



Recovery Progress Reports

Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021



Recovery Progress Report #1 to July 2019

Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021

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Event summary

During November-December 2018, Queensland experienced a series of record fire condition days, which the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) stated were ‘unprecedented’ and ‘unlike anything Queensland has experienced before’.

From 29 November 2018 there were four consecutive days where Extreme Fire Danger Ratings were recorded and very high temperatures were felt across the state. The catastrophic conditions led to the worst fires experienced by Queensland in recent memory, with 1250 fires across the state, 140 of which were in Central Queensland.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services operations were assisted in the response effort by 1202 firefighters and support personnel from every Australian state and territory. It is estimated more than 1.4 million hectares was burnt during the event.

The Central Queensland Bushfires between 22 November and 6 December 2018 resulted in eight Central Queensland local government areas being activated for a range of Category A and Category B assistance measures under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

The *Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018—2021* was endorsed by the Queensland Government on 3 April 2019.



State Recovery Planning and Policy Coordinator

It gives me great pleasure to present the first in a series of reports highlighting the progress towards recovery following the 2018 bushfires in Central Queensland.

This report outlines progress against activities identified in the *Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018—2021* (the Plan) at both a local and state level. It focuses on the efforts of five councils who developed event specific recovery plans for the bushfires, as well as the efforts of four Functional Recovery Groups (FRGs). As the Roads and Transport FRG was not required to stand up for this event, they have no recovery activities included in this report.

As the State Recovery Planning and Policy Coordinator (SRPPC), I would like to thank the State Recovery Coordinator (SRC) for his engagement with the impacted councils and the FRGs throughout the recovery process. I would also like to thank the local recovery coordinators for their oversight of local recovery initiatives. Additionally, I would like to thank the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's (QRA) Recovery Team for their ongoing support to the impacted councils.

In my role as SRPPC, I met with the CEO of the Rockhampton Regional Council in May to discuss council's recovery progress. I will continue to engage with impacted councils in the coming months.

A marked achievement since the Plan was endorsed by the Queensland Government in April 2019, is the completion of the *Central Highlands Event Specific Recovery Plan*. That plan is attached to this report.

Brendan Moon
State Recovery Planning and Policy Coordinator
Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Reconstruction Authority

State recovery progress

This section provides a summary of recovery progress across the functional lines of recovery and resilience initiatives. The recovery progress tracks the implementation of recovery activities against the metrics identified in the Plan.

Three of the FRGs (Human and Social, Economic and Environment) have undertaken activities under phase one, *Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery*, and phase two *Recovery and Reconstruction*. The Building FRG is the only group who has moved to phase three, *Transition*.

The Plan identified there were no specific recovery activities or metrics for this event for the Roads and Transport FRG. As such, the Roads and Transport FRG is not included in this report.

An activity identified as completed will not be addressed in future reports.

Human and Social

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

These recovery tasks can be found on page 28 of the Plan.

Distribution of DRFA Category A and B as at 27 June 2019

Status: Ongoing and on track

The distribution of DRFA Category A and B assistance entails communities being provided with funding through the Personal Hardship Assistance Scheme and Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme within activated areas. The following table outlines the current payment status across both schemes.

Assistance type	Number of applications paid	Value of applications paid
Emergency Hardship Assistance	4,314	\$1,849,945
Essential Household Contents Grant	20	\$23,850
Structural Assistance Grant	2	\$19,982
Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme Grant	3	\$6,135

Minimise disruption of education and childcare services

Status: Completed

This recovery activity aims to ensure that community members have access to education services. There were no significant building issues identified with the impacted schools as a result of the fires. On 5 December 2018 all schools were opened. Department of Education operations returned to business as usual before the December school holidays commenced in 2018.

Minimise disruption of critical health services

Status: Completed

This recovery activity aims to ensure that community members have access to and are able to meet health needs (including mental health) arising from the disaster. Queensland Health proactively provided public health messaging to support residents returning to impacted areas. Queensland Health services returned to business as usual by 19 December 2018.

Connect displaced householders to housing assistance and support mechanisms

Status: Completed

This recovery activity ensures adequate housing is available to community members at appropriate times in the recovery process. On 12 December 2018, all 28 Emergency Housing Accommodation Requests received by the Department of Housing and Public Works (HPW) were closed. There are no outstanding requests for emergency accommodation assistance related to the bushfires.

Timely advice of recovery activities, public health information, advice and assistance

Status: Ongoing and on track

This recovery activity ensures the timely advice is provided to ensure community members are aware of the recovery services available. To date, 5990 hours of service provision has occurred. At this stage, there have been no recovery funding requests for activities which provide counselling services, financial aid or financial counselling services. The recovery partners and services they provide are listed below.

Recovery Partner	Activity
Department of Education	Counselling services offered to staff and students
Australian Red Cross	Attended community meetings and provided of recovery advice
The Salvation Army	Attended a community recovery event in Baffle Creek, Gladstone
Uniting Care Queensland (Lifeline)	Attended Bushfire Community Debriefs in Agnes Water and Wartburg lead by Gladstone Regional Council Delivered an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) in Miriam Vale and Agnes Waters Delivered safeTALK sessions in Baffle Creek and Captain Creek

In addition to the above recovery activities, 6526 instances of personal support and or psychological first aid services have been provided.

Provision of additional mental health services and coordinate the provision of psychosocial and practical supports

Status: Ongoing and on track

The provision of additional mental health services is led by Queensland Health. This recovery activity is designed to ensure community members have access and are able to meet health needs arising from the disaster. A summary of service delivery to date is outlined below.

Hospital and Health Service	Number of engagement activities	Number of people engaged	Screenings	Treatment
Wide Bay	10	13	2	0
Mackay	20	511	435	3
Central Queensland	3	0	0	0

The engagement activities identified needs for the diverse groups of potential clients across the three impacted Hospital and Health Service regions. The needs include tailoring services to a number of sub-groups within broader communities, building preparedness and resilience, establishment of support groups (youth, women), addressing cumulative trauma and fatigue, supporting those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, supporting those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and supporting those who played an active role in response activities (Forrest Rangers and the Rural Fire Service).

Coordinate the matching of donated goods and services

Status: Ongoing and on track

The provision of donated goods assists communities contribute to the recovery process. Donated support has been available to Queensland residents impacted by the fires since the beginning of the November 2018 event. To date, 16,828 items have been received by affected community members, mostly in the Gladstone and Mackay local government areas.

Communities are being encouraged to continue to source support where required. Donated funds are still available to meet needs.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on pages 28-29 of the Plan.

Community Development program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Community Development program provides funding to employ three CDOs to work across the eight impacted Local Government Areas to understand recovery needs and develop community-led recovery and resilience plans. The CDOs will potentially:

- assist community members feel sufficiently safe and secure following a disaster to engage in social activities and interactions with other members of the community
- enable households, families and individuals to act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process
- assist community members with access to appropriate and coordinated social services.

The CDO for Mackay commenced on 1 March 2019 and the CDOs for Livingstone and Gladstone Councils commenced on 1 April 2019. The CDOs have reported significant work in developing relationships with community organisations and disaster management organisations. CDOs are currently developing their Community Development work plans.

Flexible Funding Grants program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Flexible Funding Grants program is for non-government organisations, local governments, industry groups and community groups to implement projects aimed at driving recovery, and building awareness and resilience within the disaster impacted communities. The flexible funding grants will potentially:

- assist community members feel sufficiently safe and secure following a disaster to engage in social activities and interactions with other members of the community
- enable households, families and individuals to act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process
- assist community members with access to appropriate and coordinated social services.

The first round of the Flexible Funding Grant applications for small grants of \$2,500 to \$20,000 and large grants of \$20,000 to \$100,000 opened in the first quarter of 2019. As a result of the first round there will be 17 Queensland-based community groups, non-government organisations, industry groups, and local governments delivering projects across the Banana, Bundaberg, Central Highlands, Isaac, Gladstone, Livingstone, Mackay and Rockhampton local government areas. The list of successful applications follows.

Applicant	Project	Grant funding
Baffle Creek Community Inc	Upgrades to existing community centre	\$96,500
Capricornia Catchments Inc	'Seeing Past the Smoke' community workshops	\$95,573
Central Highlands Regional Council	Installation of humidity and temperature sensors	\$7,000
Crediton Hall Recreation Club	Schematic design for new hall facility	\$40,000
Finch Hatton Airstrip Association Inc	Upgrades to emergency airstrip	\$39,183
Finch Hatton Progress Association	Purchase of UHF radio system	\$19,500
Finch Hatton Progress Association	Purchase of aviation transceivers	\$3,000
Gladstone Community Linking Agency Ltd	Purchase of solar power and battery off-grid storage systems	\$100,000
Greater Whitsunday Food Network Inc	Delivery of actions in the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday Food and Agritourism Strategic Action Plan	\$77,400
Kooyalee Outdoor Education Centre – Guides QLD	Upgrades to existing facility	\$4,220
Mackay Regional Council	Emergency Resilience Officer	\$100,000
Mackay Tourism Ltd	Agritourism capacity-building forum	\$15,000
QLD Tourism Industry Council	QLD sustainable regions risk and resilience program	\$98,000
Reef Catchments (Mackay, Whitsunday, Isaac) Ltd	Burning barriers to bushfire management in the Mackay, Whitsunday, and Isaac region	\$88,600
Rockhampton Regional Council	Bushfire evacuation planning with Mount Archer and neighbouring suburbs	\$25,000
Rockhampton Regional Council	Disaster management, community recovery, engagement, education and communication trailer	\$40,000
Rockhampton Regional Council	'Recording Resilient Stories of Today for the Future' project	\$10,145
The Caves Pony Club Inc	Upgrades to existing facility and equipment	\$50,000
Volunteering QLD	'Disaster Ready Volunteers' video clip	\$20,000
Volunteering QLD	'Community Resilience Through Volunteering' workshop	\$93,700
Welcome Intercultural Neighbours Inc	'Resilient Children, Resilient Families' program	\$71,500

Community Mental Health program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Community Mental Health program is designed to assist disaster-impacted individuals, carers, families, volunteers and communities with specialist mental health support and emotional wellbeing post disaster, in addition to existing mental health services. The program be delivered from the Mackay, Central Queensland and Wide Bay Hospital and Health Services, with a particular focus on Bloomsbury, Finch Hatton, Eungella, Sarina Beach, Baffle Creek and Deep Water.

Hospital and Health Service	Staffing	Activities
Mackay and Wide Bay	Two clinicians	Full treatment program commenced and includes screening, community engagement and needs assessment
Central Queensland	Two clinicians commence July	Program manager has commenced screening, community engagement and needs assessment

Key statistics relating to the program:

- 43.5 hours have been spent on learning / capability development with 44 participants
- 301 hours providing events/activities with 839 participants
- 273 community agencies have been involved in community activities
- 50 hours spent on activities associated with Recovery and Resilience Plans
- 75 hours spent developing resources and tools.

Establishment of District Human and Social Recovery governance committees

Status: Ongoing and on track

The establishment of District Human and Social Recovery governance committees are designed to support and provide advice to the CDOs attached to the respective councils. The groups will also ensure the involvement of community groups in the communities with the CDOs.

The Livingstone and Gladstone governance committees commenced in March 2019. The Mackay governance committee will commence in July 2019.

Continuation of Uniting Care Queensland support to the Baffle Creek community

Status: Completed

The Uniting Care Queensland support program consisted of targeted outreach to community members. As a result of these visits additional psychological first aid services were provided. Further a number of practical support services were also provided including delivery of food vouchers. The following table summarises the activities undertaken.

Property visits	Staffing hours	Psychological first aid services	Referrals provided
330	104	4112	1400

Economic

The Economic Functional Recovery Group Report addresses progress across the first two phases of recovery – Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery, and Recovery and Reconstruction. At this stage transition activities are not considered in this report.

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

These recovery tasks can be found on page 31 of the Plan.

Distribution of Category B DRFA

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Category B DRFA activated for the Central Queensland Bushfires included Disaster Assistance Small Business Loans, Essential Working Capital Loans for small business, Primary Producer Loans, Essential Working Capital Loans for Primary Producers and Freight Subsidies for Primary Producers.

To date, three applications for Disaster Assistance Primary Producer Loans have been approved to the value of \$449,077.

Financial support for primary producers and small business

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority has published links on its website outlining the various grant and loan schemes that are available to Primary Producers and Small Business as a result of the event. The website provides information on the available assistance, eligibility, loan term and repayment requirements and the applicable interest rates. The relevant website is <http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/current-programs/Disaster-recovery>

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on page 31 of the Plan. An activity identified as completed will not be addressed in future reports.

Tourism and events Queensland

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Tourism and Events Queensland package is designed to provide financial support to the value of \$105,000 to assist with recovery marketing activities completed by the following organisations: Mackay Tourism, Capricorn Enterprise and Gladstone Area Development. In summary these organisations have completed the following for the below areas:

Capricorn:

- Invested funds in social and media and influencer famils:
 - Social was boosted during January school holidays
 - Hosted travel writers and bloggers.

Mackay:

- Invested funds across digital messaging, an influencer program, digital activity and augmented reality:
 - Digital Messaging (Dec-Jan)
 - Influencer Program (Feb-Jun)
 - Digital campaign (Mar-Jun)
 - Augmented reality assets (April).

Gladstone:

- Invested funds in increasing awareness and consideration to Agnes Water/1770 as a holiday destination, from early February 2019
- Focused on the 400 kilometre drive marketing (radius of Agnes Water/1770):
 - Television advertising targeting families and empty nesters
 - True View advertising targeting the demographics of single income no kids, double income no kids and families
 - Hosted social influencers.

Rural Residential Recovery program (previously the Targeted Community Funding program)

Status: Ongoing

Since the publication of the Plan, the approved Targeted Community Funding program has been redesigned as the Rural Residential Recovery program. The program supports the clean-up and reinstatement of rural residential properties beyond the immediate vicinity of the residential house.

The program guidelines have been refined to take into account an enhanced understanding of impact and the evolving community need, whilst maintaining the original intent of the approved program. This led to identifying the Australian Red Cross, who had been already working on the ground with impacted communities, as the most appropriate delivery agency for the funding.

The QRA has worked closely with the Australian Red Cross to finalise the preparations for this program which commenced 31 July 2019. The targeted funding to reimburse owners and/or tenants of rural residential properties who have personally faced disaster related costs for clean-up activities, losses or damages beyond the vicinity of their residence, is being advertised by the impacted local councils. This information is also available on the QRA website.



Environment

The Environmental Recovery Report addresses progress across the first two phases of recovery – Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery and Recovery and Reconstruction. At this stage transition activities are not considered in this report.

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

These recovery tasks can be found on page 33 of the Plan.

Ensure parks are assessed and re-opened as soon as it is safe to do so to minimise economic impacts

Status: Complete

As a result of the central Queensland bushfires, a total of 22 national parks were impacted. As at 28 June 2019 all national parks have been reopened to the public.

Undertake preliminary assessment of environmental assessment of environmental impacts including through fire severity mapping

Status: Complete

Bushfire Rapid Assessments which incorporated environmental impact assessments were conducted at nominated sites utilising interstate and internal resources. The below case study outlines the outcomes of the approach.

Case Study

This case study on the Mount Etna outlines the outcomes of rapid assessments

In December 2018, the Department of Environment and Science's Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) staff were deployed to Agnes Water to assist interstate Bushfire Rapid Assessment teams assess the fire impacts on Deepwater and Eurimbula National Parks. The purpose of the deployment was to articulate the risk arising from these fires and share knowledge across Queensland, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Victoria teams in order to build rapid risk assessment capability - with awareness of different approaches to fire management, the various consequences arising from fires and appropriate risk mitigation actions available.

With the experience gained from that deployment QPWS&P staff have undertaken a similar, but simplified, assessment focussing on fire impacts to natural values and built assets in Mount Etna.

The Mount Etna fire burned approximately 752 hectares in total including 432 hectares on the National Park. The fire intensity was patchy across the fire area with numerous areas of full crown burns both in eucalypt dominated and vine thicket/forest communities.

This assessment report identifies potential risk to the environment with a focus on park estate including significant risk of fire recurrence from incursion of exotic high biomass grasses. The assessment report provides a snapshot of the identified risks following the wildfire event and provides practical treatment solutions and approximate costs for risk mitigation.



Damage to vine thicket/forest communities is severe over substantial areas, Michelle Brook, and Rhonda Melzer, from QPWS&P

Provided burnt area extent mapping from 'Rapidfire,' the Department of Environment and Science's prototype burnt area mapping system, to stakeholders

Status: Ongoing and on track

A draft burnt area extent from the 'Rapidfire' was provided to key stakeholders to inform, augment mapping and monitoring efforts based on a subset of available satellite imagery. The mapping has since been updated following the acquisition of additional satellite imagery.

Updated draft data was distributed to stakeholders on 12 July 2019. DES will continue to monitor burnt areas in the region with the Rapidfire system.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on page 33 of the Plan. An activity identified as completed will not be addressed in future reports.

Collaborate and undertake activities to protect cultural heritage values

Status: Ongoing and on track

Cultural heritage impact assessments were conducted at nominated sites as part of the interstate Bushfire Rapid Assessment Team deployment and subsequent internal processes.

Targeted consultation is occurring with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people regarding cultural heritage management and recovery at Carnarvon National Park. At this stage there are no reportable outcomes from the consultation.

Control of post-fire flooding and erosion

Status: Ongoing and on track

All rehabilitation works are being done under existing regional resources. Funding for further rehabilitation work identified within QPWS Enhanced Fire Initiative to be implemented in 2019/20.

Conduct programs to prevent further impacts to biodiversity

Status: Ongoing and on track

There is significant risk of fire recurrence from exotic grass incursion into wildfire damaged ecosystems at some parks. To counteract this risk, additional contingency planning is underway. Specific details of these plans will be available in the next report.

There is a potential increased risk of fox predation of turtle nests on beaches adjacent to Deepwater National Park due to the impact of the bushfires in this region. Den detection dogs were deployed on 16 January 2019 to help reduce this risk.

Ensure communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and local government are effectively engaged in the consultation and decision making processes

Status: Ongoing and on track

Thorough engagement of key stakeholders and partners has been conducted and remains an ongoing priority for QPWS.

Building

The Building FRG report addresses progress across the three phases of recovery – Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery, Recovery and Reconstruction and Transition.

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

Status: Complete

The Building FRG completed four key activities during post-impact relief and early recovery:

- initiate immediate rapid damage assessment of community infrastructure
- finalise detailed building assessments on government building infrastructure
- facilitate community access to independent building repair advice
- input into general communication strategy in relation to building and electrical health and safety messages.

The details of these programs are outlined on page 35 of the Plan.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

The following recovery activities have been identified as complete:

- targeted community funding to support clean-up of residential properties Bloomsbury, Finch Hatton, Eungella, Sarina Beach, Baffle Creek, Deepwater, Mount Larcom
- review of identified damage assessments and reconstruction monitoring
- repair government owned building assets
- determine repair/rebuild approach for community assets.

The ongoing phase two recovery tasks can be found on page 35 of the Plan.

Facilitate community access to independent building repair advice

Status: Ongoing and on track

This task focuses on the provision of building advice and information to support the recovery of the impacted community. Information is continually available to those requiring repair and rebuilding.

Develop a bushfire and heat resistant building guideline specifically for Queensland homes

Status: Ongoing and on track

Queensland Reconstruction Authority is currently in the planning and scoping phase of this project.

Phase Three: Transition

Due to the progress of the Building FRG, relevant transition activities are discussed below. The transition tasks can be found on page 35 of the Plan.

Provide advice to regulators regarding learnings from the bushfire event related to the recovery of built infrastructure

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Building FRG has undertaken to provide information on suggested improvements from the bushfire or any other event to the relevant entities. Members of QFES, HPW and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Manufacturing and Planning have been working together to review the Bushfire Guidance for the State Planning Policy.

Additionally, HPW provided input for the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review. The Department of Housing and Public Works also developed a response to the review's recommendations.

Resilience initiatives

The resilience initiatives outlined in the Plan have been refined post-publication. The refinement includes the addition of the QFES Land Management Program.

Enhance the centralised Get Ready Queensland program with a public information and awareness campaign to help educate and prepare communities for future bushfires

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Public Information and Awareness Campaign has a budget of \$170,000 and is due to commence on 31 July 2019 and run until end September 2019. The campaign is a joint initiative with QFES creative and is titled *In the Line of Fire*, the campaign spend will be divided across radio, billboards and social media.

Queensland Rural Fire Services to develop locally-led engagement activities to enhance bushfire preparedness

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Queensland Rural Fire Services to develop locally-led engagement activities to enhance bushfire preparedness is known as the *My Resilient Community Project*. The project is available to communities within the eight impacted local government areas. A large workshop has been held in Rockhampton facilitated by Queensland University of Technology and the University of Southern Queensland titled “My Resilient Community, Getting Started” targeting local government, community stakeholders, QPWS, Queensland Police and QFES. This was offered via Event Brite to all eight local governments.

QFES Land Management program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Land Manager Education program is a new public engagement activity that will increase understanding of fire preparedness and be funded as part of the Community Information and Engagement Measure, under the Cat C Community Recovery Fund for the Central Queensland Bushfires. Total funding for the activity is \$200,000.

QRA has informed Emergency Management Australia the project is a recognised need based on initial engagement through the current programs and can be undertaken within the current Category C \$0.75 million budget allocation. This has meant the budget allocations for the resilience projects have been adjusted to allow for this additional program. It will be managed by QFES and run in the Local Government Areas activated for DRFA funding as a result of the Bushfires.

Insurance awareness campaign

Status: Postponed

The insurance awareness campaign has an allocated budget of \$130,000. This QRA program has been postponed due to the number of campaigns currently planned for the market, and the desire for the campaign to be informed by insurance challenges arising from the 2019 North and Far North Queensland Monsoon. The new delivery date for this campaign will be 2020.

Local recovery progress

This section provides a summary of councils' progress against their local recovery plans, three months on from the endorsement of the Plan.

This report focuses on the five councils that completed event-specific recovery plans – Central Highlands Regional Council, Gladstone Regional Council, Livingstone Shire Council, Mackay Regional Council and Rockhampton Regional Council.

Councils have provided an update on progress against their recovery objectives, any challenges that may have been encountered, and success stories for their recovery to date. Once recovery objectives have been met they will no longer be reported against.

Central Highlands Regional Council

The *Central Highlands Event Specific Recovery Plan* was approved on 28 June 2019. The Central Highlands Regional Council has now commenced work on their recovery tasks and will commence progress reporting at the six month update. The plan is attached to this report.

Gladstone Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

Recovery Objective	Update
Habitable environment for all affected residents via existing or temporary structures	Through liaison with relevant agencies, residents requiring temporary accommodation were assisted following the fires. A number of residents have been assisted further through GIVIT funding and Team Rubicon to facilitate the return to their homes.
Clean tank water for all residents	A free water tank cleaning service was provided by Council to all residents who requested this service in the bushfire affected areas. Additionally, Council provided 2000 litres of clean drinking water to affected residents.
Refuse management for affected residents including increased service availability	Waste transfer fees were waived for several weeks following the bushfires, and kerbside collection offered. Council also engaged SIMS metal to assist residents further with the collection of scrap metal from their properties.
Animal welfare and control in lieu of structures and assistance personnel	Excluding Local Law Officer assistance directly following the bushfires, no further requests for animal welfare assistance have been received. It is believed that the establishment of the Council-Gladstone Region Bushfires-Animal and Evacuee Accommodation Facebook group, enabled community members to assist one another with their animal's care and location before the events, significantly reducing any concerns following the fires.
Wildlife management and welfare	Early reports from the Wildlife Rescue Agency indicate very few reports of injured wildlife were received. The community has provided feedback that wildlife has commenced returning to the affected areas.
Building structure safety assessment	Assessments of properties were conducted prior to residents returning to their homes. Residents requiring assistance to return to their homes have been assisted as needed. Permits for reconstruction and rectification works have been processed by certifiers as quickly as possible to allow for works for commence.

Recovery Objective	Update
Health and Wellbeing preparation of residents returning to homes	<p>Many agencies were at the Place of Refuge in Miriam Vale, and the recovery hubs set up throughout the region to assist residents who had been affected by the bushfires, prior to returning to their homes.</p> <p>Additionally, Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service has recently appointed two fulltime mental health clinicians, who will be working in the Baffle Creek/Deepwater region to provide clinical mental health support as well as supporting the ongoing resilience of residents.</p>
Road transport network – coordinated restoration of road furniture and removal of debris and hazards on state and local controlled roads to assist in road user safety	<p>This is ongoing with a Council Fire Management Group established to ensure a consolidated response. Items flagged in the recent Fire Management Interagency Group meeting will be considered by the Fire Management Group.</p>
Restoration of irrigation plots at Agnes Water WWTP and improved resilience to future fires	<p>Work is ongoing in this space, and will be further actioned through the internal working group.</p>
Installation of firebreaks on Council owned land	<p>Council is progressing their fire preparedness plans across all communities, with an initial focus on the localities impacted by the bushfires of 2018. This work will be completed collaboratively with community members, local industry, and respective state government agencies such as Department of Environment and Science, and Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.</p>
Alternative evacuation road link between Baffle Creek and Agnes Water established	<p>Alternative options for a secondary linking road between Baffle Creek and Agnes Water have been drafted by Council and community consultation will occur prior to the end of the calendar year.</p>
Empower local businesses and residents to improve their resilience to disasters	<p>The Community Development Officer (CDO), appointed through the DRFA Category C Community Development Program, will engage with local businesses and residents to enhance their preparedness and subsequent resilience to future disaster events.</p>
Identify community needs and develop localised community recovery plans	<p>The CDO has commenced work in collaboration with Council's Disaster Response Specialist, and Community Engagement Specialist, to identify community needs and start to develop localised community recovery plans. The development of these plans is anticipated to be completed prior to the end of the CDO role (March 2021).</p>
Engage with agencies and organisations to implement flexible and adaptable programs and services to meet the needs of the affected communities	<p>The CDO is engaging with agencies and organisations within the affected communities to identify potential project ideas to support the needs of the wider community. This engagement is still in the initial phases, and an update on project development will be provided in the next Recovery Progress Report.</p>
Identify and communicate financial assistance options	<p>Information about the financial assistance options available was provided to all affected communities immediately post-disaster. Updated information about remaining GIVIT funds for residents who still require support is being communicated. The CDO is engaging with community organisations to ensure they are aware of the DRFA Category C Flexible Funding Grants</p>

Recovery Objective	Update
	Program (Flexible Funding) ahead of round two applications opening in March 2020.
Provide timely and easily accessible public information to encourage two-way conversations	Council held three community debrief events in the Bushfire impacted localities – Mount Larcom in February 2019, Agnes Water and Wartburg in April 2019. This afforded an opportunity for affected residents to provide feedback on the bushfire events of 2018, and to suggest solutions that may be implemented to enhance Council's delivery of services in future events. This feedback has been collated, and converted to action items, which have since been tasked to the appropriate areas within Council. The community will be provided with an update of these action items in September 2019.

Challenges

Given the broad geographical area impacted by the event, managing resource levels while ensuring recovery works continue is of paramount importance.

Some recovery objectives will take a number of years to complete – this not only requires long term resources and planning, but also highlights a need to keep the community and agencies engaged for a significant period of time.

