Threatened Species Network

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Communicating for Recovery

A guide to developing a Recovery Plan Communications Strategy

A project undertaken by WWF-Australia

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1. Executive Summary

Many different stakeholders across a diverse range must be engaged to ensure the protection of threatened species. Stakeholder support and co-operation is essential to achieving habitat protection and enhancement, threat abatement, sustainable regional planning, and for improving understanding of the particular species and/ or habitat(s).

This resource guides a recovery team in the development of a Communications Strategy that will help foster and deliver recovery objectives outlined in its Recovery Plan. It is a model that recovery teams can adapt to suit their own setting, to ensure that their communications with key stakeholders are relevant, strategic, cost-effective and accountable.

A Communications Strategy aims to deliver the same overall outcomes as the Recovery Plan; for example, to reduce the threatened status of the species from endangered to vulnerable over five years. Communications play a significant role in inspiring, motivating and equipping stakeholders to protect biodiversity in the landscape, thereby exacting the necessary institutional and/ or cultural change. But such change demands a sustained and comprehensive effort.

These guidelines provide a strategic framework to identify key stakeholders and audiences, and the precise messages to be shared with them. It also helps recovery planners select appropriate communications tools. Although it has been developed with threatened species recovery teams in mind, the steps and principles for effective communication can be applied equally to any in-situ conservation project where the main threats have been identified.

*The **long-term** protection of species and habitats in the landscape relies on widespread community support, modifications to land management and the cultural and institutional support to reinforce these changes. This can only be achieved by implementing effective scientific, management and communications activities.*

1.1 Introduction

Recovery planning occurs across a complex and ever-changing landscape of different land tenure, use and management. Recovery teams must engage and enlist the support of a variety of stakeholders if they are to improve understanding of the importance of habitat protection, species conservation, threat abatement and sustainable regional planning. As the number of threatened flora and fauna species and ecological communities continues to grow at an alarming rate across Australia, these efforts have never been more important.

Developing positive and productive relationships with stakeholders is crucial to the recovery team's success. The attitudes and behaviours of stakeholders can be as supportive or detrimental to species recovery as poor breeding seasons or environmental hazards such as bushfires. Ongoing collaboration between recovery team members and stakeholders relies on strategic communication.

Developing and implementing an effective Communications Strategy provides focus and clarity to recovery teams working to tight deadlines, usually with limited resources. As outlined in the EA (2002) guidelines, the Communications Strategy should, among other things, address how the recovery team will:

- raise community awareness of the problem and encourage contributions towards a solution;
- raise awareness of its own activities;
- communicate its progress and results, and
- develop communications with the broader community.

This document provides a framework for developing a Communications Strategy for use within an existing Recovery Plan for a single species, multi-species or threatened ecological community (TEC). It can be used in conjunction with existing networks to develop targeted communications for any project where the main threats are known. It helps identify and profile key audiences, the messages to be conveyed, and suggests a suite of tools to employ to ensure that all communications are integrated with recovery objectives.

The Communications Strategy is divided into four parts:

- a **review of the existing Recovery Plan**, including analysis of objectives and time frames and identification of stakeholders;
- **Communications Actions**, which identify target audiences and key messages, and then describe communications products, activities and mediums for each target audience;
- the **Action Plan** that identifies targets, outputs and activities for the strategy in relation to the project's awareness-raising and capacity-building objectives; and
- **monitoring and evaluation** of the success of the Communications Strategy.

For a recovery team to realise its long-term vision, all members need to know the program's precise objectives and the nature of the stakeholder support or change they are seeking. Articulating the team's philosophy and principles in a policy document or position statement lays a solid foundation for all future relationships. Planning and coordinating subsequent communications through the use of a Communications Strategy will not only help achieve short-term goals but, ultimately, may lead to cultural and institutional change that extends well beyond the life of the recovery program.

1.2 How to Use These Guidelines

A Communications Strategy should, ideally, be developed within the first year of implementing a new or updated Recovery Plan. However, these guidelines are just as useful for recovery teams that have already commenced communications activities. From the outset, it is vital for the recovery team to have a clear understanding of its philosophy and priorities, which will set the tone for future communications with stakeholders. It must also have the following information:

- a list of known and suspected key threats;
- a list of potential stakeholders;
- an estimated distribution map for the species and a map with an outline of land tenure across the species' range;
- recovery performance indicators.

It is recommended that a project officer, consultant or volunteer (hereafter referred to as the Communications Officer) be entrusted with the responsibility for developing and implementing the Communications Strategy in collaboration with the recovery team. That individual will need both technical and administrative support from fellow team members, other program staff and additional experts that may serve as members of a steering committee. They will also require a budget.

Although the Communications Officer is advised to follow steps 1-8 in chronological order, the guidelines may be applied in a more ad-hoc fashion throughout the life of a Recovery Plan to complement short-term and long-term recovery goals. A number of templates, containing examples, have been included to help recovery teams complete each stage of the process. A detailed list of Communications Tools outlines a variety of communications activities and products that the recovery team may initiate or use. Performance indicators are also listed to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of these activities and products.

The time it takes to develop a Communications Strategy will largely depend on the resources available. However, as a guide, 10-16 weeks should be allocated to ensure sufficient time to survey stakeholders, analyse data and develop the Action Plan. Implementing the strategy can take up to a year, depending on the communications activities and tools applied, and it should be reviewed annually.

1.3 Eight steps to Developing and Implementing a Communications Strategy:

Steps	Action	Detail	Issues to be considered
Step 1	Review Recovery Plan	Review current Recovery Plan. Evaluate and learn from past experiences	*Species/ ecological community *Distribution and location *Threats *Objectives, criteria and actions *Stakeholders *Duration and costs *Recovery team composition
Step 2	Survey stakeholders	Survey stakeholders to determine their impact on threats	
Step 3	Analyse stakeholders by type	Categorise stakeholders by group	*Landowner *Govt authorities *Businesses *Consumers *Other
Step 4	Rank stakeholders by impact on threatened species	Determine the stakeholders' impact on the threat	Rank based on impact on threat, frequency, accessibility and knowledge
Step 5	Profile stakeholders	Categorise each stakeholder by their influence on key threats	
Step 6	Communications Table	List the communications actions required and the best methods for each stakeholder	*Management Issue *Ideal Behaviour *Accessibility *Communications *Media *Performance Indicators *Priority
Step 7	Action Plan	Prioritise and cost out communications actions, identifying timelines, and begin communications	Prioritise: *Tasks *Timelines *Objectives *Stakeholders *Costs Document all communications for future review
Step 8	Evaluation and Monitoring	Evaluate and monitor the Recovery Plan and Communications Strategy each year	

2. Review the Current Recovery Plan

Before developing the Communications Strategy recovery teams should review the status and content of the Recovery Plan. A Recovery Plan should adhere to the *Revised Recovery Plan Guidelines for Nationally Listed Threatened Species and Ecological Communities under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Environment Australia 2002).* In reviewing the Recovery Plan, the Communications Officer can determine which details are essential to the Communications Strategy, including elements of the Revised Recovery Plan Guidelines.

2.1 Recovery Team

List members of the team, including the chairperson and that person responsible for the development and implementation of the Communications Strategy. Provide as much detail as possible regarding the background of individual team members, including the role they play in the recovery team. For example: *Ms Jo Glass, former pastoralist, currently publican of The Desert Star, representing community interests (has a particular focus on pastoralism and tourism issues).*

Typically, the interest groups participating in recovery teams represent land management agencies, research institutions, complementary land management programs, private landowners and relevant local and state-wide community groups. Building profiles of the recovery team provides detailed information about the influences and interests that each member contributes to the Recovery Plan network.

