



**Queensland
Government**

**Ipswich District Disaster
Management Group**

Ipswich District Disaster Management Group

Comprising of:

**Ipswich City Council
Somerset Regional Council**

**Report on debrief outcomes for flooding events:
December 2010 and January 2011**

CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Ipswich DDMG boundaries	5
3. Structure of the DDMG	5
4. Summary of Disaster Events	7
5. Date of activation.....	12
6. Date / time of disaster declaration	12
7. Date / time of ending of disaster situation	12
8. Brief overview of work conducted during disaster.....	12
9. Key issues identified during –	
9.1 planning	12
9.2 response	13
9.3 recovery	13
10. Ipswich DDMG Debrief	13
11. Recommendations	21

1. Executive Summary:

District Disaster Management Groups are established to provide a whole-of-government planning and coordination capability to support local governments in disaster management.

The District Disaster Management Group is responsible to the State Disaster Management Group for all aspects of the State government's capabilities in disaster management for their district.

In performing their role, the DDMG ensures that disaster management and disaster operations in the district are consistent with the SDMG's Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework ensuring:

- a comprehensive, all hazards, all agencies approach by achieving the right balance of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery;
- supporting the mainstreaming of disaster preparedness and mitigation into relevant areas of activity of government, non-government, small business and corporations;
- aligning disaster risk reduction, disaster mitigation, disaster resilience and climate change adaptation policy and actions with international and national reforms;
- promoting a transparent, systematic and consistent approach to disaster risk assessment and management, based on the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines and the Australian/ New Zealand Standard AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk management – Principles and guidelines;
- recognising the commitment of stakeholders and the need for collaboration across all levels of government, community, industry, commerce, government owned corporations, private and volunteer organisations, and local communities in all aspects of disaster management;
- emphasising building and maintaining sincere relationships, trust, teamwork, consultative decision-making and shared responsibilities among stakeholders; and
- promoting community resilience and economic sustainability through disaster risk reduction. Operational activities of the DDMG focus on supporting local government disaster response and recovery operations.

The DDMG performs three key coordination roles during operations: forward planning; request management; and information management.

Throughout December 2010 and into the early part of January 2011 heavy rain had fallen across the Ipswich Disaster District resulting in minor to moderate flooding to most of the District. Both the Ipswich City and Somerset Regional Council Disaster Management Groups were on alert.

The Disaster District Coordination Centre was activated on 10 January 2011 to coordinate the District Response in support of the Somerset Regional Council which was the main focus at that time due to moderate flooding levels in the Toogoolawah area.

The impact on District was compounded by serious issues resulting from the sudden and unforeseen rain events in Toowoomba, Grantham and Esk that same afternoon.

Significant rainfall later that day in the Somerset Regional Council area resulted in flooding and isolation of the townships of Kilcoy, Moore, Linville, Toogoolawah, Esk,

Coominya, Lowood and Fernvale. A number of properties in the Kilcoy and Moore areas were also isolated as a result of bridges being washed away during the flooding.

The major feeder roads including the Brisbane Valley and D'Aguilar Highways were cut for a number of days causing significant resupply issues.

Power and water supplies to all these areas were also cut with major disruptions to power caused by major poles and lines being washed away in the flooding.

Evacuation centres were set up in Fernvale, Esk, Lowood, Toogoolawah, Coominya and Kilcoy. Details as supplied in sitreps indicated a total 472 homes and 22 businesses were impacted by flooding in the Somerset Regional Council area.

The Ipswich area was impacted by flooding of the Bremer River and by the level of water in the Brisbane River in the following days due to the significant rises in water levels in the Bremer and Brisbane Rivers.

As indicated in sitreps a total of 7221 premises were impacted by the flooding with over 1000 homes inundated and 766 roads and streets were cut. An estimated 1000 businesses and 4 schools were also impacted.

Twelve evacuation centres were opened by both council and community groups with the main evacuation / recovery centre located at the Ipswich Show Grounds.

On 1 March 2011 a formal debrief of the Ipswich DDCC staff was conducted followed by a formal debrief of the disaster event on 2 March 2011 for the Ipswich DDMG conducted by an external moderator.

