WHEN CULTURAL WORKERS BECOME DISASTER WORKERS: IDENTIFYING THE RISKS OF DELIVERING ARTS PROGRAMS IN POST-DISASTER CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

An emerging body of research suggests that the arts and cultural programs can stimulate psychosocial recovery for disaster-affected communities, which is an increasingly urgent area of development in the context of the climate crisis. However, the working conditions of artists and arts managers engaging with communities in post-disaster environments is yet to be examined. This paper integrates scholarship on disaster recovery workers and cultural labour to frame findings from qualitative interviews conducted with Australian artists and arts managers. Three key risks to cultural workers in disaster contexts are identified: workload-related burn out, emotional exhaustion, and financial precarity. These are significant concerns for creative recovery workers that could be better mitigated by cultural institutions and public funders through targeted support in anticipation of future disasters.

Keywords: Creative recovery, cultural labour, climate change, disaster recovery, risk management

Introduction

The arts and culture have long been recognised for their potential social and mental health benefits across a range of community, health, humanitarian, and other settings (Daykin et al., 2021; Fancourt & Finn, 2019). In response to the increasing frequency and intensity of disasters worldwide due to climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2022), arts and cultural activities are more frequently adapted to address the psychosocial impacts of disasters on communities (Baumann et al., 2021; Iizuka, 2021; Korndörffer et al., 2023). Known as 'creative recovery' in Australia, post-disaster arts and cultural programs have been shown to positively contribute to psychological wellbeing for affected community members, as well as building social capital and increasing resilience to future disasters (Fisher & Talvé, 2011; Heck & Tsai, 2022; Phillips et al., 2016). Yet insufficient attention has been paid to the impacts of such disaster recovery work on cultural workers. With climate disasters predicted to increase (IPCC, 2022), more artists, administrators, and managers will conduct their work in and with disaster-affected communities. By applying learnings from the field of disaster studies to analysis of cultural working conditions, this study presents a preliminary understanding of the risks of such work.

This paper first outlines the characteristics and underlying risks of cultural work, then outlines risks affecting disaster recovery workers to identify overlaps between these two traditionally siloed cohorts. It goes on to examine risks to the integrated cohort of 'creative recovery workers' by drawing on interviews with 14 artists and arts managers in Australia who have led community engaged arts programs in post-disaster contexts over a 13-year period. Analysis of these working experiences will produce critical insights into how the cultural sector could better resource and support creative recovery programs in anticipation of future disasters. Ultimately, this paper will establish a benchmark of challenges and opportunities in the emerging field of creative recovery research and practice.

Overlapping risks to cultural workers and disaster recovery workers

Cultural work is characterised by risk and uncertainty. Cultural workers often hold multiple jobs or are engaged on a series of short-term contracts, with little job security and uncertain future career prospects (Hesmondhalgh, 2018; Oakley, 2009). Earnings from work in this field are distributed very unequally, with many living at or below the poverty line (Caust, 2023; Hesmondhalgh, 2018; Oakley, 2009). Despite the relatively low wages, there is a culture of self-exploitation and over-identification with work, where cultural workers feel compelled to work long hours on demanding projects to bolster their professional reputations and maintain interpersonal relationships (Hesmondhalgh, 2018; Oakley, 2009). Such working conditions can harm the mental health of so-called "gig workers," with some studies finding that it is three times more likely for cultural workers to have a mental health issue compared to the general population (Gross et al., 2018; Shorter et al., 2018). Hesmondhalgh (2018) posited that "labour-of-love" attitudes and the "non-monetary, psychological rewards" (p. 352) of cultural labour may motivate workers to persevere despite these issues. However, as Oakley (2009) pointed out, "psychic income" alone may not sufficiently compensate for the "lack of monetary success" (p. 31), nor for "the competitiveness, exhaustion and fear of failure, that are also a large component of much cultural work" (p. 23).

Along with financial precarity and intense workloads, high emotional labour has also been associated with cultural work. Emotional investment in the work, the maintenance of professional networks, and the "hidden costs" of community engaged arts practice are all examples of this. Lee (2013) drew on Hochschild (1983) to contend that emotional labour is intrinsic to cultural work in that "it involves 'deep acting', where workers employ their emotional lives as part of the labour process" (p. 8). In other words, emotional investment in the work itself is an expected component of cultural labour. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2008) demonstrated that emotional labour also occurs during interactions with colleagues due to the high reliance on professional networks to access future work opportunities. For cultural workers engaging with "disadvantaged populations," Belfiore (2022) explained that it is common for these individuals to shoulder the "hidden costs" of building rapport and providing after-care to community participants (p. 62). She argued that community engaged cultural workers are systematically exploited by public funding institutions that are unwilling to fund "meaningful care" as an inherent component of this work (Belfiore, 2022, p. 62). These factors suggest that for cultural workers, emotional labour is multi-faceted and somewhat inescapable.

