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Australian Disaster
Resilience Conference

19 – 20 AUGUST 2026

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Locally Led, Community Powered

Transforming Recovery Governance Through the
Douglas Recovery Resilience Sub-Plan (DRRSP)

Presented by Annette Plowman



Australian Government
National Emergency
Management Agency



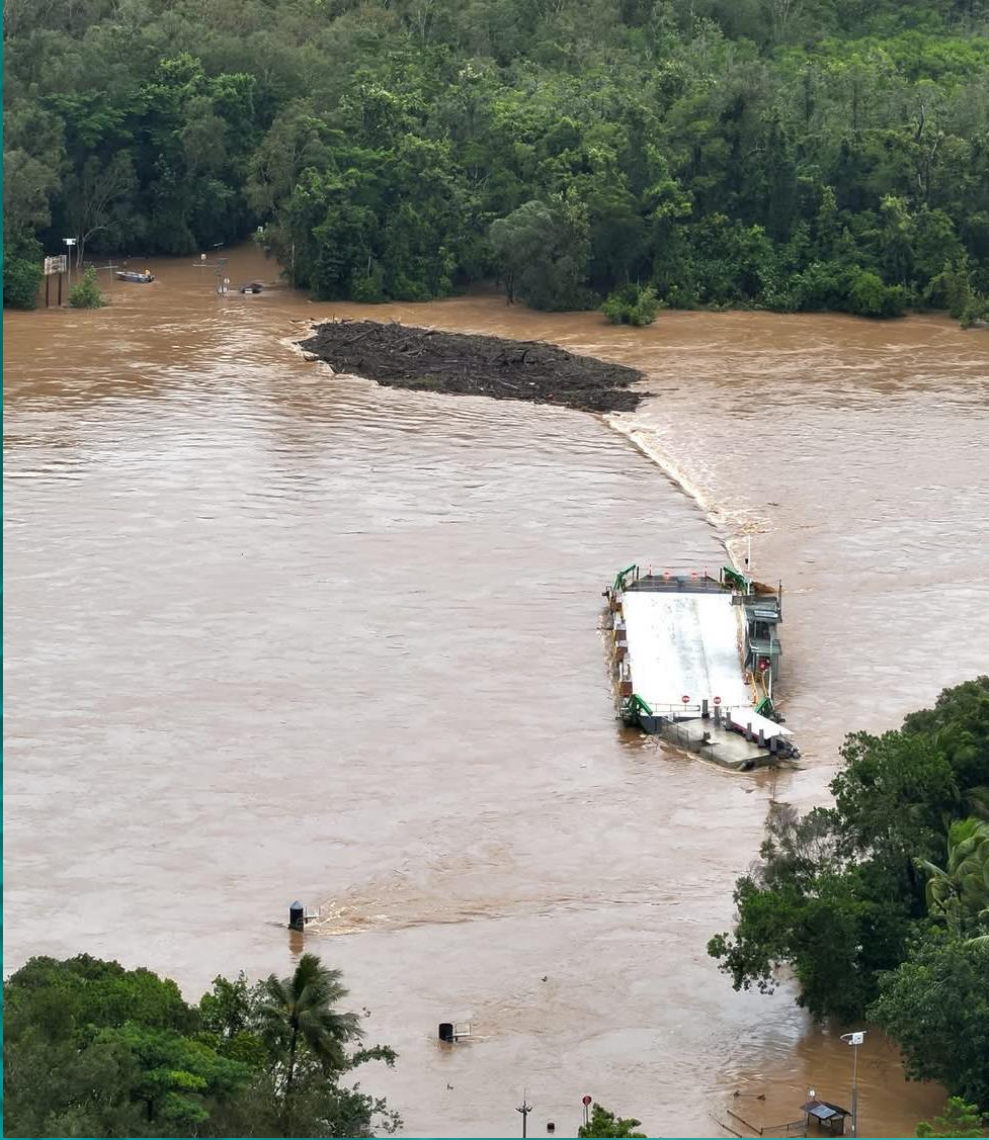
Australian Institute for
Disaster Resilience



Acknowledgement of Country

Douglas Shire Council acknowledges the traditional Country of the Eastern Kuku Yalanjiwarra Bama people and the Djabugay Nation People of the coastal areas and rainforest of the Douglas Shire.

We recognise the deep cultural knowledge and connection to Country held by these communities, and the vital role they play in strengthening resilience and supporting disaster preparedness, response and recovery across the Shire.



2026 impacts to Daintree River Ferry

How can you better embed community experience and knowledge to assist with disaster response and recovery in your communities?

Douglas Shire Council

- Covers an area of 2,445km²
- Shire economy depends on agriculture and tourism:
 - 426,000 overnight visitors per year
 - 262,000 day visitors per year
 - Generates \$574 million
 - Supports over 2,500 jobs
- Home to over 13,000 residents



What led to this?

