



BELLINGEN SHIRE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE DELIBERATIVE PANEL 13-14 NOVEMBER 2020

Final report



Prepared by the University of Newcastle
February 2021

1. Introduction

Recent local government reform and changing community expectations has led Bellingen Shire Council (Council) to commit to engaging the community in new and exciting ways.

As part of a new policy designed to enhance citizen engagement and to better inform Councillors of community views to strengthen decision making, Council resolved to test a citizen engagement approach called a deliberative panel, sometimes referred to as a citizen's jury.

Deliberative panels allow for a participating group to form a view based on individual values and in response to discussions with one another, the technical expertise that is presented, as well as the values of the group as a whole. Deliberative panels are a powerful and increasingly used format for engaging the community in complex decision-making. They allow for community members to share and discuss their views with knowledge of potential impacts and arrive at a collective position.

Council engaged the University of Newcastle team led by Professor Roberta Ryan to conduct a deliberative panel exploring the community views on locally-led ways to strengthen community resilience. Roberta is an expert in deliberative decision-making and has been trialing different approaches over the last 15 years.

This report has been independently prepared by the University of Newcastle.

2. The deliberative panel

2.1 Explaining deliberative panels

Deliberative panels are an increasingly used form of community engagement for complex policy issues facing decision-makers. They can be thought of as a process of 'simulated decision-making' whereby panel members are given the same evidence and information as elected representatives, and then are asked to arrive at a collective position. In this way, deliberative panels can be used to meaningfully support participatory democracy while retaining the democratic legitimacy and accountability of decision-making by elected representatives (representative democracy).

Deliberative panels provide citizens with the information they need to give informed input into policy issues and, through group dialogue, ensure this input is based on collective (or public) rather than individual (or self) interest.

This occurs through a process where panel members: consider the evidence on a policy issue and request any advice they need from relevant experts; exchange individual views on the issue and evidence with other panel members; give reasons for and argue the merits of their own views; and then re-consider these views.

At the end of this process, the group is asked to provide collective advice although, depending on the nature of the issue, content of the deliberations and diversity and strength of the arguments put by participants, this does not always occur.

2.2 The Bellingen Shire Deliberative Panel

2.2.1 Forming the panel

To form a broadly representative deliberative panel for the Shire, the University team called for expressions of interest across the entire community, which was promoted through a mini media and stakeholder engagement campaign.

The team was keen to hear from a range of people who were able to represent a cross-section and depth of perspectives and views. Importantly, interested panellists did not need to have any previous knowledge nor interest in the topic of community resilience to be considered.

Those community members who were interested in participating were asked to complete an online survey. The survey covered a range of topics from their feelings about their local neighbourhood and community; to the importance they placed on infrastructure, social amenities (such as parks) and public services (schools and health care); through to their concerns regarding natural hazards (e.g. floods, fire, coastal erosion).

77 people completed the survey, which the University team analysed to draw up a shortlist of potential participants. In their analysis, the team looked for a sample across age, gender, level of education, a range of values and interests and where they lived in the Shire. The shortlist included two Indigenous people, as well as two people from non-English speaking backgrounds. The team also assessed the responses to the topical questions to ensure a range of views was reflected in the shortlisted group.

Each person on the shortlist was interviewed ahead of confirming their participation. The purpose of the interview was to get to know the potential panellists a little more, to explore their interest in participating on the panel, and to discuss what they hoped to gain from the experience.

A final group of 25 Bellingen Shire residents were invited to participate.

2.2.2 Planning and designing the panel

The Bellingen Shire deliberative panel was designed to:

1. understand the issues related to community resilience for the Shire and
2. explore the role of Council, the community, and others in building capacity for community resilience.

To inform the planning and design of the panel, the research team looked at successful models and approaches in Australia and overseas of building resilient communities with an emphasis on local grassroots citizen-led efforts. The subject matter information (attachment A) found:

- There are three main streams of literature: community resilience, disaster resilience and social ecological resilience.
- Much of the literature in this area focused on ideas associated with the establishment of a hub, e.g. some literature highlighted the importance of a 'trusted' physical space e.g. the City of Ann Arbor, MI, which polled residents and found a high level of trust in firefighters. As a result, they located a hub at the fire station.
- The findings of the literature could be summarized to suggest that the most successful models of community resilience have been community driven and owned, e.g. the NorCal Resilience

Network in the US positions itself as a grassroots coalition that activates and supports community-based, nature-inspired solutions to climate change, economic stability and social equity.

The subject matter review provided the foundational materials for the deliberative panel form and content including the approach, the slide pack content and the supplementary materials (pre-reading pack and handouts).

Through the subject matter review, the University team also identified and short list of experts who could contribute to and support the panellists with their deliberations. These experts play an essential role in the deliberative process by providing participants an informed and independent view on the subject matter at key points in the proceedings, along with the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussing ideas.

The experts invited to support this deliberative panel offered insight across three areas:

1. A community leader / activist to speak first-hand about the role of community in building resilience.
2. An academic to provide a grounding to the participants on the broad areas that they could consider when thinking about building community resilience.
3. A practitioner to speak about their experience in governance and the development of alternative approaches to funding.

Information about the expert speakers and their contribution to the deliberations is covered below.

3. The panel process

3.1 Warm-up and pre-panel preparation

Before attending the panel, participants were provided with a pre-reading information pack (attachment B). The purpose of the pack was to provide a foundational level of information about the deliberative panel process and an overview of some of the literature on community resilience. For those who were interested, the pack also included links to further information including academic papers on the subject.

A warm-up exercise was included in the pre-reading information pack asking panellists to reflect on Bellingham Shire's experience with resilience (e.g. the impact of COVID19, recent bushfires, historical floods), and to list three things the local community had done well to respond. The exercise encouraged members to start to form their views on building community resilience before they started the deliberative process, which meant the group was able to start with a position on the subject.

At the start of the panel process, participants were asked to complete a short survey asking them to rate on a scale of 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' seven statements related to community resilience. The statements included:

- Bellingen Shire is agile and flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Building community resilience needs to be community-led and driven.
- Government (federal, state and local) has a crucial role to play in developing community resilience.
- The decisions I make have an effect on the community I live in.

Panellists were asked to complete the same survey at the conclusion of the panel the following day. Remembering that an important part of the deliberative panel process is informed engagement, which results in a change in knowledge and views, the survey was designed to demonstrate a shift (if any) in the views of participants as they worked through the deliberation process. The outcomes of the pre- and post-panel reflections are detailed in the additional notes section at the end of this report.

3.2 Initial briefing and introductions

Part 1 of the deliberative panel ran from 5.30pm – 8pm on Friday 13 November. The purpose of this component was to provide an initial briefing to the group on the deliberative panel process, to introduce and start to explore the subject of community resilience, and to provide an opportunity for participants to get to know each other.

3.2.1 Where do you live in the Shire and why did you volunteer for the deliberative panel?

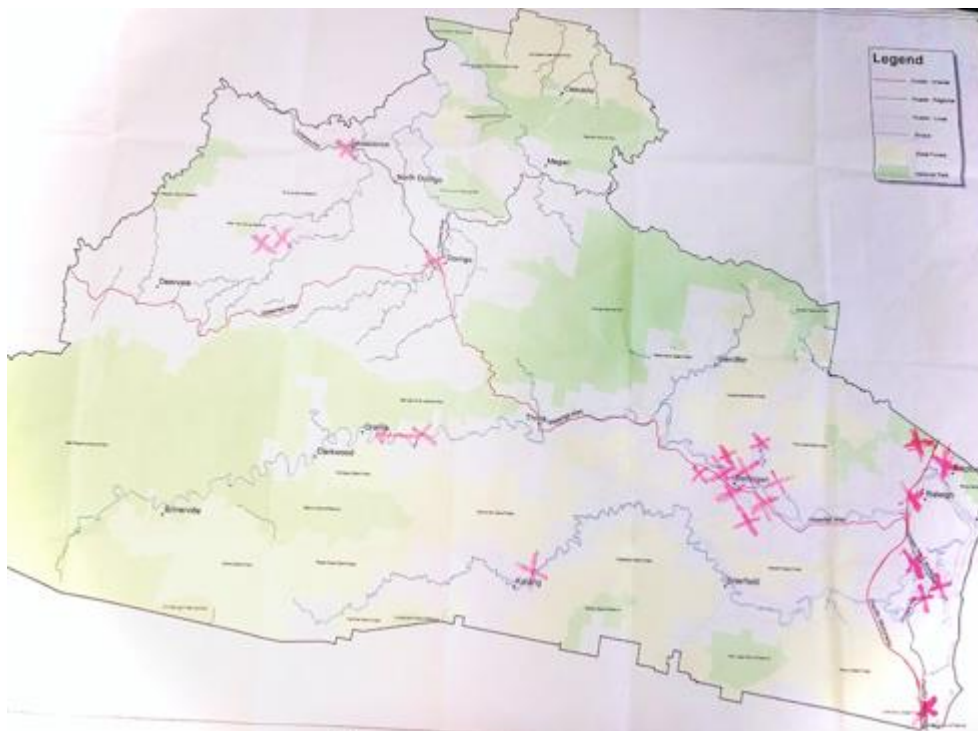


Figure 1: Participants' location in the Shire

As each member of the group spoke, their locations were marked onto a map of the Shire (figure 1). Many had lived in the area for 10+ years, and a small handful had recently moved to the Shire including from Victoria and Queensland. Many in the group were volunteers and their motivation for being involved in the deliberative panel was due to a strong sense of civic responsibility.

The group discussed the nature of the Bellingen Shire community. Many felt that the community was very cohesive and supportive, with some feeling that it was anchored around its vulnerability to the elements:

“We are frequently faced with death defying situations. We are the wettest Shire in the country ... when it floods, the divisions are gone. This forges us into something very special. We have a tradition of responding to need.”

Others expressed the view that the Shire had changed significantly bringing greater division and a reduced sense of ‘community’ to the area. Some felt that this had been amplified in 2020 as a result of the pandemic with the influx of ‘cashed-up’ retirees and young people from the city.

The composition and diversity of the community was discussed further later in the evening and is detailed below in 3.2.5.


3.2.2 What is a deliberative panel and why are we here?

What is this all about?

The deliberative panel approach brings together broadly representative groups of citizens to ‘deliberate’ on key initiatives, and provide advice and options for the way forward.

This deliberative panel will focus on:

- understanding the issues related to community resilience for the Shire and
- exploring the role of Council, the community and others in building resilience.



What is this all about?

This work is part of Council’s Bushfire Recovery & Resilience Program, which includes initiatives to enable, empower and support community resilience.


Council is keen to understand perspectives from different parts of the community to inform its community resilience plans and activities.





What are we asking you to consider?

Through a facilitated discussion informed by subject matter briefings and expert input, we are asking you to:

- consider ways to support community resilience for Bellingen Shire
- make recommendations to Council for their consideration and final decision-making.



