

# Business Queensland Connect



November 2024

## Preparing for natural events and advancing disability access

As summer approaches, Queenslanders are reminded to prepare for potential natural disasters. Knowing the risks and being prepared saves lives, money and accelerates recovery. This month's edition delivers a range of resources to help, whether you are in metropolitan, regional, rural or remote locations. All Queenslanders can:

- stay informed through [alerts and warnings](#)
- create a plan for [home](#) and [business](#)
- access [support and funding](#).

November also highlights [Disability Action Week](#), with the year's theme of accessibility. From 24 November to 1 December, we recognise the contributions the 1 in 5 Queenslanders with a disability make to families, communities, workplaces and our state's economy.

Find out more about programs that support and incentivise employers and business owners to include diversity here:

- [Skilling Queenslanders for Work](#)
- [Workforce Connect Fund](#)
- [Back to Work](#).

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## Natural talents flourish with business incentives and support



Alexandra Hayes-Hatten (*pictured*), a young woman from the Sunshine Coast with dyslexia, has triumphed over academic challenges to pursue her passion for conservation.

Recently named [Vocational Student of the Year at the 2024 Queensland Training Awards North Coast](#) region, Alex is a shining example of determination and ambition.

Completing a Certificate I in Conservation and Ecosystem Management through the [Skilling Queenslanders for Work](#) program, Alexandra's journey showcases the impact of inclusive education and employer support in helping individuals with disability succeed in their chosen fields.

"My challenges in school affected my confidence, but with the support of peers and mentors, I realised I could still achieve my goals," she shared. "I want to inspire others facing similar barriers to see that they too can overcome obstacles."

She is now ECOllaboration's Training and Development Project Manager, facilitating traineeships and managing projects. She excels in leadership, communication, and engagement and aspires to become a university lecturer.

To learn more about incentives and support for a diverse, inclusive workforce, visit [Back to Work](#).



## Be prepared this disaster season

In Queensland, severe weather can strike at any time, and being prepared can make all the difference. Information on Business

## Personal disaster plans to protect employees

Your employees are one of your greatest assets, and in the case of a weather event it is important to make sure they're prepared with

Queensland's [Small Business Disaster Hub](#) can help.

Follow these three steps to get ready:

- **Understand your risk** – impacts from extreme weather are different for everyone. Learn about what can happen where you live and work, and how it could affect your business.
- **Make a plan** – make a business emergency plan so your employees know what to do in extreme weather.
- **Pack a business emergency kit** – include first aid and survival supplies, protection equipment and gear, an emergency contact list for employees, key suppliers and clients, and copies of important business documents.

Learn more on [business.qld.gov.au/disaster](https://business.qld.gov.au/disaster)

Download the business continuity plan template on [getready.qld.gov.au/business](https://getready.qld.gov.au/business)

their own personal plans before disaster strikes.

Encourage your employees to create their own personal emergency plan so they know what to do and who to contact in extreme weather.

Clear communication during emergencies can be critical to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone.

The new [Get Ready Queensland Severe Weather Household Emergency Plan](#) is a simple online form making it quick and easy to plan for an emergency.

Don't leave it until the last minute. Make sure you and your team are ready by putting your business AND personal plans in place today.

Visit [getready.qld.gov.au/plan](https://getready.qld.gov.au/plan) to create a severe weather personal emergency plan.



## Disaster planning for primary producers with livestock

Primary producers see the impact of unpredictable weather every day.

Working with industry, councils and government, producers can now access an emergency plan specifically designed to help them build greater disaster resilience and prepare for the impacts of severe weather.



## Essential disaster-readiness tips for business

The [Queensland Small Business Commissioner](#) has collated insights from small business owners who've been through a disaster, sharing their quick tips to help you get back to business fast.

- **Organise key documents:** Store critical records like tax invoices, bank statements, insurance policies,

Developed by [Get Ready Queensland](#), the Queensland Government's lead program for disaster preparedness, the [Livestock Severe Weather Emergency Plan](#) is a comprehensive, step-by-step solution to get producers, their property, livestock and business, disaster ready.

The plan has information and guidance on:

- designing a severe weather emergency plan
- understanding risk, preparing a property, and packing an emergency kit
- emergency contacts, alerts, and what to do during and after severe weather.

It's important to have a plan to ensure your property, livestock and business is ready. With prior planning, your property and business are more likely to be operational sooner.

