individual ethnic groups. Not all groups or individuals are afraid to allow their women and children out of the homes to participate in 'events', for example, but the rights of those who have these views needs to be respected and adequate communication mechanisms put in place if trust is to be developed.

Responses from our informants, in all of our urban case studies and also in Wendouree West, indicated that one particular demographic grouping who were excluded from the processes were the youth in the area. Concern was often expressed as to how they could be involved more. No easy answers to this question were given however attempts to involve youth in CCB are continuing to evolve and some success has been achieved.

Another group was one that we have noted as being vulnerable in our earlier research, the single parents living in rural areas. These parents may also be excluded in the Cities but no one mentioned them. Possibly they simply get lost in the large cities whereas their presence is more obvious in the smaller towns. Whether they excluded themselves from existing networks or were excluded by others is not known but a number of informants were concerned that more needed to be done to bring these parents into existing networks. In some instances a lack of trust in these families was evident. However one council has established processes though where the mothers have been able to come together and support each other. While they were seen to have had problems two years ago the belief now was that these had been largely solved. One has to question though if they are able to tap in to the more established networks or if they are existing on the fringes of the locality and whether the 'problem' has actually been solved. One also wonders what has been achieved in ensuring that the children have also been incorporated in to the appropriate local networks.

While none of the localities where interviews were conducted for this research had a significant percentage of aboriginal Australians, our earlier EMA case study research in South East Victoria indicated that these people were involved less often in the established, consulted networks. They were more likely to remain within their own networks and were often regarded with suspicion and as outsiders.

7. What appears to be present in all of these examples is that there is a degree of preconceived ideas present on all sides, which can lead to exclusion from the CCB processes.

What was evident in a number of rural shires in Victoria was that even when the population within the council boundaries appeared to be homogenous a 'one size fits all' CCB plan might not be appropriate. Responses to CCB by residents varied from town to town in one shire and it was said, "CCB was not in place where it was most needed". Examples were given about how hard it was before the recent fires to develop neighbourhood watch programs and to get residents to volunteer for such things as the Red Cross. Yet towns just thirty or so kilometres away had less trouble doing these things.

Isolation and differing needs associated with this can also lead to exclusion and with the best will in the world local authorities will find it difficult to overcome the tyranny of distance. Meetings are often held in towns and we were informed by a number of farmers that they were never consulted or involved in consultations; even though the council representative interviewed was proud of the processes they had set in train and believed that they were able to reach residents from across the shire. None of those present in this focus group of farmers had ever been to one of the regular meetings called to enable residents to meet with councillors or officers. Yet this need not be seen as being a negative. They had and utilised other means of getting their messages across, using for example direct contact with politicians, council officers and key individuals. Those present had an active association with the CFA and seemingly volunteered their services and time quite readily and when required. They were not lacking in Social Capital or trust it was simply that they were very self contained and had bypassed the standard consultation processes set in train by the council.

One thing that was evident after the recent 2003 fires in the East of Victoria was that such disasters can both bring people together but they can also lead to conflict either between residents or between residents and authorities. There would appear to be a narrow window of opportunity present within which all concerned can work towards developing trust and networks, which will work towards better risk management in the future. However, if the conflict is not overcome then further rifts will develop in the particular locality. One unconfirmed report stated that the conflict between parents was being expressed in the school ground with the police having to be called in to settle the disputes. This can have damaging affects for long-term CCB prospects. Despite the praised efforts of one local shire's workers and recovery plans, the same negative future could be seen for some areas where the residents, as mentioned earlier, were unhappy with one particular government department's approach to 'community recovery'. The CFA was also being blamed for inappropriate reaction factors and failure to utilise local knowledge having earlier been praised for their bravery and efforts in fighting the fires. The lack of trust present could have long-term implications with residents possibly excluding themselves from participating in future consultations. More importantly, volunteers might ask themselves "what's the point in

joining the CFA (for example) when I have to face such criticism?” It is difficult enough finding fire fighters without those already involved having to face angry, fellow residents.

Where CCB may be less affective, local capacity can be supported by statutory bodies but cannot be sustained and perhaps not even engendered by agencies without strong local commitment. At the same time, we were informed that one way to overcome this situation where CCB strategies may not have been effective in the past was for local residents and authorities to learn from events, build up knowledge bases and develop localized teams who won't have to rely on one person at the centre. With that council, no one would turn up for meetings before as they didn't see the need whereas the council has been able to build on the needs as seen in the post event period.

There was often a difference between what council officers thought was effective in the area of consultation and the perception from the outside. In one case even the mayor was less sure that the processes set in train were overly successful. He believed there were still many improvements to be made if the residents were really to be consulted and empowered and yet his London council's consultation plan and its operations are held up as being one of the most effective in London.

In other councils, officers believed that their capacity building /consultation programs were effectively reaching out to the local residents, if not personally then at least through the local networks. As mentioned, none of the participants in one of the focus groups had attended consultation meetings held with officers and councillors in nearby towns and importantly nor would they attend. They thought that the meetings were based on 'town' issues and were irrelevant to them. They had "other ways of getting things done without having to attend meetings".

In summary of this section then, too often methodology associated with a community building budget proposal immediately creates a top down structure. Council for example then needs to create an inclusive planning group which works together to develop protocols, and processes for assessing plans and operational procedures.

There is an ongoing need to research the changes in particular localities and develop locality specific methods, techniques and tools to build up and assess local capacity. This would entail working in conjunction with agency and municipal staff, volunteers, community representatives and identified specialists to assess the tools and standards developed as, for example, part of a CCB project.

4. VOLUNTEERS-VOLUNTEERISM

In the Australian context and elsewhere, volunteers and the work they contribute to the community, are defining measures of community capability, and of disaster management capacity. Volunteers are both a measure of capacity but they also contribute to the capacity, safety and well being of their communities.

Voluntary activity is significant across the world, whether as community based organizations, faith based organizations or more informal groups such as extended families. However, in terms of sustaining communities, it is particularly important in Australia where the vast distances and remoteness of many communities makes the provision of many essential services by government difficult, if not impossible and if provided directly, at a prohibitive cost.

There are a number of definitions used to describe volunteers and volunteer activity.

The Macquarie dictionary defines volunteers as “those who enter into any service of their own freewill, or who offer themselves for any service or undertaking”.

Another definition states “voluntary work may be defined as unpaid work which is chosen freely by a person and can be carried out during their free time. It spans almost all spheres of social and public life, including politics, business, unions, religion, sport, recreation, emergency and social services (Campaign Consultation Inc USA.).

