



# KEY CAPABILITIES FOR COMMUNITY DISASTER RESILIENCE

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Insights and Practice



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and Owners of the lands on which we work and live across Australia.

This framework and practice guide was created by people living and working on Wurundjeri, Bunurong, Yurabol, Yugara, Turabol, Bindal and Wulgurukaba Countries. It draws on the experience of our Fire to Flourish program, that operates on Bidwell, Brinja-Yuin, Bundjalung, Djiringanj, Gumbaynggirr, Gunaikurnai, Kamilaroi, Monero, Walbunja and Yaegl Country.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and acknowledge the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. We are committed to collaboration that furthers self-determination and creates a better future for all.



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### Images

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# CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. The Six Community Capabilities for Disaster Resilience .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Using the Community Capability Framework .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4. Appendices: The Tools .....</b>	<b>28</b>

## Introducing this guide

This guide has been designed to bridge the theory and practice of disaster resilience capabilities. Readers seeking to understand key capabilities for community disaster resilience – what they are, and what they can look like in action – will find this guide useful. It will also be an invaluable guide for communities and practitioners looking for a series of tools to help assess and strengthen their own disaster resilience capabilities.

**Section 2** of the guide introduces each of the six community capabilities for disaster resilience. Each capability has its own page, describing what the capability is, why it's important, and includes a case study providing a real life example of what that capability can look like in action. There are also reflection questions that communities can ask themselves to begin thinking about how their own actions might be fulfilling that key capability.

**Section 3** provides tools for how community groups, community development practitioners or researchers can put the six capabilities for community disaster resilience into practice. There are examples of why and how this could be done, before introducing a series of suggested tools including: capability tables, capability cards, and a sliding scale that demonstrates how the capability framework can be used to design community initiatives, and for reflection and evaluation over time.

The **Appendices** have the capability tables and the capability cards in printable formats, so that communities and practitioners are able to use them.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

Disasters are becoming more frequent and severe, placing more demands upon communities, government and emergency services alike. This context has highlighted the importance of communities being able to take ownership and lead their preparation and response to local challenges and disasters. Until now, it has been unclear what capabilities communities need or want to have to strengthen their collective resilience to disasters.

What are the capabilities that communities need to strengthen their communities resilience to disasters now and in the future?

Fire to Flourish – a five year philanthropically funded action-research program that emerged in response to the 2019–2020 Australian bushfires – was conceived to enable communities to strengthen their collective

resilience to disaster. The program created a way for communities affected by the bushfires to trial community-led and designed initiatives to support and strengthen community disaster resilience, and to strengthen community capabilities to facilitate their own collaborative actions in the future.

Through this work, and in partnership with communities across Victoria and New South Wales, Australia, we identified six key capabilities that are foundational to community disaster resilience. This practice guide introduces these six capabilities in the form of our Community Disaster Resilience Capability Framework and outlines the purpose and use of the capability reflection tools.



*Six Community Capabilities for Disaster Resilience*

## What is 'capability'?

Capabilities are a combination of skills, knowledge, behaviour and actions, qualities, attitudes and values that can lead towards specified outcomes. The capability approach advocates for enlarging people's choices so that people are able to be or do what they value and have reason to value. It is an approach to community development that focuses on a community's strengths, needs and priorities, encouraging people to have increased agency (or self determination) over their own lives and communities, and to be able to be actively involved in shaping their own futures.

## Why a Capability Framework?

In the aftermath of the 2019–2020 Australian bushfires, it became clear there was renewed interest in community disaster resilience and the need for communities to be able to lead collective action in the wake of disasters. Despite many studies of community resilience, it has remained unclear what capabilities and collective practices are essential for communities to cultivate in order to strengthen and maintain their resilience to disasters. This Capability Framework provides communities with a way to identify the capabilities they need and want to build, and a tool that allows communities to observe the growth of their capabilities over time, allowing for continuous maintenance, innovation, and growth.

The Community Disaster Resilience Capability Framework identifies and defines the capabilities needed for disaster resilience planning, and is applicable to communities, practitioners, agencies, researchers and evaluators alike. It sets out consistent terminology for observing community capabilities and monitoring their changes and growth. It can be used in multiple ways to identify, stimulate and capture the development and strengthening of collective capabilities through community-led activities.

This practice-led framework also addresses a critical gap in our knowledge relating to community recovery and resilience. It aligns with current practice within the disaster sector while also encompassing concepts and values in adjacent fields concerning the importance of transitioning to systems that allow communities to lead their own disaster resilience.

This report and practice guide introduces the Community Disaster Resilience Capability Framework and the way it can inform the design, evaluation, reflection and refinement of community-led approaches and initiatives that exist to strengthen community capabilities in the context of disaster resilience.

## How was the framework developed?

The Community Disaster Resilience Capability Framework was primarily designed and developed by the Fire to Flourish team based on extensive participatory work with communities and with input, expertise and advice from a range of perspectives. It is shaped by observations and learning from across the research program through working directly with communities and engaging with researchers, evaluators, community development practitioners, and Indigenous colleagues and consultants. The final framework combines multiple perspectives, expertise and knowledge.

## Why these capabilities?

The six capabilities that form the Community Disaster Resilience Capability Framework emerged from the context of the Fire to Flourish program. Some of the capabilities are strongly linked to best practice, and a diversity of expertise and experience, literature and research. Other capabilities emerged by considering how the Fire to Flourish principles could inform the capability framework and be applied in community-led initiatives. In this way, the guiding principles of Fire to Flourish were not just aspiration, but were embedded in ways of working that contribute to strengthening the community and their resilience to disasters.

This first edition of the framework identifies the essential ingredients or core elements that, when combined, contribute to strengthening community resilience to disasters. These six key capabilities contribute towards a healthy, flourishing and strong community that is better able to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters and other adversities and to adapt to future changes and challenges. Future editions of the framework may change, expand upon or adapt these capabilities and elements as more communities apply the framework and accompanying tools to their own circumstances.

# 2 THE SIX COMMUNITY CAPABILITIES FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE

The six capabilities are an interlinked set that work towards increasing collective disaster resilience at the community level. While each element or capability can be focused on individually, when viewed as a connected set, these combined capabilities have the potential to strengthen resilience holistically throughout the community. Neither is more important than the other, but together form essential building blocks that underpin collective resilience

## The six capabilities

<b>Cultural safety, integrity and inclusion</b>
Creating safe and meaningful opportunities for cross-cultural understanding and collaborative action
<i>An inclusive community</i>
<b>Indigenous knowledge, experience and practice</b>
Cultural safety for Indigenous peoples reflects the values and aspirations of the Indigenous Community
<i>A community with strong Indigenous knowledge and practice</i>
<b>Building and maintaining networks</b>
Building, holding and maintaining strong and inclusive networks
<i>A connected community</i>
<b>Community disaster resilience knowledge</b>
Generating shared understanding of 'holistic disaster resilience' to inform community disaster resilience planning and practice
<i>A community continuing to prepare for future challenges</i>
<b>Community-led action</b>
Demonstrating the ability and skills to drive collaborative action
<i>An active community working together</i>
<b>Social innovation</b>
Designing, testing and learning in constructive community networks
<i>A community carrying out the best practices for their community</i>



## Cultural safety, integrity and inclusion

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**Cultural safety, integrity and inclusion** is necessary for safe and meaningful opportunities for cross-cultural understanding and collaborative action.

This capability refers to the ability to create safe and meaningful opportunities for cross-cultural understanding and collaborative action. It can be a challenging area, as people naturally tend to remain within their own comfort zones and biases. Cultural safety and inclusion practices require the consideration of those who may find it difficult to participate – whether due to physical disability, language barriers, or cultural beliefs (religious, gender-related, age etc.). These voices are crucial, both for the integrity of the group and the inclusion of diverse perspectives and ideas. It is important to create spaces where people feel safe and supported to share different experiences, knowledge, and understandings; where people are respectful towards all forms of cultural knowledge and practice. How people come together lays a strong foundation for furthering community-led action and disaster resilience.

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### Indicators for this capability

#### *As a community, are we...?*

Creating constructive and respectful spaces that build relationships between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community?

Fostering and promoting the value of different connections and relationships with people and the environment?

Creating and maintaining safe spaces for all people to share knowledge, understanding, and experiences?

Listening deeply and acknowledging past challenges when developing shared goals and priorities that promote reconciliation and strengthen community disaster resilience?

Building a growth mindset where it is safe to try, fail and learn?

Developing productive conflict management skills?



*The team of co-designers gathered to discuss priorities and projects for the Clarence Valley Caring for Country round*

## In Action

Clarence Valley is a heart-shaped Local Government Area in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, encompassing the traditional lands of the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr, and Yaegl peoples. Following the 2019-20 bushfires, the Fire to Flourish community team embarked on an innovative approach to disaster resilience funding, grounded in the Indigenous concept of 'Caring for Country'. The community-led initiative prioritised Indigenous knowledge, ways of working and connection to Country while creating inclusive spaces for participation from all members of the community.

To facilitate the inclusion of all people, the process began with extensive relationship building, recognising that cultural safety cannot be achieved through policies alone but requires genuine connection and trust. The team listened deeply to diverse community stories and experiences and invested time in understanding different cultural protocols and ways of working. This created a design that provided space and opportunity for Aboriginal community members to lead the process in consideration of their communities priorities and needs. The team prioritised ensuring that the process was not just "open to everyone," but was designed in a way that demonstrated genuine inclusion while maintaining cultural protocols.

Decision-making power for funding criteria was placed directly in the hands of Aboriginal community representatives living across Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr

and Yaegl Countries. The Community team facilitated the establishment of clear group agreements with all participants about how everyone would participate in community gatherings and conversations. The agreement was developed collaboratively and was regularly revisited and revised.

The process brought together people from diverse backgrounds across the community who were united by their common commitment to community wellbeing and healthy environments.

Through the Caring for Country and Youth round, the Clarence Valley team engaged with local Aboriginal communities, heard diverse stories, and were mindful of multiple ways of working when designing the process. They encouraged different perspectives to be shared, and for the group to draw upon a variety of decision making approaches.

