

Disaster Recovery and Resilience

Thriving Kids in Disaster

Tuesday 27 August 2024



Australian Government



An Australian Government Initiative

CITY OF
GOLDCOAST.

Gold Coast Health
always care



Queensland
Government

I would like to acknowledge and pay my deep respects to the Kombumerri and Yugambah peoples of the Bundjalung nation, who are the traditional custodians of the unceded lands we are meeting on.

To their Elders, past, present, and emerging - thank you for your generosity, spirit, and teaching; and may we work together in unity to create a world that supports all people to flourish.

I would also like to acknowledge and pay my respects to other First Nations peoples joining us today, and to Elders from other nations and cultures.

Thank you all for being here and prioritising our children.

Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership

Thriving Kids in Disasters | Operationalising resilience in disaster management



every child **thriving**
aracy



Thriving Queensland
Kids Partnership
connect • catalyse • learn



Thriving Kids in Disasters Project (TKiD) Phase 1

A systemic review of disaster management (DM) arrangements in Queensland, as they relate to infants, children, young people and their families

TKiD sought to synthesise evidence and provide advice concerning

1. What kids need in disasters to support resilience and wellbeing
2. How we might better gear our systems to support those needs

In strategic alignment with

- National framework for children and young people's development and wellbeing
- National work concerning child wellbeing in disasters (NICDAC)
- The Science of Resilience

Via a collaborative, cross sectoral coalition of

- Disaster management executives and frontline operational staff
- Child, family and youth service leaders and practitioners
- Clinicians
- Government representatives

Which has relevance for

- Policy makers/government
- Funders
- Place based organisations, practitioners and leaders

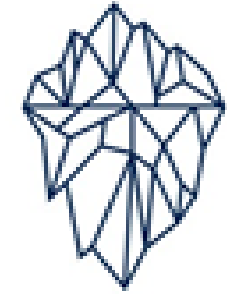


TKiD collaborators and critical friends

- Local and state government departments
- Emergency Services
- NGOs
- Neighbourhood Centres
- Philanthropies
- Research consultancies
- Universities
- Peak bodies

Focused on

- Infants and caregivers
- Children
- Young people
- Disaster management
- Mental health
- Workforce development
- Arts
- Advocacy
- Allied health
- Place based work
- Education
- Design and infrastructure



ROBSET
CONSULTANCY



Queensland
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Children's Health Queensland

40+ organisations
100+ stakeholders
Communities across Qld



Why we need a focus on kids in disasters



Infants, children and young people need healthy developmental environments where their needs are met, their wellbeing is prioritised, and their resilience nurtured.

These developmental environments can be challenged by a range of factors, including climate change and related hazards and disasters.

YAC Vic – [Bushfire Recovery/](#)
[Rural Young Activators](#)

[1:23:54]



What we know:

Kids' abilities to prepare for and cope with disasters is influenced by age, stage of development, and other factors; and this needs to be better understood by caregivers and those involved in DM in Queensland.



What should we do to support the wellbeing and resilience of kids in disaster management in Qld?

Start with the TKiD Principles...

1. The resilience, wellbeing and rights of kids are explicitly considered and holistically integrated into legislation, policy, guidelines, and operational disaster planning and management activities at all levels of government and across organisations.

2. Infants, children and young people are considered as unique stakeholders with distinct needs across their life stages. Their voices and perspectives are incorporated, and their agency and knowledge harnessed in age-appropriate ways across all phases of disaster management.

3. Disaster management approaches and investments employ a child-sensitivity lens, are long-term, place-based, appropriately timed, agile, multi-disciplinary and evidence informed, ensuring a 'do-no-harm' standard is applied that reflects children's rights

Establishing some common ground - *Why talk about resilience?*

Increasing recognition that children in the 21st century have and are facing unique adversities, including natural disasters related to the climate crisis and health-related crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic ([Ferreira et al., 2020](#)).

These adverse situations not only impact individuals but also large segments of society resulting in long-lasting effects on individuals, families, and communities ([Cutter et al., 2013](#)).

