IMPLEMENTING POLICY FOR ENABLING DISASTER RESILIENCE:
MAKING IT HAPPEN IN A FEDERAL SYSTEM

bushfire&natural HAZARDS CRC

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DISASTER RESILIENCE POLICY IS BEING IMPLEMENTED VIA A RANGE OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES ACROSS AUSTRALIA.
Effective implementation is a critical factor for ensuring successful policy outcomes and requires greater attention.

THE ISSUE

Building disaster resilience on a national scale requires all levels of government and the community to share responsibility to understand and take action to mitigate disaster risks.

Four networked adaptive capacities for building disaster resilience - social capital, community competence, economic development and information and communication provide a sound theoretical basis for guiding effort toward creating the right conditions for disaster resilience.

However, there is a shortage of evidence-based information about how to implement disaster resilience policy to achieve a more disaster resilient community.

Knowing that approaches to implementation are informed by evidence can also empower policy/program decision makers and practitioners and encourage further uptake of disaster resilience principles and support the behavior change that is needed for shifting the focus of disaster management toward prevention, preparedness and mitigation.

"This research will shed valuable light on how to put disaster resilience policies into practice, regardless of whether they originate and are managed at the highest level of government or in local organisations" – Monique Blason, BNHCRC End-user representative, SA Department of Premier and Cabinet.

THE RESEARCH

How can policy implementation arrangements enable disaster resilience in a federal system of government?

There are gaps in our knowledge about how to operationalise policy for building disaster resilience using policy implementation arrangements and mechanisms.

How disaster resilience is being implemented at different levels of government and in the community is being examined to see how this relates to building social capital, community competence, economic development and information and communication.

The Australian federal system of government also provides important context for this research, in terms of federal and state roles and responsibilities and the opportunities and constraints that federal power-sharing arrangements present for policy implementation.
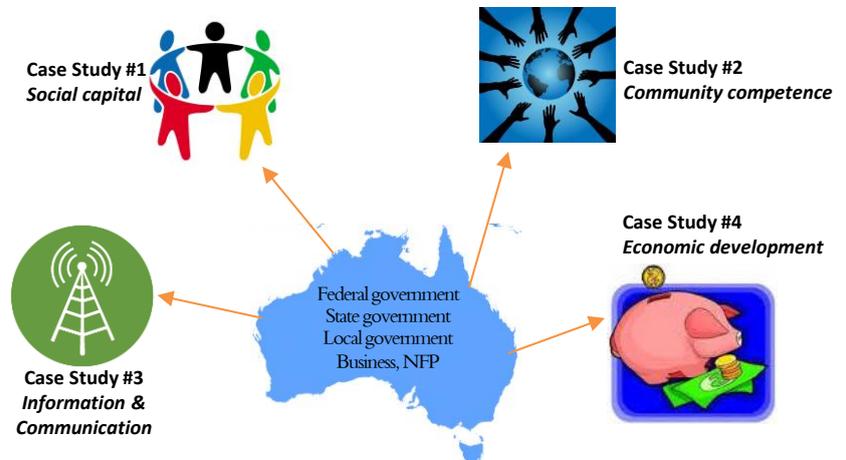
THE METHODOLOGY

Evidence from the literature on normative actions and outcomes for achieving each of the four dynamic adaptive capacities provide the terms of analysis for this research.

*DISASTER RESILIENCE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION – NETWORKED ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY	Social Capital	Community Competence	Economic Development	Information & communication
Actions and outcomes	1.Networks 2.Non-adverse geography/place-based 3.Community engagement 4.Leadership (internally focused)	1.Political partnerships 2.Stakeholder engagement 3.Leadership (externally focused) & empowerment 4.Community participation	1.Security 2.Economic diversity 3.Equity of resource distribution 4.Sustainability 5.Shared (equitable) risk allocation	1.Narratives 2.Responsible media/access to trusted information 3.Skills and infrastructure 4.Information flow between sectors

*Adapted from Australian Red Cross (2009); Norris et al (2008); Handmer, J, Dovers, S (2013); Porteus, P(2013); Australian Productivity Commission (2003)

Four case studies, corresponding to each of the four disaster resilience capacities are being conducted to examine how these actions and outcomes relate to implementation arrangements. Data is being collected from disaster resilience programs at national, state and local government, the not-for-profit and business sectors. Particular regard will be given to the influence of implementation arrangements that are relevant to federalism, such as Constitutional definition of power, finance arrangements and policy coordination.

Case Study #1
Social capital

Case Study #2
Community competence

Case Study #4
Economic development

Federal government
State government
Local government
Business, NFP

Case Study #3
Information & Communication

NEXT STEPS

An ethics approval application and negotiations with organisations regarding participation in the case studies, which include document-based research and semi-structured interviews, are currently in progress. Data collection is planned to be completed by the end of 2015.