

WHAT WE DO:

QRA is charged with managing and coordinating the Government’s program of recovery and reconstruction works within disaster-affected communities, with a focus on working with our state and local government partners to deliver best practice administration of public reconstruction and resilience funds. QRA is also the state’s lead agency responsible for disaster recovery and resilience policy, working collaboratively with agencies and stakeholders to improve risk reduction and disaster preparedness.

OUR VISION:

Make Queensland the most disaster resilient state in Australia.

OUR PURPOSE:

Enable recovery and build resilience to disaster events within our communities.

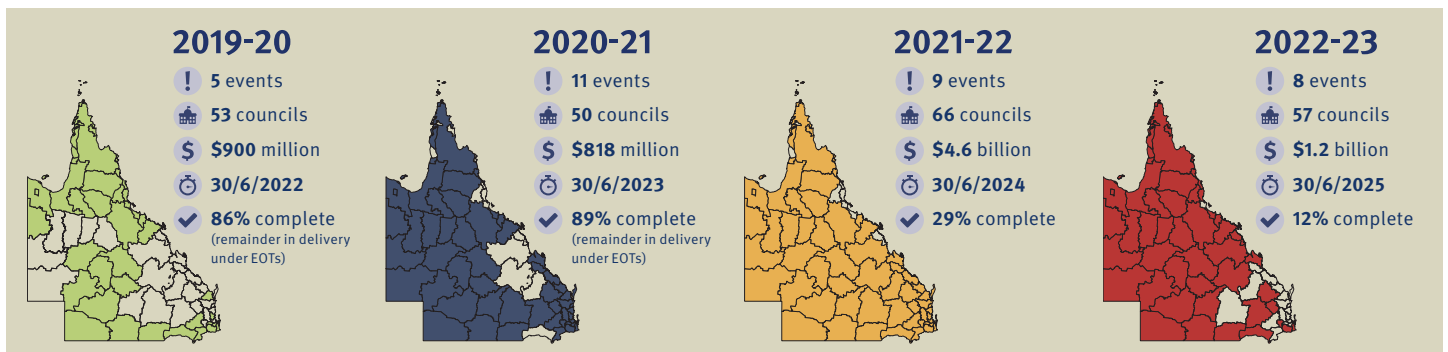
DISASTER ASSISTANCE

DISASTER ASSISTANCE AND RESILIENCE GRANTS PROGRAM

QRA is currently administering a recovery and reconstruction program under the joint Commonwealth State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) worth \$7.5 billion arising from 33 events from the 2019-20 to 2022-23 disaster seasons in the delivery and/or acquittal phase.

CURRENT STATEWIDE PROGRAM

! 33 events **🏘️** 76 councils with an active program **💰** \$7.6 billion



IN THE SEPTEMBER QUARTER

The majority of the **2019-2020 REPA program** achieved practical completion on the **30 June 2022** with the exception of few projects under an extension of time (**EOT**) including DTMR’s Cunningham’s Gap submission (\$134 million). Of the total **\$900 million** program value, **\$589 million** has been paid to date. Completed works are currently being assessed to confirm eligibility through QRA’s submission close-out process.

The **2020-2021** event year has a Current Program Value of **\$818 million**. With **50** Councils affected by **11** events and 89% complete, payments of **\$439 million** have been made to date.

The **2021-2022** event year has a Current Program Value of **\$4.6 billion** across reconstruction (\$2.55 billion) and extraordinary assistance packages (\$2.05 billion). With **66** Councils affected by **9** events and 29% complete, payments of **\$1.3 billion** have been paid to date.

The **2022-2023** event year has a Current Program Value of **\$1.2 billion**. **57** Councils are affected by **8** events and is 12% complete, reflecting the more recent occurrence of these events.

RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

The Resilience and Recovery team within QRA provides leadership, coordination, direction and advice for the development and implementation of disaster resilience and recovery planning, policy, funding, and support.

To deliver on this commitment, roles and responsibilities are dispersed between and across levels of government and with key stakeholders.

QRA is pleased to outline some of the key activities and progress that has occurred during this quarter.

RECOVERY

QRA works extensively on recovery planning with communities impacted by major disaster events, increasing capability and awareness through active participation and providing support for local recovery governance.

Across the state it is evident Councils are recovering from cumulative and compounding events, along with many who are already dealing with other longer-term stresses like drought and COVID-19. The Queensland Recovery Plan is driving a collaborative approach across functions of recovery, all levels of government and the whole community to ensure recovery operations are appropriate to the scale of the disaster event.

THE 2023-24 DISASTER SEASON UPDATE

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Activations (DRFA)

There has been no activation of Disaster Recovery Funding in September, or for the current season. However, QRA is working with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and local governments to develop an activation request for fires that threatened communities in both Toowoomba and Western Downs from 8-14 September.

