



Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership

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Thriving Kids in Disasters

FULL REPORT

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands upon which we live and work, and their continuing connection to land and sea, kin, culture and community. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and to First Nations colleagues.

We are privileged to welcome and grow our children and support our families in these places.

We also acknowledge the First Nations leaders, advocates and organisations that have fought for children and their families, and the resulting consequences of adversity and trauma over generations.

We acknowledge the resilience, determination, leadership, generosity and innovation of First Nations peoples, and we recognise the value inherent in Indigenous ways of 'knowing, being and doing'.



Acknowledgement of Collaborators

Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP) would like to acknowledge the contributions of young people, communities, collaborators and investment partners involved in the Thriving Kids in Disasters (TKiD) project. We give our thanks and appreciation for the time, knowledge and resources shared to bring together these important insights.



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every child thriving
aracy

- Emerging Minds
- UNICEF Australia
- Royal Far West
- ROBSET Consultancy
- Queensland Centre for Perinatal Infant Mental Health, Children's Health Queensland
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Service
- Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts – Community Recovery Branch
- Queensland Reconstruction Authority – Get Ready Queensland
- Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Queensland Department of Education
- Head to Health Brisbane
- Southern Downs Regional Council
- Ipswich City Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Adelaide Hills Council
- Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarra Ranges Council
- Community Plus, Yeronga Community Centre
- Laidley Community Centre
- BUSHkids
- Centacare FNQ
- Red Cross Australia
- Outback Futures
- yourtown
- MacKillop Seasons
- Creative Recovery Network
- Headspace Capalaba, Wesley Mission Australia
- Pathways to Resilience
- 54 Reasons
- Act for Kids
- Benevolent Society
- Australian Breastfeeding Association
- Nikki Trigell Consulting
- Leadrrr
- Blue Gum TV
- CQUniversity
- Queensland University of Technology
- University of Queensland
- University of Western Sydney
- University of Melbourne
- Australian National University
- RACQ
- Red Earth Community Foundation



Méilla, 16, observes floodwaters near her home in Cairns, wet season 2024

Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership and the Country Collaborative

Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP) is a Queensland-based intermediary and relationships broker focused on systems change for the benefit of children and youth. Instigated and hosted by ARACY - Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, TQKP brings together a cross-sectoral coalition of Queensland leaders, organisations, practitioners, and collaborators working together with the shared purpose of improving the conditions for Queensland children and young people to thrive. We do this by influencing six key levers to catalyse and achieve lasting change at a systems level.

While most Queensland children and young people are doing well, too many aren't currently thriving due to adverse life experiences and lack of access to the resources they need. Our systems have historically not been sufficiently geared or connected to provide the right opportunities or supports, at the right time, and in the right way. This contributes to enduring inequality and poor outcomes for too many people, which affects all of us.

TQKP works through strategically planned initiatives to help 'weave systems together' and 'amplify the value and impact' of the philanthropic, not-for profit, government, and university sectors. Collectively, we work to change systems so that all Queensland children, youth, families, and communities can thrive. TQKP's method is grounded in

ARACY's evidence-based model, The Nest child and youth wellbeing outcomes framework, and the Harvard Center on the Developing Child's Three Principles.

The Country Collaborative is a TQKP initiative drawing together collaborators spanning sectors such as education, early childhood, workforce, regional community development, health, wellbeing and the arts across rural, regional and remote Queensland and, for the purposes of this project, agencies involved in disaster management in Queensland.

Thriving Kids in Disasters project team

- **Michael Hogan:** Convenor, TQKP
- **Jacinta Perry:** Partnership Officer, Country Collaborative and TKiD lead
- **Anita Egginton:** Project Officer, TKiD
- **Kristie-Lee Alfrey:** Project Research Assistant, TKiD

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Foreword



Ryan Salle

Youth Participant, QFCC Youth Summit, passionate climate advocate

Growing up in Queensland can be a journey marked by any number of challenges – and natural disasters are prominent amongst them. Our natural environment can be wild and unforgiving, with significant and largely unique impacts on Queensland kids. Recognising this reality, it is critical that our disaster management approaches are shaped at all stages with due consideration to young Queenslanders' needs, and ultimately, foster the resilience needed to minimise disasters' disruptive impacts on childhood development.

Important to that process is the facilitation of youth agency. At all opportunities, making space for youth voice, utilising youth inputs and allowing young people to contribute to decision-making serves everyone well. Young people's experience is highly valuable, and not only does youth agency lead to best policies, it provides a crucial sense of control in the face of adversity, autonomy over the decisions which affect us, and in turn, hope for the future.

As with most modern challenges, the implications of climate change on disaster management are also essential to consider. Climate change presents immense threats, not just to young Queenslanders' futures but to our present day. We are watching live as floods, fires, storms and

droughts intensify across our state, and their impacts on Queensland kids worsen and spread.

Mitigation through climate action now holds a place of unprecedented importance, crucial in averting a chaotic future environment that even our best disaster management cannot temper. Young people continue to call out for urgent, decisive and far-reaching climate action because we are acutely aware of the world we face without it. And until those calls are heeded, our overarching approach to disaster management simply will not be meeting the needs of disaster-affected Queensland kids.

The needs of young Queenslanders are always diverse, unique and complex, and this is no less true in the face of disasters. But fulfilling them is a challenge which can be met, with the right focus and the will to act. A concerted effort is required across all levels of Queensland society, and crucially, from the decision-makers at the top. Young Queenslanders rely on our state's leadership to act, by seizing opportunities like those presented in this report and pursuing them with real commitment, recognising their necessity.

We are counting on you to ensure that disaster-affected Queensland kids grow up in environments in which they can truly thrive.



Lea-Anne Bradley

CEO
The John Villiers Trust

The John Villiers Trust (JVT) is pleased to support the Thriving Kids in Disasters (TKiD) project.

JVT is a proud partner of the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership, and the Country Collaborative, which serve to bring together philanthropic, government, higher education and community organisations to create long-term, meaningful systems change for children and young people in Queensland.

We recognise that our rural, regional, and remote communities in Queensland are frequently impacted by disasters, and our state's dispersed population and vast geography adds a level of complexity and cost to the effective and efficient delivery of support.

We also know that children and young people are affected in unique and significant ways when a disaster strikes. Many such impacts are only identified in the longer term yet could be minimised if addressed early. However, as this report highlights, our current disaster systems do not adequately consider or address the needs of children, young people and their caregivers.

Currently, philanthropy is most often activated only when a disaster occurs, and in the immediate aftermath, but we know there needs to be a broader view. This is why the work of TKiD in scoping the strengths and weaknesses of the current disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery systems is so crucial. It provides an opportunity for the philanthropic sector to come together, along with government and community organisations, to

delve deeper into how we can thoughtfully and strategically support our communities and our children before disasters strike.

Beyond tailoring a child and youth-specific response when a disaster happens, we need to build resilience into disaster planning and preparedness, ensuring young people are engaged and heard in the process. It is up to us to be ready and able to be there for children and young people – particularly those in country Queensland – well into the future.

JVT is here to support work and ideas that seed long-term meaningful change. We love country Queensland and we believe the future of its communities is in the hands of young people. This is where great change starts.

Together, we can partner and collaborate to drive community-led solutions that have deep and multiple impacts and focus on prevention and early intervention. We are delighted to see the engagement and recognition from so many stakeholders who have contributed to this work to date, and the interest shown by other philanthropic organisations who recognise the opportunity to collaborate for increased impact on this important initiative.



Michael Hogan

Convenor Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership

A cascade of bushfires, floods, cyclones, and storms in the summer of 2023/24 has again disrupted the lives and challenged the resilience and wellbeing of many Queenslanders. Climate scientists are clear we must be better prepared to face ever-increasing extreme weather events like these. As UNICEF Australia has stated, 'climate change is changing childhoods'.

Also clear is that kids are disproportionately impacted by, but often invisible in, disaster management settings, despite the best efforts of those involved. Overall, Queensland is extraordinarily good - through plenty of practice and learnings over decades - at disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Putting a greater focus on child wellbeing and resilience is an opportunity and priority for us to be even better.

Disasters disrupt kids' relationships, environments, learning and development, health, culture and identity – all of which we know are critical enablers for wellbeing. We are hearing directly from young people how concerning the threat of increasing extreme weather events and climate change is to them. And how important it is that their concerns are heard, and their capabilities recognised in solution making and action taking.

In partnership with The John Villiers Trust, TQKP has engaged key stakeholders from across Queensland and beyond to consider how we might better equip and steward our systems to meet these needs via the Thriving Kids in Disasters (TKiD) project.

The aim of this collaborative coalition is to surface strategic

insights about what we already know and do to support kids' resilience and wellbeing across the four phases of disaster management, and what we need to amplify and do better for kids now, and into the future. ARACY's The Nest and TQKP's Six Systems Levers have been used to structure child-centred evidence - and practice-informed discussions, findings, and recommendations.

TKiD has focused on ways to improve capabilities and capacities for collective leadership and systems stewardship, learning and doing together, and laying foundations for further development of disaster management policies, programs, and practices in Qld that will help our kids thrive.

This report offers a coherent, clear and compelling suite of practical propositions for people at the coalface, systems leaders, and existing and potential investment partners. We know that together we can foster the resilience of Queensland kids, families and communities in the face of disasters and create conditions for every child to thrive.

Convenor, Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership

Executive Summary



Why we need a focus on kids in disasters

What surrounds us and happens to us shapes us. In order to thrive, 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, related disasters and health and wellbeing issues. These events are increasing in frequency and severity and are compounded by an array of other issues impacting the abilities of individuals, families, communities, social and environmental systems to cope and adapt to changing circumstances.

Worldwide, kids are recognised as one of the population groups most affected by disaster events, with an estimated one billion at extreme risk of experiencing negative impacts. Current evidence shows that increased and cumulative exposure to adversity stemming from disaster experiences can undermine wellbeing and overwhelm the resilience of kids. Further, disaster related adversities can threaten the long-term health and wellbeing of kids across the lifespan, due to the disruption of nurturing development environments at critical stages of neurobiological development.

Disasters present a key threat to every child's right to life and development, making it essential that kids are recognised as distinct and unique stakeholders in disaster management (DM). In Queensland, this is especially pertinent, as our extreme disaster risk profile puts kids at considerably greater risk. Gearing our systems in Queensland to better recognise and support kids in disasters will require a range of systems level changes and investments, including those outlined in this report.

What is TKiD

Thriving Kids in Disasters (TKiD) is an initiative of the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership's (TQKP) Country Collaborative and The John Villiers Trust (JVT). TKiD has brought together stakeholders from a variety of sectors, organisations, and locations to join a collaborative coalition aimed at uplifting Queensland DM system capabilities to support Queensland kids. Together we have built an evidence base from existing literature, two discovery workshops, and 27 stakeholder interviews and discussions to understand how current DM arrangements support the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children, and young people; and the types of systems-level opportunities available to improve our current approach.

TQKP used two evidence-based frameworks to organise our findings:

- 1. Australia's child and youth wellbeing framework, ARACY's The Nest
- 2. TQKP's Six System Levers outlined by the ANZSOG & Every Child joint project on Systems Leadership for Child and Youth Wellbeing.

We considered the desirability, feasibility, and viability of the range of opportunities identified in the project to produce a series of principles and recommendations that support kids' resilience and wellbeing across the four phases of disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (PPRR) in Queensland.

What we've discovered

A review of the literature details the impacts of adverse childhood experiences, entrenched disadvantage and trauma on health, development, learning, behaviour, and relationships across the life-course including those related to disaster experiences. It is well understood that the significant disruptions caused by disasters threaten the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children, and young people in different ways. Their ability 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.

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.



We know that healthy kids have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met, and 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
- opportunities are 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.

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

- such 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.

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

At the coalface of DM, there are common themes that provide an important context for any analysis and recommendations for systems-level changes. DM systems are currently grappling with the increased occurrence and intensity of events – compounding, cascading,

overlapping – stemming from climate change and resulting in systemic pressures. It is also clear that, despite the formal, centralised, and highly structured nature of DM, the particular context of disasters requires close attention, as the specifics of the event, timing, scale, impact, community, capacity, surrounding DM and political environments and resource availability challenge one-size-fits-all approaches.

In a resource constrained environment, DM operators feel they are expected 'to do more with less', and so although the impacts of disasters compound other challenges and hardships, systems and operators are not always attuned to or designed to support people and locations in these situations. TKiD has found that although there are some good practice examples in Queensland, specialised infant, child, youth and family services and operators are not consistently involved in or invited to contribute to DM. This is often considered to be the case because while the resilience and wellbeing of kids and their families "comes up on occasion" it is not the core business or specialisation of DM.

- Concerted leadership across systems is an essential ingredient in achieving quality outcomes for kids, particularly in complex environments involving multiple agencies and levels of government like DM. We know that supporting the resilience and wellbeing of kids and their families across disaster PPRR requires prioritisation and focus, which will come from political support at all levels, clear governance, shared mission and language, and cross-sectoral collaboration. It requires long-term commitment from a wide range of stakeholders to mitigate the risks and harms of disasters and to act on opportunities to "build back better" using a contextually informed, locally led approach.
- Kids' resilience and wellbeing requires place based, flexible, long-term, smarter investment in a multi-faceted service system to respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of kids and their families in DM and beyond. These systems should be informed by and add to a robust evidence base, incorporate universal, secondary, and tertiary supports, cultivate innovation, and produce value across sectors, time, and place. Investment should be well coordinated and come from a range of sources including government and philanthropic granting and community fundraising. Evidence shows that participatory granting suits locally led resilience building approaches to DM and is a way of prioritising and signalling where investment is needed the most.

- Reducing risks, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters is everyone's business and depends heavily on an engaged public. Sharing information, knowledge, decision-making, leadership, and action requires socially and culturally responsive relationship building and communication efforts by DM authorities and operators and a willingness from local people to share responsibility. Relationship building efforts by DM operators and agencies require respect for local leadership and knowledge and engagement with community members as genuine partners across PPRR. Evidence shows that kids are often invisible in the DM space and seen as dependents, rather than as distinct stakeholders. It is critical that this thinking shifts, and that kids from all age groups are engaged to contribute their perspectives, knowledge, and capabilities.
- Workforce development is critical to provide people in the DM setting with the right skills and supports to do their jobs well and protect their health and wellbeing. These supports ensure that professional and volunteer workforces are well prepared to support the infants, children, and young people they interact with. Workforce development that recognises the need for greater disaster resilience-orientation can connect fragmented actors and professions around the challenge of building resilient communities (people and places) and is particularly pertinent in DM. Where possible, it is important that infant, child and youth centred training activities are recognised by, promoted through, and incorporated into the Queensland DM system, including the Queensland DM Training Framework and Exercise Support Network.
- Integrated delivery in disasters is best achieved via well networked service sectors, DM agencies and communities. This includes the strengthening of interagency networks in place, relationships with temporary DM stakeholders and engagement with local community members. Approaches that harness community assets and relationships through prevention and preparedness activities support more effective and coordinated disaster response and recovery. These can be achieved through better coordination and resourcing of resilience building initiatives and greater prioritisation of the needs of specific groups of people in disasters, including kids.
- To put data and learning to work, opportunities to improve collection and use of information relevant to kids' needs in disasters must be identified and acted on. As a system there is a need to ensure that relevant data is collected and used to monitor and evaluate program efficacy and impact, and importantly, to improve service provision and outcomes achieved with kids and their families. It is critical that investment activities are driven by robust evidence, outcomes and shared measurement, which requires concerted leadership and trusting relationships to enable a collaborative approach to learning, acting, and measuring – creating a learning system underpinned by viable conditions for research. Greater investment in research that provides evidence of how DM programs support the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children, young people, and their families is needed and welcomed in Queensland and nationally.



Principles and recommendations

Three overarching principles have been identified and underpin a series of recommendations concerning how we might better gear our systems to support the resilience and wellbeing of kids in disasters.

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 and capabilities across their life stages. Their voices and perspectives are incorporated, and their agency and knowledge harnessed in age-appropriate ways across all phases of DM.
3. DM 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.

The Nest provides a foundation to collectively consider the needs of kids in disasters and how we might cultivate healthy developmental environments across six interconnected domains of wellbeing, in the wider context of PPRR.

The TQKP Systems Levers offer a framework for recommendations that foster adaptive, coordinated, and high functioning systems capable of supporting the resilience and wellbeing of kids. Together, these principles and recommendations provide a series of meaningful actions to improve outcomes for kids in disasters and create conditions for kids to thrive.

Introduction



Climate change is changing childhood. It is existent and it is present. We know that a child born in Australia in 2020, will experience four times as many heat waves, three times as many droughts and 1.5 times as many bushfires as those born in 1960.

Nicole Breeze, Chief Advocate for Children, UNICEF Australia, TKiD 1 Panel

Why we need a focus on kids in disasters

Our development, wellbeing and resilience results from the complex interplay of biological, psychological, social, institutional, ecological and systems factors, as well as the impacts of trauma and adversity (1).

For kids to thrive, they need healthy developmental environments where their needs are met and their wellbeing is prioritised. Disasters resulting from natural hazards, such as floods, cyclones, bushfires, droughts and heatwaves, are increasing over time, in both severity and frequency, presenting complex circumstances, emerging threats and systemic challenges to the resilience and wellbeing of people, communities and environments globally (2). Specifically, increased incidence of disasters has placed additional pressures on systems to cope and adapt in the face of the escalating and compounding impacts. Current child development research and neuroscience confirms that what surrounds us and happens to us shapes us. This positions escalating disaster events as a key threat to the cultivation of safe and healthy developmental environments for kids.

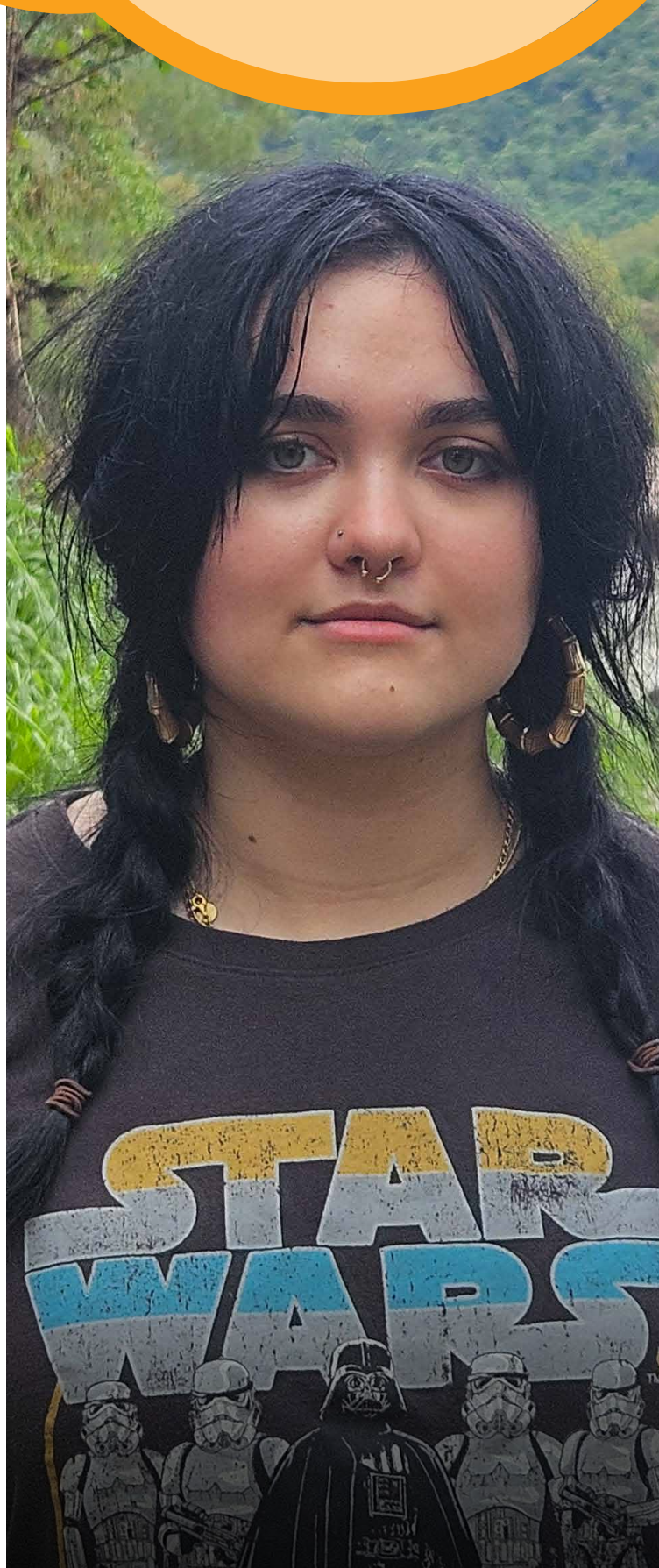
Worldwide, kids are recognised as the population group most affected by disaster events, with an estimated one billion at extreme risk of experiencing negative impacts because of climate change and associated disasters (3).

On a global scale, Australia's risk profile is considered 'very high' and is currently ranked at 22nd of 193 UN member states according to World Risk Index data (4). Further, of all Australian states and territories, Queensland is the most prone to disasters, having experienced over 97 significant events since 2011 (5).

Increased and cumulative exposure to adversity stemming from disaster experiences carries significant potential to overwhelm the resilience of kids, the impacts of which can disrupt critical development processes and echo across the lifespan. Given the unique needs of kids and their higher susceptibility to the ill-effects of disasters, it is important that they are heard and heeded as distinct stakeholders in disaster management (DM) arrangements and the systems that enact them.

Queensland has highly regarded and mature DM arrangements, including its good practice in relation to community recovery and disaster preparedness. Significant work has or is being undertaken in disaster contexts focused on infants, children and young people at a national level and in other jurisdictions¹, but not yet systematically in the Queensland context.

¹ Emerging Minds, NICDAC, UNICEF Australia, Royal Far West Childrens Service, and the Australian Red Cross





Thriving Kids in Disasters – Overview

Thriving Kids in Disasters (TKiD) contributes a Queensland based analysis of strengths and opportunities for improvement of current and future capabilities of DM systems as they relate to Queensland kids. By bringing together current research with stakeholder insights, TKiD offers a number of principles and systems-level recommendations to better support kids' resilience and wellbeing through disaster PPRR in Queensland.

