

Outcomes Evaluation of the NSW Disaster Risk Reduction Fund - Executive Summary

NSW Reconstruction Authority

21 July 2025



Nous Group acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respect to Elders past and present, who maintain their culture, Country and spiritual connection to the land, sea and community.

This artwork was developed by Marcus Lee Design to reflect Nous Group's Reconciliation Action Plan and our aspirations for respectful and productive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

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The DRRF was a major joint investment by the NSW and Australian Governments to reduce disaster risk and build resilience in NSW.

Climate change is driving increasingly frequent and severe weather events and disasters in NSW.ⁱ These events result in loss of life and livelihood and they create a sense of instability in affected regions.ⁱⁱ

As the severity and cost of disaster impacts has grown, so too has ambition to prevent, mitigate, and adapt to disaster risks.ⁱⁱⁱ The Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) was established as a joint investment by the NSW and Australian Governments under the *National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction 2019-2024 (NPA DRR)*. Its objective was to deliver upon the goals of the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (NDRRF)* by assisting organisations and communities to build disaster risk resilience in NSW.^{iv}

Between 2022-2024, the NSW Reconstruction Authority ('RA') awarded \$40.85m in DRRF grants to 78 projects across two investment streams. Projects were delivered by a multitude of state government agencies, councils, academic institutions and community organisations.

This report sets out the findings and recommendations of a DRRF outcomes evaluation.

In October 2024, RA commissioned Nous Group ('Nous') to conduct an outcomes evaluation of the DRRF to:

1. Explore and explain the outcomes achieved under the DRRF
2. Learn more about, and communicate, what works to reduce disaster risk
3. Identify opportunities and lessons to inform future DRR policies, programs and funding.

Nous drew conclusions about outcomes across the DRRF (rather than in detail for any one project) against three key evaluation questions (KEQs): appropriateness, effectiveness and sustainability. The method included: a review of policy, strategy, funding and project documents; analysis of DRRF administrative data; a survey to which 52 of 78 project grantees responded; and interviews with a sample of 22 grantees.¹

KEQ1 | Appropriateness: The DRRF was designed appropriately to expand DRR in NSW.

Nous assessed the appropriateness of the DRRF's design for meeting priorities and needs in the budget given.

1.1 The DRRF built NSW's DRR evidence base and helped inform subsequent policy settings.

The DRRF was designed to deliver on NSW's commitments under the *NPA DRR*. In the evaluation's view, the creation of a grants mechanism with a wide remit was pragmatic and tactical given NSW had no overarching disaster risk reduction (DRR) policy or up-to-date evidence base at the time; the DRRF both supported tangible action to reduce disaster risk and advanced policymakers' and practitioners' understanding of how to achieve DRR in NSW.

This work assisted the subsequent consolidation of NSW's strategic policy intent by funding precursor actions such as the Resilient Sydney Strategy and by informing the subsequent *State Disaster Mitigation Plan 2024-2026 ('SDMP')* and local government *Disaster Adaptation Plans (DAPs)*.

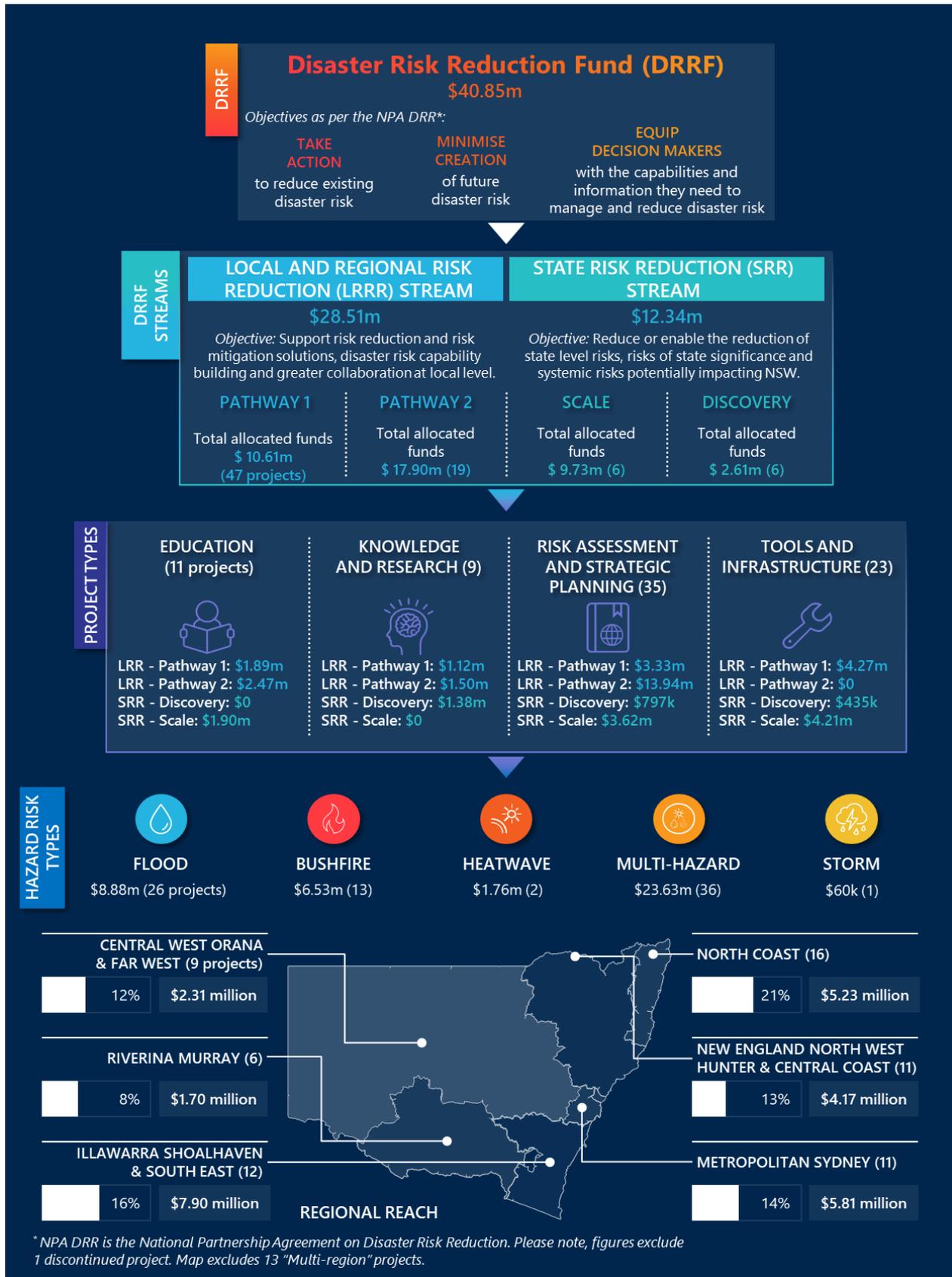
1.2 The DRRF funded efforts to address important disaster risks and community needs.

