

Indigo Shire Council Community Resilience Conversations Stanley & Barnawartha

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Overview

This document summarises the outputs from a series of resilience focused conversations held with Barnawartha and Stanley communities in Indigo Shire during October 2023. The purpose of these conversation sessions was to identify actions to strengthen resilience from the household to local community and Shire scale.

The process was driven in large part by the need for Indigo Shire communities to prepare for more extreme weather events, although non-climate related disasters and disruptions were also considered as part of the discussion.

The specific actions identified for Barnawartha and Stanley are intended to address issues the community assessed to be undermining resilience capacity in their communities. The actions range from small scale, short term 'easy wins' through to bigger picture visionary projects. Both levels of projects have their place in resilience building.

The conversations and the identified actions documented here are one part of an ongoing process to build resilience and emergency response capacities at different levels across the focus communities and the wider Indigo Shire community.

Key overarching findings

Barnawartha and Stanley are strong active communities, but they face challenges that undermine Preparedness and community resilience.

Both Barnawartha and Stanley are passionate, proactive small communities. Both communities have previously undertaken a range of locally initiated and driven actions to support place making and the health and wellbeing of their local communities. However, there are several longer-term issues relating to trust in Governance and Decision making, Infrastructure and Service provision, Economic Opportunities and Information Flows and Emergency Capacity that undermine their capacity to locally prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster and disruption.

Careful 'community centred' integrated planning is required in both Barnawartha and Stanley to address long term community resilience building, particularly Economic opportunities and Infrastructure and services challenges.

Limited and/or vulnerable physical, economic and social infrastructure, limited local services and economic opportunities, changing demographics and the natural and geographic setting create specific vulnerabilities (eg vulnerability to fire in Stanley's case or potential for a major transport disaster in Barnawartha's) and challenges for both communities. Moving towards more resilient communities in the face of a changing and more extreme climate requires navigating a complex space between social change, economic development, town and landscape planning and changing and sometimes conflicting community aspirations.

Strengthening trust in governance and decision making is an immediate priority for both Stanley and Barnawartha.

Both communities expressed significant frustration with Shire and government agency Governance and Decision-making processes. In particular, they highlighted poor engagement and communication, frustration with investment priorities and spending, and confusing or inconsistent processes. A pilot program to test approaches for strengthening trust in Governance and Decision Making across both the Barnawartha and Stanley communities is an immediate high priority to create a foundation for both communities to work effectively with the Shire on other resilience building and planning processes.

Household and Community Emergency Planning is an immediate priority in both Barnawartha and Stanley.

In the very short-term, Household and Community emergency planning will help to raise awareness of the need for household and community preparedness and help to clarify roles and responsibilities between the various elements of agency, municipal and local community emergency awareness, planning and actions.

These resilience focused community conversations have paved the way for further discussions about community resilience and development.

All the actions identified through the community conversations are valuable 'seedbanks' of innovative ideas. They are an important starting point for ongoing resilience building efforts in Barnawartha and Stanley and other communities within the Shire. Further processes to engage a wider range of community members and supporting small scale community actions are important next steps to build more resilient communities.

Actions to strengthen household and community resilience.

Barnawartha

Important note:

The actions presented below are focused on short term 'quick wins' to address immediate resilience challenges and build connections, as a step towards addressing some of the deeper, long term resilience challenges. They are also within the scope of the current capacity and resources of the community and Shire.

The more significant resilience challenges for Barnawartha relating to 'Governance and Decision making' and 'Economic Opportunities' dimensions require longer term dedicated, integrated resourcing and processes to achieve the desired progress. See pages 30-33 for the full list of actions.

Shorter term, lower effort/higher impact actions

To achieve important 'quick wins' as a way of strengthening resilience preparedness, engaging community and building connections:

1. i. Emergency Planning – household and community level emergency planning

While CFA undertake excellent annual awareness sessions there was overall agreement that more general household and community 'emergency' training would be beneficial. Indigo Shire is in the process of developing household and community focused emergency awareness material and processes. Stanley and Barnawartha will be the first communities targeted for these activities.

ii. Emergency warning /evacuation awareness raising

Related to emergency planning, there were a number of issues raised around awareness of emergency warning and evacuation points.

2. Community groups needs documented and communicated to council

Community groups are crucial to the functioning of any small community. Understanding their needs and the services they offer will help to clarify priorities for support and identify skills, resources and services that may not be well known to other parts of the community. An emphasis on emergency preparedness as part of the information gathering process will better help to inform both the Shire and the community regarding the needs and capacities of groups during emergencies.

3. Community mapping

There is currently relatively limited understanding about the communities basic demographics and needs, including the number of elderly, people with special needs and other vulnerable people. Similarly, an understanding of those with limited access to technology (to receive emergency warnings) may help to target these people for support to help them prepare for emergencies and disaster response.

4. Neighbour connect

Neighbor Connect could be a series of activities to help households to connect and have conversations with neighbours about emergency planning and looking after each other. The suggested activities were to encourage households to connect and host small conversations and events to strengthen community connection and help new residents to learn about the emergency risks. The initial activities might involve producing post cards to encourage households to have conversations and an information sheet to support local neighbourhood conversations. The Indigo Shire's emergency planning initiatives may provide the information and the impetus for this action.

5. Support and buy local

Actions (potentially linked to the community directory process) to raise awareness of local services and encourage people to buy local and support local services where possible.

6. Community events/pop up spaces/farmers/craft market – (moderate effort, moderate benefit)

With limited commercial spaces available, creating opportunities for local economic opportunities, pop up commercial spaces (to test the market and allow revolving and mobile retailers, etc) not only helps to generate local economic activity but creates opportunities for different types of community interactions and strengthens community connection.

[Longer term, higher impact/higher effort actions](#)

To achieve progress against the deeper long term challenges:

7. Volunteer register

A register to link potential volunteers with needs/tasks to create opportunities for more short term 'spontaneous' volunteering rather than the more traditional process of joining a group and participating over longer time frames.

Linked to a register and community group mapping a volunteer 'come and try' day or community group expo might help new residents or people looking to volunteer with an opportunity to connect.

8. Community Group support

Support for training, governance, administration, skills and funding for community groups is required to support some groups. There are funding sources for community group support and training, but a coordinated 'whole of Barny' approach will reduce the burden on individual groups organising their own funding and support.

9. Community emergency scenario event

A dedicated emergency planning scenario event to test both community preparedness and community integration with emergency services and municipal emergency planning. An emergency scenario session would allow the community to come together to work through an emergency scenario, highlighting the current local strengths and gaps in community level awareness and connections.

10. Heritage Centre

The development of a heritage centre, while a longer term process, provides an opportunity for the community to achieve specific aspects of its longer term vision of maintaining a connection with its farming heritage, creating specific infrastructure and social and economic opportunities. The community is currently self organising the planning process and requires clear support and assistance from the Shire to continue to drive this project forward.

11. Critical infrastructure review and repair

Critical infrastructure underpins any community. Understanding the current status of infrastructure, maintenance/repair of current critical infrastructure and understanding of future needs is fundamental to the social, economic and environmental health and wellbeing of the community. An audit of current and future critical infrastructure provides a basis for future investment.

12. Business Hub and community co-working space

Creation of a business hub and community co-working space will help to strengthen economic opportunities and support local businesses and may reduce the need for some people to travel out of the community daily.

13. Mens Shed

The benefits of mens' and womens' sheds in providing social connection are well documented. Creating a dedicated space for men and women to connect, to learn new skills and work collectively is a fundamental part of strengthening communities.

Stanley

Important note:

The actions presented below are focused on short term 'quick wins' to address immediate resilience challenges and build connections, as a step towards addressing some of the deeper, long term resilience challenges. They are also within the scope of the current capacity and resources of the community and Shire.

The more significant resilience challenges for Stanley including building trust in 'Governance and Decision making' and 'Infrastructure and services' dimensions require major longer term dedicated and integrated resources and processes to achieve the desired progress. See pages 45-47 for the full list of actions.

Shorter term, lower effort/higher impact actions

To achieve important 'quick wins' as a way of strengthening resilience Preparedness, engaging community and building connections:

1. Emergency Planning – household and community level emergency planning

While CFA undertake annual community awareness sessions there was overall agreement that more general 'emergency' training would be beneficial. Indigo Shire is in the process of developing household and community focused emergency awareness material and

processes. Stanley and Barnawartha will be the first communities targeted for these activities.

2. Household Connect

Household Connect is a series of activities to help households to connect and have conversations about emergency planning and looking after each other. The suggested activities were to encourage households to connect and host small conversations and events to strengthen community connection and help new residents to learn about the emergency risks. The initial activities might involve producing post cards to encourage households to have conversations and an information sheet to support local neighbourhood conversations.

