

# Flooding In, Flooding Out: How does post disaster volunteering build community resilience?



Harriet Barker  
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Supervised by Lena Christensen



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## **Abstract:**

The impacts of climate change are expected to cause an increase in the intensity and frequency of natural disasters. Thus, the understanding of “community resilience” (how communities respond, react and rebuild) following such events is a critical topic in the sustainability discourse.

In January 2011, the city of Brisbane, Australia experienced a flooding disaster. Although not as destructive as the previous 1974 flood, it still claimed two lives, created havoc and destroyed over 32 000 properties. In the aftermath of the flood thousands of enthusiastic volunteers converged on the flood affected areas and offered their time, resources and generosity to the flood affected victims. Research on human behaviour during a natural disaster indicates that whilst this response is normative, this goodwill diminishes as people resume their normal day-to-day lives. A mixed methods research study was performed using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews directed at volunteers and volunteer organisations to determine how the actions of volunteers in the post disaster phase of the Brisbane flood disaster could contribute to building community resilience. The results were framed using conceptualisation of community resilience developed from the research paper “Community Resilience as a Metaphor, Theory, Set of Capacities and Strategy for Disaster Readiness” by Norris et al., (2008). An extra element “Community Capability” was added as a recommendation to this model.

The results from this research illustrate that volunteers can contribute to building community resilience through various aspects of social capital such as providing support to the victims, demonstrating community attachment and a sense of community, developing and strengthening social networks and taking on leadership roles within the community. Additionally, the disaster served as a catalyst for volunteers to participate in more formal volunteering activities. However, without the proper structures to support and manage volunteers, the actions of volunteers in the aftermath phase of disasters can also inhibit community resilience.

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I dedicate my thesis to Mark, my friend who is sadly with us no longer. May he be at peace.

**Excerpt from my field diary – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2011 (Day after the flood waters receded)**

People look like ants, swarming the area like a giant infestation. Everyone is helping out others - knocking on doors, going straight into people's houses and carrying things out onto the street. There is a real sense of community spirit and the real sense of "good neighbourliness". It is so overwhelming the number of people who have come out to help. They are everywhere. Why are they here? Are strangers helping strangers? What is their motivation for doing so?

There are just so many people everywhere you just don't know what to do and where to dedicate your efforts. There are so many able bodied people who are willing to get in there and help another. Everyone is friendly and talking to each other, people are in a good mood.

I go back to the school to have a break and there is even more mayhem. There are donations of food coming in from everywhere – cold drinks, water, cakes, and biscuits. I've been speaking to lots of people, everyone is keen to have a chat and tell their story. People have come from Melbourne and Sydney they have flown up specifically to help in the clean up efforts. It is incredible how far people have travelled to help their neighbour.



*Swimming Anyone? The local swimming pool (close to my home) inundated with water.*

*The small sign on the right is approximately two metres in height.*

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# 1 Introduction

“When it rains, it pours” is a popular saying that typifies how the rain fell recently in Brisbane, the city where I come from. Brisbane, ‘The River City’, is a thriving multicultural city with a population of approximately 2 million inhabitants. It is located in the south eastern corner of Queensland (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Location of Brisbane, Queensland (Sunshine Coast Australia.com, 2011)**

After years of prolonged drought and fears that Brisbane’s water supply would run out, tight water restrictions were implemented to regulate water use. There were also discussions about building desalination plants and recycling water stations as the dams that supplied Brisbane’s water dropped to as low as 25.6 per cent in 2006 (Morley, 2009, O’Loan, 2009, Johnstone, 2006). During the second half of 2010, water restrictions relaxed as heavy rains relieved some of the water shortages.

In January 2011, continuous rainfall, king tides and rising waterways combined to cause destruction to the city of Brisbane’s infrastructure, private homes and personal property. Although it was predicted to be “Brisbane’s worst disaster in history”, loss of life was minimal and the water level failed to reach previous flood levels of 1974. The Brisbane River peaked at 4.6 metres; almost one metre lower than in 1974 (Rout, 2011). Despite this,

the damage was widespread. Approximately 27 000 homes and 5000 businesses were inundated in 67 of Brisbane's suburbs (Malkin, 2011, BBC News, 2011).

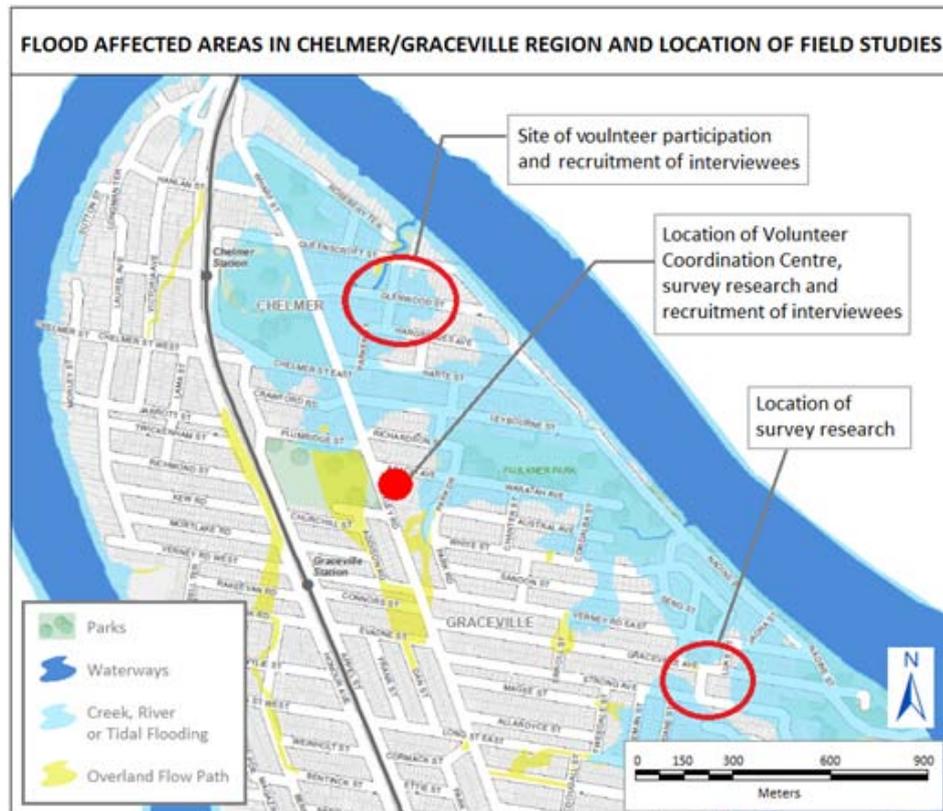
During the days following the disaster, the people of Brisbane and the surrounding areas gave their time and resources to assist the flood victims. Statewide Volunteers (one of the local volunteer agencies) was overwhelmed as 80 000 people registered their interest on their website in the few days after the waters had receded<sup>1</sup>. The Brisbane City Council were forced to turn volunteers away from their volunteer centres as there was simply not enough work for people to do (ABC News, 2011).

As my home was not inundated and after hearing an advertisement on community radio, I went to a volunteer coordination centre set up at a local school by the school's Parents and Friends Association. This was in the suburbs of Graceville and Chelmer, an area approximately seven kilometres from Brisbane's Central Business District. Located in a low lying area and in a loop of the Brisbane River, these two suburbs were some of the worst affected. There, I joined thousands of others equipped with rubber boots and shovels to become a member of the 'mud army' to assist with the flood clean up efforts<sup>2</sup>. Figure 2 is an adaptation from the Brisbane City Council's flood map that illustrates the degree of flooding in the Chelmer and Graceville area and the location of the study sites.

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<sup>1</sup>This is a pseudonym. All participants and organisations interviewed for this research paper are protected by a false name.

<sup>2</sup>This term was coined by the media to describe the many volunteers who assisted with the flood clean up in the initial aftermath of the disaster.



**Figure 2: Flood Affected Areas and Location of Field Study Sites.**

**Adapted from** Brisbane City Council, (2009).

During those days, I was overwhelmed by the generosity, support and camaraderie that were shown by the people towards each other and to the flood victims. I was taken aback when I met people who had travelled from interstate or from the other side of Brisbane to set up barbecues, clean homes or shovel mud; many of whom had no connection to the flood affected area.

Political leaders and the media praised ‘Brisbanites’ for their fighting spirit, and their illustration of “Australian Pride” and “Queensland Pride” (Sinnerton, 2011, Bligh, 2011)<sup>3,4</sup>. People spoke about how the community had changed and how this event would affect the Brisbane community forever (Fynes - Clinton, 2011, Sweetman, 2011).

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<sup>3</sup>“Australian spirit” is thought to be associated with being tough, overcoming hardship and adversity whilst maintaining a good sense of humour. This term was discussed during my interviews and when asked if “Australian spirit,” was the cause of the volunteer response, most reported that the same would occur anywhere in the world (See Appendix 5a). It is outside the scope of this study to examine this cultural trait in depth.

<sup>4</sup>Brisbanite is a colloquial term for a person who lives in Brisbane.

Despite this over nationalistic optimism, not everything was rosy. There were some reports of looting; however the biggest problem was in fact the overwhelming numbers of people who converged upon the affected areas to offer their assistance. Heavy car traffic hampered the ability for official personnel to enter the affected areas. Volunteers worked on the streets, entered people's homes and carried their flood damaged items out on to the footpath. Home owners had no opportunity or decision making ability to determine the future of their keepsakes before the volunteers came in and took things away.

Everyone I spoke to seemed to have something to say about the overwhelming volunteer effort and the huge amount of flood damaged items that appeared in front of people's houses. Their opinions prompted my interest in this topic. In the weeks following the disaster, discussions about community resilience dominated talkback shows, radio, print media and discussions at the bureaucratic level (Australian Network News, 2011, Fynes - Clinton, 2011). I attended a "community resilience" meeting organised by Statewide Volunteers and joined a group of like-minded individuals who were interested in forming a future "Disaster Preparedness Group" (Volunteering Queensland, 2011).

From these experiences I began to wonder if the large volunteer response I witnessed was normative following a natural disaster and what impact this response would have on the community beyond the initial "mud army" days. I wondered how these so called "community changes" and the enthusiasm demonstrated by my fellow citizens would operationalise in the event of another natural disaster. This triggered my thinking about the connection between volunteerism during the aftermath of a natural disaster and community resilience.

## **1.1 Research Questions and Sub Questions**

In order to explore the relationship between volunteerism and community resilience, the main question driving this research was:

How did volunteers during the aftermath of the 2011 Brisbane flood disaster contribute to building community resilience?

The sub questions of the research were:

- In what ways did volunteers help in the aftermath of the floods?
- What attributes did volunteers bring to the flood affected communities that was not exhibited by the government or emergency services?
- How does volunteerism in a non disaster context benefit the community?

These questions will be addressed utilising a community resilience framework as outlined in the following chapter.

## 1.2 Natural Disasters

A disaster is defined as “a potentially traumatic event that is collectively experienced, has an acute onset, and is time delimited. Disasters may be attributed to natural, technological or human causes” (McFarlane and Norris, 2006, p.4). Tan and Tan (2007) identify four main stages following the aftermath of a disaster<sup>5</sup>. These include the:

**Emergency Phase:** The evacuation phase, there is a scramble to save lives and swift action is required.

**Relief Phase :** Urgent measures are taken to meet the essential needs of the victims. There is also the provision of food, water, shelter and health care.

**Rehabilitation Phase:** The return of basic services and the victims and survivors are assisted to rebuild their lives.

**Reconstruction Phase :** The rebuilding and restoration of infrastructure and all essential services.

During the post disaster phase (the relief and rehabilitation stages), there is often a mass influx of outsiders into the disaster affected area. This is known as “convergence behaviour” and these people provide assistance, perform rescue activities (often prior to the arrival of government services), donate food, clothing and money to disaster victims (Perry and

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<sup>5</sup>There is no specific time period for these phases. The final phase the reconstruction phase is the longest and may last for several years.

Lindell, 2003). In the relevant literature on disasters, these actions are referred to as “prosocial behaviours”. This term is defined as “actions that provide benefit to others but have no obvious benefits for the person who carries them out” (Baron and Byrne as cited in Michel, 2007, p.635). They can be described as “an outpouring of altruistic feelings and behaviour beginning with mass rescue work and carrying on for days, weeks and possibly even months after the impact” (Barton as cited in Perry and Lindell, 2003, p.53). These actions are beneficial in two main ways: firstly, assistance is provided to the victims to overcome shock and secondly, it aids the overall recovery efforts by encouraging citizen participation (Fritz and Williams, 1957) .

This is also supported by Nilson (1985, p.689) who reports that “contrary to survivalist expectations, natural disasters typically unite even those who have dramatically little in common into an immediate large, cooperative group effort rarely seen in the modern world”. This phenomena is relatively short lived as following the initial phases of the aftermath, citizens themselves and the community go back to normal as day-to-day activities are resumed (Fritz and Williams, 1957, Perry and Lindell, 2003, Quarantelli and Dynes, 1977).

In addition to the term volunteer, the literature also commonly refers to these “prosocial” actions as “citizen participation” or “bystander response”. During the post disaster phase of the Brisbane floods these groups were referred to as “volunteers” (ABC News, 2011). Therefore, I have decided to identify the people who assisted in the clean up as volunteers and examine their actions in relation to the concepts of community resilience. Thus, the concept of volunteerism will be outlined in the subsequent section.

### **1.3 Volunteering in Australia**

All of the 80,000 people who registered on the Statewide Volunteers website during the flood were volunteers. Those who registered were just a small fraction of people who gave up their time and resources to help others in need. Volunteering is defined as “any activity in which time is given *freely* to benefit another person, group or organisation” (Wilson, 2000, p.215). Volunteering differs from a spontaneous reaction to help as a dedicated time commitment is required (Wilson, 2000). There are two types of volunteering, formal and informal volunteering. The former occurs inside of an formal organisational structure whilst the latter occurs externally (Finkelstein and Brannick, 2007). Regardless of this distinction, both are deemed an essential service to the community (Wilson and Musick, 1997). For the purposes

of this research, no distinction will be made between these volunteering types. Those that assisted during the aftermath of the flood gave up significant amounts of time, therefore the term “volunteer” is deemed appropriate<sup>6</sup>.

Australians have a strong commitment to volunteerism, illustrated by a study conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) which demonstrated that more than 30% of Australians participated in some form of volunteer work. The value of voluntary unpaid labour has been estimated at approximately \$42 billion Australian dollars per annum (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008) . Trends in volunteerism in Australia have found the following: volunteering is most prevalent in the 35-44 year age group, women are more likely to be involved in voluntary activities than men and those in paid employment are more likely to volunteer than those who are unemployed (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008) .

Although most of the respondents in the aforementioned survey reported that their motivation to volunteer was based on helping others and the community, other personal benefits were identified. Volunteering is a two way process and has been found to be beneficial for both the helper and the helped (Roberts and Devine, 2004). Numerous studies report that volunteering promotes good mental health by increasing individuals’ self worth, self esteem and sense of purpose. Volunteering encourages socialisation and the establishment of social networks (Wilson, 2000, Choi Namkee and Jing-Ann Chou, 2010) .

Some of these abovementioned benefits were expressed by the volunteers who I spoke with during the flood clean up. How their role as a volunteer can serve as a means to build community resilience will be examined in the following chapter.

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<sup>6</sup> The interviewees in this study dedicated a minimum of ten hours of their time to assist in the clean up (see Appendix 5a for more specific details). This was considered a significant amount of time considering that in more formal volunteering activities people may only dedicate one hour of their time a week. Therefore the efforts of those during the clean up was deemed to be “volunteering” as opposed to simply “helping”.

## 1.4 Thesis Rationale

This thesis thus proceeds on the hypothesis that the large volunteer response during the recent flooding events in Brisbane can serve to be a tool for building community resilience. Previous studies on volunteerism after natural disasters support my intent (Childs, 2008, Tatsuki, 2000). These two studies on Japan have illustrated how the 1995 Kobe Earthquake influenced volunteerism in Japan. It describes how the earthquake “literally shifted and took up the way people constructed reality in society and the domain of volunteerism emerged in people’s reality” (Tatsuki, 2000, p.191). Although volunteerism has always been strong in Australia, I will explore whether the Brisbane flood was a catalyst for people to become more involved in volunteerism whilst also examining how volunteering organisations have harnessed the surge of enthusiasm that was demonstrated by the volunteers.

Additionally, the link between volunteerism and community resilience appears to be tenuous in the literature. In Australia, the Government has proposed the development of a “National Volunteering Strategy” in 2011 in recognition of the ten year anniversary of the 2001 United Nations “Year of the Volunteer”. Although the formal report is pending release, the background paper advocates for the role of volunteering: “in building community resilience and its critical contribution to emergency services and disaster mitigation and recovery in Australia”. The paper does not provide any explicit justification as to how or why the actions of volunteers are important in building community resilience (Australian Government, 2011).

Therefore, my research overall research aim is to contribute to the field of community resilience by making an explicit connection between post disaster volunteerism and community resilience. This is to be achieved by exploring how volunteerism during the aftermath of the 2011 Brisbane flood disaster can, in combination with other aspects be a vehicle for building community resilience.

This thesis will proceed by outlining the theoretical framework of this study, a conceptualisation of community resilience by Norris et al., (2008). The methodology and rationale used for the collection of empirical data will be described. Following this, the empirical material has been analysed and critiqued using the theoretical framework and the relevant literature. A discussion of the limitations of the model by Norris et al., (2008) and an added element “Community Capability” will be added as a recommendation to capture how volunteerism in the 2011 Brisbane floods could assist in the development of community

preparedness for other disasters<sup>7</sup>. Finally, further reflections and implications for further research will be discussed before the final conclusions are made.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

The following Section discusses the relationship between sustainability science and the theoretical background of my study – community resilience.

