

Media Release

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NCOSS WELCOMES DISASTER FUNDING TO BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN HAWKESBURY

The NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) has welcomed a \$484,500 funding injection from the Disaster Ready Fund to build disaster preparedness and resilience in the Hawkesbury.

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."

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."

NCOSS will deliver this program in conjunction with local partners Peppercorn Services and Bligh Park Community Services.

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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