

Energy Ready

Guidebook



Energy Ready

Guidebook

Welcome to the first edition of the Energy Ready toolkit! We invite you to try it out and let us know what you think.

This toolkit was made with the advice of communities who have been through disasters as well as experts in energy and resilience.

This has been a great starting point, but we know that the real value comes from working with communities to test it out and make it better.

The link below will take you to a short survey. We'd love it if you could take a moment to let us know what works well and what can be improved. With your help, we can make the Energy Ready toolkit even better.

Here's to more resilient and Energy Ready communities!

Online Survey ↗

<https://forms.gle/CJ2i7gfoxscqbZyz87>

The creators of this toolkit acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as Australia's first inhabitants and Traditional Custodians. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People have maintained a connection to these lands and waters since time immemorial. They are custodians of a wealth of knowledge and skills that communities can draw on to become more resilient.

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Energy Ready, First Edition, 2023

Researched, produced and published
by UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures
www.uts.edu.au/isf

Field research by
Community Power Agency
www.cpagency.org.au

Designed by Parallel Lines
www.parallellines.design

With thanks to expert advisors Sophie Adams, Jo Benvenuti, Jayne Bryant, Mark Byrne, Jill Cainey, William Grey, Alyssa Harry, Kate Retzki, Mike Roberts, Heather Smith and to community workshop participants from Gippsland, Gympie, Lake Macquarie, Mullumbimby, Magnetic Island and Mornington Peninsula

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Funded by Energy Consumers Australia
www.energyconsumersaustralia.com.au

This project was funded by Energy Consumers Australia as part of its grants process for consumer advocacy projects and research projects for the benefit of consumers of electricity and natural gas. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Energy Consumers Australia.

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INTRODUCTION

**What is the
Energy Ready
toolkit?**

Energy Ready is a toolkit for communities who want to be more energy resilient.

Energy resilience makes your community better prepared to meet its essential energy needs when emergencies like bushfires or floods strike.

Your community will be safer, stronger and better able to bounce back from disasters.

Working together on energy resilience can also bring people together and strengthen community ties.

What's in the toolkit?

The toolkit is made up of this guidebook and workshop materials for seven activities. The guidebook explains how to run the activities with people in your community. The activities are the steps you follow to create a plan that works for your community.

Who can use it?

Anyone who wants to see their community become more energy resilient. You might be part of an organisation with some responsibility for community resilience planning and use it in your professional role, or you might be a member of the community who wants to make things happen. You don't need expert knowledge.

How do I use it?

Use Energy Ready to bring your community together to plan how you can be more resilient.

You can do all of the activities in order, or just choose the ones that make sense for you to do. It's also possible to revisit the activities multiple times as you progress on your journey.

You can run the activities with any size of group. There's no limit to the number of people who can join, just think about

what is manageable for you.

Generally, the more people you involve the better, but there are many different ways of getting community input and it's okay to start with a small group. You'll find more tips about running the activities in this guidebook.

Where does the information come from?

The advice and activities in this toolkit come from the combined knowledge of experts and communities that have been affected by disasters or are at significant risk of disasters.

Energy Ready is based on insights from workshops with communities that were held in Bonang, Gympie, Mullumbimby, Mornington Peninsula, Lake Macquarie, and Magnetic Island.

The toolkit has been designed with experts from the University of Technology Sydney, the Community Power Agency and Energy Consumers Australia.

**Why be
Energy
Ready?**



COMMUNITY VOICES

“My husband went missing on New Year’s Eve while on a work shift. I didn’t hear from him for twenty four hours as we both lost reception and the radio even went out as well.

In my last contact with him, he was telling me that he could see flames up ahead. I was so scared that he had been caught by the fire and that I might not ever see him again.”



COMMUNITY VOICES

"In our town, when the flood happened, there was one house in our street that had access to a generator; there was another house that had a gas stove; there was another house that had a solar hot water. So we all shared those resources in our little street."



“Once the shops opened, they were cash only, as there was no communications and for some, no power.

A lot of people did not have cash. We fortunately had a little, and were able to lend some to our neighbours.

We met people who were begging or trying to do small jobs for cash, just so they could buy food.

No banks were open, nor were any ATMs operational so getting cash through this route was not possible.”



BANGALOW FIRE STATION

NO WORDS
WE ARE HERE
FOR YOU
CALL 000



BANG
FIRE
FIRE RESCUE

COMMUNITY VOICES

“We’re pretty lucky in Mallacoota. We’re a small community and we’re all friends. We all know each other and, when it comes down to it, we’re all going to help each other out really. You just make sure that everyone’s okay.”

