

Disaster Resilient: Future Ready Burnett Inland

Roadmap to Resilience: Kalpowar



FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal



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Roadmap to Resilience: Kalpowar

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Part 1: Summary

Disaster Resilient: Future Ready Introduction

Section A: Disaster Resilient: Future Ready Program Outline and Intent

Disaster Resilient: Future Ready (DR:FR) is a national program that helps remote, rural and regional communities to be better prepared for future disasters. Place-based, FRRR first piloted the DR:FR program in New South Wales, before subsequently undertaking multi-year programs in both Victoria and the Burnett Inland region of Queensland.

An evolution of the DR:FR program in Queensland is that FRRR worked with local delivery partner Red Earth Community Foundation (Red Earth). Red Earth leveraged their networks, expertise and adaptable approach towards community resilience planning to support local partner communities in the Burnett Inland to strengthen their resilience. This effort has been made possible through the financial support of the Minderoo Foundation and the Australian Government's Preparing Australian Communities Program – Local.

The overall aim of the DR:FR program is to develop and lead regional and localised community initiatives that strengthen awareness, increase preparedness, and enhance capacity of the local community to thrive and be resilient to the impacts of climate, disasters, and other disruptions. This includes building local knowledge of climate risks, catalysing leadership, fostering collaboration and facilitating community-driven innovation processes to develop and activate strategic actions and strategies that:

- Strengthen community capacity to positively adapt and evolve to change and disruption;
- Increase disaster preparedness to better mitigate, avoid, withstand and / or recover more effectively from the increasing effects of hazards such as bushfires and floods; and
- Improve community wellbeing and enhance resilience, so communities can grow and flourish.

The pace of program delivery aims to respond to the individual needs of each community and activities may include:

- Capacity building workshops;
- Facilitated community conversations;
- Community building and engagement events;
- Co-design workshops;
- Relationship and network building; and
- Activation of priority initiatives.

The partner communities identified by Red Earth in the early phase of the program included Cherbourg, Dallarnil, Kalpowar, Kumbia, Proston and Tansey. A focus in the selection process was assessment of a community's capacity in the first 72 hours after a disaster. These communities had access to local

community funding for activities that enhanced their capacity to thrive and be resilient to the impacts of climate, disasters and other disruptions.

Another stream of activities supported collaboration across regional agencies and organisations through the development of regional level resilience building initiatives for collective impact.

Section B: Purpose of Document

This **Roadmap to Resilience: Kalpowar** document has multiple purposes. Firstly, it serves to document the journey and outcomes of the **Disaster Resilient: Future Ready** program in Kalpowar, including community engagement processes, community mapping and the identification and development of locally driven initiatives aimed at enhancing disaster preparedness and resilience in the present, and to support local community considerations in the development of future initiatives.

Iterative versions of the Roadmap acted as a vital resource for the program’s Internal Advisory Group (IAG), whose remit was to provide local advice and insights to the overall DR:FR Burnett Inland program to ensure it was delivered in alignment with local needs and priorities, within the construct of program donor parameters. By consolidating information, insights, actions and outcomes, the Roadmap aims to foster alignment with the broader disaster management ecosystem and capture the unique strengths and needs of the Kalpowar community.

Furthermore, the Roadmap was also a critical element in FRRR’s granting due diligence and provided the FRRR Board, which ultimately approved DR:FR Burnett Inland grant applications, with information about the development of initiatives and how they align to program principles, evidence of broader need, and considerations of the context.

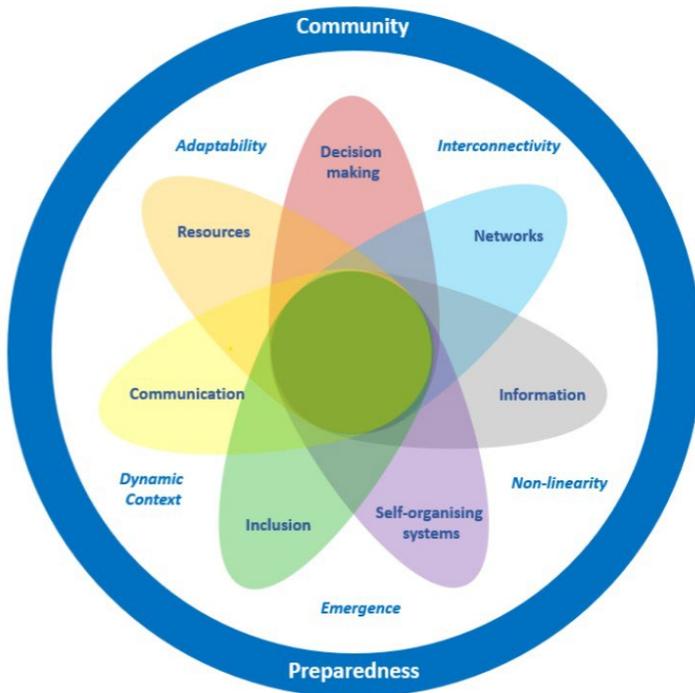
Section C: Critical Dimensions in Community Disaster Resilience

The place-based model of the DR:FR program integrates workshops, resources and learning opportunities into the model to support local activation. These ways of learning are informed by FRRR’s previous experiences delivering disaster resilience and recovery programs across Australia, and are also drawn from endorsed industry sources.

