

# Emergency Management Capabilities for Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR): Purpose, Method, & Findings

## Part 1: Understand what is known about emergency sector capabilities for DIDRR.

1. What is the nature and extent of research?
2. What does the research say about the role, capacity, tools, and training needs?
3. What are the enablers and barriers?

Data from 31 papers published between 2002 - 2022 that met the inclusion criteria were charted. Findings were presented in an [evidence-gap map](#) and key barriers and enablers identified.



### Most research:

- emphasises the need for DIDRR.
- provides some guidance on how to get started.
- focuses on disability inclusion in preparedness and response stages.

### Some research:

- tells about resources, practices, and education to help people take action on DIDRR.
- reveals that training initiatives focus on raising awareness about disability inclusion as a human right.

### Less research:

- tells how to implement DIDRR.

### What's missing:

- there has been limited focus on accessible and inclusive emergency information and warnings in the research literature even though this is a critical emergency sector responsibility.

### What's needed:

- more research on disability inclusion in prevention and recovery stages.
- monitoring and evaluation of DIDRR resources, practices, and education.

### Barriers/Enablers to DIDRR:

- inaccessibility of: (a) communication; (b) transportation; (c) management of health; and (d) emergency shelter. Other barriers focused on challenges in the areas of capacity development, partnerships and collaboration.
- meaningful participation of people with disability and cross-sector partnerships with supporting services are key enablers for change.

#### Research recommendations promote:

- developing inclusive emergency and disaster management plans.
- integrating inclusive emergency plans with supporting arrangements (e.g., workforce capacity, workforce standards).
- emergency sector collaborating with people with disability and their supporting services as key strategy for organising and delivering on DIDRR.
- developing data and information systems, including geolocation capabilities to promote the: (a) identification of people and their support needs for improved emergency management planning, and (b) response actions that addresses the disproportionate risks that people with disability face in emergencies.
- adopting a function-based approach\* to understanding, planning for, responding to, and tracking the support needs of people with disability in emergencies.

\* a functional approach shifts focus from, “What impairments/disability does this person have?” to “What supports does this person need in emergency situations”?

## Part 2: Examine how disability is represented in Australian emergency management plans and guidance documents.

1. To what extent is disproportionate risk of people with disability recognised?
2. What provisions are made for people with disability and their support needs?

Content analysis of Australian state/territory emergency management plans, state-level guidance documents, and a representative sample of local emergency management plans.



#### Key findings:

- People with disability and their support needs are not effectively profiled in emergency management plans.
- Where mentioned, people with disability are included as one of several “vulnerable” groups.
- Some recognition is made of factors that increase vulnerability of people with disability in emergencies and there is some consideration of the impact (primarily negative) of those factors on the safety and well-being of people at greater risk (e.g., inaccessible communication and limited transportation options). The factors identified are not comprehensive nor addressed equally across emergency management planning documents.
- The dominant perspective in the state and local emergency management plans is that people with disability have “deficits” that make them vulnerable.
- No specific direction is given in emergency management plans on how to address factors that present barriers to the safety and well-being of people with disability.
- Strategic direction can be found in the guidance documents. These are mostly in the form of: (a) principles to guide collaborative efforts in partnership with the community services sector, and (b) calls for preparedness support to assist people to tailor emergency preparedness to their support needs and situation. There is limited detail on how these measures are to be implemented (and to what standard) or evaluated for their impact on reducing risk and increasing resilience of people with disability to disaster.

#### What's missing:

- It is not clear whether local governments are required to act on guidance documents, with the exception of Victoria's vulnerable people in emergencies policy guidance (which is under review).

#### What needs to happen next:

- There is a critical need to develop self-assessment measures that state and local governments can undertake to assess the nature and quality of disability inclusion in emergency management plans.

### Part 3: Identify and map good practice resources for DIDRR implementation in Australia.

1. What is the resource about?
2. What sector is leading the work?
3. What is the primary purpose?
4. What is the delivery format?

Search of grey literature and grey information to retrieve tools, resources and practices relevant to DIDRR. The purpose, format and stakeholder groups were charted using a framework designed for this study. Findings were presented in a [resource-gap map](#).



The Resource-Gap Map visually presents the purpose and type of DIDRR resources developed and used by different sectors. There are:

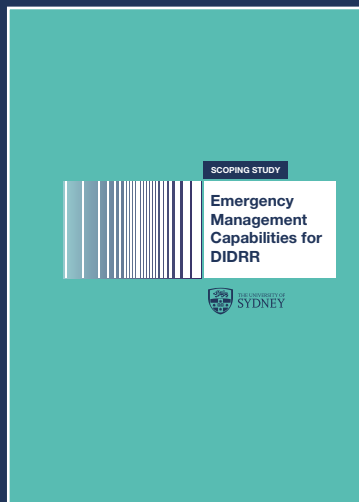
- numerous videos for diverse purposes (inform, educate, facilitate, showcase, advocate).
- evidence-based preparedness tools that target disability inclusion are being used to educate others and facilitate emergency preparedness.
- preparedness support services undertaken by emergency, community, and disability services sectors.
- webinars, training modules, and programs designed to educate and showcase DIDRR.
- several guidance documents and research briefs that fulfil multiple purposes.
- “resource hubs” that collect and share resources.
- researchers who are supporting the development and evaluation of resources, tools and activities.

#### Use the Resource-Gap Map:

- as an interactive and conversational tool to promote cross-sector learning and shared planning for DIDRR.
- to know what resources are available so that effort isn't duplicated creating resources that already exist.
- to enable ready access to available resources that can be applied, combined, implemented, and improved.

#### Spend more time on:

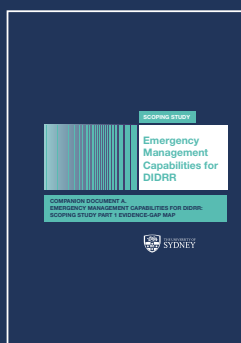
- monitoring implementation (to assess the usefulness, acceptability, feasibility of the resources)
- evaluating outcomes and impacts of the existing tools practices and resources.
- increasing resource use by multiple stakeholders.
- identifying where to focus effort on the development of new resources.
- collaboratively making decisions about modifying existing resources to be suitable for additional purposes or by different stakeholder groups.



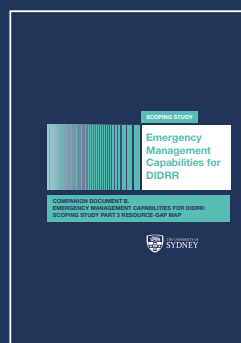
### The report:

- focuses on what the emergency management sector is doing toward the development and implementation of DIDRR,
- identifies current evidence, and gaps in research, policy, and practice, and
- makes recommendations for what should happen next.

The two companion documents should be read in conjunction with the report.



An Evidence-Gap Map of the peer reviewed research on emergency management capabilities in DIDRR.



A Resource-Gap Map of good practice resources relevant to emergency management DIDRR.