Five Reasons to be Energy Ready

1 Climate change is making extreme weather events more likely and more dangerous.

2 Being prepared helps to keep everyone in your community safer during extreme weather.

3 Energy is more than a lifeline in a disaster: being energy resilient provides everyday benefits too.

4 Resilient communities bounce back faster and stronger in the aftermath of a disaster.

5 Working together strengthens community ties, not just in emergencies but all the time.

1. Climate change is making extreme weather events more likely and more dangerous.

Australia is experiencing the impacts of climate change. Weather is becoming less predictable and more extreme. This is leading to more frequent and severe bushfires, heatwaves, storms, floods and cyclones.

It's important that we're prepared for these climate-related disasters, as well as other potential future shocks and stresses. Being energy resilient is an important part of this preparation.

2. Being prepared helps to keep everyone in your community safer during extreme weather.

Being prepared helps to keep the people in your community safe and well in an emergency, because they have what they need and they know what to do. Being prepared can also help to reduce anxiety and improve peace of mind.

3. Energy is more than a lifeline in a disaster: being energy resilient provides everyday benefits too.

We rely on energy for so many things, even more so with the growing use of digital technology. When all is going well, we barely notice

energy. But, in a disaster, it becomes clear how critical access to energy is for keeping people safe, connected and healthy and supporting emergency response workers to do their jobs. Being energy resilient provides many everyday benefits too. Communities can be more self-reliant, increase renewable energy supply and save on energy costs.

4. Resilient communities bounce back faster and stronger in the aftermath of a disaster.

An energy resilient community has done the preparation required to help keep people and assets safe and essential services going, and knows how to work together effectively to build the recovery effort.

Pulling together in adversity makes communities stronger. Some even find that being forced to improvise and innovate can lead to new and better ways of doing things.

5. Working together strengthens community ties, not just in emergencies but all the time.

Resilient communities have learnt to look after each other, take care of the vulnerable people in their community and work together effectively. These strong community connections are valuable not only in emergencies, but all the time.

IN PERSPECTIVE

In 2022, 23 people died in floods that hit south eastern Queensland and the coast of New South Wales. The State Emergency Service responded to 31,400 calls for help during the floods. After the disaster, over 3,600 homes in the Northern Rivers were declared unliveable.

What is an Energy Ready community?

An Energy Ready community is a resilient community that has put things in place to enable safe and dependable energy supply, even in a disaster.

Resilience can mean different things to different people. Most people associate it with being strong, adaptable and more readily able to bounce back from adversity.

This section explains what it means to be a resilient community, and why energy is such an important part of being a resilient community.

What is a resilient community?

There are many definitions of resilience. The most common is the ability to resist, absorb, adapt to and recover from shocks or stresses.

A resilient community is ready for the worst and working at its best. Here are some signs of a resilient community:

- Understands risks and is well prepared
- Knows its strengths and builds on them
- Works together; looks after everybody
- Values inclusion and participation
- Can self-organise and build capacity
- Able to adapt, learn, improvise, innovate
- Good leadership and strong local networks
- Good decision making and communication

Don't be discouraged if your community isn't all these things yet. It's taking the steps to be more resilient that matters.

Working together towards a common goal, like making your community stronger and safer, is a really good way to bring people together and begin to become more resilient. You can start with your community's strengths and build from there.

What about energy resilience?

Energy Ready communities are well prepared to maintain essential power in the face of disruptions or disasters. They're also able to recover from disasters more quickly.

Disasters can damage power lines, substations and other critical infrastructure, causing power outages and a cascade of infrastructure failures including communications, transport, fuel, water and sewerage.

This is why energy resilience is so fundamental to the broader concept of community resilience.

Every community is different

While the principles of community resilience are universal, the way resilience looks and feels in your community will be unique. It will be influenced by the risks specific to your location and the characteristics of the place and people. Becoming an energy resilient community is about having the tools to come up with a plan that works for you.

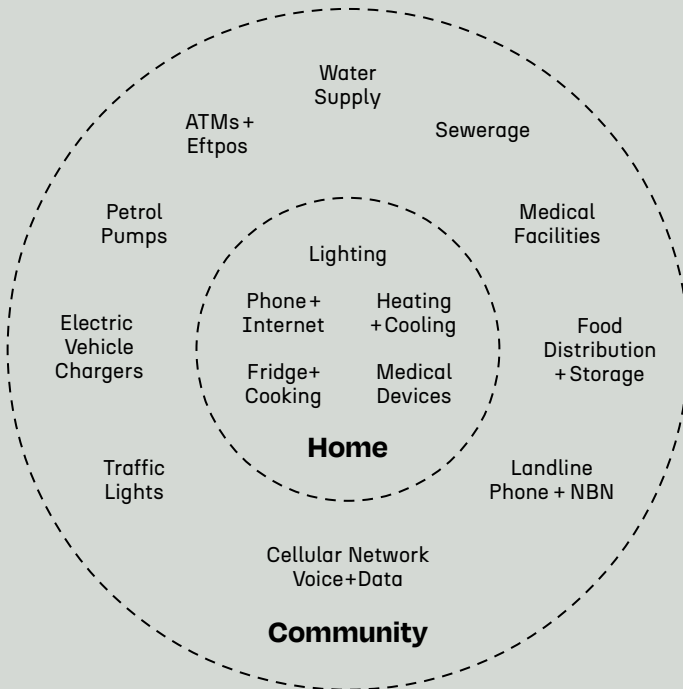
More than technology

It's not uncommon for people to think energy resilience is all about technology. While technologies play an important part, other important aspects include raising awareness, education, building connections and holistic planning.

