



Together we can...

strengthen disaster management
through creativity

Strategic Framework 2023



**Creative
Recovery
Network**

The purpose of the Creative Recovery Network

Established in 2014, the Creative Recovery Network is an independent, national, not for profit organisation working to develop and embed the vital role of culture, creativity and the arts in Australia's disaster management systems.

As a network of specialist, skilled arts and cultural practitioners, we empower and inspire communities to better support themselves in times of crisis by developing local, regional, and national leaders to support communities through the disaster experience.

We work to build a disaster resilient Australia that prevents, prepares, responds, and recovers from disasters through culture and the arts.

Our Culture and Values

Our approach to disaster preparedness, response and recovery is adaptive and iterative, in recognition of the diversity of needs of communities and cultures.

- We value the role of culture and the arts in disaster management
- We value community-centered engagement
- We value the support of local capacity
- We value collaboration
- We value acknowledgement of appropriate timeframes for recovery preparedness and response

First Peoples First

We recognise the right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have a voice within the journey of healing through a creative recovery model. We are committed to prioritising First Peoples' wisdom and protocols to foster greater understanding for caring for Country.

We will listen, connect and advocate for a First Nations perspective to be embedded throughout the arts and disaster management sectors.

Vision for Arts and Culture in Disaster Resilience

We envision a nation where the engagement of arts and cultural skills and capabilities to improve communities' disaster preparedness and recovery is commonplace and sustainably resourced. For over 10 years the Creative Recovery Network, with support from creatives and arts organisations around the country, has developed community-centred creative practice, skills, and approaches to help communities manage disaster. It is our vision that these creative practices are mainstreamed within both the arts and disaster management sectors. Together we can:

- **Prepare and Imagine:** community capability, integrating Indigenous knowledges, is built before disasters happen
- **Respond and Care:** safe spaces are created for people to unpack trauma experiences, and make sense of unimaginable impacts and generate new thinking
- **Recover and Adapt:** wellbeing and identity is supported, driven by community-centred engagement, placemaking and re imagining new futures
- **Prevent and Grow:** education and connection facilitates safe, accessible spaces to deliver important information, resources, and build social cohesion

When we activate our creativity and, by extension, our civic participation, we connect communities, foster belonging, give voice to experience, cultivate empathy, make sense of the unimaginable and generate new thinking toward future possibilities.

Challenges to Resilience

We recognise today's rapidly changing disaster risk context and the importance of acting with a sense of urgency.

The scale and frequency of today's disaster management environment requires us to do things differently, to work together, to be ambitious, adaptive, and innovative.

Creative Recovery Network invests in relationships and working collaboratively so that as a nation we can better manage disaster. We, along with other organisations, are increasingly called upon to respond to complex and compounding events that have caused significant harm and loss to our social fabric, the environment, infrastructure, and economies.

The Creative Recovery Network is at the forefront of establishing the role of the arts and cultural sector within disaster management however, it does not, and cannot, work alone. Through its training, mentoring, development, and dissemination of practice standards, Creative Recovery Network supports the growth of self-determined, connected, collaborative and inclusive communities.





Principles underpinning our work

We work with communities to create locally owned visions and goals, centering local voices, building on local strengths, and collaborating across sectors. This relational focus is intentional and adaptable and works to achieve systemic change focused on self-determination and resilience building. We are guided by:

- Understanding of and adherence to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Knowing place and respecting and supporting the distinctive needs of communities
- Engaging in deep listening, making space, and making time to truly connect with Elders and communities at large, respectful of others' time and energies
- Embracing oral testimonies and storytelling as means to sharing and celebrating individual and collective wisdom, beliefs and values and heal through connectedness and understanding
- Pursuing true participation and collaboration at large as the only path to shared and sustainable outcomes

Our approach is relational, people-centred, and future focused, underpinned by a framework of respect, engagement, and self-determination.

We recognise that individuals and communities have their own unique understanding of place, identity, risks and needs.

Our model of working strives to activate creativity and civic participation. We help to connect communities, create safe spaces to give voice to experience, cultivate empathy, make sense of the unimaginable and unleash new thinking toward future possibilities.

We offer multi-dimensional, equitable ways for the disaster management and creative sectors to work with communities to transform disaster planning systems and build capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

Strategic Directions

OBJECTIVES - Together we can	STRATEGIES
<p>Embed Creative Practice in disaster management planning and investment: With bipartisan commitment across all levels of government, disaster management, business, and community.</p>	<p>Convene and manage interdepartmental round tables at Federal and State/Territory level to build clustered networks, strengthen relationships and share knowledge.</p> <p>Develop and implement our creative recovery activation model to work within existing creative and disaster management systems.</p> <p>Develop and implement creative recovery preparedness planning, scalable for national application</p>
<p>Create new employment pathways for creatives: With creative practitioners and culture and arts sector formally recognised as an essential component of Australia’s disaster management capacity.</p>	<p>Build a federated network of specifically trained creative practitioners available for preparedness and response work in communities impacted by disaster.</p> <p>Build capacity of creatives and community leaders to work in complex emergency contexts with community arts and cultural development principles.</p> <p>Develop Masterclass programs for disaster management sector in creative recovery.</p> <p>Ensure equitable and safe working environments for creatives working within the disaster management sector.</p>
<p>Validate and quantify the legacy of Creative Practice programs in disaster management: All levels of government, non-government agencies and academic institutions commit to and invest in impact research.</p>	<p>Test and evolve the Creative Recovery Practice Framework.</p> <p>Support evolution of research community of practice.</p> <p>Use storytelling to demonstrate the value of the arts in disaster, using lived experience.</p> <p>Develop and curate an accessible repository of resources and case studies of Creative Recovery programs.</p>

Through a decade of working in the field with communities across Australia impacted by disaster, and many years of adaptive training and mentoring, Creative Recovery Network has built capacity to develop responsive programs that engage the changing realities of service gaps and support needs within the disaster context.

