Attachment 2 to Item 10.3.2.

Hawkesbury Resilience Plan Engagement Outcomes Report

Date of meeting: 29 July 2025
Location: Council Chambers
Time: 6:30pm

Engagement Outcomes Report

Hawkesbury Resilience Plan

Client: Hawkesbury City Council

Date: May 2023

Cred
CONSULTING

Cred Consulting acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we operate.

We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, Ancestors and Elders past and present.

We recognise the strength, resilience and contributions of First Nations Peoples, and the eternal and spiritual connection held in the lands, skies and waters, through cultural practices and beliefs.

Our team is proud to live, learn and thrive in the place we now call Australia, and recognise sovereignty has never been ceded by First Nations Peoples of this continent.

As embedded in our values, we are committed to building connected, healthy and resilient communities and creating purposeful outcomes that reflect our deep appreciation for the peoples and cultures that make us who we are and shape where we are going — together as one.

Table of Contents

1. Executive summary

More than 250 community members provided their feedback to inform the Hawkesbury Resilience Plan via a survey, pop-ups, workshops, focus groups and interviews in 2022 and 2023. This section summarises the key findings across all engagement activities.

The Hawkesbury community has many strengths for resilience including …

Neighbours that take care of each other

Participants told us the Hawkesbury LGA has a strong community spirit. Residents come together to help whether it's mowing the lawn of an elderly neighbour, picking up items during a trip into the city or evacuating animals to safe ground during floods or fires. Participants also told us local social media groups and pages are integral in allowing them to help each other.

"Whatever our differences are, we are a small community, and everyone works together"

Self-reliant communities with local knowledge

Participants told us they are self-reliant and have plans in place for when shocks happen. They also told us people who have been living in the community for a long time have valuable knowledge and experience in responding to and preparing for shocks. Participants want to see more opportunities for new residents to learn from lived experiences in the community.

"Knowledge of past experiences and ways of planning in relation to those experiences"

"Most people in my street are involved as volunteers in the SES, CWA or RFS. The work they do in times of crises and every day is inspiring to see"

A volunteering spirit and strong community organisations

Participants told us that local community organisations such as the local chapters of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Services (SES) play an important role in helping the Hawkesbury respond to shocks. However, it is the willingness of locals to volunteer with these organisations to keep them running that is inspiring and a strength.

Community centres that provide safe spaces

Participants told us the community centres across the Hawkesbury are powerful community connectors. They told us they have the ability to be a hub for information, but also a space to connect with the community. Participants also told us these community centres, or ad hoc resilience centres in some areas are integral during shocks. They told us it is important to have a safe space that provides information on the event, and helps the community rebuild. One interview participant told us being able

to speak to people in person at the local resilience centre helps reduce their stress levels compared to trying to find information online.

The Hawkesbury community also faces challenges including …

> **"I lie in bed and hear heavy rain. It's stressful because I think how long before the water comes in. It wakes me up at night because I am scared"**

An increasing number of shocks

Participants told us that flooding and bushfires are the most concerning shocks they are facing in recent years. They told us these events have become more frequent and more devastating, and have had severe impacts on their financial, physical, and mental wellbeing.

Infrastructure failures including poor roads and telecommunications

Participants told us the physical infrastructure of the Hawkesbury LGA is a key challenge they face during normal times and during times of crisis. Key infrastructure challenges include the poor condition of roads that take a long time to get fixed, power outages and mobile phone and internet black spots across the region. Participants told us the community is growing and they are worried infrastructure can't keep up and will pose more challenges in the future.

Communication around shocks, particularly for new residents

Participants told us that important information on floods and bushfires is not reaching the whole community. Some of this is because of the telecommunications issues, and some because new residents are moving in and are not connecting to relevant information.

> **"When people rent, there's no process where they're told that they're in a flood zone. The real estate agent is certainly not going to tell them."**

Inequitable distribution of services particularly health services

Participants told us that services are not equitably distributed. They told us that the western side of the river does not have a hospital or access to essential services when disaster strikes. While some people told us the community centres are a strength of the Hawkesbury region, others told us their communities don't have access to a central safe space like this.

Participants also told us that access to physical and mental health services is an issue. Challenges include not enough bulk-billing doctors, long-waiting lists for doctors and elective surgeries, not enough in-home care and not enough support for mental health.

Access to public transport

Participants told us access to public transport in the more regional and remote areas of the Hawkesbury LGA is poor. In fact, 59% of survey respondents told us they are very concerned about access to transport. Participants told us they have to rely on driving, the local school bus or their neighbours if they don't drive or have access to a car. This is particularly concerning to the community as there is an ageing population that may have health problems impacting their driving ability.

> "I don't believe the Hawkesbury has adequate access to health services, particularly for those in the western side of the river. There's basically zero good public transport and I despair for my kids to ever be able to find a job here or afford a house"

Domestic violence increasing during times of crisis

Participants told us that domestic violence increases in the aftermath of disasters. In particular, one stakeholder we spoke to told us that this can manifest in two ways. The first way is in families where there has never been violence before, and the second is when there has already been forms of domestic violence, but that violence becomes more serious and complex.

Some community cohorts face additional challenges

- People who are newer to the area are less prepared and aware of past experiences
- People living in some geographic areas are more exposed to certain types of disasters
- People renting are less connected to the community
- Lower income households may have less resources to be self-reliant
- Older people and people with disability may face additional challenges, for example in catching public transport.

> "I use a mobility scooter, and when there are disasters, I not able to get on a bus. When there aren't any trains running, I can't get out of Richmond unless I pay for a taxi."

> "We have been able to make our property self-sufficient but lower income families don't have that luxury"

Ideas and opportunities for the Resilience Strategy

More communication and education

Participants told us they want to see more communication about emergency preparedness and resilience from Council. This includes information on preparing for shocks, what to do during a shock and help with rebuilding after. This information should be provided across multiple platforms to account for the diverse needs of the community such as social media, text messages, signage and in-person information sessions or materials. Some specific ideas include hosting local expos to connect community members to local services, a service directory, and place-based information sessions to educate the different areas about which disasters are likely to affect them.

Improve the physical infrastructure

Participants told us they want to see the physical infrastructure of the Hawkesbury improved. In fact, 66% of survey respondents told us this was their top priority needed to help the Hawkesbury withstand emergencies. This includes improving the roads to connect the Hawkesbury to the rest of NSW and making them safe for the community and first responders. Participants also want the Council to explore opportunities for government funded secure and efficient internet and mobile phone coverage in the area.

Participants also want more physical buildings that are flood and fireproof to act as safe spaces accessible by the community. This is particularly important in local communities where there is currently no community centre.

"We really need a community centre. A doctor, or hairdresser or physio could come once a week and use space. This would make such a difference to community"

Improve volunteering capacity

Participants told us Council should harness the volunteering spirit of the region and provide the community with information on how they can help. One idea was to formalise the current volunteering process during shocks to allow locals access to equipment and facilities of Council or organisations. Another idea was to have a live document that services can access when working with the community to help manage spontaneous volunteering during emergencies.

Support local community to rebuild and become resilient

Participants told us they want Council to support the local community to build their own resilience and emergency preparedness. This includes working with local progress associations to understand community needs and ideas, reducing red tape when it comes to applying for development approvals to rebuild and being flexible in their approach to disasters recognising the Hawkesbury is a geographically diverse community.

"It would be good for Council to support community groups. Listen and respond to these communities"

Participants also told us Council should tap into the local knowledge of the area to improve resilience. This could include information sharing between generations or cultural burning as a fire prevention.

2. Introduction

This report summarises findings from community and stakeholder engagement to inform the development of the Hawkesbury Resilience Plan.

2.1   Project background

Hawkesbury Council is in the process of developing a Resilience Plan (the Plan). The Plan will:

- Establish an overall local vision for a resilience in the Hawkesbury
- Identify the risks, threats, challenges, and opportunities related to long-term resilience across Council's operations and the community
- Set out the actions across key response areas for implementation required to strengthen and build resilience across the community and the operations of Council
- Provide community and business insights that may guide asset and infrastructure planning (physical, social, cultural) and environmental protection initiatives.

2.2   Engagement objectives

Cred Consulting was engaged by Council to undertake community and stakeholder engagement to inform the development of the Plan. The engagement objectives were to:

- Inform the development of Council's Resilience Plan
- Work with the community and stakeholders to identify the existing strengths, gaps and priorities of the community
- Have the community and stakeholders identify:
    - Vulnerable groups or areas for concern, some of which have only been found after the disasters.
    - Main concerns in preparedness for and response to future shocks and withstanding other stresses
    - What services and organisations (including specific training or resources), networks and tools they use to support or increase their resilience.
- Capture fresh ideas generated from a community perspective around building connections, preparedness, resilience and improving recovery
- Raise awareness for residents of the opportunities available to improve their resilience in the Hawkesbury LGA
- Reach sections of the community from more vulnerable groups and including non-English speaking (NES) backgrounds residents, Fi and Torres Strait Islander people and rural and remote residents, and
- Complement recent community engagement activities and surveys (methods, results and findings) undertaken by Council including those associated with disaster recovery.

2.3   Engagement overview

Consultation activities included an online survey, pop-ups in locations across the LGA as well as online and face to face workshops and focus groups. In total, more than 250 people participated across all activities. Table 1 provides an overview of the community and stakeholder engagement activities.

Table 1 - Engagement activities overview

Type	Dates	Details/Location	# of Participants
Online survey	March-April 2022	Online	41
Service providers meeting	April 2022	Online	22
Pop-ups	April 2022	Bilpin	50
	April 2022	North Richmond	20
	April 2023	North Richmond	40
	April 2023	St Albans	10
	April 2023	Windsor	20
Interviews	April-May 2023	Phone	13
Face to face community workshop	April 2023	Windsor	18
Online community focus group	April 2023	Online	20
Total engaged across all activities:			**254**

Image 1 - Pop-up at Bilpin Markets (Source: Cred Consulting)

3. Online survey findings

3.1 About the online survey

The online survey was available via Council's Your Hawkesbury Your Say website between March 20 and April 24 2022. The purpose of the survey was to:

- Understand gaps, opportunities and priorities for Resilience Plan, and

- Understand the community's knowledge of the concept of resilience and educate the community about the concept of resilience.

In total, 41 people responded to the online survey.

3.1.1 Who we heard from

- Most survey respondents identify as female

- Most survey respondents live in Richmond (12%), North Richmond (10%), Bilpin (10%) and Kurrajong Hills (7%)

- Most survey respondents are aged between 35 and 59 years (54%)

  - 24 and younger (0%)

  - 25-34 years (15%)

  - 35-49 years (27%)

  - 50-59 years (27%)

  - 60 years and over (32%).

- Most respondents speak only English at home (83%).