The community forums provided a constructive and respectful space where people were able to build relationships with people from diverse and different cultural backgrounds, and hear different perspectives and ways of working and living with connection to Country. Agreements negotiated between different community organisations and community participants, ensured that mechanisms were in place to ensure the safe participation of everyone and the opportunity to draw on diverse knowledge to make decisions together as a group.



## Indigenous knowledge, experience and practice

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**Indigenous knowledge, experience and practice** is the creation of culturally safe opportunities to integrate the values, obligations, and aspirations of the Indigenous Community.

This means ensuring that cultural safety for Indigenous peoples reflects the values, obligations and aspirations of the Indigenous community. There is much to learn from Indigenous cultural and traditional practices. When a group actively seeks to include Indigenous community members, practices, and experiences, it can foster stronger, localised outcomes and support the development of ongoing, culturally-informed practices.

This core capability may need to be adapted for other cultural and community contexts. It was designed to be relevant to the Australian context which is reflected in the values, mindsets and behaviours identified in this capability. The specific indicators and proposed examples and evidence of growth may need to be adapted and tailored to other international community and cultural contexts.

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### Indicators for this capability

#### *As a community, are we...?*

Creating an environment where Indigenous people feel safe to identify as being Indigenous?

Creating an environment that is free from racism for Indigenous peoples?

Creating an environment that provides opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage in story telling and shared experiences?

Creating an environment where Indigenous peoples are able to facilitate their cultural practices?

Creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage with local communities on Country?

Acknowledging that Indigenous peoples have the right to be responsible for their own decision-making processes?



*Project Mentors and community members yarning about potential projects for their community. These discussions led to stronger, more diverse projects and ongoing collaborations throughout the community.*

## In Action

The 'Our Country in Healing Hands' granting process in Eurobodalla presented an opportunity for AUD\$1.2 million to be distributed to local community projects, based on community priorities and First Nations wisdom honouring Indigenous knowledge, experience and practice.

The team designed a granting round focused on themes and community priorities identified through community conversations and a First Nations Leadership Gathering focusing on Disaster Resilience. Through continual conversations and yarning, the team ensured that strong governance agreements and Aboriginal ways of working were kept in place. The Eurobodalla process was a transformative approach to disaster resilience that integrated local knowledge and community priorities, with strong Aboriginal leadership and deep holistic thinking around Caring for Country and community.

The granting process was an opportunity to support changing mindsets and share with community members what Caring for Country looks like. Conversations through the workshops and forums created space for

people to learn from others, sharing different ways of working, engaging and Connecting with Country. In addition to learning new skills for granting and project applications, community members demonstrated a new understanding of Caring for Country and its importance when working with Aboriginal people, and how non-Aboriginal people could engage appropriately in this way of living and working too.

Eurobodalla's 'Our Country in Healing Hands' created an environment where Caring for Country was respected and safely shared with extended community members. This new knowledge began to change and shape the design of community initiatives in ways that were more collaborative and holistic, with Caring for Country and community becoming embedded in the design and desired outcomes.

The Eurobodalla experience demonstrates that when Aboriginal knowledge systems are centred rather than marginalised, the resulting programs better serve entire communities while healing Country and building authentic, long-term resilience.



## Building and maintaining networks

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**Building and maintaining networks** focuses on the group's ability to build, hold and sustain strong, inclusive networks.

While a group may initially form around a specific focus, over time it may need to broaden its reach to strengthen connections and collaboration. Creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome is essential, and expanding beyond familiar knowledge or geographic boundaries can further enhance the network's strength and potential.

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### Indicators for this capability

*As a community, are we...?*

Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that promote collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders?

Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to design and achieve collaborative, shared goals?

Developing strong, productive and respectful networks for knowledge sharing and skill development?

Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that foster creativity and generate new ideas?

Developing strong, productive and respectful relationships with local agencies and organisations?

Developing strong, productive and respectful networks with individuals in varying communities?

Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that facilitate resilience planning?



*Community Planners in East Gippsland came together, linking their existing networks and bringing people together to participate in their community resilience planning and granting process.*

## In Action

It is well acknowledged within community experiences and within research evidence that strong social networks and connections (or social capital) can increase community resilience to disasters. But how do we know how connected we are? And how can we build and nurture social connections, especially if your community is dispersed across large distances. How do the types of social connections we have influence communities and their ability to work together to recover from or ready themselves for the next disaster?

East Gippsland is the Local Government Area on the furthest tip of the state of Victoria. The area boasts beautiful natural environments and stunning coastal views alongside rivers and extensive national forests. This natural geography has shaped how people have lived and worked in these environments and has led to townships and communities that are long distances from each other. Communities centred around each town might have strong connections with each other, but these connections do not always extend beyond the town borders, or across the LGA.

The team in East Gippsland was strongly attuned to the types of connections that did or didn't exist across their geographic area when they were faced with the challenge of designing resilience planning and community granting initiatives that would benefit people and places from Orbost to Genoa. Rather than jumping straight into the 'doing', they reflected on the types of connections needed to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach was embedded within any local community resilience initiatives. The team also became aware that after the fires some people simply weren't ready or interested in connecting with others beyond their immediate

community; their connections and social capital had been damaged by the fires as well, and needed nurturing to come back to life.

Growing networks doesn't happen overnight, but through continuing community conversations and assuring people that they were there for the long haul, gradually the team gathered together a group of people from different areas of East Gippsland. When the group started to map their connections they discovered the extent of the networks they already had; they knew or were connected to many different people already, and were able to identify other potential connections from there. The network map reminded them of an old switchboard and the value of a good switchboard operator to make the right connections and keep those connections strong.

By focusing on their individual and community networks, the group was able to discover the social connections they already had, and set about consciously strengthening them and drawing upon them to involve and invite more people into their community resilience planning and granting process. It sparked conversations about having a network of resilience facilitators across the region to help keep conversations about disaster resilience alive in 'peace times' so they are better connected and prepared in an ongoing way.

Through a conscious consideration, and their community resilience and granting process, the East Gippsland team was able to develop and strengthen networks across many small settlements, enabling them to work together to build resilience within their local communities and across the vast geographies of their home in East Gippsland.



## Community disaster resilience knowledge

**Community disaster resilience knowledge** is the generation of a shared understanding of 'holistic disaster resilience' to inform community disaster resilience planning and practice.

This refers to creating a shared understanding of the group's knowledge and skills which will help to identify community members who might have technical matter expertise (e.g. fire scientists, ecologists, behavioural experts), business experience, project management experience or qualifications, or skills for advocacy or writing and applying for grants. These underlying skills and strengths could be identified and ultimately can be combined to help strengthen community initiatives and collective resilience. This capability is more 'content' focused and could be adapted according to the specific environmental challenge or risk that people are focused on and responding to. The capability or indicators could be adapted to address food security, or a drought or heatwave context. This way the capability framework can be tailored to support specific community contexts and environmental or climate challenges.

### Indicators for this capability

*As a community, are we...?*

Creating a shared understanding of the community's knowledge, skills, assets and strengths?

Developing an understanding of the connections between the five resilience domains: social capital, economic wellbeing, physical environment, natural environment, and health and wellbeing?

Strengthening knowledge of how environmental and social changes and trends over time influence disaster risk (hazard, vulnerabilities, exposure)?

Developing a shared understanding of stakeholder influence within the community and beyond?

Identifying opportunities and barriers for positive change that strengthens disaster resilience?

Collaborating on community disaster resilience priorities and actions that strengthen the community's ability to respond, adapt and work towards positive change?



*Tenterfield community members celebrating after the granting decision making event.*

## In Action

In recent years, Tenterfield Shire has faced long-term drought, bushfires in February 2019, the 2019-2020 bushfire season, floods in 2022, and the COVID 19 pandemic. Climate change forecasts indicate that the region is likely to experience more frequent natural hazard events in the future.

Tenterfield community members have shown significant resilience in the face of these disasters. But as the personal resilience of many people is pushed to the limit, strengthening the existing community disaster resilience is a must.

In October 2023, the town of Tenterfield and the surrounding regions experienced further bushfires that resulted in the loss of property, damage to Country and widespread community disruption. Shortly afterwards, Fire to Flourish was invited by local residents to conduct a post-event learning review. The aim was to learn from these events so that the wider community could prioritise high-impact community resilience strengthening initiatives before the next bushfire event.

This process identified lessons on what worked well for community members before, during, and after the bushfires. In turn, these lessons helped community

members develop a clear vision for what they would like to see in the near future when it comes to bushfires:

***Future bushfires in the Tenterfield region will be more predictable, cause less community anxiety, will feature reliable communication, and will be well supported by community agencies. There will be no deaths or injuries. Community projects to increase Tenterfield's bushfire resilience will be designed to ensure they have a legacy going into the future.***

These community members then set priorities for what could be improved for the next time a disaster hits the region. These priorities focused on strengthening community resilience rather than on firefighting operations. Finally, the community priorities were used to identify and fund community projects that supported their priorities.

**For further reading, please see:**

- [A Community-Centred Disaster Learning Review of the 2023 Bushfires in Tenterfield, NSW](#)
- [Community-Based Disaster Learning Review: Practice Guide](#)



## Community-led action

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**Community-led action** demonstrates the ability and skills of communities to drive collaborative action.

Community projects — especially those emerging from government-supported or externally facilitated programs — may initially be led by external groups with funding and facilitation from outside of the community. These initiatives, while well intentioned, have at times been controlled and directed by external organisations and programs, without appropriately including local community knowledge and direction in project design and decisions. Over time, the goal is for these initiatives to become genuinely collaborative and community-led, with the community ultimately driving decision-making and direction leading to local action.

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### Indicators for this capability

*As a community, are we...?*

Constructively deliberating, discussing and prioritising ideas?

Generating and applying ideas, collective learning and creativity to enhance community led initiatives?

Incorporating local knowledge and practices into community-led initiatives?

Activating existing strengths, assets and leadership in communities?

Supporting peer to peer learning through the disaster resilience journey?

Developing processes of accountability and transparency?

Sharing learning and developments with the broader community?



