



Community Support Hub Guide

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Views and findings associated with this initiative are expressed independently and do not necessarily represent the views of the funding bodies.

Prepared by Natural Logic for the Local Government Association of South Australia, September 2021.

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1. Introduction

1. Introduction

Communities often gather locally to obtain social support, seek information and have their basic needs met before, during or after an emergency. Some community members will require assistance in these circumstances, while others will have the capacity and desire to offer support.

A Community Support Hub (CSH) can provide a focal point for these support mechanisms. Opening a CSH can contribute to a resilient and self-organised community that can take timely action before, during¹ and after an emergency.

This guide explains what a Community Support Hub is, and provides clarity on how to establish a CSH outside the defined situations when State Government emergency management arrangements establish an Emergency Relief Centre (ERC).

The CSH Guide has been underpinned by a research report that provides a literature review and stakeholder engagement and can be read in conjunction with that report.

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¹ While a CSH may open during an emergency safe considerations must be taken into account.





2. What is a Community Support Hub?

2. What is a Community Support Hub?

A CSH is a mechanism or place where a community impacted by an emergency seeks localised respite and assistance. A CSH provides social connection, care, comfort and information before, during or after a disaster. Services provided at a CSH complement formal emergency arrangements and broadly align with the roles of councils in supporting the wellbeing of their communities.

A CSH may provide:

- Localised social connection with people who have been impacted
- Immediate care and comfort
- Information about the emergency, to amplify any official emergency services messaging
- Referral for support services
- Light refreshments

A CSH is not intended to:

- Take the place of an ERC or any other formal emergency centre or place
- Provide government grants or case management
- Provide overnight accommodation
- Provide medical facilities
- Provide professional support services (although it may refer people to such services)

Establishing a CSH is a discretionary service that some councils may choose to offer in response to community needs. Alternatively, a CSH may be community-led. In either case, a collaborative approach is preferred.

While the traditional format of a CSH may be considered a community centre building or similar venue, the core services can be delivered through a range of formats, such as at a park or farm, or virtually via emails or social media (Figure 1). For this reason, this Guide adopts a broad interpretation of a CSH.

2.1 Types of Community Support Hub

Depending on the community's needs and the council's ability to respond (in line with their policies and procedures), a CSH may be simple, such as extending library or swimming pool operating hours during a heatwave, or more complex, such as when bushfire or other collective impacts have occurred (Figure 1). A CSH may focus on a few support services or provide many services, depending on the community need.

Figure 1: Examples of the types of Community Support Hubs



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2. What is a Community Support Hub?

2.2 Formal emergency arrangements

As part of the State emergency management arrangements, Functional Support Groups perform functional roles to support the Control Agency and Support Agencies during emergencies. The Emergency Relief Functional Support Group (ERFSG), led by SA Housing Authority (SAHA), is such a group.

The ERFSG may establish an ERC during or after an emergency. This may occur when the emergency is requested by the Control Agency (and likely when the State Emergency Centre is opened). Only the ERFSG State Manager, or their delegate, is authorised to activate an ERC. The decision to activate an ERC will depend on the scale and type of the event and the situational awareness across the State.

The Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG), led by the LGA, has developed a Joint Operating Guide (JOG) for Emergency Relief Centres, in partnership with SAHA and the ERFSG. The JOG provides a common understanding of the role of the ERFSG following an emergency, the responsibility for designating a pre-identified ERC, and the activation mechanism for ERCs. The JOG should be used as a reference by councils.

Outside this defined situation of activating an ERC, a CSH may be established. It is important that this not be confused with other formal emergency management centres/refuges or places (refer to Appendix A for more information).

A CSH is not:

- An ERC
- A Bushfire Safer Place
- A Bushfire Last Resort Refuge

These centres/refuges or places have different purposes and usually provide different services to a CSH. It is important to be aware of the functions and services of any of these that are already present in a community when considering whether to establish a CSH, to avoid replicating services or confusing community members.

The role and services of a CSH must be actively and accurately communicated to the community and must be distinguished from any formal emergency management arrangements.

2.3 When to open a Community Support Hub

A CSH can be opened to support the community before, during and after a variety of emergencies, including:

- Bushfire
- Extreme heat
- Flood
- Extreme storm
- Utility outages
- Earthquake
- Major accident
- Collective trauma (i.e. an incident that is experienced collectively by an entire group of people, such as bushfire or terrorism)

Emergency events vary greatly in scale and complexity. Larger and more complex emergencies are likely to require a greater response from individuals, the community and emergency services.

It is envisaged that a CSH may open in three circumstances:

1. As a response to an emergency when state government responses are not activated
2. As an immediate response, before an ERC may have been activated
3. To assist a community that is isolated from emergency services or essential utilities

2.3.1 State responses not activated

The ERFSG does not activate an ERC. In this case, the State Government is unlikely to activate supporting agencies such as the Australian Red Cross, Disaster Recovery Ministries, Save the Children, and St Vincent de Paul Society.

