

Since 1933.

The 'spirit of Binna Burra'.

The culture of resilience continues after
the 2019 bushfires.



Resilience:

'The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a Timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.'

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience.

Before Sunday 8 September 2019



Photo Credit: Leighton Pitcher

BINNABURRALODGE
LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK | QUEENSLAND | AUSTRALIA

After Sunday 8 September 2019

Summary.

On September 8, 2019, at the beginning of six months of what became known as Australia's 'Black Summer' bushfires, the historic [Binna Burra Lodge](#) and pioneer cabins were destroyed. They took with them the jobs of some 60 staff, most of whom had to be retrenched, as well as 4,000 forward bookings including 15 planned weddings most of which had to be refunded.

It took one year before visitors could be welcomed back onto the Binna Burra side of the Lamington National Park in September 2020. The ongoing recovery of Binna Burra Lodge wasn't possible without the support of PALs (Partnerships, Alliances, Linkages) from near and far who felt a connection to the place, its history, and its landscape.

Binna Burra is a story of resilience by previous generations of custodianship of its cultural landscape from its founding in the early 1930s.

That story of resilience continues after the 2019 bushfires and illustrates the power and value of goodwill, an intangible asset that Binna Burra describes as 'solidarity tourism', evolving out of the ashes of the disaster.

"... after a disaster, people may experience a range of thoughts and emotions, like numbness, fear, anger, helplessness and frustration. These are common reactions to an extraordinary event,"

Australian Red Cross' National Resilience Adviser, John Richardson.



'Impacts of the bushfire at Binna Burra ripple out far beyond Sunday 8 September 2019'

Steve Noakes, Chairperson, Board of Directors, Binna Burra Lodge

Early messaging just after the bushfire devastation on 8 September 2019.



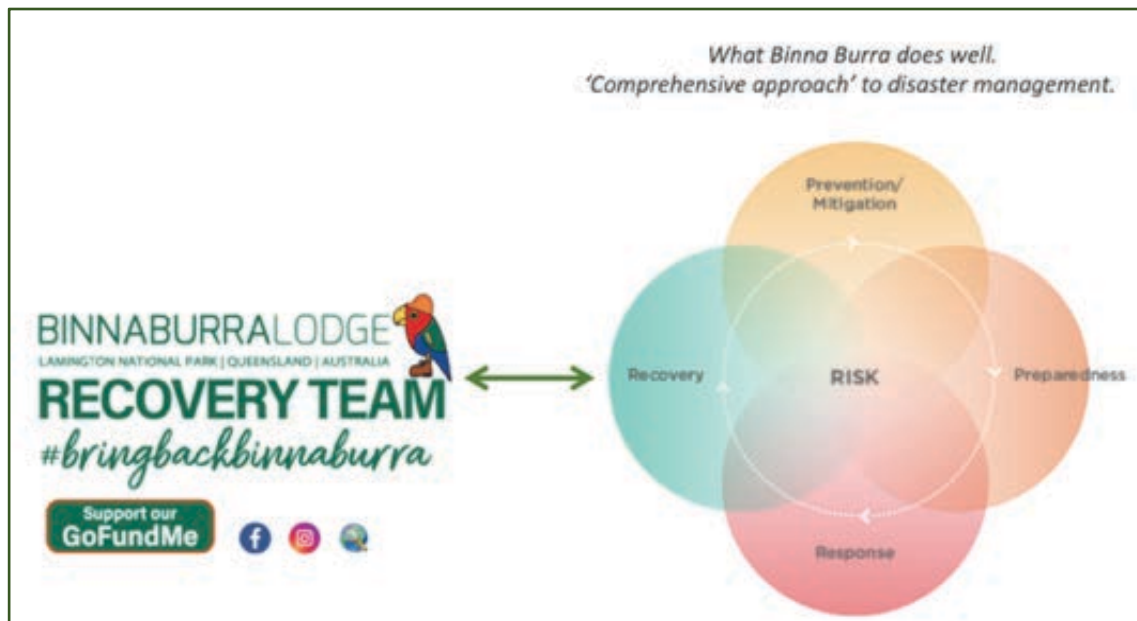
Immediately after the bushfire impact, all recovery planning and operations adapted the principles as recommended by Queensland Government - Disaster Management: and based on guidelines from the National Institute for Disaster Resilience.