The DDMG has a responsibility to critically analyse their disaster operations. Post-disaster assessment provides the DDMG with the opportunity to reflect on performance and ensure the continuous improvement of district disaster management arrangements.

As a result of discussions during the debrief (see page 18) a number of recommendations were made.

2. Outline of the DDMG boundaries:

The area administered by Ipswich Disaster District covers an area of approximately Approx. 5705 km², consisting of the local government areas of Somerset Regional and Ipswich City Councils. There are some anomalies between the Ipswich Police District and the Disaster District.

The northern areas of the Somerset Regional Council include a significant portion of the North Coast Police Region including the Kilcoy and Moore Police Divisions.

The Southern Divisions of the Ipswich Police District including Harrisville, Kalbar and Boonah are within the Scenic Rim Regional Council which is included in the Logan District Disaster area.

The suburb of Karana Downs located in the Police division of Karana Downs in the Ipswich Police District is within the Brisbane City Council area and therefore in the Brisbane Disaster District.

There are currently agreed arrangements between the DDC's of these areas to coordinate responses to events in these areas.

3. Structure of the Ipswich DDMG:

(including name of chairperson, deputy chairperson, executive officer, other members and name/s of Local Disaster Management Group and its chairperson.)

Superintendent Garth Pitman is the Ipswich District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) and Chairperson to the DDMG by virtue of his appointment as District Officer, Ipswich.

Inspector David Preston Ipswich District is the Deputy Chairperson of the Ipswich DDMG.

The Executive Officer to the DDMG was Senior Sergeant Robbie Goodger who was formally appointed on 8 November 2010.

The Chairpersons for the local disaster management groups for each respective local government areas are:

Ipswich City Council
Somerset Regional Council

Councillor Trevor Nardi
Mayor Graham Lehmann

Other DDMG members and advisors are listed in the below table:

Members	Agency
	District Officer, Queensland Police Service
	DDC / Chairperson
	Queensland Police Service - Deputy DDC
	Queensland Police Service
	Executive Officer
	Queensland Police Service, Operations Officer
	Queensland Ambulance Service (Area Director)
	Emergency Management Queensland (Regional Director)
	Ipswich City Council
	Somerset Regional Council

Advisors	Main Roads Department
	Department of Public Works
	QFRS Urban, Superintendent
	Department of Communities
	Queensland Health
	QFRS Rural, Regional Manager
	Queensland Transport
	Queensland Public Health
	DEEDI
	DETA Ipswich Regional Facilities Manager.
	DERM
	Queensland Building Services Authority
	Queensland Health (Ipswich Hospital)
	SEQ Water Dam Safety and Source Operations Manager
	Department of State Development
	QR National
	Telstra
	Energex
	Australian Defence Force (RAAF Amberley)
	Other representatives of organisations / agencies as required

Ipswich District Disaster Management Plan:

The Ipswich District has a Disaster Management Plan in place which was under full review by the Operations Officer to the Disaster Management Group during 2010 due to it not being fully amended to meet the changes to the District as a result of the Local Government amalgamations.

The review had been placed on hold in July 2010 to enable the changes to the Disaster Management Act to be fully implemented before the review of the plan was recommenced.

On 8 November 2010 a Queensland Police Service (QPS) non commissioned officer (NCO) was appointed by the Commissioner of Police to the role of Executive Officer to the Ipswich District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) in accordance with section 27 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (DMA). This appointment replaced the Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) South East Region Regional Director as Executive Officer.

On 30 November 2010 the appointed Executive Officer outlined to the Disaster Management Group that the review of the existing disaster management plan would be recommenced as the changes to the Disaster Management Act had been completed and those arrangement were now in place. The DDMG supported the recommencement of the review which was to commence in January 2011. However, due to the flooding events in December 2010 and January 2011 this action was delayed and the existing plan was utilised during the disaster event.

It is expected the review of the existing DDMP and transferring information across into the new DDMP template will recommence shortly. Feedback from the flood event DDMG debrief will provide valuable information for inclusion in the plan.

