



WHAT WE DO:

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

OUR VISION:
Stronger, safer, resilient Queensland communities.

OUR PURPOSE:
Coordinate action to improve the resilience of Queensland communities and facilitate locally-led disaster recovery.

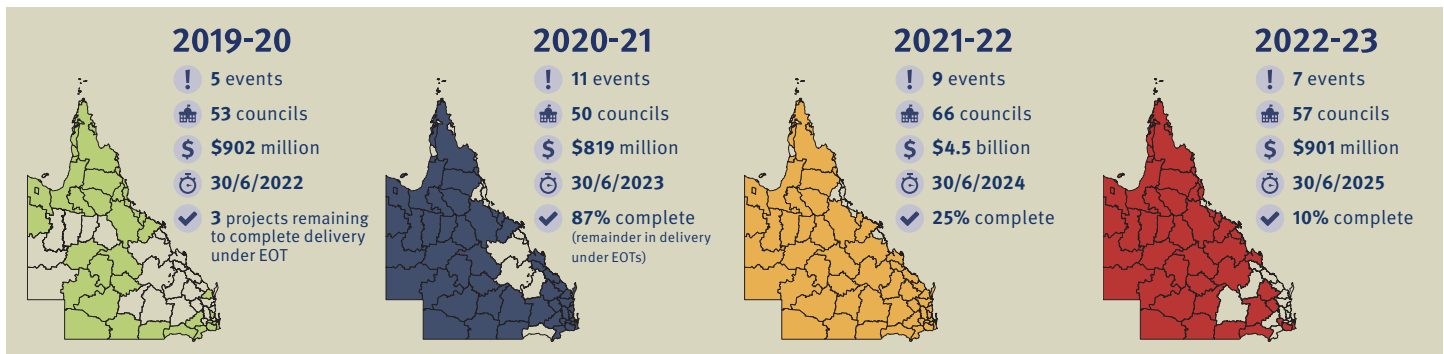
DISASTER ASSISTANCE

DISASTER ASSISTANCE AND RESILIENCE GRANTS PROGRAM

QRA is currently administering a recovery and reconstruction program under the joint Commonwealth State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) worth \$7.2 billion arising from 32 events from the 2019-20 to 2022-23 disaster seasons in the delivery and/or acquittal phase.

CURRENT STATEWIDE PROGRAM

! 32 events **🏛️** 76 councils with an active program **💰** \$7.2 billion



IN AUGUST

Following the end of the 2022-23 financial year, the focus of QRA’s activities in the administration of disaster assistance and resilience grants now shifts to supporting council and state delivery agents to compile and lodge their submissions for works delivered to 30 June 2023. Following this, QRA will complete eligibility assessments by 31 December 2023 to meet annual DRFA audit and claim requirements for the Commonwealth.

Under the DRFA, the estimated reconstruction cost (ERC) associated with the massive 2022 disaster season must also be established by 31 December 2023. Expected to be in the region of \$2.5 billion across the 66 council areas impacted in 2022, the task of finalising the ERC in accordance with DRFA requirements is significant and will be a key focus area for QRA over the remainder of the year.

Concurrent with these assessment tasks, QRA also remains on the ground monitoring and supporting delivery agents to mobilise their 2023 event programs and complete their work in delivery, including around 125 projects from the 2020 and 2021 that are being completed under extensions of time.

RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

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

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

RECOVERY

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

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements activations – 2023-24 disaster season

QRA’s first activation of the season occurred in August as a result of unseasonable rain and flooding that impacted Bulloo and Quilpie Shire Council Local Government Areas. The Southwest Queensland Flooding event occurred between 4 June – 7 July 2023 with the majority of damage to road networks across both Shires resulting in activation of Reconstruction of Essential Public Assets with indications of approximately \$5 million damage.

Engagement with Local Governments, other stakeholders, and the community

Throughout August, QRA Resilience and Recovery Officers participated in Local and District Recovery Group sessions with Logan City, Fraser Coast and North Burnett Regional Councils and attended Ipswich City Council’s Resilience Network meeting. These engagements assist with understanding recovery and resilience activities at the local level.

