

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:

Stronger, safer, resilient Queensland communities.

OUR PURPOSE:

Coordinate action to improve the resilience of Queensland communities and facilitate locally led disaster recovery.

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Status of Active Grants Programs administered by QRA				
	Prior Events in delivery	2020 Events	2021 Events	2022 Events
NUMBER OF EVENTS	-	5	11	9
\$5,800M Delivery Program	\$169M Program	\$919M Program	\$807M Program	\$3,900M Program
Deadline for Delivery	Complete	30 June 2022	30 June 2023	30 June 2024
 Time Elapsed	Remainder being delivered under EOT's	Remainder being delivered under EOT's	 50%	 0%
 % Completion	 98% complete	 77% complete	 28% complete	 \$186M grants paid

Disaster Assistance and Resilience Grants Program

Since establishment, QRA has administered a recovery and reconstruction program through the joint State Commonwealth Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) worth almost \$20 billion. Works for 25 events from the 2020, 2021 and 2022 disaster seasons were in delivery in the June 2022 quarter with an estimated value approaching \$5.8 billion.

In addition to DRFA, QRA is currently administering 18 other State, Commonwealth and joint-funded grant programs with a capped value of \$170.5 million, focused on disaster risk reduction and resilience building.

*Includes preliminary estimates for DRFA Categories A&B alongside approved funding for Categories C&D.

In the June quarter

Following the first quarter of 2022, when extreme weather devastated almost the entire state, Queensland was impacted by another two flooding events in Q2 ending the disaster season with 66 of the State’s 77 local government areas impacted by nine natural disasters with a recovery and reconstruction cost estimated at around \$3.9 billion.

Given these huge impacts, the quarter has also been characterised by recovery planning and implementation, with recovery now well underway. QRA has been on the ground supporting councils and communities along with State Recovery Coordinator, Major-General Jake Elwood to understand recovery needs and develop state and local recovery plans.

During the quarter, QRA has been working with the Commonwealth and partner agencies to develop guidelines and begin the rollout of the state’s largest-ever extraordinary disaster assistance package worth more than \$2 billion to ensure flood-affected communities get the support they need to recover. A key focus of these packages has been to build resilience into the recovery initiatives, in order to assist Queensland communities to be better placed to deal with future natural disasters. One of these initiatives, the \$741 million Resilient Homes Fund was opened to expressions of interest, with almost 3400 expressions of interest lodged by quarter-end from residents interested in improving their home’s resilience through a resilient re-build, house raising or to participate in the voluntary buy-back program.

30 June 2022 also marked the deadline for delivery of the more than \$900 million program of works related to the five disaster events that impacted the state in 2020. By the deadline, all works had been completed other than a small number that had been approved extensions of time for delivery. Completed works will now be assessed to confirm eligibility through QRA’s submission close-out process.

In addition, QRA secured acquittal of the State’s annual DRFA claim late in the quarter, with more than \$525 million of funding paid by the Commonwealth on 30 June 2022.

QRA also took other steps towards improving the state’s resilience to natural disasters during the quarter, completing delivery of the \$8 million Flood Warning Infrastructure Network project in June 2022 and progressing the assessment of applications for the North Queensland Natural Disasters Mitigation Program (NQNDMP), the Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (QRRRF) and the National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program (NFMIP) 2021–22.

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 coordinating the delivery of responsive recovery activities to assist communities impacted by major disaster events with key stakeholders to build the capacity and capability of local government to respond to disasters and facilitate timely recovery.

Across the state, Councils are continuing to be impacted by cumulative and compounding events, with many still dealing with long term stresses such as drought and the COVID-19 pandemic. 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.

2021–22 Disaster season activations

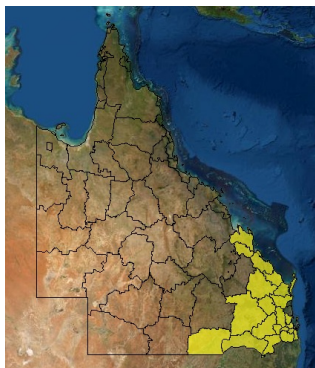
Across the severe weather season, 66 of Queensland’s 77 Local Government Areas (LGAs) were activated for funding assistance under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) following nine significant natural disasters. Of those 66 LGAs, 39 were impacted by more than one event.

There were two significant natural disaster events in the past quarter:

Southern Queensland Flooding (6-20 May 2022)

Unseasonably late rainfall across parts of the state in May filled already saturated catchments in the southeast, resulting in more flooding in the region. The township of Gympie flooded for the third time in 2022. Some homes affected in this recent event had already been damaged earlier in the year and were not inhabited.

