

# Queensland and New South Wales Floods Report

February to June 2022



In late February 2022, Southeast Queensland started experiencing storms and intense rainfall. It continued for weeks, making its way down to Northern New South Wales. Both regions were impacted by multiple rounds of devastating flooding. Tens of thousands of people were evacuated, homes and belongings were destroyed, and communities now face years of rebuilding.

Throughout it all, thanks to the support of generous everyday Australians, corporate partners, philanthropic donors and governments, Red Cross has been there – in evacuation centres, recovery hubs, processing emergency relief grants, and in communities long-term as they recover.

This report covers the first months of our response and recovery operation, how donations to the Australia Unites Telethon and the Qld and NSW Floods Appeal are being used, and our future plans to support communities.

“

Within ten minutes, the water – almost covered the whole road out the front of my house. That’s how fast it was coming up...I only just got my car and the kids out. We had to walk through probably shin deep water to get to my car...we’ve lost all our bedding, most of our clothes. I had a four-bedroom house and a massive yard, so everything’s gone. The whole kitchen has to be redone; walls knocked down. We can’t live there for quite some time.”

– Sharna, from West Ballina



“

I started panicking because, well I had a pacemaker put in. And the doctor said, “Don’t stress, it will put you into a cardiac arrest.” And my blood pressure was going up, I thought I don’t need this, this is a joke. But, I said, not much you can do about it, just got to put up with it. When you get help, it brings you to tears, but it lets you know you’re not by yourself.”

– Jeffrey, from Kyogle

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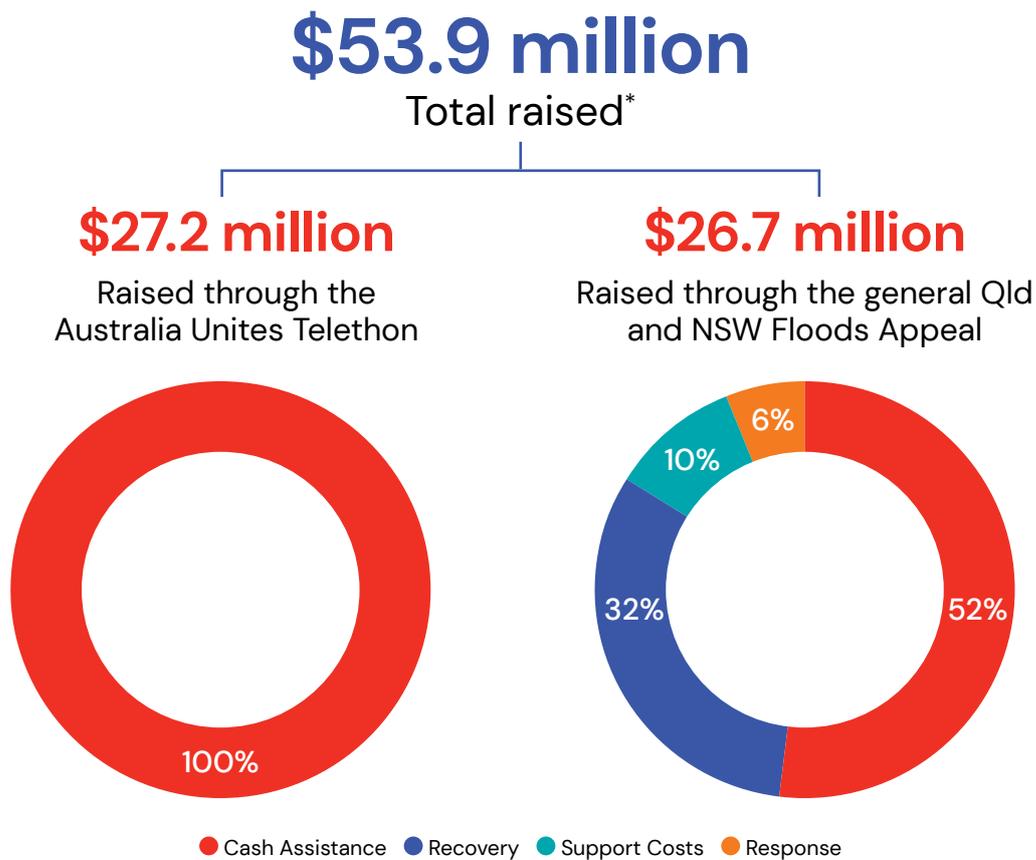
The water was horrific...it was so cold, and it kept coming. It didn’t stop....it’s so hard to describe the feeling of standing in your own kitchen, in this freezing cold water and there’s nothing you can do about it.”

