



RESEARCH CONNECT

Edition 7 | September 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management would like to respectfully acknowledge First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Queensland.

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

A message from the Inspector-General

Welcome to the latest edition of Research Connect.

As Queensland transitions from an unusually wet winter into conditions increasingly influenced by El Niño, many communities are preparing for a challenging higher-risk weather season ahead. This changing environment is a timely reminder of the importance of research, foresight, and evidence-based decision-making in helping us understand emerging risks and strengthen resilience.



Over recent months, the Office has continued to support sector learning through initiatives including our review of the Flood Warning Gauge Network within the North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils area, the Queensland Disaster Management Lessons Program, Queensland Disaster Futures Focus Groups, Disaster Management Officers' Day and engagement at conferences and forums. Across these discussions, a common message has emerged: stronger outcomes depend on our ability to translate research and lessons into practice, work collaboratively, and support communities to play an active role in building resilience before, during and after disasters.

Looking ahead this year, and I am pleased to announce that planning is well underway for our 2026 Queensland Disaster Management Research Forum. The Office and I look forward to bringing together researchers, practitioners and industry partners to explore this year's theme, *Research outside the norm: challenging assumptions, methods, and boundaries through disruptive thinking with real-world impact*, looking at how research can help us to address the hazard priorities outlined in the Queensland State Disaster Risk Report. This year's program specifically addresses risks of flood, bushfire, tropical cyclone and earthquake. It also explores broader system-level challenges and looks to enhance research capability within the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements.

Thank you for your ongoing contribution to Queensland's disaster management research community and your commitment to building a safer and more resilient future.

2026 Queensland Disaster Management Research Forum

This year, the Office of the IGEM is planning to host the sixth annual Queensland Disaster Management Research Forum.

The Forum is scheduled for **Tuesday 10 November 2026** at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

This year's forum will explore the theme: ***"Research outside the norm – challenging assumptions, methods, and boundaries through disruptive thinking with real-world impact."***



We would like to thank everyone who submitted an expression of interest to present at this year's Forum. We were encouraged by the strong response and look forward to showcasing a diverse range of research, initiatives and perspectives from across the sector.

With presenter submissions now closed, registrations will open in September 2026. Keep an eye on the event webpage below for further information and registration announcements.

Visit the Forum webpage



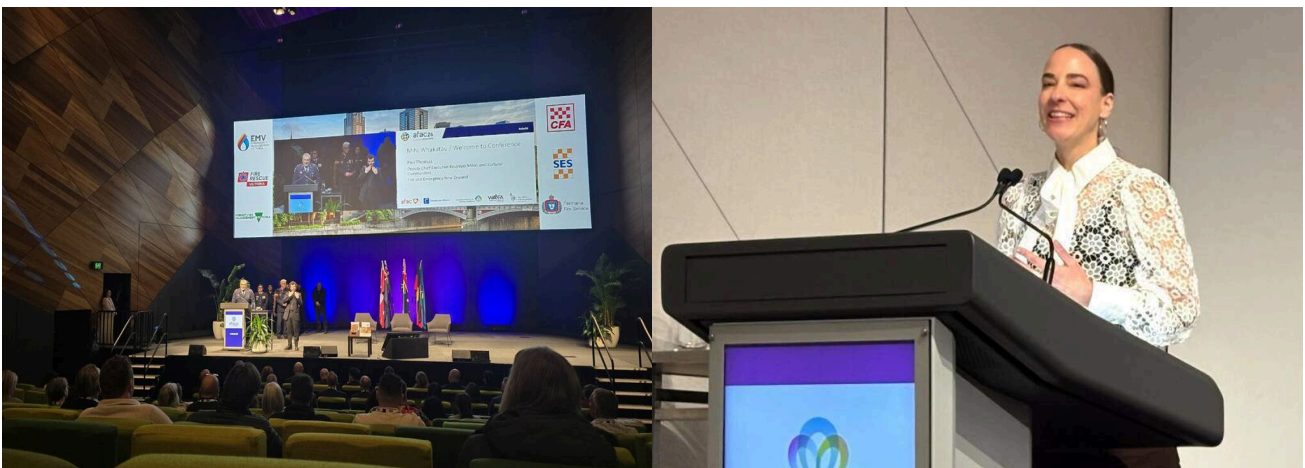
2026 ADRC/AFAC

Thank you to [AFAC](#) and the [Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience](#) for another outstanding conference, bringing together emergency management professionals, researchers and practitioners from across Australia and beyond.