QRA also continued disaster season readiness support at a local level, through Resilience and Recovery Officers’ participation in a significant flood recovery event exercise with Logan City Council and a bushfire response exercise with Toowoomba Disaster District. The exercises provide a pro-active opportunity at all levels to understand each of our roles during disaster events.

To support decision makers to embed resilience and risk reduction into investment decisions, this month QRA facilitated a workshop to develop Noosa Shire Council’s Local Resilience Action Plan. The benefit of having an up-to-date Local Resilience Action Plan is that it provides a clear way forward for sustained investment in resilience and mitigation activities should funding opportunities arise.

During August, QRA also delivered Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements training for our Far North Queensland partners in Cairns. Participants included Cassowary Coast, Cook, Cairns, Northern Peninsula Area, Tablelands and Torres Strait Island Councils.

QRA’s Recovery team engaged with Local Governments, state and external recovery partners at the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Leadership in Disaster Masterclass sessions in Beenleigh, Brisbane and Toowoomba. The masterclass provided state and local recovery leaders with the skills to navigate challenging and complex natural disaster recovery conditions. Some themes from the discussions included the complexities of disaster situations, timeframes for recovery, the importance of self-care and ability to adapt when facilitating community led decision making (such as visual representation, shown in the photo below).



Inaugural National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Summit

Resilience and Recovery team members attended the inaugural National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Summit in Brisbane on 21 August 2023.

The event was hosted by Monash University’s Fire to Flourish and proudly supported by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, Bigibilla, NSW Environment Protection Agency, Jagun Alliance and Natural Hazards Research Australia.

It brought Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, emergency management practitioners, and agency heads, to build awareness, share new thinking, and network, beginning the conversation between and about Indigenous peoples’ disaster resilience.

The summit provided an opportunity for QRA to listen to the key disaster challenges raised by Indigenous communities.



DRFA Category C & D extraordinary assistance packages in delivery

2022-23 Northern and Central Qld Monsoon and Flooding event

From December 2022 to April 2023, a significant monsoon and flood event occurred in North-West Queensland, significantly impacting councils in the region. QRA’s Regional Liaison Officers and Resilience and Recovery Officers continue to work alongside councils, state agencies and Non-Government Organisations to support the recovery effort across the region.

QRA has been working with state Functional Recovery Groups and agencies to develop a suite of exceptional circumstances funding packages to support families and small businesses, primary producers and not-for-profit organisations severely impacted by the Northern and Central Qld Monsoon and Flooding event 2023.

Phase one and two of the Category C & D packages comprise:

Phase 1 – \$11.75 million	Phase 2 – \$5.25 million
<p>Primary producers Grants of up to \$75,000 are available for affected producers to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, replace fencing and other costs associated with the recovery process.</p>	<p>Mental Health \$1 million for community mental health to deliver targeted services to the people of Boulia, Burke, Carpentaria, Doomadgee and Mount Isa, supporting individuals, families and business owners who are doing it tough.</p>
<p>Small business and Not For Profits Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for affected small businesses and not for profits to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, replace or repair damaged infrastructure and stock and other costs associated with the recovery process.</p>	<p>Local Recovery and Resilience Grants \$4.25 million – grants of \$1 million each for the councils of Boulia, Carpentaria and Doomadgee, and \$1.25 million for Burke, to help with immediate recovery needs, upgrading damaged community infrastructure, buying equipment critical to community response, and to help build back to a more resilient standard.</p>
<p>Livestock recovery \$5.75 million – Coordinated livestock support and disposal package is to reimburse primary producers, local governments and non-government organisations for the extraordinary costs of undertaking livestock welfare activities in impacted areas.</p>	

A third phase of Category C and D extraordinary assistance in response to the 2022-23 Northern and Central Qld Monsoon and Flooding event is currently in development, and QRA is working with NEMA to expedite its approval. As always, QRA is continuing to work with councils, state agencies and the Commonwealth to determine what further recovery assistance and support may be required.

