

Disaster Recovery and Resilience

Getting ready for what we know is coming:
Assessing how ready we are for the aftermath of
disasters

Thursday 4 June 2026



Australian Government

phn
GOLD COAST

An Australian Government Initiative

CITY OF
GOLDCOAST.

Gold Coast Health
always care



Queensland
Government

Housekeeping, introductions & outline

How do we understand the core concepts?

Predictable impacts from disasters

Break

Analyse plans

Wrap up



HOW we SURVIVE

What do we mean when we say:

- Disaster
- Disaster recovery
- Disaster preparedness



HOW we SURVIVE

10 minutes



What do we mean when we say disaster?



HOW we SURVIVE

What do we mean when we say disaster?



Credit: Freepik



Credit: Freepik



Credit: Time Magazine



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Credit: Freepik

Hazards focus:

- Focus on hazard category
- Often make a distinction between man-made, biological, technological and natural hazards



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Credit: Freepik

Hazards x population focus:

- Focus on the intersection of hazard and populations.
- Disasters have a social impact (individual and community level)
- Acknowledges that the threat of a hazard can have an impact (even if it doesn't happen)



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Credit: USGS



HOW we SURVIVE



Credit: USGS



Credit: BBC



HOW we SURVIVE



Credit: Time Magazine

Social phenomena focus:

- Focus on social impacts and the ways that hazards amplify pre-disaster systems
- Disasters are social in nature (little or no emphasis on the hazard).



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What do ~~we~~ mean when ~~we~~ say disaster?



Credit: Freepik



Credit: Freepik



Credit: Time Magazine



HOW we SURVIVE

What do ~~we~~ mean when ~~we~~ say disaster?



Credit: Freepik



Credit: Freepik



Credit: Time Magazine



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What do ~~we~~ mean when ~~we~~ say disaster?

"Events which are precipitated by a hazard and cause (or threaten to cause) social impacts, disruption and loss at an individual and community level. These impacts may exacerbate pre-existing inequities."



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Qld government definition:

Meaning of *disaster*

(1) A **disaster** is a serious disruption in a community, caused by the impact of an event, that requires a significant coordinated response by the State and other entities to help the community recover from the disruption.

(2) In this section—

serious disruption means—

- (a) loss of human life, or illness or injury to humans; or
- (b) widespread or severe property loss or damage; or
- (c) widespread or severe damage to the environment.

14 Meaning of *disaster management*

Disaster management means arrangements about managing the potential adverse effects of an event, including, for example, arrangements for mitigating, preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster.

15 Meaning of *disaster operations*

Disaster operations means activities undertaken before, during or after an event happens to help reduce loss of human life, illness or injury to humans, property loss or damage, or damage to the environment, including, for example, activities to mitigate the adverse effects of the event.

16 Meaning of *event*

(1) An **event** means any of the following—

- (a) a cyclone, earthquake, flood, storm, storm tide, tornado, tsunami, volcanic eruption or other natural happening;
- (b) an explosion or fire, a chemical, fuel or oil spill, or a gas leak;
- (c) an infestation, plague or epidemic;

Example of an epidemic—

a prevalence of foot-and-mouth disease

- (d) a failure of, or disruption to, an essential service or infrastructure;
- (e) an attack against the State;
- (f) another event similar to an event mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (e).

(2) An **event** may be natural or caused by human acts or omissions.



Does it matter what we mean when we say disaster?



What do we mean when we say disaster recovery?



Credit: Freepik



Credit: Freepik



Credit: Freepik



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Credit: Freepik

Activity focus:

- Focus on agencies and mandates
- Focus on action and what activities should happen
- Focus on outputs rather than outcomes



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Credit: Freepik

"Disaster recovery is a coordinated process of supporting disaster-affected communities - through support for emotional, social and physical well-being; reconstruction of physical infrastructure; and economic and environmental restoration (including regeneration of the natural environment, associated infrastructure, heritage sites and structures, and the management of pollution and contamination)."

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Credit: Freepik

Restoration focus:

- Commonly used definition in policy and research
- Focused on restoration to pre-disaster status
- 'Build Back Better' as enhanced restoration



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Credit: Freepik

"The restoring or improving of livelihoods and health, as well as economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and 'build back better', to avoid or reduce future disaster risk."

- UNISDR



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Credit: Freepik

Change focus:

- Recovery as a complex social process where no outcomes are assured.
- Recovery could be lower, higher or equal to pre-disaster functioning but there will be a 'new normal'.
- Acknowledges that for some people, there is no way to return to 'before'.