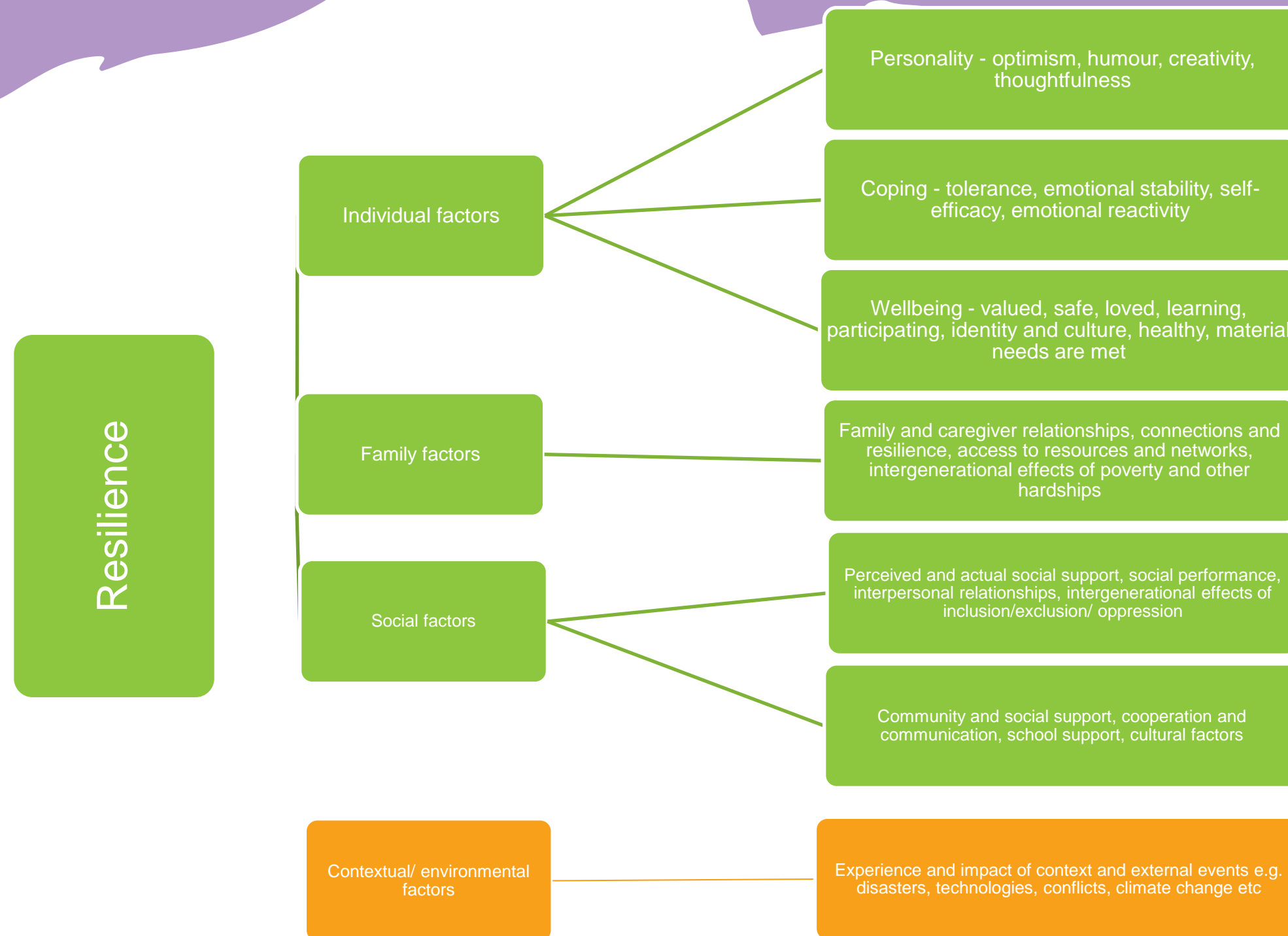
For those experiencing poverty, mental health issues, disability or social vulnerability, the impacts of adversity can be higher ([Cutter et al., 2013](#); [Flanagan et al., 2011](#); [Lauve-Moon & Ferreira, 2017](#)).