Your community might focus on some of these things first. The activities in this guide will help you identify ideas.

Community energy resilience is everyone's business

Even if we make our homes self-sufficient, the loss of essential community services affects us all. Energy is fundamental to almost all the essential services in our homes, businesses and communities.



EXPERT VOICES

“At their best, communities are prepared, are able to adapt to changing situations, are connected to each other and are self-reliant.”

Suellen Flint

WA Department of
Fire and Emergency

Setting yourself up for success

So, you want to see your community become more energy resilient.

This section contains advice about key ingredients for success, such as building community support and developing partnerships.

It's okay to start small with the people and resources you have and build your capacity from there. From little things, big things grow.

It's okay to start small

It's usually a small group of committed people that get things started. Sometimes, it's a single individual. If that's you, know there's nothing wrong with starting small. Even simple things, like starting conversations and making connections, can create ripples that grow.

You don't have to go it alone

Your community doesn't have to go it alone, and neither should you try. It's reasonable to expect authorities and utilities to do their share. Identify the organisations who have an interest in community energy resilience, find out if they have specific plans and explore how you can work together. Understanding the priorities and responsibilities of these organisations helps you as a community to identify productive partnerships and decide where to focus your efforts.

Understand the official response

Get familiar with the emergency response authorities in your area. Understand their advice to communities, how they can support you and how you could collaborate. Check the resources on their websites and reach out to them to build relationships, for example by inviting them to talk at community events. You may find connections through your local council or emergency volunteers within your community.

Know your rights

Many people don't know who their energy and communications network providers are, or that they have regulatory obligations to communities. Talking to them about energy resilience can be of mutual benefit. Understanding community needs helps network providers better deliver on their obligations. Communities can improve their understanding of the networks and what this means for their own planning.

Partnerships are key to success

Know who makes up your community. Map out key organisations, understand how they operate and how they could work together.

As an organisation that represents the community, your local council is a good place to start. Some councils are proactively undertaking community resilience planning and there may be opportunities to work together.

Other organisations with an interest in community resilience include emergency services agencies and emergency relief organisations.

Community organisations, community leaders and local businesses can be excellent partners who can reach and mobilise a diversity of people in the community.

Find more on who to engage in planning and partnerships on page 57.

Give everyone a voice

Engaging the broader community in planning for resilience is really important. It helps to ensure that your plan reflects community priorities and you'll have community buy-in when it's time to implement the plan.

Include as many voices as possible and capture a diversity of perspectives, paying special attention to how you'll include people in the community who are often left on the sidelines. People who feel abandoned or question whether they can be part of community resilience will have valuable perspectives to share.

Good ways to engage the community and build awareness include surveys, community meetings and events. You can also use this process to identify people or groups with particular interests or skills who want to be part of more detailed planning. Local council and community organisations can work with you to reach and engage the community.

Get the right people in at the right time

In most communities, there is usually a core group of people driving the initiative. Not everyone in the community will want to be involved in every aspect of resilience planning, and neither do they need to be, as long as they have the opportunity to be involved in key decisions.

There are some things you need broad community input on upfront, like setting priorities. Later on, you would want to seek community input on the proposed plan and build consensus. It's also important to raise awareness around particular projects that need the broader community's participation.

Once projects have been identified, the key is to involve the people and organisations who are important to successful implementation.

Build community support

Create a plan to build community support for energy resilience. This is a long process that runs in parallel to all other activities.

To build support you'll need to engage with a diverse range of community leaders and community networks, use media strategically and think about creative ways to build a presence in your community.

Having broad community support makes implementing plans and projects easier and amplifies their impact.

Build your core team

Your team may be juggling many things, with limited time and energy. Have a vision, but be realistic about your capacity.

Here are some good questions to ask:

- How hard are we able to work and how much effort are we prepared to put in?
- How will we work together?
- How will we recruit more volunteers? Do we need to find people with specific skills?
- How will we raise the money we need?
- How will we keep everyone motivated and keep track of progress?
- How will we tell our story to our wider community and other communities?

Learn and improve

It's important to build in opportunities to learn and improve. What could you do better? What's working well, and how might you build on this?

Set clear goals for your resilience plans and activities so you know what you're working towards, and make opportunities to regularly measure progress, reflect and reassess.

Activity 7 contains some advice about how to do this for the projects you choose.

