

# Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2022 - 2025

## Project Plan



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## Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience PROJECT PLAN

### Rationale

Natural disasters are increasing in frequency and severity. Queensland experiences the highest number of natural disasters in Australia. Compounding impacts of disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic, has heightened the need for people, whether that be individual residents, small to medium organisations, such as Neighbourhood and Community Centres, or large services and government agencies, to work together and support one another through these challenging times.

This environment has created an urgency to develop and implement strategic approaches towards disaster resilience for and with the people of Queensland.

### Background

Neighbourhood Centres Queensland (NCQ) works with 140 Neighbourhood and Community Centres across Queensland, many of whom respond to a variety of disasters including bushfire, monsoons, drought and pandemics. Having 'on the ground' experience with disasters before, during and after events, Neighbourhood and Community Centres have vital insights into community resilience and the social capital needed to withstand conditions of disasters and emergencies. NCQ endeavours to maximise the capacity of these Centres to improve the disaster resilience of communities across Queensland. To date NCQ and Neighbourhood Centre capacity building collaborations have resulted in the development and implementation of three Strategy documents.

The three published Strategies can be found on the [Neighbourhood Centres Queensland website](https://www.ncq.org.au).



## Scope

In line with NCQ's vision to foster thriving communities that are self-directed, connected and resourceful, the aim of the Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience (the Strategy) project is to build the resources and resilience of Neighbourhood and Community Centres and, in collaboration with community leaders and organisations, develop new strategies towards disaster resilience.

This state-wide Strategy will form the overarching component to the three existing Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategies for Monsoon, Bushfire and Drought Resilience. It will build on these strategies through consideration of the compounding impacts on Neighbourhood Centres and their local communities and will extend geographically across the entire state.

This Strategy will form a significant developmental milestone for the history of the Neighbourhood Centre sector in Queensland, as the first coordinated approach of this scale and scope. The Queensland Strategy will also represent a leading initiative for use by the broader Sector across Australia.

## Project Need

Neighbourhood Centres and NCQ have identified this project as a priority through the foundational work of developing the Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategies for Bushfire, Monsoon and Drought Resilience. These three Strategies were developed with 67 Centres from specific regions targeted at specific types of natural disasters. These included North and Far North Queensland (monsoon), Central Queensland to Sunshine Coast (bushfire) and West and Far West Queensland (drought). The development of these three strategies has highlighted the broader and compounding impacts of disasters on Neighbourhood Centres and their communities. Strategies to address these impacts now need to be developed as an overarching approach to disaster resilience (See Figure 1).

Queensland is home to over 140 Neighbourhood Centre organisations, which can and do play important roles in supporting disaster affected communities through their flexible, place-based models.

NCQ nurtures relationships with Centres throughout Queensland. 129 of these organisations are current members of NCQ, with over 93% of Centres funded under the Queensland Government's Department of Communities and Housing DCDSS Neighbourhood Centre funding program.

Figure 1. Strategy linkages



The three existing Strategies were supported with public comments of appraisal and officially launching roles by the Minister, Director General and Assistant Director General of the Department of Communities and Housing and Executive Director of Queensland Community Recovery.

This project has been jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments through the Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund 2020-21.

### Project Aim

The aim of the Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience (the Strategy) is to strengthen the sector of Neighbourhood and Community Centres through the co-development of prioritised strategies towards disaster resilience; and to implement this Strategy in collaboration with community members, organisations and agencies.

### Project Goals

The Strategy project goals are to:

1. Contribute to Queensland's strategic directions on enhancing disaster resilience at the state level, particularly in sharing the vision of 'making Queensland the most disaster resilient state in Australia (*Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience*)



2. Research, highlight and promote the unique and valuable role that Queensland Neighbourhood and Community Centres play in supporting communities affected by disasters.
3. Strengthen the network of Neighbourhood Centres across Queensland to explore opportunities for collaboration with broader sector networks, including non-government organisations (NGOs), disaster and emergency management agencies and government, towards disaster resilience
4. Support Neighbourhood and Community Centres through the process of:
  - sharing stories of impacts and learnings from disasters
  - planning and developing disaster resilience strategies, using participatory practices and a community development framework that promote social cohesion and community connectedness
  - implementing disaster resilience strategies
5. Increase the social capital, resourcing and organisational resilience of Neighbourhood and Community Centres to support disaster-affected communities, particularly vulnerable groups; and
6. Enhance how Neighbourhood and Community Centres work with community members to develop localised awareness, relationships, skills and leadership towards disaster resilience.

