



QUEENSLAND RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

2021-22 ERF Flood Warning Infrastructure Network (FWIN) Program

Guideline



Australian Government



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Government

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PART A – Overview and Objectives

This guideline supports eligible Queensland Councils and Department of Transport and the Main Roads to apply for funding under the 2021-22 ERF Flood Warning Infrastructure Network (FWIN) program as part of the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) Recovery and Resilience Program 2021-22, funded by the National Recovery and Resilience Agency (superseded by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)).

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) is the administering agency for this project.

Overview

The \$7 million Flood Warning Infrastructure (FWIN) program was developed as part of the broader \$75 million Emergency Response Fund Recovery and Resilience Program 2021-22 (the ERF Program) following the February–March 2022 flood events, and applies to 23 local government areas (LGAs) activated under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

\$6.5 million will be managed through a grants application process for the delivery of new and upgrades to existing flood warning infrastructure. The remaining \$500,000 will be allocated for program delivery costs.

Background

The National Recovery and Resilience Agency (the Agency) established the \$75 million ERF Program for the purpose of providing:

- A grant of recovery (Recovery Grant); and
- A grant of post-disaster resilience, which may include recovery elements (Resilience and Recovery Grant) to Queensland and New South Wales.

The purpose of the grants is to deliver projects for specific recovery and post-disaster resilience initiatives to Queensland and New South Wales LGAs significantly impacted by the February–March 2022 flood events.

Flooding is one of the most significant disaster risks in Queensland, which is why it is important to work together to ensure communities in flood prone areas have access to timely and accurate flood warnings. Flood waters only respond to their physical environment, and all at-risk communities and responding agencies rely on information from an effective flood warning system to keep their communities informed.

The [Queensland Strategic Flood Warning Infrastructure Plan](#) (QSFWIP) supports communities to better prepare and respond to flood events, and improve community resilience to flood events, through the development of a best practice flood gauge network. The network, which includes rainfall and river height gauges and other supporting infrastructure, is responsible for the monitoring of environmental and meteorological conditions which lead to flooding and enables the remaining components of the total flood warning system to be undertaken.

Eligibility Criteria

Funding is available for local government areas activated under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018 (DRFA) in response to the February–March 2022 flood events, under the South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding, 22 February 2022 – 5 April 2022 (V14) activation.

For a copy of activations, please refer to QRA's activation website:
<https://www.qra.qld.gov.au/disaster-funding-activations/activations>

Eligible applicants include councils activated under the eligible event and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR).

Benefits of the program

In addition to contributing to the objectives of the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience, and Local governments' and QRA's responsibilities under the [Queensland Flood Risk Management Framework](#) (QFRMF), the project will result in the following flood risk management benefits:

- Facilitate the development of a network of flood warning infrastructure that complies with best practice
- Drive the development and implementation of disaster resilient infrastructure, buildings, and communities
- Promote community awareness and resilience
- Achieve cost efficiencies with capital and recurrent expenditure through regional collaboration
- Foster technology improvements delivering greater awareness for lower costs.
- Aid in future proofing new assets for emerging technologies
- Improve situational awareness through a single point of truth in the context of warnings and disaster messaging

Scope of the program

The scope of the 2021-22 ERF Flood Warning Infrastructure (FWIN) program will include the delivery of new, and upgrades to existing, infrastructure and will be built based on the needs identified by the Bureau of Meteorology through the National Flood Warning Infrastructure Network Program (NFWINP), as well as those identified by eligible applicants.

The following asset types are eligible for funding under the project:

- Rainfall gauges
- River height gauges
- Flood cameras
- Electronic signage
- Data communication repeaters
- Alternative flood warning infrastructure (rain and level gauges)

The proposed new rain and river height gauges identified across high priority catchments in the NFWINP will be prioritised for funding under the program, with councils responsible for the supply and installation of any assets within their LGA to ensure the timely installation and upgrade of Bureau standard flood warning gauges in Queensland. The QRA will liaise with both the Bureau and eligible councils to facilitate the prompt Bureau approval of asset locations. Once practical completion has occurred, the Bureau will take full ownership of all NFWINP assets delivered under the program.

Remaining funds will be equally distributed amongst eligible local government areas with additional assets prioritised by eligible applicants and tailored to the needs of their communities to ensure outcomes are maximised.