2.2 Recovery Plan Objectives and Time Frames

List the Recovery Plan objectives as outlined in Part D of the AG DEH guidelines. The objectives should be measurable, achievable and contain a timeline for their implementation. Update the timeline to record any actions already undertaken.

Clearly identify the short-term recovery aim (to be accomplished by the end of the current Recovery Plan) and long-term recovery aim (to be accomplished by the end of the intensive recovery effort). Note that the recovery aims may include change in the status of a species as well as changes in the state of the species' habitat.

This is also the appropriate time to articulate the team's philosophy and principles in a policy document or position statement, which will lay the foundation for all future relationships. An example of a position statement might be:

"The recovery team's aim is to reverse the decline of threatened species in the region. This will be achieved by:

- Protecting, restoring and recreating important habitats for species in the region;
- Carrying out research that looks at the ecological needs of species and the reasons they are currently declining;
- Reducing the affects of threats to declining species and habitat;
- Increasing knowledge of habitat management and restoration; and
- Working closely with people from many other projects, organisations and groups on species conservation issues."

2.3 Threatened Species/ Ecological Communities Status

The Recovery Plan must be relevant to the protection, conservation and management of at least one species or ecological community listed as threatened under the *EPBC Act 1999* (refer to AG DEH guidelines Part A). List the threatened species/ ecological communities, including the taxonomic names or community titles as listed under the *EPBC Act* (refer to AG DEH guidelines Part A).

2.4 Threats to the Species

List all known threats that currently affect the species/ communities covered by the plan so that the most appropriate course of action can be established. If threats are not known, the Recovery Plan should state this explicitly and include actions that focus on identifying them (refer to AG DEH guidelines Part C).

Also identify potential threats that can be foreseen within the life of the current Recovery Plan and/ or long-term recovery program that may impact on the recovery of the focal taxon and/ or TEC in the future. To maximise recovery outcomes the team needs to be pro-active.

These may include internal and external operational threats. Examples include:

Internal Threats	External Threats
• Obtaining adequate ongoing funding; • Attracting sufficient and wide-ranging skills to the recovery team; • Keeping staff turnover low; • Recruiting adequate volunteers for annual survey activities; • Potential sources of conflict with key program partners; • Ensuring volunteer safety through OH&S procedures; • Building sound relationships with local media interests, beyond the occasional press release; • Building and maintaining a credible reputation with stakeholders and the community within the range of the focal taxon.	• A government or industry-led program that intensifies production practices within the taxon and/ or TEC's critical habitat and/ or likely range; • A regional NRM group does not support the project. • A recently introduced pathogen, pest or weed species that could prove to be a major threat if it spreads in the future; • Proposed changes to significant policy, planning or legislation that may affect the project; • Threats to the taxon's range from fire or prescribed burning programs to protect social infrastructure from wildfire; • New land uses or residential developments.

Use *Template 1: Threats to Operational Success* to list all operational barriers, the stakeholder(s) involved, the impact the threat could potentially have on the Recovery Plan and to identify approaches that could help minimise this operational threat.

Recognising both the internal and external operational threats gives the recovery team the opportunity to identify significant administrative or communications shortfalls that could jeopardise the team's progress. Depending on the severity and timing of these potential threats, the team may choose to consider them in the life of the current Recovery Plan or flag them for consideration in future reviews.

Stakeholders who influence these operational threats should also be identified and included in the stakeholder profiles in *Template 3: Stakeholder Analysis by Type*. Significant operational threats should also be incorporated into *Template 4: Rank Stakeholders by Impact on*

Threatened Species and Critical Habitat to ensure that these threats are considered in that analysis.

2.5 Stakeholders

Identify persons or organisations that are affected by the Recovery Plan. In particular, the plan should identify persons or organisations that have direct ownership or management responsibilities for the area occupied by the species/ communities covered by the plan, or have a potential impact on the threatened species/ ecological community. This impact can be both positive and negative. Where relevant, outline how these people and organisations are to be involved in the implementation of the plan (refer to AG DEH guidelines Part A). List details such as name, the organisation, contact details and the type of stakeholder.

2.6 Land Tenure

Provide spatial information (maps) showing the estimated distribution and location of the species and critical habitat, including descriptions of important populations, critical habitat and threatening processes (where available). Use data or knowledge to establish the likely range of the species based on past (e.g. museum records, pre-European mapping) and present observations. The *EPBC Act* recognises critical habitat as past, present and potential habitat critical for the survival of a species or habitat (refer to AG DEH guidelines Part A and B). Depending on the scale at which the recovery program is working, obtain spatial data (GIS) on the existing land tenure, land use and individual property boundaries across the likely range of the species within the area and any other data available on potential future land use.

2.7 Current Status of Recovery Plan

Objectives, actions and performance criteria form the framework for species conservation and provide a yardstick against which the success or failure of the Recovery Plan can be measured. All species or ecological communities in the plan must be covered. If insufficient data is available to state what recovery actions are needed, research may need to be undertaken to determine what management practices should be undertaken to avoid adverse impacts on the species or ecological community (refer to AG DEH guidelines Part D and E).

2.8 Learning From Past Communications

It is also valuable to evaluate the success and/ or failure of the recovery program's past communications efforts. If a recovery program is underway, ask:

- What major communications initiatives have been implemented?
- What were they designed to achieve?
- Which stakeholders did they target?
- With which stakeholders has the recovery team successfully established relationships?
- How successful were the past communications initiatives in accomplishing the team's objectives?
- How did the team evaluate these communications initiatives?

Use the criteria outlined in section 6: Evaluation and Monitoring to evaluate the products used or strategies implemented in the past. Recording the activities that were undertaken, the reason why they were undertaken and how effective they were will provide insights into how best to engage the region's stakeholders. Some methods of communication may prove to be more effective then others e.g. a telephone call was responded to but not an email (or vice versa). Incorporate these outcomes into *Template 6: Communications Table*. The contacts already established through these communications methods can form the basis of the stakeholder list and may be the first to re-establish when undertaking the stakeholder survey.

Analysis of past approaches can be extended to establishing contact with other recovery programs and conservation projects to seek feedback on similar communications activities and experiences. Recovery teams that work with similar taxa often establish links that enable biological or ecological information to be exchanged, and these links can be expanded to include communications activities. It may also be useful to talk to people involved in other programs who have worked with similar stakeholders across the range of the species. The TSN Coordinator in each state or territory (see Section 11: Contacts) may be able to suggest other people or groups in your region to contact.

3. Evaluation of Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals or groups with an interest in the activities of the recovery program. They can live in or have an interest in the area in which the recovery team is working or simply exert influence on the region, through policy or legislative responsibilities, institutional powers or economic activity. Using categories will assist the recovery team to identify the impact each stakeholder has on the threat and thereby determine the most appropriate way of communicating with them. Stakeholders can be divided into the following broad categories:

- Landowners;
- Government authorities;
- Businesses (enterprises using resources from the region, travel operators, etc.);
- Consumers/ users (volunteers, tourists, recreational users, community interest groups etc.);

The known stakeholders listed during the recovery planning process will form the initial target audience for the Communications Strategy. However, it is useful to review this list to identify any new parties and to give all stakeholders on opportunity to assess their impact and have input into the recovery program. A survey is an ideal way to engage and consult stakeholders, sift through perceptions to arrive at truths, and to expand the recovery team's knowledge to adopt a "bigger picture" approach. On a practical level, it offers vital insights into the nature of the recovery team's audience and how best to tailor messages to that audience.