TKiD draws on findings from growing science and burgeoning evidence about the general incidence and impacts of adverse childhood experiences, entrenched disadvantage and impacts of trauma on health, development, learning, behaviour and relationships across the life-course and as a result of disaster experiences. Additional insights are gleaned from current evidence and best practice concerning child development, resilience and wellbeing, with consideration given to how this relates to disaster resilience and what this means for the resourcing and governance of systems supporting kids.

In particular, TKiD draws on:

- A systems lens of levers and threads
- Australia's child and youth wellbeing framework, [ARACY's The Nest](#)
- Recent evidence in relation to operationalising resilience and wellbeing frames and tools from the University of

Queensland's [Institute for Social Science Research](#)

- TQKP's collaborations with the [Harvard Center on the Developing Child](#) and [Alberta Family Wellness Initiative](#)
- Kids in disasters related work occurring at a national level under the stewardship of [Emerging Minds](#)

Objectives

TKiD aims to provide:

- (i) clarity** around the strengths and opportunities for improvement within current Queensland disaster management arrangements to better support the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children and young people; and
- (ii) direction** to organisers, funders and policy makers via a series of evidence-informed recommendations that will better gear our disaster management systems to create positive impact for kids and families now and into the future.

Research Question

What are the strengths and opportunities for improvement in disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery arrangements for infants, children, young people, and their families in Queensland?

TKiD Framework

ARACY's The Nest (6) and the TQKP Systems Levers (7) – were selected as organising mechanisms and sensemaking tools to answer TKiD's research question.

The Nest – to understand kids' needs in disasters (Figure 1).

Australia's Child and Youth Wellbeing framework, The Nest (6) was used to understand what kids need in disasters to support resilience and wellbeing. Developed by the [Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth](#) (ARACY) in consultation with over 4000 children, young people and caregivers, The Nest relates to kids aged 0 – 24 years. This framework has been utilised across a broad range of applications including strategic development, community consultation, data collection and as a practitioner assessment tool. The six interconnected Domains of Wellbeing that form The Nest provide a sense making system that enables engagement with complex and interconnected themes and fosters a 'whole child' understanding of kids in disasters. These domains are: valued, loved and safe; healthy; participating; identity and culture; material basics; and learning. The Nest situates children at the centre of all efforts to enact positive change and therefore forms the heart of the TKiD framework.

TQKP Systems Levers - To understand how we might better gear our systems to support kids' resilience and wellbeing (Figure 2)

The TQKP Systems Levers were selected to understand how we might better gear our DM systems in Queensland to support kids' resilience and wellbeing.

This framework grew out of research undertaken by ANZSOG and the Every Child Coalition (7) that engaged systems leaders across government, community, philanthropy and tertiary sectors to consider systems enablers capable of shifting entrenched problems and enacting positive solutions to create conditions for every child to thrive, now and into the future.

The compounding, multifaceted and life-threatening nature of disasters means that siloed and programmatic responses are insufficient to prevent and address the risks they present to the wellbeing of kids. This necessitates approaches that adequately address the interconnectivity, feedback loops and emergent properties that characterise disaster contexts for children, families, communities, organisations and wider systems and that work to better align and integrate efforts to mitigate negative impacts. The six interrelated levers that underpin a systems approach to wellbeing, are: Concerted leadership; Smarter Investment; Engaged Public; Stronger Workforces; Integrated Delivery; and Putting Data and Learning to Work.

We have integrated The Nest and the Systems Levers in the context of the four phases of disaster management (PPRR) to create a conceptual framework for TKiD (Figure 3).



Figure 1. The Nest – to understand kids' needs in disasters



Figure 2. TQKP Systems Levers – to understand how we might better gear our systems to support kids' resilience and wellbeing

Methodology

Creating a Collaborative Coalition

To foster a multi-systems, interdisciplinary approach with a statewide scope, TQKP drew together representatives with expertise in DM and infant, child, and youth resilience and wellbeing across a variety of sectors and locations. Stakeholder engagement was conducted via a snowballing methodology. Early critical friends were identified to test the value proposition of TKiD and these collaborators were then invited to share the project with their networks and connect TQKP staff with other relevant stakeholders to contribute expertise.

TKiD collaborators included leaders, practitioners and researchers from organisations across Queensland and Australia encompassing:

Organisations such as

- 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

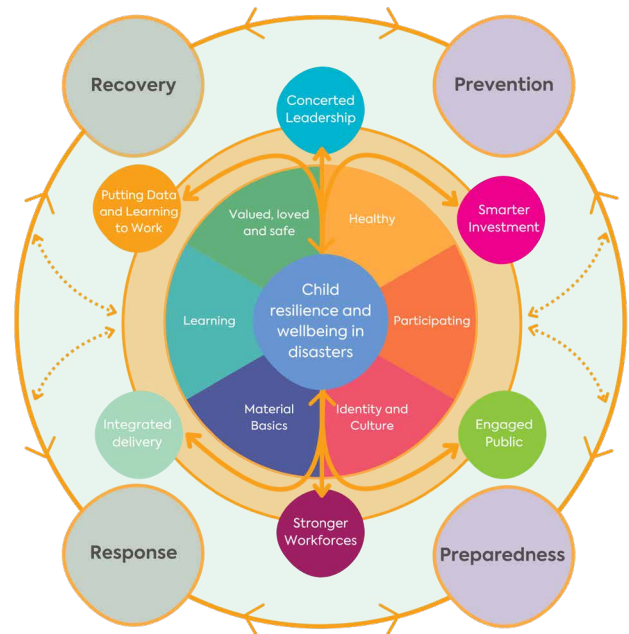


Figure 3. TKiD's conceptual framework

Building an Evidence Base

To build the evidence base, TKiD drew on the collective insights of collaborators via discovery workshops, interviews, and discussions. Learnings were also derived from existing frameworks, strategies, academic and grey literature across Queensland, Australia and internationally. This data was thematically analysed using The Nest, to understand infant, child and youth resilience and wellbeing needs in disasters, and the TQKP Systems Levers, to identify systemic strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to improve current arrangements.





TKiD collaborators at workshop 1

Discovery Workshops

TQKP conducted two discovery workshops, one in February and one in March 2024 aimed at:

- Mapping disaster arrangements and activities related to the resilience and wellbeing of kids and families in Queensland
- Learning from national initiatives and experiences in other jurisdictions
- Developing an understanding of strengths, and opportunities for improvement within current arrangements
- Identifying impactful systems interventions and viable implementation pathways.

Workshops were held in hybrid format to maximise engagement opportunity for national stakeholders, those joining from rural, regional and remote communities and collaborators with caring responsibilities and accessibility needs.

Workshop 1

Workshop 1 comprised a panel discussion to provide an overview of current national knowledge followed by consultation with 41 stakeholders to consider kids' resilience and wellbeing in disasters.

During two breakout sessions, collaborators were asked:

1. How are our systems currently acknowledging and supporting the resilience and wellbeing of kids?
2. What are the opportunities for improving the way our systems currently acknowledge and support the resilience and wellbeing of kids:
 - Across the different domains of The Nest?
 - Across the different phases of DM (PPRR) in Queensland?

Panellists

Michelle Roberts

- Director, ROBSET Consultancy
- Former Director, Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network, Australian National University

Nicole Breeze

- Chief Advocate for Children, UNICEF Australia

Swetlana Jankowiak

- Deputy Head, Community Recovery, Royal Far West

Ruby Awram

- Child Mental Health Advisor, Disasters and Climate, Emerging Minds

Workshop 2

In workshop 2, 29 collaborators were provided an overview of early themes and findings to guide and build on learnings.

During two break-out sessions, collaborators were asked how we might better gear our DM systems in Queensland to support the resilience and wellbeing of kids, specifically:

1. Given what we know, how might we better gear our DM systems in Queensland to support the resilience and wellbeing of kids?
 - How do the key themes (strengths/opportunities/gaps) we've identified across PPRR relate to the six systems levers?
 - What is getting in the way of us getting more of what we want to support the resilience and wellbeing of kids and their caregivers in DM in Queensland (challenges/threats)?



2. Given what we know, how might we better gear our DM systems in Queensland to support the resilience and wellbeing of kids and their caregivers?

- At a systems-level, what would enable us to overcome challenges/threats and get more of what we want across PPRR phases?
- Are there specific areas of action for priority investment?

Stakeholder interviews and discussions

TQKP formally interviewed nine people and then had in-depth discussions with a further eighteen people with experience in disaster activations from communities across Queensland. Interviewees included emergency services executives, local DM group chairs, frontline DM staff, local elders and place based organisational leaders and practitioners. These discussions happened one-to-one and in groups, via MS Teams, phone, and in person and ranged in duration from 60 to 90 minutes.

These contacts took place in March 2024 and aimed to:

- Understand people's roles and experiences in supporting the resilience and wellbeing of kids and families in DM in Queensland
- Understand the strengths and opportunities for improvement of current arrangements and practices across PPRR
- Identify impactful systems interventions and viable implementation pathways.

Interviewees were asked questions that considered:

- In what ways the disaster system is working to support the resilience and wellbeing of kids and families?
- What has worked well in those situations?
- What hasn't worked well in those situations?
- What would have improved this?

Literature and Desktop Evidence Review

A literature review was undertaken in parallel with stakeholder consultation to explore project themes in depth and to consider insights from existing academic research, grey literature and comparable projects. Academic databases known to house relevant disaster-related journals (e.g., Emcare, SafetyHub, etc.) were systematically searched with keywords such as 'disaster', 'kids OR children OR youth OR young people' and 'Australia OR Queensland'.

Search result titles were then evaluated for direct or indirect relevance and subsequent inclusion in the review. Additionally, relevant academic sources found during the review process, and legislative and policy frameworks, practices and guidelines that comprise Queensland's DM arrangements, were also included in the review and results synthesis.

Making Recommendations

The TKiD evidence base was used to inform a range of recommendations for systems-level investments and improvements across DM in Queensland to support the resilience and wellbeing of kids and their families.

The recommendations outlined consider the relevance and impact of identified strategies to intended TKiD audiences, which include policy makers, funders and service organisational leaders and practitioners. Specifically, this approach considers the desirability, feasibility and viability of recommendations developed via TKiD workshops and interviews, along with insights drawn from literature (8-10).

Desirability

Is it wanted?

- Was this idea generated/validated by the Queensland child, youth, families and DM eco-system(s)?

Feasibility

Is it achievable?

- Can it be done?
- Are the resources necessary to achieve this available?
- Does it comply with policy and legal constraints?

Viability

Will it yield a positive and significant impact?

- Is it scalable?
- Is it replicable?
- Is it applicable and readily tailored across a variety of contexts?
- Will it result in systemic shifts?

Current DM Arrangements

Queensland has experienced more than 97 significant natural disasters since 2011, with Commonwealth and State recovery and reconstruction efforts associated with these events exceeding \$20 billion (5). Given this risk profile, and the disproportionate impact that disasters can have on infants, children and young people, it is important to understand how current arrangements recognise and support kids and their families.

Policy frameworks

DM in Queensland is influenced by a complex system of cascading and intersecting agreements, laws, frameworks, policies, guidelines, formal and informal operations and relationships from the international to the local level.

Australia is a signatory to several international agreements that influence our all-hazards, comprehensive approach to DM. This includes the United Nations (UN) [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction \(2\)](#), the UN [Sustainable Development Goals \(11\)](#), and the UN [Paris Climate Agreement](#). All these agreements centre on the wicked problem of human-induced climate change on the earth's systems and inhabitants. Intersecting with rapid population growth and urbanisation in countries like

Australia, the agreements urge signatory countries to actively engage their citizenry to take preventative action to reduce risks and build resilience.

These agreements provide a broad direction underpinned by a common set of values that are operationalised through a suite of national crisis management, disaster resilience, risk reduction, and recovery frameworks and guidelines. For example, the Australian Government has national coordination arrangements (not laws) for emergencies and disasters, provided for in 2011 through the [National Strategy for Disaster Resilience \(12\)](#), the [Australian Government Crisis Management Framework \(13\)](#), the [Australian Emergency Management Arrangements \(14\)](#), and the [Australian Disaster Recovery Framework \(15\)](#).

All Australian states and territories have their own emergency and DM legislation authorising officials to declare emergencies and disasters in nominated circumstances and to make orders to deal with them. International and national agreements and frameworks influence their scope, including in Queensland's [DM Act 2003 \(16\)](#) and [DM Regulation \(17\)](#), and the detailed Queensland DM Arrangements (QDMA) that provide the vehicle for the legislation (Figure 4).

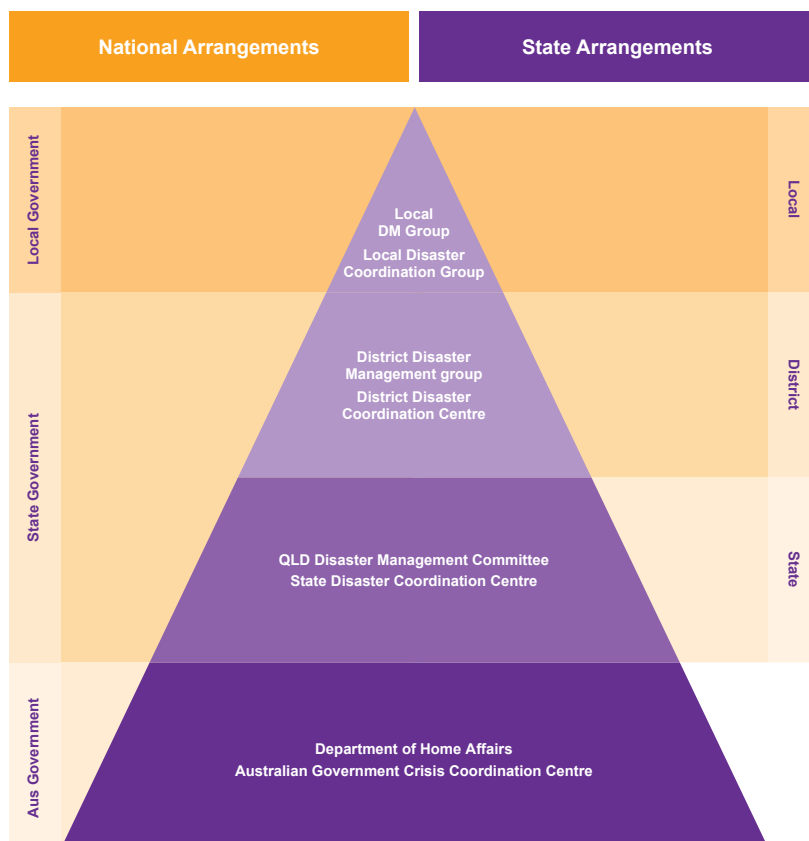


Figure 4 – Queensland's state DM arrangements.
Source: [Queensland PPRR DM Guidelines \(2018\)](#)



DM Process

Local governments – through their respective Local DM Groups (LDMGs) - have primary responsibility to manage a disaster at the community level. Accordingly, they are responsible for the development and implementation of their Local DM Plan (LDMP).

- If local governments identify gaps in their capacity or capability to manage a potential disaster and require additional resources to manage an event, they can request support from their District DM Group (DDMG), led by the Queensland Police Service (QPS).
- If district resources are inadequate or inappropriate, requests for assistance can be passed to the state via the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC).
- If state resources prove inadequate or inappropriate Australian Government support can be sought through the Department of Home Affairs¹.

Key Definitions and Concepts

Disaster	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. Although the Queensland legislation does not include drought as a disaster, the findings and recommendations of this project have considered it a critical part of the context of kids' concerns about and experiences of disasters.
A serious disruption	A serious disruption means: <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Loss of human life, or illness or injury to humans; orb. Widespread or severe property loss or damage; orc. Widespread or severe damage to the environment.
An event	An event means any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. A cyclone, earthquake, flood, storm, storm tide, tornado, tsunami, volcanic eruption, or other natural happeningb. An explosion or fire, a chemical, fuel or oil spill or a gas leakc. An infestation, plague, or epidemic; a failure of, or disruption to, an essential service or infrastructured. An attack against the statee. Another event similar to an event mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (e).
Disaster management	Arrangements to manage the potential adverse effects of an event, including arrangements for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.
All hazards	All Hazards Approach applied to all events caused by natural or human acts or omissions (same functions and activities can be applied to a range of events).
Resilience	In the context of DM, TKiD adopts Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2017 (5) definition of resilience as: A system or community's ability to rapidly accommodate and recover from the impacts of hazards, restore essential structures and desired functionality, and adapt to new circumstances.



New vulnerabilities have emerged, and already marginalised groups are becoming even more vulnerable. The sense that no-one is safe from the impacts of disasters is now pervasive, placing greater demands on the DM sector, volunteers and resources.

(IGEM 2023:24)

Snapshot of QLD DM Arrangements

As shown in Figure 4, the QDMA are organised around a tiered system of DM. The QDMA reinforce the importance of an all-hazards, comprehensive, and locally led approach, featuring shared responsibility and robust engagement, planning and coordination in the interconnected phases of PPRR.

TKiD has paid particular attention to the different knowledge and action associated with each of these four phases, described in legislation in the following ways:

Prevention

In accordance with the guiding principles of the Act, preventative measures reduce the likelihood of a disaster event occurring or the severity of an event should it eventuate.

Prevention is defined as *regulatory and physical measures to ensure that emergencies are prevented, or their effects mitigated, where mitigation is defined as measures taken in advance of a disaster aimed at decreasing or eliminating its impact on society and environment.*

Preparedness

The preparedness and resilience of communities involves all individuals sharing responsibility. Disaster resilience is significantly increased by proactive and coordinated planning and preparation for the protection of life, property, and the environment through an awareness of hazards, associated risks, and local DM arrangements.

Response

The Act defines disaster response as *the taking of appropriate measures to respond to an event, including action taken and measures planned in anticipation of, during, and immediately after an event to ensure that its effects are minimised and that persons affected by the event are given immediate relief and support.*

The aim of response operations is to save lives, protect property and make an affected area safe. Accordingly, response is the operationalisation and implementation of plans and processes, and the organisation of activities to respond to an event and its aftermath.

Recovery

Queensland has adopted the National Principles of Disaster Recovery (18).

Community recovery from disasters can be a complex and often lengthy process, with different communities recovering at different rates. The best outcomes are achieved by ensuring recovery strategies align with community need and are led by the affected community.

- This requires a collaborative, coordinated, adaptable and scalable approach where the responsibility for disaster recovery is shared among all sectors of the community including individuals, families, community groups, businesses, and all levels of government.
- A community-led approach supports the rapid restoration of services essential to human wellbeing and presents an opportunity to build resilience and improve community circumstances and preparedness beyond their pre-disaster status.

Disaster recovery is conceptualised across five interconnected functional areas of recovery including human and social, economic, environmental, built environment, roads and transport.



Also notable for this project is that the QDMA include a formal training framework – the [Queensland DM Training Framework](#) (19). While this framework incorporates a range of priority areas of knowledge and learning, there is currently no focus on understanding or working with kids and families.

Emerging priorities and influences

The recent [state-level review of the QDMA](#) flagged the implications of increasingly complex crisis and disaster environments (20). COVID-19 added new dimensions of vulnerability and complexity, and governments and response agencies are grappling with the implications of climate change, cyber security and *poly crisis* - the simultaneous occurrence of several catastrophic events.

The concept of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) no longer adequately provides an answer to the projected ‘chaos’ of the future, which includes BANI (brittle, anxious, non-linear and incomprehensible) impacts on society (Kraaijenbrink, 2022).

Looking forward, the QDMA will require disaster risk management through adaptive systems and governance that can anticipate and absorb the unfamiliar, provide stability in a complicated world, and leverage new opportunities, networks and partnerships (21).

Reflecting the key recommendations of the Review, the QDMA will be updated to incorporate government interests and actions relating to disaster resilience and risk

reduction. This will result in increased attention to PPRR arrangements and outcomes. The Review also highlighted the need to recognise the knowledge, perspectives, interests, and agency of more diverse stakeholders, including First Nations peoples, groups and communities, and called for meaningful inclusion of diverse voices and person-centred planning for disaster risk reduction (DRR).

These recommendations relate to systems-level changes, which supports the approach taken by TQKP in this project.

Implications for supporting the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children, young people and their families

TQKP has used this important contextual information to inform every part of TKiD, from developing research questions to identifying the people and agencies we need to speak with and making meaning of what we have discovered.

While TQKP has a broad interest and specialist knowledge in supporting the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children, young people, and their families in Queensland, TKiD narrows this interest down and brings this specialist knowledge to the DM setting. This is particularly relevant given the lack of attention to children and young people in the current QDMA. Due to the significant impacts of drought on kids living in rural and remote communities, including their interaction with disaster events like floods and bushfires, droughts are considered within the scope of TKiD.

Literature Review



A disaster resilient community is one that works together to understand and manage the risks that it confronts. Disaster resilience is the collective responsibility of all sectors of society, including all levels of government, business, the non-government sector and individuals. If all these sectors work together with a united focus and a shared sense of responsibility to improve disaster resilience, they will be far more effective than the individual efforts of any one sector.

The Australian Government's adoption of an integrative collective responsibility approach to disaster resilience (12)

Introduction

This section draws upon existing research concerning the impact of disasters on infant, child and youth resilience and wellbeing. Evidence regarding the needs of children and families in disaster contexts is considered, along with key systemic enablers and barriers to enhancing resilience in children, families, communities, and systems, according to The Nest and TQKP Systems Levers.

It is well understood that the significant disruption, threat to safety, property and life that disasters present threaten the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children, young people and adults (22-26). Children are particularly vulnerable to disaster impacts, as their ability to prepare for and cope is limited, along with their capacity to have their physical and emotional needs met autonomously (27-29).

Given these vulnerabilities, the prioritisation of children in DM efforts is crucial. Further, systems change approaches that cultivate high functioning and adaptive supports for children are becoming increasingly important. As the effects of climate change continue to escalate across Queensland (30), we must consider how to best enhance the resilience of children, families, communities, organisations and systems in the context of more frequent, severe and compounding disaster impacts.