Human survival depends on the resources that are provided by the planet. Paradoxically, humanity is also a driving force for global environmental change (Redman et al. as cited in Folke, 2006). It is now widely recognised amongst the scientific community that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have resulted in increased global atmospheric temperatures (Few, 2003). Climate modeling has also predicted the increased likelihood of sea level rise associated with melting of polar ice, changes in precipitation and increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events (Solomon et al., 2007) Therefore, the severity, magnitude and prevalence of floods and their subsequent impacts on communities are thought to increase (ibid).

Folke (2006) suggests that in order for humanity to cope with such shocks and continue function and thrive, an increased understanding of the delicate interplay between humanity and the environment is required. As a strategy to deal with these changes caused by climate change, the concept of resilience has gained traction within the sustainability science discourse (Folke et al., 2002).

This study examines a recent flooding event and the impact of the ensuing volunteer response on community resilience. Given that the severity of flooding is likely to increase in the future; my study is highly relevant to sustainability science (Folke et al., 2002, Folke, 2006).

### 2.1 What is Resilience?

The term “resilience” emerged from ecology during the 1960s and early 1970s (Folke, 2006). Resilience was recognised as the ability of an ecological system to survive in the face of change. It was defined as a means to

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<sup>7</sup>After doing a brief search of LibHub and Google Scholar only one peer reviewed article relating to “Community Capability” was found (Abatena, 1997). As no definition was provided I decided to devise my own meaning for this concept.

determine the persistence of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb change of state variable, driving variables and parameters and still persist (Holling, 1973, p.17).

Following this, the term resilience began to infiltrate different disciplines such as anthropology in 1975, human geography in 1994, psychology in 1986 and sociology in 1995 (Folke, 2006). Resilience moved into sociology with the understanding that ecological and social systems are closely related. Thus, resilience of social systems can be understood in similar ways to ecosystem resilience (Adger, 2000). Although this connection remains relatively undefined in the resilience literature; the assumption was made due to the dichotomy that exists between humanity's dependence on the ecological environment and its ability to destroy ecosystems at the same time. Thus, the environment and human societies cannot be treated independently (Folke et al., 2002, Adger, 2000).

The Resilience Alliance, a research organisation comprised of researchers from various academic backgrounds provides the following explanation of resilience relating to socio-ecological systems:

Resilience as applied to ecosystems, or to integrated systems of people and the natural environment, has three defining characteristics: The amount of change the system can undergo and still retain the same controls on function and structure, the degree to which the system is capable of self-organisation, the ability to build and increase the capacity for learning and adaptation (Resilience Alliance, 2011).

Adger (2000, p.347) suggests social resilience is “the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change”. Social resilience considers social, spatial and economic aspects and therefore requires interdisciplinary examination on a variety of scales (Adger, 2000).

Social resilience thinking has since begun to include human communities, a vital component of social ecological systems. In an attempt to define community resilience, twenty one definitions of resilience are examined by Norris et al., (2008). In the end they suggest that resilience is “a process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of function and adaptation after a disturbance” (p.130). Of particular importance is that whilst the discussion of resilience has been focused on the ability of a system to absorb shocks and still function, understanding the system's capacity for regeneration, renewal and re-growth are equally important in resilience thinking (Folke, 2006). To support this statement, Brown and Kulig (1996/97) note that resilience is not simply a return to homeostasis; it enables the community an opportunity to grow from a crisis.

Community Resilience has entered the disaster literature by examining how communities respond, react and rebuild after a disaster (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2004). As the prevalence and severity of natural disasters are predicted to increase in the future, the importance of exploring this concept has become even more significant.

## 2.2 Critiques of Social and Community Resilience

Although community resilience is now widely recognised in the literature on disasters and disaster management, its critiques cannot be overlooked. Whilst the plurality of the term resilience has been useful within different disciplines, it can also create communication problems between the different research fields (Gallopín, 2006). This is supported by Bodin (2004), who suggests that terminology unique to resilience may be lost when transferred across different disciplines<sup>8</sup>.

In conjunction, applying a concept originally derived from an ecological to a sociological context is also problematic. Adger (2000) argues that when this is the case, it assumes no differences in behaviour or structure between an ecological and social system. Another contradiction with resilience is that when examining social-ecological systems, to preserve one system (the ecological system for example) requires radically changing the other. For a social system this may not always be realistic (Jerneck and Olsson, 2008).

Using the term ‘community’ has also been highly criticised as it is open to subjective interpretation. A community can be explained in either a geographical context or referring to the members who make up the community (Norris et al., 2008). Boughton (1998, p.2) skirts around this difficulty by defining a community as “a group that has a number of things in common generally defined by location but which may include such things as shared experience or functions”. He argues that this definition, albeit general, is necessary as it enables its application to many different groups, all of which are relevant in emergency management (Boughton, 1998). It is acknowledged that different definitions of the term ‘community’ exist however, given that Boughton’s definition is utilised in disaster research, this definition of a community is considered to be applicable for this thesis.

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<sup>8</sup>Terminology used in resilience thinking include: stability, adaptation, vulnerability and panarchy. It is outside the scope of this thesis to examine these terms.

Adger (2000) suggests that social resilience should only be focused on communities and is not related to the resilience of individuals. According to Buckle et al., (2000), Adger's view fails to consider the resilience of those who make up the community - individuals and groups. Although each have differing levels of resilience which vary over time, understanding their resilience is essential for understanding the resilience of community as a whole (ibid). I support this argument because in my opinion, it seems futile to consider a resilient community without considering the individuals who comprise it.

Though it is important to consider the individual within the community (Pfefferbaum et al., 2005) suggests that a group of resilient individuals do not necessarily equal a resilient community. Additionally, community resiliency is tied with members of the community working together and not just as the aggregate of its individual members (Brown and Kulig, 1996/97).

It is evident from these examples that the theory of social and community resilience are not perfect. However, they serve to be an interesting method by which to measure the impacts of natural disasters on human communities.

## **2.3 Conceptualising Community Resilience**

As community resilience has gained credence in the disaster literature, it is therefore pertinent to understand what features comprise a resilient community. In this Section I will describe several different conceptualisations of community resilience and justify the model I have chosen for the basis of my research.

Three characteristics of a resilient community are identified by Hudson (2010). These include the amount that a community can change and still maintain its structure and function, its ability to reorganise following a threat and the capacity for the community to adapt and learn to the new situation (ibid). Although this explanation is axiomatic, Hudson's definition seems to be descriptive rather than analytical.

Another suggestion is provided by Ganor and Ben-Lavy (2003) who conducted research on Israeli communities exposed to traumatic events over long periods of time. They identify six components of a resilient community. These include communication, cooperation, cohesion, coping, credibility and credo<sup>9</sup>. This framework is more detailed than

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<sup>9</sup>Credo is defined as "the vision of the community, one that depicts a better future, a horizon of hope" (Ganor and Ben-Lavy, 2003, p.106)

Hudson's above and could be applicable to communities affected by natural disasters. However these elements focus more on mitigating the mental health impacts associated with constant exposure to traumatic events. Therefore, I deemed this model inappropriate for my study.

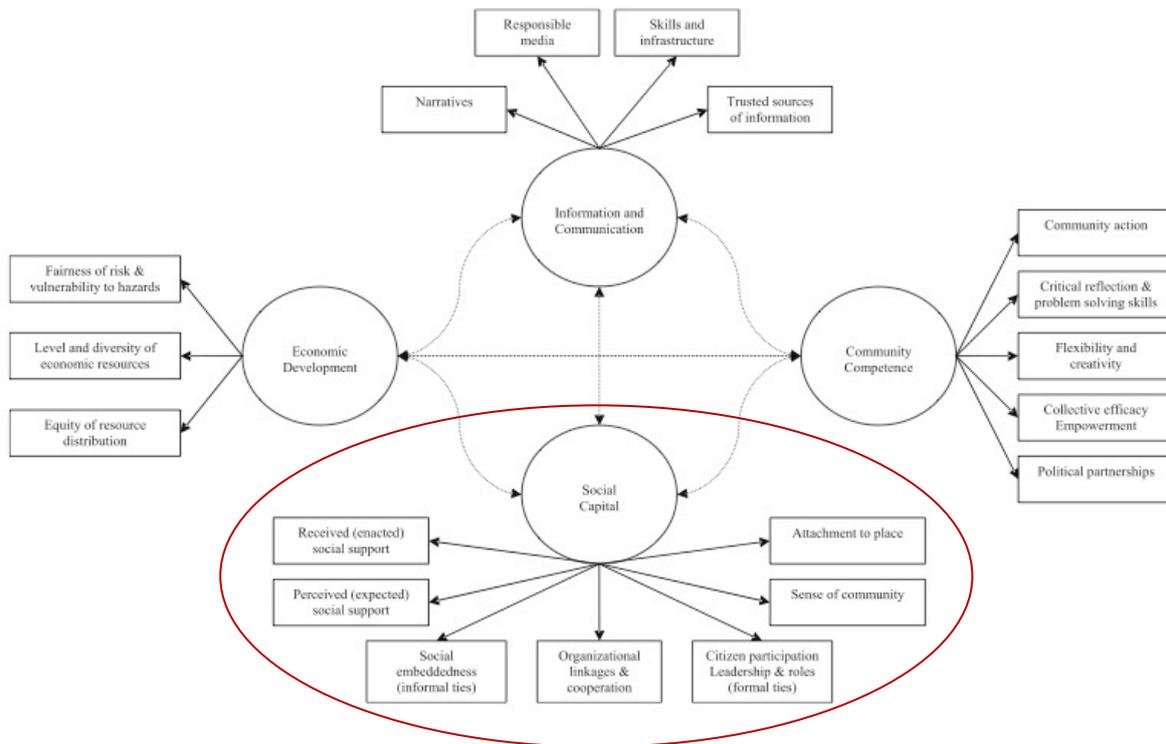
The Red Cross Red Crescent – World Disasters Report (2004) introduces the “Sustainable Livelihoods Approach” that emphasises the strength of communities instead of its needs or vulnerabilities. This approach uses the sociological concept of the “Capitals Approach” in explaining how to sustain human livelihoods and build community resilience. Five kinds of capitals are included: natural, physical, human, financial and social capital (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2004). This model although clear, was very broad and I found it difficult to frame post disaster volunteerism within this context. Volunteerism could be linked with social capital; however given the difficulties describing this concept as discussed in the following chapters, I avoided this approach.

Four key elements that both physical and social systems need to be resilient are suggested by Bruneau et al., (2009) who studied the resilience of physical structures exposed to earthquake hazards. They refer to the four R's: robustness, redundancy, rapidity and resourcefulness. I did originally consider conceptualising “volunteerism” within this framework however I found it particularly difficult to adapt all the research data into the four set categories.

Instead, I drew from the work of Norris et al., (2008) who, after critiquing other models of community resilience, draw on the four R's to examine community resilience through a capacities approach. They identify that communities are resilient through a set of networked adaptive capacities combining both resources themselves and their attributed features. They suggest that by utilising this approach community resilience is a not an outcome nor stability (Norris et al., 2008). Instead it is a progression to adaptation and is “a strategy for the promotion of disaster response and readiness” (Norris et al., 2008, p.144). Their definition almost parallels the meaning of “Community Capacity” a term derived from public health which is defined as “ the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilise and address social and public health problems” (Goodman et al., 1998, p.259).

As illustrated above, I acknowledge that this is not the only model of community resilience. However, I found this model to be the most appropriate as it comprehensively

illustrates what capacities a community specifically needs in order to be resilient. The model is illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Norris et al., (2008) - Model of Community Resilience (emphasis added).**

As illustrated, the model identifies four networked resources: Information and Communication; Community Competence; Social Capital and Economic Development.

I acknowledge that all facets in combination build community resilience, yet it is beyond the scope of this study to examine this conceptualisation in its entirety. Instead, for the purposes of this study and the results from the empirical data, I will only focus on post disaster volunteering through the **Social Capital** arm of the model (see Figure 3).

## 2.4 Social Capital

The concept of “social capital” has been discussed and contested widely in the literature. This thesis draws upon the work of Robert Putnam – one of the most influential and renowned writers on social capital. In the literature on natural disasters that discuss social capital, most

refer to the work of Robert Putnam however other references have been made to the works of Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman<sup>10</sup>.

Social capital is thus defined as “features of social life - networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” (Putnam, 1995, p.664). During a disaster, Dynes (2006 p.2) states that social capital “is our most significant resource in responding to damage caused by natural and other hazards”. When there are losses to other forms of capital (i.e. human, natural or economic capital), social capital can be quickly repaired and used to accomplish essential tasks (Dynes, 2006). In regards to community resilience, social capital reflects “the quality and quantity of social cooperation” (Mayunga, 2007, p.7). Whilst social capital is effective at reducing community distress, distress can also diminish social capital (Mathbor, 2007).

In the model by Norris et al., (2008), a thorough explanation of the capacities that comprise social capital is not provided. As extensive research about each concept already exists, their aim is to draw conclusions about the set of capacities as a whole to enhance community resilience (Norris et al., 2008). Therefore, after reviewing the cited literature in the article, my interpretation of each concept is outlined in Table 1.

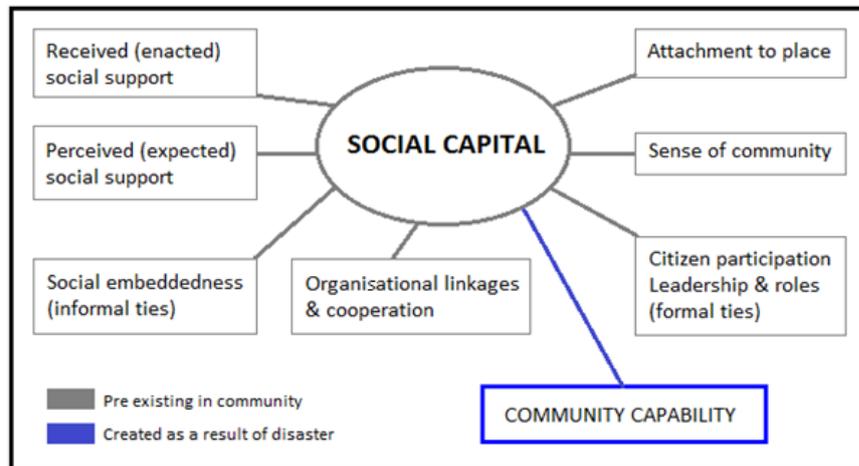
**Table 1: Social Capital Capacities in Community Resilience Model, Norris et al., (2008)**

<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Received (Enacted) Social Support	This is the support that victims receive from the surrounding community during the immediate stages after the disaster.
Perceived (Expected) Social Support	Perceived support is the individuals’ understanding that help would be there if required.
Social Embeddedness (Informal Ties)	These are the informal networks that exist within a community. Primarily the relationships that exist between partners, families, friends and neighbours.
Organisational Linkages and Cooperation.	Members of resilient communities cooperate with each other within the community. Community based organisations may have links with external organisations
Citizen Participation Leadership and Roles (Formal Ties)	This refers to any participation and leadership shown by community members within the community and formal organisations.
Sense of Community	This is an understanding of trust and belonging with other members of the community.
Attachment to Place	This is one’s emotional connection to their neighbourhood or community. It does not include the emotional connections with people who live there.

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<sup>10</sup>It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider these theorists’ works yet it is important to acknowledge their contributions to the area of social capital.

These concepts will serve to guide me through the analysis of the empirical material as outlined in the following Section. Furthermore, from the results of my empirical research I propose an addition to the model called “Community Capability” as illustrated in the Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Community Capability as an Addition to Framework by Norris et al., (2008)**

This model above highlights the existing social capital characteristics already present in the community in order for a community to be resilient. It is my proposal that the additional arm ‘Community Capability’ develops as a result of the disaster. How the volunteers exhibited these existing and future elements will be outlined in the later chapters.

### 3 Methodology

This research employs a mixed method approach and utilises surveys, semi-structured interviews and photographs. This Section outlines the parameters of the chosen methodology and its applicability to the study of post disaster volunteerism and community resilience in the context of the 2011 Brisbane flood disaster.

#### 3.1 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

All research depends on the researcher maintaining overarching assumptions about the way the world is perceived and knowledge examined. Therefore, it is important to explain my ontological and epistemological positions for this research. The chosen ontological standpoint

is constructivist. Constructivism is a critical position and is defined by the understanding that “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (Bryman, 2008, p.692). This suggests that society is a social construction and social relationships are constantly changing and are influenced by these interactions (Dalgren et al., 2007). This also acknowledges the transient nature of the volunteer situation itself. A moment of volunteerism thus only exists under certain conditions, and through agreement of the social actors, and with the disaster as a catalyst and common context.

The epistemological standpoint of this research is based on interpretivism. This is defined as “an epistemological position that requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2008, p.694). Therefore, the knowledge I construct from my interview and survey data is both connected and inseparable. I also acknowledge that I may have influenced my participants’ views and opinions and they influenced mine during the interview process. Nonetheless, I have attempted to ensure the accuracy and quality of the empirical data and analysis by undertaking the following research strategies as outlined below.

### **3.2 Mixed Methods Research**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection have been used in this research. This is known as “mixed methods research” (Bryman, 2008). Triangulation involves the use of multiple tools such as methods, data, theories and data sources within a research project and is considered to be an effective method of combining both qualitative and quantitative research (ibid). Flick and Lucchini as cited in (Rice and Ezzy, 2000) suggest that triangulation allows the researcher to develop a more complex picture of the subject thus increasing the validity of the research.

I used both data and method triangulation in my research. Data triangulation involved obtaining an initial survey of volunteers in the Chelmer and Graceville region. Following this I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews from volunteers from various organisations and groups. These ranged from volunteers who were members of informal groups (i.e. they volunteered with friends and family) and more formal groups (such as the Parents and Friends Association and other volunteering organisations). Additionally, my field journal during the clean up phase and photographs to visually illustrate the event further enforce the robustness of my empirical material and methods.

