



IGEM *Connect*

Inspector-General Emergency Management

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Welcome to the latest edition of IGEM Connect.

I had the pleasure recently to visit Flinders Shire and Palm Island, as part of the Townsville District Capability Review.

For those of you unfamiliar with our capability reviews, my Office is undertaking a progressive program of assessments within disaster districts across the State, focusing on plans, arrangements, processes and systems used to meet future challenges. These are measured against the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.

Following on from similar reviews at Warwick and Mackay, the Townsville assessment has been by far the largest of the capability reviews, incorporating in-depth assessment of the Townsville District Disaster Management Group, all related local disaster management groups (LDMGs), and seven councils.

The seven councils alone account for almost 10% of local authorities in Queensland.

Despite the wide diversity in size, population and location among the councils and groups, what has encouraged me has been the common overall commitment of those across the district in embracing the review and seeking to ensure the best possible disaster management arrangements are in place.

Flinders Shire was particularly impressive, running a detailed airport exercise which not only involved a full contingent of disaster management personnel, Local Disaster Management Group representatives and senior and key council staff but also Cadets from Hughenden and surrounds who put their acting skills on show as “victims”. Exercise Exhale also included a detailed LDMG debrief the following day.

Likewise a comprehensive joint local and district discussion exercise was also staged on Palm Island and I was encouraged by the broad range of participant and their strongly committed involvement and goodwill over the duration of the day.

It was also pleasing to see the leadership and personal involvement of the Palm Island Mayor and Chief Executive Officer in exploring opportunities and possibilities to enhance disaster management arrangements for those on the island.

Going forward, my Office will provide the combined Townsville Disaster District with outputs that will assist the disaster management groups and local government to improve their disaster management arrangements. These will include results of a community survey which can be used to inform future planning and public engagement; a final capability report and combined improvement strategy for the disaster district; and a facilitated workshop to develop a shared improvement action plan.

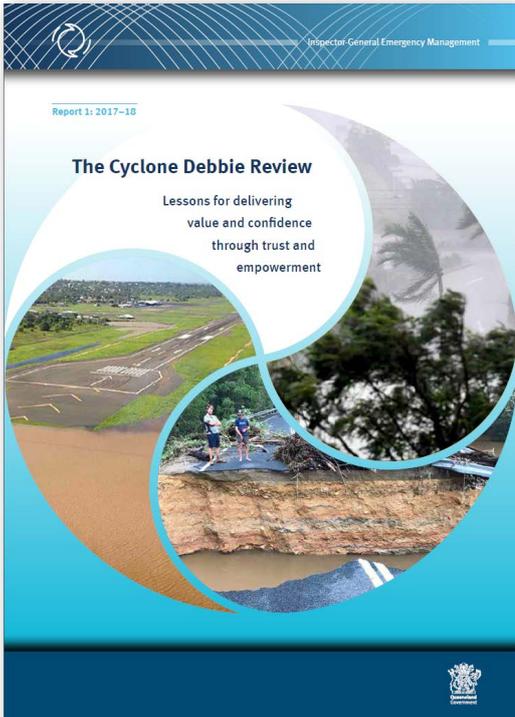
On the back of the commitment of entities in the district and the outcomes from our review, I hold strong hopes that the already high standard of disaster management in the region will be enhanced even further in future.

Tropical Cyclone Debbie Review Released

As you may have read, the review into the effectiveness of Queensland's disaster management arrangements in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie has been released.

To refresh your memory, I was tasked by Police, Fire and Emergency Services Minister Mark Ryan in April to ensure that we have a robust approach in Queensland to continuous improvement across all aspects of the State's disaster management system, in the wake of TC Debbie.

As part of the review I was asked to ensure disaster management good practice arising out of TC Debbie were identified and shared; that lessons learnt were captured; and that common themes for improvement were adopted.



To most effectively approach the task, the review focussed on three key impacts of TC Debbie, namely direct cyclone impact in the Mackay and Whitsundays region; rapid on-set weather conditions after the cyclone's coastal crossing in the Logan, Gold Coast and Scenic Rim area; and slow on-set flooding experienced in the Rockhampton district.

My Office consulted 80 organisations and agencies along with the 1200 members of the public who participated in a telephone survey commissioned for the review.

In short, the review found the disaster management system in Queensland performed well in preparing for, responding to and transitioning to recovery from TC Debbie.

Despite the positive overall assessment, the review arrived at 18 recommendations incorporating themes such as the need to provide timely and contextualised information, consistent and understandable public messaging and the continued need for addressing information sharing in disasters and how systems worked together.

The review also highlighted the need for improved business continuity planning and work to improve the tourism experience during such events; the benefits of coordinated exercising across all levels of the

disaster management system that focus on information flow and

the integration of roles and responsibilities; and a requirement for better fatigue management arrangements during sustained events such as TC Debbie.

Importantly, the review also identified a significant number of good practice actions and activities. These include the enhanced functioning of the State Disaster Coordination Centre at Kedron and the work of Queensland Health and the Department of Child Safety, Communities and Disability Services in mobilising significant numbers of staff to ensure health and community recovery services were delivered successfully.