Longer term, higher impact/higher effort actions

To achieve progress against the deeper long term challenges:

1. Shire Connect – shire information sessions

Participants felt that a regular opportunity for residents to have direct contact with Shire staff would improve the relationship between residents and the Shire. Building trust and transparency in the Shire's decision making processes, improving the understanding of local issues and sharing information is critical to progressing some of the longer term challenges the Stanley community faces with regards to planning and development.

2. Community Emergency Planning and Awareness

Coupled with household and ensuring it complements the existing CFA information and awareness sessions, there is scope for community emergency planning sessions to strengthen the wider communities knowledge of emergency procedures including the role of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning and protocols and the role of other important land managers in the Stanley landscape.

3. Toy Library/Play group

With a lot of young families moving to Stanley since the pandemic, there is a need to create local support and connection opportunities for young parents and young children. A toy library/play group that operates from the community hall or the school site may provide an important opportunity to increase community cohesion and local networks and share information. There are currently grants available for establishing toy libraries through the Dept. Families, Fairness and Housing.

4. Community Connect

A number of previously regular community events and gatherings have not occurred since the pandemic. The decline of community events and volunteering is not unique to the Stanley community, it is a wider trend playing out across all communities. This action would target the running of 3-4 small 'themed' community events to draw the community back together and provide opportunities for connecting, sharing information and generating support for community actions.

5. Childcare capacity

There is currently limited opportunity for childcare within Stanley. This limits household capacity to work and to participate in community activities. Some focus on developing local childcare services would increase connection, household and community capacity.

6. Infrastructure and energy security planning

As highlighted by most participants, the vulnerability of communication, energy and other infrastructure undermines household and community resilience in multiple ways. Focused planning on improving the security of energy and services and infrastructure is fundamental to the development of a resilient future for Stanley.

7. Community Centre

The Stanley community currently relies heavily of the community run post office and volunteer networks to coordinate community activities. The community also lacks a geographic and 'metaphoric' centre. A community centre (operating from existing community infrastructure) could potentially create a community hub around which social connections, information, 'bumping' opportunities and community activities could revolve. There are currently no funding opportunities for community centre establishment. A partnership relationship with adjacent community centres may be a viable option in the short term.

Introduction

Indigo Shire has instigated a series of conversations with the Barnawartha and Stanley communities to better understand their capacity to cope with disasters. The community conversations form part of a wider focus across Indigo Shire on community resilience and emergency capacity.

These initial conversations will form the foundation for liaison with other community groups and organisations, businesses and agencies within and associated with these communities.

The focus of these initial conversations was on understanding and base-lining current resilience capacity. Understanding and building resilience requires ongoing conversations, action and learning. As communities change and evolve over time so too does their capacity to cope with disaster and disruption. The nature of the risks communities face also changes over time. The community resilience conversations summarised in this document reflect current community understanding and perceptions about current risks.

The outputs from the conversations provide a basis for actions by individuals, households, community organisations and the Shire. They also provide a baseline, however coarse, from which progress towards resilience building can be measured.

Understanding resilience

Resilience is a widely used, and some would argue, over-used word. It is used in a range of contexts from mental health, personal wellbeing, community, disasters, infrastructure economics and business. For the purposes of this current project, we define resilience as:

‘the *capacity* to cope with *disaster and disruption* and continue to function in a desired way’

That *capacity* maybe of an individual person, of a family, a business, vulnerable groups or the whole community. We also recognise the important relationship between the resilience of individuals and the communities of which they are part. An individual’s resilience will be determined in part by the resilience of the wider community and vice versa.

The *disasters and disruptions* people and communities have to cope with may be rapid and destructive events such as a natural disaster, pandemics, an accident or the failure of critical infrastructure. However, it may also include slower changes such as the decline of a key industry or demographic changes that undermine the communities longer term capacity to cope with those more rapid events.

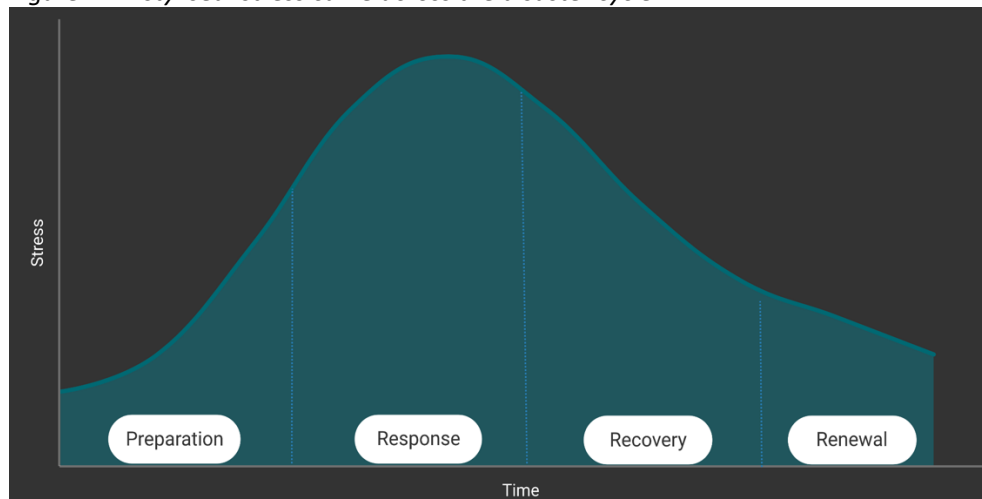
Understanding resilience capacity and its benefits

During disaster and disruption, individuals and communities experience a range of psychological, physical, social and economic stresses. Those stresses rise and collectively peak at the height of the response phase (Figure 1), although specific aspects of stress will continue and may peak at much later stages for individuals.

The shape of the ‘stress curve’ will vary for each individual, household and community and will be partly influenced by pre-existing conditions. There is emerging understanding that stress and trauma for individuals is cumulative, that is, that stress and trauma from previous events is carried forward, accumulating over time. Individuals, households and communities from lower socio-economic, marginalised, special needs and otherwise vulnerable groups with pre-existing stresses are likely to suffer most during and after disaster and disruption.

Resilience building cannot fully remove or reduce external risks. However, it can reduce the stress experienced by individuals and communities across the disaster cycle. It can also reduce the direct and indirect economic costs of disasters. Recent studies suggest for every \$1 invested in resilience (risk reduction, prevention and planning for disasters) we save \$4 - \$10 in the recovery phase. The flow on effects from disasters have significant indirect costs, with one estimate putting the cost of disruption to peoples’ lives from the 2009 Black Saturday fires equal to the direct \$3.9B cost of property and infrastructure losses. The key message here is that any efforts to better prepare communities for disasters and disruption makes good social and economic sense.

Figure 1. A 'stylised' stress curve across the disaster cycle

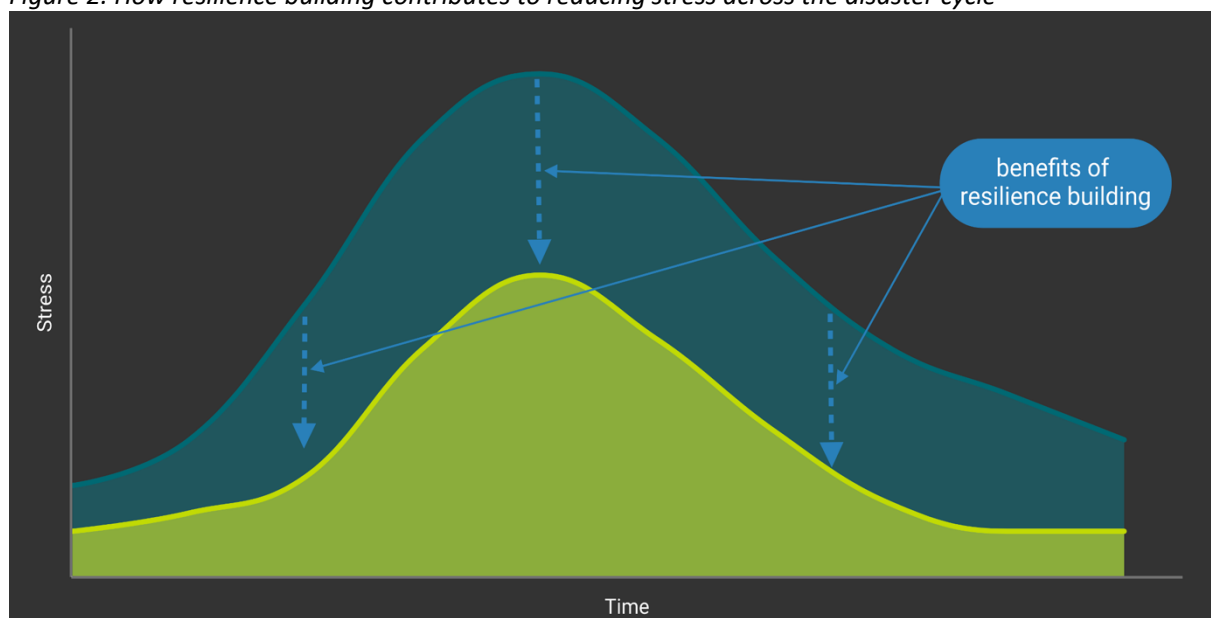


Resilience building

While there is a popular view that resilience is primarily about recovery and bouncing back after disaster, evidence clearly shows that proactive action (ie in the Preparation and early Response phase) is a significantly better investment reducing the impact of events and speeding Recovery.

