



Resilient Lismore receives full 'Repair to Return' funding.

February 26, 2024

Resilient Lismore has welcomed the finalisation of its funding deed with the NSW Reconstruction Authority, which will enable the continuation of its 'Repair to Return' program.

Resilient Lismore Executive Director Elly Bird said that in 2024 the organisation is scaling up its 'Repair to Return' project to best utilise the \$5 million funding.

"Repair to Return was formerly known as the 'Two Rooms Project', which used volunteer labour to construct walls in two rooms of badly flood-damaged homes," Ms Bird said.

"Repair to Return has evolved as we have secured funding, and now we engage qualified tradespeople to do the work. Our scope has expanded to provide partial repair of homes, including kitchens, bathrooms and other critical repairs."

"After nearly two years of our home repair work being privately funded by local organisations and philanthropists we are very grateful that the NSW Reconstruction Authority is providing this additional funding so that we can continue to help people return to safe and secure homes."

"It's a significant milestone for us and we extend our gratitude to Premier Minns and his government; to the Emergency Services Minister Jihad Dibb and of course to Janelle Saffin the Member for Lismore who secured this funding commitment for our work."

"The Repair to Return program provides qualified trades assistance to owner-occupiers who were living in the affected property at the time of the disaster and who still need to live there.

"We prioritise people who can't progress their recovery on their own, we prioritise vulnerable people, and we are trying to help as many people as we can. We work in Lismore and in downstream communities, including Coraki, Woodburn, Wardell, Bungawalbin and others - we have a regional footprint." Ms Bird said.

"We are not doing renovations or total rebuilds, but we will help people repair their homes so they have somewhere safe and secure to live. There is a high level of need so there might be a waitlist depending on the situation and the work that is required. We can't guarantee that we can help everyone but we are doing our best to help as many people as we can."

"We can provide labour and materials, or we can help people use the materials they already have. We can help to restore essential plumbing; repair and restore kitchens; assist with electrical work; resheet



walls; assist with furniture and whitegoods - and more. People just need to talk to us to see what we can do.

Ms Bird said there was still a mountain of work to do for the Northern Rivers to build back and develop resilience for future events.

“This is a multi-year, long-tailed recovery process,” she said. “We understand that people from outside the region might think, ‘Oh, that was two years ago, it’s all over now’, but that is far from the truth.

“Lismore and the Northern Rivers are on the way back but there is still plenty that needs to be done: homes that need to be repaired, people who need assistance, and businesses that need support.

“Resilient Lismore is here for the long haul because this is our community: our staff and volunteers are from this community. We love it, we are here to help the people we live alongside, and we are committed to helping our region not just to survive but to thrive.

“We are grateful to the Reconstruction Authority and to our partners and supporters for their ongoing commitment to our community. We are particularly grateful to the local people who have provided significant funding to get us to where we are now, and who have helped us to help so many people live in safer housing.”

Amanda Leck, Head of Adaptation, Mitigation and Reconstruction at the NSW Reconstruction Authority, said supporting the Repair to Return program was a practical example of the organisation backing a community-led initiative that clearly works.

“The work in Lismore is not just about buying back homes and rolling out our Resilient Lands Program, it’s about restoring a community and maintaining its unique identity for the long term,” she said.

“We know we can’t stop disasters from occurring, but we can do more to prepare and prevent the worst of their impacts.

“It’s critical we’re better prepared for future disasters with Councils and local community leaders and will develop local Disaster Adaptation Plans that consider all possible options.”

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About Resilient Lismore:



Resilient Lismore is dedicated to making a significant contribution to locally led disaster response and recovery efforts in the Northern Rivers, following the February 2022 flood events that left hundreds of residents displaced. First formed in 2017 to support residents in the wake of tropical cyclone Debbie, Resilient Lismore is now providing outreach and access to support services and coordinating skilled tradespeople, labourers and volunteers to help rebuild the region.

Since the disaster in February 2022, Resilient Lismore has partnered with a number of charitable organisations to provide community rebuild, wellbeing, and grant and donation initiatives. Resilient Lismore is funded by the NSW Reconstruction Authority, Healthy North Coast through the North Coast PHN program; the NSW Government Flood Support Program; the Northern Rivers Community Foundation; the Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal; Paul Ramsay Foundation and other private and philanthropic organisations. It also enjoys partnerships with the Reece Foundation, and with The Winsome, as well as a dedicated team of local community volunteers.