

(Em)powering communities on the journey to energy resilience

The impacts of climate change are affecting regional and rural communities in Australia at an immense scale, climate disasters show intensities and frequencies that exceed past events by large. Floods, bushfires and cyclones cause loss of homes, infrastructure and access to essential services, such as electricity and communication, with long-term economic and social consequences for the region.

This project explores community energy resilience in six communities across Australia using a mixed methods approach. The project brings together researchers, community organisations, emergency responders and visual designers. First, a literature review explores different concepts of community energy resilience drawing on international and Australian case studies, informing an evaluation framework for community engagement. Secondly, we select six culturally and geographically diverse communities that experienced or are at risk of future climate impacts. Through focus groups, we explore why community resilience is needed, what the drivers, barriers and opportunities are, and how energy resilience can best be delivered to communities. The outcome is a visual guide for communities living in disaster-prone regions showcasing real-world examples of building energy resilience, informed by grass-roots research.

The project aims to develop an understanding of how human aspects can be best utilised to inform disaster management and meet the needs of communities in crisis, by focusing on existing social relationships and communal structures rather than relying on technical and administrative processes. It can offer guidance to communities in other parts of the world experiencing similar disasters by visualising challenges and providing practical solutions contributing to more resilient communities.

About the project

<https://grants.energyconsumersaustralia.com.au/archive/em-powering-communities-on-the-journey-to-energy-resilience/>