



The Power of Local: How councils are partnering with communities to build equitable resilience



Presented by

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Local government plays a crucial role across the whole emergency management continuum

PREPAREDNESS AND RISK REDUCTION



- **Policy** – developing and maintaining local disaster plans
- **Physical** – clearing fire hazards, managing bushland buffers, maintaining stormwater drains
- **Regulation** – enforcing land-use planning controls and building codes in high-risk zones

RESPONSE



- **Resource support** – supply local plant equipment to lead agencies
- **Infrastructure management** – shoring up water and sewage treatment buildings
- **Communication** – share safety alerts and updates
- **Community safety** – open and run evacuation and relief centres, coordinate shelter for displaced people and animals
- *Engage in actual response (e.g. through SES or Bushfire Brigades)*

RECOVERY



- **Infrastructure** – inspect damaged public and critical infrastructure including roads and bridges
- **Clean up coordination** – manage waste removal and debris clearing
- **Media** – spokesperson for the community
- **Volunteer coordination** – managing physical donations (food, clothes etc), and longer-term volunteers (food, accommodation etc.)
- **Community rebuilding*** – financial aid access, pastoral care, applying for disaster recovery funds, town halls (*for months or even years)



REIMAGINING RESILIENCE

Moving beyond hazards

Disaster impacts are shaped by the conditions that exist before an event occurs

‘Social determinants of disaster impact’

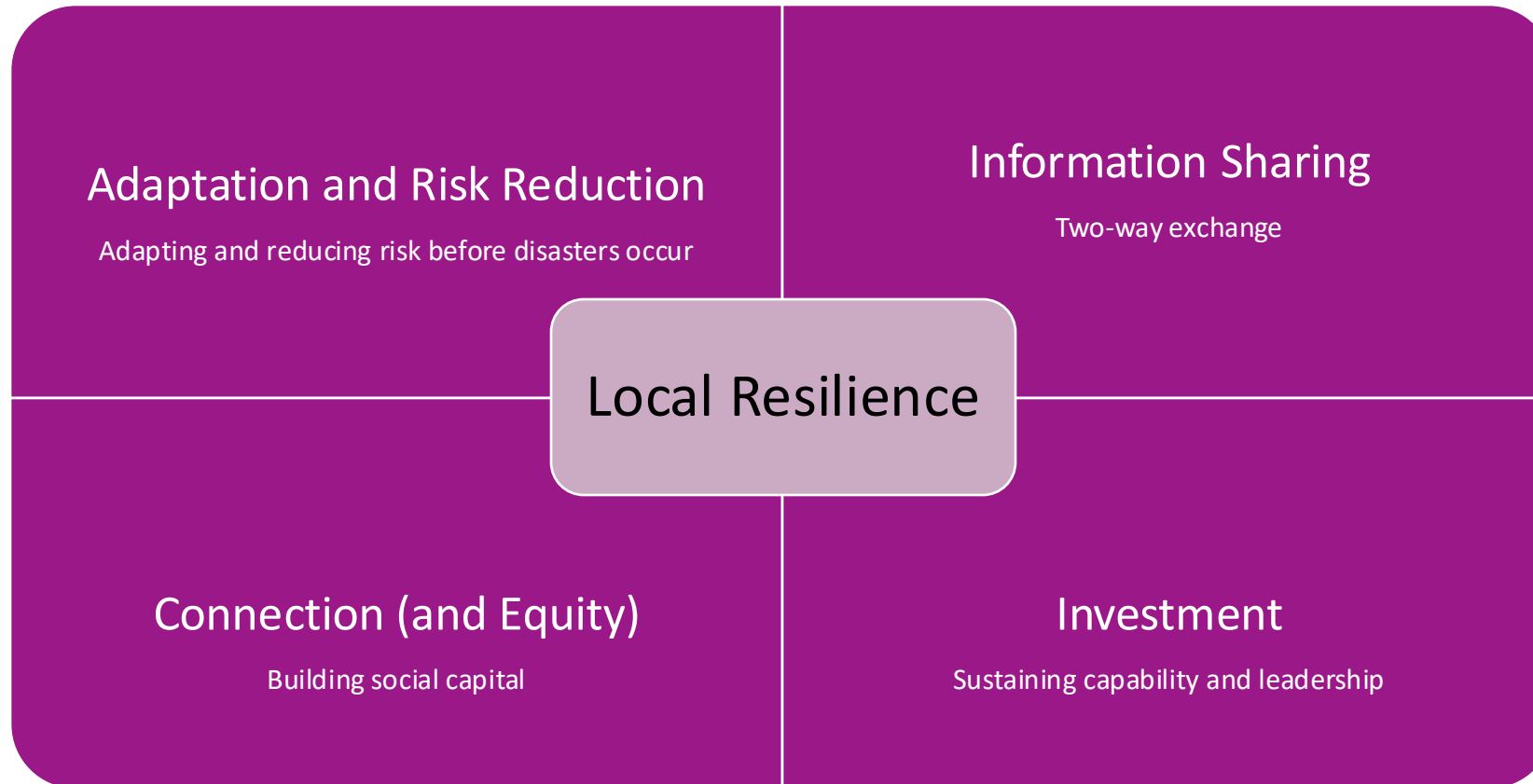
Economic, environmental, institutional, systemic and social

Role of local government

A more proactive, collaborative and community-centred approach to resilience building.