Example of recovery communications within the first week of the bushfire devastation.



Purpose and process.

On the day of the bushfire impact Binna Burra commenced a 'comprehensive approach' to managing the disaster. The initial purposes were to (a) establish a response and recovery framework all stakeholders could engage in (b) take care of the staff, customers and creditors and (c) develop a process to reopen access to and remaining facilities on the Binna Burra Cultural Landscape within the Lamington National Park, part of the Gondwana World Heritage Listed Rainforests of eastern Australia.



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RECOVERY TEAM
#bringbackbinnaBurra

**Create a
recovery
structure**

RECOVERY PHASE
ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK

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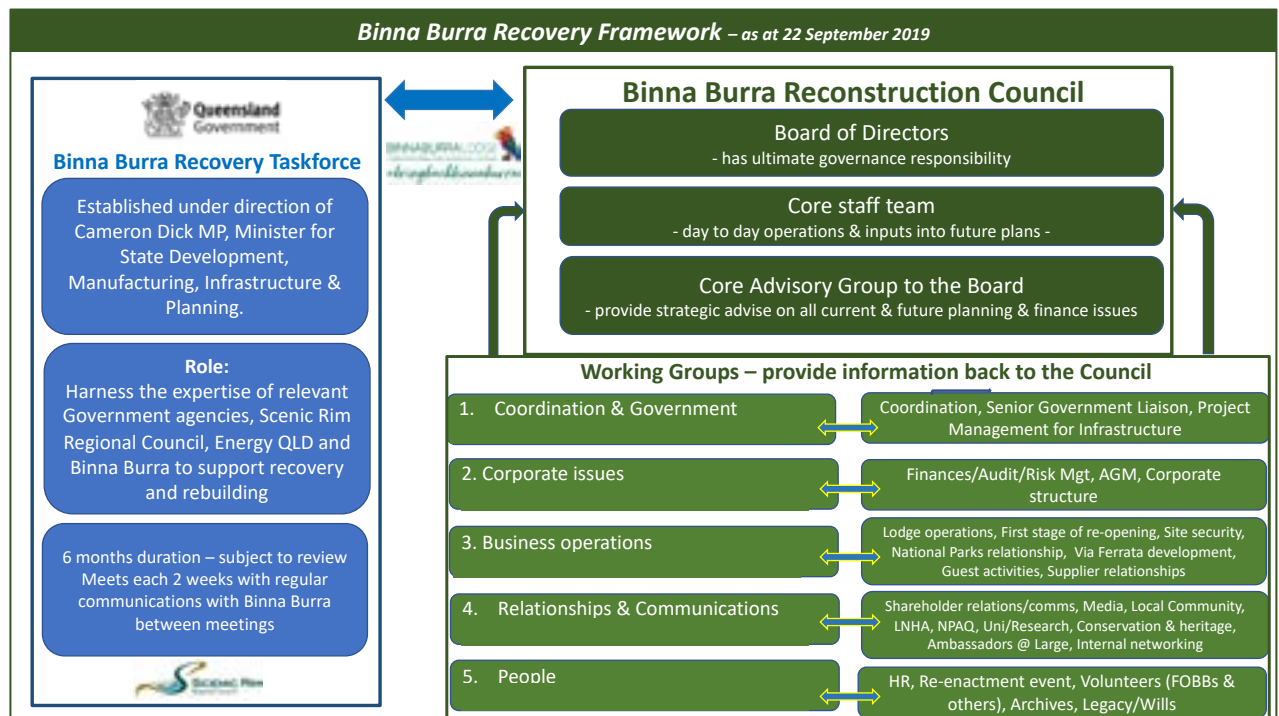
#bringbackbinnaBurra



NO
OVERTAKING
OR

The 'Bushfire Response and Recovery project' involved a strategic approach to identify and engage Binna Burra 'PALs' – Partnerships, Alliances, Linkages.

Within a week of the disaster, the Binna Burra Recovery Framework had been developed and implementation commenced.



