

Disaster-resilient and adaptive  
to change:

Narratives to shape achievable  
visions of resilience, support  
co-ordinated practice, and  
catalyse collective action

*Dr Deborah O'Connell*

*CSIRO*





# Acknowledgments and resources

## Enabling Resilience Investment team

Russell Wise, John Marinopoulos, Deborah O’Connell, Nic Mesci, George Tieman, Russell Gorddard, Joey Chan, Dianne Flett, Ashlin Lee, Seona Meharg, Ariella Helfgott, Holger Maier, Dayna Hayman, Sarah Patterson (2021) Range of publications available here:

## Resilience insights, narratives and checklist for Queensland

Funders: Queensland Reconstruction Authority, CSIRO

Authors: Deborah O’Connell, Nicky Grigg, Dayna Hayman, Erin Bohensky, Tom Measham, Russell Wise, Yiheyis Maru, Michael Dunlop, Sarah Patterson, Sneha Vaidya, Rachel Williams, Steven Lade. Website for reports [The Queensland Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Approach project \(QRAPTA\) | Queensland Reconstruction Authority](#)

## Australian Vulnerability Profile

Funders: Emergency Management Australia/National Resilience Taskforce, CSIRO

Authors: Deborah O’Connell, Russell Wise, Rachel Williams, Nicky Grigg, Seona Meharg, Mike Dunlop, Veronica Doerr, Jacqui Meyers, Jill Edwards, Monica Osuchowski, Mark Crossweller

Agencies: EMA, CSIRO, Geoscience Australia, BoM, DoEE, Dept of Defence, several state agencies from Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland

<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/profiling-australias-vulnerability/>

<https://ecos.csiro.au/deconstructing-disasters-taking-stock-on-where-we-are-now-and-dreaming-our-future/>

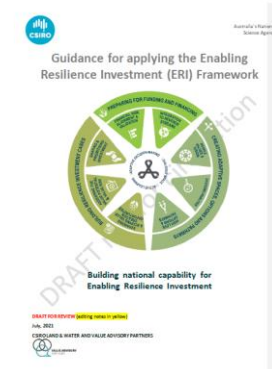
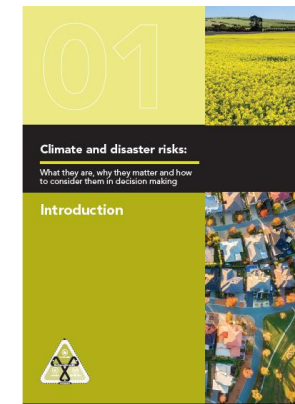
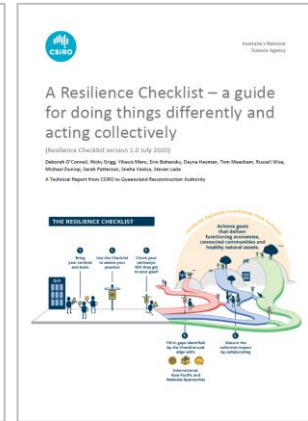
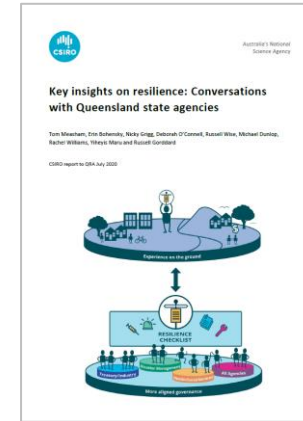
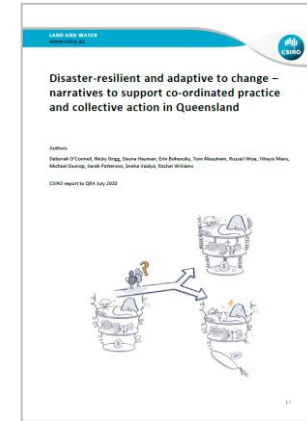
## Strategic disaster and climate risk assessment

<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/strategic-disaster-risk-assessment-guidance/>

Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and transformation Approach (RAPTA) (Version 2) <https://publications.csiro.au/publications/publication/Plcsi:EP205808/>

Funders: CSIRO, Global Environment Facility, UNDP, Stockholm Resilience Centre/GRAID

Authors: O’Connell, Deborah; Maru, Yiheyis; Grigg, Nicky; Walker, Brian; Abel, Nick; Wise, Russ; Cowie, Annette; Butler, James; Stone-Jovicich, Samantha; Stafford Smith, Mark; Ruhweza, Alice; Belay, Million; Duron, Guadalupe; Pearson, Leonie; Meharg, Seona.



ence augmented reality vision of a resilient town – ABC, BoM, CSIRO and many others <https://www.mtresilience.com>





# Why narratives?



## Key messages:

- There are many reasons that narratives are effective at engaging hearts and minds, and helping to shift behaviours
- And, there are many ways that stories can be used, and misused



Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her TED talk 'The danger of a single story':

*Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize.*

*Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity ...*

*The single story creates stereotype and the problem with stereotype is not that they are untrue but that they are incomplete, they make one story become the only story.*



- In our work, it's about
  - Explaining science of complex systems, sense-making
  - Shaping our science - mental models and narratives are key levers for system change
  - Must be transparent, evidence-based where appropriate, ethical, custodianship respected
  - Danger in only providing space for existing dominant narratives (or people or organisations who hold the power and can disproportionately influence the narrative)

# From Vulnerability to Resilience – a systems narrative





# What do you value? What do you stand to lose?

New Years Eve  
2018, in the  
place where you  
live

Hold that  
thought...

New Years 2020, SE  
Australia

Hold that  
thought...