A key framework that underpins how the DR:FR program understands and considers resilience is the Critical Dimensions for Community Resilience. Drawing on research with communities experiencing disasters and other shocks in Australia over time, as well as a growing body of published research, University of Sydney researchers documented and developed a set of key areas, or dimensions, which are helpful in guiding and supporting community led work in disaster preparedness and resilience building. In collaboration with FRRR through an action research partnership, these dimensions were seen in action in communities impacted by disasters.

As noted in the [Action Research Report for Community Partners into FRRR’s Disaster Resilient: Future Ready Victoria Program](#) report (Joseph, P., Rawsthorne, M. & Howard, A. (2025) “While the Resilience Dimensions identify seven distinct areas of action to strengthen disaster preparedness, these sit within a larger realm of complexity thinking or complex systems.” Furthermore, “Including this kind of thinking

offers new and promising directions for anyone interested in disaster resilience building, and it helps us understand often invisible dynamics and feedback loops which enable and prevent action.”



Resilience-building Dimensions (Rawsthorne, M., Howard, A., Joseph, P., Sampson, D., and Katrak Harris, M. (2023). Understanding community-led disaster preparedness. Australian Journal of Emergency Management. 38(2), 49-54)

FRRR recognises that, nationally, disaster management is a busy and complex space and so takes an inclusive approach through focusing efforts on the Critical Dimensions in Community Disaster Resilience as a supportive framework for affected communities, regardless of the type of climate related impact. While ‘drought’ by national definition and by program donors is not considered a disaster, it is listed in the community profile for Kalpower given its wide ranging local climatic and social impact, particularly given the history of drought in the region and its close connection to both heatwaves and fire.

Section D: Internal Advisory Group

DR:FR Burnett Inland established an Internal Advisory Group (IAG) to create an informal advisory mechanism in relation to operational processes of the program. The IAG was designed to engender collaboration, information sharing, local input, and a continual learning loop to strengthen the working relationship between Red Earth, FRRR, local organisations and community, and bolster coordination between local emergency management agencies and community level self-determination.

In addition to Red Earth and FRRR participation, broader local representation included Disaster Management Officers from South Burnett Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council and Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council. Leadership from local community organisations and government

agencies were also represented, including South Burnett CTC, Liver Better Monto, and the Department of Primary Industries QLD.

Governance of the IAG was critical and supported by Terms of Reference which outlined the remit, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, conflict of interest and respectful conduct. The IAG aimed to meet monthly through the program which mainly occurred online.

Community Journey

Section E: Kalpowar Profile

Kalpowar is a small rural township in Queensland, located in the North Burnett Regional Council area (and partly in the Bundaberg Regional Council area), within the state electorate of Callide and the federal division of Flynn. Kalpowar is approximately 60 km north-east of Monto, approximately 116 km north-west of Bundaberg and by road is approximately 353 km north-west of Brisbane.

People and Place

- **First Nations:** Goorang Goorang people
- **Population:** 53 (2021 Census)
- **SEIFA:** 13
- **Remoteness:** Outer Regional (RA3)

History and Identity

The town's name is derived from the name of the local railway station as assigned by the Queensland Railways Department on 30 January 1928 – Kalpowar – which was an Aboriginal word meaning either 'pine tree' or 'copper'. Kalpowar has a rich history in goldmining and timber.

Community Assets and Services

The community's greatest asset is the Kalpowar Hall, which hosts numerous events throughout the year. There are no emergency services in Kalpowar, with the nearest Urban Fire Service response unit some 45 km away and all Rural Fire Service response units located on the other side of the State Forest and pine plantation. The town has public toilets and a phone box, along with a tennis court and sports field that are no longer in use or maintained. There is a local Airbnb as well as a short-stay campsite at the former school oval. Since the school closed in 1997, the nearest primary schools are Builyan State School in Boyne Valley and Monto State Primary School. The nearest secondary school is Monto State High School. There is a Telstra telecommunication tower that provides a 4G service to those living in the township, however there is minimal connectivity outside of the township and the tower only has a backup power supply for a maximum of two hours.

Climate and Disaster History

The Kalpowar area has experienced recurring droughts, including the Federation Drought (1895–1902) and the Millennium Drought (1997–2009), as well as impacts from Ex-Tropical Cyclones Beni (2003), Oswald (2013), Marcia (2015, which was a category 1 cyclone when it passed over Kalpowar), and Debbie (2017). Other notable events include bushfires in 2012 and 2019, as well as an extreme weather event which caused localised flooding and isolation in December 2010-January 2011.

There are eight causeways between Monto and Kalpowar that flood during rain events, leaving the community isolated for days at a time with response units unable to access the community until water levels recede.

Disaster Resilience

Kalpowar falls under the North Burnett Region Disaster Management Plan. The [Australian Disaster Resilience Index](#) assesses the broader Monto-Eidsvold area as having **low disaster resilience**, with limited coping capacity and adaptive capacity. Contributing factors include entrenched social and economic disadvantage, lower service access, reduced community cohesion and limited opportunities for adaptive learning.

Community Context

Once a bustling community in the 1970s with a post office, general store and school, following the closure of the railway the town started to experience long-term demographic change. Over time, shops were converted into homes and the population declined. Kalpowar is now largely made up of older residents. While the community sees a steady flow of tourists, trail riders and cyclists visiting the Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail, day-to-day interaction among locals can be limited, and many residents remain disconnected unless a significant event impacts the whole community.