Good resilience building increases the capacity to cope in *all* phases of the disaster and disruption cycle from Preparation, Response, Recovery and Renewal and lowers stress across the disaster cycle (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. How resilience building contributes to reducing stress across the disaster cycle



Multi-level focus – resilience is a shared responsibility.

While the focus of this current project is not on the formal Response activities undertaken by emergency service organisations, individuals and households must still undertake their own emergency preparations and response actions during an event.

Importantly, it is often the relationship *between* individual and household responses and decision making and the formal emergency services response that has a large bearing on the outcomes of a disaster event. For example, making decisions at the household level to evacuate early in response to emergency warnings reduces pressure on emergency services and allows them to concentrate resources where they are needed most.

Hence, resilience is a *shared responsibility* where individual, households, community, emergency services and organisations like Local Government must work together to achieve the best outcomes.

Assessing resilience

There is no definitive understanding of what constitutes resilience capacity, however numerous studies, reviews and on ground experience suggest that the following ‘dimensions’ are important for resilience (Table 1., FRRR & USyd, 2022).

These overlapping dimensions collectively support the capacity to cope during disaster and disruption across the disaster cycle. They create the *preconditions* for resilience. For example, without adequate infrastructure, without good flows of information or without a cohesive community that looks out for the most vulnerable members, no community will be able to prepare well, respond to and recover from a disaster. The impact of a disaster on any community lacking those attributes will be much greater and the recovery time much longer than on a community that has worked on those things prior to any event.

In the context of this project, these dimensions provide a way to assess resilience and structure conversations about what can be a vague concept for many people. While subjective, assessment of the dimensions also provides an initial baseline for assessing the effectiveness of resilience building over time.

Table 1. Definitions of the 10 resilience dimensions assessed during the community conversations.

Dimension	Explanation
1. Social cohesion	Social cohesion is important during times of community stress. It allows differing individuals and groups to make decisions and work effectively together during planning and during any disruptions and disasters without being hampered by social, cultural, religious or political differences.
2. Inclusion & diversity	During times of stress, marginalised people are often excluded, overlooked or at worst actively discriminated against, further compounding the direct impact of disruption and disaster. Marginal and diverse individuals and groups should be actively engaged in community planning.
3. Economic opportunities	The capacity for people to earn a sufficient income is fundamental to personal and community resilience. Diverse local economic opportunities are better able to withstand disruption and disaster while a narrower or less diverse local economy may be more severely impacted and take longer to recover.
4. Infrastructure & services	Communities require adequate and reliable infrastructure and services to support their health, wellbeing and prosperity. Infrastructure and services must be able to cope with expected <i>and</i> unexpected disruptions and disasters.
5. Emergency response capacity	The ability for local communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from disruptions and disasters is fundamental to community resilience. While State and regional level emergency organisations will support communities as quickly as possible, communities need capacity to cope in the first 72 hours to reduce impacts on human physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Dimension	Explanation
6. Governance & decision making	Governance and decision making processes that are responsive, fair, transparent and accountable ensure that communities can plan for and act on the needs of their communities. Lack of good governance and decision-making leads to disengagement and conflict, reducing capacity in other ways.
7. Information flows	Information flows must be multi-directional ensuring required information (about planning, issues, resourcing, priorities, decision making, practical on ground issues) flow to the right people at the right times to ensure decisions and actions are appropriate and timely. In particular, flows of <i>local knowledge</i> are critical to community resilience as it includes information not contained elsewhere in the information 'system'.
8. Networks & connection	Connections <i>between</i> different people, organisations, decision makers and decision-making processes, at different levels from household to state help communities to organise and influence many of the resilience dimensions.
9. Self-organisation capacity	The ability for communities to self-organise support is important when faced with disruptions and disasters. Experience has shown that formal communication and decision-making processes at higher levels often breaks down or are overlooked at finer scale details. The ability for communities to get together, make decisions and organise action when other systems fail or are yet to kick into gear is an important capacity.
10. Resourcing	Communities that can access resources quickly are better able to respond to the needs of individuals and groups and recover more quickly from disruption and disaster. Resources are more than money. The include skills, expertise and equipment and local and cultural knowledge that can be important at different phases in the disruption and disaster cycle.

Community discussion process

Three 2hr sessions were held in Stanley and Barnawartha. The focus for the discussion sessions were as follows (Figure 3).

Session 1.

- Identifying visions for future. How do you want this community to look and feel in the future?
- Resilience of what? What is it we want to make resilient?
- Resilience to what? What are the risks to our community?

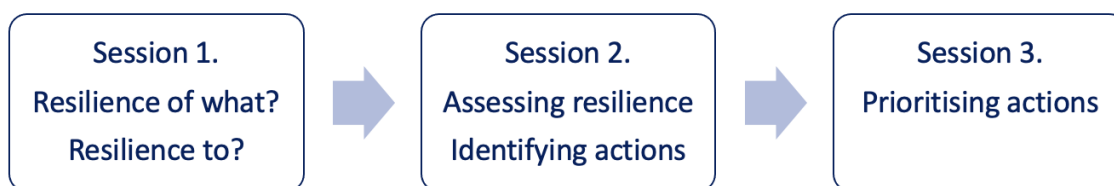
Session 2.

- Assessing resilience against the 10 'dimensions' of resilience
- Actions to address perceived resilience deficiencies, at the household, community and in partnership with the Shire and other agencies.

Session 3.

- Prioritising actions to inform household, community and Shire efforts and activities.

Figure 3. The focus of the 3 related sessions undertaken in Barnawartha and Stanley



The intention was to have the same group of community members attend each session, however for the Stanley community each session was attended by mostly new people. This allowed for a wider range of perspectives to be heard within the three sessions but meant there was limited continuity and sharing of discussion across sessions.

In contrast the Barnawartha sessions had a core group of people that attended all three sessions. This allowed for greater continuity of discussion across the three sessions.

Summary outputs

Barnawartha - Summary of outputs

Visioning

The collective visions identified by the Barnawartha participants emphasised a well-planned and cared for physical environment. Designated shopping and light industrial zones fit alongside clean and well-maintained recreational, community and green spaces creating opportunities for people to live, work and connect within their local community. This physical and built environment helps to create a place that feels welcoming and 'worth stopping' in. The place is loved, and among other things there is a sense of pride, safety, energy and belonging.



Resilience of what?

(What needs to be resilient for Barnawartha to function well?)

Please note, the below summary is not in any priority order

- **Diverse and large number of community groups** – for a relatively small community, Barnawartha has a large number of different community groups. These groups (many working away quietly) provide many services and opportunities for social connection and support.

- **Geographic location** – Barnawartha’s location provides the best of both worlds. It is a small community setting in a rural landscape but just a short commute to larger centres. While the geographic location obviously won’t change, the proximity and dependence on the larger centres of Wodonga and Wangaratta could lead to rapid changes in community character depending on planning, housing and economic opportunities within the town. Maintaining the physical and social character of the community requires deliberate, careful attention from the Shire and community.
- **Community meeting place** - Places for informal and incidental ‘bumping’ are fundamental to maintaining social networks and cohesion and for information to flow within the community. The pub, petrol station, general store/post office are not just crucial services but fundamentally important for maintaining wellbeing and social connection.
- **Caring community** – the many community groups and social networks within the community provide a caring ‘safety net’ through which people connect and feel cared for. Ensuring that safety net continues to function and expands when needed (eg to embrace new residents) is a fundamental part of maintaining and building a resilient community.
- **Property prices** – the availability of larger lifestyle blocks and still relatively affordable housing will continue to attract a range of people to the town. This brings with it an opportunity of new skills, volunteers and economic opportunities.
- **Open spaces** – the green spaces and access to nature are an important part of the character of Barnawartha and provide opportunities for people to spend time in nature, something that has been shown to be as effective as prescribed medication for treating some types of mental health issues.
- **Farming history** – Barnawartha has a rich farming history. Valuing and maintaining this rich cultural and other heritage is an important part of maintaining a sense of place.
- **People** – the diversity, friendliness and sense of fun and humour are crucial to creating a sense of community. Maintaining existing and creating new opportunities and places for people to meet is fundamental to building a strong cohesive community that can face future challenges as they arise.