The DRRF's structure - summarised in **Figure 1** overleaf - allowed RA to balance action with innovation, at varying scales, and to reduce risk in ways consistent with *Sendai Framework* principles and *NDRRF* priorities.^v The use of funding streams and pathways was appropriate as it enabled RA to disburse a large amount of funding in a short time, in envelopes diverse organisations with varying capacity could manage, and to initiatives that had potential for immediate impact and/or which would build a better understanding of DRR.

The DRRF could, however, have better supported at-risk cohorts to access DRRF resources. All grantees working with specific communities felt there was a missed opportunity to provide dedicated funding pathways for organisations run by, or which work with, at-risk cohorts and to encourage genuine cultural literacy and project co-design and delivery with communities, especially First Nations communities.

¹ A sampling approach was used to manage the extent of engagement required. A sample of 24 projects (of the total 78 projects) was determined to be an appropriate size for project level analysis, as explained in Nous' Outcomes Evaluation Plan.

Figure 1 | Structure, objectives, scope and funding of the DRRF



1.3 Funding allocations aligned to intent, but expectations were ambitious for the timeframe.

The evaluation's analysis shows that funding allocations across streams and pathways reflected the range of priorities, needs and variables which RA sought to address. Collectively, funded projects reached a large proportion of the NSW population. Projects at scale (up to \$2.5 million each) with immediate promise and/or which could harness statewide expertise absorbed more funds than 'discovery' projects (up to \$300,000 each). Importantly, though, those projects tested new DRR methods and built NSW's knowledge base.

Two-thirds of all funding went to local and regional projects (ranging from \$300,000 to \$1.5 million each) which incentivised collaboration between organisations and with communities. Over half of all projects were led by councils, reflecting their essential leadership role in DRR.

A key challenge in achieving the DRRF's ambitious intent was not funding volume but funding duration. Many grantees and senior RA staff reported that the provision of a once-off, two-year grant did not allow time for the deep, extensive and iterative work required to achieve ambitious 'end-of-program' DRR outcomes. Several grantees suggested RA could have kept the DRRF's ambition in view but set a more immediate version of project success and value that grantees could deliver confidently on.

KEQ2 | Effectiveness: The DRRF delivered real benefits and built a foundation for DRR.

2.1 DRRF projects delivered innovative tools and initiatives, and new knowledge, to address existing and future risks

Nous evaluated how the DRRF contributed to DRR in NSW by examining project outputs by hazard type.

The DRRF allocated funding towards five hazard categories that reflected the nature of the severe emergencies and changing weather patterns affecting NSW as well as known policy priorities. This approach enabled communities and organisations to address the disaster risks most relevant to them. As outlined below, projects produced a range of outputs which not only assisted NSW communities to reduce disaster risk but also helped expand the evidence base on DRR in NSW. Case studies referred to are at Appendix A.

