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Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management acknowledges the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this Country.

We recognise their connection to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures, and to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

A message from the Inspector-General

Welcome to the second edition of Research Connect.

I am pleased to advise my re-appointment as Queensland's Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM).

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our stakeholders for their unwavering support and collaboration over the past five years and support of the wonderful people in the Office. This period has been marked by complex challenges, but through our collective efforts, we have fostered a robust sector dedicated to continuous improvement and shared responsibility.



It has been a busy start to 2025, with the northern areas of our state experiencing severe flooding. Once again, we are seeing the disaster management arrangements operationalise into supporting local response to and recovery from these events. The severe weather season is not over, and I encourage you all to remain vigilant and remember, if it's flooded, forget it.

I am pleased to advise that the 2023-24 Severe Weather Season Review report and the Queensland Government's response were published on the Queensland Parliament [website](#) on 4 February 2025. The Review examined preparedness, response and transitional arrangements for 12 weather events using evidence and intelligence from 118 submissions, 14 community forums, 26 interviews and commissioned research. I would like to thank all our stakeholders for their time and contribution.

Alistair

IGEM Research internship

The Office of IGEM had the wonderful opportunity of hosting Ms Jessica Whellens, a Queensland Ambulance intensive care paramedic from Yeppoon, who was completing a 200-hour placement as part of her humanitarian degree with [Deakin University](#).

Jessica's project focused on the challenges and opportunities around aged care facilities and disaster management in the Bundaberg area, particularly examining the changes since the major floods in 2013. Her background as a paramedic has given her a unique perspective on the complexities of aged care environments, especially during disasters.



While working closely with the IGEM team, Jessica gathered valuable insights and data through interviews with the Disaster Management Units of Bundaberg and Redland City Council, the District Disaster Co-ordinator for Bundaberg, and the Disaster Management Lead from the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ).

Her findings have highlighted the multifaceted needs of aged care residents and facilities during disasters. She emphasised the importance of enhanced collaboration between all levels of government, emergency services, and aged care providers to create robust disaster management plans.

As Jess nears the completion of her Masters in Humanitarian Assistance with Deakin University, she is excited about the prospect of transitioning into the disaster management sector. While the change is daunting, Jess is eager to embrace the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

"Working with IGEM has been a fantastic experience. The team's support and willingness to share their knowledge have been invaluable. I'm excited to apply what I've learned and make a meaningful impact in disaster management." - *Jessica Whellens*

We are proud to have hosted Jess and look forward to the valuable contributions she will make to our understanding of disaster management in aged care facilities. Keep an eye out for her case study on the www.igem.qld.gov.au website soon.

Email us at research@igem.qld.gov.au if you are interested in internship opportunities.

Natural Hazards Research Australia

The start of 2025 brought the devastating and ongoing impacts of natural hazards around the world into stark relief. The Greater Los Angeles wildfires raised [serious questions about the possibility of similar fires in Australia](#), much of Australia experienced severe heatwave conditions for more than a week and north Queensland continues to count the cost of the most recent flooding.



Exploring the [research lessons posed by the recent Greater LA fires](#), [Natural Hazards Research Australia](#) CEO Andrew Gissing draws on Centre research, grey rhinos and black swans to explain how and why preparation for and mitigation from catastrophic disasters, like the fires in LA, can be lacking. This topic will be unpacked even further in a special Hazardous Webinar on 27 February, [Research lessons from the LA fires](#).

In light of the north Queensland floods, national and state leaders have [supported the need to build back better](#). A policy strongly supported by research to minimise future damages. However, for this approach to work, it must be supported by continued investment in proactive mitigation to reduce risk, and we must also recognise when it is best to build back [somewhere different](#). Ways this could happen feature in the March Hazardous Webinar on 18 March, [Resilient housing policies: A framework for evaluation](#).

The [health impacts of bushfire smoke on the human body](#) are also highlighted in research carried out by Centre PhD students by Suki Jaiswal and Kiam Padamsey. Looking at the effect of smoke on firefighters' eyes and knowledge gaps and use of personal protective equipment amongst volunteer and career firefighters respectively, these studies are already changing the way the effects of bushfire smoke are being managed.

Get Ready Queensland State of Preparedness Report

Every two years, [Get Ready Queensland](#) (GRQ) conducts the Queensland State of Preparedness survey to understand how Queenslanders are preparing for extreme weather, its impact on their lives, and the barriers they face. In 2024, GRQ's market research partner MCR interviewed 1535 people across five key regions, providing valuable regional insights.



The research revealed that while 59% of Queenslanders have an emergency plan, only 19% have written it down. To address this, GRQ launched the "[Weather Doesn't Plan, But You Can](#)" campaign in October 2024, introducing an [Online Household Emergency Plan](#) to encourage documentation.

A significant finding was that 76% of Queenslanders experienced disruptions due to severe weather in the past two years, which increased disaster preparedness behaviours. The research also showed a 58% rise in people preparing out of habit since 2022.