### **3.3 Research Methods**

As mentioned in Section 3.2, both a survey and semi-structured interviews were used to collect empirical data. “Survey research is the administration of questionnaires to a sample of respondents who have been selected from a population” (Walter, 2010, p.179). A simple questionnaire was chosen in order to determine the basic demographics of the volunteers and their motivations for assisting during the clean up (see Appendix 1). The results of these questionnaires assisted me to devise appropriate questions for the following interviews.

Semi-structured interviews allowed the participants the opportunity to iterate their stories of the flood crisis and their role in the volunteer clean up efforts. This type of interview is useful as it allows room for the researcher to understand their interviewee’s perspective and enable suitable reflections to be made of their opinions and reality (Brockington and Sullivan, 2003, Ragin and 1994, Kvale, 2009). Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to explore the subjective meanings and interpretations that people give to their experiences (Denzin, as cited in Rice and Ezzy 2000).

The interview questions varied according to whom I spoke with and three sets of interview questions were used to gather my data. The same questions were asked for the first twelve interviewees. Following the analysis of their responses, the next involved a set of questions which explored the previous interviewee’s responses. Finally, the third set were targeted at volunteering organisations and thus differed from the initial participants (see Appendix 4a, 4b and 4c).

### **3.4 Participant Recruitment and Sampling**

All participants were selected in a purposive manner. This ensured that the interviewees were most relevant to address the research question (Bryman, 2008). A total of 76 participants were used in this study – sixty for the survey and a further sixteen for the interviews. For the survey, all participants were recruited in the disaster affected suburb. They were randomly selected on the street or at the “Volunteer Coordination Centre” set up by the local school’s Parents and Friends Association (see Figure 2). The surveys had to be performed and collected rapidly as the mass volunteer effort only lasted during the relief phase of the flood (in this case I considered this to be the three days after the floodwaters had receded).

Following the distribution and collection of the survey data, other participants were recruited for the interviews. Four interviewees were recruited from the group whom I worked

with directly; one interviewee was recruited after I learned that she had travelled approximately three hours by car to the flood affected area. Additionally, two more participants were obtained from these interviewees via snowball effect<sup>11</sup>.

Following this I then approached members of the School's Parents and Friends Association. This group had taken the initiative and set up a flood relief centre and coordinated thousands of volunteers to assist the flood victims in their suburb. Three interviewees were recruited from this group – the group's president, a board member and the school principal.

A few weeks after the flood, I attended a "Community Resilience" community meeting organised by Statewide Volunteers. At this meeting I recruited two further participants; one had only arrived in Brisbane one month prior to the flood. The other, an organisational psychologist with extensive knowledge of community resilience. Finally, in order to gain more of an understanding of volunteerism in both a disaster and non disaster context, I conducted three interviews with members of volunteering organisations. These included a State Manager, State Communications Manager and a Social Engagement Initiatives Manager.

All participants in my study were involved in the flood clean up in some manner and only one had been affected by the flood<sup>12</sup> (see Appendix 2). Although I had spoken with many flood affected victims, I decided not to include them in my study. I felt they may have been too traumatised with the recent event and therefore interviewing them would be insensitive and unethical.

All survey data was anonymous and collected after receiving verbal consent from the participants. For the interviews, verbal approval was first sought and then written consent was obtained during the interview. Contact details of counseling organisations were offered in the event of the participants becoming upset by the interview material (see Appendix 3). All interview participants and their respective organisations were protected by a pseudonym. Photographs I have taken have also been used throughout this report. All people in the photos are unable to be identified.

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<sup>11</sup> This is when research participants are recruited by others involved in the study (Bryman, 2008)

<sup>12</sup> One interviewee's rental property was damaged during the flood.

### **3.5 The Interview Process**

The interviews took place at least one month after the flood disaster between the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2011 and the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011. This one month break gave the respondents the opportunity to reflect on the experience. Most interviews were one-on-one and two interviews were conducted in pairs. The location of these interviews varied, depending on the interviewees preference and time constraints. All interviews were tape recorded and between thirty to ninety minutes in duration. The interviews were transcribed verbatim on either the day or a few days following the interview. As accuracy of the transcript is an essential step to ensure data validity, rechecking the transcript against the audio and further proof reading was attended (McLellan et al., 2003).

Following transcription, the material was then sent back to the interviewees. This enabled them to view their contributions and make any comments or adjustments they deemed necessary. This process called “respondent validation” is an effective method for ensuring the accuracy of the data (Bryman, 2008). After receiving the participant’s feedback about their transcript and making the appropriate corrections, I began to analyse the empirical material.

### **3.6 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The interview data was examined thoroughly in order to gain an understanding of the material embedded within the interviews. Both content and thematic methods of analysis were used to achieve this. Whilst I acknowledge that there are numerous methods for analysing qualitative data, the following methods were deemed the most comprehensive and thorough for this report. Content analysis involves arranging the empirical data in predetermined categories with the purpose being: “to provide knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a guide to action” (Krippendorff as cited in Nandy and Sarvela, 1997, p.4). During the initial phase of the analysis, the raw data was crudely arranged in analysis tables in order to identify similarities and differences between the responses (see Appendix 5a, 5b and 5c). These categories roughly corresponded with the interview questions. The transcripts were then scrutinised and appropriate pieces of text inserted into the six elements of the community resilience model (see Figure 4).

To ensure further rigour, the empirical data was also examined for themes. According to Ryan and Bernard (2003, p.86) “without thematic categories, investigators have nothing to

describe, nothing to compare and nothing to explain”. Thematic analysis commenced during the transcription process and salient themes were identified. After exploring for basic themes, identification techniques drawn from Ryan and Bernard (2003) were applied to identify more subtle themes. Table 2 illustrates how themes were identified in the empirical data and the rationale for each technique.

**Table 2: Methods to Identify Themes as identified by Ryan and Bernard (2003)**

<b>Theme Identification Technique</b>	<b>Identification Method and Rationale</b>
Repetition	The text was examined for repetitions in the material. This indicated that the topic was important for the respondent.
Indigenous typologies/categories	The text was examined the text for unfamiliar or often “local” terms used in unfamiliar ways.
Metaphors and analogies	The text was examined for analogies and metaphors. These often are used to describe a respondent’s thoughts.
Similarities and differences between transcripts	The transcripts were compared and contrasted against each other. This enabled differences to be identified between one respondent to the next.
Linguistic connectors	Each text was examined for the following words: “Because,” “since”, “and a result” = causal relationship “If,” “then,” “rather than,” “instead of” = conditional relationship “Is a” = taxonomic category “Before,” “after”, “then,” “next” = time orientated expressions “Not”, “no”, “none” or the prefix “non”, “un”, “in”, “il-”, “im-” = can also assist to identify themes Identifying these words highlighted potential themes. After closer examination, these were then inserted into the six categories of the resilience model.
Missing data	Data was examined by attempting to identify topics that interviewees avoided during the interview process
Transitions	Changes in voice tone and topic were scrutinised. Shifts in topic can assist to identify themes in addition to interruptions by different speakers during group interviews.

### 3.7 Research Limitations

This research and subsequent data analysis is limited by several factors. Firstly, the surveys were conducted rapidly in the initial aftermath phase where people were elated, motivated and excited about the clean up process. Therefore, their responses may have tended to have been overly positive. Secondly, the interviews were conducted a minimum of four weeks after the flooding so participants may not have had enough time to reflect properly on the

event. It would have been interesting to conduct follow up interviews approximately six months after the flood to compare their initial response with perhaps more a reflective one six months on.

The study was only conducted in one flood affected area of Brisbane. It is unknown whether or not other areas experienced the same response and community reaction similar to the Chelmer/Graceville community. Whilst this reaction was reported to be similar Brisbane wide, there were other reports of flood affected suburbs that “had been forgotten” and “abandoned” particularly some of the suburbs in the outlying city areas and much of rural Queensland (Calligeros, 2011).

Utilising one conceptual framework in itself is a limitation as it constrains ideas and thoughts within its boundaries. Using only one aspect of the Norris et al., (2008) model is also problematic as I am unable to consider the other elements of the model which complement the social capital aspect. Therefore, it is important to highlight that this study aims to explore volunteerism through the social capital element only and that social capital in isolation cannot build community resilience. Instead all facets of the model must be functioning for community resilience to be realised.

Coming from Brisbane and being a volunteer myself during this event may also pose as a bias. I attempted to be as objective as possible during this research particularly during the clean up phase however my experiences and observations may have been tainted by my participation during this time. With regards to the data analysis, the thematic analysis of the interviews was performed utilising techniques from one main academic article as cited in Section 3.6 which may have limited the identification of themes within the empirical material.

Finally, this research has been conducted in Australia, an affluent country with a stable democratic governance system. Therefore, the provision of support provided by the community may reflect this stability. Hence this research may not be relevant to other contexts. In conjunction, every natural disaster is unique in its nature, scale and magnitude of destruction. Therefore, it is also imperative to understand that specific experiences or lessons learnt from disasters may be applicable to other contexts however they not directly transferrable.

## 4 Results and Analysis

The results of both the surveys and semi-structured interviews will be presented and analysed here. The empirical material has been organised according to Norris et al., (2008) conceptualisation of community resilience through the social capital segment (see Figure 4). These include:

1. Received social support
2. Perceived social support
3. Social embeddedness
4. Organisational links and cooperation
5. Citizen participation, leadership and roles
6. Sense of community
7. Attachment to place

An extension of the model titled “Community Capability” (as illustrated in Figure 4) will also be discussed and the rationale provided for its addition. Bold text within the quotations indicates when an idea was emphasised by the interviewee.

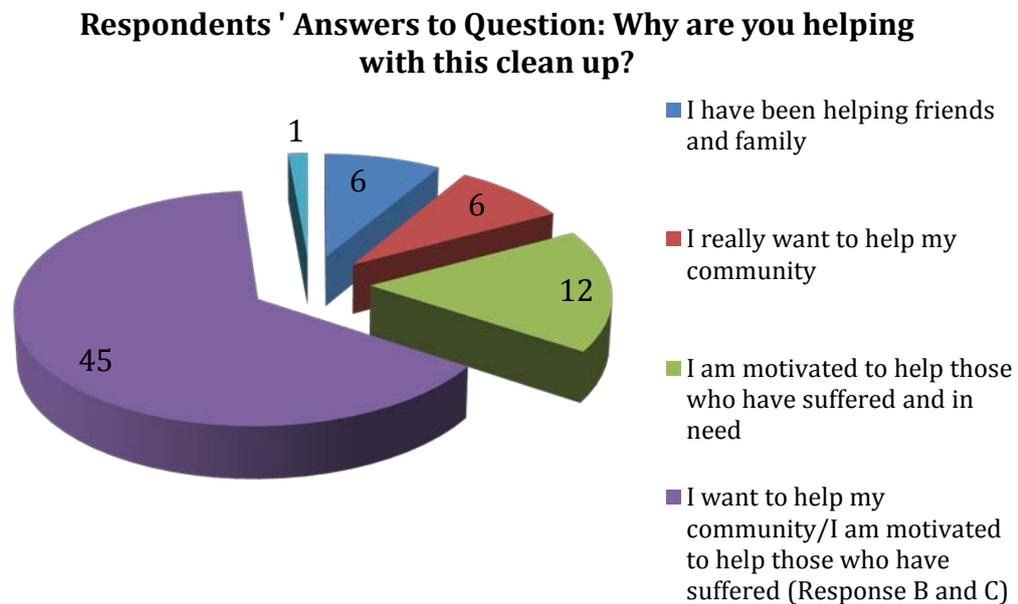
### 4.1 Received (Enacted) Support

Norris et al., (2008) indicate that an individual’s social support is an important component of social capital. This support can be examined in a structural manner (by the number of social networks and resources), through enacted support (offering support in times of emotional distress) and by functional support (providing acceptance or psychological support). Support can be provided naturally through friends, family and neighbours, through more formal means (professional support), or via community links such as clubs or religious organisations.

My results clearly show that support was provided by the volunteers to members of the flood affected community. Regarding structural support; the School Parents and Friends Association had linkages within the Graceville community and therefore were able to effectively allocate and organise resources to the affected households. The volunteer organisations also demonstrated this support by allocating volunteers to the various “Displaced Persons Centres” around Brisbane.

It was evident that volunteers provided “enacted support” to the community. From my twelve initial interviewees, less than half had a personal connection to the people whom they

assisted. This is also reflected in the survey results presented in Figure 5. Please note the total respondents equal seventy as ten respondents chose more than one response.



**Figure 5: Volunteers' Motivations for Assisting in the Clean Up**

From this graph it is evident that only a few respondents (six) were actually assisting friends and family. More than three quarters of the respondents were motivated to “help their community and were motivated to help those who have suffered”. More people were motivated to help those who had suffered in comparison to “helping their community”.

Volunteers also provided different types of support. Obviously, those who had helped friends and neighbours were able to provide direct emotional support to the victims. Other contributions made by people were varied. Some gave their time to clean up mud; some served tea and coffee; whilst some donated both money and resources to the Parents and Friends Association’s Flood Appeal<sup>13</sup>. Four months on, the school’s Parents and Friends Association are continuing their support to the victims. This generosity and level of assistance was not expected by all of the initial interviewees. Seven of the interviewees were surprised at the number of people who had helped during the aftermath phase. Some attributed the large numbers of volunteers to the city’s large population and two to the

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<sup>13</sup> This is a community based project that collects monetary donations for the flood victims.

Australian culture of ‘mateship’<sup>14</sup>. All did not expect the overwhelming generosity shown by the volunteers.

With respect to building community resilience, the act of simply “being there” and attending to simple clean up tasks was also considered important. Volunteers felt effective because they “were working towards a common goal,” “making a small contribution to the overall effect” and felt that the “impact of you wanting to go and help was the most important”. The State Manager of one volunteering organisation explained:

I think that volunteers **enhance resilience** through the fact that these people **are interested** in a particular community, “an outsider came in to help us when we were down.” I think that volunteers are really important to building that resilience and that feeling of the foundation of it is goodwill. And wanting to see your fellow man **not be** in crisis. And that just spurs more goodwill and helps people feel better about things.

State Manager, Newlight Queensland.

This was best exemplified by the term “shadow services” used by another respondent of a volunteering organisation. He suggested that volunteers help in a disaster situation by:

Being a resource for people, not necessarily a friend but **being there** for the people who have been directly affected. Being there is **really** important, I don’t know that everybody wanted a friend, but I think they wanted to be surrounded by supportive people. And I think that’s what volunteers probably don’t initially understand that they’re doing. But that’s what they **really** are doing. And the actual help, the functional help that they give is very valued and I’m not denigrating that, but it’s the shadow service that’s the important one.

State Communications Manager, Helping Hand Queensland.

Social support has been found to be effective in mitigating the impacts of disasters, however, following a disaster, social support may impact negatively upon two other elements of social capital (Norris et al., 2005). These aspects are perceived support and social embeddedness and are discussed in the following Sections. The demand for social support may outweigh the availability of support as disasters often affect entire social networks (Norris et al., 2005). Additionally, this may also result in a phenomena called the “insider/outsider effect” as termed by Edelstein and Wandersman (1987). Social groups affected by the disaster may

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Mateship’ is a term strongly associated with Australian culture. Used during World War One. It refers to your friend your “mate” and implies a “ shared experience, mutual respect and unconditional assistance” (Australian Government, 2007).

become “saturated” with stories relating to the disaster event. In order to avoid this, members of groups may isolate themselves and thus impact social relations. Additionally, this “saturation” may affect relations with outsiders who, unable to sympathise, are fatigued about the constant focus on the disaster event and as a result avoid these interactions (Edelstein and Wandersman, 1987). This could certainly be problematic for the volunteers I interviewed, especially as many of them dedicated a lot of time to assist. In conjunction, “burnout” could be another potential problem for the members of the Parents and Friends Association. This is because they may feel exhausted and consequently lose motivation for their continuing flood work as a result of their previous intense efforts<sup>15</sup>.

Too many volunteers coming forward to help was another problem associated with social support. In the initial interviews, all but two respondents commented that too many volunteers hampered the clean up efforts. “Getting in each others’ way”, “strangers entering people’s homes” and “removing damaged household items without the permission of the owners” was mentioned. Deborah explained how the provision of support (if not appropriately managed) can inhibit community resilience:

“It [the home owner’s belongings] was out of the front and they [the owners] had to go through piles of rubbish to get a special box that their grandmother had given them. And the volunteers in all good faith would have thought “oh a mud covered box, throw it out”. There were too many people in each person’s house. One particular lady, a single lady on her own, in her thirties she just said “a) she was in shock and b) she had twenty people in her house that she didn’t know who any of them were.” So, she was telling me, she was ready to renovate and she’d saved up all this money, she’d bought new white goods on sale and people just threw things out, they were in their boxes [. ....] it’s the really personal items that have been most upsetting for them. You know, white goods come and go, but your grandma’s glory box isn’t coming back”.

Deborah, member of Parents and Friends Association

In my opinion this statement illustrates an invasion of privacy and an intrusion on personal space. From my own observations, I witnessed volunteers entering people’s homes and piles of keepsakes appearing on the footpath ready for disposal. This is evident in the following photograph.

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<sup>15</sup>See Appendix 5a Section for more details on how the Parents and Friends group assisted in the clean up.



**Figure 6: Piles of Homeowners' Items Appearing on the Footpath**

Although I could not find any literary material to support this finding, I suggest that flood victims may elicit negative attitudes towards their helpers once they are no longer traumatised by the event. For the homeowner, they may experience a lack to trust towards others in the outside community. Trust is an important component of social capital according to Putnam's definition as cited in Section 2.4. Therefore this lack of trust will affect social capital and ultimately impact a community's resilience.