DRFA Category C & D extraordinary assistance packages in delivery

2022-23 NORTHERN AND CENTRAL QLD MONSOON AND FLOODING EVENT

From December 2022 to April 2023, a significant monsoon and flood event occurred in North-West Queensland, significantly impacting councils in the region. QRA's Regional Liaison Officers and Resilience and Recovery Officers continue to work alongside councils, state agencies and Non-Government Organisations to support the recovery effort across the region.

QRA has been working with state Functional Recovery Groups and agencies to develop a suite of exceptional circumstances funding packages to support families and small businesses, primary producers and not-for-profit organisations severely impacted by the Northern and Central Qld Monsoon and Flooding event 2023.

Phase one and two of the Category C & D packages comprise:

Phase 1 – \$11.75 million	Phase 2 – \$5.25 million
<p>Primary producers</p> <p>Grants of up to \$75,000 are available for affected producers to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, replace fencing and other costs associated with the recovery process.</p>	<p>Mental Health</p> <p>\$1 million for community mental health to deliver targeted services to the people of Boulia, Burke, Carpentaria, Doomadgee and Mount Isa, supporting individuals, families and business owners who are doing it tough.</p>
<p>Small business and Not For Profits</p> <p>Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for affected small businesses and not for profits to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, replace or repair damaged infrastructure and stock and other costs associated with the recovery process.</p>	<p>Local Recovery and Resilience Grants</p> <p>\$4.25 million – grants of \$1 million each for the councils of Boulia, Carpentaria and Doomadgee, and \$1.25 million for Burke, to help with immediate recovery needs, upgrading damaged community infrastructure, buying equipment critical to community response, and to help build back to a more resilient standard.</p>

Phase 1 – \$11.75 million	Phase 2 – \$5.25 million
<p>Livestock recovery \$5.75 million – Coordinated livestock support and disposal package is to reimburse primary producers, local governments and non-government organisations for the extraordinary costs of undertaking livestock welfare activities in impacted areas.</p>	

A third phase of Category C and D extraordinary assistance in response to the 2022-23 Northern and Central Qld Monsoon and Flooding event has been requested, and QRA is working with NEMA to expedite their approval. As always, QRA is continuing to work with councils, state agencies and the Commonwealth to determine what further recovery assistance and support may be required.

Damage Assessment Reconstruction Monitoring (DARM) update

Throughout the September Quarter, QRA conducted two Damage Assessment Reconstruction Monitoring (DARM) operations to assess recovery and progress of disaster effected communities in Queensland.

FOLLOW-UP DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS PROVIDE SNAPSHOT OF NORTH-WEST QUEENSLAND FLOOD RECOVERY

QRA officers, assisted by Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts (DTATSIPCA) staff conducted DARM operations in Burke Shire Council from 4-6 September to monitor the progress of reconstruction and recovery within the local community.

Associated data and maps on the 3-month DARM operation were disseminated to Burke Shire Council and associated state agencies to assist in understanding the progress of reconstruction and recovery, and to assist in identifying those in the community who may require continuing or additional support. With the assistance of DTATSIPCA staff, residents of the community of Bidunngu (outside of Gregory) were able access financial assistance of over \$11,000 under the Essential Household and Contents Grant.

Of the 78 homes and businesses that were initially assessed as damaged, 48 are no longer damaged (62%). Of the 30 properties that remain damaged, 11 have had work commenced.



General Manager, Resilience and Recovery Division Vina Varsani conducting DARM in Burketown



QRA and DTATSIPCA officers in Burketown during the DARM operation



General Manager, Resilience and Recovery Division Vina Varsani and CEO Jake Ellwood conducting DARM in Burketown

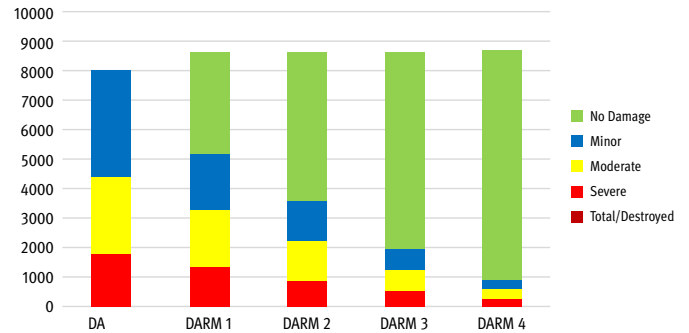
SOUTH EAST QLD FLOOD RECONSTRUCTION MONITORING – 15 MONTHS

Between 10-14 July, QRA officers undertook the 15 Month DARM operation on properties affected by the 2021-22 Southern Queensland Flooding. More than 45 QRA officers helped assess almost 2000 properties across 14 local government areas in South-East Queensland. Officers from DTATSIPCA also joined forces with QRA teams in Ipswich and Brisbane to provide on the ground support to members of the community that required it.