The survey *(Template 2: Survey of Stakeholders)* elicits general information about the stakeholder(s) and their habits before listing known threats and asking stakeholders to describe their impact on these threats. It also gives stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the behaviours of other stakeholders (both positive and negative) and to make recommendations for how recovery actions might be improved. The questions and level of detail can be tailored to specific stakeholders as required.

Careful consideration should be given to the method of distributing the survey, as this will influence both the number and quality of responses received. It should be distributed as widely as possible, starting with a mail-out or emails to known stakeholders, advertisements through editorials in local newspapers, and by providing copies at libraries and local retail outlets. It may be appropriate for recovery team members to visit particular stakeholders, such as landholders, and work through the survey with them. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is invariably useful in encouraging survey returns.

Survey results should be tabulated and inconsistencies between perceived impact on threats and actual impact should be evaluated to determine whether an education program is required. This data will form the basis of *Template 3: Stakeholder Analysis by Type.*

The survey is an effective way to establish a "level playing field" with the people and groups with whom you are trying to communicate. It can help identify what drives that person/ group, their aims and aspirations, and establish where those aims and aspirations overlap with those of the recovery program. Discovering where conflict exists is just as important as learning where the parties share common ground because this can highlight deficiencies in previous communications, and differences in values and attitudes that may impede recovery efforts.

It should be noted here that surveys can be expensive to implement. The cost of distribution and collation may be prohibitive to the recovery team. As an alternative to a large survey mail-out, consider distributing surveys through libraries, identifying a sample focus group to question, undertaking telephone surveys or personal visits, or having a booth at a community day or mall. The recovery team may be able to identify key people of influence in the community who provide support and advice to a number of stakeholder groups. They are generally well placed to provide information to feed into the survey.

3.1 Stakeholder Analysis

The next step is to use the survey results to categorise stakeholders into groups. This will help determine who has an influence or impact on the recovery effort, how these stakeholders can best be contacted and what messages need to be directed to them.

Use *Template 3: Stakeholder Analysis by Type* to list and categorise all stakeholders, record their contact details, and document any additional information, including obstacles they may have identified to their support of the recovery team's objectives. Adapt the categories to suit your specific region and Recovery Plan, but divide stakeholders into the following basic groups:

1. **Landowners: private and commercial;**
2. **Government authorities (including local, state and federal);**
3. **Businesses:**

a) *Regional bodies and enterprises of the region;*
b) *Enterprises using resources from the region;*
c) *Travel operators accessing the region;*
d) *Other enterprises.*

4. **Consumers/ users:**

a) *End users of products from the region;*
b) *Tourists;*
c) *Recreational users (4WDs, bushwalkers, cyclists, etc.);*
d) *Other.*

5. **Others.**

Start to complete this table by referring to stakeholder profiles and networks developed in the past, then identify each stakeholder's influences and their impact on the recovery effort. Add stakeholders identified in Section 2.8 as having a potential impact in the future, like a government body or business considering development in the region or a policy that may affect the recovery effort.

Recording known data will help to expose gaps in the recovery team's knowledge of stakeholders. These gaps can be addressed by:

- referring to the map of tenure in the Recovery Plan;
- sourcing data from commercial companies who collect and sell data about a range of issues across various demographics;
- referring to government-commissioned surveys and market-based research;
- consulting with members of other programs working with these stakeholders; and
- consolidating a network of industry contacts. This may provide an opportunity to develop a focus group for future discussion.

Include as much detail as possible in this table and update it regularly.

3.2 Assess and Rank Stakeholder Impact on Threatened Species and Critical Habitat

There can be a multitude of stakeholders across the critical habitat or likely range of a taxon and/ or TEC. It is neither realistic nor desirable to engage them all. This step involves prioritising stakeholders to enable the recovery team to make the most effective use of its resources. There may be key people of influence in the community who provide support and advice to stakeholders; engaging them may provide an efficient way to reach a number of stakeholders. Operational threats (whether significant administrative or external threats) also need to be included as they have the potential to jeopardise the recovery team's efforts.

After identifying and categorising stakeholders use *Template 4: Rank Stakeholders by Impact on Threatened Species and Critical Habitat* to rank them according to their current or likely future impact on threatened species and critical habitat. Rankings are given out of five, where 0 is low and 5 is high, to produce a total out of 10. Stakeholders with a rating of 0-4 are considered to be a LOW priority, 5-7 are a MEDIUM priority and 8-10 a HIGH priority. Stakeholders with the highest rankings are deemed to be key stakeholders, however this may change over time. Use the ranking system periodically to determine at which point a person/ group becomes a key stakeholder or, conversely, loses this status.

3.3 Develop Key Stakeholder Profiles

Having developed a list of key stakeholders, the next step is to learn more about them so that the recovery team is better placed to effectively enlist their support. Use *Template 5: Stakeholder Profiles* to develop a complete profile of each stakeholder. This information helps the recovery team to understand the nature of the stakeholder's activities, their aspirations, constraints to their support of the recovery program's aims, and what support mechanisms they might need. The exercise may also expose how much or little the stakeholders know about the recovery team's objectives, the precise nature of change required and any positive contributions they are already making. Ultimately, this data will help guide recovery team members on how to interact with stakeholders, address any differences of opinion or conflict, and deliver information that is directly relevant to their interests and needs.

Gathering the information for these profiles is likely to involve direct consultation with stakeholders, discussions with members of the recovery team and allied resource management staff working with the same or similar stakeholders, and additional networking. Government offices, agencies supporting primary industries, marketing companies and regional bodies might also serve as additional sources.

The recovery team should identify no more than 10 key stakeholders to engage. Working effectively with these stakeholders should offer the team the best return for its investment. However, bear in mind that these profiles evolve over time. Amend them as the stakeholders change or supplementary information is gathered.

4. Communications Actions

Once the recovery team has a better understanding of the social, cultural and political landscape in which the stakeholders operate, it's time to develop a set of communications actions to deliver key messages. A communications activity takes place each time a team member exchanges information with another person about the program. Every one of these exchanges can add value to, confuse or undermine the team's efforts.

For communications to be effective, members must be clear about the exact audience they are targeting and the nature of support or change they are seeking. Regularly consulting the team's policy document or position statement is a useful way to ensure that communications directly address recovery objectives.

Given resource constraints, it is important that the team's communications activities achieve as many recovery objectives in as few actions as possible. Targeting stakeholders with a wide sphere of influence certainly helps. But whatever the methods used, it is crucial for the team to be guided by clear objectives and to thoroughly document the communications actions for the purposes of future evaluation.

4.1 Effective Communication

Communication is more likely to be effective if it is:

- relevant to the audience and tailored to their current level of understanding;
- delivered by a credible person with whom the audience has built a relationship, who tries to have genuine empathy for their situation and interests, establishes mechanisms for two-way feedback and actively listens;
- presented in language that is meaningful and familiar to the audience and imparted in a positive and empowering way;
- clear and delivered in bite sizes;
- consistent with other messages already received;
- repeated and reinforced by several different sources.

4.2 Planning

Before spending time and money developing new communications products or activities remember to:

- assess what already exists and think about modifying these products and activities to suit the team's specific purpose;
- consider what opportunities may exist to develop communications products in cooperation with partner groups;
- consult widely to develop the key messages to be conveyed to help ensure that the message is tailored to the specific stakeholder(s) and takes into account any obstacles that they may have identified to their support of the recovery program.

Networks and other stakeholder contacts are a useful source of advice on what information is directly relevant to the stakeholders' interests. Communications will be most effective if the recovery team matches both the approach and the message to the aspirations and values of the stakeholders.