### **Key Project Benefits**

With enhanced disaster resilience as a critical theme of this Strategy, key benefits of the project include:

- a. Strengthened relationships and collaborations between Neighbourhood Centres and broader sectors, primarily the disaster and emergency management sector and the community sector.
- b. Strengthened relationships and collaborations among Neighbourhood Centres across Queensland, and with NCQ.
- c. Enhanced organisational resilience of Neighbourhood Centres.
- d. Enhanced connection between Neighbourhood Centres and with local communities.

### **Benefits of the Strategy Development Process**

Benefits from the development of the Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience include the following:

- a. Greater geographical representation from Neighbourhood Centres across the state.

- b. Drawing together key aspects of each existing Strategy (Monsoon, Bushfire and Drought).
- c. Consideration of addressing broader disasters (Eg. COVID-19) and the associated compounding impacts.
- d. Recommendations to guide collectively prioritised actions through shared approaches and cohesion between Neighbourhood Centres.
- e. Provide a strategic and resourced platform to coordinate and support the implementation of the Resilience Strategy; and
- f. Provide a tool for raising awareness of the role and value of Neighbourhood Centres to support advocacy towards greater investment into the sector.

### Guiding Principles

The development of the Strategy will be guided by Neighbourhood Centres, and draws on the following principles in building the capacity of Neighbourhood and Community Centres:

#### ***National principles for disaster recovery:***

- Understand the community context
- Recognise the complexity of the community and the disaster
- Use community-led approaches and support them in the process
- Coordinate all activities based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs
- Communicate effectively between affected community and stakeholders
- Recognise and build individual, community and organisational capacity for disaster resilience

#### ***Community development principles:***

- Community participation and active citizenship
- Community-led action and ownership
- Equitable access services, resources and opportunities
- Values community knowledge and wisdom
- Social inclusion and connectedness

### Target Beneficiaries

**Primary:** Neighbourhood and Community Centres across Queensland.

**Secondary:** Broader sector organisations and services across Queensland, primarily the disaster and emergency management sector and the community sector.

**Indirect:** Community members of Neighbourhood Centres' local areas across Queensland.

## Project Timeframe

Project commencement: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021

Project completion: 24<sup>th</sup> December 2022

## Key Stages and Dates

KEY STAGES	DATES
Literature review and collation of first phase content	Nov'21 - Feb'22
<b>Centres Discussion Sessions</b> for core development of the content and priority strategies.	3, 9, 10 March
Send survey to Neighbourhood Centres for further content development and to rank the priority strategies.	24 March
<b>Survey</b> entries due	7 April
NCQ collate, analyse and write draft Strategy	8 April – 5 May
Send draft Strategy to Centres for <b>feedback</b>	6 May
Zoom sessions for Centres to share feedback together	11 & 12 May
Centres final feedback due. NCQ incorporate feedback.	18 May
Send strategy online launch event invitation	26 May
Strategy online <b>LAUNCH event</b> (NCQ and some representative Centres are encouraged to present)	23 June
NCQ and Centres develop <b>Action Plan and start</b> first phase of Strategy implementation	July - December

## Project Description

The project will include the following core components to address the needs detailed below:

1. Co-development of the Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience.

*Neighbourhood Centres Queensland (NCQ) will coordinate the co-development of the state Disaster Resilience Strategy with Neighbourhood Centres. This research process will provide opportunities for Centres to collectively share experiences, learnings, needs and ideas to ultimately develop a set of prioritised strategies for Neighbourhood Centres to work towards disaster resilience.*



*Support towards collaboration among Neighbourhood Centres and the wider partners.*

*Examples of shared needs and issues identified through these strategies range from efficient systems to deliver increased volumes of emergency relief, to adaptive business continuity planning, to collaborations between organisations to increase local intel and connections for referral pathways, to shared resources and distribution for community preparedness.*

## 2. Implementation of the Disaster Resilience Strategy.

*NCQ will coordinate phase 1 of the Strategy implementation, which will be undertaken between July to December 2022.*

