

Thriving Communities Partnership

*Disaster Planning
and Recovery
Collaborative
Research Project*



PHASE 2 REPORT | October 2021



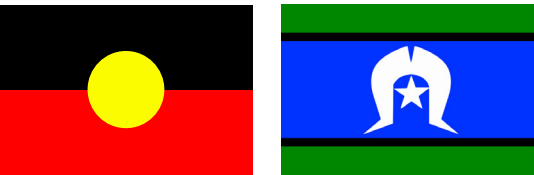


Thrivng Communities Partnership (TCP) is a not for profit organisation that enables collaboration across multiple sectors including business, academia, government, NGO’s and those with lived experience. Our goal is to see everybody have fair access to the modern essential services they need to thrive in contemporary Australia.

Our approach focuses on understanding the often complex influencing factors of vulnerability using co-design and other community-led solutions that reduce the barriers to access and embedding sustainable and effective change.

We believe the best results for individuals, organisations and the community occur when we have a movement of organisations working collaboratively within and across sectors to provide holistic support. The challenge is not to ‘fix’ people, rather to unite and shape a system around what works better for people. We aim to create a fair and connected system, so that everyone in Australia can achieve an adequate standard of living, and live free from discrimination.

The Thriving Communities Partnership secretariat thanks our Partners for their ongoing support – without you all, this work would not be possible.



We proudly acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and pay respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and value the continuing rich culture and the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the Australian community.

**For further information
on this research:**

contact@thriving.org.au
thriving.org.au

CONTENTS

A message from TCP CEO, Ciara Sterling	4
A message from TCP Queensland Chapter Lead Jane Pires	6
Executive Summary	8
About the project	20
The Project Timeline	22
The TCP Way	24
TCP’s Collaborative Social Innovation Cycle	25
Phase 2 Research Design	26
Mapping the Ecosystem	30
Research Findings	32
Life Before	34
Weather Warning	38
Disaster Impact	42
Aftermath	46
First Year Recovery	52
Long Term Recovery	56
Industry Insights	59
Banking	60
Carers and support organisations	62
Community legal services	64
Financial counselling, financial capability, and community finance	66
Insurance	68
Local and National not for profit organisations	72
Local disaster management group	76
Mental health services	78
Neighbourhood centres	80
Ombudsmen	82
Small Business services	84
Utilities and Telecommunication	88
Moving from insight to action	90
Where to from here	92
References	94
Terminology	96
Appendices	98

A MESSAGE FROM
THRIVING COMMUNITIES
PARTNERSHIP CEO

CIARA
STERLING



It has been more than two and a half years since the North Queensland Monsoon which affected 3,300 households and 54,000 businesses¹. However, long after the waters recede and the world turns its focus to the next disaster, the impacts are still being felt by the people, businesses and the community who were all affected. There are so many stories, lessons, and opportunities to take away that can help us all improve our preparation and response in future events.

TCP collaborates on complex issues, working across the ecosystem to design solutions with people, not for people. People’s lived experience enables us to better recognise individual circumstances, identify challenges and opportunities, and to empathise and question our own assumptions and biases. These insights support us to think differently about how and where the system needs to change, with the aim of ensuring people and the community are at the centre of any solutions.

All the humans affected by this disaster have their own story to tell through their own unique experience when either engaging with support services, or when providing these services to others. This project started with many courageous people sharing their stories in Phase 1 of TCP’s Disaster Planning and Recovery Collaborative Research Project. Since then, we have engaged with more than 280 people from over 120 organisations to understand more about how we, as organisations, can collectively improve the support we provide to communities during a disaster.

We have sought to understand the whole journey, across the many interconnected, dynamic networks that exist throughout a community in the wake of a disaster. While Phase 1 focused on community members and small business owners, Phase 2 explores the experience of frontline staff who assisted these residents and local businesses following the 2019 North Queensland Monsoon. Many of those frontline staff were residents of Townsville and were managing their own recovery journey while supporting others. This data allowed us to deepen our awareness of the lived experience of the frontline staff and map the findings to the lessons learnt in Phase 1, enabling

organisations to build a better understanding of the role they play in the disaster response ecosystem.

There is often a discrepancy between what organisations want to do and how it is experienced in the community, and engaging with frontline staff has allowed us to understand how and why the desired state can differ from the reality. Thanks to this research, organisations can identify opportunities to provide tangible, actionable, cross-industry and cross-sector improvements to support staff and those impacted by disaster from preparation through to long-term recovery and resilience.

We have a collective responsibility to continue to listen, learn and act together to improve and strengthen how the ecosystem wraps around the community. Just as the residents of Townsville and frontline staff have been brave in sharing their story, we must be brave to take accountability to provide support to our fellow humans and to work together through a community focused and human centred lens.

Everyone who has participated or engaged with the research shares TCP’s commitment to work and be better together, taking onboard the lessons and opportunities for change that have emerged throughout this project. It is through our partnership that we can drive the greatest change. TCP would like to thank every one of these generous humans for seeing the opportunity for collaborative learning that this project has offered. We would also like to acknowledge our research partners Symplicit who have supported our collective vision.

“We have a collective responsibility to continue to listen, learn and act together to improve and strengthen how the ecosystem wraps around the community.”

– Ciara Sterling
CEO, Thriving Communities Partnership

A MESSAGE FROM ENERGY AND WATER
OMBUDSMAN OF QUEENSLAND AND
TCP QLD CHAPTER LEAD



At its heart, this research project has sought to identify actionable, cross-sector, people centered improvements to help support community recovery and resilience when faced with disaster. TCP’s Queensland Chapter saw a great opportunity for learning and growth amidst the damage and destruction left by the monsoon, and without the support and bravery of the community of Townsville, none of this would have been possible. The residents and first responders who shared their stories and every organisation that participated in or connected with the research has underscored the power of collaboration in the pursuit of change.

“Every organisation that connected with the research has underscored the power of collaboration in the pursuit of change.”

– Jane Pires

Energy and Water Ombudsman of Queensland
and TCP Chapter Lead

JANE PIRES

Over the course of the past two and a half years, these groups and the broader TCP community have all shared the same vision – to improve life outcomes for people following a disaster, improve service delivery and to apply the lessons learned from this research in all future operations. Although the focus of this research remained QLD/Townsville centric, it is our shared hope that these lessons can be applied more broadly, to push for change on a national scale and help strengthen the resilience of our communities and improve the collaborative capacity of our service ecosystem.

Doing better together, as individuals and as organisations, has always been a core philosophy at TCP and thanks to the insights derived from this project we have the opportunity to do exactly that. Simple, actionable, cross-industry and cross-sector improvements in our service delivery can create an enormous flow-on effect that changes the lives of thousands of humans.

There is a commitment from organisations across the TCP community to better their services and the community of Townsville and TCP’s Queensland Chapter hope that this commitment will not be soon forgotten.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During a natural disaster, people interact with countless organisations from across community, business and government sectors. The way organisations respond to a disaster event, from the first weather warning through to long-term recovery, shapes the experience of community members and the experience of frontline workers. Many of these frontline workers may also be experiencing the effects of the disaster themselves whilst tending to the needs of the community and requiring their own degree of support. We, as a collective

ecosystem of organisations, have the opportunity to positively impact the experience of these frontline workers and assist in providing an effective, coordinated response to natural disasters, one that places community needs at the forefront.



About the Project

The Disaster Planning and Recovery Collaborative Research Project was born from a need identified by Energy Queensland following the 2019 North Queensland Monsoon and soon embraced by Suncorp and the Queensland Chapter of the Thriving Communities Partnership (TCP). It recognised the complexity and interconnectivity of the ecosystem in which we live and the need for organisations to work collectively, rather than individually, to support people in our community during challenging times.

The objective of the project is to provide tangible, actionable and cross-industry improvements to help people impacted by disaster access tailored support – the cornerstone of the TCP Charter.

This project was divided into two phases:

- **Phase 1** – understanding the experience of individuals and small businesses from their perspectives.
- **Phase 2** – understanding the experiences of first responder and frontline service providers from their perspectives.

The project approach included research activities designed to build understanding and a series of workshops and roundtables to share learning and drive action.

Purpose of Phase 2 Research

Phase 2 research involved mapping the experiences of frontline workers during the 2019 North Queensland Monsoon, both those who were on the ground and those providing support at a distance. Engaging with people from a cross-section of frontline industries provides insights that help to build a deeper understanding of the discrepancies between the support organisations aim to offer

“The objective of the project is to provide tangible, actionable and cross-industry improvements to help people impacted by disaster access tailored support.”

- THRIVING COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP

and how their support is received in the community. By understanding this we can identify challenges, gaps and opportunities in our organisational industry-wide, cross-sector responses.

In this report you will find the following:

- Ecosystem Insights that represent the themes and findings common across all industries participating in the research.

In this executive summary you will find these high level findings grouped by an overarching theme. In the body of the report, these findings have been mapped against the disaster journey experienced by residents and local businesses to illustrate the connection between the frontline worker experience and the community member experience.

- Industry Insights that represent the findings specific to each of the 12 industries involved in the research.

Phase 2 Research Insights

The following research findings represent the major themes that are common across the 12 different industries that participated in the research. Under each theme there are a series of findings which can be categorised as:



ECOSYSTEM



ORGANISATION

Ecosystem findings

These develop from the interconnectedness of the ecosystem and community.

Organisational findings

These occur at an organisational level. They can occur within organisations but are so common that they impact the majority of organisations across the ecosystem.

RESPONSE COORDINATION

Response coordination is the planning and collaboration that occurs within organisations and across industries that aims to deliver a coordinated and effective disaster response.

-  **Industry Coordinated Response:**
When an entire industry coordinates a response, they can provide a more consistent experience across organisations. This means the complex service ecosystem can be easier for people to navigate and systemic challenges that arise following a disaster event can be addressed collectively by industries, rather than in siloes.
-  **Organisational Role Clarity:**
Organisations may have limited oversight of the roles that other organisations play in the disaster response and how their organisation fits within the response ecosystem. There is an opportunity for industry bodies and the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) to provide organisations with oversight of what organisations are operating in the disaster response.
-  **Disaster Response 'Playbooks':**
Disaster response 'playbooks' are extremely effective because they define the roles and processes that are activated in the event of a disaster. While each organisation would benefit from having a playbook, there is an opportunity to increase the responsiveness of the entire system by integrating organisational playbooks with an industry-wide playbook.
-  **Data Integration:**
Organisations have a need for better data integration, such as weather forecasting, hazards and outages and critical customer registers (i.e. those who require access to utilities for medical needs). This would assist organisations to more effectively plan for an event and prioritise a response that considers people who are at higher risk of experiencing vulnerability.

RESOURCING & FUNDING

When gaps in resourcing staff and access to funds are not proactively mitigated within the system, organisations (and entire industries) may face challenges with meeting increased service demands and emerging community needs following a disaster event.

-  **Short-term Funding Focus:**
Disaster funding approaches are often reactive, meaning funds and resources are only made available when a disaster occurs. While these funds provide important immediate support, the temporary funding does not support long-term resilience building and change in the ecosystem.
-  **Surge Capacity:**
Surge capacity is the ability to increase staffing requirements quickly to respond and meet service demands in a disaster scenario. This sudden need for staff is often a challenge for organisations which may be further complicated by funding and staff availability.
-  **Remote Technology:**
Staff and volunteers may need to work remotely from temporary accommodation or pop-up offices if they have travelled to the impacted area or their regular workspaces have been impacted. Having to access organisations' servers and work with remote technology can greatly reduce efficiencies which may delay services to the community, such as the processing of insurance claims. Conversely, mobile technology such as iPads and mobile apps were incredibly helpful in assisting people quickly on the ground.



"When an entire industry coordinates a response, they can provide a more consistent experience across organisations."

AWARENESS, EDUCATION & TRAINING

Disaster awareness, education and training can support both communities and organisations to navigate disaster events from a place of preparedness, strength and confidence. Organisational training that is linked to a disaster response plan and strategy can support frontline staff to mobilise effectively in a disaster event, maintain role clarity and look after their own mental health and wellbeing.

-  **Community Disaster Awareness and Education:** While whole-of-community preparation and education is important, it has been identified that there is also a need to engage with specific community groups through tailored approaches and programs. Communications and information are often not designed to be culturally responsive, accessible and inclusive which means some community members may find information is not relevant to them or they are unable to access and interpret it.
-  **Disaster Response Training:** Frontline staff may lack the appropriate training and support mechanisms to deal with confronting situations and may experience compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and other health and wellbeing impacts. Training staff in the role they will need to perform in a disaster event helps them clarify what services they can provide. It can also prepare staff to empathetically respond during difficult conversations with community members and customers, and to provide warm referrals to other service.

INTERACTIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

The interactions that occur between staff and the community not only ensure access to services and support for residents and small business owners, but can also influence a sense of community connectedness, hope and practical assistance far beyond standard service provision.

-  **'It Doesn't End With You':** 'It Doesn't End with You' is a powerful quote captured from the research that calls attention to the fact that everyone impacted by a disaster is trying to navigate a very complex, challenging journey and each frontline worker has the potential to help each person as they move a bit further along that journey.
-  **Local Presence:** On the ground presence is essential for community recovery. Interacting face-to-face enables more personal and meaningful interactions and ensures services are accessible to people who are not otherwise aware of them or able to access them through other channels.
-  **Provision of the Basics:** Immediately after a disaster, people may not have even the basic necessities (e.g. water, food, clothing, baby bottles), so frontline staff find it very beneficial to be able to have a stockpile of basic necessities to offer at evacuation centres, recovery centres, pop-up services and other community meeting points.

“The interactions that occur between staff and the community not only ensure access to services and support, but can also influence a sense of community connectedness.”



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

In every community, there are an abundance of advocates, change makers and innovators passionate about seeing their community thrive. Collaborating with formally and informally recognised community leaders can help organisations to develop more effective response strategies that are truly community-led and aligned to community needs.

-  **Community Champions:** Community champions are the people in the community who are proactive and intentional in contributing to disaster recovery and resilience through the social networks they provide or the guidance, support and trust they offer within their community. There is an opportunity for organisations to strengthen referral pathways by connecting with community champions, however organisations should consider the risk of overburdening individuals and coordinate their approaches to avoid this.
-  **Trusted Local Experts:** An organisation can establish community trust quickly by working with and supporting locally recognised experts and businesses.
-  **Community Events:** Community events are integral in generating disaster awareness and preparedness. Annual 'disaster ready' days are incredibly important events for the local government, the community, and organisations to interact.

STAFF WELLBEING

The mental health and wellbeing of frontline staff is an integral part of the disaster response ecosystem and can be heavily impacted by the often emotionally and physically taxing nature of their roles following a disaster event.

-  **Vicarious Trauma:** Vicarious trauma is the emotional response a person, particularly a frontline staff member, may experience as a result of working with people who have experienced trauma, hearing their stories and witnessing their emotional response. Debriefing with colleagues at the end of each day was a huge benefit to process the experiences of the day, share emotional support and discuss ways the teams can improve the situations they are encountering.
-  **Burnout:** Due to resourcing challenges and the ongoing crises that develop after a disaster, staff may be working beyond their capacity, yet feel compelled by compassion to keep working. Organisations need to be vigilant that staff are not overextending themselves and look for ways to mitigate against staff burning out.
-  **Guilt:** Organisations can help reduce feelings of guilt by providing locally impacted employees with flexibility to be absent from work, whilst respecting that they may wish to continue working to provide a sense of purpose and normality following a disaster event.

COMMUNICATIONS

Disaster communications enable timely information to be dispersed so that organisations can proactively contribute their services in a coordinated disaster response. They also provide direction to the community about how to ensure their safety and mitigate damage before, during and after a disaster event.

-  **Coordinated Disaster Response:**
Some of the industries and organisations that provide services, support and supplies to the community following a disaster event don't have established connections and communication channels to the LDMG, which may reduce their ability to contribute effectively to a disaster response.
-  **Digital Exclusion and Accessibility:**
Digital exclusion due to access, affordability or capability issues makes it difficult for organisations to provide some individuals and community groups with the services they may need. Utilising local physical social networks is a way to better reach digitally excluded groups.
-  **Inconsistency of Channels:**
The inconsistency between official channels and the frequency of messaging can lead to confusion and mistrust causing community members to seek alternative information or unwittingly share misinformation.

ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY

Accommodation availability is a theme that requires special attention because it is a central challenge in natural disaster scenarios that can lead to many issues in the community. Without adequate and appropriate emergency accommodation, overcrowding, instances of domestic and family violence and the number of people experiencing homelessness may increase.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS & ATTITUDES

Common perceptions and attitudes toward disaster events that may develop in a community can create challenges for frontline staff to deliver services that community members will trust and engage with.

-  **Disbelief and Complacency:**
Many people maintain the belief, subconsciously or knowingly, that a disaster won't occur, until it is too late. This can make it challenging for services supporting the community in preparation and evacuation and can lead to shock and eventual trauma once the disaster occurs.
-  **Stigma of Seeking Assistance:**
Phase 1 research revealed that people avoid seeking assistance due to shame or the belief that there is someone more deserving of the support. Phase 2 research reveals that seeking mental health support can also be seen as shameful, especially within rural communities.

“Many people maintain the belief, subconsciously or knowingly, that a disaster won't occur, until it is too late.”

Phase 2 Industry Insights

The 'Industry Insights' are categorised by the 12 industries that participated in the research. This executive summary provides the key findings for each industry, while in the body of the report

you will find further detail about what works, the challenges and the opportunities for leverage across each of these key findings.

BANKING

Banks are an essential service and without the ability to access their finances, the community cannot access the services they need to rebuild, and local businesses cannot provide supplies or contribute to the local economy to support recovery.

- Key Findings:
- Access to money is key to initiating recovery activities.
 - Proactive community presence builds trust with the community.

CARERS AND SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Carers and support organisations often play an integral role in assisting older people, people with disabilities and those with other support needs, especially when responding to a disaster.

- Key Findings:
- Utilising data for good can support an inclusive disaster response.
 - People with disabilities need disaster plans that address their specific needs.

