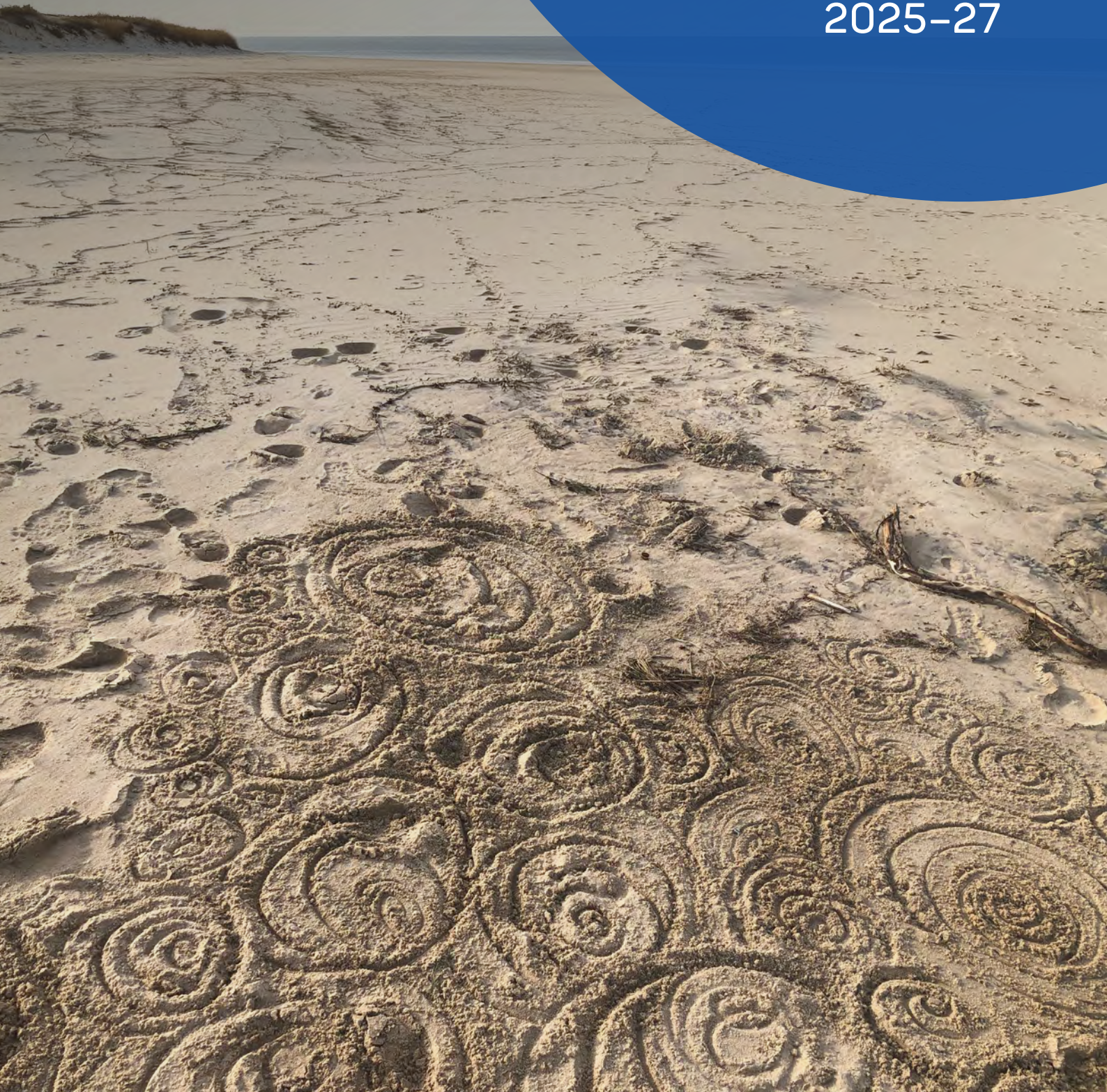




Australian Institute for
Disaster Resilience

Our Approach

2025–27



Australian Government
National Emergency Management Agency

Australian Institute for
Disaster Resilience





Acknowledgement of Country

AIDR acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants and Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work and learn. As part of the trans-Tasman organisation AFAC, AIDR also acknowledges the Māori as the Tāngata Whenua and Treaty of Waitangi partners in Aotearoa New Zealand. We pay our respects to their ancestors and Elders, past and present.

AIDR recognises the importance of reconciliation in creating stronger, safer, more inclusive and resilient communities.

