



PROJECT PLAN

Community Flood Recovery Volunteer Project

Abstract

A partnership between Disaster Relief Australia, Hastings Neighborhood Services and NSW SES to support the use of community volunteers and equipment in flood recovery



**Disaster
Relief
Australia**



BACKGROUND

The Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Government area contains several communities that are susceptible to floods, storms and tsunamis.

The region experienced major flooding in March 2021 and again in May 2025.

Recent events have seen increased involvement of community volunteers in the recovery phase of natural disasters.

In late 2025, Hastings Neighbourhood Services and the Northside Progress Association were gifted flood recovery clean-up equipment.

INTENT

This is a pilot project that seeks to increase the capability of community volunteers to use flood recovery clean-up equipment and to prepare for future floods.

This will be achieved through a combination of online and face-to-face training, experiential learning and support opportunities.

The project will also seek to develop operational guidelines and procedures for community flood recovery volunteer management based on the core principles of flexibility, scalability and interoperability.

If successful in the pilot stage, the project, with additional resourcing and support, could be continued and potentially target participants from different areas.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Increase the capability of community flood recovery volunteers** to assist in the physical clean-up of flood-damaged properties in the Port Macquarie, Lake Cathie and Wauchope areas during significant flood events.
2. Increase the **severe weather preparedness** of community flood recovery volunteers.
3. **Maintain and manage flood recovery clean-up equipment** at the Wauchope Neighbourhood Centre, Lake Cathie Neighbourhood Centre and Port Macquarie North Shore.

4. Develop operational guidelines and procedures for the **management and coordination of community flood recovery volunteers** in Port Macquarie, Lake Cathie and Wauchope areas.
5. Provide **support and networking** opportunities for community flood recovery volunteers.

SCOPE

This is a 12-month pilot project focusing on building volunteer capability, the management of flood recovery equipment and severe weather preparedness.

The project will be limited to Port Macquarie, Wauchope and Lake Cathie areas.

DELIVERABLES

1. Participant Recruitment Communication Campaign

Call out for participants in a training and support program for community flood recovery volunteers.

- Media Release
- Social Media Posts
- Radio Interviews
- Posters
- Direct approaches organisations
- Service Network Presentations

2. Recruitment Information Sessions

Provide opportunities for direct engagement of potential program participants.

1x Daytime information session
1x Nighttime information session

- 30 min information sessions
- Project overview – background, objectives, training, ongoing support
- Expectations on participants
- Question and answer
- Registration of participants for training workshop

3. Training Workshops

Workshop to be held over two Sundays.

First session at the NSW SES Port Macquarie Unit Headquarters.

Second session onsite at Wauchope Neighbourhood Centre, Lake Cathie Neighbourhood Centre and Port Macquarie North Shore. The training will consist of the following:

Part 1 - Spontaneous Volunteer Training

Conducted at NSW SES Port Macquarie Unit

Hastings Neighbourhood Services to organise

Use of the existing “Tomorrow Ready” online spontaneous volunteer training course in an in-person training group setting.

[Link to Tomorrow Ready Training](#)

This training covers the following topics:

- Role of Spontaneous Volunteers
- Emergency Management arrangements
- Self Care
- Leadership
- Trauma-Informed approaches to working with communities
- Guest speaker reflections on past flood recovery campaigns from previous events.
 - ✓ Nette McCobrie – 2021 and 2025 Flood Recovery Coordinator, St Angus Parish
 - ✓ Andrew McCullough – 2025 SES Spontaneous Volunteer Coordinator

Part 2 – Flood risks and preparedness –

Conducted at NSW SES Port Macquarie Unit

NSW SES provided

- Local Flood Risk Profile – Sim Table Flood Modelling
- Preparedness activities, sandbagging, using a ladder, turning off utilities, tarping
- Local Emergency Management Arrangements
- Tour of NSW SES Port Macquarie Unit

Part 3 – Community Flood Recovery Operations

Conducted onsite using recovery equipment at Port Macquarie North Shore, Wauchope and Lake Cathie Neighbourhood Centres.