## **4.2 Perceived (Expected) Social Support**

Perceived support is the understanding that help would available if required (Norris et al., 2008). This ties tightly with the notion of reciprocity which is essential for the establishment of social capital (Putnam, 2000). There is a close relationship between received and perceived support (Norris et al., 2008). It is suggested that the former (received support) acts as a buffer against degradation of the latter (perceived support), or the former has negative implications for the latter (Norris and Kaniasty, 1996, Kessler, 1992). Eight of the twelve initial respondents mentioned the notion of "reciprocity" (expecting the same would be done for

you) was an influencing factor for them to provide assistance. Another two respondents mentioned that although “expecting the same would be done to you” was not their primary motivation, it was an implicit expectation that exists when providing assistance to others. One interviewee suggested that this notion of reciprocity was simply her understanding of “her community”.

Perceived support seemed to be strongly related with feelings of empathy. As empathy was a salient theme in all initial twelve interviews, I have elaborated on this notion. The following quote illustrates this connection:

I guess because I thought that this could have easily been me, and I'd like to think that in a similar situation, people would have helped me out. There's that general feeling to be involved in something, where your neighbour in a general sense has been affected and they have been brought to their knees and devastated, and just a general feeling to do what you can to help those that had been badly affected.

Walter, resident from flood affected region

Living in the local area and witnessing the disaster “all around us” also appeared to have an impact. This may suggest that living close to the affected area influenced one's motivation to assist. Carl added this:

But when it happened so locally for lots of people even if they weren't affected I think they get the sense of if it had been me what would I have liked to happen? And I would have liked to have felt that people would have been willing to help so therefore **I am willing** to help those people – I am not affected but these people are so the least I can do is help.

Carl, resident from flood affected region

However this notion was not reflected in my survey results as evident in Figure 7.

### Distance Travelled by Volunteers to Help Out

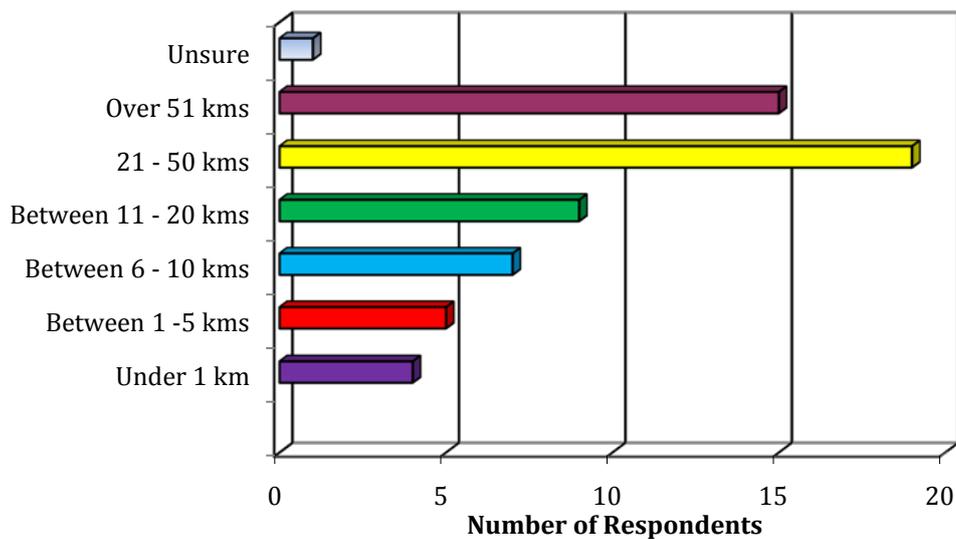


Figure 7: Distance Travelled by Volunteers to Assist

The majority of my survey participants had travelled over 21 kilometres to assist in the flood affected region. I also met two men who had flown up from Sydney (approximately 1000 kilometres) and from Melbourne (2000 kilometres) respectively to volunteer. The fewest had travelled under 5 kilometres however, others who lived close by may have been attending to their own flood affected properties.

One interviewee had travelled 300 kilometres to set up a tea and coffee van to support the volunteers. She was motivated because:

We love tea ourselves, and we drink copious amounts of tea and we thought “how would we cope? If we couldn’t just make a cup of tea when we were stressed?” So it was such a simple thing to do.

Rachael, owner of volunteer tea and coffee van

These above findings suggest that living in close proximity to the disaster area does not influence one’s sense of empathy and subsequent motivation to assist.

Experiencing a sense of helplessness and wanting to do something were also salient themes. Respondents wanted to act so that “they didn’t feel helpless” and because they “felt totally numb and so they couldn’t not do something,” and felt “guilty and sorry but at the same time feeling relieved because they were unaffected”. Another noted they “couldn’t suppress the urge to do something”. If unable to help physically, almost all participants

mentioned that they would find some way to assist the victims. This findings correspond with a study on citizen response after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on New York City (Lowe and Fothergill, 2003).

Evidently, this sense of “wanting to do something” was experienced by many others. The volunteering organisations reported that they had experienced a peak of volunteer registrations after two other natural disasters which occurred within short duration of each other, Cyclone Yasi in North Queensland and the earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand<sup>16</sup>. These findings suggest that an understanding of perceived help combined with feeling empathy towards the victims may influence an individual’s decision to assist. As a result, this may increase citizen participation discussed in Section 4.5.

Interestingly, interviewees felt pressured to help out. One respondent reported that the social pressure was almost like “a pop movement”. The media displayed images of people in mud covered clothing and queues of people lining up to volunteer. Pictures of people wading through the flood waters were regarded as heroes (Syvret, 2011, Chambers and Fraser, 2011, Dew and Shakespeare, 2011). Whilst this may have encouraged more people to assist, it would have contributed negatively to the convergence behaviour that will be discussed in later chapters.

Volunteers may also have felt compelled to help in the initial phases whilst disregarding the importance of providing assistance to victims in the long term. One participant noted:

There was a bit of community expectation [to volunteer] that you need to go and do it and everyone was talking about it and people did their quota, donated their money and now they have their levy that they are paying and now people probably feel that they have done what they need to do until the next crisis<sup>17</sup>.

Tina, Registered Nurse

This corresponds with the literature that suggests that public support wanes in the weeks following the disaster (Pardess, 2005, Fritz and Williams, 1957) .This is thought to hamper community resilience efforts as rebuilding a community affected by a disaster extends longer than the initial aftermath phase (Pardess, 2005).

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<sup>16</sup> Extensive flooding occurred throughout rural Queensland before and after the floods in Brisbane. Additionally, several weeks after the Brisbane flood, Cyclone Yasi hit the north coast of Queensland and created widespread devastation.

<sup>17</sup> This is a government organised monetary fund to assist disaster victims.

In conjunction to the social pressure that was experienced by the above respondents, I suggest that this may have negative implications for other members of the community. For some who were physically unable to volunteer or for others whose offers of assistance were not required, creating such a “pop” movement in the media may render feelings of frustration, guilt, helplessness, social isolation or other negative behaviours. This may lead to people feeling a loss of community and social embeddedness and affect community resilience. These aspects will be discussed below.

### 4.3 Social Embeddedness (Informal Ties)

Informal ties are the relationships that exist between partners, families, friends and neighbours (Norris et al., 2008). Most respondents made some comment about informal social connections they had seen or heard about during the clean up. The themes that emerged were the establishment of new networks, reaffirmation of old networks and respect shown between different age groups in the community. The impact of a shared experience was also thought to build new networks. One respondent noted:

I think for any community that was **immediately** affected by the flood, you all of a sudden have a whole lot of shared memories and shared experiences that were quite intense. So there is a much greater bonding merely because of that.

John Peters, Organisational Psychologist and Social Researcher

Lisa recounted this story:

Two women that I met; they lived two doors down from each other on Graceville Avenue, they never spoken to each other whole time in three years. Now because of the floods they are planning a holiday together. They came together; helped each other out and now they are going on holiday together.

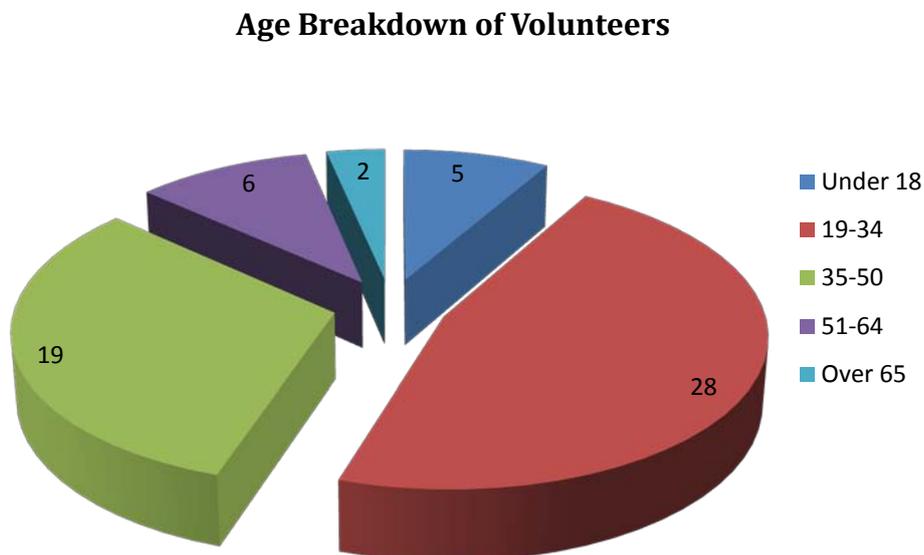
Lisa, resident from flood affected region

Two participants reported having reconnected with older networks.

I've not spoken to my neighbour for ages, but she came over on Wednesday morning [...] and that broke the ice a bit. Maybe we will chat a bit more now or something but I don't know. I think in the affected areas **definitely** people have come together and are helping each other out and they have the common thing that it happened to them.

Kathy, resident from flood affected region

Interviewees expressed respect for younger people in response to the vast numbers of young people who volunteered. My survey results reflect the interviewees' comments (see Figure 8)<sup>18</sup>.



**Figure 8: Age Breakdown of Survey Respondents**

The majority of respondents were in the 19-34 age category followed by 35 -50 year olds. These findings are in contrast to the trends in regular volunteering in Australia (see in Section 1.3) and the demographics of the “typical volunteer” as indicated during my interviews with the volunteering organisations (see Appendix 5c). Two organisations mentioned that the average volunteer was over 45 years of age. The third commented that it was impossible to make a generalisation as the age groups varied. However, all did report, that during the

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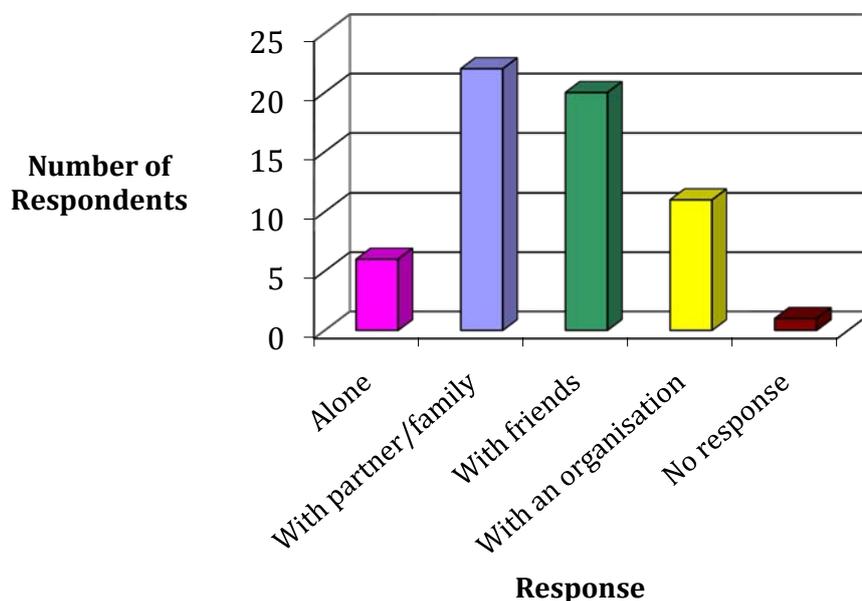
<sup>18</sup> These age categories were chosen for no specific purpose.

aftermath of the flood, they experienced an influx of volunteer interest from people of all ages.

My results are similar to a study performed by Michel (2007) on the characteristics of volunteers who assisted during Hurricane Katrina that struck the southeast coast of the United States of America in 2005. The results found that the characteristics of a “typical” volunteer (one who volunteers on a regular basis) were not the same as the volunteers who assisted in the disaster. This may suggest that during a disaster, a wider variety of people are available and motivated to assist due to the disruption of day-to-day activities caused by the disaster. In regards to building community resilience this may result in the removal of societal barriers that exist between social groups and enhance cooperation as highlighted in the responses above.

Social networks can also be used to motivate community members for action (Dynes, 2006, Fritz and Williams, 1957). This was also reflected in my survey results (see Figure 9).

### Response to Question: Who are You Volunteering With Today?



**Figure 9: Volunteers' Companions During Flood Clean Up**

My results illustrate that the majority of the participants were volunteering with friends and family. More were assisting with members of an informal social network than with an organisation (formal network). This suggests that these informal networks were influential in the volunteer effort.

Interestingly, the majority of respondents in the interviews did not assist on the basis that they knew someone affected by the disaster. This suggests that whilst informal networks may be a motivating factor, the relationship with who they assist is not important.

Informal social networks regardless of how they are established are essential for building community resilience (Mathbor, 2007). I propose that not only do they motivate volunteer participation but can be also utilised in the event of another natural disaster. This is supported by one of the volunteering organisations who noted that:

We **all** got to know each other, so just anecdotally; it has made a difference in our local area. I know everybody's gone back inside now and turned on the TV and people have forgotten each other's names, but if you needed that community for something, you **could actually** call on them. And I think, I don't know if that will go away in those areas.

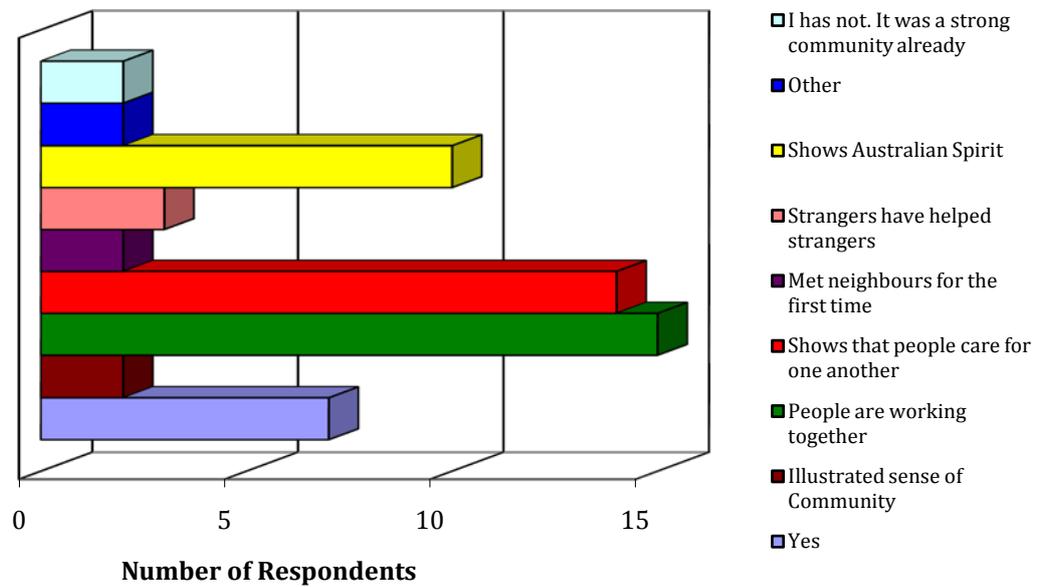
State Manager, Newlight Queensland

Conversely, there is also a risk that social networks can be exclusive and inhibit the fostering of social capital (Putnam, 2000) and consequently community resilience (Norris et al., 2008). Tight-knit groups can become too exclusive and affect the relationships with the wider community, inhibiting communication and cooperation between groups (Pelling and High, 2005). Although no evidence of this was found in my research, there may have been cases where volunteers in groups were prejudiced in their selection of whom to assist. This potentially could fuel tension similar to the experience during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 where racial segregation manifested during the aftermath of the disaster (Munasinghe, 2007).

#### **4.4 Organisational Linkages and Cooperation**

For a community to be resilient, members must act as a collective unit (Pfefferbaum et al., 2005). This is supported by Davidson as cited in (Mayunga, 2007) who notes that the most resilient communities (those with strong capital) work towards a common goal. My survey results support these statements and highlight that behaviours that represent cooperation such as “strangers helping strangers” and “people helping each other” were witnessed. See Figure 10.

### How has This Flood Brought the Community Together?



**Figure 10: Survey Respondents' Views on How the Flood Has Brought the Community Together**

This graph illustrates that “people are working together” was featured more often than the response “shows that people care for one another”. This suggests that the notion of the former was more visible by the respondents than the latter. A large percentage of respondents mentioned that “Australian Spirit” was one of the reasons why the community came together<sup>19</sup>.

Organisational linkages refer to the connections between community organisations and external organisations. The school Parents and Friends Association were cooperating with other local organisations and linkages were demonstrated between the public and volunteering organisations. The volunteer organisations I interviewed were overwhelmed by the interest shown by the public during the flood disaster. Two organisations received more than 1600 visits a day to their website and another experienced a 300% increase in volunteer interest since the natural disasters during January and February 2011. In one organisation, 200 new volunteers were trained in psychological First Aid. These volunteers were mobilised and assisted in the community recovery centres in the area. In the same organisation, interest in telephone counseling courses in the aftermath of the floods exceeded interest in training courses that they had run previously. The State Manager of Newlight Queensland explained:

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<sup>19</sup> Please see Footnote 3 in Section 1.0 for further clarification

That's **quite a big deal** because for the last year and a half we haven't been able to fill the telephone counseling course. So numbers have been down and declining whereas now we are able to, you know the flood and the **resultant passions** has enabled us being able to make sure that the service is **fully** manned and an abundance of people that **are trained** and ready to take that role when we need them to.