What we are asking you to do



Roberta took the group through the deliberative panel approach and what they could expect from the process. She explained how deliberative panels run and what they are designed to achieve from considering the information presented, to discussing what it means to individuals and why, identifying what it means for the group, through to arriving at recommendations.

3.2.3 What is community resilience?

Perspectives and definitions

- The **existence, development and engagement** of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty and unpredictability.
- A community or region's capability to **prepare for, respond to, and recover** from significant disturbance-driven changes while maintaining community character, cohesion and capacity, and without permanent impairment of the community's public safety and health, economic, social, and national security functions, thus, accelerating recovery.
- The **amount of disturbance a system can absorb** and still remain within the same state, the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization, the degree to which the system can build and increase the capacity for learning and adaptation.
- [Emerging] from **four** primary sets of adaptive **capacities**:
 - Economic development
 - Social capital
 - Information and communication
 - Community competence.



Alternate view on defining community resilience

- Definitions of community resilience tend to either focus on:
 - specific challenges for the community that risk excluding other important challenges; or
 - an all-encompassing definition that may be too complex to apply at the local level.
- One option is to abandon the search for a single, precise definition of community resilience.
- Instead, it may be more appropriate to consider community resilience as a catch-all term for the range of elements which may be important for a community.



Activity: group discussion

What words/elements in the definitions mean something to you? Why?

Thinking specifically about the Shire, what is most important?



The group considered different definitions of community resilience related to what it means for Bellingen Shire. The definitions included examples that ranged from very prescriptive through to not having any single definition.

The group acknowledged that community resilience meant different things to different people and that it was difficult to land on a precise definition. Overall, the group felt that a broad definition of community resilience was most applicable to the Shire. The wide-ranging discussion included considerations of physical, economic and social assets. There was a broad sense of the need for preparedness, as well as a focus on cohesion, wellbeing and connectedness.

Additional comments included health, housing, water security and others that were discussed later in the proceedings as domains for community resilience.

Group discussion: Definitions of community resilience

- Resources, services, assets, infrastructure
- Surviving the future
- Equity food, funding
- Access to health, housing, support, safety, transport, energy, employment, water security, education, food
- Hub/food
- Community garden tenure
- Place/Hub
- Celebrations
- Restart a new community culture
- Clothing
- Education
- Prevention
- Ways to acknowledge, debrief, celebrate events to engage

3.2.4 What does community resilience mean to us?



Figure 2: Word cloud *What does community resilience mean for you and Bellinghen Shire?*

Panellists were asked to work independently and nominate three words to answer the question: what does community resilience mean for you and Bellinghen Shire? A range of views were expressed with communication and engagement emerging as the strongest theme. The second ranked themes were inclusion / inclusivity and support / resources, with preparedness and trust each ranking third most common. The weighting of the words is depicted in the word cloud above (figure 2).

These themes were expanded upon in the group's discussion around the values that should underpin community resilience. The group talked about who should be considered in building resilience with a particular focus on the marginalized or traditionally under-represented sections of the community; and on the importance of Council to be visible. They also discussed the processes to support community resilience flagging communication as key.

What we need		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks/distributed networks • Vision • Inclusion • Adaptability • Trust • Connections • Cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support • Stability • Localisation • Preparedness • Sharing • Tolerance • Change • Neighbours/neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance • Compassion • Positivity • Respect • Diversity • Openness • Proud
Who		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people • Role of council – enabling visibility • People with disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal people • Inter-generational 	
How		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement networks • Involvement • Listening • Working together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication – distributed leadership • Facilitating grassroot solutions • Face to face 	

3.2.5 What are the views of community in Bellingen Shire?

The group discussed the diverse composition of the Bellingen Shire community commenting that there are many communities within communities. The group highlighted that location within the Shire and the division between 'old Bello' and 'new Bello' were two areas where the lines of difference in the community were most marked. Some had lived in the area for generations while others were newcomers drawn to the area to pursue an alternative lifestyle, raise a family, or to enjoy the beautiful setting. They said that the diversity is what makes the Shire great.

They agreed that the composition of the panel was broadly representative of the Shire in terms of location, demographics, and longevity of living in the Shire. They also said that – given the diversity – the process of agreeing a way forward would be challenging.

3.3 Exploring the role of community, the Shire's assets and the domains / priorities for community resilience

Part 2 of the deliberative panel process was held from 9am – 5pm on the following day, Saturday 14 November. This whole-day session comprised presentations from subject matter experts; and individual, small group and whole group discussions and deliberations. It concluded with a series of recommendations to Council representatives.

3.3.1 Mapping community assets



Ahead of working in groups to brainstorm the Shire's community assets, panellists were introduced to one way to consider framing their thinking. The approach comprises personal, community, and institutional (the relationship between organisations) elements.

3.3.2 What assets do we have in Bellingen Shire for community resilience?

Environment		Physical	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● River● Rainforest/forest● Wildlife● Climate● Diversity● Landscape● Water● Land● Natural ecosystems		<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Town centres (heritage, ambiance)● Small footprint● Rural● Beauty● Space (population, density)● Diverse demographic● Mainly small sole trader businesses and family-owned farms● Food production	
People			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Intelligent● Knowledgeable● Belonging/pride● Heart● Champions● Connection with planet globally● Landcare● Country Womens’ Association● Mens Shed● Lions Club● Arts & cultural groups● Gumbaynggirr country and culture● Local indigenous knowledge and willingness to share it – cultural burning possibility?● Old and new knowledge● People who have been here a long time● Newer people bringing different expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Groups and Associations – Neighbourhood Centres● Very diverse, creative, experienced people● Willing to share skills and knowledge● Farmers Association● Lifesaving● Sporting groups & clubs● Senior Citizen groups● Chamber of Commerce● Rotary Club● Church groups● Alternate therapies● Well-established community groups and organisations● Police● Political parties and representation● Historical societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Farming and land management expertise● Emergency Services● 2BBB (Community Radio)● Expertise and offering to share expertise● Commitment● Community gardens● Home gardens● Housing Matters Action group● High levels of tertiary education● Over 350 community groups● Diversity● Creativity● Youth hub● Community clubs● Facebook groups	
Infrastructure			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Health facilities● Tourist facilities● Sporting facilities● Mountain bike/sports groups● Community halls and facilities● School halls● Showgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Schools● Rural Fire Service● State Emergency Service● Libraries● Neighbourhood Centres● Rainforest Centre● Hospitals● Churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Museums● Aged care facilities● Parks● National Parks● Nature Reserves● Flood cams● Memorial hall● Kombu Wholefoods store	

Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untapped goodwill • Festivals and community events • Cultural activities • Quality of life - ways to share it • Pelena • Council • Commitment to local food/farmers and community markets • Gumbaynggirr language revival • High levels of recycling • Restaurants/cafes wanting to recycle • Nature tourism • High uptake in solar panels • Local community markets • Local business keeping dollars in the community

This was a really positive discussion with panellists agreeing that there is an abundance of assets in the Shire. Highly valued was the knowledge and expertise in the community including Indigenous knowledge, the active and self-organised community includes many organisations and groups, and the natural landscape. The group discussed and agreed that the Shire has evolved in recent years, and that its large number of assets offered a strong starting point for building community resilience.

Key themes from the discussion were listed and each member of the group was asked to place a tick alongside the assets that they thought were most important. They had three ticks each to distribute according to their preferences.

Again, communication was key. This is reflected in the prominence of the community consultation theme in the graph below. Public infrastructure - including water and energy security - were also highlighted for their importance to the community's overall ability to be prepared for times of crisis.

Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council communication – accessibility ✓ • Community consultation ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ • Youth engagement and involvement ✓✓✓ • Ecosystem services • Coordination ✓✓✓ • Facilitation ✓✓✓
Assets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future proofing all assets ✓✓✓ • Waterfall Way ✓

Infrastructure	
• Footpaths – greater accessibility, increase healthy living and connection	✓
• Disaster preparedness – evacuation centres	✓✓✓
• Increase local waste management facilities (methane recapture, recycling capabilities, waste management education)	✓✓
• Water conservation and security	✓✓✓✓✓✓
• Community owned energy	✓✓✓✓✓
• Housing affordability	✓✓✓✓
• Population and development regulation	✓✓✓✓✓✓
• Transport – parking (lack of public transport)	✓✓
• traffic congestion	✓
Resources	
• Funding to support existing	✓✓✓
• community initiatives and build upon them	✓✓
• Education on local engagement to allow equitable contribution (other options to contribute to the discussion other than the create portal)	✓

3.3.3 Community assets and resilience

Five fundamentals of resilience

Inclusive: community cohesion and quality of life for all

Durable: prepared and robust against identified shocks and stresses

Reflective: learning, evidencing and continuous improvement

Adaptive: agile and flexible to change

Integrated: working together, solving multiple problems



Expert speaker: Zena Armstrong, President Cobargo Bushfire Recovery Fund



Zena has been President of the Cobargo Community Bushfire Recovery Fund since its establishment in January 2020. She spoke passionately and with authority about the experience of Cobargo through the devastating bushfires of January 2020 and the community's efforts since that time towards recovery.

Given the scale of the crisis, there was intense media attention on Cobargo's plight generally, which was heightened with the visit of Prime Minister Morrison who was not welcomed by all.

Zena spoke of the pressure on the community and the limits on the support that was available, including from Council. Early in the recovery process, the local business chamber formed a network but this platform was considered too narrow and exclusive. Ultimately, the community and business chamber came together to form a broader more representative group.

Zena's presentation is available [here](#).

President of the Cobargo Community Bushfire Recovery Fund, Zena Armstrong's presentation resonated strongly with the group. They were inspired by her story and – as a region that is also vulnerable to natural disasters – the panellists could relate to Cobargo's experience. Being independent, having local agency and not relying on 'outsiders' was a strong message for the group. Related to this, the development of disaggregated systems (around energy and water for example) were key take outs. Supporting the development of local expertise so that it can be leveraged when needed was also noted.

Group discussion: From Zena's presentation – elements of success

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad based ongoing engagement • Use local expertise • Support and build capacity of volunteers • Local champions • Celebrations - learn and doing • Build on local assets/strengths • Establish bushfire recovery hub/s • Tell own story – websites etc • Source funds • Long term resilience planning • Use disaster to plan beyond zero emissions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular economy • Disaggregated systems (energy, food) • Sort out the governance arrangements / committee structure (whole of community not just business) • Social capital • Watch for power exploitation • Connecting local divisions/recognise trauma • Avoid political capture • Bounce back after rejection • Local agency/self-direction |
|--|---|

3.3.4 Community resilience domains



The group prioritised areas / domains of focus to build the Shire's community resilience by placing a tick against those areas that they considered most important. Through this exercise, they nominated water as key. Education and food were ranked equal second, and energy was ranked third most important.

