

# RESILIENCE

**The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties**

We are living in an increasingly uncertain world which is affecting the way we live our day-to-day lives.

Floods, fires, and drinking water contamination in some regions of NZ, the pandemic, shortages due to the war in Ukraine, and the sky rocketing cost of food, energy, petrol, and housing/rentals suggest business-as-usual can no longer be expected.

Humans are changing the biophysical systems that support life on earth, and we are rapidly depleting many of the materials and minerals we depend on for our modern way of life through our excessive consumption compounded by our massive population growth.

Renewables will not replace our current demand for fossil fuels in the time frame they're needed, so how can we live well on less energy and best survive and thrive in the rapidly changing, difficult circumstances we'll find ourselves in?

Being a learner, developing new skills, employing critical thinking, having a flexible mindset and the ability to cooperate at the neighbourhood or community level will better equip us to adapt to each new situation and withstand ongoing disruptions and disasters.

While action from Government is essential, it is local people and community organisations who are the first responders in disasters and who are more effective in giving help when it's needed.

The more we plan now and begin to create resilient communities, the less likely our communities will disintegrate into conflict and violence in the face of the major disruption predicted by climate science, our growing understanding of planetary boundaries, energy, materials, and minerals shortages.

If we prepare by setting up measures that meet local self-reliance needs and support everyone, we could then live a more meaningful, fulfilled life full of social connections, generosity and contentment - the values most strongly associated with happiness.

## Talking to Your Community or Neighbourhood

- You probably know one or two people locally who you like. Invite them to a gathering. Make it a fun, social event in pleasant surrounds with food & beverages.
- Find your commonalities and their specific interests by asking questions about their concerns for the community in relation to climate change and related disasters and their ideas for ways to collaborate to support everyone. Ask if they'd be your ally in gathering more community support for building self-reliant resilience.
- Decide on your invitation (see document below on how to frame this, slide 26, p24) to the wider community to gain more support

[http://www.asmallgroup.net/pages/images/pages/CES\\_jan2007.pdf](http://www.asmallgroup.net/pages/images/pages/CES_jan2007.pdf)

## Ideas for Community Self Reliance

### Start a neighbourhood garden club

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/spedal/urban/starting-a-garden-club.htm>

### Start a Community Compost facility for distribution to the community

<https://www.robgreenfield.org/start-a-community-compost-site/>

<https://ilsr.org/compost-climate/>

### Start a time bank

<https://livingeconomies.nz/solutions/timebanks>

<https://livingeconomies.nz/solutions/lets>

Use [Community Weaver](#) to keep track of hours exchanged

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## Start a Community Kitchen

Come together to bottle fruit, make preserves, pasta sauces, food boxes (see bulk buying)

<https://communitykitchens.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/CK-Quick-Guide.pdf>

## Give away unused items

Furniture, toys, tools, and materials using the Community Facebook Group. Your craft group might wish to refashion clothing, re-purpose other items.

Choose a day to put unwanted useable items out on your front lawn for people to take as needed.

## Start A Toy Sharing Library

<https://fairplayforkids.org/pf/how-to-start-a-toy-lending-library/>

## Start a Tool Lending Library

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK1907/S00380/tool-lendery-a-new-community-resource.htm>

<https://learn.eartheasy.com/articles/how-to-start-a-neighborhood-tool-share/>

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/tool-time-auckland-community-library-loans-out-everything-from-leaf-blowers-to-jigsaws/UZ2J6BNQT2427HKY06Z0EIZ60Y/>

<https://hackland.nz/>

## Bulk Buying of basic items

For example, food, cleaning products etc. for distribution to community members, to save on transport.

**Create food boxes:** a small group goes to markets or wholesale businesses and buys in bulk.

<https://www.boxdivvy.com/how-it-works>

[https://www.slowmovement.com/box\\_scheme.php](https://www.slowmovement.com/box_scheme.php)

**Build a Community Produce Stand** where gardeners/cooks can put surplus vegetables, fruit, plants, preserves etc they've made

## Community Supported Agriculture

Find a local grower who is interested in this;

<https://kaicycle.org.nz/csa>

## Volunteer/Teach your skills

Tap into the wealth of expertise/interests in your community How to grow food sustainably,

- food foraging,
- food forest design,
- bees and pollination,
- grafting, pruning fruit trees, propagation,
- water conservation & water management,
- worm farms, edible weed identification and uses.

