



Thriving Queensland  
Kids **Partnership**

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# Thriving Kids in Disasters

PHASE 2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS REPORT

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# Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership

**Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP)** is a Queensland-based intermediary and coalition focused on systems change for the benefit of infants, children, young people and their families.

Instigated and hosted by ARACY – Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, TQKP brings together Queensland leaders, organisations, practitioners, and collaborators from multiple sectors to work collectively towards our shared vision for a Queensland where all children and young people have what they need to thrive – now and into the future.

To find out more about our work, visit [www.tqkp.org.au](http://www.tqkp.org.au)

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## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands upon which we live and work, and their continuing connection to land and sea, kin, culture and community. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and to First Nations colleagues.

We are privileged to welcome and grow our children and support our families in these places.

We also acknowledge the First Nations leaders, advocates and organisations that have fought for children and their families, and the resulting consequences of adversity and trauma over generations.

We acknowledge the resilience, determination, leadership, generosity and innovation of First Nations peoples, and we recognise the value inherent in Indigenous ways of 'knowing, being and doing'.

# Acknowledgement of Collaborators

TQKP acknowledges the expertise and generosity of the kids, caregivers, communities, funding partners and systems practitioners and leaders who have contributed to the development of these engagements.

TQKP further acknowledges the contribution of all who help our kids and communities prevent, prepare, respond to and recover from disasters, and of those whose lives have been touched by disaster impacts across Queensland and beyond.



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every child thriving  
**aracy**

## TKiD Phase 2 community engagements were made possible through collaboration with:

- Kids and caregivers from Western Downs, Kowanyama and Cairns communities, Queensland
- Western Downs Regional Council
- Chinchilla Community Centre
- Hannaford State School
- Meandarra State School
- Brigalow State School
- Kogan State School
- Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council
- Youth Empowered Towards Independence
- Kowanyama State School
- Kowanyama Anglican Church
- Community Enterprise Queensland
- Child, youth mental health services, Kowanyama, Children's Health Queensland
- Play Matters
- Queensland Centre for Perinatal Infant Mental Health, Children's Health Queensland

# Introduction & Background

## Thriving Kids in Disasters (TKiD)

The Thriving Kids in Disasters (TKiD) initiative is a response to the impacts of increasingly frequent and intense, climate change related disasters on kids and families. In Queensland, this is pronounced, with 100% of local government areas subjected to a disaster activation since 2021 and an unprecedented thirteen separate disaster events across the 2023/4 season.

To effectively respond to these challenges we must act decisively on the evidence, to mitigate the threats disasters pose to the safety, wellbeing, and development of Queensland's 1.6 million kids.

TKiD works to increase the visibility of kids and their caregivers in all disaster management (DM) phases and spaces through a range of workforce development, smarter investment, concerted leadership, and improved data collection and research initiatives that enable integrated and responsive program and service delivery, and more meaningful and inclusive participation by kids and their caregivers in DM spaces.

“

We live in a container house. It's too hot to do anything, so we go outside. It's too hot to concentrate or do homework. I do that at school. The fires came to behind our property so Dad's just cleared all the trees and bushes to stop fires coming. Now it's hotter and there are no trees to sit under. He's making two of us girls a separate bedroom in a caravan though because there's nine of us. Too many in the container.

– *Primary school student, Western Downs*

## Community Engagements

Kids are chronically underrepresented in decision-making. This is despite the potentially far greater and more enduring impact that major policy, service and infrastructure decisions will have on their lives, relative to adults.

They tend to lack agency in decision making forums and are most commonly consulted on issues that have a specific and explicit youth lens, despite being a stakeholder in every area.

The implications of a lack of consultation and engagement with kids are intensified in disaster contexts. The unique developmental stage of babies, children and young people mean that they are uniquely impacted by disasters and require tailored supports to mitigate potentially negative effects. Significantly, research highlights that one of the most effective mechanisms to mitigate negative disaster impacts is to involve kids in disasters. Giving kids a voice and a role across all phases of disaster management provides a chance to them to exercise their own agency, cultivates a sense of self efficacy and provides systems leaders with child centred and informed strategies to support kids in disasters. This is highlighted in the [Thriving Kids in Disasters Report](#), which put forward a number of principles and recommendations to improve systems and better support the wellbeing, development and resilience of kids in disasters.

The follow-on from that report, Phase 2 of TKiD, involved translating those recommendations into workable, fundable propositions via the [TKiD Action and Investment Plan](#). This plan was co-developed in close engagement with kids and families from three Queensland communities in order to embed their voices and tangible ideas for a better geared disaster management system into the document.





## The Nest

ARACY's The Nest (Figure 1) informed the design of the three engagements.

Developed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) in consultation with over 4000 kids and caregivers, The Nest comprises six interconnected Domains of Wellbeing that help to understand the needs, experiences and factors that affect kids. It puts children at the centre of all efforts to enact positive change.

