



Industry Recovery and Resilience Package

Final Evaluation Report

2021-2022 Southern Queensland Floods

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Document details

Security classification	Not yet approved
Date of review of security classification	December 2025
Authority	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
Author	Monitoring & Evaluation – Resilience & Recovery
Document status	Final
Version	1.0
QRA Reference	DOC/25/107145 GD: 1062

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Acronyms

ATL	Allowable time limit	KEQ	Key evaluation question
BMRG	Burnett Mary Regional Group	LGA	Local Government Area
DPI	Queensland Department of Primary Industries	LLER	Locally led economic recovery
DRFA	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements	QFF	Queensland Farmers' Federation
EDARG	Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants	QRA	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
EOT	Extension of Time	ToC	Theory of change
IRRO	Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer		

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Summary

The 2021–22 Southern Queensland Floods led to widespread impacts across Queensland, prompting a \$2 billion Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement (DRFA) investment. This evaluation examines the Industry Recovery and Resilience (IRRO) program to understand its relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. Findings draw on available data, noting data and evidence was variable in quality and depth.

The 2021-22 IRRO program was allocated \$2.5 million under DRFA Category C to assist primary producers severely impacted by the 2021-22 Southern Queensland Floods, activated for primary producer assistance in 22 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The package was intended to assist primary producers recover from the initial impacts of the events, help build resilience and better understand the risk and impact of flooding to their farm businesses, both through the development of Flood Management Plans and engagement activities.

Key findings

Table A: Summary of evaluation findings

Key Evaluation Questions		Answers
Relevance	1. To what extent did the design of the IRRO package reflect real needs in the community?	Significant
	2. Was the design of the IRRO package appropriately targeted to meet community needs and achieve its outcomes?	Moderate
Effectiveness	3. To what extent were the packages' activities and outputs delivered as planned?	Moderate
	4. To what extent did the package achieve (or is likely to achieve) its intended outcomes?	Moderate
Efficiency	5. To what extent was the IRRO package adequately and appropriately resourced (staffing, funding, equipment, systems, timeframes) to meet their objectives?	Moderate

Relevance

- Available Request Forms, survey data and contextual information indicates both packages were broadly aligned with community needs. While there was generally a robust framework for program delivery, IRRO uncertainty around grant timing, availability and eligibility criteria may have limited uptake of the Primary Producer Flood Risk Management Grant portion of the package.

Effectiveness

- Due to commencement delays, very limited support was able to be provided by IRROs to primary producers to access funding for immediate recovery needs.
- Workshops were effective to improve knowledge and awareness of resilience practices and encouraged changes to how they prepare, manage and recover from floods.
- IRROs exceeded their targets (150), with 198 Flood Management Plans developed with primary producers that outline immediate and long-term actions to build increased flood resilience.
- Low uptake of grants – Many factors including financial constraints, uncertainty about eligibility requirements, reluctance to incur upfront costs and delays to the establishment of the grant likely contributed to a low uptake of the Primary Producer Flood Management Grant.

Efficiency

- Delays impeded immediate recovery needs, limited the support provided to primary producers to access funding and later led to primary producer engagement difficulties.

Table B: Package expenditure summary

Package / sub-program	Committed funding	Approved activities value	Amount spent	% Funding amount spent
Overall package	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,652,046.66	66.1%
IRRO Wages and Operating Costs	\$1,375,000	\$1,375,000	\$1,369,589.62	99.6%
Primary Producer Flood Risk Management Grants	\$1,125,000	\$1,125,000	\$282,457.04	25.1%

1. Introduction

1.1 2021-22 Southern Queensland Floods and DRFA Packages

The 2021-22 Southern Queensland Floods consisted of repeated and devastating flooding that occurred between November 2021 and May 2022 across many Queensland communities that included four significant disaster events¹. Thousands of families, small businesses, non-profit organisations, and primary producers across 39 of the 77 Local Government Areas (LGAs) were heavily impacted by these events, including loss of lives, resulting in one of the largest recovery operations in Queensland's history.

The event resulted in the activation of 39 LGAs for Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Category C and D assistance², with 20 exceptional circumstances packages jointly funded by the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments. The packages are summarised in Appendix 7.2, and:

- comprised 41 programs, across five lines of recovery and resilience
- were delivered by 10 Queensland Government agencies
- totalled over \$2 billion.

The funding packages were designed to support communities, families, small businesses, primary producers and not-for-profit organisations severely impacted by the 2021-2022 event³.

This evaluation is being conducted as part of DRFA and QRA requirements to evaluate Category C and D packages⁴.

1.2 The Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer (IRRO) Program

The 2021-22 Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer (IRRO) program was allocated \$2.5 million under DRFA Category C to assist primary producers severely impacted by the 2021-22 Southern Queensland Floods, in 22 LGAs activated for primary producer assistance⁵.

The package was intended to assist primary producers recover from the initial impacts of the events and to help build resilience and better understanding of the risk and impact of flood to their farm businesses, both through the development of Flood Management Plans and engagement activities.

1. *The 2021-22 Southern Queensland Floods included (1) Central, Southern, and Western Queensland Rainfall and Flooding, from 10 November 2021 to 3 December 2021 (AGRN 986), (2) Ex-Tropical Cyclone Seth, from 29 December 2021 to 10 January 2022 (AGRN 994), (3) South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding, from 22 February 2022 to 5 April 2022 (AGRN 1011), and (4) Southern Queensland Flooding, from 6 May 2022 to 20 May 2022 (AGRN 1020).*

2. *See Appendix 7.1 – DRFA assistance measures*

3. *For a full list of Funded packages for the 2021-22 Southern Queensland Floods Portfolio, see Appendix 7.2*

4. *For the legislative and policy context informing the evaluation of the IRRO package, see Appendix 7.3*

5. *See Appendix 7.4 – LGAs Activated for Primary Producer Assistance*

2. Methodology

2.1 Approach

The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach, which means it is based around a theory of how the package intended to support stakeholders to recover from the flood events and build their resilience. The evaluation tests the theory, by looking at different sources of data and evidence, to see how accurate it is and, in the process, identify the achievements and shortcomings of the package.

As part of this approach, a theory of change (ToC) (see Figure 1) was developed to understand the changes (outcomes) the package aimed to achieve or contribute to, and how the package could be expected to effect those changes.

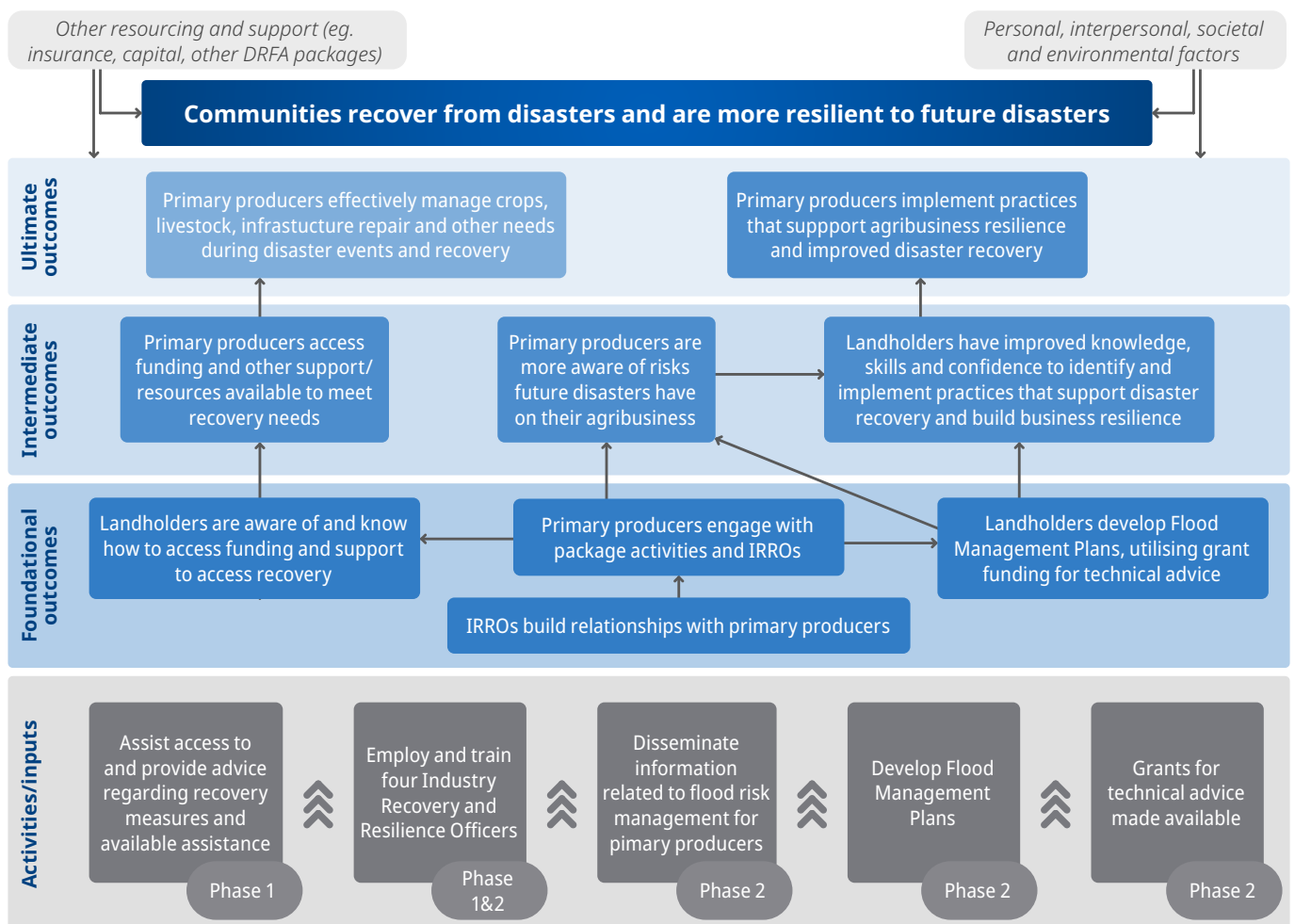
The ToC was developed based upon the objectives, outcomes and eligible activities in the package's guidelines.

