

Disasters and the Law

Report from the 2025 Disasters and the Law National Symposium

February 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the Traditional Owners and Custodians, and as valued Australians. We pay respect to them; to Elders past and present and to those who come, for you hold the memories, the traditions, the culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across this country. We acknowledge their ancestors were first to walk upon this land, are survivors of war and conflict, have preserved their culture and have cared for and protected this continent for over 60,000 years.

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A foreword to the symposium

Advancing legal advocacy and education begins with dialogue.

Australian Red Cross (Red Cross), the Federation of Community Legal Centres (the Federation) and Disaster Legal Help Victoria (DLHV) convened the inaugural Disasters and the Law National Symposium (the Symposium) in March 2025 at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre in Naarm/Melbourne, Victoria.

Designed to elevate the importance of legal issues in disaster contexts, promote best practice across jurisdictions, and highlight developments in disaster and climate justice advocacy and collaboration, the Symposium brought together more than 130 leaders, decision-makers, policymakers, and frontline workers from across the emergency management, disaster resilience, legal, government, academic, and related sectors. The Symposium was the first time this diversity of sectors was all in the same room, focused on the same issues.

Chaired by Andrew Coghlan, Head of Humanitarian Diplomacy, Emergencies, at Red Cross, the Symposium highlighted the critical role of the law in international, national and state and territory contexts. It also explored the common and emerging legal issues that impact the resilience of people, communities and agencies in the increasingly overlapping, and at times simultaneous, phases of disaster events – preparation, planning, response and recovery.

During the Symposium, four keynote speakers presented their experience and research in international and domestic humanitarian law, climate and disaster law, disaster justice and legal needs arising from disasters. A panel explored the lived disaster and recovery experiences of legal practitioners across the country. Interactive workshops with frontline legal practitioners and other attendees explored the understanding of existing laws governing emergency response and how to connect disaster-impacted communities with appropriate legal assistance. The event concluded with a reflective panel that discussed and summarised learnings from the day.

Two key themes emerged from the Symposium:

- The influence of international and domestic laws and policies on local response and recovery efforts, and the need for the law to keep up to date with developing issues including climate change.
- The importance of centring justice in disaster planning, response, relief and recovery, with an emphasis on human rights, fairness now and into the future, and better supporting underrepresented communities.

This report captures the research, key ideas, and discussions from the Symposium and offers a starting point for future work in the field of disaster law. Within its pages are foundations for advocacy at international, domestic and local levels, on topics from climate adaptation to disaster response frameworks and responsibilities, aimed at ensuring that disaster justice is at the root of all our work and responses.

Introduction

Laws, and their related policies and operational plans, are the backbone of effective disaster risk management. They provide the structure that enables governments, organisations and communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. When robust, they lead to coordination, clarity and accountability. When absent or unclear, preparedness is poor, action is delayed, and the risk of harm increases.

The United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) defines a disaster as ‘a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.’¹

Disasters are not natural. Disasters occur when something of value is exposed to a natural hazard. Human actions influence both the severity of the hazard (through factors such as climate change) and the extent of their impacts, for example by permitting development in potentially flood-prone areas.² Ultimately, governments and decision-makers make systemic choices that shape both the nature of the hazard and the vulnerability of the things that communities value.

As we face increasingly frequent and intense disasters due to climate change, the need for effective disaster law is increasing. This is reflected in Priority 2 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), which calls for strengthened disaster risk governance.

Strengthening legal and policy instruments can improve disaster preparedness and response, while also supporting broader global commitments. This includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, agreed to by the United Nations (UN) to end poverty, improve health, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth; and the Paris Agreement, the 2015 treaty signed by 195 countries to limit emissions and curb global temperature rises through international cooperation.³

More than nine million people in Australia have been directly impacted by a disaster or extreme weather event over the last 30 years.⁴ In 2022 alone, around 18 million people in Australia lived in an LGA impacted by at least one declared disaster.⁵

In times of disaster, legal protections are sometimes suspended, and human rights may be sidelined.⁶ But failing to prioritise human rights and the needs of communities deepens harm and inequality. Disaster research also shows that local, place-based responses are most likely to lead to better and fairer outcomes because they are shaped by community needs, relationships, experience and trust.⁷ These approaches build on deep local knowledge and existing networks, which strengthens collaboration and shared decision-making between communities and emergency agencies, leading to more effective and equitable disaster management.⁸

Disasters don't just disrupt daily life; they can also generate new legal issues and exacerbate existing ones. People affected by disasters often face complex clusters of legal problems that can persist for years.⁹ For instance, people may struggle to find affordable, liveable housing in their communities and may end up in makeshift housing or in another community for extended periods of time. The longer these problems persist, the less likely they are to resolve.¹⁰ These issues are even more acute for communities facing systemic disadvantage or living in areas highly exposed to climate risks.¹¹ Such communities are experiencing the threat or reality of successive, and even concurrent disaster events and compounding impacts on individuals, families, communities and futures.

Recommendations by the legal sector following the 2009 Black Saturday Victorian bushfires highlighted the critical need to champion long-term, specialised legal support in disaster recovery.¹² The 2020 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements (the Bushfire Royal Commission) found that the delivery of legal assistance services is a key example of non-government recovery support which would benefit from greater planning, and recommended that non-government organisations (including legal assistance) should be

included in recovery planning processes at the local, regional, jurisdictional and national levels. It further recommended that Australian, state and territory governments expedite the development of pre-agreed recovery programs, including those that address social needs, such as legal assistance.¹³

While good progress has been made, the legal sector is sometimes still missing from important decision-making tables and conversations, and disaster-affected communities have continued to experience complex legal issues.¹⁴

Legal education plays a critical role in disaster resilience. Preparedness reduces risk, while early legal intervention can prevent problems from escalating, enabling people to focus on recovery and rebuilding their lives. The legal sector, like the emergency management and community sectors, plays a crucial role in this work. Cross-sector collaboration should be a key focus, ensuring legal services are embedded within broader recovery efforts to respond to the full spectrum of evolving, compounding and novel disaster and recovery needs.

Ultimately, we all share responsibility for ensuring that no one is left behind in disaster planning, response, or recovery.

Disaster law and frameworks: From global to local

International Framework: Sendai Framework

The [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction \(2015-2030\)](#), adopted by the UN in 2015, is a 15-year plan to reduce disaster risk and build resilience globally.

It is the key international agreement that influences Australia's disaster laws and policies and outlines four priorities for action:

- Understanding disaster risk
- Strengthening disaster risk governance
- Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience
- Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response.



The Sendai Framework emphasises a move beyond simply responding to disasters to proactively reducing the risk of future disaster.

It highlights the importance of investing in preparedness measures to minimise the impact of disasters, and promotes a collaborative approach involving governments, communities, businesses, and other stakeholders in disaster risk reduction. The framework also encourages 'Build Back Better' principles in recovery, reconstruction, resilience and rehabilitation after a disaster.