The domains provided both a guide for forming stimuli, activities and questions we wanted to answer in the engagements; and a framework for looking at the responses and ideas shared and identifying themes. We also know that children and young people are affected in unique and significant ways when a disaster strikes. Many such impacts are only identified in the longer term yet could be minimised if addressed early. However, as this report highlights, our current disaster systems do not adequately consider or address the needs of children, young people and their caregivers.

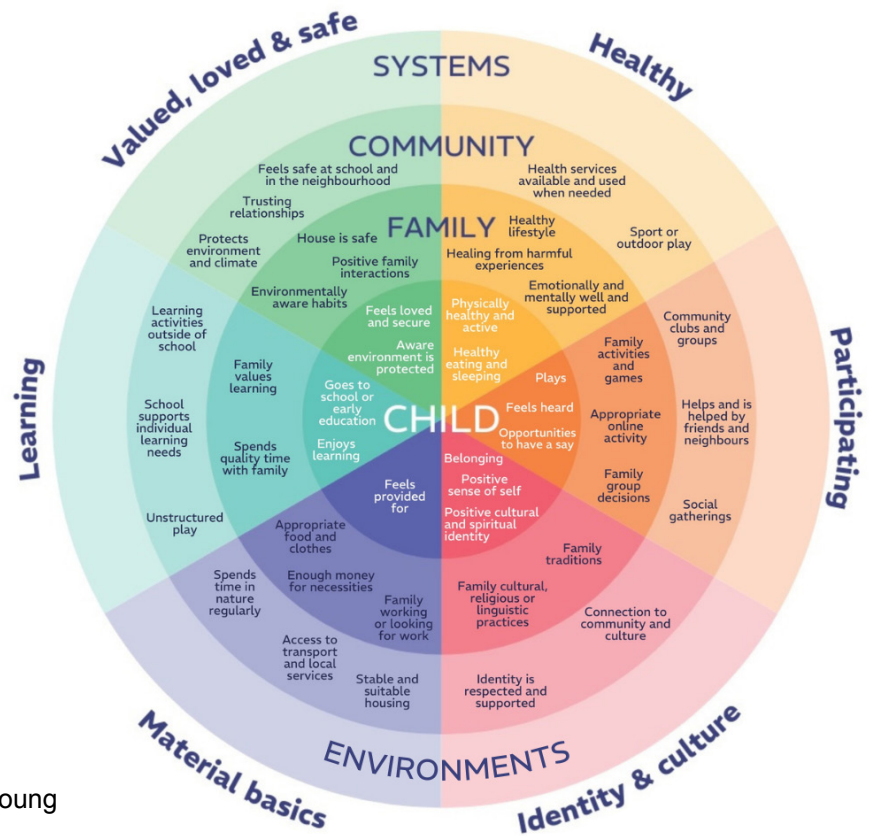


Figure 1 ARACY's The Nest

## How to read this document

The purpose of this report is to amplify the voices of kids and caregivers, to inform decision-making around their needs before, during and after disasters. This report shares the insights drawn from three community engagements with kids and caregivers in Western Downs, Kowanyama and Cairns and draws out common themes to inform further action, both locally and more broadly across the state. Further, this report details the methodology of these engagements, highlighting a range of strategies to better engage kids in disasters and provide an authentic forum for their voices to be heard and heeded by the systems that shape their broader lives.

### Methodology

This includes processes and considerations for consulting and engaging with kids that help to generate rich, authentic responses. If you are a local community leader, policy maker, work in a social service organisation or government, you will find here useful approaches to embedding young voices and ideas in decision making.

### Engagements

This section covers the three local engagements undertaken with kids and their families. It provides more detail on the nature of the engagements, providing examples of how the arts open up opportunities for rich discussions, as well as ideas and opportunities for taking action in these communities.

### Themes

This pulls together common themes from across all three engagements, offering opportunities for systems level changes that have potential impact beyond the three consulted communities.

# Methodology



## What is the story of this place?

During these engagements, we sought to help kids share their experiences of life in their community, within and beyond disaster contexts. This gave kids the opportunity to explore their needs and ideas for systems improvement across the full spectrum of disaster management - prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR).

Therefore, while we centred on specific disasters in each location, each program was designed to encourage wider reflections, and allow for following lines of thought that may not immediately relate to the disasters, but when put together could give a more complete picture of where systems gaps and overlaps might exist.

To achieve this, we designed each engagement using a storytelling framework, applying creative thinking strategies.

### Using creative thinking to explore and express experiences and ideas

In order for kids to be able to contribute meaningfully to a discussion, they need to have

- An appropriate level of context for the discussion, including an idea of where the information they are sharing might go, and what might be done with it
- A meaningful connection to the topic of discussion
- Support in applying both divergent and convergent thinking skills
- Time for consideration, reflection, soft-testing of their ideas
- An understanding that there are no right or wrong answers
- Trust in the people running and supporting the consultation

Arts-based engagements can provide a framework for generating ideas and responses that are not possible through surveys and interviews.