- Through AFAC's partnership with Reconciliation Australia, and embodied in our Reconciliation Action Plan, we hope to make a meaningful contribution to honouring the histories, cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Sharing Connection

Maddi Moser (Taungurung artist), 2024.

The story: This artwork represents connection through all living things. It depicts the sharing of knowledge and process of learning – circles are continuous and have no beginning or end, reflecting the process of the sharing of stories, wisdom and learning. The patterns highlight wisdom and the flow of teaching, learning and sharing knowledge and skills. It reminds us that we are connected through the past and into the present.

About the artist: Maddi Moser is an Aboriginal artist, designer and secondary school teacher. Maddi is a proud First Nations person and is a member of Taungurung Mob in Victoria, whose ancestral Country encompasses Seymour and Broadford along the Goulburn River. Taungurung is part of the Kulin Nations.

AIDR recognises the crucial role of Indigenous knowledge in reducing disaster risk and strengthening resilience. For tens of thousands of years, Aboriginal communities have developed deep, place-based understandings of their environments, including sophisticated approaches to land management, hazard mitigation, and adaptation.

www.aidr.org.au/resources/aidr-aboriginal-artwork

Contents

- Acknowledgement of Country2
- Sharing Connection artwork3
- Background5
- What is shaping our future6
- Vision8
- AIDR's mission8
- Our purpose8
- Our strategic alignment9
- Our values10
- Our principles11
- Our stakeholders12
- Theory of Change13
- Core AIDR activities.....14
 - Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection15
 - Networking and national capability development15
 - Australian Journal of Emergency Management16
 - Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub16
 - Major Incidents Report17
 - Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary17
 - Resilient Australia Awards18

Background

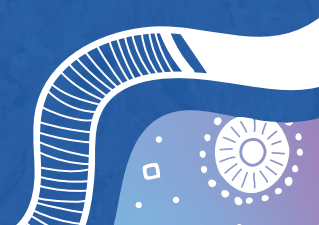
National scale capability in emergency management and disaster risk reduction (DRR) started in Australia in 1956 with the establishment of the Australian Civil Defence School at Mount Macedon.

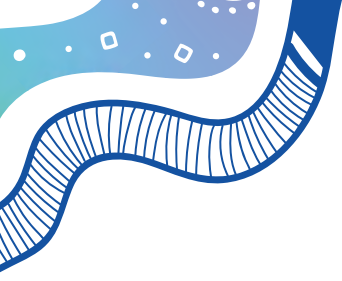
Over time, the college evolved into the Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI) under the auspice of Emergency Management Australia.

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) was created in 2015 following the closure of AEMI. AIDR was established through a partnership of the Australian and New Zealand Council for fire and emergency services (AFAC), Australian Red Cross, and the then Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre. AIDR's remit was sector development.

Over the intervening 10 years, AIDR has successfully delivered on building capability for the emergency management system.¹ Moving into the next stage of AIDR's future, AFAC continues to manage this important contribution to reducing disaster risk on behalf of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

1. Clear Horizon (2025) 2020–24 Evaluation Report





What is shaping our future

Disaster and its impacts are not inevitable or natural.

Hazards are part of life in Australia, but whether they become disasters depends on the decisions we make, the systems we build and the conditions people live in. DRR is not only about responding when events occur, but also about reducing risk over time, strengthening resilience, and supporting communities, systems and environments to be safer and enable social and economic life to continue with minimal disruption when hazards occur.

The global Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its focus on people, planet and prosperity, sets aspirational goals. It aims to enable all people to reach their potential with dignity and enjoy fulfilling lives, without compromising future generations or causing harm to the biosphere. DRR contributes to this by placing efforts into strengthening wellbeing, not just protecting lives and property.

This aligns with growing recognition internationally and in Australia that disasters are shaped by social, economic, environmental and institutional factors. It also reflects a broader shift in focus, from managing emergencies in isolation, to understanding and reducing the systemic risks that drive disaster impacts.

In Australia, this sits within a long history of living with hazards.

For tens of thousands of years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have cared for Country and built deep knowledge of how to live with natural variability.² Today, hazards remain part of everyday life, and communities, systems and environments are closely connected.

These connections matter, because disasters don't occur in isolation.

Disaster risks are systemic; they are shaped by how different parts of society and the environment interact. This means risks are influenced by interconnected factors such as social conditions, health systems, economic stability and environmental change. For example, economic hardship can increase vulnerability, while strong social cohesion can support recovery. Technological and political changes can also create

new risks or reduce existing ones. Together, these overlapping and interdependent factors make disaster risk complex and shared across systems.

