

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.

In April

QRA undertook a detailed review of the Delivery Program and has revised program values based on updated estimates of final eligible costs. This included preliminary estimates for the five 2020 Events.

As a result, the value of Delivery Program has been revised from \$1.770B to \$2.05 B.

Status of NDRRA/DRFA Delivery Program

	2018 Events	2019 Events	2020 Events
NUMBER OF EVENTS	6	12	5
\$2,050M Delivery Program	\$282M Program	\$1,440M Program	\$329M Program
\$664M Current Spend	\$226M Spend to date	\$419M Spend to date	\$19M Spend to date
Deadline for Delivery	30 June 2020	30 June 2021	30 June 2022
Time Elapsed	88%	38%	-
% Completion	80% complete	29% complete	6% complete

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

NDRRA/DRFA Grants Program

Since establishment, QRA has administered recovery and reconstruction program through the joint State-Commonwealth Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) worth more than \$16 billion.

Acquittal:

The 2018-19 NDRRA/DRFA Claim was submitted to the Commonwealth on 31 March 2020 accompanied, as required, by an unmodified audit opinion. The Claim acquitted \$840M recovery expenditure delivered in the 2018-19 financial year. The Claim is currently under assurance review by the Commonwealth, following which close to \$500 million of Commonwealth funding is expected to be released to the state by 30 June 2020. The next claim relating to the 2019-20 financial year is due for lodgement to the Commonwealth in March 2021.

Impact of COVID-19 on NDRRA/DRFA Programs

QRA is working with all parties with an active recovery program to understand impacts of COVID-19. The majority of councils have been able to progress works but with some experiencing delays due to access restrictions for councils, consultants and contractors to undertake works or prepare tenders.

QRA has sought and received approval from the Commonwealth for extensions of time for delivery and approvals across the active program. These extensions are being managed by QRA on an individual project basis, with QRA officers remaining in close contact with all delivery agents in order to minimise delays wherever possible.

DISASTER ASSISTANCE - Additional Recovery Measures

QRA is administering a suite of exceptional DRFA assistance measures for recent events.

Queensland Bushfires (2019) - \$30.175M

Tourism Recovery package	\$6 M
Marketing Campaign	\$1.5M
Tourism Recovery Officers (TROs)	\$500k
Tourism Recovery Fund for Local Government	\$3M
Walking Trail Restoration and Resilience	\$1M
Binna Burra Recovery Package	\$1.775M
Mental Health and Wellbeing	\$4.7M
Community Development Officers (CDOs)	\$3M
Flexible Funding Grants	\$6M
Monitoring and Evaluation	\$300K
Bushfire Recovery Exceptional Assistance Immediate Support Package	\$8.4M

In April, the Commonwealth announced an expansion of its fully-funded Exceptional Assistance Immediate Support Package to a further eight impacted councils at an additional cost of \$1.975 million.

Works for
23
events
from
2018 | 2019 | 2020
disaster seasons are currently in delivery with an estimated value in excess of
\$2.05B

North & FNQ Monsoon Trough (2019) - \$242M

Infrastructure \$134.5M • \$91.3M allocated to date to 56 projects, to restore and improve the disaster resilience of flood damaged essential public, community and water assets.

Economic \$39M • 5 Industry Recovery Officers and 3 Rural Financial Counsellors in operation.
• 203 small business grants approved to the value of \$1.96M.
• Over 200 business owners accessed free mentoring under the Department of Small Business, Employment and Training (DESBT) Mentoring for Growth program.
• 41 Travel bursaries provided for delegates to attend the Destination Q Events Conference.
• \$1.7M provided to councils for fodder supply costs.

Environment \$36M • Riparian Recovery Program – 114 projects worth \$33.74M recommended across riparian reconnaissance, urgent riparian works, Coastal Recovery Program and the Regional Invasive Species Program.
• \$100,000 Emergency Response Program for Parthenium Weed is being delivered through Department of Agriculture and Fisheries as an emergency response.

Human & Social \$12.75M • 9 Community Development Officers in place.
• Mental Health program is in delivery with 13 clinicians, social and health workers and one Child and Youth Mental Health service delivering services through the Townsville, North West and Central West Hospital and Health Services (HHS).

