



Institute of Child Protection Studies

PROJECT REPORT

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK Australian Government Disaster Assistance Package

October 2007

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PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines a framework to guide the evaluation of “all hazards” disaster recovery assistance provided by the Australian Government. The Australian Catholic University (ACU) has been commissioned to develop this framework by the Department of Families and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), on behalf of the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Committee (AGDRC).

The aim of the framework is to provide whole-of-government and “all hazards” perspectives for the evaluation of the disaster recovery programs of Australian government departments and agencies, and in this context to promote consistent evaluation processes and where practicable common instruments and approaches.

The development of the framework

The Disaster Recovery Assistance Evaluation Framework was developed by ACU in consultation with members of the AGDRC Projects Working Group and through active discussions with other departmental and agency stakeholders.

The first step was a literature review (provided separately) which has contributed towards the development of the draft evaluation framework. The development of the framework involved three further main steps:

- Step one: the preparation of a draft framework, including such elements as evaluation logic and indicators of outcomes and other performance measures.
- Step two: the testing of the draft framework by its use in evaluating Australian Government Disaster Recovery activities following Tropical Cyclone Larry.
- Step three: the preparation of a finalised version of the framework based on learning from its testing and other feedback from participating agencies.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

BACKGROUND TO THE FRAMEWORK

The Australian Government has a key role to play in supporting recovery efforts after major disasters which may occur on or off shore. It does this in a range of ways including working with State, Territory, non government and community organisations to build community capacity and sustainability¹, providing physical and technical assistance and establishing special whole-of-government recovery mechanisms to coordinate the provision of assistance.

Recovery is the coordinated process of supporting communities affected by disasters or emergencies, including terrorist incidents, in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and the restoration of their emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing. Recovery incorporates consequence management and extends to the long term rebuilding of a community. Invariably, recovery involves close community participation (Commonwealth of Australia 2006 p.55)

There is an increased expectation now for governments to be able to carry out these roles in response to a wide range of diverse events. Disaster situations may involve large or small numbers of affected people, different geographic areas, and widely varying physical and social effects. They may have natural causes such as cyclones, bushfires and tsunamis; human causes such as terrorist actions; or result from the impact of exotic animal diseases or human pandemics. They may combine the effects of multiple hazards. Invariably they will require recovery capabilities that are not routinely available to or from any single organisation or level of government.

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Arrangements (AGDRA)

The expanded role for the Australian Government in disaster mitigation and recovery is detailed in Australian Government Disaster Recovery Arrangements, 2007. These 'arrangements' commit the Government to providing a coordinated

¹ Natural Disasters in Australia: reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements. A report produced by the Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services (DoTARS) on behalf of the Council of Australian Governments 2004 and Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements DoTARS, 2007

approach to delivering recovery assistance to Australians following onshore and offshore disasters and critical incidents. Specifically the Australian Government's role is to support or supplement the states through the implementation of a range of programs and measures, including:

Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) administered by the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) and delivered through the States and Territories;

Provision of assistance, when requested under one of the agreed national plans (e.g.: Commonwealth Disaster Response Plan) coordinated in the main by Emergency Management Australia, Attorney General's Department

Implementation of the National Emergency Protocol

Coordinated Australian Government recovery response, including provision of tailored disaster recovery financial and other assistance through the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Committee (AGDRC) (Commonwealth of Australia 2007).

Alongside Australian Government services and assistance a new set of national protocols for managing a major disaster are currently being developed. Recognising the cross jurisdictional nature of some disasters, plans for reducing the impact of hazards such as pandemic influenza are being refined and tested. The protection of critical infrastructure and business continuity are of vital interest to communities and industries (Emergency Management Australia 2007). This ongoing work may have implications for the Australian Government's role leading to the need for this Evaluation Framework to be adjusted over time.

Role of the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Committee (AGDRC)

In recognition of this, the Australian Government has established the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Committee (AGDRC) with broad membership to advise the Government on tailored assistance packages following disasters of national significance. This committee has the responsibility for coordinating the Australian Government's recovery assistance following disasters or critical events. The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) is the chair of this Committee.

The Australian Government’s recent policy documents for protecting against terrorism expand the definition of recovery to include “terrorist incidents”. They also specifically emphasise the long term nature of recovery and the importance of community participation:

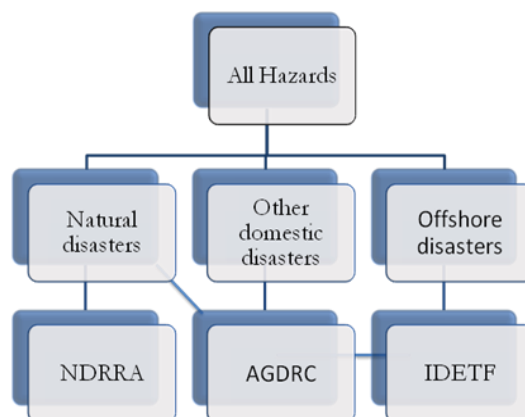
WHAT PROGRAMS DOES THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK DEAL WITH?