*The DisasterWISE team sharing their network and the value of community-led action.*

## In Action

In a time of increasing disasters and climate crisis, DisasterWISE provides a place for connection and learning, and enables people to build stronger, inclusive and thriving communities. In recognition of the expertise and existing strengths, assets, connections and leadership that already exists within communities, community-led action is fundamental to DisasterWISE and the type of movement they are supporting to grow and thrive.

DisasterWISE was seeded in 2022, when a small group of 12 co-designers who met to imagine and co-design a learning network for disaster-impacted communities. Some of the first members of the network have lived-experience of disasters and their aftermath, which strengthened their belief in the importance of enabling communities to take action through resilience building initiatives and lead their own recovery.

In 2023, DisasterWISE emerged as a dynamic communities network founded on the idea that resilience is not built through top-down systems and interventions, but through relationships and connections that see community members willingly show up for each other,

take action, provide support, and share insights and learning with others. By harnessing local knowledge and strengths, communities can create opportunities for self-determination and build long-term resilience within their local context genuinely aligns with their aspirations.

This understanding has continued to shape DisasterWISE initiatives and the types of support and learning opportunities they create for people across a variety of communities and backgrounds.

DisasterWISE demonstrates the importance of keeping community at the centre of conversations and decisions that impact their wellbeing and shows how community-led action, self determination and local agency can transform and enhance community disaster resilience. The formation of the network, its growth and the interest and excitement it sparks in others reflects the increasing recognition of the importance of community-led disaster resilience initiatives. DisasterWISE is a shining example of what can happen when communities take the lead.



## Social innovation

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**Social innovation** refers to the capability of a group to design, test, and learn within constructive community networks. It enables innovative thinking, experimentation with new ideas, and the integration of new knowledge and processes across community networks, often making the process engaging and energising. This capacity allows the group to grow together, refine their ways of working, and generate new ideas. It also supports the expansion of activities, learning from other communities and their projects, and creating meaningful opportunities for connection.

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### Indicators for this capability

*As a community, are we...?*

Advancing opportunities with communities to influence the outcomes of system level processes which impact them?

Using data, evidence and community voice to develop new initiatives that work towards sustainable futures?

Trialling new co-designed initiatives to influence community disaster resilience and project development?

Using collaborative approaches to evaluate projects?

Using evaluation findings to reset community priorities and visions?

## In Action

Social Innovation can feel like a tricky capability to grow, but when seen in action there is no doubting the transformative potential of communities working together to achieve their goals in new and creative ways.

The Fire to Flourish Placemaking initiatives in Clarence Valley embodied social innovation. Following the 2019–2020 Australian bushfires, four communities across Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl Country in the Clarence Valley engaged in a placemaking process to strengthen their long-term disaster resilience.

The Fire to Flourish placemaking process flipped conventional disaster planning methods by starting with a focus on community strengths and assets. Creative methods like walking, photography, mapping with tactile materials, and Indigenous-led 'yarning circles' were used to encourage communities to identify their own strengths and priorities. It was a genuine process of collaborative design where local knowledge shaped every decision.

Engagement with the placemaking process grew from an initial 127 workshop participants to over 400 people voting on the final project proposals. This increased engagement showed communities taking ownership of the process, moving from passive recipients to active innovators.

New networks, connections and forms of social capital were forged through placemaking initiatives that brought together local residents, the local community team, Indigenous Elders, researchers and a group of architecture and urban planning postgraduate students. The collaborative team were able to work together to find new solutions and approaches to meeting the communities needs, desires and their vision for a resilient community. These networks have persisted beyond the formal program, with communities using placemaking assets and frameworks for their ongoing initiatives.

The program catalysed conversations that moved disaster resilience thinking beyond times of crisis and into everyday community life. Local councils gained confidence to support projects, and communities developed advocacy skills and experience working with formal planning processes.

The social innovations facilitated by the Placemaking program, that foregrounded considerations about place and community, allowed community members to come together to explore, discuss and prioritise ideas in innovative ways. They were then able to work constructively together to learn, test, review, and design upgraded community spaces to strengthen their long-term disaster resilience.



*Woombah's innovative decision-making processes led to the development of a multi-purpose space that met the everyday and emergency needs of the community. Over months of collaboration and exchange a design was settled on that was "uber practical" and low-maintenance, using steel and concrete to withstand bushfires and floods while maximizing natural light and borrowing from local vernacular architecture.*



*In Woombah, the group were clear about articulating what their community needed, while listening to expert knowledge and advice. Through listening, conversation and compromise, a solution and design was arrived at that meant the community was heard and listened to all along throughout the process.*

For further reading, please see:

- [Placemaking Clarence Valley](#)
- [Placemaking as a Catalyst for Building Resilience](#)
- [Community Placemaking Sessions](#)

# 3 USING THE COMMUNITY CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

## Who can use the framework?

The Community Disaster Resilience Capability Framework is adaptable and can be used by many different people and groups.

**Community groups** such as Landcare groups, environmental groups, or fire or emergency planning groups, can use the capability tools to prompt discussions about their current and future goals, or to consider what they are doing well and what they might like to focus on in the future. The framework and tools can help communities see positive growth and change occurring, or to pinpoint areas that may benefit from further attention.

**Practitioners** such as community resilience officers (e.g., in local councils or a government agency) could use the capability framework to learn more about a specific community and identify key priorities to include or address in projects and activities. They could also use the capability framework and accompanying tools to prompt community groups to reflect on what's working well, and where there might be areas to focus on going forward. The insights revealed while using the capability framework could also help inform and shape practitioner work practices.

**Researchers or evaluators** can use the capability framework to capture consistent observations across a variety of key capabilities. It can also inform research questions to be used in interviews or surveys.

## What can the framework be used for?

The Community Disaster Resilience Capability Framework is adaptable and designed for any community to use in multiple ways in their local contexts. It has three primary purposes: to support design, reflection, and evaluation by capturing signs of progress and change.

**Design:** The capability framework can inform the design of community activities and initiatives that seek to strengthen community resilience to disasters. Each capability can be engaged with by asking a suite of related 'how are we' or 'how can we' questions to inform the design of

resilience-strengthening initiatives and activities. The framework could be used in this way by community groups or practitioners working with communities.

**Reflection:** The capability framework and tools can be used as a reflective tool to encourage groups to reflect and consider how their group is going, what they have learnt, what skills they have developed, and what they want to do next. Reflection can enable a group to identify what is working well and what could be done differently or improved. This can lead to further refinement of projects and priorities and to support the development of new initiatives.

Ongoing reflection and refinement over time can help to ensure that people are working together and learning from each other to continue to strengthen community resilience to disasters and other challenges. The framework is designed to facilitate reflection and learning, encouraging groups to work together to continually refine and reset activities as needed to ensure community-led action and initiatives will continue to strengthen and maintain a connected and resilient community.

**Evaluation and capturing change:** The framework can be used to capture signs of change and growth within communities. The framework's six capabilities provide a consistent set of key capabilities and indicators that enable communities and practitioners to observe, capture and monitor signs of change and development. The set of capabilities helps focus observations on change occurring over time, and spotlights activities, skills, values and behaviours that are expected to support the strengthening of community disaster resilience.

Communities can use this framework to monitor and discuss their own progress. Capturing signs of change over time is likely to be more effective and valued when groups have had time and opportunity to adapt and tailor the framework to their local context. This will ensure that the framework and growth tables are capturing things that are of value to and valued by the community and that they see as signs of success. This capability framework offers a way that communities can be engaged in identifying signs of success and change themselves.

**It is important to remember that no two communities are the same and so it is often unwise to compare one to another. In recognition of this, this tool has been designed to accommodate the unique characteristics of each community—including differences in composition, pace, challenges, lived experience, local knowledge and expertise.**

### When could the framework be used?

The framework and tools can be used regularly (for example, every 3–6 months) to see the change occurring across different capabilities over time in response to community initiatives and activities.

It can also be used retrospectively (e.g. “What was our capability last year?”), to reflect the current state (“What is our capability now?”), and in an anticipatory manner to set goals (“Where we would like to be in the future?”).

Community groups could use the framework as a tool to prompt discussions about their current and future goals, or to consider what they are doing well and what they might like to focus on in the future. It also helps to see positive growth or unexpected negative outcomes, and to pinpoint what might need further refinement and iteration in order to meet their goals and priorities.

### Balancing Collective and Individual Capabilities

This Capability Framework was designed to capture collective capability developments rather than to assess individual capabilities, however, collective and individual capabilities are often interconnected. The framework and tools can be used in alternative ways to acknowledge this interconnection between collective and individual capabilities.

**Individual reflection as part of a group:** To begin, each individual member of the group is invited to reflect on where they see the group, using the Capability Growth Tables. These individual reflections can then be shared with the group. This might be done anonymously or through conversation. The group can then have a discussion based on this information and these reflections. This will help the group to identify collective strengths and key areas for growth.

**Group reflection:** Group discussions are a valuable way to identify future priorities, current concerns, and to celebrate the strengths within the group. By having group discussions, the focus is placed on how the group and community can continue to grow and strengthen collective resilience and collective capabilities (rather than upon individuals). It is important to avoid critiquing individual performance, and instead focus on how the group can work together to strengthen and grow collective capabilities.

**Personal reflection:** If members of the group wish to reflect on their own personal capabilities and personal growth, they could use the capability framework in their own time to consider how they are growing their own personal capabilities and skills. Instead of asking ‘Are we’, an individual could ask ‘Am I’ or ‘How can I’ when engaging with the Capability Growth Tables. This individual reflection activity would highlight for each person how they can contribute to the whole group, and how their unique strengths and skills are valued.



## How can the framework be used to capture growth?

The Capability Framework has been adapted into tools that communities, practitioners, researchers and evaluators can use to understand and capture community capability development over time.

Because the six capabilities of the Community Disaster Resilience Capability Framework are ‘big picture’ themes, each capability has been broken down into 5–7 prompts or indicators that offer more detail and provide an example of the types of values, skills, knowledge, activities and actions for the overall capability.

The indicators were designed to capture not just group values or mindsets, but how this was seen in action and demonstrated in the behaviour or initiatives of the group – essentially highlighting what and how groups might act and respond in response to shared visions and priorities.