The 2019-20 bushfires started in Australia's hottest and driest year on record. Over 24 million hectares were burnt. Tragically, 33 people died and extensive smoke coverage may have caused many more deaths. Nearly 3 billion animals were killed or displaced. Over 3,000 homes were destroyed. Estimates of the national financial impacts are over \$10 billion.

Getting the most from this toolkit

This toolkit is all about helping communities work together collaboratively and effectively.

It's also about making the experience as simple as possible for the person who is facilitating the activities.

This section contains information that will help you feel more prepared and confident as a facilitator.

How the activities work

The activities in this toolkit are designed as a sequence that can be run as individual sessions or combined into a few longer sessions. You can do them all or pick the ones that resonate for you. You can also repeat them several times with different groups if needed, and revisit them at different stages as you refine your plan.

- ① **Who We Are**
Define your character and values
↓
- ② **Our Vision**
Imagine your ideal community
↓
- ③ **Hazards & Risks**
Understand the risks you face
↓
- ④ **Our Priorities**
Work out what's important
↓
- ⑤ **What's Possible**
Explore what you could do
↓
- ⑥ **What's Practical**
Work out what's achievable
↓
- ⑦ **Our Plan**
Make a plan of action

Decide who'll lead the activities

These activities are designed so that anyone can lead them. You don't need special training, just time to prepare. You could be from the community, the local council or an organisation looking to help the community to become more energy resilient. You might choose somebody who is trained in facilitating workshops. Having someone from outside the community can help ensure the process is seen as independent.

Identify who to involve

As well as a diversity of community members, include important organisations in your community. To identify who, think about:

1. Who can influence a successful outcome?
2. Who has to live with the consequences of the problem or situation?

Ask these questions to identify who to involve in the overall community energy resilience plan, as well as who to involve in specific projects.

If you can't engage all the groups you want to, don't consider it a roadblock—just start with the groups most critical to success.

Community organisations are the glue holding communities together. Include the significant organisations in your community, as well as important community hubs like schools.

Local government is well positioned to work with the community on resilience planning. Find out what your council's already doing and how you might work together.

Local politicians can be good allies who can help you gain support for plans and projects.

Traditional owners can provide valuable knowledge and perspectives on caring for Country and increasing resilience to natural cycles.

Local businesses help drive recovery after a disaster. Include the major employers and critical businesses in your community.

Emergency services agencies and emergency volunteers can help identify how community action can complement the official response.

Relief organisations can provide advice on what is most helpful in an emergency.

Government agencies have a variety of responsibilities related to resilience and may support or fund aspects of your plan.

Service providers for electricity, telecommunications and other critical services can help you understand system vulnerabilities and what could be done to improve energy resilience.

Reach out to people

Draw up a list of contacts for the organisations you want to invite. Think about how you'll reach community members and identify networks

that can help you get the word out. The invitation should clearly communicate the purpose, timing and location of the event, who is organising it, and any RSVP details. Make sure you give people enough notice before the event.

Choose a meeting place

Online workshops can be convenient, though personal contact is a great way to meet new people and build relationships. Decide what works best for your community. You may want to mix it up with some sessions in person, other sessions online.

Identify local organisations who might help out with venues or catering. For example, councils often offer facilities to community groups for free. Make a list of the equipment you need in the venue.

Plan the sessions

Develop a workshop run sheet that includes:

- The purpose of each session
- Instructions for each session
- Timing of each session, including breaks
- Facilitator roles (who'll lead the session, who'll support or take notes)
- Materials required for each session

The guidebook activities contain most of what you'll need for your run sheet. The ideal session timing will depend on the priority your community wants to give it and how many people are participating. Sessions should be long enough to allow people to focus, but not so long that people lose concentration. No session should be more than ninety minutes without a break.

- Start with the purpose of the day, the agenda, and any important housekeeping information about the venue.
- Allow time for everybody to introduce themselves and say what they hope to get out of the session. Provide name tags.
- Record important discussion points and decisions, ideally where everyone can see them on an easel or screen. Keep the completed activity worksheets as a record.
- End by outlining the next steps in the process. Ask for people's reflections: what worked well? What could be improved?

Make space for everyone's voice

Find ways to for everyone to be heard, not just the loudest in the room. Individual and small group activities can help, as well as techniques like mapping individual thoughts on sticky notes and voting with sticky dots. Whole group

discussions are useful but be sure to mix things up to draw out the quieter voices. The activities here have been designed with this in mind.

Not everyone will be able (or want) to attend the workshops, so think about using a community survey to inform some of the bigger decisions.

Be mindful of people's feelings

Be aware that discussion about disaster preparation could be difficult for people who've experienced disasters or live in fear of them. Check in with the group before you start and agree on the protocols for the discussion. Decide how people can signal they're feeling distressed and what will be done to support them. Have details of counselling services like Beyond Blue and Lifeline on hand. Beyond Blue, the Australian Red Cross and the Australian Psychological Society all have online resources about recognising and dealing with disaster-related trauma.