Volunteer fatigue is also emerging, yet the community continues to demonstrate strong cooperation during emergencies or situations where support is needed. The Kalpowar Hall, positioned near the popular rail trail tunnels and featuring a mural from the Monto Art Trail, is recognised as a key opportunity to strengthen local cohesion by re-establishing a central community meeting place that welcomes residents and visitors alike.

Key challenges include unreliable communication networks, especially during extended power outages, and the community's high exposure to bushfire risk due to surrounding state, national and pine forests. Older buildings are not fire-resistant, and fuel loads—particularly along the creek running through town—heighten community vulnerability. In an emergency, it is likely that non-residents could be stranded in Kalpowar if they are visiting the area, or looking for shelter during a weather event.

Section F: DR:FR Community Engagement

Red Earth adopted an agile approach to community engagement in Kalpowar, ensuring that the process remained responsive to community needs.

Engagement began in April 2023, with a series of community sessions held at the Kalpowar Hall throughout 2023 and 2024. These sessions brought together a core group of residents, with attendance ranging from five to ten people.

Across these sessions, the community worked through a program framework organised by the topics of prepare, people, place and possibilities (see appendices) to explore local challenges, map assets, and identify priorities. Facilitation activities included community mapping, dotmocracy voting to identify priorities, interactive assessments, and solution-sorting exercises. These activities helped the community build a shared vision for resilience and co-design a set of community-led initiatives.

The engagement process also provided opportunities for collaboration directly with FRRR representatives, who supported conversations around funding guidelines and processes. By late 2024, the community had refined and prioritised a set of initiatives that were ready to move forward.

Throughout 2025, Kaye Wilson and Elaine Cook became the primary points of contact for the Kalpowar community due to the limited capacity of volunteers, as well as multiple core community members suffering illness or, very sadly, passing away. Red Earth and FRRR offered responsive support throughout the development of the grant application.

The DR:FR program brokered connection between core community members and the North Burnett Regional Council, particularly the Disaster Management Officer, to ensure that formal disaster management considerations were incorporated into project outcomes (including correct disaster messaging for a new noticeboard), ensuring that initiatives remain firmly grounded in community priorities, while aligned with broader disaster resilience planning across the North Burnett region.

Section G: Localised Reflection on Critical Dimensions

Networks: Kalpowar community leaders have strong formal and informal networks, evidenced by their committed involvement in the Kalpowar Hall Committee, as well as their strong social connections within the community. There is a desire to increase networking opportunities, with the hopes of engaging the broader community and inspiring them to attend local events.

Information: There is a wealth of local knowledge in Kalpowar, however historically, there has not been a lot of opportunity to share tailored information with the broader community and tourists. The installation of the community noticeboard, with both emergency information and localised content, will help provide an avenue for information sharing.

Self-organising Systems: Being such a small community, Kalpowar is adept at leveraging self-organising systems and building on networks and relationships to activate events and community-led initiatives.

Inclusion: Kalpowar has amplified its understanding of inclusion since the activation of the DR:FR program, and now considers tourists, trail riders and cyclists to be part of the fabric of the community. Community members have noted that they need to consider such non-residents when developing disaster preparedness and resilience initiatives.

Communication: While communication in Kalpowar is often informal, there is a regular local newsletter circulated. Increased networking opportunities is another way to establish a continuing conversation with the broader community.

Resources, Tools and Support: Community members within Kalpowar contribute their skills, knowledge, effort and time for the benefit of community. Through the activation of local initiatives through the DR:FR program, the community combined these contributions with external financial and practical support to enhance resilience.

Decision Making: Kalpowar sees benefit in having a local representative on the North Burnett Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) Monto Subgroup. This representation would help inform local inclusive decision-making and provide an opportunity for Kalpowar’s community priorities to be communicated.

Section H: Kalpowar Resilience Statement

As part of the community engagement process participating community members co-designed statements to capture what resilience meant for them collectively. It is intended that Kalpowar reflects on this statement over time, so that it can evolve to reflect the changing nature of community life.

“Kalpowar’s community spirit is most evident when things get tough and people come together to talk, to get information and to share resources to help. Kalpowar is well self-organised, inclusive of all, has strong networks and members are part of decisions that impact their community.”

Section I: DR:FR Funded Initiatives

Resource Kalpowar Hall for Disaster Response and Information

Lead organisation: Kalpowar Hall Committee

This initiative focused on resourcing the Kalpowar Hall as a Community Meeting Place so that it can be used as a central community hub for information and resource sharing before, during and after an emergency or disaster. This initiative included a generator, storage area with clean up supplies, defibrillator and first aid kit, local first aid training, large tanks with a water pump for asset protection in the event of a fire, and the installation of a community noticeboard with formal disaster management information and local content.

Project Partners

Kalpowar Hall Committee, North Burnett Regional Council, Red Earth Community Foundation, FRRR.

Outcomes:

Resourcing the Kalpowar Hall bolsters the hall's capacity to act in its appropriate function during the disaster cycle to support preparedness, response and recovery, increasing a sense of empowerment in community. Disaster-related information being accessible at the hall increases preparedness for local community and tourists. The projects provided opportunity, like the working bee, for community to work together. This supports community in knowing how to band together and to help each other in times of disaster.