## Other Activities

- Wine making using surplus fruit, elderberry cordial.
- Mushroom growing.
- Bread making.
- Preserves, bottling.
- Seed saving.

**Various building projects** - a cool safe, a no electricity fridge, a windmill, a chook or wood shed, a chook tractor. Sewing, mending, patching, darning, weaving, corn cob & peg dolls, carpentry, cabinet making, whittling.

Drawing, painting, sculpture, music making, choir, writing, journaling, poetry, square dancing, yoga, meditation.

## Start a Pop-up Repair Cafe

<https://bristolgreencapital.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/repair-cafeToolkit-edit-002.pdf>

<https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/how-to-start-a-repair-cafe>

<https://www.repaircafe.org/en/join/start-your-own/>

**Celebrate all your successes at community building**

**Document people's personal stories of engagement, milestones achieved**

**Photograph, publish in Newsletters, on community bulletin boards, Facebook groups**

## Links to Media Advocating Community Resilience

<https://actionguide.localfutures.org/actors/individuals>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/lifestyle/magazine/community-on-sense-recipe?>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/nelson-mail/128898702/cost-of-living-cutting-the-produce-bills-as-easy-as-sharing?>

<https://www.storiesweliveby.org.uk/TheCourse>

<https://education.resilience.org/course-options/>

<https://www.resilience.org/take-action/>

# Personal Stories of Building Community, Locally

## Meg's Story - Taieri Mouth

I am single. I have 67 years life experience and have lived in Taieri Mouth for 2 1/2yrs now. I knew I wanted and would need community...it was a big reason for choosing to live here.

I love cooking, so that was the easiest, most enjoyable way for me to make connections with my street. I simply baked biscuits at first, put them on recycled small veggie or meat trays with a serviette, and door knocked, introduced myself, and offered my baking. Since that beginning I now often give meals to neighbours - casseroles, pasta dishes, soups, apple crumbles etc etc. as I tend to cook in bulk. I give these meals to neighbours in ceramic dishes mostly, so I get another interaction when they are returned.

I also use 'occasions' to bake and distribute small trays of goodies such as at Christmas, Easter, & Anzac Day. My neighbours now offer me surplus from their gardens or offer me soups, whitebait, or their newspapers which I use for the garden or lighting my fire. One older fellow just showed up one day and began wheel barrowing a load of wood chip I'd had delivered, onto my garden - he wanted something to do. I love the exchange, the thoughtfulness it requires, the kindness shared, the relationship

For one summer season, I ran a little cafe at my house – "Tuesday's @ 10am" - based on gifting, not money. I loved these little cafes which attracted a group of people ...my location is a bit out of the way, not on the main strip of housing. I made fliers and distributed them to a few streets near by which got it going. I loved the surprise of the gift... often garden produce or plants ...and I loved the discussions we had. I didn't continue it this summer as establishing my garden has been a huge endeavour, but I might resurrect it in the future.

I participate in a monthly women's social gathering on a Friday 4-6 pm, organised by several of the local women. This has been a great way to meet new people, some of whom are on my wavelength re climate issues.



## **Ivan's Story - Otepoti, Dunedin**

I live in a narrow dead-end street with parking on one side only and there are 25 houses in the street. My house is located at the top end of the street where I have lived since June 2008. Cooperation is needed to drive up and down the street. I am on a nodding/hand wave basis with everyone on the street as I pull over to the parking side of the street to allow cars right-of-way. When I first shifted in, only one neighbour opposite made an initial contact by dropping one of his service leaflets in my letter box. I now am on a friendly first name basis with six of my closest neighbours and I have exchanged telephone numbers for emergency purposes with two of my neighbours. I have been inside the homes of four of my neighbours and they have been inside my home. None of my neighbours are my close friends and there is only one neighbour who I call in for a regular chat. I made first contact with my nearest neighbours by initiating conversations when I saw them on the street or in their front yard and likewise with two residents who live at the bottom of the street.

