

Livingstone Shire Council

November 2019 Bushfires: Local Recovery and Resilience Plan
 Endorsed by the Livingstone Shire Local Disaster Management Group
 on 14 November 2019



Recovery narrative

About our community

The Livingstone Shire local government area covers approximately 11,700km², from Stanage Bay in the north, the Keppel Island Group to the east, Nerimbera in the south and Ogmoo and Mount Gardiner in the west. The main population centres are Emu Park and Yeppoon, situated approximately 600km north of Brisbane on Queensland's Capricorn Coast. Livingstone Shire boasts a unique and relaxed lifestyle, strong community values, and diverse natural landscapes. Livingstone Shire has an average daily temperature of 17.8°C and 27.1°C and receives an average of 938mm of rainfall each year. Livingstone Shire's solid economic growth is built on a variety of industries including agriculture, mining and retailing; however, it is best known for tourism, which is based on a variety of natural, cultural, and entertainment attractions.

About the disaster event

On the afternoon of Saturday, 9 November 2019, a fire broke out on Old Byfield Road in Cobraball, a locality in Livingstone Shire. In a matter of hours, the fire spread very quickly and threatened lives and properties. Evacuations began that evening and continued throughout the night and into the next day. In total, approximately 11,500 hectares were affected. Many properties were damaged or destroyed, including fourteen homes which were completely destroyed. Livestock, wildlife, and other animals were also affected, along with significant damage to the natural landscape. Repatriations were completed on 13 November, when the last roads were re-opened to residents. Nineteen localities in Livingstone Shire were impacted, including Barmaryee, Bungundarra, Cobraball, Adelaide Park, Farnborough, Inverness, Lake Mary, and Woodbury.

Local Recovery Group

Chaired by: David Mazzaferri (Local Disaster/Recovery Coordinator)

Four Recovery and Resilience Taskforces have been established, which serve as sub-groups to the Livingstone Shire Local Disaster Management Group. These are:

- Economic and Regional Development;
- Community Development;
- Environment and Regulatory; and
- Built environment.

Key stakeholders

Stakeholders include lead state government agencies, community groups, non-government organisations and associations, local businesses and trade associations, service providers, community members, and other invested parties.

Recovery objectives

- 1 Road safety issues are addressed and roads re-opened quickly.
- 2 Evacuated residents are repatriated (return home or to appropriated longer-term accommodation).
- 3 Essential services (water, power, telecommunications) are restored and repaired safely and efficiently.
- 4 Burnt/damaged guideposts and signs are removed or replaced as required.
- 5 A comprehensive environmental impact/damage assessment is completed.
- 6 Animal welfare concerns are identified and addressed.
- 7 A comprehensive assessment of economic damage to assets and key industries is undertaken.
- 8 Support to farmers, rural landholders, and small businesses impacted by the event is coordinated and effective.
- 9 Funding is sought and secured to ensure holistic recovery and resilience-building initiatives (including improving economic growth, stability, and diversity).
- 10 Funding is lobbied for and secured for a Recovery and Bushfire Resilience Officer to work with the community and agencies.
- 11 Funding is secured for development of a *Resilience Strategy*.
- 12 Ongoing support for environmental health and revegetation programmes is coordinated and sustainable.
- 13 Ongoing industry and business resilience strategies are developed in collaboration with relevant groups and agencies.
- 14 Ongoing holistic support is made available to affected residents to address all recovery and resilience needs.
- 15 Ongoing community-led recovery and resilience initiatives are identified, developed, and supported.

Measures of success

Human and social

- Evacuated residents are repatriated quickly and effectively.
- Residents impacted by the event have access to a range of supports (including funding sources, psychosocial support, and community activities/programmes).
- Funding is sought and obtained to support holistic recovery and resilience-building initiatives.
- Ongoing community-led recovery and resilience strategies are established.

Economic

- There is an appropriate understanding of the economic impacts of the event (including impacts on industry and primary producers, and measures of financial assistance and donations provided).
- Primary producers and small businesses have access to appropriate support and financial assistance.
- Funding is sought and obtained to support holistic recovery and resilience-building initiatives.
- Ongoing economic resilience strategies are established (including continuity and recovery implementation planning).

