



Lessons in Resilience

Insights from community and health organisations across the west of Melbourne

Overview

Lessons in Resilience is a collaborative, cross-sector project strengthening community resilience and advancing just adaptation and health equity in the west of Melbourne. Led by Jesuit Social Services' Centre for Just Places, in partnership with Wyndham City Council and the Western Public Health Unit, the project brings together community services, health organisations, local government, and researchers to support community resilience.

Through case studies and research, the project explores how local organisations adapted during recent crises—from floods and heatwaves to the COVID-19 pandemic. These insights will inform practical, policy-relevant strategies to build organisational capacity, improve service coordination, and support more just, community-responsive resilience strategies.

Why this work matters

The community services and health sectors are central to building resilience in communities affected by climate change and health inequities. Their deep local knowledge, trusted relationships, and commitment to wellbeing position them as key partners in addressing complex, place-based challenges.

Climate change amplifies existing systemic inequities, shaping patterns of vulnerability and limiting access to essential resources, services, and decision-making. Responding effectively requires coordinated, cross-sectoral action that draws on the strengths and expertise of diverse organisations, including local government and research institutions.

Lessons in Resilience focuses on capturing how organisations adapted their operations and services during recent disruptions. By learning from past responses, the project will inform practical strategies to strengthen organisational capacity, foster collaboration, and support just, community-informed approaches to resilience.

Project Objectives

- Mobilise the collective expertise of community services, health organisations, local government, public health units, and universities in Melbourne's west to drive equitable approaches to resilience.
- Strengthen regional understanding of intersecting and compounding risks—particularly for communities facing systemic disadvantage.
- Deliver actionable, evidence-informed strategies to enhance the resilience of health and community organisations serving at-risk populations.
- Align and build on existing initiatives to support coordinated, cross-sector planning across systems and scales.
- Establish a local, accessible evidence base to inform advocacy, strategic decision-making, and capacity building across the region.



Project Activities

Research Synthesis (May – Jul 2025)

- Reviewing existing regional research, evaluations, and inquiries to consolidate knowledge of good practice and policy and identify systemic gaps.

Case Studies (Jun – Dec 2025)

- Documenting how local organisations adapted their operations and service models in response to overlapping shock and stresses between 2019 and 2025.

Research Report and Recommendations (Dec 2025 – Feb 2026)

- Developing clear, evidence-informed strategies to enhance the resilience of health and community organisations and support coordinated, just responses to shocks and stresses, including climate change impacts.

Launch Event and Regional Forum (Feb 2026)

- Hosting a launch and regional forum to share project insights, showcase local leadership, and facilitate cross-sector dialogue on building climate resilience and health equity.

Partners and supporting organisations

The project is led by Jesuit Social Services' Centre for Just Places, in partnership with Wyndham City Council and the Western Public Health Unit, and supported by GenWest, Victorian Council of Social Service, and Victoria University.

Funding Partners

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Contact

To find out more about this project and how you can become involved please contact:

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