The Inspector-General of Emergency Management Alistair Dawson and Director, Research and Communications Kate Retzki attended the conference, which explored a range of emerging challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

Key themes included the growing complexity and interconnectedness of future risks, the importance of inclusion and collaboration in disaster risk reduction, the role of emerging technologies and artificial intelligence, and ensuring research and lessons are translated into meaningful action and improved community outcomes.

Kate also had the opportunity to present on the Office's interest in futures and foresight, showcasing how futures thinking is being used to explore long-term and emerging risks facing Queensland.



Research in action: Disaster Futures Focus Groups

In June, the Office convened members of the Queensland Disaster Futures Champions network for two focus group sessions to explore future disaster scenarios in greater depth. The discussions built upon the IGEM Futures Connect Round Table and Disaster Futures Champions Summit held in 2025, examining emerging challenges and opportunities across governance, policy and planning, community resilience, infrastructure, communication, and technology.

The discussions were informed by the Transformative Scenarios developed by [Natural Hazards Research Australia](#). Insights from the focus groups, together with outcomes from previous futures-focused events, will contribute to defining pathways to support the ongoing strengthening of the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements and inform future policy, strategy, and operational planning.

We thank all participants for their valuable contributions and commend our [Griffith University](#) intern Vihanga Amarakoon for facilitating the focus groups and drafting the report.



Queensland Local Government Heat Action Survey

[Griffith University](#) and [James Cook University](#) researchers are inviting Queensland local government representatives to participate in the Queensland Local Government Heat Action Survey. This survey is part of the Heat-Health Impact Monitoring, Action and Communication for Queensland (HIMACQ) project funded by the Australian Government's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA – Disaster Ready Fund Round 2).

The survey aims to better understand current heat-health and heat-risk resilience actions being implemented across Queensland councils. Questions relate to heat governance, planning, partnerships, and support for at-risk populations. Findings will help identify good practice examples, common challenges, and opportunities to inform future policy, funding, and practical support for local governments.

To learn more or register your council's interest, please fill out the EOI form below or contact Mehak Oberai at m.oberai@griffith.edu.au. The survey is open until September.

(GU ref no: HREC/2026/0400)

Fill out the EOI form to participate

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience update

The updated [Training and Professional Development Resources Collection](#) on the Knowledge Hub, highlights what AIDR's program has to offer. The collection also includes very helpful resources about other sector-based training and opportunities along with related university courses, short courses, modules and/or subjects that offer other development pathways.



New [Australian disasters | Disaster Mapper](#) incidents from 2022 to 2026 have been added, with more to come. This resource documents Australia's past disasters, providing insight into disaster events that have impacted Australia and serving as a record of significant disaster impacts that have affected the Australian community. The [Webinars Collection](#) on the Knowledge Hub has been updated so you can catch up on any webinars you have missed all in one place.

Natural Hazards Research Australia update

Partnerships healing Country and new Workshop Grants available

Partnerships are a fundamental strength that supports both First Nations communities and broader disaster resilience efforts.

Natural Hazards Research Australia (the Centre) marked last month's NAIDOC Week (5–12 July) by launching a short documentary on the [Healing Country through Wiradjuri and Wolgalu-led land management project](#), which supports best outcomes for Country, community and hazard risk on Wiradjuri and Wolgalu Country in New South Wales.

Visit the [project page](#) on the Centre's website to learn more and to watch the video, which demonstrates why embracing First Nations leadership and partnerships in emergency management and natural hazards research is essential for creating better outcomes for all. Last month, the Centre also announced that four grants of up to \$7,500 per workshop (ex GST) are available during the 2026–27 financial year for the ongoing Workshop Grants Program.