State Manager, Newlight Queensland

Furthermore, another organisation described the new interest shown by businesses following the flood:

We've got some corporations who've got volunteers, who've got corporate volunteering days now that want to continue to work with us. They kicked it off during the flood and they want to continue. We've got relationships with groups that we've never had relationships with before. And they will be sustained.

State Communications Manager, Helping Hand Queensland

These examples illustrate that through cooperation and utilisation of organisational linkages, both volunteers and volunteering organisations have developed structures that can be utilised in another disaster. These findings correspond with a study by Lowe and Fothergill (2003) who also found that after September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, community interest in emergency volunteerism also increased.

## **1.1 Citizen Participation, Leadership and Roles (Formal Ties)**

This section is broken up into two parts, citizen participation and leadership and roles.

### **1.1.1 Citizen Participation**

Social capital can be used to initiate collective action and hence drive citizen participation (Dynes, 2006). Citizen participation is defined as "a process in which individuals take part in decision making in the institutions, programs and environments that affect them" (Heller, as cited in Florin and Wandersman, 1990, p.43). Evidence of citizen participation was exemplified by the vast numbers of volunteers who were providing assistance in the flood affected area. Participation facilitates a notion of belonging and community members are more likely to invest in and enjoy their involvement when it is deemed to be important (Pfefferbaum et al., 2005).

This was reflected in eleven of the twelve initial interviews. These respondents reported that the experience was “personally satisfying” as it “felt good to help people” and was “putting something back into the community”. This is illustrated by the following statement:

I'd be wanting to do something; I'd be frustrated by not being able to do something. But I think that gets back to my personality, but I was pleased that I could do it for no other reason that I felt that I'd helped someone.

Elsbeth, assisted friend in flood affected region

One respondent mentioned she felt a sense of “community and belonging and a need to go and help others”. Others expressed enjoyment in working as a team and to “work towards a common goal”. This quote below illustrates how one volunteer felt about her experience:

It was very humbling, we weren't the only ones who were volunteering and it was just so nice to be part of something that is bigger than one individual, it was a humbling experience, I think it comes up so rarely in people's lives, that sense of being something bigger than yourself and your family and it has a life of its own, it engenders a certain sense of community feeling, even if it is just for one day, people carry it for a long time afterwards.

Rachael, owner of volunteer tea and coffee van

Correlations have been found in the literature on volunteers and disaster victims. Volunteers found their experience enjoyable and victims, after overcoming the traumatic effects of the disaster actually benefitted from the experience (Joseph et al., 1993, Taylor et al., 1983, Lowe and Fothergill, 2003).

In contrast to feeling positive about their experience, others commented about how volunteering could adversely affect health outcomes and in particular mental health. One interviewee, a nurse in the emergency department reported that during the days of the flood, there was an increase of mental health admissions where she worked. She described:

I noticed a lot of people at work, people who are already fragile, it just created so much angst and unsettled feelings and some people lost their way a little. We were really busy at work with mental health patients who were really, worried or, I don't know.

Tina, Registered Nurse

Additionally, a respondent from one organisation reported that she had received a phone call from someone who had been sectioned (legally forced to seek compulsory mental health treatment or assessment) for “over volunteering”<sup>20</sup>. This may have wider implications for the

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<sup>20</sup> This is a part of the national Mental Health Act.

health care system due to the sheer numbers of people who converged on the flood area. Research into the mental health impacts on emergency workers and victims has found that most people do suffer some sort of psychological distress following the event. However, most recover without requiring medical treatment (Norris et al., 2002).

Additionally, if more people heeded the instructions offered by the media and local council, less would be exposed to the damage caused by the flood waters and the subsequent psychological impacts<sup>21</sup>. Conversely, considering that not being able to help during the flood events created such a feeling of helplessness and angst as described in Section 4.2, it is questionable whether or not people would have heeded these instructions anyway.

Logistical problems were also a result of too many volunteers. Carloads of volunteers, parked cars, vehicles carrying equipment and people cleaning the streets created havoc and prevented formal emergency services such as the army, and the State Emergency Services from entering the flood affected region. One volunteer mentioned:

You would have seen the absolute turmoil that was in Chelmer with all the cars parked everywhere. I got there at seven am in the morning and there were only two or three cars down there at that stage. But it soon built up and then the police came and blocked it all off. 'Cause the army trucks couldn't get in and they couldn't turn around and the machinery they'd organised couldn't get in the streets.

Jeff, assisted friend in flood affected region

The following photograph exemplifies Jeff's comment. See Figure 11.

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<sup>21</sup> During the time that the flood waters were high and local government and media issued instructions to "stay at home" and "do not drive near or through the floodwaters" ( Brisbane City Council, 2011).



**Figure 11: Volunteers Hampered the Efforts of Emergency Services and Official Personnel**

As illustrated, the scene was disorganised. However, despite these negative comments and observations, most respondents concluded that the positive impact of many volunteers greatly outweighed any adverse consequences. Two commented that the number of volunteers were essential due to the scale of the disaster. Some; (in particular the volunteering organisations) suggested that more formalised structures were necessary to organise the volunteers, whilst others stated that there was simply no time to initiate a more organised local response.

This finding corresponds to the disaster literature. Convergence behaviour has been discussed in the literature as having the ability to seriously hamper response efforts of emergency personnel (Perry and Lindell, 2003, Fritz and Williams, 1957). Whilst it is suggested that more organised response efforts are required, these are difficult to coordinate and control due to the level of confusion that exists during these events (Fritz and Williams, 1957). Others highlight the importance of utilising existing formal community groups (in this

case the Parents and Friends Association to take on organisational roles in the aftermath phase (Paton and Gow, 2008, Brown and Kulig, 1996/97). Their role will be analysed in later chapters.

Volunteering during the flood clean up could also impact citizen participation in the long term. This was also found in the literature (Lowe and Fothergill, 2003, Tatsuki, 2000, Childs, 2008) . Respondents indicated that their participation served as a catalyst for them to get involved in more formal volunteer work in the future. Many had already made a commitment to participate in volunteering activities related to the flood; others were continuing their ongoing support in the community. Some mentioned that the flood event “helped identify a need”, “rekindled the flame to get involved again” and “gave me confidence to volunteer”. One interviewee explained:

I think it [the flood] has certainly **motivated** me more to volunteer and I think that others will probably feel the same. I mean the river is **just disgusting**; it looks awful, so the quicker they can get it to looking half decent, the better for everyone, nicer for the area.

Kathy, resident from flood affected region

As mentioned, the volunteer organisations experienced an increase of interest and as a result responded to meet the demand. The challenge these organisations now face is providing the opportunity for people to become engaged in projects. Several disaster resilience programs were initiated and community meetings (such as the one I attended) were held to spark the conversation about resilience. Here one volunteer organisation spokesperson refers to the CREW project, a volunteer disaster response taskforce. She noted:

With the CREW project, we feel as though we’ve opened a door to allow people to respond. And tap into that emotional response and harness it in a lot of ways.

Social Engagement Initiatives Manager, Statewide Volunteers

Although these examples illustrate how people have continued their community engagement after the flood disaster, other participants felt volunteerism within the community would not increase at all. Instead, it was suggested that people will feel encouraged to offer assistance more rapidly the next time or may motivate others who did not assist. One participant described a “snow ball” effect in the community. Previously disengaged community members may now feel more inclined to participate in the community due to the support they received.

This will enhance individual participation, improve social embeddedness and thus contribute to community resilience.

#### *4.5.2 Leadership and Roles (Formal Ties)*

Regarding leadership, Ganor and Ben-Lavy (2003) suggest that grass roots leadership is essential for building community resilience. The school Parents and Friends group exemplified this. According to members of the Parents and Friends Association, during the initial aftermath phase, they convened a volunteer response centre and coordinated about 12 000 people and provided assistance to 500 homes in approximately thirty three hours. According to members of the Parents and Friends Association; undertaking such a leadership role in the community was an “obvious” thing to do and their accomplishment was due to the fact that:

As a team of P and F members, we were quite, a well formed team and knew each other’s nuances you know, and when a team works it works. So we already had that ability to work as a team. And when the phone call came from Victor the president saying “community meeting 12 o’clock Graceville”. I cancelled my holiday.

Deborah, member of Parents and Friends Association

Edelstein 1998 as cited in (Norris et al., 2008) notes that leaders in the community have the strongest attachment to place. This is illustrated by the president of the Parents and Friends Association. He stated that:

I was not motivated only by the fact that many people I knew were affected and needed help. Whether I knew those affected or not, it did not influence my decision to act. Significant parts of the suburb and surrounding suburbs where I lived were destroyed. That’s what I knew and that’s what I knew I had to respond to.

Victor, Parents and Friends Association President

However, community leaders can hamper resilience efforts. A study of Australian towns determined that the towns who displayed the least community resilience had the most number of leaders. It was postulated that leaders who were deeply embedded in the community had the tendency to be controlling and did not necessarily provide the best leadership for the community. Instead, newcomers with their innovation and enthusiasm were more likely to contribute to resiliency efforts (Plowman et al., 2003).

Despite this finding, it is difficult to imagine that a newcomer to the community would have the capacity to organise such a response as the Parents and Friends Association.

expressed her difficulties with assisting during the flood disaster because she “didn’t know where to go to help” or “how to identify the needs of people who were flood affected”. She stated:

I **wished** I’d been here for longer because I would’ve known places better and had better resources to help people. And I also didn’t know what sort of **help** people would seek because I’m new to the place. If something similar were to happen back in India probably I would really know, I **can guess** that this is what people need so I can really assume and presume and guess.

Gauri, new Brisbane resident

One of the advantages that the Parents and Friends Association had over the respondent above was a well established social network that brought resources to bear. When asked if he, (the Parents and Friends Association president) would have helped as a volunteer in another area of town, he responded:

I would have got involved, however there’s no doubt that I wouldn’t have been able to get involved in the same way and with the same effectiveness - because what was crucial to this operation was local knowledge, local content. Not only of the area, but also people, the people who I knew that I could coordinate and pull into it.

Victor, Parents and Friends Association President

This is illustrated by another respondent who thought that through the web of social connections through the school, resources could be accessed quickly. He implied that an existing social network was effective because “it [the social network] was basically just turned on and the volume cranked up”<sup>1</sup>. One volunteering organisation spokesperson referred to such groups as a “snowflake in the middle of a whole bunch of star relationships”. To explain further he suggested:

The individual volunteer has no resources but the already existing group already has some resources. It has the urn, the extension cables and it has the trestle tables in the hall where they normally operate<sup>2</sup>. They bring some **infrastructure** to bear. That’s what they bring. And of course they know their group who’s got what access to what resources.

State Communications Manager, Helping Hand Queensland

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<sup>1</sup> Cranking – refers to increasing in intensity.

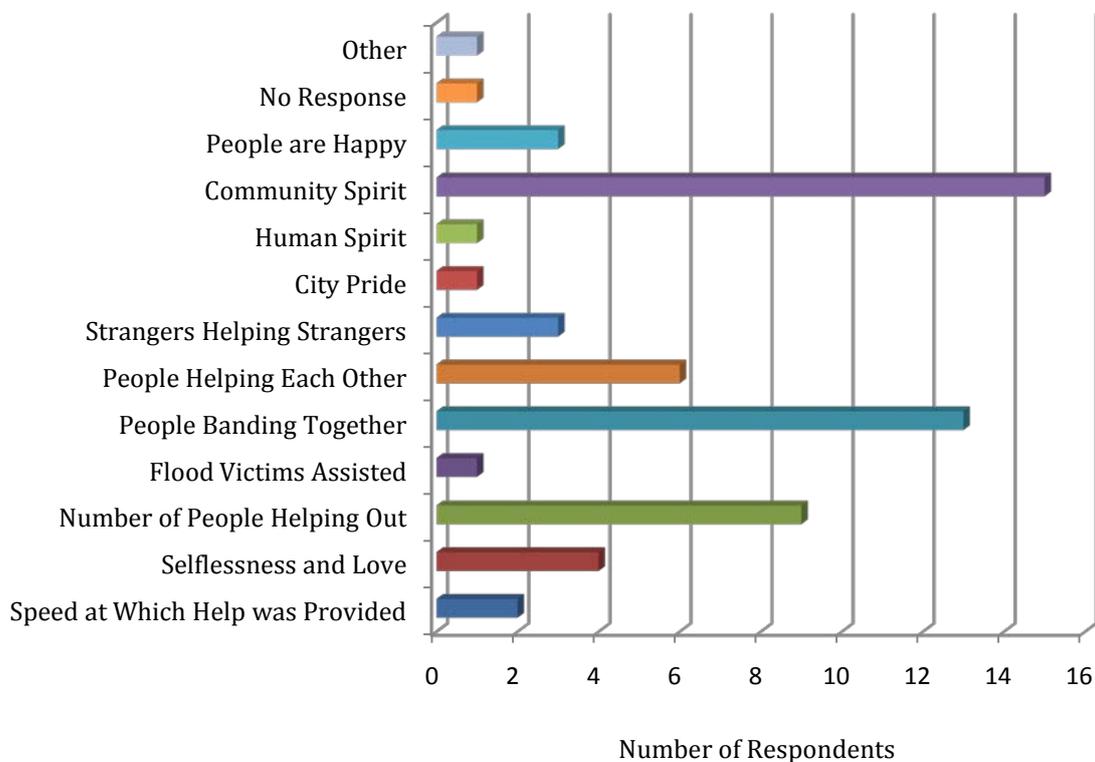
<sup>2</sup> Urn is a large device used for boiling hot water. Usually used when catering for large social functions.

These quotes correspond to the literature which emphasise the importance of using local knowledge to support and address the context specific needs of the affected victims (Bolin and Stanford, 1998). This local knowledge therefore, is essential for building community resilience.

#### 4.6 Sense of Community

“Sense of community is an attitude of bonding (trust and belonging) with other members of one’s group or locale” (Perkins as cited in Norris et al., 2008, p.139). Although disasters have been found to disrupt the sense of community, it is also thought that it provides an opportunity for the community to set aside differences, come together and foster a stronger sense of community (Norris et al., 2008). “Sense of community” was mentioned in the survey by only two respondents (see Figure 10, Section 4.4). This did not seem to be the main reason for bringing the community together. Instead as Figure 12 shows, “community spirit” was the most positive thing volunteers had experienced.

**Response to Question: What is the most positive thing you have seen from this Flood Disaster?**



**Figure 12: Survey Respondent's Views on the Most Positive Observation from Flood Disaster**

For the purposes of simplicity, the terms “sense of community” and “community spirit” have been considered to be synonymous in the following sections.

Three interview respondents reported that the “sense of community” in the Graceville/Chelmer region was already strong and two suggested that geographical location was the cause. “Nestled” in the loop of the river, respondents suggested that these suburbs are isolated from others and therefore create a strongly defined community (see Figure 2).

Others suggested that the “common event” brought people together and the flood “just probably heated up the steel and made it a little bit stronger”<sup>24</sup>. One participant had an alternative opinion:

The community of Graceville is not a community; it’s a bunch of people who by accident live there. What makes them a community is something that they suddenly have in **common** which was an event. So when **it’s the event** that caused them to think of themselves as a cohesive community that needed to do something for each other. In the absence of the event they are just a bunch of people who have nothing to do with each other, have nothing in common other than they happen to live in the same suburb.

John Peters, Organisational Psychologist and Social Researcher

The suggestion that the “event” may have drawn the community together is also reflected from my survey data in particular Figures 5 and 7 (see Sections 4.1 and 4.2). In Figure 5, more than three quarters of the respondents were motivated to assist their community and assist those who were in need. Drawing from Figure 7, most respondents had travelled over twenty-one kilometres to assist. This may suggest that people’s notion of community extends further than the geographical boundaries of their suburb and supports the perception that the community is drawn together by a common event. These examples exemplify the difficulties in defining a community and will be discussed in Section 4.8.

## 4.7 Attachment to Place

According to (Tartaglia, 2006), place attachment can be associated with one’s sense of community. In the event of a natural disaster, attachment to place has been found to both aid in the repair of a community and also impair the building of community resilience (Manzo and

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<sup>24</sup>A metaphor used to explain the strength of the community. The ‘steel’ in this case is representing the community.

Perkins 2006). Accessing these feelings can enhance community revitalisation efforts but if unharnessed can create community disruption (ibid). Additionally, strong ties to the community could also inhibit evacuation efforts as people may be unwilling to leave their homes or part with damaged keepsakes. None of these negative consequences of place attachment were evident in my interviews.

Most interviewees illustrated that they would assist in another flood affected area but conceded that they would be less likely to get involved as heavily as they did in their own suburb. This statement exemplified this point:

Ultimately my backyard isn't just the confines of my property, my backyard is ultimately the area in which I live and the people within it and so when you live in that area and it is a strong community, the last thing you want to see is ultimately it suffering some long term systemic demise. I'm not saying that this thing [the volunteer response centre] is the cure to that, but I would have thought if we can make a fundamental impact in the clean up and we clearly did and also in a way that also let people know that we were there to help – then that possibly can help minimise such demise.