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

Having free legal advice and assistance available to the community helps mitigate against further trauma and stress as people navigate disaster recovery, however many community members are not aware of these services or how to access them.

- Key Findings:
- Community legal centres are important channels of support but are often disconnected from official disaster response plans.

- Limited resources for disaster response create obstacles for community legal centres to provide assistance

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING, FINANCIAL CAPABILITY AND COMMUNITY FINANCE

Financial counsellors support and advocate for residents and small business owners in financial difficulty, and their services are especially in demand following natural disasters where they provide support and advice on how people can start to rebuild their lives.

- Key Findings:
- The presence of financial counsellors is an important support channel for people experiencing financial vulnerability.
 - Building financial capability in a community, and providing access to inclusive community finance products and services, helps mitigate against financial hardship and vulnerability.

INSURANCE

Insurers are integral to providing the funds and resources that are necessary for a community to recover from and rebuild following a natural disaster.

- Key Findings:
- Quality, in-person discussions can make a confusing and complex process easier for customers to navigate.
 - Mobilisation of resources to assess damage and rebuild is logistically complex.
 - The complexity of insurance policies and procedures means cooperation and alignment within and across industries is critical for an effective disaster response.



LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT GROUP (LDMG)

Both communities and organisations depend on the LDMG’s coordination and communications to inform them when to act, provide guidance on appropriate responses and strategic oversight to avoid gaps and duplication in responses.

- Key Findings:**
- Effective clean-up and waste management services greatly reduces the emotional trauma in a community.
 - Digital communications are effective but need to be accompanied by alternative, accessible channels.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

Not for profit organisations play a lead role in the immediate response after a disaster and may provide a range of services including emergency evacuation, coordination and distribution of relief, resources, and counselling.

- Key Findings:**
- Quick induction times and prepared resources are key to providing an effective and efficient response.
 - Universal design in evacuation centres reduces further trauma and harm for people with a disability or other specific needs.
 - Coordination of basic goods and donations can be logistically challenging but is incredibly important to provide for the community’s basic needs.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental health services provide critical support in both the immediate and long-term recovery following a disaster and require established referral pathways across the ecosystem to ensure adequate assistance can reach the community.

“Establishing mental health pathways early in the disaster response improves people’s acceptance of seeking assistance.”

- Key Findings:**
- There is often a stigma that is associated with seeking mental health assistance.
 - Establishing mental health pathways early in the disaster response improves people’s acceptance of seeking assistance.
 - Community-led mental health initiatives support the community to develop their own ways to promote wellbeing in the community.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

Neighbourhood centres provide local information and access to community services and activities. They make use of a network of local volunteers to provide a reassuring physical presence and accessible pathways to support for local community members who may be experiencing vulnerability.

- Key Findings:**
- Coordination between different neighbourhood centres supports a unified, community-led response.
 - Resourcing neighbourhood centres during a time of crisis requires more trained staff.

OMBUDSMEN

Ombudsmen provide an important channel for residents and businesses to seek resolution to outcomes they are not happy with, so partnerships between ombudsmen, essential service providers and community legal services can create effective dispute resolution.

- Key Findings:**
- On-the-ground presence of Ombudsmen helps people feel their complaint is heard and raises

awareness of the free dispute resolution service among community members.

SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES

Small business services are services that support owners of local businesses. Small businesses are pillars in the community, providing employment, resources and services that are vital to community recovery and resilience.

- Key Findings:**
- Grants and hardship programs for small businesses are important resources of support.
 - Insurance brokers can be a double-edged sword for small business owners in a disaster.
 - Business mentors with disaster training are a valued resource for businesses.
 - Strata (the ownership of apartments and shopfronts in a building complex), is an incredibly complex insurance scenario that impacts residents and business owners.

UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

When a community is cut off from the essential services such as utilities (energy, water and gas) and telecommunications (including internet), its ability to receive information, communicate and begin taking steps towards recovery (i.e. begin clean-up) is hindered.

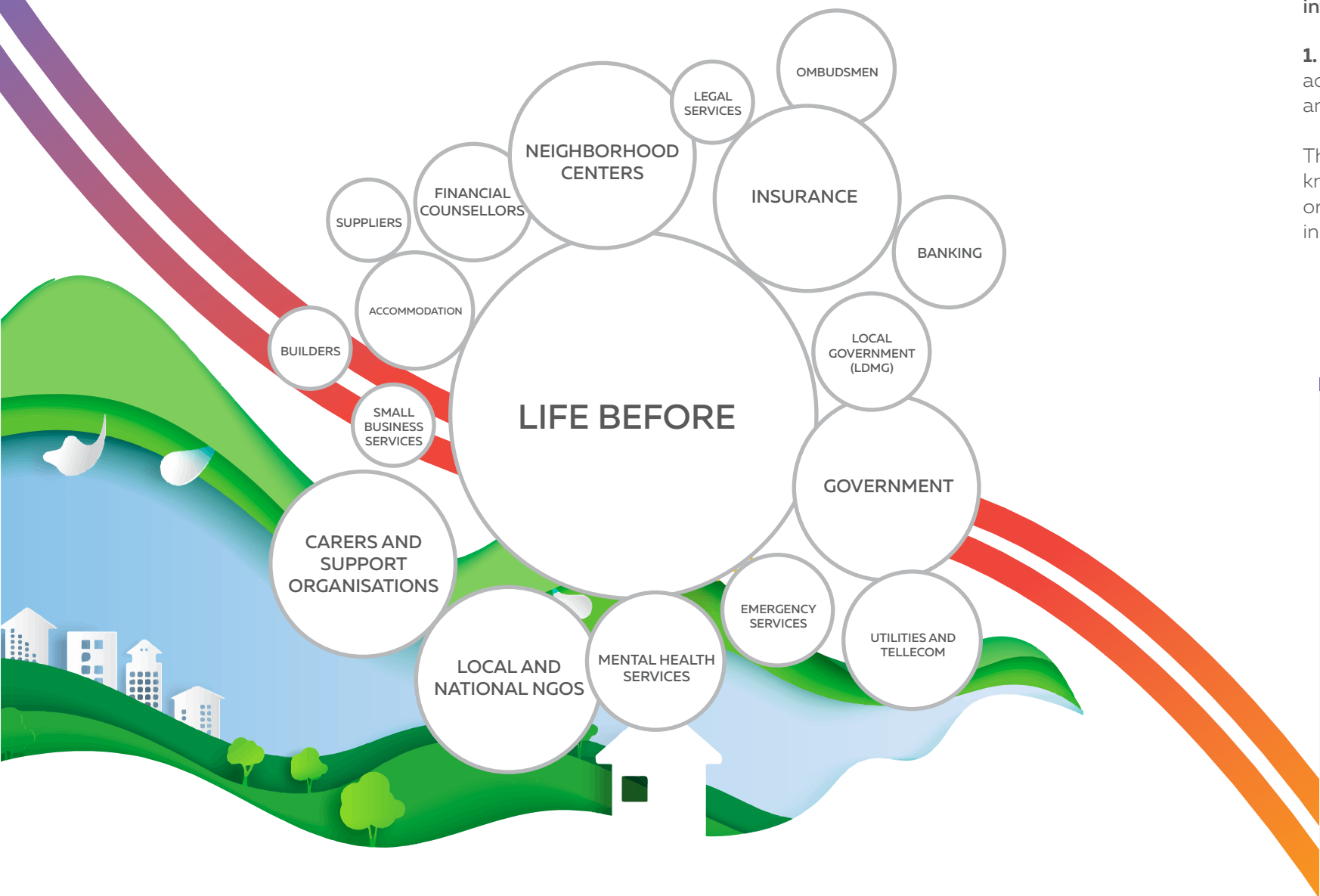
- Key Findings:**
- Going beyond regular role responsibilities and utilising strong referral pathways generates more effective responses to disaster impact.
 - Damage to assets that impact access to essential services can greatly affect the community’s ability to respond to a disaster.

Mapping the Ecosystem

The Phase 2 Ecosystem Map visualises the ecosystem and industry insights across the disaster journey experienced by residents and local businesses, from preparation through to long term recovery. It illustrates the interactions, challenges and opportunities occurring in an ecosystem-wide, cross-sector capacity. It not only shows the current interactions happening across industries at each phase, it also highlights opportunities for new connections that could improve the support and services, based on the research findings. You can view it online [here](#).

From Insights to Action

The insights from Phase 2 outline opportunities for change within the industries that participated in the research and across the entire disaster response ecosystem. Moving from insight to action can be challenging in such a complex space. TCP’s ‘Disaster Planning and Recovery Don’t Just Think Tank’ held in April-June of 2021 provided the opportunity for 25 people from 19 organisations across 12 different industries to explore possible opportunities for change. Participants collectively explored challenges around equity and accessibility, mental health, recovery and resourcing, cross sector communication and planning and alignment to identify 28 initiatives with 17 opportunities for further connections related to disaster planning and recovery for the future.



The process enabled the group to prioritise two key initiatives for collective action. This report provides a suggested process and exploration questions for other groups who would like to use this research to influence their activities. The two key initiatives developed through the Don’t Just Think Tank are:

1. Developing strategies for working collaboratively across sectors to support aligned disaster planning and recovery efforts.

This includes strategies to facilitate ongoing knowledge sharing and connection between organisations, including information about initiatives, programs and services.
2. Collectively building an understanding of gaps and successes of existing community-facing dedicated platforms to:
 - Establish a holistic view of existing platforms via taking inventory of what currently exists.
 - Inform strategies to improve community preparedness and disaster planning for residents, and
 - Leverage existing platforms to ensure people have the information they need and facilitate early access to services and support following a disaster event.

Where to from here

Though the findings from this research are Townsville centric, it is hoped that the insights can be applied more broadly on a national scale and across a variety of industries, organisations and disaster scenarios. It is through engagement with the research and the sharing of information that we as a collective ecosystem of organisations can continue to strengthen our ability to support affected communities in times of disaster.

TCP hopes that the findings of this project continue to be shared within organisations and across industries and sectors to help improve our collective capacity and strengthen our connections to each other as a single, collaborative ecosystem of services. We are committed to ensuring that this research is used to create real, lasting change and hope that together as a national ecosystem of organisations, we will continue to work to ensure effective and aligned responses to natural disasters in the future.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Disaster Planning and Recovery Collaborative Research Project was born from a need identified by Energy Queensland following the 2019 North Queensland Monsoon and soon embraced by Suncorp and the Queensland Chapter of Thriving Communities Partnership (TCP).

These organisations recognised the complexity and interconnectivity of the ecosystem that residents and local businesses must navigate when a disaster impacts their community. A local resident may have insurance to repair their home, for example, but a mental health condition may make it difficult for them to leave their home so it can be repaired.

At the same time, a local staff member within an organisation may be supporting a customer with their electricity account and identify a number of other issues the person needs support with, but they may not know where to refer this person to get the support they need. The organisations involved in this project understood the need to work collectively, rather than individually, to support people in their community during challenging times.

In 2019, TCP established a working group with Energy Queensland, Suncorp, Symplicit, the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Queensland, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, NAB, Australian Red Cross, Queensland Council of Social Services, and State Government representatives who collaboratively defined the project vision, design and the implementation plan. They described the project objective as “providing tangible, actionable and cross-industry improvements to help these people in accessing tailored support – the cornerstone of the TCP Charter.”

“The project objective is to provide tangible, actionable and cross-industry improvements to help people access tailored support – the cornerstone of the TCP Charter.”

Project Success Factors

The working group determined that success would be defined differently for the different groups involved in the project, and the project has been driven by the following factors for success:

- **People and local communities** will be better prepared and more resilient to natural disasters.
- **Organisations involved on the ground or providing a service to those impacted** will better understand the role they play in the disaster response ecosystem. They will be able to identify synergies and realise how long-term partnerships may be leveraged for improved community and organisational outcomes. They will better understand how to prioritise responses to ensure a people-centred, coordinated approach that avoids duplication and best utilises resources to meet the community needs.
- **The broader TCP community** will be able to learn from the project’s approach and its deliverables and consider how they may be able to apply them as relevant to their circumstances and context.

Project Design

This project has been divided into two phases:

- **Phase 1** – understanding the experience of individuals and small businesses from their perspectives.
- **Phase 2** – understanding the experiences of first responder and frontline service providers from their perspectives.

The project activities included both research activities designed to build understanding, and also a series of workshops and roundtables to share the learning and drive action.

While the focus of this report is to share the findings from the Phase 2 research, it also includes an overview of the entire project approach and activities to date.

It is hoped that the lessons learned throughout this project may be applied to disasters of all kinds across the country and contribute to the growing body of knowledge around disaster response and preparation, and our ability to support communities in a cross-sector capacity with humans at the centre.



THE PROJECT TIMELINE



Establishment of the Disaster Project Working Group

The Disaster Project Working Group was established in June 2019 to collaboratively define the project vision, design and the implementation plan for the two phases of the project. Funding for the Phase 1 of the project was raised by November 2019, with contributions from Energy Queensland, Suncorp, Symplicit and TCP.

The working group supported TCP and Symplicit in the design of the Phase 1 research, the recruitment of Phase 1 research participants, refining phase 1 findings and identifying emerging opportunities to improve community outcomes.

Phase 1 Research

Phase 1 research took place between 3 and 7 February 2020, approximately one year after the 2019 North Queensland Monsoon. Symplicit and TCP interviewed 12 residents and 8 local business owners to document their experiences of dealing with support and essential services before, during and after the disaster event. Through a thematic and comparative analysis of these experiences, we began to paint a picture of the interactivity between essential service and support providers in two main categories:

Residential and whole-of-community insights

Small and medium size business insights

These insights were developed into a report and two journey maps to visually represent the journey. By placing humans at the centre of the project, these insights supported us to build our understanding of existing barriers, challenges, gaps and opportunities and formed the foundation from which the rest of the project would build upon. Full report available [HERE](#).

Working Group Reflection and Learning Process

The Disaster Project Working Group Reflection and Learning process occurred in September 2020 when the group evaluated the impact of the project to date. This process centred around TCP's Theory of Change, reflecting on:

- The project foundations
- The enabling conditions for change, which include building capability, connections and changes in the way we collaborate
- Early signs of change evident within organisations and across the ecosystem.

This evaluation highlighted the benefits of the collaboration process and the human-centred approach, and identified that the research findings had been a stimulus for learning and conversations. It also highlighted the need to engage more local organisations in the Working Group and the need to further understand who is doing what and aligning across sectors.

As a result, the Project Working Group expanded to include more representation from Townsville-based organisations and individuals, including small business financial counsellors, Indigenous Consumer Action Network (ICAN) and Corporate2Community who were all collectively involved in the design of the Phase 2 research.

TCP's National Virtual Roundtable

TCP's National Virtual Roundtable was held across November and December in 2020 to socialise the Phase 1 research findings. The roundtable workshops focused on building an understanding of the role organisations play, both individually and collectively, in the community experience of a disaster.

Utilising the research findings from Phase 1 and the collective knowledge and experience of participants, the roundtable discussions sought to explore considerations about what can be done before, during and after a disaster to reduce risk, improve recovery and support long term community resilience.

Held across four separate sessions, a total of 150 people attended from across the country. They participated in the discussions and activities, ensuring an abundance of cross-sector input and insight was available to contribute to our growing body of collective knowledge. Full report available [HERE](#).

Phase 2 Research

Phase 2 research focused on understanding the experiences of the frontline workers and organisations who were on the ground during the North Queensland monsoon. Between 1 March and 18 March 2021, Symplicit conducted 22 deep-dive interviews and three focus groups, consulting 35 frontline workers that represented a cross-section of the industries involved in responding to the North Queensland Monsoon of 2019.

There is often a discrepancy between the support organisations want to provide to their community and the support a community experiences in reality. The insights from frontline workers can help to build a deeper understanding as to why such discrepancies exist and the challenges, barriers, gaps and opportunities in our organisational and collective responses. **The findings from this research make up the body of this report.**

The Disaster Planning and Recovery Don't Just Think Tank (DJTT) workshop

The Disaster Planning and Recovery Don't Just Think Tank (DJTT) was held from April to June 2021 and provided an opportunity for a group of 25 people from 19 organisations across 12 industries to come together to collectively, safely and adaptively explore the Phase 2 research findings and to ideate and design a number of small initiatives aimed to support disaster resilience in Townsville and contribute to the growing body of evidence about what works and what doesn't across disaster contexts. See more detail on page 90.

THE TCP WAY

We know that ‘the problems before us now cannot be resolved in the way we approached problems in the past.’² TCP takes a more adaptive and flexible approach to problem solving, in contrast to traditional approaches. Our approach aims to build a nuanced understanding of issues and work together with stakeholders, including those directly impacted by our work, to explore how transformational partnerships can move us away from doing business as usual.³

TCP operates in environments that are complex, constantly evolving and where all stakeholders share a co-responsibility for the present situation. Through a process of probing, sensing and responding, we seek to enable a safe environment where testing of new responses and solutions can be collectively explored.⁴

“We are driven by the principles of diversity, equity, openness, mutual benefit and courage.”

Partnering Principles

TCP’s approach is based on the Partnership Brokering Association’s principles of partnership brokering.³ We are driven by the principles of diversity, equity, openness, mutual benefit and courage.

We demonstrate this by keeping humans at the centre of our work, leaving competition at the door, minimising harm, building on existing strengths and avoiding duplication.