Resilience to what?

(what are the risks the Barnawartha community needs to be resilient to?)

- **Bushfire risk** – the direct impact of fires on people, businesses and infrastructure was identified as a key risk for the community. The lack of suitable shelter and evacuation points was also identified as a key issue related to fire and other emergencies.
- **Climate change and extreme climate events** – extreme rainfall events, extreme temperature events.
- **Barriers to progress and decreasing community ‘agency’** – agency refers to the community having the drive, authority and opportunity to manage local issues themselves where and when they would like to. For example, the prevention of locally managed fuel reduction burning or small scale maintenance of local public infrastructure by the Shire and other central formal authorities disempowers the community and undermines community willingness to participate in future activities.
- **Train derailment** – with increased train speeds and increased movement of goods by rail, Barnawartha is exposed to the risk of a major derailment or hazardous material incident.

- **Loss, damage and disruption to key infrastructure and services** – the continuous provision of energy, communication, internet and transport infrastructure and services was seen as important to peoples' health and well-being and economic opportunities and viability. Damage to key infrastructure such as bridges, culverts and crossing from flood events was identified as being disruptive, with unnecessarily long repair times. Loss of services can impact directly on some groups more than others such as elderly or young families.
- **Heavy vehicle traffic** - Increasing heavy vehicle traffic through the town represents a direct risk to local residents (particularly elderly and young families/children) and impacts on road infrastructure. There is also increased risk of hazardous material incidents associated with increased heavy vehicle traffic.
- **Loss of community identity** – rapid influx of people moving for cheaper land and housing prices, and the drive in/drive out commuters could undermine community identity and cohesion. Similarly, the lack of community hubs like cafes and local businesses undermines the community's capacity to connect and work together.
- **Decline of volunteers** – having adequate volunteers to support CFA, SES and other critical community-based organisations is fundamental to community preparedness, response and recovery from disasters.
- **Lack of economic opportunities or closure of major employers near the community** - with existing economic opportunities already limited, any loss of local economic opportunities further undermines community viability and forces residents to travel out of the community for work.

Further broader societal changes such as increasing isolation, cost of living pressures, increased trauma from exposure to threats and negative external events undermine household and community resilience in various ways.

Session 1 of 3: community contributions

THE BARNAWARTHA COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO BE RESILIENT TO:

CLIMATE CHANGE	FIRE BUSHFIRE & INFRASTRUCTURE FIRES	BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT/ IMPROVEMENTS <small>IE: COUNCIL PROCESSES</small>	DAMAGED BRIDGES, ROADS & COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE	INCREASED TRUCKS IN TOWN	COST OF LIVING
"JOINING" WODONGA	CLOSURE OF LOGIC BUSINESSES <small>IE: WOOLWORTHS</small>	TOO MANY PEOPLE <small>BALANCE OF GROWTH WITH INFRASTRUCTURE</small>	ISOLATION & DECLINE IS SERVICES	TRAIN ACCIDENTS & CHEMICAL SPILLS FROM TRUCKS/TRAINS	TRAUMA FROM REPEAT EXPOSURE TO THREAT
LACK OF VOLUNTEERS	LACK OF OPPORTUNITY <small>IE: JOBS, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT</small>	ADD YOUR IDEAS:			

Assessing resilience

The resilience assessment was carried out using the 10 dimensions of resilience. Participants were asked to indicate on 'spider diagrams' if they thought the dimension was –

- Okay and just required maintaining (towards the outer green ring)
- Required some work to maintain and strengthen (towards the orange ring)
- Required significant work to build up (towards the central red ring)

Please see pages 24 and 25 below for the individual and averaged responses from the community assessment.

The resilience assessment for Barnawartha identified three areas for significant work to build resilience:

i. Governance and decision making

This dimension was interpreted as '*Trust in governance and decision making*'. There was strident criticism of Indigo Shires investment decision making and communication processes by some participants. There were a number of comments and questions from participants about how decisions are made, how priorities are set and how to influence priorities and decision making. While much of community criticism relates to longer standing broader community priorities and projects, lack of trust in governance and decision making reduces community engagement, undermining the willingness to work closely with the Shire and agencies to address more immediate resilience building work.

ii. Information flows

Poor information flows undermines trust (related to Governance and Decision Making) and reduces engagement and connection. Information flows between the Barnawartha community and the Shire and agencies and within some parts of the community itself was highlighted as an issue that requires attention.

iii. Economic opportunities

The lack of local economic opportunities reduces potential to create income and employment opportunities within the community and limits the chance for informal community interactions (ie at cafes and restaurants). Diverse economic opportunities ensure income and access to local goods and services during emergencies and helps to speed up recovery following emergencies.

Additionally, two other areas requiring work to **maintain and strengthen** were identified:

i. **Emergency services capacity**

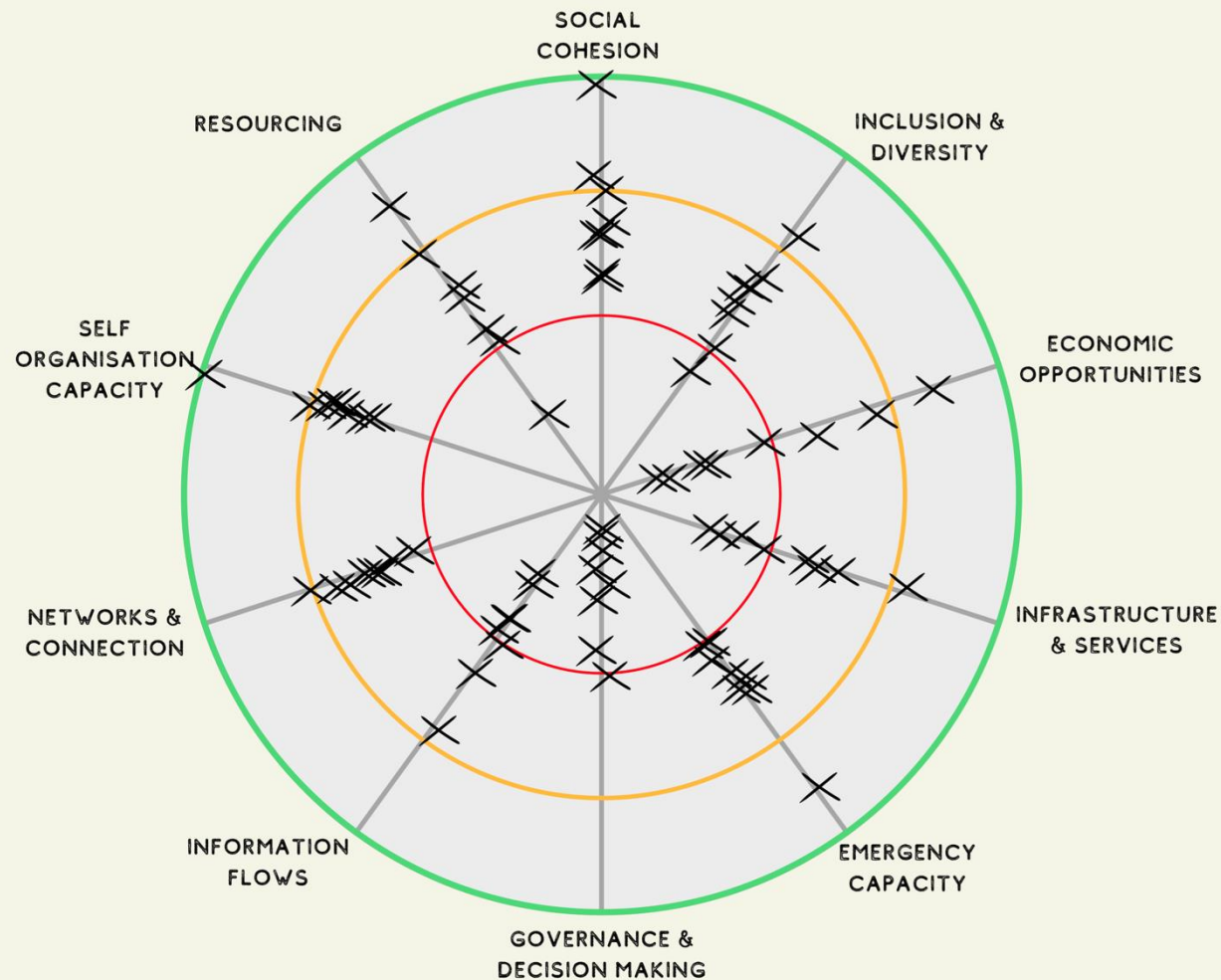
While the high level of CFA experience and equipment was acknowledged, the lack of other emergency capacities within the community was noted. It was also noted that during fires, CFA and other services can be called away from the town. Developing an understanding of emergency and evacuation procedures, what other capacity exists in the community and what are the most significant community scale gaps to be addressed were seen as potentially important actions.

