Australian Government

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

Australian Institute
for Disaster Resilience

2021-2025

OUR APPROACH

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and culture. We pay our respects to elders past and present.

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Foreword

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) is the National Institute for disaster risk reduction and resilience. We work to strengthen the resilience of Australian communities to disasters by sharing knowledge and collaborating across a broad range of sectors taking action to reduce disaster risk.

Communities across Australia are experiencing increasingly severe and frequent disasters and emergency events. Compounded with the driver of a changing climate, the possibility of natural hazards triggering disasters of unprecedented scale continues to grow. There is a need for sectors to work together with a shared sense of responsibility to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from disasters.

AIDR was formed in 2015, with funding and support from the Australian Government, and operates as a business unit of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC). The services that AIDR delivers are defined and funded through a contract between the Australian Government and AFAC.

AIDR is a networked organisation that connects and supports a variety of stakeholders across multiple sectors, states, and territories. These include the emergency management sector, disaster resilience sector, Commonwealth, state, and local governments, the private sector, and the community sector.

This document outlines AIDR's program of work for the next four years, which will span the emergency management continuum of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. AIDR will influence change by creating, growing, and supporting a range of networks; providing opportunities for learning, capability development, and innovation; sharing knowledge and resources to enable informed decision making and action; and facilitating thought leadership through national conversation.

AIDR is in a strong position to provide leadership for those acting to reduce disaster risk and to continue our role in supporting a disaster resilient Australia. Our knowledge products and services, such as the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection, the Knowledge Hub, the Australian Journal of Emergency Management, and the Australian Disaster Resilience Conference, support increased knowledge, understanding and capability development across sectors. In addition, we enable a growing, inclusive, connected, and informed network of practitioners who make evidence- and values-based decisions.

Through the delivery of these products and services, over the next four years AIDR expects to enhance its existing reputation as an influential and trusted thought leader in disaster resilience in Australia.

Amanda Leck
Executive Director
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

Our purpose

AIDR is the National Institute for disaster risk reduction and resilience. We collaborate across sectors to strengthen the resilience of Australian communities to disasters.

AIDR creates, grows, and supports a range of networks; provides opportunities for learning, development, and innovation; shares knowledge and resources to enable informed decision making and action; and facilitates thought leadership through national conversations.

Our partners

AIDR is a consortium managed by AFAC as a business unit and supported by its partners: the Australian Government and the Australian Red Cross.

AIDR delivers a range of products and services on behalf of the Commonwealth Government to support a disaster resilient Australia.

Australian Government

The services that AIDR delivers are defined and funded through a contract between the Australian Government and AFAC. A Governance Committee monitors the performance of AIDR in delivering the services defined and funded through the contract, as well as in achieving the outcomes identified in the AIDR Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

afac

AFAC, as the national council for fire and emergency services, supports the sector to create safer, more resilient communities. AFAC drives national consistency through collaboration, innovation and partnerships. AFAC delivers enhanced capability by developing doctrine and supporting operations.

Australian Red Cross

Red Cross mobilises the power of humanity – the powerful action of people helping people that can make a real difference to those overcoming tough times. It saves lives and supports people before and after disasters strike. It works to alleviate suffering during wars and conflict and to promote humanitarian laws and values.

Red Cross partners with International Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in areas as diverse as health and disaster risk management to form part of a global movement of humanitarian organisations in 190 countries.

Our values

RESPECT

COLLABORATION

MUTUAL OBLIGATION

MUTUAL BENEFIT

EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

Our stakeholders

AIDR's stakeholders include those working or volunteering to support disaster resilience across multiple sectors including:

- Academia and Education
- Business, Insurance and Finance
- Commonwealth, State and Local Governments
- Community and Volunteer Organisations
- Crisis and Emergency Management
- Emergency Services and Defence
- Environment and Infrastructure
- Health and Community Care
- Media and Communications
- Not-for-profit, NGO, Member Body and Peak Body

Influencing change

AIDR contributes to a more disaster resilient Australia through four key influencing strategies that encapsulate AIDR's work:

- Actively supporting, growing and sustaining a range of networks across sectors and jurisdictions.
- Enabling those with a role in disaster risk reduction and resilience to come together to learn, develop and innovate.
- Collecting, developing, curating and sharing knowledge to educate and promote good practice in disaster risk reduction and resilience.
- Providing a central focus point for national thought leadership on disaster risk reduction and resilience.