The ToC guides the evaluation and informs judgements around the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the package. These criteria are used as the basis for evaluating the packages. Key evaluation questions⁶ (KEQs) for each of the criteria were developed and guide the evaluation (see Table 1). The evaluation aims to answer these questions, based on the data and evidence collected as part of the evaluation process.

Table 1: Key Evaluation Questions

Criterion	KEQs and sub-questions
Relevance <i>Is the package doing the right things?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the design of the IRRO package reflect real needs in the community? Was the design of the IRRO package appropriately targeted to meet community needs and achieve its outcomes?
Efficiency <i>How well are resources being used?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the IRRO package adequately and appropriately resourced (staffing, funding, equipment, systems, timeframes) to meet their objectives?
Effectiveness <i>Is the package achieving the changes it intended to achieve?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were the packages' activities and outputs delivered as planned? To what extent did the package achieve (or is likely to achieve) its intended outcomes?

Figure 1: Theory of Change



6. Key evaluation questions are high-level evaluative questions that inform the overall evaluation question and are operationalised by mid-level evaluative questions (Davidson 2014).

2.2 Methods and sampling

The evaluation of the 2021-22 IRRO program used a convergent mixed methods data collection and analysis approach to address the key evaluation questions.⁷

2.2.1 Data collection

The data collection methods were based around the information requirements to answer the KEQs. A mix of primary and secondary data sources were used.

Secondary data sources included:

- Package documents, specifically Request Forms, guidelines, progress reports, project plans, risk matrices and acquittal data
- Package monitoring data from implementing agencies, including event and activity records.

Primary data sources comprised:

- An evaluation questionnaire directed to the Department of Primary Industries that participated in the package delivery (design, delivery, community awareness, and community access).⁸

The evaluation, including data collection activities, was guided by key ethics principles described in the *Human Rights Act 2019, Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations, Information Privacy Act 2009, and Stakeholder Engagement Guide: For Monitoring and Evaluation Activities*. Collectively, these documents outline ethical, legal, and procedural frameworks for respecting human rights, safeguarding personal information, and guiding evaluations and stakeholder engagement in evaluation activities.

2.2.2 Limitations

Apart from financial data and monitoring data related to package outputs and quantitative data provided by one of the IRRO delivery partners, most of the data informing the evaluation is qualitative. This reflects one of the key limitations of the evaluation report – data availability and scope for primary data collection. Limited data related to community outcomes was available, most of the existing QRA-collected data related to compliance processes such as Request Forms, guidelines and financial acquittals.

Time constraints precluded primary data collection, and QRA relied on the delivery agency to facilitate primary data collection. Much of the data relating to outputs and outcomes was provided by the IRRO delivery partners (Queensland Farmers Federation and Burnett Mary Regional Group). While this provided valuable insights into the perspectives of the IRROs, there was limited ability to triangulate this with other data sources to analyse outcomes, limiting the level of certainty of some findings.

7. Creswell, J. W. & Clark, V. L. P. 2018, *Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.)*. SAGE publications.

8. A detailed list of data utilised in the evaluation can be found at Appendix 7.5 – Evaluation Data



Normanby Bridge, Gympie (source: Gympie Regional Council)

3. Evaluation findings

This section presents the data and evaluative findings for the KEQs for each criterion. The findings of the evaluation are summarised as answers to the KEQs in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of evaluation findings

Key Evaluation Questions		Answers
Relevance	1. To what extent did the design of the IRRO package reflect real needs in the community?	Significant
	2. Was the design of the IRRO package appropriately targeted to meet community needs and achieve its outcomes?	Moderate
Effectiveness	3. To what extent were the packages' activities and outputs delivered as planned?	Moderate
	4. To what extent did the package achieve (or is likely to achieve) its intended outcomes?	Moderate
Efficiency	5. To what extent was the IRRO package adequately and appropriately resourced (staffing, funding, equipment, systems, timeframes) to meet their objectives?	Moderate

Note: See Appendix 7.6 for full summary and rubric

3.1 Relevance

The relevance of the packages refers to the extent to which the package design reflected and appropriately addressed the needs of target stakeholders. The community needs identified early in the event, in the package Request Form, outlined delivery agencies' understanding of the context and broad community needs at the time. The guidelines were developed in response to the needs identified in the Request Form, and activities delivered must align with the eligible activities and costs outlined in the guidelines.

3.1.1 Identified community needs

The main source of data available for ascertaining community needs was the *Category C Assistance Request Form* (Request Form), as primary data collection with community members was unable to be conducted for the evaluation. The Request Form detailed extensive damage to the primary production and agriculture sector, causing significant production losses as a result of the flood events including:

- Erosion damage, mulch, and exposure of root systems in vegetables, sugar cane, and tree cropping
- Damage to waterways and headlands as well as destruction of infrastructure including fencing, irrigation and pumping equipment, and dams
- Crop losses due to waterlogging and root diseases especially in horticultural crops, cotton, and sugar cane
- Fresh food shortages in retail outlets due to the interruption of the supply chain.

Case studies⁹ corroborated the impact the flood had on producers:

Case Study A: Three-quarters of the primary producer's dairy farm was inundated by flooding which came up to the fence line of the homestead and halted the farm's production, resulting in topsoil loss and the destruction of fences and the erosion of roads on the property and limited market access.

Case Study B: The primary producers, operating a mixed cropping and cattle farm, saw their cattle yards, hay sheds and machinery inundated – they lost 800 hay bales, lost cows and calves to the flood water, as well as machinery and irrigator computers and fences damaged or destroyed. Their lucerne paddocks had their crops and topsoil washed away, leaving them out of production for 18 months post-flood. Soil health was also affected.

Case Study C: The primary producers, primarily running a cattle and silage enterprise, had 80% of their property inundated during the event. They relocated cattle due to a lack of pasture and fresh water, incurring higher costs and declining livestock condition. Flooding caused damage to infrastructure, including fences, pumps, troughs, dam walls, tracks, and electrical systems. Riverbank erosion, loss of pastures, debris deposits, and the spread of invasive weeds further affected the property.

Case Study D: The primary producer operates a mixed cropping and cattle enterprise which was significantly impacted by flooding, leading to significant soil erosion and crop and infrastructure damage, which led to challenges in operations and reduced productivity.

As a result of the flood events, the Request Form identified key needs as:

- assisting producers to recover from the initial impacts of the events; and
- to build resilience to the impact of cumulative flood events and better understand the risk and impact of flood to their farm businesses.

3.1.2 Package design

In response to the two overarching needs identified in the Request Form, the Guidelines for the package had the following objectives:

1. The agriculture sector is more aware of the risks future disasters have on their agricultural enterprise.
2. Agricultural businesses have business continuity plans and examples of dynamic organisational resilience practices that address relevant risks and threats from future natural disasters.
3. Agricultural businesses have tools to help them identify, assess and manage business risks from future disasters and strategies and actions on how to address these risks.
4. Primary producers are better able to account for, consider and integrate impacts of natural disasters into existing drought-based Farm Business Resilience Plans.

9. Case studies A and D were provided by QFF, Case studies B and C were provided by BMRG. They have been anonymised to ensure privacy. See Appendix 7.7 for full details

To achieve these objectives, four IRROs were engaged and worked across two phases:

1. The first phase of the program was planned to align with the availability of other disaster recovery funding support with the IRROs assisting primary producers to access recovery assistance, as well as providing advice and referrals to support services such as financial counselling, social support services.
2. Build long term resilience with the four IRROs working with industry groups, local governments and impacted producers to assist primary producers to better determine their flood risks and develop property scale flood management plans.¹⁰

Primary Producer Flood Management Grants

As part of phase two, the Primary Producer Flood Management Grants component of the IRRO program was administered under the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994* through the *Rural and Regional Adjustment (Primary Producer Flood Management Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023*. The objective of Primary Producer Flood Management Grants Scheme, provided under the DRFA, was to:

- Support up to 150 primary producers with the cost of obtaining eligible professional advice¹¹ (up to a maximum of \$7,500) for flood and high rainfall mitigation planning associated with developing Flood Management Plans endorsed by an IRRO.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the grant, applicants were required to be primary producers within activated LGAs and received eligible professional advice on or after 18 May 2022.

Eligible professional advice was defined as advice or a service [e.g., accountancy advice, agronomic advice, financial planning, flood mapping, soil mapping and assessment] provided by a suitably qualified professional adviser [e.g., accountant, agronomist, farm irrigation consultant, financial planner, geographic information system technician, soil scientist] to an applicant about improving the resilience to flooding and high rainfall of the applicant's primary production enterprise.

3.1.3 Needs alignment

Community needs that were addressed in the program design were agricultural risk awareness, resilience planning, and risk management tools, which support recovery from productivity losses, infrastructure damage, and supply chain disruptions caused by natural disasters. It was found that the Request Form appropriately fulfilled these needs, as corroborated by secondary data obtained throughout the Evaluation.

