



KURANDA COMMUNITY  
IMPACTS OF T.C. JASPER  
THE STORY OF OUR COMMUNITY  
KURANDA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prior to December 2023, the Kuranda region faced significant socio-economic challenges that impacted its community's stability and well-being. The arrival of Tropical Cyclone Jasper in December 2023 brought unprecedented rainfall and devastating flooding, severely affecting homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure. As the wettest cyclone in Australian history, Jasper highlighted the region's vulnerabilities in disaster preparedness and resilience.

This report, produced by the Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre (KNC), captures the story of Cyclone Jasper and its profound effects on the community. Drawing insights from a community survey, direct feedback from residents, and grey literature—unpublished materials such as reports, organisational records, and personal accounts—it examines the immediate and long-term impacts of the cyclone. Additionally, it reflects on the extraordinary community response and outlines the steps necessary to build a stronger, more resilient future for Kuranda.

## Key Impacts:

**Housing and Infrastructure:** Severe flooding affected approximately 12 homes in Kuranda, with seven submerged entirely. Other homes and properties were also impacted by landslides, tree falls, and damage to roads like the Kuranda Range Road disrupted connectivity for weeks. Businesses suffered losses due to power outages and water damage during peak Christmas trading, compounding existing economic challenges.

**Community Well-being:** Prolonged power and telecommunications outages and isolation coupled with a lack of immediate access to supplies and medical services, heightened community stress. Mental health deteriorated significantly, with many residents reporting anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress.

**Community Response:** The Kuranda community displayed remarkable resilience and solidarity. Informal "mud armies," local volunteers, and the KNC provided critical assistance, from taking in neighbours, food and clothing donations to helping residents navigate grant applications.

Over 80 residents sought support from KNC's Community Connect workers, who facilitated emergency relief and distributed essential supplies through partnerships with various organisations.

**Challenges Identified:** Infrastructure: Prolonged power and telecommunications outages left many without communication during critical periods and roads being cut or damaged by flooding waters and landslides.

Barriers to Financial Aid: Complex and lengthy grant processes discouraged many from accessing support.

Mental Health Impact: Psychological effects of the disaster underscored the need for integrated mental health resources in disaster recovery.

**Path Forward:** As the frequency and intensity of natural disasters rise, the Kuranda region must build on its strengths and support community cohesion and volunteerism, while addressing systemic weaknesses. A collaborative approach involving government agencies, local organisations, and residents is essential to create a safer, more resilient Kuranda. By leveraging the lessons from Cyclone Jasper, the community can prepare to better withstand future challenges while fostering long-term stability and well-being.

*The Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre  
Management Board*

13 December 2024





KURANDA FAMILY DAY 2024

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre (KNC) acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land in which we work and pay our respect to elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia.

In particular we wish to acknowledge everyone who was willing to share their stories and information, especially Irene, Nathan, Premala and Roger for allowing KNC to share your stories.

KNC would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partner organisations, as well as the dedicated staff and volunteers. Most importantly, we wish to thank the entire Kuranda community for your unwavering support, remarkable resilience, and the enduring pride and passion you show for our region.

We also acknowledge the support and funding from the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and Arts.

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LANDSCAPE DAMAGE FROM WIND AND RAIN



BARRON RIVER



BUILDING COLLAPSE AT RUSSET PARK DUE TO FLOODING

## INTRODUCTION

Tropical Cyclone Jasper crossed the coast on 13th December 2023 as a Category 2 cyclone. The eye of the storm crossed the coast at Wujal Wujal about 300kms north of Kuranda. As Jasper moved inland the region was hit with persistent heavy rainfall resulting in widespread flooding throughout FNQ. In the days that followed more than a century of flood records were broken in rivers just outside of Cairns and the Daintree including the Barron River which flows right through the Kuranda region.

By the 18th December 1.9 metres of rain had been recorded at the Kuranda Railway station, surpassing the previous record of 1.1 meters. The impacts of that amount of rain were devastating to many homes in Kuranda.

Specific data for Kuranda is difficult to access but the KNC assisted families from 12 homes severely affected by flooding. Seven of these homes were completely submerged, with water reaching the roofs, including three two-story houses. Additionally, three homes experienced flooding on the entire bottom level, while two others had water levels up to knee height throughout the property. There were also significant impacts from fallen trees and landslides. Residents felt the impact before the flooding occurred with one family evacuated immediately after the cyclone had crossed due to a tree falling in the middle of their rental property making the home unlivable.

## BACKGROUND ON KURANDA REGION

Kuranda, often referred to as the “Village in the Rainforest,” is a renowned tourist destination in Queensland, Australia. Its proximity to the Wet Tropics of Queensland, specifically the World Heritage-listed Barron Gorge National Park, adds to its appeal. This scenic village is nestled within the Mareeba Shire Council Local Government region, situated about 28 kilometers from Cairns and 37 kilometres from Mareeba. Kuranda is famous for its lush rainforest environment, scenic views, diverse wildlife and rich cultural heritage, making it a popular tourist destination.

The Kuranda postcode includes several satellite communities such as Myola, Koah, Mona Mona, Speewah, Russet Park, Mantaka, Oak Forest, and Kowrowa. This region is rich in cultural heritage, with deep ties to Indigenous history, and is significantly impacted by the ongoing effects of colonization. The 2021 Census data places the Kuranda regions population at 4,826 (ABS, 2024). Despite its cultural depth, the community faces numerous socio-economic challenges.

One of the key issues is homelessness. While the 2021 rate of homelessness in Queensland stood at 443.2 homeless persons per 10,000 people, the rate in Kuranda was notably high at 236.1 homeless persons per 10,000 people (QLD Treasury). This statistic reflects the broader socio-economic difficulties in the area, including limited access to affordable housing, employment opportunities, and support services.

These factors contribute to ongoing concerns regarding the well-being and stability of the local population, especially given the area’s vulnerability to both historical and present-day disadvantages.



JUNE 2023  
POPULATION 4,989



OF THE  
POPULATION  
ARE OVER 65YO



MEDIAN AGE  
48YEARS



JUNE 2024,  
MEDIAN RENT FOR A  
3 BEDROOM HOUSE  
\$510 P/W



UNEMPLOYMENT  
RATE

12.7%

of Kuranda Residents identified as Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

25.1%

of Kuranda residents were living with long term health conditions.



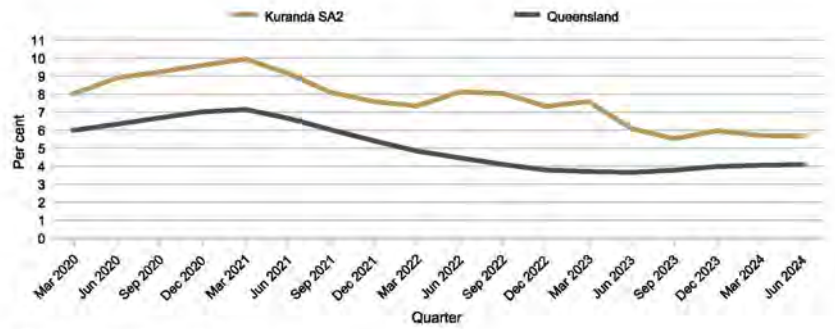
17.7% of residents undertook volunteer work compared to Qld of 14.1%



\$32,344 was the total personal median annual income.

9.4%

of families considered to be living on a low income compared with Qld average if 6.9%



(a) Based on a 4-quarter smoothed series.

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, *Small Area Labour Markets*, various editions

Figure 1, Kuranda Unemployment Rate Source: Qld Government Statistician's Office.

The median age for Kuranda was 48 years in 2023, it is predicted to increase to 50.2y in 2046, demonstrating the aging population. While services are limited 4.8% of residents require assistance with a profound or severe disability and 20.9% of families with children under 15 years of age and no parent employed in Kuranda SA2 (Qld Government, 2024).

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a national initiative that collects data on children's development before they start school. It assesses five key domains of early childhood development that are crucial predictors of a child's future health, education, and social outcomes. These domains are:

- Physical health and wellbeing
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Language and cognitive skills
- Communication skills and general knowledge

The AEDC categorises children as being "on track," "at risk," or "developmentally vulnerable" in each of these domains. Children who are identified as developmentally vulnerable display significantly lower than average abilities in the respective domain.

In the 2021 AEDC assessment, 31.7% of children in the Kuranda SA2 (Statistical Area Level 2) were found to be developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains in comparison the rate was 13.2%, highlighting concerns regarding early childhood development in the region (Qld Government, 2024).



