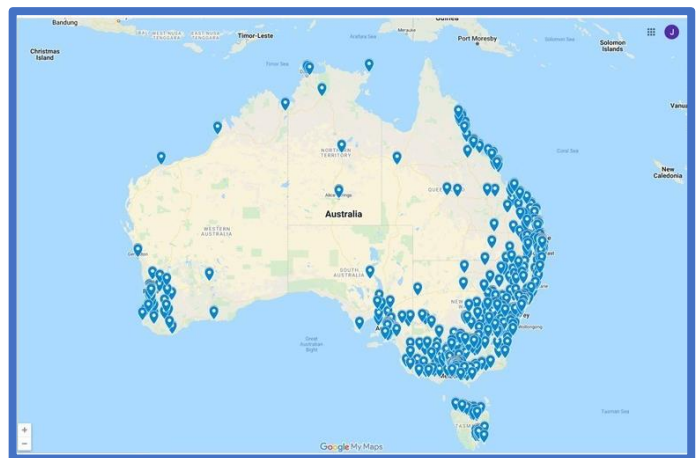


# Rotary Australia World Community Service Limited

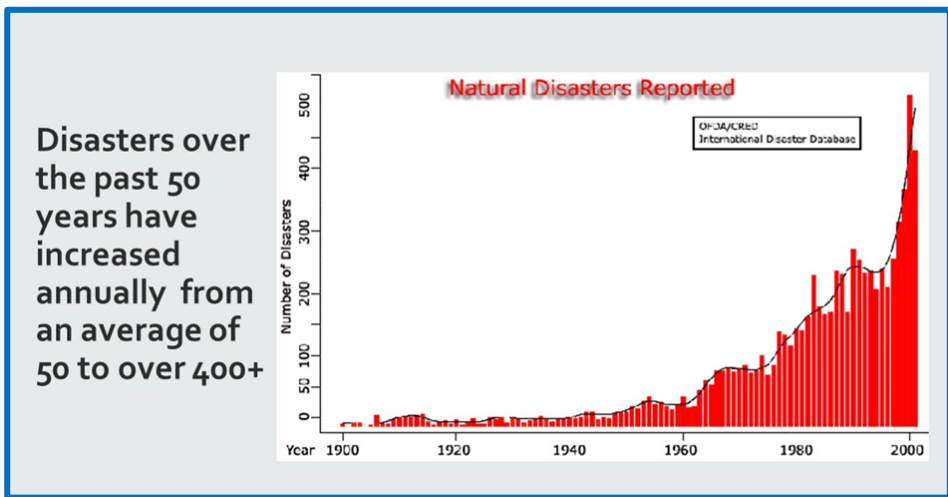
## Natural Disasters and our response

Natural hazard events can occur anywhere at any time and wherever they occur, local leadership, knowledge and engagement is key to returning stability and normality to both individuals and the community.

Rotary clubs in Australia through Rotary Australia World Community Service Limited (RAWCS) represent a national network of community-based business and professional members. Rotarians are engaged with their local communities and have demonstrated experience and willingness to both lead and support the resilience and recovery of their communities before, during and in the aftermath of damaging events. (The map shows the geographic spread of Rotary Clubs in Australia).



RAWCS, as a key community service organisation believes it has a shared responsibility to the public and communities in which it operates and can react swiftly to emerging natural disaster impacts both in Australia and overseas.



This graph shows how the incidence of Natural Disasters is accelerating. RAWCS has adapted to this reality by developing the Rotary Australia Relief Fund (RARF) to enable rapid establishment of appeals for funds to support community responses. RARF Project Criteria are documented under this site’s Key Documentation menu.

## Minimising the harm to people and communities is an ongoing process

### Mitigation:

To prevent or reduce damage from future disasters, there are a variety of tasks involved in assessing possible weaknesses, taking steps to strengthen infrastructure, and educating the public about ways to lessen risks.

### Preparedness:

During the preparedness phase, work should be undertaken to develop and refine emergency response plans and resources. Also conduct training exercises to get ready for a variety of possible scenarios. (Example - home fire guards, flood plan, power back up after storm damage)

### Response:

When disaster strikes, and in the days and weeks that follow, there is a need to coordinate logistics for carrying out response plans. To take action to save lives, preserve property, and provide humanitarian care. To evacuate affected areas; set up shelters; restore power and repair other critical infrastructure; and deliver food, medicine, and other supplies.