Group discussion: what are the domain priorities?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health ✓ • Housing ✓ ✓ • Support ✓ ✓ • Transport ✓ • Safety • Water ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy ✓ ✓ ✓ • Employment ✓ ✓ • Education ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ • Civic responsibility • Food ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ |
|--|---|

In the discussion, the group reflected on Zena's presentation in particular her comments on establishing disaggregated systems including the importance of securing water and fuel supplies. The group posited who coordinates in a crisis? They talked about the significant challenges they had faced during the bushfires such as lack of access to water and power, but that the community came together.

When the group considered what might be missing from the discussion on domain priorities, they compiled a list and voted with ticks against each. Diversity in consultation, communication and transparency in Council processes were nominated as important areas of focus.

Group discussion: what's missing in our areas of focus?	
• Diversity in consultation	✓✓✓✓✓✓
• Local newspaper	
• Environment	✓
• Communication	✓✓✓✓
• Expertise	✓
• Transparency in Council processes	✓✓✓✓✓✓
• Getting educated about civic responsibility	

This took the group to a discussion about the role of Council in disaster preparedness and building community resilience. They discussed whether community resilience should be community-led or Council-led, and how to strike an appropriate balance between these. Generally, the group felt that Council does have a leadership role to play. Many agreed that shared ownership by way of *Community-led, Council-enabled* struck the good balance, although overall there was strong support *for community resilience being community led*.

Reflecting the constant theme of communication throughout the deliberative panel process, some concerns were raised about the effectiveness of Council's engagement including the reach of the Community Engagement Officer, and the expectations of Council for this role. There was wide-ranging discussion about whether the Council Engagement Officer should provide support for the four areas within the Shire, as well as the Shire as a whole, and some were concerned to have a detailed discussion about how the resources of this role are best deployed.

There needs to be further work to help Council hear the community's views about ways they can strengthen their community engagement activities. The online 'Create Community Engagement Hub' was known by a few in the group but not widely used. Engagement needs to increase across all platforms including being more active in social media. One participant said that Bellingen Shire Council was one of only four Councils in Australia without a FaceBook presence.

Expert speaker: Brian Furze, researcher, writer and adviser, Sustainable Landscapes



Brian has had a long career as a researcher, writer and advisor working with communities searching for community-generated change. His main focus is on sustainable landscapes and the people who support them - community-based change and resilience in the search for sustainable futures.

He is part of the delivery team for the Community Leadership and Resilience Scholarship Scheme – a joint initiative offered by Bellingen, Port Macquarie-Hastings and Kempsey Councils with Charles Sturt University to create and train a skilled network of leaders to support the Mid North Coast's current and future crisis responses.

Brian spoke of his experience and learnings from working across multi-stakeholder platforms including local communities, government agencies, NGOs and the business sector on building community resilience. He spoke of the importance of establishing strong links between local communities and those outside the region to ensure representation in decision-making beyond the local area.

Brian's presentation is available [here](#).

Expert speaker: Emma-Kate Rose, Executive Director, Food Connect Foundation and Project Manager, The Next Economy



Emma-Kate is a community advocate and social entrepreneur. She leads Food Connect, a social enterprise which has led the way in transforming the local food system, using principles of ecological agriculture and engaging ethically with family farms and local communities for over 14 years.

Emma-Kate spoke about her experience with establishing Food Connect. She also shared with the group the path the organisation followed in its equity crowdfunding campaign, which raised over \$2 million to buy their own warehouse along with 500 care-holders.

In addition, Emma-Kate talked about governance for the enterprise and its inclusive and open approach to community participation and engagement.

4. Recommendations and way forward

The concept of a physical hub was discussed but not widely supported. A lot of questions were raised about the form it might take – virtual, physical – whether it would be a commercial enterprise and how communication and engagement would occur. There were also discussions about existing community hubs and services, and what role they could take in the future.


Ultimately the group was not convinced that there was a need in the Shire for a community resilience physical hub. Instead, they felt that there is already a strong and vibrant network of 350+ community groups that are somewhat under-utilised and undervalued. They felt that if these groups were well connected, that they could provide the Shire with the capabilities to build community resilience.

In order to achieve this, the group felt that the Shire needed to develop an understanding of the network as a whole and linkages between groups; that the network should be mapped and that this was an opportunity for Council to work with the community. A strong position emerged that a key first step was to undertake a detailed community mapping exercise identifying existing strengths and community capacities.

Reflecting a common thread from the start of the panel deliberations, communication was a focus for the group's discussions on recommendations and priorities. The panellists would like to see greater communication and engagement from Council day-to-day.

Preparedness across the domains of water, food security and disaster readiness was also highlighted in this final session by the group. They recommended developing and implementing a series of priority projects to support the establishment of disaggregated systems in areas including fuel, power and water to ensure the preparedness of the Shire.

The group broadly (but not universally) agreed on a governance model acknowledging that there is significant expertise in the Shire, and that its assets are interdependent.

Community resilience model	Improved communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet and intranet – Shire wide • Facebook • Emergency comms – radio, social media, texting/whatsapp, internet at every SES shed • Local newspaper • Better accessibility • Transparency in Council • Processes – funding priorities and processes • Variety of ways to engage • Go to where people are already meeting
Consolidation of hubs	Assessing what we have
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building • Capability • Needs assessment • Back to what is already here • What does good governance entail? • What is included? What does it look like? Co-led • Is this a space for multi-stakeholder (multi-hubs?) • How accessible will it be? • Can we expand the hub to do sales & distribution? • Is this a commercial venture? • Will this be an education and learning or sharing of skills/knowledge facility? • Could this be a story-telling space? • Is this a physical location? • Can we build on assets/groups we already have? • Is this a duplication? • Will we have events to bring community together? Reward & celebrate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have to look back before you can look forward • Assess what we have • Redesign the community role • Redesign the engagement role • Assess, plan, do, check act • Look at what we redesign • Link • Acknowledge current community groups formal and informal and support a space where people can come together and networks, share resources, knowledge, ideas and provide a link to change it from concept to reality • Links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council collaborative ○ Connect to each other ○ Groups helping groups

The panel concluded with the presentation of a series of recommendations to Council on the way forward to develop the Shire's community resilience: while there was a level of agreement for these recommendations, there was not full group agreement with them all.

1. Map the functions and existing capabilities of the Shire's community network. Where are the strengths? Where are the gaps?
2. Support this network to share resources, knowledge and ideas – the means through which this can be done needs further consideration.
3. Work with the community to reshape Council's approach community and engagement so that it leverages the above networks and supports the community by promoting:
 - greater collaboration with Council
 - greater connections to each other
 - a culture of groups helping groups
4. Improve communication from Council to the community across a variety of digital and non-digital platforms including establishing a Facebook page.
5. Establish and set-in train tangible priority projects that build the community's resilience and ensure that the Shire is prepared, ready and connected such as across the priority domains of water, food security, disaster readiness.

To support the implementation of the above, 22 of the 25 people in the group have signed up to be involved in future community resilience activities for the Shire.

First-hand accounts from some of the participants on the Bellingen Shire Deliberative Panel can be viewed here:

David
Ellie
Fabio
Gary

Karen
Lindsey
Sara
Tom

Additional notes: Movements in thinking about community resilience

Panellists completed a pre- and post-panel survey to measure any shifts in attitudes towards the issues discussed at the panel. The purpose of this exercise was to understand if the panellists had changed their views based on what they had heard, learned and discussed over the previous 1.5 days.

The survey comprised seven statements against which panellists were asked to rate their response on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements were:

1. Bellingen Shire is agile and flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances
2. Equity is a key element of building a resilient community
3. Building community resilience needs to be community-led and driven
4. Communities in Bellingen Shire are able to access and use available resources (e.g. energy, communication, transportation, food) to respond to, withstand and recover from adverse situations
5. Government (federal, state and local) has a crucial role to play in developing community resilience
6. A community is more vulnerable when people don't know their neighbours
7. The decisions I make have an effect on the community I live in

Panellists were more cognisant of the role of community – individually and collectively – by the end of the panel with over half agreeing more with the statement 'Decisions I make have an effect on the community I live in' at the end of the panel; and over one third agreeing more that 'A community is more vulnerable when people don't know their neighbours'. There was one panellist who agreed less with these statements by the end of the panel.

Responses to the statement 'Building community resilience needs to be community-led and driven' remained largely the same with no change in views by over half of the panel. There was small movement with some agreeing more with this statement (5) and others agreeing less (4) by the end of the proceedings.

There was stronger agreement among the panel with the statement 'Bellingen Shire is agile and flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances' with over half agreeing to the statement. Through the expert speakers, panellists also weighed-up the Shire's capacity to respond to challenges against that of others (for example Cobargo).

There was a strong increase in agreement with the statement 'Government (federal, state and local) has a crucial role to play in developing community resilience', with a small number agreeing less with the statement by the conclusion of the panel. The role of Council in particular was discussed in-depth during the deliberative process, and this shift is reflected in the panel's recommendations related to the need for Council to improve connection with and support for community to build resilience.

Attachment A: Community Resilience subject matter review

This subject matter review was developed to assist the Project Team with thinking and planning for the Bellingen Shire Deliberative Panel. Initially the review focused on resilience hubs. As planning for the Panel developed the review broadened to include resilient communities more generally with an emphasis on local grassroots citizen-led efforts that work towards creating resilience in local communities.

Overview

- Majority of the literature is around hubs developed for extreme events and disaster recovery.
- There are three main streams of literature; community resilience, disaster resilience and [social ecological resilience](#)
- All literature stressed the importance of a trusted physical space e.g. the City of Ann Arbor, MI, polled residents and found a high level of trust in firefighters. So they located the hub at the fire station.
- The most successful models have been community driven and owned – [Norcal Resilience Network](#) contains examples of community driven action across a range of sectors.
- A resilience hub typically refers to one building
- Hubs are often used to engage residents in preparedness trainings, apply infrastructure investments, and facilitate relationship-building activities.

Success Indicators

Shifting power and capacity to the community e.g. of Miami's [Valencia Gunder](#) whose response to Hurricane Irma became a model for resilience hubs nationwide.

Community driven - Resilience Hubs are a tool to increase community adaptive capacity and enhance quality of life. Residents and local community-based organizations should be partners, and preferably the leaders, from the very beginning of the process. This requires local government leads and other partners to actively step back and shift power to community leaders and organizations.

Community cohesion – emerging evidence of the link between place-based social cohesion and resilience. This [article](#) (firewalled) reports on comparative findings of cohesion and resilience indices in four Canadian rural communities that experienced disasters and evacuation in different phases of coping and resilience.

Public-private partnerships has been a neglected area of engagement but is gaining increasing traction particularly in urban settings e.g. [Accra Resilience Strategy](#). See also Gold Coast case studies below.

Resilience in Bellingen

The [Australian Disaster Resilience Index](#) assesses [Bellingen Disaster Resilience](#) as follows:

This area is assessed as having moderate capacity for disaster resilience.

Communities in areas of moderate disaster resilience have some capacity to use available resources to cope with adverse events, and some capacity to adjust to change through learning, adaptation and transformation.

