



Australian Institute for
Disaster Resilience

Disaster Risk Reduction Handbook

Delphi: Briefing Paper

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1. Overview

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) is commencing development of the first edition of a national **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Handbook** for the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection in September 2026. The handbook is intended to provide nationally consistent, evidence-informed guidance that supports organisations, practitioners and communities to better understand, reduce and manage disaster risk, while strengthening disaster resilience across Australia. The Handbook Collection supports the implementation of Australia's key disaster resilience frameworks and provides practical guidance that translates policy into action.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is “aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development” (UNDRR, 2017). Central to this is the understanding that *disasters are not natural*: a disaster occurs when hazards intersect with exposure and vulnerability and exceed people’s capacity to cope (Department of Home Affairs, 2018, p. 4). DRR therefore encompasses the policies, strategies and practices that influence where and how people live, how land and infrastructure are planned, how environments are managed, how investment decisions are made, and how individuals, communities and institutions prepare for, respond to and recover from disruption.

Given the breadth, complexity and rapidly evolving nature of disaster risk reduction, AIDR is undertaking a Delphi study to inform the handbook's scope, structure and content priorities. The Delphi method is a recognised approach for systematically gathering and refining expert opinion through a structured, iterative process. It is particularly well suited to fields where knowledge is distributed across sectors, jurisdictions and areas of expertise.

The DRR Handbook Delphi will bring together a diverse panel of experts and practitioners from across government, emergency management, academia, infrastructure, planning, environment, health and community services, business, First Nations organisations and other relevant sectors. Through a series of survey rounds, participants will identify areas of consensus, emerging priorities, critical knowledge gaps and examples of good practice that should be reflected in the handbook.

The findings will provide a shared, evidence-based foundation for the handbook, helping to ensure it addresses the contemporary needs of the Australian disaster resilience sector, aligns with current national and international policy frameworks, and reflects the experience and expertise of those working to reduce disaster risk in communities across Australia.

2. Background

2.1. About the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection

The Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection is Australia's national collection of disaster resilience guidance. Managed by AIDR, the collection provides freely available, nationally agreed principles, doctrine and good practice guidance across a wide range of emergency management, disaster resilience and community resilience topics. The Handbook Collection is developed through



extensive consultation and collaboration with jurisdictions, agencies, subject matter experts and practitioners to ensure guidance is evidence-informed, practical and relevant.

The purpose of the Handbook Collection is to:

- Provide an authoritative and trusted source of disaster resilience knowledge.
- Support the implementation of national disaster resilience policy and frameworks.
- Promote nationally consistent approaches and terminology.
- Highlight and encourage the adoption of good practice.
- Strengthen interoperability and collaboration across sectors, jurisdictions and communities.
- Build capability across the disaster resilience sector.

The collection aligns with and supports Australia's key disaster resilience policies and frameworks, including the *National Disaster Resilience Strategy* (Council of Australian Governments, 2011), the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* (Department of Home Affairs, 2018), the *Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework* (ANZEMC, 2018) and the *Australian Disaster Recovery Framework* (ANZEMC, 2022). It contributes to National Action 3 and 4 of the *Second National Action Plan to implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* (National Emergency Management Agency, 2023).¹ It helps translate the priorities of the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* (UNDRR, 2015) into Australian practice. By strengthening knowledge, capability and coordinated action across sectors, the collection also contributes to the achievement of the *Sustainable Development Goals* (United Nations, 2015), particularly those focused on resilient communities, sustainable development and partnerships.

2.2. The need for a national DRR handbook

Disaster risk is increasing in Australia as a result of interconnected social, environmental, economic and technological factors. Natural hazards are becoming more frequent and intense, population growth and development continue to increase exposure to risk, critical infrastructure systems are increasingly interconnected, and communities are experiencing more complex and long-lasting disaster impacts. At the same time, there is growing recognition that reducing disaster risk before disasters occur is essential to building safer, more resilient communities.

