

Community resilience

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The arrival of the coal seam gas (CSG) industry in regions and communities of southern Queensland is coupled with change. The benefits and costs of development are closely tied to the social, economic and environmental opportunities and challenges experienced by impacted communities and surrounding regions.

How can community members make sure their community continues to thrive and function beyond CSG? What are the resources and strategies required to enable and enhance community responses to major developments? These are some of the questions the [Community functioning and well-being](#) research project explores.

What is meant by community resilience?

Community resilience can be thought of as a community's ability to adapt and respond to change. How well a community adapts and responds to change, such as CSG developments, can play a huge role in its continued function and success.

To gain a better understanding of the qualities that are needed to adapt and respond to change the Community functioning and well-being project focused on resilience at a group level within the community. Initial results identify five factors that are important in helping community groups to be resilient:

- Strategic thinking – groups that make plans to achieve their set goals, position themselves and link with others to share information and learn.
- Links within communities – groups that are very well connected and maximise use of resources.
- Effective use of resources – groups that select an appropriate level of engagement to focus their efforts.
- Commitment – groups that have a strong attachment to their local area are likely to persevere.
- Building meaningful relationships based on trust and respect – groups that share trust with other groups, stakeholders and gas developers tend to thrive.

The research also highlights three ways community groups contribute to wider community resilience. Having resilient community groups within the wider community:

- enables a diverse range of community issues and concerns to be addressed
- allows the groups to tackle problems of varying size
- allows some community groups to act as bridging organisations to help connect and support members of the wider community.

What to focus on to help increase community resilience?

Community groups are an important layer within a thriving community and play an integral role in addressing complex issues involving multiple stakeholders associated with a rapidly expanding CSG industry. However, care must be given to how much is expected of community groups as their participants are often voluntary. Other sectors within the CSG industry, government, and non-profit organisations might collaborate with community groups to help foster wider community resilience. In particular, these sectors could support and develop community groups' capacities for strategic action and linking within the community, together with building collaborations based on trust, respect and open dialogue.



Figure 1. Understanding how communities will adapt and respond to changes brought about by coal seam gas developments.