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2010–11 Queensland floods

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A series of [floods](#) hit [Queensland, Australia](#), beginning in December 2010. The floods forced the evacuation of thousands of people from towns and cities.^[2] At least 90 towns and over 200,000 people were affected.^[2] Damage initially was estimated at around [A\\$1 billion](#)^[3] before it was raised to \$2.38 billion.^[1] The estimated reduction in [Australia's GDP](#) is about A\$40 billion.^[4]

Three-quarters of the council areas within the state of Queensland were declared disaster zones.^[5] Communities along the Fitzroy and Burnett Rivers were particularly hard hit, while the Condamine, Ballone and Mary Rivers recorded substantial flooding. An unexpected [flash flood](#) caused by a thunderstorm raced through Toowoomba's central business district. Water from the same storm devastated communities in the Lockyer Valley. A few

2010–2011 Queensland and New South Wales floods



A woman trapped on the roof of her car awaits rescue during the Toowoomba flash flood

Date	December 2010 – Jan 2011
Location	Much of central and southern Queensland including Brisbane , Rockhampton , Emerald , Bundaberg , Dalby , Toowoomba , Roma , and Ipswich
Deaths	38 dead and 9 missing (presumed)

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days later thousands of houses in Ipswich and Brisbane were inundated as the [Brisbane River](#) rose and [Wivenhoe Dam](#) used a considerable proportion of its flood mitigation capacity. Volunteers were quick

to offer assistance, and sympathy was expressed from afar. A large mobilisation of the Australian Defence Force was activated and a relief fund created. The head of the recovery taskforce was [Major General Michael Slater](#). The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (CEO was Graeme Newton) was formed to coordinate the rebuilding program beyond the initial task force, and a Commission of Inquiry was established to investigate all matters related to the floods.

The 2010–11 floods killed 38 people in Queensland.^[6] As of 26 January, an additional nine people were missing.^[7] The state's coal industry was particularly hard hit. The Queensland floods were followed by the [2011 Victorian floods](#) which saw more than fifty communities in western and central [Victoria](#) also grapple with significant flooding.

Deaths 38 dead and 9 missing (presumed dead)
Property damage A\$2.38 (\$2,389,225,876) billion; 200,000 people were affected.^[1]

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Background [\[edit\]](#)

Brisbane experienced major flooding in [1893](#) and [1974](#) as the Brisbane River broke its bank and inundated low-lying areas. Towns including St George and Theodore had dealt with [major flooding](#) earlier in 1996. The floods were a result of heavy rainfall caused by [Tropical Cyclone Tasha](#) that combined with a [trough](#) during the peak of a [La Niña Modoki](#) event.^[8] The 2010 La Niña Modoki weather pattern, which brings wetter conditions to eastern Australia, was the strongest since 1973.^{[9][10]} This La Niña event caused a prolonged event of heavy rainfall over Queensland river catchments. Record or near to record [sea surface temperatures](#) were recorded off the Queensland coast in late 2010.^[11] December 2010 was Queensland's wettest on record, with record high rainfall totals set in 107 locations for the month.^[12] The state average rainfall level of 209.45 millimetres (8.25 in) exceeded the previous record of 200.1 millimetres (7.88 in) set in