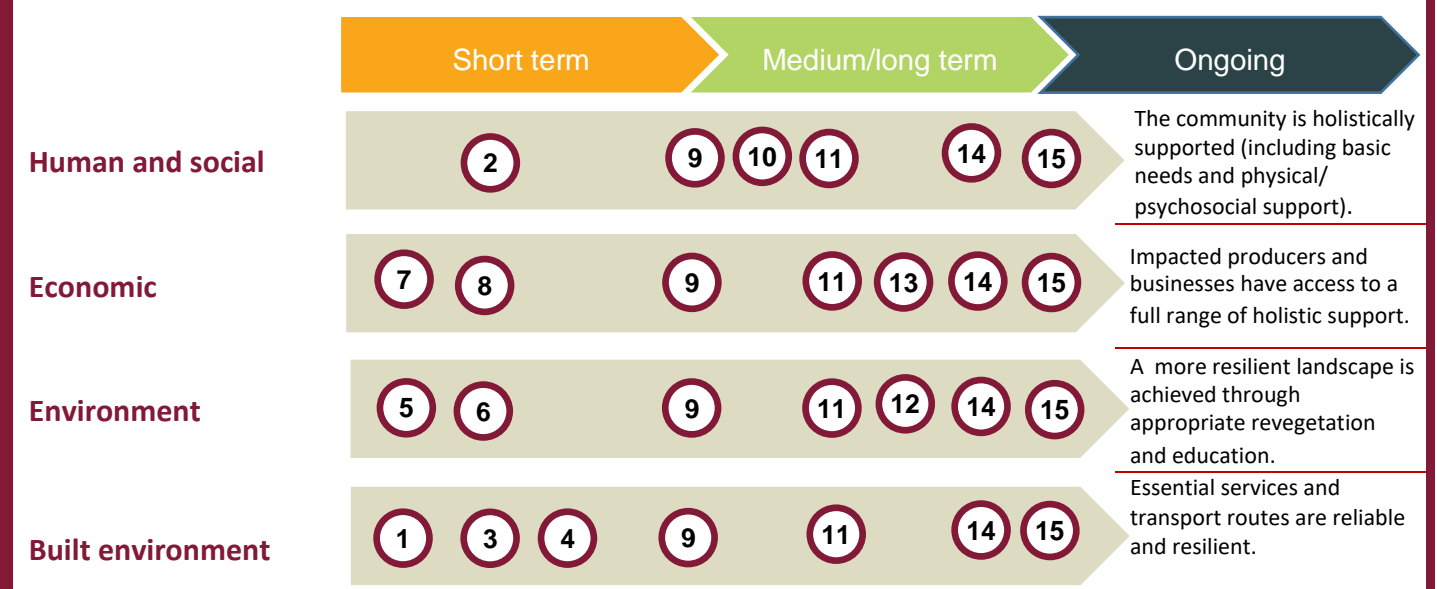
Environment

- Damage assessments are compiled and shared with appropriate agencies.
- Animal welfare issues are identified and addressed
- Environmental health hazards are reduced through provision of appropriate information (including hazardous waste disposal, biosecurity measures, and safe vegetation clearing).
- Funding for ongoing recovery and environmental rehabilitation programmes is sought and secured (including erosion control measures, appropriate revegetation, and community awareness campaigns).

Built environment

- Essential services are restored in a timely and effective manner.
- Roads are cleared and re-opened to residents quickly.
- Funding is sought and secured to support reconstruction of assets and development of resilient infrastructure.

Recovery timeframes



Damage and impacts

Human and social

- Loss of 14 homes and 37 other structures
- 1,064 dwellings effected by event
- Significant loss of / damage to property (including vehicles, fences, and machinery)
- Evacuations for 78 hours +
- Loss of power for 5 days + for some residents
- Exacerbation of health concerns due to smoke inhalation
- Significant and extended psychosocial, mental, and financial stress related to cumulative effect of multiple disasters in recent years

Economic

- Loss of income for primary producers (including destruction of approximately 8,500 hectares of grazing land and 275 hectares of horticultural production land)
- Loss of income for peri-urban producers and small producers
- Significant financial losses for residents (including loss of income, loss of home / contents, sheds, machinery, and vehicles)
- 747 properties (rated against productivity land use) impacted – *currently being validated*
- Evacuated residents unable to feed and water stock for extended period of time

