



Local Emergency Management Guidelines for Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction in NSW

**Disability Inclusive Disaster Preparedness in NSW:
Enabling Local Community Resilience Through
Collaboration 2015-2017**

Funded under the joint State and Commonwealth
Natural Disaster Resilience Program.



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SYDNEY



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Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction

These guidelines are for local emergency managers and disability support providers to understand Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) principles and suggest practical activities to engage the community in building resilience.

There are barriers to people with disability participating in emergency preparedness activities. These guidelines support local emergency managers and disability support providers to overcome those barriers.

The guidelines focus on emergency preparedness. They were developed as part of the *Disability Inclusive Disaster Preparedness in NSW: Enabling Local Community Resilience Through Collaboration 2015-2017* project.

This project brought together emergency managers and disability support providers in three NSW communities to:

- develop a shared focus on community strengths, challenges, and resources for DIDRR
- build a local knowledge base in DIDRR
- learn to self-assess individual and organisational preparedness
- develop networking between groups to sustain DIDRR following project completion

Responsibility for disaster risk management rests with the emergency management sector and local communities. The *NSW State Emergency Management Plan (2012)* outlines the agreed roles and responsibilities of emergency management agencies at State, Regional and Local Levels.

Emergency Management in NSW supports:

- the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (2011)* at the local level
- connects local actions with regional, state and national-level policy and practice
- ensures that the public can access comprehensive information that helps people to prepare themselves, their family, home, property, and business for natural disasters



What is DIDRR?

DIDRR means making sure the needs and voices of people with disability are included in disaster risk management. People with disability have the right to be active participants in decisions that affect their lives.

To ensure community resilience, people with disability need to be included from the beginning of emergency management planning.

DIDRR increases the effectiveness of emergency management efforts as it builds capacity of people with disability, their families and carers to prepare, respond, and recover from natural disasters and emergencies.

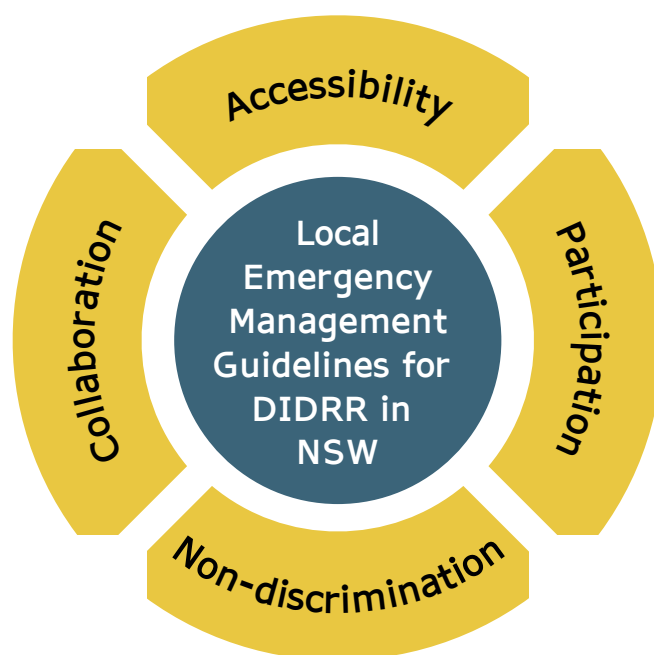
DIDRR requires removing the barriers that stop people with disability engaging with disaster risk reduction activities.

DIDRR covers all 4 phases of disaster risk management which are prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

DIDRR Principles

Accessibility, participation, collaboration and non-discrimination

- **Accessibility**
Requires disaster risk management information to be universally accessible. Comprehensive, readily available information must underpin all policies in emergency management
- **Participation**
Requires people with disability to be actively engaged in disaster risk reduction activities in the local community
- **Collaboration**
Requires multiple stakeholders learning and working together to ensure disability inclusive disaster risk reduction
- **Non-discrimination**
Requires fair and unprejudiced treatment of people with disability and must underpin all policies and actions in disaster risk management



Key Messages

Three key messages

Starting point

There is no one distinct starting point for local community engagement in DIDRR.

There are tools that assist emergency managers and disability support providers to get started at any point in the process.

Community engagement

Community engagement and resilience begins when emergency managers, people with disability, and disability support providers learn and work together.

Developing local knowledge about natural disaster risk and local community strengths, challenges and resources is an important step in learning and working together.