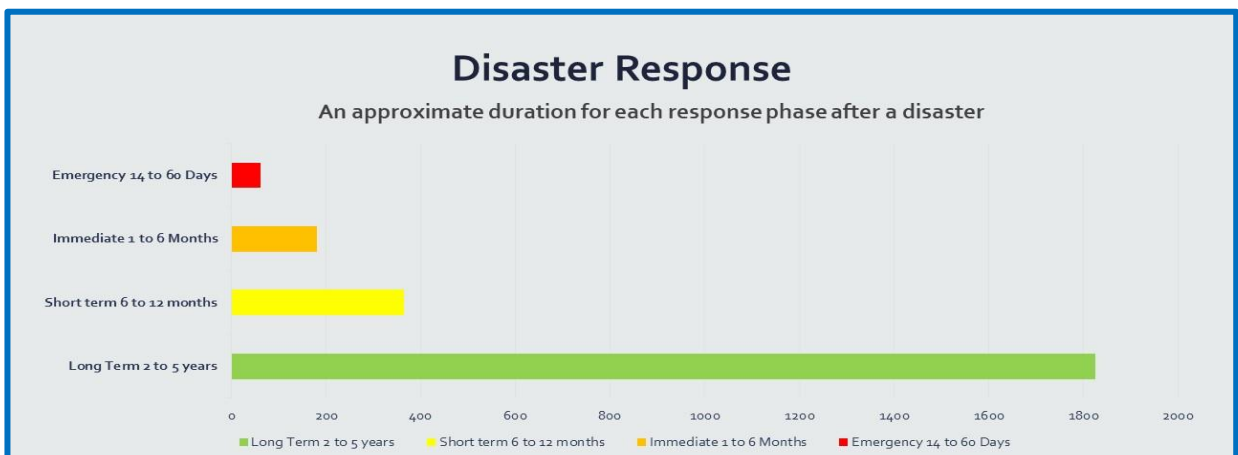
### Recovery:

After meeting people’s immediate needs and restoring basic services, focus turns to addressing the recovery priorities for community to function – such as to address housing, health, and social service’s needs, infrastructure, work alongside community structures to assist in rebuilding communities.



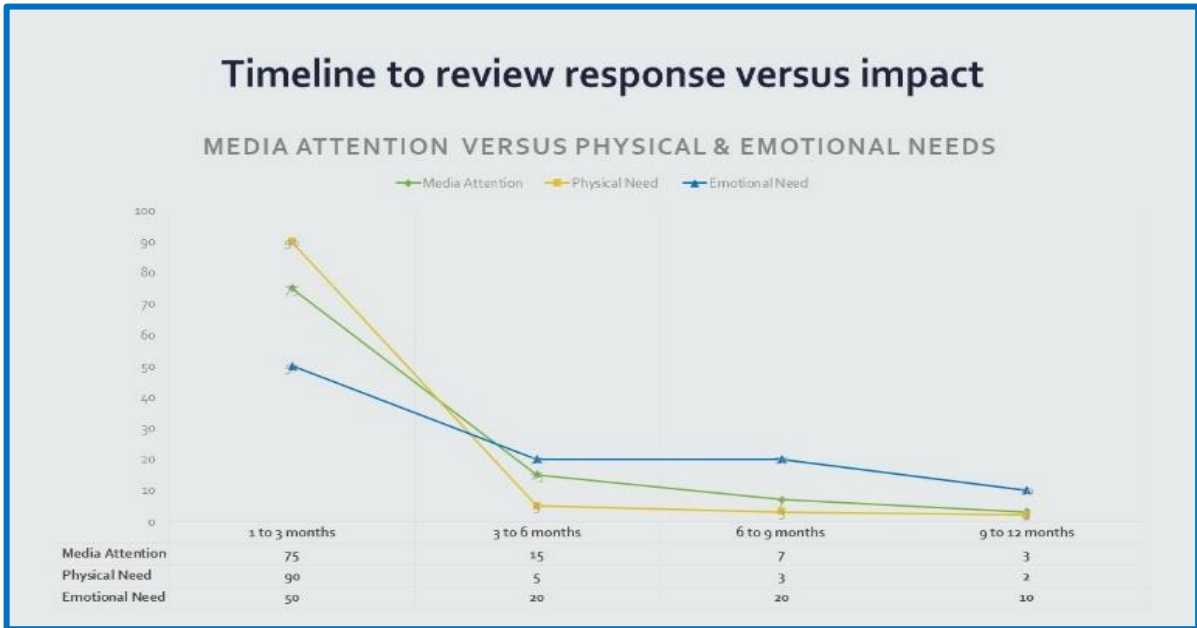
Developing a shared responsibility for reducing risk within communities relies on the ability of key leadership within the community to recognise risk and to proactively initiate mitigation and seek partners to address risks and build resilience. In this regard, at the community level, the process is analogous to developing a workplace safety culture which identifies risk and builds collaboration to eliminate or mitigate the threats. Rotary, through community partnerships in many communities is well placed to contribute and lead.

