

# CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN DISASTERS: A CO-PRODUCED PROGRAM OF RESEARCH AND NEW TOOLS



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**THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE RECOGNISES DISASTER RESILIENCE EDUCATION (DRE) AS A PRIORITY. THIS PROJECT HAS REVIEWED THE ROLE OF DRE AND RELATED INITIATIVES. IT EMBARKED IN YEAR 1 ON A PROGRAM RESEARCH FOCUSED ON CORE QUESTIONS LINKED TO IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF DRE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING STAKEHOLDER VIEWS, AND INITIAL DRR/RESILIENCE OUTCOME AND IMPLEMENTATION-FOCUSED EVALUATIONS. IN YEAR 2, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A PRACTICE FRAMEWORK, WHICH CAN BE USED TO ENSURE THAT BOTH CURRENT AND FUTURE DRE PROGRAMS ARE INFORMED BY SOLID EVIDENCE-SUPPORTED ELEMENTS. THE FRAMEWORK, INFORMED BY EXISTING LITERATURE AND THE TACIT KNOWLEDGE OF OUR END-USERS, IS COMPRISED OF THREE CORE DIMENSIONS AND THREE GUIDING PRINCIPLES. THIS TOOL IS NOW ASSISTING IN YEAR 3, AS WE EVALUATE END USER AGENCY DRE OUTCOMES. WITH THE FRAMEWORK AS FOUNDATIONAL, WE ULTIMATELY AIM TO CREATE A COMPANION SET OF TOOLS THAT CAN BE USED TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS AT SCALE.**

## Core dimensions

### 1. Design

Program aims and objectives should reflect an action-oriented perspective that recognises children and youth as legitimate stakeholders in disaster resilience. Teaching and learning activities should facilitate 'active learning'. Assessment of student learning and action should be included as a core program element.

### 2. Implementation

Alignment to the National Curriculum and professional development for teachers are key mechanisms for increasing program uptake. Embedding programs in school emergency management planning also represents a promising approach to sustainable, scaled implementation.

### 3. Evaluation

Programs should be routinely evaluated for both process and outcomes. Mixed method research designs which capture both quantitative and qualitative data are essential to gaining an accurate picture of program effectiveness. Longitudinal designs that evaluate the impact of programs in the event of an actual hazard or disaster are needed.

## Guiding principles

### 1. Collaboration and partnership

The design, implementation and evaluation of quality DRE requires the active involvement of the emergency management and education sectors, the private sector, academia, NGOs, not-for-profits, and community-based organisations. The direct involvement of children and youth is also critical.

### 2. Protection and participation

Children have the right to be protected from disasters. They also have the right to access information and participate in decision-making that affects them. DRE programs should not only support children in understanding their rights to protection and participation, but seek to facilitate the full realisation of those rights

### 3. Diversity and inclusion

DRE should be an empowering and engaging experience for all children. This requires that programs promote the inclusion of all children, regardless of gender, disability, culture, language or socioeconomic status. Reaching children in rural and remote locations is also a key priority.

**End User Statement, Cluster Lead User:** Andrew Richards, New South Wales SES

The Child Centred Disaster Risk Reduction (CC-DRR) project led by Prof Kevin Ronan has involved ongoing consultations with end users children, parents, teachers and school personnel with a view to reconciling a top-down and bottom-up approach to research. Its primary focus is to build best practice in Child Centred Disaster Risk Reduction research to establish whether it works, is effective, scalable and sustainable. The project has involved a review of agency and NGO programs to establish whether they are effective and the key contributors to their success. Agencies have benefitted from a review of programs in terms of disaster risk reduction theory and student learning objectives to better understand how the impact of agency programs can be enhanced. The opportunities for end-user input I am aware of have included:

- workshops with all end-users in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth
- presentations and workshops at the Sydney and Hobart Research Advisory Forum
- ongoing presentations to the wider AFAC stakeholder groups such as the Community Engagement Technical Group
- one on one staff exchanges with individual emergency services to embed researchers in the organisation and better target the specific outcomes to agency needs
- regular teleconferences with end-users and other researchers in the cluster that result in cross-project collaboration

The utilisation roadmap for the project has been co-created with end-users throughout the course of the project facilitating greater acceptance and includes the following outputs:

- end user capacity building workshops
- best practice guidelines
- practice and evaluation framework
- monitoring, evaluation and implementation toolbox
- drills and gaming simulations

As the Communications and Warnings Cluster Lead End User I sense a high level of satisfaction from end users involved in the project. Keep up the good work team!

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