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Credit: Freepik

"Recovery is the process of coming to terms with the impacts of a disaster and managing the disruptions and changes caused, which can result, for some people, in a new way of living. Being 'recovered' is being able to lead a life that individuals and communities value living, even if it is different to the life they were leading before the disaster event."

- AIDR Community Recovery Handbook



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What do ~~we~~ mean when ~~we~~ say disaster recovery?



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Credit: Freepik



Credit: Freepik



Does it matter what we mean when we say
disaster recovery?



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What do ~~we~~ mean when ~~we~~ say disaster recovery?

recovery management



Credit: Freepik

recovery



Credit: Freepik



Credit: Freepik



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What do ~~we~~ mean when ~~we~~ say disaster recovery?



Credit: Freepik



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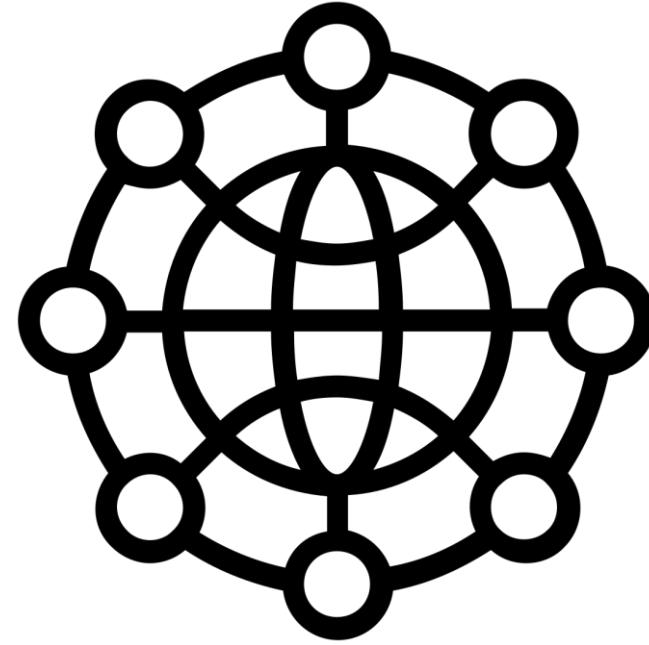


Primary impacts

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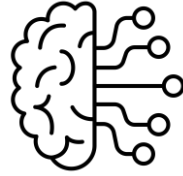


Primary impacts

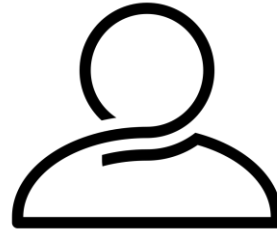
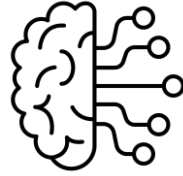