4. Summary of Disaster Events:

Sunday 9 Jan 2011

Advice was received from SEQWATER that releases from Wivenhoe were to be reduced as increased flows were being experienced in Lockyer Creek. However as the Lockyer peaked flows would be increased and it would be necessary to increase releases over Monday to a level that would cut the Brisbane Valley Highway sometime Monday afternoon.

Monday 10 January

At a phone link up with SDMG during the afternoon all parties received update from BOM advising that 3 days of general rainfall of 50-100mm expected across the SE. At 1400hrs the Disaster District Coordinator was notified of the Somerset Regional Council main offices and Local Disaster Coordination Centre had been inundated by water due to a severe



rain event that also impacted severely on the Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley areas causing widespread damage and loss of life.

Due to damage to their coordination centre the Somerset LDMG were attempting to relocate their operations to their backup coordination centre site at Fernvale.

The large volume of calls to all emergency services in a short space of time initially from the events in Toowoomba, Grantham and Esk and later in the Lowood and Ipswich areas caused significant issues for all emergency services. The Ipswich District Police Communications Centre alone received 89 '000' calls in the hour 1400 to 1500 hrs on the 10 of January and 590 '000' calls for the 24 hrs on 11 January 2011.

Tuesday 11 January

Localised flooding overnight in the Somerset Regional Council area had resulted in the establishment of evacuation centres at Toogoolawah, Lowood, Esk, Mt Tarampa, Kilcoy, Coominya and Prenzlau due to being cut off by road in all directions.

Local flood water receded early in the afternoon and allowed access to Fernvale Futures. Flooding had damaged water mains in Fernvale and water had been turned off by QUU at the Lowood reservoir. Landline phones stopped working around midday. The loss of landlines also meant there was no landline internet. Poor mobile coverage meant no wireless internet.

A decision was made to use Fernvale Futures as the evacuation centre as it was central, visible and had drinking water and functioning toilets.

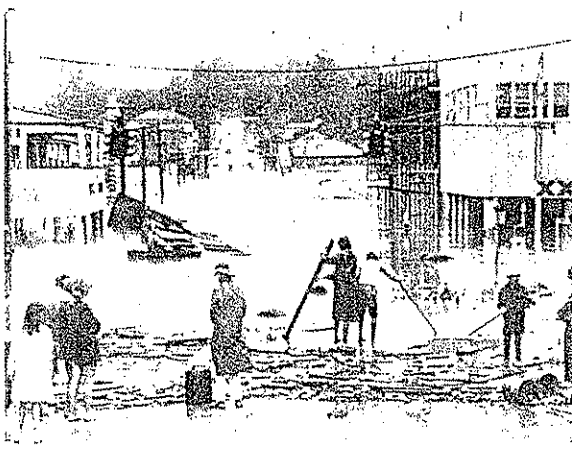
At 0830hrs the Ipswich City Council had its first LDMG to commence planning and preparation for the expected flood event as the result of the heavy rain in the catchment areas of both the Bremer and Brisbane Rivers.

Wednesday 12 January

At 0930hrs the DDMG met to discuss operations and coordinate the response and recovery arrangements for the event. The Recovery Committee had been activated but were experiencing significant issues due to the Department of Communities offices in Wharf Street Ipswich being in the projected flood zone and needing to be evacuated.

Brisbane Street Ipswich 1974

and 2011



QRFS personnel attended the evacuation centre for the Somerset Regional Council and were tasked to check for stranded persons and to assist with any evacuations.

Evacuation Centres were operating at Lowood High School and Fernvale Primary School, which had opened overnight as people could not get to the Futures Centre.

Flooding in Black Snake Creek was receding, which allowed travel to the Warrego and to Lowood.

Brisbane Valley Highway at Fernvale, Warrego Highway and Cunningham Highway still remained closed. The road over Mt Crosby Weir and Colleges Crossing are also cut. Numerous other roads are now cut due to the Bremer River water level. The Warrego Highway was closed due to the Bremer River over the highway at Dinmore. The Ipswich Motorway was also closed due to flooding of Brisbane River and evacuation of all construction workers had been completed.