RESILIENT HOMES FUND

As at 28 August, 6552 homeowners have registered their interest in the **Resilient Homes Fund** with 5056 registrations active. Of these, 681 people registered their interest in the Voluntary Home Buy-Back program, 1594 in the house-raising and 1982 in the retrofit, with 799 people unsure which option is best suited to their individual needs.

Delivery of the **Voluntary Home Buy-Back** component of the Resilient Homes Fund has continued in Brisbane, Ipswich, Logan, Sunshine Coast, Fraser Coast, Gympie, Moreton Bay, Lockyer Valley, Goondiwindi, Somerset, Gold Coast and Noosa local government areas. As at 28 August, there have been 794 valuation inspections undertaken, 682 offers presented, 512 offers accepted and 312 contracts settled. Demolition of purchased properties has also commenced in multiple Councils, with 123 complete and a further 95 scheduled.

Further details: [Resilient Homes Fund Eligibility and funding factsheet](#)

Property Level Flood Information Portals

Procurement for the Property Level Flood Information Portals (“the Portals”) continues, contract award due imminently. QRA have two information sessions planned on 12 and 14 September with the 39 DRFA-activated Councils, which will outline the proposed implementation plan for project delivery and allow councils to seek clarification on any questions they have.

The Portals project has the principal aim of assisting residents to understand, be more informed and better prepared for future flooding events by giving them access to flood risk information specific to their property.

Delivery of the Portals will enable any member of the public in an eligible local government area to enter their address into a locally hosted platform and obtain key information about flooding at their property. Where data is limited, the system will still be implemented using existing datasets and allow for updates as new data becomes available.

The project is funded under the Resilient Homes Fund.

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

The Peer Review and Technical Advisory Panel and the flood team continue to provide valuable resources to Councils. The support has been well received in delivering their funded flood risk management projects under the \$31 million Flood Risk Management Program. \$18.25 million is available to 36 councils across 127 projects to invest in flood studies, flood risk management plans, and flood warning intelligence systems, so they’re better prepared for the threat of natural disaster.

This package is one of three made available through the \$31 million Flood Risk Management Program, which is funded through the 2021-22 DRFA extraordinary assistance package.

Other packages under the program include \$2 million to support community engagement and education around disaster preparedness; and \$6 million LiDAR capture and floor level database remote sensing technology to create 3D maps and models of environments, to better understand potential risks,

The LiDAR capture and floor level database package is progressing well and is approximately 40% complete.

Emergency Response Fund - Flood Warning Infrastructure Network Program (FWIN 2.0)

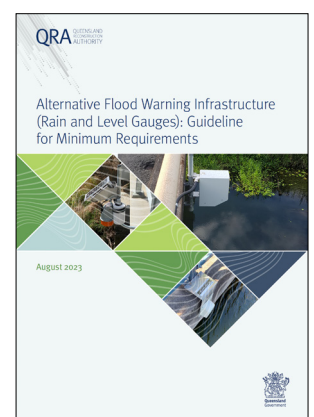
QRA continues to work with the Bureau of Meteorology to finalise funding opportunities within high priority catchment for flood forecasting infrastructure assets.

The ERF FWIN program consists of \$7 million being made available through the \$75 million Emergency Response Fund for Queensland Flood Warning Infrastructure across 23 councils impacted by the 2022 South East Queensland flooding event. All elements of Flood Warning Systems will be eligible for funding under this program to improve Queensland’s Flood Warning Infrastructure.

Alternative Flood Warning Infrastructure Guideline now live

QRA has engaged with Industry, Local Governments, and State Agencies in delivering a set of minimum requirements through the Alternative Flood Warning Infrastructure (Rain and Level Gauges) Guideline for Minimum Requirements (Guideline) to support all future asset owners to procure quality, fit for purpose assets that meet their identified flood warning needs.

Assets in the Guideline are innovative, low cost, readily deployable devices that can complement the existing Flood Warning Infrastructure Standard gauge network to help inform flood warnings for our communities and planning for response and recovery from flood events.



Nature Based Solutions Workshop

QRA’s Flood Risk Management team recently attended the Nature Based Solutions workshop this month. The intent was to build greater understanding on what are nature-based solutions and why they can be part of the flood resilience portfolio of solutions and other benefit. Discussions were had around the key issues and challenges in investing in such measures, and case studies were showcased.

