



WHAKARATONGA IWI

FIRE
EMERGENCY

NEW ZEALAND

Hawke's Bay Recovery Team Pilot Evaluation

Te Ao Mārama, 2022



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EMERGENCY**

NEW ZEALAND

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Recovery is part of what we do

Fire and Emergency was formed on 1 July 2017, and focussed on bringing together rural and urban fire services and developing the structures, systems, tools, and ways of working that we need to operate as a unified organisation.

Our people do more than just fight fires, we work with communities across the 'four Rs' of reduction, readiness, response, and recovery to build resilience, and help them prepare for, respond to, and recover well from emergencies.¹

1. Fire and Emergency New Zealand, Annual Report 2021



Fire and Emergency NZ is committed to supporting different ways of volunteering

The Fire and Emergency NZ Volunteerism strategy 2019–2029 highlights the need to provide broader and more flexible ways for people to volunteer.¹

Part of this commitment to volunteerism includes priorities to:

- **Encourage** broader and more flexible ways to volunteer
- **Build** a model for volunteerism to thrive across our organisation
- **Strengthen** connections between volunteers and the rest of the organisation.²

1. Note- models implemented in other districts should be tailored for the needs and contexts of those areas, so may not necessarily use volunteers to deliver these services.

2. Volunteerism Strategy 2019-2029, Te huinga hukihuki mo te tautaki tuaotanga, Fire and Emergency New Zealand.



We know not everyone is prepared for a fire

When confronted with a fire, people can face:



Uncertainty over the next steps



Feeling overwhelmed



Time pressure



Trauma from previous experience with fire

After evacuating, people are thinking about their immediate needs such as making sure they have their keys or their pets are safe, which can lead to people attempting to re-enter their dwelling.¹

1. Lilley, R. 2022. Smoke Alarms: Insights into fire-related experiences, motivation and actions. Injury Prevention Research Unit, Dunedin School of Medicine.

Fires and disasters have a long-lasting impact on people

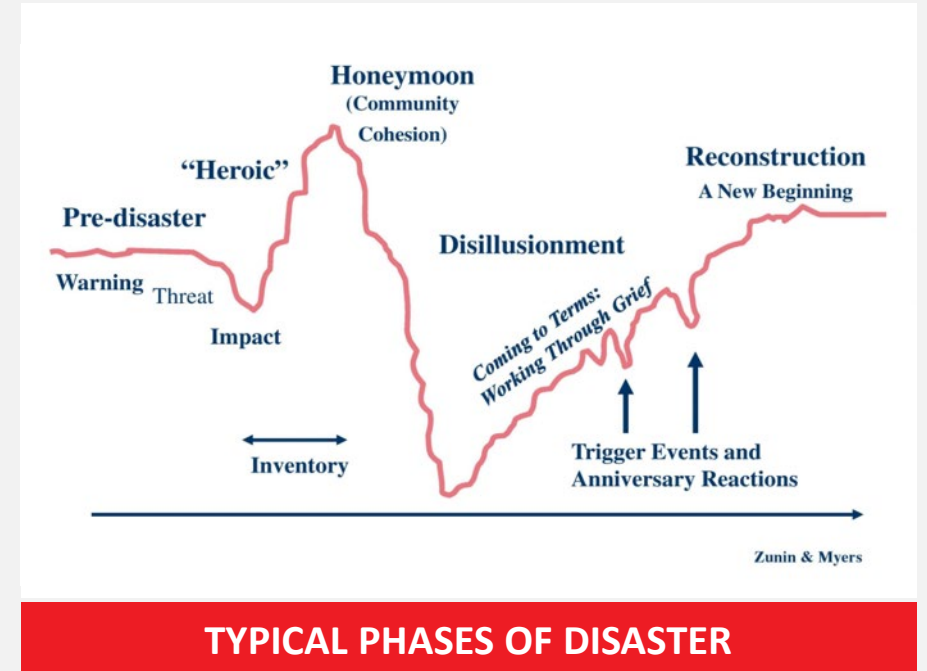
Zunin & Myers 'typical phases of disaster' is a common model in disaster recovery and shows the different stages of emotional response people have long term after a disaster.¹

The impact of an event like a house fire lasts much longer than just the initial response.

