

Summary of Inaugural Community of Practice on Relocation, Retreat and Resilience in Australia (COPRRRA) Meeting – 14 October 2025

On 14 October 2025, COPRRRA held its inaugural meeting, bringing together 33 participants (from 69 registrations) from across government, the not-for-profit and humanitarian sectors, academia, consulting, planning, and flood management, among others.

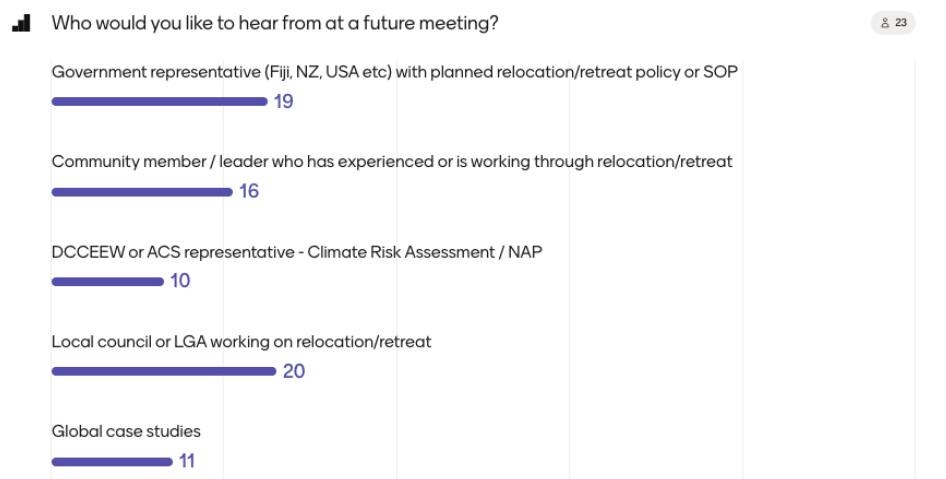
The session began with a brief overview of the current global and national context for planned relocation and retreat policy, practice, and research. Narelle Poole from WaterTech Consulting and Jamie Simmonds then shared their experience from Grantham, where an 11-month process following the devastating 2011 floods saw a land swap and several households relocated (see slides from Grantham). Participants then contributed insights and ideas to help shape the future direction and priorities of COPRRRA.

Breakout discussions offered opportunities for participants to connect and share their work and interest in relocation and retreat. A reoccurring theme was around ensuring communities are at the centre of relocation and retreat decision making and on the need for proactive adaptation planning, particularly to engage communities on these complex issues before disasters strike or risk levels become unacceptable. Participants also contributed ideas for what a community of practice on relocation and retreat could prioritise and focus on moving forward, as well as what expertise and experience they could share with others through COPRRRA.

Next steps will involve consolidating these perspectives and contributions into a calendar and work plan for the coming 12 months. We'll seek participant feedback before the end of 2025, and look forward to continuing to connect, explore, share, and learn together into 2026. A huge thank you to everyone who joined and contributed to this important first step.

Suggestions from participants on COPRRRA focus and priorities.

The following includes inputs from participants through the Mentimeter activity (33 people). These contributions build on those that were provided through the initial COPRRRA registration (69 people) and cover a) the types of activities COPRRRA could focus on, b) who / which organisations people want to hear from and learn from, and the skills and expertise that COPRRRA members themselves can contribute to COPRRRA.



Other suggestions for presenters at future COPRRRA meetings.

Community Voices & Lived Experience

- Residents and communities directly facing or who have experienced relocation (including non-homeowners)
- First Nations and Pacific communities (e.g., Torres Strait, Fiji) who have experienced or are navigating relocation.

Policy, Planning & Governance

- Planning legislators and strategic planners who shape land use and zoning decisions.
- Government actors with authority to influence relocation policies and implementation

Finance, Insurance & Economic Actors

- Insurance and banking sectors, including those shaping risk pricing and financing mechanisms.
- Interest in exploring different financial models to support relocation and retreat.

