



2022-23

# River Murray Flood Recovery

Final Report

April 2025



Government  
of South Australia

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# **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet acknowledges and respects Aboriginal people as the state's first people and nations, and recognises Aboriginal people as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters.

# Message from the Premier

The 2022/23 River Murray flood event was one of South Australia's biggest natural disasters.

At its peak, in December 2022, a staggering 186 gigalitres of water per day was flowing into the river – a volume comparable to the annual demand of the entire Greater Adelaide region.

Every living thing along the river's length felt its impact, from the natural flora and fauna to the livestock and agriculture – and, most importantly, the people who built their businesses, homes, and communities on the Murray.

Our river communities are no strangers to the cycles of nature, but this was unprecedented in recent times.

However, South Australians are always ready to lend a hand for one another, and the people of our states truly rose to the occasion as the mass influx of water made its relentless way downstream.

Hundreds of volunteers, emergency agencies, local councils, and riverside communities went above and beyond to strengthen existing levees, construct new defences, and protect those most vulnerable.

Countless sandbags were distributed to barricade towns and properties as the waters approached, and businesses and property owners transferred stock and possessions to the safety of higher ground.

These precautions were vital and effective in limiting the flood's most devastating effects. However, the toll it took on river communities was still enormous.

Almost 91,000 hectares of land was inundated, impacting agricultural areas, national parks and reserves, and residential land. Thousands of properties were damaged, and millions of dollars of vital infrastructure destroyed.

As locals acted to protect their lives and livelihoods from the rising waters, so too did the South Australian Government.

Essential supplies and emergency accommodation was provided to those cut off by flood waters. Repairs began on connecting road and ferry networks as soon as was practical, and immediate relief and recovery efforts were activated to help those impacted.

Between the State and Federal governments, over \$194 million was committed to provide an extensive assistance and recovery program to help primary producers, irrigators, small businesses, property owners, and other affected individuals rebuild and recover.

Importantly, local councils and representatives throughout the effected communities worked together with the State and Federal governments, to identify challenges and ways to solve them in a collaborative way.

The consequences of the flood on local River Murray communities, the environment and the economy did not end once the waters subsided.

The State Government continues to work with the businesses, local councils, families, and individuals affected by this once-in-a-generation disaster.

I believe that we can rebuild lives and restore communities, and create a resilient future for the River Murray and all who call it home.



**Peter Malinauskas**  
Premier of South Australia



# Message from the Community Recovery Coordinator

During my role as Community Recovery Coordinator for the River Murray flood, I had the privilege of working alongside so many generous and hardworking people dedicated to helping those impacted by flood waters not seen in South Australia for decades.

At its core, The Community Recovery Coordinator acts as a conduit between the State Government and the impacted community to ensure that targeted supports reach those in need, filling any gaps that may be identified as the recovery effort progresses. The effectiveness of this role is largely reliant on the good will and cooperation from all parties involved. All levels of government worked tirelessly with impacted communities over an extended period of time, developing important working relationships to ensure issues were speedily addressed in an appropriate manner. It is encouraging to see such strong levels of cooperation across all forms of governments and within affected communities in times of crisis.

There are far too many agencies, departments, non-government organisations, volunteer groups, council staff, Emergency Relief Centre staff, Recovery Centre staff, State Relief and Recovery Infoline staff, community members and many, many others to thank for their important contributions to the flood recovery. It is also difficult to outline every effort made

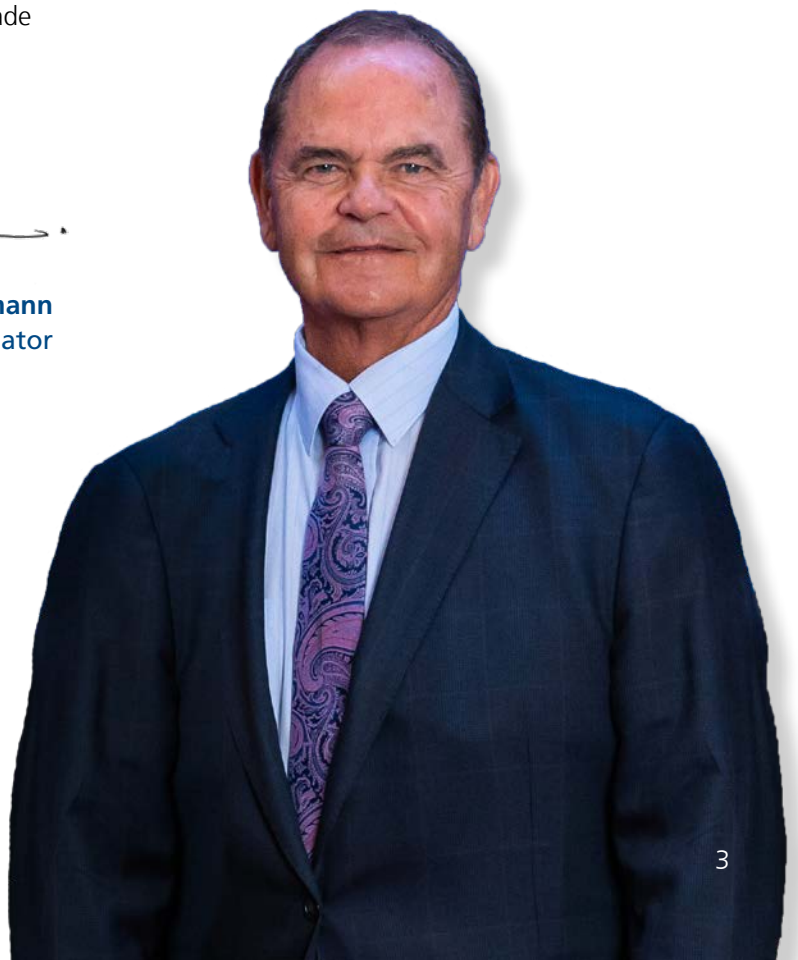
or action undertaken throughout the flood recovery in one report. This does not diminish in any way the value of these labours, or their positive influence on our river communities. Those impacted were, and continue to be, grateful for the support provided to them. Your efforts made life that little bit easier for people up and down the river, and I thank you all.

Despite the challenges, much has been done on the ground and behind the scenes to recover from this historic event. Thousands of tonnes of flood-affected waste have been safely collected and removed, millions of dollars have been spent on urgent financial assistance, and community facilities continue to reopen as repairs continue. Recovery is a journey and looks different for everyone, but those affected can take comfort in the fact that every effort has been made to tangibly improve their lives.

While my role as Community Recovery Coordinator has drawn to a close, the recovery journey is by no means over for many along the river. I have no doubt that the resilience shown by these communities will stand them in good stead, and these communities will overcome any challenge that may lie ahead in the future.



**Alex Zimmermann**  
Community Recovery Coordinator



# About this Report

This report provides a summary of the recovery processes and initiatives implemented by the State Government, with funding support provided by the Commonwealth Government under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), along with important recovery efforts undertaken by communities, local councils, non-government organisations (NGOs), volunteers, and other recovery partners. The report outlines important achievements of the recovery phase, and the task that still lies ahead, across the four nationally recognised recovery domains: social; economic; built environment (or infrastructure); and the natural environment.

While every effort is made to accurately summarise the recovery activities undertaken following the flood, it is beyond the capacity of any one document to outline each effort undertaken due to the large scale of the event and the ongoing nature of the flood recovery. Many of the impacts from the flood continue to be analysed by government and other stakeholders and are yet to be fully comprehended. Statistics presented in this report are as accurate as possible at the time of publication, noting that due to the ongoing recovery effort many of these figures are subject to change in the fullness of time.

# Introduction

The River Murray flood, the largest since 1956 and the third highest flood ever recorded in South Australia's history, occurred between November 2022 and February 2023. A third consecutive La Nina event occurred in 2022 resulting in record rainfalls across the Upper Murray-Darling Basin in New South Wales and Victoria during November. These rainfalls, combined with an already saturated catchment, resulted in water flows in the River Murray to increase to major flood levels.

In November 2022 the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) forecasted flows to peak at certain rates, with the overall result less than predicted. The flooding that did occur had major impacts.

In preparation for the inevitable rise in water levels, the South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES) led extensive operational activities - supported by other State Government agencies and local councils - including swiftwater rescue, asset protection, pumping activities, evacuations, and ground and air observations.

Several temporary levees were raised, most notably along the main street in Mannum. More than 50 levee banks along the River Murray required repairs ahead of the flood peak. DefenCell technology, a containment system used to mitigate flooding, was deployed to keep safe essential infrastructure and high value assets unprotected by existing levees. Approximately 5.31km of DefenCell was deployed across the River Murray ahead of the flood. Hundreds of thousands of sandbags were distributed to River Murray communities by the SASES. The SASES also facilitated community meetings in several locations along the River Murray including Renmark, Cobdogla, Mannum, Berri, and Blanchetown ahead of the flood peak.

On 18 November 2022 the River Murray flooding event in South Australia was formally declared an Australian disaster event (commencing 15 November 2022), classified with the Australian Government Reference Number (AGRN) 1042. On 21 November 2022 the State Coordinator for South Australia, Police Commissioner Grant Stevens, declared the River Murray flood event a major emergency under the *Emergency Management Act 2004 (SA)* (the Act), with the declaration remaining in place for 80 days. On the same day the State Coordinator appointed Damien Walker, Chief Executive, Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) as Assistant State Coordinator –

Recovery under the Act. Recognising the need for a coordinated community recovery, Alex Zimmermann was appointed to the role of Community Recovery Coordinator – Flood, and commenced the role on 22 November 2022. As flood waters decreased, the major emergency declaration was revoked on 9 February 2023. On 21 February 2023, the State Recovery Coordinator authorised the formal transition from the response phase of the event to the recovery phase.

The State Government, with support from the Commonwealth Government, allocated over \$194 million to a comprehensive flood recovery assistance package, encompassing a range of initiatives including emergency accommodation, grants for impacted individuals, small businesses and primary producers, a comprehensive waste clean-up program, tourism support, financial counselling, legal assistance, and mental health support.

The flood caused considerable shocks to communities, significant disruptions for businesses and primary producers, and high levels of emotional and financial distress for individuals. Electricity and other essential services were disconnected to thousands of properties along the River Murray, and many people were forced to evacuate their homes and shacks. Sadly, two fatalities were recorded, one in Ross Lagoon on 11 December 2022 and one in Loxton North on 10 January 2023. A coroner's investigation is underway to determine if these deaths were caused by the flood.



“

It is entirely reasonable to say this will be one of the most – if not the most – significant natural disaster in the state’s history.

*- Former South Australian Emergency Services Minister Joe Szakacs describing the River Murray flood event in January 2023.*

# Impacts of the flood



90,907 hectares of land flooded

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37,826 hectares of primary production land flooded

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Approximately 3,295 properties flooded, including 367 primary residences

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3,368 customers disconnected from power and 15 powerlines de-energised

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Several water and sewage disconnections

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544 primary producer businesses impacted

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Approximately \$11.9m in lost agriculture production

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10 major fish kill clean-ups totalling more than 30 tonnes

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Nine of 11 ferry crossings closed

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1,188km of total roads impacted

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Approximately 185 roads closed

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152 boat ramps closed

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\$12m of park infrastructure inundated

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Nine local government areas impacted:

- Alexandrina Council
  - Berri Barmera Council
  - Coorong District Council
  - District Council of Karoonda East Murray
  - District Council of Loxton Waikerie
  - Mid Murray Council
  - Pastoral Unincorporated Area - as administered under the Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Act 2009 (SA)
  - Renmark Paringa Council
  - Rural City of Murray Bridge
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While the flood waters affected communities along the length of the River Murray, impacts were most significantly felt in the Lower Murray area encompassing the Mid Murray and Murray Bridge regions, with over 2,000 dwellings flooded and over 150 kilometres of roads either damaged or destroyed.

As at 27 May 2024, approximately 2,600 insurance claims totalling \$439 million attributed to the flood in South Australia had been lodged. Approximately \$27 million claims remain outstanding, with a claims closure rate of 91.6%.

The flood event was not declared a Significant Event or a Catastrophe by the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) at the time of occurrence, given the number of claims across a small number of insurers. However, as the severity of damage to impacted properties was revealed, The ICA retrospectively declared the event as River Murray Floods Significant Event 225 in its 2023 Catastrophe Resilience Report. According to the report, 98% of insurance claims were personal and 2% were commercial. The average claim cost was approximately \$192,000 and an estimated 15% of properties impacted were determined to be a total loss.

### Insurance status of impacted registrants from Relief Centres, Recovery Centres and the State Relief and Recovery Infoline

Building Insurance		
(Data missing)	105	3.17%
Unknown	276	8.33%
No	522	15.75%
Not Applicable	359	10.83%
Yes	2052	61.92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3314</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Contents Insurance		
(Data missing)	105	3.17%
Unknown	276	8.33%
No	586	17.68%
Not Applicable	349	10.53%
Yes	1998	60.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3314</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

# The impacts behind the numbers

## Social

The flood event had a significant social impact on river communities. People were forced to evacuate their homes and shacks, helpless to stop the water levels from rising. Many small businesses faced uncertainty, with no choice but to close their doors. Livelihoods were impacted and daily routines upended, with seemingly no end in sight.

Emergency Relief Centres were activated along the river, with over 4,000 enquiries made. Temporary accommodation was provided to those with no alternative housing. Services including food relief, financial counselling, and support for primary producers were in high demand, signalling the strain felt by locals. As the recovery effort progressed Emergency Relief Centres transitioned to Recovery Centres, acting as long-term central hubs for assistance. Pop-up Recovery Centres appeared along the river to increase access, while recovery staff made regular home visits to check on the most vulnerable as part of an ongoing outreach effort.

Health concerns were also prevalent before, during and after the flood. Greater mosquito numbers were present along the river due to the high water levels, which increased the risk of outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases such as Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV), Ross River Virus (RRV) and Murray Valley Encephalitis Virus (MVEV). A “fight the bite” public information campaign was rolled out, while free JEV vaccinations were made available to flood-affected communities. Emergency water supplies were provided for those who had no alternative means of sourcing this vital resource.

The declining flood waters offered little respite, as the magnitude of the damage was laid bare. Attention quickly turned to clean up and remediation. Returning to damaged and destroyed properties confirmed the worst fears for many, adding to the collective mental strain. The State Government’s comprehensive clean-up service helped ease the burden, alleviating program registrants of the need to undertake difficult, time-consuming, and risky repair work themselves.

The flood impacted the traditional lands of several First Nations communities, with some Aboriginal heritage sites disturbed and burial grounds resurfaced. It is estimated that the floods intersected approximately 754 reported Aboriginal sites, 38 burial sites,

35 historical sites, 369 culturally-modified trees, and 312 archaeological sites. A number of other unrecorded Aboriginal heritage sites were also disturbed, mostly in the Mid-Murray region. The loss of, and damage to these sites will have a profound and long-term social impact for First Nations communities.

Restrictions on recreational aquatic activities along the River Murray were temporarily implemented for safety reasons, further disrupting the way of life for local communities. Many community events were also forced to cancel due to the flood. However, in true community spirit, spontaneous gatherings arose along the river during the recovery phase, with people sharing their experiences of this historic event.

Many property owners impacted by the flood are currently weighing up their options, deciding whether to repair and rebuild their properties, or to depart the region altogether. The cumulative result of these decisions will fundamentally shape the future composition and social fabric of South Australia’s River Murray communities.

## Economic

Several businesses along the river were impacted by the flood, with small businesses, primary producers, and the tourism industry disproportionately affected. Many businesses were forced to close due to a number of reasons including potential inundation, power outages, access issues caused by road and ferry closures, or the location of temporary levees and other flood defence systems. These impacts, along with other factors like river restrictions, had a compounding effect on the wider economy. Business closures led to a number of flow on effects including reduced demand for accommodation bookings, and a reduced demand for restaurant and tourism experience bookings.

Local governments experienced, and continue to experience, significant financial strain due to the flood event. Council infrastructure and assets were significantly impacted by the high flows, with costs incurred to repair sealed roads and other essential infrastructure. Funding support continues to be provided by the State and Federal Governments through the Local Government Disaster Recovery Assistance Arrangements (LGDRAA) and Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) programs.

The inundation of agricultural land severely limited, if not completely debilitated, the operations of hundreds of primary producers. This had an impact on local river economies and the state's economy overall. The total value of horticulture production across the flood-affected areas is valued at approximately \$810 million, with livestock production valued at approximately \$172 million. Loss of crops damaged or destroyed due to the flood was estimated at over \$16 million.

37,826 hectares of agricultural land was inundated. Approximately 544 owners of agricultural or primary production land were identified within the inundated area. However, owners of agricultural land are not all primary producers. Approximately 204 livestock producers including 24 dairies were flood affected, while 42 grape growers also experienced flooding of vineyards.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) worked together with the SA Dairyfarmers' Association (SADA), Livestock SA and various livestock owners to relocate livestock to higher ground. Fodder relief was provided through PIRSA and Livestock SA. PIRSA also established temporary pet accommodation support at pet boarding facilities from December 2022 to January 2023.

Primary Production Irrigation Grants valued up to \$25,000 were distributed to assist with relocating and re-establishing affected irrigation infrastructure, while Primary Producer Recovery Grants valued up to \$75,000 were distributed to assist with essential recovery and reinstatement activities.

Over \$4 million was spent dewatering 45 gigalitres from 2,157 hectares of productive grazing areas. A free and confidential program to connect primary producers with assistance through the Family and Business Mentors and Rural Financial Counseling service was also offered.

Restrictions on boats on the river impacted the local fishing industry. High freshwater flows prevented the majority of netting activity in the Coorong estuary, leading to reduced catches of mulloway. Production losses were also felt in the dairy industry, with the reduction or cessation of milk production from dairy cows, which had to be removed from inundated areas.

Tourism operators were forced to cancel several months of bookings over their peak seasons. Prior to the flood, tourism in the Riverland and Murray River, Lakes and Coorong was worth a combined \$436 million, directly employing 2,800 people across these regions. To support this industry, in February

2023 the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) announced a \$4.6 million river recovery plan, comprising \$3 million for a River Revival Voucher program, \$1.1 million to a dedicated River Murray marketing campaign 'Rise Up for Our River', and \$500,000 to support significantly impacted businesses through the Mid Murray Tourism Recovery Fund.

The River Revival Voucher program comprised three rounds and as of 4 March 2024, 26,500 vouchers were released. Across rounds one and two, more than 12,100 bookings were made at participating experience, accommodation, houseboat, and guided tour operators.

The first two rounds of the voucher program injected an estimated \$10.7 million into these regions.

The booking and travel period for round three commenced on 22 February 2024, with the booking period ending on 27 March 2024 for travel until 20 June 2024.

## Infrastructure

The damage to infrastructure caused by the 2022-23 River Murray flood was profound. Thousands of properties were damaged and disconnected from essential services, hundreds of kilometres of roads and key transport routes were closed requiring extensive repairs, and millions of dollars of park infrastructure was inundated.

The clean-up program worked to mitigate some of these impacts. Free disposal of flood-affected material was offered by the State Government at participating transfer waste stations. Regular kerbside collections took place up and down the river, removing thousands of tonnes of debris, hard waste, garden waste, electronic equipment and the like. Properties were assessed for asbestos and other hazards and remediated accordingly, with some deemed irreparable and demolished under the program at no cost to the property owner.

Access for river communities became a logistical nightmare, with well-travelled roads and ferry routes inaccessible for months at a time. Primary producers struggled to move their machinery and harvest. Bookpurnong Road, the major thoroughfare between Berri and Loxton, was forced to close for weeks, adding 30 minutes of travel time per trip for thousands of vehicles. In order to offset this disruption

the government made payments of \$300 available to pensioners, concession card holders and other low-income earners in River Murray communities who incurred significantly higher travel costs due to flooding.

Several ferry crossings were impacted by the flood, causing disruption to essential ferry services. In some cases, services were halted due to inundation of the access roads, rather than impacts to the ferries or ferry infrastructure.

- The Lyrup ferry closed on 30 November 2022, and re-opened on 25 January 2023.
- The Mannum upstream ferry closed on 1 December 2022, and re-opened on 25 February 2023.
- The Swan Reach and Morgan ferries closed on 6 December 2022, and re-opened on 25 February and 8 March 2023 respectively.
- The second Mannum downstream ferry closed on 11 December 2022, and re-opened on 21 February 2023.
- The Purnong ferry closed on 14 December 2022, and re-opened on 20 February 2023.
- The Walker Flat ferry closed on 15 December 2022, and re-opened on 24 February 2023.
- The Wellington ferry closed on 28 December 2022, and re-opened on 25 February 2023.
- The Waikerie ferry transitioned to its high-water flow ramp on 23 November 2022, allowing its continued operation. Ferry operations at the high landing ceased between 29 December 2022 to 9 January 2023 when water levels rose above the upper landing. The ferry was moved back to the lower landing on 8 February 2023, and operations resumed on 9 February 2023 when the access road (Taylorville Road) could be used.
- The Cadell, Taillem Bend and Narrung ferries maintained operations throughout the flood response, although Taillem Bend and Narrung ferries had intermittent pauses in operations due to combinations of high flow and weather impacts.

Twelve roads maintained by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) required restrictions or detours due to the flood:

- Taylorville Road, Waikerie (Lower Landing) closed on 23 November 2022, and re-opened on 10 February 2023 in conjunction with the re-opening of lower ferry landing.
- Taylorville Road, Waikerie (Higher Landing) closed on 29 December 2022, and re-opened on 9 January 2023, in conjunction with the resumption of the Waikerie ferry service (Higher Landing).

- Hunter Road, Mannum closed on 28 December 2022, and re-opened on 18 March 2023 after major remediation works were completed.
- Burdett Road, Mannum closed on 28 December 2022, and re-opened on 8 March 2023 after major remediation works were completed.
- Ferry Road, Wellington closed on 28 December 2022, and re-opened on 25 February 2023.
- Angas Valley Road, Walker Flat closed on 22 December 2022, and re-opened on 24 February 2023.
- Kingston Road, Moorook closed on 13 December 2022, and re-opened (with restrictions) on 25 January 2023.
- Randell Road, Mannum closed on 11 December 2022, and reopened on 1 March 2023.
- Bookpurnong Road, Loxton and Berri closed on 1 December 2022, and re-opened on 11 February 2023.
- Stott Highway, Swan Reach closed on 7 December 2022, and re-opened on 25 February 2023.
- Morgan Road, Lake Bonney closed on 25 November 2022, and re-opened on 8 March 2023.
- Princes Highway, Waltowa was intermittently closed between 19 January and 23 February 2023.

Access was further restricted by the closure of a number of council roads.

State and local governments worked around the clock to assess and remediate essential infrastructure, over and above their regular duties. SA Power Networks (SAPN) was tasked with reconnecting power supply to over 3,000 properties and repairing several de-energised power lines.

In the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area (LMRIA), 22 levees overtopped or breached, causing damage to the levee network and inundating large areas of agricultural land. Levee assessments, remediation works and mass dewatering became the norm throughout the recovery effort to enable primary producers to access their land. Add the following text: The State Government provided support including levee embankment remediation for businesses and construction and engineering support grants.

The State Government provided support including levee embankment remediation for businesses and construction and engineering support grants.

Many public toilets and Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS) were forced offline, requiring extensive repairs. Temporary toilet facilities were provided by the State Government across the River Murray for several months as an interim measure to meet community needs.

Significant remediation works were also required for houseboat mooring locations, while iconic paddle steamers such as the PS Industry were also sidelined.

As many property owners look to rebuild, development along the river was fundamentally changed due to the flood. A new River Murray Flood Resilience Code Amendment was introduced to rezone flood-affected shack settlements, alter finished floor levels, and provide greater flexibility in building height allowances. These changes aim to minimise the impact of any future River Murray floods on residents, shack owners, caravan and tourist parks, and help mitigate future flood risk. Data on floodwater levels and the extent of inundation during the flood was collated and considered in developing the changes to the Planning and Design Code. The changes came into effect on an interim basis at the same time as being released for community consultation, providing clarity and confidence in the redevelopment process.

## Environmental

The environmental impacts of the flood were also significant, with flora and fauna both heavily affected.

Approximately 30,000 hectares of national parks were inundated and tonnes of dead fish appeared along the river. DEW and the South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management (SAVEM) group were activated by PIRSA on 19 November 2022 to provide veterinary assessment and treatment of wildlife impacted by the flood. 7,323 animals were assessed across 785 sites. Sadly, approximately half of these animals were euthanised. Fallen trees and other debris made their way into the river waterway and surrounding banks, requiring extensive clean-up.

All 14 national parks along the River Murray in the Riverland and Murraylands region were inundated during the flood event, resulting in over \$2.5 million worth of repair work to park assets. These national parks were closed to protect essential assets, reopening as quickly as possible following the receding flood waters. Most park assets were deemed repairable, with work ongoing to repair trails and other essential infrastructure.

The managed wetlands and pumped wetlands that had excluded carp were compromised by the flood, resulting in their return. As waters receded, work resumed to manage those sites and remove the carp from those areas. The process of returning those sites to pre-flood conditions will take a number of years.

Despite these impacts, elements of the environment undoubtedly benefited from the flood. Water flowed indiscriminately across the River Murray, including through dry areas desperate for water. New growth was stimulated in several ecosystems, increasing food sources and providing ideal breeding habitats for many species.

Vegetation also benefited, with organic material and nutrients rejuvenating the river system, increasing the health and diversity of plants. Flows helped scour out the Murray Mouth. Salt and pollutants were flushed from the river system, with water levels and salinity in the Coorong remaining at healthy levels.

Dissolved oxygen, essential to aquatic life, in the waters of key Riverland floodplains remained at levels that support fish and other organisms. Groundwater salt levels around floodplains dropped, which may benefit the native floodplain vegetation.

The recovery of the tree canopy had a significant flow on effect. The greater canopy saw an increase in flowers, which led to more insects in the environment. Populations of species feeding on those insects benefitted from the mass seeding and flowering.

The flood provided the ideal conditions for growth of the seedbank in the soil. The understory vegetation response provided various ecological benefits, including ample food resources for birds and many places to breed for southern bell frogs.

# What is Recovery?

Recovery is the process of restoring or improving the livelihood and health, as well as the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities of a disaster-affected community. It is a complex process that provides an opportunity to enhance community resilience to avoid or reduce future hazards or disaster risk.

The outcome of being 'recovered' for individuals and communities is reaching the point where they are able to lead a life that they value living, even if it is different from the life they had before the disaster event. For both individuals and communities, the journey from experiencing a disaster and 'being recovered' is long, multi-layered, distinct and influenced by a myriad of factors. These include lived experiences and community profiles before and after the event, the type and scale of the event, and economic circumstances.



Individuals and communities affected by the 2022-23 River Murray flood continue to recover at their own pace, depending on their individual and collective needs and circumstances.