A 2011 review after the Christchurch Earthquakes by the Joint Centre for Disaster Research found that the following principles strengthened an individual's recovery after a disaster:

- Treating a person as part of a whānau/community
- Facilitating social support
- Valuing cultural and spiritual practices
- Facilitating collaboration between recovery stakeholders.²

1. Zunin & Myers as cited in DeWolfe, D. J. 2000. Training manual for mental health and human service workers in major disasters (2nd ed., HHS Publication No. ADM 90-538). Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.
2. Mooney, M., Paton, D., de Terte, I., Johal, S., Karanchi, A., Gardner, D., Collins, S., Glavovic, B., Huggins, T., Johnston, L., Changers, R., and Johnston, D. (2011). *Psychosocial Recovery from Disasters: A framework Informed by Evidence*. New Zealand Journal of Psychology, 40(4).



The Hawke's Bay recovery team was set up to provide welfare support

In Hawke's Bay, there was a gap in services for community members who had survived a fire as Victim Support was found to be unable to respond to events in a timely way.

In 2019 the Hawke's Bay district saw this opportunity and started the process of setting up a recovery function in the district.

This process involved understanding the key support agencies in the district, understanding the gap in services, and slowly training and resourcing volunteers to provide this support.

“ We don't want to just pack up the truck and walk away, leaving them, you know, still on hold for the insurance company and where they're going to sleep that night and MSD is not answering their phone and unaware of the facilities that are available to them.”
– **Recovery volunteer**

“ So victim support is not necessarily turning up at the exact moment of the crisis, they turn up the day after or a couple of days later.”
– **Recovery volunteer**



The recovery team has been operating for two years now

Fire and Emergency New Zealand wanted to know how this team was performing and if this model is something that other districts could adopt to support their communities.

Te Ao Mārama was approached to evaluate if the Hawke's Bay/Te Matau a Māui recovery team services were effectively meeting the needs of the communities they serve and if their model of support was able to be used in other communities across Aotearoa.