National Principles for Disaster Recovery

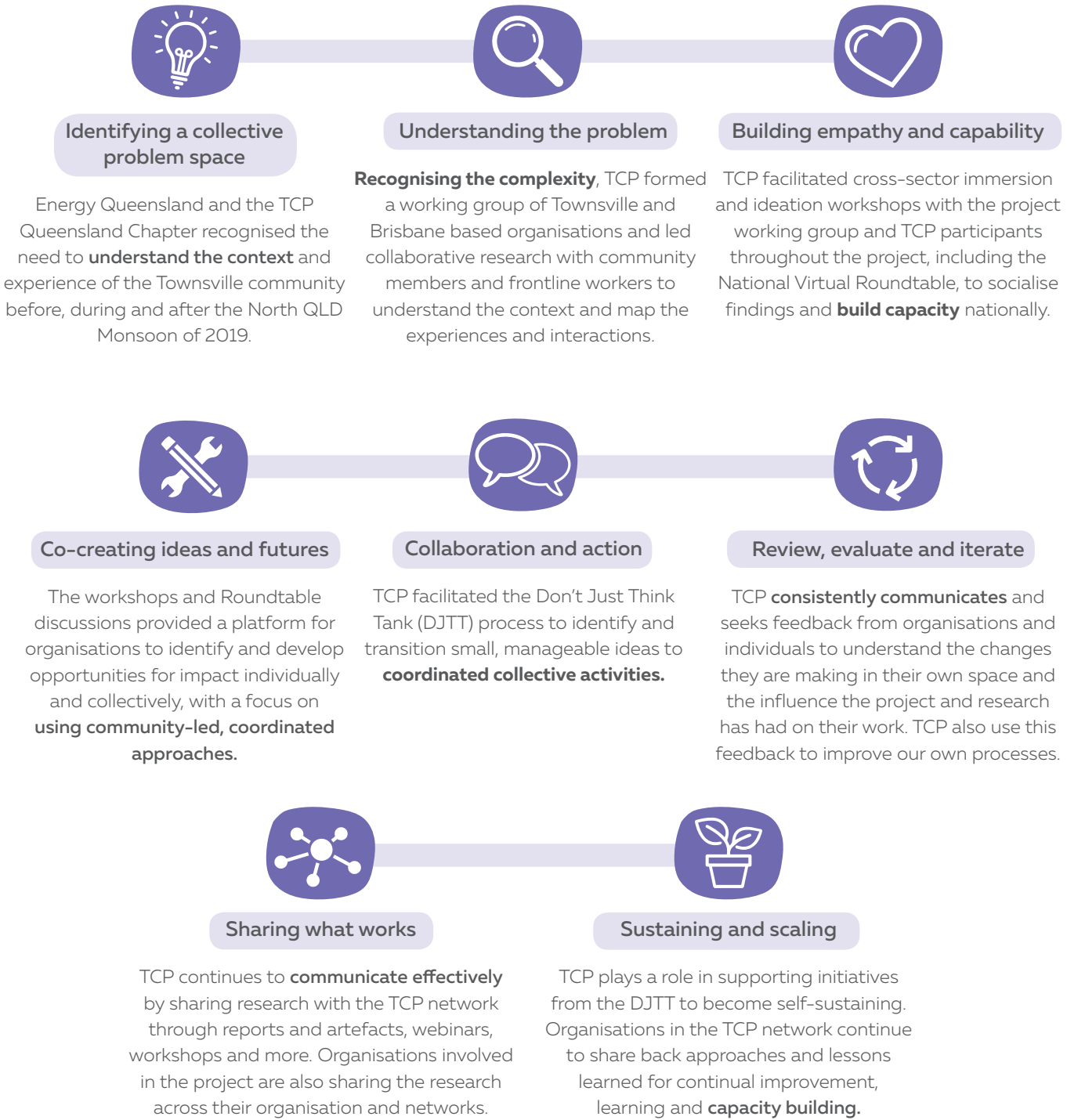
In keeping true to this commitment to build on existing work strengths and avoid duplication, this project uses the National Principles for Disaster Recovery⁵ which identify the following six principles as design principles that lead to successful recovery from a disaster event:

- Understand the Context
- Coordinate all Activities
- Recognise the Complexity
- Communicate Effectively
- Use Community-led Approaches
- Recognise and build capacity



TCP’S COLLABORATIVE SOCIAL INNOVATION CYCLE

The National Principles for Disaster Recovery can be seen in action throughout the TCP Collaborative Social Innovation that provided the framework for our project approach:



PHASE 2 RESEARCH DESIGN

PHASE 2 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the Phase 2 research is to better understand why discrepancies exist between the support organisations seek to provide to communities during a natural disaster, and the lived experience of the residents and small businesses in the community. It also seeks to identify the challenges, gaps and opportunities in organisational, industry-wide and cross-sector responses.

To achieve this, the research sought to deepen understanding of frontline worker experiences and map these findings to the journey experienced by residents and small businesses that emerged in phase 1 of the research. This was done by conducting 22 deep-dive interviews and 3 focus groups, consulting a total of 35 frontline workers.

While the research scope focused on the North Queensland Monsoon, the insights and opportunities may have applicability across regions and disaster events. We intend for this research to foster connections, and collaboration across organisations and sectors and contribute to the body of knowledge about how collective readiness and response will contribute to increased resilience to future disaster events.



PHASE 2 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

To achieve these objectives, we conducted research and analysis activities with the following industries:

Utilities and Telecommunications

Banking

Insurance

Small Business Services (e.g. mentors)

Ombudsmen

Mental Health Services

Local and National Not for Profit Organisations

Community Legal Services

Neighbourhood Centres

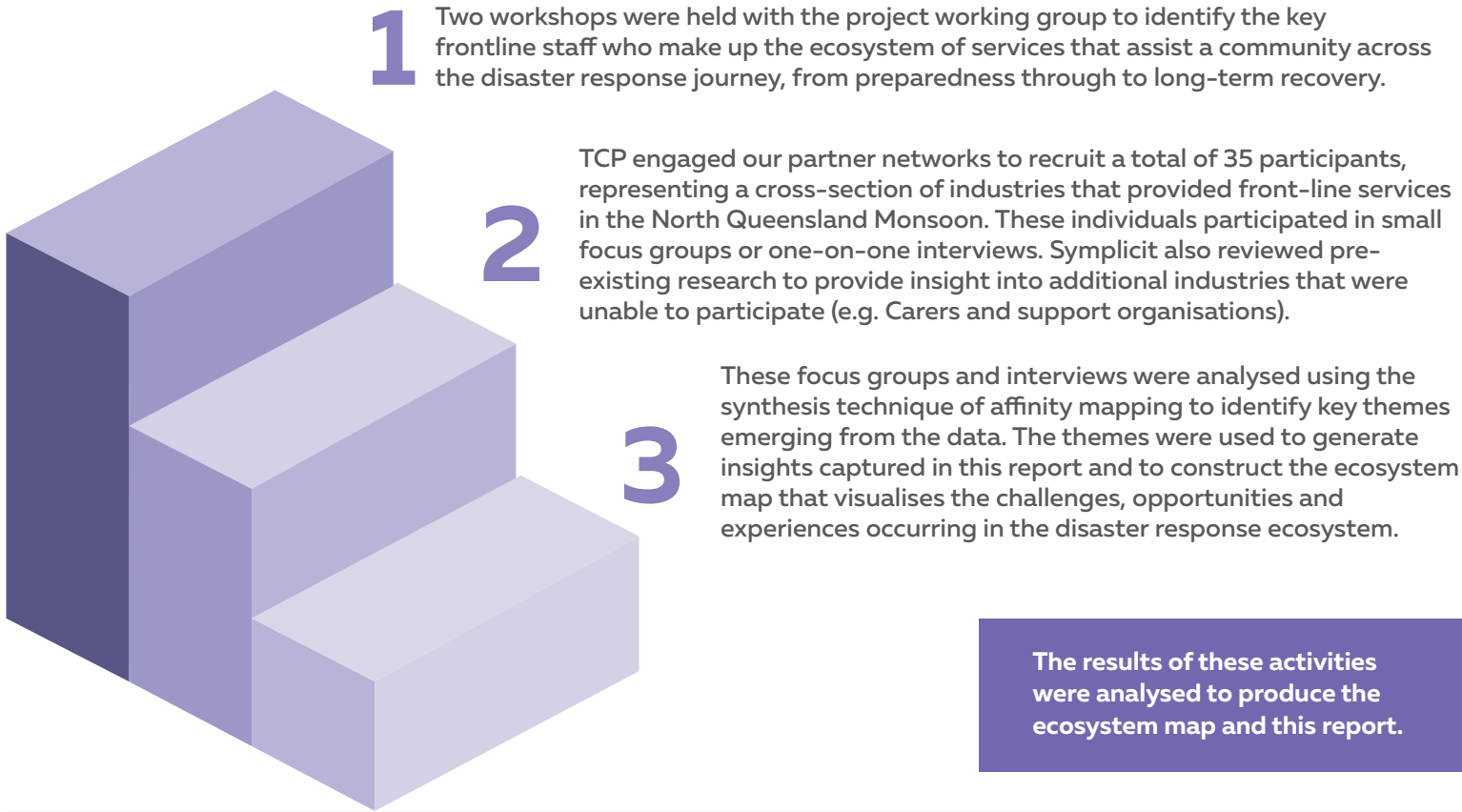
Carers and support organisations

Local Disaster Management group

Financial Counselling, Financial Capability and Community Finance



The research and analysis were executed in three stages:



Research Limitations

While this research engaged a broad cross-section of people and organisations, we acknowledge there are some limitations with the research and its ability to represent the entirety of frontline staff involved in the disaster preparedness and response ecosystem.

State and federal governments were not represented in the sample and factors, such as a natural disaster occurring at the time of the research and time constraints for frontline staff to participate in the research, were noted to impact participation. Due to COVID-19, we performed all recruitment and research remotely, which also meant valuable on-the-ground engagement during the recruitment process was not possible.

The ecosystem of services is extremely complex and the entirety of relationships within and between

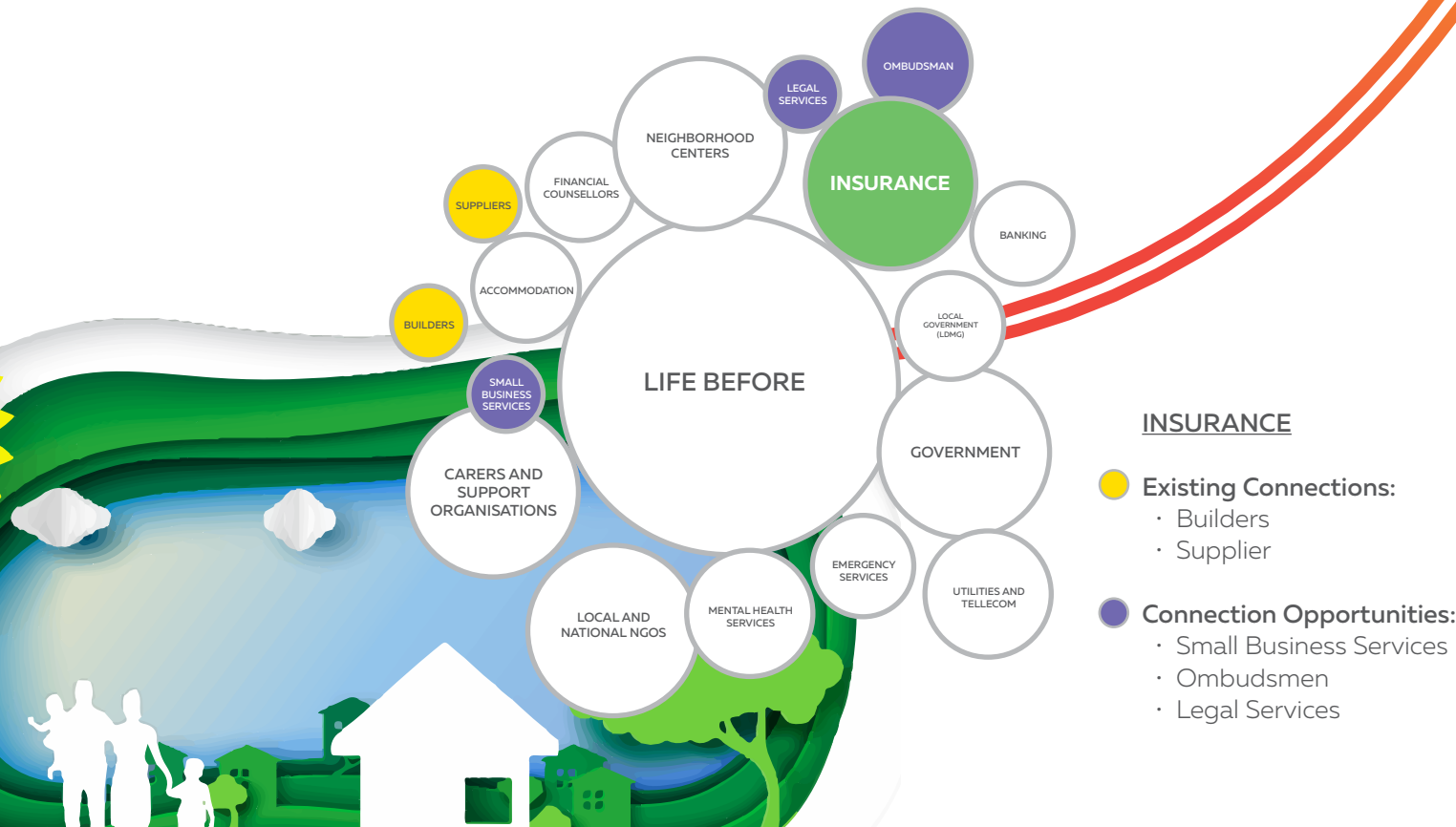
organisations cannot be fully represented. This research represents the stories told by the frontline research participants, whose experiences provide valuable insight into the disaster response ecosystem. This research is not intended as a comprehensive description of the disaster response ecosystem for every disaster, but should be used as a catalyst to spark conversations and collaboration between organisations and industries and prompt more people to contribute their own experiences and identify further opportunities to build a more holistic and connected response.

MAPPING THE ECOSYSTEM

The Phase 2 research ecosystem map visualises the collection of frontline services and how they impact the community experience of navigating a natural disaster event. It illustrates the interactions, challenges and benefits occurring in an ecosystem-wide, cross-sector capacity. The ecosystem map created for this project is unique because it visualises how the relationships of frontline organisations relate to the community journey of a natural disaster (as captured during Phase 1 research), and highlights the interconnectedness of the disaster response ecosystem.

The ecosystem map details the following:

- The major phases of the journey as defined in the Phase 1 research and a summary of what is occurring for residents and business owners in each journey phase. *For more detailed understanding of these journeys refer to Phase 1 research.
- Ecosystem-level insights that relate to the experiences across industries during each phase of the journey.
- Industry-level insights that relate to the experiences occurring within a particular industry during each phase of the journey.
- The benefits, challenges and opportunities associated with each insight.
- Key existing connections and opportunities for new connections between industries.



The map's goal is to help make tangible the complexity that is occurring, so that organisations can collaborate on common ground and begin to leverage opportunities that will shape a more inclusive and connected ecosystem.

It should be acknowledged that insights and issues occurring at the scale represented in this map are often inter-connected and can affect multiple phases of the community journey. For example, issues described in insights that occur before a disaster may play out in the aftermath of a disaster, making it difficult to appropriately place the insight into the timeline. Therefore, insights represented in the ecosystem map should not be interpreted as being confined to the phase they are represented in, but rather used to begin reflection on how each insight affects the ecosystem and the community over time.

Given the complexity and quantity of connections between industries across each disaster phase, these have not been represented in this report.

We recommend viewing the journey map online to explore this in more detail - Click [here](#) to view the Ecosystem Map.

“The map’s goal is to help make tangible the complexity that is occurring so that organisations can collaborate and begin to leverage opportunities that will shape a more inclusive and connected ecosystem.”

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Ecosystem Insights

The following research findings represent major themes that are common across the 12 different industries that participated in the research and provided frontline community assistance in the North Queensland Monsoon of 2019. Under each theme there are a series of findings which can be categorised as:

Ecosystem findings

These develop from the interconnectedness of the ecosystem and community. They are best explored in collaboration with other organisations and industries.

Organisational findings

These occur at an organisational level. They can occur within organisations but are so common that they impact the majority of organisations across the ecosystem. Organisations can explore these findings internally, but due to the commonality and interconnectedness of issues they can also be explored collectively with other organisations.

Incorporating Phase 1 and Phase 2 research findings

The findings of the Phase 2 research are based on the experience of frontline workers during the different phases of a disaster and the complex dynamics that influence their ability to provide support and services to community members. Through this report, you will also find the experiences of residents and local business owners woven through each stage of the disaster journey. This helps to illustrate the flow on impacts that can occur between community members and frontline workers, and also aims to ensure the Phase 1 research findings remain front of mind and the 'collective community voice' is central to shaping the disaster preparedness and response ecosystem.

What is an ecosystem?