Australia has strong policy foundations for disaster risk reduction, including the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*, as well as significant expertise across government, industry, research and community sectors. However, there is currently no dedicated national handbook that brings together disaster risk reduction principles, concepts, approaches and good practice in a single, accessible resource. As a result, knowledge, guidance and lessons are often dispersed across multiple frameworks, disciplines and jurisdictions.

The development of a national Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Handbook will address this recognised gap in the existing Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection (see AIDR, 2024). Consistent with the purpose of the Handbook Collection, the DRR Handbook will provide nationally consistent,

¹ **National Action 3:** Collaborate to harmonise and improve how data, information and research is produced, shared, tailored and used to inform effective approaches to risk reduction. **National Action 4:** Build evidence, intelligence and insights by integrating local knowledge and lived experience, including traditional knowledge, to inform effective decisions. (see National Emergency Management Agency, 2023, p. 10)

evidence-informed guidance for people and organisations that influence, enable, govern, plan or implement disaster risk reduction.

Importantly, the handbook will connect and translate key national and international policy directions into practical guidance. It will align with the priorities of Australia's *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, including understanding risk, strengthening governance, investing in resilience, and enhancing preparedness for effective response and recovery.

Rather than duplicating existing resources, the handbook will complement and build on them. It will enhance the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection by drawing on and supporting relevant guidance in established handbooks, such as those addressing land-use planning, community engagement and other related areas (AIDR, 2020b, 2020a). It will draw together relevant Australian and international research, policy and practice literature, while synthesising lessons, knowledge and good practice from across Australia. It will also build on existing government and non-government DRR strategies, plans and guidance, helping to address gaps, strengthen shared foundations and promote greater consistency across sectors and jurisdictions.

The DRR Handbook is intended to be a practical, nationally relevant resource that can be applied across hazards, sectors and jurisdictions. It will support users to identify, assess and reduce disaster risk while strengthening resilience and contributing to sustainable development outcomes.

2.2.1. Intended users

The handbook is intended for a broad range of practitioners, decision-makers, organisations and communities involved in reducing disaster risk, including:

- Emergency management practitioners
- Local, state and Commonwealth government agencies
- Infrastructure and critical asset owners and operators
- Land-use planners and built environment professionals
- Environment and natural resource managers
- Community resilience practitioners
- Non-government and community organisations
- Health service providers
- Researchers and educators
- First Nations organisations and representatives
- Businesses and industry bodies.

The handbook will be relevant to people working in both paid and volunteer roles and will support collaboration across disciplines, sectors and jurisdictions to achieve shared disaster risk reduction outcomes.



3. About the Delphi

3.1. Purpose and rationale

The DRR Handbook Delphi is being undertaken to inform the development of the DRR Handbook and ensure it reflects the knowledge, expertise and experience of those working in disaster risk reduction across Australia.

Disaster risk reduction expertise is distributed across government, emergency management, planning, infrastructure, environment, community development, research and many other areas. The Delphi method provides a structured and transparent process for bringing these diverse perspectives together and identifying areas of consensus on what a national DRR handbook should contain.²

The Delphi will help ensure that the handbook:

- Addresses priority knowledge and practice needs
- Reflects contemporary research and evidence
- Captures diverse perspectives from across sectors and jurisdictions
- Identifies emerging issues and future challenges
- Supports nationally consistent approaches to disaster risk reduction

3.2. How the Delphi will work

The Delphi method employs multiple rounds of structured questionnaires that are shared to a panel of invited participants. The DRR Handbook Delphi will involve three rounds of questionnaires shared online.

In round 1, participants will be asked to identify and comment on important DRR concepts, principles, enabling conditions, strategies and approaches, and area of practice that should be considered for inclusion in the handbook.

