

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RESEARCH / EVALUATION PROJECT TITLE	Ready Together
COMMISSIONING AGENCY	Australian Red Cross
TIMELINE	February 2026-September 2028
PURPOSE	Formal and objective assessment of the efficacy of the Ready Together Project at improving resilience and preparedness in underserved Western Australian communities
KEY CONTACTS	Craig Stewart, WA State Director
PROPOSAL SUBMISSION	Proposal submission to be emailed to DirectorWA@redcross.org.au with a copy to mjanssen@redcross.org.au Submission required by 5pm Friday the 28 th November 2025.

1. Background and Context

1.1 Project Summary

There is a developing emphasis on the intangible social impacts of disasters and their adverse effect on the systemic health and well-being of our communities. The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) has noted that disasters impact people's health and wellbeing, livelihoods, educational outcomes, cultural practices and community cohesion, adversely influencing the economic performance of individuals and communities.

The strength of an individual's and communities' resilience will influence how well a community responds to a disaster and the trajectory of its recovery. The greater resilience a community has, the better able it is to manage the shocks associated with a disaster. In WA the Community Disaster Resilience Index noted that:

- Of the 36 local government areas (LGAs) with high levels of disaster resilience all (97%) are in the Perth Metropolitan area bar one (Albany).
- Of the 113 LGAs with moderate levels of resilience 98 (87%) are in the Perth Metropolitan area, 11 (10%) are in inner regional areas (of closer proximity to a metropolitan area) and four (4%) are in outer regional areas.
- Of the 75 communities with low disaster resilience, 13 (17%) are in metropolitan Perth. All 24 remote/very remote LGAs have low disaster resilience.

Red Cross has also noted a growing prevalence of regional and remote communities impacted by small scale disasters that do not attract Federal or State Government support for recovery efforts. While these disasters may be considered small, they nonetheless can have a disproportionate impact on communities. In these instances, local governments are often required to drive recovery efforts themselves with limited resources.

While the Emergency Services sector is grounded in geographically based communities, research and experience has identified that minority communities (communities of interest) are disproportionately impacted by disasters. This results in additional vulnerabilities to the community but also challenges their response and recovery capability. Community disaster resilience can be influenced by factors such as entrenched social and economic

disadvantage, less access to resources and services, lower levels of community cohesion and limited opportunities for adaptive learning and problem solving.

Ready Together adapts and delivers Australian Red Cross programming to address gaps in disaster resilience, response, and recovery in WA through the application of existing Australian Red Cross programs and approaches to community-led disaster resilience, recovery and trauma-informed disaster response. Through consultation with communities the program seeks to continually improve Red Cross programs and resources for all people in communities across Western Australia while focusing delivery on underserved communities – specifically people with disabilities, children and young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, First Nations communities, regional communities, and LGBTIQ+ communities.

1.2 Project Goal

Red Cross Emergency Services is aligned towards the strategic goal: *Communities are strong and resilient and have capacity to anticipate, respond to and recover well from disasters*. Our project theory of change assumes that helping facilitate community-led planning and implementation of resilience building activities (which encourage social connections, shared responsibility, and active participation) will contribute toward reinforcing adaptive capacities, thus strengthening resilience.

Project-Level Outcomes (from the ARC M and E framework)

1. People understand the psychosocial impacts of disaster.
2. People have the information needed to make decisions about preparing for, responding to and recovering from disaster.
3. People feel empowered and in control of decision making regarding preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters.
4. People feel safe, calm and hopeful.
5. People have access to quality psychosocial support.
6. People are confident to address psychosocial needs.

Long-term outcomes (from the ARC M and E framework)

1. Communities are taking localised, community-driven action to build resilience and recover from disaster.
2. People collaborate to share information, strengthen community connection and support resilience and recovery.

2. Terms of Reference

2.1 Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the activities delivered under the Ready Together Project (the Project). The evaluation will assess the following:

- How well the Project achieves its objectives of improving the capacity of the six identified underserved communities – First Nations, people with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse, children and young people, regional and remote communities, and people identifying as LGBTIQ+ - to anticipate, respond to, and recover from disasters.

- The degree to which the project applies an inclusive, culturally safe and responsive approach to working with these communities, incorporating the GEDSI principles (gender, equality, disability and social inclusion), which aim to ensure that all individuals have equal access to resources, services and decision-making processes, and that their diverse perspectives and needs are considered.
- The project's success in empowering communities with knowledge, confidence and tools to reduce the long-term impacts of disasters.

