

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

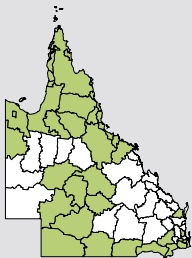
QRA is currently administering a recovery and reconstruction program under the joint Commonwealth State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) worth **\$10 billion** arising from **45** events from the 2019-20 to 2023-24 disaster seasons in the delivery and/or acquittal phase.

CURRENT STATEWIDE PROGRAM

! 45 events **🏠** 76 councils with an active program **💰** \$10 billion

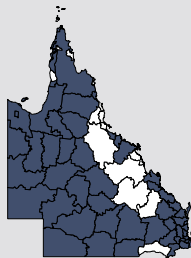
2019-20

- !** 5 events
- 🏠** 53 councils
- 💰** \$921 million
- 🕒** 30/6/2022
- ✓** 89% complete
(remainder under EOTs)



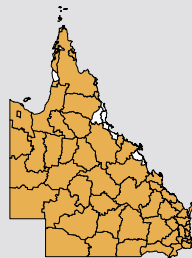
2020-21

- !** 11 events
- 🏠** 50 councils
- 💰** \$826 million
- 🕒** 30/6/2023
- ✓** 92% complete
(remainder under EOTs)



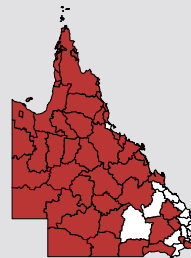
2021-22

- !** 9 events
- 🏠** 66 councils
- 💰** \$4.9 billion
- 🕒** 30/6/2024
- ✓** 45% complete



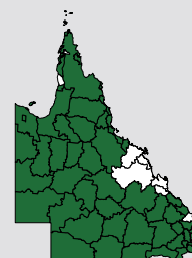
2022-23

- !** 8 events
- 🏠** 57 councils
- 💰** \$1.6 billion
- 🕒** 30/6/2025
- ✓** 20% complete



2023-24

- !** 12 events
- 🏠** 65 councils
- 💰** \$1.8 billion
- 🕒** 30/6/2026
- ✓** 0% complete



IN THE MARCH QUARTER

The **2019-2020 REPA** program has been delivered with the exception of DTMR’s Cunningham’s Gap project (\$134 million) under extension of time (EOT). 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 **\$826 million** across **50** council areas affected by **11** events. The program is **92%** complete, and payments of **\$472 million** have been made to date.

The **2021-2022** event year has a Current Program Value of **\$4.9 billion**. With **66** Councils affected by **9** events and **45%** complete, payments of **\$2 billion** have been paid to date.

The **2022-2023** event year has a Current Program Value of **\$1.6 billion** across **57** Council areas affected by **8** events. The program is **20%** complete, and QRA has paid **\$420 million**. Teams are currently focused on delivering the required assessments needed to establish the ERC, due 30 June 2024.

THE 2023-24 DISASTER SEASON

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Activations (DRFA)

Queensland has seen a range of disaster events impact communities and Local Government Areas across the state, which have included bushfires, heavy rainfall, flooding, severe storms and two Tropical Cyclones (TC). To date 65 councils across 12 events have been provided access to immediate financial assistance to support disaster recovery in the 2023-24 season:

- [Tropical Cyclone Kirrily, Associated Rainfall and Flooding, 25 Jan – 26 Feb 2024](#)
- [North Queensland Monsoon Trough, 12 – 22 Jan 2024](#)
- [Southwest Queensland Flooding 6 – 23 Jan 2024](#)
- [South East Queensland Severe Storms and Rainfall, 24 Dec 2023 – 3 Jan 2024](#)
- [Tropical Cyclone Jasper, 13 – 28 Dec 2023](#)
- [Brisbane and Ipswich Severe Storms, 15 – 16 Dec 2023](#)
- [Queensland Low Pressure Trough, 20 Nov – 1 Dec 2023](#)
- [The Pines and Condamine Farms Bushfire, 19 Nov – 1 Dec 2023](#)
- [Mount Isa Bushfire 23 Oct – 1 Nov 2023](#)
- [Southern Queensland Bushfires, 8 Sept – 7 Nov 2023](#)
- [Northern Queensland Bushfires, 18 Oct – 8 Dec 2023](#)
- [Nome and Julago Bushfire, 16 – 24 Sept 2023](#)

SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND SEVERE STORM AND RAINFALL

A severe line of thunderstorms moved through Southeast Queensland during the Christmas season with destructive winds, giant hail, and locally intense rainfall in parts of the Gold Coast, Logan and Scenic Rim Local Government Areas. The intense storm forged a destructive path which saw large scale power outages, fallen trees and debris, significant impact to dwellings and buildings, signal faults on road networks and a tragic fatality on the Gold Coast. Seven Local Government Areas were activated for DRFA assistance as a result of impacts from this event. Queensland Police Service (QPS) Assistant Commissioner Ben Marcus was appointed Deputy State Recovery Coordinator to assist impacted communities to recover, alongside the support from QRA Regional Liaison Officers (RLO) and Resilience and Recovery Officers (RRO).



TROPICAL CYCLONE JASPER

Mid-December saw a Category 2 Tropical Cyclone impact the far north of Queensland. Severe weather associated with Tropical Cyclone Jasper included damaging wind gusts, intense widespread heavy rainfall and dangerous, life-threatening flash flooding. Torrential rainfall up to 450mm fell in Far North Queensland causing significant impacts to rivers, roads, dwellings and buildings. Many communities were cut off requiring evacuations to places of refuge and significant recovery efforts are underway to help communities recover. Seventeen (17) Local Government Areas were activated for assistance under DRFA in response to this event. The Aboriginal Shire of Wujal Wujal experienced a record breaking flood requiring the evacuation of the whole town, leaving most buildings and roads within the community damaged or destroyed. Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing has been appointed Deputy State Recovery Coordinator to help communities recover from the devastating impacts from TC Jasper.