Subsequent rounds will provide participants with a summary of the responses from previous rounds and invite them to review and rank or prioritise statements. As participants review and refine their responses, areas of agreement and disagreement become clearer. The aim is not necessarily complete agreement, but to identify where there is strong consensus, where opinions differ, and what the collective priorities are for the DRR handbook.

For each round, participants will receive a short 'primer' document to assist them in thinking about their responses to the questionnaire. Participants will be given 1-2 weeks to complete each questionnaire at a time that is convenient to them.

A summary of participant responses will be shared with the panel anonymously. Direct quotes from responses may also be shared.

² For examples of the Delphi method used in the context of DRR policy and practice see Rodriquez et al. (2022), and Ross et al. (2024). For an overview of the Delphi method see Jorm (2025).

The Delphi process will run across October and November 2027, once enough participants have been recruited. The dates listed in the indicative timeline below may change to some degree depending on recruitment and analysis timelines.

3.2.1. Indicative timeline

- 13 October Round 1 opens for 2 weeks (International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction)
- 27 October Round 1 closes and analysis of results begins
- 10 November Round 2 opens for 1 week
- 17 November Round 2 closes and analysis of results begins
- 24 November Round 3 opens for 1 week
- 1 December Round 3 closes and analysis of final results begins
- 15 December Results shared with panel

3.3. What the Delphi will cover

- **Purpose and intended users:** What should the handbook be for, and who most needs it?
- **Concepts and definitions:** What does DRR mean in practice, and what concepts are essential to include?
- **Policies, frameworks, principles and values:** What policies, frameworks, principles and values should guide DRR practice in Australia?
- **Enabling conditions:** What conditions, capabilities and supports help DRR succeed?
- **DRR strategies:** What DRR strategies should be considered in the handbook?
- **Practice areas and guidance gaps:** Where does practice guidance already exist, and where is practice guidance most needed?
- **Emerging issues and future needs:** What changes, risks or new knowledge should shape the handbook?
- **Other content elements:** What other elements should be considered for inclusion in the handbook?

3.4. How participants will be selected

People who are interested in participating in the Delphi will be asked to complete a short Expression of Interest outlining the perspective they would bring to the Delphi.

The number of participants will be capped between 80-100 to enable timely analysis of results while also enabling a wide range of perspectives to be included.

In addition to seeking representation from across Australian states and territories, participants will be selected to ensure the widest representation possible across the disaster risk reduction system in Australia. This will include seeking participants from a range of sectors, with diverse areas of expertise and experience, and working across different DRR contexts (see Table 1).

Table 1 Delphi participant recruitment framework

Dimension	Coverage sought
Sector/ stakeholder groups	Government; emergency management organisations; local government; community sector; First Nations organisations; environmental and natural resource management organisations;

	infrastructure and utilities; business, finance, and industry; health; researchers and academics; social inclusion and disability practitioners; other DRR stakeholders
Areas of DRR expertise and experience	Climate adaptation and future risk; Community preparedness and resilience; Disaster mitigation and prevention programs; Disaster risk governance, policy and law; Emergency management operations and hazard response; Environmental management and nature-based solutions; First Nations knowledge and practice; Industry and business resilience; Infrastructure and critical systems resilience; Investment, finance and insurance; Land-use planning and the built environment; Monitoring, evaluation and learning; Preparedness capability development and education; Public health; Recovery and Build Back Better; Research, evidence and knowledge translation; Risk assessment and risk intelligence; Risk communication and public awareness.
Geographic and place-based contexts of DRR work	Metropolitan and major urban centres; Peri-urban and urban-fringe areas; Regional cities and regional areas; Rural and agricultural areas; Remote and very remote areas; Alpine and high-country environments; Arid, remote and rangeland environments; Coastal and marine environments; Environmentally significant and protected areas; Forest and bushfire-prone environments; Riverine and flood-prone environments; Tropical and cyclone-prone environments.
Population and social contexts of DRR work	Children and young people; Community-led and place-based initiatives; Culturally and linguistically diverse communities; First Nations communities; Older people; People with disability; Rural and agricultural communities; Remote and very remote communities; Socially and economically disadvantaged communities; Urban, suburban and peri-urban communities.
Hazard and risk contexts of DRR work	Bushfire risk; Flood risk; Cyclone and severe storm risk; Heatwave and climate-related risk; Coastal hazards and sea-level rise; Geophysical hazards (e.g. earthquake, landslip); Multi-hazard and cascading risk; Systemic and interconnected risk.