However, there are other definitions determined, so it would seem by the ethos and philosophy of the organization. For example, The Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service, a Roman Catholic community service organization, states that, “in line with the Statement of Purpose and Philosophy of GSYFS, all volunteer programs and volunteers will be in partnership with the community and have as its goal the total development of all people by ensuring that all people have equality of access to the systems, structures and resources of the society”

Many and diverse organizations comprise the volunteer sector, both not for profit such as the Victorian Council of Churches, Red Cross, sea air and mountain rescue services and public sector such as fire, ambulance and state emergency services.

Volunteers are integral to these services and governments are dependent on volunteers to deliver a wide range of services to the various communities, services that people have come to take for granted.

For example, in the 2003 fires in the East Gippsland region of Victoria, resident in a certain area were warned that if they stayed to fight the fires surrounding their property, they could not expect the Country Fire Authority personnel to automatically come to their aid if their safety was threatened. The fires did come, property was destroyed or damaged, and the C.F.A. didn't come to their aid and the people felt betrayed. Their expectations, shaped by many emergencies and disasters that response services could always be counted on were not met.

This example lends weight to our research that as emergency services are acknowledging more realistically their capacity, which is limited, that local community capacity may need to increase to step into the gap to maintain an adequate level of protection to their community.

Whatever the definition, “Australia is well served by hundreds of thousands of volunteers without whose service the country would be the poorer” (National Recognition of Volunteers 2002).

It has been estimated that without volunteers the C.F.A. in Victoria in 2001 for example would have faced additional costs estimated to be upwards of \$470 million, which the Government would have needed to fund. Such estimates would hold proportionately true for any of the services that depend on volunteers. (Value your Volunteers E.M.A. 2001)

There is an ingrained ethic in Australia, of voluntary community service and support, which has been shaped by the history of the nation since white colonization and is in all probability the origin of the concept of “mateship” (though some would see the existence of this as a myth).

Geographically isolated from Europe and with the requirements for communities to be self sufficient, Australia’s geography and sparse settlement has reinforced the need for communities to be relatively self sufficient. And although settlement in time developed and expanded from the cities around the seaboard of Australia, the sparseness of settlement in the areas away from the coastal areas has meant that self-sufficiency is a necessity for community sustainability.

Australia has a long history of disasters, bushfires cyclones, droughts and floods the most common. This in turn has led to government and non-government agencies developing a systemic response to meet the needs of those affected by these types of emergencies and disasters.

This is the origin of services such as the Country Fire Authority (CFA), State Emergency Services (SES), who, without the services of unpaid volunteers would cease to exist in their present form.

Responding to needs generated by natural disasters, volunteer organizations such as the Red Cross and Church Agencies such as the Uniting Church, St Vincent de Paul’s, The Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Salvation Army, have developed around the needs of the wider community for catering, accommodation, family and personal support. By these services they also contribute to community recovery, community building and personal support.

In the aftermath of World War 2 it was recognised at National and State government levels that there was an increasing need to coordinate the work of Government and Non Government agencies, who at that time were acting in relative independence from one another, into a cohesive and integrated structure.

During the 1970’s steps were taken to integrate the roles, activities for emergency service purposes, which included an assumption that the provision of services and activities of

volunteers would continue unabated and unaffected by the changing social, economic and cultural configuration of the Australian Society That assumption can no longer be taken for granted for reasons which will be later examined.

Today, social and economic changes in Australia has produced an environment in which volunteerism is under pressure from a number of forces. Pressures on family life, changing family and coupling structures, decreased numbers in the work force and increasing pressure and time constraints on those who do work, have all combined to decrease the time available for volunteer work and increase the problem of finding sufficient volunteers to fill the vacancies caused by increased ageing of the community and declining membership in organizations.

Expanding suburbs and rising community service and response expectations have increased the amount, standard and range of services required (and expected) by communities.

In addition, in spite the many programmes designed to highlight the value of volunteers to the country, the value of the work of volunteers seems to have diminished proportionately with the increased reliance on volunteers. A statement which will later be more fully examined. (Charities Definition Enquiry 2001).

Volunteers contribute to the well being of society in many ways.

They give of their time and expertise and are often prepared to risk their health and life in emergency situations. They give of their time and income to undertake training and study. In many emergency organizations they practice regularly to improve their skills. They do that and more in the service to their neighbours and community, and the time and effort is given free and freely.

For this research, contact was made with a varied number of representatives of organizations and agencies to determine whether the volunteer base, recruitment and maintenance of the volunteer base was changing and if so how?

All reported a list of difficulties and problems that are almost identical to the list first published in the Journal of Emergency Management in 1997.

Volunteers are older and physically less able and are therefore restricted in what they can do.

Fewer volunteers are prepared to commit themselves except for a short period of time, typically, one to two years.

Recent changes to the preparation and distribution of food and the threat of litigation have seriously affected catering arrangements, especially churches.

Voluntary agencies face a crisis of identity and serious recruiting problems.

Church congregations are typically of aged member whose service is mainly directed to the survival of the congregation.

Changing patterns in the economy and workplace with under employment, increased responsibilities and workload for full time workers, two income families all make it difficult to recruit volunteers especially in the highly desirable younger age bracket.

Privatisation and economic rationalisation has had a serious flow on affect. The user pays principle and privatisation of services such as meals on wheels has eroded the willingness of people who formerly were willing to respond in an altruistic way to meet a community need. Volunteers did more than simply deliver meals they gave personal support as well.

There is a serious problem in rural areas where communities are getting smaller, populations are ageing and the number of persons living on the land is decreasing.

The inter-face between salaried staff of permanent emergency agencies and government departments and local community volunteers can mitigate against local recruitment especially where there is a high turn over of paid staff and those new to the position either don't have time or are perceived not to give sufficient time to the particular make up and needs of the community in which they work.

The difficulty of maintaining volunteers over an extended period of time when there has been no crisis or disaster is illustrative of recent findings in England that the period of time after a disaster when memories are still fresh and commitment levels are high is 18 months. After that period of time has passed so too has the urgency and willingness of the people to be involved. in voluntary service.

Perhaps there is a need to redefine what is meant by volunteerism or what is considered to be a viable and more contemporary expectation of volunteers. For example, previously volunteers were typically committed for years to a single organization. Now volunteers enter, leave and re-enter the volunteer labour force in ways that are consonant with changed life styles and paid commercial and industrial structures.

The structure of emergency management arrangements, which are hierarchical in nature, militates against local response when they perceive that they are only recognised as a valuable asset when there is a crisis.

The perception that there are highly structured and formalised disaster management arrangements in place has increased expectations that the governments will provide all that is necessary in times of need.

