

Public Health 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 Public Health 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
9	September 2022	Eileen Devescovi / Linda Govan	Yearly Review	September 2022
10	August 2023	Eileen Devescovi/Linda Govan	Yearly Review	August 2023

Endorsement

This Public Health 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

Abbreviation List

Abbreviation	Full Title
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
DES	Department of Environment and Science
ECAT	Evacuation Centre Assessment Tool
LDC	Local Disaster Coordinator
LDCC	Local Disaster Coordination Centre
LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
WWW	Water and Wastewater (Burdekin Shire Council)

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1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

This Public Health Sub Plan aims to outline arrangements for the effective prioritisation and allocation of resources to support the Burdekin Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) in the protection of the community via temporary or preventative health measures to minimise the threats to public health, in addition to the protection of the environment, both during and after a disaster.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this sub plan are to:

- Detail the requirements necessary to mitigate public health risks in times of an emergency/disaster;
- Harness the efforts of a range of organisations, into an efficient, coordinated environmental health response during disaster events which may have a major impact on public health;
- Provide effective liaison between all emergency services and supporting agencies;
- Provide arrangements for efficient coordination of local resources and any external support resources; 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 with a public health function and/or responsibility.

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.

Key legislation covering functions, powers and authorisations of Environmental Health staff that may be required to undertake work according to this plan include:

- [Local Government Act 2009](#);
- [Food Act 2006](#);
- [Environmental Protection Act 1994](#);
- [Public Health Act 2005](#);
- [Public Health \(Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services\) Act 2003](#);
- [Animal Management \(Cats and Dogs\) Act 2008](#);
- [Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011](#); and,
- Burdekin Shire Council Local Laws.

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 to support the effective management of public and environmental health-related matters during a disaster. 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 Community Information & Warnings Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Evacuation Sub Plan;
- Burdekin LDMG Pandemic Influenza 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 Use of Sub Plan during Operations

A disaster event may cause significant disruption to the community and pose a range of risks to public health. Water supplies, sewage treatment, refuse disposal, power supply and access to food may be compromised. This may lead to an increased risk of disease, and the situation may continue for some time following the actual disaster event.

The Burdekin Shire Council has limited public health response capabilities and will require support and assistance from various agencies and organisations. Planning and coordination of the public health response is required to mitigate and respond to public health risks.

The term “public health” in this plan includes those matters that may be defined under Environmental Health, and all environmental health matters are to be included and considered as part of this plan.

A level of resilience in communities is encouraged via public awareness of basic hygiene practices during and following a disaster. It is expected that public awareness programs to help communities to be prepared and to be self-sufficient for several days with food, water, etc. will be implemented.

This sub plan aims to mitigate and manage potential, imminent, or actual public health risks within the Burdekin region before, during, and after hazardous events and disasters. This sub plan will be scaled up or down as required to provide operational support on behalf of the Burdekin LDMG.

This sub plan addresses immediate responses to disaster events. Longer-term disaster recovery issues are managed through the Disaster Recovery Committee and will also include public health and environmental information and advice.

2.3 Functional Responsibility

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

3. Concept of Operations

Queensland Health is the lead agency for all public health disaster events and public health risks.

When this sub plan is activated, Environmental Health Officers will provide expert advice on public health and environmental issues to the Burdekin LDMG, Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) and Local Recovery Group as required.

3.1 Management Process

The management and mitigation of threats to public health is to be achieved by:

- Delivering best practice environmental and public health principles.
- Planning and preparing for effective response to hazardous events.
- Integrating Council's environmental health resources with other stakeholders.
- Delivering a timely response through the provision of timely advice and public information prior to, during and after a disaster event.
- Regularly reporting to and consulting with the Director Infrastructure Planning and Environment in relation to activities undertaken and decisions made.
- Learning lessons from experiences which can be used to improve practices and procedures in the future.

3.2 Supporting Agencies

Management of the threat where necessary will involve a coordinated response with other government departments, service providers and businesses. The Burdekin Shire Council is the primary agency responsible for ensuring public health before, during and after a disaster event supported by the LDMG.