1975.^[13] 2010 was also recorded as the state's wettest spring since 1900^[14] and the Australian continent's third wettest year.^[15] Climate scientist [Kevin Trenberth](#) thought [climate change](#) was a contributing factor in the unusually high precipitation rates.^[16] He attributed a half-degree Celsius rise in ocean temperatures around Australia to global warming which produces extra [water vapour](#) and intensifies the monsoon. Other scientists say that it is too early to draw such a conclusion.^{[16][17]} Assertions were also made by Professor [Hubert Chanson](#), an expert in dam and reservoir engineering with extensive firsthand knowledge of the Wivenhoe system, that mismanagement of the [Wivenhoe Dam](#) might be a contributor to the some flooding in the lower [Brisbane](#) valley.^[18] While an expert engineer, Michael O'Brien - a senior manager of an ASX-listed resources company and an outside consultant evaluating cause - agrees that "massive releases of water from [Wivenhoe Dam](#) on Tuesday, January 11, did indeed produce most of the flooding in the [Brisbane River](#) the following afternoon, with a peak in the early hours of Thursday morning, January 13. The dam's releases into the [Brisbane River](#) also caused the [Bremer River](#), which winds through the city of [Ipswich](#), and the [Lockyer Creek](#) to back up and cause much of the flooding outside [Brisbane](#)." This was corroborated by a panel of engineers hired by Insurance Council of [Australia](#). O'Brien also found that the [Wivenhoe Dam](#) and [Somerset Dam](#) did not hold the maximum capacity they were capable of holding during the crisis period, which would have significantly alleviated flooding. Only one source, [Neal Ashkanasy](#), who specialises in social and [organisational psychology](#) (and 35 years ago was involved in the design of [Wivenhoe Dam](#)), found fault with these results and instead finds that the dam was operated correctly throughout the time of the storm and the flood that followed, saying the "dam was run with outstanding precision."^[19]

Isolated flooding started across parts of the state in early December. On 23 December a [monsoonal trough](#) crossed the coast from the [Coral Sea](#), bringing torrential rain that fell in a broad swath from the [Gulf of Carpentaria](#) to the [Gold Coast](#). The widest range of intense rainfall occurred on 27 December with very high daily totals recorded on 25 December near where [Cyclone Tasha](#)

crossed the coast.^[11] By 30 December vast areas of Southern and [Central Queensland](#) were affected by the flood.^[20] The conditions led to a large influx of snakes in the [Rockhampton](#) area, as well as some crocodiles.^[21]

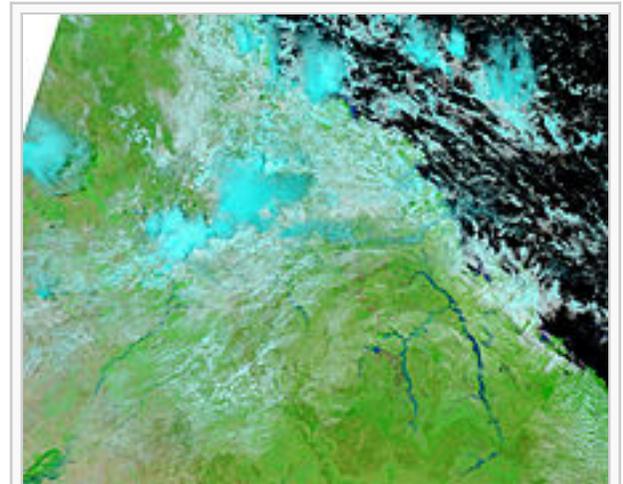
Extent [\[edit\]](#)

Flooding was widespread across [Queensland](#) and [New South Wales](#) from the end of December 2010 – January 2011 with several separate rain events causing rivers to rise over a lengthy period.^[17] Many places, including [Condamine](#) and [Chinchilla](#) were inundated by flood waters on multiple occasions.^[20] About 300 roads were closed, including nine major highways.^[22]

During the flooding it was reported that more than three-quarters of [Queensland](#) was affected by flooding.^{[20][23]}

Fitzroy River basin [\[edit\]](#)

The flooding initially forced the evacuation of 1,000 people from [Theodore](#) and other towns, described as unprecedented by the acting chief officer of the [Emergency Management Queensland](#).^[24] The military transported residents by helicopter to an evacuation centre at [Moura](#). The total evacuation of a [Queensland](#) town was a first for the state.^[25] Major flooding at Theodore persisted for more than two weeks.^[11]



NASA image showing swollen rivers and cloud cover. [\[edit\]](#)



Rockhampton seen from the air on 31 December: the Fitzroy River can be [\[edit\]](#)