Successes

Community consultation and engagement have led to greater social and community cohesion, evidenced by community members working together and being proactive in terms of project ideas that will enhance community resilience.

The Council was successful in obtaining funding for three projects under the Flexible Funding Grants program. The projects are:

- enhancements to the existing Baffle Creek Community Centre
- a community workshop to increase local volunteer effectiveness and community awareness of disaster volunteering
- Resilient Children, Resilient Families project.

Livingstone Shire Council

Progress of recovery objectives

Recovery Objective	Update
Essential services (power, water, waste, tele-communications) repaired and restored	Essential services repaired and restored. Strategies to address telecommunications issues are being investigated with The Caves community.
Community Recovery Hub established at The Caves	Recovery Hub addressed immediate needs of impacted residents.
Inspection and removal of burnt trees as required	Inspection and removal of trees on council property completed.

Recovery Objective	Update
Identification and management of personal hardship cases	<p>Personal hardship cases identified and supported through Community Recovery Hub.</p> <p>Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Grant as well as Council's iCare program and support from UnitingCare Queensland (Lifeline), Australian Red Cross and the Salvation Army.</p>
Community messaging that "we are open for business"	<p>In partnership with local government and Capricorn Enterprise, the Capricorn Caves has successfully managed messaging and media. The annual Caves Fossil Day (22 June 2019) had over 1200 attendees from across Queensland, indicating this messaging has been successful.</p>
Assess human, health, and social impacts	<p>Immediate impacts have been assessed and managed. Ongoing social impacts will be identified and addressed by the CDO and other agencies as necessary.</p>
Attend Caves Rural Fire debrief to capture learnings	<p>Completed 13 December 2018. Learnings shared with appropriate agencies.</p>
In partnership with the relevant agencies, provide access to psychosocial support services if required	<p>Council officers have identified appropriate support agencies and will continue working with community members to provide access to required supports.</p>
Facilitate support to Caves Tourist Park (support to staff and tourism)	<p>Council has worked closely with The Capricorn Caves Tourist Park to address medium and long term recovery needs. The key issue identified is limited telecommunications capability currently at the site. See objective 12 below for more detail.</p>
Assess economic impact on key assets (e.g. tourism, small business and agriculture); promote opportunities to drive economic recovery	<p>Economic impacts on tourism and small business has largely been overcome as a result of effective and timely messaging that the area is open for business.</p> <p>Impacts on agriculture are yet to be fully realised as Livingstone is now drought declared. Identifying impacts of the fire versus those of drought is complex. Council is working with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to address ongoing impacts on agriculture.</p>
Lobby for better mobile phone communication for the affected area	<p>Limited mobile phone capabilities have been identified through the Livingstone Local Disaster Management Group. Council has been working with The Capricorn Caves tourism operators and Rural Fire Brigade to identify mechanisms to address the issue.</p>
Assess resilience of critical infrastructure	<p>There is limited telecommunications capability at The Caves, particularly around the Capricorn Caves Tourist Park. This was demonstrated during the bushfire event.</p> <p>The tourism managers, in partnership with Council and The Caves Rural Fire Brigade, have begun discussions around solutions and are investigating submitting an application for a Flexible Funding Grant (Round 2) to address this.</p>
Environmental assessment across The Caves area	<p>Detailed environmental assessment is ongoing. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has indicated recent surveying demonstrates no reduction in the local bat population. Assessment of the canopy around The Caves is continuing.</p>

Recovery Objective	Update
	Significant vegetation (particularly the semi-evergreen vine thicket) at Mt Etna National Parks was lost and the impacts of this are still being investigated.
Seek funding for any Cat C opportunities to support recovery and resilience across Human Social with particular attention to cumulative effects of disasters	Successful application for a CDO, with the officer appointed 5 April 2019. Officer now engaged with The Caves community as well as Rockhampton and Central Highlands services to develop appropriate recovery and resilience strategies.
Continue to implement long-term resilience strategies	Council employees, elected members, the Livingstone Shire Local Disaster Management Group, and relevant stakeholders are engaged in an ongoing process of identifying community-driven resilience-building strategies and supporting these as required.

Challenges

Round one of the Flexible Funding Grants program coincided with recruitment process for CDO meaning limited support was available to applicants in the area. As a CDO officer has now been appointed, there will be assistance for round two applications.

Families and community groups in The Caves are looking for funds to fix damaged fencing but are having difficulty finding an appropriate resource. Livingstone Shire Council has been advised the Rural Residential Recovery program may provide the required assistance.

Successes

The Caves Fossil Day was held on 22 June 2019 and had over 1200 attendees, indicating the messaging that the area is open and ready for business has been heard. The council was successful in their application for a CDO. The appointed officer has engaged with The Caves community, and Rockhampton and Central Highlands service providers to develop appropriate recovery and resilience strategies.

Rockhampton Regional Council

Meetings

The Rockhampton Regional Council's Recovery and Resilience Working Group met on 12 April 2019. The meeting reflected on the current recovery status and discussed options and priorities for the Flexible Funding Grants program. As a result of this meeting funding applications were prepared and submitted. The Rockhampton Local Disaster Management Group continues to meet quarterly and receives recovery status updates. The Council welcomed John Webb, Manager, Communities and Culture, to the position of Deputy Recovery Coordinator.

The Rockhampton District Human and Social Recovery Committee and the inaugural meeting of the Central Queensland Bushfire CDO Reference Group were held on 7 May 2019 to develop an updated understanding of the current recovery needs of the community and plan appropriate strategies to build resilience and prepare for future

recovery needs. There is an upcoming Rockhampton Regional Council Resilience and Recovery Subgroup meeting scheduled for late July 2019.

Initiatives

The Council is currently reviewing the Bushfire Mitigation Strategy and the associated Memorandum of Understanding between Council, QPWS and QFES.

Disaster Resilience Community Profiles for Gracemere, Stanwell, Kabra, Mt Morgan, Bajool, Richlands and Alton Downs are in the process of being developed as a part of a combined recovery and *Get Ready Queensland* program. Additionally, the Australian Red Cross Pillow Case project targeting Bajool, Kabra and Gracemere is being rolled out in conjunction with council to assist the communities' primary school students to understand their risks, preparation strategies and provide guidance on preparedness discussions with their families.

Local rebuilding fencing strategies continue to be developed with the community, Australian Red Cross and local community groups.

In 2018, QFES conducted *Operation Knock Knock* in Gracemere. In 2019, a similar program named *Operation Community Connect* will target the same area. In addition to the questions posed last year, new questions will be added to determine the impact of the fires on the communities and their sense of preparedness. This data will be used to inform future education strategies, highlight any recovery gaps that may exist and identify changes in preparedness levels.

Successes

The Council was successful in obtaining funding for three projects under the Flexible Funding Grants program. The projects are:

- Recording Resilient Stories of Today for the Future
- Disaster management, community recovery, engagement, education and communication trailer
- Bushfire evacuation planning with Mount Archer and neighbouring suburbs.

These projects are still in the planning and scoping phase. Additionally the council will partner with Capricornia Catchments Inc. to facilitate their 'Seeing Past the Smoke' community workshops supporting recovery in the region.

Mackay Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

The Mackay Regional Council is focusing on the recovery objectives outlined in the Event Specific Recovery Plan.

Recovery efforts in the human and social domain are progressing ahead of recovery timeframes. However, the repair of burnt fences is an area of concern for recovery progress. The end of the wet season allows farmers to finish repairs to fencing.

Strong community-led recovery is emerging across all of the pillars of recovery. There have been a number of applications for the Flexible Funding Grants program, for

rebuilding infrastructure and weed management on private lands. Mackay has also experienced a healthy economic return in a range of businesses.

The wet season delayed assessments of the fire impacts on the rainforests at Eungella and Finch Hatton but they have now been completed. An excellent recovery plan has been presented by the DES. This recovery plan focuses on weed management allowing for forest regeneration to occur naturally without the need for revegetation. The Council has committed to working with DES to engage with local residents who are keen to begin restoration works of replanting trees.

Challenges

The Council has identified the need for greater holistic coordination of recovery from the District Disaster Management Group for a few important reasons:

- most of the fires in this region occurred across the LGA boundaries with Whitsunday and Isaac and building resilience in those localities involved working across the boundaries
- the Council's contract with the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS) for community recovery services covers Mackay and Isaac councils. Better engagement across all recovery pillars in the district should prevent future gaps or duplication in activities.

The Mackay Regional Council has been advised this concern has also been raised by senior local leaders from DES and DCDSS. The Council will work with the District Disaster Management Group to address the issue.

Case Study

This case study on a Mackay resident highlights the interplay between the different functional areas of recovery and how external influencing factors can create cascading recovery challenges for individuals.

A man at Finch Hatton lost his home, sheds, farm equipment and sugar cane crop.

While he has strong family support and his insurance company will cover costs to rebuild the home, there are issues hampering his recovery that are indicative of the challenges particular to rural people and individuals dealing with large, centralised institutions and a global economy.

He has been told it will cost him \$40,000 to restore power to the property, but he is having difficulty finding people in Ergon who can answer his questions or negotiate the work. The energy supplier previously had a small office only a short drive from his home but now he must contact a call centre in Brisbane where his call is bounced between departments.

Mackay Sugar determines how much sugar cane he must produce each year, but this year he cannot meet the required yields and may not be able to sell even the little cane that has regrown (the company will usually not take anything short of the required yields). In addition, there is great uncertainty for local canegrowers due to the imminent takeover of the company. It means he is unsure if he should attempt to recover the farm, as he does not know what conditions he would be operating under in the future.

As an older man descended from several generations of cane growing, it is all he has ever known. As a bachelor who is now living away from his community, his social isolation has grown. The man is being supported by Mackay Regional Council and DCDSS.

Central Highlands Regional Council Local Recovery Plan

Recovery narrative

Recovery Introduction

Central Highlands Regional Council a progressive region creating opportunities for all. The Central Highlands will recover building a community more resilient to future disasters. Our recovery will be based on a community lead approach building resilience through the re-establishment of community linkages.

Overview of Central Highlands

The area administered by Central Highlands Regional Council (CHRC) extends over approximately 59,884km², west of Rockhampton. The Council area is surrounded by Banana and Murweh Shires and the regional councils of Barcaldine, Blackall/Tambo, Isaac, Rockhampton, and Maranoa. The area administered by the Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council lies within the boundaries of the Central Highlands Regional Council. The topography is dominated on three sides by mountains – along the western side by the Drummond Ranges, in the south by the Great Dividing Range- Carnarvon Range and in the north by the Peak Range. Elevations in excess of 1000m are reached along the edge of the Carnarvon Range, with Mt Moffatt (1097m) and Mt Lambert (1029m) the highest peaks. Mt Pisgah (811m) is the highest peak of the Drummond range and Scott's Peak (854m) the highest of the Peak Range. Elsewhere elevations range from 300m to 600m across rolling hills and floodplains. The area is drained by the Comet, Nogoia, Mackenzie and Dawson Rivers and their tributaries which form part of the greater Fitzroy River basin.

Council values

Respect and integrity

- Building trust, teamwork, communication and a shared understanding.
- Actively listening to our communities.

Accountability and transparency

- Equal opportunities, fair and open consultation and communication.
- Accepting responsibility for our actions.

Providing value

- Best value for money outcomes for our community.
- Collaboration, managing expectations and working towards common goals.
- Deliver efficiency and effectiveness in all that we do.

Commitment and teamwork

- Continually improve on our achievements and drive innovative solutions.
- Lead change and continuous improvement in delivering for our community.
- Promote a positive health and safety culture.

Lines of Recovery

Human and Social, Economic, Environment, Infrastructure.

Key stakeholders

Central Highlands Regional Council, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment and Science (Heritage Branch), Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, Queensland Health, Department of Transport and Main Roads, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, community members within the region, community volunteers, mental health service providers, Non-Government Organisations, other invested parties.

Recovery themes

1. Response: ensure community safety
2. Rebuilding: bring the community forward to a new normal
3. Restoration: working together to repair and re-establish community linkages across the lines of recovery
4. Resilience: embed the principle in all activities to mitigate, improve and build betterment for the community

Overview of Event

Central Highlands Regional Council LDMG stood up and the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) activated and was manned in response to unprecedented fire weather conditions on Wednesday, 28 November 2018.

Significant impacts were sustained around Carnarvon Gorge, Arcadia Valley and surrounding primary producers. Property at Takarakka and the Wilderness Lodge were damaged as were Indigenous artworks. Access to power and gas infrastructure was lost. Tragically, there was one loss of life.

Blackdown National Park and surrounding primary producers sustained significant damage. Key areas of concern include: Blackdown Tablelands and surrounding properties, Expedition Range Area, Carnarvon Gorge, Arcadia Valley, Rolleston, Deepdale and Albinia.

Disaster Recovery Objectives

Identification and management of personal hardship cases. Assess human, health, and social impacts. Impact assessments –completed, information shared to understand the true impact. In partnership with the relevant agencies, provide access to psychosocial support services if required. Assess economic impact on key assets, e.g. tourism, small business and agriculture, and promote opportunities to drive economic recovery. Lobby for better mobile phone communication for the affected area. Assess resilience of critical infrastructure. Environmental assessment and rehabilitation –mechanisms implemented. Forest rehabilitation - focus on long term rehabilitation project involving communities. Seek funding for any Cat C opportunities to support recovery and resilience across Human Social with particular attention to accumulative effects of disasters. Continue to implement long term resilience strategies.

Definition of Disaster Recovery

Disaster recovery is the coordinated process of supporting disaster-affected communities' psychosocial (emotional and social), and physical well-being; reconstruction of physical infrastructure; and economic and environmental restoration (including regeneration of the natural environment, associated infrastructure and heritage sites and structures, and the management of pollution and contamination).



Mayor
Kerry Hayes



CEO
Scott Mason

Activations for Disaster Recovery Funding Assistance

For details of activations and assistance measures visit www.qra.qld.gov.au/activations

Disaster relief measure

- Counter Disaster Operations

Activation date

30/11/2018

Damage and impacts

Human and Social

- Community wellbeing and connectedness
 - Community wellbeing and connectedness impacted.
 - Psychosocial impacts to individuals, families and communities as a result of a feeling of isolation, helplessness, lack of support networks and not understanding the severity of the situation (most people have not experienced this level of severity).
 - Feeling of disconnectedness from community due to cancellation of local events such as the camp draft and cutting events.
 - Feeling of disconnectedness from community due to individuals withdrawing from community groups such as the Rolleston P&C.
 - Expectation of local people being available 24/7.
 - Loss of community traditions.
 - Potential impact on children's continuing education.
 - Loss of enjoyment and recreation opportunities at the gorge - lack of trust.
- Mental health
 - Mental health services beyond capacity – not understanding jurisdiction boundaries.
 - Increased need for mental health services to support family, friends and colleagues dealing with the loss of the volunteer firefighter.
 - Increased need for mental health services to support individuals, families and communities dealing with loss of property and possessions.
 - Requirement for qualified support to enable community to debrief
 - Individual's capacity to listen is diminished as a result of mental fatigue.
 - Mental fatigue - impaired decision making, diminished resilience, changes in routines, substance abuse and disconnectedness from family, friends and community.
 - Agency fatigue.
 - Landholder fatigue.
 - Anxiety towards fires – people not knowing when the event would end, compounded by drought– still on 'alert' in their minds.
 - Family disruption and friction as a result of ongoing stress and financial pressure due to loss of income, jobs and stock.
 - Event compounding on existing issues such as drought.
- Impact on volunteers
 - Fatigue due to a lack of support.
 - Loss of the volunteer base due to fatigue.
 - Withdrawal from volunteering leads to withdrawal from community.
- Lack of communication and cohesiveness from Government and community services.
- Risk perception / assessment of risk – increased anxiety for the future of disaster management.
- Risk perception / assessment of risk - increase in people accessing financial assistance.

Economic

- Agriculture industry - loss of cropping, fodder, machinery, fencing and water infrastructure.
- Agriculture industry - extended disruptions to transport routes for product freight to saleyards/market, particularly the cattle producers facing long term delays in repairs to roads to allow heavy vehicle access.
- Tourism industry - loss of income/profits due to temporary closure of National Park and lack of communication in letting tourists know that the region is 'open for business'.
- Loss of income/profits to small businesses – cancellation of community events, reduced number of tourists due to temporary closure of National Park and school closures.
- No fund raising opportunities for community groups due to cancellation of community events.
- Raise in insurance premiums.
- Financial costs associated with the fire response.
- Financial costs associated with school closures.

Environment

- Basin and river catchment erosion.
- Erosion impacts to drainage/culverts and seed banks.
- Loss of top soil and cover crops.
- Water quality– concerns regarding animal and human consumption of water due to silting up of waterways and dams.
- Biosecurity concerns within the aquaculture industry - loss of habitat and breeding grounds for wildlife and water quality.
- Biosecurity risk - loss and disposal of wildlife and livestock.
- Biosecurity risk - outbreak of weeds on burnt fire ground due to:
 - Lack of competition;
 - Spread by fire vehicles; and
 - Loss of productivity.
- Public health concerns including mosquitoes, water quality and air quality.
- Public health concerns including impact to air quality resulting in more dust in the air.
- Vegetation changes including:
 - Community topes;
 - Transition from forests to grasslands;
 - Loss of cover crops resulting in erosion;
 - Loss of seed bank (pastures and legumes);
 - Loss of refuge areas (where animals retreat to);
 - Grasslands burn hotter and faster;
 - Creates a mono-culture;
 - Buffering layer between grassland and forests gets smaller;
 - Loss of soil microbes (harder to grow things); and
 - Loss of carbon sequestration.
- Pest management
 - Predation – stock, native species have nowhere to hide.
- Feral animal dispersal
 - Dogs, cats, horses, cattle, pigs and foxes eat native animals and threaten domestic animals and spread disease.
- Fire Management Implications
 - Increased fuel loads due to mono-cultures.
 - Reduced management opportunities for planned burns.
 - Selling the need to burn very shortly after a wildfire.
 - Greater understanding of fire science needed.
 - Wattles breaking up the country (little feed opportunities in the wattle).
- Increase of safety concerns around trees falling.

Infrastructure

- Communications
 - Mobile telecommunication impacts resulting in communities and recovery agencies unable to communicate.
 - UHF radio network impacted resulting in being unable to connect with rural landholders.
 - Fire Breaks – to protect infrastructure.
 - Reduction in business as usual services by responders.
- Roads
 - Damage to road network and four wheel drive tracks (national parks).
- Building
 - Assets within national parks damaged such as amenities blocks, walking tracks and signage.
 - Commercial buildings damaged.
 - Power poles and lines damaged.
 - Property fences.
- Water Infrastructure.
 - Water tanks.
 - Water pumps.
 - Solar panels.
 - Windmills.
 - Damage to rain/river gauges.

Recovery objectives

Human and Social

1. Disaster management event de-briefing and consultation
 - Development of action plans so that they are in place for future events.
 - A minimum of three communication methods used to inform community of outcomes debrief.
 - Return of confidence in Disaster Management to the community.
 - Follow up projects to reflect community needs and expectation.
2. Building community resilience
 - Increase sustained community through active/positive involvement in community groups.
 - Develop partnerships with Council, NGOs and other stakeholders.
 - Utilise the "My Resilient Community" Project.
 - Attract & retain volunteers & develop skills.
 - Rural Fire fighters training.
 - Personal Development & Leadership Training.
 - Sponsored community events – to host with external support.
 - Develop networks/ communication plans – community support.
 - Community & Education funding for safe and reliable equipment.
 - First aid and chainsaw training.
 - Public information about Disaster Management processes delivered by CRS etc. and go to sub-communities, resilience programs.
 - School programs
 - Kids matter
 - Mind matters
 - School guidance officer
 - Red cross-pillow slip project.
 - Annual community events for volunteers recognition.
 - Workshop with volunteers include council & services – volunteer retention – make their life easier.
 - DM plan communications strategy for outlying areas.
 - Keep knowledge of the plan active even after people leave town.
 - Fun activities, events to bring connection opportunities.

Human and Social Cont.

3. Psychosocial and Wellbeing and Preventative Mental Health
 - Decreased demand on mental health services.
 - Prevention Yoga/ destressing skill building – Toolkits.
 - Regular individual health visits.
 - Fun activities, events to bring connection opportunities.
 - Regular sustainable sufficient services.
 - Mental health, physical health – education.
 - DM Event debriefing – 2 days workshop – accessible for families, child care.
 - Staged approach into the future.
 - Have a plan for 6 – 18 – 24 months after event to respond.
 - 3 year therapeutic approach.
 - Creation of safe spaces for example - meditation spaces.

Economic

4. Key transport routes – priority restoration and improved resilience to the key transport routes for primary producers and resource sector.
5. Empower local businesses to improve their resilience to disasters that addresses business continuity plan development, financial planning, record keeping and insurance.
6. Restore confidence in the tourism market.
7. Development of a community tourism plan.
8. Local clubs have liability insurance.

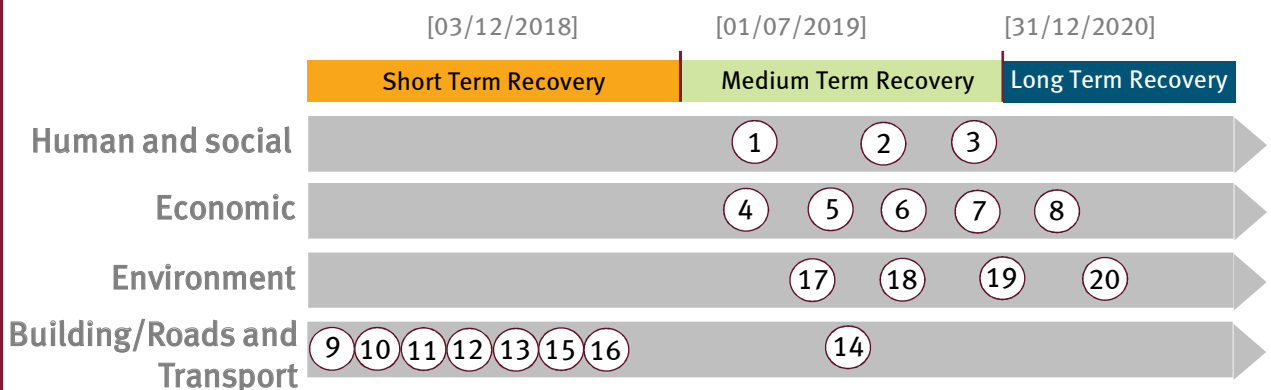
Building/Roads and Transport

9. Road transport network – coordinated restoration and betterment planning for the extensive road transport network for state and local controlled roads.
10. Telecommunication infrastructure – long term repairs and improvements.
11. Energy supply – infrastructure improved resilience.
12. Restoration of community facilities.
13. Establishment of evacuation and response infrastructure to at risk communities.
14. Review of stock route infrastructure access and connections. Enhance water availability for fire fighting resources.
15. Water bores – confirm if these bores can be used to fill water tanks for fire fighting.
16. Roads – develop an understanding of road ownership.

Environment

17. Environmental rehabilitation and collaborative approach to enhance environmental management.
18. Development of additional firebreaks along state/council owned roads.
19. Support research and science to improve fire management and ecosystem resilience.
20. Practical implementation of fire management and education program.

Recovery Timeline



Local Recovery Plan

Key Recovery Tasks

Human and Social

- Increase reliance on council to keep the community moving forward.
- Explain the role of the preparedness, prevention, response and recovery in wild fire event.
- Conduct disaster education sessions in schools.
- Develop community education material about fire management that addresses fire landscape, government policy, workplace health and safety and fatigue management.
- Conduct fact finding sessions

Building/Roads and Transport

- Review current telecommunications communications availabilities and current radio communications practices
- Develop appropriate mitigation options and seek clarification on ability to develop fire breaks for reserves that run parallel to roads.

Economic

- Implement education program on pasture management and financial management.
- Council to collaborate with the community to develop a community tourism plan and design a media marketing plan.
- Identify resource deficiencies – staff, equipment, fire lines and funding for ongoing maintenance.
- Conduct school visits to educate students on the preparing for disasters.

Environment

- Implement fire management practices, policies and strategies including a planned burn program, mapping of vegetation groups across landscape, fire scars and fuel loads.
- Engage with fire response agencies to implement post-fire monitoring to understand impacts and priorities for future fire management to inform fire strategy reviews and develop an understanding of fire science.
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to continue to support innovation in fire management as well as develop a fire behaviour app. QPWS will also use drones to patrol fire grounds for intelligence gathering as well as mapping fire scars.
- Work with the community to build resilience against stream bank erosion.



Measures of Success

Human and Social

- All parks and public spaces have been reopened.
- Community wellbeing is addressed in the long term with mental health services made available.
- Support made available for families who were heavily impacted.
- The community is better placed and prepared for the next event.
- Recognition and support for fire volunteers
 - A program is developed to ensure fire volunteers feel valued and appreciated

Economic

- Mining and resource sectors have improved their resilience to reduce future economic impact.
- Increase in tourists numbers to the region
- Community events are held as planned.
- Primary producers and landowners fences and structures have been rebuilt.
- Small business have business continuity plan developed.

Environment

- Collaborative Approach to Environmental Management
 - Stakeholders and relevant agency roles are understood.
 - Identified resource deficiencies and risk.
- Practical Implementation of Fire Management that addresses:
 - Implementation / review fire management strategies with collaborative input.
 - All agencies understand their responsibilities including lessees.
 - Identified resource deficiencies.
- Education Program on Fire Management and Response program addresses:
 - Community education of fire management and response implemented.
 - Faster risk analysis and self-sufficiency of risk management occurs.
 - Education on other values – forestry, production and tourism implemented.
 - Increased awareness and proactive media engagement on policies.
 - Mitigation activities for example planned burns, fire lines and community education are promoted.
 - Utilised non-traditional forms of advertising for example the airport.
 - Cultural heritage register has been updated and shared with relevant agencies.
 - Post-fire monitoring activities have informed the fire strategy review.
 - Fire management innovation has been supported.

- Partnerships with Non-Governmental Organisations have been established for streambank erosion control.
- A coordinated approach to pest management has been implemented
- Pasture science is utilised and has built resilience in agricultural setting

Building/Roads and Transport

Communications

- Enhanced telecommunications communications availabilities
- Enhanced Radio communications availabilities

Fire Breaks

- Measured reduced risk impact from fires
- Mitigation works carried out on state/council roads that run along reserves.

Water Infrastructure

Stock Routes

- Access to infrastructure does not impede access to stock connections.
- Enhanced water availability and existing stand pipes for fire fighting operations have been made compatible.

Water bores

- Bores that are fully equipped, not connected to town water supplies are reviewed.
- Feasibility of using existing equipment to fill fire tanks study completed.

CHRC Roads

Financial

- Grant applications submitted.
- Grant applications for resilience projects for asset management protection undertaken have been completed.
- Confirmation of ownership & roles and responsibilities completed.

State controlled Roads

- Program of road verge maintenance completed.