Kids' ability to express themselves using words can be affected by many factors, including but not limited to:

- Their vocabulary
- Their language background
- The time they need to process ideas into words
- The time they need to write a response
- How concerned they are with making a mistake (e.g., spelling mistakes)

- Their comfort levels and confidence in speaking and writing
- Their perception of what is expected with written work.

By inviting kids to create or contribute to an artistic response, they are being provided with a buffer from the direct question about their experience, and can instead engage in a conversation about the work they have created. This still allows for the capturing of stories, in their own voices, but also allows for the expression of ideas in other ways (visual or otherwise) that, in combination with the child or young person's narrative, provide a rich response.

### Divergent & convergent thinking

There are essentially two main activities that take place during a creative process. Divergent thinking, in which we provide ourselves with options, and convergent thinking, in which we select the option that best suits our desired outcome.

Often, when kids are consulted, it is done in a way that inhibits creative thinking, that is, they are asked closed questions that do not support the consideration of multiple possible responses, or not enough time or space is given for them to test different ideas.

Arts-based engagements can provide an opportunity for kids to apply creative thinking, opening up the possibility for more considered, and often less anticipated responses.

### Collaboration

Arts-based engagements also foster collaborative responses, which can be useful in exploring themes across different individual experiences.

Kids often have a richer visual vocabulary than a verbal one. By having the option to draw/sculpt/craft a response first, they are able to express ideas they may not have the language skills to communicate. Their creations then provide an anchor for discussion, prompting and clarifying questions, helping them to build their verbal description, resulting in richer responses.

Some challenges that are often faced in consultations with kids and examples of questions that can help kids elaborate on the ideas they've shared through art responses are given in the table on the following page.



# Conversations with kids

Challenge	Mitigating approach	What this looked like
<b>Kids provide answers to questions they think are correct, or what the interviewer is looking or hoping for</b>  <b>The environment or context is not conducive to creative thought, or opening up to sensitive topics</b>	Activity design that implies no right or wrong answer	Randomisation tools/techniques to help develop elements of a creative response
	Use of informal materials rather than more formal ones	Use of different sized small scraps of coloured paper instead of A4 sheets
	Openness to how kids share their ideas	Inviting kids to respond to a question with drawing or writing or a combination
	Accepting and honouring all responses	Before kids do each activity themselves, demonstrate the thinking we are looking for, facilitating a shared response by calling for and taking suggestions from the group; not rejecting any, but teasing out and building on them all - applying the improv technique of 'Yes, and...'
	Helping kids gradually build on small ideas, rather than asking for fully-considered responses up front	Staging out the process of inquiry, with elements built into each stage that prompted some reflection or interrogation of the previous stage
	Offering up choice in thinking	Rather than ask 'what happens next?', ask 'what could happen next?' and prompt for two different ideas
<b>Kids aren't able to express themselves sufficiently in writing or orally (because they have limited vocabulary, or need more processing time, or are slow to write, or not confident writers)</b>	Activity design that asks for a drawn or crafted response, which can then act as a topic for discussion to elaborate on	Asking elaborating questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you describe what is happening in this picture?</li> <li>• I like how you've done the expression on this character's face. Can you tell me how they're feeling?</li> <li>• If this character could talk, what might it be saying right now?</li> <li>• That's a big place you've drawn. Are there any other things you haven't yet drawn that we might find there?</li> </ul>
	Removing the barrier of written responses	Offering to scribe for them, reading back what they've said, and asking if there's any changes or additions they'd like to make.
<b>Kids do not feel psycho-socially safe to engage in the discussion</b>	Partnership with local service systems	Working with trusted support workers, community leaders to develop all aspects of the program  Ensuring partners are well briefed on consultation framework and aims  Designing program to enable kids to work alongside trusted partners, reducing focus on key facilitator, to support cultural safety
	Program design that allows kids to observe and try before fully engaging in the activity	Drop-in activity in community spaces, with trusted people present.  Activity design that indicates a small contribution is enough, but there is also no limit on contributions.

# Engagements



I put the sprinkler on the trampoline when it gets too hot, until Mum catches us and puts a stop to it because we're on tanks.

– Primary School Student,  
Western Downs

## Western Downs

### Context

Communities in the Western Downs are experiencing the effects of increased temperatures, and an increasing number of heatwaves annually.

Through partnership with Western Downs Regional Council, we engaged with three state schools, and developed a 1.5 hour workshop that focused on children's experience in heatwaves. 46 kids participated in the workshops, ranging in year level from Prep to grade 6.

The in-class workshop allowed for space to establish the context of the discussion, build rapport with the students, develop some shared language, and provide time for them to work through their ideas. It also allowed for one-on-one and group discussions.

