



**WHAT WE DO:**

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

**OUR VISION:**

**Stronger, safer, resilient Queensland communities.**

**OUR PURPOSE:**

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

**DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**Disaster Assistance and Resilience Grants Program**

Since establishment, QRA has administered a recovery and reconstruction program through the joint State-Commonwealth Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) worth more than \$16.5 billion. Works for 28 events from the 2019, 2020 and 2021 disaster seasons are currently in delivery with an estimated value of approximately \$3.0 billion.

In addition to DRFA, QRA is currently administering six other State, Commonwealth and joint-funded grant programs with a capped value of \$86.75 million, focused on disaster risk reduction and resilience building.

**Status of Active Grants Programs administered by QRA**

	Prior Events	2019 Events	2020 Events	2021 Events
<b>NUMBER OF EVENTS</b>	-	12	5	11
<b>\$3,066M</b> Delivery Program	<b>\$82M</b> Program	<b>\$1,465M</b> Program	<b>\$919M</b> Program	<b>\$600M</b> Program
<b>Deadline for Delivery</b>	Complete	Complete	30 June 2022	30 June 2023
 Time Elapsed	Complete Remainder under EOT's	Complete Remainder under EOT's	 54%	 5%
 % Completion	 84% complete	 88% complete	 40% complete	 3% complete

**In July**

Following the 30 June 2021 deadline for delivery of the majority of the 2019 Events DRFA program and establishment of the estimated reconstruction cost for 2020 Events, the focus of the disaster assistance grants program in July has been to progress the close-out of submissions completed up to 30 June 2021 and monitor the ongoing progress of works in delivery.

The 2019 Events program was successfully delivered by 30 June 2021, other than \$217 million of works with extensions of time to deliver beyond June due to COVID-19 related impacts.

During the month, QRA has also worked with delivery agents to revise 2021 Events estimates as damage continues to be assessed and submissions prepared. This has seen the previous estimate of \$292 million for the first four events of the season increase to a preliminary estimate of \$600 million that covers all 11 events that occurred during the season. This estimate has increased as LGAs continue to assess and report the full extent of the impacts associated with those events.

In July, 82 projects worth \$19 million were also announced as successful through the 2020–21 round of the Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (QRRRF).

**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 one state event specific recovery plan that underpins the Government’s commitment to helping communities recover, rebuild and reconnect from the following major weather events of recent years:

- **Queensland Bushfires (2019)**

As at 30 June 2021, the event specific recovery plans for the North & FNQ Monsoon Trough (2019) and Central Queensland Bushfires (2018) have been finalised. Close out reports are currently being completed.

In addition, QRA is supporting local governments in the development and implementation of their event-specific recovery plans. Local recovery plans highlight initiatives to support recovery, reconstruction and opportunities for communities to reconnect.

Recovery Capability

The recovery team supports recovery capability at the local, district and state disaster management levels. Recovery capability development activities undertaken this month include:

- Attending and supporting the Regional Resilience Strategy Big-map exercises facilitated with Goondiwindi Regional Council and the Darling Downs region, to closely link recovery outcomes and resilience objectives.
- Meeting with Gold Coast City Council to enhance recovery partnerships and participate in their local recovery meeting.
- Meeting with Southern Downs Regional Council to connect with their new Bushfire Community Development Officer and Recovery Coordinator.
- Participating in the Whitsunday Regional Council Local Disaster Management Group Meeting.

Recovery Planning and Governance Project

The Recovery Planning and Governance project is designed to develop and enhance understanding of recovery governance and planning at the local level, and is continuing to be rolled out across the state.

There are 53 Council Recovery Sub-plans endorsed across Queensland, and QRA is continuing to work with 45 councils to support the development of their recovery sub-plans.

In July, QRA participated in recovery planning and governance meetings and sessions with North Burnett Regional Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Cook Shire Council and Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council.



Image: Cook recovery sub-plan session.

## District Recovery Project

The District Recovery Project is designed to understand recovery needs at the district level and provide District Disaster Management Groups (DDMGs) with specific training based on those needs.

During July, QRA commenced engagement with the Queensland Police Service on the roll out of the workshops associated with the project. To date, three police districts have confirmed their intention to participate in the project. The District Recovery Session Plan and Presentation are currently under development.



## National Recovery Agenda

QRA is leading and contributing to key projects developed and delivered through the Community Outcomes and Recovery Sub-committee (CORS), as part of the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) framework.

