

# POLICY AND STRATEGY

Australia



## Operation Queenslander, QLD

Over the summer of 2010-2011, Queensland experienced an unprecedented series of extreme weather events that devastated local communities, damaged vital infrastructure and resulted in the entire state being declared a natural disaster zone.

Flooding rains, coupled with a severe tropical cyclone, damaged more than 9,000 kilometres of state roads, close to 5,000 kilometres of state rail network, affected 11 major ports and 411 schools, and left approximately 480,000 homes and businesses without power. Tragically, the disasters also resulted in the loss of 36 lives.

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh described the “Summer of Sorrow” as a period of “unrelenting catastrophe” and committed the State to “Operation Queenslander”; a State-wide reconstruction program. Over two years, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QldRA) will oversee the execution of a reconstruction program worth \$6.8 billion.

### Evans & Peck’s role

Evans & Peck participated in the immediate recovery response and was engaged to play a key role in the establishment of the QldRA.

Within 24 hours of major flooding in Brisbane in January 2011, Evans & Peck’s local team assisted the Brisbane City Council with practical advice and hands-on support on a pro bono basis. Experienced project directors were deployed to crisis coordination centres across the city to assist with the immediate response and cleanup, some working seven days a week. The priority was to remove debris from city streets. Evans & Peck drew on its extensive network of construction industry contacts to facilitate the involvement of major contractors and secured excavation equipment, trucks and manpower to do the job.

Within days, Evans & Peck was engaged to support the critical startup of the QldRA – a purpose built authority tasked with developing, implementing and managing a State-wide plan for rebuilding and reconnecting communities affected by the floods and cyclones.

Our most senior people were seconded to the initial QldRA team, including Evans & Peck Director Peter Wood who worked as a member of the executive team for several weeks. Our people worked closely with government executives to design the authority’s structure, define the operational approach and anticipate immediate challenges.

Evans & Peck’s team realised that project controls and demonstrating value for money in the reconstruction work would be critical for the success of the QldRA. Working in partnership with experienced government officials and senior officers from Australia’s military, Evans & Peck established the QldRA’s project controls function to develop an innovative new governance model for assessing and providing funding to reconstruction projects: the Value for Money Strategy. The newly formed team then used the strategy to quickly develop procedures to enable the rapid mobilisation of the reconstruction effort. This included coordinating the early allocation of more than \$400 million in funding to local councils so that the reconstruction of vital infrastructure could begin.

The Value for Money Strategy was a crucial tool for the QldRA as it mitigated problems that had been experienced in previous disasters and other funding/stimulus programs. The strategy ensured value for money outcomes in the expenditure of public funds.

### FACTS AND FIGURES

**Client:** Queensland Reconstruction Authority

**Budget:** \$6.8 billion

**E&P involvement:** Jan-Sept 2011

### Results

In March and May 2011, the World Bank toured regional Queensland and praised the QldRA for its “highly effective relief approach”. World Bank Country Director for the Pacific, Ferid Belhaj, was impressed by what he encountered: “We ended up learning a lot from you and capitalising on your experience. What you have here is absolutely marvelous, especially the quick response to the catastrophe, and also in the way you have institutionally put together the QldRA. What you have done is world’s best practice.”

“What we have in Queensland with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority is a unique model for recovery – a rapidly established Statutory Authority working across all levels of government and with integral support from the Australian Defence Forces.”

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh, 16 June 2011  
(on Queensland’s MOU with the World Bank)



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