State of Queensland
Multi-Agency Response Plan to
Chemical, Biological, Radiological incidents
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Foreword

Queensland emergency service agencies, Queensland Health and the Queensland Police Service traditionally respond to a range of emergency incidents within their standard roles, responsibilities and capabilities. These incidents have generally been localised and have not impacted on the community at large. The management of such incidents has occurred through existing legislation, the application of standard operating procedures by each responding agency and established inter-agency operating arrangements.

Recent international events have highlighted the need for governments to enhance their capacity to respond to chemical, biological and radiological incidents resulting from accidental, natural, terrorist or criminal events. The nature of these incidents presents a greater threat to the community and requires special command and control arrangements for effective whole-of-government management.

In managing natural and technological disasters emergency managers carry out risk assessments and vulnerability studies based on available hazard information. From this process, strategies to treat the risks are formulated and plans are developed. In the case of consequence management relating to terrorism, the process of assessing risk and vulnerability can only be effective if emergency managers have all the necessary information, as early as possible, to enable them to plan. For this reason, information sharing at the Commonwealth and State level is a priority.

The purpose of crisis and consequence management is to protect public health and safety, restore essential government services and provide emergency relief to those affected by a criminal or terrorist incident. However, in the context of the National Counter Terrorism Plan (NCTP), only those aspects of consequence management concerned with managing the immediate or short-term effects of such incident are addressed. Longer-term recovery issues, that are part of the total ambit of consequence management, will be carried out using existing disaster recovery plans. Regular multi-agency training between police and emergency response agencies at all levels of government must be conducted to ensure coordination between crisis management and consequence management.

This Plan builds on existing capabilities of responding agencies while recognising the special arrangements for managing accidental or terrorist related releases of chemical, biological and radiological agents into the community.

This document is a dynamic document and will be validated through the conduct of exercises and by experience.

The CBR Plan is prepared under the guidance of the State CBR Steering Committee.
Authority

The CBR Plan is endorsed by the Chief Executive Officers from the following agencies:

**Authority**

- Michael Kinnane  
  Director-General  
  Department of Emergency Services  
  and Member and Deputy Chair of the  
  State Disaster Management Group

- R. Atkinson  
  Commissioner of Police  
  Queensland Police Service  
  and Member of the  
  State Disaster Management Group

- Dr Steve Buckland  
  Director-General  
  Department of Health  
  and Member of the State Disaster Management Group

**Authorisation under the** Disaster Management Act, 2003**

The CBR Plan is a Threat Specific Plan of the State Disaster Management Plan and is authorised under the Disaster Management Act, 2003.

- Alan Brunner  
  Executive Officer  
  and Member of the State Disaster Management Group
Part 1 - Introduction

The CBR Plan outlines the Queensland Government’s management of CBR incidents. The Plan is a Threat Specific Plan of the State Disaster Management Plan and is supported by three specific plans that outline the Queensland Government’s multi agency response to chemical, biological and radiological incidents. The Plan is also a sub plan of other state counter terrorist arrangements.

Hazardous material incidents are usually within the capacity of local response agencies such as the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Health, and require minimal off-site management and coordination. Where a biological agent can affect animal or plant health the Department of Primary Industries will play a Lead Agency role in accordance with existing planning arrangements.

Should a release, or the threatened release, of a chemical, biological or radiological agent be the result of a terrorist or criminally instigated action, the Queensland Police Service will be the controlling and coordinating authority for the response across all agencies. If the incident is the result of a terrorist action, the incident will then be controlled and coordinated in accordance with the National Counter Terrorism Plan (NCTP) and/or the emergency powers afforded to the police under the Public Safety Preservation Act, 1986 where appropriate. The procedures outlined in the State CBR Plan will then complement the above arrangements and legislation.

Where the capacity of the local response is exceeded and there is potential for significant impact from the incident on a community it may be necessary to escalate the support and assistance required through the activation of the Queensland Disaster Management System.