Environment

- Significant loss of vegetation across 11,500 hectares and associated psychosocial implications related to destruction of environment
- Significant loss of / injuries to wildlife and other animals
- Major impact on protected species and localised extinction risk
- Increase in green waste (burnt / damaged trees and vegetation) on properties

Built environment

- Damage to approximately 100 guideposts and 20 signs
- Damage to Energy Queensland infrastructure
- Significant damage to trees on road reserves at risk of falling onto roads
- Extensive road closure throughout event

Recovery tasks

Human and social

- Essential services (water, power, telecommunications) repaired and restored
- Appropriate longer-term accommodation coordinated for residents whose homes were destroyed
- Coordination of donations and offers of support to effected residents
- Community Recovery Hub established to address immediate needs of residents
- Effected residents have access to emergency funding sources and are supported in making applications
- Health/social/psychosocial wellbeing of effected residents to be monitored and assessed
- Partnership with appropriate agencies
- Lobby for funding for ongoing case coordination to support effected residents
- Promote positive news stories about community recovery and resilience
- Coordinate community debriefing at an appropriate time following the event
- Develop *Community Fire Management Plans* in collaboration with residents to ensure strategic fire breaks/community resources/communication methods are understood and gaps are addressed where required
- Develop strategies to promote community connectedness and social inclusion
- Coordinate community education opportunities to ensure residents have access to accurate and appropriate information
- Seek funding to ensure the community is supported in recovering from this event and that resilience to future events is enhanced (including funding for a Recovery and Bushfire Resilience Officer and development of a *Resilience Strategy*)
- Support to schools for education and assurance on all hazards and risks

Recovery tasks (cont.)

Economic

- Liaise with agencies (including Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services) and landholders to assess economic impact of the event
- Develop a functional tool for capturing economic costs of disasters for use in future events
- Ensure barriers to logistical issues (including transportation and storage) are reduced
- Promote positive news stories about the local economy and market stability/recovery
- Develop and implement strategies to maximise use of local resources during reconstruction activities (*a Local Content Plan*)
- Work with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate a ‘one-government’, holistic approach to recovery
- Work with primary producers, small businesses, and relevant agencies to develop business/industry recovery implementation plans
- Ensure businesses and industry have access to information on funds, grants, and loans available from government and other entities
- Provide targeted information regarding business continuity planning
- Facilitate education sessions to ensure landholders understand insurance needs
- Seek funding to ensure local producers and businesses can recover and economic resilience is improved for future events
- Identify, implement, and seek funding for programs to build economic growth, stability, and diversity in the area

Built environment

- Reparation and restoration of essential services (power, water, waste, telecommunications)
- Inspection and removal of burnt trees on road reserves
- Promote positive news stories about restoration of infrastructure
- Seek funding opportunities to support holistic recovery and resilience efforts, including measures to ensure ongoing resilience and reliability of essential infrastructure
- Work with relevant stakeholders to develop *Community Fire Management Plans* to ensure strategic fire breaks / community resources / communication methods are understood and gaps addressed where required
- Develop ongoing resilience strategies in collaboration with community members and relevant agencies
- Examine and improve the resilience of critical infrastructure

Environment

- Conduct desktop and field assessments including direct fire damage, contamination, mechanical clearing, and downstream impacts
- Liaise with relevant state agencies to ensure coordinated, holistic support is offered to impacted residents during recovery
- Obtain and provide advice to assist landholders regarding environmental health hazards (including water quality, disposing of food waste, asbestos removal, and vegetation disposal)
- Obtain and provide biosecurity advice and safety measures for fodder and water transport and vehicles entering properties
- Restore/retain/maintain areas for erosion control purposes on public land as required
- Work with landholders to implement long-term erosion control measures
- Facilitate natural revegetation and develop rehabilitation plans for environmental assets
- Coordinate projects for revegetation/weed control
- Conduct community education sessions to ensure landholders understand insurance needs
- Seek funding to ensure local producers and businesses can recover and economic resilience is improved for future events
- Identify, implement, and seek funding for programs to build economic growth, stability, and diversity in the area
- Reparation and restoration of essential services (power, water, waste, telecommunications)
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- Work with relevant stakeholders to develop *Community Fire Management Plans* to ensure strategic fire breaks / community resources / communication methods are understood and gaps addressed where required
- Develop ongoing resilience strategies in collaboration with community members and relevant agencies
- Examine and improve the resilience of critical infrastructure