Community-Based Organisations & Volunteers Action Checklist

Purpose To help community-based organisations (e.g. Rotary & Lions Clubs, Neighbourhood Houses, church groups, sporting, or cultural groups) strengthen safety, inclusion, and wellbeing in the preparedness, prevention, response and recovery phases of disasters. It recognises that community organisations are trusted local connectors who can play a vital role in supporting inclusion, preventing family and domestic violence and helping people recover from disasters safely.

Aims Making sure everyone, regardless of gender, culture, ability, sexual orientation, or personal identity (such as faith, age, or lived experience) feels welcome, respected, and able to take part equally in community life and in disaster response and recovery. Inclusive practice goes beyond welcoming diversity; it means designing spaces, language, and decision-making so everyone can participate fully.

1. Build Awareness & an Inclusive Culture in your Organisation/Club		
Consideration	**Action**	**Completed**
Disasters can increase the risk of family and domestic violence. Building awareness helps prevent harm and create a culture of respect.	• Attend Gender and Disaster Australia's Lessons in Disaster training. Discuss what you learn in meetings/training sessions and apply it to your activities. • Share key messages in newsletters and community events: 'Disasters increase stress, but violence is never acceptable.' and 'Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported.' • Invite local speakers such as family violence and LGBTIQA+ services to meetings, training sessions or community events to help raise awareness and provide practical advice. • Challenge gendered stereotypes in meetings and social events (e.g. 'That's not respectful—let's keep this space welcoming for everyone.'). **Useful Resources:** Gender and Disaster training materials, Respectful Relationships Training, Local Council inclusion officers (if available).	

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2. Connect & Partner with Local Organisations and Services		
Consideration	**Action**	**Completed**
Partnerships ensure your group knows who to contact for specialist help and how to refer people safely. Collaboration supports inclusive planning.	• Identify and connect with local agencies and organisations such as family violence services, LGBTIQA+ organisations, multicultural and disability services, local government and emergency management agencies. • Exchange contact details and agree on how you'll share information in a crisis (who to call, when, and how). • Bring local partners together where possible to share insights about community risks and plan simple, coordinated ways to support people during disasters. • Share what your organisation can offer (e.g. meeting spaces, volunteers, communication networks). • Include people from different community groups in your planning meetings to ensure decisions and actions reflect a wide range of community perspectives and experiences. **Partnership Example**: Work with your local domestic and family violence service to co-design evacuation signage that are both visual and easy to understand.	

3. Create Safe & Accessible Spaces		
Consideration	**Action**	**Completed**
Ensure community spaces and activities are physically accessible, socially welcoming, and culturally safe, so everyone feels included, protected, and able to participate.	• Review community hubs and evacuation spaces for accessibility and safety: make sure entrances, signage, exits, ramps, and lighting are well marked, well lit, and easy to use so all community members including people with mobility needs or disabilities can enter and evacuate safely. • Ensure suitable seating and facilities for older adults, people with disability, and families—such as chairs	

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3. Create Safe & Accessible Spaces		
Consideration	**Action**	**Completed**
	with armrests, accessible restrooms, and toys or activities for children. • Provide options for privacy or quiet spaces where possible. • Display visible signs of welcome e.g. rainbow flags, multilingual posters, or accessibility symbols—to show that everyone is accepted and included. See following web links: https://www.rainbownetwork.com.au/resources?utm • Arrange interpreters or translation support for people who speak languages other than English. • Support a safe and respectful environment by adhering to zero-tolerance policies for harassment, discrimination, and disrespectful behaviour at meetings and events. • Provide for male/female and gender-neutral bathrooms to ensure people of all genders feel welcome, safe and respected • Organise quiet areas for people needing space. **Resources:** Australian Human Rights Commission - Disability Access and Inclusion Health Check, inclusion signage guides.	

Quick Wins		
Consideration	**Action**	**Completed**
If you're not sure where to start, consider these quick, low-effort actions:	☐ **Include family and domestic violence awareness in next newsletter** - Add information about support services and disaster-family and domestic violence connections ☐ **Review your meeting space** - Check accessibility and consider how welcoming it feels to diverse community members ☐ **Connect with one local service** - contact your local family violence service or multicultural organisation	

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	☐ **Plan awareness activity** - Organise a guest speaker or information session for an upcoming meeting/event ☐ **Update emergency contacts** - Ensure your organisation has current contact details for local support services ☐ **Practice inclusive language** - Start using more inclusive language in your communications and activities	

Resources and Support

Key contacts to get you started:

- **1800RESPECT:** 1800 737 732 (24/7 confidential counselling and information)
- **Men's Referral Service:** 1300 766 491
- **Gender and Disaster Australia resources:** https://genderanddisaster.com.au/

Local contacts:

Local Family Violence Service: _____

Multicultural Community Centre: _____

LGBTIQA+ Support Organisation: _____

Emergency Management Office: _____

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