



Education for Disaster Resilience

Community feedback for a community-driven approach



BELLINGEN
SHIRE COUNCIL



Acknowledgement

Bellinghen Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Gumbaynggirr people, who have cared for this land since time immemorial. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and commit ourselves to a future with reconciliation and renewal at its heart.

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Executive Summary

After the 2019/2020 bushfires, Bellingen Shire Council received funding to support local recovery and address the preparedness and resilience of the community.

Community feedback was sought to identify the issues that matter to residents, where the whole community needs to invest time and resources, and what makes a resilient community in Bellingen Shire. From that feedback, Bellingen Shire Council created a program of works for two funding programs – the Bellingen Community Recovery and Resilience program and the Ring of Resilience program.

During consultations, community education on disaster preparedness, response, recovery and resilience was highlighted, with special focus on a local approach. A total of \$32,000 was allocated within the funding to deliver community education projects.

Bellingen Shire Council has collated feedback from the community in this report and aligned the responses to each phase of the Disaster Management Cycle - Prevent, Prepare, Respond and Recover. We have also included Resilience.

This report provides community with insight into what their fellow residents said, and provides

Council, organisations, and community groups with a resource to plan and deliver activities to support resilience education.

In our analysis, we considered projects already underway within the Resilience program or other areas of Council which are addressing the topics raised by community, including the Local Community Disaster Plans, and existing wellbeing and climate change projects.

We assessed what was within Council's remit and capacity to deliver, and what would best be delivered by the expertise of community organisations. We encourage any community organisations or groups to utilise this report to inform any educational activities they wish to deliver in the Bellingen Shire.

At the end of this document we have provided a list of recommended activities for Council to pursue under the current education funding and anticipated timelines to begin.

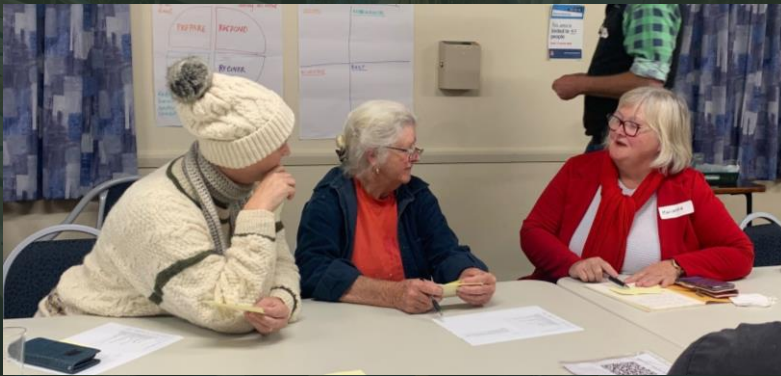
Consultations

The information compiled in this report is community feedback gathered through a number of forums and methods, including:

- Bellinghen Shire Deliberative Panel 2020/2021.
- Bellinghen Shire Community Resilience Workshop 2021.
- Flood Recovery Roundtables March-April 2022.
- Community Surveys – Flood Impact Surveys 2021 and 2022.
- Community Education Workshop September 2022.
- Various pop-up stalls with community and meetings with local organisations and groups.

Thanks

Bellinghen Shire Council would like to thank all members of the community who took time out of their busy lives, and often after coping with a disaster, to give their voice, ideas and feedback to help build a safe, connected and more resilient Bellinghen Shire.



The Disaster Management Cycle

The Disaster Management Cycle PPRR model is a comprehensive approach to disaster risk management. To ensure that we address each phase of the cycle, Bellingham Shire Council collated community feedback into the 4 phases – Prevent, Prepare, Respond and Recover – with Resilience added to the centre.

The following pages list community ideas and feedback in to each phase and suggest methods of delivery of education.



Prepare Get ready to manage the crisis	Respond Save lives and minimise immediate impacts
Prevent Minimise impacts of future disasters	Recover Restore activities and services

Prepare

1. Education that helps residents plan for disasters as a community, a neighbourhood, and for their individual homes and families.

Community ideas

Understanding your risk, your built environment, and the nature of fire, flood and other disasters.