TROPICAL CYCLONE KIRRILY

In late January, TC KIRRILY crossed the coast just north of Townsville as a Category 3 system, causing flash flooding and major power outages in the region. The impact of TC KIRRILY was felt across the state, with rainfall associated with the system impacting as far south as the Moreton Bay area, leading to swift water rescues being undertaken by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), and as far west as McKinlay, which was evacuated due to the rainfall and flooding brought about by the remnants of the system as it drifted west. Thirty-six (36) Local Government Areas have been activated for DRFA assistance so far, making this the widest spread event this disaster season.



2023-24 STATE RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PLAN

QRA is leading the development of a State Recovery and Resilience Plan to support recovery from the disaster events of 2023-24. The aim is to ensure that impacted communities are not only supported during recovery but empowered to be more disaster resilient to future events.

The State Recovery and Resilience Plan will be nested under the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience and the Queensland Recovery Plan.

QRA is working with councils and Functional Recovery and Resilience Groups (FRRG) to identify common themes from the Local Recovery Plans, and map action plans to the locally identified needs.

The specific themes for the 2023-24 season sit under the State resilience priorities of Building Codes and Land Use planning; Crucial linkages / Infrastructure, Vulnerability and Environmental Protection.

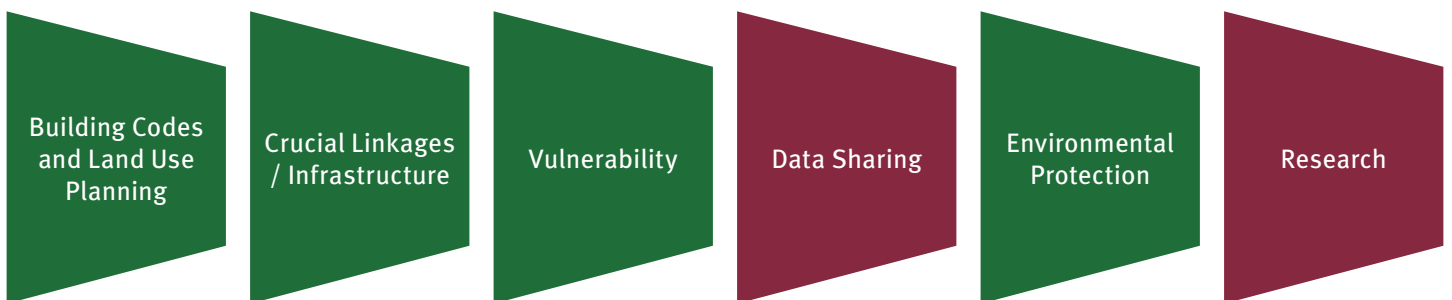


Image: SRRG Strategic Priorities, Dec 23.

The 2023-24 SRRP covers the entire disaster season of 2023-24 unlike former plans which were event specific. This shift is to improve the integration of the State plan across events and levels of government. A region's recovery is better supported through a single plan as it documents the cumulative effects of disasters over the season and enables a more comprehensive plan which addresses the total community, economic and environmental requirements. Delivery agents such as individual government departments, working under the leadership of their Functional Recovery and Resilience Group, can now address impacts in a more streamlined, efficient and effective manner.

RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

QRA's Resilience and Recovery team coordinate the development and implementation of disaster resilience and recovery planning, policy, funding, and support in Queensland.

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.

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.

Throughout the March 2024 quarter, QRA's Recovery team continued to engage with local governments and lead agency partners across the state.

QRA officers were deployed and provided ongoing direct recovery support to communities and local governments impacted by TC Jasper, including Cairns, Douglas, Wujal Wujal and Cook council areas. The officers worked closely with councils to:

- collate flood impacts across the communities
- participated in a Local Recovery Group, Sub-Group meetings, District and State Human and Social Functional Recovery and Resilience Group meetings.
- facilitate a TC Jasper Event Specific Local Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Further engagements were made with other local governments impacted by TC Kirrily, including engaging with McKinlay and Mount Isa councils to discuss recovery activities, provide assistance with Local Resilience Action Planning and plan for the delivery of recovery training to local stakeholders.

QRA officers travelled to City of Gold Coast and Scenic Rim Regional Council, which were impacted by the Southeast Queensland Severe Storms, to review recovery activities and discuss their input into the State Recovery and Resilience Plan.

During the quarter QRA's Recovery Team undertook an extensive engagement program with all local governments impacted by recent disaster events including the Southern Queensland Fires, the Northern Queensland Fires, TC Jasper, the Southeast Queensland Storms and TC Kirrily. The process identified local government's priorities for recovery planning and resilience action planning, and provided support and eligibility advice for a number of councils on their Disaster Ready Fund submissions.

DRFA Category C & D extraordinary assistance package – 2023-24 Events

QRA continues to work alongside councils, State Agencies and Non-Government Organisations to support recovery efforts across the impacted regions. Where significant impacts are experienced as a result of a disaster event, QRA works with state partners to develop extraordinary recovery and resilience packages to support short, medium and longer term recovery needs.

In response to the *September to November Queensland Bushfires*, *Tropical Cyclone Jasper* and the *SEQ Severe Storms*, QRA activated immediate assistance under standard DRFA measures and three phases of Category C and D extraordinary assistance have been developed and approved to provide short and medium-term targeted assistance for relief, emerging recovery needs and resilience building activities.

QRA is continuing to work with NEMA, State Agencies and Functional Resilience and Recovery Groups to develop additional assistance packages tailored to meet the medium to longer term recovery needs to assist community recovery across those areas most severely impacted across Queensland.

