



QUEENSLAND RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

Evaluation Report

North West Queensland Beef Recovery Package Community Recovery Package

**North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough
25 January 2019 – 14 February 2019**

November 2022

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Queensland Reconstruction Authority
 PO Box 15428
 City East QLD 4002
 Phone (07) 3008 7200
info@qra.qld.gov.au

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Introduction

The North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough produced exceptional rainfall that caused disruption and damage to communities in Far North Queensland. This record-breaking rainfall cut off communities, devastated the livestock industry, left the freight industry at a standstill and destroyed infrastructure, homes and businesses.

In total, 39 of Queensland's 77 Local Government Areas (LGAs) were activated for disaster assistance for this event and more than 116,667 people identified as experiencing hardship. The economic and social recovery from this large-scale disaster was beyond the capacity of local communities to facilitate and continues to require long-term support from all functional lines of recovery.

A Community Recovery Package was announced as a joint Commonwealth and State funded program through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) under Category D. The package included the North West Queensland Beef Recovery Package.

The purpose of the North West Queensland Beef Recovery Package was to assist primary producers and related industries that had been impacted by the devastating effects of the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough. Disaster recovery in primary industries includes the need for financial assistance, financial counselling and industry assistance programs.

The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) led the implementation of the program with administrative support from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA). The program concluded in June 2021.

This evaluation requires conduct in accordance with [A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs \(2018: 2\)](#). The framework allows for examination of the effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness and implementation of the grants. It also considers if the grants supported disaster affected communities to become more sustainable and resilient.

Developed for QRA, the Deloitte Overarching Disaster Recovery Evaluation Framework has also been reviewed and incorporated within this evaluation.

In conclusion, the evaluation of the North West Queensland Beef Recovery Package was shown to contribute to the recovery of the communities and local economies impacted by the North and Far North Monsoon Trough (Monsoon Trough). Detailed findings were documented in response to key evaluation questions.

Recommendations have been provided to improve the effectiveness of a North West Queensland Beef Recovery Package in future, with the evaluation of grants being an important contribution to improve subsequent disaster programs in government.

Publishing of this report will occur on the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub.

Program Implementation

Summary

Scope

As part of the DRFA Category D assistance, a total of \$22 million was available under the North West Queensland Beef Recovery Package. Objectives of the package are to:

- provide specialist industry recovery officers and financial counsellors to enable primary industries to access industry information and assistance to help them recover from both a production and business management point of view
- support primary producers and related industry in recovering from the devastating impacts of the Monsoon Trough
- assist in accelerating recovery of industry and communities and relieve distress caused by the event.

The capped delivery amount of \$22 million was allocated as:

- **Freight Subsidies** – \$10 million
- **Concessional Loans for Primary Producers** – \$10 million
- **Industry Recovery Officers and Financial Counsellors** – \$2 million.

Cost

The indicative breakdown of costs was initially set as below. Throughout delivery of the package, DAF had the ability to review and assess requirements to change the delivery model if required.

Resource	Timeframe	Preliminary Budget	Actual cost
Flood freight restocking and agistment subsidies	Within 24 months from the event for restocking. Within 12 months from the event for agistment.	\$10 million	\$2.1 million
Exceptional Disaster Loans	Until 30 June 2021.	\$10 million	\$4.3 million
Five North West Queensland (NWQ) Industry Recovery Officers (IROs)	12 months from contract date.	\$895,000	\$2.2 million
Four (4) part time Coastal IROs	Six months from contract date.	\$340,000	

Three (3) Financial Counsellors	12 months from contract date.	\$765,000	
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Time

All funds were to be aligned by the timeframes set as below.

Resource	Target Date	Actual Date
Flood freight subsidies restocking and agistment scheme (FFSRAS)		
• Last eligible movement date	14-Feb-21	Feb-21
• All FFSRAS activities completed by	30-Jun-21	30-Jun-21
Enhanced concessional loans		
• Loans must be approved by	30-Mar-21	Mar-20
NWQ Industry Recovery Officers and Rural Financial Counsellors		
• Activities completed by	31-Dec-20	Jun-21
Coastal Industry Recovery Officers		
• Activities completed by	30-Nov-19	Feb-20
• Final acquittal reports to DAF by	15-Dec-19	Mar-20
Full program acquittal report due from DAF to QRA	30-Sept-21	30-Sept-21

Governance activity

Advisory group

QRA is responsible for overarching administration of the DRFA and works closely with state agencies to deliver value for money and best practice expenditure and acquittal of DRFA funds within disaster-affected communities.

DAF is responsible for administering delivery of the Industry Recovery Officers and Rural Financial Counsellors.

DAF established two Regional Coordinating Committees (RCCs), one for coastal local government areas and one operating in North West Queensland, to provide local oversight and ownership of the IRO programs. RCCs were chaired by either a senior regional DAF officer, the DAF Flood Recovery Officer or a representative Local Government Mayor.

RCC membership was made up of relevant stakeholder groups, including:

- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries – Regional representation/Land Management/Biosecurity Queensland/Agri Science Queensland
- Department of Environment and Science
- Relevant local government Mayors
- Queensland Health
- Financial Counsellor representatives
- QFF
- IROs
- Regional NRM groups
- Commonwealth representative

DAF was required to coordinate all reporting to QRA as required under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Program reviews

QRA conducted regular program reviews which incorporated financial and progress assessments of the North West Queensland Beef Recovery Package. 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.

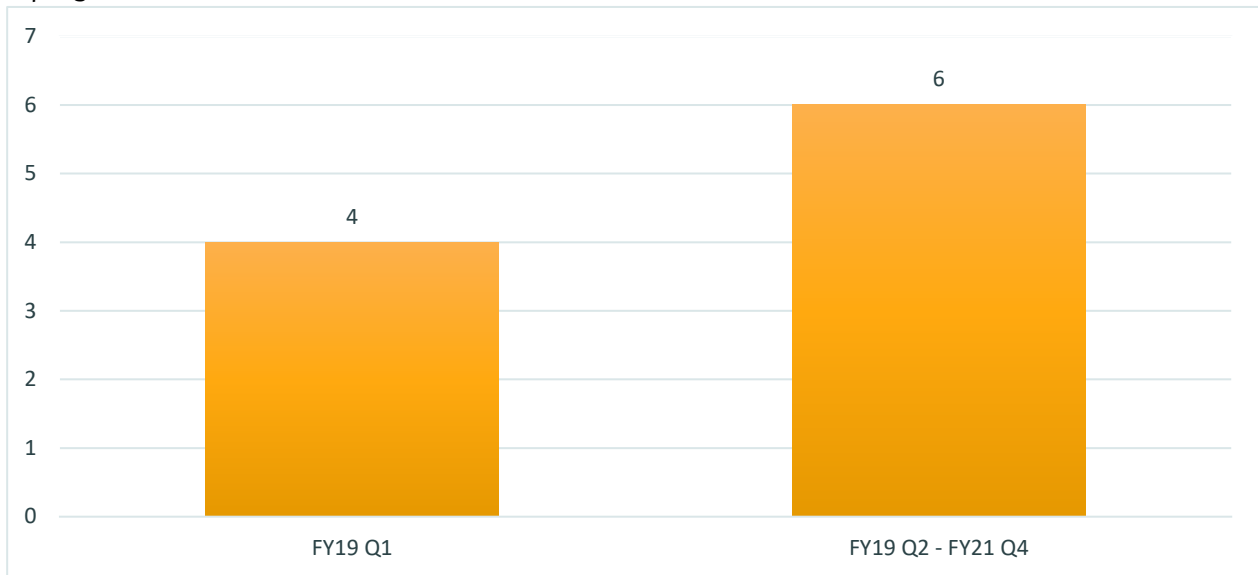
QRA provided quarterly progress reports on all Category D packages, including the North West Queensland Beef Recovery Package, to Emergency Management Australia (EMA) – as the Commonwealth and State jointly funded the program. These reports were made available for evaluation.

Progress monitoring

Quantitative

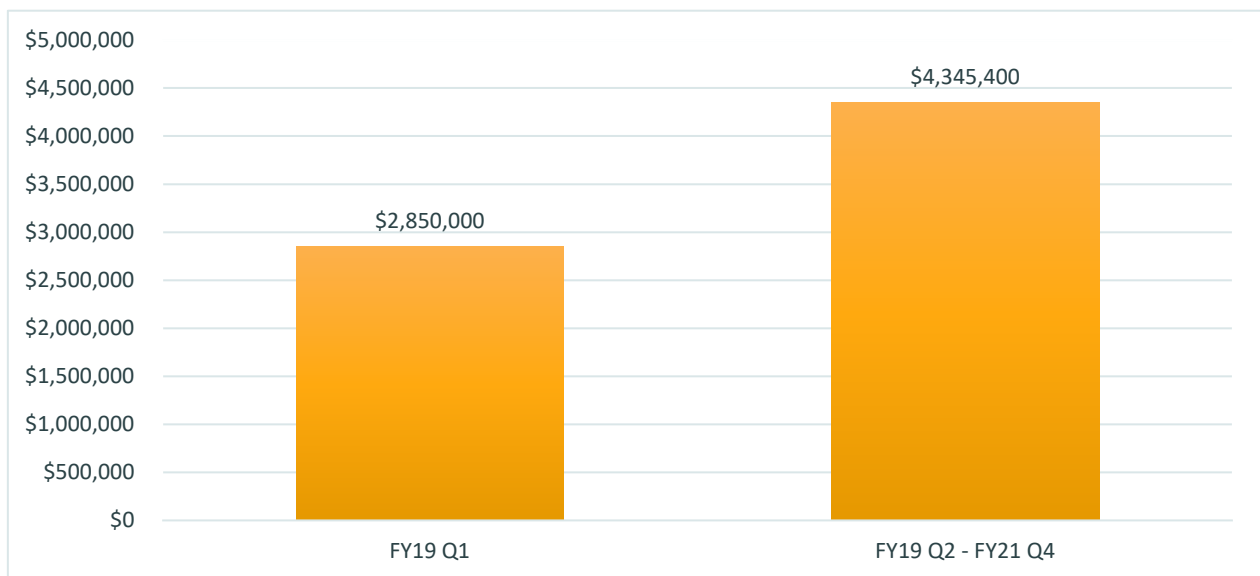
Loan applications approved

A total of six Concessional Loans were approved over the period of the program. The following graph shows the cumulative number of approved applications. Four applications were approved in the first quarter of the 2019-20 financial year, with a further two applications approved in the second quarter, totalling six approved applications. No further applications were approved for the remainder of the program.



Value of loan applications

The total value of approved loan applications was \$4,345,400. The following graph shows the cumulative value of approved applications over the program.



