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Flood-affected Queenslanders embrace resilient home upgrades

Queenslanders impacted by natural disasters are turning to resilient home upgrades to help protect themselves against future weather events.

North Brisbane couple Elizabeth and Kevin Kriesch are among the first participants of the Queensland and Australian Government's Resilient Homes Fund (RHF) program, signing up for flood-resilient upgrades with the support of their insurer RACQ.

RACQ Chief Executive Insurance Trent Sayers said the scheme's resilience retrofit work was being delivered to eligible members through the insurance claims process.

"RACQ worked closely with the State Government to develop and roll out the RHF program, so it's great to see the first homeowners start to come through the pilot phase," Mr Sayers said.

"This is the best example you will find anywhere in Australia of government and insurers working together to make homes more disaster resilient.

"We live in the country's most disaster-prone state and unfortunately, we know we'll face more severe and frequent weather events.

"That's why we're helping our members impacted by last year's devastating floods to upgrade their homes with more robust building designs and materials to help minimise damage as well as reduce the time it takes to repair and clean their property and return home should it be flooded again.

"While we can't stop Mother Nature, we can better protect ourselves, and it's through initiatives like the RHF that we will be able to make communities more resilient and reduce the financial and emotional impacts of natural disasters."

Queensland Public Works and Procurement Minister Mick de Brenni said almost 6,000 Queenslanders had signed up to the RHF program, with over 40% of those opting for resilience upgrades to their homes.

"The \$741 million Resilient Homes Fund is not only the largest natural disaster rebuilding program in Australia since Cyclone Tracy in 1974, but also Australia's largest ever climate adaptation program," Minister de Brenni said.

"We will always stand shoulder to shoulder with Queenslanders when they are most in need, particularly off the back of those natural disasters we know all too well.

RACQ is Queensland's largest club and peak independent motoring organisation. We were formed in 1905 to represent the interests of the State's first motorists and today campaign for safer drivers, vehicles and roads on behalf of more than 1.7 million members who own the Club. We offer those members a vast range of motoring, insurance, banking, entertainment and travel services and benefits, and each year respond to more than a million calls for roadside assistance.

"The Palaszczuk Government is proud to be helping Queenslanders get back into their homes sooner, to build back better, and respond to the changes in climate we're already experiencing."

The Kriesch family said they were passionate about ensuring their home was more resilient for future generations which is why they applied for the RHF grant.

"We have lived in our north Brisbane home for 50 years and it's never flooded before, so to see a metre of water through our ground floor last February was really distressing," Ms Kriesch said.

"We want this home to hold its value and be an asset for our children and grandchildren which is why we are incorporating flood-resilient changes to the lower level, including raising electrical circuits, and using waterproof walling, skirting, cupboards, doors and flooring.

"Hopefully we won't have another natural disaster, but if we do, the clean-up will be much easier and quicker because the home is much more resilient."

The upgrades are being carried out as south east Queenslanders mark the one-year anniversary of the 2022 February floods, which caused tens of thousands of homes and businesses to be inundated and left many families displaced.

Mr Sayers said RACQ received almost 16,000 claims for damage to properties and vehicles from the event, which is ranked as Australia's costliest natural disaster on record.

"We've completed more than 83% of our home claims and materially finalised all our motor claims. We continue to work through the remaining repairs as quickly and safely as possible, with priority given to complex cases and vulnerable members," he said.

"While we are tracking ahead of industry, we know it can take up to 18 months to fully recover from an event of this scale and appreciate this can be a long and difficult process for affected homeowners.

"We will be there for our members until every claim is finalised and everyone is back in their homes.

"Looking ahead, we know there will be more natural disasters and that's why we have and will continue to make improvements to our claims processes to ensure we can best serve our members in their time of need."

More information about the Resilient Home Fund can be found [here](#).

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