

# Community Information and Warnings Sub Plan

Burdekin Local Disaster Management Group

**Prepared By**

Local Disaster Coordinator

**Authorised By**

Local Disaster Management Group

**Date Prepared**

September 2024

## 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:

*Local Disaster Coordinator  
Burdekin Local Disaster Management Group  
PO Box 974  
AYR QLD 4807*

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
6	August 2023	Eileen Devescovi	Yearly Review	August 2023
7	September 2024	Eileen Devescovi	Yearly Review	September 2024

### 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.



Mayor Pierina Dalle Cort  
Chair Burdekin LDMG



Eileen Devescovi  
Burdekin Local Disaster Coordinator

The functions of the Local Government were advised in accordance with the *Queensland Disaster Management Act* (DM Act) (s80). This sub plan was formally adopted by the Burdekin Shire Council through resolution at the Council meeting held on [Day DD Month 2024].



Mayor Pierina Dalle Cort

## Abbreviations List

Abbreviation	Full Title
<b>AWS</b>	Australian Warning System
<b>BOM</b>	Bureau of Meteorology
<b>BSC</b>	Burdekin Shire Council
<b>EA</b>	Emergency Alert
<b>EAP</b>	Emergency Action Plan
<b>EWN</b>	Early Warning Network
<b>GIS</b>	Geospatial Information System
<b>LDC</b>	Local Disaster Coordinator
<b>LDCC</b>	Local Disaster Coordination Centre
<b>LDCC SOP</b>	Local Disaster Coordination Centre Standard Operating Procedures
<b>LDMG</b>	Local Disaster Management Group
<b>LDMP</b>	Local Disaster Management Plan
<b>NEMA</b>	National Emergency Management Agency
<b>QFD</b>	Queensland Fire Department
<b>QPS</b>	Queensland Police Service
<b>SEWS</b>	Standard Emergency Warning Signal

## Table of Contents

Document Control .....	2
Amendment Control .....	2
Amendment Register .....	2
Endorsement .....	2
Abbreviations List .....	3
1. Overview .....	5
1.1 Purpose .....	5
1.2 Objectives .....	5
1.3 Scope .....	5
1.4 Authority to Plan.....	5
1.5 Plan Review and Testing Requirements.....	5
2. Governance.....	6
2.1 Activation of Sub Plan .....	6
2.2 Functional Responsibility .....	6
2.3 Responsibilities of Agencies and Organisations .....	6
2.4 Relevant Issues .....	7
3. Communication Process.....	7
3.1 Communication Phases .....	7
3.2 Information to be released.....	8
3.3 Assessment of the Situation.....	8
3.4 Identification of At-Risk Communities.....	9
4. Emergency Messaging .....	9
4.1 Method of Distribution .....	9
4.2 Messaging for At-Risk Communities .....	11
4.3 Emergency Alert (EA) .....	11
4.4 Australian Warning System (AWS).....	12
4.5 Social Media and Website (Digital Communications) .....	12
4.6 Standards Emergency Warning System (SEWS).....	13
4.7 Early Warning Network (EWN).....	13
Related Documents.....	14
Attachment A – AWS Hazard Icons and Example Action Statements.....	15
A.1. AWS Hazard Icons .....	15
A.2. AWS Action Statements (Examples).....	16

## 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 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 DM Act. This sub plan will be managed in accordance with the administrative and governance processes outlined within the Burdekin LDMP 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

The LDC of the Burdekin LDMG will activate this plan 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 as the “single point of truth” on behalf of the Burdekin LDMG.

This sub plan is supported by the:

- Burdekin LDMP;
- 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.
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.

Organisation	Responsibility
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
QFD	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.
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 (<https://disaster.burdekin.qld.gov.au/>), message boards and radio as per the processes of their respective organisations. Warning systems used for disaster management purposes are detailed in the *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"> <li>• ‘Get Ready’ Burdekin Information Stalls,</li> <li>• Burdekin Shire Emergency Action Guide,</li> <li>• Disaster Dashboard,</li> <li>• Permanent electronic message boards,</li> <li>• Television,</li> <li>• Radio,</li> <li>• Newspaper,</li> <li>• Website,</li> <li>• Social media, and</li> </ul>	<b>ALERT</b>