The Evaluation Framework presented here deals with, and is restricted to, the disaster recovery assistance activities and responsibilities of the Australian Government. This excludes (a) recovery activities that are primarily the responsibility of other levels of government or of non-government agencies (even if co-funded by the Australian Government) and (b) activities generally regarded as involving other stages in disaster management such as immediate response and mitigation or response planning.

This exclusion includes the NDRRA. If a decision was made in agreement with State and Territory governments to undertake an evaluation of the NDRRA as part of this evaluation framework, then suggested measures have been drafted and are included in the Evaluation Framework Logic table at Attachment ‘A’.

The main focus of the Framework is activities covered by the AGDRC. The following chart maps the place of the AGDRC within the overall disaster recovery setting of the Australian Government.

Figure 1 Australian Government Recovery Response Map



PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES OF EVALUATION

What is the purpose of evaluative activities?

Australian government programs are subject to a common set of performance management principles set within a generic outputs and outcomes framework. The purposes and principles of evaluation adopted here for disaster recovery are consistent with that generic framework. While the detailed questions and data issues are often specific to each program, the overall approaches and principles are widely used and understood.

An increasingly common way of organising these questions is to define “program logic”, or in this case “evaluation logic”, as a basis for specific evaluation strategies and research questions. This approach is adopted in this framework (see below). At the same time, generic evaluation principles also guide the evaluation process and these are made explicit in the following section.

Principles of evaluation

This evaluation framework is underpinned by a broadly generic set of assumptions or group of principles that are required to inform evaluation². They are:

- **Utility** – that the evaluation is useful and satisfies the needs of a range of evaluation users.
- **Feasibility** – that evaluation is viable and pragmatic and that the evaluation design does not disrupt the target population, or is otherwise unacceptable to it.
- **Ethical research** – that the evaluation is conducted with regard for the rights and interests of those involved and affected and does them no harm. For example, participants require clear information about the research, its end use, constraints to confidentiality and any risks to them about their involvement.

² These standards have been adapted from The Joint Committee on standards for evaluation, Program Evaluation standards, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 1994 cited in Evaluation Planning Framework EIRE, April 2002.

- **Accuracy** – to ensure credible findings, that design and reporting is accurate, complete and balanced, in turn requiring reliable and valid data collection and analysis.
- **Sharing** – that the learning is shared with others including with local people, groups, agencies and other levels of government.
- **Participation** – that evaluation is a participatory process that includes the range of people and groups who are involved in or receive assistance under the Government assistance program, recognising that evaluation should occur ‘with’ participants and stakeholders rather than just being done ‘to’ them.

Users of the evaluations

Evaluations have multiple potential purposes and uses, including for accountability and management, but increasingly the particular focus of evaluation is on its potential contribution to learning for program improvement. This focus has also informed the development of this framework, with an emphasis on the desire to assess the effectiveness of program delivery and to assist further refinement of the Australian Government’s role in disaster recovery across ‘all hazards’ situations and in the context of the wide range of other people potentially affected by disasters and involved in recovery efforts.

This focus and its context further implies that the potential users of evaluations include not only Australian government agencies (with the AGDRC itself the key user in this case) but also other levels of government, non-government organisations and affected communities.

THE LOGIC MODEL

Introduction

An evaluation logic (or ‘logic model’) acts as a reference point for all parts of the evaluation. It describes in succinct fashion the assumptions and operational theories which underpin the program, the inputs and outputs (usually activities) anticipated, and the expected short, medium and long term outcomes. As such,

logic models illustrate at the individual program level the ‘outputs and outcomes’ approach that the Australian Government has adopted for its overall performance management framework.

The evaluation logic outlined here is presented in tabular form – this form allows for greater detail than usually is possible in diagrammatic presentations, while retaining much greater economy of expression than in textual descriptions.

Because the framework presumes that the key focus of evaluation is program effectiveness, the evaluation logic is also concentrated on just three core elements – evaluation outputs (or activities), immediate results, and evaluation objectives (medium term outcomes). Little attention is paid here to defining the inputs required for each program – other than to identify the agencies responsible.

Evaluation Assumptions

A range of assumptions underpin any logic model, and one of the important purposes of logic models is to make the assumptions explicit. At a fundamental level, several important assumptions have already been discussed:

- the concepts of disaster recovery and disaster recovery assistance
- the scope of Australian Government recovery programs for this framework
- the purposes and principles for evaluation

Beyond these basic assumptions, a number of others are also important and should be identified here. Their importance arises in the fact that they underpin the specific purposes of the Australian Government’s disaster recovery programs. Much of evaluation compares outcomes with these intended purposes.

