

*Does saying we're resilient make it so? The  
Cairns resilience scorecard project*

2014-2018

Sioux Campbell, Cairns Disaster  
Management Resilience Officer

# What IS community resilience??

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- Increasingly popular concept widely used by community leaders, policy makers, emergency management practitioners and academics around Australia. With any challenging event, out pops the term RESILIENCE.
- But **little agreement** on meaning and application...!
- This lack of consensus undermines its usefulness when developing emergency and disaster management policies and plans at national, state and local levels.
- Resilience defined by the UNISDR as *“The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions”*
- = a process of continuous engagement that builds preparedness prior to a disaster and allows for healthy recovery.
- In the Cairns region this underpins our ongoing Be Ready, Cairns! community resilience building programme.
- **In the national, state (and Cairns!) strategies, resilience is clearly identified as a shared responsibility.**

# Cairns region context

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- One of just 6 Australian cities and the only Australian role model city with the UNISDR Resilient Cities campaign.
- Complex socio-economic makeup comprising many cultures, both ends of the economic spectrum, highly transient population, hundreds of thousands of tourists, limited employment opportunities ....
- Very different geographic communities spread from south to north.
- Absence of a major disaster since 2011.
- Plenty of urban myths/old beliefs...
- Complacency the enemy.
- Climate denial alive and well.
- “Someone else” will take care of it.
- Solid background of 2-3 years’ resilience development work undertaken around the region.

# So how resilient are we??

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- Plenty of empirical evidence through ongoing programme delivery – but in the absence of known behaviour/recovery through an event, how do we know what our actual level of resilience is?

In this project, we brought together two scorecard methods – **Torrens and UNISDR** - to align community and infrastructural resilience through:

- Research based on previous two years of the Be Ready, Cairns! resilience programme, including learnings identified and experiences from TC Ita (2014).
- Community mapping, to identify the geographic locations of those most vulnerable in Cairns – adding to existing knowledge of communities vulnerable across social, economic, built and natural environments and other factors such as disability, language spoken, age and ethnicity.
- Surveys within those geographic communities based on the **Torrens** scorecard criteria.
- Community engagement activities in those locations.
- Applying the **UNISDR** scorecard through Cairns Local Disaster Management Group members.
- Self-assessments by LDMG members, partners and contributing organisations.
- Workshops, *shared* assessment and feedback. (LDM **GROUP**....)
- Developing a collective action plan based on the results, addressing largest gaps.

# Learning from our publics

Inform, consult, involve ... And collaborate.

## IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

	INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT				
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
<b>GOAL</b>	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions.	To work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
<b>PROMISE</b>	"We will keep you informed"	"We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns."	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made."	"We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible."	"We will implement what you decide."



# Community Mapping

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- Showed visually and through text the relative location of households and distribution of different communities via various characteristics.
- Used 2011 census data and various other reports to identify communities potentially vulnerable through factors such as ability to speak and understand English, ethnicity, length of residence in Australia, income and education levels, any disability, employment status, age, provision of unpaid care.
- Overlaid with geographic vulnerability factors – eg storm surge, flood, tsunami, wild fire, landslip
- Identified four areas featuring the greatest number of factors:
  - Cairns City/Cairns north
  - Manunda/Manoora/Mooroobool/Westcourt/Bungalow
  - White Rock/Mt Sheridan/Bentley Park/Earlville
  - Babinda
  - Yorkeys Knob – used as a comparative area given several factors.

# Torrens Resilience Institute approach

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- The Torrens tool - Four components to measure: Community connectedness; risk and vulnerability; planning and procedures; available resources.
- Scorecard with toolkit is available under the 'Tools' tab on the Torrens Resilience Institute website: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/centres-files/TRI/pdfs/tritoolkit.pdf>

## Our approach

- Adapt the tool to produce a survey of indicators of resilience (simple 10 question survey).
- Administer the survey within the identified geographic communities at locations and times likely to capture residents. Focus on old-fashioned 1-1 connections.
- Take an open approach to the questions – generate discussion about community connections, their link to community safety and preparedness – no right nor wrong answers.
- Administer the survey in conjunction with disaster management partners such as the fire service, SES – make community participation appealing through resource giveaways, contact with real emergency managers, one-one advice and information.

## Response

- Most people loved it – a rare chance to interact with emergency services and the council on the community's own turf (not council's) in community time (not council's).
- Unusual questions about their perceptions and experiences – not judging, prioritising.
- A few intense critics: *I'd rather die than do a bloody council survey ....*

# Community Survey

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1. Which area or suburb do you live in?

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2. Are you part of a club, community group or church in your area?

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3. How connected do you think people living in your area are?

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4. What contact do you have with the Cairns Regional Council?

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5. What sorts of disasters could happen in Cairns?

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6. Do you have a household emergency plan? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a household emergency kit? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do your children learn about natural disasters at their school?

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8. Where would you find information which would help you in a disaster?

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9. Where would you find local emergency services?

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10. What emergency training do you have? (eg first aid certificate, SES member, chainsaw certificate?)

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# Surveying in communities



# What we learned

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Findings from this component of the project provide a much clearer picture of where indicators of resilience are strong and where more effort is needed. This strengthens resilience by:

- ❑ Targeting key gaps in knowledge and understanding, for example people being unaware of where their nearest emergency services are located or having the wrong information about where they find help in a disaster.
- ❑ Continuing to support messages, information and activities which increase resilience, such as engaging community members in how to create a household emergency kit and plan.
- ❑ Raising levels of knowledge and awareness of all possible hazards. We hosted information stands when running our survey, providing a new Cairns-specific all-hazards resource, practical give-aways and opportunities to talk to disaster management staff. We also partnered with the fire service to raise the profile of wildfire and suitable preparedness and response actions.
- ❑ Working with elected representatives, other council functional areas and external agencies to grow a community presence and increase community connectedness. Surveys were offered at a range of community venues and times likely to gain participation. This encouraged general discussion, leading to recommendations for future community development approaches and partnerships to work collaboratively with communities.

# United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Scorecard

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- Based on the UNISDR’s “Ten Essentials” of disaster management - 85 disaster resilience evaluation criteria, focusing on:  
**Research, Organizational factors, Infrastructure; Response capability; Environment; Recovery .**
- Each “essential” broken down to describe the aspect of disaster resilience being measured, an indicative measurement and the measurement scale (from 0 to 5, where 5 is best practice).
- <http://www.unisdr.org/2014/campaign-cities/Resilience%20Scorecard%20V1.5.pdf>

## **PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY**

### **Essential 2 – Financing and Incentives**

Item measured: Extent of insurance coverage for domestic housing (exclude personal coverage).

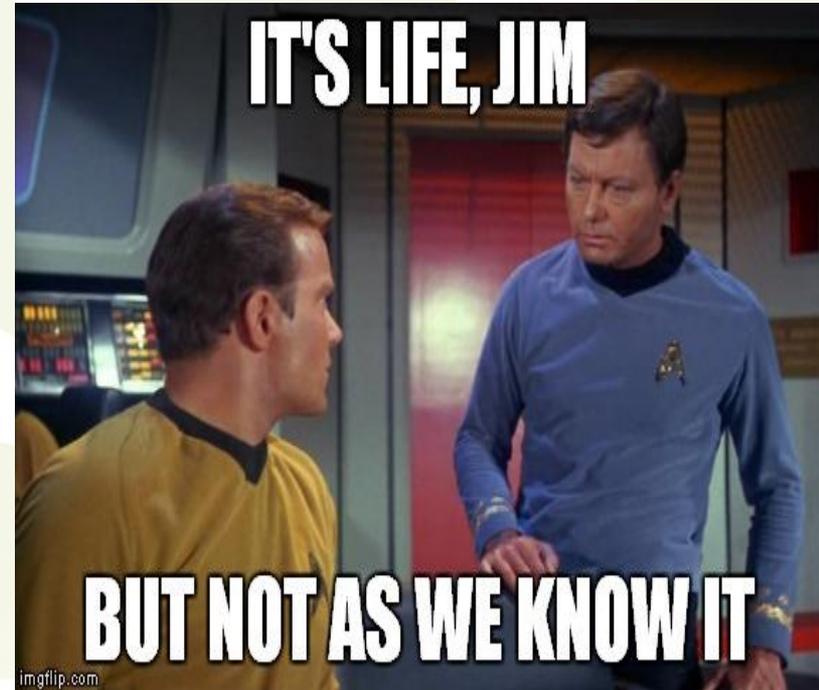
Score options:

- 5:** 75-100% of likely housing losses from “most severe” scenario are covered city-wide by insurance;
- 4:** 75-100% of likely losses from “most probable” scenario are covered city-wide;
- 3:** 50-75% of likely losses from “most probable” scenario are covered city-wide;
- 2:** 25-50% of likely losses from “most probable” scenario are covered city-wide;
- 1:** 0-25% of likely losses from “most probable” scenario are covered city-wide;
- 0:** No insurance cover.

# UNISDR Scorecard Process

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- For the first time individual LDMG members and other stakeholders were asked a standardised set of questions about resilience - had to consider responses individually, then examine efficacy as a whole.
- Proved much more challenging than the usual process of providing feedback (or not) on a written document. In the stocktake process, everyone began at the same level. Participants agreed to openly discuss responses and decide on an appropriate resilience score for all measures by consensus.
- Detail had never been presented in this kind of forum before, requiring LDMG members to identify their own agency's resilience strengths and weaknesses.



# Challenges

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- Not used to working collaboratively.
- Not used to sharing potentially “sensitive information” ...?
- If the score isn't 5, we're seen to be lacking.
- Perception of information ownership.
- Reluctance to own solutions or make a commitment to action – “that's your job”.
- Perception of a weird background agenda ...
- Trust and persuasion required through sustained communication/engagement

# UNISDR process findings

Highlighted strengths and weaknesses in the organisational and infrastructural resilience of the region. This supports resilience growth by:

- ❑ Clarifying exactly who is doing what, where. In Cairns the resilience effort is being strongly lead by local government, with degrees of support from state and other organisations. This should be increased.
- ❑ Identifying gaps in process such as limited risk assessments or single hazard planning.
- ❑ Identifying gaps or limitations in infrastructure such as emergency fuel supplies, emergency communications, human resources, ecosystem services.
- ❑ Evaluation has occurred through reference to both scorecard criteria and processes as well as validation with contributing organisations, groups and communities.



# Process

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- A significant part of the purpose was to demonstrate shared responsibility through a participatory process. We believed it was particularly important for LDMG members to assess their resilience capability and capacity individually, before making their contribution to the group. Experience shows a level of perception that “local government will take care of it”. We also wanted to make it clear that resilience is not just the responsibility of one local government resilience officer.
- A workshop was used to engage the LDMG in identifying who should assess which elements of the UNISDR scorecard, then assigning each element. A second workshop brought the information together and set LDMG members the task of agreeing on scores considering all the data provided, then noting where specific strengths and weaknesses exist. This enabled participants to see an overall picture of resilience for themselves, in which everyone is a contributor. They were encouraged to reflect on where improvements can be made and how those can be implemented.
- Ongoing message through a sustained, facilitated process “it’s for the greater good”.



# Outcomes

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- First comprehensive, collective baseline measurement of resilience conducted in the region. We now have a reliable set of qualitative and quantitative data to assess against in future years.
- Learnings from both processes already being incorporated into ongoing disaster management and resilience-building work.
- Important where scores are high and therefore resilience levels strong as ideally those levels are maintained or exceeded. Where scores are lower, gaps have been identified and work is underway to increase resilience (eg emergency fuel supplies, the effects of all hazards in some sectors, understanding the state of our ecosystem services). For some measures, increasing resilience scores is neither possible nor realistic for our region eg providing all disaster information in all languages spoken and proving that 100% of those receiving it have understood it. Such a measure does however provoke thinking on what else might be able to be achieved!!
- Community interactions have either generated new contact or reinforced existing liaison work. The survey outcomes also gave valuable clues on where future time could best be spent, for example on continuing to emphasise the importance of maintaining a household emergency kit and emergency plan across hazards. Many people had little idea of where their nearest emergency services were, or had the wrong information.
- Outcomes of the overall scorecard process can be shared with others to support resilience efforts across the state as well as more widely throughout the UNISDR community. The project has attracted a lot of interest and attention.