DISASTER MANAGEMENT

LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Communication Sub Plan

Document control

This sub plan will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. The Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) will ensure contact details are kept and up to date.

Minor amendments to this plan can be made by the LDC. Amendments which affect the intent of the plan must be endorsed by the LDMG.

All approved amendments are to be listed below.

Version	Date	Comments	Approved by
1.1		Supersedes Communication Sub Plan 2016; Sub plan reviewed.	LDC
1.2		Inserted paragraph on Emergency Alert under Communication Methods.	LDC

Table of contents

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full title
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
Council	Rockhampton Regional Council
IMS	Guardian IMS (Disaster Management System)
LDC	Local Disaster Coordinator
LDCC	Local Disaster Coordination Centre
LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group
LDMP	Local Disaster Management Plan
QAS	Queensland Ambulance Service
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
QPS	Queensland Police Service
SES	State Emergency Service

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this Sub Plan is to guide communications through the six possible stages of an event: Prevention and Preparedness, Alert, Lean Forward, Stand Up, Stand Down and Recovery.

This Sub Plan is to be used in conjunction with the Local Disaster Management Plan and its Sub Plans. It sets out the agreed communications responsibilities and actions for the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and applies to emergency/ disaster events and associated hazards within the Rockhampton Local Government Area.

The LDCC is an interactive multi-agency coordination centre used for complex emergency and disaster events. The LDCC acts as a centre for acquiring and deploying support resources, managing **information collection and dissemination**, developing intelligence and strategic plans for the local capabilities and maintaining an overall record of the event.

The provision of timely public information and warnings tailored to our region plays a significant role in making our community safer. Sharing the right information at the right time will empower individuals to make informed decisions, take action and reduce potential impacts and consequences of the hazard.

Objectives

The objectives of the Sub Plan are to ensure that the public information is provided before, during, and after an emergency to reduce the potential impact of an emergency or hazard. This includes warnings, which provide point-in-time information about a hazard that is impacting or expected to impact communities.

Key contacts

- Chair Local Disaster Management Group
- Local Disaster Coordinator
- Coordinator Disaster Management, Rockhampton Regional Council
- Media and Communications Coordinator, Rockhampton Regional Council

Responsibilities

The coordination and dissemination of communication relating to supporting warnings and alerts and community consequence is the responsibility of the LDMG Chair and LDC.

All communication is to be approved by the relevant lead agency and LDMG Chair through the LDC and recorded within Guardian IMS (disaster management system).

During the Lean Forward and Stand Up stages of an event, a dedicated Media Officer will operate from the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC).

Partner agencies that provide information and warnings are:

Organisation	Responsibility
Rockhampton Regional Council (RRC)	Information on Council road closures, traffic routes, evacuations, storm tide, relief centres, evacuation centres, debris clean up and all matters relating to the activation of the LDMG.
ABC RADIO and commercial radio stations (4R0, HitFM, Triple M)	Current Alerts and Warnings for Queensland regions as per arrangements with Queensland State Government.
Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)	Current Alerts and Warnings for Queensland regions as per arrangements with Queensland State Government.
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	Information about an animal/plant disease emergency and its implications.
Department of Transport and Main Roads	Information on road closures on state roads.
Ergon Energy	Information regarding power outages and power supply.
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)	Coordinates media and public information regarding fire, chemical or gas emergency situations.
Queensland Health	For information regarding a public health epidemic or heatwave.
Queensland Police Service (QPS)	Information about a locally managed incident, including directed evacuations.

Warning principles

Public information during the response phase of a disaster management operation provides the community with awareness of hazards and information about events and recommended actions, such as local evacuation arrangements and specific measures available for vulnerable groups (e.g. the elderly, ill and people with a disability).

Warnings related to an event are issued by the relevant lead agency. The notification and dissemination of information and warnings does not rely on the activation of a disaster management group. Rather, they should be the automatic responsibility of disaster management agencies, regardless of the status of activation of a disaster management group.

The release of additional information to the community regarding the development of an emergency/ disaster and associated hazards will be the responsibility of the Chairperson of the LDMG. This information will be released in conjunction with representatives of lead agencies and/ or support agencies of the LDMG, who are responsible for the input of relevant data to this process.