Structural barriers

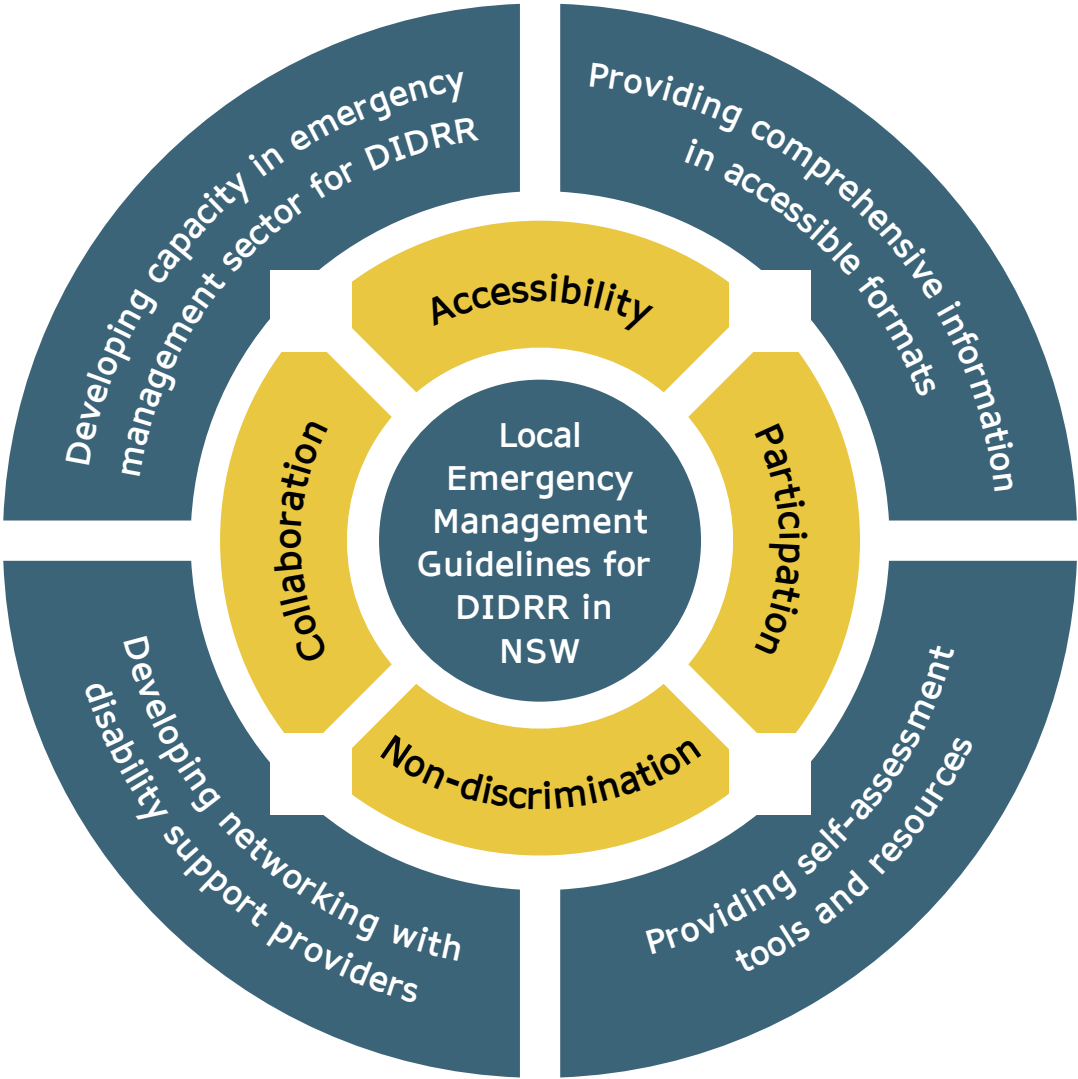
Structural barriers compromise participation of people with disability in emergency preparedness for natural disasters.

Agile systems of partnership require emergency managers to engage diverse networks and leverage local capacity to remove or work around the structural barriers.

Emergency managers need support and resources to engage local networks and carry out DIDRR activities effectively.

The DIDRR NSW video provides an overview of the principles from the perspective of people with disability, emergency management, and disability support providers. This can be accessed at: goo.gl/yhPytt

DIDRR Framework





Developing capacity in emergency management sector for DIDRR

What should happen

Remove barriers that make it difficult for emergency managers to engage effectively with the disability community and their networks in emergency preparedness.