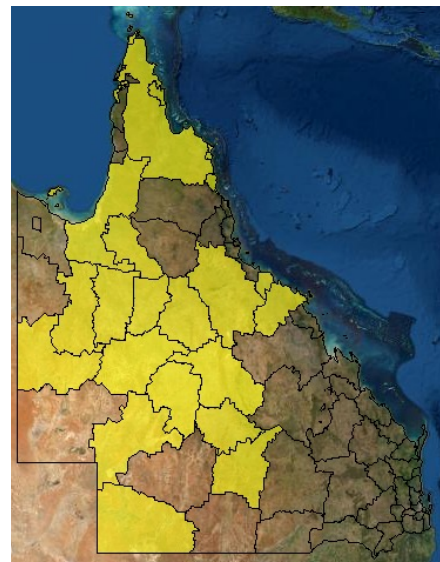
The townships of Warwick in the Southern Downs and Laidley in the Lockyer Valley were also inundated, with some residents in both communities evacuated. Twenty-one (21) LGAs were activated for DRFA assistance, with six of those activated for personal hardship assistance.



Areas impacted by Southern Queensland Flooding May event

Northern and Central Western Queensland Rainfall and Flooding (21 April – 12 May)

Intense heavy rainfall and flooding occurred across parts of Queensland during April and May 2022, resulting in Counter Disaster Operations (CDO), and Reconstruction of Essential Public Assets (REPA) claims under the DRFA across 26 LGAs.



Areas impacted by Northern and Central Western Queensland Rainfall and Flooding May event

Some councils have been activated numerous times, with Bundaberg, Gympie, North Burnett and South Burnett Regional Councils activated four times this disaster season.

	2021–22 (to date)	This quarter
Events	9	2
LGAs activated	66	47
LGAs activated multiple events	41	0

State Recovery Coordinator

Over the past few months, the State Recovery Coordinator, Major General Jake Ellwood, has been busy developing the Southern Queensland State Recovery and Resilience Plan 2022-24 (SRRP). The SRRP will provide a blueprint for all levels of government, industry, and communities to work together to not only support Queensland’s recovery from the 2021-22 summer of flooding, but to make our communities safer, stronger and more resilient in the face of future floods. The SRRP will be released later this year.

This quarter the Major General has also been engaging with local communities following the South East Queensland flooding and has completed his initial visits to all 23 LGAs impacted. In May 2022, he provided a flood recovery update on ABC Brisbane radio to discuss progress three months on from the floods and to encourage eligible homeowners to register their interest for the Resilient Homes Fund.

Additionally, the Major General has continued to revisit some areas that were more severely affected by the SEQ Floods to see how recovery is progressing. In early May, he visited the Paddington Ward of Brisbane City Council with Councillor Peter Matic who described the damage as catastrophic – with just over 200 homes sustaining moderate to severe damage. Mid-May, he joined QRA’s Jimmy Scott and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services Mark Ryan in Laidley to inspect damage left behind by Queensland’s most recent severe weather event. And in June 2022, he returned to the Ipswich City Council area where he was amazed with the work which had been done since the flooding three months ago. While some hardest hit areas have a long road ahead, the SRC believes the region is recovering well.



During his visits the SRC has been encouraging community members to seek assistance and support, from the support services available to the community.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

MAJOR LANDSLIP CLOSES GOLD COAST–SPRINGBROOK ROAD

Emergency works are underway on Gold Coast–Springbrook Road and a section of the road remains closed for safety due to a significant landslip north of Little Nerang Dam.

It is one of several Gold Coast hinterland roads to suffer severe damage following record rainfall across south east Queensland in February and March 2022.

A total of 676mm was reported at Springbrook from 23 February to 1 March 2022. This resulted in multiple landslips along Gold Coast–Springbrook Road, which were cleared by Transport and Main Roads crews to allow the road to reopen under traffic control and traffic signals.

An extended road closure will be required to allow crews to clear the damaged site, complete geotechnical assessments, stabilise the upper and lower slopes, and repair the road. Investigations are underway and crews are undertaking hand-scaling to remove loose rocks from the upper slope. While it is too early to say exactly how long the closure will be required, it could be in place from 18 months to two years.

In addition to the landslip site, there are at least 15 other major sites needing significant reconstruction work along Gold Coast–Springbrook Road.

Traffic detours are in place so residents can access their properties – the alternate route is west of Springbrook via Pine Creek Road.

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



Image: Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – landslip following SEQ Rainfall and Flooding event (February 2022).