Moderate disaster resilience is generally contributed by moderate levels of coping and adaptive capacity, which in turn are associated with moderate levels of economic capital, moderate provision of and access to services, moderate community cohesion and variable encouragement for adaptive learning and problem solving.

Resilience in NSW

The NSW Government recently established [Resilience NSW](#), as the lead disaster management agency for NSW, responsible for all aspects of disaster recovery and building community resilience to future disasters. It oversees and coordinates emergency management policy and service delivery with a focus on social, economic, infrastructure and natural environment outcomes.

Direct inquiries

- Phone: 02 9212 9200
- Email: info@resilience.nsw.gov.au

Led by Shane Fitzsimmons.

Website includes resilience resources for [Councils](#), [communities](#) and [NGOs](#).

What are Resilience Hubs

“Resilience Hubs are community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life. Hubs can meet a myriad of physical and social goals by **utilizing a trusted physical space** such as a community centre, recreation facility, or multi-family housing building as well as the surrounding infrastructure such as a vacant lot, community park, or local business. They provide an opportunity to effectively work at the nexus of community resilience, emergency management, climate change mitigation, and social equity while also providing opportunities for communities to become more self-determining, socially connected, and successful before, during, and after disruptions. Resilience Hubs serve communities in three operating conditions: Normal (>99% of the time), Disruption, and Recover” (<http://resilience-hub.org/what-are-hubs/>)

Normal

Hubs provide a home base for residents, businesses, and organizations to gather for workshops, events, meals, and training opportunities that benefit a range of community needs, including resilience. Hubs function in normal mode the majority of the time, meaning there are no hazards present and all critical infrastructure is available and functioning properly.

Disruption

Although Resilience Hubs will function at “normal mode” most of the time, they are intended to also act as centres for preparedness, response, and recovery. In the event of a disruption, Hubs will switch from Normal Mode into reacting and responding to the disruption and will enhance operations to better support immediate community needs. With enhanced systems and capacity, Hubs can ideally help reduce the need of emergency services and better connect residents and businesses with supplies, information and support during a disruption.

Recovery

Hubs can play a critical role in post-disruption recovery and ongoing community needs. The same inequities frontline communities experience before and during a disaster tend to impact their ability to recover, let alone thrive, after a disruption. Hubs can act as centres for resource deliveries and distribution, access to support and assistance for complicated processes such as filling out relief or insurance forms, locations to access support services for trauma and can even be locations where Community Benefits Agreements are generated.

Hubs can also be central locations for external partners to gather and support recovery services such as conducting needs assessments, damage assessments, interviews with residents, and collecting data.

Key Components of a Hub

- **Community Desire and Support**

A Resilience Hub can only be effective if community members actively engage in co-development, understand the resources and services it provides, trust and wish to visit the location and trust the people managing the site.

- **The Building(s):**

An existing well-used and well-trusted site (building) is the core of a Resilience Hub. The best sites are those that are in fairly good condition and can support other critical elements such as solar and energy storage systems.

- **Resources to Meet Community Needs During Extreme Events:**

In addition to providing shelter and electricity, each Resilience Hub should maintain a supply of and provide access to freshwater and resources such as food, ice, refrigeration, charging stations, basic medical supplies, and other supplies needed in the event of an emergency. Provide engagement and educational opportunities to enhance individual adaptive capacity; and increase energy and water efficiency of surrounding businesses and residences. Critical communication and information functions that help educate community members.

- **Energy Systems:**

Onsite power systems capable of reliably sustaining operations during an extended power outage.

Onsite power system will provide economic and social value to the host facility not simply during outage events but also during normal operating conditions.

- **Community Uses:**

Resilience Hubs are enhanced community centers that are managed and supported by local residents providing: translational services, access to health services like flu shots and diabetes screening, job opportunities/centre, locations for growing local food, spaces for before and after school programs, job training programs.

Key Steps to consider early on in the process (based on guidance from USDN) include:

1. **Establish a need, buy-in and funding.** This step is important to understand how to enhance existing or create new programs and services to meet the needs of the community. What does the community need? How does the resilience hub align with community or local government goals (and potential funding streams)? Communities can look for financial and in-kind support from local, state and federal governments; foundations; impact investment funds; utilities (incentives); universities and researchers; and vendors.

2. **Build project teams.** These core partners can be representatives from local governments; local business; community leaders and community-based organizations; public works; neighbourhood associations; first responders; educational institutions; hospitals and clinics; cultural institutions like museums; and faith-based leaders.
3. **Assess vulnerabilities, sensitivity and adaptive capacity:** Examines anticipated climate impacts and chronic stressors and awareness of and concern about it in the community. You also dive into questions like:
 1. Housing: Who owns, rents or is in public housing. What's in a flood zone? Who has insurance?
 2. Food security: Where is the closest grocery store? How do people access it? Will it stay open in an emergency?
 3. Mobility: Who has access to cars and transit? Is transit reliable? What evacuation options do people have?
 4. Health: What chronic illnesses like asthma do people have? Who relies on medications, including those that need refrigeration? Do people have insurance?

Case Studies

[Building a Resilient and Equitable Bay Area](#)

Discusses the concept of economic localization. Restoring the capacity of communities to sustainably feed, clothe, house, and power themselves with the knowhow, natural resources, and financial capital inherent to their own bioregions and the people who reside there. Economic localization holds great promise as a strategy for creating a wider range of local jobs and institutions, shielding our economy from global shifts, increasing the diversity and quality of goods and services we consume, distributing economic benefits in a more equitable manner, and protecting our environment.

Discusses strategies needed to localise the economy:

1. Multi-agency coordination
2. Localization as overriding policy
3. Localization as a tool for enhancing social equity
4. Sound analytical basis for localization opportunities
5. Self-reliance targets for key sectors
6. Specific policies and programs to achieve economic localization

[Public-private partnership in disaster management: A case study of the Gold Coast](#)

Public-private partnership has important roles to play in disaster management, including building business and community resilience, developing community risk awareness and providing essential services. This paper reports on two recent initiatives in public-private

partnerships on Queensland's Gold Coast. The first is an initiative by a local community group 'Varsity Lakes Community Limited' to prepare a disaster management guide for the master planned community of Varsity Lakes with support from NRMA insurance company and the local council. The second is the 'Community Watch' program initiated by the Gold Coast City Council to involve local community groups in various parts of the City for building disaster resilience. These two examples provide insights on evolving disaster management public-private partnerships that are more community based and bottom-up by nature. The study indicates that there is potential for including an additional layer of 'community' when conceptualising the existing four-tiered (commonwealth, state, district and local government) disaster management framework of Queensland.

Building community resilience is a complex and important task that requires effective partnerships. This includes the development of public-private partnerships. This paper has provided two different but related case studies of how such partnerships have formed within the Gold Coast: the partnership between Gold Coast City Council and Varsity Lakes Community Limited; and the partnership between Gold Coast City Council and local community-based organisations. Unlike traditional emergency management approaches to “partnerships” in which government applies a top down approach to determining partners and program, both case studies reviewed by this research illustrate a different approach – one in which the non- government partners have “emerged”. The Varsity Lakes community did not need to be “authorised” by government to have an interest in emergency management – as explained above, this grew naturally out of the development process. Likewise the Gold Coast Community Watch program seeks to identify community-based groups which have an interest.

[Bushfire communities and resilience: What can they tell us?](#)

By using the experience of the community members to understand the experience of living in a bushfire affected community we can extract what factors that are important to a competent, resilient community. This current study used qualitative methods to determine that five factors (sense of community, social support and social networks, self-efficacy, coping and community competence) are important aspects of the communities’ experience in mediating bushfire disasters.

Resources

[Resilience hubs: Shifting Power to Communities and Increasing Community Capacity](#)

The purpose of this white paper is to establish definitions and capture ideas to help community organizations, local governments, and other interested parties implement and support community Resilience Hubs. These ideas are drawn from local experiences in several [Urban Sustainability Directors Network](#) (USDN) cities including Washington DC and Baltimore. Certain features of the Resilience Hub concept, such as providing temporary shelter during emergencies, have long been in use within communities. The concept of Resilience Hubs as defined here, however, is intentionally more comprehensive in purpose and scope, focusing on preparedness, adaptation, mitigation, and equity.

[Guide to Developing Resilience Hubs](#)

Outlines the essential elements of a Resilience Hub and how to begin planning for Hub development. The Guide is intended to help communities develop new Resilience Hub projects. Provides detailed guidance through eight phases:

1. Making the Case for Resilience Hubs
2. Selecting a Project Team
3. Assessing Vulnerability & Selecting a Service Area
4. Identification of Project Team and Project Goals
5. Identifying and Evaluating Sites
6. Identifying Resilience Solutions
7. Site Development and Solutions Installation
8. Site Activation and Operations

[Community Resilience Toolkit: A Workshop Guide for Community Resilience Planning](#)

Toolkit guides groups in leading workshops to plan for resilience in their communities while decreasing reliance on fossil fuels. It is designed for community groups. The Toolkit offers resources and action ideas in six key sectors: food, water, energy, transportation and housing, jobs and economy, and civic services.

The toolkit contains three basic elements:

Background notes offer facilitators background information and resources on each topic that may be helpful for discussions.

Facilitation notes offer ideas for participatory workshop methods that help groups fully engage with the material, nurture creative thinking, and focus on meeting workshop goals.

Participant handouts are ready-to-use resources that help communicate key information to workshop participants.

[Map your Future Toolkit: Community Resilience Planning](#)

Map Your Future is a program for community groups to improve their communities through building resilience. The Toolkit has a focus on preparing for natural disasters and the impacts of climate change. The approach is based on asset-based community development.

The Toolkit provides instructions for:

1. Surveying community members about challenges they face and solutions they support
2. Creating maps to support existing strengths in the community, and places where more could be done
3. Working with city planners to make the vision a reality

The Toolkit includes: instructions, tips, a community survey, and community mapping lists, and a project roadmap.

References

[Building Community Resilience and Wellbeing Report](#) - prepared for the Mental Health Commission of NSW by Australian Institute of Business Wellbeing, The University of Wollongong.

[Community Toolkit for Economic Recovery and Resiliency](#) – a Canadian toolkit for local government to prepare for their role in business and economic preparedness, response and recovery.

[How to create a resilient space; A Step by Step Primer](#)

[Ready to Respond Strategies for Multi-Family Building Resilience](#)

Community Resilience

Community resilience is defined as the existence, development and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty and unpredictability.

[Building Thriving, Resilient Communities](#) collection of books, online resources, trainings and courses exploring resilient systems being created in diverse communities.

[Resilience and Community Action in Bristol](#)

Provides a detailed case study of Bristol's movement for community-based action on sustainability. Discusses community-initiated projects, role of local government.

