



Protecting Our Communities (Disaster Resilience) Program (POCP)

Guidelines 2023–24



Australian Government



Queensland
Government

Document details

Security classification	Public
Date of review of security classification	October 2023
Authority	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
Document status	Final
Version	1.0
QRA Reference	DOC/23/59754 GD-0838

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Contents

PART A – OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES	4
About the Protecting Our Communities (Disaster Resilience) Program	4
Funding source	4
Objective	4
Key timeframes	4
Who may apply	5
Maximum funding available per project	5
Eligible projects	6
Eligible expenditure	6
Ineligible expenditure	6
PART B – APPLICATION PROCESS	7
How to apply	7
Late applications	7
Assessment	7
PART C – GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS	8
Funding Agreement	8
Unspent funding	8
Variations	8
Procurement	8
Record keeping	8
Progress reporting and progress claims	8
Extensions of time	8
Project acquittal	9
Assurance activities	9
Certification	9
Goods and Services Tax (GST)	9
Public acknowledgment of funding source	9

Part A – Overview and objectives

About the Protecting Our Communities (Disaster Resilience) Program

The Protecting Our Communities (Disaster Resilience) Program (POCP) was developed following the Australian Government's election commitment to provide funding to communities across Australia to increase their disaster resilience and preparedness for future disasters as part of the 2022-23 Budget – announced in October 2022.

The purpose of this program is 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 at the local level.

The Program is a closed, non-competitive funding program and will be delivered in two tranches.

- Tranche 1 – administered by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), opened in June 2023 for applications.
- Tranche 2 – to be administered by states and territories and will have varying application timeframes.

Projects identified to receive grant funding by the Australian Government, detailed in the 'who may apply' section, are invited to apply for the program via the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA). QRA is responsible for delivering Tranche 2 of the program in Queensland.

Funding source

Tranche 2 of this program will deliver commitments across Queensland with a total value up to \$11.2 million in funding from the Australian Government.

Objective

The POCP objective is to deliver projects that aim to increase the disaster resilience and preparedness of Australian Communities for future disaster events by:

- increasing disaster resilience through building or upgrading telecommunications infrastructure, road infrastructure, evacuation centres, cyclone shelters and emergency management precincts;
- improving community preparedness through volunteer training and developing disaster management plans; and
- enhancing the ability to respond to disasters by purchasing essential equipment, such as Quick Response Vehicles.

Key timeframes

Application stage:

- Funding program opens 10 November 2023.
- Applications must be submitted by 5.00 pm 1 December 2023.
- All applicants will be notified of outcomes by 22 December 2023.

In addition to application activity, a Federal Funding Agreement schedule needs to be finalised and a statewide implementation plan developed for all successful projects. It is a Commonwealth requirement that the Federal Funding Agreement schedule is co-signed, and the statewide implementation plan is endorsed by NEMA prior to any projects commencing. Following this, QRA will create project funding agreements and projects will be able to formally commence in early-mid 2024.

All projects must be completed by 30 June 2026. All project acquittal reports are due within three months of the completion of the project, including any peer/external reviews of scoping studies or research.

Who may apply

This funding is only available to the applicants detailed below that have been identified by the Australian Government and invited by QRA to apply.

Table 1: Queensland Projects

Organisation	Project Name	Project Description	Commonwealth funding
Ipswich Show Society	Ipswich Showgrounds Evacuation Centre Upgrades	Upgrade of the Ipswich Showgrounds to improve amenities that can be utilised as an emergency relief centre during disasters	\$1,500,000
Mackay Regional Council	Pioneer River Levee	Construction of a levee on the Pioneer River to protect South Mackay urban areas from future flooding	\$5,000,000
Gladstone Regional Council	Deepwater National Park Fire Trail	Rebuild and upgrade Deepwater fire trails to allow for better access for the Queensland Rural Fire Service to better prepare for bushfires and keep the community safe during a bushfire	\$2,000,000
Rockhampton Regional Council	Gracemere Integrated Emergency Communications System	Upgrade satellite communication UHF/VHF radio and fix known blackspots in the areas around Mount Morgan and Gracemere to increase communication during disasters	\$500,000
Richmond Shire Council	Coalbrook Road culvert crossing replacement	Replacing the culvert crossing at Coalbrook Road to increase flood resilience	\$301,620
Cairns Regional Council	FNQ Coastal Erosion Works	Undertake coastal erosion works on the northern beaches of Cairns to protect the coast against future erosion	\$750,000
Cook Shire Council	FNQ pedestrian access bridge	Upgrade of the pedestrian access bridge that crosses the southern side of the Endeavour River near Cooktown to allow direct access to Cooktown for residents during the wet season	\$250,000
Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council	Porpuraaw Road concrete causeways	Construction of six concrete causeways to ensure year-round access to the South Mitchell River and Gulf of Carpentaria	\$420,440
Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council	Cullen Point Barge Ramp Rock Wall	Construction of a rock wall on the north side of the Cullen Point Barge Ramp in Mapoon to ensure the barge ramp withstands severe weather and can be used in emergency evacuations	\$479,380
		Total funding	\$11,201,440

Maximum funding available per project

No further Commonwealth or state funding is available beyond the amount of Commonwealth funding listed in Table 1 above. If this funding is insufficient, applicants are encouraged to make a co-contribution towards the total project cost.