Further heavy rainfall on 29 and 30 March 2022, including 218mm at Springbrook, resulted in a large section of the upper slope slipping down the mountain. From 31 March 2022, an ongoing road closure has been in place from Neranwood Park to Pine Creek Road.



Image: Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – landslip following heavy rainfall in late March 2022.

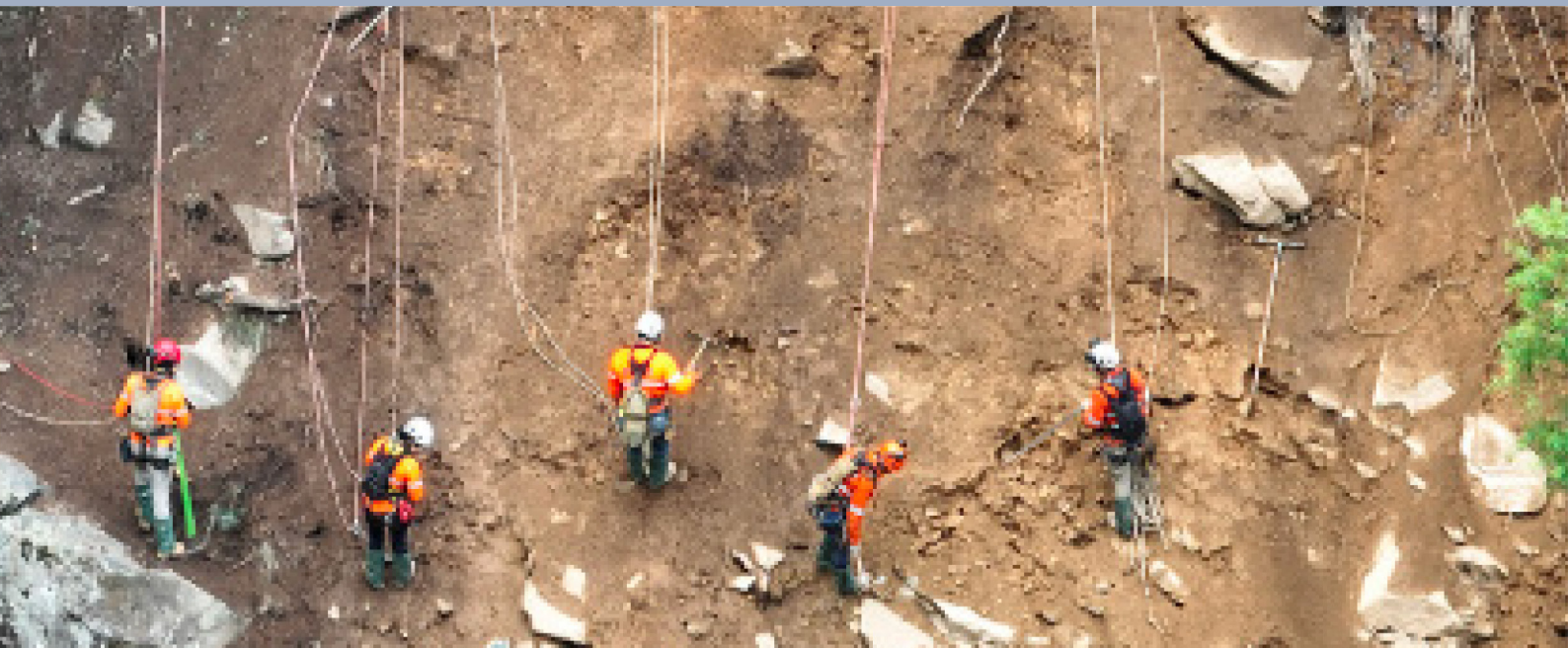


Image: Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – abseilers hand-scaling loose material on upper slope.

Damage Assessment and Reconstruction Monitoring (DARM) – South East Queensland

After every significant event, QRA re-visits impacted communities to monitor and track the progress of reconstruction and recovery. The reconstruction monitoring audits are an important part of the recovery process and are conducted at three-month intervals following significant disasters.

In June, DARM teams commenced follow-up assessments of properties identified as damaged in the immediate aftermath of South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event in February this year. This activity captures vital information that is shared with councils, supporting agencies and other organisations to improve and establish a consistent understanding of the needs and priorities of flood-affected communities.

This is the largest Reconstruction Monitoring audit conducted since 2011, with over 8,500 properties to be assessed over a one-month period.



Update on Disaster Recovery Funding Assistance

QRA is continuing to work with our state and Commonwealth partners on the roll out of exceptional circumstances packages, jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments, to support Queensland communities in their recovery from significant weather events during the 2021-22 Queensland summer.