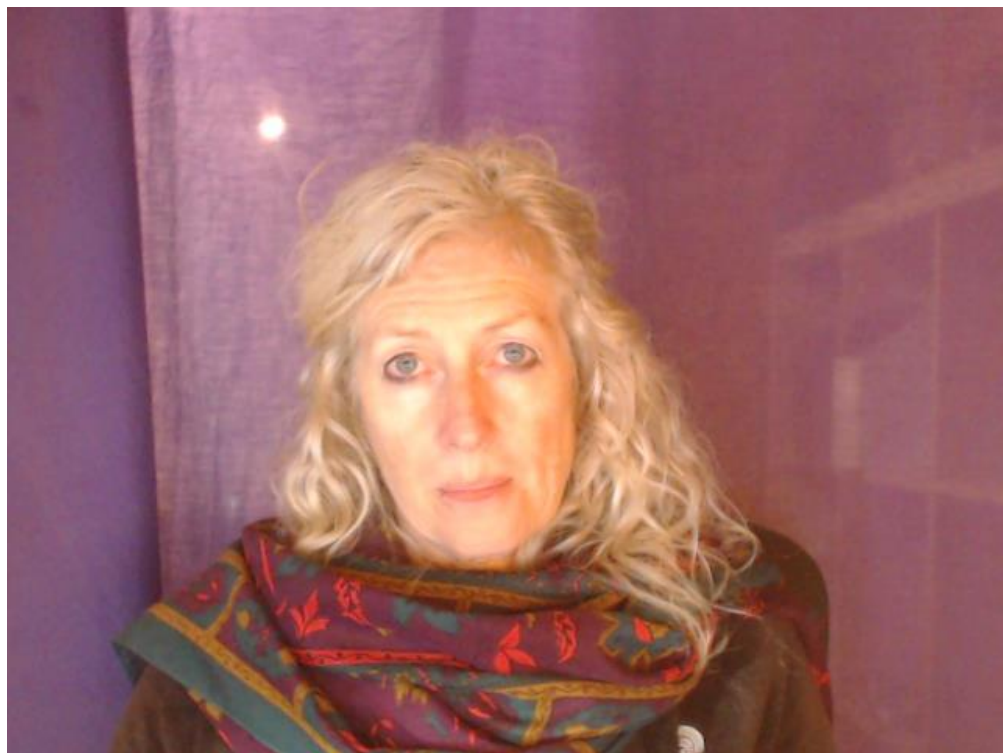
In the midst of the  
COVID-19  
pandemic

Hold that  
thought...





Image ABC Tom Maddocks



7.30 am New Years Day 2020  
Same place: Bermagui  
looking back towards  
Cobargo







Values prioritised in decision-making during 'normal times' create systems that may not serve the values that matter to us most in times of catastrophe

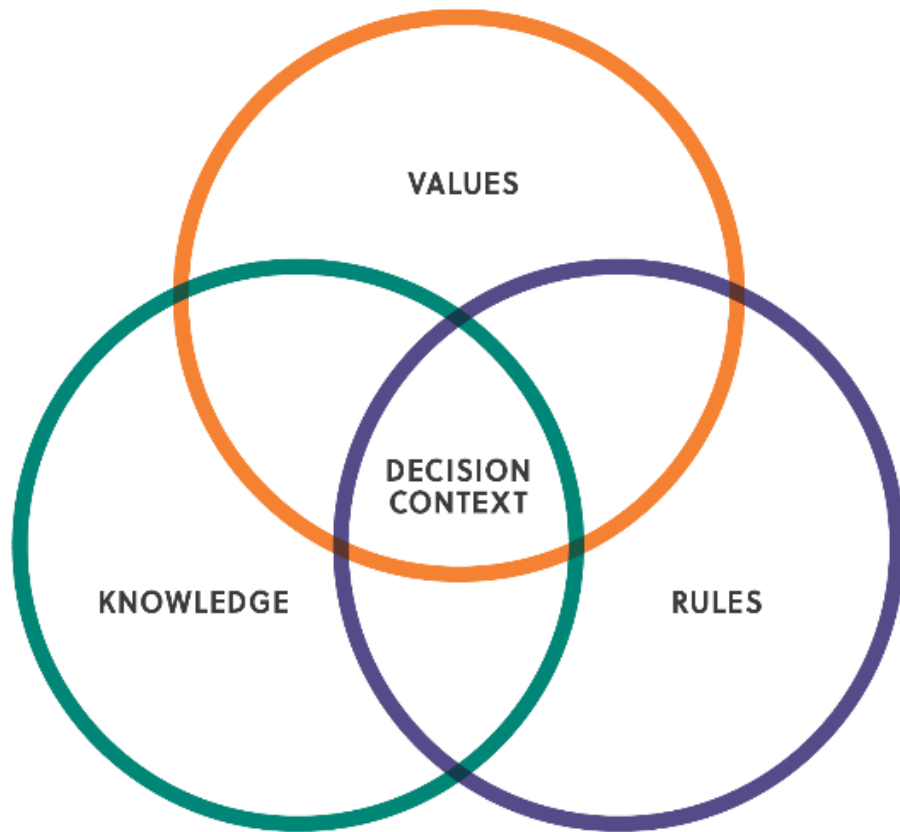
## Values are in tension



Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs. 2018. Profiling Australia's Vulnerability: the interconnected causes and cascading effects of systemic disaster risk. <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/profiling-australias-vulnerability/>