 FLOOD	Flood projects improved local infrastructure and built scalable models and data systems.
26 projects, \$8.88m in funding (6 regions, plus 2 multi-region projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Projects were typically delivered in areas with recent flooding events, by local councils, and built resilient infrastructure or developed flood modelling tools (<i>Case studies 1 & 2</i>).Improved resilience is not yet observable, but tools are being used and have application to other regions.
 BUSHFIRE	Projects delivered education and research, bolstering communities' bushfire preparedness.
13 projects, \$6.53m in funding (3 regions, plus 4 multi-region projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recent bushfire events drove interest in community education and research.Bushfire projects typically delivered specialist training and education resources. Many grantees formed new partnerships or strengthened existing ones between emergency response agencies and communities to enhance their reach (<i>Case studies 3-6</i>).Knowledge is being used but community resilience needs ongoing investment.
 HEATWAVE	Heatwave projects developed tools for communities to understand risk.
2 projects, \$1.76m in funding (1 region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Two projects produced tools to assess, manage and build community awareness of heat risks (<i>Case studies 7 & 8</i>).Heatwave project outputs can be scaled but require ongoing support.
 MULTI-HAZARD	Multi-hazard projects cultivated partnerships and engagement
36 projects, \$23.63m in funding (6 regions, plus 7 multi-region projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Projects targeted risks from multiple hazards by driving strategic alignment, collaboration and capacity building among organisations and community engagement (<i>Case studies 9 - 13</i>).Additional effort will be required to sustain results.
 STORM	Storm risks were mainly addressed as a secondary objective
1 project, \$60k in funding (1 region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">One-storm specific project investigated the reconstruction of a coastal sand levee.Storm resilience was typically a secondary goal in flood and multi-hazard projects.

2.2 The DRRF meaningfully progressed DRR efforts and generated important learning in NSW

Nous further evaluated how the DRRF contributed to DRR in NSW by evaluating the changes in knowledge, preparedness and action ('outcomes') achieved by projects of four different types.

Overall, grantees largely achieved their intended outcomes (as per the DRRF Program Logic and measured by agreed indicators). They said the DRRF increased their focus on, and understanding of, DRR, helped them build relationships to support their work, and gave them tools and knowledge to advance DRR efforts. The evaluation identified outcomes that were common in many projects regardless of their technical nature, as well as outcomes specific to projects of different types, as summarised in Figure 2.

Figure 2 | Outcomes achieved by DRRF projects

COMMON OUTCOMES ACROSS ALL PROJECT TYPES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DRRF enabled most grantees to advance on their DRR journey, regardless of their starting point. Funded projects gave individuals, organisations and agencies knowledge and tools for DRR. The Fund strengthened networks and supported partnership development, enabling more effective, efficient, and sustained DRR efforts. One grantee noted that <i>"the relationships formed were arguably more valuable" than the strategy [i.e. project output] itself"</i> Projects built bridges between local, regional, and state stakeholders to address important needs. One stakeholder noted <i>"the DRRF acted to fill the "grey area" between local and state actors."</i> 			
SPECIFIC OUTCOMES BY PROJECT TYPE			
RISK ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING	KNOWLEDGE AND REASERCH PROJECTS	EDUCATION PROJECTS	TOOLS & INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
<p>Projects enabled organisations to better understand, plan for and collaborate for DRR</p> <p><i>(Case study 14 – 17)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects improved organisations' understanding of disaster risk and strategic responses. Almost all grantees had started to identify risks and risk mitigation actions because of the DRRF. Organisations grew their capability and capacity to do risk assessment and strategic planning. Embedding this into business-as-usual remained challenging, however. Projects developed partnerships and networks to support better strategic planning. About half of survey respondents reported changes in the way their organisation worked with others to assess and plan for risk. 	<p>Projects expanded disaster risk evidence to inform risk identification, strategic planning and collaborative action</p> <p><i>(Case study 18 – 20)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects generated knowledge that many organisations have started using. Many grantees said they have started to factor disaster risk information into their work. Knowledge and research projects strengthened connection and collaboration to build knowledge. This was often a positive unintended consequence of projects as grantees engaged with a wide variety of sector stakeholders during project delivery. 	<p>Projects lifted community and organisational capability for DRR understanding, capacity, and action</p> <p><i>(Case study 21 – 22)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education programs contributed to greater DRR understanding and readiness through engagement programs, training and workshops. Projects tapped into established community networks to expand the reach of DRR education, which they said was a key driver of success on projects. Projects connected agencies with communities to inform DRR policy and program design. In facilitating learning between these parties, projects improved visibility of community needs and gave avenues for community voices and lived experience to shape DRR initiatives and policies. 	<p>Projects improved risk detection, assessment and response.</p> <p><i>(Case study 1, 7, 23)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects produced assets that will reduce risk, although limited initial effect was reported, possibly due to organisational practices that did not yet accommodate the use of new assets. Projects leveraged technology in innovative ways to support community-based DRR by giving them access to hazard risk data and building their understanding of resilience strategies. The DRRF created an avenue to stimulate private sector co-investment in DRR. 25% of surveyed grantees indicated that they had formed public-private partnerships.

