



Evaluation Report

Community Development Program Community Recovery Package

Central Queensland Bushfires
22 November – 6 December 2018

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Introduction

The Central Queensland Bushfires 2018 were an unprecedented disaster event for Queensland.

135 fires were attended at the peak of the event on 28 November 2018. These occurred in 35 localities across eight Queensland Local Government Areas (LGAs) and approximately 1.4 million hectares of land was burned. Homes, property, pets and livestock were lost with extensive destruction of the natural environment and an enormous clean-up operation required.

The fires caused significant social disruption within impacted communities – including 14,462 residents notified for evacuation, 71 early childhood centres and schools closed, and impacts to the operation of local businesses and transport routes.

A Community Recovery Package was announced as a joint Commonwealth and State funded program through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements under Category C. The package included a Community Development Program.

The Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS) led the implementation of the program with administrative support from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA). The program concluded in March 2021.

A requirement of the Community Recovery Package is to evaluate the program in accordance with [A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs \(2018: 2\)](#). The evaluation examines the program's effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness and implementation. It also considers if the program supported disaster affected communities to become more sustainable and resilient.

The evaluation concluded the Community Development Program contributed to the recovery of the communities and local economies impacted by the Central Queensland Bushfires 2018. Several detailed findings were documented in response to key evaluation questions.

Recommendations have been provided to improve the effectiveness of community development programs in future. Some are specific to a Community Development Program or similar, with others relevant to community recovery programs generally.

The evaluation of the Community Development Program is an important contribution to improve subsequent disaster programs in government and will be published on the Australian Institute of Disaster Recovery evaluation database.

Program implementation

Summary

Scope

The Community Development Program was funded \$1.080 million under DRFA Category C assistance. Funding was available to establish Community Development Officers (CDOs) to work across the eight impacted LGAs to understand recovery needs and develop community-led recovery and resilience plans.

The lead delivery agency was the (then) Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS), engaging with local government as delivery partners to employ three CDOs based in the following regional centres:

- Gladstone
- Mackay
- Rockhampton.

The CDOs were employed over a two-year period through to March 2021.

The CDO's recorded their time spent on community development activities as:

- 2,250 hours developing and delivering events
- 705 hours developing resources and tools
- 660 hours on training and learning
- 1,520 hours in supporting flexible funding grant (FFG) activities
- 725 hours developing recovery and resilience (RR) plans.

The CDO's recorded participation in the community development activities as:

- 8,026 participants in events *
- 1,599 participants in training activities
- 1,228 participants in FFG activities
- 264 participants in developing RR plans.

The CDOs also recorded participation from other community agencies in their community development activities as:

- 1,920 community agencies participating in events.

*Clarification: Number of 8026 participants is the cumulative count of all participants, which may include participation in multiple events by individuals.

Cost

The program was implemented for \$1.011 million.

Location	Budget	Actual cost
Total	\$1,080,000	\$973,103

Time

The funding contracts for the CDOs were executed by early April 2019, approximately four months after the disaster event.

Milestone	Target date	Actual date
Funding contracts executed	Jan/Feb-19	Mar/Apr-21
Program completion	Jun-21	Mar-21

Governance activity

Governance structure

The program was delivered by (then) DCDSS through funding contracts executed with three local governments for the employment of each CDO. DCDSS set out a high-level role description and employment evaluation criteria in the Program Guidelines, supporting the assessment of candidates with the delivery partners to select the CDOs.

The delivery partners and CDOs had regular reporting responsibilities set out in the Program Guidelines, including the provision of monthly milestone and progress reports, quarterly case studies and financial reports, and annual audited financial statements.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) oversaw the monitoring and reporting of the program through the Regional Liaison Officer (RLO) responsible for managing programs delivered by state agencies. The QRA RLO was supported by other functions within QRA such as compliance, value for money and assurance assessment. Financial monitoring was undertaken through the QRA Monitoring and Reporting System (MARS).

At the program level, there was some evidence in the Recovery Reporting of a Community Development Taskforce being established to support the CDOs to deliver a 'collaborative' and 'fit-for-purpose' approach to their services.

At the local level, District Human and Social Recovery governance committees were established to support and provide advice to the CDOs attached to the respective Councils and ensure the involvement of local community groups. The committees were established as:

- Gladstone Central Queensland Bushfires Community Development Reference Group (stood up April 2019).
- Livingstone Central Queensland Bushfires Community Development Reference Group (stood up May 2019).

- Mackay Central Queensland Bushfires Community Development Reference Group (stood up July 2019).

The reference groups met regularly as required. The Gladstone committee met at least quarterly and conducted an independently facilitated review of the program, which was shared for evaluation (refer to case study CS04).

Program reviews

QRA conducted regular program reviews, which incorporated financial and progress assessments of the Community Development Program. The DRFA program as a whole portfolio was reviewed by QRA in detail three times each year, for a total of nine reviews throughout the program. These reviews included a program briefing from the DCCDS Director of Community Recovery directly to QRA's Executive Leadership Team.

QRA provided quarterly progress reports on all Category C packages, including the Community Development Program, to Emergency Management Australia (EMA) as the Commonwealth and State jointly funded the program. These reports were made available for evaluation.

Independent audit

Queensland Audit Office reviews samples of all programs during delivery and at acquittal as part of their audit of Queensland's annual DRFA claim. The Australian National Audit Office also conducts an audit of the claim on behalf of the Australian Government.

Progress monitoring

Quantitative

Timely procurement

The timely procurement of three CDOs contributed to the program objective of:

- Establish CDOs to provide appropriate social services.

All three CDOs were reportedly appointed prior to 5 April 2019, approximately four months after the event.

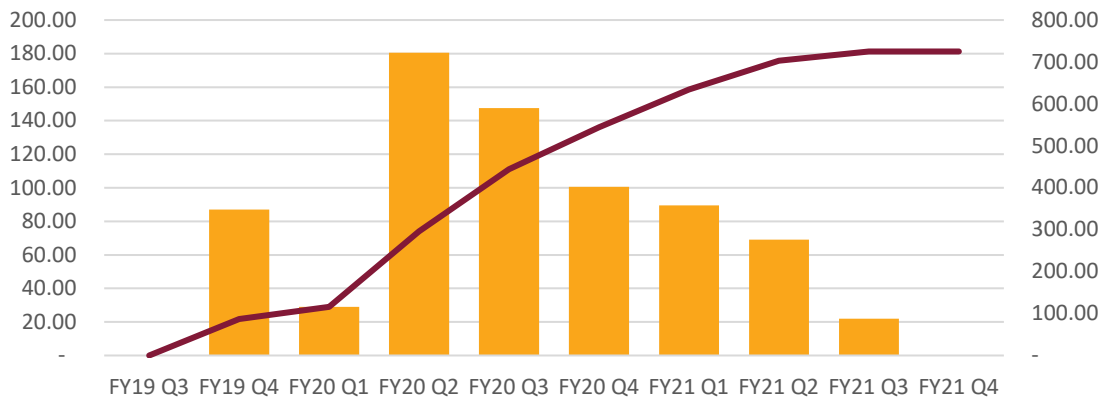
Engagement events

The facilitation of community events contributed to the program objectives of:

- Community has opportunities to access information
- Community has opportunities to engage through social events.

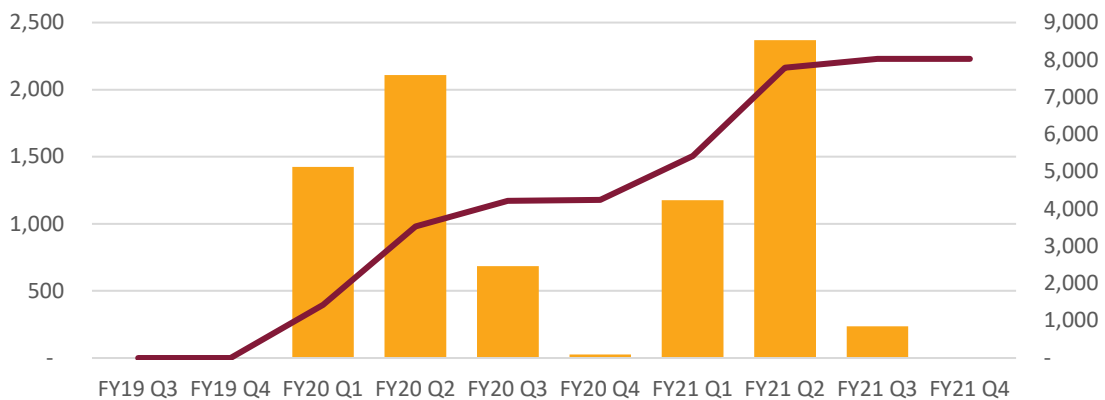
The CDOs invested more than 2,250 hours in developing and delivering events throughout the program. This equates to approximately 30 hours per month for each CDO. The CDOs were busiest between September 2019 and March 2020, before COVID-19 restrictions impacted the delivery of engagement events.

Hours developing and delivering events



The engagement events attracted more than 8,000 participants across all regions throughout the program. COVID-19 restrictions impacted the delivery of engagement events in the final quarter of the 2019-20 financial year, although recovered to a peak of 2,370 participants in the period of July to September 2020.