These discussions will assist the team in development of the Queensland Flood Risk Management Investment Plan (QFRMIP), which will provide Queensland with a long-term state-wide strategic approach to investing in, prioritising, and strengthening resilience to flooding.



RESILIENCE

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

As the most disaster-prone state in Australia and with on-going disaster impacts across the state, QRA is continually considering new ways to improve the safety and resilience of Queensland communities. This includes building trusted, reciprocal and robust relationships with community leaders, thought-leaders, and local, state, Commonwealth and international partners, and participating in a wide range of activities to inform our policies.

Non-DRFA Resilience Funding Programs

Along with its lead role in managing and coordinating Queensland’s program of recovery and reconstruction funding within disaster-impacted communities, QRA also administers a range of disaster resilience funding programs on behalf of the State.

A number of these programs are currently in delivery helping to strengthen the disaster resilience and preparedness of Queensland communities.

STATE OF ACTIVE NON-DRFA (RESILIENCE) GRANTS PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY QRA – AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

Program	Approved \$	Approved projects	Projects completed
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2019-20)	\$13.1M	68	58
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2020-21) – includes \$6M Managing Disaster Risk	\$19.1M	82	22
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2021-22) – includes \$6M Managing Disaster Risk	\$19.1M	53	In-delivery
Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund (2022-23)	\$10.1M	24	In-delivery
North Queensland Natural Disasters Mitigation Program	\$10M	22	In-delivery
Recovery and Resilience Grants - Stream 1 (2020-21)	\$11.5M	14 councils funded for 66 projects	In-delivery
National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program (2020-21)	\$9.9M	3	1
National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program (2021-22)	\$0.894M	2	In-delivery

Resilience Valuation

Investment in resilient infrastructure has many benefits, however, the intangible benefits of resilience projects are often harder to measure so can be overlooked when considering the costs and benefits of an investment. A key challenge to date has been the lack of an available tool that enables the full extent of the complex and unique disaster effects and challenges communities face to be valued, which would greatly benefit effective investment decision-making.

QRA, as a member of the Resilient Futures Investment Roundtable, has partnered with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) to undertake a pilot project to customise the Sustainable Asset Valuation initiative Tool – an Excel based cost-benefit analysis that enables consideration of otherwise intangible benefits by using 15 indicators, such as road disruption, market access for crops, fruit and livestock, and mental health, to explore the full benefits of the investment. The aim of the pilot project is to test the considerations against projects with known success, such as Queensland’s Betterment Project, and further explore the intangible benefits to provide a more holistic view of community benefits from investments in resilient infrastructure.

The SAVi Tool has the potential application to support decision makers to prioritise future investments in resilient infrastructure, to advocate for increased investment in resilience programs, and for embedding resilience in all infrastructure decision-making, beyond disaster-related infrastructure reconstruction. QRA will continue to work with stakeholders to further test and refine the SAVi Tool and explore opportunities for others to use this tool or aspects of it in their work.

INTEGRATION AND COORDINATION

Integration and Coordination continues to support the development of QRA’s strengthened mandate for resilience. By leveraging QRA’s broad expertise and knowledge, as well as that of our partners with the establishment of State Recovery and Resilience Group (SRRG), Queensland is well placed to remain the national leader in recovery and resilience.

In preparation for the first interim SRRG meeting planned for late September 2023, engagement has occurred with each of the Functional Recovery Groups (FRG), to support the identification of priority actions, as well as guide their transition to Functional Recovery and Resilience Groups (FRRG) planned for late 2023.



Feedback from agency engagement confirmed that FRG agencies are best placed to lead the enhancement of their own functional group given their expert knowledge of their sector,

with the SRRG coordinating actions and priorities between groups, as well as identifying potential opportunities for funding.

GET READY QUEENSLAND (GRQ)

GRQ is a year-round, community resilience program that helps Queenslanders prepare for disasters. The program integrates a state-wide research driven awareness campaign led by QRA, alongside a grass roots grants program providing \$2M across Queensland’s 77 councils and the Weipa Town Authority to deliver locally-led disaster preparedness initiatives.