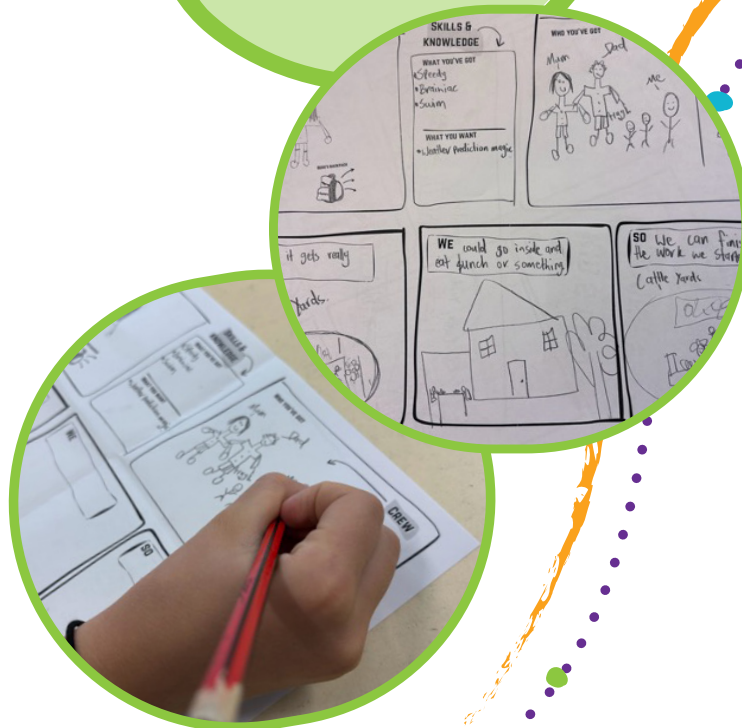
We needed to take into account the environment we were delivering the workshops in, and be aware of the tendency children have to wanting to provide the 'correct' answer when workshops are done in class.

While it is ideal to provide the full context to the teachers ahead of the session, and brief them on how they could best support the delivery of the workshop, this is often not possible for various reasons, including staffing changes, teachers' limited administration time, and last minute schedule changes.

The workshop needed to be designed to be accessible for a wide age-range, as the schools engaged were small, with multi-aged classes across prep-6, and they wanted to provide the opportunity to participate to all students.

### Program design

We designed a one-off in-class workshop for primary-school aged children titled **A Kid's Guide to Staying Safe in a Heatwave**.



Communities in the Western Downs are experiencing the effects of increased temperatures, and an increasing number of heatwaves annually.

The workshop involved stepping the kids through a series of narrative-based activities that together formed a picture of their experiences in their home, school and community life in relation to heat.

The kids were guided in the process of:

- Creating a map
- Fleshing out a protagonist (themselves) and their support crew
- Adding physical, emotional and knowledge-based resources
- Creating a short comic depicting an experience in their life related to heat

The resulting zines formed the basis of the children's consideration of the different aspects of heatwaves and how they are affected by them.



# Themes



## Kids' experiences can vary widely within and between communities.

A wide range of stories were shared by kids relating to their home life, the responsibilities they had, what options they had available to them to cool down and stay out of the heat, and how much this affected their ability to participate in school learning and other areas of their lives.

A common theme among kids who lived on working properties was the various jobs and responsibilities they held, which would often increase in cases of heatwaves.

The stories of farm jobs also highlighted the connection many of the kids had to animals - holding both formal responsibilities, and feeling emotional attachment to them.

## Kids may understand how to stay safe in heat, but not have the power or agency to act, or have access to the resources or facilities they need.

This lack of agency was referred to by kids describing farm jobs. It was also referenced several times by kids describing the lack of a local swimming pool, and their reliance on adults for transport and supervision, limiting their opportunities to swim to times outside of their control.

Stories shared by children living on farms was access to places to swim, particularly in dams on their properties. Their descriptions indicated a level of agency in choosing when they swam, and of having immediate access to water.

In contrast, kids who did not live on farms shared stories of having far fewer options to cool down. Most described having to either rely on being taken by bus to the local pool in a neighbouring town, or using sprinklers, or simply not being able to cool down.

## Schools, other institutions and public infrastructure offer relief from heat that many children do not have access to at home.

Many kids, particularly those not from farms, described homes that did not provide basic cooling, and referred to places such as school and the public pool as their options for respite from heat.

### Voices of Western Downs Kids

"When it was hot last week I had to go home after school and fill up all the water tanks for the animals."

"I stay cooler by staying out of the sun. That's hard when you're doing jobs (on the farm)."

"There's always jobs to do, even when it's hot. Dad doesn't care that it's hot."

"Sometimes when it's hot I don't feel like working (on the farm), but you still have to, even when it's hot."

"Sometimes people do squad at the (local) pool in the morning...if someone who is qualified has a key they can let us in...most parents have done the lifesaving course."

"I don't have a pool. I just live there (points to a street away from school) so I don't have a dam like them (other kids at her table). I go outside in the shade."