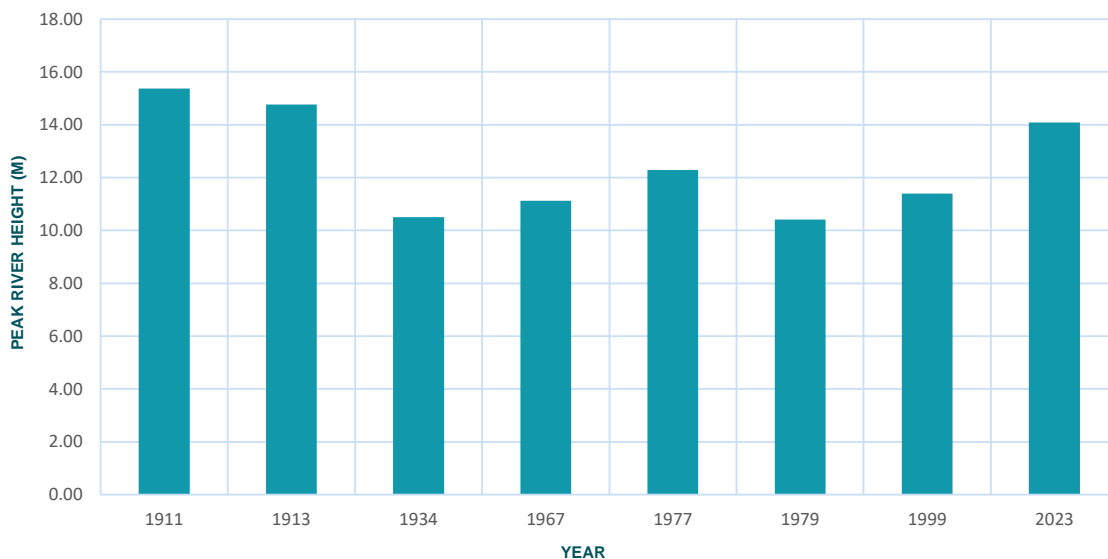
# KURANDA EXPERIENCES DURING JASPER

As previously mentioned, Kuranda-specific data can be challenging to gather, much of the following information is based not only on grey literature but on residents' experiences and reports provided to the KNC. This firsthand feedback from community members offers valuable insights into the local challenges and needs, particularly during extreme weather events and periods of isolation. Residents' accounts provide a clearer picture of the impact on daily life and the community's adaptive measures, filling gaps where formal data may be limited.

While not isolated to Kuranda, the Mareeba Shire Council(MSC) received over 900 calls, with 185 requests for emergency assistance, during the aftermath of the tropical cyclone Jasper and associated rainfall (MSC, 2024) Kuranda SES had 169 requests for assistance between the 12-26 December 2023. This is a very high volume for a small volunteer group requiring assistance from other groups across the Tablelands and Brisbane (Kuranda SES, personal communication, 2024). Fallen trees on powerlines and houses impacted the community caused a major impact on our community.

While low lying regions such as Cairns did not receive major flooding until the 17<sup>th</sup> December (CRC, 2024) many Kuranda residents had power lines down, trees had impacted houses and roads and landslides were also an issue. Rising flood waters in several areas cut off many people from being able to access main roads and seek assistance. Myola recorded a river level peak at 14.09 meters at 8am on the 17<sup>th</sup> December, the highest flood level in more than 100 years and the highest peak at this location since 1913 (Weatherzone, 2024).

**PEAK RIVER HEIGHT BARRON RIVER AT MYOLA**



**Figure 2: Peak River heights over 10m at Myola (Created from data at Lim et al & SaFCA)**

The waters were also flowing extremely fast and were filled with dangerous debris making flood boat usage almost impossible. Some of the people who did experience severe flooding had to self-evacuate. This meant staying with neighbours who had houses on higher ground. A number of those who had to evacuate only had time to take a couple of crucial things and the clothes they were wearing. The rapid fast-rising floods left people unprepared. While most people had prepared for a category 2 cyclone, no one had expected the ferocity and continued rainfall that led the National Emergency Management Agency to declare Jasper to be the wettest tropical cyclone in Australian history (NEMA, 2024).



KURANDA RANGE . P. Credit MAIN ROADS



BARRON RIVER. P. Credit MAREEBA SIRE



DAMAGE TO KURANDA WEIR. P. Credit CLEAN Co

Russett Park, a satellite community of Kuranda, faced an unexpected isolation period after the bridge over the Barron River flooded, cutting off access for an extended seven days. Normally, this bridge goes underwater during the wet season, and residents are accustomed to being cut off for around three days. Many households are equipped with generators due to frequent power outages caused by downed power lines or weather events. However, the prolonged isolation tested their preparedness, as no one anticipated a full week without access.

Residents coordinated with the Mareeba Shire Council to arrange helicopter delivery of essential fuel for generators. This fuel was crucial not only for general household needs but also to power life-saving medical equipment.

Along with those residents who experienced damage due to high flood waters, homes were also damaged by fallen trees and landslides. There was widespread damage from leaking roofs as well as flooding down driveways running into homes making several driveways impassable. One driveway that was so damaged from the level of rain it caused a car to sink into it, making a 2km long driveway only accessible by foot. There were multiple reports of landslides on residents' properties as well as local roads that are still being repaired by council 11 months after the event. Several homes were deemed unlivable not only from flood waters but also from fallen trees. This led to many calls for people in need of emergency accommodation. The region was already experiencing a shortage of housing prior to the event so the loss of permanent rental properties as well as homeowners needing temporary rentals placed an extra burden on the already struggling housing market. Several residents decided to leave the area altogether and there are still some residents who are living in rental properties as they've been unable to return to their homes.



PHOTOS CREDIT: KURANDA VILLAGE

## ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Local businesses also faced significant challenges due to power outages and water damage. The Kuranda Range road is an important road corridor to the Tablelands for freight, business, tourism and emergency services, it is the areas main connection to Cairns. It suffered extensive damaged, 11 months since the cyclone it is still reduced to one lane with traffic lights in two locations. The Range Road was closed for 5 consecutive days following Cyclone Jasper with 35 landslips recorded, one that has almost wiped out one lane of the highway (The Express Newspaper, 2023). Main Roads crews worked to get repairs done as quickly as possible but the monsoonal rainfall of early 2024 exacerbated landslips along the range road making it increasingly difficult. Specialist supply issues and wet weather delays saw works completed to allow traffic to safely use the range road by 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 following 37 nights of full road closures (qra.qld.gov.au).

Many business owners (especially retail) had difficulties in attending their business premises due to road closures. As a result, mould had taken hold and ruined thousands of dollars of stock. This all happened at peak Christmas trading time. Kuranda's economy is heavily reliant on tourism and Christmas spending can sustain many people though the quiet season from January to April. Several retail businesses have closed since Cyclone Jasper which took place after several years of economic difficulties stemming from COVID-19. A number of businesses operate from home and were also

impacted by damage to property, loss of electricity and telecommunications and isolation.

As well as road closures the popular Kuranda Scenic Railway which normally brings annual patronage expected to exceed 400,000 passengers to the village was not operational until 23<sup>rd</sup> February and didn't return to a full timetable until April. The damage to the Kuranda Range rail line was significant with major washouts, significant landslips, uprooted tree, and debris on the tracks in more than 60 sites along the railway (Queensland Rail, 2024).

*"The recovery of the range was no easy feat, with eight track machines used and more than 50 employees and contractors engaged in the recovery effort to remove 5400 cubic meters of spoil and more than 400 fallen trees."* Queensland Rail CEO Kat Stapleton, 2024.

One local business that has been majorly affected is the Kuranda Riverboat. The Riverboat provides tours of the Barron River and while they were able to park their boat safely all their other infrastructure including mooring was destroyed. It was more than six months before they were operational and ongoing repairs to the Kuranda Weir which drops the water level has meant that they had a period of not being operational in October/ November.

Many people in the region are underinsured. A 2021 study published in the journal Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space. Indicated that Kuranda is under insured by between 17.4% to 30.4 (The Conversation, 2024).

## COMMUNITY RESPONSE

In addition to the numerous community groups and organisations that provided assistance, friends, neighbours, and local residents quickly stepped up to support those affected by the severe weather event. One group of locals cleared 35 kilometres of fallen trees from dirt roads so locals can access help and supplies (ABC, 2023). Once the community learned about the impact on Kuranda, the response from individuals eager to help was remarkable. Informal groups, often referred to as “mud armies,” formed to help clean out mud and debris from damaged homes. Local businesses generously donated food and drinks for the volunteers.

Jade Falvo, a dedicated community member, established a donation hub where residents could drop off various items for those who had lost everything. She also coordinated closely with donation hubs in Cairns, collecting essential goods like food, clothing, and household supplies. Thanks to her efforts, the hub was even able to provide Christmas presents to several local families; Jade and her children wrapped and delivered gifts on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The community also rallied together to collect a significant amount of cleaning products through donations from residents and businesses in Mareeba and Kuranda. The SES was able to use and distribute these supplies as they assisted various areas in the region with washouts. Additionally, community members organised a New Year’s Eve live music event at the Billabong, raising nearly \$7,000 to address specific needs that donations hadn’t covered.

Jade Falvo, who played a crucial role in coordinating these efforts, received a certificate of recognition from Project Recognise and the Hon. Warren Entsch MP, Federal Member for Leichhardt, along with many other volunteers, in acknowledgment of their contributions following Cyclone Jasper. Her experience made her an ideal candidate for the role of Community Connect worker when funding became available in February.



KNC & NGOONBI COMMUNITY OUTREACH DECEMBER 2023



LOCAL DONATIONS AND SUPPORT, JADE FALVO



KURANDA MARKET STALL SUPPORTING HUNGRY & TIRED WORKERS

## COMMUNITY CONNECT

The KNC is a not for profit, incorporated Association funded by the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts . It also receives funding from the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services. The organisation is managed by a voluntary Management Board elected annually by the membership of the organisation KNC assist all members of the community who seek support including individuals, families, and the community in general.

Following the emergency, the KNC became a crucial hub for community members seeking help after losing their homes and belongings. Displaced and impacted residents urgently needed access to food, clothing, and other essentials. Additionally, a round of government grants was made available for those affected, leading to a surge in people seeking assistance with the application process. KNC also collaborated with community organisation such as the Kuranda SES and Pony Club to hold satellite support events so people could access the internet via a mobile system.

The Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and Arts understanding the vital role Neighbourhood Centres play in small communities after a disaster, granted funding for Community Connect Recovery Workers to be able to work at local Neighbourhood Centres and assist those that had been impacted. At KNC, over 80 people sought assistance, many reaching out multiple times throughout the six-month contract. The support provided included food and fuel vouchers, the replacement of household items ranging from toasters to fridges, as well as furniture, bedding, clothing, and cleaning supplies. Community Connect Workers collaborated with emergency relief agencies and a dedicated group of community volunteers who contributed through donations. Several agencies played a crucial role in supplying material assistance, vouchers, and food donations.