Under Section 30 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the LDMG is responsible for ensuring the community is aware of ways of mitigating the adverse effects of an event, and preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster. This involves raising awareness of identified threats and the means by which the public should respond at an individual and/or household level, and may include warnings and directions, as provided by lead agencies for warnings relating to the particular hazard.

Disaster and emergency warnings need to be timely, consistent and succinct, so that people can take appropriate action. They need to include a call to action and empower people to make decisions about their own safety. Messages need to be based on risk and include information on potential impacts and consequences.

Warnings need to be trusted, authoritative and verifiable. Individuals are likely to hear about a potential disaster situation from a variety of sources and most will seek to confirm that message before they take any action. Therefore the frequency and timing of emergency warnings needs to be carefully considered. As long as the information is consistent and led by the relevant agency, emergency warnings issued from two or more agencies will help to confirm and reinforce the warning message.

Effective warning systems are an essential prevention strategy that aims to convey information to the community relating to the impending disaster event. Messages need to be readily accessible. Warnings to the community from the relevant agencies and Council are transmitted via electronic media (i.e. sms, e-mail, social media, websites, emergency dashboard, digital display boards) and radio as per the processes of their respective organisations.

Rockhampton Region Communities

There are different communities and audiences that may need to take priority and will benefit from receiving early advice of an impending serious event.

Some of these communities are identified below.

- Non-English Speaking Background (NESB)
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)
- People with a disability
- Aged Care
- School communities

During a disaster event, care should be taken to ensure that messages are accessible to all audiences, including employing resources such as an Auslan interpreter during doorstops and adding captions to Facebook videos or summarising the video in an accompanying text post.

Role of the Media Cell within the LDCC

The responsibility for media and communications within the LDCC lies with an officer from Rockhampton Regional Council, who will act as a Media Officer. The duties of the Media Cell within the LDCC are described within the Local Disaster Centre Sub Plan. A 'cheat sheet' for the media officer can be found at in O Drive at O:\executive\MENG\Media\Disaster.

Communication Process

There are six communication phases for emergency/ disaster events and associated hazards used within communications and community engagement strategies and procedures. These are:

Phase	Primary purpose of communication
Phase 1 – Prevention and Preparation	Promote overall disaster preparedness and resilience in the community.
Phase 2 – Alert	Ensure community is aware of risk and has information on how to prepare.
Phase 3 – Lean Forward	Ensure community is aware an event may be imminent and has access to required information and resources in order for them to be able to make decisions.
Phase 4 – Stand Up	Provide accurate and timely updates.
Phase 5 – Stand Down	Provide information about scope and impact of event, any resources and assistance available.
Phase 6 – Recovery	Share ongoing support available and updates on any recovery work.

Information to be released

When a disaster situation threat is increasing and then subsequently during the disaster situation communications will focus on:

- Getting information to the people who need it;
- Getting the right information to the right people;
- Ensuring it is consistent, timely, user-friendly, accurate, and useful.

This information may consist of:

- Nature of the disaster threat and advice about actual situation
- Advice on what precautions to take and what immediate actions may be required
- Location of the (likely) disaster (area affected) and number of people involved
- Public safety
- Evacuation information
- Continuing hazards
- Environmental impact
- Social impact
- Cultural impact
- Economic impact
- Agencies involved in response
- Scope of agency involvement and activity and future tasks of agencies
- Extent of estimated public and private damages
- Safety instructions, how to respond and stay safe
- How and where to get personal assistance
- How and where to get information regarding assistance for livestock and companion (pet) animals
- Telephone numbers for donations and methods of donating money
- Other offers of assistance

The Stages of Communication of the LDMG

Stage 1 – Prevention and Preparation

This stage serves as an opportunity to increase overall disaster resilience in the community outside of an actual disaster event.

The 'prevent and prepare' phase has two aims:

- Increase awareness and education in the community of the risks they face;
- Limit the impact of a disaster by ensuring the community has taken appropriate action to prepare.

These aims will be achieved through:

- Regular media, engagement and education opportunities throughout the year;
- Targeted, benchmarked campaigns to promote specific behaviours.

