



Community Engagement for Disaster Risk Reduction

Growing community resilience to current and future risk through research and conversations.

CEDRR Preliminary Participant Summary (February 2025)

Thank you for participating in our Community Engagement for Disaster Risk Reduction project (CEDRR) between 2022-2024. We have now completed this phase of data collection and are pleased to share a preliminary summary of the results.

What did we accomplish with your community?

Through building mutually beneficial relationships with communities across Melbourne, our research project delivered: better understanding of public risk perceptions and experiences; supported the mitigation of household flood risk; and contributed directly to community resilience through community engagement. In addition to the direct benefits to participants, we have also built one of the largest community engagement datasets in Australia. This dataset was developed by:

- **Inviting over 10,000 flood prone households** across our Darebin, Kingston, and community group case studies to participate.
- **Discussing** the research with **over 3,000 households**.
- **Interviewing over 1,000 people** in our initial engagements and **over 650 people** in our follow-up engagements.
- **Donating over \$30,000** to a diverse range of community groups and participants.

Thanks to all our partner community groups who are building community resilience. **We donated:** \$9650 for twelve community gardens and urban food relief organisations; \$3475 for Foodbank Victoria; \$3,330 for the Darebin Women's Sports Club; \$1850 for CERES; and \$1775 for Kids First Australia; among many others. That's over 6,660 meals to families in need; vital support for at-risk youth; new equipment for women in sport; and essential tools and training for community garden volunteers.



"This year this money helped us keep the lights on. The community grants we did win weren't enough to keep things going, so this money was extremely helpful."
(Community Garden Representative, 2024)

"You're offering, you know, a little bit of money to support people in their community groups. I think that's fantastic. Makes you really want to get involved with a survey like this." (Participant #015-02002-02236)

What impact did the research have?

Overall, we found that engaging community members in our research was an enjoyable and two-way learning exercise that supported risk reduction at both the household and community scale. From our follow-up interviews, we found that:

- 98% enjoyed participating in CEDRR.
- 64% reported that participation increased their flood risk awareness.
- 63% reported changed intentions to reduce risk.
- 48% took action to reduce risk.

"It was informative, I didn't realise that we lived in a flood prone patch. It was stimulating in that it made me think about the implications of that. And it provoked some action on my part, I just bought a specific first aid kit... I mentioned it to a couple of people, and I got flood stories, from the local area." (Participant #008-010061-01644)

"I think I'm more aware of what risks there are, and I guess just knowing what to do in those situations. And also what kind of resources I need to gather for myself." (Participant #008-01039-01831).

What are people in your community doing to reduce their flood risk?

While many participants reported that CEDRR was an opportunity for reflection and empowerment, others indicated that they were not sure what actions they could be taking to reduce flood risk.

"I wouldn't know what to do differently.. if anything, it'd just be helpful having more information about actions or what could be done." (Participant #008-01503-01751)

Use **Table 1** to see what people in your community are doing to reduce household flood risk, how these actions correlate to Melbourne Water's [Flood Resilience Guide](#), and take action yourself via the links.