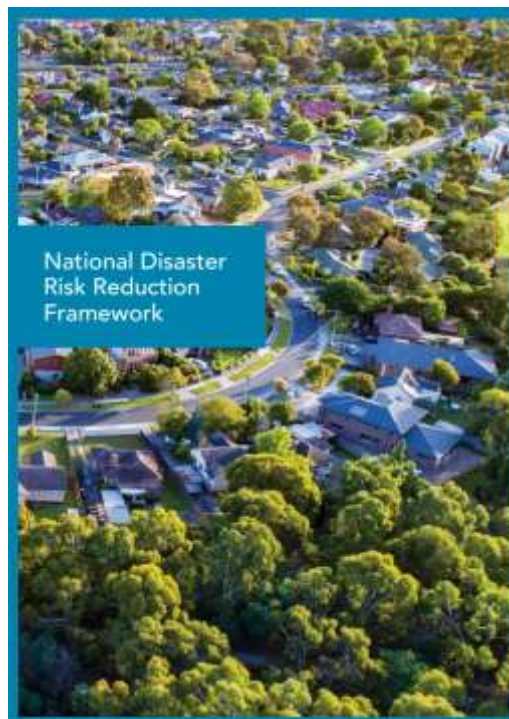
Convention on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters

A United Nations-led treaty on the protection of people in disasters, the *Convention on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED)*, is under development and is expected to be adopted by late 2027. This legally binding instrument will build on the [International Law Commission's \(ILC\) 2015 Draft Articles](#) to strengthen international law, clarify obligations, and enhance cooperation in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response. The treaty will focus on protecting the rights of individuals during disasters and is being negotiated between 2025 and 2027.

Australia's national implementation

Australia, along with other UN members, committed to implementing the Sendai Framework in 2015. Australia's [National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework](#) (NDRRF) is the primary mechanism for implementing the Sendai Framework domestically. The NDRRF aims to build Australia's resilience, preparedness, and management of disasters. The framework aligns with the Sendai Framework's priorities, focusing on understanding risk, strengthening governance, investing in resilience, and enhancing preparedness.

Australia's [National Strategy for Disaster Resilience](#), while preceding the Sendai Framework, also guides national disaster risk management activities and aligns with the framework's priorities.



State and Territory Laws

Australia's disaster governance is complex due to its shared responsibility between federal, state, and local governments, with the federal government providing funding and policy, and state/territory governments managing crisis response and recovery.

Australian states and territories are primarily responsible for emergency management within their jurisdictions, including prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Each state and territory has its own emergency management legislation, plans, and arrangements tailored to address local hazards and risks. While they manage emergencies independently, they also collaborate and can request support from the Commonwealth when needed.

Local governments also play a crucial role in emergency planning and management at the municipal level in most Australian states.

A recent situational analysis of disaster-related laws and frameworks in Australia by Red Cross observed that:

- Australia's disaster management frameworks align well with international standards and show strong strategic intent
- Multi-level governance complexity and advisory instruments can be a challenge to effective coordination and enforcement across agencies and jurisdictions
- Improving legal clarity, governance, investment, and stakeholder engagement including First Nations and gender perspectives can strengthen resilience.

Visit [Australian Emergency Law](#) for details of Australia's various emergency management legislation.



Everyday Laws

Disasters create new problems and exacerbate existing legal problems. There are a host of everyday laws that are triggered by disasters.¹⁵ Disasters commonly intersect with property and tenancy laws. Legal issues may relate to repairs, neighbourhood disputes, rebuilding, eviction, homelessness, and these may affect the affordability, availability and liveability of housing in impacted communities. Consumer and social security law issues may involve building or insurance disputes, or complaints about grant decisions or Centrelink reviews. Encounters with the criminal justice system might relate to infringements, driving offences or compliance with court orders. According to the findings of the Public Understanding of Law Survey (PULS), those who had experienced a

disaster were 2.5 times more likely to report another legal issue relating to employment, injury or illness, debt or money, or government and public services.¹⁶

Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, with related legal issues escalating and compounding in scale and consequence.¹⁷ Laws that intersect with disasters must factor in a changing climate, prevent harm, protect those most at risk, and enable timely, fair, and coordinated responses. Disaster law should also promote accountability, equitable recovery, and proactive risk reduction, ensuring that legal systems strengthen community resilience in the face of escalating hazards.

Lessons from the intersection of law, policy, and humanitarian crises

Ms Yvette Zegenhagen OAM

Executive Director, External Engagement, Australian Red Cross

Situating the work of Australian Red Cross (Red Cross) within a global context, Yvette Zegenhagen explored how and why strong legal frameworks and a focus on preparedness are essential for reducing disaster risk and protecting communities worldwide. The following provides an overview of her presentation.

The Red Cross Movement is borne out of international treaty law – specifically the Geneva Conventions – and National Societies, like Red Cross, are not NGOs. They are established through domestic legal instruments and are auxiliary organisations in the humanitarian field to the public authorities of the country in which they operate. There is a particular mandate under these legal frameworks for the role of National

Societies in the prevention, preparation, response and recovery of communities in times of disasters and emergencies and in times of armed conflict or large-scale crises. This status translates through to our International Federation, who through this auxiliary role enjoy permanent observer status at the UN and a range of diplomatic privileges not afforded to other humanitarian organisations.



For example, internationally we – both National Societies and the Federation – can engage in multilateral fora on disaster law issues. Domestically, it means we are a trusted partner to government. While maintaining our independence, we also have a direct line to confidentially share and discuss humanitarian challenges and help find solutions to shared areas of concern.

There are four key takeaways from the intersection of law, policy, and humanitarian crises:

The law cannot and should not be designed for lawyers. As legal practitioners, disaster law must be made credible, accessible and even a little bit inspirational. Red Cross knows that the law is applied and works best in humanitarian crises when practitioners from across the breadth of emergency management come together with communities themselves, who know and understand how they can use the law to facilitate better humanitarian outcomes.

We need to think globally and act locally. It is important to look outside our own lanes to think creatively about how the law can be used as a practical tool. The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2018 Sulawesi earthquake are among Indonesia’s most devastating disasters, yet they illustrate a remarkable transformation. From a fragmented international response in 2004 to a coordinated, locally led approach in 2018, this shift reflects the impact of legal and policy reforms. Strengthening disaster law has enabled Indonesia to manage crises more effectively while also advancing localisation in disaster response.

In December 2024, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution initiating the development of a legally binding instrument to protect people during disasters and setting the stage for negotiations on an international treaty.¹⁸ Red Cross hopes that this instrument for the protection of persons affected by disasters will serve to clarify and consolidate states’ obligations with respect to the management of disasters and disaster risk.

The law does not sit in a vacuum.

There are sometimes unreasonable expectations placed on the law in times of crisis, and we cannot view the law as a panacea. It is important to have the right policy environment, training, education, a pragmatic and practical approach to the interpretation and application of the law, the human capital to support those affected by crises, and an alignment of the role of the law between the sector and government authorities. If the right conditions are in place and the laws are working well, they should almost seem invisible.