This severe weather season, the assistance provided for Betterment is the largest ever made available with \$150 million directly targeting local government areas affected by the three significant events in southern Queensland seeking to build back better. A further \$20 million is available across all local government areas activated during the nine severe weather events.

The Betterment Fund increases the resilience of vulnerable assets, assisting communities to maintain their connectedness and reduce hardship during and after future disaster events.



Councils and state agencies can also access extraordinary disaster assistance of \$100 million to clean up and repair community and recreational assets damaged during the major floods of the 2021-22 disaster season.

Public parks, reserves and playgrounds are just some of the assets covered under this package. Additionally, \$5 million is available for repairs to recreational assets damaged in national parks.

The links between infrastructure and environmental recovery and human wellbeing are strongly recognised. These packages support holistic community recovery ensuring communities are able to reconnect, rebuild and recommence activities that have been put on hold due to flood damage.

QRA will continue to work with the Commonwealth government and Queensland Government administering agencies on the development of these programs.



The Resilient Homes Fund

The State Recovery Coordinator is encouraging anyone who thinks they may be eligible for the Resilient Homes Fund to register their interest.

The aim of the \$741 million Resilient Homes Fund is to provide home owners at risk of future flooding with an option to remove or at least mitigate the risk.

By providing a pathway for a more secure existence at an individual level and a stronger and more resilient community at a broader level.

This is a significant and complex program, that has never been delivered before on this scale, and we have a wide range of factors to consider when rolling out a program of this magnitude to make sure those who are most vulnerable within our communities, and subject to the highest flood risk, are prioritised for assistance.

Registrations of interest are still OPEN for homes affected.

RESILIENCE

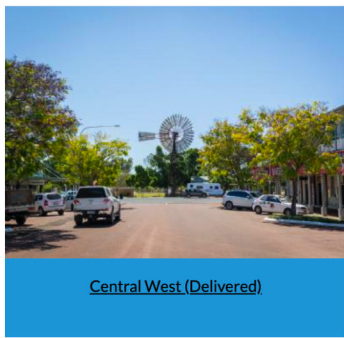
QRA is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of whole-of-government policies for managing flood risks and improving the resilience of communities and facilitating mitigation against potential disasters.

As the most disaster-prone state in Australia and with on-going disaster impacts across the state, QRA are continually considering new ways to improve the safety and resilience of Queensland communities. This includes building trusted, reciprocal and robust relationships with community leaders, thought-leaders, and local, state, Commonwealth and international partners, and participating in a wide range of activities to inform our policies. These Resilient Queensland initiatives aim to support Queensland councils and relevant state agencies with comprehensive and consistent community messaging via social media, disaster dashboards and other communication.

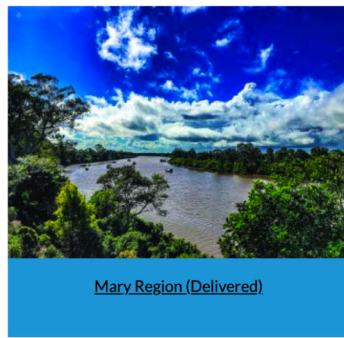
Building resilient communities

Through *Resilient Queensland*, the implementation plan for the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2017, QRA has led extensive stakeholder engagement since 2018.

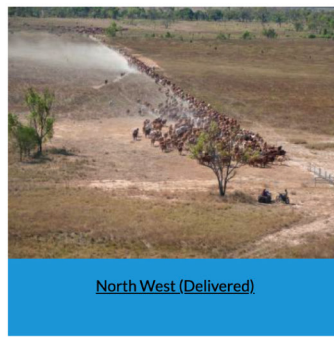
Through continued engagement we are pleased to report we are in the final stages of development of the Regional Resilience Strategies and Local Resilience Action Plans across the state. This quarter another four Regional Resilience Strategies were endorsed, with the remaining strategies being prepared for final endorsement with regional stakeholders.



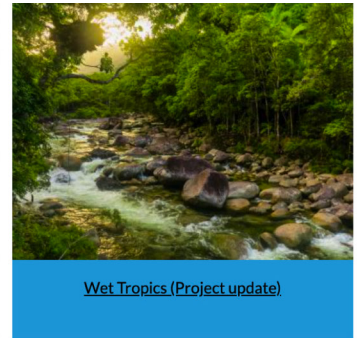
Central West (Delivered)



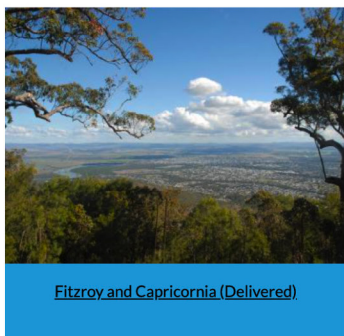
Mary Region (Delivered)