The evaluation will also offer recommendations for scaling up or refining the Project for future iterations, ensuring that resources are being used efficiently and effectively.

The **key research / evaluation questions** ask:

1. Program Impact on Community Resilience

- To what extent has the program improved disaster preparedness, response, and recovery in the target communities?
- How have community members perceived changes in their resilience since the program began?
- What specific outcomes demonstrate strengthened community resilience?

2. Outcomes for Priority Groups

- How effectively did the program address the unique needs of the six identified target communities?
- In what ways did the program ensure accessibility, cultural safety, and inclusion for these groups?
- What barriers remained for priority groups in engaging with emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts?

3. Community Engagement and Collaboration

- How did the program facilitate collaboration among local stakeholders?
- What evidence is there of increased community-led initiatives or collective action?
- How did community engagement contribute to improved disaster resilience and recovery?

4. Opportunities for Improvement and Sustainability

- What challenges or limitations affected the program's success?
- What improvements could be made to enhance future program delivery?
- What is the potential for sustaining community-led initiatives beyond the program's duration?
- How can these initiatives be integrated into broader resilience strategies?

2.2 Scope and approach

The evaluation will focus on the following key areas:

1. **Geographical Scope:** The evaluation will focus on communities engaged through the Project, considering their specific size, location, and disaster-related vulnerabilities. Final locations will be confirmed during project planning.
2. **Program Components:** All aspects of the Project will be evaluated, including:
 - a. Community-selected programming, assessed using the Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) framework
 - b. Participant experiences of cultural safety

- c. Outcomes related to building local knowledge and capacity within both communities and emergency services
- 3. **Target Groups:** The evaluation will focus on the six priority community groups experiencing complex disaster vulnerabilities.
- 4. **Time Frame:** The evaluation will take place at key points throughout the Project, and will include:
 - a. formative assessments during the early stages of implementation to monitor progress and identify potential issues
 - b. a mid-term evaluation underpinned by the CMO framework to determine what worked for whom and why, to inform the remainder of the program
 - c. a summative evaluation at the end of the project to assess the overall outcomes, impacts and learnings.
- 5. **Methodological Scope:** The evaluation will employ both qualitative and quantitative methods which will be co-designed by the evaluator and the ARC program team, and a triangulated approach which includes:
 - a. Data from program surveys and questionnaires to measure knowledge, confidence, and attitudes related to disaster resilience, response, and recovery.
 - b. Interviews and focus groups with community members, local government officials, emergency services personnel, and other stakeholders to gather insights into the Project's effectiveness, quality and impact.
 - c. Analysis of program records and reports to assess the insights into the Project's various activities and services, and related effectiveness, quality and impact.

The evaluation will aim to determine the extent to which the project objectives were achieved; alongside the longer-term impact it has served in improving the disaster resilience of the communities involved.

Evaluation Report

The external evaluator will then synthesise the data collected throughout the project by the community representatives and Red Cross project staff, as well as the data from the final evaluation workshops and interviews and write up the evaluation report. Red Cross will provide the branded professional template and photographs for the report.

Red Cross responsibility	Evaluator responsibility
Attend monthly check-in meetings via videoconference	Lead monthly check-in meetings via videoconference
Identify community representatives	Design and plan the approach
Provide monitoring data (qualitative and quantitative)	Conduct interviews and face-to-face workshops
Provide access to Australian Red Cross Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and relevant evaluation resources including standard survey tools	Analyse interview and workshop data, monitoring data collected by Red Cross personnel (including resilience measures), and synthesise the community-led evaluation artefacts
Support recruitment of interview and workshop participants	Write up and disseminate final evaluation report, including a brief one page summary (e.g. infographic)

	Plan travel and site visits, coordinated with the Project team
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Key Stakeholders

- Community members and project participants
- Red Cross National and State/Territory Emergency Services teams, including volunteers, Red Cross members and staff
- Local and state governments in participant communities
- Community organisations, groups and service providers, including the emergency services sector.

2.3 Conditions and guiding principles

Australian Red Cross uses the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) Framework for Evaluation (2011) to guide the design of evaluations and requires that the evaluation be conducted in accordance with professional and ethical standards such as the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) [Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations](#) (2013) and the [First Nations Cultural Safety Framework](#) (2021) and with respect to Red Cross's duty of care to clients, staff and volunteers.