We must anticipate and prepare for future legal needs. The past is littered with examples where laws, domestic or international, have played catch up with society. The legal ecosystem must draw upon insights and research from other disciplines – scientific, community, sectoral, medical, environmental – to understand what legal issues await us as a society and start planning for those. We need a nimbler environment within which the law can operate and evolve. This is increasingly important, and difficult, when organisations like Australian Red Cross are grappling with humanitarian challenges such as climate change where there are so many interconnected and complex facets.



Disasters cause immense human suffering and loss, but effective laws and policies can significantly enhance community safety and resilience. This presentation encouraged attendees to consider how to leverage the insights and experiences from the Symposium, alongside continued work engaging with government and the sector, to provide lessons and learnings for colleagues grappling with similar challenges in their own domestic contexts all over the world.

Yvette Zegenhagen concluded by recognising that, for those working at the frontline of crises here and around the world, the law can be an invaluable practical tool to help build strong, resilient communities, to prevent or minimise harm and to help communities rebuild after shocks and trauma. It provides scaffolding for society in times of crisis and can also remind us of our common humanity on the worst day of someone's life.

The role of law in managing climate-induced disasters

Rosemary Lyster – Professor of Climate and Environmental Law, University of Sydney

Professor Lyster examined the legal, institutional, and justice-based challenges that arise in the context of accelerating climate-induced disasters. This summary captures the arguments and research covered.

The law is not peripheral but foundational to how societies respond to climate risks. Legal systems determine responsibility, resource allocation, protection of rights, and pathways for redress. As disasters become more frequent and severe, the legal system must evolve to address these compounding and cascading risks.

There is a four-phase structure to climate disaster law:

Prevention: Emissions mitigation, hazard risk assessments, and integration of climate change adaptation with disaster risk reduction frameworks like the Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework.

Response: Clear legal mandates for emergency warnings, coordination mechanisms, and roles of military and government.

Recovery: Embedding 'Build Back Better' principles and planning for climate displacement.

Compensation and risk transfer: Civil law, insurance systems, and disaster payments.

However, there are five areas where legal clarity and justice are urgently needed.

Mitigation: According to the 2024 UNEP Emissions Gap Report, CO₂ emissions reached a record 420 parts per million in 2023. Emissions must drop by 42% by 2030 to stay on a 1.5°C path – but current trajectories fall well short.¹⁹ It is critical that we uphold legal obligations under the Paris Agreement to limit warming to well below 2°C, and ideally 1.5°C.

Adaptation: A June 2024 report from the Least Developed Countries Expert Group found that many National Adaptation Plans are still in early stages, with no reliable metrics to assess whether current actions are meaningfully reducing vulnerability. National laws must better integrate climate adaptation and disaster risk strategies.

Climate finance: At COP29, developed countries again failed to meet the US\$100 billion annual finance goal. Meanwhile, developing countries require over US\$970 billion annually for mitigation and adaptation combined.

COP29 acknowledged that multilateral financial systems must be reformed to deliver climate justice. Developed nations continue to underdeliver on climate finance commitments, which is creating systemic inequity.

Loss and damage fund: The new Loss and Damage Fund reported US\$702 million in contributions from 23 countries. This is vastly inadequate in the face of increasing losses. Non-economic losses, such as cultural identity and community cohesion, remain unaddressed, and existing legal avenues for loss and damage are inadequate, particularly for non-economic impacts.

Displacement: There is no binding international legal framework to safeguard the rights of people displaced by climate impacts.

Australian context: National governance and structural barriers

Discussing findings from the 2020 Bushfire Royal Commission, Professor Lyster welcomed the establishment of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) – a positive step toward national coordination. However, while progress has been made on recommendations to improve information sharing and create a National Joint Common Operating Picture, consistent implementation across jurisdictions remains a challenge.

Professor Lyster concluded by reinforcing that legal and institutional reform is essential to ensure just and effective climate disaster responses, which must include:

- Strengthening legal protections for communities
- Ensuring accountability in emissions and finance
- Embedding justice principles in all disaster phases, and
- Reimagining national governance to prioritise public safety and climate resilience.

The presentation offered a sobering assessment of the current state of climate law and a clear direction for cross-sector collaboration to build a more just and climate-prepared future. It was an urgent call to action for legal practitioners, emergency managers, policymakers, and academics to strengthen the legal frameworks that govern disaster risk, response, recovery, and compensation and place justice and equity at the centre.

Workshop 1: Does law matter in emergencies?

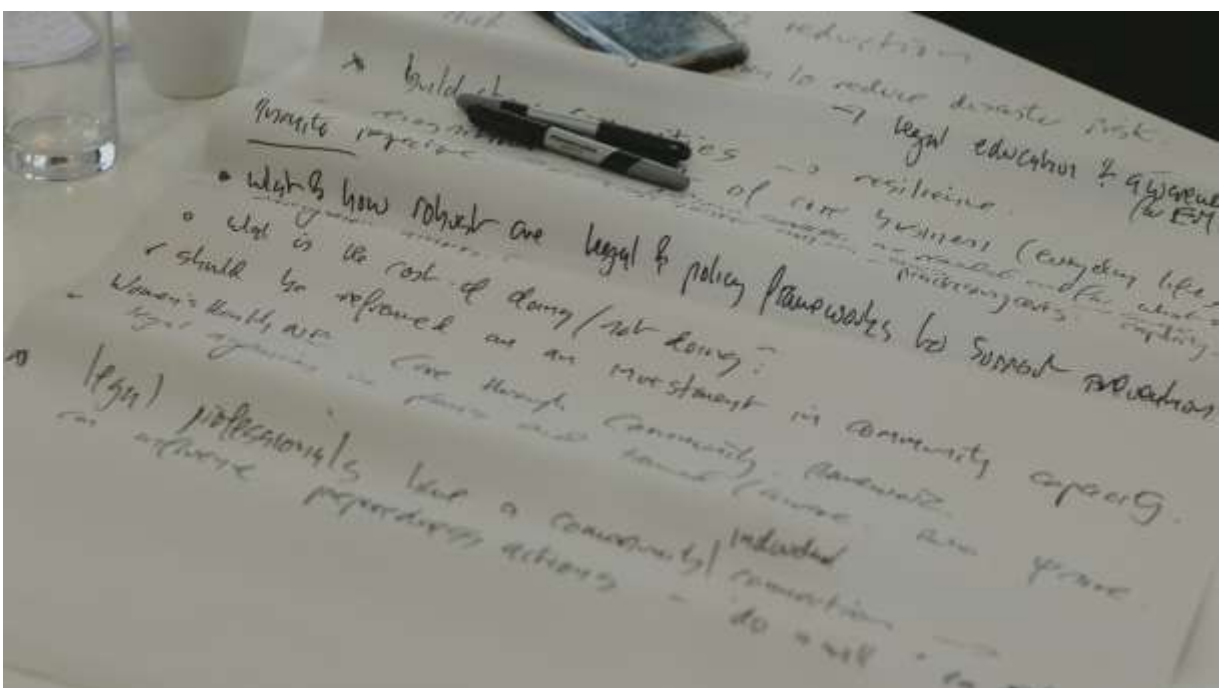
During this workshop, attendees were invited to explore the role of law in disaster relief and recovery, examine how legal frameworks shape emergency responses, and explore how inconsistencies can create confusion and distress for disaster-affected communities. Participants engaged with the legal, practical, and cultural dimensions of emergency response, using a cross-border scenario to frame discussion.