4.3 Communications Options

There are a variety of informal and formal communications tools, products and activities for recovery teams to employ to promote and advocate recovery objectives, produce information and involve volunteers. Common approaches include the use of the mass media, networking and building the capacity of networks. Less tangible tools include training sessions, partnership alliances, committee memberships and sponsorship arrangements. No single method is best and recovery teams may need to adopt a number of different approaches; it will depend upon the stakeholders, the messages being conveyed and the resources available. *Appendix 1: Communications Tools* sets out a number of options, and a small sample are listed below, recognising that the level of personal involvement increases as you move from mass media to face-to-face methods.

4.3.1 Face-to-face communication

Where it is feasible and practical, recovery teams are advised to engage in face-to-face discussions with stakeholders. These personal interactions do not necessarily have to be on a one-to-one basis, which some stakeholders may find confronting, but may occur in a more relaxed or informal setting such as during a working bee, social event or workshop. Where such personal interaction is not immediately possible, telephone conversations can be the next best option.

4.3.2 Information production

Traditional information products include information kits, brochures, fact sheets, newsletters, posters, reports, presentations, hotlines, websites, etc. As these tools are frequently used, often for years, and demand considerable resources to produce, they should be planned carefully. The intended audience should also be strategically targeted during distribution to avoid wastage.

4.3.3 Networking

An informed network can be a very cost-effective method of significantly increasing the outreach of the recovery program. It can provide a sounding board for decision-making, enable the experiences of different stakeholders to be shared, raise the profile of the recovery team and provide it both with valuable information and opportunities for evaluation. A robust network can also play an important role in reaching a diverse but related audience or opening up dialogue with a difficult or unapproachable stakeholder by facilitating third-party discussions (via an individual known to both parties, such as a neighbouring landholder, peer or industry group).

4.3.4 Developing partnerships

Working through established partnerships, such as community groups, and developing new partnerships with key authorities, peak industry groups or industry-based environment officers can be a wonderful way to consult and engage stakeholders. The aim is to consolidate a network of individual industry contacts with some sympathy for the aims of the team and to receive their feedback and perhaps mentorship. Hosting small meetings with individuals from one stakeholder group, also known as focus groups, is another way to discuss specific issues. Team members can even simulate this exercise by asking stakeholder groups to raise specific issues at their meetings and then attend to listen to the range of views and issues raised. Circulating and receiving information through such a third-party may initially be easier than attempting direct contact.

4.3.5 Volunteer involvement

Volunteers recruited to help teams with administrative or practical on-ground tasks can also serve an important communications role. They are repositories of knowledge, have credibility and contribute observations throughout the year, actively promoting recovery programs through their local networks.

4.3.6 Research

The act of developing a Communications Strategy may highlight the need for the recovery team to conduct additional research or field work. Recovery teams should see such exercises as prime opportunities to promote their goals and further enlist stakeholder support.

4.4 Communications Table

Using information gathered in the stakeholder profiles, a Communications Table *(Template 6)* can now be compiled. It stipulates target audiences and lists management issues, ideal behavioural outcomes for each stakeholder and communications tools to deliver the desired message. Performance indicators also aid future evaluation and monitoring. The Communications Table should list all communications actions that have been identified, which will be prioritised and costed in the Action Plan.

Using the “high/ medium/ low” column in *Template 4: Rank Stakeholders by Impact on Threatened Species and Critical Habitat* as the basis for sorting the stakeholders, list them in descending order from high to low priority. Against each stakeholder identify the relevant management issues and the objective of the communications action. This may relate to the change in behaviour that the communications action is designed to achieve.

Consider both the accessibility of the stakeholder (see *Template 5: Stakeholder Profiles*) and stakeholder type to arrive at the most appropriate communications medium. The recovery team needs to consider how easily the stakeholder(s) can be contacted and by what means, what networks they belong to and what broader communications mediums they use. Some of this data will have been gathered in the survey of stakeholders (*Template 2*).

Refer to *Appendix 1: Communications Tools* to determine the most relevant way of communicating with the stakeholder. The performance indicator is an important means of evaluating the success of the Communications Strategy. It should be measurable, identify a target for the change in behaviour and a deadline for achieving that target. Robinson and Glanznig (2003) give the following examples of measurable objectives for improving habitat and increasing the use of sustainable wood:

- the number of fences constructed to protect nesting habitat;
- the number of graziers no longer burning off wood on their properties;
- the number of wood suppliers adopting the code of practice and supplying only wood from sustainable sources; and
- 80 per cent of graziers changing their practice of removing dead wood from forests within the next two years.

Baseline data should be collected as the project is implemented, using the measurable objectives as the basis for evaluation.

5. Action Plan

The Action Plan is the practical means of implementing the Communications Strategy, using information compiled in the Communications Table *(Template 6)*. It should be developed and periodically reviewed in consultation with the recovery team.

Transfer each issue across to *Template 7: Action Table* in order of priority. Divide each management issue into individual tasks where necessary, with each task representing a definable communications action. For each action, allocate a time for implementation, define an objective and estimate the cost. The Communications Strategy budget will determine how many actions can be implemented. To help decide how best to allocate resources, conduct a cost/ benefit analysis for each action, taking into consideration the likely impact of the action on the recovery of the species.

Actions can be combined to save money and maximise output. For example, instead of running several small newspaper articles, combine the issues in a feature article that gives more exposure. If the cost of implementing a low-priority action is prohibitive, it can be eliminated from the current strategy, but it is useful to document why it was dropped, in the event that further funding becomes available in the future and it can be reinstated.

The Action Plan represents the Communications Strategy that will be implemented over a 1-2-year period. Recovery team members should keep a thorough record of all communications (including copies of presentations, press releases, newspaper articles, etc.) and maintain up-to-date lists of media and related communications contacts. Completed actions should be marked off and completion dates recorded.

6. Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of communications activities is critical to the overall success of the recovery program. This evaluation can occur formally (through the use of feedback forms or surveys) and informally (through conversations or observational notes) as the communications actions are completed. An overall, annual review can then be undertaken to ensure that the Communications Strategy and its individual actions are still effectively delivering the intended message to the right group.

Among other criteria, it is important for the recovery team to determine:

- whether the communications tool was the most suitable for delivering the message;
- whether the communications tool was the most suitable for the stakeholder(s);
- whether the communications tool effectively delivered the message;
- whether the message was the right one for the particular audience; and
- the outcomes of using the communication tools, i.e., whether the stakeholder has changed their behaviour.

The success or otherwise of individual communications efforts should be assessed against each of the measurable and quantitative performance indicators outlined in *Template 6: Communications Table*. Ideally, assessments should be made and feedback sought immediately after specific events like a workshop, seminar, forum, working bee, field day, etc. It is good practice, for example, to ask workshop attendees to complete feedback forms (sample questions provided in *Appendix 2*) before leaving the workshop, while their impressions are still fresh. This also enables the lessons learnt to be applied soon thereafter to the planning of other events. Finally, and most importantly, all communications actions should be evaluated collectively during an annual review to ensure that the activities and stakeholders targeted are effectively delivering the necessary changes across the critical habitat or range.

The first step of a formal evaluation process is to again survey stakeholders, using baseline information gleaned during the original stakeholder survey (*Template 2*). This second survey (*Template 8*) is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the communications tools used in the Action Plan against the above criteria. Again, given budgetary limitations, the survey scope may be limited to a sample focus group.

