

Does saying we're resilient make it so?
The Cairns resilience scorecard project

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What IS community resilience?

- Increasingly popular concept widely used by community leaders, policy makers, emergency management practitioners and academics around Australia. With any challenging event, out pops the term.
- But **little agreement** on its actual meaning and application...!
- Undermines its usefulness when developing emergency/disaster management policies and plans at national, state, local levels.
- UNISDR definition: “*The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions*”
- = a process of continuous engagement to build preparedness prior to a disaster, supporting healthy recovery.
- In the Cairns region this underpins our ongoing Be Ready, Cairns! resilience building programme. Remembering at all levels in Australia – resilience is clearly defined as a **shared responsibility**.

Cairns region context

- One of just 6 Australian cities and the only Australian role model city with the UNISDR Resilient Cities campaign.
- Complex socio-economic makeup comprising many cultures, both ends of the economic spectrum, highly transient population, hundreds of thousands of tourists, limited employment opportunities....
- Very different geographic communities spread from north to south.
- Absence of a major disaster since 2011.
- Urban myths/old beliefs abound!
- Complacency the enemy.
- Climate denial alive and well.
- “Someone else” will take care of it...
- Solid background at the time of 2-3 years’ resilience development work undertaken around the region.

So how resilient are we?

- Lots of empirical knowledge – but in the absence of known behaviour through/recovery from an event – how do we know our actual level of resilience??

In this project we brought together two scorecard methods – **Torrens and UNISDR** – to align community and infrastructural resilience through:

- Research based on two years of Be Ready, Cairns! including learnings identified and experiences from TC Ita (2014).
- Community mapping – identified the geographic locations of those most vulnerable – adding to existing knowledge of communities vulnerable across social, economic, built and natural environments + other factors such as disability, language spoken, age, ethnicity.
- Surveys within those communities based on **Torrens scorecard** criteria.
- Community engagement in those locations.
- Applying **UNISDR scorecard** with Cairns Local Disaster Management Group members.
- Self-assessments by LDMG members, partners, contributing organisations.
- Workshops, **shared** assessment and feedback.
- Developing a collective action plan based on the results, addressing largest gaps.

Learning from our publics


Inform, consult, involve ...

And collaborate

IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC		We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Community mapping

- Visual and written picture of the relative location and distribution of different communities via various characteristics.
- Used 2011 census, other reports to identify communities potentially vulnerable through factors such as ability to speak/understand English, ethnicity, length of residence in Australia, income and education levels, disability, employment status, age, provision of unpaid care.
- Overlaid with geographic vulnerability factors – storm surge, flood, tsunami, wild fire, landslip.
- Identified four geographic areas featuring the greatest number of factors – no surprises. Included an old-established coastal suburb as a comparative area given several vulnerability factors featured.

Torrens Institute scorecard approach

- Measuring four components: Community connectedness; risk and vulnerability; planning and procedures; available resources.
- Scorecard and toolkit available: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/centres-files/TRI/pdfs/hrc1.pdf>

Our approach

- Adapt the tool to produce a survey of indicators of resilience (simple 10 questions).
- Administer within the identified geographic communities at locations and times likely to capture residents – focus on old fashioned 1-1 connections!
- Open approach to the questions – generate discussion about community connections, their link to community safety and preparedness – no right nor wrong answers.
- Administer in conjunction with disaster management partners such as the fire service, SES – make community participation appealing through resource giveaways, contact with real emergency managers, 1-1 advice, information.

Response

- Most loved it – rare chance to interact with emergency services and the council on community turf (not council's), in community time (not council's).
- Unusual questions about their perceptions and experiences – not judging, criticising.
- A few intense critics: ***I'd rather die than do a bloody council survey ...***



Our community survey



1. **Which area or suburb do you live in?**

2. **Are you part of a club, community group or church in your area?**

3. **How connected do you think people living in your area are?**

4. **What contact do you have with the Cairns Regional Council?**

5. **What sorts of disasters could happen in Cairns?**

6. **Do you have a household emergency plan?** _____
Do you have a household emergency kit? _____
7. **Do your children learn about natural disasters at their school?**

8. **Where would you find information which would help you in a disaster?**

9. **Where would you find local emergency services?**

10. **What emergency training do you have? (eg first aid certificate, SES member, chainsaw certificate?)**



Surveying in communities

Babinda Harvest Festival



Cairns Central Mall



Torrens process – what we learned



Findings from this component of the project provided a much clearer picture of where indicators of resilience are strong or where more effort is needed. Strengthens resilience by:

- Targeting key gaps in knowledge/understanding, eg people being unaware of where nearest emergency services are located or having the wrong information about where to find help in a disaster.
- Continuing to support messages, information and activities which increase resilience, such as engaging community members in how to create a household emergency kit and plan.
- Raising levels of knowledge/awareness of all possible hazards. We hosted information stands when running our survey, providing a new Cairns-specific all-hazards booklet, practical giveaways and opportunities to talk to disaster management staff. We partnered with the fire service to raise the profile of wildfire and suitable preparedness and response actions.
- Working with elected representatives, other council functional areas and external agencies to grow a community presence and increase community connectedness. Surveys were offered at a range of community venues and times likely to gain participation. This encouraged general discussion leading to recommendations for future community development approaches and partnerships for working collaboratively.