Scenario – Cross Border/Stay or Go:

Jo lives in a remote area in NSW near the Victorian border. Both sides of the border are threatened by a bushfire. There is a current emergency warning in both states. Jo's plan is to help her parents stay and defend the family farm 20 minutes away in Victoria. While she is on the farm, the police and CFA attend to encourage Jo and her family to leave. They refuse.

Questions and prompts

- What role do emergency services have in the relief and recovery phases of a disaster? What about community services (legal, financial counselling, health)?
- How is your state emergency management framework (EMF) implemented in your local area?
- Can Jo and her family be ordered off/forcibly removed from the farm by the police or CFA? Can they be arrested? Would this situation be different if the farm was in another state?



Legal and jurisdictional complexities

Participants considered the challenges posed by Australia's diverse legal and governance frameworks. For instance, in Victoria, residents with a financial interest in property cannot be forcibly evacuated, in contrast to New South Wales where they can. Jurisdictional approaches also diverge: Queensland places legislative responsibility for relief on local government under the *Disaster Management Act* and *Environmental Protection Act*; Tasmania relies on government involvement later in recovery; Victoria coordinates through the *Emergency Management Act*; and the Northern Territory applies a dual-government state authorities with local framework. Community legal centres are often engaged at the local government committee level through municipal emergency management plans.

Community impact and legal implications

Participants examined the interface between legal frameworks, response priorities, and community-defined needs. While the preservation of life and property is consistently prioritised, this can obscure or override the values and priorities articulated by affected communities. Persistent ambiguity surrounds questions of responsibility and liability – for example, accountability where residents refuse evacuation and subsequently perish, or the legal implications when volunteers dispose of property during clean-up operations.

'Disaster response happens fast, and the focus is on preserving life and property and identifying immediate next steps. But there can be differences between community needs and what emergency services may think community need.'
Symposium attendee

Trauma, empowerment and cultural considerations

The imperative for trauma-informed and culturally competent approaches was discussed by participants. Disasters magnify everyday legal and social issues, underscoring the need for responses that recognise and mitigate trauma. The provision of culturally safe environments in evacuation and relief centres is particularly critical for First Nations peoples and migrant communities. Legal literacy initiatives were identified as important in restoring personal agency and empowering individuals during crisis and recovery.

'A trauma-informed lens on disaster response is needed. 'Ordinary' problems are exacerbated by disaster. Processing information can become difficult. Empowerment comes from understanding the process and identifying that's something I can do (even when all else is out of your control).'

Symposium attendee

Experiences of First Nations communities

Participants discussed the unique impacts of emergency powers and legislation on First Nations communities. Emergency powers need to adequately respect cultural obligations, to reduce the likelihood of damage to country, artefacts, and heritage sites.

Rural and agricultural perspectives

There was discussion of the distinct challenges faced by rural and agricultural communities, including drought as a significant, and a largely silent disaster event. Delegates noted that farmers frequently prioritise high-value machinery and equipment over residential dwellings, highlighting the need for tailored legal and emergency management guidance.

Emergency and recovery worker wellbeing

Participants spoke of the pressures experienced by recovery personnel, including those providing legal support. Local personnel are frequently exposed to vicarious trauma, balancing the demands of community care with their own personal circumstances. Where personnel live and work within the same community, risks of role conflict and social isolation are heightened.

'It's very difficult when you lose everything – it's possible to lose your house, livelihood, car, and animals all at once. On-the-ground engagement is important, because response and recovery actions and the legal system can reinforce trauma. Community agency is important, too.'

Symposium attendee

Structural and systemic challenges

Systemic barriers within Australia's disaster governance arrangements were also discussed. The distribution of responsibilities across local, state, and federal levels can be unclear, contributing to confusion and inefficiency. Moreover, the conventional model of sequential disaster phases – response, relief, and recovery – does not align with the lived realities of compounding or simultaneous events. Legal and policy frameworks need to be better oriented towards resilience and risk reduction.

Summary

This workshop highlighted the critical intersection between law, governance, and disaster response. Legal frameworks can either support or hinder effective relief and recovery, depending on their clarity, consistency, and cultural sensitivity. There is an urgent need to embed trauma-informed, place-based, and legally coherent approaches into all stages of disaster management to support both affected communities and frontline responders.

Access to disaster justice

Dr Monica Taylor

Researcher, Queensland University of Technology

Dr Monica Taylor considered how disasters can expose and deepen existing inequalities in society, and how their management can further perpetuate or minimise inequities and injustices. This is a summary highlighting the research shared with attendees.

There are two broad bodies of law during disasters:

- Laws that govern the operation of disasters. There are many pieces of legislation, in addition to common law principles, that govern the operation of disasters, at all stages of the disaster management cycle.
- Everyday laws. The many laws that affect people who are impacted by disaster.

The first type of laws, disaster management laws, mostly operate at the state/territory level. However, after the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements 2020, national legislation was enacted that provides a framework for the declaration of a national emergency – *National Emergency Declaration Act 2020* (Commonwealth).

These laws provide a legal definition of what a disaster is. They provide the source of legal authority to lawfully declare a disaster, and they grant ‘disaster powers’ to emergency personnel. The second type of laws, everyday laws, include tenancy, employment, insurance, domestic and family violence, and many others.

It is at the intersection of these two bodies of law that we can explore the idea of disaster justice, not just legal problems. Accessing ‘justice’ is different to having a legal problem. Legal problems can usually be addressed by securing available legal rights and

remedies through existing laws and processes. However, accessing *justice* refers to experiences of injustice that may not be recognised through existing laws and processes, where law may not yet exist or reach.

The emergence of ‘disaster justice’ as a critical discourse focuses on the importance of equitable treatment of people in disaster-related policies and reframes disaster management in terms of social justice and human rights.²⁰

Human rights principles can support people to seek and achieve disaster justice. A human rights-informed disaster management system places human rights at the centre of each phase of the disaster management cycle and requires that people most at risk of harm from disasters participate in decisions that impact them and their communities. The centring of gender perspectives and First Nations knowledge, wisdom, and expertise is crucial, as are the voices of people with disability.

Human rights are now an expected norm in disaster management in Australia.²¹ Countries like Australia have a positive obligation to respect and protect human rights, including the right to life, through key conventions that Australia is signatory to including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This means that governments need to actively take steps to prevent harm from impending disasters.²²

Building in floodplains is an example of how governments can be in the business of disaster risk creation. Not only does it potentially create legal problems down the line for householders who live in flood-prone properties, it also threatens livelihoods and, in human rights terms, the right to life. This is a live issue amidst the 'triple crisis' – climate, biodiversity and the rising cost of living.

