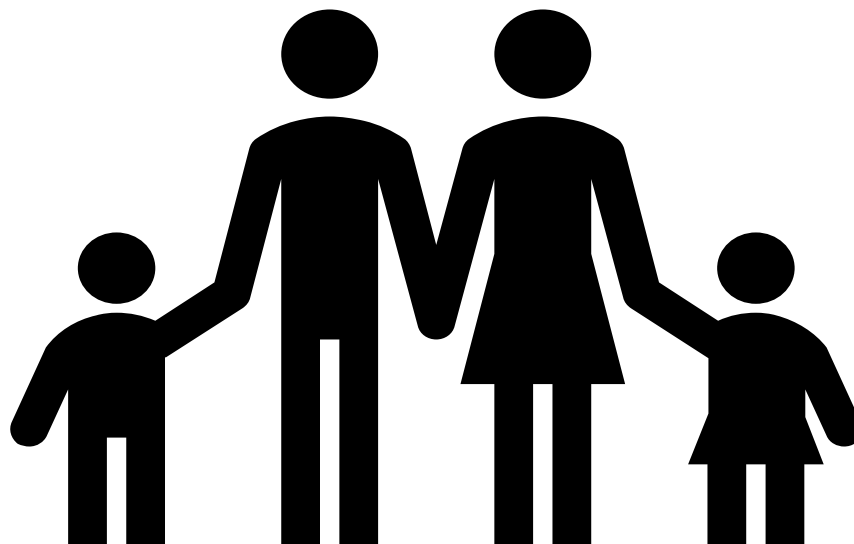


RediCommunities

Building Resilience in the Face of Disaster

Disasters have varied, complex and long-term impacts on people's lives, including on their wellbeing, quality of life and social connections, but individuals and communities have capacity to cope with and recover from these impacts. Disaster resilience focuses on strengthening social capital and collective efficacy, as well as taking practical actions to prepare.



The risks that people in Forest Lodge and Glebe social housing face are becoming more frequent and complex, with communities often impacted by overlapping events, such as drought, bushfires and pandemic. We have repeatedly seen that Forest Lodge and Glebe social housing tenants are strong and resilient but there is more that can be done to prepare for, respond to, and recover well from disasters. Experience from international and interstate disasters shows that communities which are well connected, and have done work to prepare themselves, are able to cope better and recover faster from the impacts.

Exploring Resilience, Disasters and their Impacts

We started off by establishing some definitions so that we had the same understanding of what we were talking about. We talked about how resilience is not about ‘bouncing back’ or the immediate ability to respond to negative events, but a process of positive adaptation before, during and after adversity. Here is how the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has defined it:

“The ability of communities (and their members) exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, prepare for, reduce the impact of, cope with and recover from, the effects of shocks and stresses without compromising their long-term prospects.”

A disaster is an unforeseen and often sudden event of natural or human origin that can overwhelm people’s ability to cope. In Australia, we have historically tended to focus on one or two natural hazards in any local area in planning. As we have seen recently with the COVID-19 pandemic, the unexpected can happen, which can subsequently have far-reaching impacts on people and communities, overwhelming their ability to cope.

Below are the notes on potential local disasters and their impacts. Red Cross takes an all-hazards approach to preparedness and resilience, recognising that the consequences on communities and individuals impacted are very similar regardless of the cause. We discussed how disasters impact our:

- Health and wellbeing, both physical and mental
- Relationships
- Ability to earn an income
- Educational outcomes
- Community dynamics and social routines
- Ontological security (sense of control over our life and future and order in the world)
- Connections to things that hold meaning to us (Country, place, community, homes, animals, and sentimental possessions)
- Goals and aspirations

We acknowledged that there can also be positive impacts such as increased social cohesion and trust and an opportunity to build back better. In preparing ourselves and our communities for these impacts, we are strengthening our resilience to withstand future disasters.

Due to conflicting logistics, we were unable to hold the planned Emergency Services Panel workshop within the project timeframe. This session would have provided opportunity for emergency service agencies and community to engage in a conversation and Q&A forum regarding the localised risks. There was an understanding that a similar style event would be organised by the City of Sydney at a later date, potentially with the support of Red Cross as suitable.

We developed and distributed an online survey that, along with information collected during workshops and consultations led to the following identified key disasters, concerns and issues.