"We have a big family. This is the container we live in, but it's not really safe when it's hot. We go outside then and find shade. We can put on the sprinkler sometimes if there's enough water. But you just really sit around. You can't do anything much when it's too hot."

"Meandarra pool is the closest pool to here, we're going there for swimming lessons this afternoon...the shallow end has a shade, but the deep end doesn't."

"It's good at school because there's cool places inside and out. I like coming inside under the fans and aircon when it's really hot. You can't concentrate at home. It's too hot to even play sometimes. If you run around you feel too dehydrated and get a headache. It can get too hot to do homework. You can't concentrate."



# Engagements



“If it floods, we would stay home because the MPC (Multipurpose Centre) is for cyclones and it would flood. I’d have to go on the roof of the house.”

– Young person, Kowanyama

## Kowanyama

### Context

We worked in partnership with Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI) and Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council to facilitate local engagement with TKiD. Led by council and YETI, Kowanyama community has been in the early stages of developing a youth strategy and the TKiD engagement provided a platform to kickstart this process and engage young people locally.

We designed the youth engagement to work in a public setting, as a drop-in rolling activity rather than a discrete workshop, that also allowed for multi-generational collaboration.

We also anticipated potential changes to the program, including venue (the local church) and participant numbers, and so designed the engagement to be transportable, lo-fi and adaptable. This allowed for an extra session to be delivered with students from Kowanyama State School.

### Program design

We designed a simple installation of a floor map of Kowanyama, drawn roughly and fairly inaccurately in texta on brown paper.

Scattered around the map were images from the town – facilities, landmarks, recognisable streets, both during natural disaster events such as floods, and during less turbulent times – as well as paint pens, gluesticks, and scraps of coloured paper.

Several images were pre-stuck to the map, in questionable positions, and a handful of geographical features were drawn.

The map was installed on the floor of the church, and



young people were invited to visit and contribute to the map, sharing stories of their experiences during different weather events in relation to place - writing, drawing, narrating.

The inaccuracies in the beginning map served to engage young people in contributing, as they were keen to point out where we’d got it wrong.

As participants added more ideas, the map of Kowanyama grew, with more brown paper added to the floor, taking in surrounding areas such as rivers, the coast, and the road to Cairns.

The act of contributing stories to the map served as a focal point for discussion with young people about specific experiences relating to disasters, allowing the team of facilitators (YETI staff, TQKP staff, youth engagement staff from council) to expand on ideas shared.



# Themes



## Facilities are not designed with kids in mind and are not meeting their needs.

Kids shared stories describing their daily life and activities, making use of local facilities. A common topic was the need for infrastructure design that considered how young people make use of space, and their needs, particularly regarding heat.

The comments related to both public facilities and Kowanyama State School.

The need to address gaps in suitable infrastructure was also highlighted in discussions around disaster response, particularly regarding public shelter.



This relates to the responsibilities kids take on in the event of floods and highlights the need to help kids build clear understandings and knowledge around the work they are doing.

## Communicating with kids about disasters was identified as an opportunity for development.

Some young people noted the confusing messages relayed. Some adult community members identified the gap in teacher training and briefing, acknowledging that new teachers often arrive right before the wet, with little or no experience in cyclones or floods, and are ill-equipped to provide information to students.

## Voices of Kowanyama Community

“We need a separate pool for the little kids. Make them safe from the bigger kids. There’s room for it.”

“There’s just a basketball court but no poles or hoops...no shade, just stools, no undercover area...there’s the outline (of the court) but no hoop. A few kids just hanging around.”

“Sometimes at the school the air con breaks down...and we can’t open windows because they’re boarded up.”

“Then sometimes the bubblers don’t work.”

“There is no flood shelter.”

“If this place floods, the cyclone shelter floods too.”

“When the river gets high we make sandbags and put them all around the yard.”

“It would be better if young people could join the SES. It would help them get knowledge about serious disasters...with that knowledge they can show the community what is needed.”

“Cyclone Nora – Community meeting for adults, can’t remember anything for kids...Kids got info from family, like stay in the bathroom... It was very confusing.”





# Engagements



“That’s all of the water.  
It’s in the kindly.”

– Playgroup attendee,  
Cairns

## Cairns

### Context

We ran two playgroups in Cairns northern beaches, inviting families who had been affected by the flooding following Cyclone Jasper.

We partnered with the Queensland Centre for Perinatal Infant Mental Health (QCPIMH) and Play Matters to design an engagement that supported parents and carers of very young children to share their stories before, during and after the flood.

Play Matters supported the engagement with participating families, while QCPIMH provided specific guidance in the consultation of very young children around disasters. Both contributed to the development and facilitation of the engagements.

The two engagements, which were set up in two community centres, had small numbers of participants, possibly due in part to inclement weather (an irony not lost on everyone involved), however the result of this did allow for deeper conversations with participants than if there had been more families.