Secondary impacts

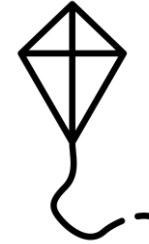
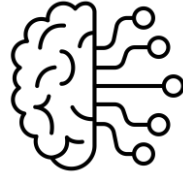
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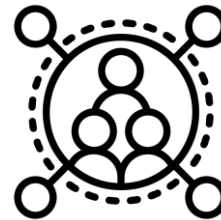
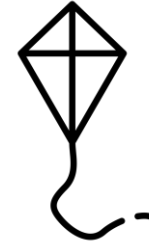
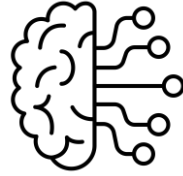
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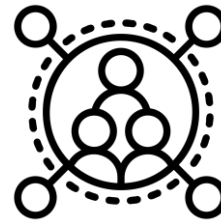
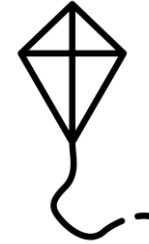
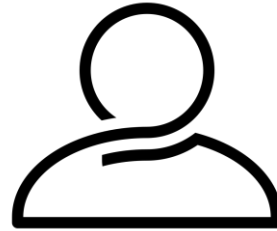
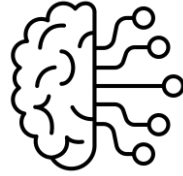
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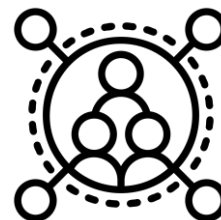
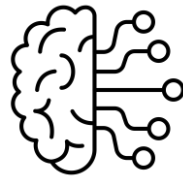
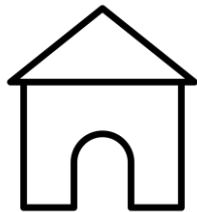
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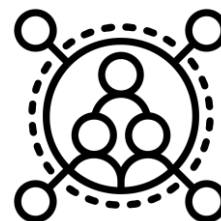
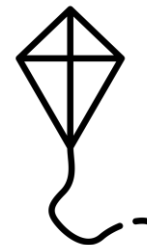
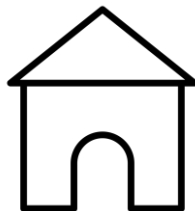
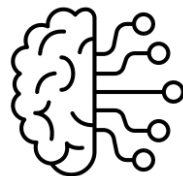
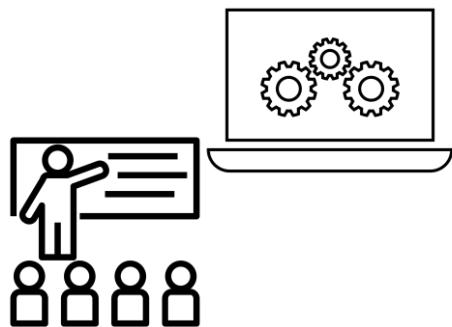
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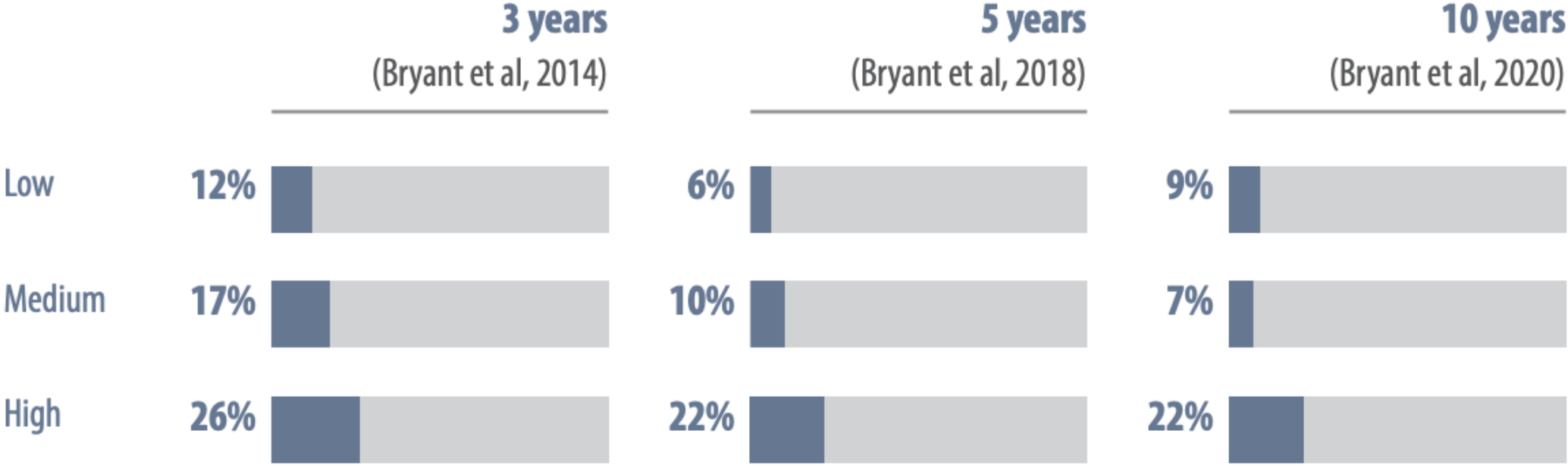
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Rates of probable disorders across all communities - PTSD, depression, and/or severe distress