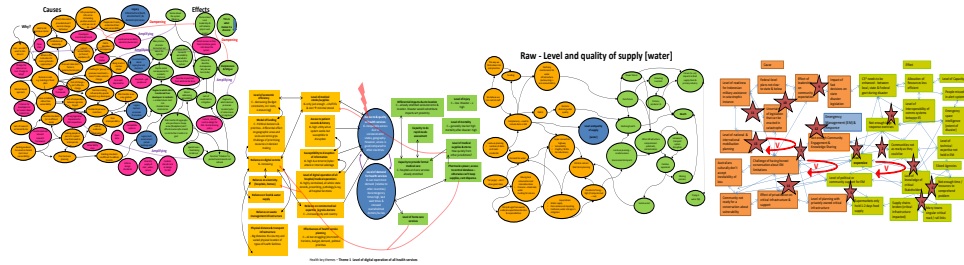


# Values Rules and Knowledge



# Distilling typical systems patterns

Raw data (>80)

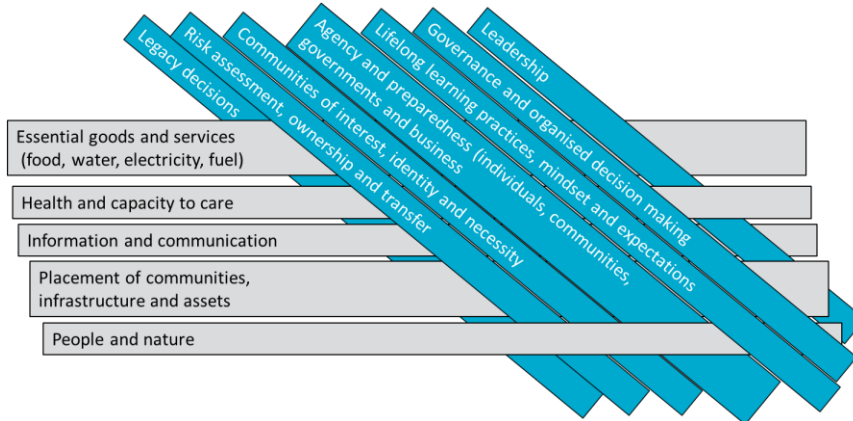


Typical systems patterns (15)