Kids in Disasters

Current research demonstrates that while children may have similar needs, there is variation in individual responses to adverse experiences and positive supports (31). In the short term, children's ability to cope with and recover from disaster is supported with the help and care of people around them. While most children navigate the adversity of disaster experiences with relative ease in the long term, there remains a significant number who require additional interventions to support their wellbeing and protect their development (28, 32). Overall, children experience disaster events physically, mentally, educationally, and relationally, within their wider family, community and environmental contexts, and these experiences influence wider developmental processes (6, 22, 26, 33, 34).

From infancy to adolescence and very early adulthood, children's brains and bodies are undergoing significant developmental shifts, which help lay the groundwork for future health and wellbeing. This developmental pathway is shaped, for better or worse, by a complex interplay of environmental supports and stressors, genetic makeup and timing, all of which can influence individual health and wellbeing imminently and into the future. These changes occur as children are learning about their own capabilities and identities, broadening their perceptions and becoming familiar with, and forming attachments to, the people and world around them (35, 36). These important phases of

early brain development can be impacted by the significant stress of disasters and bring about biological changes to brain architecture (37). Because of this, children are particularly susceptible to physical, cognitive, psychosocial, and emotional disruptions during disaster events and at greater risk of chronic trauma responses into adulthood (22, 28, 37, 38).

Developmentally, children's vulnerabilities are also connected to prenatal experience of disaster-related stress, stage of cognitive development and age, disrupted attachment from primary caregivers during disaster, gendered needs, emotional experiences, and perception of disaster (23, 39-43).

Particularly in younger children, cognitive development influences the interpretation of disaster events, often meaning that events are cognitively overstated or fantasied rather than logically reasoned (44-48). This means that younger children may need targeted support to make sense of disaster experiences in developmentally responsive ways.

Children's personal experiences of disaster can have a significant impact on their ability to cope and recover from the event. This might include experiences such as actual or perceived threat to life or safety of children and their loved ones, along with separation and evacuation experience. Specifically, the experience of disconnection from primary caregivers (physical separation or emotional distancing) has been evidenced to increase the risk of disrupted formation of personal and social identity, poor self-efficacy, and future relational attachment. Further, adverse childhood experiences have been shown to have a cumulative effect. That is, the more adverse experiences children are exposed to, the higher the likelihood of chronic and severe trauma responses (28, 39, 40, 49). This places children and families who are already experiencing inequities at increased risk of experiencing poorer outcomes post disasters.

In addition, disasters increase the likelihood of escalating further adverse childhood experiences outside of the actual event. The increased stress experienced before, during

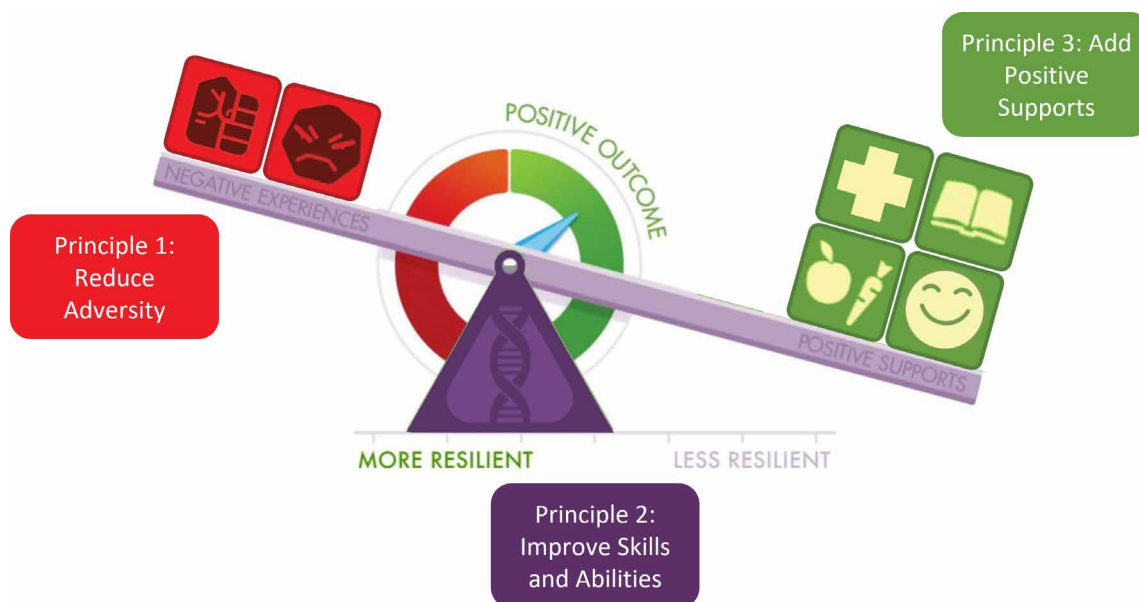


Figure 5 – The Harvard Resilience Scale (56)

and after a disaster has been shown to increase risk of parental substance use and abuse, domestic abuse and violence, and significant potential for family unit disruption or separation (50). Disasters are also likely to increase financial hardship within families (51), further compounding stress and related trauma risks.

These findings echo research on adverse childhood experiences more generally, which demonstrates the potential of trauma occurring at pivotal stages of childhood to hinder developmental trajectories across the lifespan (22, 26, 27).

The risks that disasters pose to the development of children are particularly important in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which cites the right to survival and development as a core guiding principle, along with non-discrimination, acting in the best interests of children and respecting their points of view (52).

Conversely and critically, positive childhood experiences serve a protective function, and evidence in some children of ‘post traumatic growth’ is evident (22, 35, 38). This underscores the importance of DM approaches that foster calm, safety and self efficacy in children, along with the provision of healthy developmental environments outside of disaster events.

Resilience

Disasters place enormous strain on the capacity of children, families, communities, organisations and systems to recover from the widespread disruption and destruction that they cause. The term resilience is used widely across both DM and child wellbeing arenas and refers to the ability of individuals, groups and systems to recover, cope and adapt in the face of adverse experiences. While resilience is an ambiguous concept and not clearly defined in the literature, its intersection between child development and DM research and practice enables us to consider its application across the spectrum of individual, family, community, organisational and systems levels, and understand what this means for the wellbeing of children in disasters.

A recent Queensland based review of resilience science within bio-psycho-ecological frameworks found divergence across definitions and application of the term, however noted that contemporary conceptualisations characterise resilience as a dynamic and context driven process, rather than as a final outcome (53). Within DM literature definitions also vary, but often focus on resilience as a characteristic of communities and systems that is the responsibility of all systems and individuals (54, 55).

The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (56) offers the Resilience Scale (see Figure 5) as a valuable metaphor to enable understanding of how resilience can be nurtured. This scale has been operationalised by the Canada based Alberta Family Wellness Initiative at an individual, family, organisational and systems level, providing a salient example of the applicability of resilience across multiple contexts and systems levels (35). The Resilience Scale metaphor considers the interaction between positive supports and experiences, the strengthening of skills and capabilities, along with the build-up of toxic stress resulting from adversity in fostering resilience. The Resilience Scale represents these elements as:

- **Red Boxes:** Adverse experiences which have the potential to cause toxic stress, such as neglect, physical and psychological violence and disruption and threat to safety caused by disasters.
- **Green boxes:** Positive experiences, relationships and supports that promote health and wellbeing. This might include nurturing caregiver and child relationships, access to material basics and safe and stable home and community environments.
- **Purple Fulcrum:** The initial position of the fulcrum represents core resilience capacity. This position can be influenced by skill and capacity building in individuals, families, communities, and systems to reduce the impact of adverse experiences. By strengthening core skills, the fulcrum can be shifted to reduce the leverage of adverse experiences, therefore fostering a higher level of resilience.

Literature supports the role of developmental timing and individual differences such as neurological and cognitive processing in subsequent resilience outcomes for children experiencing adversity (27, 35, 57). This literature highlights the experiential building and development of young minds, the interactional effects of child-caregiver engagement, the executive functioning and self-regulatory processing of experience, the neurological impact of stress on mental health and wellbeing, and the neurological and behavioural outcomes related to motivation and reward (35, 57). In short, the cognitive experience of disaster and subsequent engagement with caregivers and community guides children's perceptions and emotions surrounding disaster events, which then either elicit feelings of overwhelming stress and helplessness (poor mental wellbeing) or feelings of control and motivation (resilience).

For example, in compounding disaster contexts, the cumulation of negative experiences may outweigh the balance of positive supports; however, cognitive realignment of negative experiences through capacity and psychological skill building can recalibrate the scales to foster resilience in an individual (58, 59). These types of realignment happen through a range of interventions from clinical to community based and highlight the interconnectedness of children's resilience with that of their families, schools, communities, and broader society. For this reason, attention to and investment in the resilience of all these systems is crucial to outcomes for children. This ranges from reducing their exposure to hazards through well-informed planning policies, to building specialised

resilience-oriented surge workforces, and preparing and supporting place-based service organisations to maintain their usual services to children and families and deal with the additional requests for assistance beyond the day to day supports that they deliver in the lead up to, during, and following a disaster (60).

Supporting resilience oriented response and recovery

To support resilience-oriented disaster response and recovery, we can consider Hobfoll's five principles of mass trauma intervention (32, 61) outlined on the next page.

These principles are applicable to children and adults in disaster contexts. For example, active inclusion in disaster planning, response, and recovery activities has been shown as a beneficial risk-focused strategy, sharing knowledge and giving children a sense of safety, calm and efficacy before, during, and after disaster events (27, 62, 63). Asset-focused resilience strategies boost access to resources and strengthen individual, family, and organisational capacity and connectedness (64), while an adaptive systems-focused approach operating at the organisation and systems levels results in child-sensitive policies and practices, including age-appropriate ways for children and young people to participate in DM, building a sense of hope and self-efficacy.

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.



Kids, disasters and developmental environments

Children's disaster experiences exist in wider contexts related to their personal and family circumstances and the communities and systems that surround them. Children need healthy developmental environments to thrive, and we know that exposure to concurrent adversities can result in the cumulation of harmful consequences. This means that children, families and communities who are already experiencing adversity or with prior trauma experiences are disproportionately affected by disaster (54, 65-67). Circumstances such as living with disability, housing insecurity, domestic family violence, financial hardship, interaction with the criminal justice system, and geographical remoteness all present elevated risks for the development of more severe and chronic post disaster development outcomes for children (34, 50, 68).

Personal Context

Child gender and age

At an individual level, the impact of disaster on children is not consistent and 'one size does not fit all' (34). While it is acknowledged that both males and females experience disaster-related vulnerabilities and concerns, gendered differences of disaster impact on both children and adults are evident. Literature suggests that females are more vulnerable to greater risks of emotional insecurity (69) and disaster-related trauma (70, 71), potentially due to females typically being more influenced by emotional and family factors which are heavily impacted during disaster (72). Males also experience vulnerabilities during disaster, however young males are suggested to be more negatively impacted by physical activity and interaction restrictions that accompany disaster-related events (72). Age also presents differences in disaster impact, with literature suggesting younger children are more vulnerable due to their heavier reliance on caregiver interactions and lesser developed cognitive rationalisation of the event (27, 35).

Living with disability

Children living with disability, and the adults who care for them also experience unique disaster vulnerabilities. In a study investigating risks and experiences of the Northern Rivers New South Wales (NSW) flood event of 2017, Bailie et al. (73) reported people with disability and their carers were at increased risk of their homes being flooded and were faced with unavailability of mould-free recovery housing which led to additional negative health and wellbeing impacts. Further, children living with disability (and their carers) often also have experiences of inaccessible, conflicting, and confusing information regarding disaster and evacuation information, and also experience heavily reduced accessibility to essential healthcare and support services (73-75).

Family dynamics and resources

Family dynamics play a role in how children experience disasters (34). For example, pre-existing family trauma that is compounded by disaster experiences carries a greater likelihood of evolving into complex trauma (22). Domestic violence is a well-known concern, with dual implications of

“The built and natural environments that surround children and families are shaped by and deeply rooted in historic and public policies ... that influence where people are able to live and what resources they can access. As a result, levels of exposure to hazards and access to opportunity are not distributed equally. In short, place matters.” (81)

domestic violence functioning as both an existing trauma and an outcome of extreme stress during and following disaster (32, 76-80). Gallagher et al., augment these findings, pointing to incidence of post disaster stress and attachment avoidance between adult couples; suggesting that male partners tend towards isolation and denial, negatively impacting relationship dynamics. This dynamic may also have replicable impacts within broader contexts such as families and communities.

Socio-economic circumstances

Families experiencing poverty are at increased risk of exposure to hazards in disasters and often lack resources needed to materially prepare for and recover from disasters. For example, families under financial stress are more likely to be under-insured and are also more likely to live in hazard prone areas, such as flood plains (68). Further, families on lower incomes face higher difficulty in accessing affordable and suitable housing in tight rental markets squeezed by housing supply issues in disasters (34).

Community Profiles

School resources and resilience

Schools can support and foster children's resilience in disaster settings in many ways. Research on the role of schools highlights their value for children as places of learning about disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness in their local setting as well as potential physical safe refuges during an event (82, 83). In terms of resilience-oriented recovery, schools are also important physical and social places that children are attached to and feel a sense of belonging in, and recent research emphasises the contribution they can make to individuals and groups to make meaning of their disaster experiences (82).

Community resources and resilience

Children's resilience is tied to the resources and resilience of their families, their schools, and their broader communities. Resilient communities have the social, economic and human capital required to effectively nurture the resilience of children and families, and actively support it during times of adversity. This requires strong leadership to instil pride and belonging, and to invest wisely in community assets and other social capital building activities. Resilient communities recognise the complex nature of changes that are surrounding us and focus on reducing risks, strengthening and harnessing assets, and building adaptive capabilities from the individual to systems level. They draw

on the surrounding societal and other higher level supports to benefit children and families in their communities (64).

Rural and remote communities

Children living in rural and remote areas have a significantly higher likelihood of experiencing disaster, with data suggesting a 3.8 to 7.5 times greater risk for children from rural and regional places. This figure jumps to between 7.2 to 16.5 times higher likelihood for children from remote areas (3)

Children from rural, regional and remote communities are also less likely to have timely access to quality supports, and thereby experience greater impacts (34, 62, 70, 84, 85). Geographical isolation presents challenges to disaster preparation, response and recovery activities which require additional funding, resourcing, and timelines to be implemented at the same standard as more centralised locations. This geographical isolation can also heighten social isolation, with less availability for community members to connect and support each other (41, 62, 86, 87). The combination of reduced accessibility and social isolation creates a compounded risk for country children physically, developmentally, and emotionally.

Cultural considerations

Cultural dimensions play an important role in disaster contexts. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages across Queensland are diverse (88, 89), and require approaches that foster cultural safety across all phases of DM. Language accessibility is another important consideration in disaster preparation, evacuation, and recovery communications presented by services external to the affected community (38, 67, 74, 90).

Indigenous Australians, and specifically Indigenous children under ten years of age, who have an existing prevalence of traumatic life events are also evidenced to be at higher risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (70). This includes a higher prevalence of adverse experiences at an individual and family level but is also situated in the context of adversities stemming from systemic racism and the intergenerational impacts of colonisation (91).

Similarly, culturally and linguistically diverse children and families require tailored supports. In particular, children and families from refugee backgrounds may have prior experience of disasters, humanitarian crises and racial and ethnic persecution. The intersection and overlay of these experiences make special consideration of newly arrived families and those with experiences of torture and trauma particularly important (92, 93)

Families, community, and DM leaders should be open to hearing and integrating the unique needs of children into practice, especially in terms of disability, neurodivergence, and cultural factors that are important to address for essential accessibility and respectful, trauma informed practice (63, 74, 75, 94). This includes accessible prevention and preparation information and considered response and recovery activities.

Together, literature addressing cultural considerations within and across disaster contexts presents the need for further understanding of the impact experienced by Indigenous children due to hazardous events on Country, respectful integration of Indigenous knowledge, needs and capabilities, and accessible information that considers linguistic variation within the local community.

Compounding crisis and disasters

As climate change effects escalate, the PPRR phases of DM may become more conflated and less linear, due to compounding impacts. When disaster events occur in succession, children, families and broader communities can be particularly impacted by instability, discontinuity, disconnection and helplessness (59, 66). Instilling a sense of community, safety, and control can work to reduce the negative loading of multiple disasters (59, 66).

Through a systems lens, compounding disasters place additional pressures on services and community infrastructure, as organisations and communities are faced with intersecting impacts and a requirement to adapt and stretch resources to cope with additional and more complex demands. Addressing these emerging issues requires multi-level, cross sectoral and interdisciplinary approaches, grounded in resilience efforts that are place based, grounded in community capacity building and wider risk reduction and prevention focused activities (95).

Systemic Implications

Given the multifaceted contexts that impact children's disaster experiences and outcomes, it is crucial that families, communities, organisations and broader disaster systems can respond adaptively and coordinate effectively. The coordination of individuals, communities and services, along with the presentation of accessible and clear communications is vital to ensuring an integrated and effective DM strategy for all persons impacted, especially children (27). The coordination of organisations and systems is critical to help restore a sense of recovery to optimise children's immediate and long-term wellbeing (54, 65-67, 96).

Awareness of potentially hidden impacts, such as those associated with existing trauma and detrimental family dynamics should also be a priority for communities, organisations, and DM systems. Given the evidence suggesting that connectedness is the most important factor in supporting children's resilience and wellbeing during and after disaster (49, 94), secure family relationships and togetherness should be prioritised and supported (39). This may include identification of discordant family dynamics and offerings of additional support (42), prioritised family-centred allocation of basic needs and housing (94), and/or provision of Mental Health First Aid training for families and communities (29, 97, 98).

It is crucial to understand and acknowledge that children, their families and the communities they live within, have both vulnerabilities and capabilities when it comes to DM. Appropriate support to mitigate vulnerabilities and balance resilience is crucial for Queensland children



“There appears to be a lack of attention to addressing the systemic inequalities that constitute risks to resilience. As well as poverty, racism and colonising practices, other examples include mental health issues, housing and homelessness, substance abuse, and domestic and family violence. Addressing the root causes of disadvantage is not easy but should still be kept in mind when building resilience.” (53)

to feel safe and empowered before, during and after disaster experiences. These findings situate disasters in a wider context whereby the severity and strain of natural hazards can overwhelm available coping and adaptive capacities and shine a light on pre-existing inequalities in communities and systems.

What kids need in disasters – The Nest

In acknowledging and addressing the needs of children in disaster context, current literature illuminates the importance of integrated, and reciprocal relationships, resources and activities that work to support and build resilience for children and their communities. In this section, we frame children’s needs, as suggested by literature, according to the domains of The Nest (6).

Valued, loved and safe

Children experience disasters relationally (39) and the experience of families, parents, and significant adults can play an important role in children’s post disaster development and wellbeing trajectories. In particular, secure and connected family relationships remain one of the most prominent protective factors for children against trauma impacts (28, 98, 99). This highlights caregiver separation in disaster response and recovery timelines as a major concern for children’s wellbeing (28, 39, 40, 49). Separation from primary caregivers during disasters has also been shown to have long lasting effects on attachment security and post-traumatic psychopathology (40). The experience of disconnection from primary caregivers (physical separation or emotional distancing) has been evidenced to increase the risk of diffuse identity formation, poor self-efficacy, and future relational attachment (39, 40). This indicates the importance of family cohesion and connection during and after disaster, for children’s psychosocial development, self-validation, and relationships.

In light of this, protocols for unaccompanied children to be reunited quickly with their loved ones should be prioritised (100).

“The greatest source of danger, unpredictability and uncontrollability for an infant or young child is the absence of a caregiver who reliably and responsively respects and nurtures them.” (22, 101)

Further, parent experience, distress levels and response in disasters has been shown to influence impacts on children. This might include factors such as parent psychopathology, parenting style and broader family functioning (102). Secure community relationships have also been found to provide protection (49). However, when family and community relationships are strained or experienced as dysfunctional, they can conversely act as physical and psychological risk factors in times of heightened stress in disasters (23, 66). Regardless of the relationship, parents,

caregivers and other significant adults (e.g. educators and community members) need individual support so that they may manage their own wellbeing and needs in disasters while also effectively supporting children to feel valued, loved and safe (27, 83, 102). While the need for further research and the development of tailored interventions for parents and significant adults has been identified, several good quality approaches currently exist, including Disaster Recovery Triple P and Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Recovery programs (98, 102).

More recently, Australian disaster arrangements have included a focus on return to educational normality as part of disaster recovery, to address not only children’s need for familiar routine and educational continuity, but also to address parents’ need for return to employment and income generation (3, 27). Fostering this ‘return to normal’ for children, their families and the broader community helps to mitigate some of the most prominent vulnerabilities of a community experiencing disaster (27, 87). This may include the need for developmental and educational continuity, maintained financial income and return to financial status, access to usual community services, continuation of cultural social structure, and reduction of loneliness and isolation (25, 27, 49, 87).

A concern that arises in the absence of secure family dynamics is that of domestic violence. Disaster and domestic violence have a reciprocal impact – domestic violence is exacerbated by the stress of disaster, and the intensity of stress incurred during disaster may lead to violence in the home or family setting (32, 76-79). This presents a major concern when considering children in disasters, as witnessing or experiencing domestic violence or abuse elicits trauma response (70) which, when compounded with disaster related trauma, may lead to long-term complex trauma, relational isolation, and emotional detachment (22, 79). Conversely, we also know that the stress of disaster may act as a ‘tipping point’ for some adults and young people, who then find themselves lashing out at spouses and children (50, 77-79). Literature reflects independent focuses on domestic violence and DM, however, further research and integration is needed to present a full scope of experiences and potential solutions



(50). The recent Gender Emergency Guidelines (79), provide important early insights in this respect. Regardless, the culmination of known literature with relevant focus suggests that early identification and intervention for at-risk families presents a starting point to reduce the potential for domestic violence within families and communities facing disaster (39, 42, 98). Integration of relevant emergency support services to respond to cases of domestic violence within disaster context should also be a primary action for DM (79).

The way that DM systems acknowledge children's capabilities can also contribute to recovery long after the disaster event has occurred. Return to usual routine, education and play is a significant focus for current DM, to provide children with a sense of familiarity and safety (27, 103, 104). Unfortunately, this 'return to usual' approach is not always easy, with many students, parents and other primary caregivers, such as teachers) experiencing overwhelming hypervigilance and anxiety for months following a disaster (34). However, interventions allowing children guided autonomy to explore their own experiences, such as integrated guided narrative therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) within familiar routines at school, has been evidenced to shorten recovery time and improve resilience (58, 83, 98, 105, 106).