### Program design

Using ARACY’s The Nest wellbeing framework as inspiration, families attending the playgroup were invited to add a leaf to a big turkey nest, which sat on a blue tarp



representing the rising water, writing their experiences (or narrating these to a facilitator) on the leaf.

Families could also share their stories on postcards and letters, and pop them in the Turkey Post Box.

A series of related activity stations (rebuilding, dress-ups and drawing) were set up around the space.

The Nest was the centrepiece for discussion, with the accumulation of stories and ideas over the course of the engagement offering prompts, and the modular nature of the coloured leaves meant they could be rearranged to find common themes.

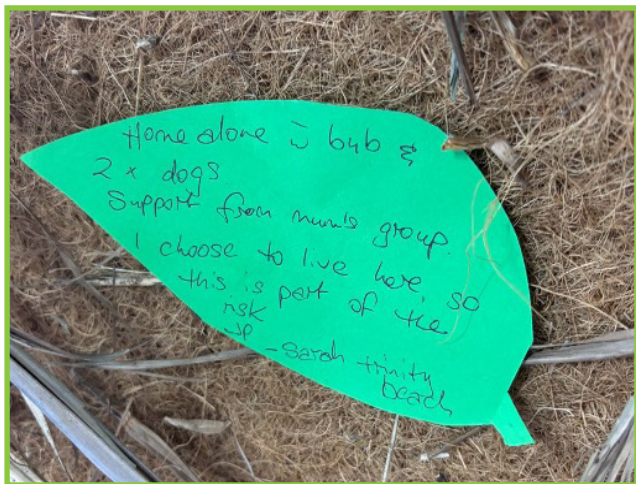




# Themes



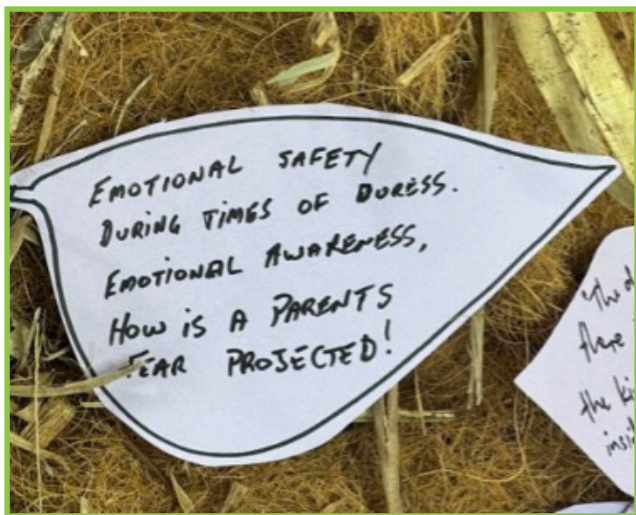
**Wider support networks are critical when disasters cut carers off from their primary supports.**



**Some parents talked about the emotional stress, and how they projected it might affect their children.**

One young child created a drawing depicting his kindly getting flooded, and talked about how he feels about different weather.

**"I love rain! (Do you like lightning?) Yes, I do like it."**



A parent described a similar response from her child, highlighting the ways young children experience events, and raising the broader consideration of kids' relationship with and understanding of weather in general.

## Voices of Cairns Parents and Caregivers

"The scariest part was that my partner was working away so it was just me, the baby and two dogs."

"Smithfield parents group organisation a WhatsApp which was helpful to stay connected and help each other with care...some of the parents work casual, some had partners away."

"I was stuck at Redlynch for a day, couldn't get through. Her mother and I are separated...I couldn't get in contact, wasn't able to be connected to my daughter, didn't know if they'd been affected. Yeah, that was stressful."

"I let my children know that this is 'right fear'. We have fear to warn us about external danger. I impart that information that this is a scary time, and this is what we have to do. We have to be alert, take this step, this step, this step: stay safe. It's solutions-focused."

"But it's important not to invalidate that emotion they're feeling. It's important they feel that emotion and not have it invalidated because we want to feel better as parents. It's like when someone's crying in front of you, and you give them a hug because we want to feel better, we feel awkward and uncomfortable. Rather than let them process what they're going through. That's why I think it's important that they process their fear, they don't suppress it, and that's where a lot of problems come. Depression is when we de-press emotion instead of letting it go through. Anxiety is based on the future, and it's only our imagination. We can imagine whatever we want. In cyclones we catastrophise, imagine so many scenarios. Don't do that - stay with the task at hand. Stay in the day. What we have to fear is our thoughts."

"It's important they feel that emotion and not have it invalidated because we want to feel better, we feel awkward and uncomfortable. Rather than let them process what they're going through. That's why I think it's important that they process their fear, they don't suppress it."