Theory of change

Through consultation with a broad group of stakeholders, AIDR has developed a Theory of Change that identifies how AIDR's key influencing strategies are expected to 'work' to bring about change and to contribute to a disaster resilient Australia.

Shown in this model, the key influencing strategies will build on AIDR's foundational work to effect both immediate, short term outcomes and intermediate, medium term outcomes. These will in turn contribute to AIDR achieving its desired final outcomes by 2025. At a high level, AIDR's work will contribute to the broader 'big picture' goals.

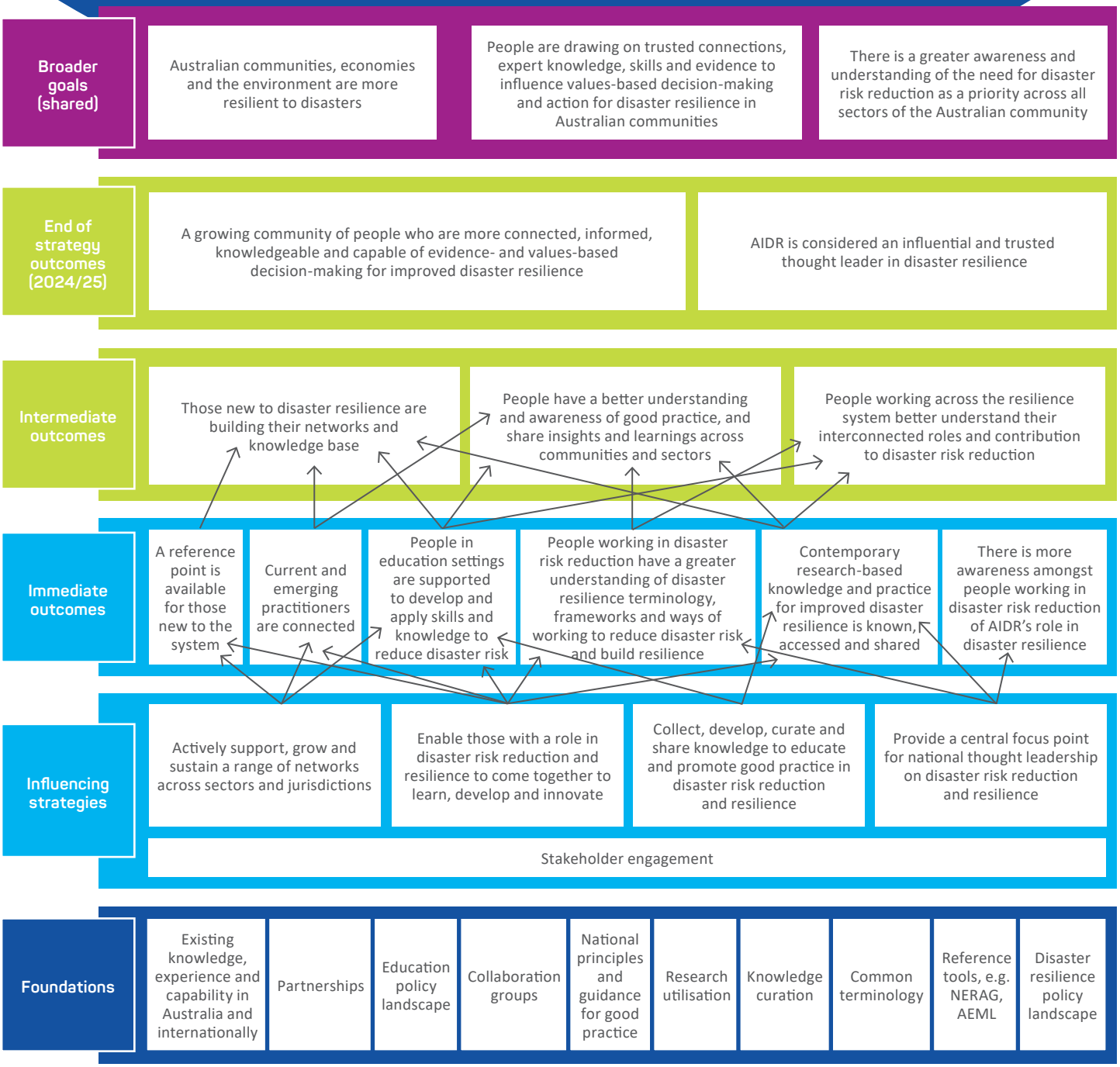


Figure 1: AIDR theory of change model

What success looks like

By 2025, AIDR expects:

- a growing community of people who are more connected, informed, knowledgeable and capable of evidence- and values based-decision making
- to be considered as an influential and trusted thought leader in disaster resilience.

By collaborating with our ever-growing network of diverse stakeholders to share knowledge, learning and capability development, AIDR will contribute to a more disaster resilient Australia where:

- people are drawing on trusted connections, expert knowledge, skills and evidence to influence values-based decision making and action for disaster resilience in Australian communities
- there is a greater awareness and understanding of the need for disaster risk reduction as a priority across all sectors of the Australian community.

Monitoring and evaluation

AIDR has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to guide its program of work and to demonstrate AIDR's impact over the timeframe of this Strategy. The approach is theory driven, with measurement aligned to the Theory of Change model.

The plan includes:

- **Measurement** that tracks the delivery of influencing strategies and data will be collected about the activities and outputs across AIDR's four key influencing strategies.
- **Strategic learning** also occurs across the Theory of Change with different learning questions related to different levels of change.
