

Review of state agency integration at a local and district level

Report 2: 2014-15



There are challenges to how state agencies integrate effectively at district and local levels to support disaster management, and maintain these linkages. Clearer roles and responsibilities in doctrine, increased engagement and risk-based planning present opportunities for a more integrated approach.

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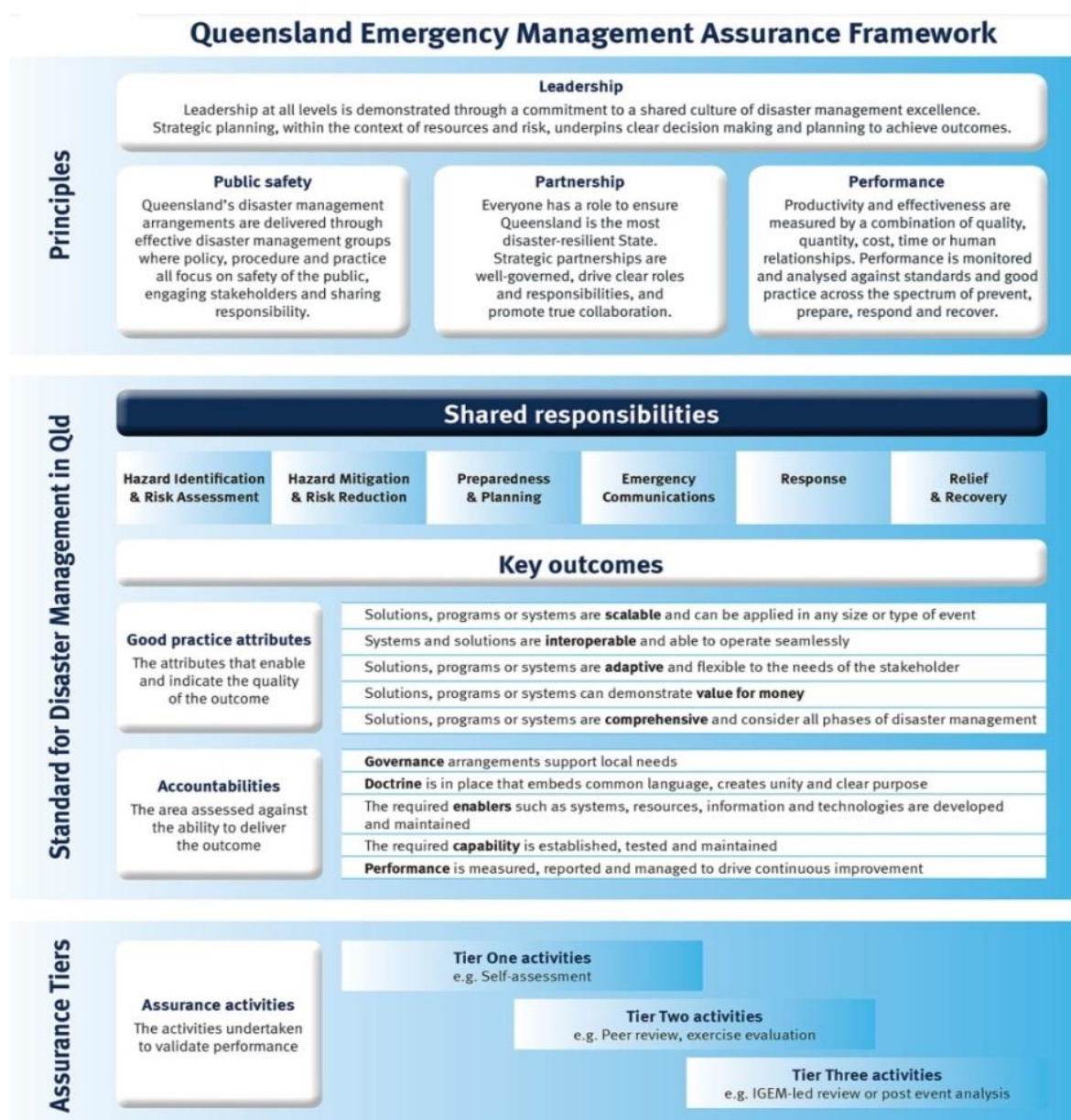
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Contact details

All enquiries regarding this document should be directed to the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management:

- Email: info@igem.qld.gov.au
- Tel: 07 3227 6588
- Mailing Address:
Mail Cluster 15.7
GPO Box 1425
Brisbane Qld 4001



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Executive summary

Background

The purpose of this review is to describe the drivers for, and barriers to, integration of state government agencies in Queensland's disaster management arrangements (the arrangements). We focus on the participation of state agencies¹ in local and district disaster management groups.

Integration of disaster-related services

The *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld) outlines a model of disaster management with three tiers: state, district and local levels. The model requires local governments to take primary responsibility for events in their area. In principle, risk is escalated to the next tier based on each level's capacity, capability and residual risk. In practice, however, the range of hazards, number of entities involved and differing roles and responsibilities make the escalation of risk a highly complex process.

Entities take various approaches to the way they apply the principles of integrated risk-based planning, which should be carried out collaboratively with relevant stakeholders. There is increased likelihood of a disjointed and reactive approach to disaster management if planning is not based on these principles, including collaboration. It also prevents entities from clearly identifying their accountabilities in the local context, and makes it harder for them to understand the roles, responsibilities, capacity and capability of other agencies that are part of the disaster management group.

While the disaster management doctrine² should guide entities on how to use risk based planning, it is not consistent, nor is it consistently applied across the sector. The doctrine documents local, district and state level roles, but does not articulate how each of these should bring participants together to deliver integrated and collaborative disaster management.

The arrangements are enabled by legislation, which sets out the three tiered structure and major functions of groups, as well as by policy which includes plans, guidelines and, since 2014, the *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland* (the Standard). Hazard-specific structures and plans, developed within single agencies, are not well assimilated into the broader arrangements. People at local and district levels also have diverse expectations about the roles and responsibilities in the *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan* (the State Plan) and how they translate to responsibilities at the various levels. This complicates the role of state agencies to support local and district groups with varying needs and expectations.

¹ When the term *state agency* is used, we mean Queensland Government departments.

² '...collective knowledge that has been structured and systematised to facilitate its application in practice and prepared for dissemination in a way appropriate for its intended audience', Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council, *Fundamentals of doctrine: A best practice guide*, 2011, p. 2.

Findings

1. Integrated, risk-based planning is not evident across the disaster management sector, resulting in too great a reliance on relationships and the experience of some disaster management practitioners.
2. The *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan* allocates roles and responsibilities for state agencies but does not elaborate on those responsibilities and how they are to be delivered.
3. Hazard-specific structures and plans are not well assimilated into the broader arrangements, which limits the integration of state agencies at the district and local level.

Integration of disaster management planning

Disaster planning is often compliance driven and may not sufficiently consider relevant circumstances. Planning processes applied by local and district groups mainly focus on meeting guidelines and disaster management assessments. Unfortunately the value of the planning process is sometimes lost. In many cases, planning occurs in isolation and key stakeholders are not sufficiently engaged to contribute.

The State Plan outlines the roles of primary agencies, but provides little guidance on responsibilities and their application at different levels of the system. This also results in disjointed planning and mismatched expectations of support at local and district levels.

For some state agencies, disaster management is well integrated across their internal structures and outlined within agency plans and arrangements. Typically though, these plans are developed in isolation from other disaster management stakeholders, especially district and local groups. Competing interests between core business and disaster management responsibilities may also affect a state agency's ability to fully support local and district groups.

There is variation in the skills, knowledge and capability of state agency representatives to local and district groups. Where representatives are less experienced or do not possess disaster management expertise, their ability to provide input into the planning process may be limited. This increases the risk of poor outcomes during disaster operations. A lack of robust governance within local and district groups reduces the likelihood of state agency commitment and participation and increases the risk of sub-optimal planning and exercising.

Findings

4. Disaster management doctrine does not give adequate guidance about integrated planning processes. The *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan* allocates roles and responsibilities for state agencies but does not elaborate on those responsibilities and how they are to be delivered.
5. The current disaster management planning guidelines have resulted in many local and district plans being process driven and compliance based. The guidelines could address local circumstances better.
6. State agency planning does not consider ways to integrate into local, district and the state arrangements.
7. Disaster management plans do not provide strong linkages between the three levels of the arrangements.
8. Planning is often undertaken in isolation without engagement of relevant stakeholders, leading to differing expectations.
9. State agency representation on local and district groups is variable in skill, expertise and consistency, which limits the ability of some groups to deliver effective disaster management services.
10. Where governance processes are not robust there tends to be reduced contribution from state agencies at the local and district level.

Integration of entities within a control structure

Doctrine is expected to support disaster operations and provide clear guidance on control structures, operating within a system of coordination. Ambiguity and variability of a state agency's roles at local and district levels reduces successful integration into coordination centres.