Public media (TV, newspapers, radio and online) was used on the morning of the bushfires and for the days, weeks and months after the disaster to keep the public informed as well as maintain the brand for a future reopening. Within one week of the disaster, the following was communicated to the 800 + shareholders.

Sunday, September 15, 2019 (one week after the fire)

Message from Steve Noakes Binna Burra Chair, Board of Directors.

BRING BACK BINNA BURRA

Dear Binna Burra stakeholder,

We are now well into recovery planning stage. THIS IS OUR IMMEDIATE PLAN.

We will adapt the principles underpin all recovery planning and operations as recommended by Queensland Government - Disaster Management: and based on guidelines from the National Institute for Disaster Resilience. That means we have:

(a) understood our context and acknowledged the impact upon all our stakeholders extends beyond the actual site where the devastating fires occurred last weekend - with an initial focus on the safety, well being and transitioning to new employment for our staff and connecting with our future customers who held bookings

b) acknowledged the complexity of our task which has a range of effects and impacts that require a variety of approaches which can leave long-term legacies for sustainable tourism at Binna Burra Lodge inside the World heritage Listed Lamington National Park

c) adopted a stakeholder engagement that engages our Board, staff, shareholders, the local Beechmont community and the friends of Binna Burra throughout Australia and internationally

d) we're ensuring coordination of all activities, kick started this week with the Queensland Government Binna Burra Recovery Taskforce

e) our communications strategy is two-way - your input and feedback is encouraged - the media statements are consistent via one person - the Chairman

f) we are advanced in identifying the capacity of individuals and organisations to mobile our PALs (Partners, Alliances and Links) to create innovative new nature based, educational and adventure tourism programs at the new Binna Burra which preserve and enhance the foundations and spirit of our magic part of the Gondwana World Heritage Rainforest of Australia.

All the above continues to be operationalised this week. There will be a range of ways our 'stakeholders' can contribute if they wish. These will be promoted on our website and Facebook site as they roll out. We will welcome your contribution to BRING BACK BINNA BURRA

If you would personally like to assist please donate to: <https://au.gofundme.com/f/friends-of-binna-burra-lodge>

State Government PALs.

High level representation every two week for six months after the bushfire by senior leadership of each Department.

A range of different Departments/Agencies within the Queensland Government have been very supportive to help [#BringBackBinnaBurra](#)



The taskforce was activated to:

- coordinate and facilitate a recovery action plan
- provide advice to government
- support the Binna Burra Lodge Management Team and Board of Directors in providing staff with employment and training pathways.



Thank you for your efforts towards the Binna Burra Lodge Recovery

1. State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure & Planning
2. Transport & Main Roads
3. QLD Reconstruction Authority
4. Innovation & Tourism Industry Development
5. Employment, Small Business & Training
6. Environment & Science
7. Natural Resources, Mines & Energy
8. Energy Queensland
9. Queensland Health
10. Office of Industrial Relations
11. Queensland Police
12. QLD Fire & Emergency Services
13. Treasury

Australian Government – another response & recovery PAL for Binna Burra.

Federal Government bush-fire recovery support has also been welcomed
– includes cash support for specific projects

TOURISM AUSTRALIA

TOURISM AUSTRALIA UPDATE

AUSTRALIAN STORIES

Essentials
10 June 2020



Binna Burra Sky Lodges ready to reopen, QLD

The [Binna Burra Sky Lodges](#) in Queensland are getting ready to welcome back guests in August.

Unable to host guests since September last year due to the summer bushfires and then COVID-19, the lodge is excited for guests to return. A gateway to Lamington National Park and located in the Gold Coast Hinterland, with sweeping views across the Coomera and Numinbah Valleys, the award-winning Skye lodge is the perfect place for a nature escape. Those longing to curl up in front of the cosy fireplace while taking-in breathtaking views are able to make bookings for August and beyond online now.