Emerald was cut off by road on 29 December as the **Nogoa River** rose.^[26] By the next day, the river surpassed the 2008 flood peak level of 15.36 metres (50.4 ft).^[27] At the peak of the flooding, 80% of the town was flooded, the worst the town ever experienced.^[28] 1,200 Emerald residents registered as evacuees.^[29]

Rockhampton had nearly a week to prepare for an expected flood peak from the **Fitzroy River**, which courses through the centre of the city.^[30] The airport was closed on 1 January.^[31] A metal flood barrier was erected around the terminal to prevent flood-borne debris from causing damage to the structure. An evacuation centre was set up at the **Central Queensland University**.^[29] The Bruce Highway leading south out of Rockhampton was closed to traffic. The river peaked at 9.2 metres (30 ft) just short of the predicted 9.4 metres (31 ft) maximum.^[32]

The **Port of Gladstone** reduced its export capacity because the coal stockpiles at the port were saturated and further coal deliveries could not be made by rail.^[33] The **Goonyella railway line** which serves a number of coal mines in the **Bowen Basin** was closed for one week and shipments of grain were also delayed.^[34]

Burnett River basin [\[edit\]](#)

On 2 December, the Fitzroy River can be seen to have burst its banks



View of the swollen Fitzroy River, which surrounds the western half of Rockhampton [\[open in new window\]](#)

The central Burnett towns of [Gayndah](#) and [Mundubbera](#) saw major flooding on 28–29 December. The [Burnett River](#) peaked at 18.25 metres (59.9 ft) at Mundubbera—the highest river height since 1942—inundating more than 20 houses. Downstream at Gayndah, the river peaked at 16.1 metres (53 ft) with floodwaters reaching two houses.^[35] Both towns were isolated for several days and there was major disruption to the potable water supply and local agricultural production.^{[35][36]}

[Bundaberg](#) experienced severe flooding, the worst in 40 years,^[30] after the [Burnett River](#) flooded the city, although the [Paradise Dam](#) reservoir contributed to some flood mitigation.^[17] This resulted in the evacuation of 300 homes.^[30] The [Bundaberg Port](#), a major sugar exporting facility, was closed late in December 2010 as flooding deposited silt in the port, forcing its closure. The port reopened in early March 2011 after successful dredging operations allowed ships to berth.^[37]

Condamine/Balonne River basin [\[edit\]](#)

[Chinchilla](#) and [Jericho](#) were also inundated.^[26] At least 40 residents were evacuated from Chinchilla.^[38]

Flooding in [Dalby](#) was the worst since 1981.^[39] The town's [water purification](#) system was flooded, resulting in water restrictions that have hampered clean-up efforts. 112,500 litres (24,700 imp gal; 29,700 US gal) of water were transported to the town of 14,000 residents.^[40] [Warwick](#) was isolated



The swollen [Burnett River](#) at [Gayndah](#), 350 kilometres (220 mi) north west of Brisbane [\[edit\]](#)



A flooded paddock in Warwick [\[edit\]](#)

when all roads into the town were cut off.^[41]

The [Condamine River](#) reached 14.25 metres (46.8 ft) on 30 December, its highest level ever recorded.^[42] [Condamine](#) was mandatorily evacuated on 30 December.^[43]

A second rain event on 9–10 January saw floodwaters again threaten Chinchilla and Condamine with Chinchilla residents again asked to evacuate.^[44]

The [Macintyre River](#), which forms part of the border between the Australian states of [New South Wales](#) and Queensland, began to threaten the town of [Goondiwindi](#) on 13 January. While the town is protected by a 11 metres (36 ft) levee, the local hospital and aged care home were evacuated as a precaution and an evacuation centre was established.^[45]

Mary River basin [\[edit\]](#)

Heavy rain in the [Mary River](#) catchment on 8–9 January 2011 led to flooding at [Maryborough](#) and [Gympie](#). The Mary River at Maryborough was expected to initially peak at 8.5 metres (28 ft) at midday 9 January with some houses and businesses inundated.

Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley [\[edit\]](#)



Long and Mackenzie Streets in suburban Toowoomba flooded. [\[edit\]](#)

The city of [Toowoomba](#), in the [Darling Downs](#), was

hit by flash flooding after more than 160 millimetres (6.3 in) of rain fell in 36 hours to 10 January 2011; this event caused four deaths in a matter of hours.^{[44][46][47]} Cars were washed away (see [video](#) [\[edit\]](#)). Toowoomba sits on the

External video

[Flooding at Helidon on 10 January](#) [\[edit\]](#)

[East Creek Toowoomba in flood](#) [\[edit\]](#)

watershed of the [Great Dividing Range](#), some 700 metres (2,300 ft) above sea level. A three-week period where it had rained on all but three days had left the soil around Toowoomba super saturated and when a line of storms hit the city on 10 January, the resulting torrential rain rapidly ran off down gullies and streets. The central business district of the city sits in a small valley where two small water courses—East Creek and West Creek—meet to form [Gowrie Creek](#). Unable to cope with the volume of water heading toward them, the creeks burst their banks, pushing a devastating wall of water through the city centre.^[48] This water then headed west, not towards the Lockyer Valley which was also experiencing extreme rainfall that fell on eastern facing slopes.^[49]

The surge passed through the [Lockyer Valley](#) town of [Withcott](#), where the force of the water pushed cars into shops and forced the evacuation of hundreds of people. The scene was described by an onlooker as "like [Cyclone Tracy](#) has gone through it ... If you dropped an atom bomb on it, you couldn't tell the difference."^[50] Nearby [Helidon](#) had several homes and farms flooded but did not break the main creek bank and enter the town. It was cut off from all sides by destroyed roads. [Grantham](#) was also devastated by the surge of water. Houses were left crumpled by what Premier of Queensland [Anna Bligh](#) described as an "inland [tsunami](#)". According to local media, the flood waters had reached a height of 7 or 8 m (23 or 26 ft) by the time it struck Grantham.^[51] The peak discharge rate around Withcott and Grantham where Lockyer Creek is joined by Gatton Creek, was estimated to be 3,500 m³ second.^[52] At least 100 people were evacuated to the Helidon Community Hall.^[53] Nine people were confirmed dead, and many more feared dead among 66 reported missing.^[54] The body of one victim washed away at Grantham was recovered 80 kilometres (50 mi) downstream and [Queensland Police](#) Commissioner [Bob Atkinson](#) warned that some bodies may never be found.^[55] Nearby [Gatton](#) saw voluntary evacuations as the [Lockyer Creek](#) rose to a record height of 18.92 metres (62.1 ft), exceeding the previous record set in the [1893 Queensland floods](#).^[44]

Three people from Grantham listed as missing were officially declared dead by the [Coroner](#) on 5

June 2012.^[56]

Brisbane River catchment [\[edit\]](#)

Flooding began to affect low-lying areas of Brisbane on the morning of 11 January 2011. By around 2:30 p.m. AEST, the [Brisbane River](#) broke its banks leading to evacuations in the [Brisbane CBD](#) and the suburbs of [Fortitude Valley](#) and [West End](#).^{[57][58]} An evacuation centre was established for flood-affected residents at the [RNA Showgrounds](#) in [Bowen Hills](#).^[59] Residents of 2100 Brisbane streets were advised to evacuate prior to the arrival of floods, which struck the city on 12 January. [Lord Mayor Campbell Newman](#) stated that an estimated 20,000 homes would be affected when the river peaked on 14 January.^[60] He subsequently advised that the Brisbane River transport infrastructure had been "substantially destroyed".^[61]

The Brisbane River peaked on 13 January at a lower level than predicted,^{[20][62]} but still 20,000 houses in Brisbane were inundated. Some of the Brisbane suburbs worst affected by the floods were [St Lucia](#), [West End](#), [Rocklea](#) and [Graceville](#).^[63] The floods damaged some of Brisbane's icons. The Brisbane Riverwalk, a floating walkway over the Brisbane River linking the inner city neighbourhoods of Fortitude Valley and [New Farm](#), broke up, with a section forming a 300 metres (980 ft) "floating missile" that threatened the [Sir Leo Hielcher Bridges](#). The largest part



[Wheel of Brisbane](#) during the floods. 