Makes the following observations:

- Initial conversations among members of the Resilience Action Group indicated a range of perspectives on what resilience is and ideas of how to achieve this. These converged on more radical notions of resilience, with an emphasis on ongoing systemic change, both incremental and transformative, rather than resisting change or 'bouncing back'.
- Many members of the group talked about the need for ongoing learning processes to promote flexible and proactive responses to change and build adaptive capacity, and the need for this to involve all sectors of society.
- Inclusion in planning and decision-making was a key factor, raised in many different contexts and as both a practical and an ethical issue: in other words so that adaptive capacity can draw upon the greatest range of perspectives and knowledge.

[Linking Theory and Practice of Community Resilience](#) – Article situates community resilience in complexity theory in terms of the behaviour of 'complex adaptive systems'.

[Thriving Resilient Communities Collaboratory](#) (TRCC) is a U.S.-based network of regional and national leaders who use systemic and collaborative approaches to help communities thrive and become more resilient. The site hosts an overview of programs, impact and multi-stakeholder approach including a collaborative funding model.

[Global Resilient Cities Network](#) – Supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. A city-led organization that drives urban resilience action to protect vulnerable communities.

Transition Communities

Originating in the UK in 2006, the Transition movement is oriented to local grassroots citizen-led efforts that prepare for and support a societal energy transition to a low-carbon future in response to climate change, peak oil, ecological degradation, and economic instability. Overlapping significantly with relocalisation, degrowth/slow growth, local food, and related movements, and based on permaculture principles and a distributed network model, it embraces the opportunity to turn crisis into an opportunity to build more resilient, convivial, and vibrant local communities.

Transition communities have started projects in areas of food, transport, energy, education, housing, waste, arts etc. as small-scale local responses to the global challenges of climate change, economic hardship and shrinking supplies of cheap energy.

It's an approach that has spread now to over 50 countries, in thousands of groups: in towns, villages, cities, Universities, schools.

It is about communities **stepping up** to address the big challenges they face by **starting local**. By coming together, they are able to **crowd-source solutions**. They seek to **nurture a caring culture**, one focused on **supporting each other**, both as groups or as wider communities.

[Local, community led](#) – booklet provides case studies of:

- Food communities
- Energy communities
- Enterprising communities
- Regenerative communities

[Transition Darebin](#) (VIC) - This group is about helping the Darebin community learn ways to sustain itself by pursuing practical solutions like local food growing, energy efficient homes and buildings, fossil-fuel-free transport, local production of goods and services, and reuse and recycling. It has a strong social justice focus.

[Transition Australia](#) - an organic network of groups that are growing and developing, and benefit from being connected. The aim of the website is to connect and support transition groups focusing on sustainability, food security, equity and cohesion. We want to make it easier for these groups to find each other, share resources, learn and be inspired.

[The emergence of the transition movement in Canada](#) - This paper reports on the methods and results of a Canadian community-based research study aimed at understanding how and where the movement has taken root across the country, what Transition practice looks like, challenges and opportunities encountered, and lessons learned that could be applied within the movement and by others interested in the role of citizen-led initiatives for sustainability transition.

[Transition Research Network](#) - a self-organising peer group of academics and community activists. Its main phase of activity ran from 2011 to 2014, projects and programming then transferred to European [Network of Community-Led Sustainability Initiatives](#).

Transition resources and tools

[Essential Guide to doing transition](#) – beginners guide for communities starting a transition movement.

[Resources for Transition communities](#): Resources and guides to seven essential ingredients to develop and embed Transition within your community.

[This site](#) collects presentations and an open space write-up from the Transition-themed parallel session at the [Resilience 2014 Conference](#) in Montpellier, France, held by the [Resilience Alliance](#), along with related papers presented elsewhere in the conference and a few gathered from elsewhere. It combines first-hand accounts, primary documentation, original analysis and global vision on the theory and practice of community resilience, and is recognised as a landmark study in the resilience field.

Sharing Communities

[Bring Transition Town-Style Sharing to your Community](#) – article about building resilience around local, grassroots economies in response to peak oil and climate change. Discusses and provides examples of sharing models for food, swapping and bartering, skills and knowledge, community currencies and time banking.

[The People Who Share](#) – works to divert surplus resources to people in need, tackle loneliness and protect the planet. **This [page](#) provides a directory of community led sharing initiatives.**

Food Resilience

Food Hubs

A food hub is a business or organisation that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers in order to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.

Food Hubs range in scale from volunteer-run buying groups using temporary spaces for receipt and packing of goods (like community or school halls, churches and garages) to permanent and well-established Hubs providing a variety of business, educational and/or food access services.

Food hubs are often EITHER driven from producers (with view to increase market access) OR from consumers / consumer advocates. Some hubs, like for example, [Manchester Veg People](#) in the UK, are set up with explicit multi-stakeholder ownership (buyers and sellers) and there are processes embedded to manage achievement of multiple objectives and to navigate potential conflicts.

There have been recent feasibility studies for food hubs in the Australian context. Click to read the [Bendigo Food Hub Feasibility Study](#) and the [Wangaratta Food Hub Feasibility Study](#).

Food Cooperatives

[Starting a Food Co-op](#)

[Sources and Uses budget](#) (S&U) is one of the most important business planning tools that a startup co-op will use. Template Sources and uses - This template is designed to help startup co-op steering committees understand how much cash is required to open their co-op, as well as how much is needed in each stage of the development of their co-ops, and which sources (or pots) of funds should be used in each stage.

[Why some Coops Fail](#) identifies four factors that were common among startup co-ops that did not succeed:

- very small retail spaces (500–1,500 square feet)
- startup budgets significantly below co-op averages
- unusually short or truncated development timelines
- over-reliance on member labor

These four factors remain the best indicators for potential lack of viability for a new co-op. Unusually low budgets and short timelines often imply cut corners and poor planning. Most new startups need three to five years (often more) to move from initial discussions through open doors.

[Totnes Devon](#)

[Bello Food Box](#) - a local produce system distributing affordable weekly boxes of local, seasonal, healthy, fresh fruit and veg, sourced within 200km of Bellingen. 5 Church Street, rear entrance Bellingen NSW 2454 0437590185
info@bellofoodbox.org.au
www.bellofoodbox.org.au

[Fitzroy Urban Harvest Food Swap](#), 1st Saturday of every month at Smith's Reserve Fitzroy (parkland next to Fitzroy pool). If your garden produces fruit and vegetables and there's enough to share then come on down - The idea is to share the spoils of our wonderful gardens and get to know your neighbours while you're at it! And don't worry if you haven't got a lot to swap - think broadly! folks bring along recipes, jars for jams, flowers etc etc
Geelong Sustainability Has an affordable housing Project.

Food Networks

[Open Food Network Australia](#) - open source platform enables new, ethical supply chains by making it easy and efficient. Food producers can sell online, wholesalers can manage buying groups and supply through networks of food hubs and shops. Communities can bring together producers to create a virtual farmers' market, building a resilient local food economy.

[Whitsunday Food Network](#) - Established in 2015, the Greater Whitsunday Food Network brings together the farm to plate value chain to encourage and support investment in local food and agritourism products in the region.

[Bristol Food Network](#) - supports, informs and connects individuals, community projects, organisations and businesses who share a vision to transform Bristol into a sustainable food city.

We have taken our wider objectives from [A Good Food Plan for Bristol](#):

- To promote and encourage people to cook from scratch, grow their own and eat more fresh, seasonal, local, organically grown food.
- To champion the use of local, independent food shops and traders to help keep Bristol's high street vibrant and diverse.
- To promote and encourage the use of good quality land in and around Bristol for food production.
- To promote and encourage the redistribution, recycling and composting of food waste.
- To advance education about the part that food, nutrition and lifestyle can play in meeting the needs of disadvantaged individuals, families and groups in the community and encourage social inclusion and social cohesion.
- To promote community-led food trade such as co-operatives, buying groups, Community Supported Agriculture and pop-up shops.
- To build the Bristol Food Network expertise in food and sustainability that allows access to and creates opportunities for local people within Bristol.

[IncredibleEdible](#) – UK based network that works with local people to show how they can transform their own landscapes and turned disused plots into abundant sources of healthy food.

Attachment B: Pre-reading pack for panel participants



BELLINGEN SHIRE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE DELIBERATIVE PANEL

13-14 November 2020

Thank you for being part of the Bellingen Shire Community Resilience Deliberative Panel. The Panel will be held over two days 13-14 November 2020.

This information pack will provide you with some background about the deliberative panel process and what community resilience is about. **Also included is an exercise on page 5 that we ask you to complete prior to the deliberative panel.**

What is a deliberative panel?

A deliberative panel is an innovative form of community engagement designed to strengthen participatory democracy by placing people (citizens, residents, affected individuals) closer to the affairs of government and decision makers.

It is a facilitated process that brings together regular citizens in a public square/forum (democracy) and gives them an opportunity to discuss ideas that are important to them, being informed by one another and by others with expertise in the field. It is about participants considering relevant facts from multiple points of view, talking with others to think critically about options before them and enlarging their perspectives, opinions and understandings.

Deliberative panels are an approach that emphasises information processing (meaning/sense-making) as much as information exchange (communication of information), and encourages people to critically test, assess and contend with a range of perspectives, inputs and evidence.

Ordinary citizens know what matters to them. A deliberative panel provides an opportunity for citizens to share their opinions and expertise, and exchange ideas with each other. This enriches our understanding of the points of view of others and allows for the development of shared understanding and common goals.

Through respectful dialogue, the panel can develop a shared view of what is important and what needs to be done as individuals and as a community. A deliberative panel seeks to elicit informed, quality, meaningful discussion and decisions.

What is Council doing?

It has been a difficult 12 months for the Shire, which has faced drought, bushfires, floods and COVID. Bellingen Shire has shown itself to be a very resilient community, able to cope with stressors and to recovery quickly. However, there are those amongst us who have struggled with stresses such as fear, loneliness and trauma.

Bellingen Shire Council has been working closely with the community to plan for the social and economic impacts the Shire faces now and into the future. The Council is keen to develop projects that make us a more resilient and prepared community, that can deal with the challenges that past, current and future disasters will present us.

This focus is part of Council's Bushfire Recovery & Resilience Program (<https://create.bellingen.nsw.gov.au/community-resilience-and-preparedness-program>), which includes initiatives to enable, empower and support community resilience. Bellingen's Bushfire Recovery and Resilience funds will be channeled into projects and grants that will provide the opportunity for community led activities and innovation that can help make us all more resilient in our day to day lives and readier to cope with and recover from disasters.

What is community resilience?

Change is constant both in nature and in society. Resilience is about the ability of a community to sustain itself through change by adapting. Communities can develop resilience by actively building capacity and engaging with others in the community.

Community resilience is the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise¹. It is an important indicator of social sustainability.

This definition closely links resilience with the capacity to adapt. The capacity to adapt refers to the ability of a community to learn, to experiment and adopt solutions, and to develop shared responses to broad range of challenges.

Community resilience is about communities stepping up to address the big challenges they face by starting local. By coming together, communities can develop solutions. Community resilience seeks to nurture a caring culture, one focused on supporting each other, both as groups and as wider communities.

