

Frequently Asked Questions

Community Recovery Committee Review

Why was the Community Recovery Committee established?

The Community Recovery Committee was established in April 2023 to provide advice and support to Council on recovery issues, barriers and needs after the Maribyrnong River Flood in October 2022. The committee was also established to advise on the development and implementation on recovery and resilience programs and strategies.

The Committee was also initiated to support Council to develop a flood recovery plan and program to meet the needs of affected residents, and the requirements of the Community Recovery Hubs Grant, which was jointly funded by the State and Federal governments.

What were the objectives of the Community Recovery Committee review?

After eight months of operation, it was timely for Council to undertake an independent review of the structure and performance of the Committee to ensure it was functioning as planned.

The scope of the review was to:

- review the existing Terms of Reference and governance structure

- review the induction material and sample of papers from committee meetings
- develop and distribute a survey to all Committee members
- conduct interviews with all Committee members and a selection of key stakeholders, including staff who had been involved with the Committee and/or recovery actions
- benchmark against other community recovery committees across Victoria and other states
- develop a project report

How was the review undertaken?

The review was undertaken using the four steps below:

1. Document review of reference materials, including from other Councils, Emergency Recovery Victoria, the Inspector-General of Emergency Management, and the Australian Public Service Commission.
2. Interviews conducted and documented with stakeholders including community members, Council officers on the Committee, and staff with involvement in the recovery program.
3. Consultation analysis – interpretation of data and key themes extracted and categorised.

4. Synthesis – information gathered during the first three stages was summarised to highlight key issues, learnings and recommendations.

What are the key issues identified in the review?

Issues identified within the Community Recovery Committee review relate to:

- The need for clarity between State and Local governments and communities.
- Loss of trust between community, Council and State agencies.
- Differing perceptions among committee members – both community and Council officers – regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Committee.
- Exhaustion among members who were navigating their own recovery while providing support and advice to Council for the benefit of their community.

What are the recommendations identified in the report to address the issues identified?

The report recommends:

- The recruitment of additional community members, ideally from groups who are grounded in the wider community and from diverse backgrounds.

- The appointment of an independent chair.
- The Terms of Reference be negotiated and agreed by the new Committee.
- Agreement should be reached among the new Committee members about the objectives of the Committee itself and the relationships of those involved.
- Committee members should be granted access to professional mental health support.
- Committee members, including Council staff, require ongoing training, support, and mentoring.

What is the relationship between the Council Sub-Committees and the Community Recovery Committee?

In addition to the Community Recovery Committee, Council also established a Social Recovery Sub-Committee, Built and Natural Environment Sub-Committee, and Economic Recovery Sub-Committee. These sub-committees support the work of one another through information sharing.

What will be the role of the Community Recovery Committee moving forward?

- Moving forward, the Community Recovery Committee will seek to:
- Understand community strengths and identify top recovery priorities from a community perspective.
- Collaboratively develop and monitor a flood recovery plan.
- Identify the best ways to gather and share information with the broader community.
- Advise, support and promote the best use of grant funding.
- Work with sub-committees to support the delivery of the flood recovery plan.
- Provide advice on any review and evaluation of the flood recovery plan.
- Aim to use the principles of:
 - Trauma informed
 - Strengths based
 - Good governance
 - Community centred
 - Collaboration and working together

What will be the key changes to the Committee as a result of the review?

The appointment of an independent chairperson for the Committee will be a key change. This person should have experience in facilitation and have an understanding of community-centred recovery.

Representatives from cohealth and GenWest will be invited to join the Community Recovery Committee. These agencies are also represented on the Social Recovery Sub-Committee.

Council will reopen applications to join the Community Recovery Committee, and will seek an additional 2-6 community members to enable Council staff to receive advice on recovery matters from a group that is representative of the community. The criteria will be amended to include residents within the impacted area who may have moved in since the 2022 Flood Event, community members who reside in Maribyrnong City Council and are providing support to someone who was impacted by the October 2022 flood.

Visit Council's website for further information:

www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/flood