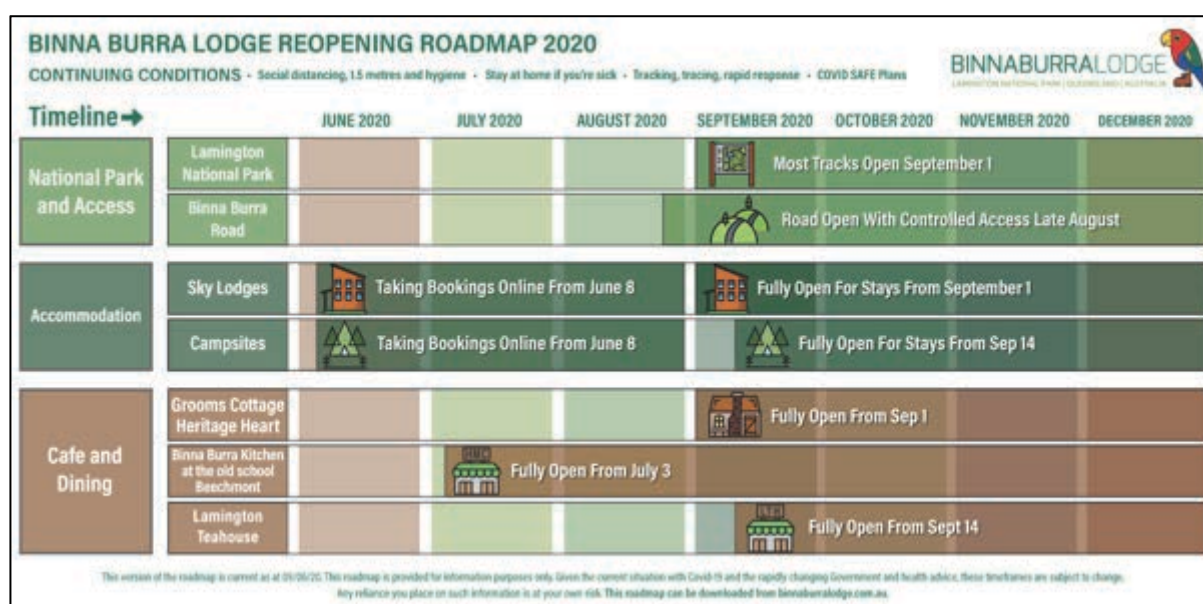
The path to reopen.

A key achievement was the strategic approach with the support and engagement of Binna Burra's PALs that resulted in maintaining cohesion and focus by all key stakeholders to work through the months of delay in gaining road access, the pressure of no trading income for one year, sourcing working capital, maintaining the vision and leadership to give all stakeholders that Binna Burra would come back again.

The campaign #BringBackBinnaBurra worked well as the lead social media messaging, coupled with a rapid expansion in Binna Burra's Facebook followers to over 50,000 and finding the resources to maintain a key digital marketing staff member.



It took 12 months from the September 2019 bushfires to commence business activities back on the site. Business recovery from such devastation is not short term, but as Binna Burra heads towards its first full year of trading again, the organisation continues to make steady progress to rebuild the business which now employs about 35 staff, most of whom come from the local community.



Binna Burra Lodge Ltd is an unlisted public company, best described these days as a social enterprise with a strong environmental focus. The organisation was founded by the same people who, in 1930, formed the National Parks Association of Queensland. Under the 1934 constitution of the original company, Queensland Holiday Resorts, no individual shareholder can own more than 2.5 percent of the shares. Now it's over 1,000 shareholders. It's possibly Australia's largest 'ecotourism collective'. Approximately half of all share holders have small holdings of 500 x \$1 shares and 90% have 5,000 or less shares.

Two years after the bushfires, the recovery project is going well beyond 'business as usual' with strong progress in the first Reconciliation Action Plan at Binna Burra, a new Master Plan developed, improvements either completed or underway to the remaining infrastructure such as a large open-air deck on the Tea House/Café, improvements to the camp-ground including new Safari tents and Tesla electric car charging, a new Bushwalker's Bar and Heritage Reading Room in the heritage listed Groom's Cottage (1934), building Australia's first via ferrata (a rock face adventure activity) and initiatives such as 'Science Matters @ Binna Burra', 'Binna Burra Geographic', 'Millennials of Binna Burra + Gen Z (MOBBz)', 'Friends of Binna Burra' (FOBBs), the Binna Burra Bushfire Gallery and the Binna Burra Bushwalker's Bunkhouse.