- **Evaluation** draws on measurement and learning data, and focusses on the effectiveness of the influencing strategies.

Policy alignment

AIDR's services are aligned with, and enable contribution to, existing national and international policy and work, and will adapt as policy changes. Existing relevant policy (April 2021) includes:

- the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*
- the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* priorities and strategic guidance
- Australia's commitment to the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*
- the *Sustainable Development Goals*.

Principles

AIDR's work is guided by the following key principles:

A strengths-based approach

AIDR actively engages and collaborates with those involved in the disaster resilience system to:

- support and promote existing arrangements, organisations and initiatives
- facilitate collaboration between key stakeholders in disaster resilience.

A catalyst for, champion and enabler of change

AIDR empowers others to drive change, playing the role of enabler, broker and facilitator of networks, knowledge and capability. This is achieved through being:

- an aggregator and holder of knowledge
- a builder of capability.

Proactive, not reactive

The network, knowledge and capability needs of all sectors are proactively anticipated.

An inclusive approach

Networks, knowledge and capability building services are informed by:

- a 'whole of system' understanding of the ecosystem, across sectors and geographies multiple perspectives, inclusive of all key stakeholders and those wanting to be involved, and Indigenous wisdom.

Practical

Network, knowledge and capability services focus on:

- translating policy into practice
- contributing to practical impact at a local level.

Fit-for-purpose for targeted audiences

Network, knowledge and capability services are fit-for-purpose for the user, meeting target audiences where they are 'at'.

Service area mapped to influencing strategy

AIDR delivers a range products and services on behalf of the Australian Government. Each of these service areas contributes to the way AIDR influences change and contributes to a more disaster resilient Australia.