Messages will:

- Promote the Rockhampton Emergency Dashboard
- Promote the five steps to be READY:
    - Step 1 – Understand Your Risks
    - Step 2 - Make a Plan (Household Emergency and Evacuation Plan)
    - Step 3 - Pack Supplies (Emergency Kit and Evacuation Kit)
    - Step 4 – Prepare your Home
    - Step 5 – Protect your Pet (Pet Emergency Kit)
- Promote how to Respond (Tune in to Warnings, Prepare for Evacuation, Check on Neighbours)
- Promote how to Recover (where to find information and resources)
- Share and support Disaster Management messages from other agencies.

These communications are managed through a separate communications and engagement strategy.

Stage 2 – Alert

At the **Alert** phase Council's Communications Team will begin preparing for communications during a disaster. Any communication will be at the direction of the LDC, with the LDMG Chairperson as spokesperson.

Specific actions at this point will be to:

- Establish a roster in preparation to Lean Forward.
- Email media contacts and inform them of LDMG moving to alert phase. Advise further updates will be provided if the situation develops.
- Print off hard copy list of key media contacts.
- Create or share communications with key information for public, e.g.:
    - 'If it's flooded, forget it'
    - Where to go to get sand bags, other ways to prepare
    - Where to get information – lead agency, Emergency Dashboard.
- IMS – ensure users are familiar and comfortable with software.
- Provide support to ensure RRC staff are kept updated.

Stage 3 – Lean Forward

The **Lean Forward** phase triggers the activation of the LDCC and Media Officers.

Officers will use email, social media and IMS to issue regular updates to the media and community. Rolling updates should be published on a single page on the news section of Council's website, ensuring the most up to date information is at the top. For example: https://bit.ly/3nBYq64.

Any communication will be at the direction of the LDC, with the Chairperson as spokesperson wherever possible.

Action	Detail
Media Officers activated	Media Officers set up in LDCC. Make contact with all media outlets to ensure they are aware LDCC has moved to *Lean Forward* phase. Begin to use IMS for warnings and appropriate actions required. Stay in regular contact with emergency service agencies media reps. Organise media briefings if required and respond to media enquiries. Record briefings where possible and livestream to Facebook when necessary. Regularly monitor and respond to enquiries on social media. Correct public misinformation. Event will be set up in IMS – ensure correct protocols are used at all times to allow for consistency and continuity. Place LEAN FORWARD banner on website and Emergency Dashboard.
Prepare key messages and briefing notes for Council spokespeople	Depending on the disaster this can be around: • Emergency Dashboard • Road closures – Flooded, Forget It • Sandbags and pile locations • Storm tide information - online mapping • Ice, power etc – if applicable • Looking out for your neighbour • Evacuation – staying with friends, family, in alternative accommodation, assembly areas and centres • Isolated communities • Economic - ensure messaging considers the 'true impact' of the event.

Stage 4 – Stand Up

The **Stand Up** phase sees a continued focus on ensuring the community, media and internal staff have the most up to date information.

Any communication will be at the direction of the LDC, with the LDMG Chairperson as spokesperson wherever possible.

Action	Detail
Media Officers remain activated according to roster	Maintain regular contact with all media (email, phone, Facebook). Continue issuing media releases, website and social media updates with messaging agreed on with Disaster Management Coordinator/LDC/LDMG Chair. Continue to stay in regular contact with emergency service media units for the latest developments. Regularly monitor and respond to enquiries on social media. Correct public misinformation. Event will be set up in IMS – ensure correct protocols are used at all times to allow for consistency and continuity. Attend LDMG to ensure updated information is known. Provide daily update for Sitrep – stats etc. Capture images for possible submissions post event. Potential for Politicians (Fed and State) to visit the area.
Prepare key messages and briefing notes for Council spokespeople	Depending on the disaster this can be around: • Economic - ensure messaging considers the 'true impact' of the event and won't have a negative impact on local businesses/ tourism • Road closures – Flooded, Forget It • Sandbags and pile locations • Ice, power etc – if applicable • Looking out for your neighbour • Evacuation – staying with friends, family, in alternative accommodation, assembly areas and centres • Isolated communities • Government and Agency Support available to residents

	• Advertising of potential pop up Hubs or Community Meetings that may occur • Potential for joint media with Fed/State politicians – highlight links to former funding and support.

Stage 5 – Stand Down

Media Officers will be stood down by the LDC and communications move from response to recovery mode.