Victor, Parents and Friends Association President

Volunteering in the flood disaster may also provide newcomers with the opportunity integrate into the community. As a result of the flood disaster, one interviewee expressed that participating in the clean up gave her first chance to interact with the community. She stated:

The flood was a situation where I had the interest to communicate, and to interact and to help. And the other side [the flood victims] had the need and purpose behind it. So I think it made it easier. It broke the ice. You didn't really need to have a reason as such, go and create an opportunity but the opportunity was already created there. So it made it much easier and gave me my first opportunity to interact with someone from Brisbane, somebody who'd been living here.

Gauri, new Brisbane resident

One volunteering organisation suggested that community ownership was essential for communities to recover from adversity. She highlighted:

And if they've [community members] got an **ownership** in helping **their** community recover, then that builds resilience, that builds capacity to be able to deal with adversity when it strikes.

State Manager, Newlight Queensland

These examples demonstrate how a strong attachment to place may enhance community resilience.

#### **4.8 Critiques of Norris's Model**

It is evident from this analysis that volunteers did play a role in enhancing community resilience through the various elements of social capital provided by Norris et al., (2008). However, this conceptualisation is by no means the panacea or the only method by which to examine community resilience.

One of the problems relates to the difficulties in defining a community. During the interviews, when respondents described experiencing “a sense of community” who or what they were referring to is unknown. Referencing their social group may engender a sense of community; however they may not feel the same towards outsiders. Although the literature (Barton, 1969) suggests that the “altruistic community” prevails, ambiguities regarding the term community may lead to isolation and exclusion of certain societal groups which potentially can lead to diminished resiliency of these groups and consequently the entire community. This is supported by (Kaniasty and Norris, 2004) who note that in the development of altruistic communities social exclusion does occur.

Using the “social capital” theme is inherent with problems. Not only is the term vague and highly contested but the notion of a community as having strong social capital is also problematic because it can also create, inward-looking, self focused communities (Putnam, 2000). Despite this, it is difficult to devise an alternative concept that encompasses these seven elements of social capital.

As mentioned above (Section 4.4), organised structures or utilising pre existing structures may assist to mitigate the negative consequences associated with post disaster volunteering (St John and Fuchs, 2002, Pardess, 2005). As the volunteer response was so large and widespread it is difficult to estimate how many of these existing structures would be required for an effective, organised and thorough response to be established. Too many groups may diminish the efficacy of the total response if they not controlled by higher organisational body.

Finally, the conceptualisation provided by Norris et al., (2008) is limited because it only considers the existing elements within a community in order to be resilient. It does not consider additional aspects that may evolve from a disaster. Therefore, I offer an extra element which I have called “Community Capability” to incorporate this (see Figure 4).

#### **4.8.1 Community Capability:**

I have coined the term “Community Capability” to describe a tacit understanding that a community **will act** as a collective during a disaster. The distinction is made from Perceived Support (explained in Section 4.2) as “Community Capability” involves the community drawing from the past and using these experiences to act together. In the interviews, Community Capability was initially described as community recognising a need to act. Elspeth made this statement:

I think the community realised that there **was a need**, and that members of the community were prepared to get in there and do their bit.

Elspeth, assisted friend in flood affected region

Others thought that “what the community can do” or the capacity of the community would have a long lasting impact in the Graceville and Chelmer region. This is illustrated below:

I think after a few years people tend to go back to their normal way of life. But I think what also it has shown is that this is what people can do and so people do remember that as being part of spirit of community so they know in their back of their minds is that this is what the community **can do** in times of crisis. So it’s nice thing to have tucked away somewhere.

Walter, resident from flood affected region

This was supported by one volunteer organisation who suggested that creating a “community memory” was an essential element of building Community Capability.

The bringing together and the **experiences** all of a sudden means **that we can deal with this**. So next time it happens there’s that corporate memory if you like or social memory, community memory “we **can** manage, we can cope with this”. **That’s** community resilience because they’ve been there before, they know it works; they’ve got all the bits and pieces that comes together when it’s needed.

State Communications Manager, Helping Hand Queensland

Volunteers were thought to play an essential role in this process because they can assist other members in the community as illustrated below:

If you have enough individuals who are volunteering in a community who have got that experience, then they can help other members in their local community, prop them up I guess.

State Manager, Newlight Queensland

After conducting a brief literature search on LibHub and Google Scholar, it seems that scant literature exists for the term “Community Capability”. This term is similar to the term *credo* (the vision of the community) suggested by Ganor and Ben-Lavy (2003) (see Section 2.3). Without a thorough literature search to support my arguments, I can only assume that the creation of a “community memory” can be beneficial for building community resilience and volunteers, according to my empirical material, comprise a vital aspect.

## 4.9 Final Reflections

Volunteerism during the aftermath of the Brisbane flood disaster has demonstrated its important role in building community resilience. One reason as mentioned in Section 4.5.1 is that the flood event served as a catalyst for people to become more involved in formal volunteering. However, the bureaucratic structure involved in formal volunteering organisations may inhibit the rapid mobilisation of volunteers as was the case for one organisation I interviewed. Furthermore, for the volunteer, the formalities to enter volunteering organisations are also tedious. For example, in Australia, most volunteer positions require a formal clearance from the police (Volunteering Australia, 2009). This is potentially problematic as the procedure is lengthy and expensive. Despite this, one organisation suggested that people should be encouraged to sign up for more formal volunteering especially in disaster relief organisations. It was suggested that:

The **most** effective way of doing that is to sign up as a volunteer and register as a volunteer with an organisation **before disasters happen** [...]. It means you’ll be able to hit the ground running when there is a disaster. You are going to be trained, and it will be kind of sustained and thoughtful and targeted and effective.

Social Engagement Initiatives Manager, Statewide Volunteers

Whilst this may encourage participation for some, for others formal volunteering may pose a deterrent in the form of requirements and demands. Not everyone has the time, motivation or financial capability to volunteer. In the event of a disaster, members of volunteering organisations may feel obliged to assist in a particular manner and hence potentially neglect the opportunity for more organic, informal volunteering efforts to emerge.

Relative to this, the cost of volunteering is of equal pertinence. The assumption that “volunteers are free” is a naïve one. People may have the interest to volunteer, however the infrastructure required to support them is costly. An influx of motivated people may clog the

system and create a financial burden for volunteering organisations that are often charity based or rely on grants to fund projects.

Finally, the literature on disasters suggests that preparedness is a key factor of promoting resilience (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2004, Klein et al., 2008). On the other hand, as deliberated by one interviewee, is it truly possible to be prepared for unexpected events of this kind? Perhaps the large volunteer response and the subsequent negative outcomes were due to the fact that many people had never experienced or witnessed an event of this scale at the local level before<sup>25</sup>. This alludes to the question: How can communities who have never experienced a natural disaster or suffered adversity learn from this experience and develop resiliency strategies themselves? This poses an interesting question about the value of preparedness for community resilience especially when studies have shown that levels of disaster preparedness are low even in high risk areas (Gregg et al., 2004). Perhaps it is futile to be prepared and communities should wait for a disaster and the societal response to subsequently emerge from it. I do not advocate for this latter statement but wish to highlight the need for further research in the area of disaster preparedness.

## 5 Conclusion

In January 2011, the city of Brisbane was hit by a flood disaster. In the initial aftermath, flood affected suburbs were inundated with droves of volunteers. This caused mass media attention and the Brisbane City Council was forced to turn people away from affected regions. This convergence behaviour is normative after a disaster as is the outpouring of prosocial, altruistic behaviour demonstrated by the community. Disaster research highlights that this behaviour is short-lived and gradually subsides several weeks following the disaster.

This study aimed to refute these claims by analysing how volunteers during the aftermath of the 2011 Brisbane flood disaster were a vehicle for building community resilience. A conceptualisation of community resilience which focused on social capital was utilised to answer the main research question: How does post disaster volunteering build community resilience? The results from this study illustrate how volunteers contribute to community resilience by demonstrating seven capacities that are essential during the

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<sup>25</sup>As mentioned, there was a previous flood in Brisbane in 1974, however new residents and young people may not have been living in Brisbane or alive in 1974.

aftermath of a natural disaster. Some of these include providing support to victims, establishing new informal networks and demonstrating leadership capabilities within the community. These elements in addition to the other aspects of the model provided by Norris et al. (2008) are the backbone of a resilient community.

Although volunteerism was shown to contribute to community resilience, negative implications were also evident. Too many volunteers, volunteering for the wrong reasons and over volunteering were some adverse outcomes of the recent experience. Therefore, in each of the seven capacities outlined, a fine line exists between the elements being of value or a hindrance to resiliency efforts. Additionally, in order to include the understanding of the community's ability to deal with future adversity, a "Community Capability" component was added as a recommendation.

While volunteering organisations can augment preparedness by the development of volunteer emergency response teams, deployment of volunteers requires careful planning to harness and maintain the enthusiasm of volunteers and manage financial constraints.

This research supports the notion that volunteers are an essential tool for building community resilience and that through the work of volunteers; communities can bounce back and recover from disasters when they strike. As one interviewee aptly stated:

**What was achieved couldn't have been achieved because of the fraternity. The sense of solidarity. The sense of togetherness could not have been achieved by turning up with a red fire truck or whatever. So I think, functionally, we could probably have managed without them [the volunteers], slower and all the rest of it but spiritually if you like, no way.** It was something special that's happened. And that those volunteers brought a **dynamic** a community dynamic that can't be duplicated by anything other than that outpouring of the compassion and excitement and willingness to share themselves. I don't think that's easily duplicated by any other kind of [...] that's a **very powerful** emotional force that's implanted itself in people's memories that've lived through it.

State Communications Manager, Helping Hand Queensland

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## Appendices:

### Appendix 1: Volunteer Survey

**Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.**

My name is Harriet Barker and I am studying a “Master of Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science” at Lund University in Sweden. This survey will be part of my master thesis. I am interested in studying how the Brisbane community has responded to the flood disaster. If you would have further questions about my research my email address is [harrietbarker@hotmail.com](mailto:harrietbarker@hotmail.com). Please don't put your name on the survey unless you want to.

1) What is your age group?	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 19 -34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-64 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 65
2) Was your home and/or business affected by the flood?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, how has this disaster affected you?
3) Approximately how many kilometres did you travel to volunteer in the flood clean-up?	
4) Who are you volunteering in the clean-up with today?	<input type="checkbox"/> Alone <input type="checkbox"/> With partner/family <input type="checkbox"/> With friends <input type="checkbox"/> With an organisation

5) Why are you volunteering with this clean-up?	<input type="checkbox"/> A) I have been helping friends/family <input type="checkbox"/> B) I really want to help my community <input type="checkbox"/> C) I am motivated to help those who have suffered and in need <input type="checkbox"/> D) Both B and C
6) What are you hoping to gain from volunteering in the flood clean-up?	
7) Do you think this flood has brought the community together? Why?	
8) Are you surprised by the number of people who have volunteered to help with the clean-up?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
9) What is the most positive thing you have seen from this flood disaster?	
10) How can the community prepare for another flood disaster in the future?	

Thanks again for your time.

If you would like to share more of your “flood” stories please leave your email address or phone number and I will contact you for a more in depth interview.

## Appendix 2: List of Interviewees

<b>Interviewee Name</b>	<b>How Recruited</b>	<b>Role during Flood Clean Up</b>	<b>Occupation if necessary</b>
Lisa, resident from flood	Met at volunteer coordination centre	Worked with P and F. Radio Announcements Data entry at School First Aid Communication via Face book	Not Stated
Tina, Registered Nurse	Through Lisa,	Helped out with local church group Assisted a man clean up shop	Nurse
Walter, resident from flood affected region	Father of Lisa,	Helped friends x 2 Helped Strangers Signed up at School	Not currently working
Carl, resident from flood affected region	I Worked with him during clean up Husband of Kathy	Cleaned up houses Transported destroyed items from people's homes Signed up at School	Not stated
Kathy	Worked with them during clean up Wife of Carl, resident from flood affected region	Cleaned up houses Transported destroyed items from peoples' homes Signed up at School Organised hampers at Ipswich	Nurse
Henry	Met at Volunteer Coordination Centre	Part of P and F “fill the holes where possible” “school focal point for relief” Saying what school could and couldn't do Part of planning group	School Principal
Deborah,	Met at Volunteer Coordination Centre	Co coordinating people who needed accommodation and flood affected families Supporting the volunteers Distribution of community fund	Not stated
Elsbeth,	Met whilst cleaning her friend's home	Helped friend – pack up and clean up Psychological support	Retired
Victor	Met at Volunteer Coordination Centre	President of Parents and Friends Association	Lawyer
Jeff,	Met whilst cleaning his friend's home	Helped a friend Then worked with other volunteers walking the street	Police Officer
Rachael	Met whilst drinking tea on street during clean up	Served tea and coffee and food to flood volunteers	Not currently working

Gauri	Met at Community Resilience Meeting	Helped clean up homes – strangers houses	Not currently working
John	Met at Community Resilience Meeting	Assisted neighbours in the area	Organisational Psychologist Researcher
State Manager Newlight Queensland	Emailed directly to request interview	Assisted neighbours Co ordination role for organisation	State Manager
Statewide Volunteers spokesperson	Emailed directly to request interview	Manned call centre	Social Engagement Initiatives Manager.
Communications Manager, Helping Hand Queensland	Emailed directly to request interview	Coordinated volunteers	State Communications manager

## Appendix 3: Research Participation Consent Form

Slight variations of this consent form were used depending on the role interviewee.



### Research Participation Consent Form

Participation in this study is **COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY**. You may withdraw at any time.

My name is Harriet Barker and I am currently studying a “Master of Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science” at Lund University in Sweden. For my master thesis I am interested in finding out why people volunteered during the recent Brisbane floods in January 2011 and the impact their efforts may have on the community in the future and whether or a strong volunteer response illustrates a resilient community.

I would like to interview you to learn more about your views of how the volunteering effort has impacted the community and how (and if) this is linked with community resilience.

The interviews will take **approximately 40 minutes** of your time and will be in person.

During the interview I will be writing notes and using a tape recorder so I have a record of everything we both say. After I have transcribed our interview, I will send you a copy of the interview. You have the opportunity to clarify your answers and add more information.

Following the interview I may ask you to attend a focus group session which will consist of a small group discussing more detailed issues that have emerged from the interview process. Please let me know if you would be willing to take part. If this is not an option, I may need to contact you for a further interview. This could be done via telephone if you do not have time.

There are no perceived risks to you for this study. I will ensure your identity is protected by giving you a false name and only record the suburb where you live and your profession if necessary. This helps me to organise the data when all the interviews have been performed. I will provide some contact details of counselling organisations if you feel upset from the material we discuss.

The results of my study will be published in the form of a master thesis and will then be available on the Lund University's website. If you would like a copy of the completed thesis I will send a copy to you via email in the future.

If you have any questions regarding the research at any time please feel free to contact me via email: harrieteizabethbarker@gmail.com or via mobile +61 409 998 122. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study please contact Ingegerd Ehn (Director of Studies at Lund University) at ingegerd.ehn@lucsus.lu.se or via telephone + 46 46 222 80 80.

If **you agree** to participate in this research project please sign below.

If you do not wish to participate please circle **No** in the text below.

I agree to be interviewed in this research project. Please circle:

Yes                      No

I agree to be audio taped during the interview. Please circle:                      Yes                      No

Participants Signature.....Participants Name Printed.....Date.....

Investigators Signature.....Investigators Name..... Date.....

## Appendix 4a: Interview Questions with Volunteers

This was the basic structure for the first initial twelve interviews. Each varied slightly in the order of questioning and follow up questions which are not documented here.

### *Role in the Flood Clean Up*

1. Can you describe to me your role in the flood clean up?
2. How did you get involved in your volunteer role?
3. How many hours did you volunteer for? Over how many days?
4. Do you think your personal contribution in the volunteer efforts was effective at all? Can you describe how and why?

### *Motivation for Volunteering*

5. Why did you decide to volunteer at the flood clean up? Was there anything in it for you?

### *Connection to the flood area and victims*

6. What is your connection to the flood affected area?
7. Did you know anyone directly affected by the flood? Did this motivate your decision to help out in the area that you did?
8. Do you think it matters to know someone in this situation to lend a hand?
9. How far away did you live from the flood affected area?

### *The Volunteer Response:*

10. The media praised Brisbanites for getting out there and lending a hand. Perhaps you'll agree that the volunteer response was pretty overwhelming...Were you surprised at the number of people who came to help out?
11. Do you think that the response in Brisbane was unique in comparison to say if a disaster happened in another part of the world?
12. When you saw everyone in the streets, the BBQ, the lines of people with their shovels, how did it make you feel?
13. Why were there so many people coming out to help do you think? What were their reasons for assisting?
14. There were lots of stories of strangers helping strangers why do you think so many people got involved in the clean up when they didn't know anyone directly affected?

15. Can you think of any negative consequences of so many volunteers willing to help those in need?

*Community Benefits of Volunteer Efforts:*

16. Has your personal view of the community changed as a result of the overwhelming volunteer efforts? Do you view the community differently now?

17. Generally speaking do you think the flood was a community changing event or not? Can you describe how it may have changed? Do you think this is a temporary or permanent thing?

*Long term Community Benefits of Volunteering:*

18. Is there any scope for your role during the post disaster clean up to be continued?

19. After your stint helping out are you more motivated to assist in other community volunteering projects?

20. What about for other members of the community?

21. Do you think that the volunteering effort will have any long term lasting effects on the community?

22. Do you have anything further that you wish to add?

## Appendix 4b: Interview Questions with Organisational Psychologist

This was a standalone interview as the respondent an organisational psychologist had research experience into many of the issues that I was exploring. As above, the order of questions during the interview was not exactly the same as these however this was the template I used and followed.

### *Meanings of Community Resilience*

1. What is a resilient community?
2. What are the components of a resilient community?
3. How would a resilient community respond and react in a flood disaster?
4. Do disasters make communities more resilient?
5. How can a community remain resilient post disaster?