Dr Taylor's research explores the intersection between the climate crisis and the legal assistance sector, through interviews with lawyers across Australia about the sector's preparedness to address climate change-related legal problems. Below are quotes from Dr. Taylor's research interviews, which she shared in her presentation, that illustrate these challenges.

'There's still a real lack of understanding in emergency management in terms of the importance of legal [services] and that is a huge barrier. Even in dealing with some of the people on the ground... a lot of it is about us scrambling to get those invitations, us reaching out to other places to say, "You need to include us."'

'In the city, even if you were flooded and you were helping someone who was flooded, you're still a step removed from your clients. Rarely do you run into them at the supermarket. Rarely do they know who your parents are, and where you went to school.'

'In a small town – I mean honestly, I can't imagine anything more difficult than sitting in that recovery centre and being the one responsible for fixing the problems of people you grew up with, your neighbours, your friends and people you see. It's very isolating.'

'So, there seems to be this awful sort of circle of people who are disaster impacted, who then have legal problems, who were then feeling significant mental health, stress and anxiety around it. And it is really clear to see in the disaster space that the people who are vulnerable and already experiencing poverty and disadvantage are far more impacted, but also this bigger group of people who were being impacted for the first time.'²³



How disasters shape legal problems

Dr Emily Kothe – Senior Researcher, Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

Dr Emily Kothe shared insights into how disasters shape legal problems through the lens of the Law & Justice Foundation’s analysis of three years of disaster response and recovery services delivered by New South Wales Legal Aid’s Disaster Response Legal Service. Below are the key observations and themes covered.

What is a disaster-related legal problem?

Disasters leave a profound aftermath for individuals and communities. People impacted by disaster may face displacement, which can lead to homelessness, financial hardship, and long-term impacts on physical and mental health. Essential services like transport, schools and healthcare often suffer severe damage, slowing community recovery. Economically, disasters cause widespread property loss, disrupt business activity, and increase unemployment. For individuals, financial stress is often compounded by complex insurance processes. The psychological toll can persist for years.

Legal problems are problems or disputes that raise legal issues or for which there may be a legal resolution. People often fail to recognise the legal dimensions of their problems, both in day-to-day life and in disaster scenarios. However, early identification of legal issues can lead to early resolution or prevent legal problems escalating.

In 2024, the Law and Justice Foundation published the [State of the Evidence report](#), which analysed NSW’s Disaster Response Legal Service (DRLS) data alongside existing

research.²⁴ This report identified convincing evidence of an increase in both legal problems and legal need following disaster.

This is supported by the Victoria Law Foundation’s [Public Understanding of Law Survey \(PULS\)](#), which showed that Victorians who experienced the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires were more likely to have experienced a legal problem, more likely to have that legal problem result in legal need and less likely to have their legal problems resolved within 12 months.²⁵ Overall, research shows that legal problems surge in the immediate post-disaster period but are characterised by a ‘long tail’ with problems persisting long after disaster response ends.²⁶

Legal problems resulting from disaster response and support

Programs designed to assist in disaster recovery can themselves lead to legal need. For example, the Resilient Homes Program,²⁷ which offers home buybacks to a maximum of \$600,000 and flood resilience works to a maximum of \$200,000 to homes at high risk of future flood in designated NSW local government areas, has led to substantial demand for legal services.

Decisions relating to the scheme involve significant sums of money and determine whether families can relocate, the program is complex, and legal providers have engaged in sustained outreach to support communities in areas covered by the scheme.

Frontline providers in NSW have noted that many grant schemes are designed to provide relief for uninsured people. This can result in a complex legal landscape, particularly in cases where people had building insurance but opted out of flood cover. Because there is often uncertainty about whether water damage was caused by a flood or a storm, some people were required to submit an insurance claim to provide evidence of its rejection – a necessary step to prove eligibility for government relief.

The interconnected nature of these problems reinforces the need for a coordinated, holistic approach to disaster relief and the potential role of the legal sector in identifying and advocating for changes in policy that would reduce people’s experience of legal need.

Embedding legal need into disaster response and recovery

A consistent theme has emerged in disaster research across the country: disasters create legal problems that are complex, widespread, and long-lasting, and different groups experience legal need in distinct ways.

Effective disaster response and recovery depend on strong collaboration across sectors. Community legal centres, legal aid commissions, family violence prevention legal services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services, and the private legal sector, all play a vital role in assisting people with disaster-related legal problems, but their work does not exist in isolation.

By integrating legal services into broader disaster resilience planning, there is the potential to reduce the severity of legal problems, improve outcomes, and ultimately contribute to more effective and equitable disaster response systems.



Panel: Responding to legal needs in disaster zones

Bill Mitchell OAM, Principal Solicitor, Townsville Community Law
Ippei Okazaki, Sector Development Manager, Community Legal
Centres SA

Kate Clohsey, Director of Strategy and Impact, ARC Justice
Sally Bryant PSM, Manager, Disaster Response Legal Service, Legal
Aid NSW

Chair: Dr Bronwyn Lay, Strategic Lead, Climate Justice Support
Unit, Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria

This panel brought together frontline legal service providers from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia, each of whom work within distinct legal frameworks and disaster contexts, including floods, bushfires, and cyclones.

The panellists are frontline practitioners – four people carrying real responsibility for meeting the legal needs of Australians living through disasters. One noted they had provided disaster legal assistance across six cyclones and six flooding events since 1997. Their experiences show providing disaster law services in Australia is being built in practice, across different state laws, geographies, hazard profiles, and community contexts, often under intense pressure.

The discussion centred on the lived experience of those delivering legal assistance to disaster-impacted communities, particularly place-based services where practitioners often face the same disruptions as their clients.