An ecosystem is 'an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organised in a way that achieves something.'⁶ The way the ecosystem thrives or survives is influenced by the effects and relationships between interacting factors within the ecosystem. Ecosystems are dynamically evolving and should not be perceived from a linear viewpoint.⁷

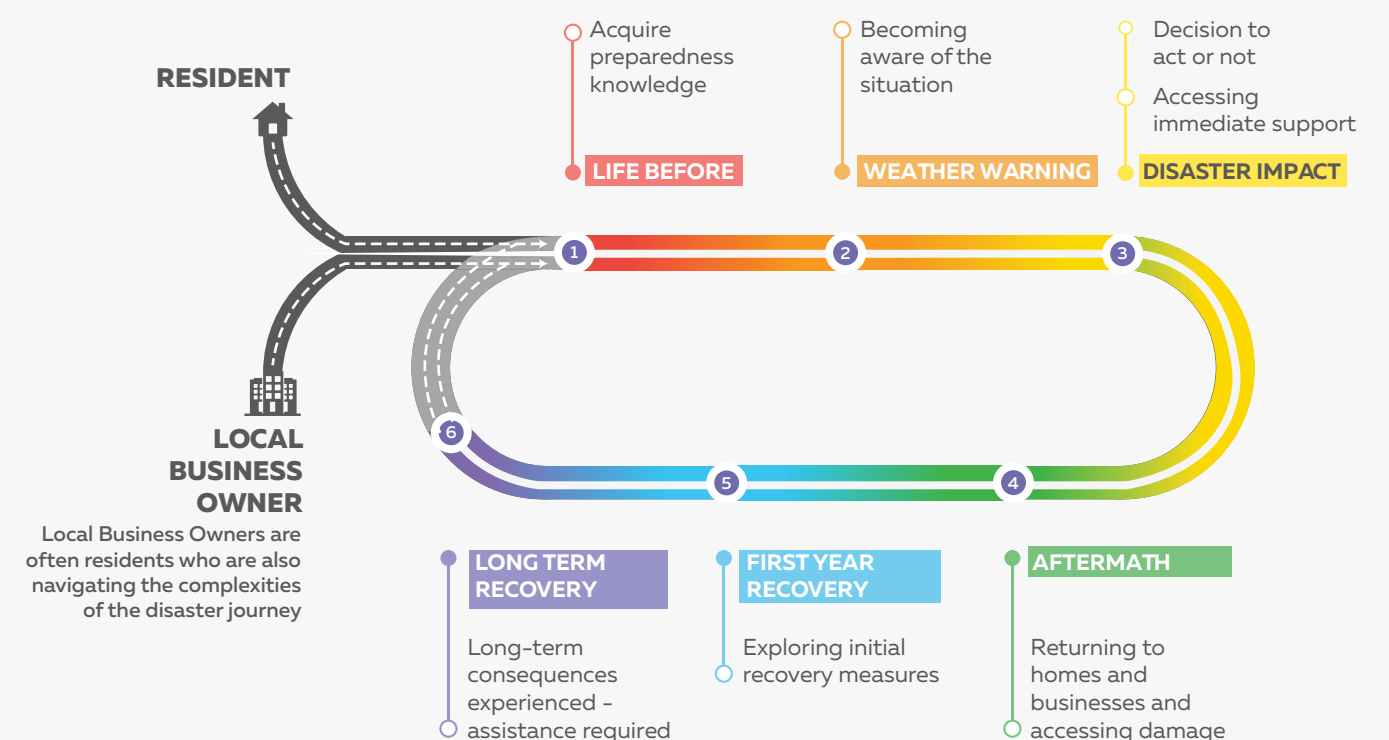
The 'Disaster Planning and Recovery Ecosystem' refers to all individuals, organisations, groups and actors that play a role in disaster planning and recovery

What is 'systems thinking'?

Changing an ecosystem is difficult because all ecosystems currently achieve a purpose, even if that purpose isn't what we might want it to achieve. Systems thinking is 'the ability to understand the interconnections within an ecosystem in such a way as to achieve a desired purpose, rather than its current purpose'.⁸

At TCP we use the terms 'ecosystem' and 'system' synonymously.

Resident and Local Business Disaster Journey from Phase 1



1

LIFE BEFORE

The 'life before' phase is the period of time before any weather warnings are issued. Community members' level of disaster preparedness and life circumstances may vary greatly. There are many factors that may influence a person's ability to respond to and recover from a disaster event including: lifestyle, home and family situations, financial inclusion and resilience, health, social capital, cultural background and digital access and capability. These factors are influenced by the level of inclusiveness of the ecosystem pre-disaster. Long-term recovery from previous disaster events may be occurring in this phase and it is the critical time for preparedness and planning to take place among organisations and the community.

RESPONSE COORDINATION

Response coordination is the planning and collaboration that occurs within organisations and across sectors which aims to deliver a coordinated and effective disaster response that avoids duplication and addresses service gaps. It is integral that this work occurs prior to a disaster event, so that integrated and collaborative responses can be enacted at the time of disaster impact.

Key Findings:



Industry Coordinated Response

When an entire industry coordinates their disaster planning and response, they can provide a more consistent experience across organisations. This means the complex service ecosystem can be easier for people to navigate and systemic challenges that arise following a disaster event can be addressed collectively by industries, rather than in siloes. For example, planning and collaboration enabled the Insurance Council of Australia to coordinate aspects of the insurance industry response to the Monsoon Disaster. They also implemented community forums on insurance matters which enabled the community to voice concerns, access pathways to advice and dispute resolution services. Where industries had an aligned, pre-determined and people-centred response to specific issues, this generally resulted in better outcomes

for the community and for organisations. This is because decisions could be made quickly and effectively enabling people to access services and support in a timely way. There is an opportunity to increase coordination within and across industries by engaging industry bodies in the preparedness phase and creating clear pathways and processes for coordination between industry bodies and local government disaster response plans.



Disaster Response 'Playbooks'

Disaster response 'playbooks' are extremely effective because they define the roles and processes that are activated in the event of a disaster. While they exist at a local government level with the LDMG and within organisations, playbooks may not be integrated across the ecosystem. While each organisation would benefit from having a playbook, there is an opportunity to increase the responsiveness of the entire system by integrating organisational playbooks with an industry-wide playbook. Industry playbooks could in turn be integrated into the local government playbook, resulting in a master playbook that would support the rapid, coordinated implementation of disaster response plans across the ecosystem to assist community response and recovery.

AWARENESS, EDUCATION & TRAINING

Disaster awareness, education and training can support both communities and organisations to navigate disaster events from a place of preparedness, strength and confidence. Organisational training that is linked to a disaster response plan and strategy can support frontline staff to mobilise effectively in a disaster event, maintain role clarity and look after their own mental health and wellbeing. Community disaster awareness activities and information that is developed with and led by the community can increase preparedness and foster community resilience to disaster events. A collaborative effort between organisations to develop and deliver staff training and community programs can ensure consistency and alignment within the response ecosystem.

Key Findings:



Community Disaster Awareness and Education

While whole-of-community preparation and education is important, it has been identified that there is also a need to engage with specific community groups through tailored approaches and programs. Communications and information are often not designed to be culturally responsive, accessible and inclusive which means some community members may find information is not relevant to them or they are unable to access and interpret it. For example, disaster education tends to focus on mitigating damage to physical assets (e.g. homes, businesses, etc.), but First Nations people may also prioritise repairing their connection to Country. Organisations and industries have the opportunity to collaborate with community leaders, advocates and each other to develop communications and resources that reflect and communicate to all community members.

"I always keep my cyclone kit stocked with canned food, torches and a radio just in case."

- TOWNSVILLE RESIDENT



 Disaster Response Training

Disaster scenarios are often complex, chaotic and confronting. Frontline staff may lack the appropriate training and support mechanisms to deal with confronting situations and may experience compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and other health and wellbeing impacts. Training staff in the role they will need to perform in a disaster event helps them clarify what services they can provide. It can also prepare staff to empathetically respond during difficult conversations with community members and customers, and to provide warm referrals to other services. Knowing where and when to refer someone can support positive outcomes for both the community member and the staff member, as it helps them to maintain boundaries in their role. In addition to providing disaster specific training, organisations can look to pair new staff up with experienced staff so that inexperienced staff can be supported in confronting settings. There is also an opportunity for industries and sectors to collaboratively develop and deliver aligned disaster-response training, through consultation with staff and community members, to avoid duplication and increase coordination across the ecosystem. Partnering with local small businesses and training providers to do so can also contribute to the local economy.

“Realistically..it’s really hard for a small business to justify insurance costs..it’s a juggling act..you have to try and mitigate your risk but keep costs within reason.”

- LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER



RESIDENT

Phase 1 research found that providing effective disaster preparedness education can assist in mitigating future risk factors and can enable community members to feel a sense of autonomy and resilience as they navigate their unique journey. Preparedness may include stocking an emergency kit, a plan to safeguard important documents, ensuring house/belongings are raised out of the flood zone and monitoring weather. These may all be made easier through effective communication and with an understanding of the specific contexts and journeys of the diverse communities we serve.



BUSINESS

Findings from Phase 1 highlighted that local business owners may experience personal and residential impacts during a disaster event, which are compounded by impact to their business and livelihood. Strengthening local economies through encouraging a digital presence, greater supplier diversity and disaster preparedness plans can help businesses, especially small businesses, recover from a disaster event. Whilst flood damage insurance (which some business owners perceive to be unaffordable) may not be a viable option for some, supporting business owners to be more adaptable can effectively mitigate risk and more broadly support the resilience of entire communities.





1

2

WEATHER WARNING

In this phase, official weather warnings have been made public and organisations generally begin to mobilise and enact their disaster response plan (if they have one in place). Community members’ responses may vary. Most people take notice of a significant weather event, but may not perceive a threat. Access to and trust in information is a key factor influencing decisions at an organisational and community level.

RESPONSE COORDINATION

As many organisational responses are ‘activated’ by a weather warning, effective coordination of activities both within organisations and across sectors is critical to timely and aligned responses. Effective communication and building on preparedness work already completed can maximise disaster readiness and mitigate against negative disaster impacts (i.e. damaged assets, service disruptions) for the organisation and the community

Key Findings:

 Organisational Role Clarity

Organisations may have limited oversight of the roles that other organisations play in the disaster response and how their organisation fits within the response ecosystem. This can become a challenge in recovery centres where staff may be unsure what other services are present and therefore miss opportunities to connect people with assistance. Additionally, staff in essential service organisations often experience an increasing number of customers disclosing poor mental health following a disaster event, yet staff may be unsure where and when to refer people to mental health services. There is an opportunity for industry bodies and the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) to provide organisations with oversight of what organisations are operating in the disaster response. This would allow staff to more proactively connect community members with services and support. It would also provide insight on where to leverage existing organisational strengths and where there are gaps or duplication in service provision.

 Data Integration

Organisations have a need for better data integration, such as weather forecasting, hazards and outages and critical customer registers (i.e., those who require access to utilities for medical needs). This would assist organisations to more effectively plan for an event and prioritise a response that considers people who are at higher risk of experiencing vulnerability. In Townsville, some insurance companies were able to utilise data about disaster damages from the military and SES which helped them prioritise assistance to their customers in areas most severely impacted by the flood. There is an opportunity to leverage off the data different industries hold and look for ways to integrate it with other services to provide a more effective response in each community. However, any data integration and registers must address how personal data would be made available across organisations and people may be reluctant to volunteer information or have their data used in this way due to privacy concerns.



RESOURCING & FUNDING

The ability to resource staff and access to funds are often two key enablers to effective disaster preparedness and the ability for organisations to mobilise and respond to disasters in a timely and appropriate way. When gaps in resourcing and funding are not proactively mitigated within the system, organisations (and entire industries) may face challenges with meeting increased service demands and emerging community needs leading up to and following a disaster event. This can lead to delays in access to the services and supplies necessary for recovery. By engaging in preparedness activities and proactive planning, organisations and governments can collaboratively anticipate and better support the resourcing of a disaster response and support community resilience.

Key Findings:

 Surge Capacity

Surge capacity is the ability to increase staffing requirements quickly to respond and meet service demands in a disaster scenario. This sudden need for staff is often a challenge for organisations which may be further complicated by funding and staff availability. In order to meet staffing needs, organisations often depend on flying people into local disaster areas. This helps relieve local staff who may be impacted by the disaster, but local knowledge and community connectedness may be reduced in the process and local staff may feel displaced at work and unsure of their role in the disaster response. Floods, hazards and damage to infrastructure and roads can also make it more challenging for staff to be mobilised to areas in need.



“I sat down with my wife, ‘Are we going to close the store? Are our staff perceived to be in danger?’”

- LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND
ATTITUDES

There are common perceptions and attitudes toward disaster events that may develop in a community, some of which were identified in both our Phase 1 and Phase 2 research as having an impact on community and organisations mobilising and taking action ahead of an imminent disaster event.

Key Findings:

 Disbelief and Complacency

Many people maintain the belief, subconsciously or knowingly, that a disaster won't occur, until it is too late. This can be true even for people that have experienced disasters previously. Emergency crews may have knocked on residents' doors multiple times during the Monsoon Disaster, but residents still maintained the belief that the weather would pass over, putting themselves in danger. Local organisations may also keep their business open and fail to prepare for a disaster event because of the belief it will not occur. Not only does this make it challenging for services supporting the community in preparation and evacuation, once a disaster occurs it can lead to shock and eventual trauma that is common in communities impacted by disaster.



RESIDENT

When a weather warning is issued, Phase 1 research highlighted that there can be a wide range of barriers that prevent residents from taking action. While official communications and networks of families, neighbours and friends help spread advice, conflicting information can cause confusion and indecision. Understanding that electricity can act as a 'gatekeeper' for people and households that still have access to power are often less likely to evacuate despite warnings provides important context of the community's journey through a disaster event. Ensuring access to timely and accessible information like weather warnings can greatly impact community members' ability to prepare and, most importantly, safeguard their home and family.



BUSINESS

Phase 1 research found that local business owners have varying responses to disaster warnings, from taking early action to delaying a response and monitoring the situation to see if it escalates. It is important to understand the myriad influences to decision making at this stage of the journey, such as family and home life or the well-being of staff. Educating business owners on the importance of decisions such as closing the business, moving stock to a safe location and setting up a generator can greatly impact a business owner's response and recovery journey by ensuring they have all available information and the agency to make their own informed choices.

"Going to an evacuation centre could have been an option but we felt it was safer and appropriate to stay at home, if we lost power it may have been different."

- TOWNSVILLE RESIDENT





DISASTER IMPACT

In this phase, the community as a whole responds to the now-immediate impact of the disaster event. Personal safety takes priority for residents, local business owners and frontline staff. First responders play a critical role in ensuring community members are evacuated or can seek appropriate alternate shelter from the disaster impact.

COMMUNICATIONS

Disaster communications enable timely information to be dispersed so that organisations can proactively contribute their services in a coordinated disaster response. They also provide direction to the community about how to ensure their safety and mitigate damage before, during and after a disaster event. Without clear channels of cross-organisational communication, organisations may become excluded from a coordinated response, which in turn hinders their ability to respond to community needs in a timely way. There are opportunities for organisations to collaborate and begin to develop more integrated systems of communications so that the ecosystem has a coordinated and cohesive message that can be dispersed through multiple channels. Considering accessible, inclusive content and channels for communications is critical for community messaging. Organisations can collaborate to develop a shared, multi-channel approach that caters for different community groups and communication needs.

Key Findings:

 Coordinated Disaster Response

In Queensland, the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) is responsible for coordinating the official local disaster response. Some of the industries and organisations that provide services, support and supplies to the community following a disaster event don't have established connections

and communication channels to the LDMG, which may reduce their ability to contribute effectively to a disaster response. There is not only an opportunity to establish stronger channels of communication between the LDMG and industry bodies across sectors for better response and alignment, but there also is an opportunity for retrospective learnings across the ecosystem to be shared.

 Inconsistency of Channels

The inconsistency between official channels and the frequency of messaging can lead to confusion and mistrust causing community members to seek alternative information or unwittingly share misinformation. Within and between organisations, this can create uncoordinated responses and delay services to people in need. For example, some organisations may receive an update on the disaster situation one day, but not receive additional updates for the rest of the week, which leads them to believe they are missing out on important information and then delay action. In Townsville, the local government created a 'disaster dashboard' on their website which was an effective way to disperse official communications and advice from a centralised location. There is an opportunity to continue to build on the effectiveness of the 'official dashboard' to increase its accessibility and integrate it with industry and organisational official communications, so the entire system can be better informed to take action.

 Digital Exclusion and Accessibility

Digital exclusion occurs when a community group or individual is not able to utilise digital communications and technology effectively due to access, affordability or capability issues. This makes it difficult for organisations to provide some individuals and community groups with the services they may need. Utilising local physical social networks is a way to better reach digitally excluded groups. For example, a community lawyer could provide information about their services to a person or organisation community members are likely to interact with and trust (e.g. an elected representative, Indigenous Elder or a local doctor).



ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY

Accommodation availability is a theme that requires special attention because it is a central challenge in natural disaster scenarios that can lead to many issues in the community. Without adequate and appropriate evacuation facilities and emergency accommodation, there may be an increase in overcrowding, instances of domestic and family violence and the number of people experiencing homelessness. People who are unable to secure accommodation risk emotional and mental trauma and their financial security and wellbeing may be impacted. With limited accommodation options after a disaster, people with specific needs, like large families and people living with disabilities, may not be able to find suitable shelter. People may find that they need to be moved into

rentals that are in flood prone areas, putting them at greater risk of future flood events. The rental market may also become saturated, which leaves people with limited housing options or the need to commit to rent repayments that are not affordable. There is an opportunity for government organisations, not for profits and businesses across the accommodation sector (including hotels and motels) to collaborate on ways on how to address this central issue of accommodation availability.



RESIDENT

Severe weather events can escalate quickly, so residents may have little time to prepare before they are confronted with the disaster impact. Evacuation and the decision on whether to stay or leave is often a highly stressful situation and requires access to timely and tailored information and assistance. Interactions with frontline services have the potential to greatly support people or inflict further trauma, highlighting a clear opportunity and need to collectively shape a more people-centred and trauma-informed disaster response. Evacuation centres that are ill-equipped to support people with a disability or cater for young children, and media filming evacuation scenes without consent are some of the negative experiences community members encountered.



BUSINESS

Phase 1 research highlighted that local business owners may simultaneously be responding to disaster impacts at their home and at their business. Businesses will generally close if they are able to do so, as the priority for owners and staff becomes looking after their family and home but some local business owners (i.e. motel owners) may become trapped with customers and staff in their business and feel responsible for their safety. Business owners are constantly monitoring incoming information and available resources to inform decisions that aim to keep people close to them safe until the weather subsides. If a business owner is away from their business, they may be unaware of the impact occurring to their livelihood until the weather passes.

“Many of these people locally are affected, and because our own people working in the banks, the tax office...support agencies, they themselves may have personally been impacted and their family impacted.”

- SMALL BUSINESS FINANCIAL COUNSELLOR

“For me the biggest consequence was being ill-prepared to evacuate my home... as a person being evacuated but also as a person with a disability. I felt vulnerable because there was no pre-communication about ‘this is how we’re going to support you as a person with unique needs and special requirements.’”

- LOCAL RESIDENT



AFTERMATH

In the aftermath of a disaster, each member of the community is confronted by, processes and evaluates the damage that was caused by the event. Connection, community networks and an on-the-ground presence of organisations are key to accessing assistance in this early stage of recovery. Additional staff and resources may arrive at the impacted area to bolster organisational response and recovery efforts.