Resources such as the [Cognitive Behavioural Intervention for Trauma in Schools](#) (107) and [Birdie's Tree storybooks](#) and videos presented by the [Queensland Centre for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health](#) (58) are also valuable in guiding children and their caregivers through disaster experiences and emotions, in an age-appropriate manner. Rather than simply being expected to return to normal, children have the capacity to explore their own experiences with guidance from trusted teachers and support workers, exert an appropriate level of autonomy while coming to terms with what has happened, address imagined or false memories, rationalise the human response, and consider the logical risk for future natural hazards and disaster events.

Familiarity, inclusion, and continuity are key in allowing children to build trust and feel safe when exploring disaster related ideas and reflections. Hearing and acknowledging the voices of children will allow disaster leaders to better understand the unique needs, experiences, and capabilities of the younger generation, while also allowing children to feel a level of control and autonomy in their own safety and recovery. Particularly in cases where children

have unique cultural, situational, family, or health needs, it is essential that familiarity, inclusion and continuity efforts are presented in an encouraged, accessible and respectful manner.

Healthy

It is widely acknowledged that disaster contexts have a variety of impacts on individual and community level health outcomes. Within current literature, there is a predominant focus on mental health and wellbeing in the recovery and post-disaster timeline. Much of this highlights that mental health and wellbeing concerns can be effectively screened and addressed with relevant supports within the response timeframe, via accessible and integrated support systems. Of particular note, CBT interventions offered individually, via schools, were effective in reducing anxiety and trauma-related psychopathologies and symptoms (38, 83, 99, 105-107). However, despite a compelling evidence base, CBT approaches have had limited standardised uptake across Queensland disaster systems (38).

Post-disaster tele-health and online health interventions were also noted as effective in terms of identifying and addressing mental health concerns in wider community populations (74, 108-110). However, access to such resources may be perceived as a barrier for younger children who may not be familiar with such technology, and for remote communities without stable internet or phone services (32).

Disaster related maternal stress during prenatal development has been linked to increased likelihood of potentially adverse outcomes, including childhood anxiety (111), sleep and attention concerns (112), temperament difficulties (113 2017), competence (114), disrupted cognitive development (115 2017) and development of traits relating to autism spectrum disorder (116). This underscores the importance for systems to provide adequate supports to reduce the incidence of maternal stress in disaster contexts to protect healthy prenatal development. Moreover, evidence suggests that such support is currently lacking, especially for rural mothers and perinatal health professionals (41).

Recent advancements in tele-health and online interventions present a promising direction through helping to counteract isolation and lower health literacy, and improving access to health information and screening (74, 108-110).

Participating

Legislation, national practice and educational curricula all posit that children have the capacity to drive change and that they should be provided the opportunities to engage with and contribute to DM (2). Both research and practice have repeatedly backed this call for the inclusion of youth voices and co-design in relation to disaster preparations, responses, and recovery times (53, 94, 117, 118). Children have also indicated their eagerness and capacity to be included in age-appropriate discussions, decision-making, and activities across the PPRR phases of disaster (27, 53, 63, 118). This may include inclusion in community disaster meetings and initiatives, peer support activities, and disaster response service. However, it is crucial that these engagements and activities are developmentally-appropriate to foster autonomy, competence and relatedness (119), and counteract the weight of the stress experience (57). Effective inclusion of children in DM can support children to safely explore and share their ideas, expectations, memories, thoughts, experiences, feelings, and needs; and subsequently build empowerment, self-efficacy, understanding, compassion, and resilience (27, 35, 62, 63, 97).

“Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinion taken into account.”

United Nations Rights of the Child, Article 12; (63)

Many disaster researchers and leaders have advocated for the inclusion of children’s voices within disaster arrangements to best serve their needs (53, 94, 117, 118). However, there are limitations to existing attempts to support this, including that much of the empirical research in this space relies on parent or caregiver reports of children’s experiences and needs, potentially overlooking the child-centred interpretation (27, 84, 120, 121). Empirical research is needed to frame such crucial insights with rigorous, child-focused, and theoretical interpretations.

Children are more knowing, capable, and resilient than they are given credit for (118). When provided with appropriate PPRR activities, they can support DM efforts (121). For example, evidence suggests that the involvement of children in disaster preparation can provide a positive and self-affirming experience and can help mitigate the stress and negative impacts of disasters (97, 121). Involving children in prevention and preparedness activities is an effective strategy to build resilience. This might include activities such as connecting children with emergency services via school visits, practicing school and community-based emergency procedures such as evacuation drills, and active engagement with appropriate disaster-related decision making via youth representation on relevant DM committees (121, 122). Similarly, inclusion in recovery decisions, protocols, and activities can improve post-disaster self-efficacy and resilience, especially for children, by supporting active engagement, appropriately guided autonomy, and a sense of control in what and how the individual responds (27, 53). As highlighted by McDaid et al. (53), an individual’s resilience relies on an interactive, and reciprocal ecosystem comprising appropriately supportive and inclusive policy, community, family and individual (see Figure 6).

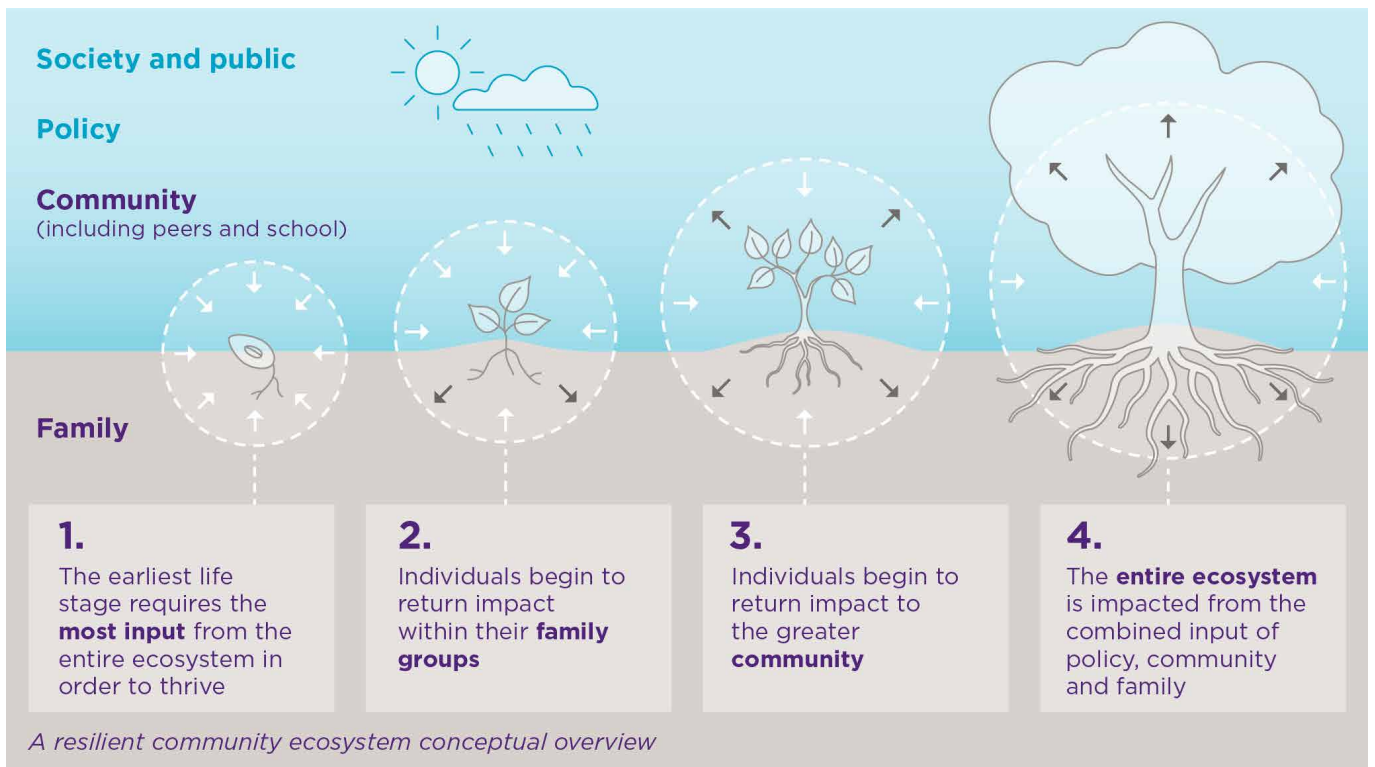


Figure 6. Conceptual overview of resilient community ecosystem as presented by McDaid et al. (2023).



Resilient Kids Toolkit ©UNICEF Australia/2023/Moran

Identity and Culture

A key literature focus concerning identity and culture revolved around the practical identification of disconnected family, specifically the negative impact of child-caregiver separation in disaster response and recovery timelines (39, 40, 49). Physical separation and emotional distancing between children and their primary caregivers is suggested to negatively impact on kid's formation of personal and social identity and their perceived role within and beyond their community, leading to higher risk of poor self-efficacy, and insecure future relationship attachments (39, 40, 49). In addition, practical supports beyond logistical reunification protocols are also needed. For example, to facilitate the return to identity and culture in recovery phase, familiar and safe spaces to reflect on and explore disaster experiences via imagery and narration are beneficial for children (106).

Unfortunately, a notable gap was seen within the currently reviewed literature relating to DM and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and children. With existing unresolved and intergenerational traumas experienced by Indigenous populations, it stands to reason that disaster-related disconnection from Country, family separation, racism, and the generalised Western approach to DM, may each act as cultural determinants further compounding and exacerbating existing complex trauma (29, 38, 67, 70, 90, 123). Given the cultural richness and deep connection to Country for Indigenous peoples, it is imperative that Australian DM arrangements include, and are co-designed with, Indigenous communities and children to offer culturally safe and accessible communications, planning, and resourcing (90, 94).

Material Basics

Having appropriate material basics, such as food, water, bedding, medications, nappies, fuel, various age-appropriate toys and spaces for play are crucial in preparedness, response and recovery timeframes. With the potential for disaster to elicit long term disruption in housing, finances, transport, and general access to material basics, appropriate preparation and management of material necessities is crucial to meet basic needs and lower stress for children and families. For example, Aitken et al. (124) found that families who were better prepared with longer-term provisions of food and water were less anxious during disaster. However, households with children under 18 years of age were among the subpopulations identified as less likely to have planned sufficient food and water provisions (124). It is important that systems focus on needs assessments and access to material

basics access before, during and after disasters. This includes consideration of accessible resources such as local or virtual support services, freely available childcare and transport options, financial assistance to fund basic needs, and assistance with appropriate housing conditions, especially for families with children living with specialty needs (e.g., chronic health conditions, neurodivergence, or disability needs).

Learning

Schools play a crucial role in DM, presenting a place for children to participate and learn, access to trusted and supportive educators and often a safe haven in response and recovery phases (3, 34, 62, 123, 125, 126). A systematic review of children's mental health and wellbeing related to disaster reiterated the effectiveness of school-integrated interventions around the world (127). However, while these community-familiar supports provide important material aid and wellbeing support, they are often managed by school staff who are also likely experiencing the stress of disaster, loss of property, family separation, and grieving processes. To better support these staff while they support their communities, further formalised training, funding, and recognition is needed (27, 34, 83, 84, 97). This would be supported by aligning with the [National Guidelines for Trauma-Aware Education](#) (29), DM arrangements should prioritise a whole-of-school approach to trauma identification as well as a focus on educator wellbeing, so that they may continue to effectively prepare, respond to, and aid recovery for Queensland children and communities.

The systems education approach posed by Ronan and Towers (142) provides a strategy to empower children with appropriately increasing disaster knowledge, skills, motivation and confidence in disaster context and beyond by integrating knowledge of disasters and natural hazard management throughout education curricula. This includes educating children to understand the science related to hazards and logical risks (how does this happen and what it means to me and my community?), to build problem-solving capacity and coping (how can we manage this event?), and to foster motivational and emotional capacity to cognitively translate 'risk, threat and fear' to 'challenges that can be addressed with considered solutions' (how can we reframe this event to be more manageable?). This interlinked approach, across systems and within trusted educational spaces, can provide children with holistic and multifaceted knowledge and skills required to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. While most children display a capacity for disaster discussion

and learning, the presentation of disaster education may depend on how and to what extent children understand hazards, risks and available resources for relevant solutions within their community (128). Children's age, geographical location, societal inclusion, socioeconomic status, cultural status, unique vulnerabilities, learning preferences, and past experience in disaster planning or response, are important considerations in the development and delivery of DM curriculum.

Gearing DM systems to support kids in disasters – TQKP System Levers

Meeting the needs of children in disasters requires well geared and adaptive systems capable of responding rapidly and effectively across PPRR in complex and compounding disaster contexts. This section considers key systems enablers capable of enhancing DM responses to children's needs according to the TQKP System Levers.

Concerted Leadership

DM is complex and the widespread nature of disaster impacts mean that concerted leadership across sectors is critical to providing responsive supports.

Interaction with consistent disaster leadership professionals (e.g., emergency service personnel and community response leaders) within familiar community settings is beneficial for children's preparedness, response and recovery (121, 122). In this sense, local teachers are well positioned to support children during each of the disaster phases (27, 29, 83). However, each of these community-based leadership groupings requires more resourcing, funding, and evidence building to better identify and deliver appropriate training opportunities and resources, so they can guide and support children from a basis of ongoing relationships built on trust and familiarity (27, 29, 83, 97).

The [National Guidelines for Trauma-Aware Education](#) (29), highlight the need for trauma-aware education to be facilitated at both the site and systems level, to ensure best practice is delivered for children, families and staff. High quality, inclusive, and co-designed training and resources that incorporate development of relationships between children, families and educators is needed to ensure the provision of appropriate support. It is also important to recognise that those providing trauma-aware support should also receive their own support, reflection time, and supervision. Trauma-aware training and self-reflection components should be further integrated into preservice educator training and professional development opportunities that are funded and resourced long-term and be regularly evaluated to manage aspects that may shift within the context of the community or type of hazard event (29).

Training and engaging autonomous and operational leaders can benefit both planned and flexible implementation of PPRR actions, particularly in terms of collaborative and integrated activities (97, 129). Co-leadership models would also provide benefit for community populations who have been historically under-represented in DM, such as Indigenous Australians, people

living with disability, and child/infant-focused professionals (79, 90). Gaining such uniquely focused yet broadly spanned knowledge and perspective on the needs and capabilities of the community, across a collaboration of representative leaders, allows for specialised insights and activities that provide best support in disaster contexts.

Smarter Investment

To meet the needs of children and families in disaster, research and operational management arrangements require additional and regular investment (27). Investment in PPRR training is needed to build capacity and efficacy of local and familiar supports (e.g., local educators, healthcare professionals, and emergency personnel) (27, 41, 83, 97, 122, 130), and non-local support persons require funding and resource continuity to maintain community engagement and build community trust (27). To effectively manage this vastness of funding and resource requirement, investment priorities may consider application of collaborative and integrative research and activities (27).

Regular and consistent research investment is also needed to expand empirical knowledge and practical evaluation regarding children's experiences and current disaster-related activities, and subsequently transition that knowledge to regularly evaluated practice (27, 100). Investment in evaluation of DM activities is necessary to understand enablers and barriers to implementation as well as validated effectiveness of the approach across locations, and phases of disaster. Moreover, continued and adaptive investment in innovative DM approaches is needed as Queensland communities naturally evolve in the wake of societal implications and climate change (131-133).

Engaged Public

Caregivers, family, friends, professionals, and communities often experience some level of anxiety, exhaustion, fear, hopelessness during disasters and must be supported, to enable them to effectively support the children around them (27, 83). Capacity building, particularly with parents and caregivers, is key in disaster contexts. Mental Health First Aid and Recovery programs may be helpful, and could be applied in at-risk disaster locations, to a subset of population or provided at a broader community level (98), however additional research is needed to understand the efficacy of these initiatives (80). Training related to culturally respectful support, acknowledgment of strengths and limitations of people with disability or neurodivergence, and maternal and child safety and care, are also important considerations for community-related disaster training and engagement (29, 79). Relevant, inclusive, meaningful, and context-transferable information and training should be presented in an accessible manner, to ensure various leaders and members of the community (including children) are engaged and skilled in relevant disaster-related training (74).

The consumption of disaster related media coverage by the public is also considered within the literature (22). While keeping connected, informed, and engaged may provide benefits in disaster contexts, the viewing of such content by children with developing cognition (and even adults) can result in excessive and unrationalised stress and fear (98) that has the potential to further compound trauma related to real world experiences of disaster (97).



[Emerging Minds](#) (134) have presented comprehensive guidance for media professionals reporting on disaster or community trauma and highlight the necessity to keep child and family wellbeing at the forefront during journalism activities and reports. The [Queensland Mental Health Commission](#) (97) also suggests that media messaging should work to provide tangible actions and strategies that children can engage to reduce the impact of disaster and climate change. Children's exposure to disaster related content, and the subsequent effects is notable; however, further consideration and investigation of such impact is warranted (98).

Raising community awareness of how disasters may be experienced by children, and how those effects may be managed via appropriate and integrated community resources, approaches and programs, is important to empower the Queensland public to respond effectively to increasing disaster impacts.

Stronger Workforces

Educators, DM and place-based agency leaders and practitioners require support and professional development opportunities to counteract exposure to stressors in disaster contexts (27, 84). This positive support and upskilling plays an important role in building the resilience of professionals, who are in turn, better equipped to effectively meet the needs of the children and families they support (27, 83, 97). For example, Mental Health First Aid was noted as being especially effective in providing support to young people and adults in the days and weeks after disaster (29, 97, 135). Mental Health Recovery training is also suggested as effective for developing longer-term coping skills for workforces, children and communities (97, 135). Workforce development that supports professionals and volunteers involved in DM to recognise unique needs and capabilities, foster cultural safety and develop shared language and knowledge, (53, 129) supports the provision of quality care, especially for children and families (79, 90).

Another crucial consideration regarding workforces within disaster context is the benefit of familiar spaces and personnel. Fostering trusting relationships is key when working in disaster context; however, is more challenging for non-local and unfamiliar personnel (136-138). This underscores the role of school-based interventions, activities, and resources, delivered by familiar and trusted local educators (83, 84, 127). However, considering the high intervention and program burden placed on educators across health, ecological, wellbeing and disaster sectors (34, 83, 139), DM may seek to disperse disaster responsibilities more broadly, by providing continuity in funding, resourcing, and opportunity for a variety of relevant workforces to foster familiarity and trust within at-risk communities (83, 122).

Integrated Delivery

Integrated multidisciplinary supports play a significant role across all phases of DM (27). Place based staff (e.g., local educators and leaders) may work interactively with non-familiar personnel (non-local agencies) to accelerate child, family, and community trust and openness to receiving support (83, 122, 136, 137). Interdisciplinary and interagency approaches to mental health, education, domestic violence, financial aid, and other support services, align with the multifaceted needs of children and their families, and subsequently foster engagement, empowerment, and integration (62, 79). Conversely, siloed agency responses undermine the efficacy of service provision in disasters, as the unique needs of children and families may not be met if appropriate referral pathways and streamlined access to supports are not identified and acted upon (27).

Schools play an important and often primary role in DM including preparedness (e.g., emergency event drills), response (e.g., community evacuation centres) and recovery (e.g., post-event basic needs and support distributions) for children, families, and the broader community (62, 84, 121, 127). Schools provide an important site for service integration and collaboration between community members and leaders, place-based agency leaders and practitioners and emergency services in DM planning and response. As familiar, safe, and accessible places, embedded in local contexts, schools are well placed to provide information, activities, and space in disaster contexts (140). However, the centrality of schools in DM often places considerable strain on available staff and resources. Appropriate resourcing and investment to assist schools to carry the extra workload associated with disaster training and upskilling, engaging as key local disaster champions, and applying knowledge in ever changing context is critical (141).

Responsibility for DM exists at all levels of individual, community, and government systems. Integrated and collaborative actions that engage key disaster resources (e.g., schools) and persons (children, families, community, and emergency personnel) are the crux of DM and are capable of addressing the breadth and intricacy of children's needs in disaster contexts. The need for collaborative efforts to facilitate trust and familiarity highlights the need for continuity and consistency in such support systems, resources, and services.

Putting Data and Learning to Work

A recurring theme in the literature is the need for further research concerning children in disasters. Scientific research should continue to build empirical knowledge regarding children's disaster experiences and evaluate current and future DM activities and interventions; which need to be transparently translated to practice (27, 79, 142,

143). A call for action has been initiated for federal, state, and local governments to better consider and integrate the needs of children in disasters (120).

Further calls have been made to improve conceptual definitions and ecological validity of research related to children in disasters, and to integrate transparent child-centred co-design for DM (53, 63, 142, 143). While there is benefit in research that engages in-person data collection following a disaster (e.g., researcher experience and positioning, participant ability to 'talk through' the event, potential for empirical knowledge to be shared with communities in real-time), there are growing ethical concerns related to the emotional and physical safety of both participants and researchers. The implication of COVID-19 has meant the development and application of online research methods has strengthened in recent years. Such a strengthened online approach opens a fresh potential for ecologically valid data collection that does not require researchers to travel to locations experiencing high risk circumstances and physically impose on children, families, and communities experiencing current disaster activations (133).

While considering ecological validity, the scope of disaster research and practice should also encourage, promote, and advocate for the voice of children in DM, by ensuring voices are actively listened to and integrated within disaster decision-making and activities (94, 106). This active inclusion and integration of voice should also extend to include children with unique perspectives and experiences, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children living with disability and neurodivergence, children from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and children with unique or discordant family arrangements (79, 90). In addition, voice research should also consider specific contextual circumstances such as location, community profile, and hazard event (131), to garner tailored context-specific insights.

Children are key stakeholders in disaster contexts and have the capacity to discuss and engage in disaster research (144). Youth activism regarding climate action and research is a current and strong example of this (117). Rather than continuing to hear 'about' children in disaster, the focus of future voice research should be based in hearing 'from' children in disaster.