Use *Appendix 3: Measuring Performance of Communications Table* to list all management issues and related performance indicators as defined in *Template 6: Communications Table,* along with individual actions outlined in *Template 7: Action Plan*. Evaluate each action against the performance indicators. The success and/ or failure of a performance indicator should be evaluated as follows:

An objective is achieved if the ideal behaviour is implemented.

- **Highly successful:** Graziers no longer burning dead wood.
  The practice has been discontinued or decreased so significantly that the threat has been removed. This has been achieved through increased awareness by the grazier of their behaviour and can be directly related to the distribution of flyers and workshops held.
- **Medium:** Graziers no longer burning dead wood.
  The practice continues, albeit at a decreased rate. Flyers have been distributed to all graziers and only a small percentage have attended workshops. Graziers interested in the process have discontinued the practice, but the practice continues among a group of graziers who have shown little interest in the process.
- **Low:** There has been very little change to practices.
  Workshops were not well attended and efforts to re-educate graziers have been unsuccessful. An alternative method of communication is required.

Each communications tool should also be assessed to determine whether the target audience received the desired communications message. In evaluating the success and/ or failure of the tool, consider the following:

- **Brochures were:**
  - a) distributed through the wrong network - target group did not receive them;
  - b) too technical for stakeholder to understand;
  - c) too confusing, providing a conflicting message;
  - d) not seen as important and not kept for future reference.
- **Telephone calls were:**
  - a) too confronting for a significant portion of stakeholders, due to them being unsolicited;
  - b) made at inopportune times, without taking into consideration the particular lifestyle of the stakeholder;
  - c) effective in reaching those individuals who were able to provide an additional contact like a mobile phone number; however, this then increased the cost of the phone call.
- **Newspaper articles were:**
  - a) effective in reaching the agricultural community as the items were placed in relevant publications with a wide circulation;
  - b) additionally promoted by local libraries and councils through boards that display “feature” articles. This unexpected result may have boosted readership of the articles.

The role of networks is rarely considered or recorded but it is still important to evaluate them. They remain a vital resource in identifying key stakeholders and ascertaining whether direct contact should be established with those – or alternative – stakeholders. Because much of the value and success of networks lies in their informality, it is best to assess their effectiveness anecdotally rather than through a formal census or feedback sheets.

As part of the annual review of the Communications Strategy, recovery teams should revisit the Communications Table (*Template 6*) and Action Plan (*Template 7*), updating performance indicators and actions for the next implementation period. This will ensure that not only are the communications actions still relevant but that other information, such as the listing of key stakeholders, is current.

The Communications Strategy (see checklist, *Appendix 4*) should be completely reviewed every five years, in line with the five-year Recovery Plan review. In the meantime, it is the task of every recovery team member to implement the strategy initiatives by maintaining meaningful communications with stakeholders and continuing to deliver consistent messages in a positive way. Inspiring others to support recovery efforts will depend on the efficacy of such communication.

7. Templates

7.1 Template 1: Threats to Operational Success

Operational Barrier	Stakeholder	Impact on threat	Detail	Alternative Approach

7.2 Template 2: Survey of Stakeholders

This survey is designed to gather information from key stakeholders of the Recovery Plan. It is also a valuable opportunity for you to have input into the recovery process, to provide information about what influences your actions and to become involved in threatened species protection. Your answers are strictly confidential but may be used to improve our future communications with you.
Please return your survey by the close date.
Thank you for your participation.

Recovery Team Project Officer: ___________________ **Date:** _________________

Contact address: ____

Email address: ____

Telephone: _____________________**Mobile:** ______________________________

Recovery Plan: ____

Recovery Plan region: ____

Recovery Plan objectives: ____

____

____

[The recovery team should include here their statement of philosophy and objectives for the Recovery Plan.]

Survey return address: ____

Survey close date: ________________________

1. Stakeholder contact details:

Name: ____

Address: ____

Email: ____

Telephone: _________________ **Mobile:** ________________

(a) How would you prefer to be contacted? _________________________________

(b) What are the best times to contact you? _________________________________

(c) Are you familiar with the Recovery Plan? (Y/N) ____________________________

(d) Would you like more information about the Recovery Plan? __________________

(e) From what sources have you learnt about the recovery team's efforts in the past?

____

(f) What newspapers, journals or specialist magazines do you read?

____

(g) What radio stations do you listen to? _____________________________________

(h) What television stations do you watch? ________________________________

2. Land tenure
Do you own or lease land in the region? (Y/N) ______________________________

If so, please indicate the land tenure and location of your property.
(For example: privately owned, leased from landholder, leased from government or other agency, Crown Land, etc. If other, please specify.)

____

____

3. Your interest
What interest do you have in this Recovery Plan?

____

Please list organisations or groups you represent, if applicable.

____

4. Activities
What do you or members of your group do in this area *(i.e. access, recreational uses, business, etc.)*?
Please specify.

____

____

5. Species threats
Below is a list of the issues threatening the species.
Indicate what impact you have on these issues and the frequency of that impact using the scale provided.

Issues impacting the species	Provide details of the impact you have in this regard	How frequent is this impact? (Frequent/ Irregular/Not At All)
As outlined in the Recovery Plan		

6. Influences
(a) What influences your thinking or actions in relation to these impacts?

____

____

(b) What constraints impede you from supporting the recovery team's objectives?
Please list any conflicts between your existing and/ or potential activities and the recovery team's objectives.

____

____

(c) If these constraints were removed, would your actions alter? If so, how?

____

____

(d) What positive contributions are you making to the recovery team's objectives?

____

____

7. Impacts of others
To understand the full range of issues threatening the species we need to be aware of all stakeholders and their impacts.
Complete the following table.

Issues impacting the species	List stakeholders	Please provide contact details for the stakeholder if available	What level of impact do you think this stakeholder/ group is having on the threat? (High/ Medium/ Low/ Don't Know)

8. Making a change
(a) What actions do you think need to be taken to address the impacts outlined in the previous table?

____

____

(b) What further actions might assist in the recovery of this species?

____

____

9. Additional information
Please include any other information relevant to the recovery of this species.

____

____

____

____

11. Become involved
Would you like to receive further information about the recovery team and its work?
(Y/N) ________________________
Nominate the way you would prefer to receive information *(mail, web updates, email, etc.).*

____

____

Thank you for your participation.

7.3 Template 3: Stakeholder Analysis by Type

Type of Stakeholder	Name	Contact	Location	Details	Obstacles
	First and surname	*Phone Address Email address*	*Local, state, national, international, region specific eg MLR, KI*	*Other specific information, e.g. president of local friends' group, CMA member, Rotarian, etc.*	*List obstacles the stakeholder has identified that impede them from supporting recovery efforts*
Landowner					
Government Authority:					
Federal					
State					
Local/ regional					
Business:					
Regional bodies and enterprises of the region					
Enterprises using resources from the region					
Travel operators accessing the region					
Other enterprises					
Consumers/ users:					
End users of products					
Tourists					
Recreational users					
Other					
Others					

