

# Resilience outcomes for the planning system

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December 2021



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Title: Resilience outcomes for the planning system

First published: December 2021

This report was commissioned by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and prepared by Meridian Urban.

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## Background

**The NSW Government is seeking to create greater resilience in our communities through the planning system. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has undertaken this project to develop a series of outcomes to promote resilience in the land use planning system.**

Episodic shocks cause disruptions that can be both expensive and impactful on wellbeing and mental health. In 2017 the simulated economic cost of natural disasters in NSW was calculated to be \$3.6bn for that year (Deloitte Access Economics, 2017). This cost is projected to significantly increase by 2050, particularly due to climate change, the increasing quantity and severity of significant weather events, and the continued vulnerability of our settlements to these events.

Chronic stresses can be equally damaging to communities. Housing affordability, transport congestion and chronic illness impact people's daily lives. Increased resilience of communities mitigates the negative human impacts and economic costs of these chronic stresses and acute shocks.

The concept of resilience touches on many areas of agency responsibility and professional practice in the built environment - including natural hazard risk management, emergency management, climate change and adaptation, human health and wellbeing, and environmental management. It is a dynamic and systems-based approach to thinking about how we strive towards sustainable development.

The planning system has an important role to play in supporting the advancement of more resilient places and communities. Work by the department and other agencies in recent years has put the planning system on a pathway of continuous improvement. Recent changes to the system to account for bush fire recovery and the COVID-19 pandemic have also underscored the important role the planning system plays in supporting resilient outcomes for people and place across NSW.

**The planning system needs to ensure that resilience and support for rebuilding/recovery are embedded at all levels, including in the legislation, strategic planning, precinct planning, and statutory planning provisions.**

# What is resilience

Resilience is a characteristic of a system that is striving towards sustainability, even when stresses and shocks might occur. In the planning context it is a foundational characteristic of the administrative system that supports the creation of sustainable people, places and communities.

The planning system, by its nature, is about making decisions that balance and trade-off the various elements related to the people, the culture, the economy, the natural environment and the built environment. Resilience is about understanding how these various elements all work together in anticipating, addressing, recovering and transforming from stresses and shocks **in place** (Figure 1).

**Planning of place** provides the platform for the different government sectors and governance systems with a role in building resilient settlements, industry, and the community, to come together to understand the values, vulnerabilities and capabilities of that place. Social, cultural, economic, environment and built interests can be balanced, co-ordinated and co-located to meet local needs and values.

Building resilience also falls across multiple sectors and governance systems, including planning and design, climate change, natural hazards, infrastructure, emergency management, economic development, health and education and the natural environment and heritage. Whilst the planning sector plays a fundamental role in building resilient places and communities, it also needs to consider its interconnections with other sectors such as embedding emergency management considerations upfront (i.e. evacuation planning) as part of decision-making processes.



**Figure 1**  
Basic elements of understanding resilience

# Defining resilience

The term 'resilience' means different things to different people with different experiences and from different sectors (i.e. climate change, natural hazards, infrastructure, emergency management, economic development, health and education and environment etc.).

**For example:**



**Disaster resilience** can encompass many areas related to preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disaster events and focuses on aspects such as improved hazard and risk data, infrastructure betterment, structural mitigation, community preparedness, and disaster management.



**Economic resilience** may include ensuring key sectors of local economies can maintain local employment and continue to deliver goods and services to support the local population during and after a stress or shock.



**Social resilience** may include protecting wellbeing, livelihoods and social fabric, community values and identity, which are at the very heart of why people choose to live, work and play where they do.



**Environmental resilience** may include supporting the ability of the environment to resist shocks and stresses and recover quickly from events.



## **The United Nations General Assembly defines resilience as:**

The ability of a system, community or society that is exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.



## **The Resilient Cities Network defines resilience as:**

Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

**Resilience for the planning system is therefore about identifying a set of values (through resilience outcomes), tailored to the role that the planning system plays in building resilient people, places and communities as part of the core concept of sustainability.**

# Key chronic stresses and episodic shocks

Identifying resilience to what is just as important as defining resilience itself, as the planning system can only do so much to address the resilience of places or communities.

**Chronic stresses are slow moving disasters or challenges that weaken the fabric of a community on a day-to-day basis or a cyclical basis, such as:**

- climate change
- homelessness and lack of affordable housing
- transport congestion
- high unemployment
- economic downturn
- water shortages and security
- drought
- pandemic

**Episodic shocks are sudden, short-term events that threaten a community. Priority episodic shocks for NSW can include:**

- heatwaves
- bush fires
- floods
- coastal hazards
- East Coast lows
- storms
- landslides
- earthquakes
- infrastructure failure
- infectious disease outbreaks
- biosecurity
- terror attacks





















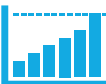



# Resilience outcomes

Seven resilience outcomes for the planning system have been identified, as shown in Table 1.

As a key element of sustainability, resilience relates to and supports the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Several SDGs have a connection to resilience building through the planning system, identified below. The resilience outcomes developed through this project have been mapped to these SDGs to show a policy alignment between the global goals, and the manner in which resilience is sought to be embedded in the NSW planning system.

**Table 1**

Resilience outcomes for the planning system linked to UNSDGs

Resilience Outcomes	Applicable SDGs
<p><b>Outcome 1</b></p>  <p>Resilience is a foundational characteristic of sustainable places and communities</p>	<p><b>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</b></p> 
<p><b>Outcome 2</b></p>  <p>Risk is identified and addressed for sustainable and adaptable places and communities</p>	<p><b>13 CLIMATE ACTION</b></p> 
<p><b>Outcome 3</b></p>  <p>Governance and accountable decisions are improved for the long-term benefits of the community and the place</p>	<p><b>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</b> <b>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</b></p>  
<p><b>Outcome 4</b></p>  <p>Resilience is embedded into the regulatory framework</p>	<p><b>13 CLIMATE ACTION</b></p> 
<p><b>Outcome 5</b></p>  <p>Settlement planning is informed by resilient social, cultural, economic, environment and built outcomes</p>	<p><b>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</b> <b>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b> <b>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</b> <b>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</b> <b>13 CLIMATE ACTION</b> <b>15 LIFE ON LAND</b></p>      
<p><b>Outcome 6</b></p>  <p>Resilience is advanced through locally led and place-based approaches for shared responsibility</p>	<p><b>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</b></p> 
<p><b>Outcome 7</b></p>  <p>Recovery, adaptation and transition pathways are business as usual</p>	<p><b>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</b> <b>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b> <b>13 CLIMATE ACTION</b></p>   





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