## Typical system patterns

Provisioning systems

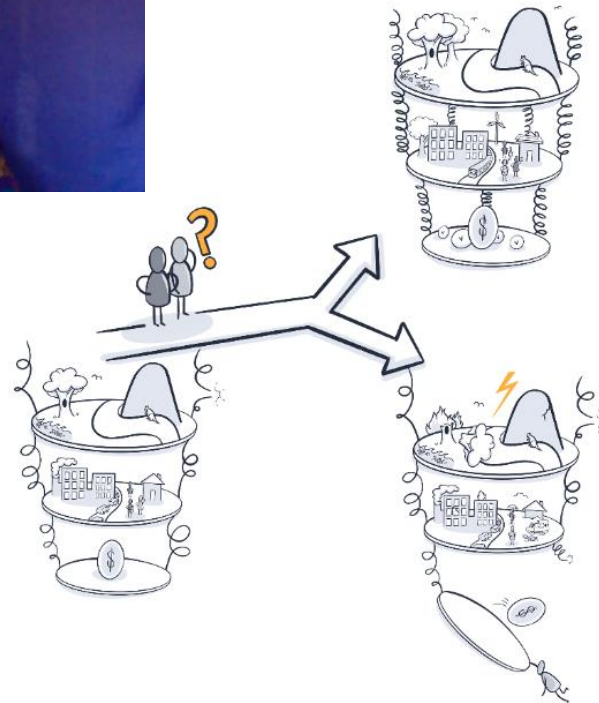


Behaviours, social capacities and social processes





# Reframing triple bottom line to show critical system dependencies – environment, society, economy (in that order!)

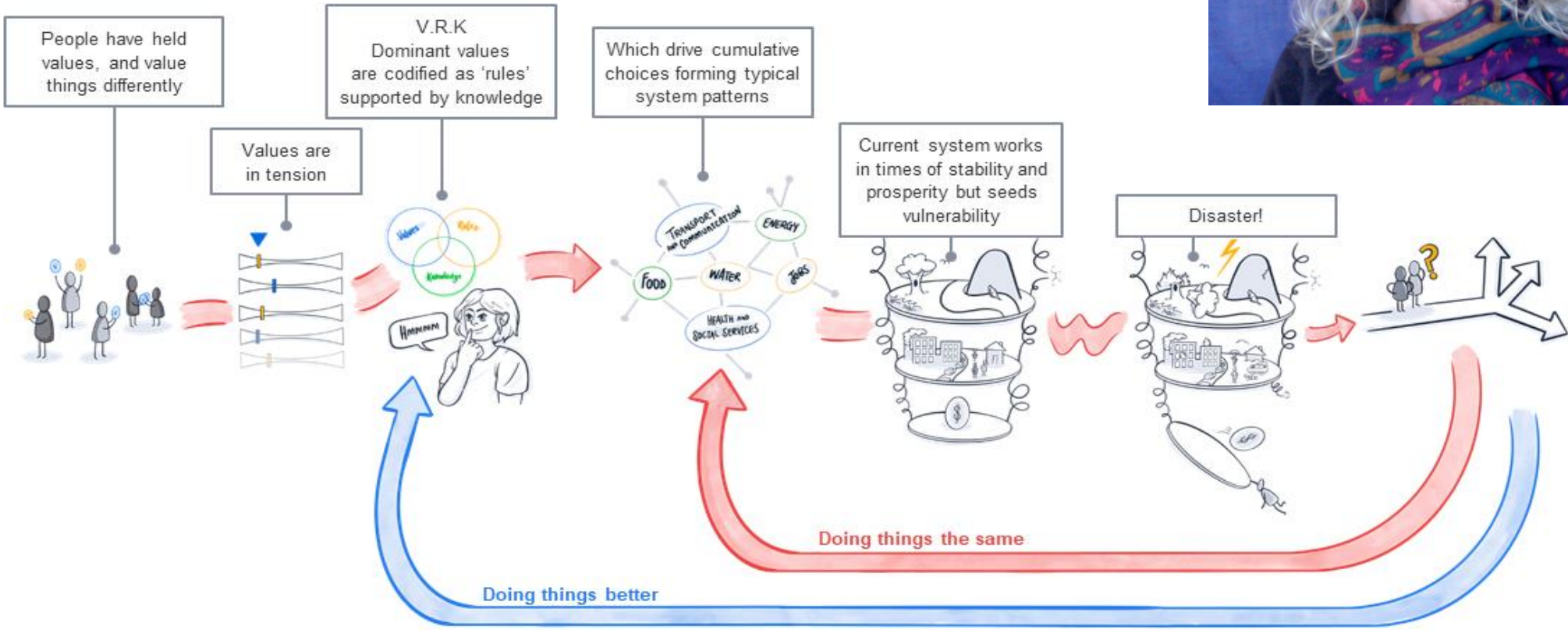


Tone Bjordam's installation at the Resilience 2017 conference in Stockholm  
<http://www.tonebjordam.com/>

Source: O'Connell et al (2020). Disaster-resilient and adaptive to change – narratives to support co-ordinated practice and collective action in Queensland. CSIRO, Australia.



# A systems narrative – reinforcing feedbacks amplify vulnerability



Source: O'Connell et al (2020). Disaster-resilient and adaptive to change – narratives to support co-ordinated practice and collective action in Queensland. CSIRO, Australia.

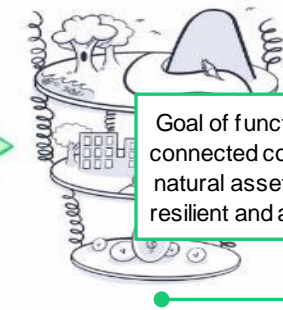




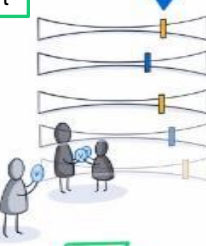
Reconfigure VRK and system patterns



Goal of functioning economies, connected communities, healthy natural assets that are disaster resilient and adaptive to change

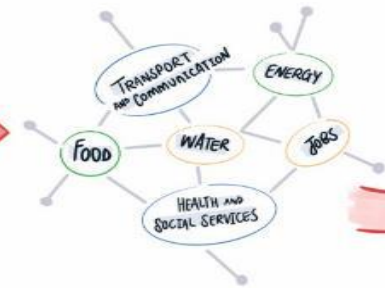
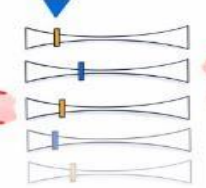


Value tension shift



Doing things differently

Post-disaster recovery is a window of opportunity



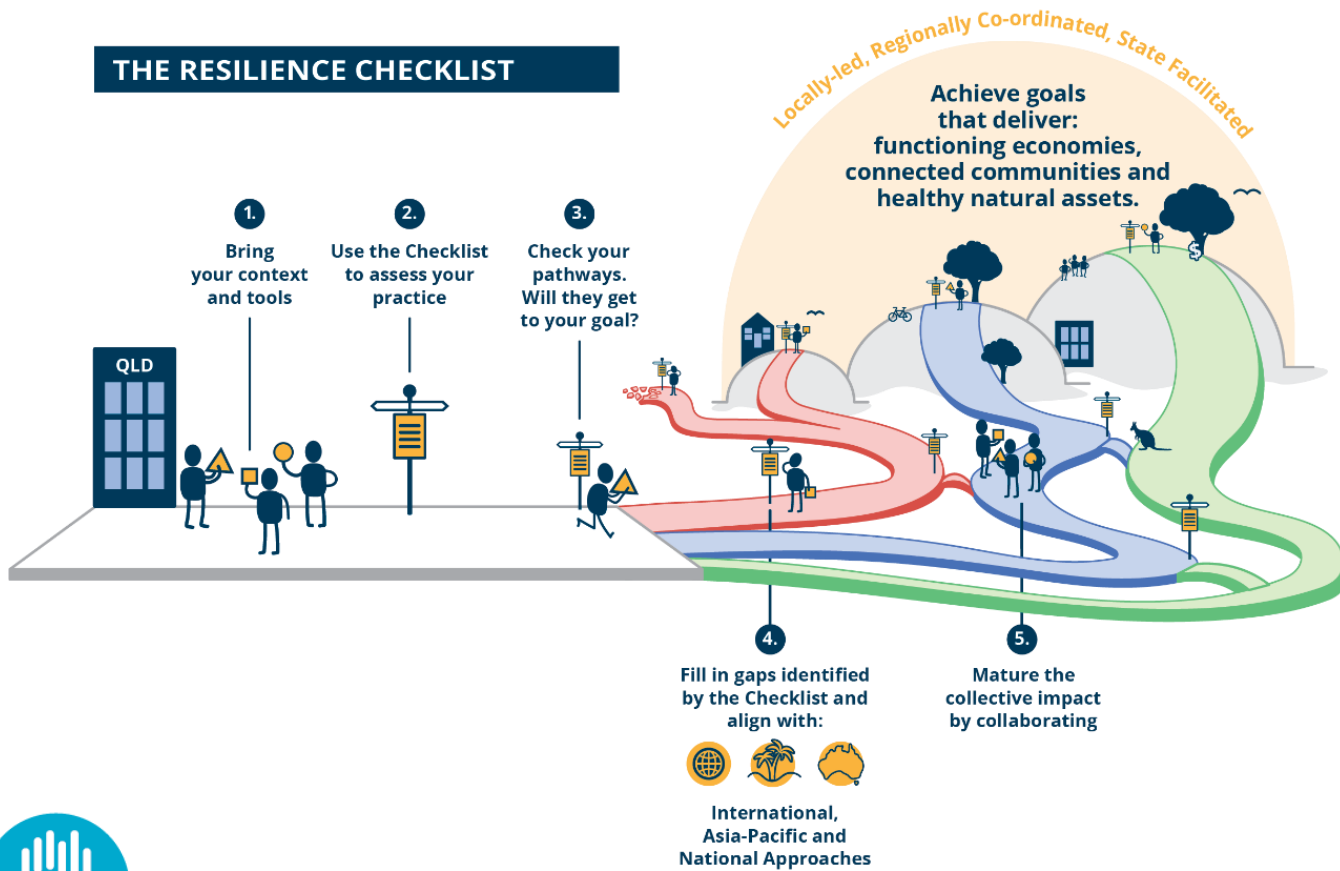
Can choose to adapt before disaster happens