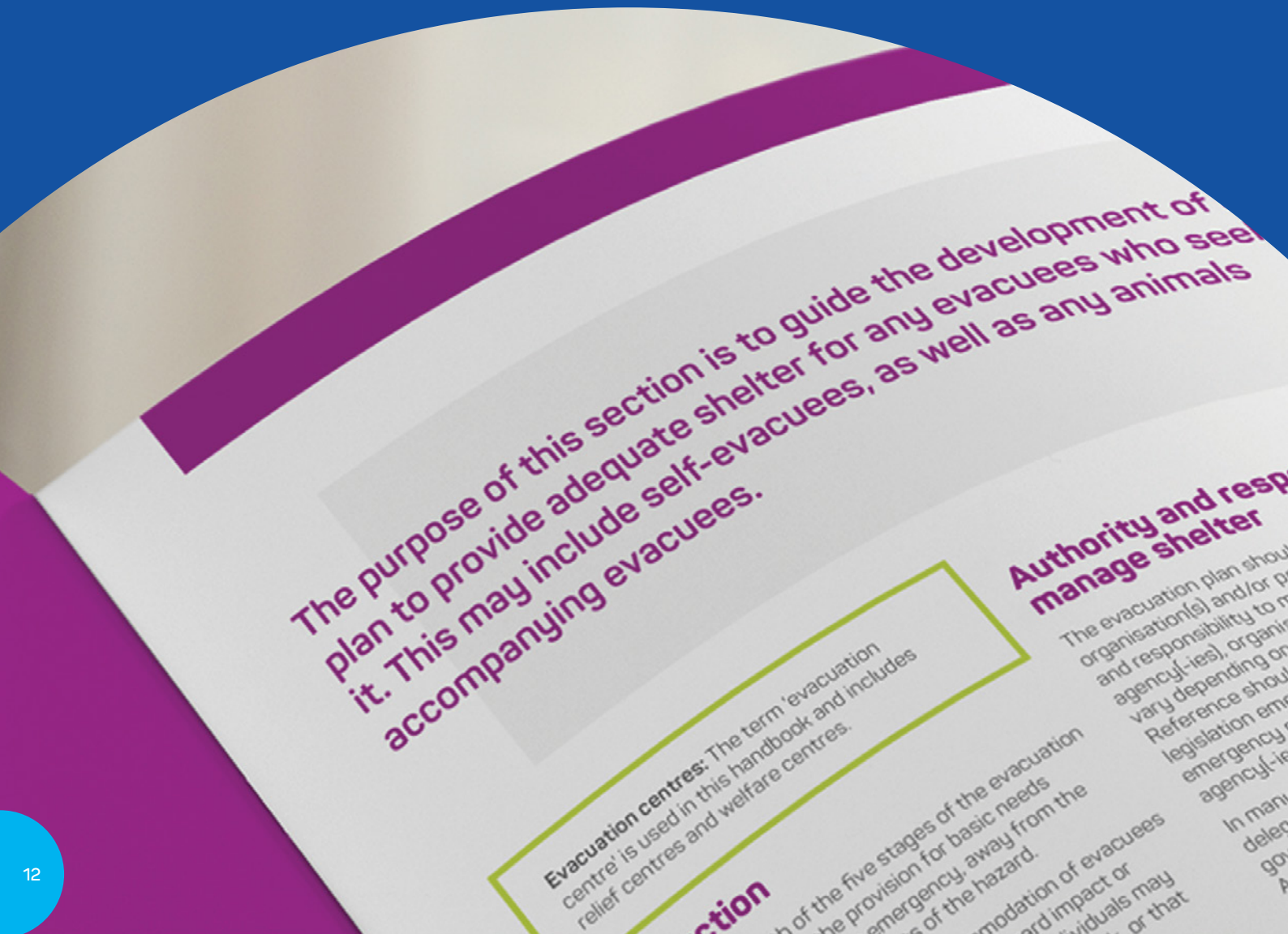
Service Area		Actively support, grow and sustain a range of networks across sectors and jurisdictions	Enable those with a role in disaster risk reduction and resilience to come together to learn, develop and innovate	Collect, develop, curate and share knowledge to educate and promote good practice in disaster risk reduction and resilience	Provide a central focus point for national thought leadership on disaster risk reduction and resilience
1	Handbook Collection	●	●	●	●
2	Networking and National Capability Development Program	●	●	●	●
3	Education for Young People Program	●	●	●	●
4	Volunteer Leadership Program	●	●	●	●
5	Knowledge Management products and services	●	●	●	●
6	National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines			●	
7	Australian Emergency Management Library			●	
8	Resilient Australia Awards	●	●	●	●
9	National Disaster Recovery Monitoring and Evaluation Database			●	
10	Major Incidents Report	●	●	●	●
11	Glossary			●	●