The approach adopted here is to identify critical assumptions that apply across the whole suite of Australian Government recovery programs – assumptions therefore that relate to the overall framework for disaster recovery evaluation. These assumptions would need to be identified – but also modified, further articulated or supplemented as necessary – in undertaking specific evaluation projects relating to

particular disaster events or particular elements of any recovery package. This is necessary for each evaluation project since each case will involve at least some differences in circumstances and needs.

Recovery and Recovery Assistance

It is assumed that the Australian Government responsibility is for the provision of 'disaster recovery assistance' rather than to deliver or assure 'disaster recovery' itself. The primary role for protecting the community and property in response to domestic disasters rests with state and territory governments. The Australian Government supports the states and territories in this primary role through implementation of a range of programs and measures.

It is useful nonetheless to define the nature of recovery outcomes as a basis for the assessment of recovery assistance outcomes. In this case the broader recovery outcomes form part of the assumptions for the evaluation logic rather than explicit outcomes.

The literature on disaster recovery recognises that recovery outcomes are sought across a range of interconnected fields e.g. the impacts of disasters on the psycho-social, economic, physical and natural environments. In developing this framework a review of the current knowledge about disaster recovery was completed. The literature review was structured around the examination of contemporary understandings of:

- disasters, including when disasters are recognised as national events calling for central government responses;
- the impacts of disasters on the social, economic, physical and natural environments, groups which are particularly vulnerable, and the timeframes of loss experiences;
- the concepts of recovery as both outcomes and processes for individuals, communities and governments, including how people help themselves and

each other to recover; and the closely related concept of recovery assistance provided by governments and other formal services;

- the key elements and factors in delivering successful disaster recovery assistance, including in understanding the boundaries and interconnections of recovery within the broader disaster management framework of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

As noted above, offshore disaster events may require only psycho-social and medical recovery in the domestic Australian context – since the other elements may be wholly or substantially required only in foreign jurisdictions. Onshore disasters will often involve all of the fields, although exceptions are possible (for example pandemics may not involve physical damage).

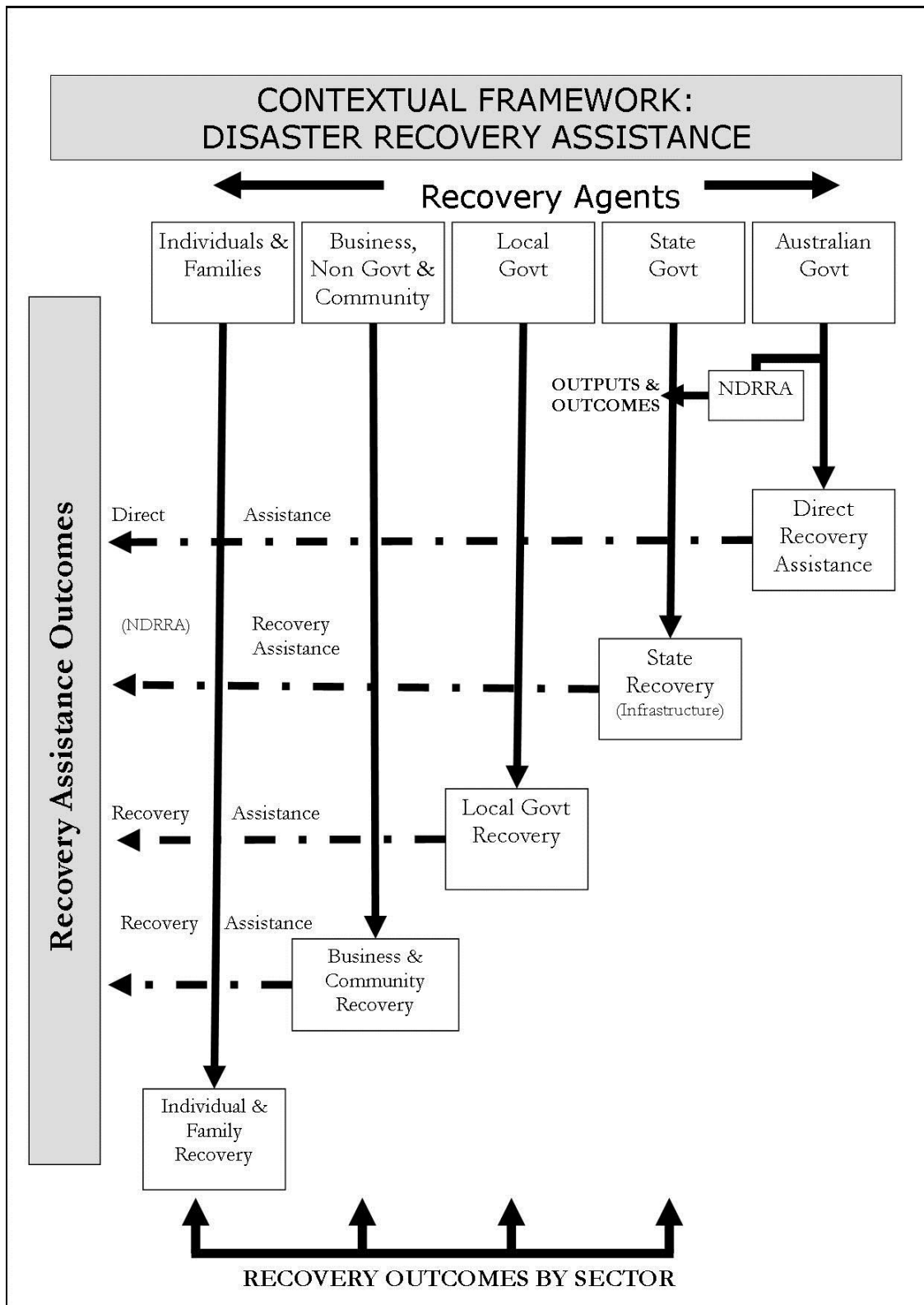
The recovery experience is ultimately one that in particular is undertaken by individuals, social groupings and businesses. Depending on the nature and scale of the disaster, government also plays a key role (and may face recovery tasks for its own facilities).