Inconsistent application of terminology used in guidelines, plans and operating procedures makes this even more problematic. For example, we observed the interchangeable use of the terms *local government* and *local group* created confusion around expectations, group functions and entity³ roles and responsibilities. Participants sometimes felt disenfranchised by the implication that local groups were run solely for and by local governments.

The multi-hazard and multi-entity nature of the arrangements leads to parallel response and control structures for specific hazards. We observed detailed planning by state agencies, including plans for internal communications and control structures. However, there were few examples where these structures were well integrated into local and district planning. There is a reliance on relationships within and between coordination centres as opposed to planned, integrated arrangements. The multiple operational systems for communications add to the complexity of reporting and decision making and increase the likelihood of parallel systems that do not connect.

³ When the term *entity* is used, we mean any group participating in the Queensland disaster management arrangements.

Findings

11. The inconsistent use of disaster management terminology limits effective integration.
12. The multi-agency nature of Queensland's disaster management arrangements results in multiple control structures and communication protocols that may function independently of each other.

Conclusion

Our definition of integration is *that all agencies with a role in disaster management in Queensland work together efficiently and effectively through clear governance structures, risk-based disaster management planning, and during response, cooperation and control processes.*

We found there are significant challenges compromising effective integration and consequently, opportunities for improvement.

Defining roles and responsibilities across Queensland's disaster management arrangements more clearly would support agencies' ability to integrate with district and local disaster management. This should be better defined in high level doctrine, such as the State Plan, so district and local groups would have a consistent foundation upon which to build localised, risk-based roles and responsibilities.

Inconsistent local and district governance arrangements can affect state agencies' ability to attend disaster management meetings and contribute to planning and exercising. Policy development that clarifies functions and provides a clear disaster management doctrine framework will guide entities how to integrate the arrangements at all levels.

A coordinated and collaborative approach to disaster management planning will enhance integration. There is little guidance on a risk-based disaster management planning process for state agencies, nor for the district and local level. Some planning at a local and district level is compliance driven, based on guidelines and assessment processes that need to be updated.

Better outcomes will be achieved through implementing risk-based planning than relying on cooperation and relationships in the response phase. Variable and parallel structures, many processes, ambiguous doctrine and interchangeable terminology contribute to the complexity of multi-agency planning and response.

Lack of risk-based planning often results in a mismatch between the level of skill and expertise required by a local or district group and that provided by a state agency. A state planning model that directs integrated risk-based planning at all levels of the arrangements will guide and clarify roles and responsibilities, provide for better assessment of capacity and capability, and improve integration.

Information integration is reduced as a result of the different information management systems used by all entities. Viable solutions that enhance information sharing between groups and state agencies should be a priority.

By measuring and understanding disaster management performance, all entities will be able to identify opportunities to improve how they support disaster management outcomes. Proactive review and assessment against the Standard, as well as the development of meaningful performance measures, will help provide for effective disaster management.

The principles of strong leadership and partnerships, as described in the Standard, are the cornerstones of true integration. Successful integration is required to ensure all levels of government in Queensland focus on delivering seamless disaster management services to the community.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

Recommendation 1

That Queensland's disaster management arrangements are reviewed to enhance integration.

Specifically:

- to address the disparity between functions and structure of local government and disaster groups
- to integrate hazard specific agency planning at all levels of the arrangements

(This may include legislative, policy and procedural considerations).

Recommendation 2

The Local and District Disaster Management Guidelines are reviewed to align with the *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland*.

Recommendation 3

An integrated risk-based approach to disaster management planning for Queensland is developed that is consistent with the *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland* and applicable at all levels of the arrangements.⁴

Recommendation 4

Responsibilities of functional lead agencies and hazard-specific primary agencies are clearly articulated in state level doctrine, including the *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan*.

Recommendation 5

State agencies with disaster management roles and responsibilities assess their performance by including a disaster management performance measure in chief executive

⁴ Aligned to recommendation 1 of *Review of cyclone and storm tide sheltering arrangements: Report 3: 2014-15*, Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, 2015b.

officers' performance agreements. This measure should reinforce an obligation for agencies to participate in the arrangements at all levels.

Context

One of the key principles of disaster management in Queensland is the all-agencies approach, which recognises that no single entity in isolation can prepare for and deal with all issues resulting from a disaster. Queensland's disaster management arrangements (the arrangements) are based upon partnerships between governments, government-owned corporations, non-government organisations, commerce, industry and the local community. The *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland* (the Standard) provides for six Shared Responsibilities and includes the Key Outcomes that set the expectations for effective disaster management.⁵

The arrangements mirror the national approach of comprehensive and integrated emergency management.⁶ In Queensland, while *integration* is not defined in legislation and doctrine, it is the fundamental tenet upon which our disaster management is built. Effective disaster management needs a high level of coordination and collaboration across all tiers of the arrangements. This review specifically considers how effectively state agencies integrate at the local and district levels.

More than just engagement, integration in the context of this review is how all agencies with a role in disaster management in Queensland work together efficiently and effectively. This is achieved through clear governance structures, risk-based disaster management planning, and during response, cooperation and control processes. Governance structures of state, district and local disaster management groups provide the mechanism to implement the arrangements. Significant integration is required across all levels to ensure entities' roles and responsibilities are carried out effectively and in line with legislation and doctrine. Successful integration ensures all levels of government in Queensland deliver seamless disaster management services to the community.

The Standard identifies shared responsibilities that provide an environment for the integration of state agencies into disaster management: Preparedness and Planning, and Response.⁷ Preparedness and planning provide the environment in which collaboration and agency integration can be established, documented and developed. Response provides the environment in which successful integration is demonstrated.

Disaster management planning is fundamental to being prepared. Disaster management plans set priorities, provide clear roles and responsibilities and link to hazard-specific plans and operational functions. Understanding the integration and

interdependencies within a disaster management plan optimises the chances of success during operations. Disaster management groups that have developed an integrated, risk-based plan in collaboration with stakeholders will have a thorough understanding of the roles, responsibilities, capacity and capability of state agencies that participate within their group.

⁵ Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, *Emergency Management Assurance Framework*, 2014.

⁶ Australian Emergency Management Institute, *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements*, 2014.

⁷ Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, 2014, loc. cit.

Even with the best planning, the coordination of activities in a response phase is challenging. Response operations focus on stabilising the disruption to a community caused by the impact of an event on that community. At a system level the effective management of response operations depends on the performance of command, control, coordination and cooperation.⁸

Response activities rely on unity of effort by individuals from different agencies with different organisational cultures, operating under different systems to achieve a common objective. Local and district disaster management groups need to lead disaster operations through control structures, but should be able to call on state entities' representatives to provide intelligence, resources, and response capabilities. Key to this is the need to establish a common understanding and agreement of priorities and action. This is more likely to occur when participants are willing to share, collaborate, participate and partner to build trusted relationships.

The Police and Community Safety Review⁹ and the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry¹⁰ both identified issues with integration in how the arrangements come together to create a functional system. These issues included: lack of role clarity and role duplication; ineffective relationships; incompatible communication systems; capacity of entities to attend multiple meetings within regions; and information sharing. The 2009 *Report on a Review of Disaster Management Legislation and Policy in Queensland*, found a need for *significant further enhancement* for disaster management planning to be 'comprehensive, interlinking, up to date and provide clarity of action'.¹¹ The finding that key stakeholders were *not always available* for planning was cited as a risk to the quality of plans.¹²

While these reviews across Australia have identified agency integration as an area for improvement, few have identified the factors that can support or hinder it. The purpose of our review is to identify and understand both factors that enable integration, and those that inhibit it. Our focus is on the participation of agencies at both a local and district level.

⁸ Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, 2014, op. cit., pp. 26-28.

⁹ M. Keelty, *Sustaining the unsustainable: Police and community safety review final report*, 2013.

¹⁰ Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry, *Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry interim report*, 2013.

¹¹ J. O'Sullivan, *Report on a review of disaster management legislation and policy in Queensland*, 2009, p. v.

¹² *ibid.*

Purpose

The purpose of this review was to describe the drivers for, and barriers to, integration of state government agencies in Queensland's disaster management arrangements, with a focus on participation of state agencies in local and district disaster management groups. The review aims to assess this integration against the *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland*.

Scope

We have included the following in scope:

- identification and validation of the contributing factors supporting or inhibiting agency participation and integration with local and district disaster management group activities
- Identification of factors that may improve operational relationships between state agencies and local and district disaster management groups
- development of recommendations to enhance state agency integration with local and district disaster management groups.

We did not consider the following:

- the appropriateness of state agencies' roles and responsibilities as defined by the *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan* (the State Plan)
- the effectiveness of control structures
- whether state agency staff with disaster management roles and responsibilities have the skills and knowledge required to perform their role in all events
- risk management or disaster management planning in terms of understanding capability limits and escalation points
- whether common situational awareness is created at all levels through a process for sharing operational information and intelligence products, across all entities.