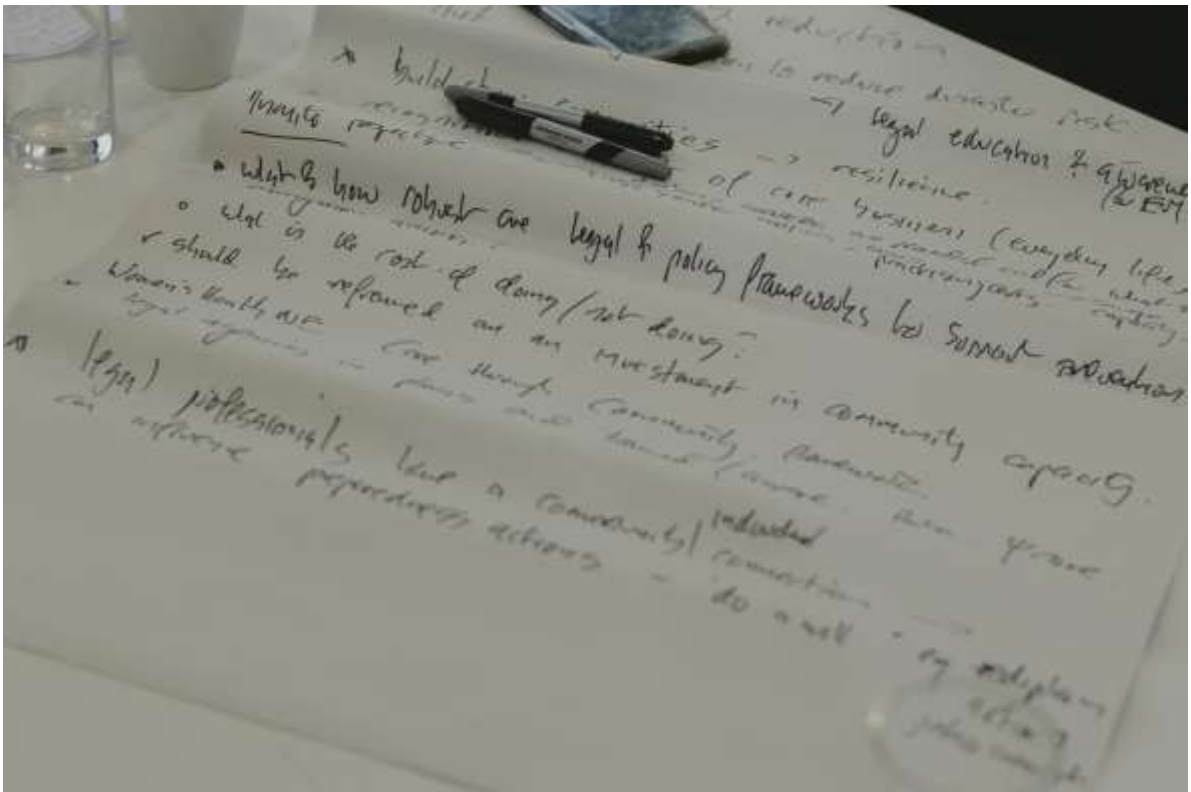
Panellists described navigating personal and professional crises simultaneously, such as responding to flooded offices while homes were inundated, and managing outreach when staff became stranded on impassable roads. These accounts highlighted the demands of decision-making in unstable environments, the imperative of business continuity, and the ongoing need to safeguard staff wellbeing. Panellists explained they have seen that organisations are increasingly engaged in preparedness, response, relief and recovery simultaneously.

Panellists also highlighted that legal need varies by hazard; for instance, flood-related building and insurance disputes differ markedly from post-bushfire issues involving land use, planning, and rebuilding. This diversity requires hazard-specific expertise, flexible service models, and rapid knowledge sharing.

Despite structural differences, collaboration between legal aid commissions, community legal centres, and the private profession is a constant. Services have moved into unfamiliar areas of law to meet evolving community needs, and panellists noted that legal remedies sometimes fail to match collective recovery needs, requiring thoughtful advocacy to bridge that gap. The 'long tail' of recovery was a consistent theme: legal needs often emerge months or years after the initial emergency, necessitating sustained engagement and steady coordination. But it is also critical to have specialised, early legal help in the immediate aftermath of disasters to help prevent homelessness and further hardship.

All panellists affirmed research on the distinct nature of disaster legal needs while emphasising the centrality of relational trust. Misconceptions that legal help is primarily for profit can deter community engagement, so trust built with communities and partner organisations is critical to enable earlier help seeking, clearer rights protection, and smoother recovery trajectories.

The panellists spoke about what helps their work, highlighting collaborative systems that respond to uncertainty with trust and flexibility, stronger capacity and capability across services, consistent coordination, and building innovative practice collectively.



Workshop 2: Legal needs and risk reduction

In this workshop, DLHV invited participants to reflect on the often-overlooked legal dimensions of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Participants explored how legal problems emerge or are exacerbated following disaster events, the role of service providers in recognising and responding to legal need, and the importance of integrated and trauma-informed legal support as part of disaster resilience.

Examples of the questions and prompts used in the workshop:



Is it your agency's role to help people access support after a disaster?



How do you know when an everyday problem is a legal problem?



If someone mentions a problem, but you are not sure if it involves a legal issue, what are some of the things you could do?



What are some of the legal barriers in disaster risk reduction?



Table Discussions

Identifying legal need

Participants explored the difficulties in recognising and responding to legal need in disaster contexts. Participants shared that many people affected by disaster are unaware they require legal assistance, with issues often emerging only once they are explicitly identified by others. Everyday challenges such as housing insecurity, family violence, and financial hardship are often magnified post-disaster, compounding trauma and obscuring legal dimensions.

'Everyday problems are amplified or exaggerated after a disaster event. Problems pile up. Intersecting issues can manifest and impact peoples' capacity to respond, including the trauma of the disaster or factors such as family violence. This multitude of compounding problems can make issue spotting challenging. This highlights the importance of the presence of legal support in recovery phases and spaces.'

Symposium attendee

Common post-disaster legal issues include housing, debt, and property damage; employment, insurance, and mortgage disputes; family law and protection orders; breaches of privacy, lost identification, visa uncertainty, and financial abuse; and scams, infringements, or disaster-related regulations.

Participants emphasised the importance of gently 'drilling down' by asking questions, avoiding unqualified advice, and seeking collegial input to facilitate appropriate referrals. Participants agreed that engagement must be undertaken through a trauma-informed lens, sensitive to the social, emotional, cognitive, and cultural needs of those affected.

Justice and risk reduction

The role of legal services in promoting justice and reducing risk was explored. Participants stressed that legal responses must be place-based, person-centred, and grounded in trust between providers and communities. Warm referrals, where trusted intermediaries support connections to legal services, were highlighted as particularly effective for individuals experiencing trauma. However, these approaches rely on pre-existing networks, cross-sector collaboration, and adequate local capacity. Increasing collaborative action during mitigation and preparedness phases, rather than waiting for crisis or recovery, was identified as a critical solution.

'A warm referral is often a positive outcome, especially for someone experiencing trauma. But a referral network relies on capacity and existing relationships and expertise. One solution is to increase collaborative action locally in mitigation and preparedness stages.'

Symposium attendee

Legal literacy and post-disaster legal issues

Participants reflected on the central role of legal literacy in strengthening resilience. Understanding rights and responsibilities is essential to navigating post-disaster systems and preventing secondary harm. Disaster contexts often exacerbate power imbalances, particularly in dealings with insurers, landlords, or employers. Trauma and cognitive overload can impair decision-making, increasing vulnerability. Practical resources, such as preparedness checklists and 'Grab & Go' kits were identified as effective tools to support legal resilience.



Integrated and collaborative approaches

Integrated and collaborative models were determined by participants to be the most effective means of meeting disaster-related legal needs. Embedding legal professionals within planning, coordination, and recovery processes builds system-wide literacy and enhances capacity. An integrated practice model, where legal, health, financial, and social services work in tandem, was strongly endorsed, with a 'one-door' entry model highlighted as an accessible pathway for affected individuals. Sector-wide training and shared frameworks were recommended to equip practitioners across disciplines to identify and respond to legal risks before they escalate.