Work continues on the Catastrophic Crisis Model Recovery Arrangements, Disaster Recovery Capability Strategy and the Functional Domain Reference Groups. A final draft of the National Recovery Needs Assessment Project has been completed and returned to CORS for finalisation. The Disaster Recovery Capability Strategy has been drafted and is out for consultation with sector stakeholders.

## Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

M&E activities are underway to determine the appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Community Recovery Programs in relation to the Far North & Northern Queensland Monsoon (2019), Central Queensland Bushfires (2018) and Queensland Bushfires (2019). Monitoring and evaluation activities status as of July includes:

- **Queensland Bushfires (2019):**
  - Tourism Recovery Program (*program logic developed*)
  - Mental Health Program (*monitoring and framework design*)
- **Far North & Northern Queensland Monsoon (2019):**
  - Industry Recovery Officers (*final evaluation report being developed*)
  - Community Development Officers (*final evaluation report being developed*)
  - Small Business Recovery Program (*final evaluation report being developed*)
  - Mental Health Program (*evaluation report being drafted*)
  - Environment Recovery Program (*data collection and interviews underway*)
- **Central Queensland Bushfires (2018):**
  - Mental Health Program (*evaluation report being drafted*)
  - Community Development Officer Program (*evaluation report being drafted*)
  - Rural Residential Recovery Program (*final evaluation report being drafted*)

Recommendations for future community recovery funding and delivery of future extraordinary funding packages will be developed.

## RESILIENCE

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

### Resilience grant programs



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

For 2018–19, \$10.65 million was allocated to 75 projects to strengthen the resilience of Queensland communities under the state-funded QDRF (\$9.5M, 65 projects) and the Commonwealth funded PCF (\$1.15M, 10 projects). As at 30 June 2021, 67 projects were complete and 8 projects remain in progress.

#### Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (QRRRF)

The QRRRF is part of a five-year National Partnership on Disaster Risk Reduction between the Commonwealth and Queensland governments. This partnership has seen more than \$66.5 million in joint funding dedicated to resilience and risk reduction.

Expressions of Interest for 2020–21 QRRRF opened in March 2021 with \$19.1 million of funding from the Commonwealth and Queensland governments available for allocation. More than 450 applications were received, seeking a total of \$162 million. This high level of enthusiasm from applicants demonstrates the desire across the state to improve resilience within our communities.

The 82 successful projects for QRRRF 2020–21 were announced on 23 July 2021. These include extensive road, floodway and levee upgrades, flood and river studies, and disaster management workshops across Queensland.

The 2019–20 round of the QRRRF is also currently being delivered. The fund fully allocated \$13.1 million of funding available at the time to 68 projects across 61 recipients. A list and interactive map of the successful projects is available on the QRA website. As at 30 June 2021, 12 projects were complete, 45 projects were in progress and 11 projects were yet to commence.

#### Recovery and Resilience Grants

QRA is administering a \$12 million grant fund, which was announced on 16 December 2020, to support locally-led recovery and resilience activities in 14 local government areas most impacted by the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough, January-February 2019.

The grants are being funded by the Commonwealth Government through the National Recovery and Resilience Agency.

Local governments have submitted their Programs of Work to QRA. These programs, up to a maximum of \$857,000, outline projects and activities they deem essential for the recovery of their communities and to increase resilience. Project delivery is underway.

### Resilience projects and activities



QRA is currently actively delivering or participating in a suite of projects and activities with the intent of building the resilience of Queensland communities:

- Phase 2 of the statewide rollout of regional resilience strategies as part of *Resilient Queensland 2018–2021: Delivering the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience*.
- Oversight of 52 actions including 12 actions that QRA is responsible for under the *Brisbane River Strategic Floodplain Management Plan (SFMP)*.
- Scoping the implementation of the *Queensland Flood Risk Management Framework*.
- Continue to deliver on the *Queensland Strategic Flood Warning Infrastructure Plan*.
- Contributing to a whole-of-government response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements (RCNDA).
- Leading reform negotiations on behalf of Queensland Government agencies in the Commonwealth's review of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Key progress in July 2021 included:



