

# Queensland Evacuation Guidelines

for Disaster Management Groups

VERSION ONE  
August 2011





**DISCLAIMER**

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South East Queensland Floods 2011 - Brisbane. Photo by Michael Marston

## Authorisation

The Queensland Evacuation Guidelines for Disaster Management Groups has been prepared to provide information and guidance to stakeholders, on the planning and implementation of the evacuation process. The Guidelines are maintained by Emergency Management Queensland, Department of Community Safety on behalf of the State Disaster Management Group.

**The Guidelines were prepared in consultation with all agencies represented on the State Disaster Management Group. It is hereby endorsed and recommended for distribution.**



22 August 2011

John Bradley

Date

**Chair  
State Disaster Management Group**

## Abbreviations

<b>AHD</b>	Australian Height Datum
<b>AP</b>	Assembly Point
<b>DDC</b>	District Disaster Coordinator
<b>DDCC</b>	District Disaster Coordination Centre
<b>DDMG</b>	District Disaster Management Group
<b>DDMP</b>	District Disaster Management Plan
<b>EC</b>	Evacuation Centre
<b>EMQ</b>	Emergency Management Queensland
<b>HAT</b>	Highest Astronomical Tide
<b>LDC</b>	Local Disaster Coordinator
<b>LDCC</b>	Local Disaster Coordination Centre
<b>LDMG</b>	Local Disaster Management Group
<b>NRIS</b>	National Registration and Inquiry System
<b>PCS</b>	Public Cyclone Shelter
<b>QFRS</b>	Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
<b>SEWS</b>	Standard Early Warning System
<b>SDCC</b>	State Disaster Coordination Centre
<b>SDCG</b>	State Disaster Coordination Group
<b>SDMG</b>	State Disaster Management Group
<i>The Act</i>	<i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i>

# 1. Preliminaries

## 1.1 Acknowledgement

The Queensland Evacuation Guidelines for Disaster Management Groups (the Guidelines) document has been prepared by Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) and funded by the Queensland Climate Change Fund. These Guidelines support the principles of the Queensland government strategy *Towards Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* and the revised climate change strategy; *Climate Q: towards a greener Queensland*.

## 1.2 Authority

These Guidelines have been developed in accordance with s.63 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (the Act). S.63 authorises the preparation of guidelines to inform disaster management groups about matters relating to the preparation of disaster management plans; matters to be included in a disaster management plan; and other matters about the operation of a disaster management group which are considered appropriate.

This document is endorsed by the State Disaster Management Group.

## 1.3 Local government responsibility

According to s.57 of the Act, local governments prepare a Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP), however it is a function of the LDMG to assist local government in this task. The Evacuation Sub Plan is a component of the LDMP.

The planning and development of the Evacuation Sub Plan should take place in close consultation with key local, district and state stakeholders.

## 1.4 Vision

The development of effective Evacuation Sub Plans will support local government, LDMGs and other relevant key local stakeholders to plan for evacuation prior to an event.

Comprehensive and coordinated evacuation planning will assist vulnerable communities in Queensland to plan for evacuation and increase community understanding and awareness of evacuation procedures during a range of hazards irrespective of their locality and the hazard they may face.

A community that is prepared for an event is more likely to respond quickly and effectively, and become more resilient for the future.

## 1.5 Application

Evacuation undertaken during small scale incidents for the purpose of public safety would be undertaken by emergency service responders in the execution of their normal duties and authorised in accordance with relevant legislation.

These Guidelines reflect an all hazards approach and are designed for the evacuation of persons exposed to a range of hazards in accordance with, and under the authority of, the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

## 1.6 Consultation

This document has been circulated to all local governments and other disaster management stakeholders throughout the State to seek feedback prior to finalisation and approval of the Guidelines by the State Disaster Management Group.

## 1.7 Statement of purpose

The aim of these Guidelines is to provide assistance to disaster management groups during the planning and implementation of the evacuation process within Queensland based on legislated emergency management principles.

A comprehensive, coordinated and consistent evacuation process is considered essential as evacuation may be required across more than one local government area and consistent evacuation processes and messages need to be conveyed to all residents as well as tourists and other transient populations.

These Guidelines incorporate and replace the evacuation planning principles previously contained within the *Guidelines for Planning and Conduct of Mass Evacuation in Queensland*.

As a consistent approach to evacuation within Queensland, these Guidelines will assist local governments to plan for the evacuation of exposed persons and document the procedures required to move a number of persons from an unsafe location to a safer location.

These Guidelines provide guidance for the following:

- evacuation planning and decision making
- issuing public information and warnings
- managing the withdrawal of people from an unsafe or potentially unsafe location to a safer location
- safer locations
- return to the evacuated area.

At the top of each chapter a flow diagram illustrates the five stages of evacuation. Planning is not a stage in itself but an implicit part of each of the five stages.

The five stages of evacuation are:

1. Decision to evacuate
2. Warning
3. Withdrawal
4. Shelter
5. Return.

## 1.8 Safety

Safety of Queensland residents is the primary driver for evacuation; however, it is important to note evacuation carries risk, both to those being evacuated and to emergency service personnel managing the evacuation.

International experience indicates mass evacuation can cause anxiety and stress which can lead to panic and loss of life.

An evacuation that has been planned prior to the onset of an event will minimise risks to both the community and disaster management personnel.

## 1.9 References

These Guidelines should be used in conjunction with the following supporting references. Readers of these Guidelines are encouraged to become familiar with these publications and websites to support the evacuation planning process.

### Publications

- Are you bushfire prepared? Prepare.Act.Survive – Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
- Design Guidelines for Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters – Department of Public Works (Q) 2006.
- District Disaster Management Guidelines
- Emergency Alert Queensland Operational Guidelines
- Evacuation Planning Manual – Emergency Management Australia 2005
- Evacuation Sub Plan template available on the disaster management portal
- Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Cyclones – Evacuation and Shelter Guideline – Department of Public Works (Q) 2008
- National Storm Tide Mapping model
- Queensland Local Disaster Management Guidelines (on publication)
- Queensland Recovery Guidelines (on publication)
- State Disaster Management Plan 2011
- Storm Tide Framework available on the disaster management portal
- Guidelines for the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) and its use in Queensland
- Tropical Cyclone Storm Tide Warning Response System Handbook

### Websites

- [www.emergency.qld.gov.au](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au)
- [www.disaster.qld.gov.au](http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au)
- [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au)

## 2. Introduction to evacuation

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### Overview

Evacuation involves the planned and coordinated movement of persons from an unsafe or potentially unsafe location to a safer location and their eventual return home.

Evacuation is a risk management strategy that can mitigate the adverse effects of a disaster on a community.

### 2.1 Local government

According to s.57 of the Act, local governments prepare a Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP), however it is a function of the LDMG to assist local government in this task. The Evacuation Sub Plan is a component of the LDMP.

Local government, in close consultation with the LDMG, are best placed to conduct evacuation planning prior to the onset of an event through their local knowledge, experience, community understanding and existing community relationships.

Communication with all relevant stakeholders and support agencies should occur to increase consistency, enhance community partnerships and minimise the potential for confusion and time delays during an event that requires evacuation.

### 2.2 Stages of evacuation

An evacuation involves five stages:

<b>Decision</b> to evacuate	➤ Decision makers analyse event intelligence and make an assessment on the necessity to evacuate persons exposed to a range of hazards.
<b>Warning</b> <sup>1</sup>	➤ Notification of event conditions and appropriate actions required are conveyed to the public.
<b>Withdrawal</b>	➤ The movement of exposed persons from a dangerous or potentially dangerous area to a safer location.
<b>Shelter</b>	➤ The provision of refuge and basic needs for evacuees in a safer location.
<b>Return</b>	➤ Assessment of the disaster area and managed and planned return of evacuees.

The following diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the entire spectrum of the evacuation process highlighting the need for planning at every stage. An evacuation is not considered to be complete until all five stages have been implemented.

<sup>1</sup> Within these guidelines the term 'warning' is used to describe a stage in the evacuation process and should not be confused with official warnings issued by the Bureau of Meteorology.

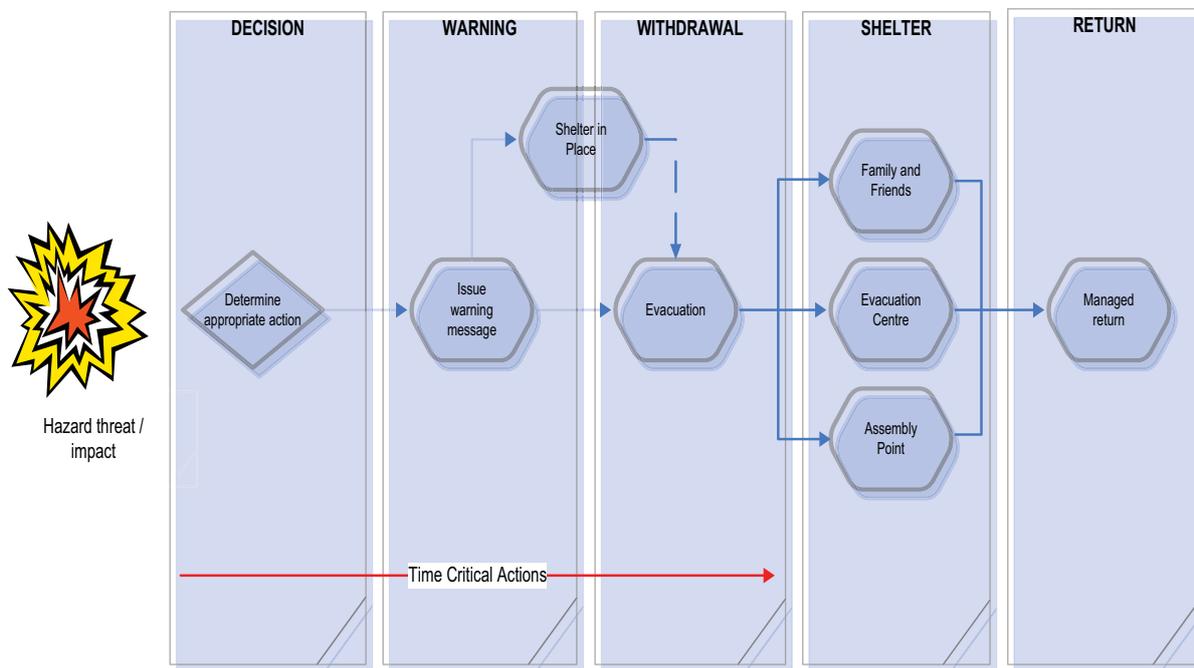


Figure 1. Five stages of evacuation

### 2.3 Context of evacuation

Evacuation can be conducted using the following categories:

<b>Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evacuation may be required <i>pre-impact</i>, as a defensive measure, or <i>post-impact</i> as a result of the impact of the event such as loss of services or severe damage to building structures.</li> </ul>
<b>Notice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depending on the nature of the event an evacuation may be <i>immediate</i> with little or no warning and limited preparation time or <i>pre-warned</i> allowing adequate warning that does not unduly limit preparation time.</li> </ul>
<b>Compulsion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some individuals within the community may proactively make their own decision to self evacuate prior to any direction from authorities. When evacuation is encouraged by authorities it is undertaken as either voluntary evacuation, where exposed persons are encouraged to commence evacuation voluntarily or directed evacuation, where exposed persons are directed under legislative authority to evacuate an area exposed to the impact of a hazard.</li> </ul>

## 3. Evacuation planning

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### Overview

A community that is prepared for an event is more likely to respond quickly and effectively, and become more resilient for the future.

Evacuation planning is an important process allowing time to consider possible scenarios and details for the management and coordination of an evacuation through consultation with a broad range of specialised stakeholders.