RESOURCING AND FUNDING

The ability to resource and mobilise staff and physical access to impacted areas are two critical factors for an effective and timely response immediately following a disaster event. Limitations on travel due to flood waters and other hazards can lead to delays in access to the services and supplies necessary for recovery. By engaging in preparedness activities and proactive planning, organisations and governments can collaboratively anticipate and better support the resourcing of a swift and coordinated disaster response.

Key Findings:

 Remote Technology

Staff and volunteers may need to work remotely from temporary accommodation or pop-up offices if they have travelled to the impacted area or their regular workspaces have been impacted. Having to access organisations' servers and work with remote technology can greatly reduce efficiencies which may delay services to the community, such as the processing of insurance claims. Conversely, mobile technology such as iPads and mobile apps were incredibly helpful in assisting people quickly on the ground. For example, staff from mental health services in evacuation centres were able to walk around the evacuation centres and connect people with support efficiently using a mobile app.

INTERACTIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

The interactions that occur between staff and the community not only ensure access to services and support for residents and small business owners, but can also influence a sense of community connectedness, hope and practical assistance far beyond standard service provision. Each frontline staff interaction has the potential to greatly influence a community member's experience and recovery journey. A positive interaction can build trust with organisations while a negative one can cause further trauma for people and deter them from engaging with other services and support in the future. Organisations have a responsibility to look across all the touchpoints they have with the community (i.e. including contractors, field staff, call centre staff, digital interactions) to ensure frontline workers are equipped to provide services effectively, but primarily to respond with empathy and compassion.

Key Findings:

 'It Doesn't End with You'

'It Doesn't End with You' is a powerful quote captured from the research that embodies the connected nature of the disaster planning and recovery ecosystem. It calls attention to the fact that everyone impacted by a disaster is trying to navigate a very complex, challenging journey and each frontline worker has the potential to help each

person as they move a bit further along that journey. For example, if a staff member at an essential service organisation is speaking with a customer and they hear that the person is experiencing homelessness and financial instability, they could refer that person on to emergency accommodation and financial counselling services, as well as the specialised assistance teams at other essential service providers. Organisations that take the mindset that 'it doesn't end with them' and invest in building strong connections within the ecosystem for referral and collaboration can better assist community members to access holistic support and can reduce the burden of people having to tell their story repeatedly to different service providers.

 Local Presence

On the ground presence is essential for community recovery. Interacting face-to-face enables more personal and meaningful interactions and ensures services are accessible to people who are not otherwise aware of them or able to access them through other channels. Having interpreters available is also critical to the inclusiveness of on the ground services. The earlier a service provider's presence is felt, the more trust can be developed in the community that the service is of benefit to their situation and will support them. This is especially important in rural and small communities where it may be difficult to gain trust. Being present in the community early, looking for long-term ways of keeping relationships open, collaborating with services the community already trusts, having meaningful conversations with people impacted, and using community leaders to spread awareness of services are ways organisations can improve their local presence. It should be acknowledged that fly-in staff that have a good understanding of the local context (e.g., geography, climate, demographics) and are well-trained in adapting to local community needs are much more effective at establishing a local presence than those that have little understanding of local conditions.

"Some staff are away from their family for weeks...working day and night...it's very confronting, but fulfilling."

- RESEARCH PARTICIPANT



 Provision of the Basics

While the primary role of most frontline staff is to assist impacted community members with a particular service, staff have found that sometimes what is really needed in the moment is simply some food or water. Immediately after a disaster, people may not have even the basic necessities (e.g. water, food, clothing, baby bottles), so frontline staff find it very beneficial to be able to have a stockpile of basic necessities to offer at evacuation centres, recovery centres, pop-up services and other community meeting points. They report that there is a huge amount of gratitude that results from providing basic provisions. It is only once basic needs are met that people can take the next step in recovery and consider things like insurance and essential services. Importantly, research also highlights the importance of social connections in disaster recovery and resilience. Organisations should consider opportunities to increase community connectedness particularly for people experiencing social or geographic isolation, as it is often neighbours and friends who are the informal ‘first responders’ in disaster events and can assist people with meeting basic needs of shelter and supplies.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

Key Findings:

 Stigma of seeking assistance

Phase 1 research revealed that people avoid seeking assistance due to shame or the belief that there is someone more deserving of the support. Phase 2 research reinforced this stigma to seeking financial assistance and also revealed that seeking mental health support can also be seen as shameful, especially within rural communities. It should be acknowledged that many community members, particularly small business owners and farmers have maintained their businesses and shown resiliency through hardships such as drought, previous disasters and economic downturn. Therefore, messaging about the need to ‘build resilience’ may not be well received. Frontline staff have found that talk of ‘building on existing strengths’ is more effective in these communities, rather than talk of ‘resilience’. A discreet way to leverage mental health support is to integrate mental health resources into other types of services someone may need. For example, if someone is seeking a financial loan due to disaster impact, accompanying the loan information with mental health resources can aid in providing support to a person that might not be aware they may need it.

STAFF WELLBEING

The mental health and wellbeing of frontline staff is an integral part of the disaster response ecosystem and can be heavily impacted by the often emotionally and physically taxing nature of their roles following a disaster event. Frontline staff involved in a disaster response may experience first-hand trauma as they are impacted by the disaster event personally, as well as vicarious trauma as they serve the community. When the mental health of staff is impacted, they may be less equipped to best support customers and community members in the shorter term and they may also experience burnout and other wellbeing implications in the longer term. Organisations should develop robust strategies for staff support, that include planning and preparation for disaster events, to ensure staff are sufficiently supported. Responding to and serving the community through a disaster event should not come at the cost of staff mental health and wellbeing.

Key Findings:

 Vicarious Trauma

Vicarious trauma is the emotional response a person, particularly a frontline staff member, may experience as a result of working with people who have experienced trauma, hearing their stories and witnessing their emotional response. Debriefing with colleagues at the end of each day was a huge benefit to process the experiences of the day, share emotional support and discuss ways the teams can improve the situations they are encountering. There is an opportunity to partner with mental health professionals to provide accessible channels for support. These could include onsite counselling services, regular group sessions with a mental health professional and actively fostering a culture where staff mental health and

“I lead a busy life, I have been in the Military, but nothing compares to the type of decision-making that I had to make in the weeks following the floods, the type of fatigue I had was unbearable.”

- RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

“We often felt like these people were sitting in a call centre...very far removed from where you were. There is more beyond just the insurance claim and the conversation you’re having with someone.”

- TOWNSVILLE RESIDENT

wellbeing is prioritised. Managers of frontline staff should also be trained to identify the signs of vicarious trauma and be aware of the steps to provide effective staff support.

 Burnout

Due to resourcing challenges and the ongoing crises that develop after a disaster, staff may be working beyond their capacity, yet feel compelled by compassion to keep working. Additionally, staff that have been impacted by the disaster may also be attending to their personal life and may lack quality time to spend with their families and recuperate. Organisations need to be vigilant that staff are not overextending themselves and look for ways to mitigate against staff burning out. While flying in staff can greatly help to relieve resourcing issues, being away for weeks at a time can make it hard for both fly-in staff and their families. Local staff members may also feel displaced at work and unsure of their role in the disaster response given the presence of new staff.

 Guilt

On top of the many confronting emotions that can occur in a disaster response, frontline staff may feel guilty burdening their colleagues or volunteers with more work because they know everyone is at capacity. Volunteers, such as business mentors, may find themselves needing to deal with complex cases that go beyond the scope and time they have available, particularly if they are operating in a volunteer capacity. If other organisational staff become aware of this, they may avoid referring business owners to an overwhelmed mentor. Local colleagues may be impacted by the disaster but continue to work, having to simultaneously deal with issues at home and in the workplace. Organisations can help reduce feelings of guilt by providing locally impacted employees with flexibility to be absent from work, whilst respecting that they may



wish to continue working to provide a sense of purpose and normality following a disaster event. Collaborations between industries and government can develop practical approaches to better support volunteers in disaster response scenarios including a leading practice guide to training and support for employees and facilitating access to organisational Employee Assistance Programs for all volunteers.



RESIDENT

In the aftermath of a disaster, people may be in a state of shock and overwhelm; unsure of what to do, where to start and how they can seek assistance. Phase 1 research found that residents may simultaneously need to find temporary or replacement accommodation, begin cleaning up and repairing their home, seek health support, and navigate the complicated financial maze of grants, loans and insurance to rebuild their life and home. Despite the rapid increase in demand many organisations experience in the aftermath of a disaster, it is imperative to remember that residents find empathy and compassion from service providers goes a long way towards helping them to feel supported and understood.



BUSINESS

Phase 1 research highlighted how important it is for businesses to reopen so they can provide services, supplies, employment and gathering places to support community and economic recovery. Many business owners will maintain staff wages, recognising the significance financial stability has for their staff members' recovery, even if it means drawing on their personal finances to make ends meet. The Small Business Recovery Centre was a source of great assistance to many business owners, but the perceived shame and stigma of seeking support is still a key barrier in many communities as they pride themselves on self-sufficiency.

"It is imperative to remember that residents find empathy and compassion from service providers."



FIRST YEAR OF RECOVERY

Community members may experience various challenges and successes as they navigate the complex disaster recovery ecosystem and interact with a variety of services and support organisations. Many organisations such as insurance providers, mental health and financial counselling services are likely to experience high demand following a disaster and resourcing to meet this demand may be a challenge.

RESOURCING AND FUNDING

The ability for organisations to sustainably resource staff and access funding to continue service delivery and recovery activities beyond the short-term is critical to supporting the community with recovery and rebuilding processes. However, a scarcity of long-term, sustainable disaster recovery funding and a lack of collaboration between organisations seeking funding for aligned purposes is a challenge experienced across sectors.

Key Findings:

 Short-term Funding Focus

Disaster funding approaches are often reactive, meaning funds and resources are only made available when a disaster occurs. This releases a lot of resources in the immediate aftermath and short-term recovery phases. While these funds provide important immediate support, the temporary funding does not support long-term resilience building and change in the ecosystem. For example, funding to support dedicated mental health services may be available for two years after an event. However, there is an ongoing need for these services after this timeframe, and the knowledge and valuable lessons learned about mental health and disaster response may be lost as people move on to other roles. There is a potential to shift disaster funding models to focus on long-term community outcomes including preparedness and

resilience, rather than solely focus on reactive and short-term funding models.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

In every community, there are an abundance of advocates, change makers and innovators passionate about seeing their community thrive. Collaborating with formally and informally recognised community leaders can help organisations to develop more effective response strategies that are truly community-led and aligned to community needs. This approach is not only likely to generate more impactful responses but may also build trust and awareness of services more broadly. Organisations should also consider the value of their local staff members’ knowledge and insight into community needs when designing programs, services and approaches.

Key Findings:

 Community Champions

Community champions are the people in the community who are proactive and intentional in contributing to disaster recovery and resilience through the social networks they provide or the guidance, support and trust they offer within their community. They are often small business owners or frontline staff at key community

meeting places, (e.g. local doctors, the librarian, the hairdresser) and they may be already volunteering in a local community group. Local staff can provide a rich understanding of the community networks that exist and play an active role in strengthening these networks. There is an opportunity for organisations to strengthen referral pathways by connecting with community champions, however organisations should consider the risk of overburdening individuals and coordinate their approaches to avoid this.

 Trusted Local Experts

In every community, there are individuals, information sources and organisations that the community knows and trusts and others that have not established this credibility or in fact have a negative reputation. An organisation can establish community trust quickly by working with and supporting locally recognised experts and businesses. Conversely, organisations may partner with services that the community does not know and trust which can lead to mistrust or be a barrier for people connecting with services. For example, if a company that is not locally trusted is used to deliver hydrology reports, then people may be more likely to question the insurance claims that were based on those reports as they feel assessors do not have the local knowledge and insight necessary to make a fair and informed decision. While local experts can greatly assist organisations to serve the community, pseudo ‘experts’ on social media may spread misinformation and erode trust in organisational efforts.

 Community Events

Community events are integral in generating disaster awareness and preparedness. Annual ‘disaster ready’ days are incredibly important events for the local government, the community, and organisations to interact. There



“It is the one year anniversary of the monsoon event and this week is the first time we will see the psychologist.”

- TOWNSVILLE RESIDENT

is an opportunity to increase awareness of and hold these events more often because inevitably new arrivals to the area throughout the year, particularly during tourism seasons, can miss out on these events due to their timing and being unestablished in local social networks. In the longer-term after a disaster event, funded community-led events can greatly assist with community recovery by strengthening social connections, connections to services and promoting preparedness for future events. There is an opportunity to ensure these events are run in inclusive locations and formats and include information relevant to all residents and small business owners. They may also benefit from being tailored to specific community groups or demographics (i.e. small business specific events). Organisations could consider collaborating to facilitate more community engagement and preparedness opportunities.



RESIDENT

As community members take steps to rebuild, recover and regain a sense of normality, they may face a number of barriers and challenges along the way. Phase 1 research found that for residents, finding suitable accommodation, challenges meeting bills and repayments including rent and utilities and looking after the needs of their families can all take precedence over caring for their own mental wellbeing. Flexibility of services, processes and policies greatly benefits the community by providing assistance appropriate for their unique circumstance and allows residents’ respite from the stresses that follow a disaster event. Many people do not experience the need to seek mental health or financial assistance until 6-12 months following a disaster event.



BUSINESS

As business owners take steps to rebuild their business, the number of tasks they have to carry out including navigating insurance claims, fulfilling existing supply and service contracts and replacing equipment, can be overwhelming. Many business owners experience ‘decision fatigue’, as they feel an immense responsibility making choices that would impact their staff, family and customers, resulting in prolonged financial and mental health effects. Establishing a positive, trustful relationship with local business owners and providing small-business centric services and assistance can support their recovery and return to operations, which in turn underpins community-wide recovery.

“They set up a Small Business Recovery Centre, so you could go there and talk to someone about finances and support available. If someone rang me I would tell them to go talk to the centre.”

- LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER





LONG-TERM RECOVERY

Recovery efforts mean that many community members and organisations are now experiencing a level of normality again following the disaster. People may be working through grief and trauma of the event and many experience ongoing challenges and barriers to recovery. Long-term recovery is also a time where planning and preparedness activities may happen within organisations and the community.

“Small businesses...are the place where the kids in town get their first job. Quite often those kids will stay in town as young adults, they’ll start families and they’ll continue working in these businesses or start their own. If these businesses are not there to support that employment and the development of their life, they will leave town.”

- SMALL BUSINESS AND FAMILY ENTERPRISE OMBUDSMAN



RESIDENT

Phase 1 research established that the impact of a disaster is enduring in a community and holistic recovery is a long-term process. The needs of residents may change as their lifestyles do due to new living arrangements, financial hardship or wellbeing impacts. Services and programs that provide financial relief (such as rent reduction) may come to an end, and existing premiums on services (i.e. insurance) may be raised, creating new barriers and opportunities for support. Mental health impacts especially can become more prevalent in the latter part of recovery due to reliving past traumas or ongoing financial and emotional hardship. Fostering trust in service providers and contributing to activities that strengthen the sense of community within the affected areas is imperative to long-term recovery and the mitigation of future risk factors.



BUSINESS

While the disaster event is well in the past, the community may be spending less, fewer people may be visiting or moving to the area and supply chains may not be operating at the same levels as prior to the disaster. Phase 1 research found that businesses who previously declined assistance may begin to feel the true financial impact of the event as a result of changes to the local economy. A long-term focus for businesses is especially important for this reason and because mental health impacts can be compounded if local business owners are experiencing ongoing challenges in recovery either at home and/or with their business.



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

The following research insights represent the major findings for the 12 different industries that we spoke to about their experience in the North Queensland Monsoon of 2019. The findings are categorised by industry, but due to the large degree of interconnectedness in the ecosystem, many of the insights relate to other industry challenges or opportunities.

The research recognises the need for more collaboration across the ecosystem, so each key finding highlights opportunities for leverage that could address challenges across the ecosystem.



WHAT WORKS



CHALLENGES



**OPPORTUNITIES
FOR LEVERAGE**

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Banking

Banks are an essential service that enables the community to access and transact with money however this is often dependent on power and telecommunications. Without the ability to access their finances, the community cannot access the services they need to rebuild, and local businesses cannot provide supplies or contribute to the local economy to support recovery.

Additionally, banks often have local branches. This physical presence in the community means they can play an important role in providing a place for people to go and discuss their experience and seek assistance.

Key Findings:

Access to money is key to initiating recovery activities.

✓

What Works

- Participating in disaster ready days and providing resources that educate community members about how they might access money (i.e. an emergency cash fund) as part of their disaster preparedness.
- Banks planning ahead for disaster scenarios to ensure there are alternative sources of power accessible (e.g. generators) to service ATMs if the power is lost.

✗

Challenges

- Even though banks might have a stockpile of generators on hand, getting access to ATM sites due to road closures may become an issue.
- Local branches may also be impacted by the disaster and need to close which reduces options for people to access their finances and seek assistance.

💡

Opportunities for leverage

- Collaborate and proactively plan between banks, energy companies, and emergency services to keep ATM's online and provide pathways for people to access their finances following a disaster event.
- Build on disaster preparedness initiatives and develop proactive communication strategies to educate community members about disaster preparedness.

Proactive community presence builds trust with the community.

✓

What Works

- Staff at local bank branches have valuable local knowledge. They can be a trusted voice in the community and are well placed to connect people to other services and assistance available.
- Retail staff may proactively contact people they think may be experiencing vulnerability to provide them support and to refer them onwards to relevant pathways for assistance.
- To maintain a presence in the community, some banks set up temporary local branches using shipping containers when permanent branches are either impacted or not available in the area.
- Some banks mobilise staff and donate resources to help with community clean-up.

✗

Challenges

- Issues can arise when coordinating the distribution of donations among banks and local and national not for profit organisations which can result in duplications of donated goods or available goods not being utilised in the community.
- Community recovery, engagement and outreach efforts by organisations may be duplicated and can fatigue the community if they are not coordinated across industries and sectors. Community leaders and representatives can be over-consulted if each organisation is operating in a silo.

💡

Opportunities for leverage

- Leverage local staff and community sector knowledge on where communities may be at a higher risk of experiencing vulnerability so more proactive and appropriate assistance can be provided.
- Collaborate within and across sectors to build aligned approaches to community recovery following a disaster event. Take a proactive approach to community engagement with a collective focus on promoting disaster preparedness within the community.