Each of the six Capability Growth Tables consists of 5–7 indicators and suggested definitions or examples to allow groups to decide what stage they are in their journey. The indicators can be used to encourage reflection, and to support groups to observe signs of change and growth against four phases of growth within each capability:

	1	2	3	4
Capability Indicator	<b>Latent</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Developing and Evolving</b>	<b>Excelling</b>
Meaning/ Definition	The capability is not yet developed	The capability is developing and there are signs of future potential	The capability is demonstrated at least some of the time	The capability is regularly practised and there is evidence of continuous improvement

**Four Phases of Growth:** Groups may adapt or change the titles or definitions to better suit their community context. These phases of growth are represented by the ‘Growth Indicator’ Capability Cards.



Community members in Eurobodalla gathering to discuss potential community projects. They considered the strengths of each project, its' alignment with community needs and priorities, and any areas for improvement or refinement.

## How to use the Capability Growth Tables

The Capability Growth Tables can be used as a prompt for discussion and a way to reflect on the group's capabilities. Community groups are invited to reflect on where their team/community sits for each of the six capabilities. Groups may have different starting points for each capability and indicator. Although views of progression and strengths may differ within the group, the idea is to repeat the activity over time to capture the direction of movement across the phases of growth in capability.

Talking through the growth phases for each indicator can encourage group reflection by providing examples to help facilitate discussion and deliberation within the group about their progress and initiatives, to motivate further collective action towards their goals and priorities. The activity will be more valuable and have more support from the group if they have been part of the discussions and adaptation of definition of the growth phrases to their local context; this way they can see their group's and community's progress towards their own tailored goals and signs of success.

This Capability Framework was designed to encourage and observe strengthening community disaster resilience, and so is not intended to specify and identify all the skills and capabilities that ultimately contribute to a resilient community. Each community is unique and only the members of each community can determine what is important within their context. Make this yours.

## Adapting the Capabilities and Indicators

It is important that the group collaboratively considers and discusses whether the definitions and evidence of success for the indicators are a good fit for their local context.

Some initial activities such as collectively brainstorming the community's priorities and concerns can help guide subsequent discussions and identification of strengths and needs, and the capabilities needed to do this work. The Capability Framework can then be used to identify and fill in the strengths and gaps.

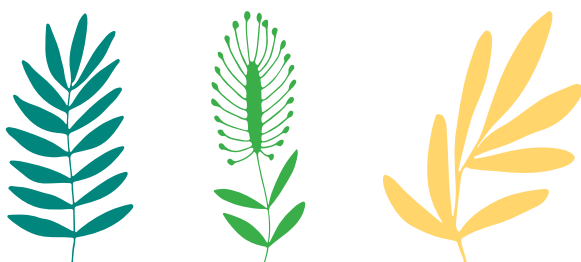
These group discussions are an important step in bringing everyone together and onto the same page. This way progress can be seen in how key priorities or concerns are being addressed.

Please note that the 'evidence' suggested for each indicator and growth phase in the tables might not be a good fit for every community context. The definitions and examples can be tailored to better reflect the local community and the types of priorities, skills, values and activities the community wants to develop and best represent the community's progress. Some definitions will be a good fit 'as-is', while others will need to be modified to be relevant.

### Hint: Blank Capability Growth Tables

Blank Capability Growth Tables are provided at the end of this report to make it easy for groups to fill out the expected growth examples and adapt the growth tables and evidence as needed for their community and initiatives.

Below are examples of Capability Growth Tables for each capability and set of indicators. They include the types of 'evidence' or activities that might occur within each indicator during the different phases of growth. These examples are provided to help facilitate discussion and deliberation within the group, and can be adapted by the group to their local context.



## CULTURAL SAFETY, INTEGRITY AND INCLUSION

Are we...?	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
<b>Creating constructive and respectful environments that build relationships between people of all cultural and diverse backgrounds?</b>	There is limited evidence that the group is creating environments to build relationships between people of all cultural and diverse backgrounds	The group is aware of the importance of creating environments to build relationships between people of all cultural and diverse backgrounds	The group values creating environments to build relationships between people of all cultural and diverse backgrounds	The group is continuously creating and maintaining constructive and respectful spaces where people are able to build relationships with people of all cultural and diverse backgrounds
<b>Fostering and promoting the value of different connections and relationships with people and the environment?</b>	Limited awareness within the group of the significance of different connections and relationships with people and the environment	The group is acknowledging the stories of others and understanding the different connections and relationships with people and the environment	By learning and listening to the stories of others, the group is developing an appreciation for different perspectives, practices and worldviews which influences their engagement with people and the environment	There is evidence of awareness and greater engagement through understanding and valuing different perspectives, connections and ways of relating to people and environments within the group
<b>Creating and maintaining safe spaces for all people to share knowledge, understanding, and experiences?</b>	The group has limited understanding of how to create safe spaces for people with different cultural perspectives	There is evidence that the group is respectful of a diverse range of stories and knowledge within the community	There is evidence that the group is creating spaces that are inclusive for all members of the community	The group has created safe spaces that encourage the active participation and contribution of groups who have been excluded from decision making processes in the past
<b>Acknowledging past challenges when developing shared goals and priorities that promote reconciliation and strengthen community disaster resilience?</b>	There are no opportunities within the group for learning from others' experiences	The group values and respects the contributions of people from diverse backgrounds or communities	The group is creating opportunities for all people to contribute to decision making processes	The group has ensured that innovations, granting, and resource allocation furthered self-determination for all members of the community (Indigenous and non-Indigenous)
<b>Developing a growth mindset where it is safe to try, fail and learn?</b>	There is no evidence to suggest the group has strategies to recover from failures	The group is identifying culturally safe ways to a) respond to failure and b) incorporate new learnings into practice	The group is developing culturally safe strategies for responding to challenges and identifying ways to build knowledge from failures into future practice	The group is actively implementing new approaches to create safe spaces and inviting constructive feedback from the community
<b>Developing productive conflict management skills?</b>	There is no evidence of conflict management practices developing in the group at this point	The group is identifying how to recognise and resolve differences	The group is learning to navigate tensions/disagreements/conflict in productive ways	The group is confidently using productive conflict management skills

## INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

Are we...?	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
Creating an environment where Indigenous peoples feel safe to identify as being Indigenous?	There is limited understanding within the group that environments may not feel safe for everyone	The group is actively learning about ways to create environments where people feel comfortable to identify as Indigenous	The group is incorporating learning to create environments where people feel comfortable to identify as Indigenous	The group is continuing to adjust practices that influence environments to ensure people feel safe and supported to identify as Indigenous
Creating an environment that is free from racism for Indigenous peoples?	Limited understanding within the group of the impacts of racism or discrimination experienced by Indigenous peoples within the community	The group is learning to identify racism and discrimination that might be present or have been experienced by Indigenous peoples within the community	The group is actively developing ways to ensure all environments are free from racism for Indigenous peoples	The group is routinely creating and maintaining environments that are free from racism for Indigenous peoples, where courteous, respectful and nondiscriminatory behaviour is consistency displayed and fostered
Creating an environment that provides opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage in story telling and shared experiences?	Limited understanding within the group of the importance of engaging in story telling and shared experiences	The group is aware of the importance that storytelling and shared experiences play in developing connections for Indigenous peoples	The group actively promotes a willingness for Indigenous peoples to engage in storytelling and shared experiences	The experiences and stories of the Indigenous community are valued and respected by the group
Creating an environment where Indigenous peoples are able to facilitate their cultural practices?	Limited awareness within the group regarding the opportunities for Indigenous peoples to develop their cultural practices	The group is listening to and learning about Indigenous histories, experiences and cultural practices	The group is creating and maintaining safe spaces and environments for people to appropriately share and learn about cultural knowledge, experiences and practices	The group is continuing to create environments where Indigenous peoples feel safe and supported to express their cultural practices
Creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage with local communities on Country?	Limited awareness within the group about the opportunities to engage with local communities on Country	The group is listening and learning from Indigenous people about engaging with local communities on Country	The group is creating an environment for Indigenous people that facilitates connections to Country	The group is continuing to create opportunities for Indigenous people to engage with local communities on Country
Indigenous people have the right to be responsible for their own decision-making processes?	The group does not value the need for Indigenous people to be responsible for their own decision-making processes	The group is beginning to recognise the importance of Indigenous people being responsible for their own decision-making processes	The group is facilitating safe spaces where Indigenous people can take ownership of decision-making processes	The group continually values and ensures Indigenous people are responsible for their own decision-making processes

## BUILDING AND MAINTAINING NETWORKS

Are we...?	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that promote collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders?	The group is not yet providing opportunities for collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders	The group is identifying opportunities for collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders	The group is creating opportunities for collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders	The group continuously values and maintains positive collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders
Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to design and achieve collaborative, shared goals?	The group is not yet bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to build connections or shared goals	The group is beginning to meet with people from diverse backgrounds to discuss and design shared goals and collaborative actions	The group is providing opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to meet to design shared goals and achieve collaborative actions	People from diverse backgrounds within the broader community come together regularly to contribute to achieving shared goals
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks for knowledge sharing and skill development?	Limited opportunities to share knowledge or skills exist within the group	The group is creating new opportunities to share knowledge and skills	Opportunities to share knowledge and skills are embraced and encouraged within the group	Knowledge is shared and exchanged productively and skills are strengthened via respectful relationships within the group and the broader community
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that foster creativity and generate new ideas?	Some group members are uncomfortable with sharing new ideas	The group is beginning to share knowledge to encourage the development of new ideas	Networks beyond the group are frequently being used to generate new ideas	group and broader community networks are actively and routinely engaging with new ideas
Developing strong, productive and respectful relationships with local agencies and organisations?	Existing group networks are not valuing respectful relationships with local agencies and organisations	The group is identifying key agencies and organisations and forging productive relationships	The group is developing connections with local agencies and organisations and creating partnerships	Reciprocal relationships between the group and multiple local agencies and organisations are resulting in the collaboration of shared goals
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks with individuals in varying communities?	Limited group connections exist beyond the local context	The group is identifying and seeking opportunities to connect with others beyond local community networks	The group is frequently connecting with individuals, communities, organisations and agencies beyond the local community	The group is regularly and routinely connecting with a diversity of people, groups and organisations
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that facilitate resilience planning?	Limited ability to incorporate resilience planning skills within the group	The group is engaging with others to create connections and partnerships around community resilience planning and priorities	The group is developing and activating networks that enhance community resilience planning	The group is actively connecting, and leveraging support for community-led disaster resilience priorities at system levels through multiple networks