All of these participants are involved in an interconnected recovery matrix. The various participants both experience recovery directly as outcomes and deliver recovery assistance to others as an outcome. A simplified description of this matrix is provided in the following diagram.

Recovery and recovery assistance matrix

The recovery matrix diagram below allows us to position the program logic for Australian Government disaster recovery *assistance* within an overall logic for disaster recovery.

Figure 2: Recovery and recovery assistance matrix



Subsidiarity

State and Territory authorities have a constitutional responsibility within their boundaries for coordinating and planning for the response to disasters and civil emergencies. Each State and Territory has arrangements in place for the management of recovery activities.

This responsibility itself derives from the federal system of government in Australia and its general principle of ‘subsidiarity’, which essentially entails government activity and policy responsibility being handled at the lowest practicable level (closest to the ultimate client group). Subsidiarity is often considered a natural complement to a client-centred focus, which is also a key principle for disaster recovery as for many other programs.

The AGDRA support this responsibility and states:

The primary role for protecting the community and property in response to domestic disasters rests with state and territory governments. The Australian Government supports the states and territories in this primary role through implementation of a range of programs and measures (AGDRA, p1)

Whole of Australian Government disaster recovery activities are coordinated through the AGDRC, including its representation on the Community and Disability Services Ministers’ Advisory Council Disaster Recovery Sub-Committee (DRSC) which facilitates operational links between the Australian and State/Territory governments on recovery planning, preparedness and response.

The roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government, consistent with this, are thus supportive and complementary (or supplementary) to state and territory roles. The Australian Government provides funding support to the states (under agreed cost-sharing arrangements), and brings its own programs to bear for complementary and supplementary purposes.

Two further implications for the evaluation logic can be drawn from these assumptions:

- It would overstate the Australian Government's roles and responsibilities to regard the overall outcome of disaster recovery, at least in relation to *domestic* natural disasters, as the program objective or outcome – the outcomes sought for domestic disaster recovery assistance should be limited to reflect only the supportive and supplementary purposes of the Commonwealth.
- On the other hand, the extent to which the Australian Government's programs may be expected to deliver overall recovery outcomes may vary with circumstances. In particular, programs initiated in relation to *offshore* disasters (or possibly those potentially wrought by animal disease or pandemics) may involve relatively more substantive Australian Government responsibilities. Generally, recovery activities in the case of offshore events will mainly take the form of human support and medical services for affected Australians (any overseas aid aspects are out of scope for this report while the domestic physical and economic aspects are likely to be minor or non-existent), and these may primarily be undertaken through Australian Government programs.

Outputs and outcomes

The following table presents the main disaster recovery outputs of the Australian Government at a level of aggregation referred to as a “program”. A “program” is an integrated set of activities with identifiable common objectives. In each case, the level of activity aggregation chosen for a ‘program’ reflects practical considerations such as management arrangements and measurement needs.

Potentially, the Australian Government has available to it a very wide range of programs that it could bring to bear (or create) to provide disaster recovery assistance. It is not possible to list all of the possibilities. The programs and activities listed in the table can be activated for a major disaster or critical incident events. The four (4) types of AGDRC Disaster Recovery Assistance Packages

listed include those that have already been used in particular instances – but there may be others, or there may be future instances when not all of these are required.