Communication Phases*	Detail	Alignment with LDMP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotional posters &amp; information packs.</li> </ul>	
Phase 2 – Watch and Act	<p>When LDMG moves to Lean Forward, Intel will be circulated to LDMG members, agencies, and the Council's executive Officers.</p> <p>Community messaging will be disseminated as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the LDMG.</p>	<b>LEAN FORWARD</b>
Phase 3 – Imminent Event	<p>This would include communications immediately before the event 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.</p> <p>Community messaging will be disseminated as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the LDMG.</p>	<b>STAND UP</b>
Phase 4 – During and Immediate Post-Event	<p>Intel collated and information provided and circulated during and immediately post-event.</p> <p>Community messaging will be disseminated as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the LDMG.</p>	<b>STAND DOWN</b>
Phase 5 – Recovery Post Event	<p>Community messaging will be disseminated as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the LDMG.</p>	<b>RECOVERY</b>

\*Length of phase depends upon impact assessment and size of a disaster event. Natural disasters, such as cyclones or floods, often provide substantial lead time to enable sequential activation of each phase; however, other events may present as “no notice” events, where the LDMG must bypass the initial preparatory phases and move directly into response operations (i.e. Phase 3 – Stand Up).

### 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; and,
- iv) recovery operations.

### 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 include, but are not limited to:



- Cyclones;
- Storm tides;
- River flooding;
- Localised flash flood events;
- Potential landslides;
- Bushfires;
- Earthquakes;
- Public health threats and issues – pandemics, heatwaves, etc.; and,
- 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 when receiving disaster and/or emergency information and warnings due to their increased vulnerability to adverse impacts associated with an event.

The Burdekin LDMG will work closely with external agencies regarding vulnerable groups and 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 effective 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 established an Area Warden program, enabling the LDMG to better understand the situation in communities that become isolated during disasters or emergencies. Area Wardens are critical to the flow of information during a disaster and serve as 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; and,
- 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;
- Permanent Electronic Message Boards (Giru and Home Hill);
- Queensland Government Emergency Alert System (EA) – SMS, text, recorded message; and/or,
- AWS.

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"> <li>• Facebook</li> <li>• Twitter</li> </ul>	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 ( <a href="https://disaster.burdekin.qld.gov.au/">https://disaster.burdekin.qld.gov.au/</a> )	Refer residents and visitors to this user-friendly information sharing platform, which allows the LDMG to communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Emergency News;</li> <li>○ Road Conditions;</li> <li>○ Weather Information;</li> <li>○ Power Outages; and,</li> <li>○ Other relevant information including Op-In Notifications.</li> </ul> This dashboard provides a 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

Mode of Distribution	Delivery Methods
EA	Key warnings/advisory messages sent via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SMS to mobile phones; and</li> <li>- Automatic scripted voice recordings to landlines</li> </ul>
AWS	Key warnings/advisory messages using a nationally consistent set of hazard icons to reflect escalating tiers of warning severity. The AWS is a new national approach to information and warnings during emergencies like bushfires, floods, storms, extreme heat and severe weather.

## 4.2 Messaging for At-Risk Communities

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

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

The LDMG, through Council, may use interpreter services as required to assist in delivering emergency warning messages.

## 4.3 Emergency Alert (EA)

EA provides a platform for local and state agencies to issue warnings by delivering messages directly to a person's mobile or landline phone. EA should complement other public information or warning delivery forms, such as traditional media, social media and website updates.

EA 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 handset's location and to mobile phones based on the last known location of the mobile handset at the time of the disaster situation. The LDMG will use EA as required and per the [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual - M.1.174](#).

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 (i.e. message severity) can be issued via EA, as follows:

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 map area 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 of up to 4000 characters to all identified landline telephone services based on their physical location;
- Send a text message of up to 612 characters (ideally less than 160 characters) to all identified mobile phone services containing a SIM card based on their physical location and/or service (billing) address; and,
- 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 - M.1.174](#)

Predefined messages and mapped areas have been prepared for storm surge zones and stored by the Watch Desk, State Disaster Coordination Centre. The LDC and LDMG will review these messages and mapped areas annually.

#### 4.4 Australian Warning System (AWS)

The AWS 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 AWS warning levels:

Warning Level	Description
<b>Advice</b>	An incident has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.
<b>Watch and Act</b>	There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start acting now to protect you and your family.
<b>Emergency Warning</b>	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.

Each warning level has a set of action statements to give the community clearer advice about what to do. Depending on the hazard, calls to Action can be used flexibly across all three warning levels.

The Burdekin LDMG will issue warnings for storms, cyclones, and floods. The LDMG has prepared messaging templates for these hazards for operational use and distribution as required by the specific event.

The relevant functional lead agency will issue warnings about hazards such as bushfires, heat waves, biosecurity threats, and chemical spills.

Warnings will be broadcast to the community via the Disaster Dashboard, social media and local media outlets.

For more information on the AWS, visit [the Australian Warning System](#).

Refer to [Attachment A – AWS Hazard Icons and Example Action Statements](#).

#### 4.5 Social Media and Website (Digital Communications)

The Burdekin LDMG has access to the Burdekin Shire Council's website. 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](#);
- Burdekin Disaster & Emergency Information Facebook;
- Burdekin Shire Council Facebook;
- Burdekin Shire Council Twitter; and,
- [Get Ready Queensland](#) website.

During disasters, the Disaster Dashboard, Burdekin Disaster Information, and the Burdekin Shire Council Facebook and Twitter accounts will be monitored and posted more frequently.

#### 4.6 Standards Emergency Warning System (SEWS)

The SEWS is a wailing siren sound adopted by all States and Territories to alert the community to the broadcast of an urgent safety message relating to an emergency/disaster. The signal is sounded immediately before an emergency warning message is played on public media broadcasts in potential or likely impacted areas. As part of a coordinated national emergency plan, the SEWS attracts attention to emergency warnings such as cyclone warnings.

The Chief Executive of the DM Act is responsible for managing SEWS in Queensland, in coordination with the Queensland State Manager BOM for meteorological purposes.

Refer to the [Queensland Standard Emergency Warning Signal – Manual M.1.171](#).

#### 4.7 Early Warning Network (EWN)

The Early Warning Network (EWN) is a privately operated, paid subscription service that issues BOM weather advisories to subscribers via SMS messaging.



















The Burdekin LDMG does not use the EWN to issue updates to the community regarding weather events.

## Related Documents

- Burdekin Local Disaster Management Plan
- Burdekin LDMG Airport Emergency Sub Plan
- Burdekin LDMG Communications Sub Plan
- Burdekin LDMG Evacuation Sub Plan
- Burdekin LDMG Transport Sub Plan
- Burdekin LDMG Tsunami Sub Plan
- Burdekin LDMG Multi-Purpose Hall Place of Refuge Manual
- Burdekin Local Disaster Coordination Centre Standard Operating Procedures (LDCC SOP)
- [Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection: Public Information and Warnings \(2021\)](#)
- [Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection: Public Information and Warnings: Australian Warning System Companion \(2021\)](#)
- [Queensland Disaster Management Act 2003](#)
- [Queensland State Disaster Management Plan 2023](#)
  - Emergency Alert and Standard Emergency Warning Signal (Pg. 30).
  - QPS 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](#)

## Attachment A – AWS Hazard Icons and Example Action Statements

### A.1. AWS Hazard Icons

CYCLONE			
FIRE			
FLOOD			
HEAT			
STORM			
OTHER			

Source: [Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection: Public Information and Warnings: Australian Warning System Companion \(2021\)](#)

## A.2. AWS Action Statements (Examples)

ADVICE	WATCH AND ACT	EMERGENCY WARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare now</li> <li>• Stay informed</li> <li>• Monitor conditions</li> <li>• Stay informed/threat is reduced</li> <li>• Avoid the area</li> <li>• Return with caution</li> <li>• Avoid smoke</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare to leave/evacuate</li> <li>• Leave/evacuate now (if you are not prepared)</li> <li>• Prepare to take shelter</li> <li>• Move/stay indoors</li> <li>• Stay near shelter</li> <li>• Walk two or more streets back</li> <li>• Monitor conditions as they are changing</li> <li>• Be aware of ember attack</li> <li>• Move to higher ground (away from creeks/rivers/coast)</li> <li>• Limit time outside (cyclone, heat, asthma)</li> <li>• Avoid the area/avoid the flooded area</li> <li>• Stay away from damaged buildings and other hazards</li> <li>• Prepare for isolation</li> <li>• Protect yourself against the impacts of extreme heat</li> <li>• Do not enter flood water</li> <li>• Not safe to return</li> <li>• Prepare your property (cyclone/storm)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave/evacuate (immediately, by am/pm/hazard timing)</li> <li>• Seek/take shelter now</li> <li>• Shelter indoors now</li> <li>• Too late/dangerous to leave</li> </ul>

Source: [Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection: Public Information and Warnings: Australian Warning System Companion \(2021\)](#)