¹ Kristen Magis (2010) Community Resilience: An Indicator of Social Sustainability, Society and Natural Resources, 23:5, 401-416.

Research² shows that there are five key factors that are important to a competent, resilient community. These are:

- sense of community
- social support and social networks
- self-efficacy
- coping
- community competence.

Social cohesion is the central mechanism through which community resilience can reduce the impact of negative change and enhance the communities' ability to recover from shock and stressors.

Community resilience means different things to different people. While there is no one agreed definition of community resilience, research³ has identified nine core elements of community resilience that are common among the definitions. The core elements are:

- local knowledge
- community networks and relationships
- communication
- health
- governance and leadership
- resources
- economic investment
- preparedness
- mental outlook.

² Patel SS, Rogers MB, Amlôt R, Rubin GJ. What Do We Mean by 'Community Resilience'? A Systematic Literature Review of How It Is Defined in the Literature. PLOS Currents Disasters. 2017 Feb 1 . Edition 1.

³ Patel SS, Rogers MB, Amlôt R, Rubin GJ. What Do We Mean by 'Community Resilience'? A Systematic Literature Review of How It Is Defined in the Literature. PLOS Currents Disasters. 2017 Feb 1 . Edition 1.

External speakers

Over the course of the two days of the deliberative panel, we will hear from three speakers who have experience in different aspects of community resilience:

Zena Armstrong, President, Cobargo Bushfire Recovery; Director, Cobargo Folk Festival

Zena has been Director of the Cobargo Folk Festival since 2015 and President of the Cobargo Community Bushfire Recovery Fund since its establishment in January 2020. A lifelong volunteer since her 20s, Zena has served on several not-for-profit boards including the American International School of Guangzhou; Music for Everyone, Canberra, and currently as Treasurer of the Yuin Folk Club.

She has volunteered with Amnesty International, the National Folk Festival, the journalists' union, community radio and is a trained Lifeline counsellor. Zena also volunteers her time at various festivals and folk music events during the year.

Zena's early career was in journalism, followed by a 20-year career in foreign affairs, which included serving at the Australian Embassy in Beijing and as the Australian Consul-General in Guangzhou. A member of the Institute of Community Directors, Zena believes strongly that community-led approaches are the only way to successful post-disaster recovery.

Brian Furze, Researcher, writer and advisor, Sustainable Landscapes

Brian has had a long career as a researcher, writer and advisor working with communities searching for community-generated change. His main focus is on sustainable landscapes and the people who support them - community-based change and resilience in the search for sustainable futures.

His work is at the intersection of people, communities, nature and culture where he has worked around the world, in particular Australia and the Asian region. He has partnered with local communities, government agencies, NGOs and the business sector on developing sustainable landscapes through land management, agriculture and conservation.

Brian is part of the delivery team for the Community Leadership & Resilience Scholarship Scheme- a joint initiative offered by Bellingen, Port Macquarie-Hastings and Kempsey Councils with Charles Sturt University to create and train a skilled network of leaders to support the Mid North Coast's current and future crisis responses.

Emma-Kate Rose, Executive Director, Food Connect Foundation

Emma-Kate is a community advocate and social entrepreneur from Brisbane. She currently leads Food Connect, a social enterprise which has led the way in transforming the local food system, using principles of ecological agriculture and engaging ethically with family farms and local communities for over 14 years.

Food Connect has open-sourced its model across Australia and New Zealand, and last year, led an equity crowdfunding campaign to raise over \$2million to buy its own warehouse along with 500 careholders.

Emma-Kate is also Chair of the Queensland Social Enterprise Council.

Pre-panel exercise

Please complete this exercise before coming to the first deliberative panel session on Friday 13 November.

Thinking about the Bellingen Shire experience with resilience (eg. the impact of COVID19, recent bushfires, historical floods), list three things the local community has done well to respond to the situation.

For each of these three things answer the following questions:

1. What made it work well?
2. Did the response involve all members of the community or only certain members?
3. Who benefitted from the response, are there people who didn't benefit?
4. What could have been done better?

Example 1:
1. What made it work well?
2. Did the response involve all members of the community or only certain members?
3. Who benefitted from the response, are there people who didn't benefit?
4. What could have been done better?

Example 2:
1. What made it work well?
2. Did the response involve all members of the community or only certain members?
3. Who benefitted from the response, are there people who didn't benefit?
4. What could have been done better?

Example 3:
1. What made it work well?
2. Did the response involve all members of the community or only certain members?
3. Who benefitted from the response, are there people who didn't benefit?
4. What could have been done better?

Further web-based reading

If you would like to read more about different perspectives and approaches to community resilience, please consider these resources:

[Building Thriving, Resilient Communities](https://www.resilience.org/communities-guide/) (<https://www.resilience.org/communities-guide/>) - collection of books, online resources, trainings and courses exploring resilient systems being created in diverse communities.

[Norcal Resilience Network](https://norcalresilience.org/) (<https://norcalresilience.org/>) - The most successful resilience models have been community driven and owned –this site contains examples of community driven action across a range of sectors.

Additional resources are also provided with this pack.

If you require further information ahead of the deliberative panel please contact Kate Robinson, Project Manager, Faculty of Business and Law, University of Newcastle: e: kate.robinson@newcastle.edu.au or m: 0408 115 467.

ATTACHMENT C: Panel slide pack - note not all slides used in the sessions

Community resilience in Bellingen Shire

Deliberative Panel
13-14 November 2020



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Gumbaynggirr people upon whose ancestral lands we meet. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands.

Session 1

Friday 13 November

Agenda for tonight

Time	Activity
5.30 – 5.45pm	Welcome Who are we and why are we here? Housekeeping
5.45 – 6.15pm	Setting the scene Getting to know each other – Introductions around the room
6.15 – 7.15pm	Dinner
7.15 – 7.45pm	What is community resilience?
7.45 – 8pm	Wrap up and summary of next day agenda

Welcome and introductions

Introduction

Who are we?

Professor Roberta Ryan, Project Director

Kate Robinson, Project Officer

Why are we here?

Bellingen Shire Council has engaged Professor Roberta Ryan and an expert team from the University of Newcastle to design and host a community engagement forum known as a deliberative panel.

Who else is here today?

Bellingen Shire Council representatives:

- Clare Danby, Community Recovery, Resilience & Preparedness Officer
- Liz Hull, Community Recovery, Resilience & Preparedness Officer
- Shaun Hammond, Communications Specialist

Welcome

- Some housekeeping matters...



- Your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving us a reason.
- The data gathered from this Panel will be used to inform the development of a resilience plan for Bellingen Shire and will not be published in any way that identifies you.

Welcome

- ✓ Your agreement to participate
- ✓ Observe directions given by the facilitator
- ✓ Do not disclose content of discussions with anyone outside the group
- ✓ Do not disclose the views of any group member

Why are you here?

The research team has carefully selected participants for the panel to represent:

- People who make up the local community – across age, gender and location
- A range of values, opinions and perspectives across the region

Setting the Scene

What are we doing and why?

What is this all about?

The deliberative panel approach brings together broadly representative groups of citizens to 'deliberate' on key initiatives, and provide advice and options for the way forward.

This deliberative panel will focus on:

- understanding the issues related to community resilience for the Shire and
- exploring the role of Council, the community and others in building resilience.

What is this all about?

This work is part of Council's Bushfire Recovery & Resilience Program, which includes initiatives to enable, empower and support community resilience.

Council is keen to understand perspectives from different parts of the community to inform its community resilience plans and activities.

What are we asking you to consider?

Through a facilitated discussion informed by subject matter briefings and expert input, we are asking you to:

- consider ways to support community resilience for Bellingen Shire
- make recommendations to Council for their consideration and final decision-making.

What we are asking you to do

When deliberating, please keep in mind:

- What is in the public interest/collective good?
- How everyone can benefit
- Making choices and contributing through equal and reasoned discussion

What we are asking you to do

Consider
information
presented

Based on individual
values and needs

Discuss what it
means to you and
why?

Based on shared
values and needs:

Identify what the
information means
to you as a group

Explore Values

Arrive at group
recommendations

Activity: getting to know each other

Introduce yourself and tell the group what you wish to get from participating in the deliberative panel?

Activity: group discussion

- Where are you on this map?
- What are the differences between the different areas in the Shire?
- Think about others who are not in the room, where are they on the map?

Dinner

6.15pm – 7.15pm

What is community resilience?

Perspectives and definitions

- The **existence, development** and **engagement** of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty and unpredictability.
- A community or region's capability to **prepare for, respond to**, and **recover** from significant disturbance-driven changes: while maintaining community character, cohesion and capacity, and without permanent impairment of the community's public safety and health, economic, social, and national security functions, thus, accelerating recovery.
- The **amount of disturbance a system can absorb** and still remain within the same state, the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization, the degree to which the system can build and increase the capacity for learning and adaptation.
- [Emerging] from **four** primary sets of adaptative **capacities**:
 - Economic development
 - Social capital
 - Information and communication
 - Community competence.

Alternate definitions

- The ability to anticipate, accommodate and positively adapt to or thrive amidst changing climate conditions, while enhancing quality of life, reliable systems, economic vitality, and conservation of resources. Resilience requires community capacity to plan for, respond to, and recover from stressors and shocks.
- A community's ability to withstand and quickly recover from difficult situations and hard times. Community resilience means that communities use their assets in creative ways to meet basic human needs, no matter what the circumstances. ¹
- The sustained ability of a community to use available resources (energy, communication, transportation, food, etc.) to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations (e.g. economic collapse to global catastrophic risks).²
- A community's ability to withstand and recover from hard times. Even in the case of a widespread emergency, residents can meet their basic needs including food, water, energy, transportation, housing, and economic and social services.³
- A resilient community is one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to, and influence the course of social and economic change (pg. 1-5)⁴

1. Community Resilience Toolkit; 2. Boshier, Lee; Chmutina, Ksenia (April 2017). Disaster Risk Reduction for the Built Environment; 3. and 4. The Community Resilience Manual (CRPT 2006)

Alternate view on defining community resilience

- Definitions of community resilience tend to either focus on:
 - specific challenges for the community that risk excluding other important challenges; or
 - an all-encompassing definition that may be too complex to apply at the local level.
- One option is to abandon the search for a single, precise definition of community resilience.
- Instead, it may be more appropriate to consider community resilience as a catch-all term for the range of elements which may be important for a community.

Activity: group discussion

What words/elements in the definitions mean something to you? Why?

Thinking specifically about the Shire, what is most important?

Activity: small group discussion

In small groups, please share your pre-panel exercise responses:

1. What made it work well?
2. Did the response involve all members of the community or only certain members?
3. Who benefitted, are there people who didn't benefit?
4. What could have been done better?

Session 1: Wrap-up

Thinking about what has just been shared with you, what was the most interesting thing you heard? And why?