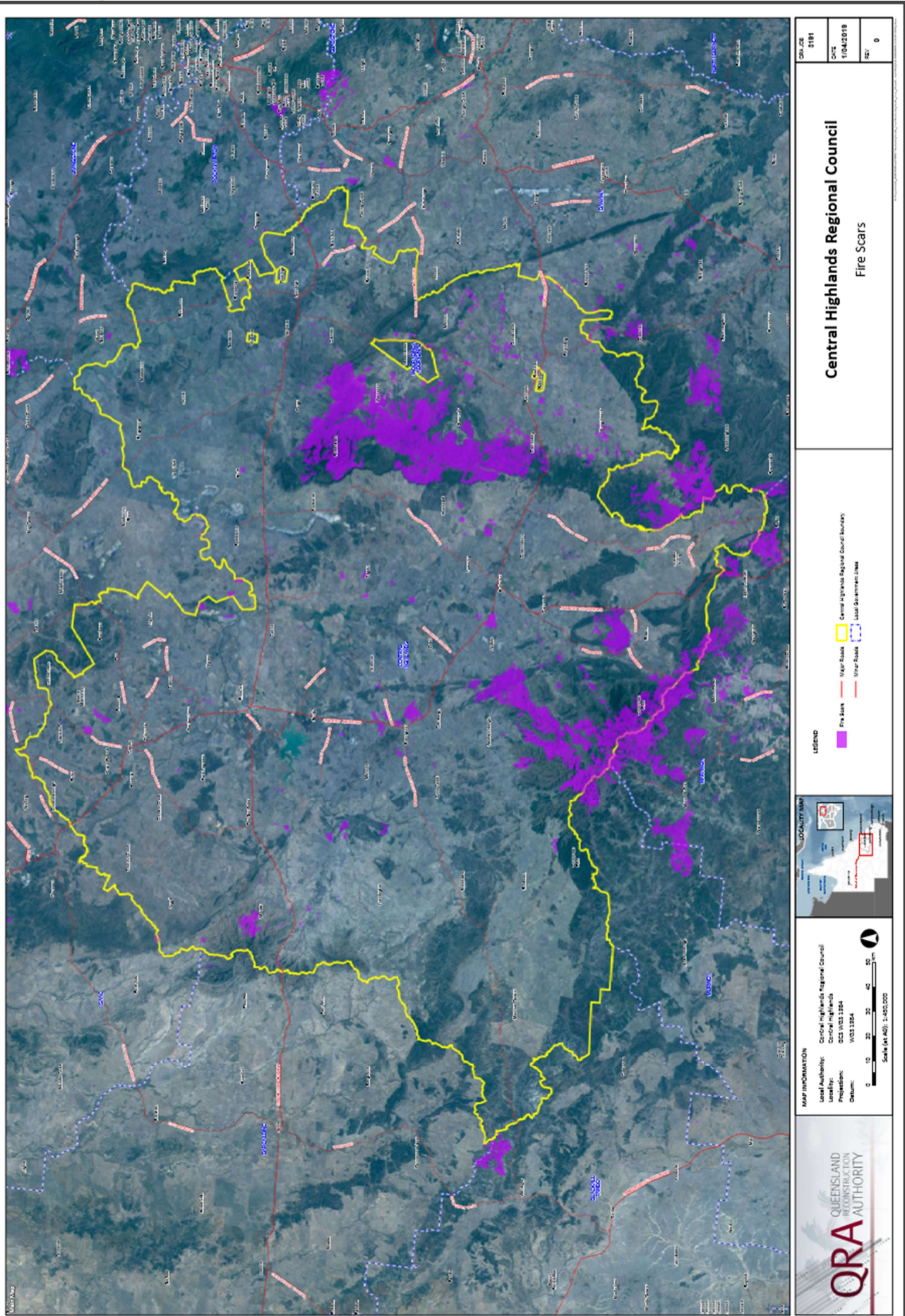
Business Continuity Planning

- Plans for emergency access/egress in place.

Local Recovery Plan

Damage - locations

Damage – locations





Recovery Progress Report #2 to October 2019

Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021

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Event summary

In November and December 2018, Queensland experienced a series of record fire condition days, which the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) stated were ‘unprecedented’ and ‘unlike anything Queensland has experienced before’.

For four consecutive days from 29 November 2018, Extreme Fire Danger Ratings were recorded and very high temperatures were felt across the state. The catastrophic conditions led to the worst fires experienced by Queensland in recent memory, with 1250 fires across the state, 140 of those in Central Queensland.

QFES response efforts were supported by 1202 firefighters and personnel from every Australian state and territory. It is estimated more than 1.4 million hectares was burnt during the event.

The Central Queensland Bushfires between 22 November and 6 December 2018 resulted in eight Central Queensland local government areas being activated for a range of Category A and Category B assistance measures under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

The *Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018—2021* (Recovery Plan) was endorsed by the Queensland Government on 3 April 2019.





State Recovery Planning and Policy Coordinator

I welcome the opportunity to present the second in a series of reports highlighting recovery progress following the 2018 bushfires in Central Queensland.

This report outlines progress against activities identified in the *Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021* (the Plan) at local and state levels. It focuses on the efforts to deliver on the event specific recovery plans for the bushfires developed by five local governments. It also reflects on the efforts of the Functional Recovery Groups (FRGs) at a state level.

A number of important achievements have been made in the recovery journey since the release of the Plan in April 2019. This is despite the fact that a number of impacted communities are grappling with additional issues related to previous disasters or recent drought declarations, which is impacting their overall recovery.

Key achievements include roll-out of the Rural Residential Recovery program, a successful tourism campaign, locally led recovery initiatives in Mackay and the Central Highlands, and collaborative efforts of state agencies in Gladstone to achieve recovery objectives.

Brendan Moon
State Recovery Planning and Policy Coordinator
Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Reconstruction Authority

State recovery progress

This section provides a summary of recovery progress across the functional lines of recovery and resilience initiatives. The recovery progress tracks the implementation of recovery activities against the metrics identified in the Plan.

Phase one and two activities have been undertaken by the FRGs for Human and Social, Economy and Environment. Phase one activities include *Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery*, and phase two activities include *Recovery and Reconstruction*.

The Building FRG has undertaken phase one and two activities, and has progressed to phase three activities of *Transition*.

The Plan identified that specific recovery activities and metrics were not required by the FRG for Roads and Transport. As such, the Roads and Transport FRG is not included in this report.

Activities identified as completed in this report will not be addressed in future reports.

Human and Social

The Human and Social Recovery Report addresses progress across the first two phases of recovery.

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

Human and Social recovery tasks are outlined on page 28 and 29 of the Plan.

Distribution of Disaster Recovery Funding Assistance (Category A and B)

Status: Ongoing and on track

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Category A and B assistance provides communities in activated areas with funding through the Personal Hardship Assistance Scheme and the Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme. The following table outlines the cumulative payment status across both schemes as at 3 October 2019.

Assistance type	Number of applications paid	Value of applications paid
Emergency Hardship Assistance	4319	\$1,850,845
Essential Household Contents Grant	20	\$23,850
Structural Assistance Grant	2	\$19,982
Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme Grant	3	\$6,135

Timely advice of recovery activities, public health information, advice and assistance

Status: Ongoing and on track

This recovery activity aims to deliver timely advice to communities to ensure members are aware of the recovery services available. To date, 8992 hours of service provision has occurred (this figure does not include additional mental health services provided by Queensland Health as part of Category C funded operations).

As at October 2019, there have been no requests for counselling services, financial aid or financial counselling services for the community by FRG partners. Services provided by recovery partners from April to October 2019 are listed below.

In addition to the above recovery activities, 6730 instances of personal support and / or psychological first aid services have been provided by Australian Red Cross, UnitingCare (Lifeline) and Queensland Health.

Recovery Partner	Activity
Department of Education	<p>Offered Lifeworks counselling services to students.</p> <p>Provided affected staff with opportunities to speak to Lifeworks.</p> <p>Involved local schools involved in a community recovery event at Baffle Creek, led by Gladstone Regional Council.</p> <p>Provided mental health coaches and senior guidance officers from Central Queensland and North Coast regions to work with the Gladstone Community Development Officer for recovery and resilience to consider the roll-out of The Pillowcase Project delivered by Red Cross.</p>
Australian Red Cross	<p>Attended community meetings and provided recovery advice.</p> <p>Distributed \$131,812.03 to 19 individuals through the Rural Residential Support Program.</p>
The Salvation Army	<p>Provided support in the form of referrals and follow-up visits following the closure of the community hub and outreach operations.</p>
Uniting Care Queensland (Lifeline)	<p>Attended bushfire community debriefs in Agnes Water and Wartburg, led by Gladstone Regional Council.</p> <p>Delivered training in applied suicide intervention skills in Miriam Vale and Agnes Waters.</p> <p>Delivered safeTALK sessions in Baffle Creek and Captain Creek.</p>
GIVIT	<p>Collected and distributed donated goods and funds to support affected community members.</p>

Provision of additional mental health services and coordinating the provision of psychosocial and practical supports

Status: Ongoing and on track

The provision of additional mental health services is led by Queensland Health. This recovery activity is designed to ensure community members have access to services to meet health needs arising from the disaster. A summary of Category C DRFA funded service delivery as at 31 August 2019 outlined below.

Hospital and Health Service	Number of engagement activities	Number of people engaged	Screenings	Treatment
Wide Bay	11	32	32	14
Mackay	37	68	68	5
Central Queensland	13	0	0	0

The engagement activities identified needs of a diverse group of potential clients across the three impacted Hospital and Health Service regions. The needs include:

- tailoring services to a number of sub-groups within broader communities
- building preparedness and resilience
- establishment of support groups (youth, women)
- addressing cumulative trauma and fatigue
- supporting those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- supporting those who played an active role in response activities such as Forrest Rangers and the Rural Fire Service.

Coordinate the matching of donated goods and services

Status: Ongoing and on track

The provision of donated goods assists communities contribute to the recovery process.

GIVIT closed the ability for individuals to donate to the Central Queensland bushfires on 7 September 2019. However, donated support remains available to Central Queensland residents impacted by fires since the November 2018 event. As at October 2019, 16,890 donated items have been received by affected communities, largely in Gladstone and Mackay.

Local communities are being encouraged to continue to source support where required.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on pages 28-29 of the Plan.

Community Development Program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Community Development Program provides funding to employ three Community Development Officers (CDOs) to work across the eight impacted local government areas to understand recovery needs and develop community-led recovery and resilience plans. The Community Development Program aims to:

- assist community members feel sufficiently safe and secure to engage in social activities and interactions with other members of the community
- enable households, families and individuals to act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process
- assist community members with access to appropriate and coordinated social services.

The CDO for the Mackay region officially commenced on 1 March 2019 and CDOs for the Livingstone and Gladstone regions commenced on 1 April 2019. Prior to the official appointments, temporary CDOs were in place in Gladstone from 1 February 2019 and in Mackay and Livingstone from 1 March 2019. Since their appointment, the CDOs have undertaken community engagement and capacity building activities across affected areas to:

- identify issues and solutions to increase future preparedness and readiness for disasters
- develop community profiles including needs and priorities for community-led projects
- establish local mechanisms such as a resilience and recovery taskforce
- facilitate access to a range of community education activities such as:
 - spontaneous volunteer management
 - accidental counsellor (training was provided which assisted people when in situations requiring them to provide unintentional personal support)
 - bushfire preparedness
 - Pillow Case Project by the Australian Red Cross
 - My Resilient Community presentations.

Community Development Program key statistics:

- 213.5 hours invested on learning and capability development with 208 participants
- 988 hours providing events and activities involving 2984 participants
- 721 occurrences where community agencies have been involved in community activities and planning
- 157 hours invested on activities associated with recovery and resilience plans
- 130.5 hours invested in developing recovery and resilience resources.

Flexible Funding Grants

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Flexible Funding Grants provide support for non-government organisations, local governments, industry groups and community groups to implement projects aimed at driving recovery, and building awareness and resilience within disaster impacted communities. This funding program is aims to:

- assist community members feel sufficiently safe and secure following a disaster to engage in social activities and interact with other members of the community
- enable households, families and individuals to act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process
- assist community members with access to appropriate and coordinated social services.

The first round of the Flexible Funding Grants opened on 1 April 2019, with applications for small grants of \$2,500 to \$20,000 and large grants of \$20,000 to \$100,000. The 17 Queensland-based organisations have been offered grants to deliver 21 projects, supporting the local government areas of Banana, Bundaberg, Central Highlands, Isaac, Gladstone, Livingstone, Mackay and Rockhampton.

Applicant	Project	Grant funding
Baffle Creek Community Inc	Upgrades to existing community centre	\$96,500
Capricornia Catchments Inc	'Seeing Past the Smoke' community workshops	\$95,573
Central Highlands Regional Council	Installation of humidity and temperature sensors	\$7,000
Crediton Hall Recreation Club	Schematic design for new hall facility	\$40,000
Finch Hatton Airstrip Association Inc	Upgrades to emergency airstrip	\$39,183
Finch Hatton Progress Association	Purchase of an UHF radio system	\$19,500
Finch Hatton Progress Association	Purchase of aviation transceivers	\$3,000
Gladstone Community Linking Agency Ltd	Purchase of solar power and battery off-grid storage systems	\$100,000
Greater Whitsunday Food Network Inc	Delivery of actions in the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday Food and Agritourism Strategic Action Plan	\$77,400
Kooyalee Outdoor Education Centre – Guides Queensland	Upgrades to existing facility	\$4,220
Mackay Regional Council	Emergency Resilience Officer	\$100,000
Mackay Tourism Ltd	Agritourism capacity-building forum	\$15,000
Queensland Tourism Industry Council	Queensland Sustainable Regions Risk and Resilience Program	\$98,000

Applicant	Project	Grant funding
Reef Catchments (Mackay, Whitsunday, Isaac) Ltd	Burning barriers to bushfire management in the Mackay, Whitsunday, and Isaac regions	\$88,600
Rockhampton Regional Council	Bushfire evacuation planning in Mount Archer and neighbouring suburbs	\$25,000
Rockhampton Regional Council	Disaster management, community recovery, engagement, education and communication trailer	\$40,000
Rockhampton Regional Council	'Recording Resilient Stories of Today for the Future' project	\$10,145
The Caves Pony Club Inc	Upgrades to existing facility and equipment	\$50,000
Volunteering Queensland	Disaster Ready Volunteers video clip	\$20,000
Volunteering Queensland	Community Resilience Through Volunteering workshop	\$93,700
Welcome Intercultural Neighbours Inc	'Resilient Children, Resilient Families' program	\$71,500

The second round of Flexible Funding Grants for small grants of \$2,500 to \$50,000 and large grants of \$50,000 to \$100,000 opened on Monday 1 October 2019 and closed on 5 November 2019.

Eligible Queensland-based organisations delivering to bushfire-impacted communities in Banana, Bundaberg, Central Highlands, Gladstone, Isaac, Mackay and Rockhampton were encouraged to apply.

Community Mental Health Program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Community Mental Health Program aims to assist disaster-impacted individuals, carers, families, volunteers and communities with specialist mental health support and emotional wellbeing post disaster, in addition to existing mental health services. The program is being delivered from the Hospital and Health Services in Mackay, Central Queensland and Wide Bay, with a particular focus on residents of Bloomsbury, Finch Hatton, Eungella, Sarina Beach, Baffle Creek and Deep Water.

Hospital and Health Service	Staffing	Activities
Mackay	Two clinicians	Full treatment program commenced and includes screening, community engagement and needs assessment.
Wide Bay	Two clinicians	Full treatment program commenced and includes screening, community engagement and needs assessment.
Central Queensland	Two clinicians	Full treatment program commenced and includes screening, community engagement and needs assessment.

Rural Residential Recovery program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Rural Residential Recovery program is detailed in the Plan as Targeted Community Funding. This funding aims to support the clean-up and reinstatement of 'lifestyle properties' and residential properties beyond the immediate vicinity of the residential house.

The Australian Red Cross is administering the grants process. To date, 19 individuals have lodged applications for assistance, with a total of \$131,812.02 being paid to all 19 applicants. The applications have supported requests for assistance with fencing, debris removal, water and infrastructure, fodder and animal feedstuffs, and the purchase of materials or goods.

Impacted local governments continue to promote this funding program to residents and further information is available on the [Queensland Reconstruction Authority website](#).

Establishment of District Human and Social Recovery governance committees

Status: Ongoing and on track

District Human and Social Recovery governance committees aim to provide advice and support to local government CDOs and ensure they are connecting with community groups.

The Gladstone Central Queensland Bushfires Community Development Reference Group had its inaugural meeting on 30 April 2019. As at 3 October 2019, the group has met four times.

The Livingstone Central Queensland Bushfires Community Development Reference Group had its inaugural meeting on 7 May 2019. As at 3 October 2019, the group has met three times.

Economic

The Economic Recovery Report addresses progress across the first two phases of recovery. Economic recovery tasks are outlined on page 31 of the Plan.

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

Distribution of Category B DRFA

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Category B DRFA activated for the Central Queensland bushfires included the following:

- Disaster Assistance Small Business Loans
- Essential Working Capital Loans for small business
- Primary Producer Loans
- Essential Working Capital Loans for Primary Producers
- Freight Subsidies for Primary Producers.

As at 3 October 2019, four applications for Disaster Assistance Primary Producer Loans have been approved to the value of \$587,077.

Financial support for primary producers and small business

Status: Ongoing and on track

The [Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority website](#) outlines the various grant and loan schemes available to primary producers and small businesses as a result of the bushfires. This includes information about the available assistance, eligibility, loan term, repayment requirements and the applicable interest rates.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

Tourism and Events Queensland

Status: Completed

The Tourism and Events Queensland package provide \$105,000 to three organisations to assist with recovery marketing activities across Capricorn, Mackay and Gladstone.

Capricorn Enterprise:

- invested in social media boosts during January school holidays
- hosted travel writers and bloggers.

Mackay Tourism invested in:

- digital messaging (December 2018 to January 2019)
- influencer program (February to June 2019)
- digital campaign (March to June 2019)
- augmented reality assets (April 2019).

Gladstone Area Development invested in promoting Agnes Water/1770 as a holiday destination. The campaign commenced in early February 2019 and focussed on audiences within a 400 kilometre radius of the destination with:

- television advertising targeting families and empty nesters
- True View advertising targeting the demographics of single income no kids, double income no kids and families
- hosted social media influencers.

The campaigns:

- reached key markets through the social influencer program and the regional tourism organisation program
- exceeded the expected reach in key markets
- created an augmented reality experience to showcase the region.

The latest visitor statistics for the regions indicate increases in domestic visitation as follows:

- Southern Queensland Country including Capricorn, Gladstone, Bundaberg and North Burnett: 2.2 million visitors, up 6.2 per cent
- Mackay: 1.1 million visitors, three-year trend up 13.3% and year-on-year up 22.1 per cent. (Three-year trend will be published by Tourism and Events Queensland and caution should be used in interpreting year-on-year change due to small sample sizes).

Environment

The Environmental Recovery Report addresses progress across the first two phases of recovery. Environmental recovery tasks are outlined on page 33 of the Plan.

Activities identified as completed will not be addressed in future reports.

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

Provide burnt area extent mapping from 'Rapidfire,' the Department of Environment and Science's prototype burnt area mapping system, to stakeholders

Status: Complete

A draft burnt area extent from the Rapidfire system was provided to key stakeholders to inform and augment mapping and monitoring efforts based on a subset of available satellite imagery. The mapping was further updated following the acquisition of additional satellite imagery.

Updated draft data was distributed to stakeholders on 12 July 2019. Department of Environment and Science will continue to monitor burnt areas in the region with the Rapidfire system.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on page 33 of the Plan.

Collaborate and undertake activities to protect cultural heritage values

Status: Ongoing and on track

Cultural heritage impact assessments were conducted at nominated sites as part of the interstate Bushfire Rapid Assessment Team deployment and subsequent internal processes.

Targeted consultation is occurring with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people regarding cultural heritage management and recovery at Carnarvon National Park.

Engagement with Traditional Owners continues regarding the removal of the remains of the boardwalk of Baloon Caves. In October 2019, staff from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and Partnerships (QPWSP) met with Traditional Owners to discuss cultural oversight for digging of footings for the toilet block at Carnarvon National Park.

Control of post-fire flooding and erosion

Status: Ongoing and on track

All rehabilitation works are being undertaken using existing regional resources.

Conduct programs to prevent further impacts to biodiversity

Status: Ongoing and on track

There is a potential increased risk of fox predation of turtle nests on beaches adjacent to Deepwater National Park due to the impact of the bushfires in this region. Den detection dogs were deployed in September 2019 in anticipation of the 2019-20 turtle

nesting season to ensure maximum protection for the turtles. The report from this latest activity is currently being prepared by the contractor.

Ensure communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and local government are effectively engaged in the consultation and decision making processes

Status: Ongoing and on track

Thorough engagement of key stakeholders and partners has been conducted and remains an ongoing priority for QPWSP.

Building

The Building FRG report addresses progress against recovery phases two and three. Building recovery tasks are outlined on page 35 of the Plan.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

Facilitate community access to independent building repair advice

Status: Ongoing and on track

This task focuses on the provision of building advice and information to support the recovery of impacted communities. The Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) continues to profile and promote safe, effective and appropriate repair and rebuilding advice for impacted communities. The recent Southern Queensland and Eastern Queensland bushfires have provided an opportunity for the QBCC to once again provide advice to impacted communities.

Social media posts continue to raise awareness of the importance of engaging licenced contractors to undertake repair and reconstruction activities.

Develop a bushfire and heat resistant building guide specifically for Queensland homes

Status: Ongoing and scheduled to be revised

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) is currently in the planning and scoping phase of this project. QRA has identified the need to engage an external supplier to assist with the development of the guide. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) has been engaged to support the project and is currently finalising the project schedule. It is anticipated the project will extend beyond February 2020, which will allow for the inclusion of any additional lessons from the 2019 Southern and Eastern Queensland bushfires into the guide.

Phase Three: Transition

Provide advice to regulators regarding learnings from the bushfire event related to the recovery of built infrastructure

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Building FRG members continue to consider the impacts and outcomes of recent bushfires on built infrastructure.

The QBCC has improved their response time to provide impacted communities information regarding the safe management of rebuilding and repair. The value of a 'tradies register' has been identified and is now a component of any disaster activation

The Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) continues to work with QFES and the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning to progress the Bushfire Guidance review for State Planning Policy.

DHPW's forward work plan has identified a need to consider the implications of severe bushfires in tropical rainforest areas and the impact on building regulations.

Resilience initiatives

Resilience initiatives outlined in the Recovery Plan have been refined post-publication including the addition of the QFES Land Management Program. These recovery tasks are outlined on page 40 of the Recovery Plan.

Enhance the centralised Get Ready Queensland program with a public information and awareness campaign to help educate and prepare communities for future bushfires

Status: Ongoing and on track

The public campaign *In the Line of Fire* ran from 31 July 2019 to end September 2019. The campaign was a joint initiative between Get Ready Queensland and QFES creative. An allocation of \$170,000 from the Public Information and Awareness Campaign budget was divided across radio, billboards and social media. Analytics on the campaign reach are anticipated in December 2019.

Queensland Rural Fire Services to develop locally-led engagement activities to enhance bushfire preparedness

Status: Ongoing and on track

The *My Resilient Community Project* has Queensland Rural Fire Services developing locally-led engagement activities to enhance bushfire preparedness. The project is available to communities within the eight impacted local government areas. A *My Resilient Community, Getting Started* workshop held in Rockhampton and facilitated by the Queensland University of Technology and University of Southern Queensland titled targeted local government, community stakeholders, QPWSP, Queensland Police and QFES.

QFES Land management program


Status: Ongoing and on track

QFES has commenced a procurement process for the delivery of the high level project plan for the Land Managers Program. The initial task will be to refine the existing project plan output to reflect the impacted area.

Insurance awareness campaign

Status: Postponed

The Insurance Awareness Campaign has an allocated budget of \$130,000. This QRA program has been postponed due to the number of disaster resilience campaigns out



to market, and the desire for the campaign to be informed by insurance challenges arising from the 2019 North and Far North Queensland Monsoon. The new delivery date for this campaign will be 2020.

Local recovery progress

This section provides a summary of councils' progress against their local recovery plans, six months on from the endorsement of the Recovery Plan.

This report focuses on the five local governments that completed event-specific recovery plans:

- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Gladstone Regional Council
- Livingstone Shire Council
- Mackay Regional Council
- Rockhampton Regional Council.

Local governments provided a progress update against their recovery objectives, including challenges and successes.

Central Highlands Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

The Central Highlands Regional Council recovery objectives are outlined on page 44-49 of the Recovery Plan. Only objectives with detailed progress made are included in this report.

Recovery objective	Update
1. Disaster management event debriefing and consultation	Eleven sessions for event debriefing and consultation are planned over the next 12 months, as part of the Rural Community Connect project.
Building community resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase sustained community through active/positive involvement in community groups – Develop partnerships with Council, NGOs and other stakeholders – Sponsored community events – to host with external support – Develop networks/ communication plans – community support – Fun activities, events to bring connection opportunities 	<p>A key initiative for building community resilience in the Central Highlands is the rollout of the Rural Community Connect project. The project aims to increase the sustainability of communities by developing short, medium, and long-term community-driven actions and responsibilities. Attendees / group members are encouraged to contribute to community plans.</p> <p>The project is bringing together council, state agencies, community and other stakeholders to provide relevant fire-management information and address the needs identified by the community. This project is developing partnerships between all stakeholders involved.</p> <p>Community events associated with the Rural Community Connect project are focused on supporting fire-affected communities to identify issues, develop mechanisms to address these and, where required, connect with relevant agencies to support projects and provide information.</p> <p>The Rural Community Connect project will work to overcome communication barriers by connecting community members to each other and to relevant local and state government agencies and other stakeholders. Communication plans will be developed where this is seen as a priority for the community (this is more likely to be highlighted in areas with limited telecommunication capabilities e.g. Arcadia Valley and Carnarvon Gorge).</p>

Recovery objective	Update
	The Rural Community Connect project will, where possible, link-in with other community events to share information and gain input from community members in fun, laid-back environments.
Development of additional firebreaks along state/council owned roads.	Central Highlands Regional Fire Management Group have priorities and coordinated a number of mitigation works throughout the region including the installation of new and maintenance of existing fire breaks, unfortunately a number of planned hazard reduction burns were not undertaken due to unfavourable fire weather conditions.
Practical implementation of fire management and education.	The Rural Community Connect project is bringing together a range of stakeholders (including local government, state agencies, community members and other organisations where appropriate) to develop practical fire mitigation and response strategies that are driven by the community. This project is also delivering important fire management education to community members to help individual landholders mitigate and manage fires more effectively in the future.

Challenges

The broad geographical range of Central Highlands Regional Council area creates logistical challenges in organising and facilitating community events and workshops in some areas. This is particularly true in the Arcadia Valley and Carnarvon Gorge area as key state representatives agencies are based in Toowoomba or Roma and have a limited local presence. Council tries to account for these distances when scheduling workshops and activities to ensure all stakeholders can attend.

Successes

Central Highlands Regional Council has upgraded its Emergency Management Dashboard to include a new section called Rural Community Connect. This enables individuals to access factsheets and information related to the bushfire management community workshops.

Media excerpt – Workshop brings common sense to community planning and cooperation

Starting conversations brings back common sense to community planning and cooperation when it comes to bushfire management. This was the key message of the first Bushfire Management Community Workshop held in Dingo on Wednesday.

