

Queensland Neighbourhood Centres

Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2023-2026

A plan to strengthen the resilience of Queensland's local communities facing COVID-19, flooding and rainfall events, drought, bushfires and other disasters.

The full strategy is available for download from the NCQ website: ncq.org.au

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Executive Summary

For many years, Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) across Queensland have been at the forefront of disaster preparedness, response and recovery, particularly those centres located in disaster prone areas of the state.

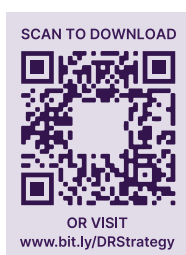
However, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, NCCs have dealt with significant challenges in delivering their traditional role of working with their communities, offering place-based, face-to-face services, programs and activities, which prioritise building relationships with and between people. Additionally, compounding disaster events from bushfire, flooding and drought have further impacted community resilience, increasing the demand for services and support. The inadequacy of resourcing to meet this demand has become a critical challenge for NCCs to manage.

Whilst disasters may vary in form, the process and methodology used by Neighbourhood Centres demonstrates consistent effectiveness in local communities. However, while it is reported that many major non-profit organisations respond to natural disasters in Queensland, the response of local Neighbourhood and Community Centres is often overlooked. A review of the community disaster resilience literature also illustrates the limited research into the role played by Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Australia, and the critical elements that influence delivery under crisis conditions.

This Strategy therefore seeks to expand the evidence base on the role and the significance of the contribution of NCCs in delivering disaster preparation, response and recovery in Queensland. Furthermore, it explores a range of strategies designed to build on NCCs' existing strengths, to provide a collective vision and clarified direction among NCCs towards disaster resilience for the next three years.





Our research found:

- Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) across the state are working with their communities in preparedness, response and recovery, commonly through community-led approaches.
- The current inconsistency in the strength of relationships between local Councils and Neighbourhood and Community Centres across the state does not support the objectives of the Queensland Disaster Management Plan. The formation of functional and effective collaboration across the stakeholder groups operating in the disaster management space could be a key factor in supporting effective outcomes for communities impacted by disaster events.
- A review of the resourcing of Neighbourhood and Community Centres to deliver their roles in community disaster resilience is required to address common challenges they face.
- Current recovery arrangements with Neighbourhood and Community Centres require a review through the co-development of a cohesive vision for recovery in collaboration with communities and place-based service providers, supported by a delivery model that provides more streamlined access to support.
- The Neighbourhood and Community Centre sector has identified the enhancement of organisational capacity, including the upskilling of staff and volunteers, as common areas of need in supporting disaster-affected communities, particularly in response and recovery stages.



This summary is developed from the *Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2023-2026*. The full strategy is available for download from the NCQ website: ncq.org.au

This strategy recommends actions prioritising 4 strategic pillars:

PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3	PRIORITY 4
 <p>Raise Awareness & Recognition</p> <p>Raise awareness and recognition of the role, value and capacity of NCCs in the disaster management system supporting disaster-affected communities.</p>	 <p>Strengthen Relationships & Collaboration</p> <p>Strengthen relationships towards greater collaboration of NCCs within the disaster management sector; and relationships towards greater inclusion of community members in all stages of disasters.</p>	 <p>Influence Policy & Shape Funding</p> <p>Influence policy and shape funding models to enhance funding arrangements to NCCs for place-based and community-led disaster recovery and resilience.</p>	 <p>Learning & Development</p> <p>Foster and strengthen place-based learning and development to support disaster-affected communities through the complexities and compounding nature of disasters.</p>

Audiences

This Statewide Disaster Strategy provides value to three key audiences.

Neighbourhood and Community Centres

This Strategy provides shared priority strategies for **Neighbourhood and Community Centres** at the local level and NCQ at the state level to strengthen approaches towards supporting disaster-affected communities within the broader disaster management systems.

Government and Non-Governmental Organisations

This Strategy provides Government and non-governmental organisations and services greater awareness of how NCCs can, do and could further contribute to the disaster management sector.

Researchers

This Strategy provides evidence and analysis to researchers on NCCs role and value, along with challenges and opportunities, in supporting disaster-affected communities.

Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of this Strategy is primarily to:

1. Inform

Provide evidence and analysis, building on existing literature exploring the role of NCCs in disaster resilience and associated challenges and opportunities.



2. Guide and Support

Co-develop a set of shared strategic priorities to guide and support NCCs across Queensland to enhance their organisational capability and capacity to build disaster resilience with local communities.



3. Advocate

Demonstrate the significance of NCCs' work across the state in community-based disaster resilience.



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from the NCQ website: ncq.org.au



The development and first phase implementation of the Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience has been jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments under the Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (QRRRF).



Australian Government



Queensland Government

Abstract

Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2023 – 2026 provides an evidence base on the role and the significance of the contribution of Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) in delivering disaster preparation, response and recovery in Queensland. Furthermore, it explores a range of strategies designed to build on NCCs' existing strengths, to provide a collective vision and clarified direction among NCCs towards disaster resilience.