ii. **Infrastructure and services**

Changing demographics including the dual challenge of a rapid influx of young families following covid and with new housing opportunities and also an ageing population in some pockets of the community highlights the need for differing infrastructure and services to meet community needs. Basic infrastructure like footpaths assist elderly residents to remain mobile, accessing local services and maintain social contact and connection. At the other end of the demographic cycle playgrounds and walking tracks allow young families to meet and encourage community interactions.

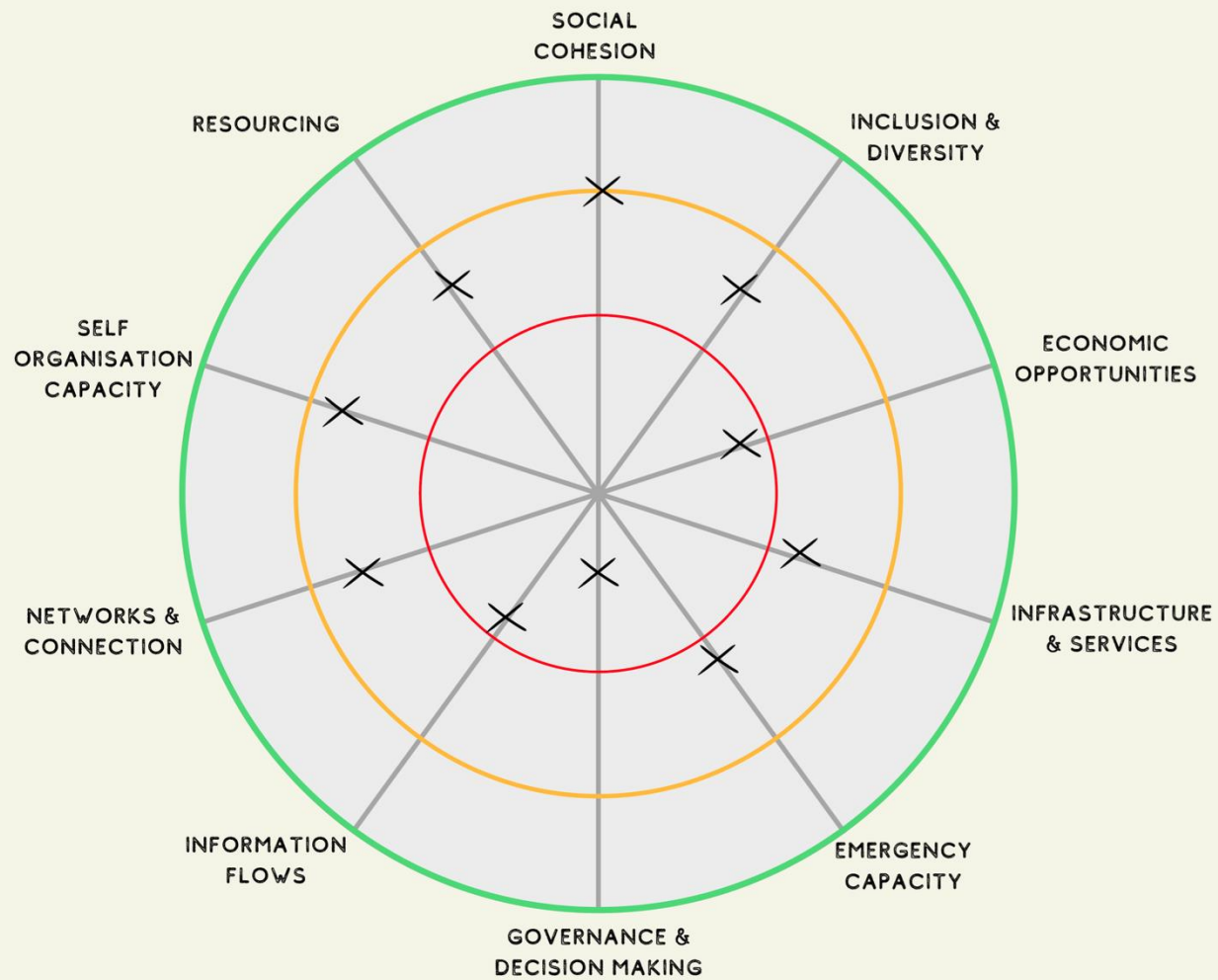
Session 2 community contributions

ASSESSING CURRENT RESILIENCE IN BARNAWARTHA



Session 2 community contributions

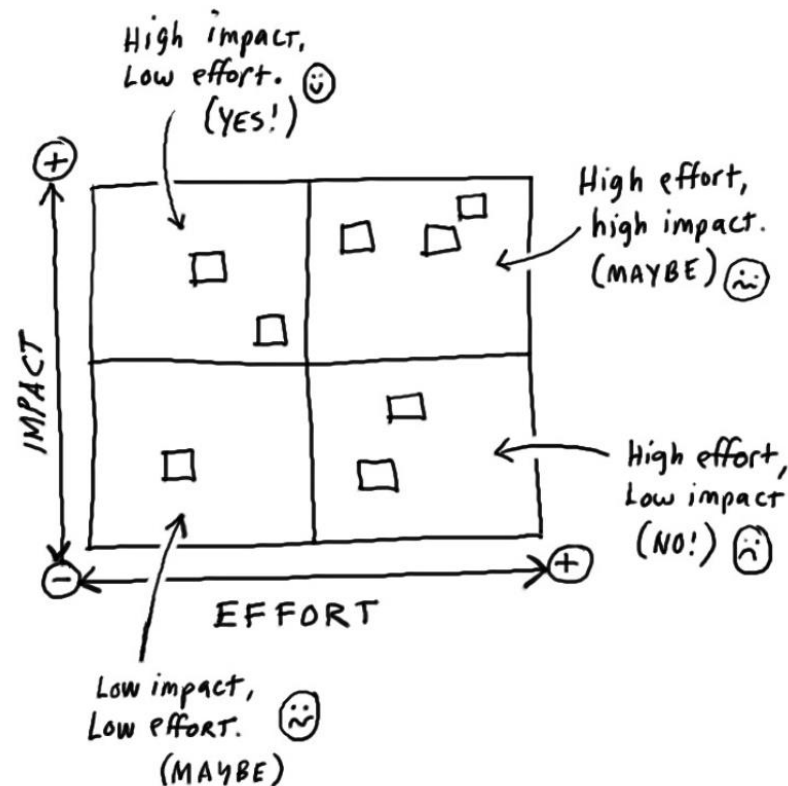
ASSESSING CURRENT RESILIENCE IN BARNAWARTHA



Actions

Participants were asked to identify the 'next most important actions required' to address the resilience challenges identified through the assessment of resilience dimensions at the household, community, and Shire/Community partnership level. **The full list of these actions (below) provides an important seed bank of ideas. These suggested actions can inform multiple Shire and community planning processes.**

Actions identified by the community were then grouped and organised according to the amount of Effort and Impact (pages 27-29).



Important note: The groupings do not reflect a strict prioritisation, it is a way to identify ‘quick win’ actions, that is, things that can be done in the shorter term with minimal resources to create some positive momentum towards more significant resilience building activities.

The more significant resilience challenges (eg for Barnawartha, building trust in ‘Governance and Decision making’ and ‘Economic Opportunities’ dimensions) require longer term dedicated resources and processes to resolve.

These actions are fundamental to strengthening the resilience of households and the community. They will need to be incorporated into the appropriate Shire and other agencies core planning processes to ensure they are addressed.

High Impact / Low Effort actions (Yes!)