Image 2 - Community art wall in St Albans (Source: Cred Consulting)

3.2   Key findings

- Survey respondents want to see better quality infrastructure and buildings (66%), better access to places and facilities to go in times of emergency (51%) and more support and resources to help the community prepare for emergencies (51%)

- 39% of survey respondents feel their household is very prepared for emergencies compared to 12$ for community neighbourhood and 2% for the Hawkesbury region overall

- Survey respondents told us top strengths of the Hawkesbury are the strong community connections willingness to help each other out, and the volunteering spirit shown through community groups and organisations

- Survey respondents told us storms and flooding and bushfires are the more concerning shocks to them

- 59% of survey respondents told us access to transport is very concerning to them followed by access to affordable housing (49%), and

- Survey respondents told us they want Council to better communicate on emergency preparedness, improve the infrastructure and provide more support for volunteering.

3.3   What we heard

3.3.1   Understanding Hawkesbury's resilience in face of emergency

Survey respondents told us better quality infrastructure will help the Hawkesbury better withstand emergencies

Survey respondents were asked what would help them and their community better withstand emergencies from a list of seven options.

As shown in Table 3, better quality infrastructure and buildings is the most popular. This is followed by better access to places and facilities to go to in times of emergency, support and resources for the community to prepare for emergencies and stronger community networks.

Table 2 - What would help you and your community to better withstand emergencies?

Rank	Theme	Response (#)	Response (%)
1	Better quality infrastructure and buildings	27	66%
2	Better access to places and facilities to go in times of emergency	21	51%
3	Support and resources for the community to prepare for emergencies	21	51%
4	Stronger community networks	16	39%
5	Better access to support services and organisations	14	34%
6	Better access to information about what to do in case of emergency	13	32%
7	More opportunities to volunteer time and skills	3	7%
8	Other	4	10%

Survey respondents were asked to rate the level of emergency preparedness of their household, community, and the Hawkesbury region overall.

As shown in Figure 1, 39% of respondents feel their household is very prepared for emergencies compared to 12% for community neighbourhood and 2% for the Hawkesbury region overall. 37% of respondents feel the Hawkesbury region is not prepared for emergencies.

Figure 1 - How would you rate the level of emergency preparedness of you and your households / your local community/neighbourhood / the Hawkesbury region?
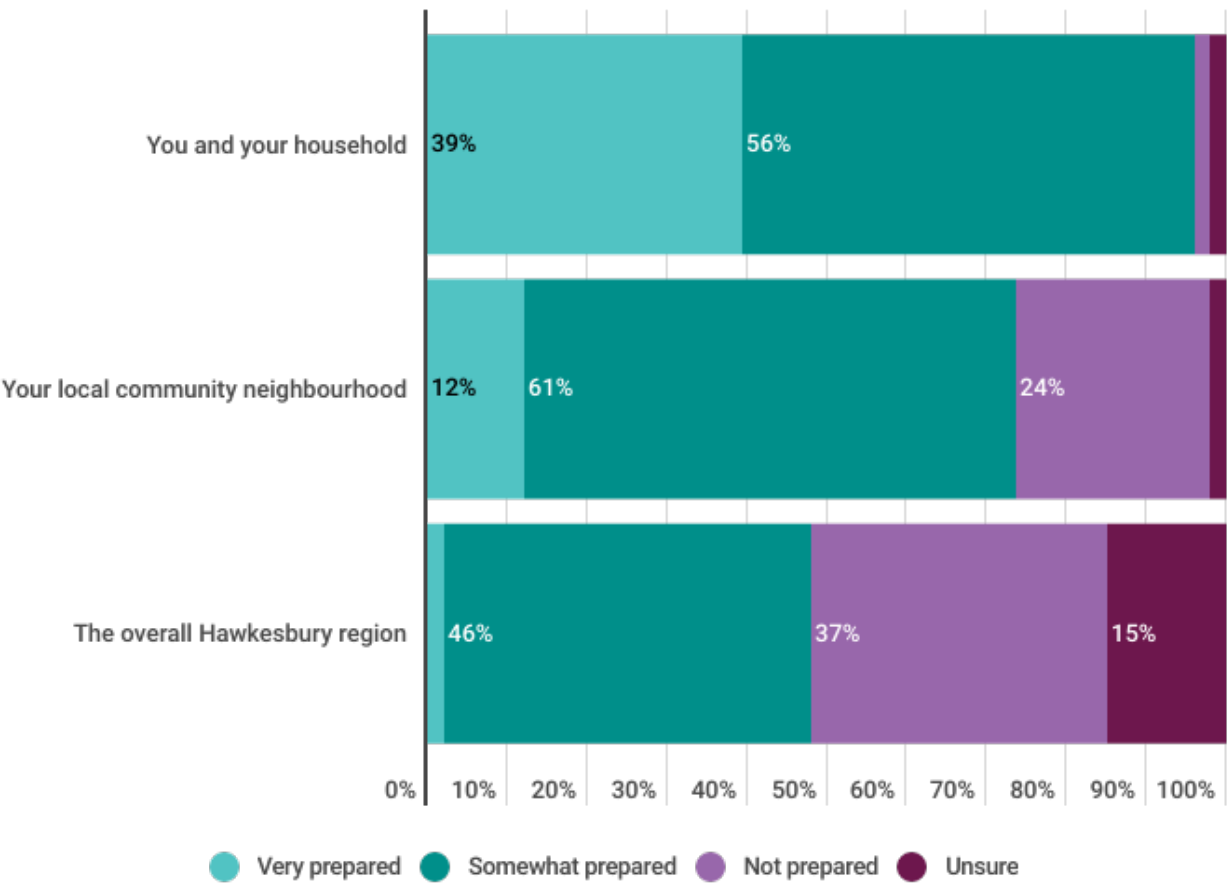
Survey respondents told us that Hawkesbury's' strong community spirit is a key strength in helping withstand emergencies

Survey respondents were asked what makes the Hawkesbury community strong to withstand emergencies. They were also asked to share any stories of resilience from their community.

Table 4 summarises the key findings from this question.

Table 3 - What makes the Hawkesbury community strong to withstand emergencies?

Strength	Select verbatim comments
Strong community connections and spirit (15 comments)	• "People banding together at times of need and relying on one another in the community" • "Self-reliance and support for each other in local communities and partnerships with local groups, NGOs and Council"
Community groups and organisations (12 comments)	• "Community groups that support people and high levels of volunteerism in emergency groups like RFS and SES"
Strong communication processes (3 comments)	• "Kurrajong Facebook community group provides consistently reliable information, especially in the 2019 bushfires and more recently with the floods"
Local knowledge and past experiences (3 comments)	• "Knowledge of past experiences and ways of planning in relation to those experiences" • "Local knowledge and local experience"

"The Bilpin community was very well prepared for the Gospers Mountain fire. There was preparedness by individuals on their own properties, neighbours helping neighbours and 'pod' armies (Utes with pods and firefighters). These were all essential. The Bilpin Hall upgrades also provide a safer place for the older folk to gather for support in emergency times"

3.3.2 Understanding level of concern about Hawkesbury's shocks and stresses

Survey respondents told us storms and flooding are the top acute shock concerns

Survey respondents were asked to rank nine acute shocks from the one they are most to least concerned about.

As shown in Table 5, respondents identify storms and flooding as most concerning to them. This is followed by bushfires, infrastructure failure and utilities failure.

Table 4 - Which acute shocks are you most concern about as a resident of the Hawkesbury? Rank from most concerned to least concerned.

Rank	Theme	Score
1	Storms and flooding	2.63
2	Bushfires	3.41
3	Infrastructure failure (e.g. roads, bridge or building collapse)	3.46
4	Utilities failure (e.g. power or communications outages)	3.56
5	Heatwaves	5
6	Disease pandemic	6.05
7	Financial crisis	6.22
8	Cyber attacks	6.93
9	Terror attack	7.73

Image 4 - Pop up in Windsor (Source: Cred Consulting)

Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of concern for a number of stresses affecting the Hawkesbury community.

As shown in Figure 2, respondents are most concerned about access to transport (59% are very concerned) and access to affordable and suitable housing (49%). The stresses respondents are least concerned about include access to employment and education (32% are not concerned) and drug and alcohol abuse (32%).

Interestingly, inequality divides was the third top most concerning stress (44% are very concerned) but also the highest ranked for not concerned along with the above (32% are not concerned).

Figure 2 - Please rate your level of concern about the following stresses affecting the Hawkesbury community.
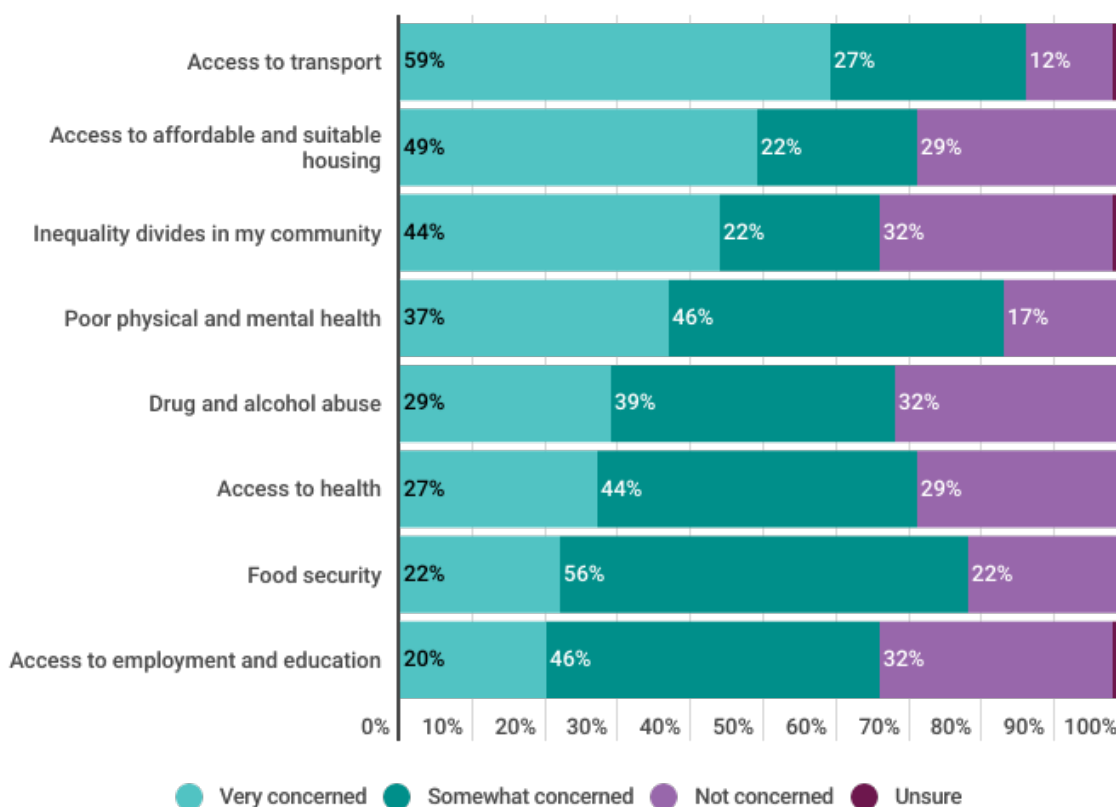
"There are pockets of significant disadvantage in the Hawkesbury, particularly with drug and alcohol use and vaping. There are also minimal services for young people to access"

"I don't believe the Hawkesbury has adequate access to health services, particularly for those on the western side of the river. There's basically zero good public transport and I despair for my kids to ever be able to find a job here or afford a house"

3.3.3 Ideas for Council to strengthen resilience

Respondents were asked about their ideas for how Council could improve community preparedness and build community connections to strengthen resilience. Table 6 highlights the key findings from this question.

