

**WHAT WE DO:**

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

**OUR VISION:**

Make Queensland the most disaster resilient state in Australia.

**OUR PURPOSE:**

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

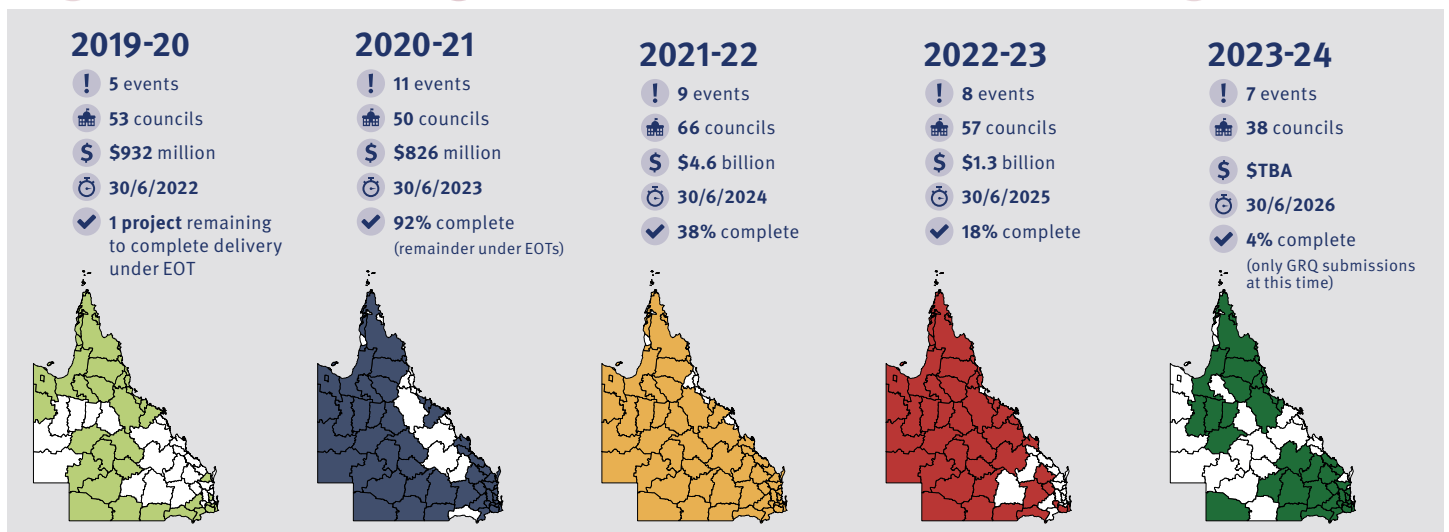
**DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**DISASTER ASSISTANCE AND RESILIENCE GRANTS PROGRAM**

QRA is currently administering a recovery and reconstruction program under the joint Commonwealth State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) worth \$7.7 billion arising from 40 events from the 2019-20 to 2023-24 disaster seasons in the delivery and/or acquittal phase.

**CURRENT STATEWIDE PROGRAM**

**!** 40 events      **🏠** 76 councils with an active program      **\$** \$7.7 billion



**IN THE DECEMBER QUARTER**

The majority of 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 **\$459 million** have been made to date.

The **2021-2022** event year has a Current Program Value of **\$4.6 billion**. With **66** Councils affected by **9** events and 38% complete, payments of **\$1.8 billion** have been paid to date.

The **2022-2023** event year has a Current Program Value of **\$1.3 billion** across **57** Council areas affected by **8** events. The program is 18% complete, and QRA has paid **\$311 million**. Teams are currently focused on delivering the required assessments needed to establish the ERC, due 30 June 2024.

The **2023-2024** event year has a preliminary program estimate of approx. **\$1.7 billion** from **8** events. Estimates continue to be developed and will be expanded as additional events occur through the season. To date, **\$30.2 million** has been paid in the form of Grant Advances to aid in initial recovery efforts.

## THE 2023-24 DISASTER SEASON

### Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Activations (DRFA)

Throughout the 2023-2024 disaster season, Queensland has seen multiple disaster events impact many communities and Local Government Areas including bushfires, heavy rainfall, severe storms and a Tropical Cyclone. To date 36 councils across eight events have been provided access to immediate financial assistance to support disaster recovery:

- [South East Queensland Severe Storms and Rainfall, 24 December 2023 – 3 January 2024](#)
- [Tropical Cyclone Jasper, 13 – 28 December 2023](#)
- [Brisbane and Ipswich Severe Storms, 15 – 16 December 2023](#)
- [Queensland Low Pressure Trough, 20 November – 1 December 2023](#)
- [The Pines and Condamine Farms Bushfire, 19 November – 1 December 2023](#)
- [Southern Queensland Bushfires, 8 September – 7 November 2023](#)
- [Northern Queensland Bushfires, 18 October – 8 December 2023](#)
- [Nome and Julago Bushfire, 16 – 24 September 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 Bureau of Meteorology reported official wind gusts of up to 106kph at the Gold Coast Seaway, and additional reports of winds gusts up to 150kph in the Scenic Rim Region. This 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 an tragic fatality on the Gold Coast. Assistant Commissioner Ben Marcus has been appointed Deputy State Recovery Coordinator to assist impacted communities 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 in the far north coast of Queensland make landfall. 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. 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.



## RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

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

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

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

### RECOVERY

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

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

### Engagement with Local Governments, other stakeholders, and the community

Throughout the October to December quarter, QRA's RROs continued to engage with local governments and lead agency partners across the state.

This activity included working closely to support Southern Downs Regional Council and Western Downs Regional Council following the Southern Queensland Bushfires through collating bushfire impacts across communities, attendance at Local Recovery Group and Sub-group meetings and the development of Event Specific Local Recovery Plans and funding submissions to guide local recovery efforts.

Further engagements included assisting local governments in the review and update of Local Resilience Action Plans, in particular specific high-priority actions identified by each council.

In addition, the team delivered a Disaster Funding Arrangements (DFA) training session in Townsville, attended by staff from the Burdekin, Charters Towers, Flinders and Townsville Councils as well as State and Commonwealth agencies. This session helped Councils and State departments understand how QRA operates within the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements to support local level understanding of Disaster Relief Funding (DRF). The National Emergency Management Agency outlined their remit and how they partner with QRA in delivering services for councils across Queensland.

QRA and NEMA partnered with LGAQ to host a state-wide council webinar attended by nearly 70 representatives from Queensland local government areas. The webinar highlighted key considerations of DRFA, readiness activities for the season, opportunities to build resilience through exceptional recovery assistance packages and provided an overview of the recovery team's role supporting resilience and recovery at a local, regional and state level.

A further webinar jointly hosted by QRA and NEMA was delivered to delivery partners highlighting key considerations across the end-to-end DRFA lifecycle, such as setting up for success, monitoring during delivery and requirements for acquittal. The session provided opportunity to share lessons from previous programs to encourage continuous improvement for future programs.

Additional engagement activities included disaster season readiness support, updates to recovery planning toolkit products and direct recovery support to communities and local governments impacted by disaster events, particularly Tropical Cyclone Jasper, flooding and SEQ storm events in December, all of which are anticipated to require sustained long-term recovery planning and resilience efforts.

### DRFA Category C & D extraordinary assistance package

#### 2024 EVENTS – INITIAL APPROVALS AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

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 has activated immediate assistance under standard DRFA measures and a first phase of Category C and D extraordinary assistance has been developed to provide short-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 and embed resilience building to assist community recovery across those areas most severely impacted across Queensland.

## 2023 EVENTS – THIRD PHASE ASSISTANCE PACKAGE ANNOUNCED

In November 2023, the third and final phase of the Category C and D extraordinary assistance for the *2022-23 Northern and Central Qld Monsoon and Flooding event* was approved.

This final phase complements the assistance measures already approved, with support now extending to community, tourism, livestock and grazing, environmental and betterment for severely impacted areas. The approved Category C & D packages comprise:

2022-23 Northern and Central Qld Monsoon and Flooding event	
Phase 1 – \$11.75 million	Phase 2 – \$5.25 million
<p><b>Primary producers</b> Grants of up to \$75,000 are available for affected producers to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, replace fencing and other costs associated with the recovery process.</p>	<p><b>Mental Health</b> \$1 million for community mental health to deliver targeted services to the people of Boulia, Burke, Carpentaria, Doomadgee and Mount Isa, supporting individuals, families and business owners who are doing it tough.</p>
<p><b>Small business and Not For Profits</b> Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for affected small businesses and not for profits to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, replace or repair damaged infrastructure and stock and other costs associated with the recovery process.</p>	<p><b>Local Recovery and Resilience Grants</b> \$4.25 million - grants of \$1 million each for Boulia, Carpentaria and Doomadgee councils, and \$1.25 million for Burke, to help with immediate recovery needs, upgrading damaged community infrastructure, buying equipment critical to community response, and to help build back to a more resilient standard.</p>
<p><b>Livestock recovery</b> \$5.75 million - Coordinated livestock support and disposal package is to reimburse primary producers, local governments and non-government organisations for the extraordinary costs of undertaking livestock welfare activities in impacted areas.</p>	
Phase 3 – \$119.12 million	
<p><b>Livestock and Grazing Land Recovery Initiative</b> \$0.25 million – A beef extension officer to assist with coordination of agriculture industry-focused training, ongoing surveillance of properties for adverse issues affecting grazing lands that may arise post flooding and work with stakeholders on control activities.</p> <p><b>Tourism Recovery and Resilience Program</b> \$1.15 million – for engagement of localised tourism recovery officers and a regional destination marketing campaign to assist eligible councils address local tourism disaster recovery needs.</p> <p><b>Community Recovery and Resilience Officers</b> \$2.22 million – community recovery and resilience officers to ensure a locally led response through widespread community engagement activities.</p> <p><b>Betterment Program</b> \$100 million – 45 local government areas activated under DRFA Category B REPA, and the Department of Transport and Main Roads are eligible to apply to restore essential public assets damaged in the event to a more resilient standard.</p> <p><b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b> \$0.5 million – monitoring and evaluation of the extraordinary disaster recovery programs</p>	<p><b>Environmental Recovery Package</b></p> <p><i>Healthy Waters Clean-up and Recovery Program</i> \$6.5 million - assistance to councils to help recover and clean up flood debris along the Queensland coastline (mainland and Mornington Island) and within environmentally sensitive areas inland (where access allows).</p> <p><i>Biodiversity and Invasive Species Management Program</i> \$3.5 million – grants to natural resource management groups, local councils and Land and Sea Rangers to undertake pest and weed management projects in affected areas.</p> <p><i>National Park Recovery Program</i> \$3.5 million - assist the Department of Environment and Science to manage impacts and threats to iconic national parks and World Heritage areas in the state’s north-west.</p> <p><i>Environmental Investigations Program</i> \$1.5 million – DES will work with stakeholders to understand damage across the region, the values of people associated with the eco-system of the north-west, and the connection of impacts to the floods to build resilience and sustainability for the region so future disaster impacts are reduced.</p>