Local, regional and state level emergency management committees should provide opportunities for people with disability to participate as members.

Reasons why

The *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (2011)* promotes a whole-of-community approach.

The *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (2011)* demonstrates the Australian Government's commitment to including people with disability in all decisions that affect their lives.

The *NSW State Emergency Plan (2012)* provides strategic direction in all aspects of preparedness, response, and recovery.

The national strategies encourage coordination and collaboration between emergency management and disability sectors to remove or work around the structural barriers in the emergency management sector.

How to develop disability inclusive capacity

Facilitate networking opportunities and events in partnership with disability organisations to enable Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs), Local Emergency Management Officers (LEMOs) and Emergency Managers to learn about DIDRR and collate existing or develop new training materials to support such learning.

Provide local Councils with resources to engage in community networking required for DIDRR.

Review membership of local and state emergency management committees to implement the priority of the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (2011)* and the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (2011)* for whole-of-community participation for emergency preparedness.

Review existing good practice and develop a set of guidelines that support LEMCs, LEMOs and Emergency Managers to build experience, skills, capabilities and competencies in DiDRR.

Incorporate disability-inclusive preparedness strategies in the development and review of local emergency management plans and combat agency specific plans (e.g., NSW SES Flood Plans).





Providing comprehensive information in accessible formats

What should happen

The emergency management sector work with people with disability and disability support providers to have comprehensive, readily available information in accessible formats to prepare for natural disasters.

The community, including people with disability and disability support providers, must take responsibility for knowing the risks that they face and their capacity to prepare and respond to natural disasters.

Reasons why

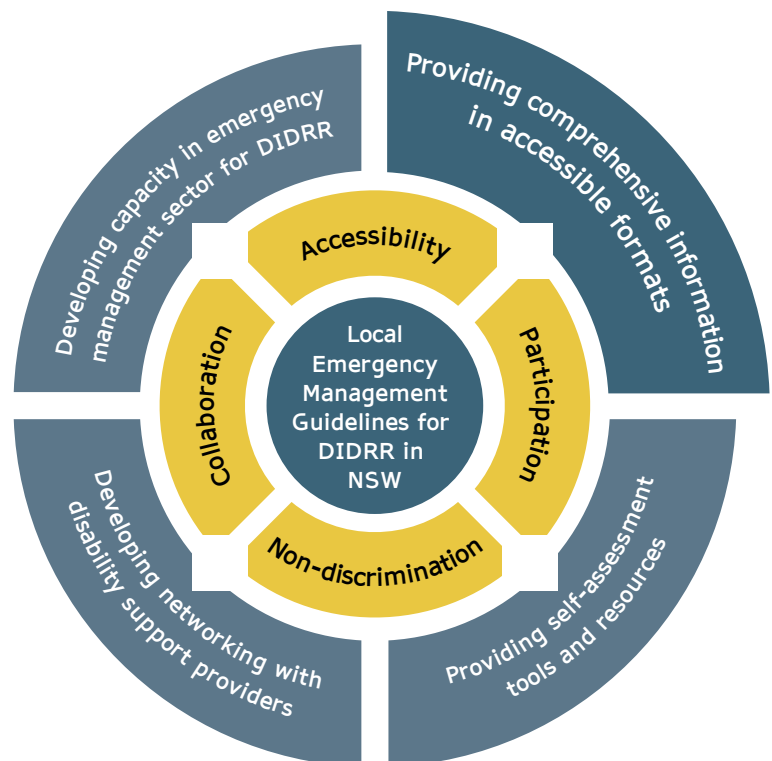
Comprehensive, readily available information in accessible formats is needed to increase the resilience of people with disability.

For people with disability, “lack of accessible information is our biggest barrier” to engaging in emergency preparedness (DiDRR Project Participant).

A key to preparedness is “having access to information and feeling empowered when we do” (DiDRR Project Participant). The *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (2011)* promotes that people with disability are involved in all aspects of community life. This comes from Australia’s obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), General Obligations and Articles 3, 9, 11, 21.

State and Territory disability legislation and Disability Inclusion Action Plans mirror the objectives of the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (2011)* promoting comprehensive, readily available information in accessible formats for people with disability, their families and carers.