Queensland celebrates the best in disaster resilience

The 2023 Queensland Resilient Australia Awards have again shone the spotlight on Queenslanders going above and beyond to build community resilience to disasters and emergencies.

Get Ready Queensland presented the awards on 23 August 2023 at a ceremony linked to the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience’s Australian Disasters Resilience Conference in Brisbane.

The winners were:

Community category

Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation – Whole of community resilience in the Southern Gulf of Carpentaria

RAA School category

Woodridge State High School – Empowered, Resilient and World Changing!

RAA Local Government category (joint winners)

Moreton Bay Regional Council – Places of Refuge and

Balonne Shire Council – A memorandum of understanding: Facilitating community, resilience, and collaboration across borders

RAA Business category

JDA Co Woolloongabba – Flood Resilience in Action: 2022 and Beyond

RAA Photography category

Omor Robin, Lutwyche – Bushfire Sunset

RAA Government category

Department of Energy and Public Works and Queensland Reconstruction Authority – Resilient Homes Fund

Highly commended awards were also extended to Yeronga not-for-profit organisation Community Plus+ and a partnership project involving Queensland’s Department of Housing and Gympie Regional Council.

QRA CEO Major Jake Ellwood congratulated the winners and finalists for their remarkable efforts in helping create stronger, safer, more resilient Queensland communities.

“The impressive pool of entries in 2023, from the south-east corner right up north to the Gulf Country, show an admirable focus on proactively reducing the effects of disasters.

“Embedding greater disaster resilience in communities requires a whole-of-society push, and it’s Queenslanders like these recognised during this year’s state Resilient Australia Awards who are leading from the front,” Mr Ellwood said.

Winning projects will now progress as finalists for the National Resilient Australia Awards, which will be announced in late 2023.



Some winners of the 2023 Queensland Resilient Australia Awards share the stage.



Stakeholders from across Queensland’s disaster management sector gather for the 2023 Queensland Resilient Australia Awards.

Get Ready Queensland campaign inspires on national stage

Delegates at the Australian Disaster Resilience Conference had the opportunity for an inside look at the strategy behind Get Ready Queensland’s award-winning Check Out What You Need campaign.

QRA Get Ready Queensland Manager Kate Retzki presented Building a habit – reframing disaster preparedness in Queensland during a break-out session at the Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Queenslanders on the peripheries of preparedness avoid taking action either due to anxiety and fatigue or apathy and complacency towards the risks and impacts of extreme weather. GRQ showed that normalising positive preparedness behaviours and building an environment where habits form is the key to strengthening household-level resilience.

Market research was at the core of Kate’s findings, with wider exploration planned for 2024.



Get Ready Queensland Manager Kate Retzki presenting at the Australian Disaster Resilience Conference

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

BETTERMENT – A BETTER WAY TO KEEPING A FREIGHT ROUTE OPEN

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority works with councils and state agencies to deliver a wide variety of infrastructure projects across the state.

This includes Betterment works to flood damaged infrastructure so the next inevitable disaster can be withstood better than the last.

Connecting Western Downs to the Port of Brisbane, the Moonie Highway is a vital freight route for industry and the region at large and essential to Queensland’s economy.

Each day on average more than 140 trucks make the journey between Dalby and St George to transport a variety of produce including grain, beef and cotton.

Improving the Moonie Highway’s flood resilience has been the focus of recently completed repair works following significant damage sustained from a series of unprecedented rainfall and flooding events between November 2021 and May 2022.

Badly affected was the crossing over Stephens Creek, halfway between Dalby and St George, which was inundated by floodwaters for several weeks.

Emergency repairs were undertaken to keep the highway open and freight moving.

A longer-term solution, however, was needed to make the highway better able to withstand severe weather and minimise supply chain disruptions.

Betterment works to build a better, more resilient Stephens Creek crossing commenced in January 2023 and were completed in mid-April 2023.

During this time, the crossing was reshaped to improve water run-off and prevent further erosion damage from floodwaters.

Jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments’ Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), the works were part of a \$170 million Betterment program to strengthen essential public assets damaged by the 2021-22 floods.

Betterment works focus on rebuilding disaster-damaged infrastructure to a more resilient standard, to help mitigate the impacts of future disasters.

The Betterment Fund is yet another initiative helping make Queensland the most disaster resilient state in Australia.

With the number of disasters experienced in Queensland each year predicted to rise, the value and importance of Betterment is only set to grow.

Since the first Betterment fund was established in 2013, more than 530 projects across 70 local government areas in Queensland have been approved by QRA, helping to create stronger, more resilient Queensland communities.

From an investment of close to \$174 million in projects that have been re-impacted, QRA has seen approximately \$397.5 million in avoided reconstruction costs.

Betterment funding is a great example of all levels of government working together to improve the resilience of our communities.



Betterment works complete on the Moonie Highway

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

HERITAGE-LISTED WALL RESTORED ON TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN ROAD

A heritage-listed dry-stone wall dating back to the 1920s has been removed and reconstructed by hand, one stone at a time, as part of reconstruction works along Tamborine Mountain Road in the Gold Coast hinterland.

Tamborine Mountain Road is one of the first main roads in Queensland gazetted by the Main Roads Board and demonstrates achievement in road building in difficult terrain in the 1920s and the early use of asphaltic concrete as a road surface. The road contains many of its original elements, including 1920s culverts and rock walls.

The dry-stone wall – which is approximately 20 metres in length and 1.5 metres high and is considered an original element of the road – was damaged as a result of the 2021 Southern Queensland Severe Weather event.

During the event, Tamborine Mountain Road experienced multiple landslips and significant slope damage. In April 2023, Transport and Main Roads completed slope reconstruction works and culvert repairs at two locations near Songbirds Rainforest Retreat.

Water flow across Tamborine Mountain Road also overtopped the existing heritage-listed dry-stone wall. Water rushing down the slope scoured the area behind the wall, causing a void and resulting in displacement of stones from its top. This could potentially compromise the integrity of the wall during further rain events.

Reconstruction works involved repairing the damaged road/culvert, repairing the heritage-listed dry-stone wall, clearing debris, and installing drainage pits and pipes to collect and divert water from the upper slope into a drainage system. As part of the reconstruction works and to enable the drainage pipes to be installed, two sections of the dry-stone wall were mapped, coded and photographed before they were dismantled and safely stored for later reconstruction. The original stones were then hand placed by a stonemason, restoring the heritage-listed dry-stone wall to its original configuration.

Reconstruction works on Tamborine Mountain Road were completed in late June 2023.

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



Tamborine Mountain Road – damaged dry-stone wall (March 2021)



Tamborine Mountain Road – dry-stone wall works in progress



Tamborine Mountain Road – completed works (June 2023)

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

LAIDLEY-PLAINLAND ROAD REPAIRS COMPLETED

Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has completed works to repair a badly damaged slope on a section of Laidley-Plainland Road at Plainland in the Lockyer Valley.

Laidley-Plainland Road links the vegetable growing area of Laidley with the Warrego Highway, the main arterial between Ipswich and Toowoomba, at Plainland. The area was impacted by multiple severe weather events in 2022, with 168mm of rain recorded over just three days in May 2022 at nearby Forest Hill.

Heavy overland water flow on a section of Laidley-Plainland Road between Hooper Drive and Fernrow Drive eroded approximately 15 metres of the batter slope beside the road, washing silt onto the road. Immediately after the event, TMR crews cleared the road to make it safe for motorists.

Following the completion of design work, construction commenced in May 2023 on a diversion block (bund) along the top of the slope, to better manage water flow. Rockfill was then installed where the slope was significantly damaged and drainage holes placed along the base of the rockfill and covered with shotcrete to help prevent erosion of the bank. Works were completed in July 2023.

Assistance will be provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). The bund and part of the rockfill works were fully funded by the Queensland Government through the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program.



Tamborine Mountain Road – completed works (June 2023)



Tamborine Mountain Road – completed works (June 2023)