Source: Gibbs et al 2021

(c) General health

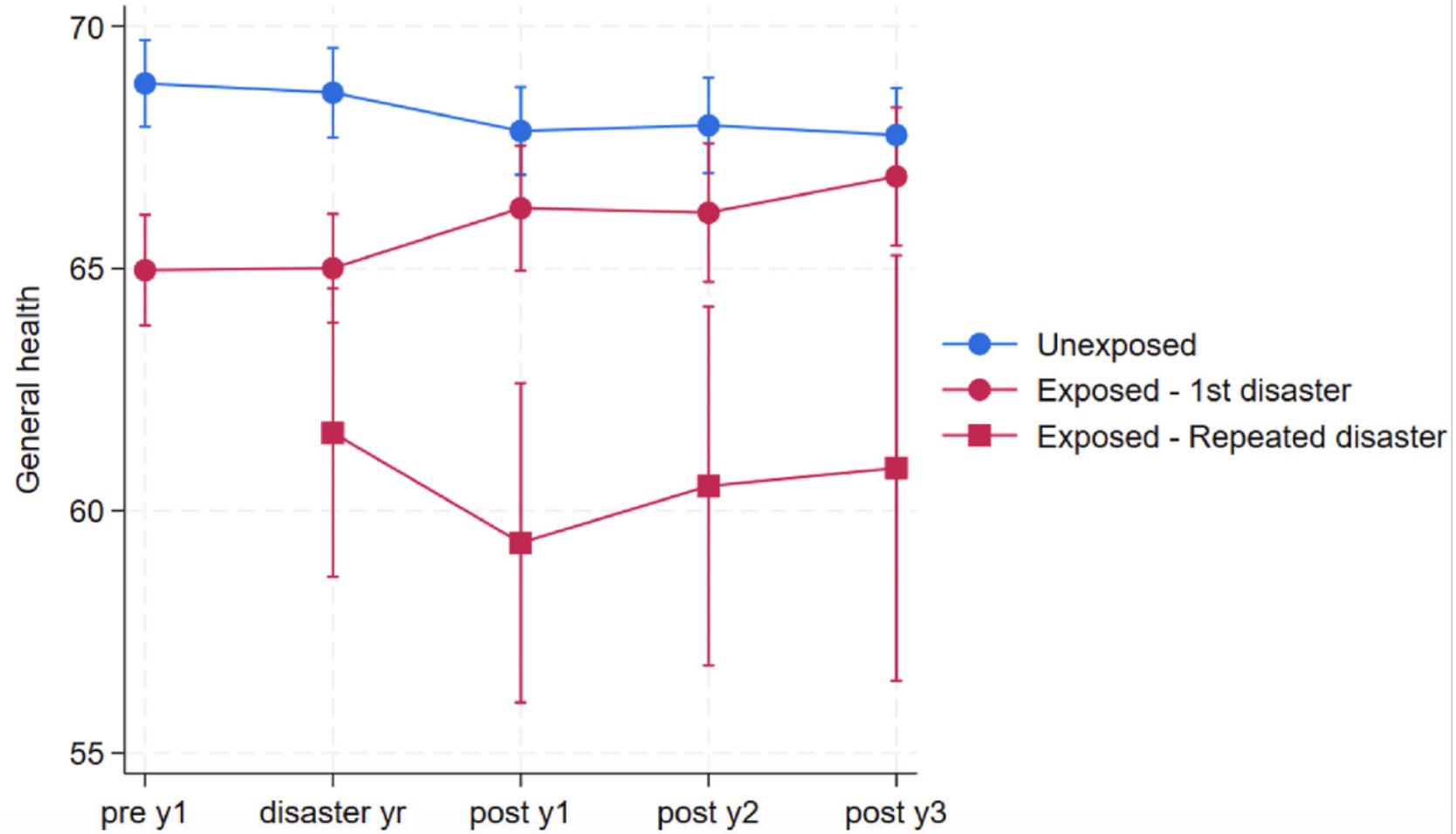


Table 2. Key disease patterns, associated with disasters, relevant to general practice healthcare provision¹²⁻¹⁵

Immediate/short term (hours–days)	Medium term (weeks–months)	Long term (months–years)
Health impacts		
Cardiovascular		
↑ BP and HTN	↑ BP and HTN	Deterioration HTN to 4 years
↑ MI	↑ MI peak first 2.5 weeks	↑ MI 2.5 weeks to 5.5 years (↑ 3xs 4 months to 2.5 years)
↑ Mortality due to IHD	↑ Mortality due to IHD first 2.5 weeks	↑ Mortality due to MI 1.5 to 3.5 years
↑ SCM	↑ SCM to 2 weeks	
↑ CVA	↑ CVA to 2.5 months	↑ CVA to 3 years
Deterioration HF	Deterioration HF	Deterioration HF to 3.5 years
↑ PE	↑ PE to 3.5 weeks	
↑ NCCP	↑ NCCP to 2.5 weeks	
Respiratory		
↑ Tsunami lung	↑ Pneumonia	↑ Pneumonia to 12 weeks
Carbon monoxide poisoning	↑ Pneumonia mortality	↑ Pneumonia mortality to 12 weeks
↑ Respiratory ED presentations first days		
↑ Respiratory hospitalisations		↑ New sinusitis to 9 years
↑ Asthma exacerbations	↑ Asthma exacerbations to 5 weeks	↑ New asthma to 10 years
↑ COPD/chronic bronchitis exacerbations		↑ New lower respiratory symptoms to 16 years
Endocrine		
↑ New incident DM		↑ New incident DM to 10 years (associated with PTSD)
Deterioration of existing DM	↑ HbA1c 6 weeks to 16 months	↑ HbA1c 6 weeks to 16 months
↑ Exacerbations of DM to ED	↑ Exacerbation of DM to ED to 2 weeks	
↑ Gestational DM	↑ Gestational DM	
↑ All-cause mortality in DM	↑ All-cause mortality in DM to 1 month	