3.5. What participation will involve

To participate in the Delphi, you will be asked to do the following:

- Read the primer before each Round.
- Participate in all 3 rounds, completing three questionnaires by the requested deadlines.
- Provide input based on your own personal expertise and experience.
- Identify where you see agreement, knowledge gaps, practical barriers or contested issues.
- Have your responses to the questionnaires shared back to the panel anonymously

We anticipate that participation will require approximately 2-4 hours of your time in total across the three rounds.

With permission, participants in the Delphi will be acknowledged for their contribution to the handbook by name in the final DRR handbook.



3.5.1. Honoraria for panel participants

Honoraria will be available to participants who are contributing knowledge and expertise in a personal capacity rather than as part of their paid employment, and to First Nations participants contributing cultural knowledge. Eligible participants include:

- **Community representatives and people with lived experience** who contribute personal insights, community perspectives and experiential, place-based knowledge and understanding relevant to disaster resilience, recovery, preparedness or risk reduction.
- **Subject matter experts**, who contribute specialised professional, technical, operational, research or practice expertise **in a personal capacity** rather than as part of their paid employment.
- **First Nations contributors**, including Elders, Traditional Owners, cultural knowledge holders and other First Nations representatives who contribute cultural knowledge, community perspectives and place-based understandings.

Participants who contribute under one of these categories will be offered an **honorarium of \$50-\$75 for each Delphi round completed**, recognising the time required to review materials, consider questions and provide informed input.

3.6. How results will be used

The results of the Delphi will be shared back with Delphi panel members. They will be used to initially scope the new DRR handbook.

On completion of the Delphi, a DRR Handbook Working Group will be established to inform further development of handbook content. **Please note that the elements identified for inclusion in the handbook through the Delphi process may be further refined, added to, or removed during the handbook development process.** As a result, the content included in the final handbook may differ to some degree from the elements identified through the Delphi process.

If you would like to continue to inform handbook development after completion of the Delphi, you will need to submit an EOI to join the DRR Handbook Working Group. All Delphi participants will be invited to submit an EOI for the working group, but participation in the Delphi does not guarantee participation in the working group.

- Responses will be synthesised to identify important concepts, practical guidance needs, prioritised content and areas requiring further discussion.
- These findings will inform the handbook's scope, structure and framework and possible supplementary material to aid in implementation.
- The Delphi will inform, but not determine, the final handbook. AIDR will make final decisions about the handbook's development.



4. How to submit an Expression of Interest

To submit an Expression of Interest to participate in the Delphi, please complete the online form via the link below. The form will ask you to share the following information:

- Name, Organisation, Email address, Telephone number
- Your area/s of DRR expertise and experience
- Your sector
- Your areas of DRR expertise and experience
- Geographic and place-based contexts of your DRR work
- Population and social contexts of your DRR work
- Hazard and risk contexts of your DRR work
- About you (any further information you would like to provide to explain the perspective, experience and expertise you will bring to the Delphi)
- Participant type (for determining eligibility for an honorarium)
- Confirmation that you are available to participate in all three rounds of the Delphi.

Please submit your EOI no later than 12 October 2026.

5. Where to get more information

Submit your EOI to participate in the DRR Handbook Delphi process here:

<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/disaster-risk-reduction-handbook-eoi/>

The DRR Delphi is being moderated by Blythe McLennan and Rose Gilliatt from the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience. You are welcome to contact the moderators directly at any time during the Delphi process. Please direct email queries to both moderators.

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