

2018 Resilient Australia Awards: bringing everyone to the table

Jacqui Douglas, Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

The Resilient Australia Awards are always characterised by collaboration. The program responds to the principle of shared responsibility, enshrined in the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*. In the 2018 program, that theme of collaboration emerged particularly through knowledge exchange. Submissions selected as national finalists brought diverse groups of stakeholders to the table; supporting nuanced, multi-faceted approaches to resilience-building that engaged whole communities.



Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs addresses the national award ceremony audience.

Image: Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

The project's community engagement approach uses a range of channels to gather input from the community; from risk identification through to evaluation of solutions.

Project co-founder, Julia Cook, said, 'What makes it so effective is that we design the strategies according to the individual needs of the community.'

The project has achieved cross-sector support in three pilot communities; Moreton Island, Beachmere and Mount Nebo. Not only were community members actively involved, the project has fostered greater cooperation among agencies and other organisations. Numerous outputs have been jointly resourced and developed by multiple organisations.

Read more about My Resilient Community on page 9.

Queensland: My Resilient Community project

The Resilient Australia National Award was won by the My Resilient Community project; a partnership between Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Queensland Police Service and Moreton Bay Regional Council.

The project puts community at the centre from the get-go; establishing community teams to drive implementation and own resilience strategies. The program recognised the importance of community self-reliance in a context of more frequent, severe disasters – where the response capacity of government and emergency services may not always meet the demand.

Northern Territory: First Aid in Schools - Remote Indigenous Access project

St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory was highly commended in the National Award category for the First Aid in Schools - Remote Indigenous Access project.

This initiative centres on the delivery of first aid training to students in remote communities, where access to emergency medical services can be extremely limited. Training ranges from calling an ambulance to managing bleeding, fractures and incidents such as stroke or heart attack.



L-R: Uncle Dave Wandin, Kylie Schabel (teacher), Shanice Banks (student), Jennie Schoof, formally Yarra Ranges Council, Lily Ellis (student), Brett Ellis, Emergency Management Victoria and school parent.

Image: Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

During 2016–17, St John Ambulance delivered training to over 5000 students over 35 sessions in 35 remote Indigenous communities as part of a broader vision to equip school-aged children with first aid skills.

St John Ambulance undertook extensive consultation over several years by engaging teachers, community health services workers, Indigenous support officers and local elders to ensure the program's relevance and accessibility to remote communities. Content from the mainstream First Aid in Schools program was adjusted for language requirements in remote areas and contextualised to local risks.

The program was designed to align with the Northern Territory Curriculum and training is flexible to fit around significant cultural events in communities.

New South Wales: Disaster Resilience in Social Housing project

Coordinated by a Sydney-based non-government organisation, Inner Sydney Voice, this project was highly commended for the National Award. The project brings together emergency management expertise with valuable local knowledge to build resilience in social housing communities.

Samuel Beattie, Project Officer, Inner Sydney Voice said, 'We thought [it] was going to be a fairly simple task of bringing everyone together [to] start talking about disaster resilience...we found that there were so many things that we could be doing, so many different ways to approach it.

'It's so important, when trying to build disaster resilience in communities, to really have that community-centred approach. [The] people you're planning for – they really have to be at the table. And they really have to be leading

it. That's the only way these kinds of things will have a lasting impact,' he said.

A key output was the establishment of the Redfern and Surry Hills Community Resilience Committee, a collaborative forum for tenant representatives, emergency services, state and local government, community organisations and non-government organisations.

Alison George, Surry Hills tenant representative and member of the Community Resilience Committee said, 'One of the things that came up while this was all evolving was how important it is to build strong community. You can't be resilient unless there is that community already there. That was something that we thought needed to be worked on.'

Victoria: Firestick project

The Resilient Australia National School Award went to the Firestick project: a Wurundjeri-led initiative in partnership with Dixons Creek Primary School, supported by the Yarra Ranges Council and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in Victoria.

The project saw students of the school walk on country with Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Dave Wandin, accompanied by Ralph Hume and Indigenous fire practitioner, Victor Steffensen. Students learnt about the constructive use of fire in Indigenous land management practices and gained a greater understanding of the natural environment through sensory experience. The process promoted healing from the fearful legacy of the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and influenced fire management practices in the broader community.