The Workshop Grants Program supports researchers and Participants to conduct workshops aligned with the Centre's mission, vision and objectives. Through these grants, the Centre aims to promote collaboration between researchers and end-users to address key focus and capability areas outlined in the Centre's [Biennial Research Plan 2026–28](#).

Further details about this program are available on the Centre's website [here](#).

Explore new research into natural hazards, disasters and resilience and watch Hazardous Webinars, researcher interviews and more on our YouTube channel. This includes the replays of three of our recent Hazardous Webinars:

- [Hazardous Webinar May 2026: Bushfire risk at the rural–urban interface](#)
- [Hazardous Webinar June 2026: Modelling impacts of natural hazards on infrastructure networks](#)
- [Hazardous Webinar July 2026: Establishing guidelines and a pathway to a national bushfire database](#)

Visit the Centre's YouTube channel

Griffith University joins UN Climate Change Universities Partnership Programme

New partnership connects [Griffith University](#) researchers and postgraduate students directly to the knowledge gaps identified through UN climate negotiations.

Griffith University has become the first Australian university to join the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [Universities Partnership Programme](#), joining a select group of global institutions including Harvard, Yale and Cornell.

The Universities Partnership Programme is the only initiative of its kind, giving partner institutions direct access to the knowledge gaps identified through international climate change negotiations on climate adaptation. Through the partnership, Griffith's Masters and PhD candidates will be able to align their research with the globally significant climate adaptation priorities, with support from UNFCCC Secretariat staff on idea and topic development.

The findings will be shared with the UNFCCC Secretariat and showcased on UN platforms. Candidates will also have the opportunity to be invited to present their research at the annual UN climate change negotiations, known as the Conference of the Parties (COP). The identified adaptation questions and themes range from coastal and marine ecosystems to health and wellbeing and Global Goal on Adaptation's seven thematic targets such as cultural heritage, infrastructure and human settlements, and poverty and livelihoods among others.

The partnership advances Griffith's Research and Innovation Plan 2025–2030 by building high-impact international partnerships that strengthen research translation, global reputation, graduate employability and sustainability leadership. It will be particularly relevant to students in the Master of Climate Change Adaptation, Master of Integrated Water Management and Master of Environment, as well as postgraduate researchers in law, environment, health and business whose work addresses climate change adaptation.

For Queensland, this is significant as it strengthens the pipeline between local, place-based research on reef resilience, coastal adaptation, extreme heat, agricultural vulnerability and the global policy architecture that increasingly determines how adaptation finance and technical support flow to the Asia-Pacific. Queensland's climate challenges are not unique in kind, but they are often early indicators of what other subtropical and coastal regions will face; a formal channel into UNFCCC knowledge gaps means Queensland's research can travel outward as readily as global priorities travel in.

For further information on this partnership, contact [A/Prof Johanna Nalau](#) (Griffith Sciences) or [Professor Rebecca Ford](#).

University of Queensland update

New research by **Nikita Sharma**, **Ella Kuskoff** and **Cameron Parsell** highlights the vital contribution volunteers make to long-term disaster recovery. The study shows that through compassionate, adaptable and locally connected support, volunteers help disaster-affected people navigate complex recovery journeys, particularly in relation to housing and rebuilding their lives. The findings underscore the importance of supporting volunteer networks as disasters become more frequent and severe.

[Read the full article](#)

Developing Secure and Resilient Systems for Queensland – in-person summit, 18 September

Developing Secure and Resilient Systems for Queensland: Complex Critical Systems in an Era of Compounding Risk. Building Systemic Resilience for Queensland brings together leaders to tackle the state's most pressing interconnected risks, such as cyber threats, climate impacts and critical infrastructure disruption. Focused on real-world outcomes, the summit delivers actionable insights to strengthen Queensland's resilience, safeguard key systems and drive coordinated responses to complex, compounding challenges. This Summit focuses on interdependent systems under escalating stress:

1. **Digital Systems** – cyber, data, platforms, digital infrastructure
2. **Physical Systems** – critical infrastructure, climate exposure, disaster cascades
3. **Organisational Systems** – people, processes, leadership, and governance

The summit is designed to discuss how these systems interact, fail together, and must be governed together.