The results found that of the homes and businesses impacted by the severe flooding in early 2022, almost 90% of homes impacted are no longer showing signs of damage. Of the 1960 properties assessed in the previous July 2023 DARM operation, 1025 were identified as no longer damaged, 935 properties remain damaged and 403 are still deemed uninhabitable. This is the final post-disaster damage assessment operation for the 2021-22 Southern Queensland Flooding events. Data collected during the operation will be disseminated to relevant Councils and State Agencies to assist in the recovery of impacted communities.

Representatives from the NSW Reconstruction Authority observed DARM being conducted in Ipswich to help understand how QRA undertakes reconstruction monitoring following a severe disaster. The QRA Resilience and Recovery team continue to provide our counterparts in NSW support in their development of a reconstruction monitoring capability.

South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding, 22 February – 5 April 2022
DARM Rate of Recovery



Graph showing the damage assessed during the 4 DARM operations since the flooding (at 3-months, 6-months, 12-months, and 15 months post-event)



QRA CEO Jake Ellwood doorknocking during 15 Month post – SE QLD Floods DARM



QRA Officers during recent 15 Month post – SE QLD Floods

Engagement with Local Governments, other stakeholders, and the community

The Recovery team continue to engage with Local Governments across the state.

Throughout the July to September quarter, QRA has continued disaster season readiness support at a local level, through Resilience and Recovery Officers participation in a significant event exercise with Logan City Council and the Toowoomba Disaster District. The exercises provide a pro-active opportunity at all levels to understand each of our roles during disaster events. QRA Resilience and Recovery Officers have also participated in Local and District Recovery Group sessions with Logan City, Fraser Coast and North Burnett Regional Councils and attended Ipswich City Council’s Resilience Network meeting. These engagements assist with understanding recovery and resilience activities at the local level.

QRA has also continued delivering Disaster Funding Arrangements training throughout the quarter, including participants from Cassowary Coast, Cook, Cairns, Northern Peninsula Area, Tablelands, Torres Strait Island, Brisbane City, Redland City, Scenic Rim, and Moreton Bay Councils.



QRA and NSW Reconstruction Authority staff during 15 Month post – SE QLD Floods DARM

QRA Resilience and Recovery Officers participated in a pre-season preparedness meeting with Noosa Shire Council’s recovery and resilience leads and new Disaster Management Officer. Discussions included council’s preparation for the current fire season, an overview on the development of their Local Resilience Action Plan and the recovery exercise scheduled for the end of November 2023. The stand-alone recovery exercise will enable new Recovery Subgroup Chairs and the wider Recovery Group membership to gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities and provide an opportunity to assess amendments recently made to Council’s Recovery Subplan, including the incorporation of lessons learned from the 2021/22 Southern Queensland Flooding event.

Local and Regional Resilience Action Plans provide a clear forward plan for sustained investment in resilience and mitigation activities. Throughout September, a key priority for Recovery staff has been engaging with councils to confirm their high priority local and regional resilience activities and identifying potential non-DRFA funding opportunities that aligned with their identified resilience activities.

INAUGURAL NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DISASTER RESILIENCE SUMMIT

Resilience and Recovery team members attended the inaugural National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Summit in Brisbane on 21 August 2023.

The event was hosted by Monash University’s Fire to Flourish and proudly supported by Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, Bigibilla, NSW Environment Protection Agency, Jagun Alliance and Natural Hazards Research Australia.

It brought Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, emergency management practitioners, and agency heads, to build awareness, share new thinking and network, beginning the conversation between and about Indigenous people’s disaster resilience.

The summit provided an opportunity for QRA to listen to the key disaster challenges raised by Indigenous communities.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAMS

QRA has commenced the monitoring and evaluation of the disaster recovery programs included in the extraordinary assistance package for the 2021-22 Southern Queensland Flooding event. The monitoring and evaluation team has been meeting with delivery agents about their programs to help inform an understanding of the status of the programs so they can be monitored throughout delivery. Monitoring the outcomes and progress of communities towards sustainability and resilience is crucial in ensuring that recovery efforts are on track. The evaluations will help identify learnings that can be incorporated into the design of future programs.