Methodology

We conducted the review between October 2014 and January 2015. The research and planning phase included a literature review and consideration of formal submissions from the disaster management sector. We also collected scoping evidence based on the following criteria:

- 2013-14 disaster management plan assessment results, including good practice examples
- natural hazard risk data from the preceding five years
- the weather outlook for the 2014-15 storm season
- 15 disaster events in the preceding five years with activation of the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements
- the number of emergency alert campaigns

- population demographics
- other identified risks/influencers e.g. large scale reception events.

Fourteen local governments were then selected to provide a representative spread of size, location and disaster management challenges for data collection and in-depth analysis as part of the review.

- Balonne Shire Council
- Banana Shire Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- City of Gold Coast Council
- Mackay Regional Council
- Moreton Bay Regional Council
- Mt Isa City Council
- Southern Downs Regional Council
- Townsville City Council
- Western Downs Regional Council
- Whitsunday Regional Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council.

The collection and analysis phase involved discussions with stakeholders from these selected local governments, as well as state agency representatives and other stakeholders from related local and district disaster management groups. A full list of contributing entities is included at Appendix B.

Analysis was against the Standard and predominantly qualitative, including the judgements, perceptions, attitudes and satisfaction of stakeholders. The review team attended a number of local and district disaster management group meetings. The review team also analysed disaster management plans, relevant sub-plans, terms of reference, and disaster group meeting minutes. We analysed information collected against the following components of the Standard:

Component 10: Cooperation and Coordination

No.	Key Outcome	Good Practice Attributes
10.1	The delivery of disaster-related services, through all phases of events, is integrated across the sector and is responsive to community needs.	Adaptable, Comprehensive, Interoperable, Scalable, Value for Money
Indicators		Accountabilities (Linked to Key Outcomes)
a	The entity recognises and supports the controlling authority's documented arrangements for coordination and cooperation.	Doctrine, Governance
b	The entity recognises, and works within, formal and informal relationships for cooperative service	Enablers, Governance

	delivery.	
c	Formally approved plans consider multi-agency and joint operational requirements and recognise the roles, responsibilities and interests of entities and informal participants.	Capability, Doctrine
d	Goals for the event are formulated, risk assessed and prioritised, and their implementation coordinated through the controlling authority.	Performance, Governance

Component 4: Planning

No.	Key Outcome	Good Practice Attributes
4.2	Disaster management planning is integrated with entity core business and service delivery.	Interoperable, Value for Money
Indicators		Accountabilities
c	Planning is undertaken, reviewed and assessed at regular intervals by authorised individuals or entities skilled in the process and is compliant with the legislation including alignment to other key documents, review and maintenance requirements	Governance, Doctrine, Capability
d	The planning and assessment process, including documenting roles, responsibilities and timelines, involves engagement with all stakeholders.	Enablers, Capability
f	Commitment to disaster management activities (including meetings, planning and exercising) is reflected in entity strategic and operational plans including relevant role descriptions and performance agreements.	Enablers

Component 8: Control

No.	Key Outcome	Good Practice Attributes
8.1	Entities work together within a control structure that manages disaster operations.	Interoperable, Adaptable, Value for Money
Indicators		Accountabilities
a	There is agreed doctrine and common language used across agencies and entities.	Doctrine, Enablers
b	Functions in disaster operations are performed and led by the agency with authority and capability to do so, under the overall direction of the controlling authority.	Capability, Governance
c	There are clearly documented and agreed control responsibilities that stem from legislation and align with disaster management plans.	Governance, Doctrine

d	Entities that form the control structure agree and document communication protocols.	Governance, Doctrine
e	The control system provides for functional management of events and operates within a risk management framework.	Enablers

For each outcome and indicator within the Standard we have detailed what we expected to find, our observations, and drawn a number of conclusions from the available information. Stakeholders interviewed for this review were provided a final draft for consultation and requested to indicate their agreement with, and acceptance of, recommendations.

Integration of disaster-related services

Key Outcome 10.1 The delivery of disaster-related services, through all phases of events, is integrated across the sector and is responsive to community needs

Indicator 10a: The agency recognises and supports the controlling authority's documented arrangements for coordination and cooperation.

Indicator 10b: The entity recognises, and works within, formal and informal relationships for cooperative service delivery.

Indicator 10c: Formally approved plans consider multi-agency and joint operational requirements recognise the roles, responsibilities and interests of entities and informal participants.

Indicator 10d: Goals for the event are formulated, risk assessed and prioritised, and their implementation coordinated through the controlling authority.

What we expected to find

The principles of leadership and partnership are fundamental to the integration of entities in the delivery of disaster-related services through all phases of events. Leadership is a foundational principle of the Standard and should be demonstrated at all levels of the arrangements through commitment to a culture of shared responsibility and disaster management excellence. Leadership should drive risk-based planning, which underpins clear decision-making and priorities. Strategic partnerships across all entities improve disaster management outcomes, particularly when they are well governed, drive clear roles and responsibilities and promote true collaboration. This is supported by the requirements of the *Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework* for policy and governance.¹³

We expected to see the translation of these principles into action through all levels of the arrangements. This translation should be seamless due to supporting doctrine, structures, processes and activities that make up the arrangements being clearly defined, agreed to and linked. We expected to see state agencies responsible for specific functions or hazards contribute to the arrangements of others at all levels. Importantly, disaster management plans at every level of the system should reflect the points above.

Collaborative planning should contribute to detailed understanding of the requirements, interests and abilities of all entities in delivering disaster-related services to the community. Meetings, discussions and relationships should ensure all involved understand what they must do and the interdependencies within the arrangements. Risk should be identified, and when it cannot be addressed at one level, transferred appropriately. Integral to risk-based planning should be in-depth discussions between practitioners, decision-makers and entity representatives to consider ways that various hazards may impact a community. By developing an understanding of the risks, participants are better placed to deal with possible impacts. In the response phase, a shared understanding of risk should inform effective development and prioritisation of goals.

¹³ Emergency Management Queensland, *Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework*, 2010.

What we found

Clarity of roles and responsibilities in key doctrine

While disaster management doctrine should be a source of guidance, there is a lack of uniformity within the doctrine itself and in its application across the sector. We noted there were inconsistent levels of state agency engagement in the local and district planning and assessment processes. The current arrangements promote integration vertically through the identification of local, district and state groups and functions. We found that doctrine does not provide guidance on processes to truly integrate state agencies into local and district disaster management planning.

The State Plan allocates roles for state agencies¹⁴ but does not elaborate on these responsibilities and how they are to be delivered. A number of state agency representatives identified discrepancies with the roles outlined in the State Plan and the agency's capacity to support service delivery during response.

This observation was supported by a significant number of disaster management officers and local government representatives consulted during the review. Without clear guidance from this document, expectations about responsibilities at each level of the arrangements vary among entities at all levels. The development of roles and responsibilities at the local and district level chiefly occurs in isolation of relevant stakeholders. This contributes to minimal contextualisation and adaption of state agency roles, responsibilities and functions at the district and local levels.

Engagement in risk-based planning

At all levels of the arrangements we observed that risk-based planning was variable in quality. Planning in general often focused on compliance and tended not to engage relevant stakeholders. Where entities had not clearly identified their accountabilities and linkages to others within the system, we found evidence of a disjointed and reactive approach to disaster management.

There was limited use of risk assessment to tailor required roles and responsibilities of state agencies at the local or district level. The *Disaster Management Regulation 2014* prescribes the inclusion of state agencies in the membership of district groups.¹⁵ We found the level of involvement and active participation varies and is largely based on the roles identified in the State Plan, without consideration of district and local risk and requirements. Many disaster management practitioners assume that groups will ask for their involvement, rather than proactively engaging in the planning process. One agency representative noted there needs to be a broader cultural change from *what would you like* to *what do we need*.

Engagement of disaster management participants at the local and district level was dependent on relationships developed within the groups. We saw effective relationships where strong group leadership set expectations that matched the agencies' ability to deliver. Past event experience, or common perception of elevated risk, also contributed to supportive group relationships. We also observed that better-performing groups with higher levels of engagement had more detailed governance arrangements.

¹⁴ Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, 2013-2014 *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan*, 2013.

¹⁵ *Disaster Management Regulation 2014* (Qld) s. 5 Membership of district groups.

However, these groups were not the norm, and a requirement for stronger group governance has been a consistent theme across concurrent Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management reviews. Many regional representatives of state agencies reported a lack of forward planning, notice of meetings, exercises and training sessions limited their ability to participate, or build activities into their work plans. In contrast, good governance in these arrangements assisted agencies to feel their participation was valued.

There is a diverse group of disaster management practitioners with considerable experience. However, all too often disaster management groups rely on their knowledge and established relationships for effective operations, to the exclusion of risk-based planning. Furthermore, this knowledge and experience is dispersed across a large decentralised state. In the absence of risk-based planning, we did not see adequate local succession planning nor centralised mitigation strategies to address this risk.

Parallel structures in disaster management

While the Act details a locally-managed, all-event¹⁶ approach; the arrangements are in practice, multi-hazard and multi-entity. The guiding principles of the Act provide that 'local governments should primarily be responsible for managing events in their local government area'.¹⁷ They are operationalised through the State Plan, although the arrangements for a *hazard-specific primary agency* can result in the local level becoming a supporting entity rather than a driver in some specified events, such as oil spills and bushfires.