Northern and Southern Queensland Fires	
\$6 million	
<p>Local Resilience and Recovery Grants \$1 million in grants to support relief, recovery and resilience activities in areas impacted by the Queensland bushfires.</p>	<p>Exceptional Circumstance Recovery Grants for Primary Producers \$5 million in grants of up to \$75,000 to provide targeted assistance with clean up, restoration and recovery activities to eligible primary producers who have suffered direct damage.</p>
South East Queensland Storms	
\$3 million	
<p>Local Resilience and Recovery Grants \$3 million in grants to support relief, recovery and resilience activities in areas impacted by the South Queensland Storms.</p>	<p>Clean Up Program \$20 million shared between the TC Jasper, associated rainfall and flooding and the South Queensland Storms clean-up program to support Local Governments and State Agencies to undertake assessments and conduct extraordinary clean-up activities of rivers, waterways, beaches, national parks, communities and recreational assets including removal and disposal of disaster related debris.</p>
Tropical Cyclone Jasper	
\$40.6 million	
<p>Local Resilience and Recovery Grants \$9 million in grants to support relief, recovery and resilience activities in areas impacted by Tropical Cyclone Jasper.</p>	<p>Tourism Recovery \$5 million to support severely impacted local government areas that rely heavily on tourism with immediate support to recover from the significant impacts of TC Jasper through targeted relief and recovery activities such as a visitor incentive initiative, immediate hardship assistance and business support to assist the tourism sector directly.</p>
<p>Tourism Recovery and Resilience Program \$24.25 million program to undertake targeted relief and recovery activities such as exceptional financial assistance to isolated businesses that were inaccessible or a building resilience infrastructure grant for tourism operators and funding for a marketing, events and travel incentive.</p>	<p>Cyclone Industry Recovery and Resilience Officers \$2.25 million to engage Cyclone Industry Recovery and Resilience Officers to support primary producers for medium and longer term recovery needs including the development of industry-specific on-farm business resilience plans and the provision of technical advice on Cyclone recovery.</p>
Tropical Cyclone Jasper and South East Queensland Storms	
Shared Packages: \$71 million	
<p>Extraordinary Recovery Grants for Primary Producers \$25 million in grants shared between the TC Jasper, associated Rainfall and Flooding and the South Queensland Storms events to support targeted assistance with clean up, restoration and recovery activities to eligible primary producers who have suffered direct damage.</p>	<p>Extraordinary Recovery Grants for Small Businesses and not-for-profits \$25 million in grants shared between the TC Jasper, associated Rainfall and Flooding and the South Queensland Storms events to support eligible small business and not for profit organisations that have suffered direct damage and provide targeted assistance with clean up, restoration and recovery activities to assist these businesses/organisations return to business operations.</p>
<p>Recovery Project Managers \$1 million shared package between the TC Jasper, associated Rainfall and Flooding and the South Queensland Storms events to engage project managers and other skilled workers to design, coordinate and manage extraordinary recovery efforts following Tropical Cyclone Jasper, associated rainfall and flooding, or the South Queensland Severe storms and rainfall.</p>	<p>Clean Up Program \$20 million shared between the TC Jasper, associated rainfall and flooding and the South Queensland Storms events clean-up program to support Local Governments and State Agencies to undertake assessments and conduct extraordinary clean-up activities of rivers, waterways, beaches, national parks, communities and recreational assets including removal and disposal of disaster related debris.</p>

DRFA Category C & D extraordinary assistance package – 2021-22 Events

RESILIENT HOMES FUND

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 Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works is delivering the Resilient Retrofit and House-raising component of the Resilient Homes Fund, whilst QRA is managing the Voluntary Home Buy-Back (VHBB) program together with local governments.

To date, 981 homeowners have been approved to take part in the VHBB scheme in 12 local government areas (Brisbane, Fraser Coast, Gympie, Ipswich, Logan, Lockyer Valley, Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast, Goondiwindi, Somerset, Gold Coast and Noosa).

As at 28 March 2024, 876 valuation inspections have been undertaken across the twelve local government areas and 859 offers have been presented to homeowners with 681 having been accepted. To date, 613 contracts have settled, and 362 demolitions of properties have occurred across eight local government areas.

The Home Raise program is now also available to more Queenslanders. On Friday 8 November, an amendment to the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation 2011* was passed to change the home raise eligibility criteria, allowing more flood-affected homeowners to raise their home, demolish and rebuild or relocate the liveable rooms of their home. The changes include:

- Extending the \$100,000 Home Raise Program (including demolition, rebuild or relocate) funding to homeowners whose existing habitable floor level is below the assessed flood level **OR** the 2022 flood level. The original requirement was that homeowners needed to meet both criteria. Now homeowners must only meet one criteria and funding will be capped at \$100,000.
- Unlocking the \$50,000 Retrofit Program funding to allow homeowners to substitute these funds to raise their home, demolish and rebuild or relocate the non-habitable floor level (for example, a downstairs laundry or storage area) above the 2022 flood level or assessed flood level, whichever is higher. This funding is capped at \$50,000.

QRA has also worked collaboratively with Ipswich City Council and NEMA to help the Mi-Hi Grove Body Corporate Committee address the complexities of voluntary home buy-back within a community title scheme. There remains a strong desire amongst homeowners within the unit complex to proceed with VHBB. All homeowners within the complex have now registered for VHBB, with the final homeowner registering during the week of 20 November 2023, via an exceptional circumstances process.

A key obstacle to proceeding with buy-back for the complex were the costs associated with the settlement of the existing body corporate management rights to Mi-Hi Grove, noting the estimated cost (\$1.84 million) could not be absorbed by Council and are not eligible for funding via DRFA. To support

Council and the homeowners, the (then) Deputy Premier sought and gained support from the Premier in October 2023 for the Queensland Government to supplement the costs associated with settlement of the body corporate management rights, if required. On 9 November 2023, Ipswich City Council voted and supported the motion to proceed with the acquisition of Mi-Hi Grove.