Council's Environmental Health staff are responsible for implementing strategies to mitigate public health risks from a disaster event. Council staff will work closely with Queensland Health to develop and implement disaster-related public health programs and activities within the region. Queensland Health will coordinate the content of public health information during a disaster.

During the planning process, related agencies with an ancillary role in public health that do not have designated responsibility under the disaster management arrangements should be engaged and included in the *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* as required.

Related agencies may include:

- Queensland Health – Public Health Unit
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)
- Department of Environment and Science
- Licensed water carriers
- Licensed food premises

- Safe Food Qld
- Media outlets for the provision of advice to the community
- QFES Chemical Services Unit
- Waste contractors

Additional local support agencies for public health include:

- Burdekin Community Association
- Australian Red Cross
- Blue Care
- Meals on Wheels
- Rural Health

3.3 Public Health Response Strategy

The Environmental Health representative on the LDMG will monitor reports and updates on the potential event and activate the plan as required.

Council's Environmental Health Services section will work closely with the Local Disaster Coordination Centre and collaborate with multi-disciplinary outreach teams to assess potential public health risks and provide specialist advice to the LDCC and the community following a disaster.

This plan outlines the public health risks in the region arising from a disaster event and considerations that will be made by Environmental Health staff. Areas to be considered include:

- Safe and adequate water supply
- Safe and adequate food supply
- Emergency ablution facilities
- Refuse/Waste Disposal
- Disposal of Dead Stock and Animals
- Asbestos Management
- Vector Control
- Animal Management
- Personal Hygiene and Infectious Disease Control
- Evacuation centres/Places of Refuge or Shelter
- Clean-up/Disinfection of Buildings

Considerations for each of the above are included in this Sub Plan.

The following table outlines the major steps associated with the Public Health response.

Step	Action	Remarks
Alert	Awareness of a hazard that can potentially affect the local government area. No action is required however, the situation is monitored.	LDMG at ALERT
STEP 1 Before Impact	<p>Burdekin Shire Council Environmental Health staff to consider likely public health issues that may arise from the impending event.</p> <p>Consideration of key asset protection measures, including waste management.</p> <p>Council Environmental Health staff commence collaboration with relevant agencies, including Qld Health.</p> <p>Initial public health messages to the community are developed to assist in their preparations.</p>	LDMG at LEAN FORWARD
STEP 2 After Impact	<p>Council Environmental Health Staff collaborate with the LDCC to develop situational awareness of the disaster impact in the region.</p> <p>Council Environmental Health Staff allocates staff to gather information and data on public health issues arising from the disaster.</p> <p>Collaborate with other agencies as required to coordinate data gathering and immediate responses.</p>	LDMG at STANDUP
STEP 3 Document Situation & Undertake Risk Analysis	<p>Undertake Public Health Risk Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify public health risks for each element of the Public Health Disaster Operational Plan. Describe the consequences to the community for each risk if nothing is done. • Establish the priority for each risk • Develop the risk treatment strategies to mitigate identified public health risks 	LDMG at STANDUP

Step	Action	Remarks
<p>STEP 4</p> <p>Develop Public Health Messages and how they will be implemented</p>	<p>Develop public health messages for each public health risk identified in Step 3.</p> <p>Determine the methods and timeframes for the delivery of each public health message.</p> <p>Determine the agencies responsible for delivering Public Health messages.</p>	<p>LDMG at STANDUP</p> <p>Collaborate with Qld Health on public health messaging.</p>
<p>STEP 5</p> <p>Develop ACTION PLAN</p>	<p>Specify the tasks to be undertaken by each agency/organisation involved in delivering public health outcomes as detailed in the Risk Treatment section of the Risk Analysis.</p> <p>Specify timeframes for all actions.</p> <p>Specify monitoring and reporting arrangements for all agencies with designated tasks.</p> <p>Report to LDMG on Action Plan through the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC).</p>	<p>Note: the plan is used as a tasking document for all agencies involved in the Public Health effort.</p>
<p>STEP 6</p> <p>Implement, Monitor, Update Plan</p>	<p>Monitor the plan's implementation – seek agency reports on progress as detailed in the plan.</p> <p>Update/amend plan the as required, maintaining version control. Re-issue as required.</p>	

3.4 Public Health Response Areas

The Environmental Health response team will also refer to the *Environmental Health Disaster Operational Plan* for each area below.