Once planning has been completed and management plans have been developed for identified risks, there is opportunity to develop comprehensive and tailored community education and awareness programs.

### 3.1 Evacuation Sub Plan

Evacuation Sub Plans should follow the five stages of evacuation and involve discussions with all identified key local, district and state stakeholders.

The planning and completion of the Evacuation Sub Plan prior to the onset of an event is critical to ensure adequate consideration and planning for an evacuation.

Evacuation sub-plans should be reviewed annually before the summer season or post event to include lessons learned.

An all hazards Evacuation Sub Plan template is available on the Disaster Management Portal.

### 3.2 Evacuation planning working group

In order to further assist the evacuation planning process and the development of the Evacuation Sub Plan a group may be established by the LDMG involving representatives from all agencies with a role in evacuation and a focus on the development of a comprehensive plan with agreement and ownership by key agencies.

### 3.3 Managing the escalation of support

During the evacuation planning process, the LDMG may identify the resources available at the local level and/or local capability will be inadequate and may require assistance from the DDMG to effectively conduct evacuation to a safer location. Similarly, where the requirements exceed the capacity of the DDMG, the DDMG would seek assistance from the SDMG.

To enhance the sharing of information and resources it is important the LDMG documents local capacity and thresholds. Any potential requests for support and assistance which have been identified through the evacuation planning process should be included and communicated to the DDMG.

The DDMG should use this information to inform its own planning process and where appropriate, inform the SDMG of any potential for the escalation of support.

### 3.4 Reception of evacuees from other local government areas

Even though an evacuation may not be necessary within their local government area, LDMGs should be aware there may be a requirement to activate elements of their Evacuation Sub Plan to cater for the agreed reception of evacuees from other local government areas or districts. This should be documented in the Evacuation Sub Plan along with possible management strategies in consultation with the relevant DDMG.

If the LDMG is unable to provide an appropriate safer location for its residents within its boundary the LDMG should brief the DDMG and escalate this issue to district level.

Once the DDMG is aware of the issue and escalation has occurred the LDMG, in close consultation with DDMG, will liaise with the neighbouring LDMG area to ensure all the necessary support and amenities are available for cross jurisdictional issues.

The DDMG, if required, will assist with resources and coordination during an event.

If the reception of other evacuees from other local government areas exceeds the capacity of the LDMG and the DDMG, the DDMG will escalate the issue and forward a request for assistance through the appropriate channels to the SDCC.

Experience has shown the reception of evacuees from other local government areas is a likely scenario, especially during large scale events, therefore it is advantageous for all parties involved to proactively plan for this occurrence and communicate management strategies.

### 3.5 Shelter in place

Shelter in place refers to residents sheltering in their own home or with family and friends if it is considered safe to do so.

Shelter in place would be considered where the structure or location of the available buildings provide a safer environment during a cyclone or emergency situation or where the time prior to unsafe external conditions is not adequate to conduct a safe withdrawal.

Evacuation planning should encourage shelter in place as the first option for residents, where an evacuation is not required, and include community preparedness education and awareness such as early media releases and public information about shelter in place.

**The best option for every Queenslander  
when evacuation is not necessary  
is to shelter in a safe and secure structure at home  
or with family and friends.**

## 3.6 Voluntary evacuation

An individual can choose to self-evacuate prior to an announcement of either a LDMG coordinated voluntary evacuation or DDC directed evacuation.

### 3.6.1 What is a voluntary evacuation?

Exposed persons who may be impacted by an impending hazard are encouraged to commence evacuation voluntarily.

### 3.6.2 Planning voluntary evacuation

Voluntary evacuation of exposed persons may also be coordinated and implemented by the LDMG in close consultation with the DDC.

The Evacuation Sub Plan should document the management strategies and operational arrangements for a voluntary evacuation.

## 3.7 Directed Evacuation

### 3.7.1 What is directed evacuation?

Exposed persons are directed by the DDC or Declared Disaster Officer under legislation to evacuate an exposed area.

### 3.7.2 When may a directed evacuation be ordered?

A directed evacuation under the Act requires the declaration of a disaster situation. A DDC may declare a disaster situation if satisfied that the requirements of s.64 of the Act have been met. The declaration of a disaster situation requires the approval of the Minister (currently the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) and must be made in accordance with s.65 of the Act. During a disaster situation, the DDC and Declared Disaster Officers are provided with additional powers under s.77-78 of the Act. These powers may be required to give effect to a directed evacuation.

A LDC, as part of the LDMG, will make a recommendation to a DDC that a directed evacuation is required based on their situational awareness in preparation for an imminent disaster. However, as the LDMG/LDC has no legislative power to effect a directed evacuation, the responsibility for authorising a directed evacuation remains with the DDC.

### 3.7.3 LDMG directed evacuation planning

LDMGs must comprehensively and holistically plan for evacuation to perform their role during a directed evacuation.

The LDMG does not have the statutory power to authorise a directed evacuation, however complete evacuation planning requires local government to develop an Evacuation Sub Plan that recognises and includes any scenarios where a directed evacuation may be ordered by the DDC.

LDMGs should closely liaise with their DDC during the development of the Evacuation Sub Plan to ensure the sub plan is consistent with, and complements, the DDC's plans and arrangements for a directed evacuation. The directed evacuation section in the LDMG Evacuation Sub Plan should refer to the QPS directed evacuation policy and any associated operational arrangements.

Similarly, a DDC should ensure LDCs within their disaster district are aware of arrangements in place at a district level with respect to directed evacuations.

### 3.8 Key messages

All hazards evacuation planning before the onset of an event is the key to an effective evacuation.

A PESTLE analysis is an example of a planning tool.

Conducting a PESTLE analysis may be a useful tool to assist with comprehensive planning.

This style of analysis includes **P**olitical, **E**nvironment, **S**ocial, **T**echnology, **L**egislation, **E**conomic considerations.

The following list is not exhaustive and should be used as a prompt for your planning process.

#### Have you considered ...

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<b>Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ what are the political implications concerned with your evacuation measures and the movement of people from an unsafe or potentially unsafe location to a safer location?</li></ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ what are the risks to the evacuation process such as access, road blocks, strong winds, traffic congestion, topography?</li></ul>
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ what is the community profile? (demographics such as people with special needs, non-English speaking backgrounds, tourists, volunteers)</li><li>➤ how to communicate the evacuation sub plan once developed to ensure relevance and consistency amongst community groups and businesses within the community?</li><li>➤ identifying all possible media outlets? How will communication with the media occur to ensure consistency and accuracy of information?</li><li>➤ the engagement of media to ensure that the most relevant and up to date information is communicated to relevant sections of the community in a timely manner?</li><li>➤ the location and signage for evacuation routes, how and when these will be publicised to the community?</li><li>➤ the process for the reception and registration of people at evacuation centres and from other jurisdictions?</li></ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ the accuracy of intelligence data and mapping tools?</li><li>➤ the capacity of the public call centre and web based systems to manage a large volume of requests?</li><li>➤ how will warning messages be delivered?</li></ul>
<b>Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ who is the responsible decision maker and what is the process to reach the decision to evacuate?</li><li>➤ what are the legislative powers given to emergency managers to require evacuation?</li><li>➤ what are the roles and responsibilities of each agency/person involved in each facet of the evacuation process?</li></ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ what resources are available to the LDMG to conduct and manage an evacuation?</li><li>➤ how local offers of assistance should be managed?</li><li>➤ how to identify and document the cost associated with the reception of people from other jurisdictions?</li></ul>

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**Key stakeholders**

- Local Disaster Management Group
- District Disaster Management Group
- Emergency Management Queensland
- Australian Defence Force
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
- Evacuation Planning Working Group
- Non-Government Organisations (such as Australian Red Cross)

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**Further information**

- Are you bushfire prepared? Prepare.Act.Survive – Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
  - *Disaster Management Act, 2003*
  - Guidelines for Planning and Conduct of Mass Evacuation in Queensland. Evacuation Planning Manual – Emergency Management Australia 2005
  - Queensland Local Disaster Management Guidelines
  - State Disaster Management Plan 2011
  - Tropical Cyclone Storm Tide Warning Response System Handbook
-

## 4. Identify local hazards and the population exposed

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### Overview

The identification of all hazards and the exposed population to each hazard is critical in the development of a planned and coordinated evacuation in order to understand all facets of the community profile and to mitigate risk.

### Extreme events

Extreme weather conditions are unpredictable and when faced with a catastrophic circumstance that exceeds pre-planned and identified safer locations it is important contingency planning has occurred to identify other places of refuge that may be required at short notice.

#### 4.1 Identify the hazards

A disaster risk assessment should be undertaken where possible to support the development of the Evacuation Sub Plan. This will identify any hazard that potentially could impact the community and necessitate an evacuation.

The factors that will influence the decision for evacuation will be dependant on the nature of the hazard. Different hazards may require specific decisions for each evacuation.

It is important to take an all hazards approach during this step.

#### 4.2 Define the hazard area

Once all the hazards that could impact the community have been identified it will be necessary to define the geographic areas potentially exposed to the hazard.

Depending on the hazard, the areas exposed may be defined by the following (please note this list is not exhaustive):

- identified historical triggers for evacuation e.g. past flood heights
- water levels above normal river height
- sea levels above highest astronomical tide (HAT)
- predicted fire behaviour and path
- spread or distance from the impact site.

It is important to consider areas susceptible to isolation when identifying the exposed area.

It is important to liaise with the relevant stakeholders during this period to ensure the areas have been defined appropriately for each hazard.

#### 4.3 Analyse the population exposed

Based on comprehensive planning and identification of potential hazards and exposed areas, the next step is to analyse the population exposed to each hazard to determine any special considerations or actions which may be required to accommodate the demographics of the community.

In conducting this analysis the following categories or factors should be considered as requiring special consideration:

- critical facilities such as hospitals
- aged care facilities (such as community service organisations, retirement villages)
- schools and childcare centres
- non-English speaking persons
- persons with a disability or special needs
- existing public transportation systems
- socio-economic capacity of suburbs or areas
- caravan parks
- persons from specific groups such as homeless persons, house bound persons
- offshore islands, isolated resorts or settlements
- previous isolated communities
- temporary/transient populations and tourists
- pet ownership.

### Vulnerable population

The LDMG will need to consider special arrangements for members of the community who may be vulnerable during an evacuation. As a guide, persons should be considered vulnerable if it is determined that upon receiving an evacuation message they are unable to comply with the evacuation directions without assistance.

In the planning stage and once a decision to evacuate has been made, LDMGs should engage with the service providers who support vulnerable people in the community. These service providers are in regular contact with their clients and have pre-existing relationships with them and contact lists which will assist in communicating emergency messages and information.

Such service providers may include:

- Australian Red Cross
- Spiritus
- RSL Care
- Bluecare
- State agencies
- advocacy groups
- other local community centres.

LDMGs should collaborate with existing services which provide assistance to special needs persons such as Queensland Health, Department of Communities, Department of Health and Ageing, local home care service agencies, Energex, Ergon and Telstra to seek assistance to plan for safe evacuation.

It is important to initiate these discussions with each group before the onset of an event to ensure that all requests and communication channels are agreed upon by all parties. This will minimise any confusion, anxiety, time delays and misinterpretation during an event.

### Tourists

Tourists will generally have minimal local knowledge and potentially no experience or knowledge of Queensland hazard events. Unlike permanent residents, visitors are unlikely to have friends or relatives in nearby safer locations with whom they can seek refuge. Many tourists may also not have access to a vehicle to enable self evacuation.

Requesting the early movement of tourists away from a potential disaster may be an option and should be considered by the LDMG. The LDMG should also consider mechanisms to manage the inbound movement of tourists into the area. These decisions will provide the LDMG with the ability to reduce the number of exposed persons and the resultant impacts on transport, shelter and welfare of these transient populations during the evacuation process.