Structural and systemic challenges

Participants considered the systemic barriers that limit effective legal support in disasters. Sustained relationship-building alongside disaster response is resource-intensive and requires long-term investment, rather than reliance on short-term projects. In some jurisdictions, concerns about legal liability, such as developers challenging flood modelling, can deter local councils from pursuing risk reduction measures. Law itself can also create barriers; examples included insurance requirements for photographic evidence of livestock losses and the exclusion of border communities from support when disasters originate in another state. Participants called for legal reform to ensure that legislative frameworks enable, rather than obstruct, disaster resilience.

Summary

This workshop highlighted the critical need for legal support to be recognised as a core component of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Legal issues are often hidden, delayed, or misunderstood, and service providers require tools, training, and partnerships to identify and respond effectively. Embedding legal literacy, integrated practices, and law reform into the disaster risk reduction agenda will enable communities to recover more quickly, reduce harm, and build resilience for the future.

'Building the capacity across the disaster sector in this way requires long-term funding. The sector relies on the experience, knowledge and networks of workers from different disaster events (for example, the 2019-20 bushfires). That expertise and those relationships are lost when programs finish.'

Symposium attendee

People often aren't aware that they need legal assistance following a disaster. They might not realise until the person they're liaising with says, "You need a lawyer". This won't necessarily occur immediately after an event.'

Symposium attendee



'Responses should be place-based and person-centred and focus on justice and risk reduction.'

Local connections and relationships between community and organisations are key to relief and recovery.'

Symposium attendee

Reflective panel: Learnings from the day

Claire Collie, Acting Director, Coordination and Planning Branch, National Emergency Management Agency

Dr Michael Eburn, Lecturer, Charles Sturt University

John Richardson, Executive Director, Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

Chair: Andrew Coghlan, Head of Humanitarian Diplomacy, Emergencies, Australian Red Cross

The closing panel brought together leaders from across the legal and emergency management sectors to share their perspectives on the Symposium. Their discussion highlighted the growing interest in the intersection of disasters and the law, and the importance of integrating legal advice into emergency management for shared understanding. The panel emphasised the need for visibility of legal issues in disaster contexts, along with the use of consistent and accessible language to help people connect with, and navigate, these issues.

It was acknowledged that legal matters can have a significant impact on individuals and communities, often compounding the psychosocial impacts already experienced following a disaster. Panellists stressed that these psychosocial impacts must remain central when working with people and communities. The discussion also recognised that, while the consequences of disaster are largely experienced by people, legal considerations extend beyond human impacts to include animals, the environment, future generations, and

cultural heritage.

Two key questions guided the discussion:

- How can legal knowledge and perspectives be embedded more meaningfully and cohesively into existing systems?
- What are the key takeaways from both an emergency management and legal perspective?

Panellists reflected several key themes:

Law in practice: The law is not self-executing; effective implementation requires policy, commitment, and the will to act. Legislative or international agreements have limited impact without the necessary operational and cultural frameworks to bring them to life.

Balancing solutions and unintended consequences: Measures to reduce disaster risk, such as restricting development in hazard-prone areas, may have unintended effects on other systems, such as local government capacity to sustain essential services and population levels.

Systems thinking: Addressing legal issues in disasters requires moving away from siloed, technocratic approaches. A coordinated, cross-sector systems approach can prevent issues from being treated in isolation.

Embedding legal literacy: Legal knowledge should be embedded across the emergency management system early in the disaster cycle, not left until the recovery phase. This includes recognising that disaster-affected communities already have systems, strengths, and capacities that must be respected.

Good practice guidance: The Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection was identified as an important tool for the sector, although it was noted that the law and

the role of the legal sector is not currently represented in these resources.²⁸

National coordination: The lack of a coherent national approach to integrating legal considerations into disaster management remains a challenge, and further national discussions are needed to explore how this can be improved.

Future commitments: The panel concluded with commitments to better integrate legal needs into existing emergency management resources, and to explore the development of a dedicated disaster law collection based on good practice.



Symposium findings

The Disasters and the Law National Symposium was one of the first opportunities in Australia for a dedicated conversation between the emergency management and legal sectors, both of which have crucial roles in supporting communities before, during and after emergencies and disasters. Drawing on the presentations, panel sessions and workshop, key insights from the Symposium included the need for:

- National laws to continue to meet international obligations and better integrate climate adaptation and disaster risk strategies.
- Legal and policy frameworks to be oriented to resilience and risk reduction rather than to response and recovery.
- Coordinated action across all levels of government and sectors to build resilience and support adaptation efforts to help all people living in Australia to prepare for and live with new climate realities in ways that are just, safe, and accessible.
- Integrated and collaborative models as the most effective means of meeting disaster-related legal needs, particularly during mitigation or preparedness phases.
- Embedded legal literacy, from local communities to government agencies, and an understanding of local, state and federal disaster powers and responsibilities to help ensure timely, effective and community-appropriate response and recovery, while also avoiding the risk of deepening existing inequalities.
- Recognition of the surge of legal problems in the immediate post-disaster period and the 'long tail' of legal problems that persist long after disaster response ends.
- Place-based approaches to disaster response that build on existing trust between communities and local organisations, that provide local knowledge, relationships and the opportunity for coordinated cross-sector collaboration between the legal, emergency management and other sectors.
- Trauma-informed approaches when providing legal services to disaster-affected communities.



Symposium considerations

Based on discussions at the Symposium, the following considerations are suggested to help shape future legislation and disaster planning, response, relief and recovery to build resilience and improve outcomes and access to justice for people living in Australia that are affected by a disaster, both now and in the future:

- The Commonwealth Government can strengthen a coordinated and coherent national approach to disaster response and risk reduction. This should include:
 - Consistency of risk ratings, language and disaster phases
 - Improved information sharing
 - Mapping of federal, state and local government jurisdictions which should also indicate other state or federal legislation that intersects with disaster powers
 - Consistent implementation across jurisdictions.
- The Commonwealth Government can implement actions from the National Adaptation Plan and facilitate and resource adaptation, including legal need, for states and local government areas where possible.
- Commonwealth and state governments can adapt their disaster models and plans to include cascading, compounding and overlapping disaster events, taking into account legal need.
- Emergency management and government agencies can commit to centring human needs and rights in all disaster phases. A community-centric approach that respects the rights of all people is a sound basis for disaster justice.
- State emergency management and agencies can work in tandem with First Nations communities and Traditional Owners to acknowledge the importance of land rights and Cultural Heritage in disaster planning, response, relief and recovery efforts.
- Emergency management agencies can embed legal literacy throughout all phases of disasters. Ensuring legal organisations participate and share knowledge can help build literacy and cross-sector collaboration that prioritises early intervention and prevention.
- All tiers of government can commit to resourcing community-led disaster preparedness, including a focus on community legal education and initiatives that increase awareness of legal rights, needs and available remedies.