Future Research Directions for Kids in Disasters

- Engage and interpret children's voices appropriately and encouragingly, to inform co-design, planning, resourcing and production, and empirical understandings of disaster experience in Queensland.
- Frame and interpret children's disaster experiences with acknowledgement of developmental capacities and developmental theories, to understand how Queensland children and families may be appropriately integrated with disaster planning, response, and recovery activities.
- Engage with Traditional Owners to lean into Indigenous knowledge and wisdom in the development of DM activities and school curricula. Explore the disaster experiences of Queensland children and families with

specialised accessibility needs and/or family contexts (e.g., rural and remote Queensland residence, living with disability or neurodivergence, discordant family or living arrangements), and co-design DM options.

- Build understanding of the effects of multiple and consecutive disasters on Queensland child and family resilience and wellbeing, and transparently apply such findings to practice with continued evaluative reflection.
- Multifaceted, multidisciplinary, and evaluative research should be undertaken at individual, community, and systems levels, to strengthen disaster knowledge and actions into the future.

Conclusion

This literature review synthesises key knowledge focused on children in disaster contexts, highlighting impactful ideas and strategies to support their needs across PRR in Queensland. Of particular note is the consistent call for children to be included in discussions and activities across all stages of DM. Such inclusion should be age appropriate as informed by developmental theory and children themselves. By including children in appropriate disaster planning, response, and recovery, we empower them with knowledge, self-efficacy, and resilience that they may take forward into the future. Across the literature, it is also suggested that the unique needs and capabilities of children require greater research attention and practical acknowledgement. The knowledge gap around children who experience greater disaster impact due to cultural connection with land, remoteness of location, and/or unique disability, neurodivergence, or family living requirements is highlighted. In addition, research that considers how we might best support adults caring for children is also noted.

Moving forward, the call for research, inclusion, and evaluation continues. Research grounded in developmental theory and community development approaches is needed to further evidence the unique needs and capabilities of children in disasters. Practical inclusion of children should move beyond 'being heard' to their integration as valued members of DM groups. Further, people who engage with children as part of disaster PRR should also be provided with quality training to support the children in their care, and themselves. Finally, consistent empirical evaluation of interventions should be conducted regularly, as the experiences of Queensland children, families, communities and systems in disaster continues to evolve.

To enable these calls to action, funding, and resourcing opportunities are required. Funding bodies are encouraged to offer child-centred research and practice grant opportunities on a regular basis. The development and provision of appropriate disaster training for children and their caregivers should also be a primary funding and resourcing focus, which should be strategically aligned to address contextual needs. It is hoped that this collation of knowledge and forward research directions for development of disaster arrangements will enable the growth of informed, empowered, and resilient children who, in turn, are empowered to contribute to the future of DM in Queensland.

Kids' Resilience and Wellbeing in Disasters



This section employs the six domains of wellbeing outlined in The Nest to integrate current literature themes, along with workshop and interview findings regarding kids' needs in disasters to describe how these needs are currently being supported and where opportunities to strengthen current approaches exist in Queensland across disaster PPRR.

Valued, loved and safe

We know that kids feel valued, safe, and loved when they feel seen and heard, and when there is certainty and security in their relationships with their family and others around them (including their pets). Disasters often disrupt this certainty and security. Further, psychological safety in kids is supported when they have knowledge about what to expect and do in disasters and agency to engage in DM activities, so that they can be part of the solution.

'There is an important focus on the basics in disaster which means that kids and family's needs can get lost in the mix. We need targeted strategies that are specific to child and family needs in disasters'

Susan Harrison, Director Clinical Services and Strategy, BUSHkids

What we've discovered

The focus of DM is primarily saving and reducing risks to human life, property, infrastructure, and environment. It does this through a formal, inter-connected system of universal and adult-centric engagement, planning, coordination, and service delivery. This can present challenges to integrating child-centred approaches, particularly during disaster response. This can lead to an experience of systems by kids and families that risks adding to the adversities they experience in disaster contexts, despite the intention of providing safety and support. Further, kids across all developmental stages report the natural environment plays a significant role in their sense of safety and wellbeing, pointing to the importance of preventative approaches focused on climate action that extend beyond immediate disaster responses (145).

Approaches that foster a sense of calm and safety through tailored communication, engage kids as capable agents, and prioritise reunification with caregivers and return to normality are known to positively support kids in disasters (23, 39, 40, 98, 100).

Also acknowledged is the importance of prioritising the safety and care of significant adults, as their experience and response to disaster impacts can have flow on effects to kids and impact their sense of psychological safety.

- Parents, caregivers, and other significant adults (e.g. educators) need support so that they can manage their own experience of disaster while also effectively supporting kids to feel valued, loved, and safe (27, 83).
- Evidence suggests that there are often assumptions that parents and community carers know what kids need in disasters and how to identify signs and symptoms of trauma in different ages and adequately respond, but this is not always true. Training and interventions in Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Recovery may be helpful (98).

Research into child identity suggests that physical separation and emotional distancing between kids and their primary caregivers in and outside of disaster settings can have long-term risks (39, 40, 49).

- These concerns along with experiences from recent bushfire and flood events in Queensland where children and families were separated from each other for periods of time, highlight the need for local DM plans to include protocols for unaccompanied and unidentified children, and family reunification (100).

In addition to family, secure and functional community relationships can act as protective mechanisms (49), or if strained or dysfunctional, they can pose as risk factors during times of heightened stress (23, 49, 66). Local knowledge is a critical way of understanding these different scenarios and underpins the important role of place-based systems practitioners and leaders in identifying threats to safety for kids in response and recovery and suitable pathways to safety.

For example, although the Australian Red Cross Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit1 provides a checklist for ensuring centres are 'child-friendly' the checklist is not commonly referred to or used to write standard Evacuation Centre sub-plans. While DM trainers and advisors might mention the checklist and give some quick practical tips – like including pop-up tents for kids with sensory challenges or breast-feeding mums – the main child-friendly action they see is the inclusion of Birdies Trees resources that are available and handed out to parents with kids by Centre workers along with other activity materials.



Evidence points to the experience of kids during the disaster response phase as being particularly impactful in terms of their long-term ability to cope and adapt. This means that specialised attention to the needs of kids in evacuation settings is critical, along with education and rapport building between kids and first responders before and after disasters. At present in Queensland, Commonwealth and State government laws, policies, guidelines, training, and plans provide standardised formats to help Councils create locally relevant disaster arrangements. Some of these resources include a focus on kids and offer advice regarding things like communications and evacuation centre design. However, the uptake and implementation of this advice is inconsistent across Queensland. TKiD collaborators told us:

- Messaging is targeted towards kids' families, not kids themselves; however young people are especially interested in receiving and co-designing age-appropriate communications. Evidence suggests that feeling informed reduces immediate and longer-term impacts (94).
- Where required, agencies involved in setting up and operating Evacuation Centres may consider the specific needs of infants, children, and young people where they deem it relevant to do so and where they have access to resources and established relationships with child and youth specialists, but this is not uniform across Queensland.
- At times, and depending on location and magnitude of impact, specialist agencies like Centacare and 54 Reasons are brought in to assist in Evacuation Centres and attend to children's wellbeing during response, and sometimes in the short to medium term recovery phase. Again, we heard this is not a consistent practice.
- Local government and agencies like the Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service (SES), and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services attend community events and hold Emergency Services days each year in some communities where they educate kids and families about the main hazards in their environments, the risks they live with and how to reduce these. These activities help to build rapport between kids, families and first responders, increase disaster awareness for kids and families and develop the capabilities of DM professionals to work effectively with kids and families.
- As seen in recent months, underinvestment in disaster infrastructures like Evacuation Centres exacerbates the disproportionate levels of risk carried by First Nations kids, families, and communities in Queensland.

Schools, early years centres, sport and recreation groups, and services like libraries and community centres play a foundational role in in fostering safe developmental environments for kids. This role extends to disaster contexts, where they are the agencies most likely to be involved with kids and families in the lead up to, during and after events. These settings are also familiar places for kids to reconnect with familiar and trusted adults and peers and provide critical opportunities to establish a return to routine and calm.

A holistic and integrated approach to kids' wellbeing offered through community-based organisations is considered ideal and celebrated when and where it does happen.

- This type of approach is child-centred and works to increase the individual's ongoing connections and resilience – not just in relation to disasters.
- It should include opportunities to hear from kids directly and provide them with opportunities to understand what it is they are experiencing, what is helpful, and how they can be a part of acting on matters that mean something to them.
- Their diverse perspectives on DM are invaluable but rarely harvested or used to inform decision making, which is a significant gap in practice that impacts on individual's feeling valued, safe, and loved.
- Child-centred resources and programs like the [Queensland Health Birdies Tree](#) and [Mackillop Seasons Stormbird](#), which are often distributed through the [First Five Forever](#) program in libraries, at community events, and at disaster impacted schools, early years centres and playgroups, are great examples of this approach in action.

Birdie's Tree is an award-winning set of storybooks, videos and resources created by the Queensland Centre for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health (QCPIMH). The team has created Birdie's Tree to help young children and families going through natural disasters and other disruptive events. There are booklets to help parents and carers look after themselves and a learning program for early childhood teachers.

Appropriate resourcing to enable these systems to plan and deliver holistic supports effectively to cultivate child resilience and wellbeing and encompass DM is critical.

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

Healthy

Healthy kids have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met (6). For infants and young children, this relies on the reliable and attentive presence of and relationship with their parent/s and other regular and important caregivers (22, 101), and for older kids, the experience of disaster and subsequent engagement with adults around them influences how they think and feel about the events and their subsequent resilience and wellbeing (22, 35). Following a disaster, kids' health is influenced and differentiated by a range of external factors, including location and remoteness, and whether they live with financial and social disadvantage (146-148).

To avoid these and other impacts (including associated developmental delays), it is critical that DM systems consider kids as a population distinctly separate from, yet integrated within the broader community, and requiring of unique needs and supports across the PRR timeline (27).

What we've discovered

While [Queensland Health](#) is the lead health agency in Queensland's DM arrangements, holistic and integrated child and youth services - especially those that are community-based - are considered an effective way to support kids' physical and emotional health and wellbeing before, during and after disasters. Reflecting the four phases of DM, and kids' different circumstances and experiences, people we spoke with recommend that interventions should range from non-specialised, preventative community and school initiatives to specialist clinical services.

For example:

- Kids and caregivers experiencing poorer physical and mental health before disasters are at higher risk of more acute and longer-term negative impacts. Increasingly, this can include mental health concerns relating to climate anxiety (145). This means that building the capacity of resilience-oriented health and wellbeing systems and engaging with kids around their environmental concerns in communities prior to disasters can prevent and protect against more serious effects.
- Another predominant focus within the current disaster literature is on kids' mental health and wellbeing in the recovery and post-disaster timeline. This highlights that mental health and wellbeing concerns can be effectively screened and addressed with relevant supports during response and immediate relief, via accessible and integrated support systems.
- Child and youth specialists have reported that integrated narrative therapies and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy interventions offered via schools have proven effective in reducing anxiety and trauma related psychopathologies (83, 99, 105, 106).

- Post-disaster tele-health and online health interventions are also noted as effective in identifying and addressing mental health concerns in wider community populations – with notable barriers for younger children, and those not familiar or comfortable with such technology, and for those without stable internet and phone services. This highlights the importance of equitable access to infrastructure needed to seek health and wellbeing support.
- Pre-natal and family stress are also concerns, indicating the importance of specialist and community supports for pregnant and parenting women and families during and after a disaster (41).
- Interagency and community relationships, connections, and resources (such as navigator roles and child and family hubs) support effective and integrated referral pathways and service delivery.

A story from recent bushfires in southern Queensland demonstrates this, where kindergarten teachers were able to identify subtle changes in the behaviours and emotional wellbeing of children who attended their centre. As well as living on a property that was damaged by the bushfires, these children had parents who were first responders impacted by their cumulative experiences out on the fire fronts over an extended period. Because of the existing relationships with children and parents and specialist child and family focused support services in the area, the kindergarten teachers were able to quickly refer families for much needed and appreciated help.

Opportunities for kids to come together with their peers following a disaster or community-level traumatic event are crucial, as it helps them reconnect and share their experiences in a safe way. When carefully guided by a trusted facilitator, relevant information about what to expect, what to do, and who can help can be introduced (83, 98, 105, 106).

- Community resilience processes that bring in specialists to educate and empower kids by engaging them in matters affecting them like droughts, family struggles on farms, long term worries about disaster impacts are happening in several rural communities across the state. For instance, Balonne Shire Council is working in partnership with schools and external services to deliver mental health programs with kids through the [Fly High Billie B Kinder](#) and [CORES](#) suicide prevention initiatives. This child-focused work was woven into a range of other community-wide initiatives rolled out concurrently to maximise impacts and recognise the great toll that multiple, enduring adversities have on individuals and families.



Despite their importance and positive impact, these initiatives are not broadly implemented as they are dependent on a mix of timing, available funding, local buy-in and leadership, and availability of skilled DM workers and specialist child health and wellbeing services.

- This is an important issue given that kids can experience ongoing mental health challenges for many years after a disaster experience (24). Long term, community embedded approaches are needed to ensure that support is available at the right time for kids, families, and communities.
- Because mental and physical health and wellbeing are heavily interconnected, child-centred allied health services like [BushKIDS](#), [Outback Futures](#) and [Royal Far West](#) are highly valued, and in some locations are an active part of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery arrangements and activities, as are impacted primary schools, kindergartens and early years centres, and playgroups including those delivered by NCCs. Consistently, people working in these types of services have emphasised the importance of having targeted evidence-based resources like [Birdies Tree](#), [Stormbirds](#), and the [Australian Red Cross Pillowcase Workshops](#) to use to engage kids and their families around disasters.

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

Participating

Participating is about kids being heard, heeded, and taken seriously within their family and community and by the systems that surround them. It means having a say in decisions that impact them. It is being empowered to speak out and express themselves. Participating means being a part of the solution (94, 149).

What we've discovered

We construct childhood in a disabling rather than enabling way and we need to be better at accepting that they're part of our society rather than waiting to be part of it when they reach a certain age.

Michelle Roberts, Director ROBSET Consultancy, TKiD 1 panel

One of the most common themes uncovered is the need for increased opportunities for meaningful participation for kids of all ages and developmental stages across the DM continuum.

Kids have told DM operators, child and youth specialists and researchers that they often feel invisible and powerless in disasters, despite also feeling that they have a lot to offer practically to support their peers, families, and communities (94). Kids reported that that they are often unwittingly put into precarious and powerless positions by being told about problems that they already observe and experience (e.g. climate change), but their perspectives are rarely asked for or considered, and their agency or potential for action is even more likely to be ignored (145). Agencies like UNICEF Australia and the Western Sydney University's Young and Resilient Research Centre are currently responding to this by producing [child-centred indicators for climate justice](#).

These perspectives highlight the flow-on effects of powerlessness and physical and emotional isolation in times of extreme uncertainty and can lead to resentment towards community members making decisions and actions for, but without them (94).

“Responsibility to fix this global crisis is falling on youth, because we are the ones growing up with this as our reality. It makes me angry. It makes me anxious. I am tired of being angry and anxious about this huge problem especially when I feel so small and powerless.”

14-year-old (145)

- Stakeholders in the TKiD project have spoken about the importance of offsetting these types of exclusions by involving kids in age and developmentally appropriate community discussions, decision making, and activity engagement that recognises their interests and agency – similar to the work that has been done in Northern NSW in 2022-23 in the wake of devastating floods by the [Resilient Kids consortium](#). This fosters feelings of self-efficacy, autonomy, relatedness, personal purpose, and reward (49, 119, 150), and counteracts the weight of individual stress experiences (57).

These outcomes help kids process their experiences and develop resilience to broader life challenges (27, 35, 62, 63) as evidenced by young people in the Western Downs who have shared the cumulative long-term effects of recent droughts, floods, and fires on their wellbeing with

their community through ‘[Shout Out!](#)’ a Council story telling project. From kids’ perspectives we understand that changing this exclusionary and diminishing story is a priority (151, 152). They want to be seen and heard across all the phases of DM as powerful, leading knowledge holders, and actors.

We have heard that all levels of government and community can do better to engage with a much greater diversity of kids and families. For instance, many people suggested that as well as schools and youth services, local governments have a key role in creating opportunities for kids to influence policy and decision making, during and outside of times of disaster (34). An example of this in action in NSW is the Taree [Our Voice](#) project, which gave young people the opportunity to feed into local government disaster preparedness activities. Kids across locations and age groups emphasise that opportunities like this should be created with ongoing relationships of trust in mind (27, 83).

- The people we spoke with are particularly concerned that we do more to engage young people aged 12-18 years, as well as the 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 (73, 75). To acknowledge their unique circumstances, systems must work together with kids and their families, which can empower their autonomy and inclusion in the community.
- Efforts must prioritise engagement with kids and families who live with higher risk of harm and poor outcomes in disasters – building equitable resilience (153) that recognises and responds to the disproportionate effects of social vulnerabilities and exclusions on people’s ability to prepare for, cope with, and recover from disaster experiences. Doing this will improve our collective knowledge and improve interventions across PPRR.

There are people and organisations well positioned and ready to launch and amplify these approaches in disaster impacted communities across the state. For example, one North Queensland community is ready to build resilience using a holistic cultural lens, linking caring for country to disaster prevention and preparedness. This would bring all age groups together to consider impacts, and what inaction might mean for cultural heritage, community, and extended family, with a focus on how to cope, adapt, and thrive. It would build on youth voices, knowledge, relationships, and leadership and use creative recovery methods to help people map out who to go to for support at times of crisis, as well as where to go.

We know that kids are often actively involved in household and family preparations and responses to disasters – we see the evidence on television footage and in media and research reports, particularly in rural, regional, and remote areas.

- Kids have roles to play and so it is important that disaster PPRR programs and practices recognise and invest in this. As a rural local government officer told us, ‘Kids in high-risk communities are often taught to read conditions and know what to do to help their family/ household prepare – they are active parts of household preparedness, especially teenagers.’

- The [Red Cross Pillowcase Workshops](#) delivered with kids in years 3 and 4 at participating schools is a notable example of this work in action, as is a climate group hosted through [headspace Capalaba](#), on the southern outskirts of Brisbane

Pillowcase workshops help children prepare for, cope with, and respond to an emergency. Delivered by Red Cross volunteers and staff, the workshops recognise that children are very capable and interested in helping their families to prepare for disasters and emergencies. Pillowcase helps to reduce real and imagined fears and build children’s stress management skills.

There are a range of other valuable lessons to be learned from high disaster risk communities in Queensland like those in the Lockyer Valley and Somerset regions where cascading floods, fires, and hailstorms in the past fifteen years have resulted in some solid, ongoing investment in child, youth, and family focused resilience activities.

- This includes consistent engagement and information sharing with children aged 0-4 and their care givers through playgroups, and with local young people to build their confidence, life and work skills, and networks
- This engagement and skills building work provides young people with a range of opportunities to provide valued services in and to the community, including at times of disaster.
- This recognition, support, and investment boosts kids’ confidence and sense of belonging, offsetting some of the hardships faced by kids, families, and communities.
- Crucial to the work with families and young people are relationships of trust built over time with key workers and organisations. Continuity of reliable and accessible services supports kids and families participating in DM efforts.

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

Identity and culture

Having a positive sense of identity and culture is central to the wellbeing of kids (145). In disaster contexts, this means that kids’ cultural and spiritual needs and contributions are considered, respected, and provided for across PPRR.

There is a need for greater attention in research, policy, and practice to understand the importance of identity and cultural connection in disaster settings, especially as they relate to the development, wellbeing, and resilience of kids. What is understood is that several characteristics of disasters and the way we manage them pose risks to secure attachment and identity, and to kids’ connection to their culture, community, place, and environment. From an Australian First Nations perspective, culture is a core part of social and emotional wellbeing and is inherently interconnected with country, spirituality and ancestors, community, family and kin, mind and emotions and body (154, 155).

What we've discovered

First Nations community members and service providers we have spoken with have been the most likely to tell us that connecting kids and caregivers to land and culture is an everyday part of building resilience or 'puuya'. Family, community, culture, and country are seen as interconnected protective factors that shape kids' identity, wellbeing, and resilience, and are woven through everyday life. Local people know people and place over time, and this includes knowing risks, vulnerabilities, and protective factors.

Puuya means 'life force' in Kuku Yalanji language, and rather than think about and respond to disasters separately, people living in remote places like Lockhart River integrate climate change and severe weather into everyday relationships, roles, discussions, and actions.

There are many crises that happen and impact kids and their caregivers in small rural and remote communities, with few services available or likely to be able to even attend in emergencies – especially in severe weather – so extended families know about and prepare to be self-sufficient in hazardous situations as much as they can. The safety and wellbeing of children and Elders is prioritised at all times.

[UNICEF Australia](#) and other child-centred disaster recovery services are applying this holistic culturally informed lens to their current work with flood impacted communities in Fitzroy River, and parts of northern NSW

This thinking is also reflected in emerging child-centred DRR projects involving schools, universities, and the Country Fire Authority in different rural locations in Victoria. These projects recognise and respond to kids' needs for connection to each other, to community, and to their surrounds (156).

- We have seen lately that extreme events such as the floods that have recently displaced the Wujal Wujal community in Far North Queensland for an extended period challenge being and feeling prepared, and depending on how they are managed can create serious long-term effects on kids' sense of identity, and broader wellbeing. Practical supports that prioritise keeping families together and facilitating kids' return to community and cultural practices after disasters are beneficial. This includes getting critical child infrastructures up and running quickly and bringing kids together in familiar and safe spaces to reflect on and explore disaster experiences via imagery and narration with trusted people in their community (106).

Tailoring responsive and inclusive approaches to children's circumstances and experiences in this way can assist kids to re-establish their sense of safety, calm, connectedness, and hope; which are all critical factors in dealing with traumatic events. Child and youth specialists involved in our project spoke about the power of sharing stories that promote self-esteem and highlight community efficacy. This collective, social processing of experiences is helpful but not always available. For example, the loss and disruption

caused by disasters can result in families moving away from impacted places permanently, with long-term rebuilding and re-establishment not always possible. This can create a further loss of identity and grief for kids and families who are uprooted from their communities; and wherever possible, families should be supported to connect into support networks in their new communities via DM agencies (e.g. Department of Housing).

