

# **“DISASTERS ARE OUR BUSINESS: WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY” WORKSHOP REPORT**

**PREPARED FOR MONARO FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE  
(MFSS)  
MAY 2024**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Background	1
2	Workshop objectives and design	2
3	Workshop actions	3
	3.1. Community sector value	3
	3.2. Community sector skills, knowledge, and resources	4
	3.3. Projects for future work	8
4	Recommendations	9

# 1. BACKGROUND

Monaro Family Support Service (MFSS) received funding from NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) through the NSW Reconstruction Authority (previously Resilience NSW) Disaster Risk Reduction Fund through the 'Community Sector Disaster Capability and Resilience Program'. The program seeks to strengthen the connection between the local community, local community organisations and emergency management to take action to reduce local disaster risks. One of the project outputs was a community sector workshop.

Monaro Family Support Service engaged Folket Consultancy to support with the development and delivery of the workshop. Folket consultant Danielle O'Hara facilitated the workshop and subsequently drafted this summary report.

The "Disasters are our business: Working together to support our community" workshop was held on the 2nd May 2024. It was attended by 37 participants, representing over 20 organisations, including representatives from the community sector, local government and state government. Some participants had been involved in disasters for many years; for others, it was the first time they had considered the impact of disasters on their service and their potential role.

This report outlines key actions and recommendations that followed the workshop.



## 2. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN

**The workshop was designed based on the following objectives:**

- Develop a clear, united message and position regarding value of community sector to the Snowy-Monaro region in disaster preparedness, response and recovery.
- Develop a plan for community sector involvement in supporting their communities in disasters.
- Identify projects, plans or ideas for how the community sector might best engage with emergency services partners with designated roles in emergency management arrangements.

**In addition to the workshop objectives above, secondary benefits for attendees may have included:**

- Individual services have increased knowledge of emergency management and the role of the community services sector.
- Individual services identify and take action to increase their organisational preparedness.
- Further opportunities are identified for sector learning and development.

**The workshop was structured around the following three sessions:**

- Introduction of key emergency management terminology.
- A desktop discussion-based scenario.
- Identification of key learnings and actions.



# 3. WORKSHOP ACTIONS

Key findings from the workshop are outlined below under three key themes aligning with the objectives above. Please note responses are recorded based on participant and scribe notes from during the workshop, with edits only made for clarity.

## 3.1 COMMUNITY SECTOR VALUE

The group identified various factors articulating the community sector's value in the Snowy-Monaro region in disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

- A trusted conduit to the community
- A potential grassroots source of information about the needs of disaster-affected communities
- A source of deep knowledge of community and organisational networks
- A source of knowledge about local vulnerabilities at a community and individual level
- Takes an empathetic and professional response to working with vulnerable people
- A source of significant collective knowledge
- The interagency committee is a mechanism for input, feedback, communication, and referral pathways.



## 3.2 COMMUNITY SECTOR SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND RESOURCES.

The group audited community sector skills, knowledge, and resources relevant to supporting the Snowy-Monaro community in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. The table below can be further developed and used by emergency services, the government, and the community sector for planning before and during a disaster.

Skills and Knowledge	
Organisation	Offerings
Cooma Multicultural Centre	Language skills, cultural awareness, connecting with wider community and each other, migrants and refugees, interpreters, needs of individual families and culture
Uniting	Connecting and linking vulnerable people to support
Eden Community Access Centre	Connectedness
NSW Health	Organisational skills
Cooma Challenge	Skills working with vulnerable people, aged and NDIS participation, accommodation
Katangul	Cultural awareness, representation, medical and community services
Wellways	Advocacy for people experiencing mental health challenges, knowledge of vulnerable people in the community, mental health support, referral pathways

MCAS	Homeless assistance, DV support, food relief, programs and outreach, grant writing
NSW Office of Sport	Large group management skills, accommodation
Salvos	Wrap around services
Monaro Family Support Service (MFSS)	Family support, youth program, children/preschool/parents groups, disaster planning, counselling and case work, school, grief and loss programs, psychosocial support, reflective practice, local knowledge and relationships including familiar dynamics
Rural Financial Counselling Service	Assisting farmers, refinancing, credit negotiation, referrals and mental health, financial counselling
Mission Australia	Crisis/transitional accommodation, DV support, brokerage, local connect and housing, 24/7 crisis service
Op Shop Jindabyne	Food and skills to help vulnerable people, connecting people
Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre	Legal counselling and outreach, advice, pro-bono work, case work, referral to services, free legal service and case work experience responding to legal issues
Red Cross	Psychological first aid, process/practices, training, helping disaster affected individuals identify their needs, national knowledge and resources
Snowy-Monaro Council	Knowledge of outlying areas

Resources	
Organisation	Type
Red Cross	People, volunteers, money, grants, reputation, years' experience, preparedness programs
NDIS (Uniting)	Good lists of people (adults)- updated regularly. Well-funded for disabilities (individuals)
Cooma Multicultural Centre	Bus, cultural empathy/awareness, trust and community connection, broad sweep of services, space (meeting hub), volunteers, experience and kitchen, info in specific languages
Monaro Family Support Service (MFSS)	Deep and wide local footprint, trailer, humans, 5 office/buildings located across the shire, fenced playgrounds, access to 5 kitchens.
NSW Health	People, meeting room hub, fleet of vehicles, professional services
NDIS	Housing, fleet of vehicles, disability vehicle
Eden Community Access Centre	Volunteers
Snowy-Monaro Council	Meeting rooms, vehicles, recovery officers
Wellways	Mental health resources, transport