In turn, hazard-specific primary agencies have control arrangements that may not fit with the legislated functions of local and district disaster management groups in disaster response.¹⁸ Given hazard-specific primary agencies generally have an emergency response capability; they have established structures and operational centres of their own. There is, then, a risk these agencies may function in isolation from the disaster management arrangements.

Finding 1

Integrated, risk-based planning is not evident across the disaster management sector, resulting in too great a reliance on relationships and the experience of some disaster management practitioners.

Finding 2

The *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan* allocates roles and responsibilities for state agencies but does not elaborate on those responsibilities and how they are to be delivered.

Finding 3

Hazard-specific structures and plans are not well assimilated into the broader arrangements, which limits the integration of state agencies at the district and local level.

¹⁶ *Disaster Management Act 2008* (Qld) s. 16 Meaning of event.

¹⁷ *Disaster Management Act 2008* (Qld) s. 4A Guiding principles.

¹⁸ *Disaster Management Act 2008* (Qld) s. 23(g) Functions (of district disaster management groups; s. 30(f) Functions (of local government disaster management groups).

Integration of disaster management planning

Key Outcome 4.2 Disaster management planning is integrated with agency core business and service delivery

Indicator 4c: Planning is undertaken, reviewed and assessed at regular intervals by authorised individuals or entities skilled in the process and is compliant with the legislation including alignment to other key documents, review and maintenance requirements

What we expected to find

Disaster management planning should be aligned to key doctrine and legislation:

- *Disaster Management Act 2003 (Qld)*
- *Disaster Management Regulation 2014 (Qld)*
- *Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework*
- *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan*
- disaster management guidelines.

The Standard, released in September 2014, also provides for disaster management planning. The Standard clarifies the interdependencies within the arrangements and should provide direction for effective planning outcomes. We expected to see integration of current agency roles and responsibilities in support of local disaster management, and their adaptation to the local context, reflected in plans. Functional and hazard-specific plans should also be integrated into local and district plans, and be assessed and exercised on a regular basis. The review, renew and assessment of local and district plans is required at least once a year.

What we found

While planning processes applied by local and district groups focus on meeting the existing guidelines and disaster management plan assessment processes, we found there were inconsistencies in their application. The plan assessment process does not include state agency plans, and many involved at local and district level described it as a *tick in the box* or *compliance* process. There is no planning guidance for state agencies, so structure and content is variable and an opportunity to ensure plans are complementary and linked is missed.

Both within disaster management groups and state agencies, the planning tends to focus on output as opposed to process. Guidelines are used by local and district groups to support the development of plans, resulting in the production of similar documents across the state. While consistency can potentially assist interoperability, where plans are essentially rebranded templates, they may lack context to local conditions.

Finding 4

Disaster management doctrine does not give adequate guidance about integrated planning processes. The *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan* allocates roles and responsibilities for state agencies but does not elaborate on those responsibilities and how they are to be delivered.

Finding 5

The current disaster management planning guidelines have resulted in many local and district plans being process driven and compliance based. The guidelines could address local circumstances better.

Indicator 4d: The planning and assessment process, including documenting roles, responsibilities and timelines, involves engagement with all stakeholders.

What we expected to find

The Standard recognises the correlation between planning and control. The achievement of effective control outcomes depends on integrated planning processes. On this basis, we also considered the following indicators from Component 9 Command of the Standard within this section of the report:

Indicator 8b: *Functions in disaster operations are performed and led by the agency with authority and capability to do so, under the overall direction of the controlling authority*

Indicator 8e: *The control system provides for functional management of events and operates within a risk management framework*

Indicator 8c: *There are clearly documented and agreed control responsibilities that stem from legislation and align with disaster management plans.*

In the Standard, integrated risk-based planning drives the development of well-governed partnerships with clear roles and responsibilities. These in turn guide operational decision-making and planning priorities.

To achieve the outcomes articulated in the Standard, comprehensive disaster management planning across all levels of the arrangements is expected. Multidisciplinary efforts and planning with communities are needed if responsibility is truly to be shared. For planning to translate into action, there must be consultative decision-making, collaboration and acceptance of shared responsibilities. The process should result in an understanding of agency responsibilities at all levels and clarity of tasks.

Planning and assessment processes should be supported by conversations about mutually agreed actions and outcomes. It is important this planning interprets roles and responsibilities set out in the State Plan to suit local context and requirements, and adapts them if necessary.

What we found

A number of disaster management officers and state agency representatives noted gaps between the roles and responsibilities detailed in the State Plan and those delivered at the local level and, to a lesser extent, the district. The 2015 review of the State Plan gives an opportunity to provide clarity on these roles and responsibilities.

Of the ten state agency disaster management plans reviewed, we found minimal evidence of integration with local and district plans. Once again, there was a broad representation of agency participation within the arrangements, but little articulation of specific roles and

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services is proactive in its planning to integrate their lead agency role for human and social recovery at the local and district levels.

responsibilities. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services was an exception to this, with detailed planning for human and social recovery. This included support of human and social recovery sub-groups through the responsibilities assigned to the chair of the sub-groups, and the development of sub-plans.

A number of state agencies indicated their disaster plans *dovetailed* into district plans, but were not included directly as sub-plans. Others had sent their plans to local and/or district groups, but did not indicate how they should be incorporated, nor had they checked if this had occurred. One state agency representative told us *privacy issues* prevented them providing their plan as part of the district plan. Instead, the agency plan would be brought to the district group for action during response. There are significant opportunities to improve the integration of agencies in disaster management through engagement in planning at all levels.

At the local level, a number of disaster management officers (DMO) indicated their local plans were drafted exclusively by local government and emailed to agencies for feedback, with varying levels of response. In a positive example, one DMO indicated subject matter experts from the local group were engaged to co-write localised functional sub-plans.

The assessment of disaster management plans at the local and district levels has used a compliance-based approach since 2011. As a result, plans are often focused on following guidelines and templates rather than driven by identified risks and focused on outcomes.¹⁹ However, the guidelines themselves do not encourage integrated risk-based planning and have not been formally reviewed since 2012.

Where significant stakeholder engagement had occurred, state agency, local and district group representatives felt greater ownership of the process and their roles and responsibilities. However, a number of state agency representatives had not been consulted; creating the perception their input was not valued. This was particularly true for advisory, as opposed to core members of local groups. Some of these members had concerns their omission would create knowledge gaps and role confusion for local and district groups.

In examples of successful integration, state agency roles and responsibilities were considered during the review of local and district plans to ensure they were appropriately contextualised. A number of DMOs also indicated that agencies had reviewed their roles and responsibilities following local disaster management exercises. These exercises were used to examine mutually agreed roles and responsibilities and identify gaps between role statements and capacity to deliver services on the ground.

¹⁹ Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, *Report on the assessment of disaster management plans: Discussion paper 2: 2014-15, 2015a.*

We observed a general mismatch between expectations of local government and the capabilities of an agency to support that local government. This was particularly the case for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Area Coordinators. Most local government representatives sought the same level of support as provided by the former Emergency Management Queensland Area Director role. We note the linkages this role provided between local and district groups. Local government representatives indicated it was critical to the functioning of their local group, and facilitated a mutual understanding of capability and capacity, especially during response activities. District representatives viewed the area coordinator position as pivotal to achieving the QFES functions in the State Plan, particularly during response activities.

Local and district representatives recognised the need to collaborate to develop trigger points for activation and requests for assistance, but some required additional guidance on how to develop these for local arrangements. While some local groups have adapted these, the activation triggers in local and district plans are usually generic and based on those in the guidelines, without contextualisation.

Finding 6

State agency planning does not consider ways to integrate into local, district and the state arrangements.

Finding 7

Disaster management plans do not provide strong linkages between the three levels of the arrangements.

Finding 8

Planning is often undertaken in isolation without engagement of relevant stakeholders, leading to differing expectations.

Indicator 4f: Commitment to disaster management activities (including meetings, planning and exercising) is reflected in entity strategic and operational plans including relevant role descriptions and performance agreements.

What we expected to find

We expected to see state agencies, district groups and local governments adhering to the guidelines and legislation that prescribe the membership for disaster management groups and the conduct of business and meetings. If this was the case we would anticipate the appropriate skill, expertise and level of representation during all phases of disaster management. This representation should include attendance at meetings, active involvement in all planning and participation in agency and group exercises. At a district level, representatives would be expected to have the authority and delegation to make decisions and commit resources on behalf of their agency.

Representation should be formalised in state agency disaster management plans, supported by mechanisms such as position descriptions, and endorsed by the chief executive officer. It is expected that agency evaluations of their obligations will occur against the Standard and, where pertinent, performance measures considered.

Advanced scheduling of meetings and exercises with clear objectives, action items and dedicated meeting spaces should foster commitment. All meeting participants should understand how they can contribute to the effective functioning of the group including in planning, reviewing, training and exercising. There should be recognition of the relationship development aspects of working together, as well as in the processes themselves.