Severe hazards can cause vulnerable systems to fail and can overwhelm individual, community and organisational capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover. When this happens, hazards become disasters.³

When disasters occur, the impacts are wide-reaching and extend beyond the immediate event.

They affect all aspects of life and can be long lasting. Disasters can impact on health and wellbeing, employment, education, relationships, and connection to community, culture and Country. They also affect the long-term liveability of communities, as well as the environment, industries and ecosystems. Recovery is often complex, uneven, and can take many years.

However, these impacts are not experienced equally.

Disasters disproportionately affect some communities and members of society more than others.⁴ People's experiences of disaster are shaped by their circumstances, health and chronic conditions, where they live, their access to resources and services, and their connections to community and place. These factors can intersect, increasing risk and influencing the type of support needed.

At the same time, the risk landscape is changing.

Disasters are becoming more frequent and complex due to climate change, and more costly as the number and value of assets at risk and the costs of reconstruction increase.⁵ Other emerging risks such as technological disruption, dis/misinformation, cyber threats and disease are adding new layers of complexity.

2. Williamson, B (2022) Caring for Country means tackling the climate crisis with Indigenous leadership: 3 things the new government must do *The Conversation*

3. National Resilience Taskforce (2018) *Profiling Australia's Vulnerability*

4. United Nations (2015) [Sendai Framework](#) for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)

5. National Resilience Taskforce (2018) *Profiling Australia's Vulnerability*

There is also growing recognition that these costs extend beyond the immediate financial impacts to include long-term and intangible effects, such as mental and physical health challenges, impacts on educational outcomes, changes in employment, and shifts in community fabric.⁶ These factors demonstrate why recovery from disasters is complex and can take years, or even decades.⁷

This is the context AIDR works within.

It is a system shaped by interconnected risks, unequal impacts and increasing complexity, where strengthening resilience requires coordinated action across people, systems and sectors.

Australia has the knowledge, experience and practical tools to reduce disaster risk and strengthen resilience. The opportunity now is to better connect this expertise across sectors and jurisdictions, make it accessible and adaptable to local needs, and support its wider use in decision-making so the benefits are more evenly shared.

This creates both an opportunity and a responsibility to ensure the right knowledge and tools reach those who need them most.

6. UNDRR (2025) *Global Assessment Report*

7. Gibbs L, Molyneaux R, Harms L, Gallagher H C, Block K, Richardson J, Brandenburg V, O'Donnell M, Kellett C, Quinn P, Kosta L, Brady K, Ireton G, MacDougall C, Bryant R. *10 Years Beyond Bushfires Report 2020*. University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia



Vision

A future where hazards don't become disasters

AIDR's mission

AIDR is the national institute for disaster risk reduction and resilience.

AIDR creates, curates and mobilises knowledge, promotes shared language and responsibility, and builds sector capability and collaboration. AIDR works in DRR to build trust, remove barriers, and support a strong, connected knowledge system that underpins informed decision making and action before, during and after disasters.

Our purpose

In line with national and international frameworks including the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, AIDR recognises DRR encompasses preventing and reducing risk, enhancing preparedness for effective response, and supporting recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction that build back better.

By minimising new and existing risks and managing those that remain, DRR helps prevent hazards from becoming disasters. When risk is understood, governed, invested in and managed inclusively, losses can be reduced and resilience strengthened over time. These efforts help make communities, systems and environments safer, protect wellbeing, and enable social and economic life to continue with minimal disruption.

AIDR exists to strengthen DRR and resilience across policy, planning and practice by supporting governments, organisations and communities to embed these approaches from the outset. It does this through its role as a knowledge broker by curating and mobilising knowledge, building shared understanding and capability, and connecting people and systems to support informed decision making.

This work is underpinned by a system-wide approach that recognises uncertainty and complexity across sectors and locations and promotes shared responsibility and collaboration across social, economic, built, natural, cultural, political and human domains.

Through national conversations and thought leadership, AIDR supports system-level change in policy and practice.



AIDR proudly supported the National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Gathering in Lismore in 2024.

Our strategic alignment

AIDR's work is aligned with, and contributes to, national and international policy frameworks. These include:

- [National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework \(2018\)](#)
- [Second National Action Plan to implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework \(2023\)](#)
- [Australian Disaster Recovery Framework \(2022\)](#)
- [Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework \(2018\)](#)
- [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction \(2015-30\)](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goals \(2015-2030\)](#)
- [The Paris Agreement \(2015\)](#).