Table 5 - Ideas for how Council could improve community preparedness and build community connections to strengthen resilience

Ideas	Verbatim comments
Better communication and information on emergency preparedness (17 comments)	• "Support is needed for more information sessions on preparing for floods for Lower Portland communities" • "Assist in sharing information that is already collated and collected by numerous organisations in the area" • "Local service expos so services can connect with their community. The promotion of service directory and referral information"
Better infrastructure (12 comments)	• "Road infrastructure is a major issue with no plan in place for road collapse. My community in lower Macdonald doesn't have a safe road at all at the moment" • "Connected communities do better. Infrastructure can do this in a physical way - we need the Grose Wold to Yarramundi bridge built"
More support for volunteering (11 comments)	• "Provide process so people know how to volunteer" • "Set up a better connection with volunteer and charity organisations so everyone knows their role in a crisis to save time and get services available quicker"
Improve cross-agency collaboration, including with state government or local NGOs (10 comments)	• "Collaborative projects and programs with local groups, NGOs and State agencies" • "Having one leader rather than getting different advice from BOM, SES and Council"
Prepare before emergencies occur (7 comments)	• "Plan of what needs to happen before a situation becomes an emergency (the lack of sandbags and slow setting up for sandbags for the community in the March 2022 flood is a prime example of this failure)"
Improve amenities and spaces for social connection (5 comments)	• "More space for Hawkesbury citizens to gather and connect - whether it is having programs for art, collaboration or spaces for people from different community to connect and gather." • "Community workshops"
Engage with young people living in the Hawkesbury (3 comments)	• "More activities for young people through utilisation of our beautiful parks"

5. Workshop findings

5.1 About the workshops

Two workshops were held with community members to explore strengths as a community, vulnerabilities to shocks and stressors, and priorities for action. This included:

- Online community workshop on 18 April 2023 with 18 participants, and
- Face-to-face community workshop on 20 April 2023 with 16 participants.

Purpose of the workshops

The purpose of the workshops was to understand:

- The strengths and challenges for resilience in the Hawkesbury
- The places, facilities and services in the Hawkesbury that help the community to withstand emergencies and recover, and
- What would help the community to better withstand emergencies.

About the online workshop

Participants for the online community workshop were recruited independently by Taverner Research.

Cred Consulting facilitated the online workshop via Zoom, using Mentimeter as an interactive, live polling tool throughout. The session commenced with a brief presentation describing the project and providing context, followed by a facilitated conversation that was guided by the following questions:

- What are the Hawkesbury Council area's strengths for resilience?
- What are the Hawkesbury Council area's challenges for resilience?
- What are the resilience connectors and assets that you rely on in times of crisis?
- What's missing? What are the priority needs for building resilience in the Hawkesbury area?
- What are your ideas to address our priority resilience needs?

About the face-to-face workshop

Participation in the face-to-face community workshop was made available to the Hawkesbury community, via the Your Hawkesbury Your Say project webpage, social media and through Council's networks.

Cred Consulting facilitated the face-to-face workshop at Windsor RSL. The session commenced with a brief presentation describing the project and providing context, followed by

A more detailed agenda was planned however the approach was pivoted on the day to allow participants to share their stories and thoughts in a more informal, conversational setting.

5.2 Online community workshop – what we heard

5.2.1 Strengths

Workshop participants were asked about the strengths of the Hawkesbury LGA for resilience. As shown in Table 7 the top strengths of the LGA include:

- **A strong sense of community.** Workshop participants told us that they have strong connections with their local community, often relying on them during crises and in everyday life

- **Strong community organisations and services.** Workshop participants told us that local organisations such as the SES, RFS and CWA are integral to shaping resilience in the Hawkesbury, and

- **The natural environment.** Workshop participants told us they love living in the Hawkesbury because of the natural environment and they want to see this protected.

Table 6 - What are Hawkesbury Council areas strengths for resilience?

Strengths	Workshop participants comments
Strong sense of community spirit (14 comments)	• "Having connections with people in your community. Knowing who is home, who needs help, who needs transport" • "We rely on the community. How can we formalise this? It would be good to get this down on paper and in the hands of community groups so when something happens the people who want to help know how they can help" • "The Kurrajong community is special. Most people in my street are involved with the SES, CWA or RFS. The work they do in times of crises and every day. It's inspiring to see what happens"
Strong community organisations and services (9 comments)	• SES and RFS • Lions and Rotary Club • Hawkesbury Helping Hands • CWA • Peppercorn • Community hubs •
The natural environment (8 comments)	• "Proximity to nature. Beautiful and fun place to live. Talking about nature is really important for resilience" • "It's a bit of heaven on earth" • "Hawkesbury is a unique place. It's a peri urban zone with agriculture and national park. There are unique assets that we have that we stand to lose if we don't plan"
Local knowledge and past experiences (7 comments)	• "A huge amount of historical information, long term residents with knowledge" • "Community base with a diverse range of knowledge, strong adaptability, volunteer involvement, and reactivity"
Social media communication particularly local Facebook groups	• "Kurrajong Community Group FB page is awesome, especially during natural disasters"

Strengths	Workshop participants comments
(5 comments)	• "Great Facebook groups for current and up to date information"

5.2.2 Challenges

Workshop participants were asked about the challenges for resilience in the Hawkesbury LGA. As shown in Table 8 the top challenges of the LGA include:

- **Poor infrastructure**. Workshop participants told us that poor infrastructure is a big challenge to resilience in their community. Top infrastructure concerns were the poor conditions of the roads and the inability to access necessary telecommunications

- **Lack of information.** Workshop participants told us the provision of information about shocks is not good enough. This includes communication about when fires or floods are happening in the moment, as well as information to help communities prepare before these shocks happen, and

- **An unresponsive local and state government**. Workshop participants told us the state and local governments need to be more responsive to their needs and work with them to strengthen resilience.

Table 7 - What are Hawkesbury Council areas challenges for resilience?

Challenges	Comments Snapshot
Poor infrastructure particularly roads and telecommunications (12 comments)	• "Some areas still don't have effective telecommunications, mobile coverage or reliable internet" • "Need to improve road infrastructure"
Lack of information before, during and after times of crisis (8 comments)	• "Lack of visually available signage talking about floods and their history. We could use heritage buildings to tell the story of flooding in the area" • "Delays in support and lack of information when a crisis is happening NOW" • "Tailor messaging locally. For example, Wisemans Ferry is affected differently from McGraths Hill, Windsor"
An unresponsive local and state government (7 comments)	• "An unresponsive Council' • "Lack of attention from some of our political representatives"
Increased development placing pressure on the Hawkesbury (6 comments)	• "Lack of vision...killing the beauty of the area by development" • "Increased infill development adding to the flood and fire evacuation load"
Diversity of residents causing tensions, particularly between long-term and newer residents (5 comments)	• "Such a diverse range of people, from homeless people to multimillionaires. To try and bring these different people together instead of being antagonist to each other" • "I live in a townhouse in Richmond. Most of us are renters, I feel there is no sense of community. People live here simply for cheaper housing, and they commute longer distances to other parts of Sydney. This sees many people naïve to resilience or what to do in times of crises" • "There are barriers between long-term and newer residents. Also discord between young and old"

Challenges	Comments Snapshot
Poor coordination between disaster agencies (4 comments)	• "No coordinated approach to dealing with challenges" • "Lack of a coordinated approach to known events"
Public transport (3 comments)	• "Insufficient public transport options" • "I hate the transport system out here. You have to catch the school bus to Windsor and stay there the whole day"
Council not being prepared for shocks (2 comments)	• "I've seen a lot of bad floods. My major concern is that Council is not prepared for flooding. Action isn't taken proactively when we know there is a flood coming" • "We wait for things to happen and then start taking change. We should prevent things happening, this is where resilience comes in"

Image 5 - Pop up at Bilpin Markets (Source: Cred Consulting)

5.2.3 Connectors and assets

Workshop participants were asked what they thought the resilience connectors and assets are in the Hawkesbury LGA during times of crisis. As shown in Table 9 the top connectors in the LGA are:

- **Community organisations and services**. Workshop participants told us that community organisations such as the SES, RFS and local media outlets are important resilience connectors. They told us these organisations and services not only provide assistance but also help inform the community about the shocks

- **The local community.** Workshop participants told us their local community is a resilience connector. This includes people who are willing to assist during times of crisis, and the local knowledge of past experiences that the community brings, and

- **Emergency and community centres**. Workshop participants told us emergency and community centres in times of crisis are resilience connectors. They told us it is important to have someone locally that is a safe space, and that provides information on the event.

Table 8 - What are the resilience connectors and assets that you rely on in times of crisis?

Connectors	Comments Snapshot
Community organisations and services (12 comments)	• SES • RFS – "Local RFS sheds are gathering places for information and assistance" • "Hawkesbury Post has been the most helpful in terms of social media/conveying hyper local information during times of flood & fire"
The local community (9 comments)	• "Older locals with historical knowledge" • "Individuals who donate and deliver items needed or open up their houses"
Emergency and community centres (5 comments)	• "Local safe places - somewhere to run if a flood rises quickly."
Local shops (4 comments)	• "Local supermarkets"
Local Facebook pages (3 comments)	• "Local Facebook pages"
Council (3 comments)	• "Council" • "Not the Council"

"We are well served in the Hawkesbury for the size of the population and available funding"

5.2.5 Needs

Workshop participants were asked what is missing from the Hawkesbury area. As shown in Table 10, the key priority needs for the LGA include:

- **More support from the government**. Workshop participants told us they want to see more support from local, state and federal governments

- **More education and information.** Workshop participants told us they want to see more education programs and information available about resilience and shocks, including for residents who are new to the Hawkesbury area and less likely to be prepared for emergencies, and

- **Better access to healthcare.** Workshop participants told us they need access to more healthcare facilities and services, especially when areas get cut off due to flooding or bushfires.

Table 9 - What's missing? What are the priority needs for building resilience in the Hawkesbury area?

Priority needs	Comments Snapshot
More support from local, state and federal government (7 comments)	• "Representation at state and federal level that can get responses from the governments and get us heard" • "Council leading their community" • "Proactive council"
More education and information (8 comments)	• "Hyper local education programs. For example, pop ups in each street/area. This could be done on a rolling basis" • "Central information about essentials being available like petrol, baby needs, medical" • "New resident information packs. These should be distributed by both Council and all real estate agents"
Better access to healthcare (5 comments)	• "We need more medical facilities, GPs" • "Coordinated medical assistance west of the river during disasters"
Better roads (3 comments)	• "Better roads"
Better telecommunications (3 comments)	• "There is still a digital divide - some can't access"
Use post flood learnings to improve preparedness (3 comments)	• "Group meetings after an event to talk about the event. At the moment it seems the event is over"
A proper emergency centre (2 comments)	• "We need an area similar to the showground for crisis stock accommodation"

5.2.7 Ideas

Workshop participants were asked their ideas about addressing resilience needs in the Hawkesbury. As shown in Table 11, the ideas for the LGA include:

- **Educate the community and provide information packs to all residents**. Workshop participants told us they want to see information packs that provide resources on planning for and responding to shocks. They want to ensure these are provided to all residents, particularly new ones

- **Stop development.** Workshop participants told us they want to see development stopped, and

- **Create a centralised action plan.** Workshop participants told us they want to see a centralised action plan for dealing with shocks.