It is acknowledged that this decision will need to be balanced with the consequential economic impact on local businesses and the LDMG should engage with local tourism boards, tourism operators and accommodation providers during the evacuation planning process (see chapter 6 Community Education and Awareness).

A community education strategy should be used, where possible, to ensure tourism operators and providers are aware of the need to inform their clients/guests of the potential impacts of an impending disaster event and what action will be required to ensure their safety.

## Aged care facilities

It is important to note the movement of persons with high care needs may need to be planned and implemented pre-emptively in advance of unfavourable conditions and higher demand on transportation providers.

Aged care facilities should have an evacuation plan and it should include procedures for the complete evacuation of the facility including specialised transportation requirements and the establishment of formal agreements with other aged care facilities or other suitable accommodation providers who will be able to provide a type of safer location and an appropriate level of care for their evacuated residents.

Aged care facilities should also be encouraged to obtain alternative power generation equipment, hold additional stocks of critical stores such as medical oxygen and common medications and develop a high needs client register. This is especially important during high risk times of the year to mitigate the immediate effects of any isolation should this occur.

LDMG should consult with local aged care facilities during their evacuation planning process to ensure the facility has a thorough and effective evacuation plan. The local Evacuation Sub Plan should note which facilities have completed planning.

Where the aged care facility identifies a requirement for external agency support which is outside their capacity (such as transport of residents with high care needs to an alternative location), the facility is to engage in detailed consultation with these agencies prior to the onset of an event to ensure a clear understanding of capacity and availability is discussed.

In the instance of a large scale evacuation there will probably be more than one facility requiring assistance which is why it is essential for aged care facilities to be encouraged to plan and discuss their need with potential transport agencies before an event.

It is important for the LDMG to communicate early and regularly with aged care facilities before, during and after an event to ensure appropriate and timely information is disseminated to aged care facilities to assist them in making informed decisions.

## Pets

Pets remain the responsibility of their owner during an evacuation and pet owners should pre-plan alternative accommodation for their pets prior to the onset of an event. Lessons learned from the Queensland 2010/11 events indicate that occasionally residents will not evacuate without pets.

Therefore it is important accommodation requirements for household pets within evacuation centres is considered as some residents may require evacuation and assistance and may not wish to relocate without their pets. The LDMG will need to consider the management of assistance animals (e.g. guide dogs) during an evacuation and within centres.

It is also suggested that residents are educated on the expectations of pet owners during an event, through the community education and awareness program before an imminent threat is realised. These expectations should also be clearly disseminated to the community during an event to ensure understanding and minimise confusion and anxiety.

As part of the evacuation planning process the following should be considered:

- communicate clearly the expectations on pet owners within the community
- develop and communicate a policy on the management of pets during an evacuation. It is important the community education strategy clearly outlines pet owner responsibilities
- develop and document transport and shelter plans for pets. LDMGs are encouraged to seek local solutions to this issue before embarking on a large scale evacuation of pets. The RSPCA is available to assist LDMGs in the development of a pet evacuation and accommodation policy.

As part of their household evacuation planning process pet owners should:

- seek alternative accommodation for their pets by prior planning for the care / fostering of their pets in non-risk areas
- where alternatives are not possible and pet owners require evacuation and seek refuge for themselves and their pets they will need to ensure they have appropriate pet transportation and restraint appliances and any other specific requirements to ensure safety of their pets and care during the evacuation process. Ultimately, pet welfare is the responsibility of the pet owner (refer to Prepare Your Pet Fact Sheet: [www.emergency.qld.gov.au](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au)).

Note that pets, when referenced within these Guidelines, refer to household, domestic pets. The LDMG is not responsible for the evacuation of livestock. The primary responsibility for livestock rests with the livestock owner.

### School closures

The authority to approve the temporary closure of a State Instructional Institution in an emergency situation rests with the relevant principal or person in charge, acting on advice from emergency service officers. In practice, principals would advise the relevant Regional Director of Education who would authorise the closure of one or more schools. If a school principal cannot contact the Regional Director of Education then the principal may close the school. Any media releases relating to school closures are issued by the Regional Director of Education.

The Department of Education and Training also has the ability to disseminate warnings and advice to Independent and Catholic Schools but is unable to enforce the closure of these facilities. The LDMG should liaise with the Regional Director of the Department of Education and Training to establish protocols for communication with Independent and Catholic Schools within the local government area.

Where evacuation is being considered, it is strongly recommended that the community is informed of school closures as early as possible, and preferably prior to the start of the school day. This will reduce traffic and the need for carers to collect children if the school is closed during the school day. The early closure of schools will also make school buses and school resources available for the broader evacuation needs of the community.

Note that the closure of schools can create a flow on issue for parents and/or carers and this needs to be planned prior to the school closure.

## 4.4 Key messages

### Have you considered ...

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<b>Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ conducting a community profile or risk analysis of the community to identify types of hazards, exposed areas and population?</li><li>➤ specific communication strategies to mitigate these risks?</li><li>➤ engaging community champions to identify needs and inform the communication strategy?</li><li>➤ contacting local and state community service providers who may hold contact lists for the exposed population?</li><li>➤ identifying any specific evacuation needs of local aged care facilities, childcare centres, hospitals etc.?</li><li>➤ whether aged care facilities, hospitals etc. are aware of local disaster management arrangements?</li><li>➤ the warning message format and dissemination to all population groups?</li><li>➤ the potential for increased timeframes during withdrawal, transportation, interpreters and shelter requirements for the exposed population?</li><li>➤ a strategy for residents in low risk areas to provide foster care for pets from high risk areas to minimise the number of animals requiring accommodation?</li><li>➤ liaising with any local catteries or kennels to identify possible options for pets during events?</li></ul>
<b>Key stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Local Disaster Management Group</li><li>➤ District Disaster Management Group</li><li>➤ Aged Care Queensland</li><li>➤ Australian Red Cross</li><li>➤ Bureau of Meteorology</li><li>➤ Department of Communities</li><li>➤ Department of Education and Training</li><li>➤ Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation</li><li>➤ Energex/Ergon</li><li>➤ RSPCA, local catteries and/or kennels</li><li>➤ Telecommunication providers such as Telstra and Optus</li><li>➤ Tourism Queensland</li><li>➤ Queensland Ambulance</li><li>➤ Queensland Fire and Rescue Service</li><li>➤ Queensland Health</li><li>➤ Queensland Police Service</li><li>➤ Queensland Tourism Industry Council</li><li>➤ other local home care service agencies.</li></ul>
<b>Further information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ State Disaster Management Plan</li><li>➤ District Disaster Management Plan</li><li>➤ Prepare Your Pet Fact Sheet: <a href="http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au">www.emergency.qld.gov.au</a></li></ul>

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## 5. Mapping the data

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### Overview

Accurate, up to date, relevant and credible intelligence is vital to ensure the most appropriate evacuation messages are developed for the community. Visual representation of this information, which is targeted to each specific community group, will assist with interpretation of evacuation zones, routes and safer accommodation. Effective mapping and modelling will also assist the community to be aware of where hazards are likely to impact.

### 5.1 Develop evacuation zones

Each local government area should use consistent language, and colours where possible, to identify evacuation zones. This will minimise confusion of information for residents who may need to move between a number of local government areas.

Areas exposed to the impact of the hazard could be categorised into evacuation zones based on severity of impact.

For example, wet events (storm tide, riverine flooding, tsunami) may use inundation levels divided into four categories:

- minor
- moderate
- major
- extreme.

When inundation levels have been identified, evacuation zones can be defined to create a visual illustration of this information to ensure it is readily accessible to disaster management decision makers and also to efficiently communicate this information to the community.

An effective means of displaying this information is the use of maps and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

When developing evacuation zones the best available datasets should be used for example:

- High resolution Digital Elevation Model (DEM) data is available for the majority of coastal communities from the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM). This data is in GIS format and the council most likely will already have this data available.  
EMQ has developed inundation zones for various storm tide events from the coastal DEM. This information is available to local government upon request.
- For riverine flooding near the coast it is likely high resolution DEM will be available; however, modelling of the DEM and other key datasets will be required to more accurately identify areas likely to be inundated for the various events.  
EMQ is currently coordinating DEM for inland riverine flooding for participating councils. Please contact EMQ for more details if your council is not already participating in this program.

## 5.2 Inclusions for mapping

Evacuation maps should be developed for communities vulnerable to storm tide, tsunami and riverine flooding, where areas exposed can be planned in advance and where these hazards have the potential to inundate populated areas.

It would be ideal to have one generic evacuation map for a given community, however this may not always be feasible as many communities will be vulnerable to a number of hazards, and the manner in which those hazards interact may result in different exposed areas.

Evacuation maps should be developed in two series to assist decision making:

- public information (to be used by the community)
- disaster management response (to be used by disaster management groups).

Please note, care should be taken using data that may quickly be outdated.

### Public information

Evacuation maps or systems developed for public information should include a basic level of information to ensure ease of understanding and application by members of the community. It is important to limit confusion and assist members of the community to easily identify their place of residence, level of exposure and an evacuation route to a safer location.

For consistency, where possible public information evacuation maps should include the following information and features:

- evacuation zones (clearly identified by colour coding)
- evacuation routes
- public points of reference to aid local orientation such as the local church, library, park.

Safer locations such as evacuation centres, assembly points and public cyclone shelters could be included on public information maps when it has been agreed that these safer locations will be used, open and staffed for all hazards.

Language, style and format for community education are important considerations to maximise understanding, interpretation and adoption of emergency information and instruction. It would be more appropriate to use clear and relevant references to evacuation zones by colour and level of severity rather than using complex technical references such as heights above HAT or AHD.

To increase public awareness, evacuation zones could be bound by recognisable features such as roads, parks, rivers or natural features so that the community can easily identify their evacuation zone.

### Disaster management response

Evacuation maps developed for disaster management response should provide relevant and accurate information to enable prompt decision making. Consideration should be given to the inclusion and clear identification of the following features on disaster management response evacuation maps:

- evacuation zones
- division of sectors or suburbs located within large exposed areas, to enable management of warning and withdrawal activities
- evacuation routes, alternate evacuation routes
- all identified safer locations such as evacuation centres and assembly points, including pet friendly facilities
- hospitals, aged care facilities, schools and other similar facilities which may require special attention or response
- emergency services and other key response agencies and locations
- hazardous sites
- critical infrastructure
- local government or other relevant boundaries.

Consideration should also be given to the development of key data to support the disaster management response maps including, but not limited to:

- population and demographic data within each exposed area
- estimated evacuation timeframes for each evacuation zone either independently or concurrently with other zones
- evacuation route capacity and hazard immunity levels
- estimated percentage of exposed population requiring emergency accommodation.

This information will be essential to assist decision making and development and timing of warnings which will allow disaster management response groups to anticipate safer location requirements and media responses.

Disaster management groups and support agencies should be encouraged to share information where possible.

### 5.3 Key messages

Have you considered ...