Primary focus ● Secondary focus ● Contributes data to ●

Service area 1

Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection

Support the implementation of the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* by providing national principles and guidance to strengthen the resilience of Australian communities to disaster. Facilitate handbook implementation at a local level through the production of companion documents and tools.



Service focus

- Provide a national focal point to coordinate, develop, and endorse national principles that set the standard for good practice in disaster risk reduction and resilience across Australian jurisdictions:
    - provide an authoritative, trusted and freely available source of knowledge about disaster resilience principles in Australia
    - align national disaster resilience strategy and policy with practice by guiding and supporting jurisdictions, agencies and other organisations and individuals in their implementation and adoption
    - highlight and promote the adoption of good practice in building disaster resilience in Australia
    - build interoperability between jurisdictions, agencies, the private sector, local businesses, and community groups by promoting use of a common language and coordinated, nationally agreed principles.
- Develop each Handbook through a process of national consultation with subject matter experts, networks, and key stakeholders with a role in disaster risk reduction and resilience:
    - enable Handbook Working Group members to be 'champions for change' through developing resources and tools that enable content sharing
    - ensure Working Group members reflect the diversity of Australian communities, including representatives of First Nations Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and people living with a disability
    - actively pursue relationships and partnerships with those not currently represented on AIDR programs of work.
- Ensure handbook content is informed by contemporary research and practice for improved disaster resilience. Use case studies and examples of leading practice to illustrate key claims and messages.
- Support the implementation of handbooks at the local level, through companion guidance, including practitioner's guides, case studies, resource collections, tool kits, checklists, and scenarios.
- Refine handbook messages in Knowledge-into-Action briefs to support practitioners and those new to disaster resilience to efficiently familiarise themselves with key concepts and access more detailed information.
- Bring people together to hear leading Australian experts unpack the principles and guidance in each handbook by sharing examples from their practice.

Service area 2

Networking and National Capability Development Program

Build knowledge, skills, and connections that support disaster resilience through a regular program of curated professional development events and learning opportunities tailored for those working and volunteering in disaster resilience across a range of sectors.

Service focus

National capability development events program

- Provide a focus point for thought leadership and national conversation that is based on good practice and informed by research. Include content that is contemporary and relevant to participant needs.
- Reflect AIDR's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and Indigenous procurement.
- Provide formal and informal networking opportunities by bringing people together to learn, develop and innovate.
- Support networks and communities of practice to assist participants to connect, learn and innovate.

Australian Disaster Resilience Conference (ADRC)

- Host Australia's leading disaster resilience knowledge and thought leadership conference supporting a whole-of-community approach to reducing disaster risk and strengthening resilience.

National Recovery Forum

- Coordinate delivery of the National Recovery Forum in partnership with the Australian Red Cross and other partners, to support the sharing of good practice, knowledge and learning for effective disaster recovery.

Lessons Management Forum

- Host the annual Lessons Management Forum in partnership with AFAC. It is Australia's pre-eminent gathering of lessons management practitioners, to share good practice, learning and innovation across the sector.

Webinar Series

- Provide webinar series that enable participants to engage in national conversations on contemporary topics through virtual technologies.