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

- The QRA project team completed the *Strategic Assessment of Service Requirement (for improvements to) Brisbane River Catchment Flood Forecasting and Warning Systems*. This comprehensive body of technical work involved many agencies and was directly supported by the Bureau and Seqwater. The document has been issued for final internal review and approval, anticipating distribution early June. The work addresses action DM4.2 of the SFMP, to lead discussions with the Bureau on a regional hydraulic modelling and flood intelligence system.
- DTMR, in collaboration with QRA and other key stakeholders, completed the *State Guideline: Flood evacuation route improvements*, which is published on QRA’s website. This guideline and supporting materials provide guidance on a process to support the identification of ‘fair and reasonable’ flood evacuation route improvements in Queensland. This supports completion of action FM12.3 of the SFMP.
- On 31 May 2021, the Queensland Government endorsed the *Queensland Flood Risk Management Framework* which was subsequently released on QRA’s website in mid-July. This framework outlines the expectations and roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in flood risk management, and guides and support decision-making by councils. This supports completion of action FM5 of the SFMP.



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

- As part of the \$8 million Flood Warning Infrastructure Network Project, a group procurement arrangement has been established, with QRA supporting work across three areas of operation; Far North Queensland; North West Queensland; and Townsville and Surrounds. One contractor has been appointed for all three areas of operations and works are due to be delivered by June 2022.

## 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.

### Get Ready Queensland Schools Competition

Students across Queensland are learning about natural disasters and how to prepare for them to win a visit from rugby league legend and Get Ready Queensland Ambassador Johnathan Thurston as part of the 2021 Get Ready Queensland Schools Competition, which was launched by the Deputy Premier on 27 July.

Now in its second year, the 2021 Get Ready Queensland Schools Competition is a statewide initiative to educate young Queenslanders about their local weather risks and empower them to help their household and community be better prepared for future disasters.

Teachers can select a range of activities from the Get Ready Queensland website, including worksheets, a snakes and ladders style board game and an online challenge, for students to complete. To enter, teachers need to take photographs of students completing the activities and submit online.

Peregian Springs State School on the Sunshine Coast was the winner of the first schools competition held in 2020. Principal Gwen Sands said the visit from Johnathan Thurston and the Get Ready team was an amazing experience for the school community.

**“Many of our students and staff were directly impacted by the devastating bushfires that ripped through Peregian Springs in late 2019,”** Ms Sands said.

Last year’s competition attracted entries from 90 classes across the state and participation from more than 1,600 students.

- All competition activities align to the Australian Curriculum for lower and upper primary.
- Entries for the 2021 Get Ready Queensland Schools Competition close 6 October 2021.
- Winners will be announced in Get Ready Queensland Week, 10-16 October 2021.



Image: Social media tile to promote the 2021 Get Ready Queensland Schools Competition. The tile features a photo of Get Ready Queensland Ambassador Johnathan Thurston with students from Peregian Springs State School, winners of the 2020 Get Ready Queensland Schools Competition.

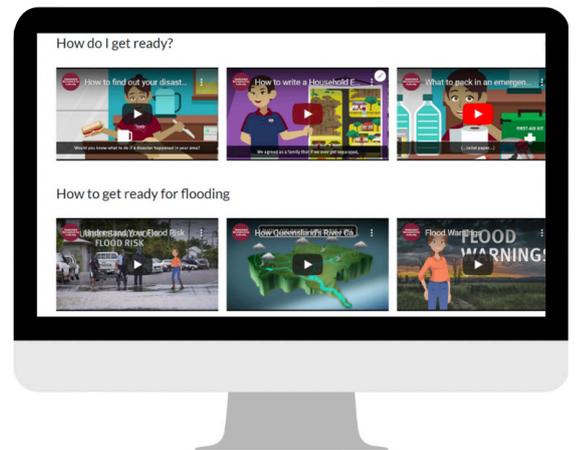
### Introducing Get Ready TV

Queenslanders can now binge-watch their way to readiness with the new Get Ready TV page on the Get Ready Queensland website.

Get Ready TV offers Queenslanders the opportunity to learn about their disaster risks and how to be prepared using videos, animations and case studies. The page hosts the full suite of Get Ready Queensland’s videos as well as helpful videos from the program’s partners including the Bureau of Meteorology, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and ABC.

Video animations and community case studies can engage Queenslanders on serious issues like disasters when they may be fatigued by a traditional approach to government messaging. The Get Ready Queensland team is undertaking market research in August to determine the effectiveness of case studies in communicating with Queenslanders about disaster preparedness. Results from the market research will assist the team in improving future videos and how the Get Ready TV page is used.

The page (*image right*) launched in the last week of July and received 50 views in its first five days.