There are parallels between the experiences of cultural workers and disaster recovery workers in relation to workload, "psychic income," and emotional labour. Like cultural workers, disaster recovery workers frequently experience a heightened sense of meaning and purpose in their work (due to the helping nature of these roles) but are at high risk of mental health issues and workload-related burn out (Brady et al., 2023; Eriksen, 2019). The term 'disaster recovery workers' encompasses a wide range of paid and voluntary positions – from health and community services to engineering and construction – engaged for months to years following a disaster event (Brady et al., 2023). Recovery workers also include those whose ordinary work may not be related to disasters, but shifts focus to recovery work when needed – such as local government employees – as well as those who self-initiate recovery activities in response to disaster events, including community members (Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience [AIDR], 2018). Contributing factors to recovery worker burn out include long working hours under stressful conditions; acute and ongoing exposure to trauma and social injustices; balancing community needs with organisational limitations and requirements; and working with limited financial and human resources (Adams et al., 2008; AIDR, 2018; Eriksen, 2019; Hay et al., 2021; Sakuma et al., 2015). Additional mental health risk factors include being personally affected by the disaster, being a woman (and/or from a minority background), prior experience of trauma, low social support, and general work stress (Ehring et al., 2011). Another risk factor is working in an unaffiliated capacity, meaning that the worker's usual professional role is not related to disaster recovery and the worker may therefore lack access to tailored support (Perrin et al., 2007).

Recovery workers that have been affected by disasters themselves face the added difficulty of managing their own recovery needs alongside those of the community members they serve through

their professional or voluntary role/s (Brady et al., 2023). Brady et al. (2023) found that while locally based recovery workers mostly experienced their work as "incredibly intense, powerful, and meaningful" (p. 20), their dual position as worker and disaster-affected community member also led to overwhelm, impacted their relationships with family, friends and neighbours, and delayed their own personal recovery processes. These findings are especially pertinent given the predicted increase of disasters globally, the movement towards community led recovery principles in emergency management strategies internationally, and the concurrent increase in locally based recovery workers (Brady et al., 2023).

Other risks affecting both locally based and non-local recovery workers are those of emotional exhaustion and vicarious trauma, especially for workers in roles that involve direct contact with affected community members. Workers that are frequently obliged to express caring and empathy can experience depression, anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and other forms of psychological distress themselves following on from these interactions (Adams et al., 2008). This can be experienced as secondary trauma, also known as vicarious trauma, which occurs when workers that are exposed to the traumatic stories of clients begin "re-experiencing the client's traumatic event" and experience "persistent arousal" related to their knowledge of the trauma (Adams et al., 2008, p. 240; Sakuma et al., 2015). Secondary trauma may exacerbate, be exacerbated by, or occur in tandem with job-related burn out, and is associated with emotional exhaustion and a reduced sense of personal achievement or job satisfaction for workers (Adams et al., 2008).

Emotional labour in disaster contexts is distinct from vicarious trauma in that it "requires employees of an organization to modify feelings to match the required display rules or modify their displays without shaping inner feelings" (Kroll et al., 2021, p. 89). Recovery work often involves "extreme" levels of emotional labour (Kroll et al., 2021, p. 88). For example, recovery workers are often required to professionally and sensitively respond to anger and hostility from community members who are frustrated at government and/or recovery agencies for perceived (or actual) inadequacies in relief and recovery service provision (Ursano et al., 2017). While emotional labour can benefit clients and community members, the suppression of negative emotions by recovery workers – or conversely, the performance of expected emotions that are not actually being experienced by the worker – can contribute to emotional exhaustion and burn out (Kroll et al., 2021).

The risks to which disaster recovery workers are exposed may also affect cultural workers who deliver creative recovery projects. Creative recovery can be broadly understood as community engaged arts projects led by artist-project managers following climate disasters (Monkivitch, 2024). While projects vary in scope and complexity depending on the context, they may include public murals and memorials, community festivals and ceremonies, and/or visual and performing arts programs that involve community members as artist-participants (Monkivitch, 2024). Creative recovery occurs at the intersection of two traditionally siloed fields. Bringing together disaster studies and cultural labour scholarship enables the identification of potential risk factors to creative recovery workers through the synthesis of theories across disciplines (see Salter & Hearn, 2014).