### *Findings from Interviews:*

6. Many people have spoken about how it was **their community** and how they had to help out because it was **their community**. What impact does living in an affected area have on willingness to help out?
7. Why do you think people would not help out do you think?
8. That notion of reciprocity or “it could have been me” was a common factor for a lot of people wanting to get out there and help. Why is that so important do you think?
9. Is this driven by empathy?
10. The people whom I’ve spoken with have mentioned that it helps to know someone who is affected but were happy to help out strangers – does this say anything about a community? Or is this just human nature?
11. A lot of people describe the community as being “bad weather friends” or only supporting each other when times are tough – what do you think that this says anything about a community especially when speaking about resilience?
12. How do those new networks help in another disaster or just generally in the community?
13. Why do people feel so compelled to “just have to do something”?

*Volunteerism and Community Resilience*

14. What does the strong volunteer effort in Brisbane show about a community?
15. What sort of attributes can volunteers bring to resilient communities?
16. How does volunteering help a community?
17. Does there need to be some sort of volunteer force in a resilient community?
18. A lot of people feel more motivated to involve themselves in volunteer work post the flood disaster – why do you think this is?
19. Do you think the community has changed post flood? How has it changed the social fabric of the community?
20. Will these changes be temporary or permanent do you think? Is this normal in any community to do think?
21. Do you have anything else to add?

## Appendix 4c: Interview Questions with Volunteer Organisations

### *Background Info*

- 1 What sort of work does your organisation do? Any emergency volunteering roles?
- 2 What sort of role did your organisation play during the flood?
- 3 How do volunteers work within your organisation?
- 4 What are the demographics of your volunteers, i.e. age, gender, ethnic background, employment status?
- 5 How long does the average volunteer stay with you for?

### *Volunteerism and the community:*

- 6 What are the benefits that people gain from volunteering and volunteer work? Why do they want to volunteer?
- 7 How does volunteerism benefit the community?
  - a) In the short term?
  - b) In the long term?
- 8 Would you say that volunteers have a more grass roots view of the needs of the community? How does this benefit?
- 9 What sort of attributes can volunteers bring to the community that paid workers can't?
- 10 How are volunteers recruited to your organisation? What percentage is recruited through friends/social networks etc? How do you go about encouraging people to volunteer? What are the ways in which you promote volunteering?
- 11 In the literature and in the Value of Volunteering Report (2008) it was documented that there is an increased trend towards more sporadic volunteering which requires less commitment, have you found this to be the case within your organisation? How are you managing these demands?
- 12 Are there any negative consequences of volunteering?

### *Volunteers and the Flood:*

- 13 In regards to the flood did you experience a surge in volunteer interest?
- 14 In what capacity have people registered their interest? In what sort of roles?

- 15 Several people I've spoken with have mentioned that volunteering in the flood effort was a catalyst for them becoming involved in volunteer work.
- a. Why do you think this was the case?
  - b. Has this been reflected in your organisation?
- 16 What were the demographics of the interested parties?
- 17 Have these people volunteered previously or are they new to volunteering?
- 18 What were their motivations for joining?
- 19 Do you think that the people who participated in the aftermath of the disaster had the same motivations for volunteering as others do who join your organisation during non disaster circumstances? Or were their motivations different?
- 20 Do you think their interest will be long lasting? If not, what strategies have been implemented to keep their interest?
- 21 How do you think volunteers helped with the clean up? Do you think that what was achieved would have been possible without volunteers?
- 22 Aside from simply "physically helping", in what other ways were volunteers crucial in the post disaster stage of the flood? What implications did this have on the community?

*Natural Disasters and Volunteerism:*

- 23 In a natural disaster, how can volunteers and volunteer organisations help?
- 24 Several volunteer groups have emerged as a result of the flood effort, one particular one being the community resilience group. If people are engaged in these natural disaster volunteer roles – why is this important?
- 25 Do you think that volunteers can act faster than professional organisations?

*Volunteers and Community Resilience*

- 26 What is your understanding of the term community resilience?
- 27 The National Volunteering Strategy emphasizes that volunteers are "an essential component in building community resilience and its critical contribution to emergency services and disaster mitigation and recovery in Australia – but why?
- 28 What are the consequences of volunteerism for community resilience?
- 29 Can volunteers inhibit the building of community resilience?
- 30 I spoke to someone who said that volunteer groups aren't essential for building community resilience simply interest groups are– what do you think of this comment?

31 Do you think that volunteers have more social networks than others? How would these be utilised in a natural disaster?

## Appendix 5a: Raw Volunteer Interview Data

The following tables contain the crude results from my interviews. The initial twelve are below and the stand alone interview and the volunteering organisations interviews are presented in Appendix 5b and 5c.

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elspeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
<b>Facts</b>	Age 50 + Lives: Flood Region Had personal connection Not currently working Had friends directly affected	Age: 50 + Lives: Outside of flood region Role: School Principal Kew lots of people directly affected	Age 40 + Lives: approx 2km from flood site Not currently working Member of the P and F A lot of people directly affected	Age 30 + Lives: Flood Region Not currently working Knew people but didn't help them out	Age approx 24 No one directly affected Currently working Lives 15 kms from flood affected	Age 40 + Friends Affected Currently working Lives outside flood region	Age 40 + No one directly affected Lives outside flood affected region	Age 50 + Friend Affected Not currently working Lived outside flood region	Age 35 + Rental home damaged P & C president Lives in the area Knew lots of people affected Currently working	Age 20 + Didn't know anyone affected Lives close to flood affected region Not currently working Been in Brisbane less than one month	Age 50 + Lives: Flood affected region Currently working	Age 40 + Lives Flood affected region Currently working
<b>Clean Up Role</b>	Helped friends x 2 Helped Strangers Went to local State School	Part of P and F group - "fill the holes where possible" "school focal point for relief" Saying what school could and couldn't do Part of planning group	Co coordinating people who needed accommodation and flood affected families Supporting the volunteers Distribution of community fund	Worked with Graceville State School – was put air Data entry at Graceville State School First Aid Communication via Facebook	Helped out with local church group Assisted a man clean up shop	Helped a friend Then worked with other volunteers walking the street	Served tea and coffee and food to flood volunteers	Helped friend – pack up and Clean up Psychological support	Organised P and F clean up group	Helped clean up homes – strangers houses  Signed up with Graceville State School	Cleaned up houses  Transported destroyed items from people's homes  Signed up with Graceville State School	Cleaned up houses  Transported destroyed items from people's homes  Signed up with Graceville State School  Organised hampers at Ipswich

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elsbeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
<b>Time Helping</b>	5 or 6 days Total 30 hrs	Ongoing -3 levels initial relief, prepare school and staff then psychological support – could be up to one year	Still working on it. Has been working full time on it for first 6 weeks – could go on for at least 6 months	3 days – 24 yrs	10 hour day	About 2 and a half days	3 days total 24 hrs. Ended up staying one extra day	3 days in total 27 hours	60hrs total and ongoing	2 days	2 days 12 hrs	3 days 16 hrs
<b>Personally Effective? Why</b>	Hope so! Part of a team Working towards a common goal	“part of a well organised effective team” <b>Didn’t have time to think about it</b> We just did it something we had to do so we just did it? This is it, this is what you’ve gotta do. This is what leaders do	Yes became person someone could come to. Would point them in right direction as to where to go.	Yes, you always think that you could do more. Best that we did in the time that we had	You could see the contribution you were making Would have preferred to use nursing skills	Was effective for friends But the impact of just wanting or prepared to go and help – lasting impact was biggest impact	Yes! It was so busy people responded well to service	Yes, effective to my friend because she felt supported	Yes. Co coordinated 12 000 people 500 homes	Yes but not enough. There was a need for more as well	Yes, it was a small part in helping and everyone’s contribution to overall effect	Yes but didn’t feel like it
<b>Why involved?</b>	“could have easily been me” “do what you can to help those in need”	<b>Role as school principal</b> Wanted to “do something” Felt that sense of “helplessness of watching” “you don’t walk away, you can’t walk away”	My community Went to Graceville State School Primary Part of the P and F – obvious thing to do, well formed team – formed ability to work well as a team – “cancelled holiday” “world of haves and	Something I had to do Something that feels right Grew up in the area Helping rich and poor Felt empathy for those who were affected	Based on Australian culture helping our mate Work pressure	Can’t not get involved, compelling, devastating, feel for these affected people	Personal decision, felt empathy for flood victims and volunteers Felt like doing something tangible. Wanted to do something practical and comforting So didn’t feel helpless	Friends always help each other. Its assumed It’s just what you do – primary motivation to help a friend	Observation there was a lot of Help identified overlap. Communication was not well Co coordinated Clean up response would have Taken a lot longer Concern for demise of a Community –	Been very fortunate. Payback to others less fortunate.	“could have been me” guilty and relieved to not be affected therefore least you can do was help	Just had to do something

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elspeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
			have not's"  If you are wiped out and I'm not – remiss of me not to help						its already A strong community  Very good access to people – knew various roles required and what was needed			
<b>Personal Gains from flood experience.</b>	Giving process  "helping your neighbour out"  "feeling that sense of satisfaction"  "putting something back into community"	"seen good examples of generosity among staff" "good stories" "met amazing people" "capital gaining for staff" <b>Building character for kids</b>	Personally satisfying – connecting people  Not hoping to gain anything else personally	Did something to help someone	Sense of community and belonging  Felt good helping	Lots of good stories about people's generosity  Didn't think about it – just an altruistic thing	It was a lovely experience.  Very humbling. Good to be part of something bigger than one individual and your own immediate family  Got so much more than we gave  Enjoyment of helping others and feel useful and know can make a difference.	None, primary motivation to help others. Just what you do  Pleased that could help someone. All about giving	Couldn't suppress urge to do something  Gave extra focus when saw the need and the willingness of people to help  Helping people and that felt good.	Feel good for helping – self satisfaction	?	Felt nice to help out
<b>Distance and willingness to help out?</b>	"It was all around us"  Could see it everywhere therefore made an impact	Distance not a worry. If I could offer something and people needed it If you live away from it – you are	Yes but not too far away See what else I could do other than going there.  If other corner of Brisbane	Not asked	Would help out in Ipswich	If had something to offer would go there.	If it had been further away (i.e. 3 hrs) wouldn't have done it	Would still help out friend on other side of town.	Lives in community therefore had to do something	Willingness always there.  Makes it easier to identify need  Logistical problems	Not asked	Not asked

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elspeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
		back into your routine	wouldn't go there unless you knew person directly									
<b>Does knowing someone affected make a difference?</b>	Yes, gives you more of an understanding as to what it is really like	Yes – because if you have emotional attachment, you go harder You would help anyway but... mate goes to next degree of support	No it doesn't matter. If it's within walking distance.  If on the other side of town – I'd do what I could do	Doesn't matter	Doesn't matter.  Felt intrusive of people's privacy. Didn't develop strong bond with other volunteers or victims	Doesn't matter but knowing someone make it more personal – motivating factor.  It hits home more if you know someone affected.	No but would help neighbours/friends/family first then tea and coffee van	No would have helped anyone but first connections friends and family  Not important but for others it makes you more comfortable when you know people	Doesn't matter. Didn't influence decision at all	Not willingness.  Would have spent same amount of time for friend.  Not easier just be there for a friend in need	It helps. You are not inhibited to go and lend them a hand.	No
<b>Would you help out on other side of town?</b>	Not sure, depends on if you knew someone:  friend/relative  If no personal connection therefore not sure	Yes, would have travelled outside of Brisbane if retired or didn't have this job. If I knew someone I would be there sooner Experience as principal has reinforced the need	Yes but not too far away See what else I could do other than going there.  If other corner of Brisbane wouldn't go there unless you knew person directly	Where ever I was I would have helped out	Yes, would be happy to go to Ipswich	Yes was happy to go elsewhere but work wouldn't permit.	Yes	Yes if 20 yrs younger.  But now, look into other things to do. Indirect way	Yes but not to the same level of involvement.  Because knew the area and people who were required – local knowledge local content	Yes would but logistical problems	Not asked	Not asked
<b>Notion of it could have been me -</b>	See comment above	Fair Comment – empathy is stronger when you think it could have been you.	Reciprocity - Embedded in community. Expects that that would just happen. Is just part of understanding the community	Would hope that same would be done	?	You'd like to think it but it wasn't a motivating factor – just a side luxury	? Not asked but did think about “how would we cope if that was us?”	Makes you realize how lucky you are. Empathy	Not asked	Don't expect that.  But I think it's embedded in the community. When there is need help comes to you.	Yes concerned with own property  Was considered. Hope it would happen	Yes concerned with own property.  Hope reciprocity would happen
<b>Unable to help</b>	Helped in another way,	“Helplessness , feel for those	Donated goods or	?	?	Always something	Donated money	Pretty useless and frustrated.	Difficult to answer in	Helpless. Want to do	Financial contribution	Would have had to have

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elsbeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
<b>physically – what would you do?</b>	Many ways to help other than physical labour	people” wanted to help Physically would have helped out strangers Found something to do – cooked food, have people to stay etc “ anything you possibly could” Other things just as powerful – has learned this from this experience	money. If you knew someone – find a family and buy them a personal yet practical things  Feel “helpless” if you knew someone personally – want to help practically  Someone you don’t know – just make donations			you could do physically – cooked or done something.	If lived in area – feel really helpless  But lived far away so didn’t feel such an attachment to place  Always something you can do.	Want to do something.	hindsight following the many hours now commitment to the cause  Would have found a way to help.	something but unable to do it.		done something
<b>Did it matter that they were strangers?</b>	No – because there was a “great sense of community”, “we are all in this together”, “everyone in same boat”	N/A	If same suburb would go and help	No	No	Went to assist in other people’s places, no  Doesn’t matter that people are strangers	No, because people are vulnerable and open	No. If something needs to be done just go and do it.	no	No – everyone was in same situation. Felt comfortable	Yes, felt more comfortable going through organisation	Not a problem but husband suggested doing something more organised.
<b>Feelings when watching and not helping</b>	Emotional, upset yet fascinated, awe inspiring, empathetic feelings – try to imagine how it must be. You are lucky so you should help others – feel privileged. An altruistic thing	Felt helpless – wanted to “do something”	Didn’t see much on the television	Teary, proud, heartwarming . Tough Australian spirit	Patriotic, proud	Put a bit of faith back in human nature	Felt helpless wanted to do something  Feel empathy “being in it”	Surreal, we were fine whilst others were not.  Because personal connections didn’t really think about others	Not asked	Devastation was heartbreaking	Guilty and relieved  Very antsy, very unsettled	Guilty and relieved  Felt numb – we just had to do something, can’t just not do anything.  “cat on a hot tin roof”

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elspeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
<b>Were you surprised re number of people helping out?</b>	Astounding, absolutely astounding. Didn't expect people to come from so far	Overwhelmed by response "Blown away"	"Felt gob smacked". Couldn't believe how many people came out to help out  "Blew my mind – I couldn't believe it"  Why? – Did not expect people to travel so far to help – was putting a fence around the community.	No, kind of expect that – Australian arrogance	No – instilled in Australian culture– sense of mate ship	Yes, knew people would assist but sheer numbers were astonishing	Never seen anything or heard anything like it before.	No because of large population of Brisbane.	Yes, because it's never happened before	Yes, great attitude by both victims and volunteers	No	No.
<b>Were other's motivations the same</b>	Yes, working together for a common purpose	Felt helpless and wanted to do something "Could have been me mentally"		Common thread of humanity and compassion  Put yourself in their shoes. Australian way Wanting to do something. You can't just sit here and do nothing	It's the Australian way	Wasn't because people were asked. People do care about other people. More evident in crisis situation. People felt they had to do something	Different reason for everyone.	Community realized that there was a need and got in and did something about it.	Don't know. <b>People care about where they live?</b>  Combination of guilt, altruism, heroism  People need self worth and self esteem and they get this from helping out.  Participation is very empowering	Struck a chord. Felt empathy in general  But individually all personal reasons	People just wanted to do something so therefore they came from everywhere.  It's just human nature  Think it could have been me therefore you go and help others  Everyone affected by disaster to some extent.	People come out and help in times of need.  Think it could have been me therefore you go and help others  It's different when you live here and are directly affected by it.
<b>Did you speak to anyone new?</b>	No but neighbours down the street – got to know each	?	Yes met up again with friends from Primary School. Will	No but heard about people going on holiday together as a	No, was surprised that didn't meet any new people.	no	no	No but friend met neighbours	No	First break to interact with community.  There was a	Would be more inclined to speak with fellow volunteers	Yes spoke with neighbours and new person down

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elsbeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
	other. "A bit like a country thing"		catch up later on.	result of flood clean up						purpose and interest  Now know who to contact – i.e. participants at resilience meeting.		street  Would speak to people who were affected
<b>If this happened in another part of the world?</b>	Don't know – think that it is humanity the world over	Don't know – depends on scale. Each situation is different. I do believe in Brisbane there were many people who were able to respond and therefore did. Large majority of people "good people"	Don't know if can comment. Would like to think that everywhere is the same.  People do what they can do to help their own - part of human spirit	Response the same	No A friend said if this was in Belgium it probably wouldn't have happened	Response the same  Human nature, human instinct	Don't know. America yes. Community spirit not unique to Australia but may depend on scale of disaster  Never seen anything like it.	Don't know but being Australian helps	Look at Hurricane Katrina, it didn't happen  Couldn't speculate	Help the same. Lots of family support.  Would be as much stranger helping stranger	No response the same	No response the same but devastation different due to infrastructure
<b>Is it an Australian thing? Was it unique?</b>	Don't think so	No not unique But mate ship is still strong	We talk about it a lot here "spirit, mate ship, kinship" Australians are " <b>bad weather friends</b> "	No – it's a common human thing that you want to help out others in common crisis or tragedy  Part of our national pride of course we want to think it	A friend said if this was in Belgium it probably wouldn't have happened  Yes	Yes, but to what extent, not too many other places in world would rally like us. i.e. per capita	The way community and government pulled together was amazing	Part of being Australian – values and being who you are but not unique to Australian	Yes Australia has less racial and religious issues than other places  Less divisions therefore Australia class-(less) society. Why we respond and react in this way.  People came from interstate to come and help "Parochial"	No, can't comment as haven't been in country for long enough.  Same spirit shown in India	No	No but Australians help each other in times of need