– Vickie, from Lismore



# The Australian community rallies

Thanks to the generosity of people, businesses, governments and Channels 7, 9 and 10, Red Cross received funds to support people impacted by the floods through the Australia Unites Telethon and the Qld and NSW Floods Appeal.



\* As of 21 July 2022. \*\*The financial figures contained within this report remain interim until audited by external audit partners, Deloitte.

## Essential support costs

From February–April 2022, Australian Red Cross ran two separate Appeals (Australia Unites Telethon Appeal, and QLD & NSW Floods Appeal) to raise funds for flood-affected households in QLD and NSW.

100% of proceeds from the Telethon Appeal went to people impacted by the floods as immediate relief cash grants. Red Cross, with some pro-bono support from corporate partners, covered the costs from administering the Telethon Appeal.

With respect to the QLD & NSW Floods Appeal, everything possible was done to keep our costs low, including seeking and receiving pro-bono support. Consistent with the Appeal Intent, the QLD & NSW Floods Appeal used 10 cents-in-the-dollar to cover essential support costs. Any interest earned on donations will be invested back into the Appeal.

## 04 Red Cross emergency response

\$1.6 million delivered 24/7 support during the floods – enabling trained emergency response team members and volunteers to help with evacuations, relief centres, and outreach services across Qld and NSW.

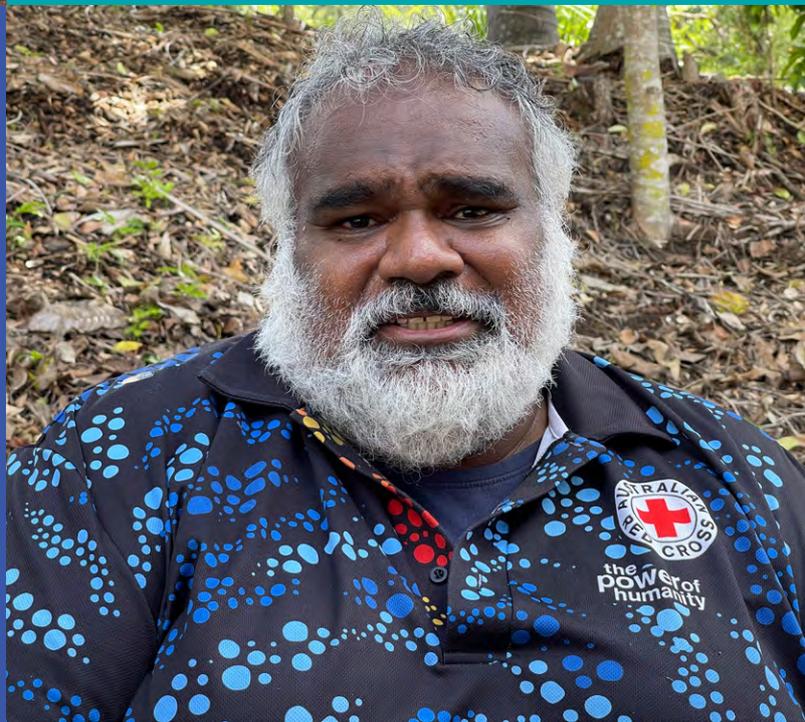


“ Some people were very hard to calm because it had just been too overwhelming. And some of those people had nothing...or very little to start with and had lost the little that they had. It'd be like us, like me losing the whole house, just losing it. I can imagine how that would feel.”