Evaluation of the Resilient Homes Fund is also underway. University Queensland (UQ) has been engaged to evaluate the Resilient Homes Fund’s ability to improve the disaster resilience of Queensland, in accordance with the four dimensions of resilience; physical, financial, social, and emotional. It will cover a diverse population that varies

socio-economically, by quality and ownership of housing stock, experiences of flood, and experience of and access to insurance, which is integral to physical and financial resilience. UQ will assess all five initiatives within the RHF to demonstrate the success factors and lessons learnt for each as they link to the four resilience dimensions.



QRA continues to work collaboratively with local councils and other Queensland Government departments to support the delivery of the Resilient Homes Fund, which aims to help Queensland homeowners whose homes have been affected by flooding in the 2021-22 disaster season to make their homes more resilient to future flooding or buy them back to remove residents from harm’s way.

The Department of Energy and Public Works (DEPW) is delivering the Resilient Retrofit and House-raising component of the Resilient Homes Fund, whilst QRA is managing the Voluntary Home Buyback (VHBB) program together with local governments.

For this quarter, some of the key milestones achieved were completing more than 100 demolitions to date, Sunshine Coast Regional Council being the first local government to complete all property settlements for its region, and for the total land size of all properties settled approach 1 million square metres.

As at 25 September 2023, more than 6566 people have registered for the Resilient Homes Fund. To date, 968 homeowners have been approved to take part in the VHBB scheme in twelve local government areas (Brisbane, Fraser Coast, Gympie, Ipswich, Logan, Lockyer Valley, Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast, Goondiwindi, Somerset, Gold Coast and Noosa).

Valuations and presentation of offers to homeowners have continued, in consultation with local governments. As at 25 September 2023, 816 valuation inspections have been undertaken across the thirteen local government areas and 733 offers have been presented to homeowners with 549 having been accepted. To date, 365 contracts have settled across eight local government areas and 153 demolitions of properties have occurred across five local government areas.



On 23 August 2023, the RHF won the Queensland Government Resilient Australia Award for its delivery of the program.

On 26 September 2023, a formal extension of the Allowable Time Limit (ATL) request for the Resilient Homes Fund, as well as an additional ten programs within the \$2.1 billion DRFA package, was approved by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), seeking up to an additional two and a half years to deliver RHF, with the program extending out to a maximum of 31 December 2026. This extension of ATL was essential for RHF, particularly the Resilient Raise and Retrofit programs, to allow the local building industry adequate time to deliver all identified scope for the programs.

PROPERTY LEVEL FLOOD INFORMATION PORTAL

Delivery of Property Level Flood Information Portal (“the Portal”) continues, with QRA working closely with the newly appointed supplier, QIT Plus to deliver the project. Two information sessions were held with 39 eligible Councils to introduce the proposed implementation plan for project delivery and allow councils to seek further clarification and involvement in the development of the Proof of Concept.

The Portal has the principal aim of assisting residents to understand, be more informed and better prepared for future flooding events by giving them access to flood risk information specific to their property.

Delivery of the Portal will enable any member of the public in an eligible local government area to enter their address into a locally hosted platform and obtain key information about flooding at their property. Where data is limited, the system will still be implemented using existing datasets and allow for updates as new data becomes available.

The project is funded under the \$741 million Resilient Homes Fund to support resilience measures in Queensland homes impacted by the following events across 39 activated Councils.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND – FLOOD WARNING INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK PROGRAM (FWIN 2.0)

The FWIN 2.0 program consists of \$7 million being made available through the \$75 million Emergency Response Fund for Queensland Flood Warning Infrastructure across 23 councils impacted by the 2022 South East Queensland flooding event. All elements of Flood Warning Systems will be eligible for funding under this program to improve Queensland’s Flood Warning Infrastructure. Grant applications for eligible Councils are anticipated to open in late 2023.

SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING SYSTEM (WP3)

QRA is working with the Bureau of Meteorology in the development of a South East Queensland Flood Forecasting and Warning System which will develop a real-time regional hydraulic modelling system and incorporate outputs into a regional flood intelligence system to share information.

This project was initially tailored to the Brisbane River Catchment as prescribed under the Brisbane River Strategic Floodplain Management Plan (Action DM4.2). However, the scope was expanded to take on a regional view to include the wider South East Queensland. The Bureau hosted workshops earlier this year with stakeholders to confirm requirements and delivery planning.

This project is one of five funded projects under the \$31 million Flood Risk Management Program, Work Package 3 – state agency delivery. The Flood Risk Management Program is part of the extraordinary disaster assistance package delivered jointly by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments through the DRFA following the 2021-22 season to address the medium and long-term recovery and resilience needs of Queensland communities.

QRA is working in partnership between 13 stakeholder agencies, including Queensland Government agencies, Seqwater and the four local governments of Brisbane, Ipswich, Somerset and Lockyer Valley, to deliver actions under the Brisbane River Strategic Floodplain Management Plan.

