



bushfire&natural
HAZARDSCRC

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF CITIZEN- LED RECOVERY IN POST-DISASTER SETTINGS

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An Australian Government Initiative



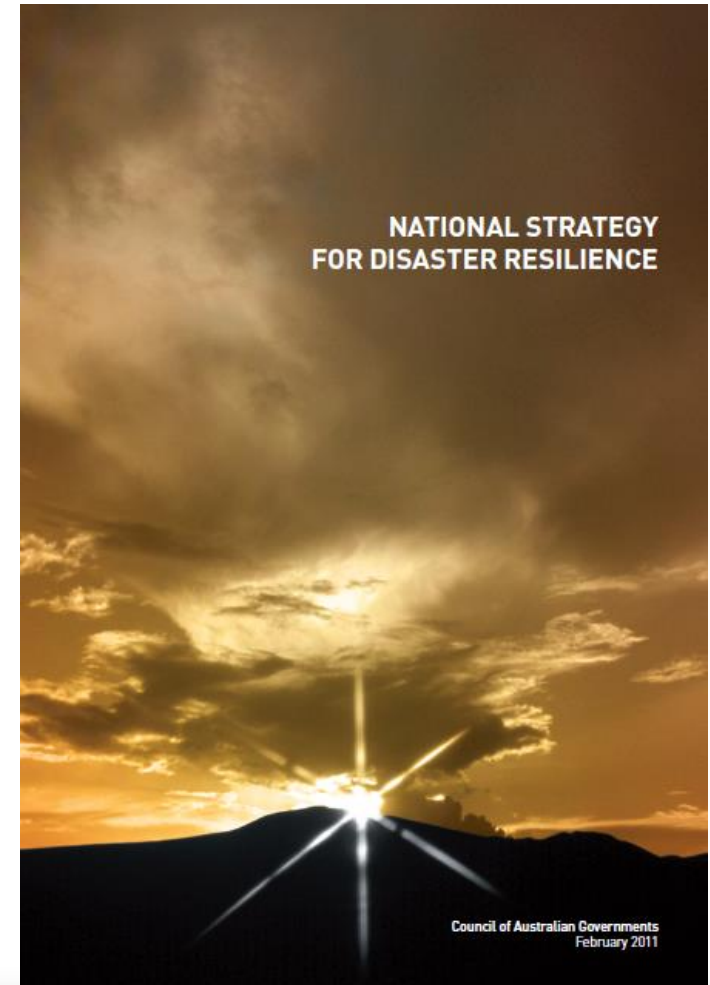
People see bureaucracy as malicious. Bureaucracy sees itself as following the rules.



AUSTRALIAN RESILIENCE POLICY

3.5. Empowering individuals to exercise choice and take responsibility

'Fundamental to the concept of disaster resilience, is that individuals and communities should be more self-reliant and prepared to take responsibility for the risks they live with... **A resilient community will understand and have the ability to use local networks and resources to support actions required during an emergency and to support recovery efforts.**'



BLACK SATURDAY

- Saturday 7 February 2009
- 46.4°C (115.5°F), strong winds, low humidity, 400+ fires
- 173 people dead
- 2000+ houses destroyed, plus buildings, infrastructure, livelihood assets etc.
- Thousands in temporary accommodation, ongoing psycho-social issues











Community On Ground Assistance

Building Preparedness,
Building Resilience,
Building Community

The Community On Ground Assistance (COGA) project is a community and agency partnership that provides flexible and responsive assistance and support to eligible families, couples and individuals recovering from the Victorian Bushfires in 2009.

COGA also provides tailored corporate volunteer opportunities to help businesses improve their workplace culture through direct hands-on practical support where it is needed most - on the ground!

COMMUNITY



We provide a wide range of support to eligible people including:

- Removal of re-growth and fire affected trees
- Dangerous tree removal
- Property clean-up to enable rebuilding to start
- Building repairs, carpentry and Occupancy Permit support
- Technical advice, assistance and advocacy with Occupancy Permits

CORPORATE



COGA provides a range of safe and tailored corporate volunteer experiences. Participants are greatly encouraged by the meaningful way they can provide direct on-ground support to people in need while helping to reduce the ongoing bushfire risk.

- Small and large groups
- Wide variety of outdoor projects and locations
- Experienced facilitators
- Real team building

Call: 0427 454 174

ABOUT US



Over the past 5 years, COGA has completed more than 500 jobs across Victoria. This has represented over 57,000 hours on site by our field staff and nearly 10,000 hours undertaken by volunteers. We operate through a range of principles which include:

- Shared Responsibility
- Medium to Long Term Recovery
- Fire Preparedness
- Bushfire Risk Mitigation

CONTACT US

To find out more information or to discuss your eligibility, don't hesitate to contact us on:

Ph: (03) 5786 1134

M: 0407 427 090

E: cogaintake@icloud.com

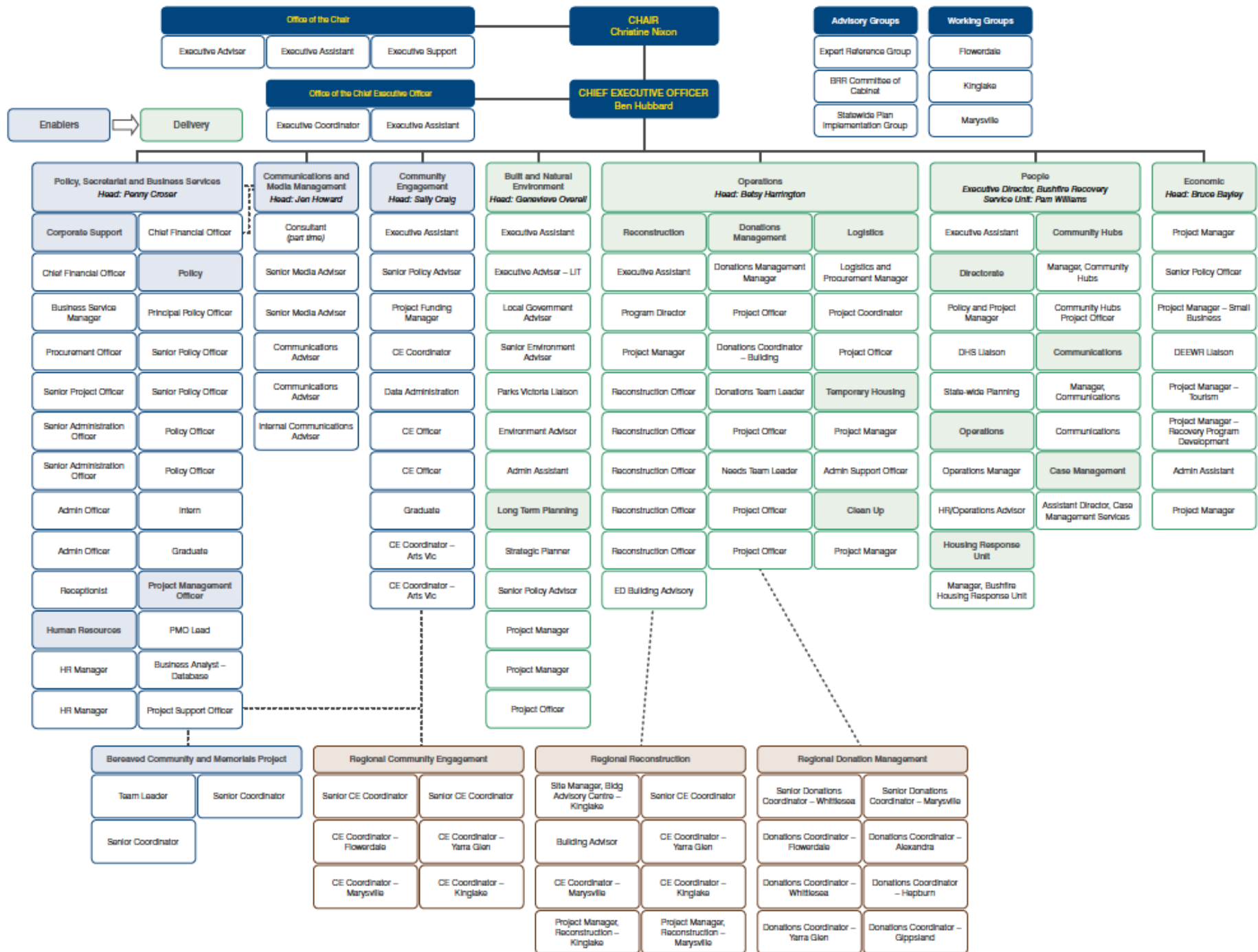
W: www.coga.org.au



Our Agency Partners include:



**FIREFOXES
AUSTRALIA**



COMMUNITY ON GROUND ASSISTANCE (COGA)

- An innovative, community-initiated project designed to meet specific local needs
- A holistic approach, focused on clients' needs
- Culture of safety and care
- Challenged by relationships with official agencies
- Highlights challenges of community-led initiatives in post-disaster settings



'What it is about is meeting people at their point of need. And instead of being an expert, letting the person be the expert in their own circumstances, and then bringing our expertise as it's required by the client...'

- COGA participant

'The motivation was never about getting a job done in a practical sense. It's been about: how do we empower and serve people... and get them to a place where they can actually do life – exist in some sort of normalcy after what they've been through... That's been the driving force. I think that's why I haven't really coped with [bureaucracy] very well because [government was] losing sight of the fact that our outcomes were fantastic. Isn't DHS the Department of Human Services?'

- COGA participant

'We're trying to create an environment where we can foster and support that kind of stuff to happen, rather than what government tends to do which is shut that stuff down because we don't have control over it... We tend to prefer our community organisations and community people to be a bit more compliant and to do what we tell them to do'

- Government official

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Study raises questions about the extent to which emergency and disaster management systems empower people and enable resilience.
- Some degree of bureaucracy is necessary. Need to help people to understand and fulfil contractual obligations, processes and procedures.
- Important to recognise that people who participate in place-based recovery efforts may be affected themselves, or may become affected, and require assistance.