December 2023 – Ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper



**13 Dec
2023**

Ex-Tropical
Cyclone Jasper
made landfall



3.2m

of rain recorded
in less than
a week



4 months

reoccurring
interruption to
water supply



One

life lost



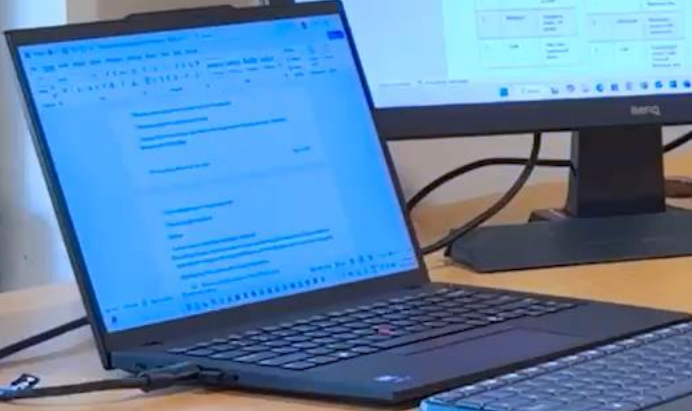
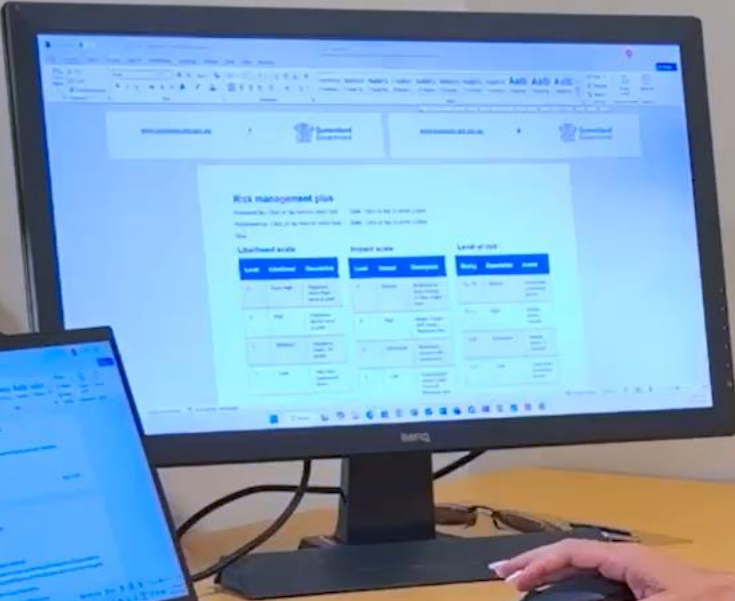
Over 100