For example, creative recovery workers may be obliged to engage in emotional labour on multiple fronts with both professional colleagues and disaster-affected community members (Belfiore, 2022; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008; Kroll et al., 2021). This may present an increased risk of emotional exhaustion for this cohort. For cultural workers engaging directly with disaster-affected individuals, exposure to traumatic stories is to be expected and therefore the risk of vicarious trauma is undeniably present (see Adams et al., 2008). Creative recovery workers may also be exposed to mental health risks as unaffiliated workers that frequently experience work-related stress and – in the sub-field of creative recovery – are usually women (Ehring et al., 2011; Oakley, 2009; Perrin et al., 2007). Finally, in Australia, creative recovery funding programs have deliberately focused on supporting local artists to deliver projects (Fisher & Talvé, 2011, 2012; Regional Arts Victoria, 2023), and the additional risks posed to locally based recovery workers are therefore relevant considerations for cultural workers in disaster contexts (see Brady et al., 2023).

While creative recovery workers may be exposed to some unique potential risk factors, I do not seek to rank these in relation to recovery workers more broadly. Rather, this paper considers cultural workers in disaster contexts to be recovery workers also, while recognising that working conditions in the cultural sector may influence the experiences of creative recovery workers. Through empirical research, this paper deepens understanding and awareness of the issues that specifically affect creative recovery workers so that these may be mitigated in future arts-based disaster recovery initiatives.

Methodology

To assess the specific risks posed to cultural workers in disaster recovery contexts, I drew on 14 semi-structured interviews with leading creative recovery artist-project managers who delivered programs throughout Australia over a 13-year period from 2009 until 2022. This timeframe was selected as a period within which Australia saw significant major disaster events – particularly bushfires and floods – that prompted both publicly funded and grassroots creative recovery programs. Sampling involved a combined purposive and snowballing approach (Patton, 1990). I identified potential participants via recommendations from my existing professional networks as a former employee of not-for-profit organisation Regional Arts Victoria, as well as directly contacting creative recovery workers that were frequently mentioned in industry reports and project websites. Although this sampling method may have biased the sample towards more experienced and well-known creative recovery workers, this was deemed acceptable for the purpose of conducting exploratory research. Nevertheless, I deliberately selected participants representing a wide range of creative recovery program types, varying in art form, artistic outputs, modes of delivery, project duration, and geographic location. For example, projects ranged from a series of arts, crafts, and poetry workshops in the Adelaide Hills, South Australia, to a 50-day-long multi-artform bushfire anniversary festival in the Snowy Valleys, New South Wales, to a two-year community choir project in Cardinia Shire, Victoria, to a five-year steel Eucalyptus tree sculpture in Strathewen, Victoria, to name a few.

Despite being relatively small, the sample size of 14 enabled sufficient "member checks" to maintain the credibility of findings (Seale, 2002, p. 104). However, most participants did not opt for anonymity, and this may have influenced them to be more generous in their representations of working conditions and partners. To address this, I recruited a range of creative recovery worker-types, with participants holding a combination of professional ongoing positions within arts organisations (2) or local government (2), fixed term contracts (2), or working independently at the grassroots (2), often as part of local collectives (4) (see *Appendix I – Interview Participants*). Two-thirds of participants received payment for their work (9), and the other third worked in a mostly voluntary capacity (5). Slightly more than half of the participants were locals to the town or region within which their work took place (8), with the other half typically becoming "embedded" in the communities in which they worked through repeat visits or ongoing professional positions (6), such as local government employees. The breadth of participants enabled comparisons between paid and unpaid, as well as locally based and non-local cultural workers in disaster contexts.

Each creative recovery worker was interviewed online via Zoom for approximately one hour, responding to questions related to project development and their observations of community participants. Given that these interviews were conducted as part of a broader study on the psychosocial impacts of creative recovery for community members, I did not collect personal data on additional potential risk factors for the creative recovery workers in the sample. Therefore, inferences based on individual characteristics such as belonging to a minority group, prior experience of trauma, and so on are not included in the scope of this paper. While I did not initially seek to explore working conditions, combined inductive-deductive thematic coding of transcripts (using NVivo software) revealed ubiquitous trends related to workload, financial resourcing, and emotional labour, and these are the focus of this paper. The following findings and discussion sections explore these themes as they relate to risk factors identified in the literature review.

