



# Survey Report: Resilience

Summary of a survey about the resilience  
of the community sector.

April 2019

## Overview

The Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) invited community service organisations to complete an online survey about their resilience from 20 March to 18 April 2019.

The survey received 138 responses from at least 55 different organisations.

Almost three quarters of the respondents' organisations worked in Melbourne (74 per cent) and more than a third worked in regional Victoria (38 per cent).

Region	Responses
Melbourne	85 (62%)
Regional Victoria	35 (26%)
Both	17 (12%)

Table 1. *Where do you work?*

The respondents represented organisations that delivered a range of services and the most common was information, advice, referral and advocacy (68 per cent).

Service	Responses
Information, advice, referral and advocacy	92 (68%)
Service and community development and support	55 (40%)
Children, families and carers	46 (34%)
Counselling and other individual support services	45 (33%)
Education	30 (22%)
Financial and material assistance	25 (18%)
Health services	23 (17%)
Daily living support	22 (16%)
Community living support	21 (15%)
Training vocational rehabilitation and employment	16 (12%)
Accommodation	16 (12%)
Community detention and correction	4 (3%)
Other	22 (16%)

Table 2. *What types of services does your organisation deliver? (Select all that apply)*

Services entered as 'Other' included family violence, legal services, and policy research.

The respondents represented a range of roles within their organisations and half worked in research, policy and/or advocacy (50 per cent).

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Research, policy and/or advocacy	68 (50%)
Manage staff	62 (46%)
Governance, strategy or finance	47 (35%)
Deliver services to clients at our organisation's premises	39 (29%)
Office management or support	37 (27%)
Deliver services to clients at their homes or another location	32 (24%)
Other	19 (14%)

Table 3. *What type of work do you do within your organisation? (Select all that apply)*

Roles entered under 'Other' included monitoring and evaluation, communications and marketing, and staff training.

## Extreme weather is impacting the community sector

43 per cent of respondents said that their organisation had been affected by an extreme weather event in the past 12 months including most organisations based in regional Victoria (53 per cent).

	Melbourne	Regional Victoria	Both	Total
<b>Yes</b>	33 (41%)	18 (53%)	6 (35%)	57 (43%)
<b>No</b>	36 (44%)	15 (44%)	9 (53%)	60 (45%)
<b>Unsure</b>	12 (15%)	1 (3%)	2 (12%)	15 (11%)

Table 4. *In the past 12 months, has your organisation been affected by extreme weather or disaster? overlaid with Where do you work?*

The most common impact of these extreme weather events on community service organisations was interrupted staff transport (46 per cent).

Impact	Responses
Staff transport was interrupted	26 (46%)
Clients' access to our services was affected	24 (43%)
Demand for services increased	22 (39%)
Staff were absent from work	19 (34%)
Staff's health was affected	13 (23%)
Premises or assets were destroyed or damaged	9 (16%)
Our organisation closed temporarily	7 (13%)
We needed additional staff	6 (11%)
Other	9 (16%)

Table 5. *What was the impact on your organisation? (Select all that apply)*

Impacts entered as 'Other' included cancelled activities, extended rest breaks, and activated disaster response plans.

## The community sector is concerned about climate change

Almost half of the respondents think about climate change in their work always or frequently (46 per cent) and only four respondents never think about it (four per cent).

Consider climate change	Responses
Always	9 (8%)
Frequently	41 (38%)
Occasionally	36 (33%)
Rarely	18 (17%)
Never	4 (4%)

Table 6. *How often do you think about climate change in your work?*

Most of the respondents felt that climate change would harm their organisation and disrupt service delivery including 52 per cent saying it would worsen their ability to meet demand.

