

DISASTER Q&A

What is a disaster?

As defined in the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, a disaster is a serious disruption in a community, caused by the impact of an event, that requires a significant coordinated response by the state and other entities to help the community recover from the disruption.

Who declares a disaster in Queensland?

The Minister for Fire and Emergency Services/or the Premier may declare a disaster situation for the State, or part of the state, if satisfied –

- (a) a disaster has happened, is happening or is likely to happen, in the state and
- (b) it is necessary, or reasonably likely to be necessary, for a district disaster coordinator or a declared disaster officer to exercise declared disaster powers to prevent or minimise any of the following –
 - (i) loss of human life
 - (ii) illness or injury to humans
 - (iii) property loss or damage
 - (iv) damage to the environment.

With the approval of the Minister, a District Disaster Coordinator may also declare a disaster situation for the district, or a part of it, if satisfied of the above criteria.

What happens when a disaster is 'declared'?

Extraordinary powers are granted to emergency services personnel for the protection of the public. This can include extra powers to move people along, enter property and evacuate people.

Does a disaster declaration by the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services guarantee state or federal funding under the Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements (DRFA)?

No.

Is a disaster declaration required for DRFA activation?

No. DRFA activation is independent of a disaster being declared.

Is the activation of the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) a requirement for DRFA activation?

No. The DRFA is a mechanism to provide financial assistance to impacted communities and is not dependent on the activation of the QDMA.

What is the DRFA?

The DRFA is a joint funding program of the Commonwealth and state governments to provide disaster relief and recovery grants and loans and financial assistance to local and state governments and restore damaged infrastructure to help communities recover from the effects of natural disasters and terrorist acts. In Queensland, this program is managed on a whole-of-government basis by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA).

The Minister responsible for the QRA is the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning.

What is required for DRFA activation?

The DRFA is activated by the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, and can only happen in response to a disaster deemed eligible under the Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018.

What is the criteria for a DRFA-eligible disaster?

A DRFA-eligible disaster must meet the criteria set by the Commonwealth under the Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018. It includes:

- That a coordinated multi-agency response was required.
- Eligible DRFA expenditure exceeds the Small Disaster Criterion (SDC) of \$240,000 (for 2018-19, as set by the Commonwealth), in addition to meeting any local government-specific trigger points.

Are declared disasters and eligible disasters the same thing?

No. An event can be eligible for DRFA activation even if there is no disaster declaration.

Are all disasters declared or eligible?

No. Some events are neither declared as a disaster, nor eligible for DRFA assistance under the Commonwealth criteria.

What role does the Queensland Reconstruction Authority play in DRFA activation?

The QRA assists local and state governments address the Commonwealth determined criteria required for DRFA activation. If a local government area has been activated and the criteria has been met, state and federal funding may be provided to reimburse eligible expenditure incurred.

* From November 2018

What can DRFA funding be used for?

DRFA funding can be used to reimburse local and state government agencies for the cost of repairing damage to essential public assets directly caused by a DRFA-eligible disaster that is outside their normal budgetary operations.

Funding can also be used to reimburse eligible expenditure incurred while undertaking activities to alleviate personal hardship and distress.

Individuals, non-profit organisations, primary producers and small business may also be eligible for DRFA loans and grants.

What other assistance is available?

Businesses and primary producers are encouraged to contact their industry association to explore specific support to meet their needs.

There are also numerous other funding and support opportunities from state, federal and non-government organisations.

These include:

- **State Disaster Relief Arrangements (SDRA)** The SDRA is an all hazards relief program that is 100 per cent state funded and covers natural and non-natural disasters. The purpose of the SDRA is to address personal hardship and community response needs for disaster events where the DRFA is unable to be activated.
- **Individual Disaster Stricken Property (IDSP)** Property owners impacted by a disaster may be eligible for an Individual Disaster Stricken Property (IDSP) support measure, administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA). To obtain an IDSP declaration, primary producers should contact the DAF customer service centre to arrange an IDSP inspection by a DAF officer and application assistance.

- **Small Business Recovery Grants Program** The Small Business Recovery Grants Program provides assistance to small businesses severely impacted by a severe disaster to engage high-level expertise to help them recover and rebuild business confidence. Further information is located at www.business.qld.gov.au/starting-business/advice-support/grants/recovery
- **Australian Government Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA)** The DRA is a short-term income support payment to assist individuals who can demonstrate their income has been affected as a direct result of a disaster. When available, DRA assists employees, small business persons and farmers who experience a loss of income as a direct result of a disaster event. The DRA is administered by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services. Further information is located at www.disasterassist.gov.au/Pages/disaster-recovery-allowance.aspx
- **BlazeAid** A volunteer-based organisation that works with families and individuals to help rebuild fences and other structures that have been damaged or destroyed. blazeaid.com.au/
- **GIVIT** GIVIT is a national not-for-profit connecting those who have with those who need, in a private and safe way. www.givit.org.au/
- As part of its core business, the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors works with external providers to assist individuals impacted by small disaster events. Phone **13 74 68**.

While all of these may not be applicable to your circumstance, the Disaster Management Guideline lists funding that may be available at www.disaster.qld.gov.au/dmg/st/Documents/RG1243-Funding-Sources-Reference-Guide.pdf

Emergency contacts

For assistance with a life threatening situation phone **000** (triple zero) immediately.

For assistance with non-life threatening situations – such as help with a damaged roof, rising flood water, or storm damage – phone the State Emergency Service on **132 500**.

Contact



1800 110 841



info@qldra.org.au



www.qldreconstruction.org.au



Do you need an interpreter?

If you need an interpreter to assist you in understanding this document, please call **13 QGOV**