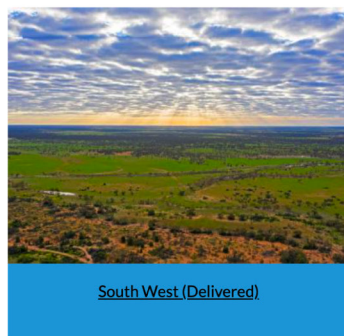
North West (Delivered)



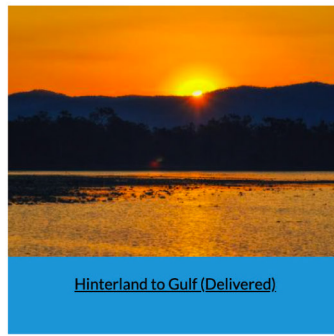
Wet Tropics (Project update)



Fitzroy and Capricornia (Delivered)



South West (Delivered)



Hinterland to Gulf (Delivered)



Burdekin and Charters Towers (Project update)

*Note, Burdekin & Charters Towers and Wet Tropics are delivered and soon to be published.

Queensland is better informed on how to strengthen disaster resilience, due to the regionally-coordinated and locally-led action plans providing a comprehensive list of resilience needs within each region. Over the coming months QRA is undertaking regional analysis of the data to understand the state-wide resilience needs. The extract beside shows some of the work so far. The intel provides opportunities across all levels and sectors to best target investment that will progress works identified.

	New Roads, Road Betterment, and Broader Transport Betterment (Helipads, Airports / Airstrips, Boat Ramps)		Resource Security and Climate Transition Studies or Audits (e.g. Water Security)
	Support to Adopt Government Policy and Actions, and Amendment of Council Operations and Continuity Planning		Hazard Modelling and Mapping for Flood Hazard, System Upgrades, GIS Inputs, and General Mapping (e.g. Demographic and Socio-Economic)
	Auditing of Council, Disaster Management and Community Buildings, Assets, and Infrastructure Condition Assessments		Provision of Disaster Management Equipment, Generators or Backup Communication Infrastructure, Upgrade or New Telecommunication Towers
	Development of Public and Landholder Training and Capacity Building Programs (e.g. Community Skill Development, Farming Diversification, Road Education, etc), and Risk Awareness Programs		Development and Implementation of Scoping or Feasibility Studies, Community, Population Attracting, and Transport Plans and Strategies
	Regional Programs with Neighbouring Councils, Industry Organisations and Business, as well as Council Training and Education Programs		Emergency Management Service Volunteer Drives, and Continuation of Existing Council Programs or Operations
	Business Capacity Building and Training, Shared Programs (e.g. Skill Development, Business Continuity), and Risk Awareness		Local Knowledge Sharing Programs, and Accessible Services (e.g. Health and Transport)

Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience

Through the implementation *Resilient Queensland*, the state now has an in-depth understanding of resilience needs at the local and regional level to strengthen community resilience to disaster events.

To continue to build on this work, QRA is updating the strategy to focus on state-led strategic commitments and actions over the next five years based on local and regional needs, with the intention to embed resilience into business-as-usual processes. The updated Strategy aims to embed the mandate for collaboration across stakeholders and ensures actions and responsibilities are clearly outlined with agreed responsible lead agencies for delivery.

Over the past few months, QRA has facilitated engagement sessions to inform the development of the updated strategy with disaster management leaders from each Queensland Government agency, the Bureau of Meteorology, the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management and the Local Government Association of Queensland. A consultation draft of the strategy was circulated to state agencies for review and feedback in June 2022. QRA is now consolidating feedback and continuing to work with stakeholders as needed.

The updated Strategy will be launched by the end of 2022.

Queensland leads the way in disaster risk reduction and resilience

QRA has had the pleasure of attending two key events on disaster risk reduction and resilience with international and national counterparts over the past quarter.

On 22 June 2022, QRA CEO Brendan Moon presented to the United Nations (UN) and Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade representatives, ahead of the UN Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to be hosted here in Brisbane this September. Brendan gave an overview of disaster risk reduction and resilience in Queensland and some examples of the programs and initiatives delegates can expect to see at the conference.