Table 10 - What are your ideas to address our priority resilience needs?

Theme	Comments Snapshot
Educate the community and provide information packs to all residents (8 comments)	• "Education Education Education. If you're moving into an area like this, you need to be knowledgeable of what to do, what to stock, how to get out" • "Immediately identify pop up learning sites and a schedule of initial education events and 'local educators'" • "An information package to all new residents"
Stop development (6 comments)	• "Immediate halt to all new builds on the floodplain, including minor infill (brown site) development in Windsor and Richmond" • "Stop approving building on flood land"
Create a centralised action plan for emergencies (2 comments)	• "Set up a centrally organised action plan in times of emergency" • "A central organisational plan for local volunteers who may be able to be deployed in an emergency"
Consider the accessibility of residents during crisis (2 comments)	• "Consideration of accessibility / residents with disability during crisis"
Other ideas	• Create a flood insurance plan • Develop a major disaster centre west of the river • Learn from past experiences including what worked well and what didn't • Strong leadership in resilience • Involve the military sooner

"I have a mobility scooter. When there is a disaster, I cannot get on a bus. When there are no trains running, I can't get out of Richmond unless I pay for a taxi"

"Encourage people to be involved in local Bushcare so as to remove woody weeds that add to bushfire fuel. Too many people are not involved with Bushcare and local weed removal"

5.3 In person community workshop – what we heard

5.3.1 Strengths

Workshop participants were asked what they see as the main strengths for resilience in the Hawkesbury. The key strengths raised are outlined below:

Community connection and spirit

Participants indicated that a key strength of resilience in the Hawkesbury is community connection, and that the community comes together and supports each other in hard times. Participants stated that they feel supported by their neighbours and that there are many volunteers in the community.

"When the community has a purpose and they are supported to achieve that, there's nothing that can stop them."

"When we moved here, we got to know the generation who were there before us, so we were prepared. They helped us when we needed it."

Local knowledge

Another strength raised was the knowledge held by long-term residents. Participants indicated that many residents of the Hawkesbury have lived in the area for generations and have extensive knowledge to share about resilience, natural disasters and the landscape.

"The strength is in the knowledge."

Sources of information and support

One participant stated that Council is connected, progressive and willing to engage with the community. Others referred to social media and community networks as key places where they can find information and learn skills.

5.3.2 Challenges

Workshop participants were asked what they see as the main challenges for resilience in the Hawkesbury. The key challenges raised are outlined below:

Difficulty navigating processes after emergencies

Participants shared stories of the impacts they experienced from floods and bushfires in recent years. Many participants stated that even after the event, the impacts are ongoing, with many in the community experiencing difficulty with the clean-up, filing insurance claims and seeking compensation, and filling in complicated online forms.

"We lost everything with no compensation because the claim process was insane."

Distance and landscape

Distance and landscape were identified as key challenges in the Hawkesbury. The region is highly prone to natural disasters and has multiple rivers, which means flood water comes from many directions and traps parts of the community in. Participants also noted that development in the area is worsening the impacts of floods, and that residents only being eligible for one Council clean-up per year means that there is extra rubbish and debris acting as fuel for bushfires or being swept away by floods.

"The Hawkesbury doesn't just have one river, it has five – it's a bath. This is why we get affected and why it's unique."

"We get locked in when both bridges go."

Lack of awareness and preparedness among new residents

Participants expressed concern about the lack of community awareness and education. They indicated that residents who are new to the Hawkesbury are often not aware of the risks of natural disasters or how to be prepared, and do not always want to take advice from longer-term residents. Renters in particular are not informed that their property is located in a flood zone. This results in some of the community being ill-equipped for emergency events and unable to respond effectively when they occur.

"When people rent, there's no process where they're told that they're in a flood zone. The real estate agent is certainly not going to tell them."

"In the floods, people were amazed at where the water comes from. They didn't really know much about the river."

Complacency and misinformation in emergencies

It was also noted that many in the community do not evacuate the area when the order is given, even the longer-term residents. Many people underestimate the severity of the natural disaster or base their response on a previous experience, when in reality natural disasters are unpredictable and previous experiences cannot be relied on. One participant expressed concern about community members sharing incorrect information and encouraging neighbours to ignore evacuation orders, and highlighted the importance of communicating that every natural disaster is different and that evacuation orders should always be followed.

"People are talking to the neighbours who are saying it's all good and won't go anywhere, so they're staying and getting in serious danger. Floods can be very unpredictable."

"Even people who have been here for a long time have the attitude of 'I'll be right, I'll just stay in my house'."

Difficulty implementing cultural burning

One participant stated that cultural burning has been continually recommended as a measure to reduce the impact of bushfires in the Hawkesbury, with success seen elsewhere, however there has been difficulty in gaining approval from the RFS to implement this.

Vulnerable people not receiving information

Participants stated that while information is available, it is not necessarily reaching the most vulnerable community members, with many residents not being online or having internet access.

Missing link between funded service providers and community members

Participants expressed concern that many service providers received funding however they were not active in the community or connecting with people who needed the service.

5.3.3 Ideas

Workshop participants were asked to share their ideas to improve resilience. The key ideas raised are outlined below:

Tapping into local knowledge

Participants highlighted the importance of tapping into the knowledge of long-term residents who have lived in the Hawkesbury for many years. Participants saw this as a key asset that is not currently being harnessed.

Improving community awareness and education

Participants saw value in improving the community's awareness and education of natural disasters. This is particularly important for new residents so they understand the risks of where they live and how best to be prepared for emergency events.

"People who move into the area really need to understand their territory. People need to prepare their pantry and groceries well before the flood comes."

Implementing bushfire prevention methods

Cultural burning was raised as a key recommendation to prevent the severity and impact of bushfires in the future. It was noted that cultural burning has a long history and has been implemented successfully in many other areas. Participants also suggested undertaking some clearing around houses to provide a buffer in the event of a bushfire.

"My kids even do cultural burning and because of that, their whole perception of fire is more calm. They have a different response."

Improving local infrastructure and services

Participants stated that there is a need to improve and maintain roads in the Hawkesbury so they can operate at maximum capacity and are safe for use by the community and first responders in emergency events. Participants also saw a need to improve the access to health services so community members can be treated locally and are not cut off from health services in emergencies.

Training and support for the community

Participants suggested a range of training opportunities that could be provided to the community, including training community members to be able to assist the people around them, through mental

health first aid and accidental counsellor courses. Training people in committees was also suggested, in terms of how to structure a committee effectively and how to apply for a grant.

5.3.4 Actions brainstorm

Workshop participants were asked to identify actions that would help the community to better withstand emergencies. The actions suggested are summarised below:

Services coordination

- Understand who/what charity has proven themselves in emergency response and ongoing recovery
- Create a database of not-for-profit organisations and sports clubs
- Live document for services to access when working with community
- INSW and SES are currently working on mapping what service providers are doing to reduce doubling up
- Create a process to control and manage spontaneous volunteering after an emergency event, to harness and utilise volunteer enthusiasm in the most effective way, and
- Organisations need to plan in advance how they will provide assistance to those impacted by natural disasters.

Wellbeing and connection

- Share the Dignity vending machines
- Advocating for children and young people around the social, emotional and mental impacts of natural disasters
- Providing opportunities for community members to come together and share their story, and explore ways to support each other
- Ensuring "resilience" includes ongoing conversations around strengthening capacity to respond and grow on a personal and community level, considering emotional and mental health
- Support the community with friendships and companionship, and
- Proactive wellness checks following emergency events, and further down the track.

Safe places and communities

- Safe places needed in all areas, which are accessible and known by the community
- Marshalling points for flood resources needed in high-risk areas
- Community centres have the ability to be a hub for information, but also a connection space during times of crisis, and
- Education centres to help the community be informed and ready.

Roads and infrastructure

- Improve quality of roads
- Rubbish removal
- Power outages are not thought of

- Better communications infrastructure, including mobile towers in low income areas and social housing
- Delayed access to clean up community facilities, and
- Need for roads to access sites.

Education and information

- Ground-level, street by street education programs tailored to that area
- Digital literacy opportunities, including council-run computer workshops
- Skill building
- Small group information sessions
- Educating against complacency
- TedX style events for expert speakers and community members to tell their stories
- Preparation packs outlining what supplies to buy and where to get information
- Local leader training program
- Knowledge of the existing community and history of the area is important
- Historical stories on signage and interactive art installations in public areas to create awareness
- Information packs for all new residents
- Visible flood height markers in streets and label telegraph poles with flood heights
- Localised plans for individual neighbourhoods with specific, tailored information, and
- AHD on every home in the floodplain.

Advocacy

- Lobby State Government to make flood risk disclosure mandatory. WSROC-led for both property purchase and rental
- Improve ability to get claims processed
- Advocate for temporary health services to be available when river cuts off
- Grants for local community groups and clubs
- Advocate for more workers to provide practical assistance immediately after emergency events. This could involve place-based organisations that are activated just prior to disasters
- Strict policing of materials stored in floodplain
- Ensure services that are funded are used for their funding, so the community is not relying on charity, and
- Support agencies.

General ideas

- Cultural burning implementation and policy
- Need better-equipped medical services and facilities west of the river, and
- Need vehicle, caravan and machinery evacuation areas.

6. Pop-up findings

6.1   About the pop-ups

Five community pop-up sessions were held on the following dates during 2022 and 2023:

- Saturday 2 April 2022, 10am – 12pm, Bilpin Community Farmers Market
- Saturday 2 April 2022, 2pm – 4pm, North Richmond Shopping Village
- Tuesday 11 April 2023, 10am – 1pm at St Albans Park
- Saturday 22 April 2023, 10am – 12pm at Richmond Marketplace, and
- Saturday 22 April 2023, 2pm – 4pm at Windsor Riverview Shopping Centre.

The pop-ups were facilitated by staff from Cred Consulting and Hawkesbury City Council. The pop-ups were open to the public and designed to provide an opportunity for the community to meet the project team, provide feedback to inform the resilience plan and ask questions.