What we found

For some agencies, disaster management is well integrated across internal structures and outlined within internal agency plans. However, representatives at all levels cited conflict between agency core business and disaster management responsibilities. We were told this was a significant barrier to participation in local and district groups. In many instances, disaster management is seen as a *separate* or *specialist* field in competition with the agency's broader responsibilities and accountabilities. Where disaster management is considered part of core business we saw a greater commitment to local and district groups. When disaster management was not a core function, formal commitment for representatives was more challenging. For example, many local and district group representatives found it hard to attend disaster management training sessions due to competing priorities for the agency.

Organisational changes and business complexity affects the ability of some agencies to provide the expected expertise and input to local and district groups. This was particularly true for state agencies with a centralised service delivery model or with diverse business areas. At times this has resulted in a representative not understanding the capability and capacity of other parts of their own agency.

Agencies with non-core disaster management responsibilities have had difficulty providing representatives for routine local and district group business and are more likely to support response operations. Where this has occurred, disaster group representatives told us it increased the group's ability to deliver *well-oiled* disaster operations. However, one local government reported a different person from an emergency service agency at every local group meeting. Therefore, the representatives had little understanding of disaster management requirements and could not contribute to the meetings.

Many agencies reported they were unable to provide regular and consistent representation at local groups, including emergency services in the smaller and more remote local government areas. They focused on representation at the district level. While this was accepted by some local groups, it was a concern by others who felt they would not have access to resources without direct representation. Furthermore, local and district group members often spoke of the challenges of untrained, unfamiliar people attending during response, while the experienced member was attending to agency disaster operations or core business.

The issue of conflicting boundaries was also raised as a factor hindering agency integration. Previous reviews have consistently raised the impact of mismatched district disaster boundaries on disaster management arrangements, and how stakeholders engage at local and district levels. A current review of these boundaries has seen protracted negotiations, emphasising the value these demarcations have for stakeholders. Where agency and group boundaries match, participation was more likely.

The location of agency representatives in regional hubs and cities provided challenges for attendance in-person at some local group meetings. Many told us this affected the development of relationships. While teleconferencing supported participation for some, and enabled the continuity of relationships, for others it was unsatisfactory.

The operation and governance of local and district groups also contribute to the level of state agency integration. Local and district groups with organised meeting, exercise and training schedules reported better agency participation. These groups talked about the strength of relationships and the importance of feeling part of a team environment. They were also proactive in identifying member roles and responsibilities with agencies, promoting mutual understanding, acceptance and information sharing. In contrast, for some regional state agencies a lack of forward planning for meetings, exercises and training sessions reduced their ability to attend.

Integration is difficult to quantify. Performance measures that have been included in plans tend to focus on meeting and exercise attendance. They generally do not include qualitative measures such as the relevance of agencies and level of involvement. Some measures reference the number of joint agency exercises conducted, but do not consider the range of agencies involved, while others attempt to measure capacity building for group members by measuring training numbers.

Finding 9

State agency representation on local and district groups is variable in skill, expertise and consistency, which limits the ability of some groups to deliver effective disaster management services.

Finding 10

Where governance processes are not robust there tends to be reduced contribution from state agencies at the local and district level.

Integration of entities within a control structure

Key Outcome 8.1 Entities work together within a control structure that manages disaster operations

Indicator 8a: There is agreed doctrine and common language used across agencies and entities

What we expected to find

Disaster management doctrine should provide the basis for consistency and a shared understanding of the environment, which then supports disaster operations across multiple agencies and groups. Even when language is ambiguous in doctrine, local and district groups have the opportunity to define key terms in their plans.

In the context of this indicator, the doctrine is expected to support activation and provide clear guidance on authority and management, particularly of local and district coordination centres. While disaster management is based on coordination activities, coordination centres and resource requirements should also be managed in accordance with control structures. In Queensland, the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) is one of the systems employed in disaster coordination centres. Regardless of the management system choice, all participants must operate using common language and doctrine for effectiveness and improved interoperability.

What we found

There is a lack of consistent terminology used throughout disaster management doctrine. The application of this terminology is variable and often does not provide sufficient detail to enable consistent interpretation. We have discussed the issues with broad roles identified in the State Plan, without defined responsibilities. This was frequently cited as an issue limiting successful integration.

The interchangeable use of the term *local government* and *local group* was present both in doctrine and amongst practitioners. In addition, division three of the Act introducing local groups is titled *local government disaster management group*. This has the potential to create differing expectations about functions, roles and responsibilities.

Importantly, we observed that language appears to have an influence on the sense of ownership and inclusiveness amongst some groups. Where *local government* had a strong identity as the primary vehicle for disaster management, participants did not feel of equal value. We heard this has contributed to passive participation in the group's activities. In contrast, we saw some groups where local government was seen as a separate entity with a very clear role. In these groups, engagement was higher and participants felt a common sense of purpose.

There were also key differences in terminology used for group members. For example, there were discrepancies in the definitions of *member*, *core member* and *advisor*. We heard this

affected the commitment to, and full engagement with, a group. Some local and district plans provide a general definition of member and advisor in plan glossaries, but use the undefined term *core member* within the planning documents.

In most cases, representatives understood that core members have voting rights on the local

Gold Coast City Local Disaster Management Group supports integration of all members through shared identity and agreed accountabilities. Group identity is also enhanced through active planning and exercising.

and district groups, while advisors and observers do not. Core members are also required to provide agency reports to the group and undertake specific training. Members are identified as core, advisor or observer depending on the role of the agency recognised by local and district groups. In some areas, executive officers and disaster management officers reported working with agencies to

identify their member status.

Some state agency representatives did not agree with their member status, particularly some designated as *advisors*. We were told that, as advisors, they had not received all relevant information during responses, and were not involved in planning processes. Some district advisors attempted to counter this, staying informed of group business by having separate meetings with district group executive officers.

Finding 11

The inconsistent use of disaster management terminology limits effective integration.

Indicator 8d: Entities that form the control structure agree and document communication protocols.

What we expected to find

The control structure is the approach a disaster management group or coordination centre should take in order to deliver its coordinating function. The primary aim of a control structure is to ensure participants from multiple entities are working together toward common and agreed goals, under the overall direction of an incident controller. There should be mutual agreement and documentation of communication protocols in order to achieve common understanding, and therefore improved management of disaster operations.

What we found

Communication and information flows within control structures are multichannel. While the arrangements identify two-way flows of information to support decision-making, in reality, the horizontal requirements of the control structure compete with the vertical requirements of individual agencies. A concern is the speed required for multi-agency disaster management decision-making may exceed the pace of hierarchical agency decision-making. Competing timings for reporting can also affect information quality and make it difficult to achieve a common operating picture. When all levels of the arrangements are activated in response to an event, there are potentially several coordination centres and control structures operating simultaneously and in isolation of each other. We saw limited evidence of documented and

agreed protocols to improve communication between control structures, especially outside of the local and district coordination centres.

Multiple operational systems for communications add to the complexity of documenting and agreeing on communication protocols. There is concurrent use of Guardian, the Queensland Police Disaster Incident Event Management System and Noggin during the response phase. One district group representative suggested the use of multiple platforms may *hinder information sharing during response*.

This issue is exacerbated by different agency information systems that run parallel to these disaster management systems. There continues to be significant work done to integrate information between systems, particularly with the Information Exchange Platform (IXP) project, which supports transfer of requests for assistance from local groups to district groups and the State Disaster Coordination Centre.

Finding 12

The multi-agency nature of Queensland's disaster management arrangements results in multiple control structures and communication protocols that may function independently of each other.

Conclusion

Our definition of integration is that *all agencies with a role in disaster management in Queensland work together efficiently and effectively through clear governance structures, risk-based disaster management planning, and during response, cooperation and control processes*. Based on this, our review found there were significant challenges compromising effective integration and consequently, opportunities for improvement.

We identified that defining roles and responsibilities more clearly across Queensland's disaster management arrangements would support agencies' ability to appropriately integrate with district and local disaster management. It is our view this should be better defined in high level doctrine, such as the State Plan. This will provide district and local groups a consistent foundation to build localised, risk-based roles and responsibilities.

Another important variable is the inconsistency of local and district governance arrangements. This can limit state agencies' ability to commit to disaster management meetings and contribute to planning and exercising. Policy development that clarifies functions and provides a clear disaster management doctrine framework will guide entities how to integrate with the arrangements at all levels.

A coordinated and collaborative approach to disaster management planning will enhance integration. There is little guidance on a risk-based disaster management planning process for state agencies, nor for the district and local level. Some planning at a local and district level is compliance driven. Planning at this level is based on guidelines and assessment processes that need to be updated.

We believe better outcomes will be achieved through risk-based planning than relying on cooperation and relationships alone in the response phase. Variable and parallel structures, many processes, ambiguous doctrine and interchangeable terminology contribute to the complexity of multi-agency planning and response. Lack of risk-based planning often results in a mismatch between the level of skill and expertise required by a local or district group, and that provided by a state agency.