14. Emergency Planning – household and community level emergency planning

While CFA undertake excellent annual awareness sessions there was overall agreement that more general household and community ‘emergency’ training would be beneficial. Indigo Shire is in the process of developing household and community focused emergency awareness material and processes. Stanley and Barnawartha will be the first communities targeted for these activities.

Emergency warning awareness raising

Related to emergency planning, there were a number of issues raised around awareness of emergency warning and evacuation points.

15. Community groups needs documented and communicated to Council

Community groups are crucial to the functioning of any small community. Understanding their needs and the services they offer will help to clarify priorities for support and identify skills, resources and services that may not be well known to other parts of the community. An emphasis on emergency preparedness as part of the information gathering process will better help to inform both the Shire and the community regarding the needs and capacities of groups during emergencies.

16. Community mapping

There is currently relatively limited understanding about the communities basic demographics and needs, including the number of elderly, people with special needs and other vulnerable people. Similarly, an understanding of those with limited access to technology (to receive emergency warnings) may help to target these people for support to help them prepare for emergencies and disaster response.

17. Neighbour connect

Neighbour Connect could be a series of activities to help households to connect and have conversations with neighbours about emergency planning and looking after each other. The suggested activities were to encourage households to connect and host small conversations and events to strengthen community connection and help new residents to learn about the emergency risks. The initial activities might involve producing post cards to encourage households to have conversations and an information sheet to support local neighbourhood conversations. The Indigo Shire's emergency planning initiatives may provide the information and the impetus for this action.

18. Support and buy local

Actions (potentially linked to the community directory process) to raise awareness of local services and encourage people to buy local and support local services where possible.

19. Community events/pop up spaces/farmers/craft market – (moderate effort, moderate benefit)

With limited commercial spaces available, creating opportunities for local economic opportunities, pop up commercial spaces (to test the market and allow revolving and mobile retailers etc) not only helps to generate local economic activity but creates opportunities for different types of community interactions and strengthens community connection.

High Impact/High Effort (How?)

20. Volunteer register

A register to link potential volunteers with needs/tasks to create opportunities for more short term 'spontaneous' volunteering rather than the more traditional process of joining a group and participating over longer time frames.

Linked to a register and community group mapping a volunteer 'come and try' day or community group expo might help new residents or people looking to volunteer with an opportunity to connect.

21. Community Group support

Support for training, governance, administration, skills and funding for community groups is required for some groups. There are funding sources for community group support and training, but a coordinated 'whole of Barny' approach will reduce the burden on individual groups organising their own funding and support.

22. Community Emergency Planning and Awareness

Coupled with households and ensuring it complements the existing CFA information and awareness sessions, there is scope for community emergency planning sessions to strengthen the wider communities knowledge of emergency procedures including the role of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning and protocols.

23. Community emergency scenario event

The chance for the community to come together to work through an emergency scenario will highlight the current local strengths and gaps in community level awareness and connections.

24. Heritage Centre

The development of a heritage centre, while a longer term process, provides an opportunity for the community to achieve specific aspects of its longer term vision of maintaining a connection with its farming heritage, creating specific infrastructure and social and economic opportunities. The community is currently self organising the planning process and requires clear support and assistance from the Shire to continue to drive this project forward.

25. Critical infrastructure review and repair

Critical infrastructure underpins any community. Understanding the current status of infrastructure, maintenance/repair of current critical infrastructure and understanding of future needs is fundamental to the social, economic and environmental health and wellbeing of the community. An audit of current and future critical infrastructure provides a basis for future investment.

26. Business Hub and community co-working space

Creation of a business hub and community co-working space will help to strengthen economic opportunities and support local businesses and may reduce the need for some people to travel out of the community daily.

27. Mens Shed

The benefits of mens' and womens 'sheds in providing social connection are well documented. Creating a dedicated space for men and women to connect, to learn new skills and work collectively is a fundamental part of strengthening communities.

Session 2 community contributions

PRACTICAL ACTIONS TO BUILD OR STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE IN BARNAWARTHA

DIMENSION	HOUSEHOLD	COMMUNITY	COMMUNITY & SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
SOCIAL COHESION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite neighbours to meet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community events & street parties• Better promotion of community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• support community events• Planning that allows for additional housing on properties• Shire needs to listen
INCLUSION & DIVERSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chat with neighbours & share a meal• Be kind, invite friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build understanding of community (ie age, living alone, dementia etc)• Multicultural gatherings• Open day for community groups• Invite people to attend events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host activities in Barnawartha• Provide a social profile so we know who lives in our community

Session 2 community contributions

PRACTICAL ACTIONS TO BUILD OR STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE IN BARNAWARTHA

DIMENSION	HOUSEHOLD	COMMUNITY	COMMUNITY & SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop up short term businesses to test concepts • Craft/Farmers Market • Business dinners • Chamber of commerce • Website that promotes local businesses/directory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent free community spaces to test concepts • Rezoned business areas • Structure plan with industrial zoning • Plans to manage transport & logistics in township • Council procure from locals
INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer for community projects • Maintain private assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community directory for all Barnawartha clubs & groups • Organise community service projects ie Clean up Aust Day • Maintain & develop local facilities • Groups to feedback to council re needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop up services ie MCHN • Heritage centre, men's shed, business hub, community rooms • Council to plan collaboratively with community • Support investment in development of sporting & country assets

DIMENSION	HOUSEHOLD	COMMUNITY	COMMUNITY & SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
EMERGENCY CAPACITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your neighbours & who might need help • Be aware & prepared • Take action & assist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage neighbours to be vigilant • Education on how information is communicated • Neighbourhood watch • Support local CFA & Emergency Services • Develop community plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice emergency • Repair bridges/roads/creeks faster • Assist with emergency planning • Help groups find & secure funding
GOVERNANCE & DECISION MAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get involved, attend meetings • Commit to a project, organise and contribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more tolerant & understanding of restricted decisions • Present a united front, come together and stand together • Maintain our strong community governance • Short, sharp projects to build succes. Inclusive & fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate reasons for decisions and provide a contact to discuss • Ongoing & regular (quarterly) meetings • Provide more detail on website about processes & requirements • Listen & take positive steps with quick wins • Council to support volunteer groups

DIMENSION	HOUSEHOLD	COMMUNITY	COMMUNITY & SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
INFORMATION FLOWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to family & friends • Choose 3 areas of interest, focus & get informed on those 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One stop area for group information, community discussions & input • Find a way to communicate with community • Take charge, ask questions & invite "those in the know" to answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate via mail AND electronic means • Regular forums (residents, families, aged, business) • Audit communication platforms for each community & use them
NETWORKS & CONNECTION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community groups should be transparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Barny to establish networks & maintain existing ones
SELF ORGANISATION CAPACITY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on existing capacity • Encourage volunteering • Invite people to join organisations • Groups to work together 	
RESOURCING		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise funds & in kind support • Delegate members of the community to help in small ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to value the skills and expertise of local people & organisations

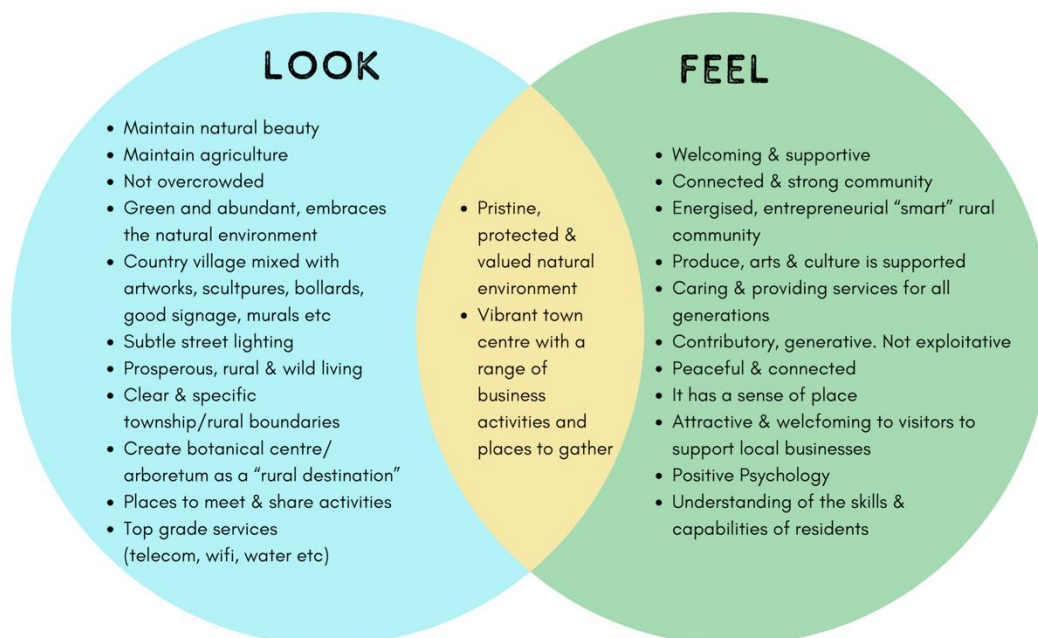
Stanley - Summary of outputs

Visioning

- The collective visions for Stanley have a strong emphasis on the combined *landscape* and *community* character. Participants envisage careful progress towards a small but vibrant village centre and surrounding community, maintaining the unique character and feel of the community and the natural and production landscapes surrounding the village.