A series of pop-up activity boards were prepared to prompt conversation and allow participants to provide feedback. The pop-up activity boards are pictured below:
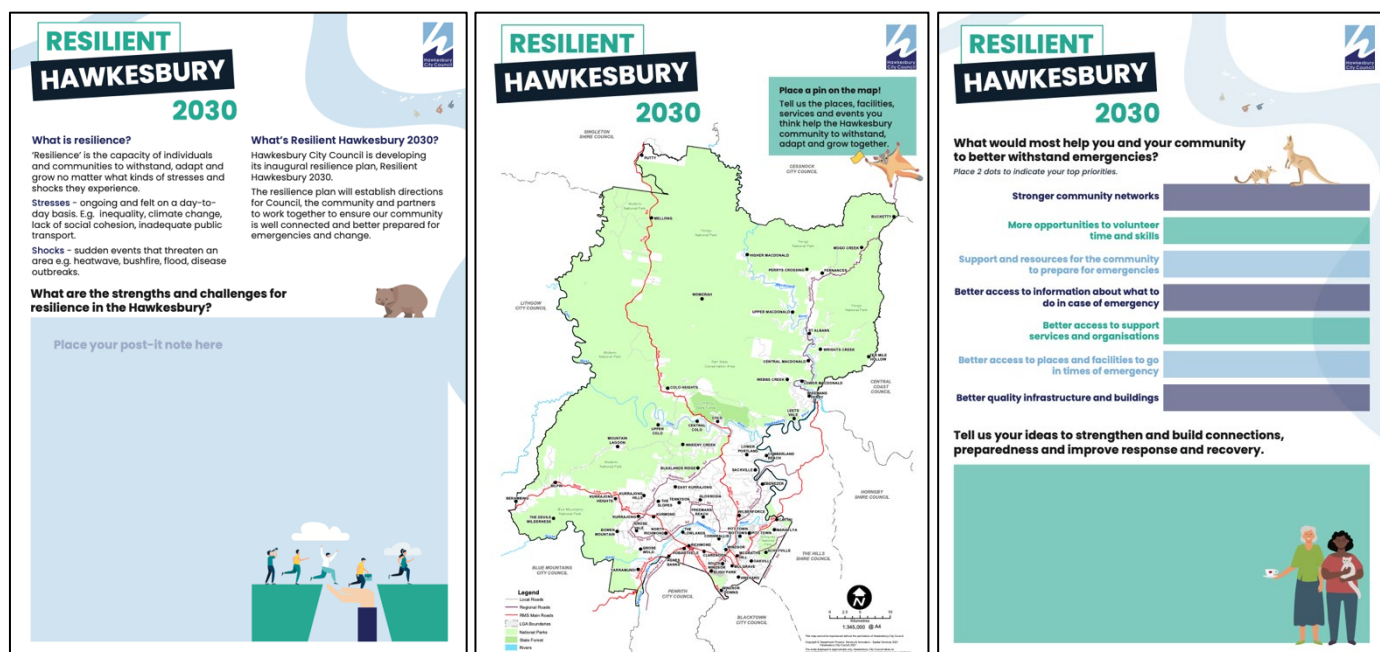
Feedback heard at the pop-ups is summarised below. The verbatim raw data from the 2022 pop-ups is provided at Appendix 1 and the verbatim raw data from the 2023 pop-ups is provided at Appendix 2, categorised per location.

6.2   What we heard

What are the strengths for resilience in the Hawkesbury?

Pop-up participants were asked what they see as the main strengths for resilience in the Hawkesbury. The key strengths raised are summarised below:

- Strong, tight-knit community that helps each other out and comes together during hard times

- Small town country feel and rural lifestyle

- Connected and aware community

- Community events, such as the St Albans Writer's Festival and folk festival and the Purple Moon art event

- The community is relatively self-sufficient

- Access to information is improving, and

- The community organisations, volunteer organisations and services are very valuable.

What are the challenges for resilience in the Hawkesbury?

Pop-up participants were asked what they see as the main challenges for resilience in the Hawkesbury. The key challenges raised are summarised below:

- Frequent and unpredictable emergency events and natural disasters

- The geographic size and scale of the LGA

- Houses being built on floodplains and difficulty finding home insurance

- Lack of public transport

- Complex and prohibitive Council planning processes

- Damaged and poorly maintained roads and footpaths

- Difficulty accessing information

- Affordable housing and homelessness

- Difficulty evacuating from the Hawkesbury

- Lack of in-person community groups and community support services

- Access to certain areas gets blocked off during natural disasters

- Balancing increased traffic and development, and

- Lack of internet and mobile phone connectivity in areas like St Albans.

Tell us the places, facilities, services and events you think help the Hawkesbury community to withstand, adapt and grow together.

Pop-up participants were asked to place a pin on a map of the Hawkesbury to share the places, facilities, services and events they think help the Hawkesbury community to withstand, adapt and grow together. Participants mentioned the following:

- Lower Macdonald – there is an evacuation route (Jack's Track) that leads to Putty Road

- Disaster relief community hub in South Windsor

- Community hubs in Wilberforce, St Albans and Colo Heights

- Libraries have good services, events and activities

- Peppercorn Services

- Richmond Club, and

- Community centres, such as the Hawkesbury Leisure and Learning Centre in Richmond.

Participants also identified the need for more evacuation routes, food supplies in emergencies, community support and services, bushfire prevention measures and improvements to roads and local infrastructure.

What would help you and your community to better withstand emergencies?

Pop-up participants at the 2023 pop-ups in St Albans, Richmond and Windsor pop-ups were asked to indicate what would most help them and their community to better withstand emergencies. They were provided with two sticky dots to indicate their top two priorities from a list of options.

The most popular option was 'better access to information about what to do in case of emergency', which received 18 votes across all three pop-ups. This was followed by 'support and resources for the community to prepare for emergencies' and 'better access to places and facilities to go in times of emergency', which received 16 votes each.

Table 11 - What would help you and your community to better withstand emergencies?

Answer option	Votes
Better access to information about what to do in case of emergency	18
Support and resources for the community to prepare for emergencies	16
Better access to places and facilities to go in times of emergency	16
Better quality infrastructure and buildings	14
Stronger community networks	7
More opportunities to volunteer time and skills	7
Better access to support services and organisations	7

Ideas to strengthen and build connections, preparedness and improve response and recovery

Pop-up participants were asked to share their ideas to strengthen and build connections, preparedness and improve response and recovery. Ideas identified by participants are summarised below:

- Provide training and education to the community around local risks, emergency preparedness and response

- Improve mobile phone and internet connectivity in St Albans

- Fix roads and community infrastructure

- Improve drainage

- Outdoor gym equipment

- Provide more communication channels

- Provide grants and financial support

- Consider local context when planning for and responding to emergency events

- Provide immediate warning of danger and better information around emergency response, including clear, consistent messaging from all agencies, levels of government and services

- Protect animals in natural disasters

- Improve physical and mental health services for the community

- Listen to long-term community members who are experts in the area

- Implement a measure to cater to overflow water from the dam

- Satellite police station and ambulance station

- Flood height markers for community members who live on the river, who can advise Council when it gets to a certain level

- Provide alternative flood evacuation routes, and

- Community fire fighting trailer with the necessary equipment, and training for the community in how to use it in an emergency while they are waiting for emergency services.

Image 6 - Community members at the opening of St Albans park (Source: Cred Consulting)

7. Stakeholder interview findings

8. About the interviews

The stakeholder interviews were conducted over April 2023. The aim of these interviews was to gain deeper insights into the shocks and stressors impacting the Hawkesbury community and how a resilience plan can address these concerns.

We spoke to 13 stakeholders across the Hawkesbury LGA.

8.1 What we heard

8.1.1 Stressors that impact daily life in the Hawkesbury

Poorly maintained roads

Interview participants told us the roads across the Hawkesbury are not satisfactory, which create dangerous driving conditions. Participants note that the roads are particularly bad after disasters such as floods which cause parts of the road to fall into the river. This means participants often feel unsafe using roads across the LGA. Another concern participants share is the lack of roads in the Hawkesbury that create traffic particularly with many heavy trucks using them. One participant told us that because of this all roads should be three lanes as this could almost double the carrying capacity.

"We have to drive everywhere. I have had to change my tires many times because of potholes filled with water. This can compound other stresses such as financial."

"The road network is a key issue for everybody on this side of the river. There has been a significant increase in traffic without any increase in the arterial network to deal with that increased volume. Traffic delays are becoming quite problematic"

Poor telecommunications including internet and mobile coverage

Interview participants told us the poor telecommunications across the Hawkesbury impacts their day to day lives. The main concern is that there is no effective mobile service or internet across the LGA. While there are options such as using wifi calling, satellites or Starlink, these are not always effective or may not be financially viable for some people. One interview participant who owns a retreat business in the Hawkesbury struggles to find people to stay without mobile reception or internet.

"My neighbour lost their job because of poor mobile reception. She was a traffic controller and was sent jobs by text rather than phoning through the landline. She lost all these jobs because she didn't know and was then taken off the contract list"

"I live 600m from mobile phone tower and I can make a call with one bar of service. If I go out to the street, it's a bit better. The local sports club where we have meetings and social events is about 600m in opposite direction and there is no phone service there. It's an issue on a good day, but mobile phone traffic increases during disaster and its more impacted"

A lack of physical and mental health services

Interview participants told us there is a lack of physical and mental health services available to residents of the Hawkesbury. They told us their ability to access these services can be impacted by both the isolation of where they live and the prohibitive financial costs.

Health concerns from participants include not enough bulk billing GPs, long waiting lists for elective surgeries and not enough mental health service providers. On the topic of mental health services, one participant told us there is Headspace wing opening in the Hawkesbury which may help ease the burden. Other participants spoke about the lack of access to physiotherapists and at home care services, which impact their ability to undergo surgery or leave hospital and return home. Some participants told us that telehealth was useful during COVID-19 and they would like to see this implemented more across the LGA.

"My neighbors' husband had stroke and is in hospital. They want to release him, but she does not feel she can look after him alone. They originally said they will send a nurse everyday but when they checked her address, they said it would only be once a week. Because of this he will have to stay in hospital"

"There are quite a few doctor surgeries but a lot them are transient, so they don't stay very long. The ones that do stay long often have long waiting lists or aren't accepting new patients"

A lack of public transport

Interview participants told us lack public transport in the Hawkesbury negatively impacts them and their community's day to day life. Many participants told us that the only public transport they can access is the school bus on school days, but this means they have to spend the whole day waiting for it to return after school finishes. Participants want to see more public transport services across the LGA to help them feel less isolated, access more services and feel more connected to the community.

One participant told us they want to see public transport better connect local communities in the Hawkesbury with the rest of Sydney, not just to Windsor. For example, connecting to Castle Hill or Glenorie which are more central and on the metro line.

"A couple of years ago I had medical emergency and afterwards I was unable to drive for a while. My only access to a shopping centre to buy food was via the school bus. I could take the school bus to Richmond but had to wait to end of day. It might not affect a huge number of people because a lot of people drive but when you get older this does become an issue"

Domestic violence

Interview participants told us domestic violence is a problem in the Hawkesbury community. Participants who spoke about domestic violence shared concerns about the hidden nature of the violence and that victims may not feel able to seek help within the community. They also spoke about the potential discord between what happens behind doors and out in the community.

One participant told us that they often see an increase in domestic violence after disasters such as bushfires and floods, often manifesting in two ways. The first way is in families where there has never been violence before, and the second is when there has already been violence, but that violence becomes more serious and complex.