2.4 Required skills, knowledge and experience (selection criteria)

- Demonstrated experience in conducting participatory program evaluations
- Postgraduate qualifications in evaluation, community development, social sciences or a relevant field
- Knowledge and experience of evaluating disaster resilience work
- Knowledge and experience building trust in and working with remote, regional and First Nations communities
- Understanding of intersectionality and adapting service delivery for a range of diverse community groups
- A high level of cultural competency and the ability to conduct evaluation processes alongside marginalised groups
- Understanding and awareness of factors affecting the operation of not-for-profit organisations, and the use of volunteers in service provision
- Experience managing evaluation studies and delivering within timeframes.

3. Deliverables and Activities

Australian Red Cross will provide the evaluator with photographs and a branded template for the report, as it is important that the report is professional and prepared for distribution to external stakeholders.

We also expect the external evaluator to keep communication channels open and provide the Australian Red Cross Reference Group with updates on the evaluation process and findings.

1.2 Activities

#	Task	Responsibility	Timeline
1.	Advertise evaluation opportunity	ARC	October-November 2025
2.	Select preferred evaluator	ARC	December 2025-January 2026
3.	Set up regular meeting check-ins	ARC	December 2025-January 2026
4.	Establish Project Governance Group	ARC	January-February 2026
5.	Set up check in meeting dates with Governance Group	ARC	January-February 2026
6.	Submit evaluation plan to Australian Red Cross	Evaluator	February 2026-March 2026
7.	Submit quarterly reports to Australian Red Cross	Evaluator	July, October 2026 January, April, July, October 2027 January, April 2028
8.	Submit final draft report to Australian Red Cross	Evaluator	June 2028

*Timeframes subject to negotiation except for final delivery date

Project Governance Group

A Project Governance Group, comprising key internal stakeholders, will provide advice and guidance to support the achievement of the evaluation objectives. The Group will meet for the duration of the Project and will be involved in the oversight of the overall initiative including supporting the evaluation. The Governance Group will meet with the evaluator quarterly for the duration of the evaluation.

Members of the Project Governance Group will include:

- External evaluator (who will guide the process, co-develop the plan and tools, provide support, conduct the interviews and final workshop, and write up the report)
- Australian Red Cross Finance Business Partner for Emergency Services
- ARC Design Specialist
- Senior State Manager Programs (WA)
- Team Leader, Ready Together Project
- ARC MEL team representative
- ARC National Resilience Team representative.

Guests will be invited to the Governance Group meetings as required. Meetings will be chaired by the Senior State Programs Manager and minuted by the Ready Together Program Support Officer.

4. Key Risks and Limitations

Potential Risk	Mitigation strategy
Budget issues	Confirm budget before commencement of evaluation.
Stakeholders' concerns about confidentiality	Provide potential participants with privacy and confidentiality agreements, inclusive of the option to be involved anonymously.
Stakeholder lack of engagement	Clear, concise and timely communications before and during evaluation. Barriers known to be addressed prior to evaluation and any identified throughout to be discussed and addressed by the Governance Group.
Stakeholders too busy to attend	Ask stakeholders how they prefer to be engaged at the start of the evaluation and where possible find flexible ways of working with them, e.g. Over the phone, online surveys, face to face, email correspondence.
Stakeholders do not feel culturally safe to engage	Appoint evaluator with strong experience of evaluation with marginalised groups, especially First Nations communities. Build trust through culturally safe and appropriate programming before evaluation component is introduced. Encourage community involvement in development of evaluation tools and administering evaluation processes.
Appropriate data collected	Monitoring plan developed at start of evaluation and any changes required be discussed, and decisions made, by the Governance Group.
Geographically dispersed stakeholders	Plan enables direct engagement, and engagement via videoconferencing, phone or email. Evaluation budget includes realistic budget for travel and accommodation.
Default on timeframes	Set timeframes at the start of the evaluation and regularly review to ensure timeframes can be met or adjusted accordingly.
Lack of Governance Group engagement	Clear Terms of Reference and review of meeting times to ensure flexible engagement
Evaluation fatigue	Stakeholder consultation prior to targeting area to ensure no evaluation overlap

5. Budget

This research / evaluation project and its outputs have an indicative budget of \$149,378 including GST and all other expenses. We would like the proposal to show a breakdown of the budget.

End.