Some Roles for Local Government in Disaster Recovery

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Putting the ‘local’ in local government

• Legislated and elected mandate and responsibility
• History (information, maps, working knowledge)
• Pre-existing relationships with contractors and communities (these are not always good)
• Expectations
• Resources – community halls, reserves, etc
• Decision-making authority/structure and discretionary funding
• Liaison with other organisations
• Balance economies of scale with costs of administration
• Existing ‘integrative’ framework (as opposed to CERA, for example) of needs assessment and service delivery that is most ready and able to modify to suit recovery
Community facilities
Homes
Infrastructure
Businesses
Traditionally TLAs do not step across the home-owner’s boundary and any infrastructure issues between the house and the front boundary is the owner’s problem. But post-earthquake it would have been impossible to just call a plumber to get the issue fixed. So we [Waimakariri District Council] made a decision fairly early on to liaise with EQC and coordinate repairs across the boundary because there’s no point us fixing our side of the sewer and people still not being able to use [the toilet] because the pipe between the house and the boundary is broken.
The Waimakariri Way: Key Success Factors

• Community first:
  - People above processes, people before pipes

• Co-location:
  – Infrastructure Mgr and Social Mgr together at the coal face, initial outreach, the hub, ‘engaging’ i.e. working with (empowering, supporting and enabling) local communities

• Communication:
  – EQ communications person, ‘engaging with’ communities through tailored ‘consultation’, honest answers where possible

• Co-ordination (integration):
  – Across time (LTCCPs); info (New Foundations/Hub); land-use and services; recovery and BaU; regional and local recovery...
The Waimakariri Way: Some contextual challenges

• unique position of local government to undertake integrated or ‘holistic’ recovery work with community at the centre, versus the lack of clarity around both community and local government’s role in disaster recovery;

• balancing Business as Usual (BaU) with recovery issues over an extended period of time.
• Fast growing ‘peri-urban’ district of 50,000 population
• 80% population within 10km of east coast
• Several main towns:
  - Rangiora 15,000
  - Kaiapoi (was) 10,000
  - Woodend 3,000
  - Oxford (inland ) 2,000
  - Pegasus (new) town under development – (to be) 5,000+
• Large part of east coast in liquefaction susceptibility zone
• Major river breakout flooding risks for Kaiapoi and Rangiora
• Kaiapoi/coast at some Tsunami risk
• Other than that a pretty nice place!
## Contexts for Recovery Mgmt.

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<th>Spread</th>
<th>Severity and Duration</th>
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<td>Relatively low intensity/short duration event, but wider geographic area affected. Requires cross-boundary coordination /regional level resourcing. Larger/more dispersed number of homes/businesses affected. Enhanced recovery co-ordination and planning structures /processes required.</td>
<td>Large scale event(s). Widespread and severe damage. Fatalities, injuries, homelessness and business interruption. Local - regional - national coordination. Enhanced/customised recovery assistance 2-10 years duration. Major recovery plans and programmes through significant public/private recovery leadership and integration arrangements.</td>
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<td>Localised event of short duration, within one Council area. Acute response, short recovery term/limited task. Frequent occurrence, e.g. severe winter snow storm, large flood events. Small no of homes/businesses affected. Short duration Recovery Management Team, quick revert to existing BAU structures/processes</td>
<td>Severe to very severe localised event, e.g. earthquake with aftershocks protracting recovery. 10s to 100s of displaced households/businesses. Significant infrastructure damage. May be fatalities, likely injuries. Longer term recovery. Initial RMT + augmented BAU. Significant regional and private sector co-ordination.</td>
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LG Recovery Mgmt. Practice - Reflections

- Pre-event recovery mgmt. experience non-existent/frameworks generic (4 wellbeings, dedicated RMTSCALE independent)
- Relied on pre-event organisational culture and leadership behaviours conducive to integrated, community-focused recovery practice to ‘get us through’ – not always assured
- Recovery from more severe/longer lasting events requires:
  - acceptance that the culture of recovery is fundamentally different to response
  - more customised, hybrid structures, capable of rapid adjustment
  - networking the exponential increase in players and so required coordination
  - real recognition that social and economic recovery is most important - but this is typically ‘at the edge’ of most organisational mandates
  - acknowledgment that secondary stressors add additional complexity and challenge not well captured in recovery frameworks and programmes
  - considering what recovery looks like, when does it end and exit strategies for recovery programmes which are all problematic