Resilience \$19.75M • Flexible Funding Grants totalling \$4.5M approved across 68 projects. The projects will continue to support and enable recovery, and contribute to building awareness and resilience.
• Townsville Flood Mapping project initiated.

Central Queensland Bushfires (2018) - \$12.0M

Human & Social \$3.79M • 3 Community Development Officers delivering program across 8 councils.
• Mental Health program - 6 clinicians appointed across Rockhampton, Mackay and Wide Bay HSSs.

Resilience \$8.25M • \$1.5M Rural Residential Recovery program has commenced roll-out with over \$1.2M paid to date
• \$5.19M has supported 78 Queensland-based community groups, non-government organisations, industry groups and local governments to deliver projects across 8 local government areas as a result of successful Flexible Funding Grant applications.
• Bushfire awareness campaign underway.

RECOVERY

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

Event Specific Recovery Plans

QRA is currently coordinating 3 state event specific recovery plans:

Queensland Bushfires (2019)

The Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan addresses bushfires that occurred across the state during the period September to December 2019. Functional Recovery Groups have completed recovery action plans which have been incorporated into the Plan. Gladstone, Southern Downs, Noosa, Livingstone, Somerset, Scenic Rim and Toowoomba Regional Councils have endorsed their event specific local recovery plans. Lockyer Valley Regional Council is finalising their event specific recovery plan.

North & FNQ Monsoon Trough (2019)

The third quarterly progress report is being progressed through Government for consideration.

Central Queensland Bushfires (2018)

Local Government and State agencies are continuing to support the recovery objectives outlined in the recovery plan. Flexible funding grants have enabled Council to use innovative approaches to recovery including the development of Rural Community Connect in the Central Highlands and an art education program in Mackay. The third progress report is currently progressing through Government for consideration.

Delivery underway on **20** completed Council event-specific recovery plans related to the Central Queensland Bushfires and the NFNQ Monsoon Trough

8 Council event-specific recovery plans being finalised for the Queensland Bushfire event

Recovery Projects and activities

COVID-19

In light of the current COVID-19 current activities, 16 Councils have stood up a recovery planning capability. Engagement with local governments is underway. QRA is:

- providing assistance and tools to Local Recovery Groups across the state to enable the capture of impacts and the completion of impact assessments
- providing advice on the development of event specific recovery plans
- supporting the district with recovery coordination as required.

Evaluation of Agricultural Recovery following the 2019 North & FNQ Monsoon Trough

Evaluation of the agricultural industries' recovery following the North and FNQ Monsoon Trough progressed in April. Following consultation with Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) staff and Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) managers, individual surveys of the four Coastal Industry Recovery Officers were undertaken in February 2020. Outcomes of these surveys were presented to a meeting of the same people to clarify the key findings. The evaluation report is currently being completed.

Early findings indicate that:

- coastal recovery officers have been effective in assisting producers in the Burdekin, Townsville and Hinchinbrook Local Government Areas access grants to facilitate recovery; and
- substantive grant amount of \$75,000 appears to have assisted farmers accelerate their recovery from the event.

Further work is required to validate the findings with beneficiaries (farmers) and evidence-based recommendations for industry recovery programs are being prepared.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

IMPORTANT QRA RECOVERY WORK CONTINUES IN THE FACE OF COVID

While the world is focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, many Queensland communities are still recovering from the four flooding events that impacted the state since January this year.

40 of Queensland's 77 local government areas have been activated for joint State and Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) assistance as a result of these floods.

With 98 per cent of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's (QRA) staff working from home, and strict travel restrictions in place throughout Queensland, QRA's staff aren't letting these obstacles stop them from supporting local governments in their recovery efforts.

QRA is currently working with all impacted councils to prepare DRFA funding submissions with early indications suggesting the combined cost of damage to public infrastructure could be in excess of \$190 million.

Innovation has come to the fore for QRA staff who have been participating remotely in Local Disaster Management Group and Local Recovery Group meetings via online video conferencing to monitor the recovery situation.

This was certainly on display during QRA's remote in-field assessment with Cook Shire Council in the last week of April 2020.

QRA staff met with representatives from Cook Shire Council via video conference to assess submissions to repair infrastructure damaged by the monsoonal flooding earlier this year.

While in-field assessments are usually done face to face, the video conference option allowed both parties a safe and practical alternative to build DRFA funding submissions.