The IRRO activities were similar to existing agricultural extension models, which seek to encourage practice change by establishing relationships with primary producers and providing awareness, education, skills and motivation to encourage and support voluntary change.¹²

10. For a full list of eligible activities please see Appendix 7.8 - Eligibility Criteria
11. A Flood management plan for a primary production enterprise, is a plan that: (1) has been prepared in accordance with eligible professional advice for the primary production enterprise, (2) addresses risks of from flooding or high rainfall to the primary production enterprise, and (3) details the actions the applicant may take to manage risks to the primary production enterprise to improve the resilience of the primary production enterprise (QRIDA 2023).
12. Williams A, James, J & Pritchard, P (2017) 'Developing an Extension Model of Practice to guide and empower extension practitioners', Rural Extension and Innovation Systems Journal 17 (1)
13. QFF & BMRG 2025, 'Industry Recover and Resilience Officer Program' [Video]
14. The QRA Evaluation team notes that the definition of eligible primary producer income has changed since the implementation of this program, now including income from agricultural support services which was previously excluded (see QLD Government 2025)

The program design contributed to filling knowledge gaps and increasing awareness of resources available to producers. Following implementation of workshops an IRRO described how:

"We had a lot of producers come along that hadn't heard of resources and education tools ... the engagement that we saw at those workshops for those primary producers out in the field, and sitting in the classroom listening to the theory side of it from our expert keynote speakers."
(BMRG IRRO)¹³

Finding 1: The program design focusing on flood recovery and future flood resilience was appropriate for primary producer needs in the aftermath of the event.

Finding 2: The delivery model was similar to existing agricultural extension activities.

A key stakeholder from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), described the 2021-22 IRRO Program Guidelines as designed to provide a robust program delivery framework that clearly outlined the purpose, structure, and scope of the IRRO program. DPI further stated that:

"The IRRO Guidelines provided a robust framework for program delivery ... Clear articulation of eligible activities, costs, and governance expectations; Strong emphasis on integration with Farm Business Resilience Plans (FBRPs) and collaboration with other aligned projects/ organisations, including other DRFA funded projects."
(DPI Engagement)

However, there was feedback regarding the grant's rebate model. Requiring upfront payment made it financially inaccessible for many producers. Additionally, IRROs reported confusion amongst producers regarding the definition of "technical advice". IRRO's reported hesitancy when referring technical advisors to primary producers and often farmers were reluctant to incur expenses due to concerns about potential rejection of grant applications.

Finally, the definition of "primary producer" (defined as having greater than 50% of income derived from farm activities) potentially excluded applicants from accessing the grants, especially those with diversified income or those whose primary production income was significantly lower due to the cumulative disaster events (for further information see discussion on Effectiveness over the page).¹⁴

Finding 3: While the guidelines provided a robust framework for program delivery, IRRO uncertainty around grant timing, availability and eligibility criteria may have limited uptake.



Kidd Bridge, Gympie

3.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness relates to the extent to which the packages achieved their intended outputs and outcomes. The ToC was used to guide evaluation of effectiveness – to break down the Guideline objectives into more tangible outcomes, to understand what was intended and achieved by the packages.

3.2.1 Intended outcomes

As per the ToC, the IRRO program sought to achieve two key outcomes, which corresponded to both phases of the package.

- Through the support of IRRO's, primary producers can access recovery resources, allowing them to effectively manage crops, livestock, infrastructure repairs, and other recovery needs following disasters.
- Through awareness raising engagements and the development of Flood Management Plans, primary producers can implement practices that support agribusiness resilience and improved disaster recovery.

3.2.2 Supporting recovery

The intention of Phase 1 was for IRROs to support primary producers to access Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants (EDARGs) administered by QRIDA, as well as other government and non-government assistance for recovery.

Delays in the commencement of the package (see Efficiency below for further details), meant IRROs began on-ground activities at a time that did not align well with the availability of EDARGs, coinciding with the tail end of the application period. Thus, IRROs were not well placed to assist primary producers with EDARG applications and could provide only limited support after commencing. Once on the ground, IRROs were able to raise awareness about and aid with grants applications, with the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) assisting one primary producer in the Balonne Shire, who was approved for a \$54,070 grant.¹⁵

Finding 4: Due to commencement delays, very limited support was able to be provided to primary producers to access funding for immediate recovery needs via the IRROs.

The IRRO program addressed some community recovery initiatives through workshops. While these primarily focused on resilience (see below), they also facilitated:

- Participation in social and professional events, which fostered social connections and engagements.
- Engagement on mental health issues as a result of the flooding events.

The IRROs found that mental health was a key concern that was raised during engagement activities, leading BRMG to hold a workshop with a focus on mental health during disaster recovery. This included presentations from Blaze Aid and Rural Aid about mental health and support services available in natural disasters. This event resulted in two producers registering with Rural Aid for counselling as well as several further enquiries post event.¹⁶

Finding 5: IRROs were effective at flexibly engaging with community needs and were able to support community recovery by focusing on fostering social engagement and connecting primary producers with mental health support.

3.2.3 Strengthening resilience

The key IRRO package activities that intended to contribute to strengthened primary producer resilience were workshops and the development of Flood Management Plans, developed with professional technical advice for which Flood Risk Management Grants were available.

Primary producer engagement through workshops and forums

A key foundational outcome underpinning the IRRO package related to relationship-building and engagement with flood affected primary producers and was an enabler for downstream outcomes to occur.

Workshops and forums were a key engagement activity delivered by the IRROs. A total of 17 workshops were delivered with 833 participants (see Table 3).

Table 3: Workshops and Forums

Description	QFF ¹⁷	BMRG ¹⁸	Total
IRRO workshops/forums delivered	10	7	17
IRRO forums/workshops attendees	414	419	833

The workshops covered topics such as flood risk mitigation aimed at helping producers strengthen both their agribusiness operations and personal resilience and included a range of topics such as flood planning, disaster preparedness, support services, writing Farm Business Resilience Plans, accessing financial support, agronomy/water/soils health management, animal health, landscape hydration and mental health.

The workshops also provided a means to inform producers about the work of the IRRO program and the availability of grants to support the development of Flood Management Plans.

These workshops enabled primary producers from various industries to connect to industry experts from a range of professional backgrounds.

"I really enjoyed running the workshops... it was also a chance to have, you know, a range of speakers, agronomy, finance, we had mental health speakers. I think it was really beneficial to have such a wide range of industries involved in the program, you know we connected with primary producers across, dairy, horticulture, mixed cropping, and grazing." (QFF IRRO)¹⁹

15. Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) 2025, Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer Project: Final Report, QFF

16. Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG) 2025, Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer project: Final report, BMRG

17. QFF 2025

18. BMRG 2025

19. QFF & BMRG 2025

Additionally, they provided a platform for farmers to share their experiences and learn from each other, as a primary producer reported:

“Look, I would really encourage all producers to really engage and embrace all industry programs such as this. It is just a really great opportunity for farmers to kind of connect, discuss, and network with other farmers and people within the [agricultural] industry.” (Primary Producer, Gympie)²⁰

DPI reported the IRRO program presentations delivered in the workshops were well received because they provided primary producers with the knowledge and skills to recover from floods, care for their land, and build resilience.

“The content of the presentations was really well received, and we are confident this will really benefit our producers in their flood recovery, looking after their landscapes and building resilience to flood and other disaster impacts going forward.” (DPI Engagement)

This bears out in survey results that were provided by QFF from workshops that they ran. Overall responses can be found in Figures 2 to 4 below²¹.

Figure 2: Survey Results – Experience of agriculture workshop

Q1. How was your experience of the agriculture workshop?

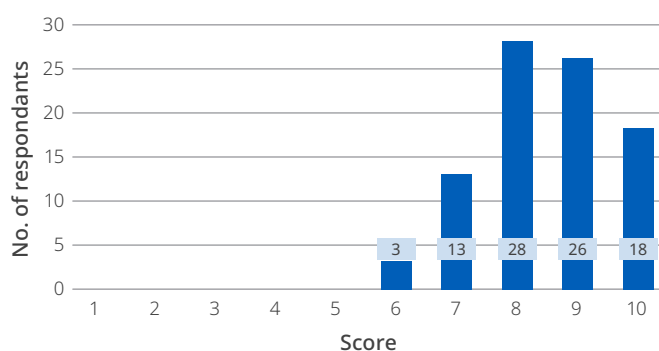


Figure 3: Survey Results – Knowledge increase

Q2. How valuable was this workshop in increasing your knowledge to better prepare for, manage and recover from flooding and high intensity rainfall events?

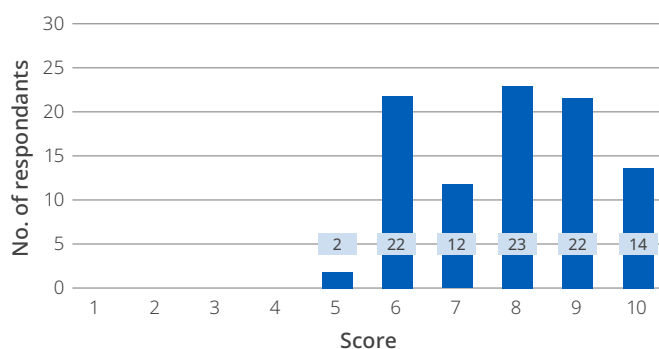
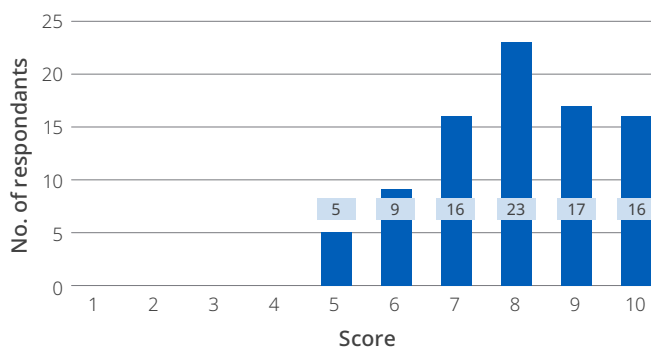


Figure 4: Survey Results – Assessing business risk

Q3. How valuable was the workshop and the presentations assisting you and your business to assess business risks, including climate and improve overall business resilience?



The average result for each question was **eight out of ten**, illustrating that overall, workshop attendees found the workshops valuable and increased their knowledge of how to prepare for, manage and recover from flood events and increase their resilience.

Additionally: **74%** of attendees indicated they planned to make changes in how they prepare, manage and recover from floods, including:

- **59%** indicated they intended to develop a Flood Management Plan,
- **75%** intended to talk further with QFF about the Farm Business Resilience Program; and
- **51%** said they would think about applying for the QRIDA technical services grant.

