



Australian Red Cross Emergency REDiPlan Resources Review

Summary

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INTRODUCTION

REDiPlan resources have been developed and delivered as part of Red Cross's national, non-hazard-specific emergency preparedness program since 2007. The aim of the program is to build the resilience of households and neighbourhoods to manage the health, financial and material consequences of emergencies.

Between January and June 2014, Red Cross undertook a review of its Emergency REDiPlan resources, as recommended in the Red Cross Emergency Preparedness Program Plan 2012–15.

The primary purpose of the review was to capture feedback from stakeholders on both the *content* and *format* of REDiPlan resources in terms of how effective, appropriate and relevant the resources are at addressing the needs of audiences.

A secondary purpose of the review was to gain a snapshot of existing preparedness materials in Australia, and to ensure that Red Cross resources reflect current Red Cross program content.

The project was guided by a reference group that included Red Cross volunteers and state office staff, recognised experts in the emergency management field, and representatives from emergency services agencies and government departments.

Resources for review included:

- *Emergency REDiPlan: Four steps to prepare your household*
- *Emergency REDiPlan: Household preparedness for seniors*
- *Emergency REDiPlan: Household preparedness for people with a disability, their families and carers*
- *Emergency REDiPlan: 4 steps to plan for an emergency Easy English* (Information book and workbook)
- *Get Ready kids' activity work book*
- *Psychological Preparedness for Disasters*
- *Bushfires: Preparing to leave early*

REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

- Red Cross is considered a relevant, trusted and reliable provider of emergency preparedness advice
- REDiPlan resources are easy to understand and easy for end users and target audiences of conduits to apply to their own circumstances
- REDiPlan resources are useful and easy to follow and are considered appropriate to the needs of end users and target audiences of conduits
- The four steps are generally considered achievable either personally or for target audiences
- 83% of survey respondents had not received emergency preparedness resources that better suited their needs than REDiPlan
- 100% of survey respondents indicated that they would recommend REDiPlan to someone else

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- A greater emphasis placed on preparing for the longer-term, psychosocial impacts of emergencies
- Dilute survival focused elements in current resources and ensure that referrals on to hazard-specific agencies are clear and consistent across the country
- Maintain a stepped approach to content
- Broaden out community connection beyond geographical boundaries
- Diversify products and channels
- Ensure accessibility
- Emphasis on face-to-face engagement
- Better utilize internal organisational expertise and networks in 'at risk' communities for a more targeted approach

METHODOLOGY

The review was based on five key terms of reference:

1. Assess whether Red Cross preparedness content addresses a gap in existing emergency preparedness literature produced by agencies included in state and national emergency management plans.
2. Assess whether the resources reflect the emergency preparedness program outputs and Red Cross Emergency Services Disaster Resilience Capacities.
3. Assess the relevance and appropriateness of REDiPlan content and format to the needs of the audience.
4. Consider whether the current resources utilise the most effective method/s of communicating preparedness information to audiences.
5. Assess whether the resources have had an impact on audience behaviour.

Activities undertaken as part of the review included:

- An audience consultation involving more than 230 people across Australia engaged through two national surveys, six focus groups, one workshop and 20 semi-structured interviews. Stakeholders were split into three groups for the purposes of the consultation. These groups

included people who received REDiPlan materials for their personal use (end users), people who received REDiPlan materials for the purpose of assisting someone else to prepare (conduits) and people who have contributed advice or input into the REDiPlan program (advisers). Participants included people working in the emergency management and care sectors, as well as a range of community groups. A descriptive analysis of qualitative data was conducted to provide a summary of responses organised according to themes of interest.

- An environmental scan of close to 500 preparedness resources targeted at communities by key agencies identified through state emergency management plans.
- Analysis of existing Red Cross data taken from two REDiPlan evaluation studies conducted within the past three years by consultants.
- An internal assessment of resources to determine whether themes relating to Red Cross emergency preparedness program outputs and Red Cross Emergency Services Disaster Resilience Capacities are adequately addressed in current REDiPlan resources.

3. Findings

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The following is a brief summary of review findings.

