

Emergency Management Capabilities for Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR): Recommendations



Inclusive Plans

- States/territories and local governments should profile people with disability in emergency management plans to ensure planning for their support needs. These plans should:
 - provide details about aware, capable, and prepared community services and resources that can help during emergencies.
 - reference other disability guidance documents so that those in charge of implementing emergency plans know where to find this information.
- The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) will continue to work with the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) to create a consistent framework for measuring progress on disability inclusive disaster risk reduction.
 - They should also invest in research to develop accurate and reliable tools for measuring disability inclusion in emergency plans.
 - [Part 2 of the scoping study](#) (see Procedure on page 50) report provides guidance on how to start and shares findings on disability inclusion in emergency plans that can help DSS with their Data Improvement Plan to track progress in this area.
- Commonwealth and states/territories should make state-level emergency guidance documents more practical by adding specific actions and measurable results for disability inclusion in two key areas:
 - tailored preparedness support in partnership people and their support services, and
 - collaboration between emergency, community, and disability services.
- It's important to involve disability representatives in creating strategies to support people actively during emergencies.
- Require monitoring and evaluation to measure progress towards DIDRR.
- Share planning and guidance documents with local emergency management groups and keep them updated on how the strategies are helping people and their support services.



Inclusive Information

Commonwealth, states/territories, and local governments should focus on making emergency information and communications accessible to everyone. Here's how:

1. Use research-informed methods to review and improve communication processes and tools and do this in partnership with people with disability. Specific consideration should be given to the accessibility, readability, understandability, and actionability of risk information and communications.
2. Evaluate how inclusive emergency information helps people with disability to prepare for emergencies and stay safe.

3. Obtain feedback from people with disability to assess how improvements to risk information and communications support their access to tailored emergency preparedness and response plans.
4. Involve disability representatives in reviewing and improving national-level emergency frameworks, strategies, and systems to ensure they are accessible to all.
5. Involve disability representatives in reviewing and improving state/territory emergency management plans and guidance documents.

Commonwealth, states/territories, and local governments should work with disability representatives to improve emergency information and services by:

1. Making sure emergency risk information and communications (like disaster alerts and preparedness materials) are easy to use by a wide range of people, including those who need information in accessible formats.
2. Enhancing early warning systems and messages so that people with disability can understand and act upon them.
3. Improving education policies and procedures for people with disability, including offering inclusive choices and opportunities to learn about their disaster risks, helping them to plan with their support networks, and ensuring that evacuation centres and relief hubs are universally accessible.

States/territories should improve the abilities of government and emergency services. This means including disability awareness and actions for disaster risk reduction in the training of emergency personnel, especially those involved in risk assessment, communication, planning, community engagement, and recovery efforts.

- The [Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness \(P-CEP\)](#) certificate course at the University of Sydney Centre for Continuing Education is a world first interdisciplinary program that helps emergency personnel learn and collaborate with people with disability and their support services to enhance their approach to DIDRR. This program has been evaluated with significant outcomes demonstrating effectiveness.
- [Emergency Sector Disability Awareness \(ESDA\)](#) provides a three-part introductory learning module on disability awareness for the emergency sector.



Inclusive Practices

- Commonwealth, states/territories, and local government should encourage the use of available tools and resources to achieve DIDRR in practice. Application of these tools and resources should focus on:
 - tailoring preparedness support for individuals and their service providers, and
 - working together across different sectors to overcome barriers that increase the risk for people with disability in emergencies.
- Make sure that organisations and individuals who are resourced (e.g., disaster resilience/ready funding) to undertake DIDRR responsibilities:
 - are aware, capable, and prepared themselves
 - are trained in preparedness support, and
 - understand Australia's emergency management arrangements.
- Promote collaboration between different groups involved in DIDRR by clarifying their roles and responsibilities.

- The [resource-gap map](#) highlights 160 high-quality and readily available resources that can help with preparedness support and collaboration, allowing community and disability stakeholders to work alongside government and emergency services for better DIDRR.
 - The Commonwealth and states/territories should use the resource-gap map to figure out where to focus efforts for strategic development of resources, their implementation and evaluation.
 - NEMA should team up with the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) to follow the recommendations in Part 3 of the scoping study report (see pages 68 – 69) to ensure ongoing development of high-quality resources for disaster risk reduction that are accessible to multiple stakeholders, including people with disability.



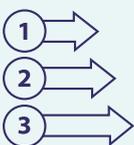
What's missing

The effective utilisation of data and evidence in DIDRR is an area that requires further development. We need to create and use data and evidence to make DIDRR a fundamental part of emergency management information and decisions.

We need reliable, accessible, and current data to:

- Understand what people with disability can do for themselves and what they need support for in emergencies.
- Identify community resources that can be used in emergencies.
- Track progress toward targeted actions on DIDRR.
- Measure the impact of DIDRR efforts.
- Make important strategic and operational decisions that positively impact the safety and well-being outcomes for people with disability and their support services in emergencies.

There are challenges to getting high-quality data. These include issues like legislative requirements around privacy, complex licencing rules, high costs for collecting and sharing data, and the need for better coordination and standardisation. There are also problems with making different systems work together, which makes it hard to consolidate and share data across different jurisdictions.



What needs to happen next?

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) can lead efforts to include people with disability in disaster risk reduction. They will continue to identify and remove barriers to this inclusion, regularly check progress, and set new priorities to improve.

NEMA should provide strategic guidance in three key areas (inclusive plans, inclusive information, and inclusive practices), NEMA should also work with other government agencies, and seek support from states/territories (who hold legislated responsibility for emergency management) on ways to better enable local community DIDRR to flourish.

Local councils, connected to community groups, play a crucial role in increasing inclusion and community resilience. They need to be effectively resourced to realise their role and functions in DIDRR.

NEMA should provide proactive leadership to:

1. make disability inclusion a standard part of the emergency management arrangements.
2. ensure that disability representatives are part of state and local emergency planning and policy development.
3. work collaboratively with all levels and portfolios of government to ensure that specific provisions are in place to identify and plan for the support needs of people with disability and determine how they will be organised, resourced and delivered at all stages of the disaster risk management cycle. For example:
 - *preparedness support programs so that people with disability have a tailored emergency plan that is communicated with support networks (well before)*
 - *accessible early warnings that everyone can understand and use (prior to)*
 - *accessible evacuation options for people with diverse support needs (during)*
 - *inclusive recovery support options matched to support needs (after)*
4. streamline consistent methods, tools, and governance mechanisms for national consistency, while at the same time fostering local leadership, local flexibility, and responsiveness in the development and mobilisation of local assets to protect the rights and safety of people with disability.

These actions must be effectively implemented so that the rights and safety of people with disability are always a top priority in disaster risk reduction.

In partnership with states/territories, NEMA should focus on taking actions, not just creating awareness.

Priority should be given to research and evaluation on the effectiveness of these actions from different perspectives to see how these initiatives impact the safety and well-being of people with disability before, during and after disasters.



CONTACT:

Associate Professor Michelle Villeneuve

Email: collaborating.4inclusion@sydney.edu.au

www.collaborating4inclusion.org