Table continued on the next page

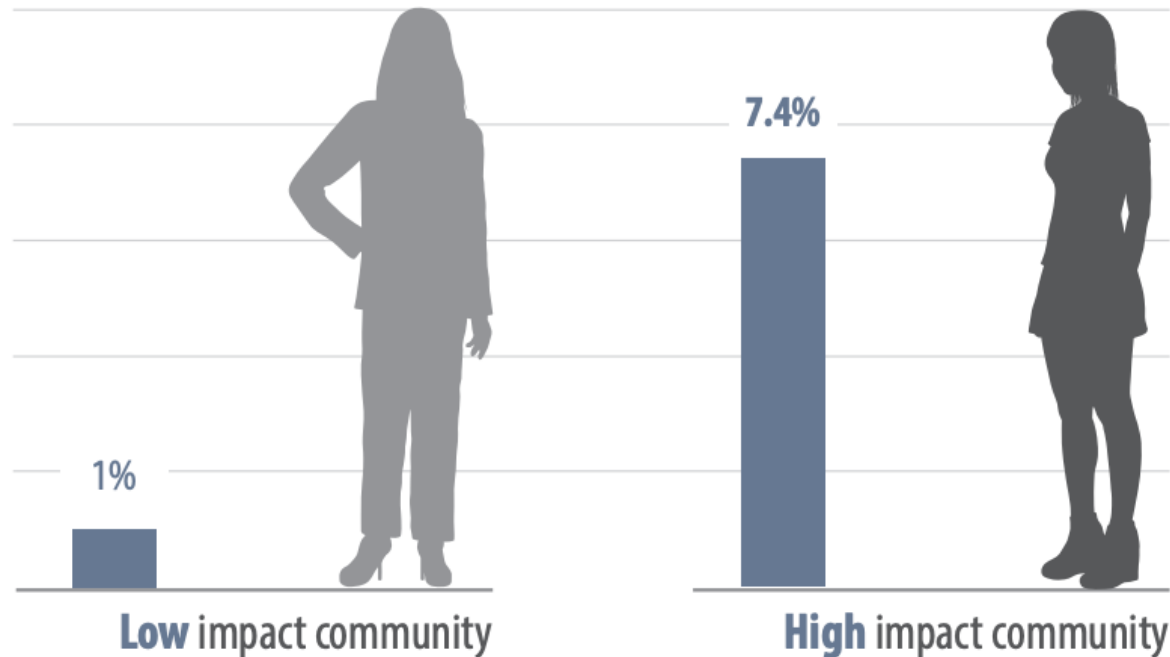
Home > Update

26 November 2024

Research reveals gender-based violence increases after disasters – how do we prepare and prevent it?

Source(s): Gender & (and) Disaster Australia

Women's experience of violence post-bushfire



Source: Gibbs et al 2021

Bushfire academic impacts



Source: Gibbs et al 2021

Key insights

The current costs

\$6.3 billion

Average annual cost of disasters to CYP in Australia in 2025

Equivalent to 1 in 6 children and young people impacted by disasters



The economic burden of disasters on children and young people is substantial and driven primarily by education loss



\$5.3 billion

annual average loss of lifetime income due to reduced rates of Year 12 completion



