



Community Resilience Networks (CRNs)

What is a Community Resilience Network (CRN)?

Cessnock City Council has established CRNs in Cessnock and the Wollombi Valley, with the aim of bringing together local community organisations, businesses, networks, agencies, charities and others that can take part in disaster recovery planning, disaster preparedness activities, and resilience building for their community as well as support local recovery efforts following a disaster.

The *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report (October 2020)* recognised the crucial role of non-government organisations (NGO) and charities in disaster recovery, and the need to incorporate the NGO sector in recovery planning processes before a disaster occurs.

The intention of the Cessnock CRN is to link local community organisations with each other as well as with the emergency management sector to provide communication channels for information on community capabilities, needs and impacts, particularly relating to higher risk groups. It is also designed to enhance cooperation and collaboration in recovery efforts, to ensure a more coordinated and effective recovery.

The CRN can enhance two-way resilience and recovery communication between impacted communities and Council, the Local Emergency Management Committee and the Local Recovery Committee (if established following disasters).

The CRN can coordinate recovery activities and promote information and activities to enhance disaster resilience, preparedness, and recovery for community services, businesses, and communities within Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA).

Key Benefits of CRNs

CRNs help Cessnock City Council support the community in recovering from a disaster. CRNs can provide information to Council and emergency services about impacts and needs in the community.

Wide membership of CRNs helps to increase community understanding of emergency management and disaster recovery arrangements, strengthening community disaster preparedness.

Impacted residents and businesses may receive support faster and in a more coordinated way, improving recovery from disasters.

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FAQs

Who could be in the Cessnock CRN?

The CRN has a focus on the human services sector and may include:

- Cessnock City Council
- Community Centres and Neighbourhood Centres
- Local housing and homelessness support services
- Social support providers
- Children's services including day care, pre-schools, and schools
- Local disability and aged care service providers
- Local multicultural service providers
- Local charities and church groups
- Service organisations such as Country Women's Association, Rotary & Lions clubs, Mens Sheds
- Aboriginal Land Councils
- Aboriginal Health Services
- Local businesses
- Any other interested local services

What can the CRN do?

- Provide information on impacts to community and recovery needs following a disaster.
- Support and/or coordinate local recovery activities.
- Help distribute recovery related information from council to all services, clients, and communities in the LGA.
- Support the development of community risk and vulnerability assessments to inform emergency management and recovery planning.
- Promote, support and/or coordinate community preparedness & engagement activities in collaboration with Council and local emergency services.
- Build resilience of community organisations through improved connections and collaboration.

How often does the CRN meet?

The CRN will generally meet quarterly, a few weeks ahead of each Local Emergency Management Committee meeting.

CRN meetings may include pre-season (bushfire/flood/storm) briefings, which could involve local emergency services providing an overview of the upcoming disaster season.

What happens to the CRN if a disaster event occurs?

During a disaster event the CRN may support Council and the Local Recovery Committee (if established) by advising them of the community's recovery needs, issues, and activities within the LGA.