

Community Update

May 2023

The NRRRC is pleased to provide this community update. It is our privilege to be part of your communities and working with you as part of your recovery and reconstruction of housing, essential assets and infrastructure in flood impacted areas across the NSW Northern Rivers.

Together, we're rebuilding our communities.

Indigenous dancers welcomed attendees to the NRRRC's Northern Rivers Reconstruction Industry Conference, held at Tweed Heads on 27 April, with a Welcome to Country and three dances.

Gudjingburra Dancers (pictured) was formed by the descendants of the Gudjinburra people of the Bundjalung, the Ngarangkwal and associated tribes to ensure Cultural Preservation into the future through Yawar (corroboree).

The Gudjinburra Dancers consist of 2nd and 3rd generation descendants and relatives and continue to grow giving young people an opportunity to express their cultural heritage and identity through practice.



Resilient Homes Fund key milestones

251
offers approved

61
offers accepted

The NRRC has reached an important milestone with over 250 buyback offers approved under the Resilient Homes Program. This includes 61 offer acceptances with the program now gaining real momentum.

Resilient Homes Fund Dashboard

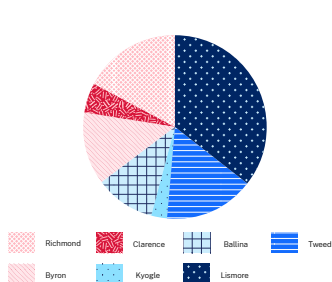
The dashboard provides a fortnightly snapshot update of the Resilient Homes Program.

11 May 2023 issue date
Numbers as of Monday 8 May 2023

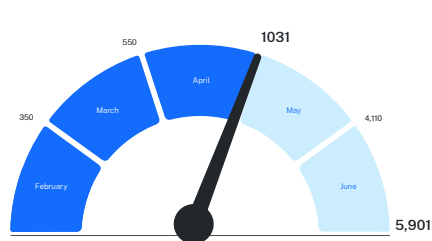
Program registrations

6471 Active
Duplicates merged

Registrations by LGA



Initial eligibility assessment complete (actual and forecast)



Engagement

68
Community engagement activities

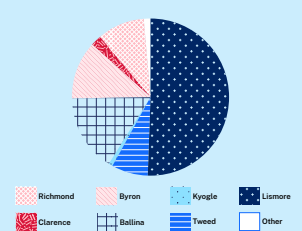
With over
2103
residents since 4 November 2022

Resilient Lands

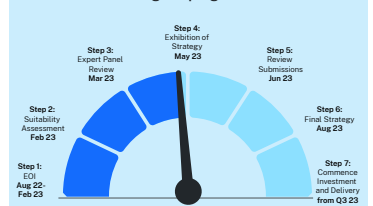
322

Expressions of interest received

EOIs by LGA



Program progress



For more information on the Resilient Lands Roadmap, and each step in the process, visit the [resilient land page](#).

831
eligible
Home buy-backs
Stream underway

Property progress under buy-back stream (actual)

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Valuations undertaken | 326/831 |
| Offers approved | 251/831 |
| Offers accepted | 61/831 |
| Settlements complete | 1/831 |

Home raising & retrofits
Streams to commence Q2 2023



The Resilient Homes Program was announced on 28 October 2022 and opened for registrations in November 2022. Over 6470 registrations have been received and people registered with the program will know their indicative eligibility by mid-2023.



The Resilient Homes Fund dashboard is updated fortnightly and provides a snapshot of progress made across the Resilient Homes and Resilient Land programs. The dashboard can be viewed on the [NRRC website](#).

Case study:

Lismore couple happy to be moving on after NRRC buyback offer

A North Lismore couple have recently accepted a buyback offered from the NRRC because they don't want to go "through another flood and lose everything again".

The couple are moving on. They have happily accepted their offer from the NRRC and purchased a fully renovated cottage in Lismore Heights. In the end it was an easy decision for them both as they wanted to downsize and put the traumas of last year's floods behind them. On the day of the major flood in 2022, they had seven members of their family rescued by boat from the roof of their house, here's their story

"The night of the flood, we really weren't expecting much at all.

We were thinking a 2017 flood, so we just got everything up from underneath the house and ready to wait it out.

I think it was 5am and water started coming through the floorboards.

Within an hour we were dragging bookcases over to get into the ceiling

It was just so quick, just huge and we didn't save anything basically because we weren't prepared."

The couple spent a month cleaning up and stripping back their home and wondering what to do next. They were just starting down the path of renovating their home when the buyback scheme was announced late last year.

"When the buybacks were offered, we thought: 'Oh my god, let's just take it'.

I am not going through another flood and losing everything again."

While the couple were on "tenterhooks" about their valuation, it came back very positively and allowed them to put in a bid on another house. Again, they had weighed up options to move their existing home and renovate it or buy land and put a little shack on it. In the end, they opted to buy a home on higher ground that was ready to move into. They hope their character filled home is bought by a company that moves them and hope the area they live in is turned into parklands in the future.

*NOTE: In the interests of privacy the NRRC have not provided the names of the homeowners featured in this case study.

Resilient Land Program

The NRRC's Resilient Land Program is being delivered in parallel to the Resilient Homes Program. The focus of the Resilient Land Program is to help deliver a sustainable supply of flood-safe land suitable for housing development.

More than 300 Expressions of Interest have been received under the Resilient Land Program. A 2-Stage land suitability assessment is currently underway, and more information will be shared in coming weeks.