Here's how we evaluated this pilot

25

INTERVIEWS

58

CASE REPORTS
REVIEWED

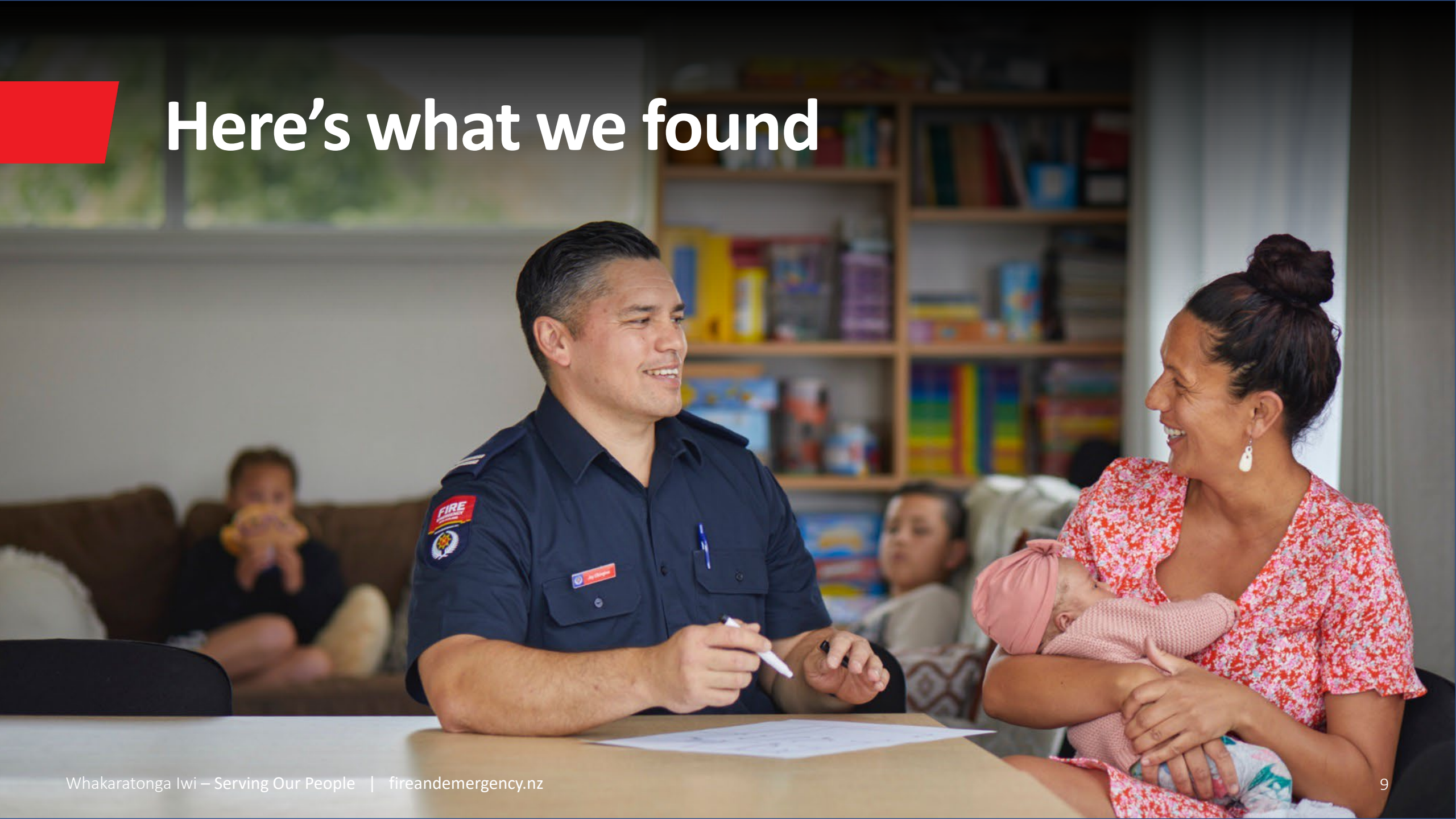


TO EVALUATE THESE SERVICES WE:

- Reviewed 58 closed case reports from the Hawke's Bay recovery team
- Interviewed:
 - 9 past and present recovery volunteers
 - 3 Fire and Emergency operational personnel
 - 10 community members that received support from the Hawke's Bay Recovery Team
 - 3 Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) who the Hawke's Bay Recovery Team worked with to supply services¹

1. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from Fire and Emergency Personnel, NGOs, and community members. Interviews were coded and analysed for key themes. These key themes were then used to answer key evaluative questions about effectiveness of the pilot in meeting community needs, and answer questions about future implementation.

Here's what we found



There are clusters of volunteers across the Hawke's Bay

In Fire and Emergency organisational structure the recovery team is employed as brigade support and sits within the Taradale station. In reality, the volunteers report to the Hawke's Bay Community Risk Manager and are located in clusters across the district with no home base.

The current recovery team consists of:

- Two team leaders who help recruit, train, and coordinate the team around responses. They are also active volunteers.
- 13 active volunteers who respond to events, debrief on events and report on events.



