Community Recovery
Ready Reserve Welcome Pack

OCTOBER 2023

Director-General's message

Our state sees more than its fair share of disasters, from cyclones to floods and bushfires. Almost every Queensland community has faced some type of natural disaster.

I've seen first-hand the difference our hard-working Ready Reserves make during these difficult, and often distressing, times.

These staff carry out a range of important roles, including working on the frontline at Community Recovery hubs or in outreach teams helping Queenslanders during their most vulnerable moments.

We are very fortunate to have such hard-working people in our department and across government, who are willing to leave their own homes and families to help others during times of disaster.

I appreciate having new staff putting their hands up to be part of this important team.

Thank you for joining the Ready Reserves and for committing to help people during some of the most difficult times they will face.

The many Ready Reserves I have spoken to have described the work as challenging, but very rewarding.

Enjoy your deployment and please stay safe and look out each other.

Clare O'Connor

Director-General

Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts

Contents

What is Community Recovery

The Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities, and the Arts (TATSIPCA) is the lead agency coordinating human and social recovery services when disasters such as floods, fires, cyclones and disease outbreaks occur in Queensland. The response includes deployment of the Community Recovery Ready Reserve workforce.

Community Recovery services help disaster-affected people by providing emotional support, material aid and financial assistance.

The Community Recovery Ready Reserve workforce of volunteers is comprised of public servants from across state government departments who have been approved for deployment. They help individuals and families with:

- practical information.
- referral to support services.
- access to financial assistance through grant applications.

Community Recovery occurs after the initial response phase of a disaster or crises and Ready Reserves are only deployed into a disaster or crises area when it is safe to do so.

Ready Reserve staff provide support to communities affected by natural disasters including bushfires, earthquakes, floods, cyclones, and severe weather events such as monsoon troughs. They also provide support to emergency incidents.

What is human and social recovery?

… it is the:

emotional, social, physical and psychological health and wellbeing

components of disaster recovery

Governance

The Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) is made up of a suite of documents that provide the platform for Disaster Management in Queensland.

As part of the QDMA, TATSIPCA is the lead agency for Human and Social Functional Recovery and Resilience under the QDMA.

Human and Social Recovery, informally known as Community Recovery is a multi-agency coordinated response. TATSIPCA works with local and state government agencies and non-government organisations to support Queenslanders to recover from natural disasters and crises through provision of emotional support, material aid and financial assistance.

Disaster activation stages

To ensure Community Recovery is ready to respond to any activation request from local government following a disaster, the following activities and actions are required at each activation level.

Alert

A heightened level of vigilance due to the possibility of an event requiring human-social recovery activation. The situation is actively monitored.

You will be sent an email if you need to take any specific action at this alert stage.

Lean forward

A heightened level of situational awareness and a state of operational readiness.

You may receive an email asking you to confirm your deployment availability and to confirm your deployment lead time. Please respond promptly, even if you can't participate!

Stand up

Resources are mobilised, personnel are activated, and operational activities commence.

You will receive an email requesting you log onto your profile page in the Ready Reserve Management System to indicate your deployment availability or otherwise and confirm your deployment lead time. Please respond promptly!

Stand down

Transitioning back to core business.

A broadcast email will be sent to all Ready Reserves and Agency Key Contacts advising them that the disaster impacted region has been stood down and deployments have ceased.

Your role as a Ready Reserve

As a member of the Ready Reserve in a disaster impacted community, you will be responsible for providing practical information, referrals to support services and assisting affected community members with access to financial assistance through grant applications.

If your deployment is to an emergency incident or crisis, you will provide referral support and information to community members and assist our partners with their provision of psychological first aid.

The role you play—whether it's on the front line or behind the scenes—is important to help Queenslanders get back on their feet. We provide services to people across a broad range of nationalities, religions and cultures and we require a range of skills from senior management to entry level positions.

Being part of the Ready Reserve gives you the opportunity to deliver much needed support and assistance to people in need, demonstrating compassion and understanding in trying times.

You will learn more about the government's role in Community Recovery while gaining new skills, knowledge, and experience. You will increase your own networks too.

Working with disaster-impacted communities can be tough but it's also rewarding.

Community Recovery work is dictated by demand. Not all Ready Reserves who are available are contacted for deployment. There may be several reasons for this including the need for a Ready Reserve to have specific experience to meet the needs of the work being undertaken in a disaster affected area.

You may be deployed to a disaster or incident-impacted area where you work directly with community members, or you may be asked to work in Brisbane behind the scenes in operational or corporate support roles.

Importantly, you need to be flexible, open to change and prepared to work additional hours to meet demand. Working on weekends and public holidays may also be required if your deployment period extends across those days.