It is anticipated that the attached listing provides sufficient illustration for the purposes of defining this evaluation framework. In conducting evaluations however, it is important to recognise that the framework is a starting point only. Particular and more detailed specification of the program logic will be needed for each case. It will be necessary to identify and take full account of the particular circumstances, Government statements and decisions that arise for each event and each component of the recovery package.

The expected outcomes of programs are presented at two levels. First, each program is expected to have immediate or short term “results” for its defined clients or other targets. Second, these results are expected to deliver higher level “program objectives” which usually take the form of defined improvements in client experiences or other circumstances.

Programs, results and objectives form a central part of an “evaluation logic” which aims to depict the relationships between them. The table also present key measures and indicators that could provide a basis for evaluation of these relationships. Both process and outcome measures are defined.

The tables present only the core elements of an evaluation logic – programs/activities, results, objectives and indicators for evaluation. Agencies responsible for individual Disaster Recovery Assistance measures are also responsible for key inputs but it is not the intention of this project to detail the input requirements for disaster recovery. Input requirements will vary considerably for each event and so will need to be identified separately – however this will generally only be necessary if the evaluation is intended to address comprehensive efficiency questions for which input data are important. It is not necessary to provide more than summary input information (e.g. total expenses or staffing) for

the purposes of most effectiveness or even process evaluations, which are the main requirements in this framework. (See evaluation strategy below).

| Program & Activities | Immediate Results | Program Objectives | Measures/indicators |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>1. AGDRC disaster recovery situation impact report & advice on options for disaster recovery assistance packages</p> | <p>Ministers are informed and advised on appropriate, whole-of-Australian Government disaster recovery package options in response to critical events.</p> | <p>Within the ambit of its responsibilities, the Australian Government determines timely, coordinated and effective recovery responses for onshore and offshore disasters and critical incidents.</p> | <p><i>Process indicators</i> ‘Right’ people with decision-making power attend AGDRC meetings</p> <p>Comprehensive, timely information obtained on needs, responses and options</p> <p>All participants clear about roles and responsibilities</p> <p><i>Outcome indicators</i> Ministers take final decisions and satisfied with advice received</p> |

| Program & Activities | Immediate Results | Program Objectives | Measures/indicators |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>2. AGDRC monitoring, oversight and fostering of inter-agency working relationships for assistance package implementation</p> | <p>(i) Effective information exchange, working relationships, and coordination of whole-of-Australian government and State-territory DR service delivery</p> <p>(ii) Ministers informed and advised on any necessary program adjustments during recovery phase</p> <p>(iii) Ministers informed and advised of change options arising from Strategic evaluations of DR experiences</p> | <p>Timely, coordinated, adaptive and effective response to recovery needs delivered by Australian Government agencies.</p> | <p><i>Process indicators</i> Assessment of adequacy and timeliness of AGDRC information gathering, and capacity to effect interventions</p> <p>Assessments of intra- and inter- governmental communications and working relationships</p> <p><i>Outcome indicators</i> Meta-assessment of evaluations of option delivery</p> <p>Client assessments of perceived delivery coordination, consistency and gaps</p> |

Recovery Assistance: Evaluation Framework

| Program & Activities | Immediate Results | Program Objectives | Measures/indicators |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>3. AGDRC Disaster Recovery Assistance Package - Communications</p> | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Helpline (ie NECC/dedicated recovery hotline) ○ Australian Government Disaster Recovery Website (www.disasterassist.com.au) ○ Disaster Recovery Newsletter ○ Media Support | <p>(i) those affected identified and communication links established</p> <p>(ii) comprehensive, timely and consistent recovery assistance and eligibility information provided to all clients</p> <p>(ii) effective collection and dissemination of community information</p> <p>(iii) well informed media</p> | <p>Those affected by disaster events are fully and continuously informed and readily able and motivated to access help, assistance and community engagements</p> <p>Information held within the affected communities is obtained and used for program design, building networks and promoting self help</p> | <p><i>Process indicators</i></p> <p>Contact volumes (relative to client numbers)</p> <p>Number of people access website</p> <p>Development and number of newsletters distributed</p> <p><i>Outcome indicators</i></p> <p>+ve/-ve media coverage</p> <p>Community satisfaction with information processes</p> <p>Community information inputs to program changes</p> |