FLOOD STUDIES, RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS (WP3)

The Peer Review and Technical Advisory Panel and the flood team continue to provide valuable resources to Councils. The support has been well received in delivering their funded flood risk management projects under the \$31 million Flood Risk Management Program. \$18.25 million is available to 36 councils across 127 projects to invest in flood studies, flood risk management plans, and flood warning intelligence systems, so they’re better prepared for the threat of natural disaster.

This package is one of three made available through the \$31 million Flood Risk Management Program being administered by QRA. Other packages under the program include support for community engagement and education around disaster preparedness; and for remote sensing technology to create 3D maps and models of environments, to better understand potential risks.

LIDAR CAPTURE (WP2)

\$6M in funding has been approved for the Department of Resources to capture Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data and the creation of a floor level database through Work Package 2 (WP2) of the jointly funded Commonwealth-State DRFA under the QRA administered \$31 million Flood Risk Management Program.

Detailed analysis of flood risks is vital to support flood intelligence in preparing for the onset of wide-scale flooding within the national best practice approach to flood risk management.

QRA has worked with the Department of Resources to determine the LiDAR extents required to support Council flood risk management projects such as flood studies and flood risk management studies and plans, and total flood warning systems funded under Work Package 3 of the Flood Risk Management Program.

The program will collect LiDAR for over 73,000 square kilometres, which equates to an area larger than the size of Tasmania, and the provided funding exceeds the amount spent by the State on LiDAR capture over the preceding decade.

ALTERNATIVE FLOOD WARNING INFRASTRUCTURE GUIDELINE NOW LIVE

QRA has engaged with Industry, Local Governments, and State Agencies to deliver a set of minimum requirements through the Alternative Flood Warning Infrastructure (Rain and Level Gauges) Guideline for Minimum Requirements (Guideline) to support all future asset owners to procure quality, fit for purpose assets that meet their identified flood warning needs.

Assets in the Guideline are innovative, low cost, readily deployable devices that can complement the existing Flood Warning Infrastructure Standard gauge network to help inform flood warnings for our communities and planning for response and recovery from flood events.



RESILIENCE

QRA is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of whole-of-government policies for disaster recovery, managing flood risks and improving the disaster resilience of communities.

Progress in delivering key state and national strategies

QRA continues to drive the delivery of key state and national strategies. QRA has been liaising with state agencies on the delivery of actions within the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2022-2027 (QSDR). State agencies have completed their second round of six-monthly reporting, tracking progress against 52 key resilience actions. A progress report will be provided to the State Recovery and Resilience Group for consideration at their next meeting scheduled for November 2023.

The actions within the QSDR will also help Queensland to implement the national resilience actions outlined within the Second National Action Plan (SNAP) – released by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in August 2023.

The SNAP aims to reduce systemic disaster risk to create stronger, more secure and more resilient communities before, during and after disasters. QRA supported NEMA in the development of this strategy to help drive national action to reduce disaster risk and leverage the work undertaken in Queensland informed by the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience.

REFORMS TO QUEENSLAND DISASTER MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

QRA is implementing a number of disaster management reforms arising from two significant government reviews – a review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (the QFES Review) and a review of Queensland’s Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA Review).

Recommendations from both reviews will see an increase to QRA’s responsibilities in the areas of resilience, risk reduction and disaster preparedness. Broadly, the resulting changes are:

- Transitioning of some disaster management functions from QFES to QRA (including hazard and risk, community engagement and some communications campaigns)
- Establishing a State Recovery and Resilience Group (SRRG) within the QDMA to provide strategic leadership on Resilience, Recovery, Prevention and Preparedness
- Expanding the remit of Functional Recovery Groups (FRGs) to include resilience
- Legislating the role of the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC)
- Establishing clear lines of reporting from a State Recovery Coordinator to the SRPPC
- Transferring Ministerial responsibility for DRFA activations to the Minister responsible for QRA
- Increasing QRA staffing by 30 FTE to support these additional functions.

A Reform Implementation Taskforce (RIT) led by Queensland Police Service, has been established to address these two reform pieces. QRA is engaged in the RIT program of work and is collaborating with other agencies to progress the recommendations.

To support the incorporation of these changes, QRA has established an Integration and Coordination function, that will work with QRA’s leadership team to support the coordination of QRA’s external engagement and service delivery functions and to drive improved engagement and collaboration with all stakeholders. The purpose of the function is to drive an integrated and coordinated approach to QRA’s service delivery, ensuring the best possible recovery and resilience outcomes for Queensland communities.