Audience consultation findings indicate that Red Cross is generally considered a reputable source of credible and trusted emergency preparedness information, particularly in communities considered more at risk to the impacts of emergencies across Australia.

REDiPlan resources were considered by many to be of particular value for people more at risk to the impacts of emergencies. Commonly identified target audiences for REDiPlan included the elderly, people with a disability (and carers of both), people who are isolated, people with a mental illness and children.

REDiPlan resources are generally considered easy to understand, easy for end users and target audiences of conduits to apply to their own circumstances, appropriate to the needs of end users and target audiences of conduits, useful and easy to follow.

The four steps are generally considered achievable either personally or for target audiences and were considered a good way to organise the information.

REDiPlan resources were considered useful in terms of both allaying anxiety and making people think about the risks they face and developing practical strategies for how they might deal with them.

The most commonly identified REDiPlan resources were the general household and seniors books and people particularly liked the children's resource.

Most participants who had received REDiPlan resources had kept them for future reference.

CONTENT

The majority of participants liked Red Cross's broad brush non-hazard-specific approach and many participants cautioned against Red Cross providing hazard-specific information or advice.

All participants agreed that hazard-specific information should always be provided by hazard-specific agencies such as fire authorities and the SES, and collaboration between all agencies (it was noted favourably that this is already the case in some states and territories) was encouraged across the board.

Many participants were familiar with the preparedness resources and events of other agencies. For some, REDiPlan's point of difference from other agency resources was its focus on the person, rather than protection of property and the environment.

These findings were supported through the environmental scan, with preparedness resources across the board most commonly including survival-specific information that addresses the protection of life and property during and immediately following an emergency.

People generally liked the psychosocial preparedness messages included in REDiPlan and some participants felt that these messages should be more prominent. This was supported by findings from other areas of the review which showed that while Red Cross promotes psychologically preparing for emergencies well through *Psychologically Preparing for an Emergency*, REDiPlan

resources have a heavy emphasis on hazard survival, with some elements of plan and kit recommendations similar to many other resources in the sector.

The provision of information that addresses the longer-term psychosocial impacts of emergencies was identified as a gap through the scan.

Red Cross will endeavor to better ensure that the longer-term consequences of emergencies, and what people can do to prepare to recover from these consequences, is included in future resources. Themes related to psychologically preparing for emergencies will be incorporated into all future materials.

Community and connection through the 'know your neighbours' message in REDiPlan was identified as being of importance to sector representatives, however it was the least commonly volunteered key message identified by focus group and workshop participants.

Connection to relevant community members and lists of important contacts were deemed important, but contact with neighbours was probably the most contentious message discussed. Some participants felt know your neighbours was a problematic message for a number of groups including those with disabilities and those living in rural areas. A common suggestion was to broaden the concept out beyond neighbours.

Red Cross will develop where necessary concepts relating to community capacity and competence, and broaden out community connection beyond geographical boundaries.

Key concerns regarding content, articulated predominantly by emergency management sector representatives, included that REDiPlan duplicates information provided by existing agencies, in particular hazard-specific information and information relating to preparing houses and kits; and that REDiPlan messaging regarding evacuation plans is too simplistic.

Red Cross will seek to dilute survival-focused elements in current resources and place emphasis on preparing for the longer-term, psychosocial impacts of emergencies. Red Cross will also ensure that referrals on to hazard-specific agencies are clear and consistent across the country.

A concern raised by a number of emergency management sector representatives that the general public might be confused by the availability of multiple resources was not reflected by community groups involved in the consultation process.

Participants of focus groups and the workshop generally felt confident that emergency preparedness messages from agencies were consistent and some participants described using more than one resource to develop their plan and or kit.

FORMAT

Red Cross REDiPlan resources exist in a very saturated national market of emergency preparedness resources and the current format of REDiPlan is very similar to hundreds of other resources available.

Resources on the whole tend to be printed books, brochures and factsheets that address specific hazards and do so through action-orientated stepped checklists.

Findings from the consultation process suggest that books are considered a good tangible way to receive information and to provide a future reminder, however the key message was that an approach that includes multiple delivery channels and a range of formats is best.