Masterclasses

- Provide high calibre masterclasses that are delivered by leading strategic thinkers and practitioners in a face-to-face and virtual capacity, for learning and growth.

Skills Clinics

- Offer skills clinics on topics of practical application such as facilitating debriefs and managing spontaneous volunteers.
- Connect organisations with tailored clinics for staff and volunteer capability development.

Service area 3

Education for Young People Program

Promote the development of disaster resilience education as a vital component in children and young people's learning. Provide strategic support for stakeholders from the education sector, emergency services, and youth-focused organisations to facilitate networks and professional learning.

Service focus

Disaster Resilience Education Strategy Group (DRESG)

- Convene DRESG to bring together experts in education, emergency services and community engagement to oversee the strategic direction of the Education for Young People program.

Disaster Resilient Australia New Zealand Schools Education Network (DRANZSEN)

- Provide a platform for sharing knowledge, practice, and resources to support learning and teaching about natural hazards and disaster risk reduction in Australia.
- Showcase initiatives which enable young people to develop and apply knowledge and skills to reduce the harmful impacts of disasters in the local context.
- Support and promote partnership approaches to disaster resilience, providing young people with authentic opportunities and audiences for learning, innovation, and action.

Enable youth leadership in disaster risk reduction

- Engage inclusively with young people to inform strategic decision making through youth networks, with a special focus on Indigenous, multicultural, and disability-focused groups.
- Celebrate learning initiatives which enable young people to respond creatively to real-world challenges and influence local decision-making.
- Recognise young people as leaders in community resilience and acknowledge the special role of young people in designing solutions to reduce climate-related disaster risk.

Disaster Resilience Education website

- Reflect contemporary theory and practice in education and disaster risk reduction.
- Provide resources to support educators and network members to design, implement and evaluate initiatives that meet the needs of young learners in their local community.
- Maintain website links to complementary resources including the Resilient Australia Awards program area, Knowledge Hub and Handbook Collection.

Service area 4

Volunteer Leadership Program (VLP)

Support the local leadership capability of disaster resilience and emergency management volunteers amongst community organisations, not-for-profits, disaster relief organisations and local government.

Service focus

- Provide opportunities for volunteers from communities across Australia to network, learn and build their capability as leaders in disaster resilience.
- Assist volunteers to build, support and grow networks in local communities to strengthen disaster resilience at a local level.
- Facilitate the connection of VLP participants to others through AIDR networks and volunteer opportunities.
- Evaluate the VLP to ensure content remains relevant and appropriately tailored to participant needs.

Service area 5

Delivery and enhancement of Knowledge Management products and services

Provide thought leadership for disaster risk reduction and resilience through the curation of contemporary knowledge products including the Australian Journal of Emergency Management, Knowledge Hub, knowledge collections and practice papers.

Service focus

- Publish and maintain curated disaster resilience collections on significant disaster resilience topics and themes.
- Leverage the collective wisdom and experience of the broader disaster risk reduction and resilience community through structured content submission calls for thematic collections and resilience case studies, as well as the annual stakeholder survey.
- Highlight, through a dedicated space on the Knowledge Hub, resilience case studies across Australia, drawing upon the Resilient Australia Awards, handbook development process, DRANZSEN initiatives, and crowd sourced materials.
- Broker timely and responsive disaster resilience knowledge through curated collections, briefs and think pieces as information needs arise.
- Highlight key knowledge products for an online audience through strategic management of social media channels.
- Maintain the Australian Disaster Mapper, a record of past disaster events in Australia.
- Host, where appropriate, a modest online presence for nationally significant bodies requiring assistance.
- Contribute to national emergency management knowledge and thought leadership through the publication of the Australian Journal of Emergency Management, Australia's premier journal supporting a disaster resilient Australia.

Service area 6

Management and Hosting of NERAG Online resources

Accelerate disaster resilience policy maker and practitioner understanding and implementation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (NDRRF), the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines, and new guidance materials for Strategic Decisions on Climate and Disaster Risk.