The three functional plans that support the CBR Plan and Lead Agency are:
- State Chemical/HazMat Plan (Queensland Fire and Rescue Service);
- State Biological Disaster Plan (Queensland Health);
- State Radiological Disaster Plan (Queensland Health).

Objectives of the Plan
The objective of the CBR Plan is to provide strategic direction to Queensland Government agencies on the planning and management of CBR incidents, whether the result of accidental or criminal origin.

Application of the Plan
Application of the CBR Plan and functional plans is the responsibility of the incident controller/coordinator and advisory agencies.
Part 2 - Planning

**State CBR Steering Committee**
The CBR Steering Committee is convened by the Department of Emergency Services on behalf of the Queensland Government and is responsible for providing guidance on the development of the CBR capability. Membership is drawn from senior officers of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Police Service, Department of Emergency Services, Queensland Health, Department of Primary Industries and any other agencies as required.

**State CBR Working Group**
The State CBR Working Group is convened by the Department of Emergency Services for reviewing and amending the CBR Plan, and undertaking tasks as directed by the CBR Steering Committee. Membership is drawn primarily from departments represented on the CBR Steering Committee.

**District Disaster Coordinator (DDC)**
The DDC is the first point of contact for managing the impact of the incident on the community under the Queensland Disaster Management System and is responsible for ensuring counter disaster plans are prepared within the Disaster District. These plans focus on coordinating a whole-of-government capability to support the Local Governments and local community in managing the consequences of an event, such as the provision of recovery services, whether the result of a natural event or from an accidental or terrorist CBR incident.
Part 3 - Principles

The CBR Plan and functional plans are underpinned by the following principles:

- The response to a CBR incident is a multi-agency response that recognises the role of combat agencies, the Lead Agency and the QPS and Commonwealth agencies in maintaining security arrangements in accordance with the National Counter Terrorism Plan (NCTP).
- The CBR Plan and functional plans are dynamic documents that are reviewed and maintained by the planning committees on a regular basis.
- Where the consequences to a community exceed the capacity of the local response agencies, activation of the State Disaster Management System may be required.
- Training for CBR incidents is primarily the responsibility of response agencies. To ensure the effective coordination of response agencies to a CBR incident training programs should involve all response agencies.
Part 4 - Agency responsibilities

Overview of Agency Responsibilities

Agency Responsibilities
Each agency has specific roles during the management of a CBR incident and is responsible for the safety, protection, training and management of its own personnel.

Counter Disaster and Rescue Services (CDRS)
The CDRS division of the Department of Emergency Services is responsible for coordination of the Disaster Management System and manages the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC).

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS)
The QFRS provides a combat and preventative service in respect to incidents or potential incidents involving hazardous materials. QFRS is the Lead Agency for the implementation of the State Chemical/HazMat Plan.

QFRS procedures regarding CBR may be extended to cover hazardous materials other than chemicals where the responsible agency has requested assistance.

Under the Fire and Rescue Service Act, 1990 the QFRS is responsible for the protection of persons, property and the environment from the effects of hazardous materials and the promotion of safety and other procedures in the event of a chemical incident.

The Response Advice to Chemical Emergencies (RACE) team provides:
- An expert mobile advisory service;
- Specialist training for emergency services for response to CBR incidents; and
- Sample management, including retrieval and liaison with Queensland Health and other agencies.

Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS)
Under the provisions of the Ambulance Service Act, 1991 the QAS is responsible for:
- On-site medical care in accordance with Queensland Health Clinical Coordination arrangements.
- Establishment of casualty collection, initial triage, treatment and transport areas.

In addition, QAS provides:
- Limited triage and treatment in the Hot Zone.
- Triage and treatment in the Warm Zone.
- On-site medical support to other incident responders.
- Casualty treatment information to off-site health facilities.