Construction of flood protection or physical mitigation infrastructure or measures are not eligible under this program.

Project standards

New and upgraded assets delivered under this program shall comply with the following references, at a minimum (where relevant):

- Flood Warning Infrastructure Standard 2019
http://www.bom.gov.au/water/standards/documents/Flood_Warning_Infrastructure_Standard.pdf
- Specifications for Alert Flood Warning Networks
- Technical Requirements for Gauge Assets Capable of Delivering Necessary Performance to meet Bureau Requirements
- Telemetry Platform (Tube Type) Drawings
- Main Roads Technical Specification – MRTS225 Imaging
- Main Roads Specification (Measurement) – MRS225 Imaging
- Main Roads Technical Specification – MRTS233 Roadway Flood Monitoring Systems
- Main Roads Specification (Measurement) – MRS233 Roadway Flood Monitoring Systems
- Flood Warning Gauge Network – Process for the installation of a:
 - New flood gauge
 - Flood gauge using Alert technology
- [Alternative Flood Warning Infrastructure \(Rain and Level Gauges\): Guideline for Minimum Requirements](#)

All project deliverables will require RPEQ certification of works, where appropriate.

Eligible expenditure

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- Be a direct cost of the approved eligible projects/activities; and
- Be incurred by the applicant (required for project audit purposes).

There is a capped percentage for administrative costs (no more than 5%) to assist with the delivery and management of these projects.

Examples of eligible costs include:

- Personnel costs directly related to the delivery of the project including salaries, vehicle and office equipment leasing
- Construction costs, such as all site works required as part of the construction, and construction-related labour, materials and equipment hire
- Detailed design, for example, production of Final or Tender Design drawings and/or specifications
- Costs of conducting a tender for the proposed project
- Purchase and installation of fixed plant and equipment

Ineligible grant activities

The following are ineligible activities for the purpose of the grants:

- Activities not related to flood events (i.e., the grant cannot be used for activities that primarily support recovery or improve resilience to other events, such as bushfires)
- Activities in areas that were not directly affected by the February-March 2022 flood event
- Activities that do not benefit local governments activated under the DRFA in response to the February-March 2022 flood event
- Purchase of land, including costs relating to the acquisition of land or property
- Wages other than wages of skilled technical officers already employed by the relevant State Government and allocated to manage the approved projects
- General services that are not connected with the construction or improvement of infrastructure or do not result in the construction or improvement of infrastructure
- The covering of retrospective costs
- Activities conducted outside of Australia
- Subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, electronic devices (e.g., phones, laptops) and rent
- Activities with the potential to adversely impact on a matter of national environmental significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth)
- The introduction of plants, animals or other biological agents known to be, or that could become, environmental or agricultural weeds and pests
- Overseas travel
- Projects that have already received full funding or a commitment of full funding. 'Full funding' is funding that equals the full estimated cost of the project as verified by an independent, relevant, suitably qualified, and accredited industry professional. Full funding is committed when the applicant jurisdiction has received written and reliable confirmation that full funding is available and will be allocated to the project within a reasonable timeframe.

The grants cannot be used for the following costs:

- Costs already incurred or expected to be incurred by any party in relation to the maintenance, improvement or construction of a project related to this Program
- Administrative costs associated with the management and delivery of this Program incurred by the state that exceed 5% of the total project cost. Administrative costs do not include salaries and wages of employees other than the salaries and wages of skilled technical officers already employed by the relevant State Government and allocated to manage the approved projects
- Cost sharing arrangements
- Legal costs
- Purchase of core business capital equipment such as motor vehicles and office equipment
- Vehicle and office equipment leasing, unless directly related to the delivery of the project
- Remuneration of executive officers
- Remuneration of an existing employee, unless the employee is temporarily reassigned to conduct work directly related to the delivery of the project

- Duplication of existing initiatives, for example costs already approved through other funding streams
- Statutory fees and charges, and any costs associated with obtaining regulatory and/or development approvals
- Costs beyond the project period, for example ongoing costs for administration, operation, maintenance or management
- Costs not supported by the general ledger, including on-cost charges
- Profit margin of applicant
- Costs exceeding the approved capped project funding amount

Should an applicant have any specific inquiry relating to whether a specific expense can be accommodated under the program, please contact the QRA via email to floodteam@qra.qld.gov.au for clarification.

