

**Submission
No 32**

**IMPROVING CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS TO CULTURALLY AND
LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES**

Organisation: Infrastructure NSW

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Submission to the inquiry: Improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities

The Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley covers around 500km² from Bents Basin, near Wallacia, to the Brooklyn Bridge. The valley has the highest flood exposure in NSW because of its unique landscape and large existing population. Floods in the valley can be very deep and extensive, and can have a significant impact on people's lives, livelihoods and homes.

Since 2016 the NSW Government has been delivering the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy to reduce and manage the significant risk of flooding in the region. The Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Directorate within Infrastructure NSW leads the coordination of the flood strategy, which includes 9 outcomes to collectively address the high flood risk.

One of these outcomes is "an aware, prepared and responsive community", under which the Community Resilience Program is delivered. This program has three broad streams – campaigns and communications, community outreach, and education for young people, and provides the opportunity to increase community awareness and preparedness ahead of a major flood. It is delivered as a partnership with the NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) and collaboration from other agencies, community organisations and local councils.

A focus of this program has been including communications and engagement activities with the area's growing culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) population, particularly in the Penrith, Blacktown and Hills local government areas. It has been identified that many CALD households may have a number of generations in a single home and some of the older generation speak little to no English. The older generation often have caring responsibilities for younger generations and limited or no access to transport – which creates additional vulnerability. Some of the initiatives delivered are outlined as follows:

- A partnership with the University of Sydney and Settlement Services International delivered 6 workshops between October 2019 and March 2020 to build the resilience of CALD communities in the valley, particularly those living with or caring for someone with a disability. The workshops were attended by over 145 CALD community members from key language groups in the valley including Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Mandarin speakers. Attendees were provided with local flood information from NSW SES and tailored emergency preparation activities. Feedback from attendees was that these workshops provided new skills to prepare for emergencies and valuable networking. This project developed 2 video training resources for CALD service providers about having person-centred emergency preparedness conversations with their clients.
- The Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley flood awareness and preparedness factsheets have been translated into 7 key community languages and are available on the NSW SES website. Work is now underway to identify the leading CALD services in the floodplain to help promote and distribute these resources to those community language groups and cultural/community leaders.
- Two public campaigns have been delivered from 2019 – 2021 around promoting flood risk and flood preparedness in the valley. These campaigns included an element of translation and promotion via CALD channels. A new more targeted campaign is being delivered from July 25th for 8 weeks which has seen new content developed in six languages, and with a promotional spend focused entirely on CALD channels. Content includes videos with community members and NSW SES volunteers speaking in-language, social media tiles, infographics and other material. This work has prompted some enhancements of the NSW SES website to improve online engagement with CALD communities at risk of flooding and will go live alongside the campaign.

Infrastructure NSW is committed to delivering further work to promote and improve communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.