*NCQ will provide project coordination, facilitation and compilation of the Strategy Action Plan, and implementation of agreed tasks and support to Neighbourhood Centres.*

*Guided by the expressed needs of Neighbourhood Centres, NCQ will provide:*

- *Hosting of online workshops and training opportunities*
- *Online Resource Libraries on disaster resilience in a Neighbourhood Centres members only space and a public access space on the NCQ website and a NCCs Facebook page for use as a Centres forum space. These online libraries include resources specifically relevant to Neighbourhood Centres in the form of templates, samples, guides, learnings, stories, sources of training and other documents.*
- *NCQ will also develop a video to raise awareness of Neighbourhood Centres' role in disaster resilience with local communities.*
- *Support towards collaboration among Neighbourhood Centres and the wider partners.*

### **Strategy Purpose**

The four-fold purpose of the Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience is as follows:

- a. it will be a tool to support Neighbourhood Centres to build their capacity to support their local communities through disasters.
- b. it will be a research document, which explores the work of Neighbourhood Centres in the disaster resilience space and outlines how this work can better support the disaster management sector in the future.
- c. it will be a pathway, to identify keyways in which NCQ can support the Neighbourhood Centre network throughout the state; and
- d. it will provide an advocacy tool to facilitate conversations and build connections with local organisations, the Local and District Disaster Management Groups, Local, State and Federal Governments and other

relevant stakeholders in disaster resilience, strengthening community disaster planning in Queensland.

### Strategy Research Questions

The research questions planned to guide the development of the Strategy include:

1. What is the role and value of Neighbourhood Centres in the context of disaster resilience in Queensland?
2. What are the experiences of Neighbourhood Centres in supporting disaster-affected communities, including compounding impacts of multiple disasters?
3. What strategies would Neighbourhood Centres like to put in place to enhance their capacity in supporting disaster-affected communities?

### Methodology of the Strategy Development

The development of the Strategy will be grounded in participatory action research principles, placing the Neighbourhood Centre representative, the participants, at the core of appreciative inquiry and decision-making.

The research will include a scoping review to identify literature and government publications on Neighbourhood Centres' role in supporting disaster-affected communities. The *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*, *Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience* and its implementation plan *Resilient Queensland 2018 - 2021*, the *Queensland Disaster Resilience and Mitigation Investment Framework* and *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan* will be prominent resources in this process.

The Strategy will incorporate key findings from the existing three Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategies for Monsoon, Bushfire and Drought Resilience and annual Queensland Neighbourhood Centres surveys.

Figure 2 outlines the methodology of the development of the Strategy.



Figure 2. Process outline of developing the Qld Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience

## Project Evaluation

Project evaluation will be measured against the six Strategy project goals (see page 6). An overall analysis of findings from the project evaluation will be included in the final project report. Evaluation of the Project Goals will be measured through the following methods:

Strategy Goals	Measure
1. Contribute to Queensland's strategic directions on enhancing disaster resilient at the state level.	Number and geographical spread of participating Neighbourhood Centres.  Increase in disaster resilience capability measured through survey results.
2. Research, highlight and promote the role that Queensland Neighbourhood & Community Centres play in supporting communities affected by disaster.	Development of case studies, shared experience and impact stories.  Interviews with emergency management sector representatives.  Data from NCQ survey of neighbourhood and community centres.
3. Strengthen the network of Neighbourhood Centres across Qld to explore opportunities for collaboration with broader sector networks and cross-sector networks toward disaster resilience.	Increase in collaborations/potential for collaborations based on survey project survey data (baseline data and final survey data).
4. Support Neighbourhood and Community Centres through the process of participatory practices and a community development framework and implementation of the strategies	Participation from Neighbourhood Centres in facilitated discussions, surveys, case studies.  Data on outcomes, evaluation surveys.
5. Increase social capital, resourcing and organisational resilience of Neighbourhood & Community Centres to support disaster-affected communities.	Data measured against disaster resilience index, increases in resourcing.
6. Enhance how Neighbourhood & Community Centres work with community to develop localised awareness, relationships, skills and leadership toward disaster resilience.	Evidence of increased connection with community, increased disaster preparedness activities, community led initiatives.