Examining the risks of creative recovery work to Australian artist-project managers

Workload

Developing multiple projects simultaneously, maintaining professional networks, and working with limited resources can contribute to high and complex workloads for cultural and disaster recovery workers (AIDR, 2018; Eriksen, 2019; Hesmondhalgh, 2018; Oakley, 2009). Across the sample, the majority of participants detailed experiences of both high workload and high project complexity. The competing responsibilities described by workers included project management, financial management, administration, governance, stakeholder management, community engagement, marketing and publicity, and artistic production or curation, to name the most prevalent. Most creative recovery workers led numerous projects, sometimes concurrently and/or over several years, to provide psychosocial support to as many prospective community members as possible. However, approximately half of the interview participants admitted that they experienced workload-related exhaustion, and this was more likely for locally based creative recovery workers delivering projects independently at the grassroots. Even those who worked in a voluntary capacity spoke to the extreme workload demands of creative recovery projects, as exemplified by comments from former lawyer Hayley Katzen (interview, 15 March 2023) – "it's too much, way way too much" – and retired trauma counsellor Vivien Davidson (interview, 8 February 2023) – "it was probably one of the hardest things I've done." Katzen and Davidson cited a lack of institutional support as a contributing factor to their very high and complex workloads, which corelated with reduced wellbeing. This demonstrates that for unaffiliated creative recovery workers, a lack of tailored support can make them more vulnerable to psychosocial risks (Perrin et al., 2007).

For most participants, partnerships were established and/or funding support was received from a diverse range of government, philanthropic, corporate, and community organisations. For example, in the curation of a 50-day-long bushfire anniversary festival, Vanessa Keenan (interview, 13 March 2023) collaborated with partners including the state government Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries, First Nations national park rangers, emergency management agencies, and not-for-profit organisation Eastern Riverina Arts, among others. Workers such as Keenan that had access to tailored support from cultural institutions were less likely to report workload-related burn out because they were better able to share the administrative workload. Another participant explained that administration and project management support from cultural institutions "freed" artists to focus on their work with communities, thereby enhancing the artistic quality of projects (M. Bolmat, interview, 8 February 2023). However, tailored support from cultural institutions was inconsistent across the sample and managing the needs of diverse stakeholders often added to already high workloads for creative recovery workers. A few facilitators indicated that they were unlikely to lead projects again in the future due to burn out, despite the "psychic income" they received from helping disaster-affected community members. These findings align with existing literature in both disaster studies and cultural labour scholarship that suggests workers are motivated to work long hours under demanding circumstances in exchange for psychological rewards, but this is often unsustainable and unsafe for workers due to the risk of burn out (Brady et al., 2023; Oakley, 2009).

Emotional labour

Workload-related burn out can be intensified by emotional exhaustion and vicarious trauma (Adams et al., 2008; Kroll et al., 2021; Sakuma et al., 2015). Alongside high and complex workloads, all creative recovery workers in the sample performed significant emotional labour for the communities they worked with. Three interview participants additionally described symptoms that suggested they had experienced vicarious trauma. The emotional labour performed by creative recovery workers included actively listening to and "holding space" for community members to share their personal experiences of trauma; pro-actively and personally reaching out to community members to encourage participation; managing group dynamics between disaster-affected community members participating in/engaging with projects; responding to instances of community hostility or resistance to creative recovery (or frustration with authority figures in general); and responding to (and mitigating)

emotional triggers for audiences and project participants. These are examples of the "hidden costs" that Belfiore (2022, p. 62) referred to in the context of community engaged arts practice, which are rarely recognised by public funding institutions despite being inherent to the work. Interview participants consistently framed emotional labour as an intrinsic responsibility of creative recovery work, but many likewise indicated that it increased project complexity and workload, as well as contributing to emotional exhaustion.