Disaster Relief Australia provided

- Flood Recovery Equipment use and maintenance
- Loading and securing loads on vehicles
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Volunteer end of shift de contamination procedures
- Local community volunteer operational management arrangements

4. Support and Network Opportunities

Two support and connection meetings will be conducted after the initial training.

It is envisaged that these meetings will take place in September 2026 and February 2027.

The purpose of these meetings will be:

- Ensure the maintenance of flood recovery equipment
- Consolidate the community flood recovery volunteers' understanding of the operational management structures
- Provide information on seasonal weather outlooks
- Provide information on how communities will be warned about severe weather events

Participants will also be invited to participate in the Port Macquarie-Hastings Community Resilience Network.

5. Community Volunteer Operational Guidelines and Procedures

Development of emergency management guidelines and procedures that cover the following areas:

- Activation of community volunteers
- Command and Control
- Safety
- Communication
- Liaison and linkages
- Tasking
- Reporting
- Briefing & Debriefing
- De mobilisation and After-Action Review

There is potential scope for these guidelines/procedures to be included in other emergency management plans.

Timelines

Recruitment Promotion	1st May – 5th June 2026
Recruitment Information Sessions	Tuesday 2nd June 2026
Community Volunteer Training Workshop 1	Sunday 21 st June 2026
Community Volunteer Training Workshop onsite PMQ	Sunday 5 th July 2026 Nth Shore
Community Volunteer Training Workshop onsite WAU	Sunday 12 th July 2026
Community Volunteer Training Workshop onsite LC	Sunday 19 th July 2026

Follow up support meetings

Wednesday, 23rd September 2026

Roles

Lead Organisation – Hastings Neighbourhood Centre

- Administration of project community participants
- Promotion of the project
- Organisation and facilitation of Tomorrow Ready training
- Facilitation of Support Meetings in September 2006 and February 2027

Disaster Relief Australia – Project Partner

- Promotion of the project
- Organisation and facilitation of the Community Flood Recovery Operations component of the training workshop
- Provision of equipment maintenance and use training
- Development of community recovery volunteer operational guidelines and procedures
- Facilitation of Support Meetings in December 2006 and February 2027

NSW SES – Project Partner

- Promotion of the project

- Organisation and facilitation of the Flood Risks and Preparedness component of the training workshop
- Provision of venue for training workshop and recruitment information sessions
- Organisation and provision of training workshop consumables and catering
- Provision of Facebook advertising

Project Manager

- Steve Lawrence
Community Capability Officer
NSW SES Northern Zone

Steering Committee

- Hastings Neighbourhood Services
- NSW SES
- Nette McCoubrie
- Disaster Relief Australia
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- NSW Reconstruction Authority

Stakeholders

- Community members
- Northside Progress Association
- Red Cross
- Port Macquarie Hastings Council
- Community Resilience Network
- NSW Reconstruction Authority
- NSW SES Port Macquarie-Hastings and Wauchope Units

Resources/Budget

Catering, promotion, venue provision, training, and consumables will be covered by NSW SES

Risks

- Potential issues in accessing Tomorrow Ready training in a timely manner and accessible manner.
- Significant flood events/NSW SES flood operations

Communication Priorities

Monthly Steering Committee Meetings via a combination of Teams and in-person methods.

Tentative Dates/Times

- Monday 23rd February 10:00am – venue tbc
- Tuesday 24th March 10:00am - venue tbc
- Tuesday 28th April 10:00am - venue tbc
- Tuesday 26th May 10:00am - venue tbc

Presentation of concept and results of pilot to:

- Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Emergency Management Committee
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Community Resilience Network

Measurement and Evaluation

- 10 community flood recovery volunteers trained
- Balanced geographic distribution of participants
- Training evaluation feedback from participants
- Number of participants attending support meetings and Community Resilience Network meetings
- Extent of promotional media coverage of the project
- Operationally ready flood recovery equipment caches
- Engagement of LEMC and CRN around future project/program sustainability