<b>Are we...?</b>	<b>Latent</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Excelling</b>
<b>Creating a shared understanding of the community's knowledge, skills, assets and strengths?</b>	Limited awareness or identification of existing skills, strengths and assets within the group	The group is beginning to identify existing skills, strengths and assets within local community	The group is creating and documenting a shared understanding of community knowledge, strengths, skills and assets	The group is applying community's knowledge, skills, strengths and assets to inform resilience planning
<b>Developing an understanding of the connections between the five resilience domains; social capital, economic wellbeing, physical environment, natural environment, and health and wellbeing?</b>	Limited opportunities for identifying connections between the five resilience domains: social capital, economic wellbeing, physical environment, natural environment, and health and wellbeing	The group is beginning to identify opportunities for connections between the five resilience domains: social capital, economic wellbeing, physical environment, natural environment, and health and wellbeing	The group is developing an understanding of the connections between the five resilience domains: social capital, economic wellbeing, physical environment, natural environment, and health and wellbeing	The group are applying a shared and 'holistic' understanding of the connections between the five resilience domains to inform resilience planning
<b>Strengthening knowledge of how environmental and social changes and trends over time influence disaster risk (hazard, vulnerabilities, exposure)?</b>	Within the group, there is limited knowledge of how social and environmental changes and trends influence disaster risk	The group is identifying how social and environmental actions and trends influence disaster risk	The group is developing knowledge of how social and environmental actions and trends influence disaster risk	The group is using acquired knowledge of disaster risk and its connection to other system elements (e.g. disaster management system, and wellbeing) to inform resilience planning
<b>Developing a shared understanding of stakeholder influence within the community and beyond?</b>	The group has no awareness of 'key stakeholders' within the community, and limited knowledge beyond the local context	The group is identifying individuals, groups, agencies and organisations who have the potential to influence change through the community and beyond	The group has identified who has influence over resources and policy, and how to influence this to effect change	The group acknowledges the influence that key stakeholders have in advocating for system change and is working collaboratively with them on community resilience planning goals and activities
<b>Identifying opportunities and barriers for positive change that strengthens disaster resilience?</b>	The group is unable to see pathways for change, or feels like they cannot influence change or initiate action	The group is beginning to identify barriers and challenges alongside opportunities that strengthen disaster resilience?	The group understands the barriers and challenges associated with strengthening disaster resilience	The group has identified and documented opportunities, challenges, barriers and additional resources needed to support positive change that strengthens disaster resilience
<b>Collaborating on community disaster resilience priorities and actions that strengthen the community's ability to respond, adapt and work towards positive change?</b>	Within the group, there are no processes in place for generating shared vision/priority actions for community disaster resilience	The group is beginning to identify visions and priorities for their community's disaster resilience	The group is generating shared visions and priority actions for community disaster resilience through collaboration with the broader community	The group has agreement upon shared vision and priority actions for community disaster resilience, and is implementing them to strengthen the community's ability to respond, adapt and work towards positive change

<b>Are we...?</b>	<b>Latent</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Excelling</b>
<b>Generating and applying ideas, collective learning and creativity to enhance community led initiatives?</b>	The group is unable to facilitate the community to influence and initiate change	The group is beginning to facilitate the community to influence and initiate change	The group connects and meets regularly with the community to discuss ideas and develop and implement resilience planning activities	The group and broader community are actively meeting to apply new ideas and incorporate new learning to foster community resilience through co-design
<b>Constructively deliberating, discussing and prioritising ideas?</b>	The group feels disconnected from decision making processes and does not have the capacity to work collaboratively with one another	The group is listening to, reflecting upon, and discussing ideas with one another to promote shared decision making processes	The group is engaging in constructive deliberation and participatory decision making	The group is confidently deliberating, discussing and prioritising ideas that align with shared decision making for community resilience
<b>Incorporating local knowledge and practices into community-led initiatives?</b>	Group initiatives are applied without acknowledgement of the local contexts	The group recognises that local knowledge and practice should inform the types of community led resilience initiatives	The group is designing community-led resilience initiatives that incorporate local knowledge and practice, that also draw inspiration from other sources of information, knowledge and experience	The group is working in partnership to advance community-led resilience initiatives by incorporating local knowledge and practices
<b>Activating the existing strengths, assets and leadership in communities?</b>	Skills and strengths within the group are dormant or exist but people are unsure if they are valued	The group is embracing opportunities to strengthen and apply existing knowledge and skills	The group is cultivating, strengthening and sharing individual and collective skills	The group is facilitating the design, leadership and collaboration of community resilience projects with the broader community
<b>Supporting peer to peer mentoring and learning through the disaster resilience journey?</b>	Limited opportunities exist within the group for promotion of connection, mentoring and learning	The group is beginning to identify and incorporate an environment of mentoring and learning into their processes	The group actively cultivates mentoring and learning processes	Mentoring and learning processes are valued and fostered within the group that guide plans for change, succession, leadership and growth
<b>Developing processes of accountability and transparency?</b>	Lack of clear processes within the group	The group are beginning to value and facilitate the design of accountable and transparent processes	The group is starting to test and use community processes of accountability and transparency	Agreed community governance arrangements are in place, used and refreshed to ensure accountability and transparency
<b>Sharing learning and developments with the broader community?</b>	Limited communication pathways exist or are used between broader community and the group	Communication pathways are being created and used by the group to share information and news with the community	The group encourages learning, reflection, and feedback about what is working well, and what might work better, and shares this (where appropriate) with the community	The group maintains transparent communication processes by sharing positive and negative outcomes and lessons learnt with the community, listening to feedback, and adapting accordingly

## SOCIAL INNOVATION

Are we...?	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
Partnering with communities to advance opportunities to influence the decisions and systems that affect their lives?	The group is not yet working collaboratively with community members to identify system changes they would like to shape	The group is identifying strategies to influence change at system levels (e.g. beyond their local context) that are in line with collectively held visions and priorities with community	The group is actively leveraging influence and advocating to facilitate system level changes that will positively affect them	The group is advancing opportunities to influence decisions and system level changes to strengthen their community
Using data, evidence and community voice to develop new initiatives that work towards sustainable futures?	There is limited use of data, evidence and community voice to inform design-thinking or decision-making within the group	The group in collaboration with community is gathering data, evidence and community voice to develop new initiatives that work towards a sustainable future	The group in collaboration with community is documenting data and priority actions in an accessible, compelling format to be used to influence system change for sustainable futures	The group in collaboration with community is using collected data and evidence to design, refine and implement new community disaster resilience initiatives for a sustainable future
Trialling new co-designed initiatives to influence community disaster resilience and project development?	The group has limited capacity to influence community disaster resilience and project development?	Co-designed and collectively agreed visions and resilience priorities shape the team's discussion and prioritisation of ideas, innovations and projects	The group is designing, testing and refining approaches based on data, evidence and community strengths and assets	The group is implementing new initiatives and strategies that influence community disaster resilience and project development
Using collaborative approaches to review projects?	The group is not yet identifying the need for collaborative evaluation processes	The group is contributing to collaborative evaluation strategies	The group is refining evaluation methods using collaborative strategies	The group is using agreed upon collaborative approaches to monitor and evaluate projects
Using evaluation findings to review community priorities and visions?	Evaluation methods are in place but the information and reflections are not being used by the group	The group has systems in place to ensure evaluation and reflections are shared and discussed with the group	Evaluation findings shape the team's refinement and redirection of community priorities and visions	The group is actively incorporating the evaluation findings to refine existing and future projects

## How can the framework be applied and put into practice?

The capability framework can be adapted into different tools to facilitate the types of conversations or evidence generation required, and importantly, to suit the different groups using the tool. Some suggestions are provided below. See the appendices for more information and instructions.

Tool	Description	Potential
Capability Cards	<p>'Capability cards' can be used to prompt discussion and enable groups to consider their strengths, areas for growth, and how they are progressing.</p> <p>There are many ways to use the cards. One option is to use the capability cards to create a matrix and sliding scale. To do this, 'Growth Indicator' cards are chosen from the pack and placed horizontally next to each other to indicate different stages of growth. Groups can then discuss each Capability Card (or indicator) and place it underneath the 'Growth Indicator' card they feel most accurately reflects where the group is.</p> <p>The 'Capability Cards' are also useful as design prompts.</p> <p>Example: Have you considered how the group will ensure the workshop creates a safe space for all people</p>	Reflection, Evaluation & Design
Sliding Scale	<p>Groups can move the 'indicators' or 'capability cards' around along a sliding scale and place them where they feel best visually represents the group.</p> <p>For example, groups can discuss 'where are we' for each capability indicator and place it on a scale of: Don't know, not yet, okay, developing, or excelling.</p> <p>(See above for how the Capability Cards can support this activity)</p>	Reflection & Evaluation
Capability Tables	<p>Print the six tables and highlight the relevant portion (or place counters on it) after a discussion to show where the group feels they are.</p>	Design, Reflection & Evaluation
Research Tools	<p>Use the capability framework to capture consistent evidence of capability development over time.</p> <p>The questions from the framework can be adapted and modified to be included in interview guides, questionnaires, surveys, or other research tools.</p>	Design, Reflection & Evaluation
Design Tool	<p>Use the framework to identify key priorities and strengths to include or address in their projects and activities</p>	Design

## For Researchers

Purpose	Description
Research design	Use the framework to develop interview questions and guides, questionnaires and surveys. This provides a consistent set of guiding questions across a range of research tools.
Notetaking, observation and analysis	The framework can guide and structure observations of group workshops and activities. It can then be used for retrospective analysis of group activities and workshops.
Analysis, evaluation and reporting	The framework and tools enable consistent evidence generation along key capabilities and indicators that can be used to evaluate community initiatives and projects. The capabilities can also provide a structure for reports and analysis from across a variety of research projects, and the insights can facilitate the refinement of future community initiatives and research projects.