	Better	About the same	Worse	Unsure
The affordability of energy for your organisation	6 (6%)	11 (10%)	80 (76%)	8 (8%)
The comfort and safety of your premises during extreme weather and disasters	4 (4%)	17 (16%)	76 (72%)	9 (8%)
Your organisation's resilience to extreme weather and disasters	5 (5%)	32 (30%)	55 (52%)	13 (12%)
Your ability to meet the demands on your services	4 (4%)	34 (32%)	55 (52%)	13 (12%)
Your clients' ability to access your services	6 (6%)	32 (30%)	53 (50%)	14 (13%)

Table 7. *What do you think climate change will do to ... ?*

Most of the respondents felt that climate change would harm their clients including 87 per cent saying the comfort and safety of their clients would get worse.

	Better	About the same	Worse	Unsure
The affordability of energy for your clients	6 (6%)	7 (7%)	85 (80%)	8 (8%)
The comfort and safety of your clients' homes during extreme weather and disasters	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	91 (87%)	8 (8%)
Your clients' resilience to extreme weather and disasters	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	84 (80%)	12 (11%)
Your community's resilience to extreme weather and disasters	7 (7%)	7 (7%)	80 (75%)	12 (11%)

Table 8. *What do you think climate change will do to ... ?*

## The community sector is responding to climate change

Most community service organisations had prepared for extreme weather events (73 per cent) and the most common action was developing an emergency plan (40 per cent).

Extreme weather preparation	Responses
Prepared an emergency plan for your organisation	49 (40%)
Assisted people affected by extreme weather and/or disasters	40 (33%)
Planned for higher demand for services during extreme weather or disasters	30 (25%)
Assessed the housing condition of clients	22 (18%)
Prepared an emergency plan for your client/s	22 (18%)
Undertaken research, policy or advocacy on extreme weather and/or disasters	20 (16%)
Applied for funding for any of the above	11 (9%)
None of the above	33 (27%)
Other	9 (7%)

Table 9. Do you know if in the past 12 months your organisation has done any of the following? (Select all that apply)

Actions entered as 'Other' included publishing health advice about heatwaves and joining community networks.

But most community service organisations had not planned for future climate change risk including via advocacy (64 per cent).

Climate change preparation	Responses
Undertaken research, policy or advocacy on climate change issues	23 (23%)
Developed a climate change risk assessment or plan	10 (10%)
Implemented a climate change plan	3 (3%)
Applied for funding for any of the above	7 (7%)
None of the above	63 (64%)

Table 10. Do you know if, in the past 12 months, your organisation has done any of the following? (Select all that apply)

## It is difficult for the community sector to reduce emissions

About a sixth of community service organisations had solar panels at some or all their premises (16 per cent).

Solar panels	Responses
Yes, on all of our premises	4 (3%)
Yes, on some of our premises	16 (13%)
No, but we plan to do this	2 (2%)
No, we considered this but did not go ahead	24 (20%)
No, we have not considered this	47 (39%)
Unsure	27 (23%)

Table 11. *Have solar panels been installed on your organisation's premises?*

The respondents whose organisations had considered solar panels were asked why they did not go ahead and the majority said the main barrier was renting their premises (69 per cent).

Barrier to solar panels	Responses
Renting premises	20 (69%)
Cost	6 (21%)
Heritage listed building	2 (7%)
Lack of sunlight	1 (3%)

Table 12. *If you investigated installing solar panels but did not install them, why did you make this decision?*

Almost half of the respondents said their organisation had not reduced carbon emissions in the past 12 months (47 per cent) but the most common action was reducing electricity and/or gas usage (24 per cent).

Emission reduction	Responses
Reduced our use of electricity and/or gas at our premises	25 (24%)
Undertaken research, policy or advocacy on energy issues	24 (23%)
Made energy efficient improvements to our building	16 (15%)
Installed energy efficient appliances at our premises	14 (13%)
Had the energy efficiency of our premises assessed	13 (12%)
Applied for funding for any of the above	8 (8%)
None of the above	49 (47%)

Table 13. *Do you know if, in the past 12 months, your organisation has done any of the following? (Select all that apply)*



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