

Community Information and Warnings Sub Plan

Burdekin Local Disaster Management Group

Prepared By
Local Disaster Coordinator

Authorised By
Local Disaster Management Group

Date Prepared
August 2023

Document Control

Amendment Control

The Community Information and Warnings Sub Plan is a controlled document. The controller of the document is the Burdekin Shire Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC). Any proposed amendments to this plan should be forwarded in writing to:

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The LDC may approve minor amendments to this document. The LDC will ensure that any changes to the document's content will be submitted to the Burdekin Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) for approval and be endorsed by the Burdekin Shire Council.

Amendment Register

All versions are archived, and this sub plan only references the last two versions.

Amendment		Plan Updated		
No / Ref	Issue Date	Inserted by	Summary of Changes	Date
5	August 2022	Eileen Devescovi	Yearly Review	August 2022
6	August 2023	Eileen Devescovi	Yearly Review	August 2023

Endorsement

This Community Information and Warnings Sub Plan has been developed for the Burdekin Shire Local Government Area (LGA) and subsequently approved by the Burdekin LDMG. This Plan is a Sub Plan of the *Burdekin Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP)* and is to be read in conjunction.

The Plan is recommended for distribution by the LDMG and is considered live once approved by the LDMG.

Lyn McLaughlin

Mayor Lyn McLaughlin
 Chair Burdekin LDMG

Eileen Devescovi

Eileen Devescovi
 Burdekin Local Disaster Coordinator

The functions of the Local Government were advised in accordance with the Disaster Management Act (DM Act) (s80). This sub plan was formally adopted by the Burdekin Shire Council at the Council meeting held on Tuesday 14 November 2023, through resolution.

Lyn McLaughlin

Mayor Lyn McLaughlin

Abbreviations List

Abbreviation	Full Title
AWS	Australian Warning System
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
BSC	Burdekin Shire Council
EA	Emergency Alert
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
EWN	Early Warning Network
GIS	Geospatial Information System
LDC	Local Disaster Coordinator
LDCC	Local Disaster Coordination Centre
LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group
LDMP	Local Disaster Management Plan
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
QPS	Queensland Police Service

References

- [State Disaster Management Plan 2023](#)
 - Emergency Alert and Standard Emergency Warning Signal (Pg. 30).
 - QFES is responsible for facilitating emergency alerts and SEWS (Pg. 90).
- [Queensland Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guidelines 2018](#)
 - Emergency Alert (Pg. 42).
 - Local governments may use local early warning systems and communication channels to issue information to provide advanced warning of severe weather or other public safety events to help prepare and protect people and property (pg. 41).
 - Undertake an analysis of identified risks that may require an Emergency Alert (Pg. 43).
- [Queensland Standard Emergency Warning Signal \(SEWS\) Guideline](#)
- [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual M.1.174](#)

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1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Community Information and Warnings Sub Plan is to manage the effective collection, monitoring, management and dissemination of accurate, useful, and timely information and warnings to the community for a local disaster event, in which the Burdekin Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and its plans and processes have been activated.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this sub plan are to:

- Define roles and responsibilities for emergency services and supporting agencies;
- Provide effective liaison between all emergency services and supporting agencies;
- Provide arrangements for efficient coordination of local resources and any required external support; and,
- Prescribe arrangements for testing, evaluation and maintenance of this plan.

1.3 Scope

This sub plan applies to emergency/disaster events occurring within the Burdekin Shire Council area, which are within the capability and resources of the Local Government, Emergency Services and other supporting agencies.

1.4 Authority to Plan

The Burdekin LDMG has prepared this sub plan under the provisions of section 57 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003 (Qld)*. This sub plan will be managed in accordance with the administrative and governance processes outlined within the *Burdekin Local Disaster Management Plan* including approval, document control, distribution, review and renewal.

1.5 Plan Review and Testing Requirements

This sub plan is to be reviewed annually before the severe weather season or post event to include lessons learned. This sub plan is to be exercised to ensure the effectiveness and scalability of the plan and include involvement, communication, and collaboration with identified key local, district and state stakeholders.

2. Governance

2.1 Activation of Sub Plan

This plan will be activated by the LDC of the Burdekin LDMG in alignment with the level of activation of the LDMG (and Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC), as required) to ensure ongoing situational awareness for key agencies and the community.

In the event of an LDMG activation, Burdekin Shire Council will prepare and distribute messaging on behalf of the Burdekin LDMG as the “single point of truth”.

This sub plan is supported by the:

- Burdekin Local Disaster Management Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Airport Emergency Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Communications Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Evacuation Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Pandemic Influenza Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Public Health Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Resupply Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Transport Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Tsunami Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Multi-Purpose Hall Place of Refuge Manual; and,
- Burdekin LDMG Local Disaster Coordination Centre Standard Operating Procedures (LDCC SOP).