- Anglicare
- Cairns Lions Club
- Centacare Cairns
- Department of Housing
- GIVIT
- ICAN – Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network
- Kuranda SES
- Kuranda Horse & Pony Club
- Mareeba Community Centre
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Member for Barron River, Craig Crawford
- Ngoonbi Community Services Indigenous Corporation
- Rent Connect Homes and Housing
- Rotary Cairns
- Seventh Day Adventist Church Mareeba
- St Vincent De Paul

KNC Community Connect Workers also worked closely with the Disaster Recovery team at the Mareeba Shire Council, the Mareeba Community Centre and the Mareeba Community Connect Workers.

There were five Grants made available by the Queensland Government for those who were impacted by Cyclone Jasper and the following floods.

- Emergency Hardship Assistance
- Essential Services Hardship Assistance
- Essential Household Contents Grant
- Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme
- Structural Assistance Grant



IMPACTED HOME TOP OF THE RANGE



PONY CLUB, KNC AND NGOONBI COMMUNITY OUTREACH DECEMBER 2023

Many found that applying for the three larger grants was quite an involved and lengthy process, in some cases the people who had sought assistance were at the point of giving up.

*“As part of our role, we really encouraged our clients to continue the process and see it through. For one of our clients who saw knee-deep water surround their home it was worth seeing the process through as they were successful at receiving the Structural Assistance Grant along with the other smaller ones.” Jade Falvo, 2024.*

This process took almost nine months to finally be approved and as of November 2024 some clients have just had their carpets replaced in their bedrooms and are currently waiting for the rest of the repairs to commence.

As of August 2024, the following grant amount has been received by Kuranda residents.

Locality	Received	Finalised	Value of Grants Paid	People Assisted*
KURANDA	1,326	1,302	\$353,091.00	1,142

Figure 3 (Source: Department of Communities Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and Arts)

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

To better understand the experiences of the Kuranda Region during Cyclone Jasper and the subsequent flooding, an anonymous survey was conducted. A total of 123 individuals participated in the survey between February and May 2024, offering insights into the community’s response and the impact of the disaster. In addition to the survey responses, many community members also shared their personal stories and experiences through Community Connect workers, providing further valuable information on how the cyclone and flooding affected their lives.

These efforts aimed to gather firsthand accounts to better assess the challenges faced by the community during and after the natural disaster, and to inform future disaster preparedness and recovery strategies for the region.

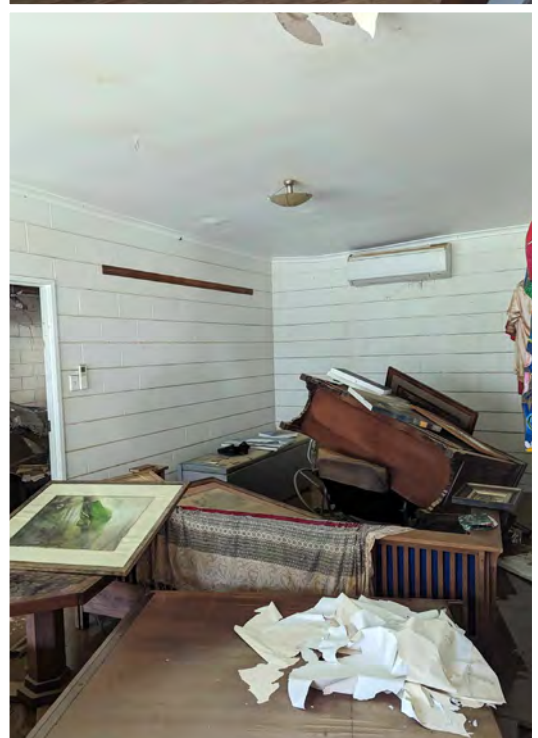
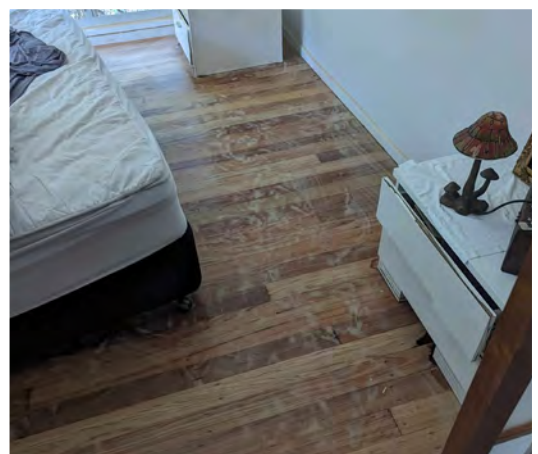
## SURVEY SUMMARY

The survey data from Kuranda and its surrounding communities provides a comprehensive snapshot of the impacts felt during and after Cyclone Jasper and the resulting floods. Residents from various areas, including Myola, Russett Park, Speewah, Kuranda Village, and Oak Forest, reported on their experiences, highlighting the severe disruptions to daily life and the challenges in accessing resources. With 95.1% of respondents reporting being affected by the cyclone and flooding, the data underscores the widespread impact of this natural disaster.

Key findings include:

- **Power and Communication Loss:** The majority (83.8%) of residents experienced prolonged power outages of over 48 hours, and 72.6% were without telecommunications for a similar period.
- **Mental Health Impact:** The average mental health rating among respondents dropped from 8.1 before the cyclone to 6.5 afterward.
- **Housing and Living Conditions:** Approximately 9.4% of respondents had to move into temporary or emergency housing, with reports of mould issues and structural damage, including water ingress and tree damage to homes. Additionally, some residents, especially those in Russett Park, reported prolonged isolation and limited access to essential supplies.
- **Grant Accessibility:** Only 35.8% of respondents received government grants, with many citing difficulties in the application process. A quarter of those who applied for assistance needed help navigating the process, suggesting an opportunity for streamlining support mechanisms in future disaster responses.
- **Community and Volunteer Support:** A significant portion of assistance came from friends, neighbours with 39.8% of respondents indicating they received help from friend/neighbour and 14.8% from the SES. The informal mud armies and community groups and other Community resources like the KNC, Ngoonbi, Mulungu and other services also provided assistance.
- **Post Event:** A number of respondents highlighted physical and mental health concerns and also noted concerns around mould.

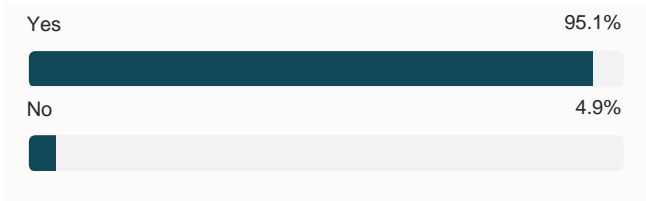
This data emphasises the need for robust emergency preparedness, improved mental health support, and streamlined access to recovery assistance for residents in regions like Kuranda. Additionally, the importance of clear communication channels during such events is evident, as residents noted the lack of accessible emergency information, especially before Cairns was impacted. Addressing these areas can help build community resilience and better prepare for future events.