A state planning model that directs integrated risk-based planning at all levels of the arrangements will guide and clarify roles and responsibilities, provide for better assessment of capacity and capability and improve integration.

We also observed that information integration is reduced as a result of the different information management systems used by all entities. Viable solutions that promote information sharing between groups and state agencies should be a priority to improve integration.

By measuring and understanding disaster management performance, all entities can identify opportunities to improve disaster management outcomes. Proactive review and assessment against the Standard, and the development of meaningful performance measures, will help provide effective disaster management.

The principles of strong leadership and partnerships, as described in the Standard, are the cornerstones of true integration. Successful integration is required to ensure all levels of government in Queensland focus on delivering seamless disaster management services to the community.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

Recommendation 1

That Queensland's disaster management arrangements are reviewed to enhance integration. Specifically:

- to address the disparity between functions and structure of local government and disaster groups
- to integrate hazard specific agency planning at all levels of the arrangements

(This may include legislative, policy and procedural considerations).

Accountable agency	Date of Completion
Lead: Department of the Premier and Cabinet Support: Queensland Police Service; Queensland Fire and Emergency Services; Public Safety Business Agency; Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management Further consultation: Lead and support agencies should consult with IGEM to enable alignment with the EMAF	June 2016

Recommendation 2

The Local and District Disaster Management Guidelines are reviewed to align with the *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland*.

Accountable agency	Date of Completion
Lead: Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	June 2016

Recommendation 3

An integrated risk-based approach to disaster management planning for Queensland is developed that is consistent with the *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland* and applicable at all levels of the arrangements.²⁰

Accountable agency	Date of Completion
Lead: Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Support: Department of the Premier and Cabinet; Queensland Police Service; Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; Public Safety Business Agency	June 2016

²⁰ Aligned to recommendation 1 of *Review of cyclone and storm tide sheltering arrangements: Report 3: 2014-15*, Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, 2015b.

Recommendation 4

Responsibilities of functional lead agencies and hazard-specific primary agencies are clearly articulated in state level doctrine, including the *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan*.

Accountable agency	Date of Completion
Lead: Queensland Police Service Support: Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	December 2015

Recommendation 5

State agencies with disaster management roles and responsibilities assess their performance by including a disaster management performance measure in chief executive officers' performance agreements. This measure should reinforce an obligation for agencies to participate in the arrangements at all levels.

Accountable agency	Date of Completion
Lead: Department of the Premier and Cabinet	TBC

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Appendix A: Scope

The following legislated functions of the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management have shaped the scope of this review:

Disaster Management Act 2003	
S 16 (c)	To regularly review and assess cooperation between entities responsible for disaster management in the State, including whether the disaster management systems and procedures employed by those entities are compatible and consistent
S 16 (f)	To monitor compliance by departments with their disaster management responsibilities
S 16 (i)	To identify opportunities for cooperative partnerships to improve disaster management outcomes

The parts of the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland that were reviewed are:

Key Outcomes	Indicators
Disaster management planning is integrated with entity core business and service delivery (4.2)	Planning is undertaken, reviewed and assessed at regular intervals by authorised individuals or entities skilled in the process and is compliant with the legislation including alignment to other key documents, review and maintenance requirements (c)
	The planning and assessment process, including documenting roles, responsibilities and timelines, involves engagement with all stakeholders (d)
	Commitment to disaster management activities (including meetings, planning and exercising) is reflected in entity strategic and operational plans including relevant role descriptions and performance agreements (f)
Entities work together within a control structure that manages disaster operations (8.1)	There is agreed doctrine and common language used across agencies and entities (a)
	Functions in disaster operations are performed and led by the agency with authority and capability to do so, under the overall direction of the controlling authority (b)
	There are clearly documented and agreed control responsibilities that stem from legislation and align with disaster management plans (C)
	Entities that form the control structure agree and document communication protocols (d)
	The control system provides for functional management of events and operates within a risk management framework (e)
The delivery of disaster-related services, through	The entity recognises and supports the controlling authority's documented arrangements for coordination and cooperation (a)
	The entity recognises, and works within, formal and informal

all phases of events, is integrated across the sector and is responsive to community needs (10.1)	relationships for cooperative service delivery (b)
	Formally approved plans consider multi-agency and joint operational requirements recognise the roles, responsibilities and interests of entities and informal participants (c)
	Goals for the event are formulated, risk assessed and prioritised, and their implementation coordinated through the controlling authority (d)

Appendix B: Contributors

Local Government
Balonne Shire Council
Banana Shire Council
Brisbane City Council
Burdekin Regional Council
Cairns Regional Council
City of Gold Coast Council
Mackay Regional Council
Moreton Bay Regional Council
Mt Isa City Council
Somerset Regional Council
Southern Downs Regional Council
Tablelands Regional Council
Townsville Regional Council
Western Downs Regional Council
Whitsunday Regional Council
Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

Other entities
Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Bureau of Meteorology
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
Department of Education and Training
Department of Environment, Heritage and Protection
Department of Housing and Public Works
Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing
Department of Natural Resources and Mines
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation
Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and Commonwealth Games
Department of Transport and Main Roads
Local Government Association of Queensland
Maritime Safety Queensland
Public Safety Business Agency
Queensland Treasury
Queensland Ambulance Service
Queensland Health
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Queensland Police Service
Red Cross

* As they existed at time of consult.

Appendix C: Tropical Cyclone Marcia

State Agency Integration during Tropical Cyclone Marcia February 2015

The integration of disaster-related services and disaster management planning, and the effectiveness of entities working together within a control structure, was tested during Tropical Cyclone Marcia. We considered how integration occurred with Rockhampton and Livingston local and district disaster management groups. We did not conduct an in-depth analysis, rather we spoke with some key stakeholders about their perception and experience during disaster operations. The information obtained validates some of the findings documented in this report.

Background

Severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia crossed the coast near Shoalwater Bay on the morning of Friday 20 February 2015. Extensive rainfall was experienced across central and south-eastern Queensland throughout the day.

Within 24 hours, Tropical Cyclone Marcia developed from a category 1 to a category 5 cyclone. Due to the speed at which the cyclone intensified, significant pressure was placed on disaster management groups at a local, district and state level, to plan and prepare, with very little lead time. By way of example, very few local or district disaster management groups had 'stood up' on the morning of Thursday 19 February, however by the afternoon, nine groups had 'stood up', and another 12 groups had moved to 'lean forward'. This may have contributed to the level of integration during this event.

Issue

Integration of disaster-related services

As documented in this report, there are varied expectations at a local and district level regarding the roles and responsibilities of state agencies. This was evident during Tropical Cyclone Marcia. We heard on several occasions that there was confusion regarding the roles undertaken by state agencies and other entities. For example, as part of their function Building and Asset Services, Department of Housing and Public Works, undertook a clean-up of debris for the Department of Education and Training. The Australian Defence Force (ADF) also undertook this same activity. We were advised this lack of coordination created difficulties for agencies coordinating relief activities. It was reported that there was also discrepancy of roles and varied expectations relating to relief and recovery activities. This specific matter will be considered in a review by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

Integration of disaster management planning

During Tropical Cyclone Marcia the experience, expertise and skill of state agency representatives on local and district groups resurfaced as an issue (refer to pg. 24, 25 & 30). Some representatives had limited disaster management experience, and had received limited training, but were directed to represent their agency at local and district meetings. There was an expectation at some group meetings that state agency representatives would

brief the group, and make decisions, about all services pertaining to that agency. This remains a challenge for state agencies which cover a diverse range of services, such as transport and main roads.

Integration of entities within a control structure

The number of different information management systems currently used by disaster management stakeholders continues to be a challenge for disaster management in Queensland (refer to pg. 29). We heard of problems related to the interoperability of these systems. For example, as the State Emergency Service request for assistance (RFA) system does not exchange information with Guardian, the Local Disaster Coordinator told us they had to manually upload RFA's into Guardian. This resulted in time delays and consumed extra human resources during the event.

Summary

The findings documented in this appendix are consistent with those identified in this report. They emphasise the importance of clarifying the core disaster management functions, roles and responsibilities of state agencies. They also reinforce the need to review legislation and supporting doctrine, particularly, the structure and functions of local government and disaster groups to enhance integration.

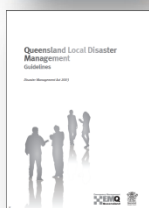
Ensuring representation of state agencies is based on the appropriate level of skill and expertise required at a local and district level, and requirements articulated within disaster management plans, will further strengthen the capability of disaster management groups. It will also help state agencies review and determine their ability to meet and commit resourcing. Improving the interoperability of disaster management information systems will enable better exchange of information and enhance the integration of agencies, groups and networks, during a disaster.