4. Safe and Adequate Water Supplies

Burdekin Shire Council provides a reticulated water supply system to many of the towns and communities in the Burdekin region. Many rural properties have their own private supply system. This includes residential premises and commercial properties, such as accommodation venues and caravan parks that supply water for their guests, visitors and residents and food businesses.

Contamination of drinking water can be caused by biological, chemical, or physical agents.

The Environment and Health Section should liaise with the LDMG and the Council's Water and Wastewater section; whenever there are concerns about water quality, supply, sources, treatment, storage, or transport. Consultation between Environmental Health Officers and Council's Water and Wastewater section is necessary if there is an issue or concern with Council's reticulated water supply.

The following outlines some of the issues and responsibilities relevant to the provision of safe and adequate water during a disaster:

- Water quality assessment processes (Operations).
- Safety and control of supply (Operations).
- Bacterial sampling (Operations and Environmental Health Officers)
- Water source monitoring programs (Operations).
- Sources of water and water treatment standards (Operations and Environmental Health Officers).
- Provision of public advice to boil water as necessary (Operations and Environmental Health Officers).
- Ensuring adequate water storage capacities (Operations and Environmental Health Officers).
- Transport and distribution of potable water to those who require it (conducted by LDMG).

4.1 Protection of Supply

For reticulated supplies, the Environment and Health Section may be required to assist the Council's Water and Wastewater section in the investigation and management of water contamination incidents by taking samples and submitting them for analysis and helping to implement strategies to protect public health.

Any Council licensed premises (including food premises, caravan parks and rental accommodation premises) that are in localities known to have been impacted by a disaster and have their own private water supply should be contacted by Environmental Health Officers to determine whether appropriate action is being taken to ensure a safe water supply.

4.2 Potable Water

The provision of potable water during an emergency is based on the minimum requirement in the *Burdekin Local Disaster Management Plan* of 15 litres per person per day.

Each evacuation centre must be supplied with enough potable water. This may be supplied initially on-site by mains or storage tank water. The capacity of each centre should be identified in each operation manual.

The Environment and Health Section may be required to assist in identifying alternative water supplies if a water supply becomes contaminated.

Carting in water, or providing bottled water, may be options to consider. If a temporary water supply is installed, it is important to ensure measures are put in place to prevent it from being contaminated.

Where no potable water is available from mains or tanks at an evacuation centre, the water supply may be arranged with designated water carriers. The Burdekin Shire Council licenses water carriers. Burdekin Shire Council Environmental Health Services maintain a list of licensed water carriers.

Bottled water may be used and stored in bulk at each centre or supplied as required by wholesalers or retailers in the locality when the need arises. The larger outlets, such as supermarkets, should be approached before the disaster event to avoid panic buying by arranging limits on public purchasing of bulk water supplies so that adequate supplies are maintained for evacuation centres. Additional bottled water supplies may be requested through the LDCC.

4.3 Treatment

If a water supply becomes contaminated and an alternative potable water supply is not available, the water supply will have to be treated to be made safe. Boiling or chlorination of the water are two options for treatment. Environmental Health Officers are to monitor and advise on these options, in consultation with Water and Wastewater.

4.4 Public Messaging

Public Health messages should be developed to educate the community on how to adequately treat tank water collected from roofs and stored in tanks on their property. This should include advice on first flush devices, coarse and fine filtration, and disinfection strategies. Such public health messages should also provide general advice on chemical disinfection of water using chlorine tablets, including the availability of such tablets.

Public health messages regarding water safety may be delivered via website, social media, media outlets, and brochures/pamphlets on water safety should be made available to evacuation centres, council offices, libraries, schools, shops, and other places where the public may gather.

