

LOCAL RECOVERY ACTION PLAN 2025 SNAPSHOT



North and Far North Tropical Low,
29 January - 28 February 2025

RECOVERY NARRATIVE

MISSION

To shape a positive future for the Hinchinbrook community by understanding community needs and wants, building on our inherent strengths, recognising and maximising opportunities and facing our challenges head on.

AIM

The Hinchinbrook Shire Council Local Recovery Action Plan (the Recovery Plan) has been developed following the impacts of the flooding in the region associated with North and Far North Tropical Low, 29 January – 28 February 2025. The Recovery Plan aims to provide the structure for a locally led recovery approach that will assist disaster-impacted members of the community to recover quickly, effectively and remain sustainable. It also aims to incorporate development strategies within this recovery to enhance the resilience of all sectors of the community for subsequent disaster events. The Recovery Plan establishes important recovery milestones and estimated completion dates of associated projects. It also documents strategies and activities that will be undertaken to better prepare for, and reduce the impacts of future disaster events while enhancing Hinchinbrook’s resilience, sustainability and prosperity.

DAMAGE AND IMPACTS

Human Social

- Tragically, two residents lost their lives during the floods, having a traumatic impact on families and locals;
- 812 homes and businesses were rated as moderate or minor damage;
- 192 homes and businesses were rated as severe damage;
- Power outage and communication disruption to approximately 11,000 residents and businesses; and
- 198 people were accommodated in the Evacuation Centre.

Economic

- Approximately 75% of cane farm and other agriculture land was inundated;
- Tourism businesses reporting very high percentage of lost bookings;
- Approximately 90% all businesses were negatively impacted by inundation;
- Economic impacts including business interruption, stock and asset loss and closures, some to never re-open;
- Closure of all private, state and independent schools across the local government area, as well as closures of childcare centres subsequently impacting the workforce; and
- Economic impacts to cane farmers with a loss of 1 – 1.5 million tonnes of cane production, impacting farmer livelihoods. Subsequent community economic impacts will only become apparent when cane crushing season commences later in 2025.

Infrastructure

- Bruce Highway closed on numerous occasions North to Cardwell and South to Townsville, significantly impacting the business community;
- Critical failure of Ollera Creek Bridge, closing the Bruce Highway to all vehicle movements for an extended period;
- Rail services ceased between Townsville and Cairns;
- Numerous local roads closed for extended periods due to water inundation;
- Landslips and road and bridge damage closed Wallaman Falls Road, Broadwater, and Paluma. Mount Fox Road sustained substantial damage;
- Impacts to numerous Council buildings and assets including JL Kelly Theatre, Hinchinbrook Shire Library, TYTO Regional Art Gallery and the Hinchinbrook Visitor Information Centre; and
- Damage to Council water and sewerage, and stormwater infrastructure.

Environment

- Soil erosion and loss of farmland on riverbanks;
- Obstructions to the drainage and waterways discharge continuing to cause increased flooding impacts particularly in the Lower Herbert communities and agricultural areas;
- Debris build up in streams and rivers exacerbating flooding in surrounding properties; and
- Loss of livestock and further ongoing livestock health issues.

RECOVERY TIMELINE

RECOVERY TIMELINE

By 1 May 2025

By 28 February 2026

By 28 February 2027

POST IMPACT
AND
EARLY INTERVENTION

RECOVERY
AND
RECONSTRUCTION

TRANSITION

HUMAN SOCIAL

Coordinate planning and implementation of recovery and disaster preparedness in areas of safety and well-being, physical and psychological health, and social aspects.

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ECONOMIC

Coordinate planning and implementation of economic and financial recovery in the Hinchinbrook Shire.

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ENVIRONMENT

Coordinate recovery of the natural environment.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Coordinate planning and implementation of housing, commercial and industrial buildings and structures, physical infrastructure (including power, water, telecommunications, transport) recovery in the district/region.

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RECOVERY OBJECTIVES

1. Emergency and Temporary Accommodation Support

2. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Clean Up Assistance (bulk waste collection and clean up support services)

4. Donations (coordination)

5. Communication (implement strategy)

6. Immediate Recovery Support (short term community support officer)

7. Ongoing Recovery Support (long term business/agriculture support officer)

8. Local School and Childcare Facilities (repair and re-open)

9. Community Recognition

10. Community Outreach

11. Economic Damage Assessment (data information advocacy)

12. Business Continuity Planning

13. Financial Assistance (advocacy)

14. Insurance (advocacy and assessibility)

15. Tourism (re-establish and promotion)

16. Infrastructure Damage Assessment

17. Power and Communication Restoration

18. Property Resilience

19. Water and Sewerage (resilience)

20. Infrastructure Repairs

21. Drainage (establish taskforce)

22. Infrastructure Resilience

23. Urban Planning (resilience)

24. Infrastructure Advocacy

25. Waste (implementing additional services)

26. Biosecurity (awareness and education)

27. Livestock (welfare management)

28. Pets (evacuation centre pet management plan)