Thursday 13 January

Access to Esk was possible by travelling south to the Warrego Highway then to Gatton and across the Gatton-Esk Road. No landline phones and mobile service was limited.

Decision made to shift LDCC to Esk as communication issues made effective operation impossible.

Fernvale Futures was used as a local co-ordination centre due to the amount of activity in the south of the region.

Flood Debris cleanup had commenced. Numerous arterial roads were still closed.

Damage to the water intake at Lowood had placed the water supply to Fernvale, Lowood, Laidley and Gatton at risk. Bottled water was being supplied by QUU.

Ipswich City Council was monitoring increasing floods water in the Bremer River.

Queensland Urban Utilities were closely monitoring their assets, and were ready to advise Energex if power needed to be cut.

Ipswich Hospital was currently working with skeleton staff.

Ipswich City Council had received 4,000 calls in regard to do 'we need to evacuate and where do we go'.

Friday 14 January

Energex had connected a generator to supply the CBD only of Fernvale.

Water was being tankered to the reservoirs supplying Fernvale/Lowood. Boil water notices had been issued.

Fernvale/Lowood landline phones were restored at about 2.00pm. All other areas were still out.

Some Community Recovery Personnel began arriving to areas with access. Starting with Toogoolawah/Esk.

The releases from Wivenhoe Dam were at about 3,500 m³/s and were being managed to achieve a target flow of around 3,500 m³/s at Moggill. This release was then maintained to drain the flood storage component by Wednesday.

The combined flood event volume in Somerset and Wivenhoe Dams was estimated to be in excess of 2.6 million mega litres.

The Warrego

Highway had been opened through Minden - day and Night at a reduced speed.

The D'Aguilar Highway to/from Kilcoy was opened to vehicles under 4 tonne.

TMR was assessing numerous bridges in Kilcoy (Somerset RC area) due to expected under pavement damage.



Somerset LDMG had closed 4 evacuation centres since commencement of the flooding event.

In the Ipswich City Council area the evacuation centres were being monitored for resupply. Ipswich LDMG had by this time closed 6 Evacuation centres since commencement of operations.

Rapid assessments were being undertaken by QFRS, and SES door knocks were also being undertaken in the impacted areas.

Ipswich DDC advised by SIB of Governor General visitation itinerary for 16/01/11
Ipswich Motorway opened from Cunningham Hwy to Logan Motorway at a reduced speed.

Saturday 15 January

Ipswich City Council:

On-going rapid damage assessments were being completed. Various major roads were in need of repairs. Ipswich Motorway – Ipswich to Goodna had been reopened.

Somerset Council. Recovery / Clean up attracted numerous reporters to the area.

Kilcoy – Two bridges (Cedarvale and Beaconsfield) were damaged and impassable and 5,000 customers were without power.

QFRS – Rapid Response Teams were undertaking Rapid Damage Assessments.

Bremer River at Ipswich was currently at 8.30 meters and steady (16.58 below bridge) and classed as MINOR.

Brisbane River at Mt Crosby was currently at 16.61 meters and rising (4.26meters above bridge) and classed as MODERATE.

All other rivers/creeks were listed as MINOR or BELOW MINOR.

Sunday 16 January

Ipswich City Council:

As a result of the rapid damage assessments, Ipswich announced the following statistics regarding the damage to businesses in the respective CBD's:

Ipswich CBD – 116

Goodna CBD – 155

Additional damage assessments in Goodna had produced the following statistics:

262 premises (business and residential) in Brisbane Tce Goodna and 68 premises (business and residential) in Woogaroo St Goodna were flood affected.

Somerset Council:

Houses SES had commenced cleaning -

- Lowood have 29 to clean, completed 6
- Esk have 35 to clean, completed 20
- Fernvale have 125 to clean, completed 50

Monday 17 January

Over the following days both councils moved into recovery operations. The impact on the two council areas consisted of:

Somerset Regional Council area:

The major feeder roads including the Brisbane Valley and D'Aguilar Highways were cut for a number of days causing significant resupply issues.

Power and water supplies to all these areas were also cut with major disruptions to power caused by major poles and lines being washed away in the flooding.

Evacuation centres were set up in Fernvale, Esk, Lowood, Toogoolawah, Coominya and Kilcoy.