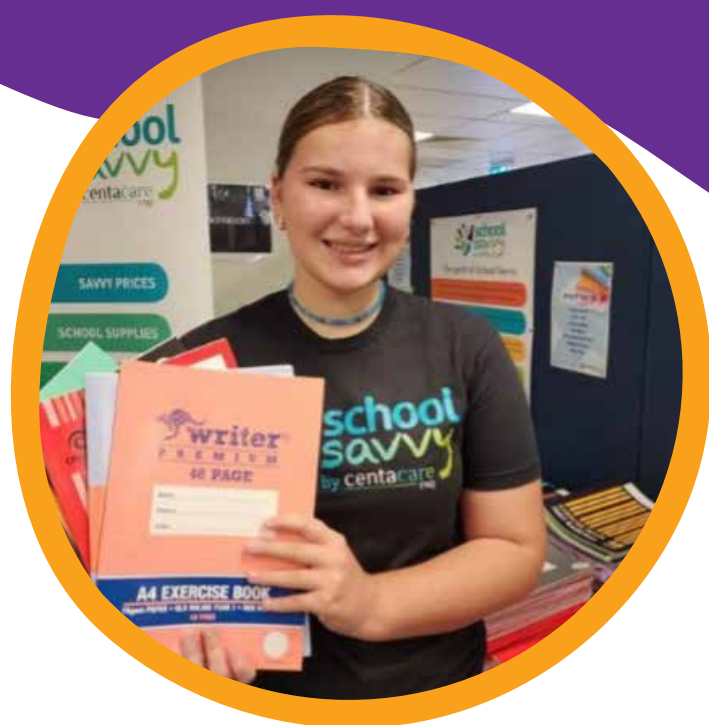
Queensland's rapidly changing population means new people are moving in and out of local communities each day. Sometimes these people are moving into localities and conditions that they are not familiar with, coming from locations across Queensland, Australia and overseas. This includes people coming from non-English speaking countries, including those with years of civil unrest, war, and other traumatic events. All these factors are crucial contextual considerations for DM agencies and operators and local child, youth, and family service systems.

- Many DM operators we spoke with believe it is critical to target people new to a high-risk locality to understand the risks they will be living with, the preparation they must undertake and what to expect when a disaster occurs. For example, in the Somerset region, Recovery and Resilience officers are organising around this idea, providing information in new resident packs, distributed through Council.
- Kids are seen as an important way in to influence adults (parents), as are local support service systems including schools, early years centres, churches and NCCs, which are often among the first places new residents connect with.

It is through these local connections that DM operators and local leaders can discover who new residents are, what their stories are, what they bring to the community that might increase their own and other's resilience, and what cultural and other specific needs they might have that should inform engagement and service delivery. This is particularly valuable for families with limited English language and literacy, those with limited resources and social connections, and families with members living with disabilities and/or chronic health conditions.

- Strategies to ensure PRR processes are relevant and inclusive might include working with community leaders and cultural translators, brokers, and young people; ensuring key information is translated into a range of languages and distributed through a variety of suitable networks; and ensuring that direct service delivery includes people with relevant skills, knowledges, and networks. [Kingston East Neighbourhood Group](#) in Logan city and [Goodna Neighbourhood House](#) in Ipswich are examples of local services operating in this way through integrating flood recovery (service navigation) assistance with their other child and family focused programs.
- Ipswich City Council has sought to build inclusive DM and risk reduction relationships and strategies over time in partnership with local disability advocates and peak bodies. A key partner in this work is the [Queenslanders with Disability Network](#) (QDN) who have been funded to roll out a [disability inclusive disaster risk reduction project](#) (DIDRR) throughout Queensland since 2022.

The [Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness \(P-CEP\) resource](#) is a part of this project and was mentioned many times as a valuable tool to help people living with a disability and their carers to consider disaster preparation. This and other disability inclusive initiatives have been commissioned by the (then) Department of Communities, Housing, and Digital Economy, and achieved in partnership with the University of Sydney, [Collaborating 4 Inclusion](#), and others. This work is promoted widely through Queensland DM authorities and is often delivered through local Councils and community support services. For example, Southern Downs Regional Council is currently planning a 'big map' exercise that targets children and young people living with disabilities and their families to become better prepared for future disasters and emergencies



Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

Material basics

Having appropriate material basics, such as 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. Research finds that families who are better prepared with longer term provisions of food and water experience less anxiety during disaster. However also highlighted is that households with children under eighteen years of age are less likely to have sufficient food and water provisions (124). This points to the importance of local prevention and preparedness activities to assess and implement material basics supports during response and recovery phases, particularly for kids and families. This is something that NCCs involved in the TKiD project are particularly attuned to, with established community pantries, emergency relief, and fuel voucher programs that experience strong uptakes in demand during and after disaster events.

We know that disasters are experienced in a really unequal way. We can't talk about supporting children affected by disasters without talking about structural inequality and how this relates to disaster risk – Ruby Awram, Child Mental Health Advisor

Disasters and Climate, Emerging Minds, TKiD 1 panel

What we've discovered

In a disaster context authorities and other helping agencies provide material basics to infants, children, and young people primarily through their families.

- The provision of material basics is a human and social recovery priority coordinated by local government in its response plans and the [Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities, and the Arts](#) (DTATSIPCA) in immediate relief/ early recovery plans.
- This includes a variety of activities including provision of safe temporary accommodation, coordination and distribution of donated goods and other types of material

Youth Ambassador Yazy with new school supplies. Centacare's [School Savvy program](#) assists students with access to uniforms and stationary supplies at several sites throughout Queensland. In response to the 2023 Wujal Wujal flood event, which severely impacted Far North Queensland, kids were supported to return to school and normality quickly via the provision of educational material basics by the School Savvy team.

assistance at Evacuation Centres and other locations, and the coordination and distribution of financial assistance to support recovery of material items lost in the event though a range of Community Recovery service outlets including online service portals. Notably the [Australian Salvation Army](#) (ASA) provides adult and child grants for immediate and ongoing financial assistance through its disaster relief program.

Feedback suggests that during disaster response and recovery NCCs and organisations like ASA, GIVIT, Lifeline, Centacare, and St Vincent de Paul consistently identify and respond to the material needs of infants, children, and young people, including the replacement of school related items.

Fuel vouchers, furniture, (human and animal) food, clothing, books, and toys are often donated and distributed locally following disasters, often through NCCs if they have a central location and broad profile in the community.

Community and government agencies involved in TKiD emphasised that disasters are only one layer of people's hardship that they need to consider and provide supports for at any time.

- Housing and financial stress for example means that some families live with damaged and environmentally risky homes following disaster events and feel powerless to resolve the matter as they cannot afford to lose their tenancies. This can increase people's health and safety risks and demonstrates the disproportionate effects of disasters on people who live with social and locational disadvantage and inequality.
- Transport was also highlighted as a critical material basic by local community services and recovery workers, impacting the ability of people to prepare, respond, and recover effectively. This is a crucial challenge for young people and families living on the outskirts of metropolitan areas and in rural and remote locations. People's vehicles are often damaged in

disaster events, compromising their ability to evacuate and access immediate and ongoing services and assistance and causing added financial strain. Transport disadvantage, such as lack of vehicle access and the affordability of fuel and vehicle maintenance, was one of the most common barriers to kids' participation in disaster resilience and recovery activities cited by community services we have spoken with.

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

We should never underestimate the importance of play. Through all the adversity and trauma that children experience, they still like to laugh they still like to play and they intersperse that with their everyday reality

Swetlana Jankowiak, Deputy Head of Community Recovery, Royal Far West, TKiD 1 panel

Learning

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 to them have a strong effect on their ability to learn. Relationships with others and play are critical parts of kids' lives and are an essential part of their learning and development, and this is a significant consideration for better involving and supporting them in the various phases of DM.

Disasters are known to disrupt these important relationships, routines, and environments, and can add stress for both kids and parents. Evidence suggests that timely and developmentally appropriate sharing of information about disasters can help kids feel better prepared, and that with the right supports at the right time, in the right place, kids can recover from their experiences (27, 103, 104).



Fraser Coast Regional Council and Get Ready Queensland working with local senior school leaders in 2019 on a disaster preparedness scenario workshop (157).

What we've discovered

TKiD collaborators told us that the DM sector recognises children's curiosity and willingness to learn – often through play - and leverages off this in many disaster preparedness campaigns via intergenerational approaches.

- [Get Ready Queensland](#), for example, has been funding and running preparedness campaigns that target kids through schools for many years. Annual Under Eight days are an example of this, where kids get to enjoy themselves while learning more about what disasters are and how they and their families can get prepared. Other examples include involving high school students in disaster preparedness scenario workshops and big map exercises, such as the one shown below in Fraser Coast in 2019.
- Community infrastructures and services like schools, early years centres, and libraries are often used to support different age groups to learn (together) about PPRR (34, 52, 62, 125, 126).
- While embedded child and family focused services provide everything from shelter and provisions to aid recovery during and in the immediate aftermath of events, they are often managed by staff and volunteers who themselves are likely to be experiencing the many stresses associated with disasters. This underscores the importance of supports for significant adults to enhance outcomes for kids in disasters.
- To better support these staff while they support their community, further formalised training, funding, and recognition is needed (27, 34, 83, 84). Along with kids and families, DM arrangements should prioritise the wellbeing of educators, volunteers, and other community care providers, so that they can continue to effectively prepare, respond to, and aid recovery for kids, families, and the community in which they live.

Return to usual routine – including early years settings, school, and vocational/tertiary training - is a significant focus for current DM, to provide kids with a sense of familiarity and safety (27, 103, 104). However, this must be managed carefully, as many kids and parents experience hypervigilance and anxiety around disaster-related separation for months following a disaster (34).

- Understanding and validating such feelings can be helpful to reduce tension and increase resilience.
- Rather than simply being expected to return to normal, kids can explore their experiences with guidance from trusted teachers and support workers (e.g. [Mackillop Seasons Stormbird companions](#)), exert an appropriate level of autonomy while coming to terms with what has happened, potentially be corrected regarding imagined or false memories, rationalise the human response, and consider the logical risk for future natural hazards and disaster events (83, 98, 105, 106).

We have heard how effective play-based, relational ways of engaging are, including a common theme of the many benefits of environmental arts processes that help kids (re) connect with each other and with important local places, and feel like they are involved in making a difference.



- Recovery workers in Redlands and Far North Queensland shared stories about kids reconnecting with their community by being outside planting trees and building nesting boxes in burnt out natural areas with local Rangers, and visiting their local Rural Fire station to engage with local fire fighters' perspectives. These types of activities are happening more often across Australia in the wake of disasters that bring heavy social and environmental tolls.

We also heard that 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. [ABC Kids, Behind the News](#), and [Heywire](#) programs are great examples of this.

- Social media, modern technologies, and arts approaches provide amazing opportunities for this to happen. The Dallarnil Kids Theatre Program and Creative Regions [AFLOAT](#) projects in the flood affected North Burnett region are great examples of this in action.
- Another example is 'Operation Resilience on Tour,' an ASA disaster resilience initiative currently under development. ASA has partnered with a puppeteer to work with a wide range of kids who have experienced disasters recently to create an interactive play about disaster preparedness and recovery for kids. The pilot is going to be rolled out across Queensland in the coming 12 months once funding has been secured.

Disaster recovery operators and child and youth specialists told us that when kids know about the hazards and risks they live with and the adversities they might have to face, they are more likely to feel mentally and physically prepared for disasters and their ability to 'bounce back' is often greater.

- The [Get Ready Queensland Getting Kids Ready for Natural Disasters webpage](#) provides resources for parents and teachers to use with kids to help them feel better informed and more prepared;
- The [QCPIMH Birdie's Tree](#) books and resources aim to achieve this through their suite of early learning books and resources, as does the [Red Cross Pillowcase Project](#) through its primary school workshops.

- A newer initiative being rolled out in bushfire affected communities in Victoria by [Natural Hazards Research Australia](#) (NHRA) researchers and emergency service agencies is the '[Schools in Fire Country](#)' project. The Country Fire Authority and NHRA have partnered together to engage primary school kids in learning about their local environments along with their teachers, parents, local Elders, and Rural Fire brigades (126). The thinking behind this initiative echoes First Nations approaches, particularly those living on country, who take kids out from an early age to teach them about and connect them to their culture, their people and history, and the world around them.
- AIDR has developed high quality and comprehensive resources to promote disaster resilience via education networks ([DRANZSEN](#)) and [resources](#) for educators aligned to curriculum
- These projects provide examples of the significant value of action-oriented learning that is embedded in local contexts¹.
- Because of their leading role in kids' lives, early years centres, kindergartens and schools are pivotal in kids learning about disaster PRR. As well as being actively engaged in co-delivering prevention and preparedness activities like those mentioned, given the effects of disasters on children and their families, it is also critical to provide educators with the types of skills, resources and supports that enables them to do this additional work. This might include supporting the uptake of neuro-/trauma-informed approaches within and across learning settings and supporting educators to be able to identify and support kids affected by disasters².

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

¹ Identified in the BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia as an essential ingredient in supporting children's early learning.

² This approach is consistent with the Trauma-Aware educational framework developed by Judith Howard from QUT.

The Nest in Action

Dallarnil Kids and Cilla Pershouse
from the North Burnett region



'In any traumatic event, people run on adrenalin while they perceive the danger is still present, but once that subsides they can become overwhelmed and there can be many impacts for their mental health and well-being. Using this arts project as a way to induce a positive mental state and improved feeling of well-being and community cohesion, we aim to ease the stress and devastation that is being felt in the wake of these natural disasters.'

'With a pivotal element of community engagement, this project shows kids and families impacted by floods that they are part of a greater community who cares and are willing to help.'

Cilla Pershouse, Performing Artist and Founder, [Blue Gum TV](#)

Cilla Pershouse is no stranger to the power of performing arts in community recovery. Having run a host of performance programs for kids from flood impacted communities previously, Cilla knows firsthand the healing and connecting power of theatre. In the wake of devastating flood events in the Dallarnil Region in North Burnett, 2022, she developed a theatre program aimed at mentoring local children (aged 4 to 12 years) to create and perform an original piece that shares stories from these extraordinary weather events. Funded by [Arts Queensland](#), forty-two kids are currently engaged in the 16-week program, which will culminate in a theatre showcase celebrating the resilience and journey to recovery of affected farms, individuals and communities in the North Burnett region.

The program gives kids a valuable chance to actively **participate** in the local recovery process through art and storytelling, whilst fostering a **positive sense of community and shared identity** as they capture this collective moment in the North Burnett region's history. The performance showcase also harnesses the power of intergenerational and intercommunity DM efforts, with families and community members hearing valuable perspectives from local kids about their flood experiences. Additionally, the program empowers children and young people to **learn** new skills in areas like researching, writing, rehearsing, musicianship, composition, technical support and performance while developing confidence and soft skills such as teamwork, project management and public speaking.

This program supports the direct involvement of kids in disaster recovery which has been shown to foster a sense of **health and wellbeing** for children and young people and fosters a sense of being **valued and safe** as their self-efficacy is validated and ability to process the impacts of disaster events is supported.



Gearing our systems to support kids' resilience and wellbeing in disasters

'Instead of praising people for being 'resilient', change the systems that are making them vulnerable'

Muna Abdi (158)

This section provides key findings about what is working well and what needs to be done at a systems-level to support the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children, young people, and their families through the four phases of DM (DM). We have used the TQKP Systems Levers to structure findings from literature and primary data.

From an on-the-ground DM perspective, there are some common themes identified during our stakeholder discussions that provide important context for analysis and recommendations for systems-level changes.

- DM is grappling with the increased occurrence and intensity of events – compounding, cascading, overlapping – stemming from climate change and resulting in systems pressures.
- The specific context of disasters is important and includes things like the event, timing, scale, impact, community, capacity, surrounding DM and political environment.
- DM is standardised in nature to support a consistent approach across time and locations.
- DM involves all three levels of government, meaning that it is embedded within and sensitive to political constraints and enablers.
- Resources are limited and DM operators feel they are expected 'to do more with less'.
- Impacts of disasters compound other challenges and hardships, but systems are not always attuned to, designed, or resourced to support people in these situations.
- Kids and their families are not consistently invited to contribute to DM.
- Specialised infant, child, youth and family services and operators are not consistently invited to contribute to DM, although there are some good examples of this in Queensland.
- The resilience and wellbeing of kids and their families "comes up on occasion" but is not the core business or specialisation of DM.

'Strong relationships were what made the difference.'

Interview with Anita Veivers, Executive Director, Centacare FNQ discussing the 2023 Cyclone Jasper and flood response in FNQ.

Concerted leadership

Concerted leadership across systems is an essential ingredient in achieving quality outcomes for kids (53), particularly in complex environments involving multiple agencies and levels of government like DM. We know that supporting the resilience and wellbeing of kids and their families across disaster PPRR requires prioritisation and focus. This involves strong political and systems leadership, and includes clear governance, shared mission, targeted, long-term investment, and cross-sectoral collaboration. It requires long-term commitment from a wide range of stakeholders to mitigate the risks and harms of disasters and to take the opportunities to "build back better" (7) using a locally led approach.

What we've discovered

Organisations like [UNICEF Australia](#) propose the development of national standards for child-sensitive disaster PPRR (159, 160). Led by the National Emergency Management Agency ([NEMA](#)) with multi-state and sector consultations, these standards would announce a strong commitment to infants, children, and young people, making them visible in the DM space. It would also pave the way for addressing inconsistencies and under-investments in research, policy, and practice.

DM arrangements utilise formal state-wide standards, guidelines, templates, training, and operating models. People we spoke with acknowledged that while this aims to achieve a consistent approach across locations (including multi-agency management structures), this one-size-fits-all approach can result in a lack of flexibility and attention to the nuances of local people, place, and events, including kids and their families.

- While there is an opportunity for local governments to tailor arrangements to their specific community and context, this is limited by a wide range of influences relating to values and cultures of practice, relationship dynamics, timing, resources, capabilities, and capacities.
- The district and township of Tara in Western Downs is an example of the need for government and non-government leaders at all levels to collaborate and tailor DM to the local community and context. People there have experienced a wide range of devastating incidents and disaster events over the last three years. These events have occurred on top of a range of long-term hardships and challenges that kids and their families are already living with. Understanding the specific needs of this community and co-designing solutions through authentic partnerships with community members, local and external agencies and services is critical to ensure that the needs and circumstances of infants, children and young people are attended to.

The case study in section 15 highlights how [Southern Downs Regional Council](#) (SDRC) has used a tailored, collaborative approach across the four phases of DM, with clear benefits in recent bushfire response and recovery activities.

- While kids and their caregivers are not written into Southern Downs DM documents specifically, they are represented by child, youth, and family-focused services in the local DM group membership, as they are in other locations across the state.
- For this membership and involvement to become more common place across local government areas, DM operators involved in TKiD believe that these specialist agencies also need to be represented on district and state level DM groups and written into plans at all levels.

When this involvement and representation of local (specialist) agencies and advocates occurs, it becomes more likely that the perspectives, strengths, and unique needs of local kids and families will be considered 'in scope' when undertaking risk assessments and planning, and when designing and delivering DM and resilience building programs across communities. This approach to working alongside local services to increase their capacity and leverage their existing relationships and roles in communities is highlighted as critical to build resilience at all levels of the system (161).

One of the challenges to achieving consistent and sustainable leadership of child, youth and family inclusive DM in Queensland is a lack of resourcing in the sector. People we spoke with emphasised the importance of shifting government policy, programs, and practice towards a more flexible and comprehensive approach to DM. This should include certainty of long-term funding that accepts the new realities of multiple, cascading and compounding events and impacts on kids, and other community members and groups.

As well as these calls to action for those involved in the DM sector to embrace and apply a child lens when responding to our rapidly changing context, it is also essential for child, youth, and family sector partners to continue to communicate and provide advice about the meaning and impacts of disasters and climate change more broadly on kids' resilience and wellbeing using available data and emerging evidence (159). Agencies like [UNICEF Australia](#), [Royal Far West](#) and [54 Reasons/ Save The Children](#) play a key role linking local and international knowledge, resources, and action. For example, [The UNICEF Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan](#) (2023-30) considers the escalating incidence of disasters and highlights the importance of multi-sector partnerships. TKiD collaborators pointed to agencies and actors best placed to lead this stewardship as:

- children and young people who are actively involved in environmental action and promoting 'green jobs' for the future (159)
- First Nations and other community leaders, custodians, and knowledge holders who maintain critical social, cultural, environmental, and economic roles and responsibilities (90)
- government agencies and initiatives relating to environmental change and disaster resilience



Pocket money donations from kids at Little World Early Learning Centre, Edmonton to support flood relief efforts in FNQ, 2023

- specific child-central social sectors involved in education in resilience and disaster risk reduction
- businesses and other investors to spur scalable innovations and fund local initiatives.

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

'Funds are limited and the funding cycle of government (e.g. DRFA) is complicated and filled with red tape and bureaucracy – lengthy, constantly changing rules.'

Interview with Jennifer, rural local government officer

Smarter investment

Kids' resilience and wellbeing requires place based, flexible, long-term investment in a multi-faceted service system to respond to the diversity of needs and circumstances of kids and their families in DM and beyond. These systems should be informed by and add to a robust evidence base, incorporate universal, secondary, and tertiary programs, support experimentation and learning (162), and produce value, impact, and productivity across sectors, time and place (7).

To meet the needs of kids in disasters, greater and smarter investment in DM-related research, policy, program, and operational management arrangements is required (27). This investment is likely to come from a range of sources and actors who share an interest in the mission of child resilience and wellbeing, including all levels of government, non-government and philanthropic organisations, tertiary institutions and community fund raising.

What we've discovered

TQKP has consistently heard how important it is for kids and families to have access to support services and people who are familiar, inclusive, and provide them with continuity. The ability to have ongoing relationships of trust with service providers impacts their ability to adequately prepare for disasters and to effectively respond and



recover from events. This type of experience requires appropriately resourced and capable local service systems, and DM funding certainty and security. A major barrier to collaborative efforts at the community level identified by NGOs involved in TKiD is the environment of competitive and individualised funding that currently exists, which leads to 'marketised approaches to care'. This exists in and outside of disaster settings and reduces commitment to and trust in working with other agencies. An increasingly popular alternative to this traditional approach to funding in the community disaster resilience field in Australia (e.g. Monash University's [Fire to Flourish](#) program) and abroad ([GlobalGiving](#)) is offered through participatory granting (163). Participatory granting puts decision-making power into the hands of communities, allowing them to use their collective knowledge and resources to prioritise long-term improvements (164). This approach was demonstrated recently in the bushfire-impacted town of Cobargo in southern NSW, where the community set up a trust to fund their collective recovery efforts. Integrating a range of philanthropic models, it centres the community and values transparency, collaboration, inclusion, equity, and social justice. This approach to investment is considered most effective when it aligns community-led resilience (recovery) planning and granting processes (165).