Making decisions about when to leave, safe travel, planning ahead for isolation.

Inclusive disaster planning – including children and vulnerable family/community members in planning.

Land management such as burn offs and cultural burns, vegetation mapping and managing erosion of slopes and riverbanks.

Plan for your animals.

Business continuity - how to keep trading.

Methods

- RFS and SES workshops, services and resources.
- Leverage BSC Local Community Disaster Plans project where possible.
- BSC website, regular media articles, and radio spots.
- Short films with locals demonstrating preparedness activities.
- Planning kits and templates distributed to community or available online.
- Information and support from organisations such as Department of Primary Industries, WIRES, local veterinary services, Landcare, and Council.
- Education for businesses to plan together to address staff shortages, supply chain disruptions, online shopping and other ways to keep businesses open.
- Information hubs stood up prior to event for locals to come and find out what to do, predicted event and risk, and current advice from emergency services.
- Person-centred emergency preparedness workshops. Disability inclusive emergency planning.

Prepare

2. Understanding our evacuation centres, assembly points, alternate routes and safer places, both official and community-identified.

Community ideas

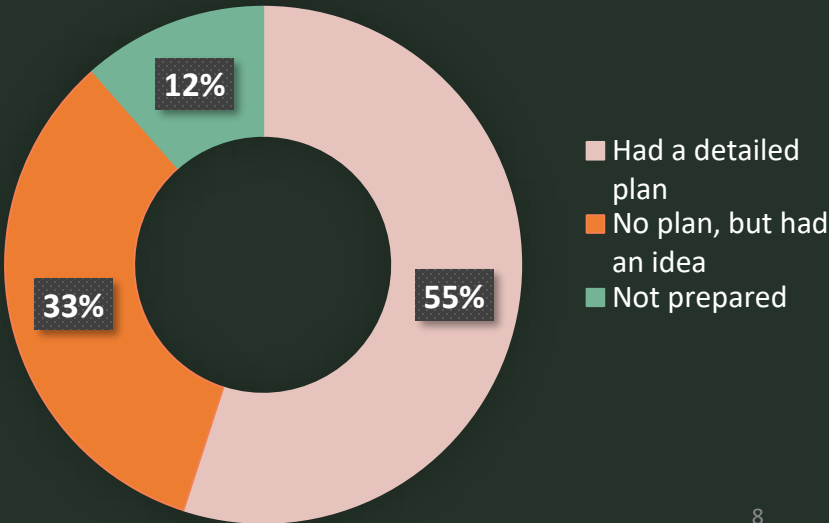
- Support community understanding of evacuating safely.
- Different safe places for flood and fire. Authorised vs community-identified.
- Where to get up-to-date advice on road closures and alternate routes.
- Rescues conducted on visitors to the area, more support to help visitors understand what to and what not to do in a disaster event.

Methods

- Flyers, fridge magnets, maps – quick resources that can be sent to households.
- Planning kits and templates distributed to community or available online.
- Information at accommodation providers for visitors to the area.
- Leverage BSC Local Community Disaster Plans project where possible.
- Information hubs stood up prior to event for locals to come and find out what to do, predicted event and risk, and current advice from emergency services.

Were you prepared?

After the March 22 flood, 55% of respondents reported they had a plan and took action. 33.5% didn't have a plan, but had an idea of what to do. 12% of residents had no plan and did not know what to do



Respond

1. How to access information and understand what to do to keep safe.

Community ideas

Where to access information during a disaster.

Understanding emergency messages, warnings, and levels.

Understanding services responsible and who to contact for help.

Flood water safety messages and campaigns.

Methods

- RFS and SES workshops, services and resources.
- BSC Local Community Disaster Plans project.
- Short films with locals talking about their experience and the best action to take.
- Activities for young people to learn and raise awareness of staying safe in an emergency., such as library and school events, creative activities.
- Planning kits and templates distributed to community or available online.
- Flyers, fridge magnets, maps – quick resources that can be sent to households and easily referenced.



**EMERGENCY
WARNING**



**WATCH
AND ACT**



ADVICE



Respond

2. Taking action to respond to the disaster safely.

Community ideas

Boost awareness and participation in SES and RFS volunteering.