While emotional labour was seen as fundamental in relation to community participants, bureaucratic demands from institutions often contradicted these efforts. For example, local government employee Jane Campbell* (interview, 15 May 2023) recalled acting as an intermediary for community members, connecting them to other government departments to help address their recovery needs. She recognised that this was certainly outside the scope of her role but described it as a "privilege" to support community members in this way. However, the emotional labour Campbell* performed for community members was compounded by navigating bureaucratic hurdles, such as resisting internal pressure to solidify creative recovery project details before community participants were ready. Bureaucratic pressures such as these are counter to community engagement principles of being flexible, responsive, and process (rather than outcome) oriented (see Lillie et al., 2024). Similar pressures were identified by an additional third of interview participants, who noted that bureaucracy enforced by cultural institutions and government added to their existing workloads and demonstrated a lack of understanding of community needs in disaster contexts. Conversely, some participants offered examples of bureaucratic hurdles being eased or removed for creative recovery workers, as explained in the previous section. But in Campbell's* case, the combination of significant emotional labour for community members and ongoing bureaucratic pressures led to persistent mood and sleep disturbances, indicating that she may have experienced vicarious trauma. While this is one of the more extreme examples from the sample, it reflects the seriousness of the psychosocial risks posed to creative recovery workers. It also demonstrates that inflexible bureaucratic processes may unintentionally put creative recovery workers in the difficult position of compromising either their access to institutional support or their relationships with community participants.

Financial precarity

Emotional labour and financial precarity are "hidden costs" that are frequently borne by the community engaged arts workers who lead publicly funded projects (Belfiore, 2022, p. 62). All participants in the sample received public funding (albeit to varying levels), yet participants worked in a range of paid (5), underpaid (4), unpaid (2), and voluntary (3) positions. Paid workers were mostly employees of cultural institutions or local government who typically provided advice and support to other creative recovery workers, as well as delivering projects themselves. Those categorised here as *underpaid* workers received some payment for their work but reported working additional unpaid hours to meet the demands of their projects. One participant explained that despite being commissioned by local government, it was difficult to justify expenditure on the hours she spent engaging with community members (G. Özer, interview, 21 February 2023). She suggested that resistance to fully funding community engagement reflected a broader trend where artists are expected to work with communities in exchange for "goodwill." Belfiore (2022) likewise recognised this trend but argued that "appropriate funding that allows for freelancers to be fairly paid and for project participants (who are often vulnerable and/or experiencing disadvantage) to be properly supported, both during and in the aftermath of a funded activity, should be a funder's responsibility" (p. 71).

While two thirds of participants in this study were not fully remunerated, locally based creative recovery workers were less likely to receive payment for their work than non-locals. All five unpaid and voluntary workers in the sample were locally based; they are divided into two categories to acknowledge that *unpaid* workers did not necessarily intend to work for free, whereas voluntary workers always planned to donate their time (though perhaps not such a huge amount of it). Unpaid participants felt compelled to work for free in response to community perceptions rather than funding

program limitations. One participant explained that "there was almost a feeling like if you did get paid for your time that you were making money from a tragedy" (B. Joyce, interview, 20 February 2023). Another observed that "the fact that we were getting funding didn't sit well with a lot of people because they were unable to rebuild their homes" (J. Townsend, interview, 2 March 2023). She explained that one neighbour accused her of capitalising on their grief by seeking public funding for cultural projects, which strongly influenced her later decision to work for free as the project manager (despite using the funding to pay other local artists for their work). Locally based creative recovery workers were motivated to support the psychosocial recovery of their communities, but ultimately chose to work for free or very little in recognition that paying themselves might inflame tensions with fellow community members. However, those that did default to unpaid labour conceded that working for free for multiple years was extremely exhausting. Furthermore, the high workload, emotional labour, and extended timeframes of creative recovery projects likely prevented those workers from deriving income elsewhere. These factors indicate that the risk of self-exploitation may be especially high for locally based creative recovery workers compared to non-locals. Given that there is already an increased psychosocial risk to workers that have been disaster-affected themselves (Brady et al., 2023), addressing the financial precarity of locally based creative recovery workers should be a priority of future initiatives.

Summary and future directions

Creative recovery workers – the artists and arts managers that deliver cultural programs in disaster contexts – are both cultural workers and disaster recovery workers. This paper confirms that as such, they consistently work long hours on complex and emotionally demanding projects, often for years, mostly in an unpaid or underpaid capacity. Despite poor working conditions, interview participants were motivated to deliver projects by the "psychic income" they derived from helping others. However, at least half experienced workload-related burnout, and many also experienced emotional exhaustion. For a limited number of interview participants, vicarious trauma was additionally evident. The risks associated with high and demanding workloads, financial precarity, emotional labour, and vicarious trauma in disaster contexts were somewhat mitigated via institutional support for some creative recovery workers. This suggests that affiliations with cultural institutions are a protective factor for creative recovery workers. However, the availability of such support was inconsistent across the sample, with locally based workers receiving the least support in terms of remuneration, project management or administration assistance. These findings suggest that despite the increasing risks associated with climate change and disasters, cultural institutions and public funders in Australia are insufficiently prepared to support the growing cohort of creative recovery workers, especially those working locally within their own communities.