"The whole community will benefit in the case of a power outage from these resources; the water tanks, generator and pump will mean the amenities like showers and toilets will function during a power outage. The water tanks are also really important as they will be needed in response to bushfire or flood. Having water accessible also increases protection of the facilities from bushfire. Upgrading the hall has provided opportunities, like through the working bee for community to work together. This supports community in knowing how to band together, to help each other in times of disaster."

Activation and Protection of Kalpowar Hall as a Community Meeting Place

Lead organisation: Kalpowar Hall Committee

This initiative focused on improving usability of the hall for the future, increasing supportive connection between locals and tourists, engagement with disaster preparedness information and easy access to a defibrillator for the community. Increasing hall use also aimed to foster volunteer engagement and capacity to host and cater regular community events into the future. Project funds were allocated to the construction of an accessible deck, UHF radio equipment to enhance communications and catering for two community BBQ's.

Project Partners

Kalpowar Hall Committee, North Burnett Regional Council, Red Earth Community Foundation, FRRR.

Outcomes

The hall is now a more user-friendly asset, providing a comfortable outdoor area for social gatherings, and a covered area for the defibrillator and information sign, ensuring they are visible and accessible. This can increase the connection between locals and tourists. Upgrading the hall has also motivated the Kalpowar Hall Committee to proactively look after the facilities and to consider how to attract support from hall users.

"Community members really appreciate the deck and have noted that these resources will make our lives so much easier. When other community members start to see that the Kalpowar Hall isn't just a building, it will draw new people in. New people are engaging, meaning more connection and sustainability for the hall."

"Having the UHF radios will be a great assistance especially in the event of no electricity to the town. The radios will enable us to communicate basically to the outside world."

"I feel the community can feel safe in knowing we have the resources to assist them in most emergencies. When there's times of emergencies and groups of people stressing, having the deck out the back feels like a cooling area where your able to relax and have time out. Having the deck we'll be able to have meetings, training days and community BBQs and will be an asset when hiring the hall to outside groups. New people are engaging, meaning more connection and sustainability for the hall."

Section J: Disaster Preparedness and Resilience Rationale

The funded initiatives align with five of the Resilience Dimensions – **Networks; Self-organising Systems; Resources, Tools and Support; Information and Communications.**

The initiatives strengthen local **Networks** by re-activating the Kalpowar Hall as a central place for community connection and networking opportunities. Hosting events provides an avenue for residents and visitors to connect, build relationships and increase social capital.

Self-organising Systems are enhanced through providing first aid and defibrillator training so that potentially life saving assistance can be activated in the instance the community is isolated.

Resourcing the hall with a generator, practical clean up supplies, defibrillator, first aid kit, water tanks and a deck with awning meets **Resources, Tools and Support** by transforming the hall into a reliable community asset, equipping the community with a facility that serves as both a social hub and a resource centre for disaster preparedness and recovery.

The installation of the community noticeboard in a place that is accessible and visible during local events, or when people are utilising the Hall, activates the opportunity for disaster preparedness discussions, ensuring vital **Information** is shared with both locals and tourists.

The UHF equipment will enhance **Communications** options during disasters and resulting periods of isolation.

Section K: Community Aspirations for the Future

Community Preparedness and Training

- Provide regular training for residents on using defibrillators and first aid equipment, with a focus on involving younger community members.
- Develop strategies to boost participation in disaster preparedness activities.
- Share information through both formal council materials and informal community events (e.g., trivia nights, themed discussions, barbecues).
- Create welcome packs for new residents to explain local risks and preparedness measures, supported by ongoing conversations about floods, fires, and other emergencies.

Partnerships and Coordination

- Collaborate with the North Burnett Local Disaster Management Group and explore partnerships with the Rural Fire Service (RFS) to strengthen local capability.
- Nominate a community representative to join the regional disaster management support group, ensuring local input and coordination. This role will also help track flood mapping progress, which will guide signage and warning systems expected to be completed by 2026.
- Maintain ongoing dialogue with council representatives to reinforce that Kalpowar Hall is not a formal evacuation centre, but rather a hub for community self-sufficiency.

Infrastructure and Facilities

- Build a deck at the front of the hall to improve usability during emergencies and events, with weatherproofing measures such as durable louvers for shelter in heavy rain.
- Install additional emergency facilities, including coin-operated showers and stored bedding, to support stranded travellers or residents during crises.

Kalpowar Disaster Management Information

A key source of emergency management information for the Kalpowar community is the North Burnett Regional Council.

For information about how to prepare for the next disaster, community members can visit Council's Disaster Management section on their website: <https://northburnett.qld.gov.au/disaster-management/>

For up-to-date information during a disaster, go directly to Council's Emergency Management Dashboard: <https://emergency.northburnett.qld.gov.au/> and subscribe to receive weather warnings and disaster updates via email and text message (text only activated during disaster events).

Links to the North Burnett Local Disaster Management Plan and Community Disaster Support Group Plans can be found under the Other Helpful Resources Tab at the bottom of the Disaster Management Page: <https://northburnett.qld.gov.au/disaster-management/>

The Importance of Integrating Cross Sector Collaboration & Partnerships

Informed by the [National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework](#) (NDRRF), the DR:FR program was designed with awareness that “disaster risk reduction is a shared responsibility.” This mutual obligation is between emergency management agencies, including local government (formal) and business, community organisations and individuals (informal). As the NDRRF also acknowledges, responsibilities between these stakeholders “is not equally shared, and it can often be unclear where certain responsibilities lie.” For this reason, a very important aspect of the DR:FR program is about brokering partnerships and collaboration to support understanding of who can do what to support risk reduction and resilience building.