Each disruption is different however there are broadly three phases and all three need to be addressed as indicated below:

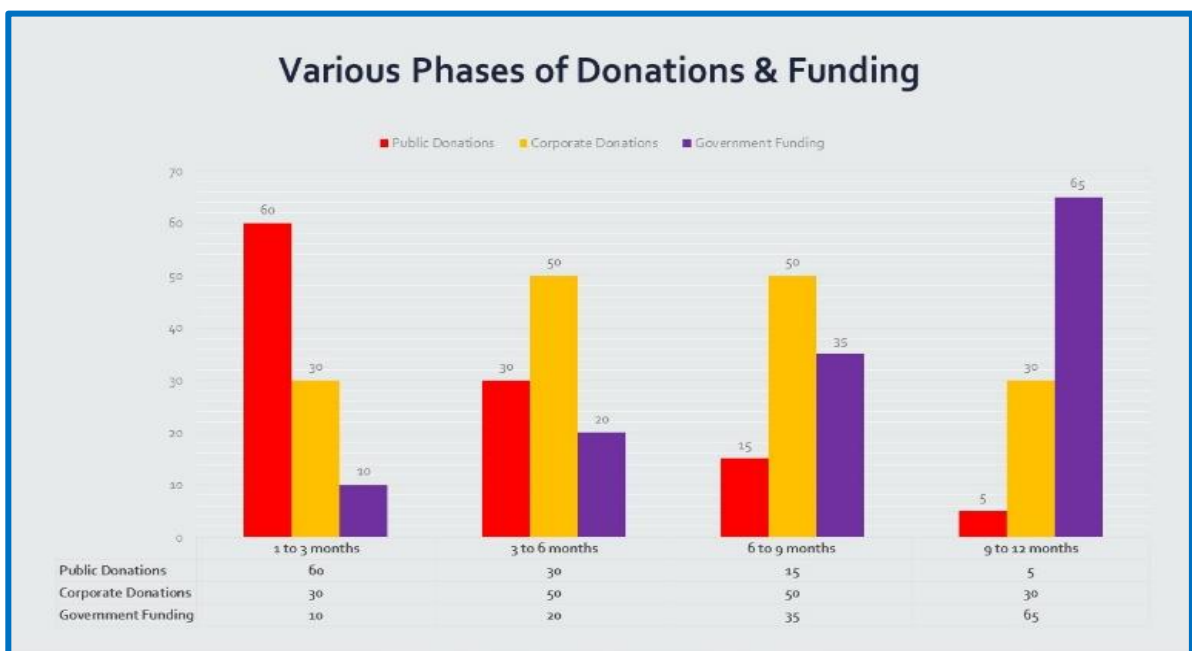


- Rotary supports three phases of relief:
  - **Immediate response:** Our local Rotary clubs, Rotary districts and partners immediately offer helping hands and supplies (directly and through other locally engaged organisations).
  - **Short-term assistance:** Our local Rotary clubs, Rotary districts help affected communities wherever we can through funds and materials to re-establish day-to-day operations.
  - **Long-term rebuilding:** Our local Rotary clubs, Rotary districts plan and implement projects that build back better in their affected communities.

Frequently media, national attention and support isn't sustained as long as it is needed as shown below:



Longer term recovery and resilience building requires a range of funding sources to address construction of infrastructure as well as the emotional support required in affected communities.