PART B – Application Process

The application process will consist of the following:

1. Applications invited
2. Applicants submit their application form detailing:
 - a. mandatory inclusion of any NFWINP assets identified within the any local government council applicant's LGA; and
 - b. any additional projects they wish to put forward for funding consideration (ranking the priority of each project) and the funding amount requested.
3. The QRA assess proposed projects against the guidelines to ensure all activities and associated deliverables are eligible and achieve program outcomes and objectives.
4. The QRA advise applicants of the outcome of their application.
5. The QRA administers grants.

Application process

Application to the fund will be undertaken by each council using the Application Form available at <https://www.qra.qld.gov.au/ERF/ERF-fwin-program-2021-22>.

Each applicant is to provide a single form, containing all projects they wish to submit for consideration. Each project must be assigned a priority by the applicant council. Any NFWINP assets identified within the applicant's LGA must be included on the applicant's application form.

Applicants may also implement a regional approach to project delivery with a lead council/organisation agreeing to procure and deliver the scope of works on behalf of multiple councils/organisations. Where a regional approach is taken, a single application is to be submitted by the lead council/organisation with evidence of their agreement to deliver the works and partnering council/organisations agreement to support their delivery. For example, a terms of reference outlining the governance structure and articulating roles, responsibilities and expectations as agreed to by all parties involved.

Following the close of applications, the QRA will evaluate the applications and award funding to the successful applicants.

The overarching principles below will be adopted when assessing and approving projects:

- NFWINP assets identified across the 23 eligible councils will be funded to assist in the transition to NFWINP delivery by the Bureau and ensure the timely installation and upgrade of Bureau standard flood warning gauges in high priority areas.
- The remainder of funding distributed equally amongst eligible local government areas (adjusted if requested funding amounts are low) to support uplift of non-Bureau standard assets across the board, as these assets have not been supported through a large-scale infrastructure investment program to date.

Key dates

A summary of key dates is provided below:

Item	Date
Applications opened	23 October 2023
Applications closed	25 January 2024
Applicants notified of funding approval	March 2024
Project delivery deadline	30 June 2025

PART C Governance and administrative arrangements

The following governance and administrative arrangements will apply to successful projects.

Funding agreement

It is a requirement that all recipients of this funding enter into a Project Funding Agreement with QRA.

A Project Funding Agreement will be formed either by:

- a. for regular recipients of QRA Funding: QRA will issue a Project Funding Schedule, which when executed by both parties, will be considered a binding Project Funding Agreement under the terms and conditions of the Head Agreement for QRA Funding already in place between QRA and the recipient
- b. for one-off funding: by execution of a standalone Project Funding Agreement.

The Project Funding Schedule/Agreement will detail the terms and conditions specific to the approved funding, including reference to the relevant funding guidelines that govern the program, funding type and amount, key date and milestone schedules, payment claim and reporting requirements.

Project Funding must be used solely for the purposes of the relevant Project and only be used on Eligible Project Costs.

The applicant warrants that it has sufficient funds to complete the Project if the amount of the Project Funding is insufficient to deliver the project.

Funds that have been used, spent or committed otherwise than in accordance with the Project Funding Agreement, relevant Program Guidelines or provisions of any Head Agreement must be repaid to QRA.

Any intellectual property associated with approved funding under this program will be provided to the applicant upon its creation by any third party.

At acquittal, project intellectual property, such as research or scoping studies, will be provided for use by QRA.

Unspent funding

Unspent funds will be returned to the program and may be reallocated to other projects.

Variations

All variations to a Project Funding Agreement, scope or change in control of a project are to be agreed formally in writing.

Where there are material changes following a project approval, grant recipients must provide QRA with updated project information.

Procurement

The procurement of goods or services must be in accordance with the applicant's procurement policy. When procuring goods or services, local governments must align with the Local Government Act 2009, the Local Government Regulation 2012 and their own procurement policy. State government agencies must comply with the Queensland Procurement Policy.

If expenditure is in breach of the applicant's procurement standards, then reimbursement of these costs is unable to be sought under this program.