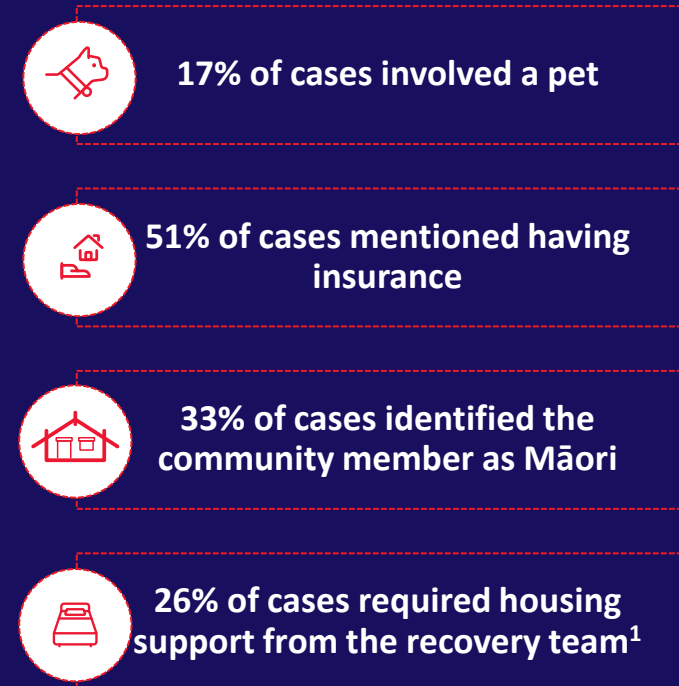
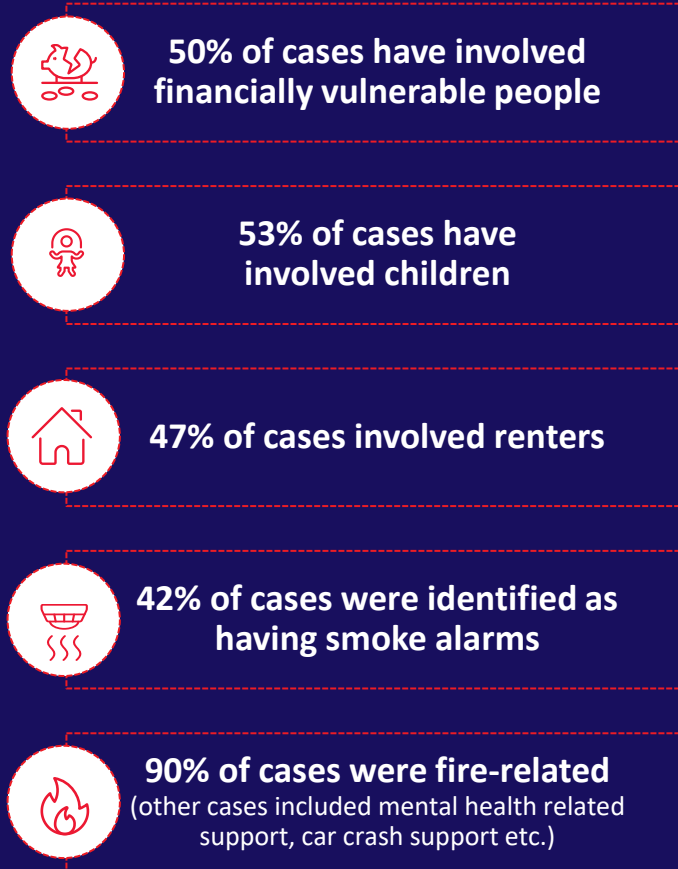
“

*We identified the need. Actually, **the need was identified by our firefighters really...** Our firefighters were dealing with it day in and day out and often – all too often – having to leave families or individual community members standing on the side of the road with no support.”*

– Fire and Emergency Personnel

The team has closed 58 cases

Average time: 1 hour 53 minutes
Average follow up calls: 3



Volunteers will get called out automatically to some calls and referred to others

The recovery team gets called out automatically to K99 calls (first appliance in attendance – property fire well involved).

Over time, as firefighters became more familiar with the services provided, and as the recovery team responded to different types of incidents, it became more common for its services to be requested.

Within the recovery team, some volunteers have more experience responding to more serious or traumatic events either through previous volunteering or career experience.

Not all volunteers can or want to attend more serious events though.



90% of call-outs are for fire-related events

(other cases included mental health related support, car crash support etc.)

“

We've got automatic callouts for K99s so it's not even up to the firefighters, they're just coming straight to us from comms and a few other ones as well. So we're turning up and then they're seeing what we're doing and they're like, "Oh, shit, that's really good" and now the feedback from the firefighters is really good. And so now they think to call comms and they're like, "Can you get some recovery down here so we can get on"."

– Recovery volunteer

2020–2022 CALL OUTS

58
CASES
CLOSED

Cases had common themes of:

- Housing insecurity
- Financial hardship
- Lack of insurance, or trouble with the insurance process
- Non-fire-related traumatic events
- Pets that were either injured or needed shelter

Training and protocols have developed over time

Recruitment happens mostly through word of mouth and links to existing volunteer networks and firefighter communities. This process involves some informal discussions before a formal offer is extended to prospective volunteers. After an offer, they have to complete a police check and are on a trial period for three months or until they have attended three events.

The team has developed their training programme for volunteers that was informed by similar models at Victim Support, Volunteer Hawke's Bay, and Red Cross. This has developed over time and covers how to:

- behave on a fireground,
- safely interact with people who have survived a fire or emergency,
- understanding grief and loss, and
- understanding Fire and Emergency codes and technology

“ We will do a whole day with the new recruits covering how to be basically an effective listener, right up to how to appropriately link different scenarios with different agencies...two-thirds of a day's training, around, yeah, trauma, crisis, grief, that sort of thing.... on top of that they get sent to Red Cross psychological first aid training, so that's another full day. You get a certificate for that. And there is an online module they're required to complete which is a child protection module.”

– Recovery volunteer

“ We do role-plays in that to make sure that people are using active listening skills.”