Queensland Police Service (QPS)
The QPS is responsible for security issues for maintaining public order under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, 2000. The QPS also has the power to invoke the provisions of the Public Safety Preservation Act, 1986 (PSPA) that provides broad additional powers during emergencies.

Under the PSPA the QPS is responsible for:
- Control and coordination of the incident (includes the on and off-site emergency environment).
- Coordination of response agencies.
- Securing the incident scene from unauthorized entry or departure.
- Crowd and traffic control.

Where a CBR incident results from terrorist activity security aspects are managed by the QPS under the National Counter Terrorism Plan.
Queensland Health (QHealth)
QHealth is responsible for administration of legislation under the Health Act, 1937 and the Radiation Safety Act, 1999.

Under provisions in the Health Act, 1937 the Minister for Health is provided extensive and wide-ranging powers in the event of a major health issue.

QHealth is responsible for the control of communicable disease outbreaks underpinned by the requirements and powers of the Health Act, 1937.

QHealth administers the Radiation Safety Act, 1999 and is the Lead Agency for radiation safety in Queensland. Under the Act, inspectors have powers to ensure that adequate controls are in place to protect the health and safety of all persons. Additionally, the Radiation Health unit of QHealth has been delegated as the power of the Administering Authority under the Environmental Protection Act, 1994 for all matters relating to land affected by radioactive material.

QHealth is the Lead Agency for implementation of the State Biological Disaster Plan and State Radiological Disaster Plan.

In addition, QHealth provides:
- Advice and direction on biological and radiological incidents.
- Public health advice and direction.
- Advice on the clinical and medical management of casualties.
- Hospital or other health facility based multi-casualty response as required.
- On-site medical teams.
- Off-site laboratory analysis of hazardous materials, including biological agents.
- Advice on decontamination.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
The EPA is the Lead Agency for administering the Environmental Protection Act, 1994. The Act provides for the protection of the environment from the effects of contaminants of all kinds. The provisions of the Contaminated Lands Act, 1990 are incorporated into the Environmental Protection Act, 1994. This extends the Act’s powers to investigate and remediate land that may be contaminated as a consequence of a CBR incident.

Many of the powers under the Environmental Protection Act, 1994 have been shared with Local Government under delegation arrangements.

Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F)
DPI&F is the Lead Agency for responding to animal and plant health emergencies that occur in Queensland. Management of animal emergencies is coordinated under arrangements outlined in the Queensland Veterinary Emergency Plan (QLDVETPLAN) which is a threat specific Plan of the State Counter Disaster Plan. Management of plant pest or disease emergencies is coordinated under arrangements outlined in the Generic Incursion Management Plan which has been endorsed Federally.

When an animal or plant disease emergency is declared a State Disease Control Head Quarters (SDCHQ) is formally organised to support Local Disease Control Centres (LDCC) and technical specialists in the field. Specialist veterinary pathologists, epidemiologists and emergency management staff within the SDCHQ liaise with public health and communicable disease specialists within Queensland Health especially when zoonotic pathogens are known or suspected. Close liaison is also maintained with the State Disaster Coordination Centre and the State Disaster Coordination Group. Equivalent arrangements apply to plant pest or disease emergencies: State Pest Control Headquarters (SPCHQ) and Local Pest Control Centre (LPCC).
A State-level Emergency Response Management Task Force (ERMTF) supports the SDCHQ and the Animal & Plant Health Service throughout all phases of an emergency activation. Elements of the ERMTF also support DPI representation on both the Central Control Group and the Major Incidents Group of Cabinet.

**Department of Natural Resources and Mines (NR&M)**

NR&M is responsible for:

- The Gas Examiner’s duties as outlined under the *Gas Act, 1965*.
- The Explosive Inspectorate as outlined in the *Explosives Act, 1999*.

NR&M is responsible for safety advice in the areas of explosives, petroleum and gas.