Local Government Area Disability Inclusion Action Plans for completion in 2017 mirror the requirements of the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (2011)* and State and Territory disability legislation and Disability Inclusion Action Plans.



Practical tips for disability inclusive events

Comprehensive access

- Have hard copies available - not all people with disability have access to, or use the internet
- Review accessibility of electronic method and use plain text – put content in body of email instead of relying on attachments for access by people using screen readers
- Use the Web Accessibility Guidelines to ensure online material is accessible
www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/
- Peak organisations provide consultancy services to ensure content is appropriate for people with disability for example, NSW Council for Intellectual Disability offer a service to adapt content to Easy Read
- When using images, insert text and captions. Where images are used in a visual presentation, describe what is on the image during the presentations for people with visual impairments
- Group discussions avoid relying on written language and bring people together to share their experiences and include everyone including those with lower literacy

Participation

- Ask people with disability what assistance they need to be involved, for example providing scribes, Auslan interpretation, covering costs of support workers to attend, cost for travel to events
- Where Auslan interpreters are required make bookings as early as possible due to the limited availability of interpreters, and this is particularly important in regional/rural areas
- Give people with disability an opportunity to present at events and ensure podium is on a level surface with no steps and a roaming microphone
- Make sure all events are accessible by using the Accessible Events Practice Points from the Centre for Disability Research and Policy, University of Sydney at sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/cdrp/pdfs/cdrp-accessible-events-211015
- Always provide alternative registration methods by telephone or email; do not rely on electronic registration as this may not be possible for some participants
- Always ask participants for open feedback and implement suggested changes for next time. Learn from each event by making it a habit to reflect on what worked and what did not

Accessible resources

How to make resources accessible

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) explain how to make web content more accessible to people with disability at www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag.php
- Peak representative organisations for people with disability can be contracted to review content for their accessibility. For example, NSW Council for Intellectual Disability provide a consultancy service for developing documents into Easy English format at www.nswcid.org.au/hire-us/easy-read-materials.html

Examples of accessible resources

- NSW SES Flood safe has Auslan interpretation deafsocietynsw.org.au/auslan_resources/page/ses_floodsafe
- NSW SES website provides translated brochures at their website, (see orange tab in top right hand navigation for language translation options) www.ses.nsw.gov.au/
- The Australian Red Cross Rediplan is in alternate formats
 - Easy English format www.redcross.org.au/files/Emergency_services_REDiPlan_easy-english_20110609.pdf
 - Auslan interpreted videos deafsocietynsw.org.au/community_programs/page/get-ready-project



Providing self-assessment tools and resources

What should happen

Provide information and tools so that people with disability can self-assess their knowledge about the following:

- the local natural disaster context
- their capabilities
- their support needs
- their support network and how they will plan and act together in the event of a natural disaster

Reasons why

Everyone can use information and resources to self-assess their own preparedness.

People with disability and their support network need the opportunity to become self-reliant. This is the same for everyone in the community because:

- Individuals are in the best position to understand what their needs are
- Individuals need to understand how their capabilities will be affected by local natural disasters

People with disability must have the opportunity to direct decisions and have choice and control in their emergency planning.

Disability support providers are an important resource because they know the individuals with disability they serve, their support needs, and their networks.

Self-reliance enables and empowers individuals and their networks to take appropriate action. It also allows emergency management personnel to focus on priorities including managing the natural disaster.



Practical tips from people with disability

- Create an emergency information card which is a plasticised card kept in a wallet with contact details of family (more than one person), medications and dosage
- Compile a medical information list that contains the names and numbers of your doctors, medications, dosage instructions, and any existing conditions. Make note of your adaptive equipment, allergies, communication methods. This may be done electronically using My Health Record at myhealthrecord.gov.au
- Save important documents on USB so that these can be accessed in the event of a natural disaster. This is particularly useful if hard copy documents are destroyed
- Save important information for any assistive devices including make, model, manufacturer, and insurance details
- Create a personal support network of family, friends, relatives, neighbours, roommates and co-workers who could assist at a moment's notice. Discuss your individual needs with them, including evacuation plans and medical information list
- Prepare for at least 72 hours of animal care for pets or assistance animal including photograph of animals and medical information, registration details, food and food preferences, favourite toy or blanket
- Participate in local emergency preparedness training by contacting your local Emergency Services to ask about training opportunities and resources
- Connect with your community, and look out and support each other using neighbourhood watch and other community networks for people to rely on each other in the case of an emergency
- Keep an emergency supply kit at your home, in the car, and workplace or anywhere you spend time, as advised by the NSW State Emergency Service
- Keep at least a seven-day supply of medications on hand. Ask your doctor or pharmacist what you should do if you cannot immediately get more medications in the disruption of a natural disaster
- Make your home or office safer by removing furniture and objects that may block your path in an emergency