\$662 million

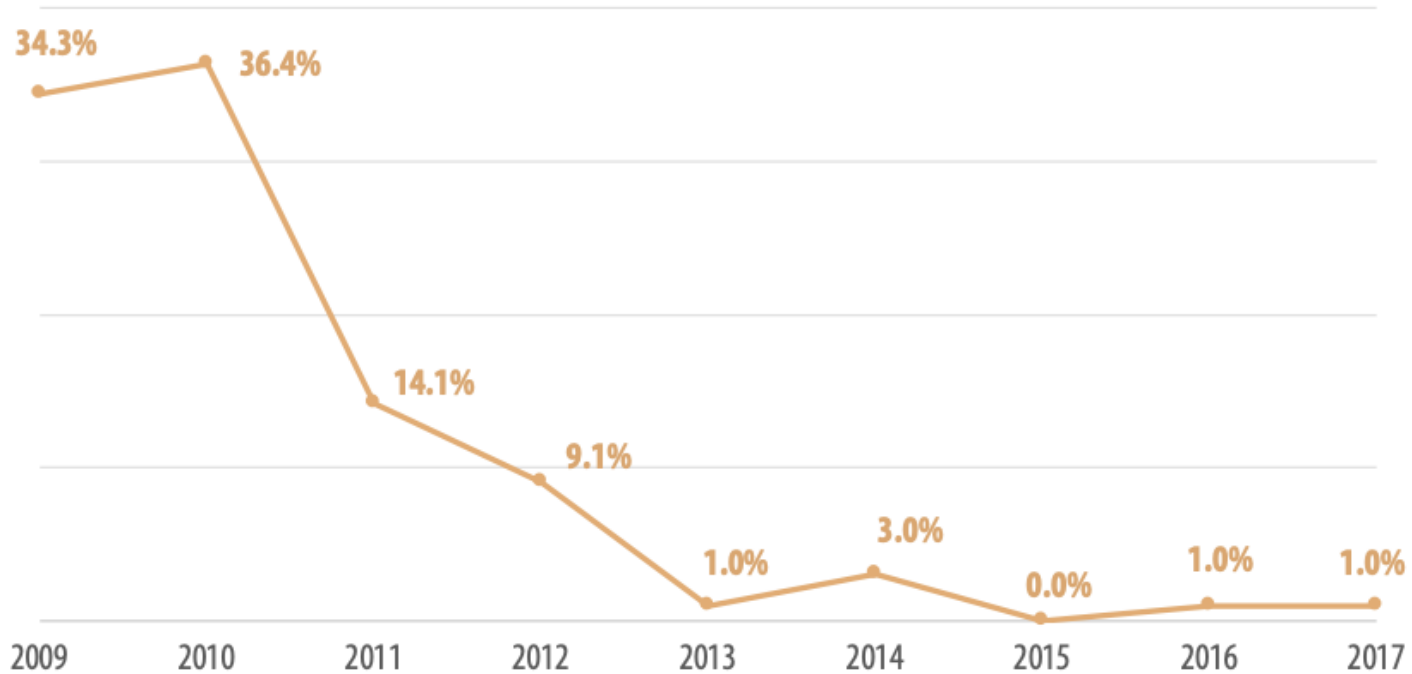
annual average mental health costs



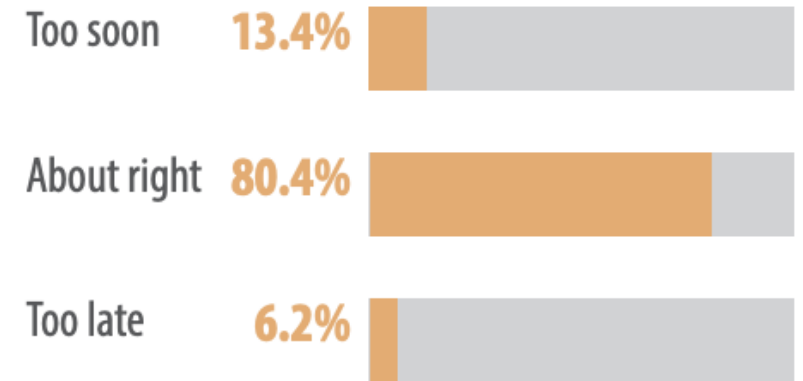
\$192 million

annual average costs due to increased child abuse

Most rebuilds commenced in the first two years after the fires.



Subjective appraisal of timing of rebuild.