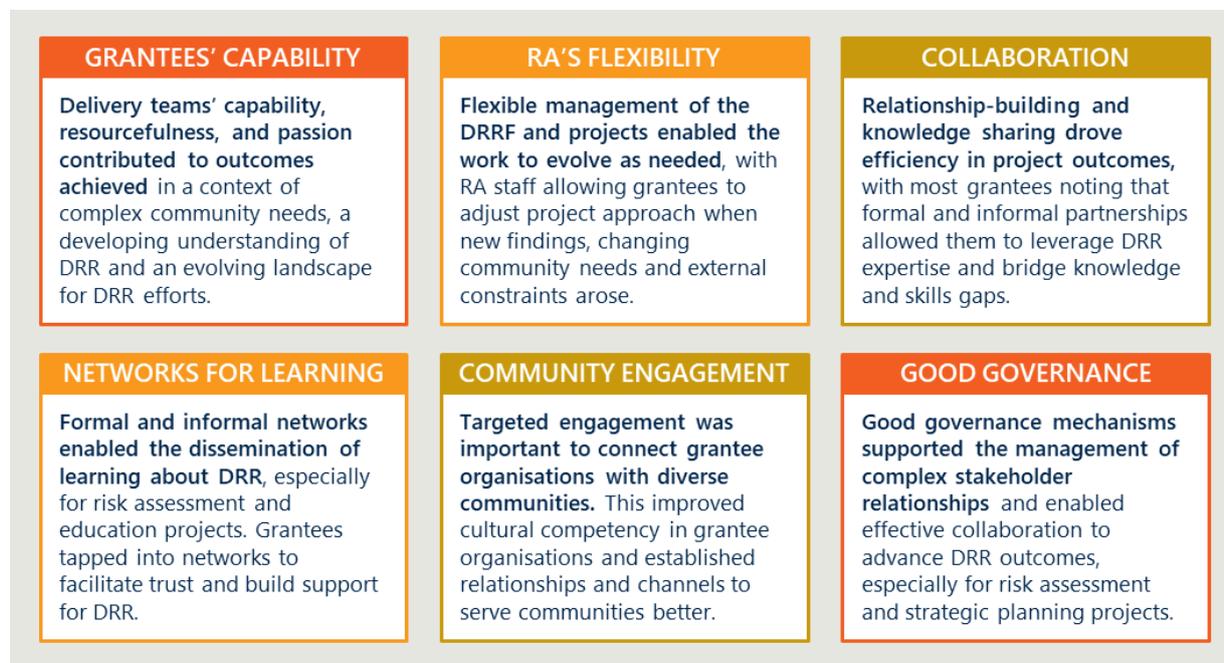
2.3 Grantees face challenges advancing and sustaining outcomes

The evaluation examined the factors that affected the DRRF's contribution to DRR in NSW.

While each project grantee identified unique opportunities and hurdles in their project, the evaluation also identified a set of common enablers and barriers to achieving outcomes within the funding period.

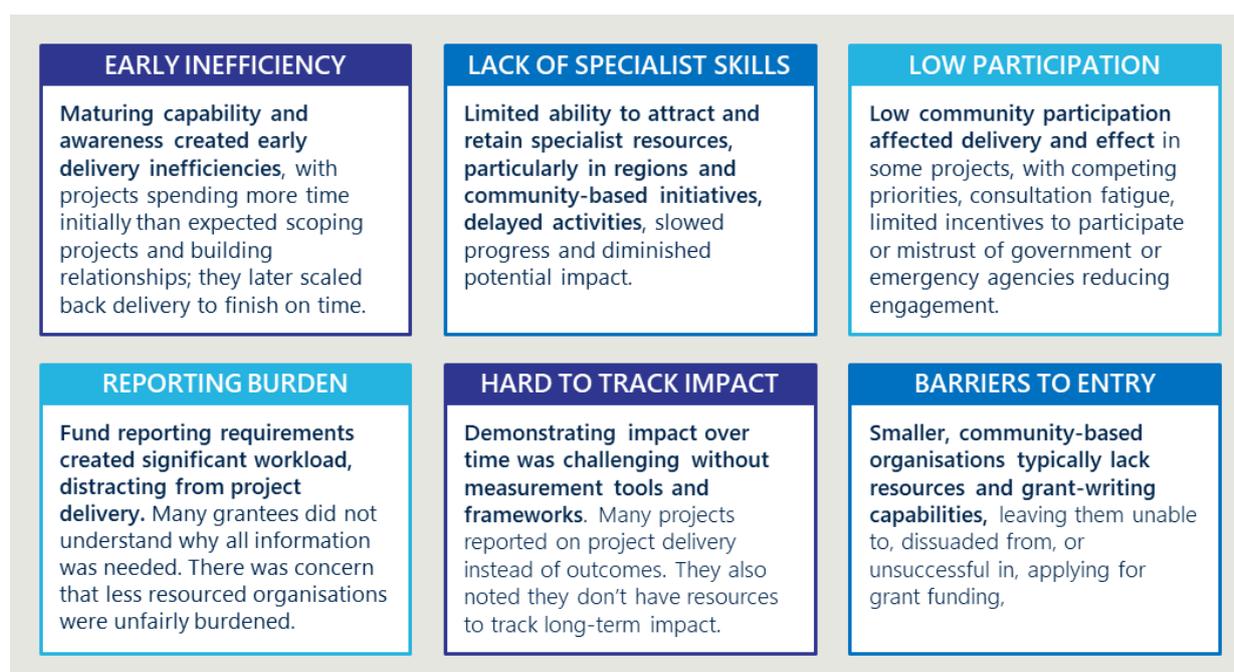
Capability, collaboration and good governance drove positive outcomes across the projects (Figure 3).

Figure 3 | Common enablers of DRRF project success



Conversely, in addition to the challenge of achieving ambitious outcomes within the funding period (see Section 1.3), grantees reported a set of constraints and pressures that limited outcomes (Figure 4).