## 2022 EVENTS – MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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



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 Buyback (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 22 December 2023, 874 valuation inspections have been undertaken across the thirteen local government areas and 803 offers have been presented to homeowners with 626 having been accepted. To date, 546 contracts have settled and 261 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. Homeowners will begin to receive their valuation reports and letters of offer in early 2024.

## PROPERTY LEVEL FLOOD INFORMATION PORTAL

Delivery of the Property Level Flood Information Portal ("the Portal") is progressing, with a substantial number of councils now confirming their participation in the QRA-led portal solution. This marks a significant transition from the initial phase confirming council interest, to a more focused and collaborative system design phase.

QRA, in partnership with QIT Plus, is now actively engaging with the participating councils to gain a thorough understanding of their current-state architecture, GIS capabilities, IT infrastructure, and data availability. This engagement is crucial for tailoring the portal solution to meet the specific needs and contexts of each council.

Following successful completion of user experience and usability testing conducted through PeakXD, QRA and QIT Plus are now implementing the recommended changes. This ensures that the system remains user-friendly and effective, enabling residents to access and understand essential flood risk information easily.

For councils that have chosen not to opt into the QRA-led solution, up to \$250,000 will be made available for the development of new, and enhancement of existing, local government portals. New portal systems will only

be considered eligible where they are required to support and/or integrate with existing council systems (and where the QRA led solution will not do this). Applications opened on the 14 December 2023 and close on 31 March 2024. Additional information and guidelines can be found on the QRA webpage.

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.

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

### **Emergency Response Fund – Flood Warning Infrastructure Network Program**

ERF FWIN applications opened on 23 October 2023, for up to \$200,000 available to each of the 23 eligible councils for flood warning infrastructure assets. Applications close on 25 January 2024. Deadline for project completion is 30 June 2025.

Under the ERF FWIN program, \$7 million is available through the \$75 million Emergency Response Fund across 23 councils impacted by the 2022 South East Queensland flooding event. A range of asset types including cameras, signs, gauges, and data communication repeaters will be eligible for funding under this program to improve Queensland's Flood Warning Infrastructure.

### **SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING SYSTEM (WP3)**

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

This project was initially tailored to the Brisbane River Catchment as prescribed under the Brisbane River Strategic Floodplain Management Plan (Action DM4.2), however, the scope was expanded to take on a regional view to include the wider South East Queensland. The Bureau hosted workshops with stakeholders in July 2023 to confirm requirements and delivery planning and have recently provided QRA with a draft project Delivery Plan for consultation in December 2023.

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 is related 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.

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

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

The \$31 million Flood Risk Management Program is advancing steadily with NEMA granting a 24-month extension to the project's timeline, now set to conclude on 30 June 2026.

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 the threat of 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.

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

### **LIDAR CAPTURE (WP2)**

NEMA has approved the reallocation of \$400,000 from Work Package 3 to Work Package 2. Work Package 2 now has total approved funding of \$6.4 million for the Queensland Department of Resources to capture Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data and the creation of a floor level database.

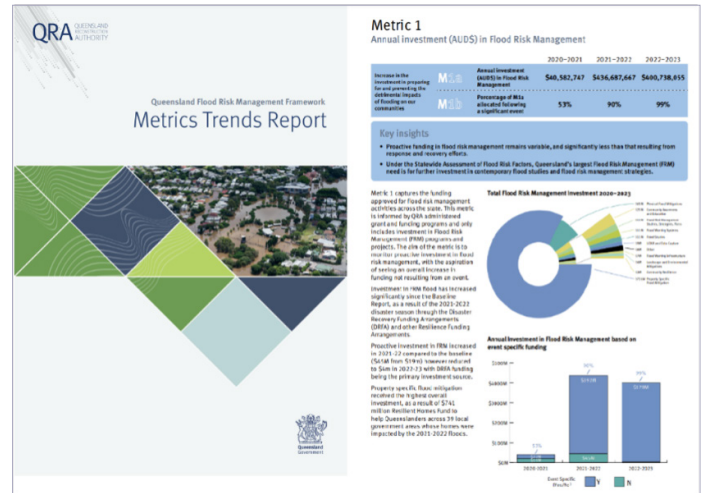
## FLOOD RISK METRICS

Five metrics have been developed to support measuring improvements in flood risk management and resilience for all Queensland communities. Each metric seeks to capture aspirations of Flood Risk Management practices prescribed under the Queensland Flood Risk Management Framework.