| Program & Activities | Immediate Results | Program Objectives | Measures/indicators |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>4. AGDRC Disaster Recovery Assistance Package – Financial Assistance</p> | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) ○ Health Costs in Australia ○ Health Costs Overseas ○ Management of Estates ○ Emergency Pandemic Assistance Payment ○ Visa Extension costs ○ Other financial assistance ie ex-gratia payments | <p>Financial assistance received by those whose homes are destroyed or rendered uninhabitable or who have been seriously injured.</p> <p>Provision of financial assistance to employers for employment costs to sustain activity and employment</p> <p>Recipients receive all necessary health and hospital services both in Australia and overseas</p> <p>Assistance with short term one off costs to maintain living standards associated after a disaster</p> <p>Financial assistance to individuals to assist in the recovery process</p> | <p>Equitable emergency relief for those suffering losses</p> <p>Increasing cash flows within affected local economies</p> | <p><i>Process indicators</i></p> <p>Speed of payments (time profile, late claims ratio)</p> <p>Reported client ease in determining eligibility, making application & accessing funds</p> <p>Timeliness and take-up rate of financial assistance payments received by eligible population</p> <p>Service delivery staff reported clearly understanding criteria</p> <p>Timeliness and take-up rate of wage subsidies by eligible population</p> <p><i>Outcome indicators</i></p> <p>Coverage and timeliness of payments relative to eligible population</p> <p>Informal/reported indications of local spending of funds</p> <p>Employment maintained relative to previous levels among client group during recovery</p> |

| Program & Activities | Immediate Results | Program Objectives | Measures/indicators |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>5. AGDRC Disaster Recovery Assistance Package – Other Assistance</p> | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personal Support ○ Counselling ○ Case Management ○ Referral | <p>Practical assistance, professional counselling, case management and referral provided</p> | <p>To support personal and family recovery processes, and facilitate self-help and coping strategies</p> | <p><i>Process indicators</i> Timeliness and take-up rate by eligible/target population</p> <p><i>Outcome indicators</i> Client satisfaction and informal indicators of use of services provided</p> <p>Service delivery agency data on client service recognition and satisfaction</p> <p>Longer term health and social statistical indicators (relative to general population)</p> |

| Program & Activities | Immediate Results | Program Objectives | Measures/indicators |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>6. AGDRC Disaster Recovery Assistance Package – Travel Assistance</p> | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Domestic ○ International | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic - Families and victims are financially supported to return home to be reunited with loved ones - International - Families and victims are reunited with loved ones, seriously injured returned to Australia, assistance with accommodation and travel to commemorate anniversaries | <p>To support personal and family reconnection and the recovery processes</p> | <p><i>Process indicators</i> Timeliness and take-up of assistance by target population</p> <p><i>Outcome indicators</i> Service delivery agency data on client recognition and satisfaction relating to assistance provided</p> |

NDRRA If a decision was made in agreement with State and Territory governments to undertake an evaluation of the NDRRA as part of this evaluation framework, then suggested measures are drafted and included below

| Program & Activities | Immediate Results | Program Objectives | Measures/indicators |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>7. Co-funding of State/Territory Disaster Recovery Programs (NDRRA assistance or like programs for other events)</p> | <p>(i) to provide a prescribed funding share to states and territories for reasonable disaster recovery expenses (ii) states and territories adopt, in accordance with community needs, the suite of disaster recovery strategies provided in the NDRRA Guidelines (iii) conduct and report monitoring and evaluation of programs.</p> | <p>States/territories fiscal responsibilities for their disaster recovery measures are met through cost effective programs.</p> <p>Commonwealth measures provided through the NDRRA are provided through cost effective programs</p> <p>Viable Farming and other business successfully negotiate temporary financial pressures in the disaster recovery period</p> <p>Increase the levels of economic activity and employment maintained by local employing businesses in the disaster recovery period.</p> | <p><i>Process indicators</i> NDRRA (or like agreement) activated for comprehensive recovery services in accordance with guidelines</p> <p>Timeliness and access to business and financial assistance programs by those affected by the disaster</p> <p><i>Outcome indicators</i> State evaluations demonstrate successful program delivery including recognition of Australian Government contribution (NDRAA).</p> <p>Rate of viable economic farming and business survivorship during recovery</p> |

EVALUATION STRATEGY, QUESTIONS AND METHODS

Evaluation Strategy

An evaluation strategy provides for a variety of purpose, specifically to:

- articulate the priority purposes of the evaluation;
- identify the key indicators and activities associated with achieving these priority purposes;
- articulate evaluation questions;
- identify data collection requirements and methods;
- allocate responsibilities for data collection and other evaluation activities.

The priority purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the Australian Government's response to disaster recovery assistance needs in order to ensure program accountability and ongoing improvement in the provision of assistance. This implies that the key questions to be addressed in evaluation for disaster recovery assistance are those relating to process and outcomes:

- The assessment of process relates essentially to performance in delivering outputs.
- The assessment of outcomes relates essentially to the "effectiveness" of the package and its delivery.

The evaluation logic presented above provides the description of the key activities (outputs or processes) and intended outcomes (results and objectives). In support of those descriptions, it also provides a summary of the process and outcome measures and/or indicators that would give fuller meaning to the output/outcome elements.