Make shared decisions

Work out how decisions will be made in a way that is fair, transparent and aims to balance what everyone wants. Will it be a simple majority decision, or will you leave some decisions to those with particular knowledge or authority? Will you canvass certain options more broadly through a community survey?

It's worth thinking this through before you begin so everyone is clear about how the process will work.

Your community, your plan

Every community is unique. These activities are designed to help your community come up with the energy resilience plan that works for you.

Some communities are just starting to think about planning for resilience, others are further along. Some may not have thought much about energy infrastructure, others are developing their own community energy projects.

Wherever you are, these activities will help you plan your next steps.

Plan for people first

Resist the temptation to jump straight to the technologies you need. First ask why you need them, who they will help and whether they are the best way to respond to people's needs. The activities in this guide will help you to do this.

Useful facilitation resources

If you're interested in furthering your facilitation skills, here are a few handy resources:



**Methods & Tools
curated by Hyper Island**

<https://toolbox.hyperisland.com>



Seeds for Change guides

[https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/
resources](https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/resources)

EXPERT VOICES

**“As Aboriginal people,
we have a wealth of
knowledge that we’re
just wanting to share
to create a safer place
for our wildlife and
people and keep our
Country healthy.”**

Uncle Phil

Yuin Elder, Milton

GUIDE TO ACTIVITIES

①

Who We Are

This activity helps you to think about the important features of your community.

When you're finished, you'll have a shared understanding of the qualities of your community that will matter most when it comes to being Energy Ready.

What you'll need

You don't need any materials from the Energy Ready toolkit for this activity, but cards or sticky notes might be useful.

It all starts with you

When it comes to resilience planning, it's really valuable to have a shared understanding of who you are as a community, what you care about most and the shared strengths you can draw on. This shared understanding can be the bedrock that you build your plans and decisions on.

This activity helps you to reflect together about the place and people that make you who you are as a community. Working together, you can think about the values and character that define your community.

Some of these things might seem obvious, especially if you've been in the community a long time. But it can be invaluable to hear the different perspectives that people have—you might come away with a much better understanding of the community you call home.

STEP 1

Think about who you are

Have a discussion about your community using the following questions as prompts. There are different ways you can approach this, depending on the size of the group and what works best for you. If a lot of people are involved, you may want to split into smaller groups. Ensure everyone feels they have the chance to contribute.

During the discussion, make sure the important points that people make are written down. You could ask people to write each separately on cards or sticky notes, or you could write them all together on butchers paper or a whiteboard.

What makes your place and community unique?

What are the defining geographic features of the place you live? These could include:

- The natural environment and climate
- The size of your town and the pattern of settlement (compact or sprawling)

What gives your community its character?

- Key occupations or industries
- Demographics (age, income, vulnerable or disadvantaged populations)
- Cultures, histories, community institutions, clubs, volunteer organisations
- Changes happening now or on the horizon

For example:

- ▶ **Our beachside location is a defining aspect of our community.**
- ▶ **Grazing and farming is a defining feature of life in our community.**

- ▶ We are a diverse coastal community of people from around the world.
- ▶ Our town is becoming a regional centre.

What are the unique challenges that your community faces?

For example:

- ▶ We are very remote and it takes a long time to get help.
- ▶ Our population grows and shrinks with the tourist season.
- ▶ We face frequent brownouts and blackouts.
- ▶ Our community has been hit hard by the closure of the power station five years ago.

What are your natural and built assets?

- How are they important to our identity, quality of life or economy?
- Are there features of the natural environment that can help increase resilience?
- How can we incorporate First Nations knowledge and skills in caring for Country?

For example:

- ▶ Station Street Hotel is a historic building.
- ▶ The community battery.
- ▶ Our Traditional Elders have expertise to share on cultural burning.

What matters to you?

- What is it about this community we want to preserve or build on?
- What are the shared values that define us?
- What are we proud of about our community?
- What kind of community do we strive to be?
- Which of our community values will matter most in an emergency?

For example:

- ▶ We are self reliant.
- ▶ We step up when it matters.
- ▶ We take care of everyone in the community.
- ▶ We value the different perspectives and voices in our community.
- ▶ We take responsibility for our actions.
- ▶ We care for our natural environment.
- ▶ We are proud of our history and heritage.

What are your strengths?

- What's great about our people ?
- What's great about our local economy?
- What's great about our local institutions?
- What's great about our natural environment?

For example:

- ▶ We have a culture of volunteering in our community.
- ▶ Our community cares about resilience.
- ▶ Our local government is already working on community resilience.
- ▶ Our local economy is diversified and strong.
- ▶ We already have a lot of solar PV and batteries.

STEP 2

Bring your ideas together

Reflect on the notes from your discussion. If you've used sticky notes or cards, put them on a wall or spread them on a table. Look for common themes and group similar cards together.

To conclude this activity, work out your top five (or so) things that best express who you are as a community. You might want to present them as short statements, like the examples above.