landslides
occurred

Community Led Approach

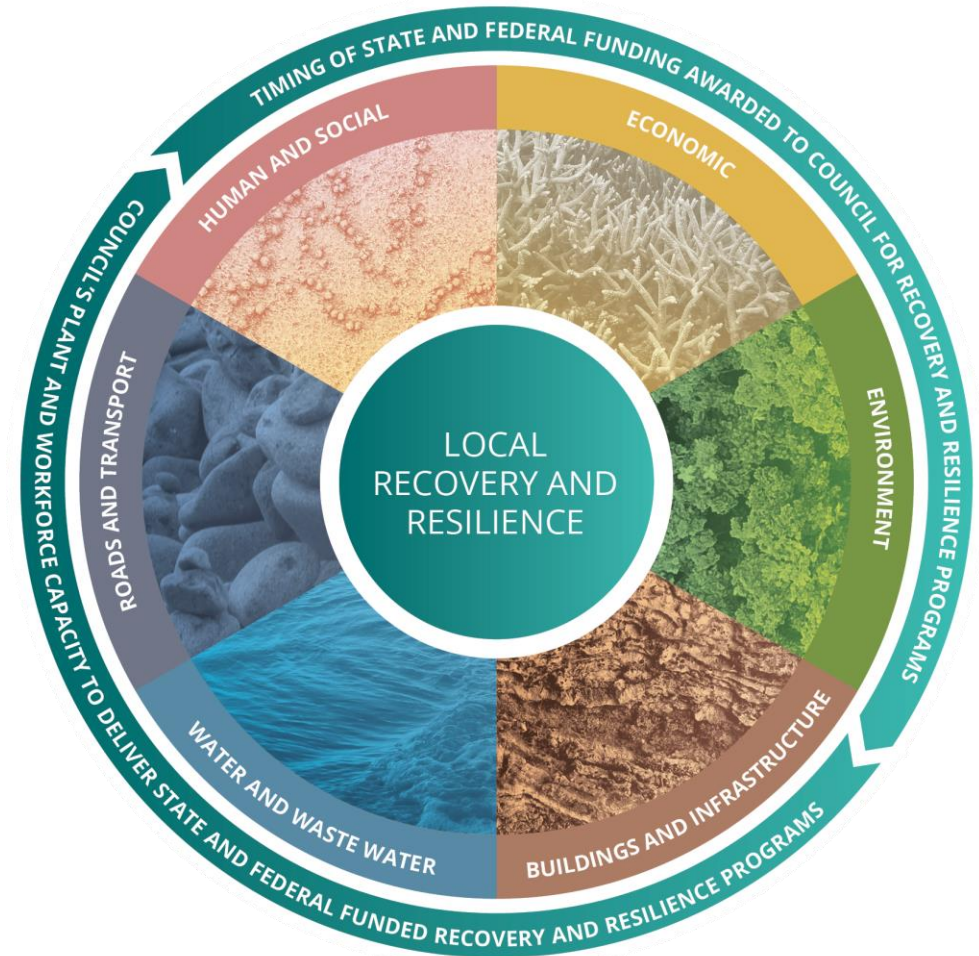


- Community Workshops:
 - Mossman
 - Wangetti
 - Oak Beach
 - Diwan
 - Degarra
 - Daintree
 - Village Wonga
- Community Surveys
- Community Stakeholder Workshops:
 - Community Organisations
 - Service providers
 - NGOs
 - Schools
- Functional Recovery and Resilience Group meetings and focus sessions



Development of the FRRGs

- Community engagement in early 2025 led to the establishment of:
 - Douglas Recovery and Resilience Group
 - Functional Recovery and Resilience Groups



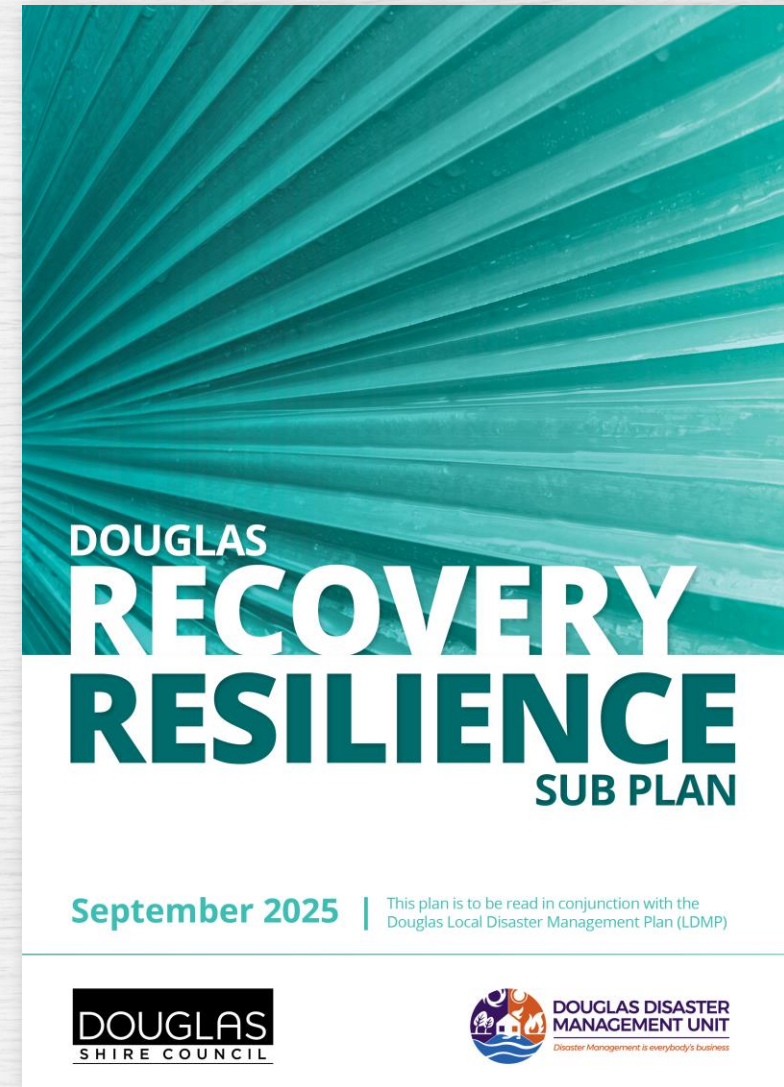
Stakeholder feedback

Having previously worked in an executive leadership role in a tourist destination with responsibilities in emergency management, it was personally challenging, distressing and frustrating as a local resident and small business operator to directly experience the impact of Tropical Cyclone Jasper – loss of access and isolation, loss of critical utilities, loss of customers and related business income, and limited access to support especially financial. It was transformational for the council to engage widely with the community and experts to develop the Douglas Recovery Resilience Sub-Plan (DRRSP). I'm pleased to be involved in the development, implementation and activation of the sub-plan.