The C.F.A. and S.E.S. are now working to counter this perception being more realistic about their capacity and as they have lower expectations of themselves so the need for voluntary activity has proportionally increased.

The perception that volunteers are tolerated rather than welcomed by salaried staff and long term serving members creates a barrier.

Perceptions and inferences that volunteers, especially church volunteers are do-gooders also doesn't help recruiting and maintaining volunteer

Examination of literature appropriate to this research has uncovered the following recommendations, to which we have added additional recommendations, to address and go some way to solving the problems associated with the difficulty of recruiting and maintaining sufficient and appropriate volunteers.

Community agencies institutions and emergency services, paid or voluntary have an obligation to the community and to each other to work safely and effectively. This means an obligation by statutory bodies to provide appropriate and continuous training, and financial support for those who seek training To provide volunteers with certification which not only validates their competency but provides a certificate of recognition of the worth and value of their work as volunteers. Certification that will provide them with Credibility, Protection and Recognition.

This requires effective state and national training programs and a legislative process that insists that volunteers and paid staff must have training and skills appropriate for their task. A valuable piece of research would be to discover how many people in response and recovery positions, paid or voluntary have had no or limited training, or training that has not been regularly updated.

Training taken by members of volunteer organizations is largely invisible to governments being conducted in their own time and at their own expense and this militates against recognition, support and funding.

Staff in training centres such as AEMI. will need to be up to date in relevant technical areas and it is encouraging to note that the staff at AEMI are confident enough to leave the structured classroom environment for the workplace to facilitate the off and on the job training. Those who follow their example will become learning facilitators, working in partnership with individuals, enterprises and industry groups to negotiate learning projects, develop new courses and customise generic courses to suit individual and enterprise needs. To be part of the process of establishing and maintaining mechanisms for continuous training and assessments.

Municipal Recovery Managers should ensure that Community Recovery meetings and workshops are held at least twice per year (by legislation if necessary) and that members of voluntary groups are invited to be part of the Recovery Committee. This will ensure that the Recovery Manager keeps up to date with his or her responsibilities within his or her job description. Volunteer groups within the municipality will then know staff changes of Recovery Managers especially in smaller rural municipalities. Such invitations will ensure that volunteer groups are recognised as an integral part of the recovery process. This in turn will enhance their work, recognise their contributions and encourage their active commitment and that of the members. This applies also to managers at local government responsible for planning and response activities, not just recovery.

The challenge is to ensure that paid staff and volunteers are well trained and that that training is visible and regularly updated. That the role and value of the volunteer is publicly recognised far more often by government, is properly funded and supported. That the training is held in time, which is appropriate and flexible, paid for and includes certification.

Appropriate training is also a need for government response agencies.

Debriefing sessions with teams of volunteers from the Victorian Council of Churches who visited farms and homes in the North East of the State of Victoria and also East Gippsland after the 2003 fires has revealed a serious need for training for staff of government agencies who are among the first to visit affected areas to assess damage and loss. Deficiencies in the necessary skills in personal support and an understanding of the emotional reaction to grief and loss which extends beyond the loss of material possessions and infrastructure such as fences and fodder can retard the process of recovery for affected people. Such personal support training would make the work of the volunteers who follow up these initial visits more effective.

Australian society has changed and is changing and it is imperative that the recruitment, maintenance and training of volunteers recognises and is in line with these changes. The difficulty is that these aims are still conditioned by forms appropriate to previous eras.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Review and Findings

LEADERSHIP AND THE PLACE OF EMPOWERMENT

While the need for good and effective leadership seems self-evident the need for such an emphasis is because our research revealed that effective leadership while acknowledged to be important was not always evident.

In programs of Community and Capacity Building, leadership exists at two main levels, leadership provided by those with designated authority, i.e., Departmental, Regional and Local Government Managers, and leaders within the community itself.

Careful selection and training is required for both categories.

Leaders appointed to manage programs should possess skills in non-directive leadership. The programs that were most effective had leaders that knew when to lead and when to step back. When to encourage and direct and when to allow (when those encouraging were non-residents) and support local resident leaders to take the lead role and to receive the trust and confidence that they needed to accept responsibility for the implementation of the agreed plans, in a word empowerment. Trust in the other participants in the process must be present for effective empowerment to occur.

From the designated outside leadership all of the above requires patience, non-directive leadership, flexibility and a willingness to delegate and surrender or share, where appropriate, leadership roles. Such delegation should occur as soon as it is evident that the community leadership is able to take on the responsibilities of planning and management.

However, the ability and willingness to step back is not always easy to do but, if a commitment to give power to the community is to be taken seriously, then non-directive leadership is essential. Form must always follow function and the resultant structure will be the test of their leadership.

For the local leaders this required training, trust, open communication, agreed realistic goals and expectations, and for all groups, a commitment to work with and for the total community.

The management and continuance of resources and a clear and constructive exit strategy will be the final test for many of the renewal programs cited in this research.

DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF NETWORKS

This research discovered that while many managers and others claimed to have and know the networks that existed in their community, there were many people isolated from networks and there were networks that operated in isolation from each other and from the managers.

As stated, maintaining good working relationships with existing networks is a vital part of pro-active risk management. Where networks don't exist (especially in census districts where there is a concentration of low income, sole parents or ethnic minorities), local authorities need to work hard to discover why there are people who are isolated, do not respond to invitations to join existing groups or associations, why they are excluded, or feel that they are excluded? While it is acceptable to speak of a community within geographical boundaries, in reality, in any geographical community we need to speak of communities of interest.

Authorities need to work with the residents, (especially with the marginalised), with established or potential communities of interest to develop appropriate networks or to expand those already in existence to be more inclusive.

The claim that “most of the people in our community are either members of well and long established networks or related to or neighbours of those who are members and who can be quickly contacted in the event of an emergency”, needs to be thoroughly tested. This research discovered that even in rural areas there were many people outside the existing networks.

There needs to be a process in place for regular meetings for the giving and dissemination of information, and regular testing of the means of communication in the event of an emergency or disaster, it is too late to do this when the disaster strikes. Our research revealed that there were a number of recovery managers who failed to do this

Either the task of recovery manager was an add on task and that their core position did not allow the time for pre-planning, training and testing, or that the position was one that frequently fell vacant so that there was a regular stream of new recovery managers who had no history of the community and the networks that did exist and little time, training and resources to carry out a thorough investigation of the composition of the community for which they had responsibility.