## Recovery activation

Recovery from the River Murray flood was initiated immediately, with the first State Emergency Centre activation on 19 October 2022. The State Recovery Coordination and Planning Group was established on 7 November 2022 to establish an understanding of the immediate recovery needs of the community.

On 21 February 2023 the River Murray flood event formally transitioned from response operations, led by the South Australian State Emergency Service, to the recovery phase.

The transition from response to recovery was informed by several factors:

- the river sitting at or below minor flood levels
- hazards to the community associated with high flows substantially reduced, and
- serious threats and disruption to community life, property and environment from the flood also significantly reduced.

When a recovery event in South Australia is complex, or of a scale that exceeds the capacity for recovery at a community level, as was the case for the River Murray flood, the recovery program is coordinated by the State Government through Security, Emergency and Recovery Management (SERM) in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. SERM coordinate recovery activities across government and non-government sectors to increase the state's disaster recovery capacity and understanding.

A dedicated Incident Management Team (IMT) was established within SERM to assist in the coordination of the immediate to medium term recovery effort.

# Recovery Governance

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet worked collaboratively with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), other State Government agencies, council representatives and staff, NGOs and community members across several committees, groups, and taskforces to coordinate and deliver the recovery program. As with all major disaster events in South Australia, several relief and recovery activities were already underway during the response phase of the flood, such as the opening of Emergency Relief Centres in November and December 2022, and the appointment of the Community Recovery Coordinator in November 2022.

## Community Recovery Coordinator



The State Government appointed Alex Zimmermann as the Community Recovery Coordinator on 22 November 2022 for a duration of seven months. Alex Zimmermann's term was subsequently extended through until June 2024, a total of 19 months, to further support impacted communities.

The Community Recovery Coordinator supported the State Recovery Coordinator to coordinate, implement, and advocate local recovery goals, objectives and outcomes set by the community and underpinned by the national principles for disaster recovery:

- Understanding the context
- Recognising complexity
- Using community-led approaches
- Coordinating all activities
- Communicating effectively
- Recognising and building capacity

The Community Recovery Coordinator undertook a number of important responsibilities throughout the flood recovery, including:

- Coordinating recovery at the local level and chairing the River Murray Community Recovery Committee (RMCRC)
- Establishing and maintaining effective communication processes with relevant stakeholders, organisations and services working in the recovery effort
- Leading the development of recovery strategies, plans and actions in a unified and efficient way, and
- Establishing and maintaining partnerships with welfare agencies, councils, government agencies and community organisations.

To support the Community Recovery Coordinator in the delivery of his duties, a \$2 million "Community Preparedness and Recovery Fund" was established from the wider \$194 million support package. The fund enabled timely and agile responses to challenges being faced by communities and individuals. The fund allowed the Community Recovery Coordinator to distribute a range of grants to support important recovery actions, including:

- Resourcing for the appointment of the Community Development Officer
- Hiring of pumps for dewatering
- Pump repairs
- Road repairs
- Removal of unsafe trees
- Earthworks
- Weed clearing
- Provision of drinking water
- Provision and maintenance of temporary toilets while community toilets underwent essential repairs, and
- Various incidentals including facility hire, travel, ICT, community recovery meetings, and various recovery communications.

In addition, the Community Recovery Coordinator provided grants to various NGOs who assisted in the recovery effort, including The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS), Habitat for Humanity, BlazeAid, Royal Life Saving Society of SA and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, to deploy and assist with recovery activities.

\$100,000 from the Community Recovery Coordinator's fund was donated as part of the SA Flood Recovery Charity Soccer Match held at Coopers Stadium on 19 February 2023 to directly support impacted communities.

Other community development projects were also supported and funded by the Community Recovery Coordinator, including wellbeing dinners, mental health first aid training, re-establishment of community gardens, and community barbeques and picnics.

## Community Development Officer



The State Government appointed Deb Richardson as the Community Development Officer on 2 May 2023 for a duration of six months. The Community Development Officer's term was extended for a further three months until January 2024 to continue assisting flood-affected communities. The Community Development Officer worked closely with the Community Recovery Coordinator to help coordinate recovery programs and activities.

The Community Development Officer undertook a number of important responsibilities throughout the flood recovery, supporting key recovery committees and working groups to meet the outcomes of the Community Recovery Plan, maintaining a flexible approach to the Community Recovery Plan to meet changing community need, establishing cooperative networks across government, non-government and community groups to assist community recovery, and coordinating the provision of programs and services to affected individuals, families and communities.

The Community Development Officer also worked closely with Wellbeing Officers, employed by Wellbeing SA. DPC funded the continuation of Wellbeing Officer, Shelley Rose and Community Liaison Officer, Dawn Stewart until the end of November 2024 to provide mental health initiatives along affected river communities. DPC also provided specific

project funds to assist with the implementation of recovery activities until the end of June 2024. The Wellbeing Officer continued resilience-related community engagement and research projects until November 2024. The Wellbeing Officer was also supported by the Local Government Research and Development Scheme administered by the Local Government Association of South Australia.

Community development activities were organised and provided by a range of NGOs, community groups and individuals. This combined effort helped achieve key goals of the Community Recovery Plan, including the restoration of infrastructure and working services, and ensuring communities remain connected.

The Community Development Officer and Wellbeing Officers worked to ensure the community had access to the broader recovery network, including recovery staff from local government and State Government agencies, participating recovery NGOs, and other available supports. The Community Development Officer supported the RMCRC and Community Recovery Coordinator by providing a regular report on general recovery activities, and the progress of the Community Recovery Plan.

The Community Development Officer's direct email and contact numbers, similar to the Community Recovery Coordinator, were publicly available to ensure the community had direct access to this recovery role. The Community Development Officer and Wellbeing Officer regularly referred people to services they required, including the Recovery Centres, and helped refer clean-up concerns to Green Industries SA (GISA) and principal clean-up contractor Johns Lyng Disaster Management Australia (JL-DMA).

The Community Development Officer and Wellbeing Officer did not take on a formal case management role. However, where appropriate they remained in regular contact with individuals, providing advocacy and guidance to help access available recovery support. Identifying and fostering community connections was critical, and was achieved by developing professional networks, connecting with individuals, and attending, supporting, or organising community activities and events along the River Murray.

These events and activities provided a safe forum for people to engage with government, NGO services and other community members. In addition to the physical, financial, and social support required for recovery, activities and events provided fun social outings and a much-needed escape from the impact of the flood.

The Wellbeing Officer coordinated a range of material donations from businesses, community groups, and charities. Donations included plants, gardening products, paint, paint brushes, wellbeing packs, books, and treasure boxes. These products were distributed via community events, one on one outreach, community groups, and the Recovery Centres.

Officers also coordinated community breakfasts, guest speakers for local gatherings, and organised insurance information sessions and accidental counsellor workshops.

The community breakfasts encouraged people to come together, check in on one another and provided an avenue for community development and wellbeing staff to hear about emerging issues and gauge the general wellbeing of attendees.

Establishing an effective network via relationships with agencies, individuals, groups and the RMCRC also provided a foundation for distributing the Community Development Grants and supporting NGOs to undertake recovery activities.

The Community Development Officer supported BlazeAid to locate their re-fencing camp at Mypolonga, and liaised with Recovery Centres and the Moorook Kingston Community Association to identify and oversee garden restoration projects at several private residences in the Riverland. Officers also referred relevant households to Habitat for Humanity for their flood recovery program.

## River Murray Community Recovery Committee

The River Murray Community Recovery Committee (RMCRC) was established and chaired by the Community Recovery Coordinator to act as the local coordinating body for recovery activities following the flood. The first meeting was held on 15 November 2022, ahead of the flood peak in December 2022.

The purpose of the committee was to identify local issues and determine solutions for themselves and their communities. The committee addressed issues including but not limited to clean-up and waste management, health and wellbeing, legal and insurance concerns, and financial assistance. The committee guided decisions about recovery priorities and resource allocation. It provided support to local communities and local authorities to manage the recovery process. The committee also provided committee members a clear avenue to government agencies participating in the recovery process, and an opportunity to tailor recovery activities to needs on the ground as and when required.

Membership of the committee included representatives from impacted councils, State Government agencies participating in recovery activities, impacted residents and holiday homeowners. At least 60 representatives participated in the committee throughout the event from over 40 organisations, community representatives and agencies. Membership naturally altered over time as the issues confronting the committee and the community evolved.



## RMCR Membership

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation  
Alexandrina Council  
Berri Barmera Council  
Boating Industry Association  
(Houseboat Representative)  
Bow Hill Collective Representative  
Brenda Park Lease Holders Representative  
Bureau of Meteorology  
Caravan parks representative  
Community Development Officer  
Community Justice Services SA  
Community Recovery Coordinator (Chair)  
Coorong District Council  
Department for Environment and Water  
Department of State Development  
Department for Infrastructure and Transport  
Department of Primary Industries and Regions  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet – Recovery  
Disaster Management Australia  
Electranet  
Environment Protection Authority  
Green Industries SA  
Loxton Waikerie Council  
Mid Murray Council  
Murraylands & Riverland Local  
Government Association  
Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board  
Mypolonga Progress Association  
National Emergency Management Agency  
Office of the Chief Psychiatrist  
Regional Development Australia  
Murraylands and Riverland  
Renmark Paringa Council  
Rural City of Murray Bridge  
SA Health

## RMCR Membership

SA Housing Trust / Relief  
SA Parks  
SA Police  
SA Power Networks  
SA Tourism Commission  
SA Water  
Shack Community Representatives  
South Australian State Emergency Service  
Walker Flat and District Homeowners  
Association Representative  
Wellbeing SA

The RMCR developed a Community Recovery Plan (Appendix B), outlining required recovery activities, as well as medium and long term recovery goals measurable over time.

At the 18th RMCR in June 2024 the committee agreed to stand down, over a year on from the first meeting.

## State Recovery Coordination and Planning Group

The State Recovery Coordination and Planning Group (SRCPG) is one of two governance structures that are stood up after an event of this scale. The SRCPG is a State Government executive level group that engaged in disaster recovery planning at the commencement of the flood recovery. The SRCPG provided strategic advice to the State Recovery Coordinator, assisted in the coordination of the recovery effort, and proactively identified consequences and re-establishment opportunities for South Australia. Membership naturally altered over time as the issues confronting the committee evolved. The first meeting was held on 7 November 2022, ahead of the flood peak in December 2022.

## SRCPG Membership

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation  
Community Recovery Coordinator  
Department for Health and Wellbeing  
Department of State Development

## SRCPG Membership

Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Department of Human Services

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Chair)

Department of Treasury and Finance

Green Industries SA

Local Government Association

National Emergency Management Agency

SA Housing Trust

SA Tourism Commission

SA Water

Service SA

Services Australia

South Australian State Emergency Service

SRCPG members developed the State Recovery Plan, outlined in full in Appendix A, and monitored its implementation over time. The aim of the State Recovery Plan is to outline anticipated recovery needs for community, as well as potential state and national impacts caused by the flood event.

Tasks outlined in the State Recovery Plan were allocated and monitored by the State Recovery Operations Group (SROG) under the recovery governance arrangements.

The SRCPG met on 23 occasions. On 19 October 2023 the group agreed to stand down, almost a year on from the first meeting. Upon the closure of SRCPG, group members agreed to provide ongoing updates to the State Recovery Plan, ensuring the continued coordination of the recovery effort.

## State Recovery Operations Group

The State Recovery Operations Group (SROG) is the second governance structure that was stood up. It was responsible for providing leadership in and coordination of the delivery of state recovery operations following the flood. The SROG provided operational advice to the State Recovery Coordinator and made operational decisions to deliver key flood recovery objectives, in line with the State Recovery Plan. The SROG was the single coordinating point for the delivery of recovery operations during the flood event.

The first SROG meeting was held on 23 February 2023.

## SROG Membership

Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Chair)

Department of Treasury and Finance

Department of Environment and Water

SA Water

SA Power Networks

Green Industries SA

South Australian Tourism Commission

Local Government Association

Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Department for Health and Wellbeing

SA Housing Trust

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation

Department of State Development

South Australian State Emergency Service

Department for Health and Wellbeing

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation

Department for Trade and Investment  
– Planning and Land Use Services

BlazeAid (Recovery NGO Representative)

The 12th and final meeting of SROG was held on 28 June 2023. At this meeting, SROG members agreed to stand down as it was determined that agency operations were being managed appropriately within existing recovery operations.

## Levees Working Group

A Levees Working Group was established to review levee policy arrangements following the River Murray floods, including the review of governance options for all levees including government, local government and privately-owned levees, and to consider the construction, modification, testing and maintenance of levees following the flood event.

### Levee Working Group Membership

Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Chair)

Department of Environment and Water

Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

SA Water

South Australian State Emergency Service

Local Government Association

Department of Treasury and Finance

Planning and Land Use Services Division -  
Department for Trade and Investment

The first Levees Working Group meeting was held on 10 February 2023, with the fourth and final meeting held on 20 July 2023. The completion of these meetings also occurred as DEW took ownership of levee management in recovery.

## Blackwater Working Group

The Blackwater Working Group monitored water quality along the river and the potential for blackwater to occur in South Australia. Communities were informed of any adverse water quality conditions. The Working Group met from November 2022 to April 2023.

### Blackwater Working Membership

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Department for Environment and Water

SA Water

SA Health

Environment Protection Authority (EPA)

Murray Darling Basin Authority

State Emergency Service (SES)

Local Government Association

Green Industries SA

## First Nations Working Group

A First Nations Working Group was established to address a range of issues related to First Nations communities, including repatriating ancestral remains and the remediation and restoration of sacred sites.

### First Nations Working Group Membership

Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Chair)

Department of Environment and Water

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation

Community Recovery Coordinator

The first meeting of the First Nations Working Group was held on 8 February 2023, with the third and final meeting held on 14 March 2023. Key outcomes from the working group included the development of a First Nations engagement plan on Country to engage with communities, and identifying measures to protect culturally significant sites ahead of the coordinated clean-up program. Once working relationships were established Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (AAR) continued to work directly with Green Industries SA (GISA) regarding clean-up.

## Chief Executive Committee

This Committee acted as an advisory and oversight group to the State Recovery Coordinator to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach to state level recovery operations. Matters discussed included critical levee works and dewatering in the LMRIA region.

### Chief Executive Committee Membership

Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Chair)

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Department for Environment and Water

Department of Treasury and Finance

Department for Infrastructure and Transport

The meeting was closed by mutual agreement as management of flood recovery issues was determined as being appropriately managed within departments.

## River Murray Council Chief Executive Officers meeting

A River Murray Council CEO's meeting was established to assist impacted councils with the flood recovery and to coordinate recovery efforts across each local government area. The first meeting was held on 10 February 2023, with the 18th and final meeting held almost a year later on 19 January 2024.

### River Murray Council CEO's Meeting Membership

Alexandrina Council  
Berri Barmera Council  
Community Development Officer  
Community Recovery Coordinator  
Corong District Council  
Department for Infrastructure and Transport  
Department of Environment and Water  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Chair)  
Department of Treasury and Finance  
Disaster Management Australia  
Green Industries SA  
Local Government Association  
Loxton Waikerie District Council  
Mid Murray District Council  
Department of Primary Industries and Regions  
Renmark Paringa Council  
Rural City of Murray Bridge

## River Murray Public Information and Communications Coordination Group

The River Murray Public Information and Communications Coordination Group was established to help ensure key recovery information was disseminated to affected communities and amplified across several mediums. These meetings were a continuation of the River Murray Public Information Coordination Group, chaired by the South Australia Police (SAPOL), held during the response phase of the flood. The first meeting led by DPC was held on 21 February 2023, with the final meeting held on 16 May 2023.

### River Murray Public Information and Communications Coordination Group Membership

Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Department for Infrastructure and Transport  
Green Industries SA  
SA Power Networks  
Department for Trade and Investment  
Health  
Department for Environment and Water  
SA Police  
Department of Primary Industries and Regions  
Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association  
Community Recovery Coordinator  
SAFECOM  
SA Tourism Commission  
Loxton Waikerie District Council  
Mid Murray Council  
Berri Barmera Council  
Renmark Paringa Council

## Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area Recovery Subcommittee

A Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area (LMRIA) Recovery Subcommittee was formed to ensure the flood recovery priorities for primary producers were appropriately represented. The committee had majority community membership, and provided a formal connection to the state recovery arrangements and ensured effective two-way communication between community and government during the delivery of the levee stabilisation and dewatering program.

### LMRIA Subcommittee Membership

Irrigation Trust presiding members  
Department of Primary Industries and Regions  
Department for Environment and Water  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
SA Water  
Local councils  
South Australian Dairy Farmers Association  
The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board  
Community Representatives

# Recovery plans

## State Recovery Plan

In the aftermath of a disaster where the recovery is led by the state, a State Recovery Plan is prepared to identify the short, medium and long-term projects critical to guiding impacted communities to a new normal, and to coordinate project completion by incorporating them into a single framework.

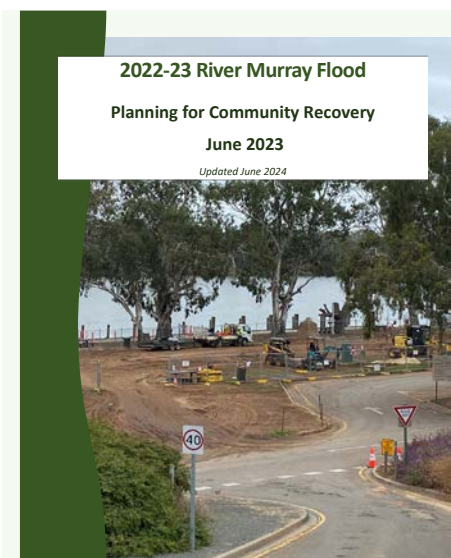
The State Recovery Plan for the flood was prepared by DPC through coordination across government agencies. It is primarily coordinated through SRCPG and is updated as new recovery priorities emerge or as actions are progressed.

It is utilised to understand major areas of impact, the recovery actions that need to take place to address the impact, specific tasks to achieve that action, and the projected outcomes. It is designed to span across the four recovery domains. The State Recovery Plan is utilised as an evidence base to support the development of support measures that are made available to the impacted community. The State Recovery Plan also supports DPC in the coordination role and as an information and intelligence sharing tool.

As recovery activities progressed and the known impacts evolved, the State Recovery Plan also evolved. The State Recovery Plan was updated in June 2024, and is outlined in full in Appendix A.

## Community Recovery Plan

The Community Recovery Coordinator, Community Development Officer and the DPC Recovery IMT developed a Community Recovery Plan in June 2023. The plan was formulated through feedback from community meetings, RMCRC meetings, community survey responses, insights from local and State Government stakeholder engagement, and the various recovery committees. The Community Recovery Plan provides a snapshot of the issues caused by the flood as of June 2023, along with medium and long term actions to be taken. The Community Recovery Plan was updated in June 2024, and is outlined in full in Appendix B.



### STATE RECOVERY PLAN

Coordinated recovery for River Murray communities

- SOCIAL**
  - First Nations communities**  
Proactive engagement with impacted First Nations communities
  - Coordinating community recovery**  
Community informed recovery
  - Easing personal hardship**  
Grants and programs to provide support
  - Temporary housing**  
Keeping people safe
  - Individual and community wellbeing**  
Outreach, recovery and mental health services
  - Communications**  
Consistent, timely information to impacted communities
- ECONOMIC**
  - Tourism**  
Restoring and promoting regional tourism  
Providing incentives to visit the region
  - Small business**  
Supporting small business and restoring consumer confidence  
Grant assistance
  - Primary producers**  
Standing by our primary producers  
Assist with clean up, recovery and reinstatement
- ENVIRONMENT**
  - River amenity**  
Repairing our waterways
  - Water quality**  
Targeted irrigator support
  - Mosquitoes**  
Protecting and educating the community on mosquito diseases
  - National Parks and Wildlife**  
Protecting our Flora and Fauna  
Clean-up and re-opening our National Parks and Reserves
- INFRASTRUCTURE**
  - Transport**  
Reopening road and ferry networks
  - Waste management**  
Disposal of debris and flood waste
  - Improving infrastructure**  
Enhanced infrastructure resilience
  - Reconnection grants**  
Connecting to essential services

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA** Government of South Australia



# Relief and Recovery Centres

## Emergency Relief Centres

The SA Housing Trust provides emergency relief during an emergency event. In response to the flood, the Emergency Relief Functional Support Group (ERFSG) established a number of Emergency Relief Centres (ERC). The Berri ERC was opened on 29 November 2022, the Mannum ERC was opened on 7 December 2022, and the Murray Bridge ERC was opened on 5 January 2023. Services at the centres addressed immediate community needs such as the issuing of personal hardship grants, private rental assistance and emergency accommodation, psychosocial support, food relief, support for primary producers, financial counselling, legal services, and community outreach. ERC staff also attended community meetings, events, and made welfare visits throughout impacted communities.

The Berri ERC received 1,489 enquiries, including 920 in-person attendances and 569 outbound calls. The Mannum ERC received 2,012 enquiries, including 1,085 in-person attendances and 927 outbound calls. The Murray Bridge ERC received 509 enquiries, including 392 in-person attendances and 117 outbound calls. In total, 4,010 enquiries were made across the three ERCs, including 2,391 in-person attendances and 1,613 outbound calls.

## Recovery Centres

Following the initial relief phase the Murray Bridge ERC transitioned to the Murray Bridge Recovery Centre on 1 March 2023, the Mannum ERC transitioned to the Mannum Recovery Centre on 2 March 2023, while recovery services continued to be available at the Berri Housing SA office.

The Murray Bridge Recovery Centre and Berri Housing SA office operated from 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday, while the Mannum Recovery Centre operated from 9:30am to 4:30pm Tuesday to Thursday. The Recovery Centres continued to provide the support offered through the ERCs on an ongoing basis. A range of agencies were available through the Recovery Centres, including Disaster Ministries, Services Australia, Good Shepherd, PIRSA and the Department of State Development.

Recovery staff made a total of 1,217 referrals to other organisations on behalf of impacted persons. 237 households were identified as requiring case management, 45 of which were categorised as complex clients.

## Pop-up Recovery Centres

In addition to the Recovery Centres, a total of nine pop-up recovery centres were held across the impacted region. Pop-up centres involved taking some of the key services available in the bricks and mortar Recovery Centres to people in less accessible parts of the region.

Location	Date	Attendance
Morgan	12/04/2023	5
Blanchetown	14/04/2023	20
Swan Reach	19/04/2023	15
Bowhill	21/04/2023	5
Pompoota	12/05/2023	15
Morgan	15/05/2023	9
Blanchetown	16/05/2023	23
Swan Reach	22/05/2023	13
Bowhill	23/05/2023	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>

## Relief and Recovery Centre Statistics

Impacted registrants at Relief and Recovery Centres and State Relief and Recovery Infoline		
Location	Households	People
Berri	337	596
Mannum	385	633
Murray Bridge	323	512
State Relief & Recovery Infoline	1745	2642
Emergency Relief Unit	524	908
<b>Total</b>	<b>3314</b>	<b>5291</b>

## Recovery Centre closures

Attendance at the Recovery Centres gradually diminished over time as the urgent needs of individuals and communities reduced. On 21 December 2023 the Mannum Recovery Centre closed permanently. The community continued to be supported from the Murray Bridge Recovery Centre, with Recovery Officers conducting outreach visits as required.

On 22 December 2023 the Murray Bridge and Berri Recovery Centres temporarily closed for the Christmas and New Year period, re-opening on 2 January 2024.

The Berri Recovery Centre closed permanently on 21 February 2024. The Murray Bridge Recovery Centre closed permanently at 5:00pm on 22 February 2024. Case management via the Recovery Centres ceased upon the centre closures. Those who required case management after the centre closures were referred to appropriate existing community supports and agencies to address their outstanding issues. The closure of the Recovery Centres marked an important milestone in the transition to community-led recovery. Community-led recovery recognises and supports the resilience, capacity and leadership of individuals and communities to lead their own recovery process.

## Recovery Pods

Recovery Pods were utilised in South Australia following the Black Summer bushfires in 2020, as a medium-term accommodation option providing shelter, cooking and washing facilities whilst recipients were rebuilding their homes. As the rebuilding process began for some along the River Murray, funding was approved in October 2023 by the South Australian Government to extend this program to the River Murray flood event.

Prior to the recovery pod program, temporary accommodation arrangements along the river were becoming increasingly untenable for many given the prolonged nature of the flood. Insurance periods would eventually run out for many, forcing people to live in unsuitable accommodation options such as caravans. Relationships in many temporary situations also became frayed over time.

The intent of the Recovery Pods was to provide temporary medium-long term accommodation for landowners impacted by the River Murray floods whilst they rebuild or repair their primary place of residence following the flood.

As of October 2024, 11 Recovery Pods were successfully deployed. A Recovery Pod in Blanchetown was the first to be demobilised from a flood-affected property, after the property owners successfully repaired their home.

# Public Information and Communications

There were multiple forms of communication from government with flood-impacted communities along the river. The below outlines SERM's public information and communications methods throughout the recovery phase. This included amplification of communications by other State Government agencies that led specific grant or support programs, such as the Office for Small and Family Business, PIRSA, DEW and SA Housing Trust among others, and the communications led by local governments, local media and community members. In addition to the below strategies, The Community Recovery Coordinator and Community Development Officer personally visited and met with many individuals, property and small business owners, community groups and tourism operators. They also attended numerous community group get-togethers and events.

## State Relief and Recovery Infoline

The State Emergency Information Call Centre Capability (SEICCC), managed by the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM), provides an overflow call taking function which supports existing emergency services information lines, to assist in the provision of response and recovery information to the South Australian community during significant emergency events.

The State Relief and Recovery Infoline was activated for the flood during the relief stage on 14 November 2022. The Infoline continued into recovery, and stood down on 23 May 2023, when its operation transferred to the Recovery Centres.

Under SEICCC management, the Infoline received a total of 4,652 calls. Of these, 2,173 queries related to relief and recovery (e.g., grants, services), while 2,479 queries were clean-up related. Upon transfer to the Recovery Centres, a total of 1,229 calls from 23 May 2023 to 23 February 2024 were received.