7.4 Template 4: Rank Stakeholders by Impact on Threatened Species and Critical Habitat

Threat	**Stakeholder**		**Impact on Threat**	**Frequency (of use/ influence on)**	**Total Ranking**	**High / Medium / Low**
	Category	**Specific title**	**(/5)**	**(/5)**	**(/10)**	
			A	**B**	**C (A+B)**	**D (C sorted Low-High)**
List all threats identified in the Recovery Plan	*List all stakeholders that have an existing or potential impact on the threat. Use the categories outlined in Template 3.*		*Rate the stakeholders' impact on the threat (0 indicates no impact; 5 indicates high impact)*	*Rate the frequency of the stakeholders' impact on the threat (0 indicates infrequent impact; 5 indicates frequent impact)*	*Add the previous two columns for a total ranking out of 10*	*Low (0-4) Medium (5-7) High (8-10)*
Removal of dead wood from native vegetation (parks, reserves, roadsides, etc.)	Landowners	Private landowner	5	5	10	High
	Landowners	Grazier removing dead wood	5	5	10	High
	Business	Commercial dealer	5	5	10	High
	Consumers/ users	General public	4	3	7	Medium
	Govt (regional)	Land manager	5	1	6	Medium
	Consumers/ users	Recreational associations, e.g. hiking clubs, campers, 4WDs, sporting shooters, etc.	1	1	2	Low

7.5 Template 5: Stakeholder Profiles

Main Threat	Stakeholder	Ranking impact on threat	Activity of Stakeholder	Current activity/ Baseline data
List all threats identified in the Recovery Plan	*List all stakeholders that have been identified as having an impact on the threat*	*Use Template 4 to determine the stakeholders' impact on the threat*	*Outline the activity of the stakeholder and describe in detail their impact on the threat. This information is used to develop a profile of the stakeholder and to establish the objective of the Communications Strategy.*	*Outline specific details of stakeholder's current activity. This baseline data will be used for evaluation.*
Removal of dead wood from native vegetation (parks, reserves, roadsides, etc.)	Landowner	High	10% of local land managers have suitable nesting trees (60% of these under wheat/ sheep farming, 30% dairy and 10% mixed)	Currently no nesting trees fenced off; all properties farmed direct to tree line
	Grazier	High	Currently dead wood collected for sale/ private use, or burned seasonally	Currently no graziers retaining timber on site
	Commercial dealer	High	Most firewood collected locally is sold to city-based retail outlets. Code of practice developed for firewood industry but not all dealers participating due to voluntary nature of the scheme. Not all dealers adopting/ conforming to code of practice	No preference/ restriction on timber sources; wood sourced from all avenues
	General public	Medium	Collection an ongoing issue. Perception that removal of fallen wood is less of a threat than removing attached branches/ standing dead trees. Some awareness-raising through conferences attended e.g. firewood conference held at CCSA last year. Currently accessing firewood through service stations or landscape supply companies, or direct from paddocks and roadsides	Level of knowledge low; no demand by consumers for wood sourced sustainably

7.6 Template 6: Communications Table

Stakeholder	Management Issue	Ideal Behaviour	Accessibility/ Available ways to contact stakeholders	Communications Media	Performance Indicators	Priority
List stakeholders by priority as identified in Template 4	*Detail the management issue to be addressed*	*Detail the objective of the communications with this stakeholder. This may include the change in behaviour desired of the communication.*	*List ways that the stakeholder is accessible. This will assist in determining the communications media (use Template 5)*	*Use Appendix 1 to determine the most suitable communications media for the stakeholders*	*List measurable performance indicators to reflect stakeholder's changed behaviour*	*Use Template 4 to determine the priority of this action*
Grazier	Impacts on nesting trees by clearing and burning dead wood	Education campaign to stop the practice of burning, and the environmental benefits to grazier of retaining nesting trees on properties	Mail, telephone, flyers, newspapers	Letters, direct telephone, individual face-to-face	# graziers responding positively to communication; # landholders seeking more information; # graziers no longer burning	High
Commercial dealer	Perpetuating practice of clearing dead wood for sale; not adopting code of practice	Adopt code of practice/ adherence to licensing system to reduce use of dead wood in favour of sustainable sources	via industry association	press releases, newspaper, letters to industry association; timed for collection season (spring) and use season (winter)	# dealers adopting code of practice	High
General public	Lack of knowledge on impacts, convenience, cost associated with purchase of wood versus collection of dead wood	Use wood from sustainable accredited sources	via point of sale e.g. service station	newspaper, distribution of flyers at point of sale; timed for use season (winter)	rise in sales of sustainably sourced wood; fall in sales of dead wood	Medium

7.7 Template 7: Action Plan

Priority	Task	Timeline	Objective	Stakeholder		Cost Calculation (estimates only)	Actual Cost	Completed
Communication action:								
Removal of dead wood from native vegetation								
1.1	distribute letters to individual landholders	within 3 months	encourage use of alternative wood sources	Landowners: private and commercial	private landowner	[100 A4 letter @ $2.05/ letter; cost includes labour and postage]	$200.50	
1.2	Workshops delivered to landowners as follow-up to letter distributions	within 1 month of letter distribution	encourage use of alternative wood sources	Landowners: private and commercial	private landowner	[$295/workshop, four workshops for 25 people each; cost includes speaker time {2hrs@$55/hr}, hall hire {flat rate $150/workshop}, morning tea {sufficient for 25 people @ $35/workshop}]	$1,180	
1.3	face-to-face/ telephone follow-up to direct requests after workshops	as needed after workshops	provide advice on fencing funding schemes	Landowners: private and commercial	private landowner	TOTAL BUDGET $1,000 available	$ 1,000	
2.1	distribute letters to individual graziers, industry associations	within 3 months	educate on benefits of tree and dead wood retention, and alternative practices to burning dead wood	Landowners: private and commercial	grazier	[100 A4 letter @ $2.05/ letter; cost includes labour and postage]	$200.50	
2.2	face-to-face/ telephone follow-up to direct requests after workshops	within 1 month of letter distribution	encourage use of alternative wood sources	Landowners: private and commercial	grazier	TOTAL BUDGET $1,000 available	$1,000	
2.3	Newspaper article	seasonally - winter and spring	awareness-raising	Landowners: private and commercial	grazier	(two articles in three newspapers, includes drafting and editing)	$150	
3.1	distribute letter via industry association	within 6 months	encourage use of sustainable timbers instead of dead wood	Business	commercial dealer	INCLUDED IN BUDGET LINE FOR LETTER DISTRIBUTION TO LANDHOLDERS AND GRAZIERS	$-	
3.2	Newspaper article/ press releases	seasonally - winter and spring		Business	commercial dealer	INCLUDED IN BUDGET LINE FOR NEWSPAPER/ PRESS RELEASE TO GRAZIERS	$-	
4.1	distribute flyers at point of sale	seasonally - winter and spring	encourage purchase of sustainable timber from accredited	Consumers/ users	general public	[100 A4 flyers @ $2.05/ flyer; cost includes labour and postage]	$200.50	

			suppliers					
4.2	Newspaper article/ press releases	seasonally - winter and spring		Consumers/ users	general public	INCLUDED IN BUDGET LINE FOR NEWSPAPER/ PRESS RELEASE TO GRAZIERS AND COMMERCIAL DEALERS	$-	
5.1	letter direct to relevant agency	within 6 months	advocate implementation of licensing system/ code of practice	Govt (regional)	land manager	NOMINAL - INCLUDED IN GENERAL PROJECT BUDGET LINE	$-	
5.2	Newspaper article/ press releases	seasonally - winter and spring	highlight need for code of practice, awareness-raising among other lobbying groups e.g. conservation groups	Govt (regional)	land manager	(two articles in three newspapers, includes drafting and editing)	$150	
5.3	Electronic discussion group	quarterly	highlight need for code of practice, awareness-raising among lobby groups e.g. other conservation groups	Govt (regional)	land manager	NO CHARGE ASSOCIATED	$-	
						Total Budget for Action Plan	**$4,081.50**	
Eliminated actions								
6				Consumers/ users	recreational associations	stakeholder impact low, behavioural changes/ practices already relatively good		

7.8 Template 8: Communications Strategy Survey of Stakeholders

This survey is designed to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the recovery team's communications with you.
Your honest views and specific feedback would be appreciated.
Your answers are strictly confidential but may be used by the recovery team to improve our Communications Strategy.
Please return your survey by the closing date.
Thank you for your participation.