Creating a new system that is disaster resilient and adaptive to change  
Doing Things Differently



# Catalysing co-ordinated practice and collective action





The future we  
choose, and  
pathways to  
reach it



# Come and explore Mt Resilience...

Go to

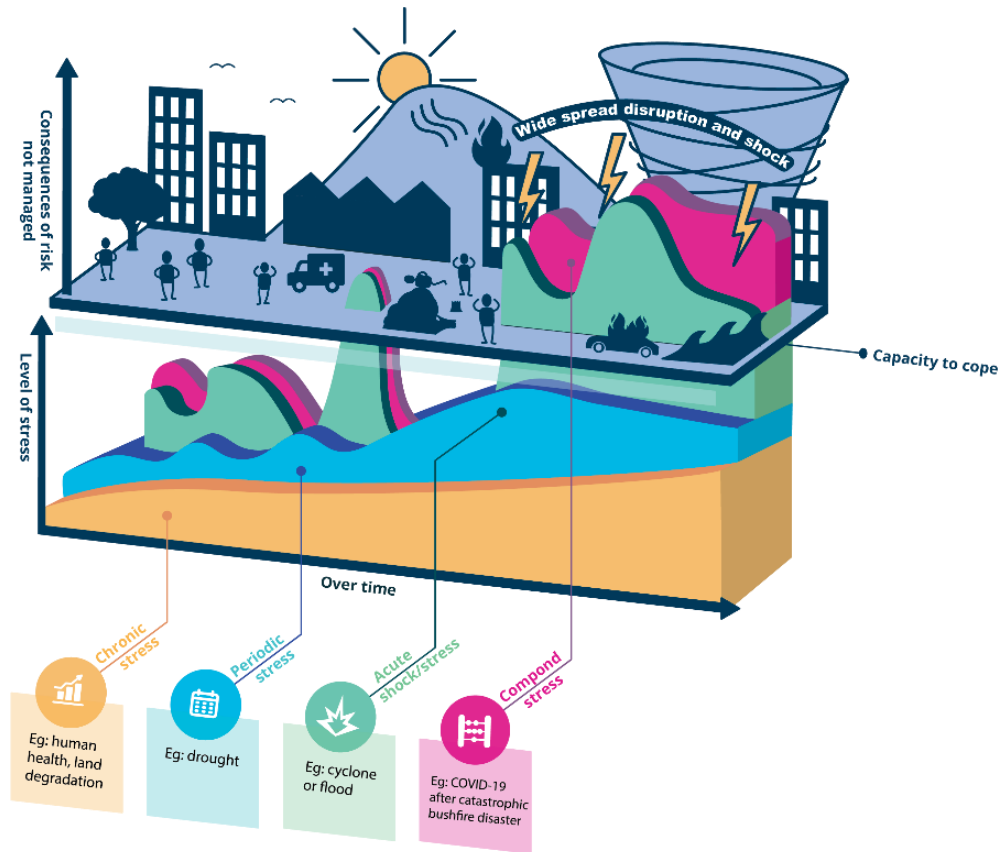
Phone: <https://www.mtresilience.com>

desktop: <https://www.mtresilience.com/?desktop> and explore for yourself the augmented reality

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/about/backstory/2020-11-19/the-making-of-mt-resilience-ar-project/>