Evaluation Questions

It is useful to formulate a range of more detailed evaluation questions and hence to identify specific data needs and methods arising from this framework, in order to

provide the Australian government and other stakeholders with evaluative information about the programs.

To this end the following key issues have been identified as informing both the effectiveness (broadly defined to include equity, quality and appropriateness) of the programs and the on process used (including higher level aspects of efficiency).

Process Issues (including high level efficiency):

- What was done?
- Who was involved?
- What was the scope and nature of the overall assistance package?
- To what extent has the package been implemented as intended?
- Did it reach the intended target group/s?
- To what extent does the current administrative process contribute to the achievement of the program objectives? (advice, relationships, communication, decision making).
- *Efficiency:* Do/did the initiatives provide value for money?
- *Efficiency:* Were the immediate results obtained in the best possible way?

Program Effectiveness Issues (including equity, quality and appropriateness):

- Does the program (so defined) deliver desired and intended outcomes?
- To what extent are designated objectives met?
- Can current processes be enhanced to provide better outcomes?
- Can the range of initiatives be enhanced to provide better outcomes?
- Does the program provide a coordinated approach to recovery from the Australian government's perspective?
- *Equity:* Is there equitable access to the benefits of the initiatives?
- *Quality:* What is the level of user and stakeholder satisfaction?

- *Appropriateness*: Are the specific assistance initiatives appropriate for the particular context, providing a relevant response to identified needs and/or opportunities generated by the disaster?

These issues are expanded upon in the appendix on key questions relating to the main elements of the package. In practice each of the programs for each of the events being evaluated will need to consider specific evaluation questions appropriate in the circumstances.

When to evaluate?

Decisions on when to formally evaluate should give consideration to numerous factors, such as:

- The nature of the disaster ie length of time assistance is provided
- Whether the measure is being used for the first time in a disaster context. It may be wise to specifically evaluate a measure that has been offered for the first time.
- The purpose of the evaluation will provide guidance as to when evaluations could be carried out – keeping in mind the impact evaluation activity may have on disaster affected communities.

Process Issues (formative) – can be carried out during the time the assistance is being provided, and possibly for diagnostic purposes – i.e. checking the implementation of the measures and making adjustments accordingly.

Program Effectiveness Issues (Summative) – carried out at the completion of the assistance, and largely for judgemental purposes – i.e. to what extent are designated objectives been achieved, and certain standards reached (equity, appropriateness etc).

Evaluation methods and data

The evaluation strategy and questions inform the methods and data needs for this framework. This section discusses the main possible methods for collecting data: a

meta analysis of existing evaluation reports, key informant interviews, client and stakeholder surveys, case studies and focus groups. Of course, these will supplement the financial and management information also generated by each program and which would be accessed for the conduct of evaluations.

Meta analysis of reports developed by individual agencies

Because of the nature of the program under review and the potential number of agencies and departments providing elements of the package a meta analysis would be a key method to understand the effectiveness of the “package” as a whole. Meta analysis in this context would mean the analysis of each Department or agency’s evaluative activity by the application of defined questions and stated indicators of outcomes. The data or evidence would in this case be each evaluation study produced by each department or agency. Analysis of state or territory evaluation may also provide data on the Commonwealth’s role.

Documentation Review

Apart from the individual reviews carried out by each department or agency other relevant documents will be reviewed in order to obtain contextual information relative to the development, structure and mechanisms in place to decide and implement the Government’s policy. These documents may include specific policy documents outlining government policy objectives. This contextual analysis will be required to ensure the recovery package reflects the current Commonwealth government role and may change over time.

Interviews/survey with key informants

Interviews with individuals involved with the development and implementation of the package and other program activities would provided a rich source of qualitative data regarding the processes involved and the opportunities for enhancements. Key informants might include individuals from the following stakeholder groups:

- Departmental personnel who had involvement and responsibility for the development and implementation of the program (eg members of the AGDRC and EMA)
- Other key departmental staff from coordinating departments represented on the AGDRC (eg Treasury and or Finance).
- Inter-jurisdictional partners – state and territory government representatives
- Community and non government organisations including peak bodies representing key areas such as business or other interest groups.

Key informants would be selected in relation to their roles and responsibilities, their involvement in development or funding in this area and their knowledge of the key issues surrounding disaster recovery.

Surveys of Individual and families and other community stakeholders

As the recipients of the package disaster affected individuals and groups are key in understanding the degree to which individual interventions met their needs and assisted in their recovery after the event or incident. Eliciting their views about the Commonwealth's activities would be in the main restricted to those specific elements of the package that can clearly be identified. Input from disaster effected individuals and groups would also be available in the meta analysis discussed above as it would assumed that departments and agencies would have independently sought the views and feedback of recipients about specific package elements.