QRA progressed the buy-back process and commenced the valuations process for all 42 properties on 22 November 2023. All homeowners have received their valuation reports and letters of offer. Of the 42 properties, 38 have accepted their presented offer so far and engagement is continuing with the remaining homeowners.

Property Level Flood Information Portal

Delivery of Property Level Flood Information Portal ("the Portal") continues, with 33 councils having formally confirmed their participation in the QRA-led portals solution. QRA is working closely with QIT Plus and eligible councils to develop the portals solution through the Discovery phase of the project. Usability Testing has now been conducted through PeakXD to ensure the system is user-friendly and effective for residents to easily access and understand vital flood risk information.

The Council Grant Program has now concluded, with interested councils submitting applications for up to \$250,000 for the development of new, and enhancement of existing, local government portals. This was made available to Councils who did not wish to opt-in to the QRA-led portals solution. Applications opened on 14 December 2023 and closed on 31 March 2024. On closure, two applications were received and are currently being assessed by QRA. This leaves four Councils of the 39 eligible under the program that did not opt in to the QRA led solution, or apply for grant funding.

The Portals initiative has the principal aim of helping residents 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 Portals 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 on their property and surrounding neighbourhood. Where data is limited, the system will still be implemented using existing datasets and allow for updates as new data becomes available.

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The \$31 million Flood Risk Management Program provides funding to undertake key activities to support evidence-based response, mitigation and resilience strategies to manage river, creek and overland flood risk. The program is comprised of three Work Packages (WPs):

- Community engagement and education material (WP1)
- LiDAR capture and floor level database (WP2)
- Flood studies, risk assessment and management strategies (WP3).

LiDAR Capture (WP2)

QRA is working closely with the Department of Resources and 26 local councils to capture Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data and the creation of a floor level database through Work Package 2 (WP2) of the Flood Risk Management Program.

The program will collect LiDAR for over 73,000km², which equates to an area larger than the size of Tasmania. Currently over 65,652km² of LiDAR has now been captured. Post-processing and quality assurance is progressing well with a total package completion of 65%. The final segment of Tranche 4 for LiDAR data acquisition is underway, with the exception of the Maranoa area.

South East Queensland Flood Forecasting and Warning System (WP3)

QRA is working with the Bureau of Meteorology to develop the South East Queensland Flood Forecasting and Warning System (SEQFFWS) which will deliver 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 with stakeholders in July 2023 to confirm requirements and delivery planning and has recently provided QRA with a draft project Delivery Plan for consultation in December 2023. QRA has reviewed and made comments on the draft project Delivery Plan, with final review by the Bureau underway.

This includes a decadal roadmap that divides delivery into three timeframes: one to two years, three to five years, and six to ten years, along with an implementation plan focusing on the one to two-year timeframe. The primary focus of the early work relates to probabilistic rainfall modelling and engagement with Councils across Southeast Queensland to identify elements from this work that can be transformed into SAP Business products or services.

Flood studies, risk assessment and management strategies and intelligence systems (WP3)

Under Work Package 3, \$18.25 million is available to 37 councils, with 128 approved projects in flood studies, flood risk management plans, and flood warning intelligence systems, so they're better prepared for floods. QRA continues providing support to councils in the delivery of their approved flood risk management projects through the established Peer Review and Technical Advisory Panels, along with QRA flood team assistance where required.

Emergency Response Fund – Flood Warning Infrastructure Network Program (ERF FWIN)

The ERF FWIN program consists of \$7 million 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 are eligible for funding under this program to improve Queensland's Flood Warning Infrastructure.

All 23 eligible Councils submitted applications for ERF FWIN funding for amounts of up to \$235,000 to enhance flood warning infrastructure assets, in addition to delivering rain and river gauges identified by the Bureau of Meteorology through the National Flood Warning Infrastructure Network Program (NFWINP). Councils have been informed of their successful projects. The ERF FWIN webpage is now live with detailed information on approved projects and funding for each agency qra.qld.gov.au/ERF/ERF-FWIN-program-2021-22. Final deadline for project completion is 30 June 2025.

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.

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 amount	Approved projects
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2019-20)	\$13.1M	68
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2020-21) and Manag-ing Disaster Risk (2020-21)	\$19.1M	82
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2021-22) and Manag-ing 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	under assessment
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)	\$5.4M	6
Disaster Ready Fund 2023-24 – Round 1	\$84M	50
Disaster Ready Fund 2024-25 – Round 2	TBC	under assessment

Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (QRRRF) 2023-24

Applications for the fifth and final round of the QRRRF (2023-24) closed on Wednesday 20 December 2023.

The QRRRF is funded 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.

QRA is currently assessing the project applications and applicants will be notified of an outcome by 30 June 2024.

Further information on the QRRRF 2023-24 is available on the QRA website: gra.qld.gov.au/QRRRF2023-24

Protecting our Communities (Disaster Resilience) Program

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 projects are being delivered in two tranches – Tranche 1 is being administered by the Commonwealth and Tranche 2 is being administered by QRA.

Tranche 2 projects include:

Applicant	Project Description	Cwth Funding
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
Richmond Shire Council	Coalbrook Road culvert crossing replacement	\$301,620
Rockhampton Regional Council	Gracemere Integrated Emergency Communications System	\$500,000

QRA is working with the Commonwealth and identified applicants to develop funding agreements to enable projects to commence.

Disaster Ready Fund (DRF)

The Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) is the Australian Government’s flagship disaster risk reduction initiative which will fund a diverse set of projects in partnership with states and territories to deliver medium-term and long-term national outcomes, investing up to \$1 billion over the next five years.

Under Round 1 of the DRF (2023-24), 50 projects were approved in Queensland for more than \$84 million in Commonwealth funding to support disaster risk reduction initiatives, including 40 projects for councils, three for state agencies, five for non-government organisations and two for universities. QRA continues to work with successful applicants and the Commonwealth to finalise implementation plans for this funding round and establish project funding agreements.