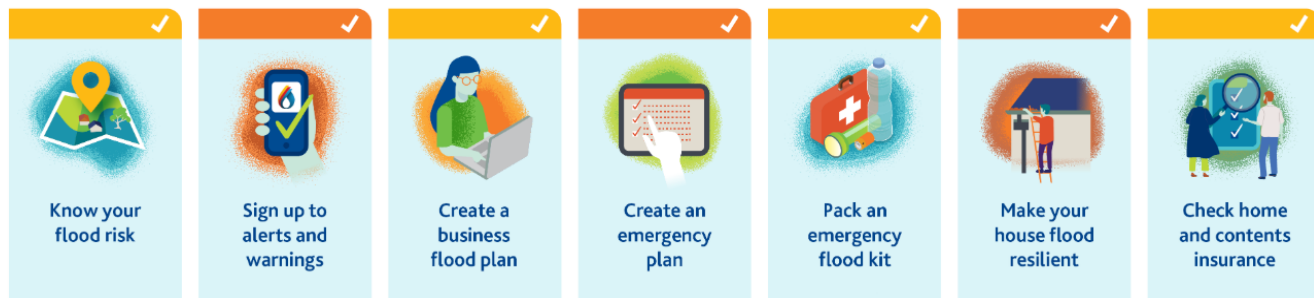


TABLE 1: Community Flood Risk Reduction Actions

Participant Actions	Darebin Community Examples	Kingston Community Examples	MW Flood Resilience Guide Suggestions
Checked flood maps for current and future properties	"I was just in the process of purchasing a property that was potentially in a flood risk zone. So just ensuring that I'm sort of checking off those things too." (Participant #008-00939-01729)	"I got on and I checked the topographical map for my area, which I didn't even realise I could access." (Participant #004-00342-00909)	Know Your Flood Risk: Check your local flood risk by using the VICSES local flood guides.
Downloaded emergency apps and check weather forecasts	"Just having that emergency app on my phone... making sure I'm just aware of weather forecasts and local news ahead of travel." (Participant #008-01232-01711)	"Becoming more aware of what the flood zones are around us... watching the weather." (Participant #004-00506-01034)	Sign Up to Alerts and Warnings: Download the VicEmergency App and monitor weather at the Bureau of Meteorology website .
Developed and updated emergency plans	"I've reconsidered my kind of emergency strategy in my house." (Participant #008-01317-01718)	"I got a new Australian Red Cross Rediplan for an emergency." (Participant #004-00373-00940)	Create Business and/or Household Emergency Plans: Use the Australian Red Cross 'Get Prepared' app and Rediplan.

Packed or updated emergency and first aid kits	"I refreshed my go-bag... just made sure it's all up to date and all of my documentation is altogether in a nice uniform spot." (Participant #008-01526-01815)	"I also looked into just getting a basic kind of first aid kit and emergency kit for the house as well." (Participant #004-00611-01273)	Pack Emergency and First Aid Kits: Find a checklist of what to pack from the VICSES website .
Cleared drains and gutters.	"If I see stuff in the gutters outside our place, I make sure they're cleared. Even at our next-door neighbours place." (Participant #008-01422-01742)	"Yes, I cleaned out the gutters - in case of flooding." (Participant #004-00358-00942)	Make Your House Flood Resilient: Did you know that regularly clearing drains and gutters are one of the easiest ways to mitigate household flood risk? Learn more .
Sealed leaks and waterproofed valuables	"The plumber came this spring because I've had water coming in... They had a crawl up on top of the roofing... seal things, so the water does not come in." (Participant #008-00863-01638)	"I actively looked for waterproofing storage containers for things like our passport." (Participant #004-00373-00940)	Make Your House Flood Resilient - Dry proofing: Seal the exterior of your house to prevent water from entering. Learn more .
Elevated floors or items above flood levels	"We're doing work to our house, and we got the floor level increased, but above the suggestion of Melbourne Water." (Participant #008-01410-01741)	"So, we've sort of made sure that things in the garage are now up off the floor, or floor level." (Participant #004-00226-00857)	Make Your House Flood Resilient - Elevation: Raise the level of the house or its services above the projected flood level. Learn more .
Installed drainage or removed flood-prone infrastructure	"Installing stormwater drainage, which doesn't exist at our current house." (Participant #008-01056-01700)	"We got rid of a pond that had filled up with water." (Participant #004-00571-01292)	Make Your House Flood Resilient - Absorption: Increase permeable surfaces on your property. Learn more .
Talked to insurers and reviewed insurance fine print	"We double checked it, and our insurance would have doubled, but we wouldn't have been covered for the kind of flood that we're actually at risk for." (Participant #008-01311-01716)	"I increased my house insurance, contents, and the building. And so, if I have to rebuild or whatever, I'm covered for that." (Participant #004-00647-01305)	Check Insurance: Check that your insurance covers all types of flooding. Ask your insurer if they are open to reducing premiums if flood resilient retrofitting is done.

