



Community Relief Fund Guidelines

2025-26 Events

Joint (Australian and Queensland governments) Guidelines



Australian Government

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government

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PART A – OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Funding Program	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) 2018 – Category C
Funding Package	Community Relief Fund
Purpose	<p>To provide funding relief to councils to support delivery of essential immediate recovery activities including clean-up and emergency make safe works that are not eligible under Categories A and B of the DRFA, insurance or other state-based funding sources, in order to support the safe function of the community.</p> <p>The fund is designed to support immediate recovery needs as they are being identified.</p>
Available Funding	Refer to <i>Annexure 1 – Eligible events and funding allocations</i>
Eligible disaster events	Refer to <i>Annexure 1 – Eligible events and funding allocations</i>
Eligible local government areas (LGAs)	<p>Refer to <i>Annexure 1 – Eligible events and funding allocations</i></p> <p>The State may request approval to extend this package to additional LGAs should severe impacts and recovery needs be identified.</p>
Administered by	Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) as Delivery Agency
More information	<p>Phone: (07) 3740 1700</p> <p>Email: submissions@qra.qld.gov.au</p>

1. Introduction

The Community Relief Fund (the Package) is part of an exceptional circumstances package of measures jointly agreed and funded by the Australian and Queensland governments (50:50) under Category C and D of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) to assist in recovery following an exceptional disaster event.

2. Objectives and Outcomes

The objective of the Package is to provide timely support to the impacted councils to remove waste and debris, make public areas safe, and enable communities to progress with their recovery as soon as possible. Objectives include:

- assist eligible councils with the extraordinary cost of event-related emergency clean up and disposal, and emergency make safe activities that are not covered by insurance and not eligible for funding under DRFA Category A and Category B relief measures
- assist eligible councils with time sensitive emergency clean up and make safe works on public areas to protect public safety, mitigate the impacts of the disaster and prevent further damage
- assist eligible councils with the extraordinary costs of activities required to make safe or reconnect essential services (e.g., electricity, water and gas), where not covered by insurance and not eligible under DRFA Category A and B (CDO or Emergency Works)

- assist in ensuring public safety, minimising health risks, to support community recovery following an exceptional disaster event
- assist mitigating community health and wellbeing impacts, preventing further damage on public areas to protect public safety, and ensure timely recovery progress.

The outcomes of the Community Relief Fund are to provide timely support to impacted councils to ensure urgent make safe issues are immediately addressed and communities progress with their recovery.

3. Timeframes

Requirement	Timeframe
Package approval date Prime Minister's (PM) approval	Refer to <i>Annexure 1 – Eligible events and funding allocations</i> for the date the relevant event Package was approved.
Completion timeframe (Allowable Time Limit (ATL))	Refer to <i>Annexure 1 – Eligible events and funding allocations</i> for the relevant event completion timeframe.
Acquittal timeframe - Lodgment due date	<p>Eligible councils are required to lodge submissions to QRA for the actual costs of completed activities, within three (3) months of the approved completion timeframe for the relevant event, or where applicable, within three months from an approved extension to the completion timeframe.</p> <p>Refer to <i>Annexure 1 – Eligible events and funding allocations</i> for the relevant event completion timeframe.</p>

4. Funding

The Community Relief Fund (the Package) is approved as a capped fund available only to local government areas activated for the measure under an exceptional disaster event.

For event specific approvals and funding allocations refer ***Annexure 1 – Eligible events and funding allocations***. QRA may reallocate available funding across eligible councils within one event package, where underspends have occurred and where additional eligible expenditure is evidenced.

Noting, no single allocation to an LGA can exceed \$1 million. In exceptional circumstances, Queensland may seek Commonwealth agreement to increase the maximum allocation for an LGA.

Where Package underspends occur, the Queensland Government may seek agreement to reallocate funding across DRFA Category C and D packages, within the aligned eligible events and targeting the same recovery sector or domain, in consultation with the Australian Government.