2.3.2 Immediate response

Given the urgency of some community needs, a local-level response may be needed before an ERC is activated. This includes situations when a CSH is opened in a preparatory sense based on anticipated conditions (e.g. catastrophic fire danger conditions and/or anticipated blackouts).

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2. What is a Community Support Hub?

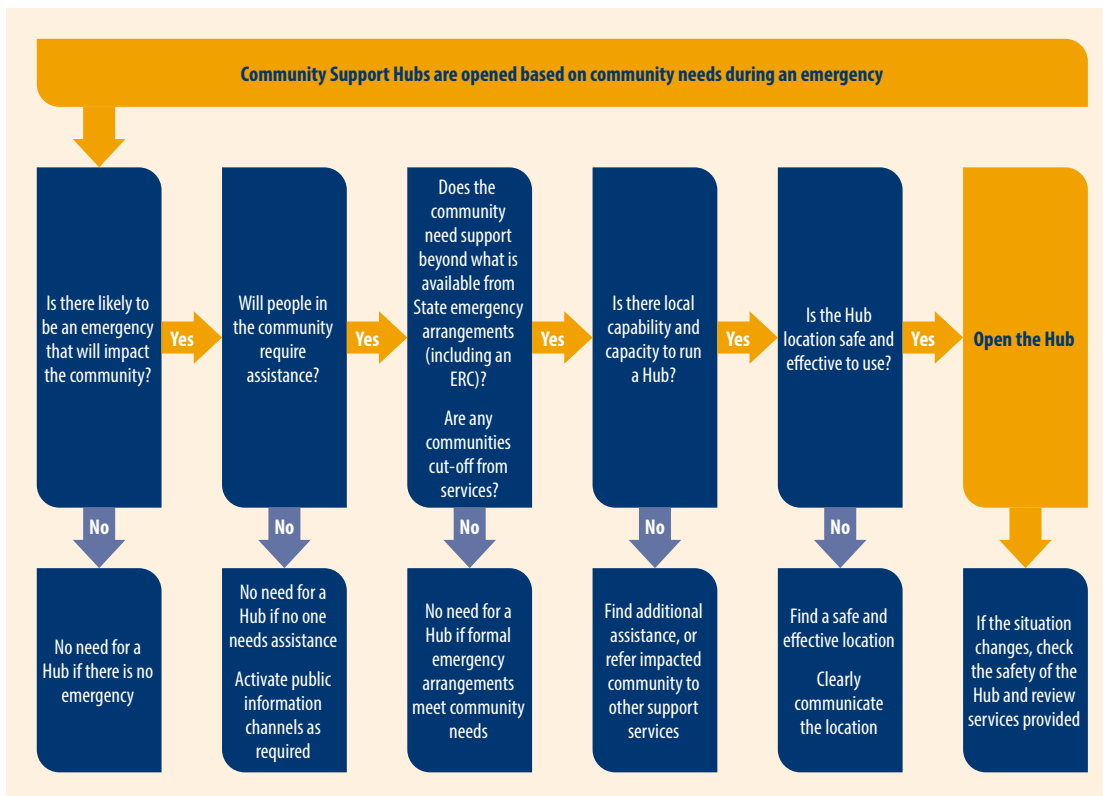
2.3.3 Isolated community

During an emergency, communities may become cut off or otherwise isolated from services and need to be self-reliant until services are restored. For example, this can occur if a fire or flood surrounds an area and/or when essential utilities (especially power, communications and water) have been lost during an emergency. In this case, the ERFSG may be unable to establish an ERC due to the conditions.

2.3.4 Opening criteria

Planning a CSH should consider criteria for opening. While these specifications will depend on local circumstances, an example of a decision process is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2: When to open a Community Support Hub (adapted from Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, www.wremo.nz/about-us/initiatives/hubs/)



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2. What is a Community Support Hub?

2.4 Role of councils

Responding to emergencies is a shared responsibility between State Government, councils and the community.

When an emergency has occurred but an ERC is not opened, the community may still need support. Moreover, even if an ERC is not opened, State Government agencies may still be available to support or supplement council-led or community-led responses, for example, through information and advice.

Notably, in the case of bushfires, it is likely that some or all of the impacted community will be displaced for 24 to 48 hours due to self-evacuation from an emergency zone. While many people will stay with friends or family, this may not be feasible for others and a place for these community members to seek respite and assistance will be required.

The role of councils during emergencies is summarised in the [State Emergency Management Plan \(SEMP\)](#), which governs the State's emergency processes, as follows:

"Local governments have responsibilities, in partnership with state government, to contribute to the safety and wellbeing of their communities by participating in local emergency management."

Responding to emergencies is a shared responsibility between State Government, councils and the community.

There is no legislative or policy requirement for councils to open a CSH. A council may opt to provide support services under certain circumstances (either directly or by supporting community-led initiatives). The provision by councils of such services broadly aligns with the 'Functions of a council' under the *Local Government Act 1999*² and can support community disaster resilience and long-term community wellbeing.