Training in response and equipment such as SES training in tinnies (Lismore flood lessons) chainsaws for cutting fallen trees.

Community-based responders – build skills in community to help during a disaster.

Training in First Aid and medical needs. Mental Health First Aid.

Methods

- RFS and SES workshops, services and resources.
- Support education around personal safety during a disaster and things you might not have considered, such as safety around electricity during floods.
- BSC Local Community Disaster Plans project.
- First Aid training is supported and delivered to community. Mental Health First Aid to support people experiencing acute distress during disaster.

Recover

1. Residents and businesses are able to navigate financial and physical support to recover from the immediate disaster impacts.

Community ideas

Where to find recovery funding and other financial support and how to apply.

Advice and assistance for primary producers to recover from crop damage, stock losses, disease, and supply chain disruptions.

Free or affordable legal advice.

Easy access to business support and information i.e., the Business Support Network.

Safe return home – understanding the risks when returning home and support to address them (electricity in house during flood, sewerage overflow clean up, SES property assessments).

Insurance claims – your rights and responsibilities.

Waste clean up and information from Council.

Methods

- BSC Local Community Disaster Plans project.
- Central point residents can access updated financial assistance information – Council website.
- Safe return home information kits, films, community meetings.
- Support access to affordable and free legal education and advice.
- Websites, flyers, magnets that support info on where to go to know the latest in clean up assistance available. Leverage BSC website.
- Recovery Hubs – bringing the right services and supporting community to attend. Awareness of benefits of attending a Recovery Hub.

Recover

2. Recovery activities for longer-term recovery.

Community ideas

Landholder assistance for recovery activities such as erosion, weed management, animal care, and clean up of property.

Awareness raising of activities that support local business and economic recovery.

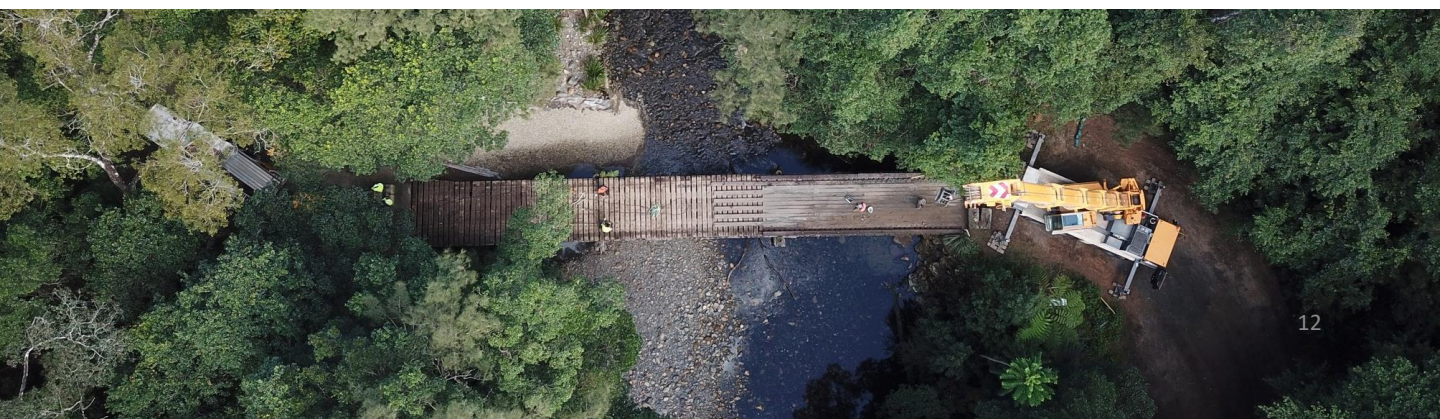
Social recovery, boosting wellbeing and community connection.

Access to mental health support.

Community story-telling and debriefing to aid the recovery journey. Creative recovery.