To date, QRA has made progress on a number of the reforms including the establishment of an interim SRRG, which held its first meeting on 20 September 2023; and the transition of the ‘If It’s Flooded Forget It’ communications campaign from QFES to QRA on 1 August 2023.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE IN RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

On 25 and 26 September, QRA representatives welcomed a Pakistan government delegation to QRA to provide an overview of our flood risk management projects, resilience and recovery work program and a deep dive into the Resilient Homes Fund program. The delegation was very interested in understanding Queensland’s disaster risks, our governance arrangements and how we balance effort and funding in recovery versus prevention and mitigation. It was a great opportunity to share information, best practice examples, and learn from each other as we face similar challenges with climate change risk and the frequency and intensity of disaster events.



QRA’s Ella Harrison, Director Flood Risk Management, Rebecca Morris, Director Policy & Vina Varsani, General Manager Resilience and Recovery, along with representatives from Department of Energy and Public Works and the Pakistan Delegation.

RESILIENCE FUNDING PROGRAMS

Along with QRA’s lead role in managing and coordinating Queensland’s program of recovery and reconstruction funding within disaster-impacted communities, QRA also administers a range of disaster resilience funding programs on behalf of the State.

A number of resilience funding programs are currently in delivery, helping to strengthen the disaster resilience and preparedness of Queensland communities.

Program	Approved \$	Approved projects
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2019-20)	\$13.1M	68
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2020-21) and Managing Disaster Risk (2020-21)	\$19.1M	82
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2021-22) and Managing Disaster Risk	\$19.1M	53
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2022-23)	\$10.5M	24
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2023-24)	\$13.1M	N/A (currently open)
North Queensland Natural Disasters Mitigation Program (2021-22)	\$10M	22
Recovery and Resilience Grants – Stream 1 (2020-21)	\$11.5M	59
National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program (2020-21)	\$9.9M	3
National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program (2021-22)	\$0.9M	2
\$75m Queensland Flood Recovery and Resilience Package (2021-22)	\$75M	7
Protecting our Communities Program (2022) – Federal Election Commitments	\$11.2M	9

QUEENSLAND RESILIENCE AND RISK REDUCTION FUND (QRRRF) 2023-24

The QRRRF 2023-24 funding round opened on Monday 18 September 2023 for applications. This is the final round of the QRRRF under the National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction and will provide \$13.1 million in funding (comprised of \$4.8 million from the Commonwealth Government and \$8.3 million from the Queensland Government) to support disaster risk reduction and resilience building initiatives that will better protect Queensland communities from future disasters.

The objective of the QRRRF is to deliver projects that make Queensland communities and infrastructure more resilient to disasters by:

1. reducing the risk and limiting the impact of disasters associated with natural hazards
2. improving understanding of disaster risk and disaster risk planning.

QRRRF is a competitive grant process and is open to Local Government Authorities, State Government Agencies, Non-Government Organisations and the tertiary sector. The QRRRF 2023-24 Guidelines and application form are now available on the QRA website – www.qra.qld.gov.au/QRRRF2023-24

Applications will close on 20 December 2023.

PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES (DISASTER RESILIENCE) PROGRAM – 2022 FEDERAL ELECTION COMMITMENTS

During 2022, the Australian Government committed funding to communities across Australia to increase their disaster resilience and preparedness for future disasters. The Protecting Our Communities (Disaster Resilience) program (PoCP) has been developed to deliver important disaster resilience projects for communities that represent value for money and have been identified by communities to improve their disaster resilience and preparedness for further disasters.

The objectives of the program are to:

1. increase disaster resilience through building or upgrading telecommunications infrastructure, road infrastructure, evacuation centres, cyclone shelters and emergency management precincts;
2. improve community preparedness through volunteer training and developing disaster management plans; and
3. enhance the ability to respond to disasters by purchasing essential equipment, such as water tankers.

The projects are being delivered in two tranches – tranche 1 is being administered by NEMA and tranche 2 is being administered by QRA.

Tranche 2 projects include:

LGA	Project Description	Cth Funding Amount
Cairns Regional Council	FNQ Coastal Erosion Works	\$750,000
Cook Shire Council	FNQ pedestrian access bridge	\$250,000
Gladstone Regional Council	Deepwater National Park Fire Trail	\$2,000,000
Ipswich Show Society	Ipswich Showgrounds Evacuation Centre Upgrades	\$1,500,000
Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council	Porpuraaw Road concrete causeways	\$420,440
Mackay Regional Council	Pioneer River Levee	\$5,000,000
Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council	Cullen Point Barge Ramp Rock Wall	\$479,380
Richmond Shire Council	Coalbrook Road culvert crossing replacement	\$301,620
Rockhampton Regional Council	Gracemere Integrated Emergency Communications System	\$500,000

As these projects were federal election commitments, discussions are underway between QRA and the approved councils to confirm if these projects remain a priority. QRA is also working on the Guidelines and Application Form to assess the projects prior to commencement.