**"I took the Birdie's books home to my 6 year old. He didn't get to experience the floods and rain as a negative so when we read them together he got excited thinking that we will get to have fun in the rain again. We floated down the street in our kayaks and made nature boat races. His response was : 'Oh yay mum, when is this happening again?'"**

**– Caregiver, Cairns**

# Themes across the engagements

## Kids often lack control and power.

Kids may have the knowledge around things such as mitigating strategies for combating heat, but they are not always in control of being able to enact them.

### Western Downs

"I put the sprinkler on the trampoline when it gets too hot, until Mum catches us and puts a stop to it because we're on tanks."

"We live in a container house. It's too hot to do anything, so we go outside. It's too hot to concentrate or do homework. I do that at school. The fires came to behind our property so Dad's just cleared all the trees and bushes to stop fires coming. Now it's hotter and there are no trees to sit under. He's making two of us girls a separate bedroom in a caravan though because there's nine of us. Too many in the container."

"We have a big family. This is the container we live in, but it's not really safe when it's hot -it's yellow. We go outside then and find shade. We can put on the sprinkler sometimes if there's enough water. But you just really sit around. You can't do anything much when it's too hot."



## Experiences of disasters can vary greatly within small communities.

### Western Downs

"I don't have a pool. I just live there (points to a street away from school) so I don't have a dam like them (other kids at her table). I go outside in the shade."

"Sometimes, when it's hot, I don't feel like working (on the farm). But you still have to – even when it's hot."

"Sometimes it's so hot you can't do anything. I just feel a bit sick so I lie down."

"It's good at school because there's cool places inside and out. I like coming inside under the fans and aircon when it's really hot. You can't concentrate at home."

### Cairns

"I took the Birdie's books home to my 6 year old. He didn't get to experience the floods and rain as a negative so when we read them together he got excited thinking that we will get to have fun in the rain again. We floated down the street in our kayaks and made nature boat races. His response was, "Oh yay mum, when is this happening again?"

Describing a drawing: "This is the kindy. The ducks weren't there in the pond. The kindy was flooded inside. That's all the water. It's in the kindy."

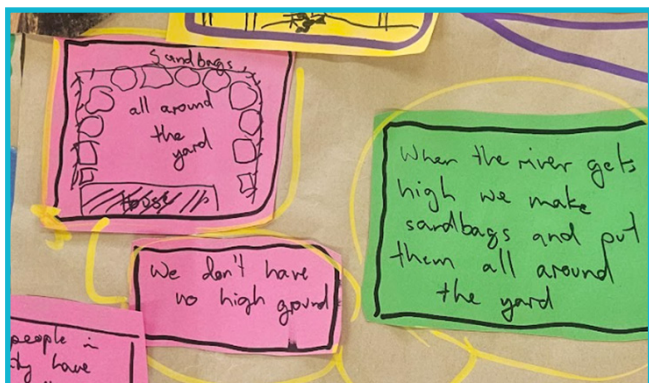




# Themes across the engagements

Children and young people are already contributing to communities' disaster preparedness and response.

But there are dots that can still be connected.



## Kowanyama

"It would be better if young people could join the SES. It would help them get knowledge about serious disasters...with that knowledge they can show the community what is needed."

"The boys need to do a lot of the manual labour when there's flood, they have to help clean up, do sandbags"

"When the river gets high we make sandbags and put them all around the yard".

## Western Downs

"Water, water, water – to drink, to cool off, and to have life (for us and animals). Droughts are terrible. Everything suffers, including us. It's hard. We have even more jobs to do taking water and feeding cattle, but it gets too expensive. It's hard to watch them starve."

"We've got 20-something dogs and we take them pigging. I have to make sure they've all got water."



Children, young people and their families engage with the natural environment and hazards differently.

## Cairns

"I let my children know that this is 'right fear'. We have fear to warn us about external danger. I impart that information that this is a scary time, and this is what we have to do. We have to be alert, take this step, this step, this step: stay safe. It's solutions-focused."

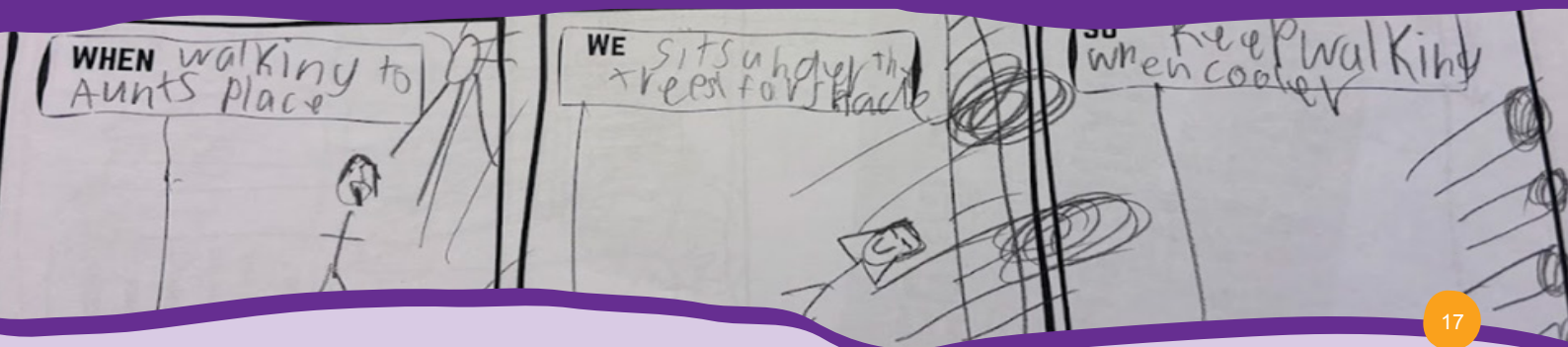
"We've always been warned, if you live up here, you're going to have bad weather."