Under the *Explosives Act, 1999* the Explosives Inspectorate provides advice on explosives issues ranging from commercial high explosives to pyrotechnics and fireworks. Contact with Explosives Inspectors at any time should be made through Police Communications Centres.

Under the *Petroleum Act, 1923* and the *Gas Act, 1965* the Petroleum and Gas Inspectorates provide advice on incidents relating to oil production and those involving natural or LP gas.

**Interstate and Federal Assistance – Coordination of Commonwealth Requests**

Under the NCTP or other functional arrangements requests for inter-state or Commonwealth assistance will be in accordance with established protocols.

However, requests for Commonwealth Government assistance in support of disaster management is to be forwarded through the appropriate Disaster District Coordinator to the State Counter Disaster Organisation Duty Officer for action in accordance with State and Commonwealth arrangements.
Part 5 - Operational coordination

Major Incidents Group (MIG)
The MIG has responsibility for providing high level guidance and support to the Disaster Management System in the event of a significant incident with major community consequences. Specifically, it provides high level decision making and leadership to the disaster management response and recovery, provides appropriate State resources to expedite the disaster management response and recovery and determines the State Government public information and media strategy.

While the membership of the MIG will be determined by the Premier and Chair of the State Disaster Management Group based on the nature of the incident, the core membership is likely to comprise the Premier, Treasurer, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, and the Ministers for Police, Health and Emergency Services.

In a CBR context the State Crisis Centre (SCC) is activated when a CBR incident is the outcome of a terrorist action. Upon activation of the SCC, the Crisis Policy Committee (CPC) will be convened, which will provide strategic policy guidance for crisis and consequence management. Ministers who might normally be part of the MIG may be co-opted into the CPC.

Multi-Agency Advisory Group (MAAG)
The MAAG consists of senior executive members from involved State and Commonwealth agencies. The purpose of the MAAG is to provide direction and coordination to agencies empowered to combat non terrorist incidents. The MAAG would normally be activated by the Commissioner, QPS but could also be activated by any Lead Agency as required.

Multi-Agency Threat Assessment Team (MATAT)
In order to provide an effective assessment of threats, a MATAT is convened to determine the credibility of the threat and the potential consequences based on information provided from the incident controller / coordinator or from other sources.

The MATAT has representatives with knowledge of hazardous materials and/or experience in the management of HazMat incidents and their impact on the community. The representatives are drawn from agencies such as the QPS, QFRS, CHEM Unit, QAS, QHealth, CDRS, DPI&F, EPA, the Department of Energy, NR&M, Australian Defence Force (ADF) and other agencies as required.

The MATAT reports to the commander of the Police Operations Centre and may be convened when:
- an apparent CBR incident has occurred with a significant number of casualties;
- there are indications of an impending crisis because the control objective at the incident site is unlikely to be achieved within an acceptable time frame or within the available resources; and/or
- the incident has the potential to cause major impact on the general public, infrastructure or the environment and could require whole-of-government disaster management arrangements to be activated.

National counter terrorism alert levels
Australia moved to a four-level system of national counter-terrorism alert in June 2003. The alert level informs national preparation and planning; dictates levels of precaution and vigilance to minimise the risk; and may be the basis of public discussion of the risk to Australia.

They also provide a ‘trigger’ for States/Territories to implement additional security measures previously determined for each threat level.

The national counter terrorism levels of alert are:
- low – no information to suggest a terrorist attack in Australia
- medium – medium risk of a terrorist attack in Australia
- high – high risk of a terrorist attack in Australia
- extreme – terrorist attack is imminent or has occurred
Operational coordination for non-terrorist CBR incidents

State wide coordination

Multi-Agency Advisory Group

Local coordination

Incident management centre

Police Forward Command Post and/or Multi-agency control point

Scene of incident

Operational coordination for terrorist related CBR incidents

State Crisis Centre
- Premier/Duty Minister
- State Crisis Policy Committee
- Media Liaison Officer
- Liaison Officers