Legal, Regulatory & Justice

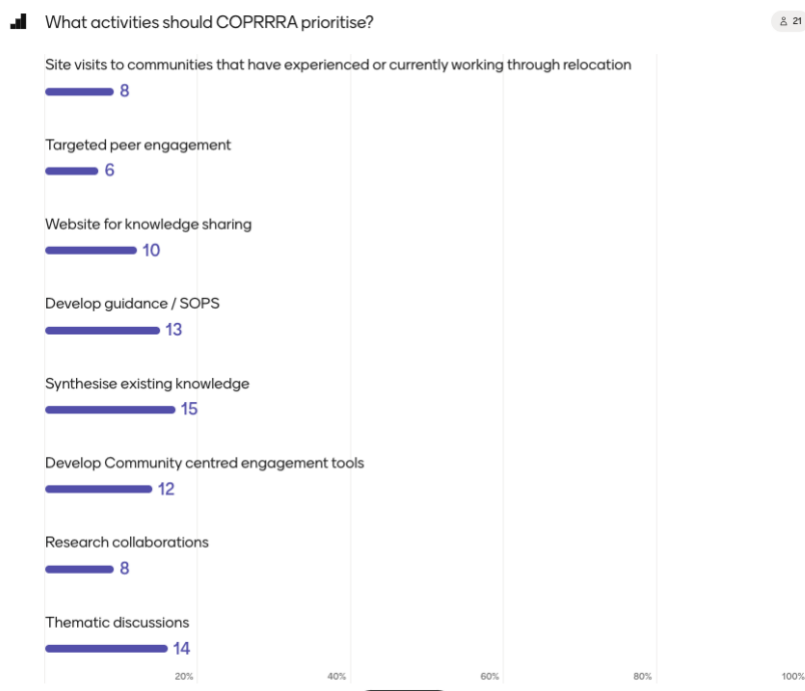
- Legal experts on property, land tenure, and rights issues in relocation.
- Voices addressing community justice issues to ensure fair, inclusive processes.

Technical & Expert Practitioners

- Researchers and academics working on frameworks for planned retreat, M&E etc
- Behavioural science experts to improve communication on vulnerability and risk.
- Practitioners from places that have successfully implemented pre disaster relocations.

Media & Storytelling

- Journalists/storytellers who can help shape public understanding and narratives on relocation and retreat



What other activities could COPRRRA focus on / what is needed nationally:

Knowledge Sharing & Lessons Learned

- Facilitating exchange of lessons from past and current relocation experiences.
- Providing a platform for problem sharing, knowledge exchange, and collaborative solution building, in both post and pre-disaster / adaptation pathway contexts
- Addressing misinformation and providing credible, accessible information for communities.

Advocacy & Policy Influence

- Federal level advocacy to elevate relocation and retreat as national priorities.
- Advocating for guidance and best practice standards in relocation and retreat,
- Working through issues of political will and funding gaps, especially shifting focus from post-disaster to proactive adaptation.
- Identifying political champions to drive the agenda – present at meetings on their experiences and challenges working on this issues.

Strategic Planning & Legal considerations

- Discussions on how to embed relocation and retreat options into strategic land use planning and statutory documents.
- Exploring / drafting adaptive planning legislation and testing it with councils and industry.
- Linking planned relocation to a national resettlement and mobility strategy.

Research Translation & Practical Tools

- Packaging research into applied tools to help communities, practitioners, and decision-makers take action.
- Producing collaborative outputs, such as journal articles (PIA journal), to build visibility and shared understanding on relocation and retreat.

Network Mapping & Collaboration

- Mapping existing communities of practice and networks (related to relocation and retreat) across states and nationally, and collaborating with other networks.
- Connecting people working on similar projects or thematic areas to avoid duplication and amplify impact.

What expertise and experience could you share through COPRRRA?

Quotes from participants

- *Developing coastal adaptation and resilience plans*
- *Case studies of community conversations and lessons learned*
- *Expertise on the strengths and needs of people who may be at greater risk, vulnerable or marginalised in the context of climate change and disasters*
- *Existing guidelines and adaptation planning underway in Victoria*
- *Development of climate hazard information to inform adaptation*
- *coastal hazard and sea level rise policy*
- *Sharing local knowledge/concerns/actions*
- *Ways the policy platforms stymie good outcomes / too rigid to help with the tricky conversations*
- *Build frameworks that communicate the essence of issues the group believes are important*
- *Strategic natural hazard planning (coastal / flooding)*
- *Summary of Western Australian status of coastal managed retreat and its challenges*

- *The role and limitations of disaster insurance in mobilising relocation. In due course we can also present what we will learn from the Resilient Homes initiatives in QLD and NSW*
- *I have done a little bit of research on how forced relocation impacts a stateless refugee community and impacts identity and connection to place.*
- *Planning and engagement for connected and socially cohesive communities and places*
- *And also a little bit of work on how to "build back better" and how to build into policy*
- *Strategic land use planning - how we can develop better planning instruments through risk-informed decision making*
- *Advocating for adaptative planning requirements under existing planning frameworks*
- *we should also look at how other environmental disasters (such as pollution) may lead to relocation being required.*
- *Developing climate risk and relocation plan in Pacific Islands*

Would you be interested to attend an in person workshop / symposium in Brisbane, September 2026

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