CASE STUDY

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Facing widespread damage from devastating floods, Moira Shire Council adopted an innovative model from CT Management Group to manage the recovery process.

BACKGROUND

When major flooding inundated Victoria in March 2012, Moira Shire in the state's north east was devastated.

More than 80 per cent of the 4000 square kilometre shire was affected and the Council was counting the cost of damage to about 1000 properties, 1400 kilometres of road, numerous bridges, drains, community buildings and sports grounds.

Of the Shire's towns Numurkah was worst affected, while a temporary levee largely spared the nearby town of Nathalia from the flood waters. The Shire's administration hub of Cobram was largely unaffected.

The event was labelled the region's worst floods on record. Within weeks the Australian Government had granted National Disaster Relief and Recovery status, allowing the Shire to begin the recovery process.

CHALLENGES

Managing the restoration of infrastructure for such a large scale disaster presented an unprecedented

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**– MAYOR
   BRIAN KEE**

challenge for the rural Council with only 200 full time equivalent staff.

Thorough planning and efficient management was required to ensure the restoration of community infrastructure would be delivered at a competitive cost, meet quality standards and within the June 2014 timeframe set by the Government's disaster relief funding.

A further challenge was finding a method to engage contractors that would meet the requirements of the Victorian Local Government Act, when the damage done by the floods would not be fully measured for months.

SOLUTION

As estimates of the damage rose into the tens of millions of dollars, the Council quickly realised that with its

current level of resources, technology and natural disaster management experience it could not manage the recovery process alone.

Moira Shire Council began the search for assistance to manage the $40 million infrastructure recovery, advertising the tender in June 2012. What it needed was an organisation with an understanding of Local Government processes and procurement requirements, and experience with natural disaster management.

And the Council found that CT Management Group offered the model it needed for the flood recovery – smart asset management technology, an innovative contract management model and Associate consultants experienced in the sector and natural disaster management.

CT MANAGEMENT GROUP®

APPROACH

It was immediately apparent that the project would require strong collaboration and a clear organisation structure.

With Council managing the wider community recovery, CT Management Group assumed responsibility for infrastructure recovery.

The approach included:

– Establishing a flood recovery office away from the Council's administrative centre.
– Creating a flood recovery team led by Council and supported by CT Management Group.
– Implementing new technology to record flood damage, program the works, and generate progress reports
– Developing an innovative model for contractor tendering and management.

PEOPLE POWER

Led by Infrastructure Recovery Manager Malcolm McKenzie, a specialist team of CT Management Group Associates was tasked with analysing the flood damage, writing tender documentation for appointing contractors, managing contractors, programming the recovery works and overseeing the delivery of the works.

The team comprises:

– Infrastructure Recovery Manager.
– Lead Civil Engineer.

– Project Manager Building Works.
– Project Manager Project and Annual Supply Contract (x2).
– Contract Supervisor (x2).
– Program Inspector.

A further two Council staff also support the recovery effort.

FLOOD RECOVERY OFFICE

Within seven weeks of the disaster CT Management Group had established a Flood Recovery Office in the worst affected town of Numurkah.

Creating a standalone recovery office was a deliberate and important part of the approach, providing many benefits.

Council's Flood Recovery Manager, David Booth, said the office was strategically placed to act as a central contact point for the community and has allowed Council "to tend to people's needs near their place of residence".

We had 300 to 400 people through the door each week for the first six to eight weeks," Mr Booth said. "That volume has now reduced as the people and property issues have largely been resolved."

Residents have felt welcomed at the Flood Recovery Office and comfortable in having a say in the future of their community infrastructure, said Ernest Jones of the Numurkah and District Development Committee.

"They've been very good (at the Flood Recovery Office) in the way they've

taken on our suggestions," Mr Jones said.

He is particularly proud of the contemporary fountain in the Broken Creek, which was at the suggestion of the Numurkah and District Development Committee.

"One aspect of the recovery is that it helps the community feel like they're getting back to a sense of normality," he said. "It's those little things that have a big impact on how people feel about their lives."

The office is also the operational base from which the Flood Recovery Team coordinates the recovery and supervises the works. And while it is 40 kilometres from the Council's administrative centre at Cobram, it was important that it operate like any of its other offices, ensuring that Council governance processes are being met.

"Where possible we try to use Council processes (like) payment processes and the customer request system," Infrastructure Manager Malcolm McKenzie said.

Chief Executive Officer Gary Arnold said a key consideration in separating the recovery process from the Council's day to day administration was ensuring "that there would be a minimal effect operationally" on the Council. It also ensures the distinction between the functions of each office is clear to the community.

Another benefit is that the stand alone office allows Council to clearly demonstrate all costs for the project and show this in a transparent way for the government funding agency.

Moira Shire Council's Flood Recovery Manager, David Booth, outside the Flood Recovery Office with CT Management Group's Malcolm McKenzie.

Mayor Brian Keenan said the Council has been pleased with the distinct separation of responsibilities between its administrative office in Cobram and the Flood Recovery Office.

"It's quite inspirational. It has never been done before, here," Cr Keenan said.

TECHNOLOGY

With an office established, focus shifted to analysing and recording the damage done by the floods to community infrastructure. CT Management Group implemented an asset management and defect logging system capable of managing the infrastructure recovery: DELTA-S.

Using personal data assistants (PDAs), Associates logged more than 3500 defects – from small pot holes to large sections of road that required rehabilitation. Details of each defect was quickly and accurately recorded in the field by inputting data into the PDA, including:

– Street and GPS location.

– Photographs of damage and repairs.

– Assessment date.

– Description of the damage and work required.

– Estimated quantity/cost.

– Actual cost.

– Works completion date.

This information was uploaded to the DELTA-S database, which allows the team to:

–Calculate the entire project cost.

– Tracks the status of individual defects.

– Produce GIS-based maps of defects and their status.

– Track the recovery project's progress.

– Generate reports, including project progress and work status reports.

– Use end of month reports to assist with funding claims from the government.

INNOVATIVE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

With the cost to repair community infrastructure still being calculated, Council could not utilise their standard lump sum contract methods as the scope of works was not fully known.

A panel of six contractors was established under a schedule of rates contract arrangement.

CT Management Group has developed an innovative model that evaluates how contractors are performing on their assigned works and ensures that Council is getting value for money.

"Using the DELTA-S tool, we can do analysis on their (contractors') work output and who is delivering us value for money," Mr McKenzie said.

RESULTS

When Moira Shire Council was inundated by its worst flood on record it devastated the shire's towns, community infrastructure and the community itself.

One year on, and utilising CT Management Group's innovative technology, contract management processes and experienced project managers and engineers, Moira Shire Council is achieving restoration of community infrastructure faster than expected – and ahead of the June 2014 grant deadline.

Council's Flood Recovery Manager, David Booth, said the progress of the recovery work was pleasing.

"(The government grant) funding gives Council two years from the start. At the moment we're on track to deliver either on time or before time," he said. "The feedback from the DTF (Department of Treasury and Finance) … is that we are well ahead of other areas (that) have had disasters even 12 months before (Moira's floods)."

Council CEO Gary Arnold said that at half way through the two year recovery project, Council is pleased with its success to date and the community response.

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LEADING THE RECOVERY (from left): Council CEO Gary Arnold, Mayor Brian Keenan, CT Management Group's Malcolm McKenzie and Council's Flood Recovery Manager, David Booth.