Central Highlands Regional Council hosted the workshop after receiving funding under the joint Commonwealth and State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Council's Coordinator Disaster Management and Community Resilience Glenn Bell said it was all about starting conversations between stakeholders to improve bushfire preparedness with positive outcomes for all involved.

'From a local government disaster management perspective, our number one priority is community safety – people need to know who to contact in an emergency and have the relationship to make that call,' Mr Bell said.

'Today has shown that everyone has concerns, everyone has responsibilities and there are things that are working and things that are not working.

'This particular group will meet again early next year to plan for the 2020 fire season, and that's what is preferable for groups across the region.'

Landholders said the workshop was a forum to voice concerns, ask questions and understand the frameworks. Jane Saunders from Charlevue said it was important for landholders to take the time out of their busy schedule and plan ahead to prevent disasters before they happen.

The day included presentations from various government agencies and not-for profits that provided clarity around vegetation management laws, communication practices with rural fire brigades, applying for permits and working with national park rangers, followed by an afternoon of discussion.

Council will host two further workshops under the funding with the next one taking place in Rolleston on 2 November 2019 and one in Bluff with details to be confirmed.

<http://www.centralhighlands.qld.gov.au/about-council/news/workshop-brings-common-sense-community-planning-cooperation/>

Gladstone Regional Council


Progress of recovery objectives

The Gladstone Regional Council recovery objectives are outlined on page 50-51 of the Recovery Plan. Completed recovery objectives are not reported in this document.

Recovery Objective	Update
Building structure safety assessment	One property is known to still have unsafe structures. An internal review is underway to determine if there any other outstanding building approvals required to assist with recovery.
Road transport network – coordinated restoration of road furniture and removal of debris and hazards on state and local controlled roads to assist in road user safety	The removal of debris initially pushed onto roadsides in an effort to clean up after the Central Queensland bushfires is continuing in an effort to reduce hazards through the current fire season.
Installation of firebreaks on Council owned land	Firebreaks have been completed on several parcels of identified Council-owned land, with a comprehensive bushfire mitigation strategy being developed. The Fire Management Group continues to work on long-term planning for fire preparedness.
Alternative evacuation road link between Baffle Creek and Agnes Water established	An economic benefits assessment on creating an alternative evacuation road link between Baffle Creek and Agnes Waters is to be completed prior to commencing community engagement on the proposed plan before the end of this year.
Empower local businesses and residents to improve their resilience to disasters	The CDO (Category C funded) has initiated contact with Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce to support business continuity planning with local businesses.
Identify community needs and develop localised community recovery plans	Work is continuing to develop local recovery plans with affected communities.
Engage with agencies and organisations to implement flexible and adaptable programs and services to meet the needs of the affected communities	A significant number of agencies have been funded to support affected communities however a lack of consultation and coordination between agencies is creating challenges. Work is underway to explore a partnership approach for flexible funding to achieve better outcomes for the communities.
Identify and communicate financial assistance options	Negotiations have been undertaken with GIVIT to secure donated funds to establish a basic firebreak that would also allow emergency vehicle access. Other funding opportunities have been communicated across the affected communities as they arise.

Challenges

The cumulative impact of the natural disasters affecting communities is being exacerbated by the current drought. Council is cognisant of these impacts when considering recovery activities.



With a November 2019 deadline for GIVIT funds to be distributed, challenges have been experienced with securing remaining donated funds for use within the region to avoid the balance being redirected elsewhere in the state. GIVIT anticipates distributing all donated funds within 12 months of the bushfires.

Successes

Gladstone Regional Council's focus on recovery has resulted in an increase in collaborative attendance at community events by partner agencies. Most recently, the Baffle Creek Bike Muster was attended by the State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Brigade, Queensland Police Service, Wide Bay mental health clinicians and Gladstone Regional Council disaster management staff. This combined approach allowed community members access to a number of agencies to ask questions regarding disaster preparedness. A collaborative approach ensures the community receives consistent messaging about the need to adequately prepare.

Case study - Meet and greet in the Captain Creek community

The Captain Creek Rural Fire Brigade arranged an emergency services meet and greet for the Captain Creek community. Approximately 100 residents from Captain Creek and surrounding area attended. All emergency services were represented, along with QPWSP, wildlife carers, Gladstone Regional Council councillors and Wide Bay mental health clinicians.

Each agency was given the opportunity to talk to the group about their role in an event and what they require from the community to ensure they are as prepared as possible for a disaster. This included the Rural Fire Service and Ambulance Service outlining the specific access requirements a property must meet to ensure they can gain entry to a property.

Council's disaster management team used the opportunity to explain the different media sources the community can access for information before, during and after an event. The importance of planning for prescription medication needs and caring for your pets in an event were also discussed. Community members were given the opportunity to ask questions of each agency.

The day received resounding positive feedback, with all in attendance agreeing it was a great success. Council's disaster management team is now liaising with emergency service representatives in other parts of the region to see if similar sessions can be rolled out throughout other townships within the Gladstone region.

Livingstone Shire Council

Progress of recovery objectives

The Livingstone Shire Council recovery objectives are outlined on page 52-53 of the Recovery Plan.

Recovery Objective	Update
Essential services (power, water, waste, telecommunications) repaired and restored	Essential services have been repaired and restored. Strategies to address telecommunications issues are being investigated with The Caves community and funding opportunities are being examined for this purpose.
Identification and management of personal hardship cases	Information regarding the Rural Residential Recovery program administered by Red Cross on behalf of the QRA has also been distributed via social media and paper copies delivered to The Caves.
Community messaging that "we are open for business"	In partnership with local government and Capricorn Enterprise, the Capricorn Caves has successfully managed messaging and media. The annual Caves Fossil Day (22 June 2019) had over 1200 attendees from across Queensland, indicating this messaging has been successful. Ongoing economic impacts on businesses at The Caves have been limited.
Assess human, health, and social impacts	The CDO has been working with recently appointed Central Queensland Hospital and Health Services disaster recovery mental health team to identify and address any emerging human, health and or social impacts.
In partnership with the relevant agencies, provide access to psychosocial support services if required	The Community Wellbeing Unit of Livingstone Shire Council has been made aware of the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Services disaster recovery mental health team and the referral process for this service.
Facilitate support to Caves Tourist Park (support to staff and tourism)	Council has worked closely with The Capricorn Caves Tourist Park to address medium and long-term recovery needs. The key issue identified is limited telecommunications capability currently at the site. Strategies and funding opportunities are being examined to address this. Council has also offered in-kind support to The Capricorn Caves Tourist Park in a recent funding submission to the Fitzroy Basin Association's Community Grants program for the purpose of a community tree planting day to be held on site.
Assess economic impact on key assets (e.g. tourism, small business and agriculture); promote opportunities to drive economic recovery	Impacts on agriculture are yet to be fully realised as Livingstone is now drought declared and identifying impacts of the fire compared to those of drought is complex. Council is working with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to address ongoing impacts on agriculture. The Economic and Regional Development Recovery and Resilience Taskforce, a sub-group to the Livingstone Local Disaster Management Group, will meet in coming months to address economic recovery and projects that could support this process in the impacted community.
Lobby for better mobile phone communication for the affected area	Limited mobile phone capabilities have been identified through the Livingstone Local Disaster Management Group. Council has been working with The Capricorn Caves tourism operators and Rural Fire Brigade to identify mechanisms to address the issue. Strategies and funding opportunities are being examined.

Recovery Objective	Update
Assess resilience of critical infrastructure	Telecommunications at The Caves, particularly around the Capricorn Caves tourist park, has limited capability which was demonstrated during the bushfire event. Council, The Caves Rural Fire Brigade, QFES and site management at The Capricorn Caves have begun discussions around solutions and are investigating submitting an application in the Category C Flexible Funding Grants program (Round 2) to address this. Council will support this application as required.
Environmental assessment across The Caves area	A detailed environmental assessment is ongoing. QPWSP has indicated recent surveying demonstrates no reduction in the local bat population. Assessment of the canopy around The Caves is continuing. Significant vegetation (particularly the semi-evergreen vine thicket) at Mt Etna National Parks was lost and the impacts of this are still being investigated with appropriate vegetation management systems being implemented by QPWSP. QPWSP has prepared a draft recovery plan for Mount Etna Caves National Park in response to the 2018 wildfires.
Seek funding for any Category C opportunities to support recovery and resilience across Human Social with particular attention to cumulative effects of disasters	The CDO is now engaged with The Caves community as well as Rockhampton and Central Highlands services to develop appropriate recovery and resilience strategies with a focus on community and agency education and capacity building initiatives.
Continue to implement long-term resilience strategies	Council employees, elected members, the Livingstone Shire Local Disaster Management Group and relevant stakeholders are engaged in an ongoing process of identifying community-driven resilience building strategies and supporting these as required. Strategies being implemented include community workshops to increase understanding of disaster management agencies and disaster preparedness, as well as opportunities for community members to take part in prevention and preparedness planning.

Challenges

Two key challenges have been identified for Livingstone Shire Council:

- Ongoing concerns regarding vegetation management and the application processes for clearing vegetation for fire breaks on private land. This has been compounded by conflicting responses from state and local government in response to recommendations within the *IGEM 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review*.
- Ongoing drought conditions within Livingstone Shire have exacerbated issues relating to the fire recovery. However, there appear to be no resources available to address drought. For example, large landholders at The Caves were not all impacted by the fires but are all being impacted by the drought.

Livingstone Shire Council has reported concerns relating to the timeframes available to apply for round two of the Flexible Funding Grants and a lack of oversight across a number of similar initiatives. These concerns have been raised with the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors who has advised that the CDO regional reference groups are being used as communication channels and to provide oversight of recovery activities.

Successes

Recovery successes for Livingstone Shire Council include:

- A successful application for Category C Community Development Officer funding. The appointed officer engaged with The Caves community as well as Rockhampton and Central Highlands services to develop appropriate recovery and resilience strategies.
- QPWSP has been working closely with Livingstone Shire Council, rural fire brigades, and landowners at The Caves in accordance with the 'Good Neighbour' policy to the mutual benefit of all stakeholders.
- The Rural Residential Recovery program has helped address concerns including damaged fencing. The time between the fires and the time funding became available has been raised as an issue. Further issues relate to eligibility for this funding – it is only available to residents of The Caves, though residents of surrounding localities such as Wattlebank are ineligible for the program.

Mackay Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

The Mackay Regional Council recovery objectives are outlined on page 54-55 of the Recovery Plan. Completed recovery objectives are not included in this report.

Recovery objective	Update
Community support – mechanisms implemented	Council was successful in securing funding for a Recovery and Resilience Officer, based in Mackay from 2019 until April 2021. This officer is also working in the affected communities in Isaac Regional Council area.
Impact assessments – completed and data collated	Damage assessments are being used to identify recovery needs.
Mental health support – mechanisms implemented	Queensland Health's post-disaster mental health recovery team is in place and supporting clients. The team has consistently maintained its presence in the affected communities since the fire event as it was already in place at the time supporting people affected by Tropical Cyclone Debbie.
Fencing – rebuild boundary fences of rural properties	Anecdotally, Council is aware that most primary producers have rebuilt their fences after the wet season.
Rural sheds – rebuilding farm structures and replacing lost equipment	There was a fairly immediate commencement of reconstruction of private irrigation systems and other infrastructure. At this point in time there is no official data on farming structures being rebuilt however this could be attributed to the minimal losses as noted post the event.
Economic recovery of primary producers – minimising impacts	AgForce reports that in its engagement, most affected primary producers seem to be doing well. The good wet season restored pastures and crops.

Recovery objective	Update
Rainforest rehabilitation – focus on long term rehabilitation project involving communities	QPWSP developed a solid plan for weed management which should allow the rainforest to regenerate.
Empower local businesses to improve their resilience to disasters	<p>Mackay Tourism and Earthcheck delivered CrisisReady workshops and rolled out the CrisisReady application in the region to build capacity in business continuity planning (BCP).</p> <p>Council and the Regional Social Development Coalition delivered a BCP workshop to homelessness and housing service providers.</p> <p>Mackay Regional Council is planning further BCP workshops in the coming months.</p>
Restore confidence in the tourism market	After a bumper Christmas, some tourism operators in Eungella have reported a very quiet dry season. It has not been determined whether this can be attributed to the fires or just the natural downturn for this time of year. Mackay Regional Council is connecting with Mackay tourism to determine if this is a common experience in the area and what can be done to support the services.
Assist evacuation and response planning in at-risk communities	<p>Council is currently developing a series of evacuation workshops in partnership with QFES and Queensland Police Services. An all hazards approach will be taken, with hazards-specific information about warnings and advice, as they pertain to triggers and actions that residents should take. The workshops will follow this structure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know When to Go 2. Know Where to Go 3. Know How to Move 4. Know What to Take
Community resilience – increasing resilience through community development and education strategies	<p>The Recovery and Resilience Officer is working closely with affected communities to assist them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and secure training opportunities to build disaster resilience, such as first aid training, accidental counsellor / psychological first aid, and managing spontaneous volunteers - Develop project and funding proposals to conduct community resilience work, such as enhancing built infrastructure and addressing emergency communications issues - Deliver community resilience arts projects. Council is funding local artists in Eungella and Finch Hatton to conduct community arts projects to aid recovery. The projects will capture stories and images of survival during the fires and commemorate the event in public art installations. <p>Council was successful in securing a Flexible Funding Grant to build its capacity to deliver more community resilience projects. An Emergency Resilience Officer has been appointed for 12 months to deliver a comprehensive emergency management, all hazards community education series which is currently in development. It will include shareable videos, factsheets,</p>

Recovery objective	Update
	<p>workshops and presentations to increase Mackay residents' knowledge and understanding of how they and the emergency management sector can support them to prevent, prepare for, respond and recover from severe weather-related emergency events.</p> <p>A significant project being undertaken by Reef Catchments and QPWSP, in partnership with Rural Fire Service, is to cut a major fire control line from Finch Hatton township to the base of Eungella Range. The 30 km control line will snake its way through the interface zone where rural properties on the southern side of the Pioneer Valley meet the slopes of the Eungella Range. Many landholders are being asked to sign up to the project, and by and large, they are very supportive. The group is planning to repeat the process on the interface zone on the northern side of the valley next year.</p>
Weed management – in rainforest areas	QPWSP has prepared a draft impact assessment for Eungulla National Park in response to the 2018 wildfires and a draft recovery plan is in progress. The good wet season saw strong, unabated growth of exotic grasses. The severe dry season has cured these grasses and in some parts trees that were partially burned in 2018 have died, presenting a significant fuel load which has raised the anxiety in the community for this fire season.

Challenges

A key challenge for the recovery from the bushfires is the compounding effect these fires have had on pre-existing recovery needs in the community.

Successes

Mackay Regional Council has seen a number of successes as a result of the bushfire recovery activities. A number of these activities have been community-led. For example, residents of Bloomsbury identified they could increase their disaster resilience if more locals were trained in First Aid. Council used funding to purchase training for 20 locals so it could be delivered quickly.

Case study – Reclaiming land

The fires enabled one property holder to reclaim land in the Blue Mountain/Carmila region. The property holder had a section of their property overrun by lantana (a noxious weed) which was burnt during the fire. After becoming aware of the burn, the property holders recognised the opportunity to reclaim the land.

Within days of the fire, a helicopter was hired to drop pasture seed bombs on that part of the property. The good wet season supported the pasture's growth and now a herd is being run on land that has not seen cattle for many years. Additionally, that section of the property is no longer infested by lantana.

This case study highlights the resilience of the property holders to seek an opportunity to reclaim useable grazing land in the aftermath of the fire and manage noxious pests.

Rockhampton Regional Council

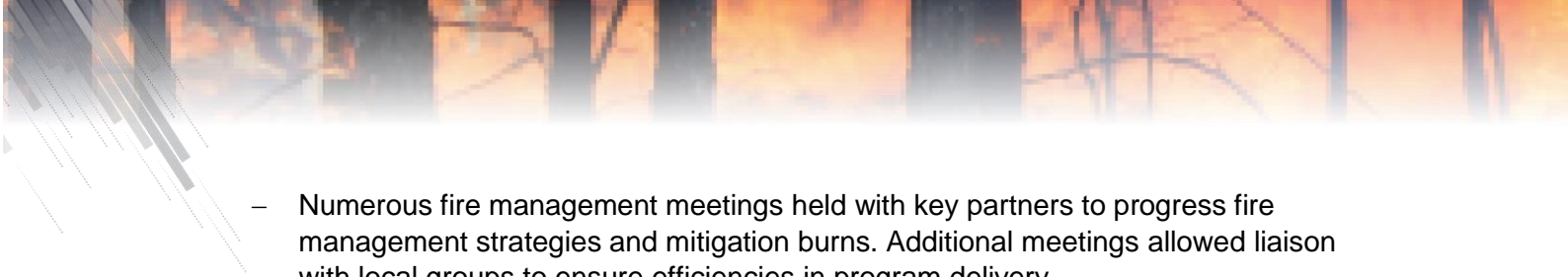
Progress of recovery objectives

The Rockhampton Regional Council recovery objectives are outlined on pages 56-57 of the Recovery Plan. Completed recovery objectives are not detailed in this report.

Recovery objective	Update
Community support – mechanisms implemented	<p>The Rockhampton Emergency Services Day was held on 28 July 2019 on the Rockhampton Riverbank precinct, with an estimated attendance of around 6000 people.</p> <p>Community engagement meetings occurred with partners, in particular to review smoke and heatwave communication and or community advice and plan Operation Community Connect in Gracemere (through August).</p> <p>Local fence rebuilding strategies continue to be developed with the community, the Australian Red Cross and local community groups. The Rural Residential Recovery program has commenced delivery.</p>
Environmental rehabilitation – mechanisms implemented	<p>Council is currently reviewing the Bushfire Mitigation Strategy and the associated Memorandum of Understanding between Council, QPWSP and QFES.</p>
Empower local businesses and communities to improve their resilience to disasters	<p>Evacuation planning and evacuation centre management training and planning has commenced with key partners. Sub-plans will be reviewed and submitted for endorsement at the November Local Disaster Management Group meeting.</p> <p>Council has worked across internal departments during their volunteer review to look for strategies to manage volunteering. A particular focus has been the management spontaneous volunteers during disasters.</p>

Successes

Two key successes identified by Rockhampton Regional Council are:

- 
- Numerous fire management meetings held with key partners to progress fire management strategies and mitigation burns. Additional meetings allowed liaison with local groups to ensure efficiencies in program delivery.
 - The financial counsellor located in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is providing support to impacted residents. This is especially important due to the lack of rain exacerbating the impacts of the fires on properties.



Recovery Progress Report #3 to December 2019

Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021

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State Recovery Planning and Policy Coordinator

I welcome the opportunity to present the third in a series of reports highlighting recovery progress following the 2018 Central Queensland Bushfires.

The *Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018—2021* (the Plan) was endorsed by the Queensland Government on 3 April 2019.

This report outlines progress against activities identified in the Plan at local and state levels. It focuses on the efforts to deliver on the event specific recovery plans for the bushfires developed by five local governments. It also reflects on the efforts of the Functional Recovery Groups (FRGs) at a state level.

A number of important achievements have been made in the recovery journey since the release of the Plan in April 2019. This is despite the fact that a number of impacted communities are grappling with additional issues related to previous disasters or recent drought declarations, which are impacting on their overall recovery.

Key achievements include:

- a substantial uptake in the rural residential program
- the art program delivered in the Mackay region
- the roll out of round two of the Flexible Funding Grants allowing 61 Queensland-based community groups, non-government agencies, industry groups, and local governments to deliver projects across the Banana, Bundaberg, Central Highlands, Isaac, Gladstone, Livingstone, Mackay and Rockhampton areas to achieve recovery objectives
- the development and publication of the Natural hazards, risk and resilience – Bushfire, State Planning Policy - state interest guidance material.

The report also contains a number of interesting case studies outlining recovery progress at the local level.

Brendan Moon

State Recovery Planning and Policy Coordinator

Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Reconstruction Authority

State recovery progress

This section provides a summary of recovery progress across the functional lines of recovery and resilience initiatives. The recovery progress tracks the implementation of recovery activities against the metrics identified in the Plan.

Phase one and two activities have been undertaken by the FRGs for Human and Social, Economy and Environment. Phase one activities include *Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery*, and phase two activities include *Recovery and Reconstruction*.

The Building FRG has undertaken phase one and two activities, and has progressed to phase three activities of *Transition*.

The Plan identified that specific recovery activities and metrics were not required by the FRG for Roads and Transport. As such, the Roads and Transport FRG is not included in this report.

Activities identified as completed in this report will not be addressed in future reports.

Human and Social

The Human and Social Recovery Report addresses progress across the first two phases of recovery.

Phase one: Post-impact relief and early recovery

Human and Social recovery tasks are outlined on page 28 and 29 of the Plan.

Distribution of Disaster Recovery Funding Assistance (Category A and B)

Status: Ongoing and on track

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Category A and B assistance provides communities in activated areas with funding through the Personal Hardship Assistance Scheme and the Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme. The following table outlines the cumulative payment status across both schemes as at 31 Dec 2019.

Assistance type	Number of applications paid	Value of applications paid
Emergency Hardship Assistance	4319	\$1,850,845
Essential Household Contents Grant	20	\$23,850
Structural Assistance Grant	2	\$19,982
Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme Grant	3	\$6,135



Timely advice of recovery activities, public health information, advice and assistance

Status: Ongoing and on track

This recovery activity aims to deliver timely advice to communities to ensure members are aware of the recovery services available. To date, 10,046 hours of service provision has occurred (this figure does not include additional mental health services provided by Queensland Health as part of Category C funded operations).

As at 31 December 2019, there have been no requests for additional counselling services, financial aid or financial counselling services for the community by FRG partners. Services provided by recovery partners from April to December 2019 are listed below.

In addition to the above recovery activities, 6927 instances of personal support and/or psychological first aid services have been provided by Australian Red Cross, UnitingCare (Lifeline) and Queensland Health.

Recovery Partner	Activity
Department of Education	<p>Offered Lifeworks counselling services to students.</p> <p>Provided affected staff with opportunities to speak to Lifeworks.</p> <p>Involved local schools involved in a community recovery event at Baffle Creek, led by Gladstone Regional Council.</p> <p>Provided mental health coaches and senior guidance officers from Central Queensland and North Coast regions to work with the Gladstone Community Development Officer for recovery and resilience to consider the roll-out of The Pillowcase Project delivered by Red Cross.</p>
Australian Red Cross	<p>Attended community meetings and provided recovery advice.</p> <p>Through the Rural Residential Recovery Program, Red Cross has distributed \$1,200,494.60 to 126 successful applicants and provided Psychological First Aid (PFA) to 182 individuals over the phone.</p> <p>Delivery of the Pillowcase Project, a disaster resilience program targeted at children aged 8-10 years, to 381 students in CQ Bushfire affected areas.</p>
The Salvation Army	<p>Provided support in the form of referrals and follow-up visits following the closure of the community hub and outreach operations.</p> <p>The Salvation Army has provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support to 269 households with \$82,870 in funding provided - 73 referrals to other agencies - 29 referrals to counselling - 16 referrals to financial counselling - two referrals to other Salvation Army services.
Uniting Care Queensland (Lifeline)	<p>Attended bushfire community debriefs in Agnes Water and Wartburg, led by Gladstone Regional Council.</p> <p>Delivered training in applied suicide intervention skills in Miriam Vale and Agnes Waters.</p> <p>Delivered safeTALK sessions in Baffle Creek and Captain Creek.</p> <p>Attended and presented at "Connect the Dots" community engagement information sessions in Rosemead and Wartburg. Lowmead was postponed at the time because of a fire in the area.</p>

Recovery Partner	Activity
GIVIT	<p>Collected and distributed donated goods and funds to support affected community members.</p> <p>GIVIT continues to direct any affected residents seeking assistance through info@givit.org.au or through their social media channels to local charities registered with GIVIT.</p>
Queensland Health (QH)	<p>QH have provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specialist mental health treatment to 30 individuals - 357 instances of brief intervention and screening - 1993 instances of health promotion and community engagement activities. <p>QH have attended community meetings to provide recovery advice and maintenance of a continual partnership and presence at community events across the anniversary period.</p> <p>Therapeutic support to community recovery groups has been provided. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rolleston - the Carnarvon Community - the Eungella story-telling project. <p>Engagement with local school staff and planning for resilience programming 2020.</p> <p>Field referral inquiries from Rural Fire Service staff and families in Baffle Creek.</p> <p>Planning with community hubs for preparedness and resilience sessions in early 2020, including Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction.</p>

Provision of additional mental health services and coordinating the provision of psychosocial and practical supports

Status: Ongoing and on track

The provision of additional mental health services is led by QH. This recovery activity is designed to ensure community members have access to services to meet health needs arising from the disaster. A summary of Category C DRFA funded service delivery as at 31 December 2019 is outlined below.

Hospital and Health Service	Number of engagement activities	Number of people engaged	Screenings	Treatment
Wide Bay	15	205	15	21
Mackay	32	953	137	7
Central Queensland	18	835	205	2

The engagement activities identified needs of a diverse group of potential clients across the three impacted Hospital and Health Service regions. The needs include:

- tailoring services to a number of sub-groups within broader communities
- building preparedness and resilience
- establishment of support groups (youth, women)
- addressing cumulative trauma and fatigue following November 2019 fires
- supporting those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- supporting those who played an active role in response activities such as Forrest Rangers and the Rural Fire Service
- Vicarious trauma vulnerability for Rural Fire fighters
- supporting older people with complex health and mobility needs
- education around impacts of media and high-level exposure for all ages, following the 2019 Queensland bushfires.

Coordinate the matching of donated goods and services

Status: Ongoing and on track

The provision of donated goods helps communities contribute to the recovery process.

GIVIT closed the ability for individuals to donate to the Central Queensland bushfires on 7 September 2019. However, donated support remains available to Central Queensland residents impacted by fires since the November 2018 event.

At the completion of donation coordination and management for this event, 17,600 donated items had been received by affected communities in the Gladstone, Mackay and Isaac local government areas.

Local communities are being encouraged to continue to source support where required.

Phase two: Recovery and reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on pages 28-29 of the Plan.

Community Development Program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Community Development Program provides funding to employ three Community Development Officers (CDOs) to work across the eight impacted local government areas to understand recovery needs and develop community-led recovery and resilience plans. The Community Development Program aims to:

- help community members feel sufficiently safe and secure to engage in social activities and interactions with other members of the community
- enable households, families and individuals to act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process
- assist community members with access to appropriate and coordinated social services.

The CDO for the Mackay region officially commenced on 1 March 2019 and CDOs for the Livingstone and Gladstone regions commenced on 1 April 2019. Prior to the official appointments, temporary CDOs were in place in Gladstone from 1 February 2019 and in Mackay and Livingstone from 1 March 2019. Since their appointment, the CDOs have undertaken community engagement and capacity building activities across affected areas to:

- identify issues and solutions to increase future preparedness and readiness for disasters
- develop community profiles including needs and priorities for community-led projects
- establish local mechanisms such as a resilience and recovery taskforce
- facilitate access to a range of community education activities such as:
 - spontaneous volunteer management
 - accidental counsellor (training was provided which assisted people when in situations requiring them to provide unintentional personal support)
 - bushfire preparedness
 - Pillow Case Project by the Australian Red Cross
 - My Resilient Community presentations.