The activation of these supporting plans should be considered concurrently with this plan.

2.2 Functional Responsibility

The LDC is to ensure all agencies and members of the LDMG are aware of these procedures.

2.3 Responsibilities of Agencies and Organisations

The release of information to the community regarding an emergency/disaster, and associated hazards, will be the responsibility of the Chairperson of the LDMG or his/her delegate. This will be done in conjunction with representatives of lead agencies and/or support agencies of the LDMG, who are responsible for the input of relevant information to this process.

A Media Liaison Officer from Council will be utilised for disaster events per the position description within the *Burdekin LDMG LDCC SOP*.

Some partner agencies that also provide public information and warnings in the event of an emergency/disaster include:

Organisation	Responsibility
Australian Government – National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)	The Australian Warning System (AWS) provides point-in-time information about a hazard that is impacting or is expected to impact communities. It describes the impact and expected consequences for communities and includes advice on what people should do.

Organisation	Responsibility
Burdekin Shire Council	Provides information on local road closures, traffic routes, evacuations, shelters and places of refuge, recovery centres, debris clean-up and all matters relating to the activation of the LDMG.
Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)	Provides weather advice to media outlets on cyclones, floods (flood alert, flood watch and flood advice), severe storms (including thunderstorms), tsunamis, land gales and severe bushfires.
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	Provides clear, accurate information about an animal/plant disease emergency, its implications and the progress of control or eradication procedures.
Department of Transport and Main Roads	Provides information on road closures on state highways through 13 19 40
Ergon Energy	Provides information regarding power outages and power supply. Emergency hotline: 13 16 70
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) – Fire and Rescue	Provides information for the media and the public regarding fire, flood, chemical or gas emergencies.
Queensland Health	Provides information regarding a public health epidemic or heat wave.
Queensland Police Services (QPS)	Provides information about locally managed disaster events and may include directed evacuations.

2.4 Relevant Issues

Effective warning systems are an essential prevention strategy aiming to convey information to the community about the impending disaster event. Warnings to the community from the relevant agencies and the LDMG are transmitted via electronic media, social media, Disaster Dashboard, message boards and radio as per the processes of their respective organisations. Warning systems in use for disaster management purposes are detailed in *Emergency Messaging* of this document.

3. Communication Process

3.1 Communication Phases

Five (5) communication phases for disaster management are used within the LDMG. The length of each phase depends upon impact assessment and the size of a disaster event. These are:

Communication Phases*	Detail	Alignment with LDMP
Phase 1 – Seasonal Preparedness - Media	Community messaging including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Get Ready’ Burdekin Information Stalls, • Burdekin Shire Emergency Action Guide, • Disaster Dashboard, • Permanent electronic message boards, • Television, • Radio, • Website and • Social media • Promotional posters & information packs. 	ALERT
Phase 2 – Watch and Act	Intel will be circulated to LDMG members, agencies, and Executive Officers of the Council when LDMG moves to Lean Forward. Community messaging will be disseminated as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the LDMG.	LEAN FORWARD
Phase 3 – Imminent Event	This would include communications immediately before or “as it is happening” disaster event – Intel will be circulated to LDMG members, agencies, and Executive Officers of Council when LDMG moves to Stand Up. Community messaging will be disseminated as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the LDMG.	STAND UP
Phase 4 – During and Immediate Post Event	Intel collated and information provided and circulated during and immediately post-event. Community messaging will be disseminated as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the LDMG.	STAND DOWN
Phase 5 – Recovery Post Event	Community messaging will be disseminated as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the LDMG.	n/a

*Length of phase depends upon impact assessment and size of a disaster event.

3.2 Information to be released

Communications will focus on preparation for, response to and recovery from disaster events ensuring residents are informed of:

- i) the progress of the event
- ii) the progress made in combating the event
- iii) the threat to themselves and the actions they need to take
- iv) recovery

3.3 Assessment of the Situation

Information for events will be analysed and assessed per the LDMP and its sub plans and procedures. Decisions relating to warning of impending events, possible evacuations or other issues affecting the community will be distributed timely via various methods.

Events that may trigger community messaging are such, but not limited to:

- Cyclones
- Storm tides
- River flooding
- Localised flash flood events
- Potential landslides
- Bushfires
- Earthquakes
- Public health threats and issues – pandemics, heatwave, etc.
- Other emergency disaster events that may arise from time to time.

3.4 Identification of at-risk Communities

Burdekin LDMG understands that some community members may need specific consideration with disaster and/or emergency information and warnings due to their increased vulnerability to the adverse impacts associated with an event.