Applications for DRF Round 2 (2024-25) opened on Monday 22 January 2024 and closed on Wednesday 20 March 2024 with 145 applications worth more than \$458 million received – seeking \$252 million in Commonwealth funding. A total of \$200 million is available for this round across Australia. QRA has commenced an initial assessment of these projects for submission to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) for final decision-making in the coming months. Successful applicants will be notified of the outcomes after July 2024.

DISASTER AND EMERGENCY SERVICES REFORM

The Queensland Government is undertaking a reform program to address the function and structure, culture, efficiency and funding and sustainability of our disaster and emergency services.

For QRA, the reforms mean an uplift in capability and capacity to improve resilience across the state and deliver its mission of stronger, safer and more resilient Queensland communities.

As part of the reforms, certain disaster management functions and activities will transition to QRA.

From 1 July 2024, QRA will be responsible for leading state-level hazard and risk functions, including the design and delivery of a risk assessment tool that is locally appropriate, cost-effective and fit for purpose.

QRA’s remit of responsibility will also include certain projects and activities within the community engagement and education and community awareness campaigns functions.

LAUNCH OF NATIONAL DISASTER RECOVERY NEEDS ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

Disaster recovery looks different for every community, and to understand what a community needs it’s important to ask the right questions.

QRA partnered with NEMA and the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Community Outcomes and Recovery Sub-Committee to develop the National Disaster Recovery Needs Assessment (DRNA) Guidelines.

This is a framework to identify specific impacts, needs, available services and gaps in disaster affected communities so the right support can be provided. The new guidelines can be applied to disasters of all types and sizes, and take into account the diverse needs and resources of individual communities. They are also nationally compatible, making it easier for recovery practitioners to support colleagues interstate when needed.

The new guidelines are available at: nema.gov.au/about-us/policies/strategies-and-frameworks/national-disaster-recovery-needs-assessment-guidelines

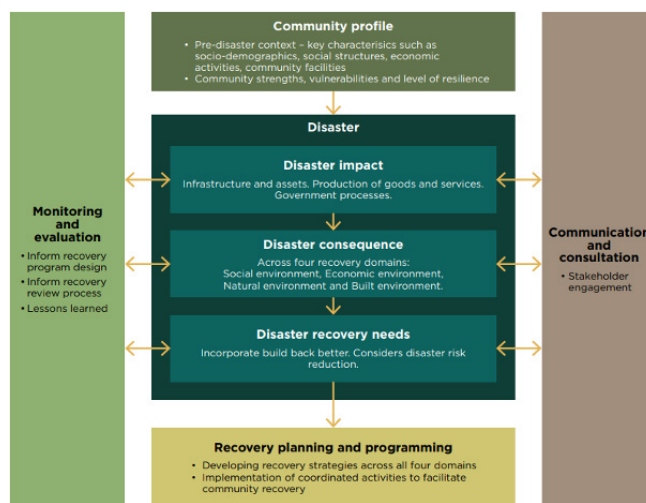
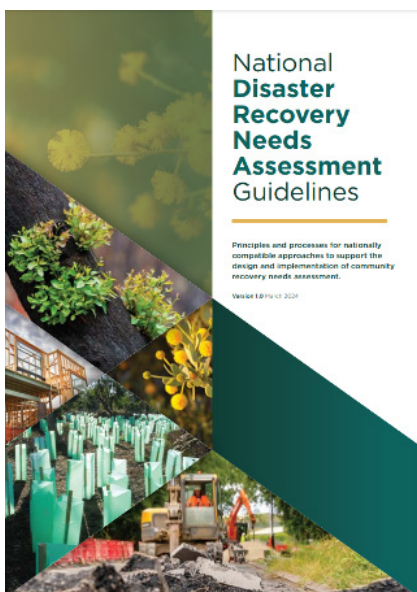


Figure: Disaster Recovery Assessment Cycle. Adapted from AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 Risk management – Guidelines

GET READY QUEENSLAND (GRQ)

GRQ is a year-round, community resilience program that helps Queenslanders prepare for disasters. The program integrates 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.

Celebrating Resilience

Resilient Australia Awards Return for 2024!



The Resilient Australia Awards are making a comeback this year, ready to shine the spotlight on disaster resilience initiatives across Queensland!

These awards celebrate projects and partnerships that have emerged between communities, schools, government agencies, universities, and the private sector.

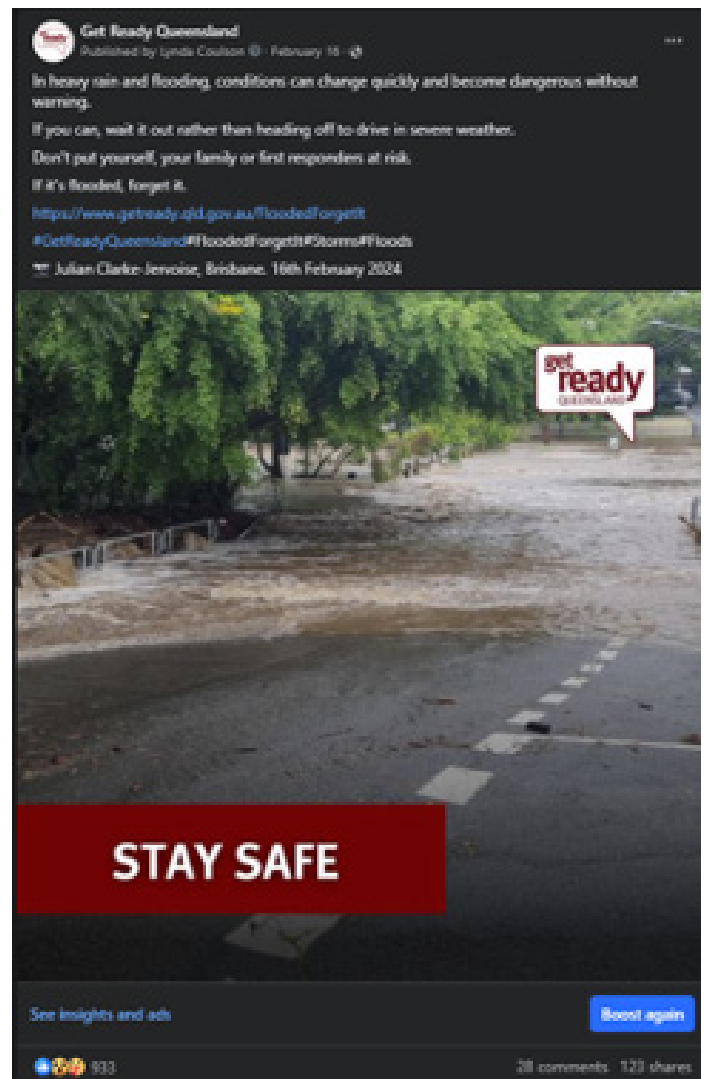
The GRQ Team is reaching out to key stakeholders that may know of outstanding projects or collaborations that have contributed to making Queensland the most resilient state in Australia. Whether it’s a community-driven initiative or a groundbreaking partnership, the GRQ Team is supporting application development.

