

1. Issue Name

Disaster Management

2. Contributors

Senior Consultant Emergency Management, General Manager Customer Service, Acting General Manager Redland Water and Waste, Group Manager Land Use Planning

3. Issue Definition and Scope

Disaster Management refers to arrangements about recognising, understanding and managing the potential adverse effects of an event, including for example, arrangements for mitigating, preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster.

This paper outlines Council's responsibilities in relation to disaster management.

4. Executive Summary

The Disaster Management Act 2003 (the Act), commenced by proclamation on 31 March, 2004, provides the legislative basis for disaster management arrangements in Queensland. Significant changes introduced with the Act include:

- a shift of focus from Counter Disaster (response focussed) to the four phases of Disaster Management (mitigation/planning, preparation, response and recovery (PPRR));
- the introduction of major legislated responsibilities for Local Government;
- a shift in responsibility from State to Local Government for development, approval and operation of local disaster management plans and activities; and
- the requirement for Council to have a disaster response capability.

The provision of National/State Disaster Relief funding is now dependant on Council demonstrating its commitment to all four phases, particularly prevention.

Council currently undertakes a number of disaster management related activities however none of these are recognised within the current Corporate Plan.

The new Corporate Plan should recognise Council's strategic role in disaster management. In addition, the role of existing Council activities in contributing to disaster management should be recognised including:

- participation in regional disaster management;
- The role of the Redlands Planning Scheme in ensuring appropriate land use planning & development control;
- Mitigating and responding to bushfires;
- Council's support of the Redland State Emergency Service;
- Providing a disaster response capability.

Expected outcomes include:

- development and implementation of the Local Disaster Management Plan;
- documentation of Council's disaster response capability;
- continued participation in Regional disaster management;
- Planning to avoid land uses in locations where there is potential risk of loss of life, or property loss or damage.

5. Regional Cooperation

Queensland's Disaster Management system is based on an *all-agencies approach* – which ensures partnering for counter-disaster arrangements between the community, council and other levels of government. The system comprises three tiers: Local, District and State and enables a progressive escalation of support and assistance through these tiers as required. The Act legislates the establishment, functions and membership of each group.

Partnership arrangements between State and Local Governments recognise that each level of the disaster management system must not only work collaboratively but in unison to ensure the effective coordination of planning, services, information and resources necessary for comprehensive disaster management (refer Appendix 2 for further information on Qld's Disaster Management System).

Regional planning and coordination also recognises that any given event has the potential to affect more than one Council, and provides a structure for gaining and providing external assistance as usually provided in support of good neighbour relations.

Council has gained a good reputation for our disaster activities, specifically:

- High level of RSC Councillor and ELG support;
- Council support of the State Emergency Service;
- Proactive approach to disaster management issues;
- Communication and relationships with external agencies (State agencies and local gov); and
- Participation in regional issues and projects.

Council currently participates at a number of regional forums:

- District Disaster Management Group including the District Recovery Group (district covers Brisbane, Pine Rivers and Redlands Council's – representation required under the Act);
- SEQ Disaster Management Advisory Group – established to facilitate communication between local governments on regional issues (also includes Dept Emergency Services);
- Regional Fire Management Team – QFRS operations ran from the depot during fire season;
- Regional projects such as:
 - I-zone Community Education Working Group (bushfire awareness);
 - SEQ Disaster Communications Project;
 - Disaster management plan template development (with BCC and Pine Rivers).

Council also participates in regional disaster management training and exercises.

Future regional projects currently being investigated include:

- Coordination of storm-tide assessment and mitigation; and
- Disaster management for the islands in Moreton Bay (ie including South Stradbroke and Moreton Islands).

While regional involvement may be time-consuming, it is the nature of the disaster management industry. This involvement needs to be endorsed at a corporate level to ensure that it is recognised and supported.

6. Background/ Discussion

The primary focus of the Qld's disaster management system (the System) is to mitigate the effects of disasters on the community wherever possible or practical, while preparing to respond when disasters do occur. The System is underpinned by the national concepts of disaster management which are:

- An **all-hazards approach** – encompassing all types of hazards and ensuring one management system for counter disaster and civil defence arrangements;
- A **comprehensive approach** – covering all phases of activity, including prevention, preparation, response and recovery;
- An **all-agencies approach** – which ensures partnering for counter-disaster arrangements between the community, council and other levels of government;
- A **prepared community** – which has strong, established links between individuals, voluntary organisations and local authorities.

The Disaster Management Act 2003 (the Act), commenced by proclamation on 31 March, 2004, provides the legislative basis for disaster management arrangements in Queensland. This legislation replaces the *State Counter-Disaster Organisation Act 1975* (SCDO Act) in its entirety.

Significant changes introduced with the Act include:

- A shift of focus from Counter Disaster (response focussed) to the four phases of Disaster Management (mitigation/planning, preparation, response and recovery (PPRR));
- The introduction of major legislated responsibilities for Local Government;
- A shift in responsibility from State to Local Government for development, approval and operation of local disaster management plans and activities;
- the requirement for Council to have a disaster response capability.