The Burdekin LDMG will work closely with external agencies regarding vulnerable groups and will endeavour to assist as required. Vulnerable groups include (but are not limited to) aged care, disabilities, ethnic groups, vulnerable adults and young people, or at-risk of abuse and neglect.

The Burdekin LDMG will maintain good relationships and lines of communication with external stakeholders to ensure that they meet the specific needs of the region's most at-risk individuals or groups during times of emergency or disasters. At-risk individuals include (but are not limited to) new residents, seasonal workers, and tourists.

In addition, the LDMG has identified coastal and regional communities and has established an Area Warden program, enabling the LDMG to understand better the situation in communities that become isolated during disasters or emergencies. Area Wardens are critical to the flow of information during a disaster and are a valuable point of contact in each community.

The LDMG has an active Area Warden program with wardens located in the following townships:

- Alva Beach
- Clare
- Dalbeg
- Giru
- Groper Creek

- Jerona
- Millaroo
- Mount Surround
- Rita Island
- Wunjunga

4. Emergency Messaging

4.1 Method of Distribution

The method of distribution is a multipronged approach to optimise coverage to the community and may include:

- Official warning agencies
- Local media
- Telephone-based
- Radio-based
- TV-based
- Internet-based (Council's website, Disaster Dashboard)
- Social Media (LDMG/Council)
- Person-to-person
- Area Warden Program
- Community organisation networks
- Roadside changeable signs and/or
- Permanent Electronic Message Boards (Giru and Home Hill)
- Queensland Government Emergency Alert System – SMS, text, recorded message
- Australian Warning System.

Mode of Distribution	Delivery Methods
Radio	Arrange interviews for key messages with the Chair of the LDMG or authorised representative. Implement pre-recorded radio advertisements or “live” reads with “key” messaging.
Television	Arrange interviews for key messages with the Chair of the LDMG or authorised representative.
Newspaper	Arrange interviews for key messages with the Chair of the LDMG or authorised representative.
Council Phone System – Messages on Hold	Implement pre-recorded messages using the same script as radio advertisements.
Council Website	Maintain content distribution network to host disaster information for the website
Council's Social Media Outlets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Twitter 	Maintain increased monitoring and posting on the Burdekin LDMG Facebook page. Maintain increased monitoring and posting on @BurdekinSC Twitter account and Facebook
Council's Disaster Dashboard	User-friendly information sharing platform, which allows the LDMG to communicate disaster/emergency news and other essential information about the disaster, including local road information and updates on council infrastructure. This dashboard provides a

Mode of Distribution	Delivery Methods
	one-stop shop for users to obtain important emergency information
Person-to-person	Doorknocking and/or mobile speakers
Area Warden Program	Area Wardens to be the “point” of contact for their community to provide up-to-date information. Area Wardens will also be vital in providing information back to the LDMG regarding their community wellbeing.
Community organisation networks	Contact as per arrangements through LDMG
Roadside changeable signs	Specific local messages at key locations
Permanent Electronic Message Boards	Specific local messaging
Queensland Government Emergency Alert System	Key warnings/advisory messages sent via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMS to mobile phones; and - Automatic scripted voice recordings to landlines
Australian Warning System	The Australian Warning System is a new national approach to information and warnings during emergencies like bushfire, flood, storm, extreme heat, and severe weather. The System uses a nationally consistent set of icons.

4.2 Messaging for At Risk Communities

Burdekin LDMG has adapted its communications processes for the distribution of emergency messages to reflect the following principles as per [Communicating with People with Disability: National Guidelines for Emergency Managers](#), to target all vulnerable groups in the community. Council will:

- Only distribute necessary and relevant information
- Verbalise visual information, including phone numbers and websites details
- Use multiple information and presentation formats
- Keep information consistent, accurate, short and sharp
- Use clear language and simple sentences.

To assist in delivering emergency warning messages, the LDMG through Council, may utilise interpreter services as required.

4.3 Emergency Alert (EA)

The Queensland Government’s “Emergency Alert Service” is the national telephone-based emergency warning system, which provides the capability to send warning messages to fixed line telephones (i.e. landlines) based on the location of the handset and to mobile phones based on the location of the mobile phone. The “Emergency Alert” (EA) system will be utilised by the LDMG as required and per the [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual](#).

Messages will:

- Warn targeted areas of the local community of imminent and severe threats from disaster events; and
- Direct those warned to other sources of information and/or direct them to move away from an imminent hazard or threat.