When two nearby houses sold a few years ago, I introduced myself when the new neighbours first shifted in. I have assisted my nearby neighbours when called upon and they have reciprocated. There is a degree of ill feeling between some of my nearby neighbours and I am the only one on good terms with all these neighbours. I would be reluctant to knock on the door of all residents in the street and introduce myself unless I were the convenor of the local Neighbourhood Watch. As an aside, the current convenor has never called a meeting. I don't see a street party ever taking place spontaneously. In contrast, my family lived for 11 years in a block of six home ownership units located down a leg-in section in Auckland. We all got to know each other very well and there was a strong sense of community and support. This disintegrated when some owners shifted out and renters shifted in. We sold up soon after.

## **Sue's Story - Otepoti, Dunedin**

We live in an area where houses are surrounded by high hedges or fences in a busy thoroughfare in a Dunedin suburb. People come and go morning and evening by car, in and out of their driveways. There is no natural meeting point like a local shop or centre of activity. So, I have started to talk with any person I come across on neighbourhood walks; more likely on weekends I garner them by their cars before they disappear. I might chat about things that strike me about their garden etc., introduce myself and try and learn something about them and remember their name. So far, it has made a big difference to me to get to know some people a little bit. It grounds me more in the area. I feel less lonely there because of it.

A few years ago, we tried to initiate a street barbeque with a section of the houses but we could not hold it due to bad weather and then Covid prevented gatherings. We will try again next summer, put leaflets in letterboxes with a backup date if it rains. And go from there.

## **Vic's Story - Broad Bay**

In 1997, we moved to Aotearoa in dribs and drabs - the wife Tessa first into a university job in the summer, the young boys next at Easter, on their own! (assisted passage), finally myself and our daughter, delayed to finish our academic years both in a teaching job and she for a school cert exam. Tessa was the breadwinner, I was the 'find a house guy'. We found one eventually in Broad Bay on the Peninsula.

Next door but one was a Dutch family who ran a Bed and Breakfast. They were warm and friendly and bonded with us as fellow migrants. Next door lived a widow who gave us cake and greeting cards saying welcome to the bay etc. After a short time, this lady started asking us to cut down some of the trees bordering our land with hers. This was persistent and it started to irk me. I didn't want to spend money this way and did not own a chain saw. I suppose that the initial warmth was a softening up process and she eventually became quite hostile.

Our daughter went to uni here in Dunedin and wished to express some independence, asking to move into the old pottery shed in our garden. Not a good idea as it wasn't heated or particularly sanitary.



We pulled it down and started to build a cottage for her use and the accommodation of friends and visiting family. Eighteen months later it was finished, but she never moved into it. The wait was too long and she did what any sensible student would do by making herself scarce.

What to do with this cottage? The Dutch neighbours came to the party: Rent it out! They sent us their overspill of tourists and we learned the ropes from them of caring for overseas visitors, providing breakfast hampers, and how to iron the sheets. They helped to develop our tax accounts and Herman put us on their visitor listing website and provided most of our early guests. This was over twenty years ago and we are still firm friends. They certainly gave us the start we needed in our new country.

## Tips to improve your resilience

*“It is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself.”*

Charles Darwin

**Get connected.** Building strong, positive relationships with loved ones and friends can provide you with needed support, guidance and acceptance in good and bad times. Establish other important connections by volunteering or joining a faith or spiritual community.

**Make every day meaningful.** Do something that gives you a sense of accomplishment and purpose every day. Set clear, achievable goals to help you look toward the future with meaning.

**Learn from experience.** Think of how you've coped with hardships in the past. Consider the skills and strategies that helped you through difficult times. You might even write about past experiences in a journal to help you identify positive and negative behaviour patterns — and guide your future behaviour.

**Remain hopeful.** You can't change the past, but you can always look toward the future. Accepting and even anticipating change makes it easier to adapt and view new challenges with less anxiety.

**Take care of yourself.** Tend to your own needs and feelings. Participate in activities and hobbies you enjoy. Include physical activity in your daily routine. Get plenty of sleep and create consistent bedtime rituals. Eat a healthy diet. Practice stress management and relaxation techniques, such as yoga, meditation, guided imagery, deep breathing or prayer.

**Be proactive.** Don't ignore your problems. Instead, figure out what needs to be done, make a plan and take action. Although it can take time to recover from a major setback, traumatic event or loss, know that your situation can improve if you work at it.

Source: The [Mayo Clinic](#)

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