The Act makes provision for the establishment of Disaster Management Groups for State, disaster districts and local government areas, and provides for the preparation of disaster management plans and guidelines which record agreed arrangements for the coordination of disaster management and disaster operations.

Local Government Responsibilities

The Act requires that Council appoints a Local Disaster Management Group, develops and maintains a Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP), and maintains a disaster response capability.

The Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) was appointed March 2004 and consists of Cr Williams (chair), Cr Ogilvie (Deputy Chair), relevant Group Managers, Counter Disaster and Rescue Service, Qld Police, Qld Fire and Rescue Service, Qld Ambulance, Redlands Hospital and Energex. The LDMG is responsible for the coordination of disaster management at the local level.

The Act places responsibility for the development, review and approval of the Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) with the local government (previously approval sat with the State). The LDMG is in the process of developing a new LDMP which addresses the four phases of disaster management (PPRR). It is important to note that the National/State Disaster Relief Arrangements are now dependant on Council demonstrating its commitment to all four phases, particularly prevention. That is, if Council does not clearly demonstrate how it is identifying and mitigating potential risks to minimise the effects of disaster on its community, Commonwealth and State disaster relief funding will be reduced.

To assist with this, in addition to its normal funding programs, the Commonwealth has recently announced an additional \$33 million over the next 4 years. This scheme provides funding to assist in the development and implementation of community emergency risk management initiatives, enhance protective measures for critical infrastructure and provide emergency management and security awareness training. Council should make all attempts to take advantage of this funding while it is on offer.

Current status

Planning

Planning includes hazard identification, risk assessment, and implementation of measures to avoid the disaster or to reduce or eliminate potential loss of life or damage to property and to protect economic development.

Council has made considerable progress over the last few years to address disaster risk within the Shire. This includes the completion of the Natural Hazard Risk Management Plan, SMBI Fire Management Plan, firebreak assessment reports and incorporation of disaster mitigation requirements into the draft Redland Planning Scheme. Projects nearing completion include fire management plans (mainland and NSI), landslide risk assessment and localised flood risk. However significant gaps existing including:

- development of a Shire flood regulation line;
- Technological and terrorism risk assessments;
- Identification and retro-fit of existing 'at risk' developments;
- Completion of the Local Disaster Management Plan (Dec);
- Development of Disaster Recovery requirements including evacuation and recovery centres (grant applied for);
- Development of a Communications Plan for pre, during and post-event communications (grant applied for)
- Islands disaster management (grant applied for).

Preparation

This includes arrangements or plans to ensure timely response, relief and rehabilitation in the event of a disaster. It requires appropriate organisational structures, trained persons, plans and procedures;

The Act requires Council to have a disaster response capability, which means the ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the local government, to effectively deal with, or help another entity to deal with, an emergency situation or a disaster in the local government's area.

Many areas within Council currently provide response capabilities however there is minimal documentation in the form of policies, procedures or operational plans that recognise, coordinate or formalise these capabilities. Appropriate documentation is required to ensure Council can demonstrate it has met the requirements of the Act should an emergency situation occur.

Areas requiring review, policy and procedural development include:

- Coordination of Council's response:
 - Call centre;
 - Water supply, sewerage and waste disposal;
 - Roads and drainage (asset management);
 - Parks and conservation (fire and vegetation management);
 - Community welfare;
 - Economic recovery;

- Redlands State Emergency Service;
- LDMG Coordination capabilities.

Response

This is the process of combating a disaster and for providing immediate assistance to affected persons and sections of the community. The aims of response operations are to save lives, protect property, and render an affected area safe.

Council has a well developed operational response system for standard emergency situations – eg flooding, storm damage, asset damage (roads, water supply, sewerage). Council also plays a significant role in mitigating and combating bushfire through the shire. Much of this response however is dependant on the knowledge and experience of key Council staff and is not supported by current guidelines or procedures. As such, many disaster response activities across Council are not recognised or supported in any formal sense. Communication and coordination between groups and the Executive Leadership Group, Council and the LDMG is also limited.

Formalising processes will also assist Council in claiming all possible costs through NDRA/SDRA funding.

Recovery

Recovery is the process by which an affected community is assisted in regaining a proper level of functioning following a disaster.

Limited recovery planning exists within Redland Shire, as is the situation within most local governments. The role division between State and Local governments is unclear however as a minimum Council is required to identify and establish evacuation centres through the Shire. Council has applied for Natural Disaster Mitigation Program funding to develop a Recovery Plan during the 2005/6 financial year.

Corporate Plan Requirements

The existing Corporate Plan does not recognise disaster management in any form. While disaster management activities can be tenuously linked to most, if not all, of the corporate objectives, this is not adequate given the legislated and growing responsibilities of Council in the disaster management area.