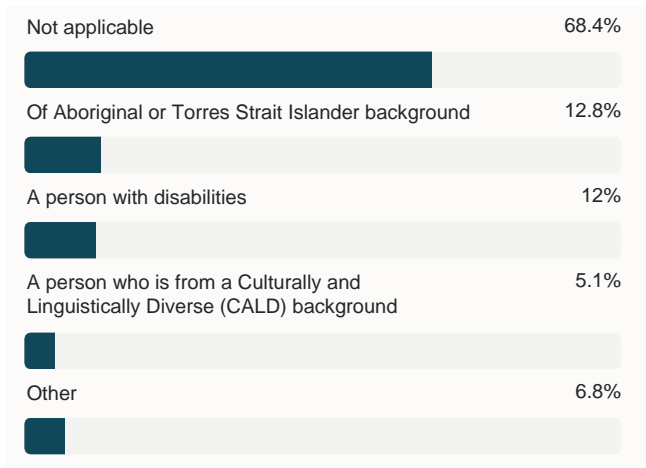
PHOTOS: IMPACTED HOME TOP OF THE RANGE

# SELECTED RESPONSES FROM SURVEY

## If you were impacted by Cyclone Jasper event?

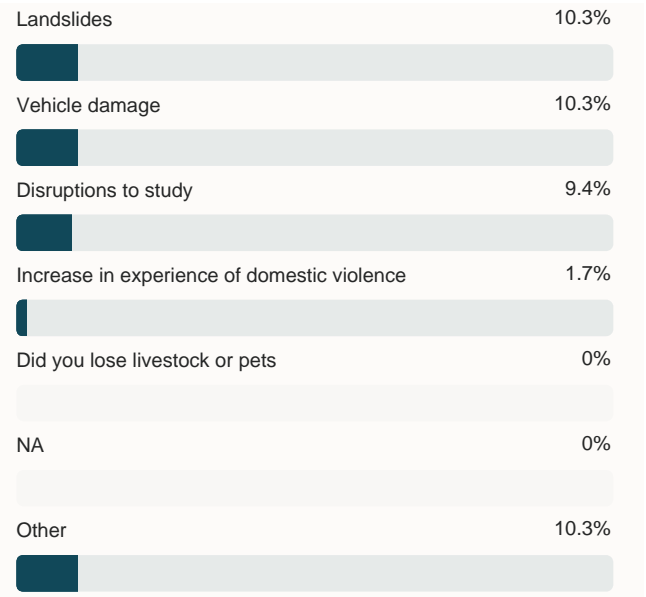
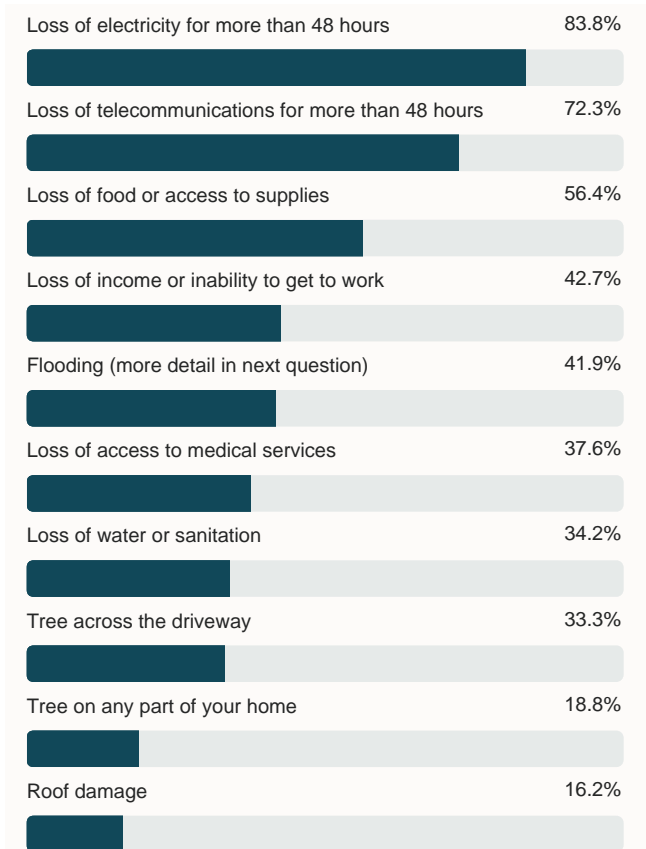


## I identify as



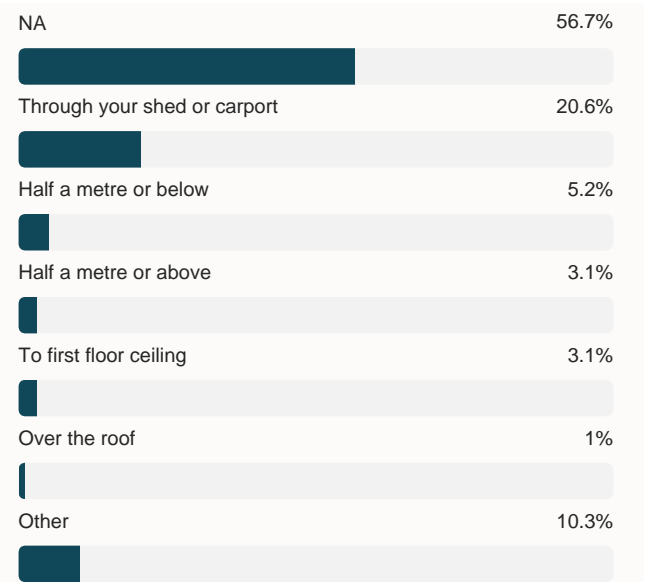
The majority of respondents (65.8%) own or have a mortgage.

## Respondents were asked 'If you were impacted by Cyclone Jasper event?'



Under 'Other' respondents listed burn out of electrical goods, especially fridge and freezers and water damage due to leaks.

## If you had water through your home, what level did the water reach?



Under 'Other' respondents listed damage from water leaks as well as damage to workplaces. One respondent commented.

*'I am elderly and live with my son who has a disability. Had to be evacuated by family due to loss of power and essential services.'*



When asked 'If you would like to you can provide further information below'

The immense amount of rain caused the soil profile to be comprised and many tall heavy rainforest trees toppled over, taking out a number of surrounding trees and massive chunks of land/earth/soil causing landslide down to Warrill Creek.

Family cleared our driveway of trees. Dirt part of our driveway has been eroded away and we are saving to have it repaired. Telstra phone was restored mid-January of 2024, and the ADSL Internet a week later. No mobile phone coverage on property.

My family and I have been so grateful to all the help we have received since Jasper. Moving from place to right now just wanting to find a home to be stable again.

If there is an opportunity to give feedback to authorities - we had a battery powered radio, but there was insufficient information provided during the event, it only went to emergency broadcasting once Cairns was affected on Sunday.

Was flooded in at Russett Park for 6 days, no power, lost food and had no internet for some or most of these days, lower room under house got water through it minimally, house was full of mould.

It's almost five months and we are still out of our home and insurance has not settled claim.

We were flooded in for 7 days and no power for 8 days!

Phone almost immediately had issues, going down and not available so unable to adequately contact Cairns Hospital (partner had surgery on day of cyclone) and my partner was unable to contact me. No power for several days and no support contact.

Have been accommodated by neighbours/friends and family. Now living in a caravan on a friends property until we can have it moved to our property at Myola.

Lost washer & drier due to water ingress under house - 1 bedroom ceiling- several large trees but consider ourselves fortunate compared to others.

Insurance has declined to pay for the damage to my roof and home. I am in the process of getting a quote to have it repaired, but I don't know how I am going to pay for it. Community Connect workers have been helpful and provided additional info.

Being cut off because of the roads and having no power which meant not enough and being on my own with 4 young kids was really scary.

Had a tree crush my caravan and annex nearly killing me and also nearly crushing my car parked out front.

Our Business, the Kuranda River Boat, has been severely impacted by the flooding on the river. We are still unable to operate due to loss of infrastructure, damage to the river and the failure of the weir embankment resulting in Cairns major flooding.

We have lost our home completely. We were never told that this could occur when we bought this place by the agent. We have lost all of our worldly possessions and everything else. Currently we are in a rental for ????

Russett Park was completely cut off for days, the residents got together and organised a chopper to deliver fuel for generators. We were going to get a chopper for food the next day as we had run out of food but the water went down and we got out.

Driveway washed out, powerlines down, trees down, septic flooded.

I was flooded in for nearly 2 weeks.

Mould is an issue.

Had the neighbours to stay with 5 dogs and 2 cats and 5 extra people.

House went under. Deemed unlivable. Been in temporary housing first. Struggle to access support services.

We are still cleaning up inside and out, and lots of things still don't work or function. We still haven't had the manpower to move all the trees, or to take the burnt-out electrical goods away.



KURANDA SES

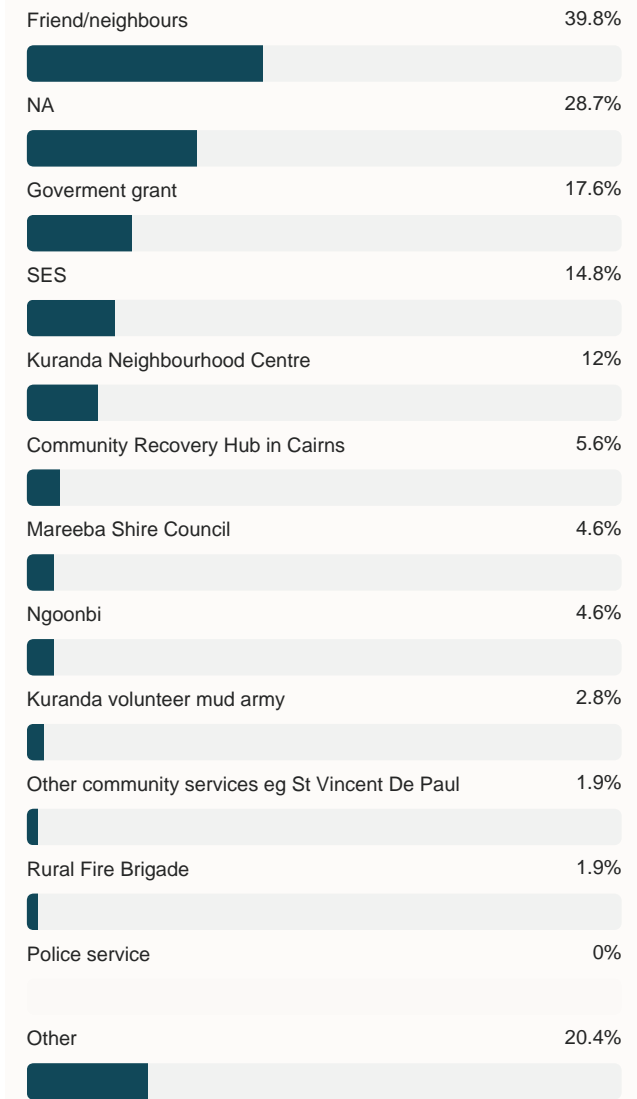


PHOTO:KURANDA SES & KURANDA RURAL FIREFIGHTERS OPERATION RUDOLF 2023



LOCAL DONATIONS AND SUPPORT, P. Credit JADE FALVO

## Did you receive help from anybody?



Many of the respondents also mentioned support from services and individuals including Mulungu Aboriginal Corporation, Jade Falvo, Suzie Grinter, Emma and Allan, and untold other Kuranda community members .

## Have you been significantly impacted health wise from this weather event?



Would you like to tell us more about any health issues experienced since the flooding event? (selected responses)

I suffer bad PTSD and anxiety attacks, can't be around flooding waters I have had anxiety attacks of the flowing water or rising.

We ended up becoming sick for over 3 weeks. Emotionally it has wrecked me and I feel so overwhelmed as we still have not even started to clean up.

Extreme symptoms of anxiety and depression experienced due to isolation. Loss of partners income due to workplace damage from cyclone.

