

Hazards, Disasters and Your Community Handbook- A comprehensive resource supporting disaster resilience education

Background

First published in 1983, 'Disasters: A Booklet for Schools' was primarily targeted at Australian secondary school students; however, it was also intended as a comprehensive reference for the whole community in the interests of public safety and awareness.

Information contained in this booklet was researched, written and prepared for publication by EMA's Community Awareness Program from our own and various other sources, including the authorities acknowledged, and has been incorporated into the publication in consultation with an education specialist.

The booklet was further described as, '*being of assistance in answering many of those questions, including vital ones about community safety through prevention, risk reduction and preparedness.*'

The seventh edition of the handbook was last revised in 2006 (ISBN 1 921152 01 X).

What is the project/purpose?

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide the education sector and wider community with a revised, *up to date* accurate and comprehensive publication (handbook), that would both support and enhance education on understanding disaster risks (NSDR Priority 2 – Understanding Risks & Priority 3 - Communicating with and educating people about risks) and subsequently **embedded within the school curriculum**.

The revised "Hazards, Disasters and Your Community Handbook" would specifically deconstruct disaster risk and define the five essential components to recognise vulnerability to strengthen resilience (Profiling Australia's Vulnerability 2018). Through integration with the school curriculum, it would support the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience (AIDR) in their endeavors to promote the development of disaster resilience education (DRE) as a vital component in young peoples' learning.

Young people play a critical role in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery. Disaster resilience education (DRE) provides young people with knowledge, skills and understanding to help them take appropriate actions before, during and after an emergency or disaster. DRE is provided in both formal learning settings (e.g. early learning centres and schools) and informal learning settings through programs provided by emergency management agencies and other organisations in young people's networks and communities (AIDR 2021, viii)

Further, it would provide a contemporary authoritative information resource on disaster risk and management for broader use. Disaster resilience education is learning about natural hazards in the local environment and ways to keep communities safe from harm before, during and after an emergency or disaster (DRANZEN Network).

Policy Context

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements (2020)

Recommendation 10.1 Disaster education for individuals and communities State and territory governments should continue to deliver, evaluate and improve education and engagement programs aimed at promoting disaster resilience for individuals and communities.

State of Queensland Inspector General of Emergency Management Review (2022)

Community education and engagement programs provided by local government, state agencies and NGOs play a vital role in engaging and educating communities (pg 49)

Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2022 – 2027 (2022)

Understand risk – applying data to strengthen risk reduction understanding, culture and education to help Queensland communities become more resilient to future disasters (pg 3)

C1.1 Embed disaster risk reduction, mitigation and resilience into decision making

C1.4 Increase community awareness and preparedness for all hazards through community engagement

C1.5 Initiate research and evaluation projects to promote the positive trajectory of building resilience in Queensland (pg. 47)

Approach

Accessible risk information, awareness, and understanding is the foundation for effective disaster risk reduction, as it helps tell the story of what, when, and where a disaster might happen, how severe it could be, and who would be most affected. If we do not understand our own personal, household and community disaster risk, we will not develop the appropriate capabilities to both manage and reduce adversity.

Where is this disaster risk currently being defined, explained and taught in a single comprehensive, credible source? In short, it is not! Existing resources and educational material have focused primarily on understanding the science and mechanics of natural hazards with limited links or association to exposed people and communities. Key concepts of vulnerability, capability and resilience are poorly understood. The proposed handbook will be the comprehensive product to provide a clear reference for the five disaster risk components to increase disaster risk understanding through education!

National curriculum alignment

The intended resource has clear and explicit links to the current Year 5 Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) and Science curricular, as well as the Sustainability cross-curricular priority.

Unit: AC9HS5K05 (Geography)

the management of Australian environments, including managing severe weather events such as bushfires, floods, droughts or cyclones, and their consequences

Unit: AC9S5U02 (Science understanding – Earth and space sciences)

describe how weathering, erosion, transportation and deposition cause slow or rapid change to Earth's surface

Unit: AC9S5H02 (Use and influence of science)

investigate how scientific knowledge is used by individuals and communities to identify problems, consider responses and make decisions

Cross curriculum priorities: Sustainability

Futures

Sustainable futures are achieved through informed individual, community, business and political action that values local, national and global equity and fairness across generations into the future.

Systems

Social, economic and political systems influence the sustainability of Earth's systems.

There are further alignments that have been identified in both the Year 7-10 (version 9) and senior curricular (version 8.4) which could be developed. Integration of an enhanced understanding of natural hazard risk and community resilience within the content of such units directly addresses the Disaster Resilient Australia-New Zealand School Education Network (DRANZEN) forum (25 August 2023) priorities :-

- Geographic enquiry and 21st Century thinking skills
- To create real world essential skills for what is being faced
- Plan, prepare and respond to hazards over time

Core Project Team

Lead: Paul Cannon

Academic Leaders: Yetta Gurtner, Harry Kanasa

Project Mentors:

Academic	Other Government Organisations	Dept Education & Schools
Helen Boon (JCU, Education, disaster resilience education)	George Hodgson (NEMA) ACARA	Benowa (Alison Falbusch)
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		ACARA: HASS (Rachelle Willington) and Science (Simon Collier) - serve on the reference group

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