Fast facts for The Resilient Homes and Resilient Lands Programs

\$880m

budget for the RHP

1,000

buybacks currently targeted through the RHP

793

buybacks delivered through the RHP as at 31 March 2026

\$100m

budget for the RLP

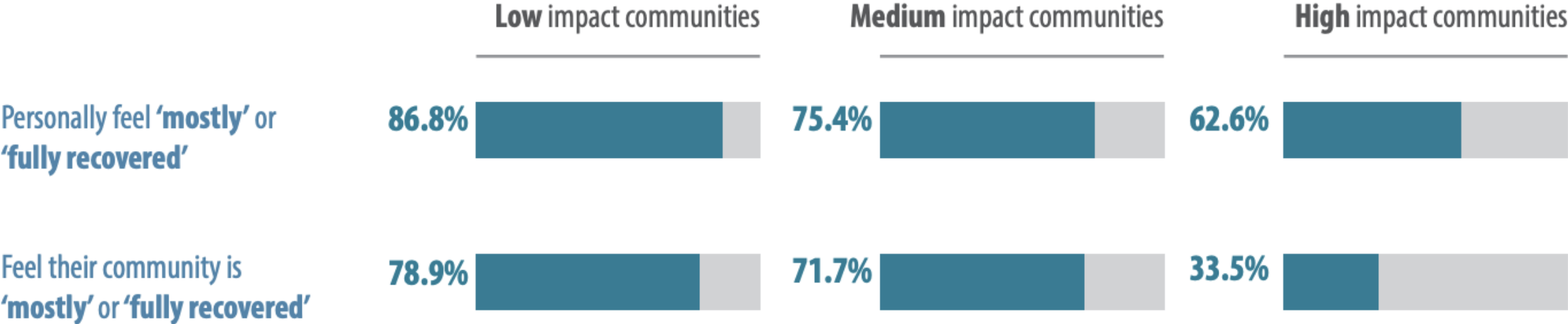
4,382

homes or lots anticipated to be delivered through the Resilient Lands Strategy

0

homes or lots delivered through the RLP as at 31 March 2026

Perceptions of recovery at 10 years



Source: Gibbs et al 2021

What do we mean when we say disaster preparedness?



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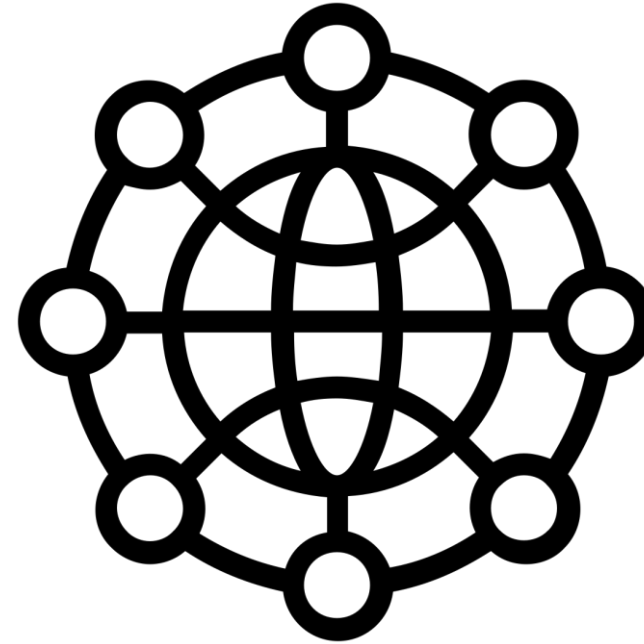


Primary impacts

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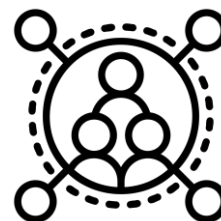
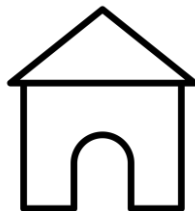
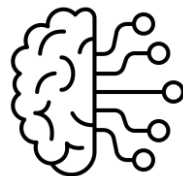
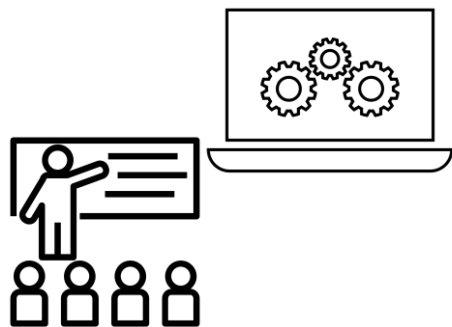


Primary impacts



Secondary impacts

HOW we SURVIVE



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Essential steps to **Get Ready**

Know your risk



[Understand local extreme weather risks >](#)

Make a plan



[Step-by-step planning guide >](#)

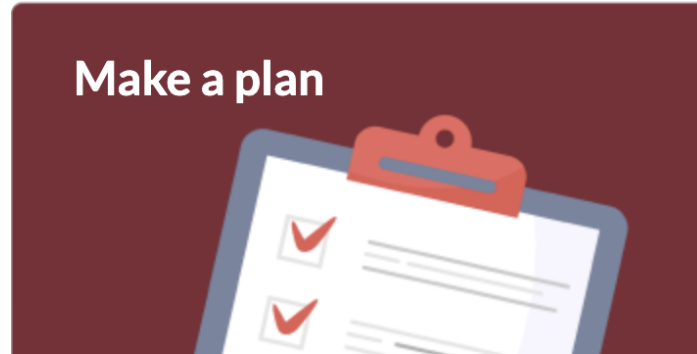
Pack a kit



[Get checklists of what to pack >](#)

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Essential steps to **Get Ready**



Items in your emergency kit

These are the basics, but you can think about what items your family might use if you had to stay at home for three days. You can also include more items if you want.

If you are at risk of isolation, you might want to pack enough for extra days. Think about your situation and pack a kit that is right for your household.

Keep your kit in a strong waterproof storage container and store it in a safe place in your home that you can get to easily. It is a good idea to keep it away from young children.