Spillover and Community Connection

For many participants, community connection is important for building community resilience. Our follow-up interviews found that impacts 'spilled over' into wider networks and communities through conversation and action.

- 76% of participants spoke to other people about CEDRR and/or the risk topics it raised.
- On average, participants discussed the engagement with three others, typically from their households, family, friends, neighbours and/or community groups.
- Collective actions included cleaning out neighbouring gutters and drains and setting up communication channels with neighbours or local communities.

"Since I spoke to your colleague last time, is that I'm part of a WhatsApp group for the street. So, we're kind of here for each other, all the neighbours, helping each other out. I think that's helpful, you know, that if something happened, we can all kind of work to together to try and sort of deal with it." (011-01593-02015)

"I have advised my daughter with choosing a place to rent... I also had conversations recently about the flood risk around my community." (015-01961-02196).

Wider Risk Reduction Concerns and Actions

Our methodology also aimed to understand what other risks are important to you and why. Use **Table 2** to see the wider range of risks that your community is concerned about, and what actions people are taking to reduce these risks.

TABLE 2: Wider Community Risk Reduction Actions

Risks	Kingston Community Examples	Darebin Community Examples
Security	"Securing the property... security lights, got one of the cameras on the front door... upgraded some of the locks." (004-00763-01340)	"Other things around the house, just like, fixing some wiring I had, some switches, lights, just like security sort of things." (008-01562-01672)
Fire Safety	"I updated my fire extinguisher... And I bought - I made sure that I had a fire blanket." (004-00428-01046)	"I did think about, sort of safety a bit. And checked the smoke alarm. And got a fire blanket." (008-01264-01666)
Health & Safety	"Since then, I've had handrails fitted to the house." (003-00322-01082)	"I'm probably more conscious of climbing ladders... Probably more personal safety measures, you know." (007-01105-01750)
Energy & Climate	"We're going to get a solar stuff on the roof so that even if the power goes out, we should be a place that will still have power, we can still run things." (004-00601-01337)	"We have solar panels. We've also got an induction cooker now... we are trying to get off gas as much as we can. And we've got an electric vehicle. And we charge that off the panels." (011-01593-02015)
Financial Risk	"Yeah, we probably secured financially better. So, we were practically secured against risk and now we're secured for financial risk." (007-00781-01334)	"I have had a chat with a financial planner... I can't control interest rates. But I can control how I manage my mortgage." (008-01470-01737)
Food Security	"We're planting an herb garden for the community. So out on the street where people can take stuff." (006-00215-00894)	"Gradually redesigning the place, getting the garden up to scratch... to make it better, you know, more resilient." (015-01849-02157)

Community Feedback and Suggestions

Thank you for your valuable suggestions. We are taking onboard specific feedback about our project, sharing your wider views with Melbourne Water and will publish their responses on our website soon.

- Participants want current flood data and future flood modelling to be made publicly available.
- Participants want resources that are specifically directed at inner-city environments, rather than generic resources advice aimed across rural and urban areas.
- Participants want personalised risk-assessment services.
- Participants want greater community connection and mobilisation around risk issues.
- Participants want greater transparency and action from Council in relation to flood zones, development, and available support and grants to increase household flood resilience.
- Participants with disabilities and limited mobility need recognition and support in planning for emergencies and evacuations from high-rise buildings.

What's Next?

Thanks again for participating in one of Australia's largest community engagement projects. The CEDRR team is now analysing these findings in more detail. Thanks to your contributions, we are also working to expand the project through a National Emergency Management Australia grant, which will continue to help grow community resilience from the ground-up.

Keep your eye on our [website](#) for future updates and findings, feedback from Melbourne Water, and our final reports in late 2026. In the meantime, visit the [Melbourne Water website](#) to learn more about [flood management](#) and how to [prepare for floods](#), or reach out to our lead researcher [Dr. Brian Cook](#) with any further questions.

CEDRR 2025. Authored by Ruby Kammoora, Dr. Peter Kamstra and Dr. Brian Cook.

<https://communityriskreduction.org.au/>