



# GUIDANCE FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PRACTITIONERS

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To help reduce climate and disaster risk

## THE DISASTERS OF RECENT DECADES CONTINUALLY UNDERSCORE AUSTRALIA'S URGENT NEED TO REDUCE ITS DISASTER RISKS, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

In 2019, the Australian Government released the **National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (NDRRF)** as a strategic and policy foundation to address systemic disaster risk, with a particular focus on natural hazards. The Council of Australian Governments endorsed the NDRRF in March 2020.

The NDRRF recommends that people whose organisations or communities may be affected by major disruptions take a significantly more systemic approach to those risks and vulnerabilities, rather than focussing on immediate vulnerabilities.

To help them, Department of Home Affairs and its collaborators have developed strategic guidance to extend the NDRRF into practice, offering tools and approaches to convene discussions and workshops and make decisions.

The **Guidance for Strategic Decisions on Climate and Disaster Risk** is intended to help stakeholders, including emergency management practitioners, to take an iterative, adaptive and practical approach to reduce systemic risks and community vulnerability.

**The Guidance can also be used to help implement the National Action Plan and its state and territory equivalents.**

This short document directs emergency management practitioners to the Guidance's key tools and approaches.

Links in this document are to sections of the Guidance, e.g. 04.4 Scenario Analysis links to Guidance 04 Section 4



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Home Affairs**

# ENHANCING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE. LEARNING INTO THE FUTURE.

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## MORE SYSTEMIC OUTLOOKS AND GOVERNANCE.

A proactive focus on the whole system, with cross-agency responsibilities and well-understood roles.

### PRIORITY 1: Understand disaster risk

#### A PROACTIVE FOCUS ...

Our focus is to help communities reduce their vulnerability, that is, to better diagnose the systemic causes and effects of disaster risks, and to mitigate those risks and build resilience as well as continue to respond to threats from natural hazards.

**03 Vulnerability analysis** helps identify key points of failure and possible interventions.

#### ON THE WHOLE SYSTEM ...

The focus is now on *all* the community's infrastructure, services and relationships with the broader systems, rather than on specific hazards to specific physical assets.

We therefore need to better understand our social, physical and natural systems, and how they are affected by each other, by our decisions and by the cascading impacts of even a single natural hazard.

**04 Scenario analysis** explores different extreme events, their potential to cause disasters, and how the system might respond to reduce vulnerabilities.

### PRIORITY 2: Accountable decisions

#### WITH CROSS AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES ...

Accordingly, all relevant public, private and non profit actors must work together on the socio economic, financial, cultural, organisational, material (infrastructural and technological) and regulatory forces that shape community decisions.

**02.5 Risk assessments** that use 'whole of system' assessments that go beyond traditional 'likelihood x consequence' approaches, are better suited to systems where vulnerability varies in space and time, where risks are uncertain or unfamiliar and cascade between sectors.

#### AND WELL UNDERSTOOD ROLES.

Within that collective responsibility, specific roles must be fairly assigned – to public, private and non profit actors – to share information and take effective actions.

**02.4 Responsibility mapping** assigns roles to those who can prevent risks arising or who need to disclose their risks, rather than those seeking to avoid them.



## BETTER DECISIONS AND INVESTMENTS.

Collective decisions that strengthen the community whether disasters happen or not.

### PRIORITY 3: Enhanced investment

#### MULTIPLE ACTORS ...

Decisions that will affect communities so deeply will have to be taken collectively, by people both within and outside the EM sector, so that the decisions are effective, equitable and widely supported.

**03.5 Values analyses** reveal the values, rules and knowledge that may guide human responses.

#### MAKING COLLECTIVE DECISIONS ...

To make those decisions, people will need to interact through a range of engagement, prioritisation and scenario analysis tools, rather than being 'told by the experts' or focussing only on one's own responsibilities.

**03.2 Deconstructing Disaster** runs a two-day experiential discovery workshop to bring the realities of disaster to life.

### PRIORITY 4: Governance, ownership and responsibility

#### THAT STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY ...

We can assess how much an action reduces vulnerability ('community values at risk') and builds resilience ('value potential'), going beyond narrow cost-benefit analyses, as well as explore new ways to create value and fund those actions.

**05.4 Prioritisations** help evaluate interventions that may reduce vulnerability or create benefits across the whole system.

**05.5 Alternative funding** can expand the amount of funding that might be available through co-funding pathways and public-private partnerships.

#### WHETHER DISASTERS HAPPEN OR NOT.

Using scenario analysis, decision-makers can identify the trade-offs they will have to make in a complex, uncertain and changing world, and identify options likely to be valuable when one, several or even no disasters occur.

**04.4 Scenarios** enable the shift away from 'optimal' approaches that assess 'preferred' options to meet a single most-likely scenario, to 'low regrets' options that yield benefits even when disaster doesn't occur, and 'robust' options which are beneficial over a range of scenarios.

# GUIDANCE FOR STRATEGIC DECISIONS ON CLIMATE AND DISASTER RISK RESILIENCE INTO THE FUTURE

The Guidance supports emergency management practitioners to take an iterative, adaptive yet practical approach to reduce systemic risks and strengthen community resilience.

For further assistance, see:

- **03.6 Learning into the Future**, to guide learning and the means to adapt your decisions and actions quickly
- **05.7 National case studies** that share experiences and increase confidence in risk reduction actions
- The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) and the **AIDR Knowledge Hub**, including the AIDR Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience Handbook (being updated in 2020)
- **The Department of Home Affairs website**, with further case studies, guidance, action plans, frameworks and policies, relevant both generally and for specific sectors and communities, and
- **Department of Home Affairs** and **CSIRO** who can help identify experts able to assist in any of these areas.

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION FOR AUSTRALIA

### Sendal Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

The global blueprint

### National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

A coordinated approach for Australia

### Profiling Australia's Vulnerability

Our interconnected disaster risks

### National Action Plans

Spanning all sectors and governments

### Guidance for Strategic Decisions on Climate and Disaster Risk

To support systemic planning and action

### Actions

By our public, private and non-profit sectors.

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