These metrics have been measured to develop the 2020-2021 baseline metrics report. Annual progress reports against the baseline metrics have now been presented and approved by the State Recovery and Resilience Group (SRRG), with the Trends and Metrics Annual reports now available on the QRA Website.

- [Queensland Flood Risk Management Framework Metrics Trends Report 2022-2023](#)
- [Queensland Flood Risk Management Framework \(QFRMF\) Metrics Annual Report: 2022-2023](#)

Each of these reports offers a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the ongoing efforts and achievements in flood risk management within Queensland. The availability of these reports in downloadable formats ensures that stakeholders, policymakers, and the public can stay informed and engaged with the state's flood risk management strategies and progress.



## 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.

The QRA has been involved in the following key activities during the final quarter of 2022.

### 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

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

The QRRRF 2023-24 funding round closed on Wednesday 20 December 2023 for applications. This is the final round of the QRRRF under the National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction and will provide \$13.1 million in funding (comprised of \$4.8 million from the Commonwealth Government and \$8.3 million from the Queensland Government) to support disaster risk reduction and resilience building initiatives that will better protect Queensland communities from future disasters.

QRA will commence assessment and approval of submitted applications in the coming months. Applicants will be notified of an outcome of their application by 30 June 2024.

Further information on the QRRRF 2023-24 is available on the QRA website: [www.qra.qld.gov.au/QRRRF2023-24](http://www.qra.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

As these projects were federal election commitments, QRA is working with the Commonwealth and identified applicants to confirm project scopes, process applications and develop funding agreements.

**DISASTER READY FUND (DRF) – ROUND ONE**

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 DRF Round One (2023-24), 50 projects have been approved in Queensland receiving more than \$84 million in Commonwealth funding to support disaster risk reduction, 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.

**DISASTER READY FUND (DRF) ROUND TWO**

Applications for DRF Round Two (2024-25) open on Monday 22 January 2024 and close on Wednesday 20 March 2024. The funding guidelines and indicative timeframes are available on QRA’s website. A total of \$200 million is available for this round across Australia.



**INTEGRATION AND COORDINATION**

In the December quarter of 2023, Integration and Coordination’s leadership of QRA’s Disaster Management Team was instrumental in coordinating our capabilities in support of communities impacted by significant disaster events across Queensland. This included close engagement with impacted councils, rapid activation of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) assistance measures, the stand-up of the Emergency Relief Subcommittee and the coordination of whole of government reporting for situation awareness of recovery activities underway. Integration and Coordination is now leading the development of a State Recovery and Resilience Plan, to ensure that impacted communities are not only supported to recover but supported to be more disaster resilient to future events.

Following severe storms in South East Queensland in late December 2023, QRA attended a number of community events to update the community on the recovery activity underway, ensuring the community had an opportunity to raise their questions. Integration and Coordination also supported the Deputy State Recovery Coordinator, Assistant Commissioner Ben Marcus.



*Deputy State Recovery Coordinator, Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing receiving a briefing from Department of Transport and Main Roads crews working to re-open the Captain Cook Highway*



*Jimmy Scott, General Manager I&C speaking at Scenic Rim Regional Council community meeting*



*Inspection of impacted residence by Australian Government officials, Degarra, Douglas Shire Council*



*Deputy State Recovery Coordinator, Assistant Commissioner Ben Marcus briefing media in Logan City Council*

Integration and Coordination also facilitated engagement with impacted communities by the Australian Government, to ensure that impacts are seen firsthand ahead of Prime Ministerial consideration of further exceptional circumstances packages under the DRFA.

In December 2023, far north Queensland was impacted by record flooding following Tropical Cyclone Jasper. Integration and Coordination supported the Deputy State Recovery Coordinator, Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing by establishing a northern coordination cell.

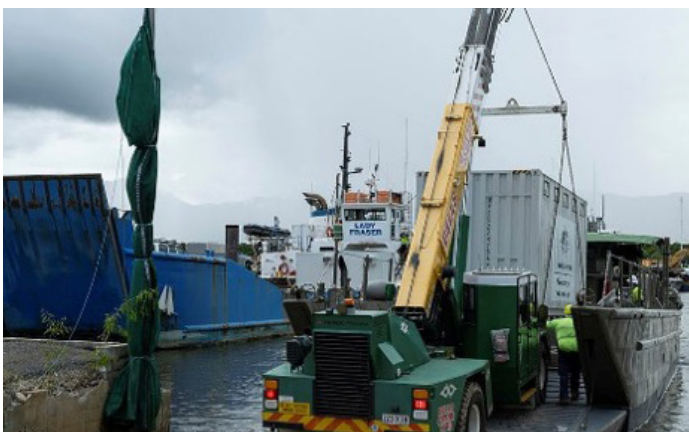


*Morning synchronisation meeting with D/SRC, QRA and liaison officers, Marine Safety Queensland Head Office, Cairns*

The Emergency Relief Sub-Committee deployed to Cairns to provide a coordination node for emergency relief and reinforce the efforts of the four most impacted Councils. The small team consisted of people who volunteered to provide critical functions in recovery planning, coordination, communications and liaison. The team was drawn from all Divisions of QRA and was a great example of how a group with diverse skillsets and the right attitude can integrate and achieve a common goal. Nine QRA personnel deployed and were well supported with reach-back services provided by QRA in Brisbane, particularly in the area of corporate services. This allowed them to focus on the work on the ground and building strong relationships with councils in Douglas, Wujal-Wujal, Cairns and Cook Shires.