Community Development Program key statistics:

- 897 hours developing and delivering events
- 3532 participants at events

- 904 Community Agencies participating in events
- 196 hours developing resources and tools
- 147.25 hours of training and learning
- 547 participants in training activities
- 520 hours supporting Flexible Funding Grants development
- 296.5 hours on developing Recovery and Resilience Plans

In this quarter the CDO's have:

- continued developing contacts and are making good progress in forums and activities within the communities
- reported strong collaboration with the Community Mental Health workers appointed across the localities, as well as the Drought Recovery Officers where appointed
- provided assistance to groups accessing GIVIT funds
- reported strong engagement with all of the councils, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Department Natural Resources, Energy and Mines when conducting workshops across many of the affected communities
- provided support and assistance with the development of Flexible Funding Grant applications, with one of the CDO's indicating that there has been a positive shift in how the community is leading and guiding recovery, particularly in the ranges above Mackay.

Activities, forums and training projects reported this quarter have involved; Rural Community Connect (fire management practices), Finch Hatton Community Resilience Project, Eungella Creative Recovery Project, Aged Care Providers – Emergency Planning and collaborative work with a community Mental Health Team – Power Up.

The Livingstone CDO has also commenced the development of locality level 'vulnerability statements' based on demographics, natural hazards, community makeup, isolation etc.

Flexible Funding Grants Program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Flexible Funding Grants Program provides support for non-government organisations, local governments, industry groups and community groups to implement projects aimed at driving recovery, and building awareness and resilience within disaster impacted communities. This funding program aims to:

- assist community members to feel sufficiently safe and secure to engage in social activities and interact with other members of the community following a disaster
- enable households, families and individuals to act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process
- help community members access appropriate and coordinated social services.

The first round of the Flexible Funding Grants opened on 1 April 2019, with applications for small grants of \$2,500 to \$20,000 and large grants of \$20,000 to \$100,000.

The 17 Queensland-based organisations have been offered grants to deliver 21 projects, supporting the local government areas of Banana, Bundaberg, Central Highlands, Isaac, Gladstone, Livingstone, Mackay and Rockhampton.

Progress of the CQ Bushfires flexible funding grant Round 1 (as of 8 January 2020):

- 100 per cent of the 'initial' 90 per cent payments to funded organisations have been made.
- No agencies completed their projects during Quarter 1 or Quarter 2.

The second round of Flexible Funding Grants for small grants of \$2,500 to \$50,000 and large grants of \$50,000 to \$100,000 opened on Monday 1 October 2019 and closed on 5 November 2019.

Sixty-one Queensland-based community groups, non-government agencies, industry groups, and local governments delivering projects across the Banana, Bundaberg, Central Highlands, Isaac, Gladstone, Livingstone, Mackay and Rockhampton areas will share in \$4,098,866 under the Central Queensland Bushfires Flexible Funding Grants – Round Two program. Successful recipients of the one-off grants will run events, deliver projects, and purchase equipment to promote longer-term disaster recovery and resilience in the wake of the 2018 bushfires.

Funding for the Flexible Funding Grants is available under jointly funded Commonwealth-Queensland Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) through Category C Community Recovery Funds (CRF), and is administered through the Queensland Government. These grants have been made available to help Queensland communities prepare for, and recover from, disasters

The table below lists the projects funded during this round of flexible grant funding

Applicant Name	Project Title	Total grant funding (excl GST)
122 Regional Cadet Unit Australian Army Cadet Corps	Senior First Aid Training for Defence Force Cadets	\$3,000
Baffle Art Group a sub group of Baffle Creek Community Inc	Communities and Altered Landscapes	\$18,237
Baffle Creek Mens Shed Inc	Tool Acquisition	\$2,896
Baffle Creek Community Inc.	Facility Improvements - Community Recovery Centre Stage 2	\$103,279
Baffle Creek Men's Shed	Baffle Creek Men's Shed	\$149,272
Banana Shire Council	Banana Shire Community Engagement Project	\$131,200
Bundaberg Region Limited	Bundaberg Resilient Leadership Program	\$50,000
Capricornia Catchments Inc.	Seeing Past the Smoke Too: CQ Community Recovery - Community Support	\$147,590
Captain Creek Pony Club Inc	Facility Enhancement	\$79,080
Captain Creek Pony Club Inc	Facility Enhancement - Storage Structure/Meeting Area	\$47,000

Applicant Name	Project Title	Total grant funding (excl GST)
Central Highlands Regional Council	Rural Community Connect – Community Led Initiatives	\$49,968
Central Highlands Regional Council	Rural Community Connect (Carnarvon and Arcadia)	\$42,560
Central Highlands Regional Council	Central Highlands Disaster Dashboard: Recovery Portal	\$19,525
Central Queensland Community Suicide Prevention Network	Suicide Prevention Services	\$5,000
Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice Assn Inc (T/A Central Queensland Rural Health)	Connecting Primary Care and the Community - Resilience Building	\$12,000
Clermont Community Housing and Other Services Inc	Inspiring Preparedness	\$100,541
Crediton Hall Recreation Club Inc.	Crediton Hall Revitalisation	\$148,500
Carinity Education Rockhampton The Baptist Union of Queensland - Carinity	Community Recovery Challenge	\$140,000
Discovery Coast Sport and Recreation Association Incorporated	Kitchen Refit	\$29,500
Discovery Coast Tourism & Commerce Inc.	Discovery Coast Economic Disaster Recovery and Management Strategy	\$42,000
Eungella Community Development Association	Eungella and Surrounds Mens Shed	\$51,000
Eungella Community Development Association	Eungella Community - Facility Upgrades	\$41,500
Fitzroy Rural Fire Brigade Group	Incident Response Trailer	\$49,390
Fitzroy Rural Fire Brigade Group	Community Strategic Firebreaks	\$7,700
Foodbank Queensland Limited	Central Queensland Food Relief Trial and Disaster Response Plan	\$18,287
Gems Christian Education Ltd	Fire Safety First	\$60,000
Gladstone Regional Council	Bushfire Management Implementation Plan and Priority Actions	\$150,000
Gladstone Regional Council	Disaster Education and Recovery Trailer	\$53,950
The Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited	Gladstone Resilient Leadership Program	\$50,000
Gladstone Community Linking Agency	Emergency Response Centre & Recovery Community Hub for Vulnerable Peoples	\$75,000
Livingstone Shire Council	Outreach Community Led Projects	\$130,000
Livingstone Shire Council	Building Social Cohesion at The Caves	\$150,000

Applicant Name	Project Title	Total grant funding (excl GST)
Livingstone Shire Council	Bushfire Resilience Officer	\$150,000
Livingstone Shire Council	The Caves Community Telecommunication Upgrade	\$17,000
Livingstone Shire Council	Bushfire Planning Workshops	\$50,000
Livingstone Shire Council	Livingstone Shire Disaster Dashboard: Recovery Portal	\$30,000
Livingstone Shire Council	Livingstone Shire All-Hazards Risk Assessment	\$85,000
Mackay Regional Council	Mackay Emergency Management Approach for Vulnerable People Project	\$150,000
Mackay Regional Council for Social Development LTD trading as Regional Social Development Coalition (RSDC)	Managing Disruptions - Peer 2 Peer Networking Approach	\$40,000
Mackay Tourism Limited	Drive Central Queensland	\$49,500
Mackay Tourism Limited	Central Queensland Fishing	\$48,000
Moranbah & District Support Service Association Inc	Building Community Resilience and Health Through Education, Connection and Support	\$6,600
Moranbah & District Support Services Association Inc	Isaac Community Connect Mobile Application Upgrade	\$26,700
Mount Larcom & District Show Society Inc	Community Disaster Recovery Hub and Animal Refuge	\$135,592
Mount Larcom Rural Fire Brigade	Mount Larcom Community Disaster Management Capability Improvements	\$41,649
Mt Morgan SES (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services)	Electrical Connection & Lighting Fitout of Vehicle & Equipment Shed	\$11,800
Pioneer Valley Agricultural Show Society Inc.	Community Hub - Pavilion	\$29,673
Queensland Families and Communities Association	Neighbourhood Centre Bushfire Response Strategy	\$50,000
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services - Gracemere State Emergency Service (ORG number is QF&ES)	Gracemere SES Generator Housing and Connection Project	\$19,997
Queensland Tourism Industry Council	CrisisReady - Southern Great Barrier Reef	\$87,000
Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Limited	Burning Barriers to Bushfire Management in the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac Region Stage 2	\$112,366
Rock FM Association Inc	Connecting Isaac Communities	\$21,214
Rockhampton Regional Council	Family Fun Day @ the Library	\$10,000

Applicant Name	Project Title	Total grant funding (excl GST)
Rockhampton Regional Council	Fire Resistant Native Plants as a Buffer in Urban Areas	\$20,000
Rockhampton Regional Council	Maintenance Fire Mitigation Trails Mt Morgan and Bouldercombe	\$40,000
Rockhampton Regional Council	Rockhampton Region Bushfire Management Study: Strategy and Mitigation Plan 2020	\$150,000
Rockhampton Regional Council	Rockhampton Disaster Management Risk Assessment 2020	\$150,000
Rockhampton Regional Council	Rural Rockhampton Digital Noticeboards	\$150,000
Ubobo Progress Association	Ubobo Memorial Hall Upgrade Project	\$93,892
Volunteering QLD Inc.	Rockhampton VOAD and Community Group Mapping	\$149,777
Winfield Rural Fire Brigade	Winfield Rural Fire Station Upgrade of Equipment & Vehicle Access	\$15,131

This information will be posted to

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/community-recovery/category-c-cq-bushfires-flexible-funding-grants-round-two>.

A further funding round (Round 3) has been approved to distribute the remaining funds of approximately \$806,833. A timetable for the release, assessment and announcements is currently being developed.

Community Mental Health Program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Community Mental Health Program aims to assist disaster-impacted individuals, carers, families, volunteers and communities with specialist mental health support and emotional wellbeing post-disaster, in addition to existing mental health services. The program is being delivered from the Hospital and Health Services in Mackay, Central Queensland and Wide Bay, with a particular focus on residents of Bloomsbury, Finch Hatton, Eungella, Sarina Beach, Baffle Creek and Deep Water.

Hospital and Health Service	Staffing	Activities
Mackay	Two clinicians	Full treatment program commenced and includes screening, community engagement and needs assessment.
Wide Bay	Two clinicians	Full treatment program commenced and includes screening, community engagement and needs assessment.
Central Queensland	Two clinicians	Full treatment program commenced and includes screening, community engagement and needs assessment.

Rural Residential Recovery program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Rural Residential Recovery program is detailed in the Plan as Targeted Community Funding. This funding aims to support the clean-up and reinstatement of 'lifestyle properties' and residential properties beyond the immediate vicinity of the residential house.

The Australian Red Cross is administering the grants process. To date, a total of \$1,200,494.60 has been paid across 126 successful applications. The applications have supported requests for assistance with fencing, debris removal, water and infrastructure, fodder and animal feedstuffs, and the purchase of materials or goods.

Impacted local governments continue to promote this funding program to residents and further information is available on the [Queensland Reconstruction Authority website \(www.qra.qld.gov.au\)](http://www.qra.qld.gov.au).

Establishment of District Human and Social Recovery governance committees

Status: Ongoing and on track

District Human and Social Recovery governance committees aim to provide advice and support to local government CDOs and ensure they are connecting with community groups.

The Gladstone Central Queensland Bushfires Community Development Reference Group had its inaugural meeting on 30 April 2019. As at 3 October 2019, the group had met four times.

The Livingstone Central Queensland Bushfires Community Development Reference Group had its inaugural meeting on 7 May 2019. As at 3 October 2019, the group had met three times.

During the recent (2019) Queensland bushfires, both Gladstone and Livingstone local government areas were impacted. This caused both governance committees to postpone meetings while they responded to the immediate response and recovery of the Queensland Bushfires. The next meetings are planned to be held within three to four weeks.

Economic

The Economic Recovery Report addresses progress across the first two phases of recovery. Economic recovery tasks are outlined on page 31 of the Plan.

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

Distribution of Category B DRFA

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Category B DRFA activated for the Central Queensland bushfires included the following:

- Disaster Assistance Small Business Loans

- Essential Working Capital Loans for small business
- Primary Producer Loans
- Essential Working Capital Loans for Primary Producers
- Freight Subsidies for Primary Producers.

As at 22 January 2020, four applications for Disaster Assistance Primary Producer Loans have been approved to the value of \$587,077.

Financial support for primary producers and small business

Status: Ongoing and on track

The [Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority website](http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/current-programs/Disaster-recovery) (<http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/current-programs/Disaster-recovery>) outlines the various grant and loan schemes available to primary producers and small businesses as a result of the bushfires. This includes information about the available assistance, eligibility, loan term, repayment requirements and the applicable interest rates.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

Tourism and Events Queensland

Status: Completed

The Tourism and Events Queensland package provide \$105,000 to three organisations to assist with recovery marketing activities across Capricorn, Mackay and Gladstone.

Capricorn Enterprise:

- invested in social media boosts during January school holidays
- hosted travel writers and bloggers.

Mackay Tourism invested in:

- digital messaging (December 2018 to January 2019)
- an influencer program (February to June 2019)
- a digital campaign (March to June 2019)
- augmented reality assets (April 2019).

Gladstone Area Development invested in promoting Agnes Water/1770 as a holiday destination. The campaign commenced in early February 2019 and focussed on audiences within a 400 kilometre radius of the destination with:

- television advertising targeting families and empty nesters
- True View advertising targeting the demographics of single income no kids, double income no kids and families
- hosted social media influencers.

The campaigns:

- reached key markets through the social influencer program and the regional tourism organisation program
- exceeded the expected reach in key markets
- created an augmented reality experience to showcase the region.

The latest visitor statistics for the regions indicate increases in domestic visitation as follows:

- Southern Queensland Country including Capricorn, Gladstone, Bundaberg and North Burnett: Annual total overnight expenditure increased by 10 per cent on average over the three years to September 2019 to \$883.0 million on the back of annual total overnight visitation increasing 10.4 per cent to 2.4 million. The growth in both expenditure and visitation largely reflects domestic visitation which accounts for 91 per cent of expenditure and 98 per cent of visitation to the region.
- Mackay: Annual total overnight expenditure grew by 15.5 per cent on average over the three years to September 2019 to \$538.5 million, largely due to visitation which grew by 13.2 per cent on average to 1.1 million. The domestic travel market has driven growth, accounting for 96 per cent of both overnight visitor expenditure and visitation (The three year trend will be published by Tourism and Events Queensland and caution should be used in interpreting year-on-year change due to small sample sizes).

Environment

The Environmental Recovery Report addresses progress across the second phase of recovery. Environmental recovery tasks are outlined on page 33 of the Plan.

Activities identified as completed will not be addressed in future reports.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on page 33 of the Plan.

Collaborate and undertake activities to protect cultural heritage values

Status: Ongoing and on track

Cultural heritage impact assessments were conducted at nominated sites as part of the interstate Bushfire Rapid Assessment Team deployment and subsequent internal processes.

Targeted consultation is occurring with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people regarding cultural heritage management and recovery at Carnarvon National Park.

Engagement with Traditional Owners continues regarding the removal of the remains of the boardwalk of Baloon Caves. In October 2019, staff from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and Partnerships (QPWSP) met with Traditional Owners to discuss cultural oversight for digging of footings for the toilet block at Carnarvon National Park.

Control of post-fire flooding and erosion

Status: Ongoing and on track

All rehabilitation works are being undertaken using existing regional resources.

Conduct programs to prevent further impacts to biodiversity

Status: Ongoing and on track

There is a potential increased risk of fox predation of turtle nests on beaches adjacent to Deepwater National Park due to the impact of the bushfires in this region. Den detection dogs were deployed in September 2019 in anticipation of the 2019-20 turtle nesting season to ensure maximum protection for the turtles. The report from this latest activity is currently being prepared by the contractor.

Community bushfire planning progress in the Finch Hatton, Eungella, Caves and Dingo localities are well underway. This process, initiated by QPWS, involves QFES regional councils and key landholders establishing a fire management program at landscape scale. The objective of the process is a coordinated mitigation of future fire risk to reduce the impact upon at-risk biodiversity values. Key values at risk of future Central Queensland fire events include: recovering rainforest, vine scrubs and natural springs.

Ensure communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and local government are effectively engaged in the consultation and decision making processes

Status: Ongoing and on track

Thorough engagement of key stakeholders and partners has been conducted and remains an ongoing priority for QPWSP.

Central region QPWS are addressing community engagement through the Community Bushfire Planning process. This process, initiated with QPWS, involves QFES regional councils and key landholders establishing a fire management program at landscape scale.

Building

The Building FRG report addresses progress against recovery phases two and three. Building recovery tasks are outlined on page 35 of the Plan.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

Facilitate community access to independent building repair advice

Status: Ongoing and on track

This task focuses on the provision of building advice and information to support the recovery of the impacted community. Information is continually available to those requiring repair and rebuilding.

QBCC continues to provide ongoing support by:

- providing impacted homeowners with a dedicated phone line to speak to customer service officers specialising in natural disaster recovery
- continuing to expand the Bushfire Rebuild Register for homeowners to safely search for licensed contractors, including licensed asbestos removers and electrical
- working with local councils and other agencies to provide affected homeowners with factsheets on Recovering after a natural disaster and Insurance information for building recovery

- regularly posting on social media to raise awareness of the importance of engaging licenced contractors to undertake repair and reconstruction activities.

Develop a bushfire and heat resistant building guide specifically for Queensland homes

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) is currently in the delivery phase of this project. QRA has identified the need to engage an external supplier to assist with the development of the guide. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) has been engaged to support the project and development of the guide is currently underway. The project has a revised completion date of 29 May 2020, which will allow for the inclusion of any additional lessons from the 2019 Southern and Eastern Queensland bushfires into the guide.

Along with development of the guide, QRA will coordinate a Reference Group of various state and local government agencies that will provide their expertise and guidance during the guide's development. A formal invitation from QRA via the CEO will be disseminated to the Reference Group organisations in the near future.

Phase Three: Transition

Provide advice to regulators regarding learnings from the bushfire event related to the recovery of built infrastructure

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Building FRG members continue to consider the impacts and outcomes of recent bushfires on built infrastructure.

QBCC has recognised the following:

- The Bushfire Rebuild Register radius needs to be expanded beyond 50km radius from disaster affected area.
- In place of a bushfire only register, a state-wide disaster register (including all natural hazards that affect QLD) is required. The design of this consolidated register is currently underway.

The Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) worked with QFES and the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning to develop the Natural hazards, risk and resilience – Bushfire, State Planning Policy state interest guidance material published on 6 December 2019.

Resilience initiatives

Resilience initiatives outlined in the Recovery Plan have been refined post-publication including the addition of the QFES Land Management Program. These recovery tasks are outlined on page 40 of the Recovery Plan.

Enhance the centralised Get Ready Queensland program with a public information and awareness campaign to help educate and prepare communities for future bushfires

Status: Ongoing and on track

The public campaign *In the Line of Fire* ran from 31 July 2019 to the end of September 2019. The campaign was a joint initiative between Get Ready Queensland and QFES creative. An allocation of \$170,000 from the Public Information and Awareness Campaign budget was divided across radio, billboards and social media. Market research from the campaign demonstrated that three quarters of those who saw bushfire advertising in the past six months said they have more knowledge about what to do in the case of a bushfire. An overall campaign report will be developed when further advertising analytics have been provided.

Queensland Rural Fire Services to develop locally-led engagement activities to enhance bushfire preparedness

Status: Ongoing and on track

The *My Resilient Community Project* has Queensland Rural Fire Services developing locally-led engagement activities to enhance bushfire preparedness. The project is available to communities within the eight impacted local government areas. A *My Resilient Community, Getting Started* workshop held in Rockhampton and facilitated by the Queensland University of Technology and University of Southern Queensland titled targeted local government, community stakeholders, QPWSP, Queensland Police and QFES.

QFES Land management program

Status: Ongoing and on track

QFES has commenced a procurement process for the delivery of the high level project plan for the Land Managers Program. The initial task will be to refine the existing project plan output to reflect the impacted area.

Insurance awareness campaign

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Insurance Awareness Campaign has an allocated budget of \$130,000. It is anticipated that this QRA program will commence in April of this year. Pending procurement approval, the Get Ready Queensland program team will be developing advertising material with agency Engine Creative in February. The disaster resilience campaign will be informed by insurance challenges arising from the bushfires.

Local recovery progress

This section provides a summary of councils' progress against their local recovery plans, six months on from the endorsement of the Recovery Plan.

This report focuses on the five local governments that completed event-specific recovery plans:

- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Gladstone Regional Council
- Livingstone Shire Council
- Mackay Regional Council
- Rockhampton Regional Council

Local governments provided a progress update against their recovery objectives, including challenges and successes.

Central Highlands Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

The Central Highlands Regional Council recovery objectives are outlined on page 44-49 of the Recovery Plan. Only objectives with detailed progress made are included in this report.

Recovery objective	Update
Disaster management event debriefing and consultation.	Issues and lessons identified are being addressed on an ongoing basis.
Building community resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase sustained community through active/positive involvement in community groups. - Develop partnerships with Council, NGOs and other stakeholders. - Sponsored community events – to host with external support. - Develop networks/ communication plans – community support - Fun activities, events to bring connection opportunities. 	<p>A key initiative for building community resilience in the Central Highlands is the rollout of the Rural Community Connect project. The project aims to increase the sustainability of communities by developing short, medium, and long-term community-driven actions and responsibilities. Attendees/group members are encouraged to contribute to community plans.</p> <p>Planning meeting scheduled for Feb 4.</p> <p>Cat C round 2 funding for Carnarvon and Arcadia 'Rural Community Connect' project is approved (the Project) will involve coordinating, facilitating, and evaluating several community disaster education and preparedness workshops in rural localities of the Central Highlands local government area (Carnarvon and Arcadia Valley).</p> <p>These workshops will involve inviting speakers from relevant agencies and organisations to address the needs of the community by providing relevant, practical information and engaging in meaningful discussions with community members.</p> <p>Cat C round 2 funding is approved for Central Highlands Regional Council Disaster Dashboard to include a recovery portal, and develop a 'Question and Answer' forum within the public-facing Dashboard.</p>

Recovery objective	Update
Psychosocial and wellbeing and preventative mental health.	<p>CQ mental Health workers and Nurse from Rolleston engaged in Human & Social recovery Group and have been involved in all Rural Community Connect workshops/meetings.</p> <p>Live Better have an agreement for a contribution of funds for additional nursing hours for Rolleston Health Service since February 2019, (Central Qld Rural Health) and the Public Health Nurse to review the arrangements.</p> <p>Cat C round 2 funding has been approved for Rural Community Connect – Community Led Initiatives to reconnect, build community cohesion and support one another. The community events, mental health and wellbeing workshops will provide education and information and an opportunity to learn new skills and assist in the recovery phase.</p>
Development of additional firebreaks along state/council owned roads.	<p>A meeting of the Central Highlands Regional Fire Management Group is scheduled to meet 11 March 2020 to priorities and coordinated a number of mitigation works throughout the region including the installation of new and maintenance of existing fire breaks.</p>
Practical implementation of fire management and education.	<p>Fire Management workshop was held in Rolleston on 2 November 2019. The feedback received from the 33 community members who attended the meeting will be addressed in future workshops.</p> <p>Future planning meeting scheduled for Feb 4.</p> <p>Cat C round 2 funding for Carnarvon and Arcadia 'Rural Community Connect' project is approved (the Project) will involve coordinating, facilitating, and evaluating several community disaster education and preparedness workshops in rural localities of the Central Highlands local government area (Carnarvon and Arcadia Valley).</p>

Challenges

The broad geographical range of Central Highlands Regional Council area creates logistical challenges in organising and facilitating community events and workshops in some areas. This is particularly true in the Arcadia Valley and Carnarvon Gorge area as key state representatives agencies are based in Toowoomba or Roma and have a limited local presence. Council tries to account for these distances when scheduling workshops and activities to ensure all stakeholders can attend.

Successes

Central Highlands Regional Council has upgraded its Emergency Management Dashboard to include a new section called Rural Community Connect. This enables individuals to access factsheets and information related to the bushfire management community workshops.

Gladstone Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

The Gladstone Regional Council recovery objectives are outlined on page 50-51 of the Recovery Plan. Completed recovery objectives are not reported in this document.

Recovery Objective	Update
Building structure safety assessment.	Completed
Road transport network – coordinated restoration of road furniture and removal of debris and hazards on state and local controlled roads to assist in road user safety.	All piles of debris remaining on roadsides that were of concern have now been removed. The close out report is to be confirmed at the next meeting.
Installation of firebreaks on Council owned land.	Council has developed a Bushfire Mitigation Strategy and received \$150,000 under the flexible funding program to support the implementation of priority actions.
Alternative evacuation road link between Baffle Creek and Agnes Water established.	Community consultation on the options for an alternative evacuation road link will now be undertaken in the first quarter of 2020.
Empower local businesses and residents to improve their resilience to disasters.	The Queensland Tourism Industry Council has received Category C flexible funding to work with Discovery Coast tourism operators on disaster preparedness.
Identify community needs and develop localised community recovery plans.	Local recovery sub-plans will be completed by December 2020.
Engage with agencies and organisations to implement flexible and adaptable programs and services to meet the needs of the affected communities.	Challenges continue to be experienced in working with groups that have received Category C flexible funding. Some funded projects have not been in alignment with community needs and require a change of scope to provide community benefit however Council officers continue to work with funded organisations to coordinate effort.
Identify and communicate financial assistance options.	Remaining GIVIT funds were secured for the establishment of a basic firebreak/emergency vehicle access track.
Provide timely and easily accessible public information to encourage two-way conversations.	A final update is due to be provided on the outcomes of community debriefs.

Challenges

Concerns have been raised that communities are becoming increasingly reliant on external funding support, which is having the unintended consequence of reducing resilience. There has been positive change gained through the funding provided in 2018 bushfires, however this has only occurred through the provision of funding, as opposed to members of the community being proactively resilient and meeting their obligations as landowners. The concern is that there is an ever-increasing expectation for financial assistance by community members unable to recover or rebuild from future events.

Successes

Sessions delivered through Volunteering Queensland have been well-received and have enhanced community understanding of disaster management.

The Council's Region Watch dashboard has been successful in providing information to the community and has been particularly well-received by disability service providers.

Increased interaction with community groups and a consistent presence in the affected areas has significantly strengthened relationships and been integral to the success of the recovery program. Local emergency coordination committees are becoming more vibrant and purposeful.

Case study - Utilisation and gaps of post-disaster funding

Background

Prior to the bushfires, there was a lack of fire mitigation on landholders' property and there was an unwillingness to engage and/or improve this. Community members (both landowners and renters) were affected.

Using funding, primarily through GIVIT and Red Cross, they were able to improve fire mitigation, in the way of equipment hire and the development of fire breaks, improved driveway access and the removal of vegetation piles.

As a result, members of the community are now engaging in fire mitigation activities when they haven't previously participated. Others who were quite vocal in believing that they were prepared have acknowledged that they can do more to improve their preparedness.