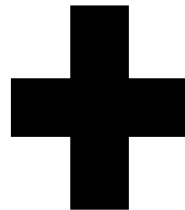
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Are we preparing for:



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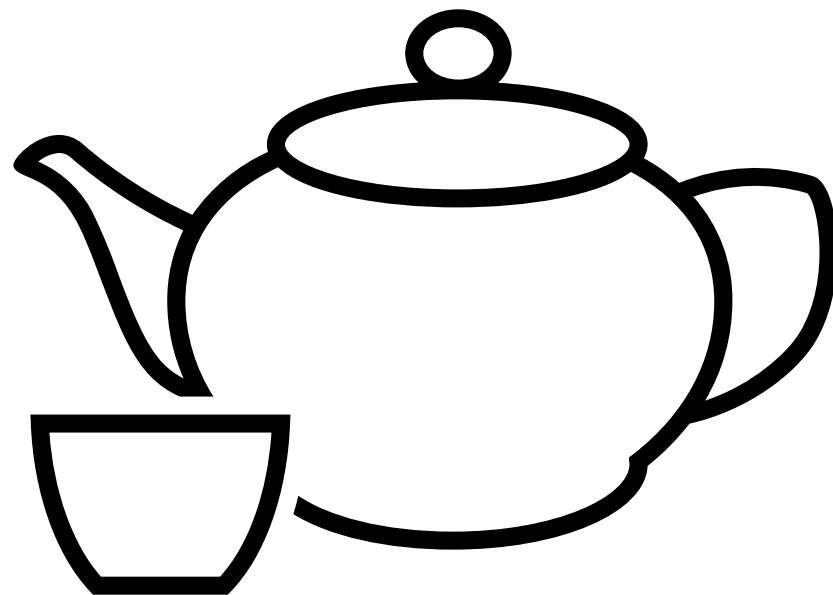
Are we preparing for:



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What are three things that you can predict people will need support with after a disaster / predictable impacts after a disaster?





BREAK



HOW we SURVIVE



Does emergency management policy
adequately address reasonable
expectations from the community
regarding how disaster impacts are
planned for?



Initial impact areas (predictable, evidence informed)

Health

Housing

Education

Safety

Community
governance



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Jonathan Abrahams



Elly Bird



Andrew Coghlan



Sabrina Davis



Douglas D'Antoine



Catherine Gearing



Lisa Gibbs



Jessie Huard



Anne Leadbeater



Margaret Moreton



Sam Redlich



Kate Retski



John Richardson



David Sanderson



Health



Prof. Jonathan Abrahams



A/Prof. Penny Burns



Alex Howard



Dr. Claire Leppard



Dr. Jo Longman



Dr. Rebecca McNaught



Erin Pelly



Housing



Catherine Gearing



Dr. Tim Heffernan



Loren Lockwood



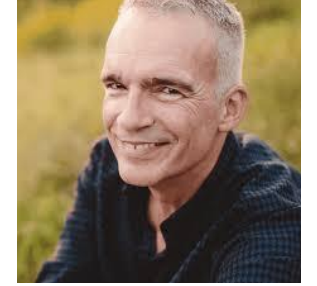
Brett Moore



Bridget Tehan



Joanna Quilty



Prof. David Sanderson



Dr. Lisa Ewenson



Prof. Elizabeth Mossop



Nikhila Madabhushi



Education



Prof. Lisa Gibbs



Martina Holland



Dr. Svenja Keele



Michelle Roberts



Safety



Loriana Bethune



Dr. Monica Taylor



Dr. Bhiemie Williamson



Community Governance



Elly Bird



Douglas D'Antoine



Sabrina Davis



Carol Hopkins



Anne Leadbeater



Zerina Millard



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Australian Institute for
Disaster Resilience



**Australian
Red Cross**



An illustration of a hand holding a yellow paper airplane. Inside the airplane, a person in a red dress is shown. Surrounding the person are various symbols: a gold gear, a blue gear, a yellow arrow, a white arrow, a red arrow, a gold circle with a white triangle, and a laptop. The background is a light blue gradient.

Foundations in Disaster Recovery

2026 courses in May, August and October

Scholarship applications and course enrolments now open



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

HOW we SURVIVE



AFTER THE
DISASTER

HOW we SURVIVE



Next event!

Thursday 6 August | 6pm - 9pm



Disaster Recovery & Resilience

Screening of *Floodland*,
followed by a discussion with Dr Rebecca McNaught

Documentary screening and discussion

- Explores resilience, loss and rebuilding.
- Focus on climate trends, disaster impacts and community well-being.
- Post-film discussion with Dr Rebecca McNaught
- Insights on the impacts on community health and wellbeing.
- Light catering provided