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Neighbourhood Centres Queensland acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of Country; we pay our respects to their Elders, Ancestors, land and seas. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Disaster Resilience Frameworks: Global, National and State

Critical to exploring the role of Neighbourhood and Community Centres in building community disaster resilience, this section will consider the existing research. Disaster management frameworks from the international, to national to state levels provide a context for how the roles of NCCs and other not-for-profit organisations and communities interrelate with the broader disaster management system. See further detailed context in **Appendix C**.

The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2011 (NSDR) places emphasis on community disaster resilience, advocating for collective responsibility across government, business, the non-government sector, and individuals. It acknowledges that “non-government and community organisations are at the forefront of strengthening disaster resilience in Australia.”¹⁷

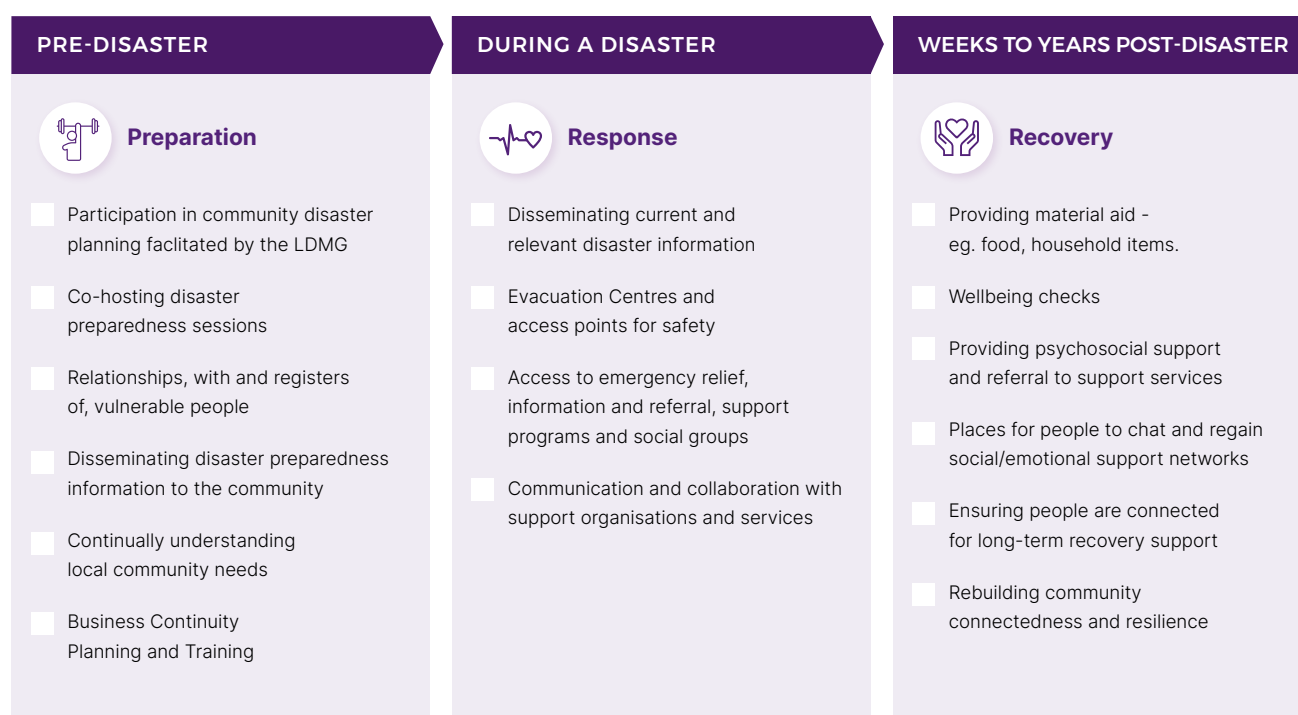


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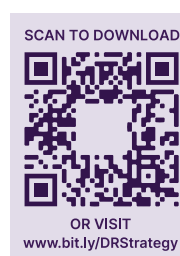
Roles Neighbourhood and Community Centres can play at each stage of disaster event



The place-based nature of NCCs provides them with on-the-ground experience, community connection and local knowledge, enabling them to play an important role in building resilience across multiple sectors of the community. As locals themselves, NCC's long-standing connections with local communities provide shared experiences and understandings of disaster events and the impacts these have on their community. This also provides them with foundational knowledge vital to informing place-based preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

While the services and supports offered at each Neighbourhood Centre vary depending on its resources and the needs of the local community, NCQ has found their capacity at each phase of disaster management to be similar, as summarised in **Figure 6**.⁵¹

The exploration of the impacts of compounding disaster events on community resilience has also highlighted a critical need to escalate preparedness and hazard awareness more broadly across communities, including vulnerable people. This is particularly in those areas that have experienced and continue to experience compounding disaster events.



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