**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

**QUEENSLAND BETTERMENT PROGRAMS**

**Queensland leads the nation in building resilience in its communities through betterment programs.**

Queensland’s experience with betterment funds shows that an upfront investment in rebuilding impacted assets to be more resilient saves money for all levels of government in future disasters.

Since the first betterment fund was established in 2013, more than 480 projects across Queensland – valued at more than \$240 million – have been delivered, helping to create stronger, more resilient Queensland communities.

Betterment allows local governments and state agencies to rebuild essential public assets to a more resilient standard to help them withstand the impacts of future natural disasters.

Examples include improvements to vital infrastructure such as roads, bridges and floodways. These can vary from stabilisation of low-lying roads to reduce erosion and scouring, upgrades to drainage structures to increase capacity or replacing gravel with reinforced concrete to improve resilience.

Through the various betterment programs, local governments have been empowered to assess, plan and implement disaster resilience at a grass-roots level, enabling work to begin as soon as possible following a natural disaster, helping to mitigate the impact on their local communities.

Queensland’s betterment programs have been jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland governments under Category D of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and prior to November 2018, the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

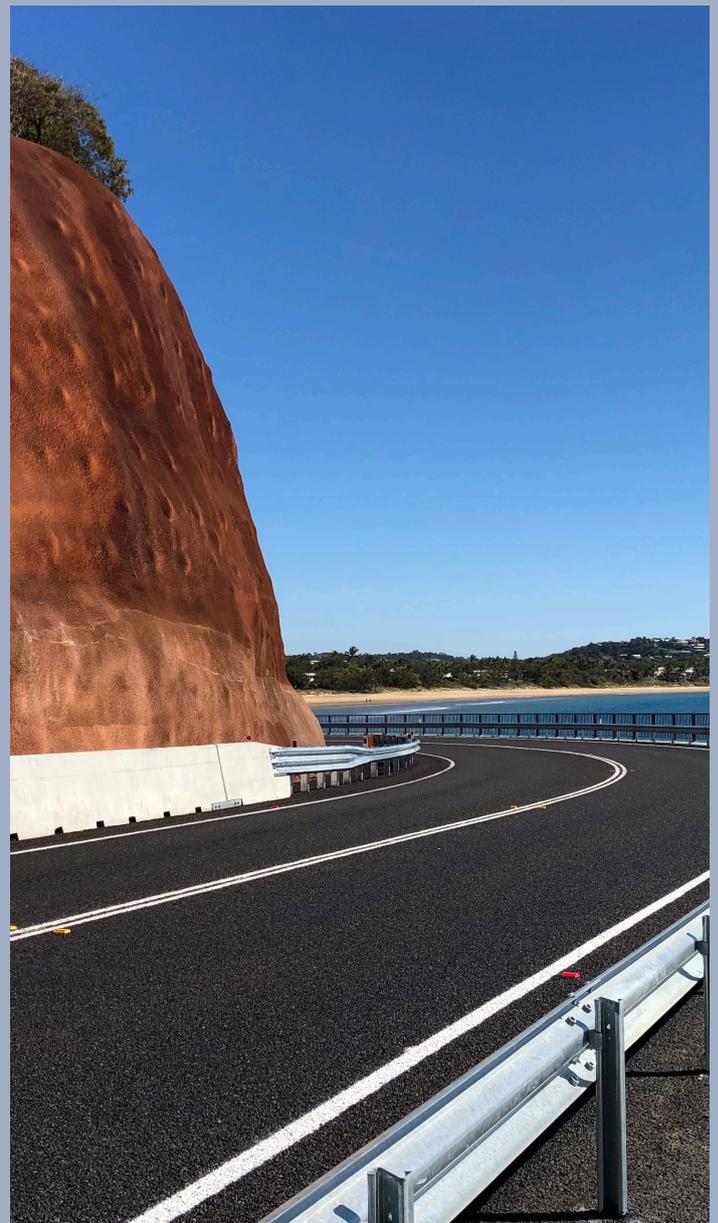
**Reducing the cost of natural disasters**

A key test for betterment projects is whether they leave infrastructure and communities less vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters.

As at July 2021, 334 projects have been subsequently impacted by natural disasters. In total, there have been 683 impacts to betterment sites from 33 events, with 85 per cent suffering no damage and the remaining receiving only minor or superficial damage.

In some cases, assets have been subsequently impacted multiple times, including, for example, Aurukun Access Road, which has been subsequently impacted eight times.