The overall fire mitigation has been positive, for the community members individually and the community as a whole. However, these works have only been possible through external funding, so links in with the challenges faced. Without external funding, these community members would have been no better prepared or resilient.

The tangible benefits that we can now observe improvements in fire breaks and improved access on people's properties.

This story was chosen because:

The Deepwater area has been impacted by a number of natural disasters over the years. Previously, the community hasn't been overly willing to undertake works or engage to enhance their resilience or change their opinion on the need to improve their preparedness. The use of funding for enhanced fire mitigation by members of this community shows a significant shift in community members' thinking.

While there are still a number of properties with minimal to no fire mitigation, the works undertaken will assist in a reduction of hazards and fire mitigation for the community as a whole. Through some community members coming to understand the need and benefits of fire mitigation, it is hoped that this will spread a positive message to others who are yet to undertake works.

Do you think the change observed is sustainable or is it likely to change again?

No, as has been outlined, the works undertaken were funded through donations and state funding. Prior to the funding becoming available, the community members had not been maintaining fire breaks. This being said, it is assumed that the properties where fire mitigation occurred would have needed significant work to create firebreaks. Now these have been made, the maintenance of them will be less expensive, so some community members may be able to maintain the breaks developed. A collaborative education program proposed between council and QFES is hoped to improve further the fire preparedness for the area.

What do you think are the key factors that made the changes happen?

While the Deepwater area has experienced a number of natural disasters in previous years, this was the first significant bushfire for the area, this compounded by the increasing bushfires throughout the country, including highlighting the very real risks if people are not adequately prepared. This includes the potential loss of human life and animals.


Gaps in Funding

As a result of the bushfires, community members (landowners and renters) who do not meet the guidelines for the receipt of funding for primary producers are not able to access funds for fencing losses.

The situation remains unresolved. However, some residents were able to gain assistance through Team Rubicon's attendance, while others have had to manage the situation on their own. These residents are often the same as those who are unable to receive drought assistance as they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

There has been continued and ongoing requests for assistance from members of the community with hobby farm type arrangements to Council and other agency bodies. It has been noted that a number of these community members have outlined that the impact and struggles, both financial and emotional they had been facing from the drought have been compounded by the fires, hence why they have little financial ability to undertake required fencing repairs, feed or pay for water deliveries.

These were unplanned changes and are negative. It has highlighted a need to broaden the types of properties that are able to access certain funding and a need to acknowledge that funding following a fire should be able to assist with compounding impacts of drought following a natural disaster.



As a result of this, the Council has received additional requests and increases in complaints. This has led to almost double the complaints for roaming stock that have been received in the last six months, as well as a notable increase in dust complaints and welfare concerns for livestock. It is acknowledged that not all of these relate to the fire affected area, but highlights the many issues impacting rural parts of the region.

This story was chosen because the issue is impacting an ever-increasing number of community members; therefore, it is important to highlight the need to consider compounding and long-term factors when funding is being provided to community members following a natural disaster.

The long term impacts are that the continued lack of funding assistance for those impacted by both fire and drought, who are not primary producers will continue to escalate the longer the drought persists. The weather forecast for the upcoming months does not show signs of a relief from the drought and there is still potential for further fires within the region in the coming months.

Without a change to funding provisions for non-primary producers, the issue will continue to escalate with more and more people suffering further and further economic losses, the emotional stress that comes with this, including concerns regarding animal welfare and crop production.

What do you think are the key factors that made the changes happen?

The region has not experienced catastrophic fires previously, and while the region has faced drought before, there has not been the compounding issues of fire damage and loss of feed, water, etc. from this also.

Lessons and Recommendations

The funding provided to the community following the fires of 2018 has highlighted the importance of understanding the key issues in a community and the need to aim to collaborate where possible to ensure that there are no duplications in services and that funding is being utilised in the more effective and efficient way.

To note:

The reports relating to the above have been through discussions and reports from community members, but there has not been any physical evidence provided to Council.

Livingstone Shire Council

Progress of recovery objectives

The Livingstone Shire Council recovery objectives are outlined on page 52-53 of the Recovery Plan.

Recovery Objective	Update
Essential services (power, water, waste, telecommunications) repaired and restored.	Essential services were repaired/restored in the immediate aftermath of the fire. Livingstone Shire Council submitted an application to Round Two of the Category C Flexible Funding program, in partnership with The Capricorn Caves (tourism agency) and The Caves Rural Fire Brigade to install equipment at the site of The Caves to address telecommunications issues; this application was successful.
Identification and management of personal hardship cases.	Information regarding longer-term support (including the Rural Residential Recovery program and the mental health recovery program) has been distributed to The Caves community.
Community messaging that "we are open for business".	The Capricorn Caves (tourism agency) has continued collaborating with Capricorn Enterprise and Livingstone Shire Council to promote the business and the region. Ongoing economic impacts on businesses at The Caves has been minimal.
Assess human, health, and social impacts.	The CQ Bushfire Recovery Community Development Officer has continued working with Central Queensland Hospital and Health Services disaster recovery mental health team and other relevant agencies to identify and address any emerging human, health and/or social impacts.
In partnership with the relevant agencies, provide access to psychosocial support services if required.	The Community Wellbeing Unit of Livingstone Shire Council has continued working with Queensland Health and other psychosocial support services providers (including non-government agencies) to ensure psychosocial support is accessible to those impacted.
Facilitate support to Caves Tourist Park (support to staff and tourism).	Council has continued to work closely with staff at The Capricorn Caves to address needs. Livingstone Shire Council submitted an application to Round 2 of the Flexible Funding program, in partnership with The Capricorn Caves (tourism agency) and The Caves Rural Fire Brigade to install equipment at the site of The Caves to address telecommunications issues; this application was successful.
Assess economic impact on key assets (e.g. tourism, small business and agriculture); promote opportunities to drive economic recovery.	Economic losses on tourism have been limited. Impacts on agriculture and associated small businesses have been difficult to assess as Livingstone Shire is in drought and differentiating impacts of drought compared to the fires is complex. Council continues to work with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to address ongoing impacts on agriculture. The Economic and Regional Development Recovery and Resilience Taskforce, a sub-group to the Livingstone Local Disaster Management Group, is meeting regularly and will coordinate a business recovery and resilience summit for local small businesses in early 2020.

Recovery Objective	Update
Lobby for better mobile phone communication for the affected area.	Livingstone Shire Council submitted an application to Round Two of the Category C Flexible Funding program, in partnership with The Capricorn Caves (tourism agency) and The Caves Rural Fire Brigade to install equipment at the site of The Caves to address telecommunications issues. The application was successful. Council is continuing to work closely with community groups and representatives to identify further telecommunications issues in the area.
Assess resilience of critical infrastructure.	Livingstone Shire Council submitted an application to Round Two of the Category C Flexible Funding program, in partnership with The Capricorn Caves (tourism agency) and The Caves Rural Fire Brigade to install equipment at the site of The Caves to address telecommunications issues. The application was successful. Council will continue working with The Caves community to identify and address further critical infrastructure concerns.
Environmental assessment across The Caves area.	<p>A detailed environmental assessment is ongoing. QPWSP has indicated recent surveys demonstrate no reduction in the local bat population. Assessment of the canopy around The Caves is continuing. Significant vegetation (particularly the semi-evergreen vine thicket) at Mt Etna National Parks was lost and the impacts of this are still being investigated with appropriate vegetation management systems being implemented by QPWSP.</p> <p>QPWSP has prepared a draft recovery plan for Mount Etna Caves National Park in response to the 2018 wildfires.</p>
Seek funding for any Category C opportunities to support recovery and resilience across Human Social with particular attention to the cumulative effects of disasters.	<p>The CDO is now engaged with The Caves community, as well as Rockhampton and Central Highlands services, to develop appropriate recovery and resilience strategies with a focus on community and agency education and capacity building initiatives. Council has also been successful in securing funding from Round 2 of the Category C Flexible Funding program for seven projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Telecommunications upgrade at The Caves. 2. Upgrade to the community park at The Caves. 3. Community development outreach projects for rural and remote localities in Livingstone Shire. 4. A bushfire resilience officer. 5. A shire-wide all-hazards risk assessment. 6. Updates to the existing Disaster Dashboard to include accessible recovery-related information. 7. Bushfire management planning workshops.
Continue to implement long-term resilience strategies.	Council employees, elected members, the Livingstone Shire Local Disaster Management Group and relevant stakeholders are engaged in an ongoing process of identifying community-driven resilience building strategies and supporting these as required. Strategies being implemented include community workshops to increase understanding of disaster management agencies and disaster preparedness, as well as opportunities for community members to take part in prevention and preparedness planning.

Challenges

Three key challenges were identified for Livingstone Shire Council in the October 2019 report.

- Ongoing concerns regarding vegetation management and the application processes for clearing vegetation for fire breaks on private land. This has been compounded by conflicting responses from state and local government in response to recommendations within the *IGEM 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review*.
 - o Update (31 Dec 2019)
 - While residents are still unclear about vegetation clearing, representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy have been actively engaged in workshops for the Livingstone Shire and delivered accurate, up-to-date information to attendees. They also provided fact sheets for distribution. The involvement of DNRME means the appropriate information is being disseminated.
- Ongoing drought conditions within Livingstone Shire have exacerbated issues relating to the fire recovery. However, there appear to be no resources available to address the drought. For example, large landholders at The Caves were not all impacted by the fires, but are all being impacted by the drought.
 - o Update (31 Dec 2019)
 - The drought has continued and the exacerbation of issues, particularly for primary producers and peri-urban producers, continues. Representatives from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries have provided information about support available to drought-affected primary producers. However, peri-urban producers/'hobby farmers' are not eligible for this support.
- Livingstone Shire Council has reported concerns relating to the timeframes available to apply for round two of the Flexible Funding Grants, and a lack of oversight across a number of similar initiatives. These concerns have been raised with the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors who has advised that the CDO regional reference groups are being used as communication channels and to provide oversight of recovery activities.
 - o Update (31 Dec 2019)
 - The regional reference group, as well as other groups and meetings have enabled oversight of the various projects and programs. To date, there have been no major concerns raised by community members about the number of programs and projects running concurrently.

Successes

Recovery successes for Livingstone Shire Council include:

- the ongoing work of the Recovery and Resilience Taskforce has ensured continuity of support to fire-affected communities while monitoring and addressing the cumulative impacts of multiple disasters in Livingstone Shire. The close working relationships fostered by the Taskforces have ensured a rapid, effective response to recovery needs of the community during the 2019 bushfires in Livingstone Shire
- seven successful applications for Round 2 of the Category C Flexible funding grants program, which will further contribute to the recovery of The Caves community while also building resilience across Livingstone Shire.

Case Study - The Caves 'Community Bushfire Resilience Plan'

The Caves community banded together during the 2018 fires, and the Rural Fire Brigade there worked tirelessly protecting properties and lives. Afterwards, though, agencies involved in recovery heard that there were many misunderstandings and communication breakdowns in the community during the fires that led to tensions and ongoing concerns about what might happen next time.

Following the bushfires, the community raised a number of issues and concerns. Key among these was that some community members lost trust for in the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES). It was also identified that there was not a common approach to fire management, including hazard reduction burns and other mitigation practices. Communication issues were also highlighted, and it was noted by multiple stakeholders that the area around the Capricorn Caves was a 'black spot' and neither radio nor mobile phone communication could be relied on in that area.

These concerns impacted community groups, and individuals, the Rural Fire Brigade and other QFES divisions, QPWS and other agencies involved in disaster management and recovery, including Council.

Led by QPWS, QFES and Council, a decision was made that the community would need to work together, with support from other stakeholders to develop their own 'Community Bushfire Resilience Plan'. This plan incorporates existing fire breaks and fire trails (including identifying the 'owner' of the break/trail and how it will be maintained), a community-led fire response plan (to ensure everyone involved has the same expectations), and other relevant information. This document ensures that there is consensus and that some of the communications issues that have been identified. Importantly, the planning process would bring together different factions of the community and encourage them to collaborate with each other, and with some of the agencies they had problems with. This planning process is ongoing, but to date has included:

- several meetings between the Rural Fire Brigade and community members
- ongoing work between QPWS and landowners adjoining the Mt Etna National Park
- council and QPWS working together to draft The Caves 'Community Bushfire Resilience Plan'

- a community meeting at which key agencies (Council, QFES, QPWS and Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) shared information about disaster management and bushfire preparedness to better inform the wider community
- meetings between Council and key stakeholders including management of Capricorn Caves tourism site, the Rural Fire Brigade and community groups.

The process of developing The Caves 'Community Bushfire Resilience Plan' is ongoing, and the changes within the community will be ongoing as well. To date, though, there is greater connectivity between individuals and groups who have previously had little or no contact. There is a much greater willingness for community members to engage with agencies, including QFES and importantly QPWS.

These changes have been positive as communication has improved between community members and individuals and agencies.

There is also a better understanding of bushfire management in the community due to the plan and the planning processes. These changes were planned.


What evidence do you have that shows what changes have occurred?

There was a community meeting held in early July 2019 to discuss bushfire recovery (arranged by QFES). At that stage, before the process of developing the 'Community Bushfire Resilience Plan' had begun, there was low attendance (approximately 15 community members) and limited engagement from those who did attend. In comparison, another community meeting/forum held in late October (following several months of working with the Community agencies on the 'Community Bushfire Resilience Plan') was attended by approximately 40 community members and the level of engagement was very high; people asked questions, they spoke to each other, and they approached agency representatives to discuss specific issues. There is still work to be done and issues to be addressed, but community members and groups are closer to each other, and have greater confidence in the agencies involved in disaster management than they did previously.

Why did you choose this story?

This story was selected as it highlights the importance of a cohesive approach and trust both between agencies and the community and between agencies and organisations themselves. It demonstrates the benefits of inter-agency cooperation and collaboration to present a united front with a shared purpose (this being improved understanding of fire management in The Caves community) and how this benefits a community. In the aftermath of the 2018 fires, there was discord within the community and distrust between community members and agencies, and between different agencies. The willingness of all partners and agencies to be involved, share information and resources, and support each other to support the community has led to the positive outcomes listed above; improved communication, improved trust and better understanding of fire management.

The long-term benefits of the project include improved community safety and better bushfire management at the community level. The 'Community Bushfire Resilience Plan' document outlines current and proposed fire management practices so that community members understand each other's management plans and that relevant government agencies (including Council, QPWS and QFES) also understand this.



This will enable an effective and efficient response to future events. Additionally, other long-term benefits include the improved communication between different residents, between the community and agencies, and between agencies.

The sustainability of the changes depends on changes in the community, as well as staff changes within organisations. Strong working relationships currently exist between all stakeholders, but this is subject to change depending upon future composition and workforce of agencies involved. There are also several key community members who are heavily involved.

Again, if these individuals were no longer involved, the changes may be unsustainable. However, given the commitment demonstrated by all involved, there are mechanisms (i.e., ongoing communication and support between agencies) that will ensure the outcomes are sustained.

The key factors that made the change happen include:

- the willingness of all agencies to engage with the community and listen to what they needed (i.e., information, a plan for how to manage land and the bushfires)
- the willingness of agencies to work collectively by sharing resources, information and commitment to the project
- the willingness of the involved community members to talk to each other, share information, learn from each other and be involved in the project.

These changes have come about because agencies have been willing to cooperate and help each other work towards the same goal. The key lesson to come from the project is that a coordinated, cohesive approach that has genuine buy-in from stakeholders is the best way to get community members involved. It is also worth noting that the project has taken a considerable amount of time (and will continue to take time into the future). Councils and agencies need to be aware of the community's needs, to monitor these changes over time, and be flexible enough to adapt to suit these needs

Mackay Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

The Mackay Regional Council recovery objectives are outlined on page 54-55 of the Recovery Plan. Completed recovery objectives are not included in this report.

Recovery objective	Update
Displaced households – settled in temporary accommodation, supported to rebuild.	The one household which lost its primary residence is still not rebuilt, with the homeowner camping on the property. One 'liveable shed' that was destroyed, but was not a primary residence (weekend retreat), has recently been rebuilt.
Emergency funding (personal hardship, etc.) – granted/approved.	Council is aware anecdotally of households being successful in receiving the Rural Residential Recovery grants via Red Cross.
Community support – mechanisms implemented.	Council has created grants for community arts projects that support recovery, administered via the Regional Arts Development Fund. This has enabled communities of Eungella and Finch Hatton to engage local artists to work with residents to tell their story of the fires and recovery through creative processes. More detail is provided in the case study below.
Impact assessments – completed and data collated.	Damage assessments are being used to identify recovery needs.
Mental health support – mechanisms implemented.	Queensland Health's Disaster Mental Health Recovery Team (note the name change), continues to support individuals. They say that of the small number of individuals they have seen, recovery is progressing well, while memories are still raw. The majority of the team's work is in delivering group programs, such as in primary schools. They have recently developed what is believed to be the first program to accompany the Birdie's Tree resources developed by the Queensland Centre for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health. The team is now working with Council's Emergency Management Team and Youth Development Officers to develop a program for teens.
Fencing – rebuild boundary fences of rural properties.	Anecdotally, Council is aware that most primary producers have rebuilt their fences after the wet season.
Rural sheds – rebuilding farm structures and replacing lost equipment.	There was a fairly immediate commencement of reconstruction of private irrigation systems and other infrastructure. At this point in time there is no official data on farming structures being rebuilt, however this could be attributed to the minimal losses as noted post the event.
Economic recovery of primary producers – minimising impacts.	AgForce reports that in its engagement, most affected primary producers seem to be doing well. The good wet season restored pastures and crops.

Recovery objective	Update
Rainforest rehabilitation – focus on long term rehabilitation project involving communities.	<p>QPWS has developed plans for rainforest rehabilitation activities. Plans for such activities have been delayed repeatedly due to staff being spread thinly responding to fires in Rockhampton and Livingston LGAs, as well as trying to manage business as usual activities. The rehabilitation plans require large volunteer workforces to collect seeds and plant trees. There is some confidence that locals would be willing to volunteer.</p> <p>Pioneer Catchment Landcare – Eungella Rainforest Cluster Group is providing opportunities for landholders in Eungella to have consultants visit their properties to advise on forest regeneration.</p>
Empower local businesses to improve their resilience to disasters.	<p>Mackay Tourism and Earthcheck delivered CrisisReady workshops and rolled out the CrisisReady application in the region to build capacity in business continuity planning (BCP).</p> <p>Council and the Regional Social Development Coalition delivered a BCP workshop to homelessness and housing service providers.</p> <p>Mackay Regional Council is planning further BCP workshops in the coming months.</p>
Restore confidence in the tourism market.	<p>There is no reliable evidence the fires affected tourism.</p>
Assist evacuation and response planning in at-risk communities.	<p>Council is currently developing a series of evacuation workshops in partnership with QFES and Queensland Police Services.</p> <p>The first Community Disaster Planning workshop will be held in early February in Sarina Beach/Campwin Beach, with more being planned over the coming months.</p>
Community resilience – increasing resilience through community development and education strategies.	<p>Council's Emergency Management Team continues to support communities to build their capacities to prepare for disasters. The Category C funded Recovery and Resilience Officer (Community Development Officer Recovery), has been supporting communities to make applications for funding such as through the Flexible Funding Grants. Support to deliver these projects has come from several Emergency Management Team members. For one example, please see the following case study on the Finch Hatton Communications Hub.</p> <p>Council's Emergency Resilience Officer, funded via a Flexible Funding Grant, UCC/Lifeline is soon to deliver some training via workshops in the affected communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Accidental Counsellor' Basic psychological first aid training for RFS brigade members and their families. - 'Help the Helpers' Self-care and peer support for community recovery workers.

Recovery objective	Update
Weed management – in rainforest areas.	<p>QPWSP weed management plan is now funded (\$20,000), but the weather has hampered delivery. The plan has two strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using herbicide and fire to remove guinea grass from the roadside up Eungella range. The long dry season and unfavourable burning conditions have prevented the prescribed burning. 2. Aerial spraying of ridges on the range. <p>With the wet season now upon us, is not expected the weed management plan will be implemented this year.</p>

Challenges

A key challenge for the recovery from the bushfires is the compounding effect these fires have had on pre-existing recovery needs in the community.

Successes

Mackay Regional Council has seen a number of successes as a result of the bushfire recovery activities. These activities are outlined in the following two case studies.

Case study - Risk reduction: Finch Hatton and Eungella Firebreaks

An initiative of QPWS and Reef Catchments is to cut major firebreaks in Finch Hatton and Eungella to protect private properties from bushfires spreading from state-managed forests.

The project is funded through QPWS budget and an \$88,600 Flexible Funding Grant to Reef Catchments, and relies upon strong engagement with local Rural Fire Service brigades and landholders.

In Finch Hatton a 30km long break has been cut with graders and bulldozers on private properties that border the QPWS-managed forests on the southern side of Mackay-Eungella Road. The firebreaks must be on the private properties as they lie in the valley and meet the boundary of the forests at the foothills. The land on the QPWS side rises sharply into the mountain range and is therefore too steep to cut a break. The project requires all landholders to give permission for the break to be on their property, and provide access to the men, dozers and other equipment to cut the break.

The next project is to cut a break to protect properties in Eungella. While much of the budget is put towards the use of heavy machinery, the work is not possible without a part-time worker from Reef Catchments to engage with landholders and coordinate works. His wage is only grant funded and the project partners can see the need to create many more breaks throughout the region, such as at Bloomsbury. Should funding be available, this work could go on for many years.

Case Study - Eungella Creative Recovery Project

Mackay Regional Council created grants for local artists to lead arts processes that could support community recovery. Budget that accompanies the Category C funded Community Development Officer – Recovery position was joined with the Regional Arts Development Fund to create a ‘Community Resilience’ category in the most recent round of RADF grants. Artists needed to show that their project would take place in a bushfire-affected community and in some way support that community in its recovery. The benefits of community arts projects in facilitating recovery from disaster are well documented and can include:

- providing creative outlets for people to express their thoughts and emotions about an event
- documenting disaster stories for posterity
- working with your hands on a creative project facilitates expressive thinking and communication
- facilitating community conversations
- building community connections
- developing collaborative relationships.

Two projects were funded. The Eungella Creative Recovery Project is led by a group of professional artists and a community group and aims to provide multiple creative projects targeted at different population groups within Eungella, to record stories of survival and create public memories of the fires. The Finch Hatton Resilient Community Project is led by two professional artists and will bring together community volunteers, the local arts community, and Rural Fire Service volunteers to create a piece of public art to honour the volunteer firefighters who saved Finch Hatton. The former is further along in its delivery and several of its projects have been delivered or are in development.

Felt Murals

The first project in Eungella to be delivered involved children at Eungella State School creating two felt murals. One of the artists involved wrote the following to capture the children’s creative choices:

The whole school discussed the project and last year’s fire events. The younger students then created a piece one year on, showing how some of the plants have been strong and recovered and the older students created a piece as an historic record of the fires.



Figure 1 - Eungella State School years 3-6 students created this mural to depict the rainforest on fire and the water-bombing helicopter – the “solution” to the fire

The addition of the helicopter came from the students who felt this was a really important aspect of the story for them. A really touching quote from one of the young students was, "The burning tree was the problem and helicopter was the solution".

Additional funding is currently being secured to frame the murals and hang them in the Eungella Community Hall.

Storytelling

The next stage of the project is digital storytelling with adults and the production of a publication. Participants volunteered to tell their experiences of the fires to a videographer. Below is an account by Queensland Health's Disaster Mental Health Recovery Team provided as part of its regular reporting."

This month the team was invited to be part of the Eungella Creative Recovery Project, a grant applied for by the Eungella Community Development Association (funded through The Regional Arts Development Fund, partnered with the Queensland Government and Mackay Regional Council, together with the CQ Regional Arts Services Network).

Involvement included visiting people in their homes in the Eungella, Crediton and Dalrymple Heights communities and providing therapeutic support during the recording of memories of their experience of the 2018 bushfires. The team took an active role in monitoring the distress levels of individuals and were able to respond appropriately. The videographer also requested the team ask relevant questions to prompt recollection through a trauma informed lens due to their fear of potential harm to residents. It proved to be a valuable part of the healing process for many as the team was able to provide psycho education and support through therapeutic conversations that followed.

Whilst driving around these areas, the impact on the landscape remained evident, and members of the Eungella Community Development Association who escorted us through the area noted that it was a daily reminder for many of the trauma they had experienced a year ago. This was a theme throughout every conversation, grief and loss was evident as people were particularly saddened that the view from their decks and closer around their properties has now completely changed and will not recover in their lifetimes.

Community members were surprised by the emotion that was brought up for them during their recollections whilst filming and showing photos and videos they had captured of the event. Many different perspectives were captured, however two major themes that emerged were:

- 1. the incredible gratitude that was expressed to those who remained to either fight the fire or support those who were fighting the fire, and*
- 2. the spirit and comradery that emerged between those who chose to stay and help in any way they could.*

Many community members noted that they feel closer to their neighbours now than previously.

A total of 32 screenings were performed over four full and long days and information about the service was given. Some positive relationships with residents were forged and this will help moving forward with further recovery and support, many acknowledging the value of the therapeutic conversations to their recovery journey.

The video that will be produced following the interviews will be given back to the community so that the event and the spirit that emerged out of adversity is not lost for both those who endured it and for future generations.

Rockhampton Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

The Rockhampton Regional Council recovery objectives are outlined on pages 56-57 of the Recovery Plan. Completed recovery objectives are not detailed in this report.

Recovery objective	Update
Community support – mechanisms implemented.	<p>Local fence rebuilding strategies continue to be developed with the community, the Australian Red Cross and local community groups. The Rural Residential Recovery program has continued.</p> <p>Pillow Case projects were run in several schools in the region and at the Rockhampton Regional Libraries</p>
Environmental rehabilitation – mechanisms implemented.	<p>Council is currently reviewing the Bushfire Mitigation Strategy and the associated Memorandum of Understanding between Council, QPWSP and QFES.</p>
Empower local businesses and communities to improve their resilience to disasters.	<p>The Rockhampton Regional Council submitted several applications under Round 2 FFGs and was awarded funding for the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rockhampton Region Bushfire Management Study: Strategy and Mitigation Plan 2020 \$150,000 • Rockhampton Disaster Management Risk Assessment 2020 (QERMF) \$150,000 • Rural Rockhampton Digital Noticeboards \$150,000 • Maintenance Fire Mitigation Trails Mt Morgan and Bouldercombe \$40,000 • Fire Resistant Plants as a Buffer in Urban Areas \$20,000 • CQ Bushfire Project Recording Resilient Stories of Today for the Future Family Round 2 Fun Day @ Library (Gracemere) \$10,000 • Also a project that will build the strength of the LDMG, Volunteering Queensland have been awarded \$150,000 for a project concentrating on the Rockhampton Region, that will identify/map emergency service volunteer capacity, connect groups, provide ES training to the volunteers and provide the LDMG with a good understanding of what does/can occur on the ground. Through this engagement, there will likely be a reduction (through strengthening existing emergency service volunteer groups) and ability to better manage spontaneous volunteers. <p>The Disaster Management Community Engagement trailer will be finalised in January, and the Mt Archer Evacuation planning quotes will also be received by mid-January.</p> <p>Through separate funding, the Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction project received funding through QRA. This project will work with those with a disability, organisations that support them, however looks to agencies that make up the LDMG to consider the needs of these groups within their frameworks and strategies.</p>



Successes

The Rockhampton Regional Council submitted several applications under Round 2 of the FFGs and was awarded funding seven projects.