## River Murray Flood Community Meetings

Several community meetings were held for flood-affected communities, organised by the Community Recovery Coordinator, with representatives from a number of State Government departments and agencies including Green Industries SA (GISA), South Australia Power Networks (SAPN), and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT). Representatives from local councils were also available for the community to raise questions, issues or concerns. These meetings were held in several key locations, providing River Murray communities the opportunity to share their experiences and learn firsthand about the recovery process and the steps being taken to address individual and community needs. Several meetings were also live streamed online to ensure the information was widely available. A total of 15 community meetings were held between February and August 2023:

1. Wednesday, 22 February – Waikerie Bowling Club, Waikerie
2. Thursday, 23 February – Morgan Sporting Complex
3. Friday, 24 February – Bonney Theatre, Barmera
4. Friday, 24 February – Berri Town Hall, Berri
5. Saturday, 25 February – Blanchetown District Hall, Blanchetown
6. Tuesday, 28 February – Lot Fourteen, Adelaide
7. Monday, 6 March – Swan Reach Area School, Swan Reach
8. Thursday, 9 March – 51 Adelaide Road, Mannum
9. Thursday, 9 March – Murray Bridge Performing Arts & Function Centre, Murray Bridge
10. Wednesday, 22 March – Milang Regatta/Squadron Club, Milang
11. Wednesday, 5 April – Meningie Bowling Club, Meningie
12. Thursday, 13 April – Pompoota Hall, Pompoota
13. Tuesday, 18 April – Norwood Town Hall, Adelaide
14. Wednesday, 9 August – Mannum Leisure Centre, Mannum
15. Wednesday, 9 August – Murray Bridge Performing Arts & Function Centre, Murray Bridge



Additional meetings were also held in Parliament House to accommodate shack owners based in Adelaide.

Additional community meetings were also held by a number of agencies during the event, such as the South Australia State Emergency Services' (SASES) community meetings preparing for the flood waters, and SAPN's River Murray Community Information Hubs to help outline the reconnection process as the flood waters passed.

## River Murray Flood Community Newsletter

During the preparedness and response phase of the River Murray flood the SASES released nine River Murray Flooding Community Newsletters from 22 November 2022 to 13 February 2023. These newsletters informed impacted communities on a range of preparation and response matters, including flow rates and sandbagging locations.

Following the transition to recovery, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet published a series of recovery newsletters to keep the community engaged and informed about clean-up services, financial assistance, community events, and other important developments. The first River Murray Flood Community Newsletter was released on 17 February 2023, four days after the SASES' final newsletter, ensuring the transition to recovery did not leave behind an information vacuum for impacted communities. Editions were initially released weekly, followed by fortnightly, then monthly. The 32nd and final newsletter was published on 28 March 2024. Flood recovery newsletters were also created and distributed by other recovery partners, including PIRSA and impacted councils.



## [sa.gov.au/floods](https://sa.gov.au/floods) and [recovery.sa.gov.au](https://recovery.sa.gov.au)

The State Government developed the [sa.gov.au/floods](https://sa.gov.au/floods) webpage, designed as the central point of truth for flood-related information online. As the event transitioned to the recovery phase, the content was transitioned to SERM's [recovery.sa.gov.au](https://recovery.sa.gov.au) website. Information featured included relief and financial assistance, emergency assistance, and re-building processes after the floods. Details on relief, recovery and pop-up recovery centres were also available, along with a link to subscribe to and view previous editions of the River Murray Flood Community Newsletter. The Recovery website was visited over 10,000 times between 1 November 2022 and 1 February 2023.

Other agencies also hosted relevant flood recovery information on their websites, including PIRSA, DEW and SAPN, along with impacted councils.

## Community Service Announcements

Flood recovery community service announcements were also placed on radio and television stations to promote the recovery effort, the State Relief and Recovery Infoline, and [recovery.sa.gov.au](https://recovery.sa.gov.au).

# State and Federal Financial Assistance

The government allocated more than \$194 million in support measures for the 2022-23 River Murray flood event. The following table identifies the individual measures and their current status, noting that a number of the measures are still in progress.

A number of the measures in the table are jointly funded by the Commonwealth and the state under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Measure	Agency	Measure Status
<b>Personal Hardship Emergency Grants</b> One-off payments for those forced to leave their home by the flood event. \$200 per child, \$400 per adult, up to \$1,000 per family.	SA Housing Trust	Closed 31 July 2023
<b>Rental Assistance</b> Up to \$2,000 for singles and up to \$5,000 for families displaced from their homes by the flood event and without insurance.	SA Housing Trust	Closed 31 July 2023
<b>Generator Grant Program</b> Up to \$500 for households and up to \$4,000 for businesses, who were notified of electricity disconnection or interruption due to the flood event, to purchase a generator.	State Development	Closed 31 May 2023
<b>Business Early Closure Grant</b> Forced to close or cease trading early as a result of the flood event - \$20,000 for an employing business, \$10,000 for a non-employing business.	State Development	Closed 31 January 2023
<b>Financial Counselling</b> Information, advice and referrals on cost-of-living and financial matters for those adversely impacted by the flood event.	State Development/ DHS	Measure complete
<b>Business Levee Embankments Remediation and Construction Grant</b> Up to \$50,000 provided to businesses on a 50 per cent cost share basis for the remediation or construction of levee embankments.	DEW	Closed 31 May 2023
<b>Levee Works</b> Funding provided to councils for levee works to mitigate the impact of the flood event.	DEW	Measure complete
<b>Fee Waivers – Houseboat and Tourism</b> Fee relief for Crown Land Licences for jetties, pontoons, pumps and pipelines, moorings and tourism operators – private, commercial and council.	DEW	Measure complete

Measure	Agency	Measure Status
<b>Houseboat Moorings/Stormwater Pumping</b> Securing houseboats and pumping of flooded stormwater infrastructure.	DEW	Measure complete
<b>Primary Production Irrigation Infrastructure Grants</b> Up to \$25,000 to assist with relocating and re-establishing irrigation infrastructure impacted by the flood event.	PIRSA	In progress – closed to new applications 30 June 2024
<b>Sandbags and flood barriers</b> Purchase of additional sandbags and other flood defence systems.	SES	Measure complete
<b>Tourism Recovery Support</b> Targeted voucher program and campaign to encourage a return to tourism along the River Murray following the flood event.	SATC	Measure complete
<b>Community Recovery and Preparedness Fund</b> Local recovery and preparedness fund administered by the Community Recovery Coordinator.	DPC	In progress
<b>Community Recovery Coordinator</b> Alex Zimmermann appointed as the Community Recovery Coordinator from 22 November 2022.	DPC	Measure complete
<b>Mental Health Support Package</b> Multiple programs providing professional counselling and support.	Health	Measure complete
<b>Legal Assistance</b> To help those affected by the flood with a range of legal issues including insurance, tenancies, employment and hardship matters.	AGD	Measure complete
<b>Essential Services Reconnection Property Assessment Program</b> Up to \$5,000 per eligible property to assist with reconnecting electricity, gas, water, septic or sewer services.	SA Housing Trust	Closed 31 December 2023
<b>Coordinated Waste Management Program</b> Structural assessments, removal of hazardous waste and debris, kerbside collections and waste management.	GISA	In progress – registrations closed 13 October 2023
<b>Small Business Recovery Grant</b> Up to \$50,000 to assist small businesses meet clean-up and reinstatement costs.	State Development	Closed 31 December 2023
<b>Primary Producer Recovery Grants</b> Up to \$75,000 per producer to assist with essential recovery and reinstatement activities.	PIRSA	In progress – closed to new applications 30 June 2024

Measure	Agency	Measure Status
<b>Blackwater</b> Fish clean-up – clean up of large numbers of dead fish resulting from the flood.	PIRSA	In progress
<b>Accommodation Bookings</b> Booking of short-term accommodation to ensure availability for those displaced from their homes by the floods without alternative arrangements.	SA Housing Trust	Closed 30 June 2023
<b>Small Business Industry Support Grant</b> Up to \$10,000 per small business to assist with operating costs during the flood event.	State Development	Closed 31 December 2023
<b>Family and Business Support</b> A free and confidential program to connect primary producers with assistance through the Family and Business Mentors and Rural Financial Counselling service.	PIRSA	Measure complete
<b>Councils – Counter Disaster Operations</b> Assistance for Councils with a variety of flood mitigation, response and remediation activities.	DEW	Measure complete
<b>Marina Mooring Strengthening</b> Grants to secure moorings.	DEW	Measure complete
<b>Travel Assistance Payment</b> One-off payment for those on lower income to assist with the cost of travelling longer distances.	SA Housing Trust	Closed 31 July 2023
<b>Fire service False Alarm Fee Waivers</b> Waiver of fees for unwanted fire alarm activations.	MFS/CFS	Measure complete
<b>Land tax, stamp duty and emergency services levy relief</b> Land tax relief for businesses and rentals damaged by the flood, stamp duty relief for those purchasing a replacement for a flood destroyed home or vehicle, and emergency services levy relief for flood destroyed vehicles.	DTF	In progress Stamp duty relief for land transfers available up to 1 March 2025
<b>Road Repairs</b> To repair state and council roads damaged by the flood event.	DIT/DTF/ councils	In progress
<b>Private Crown Land Licence Fee Waivers</b> Fee relief for Crown Land Licences for jetties, pontoons, pumps and pipelines, moorings and tourism operators – private, commercial and council.	DEW	Measure complete
<b>Tourism Recovery Further Support</b> Targeted to businesses that required more time to open, such as those in the Mid Murray area.	SATC	Measure complete
<b>Re-establishment Grants</b> Up to \$20,000 for lower income households to assist with flood damage repairs and replacement of essential items.	SA Housing Trust	Closed 31 December 2023

Measure	Agency	Measure Status
<b>Aboriginal Heritage Under Threat</b> Enabling Traditional Owners to undertake work to remediate the impact of natural disasters on Aboriginal heritage.	AGD	In progress
<b>Resourcing for flood affected electorates – Chaffey and Hammond</b>	n.a.	Measure complete
<b>Flood Mapping and Monitoring</b>	DEW	In progress
<b>Longer-Term Temporary Housing</b> Housing pods for those waiting to rebuild homes who are without alternative housing.	SA Housing Trust	In progress
<b>Additional council levee removal costs</b> Support for councils to remove temporary levees.	DTF	In progress
<b>Immediate Stabilisation – Government and privately owned LMRIA Levees</b> Temporary repairs to breached levees to allow dewatering to occur.	DEW	Measure complete
<b>Intermediate Repairs – Government and privately owned LMRIA Levees</b> Further repairs to return height and strengthen damaged levees.	DEW	In progress
<b>Resilience Investment and Management Strategy</b> Longer term governance, management and resilience investment strategy for the LMRIA levees.	DEW	In progress
<b>Mental Health Support Program</b> Increased specialist mental health services to minimise long-term mental health impacts and promote positive mental well-being for individuals, families and communities.	Health	In progress
<b>Council Community and Recreational Asset Restoration Program</b> Assistance for impacted councils to remediate and restore open spaces, community facilities and cultural heritage sites.	DTF	In progress
<b>LMRIA Irrigation Trust Recovery Support Program</b> Medium-term targeted assistance for recovery activities and long-term resilience building activities.	PIRSA	In progress

# Local Government

Nine local government areas were impacted by the flood to varying degrees based on their proximity and geographical composition in relation to the River Murray:

- Alexandrina Council
- Berri Barmera Council
- Coorong District Council
- District Council of Karoonda East Murray
- District Council of Loxton Waikerie
- Mid Murray Council
- Pastoral Unincorporated Area
- Renmark Paringa Council, and
- The Rural City of Murray Bridge

These councils provided additional support to their communities before, during and after the flood, despite the increased strain placed on their resources. Councils also amplified and created relevant key recovery information, and where possible assisted with recovery measures such as rate relief policies.

## Alexandrina Council

The Alexandrina Council area experienced minimal impacts from the flood, with the council having a limited role in recovery efforts. The Milang Shacks, located on Crown Land on the edge of Lake Alexandrina, did not have water flood over the bank. However, water had risen from underneath, causing impacts to shacks.

A recovery meeting was held with the Milang Shack Owners Association. The meeting was led by Community Recovery Coordinator, Alex Zimmermann and included speakers from DEW, PIRSA, SAPN, SASES, and Alexandrina Council's Response Commander. Milang Shack owners undertook direct communication with the Community Recovery Coordinator to address any issues. The Alexandrina Council Recovery Coordinator regularly checked in with the President of the Milang Shack Owners Association to ensure they were receiving newsletters. Fish deaths were experienced from Goolwa to Port Elliot, with PIRSA responding accordingly.

## Berri Barmera Council

In the preparation and response phase of the flood Berri Barmera Council ceased all non-essential activities and reassigned its resources to flood emergency response. The council led the construction and remediation of more than 14 kilometres of temporary and permanent levee banks in the protection of prioritised community infrastructure, facilities and property. Locations of these levees included Cobdogla, Lake Bonney and Riverview Drive, Berri. All specifications for the building of the levees were generated by independent engineers. Two minor failures were recorded in the council area, which were successfully remediated.

Pedestrian and vehicle traffic was significantly disrupted throughout the council area with many partial and total road closures necessary for public safety.

## Coorong District Council

In the interest of public safety and the protection of council-managed infrastructure, the Coorong District Council undertook pre-emptive works ahead of the flood peak. This included removing some riverfront infrastructure, closing vulnerable public areas due to a risk to public safety, inserting hazard buoys on submerged infrastructure, and relocating water extraction infrastructure at Wellington East.

Coorong District Council also undertook the following flood preparation and recovery activities:

- Preparation and recovery of riverside reserves
- Pre-flood lifting and post-flood re-siting of pumps (including Wellington East water supply), pontoons, and gangways
- Pre-flood preparation of reserves to minimise flood erosion
- Sand bagging
- Signage for flood and public safety information
- Ongoing water quality testing during and post-flood
- Post-flood removal of driftwood, sediment, rock, concrete and rubbish
- Post-flood landscaping, repair of erosion and damaged storm water outlets

Council-managed infrastructure was restored to its original pre-flood condition, and public areas reopened.

## District Council of Karoonda East Murray

The District Council of Karoonda East Murray recorded minimal impacts caused by the River Murray flood event.

## District Council of Loxton Waikerie

Within the District Council of Loxton Waikerie, the townships of Paisley, Ramco, Waikerie, Kingston on Murray, Moorook and Loxton were affected by the River Murray flood.

Levees were erected ahead of the flood peak in several locations, including along the Waikerie Riverfront and within Kingston on Murray. Several sites were affected and temporarily closed to the public as facility repairs were prioritised, including community barbecues, community toilets, roads, boat ramps and jetties.

Council worked closely with SAPN to reconnect power throughout the area. Council also worked to ensure levee banks were removed or repurposed as flood waters receded, and council infrastructure remained or returned to operational status as quickly as possible.

## Mid Murray Council

Major townships in the Mid Murray Council Area, including Mannum and Morgan, were directly affected by the River Murray flood event. Numerous shack areas, and other townships requiring ferry access, were also directly affected.

River vessels have resumed regular operations, with most grounds successfully repatriated. Similarly, businesses in the Mid Murray Council area have largely resumed regular operations. Council liaised with PIRSA to successfully coordinate the clean-up of fish kills in the area. Council continues to develop and disseminate communications to the local public featuring important information on a range of topics including the increased risks posed by mosquitos, residual dangers along the river post-flood, and the various supports available to impacted individuals and communities.

Mid Murray Council worked closely with other impacted councils and PlanSA to develop a streamlined development approval pathway to expedite approvals for damaged buildings. Similarly, council continue to work closely with Green Industries SA, the Environment Protection Authority and other relevant agencies

regarding waste management collection and the disposal of flood-affected waste and materials.

The Mid Murray Council continue to work closely with their communities and the State Government to implement a series of recovery actions, including repairs to infrastructure assets.

## Pastoral Unincorporated Area

The Pastoral Unincorporated Area recorded minimal impacts caused by the River Murray flood event.

## Renmark Paringa Council

Renmark Paringa Council's focus in preparing for the flood centred on remediating the local levee network to protect Renmark, Paringa and Lyrup, close outlets in the storm water system, and provide accurate and consistent communications to the local community.

A range of council assets and infrastructure were impacted by the flood, including roads, levees, boat ramps, bridges, wharves, houseboat moorings, stormwater, open space, community infrastructure, and footpaths. 23 kilometres of roads were damaged and temporarily closed by the flood in the council area, including Gurra Road and Twentyfirst Street.

38 kilometres of levees within the council area required remediation. Levees were constructed over roads or alongside road shoulders to adjoin sections of the levee bank network. Subsequent repair work was undertaken, including removal of some levees, to allow for roads and other access areas to be reinstated.

All 29 stormwater outlets were purposely closed using varying blockages and industrial sized pumps were installed in their place. These actions prevented flooding from back flow, allowing stormwater to be pumped out of local townships in the event of rain. Blockages were successfully removed in each outlet following the flood.

## Rural City of Murray Bridge

The cost of flood-related activities to the end of November 2023 for the Rural City of Murray Bridge was \$2.47m. These costs continue to rise as repair and recovery actions are undertaken.

43.2km of roads were inundated, with 58km of roads closed during the flood. One levee was constructed to protect the lower parts of the Mypolonga township. The levee was removed

during October 2023, with remediation work subsequently undertaken on Hannaford Terrace.

Flood barriers were constructed at Sturt Reserve to protect the Regional Rowing Centre, Murray Bridge Community Club and SA Water assets, including the town's main sewer connection. These barriers have now been removed.

All riverfront reserve boat ramps were inundated in the council area, requiring varying levels of repair. All required remedial works have been undertaken and all boat ramps are open to the public. Riverfront infrastructure such as jetties and wharves experienced differing levels of damage from the flood, therefore the extent of remediation and repair works vary in complexity.

A number of stormwater system areas required significant works to prevent flooding from back flow. Several stormwater outlets were closed, with active pumping solutions implemented where required to prevent subsequent flooding caused by rain events. All stormwater systems are now unblocked and returned to service.

Open space areas including Thiele Reserve, Avoca Dell Reserve, and Long Island Reserve suffered from bank erosion issues and damage to playground equipment. All affected footpaths have been remediated and are open to the public.

The council provided a range of support to the community including rate relief for flood-affected properties, establishing a co-working business hub to support impacted start-ups and home-based businesses, and providing ongoing advice to landowners about the planning process for redevelopment.

## **Local Government Disaster Recovery Assistance Arrangements**

Impacted local governments continue to be supported through the South Australian Local Government Disaster Recovery Assistance Arrangements (LGDRAA). The LGDRAA provides for state funding assistance to councils to help manage disaster recovery costs. The LGDRAA is administered by The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF). Several extraordinary assistance support measures are being provided to councils by the State Government under the arrangements. The government is continuing to work with councils to progress their asset repair claims.

A further \$9 million has been provided for the Council Community and Recreational Asset Restoration Program to assist impacted councils remediate and restore eligible assets essential to community recovery such as open spaces (reserves, parks), community facilities (boat ramps, playgrounds, public toilets) and cultural heritage sites.

# Recovery Assistance

## Social

### Mental Health

A \$2.3 million Mental Health Support Package was provided to communities impacted by the River Murray flood as part of the recovery effort. The initiative was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and South Australia under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

The aim of the initial \$1 million package, administered by SA Health, was to respond to the mental health needs of communities impacted by the flood event through the provision of increased mental health services, supports and responses with the aim to minimise long-term mental health impacts, and to promote positive mental wellbeing.

Local Primary Health Networks and NGOs worked in close partnership with the Recovery Centres to ensure there were clear referral pathways to mental health services, and that these were easy to navigate for service providers and the community.

The table below outlines the organisations engaged, their location and service provision.

Service / Organisation	Location
Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network (RMCLHN)	Berri and Murray Bridge
FocusOne Health	Berri
iREACH Rural Health (Formerly Murray Mallee GP Network)	Murray Bridge
Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network (BHFLHN)	Telehealth & across three Regional Community Mental Health Services
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	Berri

Service / Organisation	Location
Murraylands and Riverland LGA, Riverland SPN, Mid Murray SPN, Our Town Berri and Mid Murray Our Town	Across all LGA areas in the Murraylands and Riverland catchment
Neami National (NGO)	Murray Bridge
Mind Australia (NGO)	Renmark
Relationships Australia (NGO)	Berri
Uniting Communities (NGO)	Murray Bridge
Sane Australia (NGO)	Telehealth

RMCLHN worked in partnership with the Country Primary Health Network to engage additional staff through Focus One Health and iREACH Rural Health. The support provided included case management, support at relief centres to assist locals to access mental health services, and cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) services, with outreach services to other Riverland towns.

BHFLHN increased psychiatrist support across the country-wide Emergency Triage and Liaison Service and the Telepsychiatry Service, and across three Regional Community Mental Health Services at Berri, Murray Bridge and Victor Harbor. This increased system capacity at the country-wide and regional level.

CAMHS provided additional child mental health support and targeted interventions. An extended hours service for young people increased capacity to respond to new and existing referrals, as well as telehealth psychiatry reviews and partnerships with schools who identified at-risk children.

Wellbeing SA engaged local stakeholders (Mid Murray LGA, Our Town Berri and Our Town Mid Murray) to deliver wellbeing coordinator and community connector roles to support a range of initiatives and activities to mobilise, maintain and support mental wellbeing and resilience in the community. The Mid-Murray Suicide Prevention Network and Riverland Community Suicide Prevention Network helped

support improved community connectedness and resilience through active community networking, and improved help-seeking to connect communities to the right types of services and supports.

Mind Australia engaged a peer practitioner providing face-to-face, telehealth and mobile outreach support to individuals and families in the region.

Neami National provided service navigation support and expanded its eligibility criteria so more locals affected by the flood had access to support without a GP referral.

Relationships Australia increased their capacity and provided face-to-face, telephone and video counselling in all Riverland towns, with a focus on counselling for children and those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Uniting Communities engaged a community support worker who supported the Riverland Aboriginal community. This included engagement with Elders to support connections with broader parts of the community.

Sane Australia provided a next day Digital Aftercare service for Riverland locals who had presented to an emergency department or other health service. Locals received up to eight check-in calls with a counsellor whilst waiting for clinical services.

Recovery Centres acted as an important conduit for mental health referrals. The centres reported 3,320 people had attended during the four month period of 10 March 2023 to 30 June 2023. 38 mental health referrals alone were received via the Recovery Centres in the one month period from 23 May to 30 June 2023.

River Murray communities continuing to recover will also benefit from a further \$1.314 million to deliver increased specialist mental health services to minimise the long-term mental health impacts and promote positive mental well-being for individuals, families and communities.

### Wellbeing and Community Resilience Activities

Social support and connection can protect against prolonged psychological distress experienced as a result of a disaster. Wellbeing SA partnered with local stakeholders to implement a range of initiatives, providing opportunities for social connection, normalising mental distress during times of uncertainty, and building resilience.

Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Activities	No. of Activities	No. of Participants
Events for increasing community connection, mental wellbeing and resilience	30	3,337
Mental Health Training	14	403
Initiatives to promote help-seeking	3	65
Wellbeing events delivered across schools	4	N/A*
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>3,805</b>

\*Number of attendees could not be determined

Dates: 1 January – 30 June 2023

### Service Level Activity

#### January 2023

Levels of anticipatory anxiety were high in the week prior to Christmas with many people attending the Murray Bridge Emergency Relief Centre. It was reported that children were impacted by their parent's emotional (including financial) stress with the changing landscape of levees and rising water, and the ceasing of summer activities like swimming, boating and fishing.

Fortnightly meetings were established with the local mental health services, with the NGOs attending monthly to provide service level updates, discuss planned community engagement activities, and for service providers to communicate shared learnings. These meetings enabled collaboration and education of services being provided in the Riverland and Murraylands.

Additional meetings were arranged with the Red Cross, SA Housing Trust, the Disaster Management Branch and the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist to discuss relief centre arrangements and identified priorities. Service providers met with staff at the emergency relief centres, local councils and other providers to discuss services available, and to ensure

all regions were covered. Co-collaborated education and information sessions were held in the local and school communities to promote services and identify the demand for mental health support.

### **February 2023**

Most providers commenced service delivery, while Sane Australia and Neami National finalised their recruitment processes and provided training to new staff.

Further canvassing and network building in the Riverland and Murraylands continued, which included linking in with mainstream services and establishing regular meetings between providers to ensure co-collaboration of services in the region. Referral pathways were defined and operational resources were finalised and communicated with providers to allow for better service integration.

Additional meetings with the Red Cross, South Australian Housing Authority, the Disaster Management Branch and the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist were held to commence recovery planning.

### **April 2023**

Wellbeing SA worked with the Disaster Response Network (DRN), a national volunteer network of registered Australian Psychological Society psychologists with specialist training in supporting first responders affected by trauma and critical incident stress, to negotiate free access to their services for Council staff. The DRN had been proactively checking in with the mental health of Council frontline staff who were impacted by the flood.

The Recovery Centres reported an increase in demand. Neami National co-located their Community Rehabilitation Support Worker one day per week to the Recovery Centres to support the increased demand.

### **May – June 2023**

During May, NGOs including Neami National, Mind Australia, Relationships Australia, Uniting Communities and Sane Australia reported to either be working at capacity or nearing capacity.

### **June 2023 onward**

State Government organisations and NGOs returned to normal operations. Two regional community mental health services are available in Berri and Murray Bridge that provide specialist support for people aged 16 and over who are experiencing mental health

issues, including significant emotional distress, unsafe thoughts, or having difficulty coping. There are a range of mental health supports and programs offered in the Riverland and Murraylands by several NGOs including Neami National, Mind Australia, Uniting Communities and Relationships Australia.

## **Community Development**

A series of community development grants were provided to support community activities. Funding was provided for initiatives that supported:

- Physical and psychological health and wellbeing of community members
- Community information and collaboration
- Commemorative, memorial and/or celebratory events
- Small scale/seed funding for economic, social, cultural, infrastructure or environmental initiatives
- Community development, resilience, and capacity building

The grants reflected a commitment to community led recovery, recognising that the community is best placed to identify what it needs to recover, and that a successful recovery contributes to future resilience.

The following community initiatives were funded (wholly or partially) by the Community Development Officer grant fund, administered by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Some were operationally supported to varying degrees by the Community Development Officer or Wellbeing Officer, and in all cases were implemented by local people and groups who continue to commit their time and energy to meet the needs of their local community with passion and care. Many of the driving forces behind these projects originated from flood-affected people.



**Morgan Community Men's Shed** volunteers worked together to repair old Christmas decorations for the town Christmas Parade. The parade had been cancelled for several years due to COVID-19 and then due to flood impacts. 2023 marked its return to the town, with a crowd on hand to enjoy the parade, including the Community Men's Shed Float and its revitalised decorations, which will continue to be used in future years.

**Mannum Waters Marina Remainers** is an informal group made up of people who live on their houseboats. The group worked together with remarkable effort and coordination to protect their homes, the marina and the wellbeing of those living on their boats throughout the flood. They received funding for a celebration and debrief event, with several people identifying that they knew none of their neighbours before the flood, and are now part of a connected community. They are using the remaining funds to establish their community garden and publish commemorative photos of the flood. Through adversity this community has forged a new connection.

**Christmas Wonderland Loxton** is an iconic regional event attracting thousands of locals and tourists to view the community lights display and participate in activities. Funds were provided for a permanent roof to be installed over the stage. The area can now be used year-round and provides shelter for performers.