Our programs deepen connection for local communities, support leadership and capacity for creatives to deliver innovative, relevant work. Professional development through training, experiential learning, and formal mentoring programs can address the specialised knowledge and experience required of community arts and cultural development practitioners and support emerging practitioners in approaching the practice challenges they will face.

Prepare and imagine – Connecting Across Sectors

National Taskforce for Creative Recovery

The Taskforce is a cross-sector collaboration bringing together key national leaders in disaster management, communities, health, education, government, and the arts. In the spirit of advancing the wellbeing of all Australians and aligning and unifying efforts to reduce the risk of harm from disasters, the National Taskforce for Creative Recovery works to find new approaches to the challenges being faced by Australians from disasters and strengthen the capacity for people and the nation to cope and restore livelihoods. The Taskforce considers ideas and opportunities to embed the specialist skills and capacity of creative practices of arts and culture as an additional component of Australia's disaster management systems.

It is a fantastic opportunity to connect with the Creative Recovery Taskforce to learn of the collective experience and repackage and influence the development of this work. This is a way for us to expand our network beyond government, which I think is really quite critical to the evolution of the sector."

Jacqui Cristiano, National Emergency Management Agency

Creative Recovery State/Territory Round Tables

Facilitation of State/Territory intergovernmental creative recovery round tables build and maintains State/Territory partnerships to support planning and activation. These round tables highlight culture and the arts in leadership, promote new and emerging ideas, forms and practices with an eye to innovation and breadth of impact and relevant community engagement. Round table relationships enable influence and contribution to policy development budget allocations and future thinking around needs and opportunities.

"I feel that one of the most valuable things the CRN is doing in Victoria currently is the Roundtable. That you have been able to get all of the delegates into that space together is a real credit... The appropriate people were in the room to give us government advice ... Everyone came because they just needed to be in a room with others who understood and were able to talk through issues."

Liz Zito, Director of Partnerships, Regional Arts Victoria



Respond and Care – Building community capacity

Creative Recovery Training

Creative Recovery is a process of connecting and embedding creative approaches within the disaster recovery activities of the broader community, particularly with local decision-making in collaboration with community members, community organisations and private industry. When implemented, this approach creates more effective opportunities for sustainable delivery and community support.

Targeting creatives and community leaders our training offers a creative facilitation model that frames the strengthening of community relationships, fosters community collaboration, trust and cooperation all that is needed for building community cohesion and resilience. From the training, participants gain an understanding of the context of disaster management, its application within their local setting and the place of creativity within this ecology.

"I gained a much deeper understanding of this crucial work and my role within that process. I feel much more skilled now to be able to understand the needs of the community." Creative Recovery Training participant

Mentoring

Practice supervision and mentoring can be facilitated for groups or individuals. It is designed to support workers, and manage and monitor the delivery of high-quality services and effective outcomes for project communities/participants within the disaster context. Creative Recovery mentoring connects participants to specific experience, networks and resources of the disaster management sector.

The mentoring process engages critical reflection in order to raise issues, explore problems, and discover new ways of handling both the situation and oneself. The purpose of group supervision can be collective problem solving and team development.

"The connections and friendships that formed ... are now the foundation from which the project has grown. The knowledge and skills we learn made the backbone of the project stronger. The naturing we felt... holds us as we navigate this space...It is reassuring for our community-led project to have an organisation such as Creative Recovery Network in our corner as we continue to navigate the complex space of disaster recovery."
The Little Pocket, Beechmont Qld

Recover and Adapt - Supporting Wellbeing and Identity

Creating Well Program

Creating Well is a program that incorporates arts processes to help manage experiences of stress, burnout and exhaustion. The program is designed to specifically address the challenges of working in socially engaged projects and how practitioners can create a framework to support their physical, psychological and spiritual self-care.

Creating Well is delivered as a six-module program. It can be presented online or in-room or can be presented in a range of modules based on the specific needs of the group and can be delivered as a two-hour, half-day, one-day workshop or in a multi-day retreat setting.

"After 20 years of professional practice devoted to the arts, I had my first experience of the arts industry REALLY caring about my wellbeing. This is a profound shift."

WA Making Time Retreat participant

Prevent and Grow - Supporting Education and Connection

Preparedness Planning

Activated in partnership with Local Government bodies this preparedness plan process ensures connection into all local creative agencies and individuals within the local region – dance studios, music schools, choirs, galleries etc. – along with independent practitioners.

This program works in partnership with local communities to produce a concise Creative Recovery Preparedness Plan attached to the Local Government Disaster Management Plan and linked to their Cultural Plan, ensuring local creative sector mitigation and response is coordinated, safe and connected to local government activation strategies.



Building Research

Creative Recovery Network is committed to contributing to the growth of evidence-based research that documents the legacy and impact of arts-based programs in a disaster management context. A body of research that demonstrates the tangible and intangible outcomes of creative recovery programs can support the sector to design policy frameworks and funding opportunities that embed the arts in programs to support community resilience.

We are working with all levels of government, non-government agencies and academic institutions to commit to and grow investment in impact research to demonstrate the value of creative programs in disaster management, for the wellbeing, preparedness, and recovery of communities across Australia





www.creativerecovery.net.au

Photographs - Alice Hutchison

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