Recovery Progress Report #4 to May 2020

Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021

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Event summary

During November-December 2018, Queensland experienced a series of record fire condition days, which the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) stated were ‘unprecedented’ and ‘unlike anything Queensland has experienced before’.

From 29 November 2018 there were four consecutive days where Extreme Fire Danger Ratings were recorded and very high temperatures were felt across the state. The catastrophic conditions led to the worst fires experienced by Queensland in recent memory, with 1250 fires across the state, 140 of which were in Central Queensland.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services operations were assisted in the response effort by 1202 firefighters and support personnel from every Australian state and territory. It is estimated more than 1.4 million hectares were burnt during the event.

The Central Queensland Bushfires between 22 November and 6 December 2018 resulted in eight Central Queensland local government areas being activated for a range of Category A and Category B assistance measures under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

The *Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018—2021* was endorsed by the Queensland Government on 3 April 2019.



State Recovery Planning and Policy Coordinator

I welcome the opportunity to present the fourth in a series of reports highlighting recovery progress following the 2018 Central Queensland Bushfires.

The *Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021* (the Plan) was endorsed by the Queensland Government on 3 April 2019.

This report outlines progress against activities identified in the Plan at local and state levels. It focuses on the efforts to deliver on the event specific recovery plans for the bushfires developed by five local governments. It also reflects on the efforts of the Functional Recovery Groups (FRGs) at a state level.

A number of important achievements have been made in the recovery journey since the release of the Plan in April 2019. This is despite the fact that a number of impacted communities have subsequently suffered with bushfires during 2019, ongoing drought declarations and most recently restrictions imposed by the advent of COVID-19.

Some planned activities have been postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, however, the communities are actively embracing alternative strategies to deliver activities where these may be available.

Key achievements from this quarter include:

- the completion of the rural residential program, which saw \$1,356,532 in grants, delivered by the Australian Red Cross to 166 applicants
- the implementation of Round 2 of the Flexible Funding Grants, with all entities receiving their first 90% payment
- gift cards created by the Eungella community, based on the school children's felt murals (following their bushfires) to raise funds for communities impacted by the 2019 Summer bushfires
- development of a mental health youth program, based around a fictional Zombie Apocalypse that was delivered to army cadets by the Mental Health team
- a workshop for the residents of Sarina Beach and Capwin beach focussing on evacuation and response was delivered in February 2020, with positive feedback
- completion of the coordinated management of donated goods, with 17,600 goods donated matched with 8,329 requests
- development of strong local partnerships between councils and several local agencies by the Community Development Officers
- development of key locally-initiated disaster resources.

Local recovery progress

This section provides a summary of councils' progress against their local recovery plans.

This report focuses on the five councils that completed event-specific recovery plans – Central Highlands Regional Council, Gladstone Regional Council, Livingstone Shire Council, Mackay Regional Council and Rockhampton Regional Council.

Councils have provided an update on progress against their recovery objectives, any challenges that may have been encountered, and success stories for their recovery to date. Once recovery objectives have been met they will no longer be reported against.

Central Highlands Regional Council

Progress of recovery Objectives

Recovery Objective	Update
1. Disaster management event de-briefing and consultation	This is not occurring at present due to COVID-19 restrictions.
2. Building community resilience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase sustained community through active/positive involvement in community groups - Develop partnerships with Council, NGOs and other stakeholders - Sponsored community events – to host with external support - Develop networks/ communication plans – community support - Fun activities, events to bring connection opportunities 	<p>A planning meeting was held on February 4 and a decision was made to hold Bushfire Recovery workshops in Arcadia & Carnarvon communities in the period April 14 – 17. These workshops did not go ahead due to COVID – 19 and will be rescheduled when restrictions are lifted and face-to-face workshops can be held.</p> <p>The recovery Portal is under development. Initial meetings were held in January with QITPLUS. It is envisaged that the program will be developed for release October 2020. However, the timeframe is dependent on future restrictions due to COVID-19.</p>
3. Psychosocial and wellbeing and preventative mental health	<p>As previously reported and still ongoing.</p> <p>December 31 2019 report states:</p> <p><i>“CQ mental Health workers and Nurse from Rolleston engaged in Human & Social recovery Group and have been involved in all Rural Community Connect workshops/meetings</i></p> <p><i>Live Better have an agreement for a contribution of funds for additional nursing hours for Rolleston Health Service since February 2019, (Central Qld Rural Health) and the PHN to review the arrangements.</i></p> <p><i>Cat C round 2 funding has been approved for Rural Community Connect – Community Led Initiatives to reconnect, build community cohesion and support one another. The community events, mental health and wellbeing workshops will provide education and information and an opportunity to learn new skills and assist in the recovery phase.”</i></p>

Recovery Objective	Update
4. Key transport routes – priority restoration and improved resilience to the key transport routes for primary producers and resource sector	As previously reported December 31 2019 report states: <i>“Businesses have been involved in Rural Community Connect workshops/meetings”</i>
5. Empower local businesses to improve their resilience to disasters that addresses business continuity plan development, financial planning, record keeping and insurance	Not progressed in this reporting period
6. Restore confidence in the tourism market	Not progressed in this reporting period
7. Development of a community tourism plan	Not progressed in this reporting period
8. Local clubs have liability insurance	Not progressed in this reporting period
9. Road transport network – coordinated restoration and betterment planning for the extensive road transport network for state and local controlled roads	Not progressed in this reporting period
10. Telecommunication infrastructure – long term repairs and improvements	Not progressed in this reporting period
11. Energy supply – infrastructure improved resilience	Not progressed in this reporting period
12. Restoration of community facilities	Not progressed in this reporting period
13. Establishment of evacuation and response infrastructure to at risk communities	Not progressed in this reporting period
14. Review of stock route infrastructure access and connections. Enhance water availability for firefighting resources	Not progressed in this reporting period
15. Water bores- confirm if these bores can be used to fill water tanks for firefighting	Not progressed in this reporting period
16. Roads – develop an understanding of road ownership	Not progressed in this reporting period

Recovery Objective	Update
17. Environmental rehabilitation and collaborative approach to enhance environmental management	Not progressed in this reporting period
18. Development of additional firebreaks along State/Council owned roads	A virtual meeting was held on 22 April 2020 Fire mitigation works have been prioritised and QFES, CHRC & DNRME are working together to ensure the mitigation works are implemented and completed.
19. Support research and science to improve fire management and ecosystem resilience	Not progressed in this reporting period
20. Practical implementation of fire management and education	No further workshops have been held – these were planned for April but due to COVID-19 they have had to be postponed

Potential impacts of COVID-19 on program delivery

COVID-19 has greatly impacted on the delivery of programs as workshop scheduled to be held are face-to-face events, which have been stopped until further notice.

Depending on how long the restrictions remain in place will impact the ability to deliver workshops, within the required timeframe.

Gladstone Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

Recovery Objective	Update
1. Habitable environment for all affected residents via existing or temporary structures	Completed
2. Clean tank water for all residents	Completed
3. Refuse management for affected residents including increased service availability	Completed
4. Animal welfare and control in lieu of structures and assistance personnel	Completed
5. Wildlife management and welfare	Completed
6. Building structure safety assessment	Completed

Recovery Objective	Update
7. Health and wellbeing preparation of residents returning to homes	Completed
8. Road transport network – coordinated restoration of road furniture and removal of debris and hazards on state and local controlled roads to assist in road user safety	Completed by 31 March 2020
9. Restoration of irrigation plots at Agnes Water WWTP and improved resilience to future fires	Completed
10. Installation of firebreaks on Council owned land	The framework is to be tested and a tender to be called for implementation on prioritised land.
11. Alternative evacuation road link between Baffle Creek and Agnes Water established	Following consultation, Council resolved to focus on strengthening the immunity of existing access roads instead of pursuing alternative access.
12. Empower local businesses and residents to improve their resilience to disasters	No further update for this reporting period.
13. Identify community needs and develop localised community recovery plans	A template has been created to develop the plans for the Mt Larcom, Boyne Valley and Deepwater/Baffle Creek communities.
14. Engage with agencies and organisations to implement flexible and adaptable programs and services to meet the needs of the affected communities	No further update for this reporting period
15. Identify and communicate financial assistance options	Completed
16. Provide timely and easily accessible public information to encourage two-way conversations	Completion anticipated with the next quarter

Challenges

Effective coordination of funded organisations and activities continues to provide challenges to the Community Development Officer. The Community Development Officer is attempting to coordinate the successful projects under the flexible funding program with community development activities however, there is no real head of power to do so, creates a complex environment. It is suggested that funding agreements for those successful funding applicants should include a requirement to

work with the Community Development Officer, as it could assist to achieve better outcomes.

Livingstone Shire Council

Progress of recovery objectives

Recovery Objective	Update
1. Essential services (power, water, waste, telecommunications) repaired and restored	The telecommunications upgrade project is continuing, however due to COVID-19 restrictions, there have been issues engaging a supplier. Additionally, because the Capricorn Caves site is currently closed, this project is likely to take longer than initially expected. Communications between Council and management at the Capricorn Caves is ongoing, and attempts to secure a supplier continue. Management are currently focused on the wellbeing of their staff during COVID-19 and the economic impact of this event. Council is continuing to work with management and offer support where possible.
2. Community Recovery Hub established at The Caves	Completed
3. Inspection and removal of burnt trees as required	Ongoing as required
4. Identification and management of personal hardship cases	Anecdotal evidence (gathered from conversations with community members and relevant agencies) suggests that members of The Caves community are aware of available supports, however uptake of these services has been low.
5. Community messaging that "we are open for business"	Capricorn Enterprise and Livingstone Shire Council are still in regular contact with The Caves. While the period immediately following the 2018 bushfire did not see significant economic losses for The Capricorn Caves, the November 2019 bushfire and COVID-19 have seen serious economic losses. Council will continue working with The Capricorn Caves to provide support where possible.
6. Assess human, health, and social impacts	Previous interaction between the Community Development Officer and Central Queensland Mental Health Recovery Team enabled information sharing which has allowed the Community Development Officer to guide community members and other agencies toward the Mental Health Recovery Team, and allowed the Recovery Team to attend a range of community events to share information about their services.
7. Attend Caves Rural Fire debrief to capture learnings	Not reported against
8. In partnership with the relevant agencies, provide access to psychosocial support services if required	Communication between Council and Queensland Health regarding psychosocial supports continues, including workshops in the community involving mental health clinicians. To date there has been limited interest/uptake on available supports from The Caves community. Additionally, workshops and community engagement/education opportunities are currently limited due to COVID-19.

Recovery Objective	Update
9. Facilitate support to Caves Tourist Park (support to staff and tourism)	The telecommunications upgrade project is continuing, however due to COVID-19 there have been issues engaging a supplier. Additionally, because the Capricorn Caves site is currently closed, this project is likely to take longer than initially expected. Communications between Council and management at the Capricorn Caves is ongoing, and attempts to secure a supplier continue. Management are currently focused on the wellbeing of their staff during COVID-19 and the economic impact of this event. Council is continuing to work with management and offer support where possible.
10. Assess economic impact on key assets (e.g. tourism, small business and agriculture); promote opportunities to drive economic recovery	The Economic and Regional Development Recovery and Resilience Taskforce met monthly during this reporting period. Work is continuing to develop support mechanisms to help those impacted by the 2018 and 2019 bushfires as well as COVID-19. These mechanisms include a business recovery and resilience summit (when restrictions are lifted), small business mentoring, promotion (again when restrictions are lifted and travel is encouraged again) and connecting business to one another for support.
11. Lobby for better mobile phone communication for the affected area	The Economic and Regional Development Recovery and Resilience Taskforce met monthly during this reporting period. Work is continuing to develop support mechanisms to help those impacted by the 2018 and 2019 bushfires as well as COVID-19. These mechanisms include a business recovery and resilience summit (when restrictions are lifted), small business mentoring, promotion (again when restrictions are lifted and travel is encouraged again) and connecting business to one another for support.
12. Assess resilience of critical infrastructure	The Economic and Regional Development Recovery and Resilience Taskforce met monthly during this reporting period. Work is continuing to develop support mechanisms to help those impacted by the 2018 and 2019 bushfires as well as COVID-19. These mechanisms include a business recovery and resilience summit (when restrictions are lifted), small business mentoring, promotion (again when restrictions are lifted and travel is encouraged again) and connecting business to one another for support.
13. Environmental assessment across The Caves area	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service have completed a number of projects, and several more are underway, which will see recovery and rehabilitation of the natural environment at Mt Etna National Park damaged in the 2018 bushfire. These activities include mitigation of exotic grass incursion (underway), rehabilitation projects (underway), and further development of The Caves Community Bushfire Resilience Plan (ongoing – note this will involve ongoing community consultation and input which is currently on hold due to COVID-19).
14. Seek funding for any Cat C opportunities to support recovery and resilience across Human Social with particular attention to cumulative effects of disasters	<p>Council was successful in receiving Flexible Funding Grants for a number of projects. An update is provided below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Telecommunications upgrade at The Caves Work continues to secure a supplier who is able to undertake the purchase and installation of mobile boosters at the Capricorn Caves site. As a result of COVID-19 a number of local suppliers have been unresponsive. Attempts to contact suppliers and seek quotes will continue. – Upgrade to the community park at The Caves This project is ongoing and tracking well. Suppliers have been secured and equipment will be installed in coming months. – Community development outreach projects for rural and remote localities in Livingstone Shire This project is temporarily on hold due to COVID-19 and associated restrictions. A survey will be sent to residents of relevant localities in

Recovery Objective	Update
	<p>coming weeks to get a better understanding of their priorities; however the workshops and face-to-face engagement outlined in the submission will be delayed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A bushfire resilience officer The Bushfire Resilience Officer commenced work in early March and is conducting extensive stakeholder engagement. The officer is developing a shire-wide bushfire management plan. - A shire-wide all-hazards risk assessment A consultant has been engaged to complete this work; at present, the chosen consultant has begun work on a desktop risk assessment and plans are being developed to undertake stakeholder engagement using innovative methods due to COVID-19. - Updates to the existing Disaster Dashboard to include accessible recovery-related information Council has received and approved a plan of works from the software developer; the developer is now in the process of finalising software requirements and these will be embedded into the Dashboard and Guardian Incident Management System software in coming months. - Bushfire management planning workshops Planning for these workshops is continuing; however, given these workshops will be of most benefit if conducted face-to-face, they have been delayed due to COVID-19.
<p>15. Continue to implement long-term resilience strategies</p>	<p>Work to identify, develop, and support resilience-building initiatives continues, though face-to-face methods (workshops etc.) are on hold due to COVID-19. Council is in the early stages of developing a 'Resilience Action Plan' which will be developed over the next twelve months to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Gauge current levels of community disaster resilience; and b) Develop measures to increase resilience where needed. <p>There is also work being done in relation to Category C Flexible Funded projects which will increase resilience (particularly Community development outreach projects for rural and remote localities in Livingstone Shire) which will focus on engaging with the community to determine their long-term disaster resilience needs and supporting them to realise these.</p>

Potential impacts of COVID-19 on program delivery

COVID-19 has had a serious impact on program delivery during this period and continues to do so. These impacts include:

- a) Inability to conduct community engagement or education this is likely to impact outputs and expenditure from the Recovery Community Development Officer while also delaying projects and activities in this quarter and future reporting periods. (Note alternative methods of engagement such as educational videos etc. have been considered, however many of those impacted by the 2018 fires are primary producers or older individuals who are not likely to engage with this type of material).
- b) Community disconnection related to social distancing requirements. This is likely to contribute to feelings of isolation and potentially damage relationships that have been built or re-established since the 2018 bushfires. Plans are underway to develop reintegration activities when possible.

- c) Difficulty contacting/securing contractors to undertake funded projects, and impediments to funded programs based on community engagement or consultation due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Challenges

COVID-19 has significantly impacted program delivery (see above 'external impacts' for more information).

While there is some evidence that drought conditions have eased in The Caves area due to recent rainfall, this needs to be substantiated with community members when possible (i.e. when engagement is recommenced).

Successes

The lessons learnt about recovery planning and activation of the Livingstone Shire Recovery and Resilience Taskforces have been applied to recovery planning for COVID-19. As a result the Taskforces have met early and often, recognising a need for open communication and recovery planning together.

Mackay Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

Recovery Objective	Update
1. Displaced households – settled in temporary accommodation, supported to rebuild	One household is still to rebuild. This householder continues to camp onsite and maintain the farm while deciding if he will continue to farm sugar cane.
2. Emergency funding (personal hardship, etc) – granted/approved	No update. There has been no new emergency funding in this period.
3. Community support – mechanisms implemented	<p>Much of the work to progress Eungella Creative Recovery Projects has been in the background during this quarter including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – securing a donor (UCC Lifeline utilising recovery funding) to pay for the felt murals to be framed so they can be displayed permanently in the Eungella Community Hall – editing of the interviews filmed for the digital storytelling to create the film. <p>A new activity has emerged in response to the catastrophic bushfires in southern parts of the country from this past summer. Community leaders in Eungella wanted to fundraise for impacted communities. The felt murals created by the school children have been used to create gift cards which they are now selling to raise recovery funds.</p> <p>Photographs of these cards are shown below. The back of the card includes the message:</p>

Recovery Objective

Update

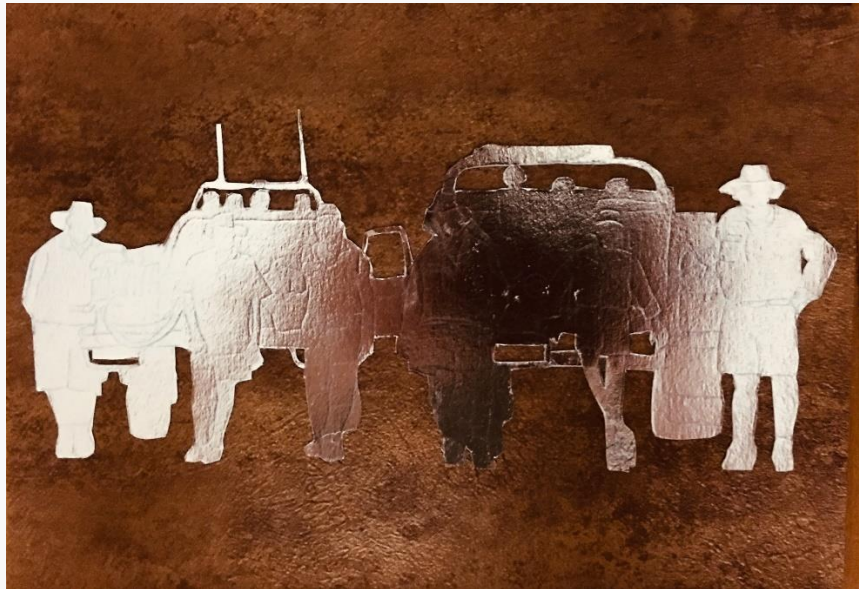
Felt mural created by children in the Eungella Creative Recovery Project following the first catastrophic bushfires in the renowned Eungella rainforest in 2018. Proceeds from the sale of these cards go to bushfire recovery.

Fundraising gift cards to support recovery from 2019-2020 summer bushfires



Update on Finch Hatton RFS Mural Project:

- They are currently securing various tradespeople to manufacture the mural, such as laser-cutting and finalising engineering to mount the mural and progressing manufacturing.



Finch Hatton RFS Mural (laser cut steel), in progress. Image from February 2020

4. Impact assessments – completed and data collated

Minimal structural damage meant damage assessments for this event were not relevant after the initial 3-6 months of recovery.

Fire scar mapping has been more used in this quarter for:

- forest rehabilitation
- weed management
- identifying trees for removal. Low-moderate intensity burns in Eungella meant it took 12 months for trees to die from rot and pests. These trees

Recovery Objective	Update
	started to fall in storms over the wet season and became problematic where the forest borders roads. Council has worked with QPWS and landholders to identify trees for removal.
5. Mental health support – mechanisms implemented	<p>The mental health team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – completed development of the youth program and delivered it to local Army Cadets. It's based around a fictional 'Zombie Apocalypse' and was very well received – developed a resilience exhibition for Mackay Libraries – are ready to deliver Birdie's Tree program. <p>Planning to deliver these group activities was progressing well prior to the COVID-19 event. Plans are on hold until restrictions lift.</p>
6. Fencing – rebuild boundary fences of rural properties	Completed
7. Rural sheds – rebuilding farm structures and replacing lost equipment	Completed
8. Economic recovery of primary producers – minimising impacts	As much as council is aware
9. Rainforest rehabilitation – focus on long term rehabilitation project involving communities	<p>Plans have again been hampered by staffing limitations within QPWS. The senior officer has prioritised work on weed management and mitigation through developing the Eungella Community Bushfire Resilience Plan. Led by QPWS and Reef Catchments, utilising a Flexible Funding Grant and (minimal) QPWS budget, the plan seeks to mitigate bushfire risks through three strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Creating strategic firelines – Hazard reduction burns, utilising methods such as aerial incendiary burning – Coordinated approach between QPWS, Reef Catchments, private landholders, Council and RFS <p>A community meeting was held on 7 March to engage private landholders, neighbours and community leaders in gathering the intelligence and buy-in the plan requires to be successful. At the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hazard reduction and fireline creation strategies were presented, including new wet season burning strategies developed in the Whitsunday LGA. – Local people and agency officers poured over maps to identify where firelines should be cut and priority areas for strategic burning, and where problem trees needed to be removed. – Strategies for coordination, owning, distributing and updating the plan were developed.
10. Empower local businesses to improve their resilience to disasters	<p>No new work supporting businesses has commenced.</p> <p>Council supported Regional Social Development Coalition to secure a Flexible Funding Grant to provide more business continuity planning workshops and activities, though that work has been stalled due to COVID-19 event.</p>

Recovery Objective	Update
11. Restore confidence in the tourism market	Completed
12. Assist evacuation and response planning in at-risk communities	<p>A workshop for residents of Sarina Beach and Campwin Beach was delivered in February 2020. The case study highlights the workshop and its outcomes.</p> <p>There was great interest from local media and other communities requesting the workshop for their area. Plans for a follow up workshop for Sarina Beach and Campwin Beach and workshops in other communities are all on hold due to the COVID-19 event.</p>
13. Community resilience – increasing resilience through community development and education strategies	<p>Supported project and application development for a number of successful recipients of Flexible Funding Grants, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Social Development Coalition - Managing Disruptions - Peer 2 Peer Networking Approach, \$40,000 • Eungella Community Development Association - Eungella and Surrounds Men's Shed \$51,000 • Eungella Community Development Association - Eungella Community - Facility Upgrades \$41,500 • Crediton Hall Recreation Club Inc - Crediton Hall Revitalisation \$148,500 <p>Council was also successful with the following project, which has been delayed due to COVID-19 event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mackay Emergency Management Approach for Vulnerable People Project \$150,000 <p>The Emergency Resilience Officer has completed a number of projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - facilitating Volunteering Queensland to deliver volunteer management training to community leaders - developing a short, shareable, community education video about storm tides (considered one of Mackay's greatest natural hazard threats) - working with Disaster Mental Health Recovery Team to deliver school projects as described above - recruiting new Emergency Liaison Officers. <p>Plans to deliver the Accidental Counsellor' training have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 restrictions. It is now being transitioned to online delivery mode, with 250 places allocated to locals, to increase resilience during the current event.</p>
14. Weed management – in rainforest areas	Work on exotic grass control at Eungella was not undertaken Jan-March quarter. Planning is currently underway.

Potential impacts of COVID-19 on program delivery

The COVID-19 event has significantly impacted delivery of programs and activities, including:

- cancellation and/or postponement of events/activities that require gatherings, as outlined throughout this report
- sidelining of key staff to work on COVID-19 response operations.

Challenges

- Lack of staffing resources in QPWS to manage forest rehabilitation continues to be a challenge.

Planning for April – June quarter has been significantly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

Successes

The Community disaster planning workshop was a great success. Please see the case study.

Rockhampton Regional Council

Progress of recovery objectives

Recovery Objective	Update
1. Essential services (power, telecommunications) repaired and restored	Completed 2018
2. Displaced household – settled in temporary accommodation, connected to services to rebuild	Completed 2018
3. Emergency funding (personal hardship, etc) – granted/approved, community able to access	Completed 2018
4. Community support – mechanisms implemented	Red Cross worked with affected landowners to deliver the rural residential project.
5. Green and hard waste – removed and adequately processed	Completed 2018
6. Impact assessments – completed, information shared to understand the true impact	Completed 2018
7. Environmental rehabilitation – mechanisms implemented	Discussions regarding the Bushfire Mitigation strategy and the associated Memorandum of Understanding between Council, QPWSP and QFES are continuing. The Bushfire Mitigation Strategy is on track to be completed by 31 December 2020. C3 has been engaged to carryout Bushfire Evacuation Planning with the Mt Archer and neighbouring suburbs of Frenchville, Mt Archer and Koonga Community Pilot – A Bushfire Evacuation Options Assessment.

Recovery Objective	Update
8. Empower local businesses and communities to improve their resilience to disasters	<p>Projects have commenced and are on track to be completed by the funding deadline of 31 December 2020. Regular reporting to the DCDSS is occurring.</p> <p>Rockhampton Regional Bushfire Management Strategy – On track for completion by 31 Dec 2020</p> <p>The Disability Disaster Risk Project working group has met and while the project plan has been amended due to COVID-19, the project is on track.</p> <p>The Disaster Management Trailer is on track to be completed by 30 June 2020.</p>

Potential impacts of COVID-19 on program delivery

The projects are currently on track. COVID-19 has caused significant changes to priorities and delays.

The projects will continue as proposed, with adapted delivery modifications. Advice sought on what the process is to request extensions for funded programs should issues arise.

There are no significant impacts and program changes to date.

Challenges


There were no challenges identified during this quarter.

Successes

The Rockhampton Regional Council submitted several applications under Round 2 Flexible Funding Grants and was awarded the following projects:

1. Rockhampton Region Bushfire Management Study: Strategy and Mitigation Plan - \$150,000
2. Rockhampton Disaster Management Risk Assessment 2020 (QERMF) \$150,000
3. Rural Rockhampton Digital Noticeboards \$150,000
4. Maintenance Fire Mitigation Trails Mt Morgan and Bouldercombe, \$40,000
5. Fire Resistant Plants as a Buffer in Urban Areas, \$20,000
6. CQ Bushfire Project Recording Resilient Stories of Today for Future Family, Round 2 Fun Day at Library (Gracemere), \$10,000
7. To strengthen the LDMG, Volunteering Queensland have been awarded \$150,000 for a project concentrating on the Rockhampton region that will identify/map emergency service volunteer capacity, connect groups, provide ES training to the volunteers and and provide the LDMG with a good understanding of what does/can occur on the ground. Through this engagement, there will likely be a reduction (through strengthening existing emergency service volunteer groups) and ability to better manage spontaneous volunteers.

Through separate funding, the Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction project received funding through QRA. It is a project managed by DCDSS and has partnered with all the right stakeholders. One of its four areas is Rockhampton. The LDMG will be linked with project leads at the next meeting. This project will work with those with a



disability and organisations that support them, however it looks to the agencies that make up the LDMG to consider the needs of these groups within their frameworks and strategies.