Blanchetown, like many communities, felt disconnected throughout the flood. Residents and shack owners were displaced, their community garden was destroyed, and the caravan park remains closed. The **Blanchetown Shack Owners Association** hosted a barbecue and music event, with camping facilities and transport to re-connect the town. The event provided a day of fun and reflection in what will be a long road to recovery. The event name, Floody Hell Recovery Party, is a reminder that a sense of humour doesn't go astray in disaster recovery.

**Blanchetown Community Garden Exchange** was funded to re-establish a shared garden. The garden provides a place for people to socialise, learn, grow food and exchange plants both for the community garden and to re-establish private gardens in the area.

**Mypolonga History Museum** are commencing a project to record oral histories of long-time residents, including their reflections on both the 1956 and recent flood. The project includes training volunteers to record oral histories to ensure the practice continues well into the future. A community event

in late 2024 will share stories to generate discussion, and ensure local experience and knowledge is recognised and kept alive within the community.

Nildottie has a small group of residents, the **Nildottie Community Group**, that volunteer to help maintain the town riverfront and cemetery. Their community pride and hard work keeps their town beautiful and via this grant fund they have a new shed to store their equipment.

**Moorook Bowling Club** missed two seasons due to the flood. While their members have been welcomed by a nearby club, they were able to play at home again for the first time since the flood in February 2024. The club's meal service continued throughout the flood event, providing an affordable meal and social connection in the area. The meals also provide a critical income stream for the club. The purchase and installation of a commercial dishwasher has enabled them to meet new health requirements and continue this important community service.

The **Moorook Hall** is a community owned, volunteer operated stone building that is more than 100 years old. The hall provides community programs and a venue for hire for individuals, groups and businesses in the region. The volunteers host the local ANZAC and Remembrance Day services, Christmas Carols, a weekly ladies games day, and provide support for the Moorook Boat Muster each year. As a Fringe venue they also provide access to events that are difficult to access in regional areas and hosted a performance of the Adelaide International Guitar Festival in 2023. Specialist stone repair work was funded to ensure it remains standing for many years to come.

Members of the **Idyl Acres Leaseholders Association** built a public park with a bike track and amenities, only to see it destroyed by flood waters. Funding will be used to purchase plants, irrigation, tree guards and other materials. Combined with some hard work, the John Birkenshaw Memorial Park will soon be back in action.

The **Monteith Hall** fell into disuse for more than seven years. A group of locals joined together to repair and reactivate the hall to provide a location for local events, informative workshops, and a central gathering point during emergencies. Their activities were severely limited by the lack of a workable kitchen. With funding provided a new kitchen will be installed in 2024 and the volunteer hall committee will expand their social, health and resilience program.

Impacted councils provided ongoing support to their communities throughout the flood event and the recovery phase. Many council staff also underwent a sustained period of stress during this time. A wellbeing afternoon was funded for **Mid Murray Council** staff to encourage discussion about mental health and wellbeing. This not only helped staff and their families, but it assisted them to continue to support their local community, which had been disproportionately impacted by the flood.

**Paisley Creek Estate** was devastated by the flood. Homes, shacks and communal areas were destroyed or significantly damaged, and as a result the small community became separated. They have received funding to restore the garden and park areas shared by residents with new plants, turf and irrigation.

**Waikerie and District Historical Society** volunteers collect, collate, preserve and share local history. The purchase of new equipment has enabled them to digitise more of the local collection to ensure it is preserved and available for use for generations to come.

**Cobdogla and District Hall Inc** is the social and sporting hub of the local community. Their regular activities and special events, including the county music festival and famous Halloween party, will no longer involve trekking through a muddy carpark. Funds to improve drainage and seal the carpark will reduce maintenance costs and improve the amenity of the club.

**iREACH**, in conjunction with **Gardening Australia's Sophie Thomson**, provided a series of garden recovery workshops for flood-affected communities. The workshops provided practical information for experienced and novice gardeners to re-establish gardens, find a new hobby, and provided another opportunity to meet in a comfortable environment to discuss community experiences and wellbeing.

Participants of the River Recovery: "Intro to Hospo" program in Murray Bridge, run by **Youth Options** and its partners, celebrated their graduation in November 2023. The training program allowed participants to undertake a range of hospitality training courses including how to prepare and serve coffee, using hygienic practices for food safety, and providing responsible service of alcohol. They were supported with career development training including resume writing, interview skills and work experience opportunities provided by a number of employers in Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend.

All of the graduates successfully secured employment with local businesses following the completion of the program.

The graduation event was a perfect opportunity for participants to demonstrate their newfound skills by preparing, cooking, and serving food and drinks for family and friends.

**Women of the LMRIA** are a community led group established during flood recovery to provide female farmers the opportunity to share knowledge, support one another, have fun and promote a greater understanding of their industry and region. The group meets regularly and has hosted activities and guest speakers. As part of the recovery process, they are coordinating a photographic storytelling program to celebrate their resilience, show pride in their achievements and continue to forge a strong and clear identity for their region.

**Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland** are delivering mental health first aid training sessions across the flood-affected areas from May 2024. The sessions are aimed at small and family businesses and their employees, to equip them with mental health first aid knowledge and skills, empowering them to take an active role in supporting their own mental health and that of their staff and peers.

**Reclink Australia** are providing healthy recreational activities to flood-affected communities who cannot afford or access these services. The activities are designed to improve mental and physical health, as well as social connection. Reclink Australia run grassroots programs each day in communities that need it most, with Reclink Coordinators acting as community connectors, listening to local needs and using sports, active recreation, art, and community engagement programs to help meet the needs of local residents. This program will run from May 2024 to April 2025.

## Community Recovery Fund – Community Development Officer (CDO) Grants 2024/25

In August 2024 a new round of Community Recovery Fund – Community Development Officer (CDO) grants were released by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The River Murray Flood CDO Grants are jointly supported by the South Australian and Commonwealth Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

These funds are used to support recovery and resilience activities or projects aimed at community recovery, community development, community resilience and capacity building for the future following the flood.

Grants of up to \$50,000 per project were distributed to the following successful applicants, with all projects requiring completion by 30 June 2025:

**Kintsugi Heroes** received a CDO grant to fund the “Beyond the Deluge” project; building and improving community wellness and resilience of people living in the River Murray area who were impacted by the floods. Kintsugi Heroes will record 12 stories from the flood event focused on overcoming adversity, hold community events featuring storytellers, develop an awareness campaign, encourage participants to seek support within their communities, and work closely with local organisations to help reach as many people as possible. All resources developed under this project will be freely available to River Murray communities including video/audio podcasts, print and e-books.

The River Murray floods had a profound impact on the Loxton Netball Club, causing significant financial strain and operational challenges. The flood led to increased travel costs, reduced participation, decreased volunteer engagement and financial pressures. **The Loxton Netball Club** received a CDO grant to fund new training, playing and fundraising equipment. In addition, funding was granted for subsidised umpire and coaching programs to enhance the skills of the club’s volunteers to ensure the continued development of local players.

**Mid Murray Our Town** received a CDO grant to train their community connectors to deliver mental health first aid training to community members. Funding was also provided for the provision of a children’s wellbeing camp in flood-affected communities, providing children the opportunity to connect with their peers and develop strategies to support their own wellbeing following the impacts of the flood.

The **Murray Bridge Community Centre** received a CDO grant to run a Community Wellbeing Summit held in November 2024 in Murray Bridge. The summit, organised by a collective of local services including AC Care, Anglicare, Foodbank, and iREACH Rural Health, focused on developing a strong network of local service providers, community groups and individuals to better respond and recover from future disasters and enhance disaster resilience.

**South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management (SAVEM)** received a CDO grant for the provision of pro bono building advice and advocacy during the long-term recovery from the flood. The funding allows for re-building advisers to continue field operations, supporting people undertaking repairs to their flood-affected properties. This work allows those initially unable to determine post-flood solutions to undertake appropriate repairs in consultation with expert re-building advisers.

Only the roof of the **Swan Reach Bowling Club** avoided inundation during the River Murray flood. The club received a CDO grant to repair the toilet flooring at the club, which had sustained significant damage from the flood waters.

Parkrun is a collection of 5-kilometre events for runners, walkers and volunteers that takes place every Saturday morning around the world. Parkrun received a CDO grant for the development of a free, ongoing parkrun event in **Waikerie**. The initiative will help enhance the wellbeing and resilience of local community members in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

The **Walker Flat Hall** received a CDO grant to host a series of local wellbeing programs and community initiatives. Wellbeing programs include a barbeque recovery celebration event, fitness yoga and art classes, and a first aid emergency training and fire safety session. In addition, the funding will support the creation of a new notice board to host local community information.

The Blanchetown Community Garden was significantly impacted by the flood, with the area inundated by over two metres of water for over two months, killing the plants and the microbes in the soil. The **Blanchetown District Hall** received a CDO grant to assist the repair of the Blanchetown Community Garden, including the provision of reinforced stainless steel bird netting to preserve the garden’s produce and newly sown seedlings.

The flood event had a disruptive impact on

the 2023 **Karoonda Farm Fair & Show** due to impacts to key travel routes, with several vendors choosing not to participate. These flow on effects continued into 2024, threatening the ongoing sustainability of the community-based event. The Karoonda Farm Fair & Show received a CDO grant to help cover the event's costs.

The **Berri Golf Club**, a not-for-profit community organisation and local tourist attraction, experienced a significant downturn in business due to the River Murray flood. The club has since identified that existing amenities and facilities are no longer able to cater for a recent influx of participants. The organisation received a CDO grant to upgrade the club's amenities.

**Disaster Relief Australia (DRA)** is a disaster relief not-for-profit organisation. DRA utilise military veterans and other volunteers to help communities prepare for and recover from disasters. DRA received a CDO grant to undertake 'Big Map' exercises across River Murray communities to help identify potential risks and hazards and provide solutions to build resilience ahead of future events.

**St John Ambulance SA (St John SA)** received a CDO grant to deliver accredited mental health first aid training within impacted communities. This training will equip residents, community leaders, community organisations and others with the skills to recognise and support those experiencing mental health issues.

The **Women of the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area (LMRIA)** project aims to support and encourage the women of the LMRIA as they continue to navigate the consequences of the River Murray Flood event. The Women of the LMRIA received a CDO grant to facilitate the gathering of women from the LMRIA, provide guest speakers and workshops on topics including trauma, wellbeing and resilience, foster the sharing of experiences with members, and acknowledge the needs of local women.



## Community Recovery Events

Impacted communities, local councils, State Government agencies and other recovery partners rallied together during the recovery process, holding a series of events and programs designed to enhance community resilience and foster relationships between affected groups. The Community Development Officer also helped to organise and support a number of the below programs. Flood recovery community meetings were also held, facilitated by the Community Recovery Coordinator, providing impacted communities the opportunity to hear about the recovery effort and ask questions of relevant agencies and local councils. Events and programs held to date include but are not limited to:

- Community Pizza Night - Bowhill
- Accidental counsellor workshops – Lifeline
- Women of the LMRIA community together events
- Men of the LMRIA community lunch event
- Purnong Caurnamont & District Progress Association – Free Community Dinner
- Yoga classes mental health flood recovery - Neami National
- “Floody Hell Recovery Party” - Blanchetown
- The Hope Project iReach Rural Health – Exploring Hope Through Words
- Mannum Waters Marina Remainers Celebration Picnic
- Regrowth 2.0 Garden Recovery After Flood events – hosted by Sophie Thomson
- AFL Gather Round Community Footy Roadshow events
- 15 flood recovery community meetings
- Flood insurance information meetings – Insurance Council of Australia
- Flood Recovery Community Get Together Pizza Night – Blanchetown
- River Revival Voucher Program Industry Engagement Workshops – SA Tourism Commission
- Community Barbeque – Pompoota
- “Chew the Fat Night” mental health event – Walker Flat
- Free soil management event for farmers and primary producers – Murray Bridge
- Free Disaster Legal Support Program insurance information sessions
- Free Purnong flood recovery community dinner
- River Recovery: “Intro to Hospo” course and graduation ceremony
- Empowering Rural Women in Business program – SheFarmer Rachel Titley
- BlazeAid celebration and farewell event – Mypolonga
- Recovery Centre farewell and closure event – Murray Bridge
- Junk Journal Art Workshops

## Fight the bite JEV support

Increased rainfall and pooling water following flooding events can create the perfect breeding sites for mosquitoes. SA Health and local councils conduct mosquito surveillance throughout the mosquito season (September to April) in high-risk areas across the state. The average number of mosquitoes caught in surveillance traps across South Australia was very high in 2023, compared to previous years.

Viral screening of trapped mosquitoes resulted in the detection of several viruses, including Ross River virus, Barmah Forest virus, West Nile virus (Kunjin variant) and the rare but potentially serious Murray Valley encephalitis virus (MVEV). While there is a vaccination for JEV, there is no vaccination or cure for other infections. Public messaging informed flood-affected communities how to protect themselves from potential infection. This included: wear long, loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing, use mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin or PMD (ensuring to follow the instructions on the label), empty stagnant water from around the home, and maintain clean roof gutters.

Free JEV vaccination was available for eligible people who lived and worked in areas inundated by the River Murray flood event.

## Economic

### Small Businesses

In addition to the small business grant support, Rural Business Support provided a total of 512 hours of free financial counselling to small and family businesses directly impacted by the flood event as at 31 October 2023.

The River Murray Flooding Support website, through the Office for Small and Family Business, was viewed by users on thousands of occasions, specifically:

- Landing page and FAQs - 14,875 views
- Early Business Closure Grant - 4,504 views
- Power Shut-Off Generator Grant - 7,304 views
- Small Business Industry Support Grant - 5,643 views
- Small Business Flood Recovery Grant - 4,815 views

A total of 288 face to face meetings with individuals in Relief and Recovery Centres were held regarding household generator grants and 214 small business owners seeking support and grants. From November 2022 until March 2023 the Office for Small and Family Business received 698 phone call enquiries and 412 email enquiries seeking flood support, grants and mental health services information.

### Tourism

Approximately 100 tourism operators along the river were impacted by the flood event, including houseboat companies, holiday and caravan parks, hotels, motels, tour operators and local traders. Prior to the flood, the region directly employed 2,800 people.

The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) led a River Murray Tourism Recovery working group, pooling expertise from a range of stakeholders to deliver the State Government's \$4.6 million tourism support package. The funding supported several initiatives including the 'Rise Up for Our River' marketing campaign, the River Revival Voucher program, and the \$500,000 Mid Murray Tourism Recovery Fund. The Working Group proved a valuable link to the regions, and provided the SATC with real-time information and insights into what was needed to stimulate tourism recovery.

The marketing campaign showcased iconic river locations and promoted local tourism operators, encouraging South Australians to support impacted river communities.

The campaign was promoted across TV, print and outdoor, as well as digital and social media.

Designed to increase visitation and spending in River Murray communities, 25,600 River Revival Vouchers were released over multiple rounds in 2023, including:

- \$100 experience vouchers (increased from \$50 to \$100 in round two based on feedback)
- \$100 accommodation vouchers (minimum 1-night stay)
- \$200 accommodation vouchers (minimum 2-night stay)
- \$750 houseboat / guided tour vouchers (minimum \$1,500 spend inclusive of the \$750 voucher)

Vouchers were released in a systematic way to allow tourism operators time to prepare ahead of an influx of demand.

While these vouchers were a welcome initiative for many River Murray tourism operators, those in the Mid Murray region and surrounding low lying areas were unable to leverage this support due to delays in reopening their operations. This was addressed by \$500,000 of the \$4.6 million in funding allocated to the Mid Murray Tourism Recovery Fund.

Of this fund, \$150,000 was shared among Mid Murray Council, Berri Barmera Council, The Rural City of Murray Bridge, Renmark Paringa Council and The District Council of Loxton Waikerie to support new and emerging events. Additional funds were also provided to the Mid Murray Council to support tourism recovery efforts.

A further \$300,000 was allocated to support businesses significantly impacted by the floods, with grants of up to \$50,000 available through the Mid Murray River Tourism Business Support Program.

The remaining \$50,000 was used by the SATC to provide support to impacted businesses, through a combination of marketing and media spend.

In the year to June 2023, visitor spend in the Riverland and Murray River, Lakes & Coorong regions reached a combined \$562 million, an increase on the \$436 million spent in the year to September 2022, prior to the flooding event. These regions surpassed their 2025 tourism targets.

Tourism Research Australia data demonstrates the flood recovery efforts of the State Government through the SATC helped drive visitor expenditure beyond pre-flood levels.

The funding package helped tourism operators restart their businesses in the aftermath of the flood, encouraging South Australians and interstate visitors to visit the Riverland and Murray River, Lakes & Coorong tourism regions.

## NGO Assistance

A portion of the funding allocated to the Community Recovery Coordinator was made available to NGOs and not-for-profit organisations to assist flood-affected communities.

NGOs generally deliver their services through volunteers. While volunteers offer their time for free, NGOs have costs in providing supervision, training, equipment, administration, and other critical supplies. This enables volunteers to work safely and effectively. NGOs are required to purchase these goods and services promptly and in high volumes to enable the deployment of teams of volunteers. Normal fundraising activities often cannot achieve the level of donations required for fast deployment of volunteers under recovery conditions. The State Government could not cover the breadth of recovery activities and services provided by these organisations and is extremely thankful for their contribution.

The primary purpose of this funding was to assist NGOs and not-for-profit organisations with supervising or training volunteers, purchasing critical supplies, and assisting with the rapid deployment of crews on the ground to assist with recovery activities. These grants were divided between two rounds.

For the first round, NGOs and not-for-profit organisations could apply for grants of up to \$10,000. The second round increased the grant fund amount to \$15,000.

### **Lions International**

SERM partnered with Lions International to provide insurance to people who lost material goods that they were unable to replace, up to the value of \$1,000. Individuals could apply through any Recovery Centre or pop-up Recovery Centre.

### **SAVEM**

The South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management (SAVEM) organisation, auspicing for the re-building advisers, received \$10,000 to support the provision of pro bono professional re-building advice to impacted individuals, families, communities and businesses following the flood. Since 2015 the informal re-building advisers group provided pro bono professional advice to emergency event impacted individuals, families, communities and businesses in concert with other NGOs. Advisers include planners, architects, engineers, and surveyors assisting the impacted through choices made in insurance settlement, achieving regulatory compliances, and review of builder contracts.

### **SAFCA**

The SA Financial Counsellors Association (SAFCA), the peak body for financial counsellors in South Australia and the Northern Territory, received \$10,000 to run a training event into the financial impacts caused by disasters, along with the financial assistance available to impacted communities. The training session covered a range of topics including small business debt, insurance, and available government grants. 24 participants attended the session, including financial counsellors, financial capability workers, council staff, Family and Business Mentors, community lawyers, and business financial counsellors. Most attendees were working or living in flood-affected areas.



I learnt so much about what happens in disasters. The impact of these local floods were bigger than I thought and longer lasting also. I have learnt things that will have an immediate impact on my practice.

– training attendee



It was good to network with the various support organisations to get a picture of what help there is for people affected by the flood.

– training attendee

### **Volunteering SA & NT**

Volunteering SA&NT, the peak body for volunteering in South Australia and the Northern Territory, received \$10,000 to support local volunteer students in Berri to assist with rebuilding the local ecosystem following the flood. Volunteers undertook a variety of restorative projects, including propagation, the creation of turtle enclosures, and the creation of fish hotels. Funds were used to purchase a variety of required supplies including garden soil, propagation sand, compost, steel posts and timber.

### **Habitat for Humanity**

Habitat for Humanity South Australia received \$10,000 to support the mobilisation of teams of volunteers, under the supervision of a Habitat staff member, to provide practical hands-on support to primary property owners adversely impacted by the flood by restoring their outdoor environments through the 'Gardens of Hope' program.

Many people with flood-affected properties, including elderly residents, returned to their properties to be faced with damage to their garden and surrounding outdoor environment. The 'Gardens of Hope' program helped clear damaged vegetation and outdoor infrastructure, as well as repaving and replanting.



Work was prioritised for residents who did not have the capacity to undertake garden restoration themselves or were experiencing other challenges.

Funding was used to help employ a supervisor to assess sites and provide on ground management of volunteers, hiring a minibus to transport city-based volunteers to the Riverland, volunteer expenses including lunches, protective equipment, a \$5 per day petrol supplement for local Riverland volunteers, volunteer insurance cover, and any additional flood recovery equipment that was required.

### BlazeAid

BlazeAid, a volunteer-based organisation that works with families and individuals in rural Australia after natural disasters, received a \$15,000 grant to support affected farmers in the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area by re-establishing fencing damaged or destroyed by the flood.

On 2 January 2024 a BlazeAid re-fencing camp was established at the Mypolonga Football Club. 94 volunteers registered to provide assistance for a total



of 792 volunteer days. Amazon Disaster Relief provided a pallet of drinking water to the camp, providing a much-needed resource to the re-fencing volunteers. BlazeAid attended to 23 properties, clearing 26 kilometres of fence line and raising 38 kilometres of new fencing. The camp closed on 28 March 2024.

### South Australian Council of Social Service

The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS), the peak body for the non-government health and community services sector in South Australia, held a “Lessons from the Flood: A focus on people most at risk” event in Mannum on Thursday, 27 July 2023 at the Mannum Community Club. Approximately 150 stakeholders were present, including emergency management organisations, health and community service providers, local government representatives, essential service providers, local community and business leaders, and elected officials.

The event focused on reviewing and learning about how stakeholders addressed the needs of people who may have been more at risk from the impacts of the flood. This included communication, collaboration and supports provided to enable people more at risk to prepare for, respond to and recover from the flood while maintaining their health and wellbeing. SACOSS received \$5,500 to cover the expenses of the event facilitator, Dr Mark Crossweller, including travel, accommodation and facilitation. Dr Crossweller is an expert in resilience and ethical decision making in emergencies.

The funds were also utilised for a follow up visit to meet with stakeholders in the Riverland to reinforce the learnings from the initial event. The grant covered travel, accommodation and catering. This second session was at the request of Riverland stakeholders who were unable to attend the first session.

### The Royal Life Saving Society South Australia

The Royal Life Saving Society South Australia organisation received \$12,970 to help educate and train flood-impacted communities on responding to aquatic emergencies. The program provided water safety forums with community members and leaders, and opened discussions regarding water safety, helping to make the river safe again.

The program worked to address safety risks on or around the river due to the flood, such as eroding riverbanks, water contamination, and dangerous and non-visible floating debris. Cardiopulmonary

resuscitation (CPR) and other first aid knowledge was also provided. Participants acquired the knowledge, tools, and necessary information to allow them to become first responders, assisting the ill or injured until medical help arrives. The project was delivered at Renmark-Paringa and Murray Bridge, including local community hubs, community organisations, schools, and the general public. Approximately 100 people received this training.

The funding covered a range of program expenses including first aid trainers, CPR trainers, water safety facilitators, travel to and from the Riverland, equipment, and registration fees.

### **iReach Rural Health – Sophie Thomson Workshops**

iReach Rural Health, formerly known as Murray Mallee General Practice Network, received \$14,340 to organise a series of garden recovery workshops in flood-affected communities facilitated by well-known gardening identity Sophie Thomson. The workshops incorporated a number of themes including the mental health benefits of being in the natural environment, planning your garden to incorporate biodiversity and provide habitat for native wildlife, and also providing a safe space to acknowledge the grief and loss that occurred for many due to the flood.



It was really lovely to see the change in people from when they arrived to when they left. It was a lot lighter mood at the end

– Lisa Courtney – Clinical Service Manager – iReach Rural Health

Several people reported grief around the destruction of their garden and natural environments which they used to manage their health and wellbeing. Many impacted people had limited capacity to restore their gardens without support. This project assisted with this important wellbeing factor.



These workshops built on previously run events in Mannum (9 June), Murray Bridge (16 June), Monteith (23 June) and Swan Reach (30 June). These events found the area of need and focus was Mannum and Swan Reach. Therefore, additional sessions in Mannum and Swan Reach were held as follow-ups, recognising that different people had a need for this information at different times, that mental health and wellbeing changes over time, and that for some people it is a way of testing the safety of a service before reaching out for help.

Funding for the program was spent on catering and venue hire, the Sophie Thomson workshop fee, staffing requirements, management and administration, merchandise, and travel expenses.

### **SheFarmer**

SheFarmer, otherwise known as fourth-generation Sheep Farmer, wellbeing and leadership facilitator Rachel Tilley, received a \$5,000 grant to help facilitate the 'Empowering Rural Women in Business' program for flood-affected rural business women in Mannum. The program was held weekly during the school terms in 2024 from 9:00am to 12:00pm, commencing on Wednesday 31 January 2024, at the Mannum Lutheran Hall.

### **Foundation SA**

Foundation SA established the South Australian Disaster Recovery Fund in early 2023. Funds raised supported non-profit organisations working in impacted regions, by providing small grants to aid recovery and build resilience for the future.

Foundation SA raised \$87,000 which was awarded across nine community organisations, following a competitive grant application process, to support regional flood-impacted communities.

## Community Grants

- **Good Shepherd** was funded to deliver the My Money Basics Financial Literacy Program — a series of workshops for flood-impacted families and businesses in the Murray Bridge, Mannum and Berri region.
- **The Mid-Murray Support Service** was awarded a grant to restore the Scrooge's Op Shop — a community op shop that supports sensible and affordable reuse for household items and goods, and offers volunteering opportunities and social connections for the Mannum community.
- **Our Town Berri** secured funding to deliver workshops to support recovery and help build resilience for future flooding events across two key community sectors — senior students attending Riverland high schools and first responders and flood volunteers. The program is run by Our Town Berri in partnership with wellbeing coordinators across the four local high schools.
- **Mannum Community College** - The student and staff resilience and mental health and wellbeing project was an educator-facilitated online mental health and wellbeing program tailored to the needs and age of school students. It was funded to address wellbeing and provide opportunities to develop and enhance skills and strategies to navigate challenges, adversity and disappointment, and build ability to cope with grief and loss.
- **Foodbank SA** - The Foodbank Meal Packs project was funded to support people in flood-impacted communities in the Riverland over the long recovery period and through the cost of living crisis. Through their Mobile Food Hub, Foodbank distributed free and subsidised meal packs that consisted of easy to prepare, nutritious meals to cook at home. Each Meal Pack fed a family of four and freed up household budgets to spend on other essential items, such as electricity and petrol
- **Headspace Berri** - funded to deliver evidence-based clinical skills and social connections group for young people and their families in the Riverland region, with a dedicated focus to support young people as current and future leaders within their community. The project worked to build skills and connections of Riverland young people with other members of the community, Headspace Berri mentors and service providers to foster a culture of collaboration, creativity and community building in response to the River Murray floods.