Number of participants in events

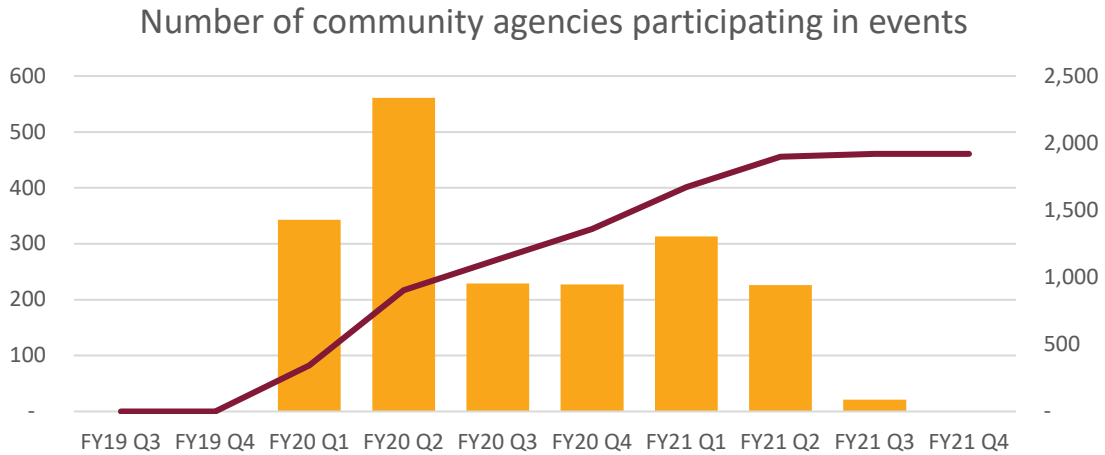


Participation of community agencies

The participation of community agencies in events contributed to the program objective of:

- Community is linked to community service providers.

The CDOs reported more than 1,900 community agencies participating in events throughout the program. Participation numbers were impacted following the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions at the start of the 2020 calendar year.

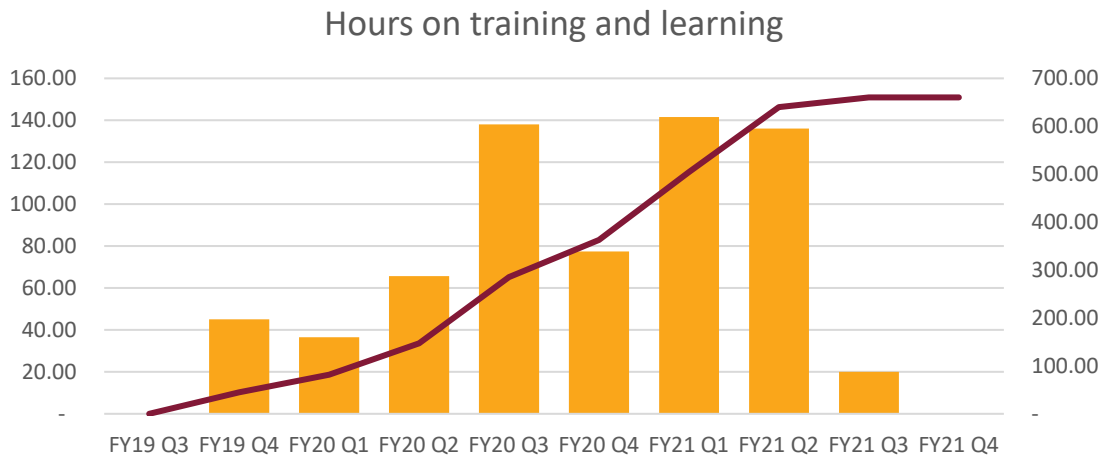


Training and learning

The provision of training contributed to the program objective of:

- Community has opportunities to build capacity.

The CDOs invested more than 660 hours on training and learning throughout the program. This equates to approximately 9 hours per month for each CDO.



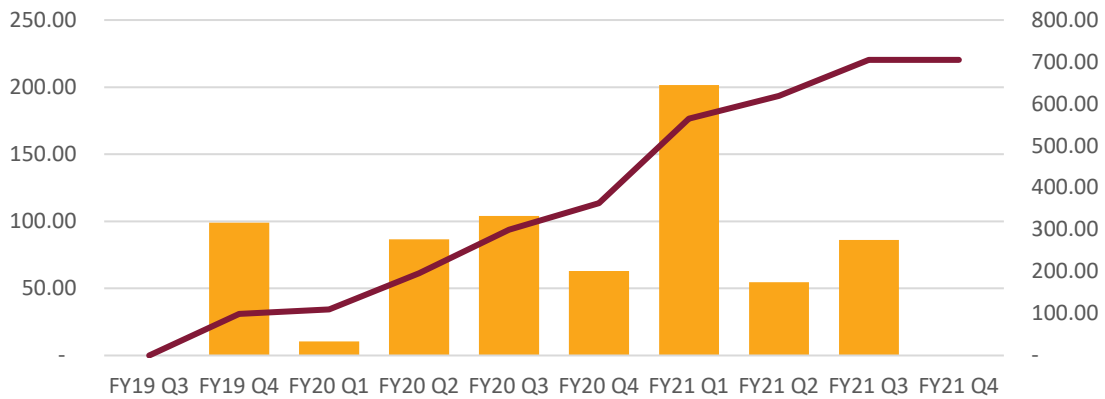
Resources developed

The development of resources and tools contributed to the program objective of:

- Community has opportunities to access information.

The CDOs invested more than 700 hours on training and learning throughout the program. This equates to approximately 9 hours per month for each CDO.

Hours developing resources and tools



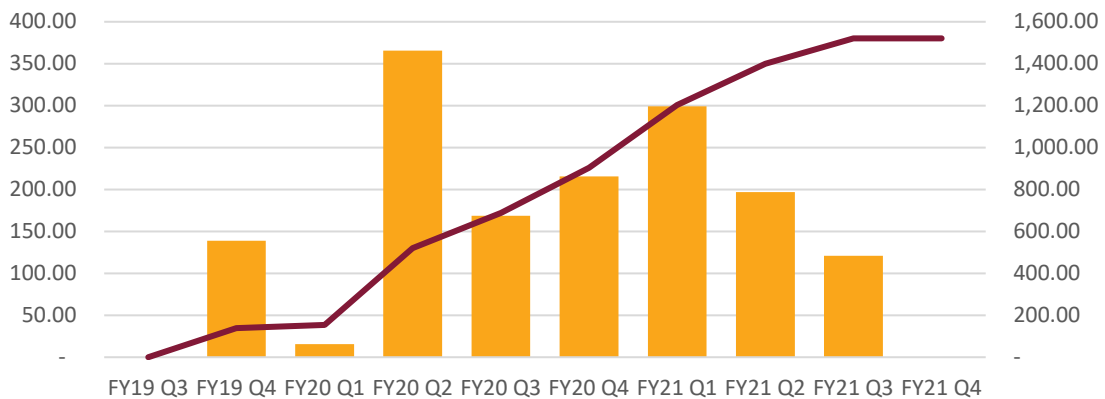
Supporting Flexible Funding Grants

The participation and effort in supporting Flexible Funding Grant (FFG) applications contributed to the program objective of:

- Community-led initiatives are nurtured.

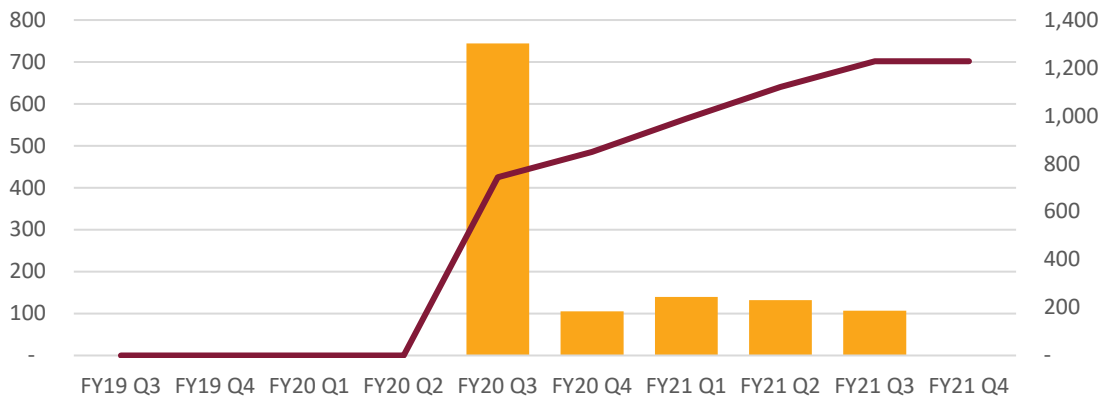
The CDOs invested more than 1,500 hours in supporting FFG development throughout the program. This equates to approximately 20 hours per month for each CDO. The CDOs were busiest in the second quarter of the 2019-20 financial year, before COVID-19 restrictions impacted community recovery activities.

Hours supporting FFG development



The FFG development activities engaged more than 100 participants across all regions throughout the program. This quantitative measure was only reported from Quarter 3 of the 2019-20 financial year, distorting the progress reporting reflected in the graph below.

Number of participants in FFG activities



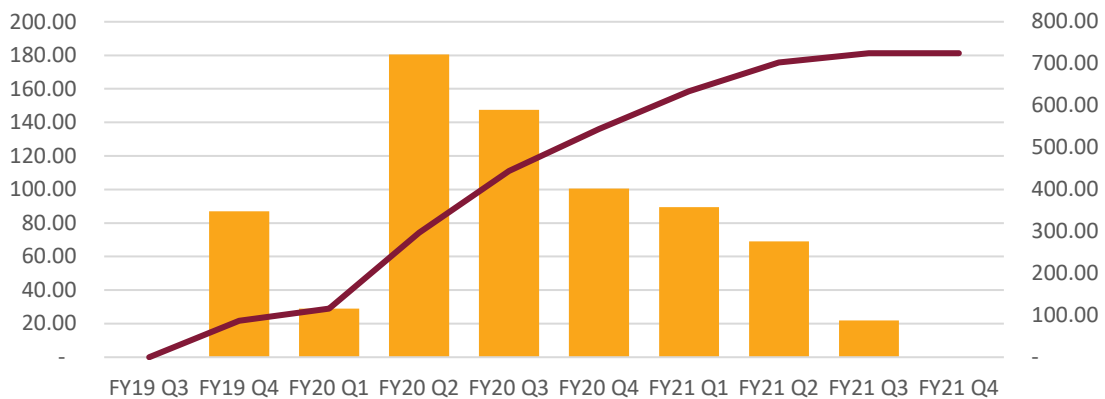
Supporting Recovery and Resilience Planning

The participation and effort in supporting Recovery and Resilience (RR) plans contributed to the program objective of:

- Community-led planning is supported.

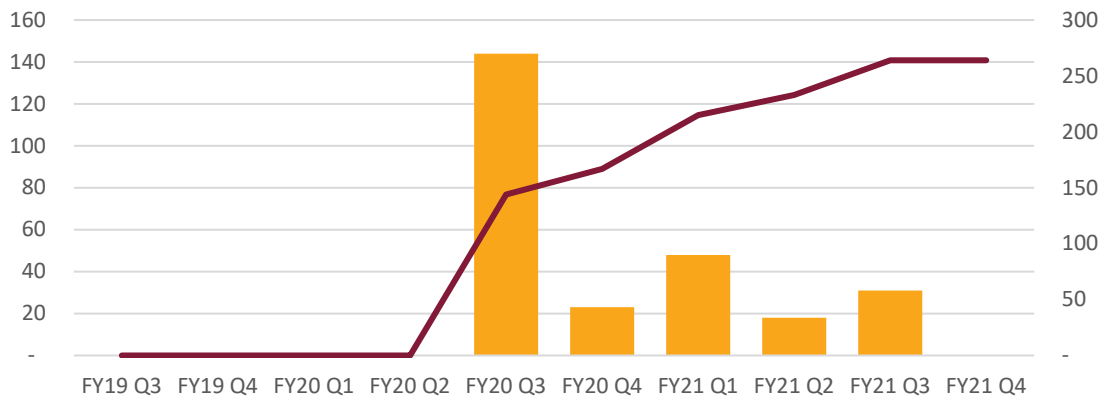
The CDOs invested more than 700 hours in supporting the development of RR plans throughout the program. This equates to approximately 9 hours per month for each CDO. The CDOs were busiest in the second quarter of the 2019-20 financial quarter, before COVID-19 restrictions impacted community recovery activities.

Number of hours developing RR Plans



The RR planning activities engaged more than 260 participants across all regions throughout the program. This quantitative measure was only reported from Quarter 3 of the 2019-20 financial year, distorting the progress reporting reflected in the graph below.

Number of participants in RR Plans



Qualitative

Case studies

Throughout program implementation, each of the CDOs were asked to contribute case studies where appropriate to highlight examples of qualitative outcomes. Several case studies have been selected and made available for evaluation as indexed below.

Index	Case study	CDO
CS01	Enhancing community messaging for disasters	Gladstone
CS02	Collaborating to support recovery in rural communities	Mackay
CS03	Eungulla Creative Recovery Project	Mackay
CS04	Community recovery	Gladstone
CS05	Mental health support – mechanisms implemented	Mackay

Evaluation findings

Governance

Regular monitoring

G2 – Has the governance structure ensured recovery programs are monitored on a regular basis?

The governance structure has enabled the Community Development Program to be monitored regularly in accordance with the funding requirements.

Nine consecutive quarterly reports were provided by DCDSS throughout program implementation, which were consolidated by QRA and shared with EMA.

The monitoring and reporting included quantitative data that were consistent with the program guidelines and evaluation plan to indicate the success of the recovery and resilience outcomes. The measures were further expanded in Quarter 3 of the 2019-20 financial year to quantify the participants involved in FFG activities and RR Plan development, as these were identified as important measures to monitor – relating to the strategies and objectives of the program.

The monitoring and reporting also included qualitative data through narrative style Recovery Reporting and some case studies directly from the CDOs – provided as examples of program outcomes.

Financial expenditure was also monitored quarterly, including a formal assurance and acquittal process administered by the QRA each financial year.

There was also evidence of monitoring of the program at the local level, through the reference groups established for each of the three regions where the CDOs were based. Recovery Reporting indicated these reference groups reviewed the effectiveness of various community engagement activities and actively planned for improvements during program implementation.

Finding 1: The governance structure ensured regular monitoring of financial progress, quantitative data and some anecdotal evidence.

Compliance

G5 – Has the governance structure ensured governance procedures conform to legislation, policies, and other plans?

The governance structure has ensured a high level of compliance with relevant plans and funding arrangements.

Conformance is best demonstrated in the program logic. This appropriately links the high-level recovery outcomes in the CQ Bushfires Recovery Plan to the outcomes, objectives and strategies in the program guidelines, to the outputs and metrics captured in the monitoring data.

The CQ Bushfires Recovery Plan clearly articulates the Human and Social Functional Recovery Group actions, including the provision of timely advice related to recovery activities and engaging community members in recovery planning and implementation.

More detailed outcomes, objectives and strategies are documented in the program guidelines specific to the Community Development Program. These two documents complement each other without conflict.

The program is also required to conform to the requirements of the DRFA to facilitate the acquittal of eligible funding from the Commonwealth and State Governments. QRA's compliance, progress reporting and assurance teams have undertaken several eligibility assessments of the program against the DRFA at program commencement (to enable an initial grant advance), during program implementation (to enable quarterly progress payments) and at program close out (to enable financial acquittal).

Finding 2: The governance structure has contributed to compliance with legislation, policies, and other relevant plans.

Share understanding of responsibilities

G7 – Is there a shared understanding among stakeholders regarding disaster recovery responsibilities, authority and decision-making?

There is evidence of a shared understanding of disaster recovery responsibilities on the Community Development Program at state, regional and local levels, with opportunities to document effective governance processes established for this event.

The understanding of roles within the three tiers of government was demonstrated through existing governance and reporting processes established prior to the event (discussed further in the following section).

Existing functions within the QRA and (then) DCDSS existed for recovery policy and community recovery respectively. Both agencies have experience in the design and implementation of a community development program (most recently for 2017 Tropical Cyclone Debbie).

Local government benefitted from their legislated role in disaster response and recovery and were active participants in the development of the program. Three councils worked collaboratively with (then) DCDSS to recruit CDOs based on pre-agreed program guidelines and a CDO role description developed from previous events.

Some of the CDOs had experience of performing a similar role within the community from a previous disaster event.

Finding 3: There was a shared understanding among government stakeholders regarding disaster recovery responsibilities.

Community development reference groups were established as subgroups to the District Human and Social Recovery Groups to support the delivery of the programs and services

by the CDOs, however the terms of reference and the activities for this group were not evidenced in reporting or available for this evaluation.

A review conducted by the Gladstone based reference group highlighted several strengths of the structure (documented in case study CS04), including the finding:

“the reference group assisted ... the understanding of the distinct communities impacted, to better meet their needs.”

The review also identified valuable learnings, with some of the key lessons summarised as:

- An orientation was necessary for members of a governance group.
- Terms of Reference to be regularly reviewed and updated.
- Membership should include Local Emergency Coordination Committee (LECC) members.
- Integrate monitoring and evaluation between the State and local levels.

There is an opportunity to document the reference group governance structure which proved effective in improving governance at the local level.

Recommendation 1: The reference groups established as part of this program were effective and should be documented to incorporate into similar future programs.

The CDOs were provided training on the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) toward the end of the program (Quarter 3 of the 2020 financial year) and would likely have benefitted from this sooner.

Recommendation 2: Incorporate QDMA training as part of the onboarding of CDOs.

There is an opportunity more broadly to ensure that CDOs and other key members of the local recovery effort are effectively onboarded as part of the program and involved in a program-wide governance group for shared learnings. Refer to recommendation 10 in the evaluation of program implementation for suggestions on applying a wholistic community recovery package approach to implementation.

Coordinated phases

G10 – Has the governance structure coordinated response and relief efforts with the recovery process so that the two ‘work together’?

In general, the existing response and recovery governance structures in Queensland have contributed to the transition between response and recovery phases for the human and social recovery domain.

To examine the link between response and recovery, it is necessary to look beyond the governance structure established specifically for the Community Development Program

and refer to the recovery arrangements stood up for the event. The Queensland Recovery Plan provides a diagram outlining these governing arrangements, which were activated in response to the event.

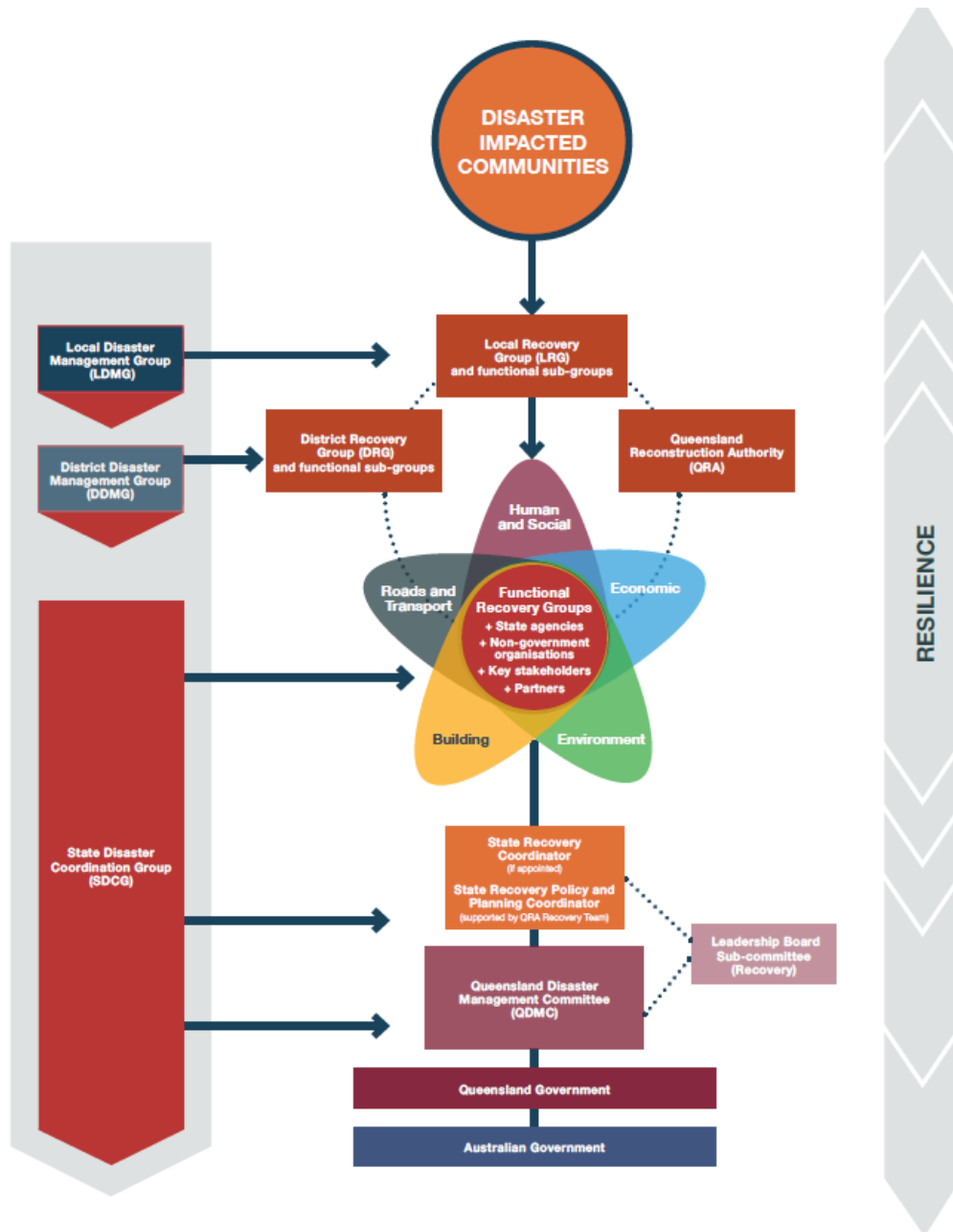


Figure 2: Queensland's disaster recovery arrangements.

As outlined in the Queensland Recovery Plan, due to the nature of their function, recovery agencies generally support both the response and recovery operations. The (then) DCDSS enacted their governance role as lead for the Human and Social Functional Recovery Group during the response and continued seamlessly into the recovery phase, conducting meetings and undertaking reporting to inform planning for response and recovery.

This governance structure supported the early collection of local impact data and stories necessary to develop the business case for justification of the need for a Community Recovery Package.

Evidence was shown in the early Recovery Reporting that CDOs actively assisted the State Recovery Coordinator with recovery planning activities 'on the ground' in communities.

The disaster management arrangements in Queensland are mature and evaluation of their effectiveness is beyond the scope of this report.

Finding 4: Existing response and recovery functions in Queensland helped to coordinate the transition between the response and recovery phases. Continuity of involvement from the Human and Social Recovery Group and then DCDSS through to the recovery phase and the Community Development Program is valuable.

Community engagement

Timely and ongoing engagement

C1 – Has community engagement occurred in a timely and on-going way that provides adequate representation of community views?

CDOs were on the ground in communities within four months of the disaster event and provided ongoing community engagement for the two-year program duration, meeting targeted recovery planning timeframes.

Timely engagement

In the first quarter of program establishment, the Mackay CDO:

“assisted in distributing Emergency Action Guides and supported community members learning how to use the disaster dashboard.”

Within the first year of the program, the Gladstone CDO reported engagement success with the Baffle Creek and Deepwater communities following engagement in relation to QFES evacuation messaging:

“The messaging between QFES and everyone else was blurred and this was a hurdle that was overcome by effective communication.”

“Community members were able to voice their opinions which were well received.”

Ongoing engagement

There were examples of persistent engagement throughout the program:

“One household is still in the early stages of recovery but as discussed, a plan is in place to support the householder and the family remains very engaged with him.”

“The big goal for the final quarter ... is ... bringing First Aid training to Blue Mountain/Carmila residents. Engaging with ... those communities has proved challenging in the past, but we hope this activity is one they ... will get behind.”

The CDOs undertook widespread community engagement throughout the two-year program implementation period as evidenced in the quantitative monitoring data; impacted by COVID-19 disruptions in the second year.

The engagement appeared to adequately represent community views with varied approaches toward community engagement. Examples of community views are shown in the following:

Willing communities

There were communities that expressed a willingness to engage in recovery activities:

“The communities of Baffle Creek and Deepwater ... identified as being high risk for future disaster events – most specifically further flooding... or further bushfires.”

“Connect Over Coffee ... is going to existing social craft groups in Eungella and Bloomsbury ... Another group is being established in Sarina Beach as there was not an existing group to tap into.”

“...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.”

Communities opting out

There were communities that self-identified as being less impacted or expressed they were unwilling to engage in recovery activities:

“...areas like Winfield self-identified early on that they were less impacted than originally thought.”

“...engagement in the Mt Larcom community has found community members expressing they are not wanting community development/activities, which has prompted a change of direction for the CDO's work in that community.”

While noting the varying community views toward engaging on community recovery, as well as the significant impacts of COVID-19, all CDOs continued implementing their recovery engagement strategies and were generally able to provide timely and ongoing community engagement.

Finding 5: Community engagement was timely in ongoing that appeared to be representative of differing community views.

Refer to recommendation 8 in the evaluation of effectiveness for further suggestions on seeking feedback directly from community participants.

Participatory recovery planning

C5 – Are recovery plans developed through participatory processes?

The recovery plans were developed with participation from community members.

CDOs had a role requirement to support the development of Recovery and Resilience (RR) plans and invested significant time on this activity (725hrs reported). 264 participants across all three regions were involved in developing RR plans, indicating reasonable community participation.

Finding 6: Recovery and resilience plans were developed through participatory processes.

Refer to recommendation 8 in the evaluation of effectiveness for further suggestions on seeking feedback directly from community participants.

Effectiveness

Sustainable community

E1 – To what extent did the disaster recovery program produce a sustainable community?

There is quantitative and qualitative evidence to demonstrate that the community development program contributed to a sustainable community.

As outlined in the program logic, four key community development program objectives were targeted by the program to achieve the recovery objective of sustainable communities:

1. Community has access to available and appropriate services
2. Community is linked to community service providers
3. Community has opportunities to access information
4. Community has opportunities to engage through social events.

The success of each of these objectives can be explored individually.

Access to services

A key strategy to increasing the availability of community services was to establish dedicated CDOs that were over and above business as usual resources to service individuals impacted by the disaster.

Employ three CDOs

The establishment of CDOs occurred throughout March and early April 2019, which was approximately five weeks later than originally planned. QRA Recovery Reporting (Recovery Progress Report #3 to December 2019) noted that:

“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.”

These timeframes align with those originally outlined in the State Recovery Plan and the program guidelines.

Finding 7: The program achieved timely procurement of CDOs, supported by practical interim measures.

Finding 8: The timely availability of recovery services is dependent on the delivery organisation’s ability to effectively work with local government to expedite contractual arrangements and recruitment processes to quickly deploy staff into key local roles.

The program was mostly fully staffed in all three regions for the program duration, transitioning back to business-as-usual services in March 2021.

One of the CDO's identified that a change of personnel midway through the program temporarily impacted the availability and effectiveness of the service to the community (refer to case study CS03).

Finding 9: The effectiveness of recovery services is dependent on the delivery organisation's ability to effectively work with local government to retain staff in key local roles for the duration of the program.

Recommendation 3: Continue to investigate improvements in procurement processes and invest in strategies to attract and retain staff in geographically diverse locations in temporary roles to maximise the availability of services.

Links to service providers

A key strategy to ensuring community links to appropriate service providers was through the CDOs undertaking regular and active engagement with relevant community service providers and promoting the participation of other community recovery workers in their recovery activities.

Engage with other community recovery workers

The CDOs reported that 1,920 community agency representatives participated in events they developed and delivered across all regions throughout the program. This is a significant quantity indicating regular alignment between service providers and strong representation of community recovery personnel at the local level.

There are also multiple qualitative examples provided to demonstrate linkages between the activities delivered by the CDOs and other community recovery agencies. Collaboration partners reported local community recovery workers from:

- Local government, including:
 - Councils in the impacted areas
 - Local Disaster Management Groups.
- State government, including:
 - Department of Environment and Science (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service)
 - Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (drought recovery)
 - Queensland Health (mental health)
 - Department of Education (schools)
 - Queensland Fire and Emergency Service
 - Department of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines.
- Non-government organisations, including:
 - Australian Red Cross

- Lions Australia
- Volunteering Queensland
- GIVIT.

The Gladstone-based CDO provided examples of consultation with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Gladstone Regional, Banana Shire and Bundaberg Regional Councils, as well as other prominent community members (refer to case study CS01). The Mackay-based CDO noted examples of collaborating with a community mental health recovery team (refer to case study CS02). Recovery Reporting indicated that the Rockhampton-based CDO collaborated with Volunteering Queensland.

Finding 10: The program effectively established links with community service providers.

Opportunities to access information

The key strategies to ensuring the community had opportunities to access information were to:

- provide information through widespread engagement
- promote recovery and resilience information.

The effectiveness of each of these strategies could be explored individually.

Widespread engagement

The CDOs reported that 2,250.5 hours of their time were spent in the development and delivery of community events across all regions, throughout the program.

Examples of engagement activities delivered to provide information to the community included:

- community disaster planning workshops
- youth disaster preparedness sessions
- recovery and resilience displays at libraries
- hazard and risk identification sessions at schools
- bushfire preparedness sessions
- My Resilient Community presentations
- Rural Community Connect (fire management practices workshops)
- aged care providers emergency planning.

Finding 11: The program effectively undertook widespread engagement to provide information for the community.

Promote recovery and resilience information

The CDOs reported that 705 hours of their time were spent in the development of resources and tools designed to promote recovery and resilient information.

Examples of recovery and resilience information developed included:

- community information sheets
- warnings and alerts infographic fridge magnets
- local vulnerability statements
- community profiles
- virtual reality activities
- emergency noticeboards
- suite of recovery planning documentation.

The Gladstone CDO provided an example of enhancing community messaging and information for disasters by identifying a recovery need for the community of Baffle Creek. Following consultation with community recovery partners, a fridge magnet with simple messaging was produced and distributed to address the need (refer to case study CS01).

Finding 12: The program effectively promoted recovery and resilience information.

The evaluation would benefit from participant feedback (e.g. surveys or interviews) demonstrating how the resources and tools developed promoted recovery and resilience information and knowledge for community members.

Recommendation 4: The effectiveness of the recovery and resilience information developed could be further evaluated through formal direct feedback from community participants.

Opportunities to engage

Delivering social events was a key strategy to ensuring the community had opportunities for engagement.

Coordinate social events

The CDOs delivered social events that attracted 8,026 participants across all regions throughout the program. When compared to quantities of individuals and families recorded as being impacted by the bushfires, the cumulative number of participants is considered significant and indicates widespread engagement.

Examples of social events included:

- Lions Youth of the Year Competition
- The Caves Lions Bicentennial Park celebration

- Australian Red Cross with the Feros Project
- Rural Community Connect program
- Finch Hatton Community Resilience Project
- Eungella Creative Recovery Project
- service club meetings
- markets
- community displays
- local Get Ready days
- art exhibitions.

Finding 13: The program effectively provided additional opportunities for the community to engage through social events.

There may be opportunities to explore collaboration with agencies outside of the community recovery sector (e.g. tourism and events) to integrate with other community events. New fund-raising or annual community events that can be leveraged for community recovery may appeal to wider groups. This would need to be explored within the constraints of the DRFA funding requirements.

Recommendation 5: Explore opportunities to integrate further with other community events beyond community recovery.

Summary of findings

Through evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data, it is likely that the Community Development Program has effectively contributed to producing a more sustainable community.

A review by the Gladstone reference group found that:

“...each stakeholder appeared to be satisfied with the outcomes of the project. All stakeholders seemed to highly value the enabling role of the CDO...”

Finding 14: The community development program was generally effective in contributing to a sustainable community.

There are opportunities to further substantiate this finding by expanding the evaluation planning to incorporate a mechanism for independently capturing the views direct from program participants – through interviews, surveys or other anonymous feedback services.

Recommendation 6: Evaluation of the program's effectiveness may be enhanced through feedback directly from participants.

Resilient community

E2 – To what extent did the disaster recovery program produce a resilient community?

There is quantitative and qualitative evidence to demonstrate that the community development program contributed to a resilient community.

As outlined in the program logic, there were three key community development program objectives targeted by the program to ensure that the community has improved capacity and capability to respond to future disasters:

1. Community-led initiatives are nurtured
2. Community has opportunities to build capacity
3. Community-led planning is supported.

The success of each of these objectives can be explored individually.

Nurture community-led initiatives

A key strategy to ensuring community-led initiatives were nurtured was raising the awareness of and assisting with Flexible Funding Grant (FFG) proposals.

Assist with FFG proposals

CDOs reported that they invested over 1,500 hours in various FFG activities in all (three) regions throughout the program. Activities included raising awareness of the grants within the community, assisting applicants with grant proposals and supporting successful grant recipients with project delivery.

CDOs reported that 1,228 participants were assisted with FFG activities.

The effectiveness of the FFG program has been evaluated separately.

Finding 15: The program nurtured community-led initiatives primarily focussed on supporting the flexible funding grant program.

Building capacity

A key strategy to ensuring the community had opportunities to build capacity and capability to respond to future disasters was to provide training, learning and skills development services.

Provide training

The CDOs reported that 660.25 hours of their time were spent on training and learning activities with 1,599 participants across all regions throughout program implementation.

Examples of training programs implemented in the community included:

- First aid training

- Business continuity planning training
- Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Toolkit
- Rural Community Connect (fire management practices workshops).

Finding 16: The program ensured that significant time was invested in capacity building activities for community members.

The evaluation would benefit from additional examples (e.g. case studies) or participant feedback (e.g. surveys or interviews) demonstrating how the training and learning activities improved the personal capacity and resilience of households, families and individuals.

Recommendation 7: The effectiveness of the capacity building activities could be further evaluated through formal direct feedback from community participants.

Support community-led planning

A key strategy to ensuring support of community-led planning was enabling the development of recovery and resilience plans.

Develop RR plans

The CDOs reported that they invested 725 hours of their time in the development of recovery and resilience (RR) plans with 264 participants.

Reported examples of RR plans developed include:

- Local recovery and resilience plans
- Bushfire recovery plans
- Community disaster plans
- Evacuation plans
- Business continuity plans.

The RR plans have not been sighted as part of this evaluation.

Finding 17: The program effectively supported community-led planning.

Summary of findings

Through evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data, it is likely that the Community Development Program has effectively contributed to producing a more resilient community.

Anecdotal reporting from the CDOs further supports this finding:

“engagement in Eungella and Finch Hatton ... seems to suggest that they have become a tighter community since the bushfires, leading to them being more likely in reaching out to the more vulnerable people in the community during the COVID-19 event.”

Finding 18: The community development program was generally effective in contributing to a resilient community.

Further evaluation of effectiveness

There are opportunities to further substantiate these findings by expanding the evaluation planning to incorporate a mechanism for independently capturing views directly from program participants – through interviews, surveys or other anonymous feedback service.

A practical example of this approach could involve the presentation of targeted evaluation questions for program participants at various stages of the recovery process. Examples of questions are as follows.

Sustainable outcome

- How do you perceive your recovery needs have been addressed?
- Do you have the information needed to support your recovery?
- Do you feel confident to engage in social events?

Resilient outcome

- How do you perceive your individual capacity and capability to respond to disaster events?
- How do you perceive your community’s capacity and capability to respond to disaster events?
- Do you have the information needed to respond to future disaster events?

Program activity outcome

Each program activity could also survey participants for effectiveness following the delivery of specific community recovery activities.

- Was the [insert service provision or resource developed] appropriate for your recovery needs?
- Did the [insert training activity] improve your ability to respond to future disasters?

All responses to questions should include both a scale (e.g. 0-10) and option for open comments to encourage qualitative feedback.

Participant responses could be sought and monitored:

- at program commencement – or early in the recovery process as a benchmark
- during program implementation – following participation in a program activity for active monitoring

- post program completion – enabling the participant to reflect on the program and whether there has been an opportunity to implement learnings at a personal level.

Recommendation 8: Evaluation of the program's effectiveness may be enhanced through feedback directly from participants.

Efficiency

Value for money

H1 – To what extent did the program achieve the right balance between centralisation of some activities to achieve economies of scale while at the same time being responsive to local needs and conditions?

The program has achieved a reasonable balance between the centralisation of functions versus the local responsiveness of the regionally based CDOs.

The functions on the program that were centralised to the (then) DCDSS and QRA included:

- program guideline design
- general program administration
- consolidation of program monitoring data
- financial claims and progress reporting
- coordination of eligible queries
- approval of communications and materials.

The program compliance assessments and evaluation are also centralised to QRA.

The functions of the program that were regionalised to a lead local government and their CDO included:

- regional recruitment and retention
- region monitoring and reporting.

The functions of the program that were localised to the CDOs within impacted communities included:

- developing and delivering of events
- developing of resources and tools
- training and learning
- supporting FFG development
- developing RR plans.

Finding 19: The program has achieved a reasonable balance between centralised and localised functions.

H5 – Did the program achieve value for money relative to the disaster recovery context?

It is likely that the program achieved a value for money outcome, representing a reasonable investment in community recovery for contributing toward an effective sustainable and resilient outcome. Additional evaluation of the program, including feedback directly from the community participants across all regions, would further substantiate this finding.

The Commonwealth and State governments approved funding for \$1.08M to deliver the community development program, which was based on early estimates provided by (then) DCDSS to employ three full time community development officers for a period of two years, plus engagement costs.

The program was delivered for \$1.011M, within the original budgeted amount. The program was mostly fully staffed throughout the two-year timeframe.

There was no evidence of wastage or significant ineligible activities reported.

It is estimated that there are approximately 9,570 total available manhours for three CDOs over two years (assuming 7.25-hour days and 44 available weeks annually). It was reported that the CDOs spent approximately 5,860 total hours (more than 60% of their time) delivering key activities that directly contributed to effective program outcomes. This is a reasonable use of time noting their responsibilities for other activities – including governance, administration and reporting, as well as other community development activities not reported.

Finding 20: The program represented a reasonable investment in community recovery that contributed toward an effective outcome.

There are likely to be some resources that can be shared between all CDOs, such as training platforms and information templates. A solution for one community may also be suitable for another and there may be cost efficiencies involved in sharing centralised resources. An example of this occurred with the development of fridge magnets in Gladstone that was adopted across other regions.

Recommendation 9: Investigate opportunities for CDOs to collaborate regularly and share resources for community recovery activities to promote efficiencies.

Implementation

Plan implementation

11 – Was the program consistent with the National Principles for Disaster Recovery?

A high level assessment of the program’s consistency with the [National Principals for Disaster Recovery](#) has been undertaken. A consistency rating of low, medium and high has been applied subjectively. Low and medium ratings identify opportunities for improvement.

Principle	Consistency	Comments
Understanding the context	High	<p>Implementation was focussed on the communities impacted most by the bushfires.</p> <p>Evidence of particular focus on the Bloomsbury, Finch Hatton, Eungella, Sarina Beach, Baffle Creek, Deepwater and Mt Larcom communities, which were hardest hit by the bushfires.</p> <p>The program drew upon CDOs and community recovery workers with experience from recent natural disaster events, such as the 2017 floods.</p> <p>The CDOs worked beyond their immediate geographical base in communities across all eight activated local government areas.</p> <p>Eungella Creative Recovery Project (refer to case study CS03) exemplified the local cultural diversity of the community.</p>
Recognising complexity	Medium	<p>The program was implemented as a reasonable compromise between efficiency (the financial investment in three CDOs) and effectiveness (the ability to service many geographically dispersed communities across eight activated local government areas).</p> <p>The CDOs were deployed in a reasonable timeframe, although there is a mobilisation and establishment period (up to six months) required to reach full capacity and effectiveness. The maximum DRFA timeframe of two financial years limits the program implementation, with multiple program participants reflecting on more time required to achieve sustainable outcomes.</p> <p>CDOs were effective in their roles at developing suitable engagement, training, resources and support activities for the communities.</p>

		<p>The COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions were an unforeseen complexity that limited physical interaction and the delivery of some social events that were important strategies to achieving desired community recovery outcomes.</p>
Using community-led approaches	High	<p>Collaborative partnerships were evident, with 1,920 community agencies participating in program related events.</p> <p>There was evidence of channelling effort through existing service providers such as QFES, QPWS, QH and non-government organisations.</p> <p>CDOs were locally recruited and regionally based to work within the impacted communities.</p> <p>CDOs nurtured community-led FFG submissions and supported RR plan development for the impacted communities.</p> <p>There was evidence of a wide variety of project types developed for FFG, reflecting the individuality of different communities, rather than one size fits all solutions.</p>
Ensuring coordination of all activities	Medium-High	<p>The program establishment was coordinated, benefitting from a clear design and establishment phase at the state level through the State Recovery Plan and program guidelines.</p> <p>In program implementation, there was evidence of coordinated activities on the ground, with all CDOs benefitting from being embedded within a local government host and establishing a community recovery reference group with key local representatives.</p> <p>A representative from each Local Emergency Coordination Committee (LECC) should be included in such a reference group moving forward.</p> <p>Interaction with other community recovery agencies was strong, as evidenced above.</p> <p>There may be scope for greater interaction between CDOs operating within different regions to share learnings and coordinate larger-scale activities, training and resources.</p>

Employing effective communication	Medium-High	<p>Program implementation demonstrated many opportunities to communicate information regularly through widespread engagement. More than 8,000 participants were engaged through events and almost 1,600 were involved in training or learning activities.</p> <p>Communication methods were diverse and included workshops, information sessions, training programs, fridge magnets, posters, books, recovery plans and grant submissions.</p> <p>Community members should be invited to participate in formal independent feedback activities, such as interviews or surveys to further evaluate the effectiveness of communication in future programs.</p>
Acknowledging and building capacity	Medium-High	<p>Program implementation strategies focussed on capacity building, particularly through training and learning activities, supporting FFG activities and developing RR plans. 1,599, 1,228 and 264 participants respectively have built their own capacity through this program accordingly.</p> <p>Participants should be invited to provide formal feedback – such as through interviews, surveys or feedback forms – made available for evaluation to further assess the effectiveness of capacity building activities in future programs.</p>

Finding 21: The program was generally consistent with the National Principles for Disaster Recovery.

Interaction

I6 – Where disaster recovery involved several separate components or projects, how well coordinated were these with each other?

The other programs funded by the Community Recovery Package for the CQ Bushfires are:

- Community Mental Health Program
- Flexible Grants Program (Flexible Funding Grants or FFG)
- Community Information and Education
- Targeted Community Funding (Rural Residential Recovery Program or RRRP).

This evaluation has shown the Community Development Program, through the CDOs, has provided a coordination role for all community recovery services relevant to the impacted communities.

The CDOs had a clear and defined role requirement to support communities with FFG activities, primarily with awareness of the grants program and supporting community organisations and individuals with grant submissions for relevant community projects. CDOs invested a significant portion of their time assisting 1,228 participants with these activities.

The CDOs coordinated with the Community Mental Health Program, connecting early with program staff to support and leverage off each other's networks. The collaborative approach was recorded by CDOs regularly through Recovery Reporting and was most evident in Mackay through their case studies on rolling out combined programs (refer to case studies CS02 and CS05).

There was limited reporting of coordination with the RRRP directly from the CDOs, however the separate evaluation of RRRP identified the CDOs were heavily relied upon by the RRRP delivery organisation (ARC) to assist with the roll out of the program. This demonstrates the vast range of activities that the CDO can be involved in, although not necessarily reported.

There was evidence of coordination with a component of the Community Information and Education program delivered by QFES, although not captured through CDO reporting. A large component of this program was a broad public information and awareness campaign delivered separately at the state level.

Finding 22: The CDOs performed a critical role in coordinating the community's participation and awareness of the other programs within the Community Recovery Package.

While the CDOs had responsibilities related to coordination with other recovery programs, all delivery organisations and their community recovery personnel (including CDOs) are likely to benefit from formalised inductions and coordinated briefings between all programs within the Community Recovery Package at the state level.

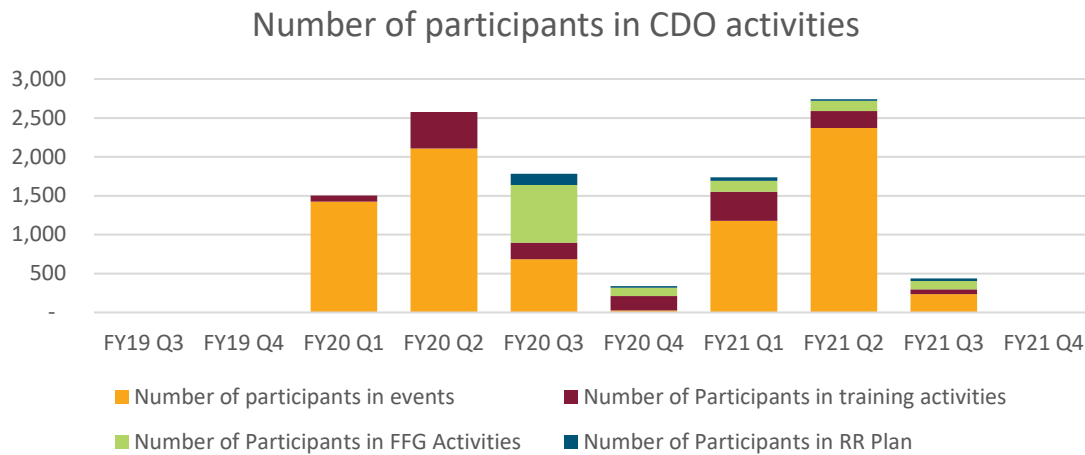
Finding 23: There are likely to be benefits associated with implementing the Community Recovery Package as a coordinated program of services at the State level.

Recommendation 10: Consider implementing the Community Recovery Package as a coordinated program of services with formalised inductions and progress briefings with all program participants and expanded governance structures.

External factors

17 – To what extent was the recovery process affected by external factors that may have had an impact on the community's ability to recover?

The program implementation was heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, which may have impacted the communities’ ability to recover. The restrictions were implemented in the fourth quarter of the 2020 financial year and the ability to engage with community participants was directly impacted, as indicated in the graph below.



CDOs reported that COVID-19 impacts resulted in agencies being unavailable, community engagement not being possible and face-to-face interaction ceasing. CDOs noted that while options for innovative engagement techniques were being considered, it was challenging to reach remote and elderly community members through these methods. CDOs also reported that the focus of community members generally shifted away from bushfire related recovery toward COVID-19 response.

It is unclear to the extent to which the interruptions to planned engagement activities had on the communities’ ability to recover, however program implementation effectiveness was reduced.

The program was also impacted by subsequent bushfires, with the Rockhampton CDO reporting in late 2020 that:

“Active fires in Livingstone (Central QLD) during November prohibited a community workshop being held in Bluff.”

Finding 24: Program implementation was affected by COVID-19 and subsequent bushfire events, which may have impacted the communities’ ability to recover.

Conclusion

The evaluation has concluded that the Community Development Program has contributed to the recovery and resilience of the communities impacted by the Central Queensland Bushfires 2018.

The key findings of the evaluation are provided below.

Governance

1. The governance structure ensured regular monitoring of financial progress, quantitative data and some anecdotal evidence.
2. The governance structure has contributed to compliance with legislation, policies, and other relevant plans.
3. There was a shared understanding among government stakeholders regarding disaster recovery responsibilities.
4. Existing response and recovery functions in Queensland helped to coordinate the transition between the response and recovery phases. Continuity of involvement from the Human and Social Recovery Group and then DCDSS through to the recovery phase and the Community Development Program is valuable.

Community engagement

5. Community engagement was timely in ongoing that appeared to be representative of differing community views.
6. Recovery and resilience plans were developed through participatory processes.

Effectiveness

7. The program achieved timely procurement of CDOs, supported by practical interim measures.
8. The timely availability of recovery services is dependent on the delivery organisation's ability to effectively work with local government to expedite contractual arrangements and recruitment processes to quickly deploy staff into key local roles.
9. The effectiveness of recovery services is dependent on the delivery organisation's ability to effectively work with local government to retain staff in key local roles for the duration of the program.
10. The program effectively established links with community service providers.
11. The program effectively undertook widespread engagement to provide information for the community.
12. The program effectively promoted recovery and resilience information.
13. The program effectively provided additional opportunities for the community to engage through social events.

14. The community development program was generally effective in contributing to a sustainable community.
15. The program nurtured community-led initiatives primarily focussed on supporting the flexible funding grant program.
16. The program ensured that significant time was invested in capacity building activities for community members.
17. The program effectively supported community-led planning.
18. The community development program was generally effective in contributing to a resilient community.

Efficiency

19. The program has achieved a reasonable balance between centralised and localised functions.
20. The program represented a reasonable investment in community recovery that contributed toward an effective outcome.

Implementation

21. The program was generally consistent with the National Principles for Disaster Recovery.
22. The CDOs performed a critical role in coordinating the communities participation and awareness of the other programs within the Community Recovery Package.
23. There are likely to be benefits associated with implementing the Community Recovery Package as a coordinated program of services at the State level.
24. Program implementation was affected by COVID-19 and subsequent bushfire events, which may have impacted the communities' ability to recover.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided to improve the effectiveness of future disaster recovery programs.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The reference groups established as part of this program were effective and should be documented to incorporate into similar future programs.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Incorporate QDMA training as part of the onboarding of CDOs.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Continue to investigate improvements in procurement processes and invest in strategies to attract and retain staff in geographically diverse locations in temporary roles to maximise the availability of services.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The effectiveness of the recovery and resilience information developed could be further evaluated through formal direct feedback from community participants.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Explore opportunities to integrate further with other community events beyond community recovery.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Evaluation of the program's effectiveness may be enhanced through feedback directly from participants.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The effectiveness of the capacity building activities could be further evaluated through formal direct feedback from community participants.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Evaluation of the program's effectiveness may be enhanced through feedback directly from participants.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Investigate opportunities for CDOs to collaborate regularly and share resources for community recovery activities to promote efficiencies.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Consider implementing the Community Recovery Package as a coordinated program of services with formalised inductions and progress briefings with all program participants and expanded governance structures.

Appendices

Appendix A – Background

Central Queensland Bushfires 2018

Impacts

The Central Queensland Bushfires in 2018 have been described as an unprecedented event for the state of Queensland.

135 fires were attended at the peak of the event on 28 November 2018. These occurred in 35 localities across eight Queensland Local Government Areas (LGAs) and approximately 1.4 million hectares of land was burned. Homes, property, pets and livestock were lost with extensive destruction of the natural environment and an enormous clean-up operation required.

The fires caused significant social disruption within impacted communities – including 14,462 residents notified for evacuation, 71 early childhood centres and schools closed, and impacts to the operation of local businesses and transport routes.

A human life was tragically lost in the event, in addition to losses of homes, property, pets and livestock. Examples of impacts to personal property and equipment include:

- 17 dwellings damaged, with 9 destroyed
- 72 sheds or other structures damaged, with 27 destroyed
- 37 properties damaged
- 28 vehicles damaged.

Response

In response to the event, local and state government resources were stood up to assist the community. The firefighting operation was the largest in the State's history. Examples of government response activities include:

- 3,000 fire and emergency services personnel were deployed, including 1,202 from interstate
- 59 aircraft utilised in fire and emergency response, with 47 flying at the peak of the disaster
- 479 damage assessments undertaken of property
- More than 2500 visitors attended the 7 Community Recovery Hubs and 8 Pop-Up Hubs that were established to coordinate community recovery services in location
- 413 community recovery workers were deployed in the aftermath of the event.

Between 27 November and 5 December 2018, the Queensland Government activated the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) for Category A and B assistance measures for communities in the following local government areas:

- Banana Shire Council
- Bundaberg Regional Council
- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Gladstone Regional Council

- Isaac Regional Council
- Livingstone Shire Council
- Mackay Regional Council
- Rockhampton Regional Council

Approximately \$4.9 million of grant and loan funding was administered through these arrangements, including approximately \$1.8 million of emergency hardship assistance grants paid to impacted residents.

Consequences

More than 1.4 million hectares of land was burned, with impacts to people, private property, primary producers, agriculture, and the environment across 8 LGAs.

More than 160 community recovery workers assisted bushfire impacted communities in the aftermath of the event, undertaking over 2000 visits and phone calls. In addition, 4,314 Emergency Hardship Assistance grants were distributed under the DRFA, with a total of \$1,849,045 paid to residents as at 22 January 2019. 28 Emergency Housing Accommodation Requests (EHAR) were received. On 4 December alone, 316 persons were supported with Psychological First Aid. Additional support was required for the 232 residents of the Baffle Creek area during repatriation.

As a result of the evident social and economic disruption, it was anticipated that long term effects would be evident in impacted areas, and a program to assist disaster-impacted individuals, carers, families, volunteers and communities with specialist support would be required post-disaster.

State recovery planning

Central Queensland Bushfires State Recovery Plan

On 9 December 2018, the Queensland Premier appointed a State Recovery Coordinator (SRC) to lead the disaster recovery effort. The SRC was supported by QRA as Queensland's lead agency responsible for disaster recovery and resilience policy. After meeting the people most affected by the bushfires, the SRC identified the repair of property as a priority in the recovery planning.

The [Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021](#) (CQ Bushfires Recovery Plan) was published 3 April 2019. The aim of the plan was to outline state government support for local governments and communities impacted by bushfires to reach a state of 'recovered'.

The plan included recovery tasks and timing to achieve high-level recovery outcomes organised by the five lines of disaster recovery. The plan stated that recovery progress of these tasks is to be monitored against key metrics through quarterly recovery status reporting.

Community Recovery Package

On 30 December 2018, the state and Commonwealth Governments jointly [announced](#) a Category C exceptional circumstances funding package under the DFRA for a Community Recovery Package.

The \$12.042 million package was developed by QRA in consultation with Emergency Management Australia (EMA) and included the following programs:

- Community Development Program
- Community Mental Health Program
- Flexible Grants Program
- Community Information and Education
- Targeted Community Funding
- Evaluation of the Community Recovery Fund

The individual programs were developed in consultation with key State Government agencies to address and identify immediate needs within impacted communities. The subsequent design and implementation of the programs formed part of the CQ Bushfires Recovery Planning operations.

Community Development Program

Program guidelines

Program guidelines were developed by QRA, which were then endorsed by EMA.

The guidelines outlined that the Community Development Program would be delivered through the appointment of Community Development Officers (CDOs).

The guidelines outlined the program's purpose, scope, outcomes and objectives, principles, delivery and care models, governance and reporting, schedule, budget and resourcing, stakeholders, communication, risks, and evaluation.

Program design

Purpose

The purpose of the program was to:

“support community-led initiatives, facilitate linkages, collaboration and partnerships between and across groups, support and enable recovery and resilience planning and have a focus on building upon the strengths and capabilities of the affected communities”

Outcomes and objectives

CDOs were required to support the community through the recovery process and ensure their work supports and aligns with the relevant Local Recovery Plans.

The guidelines identified four outcomes aligned to the purpose:

1. The needs of vulnerable groups are addressed in disaster recovery.
2. The community is aware of the disaster recovery processes.
3. The community can express its changing disaster recovery needs.
4. The community has improved capacity and capability to respond to future disasters

CDOs were to engage and establish strong working relationships with other key stakeholders involved in community recovery at the local and district levels. This will include working with these stakeholders to ensure they can effectively plan for the long-term sustainability of their communities and are best placed to build capacity in preparedness for and resilience to future disasters.

Delivery model

DCDSS procured and managed the CDOs on behalf of local government, however they were based within the LGA relevant to their area.

Scope

CDOs were to establish a local face to face presence across the affected communities to engage and identify community needs and aspirations, facilitate developmental opportunities, facilitate community planning days and to support and nurture prioritised community recovery and resilience projects.

Priority was to be given to delivery in smaller impacted communities where there is limited social services operating.

CDOs were to operate in alignment with the National Disaster Recovery Principles as outlined in the National Community Recovery Handbook 2.

The eligible geographical area was aligned to the areas activated for DRFA assistance under the disaster event. Specifically, funding for the three CDOs was restricted to three LGAs:

- Gladstone
- Mackay
- Rockhampton

The scope for the Community Development Officers was to:

- Utilise community development and theories of change methodologies
- Undertake widespread community engagement activities to discuss the recovery process and to identify the needs and aspirations of diverse groups within the affected area
- Support and enable capacity and skills development of individuals and groups, businesses and service providers within the affected areas
- Support and enable the development of recovery and resilience plans for the affected areas
- Raise awareness of and assist community groups to develop their capacity to submit recovery and/or resilience project proposals under the Flexible Funding Program
- Promote disaster recovery and resilience information and share ideas/projects from other locations
- Engage with other key workers involved in community recovery at a local level and establish links with workers funded under other components of the Community Recovery Fund.

The guidelines outlined eligible and ineligible costs and activities.

Reporting

The guidelines outlined the reporting requirements summarised in the table below.

Frequency	Details
Monthly	Activities undertaken Milestone and progress report
Quarterly	Case studies Financial progress report Upcoming activities and outcomes
Annual	Audited acquittal statement and supporting general ledger

Schedule

The guidelines stipulated that funding will be available across 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years with all funds to be fully expended and acquitted by 30 June 2021.

Budget

A total budget of \$1.08 million was allocated to the program.

The allocation per location for the full duration of the Community Development funding program is \$360,000. \$300,000 is allocated to wages, with \$60,000 to be allocated to program delivery and community engagement costs.

Appendix B – Evaluation plan

Program outcomes

The Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018-2021 identified high level recovery outcomes organised around the five functional lines of recovery. The community recovery outcomes that relate to the Community Development Program are as follows:

- Households, families and individuals can act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process.
- Community members have access to appropriate and coordinated social services.
- Community members feel sufficiently safe and secure following a disaster to engage in social activities and interactions with other members of the community.
- The community has improved capacity and capability to respond to future disasters.

Program logic

A program logic has been developed as a diagram by QRA, which is included as *Appendix C*.

The diagram shows the logical relationship for how:

- outputs can be measured against indicators
- indicators relate to the program strategies and activities
- strategies and activities achieve program objectives
- the Community Development Program objectives align with human and social recovery objectives
- the human and social recovery objectives align with the overarching recovery outcomes
- the overarching recovery outcomes align to the recovery objective of sustainable and resilient communities.

Program monitoring data

Quantitative

The quantitative data planned for one-off monitoring is:

- time required to procure CDOs.

The quantitative data planned for regular and ongoing monitoring is:

- number of hours developing and delivering events
- number of participants in events
- number of community agencies participating in events

- number of hours developing and resources and tools
- number of hours on training and learning
- number of Participants in training activities
- number of hours supporting FFG development
- number of Participants in FFG Activities
- number of hours on developing RR Plan
- number of Participants in RR Plan.

Qualitative

The qualitative data planned for regular and ongoing monitoring is:

- case studies.

Financial

The financial data planned for regular and ongoing monitoring is:

- actual expenditure, aligned to financial transaction reports
- estimated forecast to complete.

State reporting

Recovery reporting

The quantitative and qualitative monitoring data and financial progress reports were referenced by QRA to inform the progress reports prepared as part of the Central Queensland Bushfires Recovery Plan 2018 – 2021 reporting requirements.

Community Recovery Package reporting

The quantitative and qualitative monitoring data and financial progress reports were reviewed, aggregated, and summarised by QRA and submitted to EMA as part of the DRFA Category C Community Recovery Package reporting arrangements.

Program reviews

QRA conducted regular program reviews of all DRFA funded programs, which included a comprehensive program review three times each year. The Community Development Program was included in this review, with time allocated for DCDSS representatives or QRA liaison officers to brief the QRA Executive team on the program and progress.

Program evaluation

Key evaluation questions

Key evaluation questions (KEQ) give focus to different aspects of a disaster recovery program. A list of KEQs is provided in the framework, which has been considered and sampled in the evaluation of the Community Development Program. Additional KEQs have been developed by QRA in some instances to support further evaluative activity specific to this program.

KEQs have been sampled based on:

- relevance to this program
- availability of monitoring data
- coverage of all five evaluation aspects of a disaster recovery program.

KEQs sampled for this evaluation are indicated with a tick (✓).

Governance

To evaluate the governance of disaster recovery programs, the following KEQs were sampled to assess whether the governance structure helped to achieve recovery outcomes.

Governance key evaluation questions		Sampled
G1	Has the governance structure taken a long-term perspective on outcomes and recognised the complexity of the process?	
G2	Has the governance structure ensured recovery programs are monitored on a regular basis?	✓
G3	Has the governance structure ensured programs are adaptive to changing needs and impact?	
G4	Has the governance structure ensured recovery plans clearly define roles and responsibilities for disaster recovery?	
G5	Has the governance structure ensured governance procedures conform to legislation, policies, and other plans?	✓
G6	Has the governance structure established community-managed funds and other resources for disaster recovery?	
G7	Is there a shared understanding among stakeholders regarding disaster recovery responsibilities, authority and decision-making?	✓
G8	Has the governance structure ensured that governance is transparent and accountable?	
G9	Has the governance structure managed unintended consequences that might flow from recovery activities?	
G10	Has the governance structure coordinated response and relief efforts with the recovery process so that the two 'work together'?	✓

Community engagement

To evaluate the community engagement on disaster recovery programs, the following KEQs have been sampled to assess whether the engagement process appropriately drew from the community to ensure the community was integral to the recovery process.

Community engagement key evaluation questions		Sampled
C1	Has community engagement occurred in a timely and on-going way that provides adequate representation of community views?	✓
C2	Is there shared vision of a sustainable and resilient community that is understood by the community?	
C3	Has there been joint planning between community actors and emergency teams and structures?	
C4	Do organisations have capacity to develop and manage community volunteers for disaster recovery?	
C5	Are recovery plans developed through participatory processes?	✓
C6	Does the community have the capacity and formal avenues to lobby and challenge external agencies on disaster recovery plans, priorities, and actions?	
C7	Is there inclusion/representation of vulnerable groups in community decision-making and management of disaster recovery?	
C8	Are agreed plans and management arrangements well understood by the community and all disaster management agencies?	
C9	Has information been developed and disseminated in multiple media, multi-lingual formats, alternative formats; is appropriate to a diverse audience, user-friendly; and accessible to under-served populations?	
C10	Do community members have information they need to continue recovering from the disaster?	
C11	Are evolving community needs assessed and prioritised during the recovery process to inform recovery activities?	
C12	Are governance processes appropriately inclusive and representative of the affected community?	

Effectiveness

To evaluate the effectiveness of disaster recovery programs, the following KEQs have been sampled to assess whether the program was effective in achieving the overarching recovery outcomes.

Effectiveness key evaluation questions		Sampled
E1	To what extent did the disaster recovery program produce a sustainable community?	✓
E2	To what extent did the disaster recovery program produce a resilient community?	✓
E3	Was there any trade-off between achieving resilient outcomes and sustainable outcomes?	
E4	To what extent did program activities and resources allow positive interaction among the recovery domains (lines of recovery / other programs)?	

Efficiency

To evaluate the effectiveness of disaster recovery programs, the following KEQs have been sampled to assess whether the program was efficient in its implementation.

Efficiency key evaluation questions		Sampled
H1	To what extent did the program achieve the right balance between centralisation of some activities to achieve economies of scale while at the same time being responsive to local needs and conditions?	✓
H2	Did the program prevent price escalation stemming from the level of demand and competition between organisations?	
H3	How well did the program balance the need to optimise between cost of restoring essential public assets and the cost of delaying such projects?	
H4	How appropriate were the price benchmarks used to evaluate service providers?	
H5	Did the program achieve value for money relative to the disaster recovery context?	✓

Implementation

To evaluate the effectiveness of disaster recovery programs, the following KEQs have been sampled to assess whether the implementation of the program was appropriate.

Implementation key evaluation questions		Sampled
I1	Was the program consistent with the National Principles for Disaster Recovery?	✓
I2	To what extent has the program been implemented according to the recovery plan?	
I3	Did the speed of the recovery process compromise quality of services?	
I4	Did the recovery program meet community needs as they changed over time and in response to changes in disaster impact?	
I5	To what extent did program activities and resources effectively encourage interaction between outcome domains?	
I6	Where disaster recovery involved several separate components or projects, how well coordinated were these with each other?	✓
I7	To what extent was the recovery process affected by external factors that may have had an impact on the community's ability to recover?	✓

Dissemination of findings

The evaluation will be shared with DCDSS and relevant Queensland Government departments and agencies.

A copy of the evaluation report will be uploaded to the National Disaster and Evaluation Database hosted at the Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub.

