



National Taskforce for Creative Recovery

Recommendations to embed the specialist skills and capacity of creative practices of arts and culture as a key component of Australia's disaster management systems

August, 2022

Acknowledgement

The National Taskforce for Creative Recovery acknowledge and pay respects to the First Peoples of Australia from the past, present and into the future. Recognising the right to have a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the journey of healing through a creative recovery model, the Taskforce strives to listen, connect and advocate for a First Peoples lens to be embedded throughout all levels in the disaster management and arts and culture space.

Introduction

The National Taskforce for Creative Recovery is a cross-sector collaboration bringing together key leaders in disaster management, mental health, government, and the arts.

The Taskforce members have a common aim to find new approaches to the challenges being faced by Australians from the impact of disasters. We aim to strengthen the capacity for individuals, communities and the nation as a whole to cope, and restore livelihoods and wellbeing.

This Taskforce has considered ideas and opportunities to embed the specialist skills and capacity of creative practices of arts and culture as a key component of Australia's disaster management systems.

Informed by a strong evidence base, the Taskforce has explored how creative practice can benefit the health and wellbeing of people and their families, add value to processes used to transform systems, and equip specialist disaster managers with new skills and techniques.

Acknowledged at all levels of government, the context and scale of today's challenges require us all to do things differently, and together. The Taskforce has been responding to increasing and compounding potential for harm and loss to our social fabric, the environment, infrastructure, and economies. The recommendations outlined below are necessarily ambitious, respond to a growing sense of urgency, and foster collaborative relationships to meet the needs of our time.

The recommendations are the result of the Taskforce members' extensive experience, industry knowledge, commitment, and deep relational understanding about the value of culture and the arts as a stimulus for community empowerment, collective decision making and hope.

While the Taskforce itself has ended, the alliance it has established will continue to work in partnership with colleagues across government, service organisations, the private sector and in the community. The Alliance will use these recommendations to activate, educate and embrace collective approaches to grow a resilience and an equitable future for all. We urge everyone to join us in this endeavour.

Contributing Parties

Taskforce member	Position
Collin Sivalingum (Chair)	State Emergency Services Manager, Red Cross Australia
Dr Stephen Carbone	Founder / CEO, Prevention United
Jacqui Cristiano	Director, Social and Environmental Policy, National Recovery and Resilience Agency
Jillian Edwards	Specialist Disaster Risk and Resilience Advisor; Director Beyond Business as Usual
Natalie Egleton	CEO, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
Amanda Leck	(Former) Executive Director, Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
Scotia Monkivitch	CEO, Creative Recovery Network
Elizabeth Robertson	Rep: Australian Local Government Association, Senior Policy Officer, Local Government NSW
Sam Savage	Northern Queensland Emergency Services Regional Coordinator, National Indigenous Disaster Management Network, Red Cross
Joe Toohey	Executive Director, Regional Arts Victoria

Founded on the knowledge that disaster resilience is the responsibility of all sectors, the Taskforce has built a greater understanding of the role of culture and the arts in strengthening recovery from disaster and advocating for this capability to be incorporated into the vital work of disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

Roles arts and culture play in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and prevention

Prepare and Imagine: Building Community Capability

Creative processes add value to existing community development and preparedness activities, with broad potential to introduce the use of Indigenous knowledges and myriad ways for people to participate and deepen relationships.

Creative projects ensure layered, diverse, and equitable engagement. Collaborative engagement and investment in creative approaches across portfolios ensures a deepening of reach and impact, grounded in a common vision for stronger, more resilient communities.

Established in 2014 the Creative Recovery Network, through its training, mentoring, development, and dissemination of practice standards, supports people with the skills and knowledge to contribute to the growth of confident, connected, collaborative and inclusive communities.

Respond and Care: Creating Safe Spaces

Creative processes create the space for people to unpack their trauma experiences in a safe and supportive environment, making sense of the unimaginable. This is particularly important in response phases for both impacted community members and response workers attempting to manage the ongoing upheaval and impacts of a disaster. Arts-led processes offer rest, human connection, nurture, and a sense of hope, from which people can make decisions for their future. By creating these safe spaces, Creative Recovery contributes to a positive, sustainable social wellbeing impact in communities.

Recover and Adapt: Supporting Wellbeing and Identity

Creative Recovery is driven by principles of community-led, people centred engagement, empowering people through creative participatory practice, supporting and driving the necessity of place-making and reimagining new futures together. This approach encourages self-organising and ownership in diverse communities. It facilitates the organic path to recovery rather than an authoritative approach which can be damaging or inappropriate for communities. It provides a sense of value and acknowledgement of the strength and resilience within a community and equip them to participate in their own recovery path.

Prevent and Grow: Supporting Education and Connection

Culture and the arts play a vital role in facilitating safe and accessible spaces for the delivery of important information, resources, and education, building community capacity and stronger social cohesion. In partnership with disaster management stakeholders, creative practice enables new ways of engaging in disaster management and enhances the roles, responsibilities, and meaningful engagement strategies to engage and collaborate with community.

Taskforce Recommendations

Members of the National Taskforce for Creative Recovery, in the spirit of advancing the wellbeing of all Australians and aligning and unifying efforts to reduce the risk of harm from disasters, have agreed to continue as a collaborative network, an Alliance, to promote and advance the importance of the following recommendations:

First Peoples Voice

1. Acknowledge First Peoples wisdom and cultural protocols. This enriches self-determination and community-led practices and is foundational for long term systemic change.

Enabling actions:

- Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols and work to highlight the value of First Peoples cultural heritage and the need for their acknowledgement, leadership, and protection.
- Give precedence in recovery and mitigation programs to loss of sites of cultural significance from disasters and prioritise their recovery.

Strategy, Planning and Activation

2. All levels of government, disaster management, business and community organisations, embed Creative Practice in disaster management planning, investment and bipartisan commitment.

3. All levels of government, non-government agencies and academic institutions commit to and/or invest in impact research to demonstrate the value of Creative Practice programs in disaster management, for the wellbeing, preparedness and recovery of communities across Australia.

Enabling actions:

- Recognise and include the Creative Recovery Network as a key stakeholder representing the arts and culture community in disaster management.
- Support Creative Recovery Network to design and implement a good practice creative activation model to work within existing disaster management systems.
- Engage with the Creative Recovery Network on the development of protocols to support the use of creative practice within disaster management, for example: grant making and tender processes.
- Use the Creative Recovery Handbook to embed arts and culture and Creative Practice within existing disaster management frameworks, disaster planning and exercising.
- Work together to educate organisations and communities about the value and application of Creative Practice as part of community resilience building.
- Profile and acknowledge the value and impact of creative practice within disaster management, for example: national disaster management awards programs.

- Partner with the Creative Recovery Network to monitor, evaluate and give feedback on the activation of creative practices and projects.

Embedding and extending national disaster capacity

4. Formally recognise creative practitioners and culture and the arts, as an essential component of Australia's disaster management capacity and a key component of the nation's preparedness, recovery and resilience capability, delivering trauma informed practice and helping people prepare for and cope with disasters.

Enabling actions:

- Engage with the Creative Recovery Network to connect with creative practitioners for localised creative practice within disaster management.
- Prioritise support for local communities to build Creative Practice into preparedness and recovery plans.
- Work with the Creative Recovery Network to train local creative practitioners and disaster management and recovery personnel.



The National Taskforce for Creative Recovery has been proudly supported by the Australian Government through the industry collaboration stream of Australia Council's Re-imagine: Sector Recovery Initiatives fund.