Crisis Management Group
- Prime Minister/Ministers
- Senior Advisors

National Security Coordination Centre
- Watch Officer
- Media Liaison Officer
- Liaison Officer

Police Operations Centre
- Police Commander
- Media Liaison Officer
- MATAT

State Government Agencies
- Department of Emergency Services
- Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
- QHealth

Scene of incident
Relationship between crisis and whole-of-Government consequence management for a criminal or terrorist CBR incident

*When the crisis and consequence management arrangements are activated, decisions of a strategic nature are made by the Premier and selected Ministers who form the State Crisis Policy Committee within the State Crisis Centre.

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Part 6 - Media and public information

Media / Public Information Management
Where the State-wide management of a CBR incident is required, communications and information management will be coordinated by a management team incorporating representatives from the lead agency, supporting agencies and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DP&C) in accordance with government communications and information protocols.

For a locally managed incident the Lead Agency, in concert with the QPS, will have responsibility for providing information about the CBR incident.

In situations where the CBR incident is the outcome of a terrorist action, the QPS is responsible for managing the media according to their standard arrangements, in consultation with the affected agencies or organisations. Once the SCC is operating, media comment will be coordinated between the QPS, the SCC and the Australian Government in accordance with the specified NCTP arrangements.

The State communication and information protocols complement existing agency and function-specific plans. The objectives of the protocols are to promote effective interagency information flow, build public confidence in the ability of the authorities to respond to a disaster or major incident, build and maintain a cooperative approach with media organisations, and ensure all public statements are coordinated to eliminate the possibility of supplying conflicting information. Broad guidelines on the provision of types of information are outlined below.

Guidelines

Political Information
Definition: This comprises whole-of-government policy and initiative related information.

Responsibilities: This type of information should only be provided by the Premier, Ministers, Directors-General, and/or authorised spokespersons.

Strategic Information
Definition: This comprises information relating to the overall approach being taken in response to disasters or major incidents. It may also include specific departmental responses to particular events.

Responsibilities: This type of information should only be provided by Directors-General (or their appointed spokesperson), the Police Commissioner (or appointed spokesperson), or by dedicated senior officers located in the State Disaster Coordination Centre and/or the Police Major Incident Room, and following consultation with Communication Services within DP&C.

Tactical (operational) Information
Definition: This comprises factual information pertaining exclusively to the operational components of a disaster or major incident response.
Responsibilities: Media and inter-agency information should be provided by Media Liaison Officers or other assigned spokespersons identified by lead agencies (such as the QPS, QFRS, QAS, QHealth, DPI&F etc). All media relations must be coordinated by the lead agency to ensure that operations and/or investigations are not prejudiced by media reporting and to build and hold public confidence.

It should also be possible for tactical information to be provided, where appropriate, by authorised officers of these and other stakeholder response agencies.

At a disaster or incident site, the functional or threat specific Lead Agency should nominate an on-scene media spokesperson.

On-scene media spokesperson is authorised to:
Provide tactical (operational) details such as response times, action taken, the number of people involved in the event and, if relevant, their ages and sex provided it does not identify those people; and positively describe the efforts of response agencies and individuals. Such information must only be provided after discussions with the media liaison representative of the lead agency.

On-scene media spokesperson is not authorised to:
Comment about Government or Opposition policy matters (media enquiries should be referred to the relevant Minister’s media advisor); speculate on the cause of a disaster, or measures that may have prevented the disaster; or identify patients and victims by giving their names to the media (only the police are authorised to release this information).
Part 7 - Review

CBR Plan – Review and Maintenance

Review
A review of the Plan is to be conducted subsequent to:

- The performance of the Plan in facilitating operations at a hazardous materials emergency in Queensland.
- Exercises designed to practise or test aspects of the Plan.
- Alterations to the roles or responsibilities of any agency involved in the Plan.
- CBR occurrences external to Queensland or new technology that suggest a review should be carried out.