Exhaustion and depression due to being unable to keep up physically or mentally with what needed and still needs to be done, compounded by cancelled medical appointments and such when Kuranda Medical Centre and / or the Pharmacy had to close (staff cut off or no electricity or both).

I was badly affected by mould in my home and had a sinus infection that spread to my lungs. I needed antibiotics to get better.

Impact on mental health, depression. Wanting to leave area.

My husband has been severely impacted as he is disabled.

Stressed and depressed.

Mental Health.

Respiratory issues from mould.

Infections, increase in symptoms due to lack of med services and medication.

Mental stress from the proximity of the landslide to the house.

Ongoing excess (unpaid) work involved in restoring workplace.

I was stranded with a broken arm for 4 days before floodwaters dropped and I could get to hospital.

I got a bacterial infection from flood waters and have suffered with mental health issues. Currently seeing a Counsellor for this.

Some ongoing anxiety with power outages and driving up and down the range.

Prolonged mental, emotional and physical stress

We ended up becoming sick for over 3 weeks. Emotionally it has wrecked me and I feel so overwhelmed as we still have not even started to clean up.

Ongoing excess (unpaid) work involved in restoring workplace.

Older persons physically exhausted cleaning up.

Stress of potential fallen trees, land slips, road erosion etc.

Had very bad anxiety for a few weeks.

Mental health caused physical issues from stress.

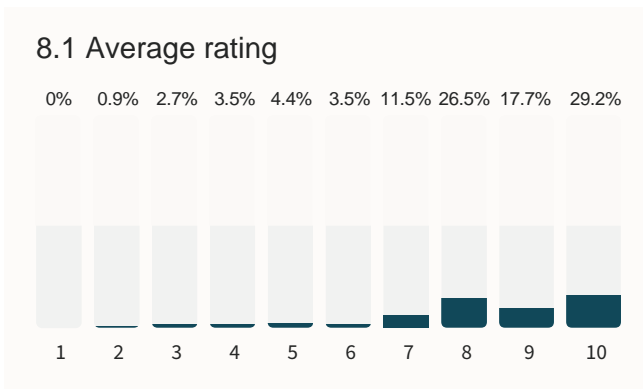
Anxiety and fear.

Mental health due to no stable housing situation and no access to support in this area.

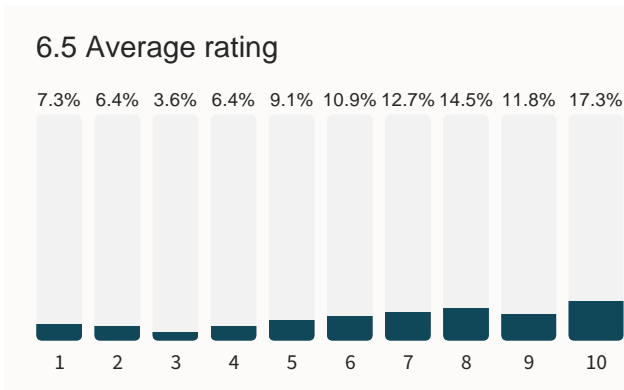


KURANDA FAMILY DAY 2024

### How would you rate your mental health before Cyclone Jasper?

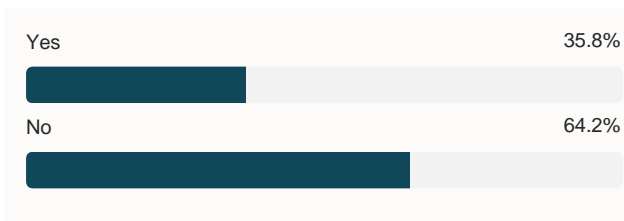


### How would you rate your mental health out of 10 post Cyclone Jasper and the flooding (1 very poor - 10 excellent)?

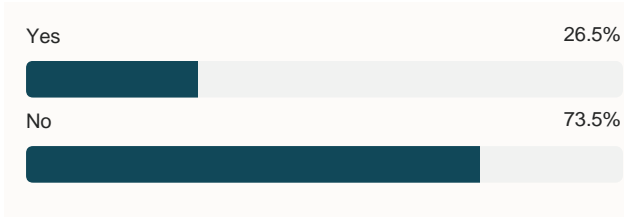


KURANDA RANGE, P. Credit ERGON

### Did you receive any government grants?



### Did you require assistance to apply for government grants?



LOCAL DONATIONS AND SUPPORT, P. Credit JADE FALVO



BARRON FALLS ROAD P. Credit



Kuranda Riverboat dock. P. Credit : MSC



MSC

## Respondents were asked 'Is there any further comments or information you would like to provide?'

*We lost power for 7 days and as a consequence lost food. Tried to apply for a grant/assistance but gave up, seemed no assistance available and whole process difficult and confusing.*

*I appreciate others had a far worse experience. No phone or WiFi for 3 days or electricity for 5 days. My generator was such a necessity. A little bit of sunshine would go a long way.*

*Radio needed to provide regular updates on flood levels; numbers to get emergency assistance; road closures; info on phone and data outages etc as well as just practical tips for being without power etc.*

*I could not get the forms to work for the government assistance and I wasn't sure they would apply to us but we lost marquees and other goods food etc as we live outdoors our lifestyle was and still is impacted though we release we are not as effected as a lot of other people and we did hours of helping other people and their food effected homes and properties*

*Telstra services for phone and internet must be improved, they are nonexistent when you need them the most. Not good enough.*

*I have found the community amazing up in Kuranda. However the government and the Shire are not interested in what has happened here in Kuranda at all. I am not relying on them at all.*

*I was unable to get to my shop in Kuranda for a whole week so the loss of trade right before xmas has severely affected our business and being able to get through the quiet season.*

*Although community spirit is high in Kuranda, there is ongoing impact on many people's finances, housing, work hours increase, ongoing service interruptions, increased range closures etc that have a cumulative effect on stress levels and mental health.*

*Thank heaven for our community. We stuck together and helped each other.*

*Community came together as best it could.*

*Thanks for doing this survey.*

# REGIONS RESILIENCE

The Australian Disaster Resilience Index (ADRI) evaluates disaster resilience by examining factors that reflect a community’s ability to prepare for, absorb, and recover from natural hazards (Coping Capacity), as well as its capacity for learning, adaptation, and problem-solving (Adaptive Capacity). These two broad categories of resilience are further broken down into eight key themes: social characteristics, economic capital, emergency services, planning and the built environment, community capital, access to information, social and community engagement, and governance and leadership.

For each of these themes, indicators are gathered and organised into sub-indexes, using publicly available data from sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Urban Infrastructure Research Network, Productivity Commission, Geoscience Australia’s National Exposure Information System, Local Government Annual Reports, Torrens University’s Public Health Information Development Unit, and the Department of Communications and the Regional Australia Institute.

These theme-based sub-indexes are then grouped into the broader Coping Capacity and Adaptive Capacity sub-indexes, which are ultimately

combined to produce the overall ADRI. Kuranda has been assessed as low on the ADRI. Low is defined as

*‘Communities in areas of low disaster resilience may be limited in their capacity to use available resources to cope with adverse events, and are limited in their capacity to adjust to change through learning, adaptation and transformation. Limitations to disaster resilience may be contributed by entrenched social and economic disadvantage, less access to or provision of resources and services, lower community cohesion and limited opportunities for adaptive learning and problem solving.’ (ADRI, 2024)*

It lists Kuranda’s disaster resilience strengths as

- Social Character
- Community Capital
- Social and Community engagement

It also lists Kuranda’s Disaster Resilience Barriers as

- Planning and the built environment
- Economic capital
- Emergency services
- Information access
- Governance and leadership

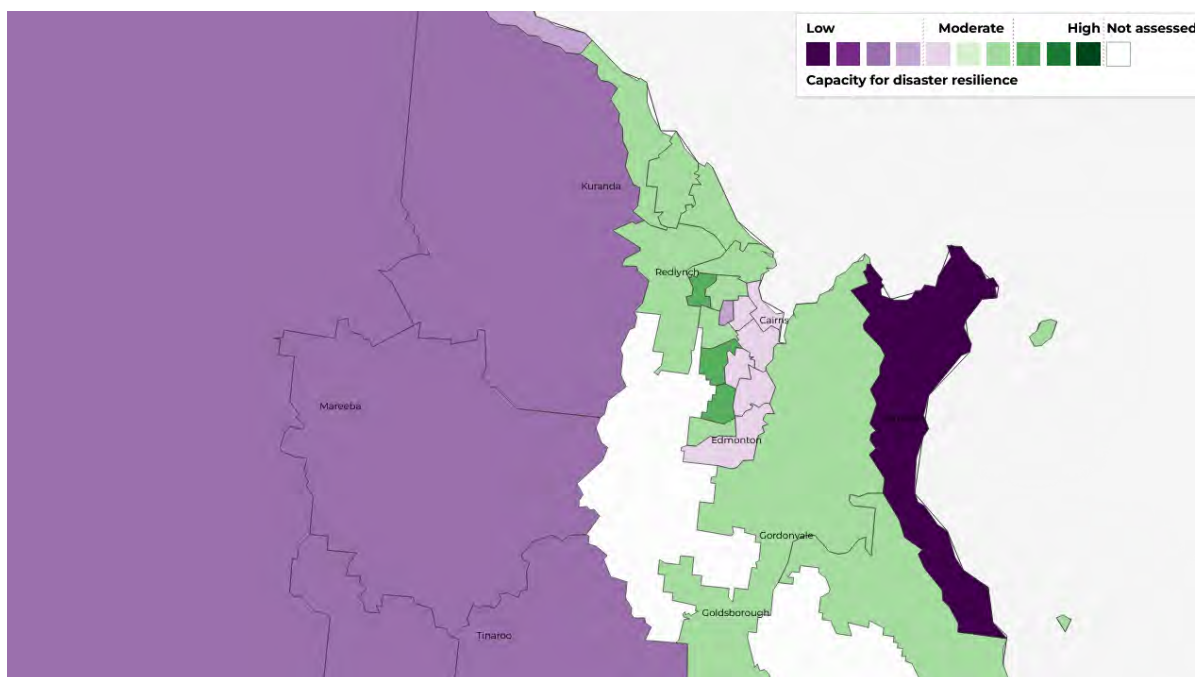


Figure 4 Regions ADRI. (Source: ADRI)



LOCAL DONATIONS AND SUPPORT, JADE FALVO



MONA MONA ROAD. P. Credit MSC

As the 2024/25 wet season approaches, many residents are feeling increasingly anxious about the potential for future disasters and severe weather events. The survey revealed a decline in mental health among the respondents; while 29.2% of respondents rated their mental health as “excellent” before the cyclone and flooding, only 17.3% maintained this rating afterward.

