

Media Release

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NCOSS WELCOMES DISASTER FUNDING TO BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN RIVERS

The NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) has welcomed a \$668,000 funding injection from the Disaster Ready Fund to build disaster preparedness and resilience in the Northern Rivers.

With partners, AbSec and the Local Community Services Association (LCSA), NCOSS' Community Organisations Disaster Adaptation (CODA) project builds disaster resilience and preparedness in communities across NSW and is focused on communities most vulnerable to disaster impacts.

The CODA project will build connections between the community, local social service delivery organisations and Emergency Management authorities to take action to reduce local disaster risks.

NCOSS CEO Cara Varian said this funding is an important step towards properly integrating social services into the disaster management response.

"Natural disasters disproportionately impact the most vulnerable members of society," Ms Varian said.

"A person's income, health, disability, age, geographic location and other factors impact their ability to respond when a disaster strikes.

"To date, the social service sector has had a limited *formal* role in responding to emergencies. But the last five years has demonstrated that social services are intrinsically embedded in a disaster response before, during and after an event.

"This funding will show the value in expanding and *formalising* the NGO sector's role in all phases of disaster management.

"We look forward to delivering greater disaster resilience for communities through collaboration and a strengths-based approach. This project will inform sensible recommendations to the Government and prove the value of the social service sector in the full gamut of disaster preparedness and response."

NCOSS will deliver this program in conjunction with local partners Resilience Lismore, Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre, Kyogle Together, Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre, and Rekindling the Spirit.

Resilience Lismore Executive Director Elly Bird said: "Resilient Lismore is very pleased that the Community Organisations Disaster Adaptation project has been funded in this round of the Disaster Ready Fund.

"Our work during 2024, in the first phase of this project, was highly successful with a lot of engagement by community organisations in the Northern Rivers as we collectively support our communities on their long recovery journey following the region wide disaster in 2022.

"We are looking forward to working alongside all of our stakeholders in the community sector and in emergency management for a further two years, to enhance disaster preparedness in the Northern Rivers."

Can Yasmut, Executive Officer of the LCSA said the organisation welcomes the funding and the recognition this gives to the increasing role Neighbourhood Centres have been taking in disaster management.

"We are excited to continue our partnership with NCOSS and thank them for their leadership in developing the CODA project. It builds on the work NCOSS with the support of LCSA and AbSec have been doing with our members in developing disaster ready community organisations and building resilient communities."

CODA will be rolled out in four locations across NSW: Hawkesbury, Northern Rivers, Eurobodalla and Bega Valley on the South Coast, and the Snowy Monaro.

For more information on NCOSS' work on disaster management and community resilience with its partners, go to www.ncoss.org.au/disaster-capability

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