Figure 4 | Project barriers commonly experienced by grantees



Grantees were largely confident that project outcomes could be sustained, but only if they had financial and human resources to maintain outputs, valuable networks, and changes in practice. Outcomes would otherwise erode over time, grantees felt. This challenge points to the limited ability of an external grants mechanism with a short funding period to drive the sustained and systemic change needed for DRR in NSW.

KEQ 3 | Opportunities and lessons: DRRF insights can inform how RA steers system change

The evaluation identified what has been learnt through the DRRF about continuing, evolving or new DRR priorities in NSW and what works well, and could be improved, to fund and address those priorities effectively.

As shown in the preceding sections, the DRRF contributed to the maturation of DRR knowledge, capability and action across NSW. Its achievements and challenges corroborate two things. First, the direction and approach for DRR since set through the statewide *SDMP* and localised *DAPs*. Second, the importance of RA's systemic role in steering and promoting DRR, as well as administering funding.

This means that, to effectively deliver DRR in NSW, RA needs to drive planning, action, and learning among diverse parties, across sectors, and over time. Literature suggests that systemic change of this kind is better sustained when actors work on the interconnected components - *explicit*, *semi-explicit*, and *implicit* conditions - that hold an existing system in place.^{vi}

The evaluation has therefore organised lessons from the DRRF to show how RA can strategically exercise influence on three 'levels' of systems change, as seen in **Figure 5** overleaf. These levels are:

1. **Structural change:** DRR strategies and funding mechanisms must evolve as disaster risk does and give organisations resources and tools to help make DRR part of their organisational practices and systems.
2. **Relational change:** While the DRRF strengthened networks, relationships, and participation, more can be done to move beyond ad-hoc coordination toward long-term collaboration.
3. **Transformative change:** Shifting mental models among leaders and practitioners to accept and adopt DRR as business-as-usual requires sustained effort and resources. An external grants mechanism with a short funding period is unlikely to be the sole driver of deep and sustained cultural change; organisations must be 'willing to come to the table' with their own resources, and to sustain their effort, too. But the experiences reported by DRRF grantees suggest that future funding mechanisms could explicitly promote and catalyse transformation, supported by RA's wider work in systemic leadership, collaboration and education.

Figure 5 | Lessons from the DRRF for future funding and systemic coordination of DRR



Recommendations

Applying the lessons from the DRRF will serve to enhance the impact of future DRR investments. Although doing so may require time and resources, the payoff of such initiatives will likely exceed the value of resources invested. Two recommendations have been developed for RA based on the lessons, enablers and barriers identified in the evaluation report. Although directed to RA, these recommendations will likely provide learnings for others working in DRR and/or other government actors running funding mechanisms.

Recommendation 1: Any future grants mechanism should direct effort in line with policy objectives and strategic frameworks and:

- Make specific provisions for First Nations projects
- Consider pathways for smaller, less well-resourced organisations
- Consider longer funding periods and/or options to extend funding
- Provide grantees some flexibility in project management while driving towards intended outcomes

The *SDMP* and *DAPs* sets a clear strategic direction for NSW's DRR efforts. Any future funding or grants mechanism should allocate funding in a way that supports realisation of its strategic objectives and intent. It should also be designed with the following features, unless incongruent with strategic objectives:

Funding or grant mechanism feature	Lessons, enablers and/or considerations this addresses:
<p>Provisions for First Nations projects whereby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding goes directly to Aboriginal organisations as the grantees on projects involving Indigenous practices (e.g. cultural burning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Projects involving First Nations practices should be delivered by First Nations organisations (Lesson 5)</i>
<p>Pathways for smaller, less well-resourced organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller organisations are provided additional supports to apply for funding (e.g. training in grant development), have a different funding pathway to larger organisations, and/or have reduced application requirements to minimise the burden on typically-limited resources pools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Uniform application processes do not always support equal participation by all organisational types (Barrier 6)</i>
<p>Longer funding periods and/or options to extend funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider funding periods longer than two years and/or provide additional funding options for projects nearing outcomes attainment or showing strong potential to extend and sustain outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Short term grant funding is not compatible with the sustained effort required for effective DRR (Lesson 2)</i>
<p>Provide flexibility while driving towards intended outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure flexible fund management (i.e. allow changes to timelines, scope and approach) while ensuring, for probity and the achievement of policy objectives, that projects contribute as intended to the DRRF's overall objectives. The evaluation understands that RA may need to consider mechanisms that can be put in place to authorise such flexibility (for example, a panel that oversaw both fund awards and variation decisions). • Ensure reporting requirements are designed to measure progress towards objectives and do not cause undue burden on grantees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fund reporting requirements created significant workload, distracting from project delivery, (Barrier 4)</i> • <i>Flexible management of the DRRF and projects enabled the work to evolve as needed (Enabler 2)</i>

Recommendation 2: As a system steward, RA should explore ways to use its influence, capabilities and networks to help organisations:

- Continue efforts to embed DRR within business-as-usual (BAU) practices
- Foster relationships and partnerships within and between organisations
- Overcome data and knowledge sharing siloes / limitations
- Improve community understanding and engagement
- Improve impact measurement

RA should leverage its role as a system steward and the cross-sectoral viewpoint and extensive networks it has to support organisations to improve DRR efforts, within and alongside funding/grants mechanisms.

