

Bringing future resilience to life with national forums

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Forums on Understanding Disaster Risk were held across Australia in October 2019 as part of a national discussion on climate and disaster risk.

The Department of Home Affairs, in partnership with the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) and CSIRO, ran the forums during October 2019. The focal point of the Understanding Disaster Risk forums was a new agenda for disaster risk reduction. This brings to life the key outcomes from the National Resilience Taskforce.

Over 700 people from a broad range of sectors gained insights into contemporary thinking about climate and disaster risk reduction, vulnerability and decision-making to support the implementation of the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*. The interactive forums allowed attendees to share their thoughts on the current disaster-risk landscape and hear from a panel of representatives about climate and disaster risk initiatives in their state.

Attendees represented a broad range of sectors including banking and superannuation, insurance, community services, not-for-profit, consulting, health care, state and local governments, critical infrastructure providers, research and emergency management. The private sector made up 17 per cent of attendees; a growing area of engagement for disaster resilience.

Attendees provided positive feedback to the event series, with many looking forward to applying the new knowledge and guidance to implement disaster risk reduction initiatives in their sphere.

The forums were shaped around sharing insights, information and guidance about climate and disaster risk developed by the Australian Government through the former National Resilience Taskforce to support the implementation of the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*. Resources include *Profiling Australia's Vulnerability: The interconnected causes and cascading effects of systemic disaster risk* and *Guidance for Strategic Decisions on Climate and Disaster Risk*.

National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

The *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*, released in April 2019, sets foundational work needed to

reduce existing risk, prevent new risk from being created and ensuring information exists to meet these demands.

It identifies seven guiding principles and four priority areas. Each priority area details a range of five-year outcomes. The Framework's central premise is that by changing how communities think about disasters and through greater collaboration working together, action can be taken to better prepare and enhance resilience.

The least understood dimension of disaster risk – vulnerability – is explained in *Profiling Australia's Vulnerability*, which provides the language and vocabulary surrounding the term.

The report encourages thinking about 'why' and 'how' naturally occurring events can lead to devastating suffering and loss. Better understanding of the underlying drivers of disaster, now and into the future, along with better understanding the dimension of what people value, provides new perspectives in thinking about disaster risk.

Stories about vulnerability are shared from systems perspective and a values perspective. It encourages new conversations to contemplate what matters the most, to make us more aware of how choices, decisions and the things we prioritise or trade-off have a related and cascading effect on the nation's social, economic and environmental resilience.

The *Guidance for Strategic Decisions on Climate and Disaster Risk* helps decision makers to incorporate future climate and disaster risk into current decision-making processes and encourages decision makers to act in ways that contribute to achieving the outcomes within the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*. In particular, the guidance provides direction on how to call upon new knowledge, capabilities and processes to consider climate and disaster risk into strategic long-term planning and investment decisions.

The forum proceedings, including presentations and videos, are now available on the AIDR Knowledge Hub: knowledge.aidr.org.au/collections/disaster-risk-reduction/