Service focus

- Review and update the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG) to align with the new policy direction set by the NDRRF and the Disaster Risk Handbook (in development).
- Review and update the NERAG Practice Guide and NERAG Online training course to accelerate the implementation of NDRRF.

Service area 7

Australian Emergency Management Library, Library Management Services

Library resources and services are readily accessible, and in a variety of media, to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information, and professional development.

Service focus

Knowledge Hub Portal

- Maintain online access to emergency management and disaster resilience resources through EBSCO, one of the leading worldwide providers of research databases, e-journals, magazine subscriptions, e-books, and discovery service to libraries of all kinds.
- Facilitate the study of disaster risk reduction and resilience by. supporting user access to external research databases on EBSCO through online tutorials and supporting materials.

The Australian Emergency Management Library Collection

- Enable better user access to the leading Australian collection of emergency management publications and resources
- Maintain up to data catalogue and library support services to enable users to search and access the collection efficiently and provide onsite study space for individuals and small groups.
- Ensure curated resources linked to Knowledge Hub collections are made available to library users.
- Ensure library borrowing and returns systems reflect contemporary practice.
- Continue strategic promotion of the Collection to education and training providers that have disaster resilience and emergency management courses on their scope of registration.
- Contribute to a network of libraries focusses on emergency management and disaster resilience.

Service area 8

Resilient Australia Awards (RAA)

Deliver a national awards program that celebrates, shares and promotes initiatives that build and foster community resilience to disasters and emergencies.

Service focus

- Work collaboratively with states and territories to identify initiatives that strengthen community disaster resilience and showcase innovation to encourage Award nominations.
- Promote the work of Award winners and finalists, including through AIDR service areas such as AJEM and Knowledge Hub, to share knowledge, innovation and capability building.
- Actively nurture the opportunities for networking and thought leadership on disaster risk reduction and resilience provided through the National Award Ceremony.
- Ensure award judging panels are inclusive of a range of views with diverse representation.

Service area 9

National Disaster Recovery Monitoring and Evaluation (N, M and E) Database

Provide a central focus point for evidence-based, good practice recovery design, through hosting, promoting and managing the N, M and E database.

Service focus

- Actively encourage recovery practitioner participation in the ongoing use, development and improvement of the N, M and E database.
- Ensure the N, M and E database is accessible on the Knowledge Hub and that its purpose is clear to the primary audience, including those working with government of all levels, NGOs and NFPs, and community recovery committees.
- Share and communicate N, M and E database information to promote good recovery practice.
- Develop resources to support N, M and E database use, including video case studies, practical user guides and tutorials.
- Explore and implement, in collaboration with the Australian Government, alternatives to the inclusion of full evaluation reports.
- Encourage contributions from recovery practitioners/agencies/recovery coordinators to the N, M and E database to enrich the content and ensure contemporary practice is captured for the benefit of others.

Service area 10

Major Incidents Report

Provide an annual record of major incidents involving the fire and emergency services sector in Australia, including lessons and insights across hazards, sectors, and jurisdictions.

Service focus

- Develop an annual report of major incidents regarded as nationally significant, in collaboration with state and territory fire and emergency service agencies and the Australian Government.
- Document significant incidents including impacts, response and, where identified, observations, to assist fire and emergency services identify key themes for improvement in practice, across all hazards and jurisdictions.
- Support a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the fire and emergency services sector through identifying lessons learned, to support and strengthen disaster risk reduction and resilience in Australian communities.
- Ensure the report is available to a broad audience by making it freely accessible online.