Methods

- BSC Local Community Disaster Plans project.
- Workshops, information kits, support and partnerships with Local Land Services, Department Primary Industries and other landholder support organisations.
- Support business and Chambers of Commerce in developing continuity measures.
- Helping community members to participate in recovery activities such as volunteering to help organise donations.
- Widely share information on access to mental health support services and longer-term mental health resilience education.
- Hold community meetings and roundtables to share stories and bring support and education from local organisations and groups.
- Human libraries, recording stories, Creative Recovery Network initiatives.





Prevent

Steps to minimise and even prevent the effects of a disaster.

Community ideas

Awareness of planning regulations, flood plains and fire risks at properties before purchase/building.

Ensuring new residents are informed of their risk (e.g., roads and bridges that flood) before renting/purchasing property and how making changes to the built environment can impact risk (i.e., water run off and drainage).

Information for visitors to Bellingen Shire during disaster.

Flood safety for all residents, particular focus on youth disaster safety and preparedness.

Methods

- Workshops, quick reference guides on planning regulations.
- RFS and SES workshops, services and resources.
- Information packs for new residents with important contact numbers, information sources, local advice, etc.
- Information sheet provided to accommodation providers for visitors to Bellingen Shire in case of disaster.
- Workshops on land management topics such as riparian and erosion management, cultural burning, biodiversity, and general property preparation for disaster.
- Planning kits and templates distributed to community or available online.
- Education on water supply and storage options and water quality management during disaster (drought, flood contamination, ash from bushfire).
- Safety education and campaigns – collaborate with local libraries, schools and Youth Hub. Resources in libraries. Run competitions for youth-led education.



Resilience

Education that supports the ability of the community to withstand, adapt to and recover from a disaster event.

Community ideas

Mental health resilience, community connection, and social cohesion.

Strengthening volunteer groups and organisations that support in the disaster cycle and encourage long-term community cohesion and sense of belonging.

Sharing local knowledge, including Gumbaynggirr knowledge, of past events and land management practices.

Education on independent power generation, backyard growing and food sustainability, water supply, storage and quality.

Understanding the climate drivers and impacts to plan mitigation and know our risk.

Ongoing disaster planning and management with community.

Methods

Workshops, short films and other engaging educational mediums.

Raise awareness of local community groups residents can get involved in to find belonging and build connection with something that matters to them.

Encourage RFS and SES volunteer participation as well as recovery organisation volunteers such as The Red Cross.

Education on good grant writing for community groups and volunteers.

Human libraries and recordings capturing the stories of experience. Truth-telling and knowledge holders of Gumbaynggirr Country share where possible. Artistic outlets for recovery and resilience.

