

# Media Release

Friday, 13 October 2023

## **SNOWY MONARO COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS HELPING REDUCE DISASTER RISKS**

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

With a forecasted hot, dry summer approaching, NCOSS has appointed Monaro Family Support Services as the host service for the Community Sector Disaster Capability project to help reduce the impacts of future disasters on vulnerable communities in the Snowy Monaro region.

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.

Monaro Family Support Service has played an active role supporting community members through drought, bushfires and the pandemic. As a trusted local organisation, Monaro Family Support Service is well-placed to help people and community organisations prepare for future disasters.

“This project enables us to focus on the inclusion of vulnerable community members directly through our own networks, knowledge and relationships and also with partner community service agencies,” Pauline Cook, CEO of Monaro Family Support Service said.

“It’s the people not at the community meetings who we really need to ensure are adequately involved in planning and preparing. What we saw in the last disasters is that those most vulnerable weren’t really involved and the impacts on them were often so much greater.”

Information and support sessions about preparing for emergencies have been run with seniors and people with a disability in Nimmitabel and with Mums and Bubs groups in Cooma and Jindabyne.

Upcoming events include:

- Street stalls in Cooma, Bombala, Adaminaby and Jindabyne in the coming weeks
- Emergency preparedness support sessions with the Mums and Bubs group in Bombala on 18 October, and with seniors and people with a disability in Cooma and Bombala in November
- Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Train the Trainer session for community service workers and volunteers in Cooma on 14 November.

For more details or to discuss attending or hosting a preparedness session, contact the Monaro Family Support Service on 6452 3450 or the Project Officer directly on 0499 618 691.

NCOSS CEO, Joanna Quilty, welcomed the engagement of Monaro Family Support Service 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, Northern Rivers as well as Southern NSW.

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> 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/)

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

**Monaro Family Support Service contact: Pauline Cook | 0417 873 519**