A shared vision for disaster resilience
Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience

Creating a shared vision for disaster resilience has been important for setting clear objectives and priorities for disaster risk reduction:

- 1** we understand the potential disaster risks we face
- 2** we work together to better manage disaster risk
- 3** we seek new opportunities to reduce disaster risk
- 4** we continually improve how we prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters

Developing Australia's Second National Action Plan

From Risk to Resilience Summit

Date
9.00am-5.00pm, Wed 29 June |
9.00am-4.00pm Thu 30 June, 29 June 2022 - 30 June 2022

Cost
Free

On 26-27 June 2022, QRA also had the pleasure of attending the two-day From Risk to Resilience Summit in Sydney hosted by the National Recovery and Resilience Agency and the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience. The summit provided a platform to convene leaders from across the nation to develop the second National Action Plan of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework. Brendan took part in a panel session to share insights following recent flooding events in Queensland, including the work to be done to strengthen the state's resilience to future disaster events. Brendan reiterated the importance of engaging at a local level and developing regional resilience strategies, which are tailored to the risks and hazards faced at the local level.

Implementation of the Queensland Flood Risk Management Framework

Flood mitigation studies to prioritise investment in flood resilience. QFRMF, FWIN, statewide flood risk assessment, metrics for success for flood resilience.

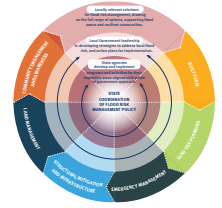
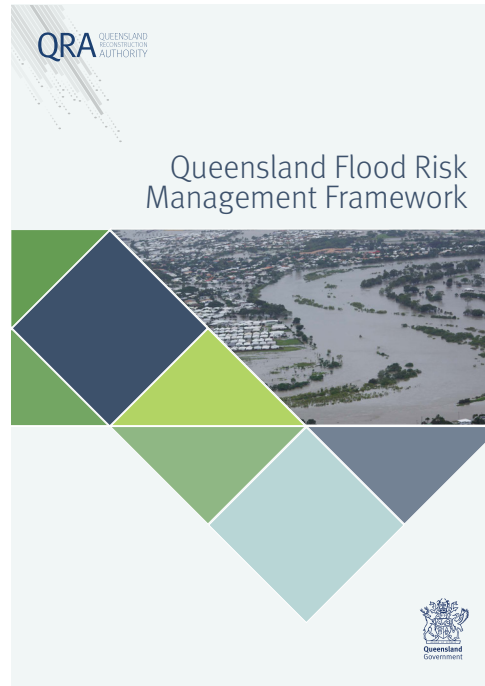
This quarter, QRA’s Flood Team has continued to implement actions under the **Queensland Flood Risk Management Framework** (Framework).

A high priority action of the Framework is the Statewide Assessment of Flood Risk. It will, for the first time, identify flood risk areas across Queensland and rank local governments according to their relative flood risk. This assessment will provide a better understanding of the status of flood risk management across the state and identify “gaps” or issues that need to be addressed.

The Statewide Assessment of Flood Risk is intended to lead to more streamlined funding applications and investment decisions, and substantial additional support for local governments in the delivery of flood resilience projects.

QRA has commenced a comprehensive stakeholder engagement program to obtain input and validation into the methodology, evaluation criteria and weighting, and the assessment outputs.

The aim is to have completed the full risk assessment by September 2022.



www.qra.qld.gov.au/resilience/flood-resilience/queensland-flood-risk-management-framework

Flood Warning Infrastructure Network

Flood waters don’t respect boundaries. It is therefore extremely important for all areas of Queensland to have information from flood warning systems.

QRA is pleased to report Queensland is continuing to drive best practice by completing the \$8 million Flood Warning Infrastructure Network project, with 180 flood warning assets installed across 28 councils in Queensland in June 2022.

This involved collaboration with the Bureau of Meteorology and local communities to identify high priority locations requiring additional flood warning infrastructure capability. This will help keep our communities safe by ensuring they are well informed by timely weather and flood warnings and forecasts.

This project was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) to support Queensland communities in their recovery from the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough (2019).



Image: Morton Station Camera in Cook Shire.

Resilience Grant Programs – Highlights

Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund 2021–22

Queensland councils and community organisations will share in \$19.1 million of joint Queensland and Australian Government funding to help safeguard against natural disasters. Successful applicants of the third round of the Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (QRRRF) include 28 councils, two state agencies, four universities and eight not-for-profit organisations. As part of this year's QRRRF, \$6 million has been awarded from the Australian Government's Managing Disaster Risk program to support 20 projects in communities hardest hit by the 2019 North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough.

For more information on the QRRF go to www.qra.qld.gov.au/qrrrf.