STEP 3

Share what you've learned

Think about how you might share insights from this activity with the wider community and hear what they think about it.

You might want to share the insights from Activities 1–4 combined as they are the steps leading up to and including the energy resilience priorities for your community. It's an opportunity to check if these priorities are shared by the wider community.

Good ways of sharing include newsletters, local papers, social media, displays at popular community locations or presentations at community events.

You could also create a short survey for community feedback. You might partner with your local council or a community organisation to do this.

②

Our Vision

In this activity you'll explore your ideal resilient community.

When you're finished, you'll have a clearer idea of what you're ultimately working towards and you can align your next steps to this bigger picture.

What you'll need

For this activity you'll need a way to write down ideas like sticky notes, cards, butchers paper or a whiteboard.

You don't need any materials from the Energy Ready toolkit for this activity

What's the value of a vision?

Activity 1 helped you define who you are as a community. This activity builds on Activity 1 by asking who you want to be in future.

Your vision is your ideal picture of what your resilient community looks and feels like in the longer term, say, in twenty five years time. Your vision helps you to identify what success looks like for your community.

It's understandable that communities at risk of disaster might want to get straight to it. But it's worth taking a moment to think about the future. Use your vision as your guiding star. Its purpose is to ensure that whatever you plan for now is aligned to a bigger picture for the future.

Local councils usually prepare community visions as part of their planning process. You could talk to your council and work with them to draw on any work that's already been done.

STEP 1

Imagine the future

Ask everyone to sit quietly and transport themselves twenty five years into the future.

Guide them slowly through these questions:

- What does our community look and feel like when we're thriving and resilient?

- How do people feel?
- What have we put in place?
- How have we built our capacity?
- How do we work together?
- How do we look after one another?
- How are we prepared for emergencies?
- How do we continually bounce back better?

Give people time to write down their thoughts about each question on sticky notes or cards; as many as they like, one thought per note.

STEP 2

Make a mosaic of visions

Ask people to stick their notes up on a wall or to lay them out on a table so that everyone can see them. Take time to absorb the different parts of your mosaic. As a group, identify key themes.

- How does your vision relate to the values, strengths and challenges you identified in Activity 1?
- Which aspects of your vision relate to energy resilience? Identify them so you can use them to inform the priorities you are going to develop in Activity 4.

Share what you've learned

Think about how you can share the vision with the broader community and how you could invite them to contribute to it.

- Think about how the vision is best portrayed. Is it an image; a statement; a story? Decide what works best for your community.
- You might leave the sticky notes up somewhere public like the local library. You could leave blank notes and pens for people to add their ideas.
- You could share photos or a video of the notes on social media, along with a description of the key themes and features of your vision. You could invite people to share their ideas in the comments.

③

Hazards and Risks

This activity helps you to understand the dangers your community faces.

When you're finished, you'll know what kinds of hazards you face, how severe the impacts are likely to be and how likely they are to happen.

What you'll need

For this activity, you'll need some pens or pencils, as well as these materials from the Energy Ready toolkit:

3a Hazard Assessment worksheets

3b Risk Assessment worksheet

3c Risk Matrix card

What is risk?

Risk is the likelihood of unwanted things happening. We can't know the future, but we can think about how likely something is to happen and how bad it would be if it happened. You can think of risk as being made up of three factors: hazard, exposure and vulnerability.



1. **Hazard:** A harmful natural event, such as a bushfire, heatwave or severe storm.
2. **Exposure:** How much the people, places and things you care about are put in danger.
3. **Vulnerability:** How badly the things you care about could be harmed or damaged.

Risk increases or decreases when these three factors change. For example, climate change is making hazards more common and more serious, so this increases risk. On the other hand, if your community takes actions to reduce your exposure or vulnerability, you can reduce risk.

Finding out about climate hazards

As many Australian communities know all too well, our climate is changing. Though the impacts will vary depending on where you live, in general, weather will be less predictable and more extreme.

Summers will be longer and hotter. Bushfires will become more frequent and severe. Rainfall will be more variable, leading to more frequent and longer droughts as well as more frequent and severe storms and floods.

With so much information about, it's important to seek credible sources of information to better understand the hazards in your area and how they are expected to change over time.

CSIRO's 'Climate Change in Australia' website provides up-to-date information from CSIRO (Australia's scientific research organisation) and the Bureau of Meteorology on the state of the climate in Australia, climate trends and future climate scenarios. You can use the 'projections' tools to explore climate projections for your region:



Climate Change in Australia
www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au

STEP 1

Work out the hazards you face

No materials required

The first step in this activity is to understand which extreme weather events or natural disasters your community may experience.

The natural hazards commonly faced by communities in Australia are shown below. Which of these does your community face? Are there other hazards you face that aren't listed here?

Bushfires
Severe Storms
Heatwaves
Extreme Cold
Floods
Cyclones
Extreme Winds

STEP 2

Better understand these hazards

Hazard Assessment worksheets

The next step is to complete a hazard assessment for each hazard you've identified.