Of the betterment projects that have been re-impacted, an investment of \$110 million has generated more than \$250 million\* in savings or avoided costs, which is a great outcome for all levels of government, as well as Australian taxpayers.



Images (left): Aurukun Access Road received betterment funding in 2013 and 2019. (Right): Livingstone’s Scenic Highway received 2015 Betterment funding.

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

**QUEENSLAND BETTERMENT PROGRAMS Cont'd.**

**Other benefits**

Not only has betterment achieved substantial cost savings through more resilient infrastructure, it has also improved the lives of those living in impacted communities, with roads and bridges not only withstanding weather events, but returning to functionality much sooner in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

Further, the avoided costs figure is based on estimated reconstruction costs only and does not include the many intangible benefits associated with having more resilient infrastructure.

This can include social, economic, and environmental benefits such as more connected communities, continuity of telecommunications, road networks and other essential services, increased consumer confidence and business activity, and reduced impacts on the environment. If these intangible benefits were included than the total avoided cost\* figure would be much higher.

**Betterment over the years**

The first betterment fund was established by QRA in 2013 following Severe Tropical Cyclone Oswald. The \$80 million program delivered 232 projects across 35 local government areas.

The second betterment fund was created in 2015 following Severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia. The \$20 million program saw 58 projects delivered across eight local government areas.

In 2017, following Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie, the third betterment program was set up. The \$41.85 million program delivered 83 projects across 22 local government areas.

The fourth betterment program was announced in 2019 after the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough. The \$102 million program saw 107 projects approved for delivery across 35 local government areas. It was also the first time that state-owned assets were eligible for betterment funding, meaning assistance was available to improve the resilience of state roads.



*Image: Carpentaria’s Little Bynoe Crossing received betterment funding in 2013.*

*\*Avoided costs are estimates only, based on data provided by councils on impacts or likely impacts, and calculated on eligible reconstruction costs under Category B of the DRFA/NDRRA at the time of project approval.*

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

**CASE STUDY – BURKE DEVELOPMENTAL ROAD BETTERMENT WORKS WITHSTAND WET SEASON**

The benefit of investing in resilience improvements on key Queensland transport routes is already evident, with Burke Developmental Road in the state’s north-west successfully withstanding significant rainfall during the 2021 wet season.

Given its critical role as a link between Normanton in Queensland’s north-west and Dimbulah near the coast, Burke Developmental Road was one of 10 strategic locations nominated for flood immunity and resilience projects in the 2019 Betterment Program.

In addition to disaster repairs following the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough flooding event, \$5.1 million in betterment funding was spent on Burke Developmental Road. Works started in April 2020 and were completed in November 2020. This included sealing a section of the road adjoining an existing sealed section and strengthening the surface.

In January 2021, Tropical Cyclone Imogen and the associated low pressure system dumped significant rainfall totals over the area, including 327mm of rainfall in an eight-day period at Normanton Airport. Subsequent assessments found the section of Burke Developmental Road where betterment works were undertaken performed well, with only minimal pavement damage reported and minor road shoulder repairs required.

This has meant the road not only was able to remain operational after the flooding, it avoided reconstruction costs of up to \$1 million from just one event.

Eligible reconstruction works are jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland governments through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



Images: Burke Developmental Road (left): completed betterment works. (Right): silt on road following Tropical Cyclone Imogen.



Images: Burke Developmental Road, Normanton–Dimbulah. (Left): damage from Far North Queensland Low Pressure System . (Right) completed emergency works.

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

**RICHMOND–WINTON ROAD A FOCUS FOR RESILIENCE WORKS**

Given the critical role of Richmond–Winton Road as a link between major towns in Queensland’s north west, three strategic locations along the road were nominated for flood immunity and resilience projects in the 2019 Betterment Program.

The road also serves as an important detour when the Kennedy Developmental Road in central Queensland is impassable due to flooding.

In addition to disaster repairs following the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough flooding, Transport and Main Roads has invested more than \$8 million in betterment works on Richmond–Winton Road.

This involved:

- Installing concrete batters to reduce scouring due to overland flow and enhance resilience.
- Pavement resilience works including in situ stabilisation.
- Works to seal a previously unsealed 10km section

Eligible reconstruction works are jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



*Image: Richmond–Winton Road – completed betterment works.*



*Images: Richmond–Winton Road (left):betterment works in progress (right): betterment works completed.*