Three levels of warning can be issued via EA:

- Emergency Warning
- Watch and Act
- Advice

Message Severity	Priority	General Meaning
Emergency Warning	1	You are in danger and need to take life-saving action immediately. Voice messages will be preceded by a four-second sound of the SEWS, followed by the words “Emergency, Emergency”.
Watch and Act	2	There is a heightened level of threat, and conditions are changing. Act now to protect yourself and your family.
Advice	3	There is no immediate danger, but you need to stay informed in case the situation changes.

The LDMG will utilise Geographic Information System (GIS) data to generate a region map that includes a polygon of the defined incident area. Using this map, the EA system will:

- Identify the phone services located within that polygon area
- Send a voice message to all identified landline telephone services
- Send a text message of up to 160 characters to all identified mobile phone services
- Report on the delivery of these messages.

The local areas to receive the messages and contents of the message will be prepared by the LDMG, approved by the Chairperson, and processed as per the [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual](#).

Predefined messages and mapped areas have been prepared for storm surge zones and stored by the Watch Desk, State Disaster Coordination Centre. These messages and mapped areas will be reviewed by the LDC and LDMG annually each year.

4.4 Early Warning Network (EWN)

The “Early Warning Network” (EWN) is a privately operated, paid subscription service, which issues Bureau of Meteorology weather advisories to subscribers via SMS messaging. LDMG does not use the EWN to issue updates to the community regarding weather events.

4.5 Social Media and Website (Digital Communications)

The Burdekin LDMG has access to the Burdekin Shire Council’s website, and social media links will be altered as required to ensure relevant and up-to-date information is available for the Community.

Highlighted links to include:

- Burdekin Shire Council Website – [Disaster Management Information](#)
- Burdekin Shire Council [Disaster Dashboard](#)
 - Emergency News
 - Road Conditions
 - Weather Information
 - Power Outages
 - Other relevant information including Op-In Notifications
- Burdekin Disaster & Emergency Information Facebook
- Burdekin Shire Council Facebook
- Burdekin Shire Council Twitter
- [Get Ready Queensland](#) website

Increased monitoring and posting on the Disaster Dashboard, Burdekin Disaster Information and the Burdekin Shire Council Facebook and Twitter accounts will occur during times of disaster.

4.6 Australian Warning System¹

The Australian Warning System is a new national approach to information and Calls to Actions for hazards like bushfire, flood, storm, cyclone, extreme heat and severe weather.

A warning provides point-in-time information about a hazard that is impacting or is expected to impact communities. It describes the impact and expected consequences for communities and includes advice on what people should do.

There are three warning levels:

Advice (Yellow):

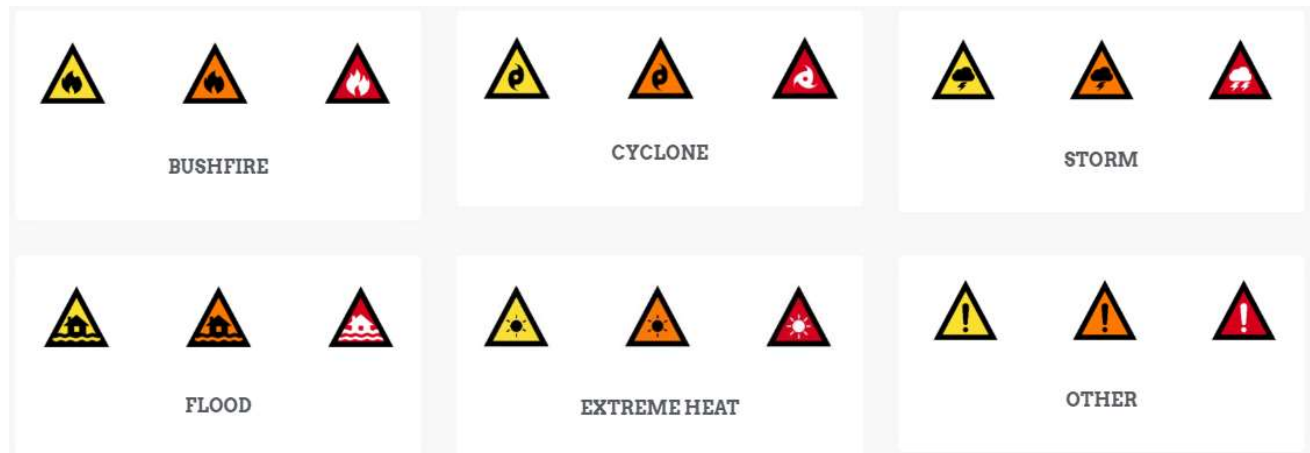
An incident has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.

Watch and Act (Orange):

There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start acting now to protect you and your family.

Emergency Warning (Red):

An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You may be in danger and need to act immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.



¹ [Australian Warning System](#)