THE NEED TO HAVE IN PLACE EFFECTIVE TWO WAY COMMUNICATION PROCESSES

The need for good, open reliable communication was expressed time and time again. This plea was expressed as a consequence of conflict, confusion and frustrations mainly experienced in response activities but also as a result of poor communication during the recovery activities. In one recent fire area, there was a great deal of frustration and anger over the confusion, as a result of poor and inadequate communication between those at the fire front and those at the command centre. It took some time before the frustrations could be aired adequately.

At one of the community renewal locations, while valuable progress had been made in developing resident participation and involvement there still existed among some of the resident action groups a sense of being patronised. They produced a slogan that was also a plea, “don't insult us, talk to us.”

Regular, consistent, reliable communication is an essential element in any situation, but not always possible in regions with a very high concentration of ethnic communities. For example, in the city of Maribyrnong, (a suburb of Melbourne), there are over 60 **different**

language groups so special strategies have to be worked out to ensure that these groups are contacted and informed. This is particularly important with regard to the numerically smaller and perhaps more isolated and newly arrived groups. One such strategy was the establishment of a large community centre where over just a few years different programs have been introduced to encourage community gatherings and cross communication and fuller understanding of the cultures represented and the needs and contributions that can be confidently expressed. As a result there has been an increase of trust and social capital beyond that originally envisaged although some ethnic groups have yet to join fully in.

When people feel, or are powerless, reluctant to get involved or socially isolated, a community has less capacity to respond positively, especially in the face of significant changes in their lives.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX ONE

Questions to be shared with key individuals, focus groups and agencies

- What do you think the term “community” means?
- What do you think the term “community capacity” means?
- What do you think the term “community building” means?
- What is your understanding of the term ‘social capital’?

- How would you describe your community?
- What networks exist in your community?
- Are you a member of any of these networks? **YES? NO?**
- If ‘No’, could you describe why you’re not a member?

If ‘Yes’ then please answer the following questions:

- How would you describe your involvement in these networks?
- How and why did you become a member?
- Do you think your council aware of these networks, if so which ones?
- To what extent does the council make contact with the networks, how, when?
- How would you describe the relationship between the council and your particular network/s?
- Are there any local groups or people excluded or who don’t participate in these networks,
- If so which ones and why?
- How do you think your council assesses community capacity?
- How do you think they assess commitment?
- Do you think you or your network is involved in community capacity building?
- Describe your involvement or that of your network.

If ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ then please answer the following questions:

- Are there any of the other local networks involved in community building?
- What do you think needs to be done to improve community capacity building in your (a) municipality and (b), locality?
- How would you describe the role of local media in your locality in developing or encouraging the development of community building capacity in your (a) municipality and (b), locality?

Questions to both individuals and to the focus group.

General questions then to the focus groups after the specific ones have been dealt with:

- What do you/we understand then by: Municipality Capacity?
Municipal Commitment?
- How do you/we measure Capacity?
Commitment?

- What are the indicators?

Subsidiary questions. Do you/we mean:

- Having a plan?
- Having resources (or a plan and resources)?
That skills and knowledge part of capability?
- That trust/social capital needs to be present?
- Capability can exist without any of these?
- Perhaps it is an attitude or set of attitudes: flexibility, self-reliance, initiative, trust and so on.

We would also like to focus on volunteers and volunteerism”

- How would you describe the current situation in your suburb with regard to volunteers?
- How is volunteerism linked to municipal capacity and commitment?
- What is the extent to which your municipality depends on volunteers?
- Do they know about their roles and use them appropriately?
- How could they be better utilised in the processes of community capacity building?
- How about the capacity of non-government agencies CAPACITY and COMMITMENT to carry out their roles? Is this present in your locality?
- Does it matter if resources and skills are held centrally and controlled by the municipality

APPENDIX TWO

META - PRINCIPLES: ASSESSING COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY

These principles have been developed as broad guidelines by which community capacity building and disaster management, and the linkages between them, can be assessed.

These meta-principles are necessarily broad, acknowledging the complexity and individuality of every community and the unique circumstances in which they find themselves.

History, geography, demography, economics and a range of other factors combine to make every community and every setting unique. Each community is individual and each community and each group of people within a community face a specific suite of risks. It is therefore impossible to provide a detailed and specific template for assessment as the context in which assessment occurs may itself influence the structure, priorities and application of the template.

Nevertheless for purposes of policy development, resourcing and programme application it is necessary to have some basis for comparing different programmes and different communities.

The principles below form an indicative framework that can be tailored to the specific circumstances of each capacity building programme.

These meta-principles are derived from modern practice in policy development, programme implementation and management but they are also grounded in our research findings as they refer to effective and innovative practice in disaster management, effective practice in community capacity building and particularly in the expectations of local communities.

Our findings confirm that agencies, particularly where a risk management protocol is used, generally already act in accordance with the meta-principles we have nominated. The only significant area of deviation – and this is variable across the country – lies in the adequacy of resourcing (but we acknowledge other competing priorities and the often lack of continuity in the appointment of recovery managers) and the extent of community engagement in capacity building and disaster management processes.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

This addresses the extent to which programmes and the policies they reflect conform to contemporary standards.

INCLUSIVE PROCESSES:

Processes of local policy development and programme implementation need to be as fully inclusive as possible, across many social dimensions but including gender, ethnicity, religion, age, occupation and wealth. Experience shows that programmes that are not inclusive are often, to the contrary, divisive and counter-productive.

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

A clear legal authority to act reduces confusion and uncertainty and minimizes ambiguity, all of which can impede the development of effective disaster management plans and practice.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Accountability is necessary to ensure that even at local level compliance with explicit statutes and codes occurs and that local people have the capacity to monitor and critically assess performance. Accountability works in two directions at least. Down to the community and up to government. (Often accountability to the community is given only lip service rather than substance.)

TRANSPARENCY:

As well as being able to critically assess and review performance local communities also have to easily see that management and operational activity is compliant.

AGREED AND DEFINED PRIORITIES:

Competing interests exist even at local levels and even within programmes. Such competition can severely limit effectiveness of capacity building and disaster management processes. One means of minimizing competition (which itself often has value as a de facto mechanism of accountability and review) is to ensure that agencies, governments and groups agree on clearly stated priorities.

ADEQUATE RESOURCING

Adequate support seems obvious, though often the fact that it is taken for granted results in it being overlooked with the result that resources are inadequate to fully complete capacity building programmes. Resources are more than money

FINANCIAL ADEQUACY AND CONTINUITY

Financial support needs to be adequate to meet programme requirements (which in turn require proper cost assessment at the start of the project). Equally important – and typically neglected – is that funding has to be of sufficient duration for the project to be completed and to become self-sustaining. Many funding arrangements are for periods that are too short. At best this generates unnecessary work and uncertainty for programme officers as they repeatedly prepare new funding applications) at worst it leads to an uncertainty that demoralizes and paralyses the programme.