The DR:FR program aims to support, resource and strengthen the ‘informal’ community resilience building and preparedness efforts at the grassroots level, while working in collaboration with the formalised support systems. Part of the program’s intent is to increase local awareness of current ‘formal’ disaster preparedness efforts, as well as response and recovery roles and responsibilities, particularly by local government.

This section of the Roadmap aims to detail mechanisms that were established as part of the program to bring about shared responsibility, the benefits of collaborating with local government and the role neighbourhood centres could play in supporting local working groups of volunteer community members to develop, coordinate and deliver initiatives.

The IAG was a strategic way to support this critical activation of collaboration. IAG representatives were vital in the program’s ability to understand the local context with regards to service provisions and emergency management arrangements, providing an easeful resource to ensure locally designed initiatives worked in concert with existing activities.

Section L: Council Disaster Management Officers

Disaster Management Officers (DMO) from South Burnett Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council and Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council were active members of the IAG. Furthermore, these representatives, in addition to the DMO at Gympie Regional Council, were engaged in conversations with community working groups and grantee applicants to support the development of initiatives so that grassroots projects complimented and understood the roles and responsibilities of formal disaster emergency management arrangements and protocols.

Brokering collaboration between these key roles in formal disaster management with community members and grantees supported local awareness of:

- **Local Disaster Dashboards** as the source of truth for up-to-date weather warning and emergency news.
- **How suitable facilities can act as important community meeting places** throughout the disaster cycle.
 - In **preparedness** this may be holding information sessions or having a noticeboard with relevant info and hosting regular social cohesion activities.

- In times of **response** these spaces may be used by community members to charge phones, receive information together, boil kettles, share stories and support.
- These spaces may also be established as **recovery** hubs after a disaster where required agencies could attend or where community led activities could occur like creative and craft projects that foster connection.
- **The Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements**, particularly for staff from four Neighbourhood Centres in the Burnett Inland, so that when developing Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Plans with individuals there is awareness of broader formal emergency management protocols.

Section M: Local Disaster Management Groups

Local governments appoint Local Disaster Management Groups (LDMG). Their role is to:

- Develop, review and assess effective disaster management practices;
- Help local government to prepare a local disaster management plan;
- Ensure the community knows how to respond in a disaster;
- Identify and coordinate disaster resources;
- Manage local disaster operations; and
- Ensure local disaster management and disaster operations integrate with state disaster management.

During the DR:FR Program, Red Earth and FRRR staff met with LDMG members in the South and North Burnett through face-to-face meetings and online deputations as part of scheduled meetings. The purpose of these opportunities was to build awareness of the DR:FR program intent, activities and community needs, and to foster an ethos of collaboration and feedback loops to support best possible outcomes on the ground and into the future.

Outcomes of the program engagement with LDMG's included:

- Recognition by North Burnett LDMG of DR:FR local community consultation in Dallarnil and Kalpowar, with reference to roadmaps noted in North Burnett Local Disaster Management Plans.
- Custodianship by South Burnett LDMG of DRA Big Map assets as a tool to support ongoing emergency management training, plus collaborative education events between emergency management agencies, councils, schools and community organisations.

Section N: Neighbourhood Centres

The purposes of Neighbourhood Centres commonly reflect community needs, with a particular focus to support those marginalised or disadvantaged, they also can act as a hub for other support agencies in rural and regional areas. For these reasons these organisations and the established systems that they have can play an important role for local communities throughout the disaster cycle. This has been the case, dependent on capacities for Neighbourhood Centres within the Burnett Inland.

Through both locally funded initiatives, as well as through projects that offered region wide support, Neighbourhood Centres have been engaged in the DR:FR program.

Building region wide knowledge and support networks

The four Neighbourhood Centres in the Burnett Inland partnered on a DR:FR funding application to coordinate staff training in Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Plans. P-CEP is an inclusive preparedness tool that Neighbourhood Centre staff would then promote broadly as part of regular community engagement events, and ultimately work with individuals to develop unique P-CEP Plans.

The DR:FR program saw strength in this partnership as the approach created efficiencies towards building knowledge across the Burnett Inland region, and also offered an opportunity for the Neighbourhood Centres to strengthen their networks and working relationships so that in times of disaster, opportunities to support each other are more likely and straightforward.

It is also important to note that both North Burnett Regional Council and Neighbourhood Centre representatives were members of the IAG. Whilst the program ensured that all conflicts were appropriately managed, the IAG mechanism enhanced project outcomes through increasing opportunities for formal and informal collaboration in disaster preparedness efforts. A fantastic example of this was Neighbourhood Centre representatives engaging in training in the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements, supported by local councils, so that when developing P-CEP Plans with individuals across the region, they could have increased awareness of formal emergency management protocols and responsibilities.

Section 2: Learnings from Broader Program

Activities & Resources to Support Future Effort

Regional Initiatives

Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP)

Overview

South Burnett CTC Inc. delivered a region-wide disaster preparedness initiative across the Burnett Inland, combining accredited Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) training for Neighbourhood Centre staff with direct community engagement, personalised planning and resilience-building activities. With \$200,000 in combined funding, the project strengthened the capability of four Neighborhood Centres and supported vulnerable residents to better understand their risks and prepare for emergencies.