AIDR's activities and outcomes contribute to **Outcome 2 of the Second National Action Plan**: establishing and maintaining an effective, connected disaster risk reduction knowledge system that provides a strong foundation for action.⁸

Through its focus on knowledge development, mobilisation, thought leadership and capability building, AIDR supports **NEMA's Strategic Objectives 2 and 3** by:

- building evidence, intelligence and insight to inform decision-making by communities, leaders and stakeholders
- helping save lives, reduce harm and maintain public trust by strengthening people, capability and communities to better resist, respond to and recover from disasters.

AIDR's work primarily contributes to **AFAC Strategic Direction 1**, supporting resilient communities through disaster risk reduction. It also contributes to **Strategic Directions 3 and 5** by providing credible, timely information and advancing knowledge, innovation and research.

8. [Second National Action Plan](#)

Our values

As a public-facing entity within AFAC, AIDR draws on AFAC's values to guide how we work and engage, and how we deliver value to the sector:



Respect

We engage with fairness and care, valuing diverse perspectives, cultures, abilities and experiences to inform better decisions and outcomes.



Teamwork

We collaborate across sectors and disciplines, working collectively to address complex challenges and strengthen shared capability.



Communication

We listen actively and share knowledge clearly and transparently to support understanding, connection and informed action.



Results

We focus on purpose and priorities, delivering practical value and supporting the application of knowledge to improve outcomes.



Our principles

AIDR's work is guided by the following principles, which underpin our approach to knowledge mobilisation, capability building and practice improvement.

Acknowledging First Nations knowledge

- AIDR recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have over 60,000 years of experience living with natural hazards.
- We value this knowledge and seek to learn in ways that are respectful and support ongoing reconciliation, walking alongside communities in shared learning. This knowledge is supported and considered alongside other evidence to inform decision-making and practice.

A systems approach

- We work across complex, interconnected systems, recognising differences across jurisdictions, sectors and places.
- While focused on natural hazards, our approach is relevant across all hazards and their consequences.
- We collaborate across social, built, economic, natural and governance systems to support coordinated and informed action.
- We take a long-term view, with consideration for future generations and sustained impact.

Disasters are not natural

- Disasters occur where exposure and vulnerability intersect with hazards.
- Decisions, systems and structures can increase or reduce risk.
- Addressing inequality is central to reducing disaster risk and informing effective action.

A person-centred approach

- We prioritise people, communities and their connections to place, culture and environment.
- We take a strengths-based approach, recognising capability, knowledge and lived experience.
- We consider the interdependencies between people, animals and the natural environment in decision-making.

Evidence informed

- We draw on multiple forms of knowledge, including research, practice, lived experience and traditional knowledge.
- We translate knowledge into practical action, supporting its uptake across policy, planning and practice.
- We inform policy and research through practice insights and emerging evidence.
- We act as a curator, connector and broker of knowledge, building capability and supporting its application across the sector.