Action	Detail
Ongoing communications	Issue media release, website update and social media update to mark the end of the incident, highlighting messages of recovery and resilience. Promote good news stories from these groups. Ensure photos of damage and other images associated with Event are obtained and saved. Regularly monitor and respond to enquiries on social media. Ensure images and other intel gathered are stored/ captured for easy future reference and use. Remove ALERT banner from website and Emergency Dashboard.
Prepare key messages and briefing notes for Council spokespeople	Depending on the disaster this can be around: • Economic - ensure messaging considers the 'true impact' of the event • Recovery messages, support agencies • Looking out for your neighbour • Isolated communities • Government and Agency Support available to residents – psychological, funding etc • Potential for Politicians (Fed and State) to visit the area – highlight links to any former funding/support • Advertising of potential pop up Hubs or Community Meetings.

Stage 6 – Recovery

Recovery from a disaster may extend for months or years beyond the actual event.

The focus of communications during this stage may be on:

- Ongoing support available for residents
- Works undertaken to repair damage
- Projects designed to capture community experience
- Anniversaries of events
- Improvements Council/ LDMG has embedded for future events
- Engagement with the community to further understand individual experiences.

Communication Methods

Social Media

The RRC Communications Team will proactively use Council's corporate Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rockhamptonregionalcouncil/) to deliver messages to residents. This page will also be used as an information gathering tool from the public posting. Other social media channels, such as Youtube and Twitter, will be used when necessary.

Council Website

The Disaster Management pages on Council's website will be regularly updated to ensure the most appropriate information is available to residents. Place ALERT Banner on the website when LDCC is moved to ALERT.

Emergency Dashboard

Access to real time emergency information all year round in one convenient spot including all emergency contact information.

Customer Service screens

Display of images (education tips etc) on the powerpoint displayed in Customer Service Centres.

DL Flyers/Other

Your Emergency Guide, magnets and others as required can be a quick and easy reference guide for the community

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets on disasters faced within the Rockhampton Region are available online and at libraries and Customer Service Centres.

Messages on Hold

Messages on hold will be developed to inform residents of the season ahead and the resources that are available to them. These short quick messages are heard by customers who call into Council (while on hold) and are generally rotated monthly.

Quay Street Signs

Council owned digital signs located throughout the CBD. Organised through IT.

Display Board at the Rockhampton Town River Gauge

Messages will be shared at this, and other display boards along Quay Street. Organised through IT.

Get Ready Day/Other Community Events

Rockhampton Regional Council participates in Emergency Services Day each year, and Council's Disaster Management team attends other community events throughout the year.

Emergency Alert

The Queensland Emergency Alert provides a platform for local and state agencies to issue public information and warnings. It is an effective means of delivering messages directly to a person's mobile or landline phone, often complementing other forms of public information such as traditional media, social media and website updates. Targeted areas at risk can be sent Emergency Alerts by completing a request form (template located in Guardian IMS Resources) and emailing it to the State Disaster Coordination Center, cc the District Disaster Coordinator. Within Guardian IMS Resources, example messages have been drafted that can be tailored for the event these can also be found on ECM #27785311. A polygon over a map indicating the targeted area at risk can quickly be created using the tools within Guardian IMS, saved as a compatible KML file and attached to the request.

Media Release

DD Month YYYY

Headline - summarise release

The Local Disaster Management Group has **ACTION** *(e.g. been placed on alert and sand will be provided free of charge to residents, as the Bureau of Meteorology has advised Tropical Cyclone Owen is set to impact the Rockhampton Region this weekend.)*

RELEVANT INFO *(e.g. BOM's current forecasts indicate that TC Owen will bring damaging winds and heavy rain, with the potential for flash flooding, and will reach our region on Sunday or Monday.)*

QUOTES FROM SPOKESPERSON *(e.g. Chair of the LDMG, Cr Tony Williams, said Council would be providing sand and that it was vital that residents prepared for the approaching cyclone.)*

"The latest modelling indicates that TC Owen will be heading down the east coast as a low and will impact our region towards the end of the week. The BOM have indicated that TC Owen appears similar to 2013's TC Oswald, but that it is a smaller system and is likely to move more quickly.

"Council will be providing sand for residents to fill their own bags with at four locations from 4pm today – Bridge Street near Stapleton Park, Dean Street opposite Mason Street, the Exhibition Road entrance of the Showgrounds, and the in the car park at Gracemere Swimming Pool.