This detailed astronaut photograph  illustrates flooding in suburbs of the

of the floating boardwalk was safely guided under the bridge by a [tugboat](#) and past other infrastructure before being safely secured.^[64] Brisbane's major [Rugby league](#) and [Soccer \(Association Football\)](#) venue, [Suncorp Stadium](#), filled with water up to 2 metres (6.6 ft) deep, reaching the third or fourth row of seats.^[65]

With the flood peaking at 4.46 metres (14.6 ft) in Brisbane City, the flood level was about the 10th highest in the city's history, several metres below the 1890 flood and the two major floods in 1893.,^{[62][66]} Some unique field measurements about the peak of the floods showed very substantial sediment fluxes in the Brisbane River flood plains consistent with the murky appearance of floodwaters.^{[67][68]} The field deployment showed also some unusual features of flood flow in an urban environment linked with some local topographic effects. Parts of the western suburbs of Brisbane were cut off for three days. Resident of suburbs including [Bellbowrie](#), [Karana Downs](#), [Moggill](#) and [Pullenvale](#) were running low on food and other items when [Moggill Road](#) was cut, until the Australian Army was able to reach the area on 15 January with supplies.^[69]

The [Bremer River](#) at [Ipswich](#), 30 kilometres (19 mi) west of Brisbane, reached a height of 19.4 metres (64 ft) on 12 January, inundating the central business district and at least 3,000 houses.^[70] One third of the city was reported to be underwater and over 1100 people took shelter at evacuation centres.^[71] At Minden, on the border of Ipswich City, a four-year-old boy was swept away by floodwaters when he fell from a rescue boat.^[72] A man in his fifties died when he accidentally drove into floodwaters in the Ipswich suburb of [Wulkuraka](#).^[73] The worst affected areas of Ipswich were the suburbs of [Goodna](#) and [Gailes](#).^[74] The flooding allowed [bull sharks](#) to reach the center of Goodna; one was spotted swimming in Williams Street, and a second in Queen Street.^[75]

Further upstream [Hubners Bridge](#) and Richards Bridge near Kilcoy were washed away.^[76] Both bridges have been rebuilt and reopened in 2012.

Elsewhere [\[edit\]](#)

In [South East Queensland](#), the [Wivenhoe Dam](#) filled to a level equivalent to 191% of its supply capacity on 11 January 2011.^{[17][77]} Although the dam can hold the equivalent of 225% of its supply capacity, storage exceeding 100% is required to be progressively released through the [floodgates](#) to restore capacity to mitigate future flood events.^{[20][78][79]} Brisbane experienced its wettest December since 1859.^[33] [Wyralong Dam](#), near [Beaudesert](#), had recently been completed and was praised^[80] for mitigating flooding in downstream [Logan](#), having exceeded 80% of its capacity.^[81]

In [North Queensland](#), the town of [Ingham](#) became isolated as the [Herbert River](#) peaked. Homes at [Babinda](#), and [Gordonvale](#) were flooded.^[82]

Deaths [\[edit\]](#)

As of 28 January 2011, 35 deaths have been attributed to the floods, 21 of which are from the Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley area.^[83] Additionally, 9 people were listed as missing (3 of whom were later officially declared dead), after the catastrophic flash flood struck Toowoomba, Lockyer Valley, Brisbane and Ipswich.^{[84][85][86][87]}

The first death was reported on 20 November 2010, when a woman drowned in her vehicle near [Dysart](#).^[88] In the following weeks, five others died from similar circumstances.^{[89][90][91][92][93]} Nine people drowned after being caught directly by the flowing waters.^{[46][94][95][96][97][98]} and thirteen people died in other