Phase 1: Capability Building

Staff from four Neighbourhood Centres—Graham House, Nanango Neighbourhood Centre, LiveBetter Community Services and North Burnett Community Service—completed accredited P-CEP training through the University of Sydney, alongside training in the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements, to ensure formal disaster management information was integrated into the delivery. This created a shared, consistent framework for supporting vulnerable residents before, during and after disasters.

Phase 2: Community Delivery

Centres activated their new capability through outreach, events, home visits and one-on-one planning sessions. Staff used P-CEP tools to guide personalised conversations about risks, supports, health needs, mobility, pets and communication preferences. Activities were delivered across multiple towns and outreach locations throughout 2025, with support from local government, emergency services and community groups.

Outcomes

- Neighbourhood Centres collaborated to embed P-CEP into everyday practice, increasing long-term capacity and consistency.
- 19 staff across four Neighbourhood Centres completed accredited P-CEP training.
- Strengthened cross-sector collaboration improved preparedness pathways and community connectedness across the region.
- Vulnerable residents gained personalised emergency plans and stronger connections to local support services.
- 1,272 community contacts and 83 personalised P-CEP plans were delivered to older people, isolated residents and individuals not previously connected to services.

“The connections built through P-CEP are essential when disaster does strike. It means people have a point of contact at the Neighbourhood Centre for the right information and an identified connection that could help with the clean up after an event.”

“This work has made a meaningful contribution to community safety and preparedness, while reinforcing Nanango Neighbourhood Centre’s role as a trusted, local, person-centred support before, during and after emergencies.”

Links

To learn more about the benefits of P-CEP, view the video case study on the [DR:FR Burnett Inland Resources Hub](#).

Are you interested in a P-CEP plan for yourself or someone you know? Monto Neighbourhood Centre, Graham House and South Burnett CTC now offer P-CEP planning as part of their services. Reach out to one of these Neighbourhood Centres to discuss P-CEP planning:

- Monto Neighbourhood Centre: Phone: 1800 580 580. Website: <https://livebetter.org.au/child-and-family/monto-community-services/>
- Graham House: Phone: 4169 8400. Website: <https://grahamhouse.org.au/>
- North Burnett Community Services: Phone: 4165 4690. Website: <http://www.nbcs.org.au>
- South Burnett CTC: Phone: 4162 9000. Website: <https://sbctc.com.au/>

Disaster Relief Australia Big Map

Overview

Big Map exercises were delivered to stakeholders and communities in the North Burnett, South Burnett and Cherbourg Local Government areas.

Big Map exercises are a valuable community resilience activity which plays a part in identifying potential risk and hazards. Developed by Disaster Relief Australia (DRA), a giant floor map of the area creates opportunity for a community to collaborate and work together to identify risks, share experiences and discuss ways to better prepare for future disaster events.

A ‘Burnett Inland’ 15m x 15m fabric Big Map was created, incorporating the North Burnett, South Burnett, Cherbourg and relevant catchments. This Big Map was then utilised to stimulate collaboration and discussions, firstly at a regional stakeholder event, then at five community sessions, all held in October 2024. The stakeholder session took place in Gayndah with over 30 emergency services, council and other agency representatives. Community sessions were held in Biggenden, Mundubbera, Monto, Kingaroy and Murgon with over 70 attendees across the four sessions.

A Cherbourg-specific 10m x 10m fabric Big Map was also created, with stakeholder and community sessions held in August 2025 in Cherbourg, attended by over 30 people, including Elders, council, emergency services and agency representatives, and community members.

Big Map exercises were identified early in the DR:FR program as a key capacity building, information-sharing and collaboration tools for regional impact, particularly given the whole-of-catchment and all-hazards approach employed by DRA.

Outcomes

There were significant outcomes from this regional initiative, including:

- The developed **Burnett Inland Big Map Resilience Report**, which provides key information about the Burnett River catchment, outlines insights, analysis and key points from discussions during the Big Map events, and lists suggested future opportunities.
- The fabric Big Maps, which have been retained in the region as valuable assets for the future. The South Burnett Regional Council Local Disaster Management Group are custodians of the Burnett Inland Regional Big Map and are committed to ensuring broad community and agency access to the Big Map for supported activities that increase disaster preparedness and resilience. The Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council are custodians of the Cherbourg Big Map, which will be used to enhance disaster preparedness planning and coordination.
- Increased understanding of how the catchment functions and of potential future impacts at a Council, agency and community level by those who attended.

Links

To book the Burnett Inland Regional Big Map, visit South Burnett Regional Council's website - [Emergency Management | South Burnett Regional Council](#)

Check out the DRA Burnett Inland report on the [DR:FR Burnett Inland Resources Hub](#).

To learn more about DRA visit [disasterreliefaus.org](#)

Youth Insights Report

Overview

This initiative focused on engaging young people across the Burnett Inland to discuss disaster preparedness and the development of the **Disaster Resilient: Future Ready Burnett Inland Youth Insights Report**.

Futures Isle were engaged to host youth consultations across the region to better understand how young people experience, understand and imagine disaster preparedness. Over 170 young people were engaged across nine locations.