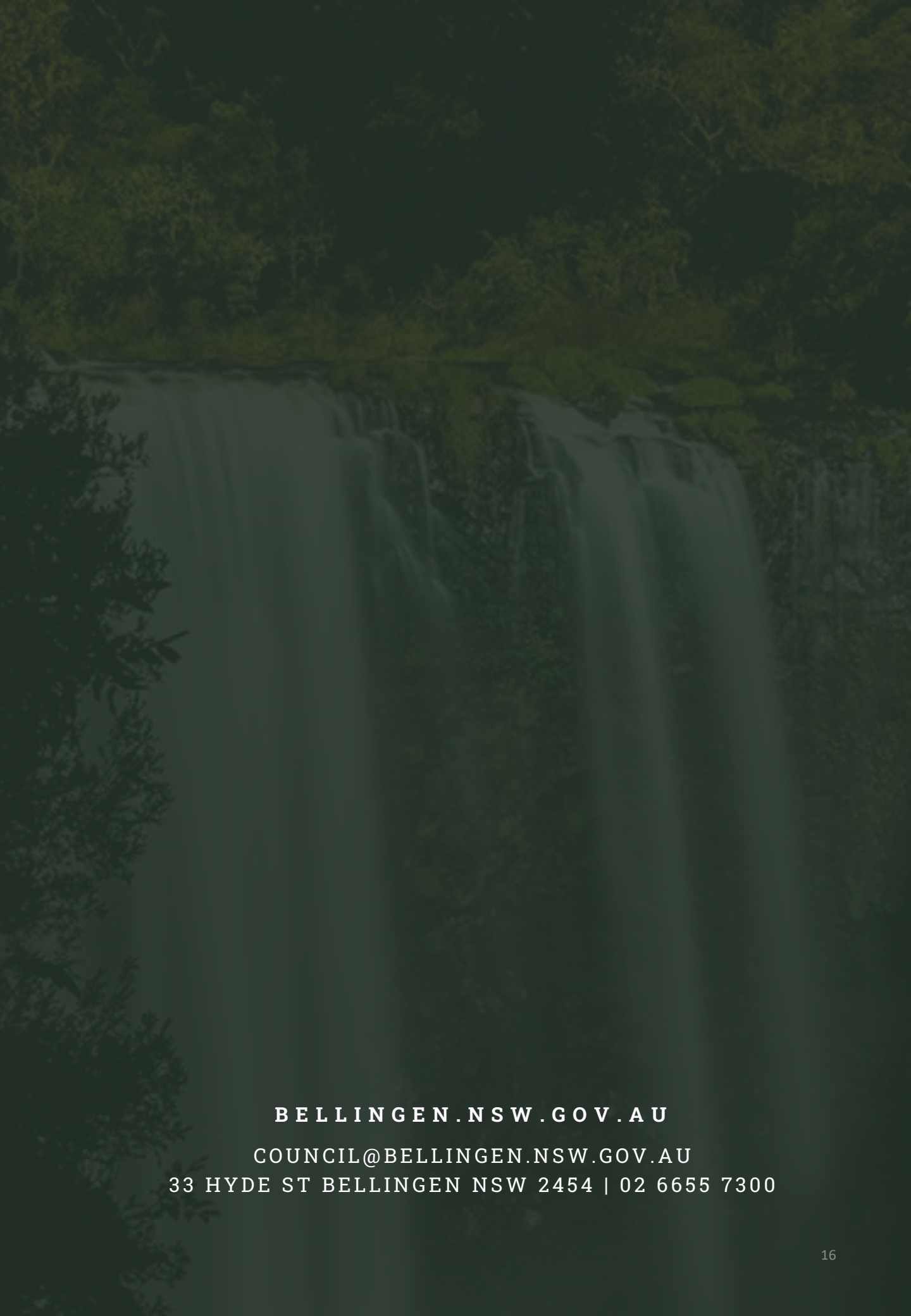
Information hubs stood up prior to event for locals to come and find out what to do, what current risk and current advice is from emergency services.

BSC Local Community Disaster Plans and Community Resilience Network.

Recommendations

Below is a brief summary of projects recommended to be moved forward by Bellingen Shire Council under the current allocated Community Education funding.

Activity	Resource	Detail	Estimated start date
Central point for information	Bellingen Shire Council website	Upgrade Bellingen Shire Council website to include disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information as a central point of trustworthy information for the community. This will include how to plan at home, emergency evacuation information, links to resources for landholders/primary producers, and where to get financial assistance. Enable printable resources for hard copies to be provided to those who need as required.	Nov-22
Quick reference resources for emergency and resilience	e.g., Fridge magnets, flyers, short films	Easy to access and understand information in the home during a disaster, such as emergency contact numbers and , as well as information on areas of resilience highlighted by community feedback, including water, food, and mental health.	Jan-23
Safety for visitors	Emergency information sheet	Develop and provide emergency information sheet to accommodation providers to ensure visitors to Bellingen Shire have access to information to keep them safe.	Oct-22
Encourage safe behaviour during an event	Competitions and creative recovery projects	Run competitions/art activities where community members, particularly youth, design and drive the message of staying safe during disasters.	Jan-23
Youth disaster recovery and resilience	Books and games	Resources for Bellingen Shire Libraries and/or schools on disasters and resilience.	Dec-22
Building Mental Health Resilience	Workshops	Provide community access to mental health training and resilience building education workshops and activities.	Feb-23
First Aid	Courses	Provide community access to First Aid courses to enable more community members to render aid during a disaster.	Feb-23
Strengthening volunteer groups and increasing participation	Community Directory and volunteer promotion	Upgrade the online community directory to a more user-friendly experience and provide printed Community Directory resources as requested in feedback after the 2022 National Volunteers Week advertising campaign.	Feb-23



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