Flooding of a caravan park and motorway at [Ipswich](#) suburb of Gales. 

circumstances.^{[46][73][98][99][100][101][102][103]}

13-year-old Jordan Lucas Rice died 10 January 2011 after insisting that his 10-year-old brother Blake be saved from the flood waters before him. He drowned along with his mother, 43-year-old Donna Maree Rice, both being residents of [Toowoomba](#)^[104] He has been called an Australian hero by the media^{[105][106][107]} and in 2015 was post-humously awarded the Australian Bravery Medal for his sacrifice.^[108]

Response [\[edit\]](#)

Public response [\[edit\]](#)

More than 55,000 volunteers registered to help clean up the streets of Brisbane,^[109] with thousands more unregistered volunteers wandering the muddy streets with gumboots and mops.^[110] Prime Minister Julia Gillard said the volunteering effort showed tremendous 'Aussie spirit' and that, "... right across Queensland today people have got up, they've marched out of their homes and they've gone to find people to help. It's a tremendous spirit of volunteering right across Queensland ...".^[111]

Reaction [\[edit\]](#)

Prime Minister of Australia [Julia Gillard](#) toured flood-affected areas on 31 December,^[29] the day before [The Queen \(Elizabeth II\)](#), sent her expressions of concern and sympathy for the victims of the floods to her representative in Queensland, [Governor Penelope](#)

The impact on our friends in Queensland is something that New Zealanders feel very deeply, and we just want to make sure that we're in a position to offer them support across the range of services that we have here in New Zealand.

New Zealand Prime Minister [John Key](#) on the floods.^[112]

[Wensley](#).^{[113][114]} The Queen later made a donation to her Queensland premier's flood relief appeal,^[115] as did her son, [The Prince of Wales](#).^[116] In March 2011, The Prince's eldest son, [Prince William](#), toured the affected areas in Queensland, as well as those damaged by [the floods in Victoria](#).^[117]

US Secretary of State [Hillary Clinton](#) stated, "On behalf of [President Obama](#) and the people of the United States, I offer my condolences for the loss of life and damage in Queensland caused by the recent flooding."^[118] US President Barack Obama said he was ready to help.^[118]

[John Key](#), the [Prime Minister of New Zealand](#), held a telephone call with Gillard, during which she thanked New Zealand for its help. [Len Brown](#), the Mayor of [Auckland](#), a sister city of Brisbane, offered assistance to Brisbane Lord Mayor [Campbell Newman](#).^[119]

[David Cameron](#), the [Prime Minister of the United Kingdom](#) offered his sympathies. [Downing Street](#) stated: "The Prime Minister offered his deep sympathy on behalf of the British people for those who have died, those who have lost their homes and all those who have been affected by the floods in Queensland."^[120]

Recovery [\[edit\]](#)

Major General [Michael Slater](#) was appointed head of a civilian recovery task force.^[32] Slater was at the time also the Commander of the [1st Division](#) based at the Gallipoli Barracks in [Enoggera](#), Brisbane. The taskforce was later replaced by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, a new body created to co-

As we weep for what we have lost, and as we grieve for family and friends and we confront the challenge that is before us, I want us to remember who we are. We are Queenslanders. We're the people that they breed tough, north of the [New South Wales] border. We're the ones that they knock down, and we get up again. Together we can pull through this and that's what I'm determined to do, with your help, we can achieve it.

