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Tōpūtanga Tuku Aroha o Aotearoa

# How NOT to Make Disaster Grantmaking a Disaster

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## BACKGROUND:

### Global context

- Recent world events
- Global learnings – CoF 8 points

### National experience

- Australia has since 2006 had cyclones, floods and fires mainly in remote, rural & regional areas
- There was a national philanthropic foundation in this space

### Local context

- 2009 significant bushfire event in the State of Victoria  
Philanthropy Australia and FRRR played roles
- Summer 2011



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## WHAT SPACE SHOULD PHILANTHROPY OCCUPY IN RESPONDING TO NATURAL DISASTERS?

- When might philanthropy be needed?
- Understanding community recovery
- How to grant?
- When to grant?
- How will you know you have achieved the best impact?



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## 2009 Victorian Bushfire Facts

- \*7 February 2009 – bushfire event occurred in Victoria, Australia – unprecedented in scale 700 fires
- \*7000 people homeless and 173 died
- \*2133 homes destroyed, + 1500 damaged, 33 communities including 109 towns and localities
- \*430,000 hectares burnt, 12,500 kms of fencing damaged, 8,000 stock and 1,000,000 wild animals died
- \*\$392M in cash donations to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund

**BUT EVERY NATURAL DISASTER IS DIFFERENT....**



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The Case Study: a collaborative & coordinated response from  
philanthropy

\*17 February 2009 – the Town Hall meeting

\*3 levels of government – National, State,

Local > Victorian Bushfire Recovery &

Reconstruction Authority (VBRRA)>

Community Recovery Committees (CRCs)

\*Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund (VBAF)

\*Royal Commission established to

investigate causes and recommend changes

for future prevention



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The Case Study continued...

- \*Complex operating environment of high expectation
- \*Convening and information role
- \*Leadership role
- \*Drawing in learnings
- \*Establishing 'operating principles' and being flexible



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The Case Study continued...

- \*3 meetings then action
- \*4 strategies to cover most responses
- \*1 project manager
- \*2 secondments
- \*12-36 months commitment
- \*Evolution based on established need
- \* 2 years on



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## RRR- Repair Restore Renew Grants Program

- \* One Strategy
- \* 21 Partners – original target group was just Trusts and Foundations
- \* 132 Projects - \$2M+ in grants from \$774 to \$60,000+
- \* Advisory Committee for the Program
- \* Informed by being placed in the field and embedded within Government
- \* Timeframe – September 2009 to March 2011



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## Finding solutions to philanthropic dilemmas

- Understand organisational capabilities
- Understand other stakeholders
- Be prepared to find solutions
- Fly under the radar
- \$3.8M came to communities which might otherwise have been lost to them



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## KEY LESSONS LEARNT SO FAR...

- Collaboration gives philanthropy a stronger voice
- Open, accessible and flexible application and assessment process
- Partnerships
- Delivering beyond granting
- Resourcing
- Adaptability
- Acute Volunteer Fatigue
- Creating resilience
- Evaluate