North Queensland Natural Disaster Mitigation Program

In addition, 16 councils have been successful in securing funding under the \$10 million North Queensland Natural Disasters Mitigation Program (NQNDMP). This program aims to help councils in North and Far North Queensland reduce their disaster risk and assist in reducing the growth of insurance costs for residents, businesses and the community. Some of the projects include installation of rock protection along the banks of Magnificent Creek in the Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council area to help prevent erosion and scouring; the investigation, design and modelling of a levee system in Mackay Regional Council to reduce inundation during storm surges; the realignment stormwater drainage in four locations across Torres Shire Council to mitigate the effects of flooding; and the appointment of a Coastal Hazard Resilience Officer at Torres Strait Island Regional Council will help to identify other risks and how to go about lessening their impact.

For more information on the NQNDMP projects go to www.qra.qld.gov.au/NQNDMP.

A full listing of successful projects will be published on QRA's website over the coming weeks www.qra.qld.gov.au.

Local Economic Recovery Fund

As a result of the Queensland and Commonwealth Government Jointly funded DRFA a local economic recovery (LER) program was established following the 2019 Bushfires. This month Ipswich City Council finalised it Harding Paddock project within the Flinders-Goolman Conservation Estate funded by the LER and Ipswich City Council. The redevelopment includes a new trailhead, landscaping, Yarning Circle and Kupmurri pit. The space enables knowledge sharing across the community and recognises the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and knowledge across the region. The new look Harding Paddock was celebrated with a community open day.



Image: Harding Paddock community open day.

Coastal and Estuarine Risk Mitigation Program (CERMP) 22–23

The Department of Environment and Science (DES) are responsible for coordinating delivery of this program on behalf of Queensland. In consultation with QRA and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, DES has submitted 11 of Queensland's coastal and estuarine disaster risk mitigation projects to the Commonwealth. Successful applicants will be notified later in 2022.

For more information on the program visit www.recovery.gov.au/coastal-and-estuarine-risk-mitigation-program-22-23.

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.

Queensland’s First Nations high school students “Get Ready” for careers in disaster management

The future of Indigenous representation in disaster management has been strengthened through this year’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Aspiration Program (ATSIAP) State Final.

Hosted by the Department of Education and Griffith University, and supported by Get Ready Queensland, students took part in an immersive experience via a four-part ‘Get Ready Finals Challenge’. More than 57 First Nations senior students from 17 state high schools came together with industry professionals to learn the ins-and-outs of disaster management – from preparedness to recovery.

The challenge involved a month of group coursework, where students had to research their communities’ local disaster risks and develop a communications plan to promote relevant preparedness messaging. Then students visited Griffith University’s Nathan Campus in Brisbane, where they presented a persuasive speech to convince a panel of judges to take-up their communications intervention. The next day, they were thrown into a fictional disaster exercise, standing up as Functional Recovery Groups to manage the response and recovery for a major flood event.

The experience showed students the vast array of disaster-related careers that can be pursued, like engineering, marketing, emergency services and project management. A highlight was Get Ready Queensland Ambassador Johnathan Thurston’s inspirational video message to all participants, encouraging them to pursue education beyond high school.

Congratulations to the Kepnock State High School team, who were awarded the 2022 ATSIAP overall winners.



Image: Kepnock State High School students accept the 2022 ATSIAP Challenge overall award.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

EMERGENCY WORKS REOPEN BRISBANE VALLEY HIGHWAY AT FERNVALE

The Brisbane Valley Highway at Fernvale has reopened after emergency repairs were undertaken to restore access.

A section of the highway at Geoff Fisher Bridge was severely damaged as a result of inundation during the South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event, with a total of 520mm falling over three days from 25 to 27 February 2022 at nearby Wivenhoe Dam.

Brisbane Valley Highway is an 84-kilometre connection between the Warrego Highway in Ipswich and the D'Aguiar Highway near Harlin. During the weather event, the Brisbane Valley Highway was closed at multiple locations due to flooding at low-lying areas and bridges.

Intermittent releases from nearby Wivenhoe Dam from 25 February 2022 also impacted areas of the highway downstream of the dam. In particular, a section of Brisbane Valley Highway near the Geoff Fisher Bridge at Fernvale was inundated for a substantial period.

Once floodwaters receded and inspections could be undertaken, it was identified there was extensive damage to the road embankment, pavement and surfacing on the southern approach to the Geoff Fisher Bridge and at the nearby Wivenhoe Pocket Road intersection.

TMR and its road maintenance contractor, Somerset Regional Council, worked in cooperation to commence roadworks immediately to restore this vital link.

The damage, coupled with the water levels from Wivenhoe Dam releases receding slower than expected, resulted in this section of the Brisbane Valley Highway remaining closed longer than initially anticipated. Once water levels dropped sufficiently to allow a structural inspection of the bridge footings, the bridge and adjacent road was able to be reopened on 12 March 2022.