... [\[121\]](#)

ordinate the rebuilding program.^[122]

The [Australian Defence Force's](#)

contribution to flood relief efforts was designated [Operation Queensland Flood Assist](#). The ADF established Joint Task Force 637, based at [Enoggera Barracks](#) in Brisbane, for operational command of on 1 January 2011.^[123] According to the Australian Prime Minister the deployment was the largest for a natural disaster since [Cyclone Tracy](#).^[124]

About 35 State Emergency Service personnel from New South Wales and 20 personnel from Victoria were deployed to provide relief to exhausted staff and volunteers.^[125] A national appeal was established on 29 December, with the state and federal governments giving A\$1 million each.^[42]

Small businesses and primary producers in 13 local government areas became eligible for grants of up to A\$25,000 to pay for costs from damage incurred as a result of the floods.^[126] National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements were made available to a total of 31 [local government areas across Queensland](#).^[127]

New Zealand announced that the country would be sending two fifteen member civil defence teams to assist in flood rescue efforts.^[128] In addition to this, New Zealand will send a number of [New Zealand Defence Force](#) soldiers, mainly engineers, as well as [New Zealand Police](#) and [New Zealand Fire Service](#) firefighters.^[112] A New Zealand [Red Cross](#) team was also dispatched.^[129]

Aid efforts [\[edit\]](#)

On 9 January, the *Flood Relief Appeal: Australia Unites* [telethon](#) broadcast by the [Nine Network](#) from the [Suncorp Piazza](#) at [South Bank Parklands](#), Brisbane raised more than A\$10 million in pledged aid.^[130] The South Bank area which includes the [Wheel of Brisbane](#) pictured above was itself inundated by flood waters only two days later.

At the [first Twenty20](#) cricket match between Australia and England in [Adelaide](#) on 12 January, both teams donated part of their match fees to help the victims and A\$28,450 was collected from people in attendance.^[131]

On 16 January, the day before the [2011 Australian Open](#) commenced, a number of players took part in the *Rally for Relief* which was held at Rod Laver Arena and attended by 15,000 people, which raised A\$750,000.^[132] The [Seven Network](#) televised the event. Players who took part included [Roger Federer](#), [Rafael Nadal](#), [Lleyton Hewitt](#), [Novak Djokovic](#) and [Andy Roddick](#).^[132]

On 27 January, the [2011 Legends of Origin charity match](#) was contested between former New South Wales and Queensland [Rugby League State of Origin](#) players. Organised by [Mark Geyer](#), the match raised \$380,587 to go towards the recovery effort.^[133]

On 13 January, Queensland Writers Centre, in partnership with Brisbane author Rebecca Sparrow, launched Writers on Rafts to raise funds for flood-affected writing communities.^[134] Authors, bloggers, publishers, organisations, festivals, and industry professionals across Australia donated their books, professional skills, and expertise, to drive and promote a fundraiser, and local celebrities donated their time to attend the Ultimate Girly High Tea. Over the course of four months, they raised over \$31,000. All funds raised went to the Queensland Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal.^[135]

Criticism [\[edit\]](#)

On 11 January 2011, former deputy director of the New South Wales State Emergency Service Chas Keys stated that he was "appalled by the situation in Queensland at the moment. The large number of new houses that have been flooded proves that land management by the Queensland government is extremely poor and building is still going on in inappropriate areas." He contrasted the approach in Queensland with the practices developed in NSW during after the [1955 Hunter](#)

[Valley floods](#), that aimed to move homes out of dangerous areas and establish warning systems. Keys also stated the NSW practices were being undone by reduced funding and unsafe housing developments, giving the example of Maitland where "the council now wants to build hundreds of dwellings on the flood plain in and round the CBD". Keys also expressed concern over deforestation, stating that, "What we need is re-forestation."^[136]

Inquiry [\[edit\]](#)

On 17 January 2011, Anna Bligh announced a [Commission of Inquiry into the 2010–11 Queensland floods](#).^[137] The Commission's [Terms of reference](#) cover a wide array of related aspects and stipulate a final report is due in one year.^[138] On 1 August 2011 the Commission handed an interim report containing 175 recommendations to Ms Bligh.^[139]



Ferries return to the Brisbane River on 14 February 2011.