Councils within the review focus areas were also commended for a raft of good practice actions including a probabilistic modelling initiative in Townsville to inform potential storm surge impact; a lessons management program in Isaac; preparedness activities in Mackay and Whitsunday; and relief and recovery work in Scenic Rim, Logan and the Gold Coast.

A pleasing overall observation from the review has been the genuine commitment of agencies in Queensland in proactively seeking continuous improvement. Not only have agencies from across the system embraced recommendations from past reviews and effected change, in many instances they have gone even further and proactively implemented initiatives above and beyond the recommendations of my Office.

Both the review and the results of the community survey can be viewed on the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management website at www.igem.qld.gov.au.

EMAF Workshops

As many of you may be aware my Office has been facilitating Emergency Management Assurance Framework (EMAF) workshops across the state since September.

A number of you were among the more than 70 stakeholders who crafted the framework and Standard in 2014, while others have become familiar with the EMAF through direct application or involvement in previous workshops or advisory sessions.

The current round of workshops is particularly focused on exploring the individual parts of the Standard and looking at how the Prioritisation Tool can be used as a 'health check' of agency, local and district group arrangements.

My thanks to the Disaster Management Unit and Executive Officers who have made it possible for my Office to take these workshops to each district, in many cases by plugging into your District Disaster Management Group meetings.

So far we've had the opportunity to engage with members of local and district groups across Gympie, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Longreach, Innisfail, Roma and Charleville. We look forward to further workshops in the near future.

If you'd like us to bring a workshop to your agency, please get in touch with the Office and we'll work together to make it happen.

Can I also express my thanks for all of the examples of good practice outlined in the workshops thus far and your invaluable observations about what you see as emerging issues within disaster management in Queensland.

The information is crucial to the work that my Office undertakes, and we are capturing these observations through our Analysis Program.

If you want to share an observation with the Office about emerging issues within disaster management in Queensland, feel free to do so by creating an account on the Collaboration Zone, which you can access through our [website](#).



The IGEM team facilitating an EMAF workshop at Dalby

Evacuation Management Arrangements Review Update

Allow me to express my thanks to those of you who provided feedback during the consultation phase of the Evacuation Management Arrangements Review.

Staff from my office are now closely looking at the comments against the draft report and we will integrate these into the final report, where appropriate.

For those not familiar with the specifics of this particular review, my Office has been assessing the extent to which arrangements reflect the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland, best practice and are scalable for a mass evacuation event.

The review has also considered the extent to which the legislative authority to initiate evacuations is clear, as well as the capacity for adapting plans to events

Australian Vulnerability Profile Workshop

In conjunction with Emergency Management Australia, my Office will co-host a workshop with adverse range of stakeholders next month to inform the creation of an Australian Vulnerability Profile.

Facilitated by CSIRO, the workshop will use best-available science to draw discussion and thinking and identify what

makes Australia vulnerable to disaster when severe to catastrophic events impact society and what people value

The workshop is being held in Brisbane on November 8-9 and will involve more than 30 stakeholders from Queensland and a further 10 project partners who will consider and discuss severe to catastrophic hazard scenarios being prepared by the Bureau of Meteorology and Geoscience Australia.

The results of this workshop, and others across Australia, will help us better understand the drivers of disaster, what triggers them and where we can direct our efforts to minimise the impact.

Emergency Management Australia is ultimately looking to create together a new national narrative that reflects contemporary challenges and enhances preparedness.

Recovery Review

Work is continuing in earnest regarding the review into recovery arrangements.

The area of recovery has been a strong point of interest within the disaster management sector for some years now and accordingly my Office is reviewing recovery arrangements to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of recovery governance, one year after the permanent appointment of the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator.

The review includes an assessment of any gaps in that governance in a bid to lead to better local level community recovery and outcomes.

An external consultant, Dr Iraphne Childs, has finalised the environmental scan while my Office has completed the site visits and data collection and is currently analysing material and identifying key themes.

Premier's Award

Allow me to congratulate those of you involved in the Disaster Management Officer's Network on becoming a finalist in the 2017 Premier's Awards for Excellence.

The Premier's Awards for Excellence acknowledges exemplary work by individuals and teams across Queensland and recognises outstanding initiatives being developed and delivered for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

The DMO Network has been named a finalist in the Leadership Category and is up against QFES's "Transforms Through Leadership Initiative", the Department of Communities' "Respectful Journey Together Building Cultural Capability" and the Department of Education and Training's "Youth Engagement Project Everybody's Business".

The winner will be announced at an awards ceremony at QUT's Gardens Point on 21 November.

Since its inception in November 2015, the network has grown to include 83 members from 55 councils across Queensland.

The purpose of the collective is to provide a peer-driven network of council disaster management practitioners to share knowledge and resources; develop ideas; learn from the experience of others; and to collaboratively identify and develop best practice, for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

The network operates through regular teleconferences, an annual forum and a secure online discussion and sharing platform.

We have already seen a raft of impressive outcomes from this group and I hold very high hopes regarding outcomes and community benefits into the future.

Until next time.

Iain MacKenzie
Inspector-General Emergency Management

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