5. Eligible applicants

Only councils that have been approved for funding allocation under the Package for a specific activated event are eligible to lodge submissions for reimbursement of funding, up to their approved capped allocation.

For event specific activation details refer to ***Annexure 1 – Eligible events and funding allocations***.

6. Eligible and ineligible activities

Eligible activities (What the funding can be used for)

Eligible activities **must** be linked to the eligible event and **meet the package objectives**. Examples include:

- clean up and make safe works on uninsured business, commercial, agricultural and industrial areas (ineligible DRFA Category A & B, and not claimed under other DRFA Category C & D packages)
- clean up and make safe works on residential backyards - non habitable areas (ineligible under CDO)
- clean up and make safe works on natural assets including within national parks, marine parks, riparian, waterways, waterway banks, creeks, rivers, streams, mangroves and beaches (not claimed under other DRFA Category C & D packages)
- emergency make safe activities on community, cultural and recreational assets and facilities (e.g. boardwalks, walkways, walking tracks, playgrounds, beach access points, picnic areas, car park facilities, and associated amenities and infrastructure (not covered by insurance and not claimed under other DRFA Category C & D packages)
- emergency make safe activities on essential services (e.g., electricity, water and gas), where not covered by insurance or Category A and B,
- management, transportation and final disposal of activity related debris and waste.

Examples of event-related debris such as items and goods displaced and carried by the specific event (e.g. storm, winds, floodwaters, tidal surge) requiring removal from impacted locations, include:

- damaged equipment, goods and stock from commercial, industrial primary production areas e.g. tyres, equipment, stock and stores
- vehicles, sheds, boats, caravans, containers
- silt and mud deposits
- building materials and contents
- damaged household contents
- pontoons, concrete and polystyrene structures
- chemical waste, hazardous materials
- animal carcasses
- green waste
- rainwater tanks
- fencing materials
- structural remnants such as roofing, guttering, insulation.

Ineligible activities

Activities not eligible under this package include, but are not limited to:

- rehabilitation, restoration or resilience works on event- damaged natural assets (e.g., sand dredging) or built assets (e.g. permanent reconstruction or resilience works on event damaged built assets)

- activities eligible for reimbursement under other funding sources, e.g. insurance, or other sources including DRFA Category A & B relief measures.

7. Eligible and ineligible costs

Expenditure can be considered eligible when:

- it is directly associated with delivering eligible activities to support immediate recovery from the exceptional event
- the costs are reasonably expected to occur in delivering the eligible activities and achieve an efficient allocation of resources
- the costs are incurred within the eligible timeframes (refer to **Timeframes**).

Eligible costs are capped at the council’s approved funding allocation and:

- must be supported by detailed evidence of the actual expenditure when seeking reimbursement of completed activities, and exclude GST
- must comply with the applicant council’s purchasing, travel and procurement policies.

Audit: Eligible councils must retain all evidence and source documents relating to delivery of the claimed activities and costs for a period of seven years after the Package has been acquitted by the Commonwealth. Refer to **Record keeping**.

Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
<p>Eligible costs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • council day labour costs (including work crews, plant operators and supervisors) directly associated with delivery of eligible activities • costs associated with ordinary salary and wages and associated costs of employees of another local government delivering eligible activities under a formal resource sharing arrangement (e.g. council to council (C2C), Mutual Aid Coordination (MAC)) are eligible where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the affected local government has demonstrably exhausted its internal capacity as a direct result of the eligible disaster ○ the required capability is not available within the affected local government ○ the deployment is directly attributable to eligible activities ○ the cost represents additional expenditure incurred by the 	<p>Ineligible costs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • costs incurred prior to package approval date are ineligible for cost-sharing (refer to Annexure 1 - Eligible events and funding allocations). • non-specific or unsupported indirect and overhead costs • costs claimed under another DRFA CAT C or D package • costs eligible under DRFA Cat A, B or insurance • legal costs • core business activities of the applicant • purchase of core business capital equipment such as motor vehicles, phones, and office equipment or furnishings (refer to Purchase of new assets, for further details) • vehicle expenses not directly related to the delivery of an eligible activity • costs associated with the use of budget funded resources, including existing office

Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
<p>affected local government that would not have arisen but for the eligible disaster.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extraordinary wages of council staff such as overtime and allowances, and costs associated with travel expenses, allowances and accommodation to undertake eligible activities • contractor costs to undertake specialist services directly associated with delivery of eligible works (e.g. removal of toxic materials or large heavy items from public spaces, waterways, residential back yards) including travel expenses, allowances and accommodation to undertake eligible activities • contractor costs of temporary employees to undertake eligible activities including travel expenses, allowances, accommodation and associated on-costs such as superannuation entitlements, workers compensation • costs associated with planning and logistics for extensive clean-up or make safe of areas/commercial premises and waste management not eligible to be claimed under standard DRFA Category A or B, and not claimed under other Category C or D packages • inspection costs to gather data on location and extent of the event-related debris or public safety risk • purchase of consumables used in undertaking the eligible clean-up activities (e.g. personal protection equipment, cleaning products) • transportation costs associated with eligible activities (e.g. removal and disposal of debris) • cost of extraordinary urgent repairs to fencing for exclusion of stock from public areas (not eligible under Category B of the DRFA, and not claimed under other Category C or D packages) • establishing, managing and decommissioning temporary dumpsites for debris (where not eligible under Category A 	<p>spaces, vehicles (including leasing, insurance and other on-going costs) and ongoing staff (outside of eligible day labour expenses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • profit margins of local governments • costs associated with the preparation, reporting and acquittal of DRFA submissions • costs associated with inspections where no event impact is identified, or no eligible activities required • rehabilitation of natural ecosystems • unsupported on-cost charges • administration costs • in-kind contributions • cash prizes or commercial gifts • costs that would have been incurred by council if the event had not occurred including fees and wages associated with budget funded debris removal, clean-up and waste management services, labour expenditure and budget funded plant and equipment costs that cannot be directly linked to the delivery of extraordinary assistance related to this Package. • any expenditure incurred or costs of works/activities incurred outside the relevant event completion timeframe (ATL) or an approved extension to the ATL (refer to Timeframes). <p>The applicant will be responsible for all costs over and above the approved capped funding amount and for all ineligible costs.</p>

Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
<p>or B, and not claimed under other Category C or D packages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repair to assets damaged as a result of undertaking eligible activities reasonably required to support package make safe and clean-up (e.g. reinstating surfaces damaged due to temporary dumpsites). • materials used while completing eligible works • local government internal plant and equipment hire rates and associated operating consumables (fuel, oil, grease etc.) consumed while undertaking eligible activities • additional maintenance costs required as a direct consequence of using internal plant and equipment where costs are not covered by insurance and not routine maintenance • hire of additional plant and equipment, and operating associated operating consumables (fuel, oil, grease, etc.) required to complete the eligible activities • purchase of low value equipment used for completing eligible activities (e.g. brooms, rakes, shovels etc.) • project management costs proportionate to the funding amount can be sought including remuneration of temporary technical, professional and/or administrative staff for time directly related to scoping and managing delivery of the activities (excludes executive and overhead charges). 	

All expenditure lodged must comply with the applicant’s financial and procurement policies and legislative requirements. Local Governments: *Local Government Act 2009* or *City of Brisbane Act 2010*.

If there are any queries about eligibility, please contact your RLO.

8. Purchase of new assets

The purchase of new assets to undertake eligible activities is generally ineligible. However, where equipment is unable to be hired and must be purchased to meet operational requirements or it is less expensive to purchase, the purchase price less the residual/depreciated value at the end of the operational use may be considered eligible.