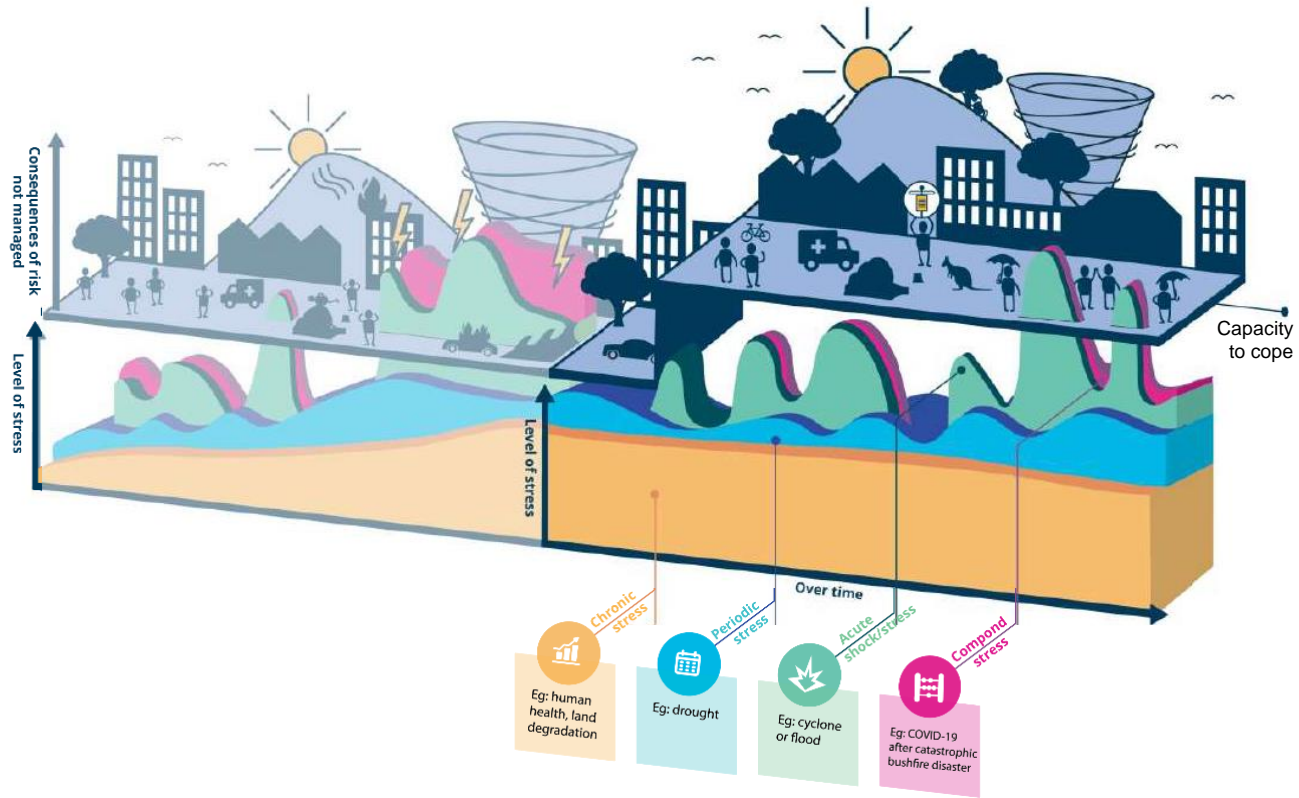
# But here's where we are right now...



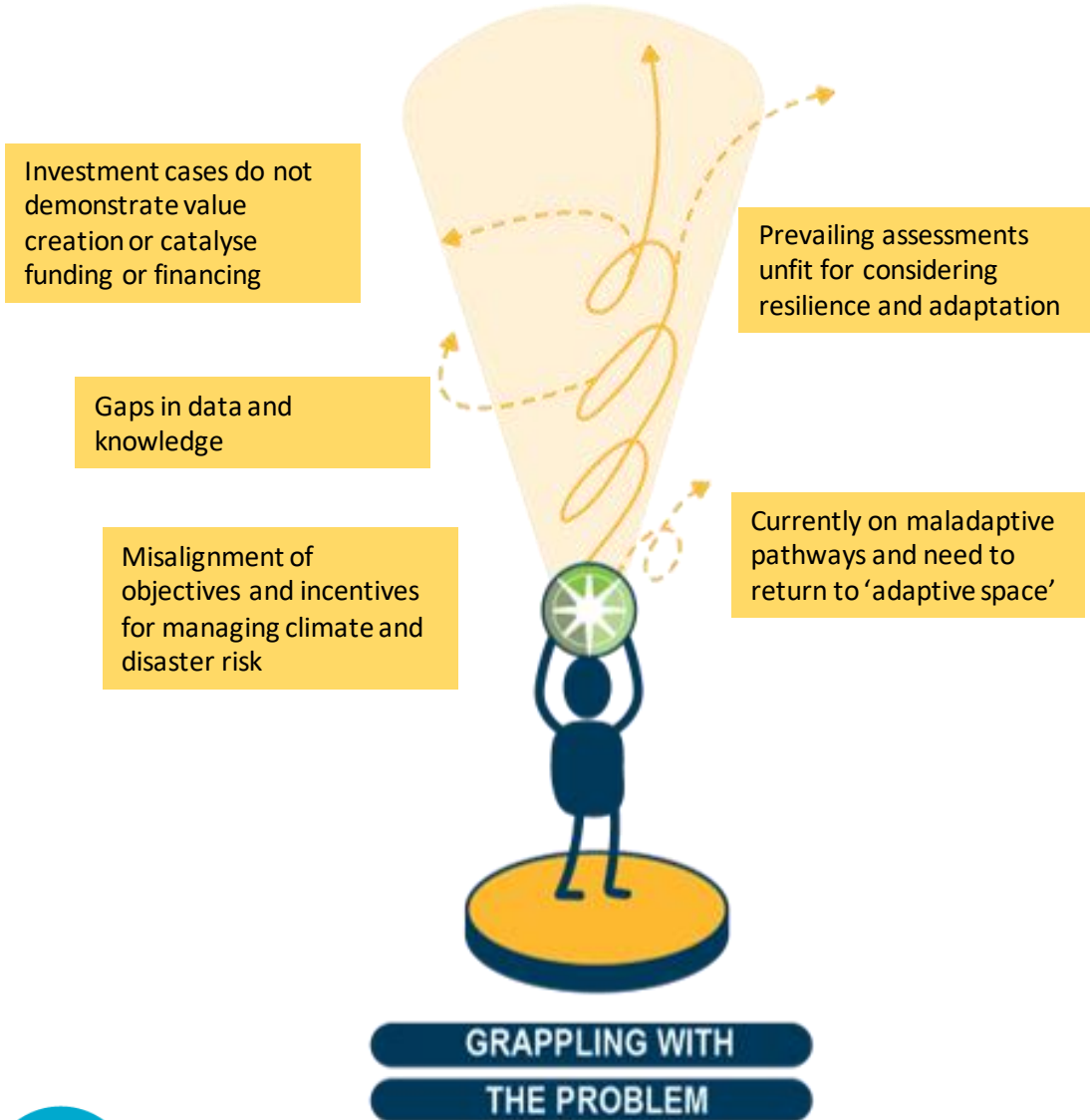
O'Connell et al (2020). Disaster-resilient and adaptive to change – narratives to support co-ordinated practice and collective action in Queensland. CSIRO, Australia.