– Bill, Red Cross Emergency Services volunteer

“ People have experiences previously with Red Cross, in the 2017 floods where they see us and saw us do some great things. And that's attributed to the volunteers on the ground, just working hard. A lot of them are people who are hurting, and have been through the same sort of stuff as the people they're volunteering for.”

– Sean, Aboriginal Community Engagement Facilitator





## Our response in numbers



**715**

Red Cross emergency response team members and volunteers involved



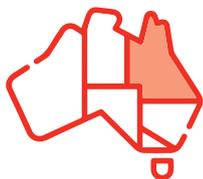
**42,275**

People assisted, including **18,775** from Qld and **23,500** from NSW



**7,120**

Registrations, **1,757** inquiries and **98** matches through Register.Find.Reunite



In **Queensland**, Red Cross teams supported in over 20 evacuation centres and 24 recovery hubs and outreach locations



In **New South Wales**, Red Cross teams supported in over 35 evacuation centres and 24 recovery hubs across impacted areas

## 06 Cash assistance

\$41.1 million is allocated to our flood relief grants, including 100% of the \$27.2 million raised through the Australia Unites Telethon.

These grants provided direct cash assistance to people impacted by the floods.

Two grants were available:

**Bereavement Grant** – \$20,000 cash assistance to support senior next-of-kin of those who died as a direct result of the floods and who were experiencing financial hardship with immediate needs (funeral and other related expenses).

**Relief Grant** – \$500 cash assistance per household for people who were experiencing financial hardship as a result of flood impact to their primary place of residence.

Applications opened on 18 March 2022 and closed on 21 April 2022. People were able to apply online, over the phone or in a recovery centre.



26

Bereavement grants paid



66,884

Relief grants paid

\* As of 6 July 2022. A small number of applications have been flagged as potential duplicates, containing at least one detail identical to another application. These are being followed up by our grants team.



I would dearly like to thank Red Cross organisation for the \$500. I lost clothing and food products because of the floods and being on a disability pension it would have been impossible to replace my damaged items if it wasn't for the grant."

- Debra



Thank you from the bottom of my heart, the tears keep coming with trying to deal with what we have been through. Being able to buy a second pair of shoes and some more clothes I feel a bit more human."

- Colleen



“ Without the support, face to face, online and phone, I don't think my husband and I would have managed. Red Cross made it so much easier. Thank you.”

– Vicki

“ The on the ground support I received from Red Cross made a difference not just financially but psychologically as well. You folks clearly understand what we were going through.”

– Sean

## Discretionary Financial Hardship Flood Grant

After distributing all eligible grants, \$7.2 million remains. The financial figures contained within this report remain interim until audited by external audit partners, Deloitte. When grant applications closed on 21 April 2022, we had received over 100,000 applications. We made the decision to close applications to ensure enough funds were available to pay everyone who was eligible.

There is \$7.2 million remaining because not every household who applied for a relief grant was eligible. The main reasons for this were:

- The applicant lived outside the flood-impacted area
- More than one person from the same household applied
- The application was incomplete, and the applicant did not respond to requests for more information
- The application was reported as fraudulent

The remaining funds will be distributed as Discretionary Financial Hardship Flood grants to households facing continued financial hardship from the floods. These will be available until the remaining funds are exhausted. This will be facilitated through our recovery teams on the ground and other support agencies already working with impacted communities, to reach those facing continued financial hardship and processed by our dedicated cash assistance team.



Recovery from these floods will take a long time. From cleaning up, to rebuilding from nothing, to dealing with the ongoing trauma of the disaster, communities impacted by the floods will need support for years to come.

“Of course, it’s going to stay with us for the rest of our lives. But you have to deal with it.” – Johnny, from Lismore, spent the night of the floods stuck on his roof. In the morning, he jumped in a friend’s boat and started helping rescue people stuck in floodwaters, in houses and on roofs. He used the Relief Grant from Red Cross to pay for food and fuel, and plans to be involved in the ongoing recovery work in his community.