"Crisis accommodation has been built and is on the verge of opening. Once this is up and running there will be six units fully staffed seven days a week for women escaping domestic violence. This is great as we have been lobbying for more than 30 years and there is nothing like this in Hawkesbury"

Other stressors include:

- Lack of social infrastructure
- Unreliable power and soaring energy costs
- Lack of access to shops
- Lack of before and after school care
- Lack of schooling options
- Lack of local employment
- Lack of affordable housing

"There is a lack of local employment. I still have to come back to Sydney to do a couple days in my old job to make ends meet as my business not making huge money. This stops younger people moving to these areas because there just aren't jobs for them"

"We moved off the land after the floods and wanted something quickly. We looked at rentals in town and there were only four properties available. We applied for all of them and only got one. It felt great to be safe and it was only then I realised how badly we were impacted mentally by the floods. It's hard because we have to pay more than 40% of our income on housing. It would be good if we could plan for more medium density"

8.1.3 Shocks that impact the Hawkesbury

Interview participants told us bushfires and floods are the main shocks they experience living in the Hawkesbury, with wide ranging impacts on their lives.

"I feel like we are at the pointy end of climate change. We are living it and have been for last four years. There is a lot of trauma in community but I think we are only just realising now how stressful it has all been"

Participants shared their experiences of these shocks with us.

Poor communication

Interview participants told us communication around bushfires and floods is often not good enough. In particular, interviewees want more proactive communications from Council before these events occur to allow them enough time to prepare. They also spoke about how in the days immediately before floods and fires the Council often does not give them enough warning before closing roads which can lead to them having to shelter in place as they can't leave.

"During the floods in 2020 the two places you could evacuate to were North Richmond and Lithgow. However, the road was blocked in both directions, and we couldn't get out. We were stuck for a long time because it took forever for the flood waters to recede"

Negative impact on mental health

Some participants spoke about the impact of the shocks on their mental health and the ongoing feeling of waiting for it to happen again. One participant spoke about the cumulative impact of ongoing shocks on the community's mental health and how trauma is often triggered in the second or third events.

"I lie in bed and hear heavy rain. It's stressful because I think how long before the water comes in. Even though I know it is not going to as we have spent a lot of money on retaining walls, I still think about it. It wakes me up at night because I am scared"

Isolation

Interview participants spoke about road closures in the aftermath of shocks leaving them isolated and unable to go to the shops or weeks for days or weeks. Participants told us they try to be self-sufficient and have enough food and supplies to last for up to a week, but this is not always possible. One participant told us that during the 2019 bushfires the roads were closed for ten days which was longer than they had accounted for. Long periods of isolation can also lead to uncertainty around the future of business and agriculture as it can be hard to access essential items needed to keep these businesses running.

8.1.5   Strengths that help the Hawkesbury get through shocks and stressors

Strong community spirit and local knowledge

Overwhelmingly interview participants told us the strong community spirit and local knowledge is the biggest strength of the Hawkesbury region. Participants told us their neighbours are always ready to help both on a day-to-day level, and particularly during times of crisis. This includes helping people access telecommunications, donating food and clothes, moving equipment and providing emergency accommodation.

Participants also told us about formal and informal communication channels between the community. For example, one participant spoke about local newspapers that are available online for community members to stay up to date on comings and goings in the community. Other participants spoke about Facebook groups and WhatsApp messages during times of crisis that keep everyone updated and act as a way to call for help. Additionally, participants who have moved into a new area spoke about being welcomed by the local community.

"Whatever our differences are, we are a small community and everyone works together"

"Disaster brings people together and that can be an amazing thing. I've seen some great things such as the St Albans newsletter saying if during the floods anyone needed help bringing their animals up to higher ground to let them know"

Community programs and organisations

Interview participants told us that community programs and organisations running in the Hawkesbury are also a strength of the region. Community organisations include Mountain of Joy, Hawkesbury Helping Hands, Peppercorn and local progress associations.

A number of participants we spoke to were also part of community programs helping the Hawkesbury community rebuild after shocks. This includes the connected and prepared community resilience project helping to get radios to the St Albans community and local mental health programs such as SODA and Café B&CO.

"The connected and prepared community resilience project helped us get radios to the whole community so we can talk to each other during disasters. We also plan to roll out grab bags and a warning system. We think this is a great outcome and it was all done through neighbourhood networks"

"I ran a social enterprise called B&CO which was a pop-up café next to the library in Windsor funded by Wentworth Healthcare. It was a commercial coffee cart which employed young people to help develop their hospitality skills. There would also be a range of mental health practitioners chatting to people from the public and connecting them with services"

Social media

Interview participants told us that the social media and connections through Facebook groups is also a strength of the LGA. They told us that Facebook groups allow the community to help each other out during day-to-day life such as picking up things from town, and to communicate during shocks.

"The Kurrajong Facebook group is good. It's good outside of shocks and during shocks. For example, if my mower is broken, I can post on there and someone will answer"

Resilience centres

Interview participants also told us the resilience centres are a strength of the Hawkesbury during shocks. They told us about the support they provide to people devastated by fires and floods, with one suggesting they become a permanent fixture in areas where there is no neighbourhood centre.

"I found the resilience centres really good. Being able to talk to people in person to help you and understand what needs to be done is so important. If I was trying to do all this online, I think it would be really hard, and it would increase my stress levels"

**Image 7 - Pop up board at North Richmond
(Source: Cred Consulting)**

8.1.6   Vulnerable cohorts

Interview participants told us the following cohorts within the Hawkesbury are vulnerable:

- Elderly people
    - "Evacuation centres and plans often rely on people being able to drive there but what do you do if you are an elderly person who can't drive or are confused about what is happening"
- Lower income households
    - "We have been able to make our property self-sufficient but lower income families don't have that luxury"
- People experiencing drugs and alcohol problems
- People experiencing domestic violence, and
- People living in more isolated areas of the Hawkesbury.

8.1.7   Ideas to improve community preparedness and connections

Better communication from Council before, during and after emergencies

Interview participants told us they want to see Council provide better communications before, during and after emergencies.

Before emergencies participants want to see Council promote self-reliant and sustainable living, such as providing information on connecting your property to solar power, and how many days' worth of provisions to have in your house. They also want more information on how to create grab bags and what to include in them, and how to plan for pets and animals.

During emergencies participants told us it would be helpful to access accurate information about the floods, with one participating sharing it can be hard to trust the media. This includes sharing information across many platforms including Facebook, mobile phones or even sending people out to door knock . One participant suggested Council creates a list of local social media channels for the community to use.

After emergencies participants want better communications from Councils on rebuilding and repairing. One idea was to provide a list of tradespeople to call on for help with installing preventative updates such as sprinkles. Another idea is to help residents understand what services are available for after emergencies, such as providing a services director. One participant also want the Council to help reduce the stigma of asking for help.

"I don't use Facebook but Council use this as their main form of communication. Normally I get a text on my mobile phone by emergency services, and it would be good if Council could do more of that. Email would be good as well when it isn't an emergency situation"

"Communication is key because the internet patchy and mobile reception goes down during floods. This means we never get updated data on river. We followed the BOM river tracking site, and it is brilliant. We are able to use it a lot to figure out where are and how far it's gone up and if we would get into trouble. It would be good if Council could promote this more"

Support the community to build their resilience and preparedness

Interview participants told us they want Council to better support the community to build resilience and community preparedness. In particular, interviewees reminded us that the Hawkesbury is a diverse community made up of rural, regional and remote communities with different needs. One suggestion is for Council to better support local progress associations, with one sharing the experience of Council working with the Bilpin Progress Association to upgrade Bilpin Oval.

"It would be good for Council to encourage and support community groups. They have been responsive especially in last few years, but they could do this more broadly throughout the Hawkesbury. They should listen and respond to these communities because they can identify the issues important to them and very often offer good suggestions"

Be more flexible when helping the community rebuild after shocks

Some interview participants shared more negative experiences of trying to rebuild after bushfires or floods. For example, one participant shared that the Council asked them to put in a development application to rebuild even though they were rebuilding like for like. Despite Council saying they would fast-track the application it never happened, which is stressful as the insurance money is usually only valid for rebuilding within one year. They also spoke about Council adopting a one size fits all approach, questioning why if your property is in the mountains 500m away from the nearest neighbour you need to pay $1000 for a noise report. They want to see the Council take a more flexible approach to helping residents rebuild after disasters.

Along the theme of flexibility, one participant noted the importance of Council thinking differently in allowing buildings to be built in flood or fire prone areas. This is because there are vital services and shops communities need to access, yet no one is allowed to build there.

Lastly, one participant suggested Council reduce the red tape in becoming a Council approved contractor. They note the current process restricts the number of tradespeople that can become approved contractors meaning there is a shortage of contractors and an abundance of work post shock.

"I find Council planners to be backwards when it comes to rebuilding. I would love to see some more flexible thinking within Council to allow buildings to be built in flood or fire prone areas to provide us with shops, services and community centres we need. It is possible to create safe, sustainable, solar powered, flood proof building"

More community centres

Some interview participants told us there is a need for more community centres in the LGA to provide residents with access to services, information, and a safe space for community connection. One participant suggested schools offer the potential to be used as community hubs as they could co-locate with other services.

"We really need a community centre. A doctor, or hairdresser or physio could come once a week and use space. This would be helpful for services that may not be able to survive permanently out there but could come once a week or fortnight to rent out a space. This would make such a difference to community especially for older people to access without travelling an hour"

Advocate to State and Federal Government

Some participants want Council to advocate more for the region to both the State and Federal Governments around resilience and emergency preparedness.

10. Service providers meeting findings

10.1 About the service providers meeting

The service providers meeting took place online on April 13 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Understand the impacts that shocks and stressors have had/are having on the community
- Explore what makes the community strong
- Explore what makes the community vulnerable
- Understand what resources/ people/ actions are needed in an emergency, and
- Understand what is missing in Hawkesbury City.

In total, 22 people participated in the meeting. Participants represented a range of key stakeholder organisations, including NFPs and NGOs across the HCC region.

10.2 What we heard

10.2.1 Strengths

Service provider participants were asked about the strengths of the Hawkesbury LGA for resilience. Strengths include:

- **A connected community.** Participants told us the Hawkesbury community is connected and look out for one another
- **Local knowledge and experience**. Participants told us the community has experience with natural disasters and the knowledge to become more resilient through these experiences, and
- **Strong support services**. Participants told us the support services in the Hawkesbury are a strength. They told us that support services have strong relationships both with the community and with other services.

"Community members help each other without formal requirements or organisations involvement"

"Community connection and well-connected community services"

"There is a lot of pride in the Hawkesbury community. People like being 'Hawkesburian', and there is a strong volunteering community sentiment"

10.2.3 Challenges

Service provider participants were asked about the challenges for resilience in the Hawkesbury LGA. Challenges include:

- **Geography**. Participants told us the Hawkesbury is large and geographically dispersed which makes providing support services difficult. This can also lead to communities being isolated and cut off. Participants also told us communities in diverse geographical areas have different needs and meeting these can be challenging

- **Support service pressures.** Participants told us support services are facing pressures in delivering services across the Hawkesbury. Pressures include long wait times, how they deliver services, funding and understanding what the community needs

- **Poor transport**. Participants told us transport across the LGA is limited which impacts day-to-day life including access to services

- **Poor telecommunications.** Participants told us there is poor telecommunications in the Hawkesbury,

- **Poor access to health**. Participants told us access to healthcare services is also a challenge across the Hawkesbury, and

- **New arrivals**. Participants told us people are moving to the Hawkesbury with limited understanding of natural disasters and the area.

