

# ESF IMPACT

## newsletter



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## BETTER BRIGHTER FUTURE AFTER COVID



**Humanity has recovered from many crises in the past:** war, depression, pandemic, natural disaster. Often, we've bounced back to create a better future. The Spanish flu was followed by the economic prosperity of the Roaring Twenties. After World War II, the German economy grew to become the world's most advanced. US social and economic policies responding to the Great Depression paved the way for twentieth-century prosperity.

The COVID pandemic presented the emergency service/management sector with a barrage of challenges as people adapted to a riskier work environment, quickly had to apply new procedures, and learn new skills, put in greater time commitments, and often face overwhelming situations including combining work and home schooling.

What author and public servant **Andrew Wear** proposes in his latest book, [Recovery. How we can create a better, brighter future after a crisis](#), is that while the pandemic has been the biggest crisis in a generation, our recovery represents an enormous opportunity, and we should be optimistic. At ESFs most recent Insight Conversation Andrew joined **John Richardson** the National Resilience Adviser for Australian Red Cross and **Carmel Flynn** CEO at Bushfire Recovery Victoria to discuss how the emergency service / management sector could embrace the opportunities presented by COVID to recover for a better brighter future.

Andrew made the point that we must somehow harness what we've learned through this pandemic. The capacity to achieve remarkable improvements and change post-disaster is phenomenal if we look forward, not back to "how it was before" and re-envision what – and who - we want to be.



John saw a role for organisations in the sector as advocates working with communities for a good, long term, visionary recovery.

According to Carmel the sector can only recover collectively, and we *must* prioritise our wellbeing in order to sustain the level of response required for more frequent emergencies and disasters.

### REACTIONS

This conversation made me think more about how all people need to have ownership of recovery priorities. There should be a strong participatory approach to this, and to capture a true representation of our community - including somehow the disengaged - to participate. The ES sector could contribute to the local conversation of COVID recovery.

**Lisa Keedle, Red Cross**

A great conversation today, filled with optimism and important lessons that many in history – both old and more recent - have learned before us about recovery following a disaster. I feel inspired about the need for us to reflect and to learn from our experience as part of our work to be better, together. I also appreciated the call-to-action to embrace the opportunity before us to think long term and to envisage the new future that we really want to see.

**Deb Martindale, ESF Board**

What really resonated for me was the reference to COVID recovery and the importance of us having a coordinated, collaborative and creative approach towards our pandemic recovery that takes the lessons and shapes them into opportunities for the way we work and building community resilience – and in particular, thinking beyond the sector – it really was a great reminder of the fact that "we're all in it together".

**Cath Greaves, CEO Life Saving Victoria**

[You can listen to a recording of the conversation here.](#)