A requirement for automatic review every two years regardless of the other review indications mentioned.

Responsibility for the Review
The CBR Working Group is responsible for coordinating a review of the CBR Plan and seeking its endorsement by the CBR Steering Committee.

Amendments to a Plan
Agencies should submit proposed amendments to the CBR Working Group for its consideration. Following endorsement by the CBR Steering Committee amendments to the Plan are to be issued to all stakeholders and will be placed on the State Disaster Management Group website (www.disaster.qld.gov.au).

Training
Each agency is responsible for the training of its own personnel to perform the roles and responsibilities assigned in this Plan. Wherever possible training should be conducted on a joint basis.
Part 8 - Definitions and legislation

Definitions

Command
The direction of members and resources of an agency/organisation in the performance of the agency/organisation’s roles and tasks. Authority to command is established by legislation or by agreement within an agency/organisation. Command relates to agencies and operates vertically within an agency.

Control
The overall direction of emergency management activities in an emergency or disaster situation. Authority for control is established in legislation or in an emergency response plan and carries with it the responsibility for tasking other agencies in accordance with the needs of the situation. Control relates to situations and operates horizontally across agencies.

Coordination
The bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure an effective emergency response. It is primarily concerned with the systematic acquisition and application of resources in accordance with the requirements imposed by the hazard or impact of an emergency. It operates vertically within agencies as a function of the authority to command, and horizontally across agencies as a function of the authority to control.

Crisis Advisory Panel of Experts (CAPE)
A permanent Commonwealth body composed of persons with expertise that is relevant to a CBR incident.

Disaster
Are usually large events natural or man-made that involves a community and requires some form of off-site coordination. They usually require resources that are not found in any one responding agency and require specific planning and operational management systems.

Emergency powers
The powers are contained in the Public Safety Preservation Act, 1986. These powers authorise Queensland emergency response personnel, in a declared CBR emergency, the power to:
- detain;
- give person directions to remain in, go to, or stay out of an area;
- decontaminate;
- medically examine and treat;
- seize property; and
- require name and address.

Incident
Are usually events well within the capacity of local response agency such as fire, police and ambulance. The response agencies are able to provide support to each other without reference to any higher authority and no agency directs the actions of any other agency.

Multi-Agency Advisory Group (MAAG)
The MAAG consists of executive members from involved State and Commonwealth agencies. The purpose of the MAAG is to provide advice and coordination to agencies empowered to combat incidents. The MAAG would normally be activated by the Police Commissioner, but could also be activated by any Lead Agency as required.

Multi Agency Threat Assessment Team (MATAT)
The MATAT is an advisory body drawn from various State and commonwealth agencies to provide advice to the Police Commander. The MATAT is chaired by a QPS officer.

Major Incidents Group (MIG)
The MIG is a group of senior ministers of Cabinet that provide high level direction to disaster management response and recovery during disasters which are not the result of terrorist or criminal action.
Police Forward Command Post (PFCP)
The police forward command post located within the cold zone, from which the Police Forward Commander controls and directs QPS activities and coordinates the activities of other agencies.

Terrorism
An act or threat, intended to advance a political, ideological or religious cause by coercing or intimidating an Australian or foreign government or the public, by causing serious harm to people or property, creating a serious risk of health and safety to the public, disrupting trade, critical infrastructure or electronic systems.

Legislation
The following legislation provides the authority under which response agencies and Government departments undertake their role within a CBR context:
- Disaster Management Act, 2003
- Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, 2000
- Public Safety Preservation Act, 1986
- Fire and Rescue Service Act, 1990
- Ambulance Service Act, 1991
- Exotic Diseases in Animals Act, 1981
- Commonwealth Quarantine Act, 1908
- Radiation Safety Act, 1999
- Health Act, 1937
- Explosives Act, 1999
- Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1994
- Contaminated Lands Act, 1990