Appendix D: Reference Material

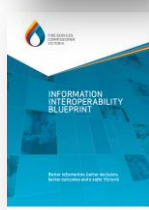
State Resources



Emergency Management Assurance Framework
Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management
<https://www.igem.qld.gov.au/assurance-framework/index.html>



Queensland Local Disaster Management Guidelines
Queensland Fire and Emergency Service
<http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au/DisasterResources/Documents/Queensland%20Local%20Disaster%20Management%20Guidelines.pdf>



Information Interoperability Blueprint
Emergency Management Victoria
<http://fire-com-live-wp.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/Information-Interoperability-Blueprint.pdf>

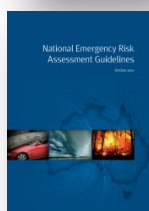


Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper
Victorian Government
http://hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Copy-of-victorian_emergency_management_reform_white_paper_dec2012_web.pdf

National Resources



Australian Emergency Management Arrangements – Handbook 9
Australian Emergency Management Institute
<http://www.em.gov.au/publications/australianemergencymanualseries/Pages/default.aspx>



National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines
Emergency Management Australia
<http://www.em.gov.au/Documents/National%20Emergency%20Risk%20Assessment%20Guidelines%20October%202010.PDF>

International Resources



Inter-organisational policy processes in disaster management
Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal
<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/09653569510082669>

Appendix E: Summary of feedback

In addition to substantial engagement during the course of this review, a copy of the draft report was provided to its contributors seeking final feedback. Below is a summary of feedback, which was provided in writing or verbally to the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management. The views of contributors have been considered and are represented to the extent relevant and warranted in preparing this report.

Summary of comments received from stakeholders accountable for recommendations:

Department of Premiers and Cabinet (DPC)
The DPC is grateful for the opportunity to consider a draft of the IGEM's Review of the State Agency integration at a Local and District level. It is acknowledged that greater integration at the local and district levels would enhance disaster prevention, preparation, response and recovery. DPC looks forward to receiving the final report and collaborating with other stakeholders to improve Queensland Government agencies' integration with disaster management arrangements and stakeholders.
Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA)
<p>The PSBA supports a review of disaster management legislation to clarify the structure and functions of local government / groups and integrate hazard specific agency planning in to district and local arrangements. The PSBA will assist the lead agency for Recommendation 1, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC), as required. PSBA is also likely to be involved in the progression of any legislative amendments resulting from such review.</p> <p>The PSBA also supports an integrated risk-based approach for disaster management planning that is consistent with the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland. In this regard the PSBA will support Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) in Recommendation 3 to fulfil its role as lead agency.</p> <p>If accepted, DPC would be responsible for implementing Recommendation 5 that disaster management performance measures would be included in Chief Executive Officers' performance agreements.</p> <p>However, the PSBA would be responsible for managing the measure as it relates to Public Safety Portfolio senior executives.</p>

Queensland Police Service (QPS)

The QPS notes the findings of the review and supports the integration and enhancement of risk assessment and planning into local, district and state arrangements.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)

[The report is] a valuable program of work that comprehensively identifies and addresses the issues and challenges associated with the integration of State Government agencies in Queensland's disaster management arrangements, particularly in relation to participation in local and district disaster management groups. The recommendations are agreed to in principle.

Recommendation 2 is supported, however the guidelines cannot be comprehensively reviewed without being informed by the Strategic Policy Framework, the State Disaster Management Plan and the Risk Assessment Strategy; all of which are currently under review and potentially several months away from completion. As an interim strategy, the guidelines can be improved through adjustment to reflect recent changes in Government. It is suggested that the interim strategy be targeted to be completed by end of December 2015 and that the comprehensive review be targeted for completion by end June 2016.

Recommendation 3 is supported, however it is reliant on firstly the development of the Risk Assessment Strategy and then its integration into the Local and District Disaster Management Guidelines. The implementation of the Risk Assessment Strategy into planning will also require the parallel development of a tool for use at the local, district and state levels to achieve consistency of use. It is suggested that the development of the Risk Assessment Strategy be targeted for completion by end December 2015 and the integration of that strategy and development of the associated tool be targeted for completion by end June 2016.

Page 23, Paragraph 3, 1st sentence: The observation in the report that there is a "lack of consistent terminology used throughout disaster management doctrine" points directly to the ongoing work of the IGEM in leading the development of a doctrine terminology framework. It is suggested that the report should note that this program of work is being undertaken.

Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP)

The department supports the findings and recommendations presented in the report, particularly Recommendation 3 which emphasises the need to employ an integrated risk-based approach to disaster management planning. The department also recommends that

consideration be given to including representatives from each of the Functional Recovery Group lead agencies in local and district disaster management planning activities. This approach may help build robust relationships across these levels and provide clarity about the State agency roles at the local and district level.

Summary of comments from other stakeholders:

Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM)

The general direction appears appropriate and consistent with the department's views. It is important to ensure that the introduction of additional process and additional cost does realise clear benefits.

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS)

The department is generally supportive of the findings and recommendations of the Review. The improvements are welcomed as improved integration of services and planning would benefit our vulnerable client base.

The department supports the recommendation to clearly articulate DCCSDS's function as a lead agency is.

It is suggested that consideration may need to be given to heightening the awareness of stakeholders involved in Community Recovery activity (where applicable) of the roles and functions of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

The department endorses the addition of disaster management performance measures for all agencies with disaster management roles with a view to improving participation in disaster management planning at all levels.

Although not listed within the recommendations of the report, the department supports the idea of an information services solution to enhance information sharing during a disaster – having access to additional information would assist in both planning and response during events.

Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI)

Recommendation 4: DSITI supports this recommendation as it will serve to clearly articulate our responsibilities as lead agency for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and those of the Telecommunication providers.

Recommendation 5: DSITI endeavours to participate in district group meetings wherever possible. As stated in your report, in-person attendance is sometimes challenging and

therefore we are reliant on teleconferencing facilities. For agencies to effectively contribute at district level meetings all District Disaster Groups should have the ability to distribute papers and presentations and facilitate teleconference participation.

Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Health (QAS DoH)

The QAS supports the recommended changes proposed within the document and supports all efforts to standardised roles, responsibilities and terminology and further ensure that risk based assessments form part of the planning processes. The QAS reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that appropriately trained officers attend the Local Disaster Management Group and District Disaster Management Group meetings as active members.

Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR)

The DTMR supports the content of the review report.

Australian Red Cross (ARC)

This is a good review and there are no changes the Red Cross wishes to add.

Department of Health (DoH)

The findings were of interest and the recommendations proposed are sound. Health continues to be a proactive state agency in disaster and emergency response and the department appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback. The department suggests a measured approach in the elaboration of how state agencies responsibilities are to be delivered as this can vary subject to the nature of the event and scale of the response.

Livingstone Shire Council



Our reference: ES9.4.2
 Enquiries to: Jenna Buckley
 Telephone: 4913 5000 or 1300 790 919

28 May 2015

Inspector General Emergency Management
 c/- info@igem.qld.gov.au

Attn: Iain S Mackenzie

Dear Sir

REVIEW OF STATE AGENCY INTEGRATION AT A LOCAL AND DISTRICT LEVEL

Reference is made to your email correspondence received 7 May 2015 in relation to the above review. I wish to provide the following comments in relation to this review.

1. *Page 6 – Finding No. 8 - Planning is often undertaken in isolation without engagement of relevant stakeholders, leading to differing expectations:*

This issue has two facets which could be further explored in the context that engagement requires initiation and response. There should be further elaboration on the details provided in the review to show both sides of the lack of engagement. In Livingstone, and other LDMG's our Disaster Management Officer is in contact with, this is not due to lack of endeavour to engage relevant stakeholders in the risk analysis and planning. Repeated invitations and attempts can be made however, with the other issues identified; such as the State agencies' staff availability and understanding, and the lack of the QDMA and Queensland Local Disaster Management Guidelines including State agencies' accountability in being engaged and contributing to all hazards, risk based planning, it is not surprising that this is a state wide issue for Local and District groups. The only reference for this side of the cause is in the Context on page 10, notation 7, *The finding that key stakeholders were 'not always available' for planning was cited as a risk to the quality of the plans.*

2. *Page 26 – Conclusion, 7th Paragraph – Information integration is reduced as a result of the different information management systems:*

For Livingstone Shire during TC Marcia, and Rockhampton Regional Council pre-deamalgamation, issues arose with RFA (SES system) information integration due to an absence of access to RFA in the LDCC. A Liaison Officer was relaying SES tasks captured in Guardian (from the LDCC call centre calls) to the SES Headquarters. When access to RFA failed at the SES Headquarters, there was no alternative available in the LDCC. If support from employed QFES, SES or Emergency Management staff had been present, a process could have been provided to resolve this whether through accessing RFA on their computers or setting up another Council's SES to receive and send through tasks on Livingstone Shire Council's behalf.

PO Box 2292 Yeppoon Qld 4703
 Phone 07 4913 5000 or 1300 790 919

www.livingstone.qld.gov.au
enquiries@livingstone.qld.gov.au

ABN 95 399 253 018

3. *Page 37 – Appendix C: Tropical Cyclone Marcia – Background, second paragraph:*

The Livingstone LDMG was stood up as of 0700hours on Thursday 19 February 2015. Attached are the acknowledgement emails showing the State Agencies' that received this notification.