*Inspecting the progress of resupply and restoration of the Ayton Boat Ramp, Ayton, Cook Shire*



*Loading barges with emergency temporary accommodation, Cairns Harbour, Cairns*

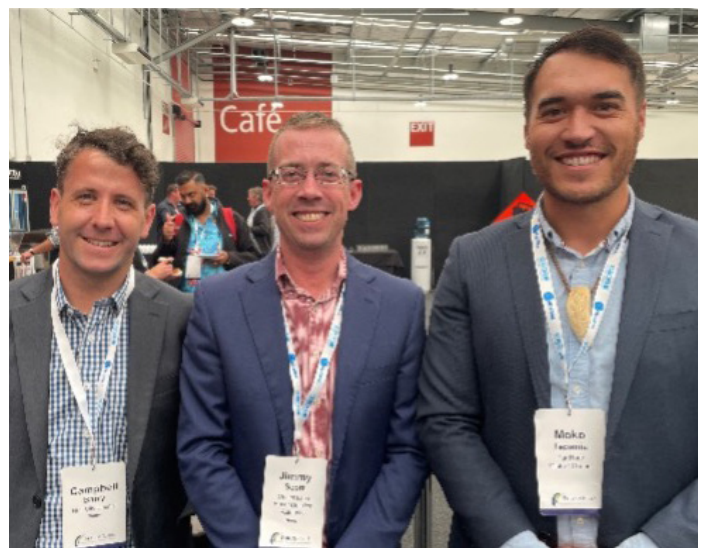
The Cell was established in partnership with Transport and Main Roads, Marine Safety Queensland who provided the facilities for the cell to operate and maritime expertise for resupply by sea. The coordination cell was supplemented by liaison officers from Disaster Relief Australia, Australian Defence Force, National Emergency Management Agency, Department of Housing and Public Works, Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.



*John Price, Deputy CEO National Emergency Management Agency New Zealand (NEMA NZ), Jimmy Scott, General Manager I&C and Dave Gawn, CEO, NEMA NZ*

Integration and Coordination also continues to support the development of QRA's strengthened mandate for resilience.

In November 2023, this included engagement and collaboration with our New Zealand colleagues, to both share Queensland's experience in recovery and resilience, as well as engage with local and national leadership to learn lessons from their experience of recovery, reconstruction and resilience.



*Mayor Campbell Barry, Hutt City Council, Jimmy Scott, General Manager I&C and Mayor Moko Tepania, Far North District Council*

Integration and Coordination is also engaging with interjurisdictional colleagues, and in November 2023 engaged with colleagues of Emergency Management Victoria and Emergency Recovery Victoria to identify collective opportunities to advance resilience and recovery outcomes for our communities.



*Rebecca Morris, A/Director, Policy QRA, Sharon MacDonnell, Emergency Management Victoria, Farooq Mohammad, Emergency Recovery Victoria, and Jimmy Scott, General Manager Integration and Coordination*

On 24 November 2023, QRA facilitated the second meeting of the interim State Recovery and Resilience Group (SRRG), which provides strategic leadership to support the recovery and resilience of Queensland Communities.

This includes supporting the transition of Functional Recovery Groups (FRG) to Functional Recovery and Resilience Groups (FRRG), which is progressing in consultation with the respective lead agencies.



*Interim State Recovery and Resilience Group – 24 November 2023*

**SRRG Strategic Priorities**



Importantly, in-principle endorsement was secured for the group’s strategic priorities, ensuring that the SRRG’s work best supports the implementation of the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2022-27, seeking to make Queensland the most disaster resilient state.

## 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.

### If it’s flooded, forget it – Your car can’t protect you in floodwater.

Cars are safer than ever before, but when it comes to floodwater, it’s a different story. GRQ launched the latest instalment of the Queensland Government’s long running *If it’s flooded, forget it* campaign in December. *Your car can’t protect you from floodwater* is a powerful and confronting ad, and it needs to be. Vehicle-related road trauma is the leading cause of flood related deaths, with more lives lost in Queensland than anywhere else in Australia.

Research suggests that many drivers are likely to overestimate their car’s ability to drive through water, even if they’ve never tried. But the fact is, a car can be swept away in as little as 15cm of floodwater. Presented as a car ad gone wrong, the campaign highlights key vehicle safety issues that arise when entering floodwaters, and reminds Queenslanders that floodwater can take anyone by surprise.

The campaign is heavily influenced by a 2022 report on vehicle related fatalities in Queensland undertaken by the Brisbane Forensic Crash Unit, with the GRQ team engaging extensively with key subject matter experts within QRA, Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to get this extensive campaign off the ground.

*Your car can’t protect you* was launched at the beginning of December 2023, achieving had over 5 million online impressions in its first 3 weeks. The campaign will run until the end of March 2024 on television, social media, radio, online, and outdoor advertising, as well as on a new website page developed in support of the campaign message.