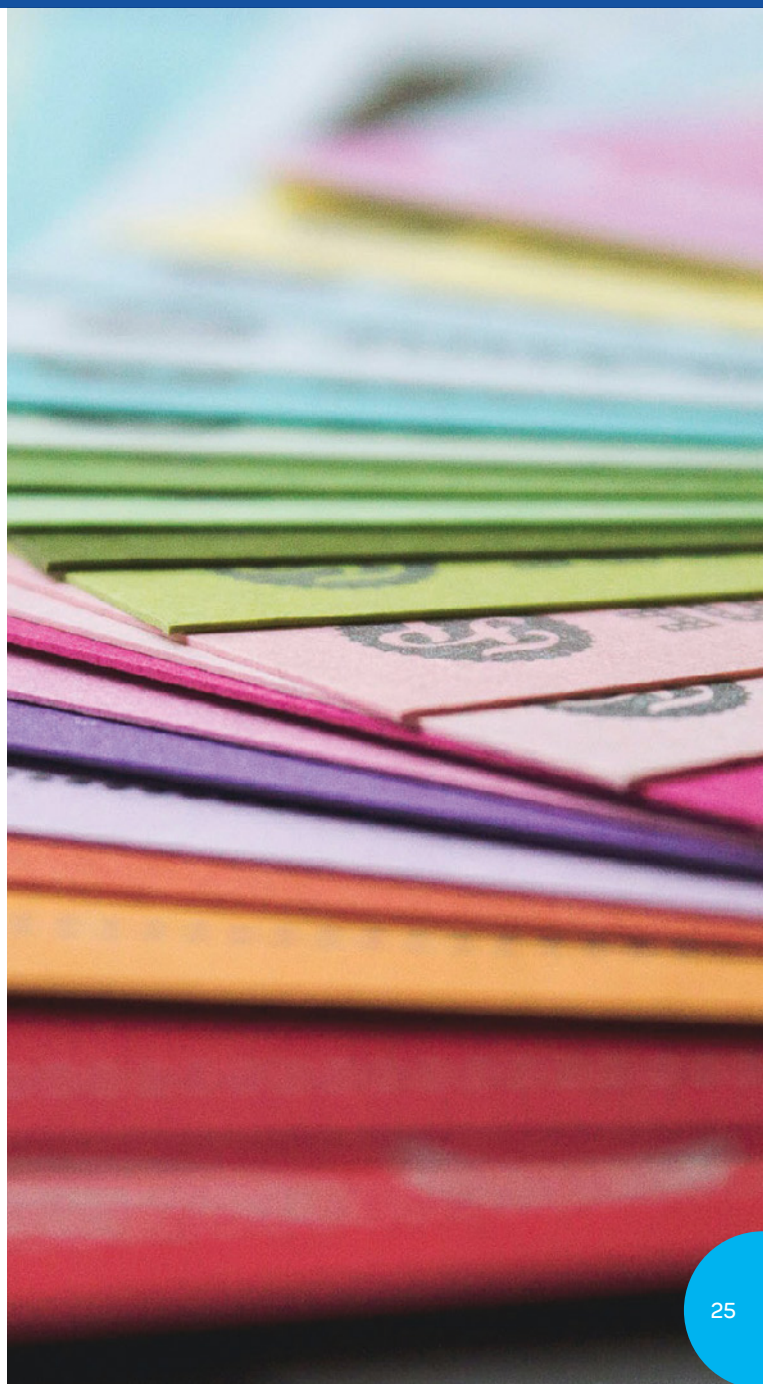
Service area 11

Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary

Provide a central focus point for disaster risk reduction, resilience, and emergency management terminology, through the ongoing maintenance, review, and update of the Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary.

Service focus

- Maintain, review, and update the Glossary to enhance the understanding and build the capability of new and existing users, to support the national conversation on disaster risk reduction and resilience.
- Guide users of glossary functions to better understand, make sense of and appropriately apply unfamiliar terms.
- Review Glossary content to ensure respectful and inclusive language that acknowledges Indigenous disaster resilience wisdom.
- Actively support and sustain the Glossary Working Group to come together to maintain, review and update the Glossary.



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IMPORTANT
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