Support provided to organisations	Lesson(s), enabler(s) and / or consideration(s) this addresses:
<p>Continue efforts to embed effective DRR within BAU practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support organisations to make DRR part of BAU is now a dedicated outcome in RA's strategic framework. RA should continue to explore ways in which this can be achieved (e.g. education and training, guidance, and mentorship highlighting the importance of DRR). • Support grantees to accurately scope and plan their work so they have a realistic view of key activities and their sequencing, timelines for delivery, and resources required. This will may involve training and guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shifting culture and mindsets is critical to make DRR BAU (Lesson 12)</i> • <i>Maturing capability and awareness created early delivery inefficiencies. (Barrier 1)</i>
<p>Foster relationships and partnerships within and between organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support organisations to develop relationships (formal and informal) both internally and externally. This may include pairing appropriate organisations or providing organisational network training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Organisational partnerships are critical (Lesson 10)</i>
<p>Overcome data and knowledge sharing siloes / limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improved data and knowledge sharing practices across organisations and sectors. This may involve advising organisations on how to best capture and share data, providing data collection tools and templates, or establishing data sharing platforms and groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consistent and comprehensive data and knowledge systems and practices are needed (Lesson 4)</i>
<p>Improve community understanding and engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight to organisations the value of effective community engagement in driving and sustaining disaster risk reduction. • Support organisations to better understand and engage appropriately and effectively with diverse community groups affected by disaster risks and impacts in particular and disproportionate way. These communities may include but are not limited to, CALD groups, First Nations communities, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ communities and low socio-economic status (SES) communities. • RA may provide communications, educational or training programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cultural literacy is still developing and must remain a priority for organisations in DRR. (Lesson 9)</i> • <i>Community involvement is critical for buy-in and momentum but takes time and explicit focus. (Lesson 8)</i> • <i>Local networks are a critical conduit for place-based initiatives and can inform regional and state policy (Lesson 11)</i>
<p>Improve impact measurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support organisations to correctly set up impact measurement processes from the outset. This may involve training, provision of data collection and impact measurement tools, or ongoing impact measurement coaching as part of fund management practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Demonstrating impact over time was challenging without measurement tools and frameworks (Barrier 5)</i>