<b>Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the identification of all key stakeholders, sources of data and geospatial information?</li> <li>➤ what type of information and visual illustration is most appropriate for the hazard, impact areas and exposed community?</li> <li>➤ what type of map is most appropriate to identify the evacuation zones?</li> <li>➤ what level of detail is the most appropriate and relevant for the exposed community?</li> <li>➤ how the evacuation zones will be described for ease of understanding (for example above what river height, distance around hazard)?</li> <li>➤ what strategy will be used for local areas to differentiate between evacuation zones for each hazard (for example storm tide, bushfire, flood, cyclone, chemical hazard)?</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local Disaster Management Group</li> <li>➤ District Disaster Management Group</li> <li>➤ Bureau of Meteorology</li> <li>➤ Emergency Management Queensland</li> <li>➤ Department of Environment and Resource Management</li> <li>➤ Emergency Management Queensland</li> <li>➤ Queensland Fire and Rescue Service</li> <li>➤ Queensland Police Service</li> </ul>
<b>Further information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ National Storm Tide Mapping Model</li> <li>➤ Neighbourhood Safer Places – Queensland Fire and Rescue Service</li> <li>➤ The Tropical Cyclone Storm Tide Warning Response System Handbook</li> </ul>

## 6. Community education and awareness

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### Overview

Thorough and sustained public awareness programs conducted prior to an event are required to build community resilience and ensure community confidence in the LDMG's ability to manage disaster events. Such programs are also required to reinforce the level of responsibility and self preparedness required by residents in the event of evacuation advice being issued.

### 6.1 Before an event

Proactive preparedness planning is important and will promote a resilient community which is confident, organised and well informed. This will enable a response which is calm, prompt, positive and effective.

The LDMG in conjunction with local government should develop a community education and awareness program that is planned and implemented before the onset of an event.

#### 6.1.1 Evacuation zones

Once evacuation zones have been identified it is important to ensure each household is actively informed of the evacuation zone in which they are located. This can be completed in a number of ways including providing residents with detailed maps down to street level in each zone and uploading the maps to local government website for accessibility. Local government call centres should be also able to assist and inform residents of their evacuation zone.

Evacuation zones should be easy to understand, identified and planned prior to the onset of any event. Evacuation zones must be clear to residents, transient populations and anyone newly arrived in a community.

This could be achieved by the following strategies:

- seasonal preparedness campaigns
- colour coded fridge magnets
- colour coded reflective markers on gutters
- emergency action guides included in council rate notices, mail outs and other multi media platforms
- colour coded stickers on household meter boxes
- roadside wheelie bin zone colouring
- emergency preparedness brochures and maps available and easily accessible in locations where tourists and transient populations access for example foyers of hotels, motels, caravan parks
- public information evacuation maps based on aerial photographs readily available to the community through council offices, websites and community events such as shows and expositions.

## 6.1.2 Developing community engagement plans

Community engagement is a critical element in encouraging community ownership and responsibility. LDMGs, where possible, should develop a plan for community engagement to ensure a thorough, broad community education and awareness program is developed and disseminated.

The community engagement plan may include the following elements:

### Identify and target specific groups

- Develop a profile of community sectors in exposed areas, for example:
  - older people living at home alone
  - people with disabilities
  - people with hearing or visual impairment
  - single parents with young children
  - large families
  - people with identified illness e.g. on a dialysis machine
  - people newly arrived to the area, the State or even the country.
- Include information on the range of sectors represented. For example:
  - businesses
  - community groups
  - educational institutions
  - health organisations
  - tourism and accommodation providers
  - animal and wildlife carers and refuges
  - sport and recreation groups.

### Develop specific engagement strategies

- Identify current communication pathways already established between local government and target groups.
- Be clear about the purposes or goals of the engagement effort.
- Become knowledgeable about evacuation zone history, and experiences of previous engagement efforts.
- Provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives or solutions.
- Engage directly with specific sectors to determine their information needs and develop appropriate responses (this may include developing target group specific written evacuation communication strategies in appropriate languages and delivery methods to meet the needs of the identified sectors).

### Identify appropriate delivery options and communication strategies

- Delivery options and communication strategies can be identified by targeting specific groups within the community, and developing specific engagement strategies appropriate to each exposed population.

### Evaluating programs and strategies

- Regular use of evaluation surveys (pre and post storm and cyclone season) to determine the effectiveness of current arrangements.
- Outcomes from a regular exercise regime that test existing programs and partnerships.
- Web-based feedback options could be used to capture community feedback on the value of current communication methodologies, and to assist in identifying upcoming community education opportunities.

### 6.1.3 Getting the message across

Local governments across Queensland have considerable expertise in communicating council policies and safety messages to their residents. It would be ideal for LDMGs to utilise these existing local community relationships to effectively ‘get the message across’ to all sections of the local community.

Messages can effectively be conveyed in a variety of ways including:

- council websites
- social media
- newsletters
- notes with rates notices
- brochures at council or local member agency offices
- libraries
- public information displays at shows and mail outs.

Evacuation preparation and procedure messages can also be communicated utilising these means of communication. Clear, relevant and factual information and recommendations provided before the onset of an event will enable residents to be better prepared and to take responsibility for their own evacuation.

Working collaboratively with the community will result in a realistic and credible evacuation plan which the community can trust and are more likely to follow. The community will then be organised and respond swiftly and confidently, ultimately achieving a more resilient community.

Emergency information is processed through two phases.

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<b>Awareness raising</b>	➤ people receive emergency information through a variety of media. Current research indicates the preferred media for receiving information is through television, radio, brochures and newspapers.
<b>Action</b>	➤ people seek further information and begin to prepare. The preferred method for seeking information is the internet, brochures and discussion with friends and neighbours.

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All publicly produced information should provide reference to useful websites and the local government call centre for more information.

### 6.2 During an event

The most advanced warning process will not be fully effective unless the community is educated and aware of what the warning means to them and are well informed on the actions they need to take for evacuation.

The primary message to be conveyed to the community is that individuals should take responsibility for their own, and their family’s safety. This should include having an emergency plan, an emergency kit and an evacuation kit easily accessible and ready for any warning notice.

Activation of the community education and awareness section of the Evacuation Sub Plan is required during an event to encourage individuals to be aware of the possible need to evacuate, to understand the warning system, and to take proactive steps to maintain safety and mitigate the effects of the identified threat.

The relevant location of and routes to an evacuation centre should be disseminated to the exposed population as soon as possible.

All information materials need to provide consistent, up to date and factual detail which is easily understood and relevant to the community.

### 6.3 After an event

It is important to maintain communication with impacted residents to ensure they are fully informed of the process required for a safe return to their homes or businesses, such as structural and electrical assessment of dwellings, safe water, public health risks and viable access routes. All media outlets and community leaders also need to be fully informed to enable them to support the community to minimise anxiety and increase resilience and community well being.

All websites and call centres should be maintained with relevant information until safe return has been completed.

#### Dissemination of return advice

As with the evacuation warnings, information regarding the return process is required to be widely disseminated to evacuees. This may be achieved by notices and announcements at evacuation centres and assembly points, Emergency Alerts, broadcasts on radio and television, social media and notices in local papers.

Where the return advice relates specifically to schools, hospitals, aged care facilities and other institutions, the return advice may be provided directly to the affected agency or overarching body such as Education Queensland, Queensland Health.

Information to be detailed in the return advice should include the following, where appropriate:

- issuing authority, date and time
- details of event and data to signify threat has abated
- specific areas deemed safe for return, include maps where appropriate
- suitable routes including any load limits and specific traffic control arrangements
- public transport arrangements, where provided
- requirement for evacuees to provide advice of proposed return to evacuation centre or other evacuee registration service, as appropriate
- appropriate health and safety messages, if required such as requirement to boil water before consumption, any potential public health risks
- recovery services available
- contact number for further information or clarification.

Return advices should be advertised widely to ensure that evacuees staying with friends or family outside of the local area are informed.

#### Post season review

It will be necessary to review all communication resources and channels including the community education and awareness section of the Evacuation Sub-Plan to identify lessons learned and ensure it contains relevant and updated evacuation information, processes and procedures.

Preparedness information should continue to be uploaded to the website in preparation for the next disaster event.

## 6. 4 Key messages

### Have you considered ...

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<b>Before an event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ identifying the information needs for each sector of the exposed community?</li><li>➤ identifying community leaders who can assist with communication to specific groups?</li><li>➤ liaising with existing local government community service providers to communicate evacuation planning and messaging?</li><li>➤ the elements of an effective communication strategy, for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Credible (being issued by a recognised authority)</li><li>• Consistent (key messages do not vary over time and campaigns are conducted regularly)</li><li>• Descriptive (describes a series of actions to be undertaken)</li><li>• Reinforced (consistent key awareness and preparedness messages are supported across seasonal media and marketing campaigns)</li><li>• Dynamic (opportunities exist for individuals to seek further information)</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>During an event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ how and when to activate the community education and awareness section of the Evacuation Sub Plan?</li><li>➤ how you will coordinate external information received by the community via media outlets?</li><li>➤ how you will ensure consistent, up to date and factual information is publicised?</li><li>➤ planning for contingency plans and alternatives in case technology and web based systems reach capacity and fail (due to higher than normal public usage) and become ineffective tools for disseminating information?</li></ul>
<b>After an event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ how you will manage the expectations of the public, media, politicians and other disaster management groups and requests for information?</li><li>➤ what relevant return information is provided to residents and how and when it will be disseminated?</li><li>➤ the process and assessments required for the community to return safely to specific locations?</li><li>➤ providing counselling for affected residents to enable positive recovery?</li></ul>
<b>Key stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Local Disaster Management Group</li><li>➤ District Disaster Management Group</li><li>➤ Australian Red Cross</li><li>➤ Commercial and community radio personnel</li><li>➤ Community representatives and leaders</li><li>➤ District Disaster Management Group</li><li>➤ Key local business</li><li>➤ Key local community groups</li><li>➤ Salvation Army</li><li>➤ St Vincent De Paul</li></ul>

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**Further information**

- [www.disaster.qld.gov.au](http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au)
  - [www.emergency.qld.gov.au/emq/css/beprepared.asp](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/emq/css/beprepared.asp)
  - [www.emergency.qld.gov.au](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au)
  - [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au)
  - Your local government website which can be found at:  
[www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory/index.php](http://www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory/index.php)
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## 7.0 Decision to evacuate



### Overview

The evacuation process starts with planning for an evacuation. During this stage, decision makers analyse event specific information and intelligence and make an assessment on the necessity to evacuate exposed persons. There are many factors which will influence the decision to evacuate and the LDMG should undertake extensive pre-planning and consideration of these factors.

### 7.1 Determining evacuation timelines

One of the important factors to be considered when planning for evacuation is the time required to safely and effectively undertake an evacuation. A timeline to map the steps in an evacuation process has the advantage of showing the critical links between the predicted impact time, the decision to evacuate, and the many factors that will determine the time taken to complete the withdrawal.

The timeline should be developed graphically to clearly indicate the time requirements for each phase of the evacuation process. The timeline should display the phases of evacuation, decision points and other considerations that will inform the evacuation process. The resultant timeline can then be used to illustrate the actions necessary, when actions are to be commenced, and timeframes for their completion.

### Decision points

Decision points are to be planned and documented for predictable hazards in the evacuation timeline. During this section it is important to plan for the unexpected and predict possible scenarios that will require contingency planning or alternative solutions. Liaison with all key stakeholders will be needed to develop an all hazards approach and to ensure all perspectives and possible scenarios are taken into consideration.

### Evacuation route capacity

The capacity of evacuation routes will vary depending on road conditions and therefore it will be important to consider a number of route conditions being normal, enhanced, disrupted and blocked.

In considering these route conditions, document the main evacuation route expected to be used and any alternative routes that may need to be implemented. It is suggested that a consistent formula be applied for calculating travel times for all road classes such as urban, rural and highway/motorway and the following capacity rates have been developed:

Route Condition <sup>2</sup>	Capacity (people per hour per lane)
<b>Normal</b> – Fine weather with normal traffic control.	600 (assumes travel speed of 40kph)
<b>Enhanced</b> – Emergency response agencies intervene to increase route capacity. Traffic management strategies may include: traffic controlled intersections, contra flow, banning vehicles towing caravans and trailers.	800 (assumes travel speed of 50kph)
<b>Disrupted</b> – Heavy rain with possible vehicle breakdowns, traffic accidents, land-slips, minor flooding across road etc.	300 (assumes travel speed of 20kph)
<b>Blocked</b> – Route is closed by flood waters, impact of fire or large scale land-slip etc; an alternative route or means of transport may be required.	100 (assumes travel speed of 5kph)

<sup>2</sup> Based on the principles outlined in Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Cyclones – Evacuation and Shelter Guideline, Department of Public Works (Q) 2008.