Stewardship of *The If It’s Flooded, Forget It* campaign transitioned to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority GRQ as part of the Inspector General of Emergency Management’s review of Queensland’s disaster management arrangements in July. Get Ready Queensland is proud to be taking on the mantle of this iconic and important campaign and look forward to building on the important work done by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to date.



Authorised by the Queensland Government, Brisbane.

Image from GRQ’s *Your car can’t protect you from floodwater* campaign

**Queensland shows Australia how it's done in the biggest Get Ready Queensland Week ever**

### ITINERARY

-  **8 days**
-  **17 events**
-  **10 locations**
-  **13 media opportunities**



#### Locations

- » Townsville
- » Charters Towers
- » Mackay
- » Rockhampton
- » Hervey Bay
- » Maryborough
- » Pomona/Noosa
- » Bribie Island
- » Brisbane
- » Ipswich

*2023 Get Ready Queensland Week (GRQ Week) took place from 6 October – 15 October 2023*

The event launched at Suncorp Stadium and included an emergency services expo, SES abseilers, RSPCA rescue animals, the announcement of the BOM's seasonal outlook and the launch of the 2023 *Check out what you need* advertising campaign.

The event was broadcast live across Australia on the channel Nine Today show.

In recognition of GRQ's strong regional focus, a parallel launch event also happened at the Townsville Strand.

**STRONG PARTNERSHIPS KEY TO BUILDING COMMUNITY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS.**

This year also saw the introduction of the regional trolley tour– a week-long series of events to promote community disaster preparedness across regional Queensland, in partnership with IGA who are supporting the campaign as a retail partner for the second year.

Visiting IGA Stores and community events in Townsville, Charters Towers, Mackay, Rockhampton, Maryborough and Noosa, Get Ready Queensland worked alongside local councils, IGA and Queensland emergency services to encourage Queenslanders to pack their own household emergency kit.



*School students high five SES mascot at Brisbane launch of Get Ready Queensland Week*



*Launch of the Trolley Tour in Charters Towers*



Major partner Suncorp has again teamed up with GRQ to support the annual advertising campaign. *Check out what you need* which will be on air until mid-November and provides practical reminders to Queenslanders about planning ahead and packing an emergency kit.

Bunnings also came on board this year to encourage Queenslanders to choose weather resilient building materials for construction, renovations, or repairs.

The initiative was also backed by the Queensland Government’s Resilient Homes Fund (RHF), which helps Queenslanders strengthen their homes and communities against flooding.

Bunnings stores across the state provided resilience-improvement tips and checklists throughout the week. Five bunnings stores also hosted Get Ready Bunnings Workshops, featuring representatives from GRQ and RHF, Local councils and the State Emergency Services who offered expert advice on preparing properties for potential threats like floods, storms, and bushfires.

This collaboration not only benefits the community but also provides GRQ and RHF with a valuable entry point into Queensland’s commercial building and DIY/renovation markets, ensuring a more resilient and well-prepared Queensland.



Launch of Get Ready Queensland and Bunnings partnership featuring Resilient Homes Fund

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

**2023-2024 SUMMER OF DISASTER – QRA RESPONSE**

The Christmas and new year period of 2023-24 will go down as one of the most active and destructive summer stretches in Queensland’s history.

Deadly storms in the south-east and major flooding in the Far North from Tropical Cyclone Jasper saw properties destroyed and flooded, communities isolated, highways and regional roads damaged, and a clean-up of mammoth proportions.

Hundreds of families were displaced, well over 100,000 properties were left without power, and seven lives were sadly confirmed lost, with another elderly FNQ man unaccounted for.

Queensland Treasurer Cameron Dick has estimated total cost to the Queensland economy from these events at more than \$2.2 billion, and that figure only has potential to rise.

Tropical Cyclone Jasper crossed the Queensland coast as a Category 2 system 170km north of Cairns near the remote community of Wujal Wujal at around 8 pm on 13 December 2023.

The system was predicted to keep moving west, however, it instead sat over the Far North coastal region for days. Then the flooding started.

By the time the rains subsided more than a century of flood records were broken in rivers just outside Cairns and the Daintree.

Figures from the Bureau of Meteorology show over two metres of rain fell in some gauges in the Mossman Gorge region, and almost two metres was recorded at Kuranda Railway Station to Monday 18 December.

As well as impacts to properties and public assets, critical regional sectors like agriculture, tourism and small business were all heavily affected.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) quickly recognised the extensive devastation caused by Jasper and requested assistance from the Australian Defence Force on 17 December 2023 to help with the immediate response.

Towns such as Wujal Wujal, Ayton and Degarra were evacuated to safety while floodwaters remained high.

Then, on Christmas Eve, a monster series of storms that lasted into the new year rolled over the south-east corner, the weather events likened by some to tornados.

Lightning, heavy rain and powerful winds ripped through the Gold Coast, Logan and Scenic Rim local government areas, with the effects also felt in the nearby LGAs of Brisbane and Redlands, and west out in Murweh.

The rainfall and subsequent flash flooding closed roads and caused landslips. High winds destroyed much of the electricity network, and an enormous number of large trees were felled.



*Bloomfield Road in Cook Shire suffered a massive washout as the Bloomfield River became a raging torrent*



*Roads were cut as rivers flooded in Far North Queensland*

SES and Ergon crews worked tirelessly through the end of December and over the first week of January to restore power to more than 120,000 homes and businesses.