## Environmental Grants

- Nature Foundation was awarded a grant to support their work to control feral fish at Watchalunga Nature Reserve through the implementation of a sustainable alien fish control strategy that encourages the recolonisation of threatened freshwater fishes.
- Wetlands Habitats (Paiwalla) was formed to rehabilitate a retired dairy farm on the River Murray and return it to a wetland. Paiwalla wetland is now a refuge for birds, native fish, turtle and local plants, as well as a site that contains items of significant cultural heritage such as middens, scar trees and grinding stones. The floods inundated Paiwalla, with water entering the wetland over the levee bank in two major places, causing surface damage to the levee, and part of the walking trail around the wetland, at the low points. The flood waters also destroyed a significant number of plantings that had been carried out over the last ten to 15 years since the restoration program began and exposed the wetland to be populated with European Carp. The grant for Wetlands Habitats will support the group to repair the levee bank around the wetland and restore protections for this unique natural environment.

## State Emergency Relief Fund

The State Emergency Relief Fund (SERF) provides a publicly accountable mechanism independent from government for the disbursement of donated monies following an emergency. Under the Emergency Management Act 2004 (the Act), any money received by the Minister for Human Services through a public appeal must be paid into the SERF for the relief of people and communities who have suffered injury, loss or damage as a result of a declared emergency or proclaimed situation. The SERF and SERF Committee are established under section 37 of the Act.

SERF was activated on 15 February 2023 for the River Murray flood. Information about how to donate to the fund was published on recovery.sa.gov.au and via the River Murray Flood Community Newsletter. At the time of activation for the flood event, SERF contained over \$100,000 in carry-over funds from previous events and accrued interest.

Donations were received until the appeal closed on 19 December 2023, with a total of \$7,725 raised through 24 donations. This included one corporate donation of \$1,731 from Tasting Australia, with the festival collecting \$1 from every take-home enamel plate sold to fundraise for the SERF.

From 19 December 2023, impacted local councils were invited to identify projects that would strengthen community engagement, sense of place and community identity, or improve the mental health and wellbeing of affected communities, including vulnerable groups. The application period closed on 2 February 2024, with four proposals received. All four applications were approved for a payment of \$10,000 each towards their projects, totalling \$40,000 in support. This was funded by the \$7,725 in donations received following the flood, interest accrued on these donations, and over \$20,000 in carryover funds. All monies donated to the fund in relation to the flood have been dispersed, according to the Governor’s Directions.

All applications for funding under SERF were approved by the SERF Committee. With no other applications received, it was decided to reserve the remaining balance in the fund, under section 37 (6) of the Act. Carried over funds will enable immediate payments to be made for deceased and injured persons should they be required in a future activation. Carry over funds remain available amid the heightened annual risk of bushfire in South Australia.

*Table: Approved SERF payments*

Recipient	Project	Payment
District Council of Loxton Waikerie	Paisley Ski Beach Beautification – Infrastructure upgrades and lawn rehabilitation at the Paisley ski beach, to reinvigorate the space for activities and social gatherings.	\$10,000
Mid Murray Council	Community Connections across the Mid Murray – Progress or hall associations across the region will be invited to deliver small, wellbeing-focussed projects, developed with local communities.	\$10,000
Renmark Paringa Council	Renmark and Paringa, Resilience and Trauma Education and Support – Project partner Mental Health Partners will deliver mental health and trauma support and education, with opportunities for participants to gain formal certificates or accreditation in these skills	\$10,000
Coorong District Council	An evening with The Unbreakable Farmer – 4 evenings with leading mental health speaker and advocate Warren Davies, to bring the community together to connect and build resilience.	\$10,000

# Infrastructure

## Clean-up

The River Murray flood resulted in significant waste management issues. Many homes and shacks were inundated with water, some for months at a time. A coordinated and extensive clean-up program, including the disposal of asbestos, chemical waste, and other types of debris, was required.

On 15 December 2022, Green Industries SA (GISA) was activated to oversee the implementation of a coordinated waste and debris clean-up program, in accordance with the Disaster Waste Management (DWM) Capability Plan under the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). GISA was tasked with providing landowners, councils, and other relevant stakeholders with support to facilitate the clean-up and responsible disposal of debris, including hazardous materials.

On 28 March 2023 GISA appointed Johns Lyng Disaster Management Australia (JL-DMA) as the tier one contractor responsible for managing the clean-up.

The clean-up program was segmented into eight phases: Flood assessment, hazard reduction, kerbside collection, demolition, removal of other waste relocated by the flood, removal and processing of sandbags, completions and sign off, and muck outs (special needs cases).

Impacted property owners were also provided free transfer waste station vouchers to help dispose of their flood-affected waste. This work was completed within the affected local government areas, and was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and the State under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. The clean-up registration period began in April 2023 and closed on 13 October 2023. Beyond this date registrations were taken on a case-by-case basis and accepted in exceptional circumstances.

Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) volunteers spent several weeks in 2023 assisting with clearing debris and the wider clean-up effort. As the clean-up program progressed into 2024 and fewer services and phases were required (these primarily being demolition

and hazard reduction works), GISA assumed the coordination role from JL-DMA. JL-DMA continued to provide support to the State Government to deliver the clean-up program in a reduced capacity.



Key statistics of the flood recovery clean-up program (as at 4 October 2024):



1,934 registrations for clean-up assistance  
(275 primary places of residence)



639 flood-affected properties assessed  
by a team of structural engineers,  
electrical engineers and hygienists



407 (of an expected 428)  
demolitions completed\*



116 (of an expected 127) hazard (asbestos  
and mould) reductions completed\*



33,617 tonnes of waste collected  
(11,029 tonnes via kerbside collection)



57% of collected materials have been  
diverted from landfill for further processing



5,195 items (equating to 59  
tonnes) removed from the river,  
including water tanks, pine posts,  
fridges and other small items.

\* The last demolition and hazard reduction works will be performed no later than March 2025.

## Electricity Reconnection

Electric shock due to flood inundation of electricity infrastructure was a key risk to the community, emergency services personnel and SA Power Networks (SAPN) employees.

SAPN disconnected 3,368 customers along the River Murray, reconnecting supply to those ready to accept it within approximately two days of the reconnection request. As of 25 June 2024, 2,145 customers have been reconnected. 1,223 services remain disconnected, with SAPN receiving approximately six reconnections per week. Reconnections will continue over time as customers continue the rebuilding process and determine their individual needs.

Once safe access to an area was available, SAPN inspected the local electricity network, undertaking repairs as required. Access to some areas was delayed due to road damage or other safety considerations. It was not safe to reconnect many properties that were inundated by water.

Once safe access was available, reconnection of power involved two key steps. First, SAPN checked and repaired the network of poles and wires supplying an impacted area. Once the network was energised, SAPN conducted safety checks to confirm the properties that could be safely reconnected to power supply or which require electrical or other work before being reconnected to power supply. SAPN left a written notice at properties with information on next steps for customers.

If a property was unaffected by flooding, SAPN reconnected power to properties where possible. If a property had unsafe wiring a qualified electrician was required to test the electrical installation, reconnect the appropriate wiring in the switchboard, and then restore power. An electrician provided a certificate of compliance (eCoC) certifying the work had been completed.

If a property was unable to be safely reconnected to the network, SAPN advised customers accordingly. In these cases, an electrician was required to test and repair the electrical installation and provide an eCoC prior to SAPN returning to the property to confirm works have been undertaken and it is safe to reconnect power.

SAPN waived the standard published fee for the abolishment of a service connection, or reconnection of a 'like for like' service after repairs by a qualified electrician. SAPN also waived the standard network supply charge for the time customers were disconnected from the electricity network.

## Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area

There are approximately 5,200 hectares of irrigated area on the former floodplain of the River Murray in South Australia, between the townships of Mannum and Wellington. This is known as the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area (LMRIA) and is made up of 27 irrigation areas that involve 142 landholders. The LMRIA is protected by 107 km of levees, of which the South Australian Government owns approximately 67km and 40km is owned and managed by private landholders and/or irrigation trusts.

The levees are critical to protecting the region and provide benefits including water security, agricultural irrigation, environmental protection and indirect economic value through the protection of significant private and public assets.

A large portion of the LMRIA levee network either breached or overtopped due to the flood which resulted in large deposits of pooled stagnant water on productive primary production land, severely damaging levees and broad farm infrastructure. This resulted in significant economic and mental hardship for landholders and community members in the area and significant damage to levees.

A LMRIA Recovery and Resilience Program was initiated by the State and Commonwealth Governments. This program included a LMRIA levee remediation and betterment program, LMRIA on-farm dewatering and Primary Producers Recovery and Resilience Grants.

Each irrigation trust area was impacted differently. DEW met with impacted landholders and trusts to determine their thoughts on what works may be required in the short term to repair the levee embankments. DEW undertook on-ground inspections, while drones were used to monitor water levels around government-owned levees and undertake initial inspections.

All government-owned levee banks were closed to the public until full condition assessments of the levees were undertaken and levees were deemed safe for public access. Recreational activities along the levee banks, such as walking, cycling and fishing were not permitted. Government-owned levee banks are located at Cowirra, Neeta, Wall Flat, Pompoota, Mypolonga, Mobilong, Burdett, Long Flat, Monteith and Jervis. Privately-owned levees along the Lower Murray are managed and maintained by private landowners and access to their levee banks is at the landholder's discretion. However, access to private levee banks where the department undertook reinforcement of levee stabilisation works was not permitted.

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) led planning activities to ensure there were no significant delays once the required initial levee repair work was complete. PIRSA worked with industry and other State Government agencies to undertake an engagement process with Irrigation Trusts in the Lower Murray to determine the broader recovery requirements for each Trust. Moved to "Committee" section earlier in the report

PIRSA successfully dewatered all 20 agricultural productive irrigation areas. This work commenced in March initially under the leadership of the South Australian Dairyfarmers Association and involved over 10 different contractors. At the busiest time during April 2023, 27 pumps were operating across 14 irrigation areas. Many landholders provided critical support to the

dewatering process. The use of private infrastructure and the hours spent by landholders monitoring the operations was an essential part of the program.

Over \$4 million was spent to dewater 45 gigalitres of water from 2,157 hectares of productive grazing areas in the LMRIA.

In early 2024, the Federal and State Governments announced \$17.1 million in funding to progress intermediate remediation works for government-owned levees in the LMRIA that were damaged by the flood.

The intermediate remediation works have begun and will bolster the immediate stabilisation works and will support the protection of the region's economically significant agricultural land and floodplain infrastructure in the event of future high flows.

In addition to the \$17.1 million jointly-funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement funding, \$14.2 million has been allocated for works to undertake initial repairs to privately owned LMRIA levees.

Condition assessments of the levees will inform the development of a longer-term resilience strategy for government and privately-owned levees within the LMRIA. DEW continue to work closely with the LMRIA landholders, irrigation trusts and community members in progressing the intermediate remediation works.

As councils and communities continue their ongoing recovery their efforts will be supported by additional support for Irrigation Trusts within the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area (LMRIA), and shared support for intermediate remediation of privately owned levees within the LMRIA.

\$2.025 million will be provided through the LMRIA Irrigation Trust Recovery Support Program for irrigation trusts in the LMRIA region to support medium-term targeted assistance for recovery activities and long-term resilience building activities.

### **River Vessel Waste Disposal Stations**

There are 13 public river vessel waste disposal stations along the River Murray. In addition, six private marina waste disposal facilities are available to the public.

DEW recommissioned each River Vessel Waste Disposal Station, when it was deemed safe to do so, which had been brought offline due to the flood. Recommissioning each station included regaining safe access to the site, inspecting the infrastructure for any damage, repairing any damaged infrastructure, reinstating equipment, and reconnecting and testing services.

### **Water sewer services**

127 SA Water customers had their wastewater services proactively disconnected from the utility's wider underground pipe network in December 2022. This was done to stop flood inundation impacting the town's wider sewer system, reduce the risk of sewer overflows into the environment, and best place services for restoration once the flood waters receded.

Throughout this period, affected properties were unable to discharge water from their toilets, showers or sinks. A further 61 customers were also identified by SA Water, but were able to continue discharging into the sewer network, following the use of temporary pumping and wastewater tanks put in place ahead of the flood peak.

SA Water's dedicated operational and stakeholder engagement teams worked with each impacted customer to provide individual support as needed, including providing bill relief towards their quarterly water and sewage charges, and the use of temporary shower and toilet facilities. SA Water removed temporary bungs and fibreglass seals from all local customers' sewer connection points, including the Mannum Bowling Club and Pretoria Hotel.

## **Environmental**

### **National Parks**

The impacts associated with the floods on national parks were highly varied, including dirtying from flood waters, coverage of roads, campsites and other areas by flood silt, washing away or damaging of fences, compromised timber components of toilets, trees falling over due to being flooded or undercut, and the washing away of whole sections of roads and culverts.

Site inspections revealed the majority of impacted assets were repairable. Safety assessments were also undertaken for each site prior to re-opening. Assessment of damaged assets has been undertaken since April 2023 and have been progressively revised as works have been identified and completed. The repair work was undertaken by a variety of local groups, including waste recovery, plumbing, carpentry, fencing and civil construction companies.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service also supported River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) Rangers to visit flood-stranded sand dunes to assess if some of the cultural sites were impacted by flood waters. Repair of access infrastructure for the Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park was undertaken to allow tours undertaken by the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association (MACAI) to recommence. A number of items of cultural heritage importance, such as middens, were exposed by the flood and remediated appropriately through consultation with local indigenous groups.

### **Pest and weeds**

Landholders experiencing outbreaks of weeds as a result of high flow events were provided access to free advisory services to help identify species and find out how to best manage them. Free loan equipment, herbicides and control services were also available for landholders with outbreaks of priority weed species on their properties.

The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board's (MRLB) District Officers shared their expertise in identifying and controlling weeds to landholders including residents, shack owners and primary producers. Staff advised on the best weed control strategies, and loaned weed control equipment and herbicides at no cost to landholders to assist them to undertake control works on priority weed species. In certain circumstances weed control was undertaken by

a District Officer or contractor without charge to the landholder. Eligibility was determined by weed type and other criteria, with a priority list of species including yellow water lily, Opuntia species (cacti), sagittaria, African boxthorn, boneseed and golden dodder.

Weed incursions emerged along the full stretch of the River Murray in the wake of the flooding event. Weed species germinated in the land alongside the river and backwater channels as floodwaters subsided and emerged in areas where they hadn't been seen previously.

### **Revegetation support**

The flood inundated extensive areas of vegetation, some for extended periods of time. Plant deaths occurred either as a direct result of being submerged or trees falling, due to waterlogged soil becoming unstable.

MRLB engaged Trees For Life to support landholder recovery through provision of a revegetation engagement service. This service was well received and was made available for three years from July 2023, to enable access to the services when required by the landholders during their recovery journey.

Flood-affected landholders were offered discounted native seedlings to revegetate areas of their property. A 50% discount was available on the cost of seedlings, tree guards and stakes ordered in the 2023 Trees For Life Tree Scheme for up to 500 seedlings and 500 stakes and guards per property. Staff provided expert advice to help landholders choose the appropriate native seedlings, having collected seed from 42 different provenance zones across South Australia, and advising on the best species for each site. Revegetation was recognised as one of the primary ways landholders could help repair flood-affected lands, while also enhancing local biodiversity and providing forage and habitat for key native species.

The support helped revegetate flood-affected landscapes, preventing further soil erosion, boosting the soil's ability to absorb water, stabilising embankments, recreating habitat for local wildlife, and improving site amenity.

### **Ecological monitoring**

DEW continue to undertake ecological monitoring projects with various research partners, including the Goyder Institute for Water Research. Research undertaken has focused on several areas including

blackwater, the movement of salt from floodplains into groundwater due to the flood, and how common carp responded to the flood.

A range of environmental responses have been identified to date, including:

- Dissolved oxygen in key Riverland floodplain waters remained at levels that support fish and other organisms.
- Salt levels in groundwater around floodplains dropped, which may have lasting benefits for native floodplain vegetation.
- Common carp thrived in the shallow, warm and productive waters. This species will continue to be monitored and outcomes will inform their management.

Following the flood peak, salinity, nutrient and phytoplankton levels were monitored up to 40 kilometres offshore, and bivalves, crustaceans and fish were collected to understand how freshwater flows influenced their diets.

Flood waters greatly improved the health of mature black box woodland and lignum shrublands in the Riverland, which had been in decline due to a lack of inundation.

This provided high-value habitat, with spring woodland bird surveys detecting 75 native species thriving in the floodplain conditions.

During a spring aerial waterbird survey, large numbers of pelicans, swans and ducks were recorded in the Coorong, particularly in the areas closest to the barrages where freshwater flows from the Murray.

In the Lower Lakes, cormorants, ibis and spoonbills formed large breeding concentrations in reed beds and on islands.

# Looking Forward

History will remember the River Murray flood of 2022-23 as one of South Australia's most significant disasters. Future generations will recall the peak flows and the imagery of damaged and destroyed properties. However, no analysis can describe the emotional toll felt by those on the ground. For some, dashed hopes of loved ones enjoying the river – where their homes and shacks once stood – cannot be quantified by the number of property demolitions completed under the clean-up program. The total impact on businesses cannot be calculated by the number of working days lost, whilst the missing satisfaction of a hard day's work is also left unmeasured.

What we can do is acknowledge the ongoing challenges faced by the many communities along the stretch of the River Murray. We can recognise those who worked, and continue to work, tirelessly to achieve better outcomes. Communities will rebuild and continue to show the Australian spirit and resilience as they have after previous disasters. In the months and years ahead this recovery journey will continue, and the experiences that are shared will be invaluable in preparing and recovering from future events that South Australia may experience.

The Community Recovery Coordinator and Community Development Officer worked tirelessly to identify and resolve local issues, develop working relationships, and enhance community resilience, efforts that will have lasting benefits for years to come. These successes would not have been possible without the collaboration and engagement of River Murray communities, who will continue to work together to achieve key recovery outcomes in the years ahead.

The South Australian and Commonwealth Governments will continue to support River Murray communities along this journey. Demolitions of flood-damaged properties are ongoing, and the clean-up support program will continue until all eligible works required by registrants are completed. The implementation of new planning rules along the River Murray will allow the community to rebuild in a more sustainable way, mitigating the risk in the event of any future flooding.



# Appendices

# Appendix A: State Recovery Plan

Social Domain			
Program Area	Projected Outcome	Recovery Actions	Status
First Nations communities	Ensuring a culturally sensitive approach to recovery activities including clean up and protection of culturally significant sites	Proactive engagement with impacted First Nations Communities Rectification of cultural sites	AAR led engagement, First Nations community meetings held on country, submission for rectification of cultural sites developed and liaison with GISA and agencies occurred
Local Recovery Coordination	Support locally coordinated community recovery and deliver community informed recovery	Community Recovery Coordinator Community Recovery Committee Community Recovery Plan Relief / Recovery Centres	Committee established, Community Recovery Plan developed with input from Councils, Relief and Recovery Centres established
Hardship assistance	Grants and financial assistance to support recovery needs	Recovery grants and programs NGO assistance available	Travel Assistance, Personal Hardship, Re-establishment & Rental Assistance grants provided. Programs & NGO assistance provided.
Displaced residents	Residents are supported to return to home / secure accommodation where their property is uninhabitable	Essential services reconnection grants Reconstruction grants Longer term accommodation sourced case by case	Reconnection and Reconstructions grants provided. Minderoo pods deployed
Individual and Community Wellbeing	Outreach and mental health services are available and provide continuity of service between response, relief and recovery needs	Mental Health assistance program FAB Support mentors activated to support affected regions South Australian Housing Authority case management Red Cross outreach	Mental Health programs available and implemented

## Social Domain

Program Area	Projected Outcome	Recovery Actions	Status
Communications & Engagement	Provision of consistent and timely information to impacted communities/ regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Meetings</li> <li>Community Newsletter</li> <li>Weekly meetings with Council CEOs</li> <li>State Emergency Information Line</li> <li>Public Information &amp; Communications Working Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community meetings held, Council CE meetings held, Newsletters published and distributed fortnightly.</li> <li>DPC coordination across Government continues long term</li> </ul>

## Built Environment Domain

Program Area	Projected Outcome	Recovery Actions	Status
Transport and Infrastructures	Prioritise and restore transport infrastructure to impacted communities	Manage and prioritise repair work to damaged transport infrastructure	All ferries returned to operating and all roads reopened.  Essential Services Reconnection Property Assessment Program completed
Waste Management	Flood impacted material and debris removed and disposed of appropriately  Includes kerbside collection, sandbag removal, and removal of flood debris from the River Murray	Green Industries SA (GISA) activated to coordinate removal and disposal of riverbank debris, asbestos and other waste materials including removal of debris from properties, shacks and businesses (and flood mud)	Eligible properties impacted by the flood event provided hazard reduction to remediate or remove hazardous materials (mould and friable flood impacted asbestos).  Clean up works schedule, with various phases, implemented.  Voucher program announced
Levees	Repair, reinstate or rehabilitate water infrastructure assets used to regulate flow including agricultural levees, environmental management infrastructure, water monitoring infrastructure	Prioritise immediate levee inspection and rectification work of agricultural levees to enable dewatering.  Develop a consistent, coordinated or clearly defined approach to the governance, management and regulation of levees in South Australia	DEW completed engineering assessments and priority rectifications to sure up levees and enable dewatering for primary producers.
Dewatering – General and Lower Murray Irrigation Area	Ensure roads and properties can be accessed safely and health issues from stagnant water do not arise.  Support primary producers to active production as soon as practicable following inundation	Dewatering over roadways, residence, shack areas. Also includes primary production land.  Undertake a coordinated State Government program to stabilise levees and remove water from agricultural areas in the LMRIA	Dewatering completed
Planning and Development	A coordinated approach by State Government and Councils to manage applications for development and any required changes to legislation and/or the Planning and Design Code	Communicate to residents and impacted communities on planning policy and processes necessary to rebuild post flood event.  Assessment and implementation of Planning and Design Code.	Completed

## Economic Domain

Program Area	Projected Outcome	Recovery Actions	Status
Small Business	Small businesses are supported to continue trading or to meet costs if unable to trade and then to recover from the impacts of flooding	Grant assistance measures Small business advisors at Relief Centres	Small Business Industry Support, Early Business closure, Small business recovery & Generator grants provided.  Advisors present at Relief/ Recovery Centres  Family and Business Support program provided.
Primary Producers	Support primary producers to mitigate the impacts of flooding and resume operations as quickly as possible	Grant assistance measures PIRSA staff at Relief Centres Livestock SA activated (provision of donated fodder)	Primary Production Irrigation and Primary Producer Recovery Grants provided.  LMRIA Assistance  Package implemented
Tourism Operators	Support and restore regional tourism by promoting local tourism and incentivising travel to the Riverland at the appropriate time	Spend your support advertising campaign.  Targeted round of tourism vouchers to promote destinations/ tourism support package	Fee Waivers – Houseboat and Tourism provided.  Targeted voucher program and campaign to encourage a return to tourism along the River Murray completed  Significant intersection with assessment and remediation of infrastructure

## Natural Environment Domain

Program Area	Projected Outcome	Recovery Actions	Status
River Amenity	Restore amenity of river and manage hazards in riverway	Manage hazards in river	Hazards in river identified and removed.  GISA coordinated clean up
Water Quality and Fish Kill clean up	Support locally coordinated community recovery and deliver community informed recovery.  Protection of environmental and community amenity from the impacts of large-scale fish deaths	Coordinated blackwater monitoring and fish carcass disposal as per operational response plan.	Completed
Mosquitos	Minimise transmission of mosquito vector diseases (e.g JEV and MVE)	Mosquito management to reduce mosquito populations and reduce risk to health through transmission	SA Health led JEV vaccination program, larvicide and public information campaign

# Appendix B: Community Recovery Plan

## 2022-23 River Murray Flood Planning for Community Recovery June 2023

Updated June 2024



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*We acknowledge this land, the  
Dreaming is still living, from the past, in  
the present, into the future, forever.*

## Recovering from the 2022 River Murray Flood

Record rainfalls in the Eastern States in October 2022 resulted in the largest River Murray flood in South Australia for 60 years. The 190 GL/day flood peak at the state border in December 2022 was higher than the originally anticipated 185 GL/day. The peak reached the Lower Lakes in mid-January 2023 with actual water levels being even higher than predicted at some points because of changes in the landscape over time. The magnitude of this event has resulted in further transformations to the watercourse.

Local communities, emergency services, councils, and the state government worked together to prepare for this high river event. Local knowledge, ingenuity, coordination, and the tireless work of entire communities reduced the negative impact of the flood to some extent, but there has been significant damage to many properties, council facilities and infrastructure, roads, and the natural environment.

The flood caused considerable shocks to communities, disruptions for businesses and high levels of emotional and financial distress for individuals. We recognise and appreciate the substantial losses of the many physical and intangible things people hold dear. We also acknowledge that the flood occurred across the lands of many First Nations people and, understanding their connections to land, water, and community, we recognise that the flood also caused significant impact on Aboriginal heritage.

This **Plan for Community Recovery** focusses on the hard work lying ahead. Although many of the immediate needs and issues have been addressed or are being dealt with, we all know that the journey to real recovery for those affected and the river has only just started and will continue for a long period of time.

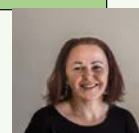
This Plan acknowledges the key impacts we know of to date, and the progress made. It also highlights a commitment to good recovery outcomes for all and proposes high-level actions to get there. The plan reflects your input which we obtained through your conversations with us as we moved about in your communities, the community meetings held in various places from January to April, the Community Recovery Committee meetings held thus far, your community survey responses, as well as the insights from local and state government engagement with communities, their plans and the many recovery-related committees that have been active since late last year.

We know the Plan will change over time as new challenges and opportunities emerge and, you, the community continue to shape and steer recovery initiatives. We invite you to come along on the journey where we work together and support each other through the downs and the ups as we go forward. We also want to celebrate the progress we make and wins we have. Thank you for your trust.