## Total evacuation time

The total time required to evacuate a community is calculated across the phases of decision, warning, withdrawal and sheltering as depicted in the following figure.

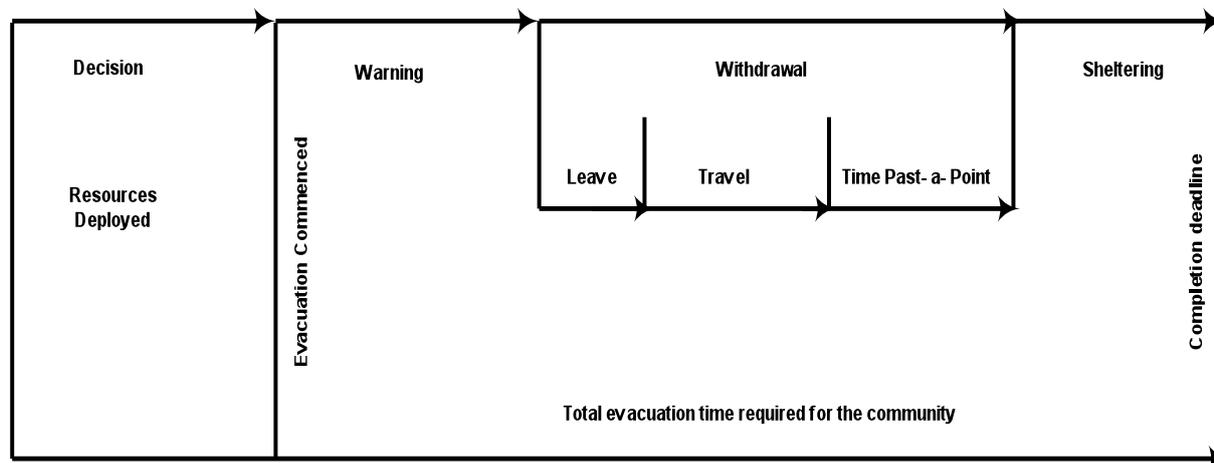


Figure 2 Evacuation timeline model

For consistency, timelines should be developed using the timeline model (Figure 2). These are approximate times and will depend on many variables including the community profile, hazard and exposed population.

The following considerations should be included:

<b>Decision time</b>	➤ The time required to make an informed decision to evacuate. This calculation should include mobilisation and deployment of resources.
<b>Warning time</b>	➤ The time taken to advise the community of the evacuation. This warning time would effectively overlap into the withdrawal phase as public messages continue to be conveyed. Please also consider the time required to develop and implement any Emergency Alert campaigns during the 'warning' phase.
<b>Withdrawal time</b>	➤ The time taken for exposed persons to travel to a safer location. The withdrawal time is the total of the leave time, the travel time and time past-a-point.
<b>Leave time</b>	➤ The time people take to secure the home and prepare to leave.
<b>Travel time</b>	➤ The time taken by a person or vehicle to travel from the evacuation zone to the shelter zone.
<b>Time past-a-point</b>	➤ The time taken for all people being evacuated to pass a point on the evacuation route. The time past-a-point can be calculated in hours by dividing the number of people to be evacuated by the route capacity in people per hour.
<b>Shelter time</b>	➤ Time for people to take shelter at a safer location.

Once developed, each timeline should be documented in the Evacuation Sub Plan to inform decision making and the timing of actions within the evacuation process.

## 7.2 Decision making considerations

In undertaking the decision making process, an all hazards risk assessment should be conducted based on event specific risks, timeframes available to safely effect an evacuation, and the availability of alternative public protection measures.

## 7.3 Authority to evacuate

An individual can choose to self evacuate prior to an announcement of either a LDMG coordinated voluntary evacuation or DDC directed evacuation.

### 7.3.1 Voluntary evacuation

Voluntary evacuation of exposed persons may also be coordinated and implemented by the LDMG in close consultation with the DDC.

### 7.3.2 Directed evacuation

The decision to order a directed evacuation during an event lies with the DDC however it is noted that this decision should be made, where possible, in close consultation with the LDC/s and based on the pre-planning undertaken by the LDMG/s during the development of their Evacuation Sub Plan.

## Roles and responsibilities

### LDMG

As indicated in 3.7.3, “the LDMG does not have the statutory power to authorise a directed evacuation”. However, the LDMG will be responsible for the management of all facets of the evacuation process (s.30(c) of the Act) which are not the direct responsibility of the DDC under these Guidelines or pursuant to the Act.

### DDC

The DDC is responsible for authorising the directed evacuation and exercising any statutory powers under sections 77-78 of the Act which are required to give effect to that directed evacuation.

## 7.4 Key messages

### Have you considered ...

<b>Data and information gathering</b>	➤ all advice from relevant authorities on severity, arrival of hazard and impact area?
<b>Evacuation</b>	➤ has the DDC been consulted with? ➤ the number of persons requiring evacuation and the type of evacuation necessary? ➤ the time required to complete the evacuation and the lead time available? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the evacuation achievable, safe and the most suitable option?</li><li>• What is the critical point for the decision to evacuate and the point at which the evacuation is to be completed? Is this achievable?</li></ul> ➤ the availability of appropriate resources available to effectively manage the evacuation? ➤ if the required resources available are sufficient and if not how more will be obtained?
<b>Warnings</b>	➤ how the current and predicted conditions, weather and the time of day will affect the proposed methods of warning dissemination, safety of movement and overall timeframe?

<b>Exposed population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ how will the process of evacuation affect the exposed population especially people with special needs and what special facilities are required for their safety?</li> </ul>
<b>Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the specific transportation requirements for all residents including people with special needs and pets?</li> <li>➤ the capacity of proposed evacuation routes to support rapid egress by pedestrian and / or vehicular traffic given the specific event related conditions?</li> </ul>
<b>Safer locations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the suitability of proposed safer locations and / or assembly points, including the ability to establish them quickly and sustain them for the duration of the event?</li> <li>➤ the most suitable safer location for the impending hazard, for example shelter in place or evacuation centre?</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the implications on commercial operations and community criticism of unnecessary evacuation versus primary responsibility and duty of care for safety of exposed population?</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local Disaster Management Group</li> <li>➤ District Disaster Management Group</li> <li>➤ Department of Transport and Main Roads</li> <li>➤ Queensland Police Service – District Disaster Coordinator</li> <li>➤ State Disaster Coordination Group</li> <li>➤ Bureau of Meteorology</li> <li>➤ Queensland Fire and Rescue Service</li> </ul>
<b>Further information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i></li> <li>➤ District Disaster Management Guidelines</li> <li>➤ Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Cyclones – Evacuation and Shelter Guideline, Department of Public Works (Q) 2008</li> <li>➤ Other agencies and government departments</li> <li>➤ The Tropical Cyclone Storm Tide Warning Response System Handbook</li> </ul>

## 8. Warning

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### Overview

An evacuation warning is a message that informs and enables individuals and communities to take appropriate action in response to an impending hazard.

The key to the success of evacuation warnings is the foundation already in place within the community through an ongoing and effective disaster management community education and awareness program. This ensures members of the community have a pre-existing understanding of the likely hazards and potential impacts relative to them and their community, and what actions they will need to take to prepare themselves for evacuation.

### 8.1 Develop standard warning messages

The information content and language contained in an evacuation warning needs to be carefully considered as it can be critical in assisting a coordinated and effective evacuation. The dissemination of accurate, clear and timely information is essential to ensure the message is clearly understood with appropriate and prompt actions and responses. The process of releasing information to the community will also assist in reducing apprehension and provide a level of confidence that the situation is being appropriately managed by disaster management authorities.

As a component of the planning process, Evacuation Order public information release templates should be developed to enable updating with current and relevant information at the time of an event.

In further developing the templates with local data it will be important to consider:

- the types of hazards that threaten the community and their likely consequences
- exposed areas with particular consideration given to special needs groups
- the type of evacuation that will be required
- emergency alert with pre-drafted or approved messages
- what safer locations to be utilised
- what evacuation routes should be used
- any community specific advice and guidance on actions required
- the appropriate authority to issue warnings and authorisation of the content
- use of the Standard Early Warning System (SEWS), where appropriate.

#### Community involvement in the planning process

The development of an efficient evacuation warning system can only be achieved through a comprehensive evaluation of the community and associated capabilities and limitations.

Consideration should be given to involving key stakeholders and community groups within the consultation process to further refine warning content and appropriate methods of dissemination. This may include relevant members of the LDMG, private industry, media and special needs community groups such as older people, people with disabilities, ethnic groups and medical, school and/or tourism boards. The participation of all these groups will provide valuable intelligence and ensure the development of effective warning content, format and associated processes.

## 8.2 Emergency Alert

The Emergency Alert is a national telephone warning system that provides Australian emergency authorities with an enhanced ability to warn the community in the event of an emergency. The warning system is another tool available for organisations to issue emergency warnings. Emergency Alerts may be issued via landline and mobile telephones.

## 8.3 Develop warning dissemination methods and processes

It is important a variety of warning dissemination methods are utilised to ensure broad distribution of warning messages. A range of methods of warning dissemination will ensure coverage of differing demographic, geographic locations and time of day. Consideration should be given to the specific needs of the exposed population with particular consideration of special needs groups and how the dissemination of warnings will be best achieved to reach these groups.

The following list provides a sample of the types of warning methods which may be considered. It will be important to choose a range of methods that will provide the broadest coverage of the community. Regular reviews of the warning processes should be undertaken to reflect any community changes.

<b>Emergency Alert</b>	➤ Emergency Alert messages disseminated to landlines and mobile phones with a billing address within an exposed area.
<b>Media releases</b>	➤ Provided to local radio and television networks for frequent broadcast during their programs.
<b>Social networking systems</b>	➤ Facebook, Twitter and other social networking systems. This option allows the public to actively seek information instead of relying on authorities making contact. It is low cost with minimal resources and has the ability to reach a broad range of groups and inform a large number of people.
<b>Telephone, mobile, fax, email</b>	➤ Local public alerting systems can be utilised to disseminate a scripted message.
<b>Internet</b>	➤ The local government website can upload the scripted evacuation message. This option allows the public to actively seek information rather than relying on authorities making contact. It is low cost with minimal resources and has the ability to reach a broad range of groups and inform a large number of people.
<b>Door knocking</b>	➤ Undertaken by uniformed emergency responders, usually Queensland Police Service and / or State Emergency Service. Evacuation message should be scripted and residents may be provided with a paper copy. This option is resource intensive; however, an effective method of warning dissemination.
<b>Public Address system</b>	➤ Fixed or mobile public announcement systems can be utilised to broadcast evacuation message.
<b>Local / community warden system</b>	➤ Local emergency networks can be utilised to disseminate a message across a community or defined area.
<b>Commercial emergency warning providers</b>	➤ Local emergency warning networks for registered users.
<b>Marine radio and distress systems and networks</b>	➤ Where appropriate, evacuation messages can be broadcast across these media.
<b>Fixed variable message signs</b>	➤ These can be existing or established specifically for the purpose of disseminating evacuation messages (liaise with Department of Transport and Main Roads).
<b>Sirens</b>	➤ Local siren to indicate immediate action is necessary.