The 2020 MOU with Griffith University as Binna Burra's lead University Partner has generated win/win/win for students/researchers, Griffith University and Binna Burra Lodge in terms of a range of research projects, student internships, joint funding proposals and library services.



Support the community to build resilience to disasters and emergencies.

Over the past nine decades, Binna Burra has always been closely connected to the local Beech Mountain community. Many local people are shareholders and/or have strong emotional connection to Binna Burra, and have greatly appreciated the reopening of the Binna Burra Cultural Landscape. Currently, some two-thirds of the three dozen staff are from the local community and Binna Burra continues to support a range of local community events and meetings on site.

Examples include:

1. Tuesday 25 May 2021: The [Governor-General of Australia revisits Binna Burra](#) to unveil a 'Local Hereos' sculpture paying tribute to the volunteer work of our local Beechmont Rural Fire Brigade.
2. Saturday 5 June 2021: Binna Burra hosts full day meeting of the Lamington Natural History Association, a local not-for-profit organisation that support the national parks service.
3. Saturday 10th July 2021: Binna Burra will host local community Bushfire regeneration creative writing workshop as a pathway to healing for those affected by the fires on the mountain in 2019.
4. 2020: [Trainees help with bushfire recovery](#) at Binna Burra ahead of graduation
5. [Scenic Rim Eat Local event 2021 – on the site of the former lodge @ Binna Burra](#)

The response and recovery process at Binna Burra continues to be documented and reported by various agencies – examples:

1. Experts say Binna Burra is a stellar example of disaster recovery. Griffith University
2. <https://news.griffith.edu.au/2020/09/01/experts-say-binna-burra-is-a-stellar-example-of-disaster-recovery/>
3. Councillor says unity had been at the core of Binna Burra Lodge's recovery.

- a. <https://www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/news/article/404/bright-future-for-binna-burra-on-bushfire-anniversary?fbclid=IwAR235wfPLLG05A1iUYcELJpwF4ZKQMAqhaJD i EHtQz MljLxmCCb5cK2-E>
4. Community's stories and insights would help develop guidelines to inform policy and decision-making in the hope that future bushfires of this scale would be prevented.
 - a. <https://news.griffith.edu.au/2021/03/26/hope-for-future-rises-from-ashes-of-bushfire-devastation/>
5. From a leading international cultural tourism expert (based in Boston, USA). Love of Binna Burra Cultural Landscape Inspires Community - Wildfire Devastation of Iconic Australian Lodge Inspires Solidarity www.bestculturaldestinations.com/binna-burra/
6. Channel 9 News: One year since bushfires took hold of Binna Burra Lodge and nearby homes devastated. www.facebook.com/9NewsGoldCoast/videos/339549343907819

The Binna Burra Response and Recovery process has already been used to assist other communities both within Australia and overseas.

Examples:

1. June 2020. Funded by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – via Griffith University for training programs in Asia Pacific. [Binna Burra features in 'Tourism - Ready for Recovery'](#)
2. Binna Burra Lodge included in Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA [Queensland Bushfires State Recovery Plan 2019-2022](#) to guide recovery of communities impacted by the bushfires that caused widespread damage across parts of Queensland from September through to December 2019.

*"Without the financial and technical support of QRA there is no way we would have been able to progress as far as we have in the recovery of Binna Burra after the bushfires in September 2019" said Steve Noakes, Chairperson of Binna Burra Lodge Ltd. "Since the bushfire devastation we have had a great working relationship with all QRA officials who initially worked with the joint State Government and Binna Burra Taskforce to fast-track the reconstruction and opening of the single access road into the Binna Burra side of Lamington National Park and to help get Binna Burra back on its feet and welcome guests one year later."*¹