The Energy Ready Toolkit comes with seven assessment worksheets for the specific hazards that Australian communities commonly face. If your community has identified a hazard that's not included, you can use the blank worksheet provided and write the name of this hazard at the top of the worksheet.

If you have a large group of people, you could divide into smaller groups and each complete a worksheet. Depending on how many people are involved, you might want to print or photocopy extra worksheets.

STEP 3

Think about the risks you face

Risk Assessment worksheet

Risk Matrix card

Now that you've identified the main hazards you face, think about your community's exposure and vulnerability to them. Use the Risk Assessment worksheet to help you work out how people, buildings, infrastructure and other

things in your community will be impacted. You only need to fill out one risk assessment worksheet—it can reference all of the hazards you’ve identified (you don’t need to complete separate risk assessment worksheets for each hazard).

Energy Ready comes with a Risk Matrix card. It’s a useful tool for thinking about the level of risk in different situations. You can use it to help you complete the Risk Assessment worksheet.

STEP 4

Share what you’ve learned

No materials required

Now that you have developed your understanding of the risks you face, think about how you might share the results of this activity with the broader community and get their feedback.

Other people in your community may have a different perspective on these risks and hearing from them can help to strengthen your understanding. You might want to:

- Talk to emergency services agencies and volunteers in your community, if they weren’t already part of the workshop
- Share the insights on social media or in local papers or newsletters
- Run a community meeting or a session at a community event to discuss the risks

④

Our Priorities

This activity helps you to think about what matters most for your community when it comes to being Energy Ready.

When you're finished, you'll have a shared understanding of your priorities. This will guide your decision making when you're thinking about how to become Energy Ready.

What you'll need

For this activity, you'll need pens or pencils and a few materials from the Energy Ready toolkit:

4a 'Priority Explorer' booklet

4b 'Products and Services' cards

4c 'Our Priorities' cards

Figuring out your focus

This activity helps you to define and agree on your community's priorities in a methodical and collaborative way, drawing on the insights from the previous three activities.

Defining shared priorities for energy resilience is important. It ensures that whatever you focus on will align with what the community cares about and needs.

STEP 1

Explore possible priorities

4a 'Priority Explorer' booklet

4c 'Our Priorities' cards

This step gets you thinking about your priorities in terms of high level needs. (You'll get into detail about the products and services you might need in the next step).

Here you can think openly and creatively about what you really need, avoiding the temptation to jump straight to solutions.

Use the 'Our Priorities' cards to write down the priorities you think are most important for your community (one priority per card). Write as many as you like. They can be broader or more specific, depending on what makes sense to

you. You can do this individually, together or in small groups.

You can use the 'Priority Explorer' booklet as an aid. Flip through the booklet to explore different possible priorities by varying the people, needs, time and hazard. When you see a combination that you think should be a priority, write it down using one of the 'Our Priorities' cards. Also draw on what you learnt from the previous activities about community identity, vision and risks.

STEP 2

Think about essential products and services

4b 'Products and Services' cards

This exercise gives you a chance to think about the products and services that will be most important to you in emergencies or disasters. The cards include things we have in our homes and businesses as well as the public infrastructure shared by the community.

Working together or in smaller groups, arrange the 'Products and Services' cards in order of importance from high to low, or group them in piles.

As you're doing this, write any additional priorities you think of on the 'Our Priorities' cards.

STEP 3

Reflect on these priorities

Completed 'Our Priorities' cards

Lay out the completed priority cards so everyone can see them. You could do this on a large table or stick them on a pinboard or wall. Give everyone time to view them.

You might want to invite participants to work together to arrange the cards so that similar priorities or themes are grouped together.

STEP 4

Determine your top priorities

Completed 'Our Priorities' cards

As a group, decide on your top priorities. It is important these are well considered as they will be the focus for the rest of the activities.

We recommend selecting around five top priorities so that you can keep things focused and manageable. If you want to share them in a survey for the wider community to vote on, you might have a few more.

You might also want to indicate which priorities are for the short, medium or long term.

STEP 5

Share what you've learned

No materials required

Think about how you might involve the broader community in deciding on priorities. You might canvas the priorities your group came up with in a community survey or on social media and ask people to vote or contribute ideas.

You might also want to share the key outcomes of the previous activities at the same time, so people know how the priorities were developed.

To build participation, support and consensus, find ways of sharing that will reach as many people as you can. You might want to use multiple platforms to ensure a wider reach.

⑤

**What's
Possible**

This activity helps you to explore what you could do to become an Energy Ready community.

When you're finished, you'll have ideas for projects you could consider.

What you'll need

For this activity, you may need some pens and pencils. You'll also need the following materials from the Energy Ready toolkit:

4c Your top 'Our Priority' cards (from Activity 4)

5a 'Project Idea' cards

Open up to the possibilities

In this activity you will come up with project ideas that respond to the priorities you've identified. It's okay to think openly and creatively without being too concerned about costs or other limitations. The next activity ('What's Practical') will give you a chance to be more selective and think about what's achievable.