An agreement should be reached on responsibilities for the dissemination of warnings and a table should be developed within the Evacuation Sub Plan which documents all sections of the exposed population, the most appropriate warning methods and an agency responsible for the actual warning dissemination.

Exposed population	Warning method	Agency primarily responsible for dissemination of warning

When the warning dissemination methods are determined it will be vital to engage with the agencies and organisations involved in the delivery process, in particular the media, to develop a working relationship to ensure agreement and commitment to the warning dissemination process.

It will also be critical to test the warning systems to improve community recognition and ensure their effectiveness. Any exercise or test of the warning processes should involve all relevant agencies and organisations to ensure clear understanding and conduct of their role.

**8.4 Key messages**

Have you considered ...

<b>Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ what type of hazard is threatening the community and what are the impacts to the community?</li> <li>➤ who will be affected and what type of evacuation is required?</li> <li>➤ what warning resources are available and what are their limitations?</li> <li>➤ who has the authority to issue warnings and who authorises the content?</li> <li>➤ should the Standard Early Warning System (SEWS) be used?</li> <li>➤ how to provide calm, factual, timely warnings to ensure the community is not alarmed and stressed?</li> <li>➤ how to include diverse cultures, people with visual or hearing impairment in warnings and communications to ensure that warnings are not misinterpreted?</li> <li>➤ pre-drafted or approved messages and the use of emergency alerts?</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local Disaster Management Group</li> <li>➤ District Disaster Management Group</li> <li>➤ Bureau of Meteorology</li> <li>➤ Department of Community Safety – SDCC</li> <li>➤ Local government representatives</li> <li>➤ Media such as Australian Broadcasting Corporation</li> <li>➤ Queensland Fire and Rescue Service</li> <li>➤ Queensland Police Service</li> <li>➤ whole of government such as Queensland Health, Maritime Safety Queensland</li> </ul>
<b>Further information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Emergency Alert Queensland Operational Guidelines</li> <li>➤ Emergency Warnings – Choosing Your Words: <a href="http://www.ag.gov.au">www.ag.gov.au</a></li> <li>➤ Standard Emergency Warning Signals (SEWS)</li> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au">www.emergency.qld.gov.au</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au">www.disaster.qld.gov.au</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.ema.qld.gov.au">www.ema.qld.gov.au</a></li> </ul>

## 9 Withdrawal

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### Overview

The process of withdrawal involves the physical and coordinated movement of exposed persons to safer locations. Withdrawal requires careful, comprehensive and coordinated planning to support the movement of all exposed persons in a timely manner and reduce public anxiety and traffic congestion wherever possible.

### 9.1 Managing the withdrawal process

There may be some community groups who will require assisted withdrawal. These groups should be identified during the analysis of the exposed population therefore the process and actions for their withdrawal should already be pre-planned and documented in the Evacuation Sub Plan.

It is important that a systematic grid system is utilised to ensure all properties are visited and regular reports on progress are conveyed back to the Local Disaster Coordination Centre.

### 9.2 Evacuation routes

Evacuation routes should be identified during the planning stage. This may involve consultation with local government engineers, Queensland Police Service, and Department of Transport and Main Roads representatives, as applicable.

In determining evacuation routes, consideration of the following will be necessary, but is not limited to:

- potential number of evacuees utilising the routes
- ensuring evacuation routes to safer locations such as an evacuation centre leads away from the potential hazard
- route capacity and hazard immunity.

The evacuation routes to be utilised for each event will be determined and based on the hazard and information received from specialised organisations such as the Bureau of Meteorology, Queensland Police Service, Transport and Main Roads and local government. However, some are likely to be common to all situations. Local evacuation routes should extend as far as a main highway or arterial road, where event specific considerations should take over, and should be signed using common signage and pre planned colours.

#### Assembly points

An assembly point is a temporary designated location specifically selected as a point which is not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard. Assembly points are often utilised as a means of gathering evacuees prior to their coordinated movement to evacuation centres or cyclone shelters.

#### Signage

Local government may consider the application of standard evacuation route signage as appropriate to local conditions.

#### Maintenance

Where roads are designated as evacuation routes, maintenance or upgrading works on these routes should be conducted outside seasonal threat periods. This will eliminate delays created by a reduced capacity of the routes during an evacuation. It is also important to acknowledge that where a road is designated as an evacuation route this should escalate the priority for maintenance or mitigation works for this road within the capital works program.

### 9.3 Traffic management strategy

The mass movement of evacuees will place significant strain on transport systems and infrastructure. A traffic management strategy should be developed addressing any known weaknesses in existing road infrastructure and traffic systems (refer to the Transport Operations [Road Use Management-Road Rules] Regulation 2009, Part 20). Where appropriate these should be complemented with additional arrangements aimed at easing congestion and ensuring managed traffic flow and the timely movement of evacuees.

The traffic management strategy should be clearly documented within the Evacuation Sub Plan. In developing the strategy the following mechanisms and systems may be considered:

<b>Road blocks and diversions</b>	➤ Closure of inbound roads, access to evacuated areas or roads prone to hazard effects.
<b>Signage</b>	➤ Use of standard signage to clearly mark nominated evacuation routes utilising directional arrows. Signage could also include 'Continue to Safer Location' signs to indicate that the signage will cease and the evacuee is outside the exposed area.
<b>Contra flow</b>	➤ Reversal of traffic flow on designated roads to increase movement away from exposed areas. Applicable only where existing safety mechanisms are conducive to contra flow operation.
<b>Managed intersections</b>	➤ Managing intersections to increase evacuee traffic flow away from exposed areas and enabling rapid egress of emergency vehicles and transport providers back into at risk areas.

The use of some traffic control mechanisms may be deemed resource intensive and unsustainable given the priorities of emergency personnel. Evacuation planning should include modelling and analysis of proposed traffic management strategies to accurately assess all options.

### 9.4 Transport

The analysis of the exposed population undertaken during the initial stages of evacuation planning will provide valuable data to assist in the planning of transport requirements during the withdrawal stage. Demographic data on the exposed population should provide a basis for calculating those within the community who will require transportation assistance.

Where it is deemed necessary, a transport strategy should be developed and documented within the Evacuation Sub Plan.

The level of detail included in the strategy should be adequate to enable prompt decision making and implementation at the time of an event. The strategy should identify transportation methods and transport resources. In particular the following issues should be addressed as outlined within this table.

Exposed area / suburb/location	Transport mode	Transport provider	Number of services	Pick-up point	Destination

## 9.5 Security strategy

The level of security to be provided to evacuated areas will require careful consideration and planning. The availability of resources to provide security is an issue to be considered in light of other priorities during the evacuation process.

The security strategy to be implemented for evacuated areas should be detailed within the Evacuation Sub Plan.

Options that may be considered include, but are not limited to:

- regular patrols by privately contracted security and / or Queensland Police Service
- the erection of barriers and manned road closures to restrict unauthorised entry to evacuated areas
- safety of emergency and / or security personnel.

## 9.6 Key messages

Have you considered ...

<b>Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ how to communicate evacuation routes in a timely manner to all sectors of the exposed population?</li><li>➤ how to ensure the major arterial routes are accessible?</li><li>➤ alternatives if the evacuation route becomes inaccessible?</li><li>➤ how to communicate evacuation routes to transient groups?</li><li>➤ transport for vulnerable groups such as high need medical, people with disabilities, children?</li><li>➤ transport and care for assistance dogs during the withdrawal phase?</li><li>➤ how to manage security?</li><li>➤ how to identify residences which have been evacuated to ensure disaster management resources are not used unnecessarily?</li></ul>
<b>Key stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Local Disaster Management Group</li><li>➤ District Disaster Management Group</li><li>➤ Department of Transport and Main Roads</li><li>➤ Queensland Police Service</li><li>➤ Local government engineers</li></ul>
<b>Further information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i></li><li>➤ District Disaster Management Guidelines</li><li>➤ Manual of Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)</li><li>➤ Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Cyclones – Evacuation and Shelter Guideline, Department of Public Works (Q) 2008. pp 22-29</li><li>➤ National Standards as advised by Austroads</li></ul>

## 10 Shelter

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### Overview

The shelter stage of the evacuation process includes the provision of refuge to evacuees within nominated safer locations away from the potential hazard or area of impact. This stage of evacuation relates to the receiving, registration and temporary respite or accommodation of evacuees.

The identification of the most appropriate facility in which to shelter, relative to the type of event, will be decided by the LDMG and conveyed within warning messages.

### Community responsibility

It is important to note during a time where a hazard may be threatening to impact on a community and an evacuation is not required, it is the responsibility of the individual to assess the current situation (tune into warnings, log onto council website and listen out), their needs, their family and your neighbour's needs and their location and decide whether shelter in place or finding alternative accommodation away from the exposed area (motel, hotel, other family and friends) is a valid and safer option.

Persons who are capable of moving away without assistance are encouraged to relocate outside the exposed area.

It is important to note however, there will be an expectation that some form of safer location is provided as an option if the public is directed to evacuate from an unsafe area through the dissemination of an evacuation order.

### Extreme events

Extreme weather conditions are unpredictable and when faced with a catastrophic circumstance that exceeds pre-planned and identified safer locations it is important that local governments have undergone a level of contingency planning to identify other places of refuge that may be required at short notice.

### 10.1 Types of safer locations

Safer locations can be classified into the following types: shelter in place, assembly points, evacuation centres, public cyclone shelters and place of refuge.

#### Shelter in place

The best option when evacuation is not necessary is sheltering in a safe and secure structure at home or with family and friends.

Residents, if evacuation is not required, should be encouraged to seek refuge with family and friends who may live in a building structure that meets current wind strength regulations, or is located higher than the expected flood peak and is considered a safer location for the impending hazard.

Persons who are capable of moving away without assistance are encouraged to relocate outside the exposed area.

Considerations:

- assistance cannot be provided during the event
- there may be a need to be self-sufficient for some time after the event.

## Assembly point

An assembly point is a temporary designated location specifically selected as a point which is not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard.

Assembly points can be used as a possible safer location and would usually only be utilised during events where specific shelter is not required and the duration of the evacuation is not predicted to be lengthy.

Assembly points may not necessarily be staffed and evacuees may be requested to cater for their own basic requirements for a short stay.

Assembly points are more often used as a means of gathering evacuees prior to their coordinated movement to evacuation centres or cyclone shelters.

Considerations:

- amenities may not be available
- pets may not be permitted
- police or an emergency services officer may not be in attendance.

## Evacuation centre

Establishment and management of evacuation centres is a responsibility of the LDMG, in conjunction with DDMGs as necessary. LDMGs may enlist the services of the Australian Red Cross to assist them in managing evacuation centres. This assistance is usually agreed to before the onset of an event (State Disaster Management Plan).

When an evacuation is ordered, because it is no longer safe to shelter in place with family and friends, residents should relocate to a designated evacuation centre that is open and staffed.

An evacuation centre is a designated building specifically selected as a location not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard. Evacuation centres should be pre-determined and clearly categorised for event suitability.

It is important to note that an evacuation centre is not suitable for use as a public cyclone shelter during a cyclone event but would be utilised for accommodation after the cyclone has passed.

Public cyclone shelters may not be available in all localities therefore if the impending hazard requires mass evacuation other alternative locations should be explored such as sheltering with family and friends or evacuation centres outside the exposed area.

It is also important to identify and prioritise possible evacuation centres suitable for potential hazards within a community prior to the onset of an event. Once all possible evacuation centres have been identified, prioritised and documented in the Evacuation Sub Plan it will allow timely decision making during an event, if the planned high priority evacuation centres reach capacity or residents are unable to reach the centre, as this will allow planning for a flow on effect from one centre to another.

LDMGs should encourage the pre- identification of any likely spontaneous evacuation centres by local community groups where possible, and plan and maintain capability to assist them. Using past experiences of where people congregate in emergencies or communities that have been isolated before may assist this process.