Wherever possible, Ready Reserve members will be assigned roles in line with their skills and experience however it's important to be flexible. Every role is important for a successful recovery operation and regardless of the role you have been allocated, you will be helping the community.

And remember, while employed as part of Community Recovery, staff represent the Government as public officials and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. Expectations of staff behaviour is the same as for a public servant at any other time, with additional consideration, sensitivity and understanding for the community members in the impacted area.

Agency Key Contact

An Agency Key Contact is a representative from your department who is responsible for coordinating your department's Ready Reserve workforce.

They can assist you with Community Recovery advice and questions.

To find out who your Agency Key Contact is and their contact details, visit: www.forgov.qld.gov.au/service-delivery-and-community-support/help-community-disaster-recovery/contacts.

Training and capability

Community Recovery training will provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to perform confidently in a disaster or crises event environment. It is very important that you access and complete the Community Recovery training program as soon as possible after your nomination is approved.

Training courses are hosted in the department's Learning Management System, iLearn, and you must first be enrolled as a member of the Community Recovery Ready Reserve before you can access the program.

When your nomination is approved, you will be provided iLearn enrolment information, and you will be able to access your iLearn account from your workplace or from home at your convenience.

The training program is based on a tiered model of capability development and is organised across four levels of self-paced online learning:

1.   Induction and mandatory core skills

2.   Role specific

3.   Supervision, management and leadership

4.   Exercise and development.

The program also includes course content that is optional for you to complete. This additional learning is being offered to enhance your understanding of the Community Recovery program.

For those Ready Reserve members who are assigned to a role in the State or District Recovery Event Management teams, you will be required to complete the role specific training relevant to the functional work area you are assigned to.

It is also essential that you refresh your knowledge at the start of the event season that commences in October – April each year and participate in annual refresher training delivered virtually during October – November.

View details of the Community Recovery Ready Reserve training required on the For government website, or speak with your Agency Key Contact.

Community Recovery Ready Reserve Deployment Guide

When you are deployed, we will email you a copy of the most current Community Recovery Ready Reserve Deployment Guide.

The guide contains lots of information to help with your deployment including information about:

- Looking after yourself and others
- Training and capability
- Concerns and complaints
- Travel
- Accommodation and meals
- Timesheets
- Allowances and expenses
- What to take with you on deployment
- Community Recovery Briefings and debriefings
- Contact information.

Deployment roles

Deployment looks different for everyone. Ready Reserve members can work on the frontline or behind the scenes. Every role is critical to providing support to a community as they recover from a disaster or incident.

Ready Reserve members undertake roles within an impacted community through the District Recovery Event Management Team (DREMT) and in the central State Recovery Event Management Team (SREMT) located in Brisbane.

Recovery Hub Worker and Outreach Worker (event location based):

- Provide disaster specific advice to members of the public
- Based in a Community Recovery hub/Support Services location or undertake outreach visits to members of the public at their residences
- Complete referrals to other government departments and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)
- Complete financial assistance (grant) applications
- Verify disaster impact and damage at residences to support grant applicants.

Other Ready Reserve roles (Brisbane and regional based)

- Team Leaders and Managers (District and State Recovery Event Management teams)
- Training delivery
- Ready Reserve management
- Deployment, travel, and accommodation
- Grant administration
- Logistics
- Business support and finance
- Marketing and communication
- Reporting, intelligence, and planning
- Workforce support and wellbeing.

Speak to your Agency Key Contact to find out more information about the roles that are available and how to apply.

What to pack for deployment

As mentioned earlier, if you are being deployed into a disaster affected area or in response to a crisis, you will be provided with a comprehensive Community Recovery Ready Reserve Deployment Guide (PDF).

The guide provides detailed information about what you may need to pack depending on the type of disaster/crisis and your personal circumstances.

Deployment pack

- You will receive a satchel bag containing:
    - Sunscreen, hand sanitiser and insect repellent in a resealable bag
    - Raincoat (poncho) Pens and a notebook
    - Information sheets and timesheets
    - Your choice of a cap or broadbrimmed hat Two Community Recovery polo shirts Detailed deployment guide.

Travelling to your location

We will call you to confirm your availability for deployment and discuss transport.

Wherever possible you must use government funded transport options, e.g. government vehicles, train, bus, or air to travel to/from your deployment location. You can claim the costs of any eligible travel expenses you incur. Keep your receipts/tax invoices and attach these to your claim form, however in most cases the Mobilising team will organise your transportation along with your flights and accommodation.

If deployed, you will receive a confirmation of your deployment by email.

The advice will contain:

- The period of your deployment and your scheduled return date to your usual workplace
- Workforce support, wellbeing and safety information
- Community Recovery timesheet and claim forms

The email will be sent to your work and home email address. Please forward the email to your line manager.

Transport

Car

After confirming that no other transport options are available, seek approval from the Mobilising team to use a private vehicle.