"I choose to live here, so this is part of the risk"

## Kowanyama

"Wet season we fish. Dry season we hunt wallaby, turkey, flying fox, geese egg, geese, pigs, bullock"

"Shelfo is a big river crossing on the way to Pormpuraaw. It changes every year in the wet."





# Themes across the engagements

## Children, young people and families want to be informed.

### Kowanyama

"The young fullas would find the SES training exciting - we should try to promote it more."

"Cyclone Nora - Community meeting for adults, can't remember anything for kids (school, community)."

"Kids got info from family (like stay in the bathroom). It was very confusing."

"Boarding school students need support and contact during disasters."



## Consulting with children, young people and families on infrastructure is crucial and needs to be ongoing.

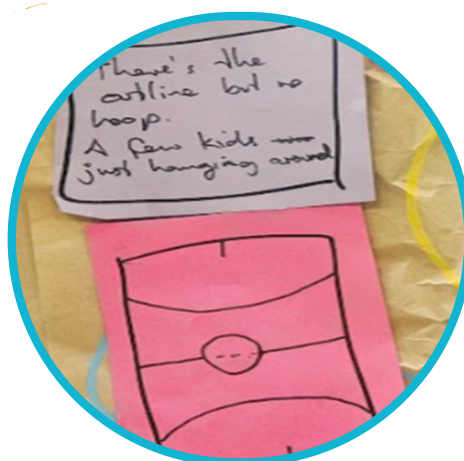
### Cairns

"The scariest part was the uncertainty, not knowing what was going to happen. The worst part was the text messages that came out from the council, 'Take cover now'. The language was over-the-top. They didn't need to be sent at all, as it turned out. Or at least they could have been worded differently. It was my first cyclone up here and the text messages were too full-on, expecting it was going to be the worst it could be."

"How do families get hold of donations?"

"No-one knew about lots of coordination of collection & distribution"

"During the flood situation, we didn't have the power off. But after the flood, the power was turned off. We felt confused. It would be good to have notice if we're going to lose power, so we can get a generator, ice to preserve food."



### Kowanyama

"Sometimes at the school the air con breaks down. ...We can't open windows because they're boarded up. Then sometimes the bubblers don't work."

"There's just a basketball court but no poles or hoops...no shade, just stools, no undercover area. There's the outline (of the court) but no hoop. A few kids just hanging around."

"We need a separate pool for the little kids. Make them safe from the bigger kids. There's room for it."

### Western Downs

"Meandarra pool is the closest pool to here...we're going there for swimming lessons this afternoon. The shallow end has a shade, but the deep end doesn't."

"We'd love a pool here. We have drive to swim in a proper pool (to Meandarra or Tara)."

# Opportunities

Kids and caregivers in all communities we spoke with identified a range of immediate and practical opportunities to better support kids in disasters. Many of these ideas have been worked into fundable project propositions via the [TKiD Action and Investment Plan](#).

They included:

## Western Downs

- Engage kids in the Western Downs in a deeper process of place-based co-design for facilities, upgrades, and continuing through the life of the asset.
- Development and delivery of heat education program for children and families.

## Kowanyama

- Training pathways for young people in disaster management in SES and PCYC.
- Basic facilities upgrades to provide sufficient shade, and make facilities more fit for purpose, engaging young people in the process of identifying upgrades needed (UX and journey mapping over the lifetime of the asset).
- Emergency kits designed by kids, in partnership with the Red Cross Pillowcase Project.
- Disaster communications strategy and actions co-designed with kids.
- Localised disaster training for starting teachers.

## Cairns

- Coordination of disaster communications across playgroups, parents groups, daycares.
- Maternal and child health liaison officers to connect disaster impacted families with supports.





# Next steps

TQKP is working with funders and collaborators across Queensland and further afield to enact the practical strategies encompassed in the [TKiD Action and Investment Plan](#) and bring the ideas of kids and caregivers to fruition.

If you are interested in contributing to this work, or learning more about you can better involve kids in disasters, please connect with us!



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# Thriving Queensland Kids **Partnership**

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