Considerations:

- volunteer support organisations are typically in attendance
- large numbers of people may be present, if it is a large facility
- food and amenities will be available
- other supplies such as power and water may be available
- pets may be permitted
- police, emergency service or coordinating personnel may be in attendance.

### Public cyclone shelter

It is important to note that for a structure to be called a public cyclone shelter it must be designed and constructed in accordance with the Design Guidelines for Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters: September 2006.

The primary purpose of a public cyclone shelter is to protect people evacuated from their homes, due to the threat from potential storm tide inundation or those without shelter who have been unable to leave the danger area.

A public cyclone shelter is a building specifically located and designed to provide protection to occupants from the effects of the most severe tropical cyclones until the cyclone threat has passed.

Public cyclone shelters are not designed for the temporary accommodation of evacuees or for the provision of services to evacuees after a cyclone has passed. Evacuation centres are established for this purpose in suitable buildings.

Considerations:

- pets are not permitted
- bedding and personal goods cannot be taken
- police or an emergency services officer may be in control of the shelter
- volunteer support organisations may not be in attendance.

### Place of refuge

Where the capacity of identified other safer locations may be exceeded a place of refuge may be an option.

A place of refuge is not specifically designed as a public cyclone shelter and is usually a privately-owned or government building that will provide a level of protection from the effects of the cyclone as it passes.

A place of refuge may be solidly built, outside storm tide areas and evacuation zones and could be one of the following but not limited to:

- shopping centre
- neighbourhood safer places.

The location and opening of a place of refuge will be announced by a member of the LDMG, most likely the Mayor or a senior police officer.

Considerations:

- volunteer support organisations may not be in attendance
- large numbers of people may be present if it is a large facility
- food and amenities may be minimal, if at all
- emergency food or other supplies, power and water may /may not be available
- pets are unlikely to be permitted
- police, emergency service or coordinating personnel may not be in attendance.

## 10.2 Identification of suitable safer locations

Safer locations should be established at well known, accessible and easily recognisable sites within the community. In planning for evacuation, the LDMG should ascertain suitability based on the following considerations:

### Event suitability

It is critical the nominated safer locations are suitable and are not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard. For this reason it is recommended that a list of locations is not released prior to an event.

A location which is suitable for one hazard may not necessarily be suitable for refuge from all hazards and its immunity should be carefully investigated and documented within the Evacuation Sub Plan.

### Capacity

It is important to quantify the capacity of the safer location. While an assembly point in an open location may not have a maximum capacity, evacuation centres and cyclone shelters will have a maximum capacity level based on building codes, the proposed length of stay of evacuees and the facilities available.

Therefore the capacity should be considered in terms of temporary short term respite or temporary long term accommodation (refer to Glossary).

In determining the capacity of a facility it is also important to consider the safe level of capacity in terms of public health and safety and emergency warning systems in place.

There are a number of important matters to consider in the selection of buildings for use as safer locations.

Although the Design Guidelines for Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters: September 2006 contains criteria for designing cyclone shelters; particularly matters relating to wind load, debris load and debris screening; it also provides useful criteria that can be used in considering the suitability of buildings for occupancy as safer locations.

An important consideration regarding buildings or areas within larger buildings that are being considered for use as a safer location is the presence of external glass windows. In areas likely to be impacted by cyclonic winds it is critical that occupants are not placed in buildings or areas within buildings that will be adversely impacted by the shattering of overhead / ceiling or wall window glass as a result of debris impact or window failure.

The following should be considered when identifying suitable safer locations:

## Key considerations

<b>Communication</b>	➤ To ensure communication to the Local Disaster Coordination Centre, consider availability of access to a phone, facsimile and a redundancy communication mechanism such as a battery operated radio. Evacuees will require communication mechanisms to stay informed of current situations with the event; this may be achieved via television, radio broadcast and an information board for updated advice and messages from the Local Disaster Coordination Centre.
<b>Amenities</b>	➤ Toilets and shower facilities should be adequate to cater for the proposed capacity of the location. This may need to be achieved through the provision of temporary amenities.
<b>Disabled access and amenities</b>	➤ The facility should have suitable access and amenities for evacuees with disabilities.
<b>Kitchen facilities</b>	➤ Basic facilities should include access to a supply of clean drinking water. Kitchen facilities should be able to cater for the capacity of the location or planning should include the provision of meals prepared externally to the location such as Salvation Army, commercial catering, pre-packaged airline food.
<b>Ventilation</b>	➤ Ventilation should be sufficient to cater for the proposed capacity of the location.
<b>Vehicular access</b>	➤ Suitable vehicular access should be available at the location including parking within close proximity. Consider all weather access and hard stand/clear areas for parking heavy vehicles.
<b>Pet and animal facilities</b>	➤ Consider the availability of suitable housing of pets within close proximity to the facility. Also consider how aid animals (e.g. guide dogs) and companion animals will be accommodated.
<b>Alternative power supply</b>	➤ Consider the availability of an alternative power supply or a connection for emergency supply.
<b>Alternative water supply</b>	➤ Consider the availability of alternative water supply. This may include planning for the provision of alternative bottled supply.

## Negotiation for use

In planning for evacuation, the use of an assembly point or evacuation centre should be negotiated with the owner or managing body on the use of the location or facility. In addition, it will be important to seek clear instructions and advice on contact details or arrangements for after hours access.

## Limit disruption to recovery

It is also important when considering locations which may be suitable as refuges during a disaster to consider the impact the use of the facility as a refuge may pose to the usual business of the location. For example, schools may be deemed suitable for short term respite use and useful during school holidays but unsuitable for longer term temporary accommodation.

### 10.3 Document safer locations

Once safer locations suitable for all hazards have been identified, and an agreement reached with the owner/manager of the facility, detailed information on each safer location should be included within an appendix of the Evacuation Sub Plan and include contact details for access and after hour access to the facility.

Maps used for disaster management response should identify the location of each safer location and appropriate evacuation route/s to each location. These maps should be included in an appendix of the Evacuation Sub Plan and reviewed annually as part of each region's pre-season planning and forecasting.

### 10.4 Evacuation Centre management

Where evacuation centres are being used as safer locations during an evacuation they are to be opened and operational prior to their details being released to the public in the Evacuation Order.

Specific details on the coordination, management and ongoing operation of evacuation centres should be addressed and clearly outlined within the Evacuation Centre Management Sub Plan. Local government may also consider entering a memorandum of understanding for evacuation centres with the Australian Red Cross, or other supporting agencies, which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party in planning and responding to evacuation requirements during an event.

The Evacuation Centre Management Sub Plan should clearly outline the coordination and management of the following services and issues:

- allocation of roles and responsibilities
- opening and staffing of centre
- registration of evacuees (NRIS)
- preparation and provision of catering and bedding
- centre security and privacy
- requirements for the care and welfare of special needs evacuees
- cultural considerations
- first aid personnel, hygiene and laundering
- facilities for pets and animals if applicable
- an area to recharge personal technology such as mobile phones
- identification of roles and responsibilities of supporting agencies which may be present in the community such as:
  - Lions Club
  - State Emergency Service
  - Australian Red Cross
  - Rotary Club
  - Salvation Army
  - St Johns Ambulance
  - other local volunteer groups.

In addition, the Evacuation Centre Management Sub Plan should outline clear communication protocols between the evacuation centre and the Local Disaster Coordination Centre to ensure regular advice on numbers of evacuees, requirements for catering and any health and safety issues.

## 10.5 Registration

All evacuees should be registered and the registration documented. Where evacuees decide to relocate to a nominated Evacuation Centre, their registration should be undertaken as a standard function of evacuation centre management. Consideration is required for registration when evacuees decide to evacuate to family and friends or another alternative safer location. Methods will vary depending on the volume of evacuees and may include the dissemination of a telephone number to call for registration or the completion and submission of registration forms by the evacuee at a suitable location.

When registered, evacuee details will be updated into the National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS). NRIS is an active computer database filing and retrieval system designed to provide relatives and close friends with basic details of the whereabouts and safety of people they know who may be visiting, living or working in an emergency affected area.

During an event the Australian Red Cross has the capacity to launch the website Safe and Well which allows the community to register themselves into NRIS. It is important to liaise with the Australian Red Cross to determine the need and the suitability of activating this element of NRIS.

## 10.6 Pets and animal welfare

It should be well documented that pets and animals remain the responsibility of their owners (refer section 4.3). However, during an evacuation that may require the evacuation of a resident and their pet the LDMG will need to consider this issue and develop a strategy for the welfare of the pets and animals of evacuees.

Pets when referenced within these Guidelines refer to household, domestic pets only. The LDMG should not be responsible for the evacuation of livestock; the primary responsibility for livestock will rest with the livestock owner.

Some evacuees may require accommodation for their pets therefore consideration of the following is required:

- pets and animals to be separately accommodated for hygiene and safety reasons
- assistance/companion animals for people with disabilities and how these animals can be accommodated with their owners within separate quarters of the evacuation centre.

## 10.7 Relief and Recovery Centres

It should be noted that Evacuation Centres provide basic needs and temporary respite or accommodation for evacuees. Relief and Recovery Centres, commonly referred to as 'One Stop Shops' which provide a range of welfare, support, financial and emotional recovery services for disaster affected persons are a separate facility with differing management and facility requirements and therefore will normally be housed separately to the Evacuation Centre.

Determining the need for, and establishment of, Relief and Recovery Centres is managed by the Department of Communities. These decisions are informed by the needs identified by the LDMG.

## 10.8 Key messages

### Have you considered ...

#### Factors

- the identification of approximate number of evacuees to be accommodated?
- a process for background checks and police checks of potential evacuees?
- evacuation centre signage that is able to be understood by all community members especially the special needs community?
- the collection of information for NRIS?
- identifying community groups who may take responsibility for establishing and operating centres in the future?
- establishing cooperative arrangements with these community groups which outline how the centres should operate, and to ensure the centres have appropriate facilities?
- suitable evacuation centres (event specific) away from the hazard to accommodate the identified number of evacuees (with power generators)?
- how the establishment and maintenance of communication with spontaneous evacuation centres will occur?
- the management strategy of resupply for these spontaneous evacuation centres?
- developing a floor plan that describes the lay out and allows calculation of occupancy and resource requirement?
- how the resources for your evacuation centre will be provided?
- how costs will be documented for host council and neighbouring council?
- car parking spaces, buses for private transport to the evacuation centres?
- access for emergency vehicles e.g. ambulance, fire, police?
- security for evacuees, staff and resources?

#### Key stakeholders

- Local Disaster Management Group
- District Disaster Management Group
- Australian Red Cross
- Department of Communities
- Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
- Department of Public Works
- Local security businesses, supermarkets
- Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
- Queensland Police Service
- RSPCA
- Salvation Army

#### Further information

- Design Guidelines for Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters: September 2006
- Queensland Local Disaster Management Guidelines
- Neighbourhood Safer Places – A Place of Last Resort In a Bushfire: 2010

## 11 Return

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### Overview

The return of evacuees to their homes requires careful planning to ensure the process is undertaken in a managed and coordinated manner and should be undertaken prior to the onset of an event. It should never be accepted that the evacuation process is complete when the hazard has passed as it is critical that people return to their homes and community in a safe manner with as much support and assistance as possible.

The return process may include:

- return to the area by emergency services and work teams only
- partial return to only some areas of the evacuated area
- temporary return during daylight hours only.

Planning and consideration will be required to manage those persons who voluntarily evacuated without the visibility and knowledge of the LDMG as these people will not be registered and may not be receiving direct public information regarding the return to their homes.