NSW Office of Sport	Emergency accommodation, big spaces, fun activities
Katungul	Women's wellness refuge, gym, medical centre, cultural awareness
Salvation Army	Food/BBQ, food truck
Jindabyne Op Shop	Clothing, food, physical location, blankets
Mission Australia	Outreach support, rough sleeper packs, BBQ trailer
Lions or Rotary Clubs	Trailers, BBQ's, cash, labour,
Cooma Challenge	Vehicles and truck with lifter platform, 3 sites with kitchens, mental health services
Rural Financial Services	Brochures, grants and loans, info of regular financial support, referral services
Monaro Community Access Services	Food relief, DV safety planning, homelessness support, brokerage, SAMS

## 3.3 PROJECTS FOR FUTURE WORK

**The following actions and projects were identified for future work:**

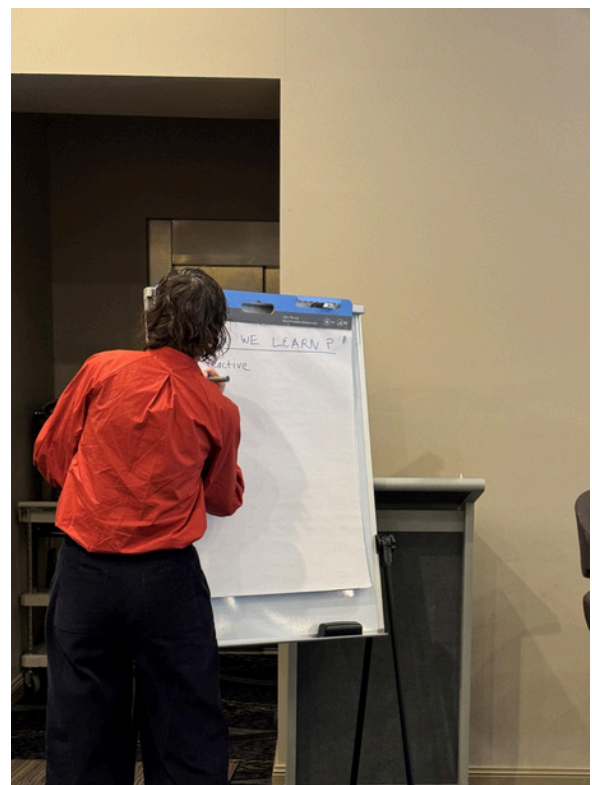
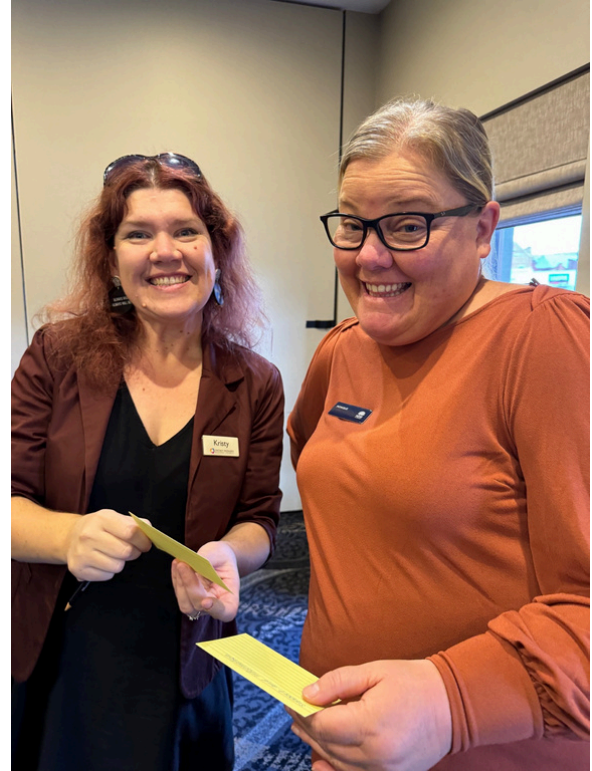
- Services to engage staff regarding their individual preparedness
- Services to examine their organisational preparedness, policies and procedures
- Request presentation from NSW Reconstruction Authority on the State Recovery Plan
- Request a presentation from the LEMC/relevant government representations on emergency management arrangements
- Request a presentation from relevant response agencies on accurate information in a disaster
- Establish communication mechanisms and pathways with agencies, starting with the LEMC
- Add a 'disaster management' regular standing agenda item to the Snowy-Monaro community sector interagency.



## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the workshop actions and learnings, the Snowy-Monaro community sector should consider the following recommendations:

1. Include 'disaster resilience and recovery' as a regular agenda item at the Snowy-Monaro interagency meeting, including a report from the LEMC observer/representative.
2. Add an annual pre-bushfire season preparedness session to the interagency meeting, including a briefing from RFS, a reminder for staff to have their own individual emergency plans, review and update organisational emergency plans and discuss any sector-wide considerations for the summer.
3. Increase community sector understanding of individual and organisational preparedness, recovery governance, and emergency management arrangements through workshops, site visits, and guest speakers.
4. Advocate for and establish a funded 'resilience and recovery' role based in the community sector to provide ongoing backbone support and act as a conduit between the community sector and emergency services. It is important this role is separate from formal agencies and hosted by the community sector.





## ABOUT FOLKET CONSULTANCY

Hej! "Folket" is Swedish and means "The People", think 'folks' in English. We're a boutique consultancy based in lutruwita/Tasmania. Founded by Linda Karlsson, Folket Consultancy is a collective of experienced consultants. Our team of folks all love to work on collaborative projects that create impact in our communities.

Between us, we offer expertise in evaluation, research, facilitation of workshops and community consultation, co-design and program development, community and stakeholder engagement, as well as strategic communication.

We tailor our team and services to your needs.

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