Key Disasters	Concerns/Issues
Heatwaves	Personal safety
Crime (drugs, riots, violence)	Impact on personal property
Apartment block fires	Safety of pets
Flood	Fires in apartment blocks
	Elderly & disabled peoples not able to evacuate
	Where to find shelter, food, water?
	Poorly maintained social housing properties possibly vulnerable to flooding, storms – damage inside
	No defibrillator in apartment blocks
	No fire extinguishers in some housing stock
	Do not know what to do in an emergency
	What is the role of Fire & Rescue if there is a fire in apartment blocks, who makes sure everyone is safe?
	No fire wardens or people responsible for residents' safety in apartment blocks
	Being unable to call for help because of injury or illness (many residents live alone)

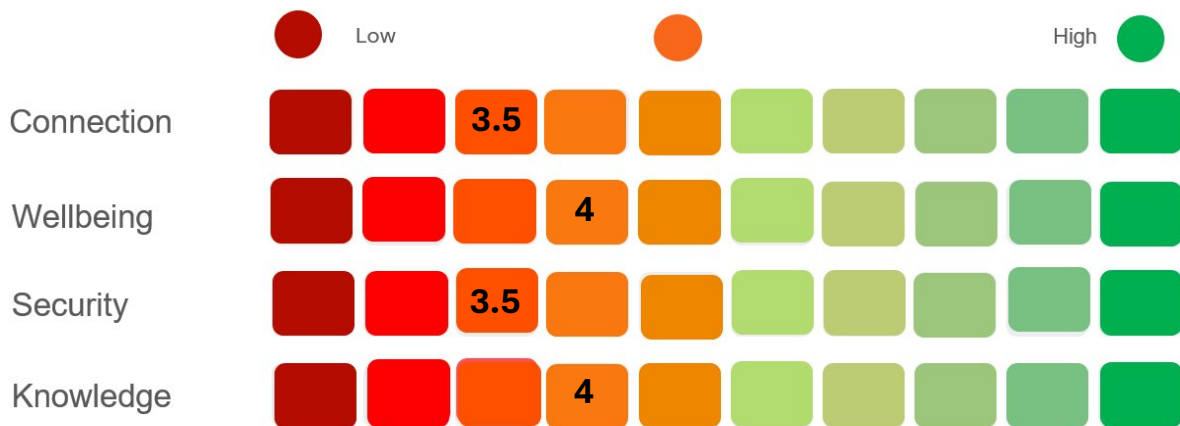
People also put down their level of preparedness on a scale of 'Very Unprepared' to 'Very Prepared'. The results of this were very mixed and dependent on where people lived (house or flat) and their capacity and ability to access services and information. There is a large group of multicultural people in social housing, along with older people, high levels of illiteracy and people with disabilities, which influences people's ability to access information and be disaster ready. Of the ten respondents, four people said they were 'Somewhat Prepared'. However, two people said they were 'Very Unprepared' and one said they were 'Somewhat Unprepared'. Two also said they were neither prepared nor unprepared. Only one person said that they were 'Very Prepared'.

Resilience Assessment

We used RediCAT, the community assessment tool to gauge the current state of Resilience in Forest Lodge and Glebe social housing. While resilience is a process rather than a static state, the assessment provides a point-in-time snapshot of some key measures important to resilience, providing guidance on aspects of community life that the community could focus on in order to strengthen resilience over time.

The Assessment Tool highlights 4 key measures of Resilience, called the Resilience Capacities - Connection, Knowledge, Security and Wellbeing. Each has a range of indicators associated with it that are used to inform a score for that measure.

Resilience Capability Score



Decision-making was an interactive process that involved representatives from the City of Sydney, Forest Lodge and Glebe Coordination Group (FLAG) and individuals from the Forest Lodge and Glebe social housing estate about the most accurate score. Much of the value in this process comes through challenging assumptions and having discussions that require the community to consider issues from multiple perspectives, coming to an agreed position together.

The average of the results that were agreed upon for all 4 themes showed that there are lots of good things already happening and also that there are a lot of areas that can be improved. The scores themselves really weren't important, it was about drawing out the knowledge amongst the group and testing our assumptions.

During this session we brainstormed ideas for initiatives around each capacity to strengthen resilience.

Building on Resilience: From Ideation to Action

Finally, we built on the ideas born from the resilience assessment to prioritise ideas to form our resilience action plan.

Forest Lodge & Glebe Social Housing Tenants' Disaster Resilience Vision and Mission

Disaster Resilience Mission: Facilitate, build and sustain disaster resilience in Glebe and Forest Lodge communities by fostering links and communication between stakeholders in the area and by building connections between community and people or groups with relevant skills, knowledge and expertise to respond to community concerns and support initiatives related to disasters.

Disaster Resilience Vision: To act as a consultative group on disaster preparedness and resilience to facilitate collaboration on issues of concern impacting the community, by supporting, promoting and giving voice to Glebe and Forest Lodge social housing residents' needs and initiatives related to disaster readiness.