Council has recognised the requirement for the effective coordination of Council's responsibilities under the Act by appointing the Senior Consultant Emergency Management, which reports directly to the General Manager Customer Service (also LDMG Executive Officer). Similar recognition of Council's responsibilities should be provided within the Corporate Plan. This recognition could be provided primarily through acknowledging the development, implementation and review of the Local Disaster Management Plan, which is the coordinating document for Council's disaster management activities.

In addition, the role of existing Council activities in contributing to disaster management should be recognised including:

- The role of the draft Redland Planning Scheme in ensuring appropriate development;
- Mitigating and responding to bushfires;
- Council's support of the Redland State Emergency Service;
- Providing a disaster response capability.

Recommendations

That the Corporate Plan recognise:

- Disaster management as a key responsibility in itself;
- The various sub-components as contributing to disaster management (eg planning scheme, Council operations, SES).

APPENDIX A – DEFINITIONS

The Act defines the following terms relevant to this report:

A '**disaster**' is a serious disruption in a community, caused by the impact of an event, that requires a significant coordinated response by the State and other entities to help the community recover from the disruption.

A '**serious disruption**' means any of the following:

- Loss of human life, or illness or injury to humans; or
- Widespread or severe property loss or damage; or
- Widespread or severe damage to the environment.

An '**event**' means any of the following:

- A cyclone, earthquake, flood, storm, storm tide, tornado, tsunami, volcanic eruption or other natural happening;
- An explosion or fire, a chemical, fuel or oil spill, or a gas leak;
- An infestation, plague or epidemic;
- A failure of, or disruption to, an essential service or infrastructure;
- An attack against the State;
- Another event similar to an event mentioned above.

An 'event' may be natural or caused by human acts or omissions.

'**Disaster management**' means arrangements about managing the potential adverse effects of an event, including for example, arrangements for mitigating, preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster.

'**Disaster operations**' means activities undertaken before, during or after an event happens to reduce loss of human life, illness or injury to humans, property loss or damage, or damage to the environment, including, for example, activities to mitigate the adverse effects of the event.

'**Disaster response capability**' for a local government, means the ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the local government, to effectively deal with, or help another entity to deal with, an emergency situation or a disaster in the local government's area.

APPENDIX B – QLD'S DISASTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The *concepts* of disaster management are:

- An ***all-hazards approach*** – encompassing all types of hazards and ensuring one management system for counter disaster and civil defence arrangements;
- A ***comprehensive approach*** – covering all phases of activity, including prevention, preparation, response and recovery;
- An ***all-agencies approach*** – which ensures partnering for counter-disaster arrangements between the community, council and other levels of government;
- A ***prepared community*** – which has strong, established links between individuals, voluntary organisations and local authorities.

The four *phases* of disaster management are:

- Prevention - This includes hazard identification, risk assessment, and implementation of measures to avoid the disaster or to reduce or eliminate potential loss of life or damage to property and to protect economic development;
- Preparation - This includes arrangements or plans to ensure timely response, relief and rehabilitation in the event of a disaster. It requires appropriate organisational structures, trained persons, plans and procedures;
- Response - This is the process of combating a disaster and for providing immediate assistance to affected persons and sections of the community. The aims of response operations are to save lives, protect property, and render an affected area safe;
- Recovery - This is the process by which an affected community is assisted in regaining a proper level of functioning following a disaster. It comprises two stages - 'initial recovery' and 'long term recovery/reconstruction'.
 - Initial Recovery - The aim is to satisfy personal and community needs, and to restore services to the level where Local Government and the normal responsible agencies can manage the continuing process.
 - Long Term Recovery/Reconstruction - Long term recovery, reconstruction or rehabilitation measures are the subject of separate arrangements.

The Queensland disaster management system comprises three tiers: Local, District and State. The system enables a progressive escalation of support and assistance through these tiers as required. A fourth level, the Commonwealth, is also included in our disaster management system, recognising that Qld may need to seek Commonwealth support in times of disaster.

The system comprises several key management and coordination structures through which the functions of disaster management for Qld are achieved. The principle structures that make up Qld's disaster management system are:

- Disaster Management Groups that operate at State, District and Local levels and which are responsible for the planning, organisation, coordination and implementation of all measures to mitigate/prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster situations;
- Coordination Centres at State, District and Local levels that support Disaster Management Groups in coordinating information, resources and services necessary for disaster operations;
- State Government Functional Lead Agencies through which the function and responsibilities of the State Government in relation to disaster management are managed and coordinated;
- State Government Treat Specific Lead Agencies responsible for the management and coordination of combating specific threats; and

- Committees, either permanent or temporary, established under the authority of the Disaster Management Groups for specific purposes.

Management of a disaster at the community level is conducted by Local Government who are responsible for the implementation of their Local Disaster Management Plan. If Local Government requires additional resources to manage the event, they are able to request support from their District Disaster Coordinator. This allows for the rapid mobilisation of resources at a regional or district level. Similarly, if District resources are inadequate or inappropriate, requests for assistance can escalate to the State, and finally the Commonwealth.