"Vast area of Hawkesbury means difficult connecting with areas that are not central"

"A lot of areas in the region have no access to basic infrastructure, such as digital networks, telecommunications, transport, and health. These are crucial to get in times of emergencies as well"

"New arrivals to the area bringing new animals and plants, and not having a survival plan in face of crisis. Unpreparedness due to unfamiliarity with the region, from newcomers, provides high vulnerability to community members"

"Not only do we not necessarily know what people's priorities are, they are very different. Each suburb sees themselves as different communities. They don't want to be labelled as 'Hawkesbury residents', and that they are unique. This creates challenges to create programs and services to fulfill these needs, as they are provided with funding and resourcing as much as government gives"

10.2.5 Needs

Workshop participants were asked what the priority needs are for resilience in the Hawkesbury area. Priority needs include:

- **More services**. Participants told us they want to see more services across the Hawkesbury. This includes more support services in remote locations, more community centres, mobile health services, childcare services and services for young people

- **More transport.** Participants told us they want to see more transport options across the Hawkesbury

- **More employment.** Participants told us they want to see more local employment in the Hawkesbury

- **Understand needs of community.** Participants told us they want to see more community consultation to better understand needs of local communities in the Hawkesbury, particularly any differences and how these can be addressed, and

- **More funding.** Participants want to see more funding for resilience, preparedness, and recovery support in the region.

"Recognising we are rural and not metro so that we are resourced appropriately"

"Community centres established in remote areas of the Hawkesbury including St Albans, Wiseman's Ferry and Colo"

"Consistent funding for resilience, preparedness and recovery support. It's a cycle that occurs through every disaster"

Image 8 - Smoking ceremony at St Albans park (Source: Cred Consulting)

10.2.6 Ideas

Workshop participants were asked their ideas about addressing resilience needs in the Hawkesbury.

Funding ideas include:

- Provide funded professional grant writers to assist community organisations in applying for funding
- Lobby funding bodies to fund services as rural not metro, and to simplify funding process, and
- Fund the Hawkesbury Chamber of Commerce to implement a Community Wealth program to build business networks and employment.

Understanding the community ideas include:

- Community mapping to better understand strengths, challenges and needs, and
- More consultation with residents across the whole Hawkesbury.

Knowledge sharing ideas include:

- Share local community knowledge already collated
- Council to create a central repository on community needs data and reports to provide evidence for grant writing, and
- Data sharing between organisations to help service providers and community members connect with place-based organisations.

Participants also want to see Council invest in infrastructure such as roads and telecommunications to make living and working in remote areas of the Hawkesbury viable to current and new residents.

11. Appendix 1: 2022 pop-up data

What are the strengths and challenges for resilience in the Hawkesbury?

Bilpin	North Richmond
Strengths	
• Purple moon (art event) is great and an important event to support local economy, as it helps bringing in visitors and money to our community • Some services like HCOS have been operating for a very long time • Food industry were more organised in the second flooding event. • Solar panels help to be self-reliant • Important volunteer groups: Bowen Mountain Park Management, Bowen Mountain Association	• SES and RFS and other services are amazing! They go above and beyond for the community and we love them!
Challenges	
• More families and younger adults in the area • Communication issues - mobile coverage regularly, plus even worse when towers go down • Bushfire Hazard reduction is important (Needs to heppen more and be funded. Backburns are part of our life here) • Flooding blocks off Mount Tomah, the bridge at Colo. This leaves the community isolated. • Ambulances services has to come from Richmond • If we don't speak, then we won't know what to do • Two years now of emergency but it still don't feel resilient • Metropolitan and highway police were evil and did much harm during the black summer fires. They seemed to not care or help the local community. They blocked off access a few 100m of the gas station (on Bells Lines of Rd) and did not allow residents to refuel tanks for their fire pumps (while they were fighting to safe their property!). • Metroloitan fire brigades got in the way during last bush fires - they don't cary water on their trucks, they don't use unpaved roads and they are not sufficiently trained in fighting bushfires… but they outrank the RFS and make uninformed decisions) • Encourage development in Kurrajong and more tourism • Communication is vitral and needs improvement, as the Bilpin area has bad service coverage. Loudspeaker truck or dedicated info points in pre-established locations could help community to stay	• Less planning, more action • I drive all over NSW and ACT and the streets in HCC are the worst by far • Better infrastructure needed, in particular flood plains • Recent floods: no police presence, no medical on Richmond side of river (Landlocked - there was no way out) • Balancing between traffic and development. Because of Redbank increased traffic and homes • North Richmond community centre wasn't even established/prepared for people seeking refuge during recent floods • Lighter traffic on roads in weight • Macquarie centre development -> why do we still allow new development in flood plains? • Potholes need to be fillend and better facilities • Development approval process requires addition of environmental impact plans • North Richmond bridge went under three times in two months -> no road infrastructure • DA process for this community cannot approve developments without looking at impact during desasters • Anti-corruption Development processes • Zoning -> why have they allowed houses in Windsor?

informed. Especially for elderly and residents without internet connection.	• Transparency about where grant funding is being spent. Community is saying that they are not seeing much change (Redbank)
	• We need to raise the dams and stop sealing all the ground due to overdevelopment
	• William street community centre is great and very importtant for the local community. However, during the recent floods they weren't informed and couldn't warn the local community
	• Rebank Creek -> floods occuring frequently
	• Causeway flooded and has not been repaired after March 2021 flood
	• Better predict floods
	• Bridge was under water three times in 25 months. We need right road infrastructure
	• Why didn't they build the bypass for improved access
	• Run-off from concreted surfaces - they were previously agricultural land and were able to absorb water

Ideas to strengthen and build connections, preparedness and improve response and recovery

Bilpin	North Richmond
• Clarendon showground -> no place for people to shelter their horses/animals (Evacuation Centre)	• Trees were cut up and blocked creek near Windsor Golf Course. Flooded the course/area
• Improve drainage along Bells Line of Road - risk of landslides during heavy rain, due to the hilly terrain	• Proactive and mental health care for kids
• Communications and engagement between the community and HCC is vital and we need more communication channels. This is a great event!	• Need alternative flood evacuation routes
	• Shock/disaster aftercare is non-existend -> have an accountable & continous point of contact within HCC for help
• Better and easier access to information (especially during times of crisis) is needed for local community -> local federal member (Susan Templeman) is an important and trusted point for information distribution	• HCC to provide onlinetool to lodge and follow-up with HCC on previous help requests/enquirees etc.
• We are over the word 'Resilience'" -> we are now talking about it for two years and we are still not resilient or better prepared (see current floods)	• Comments by local nurse "North Richmond had no doctor during recent floods -> we need a medical triage centre/plan in place. I work for Dr. Islam who would be open to setup an arangemend/plan with HCC for future events. An emergency team including nurses and doctors could fly in, even after the bridge has been closed, to operate out of the surgery. In the last flood I was manning the surgery alon, wil Dr Islam was on the other side of the river. We were able to do a lot via telehealth but the community and some vunerable.
• There is currently a 'BRAG' community group starting to be setup/developed by Bilpin community members. Info provided by Penny, contact via: BRAGbilpin@gmail.com	
• Upper Colo community is also in the process of starting a BRAG group. There are no functioning bridges at the moment (both destroyed during the recent floods).	• Richmond Club wasn't prepared and ready as an emergency shelter, when people started pooring in (pre plan and be ready!)

- Another road/access into this side of the river when flooded - flood free reiver crossing
- People feel they have missed out on grants and financial support
- We need to raise money for local residents and farmers who lost their houses or crops (group of kids 6-12y)
- Blue Mountains Botanic Garden events (i.e. community yoga) are low in attendance because they are not community run (run by external organisation not connected with local community/residents)
- Bowen Park area needs improvements in vehivcle and people capacity, as well as acces acces during crisis (to be not developed in the park, but nearby, to function as an emergency meeting point/shelter)
- Identify and support community in identifying resources to be supported (e.g. by grants)
- Provide council support for regeneration and lobby for farmersto state government to assess farmers not doing well financially
- Revise process and procedures for flood signs on bridge (police is managing signs)
- Community volunteers
- Making sustainable and climate/ecological decisions for farming, by farmers
- North Richmond bridge flooding - ensure signs come down. Let community put signs down.
- More understanding about the role of different government levels
- Better information channels and distribution. People use word of mouth which carries risk of falso or ouddated information in times of crisis
- HCC needs to provide technical assisstance for bushfire preparedness. It would help to have a dedicated bushfire protection officer for residents (to inspect houses and property and make preparedness recommendations and education)
- More communications about accessible evacuation centres e.g. no one knows about Homebush
- HCC to improve crisis communications by establishing emergency communication points at fixed location (so people know where to get latest information when landline and generators go down)
- Not just money and grants -> we need a constructive and strategic plan where money is spread out/spent

- We need another bridge (like Jim Anderson bridge)
- Bridge needed between north Richmond and Agnes Banks -> it is built too low, it is usually the first to flood
- Improve telecommunication and power network in the LGA -> there is no consideration to how many hub towers are needed
- Once a fire is over we can cope, with the floods it sticks -> the floods contaminate land and water, contaminate water tanks and bring so much rubbish and debries.
- Acerage resident: Drainage and road works in our neighborhood were never completed, even though it was part of the consent approval and should have been completed by the developer. Now the flood destroyed the section of the road that was built and the dry-creek-bed is blocked and needs to be cleared. Debries creates drainage issues (future floods?!) and we need council's help.
- HCC rep Lisa spoke to the woman and asked her to lodge this with HCC. The property is located east of Kurrajong.
- The raising of the river dam by 14m previously discussed has been scratched recently -> what is the alternative? What is HCC's plan?!
- Acerage resident: Drainage and road works in our neighborhood were never completed, even though it was part of the consent approval and should have been completed by the developer. Now the flood destroyed the section of the road that was built and the dr
- Access is number one priority for North Richmond!
- Floods have a long term impact as floods stay long beyond the active flooding. Contaminates houses, land and water. Lots of waste and rubbish, but all the bins are gone.
- Better comms: different channels of communication and early warnings -> posters at shops, radio, and simple flyer copied at a copy shop (not everyone has access to the internet and communication network can breakdown during disasters). Info/warnings came to late in recent flood - I woke up to a SES text message and ankle deep water in my bedroom and I rely on a walker...
- Quicker response when crisis happens -> they happen at certain times in the year, be ready and prepared
- Impact on small businesses when they have to close/travel/loss of stock.

• HCC to train residents how to write grant applications	

12. Appendix 2: 2023 pop-up data

What are the strengths and challenges for resilience in the Hawkesbury?

St Albans	Windsor	Richmond
Strengths		
• The community helps each other out. Strong community spirit • Tight-knit community • Events like the folk festival and mountain biking race have a big turnout • Peppercorn has helped me out a lot • Writer's Festival • We're pretty self-sufficient • Since the fires, access to information has gotten better • The SES dropped off groceries to everyone	• The community have been through this before, they know what works. Tap into this. • Neighbourly support • Togetherness real community help one another • Community helps each other out • Sticking together during hardship • The community come together • Survivors. Family 100 years in area • Help to rebuild post flood • Communications about emergencies is sometimes delayed • Richmond bridge must be designed for 1 in 100 year flood • Broadcast bridge closure in social media, before it closes • Helping hands was fantastic during the floods • Volunteer organisations are strong: Red Cross, Salvation Army, Anglicare – very supportive • Getting together to help each other • In Windsor – Brabyn Street (Hawkesbury Valley Way) we are cut off from the evacuation route. We can't get out. • Last flood council was really efficient with sand bags • Salvation army was a big help during floods – South Windsor.	• Small town country feel, atmosphere, rural qualities • Businesses support community • We provide nursing services on North Richmond (takes three hours during floods). We need to get Bridge sorted • Community is helping each other, getting over cultural differences. Open spaces is where we go • Lifestyle landscape • Feeling of community spirit • Everybody is concerned about the community. We have group chats in the community. • RFS. Volunteers help spread the message • Local vibe • Diverse community in that people are from all walks of life • We have community social media groups where we help each other and more info • Community spirit, coming together in times of need, donating, giving. • Lots of support from the SES, other services • The community helps each other • Community spirit, strangers help each other • Fix road in low lanes. Bridge on Richmond Road is eroding • She was alone • Staying together as a family is a challenge. North Richmond to Richmond access was an issue • My mum had the animals, need public transport/plans for roads

		• Community comes together and shares food in emergencies
		• Fire services are good
		• Connected and aware community
		• We care a lot about the environment. Lots of support for sustainability
		• Fire service
		• Yarramundi – the community look after ourselves. Strong community, good RFS
		• Businesses should get more council support. The ones who give back in emergency
		• Defence force post flooding were very helpful. Lack of coordination of evacuation was detrimental.
		• Not everyone evacuates
		• Put a tent in a high ground car park. Better plan for power outage
		• We all help each other. Places are too far away. Somewhere with an RSL – high ground
		• Close knit community, good pace of living
		• People are so nice to each other
		• Disaster makes us stronger
		• South Windsor reached our house, but other than that nothing happened
		• Everyone pulls together, has each other's backs
		• Lifestyle, open space
		• Community works together and helps each other out

Challenges

• Star link (Elon Musk) internet is better but more expensive	• Need potholes fixed quickly	• Increase capacity of dam. Provide more help to people to come back
• Communications during bushfire. No phones/internet for 6 weeks – had to come to fire shed twice a day to check if I was in danger	• We were denied financial support during flood and went to Salvation army.	• Lack of action by council. Access for services into community (Roads)
	• Houses are being built on flood plains	

• Covid caused a lot of fall out in the community between people who were pro-vaccination and anti-vaccination	• Transport for elderly. More buses • Digital media have people withdrawn and do not socialize. Challenge is to rebuild trust transparency, community • Council planning processes are hindrance organic form stuck in DA limbo for 3 years. • Road maintenance not patchwork jobs • Poor quality road maintenance too much time passing since floods • Including Hawkesbury in "Western Syd" inclusion. Does not stop at Blacktown/Penrith. • Warragamba Park – an irrigation dam, not mitigation politics. Get started on real issues • I was without work for 18 days due to flood	• Lack of council support to improve the road (access) • No flood gates at Yarramundi • James Mahew street, south Windsor. Where do we go to safety/with animals? • Fix up roads and potholes • Older people may not have as much access to info • I was in the house, high water, 2 dogs, blackout. Can't go to toilet • We would have to go to Springwood • Roads are gone – no connection to emergency services. • My son goes to soccer. We was not able to use the field during flood. His confidence went low during that time • Provide a border to hold the flood • Losing many jobs (bushman) in flooding Pitt town had to move across LGA to Grose Vale • People need to make their own decisions. People need to empower themselves • Floods are really unpredictable. Can't always plan for them • Home insurance providers won't cover Bligh Park anymore, or it's much more expensive • Floods x5 in a year impact, lack of communication is challenge • I live in Yarramundi. Bridge goes under and no one thinks about it. The emergency services don't know the geography • Repair of roads towards the River's. Road maintenance post flood • Richmond road traffic • The roads and potholes are really bad

		• Upgrades to hospital and facilities – grants and funding (look Nepean)
		• Under the bridge and roads. It's a big issue
		• Lots of ongoing emergency events happening very frequently
		• One of the challenges is getting out of Hawkesbury and evacuating.
		• Footpaths, paving walkability walking on grass difficult health wise (for those with mobility issues). Need safe and stable paths
		• Affordable housing is a challenge, homelessness not enough support during bushfires or flood.
		• No in-person help. Is all digital. No youth groups, no PCYS, no activity for teenagers
		• Need more support for women 45+ with loneliness, medical support, community services
		• Need community groups
		• Difficulty access to information and events – needs more adverts for events
		• It took a while to get sand bags during floods. Difficulty getting info about where the sand bags were
		• Lots of blackouts in east Kurrajong

Tell us the places, facilities, services and events you think help the Hawkesbury community to withstand, adapt and grow together.

St Albans	Windsor	Richmond
• Lower Macdonald. Evacuation route (Jack's Track) that leads out to Putty Road	• Better support during event while isolated. Post event SES were helpful • Food supplies are important. Royal Lifesaver brought over medicine from chemist during flood • State and federal help was amazing re. financial	• Community hubs: Wilberforce, St Albans, Colo Heights • Rural fire service SES • Londonery resident LGA of Penrith and Hawkesbury split across the street and gets disregarded by emergency services

	- assistance e.g. liquor license approved by state as COVID response was fast tracked and quick - Destroyed – gaping holes on Crown land – river banks @ Cumberland Reach. - No evacuation path esp during fire where dependent on river route - Recreation areas affected by gaping riverbank holes e.g. picnic tables dangerously hanging/placed post flooding community had to clean up themselves and have to maintain for free, unresponsive council and MPs. Someone will get hurt e.g. Scout Hall next to nicer hotels - Disaster relief community hub out in South Windsor - Mental health services – ADHD, PTSD - Meals delivery Jeremiah's projects church and social groups. Sports club - More evacuation routes needed. We only have Rouse Hill now – even that shuts down eventually.	- Police do not recognize property as within their borders and does not respond to calls, "too far" @ Agnes Banks asks to refer to Penrith outside LGA - RFS refuse to back burn behind property despite resident's request due to safety/danger as people act dangerously (ie. Bonfires, firecrackers) - Library: good services, good events and activities - South Windsor: safe place during floods - Peppercorn services. Windsor. - Access from and to Blacktown via Vineyard (Yineyard Church – rescue location) - Wires is really helpful - National parks better water management - Upper Colo Bridge and Richmond Bridge risk for community if not taken care of - We are here (Richmond) and its safe opposite to high school. Never been a flood here. - We had to go to South Richmond. Richmond club is the only service - Homelessness prevention to access required services - Community centres. Hawkesbury leisure and learning centre in Richmond - Yarramundi – we are high and we got out off. We go to Springwood outside LGA. - Access to shops during flooding – stock in supermarkets depletes as people hoard - BOM during flood, requires better communication of real life events – e.g. resident was advised that water levels dropped when they actually rose and was flooded.

			Sydney Water – power out = sewerage out – better, more timely response.

What would help you and your community to withstand emergencies?

	St Albans	Windsor	Richmond
Stronger community networks	1	2	4
More opportunities to volunteer time and skills	2	1	4
Support and resources for the community to prepare for emergencies	4	2	10
Better access to information about what to do in case of emergency		4	14
Better access to support services and organisations	1	2	4
Better access to places and facilities to go in times of emergency		4	12
Better quality infrastructure and buildings	3	2	9

Ideas to strengthen and build connections, preparedness and improve response and recovery

St Albans	Windsor	Richmond
• More training and education for the community – emergency preparedness, general education • More of the community spending more time here – not just weekends • Better roads and phones • Need constant support for community training. First aid etc. • Fix basketball nets on the tennis courts • Mobile black spot! Need coverage! • Fix tennis courts post floods • When they close the bridge we won't be able to get any trucks in for deliveries, repairs etc	• Take into consideration local context e.g. 1 in 50 pmi not reflective of runoff • Educating people on direction of risk e.g. not normalizing "looking west" and getting caught out in east • Need more cohesive communication between all authorities • Not building in flood zones • Immediate warning of dangers • Invest in fire and flood near me apps poor info, need detail • Better info on routes • Information too delayed, radio unavailable • Alternatively looking at road traffic camera to track as	• People need to be prepared and know what they need to take with them in an evacuation • Streamlined information in the event of emergency (to cut through noise, chaos, aka a "go to " source) • Flood evacuation routes, revise, as they lead to river… but river floods? • Mock scenario role playing events to train people on how to prepare and respond • Better access to information for new people • Privatise. Employ local to help fix community issues • The community need to understand the risk, where to

- No weight limit on St Albans bridge
- Would like to see more support from the SES
- Information about emergencies and where do we need to evacuate to
- Outdoor gym/keep fit equipment for mental health. Nothing available locally in terms of gyms

- opposed to 'real time' apps too delayed
- Don't do nothing, be proactive, responsive, prepared
- Improve services for community. Mental health support
- People are still homeless from the floods. They need support
- Need boom gates to prevent people driving into emergency danger zones
- Communication from gov could be better. Gov need to be here on the ground helping and getting local knowledge
- More consultation needed with the older generation
- Need more action in the aftermath of emergencies to work together and start the recovery
- Landowners along the river should have a central point of contact
- Other communities in Australia and overseas have experience with flood response and mitigation. Tap into this.
- Council should go to schools and communicate this information. Start young.
- Could we adopt the yellow red blue cyclone warning approach here to warn people of emergencies?
- People who live on the river could have maniers to measure the flood and advise council
- Council needs to listen to long-term community members who are experts in the area

- get info and how to be prepared
- Making sure the message is the same from all levels of government
- Yarramundi: need more information about emergency response. Reserve needs work
- Social media is a good platform to reach people however not everyone has access
- Community programs to get defibrillators
- Community fire fighting trailer with all the equipment. Community can get trained in how to use it until fire services arrive
- Preparedness, tools, resources in emergency
- Need to protect the animals and biodiversity in natural disasters
- More funding ways to address road access issues. Fire season is starting early
- (all our services) RFS + SES + ambulance. Need single source of information
- Access to supplies needs to be maintained
- Satellite police station and ambulance station
- Funnel or reroute the dam. I think this was in the works
- Tree maintenance is needed
- I want to know more about what services are available in the community
- If we get a blackout we lose water and power. Need a gov subsidy for generators or access to alternative power sources
- There should be another dam/catchment to cater the overflow water.