INTEGRATION AND COORDINATION

- Integration and Coordination (I&C) continues to support the development of QRA’s strengthened mandate for resilience. By leveraging QRA’s broad expertise and knowledge, as well as that of our partners with the establishment of State Recovery and Resilience Group (SRRG), Queensland is well placed to remain the national leader in recovery and resilience.
- QRA chaired the first meeting of the interim SRRG on 20 September 2023, a newly formed group that will provide strategic leadership to support the recovery and resilience of Queensland Communities through the facilitation of a locally led approach, supported by Functional Recovery & Resilience Groups.
- The SRRG endorsed in-principle its first interim Terms of Reference and commenced a process of strategic priority identification to inform the strategic workplan of the group, supported by QRA.
- Additionally, I&C continued to build readiness of the QRA ahead of the higher risk weather season. QRA’s Guide for Disaster Operations was finalised, which establishes a Disaster Management Team to coordinate and support QRA’s disaster recovery activities, should the state be impacted by a disaster event. Training is underway across the organisation, and an all-staff briefing is planned for mid-October to familiarise staff with the functions and responsibilities of the Disaster Management Team.
- QRA’s Director of Integration and Coordination is due to commence with QRA in early October 2023, which will aid in bolstering the focus on this important work.

GET READY QUEENSLAND (GRQ)

GRQ is a year-round, community resilience program that helps Queenslanders prepare for disasters. The program integrates a state-wide research driven awareness campaign led by QRA, alongside a grass roots grants program providing \$2M across Queensland’s 77 councils and the Weipa Town Authority to deliver locally-led disaster preparedness initiatives.

Queenslanders reminded of flooding risks

Even though it looks like El Nino will bring Queensland a hotter, drier summer, Get Ready Queensland is reminding communities that there is still a chance of flash flooding, and that they should be prepared.

In September, GRQ launched their **Queensland’s weather can turn in a flash** campaign, which reminds audiences to always be ready for flooding. Queensland’s climate can bring extreme weather, with severe storms and cyclones still occurring during an El Nino weather pattern.

As community attention turns to bushfires and heatwaves, GRQ is keeping flood risk relevant. The campaign encourages people to register for warning notifications for the areas they visit most, not just where they live. This is building to a holistic view of disaster preparedness that goes beyond the home.

GRQ’s new flood campaign is running on Instagram and Facebook using ‘stories’ and the newsfeed, and will continue until 6 October 2023. Campaign videos link to a webpage on the GRQ website to encourage people to learn more.

The campaign was informed by social research, carried out in June 2023. The research shows that most people (in this research) see flooding as a potential inconvenience rather than a serious issue in their lives, and therefore any campaign should have clear, practical calls to action.



Image from GRQ’s Queensland’s weather can turn in a flash campaign

All creatures, great and small, to GET READY

GRQ has orchestrated another important partnership, this time with a focus on Queenslanders’ four-legged friends.

Preparing pets or animals for disasters is an important message, with many Queenslanders saying that they won’t evacuate or take other precautions because of their furry or fishy friends. That’s why GRQ is working with RSPCA Queensland to spread tips and tricks for keeping animals safe during extreme weather – including household pets, farm animals and native wildlife.

The partnership will include a month-long campaign called **Pet Ready Month**, which will see co-designed communications published via social media, web and educational materials. RSPCA Queensland is no stranger to GRQ’s mission, having contributed at GRQ events in the past.



A QPS furry friend at the Get Ready Brisbane Emergency Services Expo in 2023

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

100 HOMES BOUGHT BACK IN IPSWICH

One hundred Ipswich homes have now been bought back as part of the Resilient Homes Fund, enabling families to sell flood-impacted properties and be freed from future flood risk.

The program, a jointly funded initiative delivered through Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, was established in May 2022 following the catastrophic 2021-22 rainfall and flooding events.

More than 6,500 homeowners registered for the Resilient Homes Fund, which also includes Home Raising and Resilient Retrofit programs, prior to registrations closing on 30 July 2023.

The Department of Energy and Public Works is managing the delivery of the retrofitting and house-raising components of the Resilient Homes Fund, while the Queensland Reconstruction Authority is managing the Voluntary Home Buy-Back program together with local government.

In Ipswich, 100 sale contracts have now been settled, and 57 homes have been demolished or removed, removing flood-affected residents from harm's way.

This means Ipswich locals can now move away from repeatedly flood-prone suburbs and set up in safer areas.

In total, 148 homeowners have accepted offers for buy-back out of the 207 offers which have been presented to homeowners so far.

There are still offers on the table which homeowners are considering, so Queenslanders can expect this number to keep growing.