If other Commonwealth funding is to be used as a co-contribution, applicants are encouraged to review the Guidelines of the applicable programs to ensure that funding from that program can be used for this purpose.

Eligible projects

To be eligible your project must:

- increase the disaster resilience and/or disaster preparedness of the community
- be consistent with the intent of the announced commitment
- for infrastructure projects, not be located on privately owned land where you do not have a formal arrangement, such as a lease, for use of the land, and comprise at least one of the following activities:
 - constructing new infrastructure
 - upgrading existing infrastructure
 - extending existing infrastructure
 - replacing infrastructure where there is a significant increase in benefit
 - fit out, alterations and/or extensions to existing premises
 - purchase of fixed equipment/assets that are related to your community infrastructure project.

If the grant activity is part of a larger project, you should provide evidence to show how the grant activity can be delivered in isolation and the outcomes to be achieved as a result of the grant.

Eligible costs

Eligible costs are costs directly associated with the delivery of the project and are able to be funded under this program.

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be a direct cost of the project
- be incurred by you within the approved project period.

Eligible costs include:

- costs associated with the delivery of training and education programs, such as facilities hire, planning and facilitation, design and publication of materials, community/public messaging such as radio, print media and billboard space, and reasonable travel costs (calculated on the basis of your organisations' travel policy)
- remuneration of an existing employee, where the employee is temporarily reassigned to conduct work directly related to the delivery of the project
- personnel costs directly related to the delivery of the project including salaries, vehicle and office equipment leasing
- construction costs, such as all site works required as part of the construction, and construction-related labour, materials and equipment hire
- detailed design, for example, production of final or tender design drawings and/or specifications
- costs of conducting a tender for the proposed project
- project management costs proportionate with the funding amount sought including remuneration of additional technical, professional and/or administrative staff for time directly related to managing the construction or delivery of the proposed project (does not include executive duties or overhead charges)
- purchase and installation of fixed plant and equipment.

Ineligible costs

Ineligible costs are not funded by the program and will need to be met by the applicant.

Ineligible costs include:

- costs not associated with the delivery of the project
- legal costs
- catering and official opening expenses (excluding permanent signage)
- purchase of core business capital equipment such as motor vehicles and office equipment
- vehicle and office equipment leasing, unless directly related to the delivery of the project
- remuneration of executive officers
- remuneration of an existing employee, unless the employee is temporarily reassigned to conduct work directly related to the delivery of the project
- costs that are incurred prior to project approval (approval is once the funding agreement is signed and returned by the approved applicant)
- duplication of existing initiatives, for example costs already approved through other funding streams
- statutory fees and charges, and any costs associated with obtaining regulatory and/or development approvals
- costs of internal furnishings and supplies
- costs beyond the project period, for example ongoing costs for administration, operation, maintenance or management
- costs not supported by the general ledger, including on-cost charges
- profit margin of applicant
- Goods and Services Tax (GST) (unless the end-recipient of the grant is not registered for GST)
- costs exceeding the approved capped project funding amount.

Part B – Application process

How to apply

QRA will write to applicants listed in Table 1 outlining the process for progressing an application. This correspondence will include the program guidelines and the application form.

To apply, you must complete and send the application form (and all attachments) via email to submissions@qra.qld.gov.au, prior to the closing date.

If you need further guidance, or find an error in your application after submitting it, you can contact us by email at grants@qra.qld.gov.au.

Late applications

If the applicant is experiencing exceptional circumstances that are reasonably unforeseeable and beyond the applicant's control, late applications may be considered, on a case-by-case basis.

Notification of a late application requests must be made prior to the closing date and emailed to grants@qra.qld.gov.au. Following review of the request an outcome will be provided to advise if the late application will be accepted.

Assessment

QRA will review applications against the eligibility criteria to confirm alignment with program objectives.

The following assessment criteria will be used in reviewing applications:

- 1. Benefits of your project to the community**
Building future resilience for your community and/or preparing them for future disasters
- 2. Project viability and sustainability**
Ensuring the project is a viable and the applicant is ready to commence the project
- 3. Your capacity, capability and resources to carry out the project**
The applicant has the capacity, capability and resources to carry out the project

Part C – Governance and administrative arrangements

The following governance and administrative arrangements will apply to successful projects.

Funding agreement

It is a requirement that all recipients of this funding enter into a Project Funding Agreement with QRA.

A Project Funding Agreement will be formed either by:

- for regular recipients of QRA Funding: QRA will issue a Project Funding Schedule, which when executed by both parties, will be considered a binding Project Funding Agreement under the terms and conditions of the Head Agreement for QRA Funding already in place between QRA and the recipient, or
- for one-off funding: by execution of a standalone Project Funding Agreement.

The Project Funding Schedule/Agreement will detail the terms and conditions specific to the approved funding, including reference to the relevant funding guidelines that govern the program, funding type and amount, key date and milestone schedules, payment claim and reporting requirements.