If It’s Flooded Forget It Update

The recent If Its Flooded Forget It (IIFFI) 2023-2024 advertising campaign concluded on 31 March. It garnered over 21.8 million online impressions (16.8 million in the last three months) and 125,000 web visits since its launch in December. The media spend included \$200,000 for contingency radio ads statewide and in First Nation community radio, strategically boosted ahead of severe weather events including Tropical Cyclones Jasper, Kirrily, Lincoln, and Megan. The IIFFI website, severe weather contingency radio and social media presence will be active until the campaign relaunches in December.

Funded by the Camera Detected Offence Program (CDOP), the campaign’s success was commended recently by the Queensland Road Safety Board and Steering Committee, particularly noting its engagement rate, which was nearly three times higher than the Queensland Government benchmark for similar campaigns. The existing campaign is currently due to run for a total of three years without additional campaign creative, but a media buy budget of \$1M per year.

Foundational research on Queenslanders’ floodwater vehicular risk perception and behaviours has been completed statewide, with the initial analysis report expected in the coming weeks. Post-IIFFI campaign research is scheduled to begin in mid-April.



The ‘Stay Safe’ posts reached 21,000 people and had 2,700 interactions for a \$100 boost.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

TROPICAL CYCLONE KIRRILY: THE NORTHERN SYSTEM THAT BECAME A STATEWIDE DISASTER EVENT

With Queensland still reeling from the one-two punch of Tropical Cyclone Jasper and the south Queensland severe storms over the Christmas-new year period, another tropical cyclone struck, with impacts felt in the north and north-west to the south-east and all points in between.

Tropical Cyclone Kirrily crossed the Queensland coast as a Category 3 system just north of Townsville around 10 pm on 25 January 2024 and proceeded to dump more than a metre of rain even outside the immediate impact zone, causing chaos over the Australia Day long weekend.

Soon after Kirrily’s arrival, power outages and localised floodwaters impacted thousands around the greater Townsville area.

As Kirrily moved west in the following days, more than 300mm of rain was dumped across south-east Queensland overnight on 29-30 January, causing severe and widespread flash flooding.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) carried out 13 swift water rescues in the Moreton Bay suburbs of Bray Park and Brendale where houses were inundated.

QFES were also called to homes in the Somerset, Lockyer Valley and Darling Downs regions.

But ex-Tropical Cyclone Kirrily wasn’t done yet and continued to dump record amounts of rain over the weeks that followed.

Towns as far afield as Kynuna in McKinlay and Warra in the Western Downs were evacuated ahead of floodwaters.

Out west, Kirrily turned the dusty plains of the Diamantina into an inland sea, isolating towns and homesteads throughout western Queensland.

Kirrily has been a very significant event, with the effects felt from Mornington and Burke in the far north-west to Moreton Bay, Ipswich and the Lockyer Valley in the south-east.

More than 1,270 initial damage assessments have been conducted across Queensland to date in response to Cyclone Kirrily, revealing 126 properties have suffered minor damage, 96 properties with moderate damage, 29 with severe damage, and one property totally destroyed.

In response to Kirrily, QRA activated a range of disaster assistance measures under the joint Commonwealth-state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) to support flood-affected individuals and families with their immediate recovery needs.

This includes Personal Hardship Assistance grants for the purchase of emergency items like food, clothing and medicine, and other financial measures to help eligible residents make their homes safe to live in and to reconnect essential services.

As at 13 March 2024, more than \$18.2 million in Personal Hardship Assistance payments have been made, benefitting more than 100,000 people.

Funding is also available for councils to address immediate recovery needs such as the restoration of public assets and to reimburse for counter disaster operations like sandbagging and the stand up of local evacuation hubs.

Queensland Police Service (QPS) Assistant Commissioner Ben Marcus, initially appointed Deputy State Recovery Coordinator for the south Queensland Christmas-New Year storms, was subsequently appointed to the same role for Tropical Cyclone Kirrily.

AC Marcus helped lead the massive task of coordinating disaster recovery operations, including providing strategic advice to government agencies and regular recovery updates to communities.

Several months on, QRA is continuing to work closely with all 40 impacted local councils, and state agencies, to support recovery efforts.

QRA is coordinating a long-term State Recovery and Resilience Plan for the events in the 2023-2024 disaster season and will be meeting with the Commonwealth to develop further targeted funding packages to support the recovery and resilience of communities hardest hit.

Tropical Cyclone Kirrily has been a highly unpredictable weather system but QRA is doing whatever is needed to help Queenslanders get through this challenging period and progress on the road to recovery.



Major floods are still current throughout western Queensland.