4. *Page 37 – Appendix C: Integration of disaster-related services:*

The example given of Building and Asset Services (as part of Department of Housing and Public Works) cleaning up debris for the Department of Education; there is no record in the meeting minutes of the LDMG for this event where it was raised to the attention of the group or the Coordination Centre. In relation to cleaning up schools, the use of the Australian Defence Force was raised at the LDMG meetings as it was fulfilling the DACC request and run through the LDCC/SES Headquarters. Department of Housing and Public Works decision to send those work groups to clean debris did so without the involvement of the LDMG/LDCC.

5. *Page 38 – Summary:*

Reinforcement of 'the need to review legislation and supporting doctrine, particularly, the structure and functions of Local Government and disaster groups to enhance integration' should be identified to the State Agencies to recognise their responsibility to identify the appropriate staff and allow them to attend joint training and exercises. Enhanced participation would greatly improve prevention, planning and response operations. Guardian being used by Local Governments in the LDCC is a good practice as Local Government holds the responsibility for supporting coordination and the program is easily learnt by Council Staff and the Agency Liaison Officers. A challenge arises when the trained Agency Liaison Officers are not those that are sent to the LDCC during an activation or the agency staff do not take advantage of the Guardian training and LDCC exercises and therefore have no exposure to the program.

Thank you for allowing the opportunity to provide comments on the draft review report and we look forward to the receiving the final report and participating in the resulting change process.

Yours faithfully



Dan Toon
Director
Infrastructure Services

Mackay Regional Council

OUR REF IGEM
BCMSB

28 May 2015

Inspector-General Emergency Management

Office of the IGEM

info@igem.qld.gov.au

**Mackay Regional Council Feedback Submission
Review of State Agency Integration at a Local and District Level**

Dear Inspector-General,

Mackay Regional Council supports the recommendations made in this Review Report.

Mackay Regional Council acknowledges and appreciates that feedback from Council staff interviewed in relation to this review in November 2014 has been considered and contributed to the draft report content.

Mackay Regional Council and the Mackay Local Disaster Management Group are continually improving and looking for ways to improve our integration with State Agencies.

Mackay Regional Council (MRC) would like to offer the following specific feedback / comments for consideration in relation to the draft review report:-

- Page 5 – MRC agrees that planning is often compliance driven.

Councils experience is that repeated attempts to bring state agencies into a collaborative planning process have failed. Whenever sub plans are reviewed the amount of feedback from state agencies is extremely limited. As a result of the limited participation, planning effectively occurs in isolation across the arrangements and key stakeholders.

Whilst the LDMG and state agencies have always worked extremely well in response, it has been noted that many state agency reports within peacetime equate to a statement of "business as usual".

This year, the LDMG have required all agencies to give a written status report on their agency activities which is included within the distributed agenda one week prior to the scheduled meeting. Since the introduction of this measure, we have noted a considerable increase in commitment, participation and sharing of information within the group.

Civic Precinct, Gordon Street
PO Box 41 Mackay | QLD 4740 | Australia

Phone 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529)
Fax 07 4944 2400

Email council@mackay.qld.gov.au
ABN 56 240 712 069

Page 2 of 3

At the District level, the three local governments supply written status reports and apart from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and Maritime Safety Queensland, most state agencies only give a verbal report which is based on the 'business as usual statement'

Our belief is that a requirement of a written status report submitted prior to the meeting and included with the agenda increases agency commitment, participation and sharing of information.

- Page 15 – MRC agrees that discrepancies within roles and responsibilities within the three levels and the agency's capacity to support service delivery during response hinder the ability to effectively respond to the community needs.
- Page 16 – MRC agrees that the lack of forward planning, notice of meetings, exercises and training impacts on the integration of the group. Over the past three years, this LDMG publishes in October each year, the next years scheduled LDMG meeting dates in advance. We have found that this increases attendances at meetings assists in reducing calendar clashes.

Council is also of the belief that the minimum number of meetings to be held per annum should be increased within the Disaster Management Act from two to a minimum of at least four meetings. In the past we have had temporary chairs of the District Group that have effectively dropped previous meeting schedules from eight meeting per annum back to the bare minimum, stating that meets the requirements. But it also defeats integration, cooperation, building of relationships and effective planning.

- Page 19 – MRC agrees that the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services are committed and passionate about disaster recovery.
- Page 20 – MRC agrees that there is a need trigger points for activation and requests for assistance.

As a result of TC Marcia the Disaster Management Officers from the three local governments (Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac) together with the QFES Area Coordinator and Executive Officer of the MDDMG have engaged in a project to come up with standardised trigger point for cyclones based on distance, speed, track and intensity rather than just off Cyclone Watch or Warning from the BoM.

- Page 24 - MRC agrees that the different computer operating systems in the Disaster Management space across State, District and Local levels creates significant difficulties and hinders information sharing and operational improvements.

Council also has concerns over the limited consultation over information systems that are brought in by State for the State Emergency Service (previously RFA and now TAMS) to use that do not talk to or integrate with systems at a Local Government level (in our case Guardian). Hence additional resources and time are wasted on reentering data on two information systems.

Page 3 of 3

The big picture may be lost or not able to be seen from the LDMG due to differing datasets.

Council has recently purchased and established a separate Guardian platform for SES to use rather than the State System. The hardware required to operate the systems is also purchased by Council and not provided from State.

- To improve agency integration and as indicated in our reply to the Local Government Capability for Emergency Warning and on Page 22 of EW Review: There should be requirement in the Incident Management System directive for QFES Information and Public Warning Unit to advise a local government area if an event may or is impacting them i.e. pandemics, biohazard and animal hazards. Even though there are threat specific functional lead agencies to deal with these events, in my experience (preparations for pandemic outbreak in 2009, equine influenza, oil spills) they have all relied on LG (LDMG's and DDMG's) to provide some assistance. At least then the Local Government (LDMG) will be on the front foot to start pre-empting some of the requests that may come their way from the lead agency.
- As stated above Mackay has been extremely fortunate to have very good relationships and cooperation with state agencies and the District Group especially in response times. However we do believe there is opportunity to build on the response capabilities through effective integration.
- Council would add that LGAQ as our representative body be a key part of the team implementing the recommendations across the state and working with individual local governments.

Mackay Regional Council would like to thank you for allowing us to be a stakeholder and to take part in this review.

For additional information, please contact Mr Bruce Chester-Master, Acting Emergency Management Coordinator, Mackay Regional Council on (07) 4961 9632 or by email bruce.chester-master@mackay.qld.gov.au

Yours sincerely,



Jason Devitt
Local Disaster Coordinator
Mackay Local Disaster Management Group

Whitsunday Regional Council



Our reference: Disaster Management
Your reference:
For further information please contact: Scott Tellegen
Direct dial no.: (07) 4945 0681

22 May 2014

Inspector General Emergency Management
Iain Mackenzie
Via e-mail: info@iqem.qld.gov.au

Customer Service Centres**Bowen**

P: 07 4761 3600
67 Herbert Street
Bowen Qld 4805

Collinsville

P: 07 4785 5366
Cnr Stanley and Conway Streets
Collinsville Qld 4804

Proserpine

P: 07 4945 0200
83-85 Main Street
Proserpine Qld 4800

F: 07 4945 0222
E: info@whitsundayrc.qld.gov.au
W: www.whitsundayrc.qld.gov.au

ABN: 63 291 580 128

Dear Inspector General,

**RE: WHITSUNDAY REGIONAL COUNCIL – REVIEW OF STATE AGENCY
INTEGRATION AT A LOCAL AND DISTRICT LEVEL – DRAFT REPORT FOR
COMMENT**

Reference is made to your e-mail regarding the above.

Whitsunday Regional Council supports the recommendations made in this Review Report.

Whitsunday Regional Council acknowledges and appreciates that feedback from Council staff interviewed in relation to this review in November 2014 has been considered and contributed to the draft report content.

Whitsunday Regional Council and the Whitsunday Local Disaster Management Group are continually improving and looking for ways to improve our integration with State Agencies.

Whitsunday Regional Council (WRC) would like to offer the following specific feedback / comments for consideration in relation to the draft review report:-

- Page 19 – WRC agrees that the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services are committed and passionate about disaster recovery.
- Page 20 – WRC agrees that QFES Area Coordinators provide an important link between Local and District groups.
- WRC agrees that the different computer operating systems in the Disaster Management space across State, District and Local levels creates significant difficulties and hinders information sharing and operational improvements.

Whitsunday Regional Council would like to thank you for allowing us to be a stakeholder and to take part in this review.

Please feel free to contact Council's Local Disaster Coordinator Scott Tellegen on (07) 4945 0681 should you have any questions or require any further additional information in this matter.

Yours faithfully


Scott Waters
Chief Executive Officer

Address all correspondence to the Chief Executive Officer, Whitsunday Regional Council, PO Box 104 Proserpine Qld 4800



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