Resilience is conceptualised by educators, health professionals and policy makers as a way of mitigating the negative impacts of these adverse situations on children due to the potential impact resilience has on the physical, mental, and academic outcomes of children ([Ferreira et al., 2020](#)).



Source: [Bushfires & Natural Hazards CRC](#)

What do we mean by resilience? A quick peak into the science



Think about resilience as **a process** that is more dynamic and complex than simply retaining positive outcomes despite adversity.

Resilience is framed as the capacity of the individual and their system to provide and access resources and supports in culturally meaningful ways ([Masten, 2014](#); [Ungar, 2008](#)).

This is especially relevant to children, who often have limited independence in being able to seek and choose the environment or system they belong to.

Without the provision of supports from their system as well as their own interactions with these resources, children are less likely to demonstrate resilient outcomes when faced with adversity ([Masten, 2014](#)).

The Alberta Family Wellness Initiative's Childhood Resilience Scale

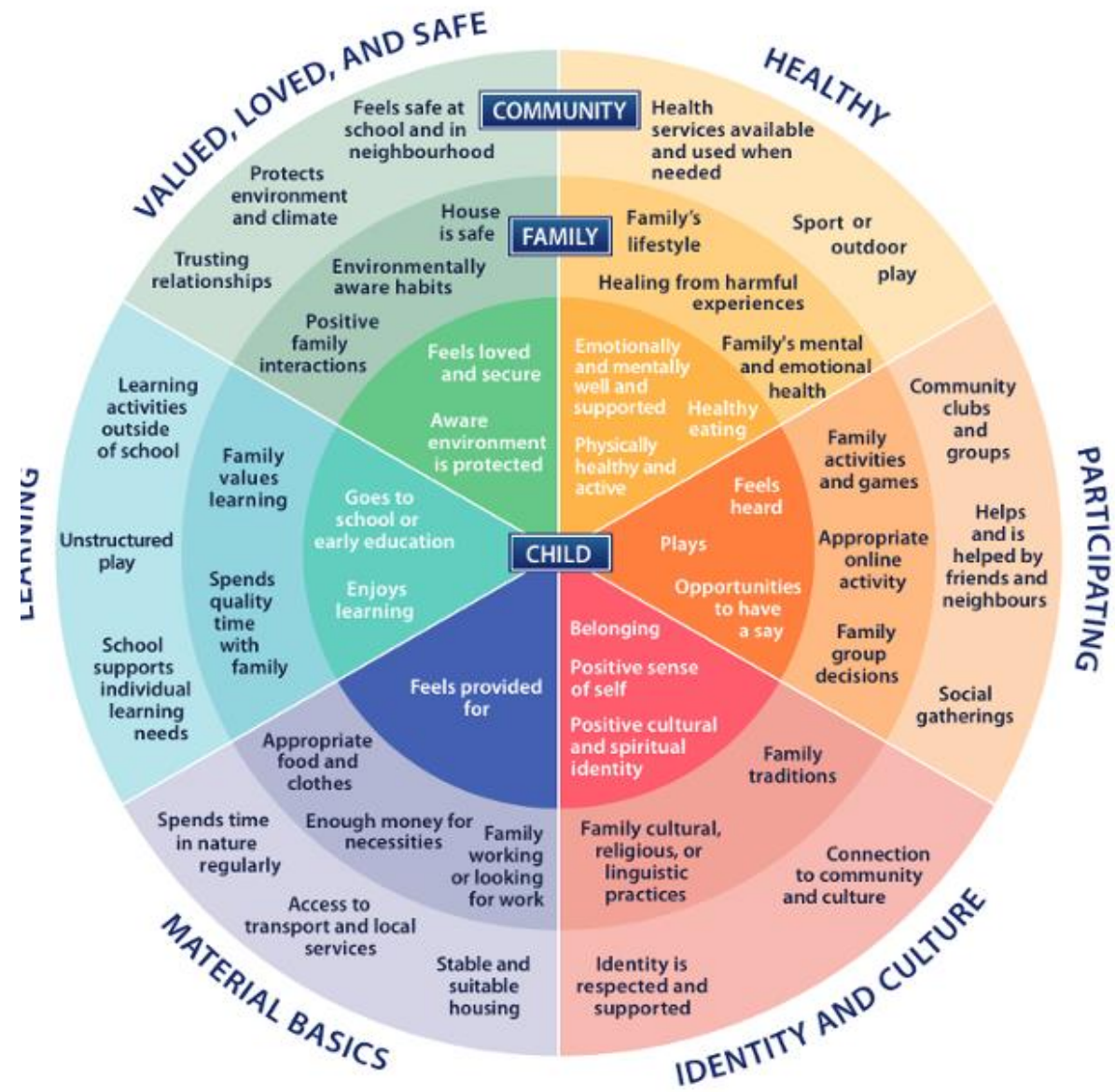
- Resilience is impacted by our genetics, but equally on the skills and abilities that we develop through experience that allow us to adapt and stay healthy even in circumstances of severe stress or hardship like disasters and emergencies.
- Our resilience is heavily impacted by our childhood experiences, when our brains and bodies are going through critical development stages, so we must work together to protect and support kids in developmentally appropriate ways when they are faced with adverse events.
- The resilience scale is a metaphor to explain why some people seem more resilient than others and helps us understand how to improve resilience, including in times of crisis.