¹ QRA was also instrumental in arranging \$1.775 million awarded to Binna Burra in early 2020 to support our recovery as the largest single employer in the Beech Mountain community and as custodians of the Binna Burra Cultural Landscape. This was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments through Category D of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). That funding went towards cleaning up the site, site master planning and to stabilise the cliff face to improve the sites safety and resilience into the future. QRA also announced \$500,000 of funding through the Local Economic Recovery (LER) Program to the Scenic Rim Regional Council (SRRC) for infrastructure works at Binna Burra Lodge. LER is jointly funded by the

Experts say Binna Burra is a stellar example of disaster recovery



<https://news.griffith.edu.au/2020/09/01/experts-say-binna-burra-is-a-stellar-example-of-disaster-recovery/>



“Places like Binna Burra are already thinking ahead: what kinds of plants they can plant now, how they should design buildings to stand more extreme conditions.”

“All of this is very practical climate change adaptation and really requires a new mindset in how we tackle future problems in today’s context.”



Commonwealth and Queensland Governments under the DRFA. The funds will be used for improvements to the Binna Burra Tea House, camping and amenities on site.

Findings and achievements.

Initially the entire Response and Recovery process at Binna Burra was guided by the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience – and then along came the COVID pandemic and that also had to be factored into the organisation's strategic thinking – illustrated in the diagram below used for in-house planning.



Such is the significance of the Binna Burra Cultural Landscape under Queensland Heritage Register legislation administered by the Department of Environment & Science, the project was the first time the Queensland Government had established a six-month cross-department Recovery Taskforce for a specific tourism enterprise. Without that strategic, high level coordination between Federal, State and Local government agencies, we would not have had the Binna Burra side of Lamington National Park open one year after the bushfire devastation.

Key findings by Griffith University research team (attached file 'Bushfire at Binna Burra Lodge. A case study').

- Have multiple trained fire wardens, particularly given varying shift patterns and high-risk and/or remote locations. Define precise roles prior to the emergency and during the event.
- Have multi-skilled, cross-trained staff that are able to deal with complex and variable situations, and transferable skills. This is particularly relevant during the recovery process when staff may have to undertake roles outside of their normal duties. Conduct regular crisis scenario training.

- Have a go-kit that is easily accessible and contains information required to keep business trading and/or be able to respond to insurers and banks etc., as well as spare building and vehicle keys. Store important archive documents off-site, and store cash and valuable items in a way that is easy to move. Stationing staff to avoid more visitors to the disaster zone.
- The decision not to let business get in the way of early evacuation.
- Pre-determine the most senior person in the organisation as a single spokesperson to communicate and liaise with stakeholders and media.
- Ability to operate remotely and set-up temporary headquarters. Portable technology infrastructure and telecommunications and cloud-based computing is important.
- Pivot your communications and website in response to the event.
- Consider forward bookings and distribution channel partners. Managing cashflow in the event of a disaster to account for operations and staffing.
- Build relationships with key stakeholders and partners prior to the event such as destination marketing organisations, the media, emergency services and government.
- Understand your staffing responsibilities and have a staff management plan in the event of a disaster with particular consideration to the post-disaster staff management strategy e.g. business disruption insurance.

A collaborative research project with the University of Queensland is currently underway to explore how resilient leadership as well as stakeholder collaboration and social networks are important factors that contribute to the resilience of an organisation such as Binna Burra Lodge.

Response: Dealing with the immediate issues.

Reactions, grief, sadness, staff, intense media interest, customers, creditors, suppliers, bank, ATO, road access, asbestos, internal & external communications, shareholders, Board responsibilities, volunteers, solvency, water, sanitation, power, wildlife, site security, legal compliance issues, high profile visitors, personal situation etc



Binna Burra Lodge's Steve Noakes Picture: NIGEL HALLETT

Focus on the opportunity!

Inclusiveness.

The way tourism sector operators respond and recovery from any disaster will be unique to the event, the destination and the enterprise impacted. In the case of Binna Burra, the way post-bushfire scaled-down organisation responded with the support of our PALs, might be useful to others facing similar disasters.



As a long standing social enterprise, Binna Burra Lodge has a diverse staff and an even more diverse set of visitors to the Binna Burra Cultural Landscape. The company is also now well advanced with its first Reconciliation Action Plan and for the first time in its long history, now has more women on the Board of Directors than men.