[Global Change Institute Building, UQ Saint Lucia campus](#) – Friday, 18 September, 12pm–3pm

Upcoming events and opportunities

CSIRO Kick-Start Program

[CSIRO Kick-Start](#) is an initiative for innovative Australian start-ups and small to medium enterprises, providing funding support and access to CSIRO's research expertise and capabilities to support the development of new products, services, or processes.

The program may be relevant to organisations in disaster resilience, emergency management, climate adaptation, and related sectors seeking to collaborate with research partners and accelerate innovation.

- Benefits of the program include: Access world-class CSIRO research expertise
- Share project costs through matched funding
- Advance prototypes, feasibility studies or product development

[Learn more](#)

New Zealand Geographical Society and the Institute of Australian Geographers joint conference

8–10 December

On behalf of the New Zealand Geographical Society and the Institute of Australian Geographers, we warmly welcome you to the 2026 Joint Conference in Palmerston North. We gather under the theme Hopeful Spaces to exchange ideas, foster collaboration, and envision geographies of creativity, regeneration, and possibility. This year, the joint conference is hosted by the Manawātū Branch of the New Zealand Geographical Society, aiming for a lower-key, wellbeing-led conference.

[Learn more](#)

Regional University Industry Collaboration Program

The [Regional University Industry Collaboration](#) program is designed exclusively for Queensland-based small to medium enterprises, providing support at every stage



2026 Disaster Ready Together 16–17 September

The Summit will bring together leading experts in disaster preparedness, our recovery and resilience sector alongside local service organisations, emergency management agencies, researchers and community groups to exchange knowledge, strengthen collaboration, and advance the future of disaster preparedness in the Northern Rivers.

[Learn more](#)

130th LGAQ Annual Conference 19–21 October

The 130th Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Annual Conference takes place from October 19–21, 2026, at the Cairns Convention Centre. This premier three-day event unites leaders from all 77 Queensland councils to debate vital community issues, including local disaster management.

[Learn more](#)

of their research and development journey. The program offers the skills, funding, expertise, and networks necessary to drive innovation across the state's regions.

[Learn more](#)

International Conference on Fire Safety and Disaster Risk 9–10 December

Fostering innovative solutions and field-critical themes, the International Conference on Fire Safety and Disaster Risk, organised by The EurAsia Foundation of Science, Technology and Management and held in Sydney, blends traditional wisdom with technological innovations. Gain significant traction in this fast-paced field by forging lasting bonds with global business owners, students, researchers, and scholars.

[Learn more](#)

2027 Frontline Mental health Conference: from risk to readiness 1–2 March

The Frontline Mental Health Conference, Brisbane, brings together the leaders, practitioners, researchers, policymakers and frontline professionals shaping the future of mental health across Australia's frontline services.

[Learn more](#)

This email was sent by IGEM, Inspector-General of Emergency Management, 111 George St, Brisbane, Qld 4001, Australia to Kristyna.Fajglova@igem.qld.gov.au

Climate Adaptation 2026 growing knowledge, empowering change 26–28 October

[Unsubscribe](#)

The NESP Climate systems hub invites you to join us for Australia's next national adaptation conference to be held in Newcastle, NSW from 26–28 October 2026.

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Vision⁶

The conference is Australia's preeminent event focused exclusively on climate change adaptation. It is an opportunity to share knowledge and experience, to network and strengthen the growing community of adaptation practice and research in Australia.

The program across three days includes plenary sessions focused on key voices,

panel sessions and workshops addressing specific challenges and thematic sessions of delegate presentations.

2027 Disaster & Emergency Management Conference

20–21 July, Brisbane

Learn more

Want to see more?

Don't forget to check out our [Research Connect webpage](#) which has been developed to connect researchers with disaster managers. The Office of the IGEM will continue to grow the Research Connect webpages in collaboration with our stakeholders, and we invite your organisation to share your research content and opportunities on the platform. 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 page.

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Learn more

