

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**10 March 2023**

### **REDUCING DISASTER RISKS FOR THE NORTHERN RIVERS – EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST OPEN**

The NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) is seeking a local organisation in the Northern Rivers to host a Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) project to help reduce the impacts of future disasters on vulnerable communities in NSW.

Funded through the joint Australian Government – NSW Government National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction, NCOSS is partnering with AbSec and the Local Community Services Association to deliver the Community Sector Disaster Capability project.

NCOSS will work with a place-based NGO in the region, tapping into the local NGOs' knowledge and understanding of the community to build local disaster capability.

The project will also be delivered in the Hawkesbury and South Coast areas.

Today NCOSS opened a call for expressions of interest to identify a local community organisation to host the Community Sector Disaster Capability project. Applications close on 6 April 2023.

The overarching aim of the project is to build a more collaborative, networked approach to disaster risk reduction, working with vulnerable communities and the NGOs that support them.

“We know that certain communities and population groups – people with disability, those who are homeless or in precarious housing, older people - are more vulnerable and will be most impacted when disaster strikes, and that it's trusted, local organisations who are there for them as they try to piece their lives back together,” NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty said.

“But too often, these communities and the local organisations who support them are not involved in the early stages of disaster management. Yet this is when preventative action can be taken to reduce risks, and to work together to ensure everyone is prepared and has a plan.

“NGOs are community assets that have local connections and expertise working with vulnerable population groups.

“They're trusted by their local communities, who themselves have experience, knowledge and capability when it comes to disasters.

“Top-down approaches by themselves don't work - we need a more collaborative model that incorporates ground-up initiatives from the get-go.

“Preparing for future disasters and reducing risks is more important than ever, particularly for our most vulnerable members of society.

“We need to stop repeating past mistakes, and this program will help us do that by strengthening connection within and between local communities, social service organisations and emergency management systems to reduce risks and better plan and prepare.

“I'd like to thank both the Federal and NSW Governments for this funding, and we look forward to updating them on our learnings and achievements in these regions.”



The project has been funded \$1.5 million in total under the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund, administered by the NSW Reconstruction Authority.

Under two funding pathways, Pathway 1 and Pathway 2, the DRRF Local & Regional Risk Reduction stream aims to deliver direct risk reduction and risk mitigation solutions, build capabilities in disaster risk reduction, and promote collaboration between local communities, councils and other stakeholders.

The DRRF has three funding streams and offers \$52 million in total to build resilience and help reduce, mitigate and manage the risks of future disasters.

The DRRF is jointly funded by NSW and Australian governments and is targeted at locally led initiatives to help keep communities safe in the future.

Expressions of Interest Guidelines and application form is available at:  
[www.ncoss.org.au/disaster-capability/](http://www.ncoss.org.au/disaster-capability/)

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