STAFF

Staff numbers need to be adequate for the process of programme development, start up, implementation, review and closure consequently there needs to be ongoing training and continuity of appointment.

SKILLS

Staff skills and the skills of local and agency contributors need to be adequate to the project. Enthusiasm, an indispensable ingredient, is not a substitute for skill.

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is required to support skills and it may exist in various forms. In particular knowledge of local circumstances (local risks, history, tradition and culture) is an essential ingredient for effective programmes.

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

The linkages between environmental processes, human activity located in the environment and so modifying that environment, the element of accident and design fault, of constrained choice as well as the societal determinants of risk are now accepted, if not fully understood. Any capacity building programme therefore that aims to deal with risks, vulnerabilities and disaster management capacity therefore needs to deal in an integrated way with the following four elements

SOCIAL

The links between people and groups and communities whether on a personal or formal or regulated basis

ECONOMIC/LIVELIHOODS

The human activities that focus on livelihoods, wealth generation and wealth distribution.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The relations between human society and activity and the natural world

CULTURAL

The values, norms and revealed behaviours of individuals and groups, including faith systems, diet, dress, behaviour, inter-personal and person to government relations and aspirations

SELF-SUSTAINING

Programmes and activities and the changes they achieve in the world need to be not just sustainable but also self-sustaining, whereby they contain a capacity within them that has to adapt to and to optimize relations with external systems.

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Any programme or entity needs to have the ability to respond positively to changes in its environment. This goes beyond just a learning capacity and requires the ability to learn and to respond to external and internal variables.

OVER THE HORIZON SCANNING

Much planning adopts a snapshot approach and is based on the current time period. Planning needs to look into the future for an agreed distance so that the plan remains relevant to an environment that inevitably changes. This requires an assessment of trends and the ability to look forward to estimate and anticipate changes before they exert a significant and irreversible impact.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Any programme or situation requires continuous monitoring and critical evaluation to ensure that it is still aimed at its agreed outcomes. This tracking of progress towards outcomes (or measurement of deviation from outcomes) requires a constant and self-aware critical assessment.

CHANGE MECHANISMS

Change and development is an inevitable concomitant of society and programmes and activities and goals exist within a dynamic context. The capacity to respond to change (related to adaptive capacity) is a prerequisite of any situation or system that wants to avoid ossification.

EXIT STRATEGIES

Not all situations are avoidable or retrievable and there may be situations and circumstances when the optimum strategy is retreat. In these cases an exit strategy to minimize disruption is needed.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community consultation is a requirement for all elements and all stages of community capacity building. It is counter-productive, and may be unethical, to impose change – however benign – on people who have not had the opportunity to contribute to that change process.

MECHANISMS FOR EXCHANGE, FEEDBACK AND REPORTING

The exchange of ideas, information and artefacts is a given – and is central to the meaning of community – constituent of any group or community. But how these are mediated may affect their meaning. Gossip and informal conversations have their place but are not appropriate mechanisms for the exchange and consideration and debate of crucial issues. For matters significant to the community – or to a part of the community – more formalized exchanges are required (though they may not be formal in tone or manner).

EFFECTIVENESS

Any programme needs to be effective in meeting its goals and needs to be efficient in minimizing the costs of attaining the specified outcomes.

EFFECTIVE

The capacity building programme must achieve its aims.

EFFICIENT

The capacity building programme must use the minimum resources necessary to achieve its outcomes

COST EFFECTIVE

Costs should be proportionate to benefits and this proportion agreed on prior to the programme beginning.

MULTI-LATERAL

Side, spin off and multilateral benefits should be maximized as should opportunities to share resources and information and skills with other projects so long as the cost of the collaboration is not to the detriment of any programme.

We have suggested these principles which may be used as a framework for assessing the effectiveness of capacity building programmes but can also be used to assess disaster management arrangements. This applies especially in the areas of mitigation where many programmes focus upon land use planning, economic development, infrastructure development and maintenance and which have applicability to a range of social and community priorities. These principles apply also to recovery activity which hopefully will be linked to mitigation to reduce future risks but also linked to development to take advantage of the resources that disasters often attract and the pause they give the community and government to think about the directions in which the community should move.

Beyond this we see that there is a necessity for disaster management, especially in the developed world, to draw upon the experience and knowledge of the humanitarian and development sectors. As a start it appears to us that other broad policy and governance frameworks have applicability to disaster management. These include Agenda 21 United Nations (9), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights United Nations (10) and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals World Bank (11). All these provide a set of standards against which we can assess community building and disaster management and which provide linkages between the two that can act as pathways of exchange and mutual support.

APPENDIX THREE

SOCIAL CAPITAL

In order to understand the concepts relating to Community Capacity Building one first has to understand the concept of Social Capital as the two concepts have been combined in the thinking of Policy makers from around the world in recent years.

The first of the definitions of social capital is taken from:

<http://www.bowlingalone.com/socialcapital.php3>

WHAT DOES "SOCIAL CAPITAL" MEAN?

The central premise of social capital is that social networks have value. Social capital refers to the collective value of all "social networks" [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other ["norms of reciprocity"].

HOW DOES SOCIAL CAPITAL WORK?

The term social capital emphasizes not just warm and cuddly feelings, but a wide variety of quite specific benefits that flow from the trust, reciprocity, information, and cooperation associated with social networks. Social capital creates value for the people who are connected and - at least sometimes - for bystanders as well.

SOCIAL CAPITAL WORKS THROUGH MULTIPLE CHANNELS:

- a. Information flows (e.g. learning about jobs, learning about candidates running for office, exchanging ideas at college, etc.) depend on social capital
- b. Norms of reciprocity (mutual aid) are dependent on social networks.
 - o Bonding networks that connect folks who are similar sustain particularized (in-group) reciprocity.
 - o Bridging networks that connect individuals who are diverse sustain generalized reciprocity.
- c. Collective action depends upon social networks (e.g., the role that the black church played in the civic rights movement) although collective action also can foster new networks.
- d. Social networks that help translate an "I" mentality into a "we" mentality encourage broader identities and solidarity.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL?

When a group of neighbors informally keep an eye on one another's homes, that's social capital in action. When a tightly knit community of Hassidic Jews trade diamonds without having to test each gem for purity, that's social capital in action. Barn-raising on the frontier was social capital in action, and so too are e-mail exchanges among members of a cancer support group. Social capital can be found in friendship networks, neighborhoods, churches, schools, bridge clubs, civic associations, and even bars. The motto in Cheers "where everybody knows your name" captures one important aspect of social capital.