General information and advice should be freely distributed throughout the affected area relating to potential hazards of polluted drinking water supplies and the fire and explosion dangers of using bottled gas to boil water during power outages.

5. Evacuation Centres/Places of Refuge or Shelter

Maintaining public health in temporary shelters is essential to assist those affected by a disaster. Evacuation Centres are the primary means by which shelter (including providing food, water, and appropriate ablution and toilet facilities) are provided to those with no suitable place of shelter in the community. It is incumbent on those providing evacuation centre services to ensure they provide safe and adequate shelter that contributes to and maintains public health.

Evacuation centres may become crowded, and standards of personal and collective hygiene, safe water, and food supplies are all critical to minimise the risk of disease spreading among evacuees. Any illness can

spread quickly in the confines of a crowded evacuation centre and will add significantly to the trauma experienced by those in such centres. Staff may be affected by an illness outbreak, reducing the centre's capacity to operate effectively.

The *Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* considers public health risks in evacuation centres. It ensures adequate support is provided to evacuation centre staff to maintain appropriate standards of food safety, safe water supplies, appropriate ablution facilities, refuse disposal, and individual and collective hygiene standards.

Regular and routine inspections of evacuation centres should be conducted to ensure adequate standards are maintained. Food donation to evacuation centres should be discouraged to avoid the possibility of contaminated food being ingested by evacuees and evacuation centre staff. Only trusted food suppliers should be used by Evacuation Centres.

Consideration of the management of pets for persons in evacuation centres, including measures to deal with animal control and the animal waste, forms part of the Public Health Disaster Operational Plan.

Queensland Health has developed a tool to assist Public Health planners in assessing evacuation centres. This tool, known as the Evacuation Centre Assessment Tool (ECAT), is provided in spreadsheet format, and is held by the Council's Environmental Health staff. It augments the planning tools provided in the Evacuation Centre Management Sub Plan.

Not everyone impacted by a disaster will choose to seek shelter in an evacuation centre. Some people may choose to remain in their homes, which may not be suitable from a public health perspective.

5.1 Public Messaging

Public messaging should focus on the dangers to individuals and public health for people who have stayed in their homes and may now be affected by contaminated water, food spoilage, and sewage overflows. Pathways for people in such circumstances to seek appropriate help and support should be provided.

6. Safe and Adequate Food Supply

Food safety may be compromised because of the impact of a disaster event and is usually related to spoilage caused by a lack of refrigeration during power outages or poor sanitation and food handling procedures.

Environmental Health Officers will be responsible for monitoring the safety of food and providing advice on food safety in the following situations:

- Council licensable and other food businesses affected by a disaster
- Evacuation centres activated during the disaster; and
- Homes that have been impacted by the disaster such as loss of power, water and/or damage.

The *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* will implement an increased food safety monitoring program that undertakes inspections of food suppliers (as detailed above) to ensure adequate food handling and storage arrangements are maintained. Any limitations should be identified and rectified where possible.

Establishing temporary kitchens and mass feeding the public or response workers may be necessary during disaster operations. In many cases, these facilities will be provided by specific organisations (service clubs,

etc.) that maintain high food safety standards. However, routine, and regular inspections of such facilities should be considered to ensure public safety.

Environmental Health Officers are to be available to answer enquiries from the public regarding the safety of food in homes that have been affected by a disaster.

6.1 Spoilt Food and Disposal

Spoilt food resulting from lack of refrigeration or stock damaged by the impact of the disaster should be identified and removed to safe areas away from the public. Spoilt food must be removed from public spaces as quickly as possible. This includes food spoilage at retail food suppliers, institutions, evacuation centres and private residences. The Public Health Disaster Operational Plan identifies the arrangements to remove and manage spoilt food supplies.