Mandatory disaster insurance [\[edit\]](#)

In return for Senator [Nick Xenophon](#)'s support of the Queensland Flood Levy, the Government will modify the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements and force the states to take up disaster insurance.^[140]

Legal action [\[edit\]](#)

On 8 July 2014 legal firm [Maurice Blackburn](#) lodged a class action with the NSW Supreme Court on behalf of 4000 flood victims. The legal action alleges negligence and nuisance against the operators of the dams: [Seqwater](#), [SunWater](#) and the State of Queensland.^[141]

Impacts [\[edit\]](#)

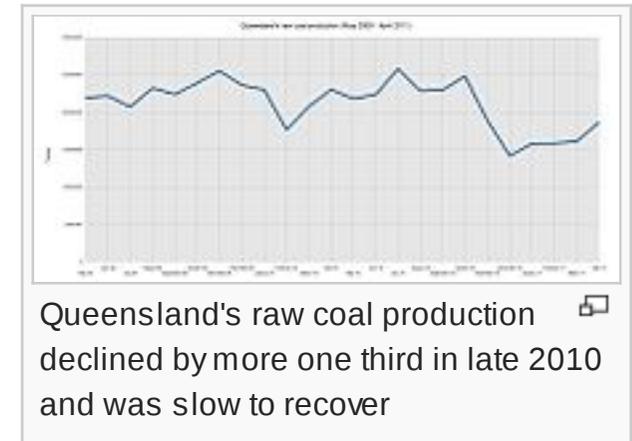
The severe rainfall across Queensland resulted in a drop in world sea level by as much as 7 mm.^[142] The drop lasted for around 18 months and has been attributed to Australia's arheic and endorheic basins which soaked up the water previously evaporated from the oceans.

Economic [\[edit\]](#)

Queensland Treasurer [Andrew Fraser](#) said it was not possible to put a figure on the damage; "other than to say the damage bill is going to start with a *b* and not an *m*".^{[143][144]} The floods will cost the Australian economy at least A\$10 billion.^[145] In figures released at the end of January 2011, the Insurance Council of Australia calculated that 38,460 individual claims were lodged with insurers which were worth A\$1.51 billion.^[146] Nearly half of those claims were for damage to homes and more than half were made by those living in Brisbane.

The price of food across Australia will go up.^[147] The floods will cost supermarket chains tens of millions of dollars.^[147] Some communities isolated by floodwaters experienced food shortages, and a rise in the cost of fruits and vegetables was reported shortly after.^[43] Food supplies to northern Queensland were disrupted requiring groceries to be transported to [Townsville](#) by ship.^[148]

Coal railway lines were closed and numerous mine sites flooded. According to an analysisist at [Macquarie Group](#) almost all the available stockpiles of coking coal in Queensland were exhausted in late January 2011 due to reduced rail capacity.^[149] About 15% of the state's annual output of coal production was lost and by late March 2011 recovery was progressing slowly.^[150] Four



months after the floods the Dalrymple Bay coal terminal was operating at half its capacity as the open-cut mines in the region continued to deal with de-watering issues.^[151]

Swimming pool salt was in short supply as salt mines near Rockhampton were flooded.^[152]

Thousands of litres of milk had to be dumped because it couldn't be transported for processing.^[153] The persistent wet conditions also caused health problems for livestock. There was severe damage to roadways in forestry plantations across wide areas of the south of the state.^[154]

Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced that the government would impose a **flood levy** on people across Australia, to fund reconstruction works.^[155]

See also [edit]

- [1893 Brisbane flood](#)
- [1974 Brisbane flood](#)
- [Floods in Australia](#)
- [List of disasters in Australia by death toll](#)
- [March 2010 Queensland floods](#)
- [2013 Queensland floods](#)



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- [Flash flood death toll rises to 9](#) 
- [Brisbane City Council COP Situational Awareness Application](#) , interactive map showing extent of flooding in Brisbane
- [Interactive map of pre and post flood aerial images along the Brisbane River](#) 
- [Dam operator blames inaccurate weather forecast for 2011 Brisbane flood](#) 
- [Interim report of Queensland Floods Commission of Enquiry, handed to Premier Bligh on 1 August 2011](#) 



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