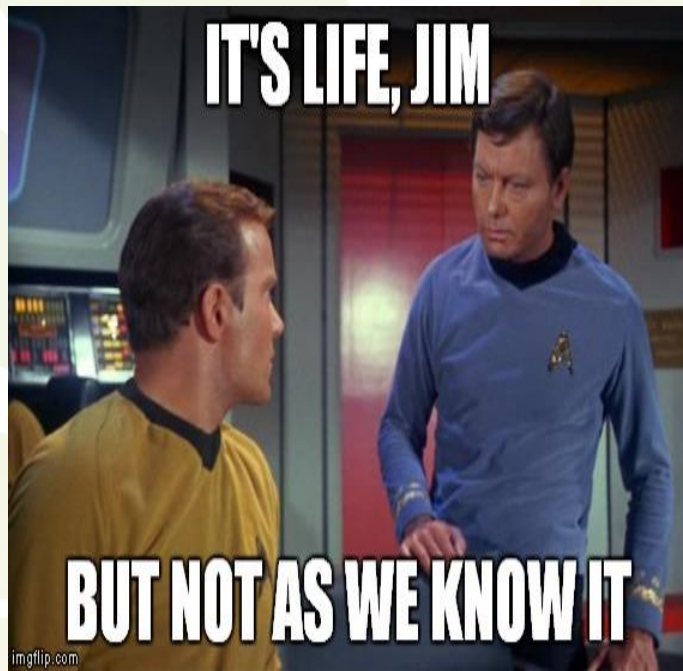


UNISDR Scorecard

- Based on UNISDR “Ten Essentials” of disaster management – adds significant detail to UNISDR Local Government self-assessment tool.
- <http://www.unisdr.org/2014/campaign-cities/Resilience%20Scorecard%20V1.5.pdf>
- 85 disaster resilience evaluation criteria related to:
Research (evidence based compilation and communication of threats/responses);
Organisation (policy, planning, coordination, finance); **Infrastructure** (built and social);
Response capability (incl information provision and enhancing capacity); **Environment** (maintaining and enhancing ecosystem services); **Recovery** (incl scenario planning).
- Each criterion broken down to describe the aspect of disaster resilience being measured from 0-5 where 5 is best practice.
- **Eg: Essential 2, Financing and Incentives:**
Extent of insurance coverage for domestic housing (excl personal coverage).

UNISDR scorecard process

- For the first time individual LDMG members and other stakeholders were asked standardised questions about resilience – considered responses individually, then examined efficacy as a whole.
- Much more challenging than the usual process of providing feedback (or not) on a written document. In the stocktake process everyone began at the same level. Participants agreed to openly discuss responses and decide on an appropriate resilience score for all measures by consensus.
- Detail had never been presented in this kind of forum before, requiring LDMG members to identify their own agency's resilience strengths and weaknesses.



Challenges



- Not used to working collaboratively.
- Not used to sharing “sensitive” (?) information.
- If the score isn't 5, we're seen to be lacking.
- Perception of information ownership.
- Reluctance to own solutions or make a commitment to action – “that's your job”.
- Perception of a weird background agenda....
- Trust and persuasion required through sustained communication/engagement.

UNISDR process – what we learned

Highlighted strengths and weaknesses in the organisational and infrastructural resilience of the region. This supports resilience growth by:

- Clarifying exactly who is doing what, where. In Cairns the resilience effort is being strongly lead by local government, with degrees of support from state and other organisations – this should be increased.
- Identifying gaps in process such as limited risk assessments or single hazard planning.
- Identifying gaps or limitations in infrastructure such as emergency fuel supplies, emergency communications, ecosystem services.
- Evaluation has occurred through reference to both scorecard criteria and processes as well as validation with contributing organisations, groups and communities.



UNISDR process application

- A significant part of the purpose was to demonstrate shared responsibility through a participatory process. It was particularly important for LDMG members to assess their resilience capability and capacity individually, before making their contribution to the group. Experience shows a level of perception that “the council will take care of it”. We also wanted to make it clear resilience is not just the responsibility of one local government resilience officer.
- A workshop engaged the LDMG in identifying who should assess which elements of the UNISDR scorecard, then assigning each element. A second workshop brought the information together and set LDMG members the task of agreeing on scores considering all the data provided, then noting where specific strengths and weaknesses exist. This enabled participants to see an overall picture of resilience for themselves, in which everyone was a contributor. They were encouraged to reflect on where improvements can be made and how these can be implemented.
- Ongoing message through a sustained, facilitated process – *It’s for the greater good.*



Outcomes

- First comprehensive, collective baseline measurement of resilience conducted in the region. Produced a set of qualitative and quantitative data to assess against in future years.
- Learnings incorporated into ongoing management and resilience building work – strategy, projects, operations.
- Important to maintain effort where scores are high/resilience is strong. Where scores were lower/gaps identified, specific projects have been created, eg research into the state of our ecosystem services.
- For some measures, increasing resilience scores is neither possible nor realistic for Cairns. Eg, providing all disaster information in all languages spoken and proving that 100% of those receiving it have understood it Such a measure does however provoke thinking on what else might be achievable!!
- Community interactions either generated new contact or reinforced existing liaison work. Survey outcomes provided valuable clues on where future time should be best spent, for example on continuing to emphasise the importance of maintaining a household emergency kit and emergency plan across hazards. Many people had little idea of where their nearest emergency services were, or had the wrong information.
- Outcomes of the overall scorecard process can be shared with others to support resilience efforts across the state as well as more widely throughout the UNISDR community. The project has attracted a lot of interest and attention – last year it won IAP2 Australasia’s Disaster and Emergency Services Core Values Award.
- Scorecard will be re-run in the region in 2021!!