The Harvard Resilience Scale – National Scientific Council on the Developing Child



Some more common ground - *Let's talk about infant, children and young people's wellbeing and what they need to thrive*



Frameworks for understanding - ARACY's [The Nest](#), and the [National Social and Emotional Wellbeing Model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#)

Kids healthy development is supported when they feel valued, safe and loved, regardless of the environment

We know that kids feel valued, safe, and loved in DM settings when:

they can maintain a sense of calm, safety, agency and connection

secure and functional family and community relationships exist

the safety and care of significant adults in children's lives is supported

specialised attention to their needs is provided across PPRR

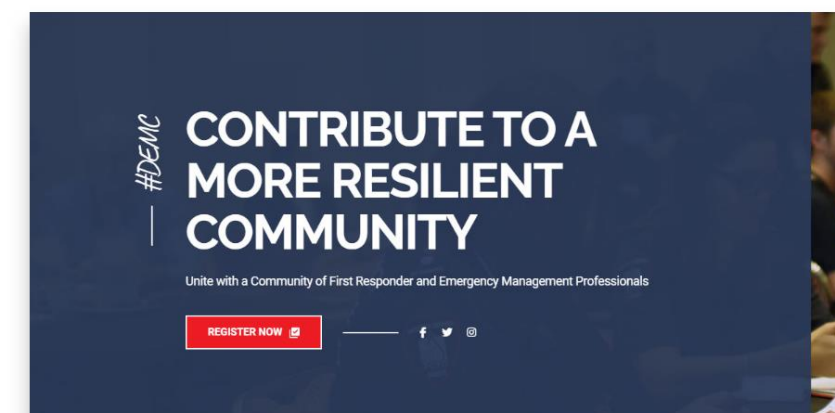
a holistic and integrated approach to their wellbeing is taken, involving local child-centred infrastructures and community-based organisations.



[H1259-Evacuation-Centre-Management-Handbook.pdf \(disaster.qld.gov.au\)](https://disaster.qld.gov.au/H1259-Evacuation-Centre-Management-Handbook.pdf)

Gender and Emergency Management (GEM) National Guidelines

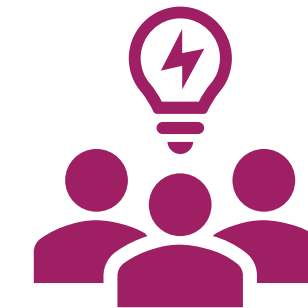
MAY 9, 2019



[Gender and Emergency Management \(GEM\) National Guidelines \(anzdmc.com.au\)](https://anzdmc.com.au)



We know that **healthy** kids have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met



Take a minute to think about and share how you've seen or achieved this in a way that recognises and responds to the variety of needs that kids have across PPRR.