Head to [getready.qld.gov.au/plan](https://getready.qld.gov.au/plan) today.

rates notice and property leases in waterproof cases or digital backups.

- **Capture your inventory:** Photograph your stock, equipment, and premises now—these are invaluable for insurance claims.
- **Log your actions:** Keep a journal of all decisions and events or use this [event log](#). Include 'before and after' photos of damage to document your journey.
- **Know your CCTV:** Learn now how to download or save CCTV footage and protect essential equipment, like CCTV and modems, from water.
- **Protect your connectivity:** Have a power bank or portable charger for your phone.

Disaster legal help is available by calling Legal Aid Queensland on 1300 527 700 or [Disaster legal help - Legal Aid Queensland](#)



## Mentors celebrate business success

For over 20 years, Queensland's [Mentoring for Growth](#) (M4G) program has helped small businesses tackle challenges, build resilience, and thrive with support from an experienced network of 400+ mentors.

Highlights from this year's program includes:

- more than 360 sessions state-wide
- more than 50% of sessions were held with female business owners
- a quarter of sessions with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse business owners
- a 100% increase in participation among First Nations businesses.

The M4G program continues to empower Queensland businesses, strengthening communities and driving economic growth. Register on [business.qld.gov.au/mentoring](https://business.qld.gov.au/mentoring)



## Creating accessibility for all Queensland audiences

[Disability Action Week](#) focuses on the importance of accessibility, asking Queensland businesses to connect, include and empower all audiences when creating events and communication.

Small, easy changes can make the difference for people with diverse communication needs.

Take action to remove barriers that may prevent people with disability from accessing information. Consider:

- making your web content **easy to read**
- including **alt-text for images** for people who use screen readers
- writing documents in **plain language** – you could go further and make Easy Read and dyslexia-friendly versions and Auslan translations available

Learn how to create [accessible communication](#).

To ensure events can be enjoyed by everyone, check out the Queensland Government [accessible event guide and checklist](#).



## Helping business through digital improvements

The Digital Solutions program helps support small businesses to harness opportunities and grow in the digital economy. Services cover a range of topics including digital marketing, social media, websites and selling online, business software and cybersecurity.

Small business owner Daniel McCullough (*pictured*) recently transitioned his online business from part-time to full-time. He reached out to the Digital Solutions program for guidance on how to grow his business using digital tools.

Daniel learned how to streamline his online booking system, started an e-newsletter, and improved search engine optimisation to increase online visibility.

Through the Digital Solutions program, small businesses can access free workshops, webinars and self-directed tutorials.

Additionally, for a small fee, small businesses can also access four hours of one-on-one digital advice from a qualified and experienced business advisor.

Find out more about the program [business.gov.au/digitalsolutions](https://business.gov.au/digitalsolutions)

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## Neurodiversity program bolsters retail workforce



The Australian Retailers Association (ARA) is providing meaningful employment to neurodivergent people and people with a disability through the [Retail Ready and Able \(QLD\)](#) program.

The program is changing lives and transforming the workforce of Queensland's retail sector by providing training, mentoring, and coaching to enhance employability and inclusivity for neurodivergent people and people with a disability.

Since July 2023, over 200 job seekers have been supported, with 40 per cent securing employment. The initiative has been instrumental in skill development, confidence-building, and the promotion of inclusive hiring practices.

Retail Ready and Able (QLD) participant, Rebecca (*pictured*), embarked on a journey to transform her career. On the first day of placement Rebecca inspired the Rivers management team with her infectious energy and determination. It didn't take long for her skills to shine and her potential to be recognised, and she was offered permanent part-time employment just one day into her work placement.

The Ready Retail and Able (QLD) program, funded by the [Workforce Connect Fund](#), is dedicated to fostering diversity, positioning the retail sector as leaders in inclusiveness.



### **Growth for rural and remote workforce**

Markus Mueller, owner of Outdoor Solutions Queensland, faced challenges recruiting and onboarding in remote areas. By partnering with Kym Wessling, the Queensland Government's Agriculture and Horticulture Industry Workforce Advisor, Markus developed a targeted workforce plan and secured a HR Workforce Connect Grant.



### **Emerging talent, get screen-ready!**

Screen Queensland's [Film Intensive Script to Screen](#) program is designed for emerging film professionals, writers, and storytellers looking to build job-ready skills and gain industry experience in Queensland's growing film sector.