Our stakeholders

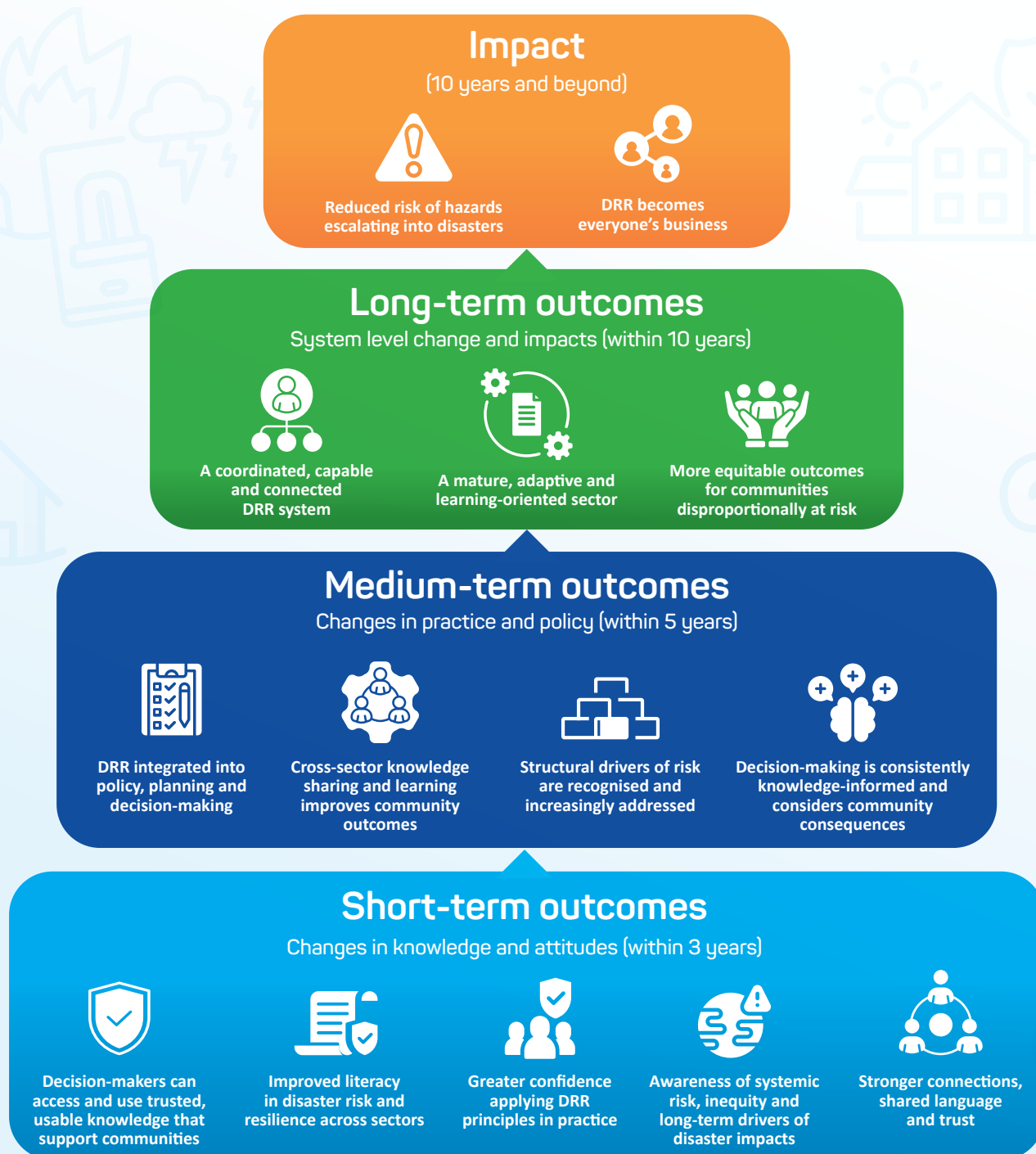
Recognising that everyone has a role to play in reducing risk, AIDR's stakeholders include those working or volunteering to support disaster risk reduction and resilience across multiple sectors. AIDR reaches these stakeholders through the membership of AFAC as well as direct engagement across the sector. These include:



Theory of Change

This Theory of Change sets out how AIDR contributes to a future where hazards do not become disasters. It explains the change AIDR is working toward, the role we play in enabling that change, and the pathways through which our work is expected to lead and contribute to stronger disaster risk reduction and resilience outcomes over time. This Theory of Change is supported by a measurement framework that sets out AIDR's approach to measuring short-, medium- and long-term outcomes, including where AIDR has direct influence and where it contributes to change over time.

Our vision is a future where hazards don't become disasters



AIDR is the national institute for disaster risk reduction and resilience. AIDR creates, curates and mobilises knowledge, promotes shared language and responsibility, and builds sector capability and collaboration. AIDR works in disaster risk reduction to build trust, remove barriers, and supports a strong, connected knowledge system that underpins informed decision making and action before, during and after disasters.

Core AIDR activities

The core AIDR activities represent key elements of developing best practice knowledge, managing them in an accessible form, and translating this knowledge into capability development and thought leadership. Each of the current AIDR activities is largely based on a long history of stand-alone activities of high-quality development and delivery.

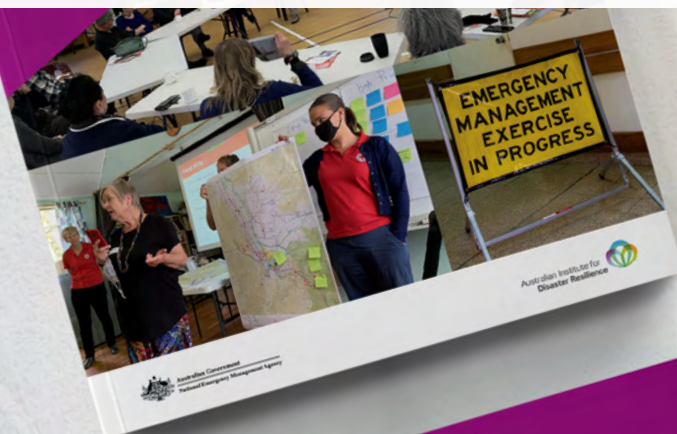
Throughout the 2025–27 period, AIDR will work to better integrate these activities for clearer pathways for users of AIDR's activities. AIDR will also work to better integrate the risk reduction activities of AFAC, community engagement, public information and warnings, and the built environment, into the work that AIDR undertakes.



Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection

Support the implementation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework and Australian Disaster Recovery Framework by providing national principles and guidance to strengthen the resilience of Australian communities to disaster. Facilitate handbook implementation at a local level through the production of companion documents and tools.

Planning for
Animals



Evacuation
Planning

Networking and national capability development

Build knowledge, skills, and connections that support disaster resilience through a regular program of curated professional development events and learning opportunities tailored for those working and volunteering in disaster resilience across a range of sectors. These events include a National Capability Development event program, the Australian Disaster Resilience Conference, National Resilience Forum, Lessons Management Forum, and disaster resilience masterclasses. Networks and communities of practice and collaboration groups may also be supported.



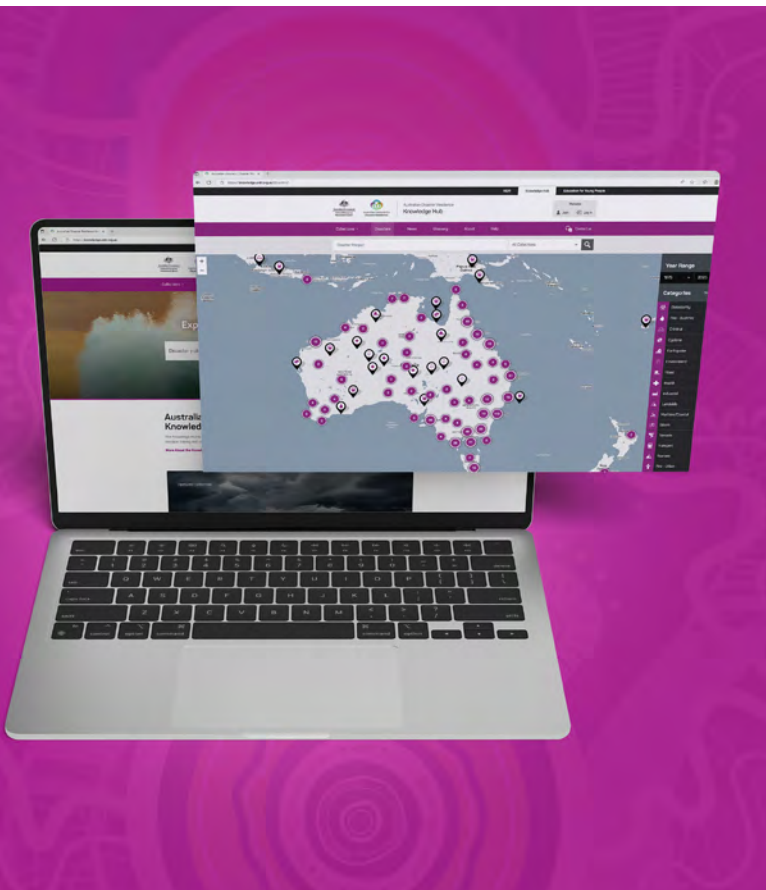
Australian Journal of Emergency Management

Showcase lessons learned, key research initiatives and innovations in the emergency management sector in a quarterly peer-reviewed journal.



Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub

Provide the pre-eminent platform for DRR and resilience through the curation of contemporary knowledge products including the Knowledge Hub, Disaster Mapper, knowledge collections, practice papers and evaluations.



Major Incidents Report

Provide an annual record of major incidents involving the fire and emergency services sector in Australia, including lessons and insights across hazards, sectors, and jurisdictions, and the systemic risk factors that influence people's and organisation's ability to prepare, respond and recover from disaster.



Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary

Provide a central repository for terminology regarding DRR, resilience, and emergency management, through the ongoing maintenance, review, and update of the Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary.





Resilient Australia Awards

Deliver a national awards program that celebrates, shares, and promotes initiatives that build and foster community resilience to disasters and emergencies.





Australian Institute for
Disaster Resilience

www.aidr.org.au

Australian Disaster Resilience
Knowledge Hub

www.knowledge.aidr.org.au