"We will continue to monitor the levels throughout the coming days, ensuring more sand is provided if needed.

KEY MESSAGE/S FOR COMMUNITY

"It really is vital that our community is prepared for the winds and rain heading our way. In your Emergency Kit make sure there are things like a radio, a torch, charged power banks, a first aid kit, and enough food and water for three days.

"Getting rid of any debris in advance can make a huge difference. Trim any branches over your roof, clean out yards, and remember you can take any green waste or recycling to our landfill sites for free.

"We have a huge number of resources on our website to help you prepare, and you can use the emergency dashboard and our Facebook page to see the latest warnings and updates."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES *(e.g. There is a 5 day cyclone forecast available from the BOM here INSERT LINK. The Emergency Dashboard, which also gives advice on getting prepared, is here INSERT LINK.)*

LDCC CONTACT DETAILS

MEDIA OFFICER CONTACT DETAILS

Appendix B: Key messages for the community

Event

Fire

Possible key messages for inclusion in a media release or talking points include:

- Please continue to check the Queensland Fire & Emergency Services (QFES) website for updates and more information. It is vital to comply with directions of QFES.
- Have you prepared your home? There are some basic precautions you can take to help protect your property. Head over to the QFES website for more information: https://www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au/BushFire_Safety/Pages/Create-your-bushfire-survival-plan.aspx.
- Consult your Bushfire Survival Plan. If you plan to evacuate, make sure to act early. Waiting could reduce your options.
- It is important to remain vigilant and aware of your surroundings. As we know anything can happen and conditions can change in an instant. Be prepared, be aware, and above all be safe.
- Make sure you have an Emergency Kit and Evacuation Kit ready. (Checklists available here)
- Stay informed by checking Council's Emergency Dashboard: https://emergency.rockhamptonregion.qld.gov.au/.

Heatwaves

Possible key messages for inclusion in a media release or talking points include:

- Heatwaves can impact anyone. Babies, young people, elderly people, pets, people working outdoors and those with medical conditions such as asthma are particularly vulnerable and need to take special care during heatwaves.
- Follow the advice of Queensland Health for staying healthy in hot weather: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/713427/dm-stay-healthy-heat.pdf.

Flood

Possible key messages for inclusion in a media release or talking points are:

- If it's flooded, forget it. Never walk or drive through floodwaters.
- Locations to collect sandbags.
- Relocate rubbish bins to a higher level.
- Stay informed by checking Council's Emergency Dashboard: https://emergency.rockhamptonregion.qld.gov.au/.
- Begin clean up as soon as flood waters recede and it is safe. Wear proper equipment, including safety glasses and heavy work gloves, to protect yourself from injury.
- Make sure you have an Emergency Kit and Evacuation Kit ready. (Checklists available here)

Cyclones and storms

Possible key messages for inclusion in a media release or talking points are:

- Secure and brace all exterior doors and close all interior doors. Keep curtains and blinds closed.
- Stay indoors and away from windows, skylights and doors.
- Ensure any furniture or objects outside are brought inside or secured.
- Make sure you have an Emergency Kit and Evacuation Kit ready. (Checklists available here)
- Stay informed by checking Council's Emergency Dashboard: https://emergency.rockhamptonregion.qld.gov.au/.

Evacuation

Possible key messages for inclusion in a media release or talking points are:

- If you are planning to evacuate it is important to do so early. Waiting may reduce your options.
- Consider staying with family or friends that live in an area that won't be impacted by the disaster or is a safer alternative.
- This Australian Red Cross service allows our community to register, find and reunite family, friends and loved ones during and after a disaster event. Visit the Register.Find.Reunite website for more information.
- Location/s of temporary accommodation or evacuation centre/s.
- If you're heading to an evacuation centre, you can pre-register (urls for evacuation centre pre-registration available here).
- Take your Evacuation Kit with you. (Checklists available here)

Clean up

Possible key messages for inclusion in a media release or talking points are:

- Begin clean up as soon as it is safe to do so. Wear proper equipment, including safety glasses and heavy work gloves, to protect yourself from injury.
- Residents affected by the recent flooding are encouraged to make use of Council's free waste disposal days.
- Residents are asked to help out by separating their waste before disposal. There will be specific areas for recyclable materials; concrete, bricks and stones; green waste; and scrap metals.