The Black Dog Institute underscores the mental health impact of natural disasters, stating that for every individual who suffers a physical injury from a natural hazard, 40 others are likely to experience psychological effects. Supporting data indicates that between 20-50% of people exposed to unpredictable and extreme weather events may immediately face heightened anxiety, depression, PTSD, sleep disturbances, and suicidal thoughts. Additionally, 10-20% of individuals may develop post-traumatic stress disorder in the years following such events (Black Dog Institute, 2024). This data emphasizes the critical need for mental health support and resilience-building within the community as they prepare for another potentially challenging wet season.

As indicated by AECD data, 31.7% of children in the Kuranda SA2 2) were found to be developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains. Thriving Kids in Disasters (TKiD) report indicates that regional children are more vulnerable to the impacts of disasters and building the resilience and wellbeing of children in terms of disasters “requires place based, flexible, long-term, smarter investment in a multifaceted service system to respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of kids and their families in DM and beyond” (TKiD report, p.g 10).



Worldwide, kids are recognised as the population group most at risk during disasters.



A child born in Australia in 2020 will experience four times as many heat waves, three times as many droughts and 1.5 times as many bushfires as those born in 1960.



Of all Australian states and territories, Queensland is the most prone to disasters, having experienced over 100 significant events since 2011.



Disasters are increasing in frequency, with Queensland experiencing an unprecedented 13 events over the 2023/4 season.



100% of Queensland's Local Government Areas have been activated under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements since 2021, with 1.6 million children and young people impacted.



Kids in rural and regional areas are up to eight times more likely to experience a natural disaster than their city counterparts. In remote areas it is up to 16 times.

Source: TKiD, 2024

# STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA, 2022) recognises that Queensland is the most disaster-affected state in Australia, having experienced 97 significant disaster events since 2011. With predictions indicating an increase in such events, it is essential for Queensland to adopt a coordinated strategy to better understand, manage, and reduce disaster risks, while continuously improving its preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

In 2022, every region across Queensland was part developing a regionally coordinated blueprint to strengthen disaster resilience. 14 resilience regions are identified and Kuranda sitting within Mareeba Shire falls under the Hinterland to Gulf Regional Resilience Strategy along with Etheridge and Croydon Shire. The strategy is built upon four key objectives:

- 1 we understand the potential disaster risks we face
- 2 we work together to better manage disaster risk
- 3 we seek new opportunities to reduce disaster risk
- 4 we continually improve how we prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters

Figure 4 Regional Strategy four key objectives (Source: Hinterland to Gulf Regional Resilience Strategy)

The report outlines a strategic pathway identified through regional engagement and collaboration with the local governments and stakeholders. The blueprint for coordinated resilience action for the Hinterland to Gulf region, is designed to bolster resilience and to achieve regional goals.

Note: Each strategic pathway is mapped to its corresponding objective, referenced by coloured triangles.



KURANDA LOCALS



P. Credit KURANDA VILLAGE



Barron River on calmer days



	Resilient society	Resilient towns and infrastructure	Resilient transport	Resilient economy	Resilient environment
Doing same	Valuing the character of our towns and communities underpins our region's strength and vitality. <b>2</b>	Supporting reliable and consistent services and networks: from health to energy, water and telecommunications for growth and stability. We rely upon quality regional and state networks to prosper. <b>3</b>	Building Prosperity and redundancy through roads. Driving vast distances is in our DNA. Heavy transport in mining, stock movements and transit through our region infused with tourists is an uneasy mix. Strategic investment can drive prosperity and safety. <b>1</b>	Thriving small business. We focus on expanding on local reputation and opportunities in tourism. <b>2</b>	Caring for our landscape which underpins our prosperity and future. From pristine rainforest to hidden treasures and vast breathtaking savannah lands. Rainfall and flooding is part of its enrichment. <b>2</b>
	Building inclusive and embracing culturally and linguistically diverse communities. We welcome new residents, cherish the old and our youth and we want them to stay in the place that is home. <b>1</b>	Proactive improvements in disaster management understanding and resources. <b>4</b>	Maintaining physical connection through roads is our lifeblood. The region is an axis for freight and supply chains and keeps us connected to vital services. <b>3</b>	We support local business and the region's economy with the right skills and tools to prosper. <b>2</b>	Support to continue providing excellence in environmental stewardship. <b>4</b>
Doing better	Connecting to services that support our communities and townships despite distance and isolation. <b>2</b>	Enabling prosperity and a diversified economy that plays to our strengths. <b>4</b>	Increasing safety and developing pathways for betterment is essential for our road network. <b>3</b>	Seeking new opportunities in value-add production, tourism, carbon farming, mining and our scenic places to support new industry in a diversified economy. <b>3</b>	Continuing to learn and share how the natural systems work. Our people and our visitors are safe when they understand our natural systems. <b>1</b>
Doing different	Looking for ways to attract more people to our region. <b>3</b>	Strong economy through innovation and reimagined infrastructure and technology. <b>4</b>	New connections and growth through local and regional transport infrastructure and services. <b>1</b>	Expanding income streams and diversifying our economy. <b>4</b>	Enhance our environmental assets through collaboration and bespoke programs. <b>4</b>

Figure 4 (Source: Hinterland to Gulf Regional Resilience Strategy)

## FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Moving forward and preparing for future events, it is crucial to draw lessons from the experiences with Tropical Cyclone Jasper. Building resilience and improving disaster response in the Kuranda region requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. Reflecting on the community's experiences during the flooding, we believe resilience can be significantly enhanced through the following strategies:

- ◆ Develop comprehensive individual disaster plans, especially for vulnerable groups, including the elderly and people with disabilities.
- ◆ Increase public awareness campaigns about the importance of self-reliance during extended periods of isolation, focusing on essentials like food, water, fuel, and medical supplies.
- ◆ Provide resources and training on mould mitigation and health impacts associated with mould.
- ◆ Foster collaboration between local governments, not-for-profit and community organisations for disaster and resilience planning.
- ◆ Improve infrastructure especially telecommunications, roads and electricity.
- ◆ Planning for our young people and increase support for seniors.
- ◆ Improved mental health supports.



UNDER BARRON BRIDGE AT KURANDA



Walking track along Barron River December 2023



LOCAL DONATIONS AND SUPPORT, JADE FALVO

## CONCLUSION

Cyclone Jasper and the subsequent flooding in December 2023 had a profound impact on the Kuranda region, exposing vulnerabilities in infrastructure, housing, and community preparedness. The record-breaking rainfall and its devastating effects on homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure highlighted the urgent need for robust disaster resilience strategies.

Despite these challenges, the response from the Kuranda community showcased remarkable resilience and community spirit. Residents came together to support one another through informal networks, community-led initiatives, and collaborative efforts with local organisations. The role of the social services, local government, along with the dedication of volunteers and emergency services, was instrumental in providing essential relief and fostering hope during the recovery process, especially in the initial response.

However, the event underscored several systemic issues that need to be addressed, including housing shortages, telecommunications failures, infrastructure issues, underinsurance, and barriers to accessing financial assistance. The mental health toll on residents further emphasises the importance of integrating psychological support into disaster recovery plans. Moreover, the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters, as seen across Queensland, demand sustained investment in resilient infrastructure, disaster education, disaster support for children and community preparedness programs.

As Kuranda and its surrounding communities prepare for future challenges, the lessons learned from Cyclone Jasper provide an opportunity to build a stronger, safer, and more connected region. Through continued collaboration between government agencies, community organisations, and residents, the Kuranda region can enhance its capacity to withstand and recover from future disasters, ensuring the well-being and stability of its population for generations to come.

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# APPENDIX 1 CASE STUDIES

## Aunty Irene: Kuranda Village

(in her own words as told to Eleanor Gilkerson)

Freak Floods recorded in 1977 March 9th

**Background:** Tropical Cyclone Otto, 6 – 10th March 1977, moved from the Gulf into the Coral Sea near Cape Tribulation and made landfall again near Bowen. There was no significant wind damage, however it severely aggravated already serious floods between Cairns and Ingham which resulted in \$6 million crop and property damage. Heavy seas destroyed 1200m of the esplanade at Machans beach, Cairns and Hay Point. Kuranda was significantly impacted by these flood waters. Small creek systems such as Jum Rum creek were completely flooded and Helen (Irene) Hunter and her family were significantly affected being evacuated from their home.

