

Emergency Management Queensland

Department of Community Safety

Queensland Regional Household Survey – May 2012 Household Preparedness for Natural Disasters

In 2012, Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) surveyed households to measure community preparedness for natural disasters.

The results showed that Queenslanders believe they know their risks, but tend to over-estimate their preparedness and that complacency is an ongoing barrier to disaster preparedness.

METHOD

EMQ included 13 questions in the May 2012 Queensland Regional Household Survey (QRHS) to test the disaster preparedness of Queensland households. The QRHS is conducted annually by the Government Statistician to obtain information on topics of interest to Queensland Government agencies.

Data on disaster preparedness was obtained from a random sample of a total of 3,397 telephone surveys conducted with respondents (aged 18 years and over) between 28 May and 12 June 2012. Survey respondents have been 'weighted' and the resulting survey sample used to estimate behaviours for the broader Queensland population (a total of 3.4M adults and 1.8M households).

Indicators of disaster preparedness¹ include:

- Preparing an emergency kit;
- Discussing and documenting an emergency plan (including emergency contact numbers);
- Undertaking home maintenance and preparation; and
- Having adequate household insurance.

VALUE

The survey provides data on the extent of actions currently being implemented by Queensland households and details significant differences between key population segments (geographical areas and demographic groups).

This data provides crucial situational awareness for the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) stakeholders and can be used in a variety of ways:

- to determine priority community segments that require a more targeted community engagement and education approach and devise strategic partnerships and interventions to increase uptake;
- to review current action messages to provide specific emphasis where required in current campaigns and programs;
- to inform the development and approach of future state and local community education preparedness campaigns and the development of packages to support councils in priority areas; and
- to inform funding priorities administered by the sector to target specific community and population segments demonstrating lower levels of preparedness.

RESULTS

Queensland households believe they know their risk

- 97% of Queensland households believed they have a good understanding of the types of natural disasters that could occur in Queensland and the chances of them occurring; and
- Almost all Queensland households (95%) thought they had a good understanding of the impact from a natural disaster.

While the survey did not test the accuracy of respondents' knowledge, the results indicate a broad-based understanding that natural disasters are a threat for Queensland communities.

¹ COAG (2011) National Strategy for Disaster Resilience

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry (2011) Interim Report Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (2009)

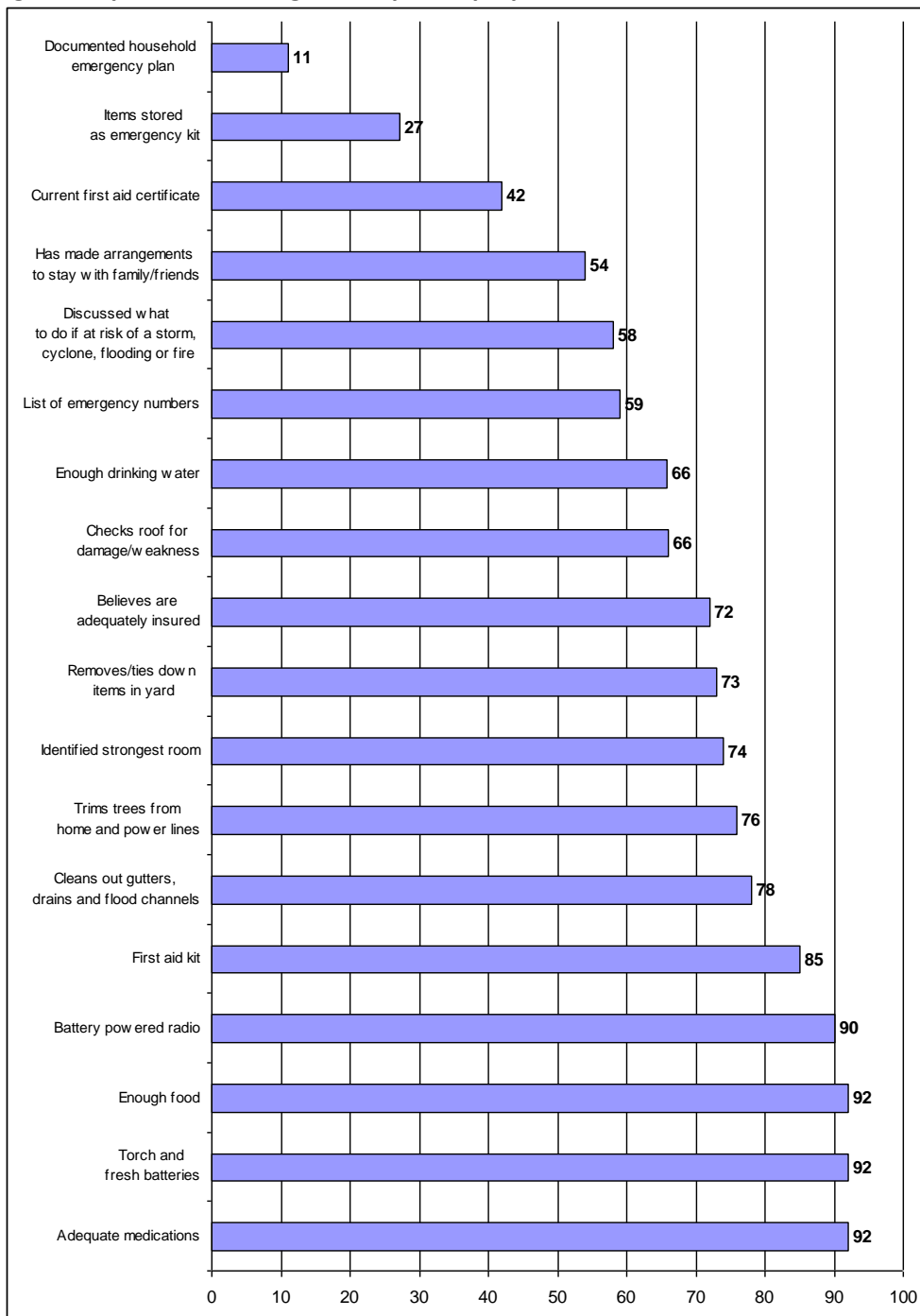
Queenslanders tend to over-estimate their preparedness

Three-quarters (76%) of respondents believed they are prepared or very prepared for a natural disaster, but their responses to more detailed questions on preparedness suggested otherwise:

- 89% of respondents did not have a documented household emergency plan;
- 73% of respondents did not have emergency provisions stored in an emergency kit;
- 56% reported that no-one in their household had a current first aid certificate;
- 41% of respondents had not discussed what to do if at risk of a storm, cyclone flooding or fire;
- 40% did not have a list of emergency numbers;
- 34% of respondents would not have enough drinking water in the event of being cut off from essential services; and
- 18% believed they are inadequately insured.

See Figure 1 for further detail on percentage of respondents that had taken preparedness measures.

Figure 1. Percentage of respondents having taken specific preparedness measures.



7 per cent of Queensland households had taken new preparedness measures in the last 12 months

Respondents who had implemented new preparedness measures in the last 12 months were asked which actions were implemented (multiple responses were allowed). The most common new measures implemented were:

- cleaning out gutters, drains and flood channels (31%);
- trimming trees away from homes and powerlines (27%); and
- maintaining enough food for three days in the event of being cut off from essential services (25%).

Multi-person households with children (11.3%) were more likely than multi-person households without children (5%) and single person households (5%) to have implemented new actions. Similarly, households with an annual income of at least \$110,000 were more likely (9%) than households with an annual income of less than \$23,000 (4%) to have implemented new measures.

Complacency is an ongoing barrier to disaster preparedness

Respondents who indicated they were unprepared were asked what had prevented them and their household from taking steps to prepare (multiple responses were allowed). The key barriers to taking action were explained as *have not thought about it* (36%) and *unlikely to happen to us* (28%).

Respondents who had taken preparedness actions were asked what had prompted them to do so (multiple responses were allowed). The most common reasons were *it is something we have always done* (30%), *recent Queensland disasters* (28%), *common sense* (25%) and *personal experience of disaster* (23%).

Socio-economic status influences insurance uptake and first aid certification

Households with higher income levels were more likely to have first aid certificates and insurance (consistent across all insurance types²).

Individuals' assessment that they are adequately insured against natural disasters generally increased consistently with age.

Cultural background affects the type of preparedness actions taken by Queensland households

Households that usually speak English at home were more likely than those who usually speak a language other than English to have:

- a good understanding of natural disasters (98% and 92% respectively);
- adequate supplies of medications (93% and 86% respectively);
- contents insurance (83% and 70% respectively); and
- a belief that they are adequately insured against natural disasters (73%) than those who usually speak another language (59%).

Households that usually spoke a language other than English at home were more likely than those who usually speak English to have:

- an emergency kit (38% and 26% respectively) and
- made accommodation arrangements in case of evacuation (69% and 52% respectively).

² Insurance types surveyed include: building insurance; contents insurance; and renters insurance

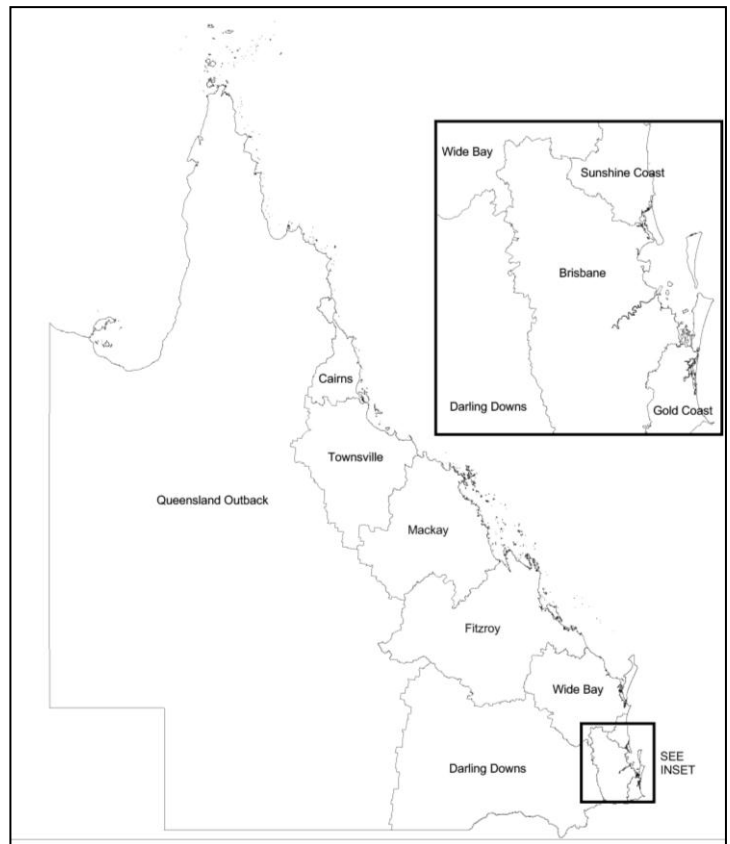
REGIONAL RESULTS

Regions used within this report align with the SA4 ABS statistical areas³ (as used in collection and presentation of census data). Figure 2 depicts the regional areas used within this report and Table 1 details sample sizes for each region.

Table 1: Sample achieved across all QRHS Regions.

Figure 2. Map of QRHS regions.

Region	Completed Interviews
Queensland Outback	288
Cairns	323
Townsville	309
Mackay	308
Fitzroy	302
Wide Bay	306
Darling Downs	304
Gold Coast	304
Sunshine Coast	299
Brisbane	654
TOTAL	3,397



North Queensland households regarded themselves as better prepared than those in the South East

The survey results demonstrated a divide between the North and South East of the state, with households in the North (and Queensland Outback) consistently demonstrating higher levels of preparedness compared with those in South East Queensland (SEQ) across the following measures:

- believed they are very prepared or prepared (see Figure 3);
- arranged accommodation with family and friends if evacuation required (see Figure 4);
- identified strongest room in the home (see Figure 5);
- discussed what to do if their home is at risk of storm, cyclone, flooding or fire (see Figure 6);
- had items stored as an emergency kit (see Figure 7); and
- had enough drinking water if cut off from services (see Figure 8)

However, households within Mackay (85%), Darling Downs (84%), Brisbane (84%) and the Sunshine Coast (83%) were more likely to have contents insurance than Cairns households (72%).

No significant difference in whether households had building insurance was found between regions.

³ Statistical area level 4 (SA4) regions are the largest sub-State regions in the Main Structure of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard.

Figure 3. Regional results - percentage of adults who believed they were prepared or very prepared.

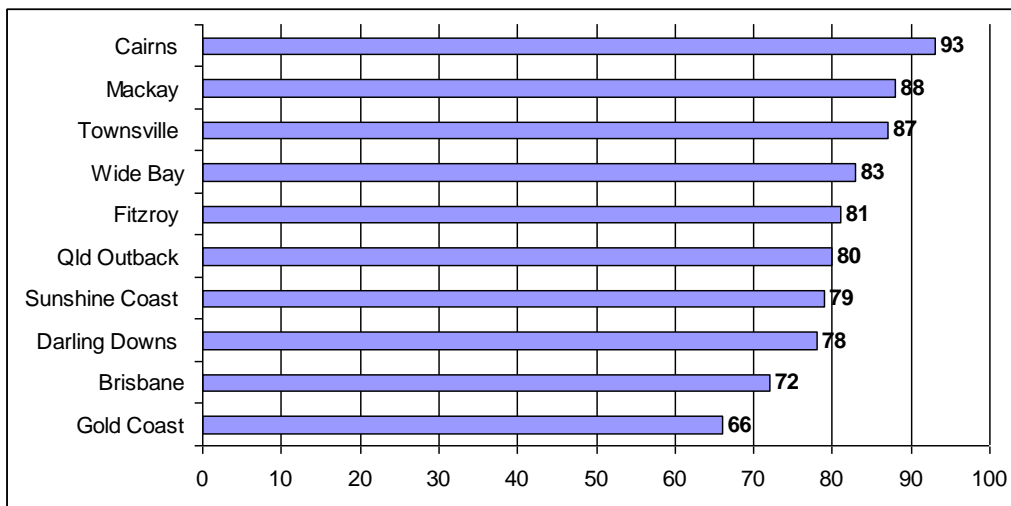


Figure 4. Regional results – percentage of households that had arranged accommodation with family and friends if evacuation required.

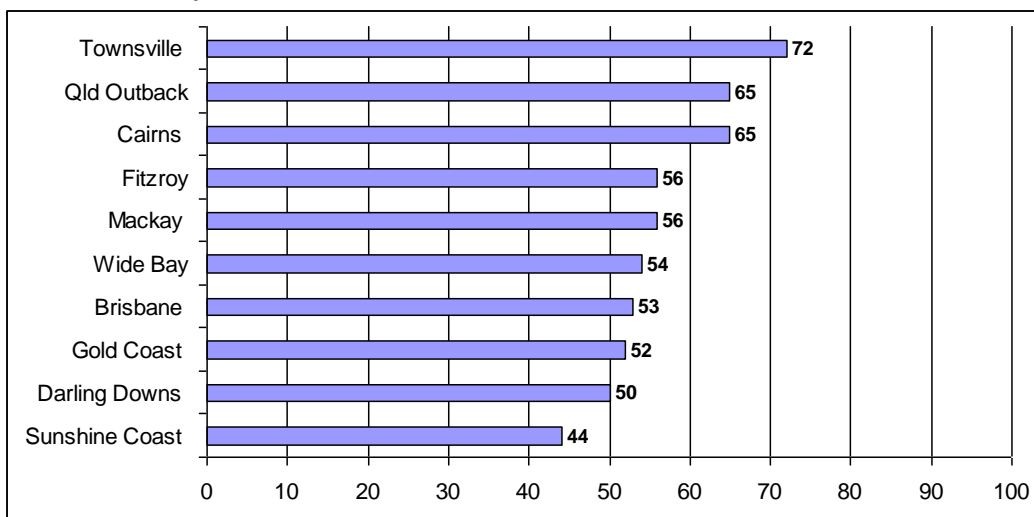


Figure 5. Regional results – percentage of households that had identified the strongest room in their home to shelter in during a severe event.

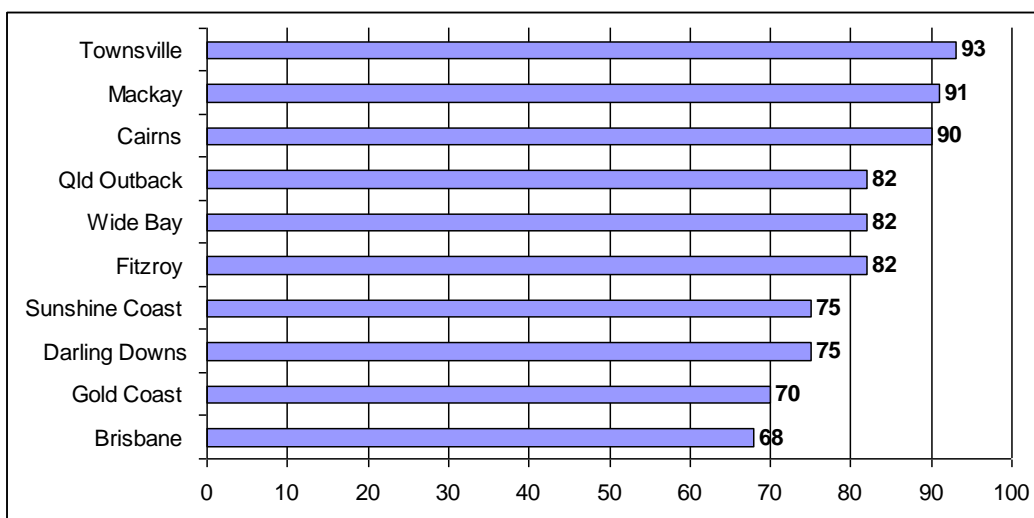


Figure 6. Regional results – percentage of households that had discussed what to do if their home were at risk from storms, cyclones, flooding or fire

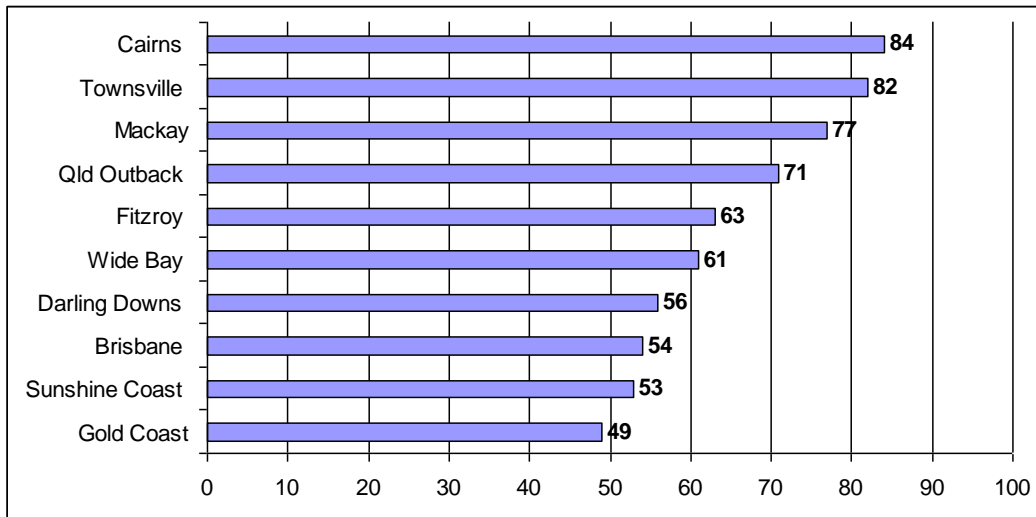


Figure 7. Regional results – percentage of households that had emergency provisions stored in an emergency kit

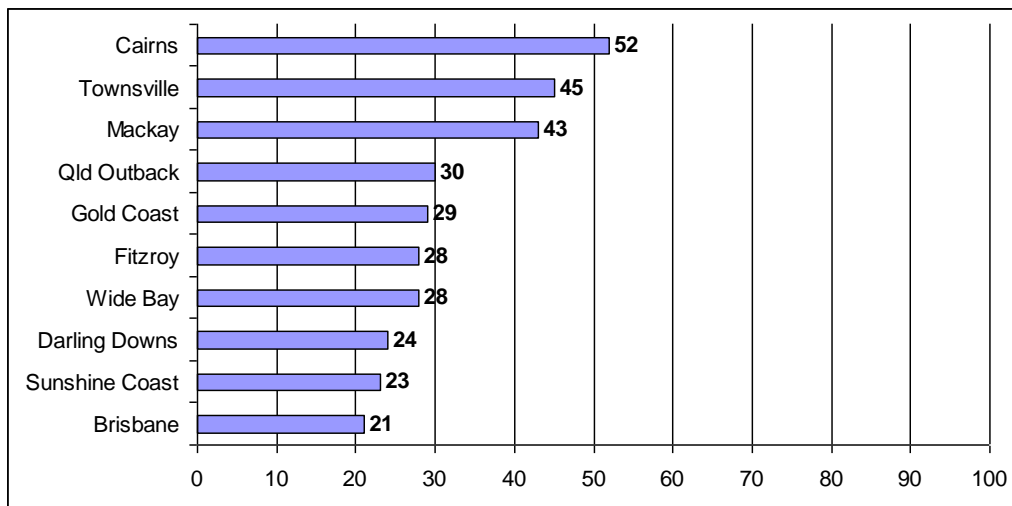


Figure 8. Regional results – percentage of households that had enough drinking water (for 3 days) if cut off from essential services