## For Organisations

Purpose	Description
Approach	This framework can be used to support organisations and facilitators working with communities to ensure a place-based approach that prioritises community knowledge and addresses their priorities and concerns.
Building internal capability	The framework can be used for team members who may be new to engaging directly with communities as a structured approach that to build internal organisational capability to support place-based and community-led approaches.
Project design and prioritisation	The framework can shape the design of community projects and initiatives. For instance, projects can be designed to ensure that they will strengthen and draw upon the six capabilities. The six capabilities could be used to determine the types of projects that will be prioritised and supported.
Reporting and acquittal	When used throughout the entire project journey (from design through to finishing a project), the framework can provide a structure for reporting on and acquitting projects and activities (if required). The framework enables consistent collection of information about the key capabilities that can be used to evaluate the work and shape and refine future projects.

# APPENDICES: THE TOOLS

*East Gippsland; Source: Gretel Evans, Fire to Flourish*

# NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

## Terms

**Co-design:** Co-design means ‘collaborative design’. It is a methodology for actively engaging a broad range of people directly involved in an issue, place or process in its design and sometimes also in its implementation. It is about engaging people into the design of improvements, innovations and impacts - drawing together their collective experiences to build services and outcomes that are as good as they can possibly be.

**Community:** A social group with a commonality of association and generally defined by location, shared experience, or function and with some things in common, such as culture, heritage, language, ethnicity, pastimes, occupation, or workplace.

**Community-led:** The community leads the process and works with partners to develop solutions to problems that it identifies. Community-led approaches are locally led and owned, centre community voice, include marginalised groups, build authentic relationships and empower communities to lead.

**Disaster resilience:** Disaster resilience is defined as “The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.”

**Community resilience:** Community resilience refers to communities developing and engaging their understanding of systems relationships, identifying strengths and networks, and self-organizing collective action “to respond to and influence change, to sustain and renew the community” and “thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise” (Berkes & Ross, 2013; Magis, 2010, 402).

**Resilience Domains:** Disaster resilience is increasingly understood as a multidimensional concept. In Fire to Flourish, five resilience domains were identified that collectively represent a holistic approach to resilience. These themes inform the development of local resilience planning and initiatives, and guide knowledge generation focus, including impact evaluation. The resilience domains are:

**Health and wellbeing:** Mental and physical health, knowledge, access to services (education; social services etc).

**Social capital:** Our people, connections and networks, cultures, knowledges and skills, access to decision-making and resources, government. See also ‘Social capital’.

**Economic wellbeing:** Our economies — agriculture, tourism, local businesses, the economic health and diversity of these, access to individual and collective financial resources.

**Natural environment:** Features and values of our landscapes, climate, vegetation, natural hazards, recurring natural events, the natural resource base and its sustainability.

**Built environment:** Housing and other built assets, roads, lifeline infrastructures (communications, water, power, waste management etc).

**Social Capital:** ‘Social capital’ refers to the connections, reciprocity and trust among people and groups. There are three types of social capital: bonding (strong ties between similar people, e.g. family and friends), bridging (looser ties between a broader range of people, often cutting across race, gender and class) and linking (ties connecting people with those in power, such as decision-makers). These norms and networks facilitate collective action, and involvement and participation in groups can have positive consequences for both the individual and the community.

**Strengths-based approach:** Drawing on approaches from fields including community development, health and social work, strengths-based approaches to disaster resilience focus on the capacities and resources that people and communities have, and how these can be drawn upon and developed to increase resilience, rather than focusing on deficits, needs and vulnerabilities.

**Systems Change:** Systems change has been defined as, “shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place.” It is about looking beyond any single organisation to understand the system by identifying all the actors involved, exploring the relationships between these actors, the distribution of power, the institutional norms and constraints within which they operate, and the attitudes and assumptions that influence decisions.

## Notes

1. The term ‘Indigenous’ is used as a collective term to refer to all Indigenous cultural groups examined within the literature including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The author/s acknowledges the diversity of people, encompassed in this term.

2. ‘Place’ is a significant theme throughout the framework, often referring to the local community and suggesting a specific geographic area or boundary. Place-based groups, assets, and challenges are woven throughout the framework—not always as standalone capabilities or indicators, but as essential elements that shape community disaster resilience. Place is deeply influenced and bounded by the surrounding environment, and its importance is reflected across all aspects of this capability framework.

# APPENDIX: CAPABILITY PUZZLE

The Capability Puzzle is a bonus tool that adapts the six capabilities into a game.

The Capability Puzzle can be used as a warm up activity or a way to introduce the group to the six capabilities.

## **A scavenger hunt**

Hide each individual puzzle piece around a room or space. Let the group go on a scavenger hunt and try to find the pieces and assemble the puzzle.

For a big group you might print multiple puzzles so the group can split into teams and see who can find a full set of puzzle pieces and assemble their puzzle first!

Let your imagination go wild! Be Creative!

**Building and  
maintaining networks**

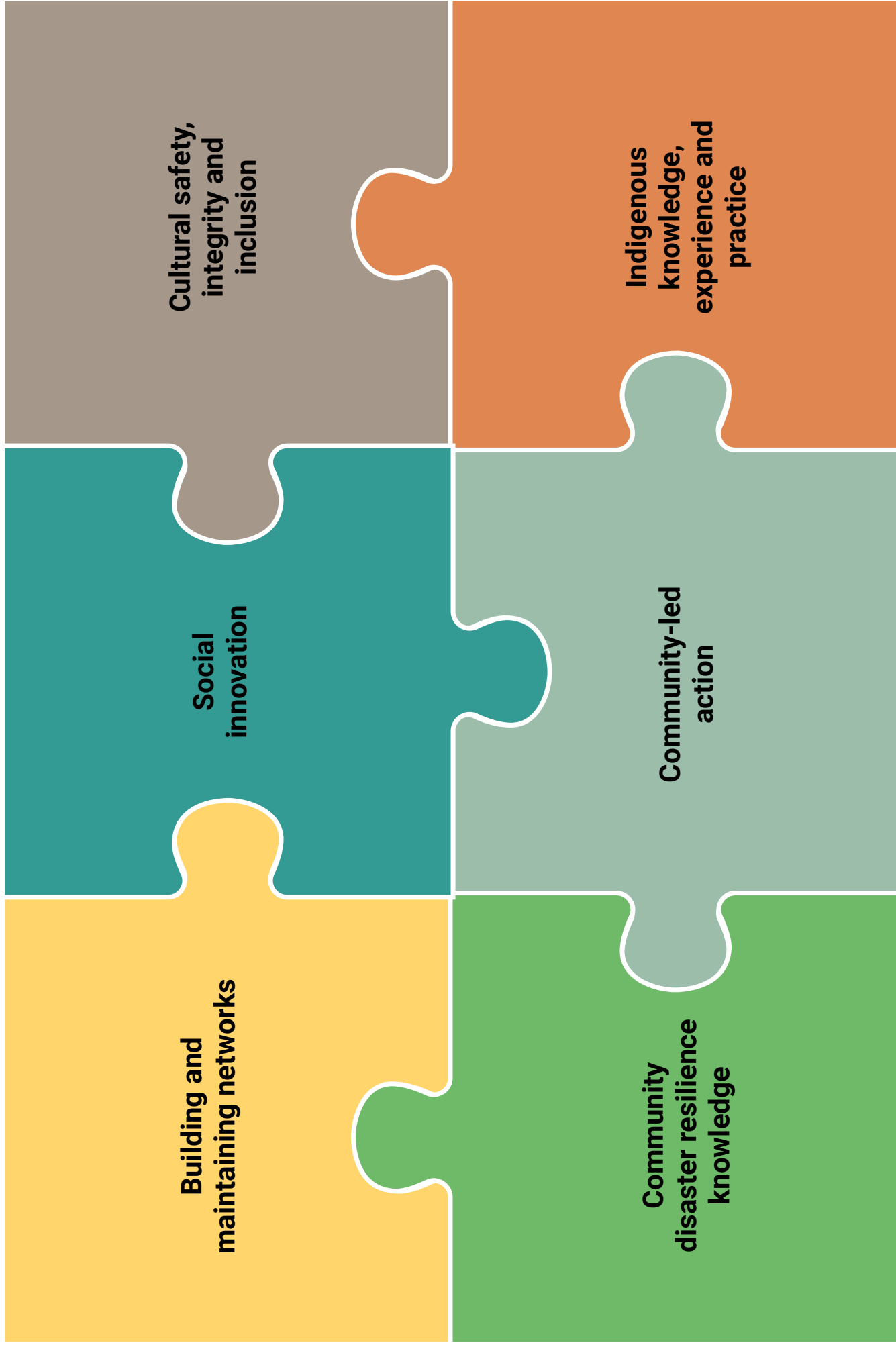
**Cultural safety,  
integrity and  
inclusion**

**Social  
innovation**

**Community  
disaster resilience  
knowledge**

**Indigenous  
knowledge,  
experience and  
practice**

**Community-led  
action**



## APPENDIX: POSTCARDS

The Capability Postcards adapt the Capability Framework into a visual resource and tool.

The Capability Postcards can be used to prompt design, reflective, and evaluation discussions. The physical card can help to focus conversation around the chosen capability. There are many possible uses for the cards, so feel free to engage with them in a way that makes the most sense to you.

The cards could be used to prompt discussions about the development of the six capabilities. The group could choose one capability card to focus the discussion and consider:

- What would a thriving community look like in this area?
- Where are our key strengths? Where is there room for improvement?
- What could we expect to see if we were stronger in some key areas?

Other questions might arise during your group discussion. Feel free to follow where these lead, noting down any new ideas that spring to mind, or new solutions and approaches that the group would like to try.



