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BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Scoping remote community resilience, building better
governance, finding new opportunities to grow resilience

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An Australian Government Initiative





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OUR LOCAL CONTEXT...



THE NORTH AUSTRALIAN BNH CONTEXT

360,000 People

- + Communities from 'outer regional' to 'very remote'.
- + Remote communities mostly inhabited by indigenous Australians (% rises with remoteness)
- + Poor infrastructure and communications
- + **Costs: today's price of diesel in Wadeye is \$3.66/litre; ULP \$3.33**
- + Disconnect with emergency management paradigm
- + Low population densities
- + Low levels of formal education and training
- + Limited labour market experience
- + Poor health

} The "Gap"

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- = Almost no formal emergency management capacity
 - = No spare capacity to fall back on
 - = No "Plan B"
 - = **Very limited community resilience**

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Objective:

Using action research, identify and trial opportunities to develop resilience in remote north Australian communities

Two Key Component Projects:

1. Scoping remote north Australian community resilience and developing community governance models
2. Developing opportunities for building more resilient remote communities in northern Australia and neighbouring countries

Closely linked to north Australian Landscape Fire Management and Training projects

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Project Team

Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods, CDU

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Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research

Prof Jeremy Russell-Smith, Mr Steve Sutton, Dr Andrew Edwards

Aboriginal Research Practitioners' Network (ARNet)

Dr Bev Sithole, Dr Jackie Gould, Ms Hmalan Hunter-Xenie, ARNet Practitioners

Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU

Professor Bob Costanza

North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA)

Mr Glenn James, Ms Leonie Malloy

End Users

Steve Rothwell (PFES NT), Mark Ashley (Bushfires NT), Murray Carter (P&W WA), David Willing (Chief Min's Dept NT), Joe Morrison (NLC), Bruno Griemel (Qld Fire & Rescue)

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Action research

1. Taking stock of the existing situation through the eyes of remote community residents **in their own languages**
2. Looking closely at what's working & seek to reinforce existing capability through better governance and training
3. Finding ways to build resilience e.g. payment for services
4. Developing tailored solutions to age-old problems of poor (or no) decision making due to distance and poor comms
5. Not waiting until the findings come out – but building resilience throughout the action research process
6. Bringing it all together and testing it in pilot communities

ARNet

THE ABORIGINAL RESEARCH PRACTITIONERS NETWORK

- A coordinated network of 50-60 Aboriginal people trained in Participatory Action Research (we will train more)
- Network members are contracted to conduct research, evaluation and planning activities in their communities
- Qualitative and quantitative methods from the ARNet “Dilly Bag “(Sithole 2013)
- Network members work with the Lead Researcher to clarify the research objective and frame the approach
- Research is undertaken in the first language of the participants with due attention to cultural sensitivities
- ARPNET has consistently delivered research findings of high explanatory calibre about interventions in Indigenous communities



SCOPING RESILIENCE & BUILDING GOVERNANCE

Objectives:

- 1) Explore communities' social, economic and cultural aspirations & identify those most vulnerable to natural hazards
- 2) Analyse present approaches to natural hazards and Indigenous views of their appropriateness and effectiveness
- 3) Describe human capability, including skills, experience, formal institutions and social networks, in participating communities
- 4) Develop an Indigenous view of options for improvement, emphasising ways to make better use of and grow existing capability

SCOPING RESILIENCE & BUILDING GOVERNANCE

Outcomes

1. Better understanding of current capabilities and institutions
2. Improved local and regional awareness of risk, combined with relevant planning tools and response.
3. Better informed local and external institutions about Indigenous information needs and preferences for BNH preparedness and response
4. Practical measures to deliver substantial improvements, with a high level of ownership within remote communities
5. Institutional re-design to reinforce and improve community resilience
6. Governance models informed by customary networks and local authority
7. Targeted communications (content and methods)

SERVICES PAYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING RESILIENT REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Objectives

1. Analyse contemporary land use management, institutional, and policy challenges facing local communities in north Australian and adjacent savanna regions
2. Explore opportunities afforded through emerging economies related to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), climate change mitigation and ecosystem service relevant to BNH
3. Evaluate Ecosystem Services (ES) & Payment for Environmental Service (PES) impacts on community resilience
4. Identify policy & institutional reforms in north Australian and adjacent regions that could broaden the revenue base for BNH planning & response







SERVICES PAYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING RESILIENT REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Outcomes

- 1) Understanding factors undermining the resilience of indigenous and local communities in north Australian and adjacent regions
- 2) Promotion of novel economic opportunities, and sustainable implementation pathways (e.g. recognition of culturally appropriate governance arrangements)
- 3) Informed basis for improving community resilience in remote northern Australia and the region