It should be noted that many councils contribute to State emergency management arrangements through the LGFSG, providing support to communities, emergency services and other councils. Support from councils is provided in many forms, such as assisting with staging sites, managing road closures and signage, and removing trees from roads. For this reason, opening a CSH would be an additional resource requirement that may be beyond the capacity of some councils.

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² Local Government Act 1999, Chapter 2 (section 7) (in part): Functions of a council include (b) to provide services and facilities that benefit its area, its ratepayers and residents, and visitors to its area (including general public services or facilities, health, welfare or community services or facilities); (c) to provide for the welfare, wellbeing and interests of individuals and groups within its community; (d) to take measures to protect its area from natural and other hazards and to mitigate the effects of such hazards; and (h) to establish or support organisations or programs that benefit people in its area or local government generally.



3. Operational approaches

3. Operational approaches

Operational approaches to establishing and maintaining a CSH can be considered along a spectrum, from council-led approaches through to community-led approaches (Table 1). Various approaches along this spectrum can be adopted to suit individual community needs (Figure 1).

Each approach has its own requirements regarding leadership, staffing, resourcing and risk management and its own underlying assumptions. For example, it may be necessary for councils to lead if there is a low level of community structure and no appropriate community groups or natural leaders; in such a case, individual volunteers could be registered with the

council to help support a CSH. In contrast, where a community has robust social connections and informed, self-organised groups, a community-led approach could be taken. In such a case, a CSH could be attached to an existing community group or services organisation (which is likely to increase long-term sustainability).

Table 1: Operational approaches for Community Support Hubs

Council-led	Community-led
Council leadership	Community leadership
Council staff key positions	Run by community members who are self-organised and informed
May be supported by State Government agencies, registered volunteers and NGOs	May be supported by council or NGOs
Council insurance	Generally self-determining (self-care) risk management
Based on a service provision approach	Based on a neighbourhood program approach, where people work together to solve problems locally while still coordinating with councils and emergency services
Does not require robust community connections and social capital	Requires robust community connections and social capital
More clearly led and staffed by council employees	Accommodates spontaneous volunteers and self-determining people, or those with little time to commit to long-term volunteering

Each approach has its own requirements regarding leadership, staffing, resourcing and risk management and its own underlying assumptions.

In either case, a CSH should not operate in isolation from the coordination of emergency management responses. For example, in the community-led approach, the council, State Government agencies and NGOs may provide advice and information to support sound decision-making, or provide coordination with emergency services or NGOs.

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4. Operational guidance

4. Operational guidance

4.1 Emergency situation

During an emergency, council staff and community responders must re-position their thinking from everyday business to supporting impacted community members. Support should be proportional to the community impact – the scale of the emergency, the degree of collective trauma, or the emotional toll.

Community members may be traumatised, overwhelmed or in shock and may require support that focuses on empathy, listening and providing hope. In other circumstances, community members may have simply been inconvenienced (e.g. a power outage) and require information or advice on unfolding processes.

Other formal emergency arrangements may be occurring simultaneously and there may be a large amount of information circulating in the community that needs to be filtered and considered. Many people may be involved, such as impacted people, people offering help, emergent groups and emergency services.

Council staff and community responders will require the capability and capacity to transition into the emergency setting and manage the situation.

In many scenarios, challenges and risks will be better managed by having a pre-existing CSH plan, which broadly outlines Hub functions for various emergencies and the corresponding resource, capability and capacity requirements. Alternatively, in simpler scenarios, a more spontaneous response may be possible.

In all cases, the psychosocial wellbeing of council staff, community responders and the impacted community will need to be actively managed.

4.2 Community Support Hub planning

It is important to define the purpose of the CSH and then ensure that the services and site that are presented to the community are fit for purpose. Defining a service as fit for purpose considers whether the service is adequate for the purpose or need of the community members receiving the service. To do this, there should be general awareness of various factors, such as:

- The types of people likely to attend the Hub
- Their purpose and/or need in doing so
- The urgency of the need for impacted people
- The reason that an individual has decided to attend a Hub rather than other options

CSH planning can be used to define service delivery boundaries and moderate community expectations (Table 2). When planning a CSH, it may be important not to overservice the community or a segment of the community, particularly if overservicing may result in:

- A higher cost of service delivery
- A reduction in individual self-reliance
- Increased expectations that cannot be sustained;
- Reduced offerings from formal emergency support services

Impacted community members will decide to attend a Hub based on several factors, as outlined in Table 2. Hub planning should consider how local community segments are likely to respond and should tailor their service to these factors.

