

Children and Young People's Experience of Disaster Report 2020 by ACYP

In recent times NSW has experienced prolonged drought, an unprecedented bushfire season and floods. These disasters have directly or indirectly impacted hundreds of thousands of children and young people across NSW.

The Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYP) went to disaster affected areas of NSW and spoke directly to more than 400 children and young people face-to-face about their experiences of disaster. This was followed up with quantitative polling of a further 1,000 children and young people.

The combined results of this research informed the development of the ***Children and Young People's Experience of Disaster Report***.

This report gave children and young people a platform to inform decision makers and service providers about how to best continue to support their needs before, during and after a disaster. The report also highlights the ways in which children and young people want to be included in the planning and implementation of solutions that relate to disaster preparedness and recovery as well as how to further support them now and into the future.

Underpinning this is the development of a Disaster Resilience Framework for children and young people.

Some of the key findings in the report include:

- disasters and the life changes that follow have significant impacts on **mental health and wellbeing**
- the destruction and damage caused to **schools** affects access to education, engagement, learning and academic achievement
- disasters can impact the **housing** stability of children and young people including damage to homes and farms as well as displacement and relocation
- disasters can create **youth unemployment** and heavy workloads for children and young people affected by drought and other social and economic issues
- children and young people can feel invisible, forgotten and unable to influence the world around them, they wish to have a **voice** and be involved in disaster recovery
- **connection to land and community** were raised as important concerns.

The 10 recommendation topics in the report:

1. Voice
2. Mental health
3. Practical and financial assistance
4. Evacuation centres
5. Education
6. Access to infrastructure
7. Community recovery
8. Raising awareness
9. Disaster preparedness and information provision
10. Activities and programs for children and young people