



Building Resilience **in Seniors** to Extreme Weather

Aaron Coutts-Smith obo Amanda Lawrence

12 November, 2019

Life before Council

- Amanda lived on the West Coast of USA for 25 years
- ‘Emergency Boxes’ in the face of earthquakes take on a whole different meaning and everyone has one
- At Netscape and after at Amazon I became a volunteer member of their Medical Emergency Rescue Team
- It was my first experience of preparedness and I was a single mother of a 2 year old.

After the fires, after the rain

- Hall Road Fire 2013

LEMO 2014

- Snow Storm 2015
- East Coast Low 2016
- Extreme Storms 2017/18

NDRRA claims

- The fire storm is coming – it might even be this year!

Wake UP people!

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

WINGELABBIE SHIRE COUNCIL

BUSH FIRE SIX WEEK **GET READY CHALLENGE**

PREPARE ACT SURVIVE

Don't think it could happen to you?
Think again!

Sign up for the Bushfire Six Week Get Ready Challenge now!
www.getreadychallenge.com.au



Don't forget the water and snacks this bush fire season!

Bush fire 6 week challenge

- Our campaign was fun, easy, family oriented, interactive and engaging!
- We ran it for 3 years
- We promoted the heck out of it!
- Did it make a difference?



How DO we make a difference?

Adding up the numbers!

Age	Wingecarribee	%
40-44 years	2,887	6.0
45-49 years	3,177	6.6
50-54 years	3,296	6.9
55-59 years	3,320	6.9
60-64 years	3,325	6.9
65-69 years	3,807	8.0
70-74 years	3,293	6.9
75-79 years	2,335	4.9
80-84 years	1,532	3.2
85 years and over	1,428	3.0

People aged over 65 years and over make up **25.9%** of the population of Wingecarribee

A Retirement destination



Senior's Week



I know exactly what to do!

- Use uniformed Emergency Management as presenters – seniors will take them seriously and listen to what they have to say!
- Give them free food and a gift to take home but don't let them have it until you are done



On the right track

- We felt pretty good about things
- Should we apply for a Community Resilience Innovation Grant?
- How hard can it be?

Seniors at a glance

- Nearly fragile
- Hard of seeing and hearing
- Age related health issues
- Economically disadvantaged
- Socially isolated
- Unprepared

Engaging Seniors

- Seniors don't really do much



Vulnerable or resilient?

- Community historians –passing on the stories from the time before
- Community connectors– bringing people together
- Have devised strategies to overcome age related afflictions or obstacles
- So, can't they also bear some of the responsibility for their own wellbeing?

Consultants stole my brain

- The Hunter Collaborative Research & Planning Group
 - Academics / Social Workers
 - Opened our eyes to a different approach
 - Showed us why it was important to allow participants to make up their own minds in a space that was both accepting and non-threatening

Adult learning principles

- Adult learning principles – adults only learn when they are keenly interested or need to know
- Adults learn in a variety of ways, lecture, discussion, activities, videos
- Triggering behavioural change – we wanted them to go away believing they COULD help themselves
- Preparedness is everyone's responsibility

Practical tips

- Make sure your venue is accessible
- Meet in a light filled room with windows
- Tea and coffee help start conversations
- Make it a safe place for everyone
- Giveaways should be relevant and useful



All in the approach

- Don't use men in uniform
- Adult learning principles – a mixture of styles
- Seniors are busy so take advantage of opportunities
- Tap into already scheduled meetings/events
- No one fills in surveys anymore!

Community mapping

- Community Mapping can be empowering by providing opportunities to have a lasting, positive influence on their community.



Resilience or Preparedness?

- Preparedness – being ready for extreme weather by getting organised before it happens. It's taking action to help yourself.
- Resilience is having the resources to plan, prepare, respond and recover quickly which happens in communities that are connected and supportive of each other.

OUR AIM HERE TODAY – final presentation

- Help you to become more resilient and self-reliant in the face of extreme weather
 - through planning and personal preparedness
- To guide you to develop practical strategies to achieve this
- Give you an understanding of how to build long term community resilience



Don't scare them

- Arm them with practical preparation resources to be better prepared for extreme weather events by having them consider their own ability to, prepare for, respond to and recover
- Consideration of personal circumstances that may limit individual capacity to be prepared and identifying options to leverage strengths and overcome limitations

What we learnt

- Choose your presenter carefully
- Take advantage of pre-arranged situations
- Not too many participants
- Limit the number of messages
- Listen to everyone and be inclusive
- Let everyone have a chance to be heard
- Relate to personal connections through discussion
- Include practical and participatory activities
- Allow participants to arrive at their own conclusions