In recognition of the existing financial precarity and mental health risks experienced by cultural workers, this paper argues that the additional risks to those engaging with communities in post-disaster contexts must be acknowledged and addressed. The findings of this study demonstrate that cultural institutions and public funders can play a valuable role in mitigating the risks to which creative recovery workers are exposed. Through an Australian case study, this paper lays a critical foundation that can potentially be applied to the contexts of other arts and cultural sectors as they increasingly engage with disaster recovery efforts internationally. However, further research is needed into the role of the cultural sector in addressing the risks posed by the climate crisis and disasters more broadly, especially for the communities within which we live and work.

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Appendices

Appendix I – Interview Participants

Name	Interview Date	Town/Region/State	Disaster Event and Year	Role related to creative recovery
Bennett, Wanda	23 June 2023	Central Coast region, Queensland	2018 Eungella and Finch Hatton bushfires	Regional Manager of Regional Arts Services Network (RASN) [not-for-profit organisation employee, local to wider region but not to disaster-affected area]
Bolmat, Michelle	8 February 2023	Kinglake Ranges, Victoria	2009 Black Saturday bushfires	Artistic Director of Kinglake Ranges Visual and Performing Arts Alliance [independent artist-project manager leading a local collective, local community member]
Cooper-Wares, Katie	8 June 2023	Lismore, New South Wales	2017 Lismore floods 2022 Northern Rivers floods	Multi-disciplinary artist and community organiser (multiple projects) [independent artist-project manager leading a local collective, local community member]
Davidson, Vivien	8 February 2023	South Coast region, New South Wales	2019-20 Black Summer bushfires	Community facilitator (multiple projects) [independent artist-project manager, local community member]
Grant, Amanda	17 May 2023	Strathewen, Victoria; Macedon Ranges, Victoria	2009 Black Saturday bushfires 2014 Macedon Ranges bushfires 2019 Eastern Victoria bushfires	Project Manager (The Tree Project) on behalf of The Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria Branch) [independent artist-project manager, non-local]; Grant Program Manager, Regional Arts Victoria [not-for-profit organisation employee]; creative recovery educator, Creative Recovery Network [educator, fixed term contract]
Joyce, Barbara	20 February 2023	Strathewen, Victoria	2009 Black Saturday bushfires	Lead artist-facilitator (The Chook Project and felting workshops), committee member Strathewen Community Renewal Association [independent artist-project manager leading a local collective, local community member]
Katzen, Hayley	15 March 2023	Ewingar, New South Wales	2019-20 Black Summer bushfires	Community facilitator (multiple projects) [independent artist-project manager, local community member]
Keenan, Vanessa	15 March 2023	Snowy Valleys, New South Wales	2019-20 Black Summer bushfires	Project manager and curator (Arbour Festival) [artist-project manager on fixed term contract, local community member]

Campbell, Jane*	15 May 2023	Redacted LGA, Victoria	2009 Black Saturday bushfires	Community Engagement Officer, Redacted LGA [local government employee, local to wider region but not to disaster-affected area]
Özer, Gülsen	21 February 2023	Cardinia Shire, Victoria	2019 Eastern Victoria bushfires	Creative Recovery Facilitator (A Singing Thing community choir) [artist-project manager on fixed term contract, local to wider region but not to disaster-affected area]
Rankin, Melinda	21 February 2023	Adelaide Hills, South Australia	2019-20 Black Summer bushfires	Director of Fabrik Arts + Heritage, Adelaide Hills Council [local government employee]
St Clair, Jeanti	27 March 2023	Lismore, New South Wales	2017 Lismore floods 2022 Northern Rivers floods	Creative Recovery Artist (multiple projects) [independent artist-project manager involved in local collective, local community member, local to wider region but not to disaster-affected area]
Sutherland, Kellie	7 June 2023	Northeast region, Victoria	2019-20 Black Summer bushfires COVID-19 pandemic	Creative Recovery Coordinator for Northeast Victoria, Regional Arts Victoria [not-for-profit organisation employee, local to wider region but not to disaster-affected area]
Townsend, Jessica	2 March 2023	Beechmont, Queensland	2019-20 Black Summer bushfires	Founder and Director of The Little Pocket community organisation (multiple projects) [independent artist-project manager leading a local collective, local community member]

*Psuedonym.