By submitting an application for funding, you are agreeing that if successful for funding you will agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the funding agreement. If you would like a copy of the funding agreement, please email grants@qra.qld.gov.au to request a copy.

Project Funding must be used solely for the purposes of the relevant Project and only be used on Eligible Project Costs.

The applicant warrants that it has sufficient funds to complete the Project if the amount of the Project Funding is insufficient to deliver the project.

Funds that have been used, spent or committed otherwise than in accordance with the Project Funding Agreement, relevant Program Guidelines or provisions of any Head Agreement, must be repaid to QRA.

Any intellectual property associated with approved funding under this program will be provided to the applicant upon its creation by any third party.

At acquittal project intellectual property, such as research or scoping studies, will be provided for use by QRA.

Unspent funding

Unspent funds will be returned to the program and may be reallocated to other projects.

Variations

All variations to a Project Funding Schedule/Agreement, scope or change in control of a project are to be agreed formally in writing.

Where there are material changes following project approval, grant recipients must provide QRA with updated project information.

Procurement

The procurement of goods or services must be in accordance with the applicant's procurement policy and all applicable legislative/industry requirements. If expenditure is in breach of any of these standards, then reimbursement of these costs cannot be sought under this program.

Record keeping

All funding recipients must keep an accurate audit trail. Records must be available for seven years from the end of the financial year the expenditure is acquitted by the Queensland Government.

For assurance purposes, the Queensland/and or Australian Government may at any time, via QRA, request documentation from applicants to evidence the State's compliance with these Guidelines. This may include, but is not limited to, access to application and project level information to confirm acquittal is in accordance with these Guidelines.

Progress reporting and progress claims

All applicants are required to provide monthly progress reports on the status of works and expenditure throughout project delivery.

Monthly progress reports are created and lodged through QRA's Monitoring and Reporting System (MARS) Portal, detailing:

- actual expenditure reported against the approved capped amount
- percentage of scope of works completed
- predicted start and completion dates and actual start and completion dates
- reasons for, and details of, any variances in scope, cost or time
- details of complementary works.

Once actual expenditure has exceeded the initial 30 per cent advance, and the project funding Schedule/Agreement is executed, applicants can progressively claim expenditure incurred up to 90 per cent of the approved funding from this program.

Claims for expenditure must be lodged with a progress report, a general ledger or transaction report (or similar financial document produced from the applicant's financial system) demonstrating the actual expenditure incurred against the recommended value of the approved scope of works. Progress reports must be certified by the applicant's delegated officer.

Extensions of time

If the applicant is experiencing exceptional circumstances that are reasonably unforeseeable and beyond the applicant's control, an extension of time (EOT) to the approved project completion date may be considered. Applicants are required to formally request an EOT, detailing the unforeseen circumstance impacting on project completion, the actions taken to minimise the impact, and the adjusted project plan and milestones. For all EOT requests, please contact your [Regional Liaison Officer](#).

Project acquittal

Once the project is completed the monthly progress report needs to be changed to final and submitted. Once the final progress report is submitted, a close out submission is created. This close out submission, and associated documentation, must be completed and submitted to QRA within three months of the completion of the project. For example, if a project is completed on 20 June 2026, the close out submission must be lodged by 20 September 2026.

Close out submissions must include:

- final progress report detailing the completed approved works/activities against the approved project works/activities
- final actual costs reported against the approved capped amounts
- detailed general ledger evidencing the final actual claimed expenditure and submitted total project costs (including details of contribution)
- final Project Report (available from the QRA website) and evidence demonstrating the completed works/activities, for example photo evidence representative of the extent of the completed works (JPG including EXIF metadata, GPS coordinates and time/date taken) and relevant reports.
- supporting documents to be made available for sampling by QRA if requested.

Close out submissions must be certified by the applicant in line with its delegations on lodgment.

QRA will undertake a final assessment of each project to ensure approved scope is delivered within timeframe, expenditure is eligible, and assurance requirements are satisfied.

Assurance activities

Applicants may be required to provide documentation to support any assurance activities. These assurance activities may include, but are not limited to:

- audit, site visits or inspections
- obtaining relevant documentary evidence to support estimated/actual costs and/or value for money assessments
- verification reviews on measures or projects
- compliance with legislative and policy requirements.

Certification

All project documentation, including applications, progress reports and final reports, must be certified by the applicant in line with its delegations.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Where the end-recipient of the grant is registered for GST, the claimed value must exclude GST and be actual expenditure, paid prior to lodging the submission.

Where the end-recipient of the grant is not registered for GST, the claimed value may include GST.

Public acknowledgment of funding source

Funding recipients must acknowledge relevant funding contributions in public materials. This includes, but is not limited to:

- media releases regarding the approved project
- acknowledgement or statements in project publications and materials
- events that use or include reference to the approved project
- plaques and signage at construction sites or completed works.

To comply with this requirement, all public advice and media releases should refer to the relevant funding source, as detailed in the Project Funding Schedule/Agreement.

Contact QRA for assistance and to coordinate approval for any materials by emailing media@qra.qld.gov.au

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