In the aftermath of a disaster, people need to be able to access support as quickly and easily as possible. Our grant application was a simple online form, requiring basic information and documentation to confirm eligibility.

### How people felt about the application process and receiving the grant:\*



**83%**  
overall satisfaction with grants process



**79%**  
said it was easy to upload documents



**82%**  
said it was easy to find out how to apply



**80%**  
said Red Cross staff were supportive and helpful

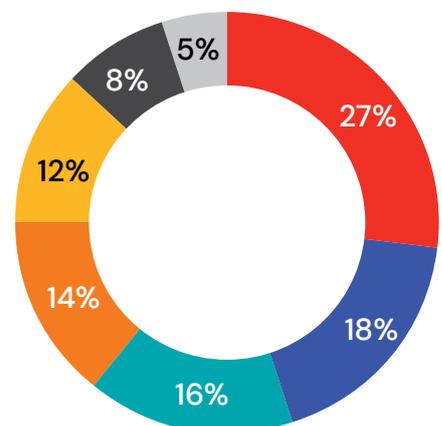


**84%**  
said the application was easy to complete



**84%**  
said they felt ‘positive and thankful’ to receive a grant

### How people spent their Relief grant



● Groceries ● Repairs ● Bills ● Fuel ● Clothes ● Other ● Shelter

\*Results based on 1,286 responses to our grant recipient survey, sent to all who had received a Relief grant as of the 4th April 2022.

# The recovery journey

**\$8.6 million is allocated to a three-year recovery program, which began in mid-May 2022.**

Red Cross was the first organisation on the ground from May 2022, beginning our long-term recovery work. Here's our plan:



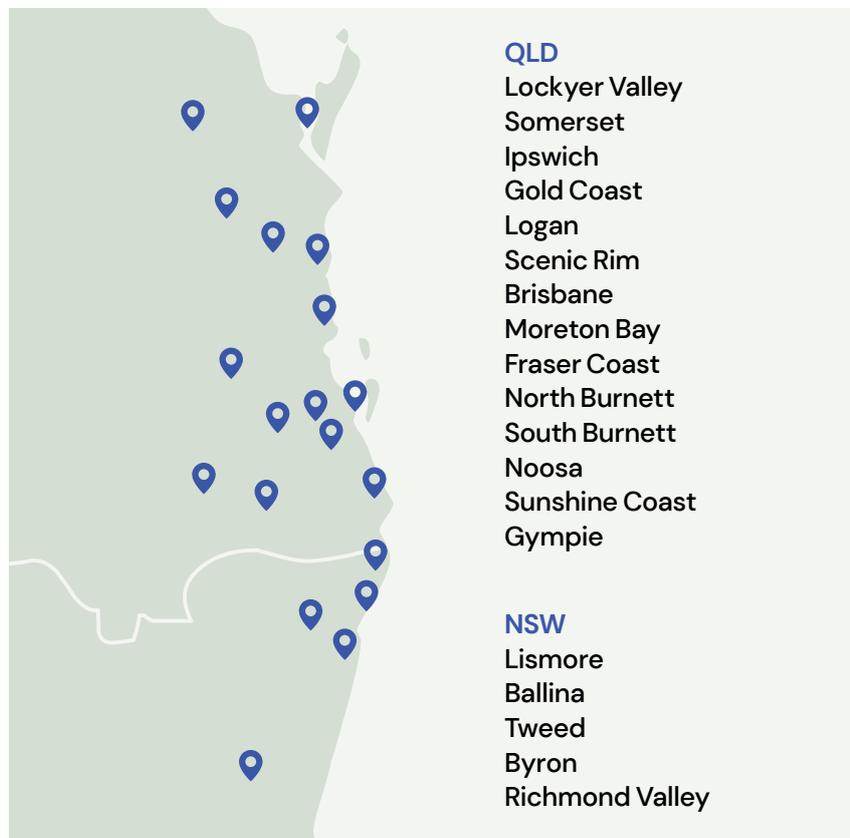
**19**

new Local Government Areas (LGAs) will be covered by the recovery program



**15**

Recovery Officers will be deployed



Different people have different rates of recovery and different states of mental health. For people who have lost everything, it is going to take a very long time for them to be back on track.”