Forest Lodge & Glebe Social Housing Tenants' Disaster Resilience Plan		
PRIORITIES	RESOURCES & PROJECT LEADS	TIME FRAMES
Priority One: HEATWAVES		
KNOWLEDGE & WELLBEING - more information about how to cope with heatwaves & what are <u>local</u> (not generic) strategies for preparing for heatwaves in Glebe and Forest Lodge.	Workshops, training & design of Glebe & Forest Lodge heatwave strategy & implementation - City of Sydney, Fire & Rescue, NSW Ambulance, NSW Health, NSW Reconstruction Authority, Australian Red Cross, local NGOs, FLAG, residents, UTS, USyd	2 years
KNOWLEDGE - heatwave information needs to be place-based, accessible & user friendly, in easy English. Lot of information but community cannot access it, difficult to understand & act upon, high levels of illiteracy & low levels of computer/internet access in community.	Local knowledge collection & repository for local disaster knowledge in easy English available & accessible to community: NSW Reconstruction Authority, City of Sydney, Glebe Library, Glebe Community Centres, NSW Ambulance, NSW Health, NGOs, Australian Red Cross, UTS, USyd	2 years
KNOWLEDGE - heatwave information needs to be based on local knowledge & translated into community languages. Large number of culturally & linguistically diverse housing residents.	Local knowledge collection & repository for local disaster knowledge translated into community languages made available & accessible for community: NSW Reconstruction Authority, City of Sydney, Glebe Library, Glebe Community Centres, NSW Ambulance, NSW Health, NGOs, Australian Red Cross, UTS, USyd	3 years
CONNECTION & WELLBEING - Homes NSW & Community Housing Providers need to climate proof existing housing stock & any new builds.	Retrofit & build climate proof housing stock with insulation, whirligigs, fans, air conditioning, & solar panels. Homes NSW, The Bridge Housing, Community Housing Providers, Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, NSW Government, residents, Tenant Representatives, FLAG, NAB, NSW Tenants' Union	3 years

Forest Lodge & Glebe Social Housing Tenants' Disaster Resilience Plan		
PRIORITIES	RESOURCES & PROJECT LEADS	TIME FRAMES
CONNECTION - strengthen community connection to & communication with local ES combat agencies	Workshops, drills, training & information dissemination by local ES combat agencies: Fire & Rescue, Ambulance, SES, NSW Police, NSW Reconstruction Authority, FLAG, residents	1 year
CONNECTION & WELLBEING - set up local community-centric groups that advocate and work for community disaster preparedness for concerns & issues related to different housing stock, apartment blocks and houses.	Community-led preparedness groups: FLAG, residents, Tenants Representatives, Australian Red Cross, City of Sydney, local NGOs	3 years
Priority Two: BUILDING FIRES		
KNOWLEDGE & WELLBEING - more information about what to do in large apartment blocks to prepare for, & respond to, building fires	Workshops, training & design of fire preparedness, response & evacuation strategies & their implementation for social housing residents: Homes NSW, The Bridge Housing, Community housing providers, Fire & Rescue, City of Sydney, NSW Reconstruction Authority, FLAG, residents	1 year
CONNECTION - need to strengthen community connection to, & communication with, local Fire & Rescue brigades	Meetings, working groups & community-centric communication strategies to facilitate connection: Fire & Rescue, Homes NSW, The Bridge Housing, Community housing providers, City of Sydney, FLAG, residents	2 years
CONNECTION & WELLBEING - set up local community-centric groups that advocate and work for community disaster preparedness in Glebe & Forest Lodge	Community-centric preparedness groups: FLAG, residents, Tenants Representatives, Australian Red Cross, City of Sydney, local NGOs, community-based organisations (e.g. GYS, etc)	3 years
Priority Three: CRIME		
CONNECTION - need to strengthen community connection to, & communication with, local NSW Police in Glebe & Forest Lodge area	Meetings, working groups, information sharing & communication strategies to facilitate connectedness: NSW Police, Homes NSW, The Bridge Housing, Community housing providers, City of Sydney, FLAG, residents	2 years
SECURITY & WELLBEING - refurbish housing stock to include security measures to adequately protect residents and their property	Retrofit existing housing stock & include in new housing stock security measures such as security doors, better lighting, secure window screens: Homes NSW, The Bridge Housing, Community Housing Providers, City of Sydney, FLAG, residents, NSW Tenants Union	5 years

Forest Lodge & Glebe Social Housing Tenants' Disaster Resilience Plan

PRIORITIES	RESOURCES & PROJECT LEADS	TIME FRAMES
KNOWLEDGE, SECURITY & WELLBEING - improve the health and wellbeing of residents through community-centric design of secure, safe spaces and a built environment that can lead to a reduction in the fear & incidence of crime within Glebe & Forest Lodge area	Community-centric Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPED) strategies for Glebe & Forest Lodge areas: Homes NSW, The Bridge Housing, Community Housing Providers, City of Sydney, FLAG, residents, CPED experts (universities, research orgs), NSW Tenants Union	10 years

After our last workshop, consultations will continue to take place with community and local emergency services. Red Cross will continue to work with Forest Lodge and Glebe social housing tenants and the City of Sydney over the coming months to help realise the top three priorities listed.