STEP 1

Review your top priorities and explore project ideas

4c Your top 'Our Priority' cards
(from Activity 4)

Make sure that everyone is familiar with the top priorities that you identified in the previous activity. This is important because these top priorities are intended to be the focus as you continue with the activities in this toolkit.

STEP 2

Match project ideas to your top priorities

4c Your top 'Our Priority' cards

5a Deck of 'Project Idea' cards

Lay your top 'Our Priorities' cards on a table or pin them on the wall. Browse the 'Project Idea' cards and identify the project ideas that are a good fit for your top priorities. Some of the project ideas are likely to address more than one of your top priorities.

STEP 3

Consider your own project ideas

5a Blank 'Project Idea' cards

The 'Project Idea' cards are full of good ideas, but you can also come up with your own project ideas to match your priorities. These could be completely new ideas, or adaptations of ideas from the 'Project Ideas' cards that are tailored to your community. Use the blank 'Project Idea' cards to record your new ideas.

STEP 4

Share what you've learned

No materials required

Including more voices and perspectives ensures that the project ideas you identify are well suited to your community as a whole. You could:

- Canvass your ideas at community events
- Run a community survey and invite people to vote or comment on your project ideas

⑥

What's Practical

This activity helps you work out which of your project ideas are practical and achievable.

When you're finished, you'll have a clearer idea of which project ideas to move ahead with.

What you'll need

For this activity, you'll need some pens or pencils and the following materials from the Energy Ready toolkit:

- 4c** Your top 'Our Priority' cards (from Activity 4)
- 5a** Your selected 'Project Idea' cards (from Activity 5)
- 6a** 'Our Assets' worksheet

Review and shortlist your ideas

It's unlikely you'll be able to do everything you want to, at least in the short term. This activity helps you to examine the project ideas and decide which to focus on. You might also work out a rough timeline for staging projects.

STEP 1

Map your assets

6a Blank 'Our Assets' worksheet

Use the 'Our Assets' worksheet to identify assets such as people, skills, equipment, money. You only need to complete one worksheet (you don't need one for each project). Begin by thinking in general terms and then think about the specific projects you have in mind.

STEP 2

Assess projects

6a Completed 'Our Assets' worksheet

5a Shortlisted 'Project Idea' cards (from Activity 5)

For each project you're considering, compare what you need to what you have and what you're willing and able to do.

You might want to plot them on a matrix, with the potential impact of the idea on one axis and the effort required on the other.

Assess each project and whether it's:

- **Ready to go**—we have the assets and ambition to undertake this project
- **Work out how**—we have the ambition but not the assets... yet
- **Not for now**—Anything else that doesn't fit

Some of your project ideas might be a great fit for your priorities, but not match your assets or your ambition. If this is the case, think about how you could adapt or reframe your project to make it more bite sized or practical.

STEP 3

Share what you've learned

No materials required

Make sure you've consulted the people and organisations that would be key to making these shortlisted projects a success. Ideally, many of them would have participated in this activity.

For those who weren't there, share the ideas with them and get their input. Invite them to participate in Activity 7.

⑦

Our Plan

This activity helps you to make a clear plan for each project you've chosen to take on.

When you're finished, you will have a clear path to becoming more Energy Ready and you'll be all set to get to work!

What you'll need

You'll need some pens or pencils and the following materials from the Energy Ready toolkit:

7a **Project Plan worksheets**

You can refer to the completed cards and worksheets from any of the previous activities, but these aren't essential.

Let's get moving!

This activity helps you plan how you'll make your projects happen. Go through this process for each project, and make sure you involve the people and organisations who will be important to the project's success.

Don't worry if you don't have them all on board yet: the first steps in your project plan can be about how you'll engage with them.

STEP 1

Agree on the team

No materials required

Before you start, discuss and agree on:

- Who will lead the project
- Who will help
- How you'll work together, including how much time each person can dedicate

STEP 2

Fill out the project plan

Project Plan worksheet

Use the worksheets to create clear plans for each of the projects you're undertaking.

STEP 3

Share, learn and improve

No materials required

Share your plan with the wider community, to build community support and attract any further resources you might need. Use social media and local events to get the word out.

Schedule regular reviews to check you're on track to meet project goals, share what you're learning and identify opportunities to adjust and improve. You might ask:

- What have we achieved so far?
- Are we on track to meet our goals?
- Are we engaging the right people?
- Are the results justifying the effort?
- What are we learning?
- How can we build on this and improve?
- How will we report and share progress?

Congratulations, you're all set!

Becoming an Energy Ready community takes time and effort. Sometimes it might feel like things are too complex, confusing or difficult. But when your community work together, you can achieve so much.

You've got this!

Sources

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