# **Cultural safety, integrity and inclusion**

**FIRE to  
FLOURISH** 



# **Indigenous knowledge, experience and practice**

**FIRE to  
FLOURISH** 

**Creating safe and  
meaningful opportunities  
for cross-cultural  
understanding and  
collaborative action**

**Cultural safety for  
Indigenous peoples  
reflects the values and  
aspirations of the  
Indigenous Community**



# **Building and maintaining networks**



# **Community disaster resilience knowledge**



**Building, holding and  
maintaining strong and  
inclusive networks**

**Generating shared  
understanding of  
'holistic disaster resilience'  
to inform community  
disaster resilience  
planning and practice**



# Community-led action



# Social innovation



**Demonstrating the ability  
and skills to drive  
collaborative action**

**Designing, testing and  
learning in constructive  
community networks**

# APPENDIX: CAPABILITY CARDS

The Capability Cards transform the Capability Framework and Growth Tables into an interactive and intuitive resource.

The Capability Cards are a set of cards adapted from the Capability Framework and Growth Tables. Each colour coded card has the core capability on one side of the card and an indicator on the other. There are 36 indicator cards to provide prompts for group conversations. These cards could inspire new design choices, facilitate reflection, or guide evaluation.

Additionally, there are four Conversation Starter cards, eight Growth Indicator cards, and six large postcard capability cards. The cards are designed to be flexible, adaptable and initiative, so feel free to use them as they make sense to you.

You could use the cards to make a matrix by selecting a Conversation Starter card as a prompt and placing a selection of the Growth Indicator cards along in a row. Some Growth Indicator cards might resonate more with your group than others, so go with them. Choose a Capability Card and discuss with your group where on the Growth Indicator scale you would put it. Place it there and then choose another Capability Card and keep going.

Follow where the conversation and the cards lead you. As you work through the cards as a group you might find yourselves considering your community strengths and areas for growth in new ways. Make note of these ideas and discussions. They can be used to foster new design ideas or new community initiatives. Alternatively, they might spark new solutions or refinements to existing projects.

## Make it your own

Consider asking different questions by changing the 'Conversation Starter' prompts.

### For example:

- How will we be...
- How can we be...
- How well have we been...
- How else can we be...
- How have we been...

You could write your questions on sticky notes or on a white board or butcher's paper.

**Feel free to mix them up or come up with your own!**



**Cultural safety,  
integrity and inclusion**



**Cultural safety,  
integrity and inclusion**



**Cultural safety,  
integrity and inclusion**



**Cultural safety,  
integrity and inclusion**



**Cultural safety,  
integrity and inclusion**



**Cultural safety,  
integrity and inclusion**



**Indigenous knowledge,  
experience and practice**



**Indigenous knowledge,  
experience and practice**



**Creating constructive and respectful spaces that build relationships between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community**

**Fostering and promoting the value of different connections and relationships with people and the environment**

**Creating and maintaining safe spaces for all people to share knowledge, understanding, and experiences**

**Listening deeply and acknowledging past challenges when developing shared goals and priorities that promote reconciliation and strengthen community disaster resilience**

**Building a growth mindset where it is safe to try, fail and learn**

**Developing productive conflict management skills**

**Creating an environment where Indigenous people feel safe to identify as being Indigenous**

**Creating an environment that is free from racism for Indigenous peoples**



**Indigenous knowledge,  
experience and practice**



**Indigenous knowledge,  
experience and practice**



**Indigenous knowledge,  
experience and practice**



**Building and  
maintaining networks**



**Building and  
maintaining networks**



**Building and  
maintaining networks**



**Building and  
maintaining networks**



**Building and  
maintaining networks**



**Creating an environment that provides opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage in story telling and shared experiences**

**Creating an environment where Indigenous peoples are able to facilitate their cultural practices**

**Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that promote collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders**

**Creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage with local communities on Country**

**Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to design and achieve collaborative, shared goals**

**Developing strong, productive and respectful networks for knowledge sharing and skill development**

**Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that foster creativity and generate new ideas**

**Developing strong, productive and respectful relationships with local agencies and organisations**



**Building and  
maintaining networks**



**Building and  
maintaining networks**



**Community disaster  
resilience knowledge**



**Community disaster  
resilience knowledge**



**Community disaster  
resilience knowledge**



**Community disaster  
resilience knowledge**



**Community disaster  
resilience knowledge**



**Community disaster  
resilience knowledge**



**Developing strong,  
productive and respectful  
networks with individuals  
in varying communities**

**Developing strong,  
productive and respectful  
networks that facilitate  
resilience planning**

**Creating a shared  
understanding of the  
community's knowledge,  
skills, assets and strengths**

**Developing an understanding of  
the connections between the five  
resilience domains: social capital,  
economic wellbeing, physical  
environment, natural environment,  
and health and wellbeing**

**Strengthening knowledge of  
how environmental and  
social changes and  
trends over time  
influence disaster risk**

**Developing a shared  
understanding of stakeholder  
influence within the  
community and beyond**

**Identifying opportunities  
and barriers for positive  
change that strengthens  
disaster resilience**

**Collaborating on community  
disaster resilience priorities  
and actions that strengthen the  
community's ability to respond,  
adapt and work  
towards positive change**



**Community-led action**



**Community-led action**



**Community-led action**



**Community-led action**



**Community-led action**



**Community-led action**



**Community-led action**



**Social innovation**



**Generating and applying ideas,  
collective learning and  
creativity to enhance  
community led initiatives**

**Constructively deliberating,  
discussing and  
prioritising ideas**

**Incorporating local knowledge  
and practices into  
community-led initiatives**

**Activating the existing  
strengths, assets and  
leadership in communities**

**Supporting peer to peer  
mentoring and learning  
through the disaster  
resilience journey**

**Developing processes  
of accountability  
and transparency**

**Using evaluation findings  
to reset community  
priorities and visions**

**Sharing learning and  
developments with the  
broader community**



**Social innovation**



**Social innovation**



**Social innovation**



**Social innovation**



**Conversation Starters**



**Conversation Starters**



**Conversation Starters**



**Conversation Starters**



**Advancing opportunities with communities to influence the outcomes of system level processes which impact them**

**Using data, evidence and community voice to develop new initiatives that work towards sustainable futures**

**Trialling new co-designed initiatives to influence community disaster resilience and project development**

**Using collaborative approaches to evaluate projects**

**Are we...?**

**How well are we...?**

**How are we...?**

**Where are we...?**



## Conversation Starters



## Conversation Starters



## Conversation Starters



## Conversation Starters



## Conversation Starters



## Conversation Starters



## Conversation Starters



## Conversation Starters



**Latent**

**Not yet**

**I don't know**

**Okay**

**Developing**

**Excelling**

**Emerging**

**Developing and evolving**

## APPENDIX: SLIDING SCALE

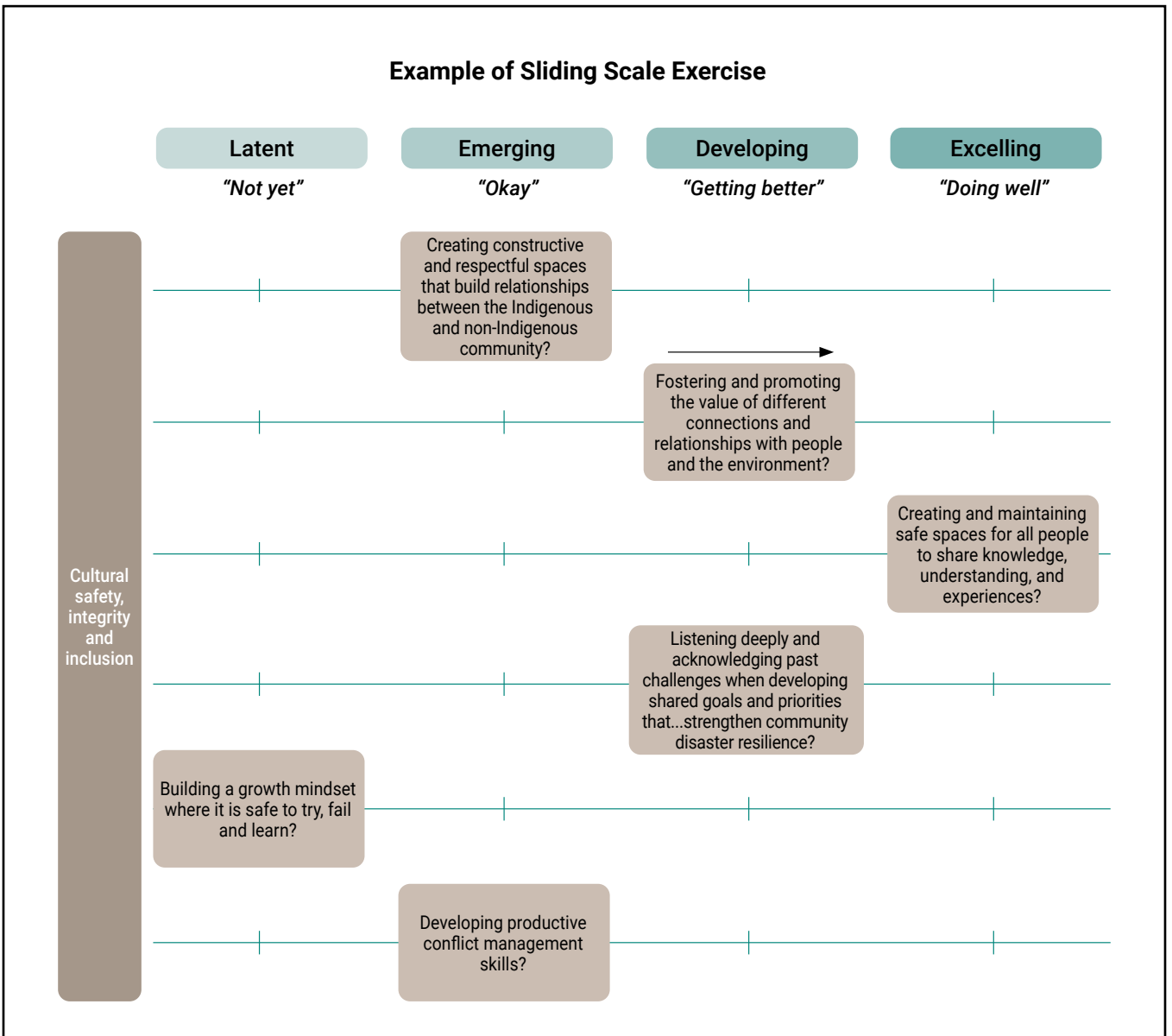
The Sliding Scale turns the Capability Framework and the Growth Tables into an interactive activity.