When asked to reflect on this novel approach, Cook Shire Council's Technical Development Officer Paul Thomas said there were several benefits the new way of working provided.

"The use of the online meeting medium is great. It saves on money, travel and accommodation, is far more flexible in availability and scheduling, and yet it delivers all of the same outcomes," Mr Thomas said.

"We would definitely consider online options in the post-COVID world, as this is an excellent way for remote councils like ours to connect with QRA and assess DRFA submissions."

Remotely staged in-field assessments are just one of the many new and innovation processes QRA is trialling during the lockdown stage of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the state-wide recovery from recent natural disasters continues and no communities are left behind.



Image: QRA staff meet via video conference to successfully carry out an infield assessment with Cook Shire Council's Technical Development Officer Paul Thomas.

RESILIENCE

QRA leads the coordination and development of whole-of-government policies for managing flood risk, improving the resilience of communities, and facilitating mitigation against potential disasters.

Resilience grant programs

National Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP)

Jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland governments, the National Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP) supports community groups, government and non-government agencies, as well as Queensland based not-for-profits, to build disaster resilience across the state. A total of **\$14.9 M** of funds was allocated to **76 approved projects** from **54 councils** and **14 organisations and agencies** in the 2017-18 funding round. Projects were due to be completed by 30 June 2020, with 33 NDRP projects reported as complete at 1 April 2020. On 21 April 2020, EMA agreed to Queensland’s request to extend this deadline to 30 June 2021 to accommodate delays associated with cessation of works related to COVID-19 isolation issues, e.g. delays in community consultations, site inspections and consultants’ capacity to undertake work.

Queensland Disaster Resilience Fund (QDRF) and Prepared Communities Fund (PCF)

For 2018-19, **\$10.65M** was allocated to **73 projects** to strengthen the resilience of Queensland communities, including funding under the **QDRF (\$9.5M, 62 projects)** and State-Commonwealth funding under the **PCF (\$1.15M, 11 projects)**. As with NDRP, on 21 April 2020, EMA agreed to extend the deadline for final performance reporting for PCF from 30 June 2020 to 30 June 2021 to accommodate delays in supply of materials and equipment, road closures, isolation and lockdowns.

National Partnership on Disaster Risk Reduction

Queensland’s Implementation Plan for the National Partnership on Disaster Risk Reduction was submitted to the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management for approval on 29 April 2020. The Implementation Plan outlines a competitive grants program as the mechanism to allocate funds towards statewide and regional disaster risk reduction and resilience priorities in Queensland. Once the Commonwealth has endorsed Queensland’s Implementation Plan, the grants program will open. The grants program is called the Queensland Risk Reduction and Resilience Fund and will accept applications from local governments, state agencies, not-for-profits and volunteer groups for initiatives that will help reduce disaster risk and build resilience.

Get Ready Queensland (GRQ)

GRQ provides Queensland Government funding for grants and community awareness campaigns to help local governments improve their communities’ resilience.

In May, QRA will provide advice to councils on their allocations for the 2020-21 Get Ready Queensland program with submissions due by mid-June 2020. All GRQ funding must be directed towards activities that enhance community resilience and knowledge of being prepared for disasters.

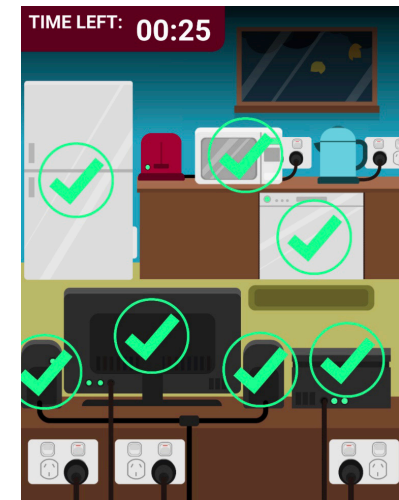
Submissions for the 2020 Resilient Australia Awards have been extended to 8 June 2020. The Resilient Australia Awards is a national program to recognise initiatives that strengthen community disaster resilience across six categories including community, school, business, local government, state/federal government and photography.

Get Ready Queensland is proud to be the state convener for the Awards to help promote the excellent work local councils, community groups, schools and individuals do to prepare and protect communities across Queensland.