Developing networking with disability support providers

What should happen

Provide information and tools so that disability support providers can:

- Self-assess their organisational preparedness
- Prioritise preparedness actions they need to take
- Develop a business continuity plan that takes into account duty of care to clients and disability support staff
- Bring people together from emergency management and disability sectors to share information and build capacity and organisational networks for coordinated planning for DIDRR
 - For example, leverage opportunities to share information about emergency preparedness through local Disability Interagency Networks (DIN)

“It isn’t until a natural hazard occurs that you realise just how unprepared you are, and the risk you can put staff and clients into.”

Participating organisation, DIDRR NSW project

Reasons why

Disability support providers are an important community resource for DIDRR because they have:

- local knowledge about accessible and inclusive community resources
- strong relationships, networks, and partnerships in the community
- expertise in providing person-centered support for people with disability so that they can participate in the community

Disability support organisations can support each other through their own networks to develop organisational preparedness and business continuity plans.

Partnership between disability support providers and emergency managers builds networks of knowledge, support, and capability for DIDRR in the local community. Local community networks have the capacity for coordination, growth, and expansion.



Practical resources

Organisational resources

- Emergency Business Continuity Plan – NSW SES
www.sesemergencyplan.com.au/business/
- Resilient Community Organisations (RCO) Toolkit - ACOSS
resilience.acoss.org.au/

Individual planning resources

- Home Emergency Plan – NSW SES
www.seshomeemergencyplan.com.au/index.php
- I'm Okay website – Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN)
imokay.org.au/
- Rediplan – Australian Red Cross
 - Auslan interpreted videos
deafsocietynsw.org.au/community_programs/page/get-ready-project
 - Easy English format
www.redcross.org.au/files/Emergency_services_REDiPlan_easy-english_20110609.pdf
- Get Ready – the Deaf Society of NSW
deafsocietynsw.org.au/community_programs/page/get-ready-project

Good practice examples

- Life without Barriers has a Board of Management sub-committee called the Disability Service Advisory Council so that people with disability can provide input and contribute to organisational planning
www.lwb.org.au/
- Wendy's Home Care has a Workplace Health and Safety committee that promotes a bottom up approach to risk reduction. Field staff are invited to join this committee and are recognised as an integral part of understanding local risks
www.wendyshome.com.au/
- Civic Disability Services has a list of screened volunteers to ensure staff coverage in an emergency. The organisation can call upon these volunteers when staff members are not available because they are responding to their own families
civic.org.au/

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Acronyms

- ACOSS – Australian Council of Social Services
- DIDRR – Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction
- ISAT-EP – Individual Self Assessment Tool – Emergency Preparedness
- LEMC – Local Emergency Management Committee
- LEMO – Local Emergency Management Officer
- NSW – New South Wales
- NSW SES – NSW State Emergency Service
- PDCN – Physical Disability Council of NSW
- RCO – Resilient Community Organisations toolkit developed by the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS)
- WCAG – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Acknowledgements

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- Dr Filippo Dall'Oso, Project Lead, Hazards Research Group, School of Geosciences (April 2015 – February 2016), University of Sydney

Advisory panel

The project's Advisory Panel comprised of the following agencies who provided advice from a State, National and local perspective on the development of the project.

- Office of Emergency Management, Department of justice
- Australian Red Cross
- Deaf Society of NSW
- Fire and Rescue NSW
- Hawkesbury City Council
- Healthshare NSW
- Local Government NSW
- MidCoast Council (formerly Greater Taree City Council)
- National Disability Services
- NSW Ambulance
- NSW Council for Intellectual Disability
- NSW Council of Social Services
- NSW Family and Community Services
- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW State Emergency Service
- People with Disability Australia
- Physical Disability Council of NSW
- Sutherland Shire Council
- Victorian Council of Social Service



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Disclaimer: The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSW Government, unless the views expressed in the Project materials have been publicly supported by the Government or Government Agency.

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Further information: sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/cdrp/projects/disasterdisab