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Table 2: Hub planning

Factors influencing impacted community member	Hub planning considerations
<p>Services</p> <p>What services will be available at the Hub?</p>	<p>Services that will and will not be available. Optional services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide light refreshments ■ Coordinate needs and offers for assistance ■ Manage donated goods ■ Accessibility to drinkable water or power ■ Accommodate pets or other specified animals <p>In some circumstances, this could be communicated to the community ahead of the emergency (to help the Hub manage expectations and to help the community develop their individual response plans).</p> <p>Services not available at the Hub should also be communicated.</p>
<p>Timeliness</p> <p>When will the Hub open?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consider the time required to establish and open a Hub ■ Consider the actions required to ensure a quick activation response
<p>Proximity</p> <p>How close is the Hub to where I live or where I have chosen to go?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consider the Hub's location and whether the site is safe and relevant to those impacted <p>Consider whether a site should be pre-identified and communicated to the community. If so, the decision-making process for opening the Hub must assess whether the location is safe and, if it is not, an alternative location must be found.</p>
<p>Connection</p> <p>Will there be people there that I know and connect with?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understand community segments and vulnerable groups ■ Consider different approaches to ensure community connections
<p>Care, comfort and safety</p> <p>Do I feel cared for and comfortable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Put steps in place to ensure the Hub is a human-centred, caring and comfortable space where people feel safe and can achieve respite
<p>Information</p> <p>Will I get timely, accurate and relevant information that provides advice on what I should do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure there is a process to gather and disseminate relevant information <p>Information should be simple and clear and may include a call to action. There may be a need to provide multilingual and literacy-level formats and to acknowledge specific user needs (e.g. children, those with disabilities, elderly, and same-sex couples).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide a process to refer people to additional services while ensuring their immediate needs are considered
<p>Consistency of service</p> <p>Will the Hub be open in all emergencies? How will I know if it is open?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communicate the circumstances under which the Hub will open ■ Communicate operating hours <p>Note that many vulnerable people may not have access to social media.</p>

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A one-size-fits-all approach does not always work. To provide the same support services to different people and groups with diverse capacities and needs, tailored approaches are required.

Local government is well positioned to identify and cater to people in the community who may need additional support in an emergency.

In some circumstances, it may be beyond practicable capacity to implement a fully tailored approach for all community segments and people more at risk in emergencies. In these cases, a CSH should seek to achieve a standard that promotes an inclusive approach through responders' attitudes, simple visual cues and specific actions to support communities (Figure 3).

CSH planning should also address when to open (Section 2.3) and close (Section 4.5).

Figure 3: Examples of simple visual cues and actions to support an inclusive Hub



More information on community cohorts and vulnerable people can be found in the supporting research report.

Hub services may include activities that vary from the normal intended uses for a building or site, which may require additional management requirements (e.g. staffing, security, different WHS or environmental health risks, and potential implications for insurance). These requirements need to be considered during Hub planning.

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4.3 Roles and responsibilities

4.3.1 People contributing within the Hub

Council staff and/or community responders will have roles and responsibilities in a CSH. This Guide uses the collective term 'Hub responders' for these people.

Table 3 provides an example of the roles in a complex Hub. It is important that a CSH leader is designated to coordinate the response and connect with external emergency services or support organisations.

Depending on the scale of the response, the Hub may also require other roles that can be filled by Hub


responders. Several roles may be performed by one person or by different individuals.

While roles are important, it is also important from a service provision perspective that the Hub maintains a human-centred approach, rather than being dominated by a procedural, administrative attitude. Further, while it is useful to have one person overseeing the Hub, the emphasis should be on a collective and inclusive approach to ensure a sustainable distribution of roles and responsibilities among Hub responders, rather than the service being reliant on a few individuals.


For the simplest Hubs, a single individual could organise a community gathering that serves as a Hub.

Table 3: Roles of Hub responders

Role	Service	Comment on resources, capability and capacity
Hub leader	<p>Consider the entire situation, coordinate actions to achieve the Hub's objectives and address anticipated future challenges</p> <p>Liaise with government and external supporting organisations, ensuring that Hub activities are not occurring in isolation</p>	<p>Leadership skills</p> <p>Connections with community, local organisations and all levels of government</p>
Logistics	<p>Focus on the safe and effective running of the Hub</p> <p>Coordinate provision of essential utilities (power, electricity, water, communications, waste management and sanitation) and public safety, particularly regarding Hub access</p>	<p>Awareness of Hub service requirements</p> <p>May need contingency plans for essential utilities</p> <p>Awareness of public health and other regulations for buildings or events</p>
Community space	<p>Focus on providing a safe and inclusive space where care and comfort can be provided, including communicating with impacted community members and providing light refreshments</p>	<p>Training in psychological first aid is highly recommended (hub responders should also be aware of increased risk of fatigue, vicarious/secondary trauma and other triggers)</p> <p>Community development staff and/or those with experience in providing care and comfort are well suited to this role</p>
Needs and offers	<p>Match people's needs with offers of assistance</p> <p>Referrals (to other services, including an ERC – where one has been activated)</p>	<p>Connections with the community and local organisations is highly recommended</p> <p>Capacity to track needs and offers (e.g. whiteboard or spreadsheet)</p>
Information coordination	<p>Keep track of information coming into the Hub</p> <p>Provide information for public dispersal, especially amplifying emergency services messages; this may include maintaining a public information board at the Hub or virtually</p>	<p>Awareness of involved organisations' communication policies (especially for council staff)</p> <p>Awareness of misinformation and the need to amplify official emergency services messages</p>