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



Images: Brisbane Valley Highway (Ipswich–Harlin) at Geoff Fisher Bridge – damage from SEQ Rainfall and Flooding



Image: Rock base installed.



Image: Completed emergency works.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

SOMERSET BENEFITS FROM BUILDING BACK BETTER

The picturesque Somerset region west of Brisbane is a scenic patchwork of rolling hills and valleys with Somerset Dam and Wivenhoe Dam on the Stanley and Brisbane Rivers. However, this beauty comes at a cost with a large number of major and minor waterways crossing the region leaving it vulnerable to flood damage.

Following extensive damage to roads and bridges during the 2011 Queensland Floods and Cyclone Oswald in 2013, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority approved more than \$6.5 million in Betterment funding for Somerset Regional Council to improve the resilience of 19 essential public assets.



The assets built back through betterment have all performed much better in subsequent disaster seasons, including the two major floods to strike the region in 2022, allowing the transport network to be reopened rapidly once the flood waters receded with no significant damage incurred.

Somerset Regional Council can now look forward to participating in further resilience improvements of its essential public infrastructure thanks to two new Betterment programs totalling \$170 million.

Due to the extraordinary nature of multiple events over the 2021-22 disaster season, \$150 million of Betterment funding has been made available for damage associated with the South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event from February to April, Ex Tropical Cyclone Seth in January, as well as the Central, Southern and Western Qld rainfall and Flooding in November and December last year.

The category D Betterment funding is provided through the jointly-funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Additionally, for the second year in a row, \$20 million in Betterment funding is being made available under the DRFA Efficiencies framework.

This \$20 million Betterment Fund is available in all 62 local government areas activated for disaster funding following the nine disasters that have impacted Queensland during 2021-22, including Somerset Regional Council.

Somerset Regional Council was impacted by the floods in late 2021, again in the February-April floods, and for a third time in the floods across much of the South East in May 2020.

The combined Betterment programs will allow Somerset once again the opportunity to improve key assets such as culverts, roads, bridges and floodways to better withstand the impacts of natural disasters.



Images: George Bell Crossing washed away in January 2013 (top) and rebuilt with Betterment in 2015 (below).

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

SOMERSET BENEFITS FROM BUILDING BACK BETTER CON'T

Somerset Regional Council CEO Andrew Johnson knows how rebuilding impacted assets to a more resilient standard can save money in avoided costs and minimise the impact of future disasters.

“To date, Council estimates it has avoided repeated repair costs in excess of \$13.6 million for the betterment projects in Somerset,” Mr Johnson said.

“The major rivers of Stanley River and Brisbane River run through Somerset and provide water to Brisbane with the storage dam of Wivenhoe Dam located just upstream of Lowood and Fernvale.

“Another major waterway, Lockyer Creek, flows from the Lockyer Valley into the Brisbane River just downstream of the Wivenhoe Dam, which makes our region particularly vulnerable to floods.

“Betterment has been a game-changer for us, allowing us to replace damaged bridges, causeways and roads with stronger, more resilient versions.



“The assets that were replaced stronger through betterment have all performed much better in the recent events, allowing the transport network to be reopened rapidly once the flood waters receded, which has been a major benefit to the community.

“Concrete pavements installed at causeway approaches thanks to Betterment has resulted both in a reduction in damage and allowed field staff to quickly clear debris from these approaches and structures.

“Also, Betterment has seen the replacement of timber bridges with more resilient concrete structures, allowing the road network to be reopened very quickly after the water recedes below the deck level.

“For example, the George Bell Crossing was a causeway over Ivory Creek that was damaged and repaired back to its previous standard after the 2011 floods, only to be damaged again in 2013.

“That’s when Betterment allowed us to replace the causeway with a pre-cast concrete bridge. After the floods this year, the road was reopened as soon as the water receded with absolutely no damage to the bridge noted.

With the new Betterment Programs, Mr Johnson said Council has a wish list of further projects that will benefit from upgrades.

“The causeway on Scrub Creek Road, which serves as the only access to a community that was isolated for a number of weeks in 2022 after the causeway washed away, would benefit from a similar solution to the George Bell Crossing.

“Other potential betterment candidates include the Patrick Estate Road causeway, the Glamorgan Vale Road culvert, and addressing landslip and erosion risk for Gregors Creek Road, Mountain View Road and Mahons Road to stop them falling into Lockyer Creek.

“The betterment program has been essential in responding to the changing environment and allowing our community to continue to go about their lives quickly after a disaster event.



Image: Before and after Betterment – Toogoolawah Pedestrian Bridge.