Agenda for tomorrow

Time	Activity
9am-10.20am	Community asset mapping
10.20am-10.30am	Morning Tea
10.30am-12pm	Evaluating the Shire's capability and capacity
12pm-12.30pm	Lunch
12.30pm-2.15pm	Defining the way forward
2.15pm-2.30pm	Afternoon tea
2.30pm-5pm	Next steps: panel recommendations

Day 2

Saturday 14 November

Welcome and recap

Yesterday we went through:

- Some guidelines for participation
- Introductions
- Definitions and understanding of the concept of community resilience

Today

- We will map out Bellingen Shire's community assets, and its strengths and vulnerabilities
- Identify the Shire's resilience priorities and explore the Shire's preparedness against the priorities
- Develop recommendations for next steps
- Present recommendations to Council

Agenda for today

Time	Activity
9am-10.20am	Community asset mapping
10.20am-10.30am	Morning tea
10.30am-12pm	Evaluating the Shire's capability and capacity
12pm-12.30pm	Lunch
12.30pm-2.15pm	Defining the way forward
2.15pm-2.30pm	Afternoon tea
2.30pm-5pm	Next steps: panel recommendations Presentation

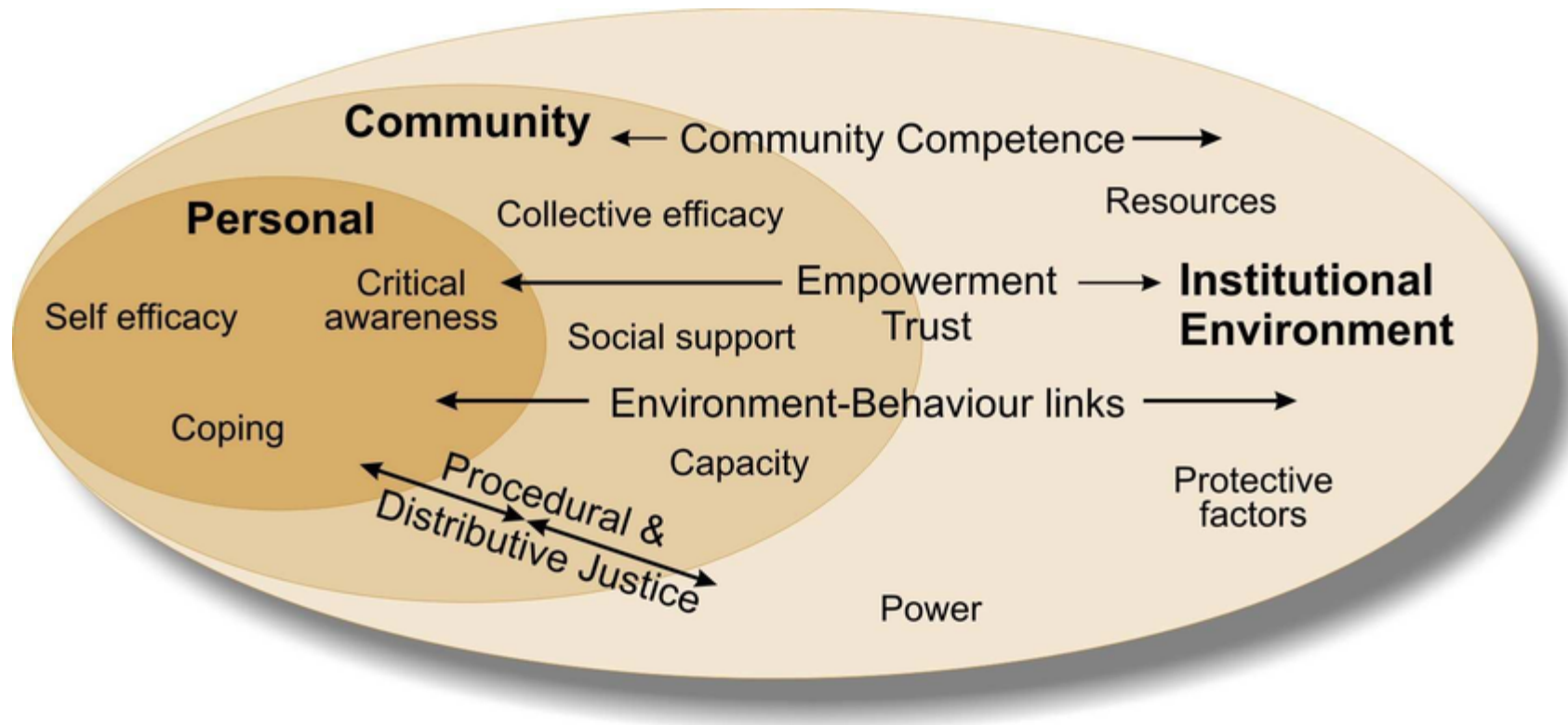
Session 2

9am – 10.30am

Session aims

- Community asset mapping
- Exploring challenges the community will face in the coming years
- Exploring opportunities for self reliance

Building community resilience



Elements of the model

Personal: where people need to know that the small things they do can make a positive difference for themselves, their families and their neighbours (outcome expectancy and action coping)

Community: where people actively participate in their communities to identify and discuss their issues and risks and determine collective solutions (community participation and problem articulation)

Institutional: where communities are supported by civic agencies that encourage and empower community-lead initiatives and where mutual trust and respect exist (empowerment and trust).

Group discussion

- Consider elements of community resilience
- Think about the elements and how they apply to our community
- Where are we now?

What is a community?

Different types of communities:

- **Interest:** Communities of people who share the same **interest** or passion.
- **Action:** Communities of people trying to bring about change.
- **Place:** Communities of people brought together by geographic boundaries.
- **Practice:** Communities of people in the same profession or undertake the same activities.

Activity: group discussion

What types of communities exist in Bellingen Shire?

The role of community in building resilience

Zena Armstrong

President

Cobargo Community Bushfire Recovery Fund Inc

Exploring community assets and resilience

Five fundamentals of resilience

Inclusive: community cohesion and quality of life for all

Durable: prepared and robust against identified shocks and stresses

Reflective: learning, evidencing and continuous improvement

Adaptive: agile and flexible to change

Integrated: working together, solving multiple problems

What is a community asset?

A community asset or resource is anything that improves the quality of community life.

It can include:

- The capacities and abilities of community members
- A physical structure or place eg. school, library, fire station
- Businesses that provide jobs and supports the local economy
- Citizen Associations eg. Neighborhood Watch, CWA
- Local private, public, and nonprofit groups and organizations.

Why do we need to understand community assets?

Community assets can be used as a foundation for community improvement.

Identifying and mobilizing community assets enables community residents to gain control over their lives.

The more *assets* people have the less vulnerable they are, and erosion of people's *assets*, increases their insecurity.

Activity: small groups

Community resilience means that communities use their assets in creative ways to meet basic human needs, regardless of the circumstances.

Using your handout:

Group 1: consider a challenging situation one person in your community might face in next five years.

Group 2: consider a challenging situation your community might face as a whole in the next five years.

Group 3: consider a challenging situation the Shire might face as a whole in the next five years.

Activity: group discussion

Small groups share findings with wider panel

All panellists consider:

- What additional assets does our community have?
- How can we make use of our assets?
- Are there any other assets that it would be useful for the community to have?

Morning tea

10.20am – 10.30am

Session 3

10.30am – 12.30pm

Session aims

Identify resilience priorities for the Shire

Explore the Shire's preparedness against the priorities

Building Community Resilience

Brian Furze
Independent Adviser

Recap

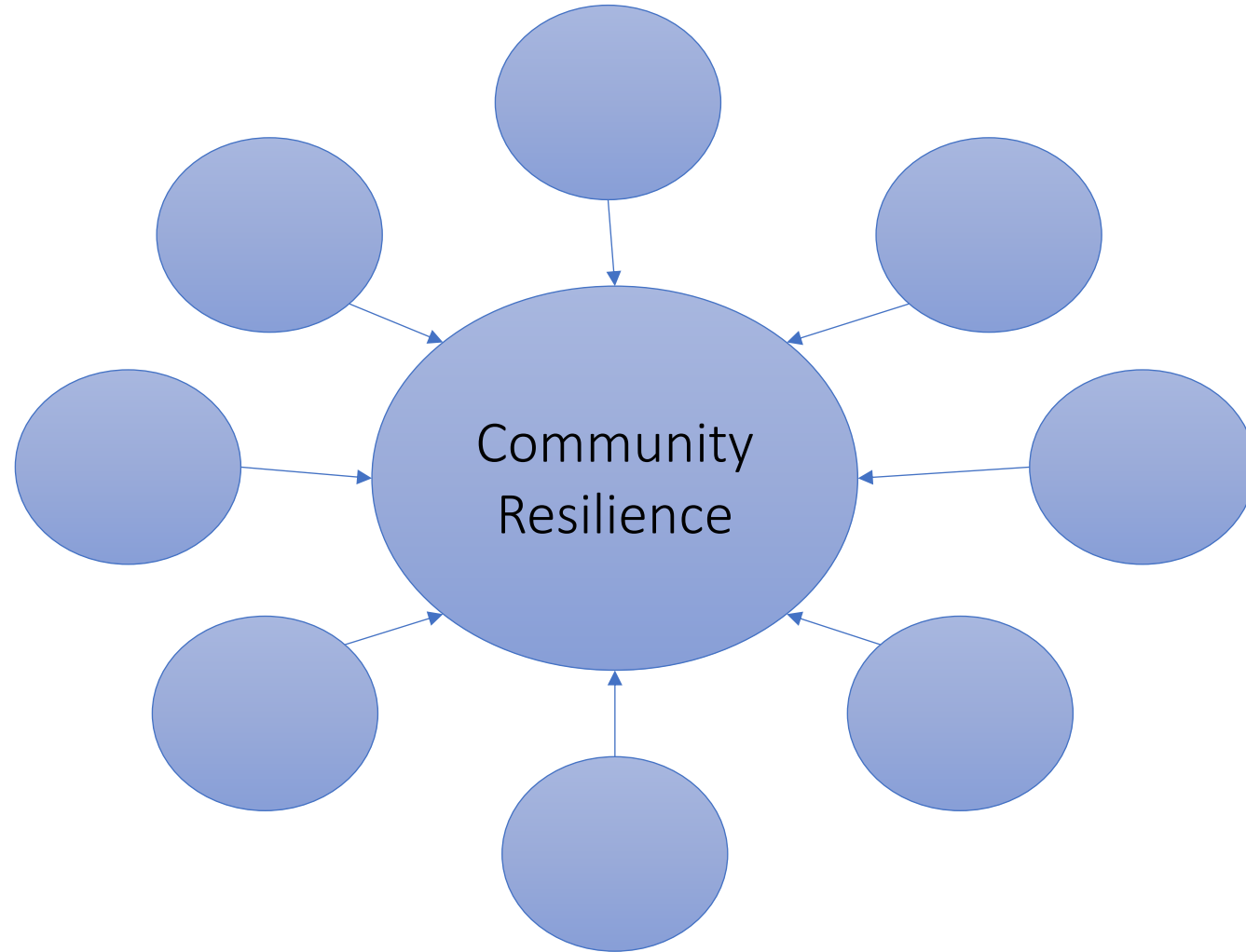
What does a resilient community look like for Bellingen Shire?