Lily Ellis, a student at Dixons Creek Primary School said, 'Fire can help the country regenerate and get better again...[the fire in a traditional Indigenous burn] trickles along the ground, without burning the trees. It just burns the leaves and then it gives regeneration to the grass.'

Uncle Dave Wandin said, '[The children] will be the driving force in the future...to lead the groundswell of caring for our country in a traditional and culturally sensitive manner that is governed by the country not governed by people.'

Read more about the Firestick project on page 11.

Tasmania: Floodscapes project

The Launceston Floodscapes project was highly commended for the School Award. Managed by The Holographic Lounge, the project engaged students of Invermay Primary School, meenah neenah Aboriginal Cultural Education Program and the Launceston Big Picture School in the production of three short films on disaster resilience.

The films combine aerial footage from the city of Launceston, the State Emergency Service, Southern Cross television and community members, with overlaid student voices and animations from student drawings. The short clips are both accessible and easily shared through digital channels.

With the 2016 floods fresh in recent memory, the Floodscapes films deliver preparedness messages in with a new voice; positioning young people as 'guardians and messengers for the city of Launceston'. There's an emphasis on looking out for family, friends and other community members.

Floodscapes debuted at the Breath of Fresh Air film festival in 2018.



Peter Randel, NSW Rural Fire Service Warrimoo Brigade, Kellie Mar, Photographer / NSW Rural Fire Service.

Image: Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience



Regina Sellar, St John Ambulance NT, Gemma Bellenger, Northern Territory Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services and Northern Territory State Convenor.

Image: Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

New South Wales: Getting Bushfire Ready at Warrimoo Public School

Highly commended in the School Award category, the Getting Bushfire Ready at Warrimoo Public School project saw the Warrimoo brigade of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) team up with the local public school to build student confidence in preparing for fire. RFS members shared knowledge with students on a range of topics including Triple Zero (000), fire types, emergency kits and drills (at school and at home) and helping others in the community.

Amelie, a student at Warrimoo Public School said, 'The Rural Fire Service helped me learn a lot about what to do in the event of a fire. Overall, this experience gave me knowledge that I couldn't get anywhere else and made me feel safe and prepared for bushfires'.

The program put the RFS *Guide to Working with School Communities* to the test; developed after a fire started near Warrimoo Public School in 2014.

The project also encompasses an ongoing partnership between the school and the brigade, whereby the annual RFS Get Ready weekend is hosted in the school's hall. These weekends engage the broader community and are an opportunity to highlight the school's evacuation plan and position it as a safe place for students in the event of a fire.

Northern Territory: Dousing the Flames

The photo, Dousing the Flames, won the Resilient Australia National Photography Award. Described by photographer Navin Chandra as an 'environmental portrait', the striking image captures Virginia/Bees Creek



Photographer Kellie Mar was highly commended for her photo of firefighter Emily Rawbone, Portrait of a Lady, in the 2018 Resilient Australia National Photography Award.

Image: Kellie Mar

Volunteer Fire Brigade Captain, Fleur O'Connor, in a burnt-out landscape in the Northern Territory.

'I think this photo is powerful because it connects with many people. It doesn't just show the landscape that's been damaged by fire, it also shows the work of a firefighter,' said Navin Chandra.

New South Wales: Portrait of a Lady

Highly commended for the National Photography Award was Kellie Mar's photo, Portrait of a Lady, which celebrates the spirit of accomplished firefighter, Emily Rawbone.

'Emily's an exceptionally amazing person...she's a mother of two, she works full-time, she's hearing impaired and

she's also one of the best firefighters I've ever seen in my life.

'The fires that she's fought in and the circumstances that she's faced; the resilience that she actually shows against these is phenomenal,' said Kellie Mar, photographer and Blaxland RFS member.

Queensland: Cyclone Resilience - Whitsunday Water

Another highly commended image, Cyclone Resilience - Whitsunday Water depicts images immediately after Cyclone Debbie, which took out water and sewerage services. Taken by Edwina Pettiford, the photo captures her husband, Troy Pettiford, and the team from the Whitsunday Regional Council setting up in a makeshift office in a garage. The team worked around the clock to restore vital services.

The Resilient Australia Awards are sponsored by the Australian Government in partnership with the states and territories and managed by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience.

Submissions for the 2019 program will open in early March 2019.
For more information, visit www.aidr.org.au/raa.