THE FOUR FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL RESILIENCE





ADAPTATION AND REDUCTION

Councils play a key role in this through:



Planning and zoning



Flood and coastal management



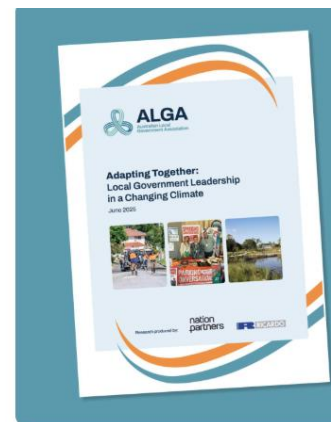
Bushfire and vegetation management



Climate adaptation and urban cooling



Infrastructure resilience



**ALGA's *Adapting Together* report
found local adaptation initiatives
deliver up to \$3.10 in benefits for
every \$1 invested**

Table 19 Summary of findings from economic analysis of adaptation investments

Case study	Typology	Dollar benefits per dollar of cost	Key public benefits ¹
City of Darwin – Urban Cooling	Physical and technological measures	\$1.1 – \$3.1 benefit per \$1 cost	⊕ 🌿 🚶
Lockyer Valley Regional Council – Flood Management	Economic and financial measures	\$0.8 – \$1.3 benefit per \$1 cost	🏠 ⊕ 🔔
City of Hobart – Bushfire Resilience	Knowledge-based, behavioural and cultural change measures	\$1.3 – \$2.9 benefit per \$1 cost	⊕ 🏠 🔔 🌿
Moyne Shire Council – Coastal Hazard Management	Regulatory measures	\$1.2 – \$2.9 benefit per \$1 cost	⊕ 🏠 🔔
Buloke Shire Council – Urban Cooling	Physical and technological measures	\$1.0 – \$1.6 benefit per \$1 cost	⊕ 🌿

1. Notes: ⊕ health and wellbeing 🌿 ecosystem services 🚶 recreation and amenity 🏠 avoided property damage 🔔 avoided emergency response costs

Download *Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate* from ALGA's website.





Case study 1 – Moyne Shire Council, VIC

Coastal Hazard Management Plan

<https://www.moyne.vic.gov.au/Our-community/Environment/Port-Fairy-coastal-hazard-assessment>





INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Communities bring

Local knowledge of social, cultural, economic factors
Lived experience
Community strengths, priorities and needs

Councils bring

Hazard information
Technical experiences
Planning and infrastructure knowledge
Access to resources and other partners
Their own placed-based knowledge



Case study 2 – Clarence Valley Council, NSW

Disaster Resilience and Risk Mitigation Program

<https://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/News-articles/Clarence-Valley-Council-Wins-Prestigious-NSW-Get-Ready-Community-Award-2021>



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Clarence Valley Council Wins Prestigious NSW Get Ready Community Award

Published on 15 October 2021

The Disaster Resilience and Risk Mitigation program in the Malabugilmah and Baryulgil Discrete Aboriginal Communities has won a prestigious Get Ready NSW Community Award.

Announced by Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott and Commissioner of Resilience NSW Shane Fitzsimmons at an online awards ceremony last week, the award recognises the work of Clarence Valley Council and fifteen stakeholders to improve infrastructure and disaster resilience in these remote communities.



Clarence Valley Council's Director of Corporate and Governance, Laura Black, said the project was not just about improving services available to remote Discrete Aboriginal Communities, but also working with these communities to help them achieve their own goals through community-led place-based projects.

"During these challenging times of concurrent natural disasters, we have seen first hand how local people have come together to collaborate and contribute to the creation of a more resilient community," Ms Black said.

"This project saw us take a proactive approach to disaster risk reduction and mitigation investments, and in partnership with these communities and numerous external stakeholders, a Neighbourhood



CONNECTION



Connected communities – relationships with neighbours, local council staff and elected members, emergency services, local businesses etc.



Council-led connections - community events, clubs, programs, networks and volunteering



Prepared before disaster – relationships are in place prior to a disaster occurring



Long-term resilience – lower psychological distress and the ability to recover faster after a disaster



Case study 3 - Shire of Mundaring, WA

Bushfire Community Day

<https://news.dfes.wa.gov.au/media-releases-feature-stories/bushfire-community-day-2025-1/>

NEWS & EVENTS > MEDIA RELEASES & FEATURE STORIES

Bushfire Community Day 2025

FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 2026



The Bushfire Preparedness Trail at the 2025 Bushfire Community Day

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Bushfire Centre of Excellence (BCoE) partnered with the Shire of Mundaring to host the fifth annual Bushfire Community Day at Mundaring Arena on Sunday 12 October 2025.



EQUITY IN RESILIENCE

Case Study 3 – Greater Hobart councils, Tas

<https://www.sparkingconversations.com.au/>



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Helping communities prepare for bushfire

Sparking Conversations, Igniting Action was a joint initiative of the Greater Hobart councils – Clarence, Glenorchy, Hobart and Kingborough.

Our project team worked side-by-side with 12 different neighbourhoods, creating bushfire risk demonstration sites, holding events and giving free bushfire risk assessments.

Our efforts were to work with communities in Clarence, Glenorchy, Hobart and Kingborough to spark conversations, and Ignite action that will protect us all from bushfire. The information and resources developed as a result of this pilot project, have been retained here for future use and reference for those participating communities, and for other communities in Tasmania and abroad.

To read the final project report - [click here](#)



INVESTMENT

HOW
resilience
is built

Adaptation and Risk
Reduction

Information Exchange

Connection

Investment

What
ENABLES
resilience
to be built



Case study 4 – Cook Shire Council, QLD

Community Powered Resilience initiative

<https://regiontnq.com.au/cook-disaster-resilience-snags-state-award/14270/>



Cook Shire Council disaster management team's Community Powered Resilience initiative won the Excellence in Resourcefulness title at the 2026 Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA) Queensland Awards for Excellence. Photo: Supplied.



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