Record keeping

All applicants must keep an accurate audit trail. Records must be available for seven years from the end of the financial year the expenditure is acquitted by the Queensland Government.

For assurance purposes, the Queensland/and or Australian Government may at any time, via QRA, request documentation from applicants to evidence the State's compliance with this guideline. This may include, but is not limited to access to project level information, to confirm acquittal is in accordance with this guideline.

Progress reporting and payment claims

All applicants with active programs are required to provide monthly progress reports on the status of works and expenditure throughout project delivery.

Progress reporting is mandatory throughout project delivery, to ensure applicants update QRA on status of scope/activity, dates, and expenditure.

Monthly progress reports are created and lodged through QRA's Monitoring and Reporting System (MARS) Portal, detailing:

- a. actual expenditure reported against the approved capped amount
- b. percentage of scope of works completed
- c. predicted start and completion dates and actual start and completion dates
- d. delivery against project milestones
- e. reasons for, and details of, any variances in scope, cost or time
- f. details of complementary works.

An executed Project Funding Schedule is required before the initial 30 per cent advance is paid to successful applicants. Once actual expenditure has exceeded the initial 30 per cent advance, applicants can progressively claim expenditure incurred up to 90 per cent of the approved capped value or the Estimated Final Cost (whichever is the lowest). The remaining 10 per cent of the final actual costs will be paid upon project acquittal.

Claims for expenditure must be lodged with a progress report and a general ledger or transaction report (or similar financial document produced from the applicant's financial system) demonstrating the actual expenditure incurred against the Recommended Value of the approved scope of works.

Extensions of time

If the applicant is experiencing exceptional circumstances that are reasonably unforeseeable and beyond the applicant's control, an extension of time (EOT) to the approved project completion date may be considered.

Applicants are required to contact the QRA via email to floodteam@gra.qld.gov.au as early as possible, detailing the unforeseen circumstances impacting project completion, the actions taken to minimise the impact, and the adjusted project plan and milestones.

Project acquittal report

The final project acquittal report, and associated documentation, must be received by QRA within three months of the completion of the project. For example, if a project is completed on 30 June 2025, the final project acquittal report is due by 30 September 2025. If a project is completed on 31 December 2024, the final project acquittal report is due by 31 March 2025.

Project acquittal reports must include:

- a. a final progress report detailing the completed approved works activities against the approved project works activities
- b. final actual costs reported against the approved capped amounts
- c. detailed general ledger evidencing the final actual claimed expenditure and submitted total project costs (including details of contribution) delivery against project milestones
- d. a Final Project Report and evidence demonstrating the completed works/activities, for example photo evidence representative of the extent of the completed works (JPG including EXIF metadata, GPS coordinates and time/date taken) and relevant reports. details of complementary works
- e. Supporting documents to be made available for sampling by QRA if requested.

Acquittals must be certified by the applicant in line with its delegations on lodgement.

QRA will undertake a final assessment of each project to ensure approved scope is delivered within timeframe, expenditure is eligible and assurance requirements are satisfied.

Assurance activities

Applicants may be required to provide documentation to support any assurance activities. These assurance activities may include, but are not limited to:

- a. audit, site visits or inspections
- b. obtaining relevant documentary evidence to support estimated/actual costs and/or value for money assessments
- c. verification reviews on measures or projects
- d. compliance with legislative and policy requirements.

Certification

All project documentation, including applications, progress reports and final reports, must be certified by the applicant in line with its delegations.

Good and Services Tax (GST)

Where the end-recipient of the grant is registered for GST, the claimed value must exclude GST and be actual expenditure, paid prior to lodging the submission.

Where the end-recipient of the grant is not registered for GST, the claimed value may include GST.

Public acknowledgment of Australian Government assistance

Eligible applicants must acknowledge ERF funding contribution in public materials, which includes but is not limited to:

- a. media releases regarding the approved project
- b. acknowledgement or statements in project publications and materials
- c. events that use or include reference to the approved project
- d. plaques and signage at construction sites or completed works

To comply with this requirement, all public advice and media releases should refer to the relevant funding source, as being “*funded by the Australian government under the Emergency Response Fund*”.

Contact QRA for assistance and to coordinate approval for any materials by emailing media@gra.qld.gov.au or telephone (07) 3008 7200.