QRA, meanwhile, worked swiftly to activate Personal Hardship Assistance under the joint Commonwealth-state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) to address the emergency needs of impacted communities.

To date, approximately \$37 million in grants have been distributed to more than 200,000 residents in the Far North and south-east who were affected by the two disasters.

Key to the long-term recovery of both respective regions will also be the \$114.5 million in extraordinary disaster assistance packages established by QRA under Category C and D of the DRFA.

This includes grants up to \$75,000 for primary producers and up to \$50,000 for small businesses and not-for-profits to use for short-term recovery needs like pasture rehabilitation, the hire or purchase of new assets and supplies, replacing stock or livestock, and repairs to infrastructure and equipment.

To date, 59 grants valued at approximately \$680,000 have been approved, with QRIDA assessing and approving more grants each day.

Far North Queensland tourism operators will benefit from the \$29.25 million Tourism Recovery and Resilience Program that includes grants, travel incentives for visitors, and promotion of the region and events.

A \$20 million program has also been established to fund extraordinary clean-up activities and damage assessments of community and recreational assets, parks, waterways and beaches, and national parks.

Local Recovery and Resilience Grants of \$1 million are currently available to the 12 hardest hit local government areas in FNQ and SEQ to speed up the recovery of communities and support future resilience measures.

In addition, \$3.25 million has been allocated for specialised officers who will assist councils and primary producers with their recovery from the impacts of these two disaster events.

Of course, QRA has also activated DRFA assistance to cover the costs of clean-up and the restoration of damaged roads, bridges and other essential public infrastructure for

the local governments and state agencies who once again find themselves with a massive rebuild job ahead.

QRA is working with stakeholders across all three tiers of government, as well as NGOs and disaster management groups, to ensure a swift recovery from this latest round of natural disasters to strike Queensland.

Dedicated regional liaison officers from the QRA remain embedded with local councils to support recovery efforts.

QRA is also working with the ADF to coordinate efforts out of the Far North Queensland Recovery Cell based in Cairns.

QRA's current recovery priorities are cleaning up and removing debris, and helping those affected with the support they need, whether that's financial or personal.

While the task ahead remains a mammoth one, we won't stop until access is returned to roads, communities are cleared, and Queenslanders are safe.



*The south-east also suffered washouts from the floods.*



*L-R: QRA CEO Major General Jake Elwood, ADF personnel, Queensland Premier Steven Miles, Cairns Mayor Terry James, state Minister for Disaster Recovery Nikki Boyd, federal Minister for Emergency Management Murray Watt.*



*The south-east also suffered washouts from the floods.*



**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

**CASTLEREAGH HIGHWAY (ST GEORGE–HEBEL) BETTERMENT PROJECT**

Work will begin in early 2024 to improve flood resilience at eight priority sites on the Castlereagh Highway, following the completion of detailed design.

The Castlereagh Highway is a major south-west Queensland transport link intersecting with the Carnarvon Highway south of St George and running to the New South Wales border and is part of the Great Inland Way linking Cairns and Sydney.

The highway experienced extensive flood damage from three protracted heavy rainfall events between November 2021 and May 2022. The section between 11.5km and 38km south of Dirranbandi was particularly hard hit, with severe pavement damage on low-lying areas, scouring to road shoulders and culvert damage.

Emergency repairs were completed immediately after the disaster events, so the highway could reopen safely while a substantial program of flood recovery works was planned across southern Queensland.

In addition to reconstruction works, eight priority sites have been identified on the Castlereagh Highway between Noondoo and Hebel for betterment works to reduce the impacts of future floods on communities and road users.

Works to build the road back better include altering road levels, installing concrete batter protection, replacing culverts, and constructing resilient road pavement. Detailed design is expected to be completed in late 2023, with procurement to follow and works expected to start in early 2024.

In addition to the betterment works, pavement repairs will be undertaken on various sections between 3km east and 38.13km south of Dirranbandi.

Repair works will be delivered through assistance provided under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Betterment works will be delivered as part of a program of improvements to essential public assets damaged during the 2021–22 flooding events, through the Australian and Queensland Governments’ \$170 million Betterment Fund for 2021–22. This extraordinary assistance is provided through the DRFA.



*Castlereagh Highway (St George–Hebel) – pavement damage (May 2022)*



*Castlereagh Highway (St George–Hebel) – shoulder scouring at floodway (May 2022)*



*Castlereagh Highway (St George–Hebel) – pavement damage at floodway (June 2022)*



*Castlereagh Highway (St George–Hebel) – water over road following Southern Queensland Flooding event (May 2022)*



*Castlereagh Highway (St George–Hebel) – pavement damage at floodway (November 2022)*

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

**TROPICAL CYCLONE JASPER LEAVES TRAIL OF ROAD DAMAGE**

Repairs are underway to reconnect isolated Far North Queensland communities after sustained heavy rainfall and flooding associated with Tropical Cyclone Jasper in late December 2023 caused major road damage across the region.