Session 1 community contributions

WHAT DO YOU WANT STANLEY TO LOOK AND FEEL LIKE IN THE FUTURE?



Resilience of what?

(what are we trying to make resilient?)

- The existing emergency capacity and preparedness is essential to maintain for future resilience. The Stanley community, including the local CFA, has extensive experience from previous events. Recognising this experience and local knowledge and supporting and strengthening this existing capacity is critical.
- Services, communication and community infrastructure are critical to the resilience of Stanley, during both emergency and non-emergency periods. Maintaining and improving existing services and communication infrastructure is fundamental to resilience in times of crisis.
- Community infrastructure, places for community to come together, to hold events and to ‘bump’ into one another strengthens social connections and builds trust. It

allows for sharing of knowledge and allows different sub groupings (eg new residents, online workers, young families, older generations) within the community to connect when they otherwise may not overlap much during day-to-day living.

- Understanding who is vulnerable in the community and why is an important resilience building strategy. New residents, residents with special needs, those that have limited access to information technology or those visiting may be less aware of risks or be less prepared for emergencies than those with more experience, more resources, stronger social and information networks etc.

Session 1 community contributions

THE STANLEY COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO ENSURE THE RESILIENCE OF:



Resilience to what?

(what are the risks the Stanley community should prepare for?)

- Bushfire - Stanley is geographically vulnerable to bushfire, with extensive areas of forests in the surrounding landscape, limited refuge areas and susceptible evacuation routes.
- Extreme rainfall, wind and storms - that impact on infrastructure and block access can lead to isolation or social and economic impacts.
- Mass resource extraction – any large scale resource extraction industry has potential to severely disrupt ecosystems, hydrological systems and the character of the landscape and community.
- Water quantity and quality - Stanley is vulnerable to loss and interruption to water supply for domestic, emergency and economic use.
- Less common but nevertheless serious risks such as pandemics, biosecurity threats and rapid technological change such as the role of artificial intelligence (AI) have potential to severely impact the Stanley community.
- Longer term issues that will reduce the community's capacity to organise and respond to emergencies including 'brain drain' and ageing demographics.

Session 1 community contributions

THE STANLEY COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO BE RESILIENT TO:

FIRE

EXTREME
RAINFALL &
WATER
CONTAMINATION

BIO SECURITY
RISKS

PANDEMICS

THE IMPACTS
OF A.I.

BRAIN DRAIN
(PEOPLE LEAVING DUE
TO LACK OF
INFASURCTURE &
RESOURCES)

MASS RESOURCE
EXTRACTION

(IE GOLD MINING)

AGING
COMMUNITY

(ACCESS TO HEALTH
CARE & TRANSPORT)

Assessing resilience

The resilience assessment was carried out using the 10 dimensions of resilience. Participants were asked to indicate on 'spider diagrams' if they thought the dimension was –

- Okay and just required maintaining (towards the outer green ring)
- Required some work to maintain and strengthen (towards the orange ring)
- Required significant work to build up (towards the central red ring)

The resilience assessment for Stanley identified three areas for focus:

I. Governance and Decision making

There was strident criticism from a number of community members across the three sessions around Indigo Shire decision making. Community members questioned how decisions are made around council planning, priorities and investment in infrastructure and services, maintenance and other council responsibilities. There was also criticism and confusion around land tenure and management responsibilities regarding fire risk, fuel reduction, weeds etc. Additionally, there was discussion around how the Stanley community itself can work effectively together to prioritise community actions and lobby the Shire and other agencies.

The lack of trust between parts of the community and the Shire and between groups within the community itself undermines capacity to work together to resolve other issues central to the resilience of the Stanley community.

II. Infrastructure and Services

Declining infrastructure and services undermines household and community resilience in multiple ways. The fragile energy supply and poor mobile coverage impacts day-to-day life, but is also a major concern for community members during emergencies. The increasing reliance by emergency services on using mobile and internet warnings and information updates means that Stanley residents are particularly vulnerable during power and mobile outages.

III. Economic opportunities

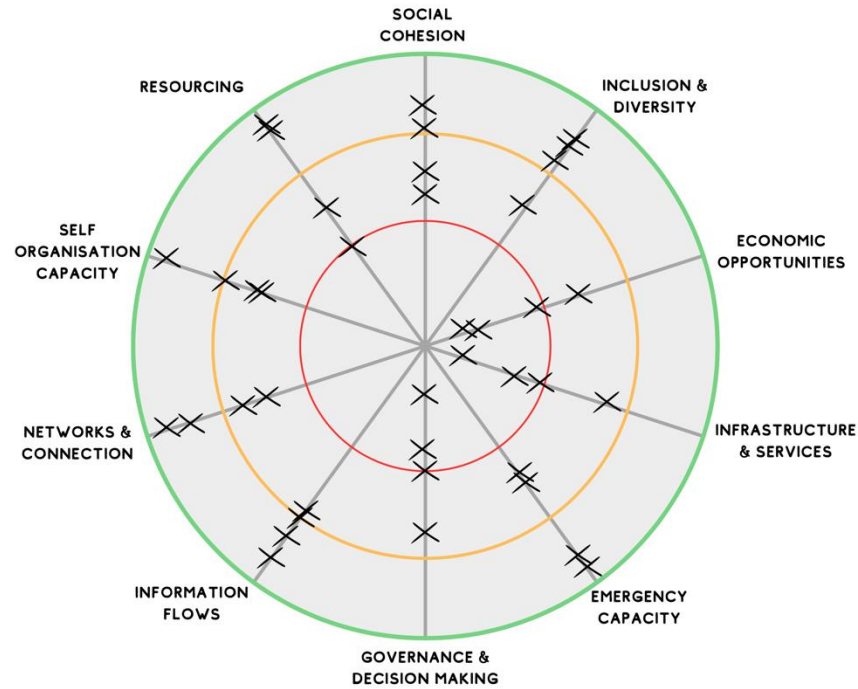
Appropriate economic development allows people to live and work locally, to diversify income and to be able to shop locally for essential items. Development of appropriate local economic opportunities such as cafes, while currently constrained by the planning overlays, also creates further opportunities to strengthen social connection, communication and networks.

Important note:

Issues around planning, specifically planning overlays and town planning/housing planning were raised extensively during consultation with the Stanley community. Clearly there is a link between some of the resilience dimensions and planning issues. Growth management and economic development opportunities for Stanley will be explored through the forthcoming 2024 Housing Review process, with the resilience assessment providing important context for that review process.