The NRRC is working with local governments, state government agencies, the development and construction industries, and other stakeholders to help deliver housing for flood-impacted communities in the Northern Rivers as quickly as possible.

Activity update

Northern Rivers Reconstruction Industry Conference wrap



With the mantra of ‘building back better’ over 250 delegates were given an insight into a \$7.9 billion pipeline of infrastructure works at the NRRC’s Industry Conference at Twin Towns, Tweed Heads on Thursday, 27 April 2023.

Key speakers included the General Manager of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) Jimmy Scott, leading Australian flood, fire and storm resilience architect James Davidson and Thomas Corley, a disaster recovery expert from the St Bernard Project in the United States.

During the conference the NRRC outlined a \$7.9 billion pipeline of public works, with more than 2,500 projects spread across seven Northern Rivers Local Government Areas, Tweed, Byron Bay, Ballina, Lismore, Kyogle, Richmond Valley and Clarence Valley.

The conference helped explain how tradies and other industry professionals could get involved in projects ranging from barbecue areas, to schools, ambulance stations and landslips.

The \$7.9 billion pipeline of infrastructure projects will require a surge in workforce capacity to support reconstruction efforts, including builders,

civil contractors, geo tech engineers, project managers and other professional services.

The primary aim of the conference was to connect trades and industry with local councils and state government and get the post-flood rebuild underway.

A key challenge for the region is the need to increase the direct construction workforce by approximately 550 additional workers in the short term, and then an additional 200 workers in three years’ time.

In terms of flow on jobs, there will need to be an additional 400 workers in construction services and approximately 200 in professional services that support construction.

In a tight labour market nationally, this is a significant challenge and will require a range of solutions, including a focus on employing diverse workforce cohorts who have been disadvantaged in employment in the construction industry including indigenous men, women and young people, women in non-traditional roles, people with disabilities and youth.

Incredible opportunity to learn from US disaster recovery experts

The NRRC brought together non-profit resilience and flood recovery organisations from across northern NSW and two disaster recovery experts from the United States.

The information sharing and networking opportunity took place at the NRRC's offices in Lismore on Friday, April 28.

Addressing Northern Rivers' NGOs was St Bernard Project's (SBP) Disaster Preparedness Program Director Helen Wiley, on a late-night live cross from the United States, and SBP's Chief Recovery Officer Thomas Corley (pictured right), who was in Australia at the invitation of the NRRC.

SBP was founded by volunteers working in St Bernard Parish in Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina in 2006 and has since expanded to provide services across the United States and Caribbean.

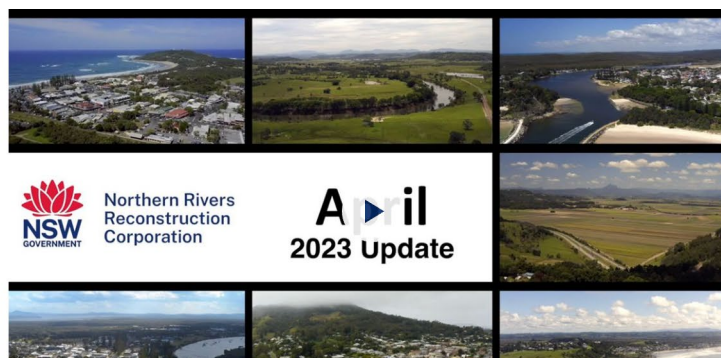
It has helped thousands of families, including the rebuilding of homes that are more resilient and energy efficient and there are many important lessons to be learned from an organisation like SBP.



In many ways the Katrina story looks a lot like what happened in the Northern Rivers and the opportunity at any point to learn from another organisation is invaluable.

Mr Corley also spoke at a community meeting at the Northern Rivers Living Lab on Wednesday 26 April and addressed NRRC's Reconstruction Industry Conference at Tweed Heads on Thursday 27 April.

Accessible monthly video updates



The NRRC provides Auslan interpreted and accessible monthly video updates. The videos provide opportunity to get more information about key programs, what's being delivered and what's coming up. Community can access the videos on our website. The April update from Chief Executive David Witherdin is now available on the website.

NRRC gets social

Follow along to get updates about our programs and activities.



linkedin.com/company/northern-rivers-reconstruction-corporation/



instagram.com/northernriversreconstruction



facebook.com/northernriversnrrc

Resilient retrofitting: MullumCares

It took about 10 months from start to finish for Sasha Mainsbridge to refit her home and be happy to call it 'flood resilient'.

Key features installed in her bathroom, kitchen and throughout her Mullumbimby home mean she could be back in her home within days, not weeks or months, if a flood happened again. Her learnings along the way are now an inspiration for others. As part of Sustainable House Day, Sunday, 19 March 2023, Ms Mainsbridge organised tours through several locally refitted flood resilient homes.

This was made possible with the support of the NRRC.



Mullum Cares is working to support and provide guidance to homeowners, communities and industry about Resilient Retrofitting as part of the NRRC's Resilient Homes Program.

Visit MullumCares website for more information: mullumcares.com.au/sustainable-house-day

Upcoming:

From **late May 2023** Resilient Land Strategy goes on public exhibition.

The NRRC looks forward to contributing to **Reconciliation Week 27 May – 3 June 2023**. The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2023 is Be a Voice for Generations.

The NRRC will announce the contract for the Managing Contractor for the **raising and retrofit streams** of the Resilient Homes Program.

Helpful links and contacts

NRRC web: nsw.gov.au/nrrc email: info@nrrc.nsw.gov.au

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