Alex Zimmermann, Community Recovery Coordinator, appointed 22 November 2022

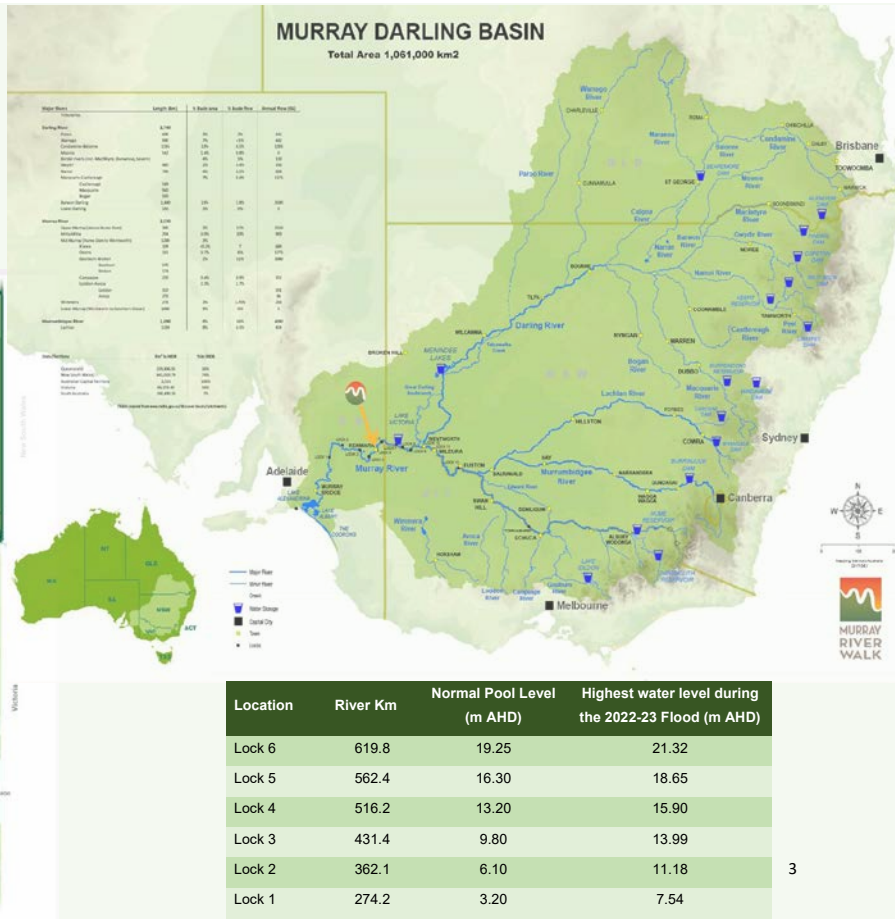
Deb Richardson, Community Development Officer, appointed 2 May 2023



SA River Murray floods are exceptional' if the water level is 5m or more above pool level. This happened in 1931, 1956, 1973 and 1974.

The 1956 flood peaked at 341 GL/day was the largest River Murray flood on record.

The 2022-23 flood peaked at 190 GL/day.



## Impact

**Impacts of the flood were spread over about 650 kms of river in South Australia.**

**It affected 9 local government areas<sup>1</sup>, many communities, groups, individuals, property owners, primary producers, businesses, as well as the built infrastructure and the natural environment.**

Communities along the river are diverse, but all are strongly connected to the different waterways and environments with a great appreciation of its importance. All living along the river understands the given flood risk, but this extraordinary event challenged people's knowledge and lived experience, and the aftermath continues to do so.

The waterway flows through the traditional lands of several First Nations communities who have a long, deep, and spiritual connection to the river and its environs evidenced by proof of habitation over thousands of years. The impacts on Aboriginal heritage including on scarred trees, burial grounds, and sacred sites are significant, but the true extent is yet to be understood.

Recovery is more than simply replacing what was destroyed or lost and fixing what was damaged. The process is complex, long, layered with many ups and downs. It is also completely different, yet the same in many ways, for those affected. Recovery can, however, also provide opportunities to develop local infrastructure, increase social connections and support, leverage opportunities for financial and economic benefit and improve the natural environment.

One of the most important factors in recovery is working together towards common goals. Circumstances and situations are constantly shifting on the ground, therefore approaches and solutions need to be responsive and flexible, incorporating community input and empowering communities and individuals to the point where communities can lead going forward.

<sup>1</sup> Alexandrina Council, Berri Barmera Council, Coorong District Council, District Council of Karoonda East Murray, District Council of Loxton Waikerie, Mid Murray Council, Murray Bridge Council, Pastoral Unincorporated Area - as administered under the Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Act 2009 (SA), Renmark Paranga Council

## Damage assessment data

90,907 hectares of land flooded

37,826 hectares of agricultural land flooded

3,295 properties impacted

544 primary producers impacted

3,368 customers disconnected from power

10 major fish kill clean ups of more than 30 tonnes

8 ferries closed

## Your Input – Your Plan

This Plan is based on your input and was drawn together by the Community Recovery Coordinator, Community Development Officer, and the Recovery Incident Management Team, Department of the Premier and Cabinet. It is a living document - an initial draft of a shared vision that captures where we are at in June 2023 after a gruelling marathon effort by individuals, communities, councils, businesses, organisations, and government working together since late 2022.

Your input came in various ways:

- your conversations with Alex Zimmermann and Deb Richardson as they moved about in your communities
- 16 community meetings held in various river communities,<sup>2</sup> in Adelaide and at Parliament House from January-April 2023
- 165 responses to the Recovery Community Survey conducted in April 2023
- 9 River Murray Community Recovery Committee meetings where representatives of shack owner collectives, houseboat owners and tourism operators attended and participated held between January and June 2023
- ongoing meetings with irrigators from the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area and with those engaged with levee management
- communications with agencies and organisations working in recovery conveyed to the Recovery Incident Management Team in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The priority for recovery is to rebuild stronger and more resilient communities, centring on people's health and wellbeing, restoration of infrastructure, the economy and tourism sectors, primary production, and the environment. The focus is on **what needs to be achieved for, in and by communities**. The Plan embodies a commitment to achieving the outcomes identified, ongoing listening, learning, and building partnerships. It will be overseen by the River Murray Community Recovery Committee, and it will be reviewed in early 2024 to identify progress and to incorporate new knowledge, experiences, and emerging challenges.

<sup>2</sup> Barmera, Berri, Blanchetown, Mannum, Meningie, Milang, Morgan, Murray Bridge, Pomoota, Renmark, Swan Reach, and Waikerie

## 1. Restored infrastructure and working services

The flood impacted **essential infrastructure and services**, commercial and industrial facilities, public and private buildings, and many community assets, including green spaces, stormwater drains, boat ramps, bridges, wharves, and houseboat moorings. Some of these are taken for granted at times. However, roads, ferries, electricity, gas, water supply and waste management systems, as well as supply chain networks are key to navigating and managing our lives. Not having these have severely affected lives, wellbeing, and economies before and after the floods. At this point, although many services have been restored or are in the process of being sorted, much work regarding clean up, property assessments, clarification of building codes, building application approvals, rebuilding homes and business premises, and the management and maintenance of levees, etc.

Impacts and Issues	Future focus	Actions going forward	Status update June 2024
1.1 Waste removal and clean up are beyond the capacity of many property owners and councils	Property, public spaces and infrastructure restoration is coordinated, financially supported and efficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to provide practical assistance with clean-up (taking into consideration that vulnerable people need additional help)</li> <li>• Identify and remove hazardous waste from flood impacted properties efficiently</li> <li>• Ensure that structural assessments of properties are coordinated, carried out efficiently and reports are provided to property owners in a timely and sensitive manner</li> <li>• Provide assistance in clean-up of public spaces</li> <li>• Carry out waste removal, clean up, damage assessment activities with sensitivity and respect regarding Aboriginal heritage</li> <li>• Provide advice on dealing with insurance claims regarding clean up, demolishing of structures, etc.</li> <li>• Provide advice and assistance on recycling of relevant items/material</li> </ul>	<p>Key statistics of the flood recovery clean-up program (as at 24 June 2024):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,934 registrations for clean-up assistance (275 primary places of residence)</li> <li>• 639 flood-affected properties assessed by a team of structural engineers, electrical engineers and hygienists</li> <li>• 330 (of an expected 420) demolitions completed*</li> <li>• 95 (of an expected 129) hazard (asbestos and mould) reductions completed*</li> <li>• 29,248 tonnes of waste collected (11,029 tonnes via kerbside collection)</li> <li>• 56.5% of collected materials have been diverted from landfill</li> </ul>

Impacts and Issues	Future focus	Actions going forward	Status update June 2024
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5,195 items (equating to 59 tonnes) removed from the river, including water tanks, pine posts, fridges and other small items.</li> </ul> <p><i>*Demolitions and hazard reduction works will continue in the second half of 2024 for property owners who have registered for assistance and are still working through decisions regarding their needs.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green Industries SA (GISA) continue to work with impacted property owners and local councils on clean-up concerns and considerations.</li> </ul>
1.2 Landowners and councils lack clarity regarding future planning code changes for rebuilding and restoring flood affected infrastructure	Infrastructure is rebuilt and restored to a more resilient standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct public consultation on changes to planning code and finalise changes</li> <li>Provide clear information and guidelines regarding planning codes in a timely manner to property owners, businesses, and councils, especially in regard to technical aspects and considerations</li> <li>Provide and promote information on how to build more flood resilient structures or develop strategies to better deal with future floods</li> <li>Provide assistance with planning applications to ensure timely resolution approvals</li> </ul>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Draft River Murray Flood Resilience Code Amendment implemented to provide clearer guidance for impacted communities to rebuild more flood-resilient development. Consultation for the amendment opened on 29 June 2023 and closed on 25 August 2023, with community drop-in sessions held in Morgan, Mannum and online.</li> <li>Approval and application processes to be undertaken through regular council channels.</li> </ul>
1.3 Community spaces, recreation, and tourism destinations (including, playgrounds, ovals, parks)	Public spaces and infrastructure, including green community and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop programs and/or initiatives to restore community spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Draft River Murray Flood Resilience Code Amendment implemented to provide clearer guidance for impacted</li> </ul>

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Impacts and Issues	Future focus	Actions going forward	Status update June 2024
and public toilets) have been damaged and cannot be used	recreational spaces are remediated and amenities restored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how to build more flood resilient structures or develop strategies to better deal with future floods</li> <li>Consider ways to document and celebrate the flood and the recovery afterwards</li> <li>Prioritise the restoration of tourism and eco-development of infrastructure</li> <li>Explore opportunities for betterment</li> </ul>	<p>communities to rebuild more flood-resilient development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local councils continuing to remediate recreational spaces and community infrastructure. Works undertaken on a priority basis.</li> <li>Local councils working with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) on opportunities for betterment.</li> <li>All DEW parks and campsites have now reopened which has supported the return of tourism activity in the region.</li> <li>Ways to document and acknowledge the flood and recovery continue to be considered at the local/community level.</li> </ul>
1.4 Essential services (including, water, power, sewerage) have been damaged and/or disconnected	All essential services are restored to all affected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to provide accessible and timely information for reconnection of essential services</li> <li>Provide timely communications on when services are back online through a variety of mediums</li> <li>Distribute information and support to drain and clean contaminated water and sludge from rainwater tanks; with temporary assistance measures made available to impacted residences</li> <li>Share and subsidise resources for individuals and/or communities to finalise dewatering</li> <li>Provide appropriate and timely information for landholders to undertake smaller scale dewatering</li> </ul>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information for reconnection of essential services was made available through utility communications, the River Murray Flood Community Newsletter, and other platforms.</li> <li>Information on draining and cleaning contaminated water and sludge from rainwater tanks made available via several platforms including the River Murray Flood Community Newsletter and the SA Health website.</li> <li>SAPN disconnected 3,368 customers along the River Murray, reconnecting supply to those ready to accept it within approximately two days of the reconnection request.</li> </ul>

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Impacts and Issues	Future focus	Actions going forward	Status update June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.5 Deposits of significant bodies of water in and around low-lying properties are impacting the ability of property owners to gain access to their properties, thereby impeding their recovery.</li> </ul>	Continue to repair levees as needed and/or dewater large bodies of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government continues to work with flood plain irrigators on levee related issues, including a significant dewatering program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dewatering in all 20 flooded irrigation areas has been completed.</li> <li>Dewatering undertaken in shack communities, providing property owners access to their properties.</li> <li>Dewatering in all 20 flooded irrigation areas has been completed</li> <li>The Federal and State Governments have announced \$17.1 million in funding to progress intermediate remediation works for government-owned levees in the LMRIA that were damaged in the flood</li> <li>In addition, \$14.2 million has been allocated for works to undertake initial repairs to privately owned LMRIA levees.</li> </ul> <p>Work is underway to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete full condition assessments of all LMRIA levees</li> <li>Complete intermediate remediation works to government-owned levees</li> <li>Commence intermediate remediation works to privately-owned levees</li> </ul>

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## 2. Connected communities and people doing well

This event had an immense social impact. The widespread disruption to infrastructure, the economy and environment and the change to social networks that usually provide support, services, care, and fun affected the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, business owners, primary producers, shack owners and communities as a whole. The initial focus of recovery efforts centred mostly on basic human needs, i.e., safety, shelter, the provision of drinking water, fixing wastewater systems, provision of temporary toilets, rubbish removal and immediate personal hardship. These activities are continuing, although scaling down and it is now apparent that the next phase will be to focus on the emotional distress, decreased wellbeing and disruptions to the social fabric of the affected communities.

Impact	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
2.1 Trauma and stress associated with the flood have led to physical and psychological impacts for people affected or working with affected people, or people dealing with the recovery effort	Community members have access to appropriate health and psychological care services, activities and social networks to meet their health and wellbeing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a coordinated, multilayered strategy is in place for services and supports to ensure assistance with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual and community wellbeing</li> <li>emotional distress and impacted coping skills</li> <li>exacerbated psychological and social problems</li> <li>user-friendly entry points and clear referral pathways between services and supports.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Communicate information about the impact of shocks and how to manage emotional, social and physical wellbeing through a variety of means, including local events, social media, non-government and government websites</li> <li>Offer initiatives that provide support in coping with the aftermath of the flood, such as through mental health and community recovery workshops and gatherings, community support projects, mental health, and wellbeing support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DPC continue to fund a series of community development grants to support community activities. Funding is provided for initiatives that supported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical and psychological health and wellbeing of community members</li> <li>Community information and collaboration</li> <li>Commemorative, memorial and/or celebratory events</li> <li>Small scale/seed funding for economic, social, cultural, infrastructure or environmental initiatives</li> <li>Community development, resilience, and capacity building</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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Impact	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build community connectedness and support community development, local events and activities that support community wellbeing, connection, and fun in different ways, including holding local events, social media, non-government and government websites</li> <li>Ensure support is available for those who undertake recovery activities, as well those interacting with flood-affected people</li> <li>Ensure that those who undertake or are involved with recovery activities are trauma informed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding was also provided to support the deployment of non-government organisations to support impacted communities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BlazeAid</li> <li>Habitat for Humanity</li> <li>Sophie Thomson gardening workshops</li> </ul> </li> <li>Community events promoted through several mediums including local councils, Community Development Officer, Community Recovery Coordinator, River Murray Flood Community Newsletter, and recovery.sa.gov.au.</li> <li>A \$1 million Mental Health Support Package was provided to flood-affected communities. The support, administered by SA Health, helped to respond to the mental health needs of communities through the provision of increased mental health services, supports and responses with the aim to minimise long-term mental health impacts, and to promote positive mental wellbeing.</li> <li>Community Recovery Coordinator, Community Development Officer &amp; Wellbeing Officers also provided support to community members.</li> </ul>

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Impact	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
2.2 The flood waters damaged Aboriginal heritage along the whole of the river.	Aboriginal groups are consulted about impacted sites and are supported to undertake restoration and remediation works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Nation groups are consulted to identify those impacts to Aboriginal heritage they choose to disclose</li> <li>Agencies and organisations work with all affected Aboriginal groups to identify ways to support and undertake restoration and remediation works in respectful ways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement has been ongoing and will continue through any final remediation works.</li> <li>GISA continue to work with Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (AAR) and First Nations communities to manage cultural heritage protection process during demolitions/ground disturbing works of clean-up program.</li> </ul>
2.3 A notable number of people are facing increased financial distress and insecurity from the physical impact to their businesses and private premises.	People in need are identified and supported through targeted community and financial support programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free financial and legal advice is made available, as well as advice on how to deal with insurance companies</li> <li>Updated communication about grants available through government agencies and NGOs continue are disseminated regularly</li> <li>Facilitate grants through different avenues with reasonable guidelines and timelines</li> <li>Work with the Insurance Council of Australia to negotiate issues around insurance claims and improve the timeliness of insurance claim resolutions</li> <li>Provide case management as needed and direct people to appropriate support services as needed</li> </ul>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flood support information sessions for small and family businesses, featuring counsellors from Rural Business Support (RBS), were held along the river.</li> <li>Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) held information forums in Adelaide to present general claim and insurance information for flood-affected policy holders.</li> <li>Community Justice Services SA provided free legal advice and assistance flood-affected individuals and communities.</li> <li>Family and Business (FaB) mentors provided to assist primary producers and agricultural business owners impacted by the flood.</li> <li>Grant information regularly promulgated through various channels, including River</li> </ul>

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Impact	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
			<p>Murray Flood Community Newsletter and via <a href="http://recovery.sa.gov.au">recovery.sa.gov.au</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case management provided through Relief and Recovery Centres to individuals identified as requiring additional support.</li> <li>Support available from existing services including ac.care, Red Cross, The Salvation Army, and Rural Business Support.</li> </ul>
2.4 Some shack owners feel unsupported in their recovery due to financial assistance not available to them compared to residential property owners.	Shack owners receive appropriate support, advice and assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide advice and assistance regarding insurance claims, rebuilding and clean up and assessment to shack owners.</li> <li>Facilitate programs for wellbeing, mental health support and opportunities for social connection are available to shack owners.</li> </ul>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) held information forums in Adelaide to present general claim and insurance information for flood-affected policy holders.</li> <li>Community Justice Services SA provided free legal advice and assistance for flood-affected individuals and communities.</li> <li>GISA continue to communicate directly with registered property owners regarding their clean-up needs.</li> <li>Financial information, advice and referrals provided on cost-of-living and financial matters for those adversely impacted by the flood.</li> <li>Mental Health Support Package funded through DRFA benefitted more than 3,800 participants, through access to</li> </ul>

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Impact	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
			<p>specialist mental health services and mental wellbeing activities.</p>
2.5 Some people are anxious about the length of time it has taken and will take to clean and prepare housing to make it safe and habitable again.	Clean up and assessment of properties is conducted in a way that acknowledges the emotional impact on households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide timely, targeted, and ongoing information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regarding clean up and assessment of damaged properties and options available</li> <li>building code revisions, implementation, building approval processes</li> </ul> </li> <li>Explore strategies and approaches to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assist local government with timely building approvals</li> <li>address the shortage of building supplies, skilled tradespeople</li> <li>improve availability of temporary housing</li> </ul> </li> <li>Practical support is provided for clean-up, particularly for households that require additional help</li> <li>Emotional assistance is provided through a variety of means, including community events, information sessions, referral to specialist services or supports, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property owners registered for clean-up assistance can continue to contact GISA to discuss their case by calling 1800 418 491 from Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm, or by emailing <a href="mailto:GISA.DisasterWaste@sa.gov.au">GISA.DisasterWaste@sa.gov.au</a>.</li> <li>The last date to request a structural assessment was 17 May 2024. The last date to request a demolition or hazard reduction works was 17 June 2024. If you are concerned about these dates, please call GISA as soon as possible to discuss your circumstances.</li> <li>Majority of demolitions to be completed by end of August 2024.</li> <li>Refer to key statistics of the flood recovery clean-up program (<i>as at 24 June 2024</i>) as outlined in item 1.1.</li> <li>Recovery Pods have been deployed to help individuals and families who lost their primary place of residence. The converted shipping containers can be placed on residents' properties, keeping them closer to home as their permanent homes are rebuilt or repaired. The pods are fully self-contained, equipped with a water tank, and operate on mains power with a back-up generator. They include a</li> </ul>

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Impact	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
			<p>toilet and shower, a small kitchen with a fridge, as well as up to four internal beds. Recovery Pods are available to recipients who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>owners of the land where their principal place of residence has been destroyed or is uninhabitable; and,</li> <li>able to demonstrate the capacity to rebuild or repair their home and commence the rebuild process within 12 months of receiving the Recovery Pod.</li> </ul> <p>For further information on the Recovery Pod application process and to apply, email <a href="mailto:emergencyrelief@sa.gov.au">emergencyrelief@sa.gov.au</a></p>
2.6 It can be difficult to find information and the right amount of support at the right time.	Individuals and groups are able to easily ask for help, have support when they need it and can make decisions about their life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate information through a variety of means, including social media, flyers at local gathering spots, word of mouth, etc.</li> <li>Ensure that communications are tailored for their audiences, that they are coordinated, share one source of truth, and are accessible</li> <li>Ensure information pathways are streamlined</li> <li>Include local knowledge, insights, and information in communications</li> </ul>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Thursday, 28 March 2024 the final edition of the River Murray Flood Community Newsletter was published.</li> <li>32 editions of the newsletter were distributed, with the first edition released in February 2023.</li> <li>River Murray Community Recovery Committee meetings, Recovery Community Meetings, LMRIA Recovery sub-committee meetings and other gatherings held to keep impacted community informed.</li> </ul>

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Impact	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flood recovery communications also undertaken by participating agencies and local councils.</li> <li>Pop-up recovery centres held along the river to promulgate information regarding available supports to impacted communities.</li> </ul>
2.7 There is an increased risk of people contracting mosquito borne diseases immediately following the floods and again when temperatures start to increase after winter.	<p>Educate and encourage people to take the necessary precautions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eliminate breeding sites for mosquitos</li> <li>avoid being bitten</li> <li>get vaccinated where a vaccine is available, and the disease is detected in mosquito traps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide advice about and support for dewatering</li> <li>Monitor for and treat mosquito breeding sites</li> <li>Intensify messaging about 'Fight the Bite' in spring</li> <li>Provide health messaging about mosquito borne diseases</li> <li>Continue to monitor the prevalence of mosquitos carrying viruses of interest using mosquito traps, especially when the temperatures start to increase</li> <li>Provide vaccines for Japanese Encephalitis Virus to people working and living in the affected areas</li> </ul>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Fight the Bite' messaging promulgated through River Murray Flood Community Newsletter and other platforms.</li> <li>Dewatering following the flood is now complete, minimising the risk of contracting mosquito borne diseases</li> <li>SA Health continuing to support arbovirus prevention and mosquito surveillance and control programs.</li> <li>Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) vaccines are available. For more information, <a href="#">visit the SA Health website.</a></li> </ul>
2.8 People in the Riverland and Murrayland are concerned about future flooding and would like to be better prepared for future events	Individuals, communities, businesses, primary producers, and council are working together to increase preparedness and build resilience for future events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications around levees occur in communities to explore community sentiment around levees being retained or removed</li> <li>Information about river mapping and flood information is more readily shared</li> <li>Flood forecasting be improved</li> <li>Provide and promote information on how to build more flood resilient infrastructure or develop strategies to better deal with future floods</li> <li>Explore opportunities for betterment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Federal and State Governments have announced \$17.1 million in funding to progress intermediate remediation works for government-owned levees in the LMRIA that were damaged in the flood.</li> <li>In addition, \$14.2 million has been allocated for works to undertake initial repairs to privately owned LMRIA levees.</li> </ul>

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Impact	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase connectedness within communities, between different communities, as well as with local and state government agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work is underway to complete full condition assessments of all LMRIA levees, complete intermediate remediation works to government-owned levees, and commence intermediate remediation works to privately-owned levees.</li> <li>A LMRIA recovery sub-committee was formed to ensure the flood recovery priorities for primary producers were appropriately represented.</li> <li>New Draft River Murray Flood Resilience Code Amendment implemented to provide clearer guidance for impacted communities to rebuild more flood-resilient development.</li> <li>Local councils working with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) on opportunities for betterment.</li> <li>The Bureau of Meteorology now provide flood warnings for minor, moderate and major flood conditions for the River Murray in SA, aligning with the national warning service. The South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES) continue to provide impact-based flood warning advice for the River Murray in SA and messaging to local communities.</li> <li>DEW undertaking a range of activities to review the flood response and prepare for future emergencies, including modelling and mapping improvements.</li> </ul>

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Impact	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased connectedness within communities, between communities as well as with local and state government agencies has been reported through survey results, community meetings and community groups (e.g., Women of the LMRIA).</li> </ul>
2.9 People are concerned about security of properties and theft	Measures to reduce crime and increase a sense of security are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular patrols take place to ensure that there is a visible presence to deter crime</li> <li>Premises are secured where possible</li> </ul>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAPOL participated in high visibility patrols to discourage criminal behaviour.</li> <li>Property owners encouraged to remain vigilant to security and theft considerations.</li> </ul>

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### 3. Businesses, primary producers and tourism thriving

The economic consequences of the flood included many direct and indirect impacts on business, primary production, tourism, and the broader river economy. The local economies are made up of intertwined people, enterprises, businesses, and primary producers who are physically in and from the communities. Some industries have traditional and symbolic positions in the local community and many businesses and jobs provide a place of connection, pride, identity, and family legacy. It is also important to recognise the interruption caused to business which provide benefits to the broader state economy, especially in the form of primary production.

The challenge going forward is to address the shocks sustained by so many interconnected river communities. Business impacts in these communities circle out and cause financial hardship to individuals, families, and the wider community in which they trade, live and support.

Impacts	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
3.1 Regional tourism operators, primary producers and small businesses have suffered losses due to an inability to trade during prolonged periods, and as a result of directly damaged assets, premises and/or land.	Impacted businesses can resume trade as soon as practicable and receive assistance to support their recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate support to tourism operators and related businesses through local and larger scale initiatives to attract visitors</li> <li>Provide financial information to small businesses to support their recovery</li> <li>Prioritise the use or involvement of local businesses in initiatives and programs</li> <li>Provide targeted grant programs for business</li> <li>Businesses have the opportunity to be represented in or participate in targeted industry forums, meetings or associations.</li> </ul>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SATC's River Revival Voucher program has so far injected an estimated more than \$10.7 million in economic impact for the River Murray regions. 26,500 vouchers were released.</li> <li>As part of the \$500,000 allocated to the Mid Murray Council region, \$50,000 was allocated to the SATC to provide dedicated marketing and PR support for impacted tourism businesses. Grants from \$5,000 to \$50,000 were allocated to 14 tourism businesses through the SATC's Mid Murray River Tourism Business Support Program. The \$315,000 in grants supported businesses including caravan parks, houseboats, tour operators, and shack accommodation with critical recovery</li> </ul>

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			<p>projects such as infrastructure replacement, powerhead installation, landscaping, cleaning, marketing, and equipment replacement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared relevant updates with the tourism sector from SA Government departments via the SATC's digital communications.</li> <li>The SATC Murray River Tourism Recovery Working Group met 13 times from February to December 2023.</li> <li>The SATC held briefings with key tourism operators and industry representatives, including TICSA, the Houseboat Hirers Association/Boating Industry Association, SA Parks, AHA, and Riverland Wine to help design and implement recovery initiatives.</li> <li>Small business flood recovery grants provided through DIIS.</li> </ul>
3.2 Local governments have experienced labour impacts on their typical service capacity including in field, planning and customer service areas with staff diverted from business as usual to flood response and recovery work.	Local governments can reinstate infrastructure and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils have access to practical and financial support to reinstate priority community infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding support to local governments continues to be provided by the State and Federal Governments through the Local Government Disaster Recovery Assistance Arrangements (LGDRAA) and Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) programs.</li> <li>Some councils were also awarded a grant of \$10,000 through the State Emergency Relief Fund (SERF)</li> </ul>

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## 4. Nature flourishing

Communities along the river rely on a healthy functioning natural environment. This natural environment has a positive impact on wellbeing, provides a location for social activities, hobbies, cultural practice, identity, and business. The very nature of this disaster was environmental and there were a range of both negative and positive impacts. Some of the negative effects relate to water quality, land degradation and contamination, plant and wildlife damage or loss, introduction of new pest species, damage to national parks and to Aboriginal heritage. The focus of this section is on those negative impacts which require focus to remediate as we go forward.

Impacts	Focus	Actions	Status update June 2024
4.1 Flood waters have adversely impacted flora and fauna and the natural habitat of wildlife	Regeneration of the natural environment and wildlife habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information and practical support for landowners to manage and support regenerating local habitats that encourage vegetation and native wildlife populations</li> <li>Support events and community led initiatives to support regeneration, revegetation, restoration, and repair of the natural environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of monitoring activities are underway which are providing detailed information on the ecological responses.</li> <li>iREACH, in conjunction with Gardening Australia's Sophie Thomson, provided a series of garden recovery workshops for flood-affected communities.</li> <li>Habitat for Humanity provided practical hands-on support to primary property owners adversely impacted by the flood by restoring their outdoor environments through the 'Gardens of Hope' program.</li> <li>The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board (MRLB) engaged Trees For Life to support landholder recovery through provision of a revegetation engagement service. This service is available for three years from July 2023.</li> <li>All DEW parks and campsites have now reopened which has supported the return of tourism activity in the region.</li> </ul>
4.2 There will be proliferation of pest and	The community is informed and supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a landscape approach to weed and pest management, encouraging private and</li> </ul>	All actions completed.

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weed species that are likely to have adverse consequences for primary producers and native wildlife and plants	about weed and pest management	<p>public landowners to work together to manage pest species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information and practical support for landowners to manage the proliferation of weeds and to eradicate newly introduced pest fauna and flora</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landholders experiencing outbreaks of weeds were provided access to free advisory services to help identify and manage weed species. Free loan equipment, herbicides and control services was also available for landholders with outbreaks of priority weed species on their properties.</li> <li>The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board's (MRLB) District Officers shared their expertise in identifying and controlling weeds to landholders. Staff advised on the best weed control strategies, loaned weed control equipment and herbicides at no cost to landholders to assist them to undertake control works on priority weed species. In certain circumstances weed control was undertaken by a District Officer or contractor without charge to the landholder. Eligibility was determined by weed type and other criteria, with a priority list of species.</li> </ul>
4.3 Riverbank and land management must consider soil erosion, contamination, acidification and the impacts to embankment stability (slumping and changes to the water way, including new deposits of sand in the river)	The community is aware of risks in and around the river and can recognise, adapt to, or mitigate risk of future floods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate the outcomes and changes of the mapping of the river system and water ways</li> <li>Identify and remove debris in and around waterways</li> <li>Conduct workshops and provide information about soil erosion, contamination, and acidification</li> </ul>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5,195 items (equating to 59 tonnes) removed from the river, including water tanks, pine posts, fridges and other small items.</li> <li>The Department for Environment and Water issues a weekly River Murray Flow Report. These reports contain information about water levels, flow rates and barrage</li> </ul>

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			<p>operations as well as any navigation issues and construction activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Royal Life Saving Society South Australia organisation provided a training program to help educate and train flood-impacted communities on responding to aquatic emergencies. The program provided water safety forums with community members and leaders, and opened discussions regarding water safety, helping to make the river safe again. The program worked to address safety risks on or around the river due to the flood, such as eroding riverbanks, water contamination, and dangerous and non-visible floating debris. The project was delivered at Renmark-Paringa and Murray Bridge, including local community hubs, community organisations, schools, and the general public.</li> </ul>
<p>4.4 There will be an increased risk of mosquito borne diseases due to large areas of inundation remaining and time taken for dispersal of water</p>	<p>Reducing the prevalence and impact of mosquito borne disease</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dewater remaining large bodies of water</li> <li>Manage new bodies of water forming because of winter rainfalls</li> </ul> <p><i>(Also see 2.7 on page 10)</i></p>	<p>All actions completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Fight the Bite' messaging promulgated through River Murray Flood Community Newsletter and other platforms</li> <li>Dewatering following the flood is now complete, minimising the risk of contracting mosquito borne diseases</li> <li>SA Health continuing to support arbovirus prevention and mosquito surveillance and control programs.</li> <li>Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) vaccines are available. For more information, <a href="#">visit the SA Health website</a>.</li> </ul>

# River Murray Community Recovery Committee

## Introduction

The River Murray Community Recovery Committee (the Committee) is a local coordinating body for recovery activities following the 2022 River Murray Flood, commencing 15 November 2022.

The Committee has a key role in restoring community confidence through assessing the consequences of the flood and coordinating activities to rebuild, restore and rehabilitate the social, built, economic and natural environments of the affected communities along the river.

The Committee provides a mechanism for local leadership and community self-determination and guides decisions about recovery priorities, resource allocation and management. It provides support to local communities and local authorities to manage the recovery process and provides visible and strong leadership.

## Purpose

The Committee will coordinate recovery for communities; working with and supporting local recovery efforts across all elements of the community impacted by the event.

## Functions

The Committee will:

- Coordinate recovery restoring and rebuilding activities across and within council areas (as identified below)
- Ensure that relevant stakeholders, sectors and interest groups within the affected communities are represented and/or involved in the development and implementation of recovery objectives and strategies
- Advocate for the communities affected
- Guide decisions about priorities, resource allocation and management
- Ensure that stakeholders, sectors and interest groups are kept informed of progress made
- Identify, pre-empt and manage local and regional recovery issues and trends
- Capture lessons learned through the recovery process
- Ensure the recovery is in line with the National Principles of Disaster Recovery (<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/national-principles-disaster-recovery/>), as well as the State Disaster Recovery Coordination Framework, Guidelines, and Procedures ([www.recovery.sa.gov.au](http://www.recovery.sa.gov.au)).

## Membership

The Group will be chaired by the Community Recovery Coordinator.

Members are required to nominate a proxy or delegate to attend when they are unable to do so.

Where members represent a multi-agency function or activity, it is the responsibility of the member to fairly represent their stakeholder/interest group and ensure stakeholders are briefed about relevant information, decisions and actions.

Auxiliary members may be invited by the Chair to contribute expertise and specialist knowledge depending upon the nature, scale and impact of an event and the recovery activity.

Membership will be adjusted as the recovery process progresses, but the initial stakeholder groups are listed below.

Organisation/Group	Member
1. Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC)	Chair, Community Recovery Coordinator
2. Renmark Paringa Council	Chief Executive Officer
3. Berri Barmera Council	Chief Executive Officer
4. District Council of Waikerie Loxton	Chief Executive Officer
5. Mid-Murray Council	Chief Executive Officer
6. The Rural City of Murray Bridge	Chief Executive Officer
7. Coorong District Council	Chief Executive Officer
8. Alexandrina Council	Chief Executive Officer
9. SA State Emergency Service	Agency nominated representative
10. SA Police	Agency nominated representative
11. Department of Primary Industries and Regions	Agency nominated representative
12. Department for Environment and Water	Agency nominated representative
13. Department for Infrastructure and Transport	Agency nominated representative
14. SA Water	Nominated representative
15. SA Power Networks	Nominated representative
16. Environment Protection Authority	Agency nominated representative
17. Green Industries SA	Agency nominated representative

<b>Organisation/Group</b>	<b>Member</b>
18. Department for Health and Wellbeing	Agency nominated representative
19. Security, Emergency and Recovery Management (SERM), DPC	Recovery Incident Management Team (IMT)
20. Wellbeing SA	Nominated representative
21. Department of Industry, Innovation and Science	Nominated representative
22. SA Tourism Commission	Nominated representative
23. National Emergency Management Agency	Nominated representative
24. Murray Riverland Local Government Association	Nominated representative
25. RDA – Murraylands and Riverland	Nominated representative
26. Community Advisory Group representatives	Number and names to be confirmed

## **Meetings and Secretariat**

The Group will meet as required by the Chair. Meetings will be conducted via MS Teams, unless otherwise specified.

Members will endeavour to reach decisions by consensus but the ultimate decision-making authority rests with the Chair and DPC. Out of session approvals may be sought as required.

One or more community advisory (or working groups) may be convened at the request of the Community Recovery Coordinator, to provide advice and recommendations.

Secretariat support will be provided by DPC.

## **Accountability and reporting**

The Committee is responsible to the Assistant State Coordinator – Recovery and will report to the State Recovery Coordination and Planning Group (SRCPG) through the Chair, who is a member of the SRCPG, and supported by the SERM IMT.

Committee members attend in their capacity as a representative of their agency, organisation, or community and are responsible for reporting back to their relevant group, agency or community on the activities of the committee.

## **Review**

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed after six months or earlier if required.

### **For more information:**

Christian Longobardi, Senior Project Officer  
Security, Emergency and Recovery  
Management

**T** 0455 052 468

**E** christian.longobardi@sa.gov.au

**W** dpc.sa.gov.au

Social Policy and Intergovernmental  
Relations  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

## Appendix B: Recovery resources and references

### STATE DISASTER RECOVERY COORDINATION FRAMEWORK

- The **State Disaster Recovery Coordination Framework** (SDRCF) describes the principles and arrangements that support a coordinated, effective and community-centred approach to assist impacted South Australian communities.  
<https://www.recovery.sa.gov.au/about-recovery/resources-for-recovery-coordinators/resource-documents/SDRCF-2022-SA-Disaster-Recovery-Coordination-Framework-V2.1-Final-Approved.pdf>

### DOCUMENTS RELEVANT FOR DISASTER RECOVERY

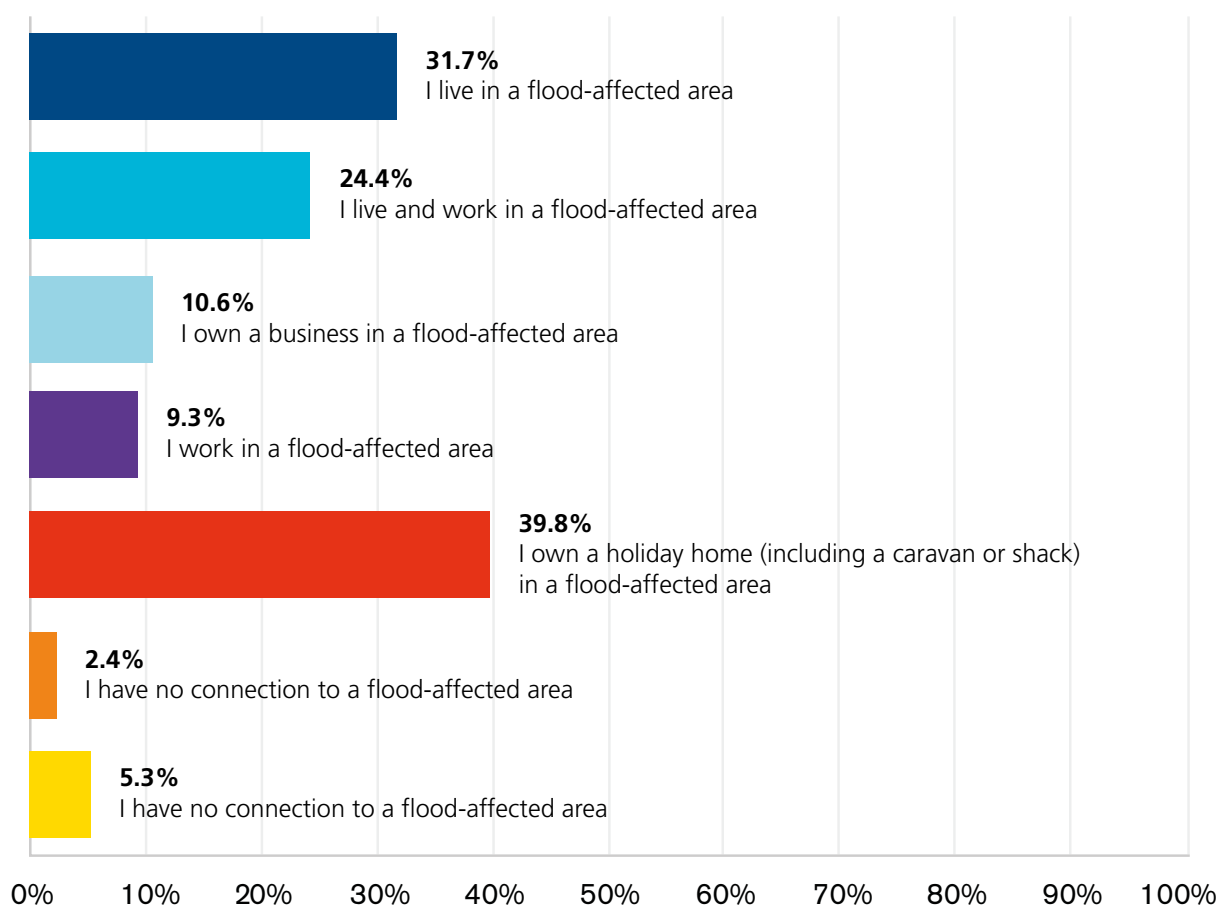
- **South Australia**
  - Emergency Management Act 2004 (SA)
  - State Emergency Management Plan
  - Stronger together: SA Disaster Resilience Strategy
  - People at risk in emergencies framework for South Australia
- **National**
  - Disaster Risk Reduction Framework
  - National Strategy for Disaster Resilience
  - Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework
  - Provisional National Recovery Framework
  - National Recovery Principles
  - National Community Recovery Handbook
  - Australian Disaster Resilience Index
  - Guidelines for Interjurisdictional Assistance (Community Recovery) 2019
  - Second National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (draft)
  - Profiling Australia's Vulnerability
  - Systemic Disaster Risk Handbook
  - National Framework for Disaster Recovery Monitoring and Evaluation

# Appendix C: River Murray Flood Recovery Program Evaluation Survey

In March 2024 DPC undertook a public survey seeking feedback regarding the 2022/23 River Murray Flood recovery program. The feedback was considered in relation to improving the flood recovery effort, as well as any future recovery services and activity in South Australia. This survey was open to all members of the public. The survey opened on Thursday, 7 March 2024 and closed on Monday, 8 April 2024. A sample size of 247 responses were gathered. A summary of the survey results is outlined below.

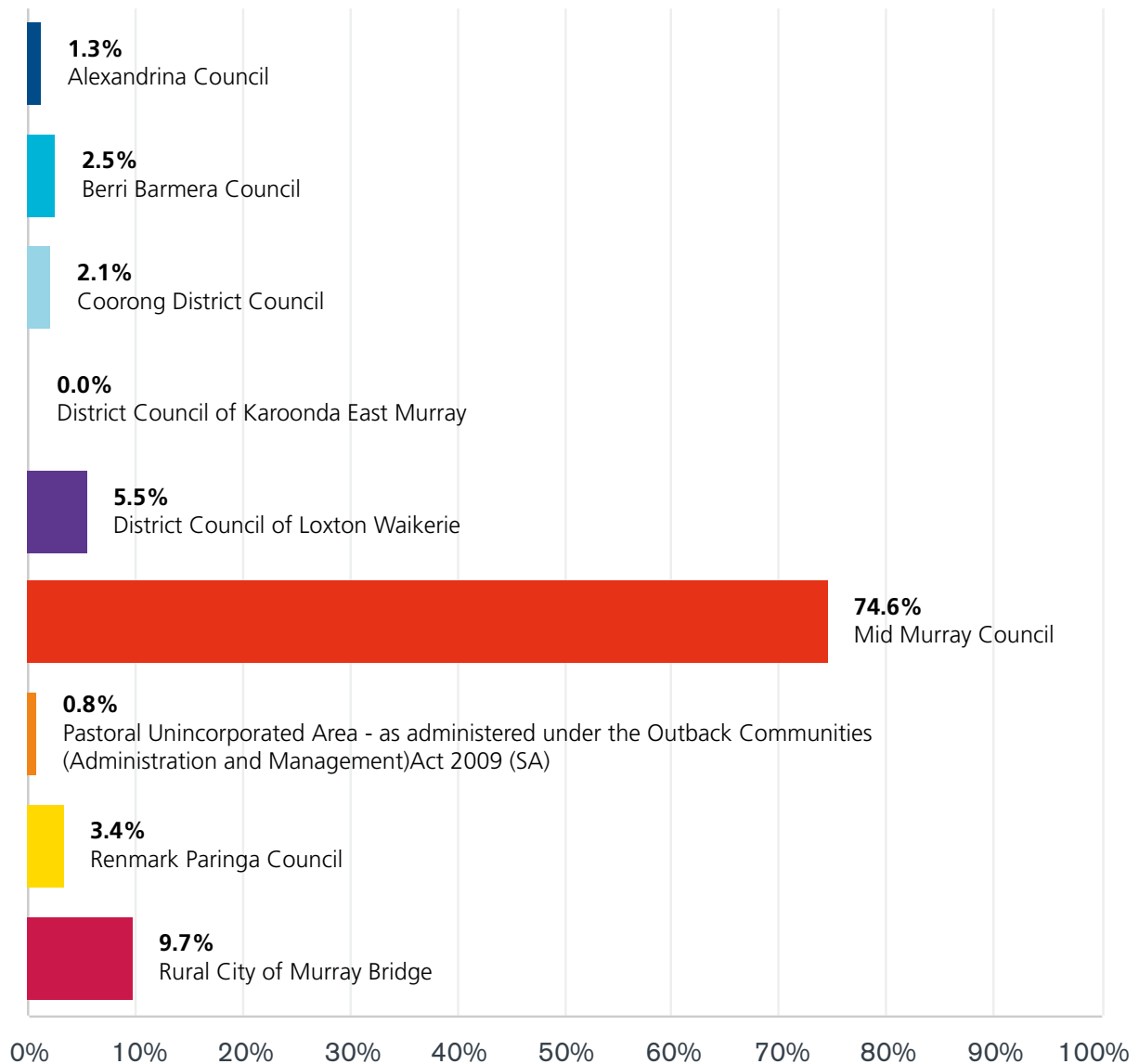
## Q1: How would describe your connection to the flood-affected area?

Total Respondents: 246



## Q2: What is your local council area?

Total Respondents: 236

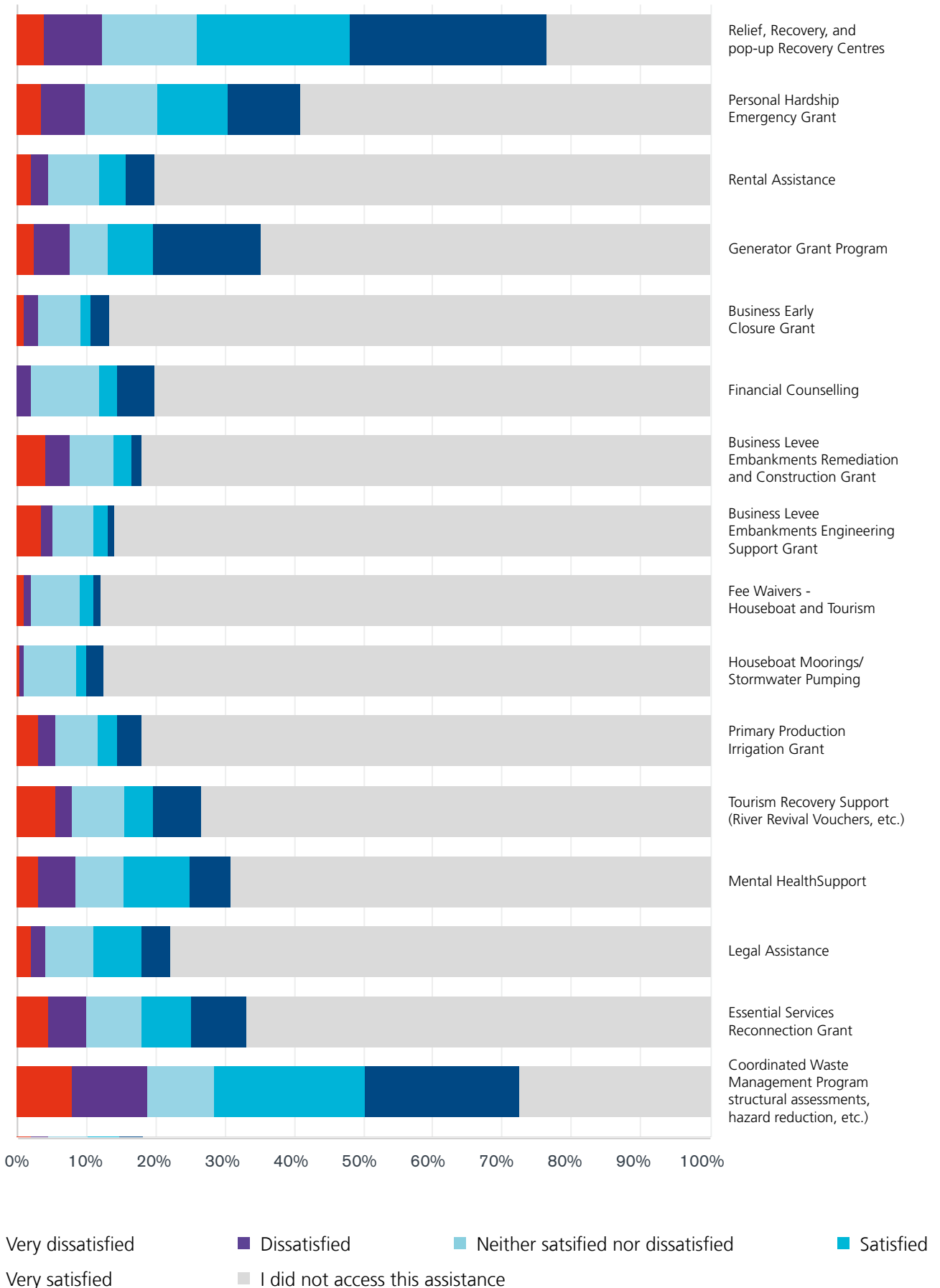


## Q3: Please outline your involvement with the River Murray flood (e.g.were you affected by the flood, did you help deliver recovery initiatives,etc.)?

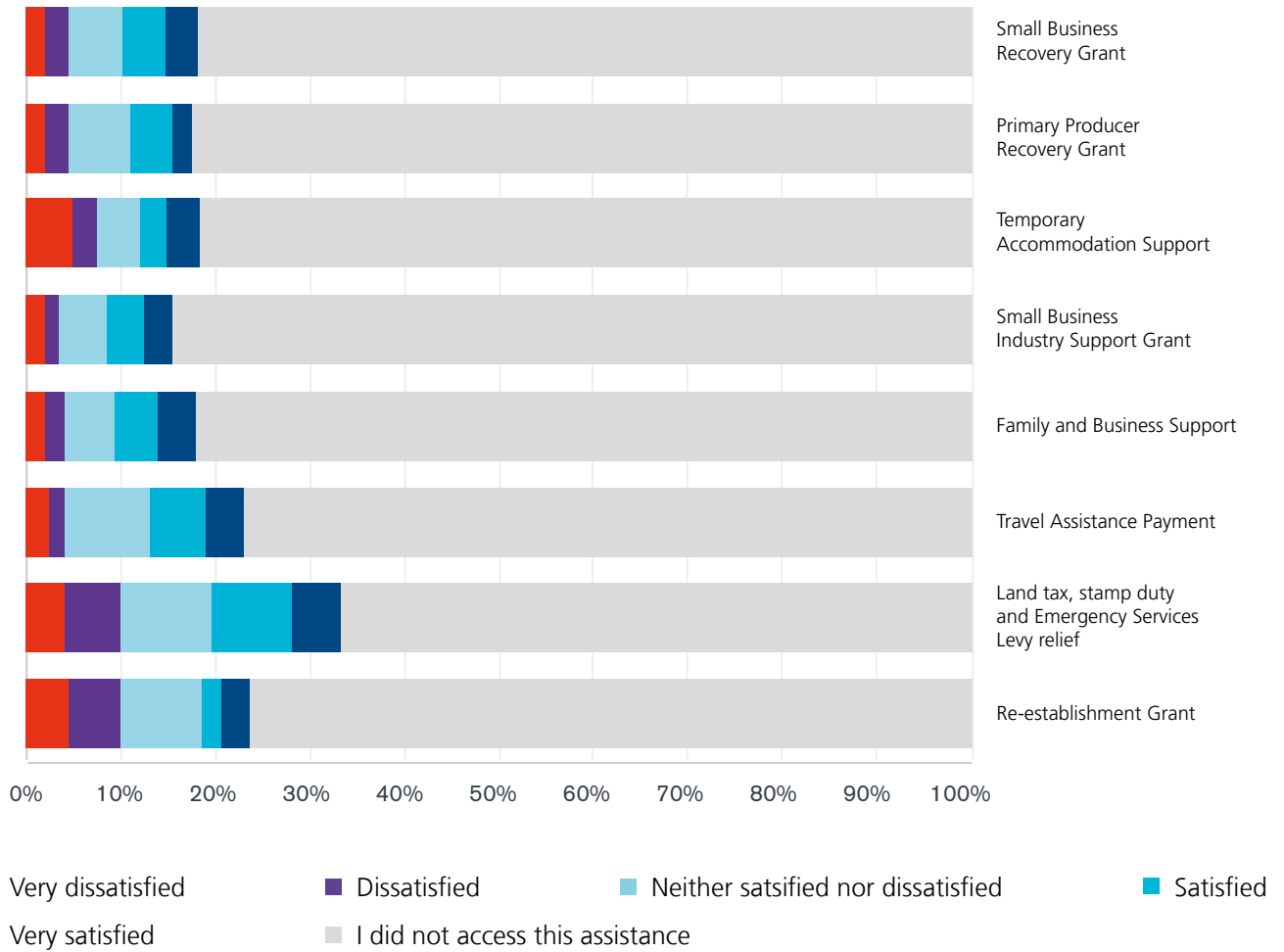
Total Respondents: 234

## Q4: How satisfied have you been with the following flood recovery assistance? (Page 1)

Total Respondents: 206



#### Q4: How satisfied have you been with the following flood recovery assistance? (Page 2)



	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	I did not access this assistance	Total	Weighted Average
Relief, Recovery, and pop-up Recovery Centres	3.9% 8	8.3% 17	13.7% 28	22.1% 45	28.4% 58	23.5% 48	204	3.82
Personal Hardship Emergency Grant	3.4% 7	6.4% 13	10.3% 21	10.3% 21	10.3% 21	59.1% 120	203	3.43
Rental Assistance	2.0% 4	2.5% 5	7.4% 15	4.0% 8	4.0% 8	80.2% 162	202	3.27
Generator Grant Program	2.5% 5	5.0% 10	5.5% 11	6.5% 13	15.6% 31	64.8% 129	199	3.79
Business Early Closure Grant	1.0% 2	2.0% 4	6.1% 12	1.5% 3	2.6% 5	86.7% 170	196	3.19
Financial Counselling	0.0% 0	2.0% 4	10.0% 20	2.5% 5	5.5% 11	80.1% 161	201	3.58
Business Levee Embankments Remediation and Construction Grant	4.0% 8	3.5% 7	6.5% 13	2.5% 5	1.5% 3	82.0% 164	200	2.67
Business Levee Embankments Engineering Support Grant	3.5% 7	1.5% 3	6.1% 12	2.0% 4	1.0% 2	85.9% 170	198	2.68
Fee Waivers - Houseboat and Tourism	1.0% 2	1.0% 2	7.0% 14	2.0% 4	1.0% 2	87.9% 175	199	3.08
Houseboat Moorings / Stormwater Pumping	0.5% 1	0.5% 1	7.5% 15	1.5% 3	2.5% 5	87.4% 174	199	3.40
Primary Production Irrigation Grant	3.0% 6	2.5% 5	6.0% 12	3.0% 6	3.5% 7	81.9% 163	199	3.08
Tourism Recovery Support (River Revival Vouchers, etc.)	5.5% 11	2.5% 5	7.5% 15	4.0% 8	7.0% 14	73.4% 146	199	3.17
Mental Health Support	3.0% 6	5.5% 11	7.0% 14	9.5% 19	6.0% 12	69.2% 139	201	3.32

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	I did not access this assistance	Total	Weighted Average
Legal Assistance	2.0% 4	2.0% 4	7.0% 14	7.0% 14	4.0% 8	78.0% 156	200	3.41
Essential Services Reconnection Grant	4.5% 9	5.5% 11	8.0% 16	7.0% 14	8.0% 16	66.8%	133	199
Coordinated Waste Management Program (e.g. structural assessments, hazard reduction, etc.)	8.0% 16	10.9% 22	9.5% 19	21.9% 44	22.4% 45	27.4% 55	201	3.55
Small Business Recovery Grant	2.0% 4	2.5% 5	5.6% 11	4.6% 9	3.6% 7	81.7% 161	197	3.28
Primary Producer Recovery Grant	2.0% 4	2.5% 5	6.5% 13	4.5% 9	2.0% 4	82.5% 165	200	3.11
Temporary Accommodation Support	5.0% 10	2.5% 5	4.5% 9	3.0% 6	3.5% 7	81.5% 163	200	2.86
Small Business Industry Support Grant	2.0% 4	1.5% 3	5.0% 10	4.0% 8	3.0% 6	84.5% 169	200	3.29
Family and Business Support	2.0% 4	2.0% 4	5.5% 11	4.5% 9	4.0% 8	82.0% 164	200	3.36
Travel Assistance Payment	2.5% 5	1.5% 3	9.0% 18	6.0% 12	4.0% 8	76.9% 153	199	3.33
Land tax, stamp duty and Emergency Serviceslevy relief	4.0% 8	6.1% 12	9.6% 19	8.6% 17	5.1% 10	66.7% 132	198	3.14
Re-establishment Grant	4.5% 9	5.6% 11	8.6% 17	2.0% 4	3.0% 6	76.3% 151	198	2.72

**Q5: How did these assistance measures help your recovery?**

**Total Respondents: 150**

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**Q6: Of the assistance measures that did not help your recovery, how could these be improved in future events?**

**Total Respondents: 120**

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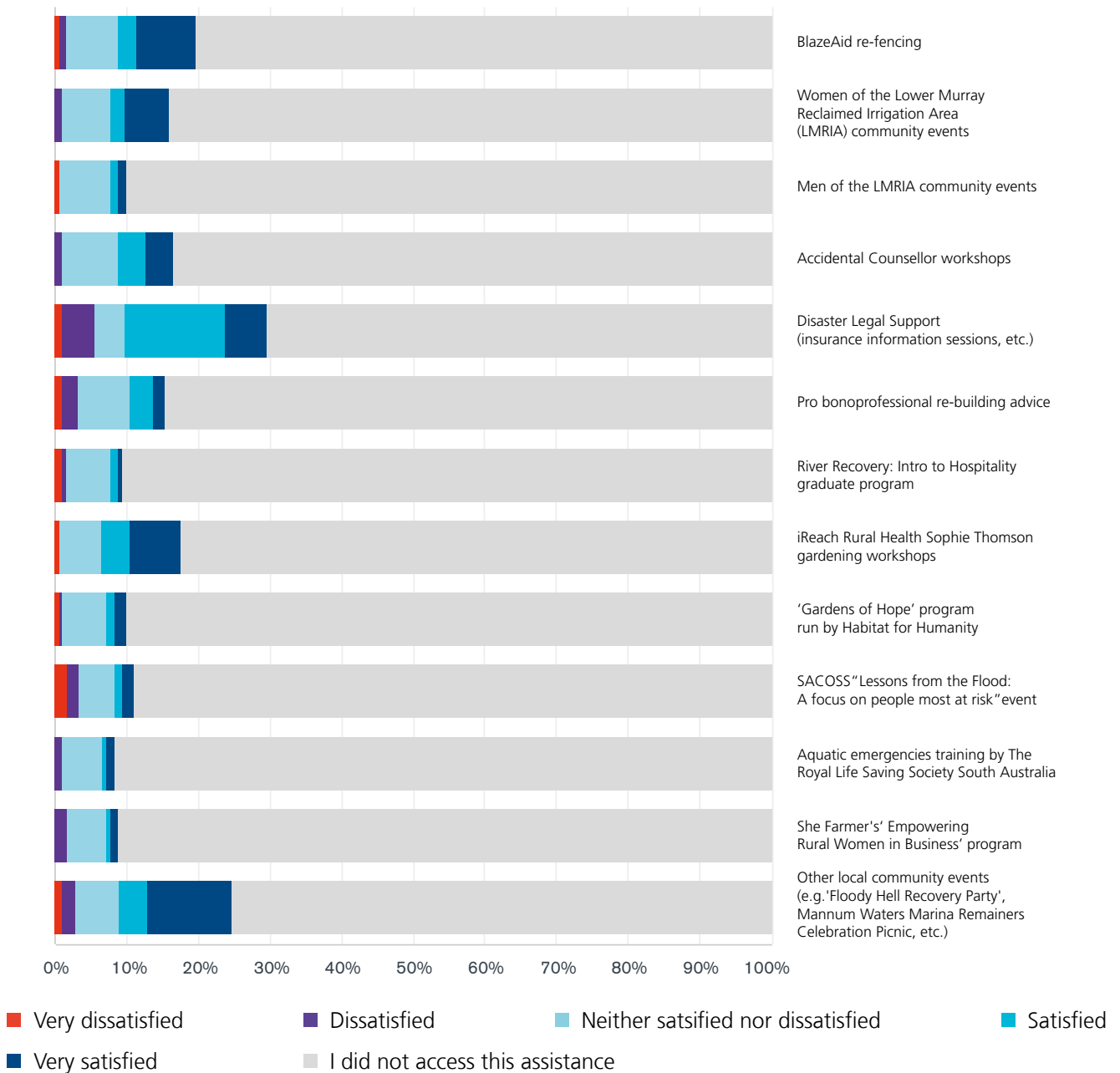
**Q7: What other assistance measures would you like to see included in future events?**

**Total Respondents: 113**

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## Q8: How satisfied have you been with the following community recovery initiatives?

Total Respondents: 186



	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	I did not access this assistance	Total	Weighted Average
BlazeAid re-fencing	0.5% 1	1.1% 2	7.1% 13	2.7% 5	8.2% 15	80.4% 148	184	3.86
Women of the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area(LMRIA) community events	0.0% 0	1.1% 2	6.6% 12	2.2% 4	6.0% 11	84.1% 153	182	3.83
Men of the LMRIA community events	0.6% 1	0.0% 0	7.2% 13	1.1% 2	1.1% 2	90.0% 162	180	3.22
Accidental Counsellor workshops	0.0% 0	1.1% 2	7.7% 14	3.8% 7	3.8% 7	83.5% 152	182	3.63
Disaster Legal Support (insurance information sessions,etc.)	1.1% 2	4.4% 8	4.4% 8	13.7% 25	6.0% 11	70.3% 128	182	3.65
Pro bono professional re-building advice	1.1% 2	2.2% 4	7.1% 13	3.3% 6	1.6% 3	84.6% 154	182	3.14
River Recovery: Intro to Hospitality graduate program	1.1% 2	0.5% 1	6.0% 11	1.1% 2	0.5% 1	90.7% 165	182	2.94
iReach Rural Health Sophie Thomson gardeningworkshops	0.6% 1	0.0% 0	6.1% 11	3.9% 7	7.2% 13	82.3% 149	181	3.97
'Gardens of Hope' program run by Habitat for Humanity	0.6% 1	0.6% 1	6.1% 11	1.1% 2	1.7% 3	90.0% 162	180	3.28
SACOSS "Lessons from the Flood: A focus on peoplemost at risk" event	1.7% 3	1.7% 3	5.0% 9	1.1% 2	1.7% 3	88.9% 160	180	2.95
Aquatic emergencies training by The Royal Life SavingSociety South Australia	0.0% 0	1.1% 2	5.5% 10	0.6% 1	1.1% 2	91.7% 166	181	3.20
SheFarmer's 'Empowering Rural Women in Business' program	0.0% 0	1.7% 3	5.6% 10	0.6% 1	1.1% 2	91.1% 164	180	3.13
Other local community events (e.g. 'Floody HellRecovery Party', Mannum Waters Marina RemainersCelebration Picnic, etc.)	1.1% 2	1.7% 3	6.2% 11	3.9% 7	11.8% 21	75.3% 134	178	3.95

## Q9: How did these community recovery initiatives help your recovery?

Total Respondents: 92

## Q10: Of the community recovery initiatives that did not help your recovery, how could these be improved in future events?

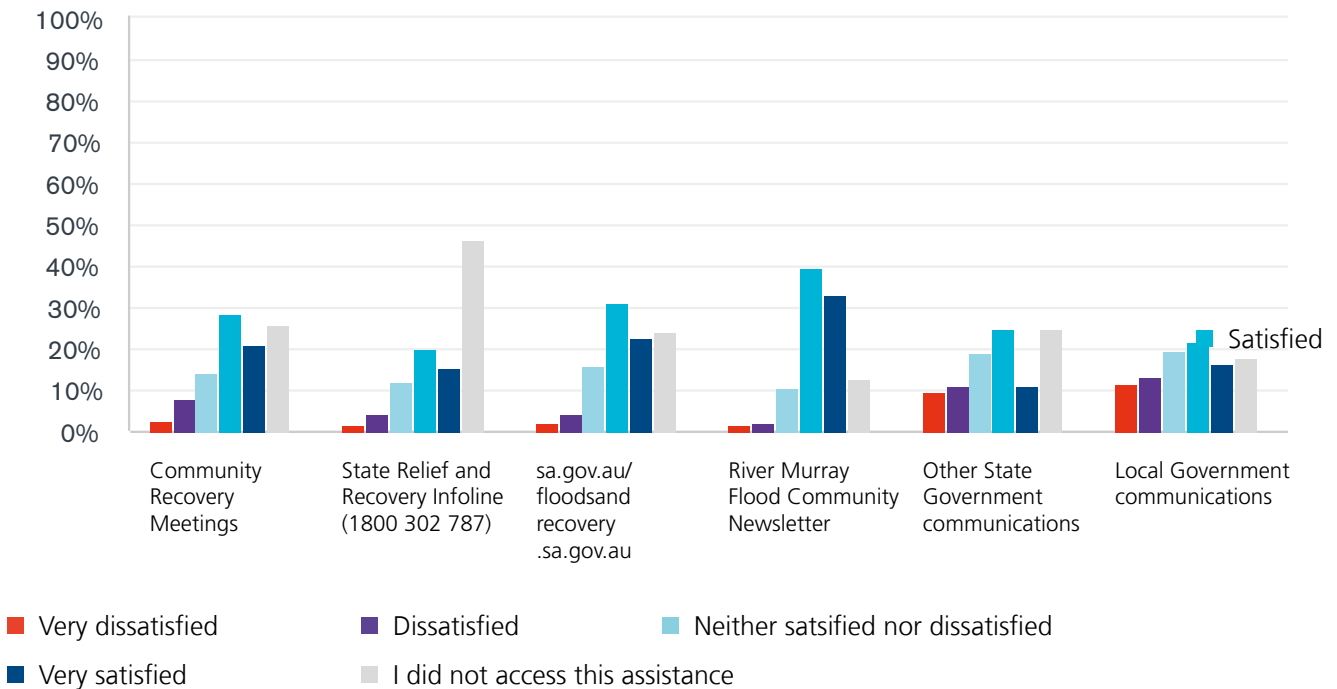
Total Respondents: 68

## Q11: What other community recovery initiatives would you like to see included in future events?

Total Respondents: 57

## Q12: How satisfied have you been with the following flood recovery communications?

Total Respondents: 181



	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	I did not access this assistance	Total	Weighted Average
Community Recovery Meetings	2.8% 5	7.9% 14	14.1% 25	28.2% 50	20.9% 37	26.0% 46	177	3.76
State Relief and Recovery Infoline(1800 302 787)	1.8% 3	4.1% 7	12.4% 21	20.0% 34	15.3% 26	46.5% 79	170	3.80
sa.gov.au/floods andrecovery.sa.gov.au	2.3% 4	4.1% 7	15.7% 27	30.8% 53	22.7% 39	24.4% 42	172	3.89
River Murray Flood CommunityNewsletter	1.7% 3	2.2% 4	10.6% 19	39.7% 71	33.0% 59	12.8% 23	179	4.15
Other State Governmentcommunications	9.7% 17	10.8% 19	18.8% 33	25.0% 44	10.8% 19	25.0% 44	176	3.22
Local Governmentcommunications	11.4% 20	13.1% 23	19.4% 34	21.7% 38	16.6% 29	17.7% 31	175	3.23

### Q13: How did these communications help your recovery?

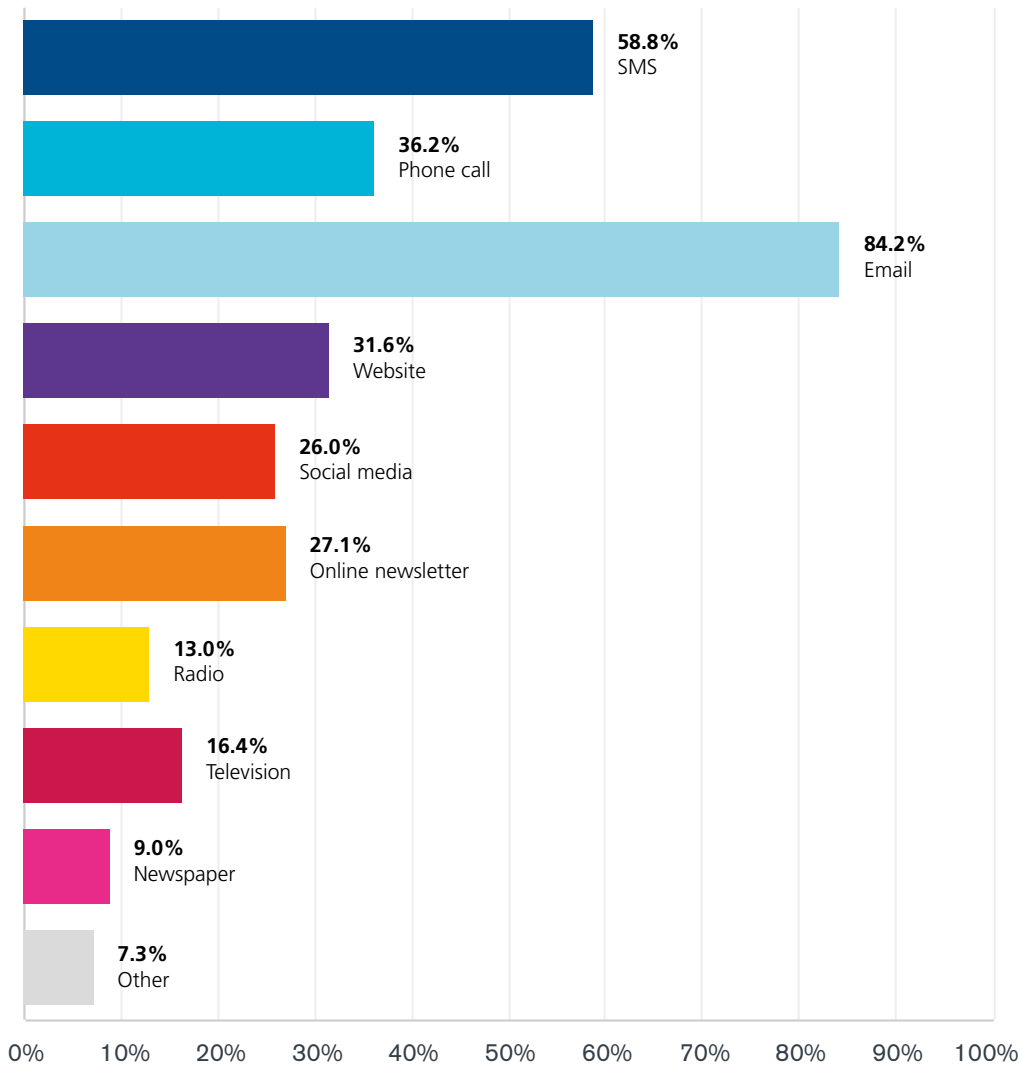
Total Respondents: 91

### Q14: Of the communications that did not help your recovery, how could they be improved in future events?

Total Respondents: 65

### Q15: After a potential disaster, how would you prefer to be communicated with for recovery information? (Select each that apply)

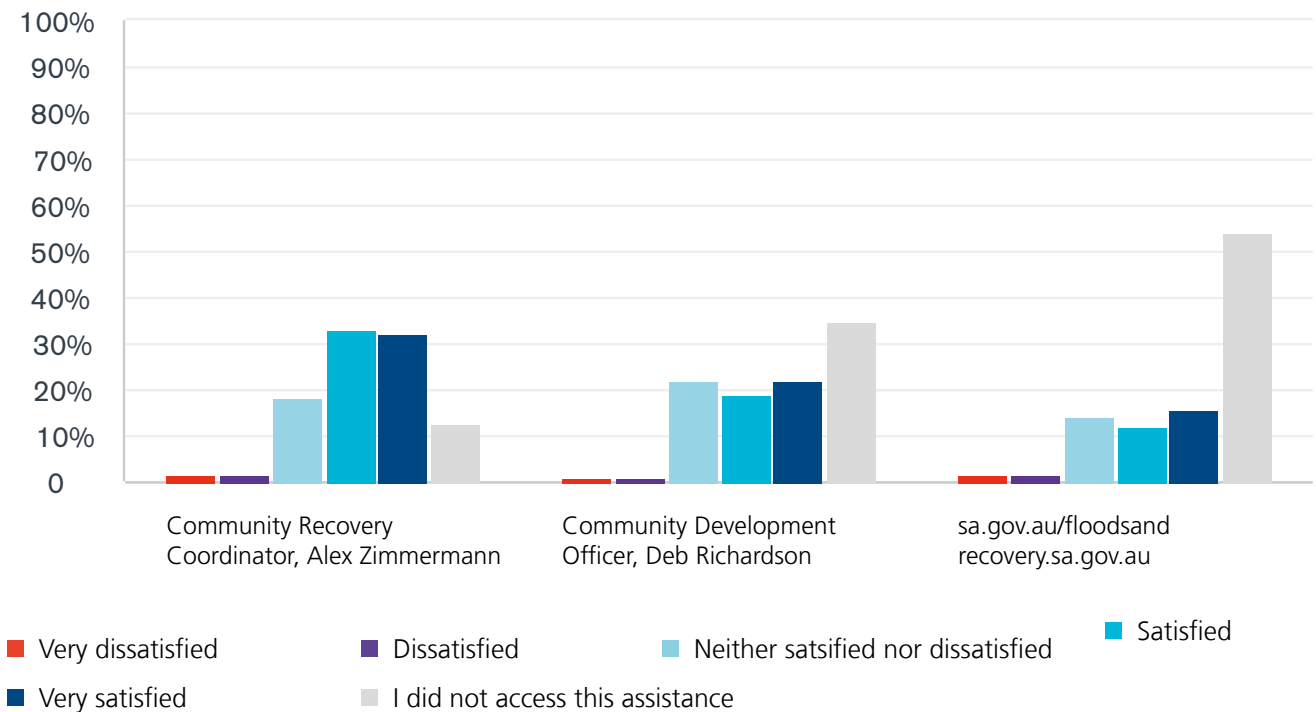
Total Respondents: 177



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
SMS	58.8%	104
Phone call	36.2%	64
Email	84.2%	149
Website	31.6%	56
Social media	26.0%	46
Online newsletter	27.1%	48
Radio	13.0%	23
Television	16.4%	29
Newspaper	9.0%	16
Other (please specify)	7.3%	13

### Q16: How satisfied have you been with the following recovery roles?

Total Respondents: 177



	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	I did not access this assistance	Total	Weighted Average
Community Recovery Coordinator, Alex Zimmermann	1.7% 3	1.7% 3	18.6% 33	33.3% 59	32.2% 57	12.4% 22	177	4.06
Community Development Officer, Deb Richardson	1.2% 2	1.2% 2	22.0% 38	19.1% 33	22.0% 38	34.7% 60	173	3.91
Wellbeing Officer, Shelley Rose	1.8% 3	1.8% 3	14.1% 24	12.4% 21	15.9% 27	54.1% 92	170	3.85

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**Q17: Please outline how the recovery roles you accessed helped your recovery**

**Total Respondents: 82**

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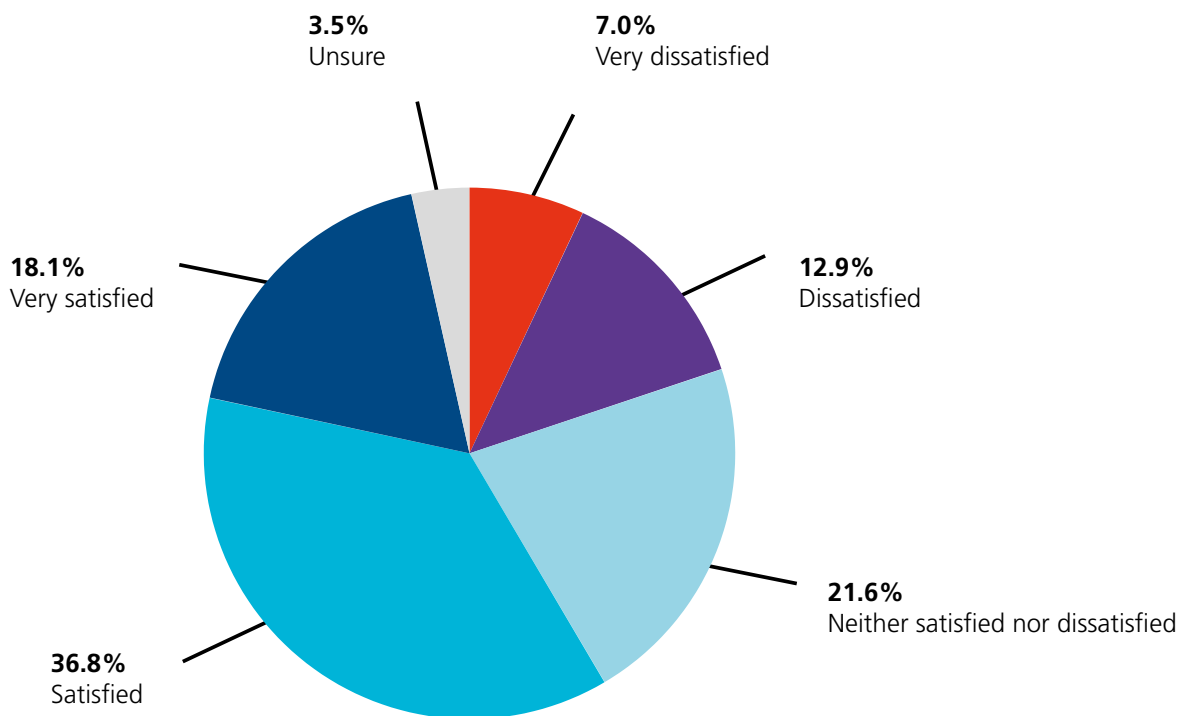
**Q18: If the recovery roles you accessed did not help your recovery, how could they be improved in future events?**

**Total Respondents: 45**

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**Q19: How satisfied have you been with the 2022-2023 River Murray flood recovery to date?**

**Total Respondents: 171**



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**Q20: How can future recovery efforts be improved in South Australia?**

**Total Respondents: 84**

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**Q21: Do you have any other feedback?**

**Total Respondents: 76**

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# Glossary

DEW	Department for Environment and Water
SASES	South Australian State Emergency Service
SA	South Australia
DPC	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
KM	Kilometres
ICA	Insurance Council of Australia
SE	Significant Event
JEV	Japanese Encephalitis Virus
RRV	Ross River Virus
MVEV	Murray Valley Encephalitis Virus
LMRIA	Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Areas
CWMS	Community Wastewater Management Systems
FaB	Family and Business
SAVEM	South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management
SERM	Security, Emergency and Recovery Management
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
CRC	Community Recovery Coordinator
CDO	Community Development Officer
IMT	Incident Management Team
SRCPG	State Recovery Coordination and Planning Group
SEICCC	State Emergency Information Call Centre Capability
SAFECOM	South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission
ERFSG	Emergency Relief Functional Support Group
ERC	Emergency Relief Centre
PIRSA	Department of Primary Industries and Regions
DIIS	Department for Industry, Innovation and Science
DTF	Department of Treasury and Finance
SROG	State Recovery Operations Group
DRFA	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ESL	Emergency Services Levy
MFS	Metropolitan Fire Service
CFS	Country Fire Service

SAHA	South Australian Housing Authority
SATC	South Australian Tourism Commission
SAFCA	South Australian Financial Counsellors Association
SACOSS	South Australian Council of Social Service
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
SERF	State Emergency Relief Fund
GISA	Green Industries South Australia
DWM	Disaster Waste Management
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
JL-DMA	Johns Lyng Disaster Management Australia
EPA	South Australian Environment Protection Authority
FTE	Full-time equivalent



**Government  
of South Australia**

For more information on Recovery in South Australia,  
and to access the online version of this report,  
visit [www.recovery.sa.gov.au](http://www.recovery.sa.gov.au)