QRA is promoting nomination opportunities for the Queensland awards and is investigating options for a virtual local awards ceremony due to potential COVID-19 restrictions.

Award nominations can be submitted at **www.aidr.org.au/programs/resilient-australia-awards**.

In May, GRQ will be launching an app designed to educate children and adults on how to prepare their household for natural disasters. The game has nine competition levels, with each stage challenging the player to complete a new resilience-building task for the game’s virtual community. The GRQ team will use this app when visiting schools and other conventions.



Images above: Get Ready Queensland app.

Resilience projects and activities

**Resilient Queensland 2018-2021:
Delivering the Queensland Strategy
for Disaster Resilience**

- Resilient Queensland in Action was released on 21 February 2020 as the progress update on delivering the first 18 months of Resilient Queensland, demonstrating how we are implementing the QSDR. It includes case studies and initiatives showcasing some of the great work happening throughout Queensland to improve disaster resilience.
- On 21 February 2020, three regional resilience pilot projects were released as part of Resilient Queensland:
 - Central West Regional Resilience Strategy
 - Mary Regional Resilience Strategy
 - Fitzroy Regional Resilience Strategy.
- Evaluation and planning for statewide roll-out is currently underway. An options analysis to facilitate statewide roll-out has been completed and will be presented to the Projects Board in May for their endorsement of their preferred option. A project plan will then be developed and presented to the Projects Board in June for their endorsement and delivery will commence July 2020.

**Brisbane River Strategic Floodplain
Management Plan (SFMP)**

- QRA has oversight of 52 SFMP actions including 34 for State government, of which QRA is responsible for 12.
- The Brisbane River SFMP Management Group met on 20 February 2020 with representation from Brisbane, Ipswich, Somerset and Lockyer Valley councils and relevant State agencies. The group will meet again on 6 May 2020 to monitor progress of the SFMP implementation.
- One of QRA's actions is to produce a Flood Communication Kit which provides a comprehensive suite of flood messaging that councils and relevant state agencies can use in their social media and other flood communication messaging to improve community awareness and resilience to floods for all Queenslanders. Consultation has also been undertaken with the Office of the Chief Scientist, the Insurance Council of Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology, and the Inspector-General Emergency Management. Brisbane River catchment partner councils were consulted in the development of the Toolkit to ensure that it meets council needs. Feedback from the councils has been very positive and the Toolkit is planned for release by July 2020.

**North and Far North Queensland Monsoon
Trough Cat D - Flood Mapping and Flood
Warning Programs**

- The \$1 million Burdekin and Haughton Catchment Resilience Strategy Project will develop locally-led and regionally-coordinated resilience solutions to address recent and emerging disaster risks for councils in the catchment area including Townsville City Council. This project is currently underway and due for completion by end of 2020.
- The \$2 million Flood Warning Infrastructure Network Project will analyse existing flood warning infrastructure, working with the Bureau of Meteorology and councils to identify high priority locations requiring additional flood warning infrastructure capability including repairs of and/or installation of new infrastructure. This project is underway in Townsville and surrounds, North West Queensland, Far North Queensland and Central West Queensland. A network optimisation exercise has been completed and has produced a report (including maps) with a prioritised list of infrastructure improvements and costings for each impacted council. Consultation has commenced with the Bureau of Meteorology, the Department of Transport & Main Roads, and Queensland Rail, for the purposes of data sharing. Funding options are currently being considered to meet a total project demand of some \$7M.
- Townsville Recalibrated Flood Modelling and Mapping Project - supporting Townsville City Council to update and recalibrate flood modelling and mapping across the council area including the Ross River. This project is underway.

**Resilient Building Guidance
for Queensland Homes**

- Flood Resilient Building Guidance for Queensland Homes – launched 9 April 2019
- Cyclone Resilient Guidance for Queensland Homes – released 17 December 2019
- Storm Tide Resilient Guides for Queensland Homes – released 17 December 2019
- Bushfire Building Guideline for Queensland homes – in development and due for completion June 2020.

Resilience policy

- QRA is working with CSIRO to develop an adaptation of their Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Approach (RAPTA) for Queensland to support resilience building activities. A stakeholder workshop was held on Thursday 20 and Friday 21 February. CSIRO has undertaken an analysis of workshop outcomes to identify next steps. A report is due to QRA in June 2020.