For information about food safety legislation and requirements, refer to the [Food Act 2006](#) and Australian Food Safety Standards (FSS). Refer to the following website for a copy of the FSS: <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafety/standards/Pages/Foodsafetystandards.aspx>

6.2 Donation of food

It is important to remember that the community wants to actively help in a disaster situation. This will include individuals and shops donating food items. The integrity of the food should be determined by asking the following:

- How old is the food?
- What temperature has it been maintained at?; and
- Has the food been exposed to contamination?

Environment and Health staff should provide advice and information about the use of donated foods to community groups and businesses.

An Environmental Health Officer will need to assess the safety of the donated food. The food should be disposed of if it is believed to be a high risk to public health.

6.3 Emergency Food Supply

All requests for emergency food supplies will be directed through the LDMG – Request for Assistance to the District Disaster Management Group for resupply considerations. All emergency food supplies will adhere to the Resupply Guidelines.

6.4 Public Messaging

Public Messages should be developed to advise the community of the arrangements for removing spoilt food and how to maintain adequate food safety standards.

Public messaging should also be developed discouraging food donations to evacuation centres to minimise the risk of illness caused by inadequately prepared or spoilt food. Details on the symptoms of food poisoning and the immediate actions required should be widely distributed as part of public health messaging.

7. Emergency Ablution Facilities

Should emergency ablation facilities be required, monitoring and prevention of sewage and sullage overflows will be required.

Emergency ablation facilities may be established to support evacuation centres or large concentrations of emergency response workers deployed to respond to the event. They may also be installed to support longer-term shelter solutions and affected community members.

The arrangements for removing sewage and sullage from such temporary sites should be considered, including sanitising such assets during and after their use. Onsite sewage and sullage disposal must conform to established standards, and public health inspections may be required to monitor issues with such facilities.

Sewage overflows may have public health impacts, and the *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* addresses the actions to be taken in the event of such overflows affecting the community.

Additional resources may be needed to pump out and dispose of sewage or sullage overflows. Disposal strategies for excess sewage/sullage should be developed.

7.1 Public Messaging

Public messaging that advises people on what actions to minimise public health issues relating to their septic and sewage systems should be considered.

8. Personal Hygiene and Infectious Disease Control

Managing infectious disease outbreaks is vital to maintaining public health after a disaster. Promoting the use of basic personal hygiene within the community remains the primary method of prevention.

However, an outbreak of infectious disease may occur despite these efforts.

The *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* addresses the surveillance and reporting of infectious diseases and provides advice on any isolation or separation of infected individuals from susceptible groups. Council's environmental health staff may also be required to assist Qld Health in controlling suspected disease outbreaks.

Maintaining personal hygiene after a disaster event is often the single most effective strategy that can be applied to minimise the risk of disease and infection. Ensuring affected communities have access to enough appropriate personal hygiene supplies must be a consideration in the *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan*.

Additional supplies may need to be obtained through the LDCC.

8.1 Public Messaging

Public messaging about not swimming in flood waters, staying away from dead animals, and using appropriate personal protective equipment should be reinforced throughout the disaster event.

Public messages about how individuals can maintain appropriate levels of personal hygiene should be developed and distributed. Such public messaging may consider:

- Handwashing and sanitiser products, including safety advice on their use.
- Treatment of minor cuts and scratches to avoid infection.
- Avoidance of potentially contaminated waters e.g., floodwaters
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment e.g., gloves, waterproof boots, etc.

9. Refuse / Waste Disposal

Large quantities of waste and refuse may be generated because of a disaster, including Green, Building (including asbestos), Putrescible, Household, and Industrial (including toxic chemicals) waste. These may all pose a threat to public health.

The capacity to remove all this waste, as well as the capacity to store it all, may be compromised by the disaster event.

The *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* addresses the refuse/waste disposal issues for all the above waste/refuse elements. It will include:

- Identification of potential sites suitable for temporary waste collection and storage, in liaison with Department of Environment and Science (DES)
- Manage collection of post-disaster waste via engagement of a local waste contractor
- Safe and controlled movement of different waste (by both council and members of the public)
- Bunding/vermin control/access, etc, for temporary landfill storage sites

9.1 Public Messaging

Public messaging that details the arrangements for all the above should be prepared with an early emphasis on the management of putrescibles.