Being able to take valuable information provided by both Council staff and other stakeholder members of this group back to businesses via bookkeeper networks.... and being able to share back insights from business to Council has been worthwhile.

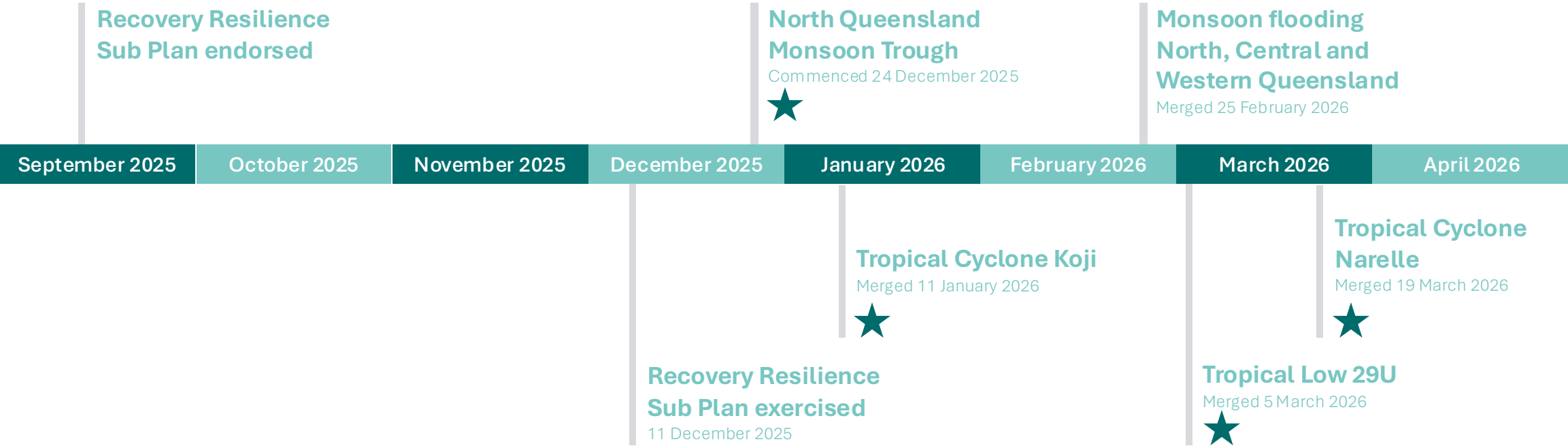
Recovery Resilience Sub Plan

- National Principals for Disaster Recovery guided development, publication and implementation
- Resilience is approached from a whole of community perspective
- Moves beyond traditional post-disaster structures



Implementation of the Sub Plan

★ DRRG and FRRGs ACTIVATED



Continuous Improvement

Research Finding

Principal

Invest in institutional trust as critical resilience infrastructure

Council Application

- Proactive trust-building
- Transparency in risk communication
- Meaningful community participation in preparedness planning with actual decision-making authority
- Embedding community organisations as trusted voices within recovery groups

Principal

Preserve and integrate cultural knowledge systems as resilience infrastructure

- Integration of cultural knowledge into recovery programs
- Support for community-based organisations that maintain disaster preparedness capacity



*First fuel delivery after
Daintree River Ferry recovery*

How can you better embed community experience and knowledge to assist with disaster response and recovery in your communities?

Conclusion

- In Far North Queensland, severe weather is constant
- Council worked alongside communities to formalise what was already happening on the ground
- Local expertise has informed priorities
- This approach builds confidence, capability and connection, ensuring communities are equipped to recover stronger together



Thank you for your time

Annette Plowman

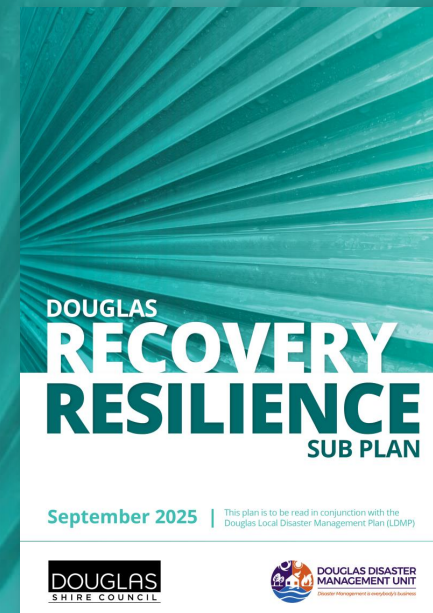
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Scan the QR code below to view the
Douglas Recovery Resilience Sub Plan





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