



MARA BUN

# COMMUNITIES NEED TO 'HARDEN UP' THEIR RESILIENCE TO MAJOR EVENTS

"The 20th century was a very quiet period for severe weather activity in Queensland," said Jeff Callaghan. "After 2004, things started to pick up."

As a retired senior forecaster with the Queensland regional office of the Bureau of Meteorology, Jeff would know. He can recall each major event in recent and past history with precision.

Jeff is concerned that as we enter the 21st century we are reversing into an historically active severe weather century, which is consistent with trends that have been tracked through paleontology records over many centuries in this part of Australia.

Currently, Jeff chairs the committee of a new initiative – HardenUp.org - led by Green Cross Australia under the National Disaster Resilience Program. The initiative aims to raise the awareness of Queenslanders to natural hazards across the state, and mobilise people to be more resilient in the face of major events.

The project will be the world's first rich media severe weather online platform. Not only will it enable ordinary Queenslanders to visualise 100 years of major weather events in their local community, but also play forward to the major weather events they can expect over the next 100 years.

The HardenUp.org partnership features some of Australia's best climate researchers, including the Bureau of Meteorology, Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence, CSIRO's Climate Change Adaptation Flagship, and the Federal Government's Department of Climate Change Coastal Adaptation team.

Green Cross is part of Mikhail Gorbachev's global network of NGOs, which empowers communities to respond to environmental change.

By encouraging people to identify their own hazard exposure, we will

raise awareness among newer residents of the cyclical patterns of major events. These often take several decades to recur. For example, the last major storm surge event in southeast Queensland was in 1967, and there is growing concern the region is due for another major event. Newcomers to the Gold and Sunshine Coasts have not been through these before and need to learn how to prepare and respond.

In partnering with Suncorp Insurance, RPS Group, the Property Council of Australia and Emergency Management Queensland, HardenUp.org will draw on leading sources of resilience information and advice. Network Ten will also promote HardenUp.org across Queensland leading into the next storm season.

Importantly, we will encourage residents to take practical actions to enhance their properties' resilience to cyclones, storm surge and severe storm hazards. By checking for loose tiles, clearing gutters, ensuring garage rolling doors, windows and doors lock properly and other measures, it's possible to significantly reduce the chance of a roof blowing off during a major event – and that turns out to be a very sustainable outcome to avoid the embedded emissions and other environmental costs of rebuilding.

Climate change and population growth present new challenges for Australia's severe weather resilience, and test the effectiveness of traditional emergency response systems. New paradigms that leverage private sector and community engagement are needed in order to encourage self-reliance to growing hazard exposure.

After encouraging people to develop their personal resilience plan, HardenUp.org will enable sharing of action across social media including Facebook to build viral participation.

By enabling world-class visualisation solutions and simple user-driven navigation pathways our platform will create a lasting resource for online community, government, business and research. 🏠

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