



HINCHINBROOK
LOCAL DISASTER
MANAGEMENT GROUP



COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND WARNINGS SUB PLAN

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AUTHORITY TO PLAN

This Community Information and Warnings Sub Plan has been prepared by the Hinchinbrook Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) under the provisions of section 57 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld). This Plan is a Sub Plan of the Hinchinbrook Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) and is to be read in conjunction.

APPROVAL

The preparation of this Community Information and Warnings Sub Plan has been undertaken in accordance with the Act to detail the role of Hinchinbrook Shire Council (Council) in managing the effective collection, monitoring, management and dissemination of accurate, useful and timely information and warnings to the community for a local disaster event.


The Plan is recommended for distribution by the LDMG.

AMENDMENT CONTROL

The controller of the document is the Hinchinbrook Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC). Any proposed amendments to this sub plan should be forwarded in writing to:

Local Disaster Coordinator
Hinchinbrook Shire Council
25 Lannercost Street
INGHAM QLD 4850

The LDC may approve minor amendments to this document. Any changes to the intent of the document must be endorsed by the LDMG.

DOCUMENT HISTORY AND STATUS					
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Approved	Ramon Jayo		Chairperson		17/12/2020
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Maintained By	Local Disaster Management Group			Next Review Date	17/12/2021
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1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Community Information and Warnings Sub Plan is to manage the effective collection, monitoring, management and dissemination of accurate, useful and timely information and warnings to the community for a local disaster event, for which the LDMG and its plans and processes have been activated.

1.2 Functional Responsibility

The LDC is to ensure all agencies and members of the LDMG are aware of these arrangements.

1.3 Responsibilities of Agencies and Organisations

The release of information to the community regarding an emergency/disaster, and associated hazards, will be the responsibility of the Chairperson of the LDMG or his/her delegate. This will be done 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.

Some partner agencies that provide public information and warnings in the event of an emergency/disaster include:

ORGANISATION	RESPONSIBILITY
Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)	Provides cyclone, flood (flood alerts, flood watches and flood advice), severe storm (including thunderstorm), tsunami, land gales and severe bushfire weather advices to media outlets.
Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)	Provides information on road closures on state roads through 13 19 40.
Energy Queensland	Provides information on power outages and power supply.
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)	Provides management and administration of Emergency Alerts and Standard Emergency Warning System (SEWS). Provides media and public information regarding fire, bushfire, and hazardous chemical situations. Coordinated media and public information regarding fire, chemical or gas emergency situations.
Queensland Health	Provides information regarding a public health epidemic or heat wave.
Queensland Police Services (QPS)	Has responsibility for providing information about local incidents and includes directives for evacuations.
Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS)	Provides information on the availability of medical transportation and the possible imminent setbacks.
Hinchinbrook Shire Council	Provides local information on road closures, traffic routes, evacuations, cyclone shelter and evacuation centre, debris clean-up and all matters relating to the activation of the LDMG.
Department of Education	Responsible for keeping the public informed on school closures/openings.

1.4 Relevant Issues

Effective warning systems are an essential prevention strategy that aim to convey information to the community relating to disaster events. Warnings to the community from Hinchinbrook LDMG are transmitted via digital and social media, Electronic Community Noticeboards and radio. Communication

systems in use for disaster management purposes are detailed in Section 3 of this document, Emergency Messaging.

2. Communication Process

2.1 Communication Phases

COMMUNICATION PHASES *	DETAIL	ALIGNMENT WITH LDMP
Phase 1 – Seasonal Preparedness	This includes: Document holder information packs, Get Ready Fact Sheets, printed Disaster Ready Resource, Electronic Community Noticeboards throughout the district and Hinchinbrook Emergency Action Guide.	PREPAREDNESS
Phase 2 – Imminent Event	This would include relevant preparedness communications days out from a disaster event.	ALERT
Phase 3 – Operational	This would include communications 1-2 days out from a disaster event.	LEAN FORWARD
Phase 4 – During and Immediate Post Event	This would include communications immediate post event (within 1 – 2 days)	STAND UP
Phase 5 – Recovery Post Event	This would include communications post event (3 – 10 days)	STAND DOWN

* Length of phase is dependent upon impact assessment, size and scale of the disaster event.

2.2 Information to be released

Communications will focus on preparation for, response to and recovery from disaster events ensuring residents are informed of:

- the progress of the event;
- the progress made in combating the event;
- the threat to themselves and the actions they need to take; and
- recovery response, e.g. hard rubbish collection, community hub location.

2.3 Assessment of the situation

Information for events will be analysed and assessed as per the LDMP and its sub plans and procedures. Decisions relating to warning of impending events, possible evacuations or other issues affecting the local community will be distributed via a range of methods as identified in Section 3 Emergency Messaging.

Disaster events that will trigger community messaging include, but are not limited to:

- Cyclone and storm tide;
- River flooding;
- Localised flash flood events;
- Potential landslides;
- Bushfire; and
- Public health events – pandemics, heatwave, rapid onset events etc.

2.4 Identification of Vulnerable Communities

Hinchinbrook LDMG understands that some members of the community may need to be specifically targeted with disaster and emergency information and warnings due to their increased vulnerability to the adverse impacts associated with these events. Such groups include:

- Bluehaven Aged Care Facility;
- Palms Aged Care Service;
- Canossa Aged Care;
- Forrest Glen Retirement Village;
- Herbert River Apex Senior Citizens' Village; and
- Lions Halifax Senior Citizens Village.