- Trevor, Red Cross Project Recovery Officer





## Long-term recovery

**Community outreach**, to assess where and what the need is, support coordination of recovery services, and help people access other support services.

**Psychosocial support**, through outreach activities, community events, and training for groups and agencies involved in recovery. Our recovery teams ensure that everyone is included, especially people or communities that may be isolated or at higher risk, to be empowered to lead their recovery.

**Capacity building**, through providing information and recovery and preparedness training.

**Community recovery**, through supporting community-led recovery activities and community leaders.

**Advocacy**, through gathering and sharing data about how impacted communities are feeling and what further support they need.

“ I met some older people who kindly refused the practical help that was offered by Red Cross and the other agencies. They said others needed the support more than they did. ‘We have enough’ they said, ‘give to others.’ Then I met a man who accepted all the help, support and vouchers he could get! He then rallied his despairing community to come to the Hub the next day and accept all the help they could get. As a migrant myself, I went to Brisbane with the lived experience of beginning again and expecting to meet many different people who were beginning again. All the local residents were similarly affected. All were beginning again to greater and lesser degrees.”

– Ushani, Red Cross Emergency Services volunteer

## Marese

Marese and her partner Ky had just started their farm stay and Air BnB business on Goat Island in the middle of the Richmond River before the floods washed it away in February. With 60 goats, horses and cows, it was a place where the couple would raise their blended family and maintain an income.

But when the rains came, Marese and Ky lost their haven. "When the floods hit Lismore we knew that it was going to be quite high" says Marese. "We didn't have the kids that week. We were lucky that it was just us two for that week."

After a sleepless night with neighbours back on the mainland, Marese and Ky used their boat to rescue people across the community who were stranded. After three days on the water, Marese was exhausted and had to retire from the rescues to focus on healing her body. She says the \$500 Relief Grant she received from the Red Cross paid for fuel for the boat rescues, water that they were handing out to stranded people, and medicines to heal the injuries she incurred after three days on the boat.

“ We like to think that that's Red Cross money. That was fuel. Absolutely nearly all of it fuel. And it wasn't just for us. It was the other people to get people out and evacuate and get some water to people that stayed in their homes.”





I lost everything. I lost my business. I lost my home, I lost my dog and I lost my cards. It was through the Red Cross, that made me feel alive.”

## Polly

When Polly went to bed on a Sunday, she couldn't have known less than 24 hours later she would be sobbing into a stranger's arms. The flood warning she was watching assured her the floods in Lismore weren't expected to peak until the following day. She had already prepared by taking a few things out of her shop – a small collectibles and antiques business she'd only just established – and moving them to her house.

But as she awoke in the dark, she knew it was time to move. "I woke up about 3:30 in the morning, and picked up my phone. A friend of mine had texted me to say I hope you're on high ground. I went into the kitchen and I picked up a torch, and I looked out the back and all I could see from my backyard was the top of my birdbath so I knew that there was at least a half a metre of water in my backyard."

She was eventually rescued by an SES crew and taken to an evacuation centre where she collapsed emotionally. With all her belongings washed away in the water, including her mobile phone, Polly had no way to let her family and friends know she was OK. She was supported to register with the Register.Find. Reunite service, and found siblings and friends had already enquired with the service to see if she was safe.

"They said "Where are you from? Are you OK?". I said "No, I'm not." I didn't have my phone. I didn't have anything. I had no way of letting anybody know that I was okay. And that's what the Red Cross did."



Everybody else has been so helpful, you know. Everybody."