A depreciating asset is an asset that has a limited effective life and can reasonably be expected to decline in value over the time it is used. Depreciating assets include items such as computers, electric tools and furniture where eligible under DRFA.

Purchases will be assessed based on the information provided by the delivery agency.

Supporting information should include:

- proof of purchase
- operational imperative including priority and timeframe necessitating the purchase
- evidence of inability to hire from suitable suppliers, i.e. letter or email with company letterhead or logo
- cost benefit rationale including a comparison of purchase cost against actual hire costs over a required timeframe, and the cost to transport hire equipment plus hire costs versus local purchase cost, and
- residual value of the purchased asset, including warranty period extending beyond the eligible activities.

The purchase of assets that have a life beyond the approved package completion timeframe are to be agreed with QRA through an eligibility request to your RLO.

PART B – HOW TO APPLY

9. Application process

Eligible applicants must lodge submissions via the MARS portal, prior to the lodgement due date (refer to **Timeframes** and **Extensions of time**).

Submissions are to be lodged under the associated activated event, as a claim for actual costs of completed eligible works. Multiple submissions may be lodged under one event.

10. Submission requirements

Submissions require data and evidence demonstrating the eligible works were required as a result of the specific activated extraordinary event, including:

- descriptions of the clean up / make safe / disposal activities (what and why)
- photographic evidence (JPEG photos including EXIF metadata, including GPS coordinates and time/date taken) demonstrating the event-related impact and need for the required clean up, make safe, and / or disposal activities
- other evidence supporting the extent of the event-impact and the need for the claimed eligible activities
- location/s of eligible clean up and or make safe activities
- start date and end date for each claimed activity
- cost value (excluding GST) linked to the claimed eligible activities
- evidence of actual costs - supported by a detailed general ledger / detailed transaction report and or payroll report.

Detailed evidence of transactions e.g. invoices, timesheets, requisition orders, must be available for sampling by QRA

11. Lodging submissions

A Community Relief Fund submission form is available to assist councils in preparing the necessary submission data and evidence and uploading into the MARS portal for lodgement.

The Community Relief Fund submission form is available for download under the relevant exceptional circumstance event, on [QRA's website](https://www.qra.qld.gov.au/funding-programs/event-specific-exceptional-circumstances-assistance). <https://www.qra.qld.gov.au/funding-programs/event-specific-exceptional-circumstances-assistance>

Contact your RLO for assistance in accessing and completing the form, or uploading and lodging submission data and evidence in MARS.

Before lodging, check the submission data is correct and is supported by evidence demonstrating the eligible urgent activities and the actual costs of activities completed following the eligible event.

Supporting evidence required:

- post event photo evidence (JPEG photos including EXIF metadata, including GPS coordinates and time/date taken) supporting the need for the claimed activities detailed in the submission
- other evidence such as media, video or reports supporting the scope of event related clean up and make safe activities and

- completion photo evidence (JPEG photos including EXIF metadata, including GPS coordinates and time/date taken).
- evidence supporting the claimed actual costs of completed activities in the form of a detailed general ledger/ detailed transaction report and or payroll report in editable format.

12. Assessment and approval

QRA will assess submission data and evidence against the Guideline objectives and eligibility criteria.

Funding recipients will be reimbursed based on assessment of the actual costs of eligible completed activities and will be paid 100 per cent of the assessed eligible expenditure and be required to enter into a project funding agreement with QRA.

QRA may consult with relevant agencies, partners and/or relevant Minister for review and/or endorsement of completed activities. The QRA CEO provides final project approval.

PART C – GOVERNANCE

13. Certification

All funding submissions lodged with QRA must be certified by the Chief Executive Officer, or equivalent or their delegated representative.

14. Funding Agreement

It is a requirement that all funding recipients enter into a Head Agreement with QRA.

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.

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

15. 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.