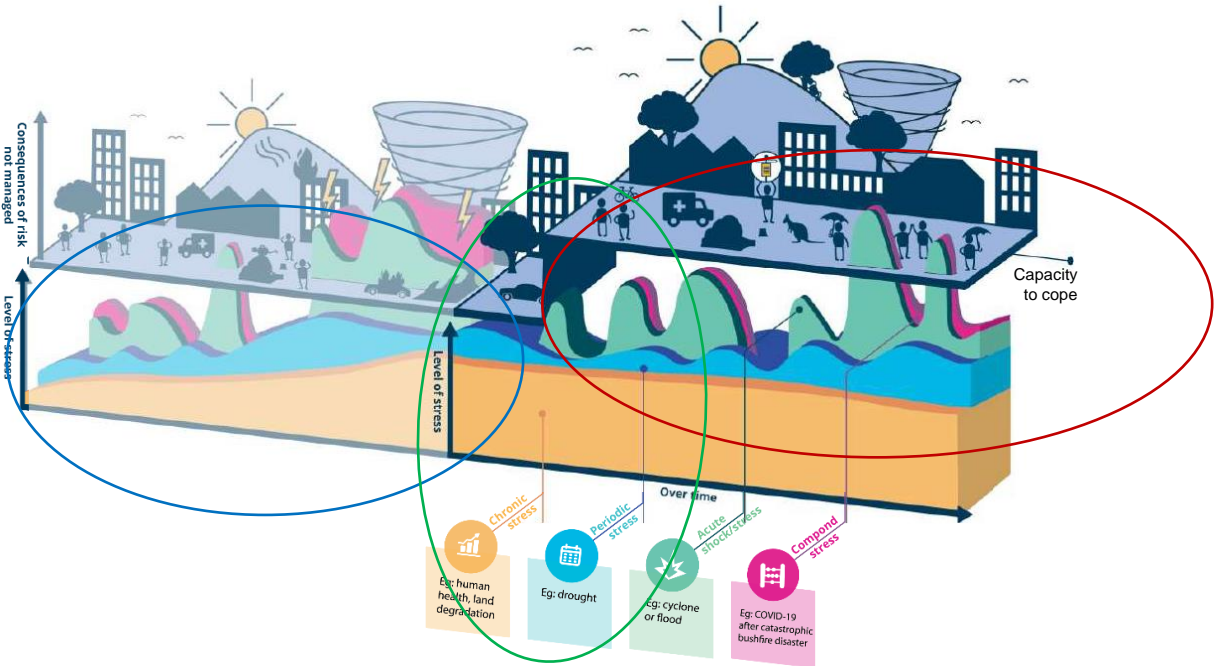
...and a future which is adaptive to change,  
resilient to disaster



# But where and how to start?



# Enabling Resilience Investment



Where are the 'things of value' at risk of damage under climate change (and why)?

What does a successfully adapted future look like?

What are the transition pathways and how can investment contribute to the transition to a new future?

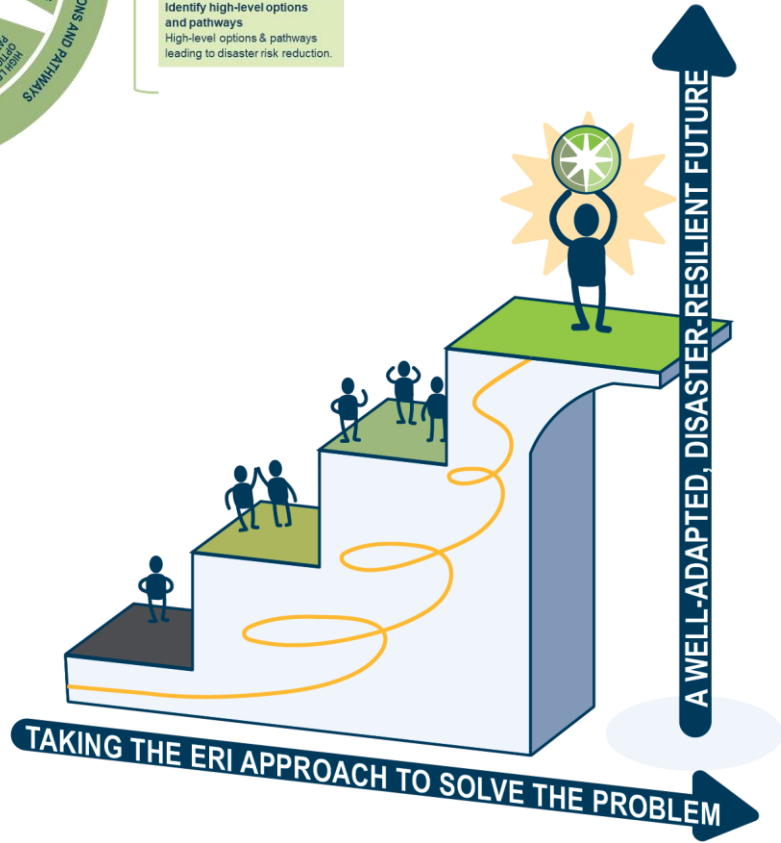
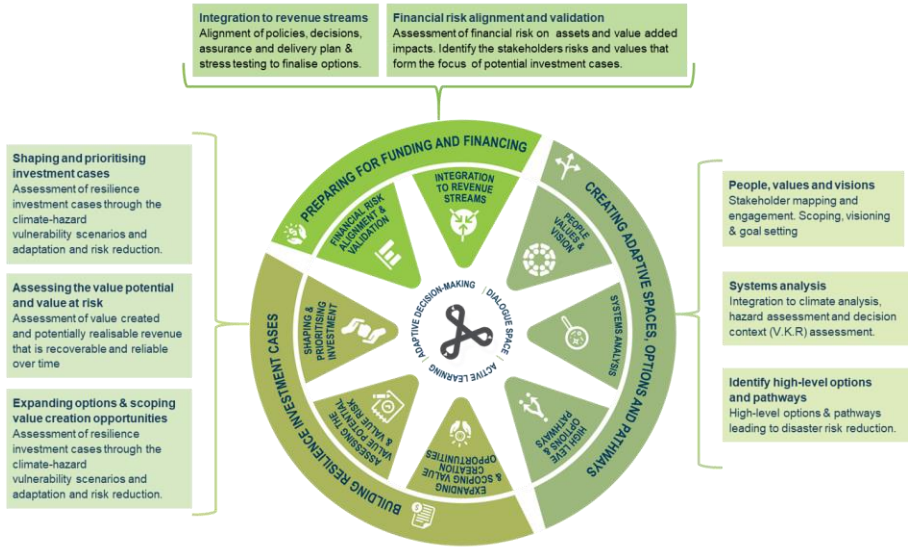
Decision makers need competencies and capabilities (data, methodologies, tools, governance) to better understand :