People generally like the interactive elements of REDiPlan books, however the current REDiPlan documents are considered too dense. Red Cross will seek to develop a light version of its final printed product that can be handed out to people following sessions or at public information events.

Face-to-face engagement activities were popular and commonly considered to be the key to getting the preparedness message across and prompting action. This was supported by the observation that recall of REDiPlan content was often stronger in those who had attended a session and received a book, than those who had only received a book.

According to participants, face-to-face engagement allows for tailoring information to best suit the audience, it allows for adaptation of content to a local context, it gives people an opportunity to assess their own risk and in a group situation it allows them to hear how others may have addressed the risk in their own lives before, during and after an emergency.

Red Cross will seek to address the development of a flexible community engagement program through a review of its Community Speakers' Program and the development of an engagement toolkit in 2015/16.

Interactive digital formats were also popular amongst consultation participants, however findings identified through the environmental scan suggest that like REDiPlan, most resources available digitally have not

been designed for digital platforms and allow for little, if any, online interaction.

Findings suggest that information should always be tailored to the needs of audiences as part of face-to-face engagement activities, however to avoid duplication in printed and online resources, as is currently considered the case with REDiPlan and the many versions currently available, information will be consolidated into a general resource and additional information relating to specific needs should be provided as supplements.

Accessibility was a key gap identified through the environmental scan and an issue raised regularly throughout the consultation process. Red Cross will endeavor to diversify the format of resources to ensure communities considered more at risk to the impacts of emergency are able to access general preparedness information. This does not necessarily mean creating tailored resources, but ensuring that any resources developed are provided in a format that suits the varied needs of a broad audience.

AUDIENCE GAPS

Key gaps in audiences identified through the scan included resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and teenagers (beyond school resources). There were also limited resources identified for communities living in high-density urban areas (beyond home fire safety information) and urban/rural fringe dwellers.

Some consultation participants identified themselves as feeling particularly vulnerable and therefore in need of disaster preparation. These included people with disabilities and people who were newly arrived in Australia.

Some participants considered Red Cross well-placed to play a role in facilitating collaboration. Red Cross will consider its role as a driver of collaboration and advocacy across the sector regarding preparedness in communities more at risk to the impacts of emergencies.

To do so, Red Cross emergency services will utilise internal organisational expertise and networks in the areas of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander peoples, youth and families, disability, social inclusion and migrant support programs to drive resource/program delivery, as well as engaging with relevant networks, agencies and audience groups when developing accessible formats and information.

The review also identified that more work should be done to develop and embed the Red Cross Emergency Services Disaster Resilience Capacities into the organisation's preparedness program. This will assist with identifying communities more at risk to the impacts of emergencies. It will also ensure that future resources provide practical activities that directly address the enhancement of resilience capacities in individuals and communities.

ACTION, BARRIERS & MOTIVATION

REDiPlan resources have prompted action. The most common actions prompted by REDiPlan resources include:

- Discussions with family about where to go as a meeting place in the event they had to leave their home or were separated in an emergency
- Discussions about what they might do/take in the case of an emergency
- Putting a kit together.

Time, having other things on the mind, cost and the skill and knowledge required to prepare were most commonly identified as factors that may prevent people from preparing for an emergency.

The most common reason given by people who did not intend to prepare for an emergency in the future was that they lived in an area that is not considered at risk of a natural hazard or that they felt adequately prepared.

The level of motivation to take action to prepare across the board appeared to depend on the risk assessment individuals applied to themselves or others.

The most common response when asked what would motivate participants to prepare for an emergency was exposure to an emergency, whether through personal experience or as an observer. Motivation to prepare for an emergency was also higher when there was support to do it.

4. Next steps

NEXT STEPS

Review results highlight that REDiPlan resources have been well received and are relevant and useful to a broad range of individuals and groups. It is therefore important to note that redevelopment work will seek to enhance the current resources.

A number of recommendations have been developed on the basis of review findings to inform the redevelopment of REDiPlan resources.

Red Cross will seek to redevelop REDiPlan resources over a period of 12-18 months from November 2014.

For more information about the REDiPlan review process or for more detailed information, please contact Jacqui Pringle at jpringle@redcross.org.au.

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