GRQ's evidence-based approach aims to drive behaviour change and build disaster preparedness as a social norm. Resources developed from the research support local governments in delivering resilience initiatives, available on the Get Ready Queensland Stakeholder Hub.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority's Get Ready Queensland program continues to help communities prepare for natural disasters year-round. Access the full [State of Preparedness Report](#) for more insights.

The platform, hosted by GNS Science, will focus on the 4 Rs: reduction, readiness, response, and recovery. Click [here](#) to read more.

Queensland Disaster Research Alliance

The Queensland Disaster Research Alliance (QDRA) reflects on a successful 2024, marked by advancements in disaster resilience through innovative research and strengthened partnerships. A key highlight was the End-of-Year Stakeholder Event, which brought together researchers, industry leaders, and agency representatives for an engaging and interactive networking experience.



In 2024, QDRA also successfully launched the Queensland Disaster Researchers Database, a comprehensive tool that maps the expertise of disaster researchers across Queensland. By promoting collaboration and aligning research efforts with national and state priorities, this database plays a vital role in addressing critical disaster management challenges.

Looking forward, QDRA is prepared to seize upcoming research opportunities that will address critical disaster management challenges. QDRA is focused on expanding research capacity, fostering collaborations, and supporting impactful research that will further enhance disaster resilience within communities.

For more information on QDRA's initiatives and upcoming opportunities, visit www.qdra.org or reach out to contact@qdra.org

University updates

Climate, Disasters & Health Showcase

Griffith University

Our world is getting hotter, disasters are hitting harder, and the impacts on health are impossible to ignore.

At Griffith, we're working across disciplines to find real solutions. On 29 January, we welcomed 60 attendees (in-person and online) to the Climate, Disasters & Health Research Showcase at Griffith's Brisbane South (Nathan) campus. This event featured 21 presenters, each tackling critical challenges in climate resilience, disaster response, and health.

Across the presentations, several key themes emerged:

- Extreme heat and health risks
- Disaster resilience and community preparedness
- Climate-driven displacement and migration
- Tech and innovation for a changing climate.

This showcase's themes highlighted the urgent need for action, and the power of research in shaping solutions. It's clear there's incredible work happening across this space, with many opportunities to collaborate and expand our research efforts. As Prof Brendan Mackey, Prof Cara Beal, Prof Andreas Neef, and A/Prof Jamie Ranse emphasised, Griffith has well-established research networks ready to support and amplify work in these areas.

If you're looking to connect with experts, explore partnerships, or start a new project, reach out to Griffith academics working in climate, disaster resilience, and health.

Let's work together to build a more resilient, healthier future.



Culturally diverse storytelling for inclusive emergency communication: Insights from CALD communities

Queensland University of Technology

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in Australia face persistent challenges, from language barriers to social integration and adapting to a new climate. Yet, disaster resilience efforts often lack resources to fully engage these communities.

When natural hazards strike, do your messages truly reach and resonate with diverse communities, not just the majority? Are your instructions clear, actionable, and culturally relevant? How well do you understand the lived experiences and cultural practices that shape these communities' perceptions and responses in emergencies?

The latest article from Jenny Hou, Greg Hearn and Kim Osman at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), addresses these gaps by exploring **storytelling** as a shared 'language' and legacy across cultures—one that can make disaster risk communication more **inclusive, relatable, and impactful**.

Moving beyond a one-size-fits-all model, our research highlights three key strategies to ensure life-saving messages are both accessible and effective:

- **Messaging Level** – Integrate cultural appeals (e.g., visual interventions, storytelling traditions, and cultural taboos) to create messages that are not only clear but also culturally sensitive and

action-oriented.

- **Network Level** – Leverage social ties within and across CALD communities to amplify messages, foster trust, and strengthen connections between communities and emergency responders.
- **Socio-cultural Level** – Draw on firsthand community experiences to support place-making practices, helping individuals rebuild identity and resilience in the aftermath of disaster events.

Overall, disaster storytelling is more than a communication tool—it's an empowering mechanism that fosters collective sense-making and recognises CALD communities as essential knowledge agents. When every voice is heard, every life can be safeguarded.

Read and download the full article [here](#).

Expression of interest: maternity care in Queensland disasters

Queensland University of Technology



Queensland is a well-resourced state that manages natural hazards and disasters on regular bases. Childbearing women are affected by disasters in specific ways, with needs and expectations that may be overlooked.

While the consequences of disasters on maternal and newborn health are known (such as perinatal maternal stress, premature birth, low birthweight), maternal vulnerability, capacity and resilience are rarely assessed, making it difficult to plan and deliver maternity services in disasters that best meet the needs of women and communities.

There is little knowledge on the real-world experiences of health practitioners, first responders and decision makers who assist women in disasters, which could contribute to improving services.