Recovery Team Project Officer: ____________________ **Date:** __________________

Contact address: ____

Email address: ____

Telephone: ______________________**Mobile:** _______________________________

Recovery Plan region: ____

Recovery Plan objectives: ____

___

___

[*The recovery team should include here their statement of philosophy and objectives for the Recovery Plan.*]

Survey return address: ____

Survey close date: ________________________

1. Stakeholder contact detail:

Name: ____

Address: ____

Email: ____

Telephone: __________________ **Mobile:** ________________

How would you prefer to be contacted? ____________________________

2. Communications activities

The recovery team has carried out a number of communications activities over the past 12 months to provide information on the impacts of threats to species in your area.
From what sources have you learnt about these threats?
(List sources like letters/ telephone calls/ emails/ newspaper articles/ workshops, etc.)

___

List the events *(workshops, forums, working bees, etc.)* that you have attended during the past 12 months.

___

___

Which forms of communication with you were most effective? Why?

Which forms of communication with you were least effective? Why?

What behaviour or actions have you changed in direct response to this communication?

How could the recovery team's communications with you overall be improved?

4. The communications activities that the Recovery Team has undertaken over the past 12 months are outlined below.
Please comment on how effective these actions have been.

Communications actions	Issues impacting the species	How effective would you rate this action? (Effective/ Ineffective/ NA)	Provide additional details
List the actions	*List the threats the action was trying to impact*		

5. Do you consider you have a good understanding of the recovery team's objectives?

6. Please include any other information relevant to the recovery of this species.

7. Would you like to receive further information about the recovery team and its work?
(Y/N) ______________________
Nominate the way you would prefer to receive information *(mail, web updates, email, etc.).*

Thank you for your participation.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: Communications Tools

Type of Media	Advantages	Disadvantages	When to Use	Audience	Cost	Points to remember
1. DIRECT						
Individual/ face-to-face	Direct mode of communication; direct contact with stakeholder; can receive feedback straight away	Can be confronting for the stakeholder; may not get a response	When the stakeholder is known and is accessible	Landholders	Cost-effective; dependent upon distances between target landholders	Best delivered via local community representative, e.g. local Landcare officer
Telephone	Direct contact with stakeholder; can receive feedback straight away	Can be confronting for the stakeholder; may not get a response	When the stakeholder is known and is accessible	Landholders	Cost-effective	Preparation of message; timing of call
Email	Direct mode of communication; high chance of being noticed and read by intended target group	Quick, easy and cost-effective to deliver	Recipient may not view the email as personal	Target community group	Cost-effective	Requires up-to-date databases with names and addresses, etc
Newsletter	Direct at contacts with a common interest	Mass distribution will result in wastage; needs to be updated and maintained on a regular basis	When the stakeholder is known and is accessible	Community/ interest group	Cost-dependent; email newsletter more cost-effective then mail-out	Requires up-to-date databases with names and addresses, etc, and a regular distribution cycle
Workshops	Direct contact with interested groups	May not be able to attract all stakeholders	When message is technical and a number of key messages need to be delivered	Community/ interest group	Cost-dependent	Planning and means of delivering message
Electronic discussion group	Direct contact with interested groups	Unsuitable for large groups; some stakeholders are not contactable by email	When message needs to be developed and discussed	Community/ interest group	Cost-effective	Need convenor of group

2. PRINTED						
Letters	Personal mode of communication; high chance of being noticed and read by intended target group	Unsuitable for very large groups	When message is specific and targeting a small group. Good to use as an introduction	Landholders	Cost-effective, depending on size of mail-out	Requires up-to-date databases with names and addresses, etc
Brochures and leaflets	Can reach a large number of people	Little chance of feedback if distributed in the wrong way; easily overlooked; mass distribution will result in wastage; limited space to explain details	When message needs to be distributed often in urban area via letter drop, or via information centre that a number of interested people access	Local community	Cost-effective if reaching a large number of people	Plan the distribution
Reports	Can present information in detail	Can be easily overlooked because of high number of reports published; little feedback option	When technical message needs to be delivered	Funding bodies, or as a tool for volunteer groups	Can be costly in time developing the report and producing it	Develop guidelines for language and layout for technical writing; plan distribution and publicity well in time
Journals and Magazines	Good way to reach specialised audience; articles usually published without cost	Limited circulation; little feedback	When technical message needs to be delivered to a specific group	Specific interest group	Cost-effective	Keep lists of specialised journals, addresses of editors and preferred style of submissions, and update regularly
3. VISUAL						
Displays/ Exhibitions/ Posters	Attractive way to present information; if staff present there is a direct feedback opportunity; long lifespan	Can be costly; can become outdated quickly	Visitor centre, open days	Community groups	Expensive	Go for light-weight, portable and easily changeable systems; don't present too much information; keep message and graphics simple

Overhead sheets	Cheap and easy to make; direct feedback possible when used to support communication	Tendency to put too much information on each sheet	When you have opportunity to talk at meetings or information days	Community groups	Cost-effective	Minimise text
Film/ video	Good to address groups of various sizes; can be watched at many locations	Need professional skills; no feedback; difficult to change	Message needs to be delivered to a wide range of people	Wide range of community groups	Expensive	
4. DIGITAL						
Web sites	Attractive way to present information; interactivity possible and direct feedback; ability to check how many people accessed specific information	Not accessible to everyone; needs to be kept updated; requires some technical expertise; can be easily overlooked	Message to be delivered to a wide range of people	Wide range of community groups	Cost-effective	Ensure linkages from other related sites to your web site to increase chance of being found
CD-ROM	Good way to present complex information; interactivity possible; no direct feedback; can be distributed to various locations	Requires technical expertise to develop; requires equipment to use; not accessible to everyone	Message to be delivered to a wide range of people	Wide range of community groups	Costly	Plan distribution

5. MASS MEDIA						
Radio Broadcast	High local interest; accessible to most; low production costs; audience can be targeted	No feedback; contact does not mean communication; lacks personal appeal; scheduling can be problematic	Message to be delivered to a regional area	Regional community	Cost-effective	Plan announcement
TV Broadcasts	Wide audience; accessible to most people; very popular medium; opportunity to combine sound, vision, animation, etc.; variety of channels allows targeting of specific audiences	No feedback; choice of channels dilutes ability to target audience	Message to be delivered to a regional area	Regional community	Expensive as an advertisement; cost-effective if news item	Plan announcement
Newspaper articles	Usually wide circulation; information can be distributed quickly	No control over content (depends on editors and journalists); no interaction possible	Message to be delivered to a regional area	Regional community	Cost-effective	Plan message
Press conference	Chance to deliver complex information to the media; has opportunity for feedback	Takes some preparation; staff need to be trained in handling media questions; needs to be newsworthy to ensure media turn up	Message to be delivered quickly to get action	Regional community	Cost-effective	Plan message
Press releases	Cheap way to draw attention of media to newsworthy events; good for fairly straight-forward issues; can be produced quickly	Media receive dozens of press releases; requires some skill to write and differentiate message; no direct feedback from journalists	Message to be delivered quickly to get action	Regional community	Cost-effective	Plan message

8.2 Appendix 2: Feedback Forms

Feedback forms should be simple and phrased and presented in such a way as to allow participants to complete them quickly. Only ask those questions that are most relevant to the target audience and phrase them in a non-threatening fashion that encourages honest dialogue rather than monosyllabic answers. Allow sufficient space for responses.