To claim mileage allowance you must provide a copy of your comprehensive insurance policy/third party plus an employee indemnifying endorsement*.

*To claim mileage allowance you must provide a copy of your comprehensive insurance policy/ third party property damage insurance policy showing that indemnity was in place (please contact your insurance company for an endorsement indemnifying your employer against liabilities at law). If you are unable to obtain indemnity you may be eligible to claim fuel cost. Talk to the Mobilising team for advice.

Airport parking can only be claimed if no other transport options are available and driving and parking for the duration is more cost effective than other means of transport.

Plane

Your flights will be booked and paid for you and your confirmation details will be sent to your email. You will require photo identification to check in at the airport.

Taxi

A taxi can only be used for Community Recovery work when a departmental vehicle or public transport including the air-train is not available, there is a safety concern, or it is not cost effective. Again, talk to the Mobilising team for further information.

Meals breaks and allowances

Allowances

On Community Recovery deployment you will receive breakfast, lunch and dinner or you may be entitled to a meal allowance. All allowances must be approved and the allowance is only provided when:

- dietary requirements are unable to be met
- a prepaid meal is missed due to operational requirements
- you are performing recovery work in your normal workplace and meet the overtime requirements.

Breaks

You **MUST** have a 10-hour break between when you finish work one day and when you commence the following day.

You **MUST** also have a 30-minute break every five hours.

Meal options

Be aware that you may need to contribute to preparing team meals, or eat pre-packaged meals, depending on the disaster impact and the meal options that are available.

Dietary requirements

Ensure you have updated any dietary requirements in your Ready Reserve Management System profile. Please remember in a disaster it may not always be possible to cater for specific dietary requirements.

CID events and non-CID incidents

Members of the Ready Reserve team within Community Recovery, assist to organise and facilitate the delivery of human and social recovery support by providing information, connecting people with support services, and taking applications for financial assistance grants.

Historically, Ready Reserves were only deployed to disaster activated areas following a formal declaration of the disaster event and activation of the Critical Incident Entitlements and Conditions Directive.

These events are commonly known as a 'CID' event.

Ready Reserves deployed to a CID event are paid for their time including any overtime entitlements, in line with the above directive which is eligible for Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA)

However, as we have seen recently, Ready Reserves are now also deployed to 'non-CID' incidents and crises.

These are incidents that **do not have a formal declaration of a disaster and do not have the above directive activated**.

Non-CID incidents and crises include assisting with health responses such as the Community Vaccination Hubs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency related incidents like the Wieambilla shootings, Maryborough car crash and the Russell Island house fires.

Costs associated with wages and approved overtime for Ready Reserves deployed to a non-CID event or crises are not eligible for DRFA funding and are covered by the home agency who deploys the Ready Reserve, and the employment conditions are those noted within the Queensland Public Service Officers and other employee award.

Community Recovery timesheet

Find a digital version of the timesheet and examples of completed versions at: www.forgov.qld.gov.au/service-delivery-and-community-support/help-community-disaster-recovery/deployment/timesheets-pay-allowances

Team leaders must sign timesheets each day.

Don't forget! Before leaving the disaster area take a copy of your completed timesheet and leave the signed original in the disaster area.

Timesheet Checklist

- Complete your timesheet accurately each day and arrange for it to be signed by your team leader each day.
- Make sure you are using the digital timesheet wherever possible.
- Write legibly and sign the bottom of the timesheet.
- Record time in 15-minute intervals Include your USUAL travel time from home to work so excess travel time payments can be calculated.
- Include your employment status, salary class, payroll department, payroll number and ordinary work hours.

- Contact your Agency Key Contact for advice on completing your departmental timesheet and leave applications.
- If sick leave is taken while on deployment you must apply for it using your normal departmental leave process on your return and record it in your CR timesheet.
- If you wish to be credited with TOIL for additional hours worked instead of paid overtime contact your Agency Key Contact.

Further information about timesheets and allowances can be found in the Community Recovery Ready Reserve Deployment Guide (PDF).

Staying away overnight

Accommodation

The Community Recovery team will arrange and pay for your accommodation. Be aware that you may need to share accommodation with other Ready Reserves.

You may be accommodated in a community hall with multiple Ready Reserves or need to sleep on a camp bed or in a tent. Please ensure you pack appropriate clothing for these conditions.

Do not change any booking made on your behalf or charge any private expenses to hotel rooms.

On check out confirm that no ineligible costs have been booked to your room – this is particularly important if you have been sharing a room.

Return to Home deployments

Staff who are required to travel for Community Recovery, but return to their own home each night, may be eligible to claim costs they incur including:

- specific meal allowances
- other private expenses (e.g., taxi, tolls, parking) or
- costs associated with driving a private car (where this has been authorized.

