

## Northern Beaches **All Hazards** **Historic Photograph Exhibition** **and Workshops**

### Summary

With the likelihood of an increase in extreme weather due to climate change, the *Northern Beaches All Hazards Historic Photograph Exhibition and Workshops* aimed to raise awareness of the impacts of natural hazards and build community resilience. The Northern Beaches Council collaborated with the New South Wales (NSW) State Emergency Service, NSW Rural Fire Service, Office of Environment and Heritage, Australian Red Cross, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Police and Ku-ring-gai Council to deliver the Workshops. Local artist Cherry Corr was engaged as curator for the exhibition, titled *Floods, Fire & Storms happen here!*

Extreme weather events have affected Sydney's Northern Beaches in the past and the frequency of these events is expected to increase with a changing climate. A recent example was the episode of storms in June 2016 when images of damage to Collaroy Beach homes received widespread attention in the media.

The Northern Beaches Flood and Coastal Storm Education Strategy 2012 – 2016 was developed to improve community knowledge and attitudes about flooding and coastal storms on the Northern Beaches. It implemented a participatory, tailored and ongoing education program to build disaster resilience within the community through raising awareness.

As part of the program, the Northern Beaches Council, the New South Wales State Emergency Service (NSW SES) and the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) collaborated with the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) to deliver the Northern Beaches All Hazards Historic Photograph Exhibition and Workshops under the NSW Government Community Resilience Innovation Program (CRIP). These are some of the initiatives they undertook.

### Keywords

Historic photograph exhibition, all hazards workshops, community resilience, markets, Northern Beaches Council



*Figure 1: Nick Aisake and Heidi Groom from the SES facilitate a storm scenario. Photo: © Northern Beaches Council, 2016.*



*Figure 2: The exhibition launch at Avalon Market had a French theme for the upcoming Paris Climate Conference. Photo: © Northern Beaches Council, 2015.*



*Figure 3: Curator Cherry Corr with Federal Minister, the Hon. Bronwyn Bishop and the SES at the Narrabeen Lakes Festival. Photo: © Northern Beaches Council.*

## All hazards workshops for community agencies

The disaster planning workshops— *Get ready: Emergency Planning for Children's Services* and *Get ready: Emergency Planning for Aged Care Facilities*— used a combination of approaches from both the Kuring-gai Council's climate wise communities program and the Australian Red Cross community resilience program. These were then tailored to the Northern Beaches. Local maps that identified the geography and specific features were used as an education tool to identify bushfire prone land and flash floods.

Participants learned about the local emergency planning agencies that are involved in emergency planning and response. They were provided with a range of resources to assist agencies to develop their own emergency response plans and kits. Workshop participants were able to discuss emergency planning issues with local representatives from the emergency services.

The workshops used scenarios presented by the SES and RFS which provided an opportunity for staff from the child care centre and aged care facility to develop confidence on how to respond to incidents. Children's activity books were distributed at the childcare provider workshops and Household Preparedness for Seniors booklets were distributed at the Aged Care facility workshops. Participants reported increased confidence and appreciation for help in developing or strengthening emergency plans. Many have since gone on to use the knowledge and planning in actual storms and emergency events.

## All hazards photographic exhibition – Floods, Fires & Storms happen here!

A curator was engaged to deliver nine pop-up photographic exhibitions at markets across the Northern Beaches. The [exhibits](#) showed photos of local floods, fires, storms and other disasters from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to the present day, alongside information about preparedness. Over 700 visitors saw the exhibit with one visitor saying, "Fascinating and horrifying and altogether excellent".

There were a variety of community awareness activities including a mystery photo competition and a drawing activity for children to express their perceptions around extreme weather. One of the exhibitions occurred shortly after significant rainfall caused localised flooding around the Narrabeen lagoon, so visitors were able to view the SES working on the flooded site. The exhibition enhanced awareness of extreme weather events and the importance of building community resilience.

## **Floods, Fires & Storms happen here! Calendar**

Calendars were made using images from the exhibition and distributed to workshop participants, mystery photograph competition winners and visitors to the final exhibit.

## **Strengthened community resilience on the Northern Beaches**

Overall, this project has helped community members to understand the risk of floods, fires and coastal storms on the Northern Beaches. It was considered important to include community members— such as care-givers who are seldom trained for emergency preparedness— as a means to help build community resilience and capacity to handle future floods, fires and storms. The project has established new networks and strengthened existing partnerships among community organisations, local governments, businesses and emergency services so that communities in the Northern Beaches region are better prepared for future disasters.

**This Snapshot was prepared by Melanie Thomas from the Northern Beaches Council. Please cite as:** Thomas, M., 2017: Northern Beaches All Hazards Historic Photograph Exhibition and Workshops. Snapshot for CoastAdapt, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast.



*Figure 4: Exhibition at the Ramp Up Art Space, Mona Vale Library. Photo: © Northern Beaches Council, 2016.*



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment and Energy**