Investment priorities raised during the project that reflect the need for participatory granting approaches include

- enhancements of community leadership and capabilities to support genuinely locally led DM planning and action
- improvements to the current centralised approach to developing and administering funding – with current processes lacking transparency, responsiveness, coherence, and certainty for local communities and DM operators on the ground, and undermining locally led efforts, capacity and resilience.

Having access to a range of timely and quality universal, secondary, and tertiary programs is location-dependent (e.g. people living in larger population centres have greater access to a range of services) and does not align with the level or type of disaster risk that people live with. This lack of access to services, particularly specialist services, is a key challenge to supporting the resilience and wellbeing of kids impacted by disasters. Reflecting this, stakeholders involved in the TKiD proposed targeted investments in (i) existing specialist child and youth services in high-risk locations that are disaster prone with large numbers/ high proportions of children aged 0-18, and (ii) specialist child and youth disaster workers that can be brought in to impacted locations as required to support and improve local capacity.

Grant administration is another critical matter that directly impacts the availability and timeliness of quality,

coordinated efforts. We have heard about the fragmented nature of funding across time, place, and organisations and its impacts. From a funded agency perspective, there is an urgent need for greater certainty and timely release of funds, with less red tape and greater flexibility and continuity. This will aid in reducing gaps and disruptions to services, support relationships held with community members and networks and reduce the loss and turn-over of experienced knowledge holders and practitioners.

TKiD collaborators shared the need for:

- Long-term investments in risk reduction, resilience and recovery, including flexible funding for sustained employment of recovery and resilience specialists in local communities and government agencies
- Medium-long term recovery funding models that are joined up with immediate relief/early recovery activity, recognising the importance of familiarity and certainty, and reducing the load on impacted kids and families to retell their stories and build new relationships of trust.

Investing in capacity building in people and systems is called for at all levels to bring benefit to kids and families across the PRR spectrum. This incorporates and goes beyond professional development of individuals and includes:

- amplifying existing strengths (programs, resources, and other actions) through recurrent resourcing and promotion, and extending the reach of these across locations
- improving communication and messaging that involves and appeals to diverse kids and families across locations and hazards, cultures, ages and family types
- improving resourcing to Queensland's Department of Education as well as the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland to ensure schools have resources to support their role across the four phases of DM
- enhancing resourcing of early childhood education and care services and libraries in their delivery of programs to infants, children and young people
- supporting local capacity to deliver and coordinate programs that engage kids in DM
- building district and state level capacity to provide specialised infant, child, and youth focused disaster resources and supports to local communities as needed
- improving DM frameworks, guidelines, and plans so they involve and support the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children, young people, and their families in all phases of DM

- systems-level professional development to build the capacity and efficacy of local and familiar supports (e.g., local educators, healthcare professionals, and emergency personnel) and non-local DM operators
- evidence-based child-centred and family-focused programs across PPRR that include those relating to child-centred DRR and child-centred climate action (141) research to expand empirical knowledge of kid's experiences, and of effective interventions and approaches to support kids' resilience and wellbeing across the phases of PPRR (27, 100).

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

'We still think of resilience as an individual responsibility, predominantly. I'd like to see us move to it being a collective responsibility'

Michelle Roberts, Director ROBSET Consultancy, TKiD 1 panel

Engaged public

Reducing risks, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters is everyone's business. Sharing information, knowledge, decision-making and action requires socially and culturally inclusive and capable relationship building and communication efforts by DM authorities and buy-in from local people and groups. These relationship building efforts require respect for local leadership and knowledge and local people's right to be genuine partners in the DM processes of PPRR – to share responsibility.

It isn't about "community voices being heard". It's about at-risk communities being respected and trusted to collaborate in the process and for the agencies to modify their processes and expectations to enable community participation (166)

'We surveyed young people visiting our centre and 74% reported that climate change is a concern for them. When we asked our staff what percentage of young people they expected to cite climate change as an issue, it was only 10%. This shows how important it is to genuinely listen to youth voices, particularly on the issue of climate change, as they will be the ones most impacted by its effects. It also highlights the need to educate staff regarding climate change and its impacts on young people now, and into the future'

Youth mental health service manager, Queensland

The principle and practice of shared responsibility as described here requires a willingness and ability for those involved in PPRR to collaborate in a range of different contexts and timeframes. Consideration of context is critical. In addition to the type of risks that exist and disaster events that have happened, DM must also consider recent and historical events for people in the community. For example, following six years of drought, bushfires destroyed a number of family homes and



'If you are starting from a really strong base, it's easy to do the other stuff well. The stronger our connections are, the more robust our supports are for kids.'

Interview with Susan Harrison, Director Clinical Services and Strategy, BUSHkids

properties in the Millmerran district on the Darling Downs in 2019, and then again in early and late 2023.

Consideration of context is particularly acute for First Nations peoples living in remote locations with ongoing traumatic experiences relating to government intervention and over-riding of human rights (167). In these situations, DM agencies and operators, and external disaster human services and researchers must privilege Indigenous leadership, cultural practices, and knowledge as a way of exercising cultural humility, safety, and responsiveness. This approach features shared decision making and explicit involvement in decision making processes regarding social, cultural, and spiritual wellbeing on Country, underpinned by their custodian obligations (90).

Stakeholders involved in the TKiD project emphasise that all these activities will require additional resources and coordination to make them happen, and in the first instance to build the capacity of individuals and groups involved (27, 83). Immediate priorities include efforts that increase cultural competence and that build a shared awareness of how disasters may affect infants, children, and young people, and how to respond with appropriate and integrated resources and actions. This process itself provides opportunities for relationship building, shared learning, and deep engagement.

What we've discovered

A key benefit of Queensland's locally led approach to DM is the greater likelihood that leaders, Elders, and DM operators will have existing relationships with residents, businesses, services, and groups, including kids and their families, which can be leveraged across PPRR. These DM activities can then become a part of the fabric of other community activities. For example, DRR can become a part of school curricula, community education about local disaster arrangements can occur at annual community events and recovery activities be delivered through NCCs or youth services.



Community bushfire meeting at the Dalveen Progress Association Hall in November 2023. People came together to share information and needs quickly because of pre-existing relationships and shared learning from earlier events.

Locally led approaches make it easier to connect and partner with local kids with a view to:

- investing in child and youth led resilience programs that connect kids to their local environments and communities and involve them in DRR in meaningful and empowering ways
- providing a variety of ways for kids to receive and share relevant disaster-related information
- making community education and preparedness programs practical as well as informative to appeal to diverse kids
- taking an intergenerational approach that recognises the active role of young people in household and community level responses (94)
- building what kids know and recommend into actions – in alignment with the international [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), kids having a voice requires the right environments and space and opportunities to be heard by people with decision making influence. (118)

When recognising the diversity of local communities, it is also important to respect the histories of the place and peoples, and changes that have happened over time. This work includes seeking out and respecting the diverse perspectives and experiences of First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse children, young people, families, Elders, and leaders, aiming to work in partnership with local representative and community groups wherever possible (166)

As mentioned, inequalities are exacerbated in disasters and so local, district and state DM agencies must build this into their thinking and decision-making and prioritise supports for localities and peoples who live with entrenched multilayered disadvantage and exclusion. The challenge from a systems perspective is making this type of approach consistent across time, place, and people.

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

Stronger workforces

Regardless of their professional training, innate resilience, and unique commitment to community workers, teachers, emergency personnel, and DM leaders can experience anxiety, exhaustion, fear, and hopelessness, and they too require supports. This support includes comfortable and safe working environments and conditions, resources to do their work effectively, opportunities to access regular supervision, and professional development opportunities that enable them to upskill in both disaster and child, youth, and family contexts (27, 84). By being supported and feeling capable, workforces are better prepared to support the children and young people they interact with (27, 83).

In recent years the need to build resilience-oriented workforces has been identified. Research that supports this type of shift in workforce development will likely aid in connecting fragmented actors and professions around the challenge of building resilient people and communities and is particularly pertinent to the DM setting. Key findings of this type of research include the need for: An interdisciplinary resilience-oriented workforce that is trauma and neuro-informed

- Workforce development programs that build shared language, understanding, processes and capacity for professionals and communities to work in a trauma and neuro-informed way
- Collaborative organisational model that promote information sharing
- Leadership models that foster a balance between workforce autonomy and operation as a collective entity (129).

What we've discovered

A strong theme emerging from this project is the importance of building the knowledge, resources, and skills of various groups of people involved in DM across Queensland locations to better support kids and their families to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. This workforce includes permanent and temporary staff and volunteers, including those on the frontline and in strategic leadership and policy making positions.

Specific actions identified during stakeholder engagements relate to the following areas.

- DM training and resources - Child and family specialists in these types of settings value the opportunity to do disaster related training and have access to disaster related resources when they have been developed with kids in mind.
- Solid and consistent induction for incoming PPRR workers that includes specialist topics like supporting the resilience and wellbeing of different age groups of kids and families in ways that are culturally responsive and trauma informed.



- Specialist child and youth training and resources for permanent and volunteer DM operators and for local people and agencies who are taking on longer term disaster related roles.
- Clinical, professional and cultural supervision to ensure that workers are cared for so they can care for others.
- Peer support and learning as a way of facilitating positive relationships and shared learnings.
- Common lists of go-to people to tap into during distinct phases of disasters – including child and youth specialists (across health, trauma, development, parenting etc).

There is no current focus in the [Queensland DM Training Framework](#) on understanding or working with infants, children, young people, and families, which is a challenge as this Framework sets the priorities and provides an authorising environment for professional learning. As has been the case with the recent research, development and implementation of the Disability Inclusive Risk Reduction (DIDRR) initiative in Queensland, strong leadership is required, supported by partnerships involving government, non-government, and academic institutions, adequate resourcing and commitment to multi-agency workforce development and integrated delivery.

Also identified is a need to have regional or state-wide pools of infant, child, and youth specialists that can be called on as required.

- These professionals would be involved in providing specialist training opportunities and even supervision to DM operators and local agencies in and outside of times of disaster.
- A training opportunity noted throughout the literature was that of Mental Health First Aid, and Youth Mental Health First Aid. These courses are available for adults to complete and focus on delivering support for people over 18 and young people aged 12 to 18 respectively (135).
- Mental Health Recovery training is subsequently suggested as effective for longer-term coping skills for both the workforce and the children, young people, and community they work with (135).

Another crucial consideration regarding workforces in the context of DM is the benefit of familiar and culturally safe spaces and personnel for kids, families, and other service providers. Fostering trusting relationships is key when working in disaster context; however, is difficult for temporary visiting personnel (136-138).

- Agencies like [BUSHkids](#) have created strategies that allow their local embedded workers to draw on their regional allied health team members to provide a range of specialist services.

The importance of these trusted relationships with familiar people and groups is likely a reason for the emergence and effectiveness of school-based interventions, activities, and resources. However, they require well-planned implementation and resourcing and a further focus on initiatives for non-school aged children. The high program and care burden placed on educators across health, ecological, wellbeing and disaster sectors to maintain these activities without additional support is not sustainable, as identified in the literature and in discussions with TKiD stakeholders (34, 83, 139). Innovative ways of distributing child, youth and family focused disaster responsibilities more broadly are required, which will require recurrent, additional funding and the right authorising environment, with some researchers proposing that this includes investing in a variety of other relevant DM workforces to foster familiarity and trust within at-risk communities (83, 122).

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

Integrated delivery

Priorities for integrated delivery relate to relationships between existing (local) and new/temporary (external) services, and effective communication with, engagement of and service delivery for impacted peoples across the four phases of PPRR. Evidence suggests these matters require better consideration, coordination and resourcing, and a greater awareness of and willingness to recognise and respect local knowledge and leadership and prioritise the needs of specific groups of people in disasters including infants, children, and young people. It is important that this relationship building and shared responsibility for planning and engagement of local communities occur outside of the imminent response phase of disaster to ensure that when events do happen, the architecture for integrated action is in place.

While there is no way to completely prevent disruption to kids' lives and experiences, evidence suggests that the risk of trauma may be minimised and managed to guide children and young people's perceived experience, resilience, and recovery outcomes (22, 53, 168). In acknowledging their experiences in a disaster context, we can understand how integrated their ecological system is, and how holistic our disaster support needs to be, to balance the resilience scale (35, 57, 168). Rather than being assumed as innately resilient, the impact of disaster on children and young people needs to be directly heard and interpreted from a child or youth perspective, advocated for within community and systems level arrangements (53), and balanced with protective factors that facilitate resilience (57, 168).

What we've discovered

Experience shows that collaborative approaches based on building partnerships between place-based organisations, DM agencies and communities promote a wider understanding of local service systems and the development of strong inter-sectoral relationships. These pre-existing relationships provide important capacity to systems, particularly during the response phase, when trust and rapid provision of supports is crucial. By investing in partnership-based models with a specialised infant, child, youth and family focus, systems are better equipped to respond quickly and effectively to meet the needs of kids in disasters.

This approach recognises and respects the existing role and relationships held by local community embedded services and supports them through partnerships with additional (external) disaster NGOs and Government agencies and includes them in multiagency committees and groups (e.g. child and youth task forces) that take responsibility for coordinating action around specific people/groups and issues.

A key matter requiring improved coordination is that kids and families need information and services that are easy to find, understand, and use. However, this is challenged by the complexity, overload and fragmentation of information and types of assistance during and following disasters and has a range of negative impacts on already distressed people. The role of community-based service navigators has emerged in recent years to help people (including service staff) understand and traverse the complex post-disaster service systems to reduce fragmentation and support more timely, seamless access to support (169).

- One suggested improvement is that the three levels of government coordinate and deliver all relevant information through an integrated online DM portal where impacted people and helping organisations can find all communications and offers of assistance.

The need for better coordination and integration of both messaging and offers of assistance flows down to the local level into the operation and membership of local DM groups and sub-groups and into local service delivery. Better outcomes for kids and their families are more likely if DM leaders build relationships and partnerships with local Elders and key local child, youth, and family groups and services that are already embedded in the community and involve them in relevant DM committees and operations. This approach enables them to understand the particular context that are or will impact local kids' disaster experiences and plan and prioritise accordingly.

- This requires agreements, policies, systems, and practices that are flexible and nimble enough to share information and resources (including workers) across agencies quickly. Information sharing is an ongoing challenge to all agencies during disaster response and recovery and undermines person-centred approaches to service delivery.

Integrated multidisciplinary supports play a significant role across all phases of DM (27) and will by necessity include familiar and non-familiar staff (non-local agencies). This collaborative approach is necessary to accelerate community trust and openness to receiving the range of supports required (83, 122, 136, 137). Experience clearly



Councils offer resources like toys, activity packs and books at Evacuation and Recovery Centres to respond to the needs of children and families


shows that maintaining service and agency 'silos' is ineffective and detrimental to the delivery and receipt of such support by kids (27).

Timely coordination and delivery of family friendly, culturally responsive, and inclusive, neuro- and trauma-informed, and age-appropriate service information and resources is important in the response and recovery stages. This may include engagement tools developed, resourced and distributed by the local service system as a part of local preparedness activities.

A holistic mix of services and programs are more likely to be delivered at the right time and place when DM agencies and operators learn from and partner with local Elders, people and groups that reflect the local community's diversity. Adaptive approaches for mental health, education, and other support services must align with the multifaceted needs of kids, and subsequently foster engagement, empowerment, and integration (62). Early childhood education and care services, kindergartens, schools, playgroups, libraries, youth groups, all-faith churches, multi-cultural and other community-embedded services have a key role to play, as they are already involved with diverse peoples and groups.

- Child and family hubs provide integrated, inclusive access to social support as well as a range of service offerings (170), often in areas of high socio-economic need. The value of these important relationships and roles should be recognised and built into the four phases of PPRR to maximise inclusion and facilitate long-term supports.

When it comes to delivering quality services, there is a need for programs and tools that are co-designed with and engaging of a wide age range of children, including young people. For example, during and after disasters, it is critical to help kids keep connected across the support ecosystem directly and by supporting parents and communities to support kids via multiple modes (online, phone, face to face) at times that suit them (includes weekends and after hours), and over long-term recovery periods. This has implications for the way service systems are planned, funded, and operationalised.



The pivotal role of early childhood education and care services and schools in engaging kids and their parents is clear. However, these settings manage many competing demands and there can be a lack of strategic direction about their role in PPRR activities.

- While the responsibility for leveraging relationships with local child and youth centred services will remain with Councils, this project has identified that more strategic conversations and negotiations at the state level are required. This includes through the [State Human and Social Recovery Functional Group](#), chaired by the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities, and the Arts.

Finally, a key solution that emerged through project consultations is ensuring Evacuation, Relief, and Recovery Centres and workforces across the state can support the resilience and wellbeing of kids and families, including:

- inclusion of kids' and family perspectives in planning, evaluation, and learning after events
- child friendly, culturally responsive, inclusive and neuro-informed environments, resources, and workforces
- clear arrangements for early childhood education and care services and schools if children need to stay in place during an event
- tailored evacuation plans for displaced priority groups including late term pregnant women, infants and breast-feeding mothers, women and children impacted by DFV, children in out-of-home care, and children with complex needs

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

'If we aren't identifying kids as a cohort in advance, we aren't considering their needs, which means we aren't planning for it.'

Interview with Anita Veivers, Executive Director, Centacare FNQ

Putting data and learning to work

The increasing interest in and benefits of evidence-based DM services, programs and initiatives was discussed by stakeholders, particularly in the workshops. Many argued that data-informed decisions should be made about all aspects of DM and DRR, which includes a mix of local, traditional, and scientific sources of knowledge. Barriers to

data informed decision making and practice include:

- The absence of any infant, child, and youth lead and outcome indicator frameworks for measuring progress and impact, and enabling continuous improvement across PPRR programs¹ (131)
- Lack of capability, opportunity, and motivation for data collection that can be used to generate and mobilise evidence (in practice)
- Funding conditions that limit time and resources given to non-operational matters and reporting obligations that focus on administrative requirements (e.g. compliance).

A key message from the literature is that much more research and investigation is warranted regarding kids across DM components and phases². Research should continue to build empirical knowledge regarding kid's diverse disaster experiences and evaluate current and future DM activities and interventions for this cohort; and those findings need to be rigorously translated to practice (27). This helps build the capabilities of those involved in supporting communities across the phases of PPRR.

Our experience of COVID-19 provided insights into the types of methodologies that researchers can use when producing knowledge with and/or about kids. Facing the restrictions challenged researchers to seek and test out more hybrid approaches that included in-person, on-line, and intermediary methods.

Stakeholders involved in the TKiD project called for national, state, and local government policy, practice, funding, and evaluation frameworks and guidelines to better consider infants, children and young people (120). This includes national standards for child-sensitive DM (160). Further calls have been made to improve conceptual definition and ecological validity of disaster research and integrate transparent co-design for DM (53, 63). Finally, research and practice should encourage, promote, and advocate for kid's involvement in DM, as is happening in relation to climate change, by ensuring their voices are actively listened to and integrated within disaster decision-making and activities (94, 106, 117).

What we've discovered

There are many opportunities in DM in Queensland to improve the types of information that are collected and how they are used at each of the different systems levels to improve outcomes for impacted kids and families. As a system there is a need to make sure that relevant data is collected and used to monitor and evaluate program efficacy and impact, and importantly, to improve the services provided to and outcomes achieved with kids and their families.

1 Which could link to the [Inspector-General of Emergency Management Standard for DM](#)

2 The Western Sydney University Young and Resilient Research Centre has produced a [Youth Co-Research Toolkit for Researchers](#) that would assist these efforts.

- There is a strong commitment within the child and youth sector to asking families and children directly about their service experiences to ensure there is continuous learning and improvement in service delivery. These opportunities support person-centred practices that give kids and their families a voice in the services that are designed and delivered. It is a way to ensure that the quality and impact of programs is prioritised, however TKiD collaborators shared that this can be difficult to enact, as service capacity is stretched.
- The data from routine funded program/project reports provide good opportunities for agencies and funding bodies to move towards a more robust system of monitoring, evaluation, and learning that can be used to inform investment decisions, alignment with sector standards, workforce development and research projects.



It is critical that investment activities are based on clearly defined outcomes and driven by a commitment to shared measurement and collective experimentation and learning (162).

Shared measurement includes a collaborative approach to learning, acting, and measuring – creating a learning system¹. TQKP believes that the process of shared measurement requires strong preconditions for success such as leadership, collaboration, and trust, along with a process that builds shared understanding - through exchanging knowledge, learning, acting and measuring together.

- Shared measurement relies on a common child-centred PPRR framework that incorporates both lead and outcome indicators to ensure that helping agencies know what to look for and measure over time – allowing for continuous improvement over time. The Nest articulates measures that capture domains of for children’s wellbeing, and along with disaster specific local indicators, provide a strong basis for identifying, targeting, resourcing, and evaluating strategies that enable kids to thrive.

Investing in learning systems based on shared measurement creates healthy conditions for research. Greater investment in research that provides evidence of how DM programs support the resilience and wellbeing of infants, children, young people, and their families is needed and would be especially welcome if these efforts were applied in the Queensland setting. Specific research opportunities mentioned include the evaluation of DM program implementation and impact, investigation of kids’ diverse experiences of disasters, and prioritising knowledge building about overlooked populations.

There are also many opportunities to collect evidence from existing programs in urban, rural, regional, and remote locations, which could tie into emerging state government interests in improved monitoring, evaluating, and learning². Reflecting key matters raised in stakeholder engagement and in the literature, future research could include, but not be limited to, the topics listed below.

