



Philanthropy  
New Zealand  
*Tōpūtanga Tuku Aroha o Aotearoa*

# Readiness, Response and Recovery: A funders' guide factsheet

## Introduction

New Zealand, like many countries, experiences a wide range of disasters and tragedies. In recent times, these have included major earthquakes, floods, fires and a terrorist shooting. Major events will continue to occur, and many predict that there will be more natural disasters due to climate change.

Philanthropy New Zealand (PNZ) developed *Readiness, Response and Recovery: A funders' guide* for philanthropists and grantmakers. It recognises the critical role they play in preparing for and responding to major events, and helping communities recover from them.

To develop the guide PNZ engaged with a range of New Zealand and international philanthropic and civil defence experts with experience in preparing for, responding to and funding recovery from major events.

**“The usual rules, conventions and processes in grant making do not necessarily apply in a disaster. This is true of government grants, business donations and the individual donor who puts a coin into an appeal tin. The way traumatised communities access and utilise grants is also different from the traditional approach to grant applications.”**

THE FOUNDATION FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL RENEWAL (FRRR), AUSTRALIA,  
QUOTED IN COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF NEW ZEALAND REPORT, WHEN DISASTER  
STRIKES: A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

# The guiding principles

The guide contains five guiding principles for funders that are relevant to any kind of major event.

## **Collaborate with other funders**

The scale and nature of major events mean that, even more than any other time, you'll need to work with other funders. Get to know other local funders. Plan your readiness with them and share your preparation. Having good relationships will support collaboration under pressure.

## **Develop strong relationships with diverse communities**

The everyday work of philanthropic funders and grantmakers means they often have strong networks in a range of communities. It's easier to help someone if you know them. Value these relationships and prioritise building relationships on an ongoing basis.

## **Build flexibility, responsiveness and customer focus into your funding processes**

Major events come in all shapes and sizes, so your preparation needs to be flexible and be able to be fine-tuned quickly after a major event. Being responsive to needs and adapting to the situation will mean you can have a more positive impact. Avoid sticking to plans that won't have factored in the uniqueness of an event, or the ever-evolving context. Maintaining a focus on community needs may see you funding in very different ways than you may have imagined.

## **Stay the distance**

Large public donations, government funding and charities experienced in disaster relief are visible features immediately after an event. While philanthropy and grantmaking often play a role in these early days, the sector's well-positioned to provide support in the medium and longer term. The impact of major events means they are a marathon, not a sprint, and increased support for those impacted will be needed long after the public profile around the issues has disappeared.

## **Over-communicate**

Timely and transparent communication is critical in a time of crisis. Your organisation might be more publicly accountable – to your donors, fund seekers, the news media, your community – than usual. It's important to plan how you will communicate and who you'll communicate with. Communicating well will help others; communicating badly can impact your effectiveness.

The guide contains sections on actions funders can take to get ready, to respond after a major event, and steps for the recovery phase.

# To find out more

*Readiness, Response and Recovery: A funders' guide* gives practical guidance, case studies and resources to philanthropic funders and grantmakers wanting to do the best job possible to help their communities deal with upheaval.

To read the full report visit <https://philanthropy.org.nz/other-research/>.

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