

Early Insights for More Resilient Communities

Information Sheet: 2025-2026 expansion project

What we're doing

The resilience of rural, regional and remote communities can change rapidly during and after events such as drought, bushfire, flood and damaging storms. Community leaders and organisations need to know how the resilience of their community is changing, so they can identify what actions/interventions may be needed. However, often there's a lack of up-to-date evidence – and leaders have to rely on word of mouth.

The *Early Insights for More Resilient Communities (Early Insights)* project aims to improve availability of data so rural, regional and remote communities can track how their resilience is changing over time and see early signs of change. An online dashboard of resilience indicators provides data at local government scale that can be updated annually to provide an ongoing picture of how resilience is changing as communities experience different events – whether drought, floods, bushfire, storms, pandemic or economic downturn.

How we define resilience

We define resilience as *the capacity of individuals and communities to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and adapt to challenges in ways that support healthy levels of wellbeing over the long-term*. This capacity can be understood by monitoring the resources available for people and communities to draw on. Key resilience resources include:

- Financial resources (local economy, household financial wellbeing)
- Human resources (physical and mental health, skills)
- Social resources (social connection, access to social support, volunteering)
- Community infrastructure and services (roads, telecommunications, health services, tradespeople)
- Community liveability (amenity, safety)
- Institutional resources (local leadership, effective local organisations, good governance)
- Ecosystem services (health water, air, biodiversity)
- Natural hazard resources (preparedness for emergencies, ability to cope with challenges)

Pilot Dashboard for NSW (2023-2024)

The *Early Insights* project started in 2023 in NSW, with a pilot project funded through the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (Southern NSW Innovation Hub) as part of the Australian Government's Agricultural Innovation Hubs Program. In 2024, the pilot *Early Insights* data dashboard, containing data for 2013 to 2022 for non-metropolitan NSW local government areas was released, with data accessible at www.communityresilienceinsights.org.au together with reports from the pilot project.

The pilot dashboard included 34 indicators examining different aspects of resilience of communities. Indicators were co-designed with stakeholders who work to support people living in rural NSW communities through challenging times including drought, bushfire, flood, storms and economic change.

Expansion of the Early Insights project (2025-2026)

In 2025 and 2026, the *Early Insights* project is expanding to include new indicators and regions, with (i) expansion of the NSW pilot to include additional indicator and data updates for existing indicators, and (ii) establishment of pilot projects in four additional states and territories:

- Northern Territory
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

This project received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund through five of Australia's Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs: Northern Hub, Southern NSW Innovation Hub, South-West WA Hub, TAS Farm Innovation Hub and Vic Hub.

Regional workshops

In each region, in-person and online workshops will be held in a range of locations in 2025 and early 2026 to identify the signs of changing resilience in different places. Workshop participants will include representatives of local organisations who work in the community in both challenging times and good times, farmers and farming organisations, natural resource management organisations, local government, and a wide range of others who have different knowledge and insights.

In workshops, participants will discuss:

- **Signs of changing resilience**
What are the signs you see in your local community, or amongst the groups of people you work with, when their capacity to cope with challenges is changing – both for the better, or for the worse?
- **How relevant are different resilience indicators for you?**
Current resilience indicators used by different organisations will be presented (showing available local, regional or state/territory data where it is available). Participants will be asked to comment on how useful and relevant different indicators are for them, and how existing indicators could be made more useful.
- **Priority data**
What are the most important types of data that should be focused on to ensure you have data available that you can use?

The workshops will be used to shape what indicators are included in data dashboards for each region.

Find out more about the project

- Head to the project web page: www.csu.edu.au/research/southern-nsw-drought-resilience-hub/projects/early-insights-for-more-resilient-communities
- Access the current version of the dashboard: www.communityresilienceinsights.org.au
- Email us: regionalwellbeing@canberra.edu.au



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