The Hinchinbrook LDMG will work with external agencies regarding vulnerable groups and will assist as required.

The Hinchinbrook LDMG will maintain good relationships and lines of communication with external stakeholders to ensure that they meet the specific needs of the Shire's most at-risk individuals or groups during times of a disaster. Such agencies include:

- Queensland Ambulance Service;
- Blue Care;
- Ingham Disability Support Services;
- Hinchinbrook Community Support Centre;
- Everglow (Ethnic Community Care Links); and
- Endeavour Foundation.

3. Emergency Messaging

3.1 Method of distribution

The method of distribution may include:

- Official warning agencies e.g. Bureau of Meteorology (BOM);
- Local media;
- Telephone-based;
- Radio-based;
- TV-based;
- Internet-based: Council's website and Hinchinbrook Disaster Dashboard;
- Electronic Community Noticeboards (ECN) – Disaster Information Communication Loop;
- Social Media;
- Person-to-person;
- Community organisation networks;
- Roadside multi message sign board; and/or
- Queensland Government Emergency Alert System – SMS, text, recorded message.

MODE OF DISTRIBUTION	DELIVERY METHODS
Radio	Arrange interview for key messages from Mayor as Chair of LDMG
Television	Arrange interview for key messages from Mayor as Chair of LDMG
Newspaper	Arrange interview for key messages from Mayor as Chair of LDMG
Council Telephone System – Messages on Hold	Implement pre-recorded messages using same script as radio ads
Council Website	Maintain content distribution network to host emergency information for the website and Disaster Dashboard
Council's Social Media pages (Facebook)	Maintain increased monitoring and posting on Facebook page and Hinchinbrook Disaster Information page
Person-to-person	Doorknocking
Council's Disaster Information Communication Loops	Information updated regularly. Eight Electronic Community Noticeboards (screens) located throughout the district. Shire Hall, Rotary Park, Lucinda, Taylors Beach, Trebonne, Halifax, Forrest Beach and Francis Creek Rest Area.
Queensland Government Emergency Alert System	Key warnings/advisory messages sent via: - SMS to mobile phones; and - Automatic scripted voice recordings to landlines

3.2 Messaging for Vulnerable Communities

Hinchinbrook LDMG has adapted its communications process for the distribution of emergency messages to reflect the following principles as per Communication with People with Disability: National Guidelines for Emergency Managers, in order to target all vulnerable groups in the community.

The LDMG will:

- Only distribute necessary and relevant information;
- Verbalise visual information, including telephone numbers and websites details;
- Use multiple information and presentation formats;
- Keep information consistent, accurate, short and sharp; and
- Use clear language and simple sentences.

In order to assist in the delivery of emergency warning messages, the LDMG may utilise interpreter services if required.

3.3 Emergency Alerts (EA)

The Queensland Government's "Emergency Alert Service" is the national telephone-based emergency warning system, which provides the capability to send warning messages to fixed line telephones (i.e. landlines) based on the location of the handset, and to mobile telephones based on the location of the mobile telephone.

The "Emergency Alert" (EA) system will be utilised by the LDMG as required and as per the Queensland Emergency Alert Manual.

Messages will:

- Warn targeted areas of the local community of imminent and severe threats from disaster events; and
- Direct those warned to other sources of information and/or direct them to move away from an imminent hazard or threat.

The LDMG will utilise the Geographic Information System (GIS) data to generate a map of the region which includes a polygon of the defined incident area. Using this map, the EA system will:

- Identify the telephone services located within that polygon area;
- Send a voice message of up to 450 characters to all identified landline telephone services within the specified area;
- Send a text message of up to 160 characters to all identified mobile telephone services within the specified area; and
- Report on the delivery of these messages upon request.

The local areas to receive the messages and contents of the message will be prepared by the LDMG, approved by the Chairperson and processed as per the Queensland Emergency Alert Manual.

Predefined messages and mapped polygons have been prepared for storm surge zones and flooding areas and is stored on the Queensland Disaster Management Portal. These messages and mapped polygons will be reviewed by the LDC and LDMG prior to November each year.

3.4 Early Warning Network (EWN)

The “Early Warning Network” (EWN) is a privately operated, paid subscription service, which issues BOM weather advisories to subscribers via SMS messaging. Council does not use the EWN to issue updates to the community regarding weather events.

3.5 Social Media and Website (Digital Communications)

Council’s website and social media pages will be updated as required to ensure relevant and up to date information is available for the community.

The primary source of digital information for the public will be concentrated on the Hinchinbrook Disaster Dashboard located at disaster.hinchinbrook.qld.gov.au

Other media pages to assist information distribution will include:

- Council website;
- Council Facebook page;
- Hinchinbrook Disaster Information Facebook page;
- Get Ready Queensland website updates;
- Queensland Weather Warnings – BOM;
- Current Tropical Cyclones;
- Climate and Weather;
- Flood report bulletins;
- Road Conditions – Local and State;
- Media Releases – Council;
- Water and Sewerage Information; and
- Lost and Found Animals.

Increased monitoring and posting on Council Facebook page and Hinchinbrook’s Disaster Dashboard will occur during times of disaster by Council’s Media and Communications team.