16. Procurement

When procuring goods or services state agencies must align with the Queensland Procurement Policy 2023 and associated policies, and local governments must align with the *Local Government Act 2009* or *City of Brisbane Act 2010*, and their own procurement policy.

If expenditure is in breach of the relevant procurement policies, reimbursement of these costs may be unable to be sought under the DRFA.

17. Record keeping

All state agencies, councils and service providers must keep an accurate audit trail. DRFA records must be available for seven years from the end of the financial year the claim is acquitted by the Australian Government.

For assurance purposes, the Australian Government may at any time, via QRA, request documentation from state agencies or councils to evidence the State's compliance with any aspect of the DRFA. This may include but is not limited to access to project level information, to confirm acquittal in accordance with the DRFA.

18. Extensions of time

An extension of time beyond the detailed eligible timeframes may be requested in exceptional circumstances (refer **Timeframes**).

Approved Completion timeframe

A request for an extension to the **Package completion timeframe** (ATL) requires NEMA approval, and must be sought before the approved timeframe has been reached.

- Funding recipients are required to contact your QRA RLO as early as possible, detailing the unforeseen circumstances impacting completion, the actions taken to minimize the impact, and the adjusted project plan, milestones and cost implications.
- Your RLO can assist with the process of lodging a formal Extension of Time (EOT) request.
- Where an applicant is approved an extension to the allowable time limit to an additional financial year of delivery, the annual acquittal of expenditure in alignment with DRFA accounting policy continues to apply.

Lodging a late submission - lodgement timeframes:

Approval to lodge a late pre-approval submission or close out submission after the due date, should be requested prior to the due date and agreed in writing with QRA.

To request approval to lodge a late submission, email your RLO providing the reason the lodgement due date will not be met and requesting approval of the extension of time to lodge your submission.

19. Assurance activities

The delivery agency **may be required** to provide documentation to support any assurance activities. These assurance activities may include, but are not limited to:

- audit
- site inspections
- obtaining relevant documentary evidence to support actual expenditure
- verification reviews on measures or projects.

20. Goods and Services Tax (GST)

All amounts claimed must exclude GST and be actual expenditure, paid prior to lodging the submission.

21. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will occur across the event year event portfolio to examine whether each package and initiative:

- responded to community needs over time (appropriately and efficiently)
- contributed (effectively) to the achievement of program/package, and recovery and resilience objectives.

The agreed upon scope of the evaluation will depend on:

- uptake of the initiative/s within each package
- evidence gaps (informed by monthly reporting and insights from program/package managers)
- the type/nature of the relevant program/package (including design and line of recovery and resilience).

Evaluation reports must be completed by QRA's Evaluation Team after the completion of a program of event year packages. To support the evaluation process, program/package managers, staff and key stakeholders may be requested to participate in interviews or supply additional data to QRA evaluation team as part of final progress reporting.

For detail on specific reporting requirements, including milestone and evaluation requirements refer to **PART B – HOW TO APPLY**.

22. Insurance

The applicant must exhaust all insurance options prior to accessing DRFA funding, including claims on any applicable insurance policy, including business continuity.

23. Public acknowledgement of joint Australian Government and State Government assistance

The applicant must acknowledge DRFA funding contribution in public materials, which includes but is not limited to:

- media releases, social media, posters, advertising and signage associated with the approved project
- acknowledgement or statements in project publications and materials
- events that use or include reference to the approved project.

To comply with this requirement, all public advice and media releases should refer to the relevant funding source, as being “jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements”.

Prior agreement must be reached with QRA which will oversee approval of media events and associated materials, in consultation with the NEMA. All publications must also include both the State and Australian Government logos and the following disclaimer: ‘Although funding for this product has been provided by both the Australian and Queensland Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government.’

As the funding packages are being delivered, the delivery agency in conjunction with funding recipients, will identify announcements, progress and finalisation of package media opportunities. Funding recipients will communicate these opportunities to QRA, which will advise NEMA.

Contact QRA for assistance and approval for any releases at media@qra.qld.gov.au or (07) 3740 1700 and must be connected to QRA implementation/policy teams concurrently.

PART D – DEFINITIONS

Applicants	Organisations that meet the eligibility requirements for funding under the guidelines, including the delivery agency.
Delivery agency	The State government department responsible for successful delivery and acquittal of the approved funding Package in line with the Guidelines.
Endorsed	DRFA funding guidelines are <i>endorsed</i> by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).
Initiative(s)	Initiatives (or sub-measures) refer to the separate approved deliverables that make up an approved DRFA Package. Initiatives are specific to a Package and may include delivery of a service or management of grant funding designed to meet the specific Package objectives.
Local Government Areas (LGAs)	Local Government Areas are used to define the geographical areas activated for DRFA funding measures under an eligible disaster event.
MARS	QRA's internal funding Management and Reporting System.
Milestones	A set of identified deliverables and dates scheduled to be met to ensure the approved initiative or approved project is completed in accordance with the Project Funding Agreement.
Project Funding Agreement	The agreement formed between QRA and the funding Recipient under the terms and conditions of the Head Agreement comprising the executed Project Funding Schedule (including the Special Conditions) and clauses 3 to 19 of the Head Agreement.
Project Funding Schedule	The schedule prepared by QRA, detailing the terms of the approved activities, funding and special conditions applicable to the relevant Project. A signed schedule will become a Project Funding Agreement.
Project Funding Submission	Project Funding submission refers to an application for funding lodged in accordance with a specific funding guideline and managed through the QRA's MARS system.
Recipients	Eligible applicants that have been approved a funding allocation and have lodged a funding submission that has been assessed and approved funding under the relevant guideline.
Service provider	An organisation contracted by the delivery agency to deliver one or more initiatives under the Package.
State expenditure	Under the DRFA Definitions and Interpretations, State expenditure is defined as 'Total state expenditure for eligible measures in relation to eligible disasters that have occurred within a financial year that a state—or body established by or under state legislation for public purposes (for example a State agency and a local government)—is claiming for Commonwealth reimbursement under these arrangements.'

Annexure 1 – Eligible events and funding allocations

2025–26 Events

AGRN and event name	AGRN 1243 – Queensland Monsoon Trough, Cyclone Koji, Cyclone Narelle and Severe Weather commencing 24 December 2025
Name of Package	Community Relief Fund
Package approval date Prime Minister’s approval	15 January 2026
DRFA funding category	Category C
Delivery Agency	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
Type of Assistance	<p>Funding allocations for councils to support delivery of essential immediate recovery activities including clean-up and emergency make safe works that are not eligible under Categories A and B of the DRFA, not covered by insurance or other state-based funding sources, in order to support the safe function of the community.</p> <p>The Package is designed to support immediate recovery needs as they are being identified.</p>
Approved funding <i>Phase 1 - \$1 m</i> <i>Phase 4 Uplift - \$2.650 m</i> <i>Phase 5 Uplift - \$1 m</i>	<p>A total of \$5.65 million (excl GST) in capped funding available to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bundaberg Regional Council 2. Cook Shire Council 3. Etheridge Shire Council 4. Isaac Regional Council 5. Livingstone Shire Council 6. McKinlay Shire Council 7. Mackay Regional Council 8. Rockhampton Regional Council 9. Whitsunday Regional Council 10. Winton Shire Council <p><i>Refer to your RLO for specific LGA allocation details.</i></p>
	Should severe impacts and immediate recovery needs be identified in additional LGAs the state will progress formal requests for approval of additional allocations to impacted LGAs.
Completed by	31 December 2026
Annual acquittal required?	Not required. An exemption of the annual acquittal requirement (accounting policy exemption) has been approved by the Commonwealth.
Acquittal due date– (submission lodgement due date)	31 March 2027