What do we want to achieve today?

This deliberative panel is designed to:

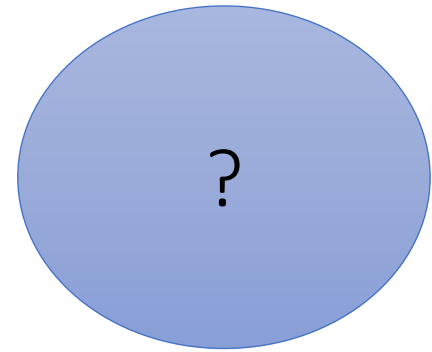
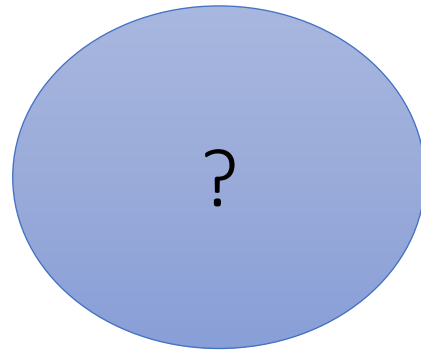
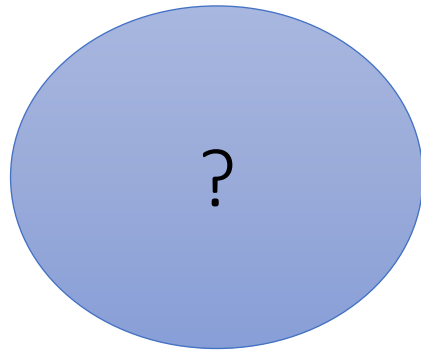
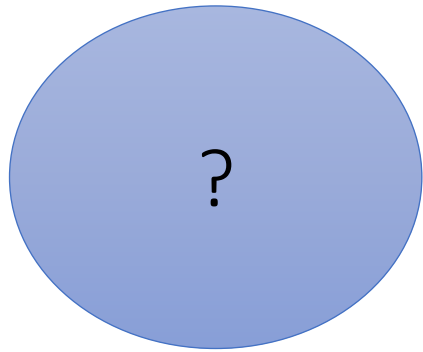
1. empower participants to look closely at the Shire's current community resilience
2. move through a process of identifying our assets, needs and priorities
3. decide what needs to be done to continue to develop our community's resilience
4. translate those solutions into concrete, achievable action plans supported by people committed to seeing the plans realised

Areas of community resilience



What are the priority areas
for the Shire?

Top four priorities identified



Do these priorities feel right to you?

Do they represent the view of other members of the community not here today?

Would you change any of them, and why?

Activity: small groups SWOT analysis

Internal	External
Strengths	Opportunities
Weakness	Threats

Lunch

12.00pm – 12.30pm

Session 4

12.30pm – 2pm

Session aims

Reflecting on our assets and priorities:

- Develop criteria for building resilience
- Develop recommendations in priority areas

Building Community Resilience: governance and operations

Emma-Kate Rose

Executive Director, Food Connect Foundation

Setting a standard for resilience

Exploring options to build resilience in our priority areas

Criteria definitions



Equity

All members of the community can adequately meet their basic needs regardless of race, gender, income, immigration status, and other factors.



Quality

The basic goods and services we rely on are of good quality, for example healthy food, clean water, comprehensive health care, and convenient transportation.

Criteria definitions



Sustainability

Goods and services we use are produced in ways that increase the earth's ability to keep producing them into the future. This means conserving resources, minimizing fossil fuel use, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



Ownership

The community collectively and securely owns rights to essential resources necessary to build community resilience

Activity: small groups

Rate on a scale of 0 to 4 how well your community meets the resilience criteria listed, using this scale:

4 = Very well (close to 100% of the time)

3 = Fairly well (most of the time)

2 = Sometimes (about half of the time)

1 = Poorly (only part of the time)

0 = Hardly ever (almost 0% of the time)

What do we want to do in
our priority areas?

Developing priority area plans

Using the community resilience criteria to develop objectives and strategies / actions in our priority areas

SWOT STRATEGIES	STRENGTHS 1. 2. 3. 4.	WEAKNESSES 1. 2. 3. 4.
OPPORTUNITIES 1. 2. 3. 4.	Opportunity-Strength (OS) Strategies Use the strengths to take advantage of opportunities 1. 2.	Opportunity-Strength (OS) Strategies Use the strengths to take advantage of opportunities 1. 2.
THREATS 1. 2. 3. 4.	Threat-Strength (TS) Strategies Use strengths to avoid threats 1. 2.	Threat-Weakness (TW) Strategies Minimize weaknesses and avoid threats 1. 2.

Activity: small groups

Consider:

- How do we achieve our objectives?
- What else do we need to know?
- What can we do individually / collectively?

Afternoon tea

2.15pm - 2.30pm

Session 5

2.30pm – 5pm

Session aims

- Form a plan from your deliberations
- Present recommendations to Councilors and other representatives
- Next steps

Recap

Where have we gotten to?

What we need to do now?

Activity: bringing it all together

Small group presentations. Questions for panellists:

1. Does the priority area plan make sense to you?
2. Is there anything missing or not considered?
3. Has anybody been left out?

Activity: finalising our plans

Finalise your presentations to present to Council

Activity: presentations to Council

Group to present deliberations and recommendations to Council

Sum-up and close

Next steps

Closing remarks

Thank you

Attachment D: Bellingen Shire Deliberative Panel: panellists comments on draft report

The draft report of the Bellingen Shire Deliberative Panel was provided to panel members on 23 December 2020 with a request for feedback by 31 January 2021.

The research team received three responses in total comprising two individual submissions, and one joint response collating the views of five panellists (noting one member of the group also provided an individual response).

Feedback from the three submissions covered the draft report, the deliberative panel process and general comments, which added to the resilience discussion. For the purpose of this summary, the general comments are not included.

Following are the comments on the draft report and the deliberative panel process, and observations by the research team.

Comments on the draft report

On the draft report, comments 1-3 were from the group submission, and comments 4-9 were from an individual submission.

	Comment	Research team observation
1.	The report provides a good overview of the process but does not put anything forward for Council to consider.	The purpose of the report is to reflect the deliberations of the panel and the themes that emerged from the group discussions. While the panel did not reach complete agreement on the way forward, there was general consensus on key areas for Council to consider. These are detailed in section 4: <i>Recommendations and way forward</i> .
2.	The report was more of a “this is what we got them to talk about” rather than actually taking forward anything that was discussed and what the members believe the community needs in order to harness and increase community resilience in	We agree that the small group discussions generated a lot of different ideas and perspectives. This is an important part of the deliberative process. The report reflects the themes that came through most strongly for the group as a whole.

	Comment	Research team observation
	the Shire. Great conversation was generated and none of this was reflected in the report.	
3.	We do not believe that there is no need for a physical hub in the shire to support community resilience. We believe that creating yet another hub will be nothing more than another financial drain on something that already exists within many community groups. We need to CONNECT the community and the community groups, not create another group.	The draft report states that there was not 'wide support' for a physical hub, and that the panel was not convinced of the need. It also includes comments that were made by the group around how it would run and co-exist with other hubs. The report covers the group's view of the importance of connecting the 350+ existing community groups. Please see section 4: <i>Recommendations and way forward</i> .
4.	The draft report doesn't discuss how the group responded to the notion that there are different sorts of resilience to consider and be delineated.	Section 3.2.3 <i>What is community resilience?</i> summarises the group's discussion around different definitions of community resilience, how it means 'different things to different people' and that a broad definition was most applicable for Bellingen Shire.
5.	Climate change is not mentioned - it was raised as an issue in considering resilience. It is an extremely important issue and it was talked about.	Noted. The summary of the group discussion following Zena Armstrong's presentation (<i>section 3.3.3: Community assets and resilience</i>) notes the opportunity to 'use disaster to plan beyond zero emissions'. This could be expanded.
6.	There is no mention of the extremely important need for education and information for the community in developing resilience.	Section 3.2.4 <i>What does community resilience mean to us?</i> mentions that communication is key to building community resilience. Education is raised (but not discussed) further in the report in 3.3.4 <i>Community resilience domains</i> and in the community resilience model in section 4: <i>Recommendations and way forward</i> . We agree that sitting behind these mentions was a discussion by the group on the importance of education for the community in developing resilience.
7.	The report focuses on the group prioritising communication a number of times (without specifying detail about the sort of communication which might be desirable with council) and	Improved communication was a focus for the group within the context of building community resilience and as an area for Council to consider.

	Comment	Research team observation
	didn't highlight the more diverse and rich discussions which took place.	Council-specific commentary is summarised in section 3.3.4: <i>Community resilience domains</i> . Suggestions for ways to improve Council's communication are included later in the report in section 4: <i>Recommendations and way forward</i> .
8.	In the discussion of community assets and resilience, please include the need for knowledge and dissemination of information and education.	<p>Noted. This is implied in the summary of the group discussion following Zena Armstrong's presentation in <i>section 3.3.3: Community assets and resilience</i>, which highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad based ongoing engagement • Use local expertise • Support and build capacity of volunteers • Local champions • Celebrations - learn and doing <p>It could be made more explicit in the draft report.</p>
9.	In talking about the council, there was a discussion that the council needed to not just be visible, but also respectful, transparent and accountable to the community.	Noted. This aspect of the discussion is not reflected in the draft report.

Comments on the process

Comments on the deliberative panel process were positive overall. In the following, all comments were provided through the joint submission.

	Comment	Research team observation
1.	Members feel that the process and the report were very cursory and lacked depth.	Noted.
2.	The members left feeling like we didn't really get anywhere and unsure as to what happens next – do we wait to hear from the Council again? Or is it up to the members to take what they have learnt from the experience and use initiative to press on without Council.	<p>The group was informed that the next step in the process was to develop the draft report for consideration by panellists, and that the final would be provided to Council.</p> <p>The group also were invited to sign-up for future involvement in Council initiatives designed to build community resilience, and that Council has had initial contact with this group.</p>
3.	There was some concern that the people on the panel weren't a good reflection or representation of the wider community. An additional comment from another panellist: the wide range in age, culture, generation/demographic does require a higher level of understanding and representation within the Bellingen community.	This is contrary to the group's discussion at the beginning of the process (see section 3.2.1 <i>Where do you live in the Shire and why did you volunteer for the deliberative panel?</i> and section 3.2.5 <i>What are the views of community in Bellingen Shire?</i>). The group discussion reflects that panelists agreed that the composition of the panel was broadly representative in terms of location, demographics, and longevity of living in the Shire. Additionally, the group included two people from non-English speaking backgrounds, two people from Indigenous backgrounds and two young people. The panel was indeed very representative of the Shire.