These findings are supported by studies showing that interactive community education, which helps communities identify problems and fosters social connectedness, can lead to behaviour changes that reduce disaster risk.²²

Finding 6: IRRO Workshops were well attended and received by primary producers. Workshops were effective in improving knowledge and awareness of resilience practices and encouraged them to make changes to how they prepare, manage and recover from floods.

Other engagement activities

IRRO’s also conducted property visits with producers to enable them to better understand the flood damage and the specific needs and challenges they faced. This allowed IRRO’s to provide broader support, such as referring them to other resources, in addition to the Flood Management Plans. IRROs noted that regular property visits helped build trust with producers.

IRROs were also a point of human connection in the service delivery to farmers.

“I would say we are probably a human connection for farmers. ... I think as an Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer we were able to offer that service as well, and on top of it, help them build their plans to recover and provide more resilient strategies to mitigate floods.” (QFF, IRRO)²³

20. Ibid

21. Compilation of survey data provided by QFF for QFF-run workshops

22. Deloitte 2016 The economic cost of the social impact of natural disasters, Deloitte Access Economics, Sydney

23. QFF & BMRG 2025

As a primary producer from **Case Study D** confirmed:

"It is refreshing to have someone visit your farm to understand us and our situation, it has been an enjoyable experience."

Finding 7: Direct engagement with primary producers allowed IRRO's to build trust, which facilitated downstream outcomes.

QFF, an IRRO delivery partner, additionally attempted engagement with Vietnamese growers based in the Logan Council region. QFF noted that growers from this background had often been overlooked by other industry programs and lacked trust in government. QFF IRROs were able to connect with a leader within the Vietnamese community to facilitate a workshop designed for the Vietnamese grower community. A Flood Management Plan template was also translated into the Vietnamese language to facilitate their development amongst the community. While there was no data available on the uptake of Flood Management Plans amongst Vietnamese growers, this represented a concerted effort to reach and engage with diverse communities.

Finding 8: IRROs were able to reach and engage with diverse communities that may otherwise have been overlooked.

Flood Management Plans

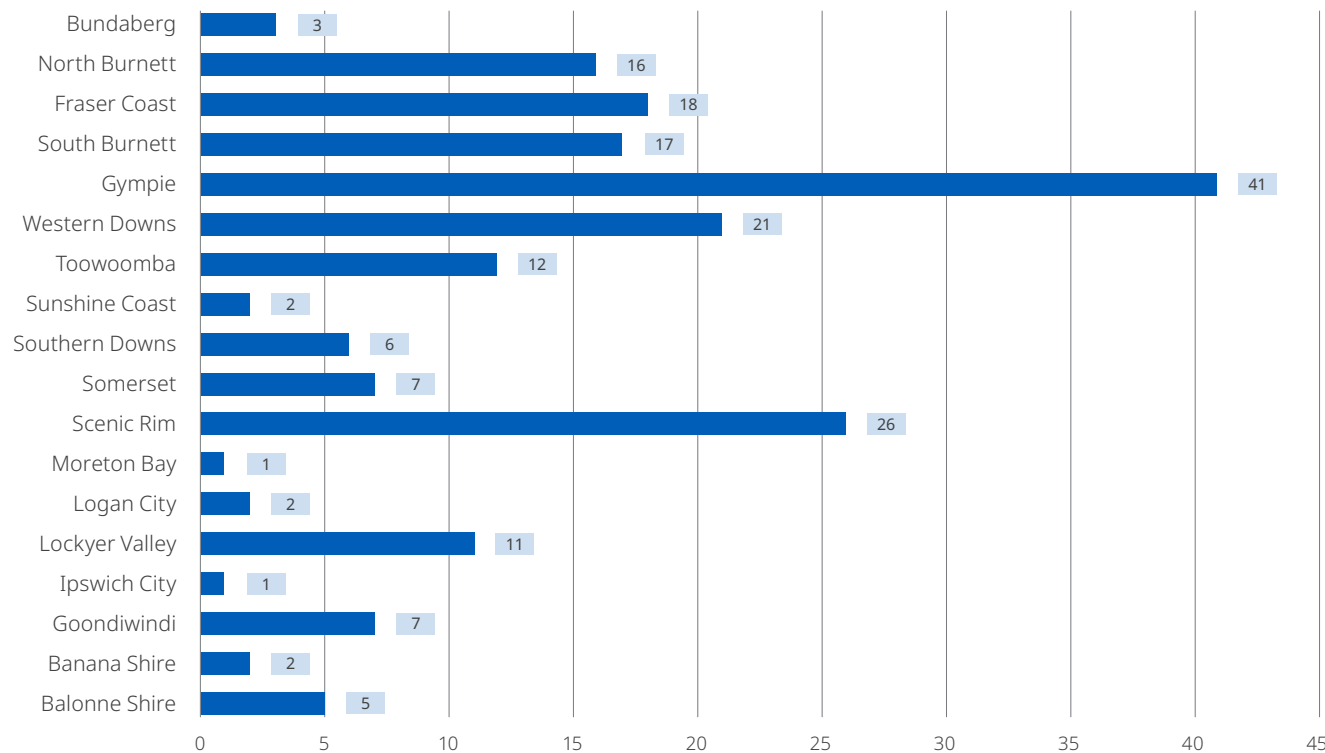
The primary objective required each IRRO delivery partner to develop 75 Flood Management Plans with primary producers, totalling 150 plans across the 23 activated LGAs. Despite the timing issues outlined above, the IRROs exceeded their targets, developing 198 Flood Management Plans (see Table 4 and Figure 5).

Table 4: Flood Management Plans

Description	QFF ²⁴	BMRG ²⁵	Total
Flood Management Plans developed	102	96	198
LGAs where Flood Management Plans were developed	13	6	18*

* One LGA had a Flood Management Plan developed each by QFF and BMRG

Figure 5: Number of Flood Management Plans by LGA



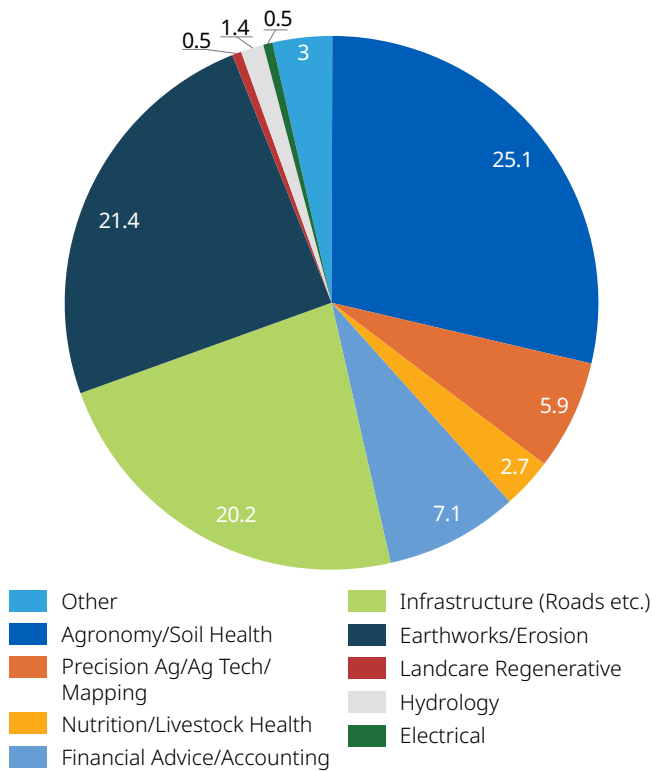
Flood Management Plans developed by the primary producers with the assistance of the IRROs included a range of activities. A survey conducted by QFF of top four planned action categories in each FMP developed with QFF IRROs found that the largest proportion of actions across all plans related to Agronomy/Soil Health (25.1%), Earthworks/Erosion (21.4%) and Infrastructure (20.2%) (see Figure 6).²⁶

24. QFF 2025

25. BMRG 2025

26. Data provided by QFF

Figure 6: FMP Planned Activities
Flood Management Plan Actions (QFF)



Many agronomy/soil health planned actions focused on efforts to control weeds and improve soil health to mitigate flood impact. Infrastructure planned activities included rebuilding and strengthening farm roads and fences to be more resilient to flood damage, while earthworks/erosion planned activities focused on repairing erosion and work to improve run-off.

There is some evidence to suggest that primary producers utilised their Flood Management Plans.

The primary producers in Case Study A utilised the planned activities in the Flood Management Plan to convert their cultivation paddocks to kikuyu grass to improve soil erosion during heavy rainfall and have also increased their silage to provide long-term storage of livestock feed without needing to build sheds.

“Silage is a great strategy for us, and silage obviously is not a new thing, but it is somewhere where we can store a lot of feed without having to have infrastructure like sheds. So, we estimate this probably there probably four- or five-years’ worth of silage here for us, as a feed point of view.” (Case study A)

One primary producer from Gympie, learning from past flooding experiences, used the development of Flood Management Plans as a motivation to build farm infrastructure above flood levels.

“One of the things we think is really important is to put in some infrastructure so we can keep our cattle and livestock up on higher ground and out of the flood. Last time we had cows and calves washed away.” (Primary Producer, Gympie)²⁷

One IRRO observed that the assistance to primary producers in developing planning documents complemented the producers’ expertise and knowledge of their businesses.

“[Primary producers] know what they are doing, they know their business, they know their property better than anyone, but they may not have those plans in place. So, I found that a really great advantage with us coming in, is we could actually help them document things, get their plans down on paper and that can be a living breathing document.” (QFF IRRO)²⁸

A primary producer from Case Study A validated this statement, relating the value of converting what had been undocumented plans into plans that are now documented and regularly reviewed.

“And prior to 2022 we did not actually have a plan... the strategies that we use for flooding was probably all in my head. When we actually put that plan down into the paper, and now it’s something we can refer back to as a family, and we do, and sit down and go back through it in detail and make sure it is right for our farm.” (Primary Producer, Case Study A)

Finding 9: IRROs exceeded their targets, with 198 Flood Management Plans developed with primary producers that outline immediate and long-term actions to build increased flood resilience to address their risk to future natural disasters.

Finding 10: Some evidence from case studies suggests that the Flood Management Plans were effective in encouraging primary producers to take up new flood resilience and mitigation actions.

Finding 11: It was advantageous to leverage producers’ own knowledge of their business and property in the development of Flood Management Plans.

Primary Producer Flood Risk Management Grants

Out of the 198 Flood Management Plans developed, only 42 producers applied and were approved for the Primary Producer Flood Management Grants to inform the development of their Flood Management Plans, a conversion rate of 21%, totalling \$229,837 (see Table 5). A further six applications were declined (valued at \$18,006) and one application was withdrawn.

Table 5: Grants Approved by LGA

LGA	Grants Approved	Funding Received
Balonne Shire Council	2	\$14,300.00
Fraser Coast Regional Council	1	\$2,896.00
Goondiwindi Regional Council	3	\$22,500.00
Gympie Regional Council	11	\$48,345.33
Lockyer Valley Regional Council	2	\$14,474.55
North Burnett Regional Council	5	\$21,108.47
Scenic Rim Regional Council	2	\$6,087.50
South Burnett Regional Council	3	\$9,070.46
Southern Downs Regional Council	2	\$9,272.73
Toowoomba Regional Council	3	\$21,782.00
Western Downs Regional Council	8	\$60,000.00
Total	42	\$229,837.04

Note: Six grant applications valued at \$18,006 were declined and one application was withdrawn.

27. QFF & BMRG 2025
28. QFF & BMRG 2025

There was an expected target of 150 grants with a budget of **\$1.125 million**²⁹, so this was a much lower than expected uptake (20% of the available funding) and reflects several factors in confluence. While IRROs noted interest in the technical advice rebate (see Workshop results) issues reported include:

- IRROs reported that the rebate structure of the grant discouraged producers, finding that producers not having adequate cash-flow to cover expenditure before being reimbursed as a common issue.

*“For many farmers, engaging a technical advice expert was viewed as a luxury not a priority, especially given the financial strain that they were experiencing. Despite the potential long-term benefits of expert advice, this created resistance to participation.”*³⁰

This was likely exacerbated by the financial impacts of consecutive events, including a flash drought in late 2023 and new significant rainfall events in late 2023 and early 2024.

- While IRROs had the opportunity for multiple engagements with QRIDA during both the design and delivery phase of the grant to identify eligibility and activity requirements³¹, QFF reported there was some confusion regarding the definition of “technical advice” which created hesitancy among the IRROs when referring technical advisors to primary producers and led to reluctance among producers to incur the expense due to concerns about potential rejection of their applications.³²
- The eligibility criteria of primary producers also limited uptake, as many producers had diversified their income streams or saw their ‘on-farm’ income drop in comparison to other income streams due to the floods and other disaster events. This meant many potentially interested producers were not eligible. This led to frustration for those who were declined when they had already outlaid funds.^{33 34}
- IRROs reported general hesitancy amongst primary producers due to previous experiences of grant application processes where they felt it had been rejected due to what they perceived as overly strict interpretation of eligibility criteria that was unclear to them.³⁵ However, it was also noted by DPI that where potential applicants did not engage with QRIDA for grant applications, there was a greater likelihood of rejection.³⁶

In response to these issues, IRRO’s placed greater importance on the benefits of having a flood management plan in place without the need to prioritise applying for QRIDA flood management plans. QFF noted that they only recommended activities be claimed which were already planned to be implemented and funded by producers regardless.³⁷ This low uptake may have limited the overall impact of the flood management plans, as specialised technical advice supported by the Primary Producer Flood Management Grant informed only a small percentage of mitigation and resilience strategies.

Finding 12: A confluence of factors including financial constraints, uncertainty about eligibility requirements and therefore reluctance to incur upfront costs led to a low uptake of the Flood Risk Management Grants.

Finding 13: Lower-than expected uptake of grants meant that only 21% of Flood Management Plans were informed by technical advice.

Producers who accessed the grants sought technical advice in areas such as LiDAR mapping, agronomy (including soil testing), finance, and livestock health and nutrition. These activities reflected efforts to build resilience across diverse areas and were documented in their FMPs, highlighting an increase in knowledge, skills, and capability.

Several case studies illustrated how technical advice contributed to producers pursuing new flood resilience practices and strategies.

Case Study B: The primary producer engaged an agronomist who provided a soil and agronomy plan for the entire farm. The agronomist identified the damage to soil as a result of the flood, including the loss of topsoil. Going forward, the primary producer continues to soil test and plan to focus on biological applications and crop rotation by introducing biodiversity through cereal crops and multispecies crops, rotating paddocks and using cattle as part of the rotation to graze paddocks selectively.

Case Study C: The primary producer applied for a grant for technical advice expenses they had already incurred before considering the flood management grant, obtaining a local earthworks specialist to provide advice and planning regarding stock water infrastructure, identifying the water pumping system was at high risk and required better placement.

Case Study D: The primary producer utilised LiDAR mapping and technical advice to plan a series of earthworks projects designed to mitigate flooding impacts, funded by the grant. They self-funded the implementation of earthworks, which included levelling paddocks in key areas to enhance water infiltration and drainage efficiency during rainfall. By reshaping the land through levelling, and constructing contour banks and drainage channels as planned, they aim to mitigate the potential impacts of future heavy rainfall and flooding—specifically soil erosion and topsoil loss. This proactive approach is intended to preserve soil health and maintain pasture and crop production over time.

“The grant money was spent on professional advice to help manage water across our farm... We plant to continue to look after our soil through advancements in land management software and redesigning paddocks to avoid catastrophic damage during high rainfall events. This should result in less cumulative damage across the entire property. More importantly, we want to improve our future resilience so that we can continue to manage and look after the country that looks after us.”

It should be noted the grant did not allow for expenditure on the implementation of any proposed work emerging out of the Flood Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Grants. Whether or not primary producers followed through with implementation is outside of the control of the package. However, from the three case studies, there was evidence that primary producers who utilised the grant went on to implement actions arising from the obtained professional advice.

Finding 14: The Flood Risk Management Grants enabled primary producers to change and improve their resilience and flood management strategies, and their ability to plan, diversify, and mitigate risks. The grants facilitated the development of actions that can lead to enhanced long-term farm management and decision-making for flood resilience, however implementation follow through is outside the control of the package.

29. QRIDA 2023

30. QFF 2025

31. Engagement with DPI

32. QFF 2025

33. QFF 2025

34. BMRG 2025

35. BMRG 2025

36. Engagement with DPI

37. QFF 2025

3.3 Operational efficiency and timeliness

Operational efficiency and timeliness are closely linked, particularly in terms of the relationship between timeliness of implementation and associated impact on expenditure. Table 6 assesses the packages according to timeliness and operational efficiency, based on the following indicators outlined in Table 7:

- Appropriate timeframe for the activities to be delivered

- On budget, without significant over or under-spends
- On time, package was made available at an appropriate time to meet need, package implementation started promptly, and all activities completed within original package timeframe (ATL)
- Human resources fully and appropriately utilised.

Table 6: Summary of operational efficiency and timeliness

Design phase		Implementation phase	
Appropriate budget and resourcing	Appropriate timeframe	On budget	On time
Yes	Yes	No ³⁸	No

Table 7: Efficiency and Timeliness Indicators

Operational Efficiency	Extent to which human and financial resources were used as planned, appropriately and fully utilised, including whether resources were misallocated or budgets underspent/ overspent, whether risks were managed	OECD 2021
Timeliness	Extent to which the packages were available at the right time to meet needs, whether their timeframes were adequate to deliver activities, whether their implementation was timely and whether they were completed within the assigned ATL	

3.3.1 Budget

The initial allocated budget for the IRRO program and Flood Risk Management Grants was \$2.5 million with IRROs to be engaged for up to two years. This was adequate for the resourcing of four IRROs and their activities. The overall actual expenditure for the package was \$1.65 million, an underspend of 44%. A large proportion of this was due to the low uptake of the QRIDA grant – out of \$1.125 million dollars only \$229,837 was utilised (an underspend of 80%), highlighting the significance of barriers to grant uptake. Some funding was re-allocated from the QRIDA Flood Management Grant Scheme to support additional on-ground activity and engagement with impacted primary producers.

Table 8: Package Expenditure Summary

Package/ sub-program	Committed Funding	Approved Activities Value	Amount Spent	% Funding amount spent
Overall package	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,652,046.66	66.1%
IRRO Wages and Operating Costs	\$1,375,000	\$1,375,000	\$1,369,589.62	99.6%
Primary Producer Flood Risk Management Grants	\$1,125,000	\$1,125,000	\$282,457.04	25.1%

Finding 15: Budget underspend was primarily due to low uptake of Flood Risk Management Grants.

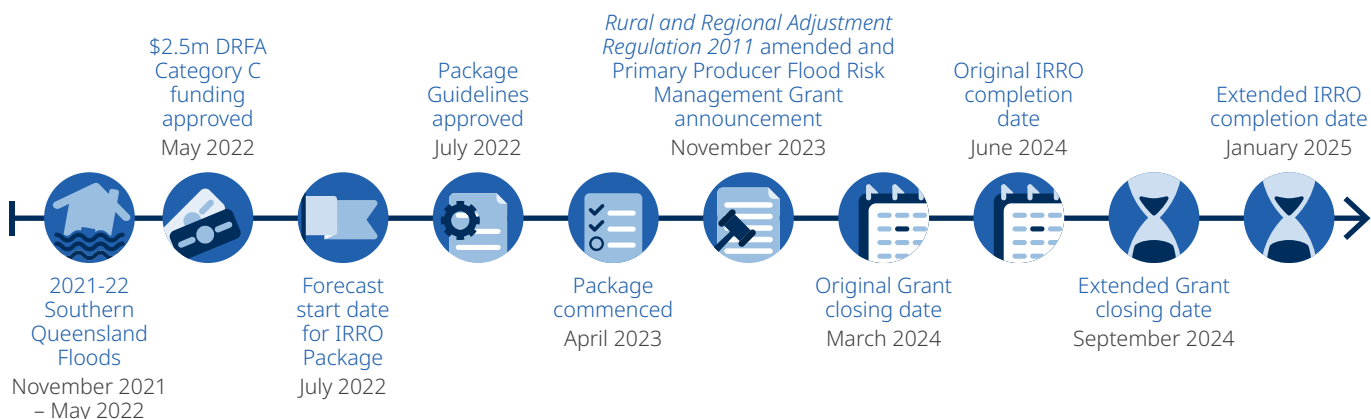


³⁸ Under/overspend <10% = Yes; 10-20% = Mostly; >20% = No

3.3.2 Implementation delays

Timelines were an important issue that affected the efficiency of the IRRO program, as demonstrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7: IRRO Package Implementation Timeline



The implementation of the IRRO program was delayed due to several cascading factors which impacted the implementation of the program:

1. A delay in the initial development and deployment of the Guidelines.
2. According to DPI, the DRFA Category C funding requirement that limited overhead expenditure made it financially unrealistic for agricultural industry groups and regional NRMs to implement the IRRO program. This challenge led to two potential delivery partners withdrawing from the initiative, hence delaying the program commencement.

“Limiting overheads to 7% made it very challenging financially or non-viable for non-profit organisations to engage in delivery of this IRRO project. This contributed strongly significantly to two potential delivery partners electing not to deliver under this IRRO project, further delaying commencement of the program.” (DPI Engagement).

However, this did not ultimately affect the overall number of IRRO’s engaged, meaning human resources were fully utilised.

3. The deployment of IRROs on the ground was significantly delayed, primarily due to recruitment difficulties including secondment challenges and filling for temporary positions. For example, for one of the delivery partners:

“[It] took 15-18 months after the flood events for IRROs to be deployed on-the-ground. Delayed roll out of the program hindered recovery timespan. These delays can leave farmers struggling to rebuild their livelihoods and crops, further compounding the impact of the flood.”³⁹

On commencement in April 2023, IRROs needed to establish relationships with many stakeholder groups, including councils, NRMs, DPI, industry organisations, community organisations and support services. It was reported that IRROs experienced difficulty when engaging with stakeholders in a delayed period up to 18 months since the flood events. Due to this delay, they were also unable to undertake the recovery activities proposed for Phase 1 of the package (for further

details see Effectiveness section). IRROs reported that because of the delays, many primary producers were not interested in engagement, along with frustration and anger for those who had not been successful in seeking assistance previously.^{40/41} The delayed commencement also meant that by the time IRROs were on the ground, seasonal conditions had changed significantly, with IRROs reporting this led to producers prioritising their immediate concerns around drought/dry conditions.⁴²

The IRROs inventively leveraged drought preparedness grants and loans and Farm Business Resilience Plans (FBRP) to get a starting point for producer engagement before pivoting to discuss flood impacts and the development of Flood Management Plans.⁴³ IRROs reported that while this was effective for engagement, it was a messy process for the producers, particularly where IRROs needed to make referrals to extension officers from another Department to assist with FBRPs.⁴⁴

Midway through the program, new significant flooding events occurred in several of the IRRO program regions (Southern Queensland severe storms and rainfall, 24 December 2023 to 3 January 2024 and Tropical Cyclone Kirrily associated rainfall and flooding 25 January to 26 February 2024), which increased the relevance of engagement around Flood Management Plans for those producers. Many others, however, experienced no rain events. This highlights the increased likelihood of events occurring in succession, the importance of timeliness of program implementation and consideration that new activations can impact the activities of underway packages.

Finding 16: A cascading series of delays led to IRROs being engaged on the ground later than anticipated, which affected Phase 1 of the delivery and led to sub-optimal primary producer engagement in the initial stages of the program.

Finding 17: Despite delays, IRROs were able to meet and exceed their Flood Management Plan Targets and successfully deliver workshops, with full utilisation of planned human resources.

39. QFF 2025, p. 33
40. QFF 2025

41. BMRG 2025
42. BMRG 2025

43. BMRG 2025
44. BMRG 2025

Primary Producer Flood Risk Management Grant timing

Further timing issues related to the rollout of the Primary Producer Flood Risk Management Grant, which related to the requirement for QRIDA regulation amendments to authorise the grants. The grants were initially open for application between November 2023 and March 2024. This timing coincided with a lack of technical service professional availability over the Christmas period which created additional challenges for impacted primary producers to uptake the grant.

The grant application period was eventually extended until 30 September 2024, which meant an extension for the IRRO program until January 2025 (from its original end date of June 2024) to maximise the uptake of the flood management grant.

Finding 18: The delayed rollout of the Flood Risk Management Grant was not timed optimally, requiring an Extension of Time.

Strong service delivery collaboration

During the IRRO program implementation, with support from QRA, the IRRO working group consisting of BMRG, QFF, QRIDA and DPI developed a strong service delivery collaboration. One of the IRROs described the strong collaboration characterising the partnership as a 'game changer'.

"Bringing our knowledge and our experience together, we've all worked together so closely week in week out, throwing ideas at each other, bringing that feedback from our producers into the room, and talking about it and how we can support them better. You know organisations coming together collaboratively and working together, it is just a game changer." (IRRO, BMRG, Case Study A)

Another IRRO also described the strong collaboration between the IRRO program delivery partners.

"It has been awesome. We have collaborated with BMRG and the [then] Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. It has been such a fantastic journey, there really has not been one downfall about it, everyone has been able to provide such valuable insight into everything." (IRRO, QFF, Case Study A)

Similarly, IRRO program delivery partners' strong collaboration was evident during the productive fortnightly meetings of representatives from BMRG, QFF, QRIDA and DPI.

"Once again, the strong collaboration between the delivery partners is evident in our fortnightly operational meetings which are working very well to maintain communication, share experiences and lessons learnt (both positive and challenges encountered), future opportunities and planning." (DPI Engagement)



4. Key learnings

Key learnings from the 2021-22 Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer Program Evaluation focused on program design, implementation, and community outcomes.

- When designing Guidelines and eligibility criteria, consideration could be given to ensuring eligibility does not unnecessarily preclude primary producers who have been impacted by an event and may have diversified their income or business practices as a response. It is noted that since the event, the definition of primary producer was altered to be more expansive. Future evaluations should analyse how the expanded definition has adjusted outcomes in future packages.
- Given that IRROs exceeded their Flood Management Plan targets, there was evidence of strong demand amongst primary producers. However, low uptake of the Primary Producer Flood Management Grants indicates that consideration should be given to making these more attractive or available to primary producers. Key considerations include simplifying and clarifying eligibility criteria and providing IRROs with adequate support to address uncertainties and confidently communicate requirements to primary producers.
- Commencement of funded activities as soon as possible after disaster events. Delayed starts have an impact on the relevance and utility of the package for primary producers, and when IRROs can provide support to primary producers to access other support services and resources during the recovery period.
- Coordination of inter-dependent activities across packages and recovery programs is needed when targeting an industry or sector and must be well timed to ensure maximum engagement and return on investment.
- Given that some producers experienced additional events during the implementation period of the package, consideration might be given to ensuring that delivery agencies are able to engage with emerging needs arising out of consecutive events.
- A strength of the package was the ability for IRROs to respond to the needs of primary producers on the ground, including a variety of tailored workshops. Future packages should ensure the agility and responsiveness of IRRO engagement continues to be supported, with appropriate time to build relationships.
- Some demographic groups may face greater challenges in accessing information about community recovery programs and grants. To enhance engagement and inclusivity, future initiatives should prioritise targeted outreach efforts and ensure that documentation is provided in accessible formats and translated into relevant languages.

5. Conclusion

This evaluation examined the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of the IRRO package for the 2021/22 Southern Queensland Floods. The evidence indicated that the IRROs proved effective at engaging with primary producers on resilience strategies, holding workshops and exceeding targets for the development of Flood Management Plans. However, uptake of the Flood Risk Management Grant was low and well under target. Despite limitations around package data, especially primary data, insights from IRRO reporting provides evidence to suggest the workshops and Flood Management Plans have encouraged primary producers to take on improved resilience strategies.

The evaluation also revealed potential to improve package design processes, to ensure that eligibility criteria doesn't unnecessarily preclude primary producers impacted by an event and to improve uptake of grants. It is also noted that timeliness of implementation was important to ensure the efficiency of packages are optimised.

Overall, the evaluation found the package targeted real needs and achieved (or contributed to) important positive outcomes for the primary production sector; and identified important lessons to improve disaster recovery and resilience work in the future.



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7. Appendices

7.1 DRFA assistance measures

Table 9: DRFA Assistance Measures

DRFA Assistance Measures
Category A: assistance to individuals to alleviate personal hardship or distress arising as a direct result of a disaster. Category A assistance is provided automatically by the states without requiring approval from the Australian Government.
Category B: assistance to the state, and/or local governments for the restoration of essential public assets and certain counter-disaster operations. Category B assistance also covers assistance to small businesses, primary producers, not-for-profit organisations and needy individuals through concessional loans, subsidies or grants. Category B assistance is provided automatically by the states without requiring approval from the Australian Government.
Category C: assistance for severely affected communities, regions or sectors and includes clean-up and recovery grants for small businesses and primary producers and/or the establishment of a Community Recovery Fund. Category C assistance is only made available when the impact of a disaster is severe. It is intended to be in addition to assistance under Categories A and B and is usually considered once the impacts of the disaster on affected communities have been assessed. Category C assistance is requested from the states and requires agreement from the Prime Minister.
Category D: exceptional circumstances assistance beyond Categories A, B, and C. Category D assistance is generally considered once the impact of the disaster has been assessed and specific recovery gaps identified. Category D assistance is requested from the states and requires agreement from the Prime Minister.

Source: Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018: Factsheet

7.2 Funded packages for the 2021-22 Southern Queensland Floods

Table 10: Funded Packages for the 2021-22 Southern Queensland Floods

Package	Delivery agent	Sub-programs within each package
Human and social		
Flexible Funding Grants	DTATSIPCA	Flexible Funding Grants
Community Health and Wellbeing	DTATSIPCA, QH	Mental Health Services Psychosocial and Mental Health Services Financial Wellbeing Service Navigator and Reconstruction CM Sector Development and Capability
Accommodation Support	DHLGPPW	Rental Security Subsidy Flexible Housing Solutions
Community Development	DTATSIPCA	Community Development
Economic		
Grants for Small Business and not-for-profits	QRIDA	Grants for Small Business and not-for-profits
Grants for Primary Producers	QRIDA	Grants for Primary Producers
Industry Recovery and Resilience	DAF	Industry Recovery and Resilience
Small Business Recovery and Resilience	DESBT	Small Business Support Service Skilling Queenslanders for Work Buy Local / Go Local
Tourism Recovery and Resilience	DTS	Building Resilient Tourism Infrastructure Regional Tourism Tourism Business Resilience Disaster Resilience Innovation
Rural Landholder Recovery and Resilience	QRIDA	Rural Landholder Recovery and Resilience
Medium to Large Business Recovery	QRIDA	Medium to Large Business Recovery
Local Recovery and Resilience	QRA	Local Recovery and Resilience
Environment		
Environmental Recovery	DESI	Riverine Recovery Weed and Pest Management Biodiversity Conservation Environmental Assets
Clean Up Grant	QRA	Clean Up Grant
Flood Risk Management	QRA, DoR, DHLGPPW	Community Engagement LiDAR Capture and Floor Level Flood Studies
Building		
Resilient Homes Fund	QRA, DoR, DHLGPPW	Voluntary Home Buy-back Resilient Retrofit Home Raising Industry Education Property level flood information
Community and Recreational Assets	QRA	Non-profit community sport / active recreation clubs Public Recreation Assets National Parks
Sport and Recreation Recovery Grant	DTS	Sport and Recreation Recovery Grant
Roads and Transport		
Roads and Transport	QRA	Betterment
Monitoring and Evaluation	QRA	Monitoring and evaluation

Notes: The Delivery agents listed are based on State Department names as at February 2025.

7.3 Legislative and policy context

The legislative and policy contexts guiding the 2021-22 Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer Program evaluation include:

- Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) assistance measures: Joint federal-state funding, DRFA, supports disaster recovery through Category A, Category B, Category C, and Category D assistance measures, easing financial burdens and enabling timely community support (see details in Appendix 7.1 - DRFA Assistance Measures).
- QRA funding administration: *The Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011 provide for efficient, effective, and economical operations under statutory obligations to deliver value-for-money disaster recovery initiatives.
- Evaluation of DRFA packages: The *QRA Strategic Plan 2025-29, Team Manual: For Monitoring and Evaluation Activities, Evaluation Strategy: Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, 2024-2027*, and the *Evaluation Framework: 2021-22 Southern Queensland Floods, 2024-27* provide guidance on how Category C and D programs are evaluated guided by the *National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs* to ensure that disaster recovery was efficient and effective.

7.4 LGAs activated for primary producer assistance

Table 11: LGAs activated for Primary Producer Assistance

LGAs activated for Primary Producer Assistance	
1. Balonne Shire Council	12. Logan City Council
2. Banana Shire Council	13. Moreton Bay Regional Council
3. Brisbane City Council	14. Noosa Shire Council
4. Bundaberg Regional Council	15. North Burnett Regional Council
5. Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire	16. Scenic Rim Regional Council
6. Fraser Coast Regional Council	17. Somerset Regional Council
7. Gold Coast City Council	18. South Burnett Regional Council
8. Goondiwindi Regional Council	19. Southern Downs Regional Council
9. Gympie Regional Council	20. Sunshine Coast Regional Council
10. Ipswich City Council	21. Toowoomba Regional Council
11. Lockyer Valley Regional Council	22. Western Downs Regional Council

Source: *Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer Guideline*

7.5 Evaluation data

Secondary data

Secondary data sources included:

- QRA administrative data, including program risk matrix data sourced from QRA Operations Division
- IRRO program documents, including the *Assistance Request Form*, the *Guidelines*, and *Primary Producer Flood Management Grants Guidelines* developed by QRIDA
- 2021-22 IRRO program close out and acquittal documents, including *IRRO Final Reports* (BMRG and QFF) sourced from DAF/DPI.
- 2021-22 IRRO program case studies, including:
 - » Case studies A, B, C and D provided by QFF and BMRG.

Primary data

Primary data collected for the 2021-22 IRRO program evaluation included:

- Monthly monitoring reports (design, delivery, community awareness, and community access) from DAF/DPI
- DAF/DPI evaluation questionnaire (design, delivery, community awareness, and community access).

7.6 Key evaluation questions

Table 12: Key Evaluation Questions detailed answers

	Key Evaluation Questions	Answers	Summary of relevant findings
Relevance	1. To what extent did the design of the IRRO package reflect real needs in the community?	Significant	Given the impact of flooding on primary producers, the package's focus on supporting recovery and building resilience strategies reflected real community needs
	2. Was the design of the IRRO package appropriately targeted to meet community needs and achieve its outcomes?	Moderate	While the guidelines provided a robust framework for the delivery of the program, however eligibility criteria may have precluded some primary producers being able to access the Primary Producer Flood Risk Management Grant (PPFRMG) and limited uptake
Effectiveness	3. To what extent were the packages' activities and outputs delivered as planned?	Moderate	Due to delayed commencement, IRROs were only able to provide limited support for the Phase 1 recovery element of the project Delivery of workshops and Flood Management Plans (FMP) were delivered as planned, and in the case of FMPs, exceeded their targets Low up-take of the grant meant that target of 150 PPFRMG was not achieved
	4. To what extent did the package achieve (or is likely to achieve) it's intended outcomes?	Moderate	While contribution to recovery outcomes were limited due to delays, there is evidence from workshop survey results and case studies that the IRRO program was effective at raising awareness of flood risk and practices to increase primary producer resilience, and evidence that this encouraged primary producers to adopt new practices. If grant up-take had been higher, this would give higher certainty of contribution to ultimate outcomes
Efficiency	5. To what extent was the IRRO package adequately and appropriately resourced (staffing, funding, equipment, systems, timeframes) to meet their objectives?	Moderate	While the initial budget and timeframes were adequate, delays to implementation of the IRRO program and stand-up of the Primary Producer Flood Risk Management Grant meant timing was significantly misaligned requiring an EOT. Poor up-take of the grant also contributed to budget underspends

Table 13: KEQ Answer Rubric

Criterion	KEQs	Significant	Moderate	Limited
Relevance	1. To what extent did the package designs reflect real needs in communities?	All or most of the objectives/ outcomes and activities in the Guidelines targeted real needs in communities. Eligibility requirements were appropriate to context.	Many of the objectives/ outcomes and activities in the Guidelines targeted real needs in communities. Some aspects of the Guidelines were not relevant or were inappropriate to context.	Very few of the objectives/ outcomes and activities in the Guidelines related to real needs and/or eligibility requirements were not appropriate to context.
	2. Was the design of the IRRO package appropriately targeted to meet community needs and achieve its outcomes?	Package Guidelines provided significant flexibility for implementers to design and deliver package activities according to need/context.	Package Guidelines provided moderate flexibility for implementers to design and deliver package activities according to need/context.	Package Guidelines provided limited flexibility for implementers to design and deliver package activities according to need/context.
Effectiveness	3. To what extent were the packages' activities and outputs delivered as planned?	Most of the activities/ outputs in the Guidelines were delivered OR all of the activities/outputs planned (and deemed appropriate and reasonable) by implementers were delivered.	Some of the activities/ outputs in the Guidelines were delivered or most of the activities/outputs planned (and deemed appropriate and reasonable) by implementers were delivered.	Few of the activities/ outputs in the Guidelines were delivered or few of the activities/ outputs planned (and deemed appropriate and reasonable) by implementers were delivered.
	4. To what extent did the packages achieve (or are likely to achieve) their intended outcomes?	Most intermediate outcomes achieved. Significant contribution (or likely contribution) towards ultimate outcomes is evident.	Some intermediate outcomes achieved (or significant progress towards intermediate outcomes is evident). Some contribution (or likely contribution) towards ultimate outcomes is evident.	Limited progress is evident towards intermediate outcomes. No evidence of contribution to ultimate outcomes
Efficiency	5. To what extent were the packages adequately and appropriately resourced?	Timeframes and budget were appropriate for the scope and type of activities delivered and in line with the outcomes that the packages aimed to achieve.	Some issues evident in timeframes and/or budget (eg. insufficient time, over- or under-budgeting). Some impact on delivery of activities and achievement of intended outcomes and/or administrative implications.	Insufficient timeframes and/ or budget severely limited packages' delivery of activities and achievement of outcomes.

7.7 Case studies

Case study A

The primary producers operate a dairy farm located on a flood plain in the Lockyer Valley, producing approximately 600,000 litres of milk annually. In May 2022, a flood event temporarily halted production, inundating three-quarters of the farm and bringing floodwaters up to the homestead's fence line.

Given the farm's high flood risk, it faces ongoing threats of production losses, infrastructure damage, and restricted market access during flood events. To address these challenges, the producers collaborated with an IRRO to develop a Flood Management Plan, outlining both immediate and long-term strategies to mitigate flood impacts on production, infrastructure, livestock, and the environment.

Key mitigation strategies included:

Land and soil management: to prevent topsoil loss during floods, cultivation paddocks were converted to Kikuyu, a drought-tolerant pasture that minimises erosion and stabilises soil during heavy rainfall.

Infrastructure improvements: to address recurring damage, electric single-line retractable fencing was installed, allowing cows to be moved to higher ground during floods and reducing fence damage. Roads and laneways were also reinforced to withstand erosion and ensure continued farm access after flooding. As Chris explained, "All our fences got washed away, and we had to rebuild all of our cow laneways and driveway."

Fodder storage: to ensure livestock are well-fed during disasters, the farm secured a 4–5-year supply of silage – "Our main priority is our animals and to make sure they're fed. So, we try to build resilience and do a lot of risk management from a flooding point of view."

Key flood resilience outcomes:

- Reduced damage to fences and laneways, with retractable fencing enabling faster recovery
- Improved soil retention and erosion control through Kikuyu paddocks
- A secure fodder supply to ensure livestock care during disasters
- Strengthened infrastructure, including flood-resilient roads and laneways.

This proactive approach demonstrates how tailored flood management strategies can enhance the resilience of primary producers in high-risk areas.



Case study B

The primary producer's farm is located on the western fringes of Gympie, along the banks of the Boonara and Redbank Creeks. Their farming operations include a mixed enterprise of cropping—primarily lucerne with some grain—and beef cattle.

In January, the region was severely impacted by a catastrophic flooding event, with nearly 470mm of rain falling in a single night.

"We woke up to the biggest deluge we have ever experienced. The water flow was incredible—fast-moving and surrounding the farm, even reaching up to the house. Our cattle yards, hay sheds, and machinery were inundated. The damage was unbelievable and devastatingly costly.

We lost 800 hay bales... Cows and calves were swept away in the floodwaters. Several pieces of hay machinery were submerged and significantly damaged. Irrigators that were normally outside the flood zone went underwater, damaging their computers and meter boxes. Several kilometres of fencing were destroyed, while track access and creek banks suffered severe erosion. We also lost our livestock bore, which supplies water to our animals, leaving them without a safe water source and making it too dangerous to keep them on the flats."



They participated in the IRRO program, developing a Flood Management Plan and accessing technical advice through the Flood Risk Management Grant. They worked with an agronomist to create a comprehensive soil health and agronomy plan for the entire farm. The agronomist identified extensive soil damage during several farm visits, noting that the impacts of the flood are ongoing, with significant topsoil loss and widespread weed infestations.

Their Flood Management Plan focuses on biological applications and crop rotation to build resilience. This includes introducing biodiversity through cereal and multispecies crops, rotating paddocks, and incorporating cattle grazing as part of the rotation to improve soil health.

Key actions implemented as part of the Flood Management Plan include:

- **Improved disaster communication:** Installing generators and a reliable Wi-Fi system to maintain vital communications during natural disasters.
- **High tide paddock:** Establishing a designated paddock at higher ground to keep livestock safe during major flood events.
- **Shed relocation:** Moving hay sheds, machinery, and irrigators to a flood-safe location above the flood level to protect critical assets.
- **Livestock water security:** Increasing water storage capacity to ensure livestock have access to water during flood events.
- **Soil health improvements:** Implementing a robust soil health plan to foster resilient soils, optimise production, and counteract flood-related damage such as topsoil loss and erosion.

Case study C

The primary producers, at the time of the event, operated a mostly cattle and silage enterprise. They had 80% of their property inundated during the event. They relocated cattle due to a lack of pasture and fresh water, incurring higher costs and declining livestock condition. Flooding caused damage to infrastructure, including fences, pumps, troughs, dam walls, tracks, and electrical systems. Riverbank erosion, loss of pastures, debris deposits, and the spread of invasive weeds further affected the property.

They successfully applied for a rebate on various expenses they had already incurred before considering the Flood Management Grant. Technical advice received from May 2022 was eligible for reimbursement under the grant. Acting swiftly on this advice, they implemented measures to mitigate risks to their multiple pump sites and water infrastructure. The water pumping system was highly vulnerable during major flood events, requiring better planning to reduce risks and prevent costly damage.



With the assistance of a local earthworks specialist, the primary producers received expert advice and planning to improve their stock water infrastructure. The cost of this advice was reimbursed through the Flood Management Grant, providing vital financial support for their flood resilience efforts.

Other key actions outlined in the Flood Management Plan include:

- **Comprehensive soil testing program:** Regular soil testing to monitor and maintain optimum soil health.
- **Financial planning:** Analysing production losses during flood events, mitigating risks, and exploring alternative income streams to support cash flow.
- **Improved livestock watering system:** Developing a more robust and resilient system to ensure reliable water access for livestock during and after flood events.

Case study D

The primary producers operate a mixed cropping and cattle enterprise. Their property was significantly impacted by the rainfall and flooding events throughout 2022, which caused severe soil erosion, crop losses, and infrastructure damage. These challenges disrupted operations and reduced productivity.

As part of the IRRO program, they developed a Flood Management Plan and accessed the Primary Producer Flood Risk Management Grant to obtain professional agronomy advice. Through this process, they identified key strategies to enhance their farm's resilience, with a strong focus on improving soil health and leveraging ag tech resources. A priority initiative was the use of LiDAR mapping, combined with professional technical advice, to better understand their property's terrain and drainage patterns during flood events.

LiDAR mapping generated detailed topographical maps, providing the Mays with a precise understanding of how water flows across their property during intense rainfall. This critical data enabled them to plan earthworks projects designed to manage water flow, prevent long-term erosion, and significantly enhance the farm's flood resilience.

Using the insights gained from LiDAR mapping and technical advice funded by the grant, the primary producers self-funded the implementation of key recommendations. These included levelling paddocks in strategic areas to improve water infiltration and drainage during heavy rainfall. By reshaping the land, constructing contour banks, and creating drainage channels, they successfully mitigated the impacts of flooding, particularly erosion and topsoil loss, which had previously reduced soil health and affected pasture and crop production.



Reflecting on their experience, they shared:

"[We] feel very grateful for recently being successful with our application for the Primary Producer Flood Management Grant. We are continually battling the cost of production and balancing input costs with land management. Like many farms, the cost of recovering and improving infrastructure and paddock structures to create long-term resilience is high and often feels unattainable. But with this grant funding and by breaking large projects into smaller, more manageable ones, we are optimistic about the future."

7.8 Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria for the 2021-22 IRRO program was determined by eligible:

- IRRO and QRIDA grants applicants (see Table 14)
- professional advice for primary producers (see Table 15)
- activities for the IRRO program (see Table 16).

Table 14: Eligible IRRO Program Applicants and QRIDA Grants Applicants

Eligible IRRO Program Applicants*	Eligible QRIDA Grants Applicants**
<p>Eligible applicants include industry groups, and relevant Regional NRM groups located within activated area. DPI will determine the appropriate four IRROs who will deliver this program in partnership with Industry and relevant Regional NRM groups to address the following areas of interest: (a) Horticulture; (b) Cropping; (c) Cotton; (d) Sugar cane; (e) Livestock impacts.</p>	<p>To be eligible for the grant, applicants must: (a) be a primary producer; (b) have a primary production enterprise located in a defined disaster area for an eligible disaster; (c) have received eligible professional advice (e.g., accountancy advice, agronomic advice, financial planning, flood mapping, soil mapping and assessment) from a suitably qualified professional adviser (e.g. accountant, agronomist, farm irrigation consultant, financial planner, geographic information system technician, soil scientist) for the eligible primary production enterprise on or after 18 May 2022; and (d) have had the eligible professional advice for a flood management plan endorsed by an Industry Recovery Resilience Officer (IRRO).</p>

Source: *Industry Recovery and Resilience Officers Guidelines **Primary Producer Flood Management Grants Guidelines

Table 15: Eligible Professional Advice

Eligible Professional Advice for Primary Producers
<p>Eligible professional advice for a primary production enterprise, is advice or a service [e.g., accountancy advice, agronomic advice, financial planning, flood mapping, soil mapping and assessment] provided by a suitably qualified professional adviser [e.g., accountant, agronomist, farm irrigation consultant, financial planner, geographic information system technician, soil scientist] to an applicant about improving the resilience to flooding and high rainfall of the applicant's primary production enterprise. However, it does not include a service provided in relation to implementing actions detailed in a flood management plan an applicant may take to manage risks to a primary production enterprise.</p>

Source: Primary Producer Flood Management Grants Guidelines

Table 16: Eligible Activities

First Phase (6 months)	Second Phase (18 months)
<p>Eligible activities undertaken through the IRRO program include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> assist primary producers to access government and non-government assistance measures in a timely manner provide technical advice to further aid recovery be located within industry and natural resource management groups to provide consistent and relevant advice for primary producers communicate with famers and affected businesses in the priority impacted areas, including via the use of print and social media, to promote the recovery services available to them work in the interests of all farmers and rural communities in the priority impacted areas link with industry, commodity and community networks assist in the development of Industry Recovery Plans provide a referral service to financial counselling, social support services, health and other disaster related programs consult and engage regarding the progress of recovery activities provide information and advice to DAF as required. 	<p>Eligible activities undertaken through the IRRO program include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> work with industry groups, local governments, and impacted producers in determining risk management in terms of crops, infrastructure, farming land impacted by flood events assist in developing property-scale Flood Management Plans to incorporate resilience and flood risk into producers' production management decisions and farm infrastructure development to reduce the impact of flooding in the longer term contribute to scenario-based flood mapping developed using contemporary mapping tools to provide catchment and on-farm flood maps help quantify the risk of the impact from floods and assist the producers to build resilience at the farm level and support resilience in the broader farming community identify synergies with the current drought-based Farm Business Resilience Planning process to incorporate natural disaster in whole farm resilience planning.

Source: Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer Guideline



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