In DM settings this is supported through :

- a range of age-appropriate interventions from non-specialised, preventative community and school initiatives to specialist clinical services
 - holistic and multidisciplinary initiatives in education, early years and community settings are valuable
 - neuro and trauma informed approaches help build the capabilities and resilience of infants, children, young people, families, workforces, and communities in disasters
 - targeted and tailored support to care givers to help them help their kids
- opportunities provided for kids to come together with their peers following a disaster or community-level traumatic event to help them reconnect and share their experiences in a safe way.

Hobfoll's Principle of Trauma Intervention	Example of Intervention Action
A sense of safety	Reduction of poor mental health outcomes via professional intervention. Individual and community engagement in risk reduction training and activities.
A sense of calm	Training and engagement in mindfulness and positive perspective-taking.
A sense of self- and community efficacy	Engagement in activities that promote self-esteem and community agency.
A sense of connectedness	Engagement in community discussion, education and risk reduction activities. Promotion of healthy family and community relationships. Training in Mental Health First Aid for identification of at-risk families and community members.
A sense of hope	Reduction of poor mental health outcomes via professional intervention. Engagement in activities that imagine and inspire a positive future and perspective.

Involve kids in all phases of disaster management



Kids of all ages want to participate and be heard in matters that affect them, and in DM:

- inclusion should be age appropriate and informed by developmental theory and kids themselves
- all levels of government and community can do better to engage with a greater diversity of kids and families, including young people aged 12-18 years, children of first responders, kids and families from First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and kids who live with or care for someone with a disability or chronic health condition
- systems must work together with kids and their families to acknowledge their unique circumstances, which can empower their autonomy and inclusion in the community.

Cobargo School kids dealing with bushfire through story telling and song



Source: The Sydney Morning Herald, 14/11/2020



Addressing poverty in communities enhances disaster resilience

Resilience and recovery are impacted by financial and material poverty and inequality.

- Having appropriate **material basics**, such as safe accommodation, food, water, bedding, nappies, age-appropriate toys, transport, school supplies and spaces for play are crucial for kids and families, in and outside of disaster settings.
- Evidence suggests that families who are better prepared with longer term provisions of food and water experience less anxiety during disaster.
- It is critical to resource education, community, recreation, and transport infrastructure to foster 'return to normal' rapidly and 'build back better' approaches long term.



What are some child and youth-centred examples you have seen relating to this across PPRR?

Child Poverty in Australia 2024: The lifelong impacts of financial deprivation and poor-quality housing on child development



AUTHORS
Alan Duncan, Chris Twomey

PUBLISHED
August 2024

PUBLISHER
Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre

[VIEW PUBLICATION](#)

NUMBER OF PAGES
54

RESEARCH THEMES
Housing Pathways and Affordability, Health, Wellbeing and Disadvantage



Kids learn through a variety of experiences within the classroom, the home, and the community in which they live.

These environments and the activities, technologies, and relationships available have a strong effect on their ability to learn and are often disrupted by disasters.

- Sharing timely and developmentally appropriate information about the hazards and risks they live with and the adversities they might have to face can help kids feel better prepared for and along with the right supports at the right time can help them recover from their experiences.
 - This information is most effective, especially for young people, when it acknowledges their capabilities to solve problems and act.
- Because of their leading role in kids' lives, libraries, early years centres, kindergartens and schools are pivotal in kids learning about disaster PPRR.
 - These child-centred services are often managed by staff and volunteers who themselves are likely to be experiencing the many stresses associated with disasters and require supports.



Harkaway Primary School Bushfire Committee

- Return to usual routine can provide kids with a sense of familiarity and safety, but must be managed carefully, as many kids and parents experience hypervigilance and anxiety around disaster-related separation.
- Child and youth-driven content and programming is an untapped opportunity to engage with kids' agency, and their diverse developmental, cultural, and linguistic learning styles and needs.