Supported by the Queensland Government's [Workforce Connect Fund](#), this program

This allowed him to build a cloud-based HR system that:

- streamlines HR processes
- improves employee access to resources
- enhances onboarding with engaging video content.

The Industry Workforce Advisor program supports businesses across the state, especially in rural and remote areas, with expert guidance and resources to address workforce challenges. Connect with an [Industry Workforce Advisor](#) today!

equips participants with practical expertise in areas including camera operation, costume, lighting, production, and locations.

Guided by experienced industry professionals, participants will also receive industry credits and be part of short film productions through a series of workshops and intensives.

The program will be held in Cairns and Brisbane in 2025. [Apply now.](#)

**Applications are open until 29 November.**



### Free commercial premises for regional creative businesses

The [Regional Place Activation Program](#), offered by [Renew Australia](#) in conjunction with the [Queensland Small Business Commissioner](#), has arranged for free commercial leases across six councils throughout Queensland.

The program offers eligible businesses free tenancy to generate vibrancy in town centres. With the first round of participating councils now receiving expressions of interest, the second cohort of councils has been announced as:

- Banana Shire Council
- Barcaldine Regional Council
- Charters Towers Regional Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Isaac Regional Council
- Winton Shire Council



### Free cyber resilience advice and recovery support

Build your business' cyber resilience with free, tailored, person-to-person support from the Small Business Cyber Resilience Service.

Available to small businesses with 19 or less full-time (or equivalent) employees, including sole traders, the service will provide free cyber security advice and recovery support.

Access can be made via:

- The Small Business Cyber Resilience Service helpline on 1800 595 170 or submit a request through the online form at [idcare.org/smallbusiness](https://idcare.org/smallbusiness).
- Small businesses who are experiencing a live cyber incident should contact the Australian Cyber

If you are a creative business operating within these council areas, [keep an eye out](#) for the expressions of interest opening for Round Two in December 2024.

Security Hotline on **1300CYBER1** for assistance.

To learn more, go to [idcare.org/smallbusiness](https://idcare.org/smallbusiness)

## Awards



*Image: Róisín O'Neill, Head of \_nology and Alix Winter, Executive Director at the Department of Trade, Employment and Training.*

### Celebrating innovation at this year's Women in Digital Awards.

The 2024 [Women in Digital](#) Awards recognise exceptional women making waves in the tech industry.

This year's "Digital Workforce: Skills for the Future" award was awarded to [\\_nology](#), a standout tech training and talent provider, dedicated to bridging the digital skills gap with an inclusive and innovative approach.

Their graduates — 61% women and non-binary, 79% career changers — are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to shape a resilient tech workforce.

As the winner of the Digital Workforce award, \_nology exemplifies a commitment to building a future-ready, skilled and diverse workforce. Congratulations to \_nology and all finalists who are advancing inclusivity and innovation across the digital sector in Australia!

Find out more about the Queensland Government's workforce action plan [here](#).



### Australian of the Year nomination for neurodiversity champion

Seeing the untapped potential of neurodivergent individuals in Australia's workforce, data analyst Geoffrey Smith (*pictured*) co-founded [Australian Spatial Analytics](#) (ASA). ASA is a work-integrated social enterprise delivering geo-spatial and engineering services, helping to meet a skills shortage in the tech industry.

Today, 80% of ASA's employees are neurodivergent, with 61% previously long-term unemployed, highlighting the social challenges neurodivergent individuals often face in finding meaningful



employment. ASA's model demonstrates how inclusive hiring can address both industry needs and social inequality, creating a more diverse and skilled workforce.

Best wishes to Geoffrey and all the nominees presented for [Australian of the Year](#).

## Events and programs



### Free regional emergency response plan program

If you are a small business owner in the Bundaberg, Fraser Coast, Gympie or South Burnett region, this program offers tailored resources, including risk assessments and development of an Emergency Response Plan specifically designed for your business through face-to-face session.

By participating, you'll learn to identify potential threats, develop robust contingency plans, and ensure the safety of your employees and assets. The program also emphasises the importance of regular updates and continuous improvement in disaster preparedness strategies.

Don't wait for a disaster to strike—take proactive steps to protect your business and build a resilient future.

To learn more and book a session visit [businesshq.org.au/beprepared](https://businesshq.org.au/beprepared)

The Queensland Government respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and seas from across Queensland.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the state.



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