– Recovery volunteer

“ I think the induction process is really good. I think it covers a lot of bases. I think the way you are taught to respond is really good, and what comes after that.”

– Recovery volunteer

The recovery team has matured into its current state

Like any job, when people are in the role for longer they seem to get more confident and more comfortable with the work.

Similarly, the team as a whole has matured its systems and protocols over time. An example of this is the team's engagement with referral organisations, where they have learnt and developed what information they need to supply at the point of referral.

Any district looking to implement recovery work needs to prepare for the journey of maturing its delivery of recovery services, its volunteers, and its relationship with referral agencies.

Models implemented in other districts should be tailored for the needs and context of those areas.

“Every time I go, it gets easier. Every time I go, everything gets easier because you begin to know the process and it's just like any new job, really. There's that time of flailing and then you kind of grasp on to something.”

– **Recovery volunteer**

“We started small. We only originally done a certain type of fire, so fires where property was beyond repair really, K99 fires – didn't do any medical or motor vehicle-type events – so started quite small and then we grew from there really. We put more training into our people.”

– **Fire and Emergency Personnel**

“I think it would be critical that you get to know each organisation, because some of them don't do parcels, or some have very strict criteria or they have limited time that they can do it.”

– **Referral agency**

The team can see its value but needs some direction to continue

The recovery pilot in Hawke's Bay has core values of:

- psychological safety,
- understanding the individual needs of community members, and
- empowering people through welfare support.

The team has internal protocols around how to use resources and how to respond to events. These have been iterative and resources have been acquired through ad hoc funding.

There are some ongoing questions that the team has around the:

- scope of potential response work,
- use of uniform responding to events, and
- the appropriate level of training required for this work

This ultimately needs to be agreed upon by Fire and Emergency and communicated to the recovery team.

“What I really think we're doing is we're filling that immediate gap, that response to the event...So they're taking them away from that immediate trauma, taking them/isolating them from seeing their own house burn down and then putting them in an environment, which is comfortable to talk and then talk through their own solutions and guide them to the right place.”

– Recovery volunteer

“They've given us nothing. They've recently given us some money to roll the programme out and it's like 30 grand or something, but before that nothing. No, so beg, steal and borrow.”

– Fire and Emergency personnel

They are meeting a need of Hawke's Bay communities

This recovery pilot in Hawke's Bay has been successful in meeting the needs of communities. It has bridged a gap that exists in the experience of people following an emergency.

The services delivered to community members are tailored to their individual needs. Where people have strong existing support, this might look lighter touch. For those with few existing support networks, this might look more comprehensive.

The work that this team does has real value to communities. Community members who we spoke to identified that the Recovery Team had provided support in the following ways:

- Referring people to organisations to help with:
 - Housing insecurity
 - Total loss of clothing
 - Food insecurity
- Providing calming support on site by following up on top concerns
- Informing people about what to expect next following a traumatic event
- Practical advice on who to contact.

“ They helped me organise a lot of things which made my brain a little bit less scrambled, which was good, because I said, ‘I think I'm losing the plot here.’”
– **Community member**

“ She was a breath of fresh air and absolutely brilliant. Every single thing she said to us was right...Just a really level, sensible conversation with the information that we needed at the time to make sure that we'd checked things off.”
– **Community member**

This is what support looked like for Susan*

*This persons name has been changed for anonymity



Susan came home after some training with her community group and thought she heard a beeping noise inside her house. As she opened the door the influx of oxygen fed the smouldering fire.

She ran back inside the building to rescue her pets and grab her keys, vape, and passport but left her medical equipment inside the house. She was left wearing shorts and a jacket on a cold night with her pets in her car, unable to go back into her house.

Volunteers helped Susan organise her thoughts and plan what to do next.

Susan was moved between Kāinga Ora properties for four months. None of these accommodation options had a full kitchen or anything bigger than a bar fridge.

Susan was able to focus on sorting out what to do next and was empowered to ask for what she needed because of the support provided by our volunteers.

"It was like the most amazing support, couldn't have been more helpful. I said to them, "I'm glad there's a team like you around" because I'm not sure how I was going to cope with that myself... They helped ring somewhere for me and got medical supplies organised, which was really good. I said, "I don't even know how to ask for this stuff"."

“Next thing I heard a window explode... Within a few minutes after that, a gas bottle flew through part of the house and through the fence.”