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elsbeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
<b>How did you feel to see people helping out?</b>	“Amazed, astonishing thing” “never seen anything quite like it before” “probably one of the most wonderful things I’ve ever experienced in terms of the community coming together	Don’t know – didn’t have time to think about “ just had to keep forward and doing” Upon reflection you will think about how amazing this was	Pleased with the support, networking, filled me with the love and of mankind – but this was short lived. – A bubble of happiness	Teary, proud, heartwarming . Tough Australian spirit	Patriotic, proud	Puts a bit of faith back into human nature.	Humbled, nice to feel nice about being human being – not many opportunities to feel that.  Bought out best in people	Pretty awesome. Felt very proud	Productive  One of finest hours of my existence.	Amused. Awestruck. The numbers were amazing.  Make feel more warm and comfortable about living in the community – hastened these feeling of comfort	Goodwill towards your fellow neighbours	Goodwill
<b>Negative Consequence of volunteers</b>	Too many volunteers Lack of organisation Getting in each other’s way But positives outweigh negatives	Weren’t ready for the response. Could organise people fast enough Positive outweigh negatives	You can get too much help – too many volunteers Volunteers throwing away things without permission from owners Too many people in each person’s house	Too many volunteers came forward – and not enough places to go. – They were frustrated and let down  Alcohol and drug taking	Environmental health problems  Mental health fallout. People psychologically affected – both volunteers and mentally unwell	Nothing too negative  Looting Negative comments directed towards police	Too many volunteers therefore if not needed felt helpless. People so willing yet unable to help  Organisational problems  Lots of volunteers got job done quickly and achieved so much	Nothing negative  Too many volunteers. Many were sent home.  Logistical problems as well from too many volunteers.	Things thrown out that shouldn’t have been  Benefits outweigh the costs – there cannot be.  Time wasn’t luxury therefore understandable that there would be negatives	None because there was a need.	Communication problems from government – bad advice  Too many people getting in there and throwing things out  Lots of goods were wasted.	Too many volunteers throwing things out  Panic mode
<b>Has your personal view of the community changed at all?</b>	Yes! Think they are wonderful now. Closed community before, not so self involved, “when chips down people come together”	No just make it even stronger  “galvanize even further”	No, it’s a very interconnected community – community feel Same response happened in ‘74 however was very young so	Same as Rachael, owner of volunteer coffee van	Reminds you that everyone is good and has that sense of humanity.  Has to be a crisis that brings people together	View of the community has enhanced. Always knew people would help but generosity taken by surprise	Don’t know but any community in Australia is not “open”. Unless it’s ongoing we all just go back to normal. If only bonded	Been reinforced.  Brisbane had great community feel – situation has proved that.  Always has	Always a tight community. Therefore this is why it was so important to respond and react to this disaster. A jewel to start with and	Initial impression “individualistic society”  Flood changed attitude. Hastened comfort within	People are insular  But flood showed that people are prepared to help each other  People spend	Yes think so.

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elsbeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
	new restored faith in fellow neighbour		couldn't really remember Went to check up on older families down childhood street.  Everyone sticks to their own little world.				by one situation great  Only if there was another emergency situation would people do it again  Small percentage of people will make friends.	been a positive, supportive, accepting community to be a part of	worth is protecting	community  Didn't have impression of community before  Didn't know anyone in community before  Whether you know someone or not people will help out each other	more likely to speak to each other	
<b>Was it a community changing event?</b>	Yes! People will talk about it for years to come  Remember the good things – community pulling tog for a common purpose etc.	No – just consolidated it even stronger. Strong community already. Galvanize even stronger Why? – Geographical reason makes strong community, family orientated area  Good for kids to see that this is what you do in an emergency Kids learning and seeing in the future	Connections that there never have been before. People know people that they didn't know – helped people that they didn't help  But still problems getting people to come and help others.  Changed for a while but “a bubble of happiness”	Did acutely. Now we move on and will be forgotten in 6 months time.  Could just be human nature  Two women went on holiday together. They were helping each other out.	Same a Julie. Reaction to acute devastation but ongoing changes won't be.  Maybe neighbours will know neighbours	Yes, people's attitudes have changed  People and government will be more cautious.  Bonded together generally and more niceness within community. May not be evident but it highlights that there is a good community out there	People carry community feeling for a long time afterwards  Natural disasters – equal social strata, levels things out.  Doesn't live there but thinks as it was a huge Event therefore it must.  People will recognise each other. Break down “stand offishness”	Yes, friends have been made. Neighbours now know neighbours. Friend is a prime example. Neighbours may call on neighbours if another event has happened. Local areas (affected areas) far more cohesive. Would have had to change to become supportive of each other. Can't not affect the communities. Because it's such a bit event	Going through stages. Hard to tell check in 6 months time. Difficult to measure now  Inherently tight community  2yrs – geography area defines that village element	Was a community realization event “a bell ringing event” – opportunity for community to come back together.  Some people yes others no. But perhaps those in flood affected areas more so	Brought people together. Usually pretty insular people tend to keep themselves to themselves  Some people yes others no. But perhaps those in flood affected areas more so	Yes in affected areas,  No some people it won't have any effect on.  A lot more fundraising events etc
<b>Will changes be temp or permanent?</b>	Feeling of “goodwill” will never be	Will wane – that's human nature	Long term because of the school.	Temporary	Temporary	Permanent thing. Because the	Temporary – but memory makes you	Permanent because it was such a big	Long lasting	Permanent but needs to be made	Temporary because things need	?

	Walter	Henry	Deborah	Lisa	Tina	Jeff	Rachael	Elspeth	Victor	Gauri	Carl	Kathy
	forgotten or last for a few years But people will go back to their normal way of life. People will remember the "spirit of community" Shown that this is what "community can do"	Community was strong before then "now just heated the steel"	You are at school with these people for life of primary school – per child			people reacted the same way in 1974. Niceness will only wane until there is another disaster. People will be out there to help again. There was camaraderie in 1974 but not to this extent	want to do it again  Temporary but	thing.		sustainable.  With community resilience group – now can depend on people within the group	constant reinforcement to become routine  Depends on people for some it will have long term effects on some people	
<b>Currently volunteering ? And why</b>	No but has previously volunteered; name is down with Statewide Volunteers.	Yes Benefits community – you need to care for other people Helps me, broadens world view	Yes member of Graceville P and F. Has been member for 5 years	No but has previously volunteered overseas	No but has previously volunteered overseas	Involved in projects through work in own time.	No but soon will be getting involved in community volunteering  Social benefits of volunteering  Personal experience with volunteer work.	No – plan to do volunteer work just retired but has joined Volunteer QLD and Red Cross for processing of QLD flood appeal	Yes president of the P and F has been for 5 years	No but registered for Volunteering QLD Chaired Community Resilience Meeting – wants to do something more sustainable Volunteer work in India	Signed up with Volunteering QLD  Want to meet new people	No but registered with Volunteering QLD.  Want to meet new people
<b>Was flood catalyst?</b>	Yes "rekindled flame to get involved again"	Just doing it and have always done it. Has been volunteering for 40 years.	"Put wind in the sail for this P and F" Will be general parent in high school P and F.	Not asked	Not asked	No, enough on plate. If another disaster/incident if thought I could help would help	Flood gave confidence to volunteer	Could step into without any extra training – and there was an immediate need	Already involved	Yes absolutely Would have done volunteer work eventually But flood helped to identify a need	Yes	Yes.  Makes it easier to interact with people
<b>Will volunteerism increase?</b>	Yes because it's been such a "landmark event"	Yes as will personal pride in community	Made people a lot more aware of value of	No. Same response as Julie	No, there was community expectation and pressure	Only if we get another disaster soon. Memories of	Maybe  Yes because it was such a	Perhaps yes - because it has raised people's	Maybe for some people it will affect others it	Now we know there is a lot of talent in the	If people are that way inclined they will get	Given people opportunity to get involved

## Appendix 5b: Raw Interview Data with Organisational Psychologist

Interview with John Peters, Organisational Psychologist	
What is a resilient community?	Describes an organisation, or a community or a person who is able to continue in a steady state despite the flux of the external environment
Components of resilient community	It has to be able to renew itself. It has to be able to reinvent itself. Make itself contemporarily relevant
Is Brisbane a thriving community?	Yes
Does scale of disaster determine response?	We are hard wired to abandon differences and pitch in and help in the face of a shared emergency average people's capacity to respond driven by adrenaline is probably only 3 or 4 days
Comments on School Parents and Friends Association	Used initiative and got in there and did it
Comments on people thinking it was there community therefore they should help	Yes helping your community but it always has to do with creating a safe environment for your children. survivor guilt thing
Does a disaster make a community more resilient?	Yes, because of community memory, People who rub shoulders together and work together, in a volunteering capacity get the endorphins from doing something useful. Laid on top of that they <b>also</b> get the endorphins from the sense of company working together in an emergency. If you had another crisis you would find the same people back there willingly and more people joining them.
Social Pressure	I suspect that the people who weren't involved, the people who socialised with those people and who hadn't volunteered, if they'd been another opportunity come up they would want to jump in so they could say "me too".
Discussion about entity and community	Brisbane called themselves community but they <b>weren't entity</b> . So it needed some mechanism to create entity out of community. And Graceville State School P and C was an example of creating entity out of community. Because the community before then, there and here was merely a collection of people who didn't know each other, had nothing in common they thought only they just shared the same geographic region. So there was no bonding between them until they had a cause. And then all of a sudden there was bonding. Yes. Cause people rally round a flag. Rally round a cause. -
Discussion of empathy	And some people have higher levels of empathy. People who have higher levels of empathy are more likely to have higher levels of endorphin need. Yes empathy goes hand in hand with "it could have been me" "if it was me I'd love to have someone helping me therefore I'll help somebody in the help that it is reciprocated at some stage."
Community of Graceville and what a community means	The community of Graceville is not a community it's a bunch of people who by accident live there. What makes them a community is something that they suddenly have in common which was an event. So when <b>it's the event</b> that caused them to think of themselves as a cohesive community that needed to do something for each other. In the absence of the event they are just a bunch of people who have nothing to do with each other, have nothing in common other than they happen to live in the same suburb. Is signified by geographical boundaries
What about social networks, how would they help in the disaster	Essential, in the disaster They would expand, strengthen and expend. Like any neural network – use it and it grows. They would help each other and they would find new members to join those networks. So the capacity of the Graceville State School to respond would be even quicker and bigger.
What do you think a strong volunteer effort shows about a community?	Well first it shows it has capacity. Volunteering requires that people have some available time or resources to contribute; it shows that people the volunteers are looking for a sense of meaning. It shows that and depending on the nature of volunteering, they are also looking for a sense of community because volunteering groups provide that. It shows that on the flip side that if there is part of that community in need of help and support, there is a resource base that can help them.
Does a resilient community have more volunteers?	A community that <b>has</b> people that are willing to step up when they need to is clearly a community that is more robust and more resilient than one that is so impoverished that no one can help anybody. Haiti for example. People might be trying to help each other, but they don't have a resource base from which to come. They are all out of work, and they are all hungry and they are all living in buildings that have collapsed so where is your resource?
Importance of P and C network in context of flood	No, because they used an already existing network, just turned it on and cranked up the volume basically. There was an already established social network. In this case this fellow just <b>tapped into</b> an established social network

<p><b>Do you think the community changed or has changed as a result of the flood?</b></p>	<p>Think about “that could have been me,” you go down to the supermarket in Graceville or the service station or somewhere where people bump into each other socially, they will be much more civil with each other and cordial even though they may never have met.          You know “was that a person that was covered in mud? – Oh well I’ll smile at them.” So I think the experience would make people socially more tolerant and gentler, more respectful of each other.</p>
<p><b>Will it be long lasting?</b></p>	<p>Will fade. Depends on other things that are going on. For people who have never volunteered any volunteering, they may have discovered you know a remarkably different side to humanity that they really enjoyed</p>

## Appendix 5c: Raw Volunteer Organisation Data

	<b>Helping Hand Queensland</b>	<b>Statewide Volunteers</b>	<b>Newlight Queensland</b>
<b>Role During Floods</b>	<p>Man displaced persons centres                      Work with state government                      Find materials for shelters                      Convened a state disasters committee                      Cared for isolated people                      Assist people to return home</p>	<p>Natural Disaster Resilience Program                      Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resilience Program</p> <p>Normally involved in advocacy, education, research.                      Provide training and manage social initiative projects</p> <p>Pass interest to relevant organisations</p>	<p>Hired crisis counselors                      Manned volunteer crisis centres</p>
<b>Demographics</b>	Role specific	In Australia, 47yr old white man? Unsure of data	Usually female about 45yrs
<b>Life span of average volunteer</b>	Depends – young people 18mths Older 15yrs	Depends	varies
<b>Changing Trends</b>	Long term commitment – waning Gen x and Y episodic – project orientated	Volunteering has now become: opportunity to gain experience, Do something worthwhile Gen Y – want to help but do so in their own terms	Lack of long term commitment from volunteer organisations this = loss of services  Gen Y's increasing interest
<b>Benefits of volunteering</b>	Specific to age group Elderly – fellowship and friendship very collegiate Middle Age – empty nest syndrome – want to reconnect with community Young – fashion, peer pressure, looking for something new Must be something more than earning a living	Learn new skills Give back to community Everyone has their own agenda  People can connect with the community.	Up skilling, social networking  Social outlet particularly for older people
<b>Negatives of volunteering</b>	Can become exclusive Instant experts “loose cannons” High expectations	Lack of financial support for volunteers.  Volunteering is expensive	Can become exclusive Difficult to get people to change They may disempower others Too much passion – difficult to get them to do the boring Stuff Volunteers cost money!
<b>Do people want to better their community?</b>	Older people yes – sense of duty, good citizen etc Others – indirectly	It varies	Yes but also about developing relationships with people  Social networks encourage people to join volunteering organisations through referrals
<b>Benefits of Volunteering</b>	Short Term Broadens experience Breaks down isolation Breeds tolerance and understanding Learn sense of empathy Breeds trust “shadow services”	Contribute hugely economically.  Fills the gaps	Short Term: Get the job done  Long Term: Build a more inclusive society Transfer skills
<b>What do volunteers bring that paid workers don't?</b>	“willingness to deliver shadow services”	Interest in the community They bring their motivation because they choose to be there.	Passion
<b>Floods and surge of interest</b>	1600 hits a day on website Totally clogged Didn't have systems to deal with flood Was flooded themselves	Totally clogged system	Yes – trained an additional 80 people to assist with psychological first aid

<b>Negatives of flood volunteerism</b>	People frustration – due to overwhelmed system	Vested interest  Over enthusiastic volunteers Example of one person who was Sectioned because he volunteered too much	Lack of resources to support volunteers Willing people but cannot mobilise due to lack of resources
<b>How did they express their interest?</b>	Anything People used organisation to get into flood area	Social media, calling up, volunteering assistance	Social media,
<b>Why flood a catalyst?</b>	Sense of Pride People wanted a piece of history “pop movement”	People knew someone affected Makes people realize what they have People are affected emotionally – a surge of interest was experienced (i.e. peak of web registrations) after Yasi, after Christchurch and? After Japan. People want to be involved in something special.	People just had to do something, make something better especially if it is happening in your community
<b>Dealing with new interest – how?</b>	Organisational links – with corporations New groups formed Expensive however	Emergency volunteer workshops – awareness raising Community leadership project  CREW project – took new volunteers on board to help deal with the spontaneous interest	Communicating with volunteers training people in psychological first aid
<b>Are people who volunteered by flood motivated by same as normal volunteers?</b>	No – seeing distress greater impact New experiences for people	People see distress, it triggers something	Yes and no
<b>Would clean up be possible without volunteers?</b>	No because of shadow services – sense of solidarity, togetherness, fraternity	No because of the money – couldn’t afford to pay people for what was achieved	No because of the community spirit. Volunteers coming in and helping “we care about your community”
<b>How can volunteers help in disaster</b>	Shadow services Support, resource for people	Joining volunteer organisations especially designed for disasters Continue on for longer than organisations can – can reach areas that organisations can’t	Volunteers are “link” to the community  Volunteers with experience in the community prop others up
<b>Role of existing groups</b>	Bring infrastructure They are a snowflake in the middle of star relationships Bring resources to bear Knowing someone = better resources	They are essential and made up of volunteers	Vital in communities, have access to resources
<b>What is community resilience?</b>	Self reliance Corporate memory, we can manage and cope next time around	Being planned, and prepared through being informed and aware.	Ability for community to bounce back after a crisis
<b>How do volunteers build community resilience?</b>	Volunteering is a bridge between families New set of structures Bridges families and state, state and individual families Episodic volunteering/social networking modern form of social capital	Volunteers fill in the gaps that paid organisations can’t do	The volunteers are the community They prop other community members up and support one another  Ownership and pride in community builds resilience
<b>How could they inhibit community resilience?</b>	Risk management – hugely problematic for volunteering	People have vested interests and not able to take step back People too gung ho	Too much passion  Lack of organisational structures to support volunteers
<b>Can volunteers act faster?</b>	Yes volunteering organisations have bureaucratic problems therefore maybe slower to mobilise. But need to distinguish between neighbourly volunteering and formal volunteering	Depends on organisation. Smaller organisations can flatten structures quicker	If they are organised in a group. Still emergency services are essential to assist