Having a positive sense of identity and culture is central to the wellbeing of kids

In disaster contexts this means that:

- DM operators understand that the nature of disasters and our DM approaches pose risks to secure attachment and identity, and to kids' connection to their family, community, culture, and environment
- kids' cultural and spiritual needs and contributions must be considered, respected, and provided for across PPRR
- opportunities must be taken to draw upon First Nations knowledge where family, community, culture, and country are seen as interconnected protective factors that shape kids' identity, wellbeing, and resilience, and are woven through everyday life.

Culture and place support kids to understand disasters and engage in disaster management

- Rocky Point Pre-school [healing on country](#) @ Myrtle Mountain



Source: ABC News, 2/8/2020



Supporting kids' needs in disasters | The Nest

Nest Domain	Key findings
Valued, love and safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involving kids in disasters fosters agency and a sense of calm and safety• Caregiver reunification is a strong priority• Evacuation Centres should be appropriately designed for kids• Domestic family violence protections must be strengthened in disasters
Healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kids with a variety of diverse needs must be considered across PPRR• Holistic and multidisciplinary initiatives in education, early years and community settings are valuable• Neuro and trauma informed approaches help build the capabilities and resilience of infants, children, young people, families, workforces, and communities in disasters
Participating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involve children in all phases of disaster management
Identity and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Culture and place support kids to understand disasters and engage in disaster management
Material Basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addressing poverty in communities as a policy priority enhances disaster resilience• Resource education, community, recreation, and transport infrastructure to foster 'return to normal' rapidly and 'build back better' approaches long term
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource and expand evidence-based programs that promote disaster awareness and self-efficacy for children and young people• Embed action-oriented disaster management education that involves kids in real world problem solving across curriculum and that leans into First Nations cultural and traditional environmental knowledge

Our systems need



Concerted leadership

- Interdisciplinary multi-systems approaches

Smarter investment

- Investment that is agile, place based and accounts for the non-linear impacts of disasters – includes participatory granting

Engaged public

- Communities and kids who are empowered and knowledgeable regarding disaster risk and resilience strategies

Stronger workforces

- Supported and prepared workforces with the ability to scale up and down according to the surge of demand created by disasters

