



Reducing the psychosocial impact of a changing climate

Improving the resilience of individuals in drought-affected communities is at the heart of a two-year Australian Red Cross program.

The intangible costs of long-term drought

Australians are facing greater danger from more frequent and severe natural disasters because of climate change. Natural disasters are estimated to cost the Australian economy \$13.2 billion a year, yet the true cost is much greater due to the intangible costs that may have long-term social impacts on communities.

While climate change adaptation efforts regularly address economic, infrastructure and technological solutions, the social and psychological impacts can be overlooked. The Red Cross is proposing an evidence-based climate change adaptation program that addresses the psychosocial impacts of drought, supports Australian communities through the current drought, and builds resilience to future droughts and other slow onset disasters.

The program will be delivered in a minimum of two states, with Queensland and NSW identified as priority states based on the extensive areas declared drought-affected.

This project will:

- ensure community leaders/volunteers and existing and new service providers and partners have enhanced capability and capacity to address the psychosocial needs of drought-impacted communities

- support drought-impacted families and communities with a range of needs-driven services to better manage psychosocial impacts
- improve policy and practice to reduce the psychosocial impacts of a changing climate.

The power of humanity

The Australian Red Cross Society is a leading humanitarian aid and community services charity providing a range of services and programs in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Red Cross is independent of government and bound by the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

The BHP Foundation works to address some of the most critical global sustainable development challenges facing our generation. The *Managing the Psychosocial impact of Drought on Australian Communities* project is part of our Australia Country Program which aims to support social development and sustainability in Australia.

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