## What RAWCS does

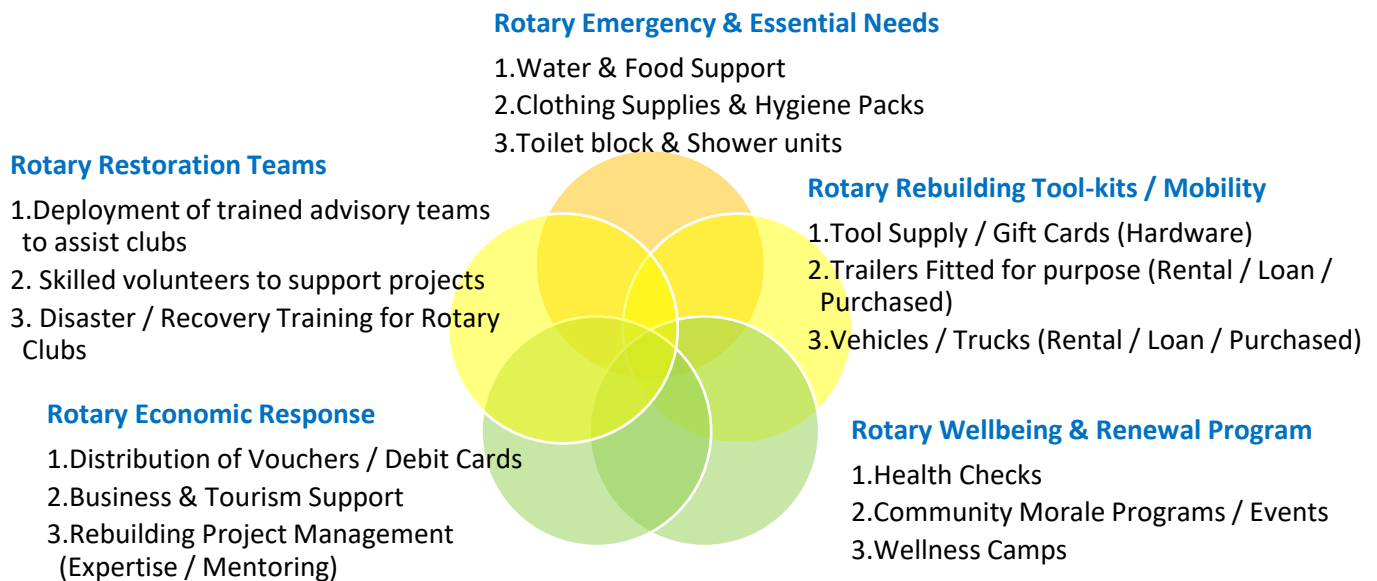
Rotary has been active in Australian communities for more than 100 years. RAWCS understands the need to be there for the long haul. By working in partnership with governments, the public and other agencies, RAWCS is constantly developing response strategies to enable the network of Rotary clubs to better serve the communities they live in.

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, Rotary Clubs in the impacted areas work within their communities to assist with clean-ups, community morale and mental health support and needs assessments using their own resources backed up by nearby clubs and the Rotary District teams. At a national level RAWCS launches an appeal through the Rotary Australia Relief Fund to accumulate specific donated funds and draws on the local knowledge of Rotarians on the ground to fund priority relief and recovery projects.

In the longer- term Rotary projects to build back better, to fortify the community against similar future hazards and build resilience, are funded directly and through significant partnerships. Collaboration with other organisations can meet needs such as funding, training, specific expertise and equipment and training volunteer teams.

## The Structure of Rotary Disaster Response

The Rotary Disaster Response encompasses the needs of the different phases of a disruption event.



RAWCS maintains a Disaster Response Committee which works closely with the Board to determine when RARF appeals should be launched and to advise on funding distributions to Rotary Community support projects in disaster impacted areas.

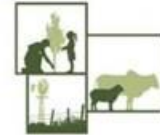
## Accountability, good governance and reliability over the long haul

RAWCS maintains accountabilities for all its actions and is fully accredited with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC). Funding, whether from the public, philanthropists or governments is subject to the highest standards of governance to ensure the integrity of the Rotary name is maintained. Volunteers need working with vulnerable people clearances and are required to agree to the RAWCS Code of Conduct. The partnership with

the NRRA on the Drought Community Outreach Program is a good example of nationwide program delivery coupled with high level integrity and accountability. This project delivered Community Outreach (support) events in 138 drought affected communities and distributed \$500 vouchers to 12,000 families that were dealing with the financial impact of drought and the long, slow period of recovery.

**Drought Community Outreach Program (DCOP)**

**Partnership with NRRA  
National Recovery and Resilience Agency**



**Engaged 110 Rotary Clubs across Australia  
Delivered Community Outreach Events in 138 towns  
Average Club Project Community benefit >\$26,000**

**Current Programs**

RAWCS is currently facilitating projects to aid recovery and build resilience in Communities that have been affected by Drought, Bushfires, Cyclonic winds and Flood. Our aim is to distribute funds to projects that meet the needs identified in the RARF appeals (calls for funding) and that meet RAWCS project criteria as soon as possible in the aftermath of a disaster. RAWCS works with Rotarians on the ground to see that effective programs which meet the identified needs, are commenced and completed in timeframes that support recovery and build long term resilience. RAWCS also seeks strategic partnerships with other delivery organisations to find solutions that best address what is needed to support affected communities.