Please keep receipts.

Forms to complete

Before leaving the disaster location, complete any relevant claim forms, for instance:

- Community Recovery Same Day Travelling Expenses Form or Overnight Travel Allowance Claim Form Community Recovery Vendor Master Data Maintenance Form (only once per event).
- Overtime Meal Allowance Form.
- You will need your bank account name, BSB and account number to complete the forms.
- An incidental allowance is paid to Ready Reserves for each night away from home as per Domestic Travelling and Relieving Expenses 9/11.

Critical incident leave

A standard deployment period for Ready Reserve members is nine days. Which includes travel time, and a break of two days fatigue leave following a continuous period of five days working in Community Recovery.

Fatigue Leave (critical incident/ special leave) is inclusive of weekends and public holidays.

Fatigue Leave should be applied for at the end of each deployment period. Contact your Agency Key Contact for more details about Directive 5/17 Special Leave.

If deployed for a back-to-back rotation you may be requested to take your two Fatigue Leave days in the disaster location. Ready Reserves who do this are entitled to meal and incidental allowances.

Use of a private mobile phone

Use of a privately owned mobile phone is acceptable for necessary work-related purposes. You must provide an itemised phone account that clearly identifies the work-related calls you made. Attach this to the same day or overnight claims form and claim as a private expense. You are NOT to record or receive any personal information from a disaster affected client on your personal mobile.

Code of conduct and privacy

While on deployment you are representing the Queensland Government and you are required to conduct yourself in accordance with the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service.

If it is found that you have engaged in inappropriate performance and/or behaviour you may be sent home early and the matter will be followed up on your return.

Familiarise yourself with the Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct policy.

You may also need to deal with personal or confidential information.

Please remember the importance of appropriate handling of confidential or private information.

Familiarise yourself with the Queensland Privacy Principles.

Health and safety

Working with individuals, families and communities who have been impacted by disaster or an emergency incident can be exhausting and traumatic for some people.

Your own wellbeing is very important. If you need to talk to someone, you can contact Benestar on 1300 360 364 to access their confidential support service.

Further information and key safety tips are provided at the time of deployment and you can learn more about workplace health and safety and caring for yourself and others on the For government website.

Emotional self-care

- Get adequate sleep.
- Eat regular nutritious meals.
- Use exercise and relaxation techniques to reduce tension in the body.
- Maintain contact with family/friends where possible.
- Talk to your team leader if you have specific concerns.

Key safety tips

- Pay attention to the well-being and workplace health and safety messages in your briefings.
- Follow all health and safety instructions.
- Ensure you use any personal protective equipment you are issued.
- Quickly seek first aid or medical treatment if required.
- Report any illness or accidents to your Team Leader/Manager.

Employee Assistance Services offer free confidential counsellors at your deployment location and on your return to work.

Report incidents, injuries or illnesses to your Team Leader and complete a Workplace Injury, Illness and Incident Report Form.

If you have any concerns relating to safety, well-being, performance or behaviour, email HRCommunities@CHDE.qld.gov.au

Be alert and report any hazards to your team leader and complete a Hazard Report Form.

Returning home

Community Recovery work is extremely rewarding but can also be emotionally draining and challenging for some people. When you're deployed you may face an unfamiliar environment away from home, family and your normal workplace and work very long hours in a pressured environment.

It's not always easy returning to the workplace and normal routines after an intense deployment experience in a disaster area. Some tips to get back in the swing of things:

- Organise a morning tea to share your experiences with your team who have been holding the fort in your absence.

- Be aware of any signs of stress or behaviours that are out of character for you.
- Contact your agency's Employee Assistance Service (EAS) if needed. The EAS is a confidential and voluntary short-term counselling service. For more details contact your Agency Key Contact.

If you experience any of the following, professional help is available through the Employee Assistance Service:

- Your sleep is disturbed, or you are experiencing intrusive thoughts or images.
- You are overwhelmed by your emotions and have no one to talk to.
- You are unable to do your work properly.
- You are experiencing difficulties in your relationships.

Ready Reserve post-deployment survey

Throughout your deployment, you will be kept informed through regular briefings.

Following your deployment, we will send you a post-deployment survey to be completed online.
The survey is not mandatory but if you do decide to complete it, your responses are completely confidential.

You may find it helpful as you work through the questions and reflect on and discuss your community recovery deployment experience.

The Community Recovery team uses the information and data to improve services and the overall deployment experience.

Ready Reserve reward and recognition

To acknowledge and highlight the important contributions the Ready Reserve makes to Community Recovery host the Community Recovery Ready Reserve Reward and Recognition Awards.

If you have been recently deployed and have observed a Ready Reserve display exceptional service to the community, and would like to nominate them for an award, visit our website to download a nomination form.