

Involving women in community wet season planning

Some ideas from around Northern Australia

Tapping into existing networks

Every community has organisations that can help you tap into women's networks. These include:

- Welfare groups like Lifeline, St Vincent de Paul, and the Salvation Army
- Citizen's organisations like the Country Women's Association, Rotary Club and Lions Club
- Parents' organisations and childcare committees
- Employers
- Disability support groups
- or other groups in your area.

Pre-cyclone clean-up day

Having a well-advertised pre-cyclone clean-up day can act as a reminder to start preparing and planning for cyclone season.



Photo: Vanessa Hunter

Clean-up days not only prompt people to clean up their own yards, but can be a community activity. This can help ensure that people with special needs are helped to prepare and plan their own strategies.

Local radio talk-back

Local radio is a great way to communicate to a wide audience, including the elderly and housebound.

Talk-back programs encourage people to phone in with questions or problems and share their experiences and strategies with the community.



Photo: Chloe Lucas

Having a wet season 'expert' such as a member of the local SES in the studio to answer questions and comment on callers' ideas is important to provide a focus and prevent any misinformation.

Simple leaflets

Many people find the official guidelines for cyclone planning complicated and hard to follow.

Pictorial leaflets, showing what to do at each level of cyclone alert, can help.

Distributing these leaflets through appropriate networks, such as women's groups, welfare groups, or local shops is an important part of getting the message across.

Talks to address specific local issues

Women's groups such as the Country Women's Association, or other community groups, will often have a forum for public talks and meetings.

These can be a good place to answer questions specific to the community, such as where to go should evacuation be necessary.

Website information

Websites provide up-to-date information on cyclone and flood warnings, weather forecasts, and road conditions. These can be vital to help communities in short-term planning.



Photo: Chloe Lucas

While not everyone has access to websites, women's networks can spread the information by word of mouth. Particularly useful websites are:

- Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au
- Queensland Emergency Services www.emergency.qld.gov.au
- Emergency Management Australia www.ema.gov.au
- Your Local State Emergency Services
- Your local government website