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4.4 Centre management

4.4.1 Resourcing a Hub

For a Hub to be viable and sustainable, it must be resourced appropriately. Resourcing involves applying knowledge and operational funding to increase council and community capacity. As discussed previously, if an ERC is not activated, State Government support is likely to be limited to regional services (including regional landscape boards, the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) and the Department for Environment and Water) and subject matter experts as required (such as the Environment Protection Authority). The lack of an ERC may also limit the support from NGOs as participating organisations (noting that these services are a critical element to the formal ERC service).

As indicated above, NGO's are only automatically activated if an ERC is activated. In these circumstances, they are provided funding by the State Government. However, some NGO's may decide to provide support without being activated by the ERFSG and would therefore be self-funded. On these occasions, the support they provide may be more limited.

Consequently, Hub planning must consider how the Hub will be resourced to ensure services are fit for purpose, including providing some training, forming bridging partnerships with support agencies and providing modest operational funding as a minimum.

4.4.2 Hub responders

Hub responders should exhibit and promote an inclusive and open attitude to support all members of the community. Community segments and vulnerable people should be identified and, as far as practicable, services should be tailored to their needs.

Hub responders and those responsible for them should actively participate in self-care. When a community has experienced trauma and is overwhelmed or stressed, responders will also experience this stress and will need mechanisms to personally process and manage the situation. Council's need to ensure systems are in place that addresses the wellbeing needs of council staff working as hub responders. Hub responders will need sufficient breaks and should support each other and seek assistance as necessary.

Australian Red Cross (2020) provides psychological first aid training, with the approach guided by three basic sets of actions – **Look**, **Listen** and **Link**. This is summarised in Figure 4.

These action principles provide guidance for how to view and safely enter an emergency situation and determine who requires assistance (**Look**) in order to understand the needs of affected people (**Listen**) and link them with the information and practical support they need (**Link**).



Figure 4: Basic steps of psychological first aid (adapted from Psychological First Aid: Supporting people affected by disaster in Australia (Australian Red Cross 2020))

4. Operational guidance

4.4.3 Management of facilities

The operation of a CSH building or space needs to be planned and managed. A checklist has been developed, which could be tailored for specific purposes (Checklist A).

4.4.4 Food and water

Light refreshments may be provided at a CSH. At council-led Hubs, the council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) is responsible for all public health matters. The responsibilities of the EHO in emergencies include:

- Advice on water supply
- Ensuring hygienic food handling, including safe production, storage and distribution
- Supply of sanitary and hygienic accommodation when required
- Refuse removal
- Pest control
- Infectious disease control

Checklist A – Management of facilities

- Safety issues inside or outside buildings or utilised spaces
- Electricity, water and communications connected, including contingencies for outages
- Site security, with keys and security measures understood
- Accessibility for everyone and adequate vehicle parking
- Adequate heating, cooling and airflow
- Adequate toilet and washing facilities
- Hub resource kit, which may include Hub operating plan (if documented), key contact information, signage, maps, basic supplies and UHF radio
- Safe and appropriate spaces for children and people with special needs
- Consideration of public health advisories
- Insurance that is appropriate for the intended use
- Appropriate accommodation for animals (e.g. shelter, shade, water, food, fodder and safe spaces), where relevant

The EHO should attend CSHs to address these responsibilities.

Although well intended, perishable food donated from the community may not meet public health standards. If necessary, clear communication to the community should be made to minimise food wastage and manage community expectations.

Council may choose to have an NGO or other party deliver catering (eg a service club may be the provider for food and water). In this case, these organisations are responsible for food hygiene and handling.

For community-led Hubs, hygienic food handling measures should be considered to maintain public safety and sanitation.

4.4.5 Donated goods and services

Generally, it is recommended that CSHs do not accept or promote donations of material goods during an emergency incident. Those wishing to donate could be guided to contribute financially through relevant donation points. This approach assists an affected community in decision-making and ownership of their relief and recovery.

Nevertheless, a CSH may choose to coordinate needs and offers for assistance, including donated goods. This requires matching local-level assistance between community members. This service may be particularly relevant for a community that has been isolated from government services or other essential services for an extended period and would aim to ensure that immediate needs are met.

The [St Vincent de Paul Society](#) is responsible for the management of donated goods in emergencies of State significance and may be able to support a CSH.

Although well intended, perishable food donated from the community may not meet public health standards. If necessary, clear communication to the community should be made to minimise food wastage and manage community expectations.