“The local knowledge of some bank staff makes it easier to understand and empathise with what customers are experiencing and direct them to other services and support.”

- PHASE 2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Carers and support organisations

Carers and support organisations often play an integral role in assisting older people, people with disabilities and those with other support needs. This role becomes even more critical when responding to a disaster event so planning and preparation with people, their carers and support organisations is key. Without planning and coordination between emergency services, support organisations, evacuation centres, healthcare providers and the individuals themselves, peoples’ safety, health and wellbeing may be compromised. Their experiences and interactions, particularly during evacuation and immediate recovery from a disaster event can have negative impacts for their emotional and mental wellbeing.

Key Findings:

People with disabilities need disaster plans that address their specific needs.

✓

What Works

- Disaster-preparedness for people with disabilities included being supported by local community groups (e.g. Kith & Kin, Selectability) and a Person Centred Emergency Preparedness Framework developed by the Centre for Disability Research and Policy at The University of Sydney in partnership with the Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) and the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA).
- The Framework includes a workbook which acts as a conversation guide used by people with disability to tailor emergency preparedness to their individual support needs and a toolkit used by service providers to enable emergency preparedness in others.
- The local council are working with the network of Townsville aged care, healthcare and disability service providers to develop a coordinated, inclusive disaster response that includes sharing facilities and resources to meet community needs.

✗

Challenges

- People with disabilities often do not have adequate disaster plans in place that address their needs.
- Support services often lack pragmatic disaster plans for their customers and may not include service continuity plans during a disaster (i.e. how people will access mobility, medical, mental health and other regular supports they need during a disaster event).
- Carers may be employed through a support organisation or often, they are a family member or friend. Therefore, effective engagement across care and disability sectors and through the NDIS is critical to ensure people and carers are aware of the importance of planning for disaster events together.
- People often have more than one carer or support provider and carers may also be impacted by the disaster event. These factors make it unclear who is responsible for assisting the person in the event of a disaster, particularly when there is no plan in place. This may mean some people who are not self-reliant in a disaster situation are left without support.

💡

Opportunities for leverage

- Build on existing approaches to disaster preparedness, such as the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Toolkit, to include an essential services and financial stability lens when developing personal emergency preparedness plans for people with a disability.
- Develop more robust pathways for informal carers (i.e. friends and family) to become aware of the importance of disaster preparedness (i.e. through partnering with the NDIS, schools and community groups and other disability support services) and provide them with the tools to initiate conversations about developing a plan.

Utilising data for good can support an inclusive disaster response.

✓

What Works

- Community and support organisations may proactively call or visit community members they work with when a disaster warning is issued to ensure they are safe and prepared for a disaster event.

✗

Challenges

- Emergency services are often unaware when they may be evacuating someone with a disability and may be ill-prepared to best support the person (i.e. they lack the right equipment, transportation or knowledge about how to communicate with the person effectively and respectfully).
- There is currently no cross-organisation database that identifies community members who may be in need of special assistance in a disaster event.
- However, there are issues around privacy that would need to be addressed should personal data be made available across organisations and people may be reluctant to volunteer information for a database due to privacy concerns.

💡

Opportunities for leverage

- Explore ways to safely and securely inform emergency services where they need to evacuate a person with a disability, medical, mobility or other needs so they can be prepared to provide the appropriate support.
- Explore opportunities for disability awareness training for all emergency service staff who may be involved in evacuation efforts following a disaster event. Staff should also be trained to communicate with people using a communication device.



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Community Legal Services

Community legal services provide free assistance for people impacted with legal issues. While each industry tries to best support the community in a natural disaster, the range of issues that occur can be wide ranging and complex, from increased rates of domestic violence through to business owners breaking a lease on a damaged store.

Having free legal advice and assistance available to the community helps mitigate against further trauma and stress as people navigate disaster recovery, however many community members are not aware of these services or how to access them.



Key Findings:

Community legal centres are important channels of support but are often disconnected from official disaster response plans.

What Works

- The community legal sector in Townsville has been proactively seeking better connections with the local, state and federal government response.

Challenges

- It may be unclear to other sectors involved in disaster recovery what role community legal centres play in a coordinated disaster response which may result in community legal services being underutilised.

Opportunities for leverage

- Lessons learnt from the Monsoon event could inform disaster readiness plans so that legal support can be better integrated into the official government disaster response. These lessons and those from other community legal services across the country could also be captured and shared more broadly across government and industry to improve the integration of legal support into all disaster responses.

Limited resources for disaster response create obstacles for community legal centres to provide assistance.

What Works

- Strong connections and collaboration between community legal centres and local financial counsellors providing wrap-around financial and legal support for people.

Challenges

- Community legal centres, much like financial counselling organisations and other not for profits, are often under-resourced and do not have access to additional funding to meet increased demand following a disaster.
- Some legal services may be able to offer temporary disaster response services but are unable to continue offering the same service into the long-term recovery phase, where legal issues are most likely to arise.

Opportunities for leverage

- There is an opportunity for community legal centres to develop stronger connections with industry to learn from each other about the issues that arise following a disaster.
- Group sessions facilitated by community lawyers can provide a platform for community members to learn about and discuss common legal issues following a disaster event while reducing the need for one-on-one consultations.



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Financial Counselling, Financial Capability and Community Finance

Financial counsellors support and advocate for residents and small business owners in financial difficulty, and their services are especially in demand following natural disasters where they provide support and advice on how people can start to rebuild their lives. They have strong referral pathways with legal and mental health services and play an important role in advocacy with essential service providers and creditors. Financial capability workers support people to build long-term

capability to budget and manage their money and to make informed choices about their money in the future, while community finance services like the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) provides people on low incomes with access to affordable finance options. There is a low awareness among community members about the assistance financial counsellors and other services can offer and people are often in significant financial hardship before they seek help which impacts their ability to recover from a disaster.

Key Findings:

The presence of financial counsellors is an important support channel for people experiencing financial vulnerability.

What Works

- Some not for profits are able to provide temporary emergency counselling services in the aftermath of a disaster, including financial counselling.

Challenges

- The financial counselling sector is under-resourced to respond to disaster events. Despite a high demand for their services in the long-term recovery from a disaster event there is little ability to fund additional counsellors to meet demand.
- Awareness of financial counsellors and how to access them is limited among community members but the sector has little resourcing to increase awareness.
- The role of financial counsellors is not always clearly defined in official disaster response plans and they may miss opportunities to contribute their experience and insight to shape future plans.

Opportunities for leverage

- Essential service providers could consider partnering with local financial counsellors to provide funding to support their operations and establish strong referral pathways for customers. They could also raise awareness of financial counselling services (i.e. via communications on their bills at community engagement activities).
- Increase the physical presence of financial counsellors at recovery centres, and in long-term recovery at community centres, libraries and other public places, to improve awareness of and access to their services.



Building financial capability in a community, and providing access to inclusive community finance products and services, helps mitigate financial hardship and vulnerability.

What Works

- Access to financial counselling and capability information at recovery centres helps people understand all of the options and assistance available when prioritising and addressing financial matters.
- Community finance options, such as the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS), provide people on low incomes access to finance for essential services and provide safe alternatives to payday loans and consumer leases. They are provided through a trusted network of community organisations.

Challenges

- Financial counsellors find that people experiencing financial hardship often enter into consumer rental and leasing agreements as they see no alternative or are unaware of the negative financial implications of many of these schemes.
- Organisations providing NILS can become inundated due to high demand following a disaster. A lack of increased resourcing may result in delays for community members accessing much needed funds.
- Insurance processes and policies are complex and financial counsellors are often not trained on disaster related insurance matters which makes it difficult for them to advise clients on insurance issues.

Opportunities for leverage

- Roundtables between insurance companies, financial counsellors and community legal services can help build understanding around insurance issues clients experience to shape approaches within sectors.
- Existing financial capability building resources and programs can be utilised by not for profits and community groups to provide more financial capability building opportunities for the community during disaster preparation.

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Insurance

Insurers are integral to providing the funds and resources that are necessary for a community to recover and rebuild following a natural disaster. The complex processes within the insurance industry may not only cause uncertainty and frustration for customers but can also cause delays in the recovery process (i.e. preventing people from starting the clean-up process or delaying access to government grants). Other service providers (i.e. financial counsellors, lawyers and ombudsmen) often become involved in insurance matters as people seek advice or wish to dispute a claim outcome.

Cross-sector conversations including those occurring at the Insurance Council of Australia’s public forums are beneficial for collective, timely discussion on industry changes. While most of the time insurance provides the safety net that supports recovery, a lack of knowledge and access to assistance to make informed decisions about insurance can result in long-term impacts to financial wellbeing for residents and small business owners.

Key Findings:

Quality, in-person discussions can make a confusing and complex process easier for customers to navigate.



What Works

- Having the assessor and builder attend customer meetings together reduces miscommunication and is more convenient for the customer.
- Companies that provide a semi-permanent location for people to come and speak with staff about their claim help provide another avenue for in-person interaction.



Challenges

- Assessors find it difficult to have quality, in-person interactions because they have little time to prepare once a disaster occurs and struggle to find time to schedule and manage appointments between site visits.
- Assessors may find it challenging to coordinate their site visit schedules to have builders present too.
- In the event an experienced assessor cannot be present, contractors that visit the site may lack empathy in their interactions with customers and erode trust with the customer.



Opportunities for leverage

- Work with assessors and builders to understand how coordinated site visits can be better executed, including exploring opportunities for new technology or roles to reduce scheduling responsibilities for assessors.
- Consider industry-aligned empathy and trauma-informed training for all staff and contractors who may interact with customers and community members. Support community resilience by engaging local training providers to deliver this.

“My first job is not to process claims, my first job is to be there for people. It doesn’t matter if people don’t get an answer immediately, they just need a face.”

- PHASE 2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Mobilisation of resources to assess damage and rebuild is logistically complex.



What Works

- Having dedicated disaster teams trained and ready to respond makes the mobilisation of resources more efficient.
- Employing panel builders and builders familiar with the insurance process makes the rebuild process quicker and provides assurance the work will be completed to a high standard.



Challenges

- Panel builders and assessors are often shared across organisations which may cause delays for customers waiting for site visits.
- Out-of-state trades licenses need to be approved which causes delays in quickly upscaling resources.
- The community’s preference for local builders is strong, however some local builders may not be familiar with an insurance company’s process, so construction can be delayed.
- If insurers use builders who they are not familiar with, they cannot guarantee that the builder will not subcontract work to less qualified tradespeople in order to meet resource demands, compromising outcomes for the customer.



Opportunities for leverage

- Collaborate to explore ways local builders and trades people can become better utilised by insurers following a disaster event to support the local economy.

“It’s very heavy...when you just want help but you can’t do anything until a policy is confirmed to be covered.”

- PHASE 2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

The complexity of insurance policies and procedures means cooperation and alignment within and across industries is critical for an effective disaster response.



What Works

- Industry-wide alignment of responses to certain types of damage, regardless of the policy, helps with consistency and transparency of responses and reduces confusion among community members. For example, the industry decided to replace all mouldy tiles (which could also be cleaned), so that each member of the community received a consistent response to the same issue.
- Prior to the disaster impact, some insurers determine what would be “pre-approved” to expedite claims without needing to go through an assessment process. This reduces the resource demands on assessors and provides people with access to essential funds as soon as possible.



Challenges

- Shifting policies causes uncertainty for some staff about how to appropriately action customer claims. This results in mistrust and frustration for some community members who perceive that their neighbour has received a more desirable claim outcome despite similar circumstances.
- Hydrology reports can be extremely confusing with how water damage is defined (storm water vs flood water). These cases are often escalated to the ombudsman.
- There is no national standard for how to respond to and address mould for future disasters.
- Where claims are decided remotely by staff in other Australian cities the local understanding of the climate and geography may be lost and can impact on claim outcomes.
- Some customers perceive that their insurance company is under-scoping their claim because they received a much higher quote from a local builder. The local builder may be charging a premium creating a misleading perception of the cost of works. These cases are often escalated to the ombudsman who needs a detailed scope of works from builders, but this is a challenge for the builder to provide this information as they are time poor.



Opportunities for leverage

- Collaborate within the insurance sector on further standardisation and simplification of their service offerings. Affordability and accessibility of small business insurance options could be reviewed and options such as group cover for co-located businesses may be explored.
- Explore further opportunities for cross-sector conversations (i.e. those occurring at the Insurance Council of Australia public forums). These discussions are an effective platform for sharing and discussing industry changes across sectors as they occur and identifying gaps and pain points in the system.

“Relationships between organisations and coordinating bodies were incredibly important. These working relationships help to get things done.”

- PHASE 2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Local and National Not for Profit Organisations

Not for profit organisations play a lead role in the immediate response after a disaster and may provide a range of services including emergency evacuation, coordination and distribution of relief, resources, and counselling. The mobilisation of not for profits to provide emergency relief requires coordination between local and national organisations that include a large

number of staff and volunteers. Collaboration across sectors is integral to ensure people are connected to the various supports (i.e. financial, mental health) available. Not for profit organisations are generally a trusted and reassuring presence in the community, providing immediate relief through to long-term recovery and resilience support.

Key Findings:

Quick induction times and prepared resources are key to providing an effective and efficient response.



What Works

- Training local volunteers to become trainers themselves as part of a disaster preparation strategy ensures that when there is a need to quickly onboard local volunteers, there are local trainers available to handle the need to upscale services quickly.
- Having the capacity to fly-in experienced managerial staff members from national not for profits to temporarily relieve the local managerial staff members who may have been personally impacted by the monsoon can be greatly beneficial. It should be acknowledged that fly-in managerial staff that were well-trained in adapting to local community needs were much more effective, than those that had no understanding of how to quickly integrate into the local ecosystem.



Challenges

- If there is a lack of local trainers available, then the induction time for local volunteers can be extended, limiting their ability to help the community until they are properly trained.
- Resourcing may require existing staff to be moved from other programs and responsibilities, which then compromises those programs. For example, a case manager that ordinarily works with a homelessness program may need to help with coordinating donations, thus people experiencing homelessness may receive less support.
- Staff may take on unsustainable levels of work which may impact their wellbeing. This can be compounded if a team member is also a locally impacted community member.



Opportunities for leverage

- Explore opportunities for increased coordination between local community groups, organisations and neighbourhood centres with national not for profits during recovery efforts, including sharing of staff and resources to meet community needs. Neighbourhood Centres, for example, are incredibly well connected in the community yet often under-resourced to effectively respond to disaster events.

Universal design in evacuation centres reduces further trauma and harm for people with a disability or other specific needs.



What Works

- Strong psychosocial first aid support is present in centres to refer people on to relevant channels. (e.g. Uniting Care, Lifeline).
- Being able to quickly arrange transport from an evacuation centre to a hospital for people in need of medical attention or complex care is critical for the health and wellbeing outcomes of these individuals.



Challenges

- Evacuation centres are generally not equipped with facilities to best support older people or people with disabilities.
- Staff may feel uncertain about how to best communicate with or assist people with a disability which can have negative outcomes for all involved.
- Staff may struggle to effectively assist people who speak a language other than English and interpreters are generally not available at evacuation centres.



Opportunities for leverage

- Proactive consultation between the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)*, disability service providers, lived experience advocates and accessibility experts to design and implement disaster evacuation procedures and centres that are accessible for all. Consider having an embedded accessibility champion in the LDMG to ensure accessibility is factored into all decision making.

Develop stronger connections and communication between hospitals, emergency services evacuation centres to support the timely transport of people to hospitals to receive care.

**LDMGs are established by local governments to support and coordinate disaster management activities for their respective Local Government Areas.*

“Resourcing and staffing is a massive issue...resourcing comes in response to a disaster event and only lasts two years. Each centre is only funded for one staff member no matter how many community members the centre serves, so its 1 staff member to 45,000 people.”

- PHASE 2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Coordination of basic goods and donations can be logistically challenging but is incredibly important to provide for the community’s basic needs.



What Works

- Following the monsoon, the digital platform and online charity Givit was used to formally broker much of the funding available for basic goods which enabled large organisations as well as small neighbourhood centres to participate in distributing much needed goods.



Challenges

- Assisting the community to access basic goods such as beds, refrigerators, washing machines and other donations is extremely complex and transportation of goods is a challenge due to damaged roads and infrastructure and limited resourcing.
- The strategies in place at the time were unable to track whether the donations that had been sent were actually received by the intended community member.
- The platforms only enabled a view of what donations were available; community organisations and individuals were unable to express a need for specific items.



Opportunities for leverage

- Build off the experience gained by using the Givit platform and work with government, industries and local community groups to develop a formalised central point of coordination to manage the distribution of goods and funds.
- Ensure processes are in place to mobilise goods such as non-perishable food when there is a disaster warning by collaborating with food charities or local supermarkets and suppliers.
- Explore how local community members who were donating basic goods through social media could be incorporated into the distribution network.



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Local Disaster Management Group

In Queensland, the local government plays the central role in coordinating and mobilising a disaster response through the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG). Both communities and organisations depend on the LDMG’s coordination and communications to inform them when to act, provide guidance on appropriate responses and strategic oversight to avoid gaps and duplication in responses. Proactive collaboration and

planning occurring across sectors is highly effective, but communities can become complacent in the dry season so gaining traction can be difficult. Challenges and disconnects in coordination and communication can impact the community’s access to timely support, generate confusion and mistrust and prolong recovery.



Key Findings:

Effective clean-up and waste management services greatly reduces the emotional trauma in a community.

 What Works	 Challenges	 Opportunities for leverage
• Clean-up crews helping the community to move their destroyed possessions into skips.	• There are compliance protocols that need to be followed to dispose of rubbish properly and safely (e.g. recycling; asbestos). Often community members are unaware of these protocols and fail to dispose of these materials safely, impacting their own health and the environment. • The type of rubbish being disposed of quickly filled up landfills. Some types had to be laboriously dismantled before being properly disposed (e.g. mattresses).	• There is an opportunity to look at how rubbish can be temporarily relocated away from the community through collaborations with large companies and government that own vacant land. • There is an opportunity to connect across sectors to create aligned messaging about the correct protocols for rubbish disposal after a disaster, such as a collaborative effort with insurers, councils and community organisations about asbestos.