Secondly, Wendy Stone and Jody Hughes provide an excellent introduction to Social Capital in their Research Paper 27 Social Capital Empirical meaning and measurement validity for the Australian Institute of Family Studies (2002).

<http://www.aifs.org.au/institute/pubs/RP27.pdf>

They state:

The essence of social capital is quality social relations. It is the quality of relationships, understood through the use of the concept “social capital”, which affects the capacity of people to come together to collectively resolve problems they face in common (Stewart-Weeks and Richardson 1998: 2), and achieve outcomes of mutual benefit (Lochner et al. 1999). Thus, social capital can be understood as a resource to collective action, which may lead to a broad range of outcomes, of varying social scale. For individuals, this can mean access to the reciprocal, trusting social connections that help the processes of getting by or getting ahead. For communities, social capital reflects the ability of community members to participate, cooperate, organise and interact (Cavaye 2001) (2001 P1).

Stone and Hughes go on to describe “bonding”, “bridging” and “linking” as the different characteristics of social capital as outlined in the literature:

Bonding social capital refers to trust and reciprocity in dense or closed networks, and helps the process of “getting by” in life on a daily basis. In contrast, “getting ahead” tends to be facilitated through bridging social capital involving overlapping networks, which may make accessible the resources, and opportunities, which exist in one network to a member of another. Heterogeneity or diversity of network members (in informal or formal groups) is argued to enhance the bridging capabilities of social capital. Finally, linking social capital involves social relations with those in authority, which might be used to garner resources or power (2001 P4)...The size and capacity of social networks may affect overall stocks of social capital. Individuals and families with large numbers of social ties *may* have access to a large stock of social capital, depending on the nature of those ties. Those with few social ties may thus have little access or opportunity to invest in social capital (P4).

...Enhancing social capital is anticipated to facilitate other outcomes, such as economic growth in a region, or public health (P6).

Social capital, like other “capitals”, is argued to be both facilitated by certain factors, and in turn produce various outcomes. These outcomes may serve to further facilitate social capital. In the example of local area safety, a sense of safety in an area might facilitate residents becoming acquainted, which in turn might enable them to act together, and further facilitate reduced crime (either directly, through working on a joint project about crime reduction, or indirectly, by informally looking out for one another’s property, and the like) (P6).

APPENDIX FOUR

THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT'S COMMUNITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

What is Community Building?

Community building has emerged as a key policy theme as governments around the world seek ways of addressing increasingly complex issues facing contemporary society. It is a process whereby communities, government, business and philanthropy work together to achieve agreed social, economic and environmental outcomes. It works by government listening to what local people believe could improve their community and sharing ideas about how these changes can be achieved. Community building can be relevant to any community but often targets communities that are characterised by inequity and disadvantage.

The word 'community' here usually means a local area, neighbourhood, suburb or town. But a community might also be a group of people who have common interests or problems they want to address. They may share social or cultural backgrounds, or hold similar aspirations.

Community building places particular emphasis on the role of social capital and partnerships. It seeks to strengthen relationships within communities and between communities and government.

Processes that are closely related to, or may be part of, community building include community capacity building, community renewal and place management.

How does community building work?

- Engages local people in a shared vision for revitalising their communities.
- Develops a range of community initiatives and projects to achieve long-term positive change.
- Builds local skills and knowledge to increase participation in government programs.
- Increases opportunities for positive social interaction within communities.
- Encourages and celebrates social and cultural diversity.

What can community building achieve for communities?

- New partnerships between community members, organisations and government that lead to reform of government services.
- Greater community capacities to address critical issues and develop action strategies.
- Greater social cohesion and participation in community activities.
- New opportunities for social, economic and environmental development.

Community outcomes

The community building programs and projects will generate outcomes in the following areas:

- Access to services that enable a healthy and active life.
- Participation in education to gain skills and knowledge.
- Crime prevention that create safer environments where people are confident to live.
Participation in employment and enterprises to develop skills, ideas and generate a community that experiences economic growth.
- Strategies that protect natural resources and assist neighbourhoods to create a healthy and friendly environment.
- Promotion of legal and civil rights, and activities that value cultural diversity and create a respectful, tolerant and fair community.
- Governance processes that encourage an open, inclusive and democratic community.

APPENDIX FIVE

Wendouree West Neighbourhood Renewal

Wendouree West is located Northwest of the City of Ballarat and is home to some 2,500 people.

In 1956 the Olympic games came to town with the rowing competitions being held on Lake Wendouree.

Around this time a new housing estate was built in Wendouree West consisting of around 1000 pre - fabricated weatherboard and brick veneer dwellings.

Approximately 47% of these buildings are public housing properties while the remaining 53% are privately owned.



A plan of Wendouree West



Existing Wendouree West House



The Hon. Bronwyn Pike MP, Minister for Community Services and Housing at the Wendouree West launch April 2001

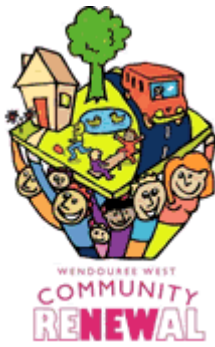
On the 29th of April the Hon. Bronwyn Pike MP Minister for Housing and Community Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on Community Building, visited the estate and launched the Community Renewal Process.

Local priorities for Wendouree West include encouraging residents, Government, Councils, service providers, businesses and the whole community, to work together in building on the strengths of the local community to create positive and lasting change. Those involved share a vision of a successful, thriving community where people want to live.

The Wendouree West Neighbourhood Renewal plan comprises two key stages. The first stage is the initiation and development of a Community Renewal Process (CRP). A Steering Committee has been established to oversee this process. The Steering Committee is co-ordinating the efforts of five subcommittees in identifying issues and developing proposals in the following action areas: (1) Learning, Employment and Economic Development, (2) Community Safety, (3) Housing, (4) Community Well Being and (5) Community Works and Environment. Residents, government departments, council, service providers and private enterprise are represented on each of these committees.



Wendouree West's Resident Group on research trip to Long Gully



A key component of Neighbourhood Renewal is resident / community consultation and to ensure that this occurs, a Residents Group has been created which reviews proposals from the 5 subcommittees and engages the residents of Wendouree West in the renewal process. The Residents Group is also playing a leading role in developing the pride and strength of the local community. A Whole of Government Group has also been established to co-ordinate the process at a regional level.

A comprehensive promotional campaign encouraged residents to attend an information session in June 2001. A positive response from the community has led to over 45 residents participating in the various committees.