Details as supplied in sitreps indications a total 472 homes and 22 businesses were impacted by flooding in the Somerset Regional Council area.

Ipswich City Council area:

The Ipswich area was impacted by flooding of the Bremer River and impacted by the level of water in the Brisbane River. All major highways were cut during this event.

As indicated in sitreps a total of 7221 premises were impacted by the flooding with over 1000 homes inundated and 766 roads and streets impacted. An estimated 1000 businesses and 4 schools were also impacted.

Twelve evacuation centres were opened by both council and community groups with the main evacuation / recovery centre located at the Ipswich Show Grounds.

The final response sitrep was forwarded on 20 January 2011. Cleanup and recovery had commenced in all areas.

One of the major issues identified during the event was the large number of dams either within the Ipswich Disaster District (Wivenhoe, Somerset, Atkinson's and Slityard Creek) or in neighbouring Districts (Lake Manchester, Maroon, Moogerah, Bill Gunn, Clarendon, Perseverance and Cressbrook) that have a significant impact on the creeks and rivers in the Ipswich and Somerset council areas depending on their current water levels.



Low water levels assist in keeping water courses functional but significant releases can have a major impact on local areas such as Colleges Crossing and access to areas in the Fernvale and Lowood areas.

If floodwaters were retained by the dam for too long not only would there be major and prolonged flooding upstream from the storage but the dam would become virtually useless for flood mitigation downstream in the event of a repetition of excessive rainfall.
Bureau of Meteorology report, 1974 floods

5. Date / time of disaster declaration:

Date of Activation:-10 January 2011.

6. Date / time of disaster declaration:

A state level disaster situation for the Ipswich Disaster District was declared by the Premier and Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Service at 1000hrs on 11 January 2011.

7. Date / time of ending of disaster situation:

Ipswich DDMG and DDCC stood down as at Sitrep to SDCC 1200hrs 21 January 2011.

8. Brief overview of work conducted during disaster:

The District Disaster Coordination Centre was operating and supporting the local councils with information from police and other sources. Significant communication problems occurred especially in the Somerset council area. Processed Requests For Assistance from both councils including water and food drops to isolated communities of Somerset and bedding and water and food to support evacuation centres. Completing RFA's for forwarding to SDCC for supply to these areas. Coordinating of supplies as they arrived.

Also a large number of requests for information from the SDCC on the impact of the event. Completed Sitreps and updates on the event as it unfolded.

Other work included (but was not limited to):

- preparation of district level disaster declaration paperwork;
- briefing preparation and participation in SDMG daily teleconferences;
- coordination and chairing of DDMG meetings conducted throughout the event;
- preparation of dot point briefings as requested;
- monitoring DDC Ipswich email accounts and provision of responses where required;
- status reports to DDMG members;
- liaison with EMQ regarding Resupply issues; and
- maintenance of situation boards, operations log and other DDCC administrative duties.

9. Key issues identified during:

9.1 Planning:

The short time period between the commencement of the amendments to the Disaster Management Act on 1 November 2010 and these events limited any update to current plans or planning initiatives and training being provided to staff to operate a Disaster Coordination Centre at the time of a major event.

9.2 Response:

The sudden and devastating flash flooding that occurred on 10 January 2011 in the Toowoomba, Lockyer and Somerset local government areas resulted in a significant Emergency Services response to an extraordinary event.

Major roads closures including the Brisbane Valley and D'Aguilar Highways significantly impacted on response due to no road access to most of the towns north of Fernvale.

The loss of power and telephone communications in the southern areas of the Somerset Council area also had a significant impact on the coordination of the response effort.

In the Ipswich City area the major impact was caused to the Ipswich CBD, Leichhardt, East Ipswich, Basin Pocket and Goodna areas.

Major road closures including the Cunningham and Warrego Highways and the Ipswich Motorway were cut and this significantly impacted on response due to the limited road access in some areas.

The loss of power to significant areas resulted in a large drain on resources in the community.

9.3 Recovery:

Somerset Region Recovery Centres were set up in Lowood, Fernvale and Esk. Ipswich City Recovery Centres were set up in Goodna, Rosewood, and the Ipswich Show Grounds.

