

# Media Release

Friday, 13 October 2023

## **NORTHERN RIVERS COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS HELPING REDUCE DISASTER RISKS**

The NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) is inviting Northern Rivers community organisations and local services to engage with a new disaster preparedness project in the region.

With a forecasted hot, dry summer approaching, NCOSS has appointed Resilient Lismore as the host service for the *Disaster Ready Together – Community Sector Capability* project to help reduce the impacts of future disasters on vulnerable communities in the Northern Rivers.

The aim of the project is to build a more collaborative approach to disaster risk reduction, working with vulnerable communities and non-government organisations to strengthen links between community organisations and emergency management agencies.

Resilient Lismore has been at the forefront of coordinating community-led disaster recovery in Lismore since 2017 and has worked closely with communities in the Northern Rivers impacted by the 2022 disaster.

“Many of our local community services were heavily impacted by the floods and landslides we experienced in 2022,” Resilient Lismore Executive Director, Elly Bird said.

“This project is about ensuring that next time disaster strikes the helpers can continue to help, and that our local organisations can do more now to help people prepare for future events. This project is about being disaster ready together.

“We are engaging with organisations across the Lismore, Kyogle and Richmond Valley LGAs right now, and encourage organisations to get in touch with us to be a part of the project.

“There will be a workshop on 6 November and a conference in February. We are keen to have a strong representation at those events, and encourage organisations to register on our [website](#).”

Resilient Lismore is partnering with local organisations Rekindling the Spirit, Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre, Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre and Kyogle Together on the project.

NCOSS CEO, Joanna Quilty, has welcomed the engagement of Resilient Lismore and its local partners to deliver the project.

“We know that certain communities and population groups – people with disability, those who are homeless or in precarious housing, older people – are more vulnerable and will be most impacted by disasters, and that it’s trusted, local organisations who are there for them as they try to piece their lives back together,” Ms Quilty said.

“But too often, these communities and the local organisations who support them are not involved in the early stages of disaster management, and subsequently not well included as part of the ongoing recovery.

“If the community sector is better included in planning for disasters, preventative action can be taken to reduce risks, such as working together to ensure everyone is prepared and has a plan. Better involvement of social service organisations should also improve communication and coordination during and after disasters.”

NCOSS is partnering with AbSec and the Local Community Services Association to deliver the Community Sector Disaster Capability project in three locations - the Hawkesbury, Southern NSW as well as Northern Rivers.

Friday 13th October is International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction with the focus on ‘Fighting inequality for a resilient future’.

This project is funded through the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) which is jointly funded by the Australian and New South Wales Governments.

DRRF projects are targeted at locally led initiatives to help keep communities safe in the future.

The DRRF has three funding streams and offers \$52 million in total to build resilience and help reduce, mitigate and manage the risks of future disasters.

The Community Sector Disaster Capability project is funded under the DRRF Local & Regional Risk Reduction stream, which aims to deliver direct risk reduction and risk mitigation solutions, build capabilities in disaster risk reduction, and promote collaboration between local communities, councils and other stakeholders.

Find out more about the project at: [www.ncoss.org.au/disaster-capability/](http://www.ncoss.org.au/disaster-capability/) and <https://www.floodhelpnr.com.au/disaster-ready-together>

**NCOSS Media contact: Billy Briggs | 0474 697 235**

**Local media contact: Elly Bird | 0418 639 927**