Attendees

ACOSS
Agriculture Victoria
ARC Justice
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
Australian National University
Australian Pro Bono Centre
Ballarat Community Health
Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service
Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
Berrill & Watson Lawyers
Charles Sturt University
CLC South Australia
Cohealth
Commonwealth Attorney-General's Dept
Community Justice Services
Community Legal Centres Australia
Community Legal Centres Queensland
Community Legal Western Australia
Consumer Action Law Centre
Dept of Families, Fairness and Housing
Department of Government Services
Dept of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
Dept of Justice and Community Safety
Disaster Response Legal Service (NSW)
Eastern Community Legal Centre
Emergency Recovery Victoria
Federation of Community Legal Centres
Financial Counselling Australia
Financial Counselling Victoria
Gippsland Community Legal Service
Gippsland Lakes Complete Health
Good Shepherd Australia Ann New Zealand
HopgoodGanim Lawyers
HowWeSurvive, UNSW Sydney
Human Rights Law Centre
Hume Riverina Community Legal Service
Justice Connect
Justice Department Qld
Legal Aid NSW
Legal Aid Queensland
Legal Aid Tasmania
Law Institute of Victoria
Mallee Family Care – Community Legal
Maribyrnong City Council
National Emergency Management Agency
National Indigenous Disaster Resilience
National Legal Aid
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service
NSW Reconstruction Authority
Parks Victoria
Pyrenees Shire Council
Queensland Reconstruction Authority
SAFECOM
Social Recovery Reference Group
Social Security Rights Victoria
South East Monash Legal Centre
Tasmania Legal Aid
Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman
Tenants Victoria
The Salvation Army
Townsville Community Law
University of Melbourne
VCOSS
Victorian Bar
Legal Services Board + Commissioner (Vic)
Victoria Police
Victoria University
West Wimmera Shire Council
Wisewould Mahony

Speakers

Professor Rosemary Lyster is the Professor of Climate and Environmental Law in the University of Sydney Law School and is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law. Professor Lyster is a leading expert in environmental and climate law and the emerging field of climate disaster law. In recognition of her expertise, Professor Lyster was appointed to the Academic Circle supporting the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, and in 2024 contributed to the [Special Rapporteur's Climate Justice: Loss and Damage report](#), advocating for a more inclusive Multispecies Justice approach to climate justice.

Dr Emily Kothe is the Senior Researcher at the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW. Dr Kothe is the lead author of [Natural disaster related legal need in Australia: Community Legal Centres and disaster preparedness](#) which presents findings from a study on the ways that Community Legal Centres in New South Wales engage in disaster preparedness, the barriers they face, and the enablers that support effective engagement and preparedness. The study is part of the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW's program of research that aims to understand the legal needs associated with natural disasters and the legal sector's capacity to respond to these needs.

Dr Monica Taylor is a lecturer at the Queensland University of Technology. Dr Taylor's PhD research, [Striving for climate justice: The role of the Legal Assistance Sector in responding to climate change-informed civil law needs of priority population groups in Australia](#), examines the readiness of Australia's public legal service system to respond to climate change-informed legal problems. Monica has also published an [Analysis of submissions to the 2023 Senate Select Committee on Australia's Disaster Resilience: A human rights analysis of Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements](#); and [Community Lawyering and Climate Justice: A New Frontier with Dr Bronwyn Lay](#).

Ms Yvette Zegenhagen OAM holds a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of International Relations, and a Masters in International and Community Development. Ms Zegenhagen worked with Red Cross for more than 15 years, most recently as Executive Director of External Engagement where she has been responsible for the organisation's humanitarian diplomacy. Yvette also served as Co-Chair of Australia's National International Humanitarian Law Committee and as a member of the Editorial Board of the International Review of the Red Cross. In 2024 Yvette received a Medal of the Order of Australia for Services to International Law.

Glossary

Auxiliary is a term used to describe supplementary help. Australian Red Cross, as a National Society in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, is auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. This status means that there is a specific and distinctive partnership between the public authorities and Australian Red Cross entailing mutual responsibilities and benefits. The status is based on international and national laws, in which the public authorities and the National Society agree on the areas in which the National Society supplements or substitutes for public humanitarian services.²⁹

Climate justice is about ensuring decisions and actions address the intersecting crises of climate change, ecological degradation, and widening inequalities, with mutually beneficial solutions that do not perpetuate or exacerbate those injustices now or into the future. It requires combining adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable development in ways that address or even eliminate, the root causes of social and ecological injustices.³⁰

Disaster describes a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.³¹

Disaster justice focuses on the role of governing structures in creating and perpetuating risks, inequalities and injustices that are magnified by natural hazards and extreme weather. Emphasises responsive and consultative relationships between emergency management and communities during extreme weather and disasters. Community and government responses need to be driven by equitable, fair and inclusive interventions that recognise the systemic drivers of inequity and environmental harm and address the existing systemic issues that perpetuate harm.³²

Legal problem describes the experience of problems that have a legal dimension, also known as justiciable problems. These are issues that can potentially be resolved through legal processes or interventions.³³

Legal need arises whenever a deficit of legal capability necessitates legal support to enable a justiciable issue to be appropriately dealt with.³⁴

Further reading

Articles

- [A human rights analysis of Queensland disaster management arrangements](#) – Monica Taylor
- [Climate change law](#) – Rosemary Lyster
- [Preparing the access to justice sector for climate change: insights from Australian lawyers](#) – Monica Taylor
- [Position Paper on the International Law Commission's Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters](#) – IFRC

Books and guides

- [Bushfires, neighbours and you: Overview of the law relating to bushfire preparedness in Victoria](#) – Allen Clayton-Greene (Victorian Bar)
- [Bushfire recovery: Planning law guidebook](#) – Gippsland Community Legal Service
- [Climate justice and disaster law](#) – Rosemary Lyster
- [Climate justice field guide](#) – Federation of Community Legal Centres
- [Flood insurance guide: A Maribyrnong community initiative](#)
- [Guidebook to public land management in Victoria](#) – Gippsland Community Legal Service
- [Stay or Go orders: your rights in a fire emergency](#) – Willem Drent (Victorian Bar)

Reports

- [A new perspective on legal need and legal capability – Report summary](#) (Public Understanding of Law Survey, Victoria Law Foundation)
- [Community lawyering and climate justice: A new frontier](#) – Monica Taylor and Bronwyn Lay
- [Everyday problems and legal need – Report summary](#) (Public Understanding of Law Survey, Victoria Law Foundation)
- [Housing, Homelessness and Disasters National Symposium](#) (report from the 2024 Red Cross, Homelessness Australia and HowWeSurvive (UNSW) Housing, Homelessness and Disasters National Symposium)
- [Natural disaster-related legal need in Australia: State of the evidence](#) – Emily Kothe et al (Law and Justice Foundation NSW)
- [Natural disaster-related legal need in Australia: Community legal centres and disaster preparedness](#) – Emily Kothe et al (Law and Justice Foundation NSW)

Cases

- [Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change](#)

Endnotes

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14. Emily Kothe et al, '[Natural disaster related legal need in Australia – State of the evidence](#)' (Report, 2024) 14.
15. Monica Taylor, 'Access to disaster justice' (Presentation, *Disaster and the Law National Symposium*, Queen Victoria Women's Centre Melbourne, 19 March 2025).
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17. Australian Climate Service, '[Australia's National Climate Risk Assessment: An Overview](#)' (Report summary, 2025) iii.
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