



How to measure community resilience in times of crisis

This case study is an example of action which contributes to HFA Priority for Action 2 and 3

Abstract

The Community Disaster Resilience Scorecard Toolkit is a tool helping Australian policy makers, local authorities, emergency planners, and community groups to measure community resilience and to set priorities and progress emergency and disaster management plans suited to their situation.

The concept of ‘community resilience’ is widely used by community leaders, policy makers, emergency management practitioners and academics in Australia, however there are often widely differing views on the meaning and utility of the resilient community concept, which can hamper efforts when developing emergency and disaster management policies and plans at national, state, territory and local levels.

In 2011, the Torrens Resilience Institute commenced a project under the Australian National Emergency Management Grants Program to clarify the concept of community resilience, and to develop tools to measure the resilience of communities to all hazards.

The project found that resilience can be measured according to how a community foresees and/or acknowledges its threats and risks, how the community works with emergency services and other emergency management agencies, and if the community can take collective responsibility to reduce the socio-economic impacts of disruptive events. Hence the Community Disaster Resilience Scorecard Toolkit was developed based on physical, organisational and social qualities that exist in all communities and that can be called on when required.

The Toolkit can be applied to a range of communities and tested against a range of potentially disruptive events. The results are summarised using a balanced scorecard supported by detailed assessments. The easy-to-use scorecard forms the basis of the toolkit where users can assess the current level of resilience, identify areas for improvement, and track progress in enhancing community resilience over time. The Scorecard covers community connectedness, processes for preparedness and response, resources, vulnerabilities and risks. Overall scores can guide communities to undertake activities in areas that increase resilience.

This information gives policy makers the capacity to develop programs and allocate funds more effectively to build community resilience and reduce the negative impacts of disruptive events. Additionally, information from the model allows priorities to be set and emergency and disaster management programs to be developed more effectively.

Although the tools can be used locally, the results have a broad application by assisting in policy development, pointing to actions required at a national, state and territory government level. This partnership approach among all levels of government, with non-government agencies and the community, will help build a culture of shared responsibility.

Community resilience provides a positive response to an increasingly volatile, uncertain and complex environment.

For more information, please visit the Torrens Resilience Institute at: <http://torrensresilience.org/community-resilience-toolkit>