In October 2001, residents conducted a door knock of every household in the area to talk to residents about the renewal process and promote a housing forum and community BBQ. This successful strategy generated a lot of community interest in Neighbourhood Renewal and saw over 150 people attend the forum.

In December 2001 the Residents Group produced and delivered a newsletter to every household in the area.

A Community Action Plan (CAP) detailing strategies for Neighbourhood Renewal was released in May 2002. The second stage of the plan is the implementation of the strategies outlined in the CAP. While some strategies are already making a difference in the community, it is anticipated that further strategies will roll out over a five to ten year period.



The first information session held with residents

A display house has been created which shows the range of housing options available to residents. Residents from 12 properties have decided on design options for their properties and work is scheduled to commence in the near future. Three workers from the Office of Housing have moved into an office at the rear of this display house to service the housing needs of residents in the area.



The Wendouree West display house

A Tool Lending program to allow residents to borrow gardening equipment and receive information on gardening techniques is being considered.

Redevelopment projects will be undertaken for existing parks.



Vacant shops in Hyacinth Grove prior to redevelopment by Uniting Care Outreach

The Community Jobs Program (CJP) will provide training and employment opportunities for 100 local residents. CJP participants will gain 16 weeks of employment at award wages as well as accredited training in carpentry, painting, landscaping and in other household renovation skills.

Local residents will also gain employment through the refurbishment of abandoned local shops purchased by Uniting



The repainted shops

Care Outreach. These shops have been repainted and consultations are currently occurring with the community on potential use, possible suggestions include:

- A café with outdoor dining and BBQ area,
- A Community Operated Food & Produce Shop
- A factory outlet selling second hand clothes and furniture
- Appliances Repair and Recycling shop
- A gymnasium and fitness centre
- Offices

Crime and Safety

The Community Safety Committee has canvassed interest in establishing a Neighbourhood Watch program to create a better sense of security. In addition sensor lights are being installed for all households to provide an enhanced sense of personal safety.

Health and Wellbeing

A recreation worker has been employed on a part time basis to look at recreation options and needs within Wendouree West.

Access to Services

The Residents Group have developed and distributed a Residents Kit containing a map of the area and details of all the local services available.

The Ballarat Community Health Centre has established a Telecommunity at the Community House to provide the community with access to communications technology and computer training.

Plans are underway to establish a technological "Community Gateway". Many residents have expressed concerns of feeling disempowered and "left out of the loop" when it comes to using the internet, accessing local support services and participating in local democratic processes. The Community Gateway project will address these concerns by providing residents with a place where they can learn how to use the internet and other communication technologies to improve their ability to communicate with Government and each other.

APPENDIX SIX

CASE STUDIES

Lewisham (South East London) 6 January.2003

Post 11 September 2001 emergency planning has operated on 2 levels: 1) 9 11 scenario, 2) at a more practical and localised level. It is becoming almost impossible to identify all threats therefore it is difficult to have a set of plans for individual events. Effective communications between key organisations is critical. Managers need a clear and understood community network and known and current contact arrangements. Redundancy in systems is necessary and the ramifications of this needs to be understood and allowed for. There is now a heightened sense of community impacts e.g. within the Church. Lewisham's EM plan just deals with mega-disasters but it is necessary to also have contingency plans for localised events. In Lewisham CC there is dialogue between social services units but no formalised plan. But there is a link between community partnerships, community networks and EM planning but again this is an area in need of development.

There is the need to emphasise positive social trends and not organise around vulnerability. There should be an investment in resilience. For example Neighbourhood Watch is organised around crime but it should be organised around "community spirit".

The role of the public authority is to build civic identity and pride e.g. through Neighbourhood wardens, street leaders who are tasked with dealing with crime etc but local people talk to them in ways that they will not talk to local government. These wardens being local and trusted bring people out of their homes, build trust and improve social capital. Although a comment from the Mayor was that these leaders are not always in contact with many in their streets and may not be the most appropriate persons for the role. A similar comment is made about Neighbourhood Watch coordinators who are often viewed as 'busybodies. As well, with an artificially constructed process such as street wardens you can professionalise the process and so estrange the local community

Lewisham had also established a Citizen Panel - 1000 people rotated through 3-year terms (as they become "expert" and non-local who are consulted on council initiatives by telephone survey).

Some of the conclusions raised at this meeting were that:

- Communities can usefully do a degree of self-policing.
- Community resilience is an attribute of the community rather than of imposed solutions or even of links with the DM network
 - Need to make the DM and police communities more aware of the shortcomings in how they approach the community.
 - Community resilience may apply across dispersed communities such as ethnic groups or extended families.
 - Formal services will never reach some people, they will not come out and they will not respond to formal services
 - Have to acknowledge that statutory agencies cannot be every where all the time and thus gaps in need have to be addressed.

- "The investment is in a community that aspires to and can sustain a place worth living in."
- London may be more resilient because recent social change e.g. immigration has forced adaptation.

Leonard Stanley (a village in) Gloucestershire, UK

(interviews on 7 January 2002 and 27 January 2002)

Following storms in October 2002 power was lost to several hundred homes.

Commentary:

Community services, such as police and emergency planning were tangential to this spontaneous community exercise in Leonard Stanley and municipal support has been minimal. This suggests that grassroots activities can occur in the absence of government and institutionalised support. But it appears the respondent who coordinated the local response has strong informal links with police and others services such as the media. This may indicate that community building occurs informally, or at least that very local - street by street - initiatives can drive community building.

In Leonard Stanley, local agencies such as Police and Council have been supportive but have not taken the initiative.

The importance of local leadership in community development and capacity building was evident in Leonard Stanley, yet even there, where positive actions occurred there were some negatives. For example, W is a local leader who finds it difficult to generate broad, local support. This mirrors the Australian experience of local leaders cycling through a series of community groups. It would be our contention that local, inherent leadership must exist prior to development initiatives, at least as a seed or anchor for further development. Without this, any recovery process will be hampered whilst networks are established or tapped in to and leaders are trained or brought to the fore.

The Lewisham and Leonard Stanley municipalities have supported local initiatives in capacity building and in developing disaster management capacity. But these efforts have been in support of local initiatives or local capacity which existed in embryonic form prior to municipal involvement. This suggests a role for government of support and strengthening and resourcing rather than of leadership.

Issues of professionalism of volunteers and exhaustion of local leadership may counter efforts to improve capacity where they drain or impose unnecessary constraints on local volunteers. The process of empowerment may estrange the empowered from their communities.

Those involved in capacity building must be careful to recognise the modalities and culture of 'communities' (recognizing all of the problems we have with this term and which may be area specific or dispersed over a wide area) - which can be built upon to enhance capacity; if ignored it may reduce the efficacy of capacity building efforts.