Through both sentiments shared at community sessions, and during discussions at Internal Advisory Group meetings, the lack of integration of young people with disaster preparedness activities became apparent and a strong support for youth voices to contribute to disaster preparedness planning emerged, with a

particular view to gaining insights about how to best engage young people and prepare them for future disaster events.

Outcome

The *Disaster Resilient: Future Ready Burnett Inland Youth Insights Report* was developed to capture the perspectives of young people and translate them into actionable insights for community-aligned investment and advocacy. The report demonstrates that youth engagement directly informed a set of priority themes and big ideas, showing where meaningful progress can be achieved. The themes identified through this process were:

- Practical knowledge is experience-based
- Conversations at home matter
- Social media use is high, but trust is low
- Trusted sources go beyond the internet
- Education needs to be practical, not just scientific

Links

Check out the Youth Insights Report on the [DR:FR Burnett Inland Resources Hub](#).

Australian Disaster Resilience Conference DR:FR Delegations

Overview

The DR:FR program built the capacity of local leaders through attendance at the annual Australian Disaster Resilience Conference (ADRC), a national conference that brings together a diverse range of people from different sectors across the country to share knowledge and build connections for a disaster resilient Australia.

In 2024 and 2025, cohorts of community leaders attended ADRC alongside Red Earth and FRRR representatives. Expressions of Interest were open to working group members in each of the six DR:FR communities, with successful applications based on a number of factors, such as disaster-related volunteering and commitment to community leadership.

Outcomes

Community leaders who attended the conference each year said they felt activated to incorporate learnings into their local context and inspired to continue learning about innovative disaster preparedness and response strategies and resources.

Delegate insights included:

- Progress "moves at the speed of trust." Trust – whether it is with community members, or among colleagues – provides a solid foundation to build on.
- The importance of building homes suited to our environment will help mitigate disaster risks.
- Better preparedness – assets, planning, or mental resilience – can help shorten the long recovery journey.

Links

To learn more about the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience Conference visit

<https://www.aidr.org.au>

Red Earth Resilience Leadership Forum

Overview

From 2022 – 2024, Red Earth hosted an annual regional in-person Forum that provided space for community members and leaders to come together to start region-wide conversations and develop actions towards co-designing an event better future for the Burnett Inland.

In August 2024, the Forum was aligned with the DR:FR program to increase disaster preparedness and resilience at a regional level. The Forum was hosted with the theme ‘Resilience as an Ecosystem’, fostering conversation around personal resilience and disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Keynote speakers were Paul Ryan (Australian Resilience Centre) and Melanie Bloor (Resilient Uki). There was also a panel discussion which explored local, regional and national perspectives on disaster preparedness and resilience building.

Outcomes

Over 60 people from across the Burnett Inland attended the Forum. Survey responses evidencing resilience built through the Forum included:

- 82% of attendees agreed or strongly agreed that the Forum increased their knowledge about disaster recovery and resilience;
- 95% learnt new information;
- 95% are more likely to increase involvement in their local community;
- 90% met new people and developed new networks;
- 96% were inspired to act on new ideas.

Links

To read more about the keynote presentations, panel member insights, and ‘Big Ideas’ that were captured at the Forum, you can view or download the 2024 Red Earth Regional Leadership Forum Report on the [DR:FR Burnett Inland Resources Hub](#).

NFP House Capacity Building Workshops

Overview

To support local organisations and volunteers, capacity-building workshops were delivered for not-for-profit community groups across the Burnett Inland.

NFP House delivered a two-session workshop in Kumbia, Biggenden and Monto in October 2025. The first session focused on good organisational governance and the second explored volunteer engagement, including how to create a fun and inclusive experience for volunteers.

Through engagement with representatives of numerous community groups, it was clearly identified that effective governance structures and retention/recruitment of volunteers were shared challenges in the region. Local capacity building was also a DR:FR priority due to awareness that if local organisations are stronger in how they operate, they have more ability to support their local communities with the challenges at hand, such as increasing disaster impacts on local communities. NFP House were contracted to deliver workshops across the region.

Outcomes

Over 40 volunteers, representing a wide range of community groups, attended the workshops, with 79% indicating they found the workshops extremely useful, and 95% responding that they would recommend the workshops to other community groups.

When surveyed about what skills and knowledge volunteers would put into practice straight away, responses included policy development, collaboration with younger people, improved communication strategies, equitable volunteer recognition, creation of task lists, meeting structure and constitution reviews, as well as implementing strategic planning.

“These workshops have given me the opportunity to look at things differently.” Trevor, Monto

Links

To learn more about the local value of the NFP House workshops, view the video case study on [the DR:FR Burnett Inland Resources Hub](#).

To learn more about NFP House and the services they offer to support not-for-profit organisations, visit their website: <https://nfphouse.org.au/>

Climate Trend Conversations Facilitated by Sweltering Cities

Overview

The DR:FR program hosted an online series of small Climate Trend Conversations for the Burnett Inland, bringing together community members, local councils and service providers to strengthen local disaster resilience. As climate risks intensify, these sessions offered a valuable space for people to connect, share experiences and learn from one another.

Emma Bacon from Sweltering Cities facilitated the discussions, providing insights into the growing impacts of extreme heat and its links with drought, bushfires, storms and rising cost-of-living pressures. Emma also shared examples from Sweltering Cities’ work in Townsville, demonstrating how community-led conversations can build practical awareness and support local adaptation.