Digital communications are effective but need to be accompanied by alternative, accessible channels.

 What Works	 Challenges	 Opportunities for leverage
• The use of a digital “Dashboard” was extremely effective at centralising information and broke a record of 4 million hits. It provided a central point of truth, providing messaging dependent on the phase of the disaster. • Communications were also delivered through innovative channels such as Spotify and YouTube.	• Some organisations and community members were unaware of the dashboard’s existence, so they struggled to understand what assistance was available to them. • Due to inconsistent messaging occurring in the community, some people did not trust what was posted on the dashboard. • Some community groups are not digitally literate, so are not able to access digital tools like the dashboard. • Digital communications often do not meet accessibility guidelines (i.e. provide screen reader friendly and Easy English information). Some people from CALD backgrounds miss critical information if it is not translated to languages other than English or if interpreter services are not made available.	• Collaborate between government, news media and technology companies to investigate how to deliver a unified model of information using multiple channels. • The LDMG could be a driving force in the creation and distribution of universally designed and accessible communications, collaborating with advocates and community leaders to ensure they are designed for specific communities in a culturally appropriate way.

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Mental Health Services

Mental health services provide critical support in both the immediate and long-term recovery following a disaster. However, essential service providers often receive disclosures about mental health following a disaster and organisations often feel ill-equipped to address mental health needs of both their staff and customers in these circumstances.

When referral pathways are not well established, staff who are well-meaning but not appropriately qualified or supported (i.e. contact centre staff at a utility provider) might feel the need to provide emotional support to the customer, delaying them from being referred to the professionals and appropriate channels of support.

Key Findings:

Establishing mental health pathways early in the disaster response improves people’s acceptance of seeking assistance.



What Works

- Mental health practitioners providing services immediately after a disaster establish more credibility and trust in the community as an essential service.
- On-the-ground presence of practitioners who provide psychological first aid to people in the immediate aftermath and recovery for residents, small business owners and on-the-ground staff are well received and an important part of the collective community recovery.



Challenges

- Often when people visit a recovery centre to transact with an essential service shortly after a disaster event, they are not ready or do not feel the need to engage with mental health services. However, engaging people later in the recovery journey when mental health impacts emerge is also a challenge.
- Building trust in communities to address mental health is challenging because people tend to build trust with familiar faces and services. Since mental health issues often emerge much later after the disaster impact, it is difficult for mental health services to establish a familiar presence just after a disaster. There are additional barriers to serve rural communities due to their dispersed locations.
- Mental health services were often not co-located with other small business support services, which creates an additional barrier for small business owners to engage with mental health services early.



Opportunities for leverage

- There is an opportunity for mental health services to be better integrated with other services and support that people connect with directly after a disaster, through co-location and establishing warm referral pathways.
- Collaborate within and across essential services sectors to develop leading practice toolkits and resources for mental health and wellbeing responses following a disaster. Considerations could include involving community advocates in the design and developing shared approaches across organisations and sectors to staff training.

There is often a stigma that is associated with seeking mental health assistance.



What Works

- During long-term recovery, mental health practitioners participate in community sporting and other events to initiate casual conversations about mental health and increase community awareness about their own mental health and the assistance available.
- The ability to include mental health support materials with paperwork for other services, such as grants, provided discrete channels for people to become aware of and seek assistance.



Challenges

- In crowded evacuation centres it may become difficult for staff and volunteers providing psychological first aid or mental health support to be discreet in discussions.



Opportunities for leverage

- Build an understanding of community needs, tailor approaches to specific demographics, regions and community groups and consider cultural sensitivity to ensure that key mental health messaging and assistance is well received.
- Partner with local organisations that are trusted voices within specific communities to enable a broader and more impactful reach, particularly when support is provided in culturally appropriate ways.

Community-led mental health initiatives support the community to develop their own ways to promote wellbeing in the community.



What Works

- During recovery, government grants enabled mental health professionals to facilitate workshops that were community-led. These workshops support the community to create their own paths to healing through events they co-created as a community (e.g. having a community BBQ; running an art contest, etc.)
- New initiatives like Mentally Healthy City Townsville (MHCT) are providing ongoing opportunities for the community to engage in mental health and well-being activities and reduce stigma.



Challenges

- Many truly community-led initiatives emerge organically and may not be sustainable in the longer term as they lack funding and rely on community members donating their time.
- The stigma associated with mental health can make it challenging to integrate it into public discussion in communities.



Opportunities for leverage

- There is an opportunity for organisations across sectors to scale community-led mental health initiatives and support the community to develop their own wellbeing strategies. For example, financial institutions could look at supporting mental health professionals in facilitating more community-led events, like football outings and BBQ's.

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Neighborhood Centres

Neighbourhood centres provide local information and access to community services and activities. They make use of a network of local volunteers to provide a reassuring physical presence and accessible pathways to support for local community members who may be experiencing vulnerability.

In a disaster, these centres may be disconnected from official and industry-wide responses; they can become quickly inundated with the complexity of community issues and struggle to resource assistance. Neighbourhood centres are key stakeholders to include in developing a community-led response, because they have established community networks and a very local understanding of community strengths that can be leveraged in times of crisis.



Key Findings:

Coordination between different neighbourhood centres supports a unified, community-led response.

What Works

- Neighbourhood centres are rooted in the community with a network of proactive community members who provide important referral pathways for, and often have pre-established connections with, members of the community who are isolated or at greater risk of experiencing vulnerability.

Challenges

- In North Queensland, there are two types of neighbourhood centres: State and federally funded centres with limited paid staff, and local government centres that are staffed with volunteers only. At the time of the monsoon, the two types of centres lacked direct connections and a coordinated disaster response. This impacted on the centres' ability to implement a community-led response.
- Individuals in a local community may be reluctant to accept assistance from other neighbourhood centres based in other suburbs because they pride themselves on being seen as a community that is self-sufficient.

Opportunities for leverage

- There is an opportunity for state and federally funded centres to collaborate with local government centres to ensure local knowledge is shared and utilised. Sharing of resources and volunteers between centres to meet community demand in different locations may assist with resourcing challenges.
- Presenting as a united network of centres may help community members feel open to engaging with multiple centres. This requires work in the preparation phase and must be developed in collaboration with staff and volunteers to overcome reluctance to accept assistance from other suburbs.

Resourcing neighbourhood centres during a time of crisis requires more trained staff.

What Works

- Neighbourhood centres have a network of community volunteers who provide strong referral pathways to assistance.

Challenges

- Centres are ordinarily staffed to handle issues and referrals that can be resolved in one interaction. In a disaster, resourcing becomes a challenge because staff often need to handle more complex problems that require ongoing case management as a result of the disaster.
- In the case of the monsoon, trained staff were funded to help meet demand but they were overworked as resourcing was still insufficient. When funding is provided only for the short-term, their experience and knowledge is lost when funding ends even though the community is still recovering from the disaster event.

Opportunities for leverage

- There is a need to have permanent trained staff that have the experience and training to coordinate resources and the ability to shift to a case management model to address the complex community issues that arise from a disaster. This model could be supported by leveraging community champions (e.g. trusted volunteers like the local hairdresser) to provide referral pathways to services and support.
- There is an opportunity for industries to collaboratively work with and to support neighbourhood centres. This can support the development of community-led responses while avoiding placing too much burden on community champions that can occur if a response is uncoordinated.



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Ombudsmen

Ombudsmen investigate and provide dispute resolution services when disputes arise between the community and service providers. Ombudsmen provide an important channel for residents and businesses to seek resolution to outcomes they are not happy with. Partnerships between ombudsmen, essential service providers and community legal services can raise awareness in the community about options available

for advice and dispute resolution and ensure these channels are accessible. Awareness of options for assisted resolution can provide a sense of agency for community members and help restore trust in organisations and the ecosystem.

Key Findings:

On-the-ground presence of Ombudsmen helps people feel their complaint is heard and raises awareness of the free dispute resolution service among community members.



What Works

- Ombudsmen meeting with people in-person and listening to their story can dissipate feelings of hopelessness and frustration in the community resulting from lengthy or unresolved disputes. There were examples where even though an ombudsman had ultimately rejected the complaint, the claimant wrote a letter of gratitude to them for showing up and listening to their story.
- Having ombudsmen and community legal services at public forums provide a channel for customers to make a complaint about the services they are not happy with.



Challenges

- Assessments can be time consuming and disputes are often long running before they reach the ombudsman which can cause frustration for all parties and delay recovery efforts.
- Challenges for ombudsmen are specific to the different industries they service. Where certain types of disputes are commonly escalated to the ombudsman, this is highlighted in each industry section of the report.



Opportunities for leverage

- There is an opportunity for essential service providers to involve ombudsmen and community legal services across more of their community engagement activities so that community members are aware of and able to access channels for resolution easily.
- Partnerships between essential service providers and the relevant ombudsmen can support maturation towards leading practice approaches to service provision and support for customers experiencing vulnerability and reduce the need for disputes to be escalated.

“Anger can arise from silence from the essential service provider who may just be under-resourced ...showing up and having a chat is huge.”

- PHASE 2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Small Business Services

Small business services are services that support owners of local businesses. Small businesses are pillars in the community, providing employment, resources and services that are vital to community recovery and resilience. When issues occur within and between the services that support local business owners, businesses may struggle to re-open, and the local economy may suffer.

Prolonging local business recovery can not only greatly impact a business owner’s mental health and financial resilience, but it can also greatly impact a community’s ability to recover and rebuild.



Key Findings:

Grants and hardship programs for small businesses are important resources of support.

What Works

- Some grant application processes are streamlined which makes it easy for business owners to get access to finances quickly while they are inundated with other tasks.
- Empathetic staff and messaging can make the process of reaching out for assistance less stressful. For example, contact centre messaging such as “press ‘one’ if you have been impacted by the disaster” and being referred to staff trained in trauma, help to create supportive environments and normalise asking for support.

Challenges

- Business owners are hesitant to seek support due to particular mindsets, such as the shame of seeking ‘charity’.
- Some paperwork for financial assistance is perceived to be too complicated for time-poor business owners to complete, particularly as they are often dealing with recovery efforts at home and the mental health impacts of the disaster.

Opportunities for leverage

- Collaboration between government, organisations, small business mentors and the local business community can explore ways of making grants easier to access for small businesses.
- Work with local business owners who have accessed grant or hardship support to understand how to shift mindsets and reduce feelings of shame.

“We should be sending information to brokers ahead of disaster season to encourage them to speak with their clients about whether they have the right cover.”

- PHASE 2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Insurance brokers can be a double-edged sword for small business owners in a disaster.

What Works

- Brokers can handle insurance claims allowing their client to focus on the many other aspects of rebuilding and re-opening their small business.

Challenges

- A broker can make it difficult to process an insurance claim efficiently because they become an intermediary who cannot provide details about the damage that occurred to the business owner.
- Small business policies are often bespoke products and policy exclusions can be unclear for business owners purchasing cover. Brokers may have sold a lower premium to a business owner that did not include flood insurance, which then requires an ombudsman to become involved and determine the party at fault.
- Disputes between a business owner and broker can become even more complex, especially in regional cities, where the broker may often be a family member or friend.

Opportunities for leverage

- Brokers, community legal services and insurance providers can collaborate on how brokers can be more integrated in disaster preparedness and response so that their presence can better support business owners.

Business mentors with disaster training are a valued resource for businesses.

What Works

- It was the first time the innovative Small Business Recovery Centre was set up to assist businesses with the disaster response. There was an overwhelmingly positive reaction from businesses to have such a resource available to them.
- In response to the experience in Townsville, mentors now have access to mental health first aid training and grants were made available to enable mentors to be paid for the demanding work.

Challenges

- The availability of business mentors often relies on individuals to volunteer time while also navigating their own recovery / other work.
- Mentors came in from elsewhere in Queensland due to demand, but these mentors often lacked local knowledge and appropriate disaster response training.

Opportunities for leverage

- There are opportunities for all industries to investigate ways their response plans can incorporate funding and resources to provide more extensive small business mentorship alongside dedicated support (i.e. hardship programs specifically for small business owners).
- Collaborate with existing small business owner networks and mentoring programs to establish more sustainable mentoring models with a focus on disaster preparedness and resilience including business continuity planning and upskilling for business owners to establish a digital retail presence.

Strata (the ownership of apartments and shopfronts in a building complex), is an incredibly complex insurance scenario that impacts residents and business owners.



What Works

• Having a single point of contact for strata is hugely beneficial. In Townsville, there was an example of a proactive property owner who took it upon themselves to become project manager of an impacted strata complex. They liaised with the insurance company and the apartment complex to expedite a rebuild.



Challenges

• There are numerous parties involved, such as body corporate, owners, renters and sub-letters, making this business incredibly complex. For insurance companies to begin addressing damage, there is a large amount of coordination required between the different parties.



Opportunities for leverage

• Explore ways for insurance strata to be more effectively managed and coordinated with stakeholders through the creation of roles or responsibilities that look after this specifically.

“At the Small Business Recovery Centre we would have benefited from co-location of mental health services to remove any additional barriers to people attending an appointment when referred.”

- PHASE 2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Utilities and Telecommunications

When a community is cut off from the essential services such as utilities (energy, water and gas) and telecommunications (including internet), its ability to receive information, communicate and begin taking steps towards recovery (i.e. begin clean-up) is hindered.

Following a disaster impact, utility service providers are often a first point of contact for people as they provide an essential service for recovery. They have an important

role within the ecosystem as a ‘connector’ to other services and assistance. Strong referral pathways between utilities and other services including mental health, financial counselling and small-business specific services are key to ensuring customers are proactively connected with the assistance available to them. This can also reduce the need for people to retell their story multiple times.

Key Findings:

Going beyond regular role responsibilities generates more effective responses to disaster impact.

✓

What Works

- After a disaster, both call centre staff and staff that are mobilised to be on the ground are not only able to help the community with account issues but are well-placed to refer people on to other services and support channels.
- Helping people obtain copies of their ID and documents greatly assists people being able to overcome ‘proof of identity’ issues.
- Developing a ‘cheat sheet’ of their services and referral pathways helps teams clarify the services and resources they could offer their customers.
- Ground crews who help people remove hazards from their properties while servicing the infrastructure contributed to building a sense of community.

✗

Challenges

- Staff may be unclear on what the scope of their role is when responding to a disaster (i.e. when to refer to another service) which leaves them trying to ‘do it all’.
- Staff may lack training and preparedness to support customers who have experienced trauma which can have negative impacts for both the staff member’s and customer’s mental health and wellbeing.

💡

Opportunities for leverage

- Collaborate among essential service providers and other services (i.e. mental health, financial counselling) by sharing and aligning referral ‘cheat sheets’ across organisations and industries. This could support stronger referral pathways between services to connect people with the different supports available in a timely way.
- Develop aligned programs within and across industries that consider disaster events, including dedicated hardship programs for small business customers. Educate all staff who may be mobilised in a disaster event and interact with customers on how they can direct people to the assistance programs available.

Damage to assets that impact access to essential services can greatly affect the community’s ability to respond to a disaster.

✓

What Works

- Ground crews performing preventative maintenance around assets to mitigate potential hazards that could cause damage in a disaster event.
- Proactive messaging to inform the community about potential hazards (i.e. water contamination, damaged electricity assets) and how to stay safe is important to prevent potential harm to community members.

✗

Challenges

- Inconsistent and infrequent communications from some utilities about what is occurring (i.e. outages and hazards) can create confusion and misinformation in the community and may have health implications for priority customers (i.e. people who rely on electricity for medical needs).

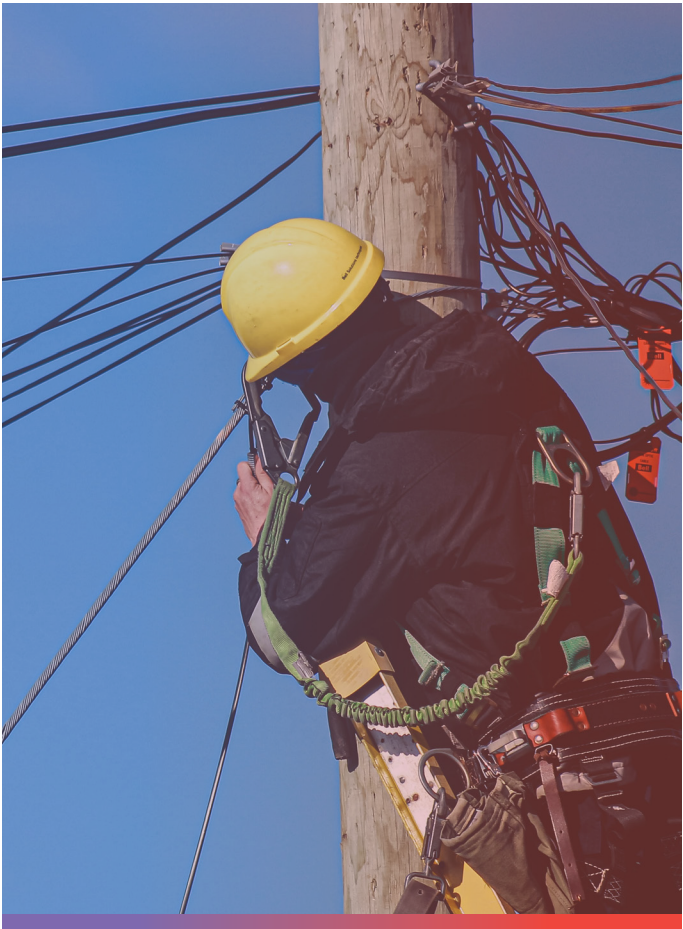
💡

Opportunities for leverage

- Utilise ground crew knowledge of local hazards and geography to develop better location-based risk prevention and mitigation strategies.
- Collaborate between utilities, telecommunications, government and community sectors to distribute more effective, aligned and accessible communications when assets are damaged. Ensure people are aware of centralised places to find information (i.e. council’s online noticeboard) and collaborate with trusted community leaders and groups to maximise reach.