On 5 December 2023, the first tropical cyclone of the 2023–24 season in Australia formed over the Solomon Islands and tracked westwards, making landfall just north of Port Douglas on 13 December 2023. Tropical Cyclone Jasper crossed the coast as a Category 2 cyclone, then weakened to a tropical low that took almost five days to cross the Cape York Peninsula.

This led to record December rainfall, with many areas receiving more than one metre of rain in less than a week. A total of 2086mm was recorded in six days at Whyanbeel Valley north of Port Douglas, 1891mm at Kuranda Railway Station, 1593mm at White Cliff Point near Mount Molloy and 607mm at Cairns Airport.

As a result, landslips occurred on all four range roads between Cairns and the Tablelands – Palmerston Highway, Gillies Range Road, Kennedy Highway (known locally as Kuranda Range Road) and Mossman–Mount Molloy Road. The Port Douglas area was also hit hard, with significant landslips and severe road damage at multiple locations on the Captain Cook Highway between Palm Cove and Mossman. Further north, the townships of Wujal Wujal and Degarra were devastated by flooding.

A total of 1639 kilometres of state-controlled roads were closed or had restricted access during the event in local government areas activated under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

As soon as it was safe to do so, Transport and Main Roads (TMR) had crews assessing road damage and making urgent repairs to restore access for communities. Thousands of tonnes of debris have been cleared and hundreds of geotechnical, bridge and culvert inspections undertaken. By early January 2024, more than 650 kilometres of state-controlled roads had been reopened.

A 19-kilometre section of the Palmerston Highway – the only designated route for B-doubles and Type 1 Road Trains between the coast and Atherton Tablelands – remains closed due to significant damage and landslips. TMR crews have cleared large trees and debris from the road to allow access for geotechnical investigations. TMR has been working with the Queensland Trucking Association to allow some permitted access to a partial alternative route for heavy vehicles while measures are investigated for reopening the Palmerston Highway.

A 27-kilometre section of the Captain Cook Highway between Buchans Point and Oak Beach remains closed due to significant damage. TMR crews have made good progress clearing a major landslip on Captain Cook Highway at Oak Beach, including demolishing a 300-tonne boulder which had fallen onto the road.



*Captain Cook Highway (Cairns–Mossman) – landslip at Buchans North caused by Tropical Cyclone Jasper (December 2023)*



*Captain Cook Highway (Cairns–Mossman) – major pavement damage caused by TC Jasper (December 2023)*



*Captain Cook Highway (Cairns–Mossman) – emergency works (December 2023)*

Geotechnical investigations and repairs are ongoing, with the section from Ellis Beach to Port Douglas expected to reopen on 20 January 2024.

Other key road links around Cairns, including the Kuranda Range Road, Gillies Range Road, Mossman–Mount Molloy Road, Mulligan Highway and Shiptons Flat Road, were reopened under restricted access by late December 2023.

Inspections and emergency works, including removing road hazards and repairing pavement, are ongoing across the region to make damaged roads safe until full reconstruction can be completed.

Damage assessments will continue over the coming months and a significant program of reconstruction works will be required.

Assistance will be provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State DRFA.



*Palmerston Highway – major landslide caused by TC Jasper (December 2023)*



*Mulligan Highway – silt build-up caused by TC Jasper (December 2023)*



*Shiptons Flat Road – damage caused by TC Jasper (December 2023)*



*Mossman–Mount Molloy Road – damage from TC Jasper (December 2023)*



*Kuranda Range Road – landslide and exposed ITS equipment following TC Jasper (December 2023)*



*Mossman–Mount Molloy Road – emergency works (December 2023)*

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

**GOLD COAST–SPRINGBROOK ROAD REOPENS WHILE LANDSLIP REPAIRS CONTINUE**

Gold Coast–Springbrook Road has reopened under traffic control while works continue on multiple severe landslips that resulted from heavy rainfall events in early 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 (TMR) crews to allow the road to reopen under traffic control and traffic signals.

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, north of Little Nerang Dam. The 70-metre landslip deposited 2500 tonnes of debris onto the road below.

From 31 March 2022, a temporary road closure was required from Neranwood Park to Pine Creek Road. This enabled TMR to undertake restoration works simultaneously on multiple sites and in the shortest possible timeframe, to minimise community and business impacts.

TMR has undertaken substantial slope stabilisation and reconstruction works at 15 major sites along the road that suffered damage during the record early 2022 weather events, as well as an additional three sites damaged by severe storms in September 2022.

This has included installing approximately 1700 soil nails and more than 9500m<sup>2</sup> of steel wire mesh and erosion control matting at damage sites along the road, along with more than 400m<sup>3</sup> of shotcrete to further stabilise the slopes.

With major works completed, TMR was able to restore community access to the closed section of Gold Coast–Springbrook Road on 21 December 2023. This section is open via a single lane under stop/slow conditions while further works including debris clearing, erosion control and slope stabilisation are completed on minor sites.

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



*Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – Site 8 landslip following SEQ Rainfall and Flooding event (February 2022)*



*Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – Site 8 repairs (November 2023)*



*Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – Site 1 landslip (late March 2022)*



*Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – Site 1 landslip (late March 2022)*



*Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – Site 9 landslip (late March 2022)*



*Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – completed repairs at Site 1 (December 2023)*



*Gold Coast–Springbrook Road – completed repairs at Site 9 (July 2023)*