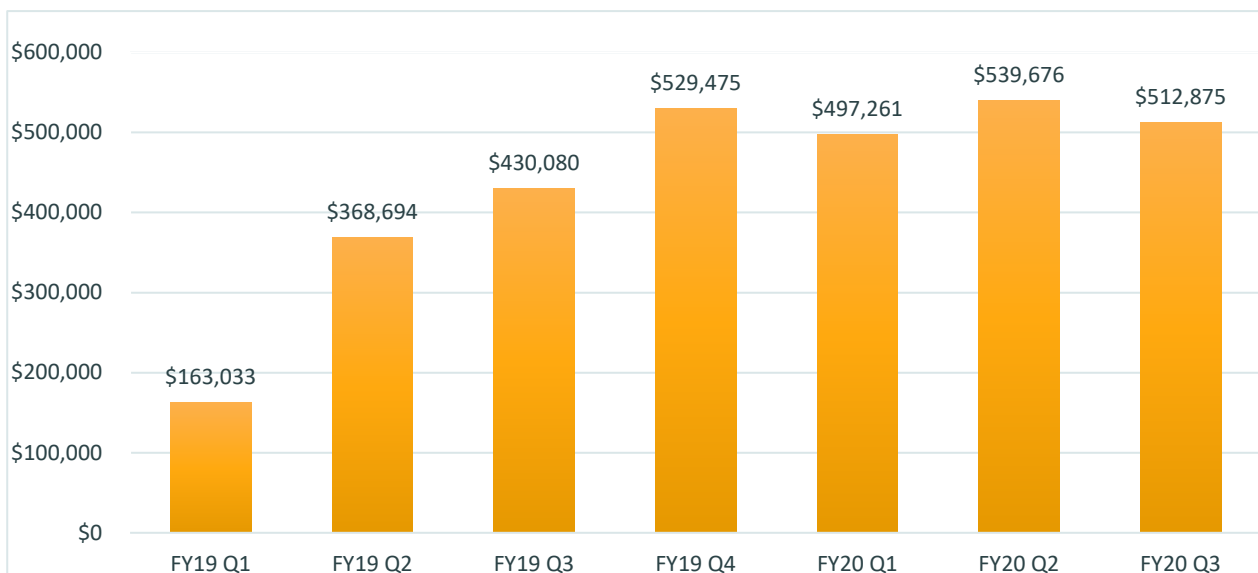
Number of approved restocking applicants

Monsoon Trough Monitoring Data for quarter six (ending December 2020) reports 75 approved restocking applicants, however the final number of approved applicants for quarter seven (ending March 2021) reported 64. This evaluation assumes this is an error and the total number of approved restocking applications was 64.



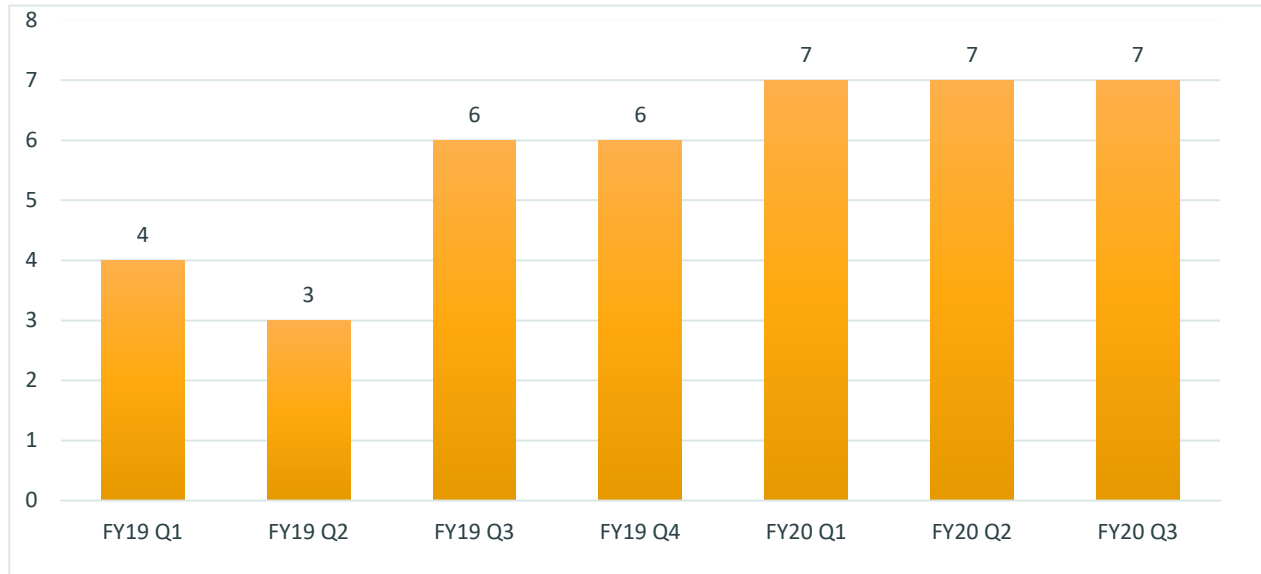
Value of restocking subsidies

There are variations in the Monsoon Trough Monitoring Data across the program. This evaluation assumes these are reporting errors and the final value of restocking subsidies is \$512,875.



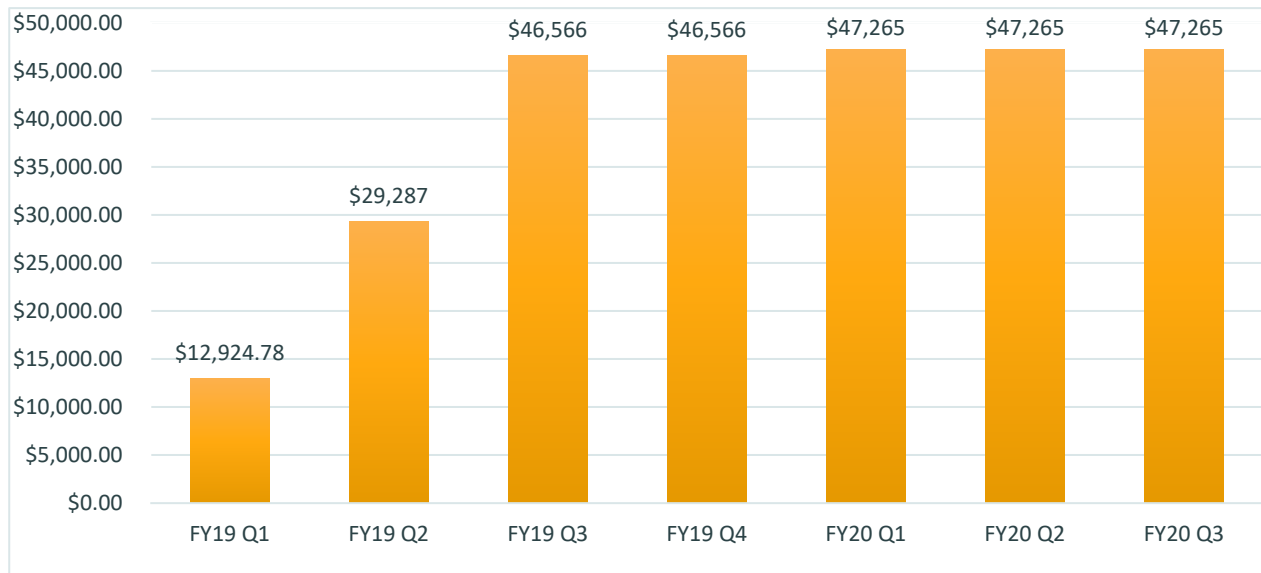
Number of approved agistment applicants

A total of seven applications for agistment subsidies were approved over the program.



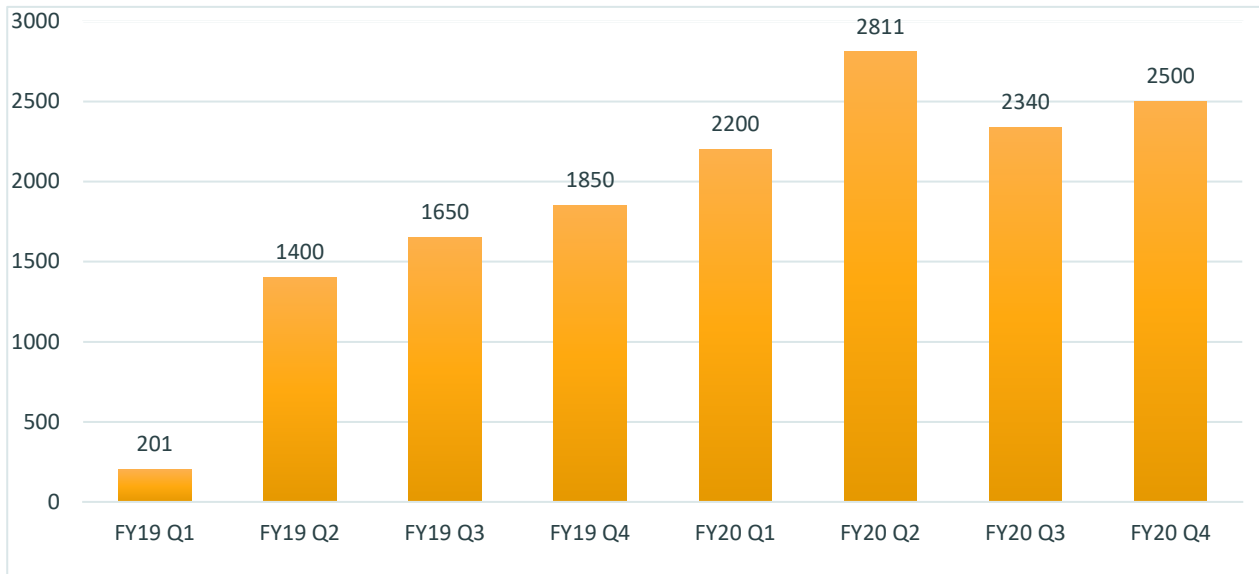
Value of agistment subsidies

The total value of agistment subsidies for the program was \$47,265.00.



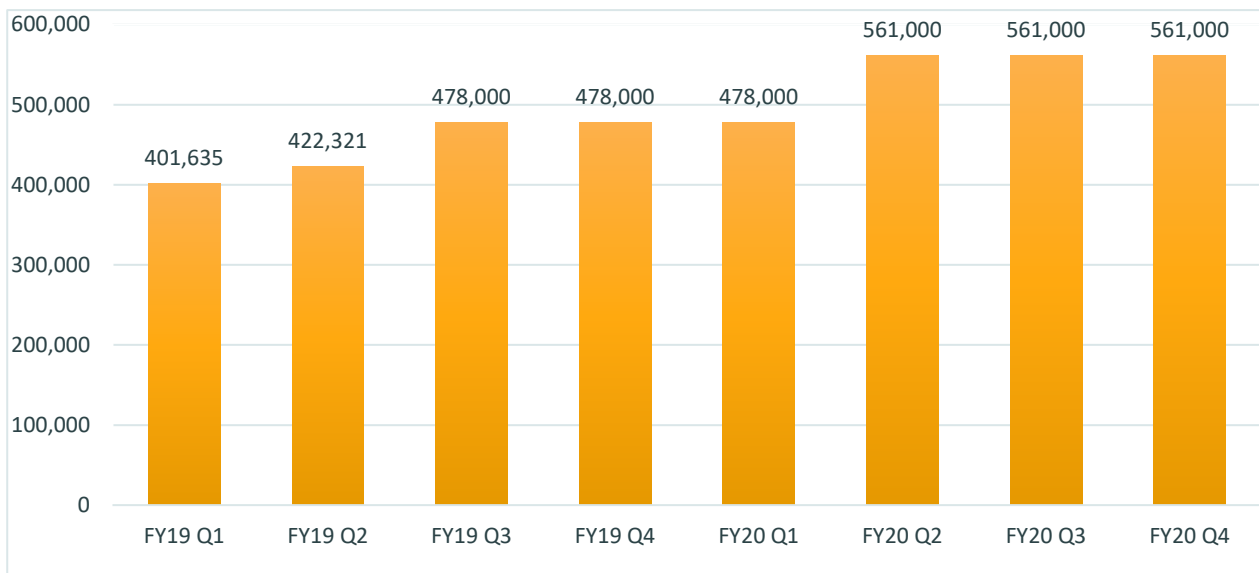
Number of direct engagements with primary producers

Industry Recovery Officers and Financial Counsellors reported 14,952 engagements with primary producers over the program.



Number of primary producers reached through media

A media campaign conducted by DAF reached approximately 561,000 primary producers during the program.



Overview of LGAs activated for assistance under the package

- 15 LGAs were activated for Concessional Loans
- 15 LGAs were activated for FFSRAS
- 11 LGAs were activated for IROs
- 11 LGAs were activated for RFCs.

Activated LGA	Concessional Loans	Flood Freight Subsidies Restocking and Agistment Scheme	IRO	RFC
Aurukun				
Barcoo				
Boulia				
Burdekin			Coastal	
Burke			NW	
Cairns				
Carpentaria			NW	
Cassowary coast				
Charter Towers				
Cloncurry			NW	
Cook				
Croydon				
Diamantina				
Douglas			Coastal	
Etheridge				
Flinders			NW	
Hinchinbrook			Coastal	
Hope vale				
Kowanyama				
Lockhart River				
Longreach				
Mackay				
Mapoon				
Mareeba				
McKinlay			NW	
Mornington				
Mount Isa				
Napranum				
Pormpuraaw				
Richmond			NW	
Torres				
Torres Strait				
Townsville			Coastal	
Whitsunday				
Winton			NW	
Wujal Wujal				
Yarrabah				

Qualitative

Community sentiments

DAF collaborated with local governments, AgForce, Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) and the North Queensland Livestock Industry Recovery Agency (NQLIRA) to develop an online survey of livestock owners impacted by the Monsoon. The survey was open between 25 June – 30 September 2019 and distributed by email from DAF to all registered livestock owners based on Registered Biosecurity Entity information.

The survey received 126 responses with representation from Burke Shire Council, Carpentaria Shire Council, Flinders Shire Council, McKinlay Shire Council, Richmond Shire Council and Winton Shire Council.

Recovery progress was reported at an individual level (for each survey respondent) instead of at a property level. An overview of survey results is summarised below.

Recovery progress

- Most of the restocking and repairs had been conducted by respondents who had already received a grant.

Grants and Loans

- 83% of respondents said they had applied for grants, loans or other assistance.
- The timing of the survey indicates these may have predominately been Special Disaster Assistance Recovery grants, not included in the package.
- Respondents reported it was “very easy” to access grants and loans.
- Survey respondents reported positive feedback about the \$75,000 Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grant (SDARG). Immediately following the Monsoon, a range of grants and loans were available outside the NWQ Beef Recovery Package, including SDARG.
- Farm Management Deposit (FMD) liquidation clauses were perceived as preventing access to loans.
- The survey captured perceived inequalities in eligibility criteria by livestock owners with off-farm income or who do not own their land.
- There were several compliments for government and aid providers including one comment “compliments to all aid givers from physical helpers, food vouchers and governments.”

Recovery information

- Survey participants were asked to nominate what information would be useful to assist their recovery. Top themes included pasture recovery advice, soil erosion management, technology and general business information.

- Approximately one quarter of cattle had been replaced by October 2019, but nearly half of survey respondents were not seeking to restock. Landholders reported concerns over poor pasture growth and recovery.
- The survey also captured suggestions from the community to administer funding for weed control and eradication programs.

Activities delivered by Industry Recovery Officers

IROs were implemented in hardest hit communities to provide primary industries access to information and assistance, helping them recover in production and business management.

Key responsibilities included:

- building resilience in case of future events
- helping the community with mental health
- upskilling workers for the beef industry
- providing access to financial assistance measures
- developing programs to meet community needs
- facilitating and coordinating stakeholders such as LGAs, State and Commonwealth government departments (e.g. Queensland Health and National Response and Recovery Agency).

Activities delivered by Rural Financial Counsellors

RFCs were contracted by Rural Financial Counselling Service North Queensland (RFCSNQ) to work with primary producers and small business operators impacted by the Monsoon.

Key responsibilities included to:

- work with rural industries and small businesses to provide financial analysis to determine the financial position of eligible enterprises
- develop, assess and report on strategies and plans for business recovery
- provide information on rural credit matters
- assist producers to negotiate arrangements with their financial institutions
- refer farm families to a network of professional service providers for advice with matters such as legal, accounting and planning and investment strategies, social and welfare problems and to the Rural Financial Counselling Service for Farm Business Debt Mediation matter and ongoing future support
- provide reports as required on the number of primary producers and small businesses helped, activities, outputs and assisted outcomes achieved
- establish and maintain functional referral networks with financial institutions and industry organisations.

Reporting

IROs were required to deliver monthly reports to DAF as well as three progress reports and a final report. RFCs were required to deliver six quarterly progress reports and a final report. DAF was required to provide quarterly progress reports to QRA.

IRO interviews

QRA conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the Coastal and NWQ IROs as well as the QFF and DAF program managers. 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain an understanding of activities carried out by IROs, communication between IROs and their community, the employment nature of IROs and their perceptions about recovery and resilience.

Case studies

Throughout grants implementation, case studies were used to highlight examples of qualitative outcomes. One case study was made available for evaluation as indexed below.

Index	Case study	Aligned Recovery Outcomes
CS01	Industry Recovery Officers – information and assistance	Businesses are operational, industry supply chains are re-established and regional economic resilience to future events is strengthened.

Evaluation findings

Governance

Regular Monitoring

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

The NWQ Beef Recovery Package was administered by QRA and coordinated by DAF in partnership with state and local government organisations.

DAF provided quarterly progress reports to QRA detailing the:

- number of subsidy and loan applications approved
- value of approved subsidy and loan applications
- number of engagements by IROs and Financial Counsellors with Primary Producers
- number of people reached through media campaigns.

Progress reporting enabled DAF and QRA to jointly monitor the:

- rate of loan and grant uptake in the community
- evolving recovery needs for assistance
- balance of total funding remaining
- primary producers receiving recovery information from IROs and RFCs
- number of people receiving recovery information through media.

An example of key monitoring data was the total number of approved applications for restocking subsidies through the FFSRAS. Monthly reporting data showed a low uptake in communities due to seasonal conditions. This data informed DAF and QRAs decision to re-allocate subsidy funding and extend the IRO program.

Each financial quarter, monitoring data was consolidated by QRA and shared with EMA as part of the DRFA reporting requirements to the Commonwealth. The quarterly data was updated 12 times (refer to progress monitoring graphs). The reported outputs and metrics followed program guidelines to support evaluation of the recovery outcomes.

Finding 1: The governance structure ensured regular monitoring of the NWQ Beef Recovery Package.

In addition to quarterly monitoring and reporting, DAF completed a project close out review to identify key achievements and areas for improvement. This review captured community feedback from grant recipients and engagement with project staff to document lessons learned. The project close-out activities provided valuable program insight and further supported the evaluation of recovery outcomes.

Finding 2: The governance structure ensured a close out review was undertaken to document lessons learned.

Recommendation 1: Delivery organisations implementing IROs should incorporate a close-out review with program delivery staff and community members, to capture feedback and document lessons learned.

DAF established two Regional Coordinating Committees (RCCs), one for Coastal IROs and another for North West IROs. The purpose of the RCCs was to provide local oversight and ownership of the IRO program. RCCs were chaired by a representative from DAF and membership included representatives from:

- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries – regional representation / Land Management / Biosecurity Queensland / Agri Science Queensland
- Department of Environment and Science
- Relevant Local Government Mayors
- Queensland Health
- Financial Counsellor representatives
- Queensland Farmers' Federation
- IROs
- Regional NRM groups
- Commonwealth representatives.

Finding 3: Regional Coordinating Committees were established to guide the IRO program on local needs.

Recommendation 2: Record minutes during Regional Coordinating Committee meetings to capture challenges, actions and decisions.

Recommendation 3: Include the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy as a member of the Regional Coordinating Committee to ensure information sharing between IROs, Community Development Officers and Community Recovery.

QRA conducted one-on-one interviews with the IROs and DAF to assist with program evaluation. In one interview, the program manager reported IROs were provided with in-person training in Cloncurry over three days to prepare for their role and provide information about reporting requirements. IROs reported in their interviews that they had access to a reporting template, but some were confused about what type of information they were required to report and how the information would be used. The IROs who reported undertaking regular reporting recalled including different activities in their report. One IRO was aware of a reporting template but did not know how to use it.

Finding 4: There were inconsistencies in the IROs understanding of reporting requirements and how the information would be used.

There were similar findings for IROs understanding their role and responsibilities. A key theme that emerged in interviews with IROs was that their role was agile and responded to the needs of the community. Some IROs recalled having a position description but it wasn't reviewed for the duration of their role. Other IROs could not recall having a position but created their own, one reporting:

"[I] took my own notes and created my own [position description] for something that I could do."

Another IRO said a position description did not exist for their role.

Finding 5: There were variations in the IROs understanding of their role and responsibilities, which may have led to inconsistent reports to DAF and QRA.

Recommendation 4: Develop a role description to include regular reporting as a key responsibility.

Recommendation 5: Deliver training to all IROs during induction including an overview of reporting requirements, how reporting is used, how to use the reporting template and when to submit the report.

Recommendation 6: Coordinate regular meetings with IROs to discuss reporting requirements, deadlines and queries.

:

"[It was] frustrating...[it] ruined our integrity as we are members of the community."

Finding 6: IROs relied on governance to ensure the information they provided to communities was accurate and consistent.

Recommendation 7: Coordinate regular meetings with IROs to ensure they are informed with current information to communicate with communities, are aware of upcoming deadlines, key messages and potential issues. Issues reported by IROs to DAF should be included in the quarterly report to QRA for escalation where required.

Community engagement

Accessible and appropriate information

C11 - Do community members have information they need to continue recovering from the disaster?

The NWQ Beef Recovery Package included multiple streams of assistance including the FFSRAS, Concessional Loans and embedded Industry Recovery Officers and Rural Financial Counsellors in impacted communities, to deliver information about available assistance and support services.

An online survey was conducted by DAF between 25 June – 30 September 2019 targeting primary producers. 126 people across Burke, Carpentaria, Cloncurry, Flinders, McKinlay, Richmond and Winton local government areas completed the survey. The survey aimed to determine estimated livestock losses and infrastructure damage, including three questions relating to preferred information providers, methods of communication and information needs.

The preferred information providers were:

- DAF
- QRIDA
- Councils
- AgForce.

Finding 7: DAF was the preferred information provider for primary producers in North West Queensland.

The preferred methods of communication were:

- email
- websites
- small groups
- face-to-face visits.

Finding 8: Face-to-face visits were among the top preferred methods of receiving information about recovery.

The highest information needs were:

- pasture recovery
- soil erosion management
- technology
- general business information.

In 2019, DAF undertook six media releases/responses to promote assistance for primary producers offered through the NWQ Beef Recovery package impacted regions. More information about the campaign's target audience and performance against campaign objectives would help in drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of social media advertising to reach primary producers.

In June 2019, DAF appointed five North West IROs and four Coastal IROs responsible for connecting primary producers with information such as:

- support services available under DRFA
- other available support services
- training and advice.

DAF also appointed three RFCs who were responsible for providing financial advice to affected primary producers.

IROs and RFCs predominately used face-to-face interactions and phone calls to deliver information to the community. IROs and RFCs reported more than 14,952 engagements with primary producers throughout the program.

Finding 9: DAF used social media as its primary communication channel to promote information about available recovery assistance. IROs and RFCs used face-to-face interactions and phone calls to deliver information.

There are opportunities to deliver information using communication channels such as website updates, media releases and social media. IROs should support DAF communications by delivering information through direct channels such as emails, face-to-face interaction and phone calls. Direct communication activities could include a regular email update to their network with information about available assistance, deadlines, tips for submissions, local events, training and services as well as a booking system for one-on-one visits.

Recommendation 8: A range of communication methods could be adopted by DAF in partnership with QRIDA, local government councils, AgForce, NRM Groups and NQLIRA.

IROs were connected to the community and able to support information needs of primary producers. In one-on-one interviews with QRA, all IROs and managers reported their services were helpful for community members to learn about available funding assistance. For example, one IRO reported working with a grower who was not aware about funding available to reinstate their eroded headland. The IRO assisted the grower to complete the application for SDARG and the grant was approved. Without intervention by the IRO, the grower may not have become aware of available assistance.

Finding 10: IROs provided information to the community about funding assistance and support services. Direct feedback from the community accessing information (from the IRO) would provide further substantiation – such as, how many grant applications or approvals were a direct result of assistance from IROs and RFCs.

Recommendation 9: There is an opportunity for DAF to conduct a survey for IROs and RFCs following engagements with community members. The survey should offer the opportunity for community members to provide feedback about information they received, their level of satisfaction, if the service met their

information needs and the likelihood of acting on the information provided by IROs and RFCs.

In addition to one-on-one engagements and phone calls, IROs coordinated community events and workshops to provide recovery information and develop skills in the community.

One IRO established a partnership with the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) to develop skills in the sector. Training workshops were delivered across the Gulf shires, Burke Shire Council and Carpentaria Shire Council to train existing and prospective cattle station employees. Approximately 20 people participated in the workshops and were trained to work on cattle stations.

Other examples of events included:

- a grower discussion group meeting
- a nursery practices and QFF climate and weather workshop
- a financial workshop
- a safety and emergency preparedness workshop
- first aid workshops
- an Outback Futures Workshop
- Northern Australia Climate Program workshops
- Yoga day
- Agriculture Day
- a Rural Minds Mental Health workshop
- a Business Edge Workshop.

Finding 11: IROs provided opportunities for the community to receive information by coordinating events and workshops across a broad range of topics to assist with recovery. There is limited evidence about how events were promoted to local communities, how many people attended and feedback from attendees on learnings from the events.

Recommendation 10: Invite event attendees to provide feedback about community events. Questions should include how the attendee heard about the event, what they learned and what additional information they need to support their recovery.

IRO feedback highlighted the recruitment process was a successful element of the program. The criteria for prospective IROs stipulated candidates must be local to the impacted region, well connected in their community, and understand what locals experienced through the Monsoon event. One IRO shared the benefit of being part of the community, rather than a temporary resource, which gave the ability to leverage their relationship to deliver information to the community:

“...definitely the biggest advantage was being a local.”

Finding 12: The recruitment of local community members as IROs contributed to delivering information to impacted primary producers, with key advantages being

their existing relationship within the community and shared understanding of challenges from the Monsoon event.

Finding 13: The ability of IROs to deliver information and select appropriate channels for communication was dependant on the individual's personality, reputation and connections within their community.

Recommendation 11: Ensure the role description for an IRO includes details about valuable attributes – such as connections within the community, a close network with primary producers, written and verbal communication skills. Interviews with potential IROs should aim to determine their understanding of people in the community, culture, challenges and networks.

IROs reported that being affiliated with DAF in their role was a key success factor in delivering information to communities. This aligns with feedback provided by the community (to DAF) in a survey to primary producers, who nominated DAF as the preferred information provider. IROs also reported that DAF provided greater exposure to community networks.

Finding 14: The IROs affiliation with DAF contributed to their credibility and ability to deliver information in communities.

Recommendation 12: DAF should coordinate future IRO programs for primary producers.

While it can be shown that IROs supported the delivery of information to impacted communities, a key challenge identified by IROs in their interviews with QRA was delivering consistent and reliable information on funding assistance. IROs reported frustrations with changes to deadlines for grant applications after they had encouraged producers to submit their application. One IRO reported:

“[It was] frustrating...[it] ruined our integrity as we are members of the community.”

This issue may be attributed to governance and is explored further in Key Evaluation Question 1.

Finding 15: IROs relied on governance to ensure the information they provided to communities was accurate and consistent.

Evolving community needs

C12 - Are evolving community needs assessed and prioritised during the recovery process to inform recovery activities?

Regular reporting by DAF allowed evolving community needs to be assessed and prioritised throughout the duration of the program.

The program design considered the prediction of significant interest in restocking after the event, and consequently a large uptake of the freight subsidies. However, due to unfavourable climatic conditions and reduced pasture response following the floods, many producers decided not to restock or introduce agistment cattle onto their property, as feed sources were too low. It was reported in the QRo4 progress report that the freight subsidy program was likely to be underspent.

In response, three of the five North West IROs were extended to 30 June 2021 to continue their services for primary producers. The two remaining IROs did not renew their contracts and the evaluation did not find evidence their position was filled.

Finding 16: Progress reporting allowed QRA and DAF to identify underspends, which informed recommendations to the Commonwealth about re-allocating funding to initiatives being accessed by impacted communities.

Recommendation 13: Programs should aim to remain flexible and agile to meet evolving community needs throughout the recovery process.

Effectiveness

Sustainable community

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

Quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrates the NWQ Beef Recovery Package contributed to a sustainable community.

As per the program logic in Appendix D, the program's recovery outcome links to the economic recovery objectives and outcomes, relating to the recovery objective of sustainable communities.

The targeted key recovery outcome of the program was to *assist primary producers and related industries impacted by the Monsoon Trough event*.

The three objectives specified in the NWQ Beef Recovery Package guidelines were to:

1. provide specialist industry recovery officer and financial counsellors to enable primary industries to access industry information and assistance to help them recover from both a production and business management point of view
2. support primary producers and related industry in recovering from the devastating impacts of the Monsoon Trough
3. assist in accelerating recovery of industry and communities and relieve distress caused by the event.

Provide primary industries with access to information and assistance

Three strategies were implemented to provide primary producers and impacted communities with information about available assistance to support their recovery.

Deliver a targeted media campaign

Throughout 2019, DAF undertook six relevant media releases/responses to promote assistance for primary producers offered through the NWQ Beef Recovery package impacted regions.

Finding 17: The media campaign delivered information about assistance to impacted communities.

Provide Industry Recovery Officers

Nine IROs were implemented across 11 LGAs in June 2019. The IROs and RFCs were responsible for connecting primary producers with information to support their recovery including:

- support services available under DRFA
- other available support services
- training and advice.

Over the course of the program, IROs and RFCs reported 14,952 (combined) engagements with primary producers. Through regular reporting by DAF to QRA, there is qualitative evidence IROs linked impacted community members with information and advice about available assistance and provided support for

grant and loan applications. There is also evidence the IROs provided holistic information and advice to impacted communities through opportunities for the community to engage in local training and events.

Finding 18: IROs enabled communities to access information and support services to assist with their recovery.

Provide Rural Financial Counsellors

Three RFCs were implemented across 11 LGAs and were responsible for providing financial advice to affected primary producers. Key responsibilities of RFCs included to:

- work with rural industries and small businesses to provide financial analysis – to determine the financial position of eligible enterprises
- develop, assess and report on strategies and plans for business recovery
- provide information on rural credit matters
- assist producers to negotiate arrangements with their financial institutions
- refer farm families to a network of professional service providers for advice with matters such as legal, accounting and planning and investment strategies, social and welfare problems and to the Rural Financial Counselling Service for Farm Business Debt Mediation matter and ongoing future support
- provide reports as required on the number of primary producers and small businesses helped, activities, outputs and outcomes achieved
- establish and maintain functional referral networks with financial institutions and industry organisations.

IROs and RFCs reported 14,952 (combined) engagements with primary producers over the course of the program. Engagements with primary producers aimed to provide financial advice and information to support their recovery.

Finding 19: RFCs provided information to support the economic and financial recovery of primary producers.

Support the recovery of primary producers

Deliver extended Concessional Loans

Six primary producers received financial support from Concessional Loans totalling \$4,345,400. The extension of Concessional Loans allowed eligible primary producers to access a low interest loan up to \$1 million to re-establish normal operations.

Finding 20: Extended Concessional Loans assisted impacted producers to cover some extraordinary recovery costs.

Program reporting showed a low uptake in Extended Concessional Loans. There is limited evidence to conclude causes for the low uptake, however there may have been resistance from primary producers to accumulate additional debt.

Finding 21: Extended Concessional Loans had a low uptake from primary producers.

Recommendation 14: Future programs should ensure RFCs are equipped to provide alternative solutions to support economic recovery for primary producers.

Deliver flood freight subsidies restocking and agistment scheme (FFSRAS)

Through the FFSRAS, there were 64 approved restocking subsidies to the value of \$512,875 and seven agistment subsidies to the value of \$47,265. The restocking subsidy enabled eligible primary producers to replace livestock lost through the floods. The agistment subsidy enabled primary producers to move stock within 12 months of the activation period.

Finding 22: The FFSRAS provided primary producers with the ability to subsidise the cost of moving and restocking livestock.

Reporting by DAF to QRA revealed a low uptake in approved applications for the FFSRAS. There is limited evidence from the community to support causes for the low uptake in subsidies, however IROs reported it may have been due to seasonal conditions and poor pasture growth.

Finding 23: IROs attributed poor seasonal conditions and pasture growth to the low uptake in the FFSRAS by primary producers.

QRA and DAF addressed the low uptake of the FFSRAS and potential underspends by reallocating funding to the IRO program to meet community needs. Refer to the Community Engagement KEQs for further findings and recommendations related to reallocating funding from FFSRAS to the IRO program.

Support accelerated recovery and relieve distress

Deliver Concessional Loans

When the NWQ Beef Recovery Package was launched, Concessional Loans up to \$250,000 were already available to eligible primary producers. The NWQ Beef Recovery Package enabled accelerated recovery

by extending the loans up to \$1 million for primary producers. The extended loans provided producers with additional capacity to undertake recovery activities, which may have reduced recovery time and/or distress following the event. Further evidence through community surveys and case studies would substantiate this finding.

Finding 24: Extended Concessional Loans increased capacity for primary producers to undertake recovery works.

Recommendation 15: Conduct regular surveys with community members to determine knowledge gaps, recovery priorities and case studies to support program evaluations.

Deliver the FFSRAS

The FFSRAS aimed to assist primary producers with impacted properties to restock as quickly as possible, enabling faster economic recovery.

The maximum level of financial assistance under the FFSRAS was up to \$50,000 per property, per year.

The FFSRAS provided primary producers with the ability to reduce the cost to restock and move livestock following the Monsoon event, supporting sustainability and business continuity.

Finding 25: The FFSRAS provided eligible producers with additional capacity to restock and move livestock.

This evaluation has identified the low uptake of restocking and agistment subsidies following the Monsoon event. A survey conducted (by DAF) with the impacted communities reported approximately one quarter of the total lost cattle had been restocked by October 2019. However, nearly half of the survey respondents were not seeking to restock due to poor seasonal conditions and pasture growth.

Finding 26: Producers reported they were choosing not to restock due to poor seasonal conditions.

Recommendation 16: Future programs should conduct regular community surveys to gauge community attitudes and concerns on available recovery assistance – this may assist to fill gaps and accelerate recovery.

Implement IROs

IROs were mobilised six months after the monsoon event. Coastal IROs were due to complete their role by 15 December 2019 and North West (NW) IROs were due to complete their role by 31 December 2020. DAF reported positive feedback from the community on IROs assisting recovery progress, with unspent funding from the FFSRAS being reallocated to extend three NW IROs until 30 June 2021. Coastal IROs were extended to 28 February 2020 due to the extension of DAFs contract with the Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF), covering the employment of the Coastal IROs. The extensions ensured eligible producers were given access to support, such as grants and subsidies to aid their recovery.

IROs provided additional capacity for community recovery and acted as an additional communication channel for recovery information. Reported evidence of IROs using feedback from the community demonstrates some community members may not have been aware of assistance measures available to them, or there may have been a delay in the information reaching them without the assistance of IROs.

Finding 27: IROs were additional resources for the community to access supported recovery.

Finding 28: IROs were mobilised six months following LGA activation for the Monsoon event. Earlier implementation may have enabled IROs to intervene sooner, to support primary producers in their recovery.

Recommendation 17: Create a standardised IRO program to enable an earlier rollout of resources and information to community following future events.

Recommendation 18: Extend the implementation period for IROs to provide communities with ongoing and long-term recovery support.

Implement RFCs

RFCs provided producers with:

- financial analysis
- support with grant applications
- negotiations with financial institutions
- referrals for legal and accounting advice
- welfare and social support
- mental health support.

RFCs provided additional capacity in eligible communities to support financial and economic recovery.

There is evidence that without RFCs, some community members may not have had access to financial advice to support their recovery. There may also have been delays in information reaching them, which could contribute to delays in recovery progress.

Finding 29: RFCs contributed to sustainable recovery of eligible primary producers by providing financial support, grant application support, welfare support and legal referrals.

Finding 30: : The Beef Recovery Package enhanced the reach and availability of information provided through the existing RFC program. .

Summary

It is likely that the NWQ Beef Recovery Package contributed to a sustainable community.

Finding 31: The NWQ Beef Recovery Package contributed to a sustainable community.

Equity

Fairness and access to recovery support

Q1 - To what extent was program delivered across different stakeholder, regions and social groups?

The NWQ Beef Recovery Package was delivered across 15 LGAs which covers 38% of activated areas for the Monsoon Trough event:

- Flood Freight Subsidies Restocking and Agistment Scheme – 7 LGAs
- Concessional Loans – 15 LGAs
- NWQ IROs – 7 LGAs
- Coastal IROs – 4 LGAs.

The table titled *Overview of LGAs activated for assistance under the package* in the Progress Monitoring section of the report details the distribution of the above assistance across activated LGAs.

There were 11 LGAs with access to all assistance available under the program.

Non-primary producers were ineligible to apply for the Flood Freight Subsidies Restocking and Agistment Scheme (FFSRAS) and Concessional Loans. However, IROs were responsible for supporting all communities in their LGA. This provided impacted communities with access to information to support their recovery if they weren't eligible for the FFSRAS or Concessional Loans.

Four LGAs were activated for the FFSRAS and Concessional Loans but did not have access to an IRO or RFC. Community members who did not meet the eligibility criteria were not able to access support services from an IRO or RFC.

Finding 32: IRO and RFC services were not available to communities outside their assigned LGA.

Recommendation 19: Future programs could consider extending the reach of services provided by IROs and/or RFCs aligned to linked programs.

Implementation

Interaction

I3 - To what extent has the program been implemented according to the recovery plan?

The Monsoon event caused extensive damage to primary production with stock losses and damage to infrastructure such as fencing, bore drains, watering points, yards and property buildings. Deloitte Economics estimated \$432 million in damage and disruption to primary production. The State Recovery Plan sought to outline activities to support the recovery of impacted communities in line with the five functional lines of recovery.

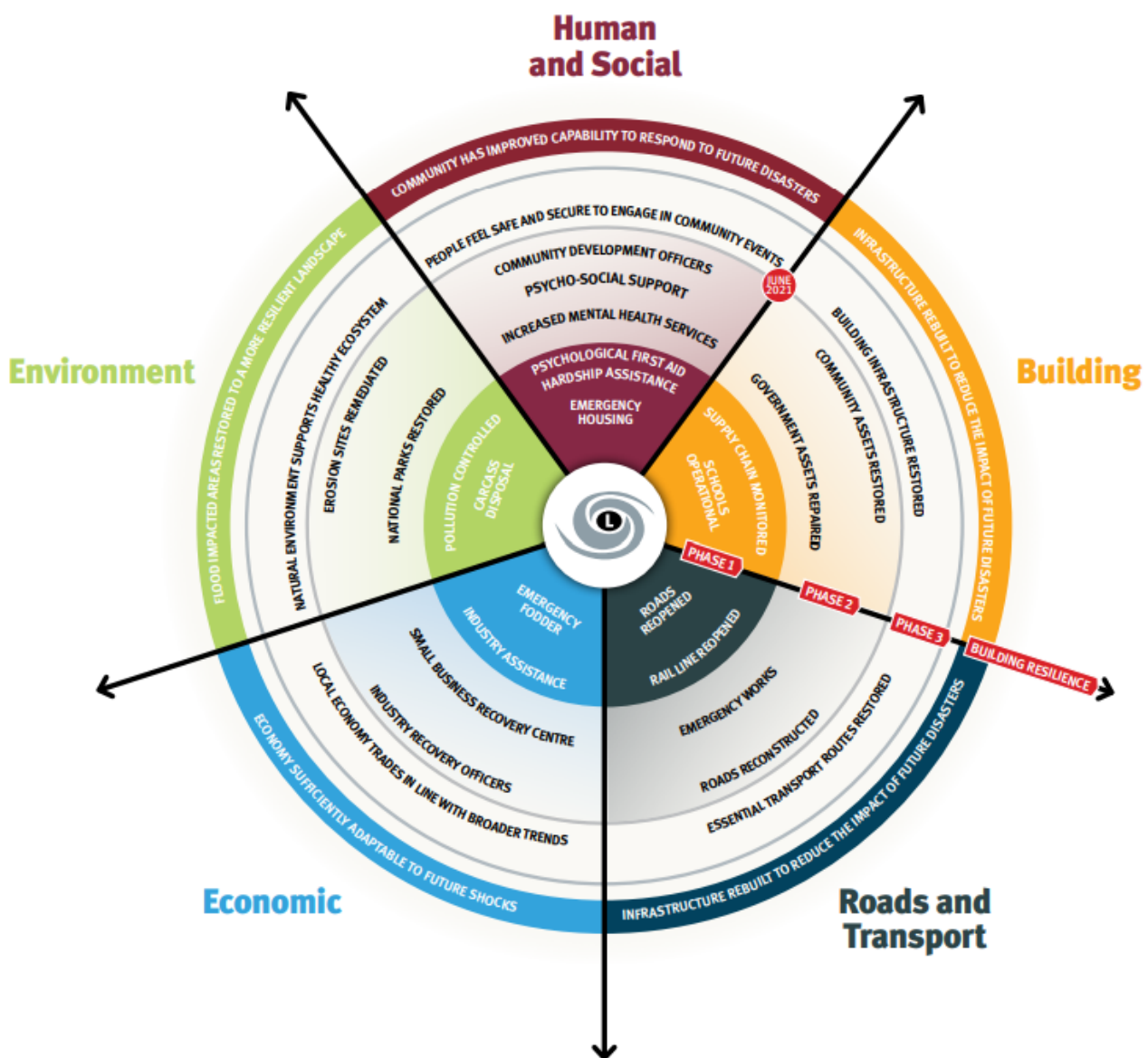


Diagram of state recovery objectives

The NWQ Beef Recovery Package was developed to achieve the economic objectives:

- Economy sufficiently adaptable to future shocks.
- Local Economy trades in line with broader trends.

Recovery activities, measures and outcomes for the program directly aligned with the objectives in the State Recovery Plan. Refer to the program logic in Appendix D for links between recovery objectives and program outcomes.

Finding 33: Program guidelines and outcomes aligned to economic objectives in the State Recovery Plan.

While the purpose of the NWQ Beef Recovery Package was to meet economic recovery objectives, the program also met human and social recovery objectives through the implementation of IROs. Environmental objectives were met through the extended Concessional Loans which enabled primary producers to undertake landscape remediation.

The activities undertaken by IROs also aligned to the human and social recovery objectives:

- Community has improved capability to respond to future disasters.
- People feel safe and secure to engage in community events.

The Extended Concessional Loans delivered through the package contributed to the Environmental objective:

- Erosion sites are remediated.

Finding 34: Program activities aligned with economic recovery objectives.

Finding 35: Program activities contributed to human and social, and environmental recovery objectives.

External factors

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

Seasonal conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the delivery of the NWQ Beef Recovery Package.

The program was developed to meet forecast interest from primary producers to restock, however due to unfavourable climatic conditions and reduced pasture response following the floods, DAF reported a low uptake for the FFSRAS.

Finding 36: Unfavourable climatic conditions and reduced pasture limited the ability for primary producers to restock.

Recommendation 20: Governance structures should ensure programs are flexible and able to respond to external influences with the ability to redirect resources to new or other program activities as required.

The COVID-19 pandemic compounded the impact of the flood event on primary producers and presented unique challenges during recovery processing. This included stakeholder engagement, disaster preparedness and building disaster resilience. COVID-19 also impacted worker availability and supply chains for primary producers managing their recovery from the Monsoon event.

Finding 37: The COVID-19 pandemic impacted worker availability and interrupted supply chains for primary producers who were already managing their recovery from the Monsoon event.

COVID-19 restrictions reduced the ability of IROs and RFCs to deliver community events and in-person consultations. There is insubstantial evidence to demonstrate changes to IRO and RFC communication challenges during the program, and therefore because of the pandemic. However, DAF reporting shows that IROs and RFCs predominately engaged with primary producers over the phone which would have enabled them to continue their service delivery.

Refer to Progress Monitoring for a graph showing the number of IRO and RFC engagements with primary producers throughout the program.

Finding 38: COVID-19 restricted the ability for IROs to deliver in-person consultations and events.

Finding 39: Despite challenges presented by COVID-19 restrictions, there is no evidence that the pandemic influenced the number of engagements by IROs and RFCs with primary producers.

Future programs should seek to diversify communication channels to support continuity of information and reduce the impact of external influences on lines of communication. Refer to recommendation 22.

Finding 40: n 21: The Beef Recovery Program IRO roles were filled by community members who were able to leverage existing relationships and networks to support ongoing access to information and resources through COVID-19. .

Following the announcements of border restrictions and lockdowns in Queensland, IROs reported they received enquiries from the community about agricultural workforces, markets and travel restrictions related to the pandemic. The QRo4 progress report stated that due to COVID-19, all IROs transitioned their role to Agricultural Coordination Officers to assist local government and agricultural businesses manage impacts of the pandemic.

Finding 41: IROs transitioned their role to Agricultural Coordination Officers to adapt to local needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendation 21: Future beef programs should continue to strengthen existing support networks, as demonstrated in the 2019 Monsoon Trough Beef Recovery Program .

Seasonal conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the impact of the Monsoon event and presented new challenges for primary producers. There is evidence that the NWQ Beef Recovery Package adapted to the impact of external factors to minimise interruption to recovery progress for primary producers.

Finding 42: Seasonal conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the impact of the Monsoon event and presented new challenges for primary producers.

Finding 43: The NWQ Beef Recovery package adapted to challenges presented by external influences to maintain recovery support to communities.

Conclusion

The evaluation has concluded the North West Queensland Beef Recovery Package contributed to the recovery and resilience of the communities impacted by the Monsoon Trough disaster. Key findings of the evaluation are provided below.

Governance

1. The governance structure ensured regular monitoring of the NWQ Beef Recovery Package.
2. The governance structure ensured a close out review was undertaken to document lessons learned.
3. Regional Coordinating Committees were established to guide the IRO program on local needs.
4. There were inconsistencies in the IROs understanding of reporting requirements and how the information would be used.
5. There were variations in the IROs understanding of their role and responsibilities, which may have led to inconsistent reports to DAF and QRA.
6. IROs relied on governance to ensure the information they provided to communities was accurate and consistent.

Community engagement

7. DAF was the preferred information provider for primary producers in North West Queensland.
8. Face-to-face visits were among the top preferred methods of receiving information about recovery.
9. DAF used social media as its primary communication channel to promote information about available recovery assistance. IROs and RFCs used face-to-face interactions and phone calls to deliver information.
10. IROs provided information to the community about funding assistance and support services. Direct feedback from the community accessing information (from the IRO) would provide further substantiation – such as, how many grant applications or approvals were a direct result of assistance from IROs and RFCs.
11. IROs provided opportunities for the community to receive information by coordinating events and workshops across a broad range of topics to assist with recovery. There is limited evidence about how events were promoted to local communities, how many people attended and feedback from attendees on learnings from the events.
12. The recruitment of local community members as IROs contributed to delivering information to impacted primary producers, with key advantages being their existing relationship within the community and shared understanding of challenges from the Monsoon event.
13. The ability of IROs to deliver information and select appropriate channels for communication was dependant on the individual's personality, reputation and connections within their community.

14. The IROs affiliation with DAF contributed to their credibility and ability to deliver information in communities.
15. IROs relied on governance to ensure the information they provided to communities was accurate and consistent.
16. Progress reporting allowed QRA and DAF to identify underspends, which informed recommendations to the Commonwealth about re-allocating funding to initiatives being accessed by impacted communities.

Effectiveness

17. The media campaign delivered information about assistance to impacted communities.
18. IROs enabled communities to access information and support services to assist with their recovery.
19. RFCs provided information to support the economic and financial recovery of primary producers
20. Extended Concessional Loans assisted impacted producers to cover some extraordinary recovery costs.
21. Extended Concessional Loans had a low uptake from primary producers.
22. The FFSRAS provided primary producers with the ability to subsidise the cost of moving and restocking livestock.
23. IROs attributed poor seasonal conditions and pasture growth to the low uptake in the FFSRAS by primary producers.
24. Extended Concessional Loans increased capacity for primary producers to undertake recovery works.
25. The FFSRAS provided eligible producers with additional capacity to restock and move livestock.
26. Producers reported they were choosing not to restock due to poor seasonal conditions.
27. IROs were additional resources for the community to access supported recovery.
28. IROs were mobilised six months following LGA activation for the Monsoon event. Earlier implementation may have enabled IROs to intervene sooner, to support primary producers in their recovery.
29. RFCs contributed to sustainable recovery of eligible primary producers by providing financial support, grant application support, welfare support and legal referrals.
30. The Beef Recovery Package enhanced the reach and availability of information provided through the existing RFC program
31. The NWQ Beef Recovery Package contributed to a sustainable community.

Equity

32. IRO and RFC services were not available to communities outside their assigned LGA.

Implementation

33. Program guidelines and outcomes aligned to economic objectives in the State Recovery Plan.
34. Program activities aligned with economic recovery objectives.
35. Program activities contributed to human and social, and environmental recovery objectives.
36. Unfavourable climatic conditions and reduced pasture limited the ability for primary producers to restock.
37. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted worker availability and interrupted supply chains for primary producers who were already managing their recovery from the Monsoon event.
38. COVID-19 restricted the ability for IROs to deliver in-person consultations and events.
39. Despite challenges presented by COVID-19 restrictions, there is no evidence that the pandemic influenced the number of engagements by IROs and RFCs with primary producers.
40. The Beef Recovery Program IRO roles were filled by community members who were able to leverage existing relationships and networks to support ongoing access to information and resources through
41. IROs transitioned their role to Agricultural Coordination Officers to adapt to local needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
42. Seasonal conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the impact of the Monsoon event and presented new challenges for primary producers.
43. The NWQ Beef Recovery package adapted to challenges presented by external influences to maintain recovery support to communities.

Recommendations

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

RECOMMENDATION 1

Delivery organisations implementing IROs should incorporate a close-out review with program delivery staff and community members, to capture feedback and document lessons learned.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Record minutes during Regional Coordinating Committee meetings to capture challenges, actions and decisions.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Include the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy as a member of the Regional Coordinating Committee to ensure information sharing between IROs, Community Development Officers and Community Recovery.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Develop a role description to include regular reporting as a key responsibility.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Deliver training to all IROs during induction including an overview of reporting requirements, how reporting is used, how to use the reporting template and when to submit the report.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Coordinate regular meetings with IROs to discuss reporting requirements, deadlines and queries.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Coordinate regular meetings with IROs to ensure they are informed with current information to communicate with communities, are aware of upcoming deadlines, key messages and potential issues. Issues reported by IROs to DAF should be included in the quarterly report to QRA for escalation where required.

RECOMMENDATION 8

A range of communication methods could be adopted by DAF in partnership with QRIDA, local government councils, AgForce, NRM Groups and NQLIRA.

RECOMMENDATION 9

There is an opportunity for DAF to conduct a survey for IROs and RFCs following engagements with community members. The survey should offer the opportunity for community members to provide feedback about information they received, their level of satisfaction, if the service met their information needs and the likelihood of acting on the information provided by IROs and RFCs.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Invite event attendees to provide feedback about community events. Questions should include how the attendee heard about the event, what they learned and what additional information they need to support their recovery.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Ensure the role description for an IRO includes details about valuable attributes – such as connections within the community, a close network with primary producers, written and verbal communication skills. Interviews with potential IROs should aim to determine their understanding of people in the community, culture, challenges and networks.

RECOMMENDATION 12

DAF should coordinate future IRO programs for primary producers.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Programs should aim to remain flexible and agile to meet evolving community needs throughout the recovery process.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Future programs should ensure RFCs are equipped to provide alternative solutions to support economic recovery for primary producers.

RECOMMENDATION 15

Conduct regular surveys with community members to determine knowledge gaps, recovery priorities and case studies to support program evaluations.

RECOMMENDATION 16

Future programs should conduct regular community surveys to gauge community attitudes and concerns on available recovery assistance – this may assist to fill gaps and accelerate recovery.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Create a standardised IRO program to enable an earlier rollout of resources and information to community following future events.

RECOMMENDATION 18

Extend the implementation period for IROs to provide communities with ongoing and long-term recovery support.

RECOMMENDATION 19

Future programs could consider extending the reach of services provided by IROs and/or RFCs aligned to linked programs.

RECOMMENDATION 20

Governance structures should ensure programs are flexible and able to respond to external influences with the ability to redirect resources to new or other program activities as required.

RECOMMENDATION 21

Future beef programs should continue to strengthen existing support networks, as demonstrated in the 2019 Monsoon Trough Beef Recovery Program.

Appendices

Appendix A – Background

2019 North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough

Impacts

The North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough – 25 January to 14 February 2019 (Monsoon Trough) produced exceptional rainfall that caused disruption and damage to communities in Far North Queensland.

The record-breaking rainfall cut off communities, devastated the livestock industry, left the freight industry at a standstill and destroyed infrastructure, homes and businesses. Over 56 per cent of the state's land mass was impacted, with 39 LGAs activated for joint State and Commonwealth DRFA assistance.

More than 70 locations experienced record daily rainfalls, 20 experienced record accumulated rainfall over 10 days and 18 locations set new records for the number of consecutive days of high (50mm or more) rainfall. In and around Townsville, the accumulated daily rainfall totals were the highest since records began in 1888.

The cascading and compounding consequences of this event are yet to be fully quantified but the long-term social and economic cost has been estimated by Deloitte Access Economics at \$5.68 billion. Damage to agriculture is estimated at \$432 million, including livestock losses of up to 500,000 cattle and 30,000 sheep.

Small business disruption has been estimated at \$116 million with 97 per cent of small businesses surveyed across the most heavily flooded areas reporting financial impacts including closures, trade interruptions, forward booking cancellations and damage to premises and equipment.

The extraordinary scale of damage to critical infrastructure included impacts to 6420km of state roads, 307km of Mount Isa rail line, 1000km of water pipelines, 15,000km of on-farm roads and 10,000km of fencing, bringing ongoing financial hardship to individuals, small business and industry until repairs can be undertaken across some of the most remote and challenging terrain in the country.

The closure of the Mount Isa rail line critically disrupted mining and minerals production – the major employer in North West Queensland. Glencore's Collinsville mine, Newlands Coal mine and Incitec Pivot's fertiliser facility were partially shut down – incurring extraordinary costs associated with alternative storage and freight of product.

With more than 116,667 people identified as experiencing hardship, the economic and social recovery from this large-scale disaster is beyond the capacity of local communities to facilitate and will be a long-term effort requiring collaboration and cooperation by all levels of government.

Response

Human and Social

DCDSS, together with partner agencies, established more than 30 community recovery hubs in the most impacted areas in the north, far north and North West of Queensland, providing services to more than 37,000 people.

Building

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) coordinated initial Damage Assessments (DAs) to determine immediate impacts. With the assistance of QRA, QFES undertook 8467 Damage Assessment inspections with approximately 40 per cent of the properties reported as damaged and 15 per cent as uninhabitable. QFES also assisted residents by providing targeted wash out services to more than 300 flooded homes.

Roads and Transport

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has been progressively assessing and restoring access to the 6420km of state-controlled road network impacted from the event. Inspections and emergency works were required to maintain road access where possible with more than \$20 million spent on counter disaster operations, emergency and immediate reconstruction works. TMR also removed 131 carcasses from state-controlled roads in impacted LGAs.

The Flood Recovery Road Access Group (FRRAG) was activated to manage emergency and disaster heavy vehicle access for freight consignors and heavy vehicle transport operators travelling in the affected areas; 86 enquiries were received with 31 permits issued.

The Rail Recovery Taskforce was established to lead the repair of 204 sites across 307km of flood-damaged track on the Mount Isa rail line. Over 400 employees and contractors were mobilised to accelerate the repairs and temporary workers camps established at Julia Creek and Richmond.

Economic

Recovery assistance for primary producers, small business and non-profit organisations has been activated under DRFA. As at 23 August 2019, more than \$93 million has been paid to 2224 primary producers, small businesses and not for profits. In addition, 46 Disaster Assistance Loans totalling over \$6.3 million have been approved for 15 primary producers and 31 small businesses impacted by the event.

As at 23 August, the Townsville Small Business Recovery Centre had provided 2450 lines of assistance to local businesses. Surveys were also conducted with a total of 794 small businesses and 172 primary producers participating.

Environment

Assessments have been undertaken with regards to riparian damage, biodiversity and habitat loss including the assessment and reopening of 41 national parks. Helping to ensure the safety of the community, saltwater and freshwater crocodiles surveys were undertaken and high risk animals relocated (if safe to do so) as well as increasing key messaging to the community on high risk native wildlife.

Early engagement was undertaken with mining and industrial sites to ensure recovery actions were environmentally safe and compliant with environmental approvals.

Consequences



Estimated impacts	Economic cost
Human and Social • Health, wellbeing and community impacts • Emergency response and clean-up	\$2.419 billion
Building • Residential damage • Commercial damage • Public asset damage	\$1.927 billion
Roads and Transport • State road damage • Local road damage • Rail damage	\$742 million
Economic • Primary production damage and disruption • Small business disruption	\$548 million
Environment • Riparian streambank damage • Coastal erosion • Pest and disease outbreaks	\$44 million
Total cost	\$5.68 billion

Source: Deloitte Access Economics estimates – The social and economic cost of the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough (2019)

Queensland's disaster in numbers

\$5.68 billion estimated social and economic cost of the Monsoon Trough event



HUMAN AND SOCIAL



\$2.419 billion estimated health, social and community impacts



\$33 million in PHAS grants paid benefitting **116,667 people**



1800 people assisted with housing support

64,823 people assisted with psychological first aid



39 Local Government Areas (LGAs) activated for Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements

DRFA
ACTIVATION

4483 requests for assistance received by State Emergency Service during the event



Activated LGAs cover an area of 100 million hectares = 56% of Queensland's land mass

56%



BUILDING



3,300 properties damaged



\$1.46 billion

estimated damage to **residential** property



\$402 million

estimated damage to **commercial** property

\$50 million estimated damage to other **public assets**



\$14.5 million estimated damage to public **water and sewerage** infrastructure



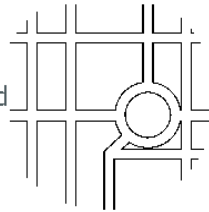
ROADS AND TRANSPORT



307km of Mt Isa rail line impacted including

200km severe damage
204 sites of severe erosion
38 bridge abutments damaged

40,000km of local government roads in the impact zone



6420km of State road network impacted

\$742 million estimated damage to roads and transport infrastructure



ECONOMIC

\$432 million estimated damage and disruption to primary production



Livestock losses up to **500,000 cattle** and **30,000 sheep**

on-farm infrastructure damage



10,000km of fencing
1000km of water pipelines
15,000km of on-farm roads

More than **17,000 small businesses** in the impact zone



Direct impacts to small business estimated at **\$44.8 million**

Small business disruption estimated at **\$116 million**

\$320 million mining revenue losses estimated due to rail closure



2300 bales of hay transported for Fodder Drop Operations



ENVIRONMENT

Rainfall & Flooding
TOWNSVILLE – 1257mm in 10 days
PALUMA, WOOLSHED & UPPER BLUEWATER – more than 2000mm in 12 days
70 locations BROKE **DAILY** RECORDS
20 locations BROKE **ACCUMULATED 10 DAY** RECORDS



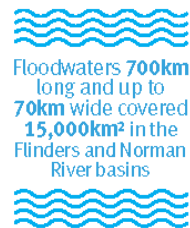
Ross River Dam reached **248% capacity**



Accumulated **TOTALS** from consecutive days of heavy **RAINFALL** in and around Townsville were the **highest** since records began in 1888



41 national parks and state forests **closed**



Floodwaters **700km** long and up to **70km** wide covered **15,000km²** in the Flinders and Norman River basins



≥ \$40 million estimated damage to riparian, streambank and coastal areas

State recovery planning

North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough – State Recovery Plan

Major General (Retired) Stuart Smith had his role extended on 8 February 2019 to include leading recovery from the Monsoon Trough flooding. The role involved development and implementation of the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough – State Recovery Plan 2019-2021 (Recovery Plan) to assist communities to recover, rebuild and reconnect as stronger and more resilient.

The Recovery Plan acknowledges that successful recovery relies on a collaborative, coordinated, adaptable, scalable approach where the responsibility for disaster recovery is shared between all sectors of the community. This includes individuals, families, community groups, businesses and all levels of government. Locally-led approaches to recovery support rapid restoration of services essential to human wellbeing and present an opportunity to build resilience and improve community circumstances and preparedness beyond their pre-disaster state.

The Recovery Plan follows this framework to be delivered across five recognised lines of disaster recovery – Human and Social, Building, Roads and Transport, Economic and Environment. The Recovery Plan recognises the lead role local governments play in the recovery process and the need for them to develop local recovery plans to help guide restoration and enhancement of infrastructure, support vulnerable and isolated members of the community, increase disaster preparedness and build resilience for the future.

Roles and responsibilities

Local government

The Recovery Plan recognises that local governments have a legislated responsibility through the *Disaster Management Act 2003* for implementation of local disaster management plans.

Queensland Reconstruction Authority

QRA is the lead agency for coordination and development of disaster recovery, resilience and mitigation policy in Queensland. QRA supports the delivery of recovery and reconstruction projects for communities impacted by the Monsoon Trough from a state perspective by providing coordination and facilitation of communication across the five Functional Recovery Groups (FRGs) to achieve whole of community outcomes. QRA also administers funding assistance on behalf of the Commonwealth and Queensland governments under the DRFA. QRA will provide regular recovery reports outlining progress across local governments, as informed by the FRGs at a state level. QRA will also report on the recovery process to the QDMC.

State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator

The Chief Executive Officer of QRA also fulfils the role of the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC). The SRPPC works with the SRC to ensure a smooth transition between response and recovery, as well as overseeing recovery operations including state level preparedness and recovery policy, planning and capability development.

State Recovery Coordinator

The SRC works in partnership with the SRPPC to coordinate recovery activities for the Monsoon Trough, report regularly to the QDMC and provide strategic advice to government agencies undertaking disaster recovery work.

Deputy State Recovery Coordinator

The DSRC provides local support – geographically located in Townsville for the Monsoon Trough – to the SRC and Queensland Government with critical insights on how to best assist communities on their road to recovery.

Other groups

Further information on the roles and responsibilities of the following entities and positions are detailed in the *Queensland Recovery Plan* and the *State Recovery Coordinator Guide 2018*:

- Local Recovery Groups (LRGs)
- Local Disaster Management Groups (LDMGs)
- Functional Recovery Groups (FRGs)
- Queensland Disaster Management Committee (QDMC)
- The Minister responsible for reconstruction and recovery
- State Recovery Coordinator (SRC)
- Deputy State Recovery Coordinator (DSRC).

Human and social recovery plan

Impact summary

DCDSS has identified a number of key community support, health and wellbeing recovery impacts and issues across various locations and interest groups.

Financial counsellors have reported a significant increase in demand for financial support and low levels of financial literacy with issues being raised such as:

- Nil or insufficient insurance coverage.
- Uninsured but contractually rented contents destroyed by floods. This means renters are not eligible for grants (as they do not own the contents) but must continue to pay rent as per the contract.

Provision of a range of social, emotional and psychological support services:

- Partner agencies have provided 63,600 instances of psychological first aid.
- More than 30 Community Recovery Hubs and Pop-Up Hubs established.
- 8880 Outreach visits conducted to provide support to impacted communities.
- Four Community Recovery Referral and Information Centres and a Rental Recovery Hub have provided support across North, Far North and North West Queensland.

Mental health and wellbeing:

- The cumulative impact of many years of drought, as well as unanticipated flooding, has had a profound effect on the wellbeing of community members.
- To date, 1344 instances of acute mental health support have been provided by agencies such as Queensland Health and North West Rural and Remote Health Services.

Housing and accommodation:

- 3300 properties damaged
- 805 requests received for Emergency Housing Assistance.

Community Disruption:

- Disruption of community social events, volunteering and community service activities due to impacts upon volunteers and staff; impacts upon sporting or service facilities; access and egress issues; financial capacity of business to support events and community members capacity to attend.

Recovery outcomes

Sustainability

- Adequate housing is available to community members at appropriate times in the recovery process.
- Community members have access and are able to meet health needs (including mental health) arising from the disaster.
- Community members have access to psychosocial support.
- Households, families and individuals can act autonomously to contribute to the recovery process.
- Community members have access to education services.
- 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.

Resilience

- The community has improved capacity and capability to respond to future disasters.
- The Community Recovery Package delivered targeted support to individuals and families to recover from the Monsoon Trough event, as well as building community capacity to more effectively respond to future events.

Program

Program guidelines

Eligibility criteria

Flood freight subsidies restocking and agistment scheme (FFSRAS)

To apply for this subsidy, applicants must meet the following conditions:

For restocking

- You are a primary producer.
- You are a property owner, share-farmer or lessee in the grazing industry (beef cattle, sheep, goats or horses that are not normally hand-fed).
- Your property resides in one of the following North West Queensland local government areas impacted by the North and Far North Monsoon Flooding:
 - Burke Shire Council
 - Carpentaria Shire Council
 - Cloncurry Shire Council
 - Flinders Shire Council
 - McKinlay Shire Council
 - Richmond Shire Council; or
 - Winton Shire Council
- Livestock you owned were either lost, humanely destroyed or died as a result of the heavy monsoon rainfall and flood event.

- The livestock subject to this subsidy were purchased after the flood event.
- The restocking movement has occurred within 24 months of the activation of your Local Government Authority for Category D DRFA assistance.
- The introduced livestock do not increase stock numbers on the property beyond the numbers on hand prior to the natural disaster event.
- The livestock were transported by the shortest practicable route, up to a maximum distance of 2,000km.
- The livestock were transported by hired carrier, private vehicle or rail.
- Your application is received in Brisbane within six months of the date the livestock were transported to your property.

For agistment

- You are a primary producer in Queensland.
- You are a property owner, share-farmer or lessee in the grazing industry (beef cattle, sheep, dairy cattle, goats, deer or horses that are not normally hand-fed).
- The livestock were sent to agistment while your property was within a State drought-declared area or had an Individually Droughted Property (IDP) declaration or were sent to agistment in the two-month period immediately prior to drought declaration.
- You did not introduce any livestock on to your property while it was drought declared or in the three month period prior to the drought declaration, including any livestock taken on for agistment.
- The agisted livestock are owned by you.
- The livestock being sent to agistment are being sent to a property located in northwest Queensland in one of the following local government authorities that were impacted by the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough:
 - Burke Shire Council
 - Cloncurry Shire Council
 - Carpentaria Shire Council
 - Finders Shire Council
 - McKinlay Shire Council
 - Richmond Shire Council
 - Winton Shire Council.
- The livestock were grazed on your property for at least three months prior to their agistment and the livestock will be on agistment for at least two months.

- The transport of livestock to agistment follows the most direct practicable route. A distance restriction of 2000 km applies and subsidies will be reduced if this distance restriction is exceeded.
- Your application is received in Brisbane within six months of the date the livestock transport to agistment.

Concessional loans

Concessional loans of up to \$250,000 are already available for primary producers in the following areas impacted by the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Burke Shire Council
- Carpentaria Shire Council
- Charters Towers Regional Council
- Cloncurry Shire Council
- Croydon Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- McKinlay Shire Council
- Richmond Shire Council
- Townsville City Council
- Whitsunday Regional Council
- Winton Shire Council

An extension of the current \$250,000 low interest loan to up to \$1 million is available under this measure. Guidelines already in place will be applied to this measure.

Industry Recovery Officers (IROs)

North West Queensland IRO eligible local government areas

NWQ Industry Recovery Officers (IROs) will support impacted producers in the following local government areas activated for Category C Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants for Primary Producers:

- Burke Shire Council
- Carpentaria Shire Council
- Cloncurry Shire Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- McKinlay Shire Council
- Richmond Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council

Five NWQ IROs will be engaged by DAF, to be located regionally, working closely with industry organisations, individual primary producers, regional NRM groups, State and local governments. NWQ IROs will focus predominantly on the beef industry, which forms the majority of primary production in this part of the state, as well as other primary industries, such as sheep and supply chain businesses for example, transport services, input and feed suppliers, veterinarians, abattoirs/processors. NWQ IROs are expected to be in place until June 2020, after the next wet season, and will be embedded within DAF or relevant local government depending on location.

Coastal IRO eligible local government areas

Coastal IROs will support impacted producers in coastal local government areas activated for Category C Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants for Primary Producers, including:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Townsville City Council

The coastal IROs will be contracted by the Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF), which will ensure there is a coordinated approach to delivery with local governments and Financial Counsellors across affected agribusiness.

Financial Counsellors

Eligible local government areas

Rural Financial Counsellors will support impacted producers and related businesses in the following local government areas:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Burke Shire Council
- Carpentaria Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Cloncurry Shire Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- McKinlay Shire Council
- Richmond Shire Council
- Townsville City Council
- Winton Shire Council

The main focus of Financial Counsellors will be to provide clients with a business analysis, preparing their business for environmental challenges, analysing risks and industry impacts as well as

developing strategies and directing clients to specialist free advice. The positions will be mobile and will travel and work across the eligible local government areas.

Appendix B – Evaluation plan

Program outcomes

The North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough State Recovery Plan 2019-2021 identified high level recovery outcomes organised around the five functional lines of recovery. The NWQ Beef Recovery Package relates to the economic and Human and recovery outcomes listed below.

Economic

- Businesses are operational, industry supply chains are re-established and regional economic resilience to future events is strengthened.
- Businesses and industries in the local economy operate and trade in line with broader economic trends.

Human and Social

- Community members feel sufficiently safe and secure following a disaster to engage in social activities and interactions with other members of the community.

Program logic

A program logic diagram has been developed and 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
- program strategies achieve recovery objectives
- recovery objectives align to the overall recovery objective of sustainable and resilient communities.

Program monitoring data

Quantitative

The quantitative data planned for regular and ongoing monitoring is the:

- number of people reached through media
- number of direct engagements by IROs
- number of direct engagements by RFCs
- number of approved Extended Concessional Loan applicants
- value of approved Concessional Loans
- number of approved subsidy applicants
- value of approved subsidy loans.

Qualitative

The qualitative data planned for regular and ongoing monitoring is:

- IRO and RFC reporting
- case studies

Financial

The financial data planned for regular and ongoing monitoring is the:

- total expenditure to date.

State reporting

Recovery reporting

The quantitative and qualitative monitoring data and financial progress reports were referenced by QRA to inform the requirements of progress reports prepared as part of the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough State Recovery Plan 2019-2021.

Community Recovery Package reporting

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

Program reviews

QRA conducted regular program reviews of all DRFA funded programs, including a comprehensive program review three times each year. The NWQ Beef Recovery Package was incorporated in this review, with time allocated for DAF 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 NWQ Beef Recovery Package. Additional KEQs have been developed by QRA 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 (ü).

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 To what extent did the community have access to and were engaged in the program?	
C2 Has community engagement occurred in a timely and on-going way that provides adequate representation of community views?	
C3 Is there shared vision of a sustainable and resilient community that is understood by the community?	
C4 Has there been joint planning between community actors and emergency teams and structures?	
C5 Do organisations have capacity to develop and manage community volunteers for disaster recovery?	
C6 Are recovery plans developed through participatory processes?	
C7 Does the community have the capacity and formal avenues to lobby and challenge external agencies on disaster recovery plans, priorities, and actions?	
C8 Is there inclusion/representation of vulnerable groups in community decision-making and management of disaster recovery?	
C9 Are agreed plans and management arrangements well understood by the community and all disaster management agencies?	
C10 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?	
C11 Do community members have information they need to continue recovering from the disaster?	✓
C12 Are evolving community needs assessed and prioritised during the recovery process to inform recovery activities?	✓
C13 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	How cost effective was the program?	
H2	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?	
H3	Did the program prevent price escalation stemming from the level of demand and competition between organisations?	
H4	How well did the program balance the need to optimise between cost of restoring essential public assets and the cost of delaying such projects?	
H5	How appropriate were the price benchmarks used to evaluate service providers?	
H6	Did the program achieve value for money relative to the disaster recovery context?	

Equity

To evaluate the equity of disaster recovery programs, the following KEQ has been sampled to assess whether the program was equitable in its implementation.

Equity key evaluation questions	Sampled
Q1 To what extent was program delivered across different stakeholder, regions and social groups?	✓

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 To what extent was the program delivered as intended?	
I2 Was the program consistent with the National Principles for Disaster Recovery?	
I3 To what extent has the program been implemented according to the recovery plan?	✓
I4 Did the speed of the recovery process compromise quality of services?	
I5 Did the recovery program meet community needs as they changed over time and in response to changes in disaster impact?	
I6 To what extent did program activities and resources effectively encourage interaction between outcome domains?	
I7 Where disaster recovery involved several separate components or projects, how well coordinated were these with each other?	
I8 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 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.



QUEENSLAND RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

Queensland Reconstruction Authority

PO Box 15428

City East QLD 4002

Phone (07) 3008 7200

info@qra.qld.gov.au

www.qra.qld.gov.au