Depending on the nature of the event, you may consider asking questions such as:

- *how did you hear about the event?*;
- *what was your motivation for attending the event?*;
- *what aspect of the event did you find most valuable, and why?*;
- *what aspect of the event did you find of least value/ not relevant to you, and why?*;
- *how do you think future events could be improved?;*
- *what other topics do you think should be the focus of future events? (Please list as many as you think relevant)*;
- *please provide your contact details if you are interested in being notified of future events, or of being added to the mailing list to receive our newsletter. Please specify whether you prefer to be contacted by post (hard copy), or by e-mail (PDF or WORD version).*

If you are intending to circulate feedback forms at the conclusion of an event, advise participants early to encourage them to view the event objectively. Ensure that you include adequate time to complete the feedback sheet to avoid any last-minute scramble.

The recovery team is not obliged to take on board all feedback, suggestions or comments from participants. It is very rare that there will not be contradictory feedback on some items and it is impossible to address all issues to the satisfaction of all participants. Make a judgement of the key elements to “get right” in terms of the particular event and devise future strategies based on this. Some of the issues to consider may include:

- relevance of the subject matter/ speakers;
- size and suitability of the venue;
- timing of the event in relation to local calendar;
- travel demands on participants;
- provision of refreshments.

8.3 Appendix 3: Measuring Performance of Communications Table

Stakeholder	Communications Media	Communications Action	Evaluation of Performance	Success Rating (High/ Medium/ Low)	Review Communications Strategy
Transfer from Template 7	*Communications*	*Transfer the communications action for each management issue as outlined in Template 7*	*Enter an evaluation of the performance*	*Rate the success of the communications*	*Provide details of how the Communications Strategy should be changed*
Landowner	Letters, direct telephone, face-to-face	Distribute letters to individual landholders	13 out of 15 landholders received letters	HIGH	Continue communications via letter
		Workshops delivered to landowners as follow-up to letter distributions	Over 100 attended workshops	High	Annual workshops
		Face-to-face/ telephone follow-up following direct requests after workshops	15 landholders contacted; 10 responded positively	Medium	Some landholders found face-to-face confronting; always precede face-to-face with an introductory letter or telephone call
Grazier	Mail, telephone, flyers, newspapers	Distribute letters to individual graziers, industry associations	2 out of 30 graziers have responded to letters; industry associations responded but have not included articles in association journals	Low	Revisit this action; need to educate graziers on the impact of burning
		Face-to-face/ telephone follow-up following direct requests after workshops	2 out of 30 graziers attended workshops	Low	Run workshops at industry events
		Newspaper article	One newspaper picked up the issue	Low	Review the articles previously presented. Seek advice of editors

8.4 Appendix 4: Communications Strategy Checklist

As outlined in Table 1.3, there are eight steps in developing and implementing a Communications Strategy:

1. **Review existing Recovery Plan**.
2. **Survey stakeholders** using *Template 2*.
3. Analyse survey responses and **develop profiles of stakeholders** (*Template 3*).
4. **Rank stakeholders** according to their impact (*Template 4*).
5. **Categorise each stakeholder** (*Template 5*).
6. Use the **Communications Table** (*Template 6*) to list and prioritise messages to be communicated, with whom and how, in order of priority.
7. Implement **Action Plan** using *Template 7*, ensuring that all communications and feedback from stakeholders is documented.
8. **Monitor and evaluate** communications on an ongoing basis (*Template 8, Appendices 3 and 4*).

9. References

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10. Glossary/Acronyms

Adaptive management

Adaptive management is a systematic process for continually improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of operational programs. Its most effective form –"active" adaptive management – employs management programs that are designed to experimentally compare selected policies or practices by evaluating alternative hypotheses about the system being managed.

AG DEH	Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage
Critical habitat	Habitat critical to the survival of the species/ community
EA	Environment Australia (former name for AG DEH)
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
Likely range	The range of a particular species (plant or animal) or TEC. A likely range may be extrapolated from such factors as survey results, similar habitat or other resources.
NRM	Natural resource management
Recovery	Protection, conservation and management of a threatened species or ecological community (must be listed under the *EPBC Act* 1999)
Stakeholders	Someone who has a share or an interest. Stakeholders may be individuals, organisations, sectors, e.g. environment sector, viticulture sector.
Taxon/ taxa	Animal or plant group having natural relations
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
TSN	Threatened Species Network
WWF	WWF-Australia

11. Contacts

ORGANISATION	ADDRESS	PHONE
WWF-Australia http://www.wwf.org.au	GPO Box 528 Sydney NSW 2000	02 9281 5515
EPBC Unit, WWF-Australia, Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT)	15/71 Constitution Avenue CAMPBELL ACT 2612	02 6257 4010
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This document was edited by Amanda Burdon.

13. Feedback Form

Communicating for Recovery: A guide to developing a Recovery Plan Communications Strategy

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:

Species and Community Program Manager
WWF Australia
PO Box 528
Sydney 2001

The authors would appreciate your feedback on the value of the *Communicating for Recovery* guide.
Please take a few moments to complete the following feedback form.
Your comments and suggestions will help us to review this guide in the future, and to ensure that it remains relevant to recovery teams and others who use it.
Please be as honest and detailed in your answers as possible.
If you have any questions about this feedback form, or the guide in general, please contact WWF Australia's Species and Community Program Manager.

Thank You.

1. Overall feedback

- How did you hear about the *Communicating for Recovery* guide?

- Why did you decide to use it?

- Did you understand the purpose of the guide prior to its use?

(i.e. were the title and keywords a clear indication of what to expect from the Communicating for Recovery *guide]?*

- If you are not a member of a recovery team, and have used the document for a purpose other than to develop a Communications Strategy for a recovery team, please provide some information on how you have used the guide and why.

- Was the advice on "how to use these guidelines" clear?

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2. Style

- Was the guide clear and easy to read?

- Was the guide arranged in a logical, sequential order?

- Was the language used appropriate?

- Did you clearly understand all technical terms used and the processes described?

- Did you consider that you had sufficient information, and additional resources, to use *Communicating for Recovery* to its full advantage?

3. Format

- Did you find the templates useful?

- Were the templates logical and easy to complete, particularly where information had to be carried from one template to the next?

- Were any templates confusing or difficult to complete? If so, specify.

- Which Appendices did you find most useful and why?

- Was the information contained within the Communications Media Tools table sufficient for your needs?

- Can you suggest other Appendices you think might be useful?

- Was the Reference list adequate?

- Would a list of Suggested Reading be useful to you?

4. Content

- Did you have a current Recovery Plan? If so, did you find it useful to complete this section? If not, on what document did you base your use of this guide, such as an action plan or action statement?

- Do you think the guide only works if a current Recovery Plan exists, or do you believe that it would be useful regardless?

- Was the “Review the current Recovery Plan” section useful?

- Were the number of steps needed for implementing the guide appropriate, or did you feel there should have been more/ fewer?

- Did the guide contain adequate information on communications tools?

- What challenges did you face in implementing your Action Plan?

- Do you feel you have a more thorough understanding of your stakeholders as a result of developing your Communications Strategy?

- Do you think the guide might be improved? If so, how?

- Was there any aspect of the guide that you particularly liked/ disliked?

- If you used a different process than what was advocated in the guide, please outline it. For example, did you complete the sections in a different order, or use only particular sections?

- Do you have any further comments or suggestions to make about the guide?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback for