



Recovery narrative

### About our community

The Lockyer Valley is rated among the top 10 most fertile farming areas in the world and has been positioned as one of the leading agriculture production zones in Australia with outputs of \$652.5m annually. The Traditional Owners of the Lockyer Valley region are the Yuggera and Ugarapul People.

The region, one hour west of Brisbane, straddles the Warrego Highway and covers an area of approximately 2,200 sq kms. The population is growing quickly and there are currently over 41,731 residents. Lockyer Valley's \$1.65 billion economy supports more than 13,000 jobs, with the main industries being goods, household services and agriculture. The region has schools, hospital, emergency and community services available.

### About the disaster events

From late February, into March, the region experienced severe weather with intense rainfall that endured for several days, resulting in flooding that locals report as unlike any that has been experienced within the region before, in terms of location, duration the rain fell and the resulting flooding. The higher rainfall totals were recorded in the north of the region. In mid-May, a second rain event impacted the region with the heaviest falls occurring in different areas (predominantly the south of the region) to the February event. While a range of rescues and evacuations were carried out, there was no loss of life as a result of either event.

Significant impacts occurred in low lying areas across the region during both events. In February, over 1000 requests for assistance were received by the Local Disaster Coordination Centre. Approximately 116 homes were inundated: 49 of those saw moderate to severe damage. Seven commercial premises in the townships of Grantham and Withcott experienced inundation. The road networks sustained an estimated \$13 million in damage.

Over 370 requests for assistance were received by the Local Disaster Coordination Centre in May, 65 homes were inundated, ten of which suffered moderate or severe damage. During this event, the majority of damage occurred in the Laidley and Forest Hill townships. Commercial properties inundated were mainly in Laidley with 12 businesses inundated and one inundated in Grantham. A very early estimate of damage to our road network sees a further \$8 million in restoration works required.

The agricultural sector has been hard hit by the two events, sustaining significant losses to crops, topsoil, fences, machinery and infrastructure. The full scope or value of the damage to this sector is unknown at this stage. What is known, is that farmers require support to return to operations. The Australian Defence Force and Rural Fire Brigades have assisted the community with relief clean-up operations. Relief, evacuation, community centres and hubs were established quickly to provide access to relief and essential emergency support.

### Local Recovery Group

The Local Recovery Committee will facilitate a coordinated process of supporting affected individuals and communities towards the restoration of emotional, social, and physical wellbeing. The vision for the committee will be in line with Council's vision for the organisation to service the community: **"We will deliver sustainable services to enhance the liveability of our community while embracing our economic, cultural and natural diversity"**.

### Key stakeholders

Council, members of the Local Disaster Management Group, Local Recovery Committee and Functional Leads, State Recovery Functional Lead Agencies (Department of Communities, Housing and the Digital Economy, Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Department of Environment and Science, Department of Energy and Public Works, Department of Transport and Main Roads), National Recovery and Resilience Agency, Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Department of Agriculture, Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, community groups and residents, community volunteers, mental health service providers, non-government organisations, other invested parties.

Recovery objectives

- 1 Community impacts and recovery needs are collated and understood - ensure a coordinated process of supporting communities toward the restoration of emotional, social and physical wellbeing – short/ long term
- 2 Immediate response & recovery activities - ensure community has access to essential and financial support services – short/medium term
- 3 Implement effective & efficient process to support community members return to permanent residence/dwellings in line with protocols- medium term
- 4 Response and recovery activities ensure businesses and agricultural industry have access to financial support services to clean up, restore/rebuild infrastructure – short/medium term
- 5 Environmental restoration and protection - ensure management plans for vector control, including mosquito control program has been developed, implemented and progress, monitored effectively– medium/long term and ongoing
- 6 Environmental restoration and protection - ensure pest and weed management plans are developed and updated to prevent spread of weeds, plans implemented and progress monitored – medium/long term and ongoing.
- 7 Environmental restoration and protection – ensure waste management strategies developed to balance landfill capacity, reduce council costs – medium/long term and ongoing
- 8 Strategy is implemented to ensure community has access to psychosocial and financial support services – medium/long term
- 9 Recovery activities ensure community organisations and not-for-profits have access to funding streams – medium/long and ongoing
- 10 Riparian management roles and responsibilities clarified. Identify and promote funding opportunities for the development of management plans and on ground activities for riparian restoration and stabilisation at priority sitesmedium/long term and ongoing
- 11 Identify and promote funding opportunities to support sustainable flood mitigations programs – medium/long
- 12 Identify and promote funding opportunities to stimulate tourism across the region – medium/long
- 13 Community education initiatives to build flood resilience through knowledge of hazard and risk assessments have been developed, implemented and progress–medium/long term
- 14 Implement coordinated recovery communication strategy enabling community access to support, services and recovery status to be communicated

Damage and impacts

### Human and social

- Cumulative psychological impacts on the community, businesses and agricultural industry, as a result of COVID-19, bushfires, drought and major flood events in 2010/11, 2013 and 2017.
- Financial and psychological impacts on community as homes and business inundated, material losses sustained and isolated communities face disruptions in the ability to access essential services.
- Lowered resilience for some residents and business that sustained damage during repeated disaster events especially where they have little capacity to relocate away from a vulnerable location.
- Sustained rainfall, personal experiences of flooding, emergency warnings, media attention and social commentary have caused 'trigger' responses for some people who have previously been traumatised during disasters.
- Places of Shelter were established at Forest Hill (20), Gatton Shire Hall (167), Gatton SDA Church (20), Glenore Grove (3), Grantham (16), Helidon (4), Laidley (88) and Lockyer Waters (14) during the February event.
- A further seventeen people were supported in Places of Shelter during the May event across three locations – Forest Hill (1), Gatton (5) and Laidley (11).

### Economic

- Estimated \$61.5m direct and indirect tangible damages in the region for the February event – excluding agricultural and community service infrastructure damages.
- Loss of income/profits for small business, primary producers, tourism.
- Small businesses primarily producers sustained damage, disruptions and financial losses
- 55 businesses impacted / needing assistance with \$15m damage reported at that time (number from DESBT via survey). The final figure is expected to be much higher.
- 7 commercial and 1 industrial business inundated in February; 13 commercial businesses inundated in May.
- Agricultural land sustained flood related damage, quality affected by waste and weeds washed on.

### Environment

- Public safety /health concerns regarding mosquitos and vermin.
- Damage to ecosystems within the creek catchments through soil erosion, sediment build up, rubbish accumulation and contaminated waste.
- Flood debris moving through catchment affecting water quality and land quality, debris on fences and properties.
- Spread of weeds and seeds through the catchment in flooded areas.
- Impacts on native fauna and animal welfare concerns.
- Stock has been lost or misplaced from private landholders.
- Failure of dams on private property affected roads and property.
- Excess waste produced by properties as a result of inundation and subsequent clean-up activities.

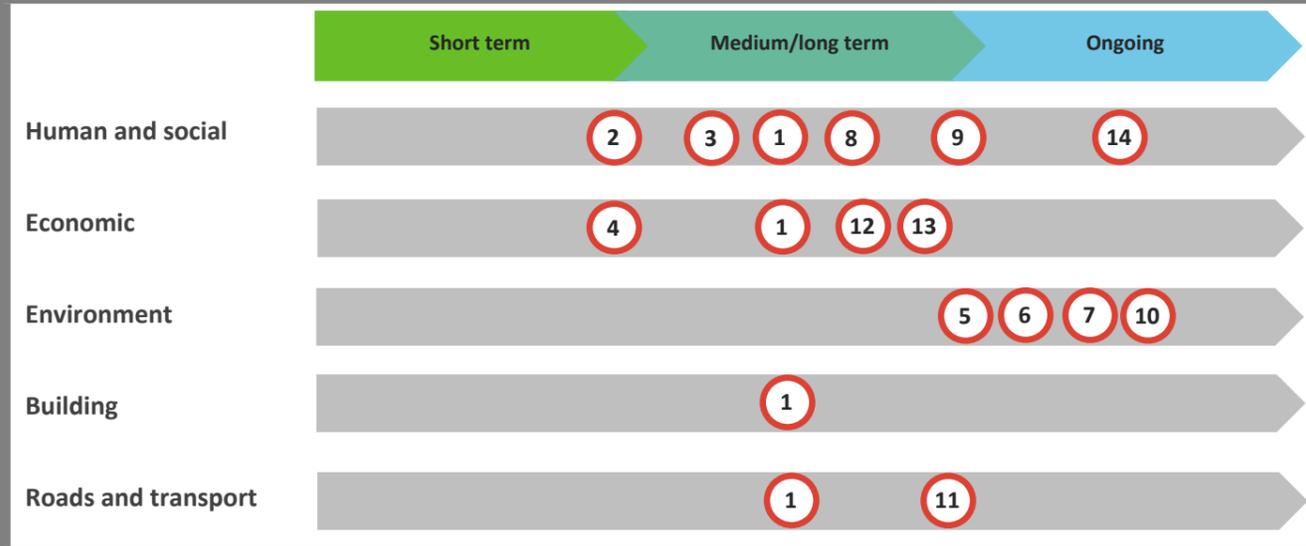
### Building

- Minimal damage to emergency and utility (water, sewage, power, telecommunications) service facilities.
- Power outages over 7 days (25 February – 3 March) 2231 customers affected.
- Council community facilities such as community buildings, halls, parks, playgrounds and sporting grounds have sustained damage to varying degrees.
- House impacts.

### Roads and transport

- Local and State roads have been damaged.
- 1396 defects logged for the February event.
- 50% of the unsealed road network needs work.
- Assets that had been made safe need to now have work done to reinstate to full usability.
- Rail damaged, lines disrupted.
- Bridges were not structurally damaged. Debris caught in bridge structures requiring significant clean up.
- Significant number of reports of driveway damage - this will be a challenge to manage moving forward.
- Footbridge in Withcott damaged/closed.
- Impact to the TMR road network not as severe as Council roads.
- Awaiting data on the movement of the Gatton Clifton Road land slip before any restoration works commence and road reopened.
- Damage results in significant impact on the supply chain and alternative access required.
- Silt removed from bridges and piled on roadside identified as an issue.

Recovery timeframes



### Human and social

In partnership with relevant state and local agencies and service providers:

- Community impacts assessments undertaken.
- Coordinate efforts to allow access to psychological support services, financial support services, essential services.
- Community member clean ups coordinated.
- Coordinate access to emergency or temporary accommodation.
- Review available financial support for recovery-focused support agencies to ensure it is adequate and appropriate to meet identified needs, and is promoted to those non-profits, and/or lobby for increased resources where needed.
- Community education programs to create a greater understanding of natural hazards and man-made disasters.
- Develop a strategy and implement community led. recovery and resilience-building initiatives.
- Address the issue of vulnerable people remaining in high-risk locations to natural disasters.
- Recovery plans established and reviewed as required.
- Communicate Recovery strategies.

### Economic

- Liaise with state and local agencies including Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) and Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry development and landholders to access economic impact of the event.
- Coordination efforts to allow access to business support services, financial support services and mental health support (in collaboration with Human and Social) for businesses.
- Work with small businesses, primary producers, tourism retail and food to develop recovery strategies.
- Assist businesses and industry to identify information on funds, grants and loans available from government and other entities.
- Investigate and implement programs to encourage consumers to shop local within impacted towns and communities.
- Accumulated impacts to agriculture and horticulture are monitored and measured against previous benchmarks.
- Investigate and identify funding to increase visitation and activation of existing community events.
- Investigate funding and activate additional tourism promotion activities to encourage return of visitors.

### Environment

- Undertake damage assessments of riparian sites within impacted area and identify priority locations for restoration works.
- Identify areas within riparian environment where flood debris and waste has accumulated and source funding opportunities to facilitate the removal.
- Source funding to undertake LiDAR assessment of impacted waterways.
- Collaborate with NRM groups (Healthy Land and Water), Council of Mayors and neighbouring Councils.
- Dispose of flood waste created from clean-up of private properties, identify/negotiate funding sources for removal of waste and debris from riparian areas that are located on private properties.
- Liaise with QRA and Healthy Land and Water to source funding and develop implementation plans.
- Pest control plans, including mosquitos, developed and implemented. Liaise with other LGA's.
- Monitoring of mosquitos and other vectors undertaken on Council reserves

### Environment (cont)

- Advice provided to local residents in relation to vector control on private property.
- Undertake surveillance for pests and weeds in flood affected areas.
- Review and update were required, LVRC biosecurity management plan.
- Identify areas of new priority weed infestations and coordinate control response with local community.
- Coordinate with Biosecurity Qld and State department for fire ants.
- Waste management strategies reviewed and evaluated for disposal of waste and long-term capacity and costs of management.
- Seek funding assistance to evaluate state of catchment (sediment accumulation, erosion sites, risk areas) and develop project plans for restoration and erosion protection works.
- Develop and evaluate management plans for catchments within impacted areas, clearly articulating roles and responsibilities and on ground actions.
- Liaise with QRA, Council of Mayors and State utilities departments.
- Investigate any issues with water storage on private properties including maintenance of farm dams and provide clarity on responsibilities - State work to contribute advice.

### Building

- Undertake damage assessments across impacted areas.
- Building inspections to be undertaken to assess safety.
- Repair community assets - bores, shade structures, playgrounds, community halls and sporting fields restored. Consider building back better or adopting different approaches in designs/delivery.
- Undertake insurance processes.
- Liaise with QRA regarding DRFA opportunities.
- Identify and seek funding for betterment opportunities.
- Seek funding for the restoration of Withcott pedestrian bridge to allow community to services.

### Roads and transport

- Undertake damage assessments across impacted area.
- Undertake priority inspection, repair work to reopen essential and local transport routes.
- Return transport infrastructure to pre-event state.
- Appointment of a Program Manager to manage flood works.
- Engage contractors to start removing silt from bridges and piled on roadside.
- Liaise with TMR to manage the removal of asphalt around Lions Park.
- Undertake comms around reporting of damage on TMR roads to 131940.
- Debris caught on bridges removed
- Liaise with QRA regarding DRFA opportunities
- Identify and seek funding for betterment opportunities.
- Infrastructure is protected from damage should further events occur in the short term.
- Investigate and negotiate funding to quickly restore footbridge in Withcott to highlight this is essential public infrastructure.

### Human and social

- Community impacts are identified and understood.
- Coordinated efforts to ensure community members have access to psychological support services, financial support services, essential services.
- Community member clean ups completed and returned home.
- Community returned to normal routines including returning to work and children to schools.
- Community members and support agencies report good awareness of and low wait times for support services.
- Community has a greater understanding of natural hazards and man-made disasters that could impact them and their communities and have taken steps to build their own resilience to protect against future harm.
- Recovery strategies are coordinated, communicated, and understood.
- Holistic community-led recovery and resilience-building initiatives implemented and are being evaluated.

### Economic

- Economic assessments have been completed, impacts have been identified and referrals were made to relevant state and local agencies.
- Business premises have been cleaned and business reopened.
- Business owners can access Business Support Services including support to alleviate stress and mental health issues.
- Farmers, agricultural industry and small business, have been able to access grants available to them without burden of overcomplicated application processes.
- Consumers have returned to purchasing at impacted businesses.
- Agricultural outputs have returned to pre-event levels.
- Tourism campaign has been implemented and tourist numbers returned and/or increased.
- Local events that bring community together and attract visitors have returned and / or expanded.

### Environment

- Environmental assessments have been completed, impacts to catchments identified and referrals made to relevant State and local agencies.
- Restoration management plans developed and informed by hydrological assessments.
- Catchment Action Plan updated.
- Flood waste removed from roadside areas as part of clean up activities involving private residences.

### Environment (cont)

- Location of riparian flood debris identified, and clean-up programs developed.
- Pest control plans implemented on priority Council reserves.
- Advice provided to community through site inspection and provision of information.
- Management plans for pests and weeds are developed and evaluated.
- Responded to community calls for assistance with the development of property pest management plans and herbicide subsidy.
- Waste management strategies result in the best outcomes for the environment, Council retains capacity for the community for coming years and residents are not significantly impacted by costs of waste management during recovery.
- The roles and responsibilities for management of creeks is clearly defined, articulated and understood by members of the community.
- Catchment Action Plan (CAP) for Lockyer Valley is updated with identified priorities and on ground actions, using current data for LiDAR, flood modelling and risk assessment.
- Information pertaining to water storage on private properties provided to affected land owners.

### Building

- Damage assessment captured, insurance claims lodged and works undertaken to rectify damage.
- Damaged residential properties repaired / rebuilt.
- Damaged businesses repaired/rebuilt.
- Damaged community assets restored - sewage infrastructure, bores, shade structures, playgrounds, community halls and sporting fields restored. Consideration for building back better or adopting different approaches in designs/delivery.
- Review flood prone parks infrastructure and rationalise where possible.
- Withcott pedestrian bridge restored allowing convenient community access to services.

### Roads and transport

- Recovery plans established and road networks re-established to a higher flood/impact immunity – build back better funding incorporated into repairs.
- Local and state roads are open and operational after emergency works and full repairs have been completed.
- Damaged road furniture repaired or replaced.
- Road pavements, culverts and drainage repaired.
- Debris caught on bridges removed.
- Betterment projects identified, successfully funded, and delivered.
- Replacement of Withcott Pedestrian bridge (Fred Thomas Bridge) successfully funded and works undertaken.

Measures of success

Delivery

### The following will assist in delivery of tasks and outcomes:

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|---|--|
| • Local Recovery Coordinator                    | • Infrastructure Teams                 |
| • Recovery Functional Leads                     | • Environmental Officer                |
| • Coordinator Disaster Management Resilience    | • Finance Officers                     |
| • Disaster Management Officer                   | • Procurement Officers                 |
| • Resilience Engagement Officer                 | • Contractors                          |
| • Community Engagement and Development Officers | • Other key stakeholders as identified |

**Projects**

- Human and social**
  - A well-resourced program that allows for meaningful engagement with different cultural and demographic groups across various localities so that recovery, resilience and preparedness can be tailored for each sub-group. This program would include supporting community groups to host gatherings so that residents can process their experiences of disaster and trauma in a supportive environment, as recommended by various disaster psychologists and recovery experts. This requires government funding for the community meetings and events.
- Economic**
  - Undertake a shop local campaign to stimulate local economic activity that supports impacted businesses
  - stimulate tourism visitation through marketing and promotional activities
- Environment**
  - Cat D funded Flood Debris Removal project to be subcontracted to Healthy Land and Water.
- Building**
  - Damaged Park infrastructure will be reinstated where seen appropriate under insurance claims and improvements identified where needed.
  - Damaged building infrastructure to be repaired under insurance claims.
- Roads and transport**
  - Damaged sealed and unsealed roads and accompanying infrastructure assets to be reconstructed.
  - Electronic flood signage and additional flood cameras

**Opportunities**

- Human and social**
  - To undertake engagement for community-led resilience and preparedness discussions that aim for local communities, residents and businesses to take a more proactive approach with less reliance on government authorities before implementing prevention and preparedness strategies.
- Economic**
  - Investigate and seek additional funding to expand existing or planned events and/or projects with recovery actions.
- Environment**
  - Assistance to landowners that aren't primary producers – those that have fallen through the gaps of not being covered under household insurance and not qualifying as primary producers.
- Building**
  - Park infrastructure that has been damaged in multiple flooding events is being assessed in line with Council Park rationalisation strategy.
  - Potential improvements to drainage infrastructure to be made to building facility roads to improve resilience. Facilities include the Gatton Showgrounds internal roads
- Roads and transport**
  - Betterment opportunities within Council's road network and associated infrastructure assets to be identified for consideration to assist in flood resilience within the region.