Floodwaters from Tropical Cyclone Kirrily lap Burke Shire Council buildings



Kirrily brought down large trees and powerlines in Townsville

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

EMERGENCY HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR BUSHFIRE VICTIMS

Hot, dry and windy conditions from September 2023 led to extreme fire danger across northern and southern Queensland and the ignition of multiple fast-moving bushfires that left a burn scar of more than 750,000 hectares.

In Tara, a rural township in the Western Downs region, these fires burned through more than 11,000 hectares, and 350 people were evacuated.

The fires destroyed 37 primary residences, 21 secondary residences, 19 sheds, and nine other structures.

As part of the immediate disaster response, the Queensland Government’s Department of Housing activated its Temporary Emergency Accommodation Plan to ensure severely affected Tara residents would keep a roof over their head.

In early November 2023, a convoy of 23 caravans rolled into Tara to provide temporary accommodation for vulnerable locals at risk of prolonged homelessness and distress.

Tara Showgrounds morphed into a central emergency recovery hub for the town’s displaced residents.

One of those residents was Clair, whose caravan – her home – was engulfed by flames. Clair was putting the finishing touches on her caravan ahead of a trip around Australia, but the fires turned that plan on its head.

Following the bushfires Clair relocated to Tara Showgrounds and was able to use the emergency accommodation as a base to get back on her feet.

She applied for a Structural Assistance Grant, which is part of the joint State-Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, and with the money was able to buy a new caravan to replace her previous one destroyed in the fire.

The income-tested grant provides up to \$50,000 to uninsured, disaster impacted Queensland owner-occupiers to help repair or replace their damaged dwelling to a safe and habitable condition.

“The Community Recovery team were great,” Clair said. “It might be a long path ahead but I know I’ve got the right support.”

Although emergency accommodation is no longer active at Tara Showgrounds, affected residents continue to receive assistance through the local Community Recovery Hub to source alternative housing arrangements.

Some residents have moved to a longer-term residential solution, the Tara Recovery Accommodation Park.

This park has been transformed into a housing hub for 15 locals still affected by the bushfires, offering transportable and modular homes, and sites for caravans.



Burnt out bushland in the Western Downs – November 2023



Caravans at the Tara Recovery Accommodation Park – February 2024 (July 2023)

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

\$1.5 MILLION FOR CALD COMMUNITIES TO GET READY

In a win for disaster-prone communities throughout Australia, the Australian Government has recently announced more than \$5.4 million in funding to reduce the risk and limit the impact of future natural disasters.

As part of this funding package, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's flagship resilience program, Get Ready Queensland has been granted \$1.5 million to create a series of natural hazard information videos and Easy Read resources for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities across Australia.

The objective of the grant is to build Australian's disaster resilience by improving accessibility and inclusivity of key disaster information, including types of extreme weather, their impacts and ways to mitigate risks at a household and community level.

The videos and complementary resources will be developed by GRQ for use across Australia and focus on seven natural hazards: bushfires, floods, cyclones, storms, heatwaves, earthquakes and tsunamis.

The videos and resources will then be translated into the most common CALD languages.

This approach aims to improve the disaster resilience of all Australians, regardless of their language or literacy barriers. The use of simplified language and images means local authorities can also get the Easy Read resources translated into other languages spoken in their locality where there is community need.

Consistent messaging will help improve communication about natural hazards across Australia between local, district, regional, state and federal levels and is intended to increase disaster awareness and preparedness.

Being aware of local risks and having a household emergency plan could be the difference between staying safe or putting yourself and your family in danger.

The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have committed \$261 million over five years from 2019-20 through the DRRP which is designed to reduce the risk and impact of disasters in line with the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework.

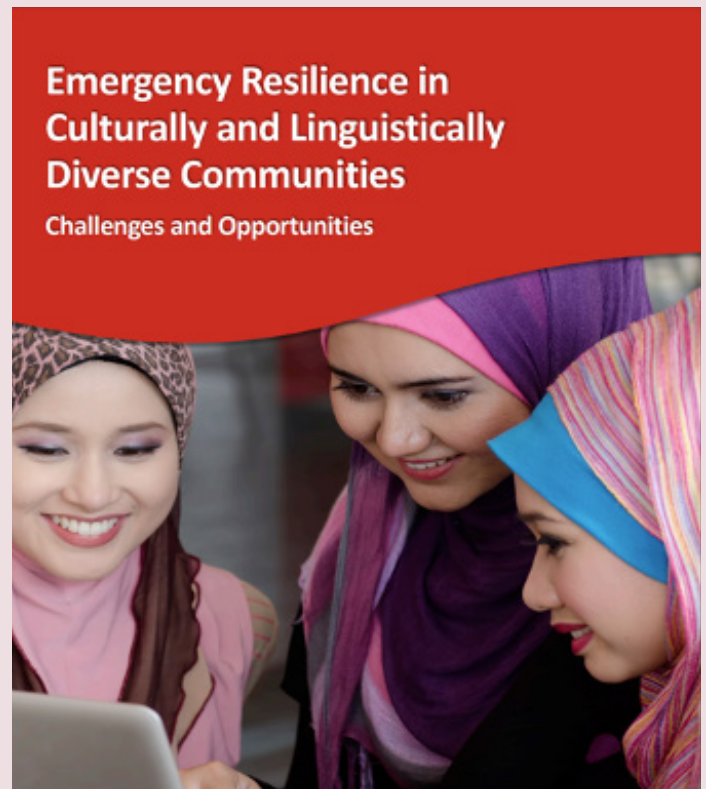


Image courtesy of the Australian Red Cross

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

BIG WIN FOR QUEENSLAND’S FLOOD WARNING INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK (FWIN)

Queensland’s flood resilience is set to be further strengthened with \$7 million worth of new and upgraded assets for the state’s Flood Warning Infrastructure Network (FWIN).