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4.4.6 Communication

Although a CSH is not a formal arrangement, it is beneficial for councils to communicate the establishment of a CSH to the LGFSG, who can communicate this information to the ERFSG.

While operating the CSH, communication is critical between:

- The Hub leader and formal government agencies and emergency services
- Hub responders and the broad community (to indicate the Hub is open and what services are available)
- Hub responders and those impacted community members that attend the Hub
- The Hub and the media (where amplification of the official emergency services messaging is critical)

Messaging should be:

- Amplify the control agency message (ensuring one source of truth)
- Short and simple, avoiding words that are long, uncommon, difficult and/or ambiguous
- Action-orientated and quickly understood (e.g. prepare, evacuate)
- Consistent, increasing comprehension and decreasing confusion

In some events, the depth and type of media coverage received (including social media) will influence funding opportunities, donations and external volunteers. The influence of the media underpins the importance of clear and consistent public communication from knowledgeable and trusted sources. This communication should provide information about what is being done to help impacted communities and about what communities need and do not need at particular times. Usually, this will come from a mayor or council CEO when the CSH is council-led. This communication process can be assisted by a media liaison person.

4.5 Closing a Hub

Determining when and how a CSH will close is also important. Community expectations should be managed by communicating how long a CSH may operate and when, and under what conditions it is likely to close.

Closing a CSH will be influenced by the ongoing community need, the internal capacity to continue to operate and the availability of other resources coming into the community (including potentially transitioning from or to an ERC – if activated).

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5. Case studies

5. Case studies

5.1 Community-led Lobethal Recovery Centre

Following the devastation of the Cudlee Creek bushfire on 20 December 2019, the district around Lobethal was isolated from services, access and utilities.⁴ Aerial firebombers suppressed the fire to the west of the town, but they could not keep the fire from encircling the town and this became the town's primary problem over the coming days.³ Together with compassionate and committed locals, Adam Weinert formed and drove a spontaneous volunteer relief and recovery effort to fill the gap in community support, sustainment and recovery until government-sanctioned recovery support was deployed to the fire zone on 6 January 2020.⁴ Mr Weinert drew on his military experience and was able to step up and lead the relief efforts.³

The Cudlee Creek bushfire was a major but the town was isolated and cut off from outside services for 72 hours.³ In the days immediately after the fire, many Lobethal community members were too frightened and shocked to attend a recovery centre, relief area or any other government agency that was located outside the town. The town was without electricity and telecommunications and the Lobethal Recovery Centre operated for 16 days before a State Recovery Centre opened in Lobethal.

The services provided by this community-led Lobethal Recovery Centre included:

- Held town meetings at 11 am each day
- Established channel 20 on the UHF band as the town's means of communication
- Matched and documented needs and offers for help
- Managed donations
- Managed trade tasking (e.g. plumbers, electricians and generators)
- Assisted with food and water for stock
- Assisted vulnerable elderly people by connecting donated generators to houses to provide cooling where there was a significant need

Under these guidelines, a community-initiated and led facility, such as this, should be referred to as a CSH to ensure the distinction between an ERC or Recovery Centre that the ERFSG may establish.

Figure 5: Community-led Lobethal Recovery Centre (source: www.facebook.com/lobethalbushfirerecovery/)



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3 www.bushfirerecovery.gov.au/stories/community-recovery-through-unity
4 www.linkedin.com/in/adam-weinert-8168a14/?originalSubdomain=au

5. Case studies

5.2 Mount Barker Community Emergency Support Site

Since the Sampson Flat bushfire in 2015, the Mount Barker Showground, which is located within a Bushfire Safer Place, has been used by community members to respond to bushfire threats. During the Cherry Gardens bushfire in January 2021, many Adelaide Hills residents in the emergency zone spent some time at the Mount Barker Showground. People moved to the site early or after the fire had started and there was a need to self-evacuate. Impacted community members brought many large animals (such as horses) and large vehicles (such as campervans) to the oval.

Mount Barker District Council opened the toilets at the Showground and ensured public health and safety by directing staff to visit the site.⁵ Self-activated community groups and individuals supported impacted community members spontaneously at the site, with donations of fodder, buckets and rope.

This requirement to shelter large animals during emergencies has led to the funding of the Mount Barker Showground Large Animal Pens project, which enables more large animals to be sheltered with greater safety in 25 yards.⁶

Mount Barker District Council has stated that there is a need to manage community expectations. For example, some community members have requested that Council provide light refreshments, meals, facilities to charge mobile phones, portable yards, and fodder for animals at the site. Council considers that some of these items are beyond its scope to support.

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Council is developing signage for the Mount Barker Community Emergency Support Site to clearly communicate the site's intended purpose and other expectations, including:

- What can be expected at the site
- The need for animals to be attended at all times
- The risks of using the site
- Site capacity and requirements once that capacity is reached
- The need for people attending the site to initially be fully self-sufficient

Council seeks to support community members by providing access to and maintenance of the site and facilities, by increasing self-sufficiency and community-led support, and by providing resources to support State emergency arrangements and Control Agencies through the LGFSG.