Advice on what to do with asbestos from damaged buildings is also a high priority. Generally, the advice for asbestos removal is to leave it in place in the home and wait until professional disposal arrangements can be made.

Public messaging should also emphasise what can be accepted at temporary refuse sites and their hours of operation.

10. Disposal of Dead Animals

Disasters may kill livestock and wild animals, and the rotting carcasses of these animals may create a public health risk to the community. Large quantities of livestock may be affected, particularly where concentrations of animals have been affected e.g., an entire pig farm flooded with all animals swept downstream.

Considerations include:

- Selection of appropriate disposal sites
- Method of disposal (burial, cremation)
- Collection, transportation and disposal procedures

11. Vector Control

The *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* must include measures for vector control and should at the least cover arrangements and resources necessary to:

- Undertake surveillance to ascertain the extent of the problem
- Vector identification
- Vermin identification
- Treatment options

The above should be undertaken in accordance with the Burdekin Shire Council's Mosquito Management Plan, as amended.

In extreme cases, the resources available to Council for vector control may be overwhelmed. In such cases, support from nearby councils may be necessary. To ensure appropriate approvals are provided to support cost recovery under disaster funding arrangements, a formal Council to Council Request for Support must be raised by the LDCC and approved by the Local Disaster Coordinator.

11.1 Public Messaging

Public messaging for residents to take standard precautions to protect from mosquito bites may be beneficial, such as wearing insect repellent and loose, light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts/pants.

12. Clean up / Disinfection of Buildings

Undertaking cleanup after a disaster poses a significant risk to public health as large numbers of people (emergency workers, affected individuals) commence moving around the impact zone. Toxic waste, raw sewage, putrescible waste and toxic bacteria all pose a threat to public health.

The *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* assists in identifying measures to minimise these risks including establishing standards for personal protective equipment, identifying specific risks and risk areas, and advice on treatment of cuts and scratches, etc. to reduce the likelihood of infection.

Mould may grow on anything affected by floodwaters or in hot/humid conditions and may affect all household goods, including carpets, rugs, mattresses, wall coverings and curtains. Mouldy hay and stock feeds may also pose a risk to public health. Workers and emergency responders should be made aware of such risks and provided with advice on personal protective equipment to reduce exposure.

12.1 Public Messaging

Mould after floods is a significant risk area. Public messaging should be developed to warn the public about the risks of mould causing lung infections and provide advice on personal protective equipment.

Qld Health has fact sheets that can assist residents with managing mould, available from Environmental Health Officers, or via the Disaster Dashboard.

13. Animal Management

Animals, whether wild, livestock or pets are often displaced after disaster events. Snakes are often very evident during and after floods. Livestock may wander due to downed fences and pose a risk to road users. Pets may be lost or homeless after a disaster.

The *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* should consider arrangements for animal management for each of the above categories and should provide for public messages that include:

- What to do with wandering livestock
- Whom to contact for assistance with wild animals e.g., snake handlers, animal welfare providers, etc
- What to do with lost or homeless pets.

14. Other Environmental Issues

Disaster events can create other environmental health issues not covered by the above points. Examples include:

- Accumulations of toxic chemicals and waste at river/creek choke points
- Degradation of river/creek beds and banks
- Impact on threatened species
- Spread of noxious weeds

The *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan* includes additional environmental health issues and provide guidance on how such issues are to be managed and the public messages that need to be developed for them.

15. Supporting Documentation

Refer to the *Burdekin Shire Public Health Disaster Operational Plan*.

16. Public Health Assessment Checklists

A range of tools and checklists have been developed, or are under development, that assists the Council Environmental Health Staff in undertaking assessments and inspections relating to public health in a disaster. These include:

- Asbestos (ACM) Assessment Sheet
- Environmental Health Rapid Assessment Form
- Evacuation Centre Assessment Tool.
- Food Premises Inspection Form

These tools/checklists are maintained by the Council's Environmental Health Staff and are included as appropriate to this Sub Plan when required.