Aunty Irene remembers: *In 1977 my family and I experienced the worst flood we have ever seen in Kuranda. Our house at the time was situated at 2 Barron Falls Road and we rented it from the Department of Housing. I remember waking up to find Gaynor floating on her mattress in the house which alerted us to the flood waters. I stepped out of my bed into knee deep water. This flooding occurred in the early hours of the morning which was very frightening. After this flood the house was deemed unlivable and was torn down. We moved to up town Kuranda after this. In 1986 a new brick home was built on the land at 2 Barron Street quite a lot higher and we were very happy to move back to our original property. This was close to the Kuranda State School where I worked for many years.*

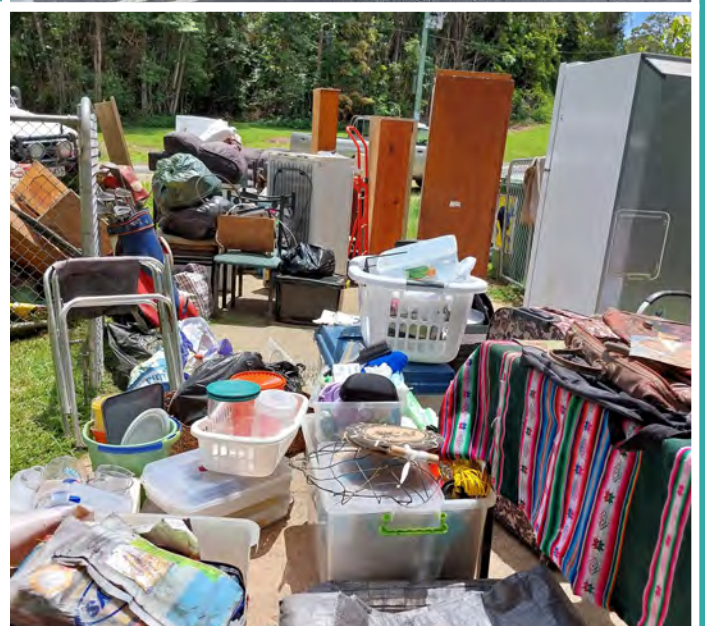
*On the 15th of December 2024 we experienced Cyclone Jasper which caused significant rain and wind in the Kuranda Village. Once again, I relived the experience of the 1977 floods. I would never have imagined that the flooding could have been higher than 1977, but it was.*

*Our brick home was purposely build further back from the Jum Rum Creek to ensure we would be well out of the flood levels of 1977. On the 17th of December 2024 I was*

*higher ground to ensure we did not lose all our lifelong memories. Unfortunately, the amount and height of the water damaged all our furniture and household items. The power had to be turned off immediately as it became a very dangerous situation with the amount of water in the home which was above some power points in the house. All our sewerage and water were affected. Around our garden we have large clumps of very tall and thick 6-metre bamboo growing which were blown over and there was lots of other debris such as fallen branches from the winds all around the yard. It was extremely difficult losing all our food and festive season supplies along with all our other household items and furniture. I was fortunate that the Kuranda Neighborhood Centre was very helpful and supported me with vouchers for food etc. My dear friend and colleague from my days of working at the Kuranda State School has donated to me and my family a lot of furniture and other household items to support us with moving back into our home. We have been very grateful for the support we have been given.*

*Luckily for us our home has been able to be saved with some renovations and replacement of electrical wiring. This is the second new kitchen the house has had to have installed within the past couple of years.*

*I live with significant health issues which were exasperated by the stress of this event. Luckily for me my family and friends were there to support me through. I was living with my son in Kuranda since the 17th December 2023 – 10th April 2024. I am so pleased to be finally able to move back into my house.*



T. Irene's house during the flooding. L Irene and her Eldest Son. R. Damage household goods

## Nathan: Kowrowa

(in his own words as told to Jade Falvo)

Hello my name is Nathan, I'm 53 year old Australian male. I've been in Kuranda for about 8 years now. I live out on Oak Forest Road which is in Kowrowa. It's mainly housing commission and larger rural properties. It's a mix of affluent people and people who aren't so affluent. We're a little community that gets cut off quite often, we don't have buses or other public transport. I have a car so I can get out myself unless one of the creeks floods.

In December 2023 we had cyclone Jasper come through, we weren't expecting much from it and knew it was going to hit up north of us so we wouldn't get much damage from it. We didn't do much in the way of prep, we had food and fuel for the generator. The night of the cyclone wasn't too bad. We lost power which is fairly normal. The next day it didn't look that bad, we started clearing the driveway so we could get up to the road. It looked like it would be a couple of days before Dismal creek would be down and we could get out. Then we had a big rain event that followed from the cyclone. That was intense, we had over 80mm of rain in 24 hours. The river is about 15-17 metres below the property where we are and it came up to within half a metre of running into our back yard, it fully inundated another house on our property where N & F live. N woke me up at about 8 o'clock on the morning the flooding had started and said he could see water coming up through the jungle outside his place. He didn't really start getting anything out until it was already starting to come into the house. The water came up really quickly. At one point we stuck a stick in the ground and after 30 minutes it was under 30cm of water. It was very intense watching the water coming up. I was quite worried and anxious as I have a lot of good quality stuff. I'm on the pension so I've had to really save and sacrifice to buy quality stuff. I have things I use for creative pursuits also, like audio gear and cameras and drones and my computer. I started getting really worried about it, so I started packing it all up into my car to move to my landlords place who lives at higher ground up the road. I was unloading my car there in the dark because the power was out. There was a block of wood bolted to the floor keeping the door open and I didn't see it, I was carrying my things (luckily only clothes) I tripped on the wood and fell forward and took the full weight of my fall onto my arms and broke my left wrist (which I found out later was in three places) I thought about it and thought I should really be at the hospital. I had to then drive up to the road in my car as we are in a mobile black spot. No NBN, no mobile

service, it's been that way for 8 years on a property where we have 3 profoundly disabled people. We also have a single Mum and my other housemates are all elderly. When the power goes out we have no phone reception so if there's an emergency you have to get in your car and go up to the road to call an ambulance. I was on the phone to the ambulance and reception kept dropping out so I was backwards and forwards on the phone about 4 times. I had to keep calling them back. Eventually we realised we weren't going to be able to do a video call with inadequate phone reception I had. This could be resolved with one repeater on our side of the river but we are lacking the mobile repeaters on our side of the river. I've been onto many different politicians about our mobile blackspot. Then to have basically a perfect storm of failures of infrastructure all at once and then to have an injury of top of that I was feeling absolutely furious at the time. I was there with a broken arm and the rain was getting harder.

Eventually someone in Brisbane said we need to sort you out an evac, we will get you to a hospital stand by. Then they got back to me and said unfortunately half an hour ago whoever is coordinating the disaster recovery said no more flights. 30 minutes before there were flights but I had spent over an hour back and forward with emergency

services. So, ***I'm stuck behind flood waters with no hope of helicopter rescue with what I assumed was a broken arm.***

I got it splinted as best I could to immobilize it with bits of wood that I broke off from furniture and electrical tape. Not ideal. I was in pretty huge amounts of pain, all I had was Panadol. That level of suffering along with already being so angry and frustrated was just too much and went on for days. I was feeling very unable to cope so I ended up putting my sleeping gear in my car and driving up to my landlords place and sleeping on the front lawn. I didn't want to impose so I slept in my sleeping bag.

I spent most of the next couple of days I just isolated myself from everyone. I broke my arm on the Saturday and 1 o'clock on the Tuesday I woke up and it hadn't been raining, it was still blacked out. The ambulance arrived and I went out and met them. They asked what was going on and they had other people who were also injured up the road that they had to go and see so they gave me some pain killers which was Panadol and Nurofen. They told me the road was open and able to get out so I drove myself to Mareeba hospital. They did say they would take me but anytime I've been to hospital I get left there with no way to get home. That's why I wanted my own car.

My biggest takeaway from this is that there always seems to be plenty of money for everything else except for the basic infrastructure to help the people who need it the most and who have the quietest voices when it comes to speaking up about things not being right.



## Roger: Top of the Range

(in his own words as told to Jade Falvo)

Cyclone coming so you get prepared. All the paperwork and important documents I put in my car, food in my car, all that sort of stuff in case I had to vacate. The cyclone turned out to be a fizzer but it was the rain that came after that was the biggest thing. The Barron River came up and came up and I thought ok, it's been there before so wasn't too worried. I've lived in this place for 12 years. The guy we bought it off told us it's flooded before and come up to the front lawn. It had done that last year. It just kept coming and within half an hour it was coming into my house which I just couldn't believe it. At the time I thought it was too late to do anything. I walked up to the top of the road and the guy across the road was standing there and asked me what I was doing. I said my house is flooding so he said alright lets go down and see what we can get. He had a heap of plastic boxes so we were just throwing stuff in these plastic boxes. I ended up saving a heap of stuff like books that were important, clothes and some other stuff but it just came up so fast and within an hour it was all through the house. We just had to sit back and see what happened.

I stayed with a friend down the road for 2 weeks. He was really good. We went back after the water had gone down, the water was pretty clean so we just had all the fine sand left through the house. It was good it wasn't mud.

There was a bit of damage to the house but it was still solid and standing there. Kitchen cupboards were wrecked, every door in the house was ripped off, all the sliding doors and screen doors, cupboards in the bedroom. My bed smashed through the window. I had a carport full of tools that went under. My really heavy fireplace moved which I couldn't believe. We spent a week afterwards retrieving stuff from along the side of the river. Even a couple of weeks ago (September, 2024) I found aluminum ladder down the river that I'd forgotten about.

***The humorous part about it all was all my socks and undies hanging in the trees as you walk down the river.***

I did loose a lot of stuff but also saved a lot. The SES came down to see if they could do anything but there wasn't much they could do really. The house is pretty much back to normal now, I've done the work myself, all except for the kitchen that I still need to replace. You guys were great, you managed to get me a new fridge and a bed and vacuum cleaner. I can't thank you guys enough, that was brilliant. It was certainly an experience and hopefully it won't happen again this year. It's amazing to look at the river now and you just can't imagine it would come up that high. The community was just so brilliant and you guys here at KNC really helped so many people.