Case Study

Community Disaster planning workshop – Campwin and Sarina Beach

The workshop focussed on teaching the main features of evacuation built around four key concepts:

1. Know When to Go - understanding severe weather event warnings and advice, e.g. bushfire warnings, and the differences between self-evacuations, voluntary and directed evacuations and police powers.
2. Know Where to Go - how to identify safe places to evacuate to and where to go to find out about evacuation centres.
3. Know How to Move - planning for the things that slow you down such as pets and household members with mobility issues.
4. Know What to Take - what to pack and managing stress.

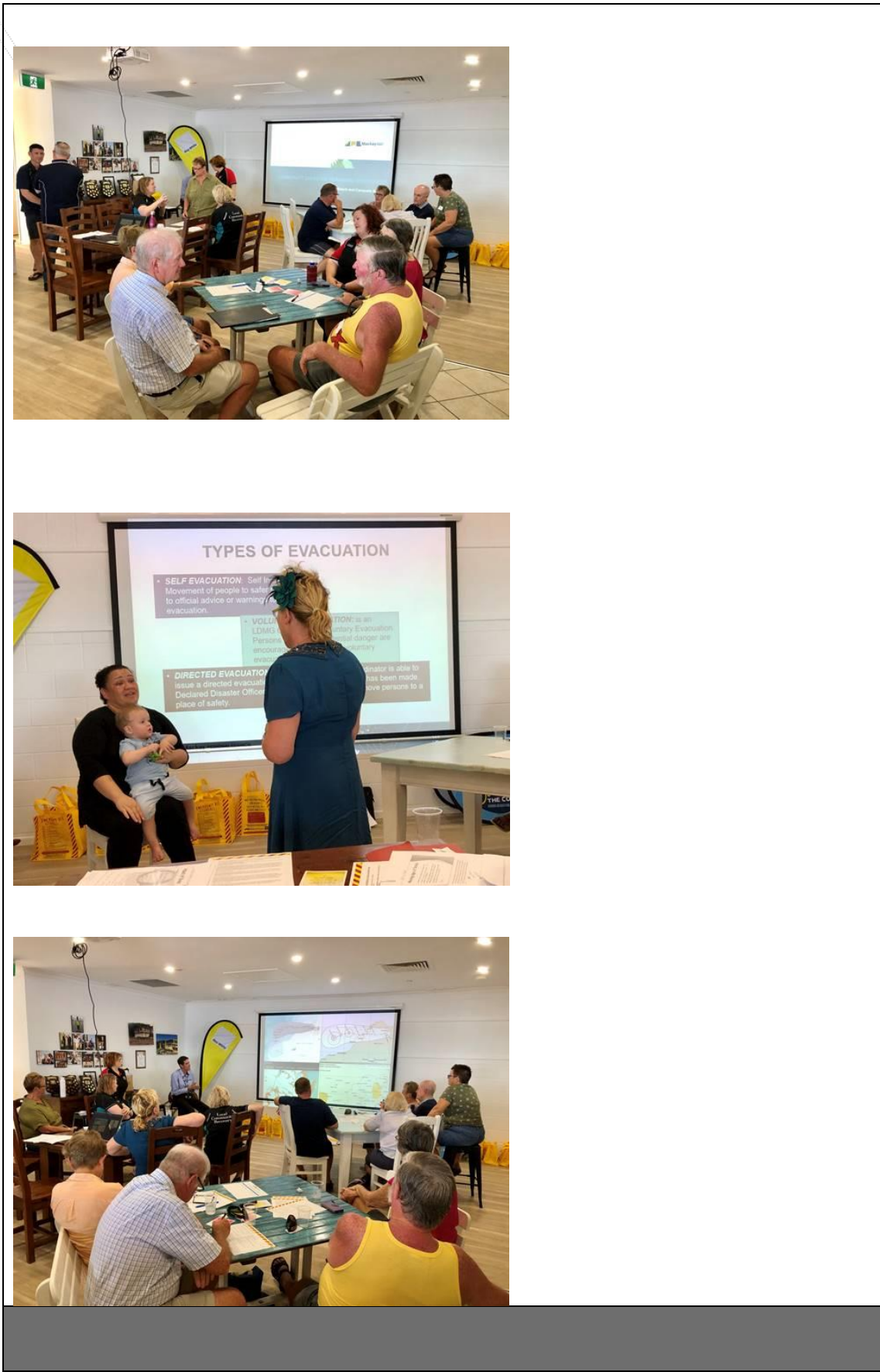
Teaching about evacuations is a key recovery objective from the Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021.

From there the workshop looked at how neighbours and communities might work together to address issues such as planning for the many elderly residents in these communities and the group agreed to meet again to look at developing the ideas discussed.

Attendees were mainly older residents and community leaders we had met before through the community briefings held in the days and weeks after the bushfire event. We held it on a Sunday afternoon hoping to get young families along, but they didn't attend. We are looking at the next workshop being on a different day/time and will advertise childcare to attract those families. Feedback was very strong. Attached to this report is a report collating the formal feedback.

Immediate outcomes:

1. A Campwin Beach resident complained that promotion of the event had not been strong in her community. We explained that there was not a dedicated Facebook group for those localities that we could advertise in, as we regularly did for other communities (e.g. Sarina Range Community Noticeboard) and encouraged the resident that she could do something about that. She did, starting a Campwin Beach and Sarina Beach Community Noticeboard on Facebook about three days later which had 150 members within a week!
2. A Household Evacuation Plan handout was distributed - the first one Council had developed. We told the group they would be our guinea pigs for the tool and would ask for their feedback 1-2 weeks after the event. We emailed requests for feedback after the workshop and one of the replies read:
 - a) "After the workshop we planned out what we would do in case of an evacuation. We have organised our paperwork and worked out how to take it with us safely and where we will go. Your Household Evacuation Plan was easy to fill out and the check list is great."



State recovery progress

This section provides a summary of recovery progress across the functional lines of recovery and resilience initiatives. The recovery progress tracks the implementation of recovery activities against the metrics identified in the Plan.

Three of the FRGs (Human and Social, Economic and Environment) have undertaken activities under phase one, *Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery*, and phase two *Recovery and Reconstruction*. The Building and Environment FRGs have moved to phase three, *Transition*.

The Plan identified that there were no specific recovery activities or metrics for this event for the Roads and Transport FRG. As such, the Roads and Transport FRG is not included in this report.

An activity identified as completed will not be addressed in future reports.

Human and Social

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

These recovery tasks can be found on page 28 of the Plan.

Distribution of DRFA Category A and B as at 31 March 2020

Status: Completed

The distribution of DRFA Category A and B assistance entails communities being provided with funding through the Personal Hardship Assistance Scheme and Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme within activated areas. The following table outlines the final payment status across both schemes.

Assistance type	Number of applications paid	Value of applications paid
Emergency Hardship Assistance	4319	\$1,850,845
Essential Household Contents Grant	2	\$23,850
Structural Assistance Grant	2	\$19,982
Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme Grant	3	\$6,135

PHAS/ESSRS Grant figures are final and have not changed.

Community Recovery conducted a survey of all EHA Grant Recipients during the event, with a 10% response rate to the survey. Findings included:

- 93% of recipients agreed it was easy to apply for the EHA grant
- 94% of recipients were satisfied with the speed of payment.

Timely advice of recovery activities, public health information, advice and assistance

Status: Ongoing and on track

Uniting Care Queensland

- One request received from another agency associated with this event was received recently. This was for goods and residential property repairs which was initially lodged with GIVIT but withdrawn after the client received financial assistance from a family member.
- No other instances of support that were associated with this have been provided within the impacted area since the last report.
- Attended and presented at the 'Connect the Dots' community engagement information sessions in Rosedale and Wartburg, Lowmead was postponed at the time because of fire in the area and then again because of COVID-19.

Coordinate the matching of donated goods and services

Status: Completed

GIVIT

All donated goods and funds were distributed to affected community members and groups in November 2019.

At the completion of donation coordination and management for this event in November 2019, 17,600 donated items had been received by affected communities in Gladstone, Mackay and Isaac local government areas. A summary of these donations is provided in the following table.

Measure	Since 26 November 2018
Number of items requested (goods and services)	8,329
Number of items received by affected communities	17,600
Number of organisations requesting assistance for this event	19
Percentage of these organisations that have received assistance	95
Number of days between request for assistance and donation offer	5
Number of days between request for assistance and requesting service's confirmation of delivery	13

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on pages 28-29 of the Plan.

Community Development program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Community Development program provides funding to employ three CDOs to work across the eight impacted Local Government Areas to understand recovery needs and develop community-led recovery and resilience plans. The CDOs will potentially:

- assist community members to feel sufficiently safe and secure following a disaster to engage in social activities and interactions with other members of the community
- enable households, families and individuals to act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process
- assist community members with access to appropriate and coordinated social services.

In this quarter the Community Development Officers (CDOs) have continued enhancing and supporting previously developed projects such as the Feros Project (ARC). In this quarter there have been strong partnerships developed with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and involvement in consultations with rainforest recovery plans. Many of the CDOs reported strong collaboration with Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES) and Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) as well.

Event development continued with the running of a number of events, spread across a wide range of activities, such as Markets, Lions Youth of the Year Competition, Service Clubs, Community Meetings, Recovery and Resilience Displays at libraries – these were run across a number of townships.

CDOs are continuing to report strong collaboration with the Community Mental Health Workers appointed across the localities as well as the Drought Recovery Officers (where appointed).

A number of resources are being developed for community members including a Warnings and Alerts infographic fridge magnet, Community Profiles, Virtual Reality activities, emergency noticeboards and suites of recovery planning documentation.

The three CDOs over the past quarter have all participated in the Disaster Management Learning Management System modules, including the completion of the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements training.

The Mackay CDO has facilitated:

- First Aid training at Bloomsbury,
- continuing development of content for the planned Community Disaster Planning Workshops
- assistance with the Youth Disaster Preparedness session.

Livingstone CDO is continuing to work on a:

- 'Rural Community Connect' program
- Hazard and risk identification session at a local high school.

There have been significant impediments to programme delivery throughout March due to the COVID-19 pandemic (such as agencies being unavailable, community engagement/workshops not being possible, and cessation of all face-to-face interaction). While options for innovative engagement techniques are being considered, it must be noted that community members are focusing on the immediate crisis at present and may not be responsive to fire-related information.

Across the three localities CDOs are connecting with successful applicants to start to build collaboration for their projects. CDOs have also ensured that there has been a level of connectivity between funded FFG applicants and the existing community and disaster management domain.

The Gladstone CDO reported that time and effort was also provided to some FFG successful groups in their understanding of recovery.

Community Development Program key statistics:

- 1200 hours developing and delivering events
- 4217 participants at events
- 1133 Community Agencies participating in events
- 300 hours developing resources and tools
- 285.25 hours on training and learning
- 758 participants in training activities
- 688.5 hours supporting FFG development
- 744 participants in FFG Activities
- 444 hours on developing Recovery and Resilience Plan

144 people have participated in Recovery and Resilience Plan development.

Flexible Funding Grants program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Flexible Funding Grants program is for non-government organisations, local governments, industry groups and community groups to implement projects aimed at driving recovery, and building awareness and resilience within the disaster impacted communities. The flexible funding grants will potentially:

- assist community members to feel sufficiently safe and secure following a disaster to engage in social activities and interactions with other members of the community
- enable households, families and individuals to act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process
- assist community members with access to appropriate and coordinated social services.

The first round of the Flexible Funding Grants opened on 1 April 2019, with applications for small grants of \$2,500 to \$20,000 and large grants of \$20,000 to \$100,000.

Seventeen Queensland-based organisations have been offered grants to deliver 21 projects, supporting the local government areas of Banana, Bundaberg, Central Highlands, Isaac, Gladstone, Livingstone, Mackay and Rockhampton.

Round 1

100% of the initial 90% of payments have been made to funded recipients. The following information around progress has been provided:

- One project has been completed, awaiting full documentation to substantiate.
- Three projects have indicated that they have been impacted by COVID-19, these projects are quantifying what this impact means to project implementation.
- The 17 remaining projects have reported they are on track as per their project milestones and many will be completed within the next quarter.

Round 2

100% of the initial 90% of payments have been made to funded recipients. The following information around progress has been provided:

- 12 projects have not reported and these organisations are being followed up.
- 12 projects have indicated that they have been impacted by COVID-19 and are still quantifying what this impact means to the projects.
- 37 projects have indicated that they are on track per project milestones.

Information on the successful projects will be posted to:

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/community-recovery/category-c-funding/category-c-central-queensland-bushfires-flexible-funding-grants>

A further funding round (Round 3) has been approved to distribute the remaining funds of approximately \$806,833. A timetable for the release, assessment and announcements is currently being developed.

Evaluation of the Community Recovery Fund

A monitoring and evaluation plan is in preparation, with plans to deliver against the key evaluation questions in the next quarter.

QRA has coordinated and delivered quarterly reports to Emergency Management Australia.

Community Mental Health program

Status: Ongoing and on track

The provision of additional mental health services is led by Queensland Health. This recovery activity is designed to ensure community members have access and are able to meet health needs arising from the disaster.

The mental health clinicians from the Mackay, Wide Bay and Central Queensland Health and Hospital Services (HHS) have focused on building resilience, recovering from trauma and continue and enhancing community engagement while working collaboratively with other stakeholders such as the Community Development Officers (CDO). COVID-19 has limited planned community engagement activities and HHSs are using the time to plan activities and look at ways to support communities given restrictions. Significant highlights include:

- **Mackay HHS** has delivered individual services, community training and attended community events. The team have developed innovative approaches to engaging with young people through the Zombie Apocalypse program.

Another resource is a collaborative venture between the team and Mackay Regional Council, QPS, SES and QFS. The group will present information together to communities impacted by the 2018 bushfires, with the aim of promoting preparedness and resilience. The team will be presenting on stress management during and after natural disasters and the first sessions were held February 9th, 2020 for Sarina Beach and Campwin Beach.

More programs are planned with communities and schools after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The team noted communities want to focus on resilience building, recovery and healing when attending community recovery events in Eungella. The team has also been requested to help support the Finch Hatton community during their Art Recovery project. There has been continued engagement with the Eungella Community about ways to provide support. The team are working with a number of stakeholders including councils, the agriculture sectors and fire services on maintaining ongoing support.

Central Queensland HHS has noted an increase in community resilience in bushfire affected areas. Their focus has been to support frontline workers who are dealing with cumulative trauma as a result of living through multiple disaster events (previous floods and fires). They have also been working with individuals. Improved social connectedness was noted in the Caves, Rollerston, Mount Larcom and Carnarvon Gorge communities. Two staff have resigned, and the HHS is actively recruiting. Ongoing support is provided through mental health teams.

- **Wide Bay HHS** has worked with Lifeline and Red Cross to support communities affected by the 2019 bushfires. Some people in fire affected communities have been re-traumatised by these bushfires and the team have received referrals from Lifeline and Red Cross. One-to-one psychosocial support has been offered to bushfire affected individuals with a focus on recovery. Training in resilience and recovery is planned to commence as soon as possible. The team is also collaborating with the Agnes Waters community to develop a local disaster service directory. Volunteerism has been promoted, the team presented to local disaster management forums. Promoting the Birdies Tree program is being planned with Gladstone Council. Training activities dealing with trauma are planned with Rural Fire Services.

Treatment trends noted were anxiety and stress, mild depression, relationship issues and PTSD. Clinical activity is described below.

Activity	Number
People screened	854
Queensland Health clients	125
Clinical hours	1474
Community events attended	207

Staffing

Hospital and Health Service	Staffing
Central Queensland	2 clinicians (one resigned, recruitment underway)
Wide Bay	2 clinicians
Mackay	2 clinicians (one on secondment and temporary backfill in place)

Case Study

The Wide Bay Disaster Recovery Team (WBDRT) recognised the impact of cumulative trauma on the local Rural Fire Service (RFS). In one community the RFS had responded to floods in 2011 and 2013, followed by fires in 2018 and 2019. This was a complex situation, as in these regional areas which face events, there are also multiple family members who are all volunteering and exposed to the same disasters. The WBDRT established a relationship with the Brigade to develop a level of trust and then provide opportunities for people to access support and information. Hence, a multi-layered approach to reaching as many of the team as possible, in a variety of ways was planned to maximise individual and collective recovery.

At an individual level, consent was obtained and the team worked through a list of referrals and triaged appropriately. Psychological intervention was provided as necessary. There have been some positive outcomes as a result of this targeted intervention. The Deepwater region is a large area and the November 2018 fire directly impacted some of the Brigade members and their properties. The second fire occurred approximately one year later. The team received new referrals from different members of the group as their properties were impacted by these fires. As well, some of the earlier referrals required a maintenance session to sustain recovery. The initial face-to-face connection likely contributed to improved outcomes for those individuals, as there was no further requirement for on-going psychological support after the maintenance session.

In addition to individual therapy, the WBDRT worked with community partners who received a flexible funding grant to support the community in preparedness, recovery and resilience. Clinicians provided expertise on how to promote one's social/emotional/psychological wellbeing before and after a disaster at a series of workshops run out of the Rural Fire Brigade Stations.

When the second fire occurred in December 2019, it became apparent that the RFS were struggling. Clinicians worked collaboratively with the Chief Fire Warden and the Second Officer to tailor an appropriate package to members. The aim of this was to improve mental health literacy and to provide contacts for people who required additional support. This presentation has been developed but not delivered due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Establishment of District Human and Social Recovery governance committees

Status: Ongoing and on track

The establishment of District Human and Social Recovery governance committees are designed to support and provide advice to the CDOs attached to the respective councils. The groups will also ensure the involvement of community groups in the communities with the CDOs.

District Human and Social Recovery governance committees aim to provide advice and support to local government CDOs and ensure they are connecting with community groups and each other. The groups meet quarterly:

- The Mackay District Community Development Reference Group met on 20 February 2020 and discussed planning for the coming year including exit planning.
- The Rockhampton District Community Development Reference Group met on 4 March 2020 and discussed planning for the coming year including exit planning.
- The Gladstone District Community Development Reference Group was scheduled to meet on 19 March 2020 but this meeting was cancelled due to COVID19.

All groups are supportive of an extension of the CDO positions in light of the disruption to their operations caused by COVID-19.

Economic

The Economic Functional Recovery Group Report addresses progress across the first two phases of recovery – Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery, and Recovery and Reconstruction. At this stage transition activities are not considered in this report.

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

These recovery tasks can be found on page 31 of the Plan.

Distribution of Category B DRFA

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Category B DRFA activated for the Central Queensland Bushfires included Disaster Assistance Small Business Loans, Essential Working Capital Loans for small business, Primary Producer Loans, Essential Working Capital Loans for Primary Producers and Freight Subsidies for Primary Producers.

As at 22 January 2020, four applications for Disaster Assistance Primary Producer Loans have been approved to the value of \$587,077. In addition, another two loans have been approved, for \$135,000. Assume that this is in addition to the previous four loans.

No additional freight subsidies applications have been made.

Financial support for primary producers and small business

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority has published links on its website outlining the various grant and loan schemes that are available to Primary Producers and Small Business as a result of the event. The website provides information on the available assistance, eligibility, loan term and repayment requirements and the applicable interest rates. The relevant website is <http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/current-programs/Disaster-recovery>.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on page 31 of the Plan. An activity identified as completed will not be addressed in future reports.

Tourism and events Queensland

Status: Completed

The latest visitor statistics for the regions indicate increases in domestic visitation as follows:

- Southern Queensland Country including Capricorn, Gladstone, Bundaberg and North Burnett: domestic overnight expenditure increased by 4.7% on average over the three years to December 2019 to \$1.1 billion
- Mackay: domestic overnight expenditure grew by 13.6% on average over the three years to December 2019 to \$515 million, largely due to visitation which grew by 7.3% to 1 million

Phase Three: Transition

Disaster resilience and recovery advice published on the Business Queensland website

Website: www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/protecting-business/disaster-resilience

Traffic on Business Queensland's pages on bushfire assistance increased significantly in the Jan-Mar quarter to 1,816 unique page views, however, this was again driven by the east coast bushfires which continued to occur around this period.

The procurement solution for the business resilience tool was finalised and Earthcheck were appointed to develop the content and business logic for the tool. The first offering is scheduled for delivery in the Apr-Jun quarter.

Rural Residential Recovery program

Status: Completed – awaiting final reconciliation

Red Cross administered the last payment under the Rural Residential Recovery program in January 2020. Project reconciliation is now taking place and will be completed no later than 30 June 2020.

The total grant funds distributed to date under this program totals \$1,351,032.25 to 166 applicants.

Environment

The Environmental Recovery Report addresses progress across the first two phases of recovery – Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery and Recovery and Reconstruction. At this stage transition activities are not considered in this report.

Phase One: Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery

These recovery tasks can be found on page 33 of the Plan.

All Phase One activities have been completed.

Phase Two: Recovery and Reconstruction

These recovery tasks can be found on page 33 of the Plan. An activity identified as completed will not be addressed in future reports.

Collaborate and undertake activities to protect cultural heritage values

Status: Ongoing and on track

On-going consultation is occurring with Traditional Owners regarding cultural heritage values and wildfire mitigation at Blackdown Tablelands National Park.

The debris from the Baloon Cave Boardwalk at Carnarvon National Park was removed and the site cleaned in a joint exercise by Traditional Owners, QPWS and Griffith University in September 2019

Work on the toilet block has been delayed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic limiting the opportunity to engage with First Nations representatives.

Control of post-fire flooding and erosion

Status: Ongoing and on track

Fireline rehabilitation, maintenance, upgrades and installation are being undertaken in accordance with QPWS standards to minimise post-fire flooding and erosion.

Conduct programs to prevent further impacts to biodiversity

Status: Ongoing and on track

Community Bushfire Plans are progressing. Control lines as agreed through community consultation are currently being installed. Significant upgrade to firelines in the four target communities (adjacent to at-risk biodiversity values) are underway. Joint mitigation burns have commenced and will progress over April and May 2020. Final drafts of Community Bushfire Mitigation Plans are almost complete. COVID-19 has impacted final community consultation activities that were planned.

With support from the QPWS Enhanced Fire Management Program, and the Strategic Pest Management Program, work continues on reducing the impact of invasive exotic grasses upon the recovering sensitive vegetation ecosystems.

Ensure communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and local government are effectively engaged in the consultation and decision making processes

Status: Ongoing and on track

Community Bushfire Planning continues with significant outcomes on the ground. Traditional Owners have been actively engaged in decision making processes at Blackdown Tableland National Park, while local communities, governments and QFES have been actively engaged in areas such as Eungella and Mount Etna Caves national parks. One shire council has subsequently hired a Bushfire Mitigation officer and is modelling their work on the QPWS CBMP program.

Phase Three: Transition

Ongoing collaboration within the Area Fire Management Groups and the State Inter-Departmental Committee on bushfires

Status: Ongoing and on track

Senior Rangers of each geographical management area represent QPWS at each Fire Management Group meeting and communicate our fire management intent within the context of the relevant geographical area.

Evaluate Phase two tasks and identify activities that may build environmental resilience

Status: Ongoing and on track

Central Region proposed phase two activities:

- Ongoing rehabilitation of strategic vegetation communities will progress.
- Further management of encroaching exotic grass fire fuel load.
- Further work with communities to address fire risk management at a landscape scale.

How were these activities identified?

- Community and partner agency consultation will continue to drive phase two works.
- This is supported by the Post-Fire Rapid Assessment Reports that were completed shortly after the fire events.

In May 2019, Central Region established an action plan consistent with the QRA Central Queensland 2018 Bushfire Recovery Plan.

Building

The Building FRG report addresses progress across the three phases of recovery – Post Impact, Relief and Early Recovery, Recovery and Reconstruction and Transition.

Facilitate community access to independent building repair advice

Status: Ongoing and on track

The Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) provided advisory guidance throughout response and rebuilding phases. This included advice to both the

DDMG and to the owners affected. QBCC worked out of the Community Recovery Centre for 10 days.

QBCC worked with other agencies including the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) staff to cold call the owners affected and provide support from Government and arranged for one-on-one meetings with anyone seeking advice on clean-up and rebuilding.

Develop a bushfire and heat resistant building guideline specifically for Queensland homes

Status: Ongoing and due for completion June 2020

The guideline is currently under development and a number of stakeholders are being engaged.

Phase Three: Transition

Due to the progress of the Building FRG, relevant transition activities are discussed below. The transition tasks can be found on page 35 of the Plan.

Provide advice to regulators regarding learnings from the bushfire event related to the recovery of built infrastructure

Status: Ongoing and on track

QBCC continues to provide support to the community and is actively involved with local authorities regarding resilience.

The QBCC has improved their response time to provide impacted communities information regarding the safe management of rebuilding and repair. The value of a 'tradies register' has been identified and is now a component of any disaster activation.

COVID-19 has impacted on the delivery of progress on the Bushfire Guidance review for State Planning Policy. DHPW is working with QFES and other relevant agencies to address risk posed by fire in 'extreme' bushfire areas. This has the potential to impact on the minimum building requirements under the National Construction Code.

Resilience initiatives

The resilience initiatives outlined in the Plan have been refined post-publication. This includes the addition of the QFES Land Management Program.

Enhance the centralised Get Ready Queensland program with a public information and awareness campaign to help educate and prepare communities for future bushfires

Status: Complete

The public campaign *In the Line of Fire* ran from 31 July 2019 to end September 2019. The campaign was a joint initiative between Get Ready Queensland and QFES creative. An allocation of \$170,000 from the Public Information and Awareness Campaign budget was divided across radio, billboards and social media. Key analytics based on the research report are:

- Community attitudes towards bushfire safety and preparedness have slightly increased compared to research conducted for QFES in December 2018.
- Over half (57 per cent) of Queenslanders living in a hotspot believe they are not at personal risk of being affected by bushfire.
- After hearing the radio advertisements, 63 per cent of Queenslanders said they would be likely to take some form of action. The radio advertisement has the highest recall at 19 per cent.
- Just under one in five Queenslanders are unlikely to take action after hearing the radio advertisement.
- The main reason for not taking action after hearing the radio advertisement is the perception that bushfires are not a risk or that they do not believe they live in a bushfire area.

Queensland Rural Fire Services to develop locally-led engagement activities to enhance bushfire preparedness

Status: Ongoing and on track

Due to the operational demands of bushfire in January, including deployment of QFES personnel to support fire management in NSW and the ACT and the subsequent impacts of COVID-19, the *My Resilient Communities* project has had minimal activity. Expenditure for the quarter to the end of March 2020 includes one minor transaction in the *My Resilient Communities* project. Expenditure now sits at \$20,070.07 to the end of Quarter 3 2019-2020.

QFES Land Management program

Status: Ongoing and on track

Due to the operational demands of bushfire in January, including deployment of QFES personnel to support fire management in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, and the subsequent impacts of COVID-19, the Land Managers Program has had virtually nil activity and expenditure for the quarter to the end of March 2020.

Insurance awareness campaign

Status: Postponed

The program was expected to be in market by April 2020, but is on hold due to COVID-19 following advice from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) re: advertising in the current climate. Creative is developed and advertising will not progress until advised by DPC.



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