

# Recovery Exercise “Conflux”

Where two rivers collide

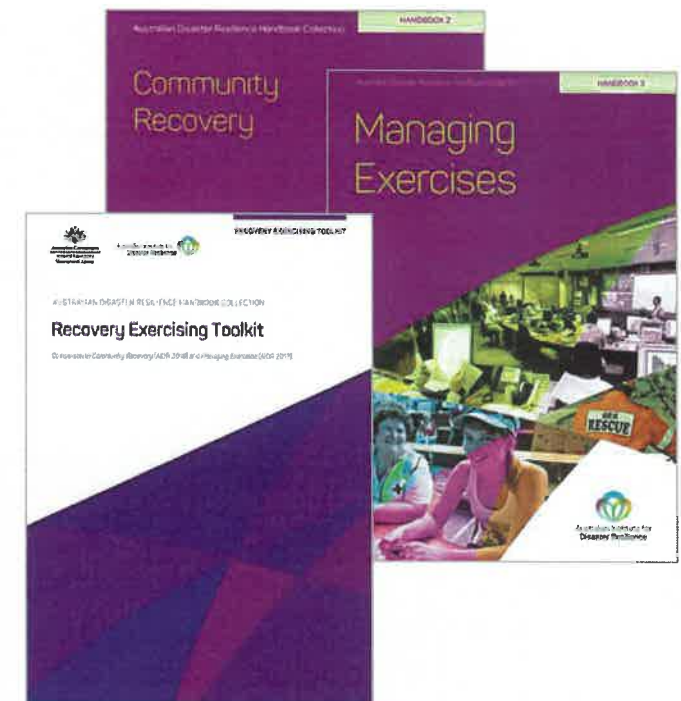
Councillor Workshop 22 June 2023

# Recovery Exercise Conflux

The Recovery Exercise was developed by the National Emergency Management Agency and the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR).

## Modules:

- Fundamentals of Community Recovery
- Scenario based – 1:500 year Flood in Launceston
- Recovery Considerations Over Time - 3 weeks to 3 months
- Recovery Considerations Over Time - 12 months and beyond
- Foundations of Economic Recovery



# Recovery Exercise Objectives

Explore recovery considerations across the short, medium and longer term

Strengthen collaboration and coordination in recovery

Practice evidence informed approaches to recovery strategies and activities

Explore the roles and responsibilities of government, non-government and local community stakeholders in recovery

Identify areas for further development to inform recovery planning



Australian Government  
National Recovery and Resilience Agency



# The Scenario Recovery Exercise - Conflux

Where two Launceston rivers collide

14 June 2023

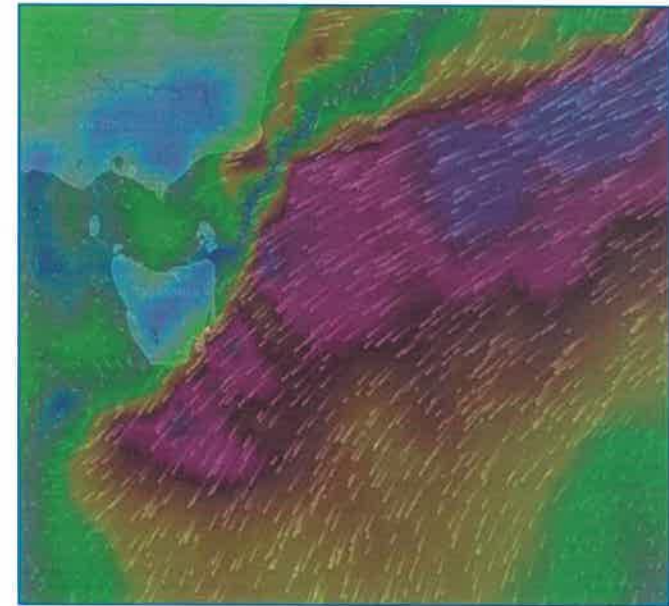
EXERCISE – NOT A FORECAST

The information on these slides is provided to illustrate the scenario and should not be used for decision-making. Photos and satellite views use historical information.