The event significantly stretched the resources of the local recovery agencies and required intra and interstate assistance to support the community e.g. Red Cross, Life Line and Department of Communities staff.

The large number of volunteers that assisted in the clean up also caused logistical issues for the Ipswich and Somerset councils, regarding how to direct the large number of people and resources to best effect.

The initial isolation of many areas for extended periods caused problems with recovery staff unable to access locations in the first few days of the event due to its coverage of the whole district. Many smaller areas were isolated for lengthy periods due to damaged roads and bridges.

10. Ipswich DDMG Debrief;

Post operational activities (*District Disaster Management Guidelines 2010-2011*)

The Chair is responsible for ensuring post-disaster assessments are undertaken to provide opportunities for participants to comment on the success and areas for improvement of disaster operations.

The Chair should facilitate the completion of a Post-Disaster Assessment Report to document the lessons identified and more importantly recommendations for improving district disaster management arrangements.

The Chair is to ensure the report findings are incorporated into the DDMG Annual Operational Plan for the monitoring and implementation of recommendations.

On 1 March 2011 a formal debrief of the Ipswich DDCC staff was conducted followed by a formal debrief of the disaster event on 2 March 2011 for the Ipswich DDMG conducted by an external moderator.

The following ground rules were established to prior to the debrief commencing:

- Open communication is encouraged to highlight key successes of the response to the event, as well as identifying problems and points of concern to individual group members.
- All concerns will be briefly identified, recorded and displayed on a large board for all members to see. Each point will then be discussed to analyse the problem, identify causes and recommend solutions to prevent the problem recurring in future operations.
- The focus will be on team discussion to resolve problems and prohibit personal criticism of individuals, 'witch-hunts', or apportioning blame.
- A debrief report will be compiled after the debriefing. This will contain recommendations on the implementation of solutions to problems identified during the debriefing as well as acknowledging successes.
- The debrief is not a platform for people to expound their own virtues. The primary aim of the debriefing is to evaluate and discover the balance between successful and unsuccessful areas of the operation.

During the debrief the DDMG considered each of the following key areas:

- Activation
- Response/Planning
- DDMG Meetings during event:
- Situation Reports
- DDMG composition
- Information flow
- Requests for Assistance
- Media management
- Recovery
- Evacuation Centres
- Other issues

The below questions were considered when discussing issues within each key area:

- What went well?
- What did not go well?
- Could we have done better?
- Lessons learnt?
- How can we improve?

Activation:

It was determined that the DDMG was activated as soon as possible given the suddenness of the impact of events in the Somerset Regional Council area and the combination with the events in the Grantham and Toowoomba areas. The warnings of a significant weather event issued by both the Bureau of Meteorology and EMQ had been forwarded on to members throughout the week leading up to the event. The regular quarterly meeting at the end of November and the advice provided at that meeting and the collation of a Christmas New Year contact list was of benefit during the event.

The members were satisfied that the plans in place at both District and Local Government levels were generally adequate but would need some adjustment to address the requirements of a similar level event.

The timing of the BOM forecasts was critical in the initial stages. The information provided could have been improved. Members were of the opinion that if the information of flood heights had been more specifically targeted to council areas (if possible) and provided earlier, Councils could have prepared better. (e.g. if notified that it was going to be a 20metre event – planning would have been more efficient).

Members identified that the Christmas holiday season posed significant issues in relation to availability of human resources in all areas. The contact details obtained by the DDMG were extremely beneficial however the access by all members to sufficient staff at this time of year was an issue. The logistics of staffing numbers would need to be incorporated into local, district and agency plans.

Members also identified a lack of area specific information from BOM.

The Somerset Regional Council area seemed to be generically aligned with the flooding for the Lockyer Valley. The Somerset Region did not get specific media coverage on the impact of the flooding for their area. It was determined that this could be improved if media releases referred to the local government regions not the catchment areas.

The members identified that there were issues with the early warning system in the Somerset Region due to the issues with the communications system including telephones being inoperable. It was considered that there is a need to look at how they will get early information out to the public in the future.