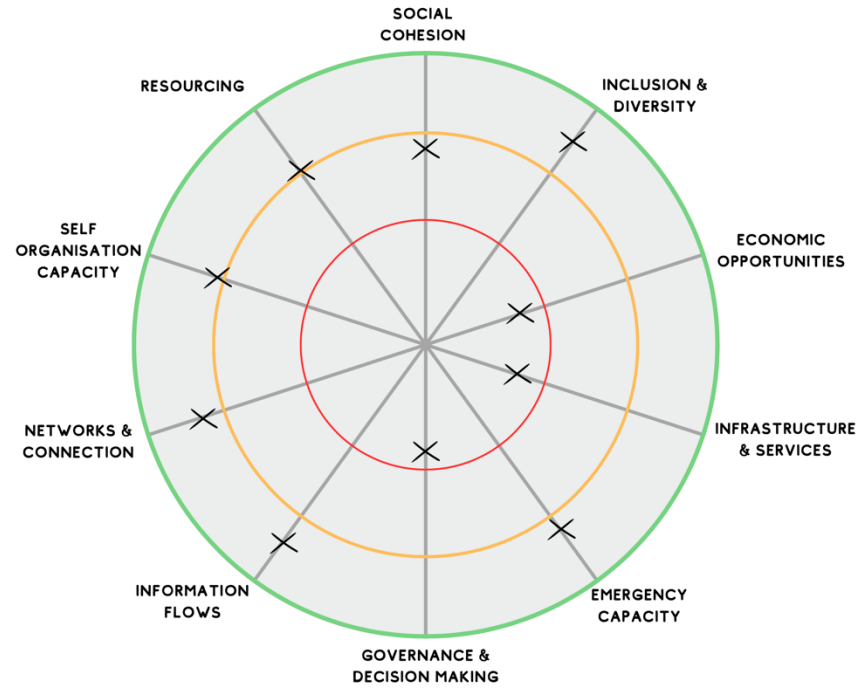
Session 2 community contributions

ASSESSING CURRENT RESILIENCE IN STANLEY



Session 2 community contributions

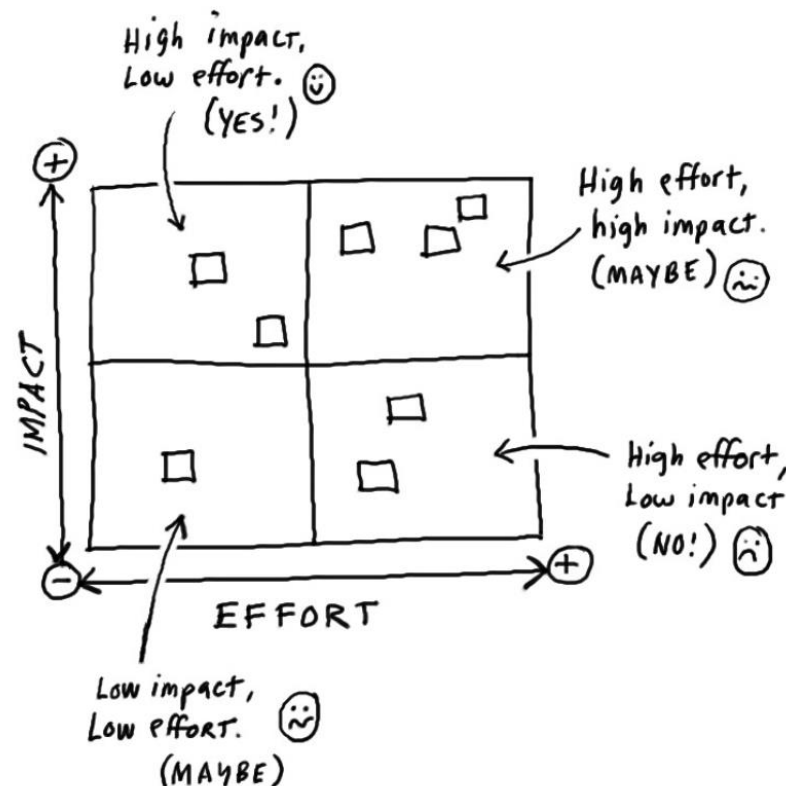
ASSESSING CURRENT RESILIENCE IN STANLEY



Actions

Participants were asked to identify the 'next most important actions required' to address the resilience challenges identified through the assessment of resilience dimensions at the household, community, and Shire/Community partnership level. **The full list of these actions (below) provide an important seed bank of ideas. These suggested actions can inform multiple Shire and community planning processes.**

Actions identified by the community were then grouped and organised according to the amount of Effort and Impact (pages 43-44).



Important note:

The groupings do not reflect a strict prioritisation, it is a way to identify 'quick win' actions, that is, things that can be done in the shorter term with minimal resources to create some positive momentum towards more significant resilience building activities.

The more significant resilience challenges (eg for Stanley, 'Infrastructure and Services' and 'Economic Opportunities' dimensions) require major longer term dedicated resources and processes to resolve. **These actions are fundamental to strengthening the resilience of households and the community. They will need to be incorporated into the appropriate Shire and other agencies core planning processes to ensure they are addressed.**

High Impact / Low Effort actions (Yes!)

8. Emergency Planning – household and community level emergency planning

While CFA undertake annual community awareness sessions there was overall agreement that more general 'emergency' training would be beneficial. Indigo Shire is in the process of developing household and community focused emergency awareness material and processes. Stanley and Barnawartha will be the first communities targeted for these activities.

9. Household Connect

Household Connect is a series of activities to help households to connect and have conversations about emergency planning and looking after each other. The suggested activities were to encourage households to connect and host small conversations and events to strengthen community connection and help new residents to learn about the emergency risks. The initial activities might involve producing post cards to encourage households to have conversations and an information sheet to support local neighbourhood conversations.

High Impact/High Effort (How?)

1. Shire Connect – shire information sessions

Participants felt that a regular opportunity for residents to have direct contact with Shire staff would improve the relationship between residents and the Shire. Building trust and transparency in the Shire's decision making processes, improving the understanding of local issues and sharing information is critical to progressing some of the longer term challenges the Stanley community faces with regards to planning and development.

2. Community Emergency Planning and Awareness

Coupled with households and ensuring it complements the existing CFA information and awareness sessions, there is scope for community emergency planning sessions to strengthen the wider communities knowledge of emergency procedures including the role of Municipal Emergency Management Planning and protocols and the role of other important land managers in the Stanley landscape.

3. Toy Library/Play group

With a lot of young families moving to Stanley since the pandemic, there is a need to create local support and connection opportunities for young parents and young children. A toy library/play group that operates from the community hall or the school site may provide an important opportunity to increase community cohesion and local networks and share information. There are currently grants available for establishing toy libraries through the Dept. Families, Fairness and Housing.

4. Community Connect

A number of previously regular community events and gatherings have not occurred since the pandemic. The decline of community events and volunteering is not unique to the Stanley community, it is a wider trend playing out across all communities. This action

would target the running of 3-4 small 'themed' community events to draw the community back together and provide opportunities for connecting, sharing information and generating support for community actions.

5. Childcare capacity

There is currently limited opportunity for childcare within Stanley. This limits household capacity to work and to participate in community activities. Some focus on developing local childcare services would increase connection, household and community capacity.

6. Infrastructure and energy security planning

As highlighted by most participants, the vulnerability of communication, energy and other infrastructure undermines household and community resilience in multiple ways. Focused planning on improving the security of energy and services and infrastructure is fundamental to the development of a resilient future for Stanley.

7. Community Centre

The Stanley community currently relies heavily of the community run post office and volunteer networks to coordinate community activities. The community also lacks a geographic and 'metaphoric' centre. A community centre (operating from existing community infrastructure) could potentially create a community hub around which social connections, information, 'bumping' opportunities and community activities could revolve. There are currently no funding opportunities for community centre establishment. A partnership relationship with adjacent community centres may be a viable option in the short term.

Low impact/Low effort

8. Fire bunker info session

Participants highlighted the interest and risks associated with fire bunkers. An information session every 2-3 years may help to provide residents with necessary information to make an informed personal choice regarding fire bunkers.

Session 2 community contributions

PRACTICAL ACTIONS TO BUILD OR STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE IN STANLEY

DIMENSION	HOUSEHOLD	COMMUNITY	COMMUNITY & SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
SOCIAL COHESION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive dinners • Visit each other • Get involved/volunteer • Hold activities in own home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social gatherings at public facilities • Creative community activities • Activities for 'new/young' and 'old' to connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare centre • Toy library • Community Centre • Community businesses to service local community (not tourism)
INCLUSION & DIVERSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House concerts • Be welcoming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivals & cultural events • Support minority groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible facilities • Assist community to support diversity through planning and social support
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use & promote local businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rezone as township to allow commercial possibilities & employment

DIMENSION	HOUSEHOLD	COMMUNITY	COMMUNITY & SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate shared power options Put pressure on shire/state/federal govt & utility providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support with water supply & power consistency Advocate to infrastructure providers to improve roads, sewerage, power, comms Identify & support funding applications Sewerage treatment facility
EMERGENCY CAPACITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radios Solar batteries Volunteer at the CFA Have a fire plan Learn about emergency management Install fire bunker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training Support/subsidise bunkers
GOVERNANCE & DECISION MAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage involvement, visit, talk & understand each other Listen to regional needs – we are ‘special’ Build trust Provide clarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster understanding of specific needs of Stanley Programs to inform & educate Review policies for consistency

Session 2 community contributions

PRACTICAL ACTIONS TO BUILD OR STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE IN STANLEY

DIMENSION	HOUSEHOLD	COMMUNITY	COMMUNITY & SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
INFORMATION FLOWS			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular public information/feedback sessions
NETWORKS & CONNECTION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the needs of others (visitation roster?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate mobile network coverage
SELF ORGANISATION CAPACITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up emergency kit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better networking 	
RESOURCING			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of facilities Support grant applications