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# BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Scoping remote community resilience, building better  
governance, finding new opportunities to grow resilience

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## OUR LOCAL CONTEXT...



# THE NORTH AUSTRALIAN BNH CONTEXT

## 360,000 People

- + Communities from 'outer regional' to 'very remote'.
- + Remote communities mostly inhabited by indigenous Australians (% rises with remoteness)
- + Poor infrastructure and communications
- + **Costs: today's price of diesel in Wadeye is \$3.66/litre; ULP \$3.33**
- + Disconnect with emergency management paradigm
- + Low population densities
- + Low levels of formal education and training
- + Limited labour market experience
- + Poor health

} The "Gap"

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- = Almost no formal emergency management capacity
  - = No spare capacity to fall back on
  - = No "Plan B"
  - = **Very limited community resilience**

# **BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA**

## **Objective:**

Using action research, identify and trial opportunities to develop resilience in remote north Australian communities

## **Two Key Component Projects:**

1. Scoping remote north Australian community resilience and developing community governance models
2. Developing opportunities for building more resilient remote communities in northern Australia and neighbouring countries

**Closely linked to north Australian Landscape Fire Management and Training projects**

# **BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA**

## **Project Team**

### **Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods, CDU**

Prof Andrew Campbell, Associate Prof Samantha Setterfield, Dr Natalie Rossiter-Rachor, Dr Vanessa Adams, Dr Karen Joyce

### **Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research**

Prof Jeremy Russell-Smith, Mr Steve Sutton, Dr Andrew Edwards

### **Aboriginal Research Practitioners' Network (ARNet)**

Dr Bev Sithole, Dr Jackie Gould, Ms Hmalan Hunter-Xenie, ARNet Practitioners

### **Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU**

Professor Bob Costanza

### **North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAISMA)**

Mr Glenn James, Ms Leonie Malloy

### **End Users**

Steve Rothwell (PFES NT), Mark Ashley (Bushfires NT), Murray Carter (P&W WA), David Willing (Chief Min's Dept NT), Joe Morrison (NLC), Bruno Griemel (Qld Fire & Rescue)

# BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

## Action research

1. Taking stock of the existing situation through the eyes of remote community residents **in their own languages**
2. Looking closely at what's working & seek to reinforce existing capability through better governance and training
3. Finding ways to build resilience e.g. payment for services
4. Developing tailored solutions to age-old problems of poor (or no) decision making due to distance and poor comms
5. Not waiting until the findings come out – but building resilience throughout the action research process
6. Bringing it all together and testing it in pilot communities

# ARNet

## THE ABORIGINAL RESEARCH PRACTITIONERS NETWORK

- A coordinated network of 50-60 Aboriginal people trained in Participatory Action Research (we will train more)
- Network members are contracted to conduct research, evaluation and planning activities in their communities
- Qualitative and quantitative methods from the ARNet “Dilly Bag “(Sithole 2013)
- Network members work with the Lead Researcher to clarify the research objective and frame the approach
- Research is undertaken in the first language of the participants with due attention to cultural sensitivities
- ARPNET has consistently delivered research findings of high explanatory calibre about interventions in Indigenous communities





# SCOPING RESILIENCE & BUILDING GOVERNANCE

## Objectives:

- 1) Explore communities' social, economic and cultural aspirations & identify those most vulnerable to natural hazards
- 2) Analyse present approaches to natural hazards and Indigenous views of their appropriateness and effectiveness
- 3) Describe human capability, including skills, experience, formal institutions and social networks, in participating communities
- 4) Develop an Indigenous view of options for improvement, emphasising ways to make better use of and grow existing capability

# SCOPING RESILIENCE & BUILDING GOVERNANCE

## Outcomes

1. Better understanding of current capabilities and institutions
2. Improved local and regional awareness of risk, combined with relevant planning tools and response.
3. Better informed local and external institutions about Indigenous information needs and preferences for BNH preparedness and response
4. Practical measures to deliver substantial improvements, with a high level of ownership within remote communities
5. Institutional re-design to reinforce and improve community resilience
6. Governance models informed by customary networks and local authority
7. Targeted communications (content and methods)

# SERVICES PAYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING RESILIENT REMOTE COMMUNITIES

## Objectives

1. Analyse contemporary land use management, institutional, and policy challenges facing local communities in north Australian and adjacent savanna regions
2. Explore opportunities afforded through emerging economies related to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), climate change mitigation and ecosystem service relevant to BNH
3. Evaluate Ecosystem Services (ES) & Payment for Environmental Service (PES) impacts on community resilience
4. Identify policy & institutional reforms in north Australian and adjacent regions that could broaden the revenue base for BNH planning & response







# SERVICES PAYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING RESILIENT REMOTE COMMUNITIES

## Outcomes

- 1) Understanding factors undermining the resilience of indigenous and local communities in north Australian and adjacent regions
- 2) Promotion of novel economic opportunities, and sustainable implementation pathways (e.g. recognition of culturally appropriate governance arrangements)
- 3) Informed basis for improving community resilience in remote northern Australia and the region