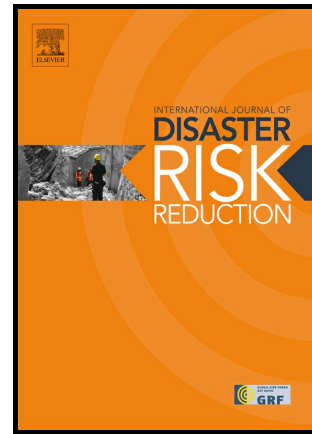


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Selecting an Institutional Mechanism for Building Back Better: Lessons from Victorian Bushfires Recovery

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Abstract

Building Back Better (BBB) is a prominent concept in post-disaster reconstruction and recovery aimed at creating safe and resilient communities following disaster events. The institutional mechanism adopted for reconstruction and recovery influences the ability to BBB. It was the objective of this paper to understand what can be considered a good institutional mechanism to assist BBB. A longitudinal case study of the 2009 Victorian bushfires was conducted to examine the institutional mechanism adopted for recovery and extract lessons. Data was collected from semi-structured open-ended interviews with key stakeholders over four years. The institutional mechanism adopted for bushfire recovery involved creating a separate recovery authority with a decentralized mandate to manage, coordinate and facilitate the recovery process. Faster decision-making and implementation, expedited legislative procedures and easier access to funding were experienced as a result. However partnership, transparency, and involvement at the grass-roots level needed further improvement. The lessons learnt from the Victorian bushfires case study are presented as recommendations to assist with the selection of an appropriate post-disaster institutional mechanism to assist future recovery efforts and Build Back Better.

Keywords:

Build Back Better; Reconstruction; Recovery; Institutional Mechanism; Victorian Bushfires

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