Figure 6: A woman and a girl feed a pony sheltering at Mount Barker Showground during the Cherry Gardens bushfire (source: www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-25/adelaide-hills-residents-survive-cherry-gardens-bushfire/13088094)



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5 It should be noted that Mount Barker District Council was primarily focused on supporting the Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG) during the Cherry Gardens fire, with staff required to assist with staging sites, road closures, signage and tree removal. As a result, capacity to support the Mount Barker Community Emergency Support Site was limited.

6 www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/council/news/latest-news/council/news/latest-news/notice-of-council-works-mount-barker-showgrounds



6. Supporting resources

6. Supporting resources

Animals

- Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) (2018) Managing Animals in Emergencies: A Framework for South Australia. https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/38355/Managing-Animals-in-Emergencie....pdf
- Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (2018) Guidelines for Planning for People with Assistance Animals in Emergencies. https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/33319/Guidelines-for-Planning-for-People-with-Assistance-Animals-in-Emerg_FINA....pdf
- NSW Government (Undated) Planning For Your Animals in Emergencies. <https://cm.ses.nsw.gov.au/media/3683/planning-for-your-animals-in-emergencies-get-ready-animals-article-pdf.pdf>
- Taylor, M. (2019) Managing Animals in Disasters: Improving Preparedness, Response and Resilience Through Individual and Organisational Collaboration. Final project report 2016–2017. Report for the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne, Victoria.

Communication

- Brady, K., Randrianarisoa, A. and Richardson, J. (2018) Best practice guidelines: Supporting communities before, during and after collective trauma events. Australian Red Cross, Carlton, Victoria.
- Red Cross (Undated) People at risk in emergencies framework for South Australia. https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/34254/People-at-Risk-in-Emergencies-Framework.pdf
- Shevellar, L. and Riggs, R. (2015) 'Understanding resistance to emergency and disaster messaging'. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 30(3), pp. 31–35.

- O'Donohue, P. and Dunstan, F. (2021) 'Using community voice to build a new national warnings system for Australia'. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 36(1), pp. 50–59. <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/ajem-january-2021-using-community-voice-to-build-a-new-national-warnings-system-for-australia/>

Evacuation Centres

- The Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook 4 – Evacuation Planning. <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/1699/handbook-4-evacuation-planning-kh-final.pdf>
- Red Cross Evacuation Centre: Evacuee Information (Code of Conduct). <https://www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/83bfd746-21eb-4058-a9b2-3db414593db7/Evac-Centre-Code-of-Conduct-COVID-19-Ver4.pdf.aspx>

Psychological first aid

- Red Cross (2020) Psychological First Aid: Supporting people affected by disaster in Australia.
- A video explaining the principles of psychological first aid can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kly45u9ml_A

Volunteers

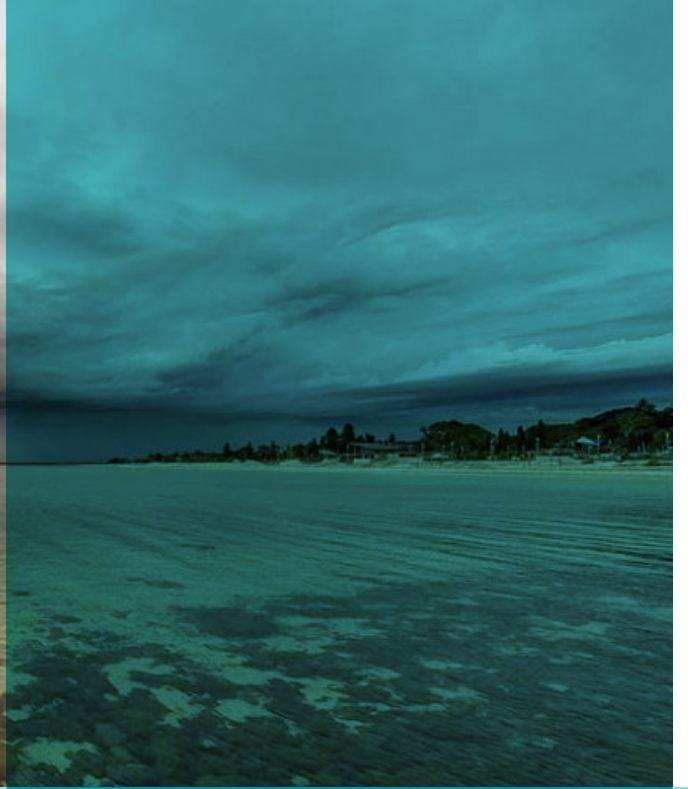
- Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection. Handbook 12 – Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers. <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-spontaneous-volunteers/>
- State Recovery Office (2019) Guidelines for Managing Spontaneous Volunteers. https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/97129/Guidelines-Managing-Spontaneous-Volunteers.pdf