“There's a little fridge that's going to hold about a bottle of milk if we're lucky... No cooking facilities... You get a kettle in your room. Am I boiling my egg in there?”

“A good couple of months after I was back in because you still think, “Crap, it was that close to potentially losing everything”.”

The recovery team needs more from Fire and Emergency

Some of the team experience pain points relating to the volunteering process linked to not having a:

- 'Home base' station for volunteers to work out of
- Formal business unit and title that recognises their work

The impact of these pain points is that some volunteers feel like they are missing out on the sense of belonging that comes with volunteering, while others are experiencing delays in getting resources when they start. This would be mitigated by more formal support and national coordination for the recovery team.

Additionally, as with any pilot activities, there comes a point where systems need to be moved from 'pilot' to business as usual. To do this, the recovery team needs the appropriate teams at Fire and Emergency to peer review and formalise recovery procedures and guidance.

“They don't have the same sort of support that you would in a brigade with a leader and officers to go to to have a chat and stuff. They're almost like a remote team...they need a business unit...then they could have ownership of that business unit and the money.”

– Fire and Emergency Personnel

“That sense of belonging. That is really important.... Giving them a place that they feel is their own, our recovery team. I've thought about this for the regions getting it in the future. They need to have a sense of belonging. This is where you meet, this is where all your stuff is stored. If you need more booklets or business cards or incident report forms or whatever, this is where your stuff is and you can come and get it anytime. Yeah, we didn't have that here and we felt like we were imposing a lot, you know.”

– Recovery volunteer

So what now?



There is already national-level work that can support recovery teams

Fire and Emergency are in the process of reviewing their relationship agreements with key partners across the sector.

Some of the issues that our volunteers are identifying at the local level could be resolved by national level coordination with partners such as MSD and Kāinga Ora.

Additionally, work being done in the local planning space to ensure a comprehensive understanding of communities, risks, and opportunities will likely strengthen the ability to deliver recovery services. This is because this planning will highlight key partners in the district, and emerging issues the team should be aware of.

“WINZ have a policy that they can't fund an expense that you've incurred before. So when you walk into their office on Monday morning you've already incurred the expense, it's your problem. So it can't be retrospectively done. But they don't have an emergency phone line open over the weekend.”

– **Recovery volunteer**

National support for the Hawke's Bay team

This pilot team needs to have national organisational support, this can help with some of the volunteer pain points.

While the work done to date has serviced the communities in Hawke's Bay well so far, it could be improved by having formal support, structure, review, and resourcing from the national level.



The Hawke's Bay recovery team has been running for over two years. It would be beneficial for this team to be formally supported by:

- National volunteering teams to ensure compliance with legislative obligations such as Health and Safety at Work Act 2017 and Employment Relations Act 2000 by:
 - Reviewing their recruitment, onboarding, and exiting processes
 - Reviewing job descriptions that outline the expectations and boundaries of the various volunteer roles
 - Introducing more robust health screening, and more formalised psychological supervision
- An organisational development review of their training services and a link to existing in-house training resources
- A link to our national service providers that Fire and Emergency have an existing memorandum of understanding with
- A link to networked services, e.g. NEMA, Victim Support, and group civil defence teams
- Support from national-level engagements with system partners, e.g. with the Ministry of Social Development, NZ Police, and Kāinga Ora

District planning should be used to access the required funds to resource the team with PPE and other needs.

Considerations for future implementation

What the Hawke's Bay pilot team has been able to do with limited resources is impressive. This is likely due to the support from the Hawke's Bay's District Manager and Community Risk Manager who have helped embed this work in the district. Volunteer team leaders have also contributed to the successful running of this volunteer team through their coordination and peer support.

This evaluation highlights the need for support from the wider organisation, and to link in with existing processes and ways of working.

While this exact service may not be appropriate or necessary in all districts, there are some lessons that can be taken from what the Hawkes Bay Pilot Team has achieved.

Before another district considers implementing a recovery function, they should have first:

- Developed district and local planning
- Developed a relationship with regional Civil Defence Emergency Management groups to understand any existing relationships and contacts (e.g. use agencies or other organisational personnel they have identified to support our work)
- A planned model of recovery services that meet the need of their district and local plan (e.g. will they implement a cluster approach, a single recovery volunteer at each station, a central team at one station to cover an entire district)
- Future work should also look at the application and boundaries of the role of recovery for Fire and Emergency NZ.



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