Participants described clear shifts in their local climate, including earlier, longer and more intense heat that is affecting routines, sleep and wellbeing—particularly for older residents. They also reflected on lived experiences of floods, storms and bushfires, noting the stress and long recovery periods that follow. Rising temperatures were linked to growing pressures on agriculture, from heat-stressed cattle to increased

irrigation costs and impacts on wine production. Many highlighted how these climate changes are becoming harder to manage alongside rising living costs, especially for renters and people unable to modify their homes.

Outcomes

Through the conversations, participants deepened their understanding of local climate impacts, shared adaptations already working well, identified gaps needing attention and generated practical ideas for next steps.

Across all sessions, participants reinforced that the Burnett Inland's resilience depends on:

- Stronger interpersonal networks
- Respect for local expertise
- Practical, low-tech communication
- Community-led initiatives
- Climate conversations grounded in lived experience rather than politics

An overarching insight: climate resilience in the Burnett Inland will succeed when it is locally driven, relational, and grounded in the everyday realities of the people who live there.

Based on these initial conversation resources were developed by Sweltering Cities to support community members and organisations in continuing these conversations and working towards impactful solutions. The resources include guides to support engagement in climate related data, community conversations prompts and facilitation tips.

Links

Resources developed by Sweltering Cities can be found on the [DR:FR Burnett Inland Resources Hub](#).

To learn more about Sweltering Cities visit: <https://swelteringcities.org>

DR:FR Burnett Inland Resources Hub

<https://frrr.org.au/reports/impact-reports/dfr-qld-hub>

Appendix A:

Community workshops and activities were progressively introduced during the DR:FR initiative, to place the program in the local context, understand the community, local environment and the climate & natural disaster risks, to enable the community to develop and prioritise actions to strengthen their resilience to climate and disaster impacts. This diagram outlines the workshop topics and objectives.



Prepare

Introduce the DR:FR initiative, explain the timeframe and process, build a group of local community members willing to engage with the DR:FR process to consider ways of building community resilience to climate risks and disasters.



People

Understand the makeup of the community, map different groups, connections, decision makers, and networks, explore community dynamics through the resilience dimensions, understand changes in community composition (e.g. seasonal workers, transient population, new residents) and consider groups or individuals who might be particularly vulnerable in a disaster.



Place

Explore the physical extent of the community, as understood by the community, consider the local context of natural and built environment, understand what community critical assets exist, how they are accessed and used, understand natural hazards, climate risks and future challenges.

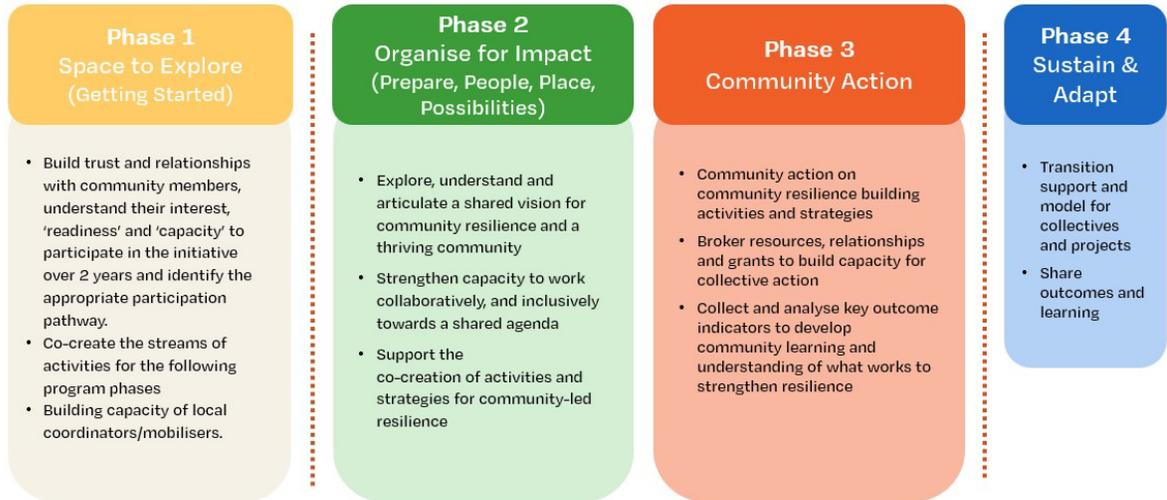


Possibilities

Generate and develop ideas for initiatives to strengthen community resilience, understanding community capacity and using the resilience dimensions to test and prioritise for action.

Appendix B: DR:FR Program Framework

Disaster Resilient : Future Ready Where do communities start and how does it work? (The Phases)



Phase 2. Organise for Impact and Phase 3. Community Action Community Engagement and Activity

Throughout the project and more intensively through these phases, FRRR works directly or through partners/facilitators with community members and local organisations, supporting them to develop and activate strategic initiatives that enhance community resilience and disaster preparedness by:

- connecting people and organisations, understanding their community and building local capacity to work together.
- building awareness of climate risks, disaster impacts and vulnerabilities.
- Increasing knowledge of resilience principles and how they are applied.
- identifying opportunities and developing ideas for community-led action.
- making decisions and implementing actions prioritized by the community.