- Jan, West Ballina resident

## Jan and Ian

Jan and Ian were evacuated in the middle of the night as floodwaters reached their home in West Ballina. With only the clothes on their back, they were supported by Red Cross volunteers in an evacuation centre with psychological first aid and registered through Register.Find. Reunite so their loved ones would know they were safe. Volunteer Jo was able to go back to their house and save Jan's wedding dress, albums, photos and other sentimental items, and she also brought them clothes to wear.

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# 14 Thank you

This Report has documented how the generosity of Australians has had meaningful impact for those affected by the 2022 floods. This impact of Red Cross disaster recovery work was made possible through the significant support from corporate donors, who jointly contributed more than \$30 million.

The extent of the flood recovery donations was made possible through the visibility of the Australia Unites Telethon, so we express our gratitude and thanks to the supporting networks: Nine Entertainment (Ch.9), Seven West Media (Ch.7), and Network Ten (Ch.10).

We would also like to specifically acknowledge our Disaster Collective Partners who have committed to ongoing annual support which provides financial stability, allowing Red Cross to efficiently mobilise resources as soon as disasters and emergencies occur.

This Collective, comprised of Australia Post, BHP Foundation, Commonwealth Bank, The Coca-Cola Company, IAG, and QBE, are always by our side, displaying humanitarian values and supporting those in need.

We also offer our sincere gratitude to the Premiers and state governments of Australia for their donations. We thank NSW (\$2.5m), WA (\$2m), VIC (\$2m), SA (\$1m) and QLD (\$500k).

In addition to financial donations, Red Cross also received invaluable pro-bono support from: Telstra, Accenture, Coles, Nexon, PayPal Giving Fund, Vicinity Centres, Reckitt, Blundstone Boots, Verizon Media, Kickin' Inn, and many others.

Active8Me	City of Sydney	IAG
AFL Players Association	Coles	Inspired Built Pty Ltd
Alsco	Collier Charitable Fund	Isuzu Ute
Amazon Australia	Costco	ITV Studios
American Express	Cotton On	Jaguar Land Rover Australia
Anglo American	Credit Suisse	John and Linda Van Lieshout
AON	Decjuba	KPMG
Australia Post	Diageo	Laing O' Rourke
Australian Unity Foundation	Entain	Lendlease
Australian Venue Co.	Essilor Luxottica	Manildra
Baby Bunting	Estee Lauder	Maxxia
Bakers Delight	Frasers Property	Mazda Foundation
Beacon Lighting & Beacon Trade	Fulton Hogan	McDonald's Australia
BHP Foundation	General Mills Foundation	Mercedes-Benz
BP Australia	GSK	Minderoo Foundation
Bupa Foundation	H&M	Mitsubishi
CBA	Harvey Norman	Mitsubishi Development
Chevron Australia	HBF	Mitsui
Citi Group	Hopper Group of companies	MUFG Bank
	Hyundai Motors Australia	New Zealand Red Cross

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Newcastle Knights	Solotel Group	The Coca-Cola Foundation
NRL	South 32	The Lott
Optus	Sportsbet	The Simpson Foundation
Paul Ramsay Foundation	Spotlight Group	TikTok
PayPal Giving Fund	St John of God Health Care	TimeSpan
QBE	Stan Perron Charitable Foundation	Toll Group
QBE AUSPAC	Suncorp	Toyota Financial Services
Ramsay Health	Super Retail Group	Toyota Motors Australia
Reckitt Benckiser	Swisse Wellness	Uber
Red Energy	Swyftx	Visa
Rio Tinto	TK Maxx	Viva Energy
Ronald Geoffrey Arnott Foundation	TAL Community Foundation	Volvo
7Eleven	Tank	Walt Disney Company
Shell	Techtronic Industries	Youi
Solo Resource	Telstra	Zimmermann

**None of this would be possible without you.**

To view the report online, including the appeal intent for the Australia Unites  
Telethon and Qld and NSW Floods Appeal, see [redcross.org.au/floodsappeal](https://redcross.org.au/floodsappeal)

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