

Jasper community strength celebrated through *Sharing Our Strength* film

Wednesday 16 September 2026. Almost three years after Cyclone Jasper, communities across the Barron Floodplain are invited to come together this month to celebrate the strength, ingenuity and relationships forged during one of Far North Queensland's most significant natural disasters.

On Thursday 24 September, Barron Connected Communities, with support from the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) and Centacare FNQ, will present *Sharing Our Strength – Moving Forward After Jasper*, a free community gathering that recognises the people, relationships and collective action that proved critical during the disaster and recovery.

The event marks the culmination of 12 months of collaboration through Barron Connected Communities, offering residents the opportunity to reconnect, share experiences, and reinforce the trusted connections essential in times of adversity.

Stories of that community strength will be shared throughout the evening through photography, artwork and conversation, alongside the premiere of a short community film documenting first-hand accounts of the unprecedented flooding that isolated communities across the Barron Floodplain in December 2023.

The film highlights resilience and resourcefulness, including residents establishing makeshift recovery centres in garages, pooling generators to create community charging stations, helping neighbours evacuate, and drawing on local knowledge to support others in a time of need.

Centacare FNQ Disaster Management senior worker Patrick Sim said strong relationships were central to community resilience.

"A resilient community is not only connected, but also has strong, positive relationships. These relationships become critical in sharing support during difficult times," said Mr Sim.

Machans Beach resident Mary Brodie said those connections became critical when communities were cut off.

"We were isolated, and we really could only rely on each other. The community rallied together to help and support the people who were flooded. That was our strength," said Ms Brodie.

CAFNEC Community Campaigner Alex Benavides, who led the film's development, said it was important for community members to shape the story rather than simply be its subjects.

"People wanted their experiences to mean something. They wanted the lessons from the floods to be remembered and applied to make their communities safer and better prepared for the future," said Ms Benavides.

Developed through a participatory, community-led process, the film features seven community leaders from Yorkeys Knob, Machans Beach and Holloways Beach, along with Councillor Rhonda Coghlan and Mr Sim.

Community members helped shape three central themes: learning from past disasters and being better prepared; the critical role of strong community connections in resilience and recovery; and recognition that the mental health impacts of disaster can continue long after homes and infrastructure have been repaired.

The film also highlights the community-owned Machans Beach Community Centre, which played a critical role during the recovery and has since been upgraded to strengthen its resilience for future events.

Following its premiere, the film will remain community-owned and available as an ongoing resource for education, community engagement and advocacy.

Sharing Our Strength – Moving Forward After Jasper is a free community event and will be held on Thursday 24 September 2026 from 5.30 pm–8 pm at Narrow Tracks Distilling, 60–70 Magazine Street, Stratford, with live music by Tessa Devine and food provided.

Media Assets: Click [here](#) for images showing the *Sharing Our Strength* film co-design process, post-Cyclone Jasper flooding and Barron Connected Communities activities.

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About Barron Connected Communities

Barron Connected Communities was established through Queensland Health's Tackling Regional Adversity through Connected Communities (TRACC) program, with Centacare FNQ convening the group and auspicing program funding.

Barron Connected Communities has brought residents and organisations together through events, training and community-led initiatives designed to strengthen connections and resilience across the Barron Floodplain.

Activities have included family fun days at Caravonica and Holloways Beach, Mental Health First Aid training for community volunteers, a mural and sensory garden with art therapy at Machans Beach Community Association, Biri Bana Cultural Walks on Yirriganydji Country, nature walks through flood-affected Northern Beaches communities and a volunteers' breakfast.

Sharing Our Strength is the culmination of this activity, providing an opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved, reconnect and look to the continued strengthening of community relationships and resilience.