PhD student Elena Skoko aims to understand how maternity care functions during disasters in Queensland, its key aspects, and suggested improvements from decision makers, health professionals, first responders, and citizens.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please contact Elena Soko via email elena.skoko@hdr.qut.edu.au. For more details visit the study web page: www.maternitycareindisasters.wordpress.com.

The study has been approved by the QUT University Human Research Ethics Committee (approval #8399) according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

A resilient disaster waste management framework for communities: experiences from Australian industry practitioners

University of the Sunshine Coast



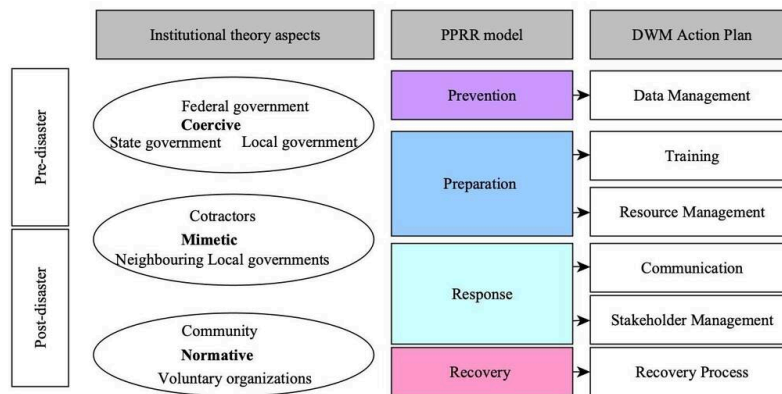
University of the
Sunshine Coast

The recent escalation in frequency and intensity of disasters demonstrates the urgent need to manage the overwhelming amount of waste generated from these events. Researchers Savindi Caldera, Chamari Jayarathna, Selena Ferguson, Joanne McNeill and Cheryl Desha developed a Resilient Disaster Waste Management (RDWM) framework with six key actions and an annual DWM health check plan for industry decision-makers to build resilient communities.

The RDWM framework and health check plan were based on analysis of the waste management literature and semi-structured interviews with local and state government decision-makers and waste management industry practitioners in Queensland, Australia.

The RDWM framework below guides decision-makers to focus on which areas of action plan should be prioritized at the different phases of disasters. Continuously improving DWM processes using this framework will help adapt to the changing landscape of disaster events in Australia.

Click [here](#) to read the full research report.



Expression of interest: participate in research on mental health services & climate risk

University of Queensland



Are you passionate about mental health and the impact of climate change? We need your help!

PhD student Ben Norris is conducting a research study and are looking for participants in Australia from three different groups:

1. Individuals who have used or considered using mental health services due to exposure to a climate risk event (e.g., natural disaster, drought).
2. Service Providers who have worked in mental health services related to climate risk events.
3. Policy Makers or Funders involved in mental health services for climate risk events.

We are interested in hearing your opinions about effective mental health services and interventions. Your insights and experiences are invaluable to us. By participating, you'll contribute to important research that aims to improve mental health services in the face of climate change.

To find out more about this research project and register your interest in participating please click on this [link](#) below or contact Ben Norris: Benjamin.norris@student.uq.edu.au

Upcoming events

Resilient housing policies: A framework for evaluation: 18 March

A fascinating look at global post-disaster resilience housing programs and what they mean for Australia.
[Register now.](#)

2025 LGAQ Disaster Management Conference 28-30 May

The LGAQ's biennial Queensland Disaster Management Conference will take place in the first half of the year, with the program and link to register soon to be released. Delivered in partnership with [Queensland Police](#)

Weather ready workshops for outdoor operations
April 2025

NatCORR and the Bureau of Meteorology are proud to offer five weather [workshops](#) coming to Hobart, Canberra, Perth, Brisbane and Melbourne in April 2025. These hand-on, in person workshops provide professional development to enhance skills and preparedness.

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Lessons Management Forum: 20-22 May

A hybrid event held in-person in Wellington, New Zealand and online, grow skills, networking, collaboration, knowledge and practice of lessons management. [Learn more.](#)

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Natural Hazards Research Forum 18-20 July

The Natural Hazards Research Forum returns to Adelaide on 18-20 June 2025, showcasing the latest natural hazards research, expert keynote speakers and knowledge collaboration. [Registrations now open.](#)

[Service, Queensland Fire Department, Queensland Reconstruction Authority and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management,](#)

the conference will run from 27-29 May 2025 at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.



This event presents a valuable opportunity to explore how ideas, case studies, and research can be practically applied to enhance disaster management strategies. Attendees will gain insights into innovative approaches, lessons learned, and emerging best practices, strengthening resilience across Queensland communities. Click [here](#) to view events details.

Want to see more?

For more details on how to submit for the next edition, feel free to reach out to IGEM at research@igem.qld.gov.au.

You can also follow us on social media to stay updated with the latest news from the Office of the IGEM. Just click the links below to visit our official pages.

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