



A healthier outcome

Why disaster management should address the long-term health of a community for a more sustainable result.

DR PAUL STEINFORT
FAIPM



Paul Steinfort has more than 40 years' project planning and management experience and knowledge in both the built and rebuilding environment. He has served as CEO of PSA Project Management for over 25 years and led new Project Management implementation for major projects such as the MCG redevelopment.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION defines health as a “state of physical, mental and social wellbeing”. For any community to achieve a set of outcomes such as these is challenging – let alone when disaster strikes.

Project management should address the long-term impacts of disasters and how to provide capability to the communities affected. It should also consider the constant challenges to any community of resilience and sustainability.

The greater community and the project management profession can learn from each other to deliver more valuable outcomes in challenging situations.

PSA methodology

I have recently undertaken research that looks at pre- and post-disaster project management to determine the best methods and project groups to respond to those challenges.

Key findings highlight the importance of understanding and enabling simple, robust, best-practice program and project management within communities. The findings form the basis of the methodology that drives PSA Project Development International (PSA PDI), a not-for-profit organisation that works with communities to design, plan and implement projects that deliver value to the key stakeholders – the community members themselves.

The PSA approach is based on the principle that sustainable projects and programs need effective, aligned, community-driven processes. In the case of recovery or redevelopment projects, praxis allows communities to understand and drive

WHAT IS PRAXIS?

Praxis is the use or practice of a discipline for specific outcomes or benefits to the community, with the growth in learning that follows. It has been progressively worked and improved in pragmatic philosophy over millennia, dating back to Aristotle and beyond.

programs more effectively from within.

The resulting programs are resourced and achieved more efficiently. They also enable effective ownership and best-value outcomes, align with the criteria of the key stakeholders, and have stronger buy-in and commitment from both funders and the community.

Not all communities are the same

Communities have their own culture and values. These influence their definition of project success. Working with community members gives you insight into the following:

- What does project success look like to them? How do they value that?
- Who are the key stakeholders and do they value it as you might? Would they share the same picture of the best-value outcomes?
- How do they plan, do and review their projects? Is that significantly different to you and what can be learnt from all this?

Understanding what communities define as a successful outcome also enables strong project monitoring and evaluation pre- and post-disaster, as well as any challenges to health, sustainability and resilience. ...



**DESIGN, PLAN AND IMPLEMENT
PROJECTS THAT DELIVER VALUE
TO THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS –
THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS**





PSA PDI, led by Dr Paul Steinfort, was involved in the Victorian Bushfire recovery efforts

PSA METHODOLOGY

Dr Paul Steinfort's research found project success hinges on the following principles:

1 PLAN

A rapid assessment of the program can determine whether outcomes are sustainable and best value in the eyes of the key stakeholders, and that project plans are feasible.

2 SUSTAIN

Through stakeholder engagement and stakeholder analysis, you can determine what their key requirements are and whether the project goals are sustainable.

3 ASSESS

A good value assessment system will help you identify the key success criteria for each of your projects and deliverables. It will also help you determine which action plans deliver best value (input versus output), and how best to achieve those outcomes.

4 PROJECT

Effective, aligned, team-driven project planning methods and praxis enable sustainable projects and programs.



NZ CASE STUDY

➔ The 2011 earthquake, centred just outside Christchurch, New Zealand, killed 181 people and caused widespread damage across the city and surrounding suburbs. The estimated cost of rebuilding to insurers is estimated at around NZ\$15-16 billion, making it by far New Zealand's costliest natural disaster.

PSA worked with community leaders and project management professionals to manage projects post disaster.