The 2021-22 floods, which caused damage to almost 7,000 homes, were one of the state's most devastating natural disasters.

The Resilient Homes Fund was developed to help Queenslanders who were impacted by this catastrophic event, while voluntary home buy-back was identified for homes that were the most severely impacted and also at the greatest risk of future flooding.

All homes purchased under the program are either demolished or removed, and then re-zoned to non-residential uses.

QRA and Ipswich City Council have worked closely together to identify eligible homes and work with residents to progress through the purchase process and finally settle these properties.

As the program continues, council will engage with the Ipswich community to develop a plan for the best future use for these empty lots.

The Resilient Homes Fund continues to make a real difference in people's lives and is enabling Ipswich City Council to be better prepared for future flood events.



9 Enid Street during flood



9 Enid Street post flood



9 Enid Street demolition complete

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

LAURA RIVER BRIDGE REPAIRS COMPLETE

A project to repair Laura River bridge on the Peninsula Developmental Road at Laura in Far North Queensland is now complete.

The bridge, known locally as Shelley’s crossing, was damaged by flooding associated with Tropical Cyclone Tiffany in January 2022. The Peninsula Developmental Road is the only state road extending north along the Cape York Peninsula, from the Indigenous rock art centre of Laura to the mining town of Weipa.

Laura River bridge is frequently inundated by flooding during significant rain events, disrupting access for locals and other road users. Given its importance as a remote road link and the history of local flooding, Laura River bridge was identified as a priority site for reconstruction works.

Works involved removing and replacing the damaged bridge deck to restore the bridge’s safety and reliability.

The works were carried out in two stages, with the first commencing in December 2022 to replace the bridge ply deck that was damaged during flooding.

Following the end of the recent wet season, the second stage to finish the bridge ply deck replacement and resurface the bridge was completed in late July 2023.

The completed works enable safe travel across this essential infrastructure and will help maintain the bridge during future wet seasons.

Assistance will be provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



Laura River bridge – damage from Tropical Cyclone Tiffany (February 2022)



Laura River bridge – completed bridge repairs (July 2023)

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

BRUCE HIGHWAY REPAIRS COMPLETED AT GIBSON CREEK

Transport and Main Roads has completed major batter repairs on the Bruce Highway approximately 20 kilometres south of Proserpine.

Heavy rain fell across the region in January 2023 during the Northern and Central Queensland Monsoon and Flooding event, including 823mm in just five days at nearby Lethebrook. This resulted in a section of the downslope batter slipping at Gibson Creek.

The Bruce Highway is the national route along Queensland’s east coast, with the Gibson Creek site on the section between the central Queensland city of Mackay and the rural town of Proserpine in the Whitsunday region.

Immediately following the event, TMR undertook emergency works at the site, including spraying concrete to stabilise the damaged batter slope and ensure the road could continue to be used safely until full reconstruction could be completed.

Following design work, reconstruction was carried out in July 2023 over two weeks, to permanently stabilise the downslope batter. This involved clearing, grubbing, excavating slip material and benching the embankment (stepping for stability); installing a grouted footing, geotextile and rock protection; and reinstating the drainage channel at the bottom of the batter.

Assistance will be provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



Bruce Highway (Mackay–Proserpine) – emergency works to stabilise the damaged slope with sprayed concrete (January 2023)



Bruce Highway (Mackay–Proserpine) – completed batter repairs (July 2023)



Bruce Highway (Mackay–Proserpine) – batter damage at Gibson Creek caused by Northern and Central Queensland Monsoon and Flooding event (January 2023)



Bruce Highway (Mackay–Proserpine) – completed batter repairs (July 2023)

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES NEW BUSHFIRE WEBSITE

The new Queensland Government bushfire website at www.qld.gov.au/bushfire acts as a source of truth for Queenslanders to easily find reliable information about bushfire. It has bushfire information suitable for the general public, and a dedicated section with information links for councils and disaster management practitioners.

The bushfire website is designed to present clear sections to assist users to:

- be bushfire aware – know your bushfire risk, understand bushfire warnings and daily fire danger ratings, and find current bushfire warnings and incidents
- prepare for bushfire – and make a Bushfire Survival Plan
- find bushfire recovery and assistance information
- understand bushfire health and safety
- learn about bushfire resilient homes and rebuilding
- check local disaster dashboards
- access the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) website.

It is a whole-of-government initiative supported by a network of state agency web and communication teams and content partners to ensure Queensland’s bushfire related content uses consistent messaging that is coordinated, current, and provides a consistent user experience with easy-to-find information.

The website is a whole-of-government initiative developed by QRA and supported by a network of state agency web and communication teams and content partners including Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.