Integrated delivery

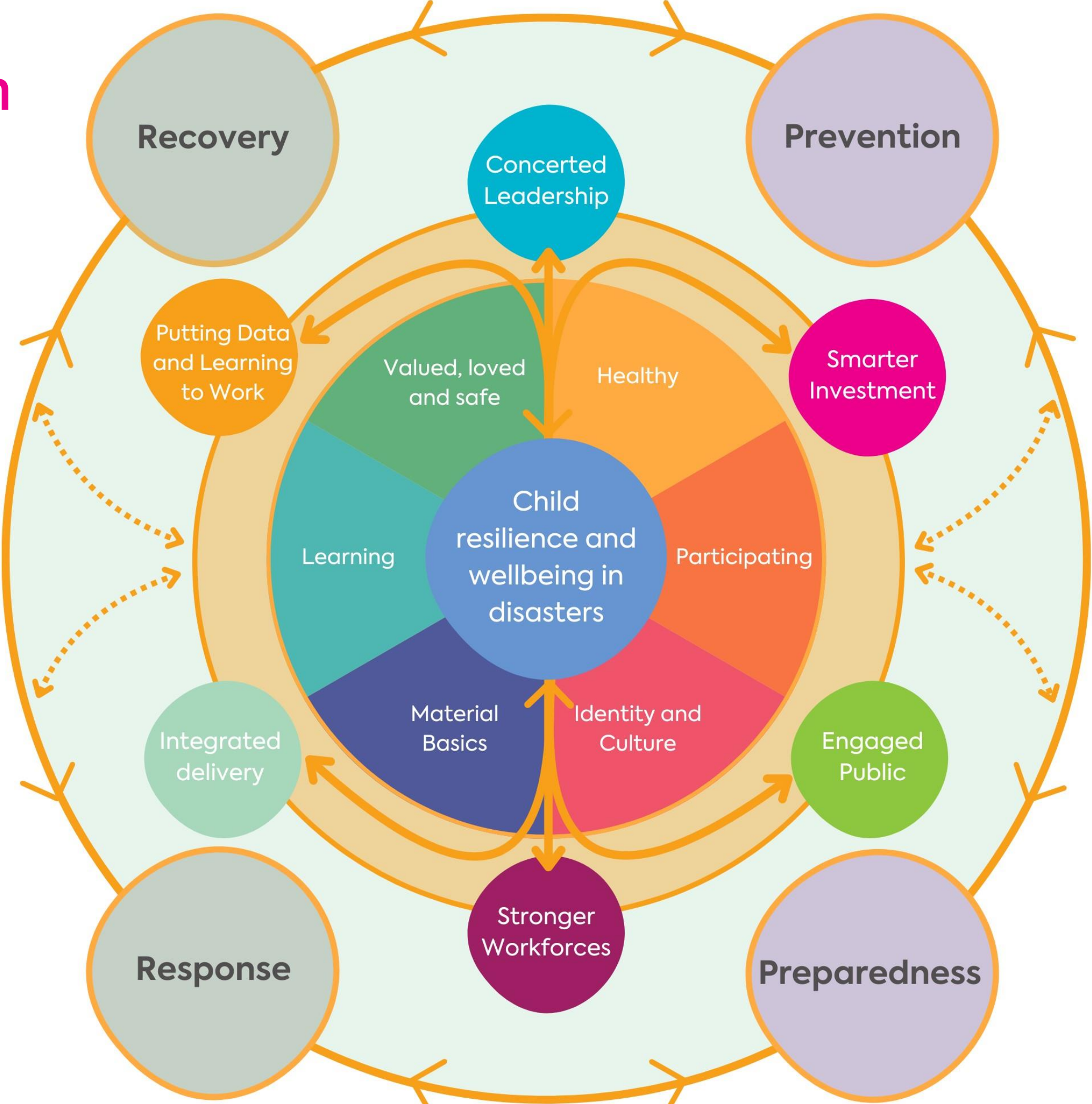
- Strong child, family and youth and disaster management sectors grounded in pre-existing trust, partnerships and capacity

Data and learning

- Data systems that promote understanding of kids in disasters

We need our systems and our investments to reflect this

Thriving Kids in Disasters Framework



Words into Practice
Webinar series
#1 – 20 September

Link to resources -
[TKiD project library](#)
Young people's climate (eco) anxiety
[Deakin Uni research](#)
[Wesley Mission headspace survey](#)

How are &
can you
listen &
respond
meaningfully
to what kids
know, need,
& have to
say across
PPRR?

Created by grade 6 students of Benalla
P-12 College, Northern Bay College in
Corio/Norlane and grades 5/6 students
of Altona North Primary.



Issue Monday 22 October 2018



KIDS DEMAND CHANGE!



Thrivning Kids in Disasters: Words into Practice Webinar 1

Friday 20th September 2024, 11:00-12:15

Hosted by **Anita Egginton**, with guest practitioners:

Canice Curtis, from Wesley Mission QLD Mental Health Services – a senior mental health practice lead working with young people on a climate change and mental health initiative across Queensland.

Briony Towers, from Leadrrr – a child-centred disaster risk reduction specialist working with Harkaway Primary and other schools across Australia to enable students' genuine participation in learning and action.



TKiD is generously funded by The John Villiers Trust.

The registration link will be emailed in the coming weeks.

For more information, please contact anita.egginton@aracy.org.au

This Webinar is one of many disaster-related information sharing and learning opportunities in the month of September.

The **National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Gathering** is being held in Lismore in the week after this Webinar.

Briony is speaking at the **AFAC/AIDR conference** in Sydney at the start of the month, so if you're there, go join her, Emerging Minds, and other presenters interested in supporting kids in disasters

Would you like a copy of TKiD?



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Contact us:

Thriving Kids in Disasters Project:

Anita Egginton
Anita.Egginton@aracy.org.au

Jacinta Perry
Jacinta.Perry@aracy.org.au



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Please provide your feedback using this QR Code
Thankyou!

Thriving Kids