Appendix A Case study References

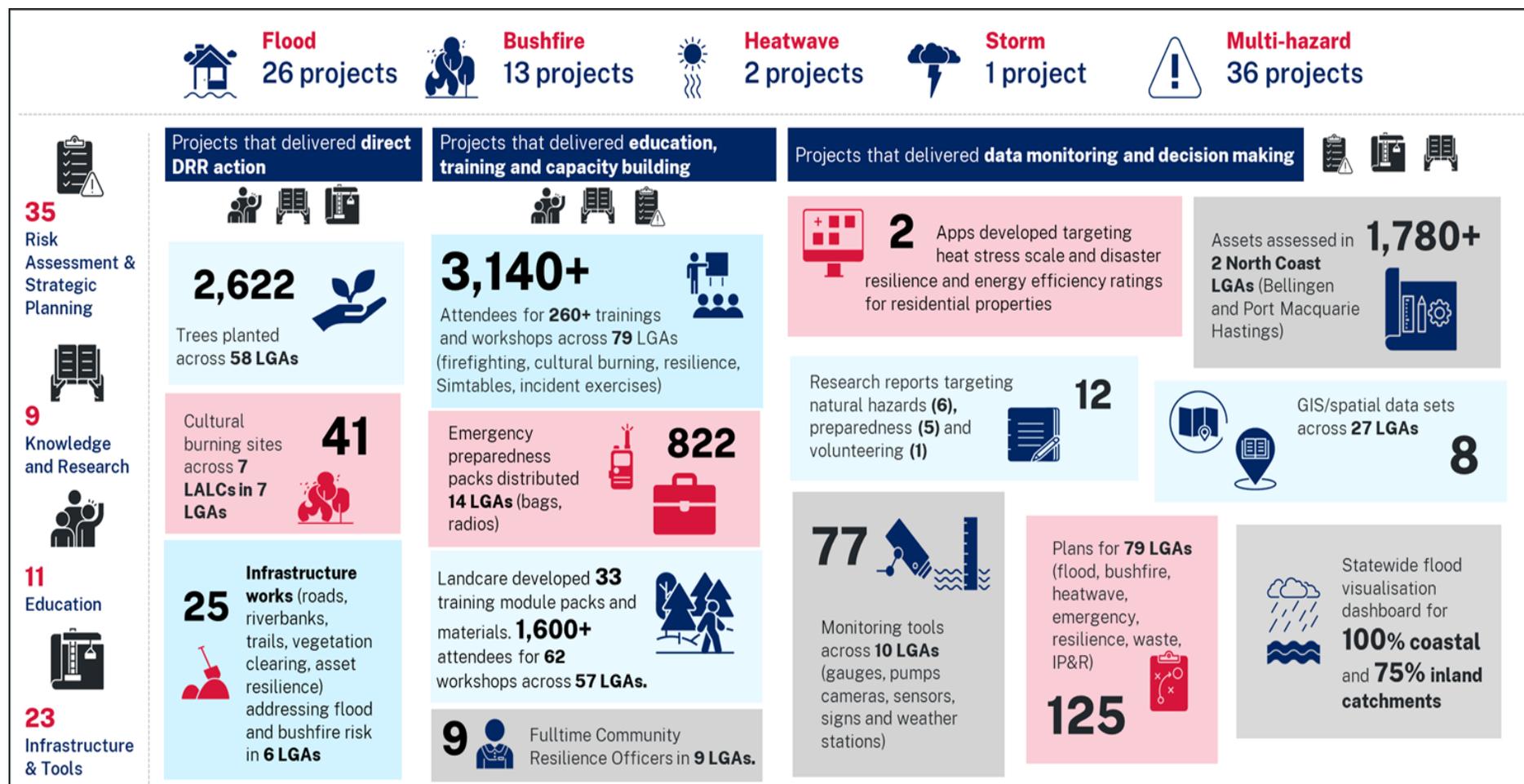
In-text reference	Case study summary
1	The NSW State Emergency Service profiled flood exposure for 198,000 dwellings and 443,000 individuals by integrating flood risk data and visualisations into a dataset for high-risk river systems in NSW. This enabled communities to make informed decisions on risk reduction actions. It also produced evacuation models, conducted workshops with partners, and delivered a 'Storymap' tool supporting communities to identify their flood risk and prepare accordingly. The SES reported that people they engaged in regional communities responded best to recognisable and empathetic communication and to people from their communities who shared their stories of flood impact and preparation.
2	NSW DCCEW created and tested a new flood hazard modelling framework that uses continuous climate simulations to predict future flood risks. This was applied to and refined across five floodplain sites. It also produced an accessible electronic data collection for developing flood models, which DCCEW has indicated will inform their strategies for data set development and environmental water management.
3	Fire and Rescue NSW brought together CALD community members and emergency services to inform a targeted communication model reducing CALD communities' vulnerability during disasters.
4	The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations and Fire and Rescue NSW ran training and discussion sessions with 73 people with disability and 14 firefighters from 8 locations. These aimed to "put accessibility at the forefront" for emergency services and supported the co-design of accessible fire safety resources including EasyRead fact sheets and AUSLAN videos.
5	Central Coast Council spoke to landowners to gain local perspective while developing a 'bushfire preparation decision' tool with the potential to benefit 12,000 properties.
6	Forestry Corporation of NSW leveraged strategic partnerships with technology companies, government bodies, and universities to share equipment, resources, and best practices to improve fire behaviour modelling and hazard reduction planning by developing a new approach to fuel load and moisture data collection. There are plans for ongoing collaboration to enhance knowledge outcomes.
7	The University of Sydney produced a "Heat Stress Scale" to reduce personal health risk during heatwaves. The app enables individuals to calculate their daily heat risk exposure and access personalised recommendations through their phones. Over 150 participants provided input through focus groups, and more than 4,000 people used the app during its pilot phase. The app's reach is likely to increase following ABC media coverage and promotion by QLD Department of Health. The grantee said these outcomes were enabled by the innovative use of online technology such as dynamic advertisement in public places and dissemination of information on government websites
8	The Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC) involved a coalition of 40 organisations from councils, state agencies, industry, and community formed a taskforce to enhance heatwave assessment, management, and governance. The taskforce developed a resilience strategy, various assessment tools like the Cool Suburbs Tool, supported the creation of a dedicated heatwave agency, and set the stage for Australia's first Heatwave Awareness Day in February 2025. This initiative has fostered strong relationships among participants and laid the groundwork for future efforts to mitigate heat risks.
9	The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure worked with stakeholders from the public and private sectors, community groups, and First Nations groups to build consensus on ways to integrate DRR into regional planning guidelines. In a complex setting, clear communication, mutual trust, and a participatory approach reportedly helped secure stakeholder buy-in.

10	The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC) developed mitigation strategies across 12 councils to reduce waste risks and improve resilience of waste services delivery during disaster events.
11	The NSW Council of Social Service supported place-based DRR efforts and connections by working with dozens of local NGOs, councils, and community groups across four disadvantaged regions. It coordinated with emergency services to avoid any confusion about roles.
12	The University of Sydney involved local groups from across NSW in the design of disaster mitigation resources for communities. Participants brought their understanding of evolving community needs and self-organised community networks to workshop discussions.
13	The Blue Mountains City Council's 'Bioregional Collaboration for Planetary Health' project delivered 64 workshops and training activities to over 2700 participants while piloting local water management initiatives, creating neighbourhood communication platforms, and founding a 'planetary health space' to support community DRR learning.
14	A project by the NSW Council of Social Service emphasized the importance of increased risk knowledge and response by organisations. The team used socioeconomic and demographic data to map disaster vulnerability in four locations, aligning it with regional hazard exposure. This work gave them a detailed view of disaster risks, aiding tailored planning and response strategies for emergency services and community support organizations. The project also fostered collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders from various sectors, enhancing local organisations' capacity to address disaster risks.
15	The Fire and Rescue NSW Case improved disaster risk assessment processes and emergency response plans for working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. The project improved the organisation's cultural awareness and community engagement approach. With CALD communities – who are often disproportionately impacted by disaster - making up ~23 per cent of the NSW community, the grantee expects this work will have significant benefit to the local community ^{vii}
16	The grantee from The Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure explained that its CSIRO partnership was essential to develop planning and guidelines for safe and affordable housing over the next 20-40 years. CSIRO staff brought specialist expertise that informed the adaptive pathways approach used in the project. The two organisations have since presented on effective collaboration at conferences and are identifying opportunities to embed project outputs into operations.
17	The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils brokered collaboration between councils and private waste management companies to make waste management systems more resilient. The grantee reported that doing so was initially challenging because of their competitive concerns, but once achieved it informed better planning that could be taken forward by councils working with the sector
18	North Coast Local Land Services undertook research to understand the impacts of successive natural disasters on regional landholders' capacity, risk behaviour, and preparedness and their willingness to reduce disaster risk. The findings have informed the grantee's planning to support DRR across the region; it has also been disseminated to other NSW agencies to inform work statewide.
19	The University of Sydney conducted research to understand how communities affected by recent events 'self-organised' to coordinate and resource the response to an event. It found that what had appeared to outsiders to be spontaneous community responses were in fact established social networks that held substantial local knowledge that were often invisible or not sought out by state authorities. The project developed resources to support self-organised community networks, but it also communicated findings to state agencies, with one agency reportedly starting to use them to tap community knowledge.
20	The Forestry Corporation of NSW piloted new bushfire fuel moisture measurement techniques. The grantee leveraged research networks across the country to access national and state-based data systems and guide efforts to gather and analyse data across NSW. It reported that being able to share