Defining "community" is critical because many 'communities' (especially of religion or ethnicity) are widely dispersed over various geographic units. Here geography, except for distance and travel time, is irrelevant. In both these case studies, local initiatives and efforts

were critical and could be substituted by organisational efforts. In Lewisham it was recognised in discussions that many residents might have little or no connection with their neighbours and little interest (or even capacity to join in activities) in actually being part of any 'community'.

Increased community capacity (where trust, skills, knowledge, confidence are developed) crossed many boundaries to influence disparate programme areas, including DM. This suggests that capacity building may have generic outcomes that benefit many areas. Post hoc this leads us to ask what qualities DM possesses that are not possessed by other programme areas. This suggests in turn that, say, information networks that serve a number of functional areas, may overlap or be so intricately networked that they are in effect one neutral or organic network; this conceptualises information exchange as flowing through a single, but multi-dimensional network rather than across or between individual, functionally specific networks.

North East Victorian Fires, 2003

Complex and compounding problems have been noted which could have been dealt with more readily, and may not even have been present to the extent they were, if more affective capacity building programs had been in place across the region prior to the event. We recognise that even if they were, many residents etc would not have participated in such programs and may also have been new to the district. Changeover of relevant staff would also have diminished the various authorities' local knowledge and trust in the service providers would also be diminished in such circumstances.

Multiple problems faced the residents such as: drought, water was scarce, cattle were being culled, Fires also added to the problems. Water in dams, storage areas and tanks were in a number of areas commandeered by the CFA to fight the fires and farmers wanted to know, especially in remote areas, how to replace the water, at whose cost and from where? Clearly simple things such as this can break down trust in a locality as the CFA members are usually also neighbours, friends, colleagues and are usually known to those affected.

With fires raging for over three weeks, all the people in the Alpine Shire were affected as every town was threatened. Constant repetition of being put on alert, high alert and then stood down as the threat was contained. People emotionally exhausted and many have, as we write, reached the stage of wishing that the fires would come and get the threat over with one way or another. Staff, leaders, volunteers were all similarly affected, having to go to work, then rush home to cope with the threat and then return to work. Yet they are expected to return to work, exhibiting the same levels of competency as before as if nothing had happened, e.g. teachers, DHS staff, community agency personnel etc. The 'capacity to cope' in such circumstances is stressed to the limit.

The CFA who have conducted many community group information sessions have been seen as saviours and as villains. When the township of Porepunkah was threatened the people were warned that nothing could save the town and to evacuate, and those who stayed did so accepting their own responsibility for anything that eventuated. When the threat diminished due to wind change and a break in the weather the CFA were criticised as alarmists.

In Omeo the same warning was given. There were some who stayed to fight the fires and lost property. No CFA fire trucks came to their assistance. The people felt abandoned and punished for going against the advice to evacuate.

A Regional Recovery Committees was established and was seen as providing back up resources for the Municipal Recovery committees.

What the affect has been on the local people and on their coping capacities can be seen in what their immediate needs were and what the responses were to the disaster. These needs have been seen as:

- Solving the water problem
- Identifying key community leaders and professionals who as they take up their duties need to be given assistance to manage their own recovery.
- Support for the distressed
- Personal support for those already involved in recovery programs and who for almost a month have gone through a high arousal acute stage, waiting stage, recovery stage. High arousal suggests that they cannot be expected to know what they need this would be particularly true for teachers now that the schools have reopened
- Medical and health needs, smoke inhalation, water contamination.
- Added problems for the disabled, aged, young. Medically impaired
- Accurate and up to date information.
- Deal with growing anger and scape goating e.g. the 'greenies' who stopped high country grazing, curtailed timber industry, and controlled burning programs in the national parks.
- Economic renewal as all the towns and townships depend on the tourist dollar.
- Employment, unemployment, decreased hours.
- Each area has its own culture and history, with potential conflict for the allocation of resources
- Resort Management. The fires and following damage to property and the burning within the national parks have affected all the Alpine resorts,; it will take years for regeneration to occur.
- .Fodder, fencing, especially where farms abut national parks
- Still in the middle of the bushfire season
- Media, accused of exaggerating the proximity of the fires to the resorts and towns
- Publicity to inform population of their entitlements in grants etc.

APPENDIX SEVEN

Wilton Park (United Kingdom) Conference on Disaster Preparedness 9 - 11 September 2002

WORKSHOP SESSION HOW TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL OF DISASTER PRONE COMMUNITIES: NOTES

These notes are included because representatives from the developed and the developing world met in this workshop to consider issues of improving community engagement in disaster management and represented a diversity of cultures, agencies and perspectives.

The representative of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC) said that it is major disasters that have dominated and shaped thinking on policy and development but most disaster mgt. work is on local events

A key issue is how to use existing capacity better rather than to develop new capacity - support local coping strategies and local capacity.

Key principles for ICRC include:

- Mapping and assessing vulnerabilities and capacities
- Achieve more accurate definition of problems
- Use low cost and appropriate technologies
- Use local committees to prepare plans and disseminate information using a variety of media
- Support local networks
- Engage in education and awareness training

Other issues arising from the general discussion:

- Building capacity requires new skills that go beyond disaster management skills
- Multiple vulnerabilities need multiple responses as building capacity is a long term process - typically in excess of 3 Years - but most agencies work on 1 year funding cycles; funding needs to be multi-year
- How is success to be measured? How are outcomes related to investments?
- Volunteers have only so much time to give to DM (disaster management) and in many areas are declining in numbers
- Capacity building is a political process because it depends on and results in empowering people and it should address the underlying causes of vulnerability
- Disaster reduction should be linked to livelihood management
- Promote and develop local leadership)
- Distinguish between community based and community level
- Rhetoric of community based activity is not matched by the practice
- An issue in community development and similar practice is that while there may be a multiplicity of pilot projects often these are not (or cannot be) replicated
- Skills will be sustainable if they are useful and relevant
- Procedural complexity of the capacity building/vulnerability assessment processes is high and may impede success

- Complexity exists where the outcome is not predictable (within agreed limits) from initial conditions.
- Whose capacity are we talking about: locality, community, family, clan/tribe/caste...?
- Community as defined geographically may have no functional or intellectual value. Locality, defined as close physical proximity is significant only where there are issues of common interest that bind people together into a community. It is the issue, not the proximity that is significant. Proximity only appears significant because certain services are provided on the basis of geographic area. If they were provided more obviously on the basis, say, of personal or class characteristic - say, age, gender - then proximity would be and would appear to be less important

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