The timely return of evacuees is considered a critical step in their psychological recovery however safety should not be compromised and their return is not to be undertaken until all issues have been considered and the disaster area is deemed safe for return. Advice on the integrity of structures may be sought from local building certifiers or the Building Services Authority of Queensland.

It is important to note that during the pre-planning of the return of residents to their home it is essential appropriate support and counselling is considered and where possible, offered through local, State agencies and/or non-government organisations.

This proactive measure will promote a calm, connected environment enhancing the recovery process.

### 11.1 Decision to return

The decision to begin the return process is to be made by the LDMG<sup>3</sup> in consultation with all other agencies involved in the evacuation process including:

- DDC
- local government sections, as relevant to local area, may include:
  - environmental health
  - building services
  - water and sewerage
  - roads and drainage
- electricity providers
- telecommunication providers such as:
  - Telstra and Optus.

<sup>3</sup> The LDMG may be represented by a recovery sub committee if the response phase has been completed before evacuees can be returned.

To determine if an impacted area is safe for return it will be necessary to conduct a detailed assessment of the area addressing the following issues:

- the threat has passed and there is no likelihood of further impact
- suitable management of public health issues and secondary threats such as mosquito infestations, contaminated water supply
- building structures are safe to reoccupy
- utilities such as power, water, sewerage and communication networks are operational
- police related investigations to meet Coroner's needs
- roads and transport infrastructure is open and safe for use
- commercial food supplies are available
- adequate security remains for damaged or unsafe areas
- availability of support services including financial and welfare services.

The majority of the information required to assess the suitability of an area for return will be available from impact assessments conducted during the response phase.

## 11.2 Return strategy

The LDMG should consider the development of a return strategy to outline the arrangements necessary to plan and execute a safe and organised return before the onset of an event and the strategy should be reviewed annually to include lessons learned from the previous year's event.

The return strategy should particularly address how to identify the specific areas deemed safe for return, any staging requirements for the return to larger areas, ongoing security arrangements for damaged, unsafe structures or infrastructure, and traffic management plan and transportation requirements.

Once it is determined that areas are safe for return the LDMG should activate the return strategy and disseminate return advice to the community. Special consideration will be required for people with special needs and these arrangements documented in the return strategy.

### Dissemination of return advice

As with the evacuation warnings, information regarding the return process is required to be widely disseminated to evacuees. This may be achieved by notices and announcements at evacuation centres and assembly points, Emergency Alerts, broadcasts on radio and television, and notices in local papers.

Where the return advice relates specifically to schools, hospitals, aged care facilities and other institutions, the return advice may be provided directly to the affected agency or overarching body such as Education Queensland or Queensland Health. Information to be detailed in the return advice should include the following, where appropriate:

- issuing authority, date and time
- details of event and data to signify threat has abated
- specific areas deemed safe for return, including maps where appropriate
- suitable routes including any load limits and specific traffic control arrangements
- public transport arrangements, where provided
- requirement for evacuees to provide advice of proposed return to evacuation centre or other evacuee registration service, as appropriate
- appropriate health and safety messages, if required, such as requirement to boil water before consumption, any potential public health risks
- recovery services available
- contact number for further information or clarification.

Return advices should be advertised widely to ensure that evacuees staying with friends or family outside of the local area are informed.

### 11.3 Recovery

The longer term accommodation requirements of those unable to return to their homes are managed through the recovery process. Appropriate longer term temporary accommodation will be required for these evacuees once the evacuation centres are closed.

The transition from response to recovery is a very important step in the process which must be detailed and planned for in the Evacuation Sub Plan. Recovery agencies should be identified and strategies listed as to how these agencies will be communicated with and whose role it will be to liaise with these groups.

While the evacuation process is completed with the return of evacuees to their homes or their transfer into medium to longer term temporary accommodation, the disaster management process continues from response and recovery into managed recovery. It is important that the LDC provides a handover of relevant information to any nominated Recovery Coordinator.

### 11.4 Key messages

#### Have you considered ...

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- Factors**
- whether the threat has passed?
  - what process will be used to return to the area: temporary return, partial return, complete return?
  - who will assess the buildings and roads for safety?
  - who will coordinate the return and community recovery?
  - whether all services are available to residents and buildings safe for habitation?
  - whether there are any possible health and safety risks to the residents? How will these be managed and solved?
  - whether the recovery services are ready and able to enter the area to assist residents?
  - whether there are any load limits on roads/access and how will this impact the return and recovery process?
  - whether there is adequate food and clean water for the community?
  - how will information on the community return be communicated with residents?
  - how will the special needs population be managed to return to their homes?
  - whether each home has been inspected by electricians if flood affected?
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- Key stakeholders**
- Local Disaster Management Group
  - District Disaster Management Group
  - State Disaster Management Group
  - Australian Red Cross
  - Department of Communities
  - Department of Community Safety – SDCC
  - Local building certifiers or the Building Services Authority of Queensland
  - Queensland Health
  - Queensland Police Service
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- Further information**
- Queensland Recovery Guidelines (on publication)
  - Evacuation Planning, Emergency Management Australia
  - [www.ema.qld.gov.au](http://www.ema.qld.gov.au)
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## 12 Glossary of terms

<b>Assembly point</b>	A designated location specifically selected as a point which is not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard.
<b>Assistance dog</b>	A dog trained to perform identifiable physical tasks and behaviours to assist a person with a disability to reduce the person's need for support. <sup>4</sup>
<b>DDC</b>	The Act states the function of the District Disaster Coordinator is to coordinate disaster operations in the disaster district for the group. In addition the DDC is the chairperson of the District Disaster Management Group.
<b>Declaration of a disaster situation</b>	Declaration in accordance with the provisions of s64 or s69 of the <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i> .
<b>Directed evacuation</b>	Exposed persons are directed under legislative authority to evacuate an exposed area.
<b>Disaster</b>	A serious disruption to the 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 (s13, the Act).
<b>Disaster District</b>	A defined area established to assist local governments with disaster management and operations.
<b>Disaster Management</b>	Arrangements about managing the potential adverse effect of an event, including, for example, arrangements for mitigating, preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster (s14, the Act).
<b>Disaster Management Group</b>	One of or a number of any of the following: the SDMG, DDMGs or LDMGs.
<b>District Disaster Management Group</b>	The group established in accordance with s22 of the Act to provide coordinated State Government support and resources to LDMGs on behalf of local governments. The specific functions of the DDMG are outlined in s23 of the Act.
<b>District Disaster Management Plan</b>	A plan that documents planning and resource management to counter the effects of a disaster within the disaster district.
<b>Event</b>	(1) Any of the following: a. a cyclone, earthquake, flood, storm, storm tide, tornado, tsunami, volcanic eruption or other natural happening b. an explosion or fire, a chemical, fuel or oil spill, or a gas leak c. an infestation, plague or epidemic ( <i>example of an epidemic – a prevalence of foot-and-mouth disease</i> ) d. a failure of, or disruption to, an essential service or infrastructure e. an attack against the state f. another event similar to an event mentioned in (a) to (e). (2) An event may be natural or caused by human acts or omissions. (s16, the Act).
<b>Evacuation</b>	The planned movement of persons from an unsafe or potentially unsafe location to a safer location and their eventual return.
<b>Evacuation Centre</b>	A designated building specifically selected as a location not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard.

<sup>4</sup> *Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009*

<b>Evacuation route</b>	A designated road, not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard, to be used for travel to a safer location.
<b>Evacuation Sub Plan</b>	A sub-set of the main Disaster Management Plan.
<b>Evacuation zone</b>	A designated exposed area from which people are evacuated.
<b>External flooding</b>	Floodwaters have entered the external areas of the property or dwelling e.g. yard or field.
<b>Exposed area</b>	An area that has been identified as being at threat from the effects of a hazard.
<b>Exposed population</b>	The population that inhabit a potentially hazardous area (see exposed area).
<b>Hazard</b>	A source of potential harm or a situation with a potential to cause loss. <sup>5</sup>
<b>Incident</b>	An event, accidentally or deliberately caused, which requires a response from one or more of the statutory emergency response agencies.
<b>Internal flooding</b>	Floodwaters have entered the internal areas of the property or dwelling e.g. habitable areas or commercial floor space.
<b>Livestock</b>	Domestic animals raised for home use or for commercial purposes i.e. cattle, horses, goats, sheep, pigs, fowls etc
<b>Local Disaster Management Group</b>	The group established in accordance with s29 of the Act to support the disaster management and operational activities of local governments. The specific functions of the LDMG are outlined in s30 of the Act.
<b>Local Disaster Management Plan</b>	A plan that documents agreed arrangements that are in place to manage disaster events within its area of responsibilities.
<b>Minister</b>	Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services.
<b>Neighbourhood safer places</b>	A local open space or building where people may gather, as a last resort, to seek shelter from bushfire. <sup>6</sup>
<b>Pet</b>	A household, domesticated animal kept as a companion such as a dog, cat, bird.
<b>Place of refuge</b>	Provides some level of protection from the effects of a specific hazard.
<b>Public cyclone shelter</b>	A building, or part of a building, specifically designed and constructed to provide protection from wind and debris during the passage of a severe tropical cyclone. Cyclone shelters are to meet the requirements for a Public Cyclone Shelter as detailed in <i>Design Guidelines for Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters: September 2006</i> .
<b>Queensland disaster management arrangements</b>	Whole-of-Government arrangements to ensure the collaborative and effective coordination of planning, services, information and resources for comprehensive disaster management.
<b>Safer location</b>	A designated location which is not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard.
<b>Self evacuation</b>	Individuals proactively make their own decision to evacuate prior to any direction from authorities.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Emergency Management Glossary, Australian Emergency Manual Series, Manual 3, [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au)

<sup>6</sup> QFRS Neighbourhood Safer Places – A Place of Last Resort In a Bushfire:2010

<b>Shelter in place</b>	An alternative or in addition to evacuation where individuals shelter within their homes, workplace or with family/friends if considered safe to do so.
<b>Standard Early Warning System</b>	A sound designated to alert the community to the need to listen to an announcement concerning an actual or imminent emergency.
<b>State Disaster Management Plan</b>	A planning tool for disaster managers which provides an overview of Queensland's all-hazards disaster management arrangements, including agency roles and responsibilities at each tier of the arrangements.
<b>State Disaster Management Group</b>	The group established in accordance with s17 of the Act who is responsible for disaster management and operational arrangements for the state of Queensland. The specific functions of the SDMG are outlined in s18 of the Act.
<b>State instructional institution</b>	An educational institution established under s13 or s14 of the <i>Education (General Provisions) Act 2006</i> , namely State primary, secondary or special education schools, environmental education centres or outdoor education centres. <sup>7</sup>
<b>Storm surge</b>	The difference between the actual water level under influence of a meteorological disturbance (storm tide) and the level which would have been attained in the absence of the meteorological disturbance (i.e. astronomical tide). <sup>8</sup>
<b>Storm tide</b>	A storm tide is the combination of storm surge and the normal astronomical tide, with additional contributions from wind and wave setup and wave runup. <sup>9</sup>
<b>Temporary short term respite</b>	A stay in a safer location for a period of between 1-18 hours where provision of bedding and substantial meals is not required.
<b>Temporary short term accommodation</b>	A stay in a safer location for a period in excess of 18 hours and may extend into days where provision of bedding and substantial meals is required.
<b>The Act</b>	<i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i>
<b>Voluntary evacuation</b>	Exposed persons are encouraged to commence evacuation voluntarily.

<sup>7</sup> Chief Executive's Directive No. 01/2010 Temporary Closure of State Instructional Institutions In Emergency Situations. Section 4(1), Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Emergency Management Glossary, Australian Emergency Manual Series, Manual 3, [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au)

<sup>9</sup> National Storm Tide Mapping Model for Emergency Response 2002