	<p>information, methodologies, and equipment with others working in the field was instrumental in this work, and ongoing arrangements to share research and data modelling are in discussion.</p>
21	<p>The grantee from Landcare NSW reported that DRR had not previously been a formal operational focus. But concurrent and ongoing climate-related disasters across NSW had driven greater interest in nature-based risk and resilience initiatives among Landcare groups. With DRRF funding, Landcare NSW ran training workshops across its extensive network, delivering 62 events in nine regions and involving more than 1,600 community members. The grantee said the workshops contributed to increased risk awareness and preparation skills among community members and Landcare stakeholders, and stronger community connections with state agencies.</p>
22	<p>The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations aimed to improve cooperation between emergency management agencies and disability organisations so agencies would have the knowledge, capability, and relationships to work with people with disability and reduce the disproportionate fire risks they experience.</p> <p>Workshops educated fire rescue and emergency agency personnel on the specific needs and risks that can face people with disability and informed the development of training resources to serve people with disability better. The grantee noted that a simple question posed by a community member - "how do I know where the fire is located when I cannot see?" - sparked purposeful conversations about training gaps in first responder organisations and how they could be addressed.</p> <p>The project also sought to reduce community members' vulnerability by providing direct DRR training; many participants said it was the first time they had received specific information.</p>
23	<p>The Resilient Building Council project showed that the demonstration of economic benefits is crucial to bring private industry into DRR. The project delivered a world-first multi-hazard resilience rating home assessment tool and training program for building assessors in NSW. As of March 2024, over 19,000 households had accessed the program and received a personalised risk assessment and action plan. 67 per cent of households identified for pre- and post-project monitoring reduced their disaster risk exposure. Critically, the grantee reported that Suncorp and NRMA agreed to reduce insurance premiums for users of the app who made their homes more resilient according to the customised recommendations.</p>

Appendix B DRRF activities and outputs: RA snapshot

RA provided the following snapshot of activities and outputs delivered by DRRF projects. While independent of Nous' evaluation (i.e. the evaluation has not verified the findings contained in the diagram), it provides a useful overview of the DRRF's achievements as recorded by RA during the funding period.



References

ⁱ NSW EPA, *Increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events*. Available [here](#). Accessed: 4 April 2025; Australian Climate Service, *Climate – Future Climate*. Available [here](#). Accessed 6 April 2025. NSW Reconstruction Authority, *State Disaster Mitigation Plan 2024-2026*.

ⁱⁱ Parliament of Australia, 2024, *Select committee on the impact of climate risk on insurance premiums and availability, Impact of climate change and more frequent and severe natural disasters*. Available [here](#). Accessed 4 April 2025.

ⁱⁱⁱ NSW Reconstruction Authority, *Disaster Adaptation Planning*. Available [here](#). Accessed 19 March 2025.

^{iv} Federal Financial Relations, '*National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction*', Available at [link](#); NSW Reconstruction Authority, *DRRF Funded Projects Master List, 2024*. 79 projects were funded originally, but one organisation discontinued the project and returned its funding.

^v UNDRR, 2015, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. Available [here](#). Accessed 19 March 2025 and Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*, Available [here](#). Accessed 19 March 2025.

^{vi} Kania J., Kramer, M., & Senge, P, 2018, 'The Water of Systems Change', FSG. Available [here](#). Accessed 22 April 2025. The three levels of change are: 'structural change' (which refers to visible components of the system such as policies, practices and resource flows), 'relational change' (which involves shifts in how people, organisations and communities interact, build trust and share power – the semi-explicit dynamics of a system); and 'transformative change' (which targets shifts in mindsets, narratives and ways of thinking – often implicit or hidden systemic drivers - to promoting lasting change).

^{vii} UNDRR, 2015, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. Available [here](#). Accessed 19 March 2025; Judicial Commission of New South Wales, *People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds*, Available [here](#). Accessed 19 March 2025.