The mental wellbeing of the community in the lead up to the bushfires, during the few days when we lost eleven houses and Binna Burra Lodge and the now 20 months after the bushfires remains at the forefront of our activities.

For a week before the bushfire finally made its way to Beechmont and Binna Burra, a number of families of staff at Binna Burra were active in volunteer rural fire services. We were all preparing for the worst. Binna Burra is a caring and nurturing organisation and the safety of our staff and guests was paramount, hence the decision to do a voluntary evacuation two days before the bushfires actually reached Binna Burra. When it became clear that almost 60 staff would need to be retrenched, and with the tremendous support of federal, State and Local agencies, with ten days of the fire 100% of Binna Burra staff retrenched had some alternatives organised in terms of new jobs, training or Centrelink arrangements. Mental health counseling was also provided. This has continued since the bushfires with support

arrangements from the Queensland government and our local Scenic Rim Regional Council and includes some community support programs funded by the Commonwealth.

On the one year anniversary of the bushfires we drew upon the learning and studies undertaken by the American Psychological Association after the 11 Sept 2001 attacks in New York and Washington DC about anniversary dates of traumatic experiences reactivating thoughts and feelings about the actual event and used that experience with Binna Burra staff and also in displays at the entry to our Bushfire Gallery – example attached.

American Psychological Association

- ***Anniversary dates of traumatic events can reactivate thoughts and feelings from the actual event, and survivors may experience peaks of anxiety and depression.***
- ***Around the anniversary of a traumatic event, people are likely to remember events clearly and many will feel emotions more intensely than usual.***
- ***Reliving the sadness is a very natural part of the healing process.***
- ***But there is no one right way to heal.***
- ***Try not to compare your reactions to those of others.***
- ***Each person is different, and each individual will find his or her own way of coping with the memories.***

www.apa.org/topics/anniversary-traumatic-event

‘There is opportunity for our policies, our strategies, our design, development and operations of all our hard and soft infrastructure to more explicitly consider and respond to climate risks.’

Steve Noakes,
Chairman, Binna Burra Lodge

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RECOVERY TEAM
#bringbackbinnaurra



Thursday 13 August 2020.

Premier of Queensland announces
reopening of Binna Burra in
Parliament House, Brisbane.



Natural Disasters, Recovery Assistance

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.45 am): While the world has been captivated and dealing with the global pandemic for most of 2020, in Queensland we have not forgotten the catastrophic bushfire season of 2019. Some 7.7 million hectares were scorched across the state, destroying homes and businesses. The road to recovery from disasters is often long and behind the scenes I want to assure Queenslanders that the recovery work has been continuing.

We announced a \$20 million tourism and community recovery package to address the long-term mental health, economic, tourism, environmental and industry impacts. Seeing the destruction at Binna Burra Lodge, we set up a task force to support the 56 staff impacted by its closure and committed \$1.7 million in joint disaster funding arrangements for its recovery. I am pleased to advise the House that Binna Burra Lodge will be reopening to visitors next month. Isn't that wonderful news.

NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR Disaster Recovery



DISASTER RECOVERY

is part of emergency management, which includes the broader components of prevention, preparedness and response. Planning for recovery is integral to emergency preparation and mitigation actions may often be initiated as part of recovery.

DISASTER RECOVERY

includes built, environmental and economic elements, as well as social wellbeing. Recovery can provide an opportunity to improve these aspects beyond previous conditions, by enhancing social and natural environments, infrastructure and economies – contributing to a more resilient community.

SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY

Understand the context

Successful recovery is based on an understanding of the community context, with each community having its own history, values and dynamics.

Recognise complexity

Successful recovery is responsive to the complex and dynamic nature of both emergencies and the community.

Use community-led approaches

Successful recovery is community-centred, responsive and flexible, engaging with community and supporting them to move forward.

Coordinate all activities

Successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach, between community and partner agencies, based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs.

Communicate effectively

Successful recovery is built on effective communication between the affected community and other partners.

Recognise and build capacity

Successful recovery recognises, supports and builds on individual, community and organisational capacity and resilience.



Social Recovery Reference Group
AUSTRALIA