“There needs to be recognition that we all work as one and not as competitors in a disaster scenario.”

- PHASE 2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT



MOVING FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Working on complex problems, with many findings and multiple opportunities, it can be challenging to know where to get started and how to move from ideas to actions.

We recommend bringing together a group of individuals who are interested in exploring the research findings and ideating opportunities together. Ideally this includes people from across and within sectors and people with lived experience. Use the research findings and the visual ecosystem map to build understanding and empathy for each other's contexts and experiences.

While there are multiple activities and questions that could be used to work through the research findings and move to action, here are a few questions that can help guide the conversation using the research findings and ecosystem map. On this page you can also find a case study of TCP's Disaster Planning and Recovery Don't Just Think Tank, where we took participants through a series of activities to understand and explore the research findings and identify and ideate opportunities for collective action.



Ecosystem Insights

Ask people to read through the ecosystem insights and reflect on the following:

- How are the findings relevant to our specific context?
- What is currently happening in our ecosystem that we should leave behind? What no longer serves us?
- What is currently happening in our ecosystem that we should take forward? What is working well?
- How do the challenges and opportunities identified at each phase impact on the resident and/or small business experience?

Industry Insights

Ask people to read through the insights relevant to their industry, reflect on their own experience, and share with the group:

- What is one thing your industry is doing that is working well?
- What is one challenge your industry has that it needs to work with others to overcome?
- You may also like to run a role play activity where people use the research to step into the shoes of those in other industries as a way to build empathy and understanding.

Ecosystem Map

Explore connections using the ecosystem map ([here](#)). Ask people to follow the journey from 'Life Before' through to 'Long Term Recovery', focusing on one specific industry each, or as small groups. Reflect on the following:

- Are there any connections that currently exist across these phases that could support the challenges identified in the previous activities?
- What is one opportunity to leverage the connections and experience your industry has in the ecosystem?

TCP'S DISASTER PLANNING AND RECOVERY DON'T JUST THINK TANK CASE STUDY

The TCP Don't Just Think Tanks (DJTT) are an opportunity to bring together a small group of organisations who want to collectively, safely and adaptively come together to explore the problem, and to then trial and test some initiatives that will contribute growing the body of evidence and knowledge about what works and what doesn't work.

The 'Disaster Planning and Recovery Don't Just Think Tank' series brought together 25 people from 19 organisations across 12 different industries. Participants collectively explored challenges around equity and accessibility, mental health, recovery and resourcing, cross sector communication and planning and alignment to identify 28 initiatives with 17 opportunities for further connections related to disaster planning and recovery for the future.

Everyone that participated in the DJTT has come together for the same reason. They joined the conversation because they were willing to say that there are spaces they can improve in and things they want to change which takes a great deal of courage and commitment. The representatives from these organisations came together because they want to do better for their customers, their clients and the wider community and we hope that the lessons learned and the collaborative partnerships developed during the workshop carry on long into the future.

Following the workshop series completed in June 2021, DJTT members are continuing to progress two key initiatives:

- Developing strategies for working collaboratively across sectors to support aligned disaster planning and recovery efforts. This includes strategies to facilitate ongoing knowledge sharing and connection between organisations, including information about initiatives, programs and services.
- Collectively building an understanding of gaps and successes of existing community-facing dedicated platforms to:
 - Establish a holistic view of existing platforms via taking inventory of what currently exists
 - Inform strategies to improve community preparedness and disaster planning for residents, and
 - Leverage existing platforms to ensure people have the information they need and facilitate early access to services and support following a disaster event.

Though the initiatives themselves are Townsville-centric, the group aims to consider their application more broadly across the Queensland region and nationally. TCP hopes to share the lessons learned from these initiatives and the discussions across their network to encourage them to be adapted and applied more broadly to national programs and in contribution to the growing body of knowledge around disaster preparedness, recovery and resilience.

We thank all the participants in the DJTT for their contributions and acknowledge with great appreciation their commitment to improving outcomes for communities who have suffered following a natural disaster.

For more information on TCP's Don't Just Think Tank approach, please email contact@thriving.org.au

WHERE TO FROM HERE

Though the research for this project has concluded, our work in disaster preparedness and resilience is far from over. There are always ongoing opportunities to connect with TCP and its partners, to engage with the research and grow our collective knowledge about what does and doesn't work in a disaster scenario. Though the research was Townsville focused, the lessons uncovered regarding collaborative service delivery, human-centered design and community led initiatives can be applied on a national level across a variety of projects and it is hoped that these key takeaways will soon become ingrained in our practice.

TCP hopes that the findings of this project continue to be shared within organisations and across industries and sectors to help improve our collective capacity and strengthen our connections to each other as a single, collaborative ecosystem of services. We are committed to ensuring that this research is used to create real, lasting change and hope that together as a national ecosystem of organisations, we will continue to work to ensure effective and aligned responses to natural disasters in the future.



“We are committed to ensuring this research is used to create real and meaningful change.”

REFERENCES

1

Deloitte Access Economics & Queensland Reconstruction Authority (2019) The social and economic cost of the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough 2019

2

Dorst, K. (2015). Frame innovation: Create new thinking by design. MIT Press. p xv

3

Mundy, J. & Dwonczyk, M. (2017) Weaving Threads: Principles, Themes And Approaches That Underpin All Our Work, Partnership Brokers Association

4

Snowden, D. J. (2007). A leader’s framework for decision making. Harvard business review, 85(11), 68

5

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (2018) Australian Disaster Resilience Community Recovery Handbook

6

Meadows, D. H. (2008). Thinking in systems: A primer. Chelsea Green Publishing.

7

Valkokari, K. (2015). Business, innovation, and knowledge ecosystems: How they differ and how to survive and thrive within them. Technology innovation management review, 5(8). Accessed at <https://timreview.ca/article/919>

8

Stroh, D. P. (2015). Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results. Chelsea Green Publishing.

Preferred citation

Diamond, K., Oakley, J., Collier, T., Millwood, J. & Black, J. (2021) Disaster Planning and Recovery Collaborative Research Project, Phase 2 Report, Thriving Communities Partnership.

Photographs throughout this report are sourced from [Unsplash](#).

Graphics designed by: Sophie McKenna

Ecosystem Map Design by: Joelle Black



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#)

Acknowledgements

The Disaster Planning and Recovery Collaboration Research Project – Phase 2 has been jointly funded under the Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018.

Although funding for this project has been provided by both the Australian and Queensland Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government.



About our research partner Symplicit

Symplicit is a research and design consultancy specialising in innovation and human-centred design. They help bridge the gap between clients, users and their experience with products, services and their environment. Through design Symplicit are able to address challenges on all scales, from developing new products and services to transforming the way organisations do business. They provide end-to-end services for initial user-led research, prototyping, testing and design delivery. Their experience and capabilities cover behavioural research and insights, digital and build environments, service design, experience design, training, customer strategy and innovation.

Founded in 2003, Symplicit is a team of over 60 practitioners who work with over 150 clients. They have offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide. Symplicit is part of HCL Technologies and has access to the power of the DWS Group and HCLs global products and services.

For more information about Symplicit, go to <https://symplicit.com.au/>

TERMINOLOGY

Disaster Planning and Recovery Ecosystem refers to all individuals, organisations, groups and actors that play a role in disaster planning and recovery

Disaster response ‘playbook’ – These playbooks define the roles and processes that are activated in the event of a disaster. They typically exist at a local government level and within organisations.

Ecosystem – An ecosystem is ‘an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organised in a way that achieves something.’⁶ The way the ecosystem thrives or survives is influenced by the flow-on effects and relationships between interacting actors and components within the ecosystem. Ecosystems are dynamically evolving and should not be perceived from a linear viewpoint.⁷

Phase 1 Research – The first stage of the Disaster Planning and Recovery Collaborative Research Project which focused on mapping the experiences of Townsville residents and business owners who were negatively impacted by the effects of the 2019 Monsoon.Full report on Phase 1 available [HERE](#).

Local Disaster Management Groups (LDMG) – These groups are established by local governments to support and coordinate disaster management activities for their respective Local Government Areas.

No Interest Loans (NILs) – NILs are available for individuals and families on low incomes with access to safe, fair and affordable credit. Loans are available for essential goods and services such as fridges, washing machines, car repairs and medical procedures for up to \$1,500. NILs is run by Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand and offered by 170 local community organisations in over 600 locations across Australia. See more information on NILs [HERE](#).

Systems Thinking – Ecosystem or system change is difficult because they achieve a purpose, even if that purpose isn’t what we might want it to achieve. Systems thinking is ‘the ability to understand the interconnections within an ecosystem in such a way as to achieve a desired purpose.’⁸

TCP Ambassadors and Ombudsman – The trusted individuals with extensive experience and strong commitment to supporting people experiencing vulnerability.

TCP Community Partners – The not-for-profit organisations that have signed up to the TCP Charter and partnership.

TCP Don’t Just Think Tank – The TCP Don’t Just Think Tanks (DJTT) are an opportunity to bring together a small group of organisations who want to collectively, safely and adaptively come together to explore the problem, and to then trial and test some initiatives that will contribute growing the body of evidence and knowledge about what works and what doesn’t work.

TCP Founding Partners – The corporate organisations that provide financial and pro-bono support to TCP and have signed up to the TCP Charter and partnership.

TCP Partners – All the organisations, ambassadors and ombudsman from across all sectors who have signed up to the TCP Charter and partnership.

TCP Participants/participating organisations – The organisations and individuals who participate in the work of TCP, but have not formally signed up to the TCP Charter and partnership.

TCP Queensland Chapter – A mix of TCP Partners and TCP participating organisations who operate in Queensland and are committed to working collaboratively on locally defined initiatives to support a thriving Queensland community.

The TCP community – All Partners and participating organisations and individuals who are involved with TCP in some way and are driven by the purpose of building a more inclusive ecosystem for everyone.



APPENDICES

Research Activities

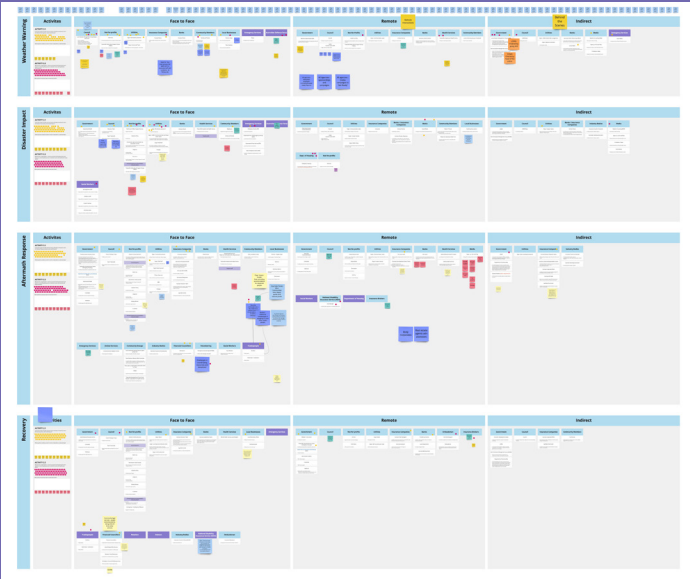
Appendix 1: Workshops with project working group

Symplicit conducted two virtual workshops in November and December 2020 with members of the Disaster Planning and Recovery Project working group from across sectors, to identify key frontline organisations and individuals who were involved in responding to the North Queensland Monsoon of 2019 across disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Participants conveyed their knowledge to build a preliminary stakeholder map, working individually and in small groups.

For each organisation or service identified, participants also captured whether service provision involved interaction with the community face-to-face, remotely or indirectly (influencing the experience behind the scenes for example via developing policies and procedures). Their inputs were captured on post-it notes in the virtual collaboration tool Miro and organised into a matrix representing the various disaster recovery phases (along the y-axis) and what activities the service or organisation is during this phase (along the x-axis).

This exercise not only allowed the group to begin to understand the diverse and complex network of services that exist to support a community response to natural disasters, but it also helped clarify what each service does and the role they play.

The matrix provided a snapshot of the ecosystem which informed TCP's recruitment approach and segmentation, with the aim of engaging a sample of participants from across sectors and phases of the disaster response.



Appendix 2: Frontline staff focus groups and interviews

Between 1 March and 18 March 2021, Symplicit conducted 20 deep-dive interviews (of 1-2 people) and 3 focus groups (of 4-5 people). The research consulted a total of 35 frontline workers that represented a cross-section of the industries involved in responding to the North Queensland Monsoon of 2019.

All research sessions were conducted remotely either on Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or over the phone. Interviews lasted approximately one hour to ninety minutes, while focus groups lasted two hours.

With the support of the project working group, TCP coordinated interviews with stakeholders from the following industries which are represented in the output of this research:

- Utilities and Telecommunications
- Banking
- Insurance
- Small Business Services (e.g., mentors)
- Ombudsmen
- Local and National Not for Profit Organisations
- Financial Counselling, Financial Capability and Community Finance
- Mental Health Services
- Community Legal Services
- Neighbourhood Centres
- Local Disaster Management Group

Additionally, Symplicit analysed existing research to provide further insight into the industries represented in this research, which includes an additional industry: Carers and support organisations.

A qualitative interview guide was designed to support rich and detailed conversations with the participants, encouraging them to recount their experience assisting the community before, during and after the Monsoon Disaster. They were asked to recall how their organisation interacts with the community in each phase and how they interact with other organisations as they go about their work. Participants were also asked to describe positive experiences and challenges along the way. As the interviews were qualitative, the interview guide was not followed directly, but was used to ensure that the conversation covered the same topics for each research session.

One interviewer ran the discussion while another took notes on a laptop. Notes were as verbatim as possible to ensure that they were accurately capturing the participant's story.

Appendix 3: Research Analysis

Following the interviews, Symplicit undertook analysis. Notes from each of the interviews were grouped by industry to establish themes and insights occurring within an industry. At the same time, findings that were identified to be shared across multiple industries were grouped to establish the system-wide themes and insights impacting on the entire ecosystem. The challenges and opportunities that exist at both the system and industry level are complex, extensive and highly interconnected. The report does not provide exhaustive documentation of what we found in the research, but rather highlights key findings. It is intended to provide a starting point for organisations to facilitate collective conversations and collaboration

In order to create the system map, both industry insights and system insights contained in the report were mapped to the fundamental phases that were established along the community and local business journey map timelines created in the Phase 1 research. Those fundamental phases were:



Established connections and opportunities for new connections between industries are illustrated in the map at each phase. It should be acknowledged that, while insights have been mapped to specific phases, there is a high degree of interconnectedness in the system and insights often relate to multiple phases. For example, issues described in insights that occur before a disaster may play out in the aftermath of a disaster, making it difficult to appropriately place the insight into the timeline. Therefore, the actual location of many of the insights represented in the system map should not be taken literally, but rather used to begin reflection on what is occurring in the community at that time.

The insights generated from the analysis and the system map were used to workshop opportunities in TCP’s Don’t Just Think Tank.

Appendix 4:
Ecosystem Map

About the map

Systems mapping is an approach used to visualise and analyse factors that make up a system. It can help us build an understanding of what the system looks like and how it behaves by examining the connections and relationships that exist. The system map created for this project is unique because it visualises how the relationships of frontline organisations relate to the community journey of experiencing a natural disaster (as captured during Phase 1 research).

Insights from the research can be found along the map according to how they relate to the community experience timeline (Life Before, Weather Warning, Disaster Impact, Aftermath, Recovery, Long-term Recovery). This allows organisations to better understand how the complex service and support ecosystem relates to the community experience and how experiences and interactions can influence community member’s recovery journey.

THE ECOSYSTEM MAP CREATED FOR THIS RESEARCH PROJECT CAN BE USED TO:

Build an understanding of the complex networks of frontline organisations, services and people that are trying to assist the community in disaster scenarios.

Understand whether interactions that exist between organisations, frontline staff and the community are beneficial or contribute to challenges for community members navigating disaster response and recovery

Understand opportunities for new relationships and collaborations to be fostered to support a more inclusive and effective disaster response ecosystem.

Identify opportunities for leverage where important interactions between frontline organisations and the community can have positive impacts across the ecosystem.

It should be noted that the system map visualises the experiences and relationships as captured during the research. This means that, although this artefact is rich with insights, all the organisations, connections and experiences that occurred during the disaster event may not be captured in these artefacts. This map can be used to reflect on the information it presents, but it can also be used to reflect on what services and experiences have not been illustrated; doing so may uncover more opportunities to start new collaborations or identify more leverage points to move the disaster response ecosystem forward.

Using the ecosystem map

Below is a thumbnail image of the system map. The map has been created with an online prototyping tool called Figma so that it could be easily accessed and engaged within a virtual context. It can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

The system map is designed to be used in workshop settings to explore the challenges and benefits occurring across the relationships in the disaster response ecosystem. It is intended to encourage collaboration within and between organisations to identify tangible, actionable opportunities to improve disaster planning and recovery in Townsville and more broadly across other regions and disaster contexts.

System Map



How to read the ecosystems map

The system map visualises the ecosystem of front-line organisations that provided support to the North Queensland community in response to the Monsoon of 2019. It illustrates what works well and current challenges within the industries who participated in the research, as well as the challenges, successes and connections across the entire ecosystem at an ecosystem level. Opportunities for leverage within the system have been identified and it is encouraged that organisations engage with the map with the purpose of identifying more opportunities. This system map is laid out to be read left to right as a procession of time, as it relates to the community journey.

Thriving Communities Partnership

symplikit

Disaster Planning and Recovery Collaborative Research Project - Phase 2 System Map

The system map brings together both Phase 1 and Phase 2 research to visualise how the relationships and ecosystem of front-line organisations relate to the community journey of experiencing a natural disaster.

For more information and complete reports on the phases of the project, please visit Thriving Communities Partnership Disaster Planning and Recovery website.

Start >

1. Access the map with the online link provided above.

2. Click the 'Start' button and follow the steps.

Our work would not be possible without
the support of all our Partners