6. Supporting resources

Vulnerable people

- Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection. Handbook 5 – Communicating With People with a Disability: National Guidelines for Emergency Managers. <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/1762/handbook-5-communicating-with-people-with-a-disability-kh-final.pdf>
- Red Cross (Undated) People at risk in emergencies framework for South Australia. https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/34254/People-at-Risk-in-Emergencies-Framework.pdf
- Engaging with Indigenous Australia – exploring the conditions for effective relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/engaging-with-indigenous-australia-exploring-the-summary>
- Effective practices for service delivery coordination in Indigenous communities. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/effective-practices-for-service-delivery-coordinat/contents/table-of-contents>
- Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Workbook A conversation guide used by people with disability to tailor emergency preparedness planning to their individual support needs https://collaborating4inclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020-08-19-Person-Centred-Emergency-Preparedness-P-CEP-WORKBOOK_FINAL.pdf



7. Appendix A

7. Appendix A

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Other formal emergency management centres and places

Other formal emergency management centres and places

It is important that the community are not confused with other formal emergency centres and places. To aid in this communication, these other facilities are described below.

Emergency Relief Centres

In accordance with the SEMP,⁷ ERCs are established by the ERFSG. They will be established as per the ERFSG Support Agency Plan and will consider the nature and scale of the emergency that is causing an evacuation. The location of an ERC will be advised when approval for the opening of a site is received from the Control Agency, to ensure that the chosen site is located away from the actual and potential impacts of the emergency event.

Depending on the potential number of evacuees, more than one centre may need to be established.

The ERFSG Support Agency Plan describes the pre-planning considerations for identifying potential ERC sites, which include aspects of site suitability, access, egress, space, power, communications and companion animals.

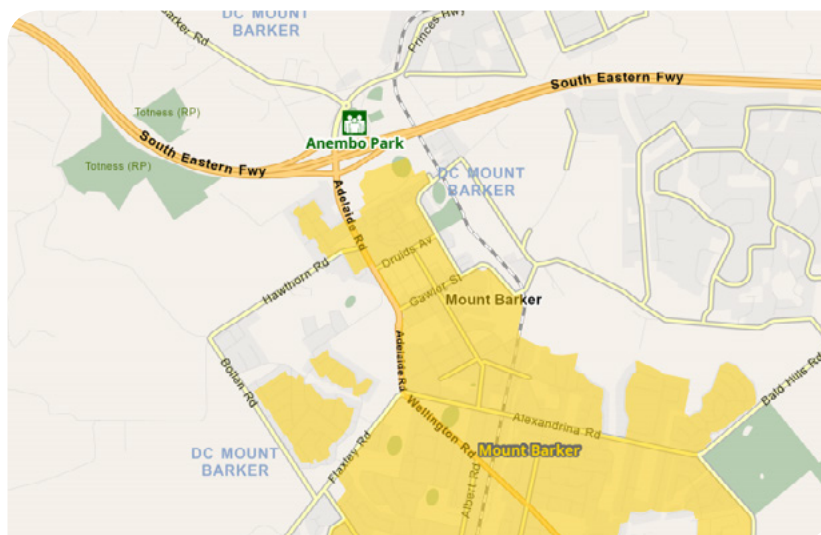
Bushfire Safer Places


A Bushfire Safer Place is a pre-designated geographic area of relative safety from a bushfire, located in metropolitan Adelaide or a regional centre (Figure 7). It may be used as a place for people to stay in, if they already live in a Bushfire Safer Place, or as a place of first resort for those who have decided to leave high-risk locations early on a high fire risk day.⁸


Bushfire Last Resort Refuge

A Bushfire Last Resort Refuge is the last choice location to shelter from a bushfire (Figure 7). It is a space or building that provides a minimum level of protection from the immediate life-threatening effects of radiant heat and direct flame contact in a bushfire. It is an area intended to provide a place of relative safety during a bushfire, but does not guarantee the survival of those who assemble there.

Figure 7: Bushfire safer places (source: www.cfs.sa.gov.au/prepare-for-a-fire/bushfire-safer-places/)



 A Bushfire Safer Place is a place of relative safety. It may be used as a place for people to stay in or as a place of first resort for those who have decided they will leave high risk locations early on a high fire risk day.

 Bushfire Last Resort Refuges are your **last** choice of location to shelter from bushfire. A Bushfire Last Resort Refuge is a space or building that provides a minimum level of protection from the immediate life threatening effects of radiant heat and direct flame contact in a bushfire. It is an area intended to provide a place of relative safety during a bushfire but does not guarantee the survival of those who assemble there.

7 www.dpcsa.gov.au/responsibilities/security-and-emergency-management/state-emergency-management-plan/SEMP-Part-3-Annex-A-Evacuation-2021-Approved.pdf

8 www.cfs.sa.gov.au/prepare-for-a-fire/bushfire-safer-places/



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