

Community resilience and adapting during CSG development: 2014 -2018

Results of the 2018 CSIRO Community Wellbeing and Responding to Change survey in Queensland, Australia

The 2018 CSIRO Community Wellbeing and Responding to Change survey documents trends in community resilience and adapting over time and across different coal seam gas (CSG) industry phases. It shows changes between the construction, post-construction and early operations phases of development in 2014, 2016, and 2018.

KEY POINTS

- Perceived community resilience actions to CSG development were only modest and did not change over time.
- Perception of community coping and adapting also stayed static.
- Adapting to CSG development is different from community wellbeing, which was robust.
- The indicators of community adaption provide opportunities for where things could be improved when responding to change.

There was also a drop in 2018 in perceptions that local communities were acting strategically in response to CSG development.

Together with modest levels of community resilience, it seems that communities in the Western Downs have found responding and adapting to CSG development challenging, at least in the early phases of industry development i.e. construction, post-construction and early operations phases.

In contrast, levels of community resilience and adapting were significantly higher and positive on average in the eastern Maranoa region, where gas extraction has a long history in the region.

Resilience and adapting remain static

The 2018 survey asked questions about a range of community resilience actions in relation to responding to changes from CSG activities in the region.

In addition, participants were asked about the community's ability to work together as a collective with other stakeholders, such as government and industry, to address challenges and opportunities related to CSG development.

Finally, participants were asked about the community's commitment and preparedness to persist in finding solutions.

Perceptions of community resilience actions in the Western Downs region were modest in 2014 and 2016. Instead of improving over time, perceptions of how well the community was responding to CSG were lowest in 2018.

Even though there was still a positive view in 2018 that communities were getting involved in responding to changes and supporting its volunteers there was less optimism that communities could persevere to find solutions.

RESILIENCE

Strategic actions

Planning, leadership, accessing and using information, learning



Working together

Sharing resources, information and learnings; good working relationships, collective efficacy beliefs



Strategic actions

Perseverance, supporting volunteers, getting involved, committed to the future



Citizen voice

Local decision making processes, being heard, being involved, trust in leaders



Types of community actions important for community resilience and responding to change.

Diversity of views

There was a diversity of views regarding how well people felt their community was adapting to CSG development, which reflected perceptions of resilience and adaption.

In line with previous surveys, approximately half the participants indicated they felt their communities were responding and coping well to the changes, while the other half indicated they felt their communities were just coping, not coping, or resisting.

In 2018, the larger town centres of Dalby, Chinchilla, and Roma identified their communities as adapting reasonably well to CSG development on average, whereas the smaller town centres of Miles, Wandoan, and Tara indicated less positive views. This suggests that size of the town and age of the industry seems to affect perceptions of adapting to CSG development.

Indicators of community adaption

The research identified important aspects of community wellbeing and resilience that were consistently linked to positive views of community adaption to CSG development.

These act as indicators of adapting and coping well with CSG – people judge how well their community is adapting to CSG based on the following factors:

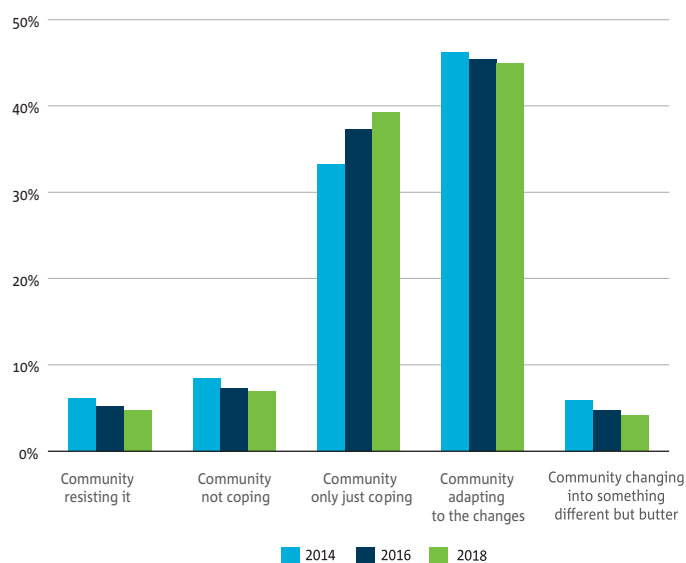
- economic opportunities
- environmental management
- local decision-making processes
- sharing information and working together
- strategic planning, leadership and access to information
- community commitment
- local trust, community cohesion and community spirit
- environmental quality.

When people judge the indicators as functioning at high levels (e.g. economic opportunities etc.) they are more confident that their community is adapting well to CSG development.

Income sufficiency was an important indicator in 2014 when construction was in full swing and 2016 when there was significant economic slowdown. Services and facilities were an important indicator during the early operations phase, and roads during the construction phase.

What we did

In March-April 2018 we surveyed 623 residents from the Western Downs and the eastern half of the Maranoa local government areas. We asked about community wellbeing and resilience, and local attitudes and perceptions of CSG development within these regions. The full report *Trends in community wellbeing and local attitudes to CSG development 2014-2016-2018* compares 2018 results with previous surveys conducted in 2014 and 2016, and identifies how these aspects have changed in the Western Downs over time. The eastern Maranoa region was included for the first time in 2016 as a comparison region. Read the full report [here](#).



Perceptions of community adapting to CSG development over time: Western Downs 2014 – 2016 – 2018.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- Find out more about the [Community Wellbeing project](#)
- Read about the [2014 survey](#) and the [2016 survey](#)
- Check out these related [fact sheets](#)

ABOUT CSIRO's GISERA

The Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance (GISERA) is a collaboration between CSIRO, Commonwealth and state governments and industry established to undertake publicly-reported independent research. The purpose of GISERA is to provide quality assured scientific research and information to communities living in gas development regions focusing on social and environmental topics including: groundwater and surface water, biodiversity, land management, the marine environment, and socio-economic impacts. The governance structure for GISERA is designed to provide for and protect research independence and transparency of research. Visit gisera.csiro.au for more information about GISERA's governance structure, projects and research findings.

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