However a combined survey covering all of the specific elements of the Commonwealth package administered to the disaster affected community could be developed. This instrument could obtain a combined view about what assisted in the process from the Commonwealth's perspective. This would best be done collaboratively with the range of Commonwealth departments and agencies involved in particular disasters/incidents. With one comprehensive evaluative process the effectiveness of particular elements could be explored and disaster affected people would not over burdened by repetitive evaluative activity.

Focus groups or interviews

For a more in-depth or qualitative understanding of issues important to the evaluation focus groups or interviews could be undertaken. The uses of these methods would enable the experience of disaster affected people to be explored in more detail. These methods could be used with those individuals who have been affected by the disaster or event or key stakeholder groups ie business or other interest groups.

Inline with the principle of ethical research outlined on page 8 of this document it is important that participants in research be clearly informed about how their responses will be used in any evaluations (ie whether they will be quoted directly) and the limits to confidentiality (how realistic it is for their identity to be maintained ie in small communities).

Analysis of existing statistical data eg Centrelink data, economic data, population level data

There are a range of separate data collection activities that potentially can inform the evaluation in this context. For example Centrelink's database would show client service recognition and satisfaction, the extent of take-up of particular measures, whether those eligible received payments and the timing of when payments were made.

ATTACHMENT 'A'

The tables below set out a series of sub-questions, the data that will answer the questions and possible sources and methods for collecting the data.

Recovery Assistance: Evaluation Framework

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>able and motivated to access help, assistance and community engagement?</p> | <p>How comprehensive, timely and consistent were the different elements of the communication strategy?</p> <p>Was information held within the affected communities obtained and used for decisions about package design?</p> <p>How well informed and supportive of the recovery process were the media?</p> | <p>key informants</p> <p>Meta analysis</p> <p>Survey of recipients of package elements</p> <p>Interviews with key informants</p> <p>Meta analysis</p> | |
|---|--|---|--|

| Evaluation Question | Possible Evaluation sub questions | Source of Information | Who collects? |
|--|--|--|---------------------|
| <p>How effective was the AGDRC in monitoring, oversight and building of inter-agency working relationships for assistance package implementation?</p> | <p>How adequate and timely was the level of AGDRC information gathering, and capacity to identify interventions?</p> <p>What mechanisms were in place to ensure coordinated implementation between levels of government, the non-government sector, private and public sectors? (eg joint teams, agency arrangements, ‘one-stop shop)</p> <p>How effective were the intra- and inter- governmental communications and working relationships?</p> <p>Did stakeholders and other recipients of package elements perceive delivery coordination, consistency and gaps?</p> <p>Was there evidence of unintended consequences of the implementation of the package?</p> | <p>Interviews with key informants</p> <p>Meta analysis Document analysis</p> <p>Meta analysis Interviews with key informants</p> <p>Survey of recipients of package elements</p> <p>Interviews with key informants</p> | <p>AGDRC</p> |

| Evaluation Question (Individual package elements) | Evaluation sub questions | Source of Information | Who collects? |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <p>How effective were each individual elements of the assistance in delivering expected results and objectives?</p> | <p>What interventions were provided?</p> <p>Was the intervention implemented equitably?</p> <p>Was the intervention taken-up by eligible populations?</p> <p>Did the intervention produce the stated result/s? Were there unintended consequences of specific interventions?</p> <p>Did the intervention complement the assistance provided by the state/territory?</p> <p>Did the recipients of the intervention regard it as the best option for them in the circumstances?</p> <p>Was the intervention provided for an appropriate length of time?</p> <p>What strategies were used to ensure effective transition back to normal management and service provision?</p> <p>How can the current processes be enhanced to provide better outcomes? (what did we learn?)</p> | <p>Secondary analysis of Statistics obtained from routine operations (eg Centrelink usage rate, user profile)</p> <p>Stakeholder/key informant interviews</p> <p>Survey of recipients</p> | <p>Responsible Agency/department</p> |

NDRRA

If a decision was made in agreement with State and Territory governments to undertake an evaluation of the ndrra as part of this evaluation framework, then suggested evaluation questions have been drafted and included below

| Evaluation Questions | Meta Evaluation sub questions | Source of Information | Who collects |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>How effective was the Co-funding of State/Territory Disaster Recovery Programs (NDRRA assistance or like programs for other events) in assisting with the recovery process?</p> | <p>Was NDRRA (or like agreement) activated on a timely and cooperative basis with appropriate recognition of Australian Government contributions?</p> <p>Was the NDRRA package comprehensive in accordance with guidelines?</p> <p>Was NDRRA package delivered through cost effective programs?</p> | <p>Meta analysis including State and territory evaluations</p> | <p>Responsible Agency/department</p> |