- Where are the opportunities to create value through investments in DRR and climate resilience?
- How can public and private sector actors invest in DRR that optimises funds utilisation?



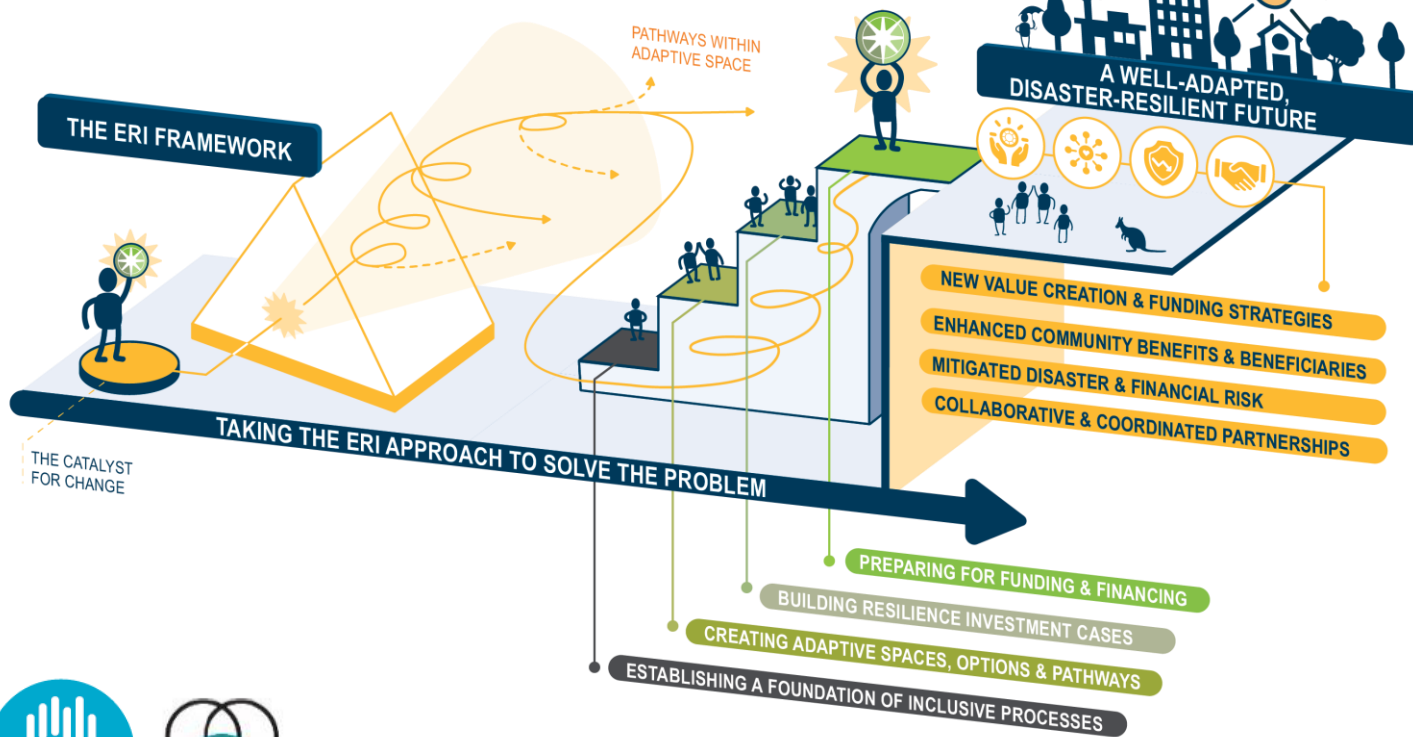


# The Enabling Resilience Investment Framework



# ERI APPROACH

Enabling Resilience Investment



Thanks for your time

For more information, please contact  
Dr Deborah O'Connell, CSIRO [Deborah.Oconnell@csiro.au](mailto:Deborah.Oconnell@csiro.au)  
Dr Russell Wise, CSIRO [Russell.Wise@csiro.au](mailto:Russell.Wise@csiro.au)