Engage and interpret child and young person’s voices appropriately and encouragingly, to inform co-design ideation and empirical understandings of disaster experience.	Frame and interpret child and young person’s disaster experiences with acknowledgement of developmental capacities and theories.	Deepen knowledge of appropriate child and young person capabilities within and across disaster contexts.
Improve our understanding of the unique yet integrated nature of children and young people within the community affected by disaster.	Examine the effects of multiple and consecutive disaster events on infants, children, and young people.	Improve awareness of the specialised support that children of first responders may require.
Better appreciate the specialised cultural knowledge that First Nations infants, children and young peoples contribute in disaster contexts.	Deepen understanding of specialised needs of diverse cohorts in DM contexts. This could include, but is not limited to First Nations, CALD, people living with a disability, LGBTQIA+, carers and kids in care and kids living in non-metropolitan centres	Build understanding of the specialised support that infants, children, and young people living in rural and remote regions may require in disaster context.

¹ See more on human learning system approaches [here](#).

² The Queensland Reconstruction Authority has just employed a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer to undertake this work.



While the lack of investment in infant, child, and youth related research is a critical barrier, so too is the lack of consistent distribution and use of the research that *is* emerging. There is a need to make data available and readily accessible to all interested parties through coherent mechanisms and pathways. Ideas shared by stakeholders include better structuring and streamlining of information flows within and across agencies at all levels and providing opportunities and incentives for workers and community members to come together to apply and share learning through processes that contribute to continuous improvement. This might happen through community information and training sessions, local human and social recovery and/or case coordination groups, or through DRR planning undertaken by various lead agencies. These groups have multiple roles to play including mobilising and generating new knowledge. These shifts in practice require concerted, cross-system leadership, with clear commitments to integrated delivery, engaged publics, and workforce development across all four phases of DM.

- The DIDRR initiative in recent years provides a good example of effective roll out and uptake of new research. The partnership initiative included a number of government, non-government, and academic institutions collaborating with disability advocates and their families to develop, implement and evaluate policy, programs, and resources (including P-CEP) that aim to better include people who live with a disability in DM.

Local and state DM and disaster recovery worker networks and primary and community health networks are used informally to distribute information and resources, share learning, and develop new skills. This happens through the formal training modules offered in the [Queensland DM Training Framework](#), as well as through informal online communities of practice and peer support groups; however, these informal networks are not active in all locations.

- It is common practice, as a part of recovery, for the funding of worker and community information sessions with specialist knowledge holders. This is often

organised through agencies like Red Cross – and the [Disaster Recovery Advisors and Mentors program](#). This program includes people with child, youth, and family focused knowledge.

- DM operators also routinely share online evidence-based resources with their networks – including child and youth centred work like the [Community Trauma Toolkit](#) offered by Emerging Minds.
- Feedback from DM operators is that many people consider they do not have the time to read research and other reports in their busy everyday lives, but that they do value the opportunity to do masterclasses and attend webinars and annual DM conferences and summits, like the [Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience \(AIDR\) conference](#) and the [Queensland Local Government DM Conference](#). These fora are highly regarded and attended and represent an effective way for people to hear about new research and meet the people involved in undertaking it. TKiD stakeholders advised that the quality of these conferences is trusted, and they are considered a reliable and efficient way of hearing about important and relevant new information – in an environment where there is an over-abundance of information and a shortage of time for people involved in operational matters to engage with it. They will often follow up on particular projects that they have heard about in these fora. DM operators advise that it is a common practice to subscribe to the [AIDR knowledge hub](#), as it is a ‘one stop shop’ for key PPRR information include the [AIDR Education for Young People program](#) that promotes disaster resilience education for all young Australians, in schools and other educational settings.

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations can be found in the [Principles and Recommendations section](#).

TQKP Systems Levers at work

Child and Youth Task Group in the Southern Downs

The road into Wallangarra Jennings,
on the Queensland-NSW border in November 2023



Bushfires burned through Queensland's Southern Downs region in November 2023. Two heavily affected areas were the farming district around Dalveen, and the border township of Wallangarra Jennings.

These two communities experienced quite different bushfire events, but in both cases the resilience and wellbeing of kids and families has been challenged.

Throughout the disaster, local human social recovery officers listened to local stakeholders at community meetings, in evacuation centres and at multi-service local recovery hubs. Drawing on this community knowledge, and grant and local recovery **data**, they quickly identified the need for targeted, differentiated, and specialised supports for kids in the Southern Downs. This led to the development of an integrated and specialised service response.

The officers worked together with local and regional child-centred organisations to quickly establish a child and youth task group, a sub-group of the Local Human and Social Recovery Group (LHSRG), led by Southern Downs Regional Council.

Since 2019 the LHSRG has invested in building connections and delivering disaster-related training to a range of local organisations. These pre-existing, embedded local relationships allowed the Community Recovery Resilience Officer (CRRO) to quickly negotiate with [BUSHkids](#), a local rural children's allied health service, to coordinate this new child and youth sub-group, working alongside other child-centred and family-focused workers and organisations.

Taking a **concerted leadership** approach, members of the task group have organised engagements and actions that recognise, prioritise and respond to kids' needs over time. Membership includes early years and family support workers, school principals, a student guidance officer, neighbourhood centres, local government and representatives of child, youth and family organisations.

Task group members are supported by the CRRO with recovery information, a structured and funded peer support program, and additional training, including [Mackillop Seasons Stormbirds](#) program, and [Creative Recovery Network](#) recovery facilitation. Building **stronger workforces** is a key strategy to ensure leaders and practitioners are skilled to provide developmentally appropriate and targeted support to kids.

Stakeholder feedback suggests that the immediate prioritisation and **integrated delivery** around children impacted by the fires has been invaluable to their resilience and wellbeing, and an important form of practical support to the early years centres and schools that work with them.

Sustained funding and employment of CRROs within local governments, shows how **smarter investment** in consistent, long-term initiatives benefits local communities across the four phases of DM in Queensland.

Principles and Recommendations



Principles

These overarching principles are intended to underpin all recommendations.

Recommendations

Recommendations are made in line with [The Nest domains and TQKP Systems Levers](#).

In Practice

Practical examples of where this is or could be happening across the eco-system.

Principles	In Practice
<p>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.</p>	<p>This principle embeds Australia’s obligations under the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning the right to survival and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.’ (171) <p>It aligns and supports the implementation of the UN’s Sendai Framework guiding principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Protection of persons and their assets while promoting and protecting all human rights, including the right to development.’ (2) <p>In practice this looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governments applying the child-friendly checklist in the current Australian Red Cross Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit into local evacuation sub-plans and associated work instructions • DTATSIPCA considering the resilience, wellbeing and rights of infants, children, young people, and their families in their annual review of their State Human and Social Functional Recovery Group Plan and District Human and Social Recovery Plans across the State • QRA considering the resilience, wellbeing and rights of infants, children, young people and their families in their annual review and updates of the State and Local Recovery and Resilience Plans • IGEM considering how the Standard for DM supports the resilience, wellbeing and rights of infants, children, young people, and their families • NEMA working collaboratively to develop national standards for child-sensitive DM.

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 developmentally appropriate ways across all phases of DM.

In practice this looks like

- Local government engaging with existing Council Youth Advisory Committees or other local youth groups in the implementation, review and improvement of local DM plans and programs
- State and national agencies engaging with existing youth fora in the implementation, review and improvement of state and national DM plans and programs
- Disaster Recovery and Resilience service providers engaging local young people to co-design and run programs following local bushfire, flood, cyclone, and other disaster events.

3. DM 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.

In practice this looks like

- All Queensland Councils employing community recovery and resilience officers who engage in long-term work that promotes resilience and reduces vulnerability of community members, including kids and their families
- Councils partnering with researchers to monitor, evaluate, and learn from these activities, sharing findings through their discrete networks including Local Government Association of Queensland ([LGAQ](#))
- Agencies and Councils working with local Neighbourhood and Community Centres in the planning and delivery of disaster risk reduction activities through existing and new programming, ensuring targeted engagement of high-risk locations and groups, including kids and families.



Nest Domains

The Nest provides a foundation for us to understand how we might foster resilience through supportive developmental environments for kids in disasters. These recommendations consider the needs of kids throughout the PPRR phases across six interconnected domains of wellbeing.

Nest Domain	Recommendations	In practice
Valued, Loved and Safe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-design and implement child and youth friendly disaster communications across PPRR 2. Support schools and early years centres to develop plans incorporating DM. Include reunification processes, return to routine plans, familiar faces, and peer connections 3. Provide parents/care givers with increased access to evidence-based supports to cope with disaster impacts and better support kids 4. Ensure that whenever it is relevant and feasible, evacuation centres include family areas to reduce exposure to toxic stress, and are resourced with safe breastfeeding and infant sleeping spaces, nappies, age-appropriate toys and spaces for play 5. Expand supports that protect against increased domestic and family violence in response and recovery phases. 	<p>Birdies Tree disaster resilience resources help children and families build emotional resilience to cope with and recover from disasters.</p> <p>Royal Far West provides a Kids Resilience Toolkit that helps kids and families develop emotional resilience.</p> <p>The Australian Red Cross Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit provides clear and helpful advice regarding ways to incorporate the needs of infants, children, young people and families into evacuation centres.</p> <p>The National Gender Emergency Management Guidelines assist with the management of domestic family violence in disasters.</p>
Healthy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Include tailored age and needs based cohort planning across all DM phases. This could include infants, children and young people with complex medical issues/disabilities/chronic health conditions and developmental needs 7. Resource and expand holistic and multidisciplinary initiatives that integrate physical and mental health, resilience and wellbeing approaches in education, early years and community settings during preparedness and recovery phases 8. Resource the development of neuro and trauma informed approaches that build the capabilities and resilience of infants, children, young people, families, workforces, and communities in disasters. 	<p>The Emerging Minds Community Trauma Toolkit contains resources to help and support adults and children before, during and after a disaster or traumatic event.</p> <p>QUT and the Australian Education Foundation have produced National Guidelines for Trauma Aware Education</p>
Participating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Involve children and young people in all phases of DM, via developmentally appropriate opportunities to actively participate in family, school, community, environment, advocacy and policy activities, including climate action 10. Resource and amplify intergenerational, whole of community approaches to DM that leverage community assets and infrastructure and that invite in quieter community voices. 	<p>Mental Health First Aid Australia offer Teen MHFA training.</p> <p>The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience provides a Disaster Resilience Education Handbook for Young People as guidance for those seeking to engage kids in disaster risk reduction learning and action.</p> <p>The Resilient Towns Initiative was a university-led, locally implemented initiative undertaken over 2021–23 that involved collaboration between researchers from the University of New South Wales and RMIT University, Red Cross, Anglicare and local and New South Wales governments. The initiative involved 7 towns and villages in the area and aimed to support these communities through youth-led resilience and recovery planning forums.</p>

<p>Identity and Culture</p>	<p>11. Implement prevention, preparedness and recovery activities that amplify and foster holistic connections to culture and place - such as environmental education and arts-based community development and place-making initiatives.</p> <p>12. Consider cultural responsiveness, gender identity, disability and neuro-diverse accessibility in program and initiative design.</p>	<p>The Fire to Flourish program has partnered with and funded Clarence Valley community leaders to run a program called Blicks Fishing Trip. This gives local kids directly impacted by fire and natural hazards a chance to connect through a multigenerational camp. Attendees learn living skills such as fishing and connecting with Aboriginal culture and history.</p> <p>Queenslanders with a Disability Network co-host Building Inclusive Disaster Resilient Community action planning sessions with Councils that lead to better inclusion of people living with disability and their carers – in Southern Downs, this includes a focus on kids.</p>
<p>Material Basics</p>	<p>13. Continue to address as a policy priority significant inequities and adversities experienced by many families to strengthen access to material basics before disaster strikes</p> <p>14. Invest in locally available recovery supports such as service brokerage, free Kindy and childcare, aid with transport, and financial assistance with costs associated with housing, schooling, and long-term housing</p> <p>15. Resource education, community, recreation, and transport infrastructure to foster 'return to normal' rapidly and 'build back better' approaches long term.</p>	<p>The Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit includes a checklist that helps make evacuation centres more responsive to the needs of infants, children, young people and their families.</p> <p>Neighbourhood and Community Centres like those in Laidley and Rosewood play an active role in disaster preparedness, response and recovery in their communities, including providing access to food, transport, and other material basics for kids and their families.</p>
<p>Learning</p>	<p>16. Resource and expand evidence-based programs that promote disaster awareness and self-efficacy for children and young people</p> <p>17. Embed action-oriented DM education that involves kids in real world problem solving across curriculum and that leans into First Nations cultural and traditional environmental knowledge.</p>	<p>Students from the Harkaway Primary School created a Manifesto that educates kids about bushfires. This is a part of a broader Schools in Fire Country program, managed by Natural Hazards Research Australia.</p> <p>The Red Cross Pillowcase workshops help children prepare for, cope with and respond to an emergency.</p> <p>Helping Hands is an ABC Kids disaster resilience curriculum planning tool kit for early childhood educators to help young children and their families prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters.</p>

Systems Levers

The Six Systems Levers provide us with a framework to consider how we might best gear our systems to support the resilience and wellbeing of kids in disasters. These recommendations relate to strategies that cultivate adaptive, coordinated and high functioning systems capable of meeting the wellbeing needs of kids in disasters.

Systems Lever	Recommendations	In practice
Concerted Leadership	<p>18. Involve child, family and youth practitioners, educators, and leaders in local and district DM planning</p> <p>19. Amplify flexible and responsive DM partnership models that incorporate smaller place-based organisations, networks, and groups</p> <p>20. Undertake interagency multidisciplinary sector capacity and capability building activities during prevention, preparedness, and recovery phases to better support community informed, coordinated and streamlined responses</p> <p>21. Advocate for national principles and standards for child-sensitive PPRR.</p>	<p>Ensure child, family and youth practitioners, educators and leaders are included in Local Government DM groups and/or sub-groups.</p> <p>Whenever possible, Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and Arts uses DRFA (Cat A and C) funds to engage and resource local child, youth, and family centred organisations to deliver recovery and resilience services and initiatives.</p>
Smarter Investment	<p>22. Explore and build upon community fundraising and philanthropic contributions to test emerging innovations to supporting kids in disaster contexts</p> <p>23. Implement community fundraising efforts that extend beyond the response phase of disasters.</p>	<p>Apply learnings from the Monash Sustainable Development Institute Fire to Flourish program that partners with and provides participatory granting to local communities for child and youth centred disaster resilience and recovery activities.</p>
Engaged Public	<p>24. Involve kids, families, and communities directly in the commissioning and co-design of place based, culturally informed DM supports</p> <p>25. Streamline and simplify systems where possible to remove access and navigation barriers for kids, families and communities seeking DM support</p> <p>26. Provide public access to evidence based materials relevant to kids in disasters via key public facing portals, like the <i>Get Ready</i> website and app</p> <p>27. Build skills and awareness for kids, families and communities to recognise and respond to signs of trauma in others via appropriate neuro and trauma informed training and shared language.</p>	<p>Involve local child and youth mental health specialists alongside of DM staff at Emergency Services and Get Ready Qld days.</p> <p>Prioritise co-designed and co-produced child and youth initiatives in disaster recovery plans at the local level (e.g. through the work of Community Recovery and Resilience Officers).</p>
Stronger Workforces	<p>28. DM and child, youth, and family agencies partner to build first responder and DM administrator capabilities in supporting kids, families, and caregivers in disasters</p> <p>29. DM and child, youth, and family agencies partner to build capability of child, youth and family practitioners and educators to engage in PPRR phases of DM</p> <p>30. Develop, test, and implement child and youth centred and family focused resources for all stakeholders engaged in DM.</p>	<p>Develop, test and implement an integrated neuro and trauma informed learning and development toolkit for DM practitioners in Qld, such as TQKP's Childhood Builders suite and the Harvard Resilience Scale.</p> <p>Implement a Community of Practice to amplify current best practice and share valuable resources and approaches amongst practitioners.</p> <p>Sponsor local sector participation in the Mackillop Seasons Stormbird companion training.</p>

<p>Integrated Delivery</p>	<p>31. Amplify systemic responses that reduce competition and leverage the assets of communities, place-based organisations, disaster agencies, industry, and philanthropies</p> <p>32. Resource interdisciplinary, interagency DM groups across PPRR to build cross sectoral child health, development, wellbeing, and resilience expertise</p> <p>33. Provide additional funding to schools and other organisations such as family hubs, neighbourhood centres, early childhood education and care services, schools, local libraries, sport and recreation clubs, and place-based initiatives through augmenting and leveraging existing programs (such as the First Five Forever program) to engage in DM</p> <p>34. Resource and maintain comprehensive service, resource, and government directories-to promote higher levels of coordination and integration across disaster phases.</p>	<p>Build relationships between the local DM and human services systems including shared training and awareness outside of times of disaster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This includes shared training and induction to LDMG arrangements to enable quick 'stand up' capabilities when a disaster occurs. <p>Provide recovery funds to NCCs to deliver child- and youth-centred resilience building initiatives suited to the local context.</p>
<p>Putting Data & Learning to Work</p>	<p>35. Ensure DM data collection and sharing processes are well resourced and coordinated to enable planning, design, and delivery of support for kids and families across PPRR</p> <p>36. Develop and implement practices and methods that support agencies to make sense of the data available and generate new data sets to inform DM practices</p> <p>37. Evaluate data related to current investments that target infants, children, and young people to identify promising practices, program improvements, redundancies, and missed opportunities (service gaps)</p> <p>38. Invest in Queensland based research that generates and translates evidence about the incidence, impacts and implications of kids' disaster experiences.</p>	<p>Ensure Local Human and Social Recovery sub-groups have arrangements in place to share data collected by various agencies in disaster response and recovery to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify impacts on infants, children, young people, and their families • use knowledge of impacts to identify and create tailored, multi-agency responses. <p>Fund developmental evaluations of promising child and youth centred recovery and resilience initiatives and share learnings through practice guides and other relevant resources.</p>



Appendix 1 - Glossary

All hazards	All Hazards Approach applied to all events caused by natural or human acts or omissions (same functions and activities can be applied to a range of events).
Disaster	<p>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. Although the Queensland legislation does not include drought as a disaster, the findings and recommendations of this project have considered it a critical part of the context of kids' concerns about and experiences of disasters.</p> <p>A serious disruption means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of human life, or illness or injury to humans; or • Widespread or severe property loss or damage; or • Widespread or severe damage to the environment.
Disaster Management	Arrangements to manage the potential adverse effects of an event, including arrangements for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.
Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	DRR is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risks as well as managing residual risk. DRR contributes to strengthening resilience and the achievement of risk-informed sustainable development.
Event	<p>An event means any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A cycle, 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; a failure of, or disruption to, an essential service or infrastructure d. An attack against the state e. Another event similar to an event mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (e).
Hazard	A process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation. Hazards may be natural, anthropogenic, or socio-natural in origin.
Kids	Infants, children, and young people.
Preparedness	The preparedness of communities involves all individuals sharing responsibility for proactive and coordinated planning and preparation for the protection of life, property, and the environment informed by an awareness of hazards, associated risks, and local DM arrangements.
Prevention	<p>In accordance with the guiding principles of Queensland's DM Act, preventative measures reduce the likelihood of a disaster event occurring or the severity of an event should it eventuate.</p> <p>Prevention is defined as <i>regulatory and physical measures to ensure that emergencies are prevented, or their effects mitigated</i>, where mitigation is defined as <i>measures taken in advance of a disaster aimed at decreasing or eliminating its impact on society and environment</i>.</p>
Resilience	The ability of an individual, family, community, organisation or system to adapt and cope in the face of adversity and rapid change.

Recovery	<p>According to the Australian Disaster Recovery Framework recovery can be defined as a process and an outcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recovery as a process</i> 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. • <i>Recovery as an outcome</i> is the restoration or improvement 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.
Response	<p>Queensland's DM Act defines disaster response as <i>the taking of appropriate measures to respond to an event, including action taken and measures planned in anticipation of, during, and immediately after an event to ensure that its effects are minimised and that persons affected by the event are given immediate relief and support.</i></p> <p>The aim of response operations is to save lives, protect property and make an affected area safe. Accordingly, response is the operationalisation and implementation of plans and processes, and the organisation of activities to respond to an event and its aftermath.</p>
Risk	<p>According to the Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework, the concept of risk combines an understanding of the probability of a hazardous event occurring with an assessment of its impact represented by interactions between hazards, elements at risk and vulnerability.</p>
Vulnerability	<p>Vulnerability is one of the defining components of disaster risk. In the Australian DM setting', vulnerability is the human dimension of disasters and is the result of the range of economic, social, cultural, institutional, political and psychological factors that shape people's lives and the environment that they live in.</p>



Appendix 2 - Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Network
AGCMF	Australian Government Crisis Management Framework
AIDR	Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience
ANZSOG	The Australia and New Zealand School of Government
ARACY	Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
ASA	Australian Salvation Army
BANI	Brittle, anxious, non-linear and incomprehensible
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
CRRO	Community Recovery and Resilience Officer
DDMG	District Disaster Management Group
DFV	Domestic Family Violence
DIDRR	Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction
DM	Disaster Management
DRANZSEN	Disaster Resilient Australia-New Zealand School Education Network
DRFA	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DTATSIPCA	Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts
ECEC	Early childhood education and care (services)
FNQ	Far North Queensland
IGEM	Inspector General Emergency Management
JVT	The John Villiers Trust
LHSRG	Local Human and Social Recovery Group
LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group
LDMP	Local Disaster Management Plan
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual
MHFA	Mental Health First Aid
NASEM	National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NCCs	Neighbourhood and Community Centres
NHRA	Natural Hazards Research Australia
NSDR	National Strategy for Disaster Resilience
NSW	New South Wales
P-CEP	Person Centred Emergency Planning
PPRR	Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Recovery
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
QCPIMH	Queensland Centre for Perinatal Infant Mental Health
QDN	Queensland Disability Network
QLD	Queensland
QDMA	Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements

QPS	Queensland Police Service
QRA	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SDCC	State Disaster Coordination Centre
SDRC	Southern Downs Regional Council
TC	Tropical Cyclone
TKiD	Thriving Kids in Disasters
SES	State Emergency Service
TQKP	Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
VUCA	Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity

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Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership

 Thriving Kids Hub, Level 1, Mosaic Building
826 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006

 TQKP@aracy.org.au

 www.tqkp.org.au

 [linkedin.com/company/thriving-queensland-kids-partnership](https://www.linkedin.com/company/thriving-queensland-kids-partnership)



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