One way to identify where the group is now is to use a sliding scale. Groups can discuss and move each indicator or Capability Card around on the sliding scale, placing it where they feel best visually represents where they are as a group. This information and agreement can guide what the group will do next. It can show where a group is doing well, and where there might be areas for growth.

### What to do

- Print the capability cards and sliding scale. Alternatively, you could draw the sliding scale on butcher's paper and use sticky notes and write out each capability and/or indicator
- Take one of the 'Capability Cards' and consider as a group 'how are we going?' or 'where are we?'
- Based on the group conversation and agreement, place the Capability Card (or sticky note) on the line of the Sliding Scale that best describes the group. This could be: not yet, okay, getting better, or doing well.
- Take another Capability Card and continue to discuss how the group is going, placing the card on the scale as a visual representation of where the group is.
- Keep doing this for each capability, or as many as you choose to focus on. Continue to discuss and move each indicator around on the sliding scale
- Once the group is comfortable with the card placement, take a photo and document it. You can refer back to this at a later date to see the potential change and progress within the group.

### Example of Sliding Scale Exercise



The Sliding Scale adapts the Capability Framework and Growth Tables into an interactive activity. Groups can discuss and move each indicator around on the sliding scale to represent where they are as a group.

**Latent**

*"Not yet"*

**Emerging**

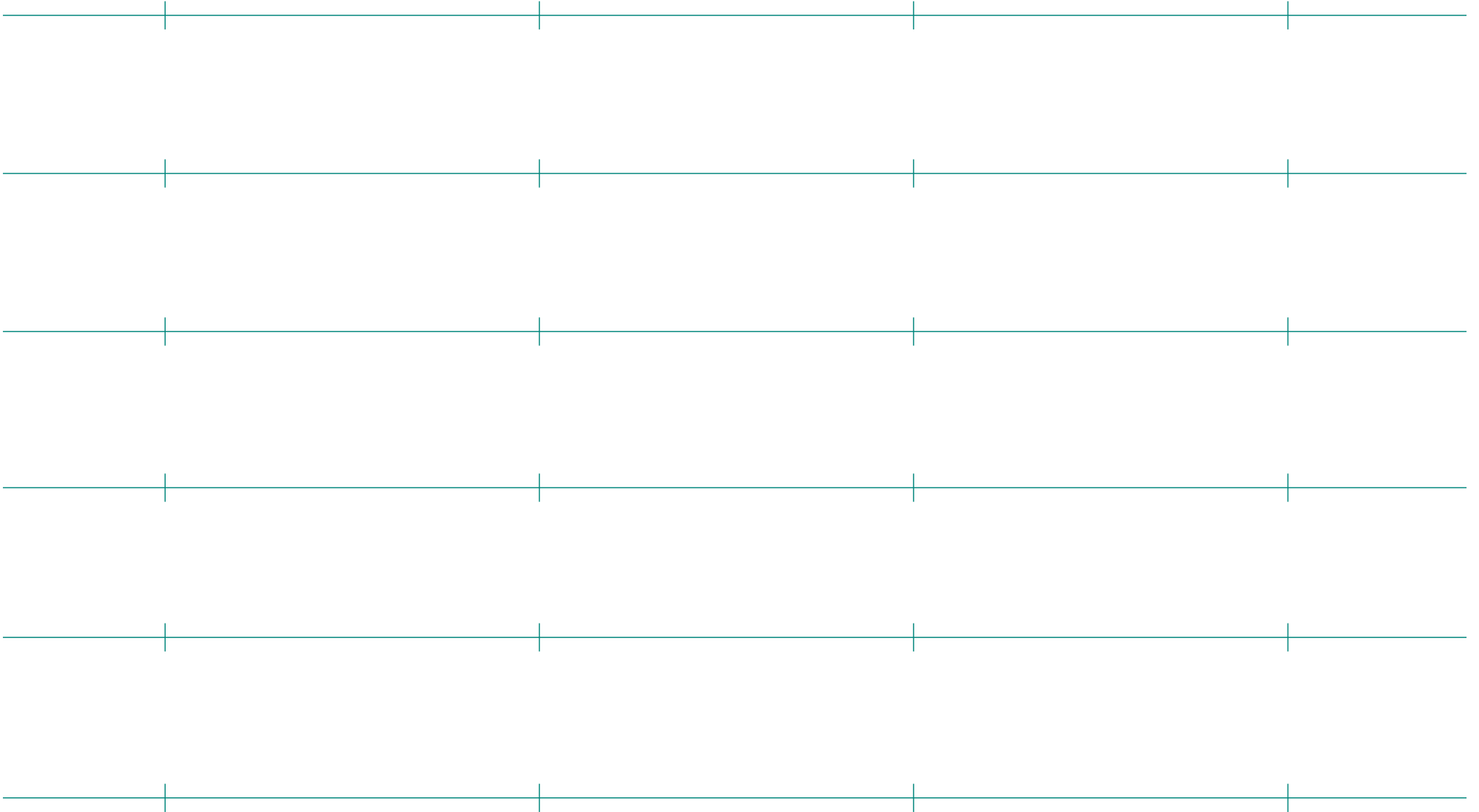
*"Okay"*

**Developing**

*"Getting better"*

**Excelling**

*"Doing well"*



## APPENDIX: BLANK TABLES

The Blank Capability Growth tables enable a group to generate their own examples of success and growth according to their local context.

The Blank Capability Growth tables allow your group the freedom and flexibility to create your own examples of what you would expect to see if your group was emerging, developing or excelling within each of the capability indicators. It creates the space for your group to consider what you would expect to see happening in your community and write down your own examples.

### What to do

Fill the following tables with examples of what you see as signs of success in your community.

#### Consider asking:

- What would you expect to see if these capabilities are growing?
- What would a thriving community look like in this area?
- What could we expect to see if we were stronger in this area?

You might find it helpful to do this digitally and revisit as you need to.

Alternatively, you could print the blank growth tables and tick the box which best represents where your group is.

**Tip:** You might have markers or counters from other board games you could use to place on the relevant box.

**CULTURAL SAFETY, INTEGRITY AND INCLUSION**

Indicators	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
<p>Creating constructive and respectful environments that build relationships between people of all cultural and diverse backgrounds?</p>				
<p>Fostering and promoting the value of different connections and relationships with people and the environment?</p>				
<p>Creating and maintaining safe spaces for all people to share knowledge, understanding, and experiences?</p>				
<p>Acknowledging past challenges when developing shared goals and priorities that promote reconciliation and strengthen community disaster resilience?</p>				
<p>Developing a growth mindset where it is safe to try, fail and learn?</p>				
<p>Developing productive conflict management skills?</p>				

**INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE**

Indicators	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
<p>Creating an environment where Indigenous peoples feel safe to identify as being Indigenous?</p>				
<p>Creating an environment that is free from racism for Indigenous peoples?</p>				
<p>Creating an environment that provides opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage in story telling and shared experiences?</p>				
<p>Creating an environment where Indigenous peoples are able to facilitate their cultural practices?</p>				
<p>Creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage with local communities on Country?</p>				
<p>Indigenous people have the right to be responsible for their own decision-making processes?</p>				

## BUILDING AND MAINTAINING NETWORKS

Indicators	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that promote collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders?				
Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to design and achieve collaborative, shared goals?				
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks for knowledge sharing and skill development?				
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that foster creativity and generate new ideas?				
Developing strong, productive and respectful relationships with local agencies and organisations?				
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks with individuals in varying communities?				
Developing strong, productive and respectful networks that facilitate resilience planning?				

## COMMUNITY DISASTER RESILIENCE KNOWLEDGE

Indicators	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
Creating a shared understanding of the community's knowledge, skills, assets and strengths?				
Developing an understanding of the connections between the five resilience domains; social capital, economic wellbeing, physical environment, natural environment, and health and wellbeing?				
Strengthening knowledge of how environmental and social changes and trends over time influence disaster risk (hazard, vulnerabilities, exposure)?				
Developing a shared understanding of stakeholder influence within the community and beyond?				
Identifying opportunities and barriers for positive change that strengthens disaster resilience?				
Collaborating on community disaster resilience priorities and actions that strengthen the community's ability to respond, adapt and work towards positive change?				

## COMMUNITY-LED ACTION

Indicators	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
Generating and applying ideas, collective learning and creativity to enhance community led initiatives?				
Constructively deliberating, discussing and prioritising ideas?				
Incorporating local knowledge and practices into community-led initiatives?				
Activating the existing strengths, assets and leadership in communities?				
Supporting peer to peer mentoring and learning through the disaster resilience journey?				
Developing processes of accountability and transparency?				
Sharing learning and developments with the broader community?				

**SOCIAL INNOVATION**

Indicators	Latent	Emerging	Developing	Excelling
Partnering with communities to advance opportunities to influence the decisions and systems that affect their lives?				
Using data, evidence and community voice to develop new initiatives that work towards sustainable futures?				
Trialling new co-designed initiatives to influence community disaster resilience and project development?				
Using collaborative approaches to review projects?				
Using evaluation findings to review community priorities and visions?				

# FIRE to FLOURISH



Fire to Flourish is a pioneering five year program, working in partnership with communities affected by the 2019/20 Australian bushfire season to trial innovations in community-led disaster resilience.

Pathways for scaling the insights, models and tools developed through the program are being created through partnerships with Government, philanthropic, not-for-profit and private sector organisations.

Fire to Flourish is led by Monash University and supported by cornerstone philanthropic partners, the Paul Ramsay Foundation and Metal Manufactures Pty Ltd. Additional philanthropic support is provided by the Lowy Foundation.

**For more information, go to:  
[firetoflourish.monash](https://firetoflourish.monash)**

A partnership between:



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