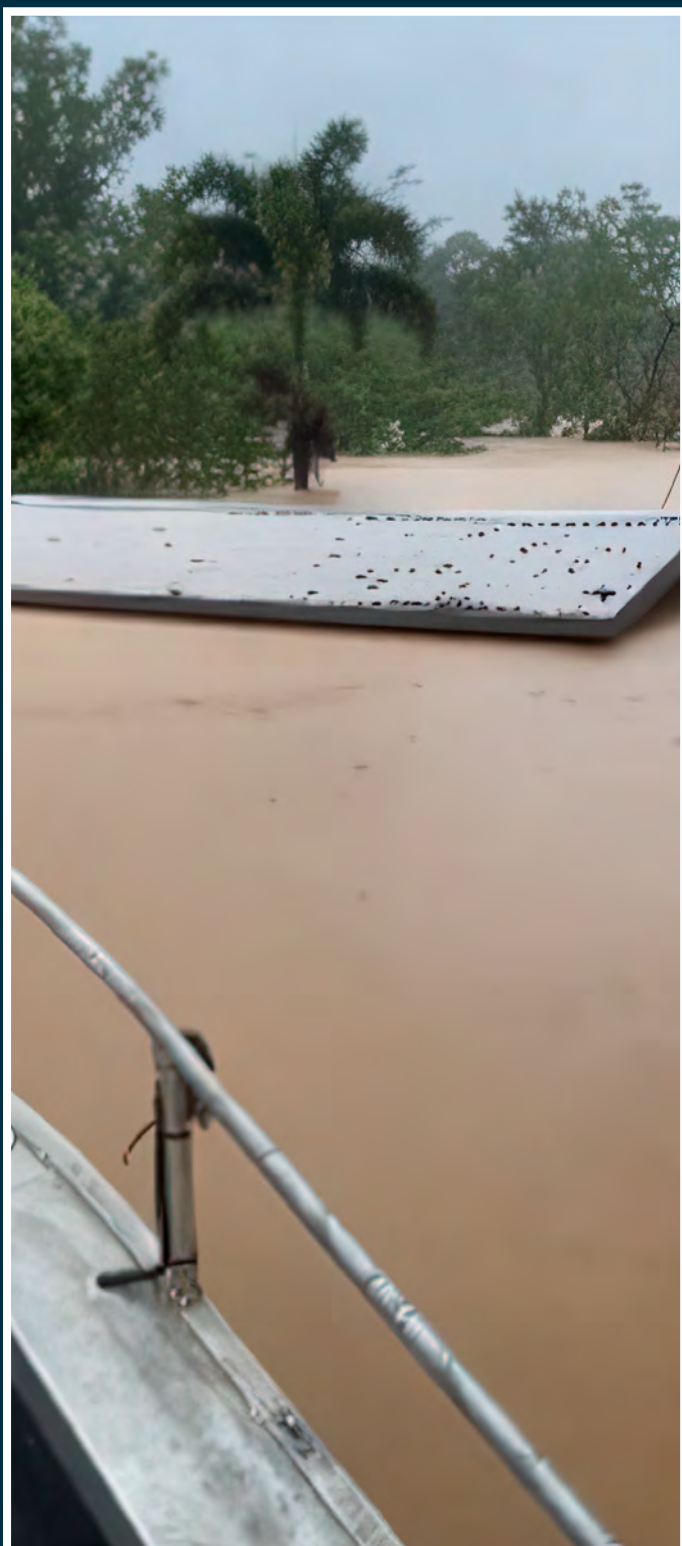
Seems to be plenty of money for everything else except for the basic infrastructure to help the people who need it the most and who have the quietest voices when it comes to speaking up about things not being right.



Top Rogers belongings including his fridge washed downstream. B. Rogers house R. further damage by flood waters

## Premala: Oak Forest

(in her own words as told to Jade Falvo)



THE ROOF OF PREMALA'S HOME

So it was the Cyclone that was occurring. We actually packed everything upstairs because we had been told by our neighbours that it had flooded before. We left and stayed at one of our neighbours house about two and a half kilometres away, that was on Wednesday so we were at their place for a few days. On Saturday we thought everything had settled so we came back, I started cleaning and putting things away. We didn't bring the chickens back yet. We brought the cats back with us. My husband was outside doing things and suddenly came in and said I'm not

happy, so we went out and started staking where the water levels were. In half an hour he came back in and said we have to leave. We picked up the cats and everything that we could, everything was still upstairs so we thought it would be ok. We packed a suitcase with a few things, I didn't even take any extra clothes because my husband said we had to leave now. At about 6pm we went to see our neighbours and tell them to leave. My husband went back on the Saturday night to turn off the electricity and it had flooded further.

The next day on Sunday my husband went back to have a look, he could only get so far but he could see the water was at the window of our top floor which is 5 meters off the ground. Later on Sunday we all went again as our neighbour brought his boat out and wanted to see if we could get anything. We found our fridge floating down the river so we managed to grab it and get some cat food out of it. They came back and said they couldn't do anything more.

On Monday our neighbour went out on his boat again and took a video and we could see that the water had reached right to the second-story roof. It's a strange experience watching something like that, it's very surreal. By Wednesday the water had come down to the first floor. This was not like flash floods. It was about Friday before my husband managed to get to the property. To see everything that I treasure, books I've had since a child that were handed down to me, carpets that have been given to me and paintings I've travelled throughout the world collecting, I can't get them back. I can't get the pictures of my brother back or my father. I had all our family pictures. Pictures of friends from university are all gone. The loss of your house, the loss of your property, the loss of things that make you who you are, the loss of things that make your identity, I've had to put all that aside because I had cats and chickens that needed me and also my work that I've committed too. So, I put all of my energy into that. Now we are in October and we're about to walk back into

another wet season and *I don't want to be here for it. I'm terrified of it. I don't want to see that much rain again. I feel like it's destroyed something in me that I won't ever get back.*

The community was amazing, they helped us so much. I was gobsmacked with the help we received and between Jade and Suzy you furnished our new place. We got a place to live and I'm still not ready to let it go yet. We didn't receive any grants or funding because we had insurance but there was supposedly money available that we didn't know about. The community was so amazing in the beginning but there's not been enough support moving forward to encourage people to want to stay in Kuranda after such a disaster. We still can't do the work that is required for our house that flooded because the causeway

# APPENDIX 2 SURVEY QUESTIONS

## Q.1 What area of Kuranda did you reside in during cyclone Jasper?

- Kuranda Village
- Speewah
- Discovery Drive
- Top of the Range
- Fairylands Road
- Myola
- Mantaka
- Russet Park
- Oak Forest
- Mona Mona
- Koah
- Cardina Estate
- Other

## R.2. Were you impacted by Cyclone Jasper or the flooding event?

- Yes
- No

## S.3 (Note due to a technical issue no question was answered for 3)

## Q.4 How many people lived in your home during the weather event?

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3-4
- D. 5+
- E. Other

## Q.5 Are you renting, own your own home or live in a shed/shack caravan, tent or van

- A. Renting
- B. Own/mortgage your own home

- C. Shed or shack
- D. Caravan
- E. Tent or camper
- F. Other

## Q.6 I identify as

- A. A person with disabilities
- B. A person who is from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background
- C. Of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
- D. Not applicable
- E. Other

## If you were impacted by Cyclone Jasper event?

- Loss of electricity for more than 48 hours
- Loss of telecommunications for more than 48 hours
- Loss of food or access to supplies
- Loss of income or inability to get to work
- Flooding (more detail in next question)
- Loss of access to medical services
- Loss of water or sanitation
- Tree across the driveway
- Tree on any part of your home
- Roof damage
- Landslides
- Vehicle damage
- Disruptions to study
- Increase in experience of domestic violence
- Did you lose livestock or pets
- NA
- Other



**Q.8 Were you urgently evacuated? If so, for how long?**

- 3 or more
- 1-2 days
- 2-3 days
- Other
- NA

**Q.9 If you had water through your home, what level did the water reach?**

- NA
- Through your shed or carport
- Half a metre or below
- Half a metre or above
- To first floor ceiling
- Over the roof
- Other

**Q.10 Was your home deemed unlivable or unsafe as a result of the flood/cyclone?**

- Yes
- No
- Other

**Q.11 Since the cyclone have you had to move to temporary or emergency housing?**

- Yes
- No
- Other

**Q.12 If you would like to you can provide further information below**

**Q.13 Did you receive help from anybody?**

- SES
- Rural Fire Brigade
- Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre
- Ngoonbi
- Kuranda volunteer mud army

- Friend/neighbours
- Other community services eg. St Vincent De Paul
- Government grant
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Police service
- Community Recovery Hub in Cairns
- NA
- Other

**Q.14. Have you been significantly impacted health wise from this weather event?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

**Q.15 Would you like to tell us more about any health issues experienced since the flooding event?**

**Q.16 How would you rate your mental health before Cyclone Jasper?**

(1 very poor - 10 excellent)

**Q.17 How would you rate your mental health out of 10 post Cyclone Jasper and the flooding**

(1 very poor - 10 excellent)?

**Q.18 Did you receive any government grants?**

- Yes
- No

**Q.19 Did you need assistance to apply for a grant?**

- Yes
- No

**Q.20 Is there any further comments or information you would like to provide?**

**Q.21 Would you like one of our team to contact you?**



KURANDA COMMUNITY  
IMPACTS OF T.C. JASPER  
THE STORY OF OUR COMMUNITY  
KURANDA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE