

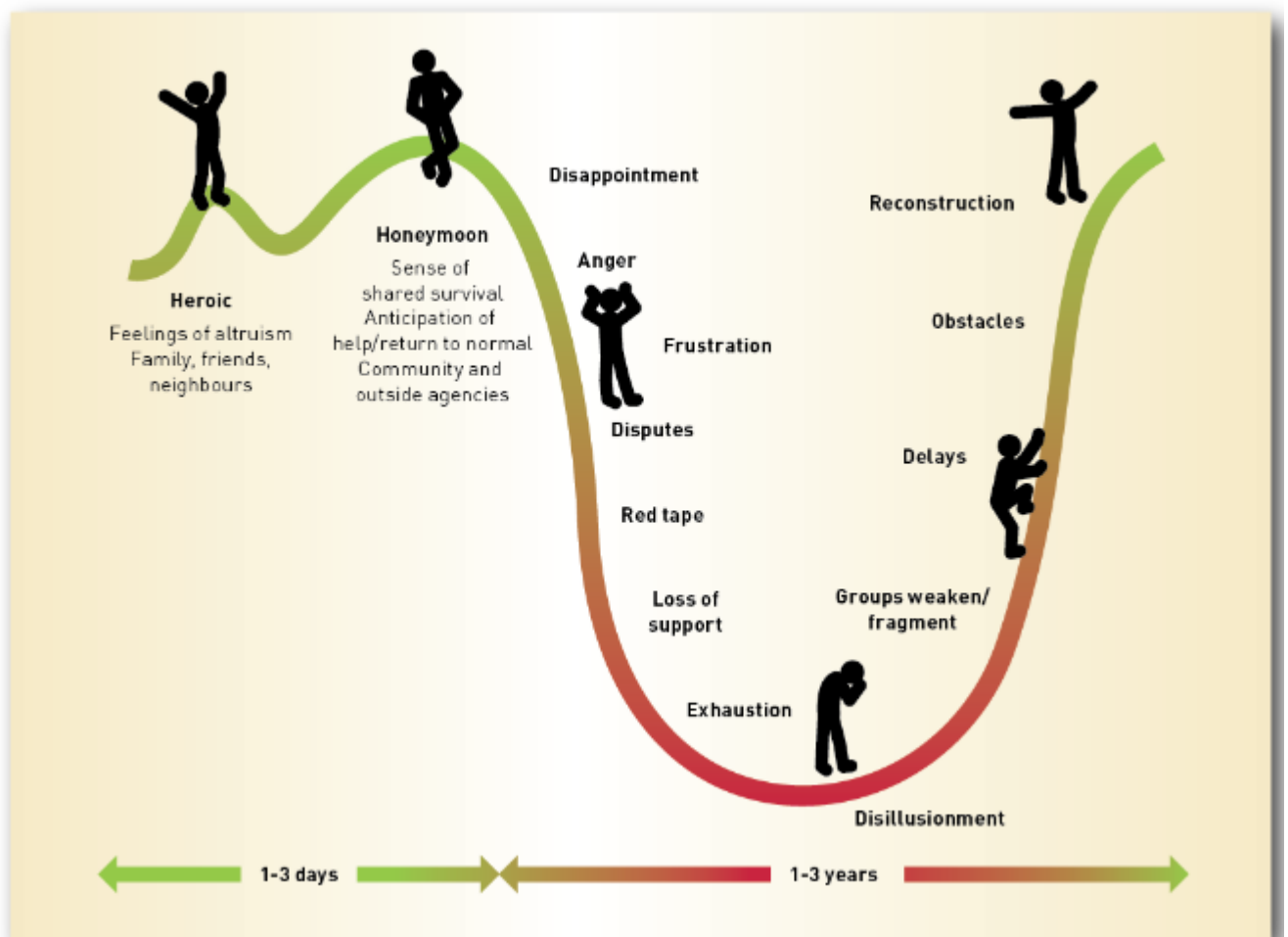
Ranford Fire - Council's Role in the Recovery Phase.

Council continues to have a role to play now that the Ranford Fire has been controlled.

There are environmental, economic, social and infrastructure issues to be considered. With the scale of the damage comes a scaled response. The first thing to do is carry out recovery planning, including ensuring a needs analysis is undertaken. That is under way.

One of the most important things for Council to consider is the social needs of those affected. Many people experience strong emotions following a traumatic event, such as has just occurred.

See the following table.



Sometimes the sense of elation from surviving is replaced by some pretty negative emotions. This is normal. If you or a neighbour needs someone to talk to about their reaction to recent events, please contact Crisis Care Helpline 1800 199 008 or Lifeline 131114.

In terms of damage to private property, the first place to turn is your insurance company. If you have a current policy, you may be covered for the cost of repairing fences damaged by fire and / or falling trees and where emergency services have had to access the fire ground. If there are significant uninsured losses, Council may co-ordinate volunteers to assist those affected. Unfortunately, Council cannot directly provide its staff and machinery to clear properties.

Council also has a role working with the Peel Harvey Catchment Council and groups like Friends of Reserves to ensure further damage to waterways does not occur from the trees that were pushed over near the river bed to stop the fire spreading. It also has a role in continuing to monitor animal welfare as some livestock and native animals will show effects of exposure to the fire and smoke for some time.

In terms of infrastructure, Council has a role to play in ensuring you can return safely to your property; a role that is pretty much complete. However please remember that the fire is contained, it is not out and may flare up as it has over the last few days. Remain vigilant.

Of course it goes without saying that as a community we all owe a debt of gratitude to all those volunteers who refused to let the savage fire last week do more damage than it did. A fantastic effort in extreme conditions. Thankyou.