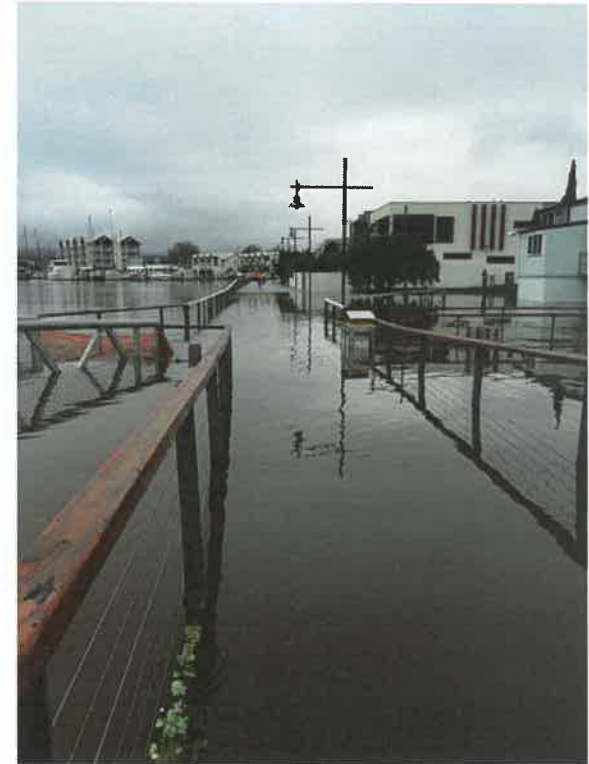
# Weather Event

- On 10 May 2023 heavy rainfall was observed with BoM rain gauges recording the highest rainfalls on record in multiple areas
- Both the North & South Esk Rivers peaked at a Major flood level
- Levee walls were breached at multiple locations
- Residents were evacuated from Newstead, Invermay, lower areas of East L'ton and the city



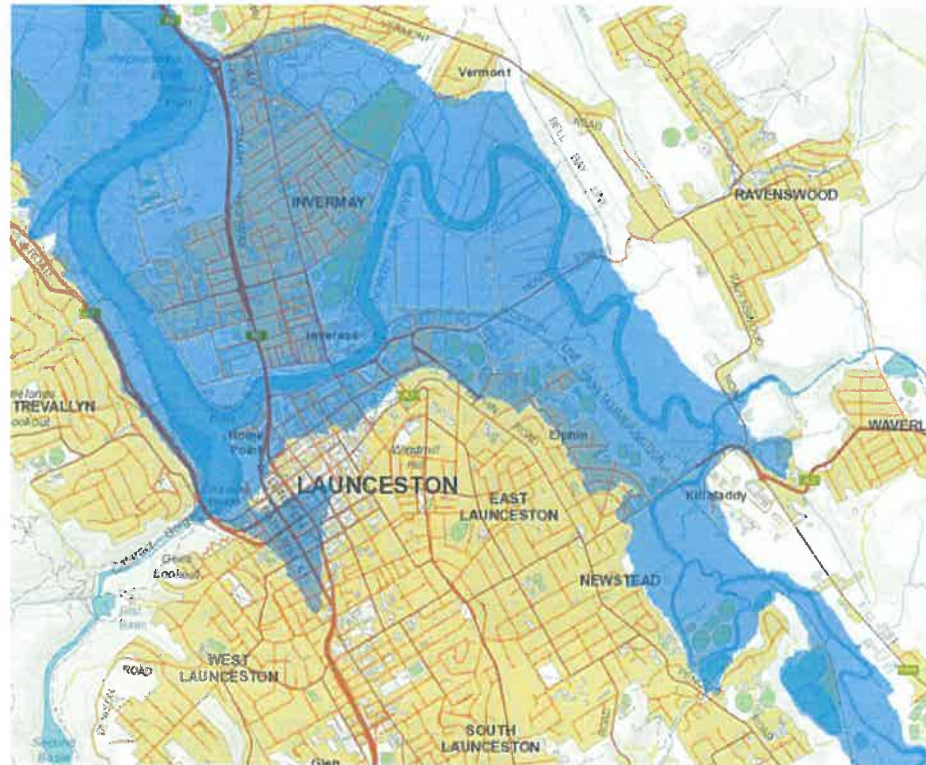
# Launceston Flooding

- During the event a total of approx. **6,000** people were displaced as their homes had been flooded at some level
- **300** residents were evacuated from lower lying areas of Newstead, however they were able to return to their properties 2-3 days later
- **5,700** people were evacuated from Invermay, low lying areas of East Launceston and the city, they remain displaced and will do so for months





# Disaster Scenario – Impact Footprint



# IMPACTS: Homes and Property

- 2,300 houses in Invermay and behind the levee in East Launceston and the City areas remain inundated with flood water
- 1,600 houses in Invermay have suffered significant inundation
- Flood water in these areas will remain in place for months
- Residents in Newstead will have returned home and assessing damage by the 3 week mark





# IMPACTS: Utilities and Services



Invermay, lower areas of East Launceston and the city still remain inaccessible due to flood waters with power unable to be restored

Power has recently been reinstated to Newstead



Norwood and Hoblers Bridge treatment plants are not operational but are expected to be operational over coming weeks



All combined system pump stations and Ti Tree Bend Sewage treatment plants are non operational and will be not be repaired for approx. 6-12 months

# IMPACTS: Roads and transport

## Key



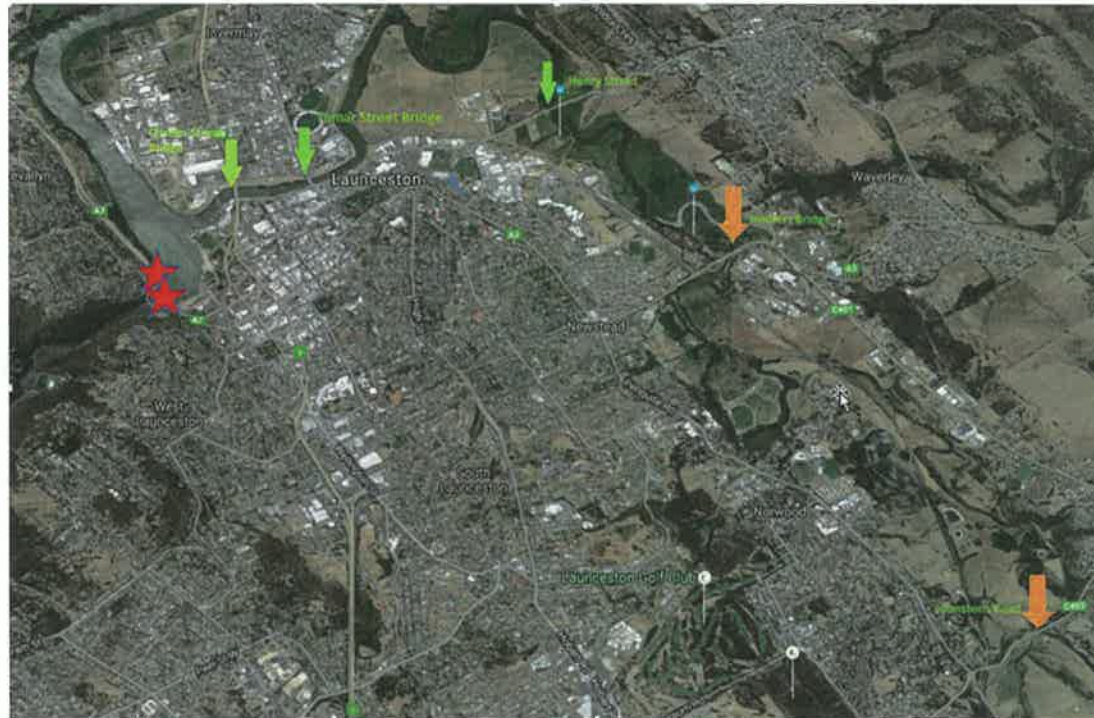
Road open



Road closed



Bridge collapse



# IMPACTS: Medical and Education Facilities



**3 Early Learning Centres** in Invermay remain inaccessible due to flood waters, it is unknown when/if these will open



**4 Primary / Secondary Schools** in Invermay remain inaccessible due to flood waters, it is unknown when/if these will open



**University of Tasmania Invermay Campus** & accommodation remains inaccessible and not expected to open for a 1-2 year period



Access to **all Hospitals** will be restricted for residents of the northern suburbs of Launceston and surrounding regional areas



Many **local healthcare** and **medical services** remain unable to operate

# IMPACTS: Community Infrastructure



- Centrelink
- Police Station and Town Hall (Council)



- QVMAG
- Various places of worship



UTAS Stadium, Churchill Park,  
NTCA, Netball Centre, Birch Ave  
Soccer, Heritage Forest, Royal  
Park



# IMPACTS: Environment

- All sewage generated in Launceston south of the estuary is discharging directly into the Kanamaluka river
- 1 x oil recycling facilities have been inundated with water
- Erosion and rerouting of flood waters in the upper catchments



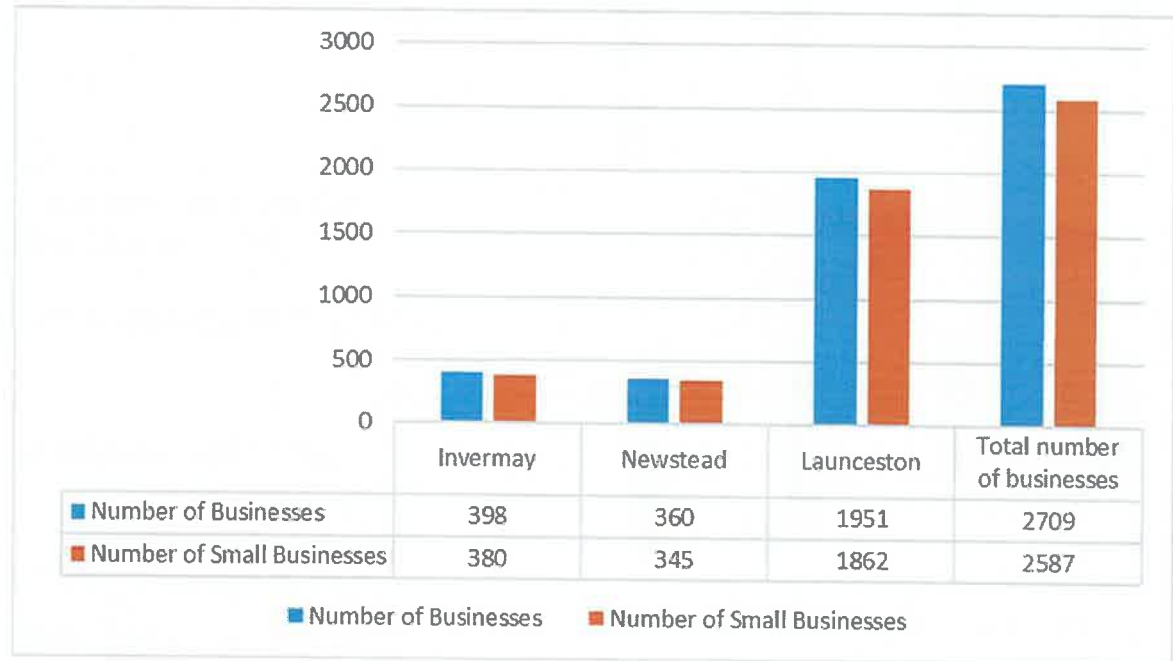


# IMPACTS: Economic and Business

- Approx. 2,709 business across Launceston are affected due the lack of accessibility to the city
- 398 business in Invermay are closed equating to approx. 2,659 jobs
- Approx. 55 major businesses within Invermay with a turnover of greater than \$2M remain closed and will do so for months
- Major supply chain disruption across the region and state due to road closures
- 2 AFL games cancelled with an local economic impact of \$9.5M
- Staffing disruptions to business across the city will be significant

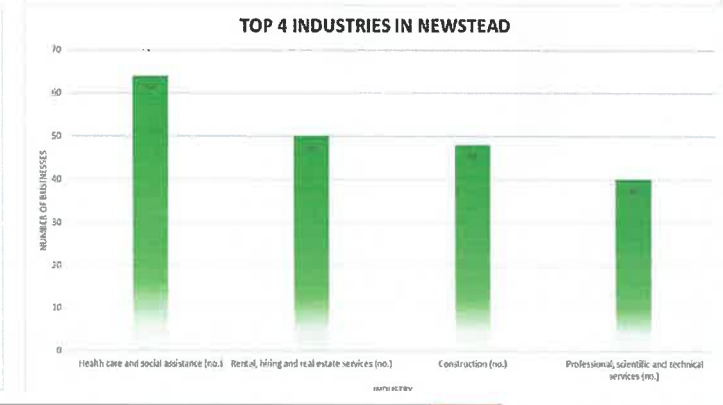
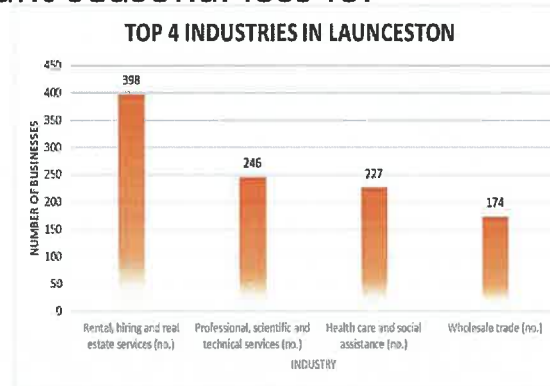
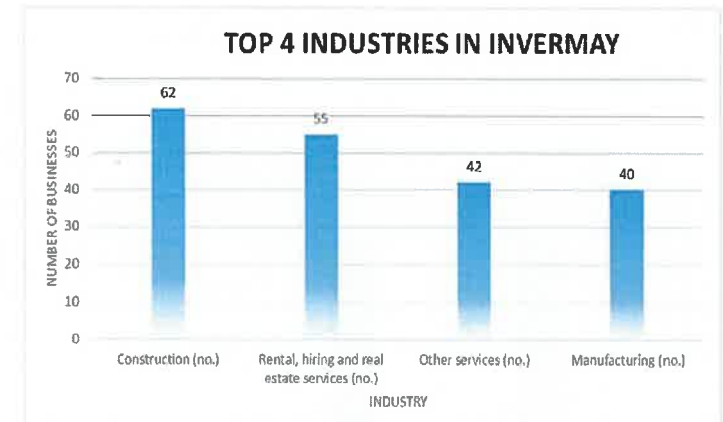
# IMPACTS: Economic and Business

- 90% of business in these will have some level of direct impact
- All business in these locations will have indirect impacts over time

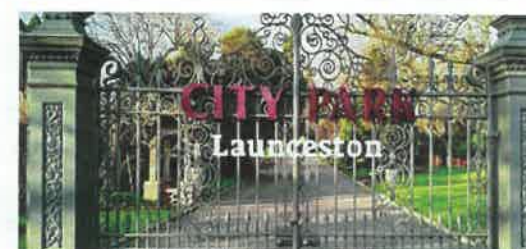


# Some further considerations...

- 80% of business have turnover of less than \$2m per annum – meaning high transaction low yield and any downtime is a major impact
- Sectors such as education and logistics may have loss of confidence impacts over time
- Storage, warehousing and logistics will have prolonged impact
- Annual festivals can mean significant seasonal loss for businesses



# Tourism attractions and businesses





# Annual festivals and Events





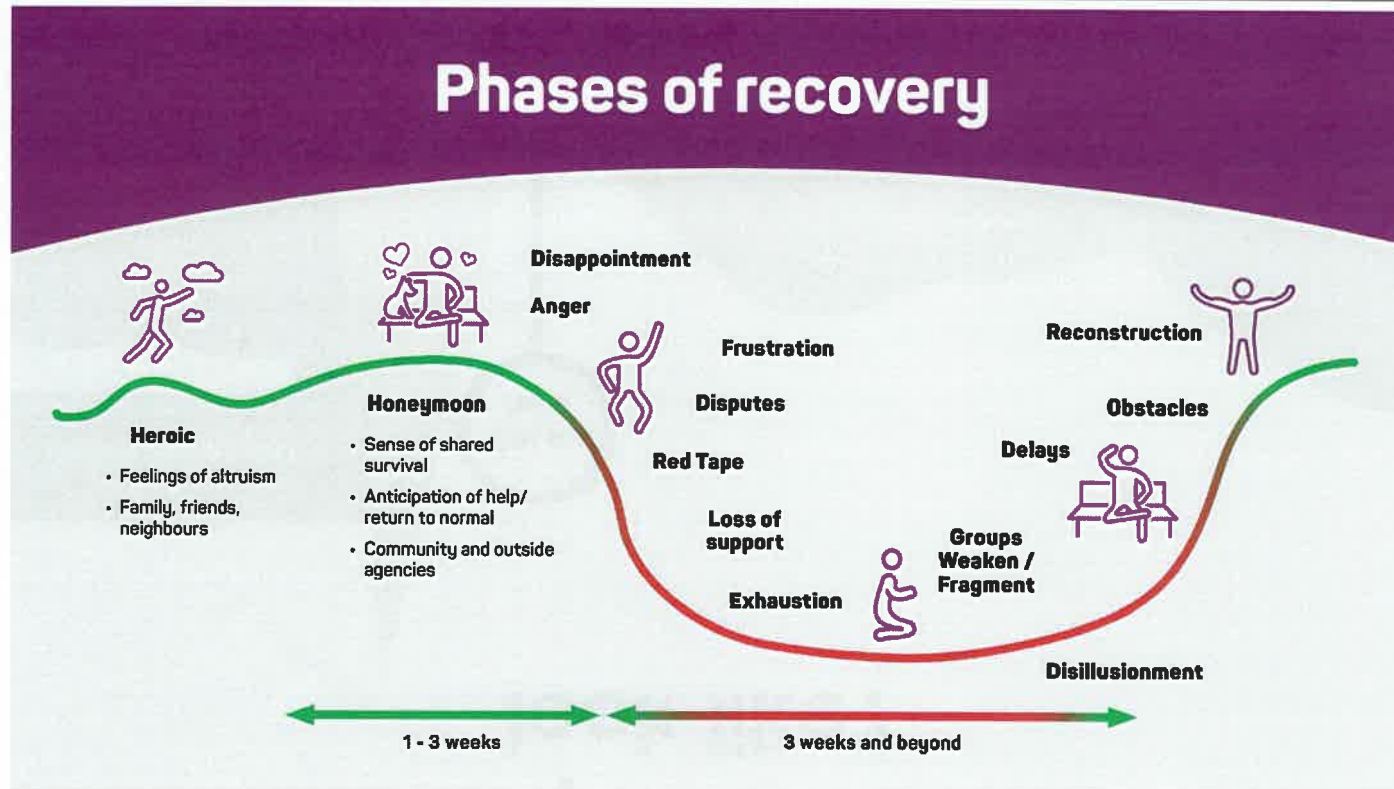
# IMPACTS: Animal and Agriculture

- Animal service providers and vets unable to travel across the city
- Stray animals after the flooding event
- Deceased pets and livestock management
- Agricultural areas on urban fringe severely impacted

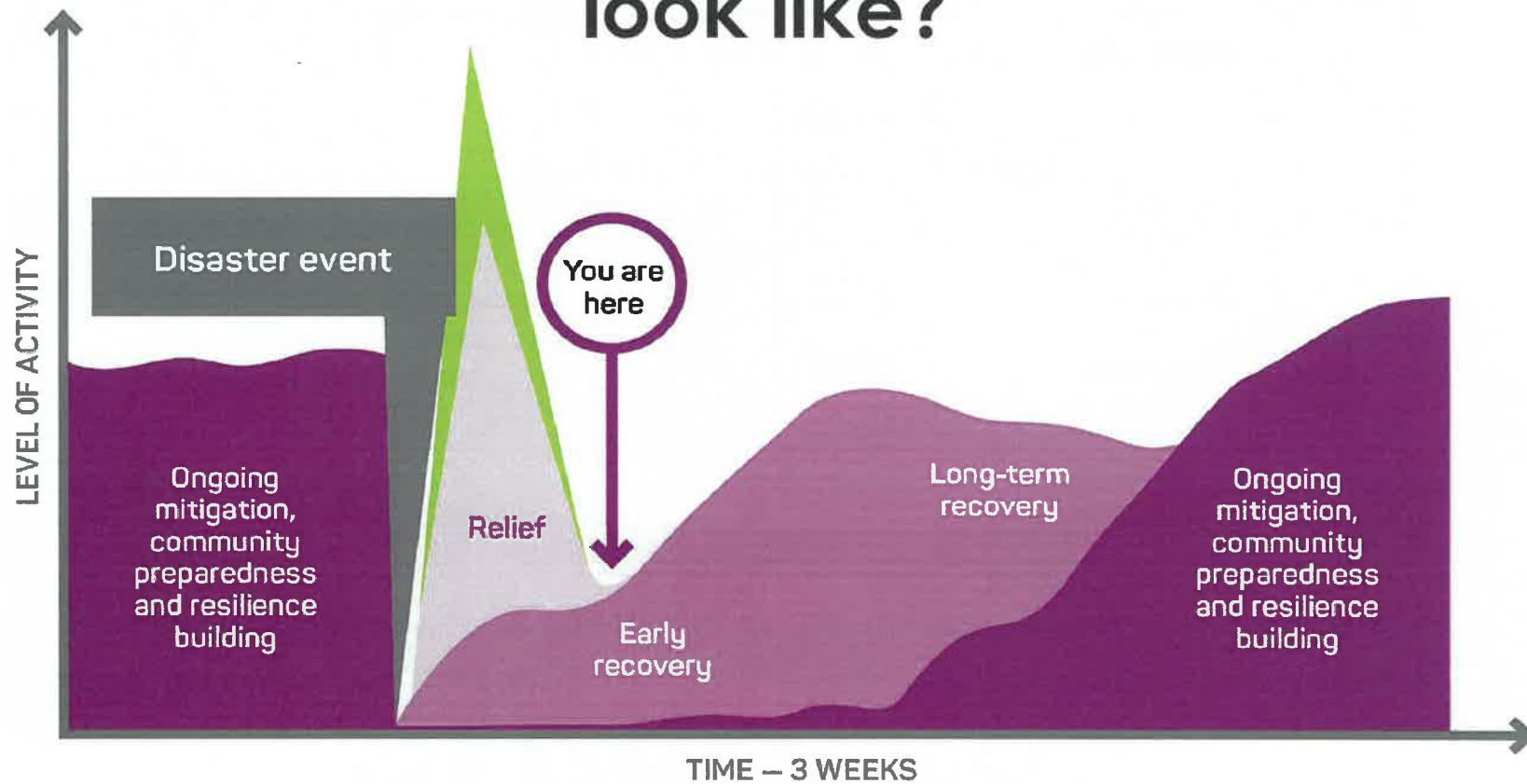


End of Scenario

# The Exercise focus...



# What will recovery at 3 weeks to 3 months look like?



# Core Recovery Strategies - 3 weeks to 3 months

## Key Takeaway...

Council staff will be supporting recovery efforts whilst impacted

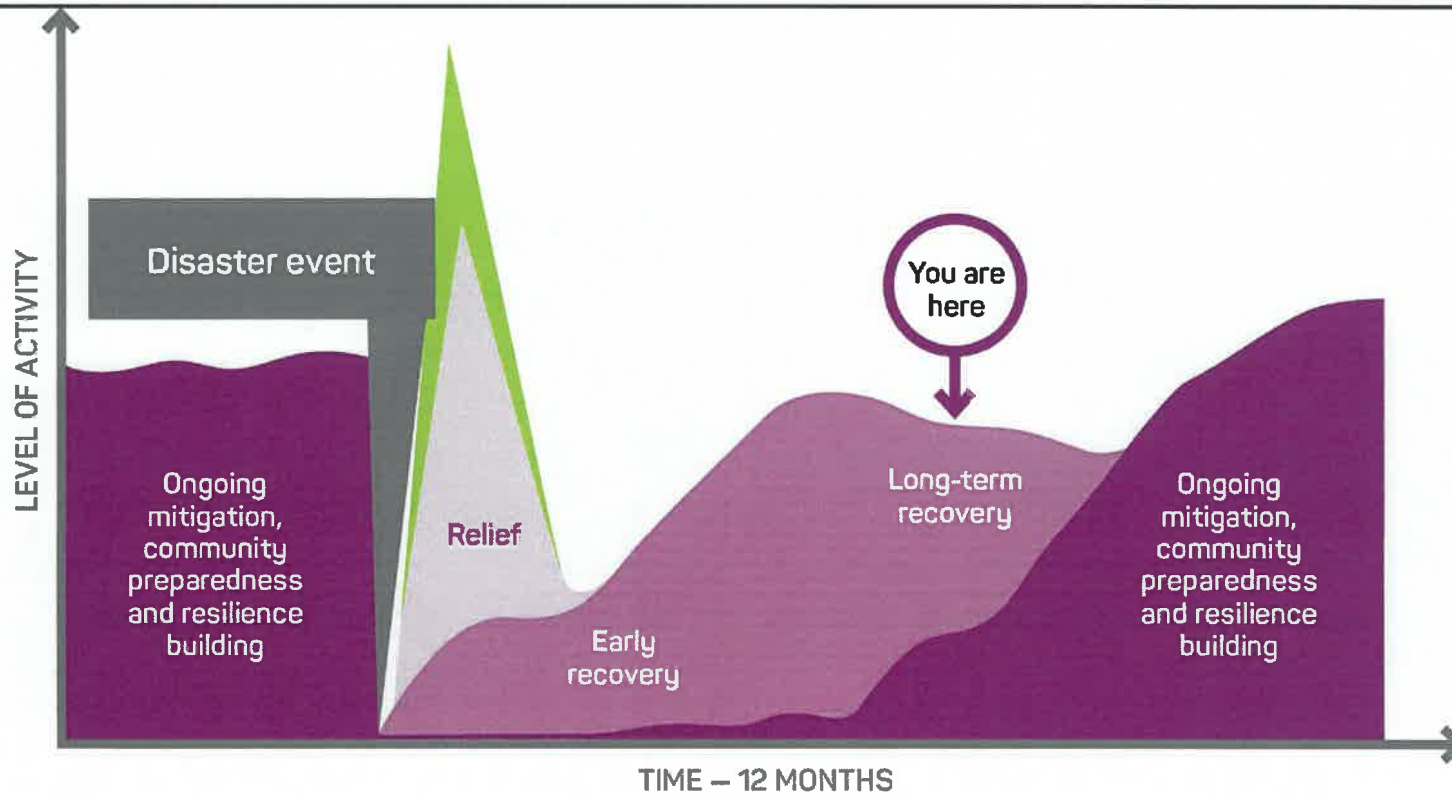
It is estimated that 20% of Council staff will be unable to get to work

We will have staff who are impacted... How do we support them while supporting the community?

- Financial aid and rates relief



# What will recovery at 12 months look like?



# What will recovery at 12 months look like?

What was discovered:

- Invermay residents may only just be returning to their properties
- Other areas may be well on the journey of recovery
- Many residents remain displaced, living in temporary accommodation and caravans
- Many residents may not have returned to the area
- Community will be deeply frustrated
- There is a division emerging in the community between those people who were not directly impacted by the floods, those still living in caravans and those who have been able to get back in their homes

# Critical and Community Infrastructure

In Invermay at 12 months:

- Sporting facilities are still closed - UTAS Stadium, Churchill Park, Birch Ave
- Parks - Heritage Forest only recently become accessible
- Cataract Gorge only recently opened to tourists with rebuilt public amenities
- Kings Bridge remains closed impacting traffic movement into the city

# Homes and Property

- Demolition is underway for houses in Invermay as most are not salvageable
- Some rebuilding is underway - but few homes completed, hundreds of homes have not been started
- Underinsurance issues emerging for rebuilds
- Shortage of tradespeople, limited supply of building materials and increased costs

## Increased housing stress and homelessness

- Many people still in insecure temporary accommodation
- Scarcity of rentals and escalating rental costs
- Increasing mortgage interest rates
- No redundancy in local housing stock to absorb another disaster event

Contributing factors to slowed recovery and increased stress, anxiety and emotional fatigue

# What is happening in the community at 12 months?

- Increase in mental health issues, substance abuse and family violence
- People are still presenting for help and assistance for the first time
- First year anniversary memorials and commemorations
- Return of disaster 'season' (fire, flood, cyclone) retriggering trauma and feelings of anxiety and distress

Funding for short-term recovery services and contracts for recovery officers often conclude at 12 months, **just at the time** the community is facing anniversaries which often result in heightened need for community support.

*Recovery Tip: Avoid concluding recovery services and workers at the 12-month mark, as this is often when recovery needs are high.*



# Long Road to Recovery

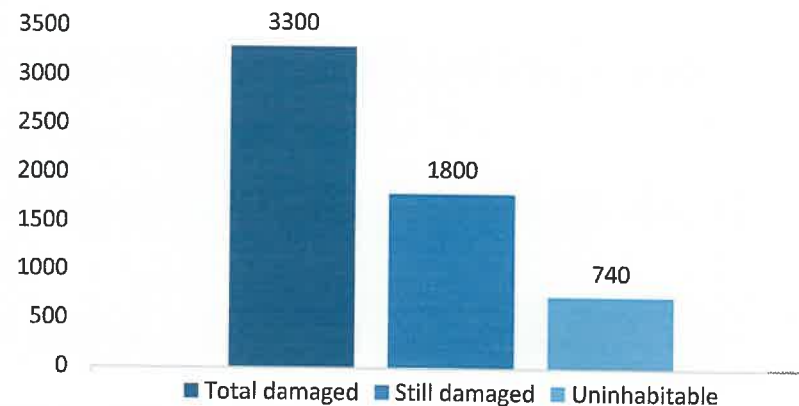
## Lismore Floods February 2022 – 9 months on

- 52% living in shells of homes that had flooded
- 26% living in temporary accommodation; caravans, sheds, pods, family and friends
- 18% living in insecure accommodation; tents, temporary rentals
- 4% no longer living in the region

*Southern Cross University Survey*

## Townsville Floods January 2019

Homes repaired by the 12 month anniversary



**12 months on**

- Nearly 50% of homes still damaged
- 25% homes still uninhabitable

## 2 years and beyond...

- Many grants and funding packages will be ending, creating a 'funding cliff'
- Transition to business as usual with ongoing support (many of those early strategies from 3 months are still needed)
- Recovery programs are still being delivered but may need to be adjusted as needs change
- Long term resilience and sustainability is now a focus
- Many people still living in temporary accommodation and caravans ongoing need for rebuilding support

# 10 Years Beyond 2009 Victorian bushfires Bushfires Report

- Ten years after the fires, 22% of people were reporting symptoms consistent with a diagnosable mental health disorder. Loss of income, property loss and relationship breakdown increased the risk of mental health impacts
- Around 10% of people in high-impacted communities reported anger problems - 5 years after
- In the first 3 to 4 years following the bushfires, reports of violence experienced by women were 7 times higher in high bushfire-affected areas
- A sense of community cohesion was lower in high-impact communities - 10 years after

10 years on – 60% of people feel like they have recovered

# A key takeaway...

If we can understand the expected longer term, community impacts of disaster we can plan for these before they occur

Lessons from previous events, exercises, reports and research can inform future recovery planning and preparedness

Its everyone's responsibility to plan early for the known recovery challenges in our community

**Prepare for recovery**

# Core Recovery Challenges for Launceston

## Social

- Food & fuel supplies
- Temporary Housing plan and pathways
- Wellbeing and mental health programs
- Programs for children and young people
- Increase in homelessness
- Increase in family violence and crime
- Sustainability of sport clubs (corporate sponsorship)
- Outward migration

## Environment

- Contamination clean up (contaminated sites and sewage)
- Acid sulphate soils
- Natural area restoration priorities
- Re-establish and support biodiversity
- Kerbside waste collection
- Loss of landfill space

## Economic

### Businesses

- Business Recovery and Advisory Services
- Return of tourists
- Employment strategies to retain workers in areas
- Public private partnerships –
- Supporting diversification in local and regional economies
- 80% of building industry impacted

### Primary producers

- Financial strategies to support the many producers who still wont have re-established cash flow

## Built

- Housing reconstruction – to what standard?
- Restoration and reconstruction heritage buildings
- Sports facility reconstruction priority
- Dewatering plan
- Building advisory services for homeowners
- Build back better initiatives
- Contractor availability / capability
- Flood levee reinstatement



# Key takeaways...

Recovery is complex and always takes a long time.

Communities will recover more quickly if they are influencing and shaping their own recovery

People will recover at their own pace, everyone's recovery journey is different

Local people and community sector organisations have an important role to play in recovery

Recovery Committees must stay connected with and be representative of the community

# Next Steps...

1. Develop a relief framework so the CoL can plan for what the community may need; set expectations for our recovery partners
2. Further work with stakeholders to confirm:
  - What does recovery look like from regional point of view and how will the state (DPAC) prioritise key actions?
  - What is everyone's role in recovery and how can we enable them to work with us to start planning?



# Discussion Questions:

1. Based on our presentation what is your reflection?
2. Do you think our community would understand the flood risk and how can we enable them to plan for such an event?
3. What are the key components of a financial or relief recovery package?
4. What are the key messages for community?

Thank you...