The investment will deliver 170 projects comprising 273 flood warning infrastructure assets across the 23 councils hardest hit by the 2022 Queensland floods, from Balonne through the south-east to Gladstone.

Earlier flood warnings and more comprehensive information will significantly improve our defence against disaster events.

Each council will receive up to \$235,000 for their new flood warning infrastructure, with a further \$1 million going towards 14 high priority projects recommended by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) within nine of the eligible councils.

Funding is coming from the Australian Government’s \$75 million Emergency Response Fund, which is backing numerous local recovery and resilience projects across southern Queensland.

The projects will address local flood warning needs identified by councils, Queensland’s Department of Transport and Main Roads, and BOM for Australia’s National Flood Warning Infrastructure Network Program (NFWINP).

In recent years Queensland has experienced more frequent and intense floods, especially flash flooding, which is why these new Flood Warning Infrastructure Network projects are so crucial.

Councils will use the funding to purchase and install assets such as rainfall and river height gauges, flood cameras, electronic signage, data communication repeaters, and sensor technology, with BOM to take ownership of the assets for the NFWINP after installation.

Councils receiving flood warning infrastructure assets under this latest FWIN investment include Balonne, Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cherbourg, Fraser Coast, Gold Coast, Goondiwindi, Gladstone, Gympie, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Logan, Moreton Bay, Noosa, North Burnett, Redland, Scenic Rim, Somerset, South Burnett, Southern Down, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, and Western Downs.

The \$7 million investment in Queensland’s Flood Warning Infrastructure Network builds on work already done by the Queensland and Australian Governments, councils and the Local Government Association of Queensland, to help keep communities safe during severe weather.

Since 2017 the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) has secured more than \$25 million for the state’s FWIN, which features more than 3,300 rainfall and river gauges operated by approximately 60 entities across government and the private sector.

This latest devastating disaster season has again illustrated the need to ensure our Flood Warning Infrastructure Network is robust and fit-for-purpose.



Examples of FWIN in Queensland: (top) An automatic River Height Camera; (bottom) Automatic Flood Warning Road sign

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

TC JASPER CAUSES MAJOR SLOPE DAMAGE ON KURANDA RANGE ROAD

Extensive slope repairs will be required along part of the Kennedy Highway (Cairns–Mareeba) – known locally as Kuranda Range Road – after record rain associated with Tropical Cyclone Jasper in December 2023 caused numerous severe landslips.

Kuranda Range Road is the winding 11.5-kilometre section of the highway that runs along the Macalister Range west of Cairns, linking the suburb of Smithfield with the town of Kuranda on the Atherton Tableland.

After TC Jasper crossed the coast north of Port Douglas on 13 December 2023, rainfall totalling 1891mm was recorded in less than a week at nearby Kuranda Railway Station. This resulted in more than 30 landslips along the road and damaged ITS infrastructure that displays variable speed limits and real time information about road conditions. Kuranda Range Road was temporarily closed for safety.

Extensive emergency works were required to clear landslide debris and commence repairs on damaged ITS infrastructure. The road reopened on 20 December 2024 with some sections reduced to a single lane with traffic control for safety. Some night works were undertaken, requiring a full closure from 9pm to 4am on 4 to 6 January 2024. Additional night works are being undertaken in March 2024.

Following further geotechnical assessments, design work will commence for repairs to the more severely damaged landslide sites along Kuranda Range Road.

The severe weather caused significant loss of vegetation along Kuranda Range Road and some of the major landslide sites pose a significant risk for further damage to the road if the area experiences more significant rainfall events over the wet season. For the safety of road users, the road may be closed at short notice.

The recovery works are jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



Kuranda Range Road – landslide (December 2023)



Kuranda Range Road – landslide (December 2023)



Kuranda Range Road – night works (January 2024)



Kuranda Range Road – fallen vegetation (December 2023)



Kuranda Range Road – landslide site (February 2024)

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

ROUTH CREEK BRIDGE REOPENED NINE DAYS AFTER MAJOR FLOOD DAMAGE

Critical earthwork repairs were completed in just nine days to reopen Routh Creek Bridge on the Gulf Developmental Road, after it sustained significant damage from monsoonal flooding.

The Gulf Developmental Road is a major north Queensland road link from south-west of Cairns to south of Normanton near the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The region was already saturated from record rainfall associated with Tropical Cyclone Jasper when subsequent severe weather in January 2024 caused further flooding. A total of 252 millimetres was reported at nearby Georgetown Airport during the North Queensland Monsoon Trough.

As a result, the eastern abutment of Routh Creek Bridge sustained significant damage, cutting the Gulf Developmental Road from Georgetown to Mount Surprise from 20 January 2024.

There was no viable alternative route, as motorists would have been forced to drive an additional 2000 kilometres with the bridge out of operation.

Transport and Main Roads (TMR) crews were rapidly dispatched to site to undertake damage assessments. Emergency works commenced on 23 January 2024, with assistance from Etheridge Shire Council crews, who removed damaged guardrail and prepared the bridge for repair.

Works included removing the damaged embankment, constructing a new rock foundation and restoring the bridge pavement over the eastern abutment.

Routh Creek Bridge reopened to traffic on 29 January 2024, with further sealing works completed on 31 January 2024. The bridge is open to all general mass limits vehicles under single lane and speed restrictions while TMR plans further restoration works.

The recovery works are jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



Gulf Developmental Road at Routh Creek Bridge – damage from North Queensland Monsoon Trough in January 2024 (Image: Queensland Police Service)



Gulf Developmental Road at Routh Creek Bridge – emergency works to remove the damaged embankment at the eastern abutment (January 2024)



Gulf Developmental Road at Routh Creek Bridge – emergency works to restore the rock foundation around the eastern abutment (January 2024)



Gulf Developmental Road at Routh Creek Bridge – damage from North Queensland Monsoon Trough in January 2024 (Image: Queensland Police Service)



Gulf Developmental Road at Routh Creek Bridge – completed