Response:

The initial impact of the events in Toowoomba, Grantham and Esk resulted in a large volume of calls to all emergency services in a very short space of time. This caused a significant impact on the communications systems of all emergency responders in the District.

The Ipswich District Police Communications Centre alone received 89 '000' calls in the hour 1400 to 1500 hrs on the 10 of January and 590 '000' calls for the 24 hrs on 11 January 2011.

The loss of power to the Lowood and Fernvale areas caused issues with the Telstra facilities resulting in the loss of telephone communications in those areas. There were also significant issues in the isolated communities in the Kilcoy and Moore areas due to the loss of power impacting of telecommunications in those areas.

The size of the Somerset Regional Council was considered with a total of – 180 staff – 140 of those are outside operational staff. Leaving only a maximum at any time a total of 40 council staff to assist in the coordination of disaster management functions. Because of size of the event the council did not have enough trained staff and as a result it had to request assistance from bordering councils. There was a delay in the provision of this assistance due to the severity of the event and this is an issue that needs to be addressed in future planning.

Given the short time frame between the QPS taking operational control of the DDCC and the limited training arranged between that date and this event there was initial uncertainty in some roles, responsibilities, operations and enquiries between the DDCC, police communications and the setting up of an MIR to manage the policing of the event.

The use of Email as the primary communications system was problematical given the single account as point of contact. If this is to remain as the single point then further consideration needs to be given to IT support programs to reduce the clutter and duplication of messages when responses are forwarded.

The group recognised the significant impact that being familiar with all the other members of the group had on the outcome of operations. Knowing who to contact for information and direction resulted in issues being resolved without major delays and without conflict in the group.

After the initial impact of the flood event, and as the volume of calls lessened the systems were generally adequate with the exception of areas in the Somerset Regional Council area. The group considered that although there were significant issues in the response phase that the good work done by members of both the DDCC and DDMG resulted in an positive response to the event.

At both debriefs the representation by agencies at the DDCC was discussed with the current representation still not formally finalised. It will be a matter that needs to be concluded as soon as possible. The representation at both the DDCC and the DDMG was made difficult due to the extent of flooding and the number of members working and residing outside the disaster district.

An issue was that some in the community did not appear to or could not comprehend what was happening even with the significant amount of information being presented in the media. A large percentage of residents did not believe the flood water level forecasts therefore did not prepare sufficiently. A community awareness program will need to be considered before future events.

The group considered that there needed to be a clearer strategy and process to move from response to recovery. The communications process and documentation of the transition needs to be identified. Who LGCCs report to and how they make requests in the recovery phase were not clear.

Air Operations:

The tasking of air assets during the event was a concern due to the last minute change in requests for air assets being transferred from EMQ to the Police Operations Centre Brisbane. How these assets were requested changed a number of times during the event which caused confusion and possible delays in responding to RFAs.

Cross Disaster District Consultation:

The alignment of Disaster District Boundaries and the boundaries of most other Departmental boundaries especially with the Police Boundaries caused some confusion and delays when responding to events in those areas.

The Ipswich Police District encompasses areas of the Brisbane City Council at Karana Downs, Scenic Rim Regional Council at Boonah, Kalbar and Harrisville. However the Ipswich Disaster District also includes parts of the Caboolture Police District at Moore and Kilcoy.

Informal arrangements regarding these anomalies have been in place since the amalgamation however the issues experienced during this event need to be addressed by some formal arrangements being put in place.

Road Closures:

Due to the large number of roads cut by flood water both councils and Main Roads experienced a shortage of road closure signs. It was considered an unviable option to buy enough signs and store them for use in possible future events due to the possibility that a similar event may not occur for a number of years. It was requested that a recommendation be considered to change legislation for permission to use certain signs that are non-standard in certain exceptional circumstances.

As with other locations the contention of whether the 'Road Closed' sign is an enforceable traffic sign is an issue. The importance of being able to enforce road closed signs is critical to saving lives by deterring motorists from crossing flooded roadways. It is recommended the Queensland Police Service and Department of Transport and Main Roads examine this issue and confirm legislative provisions exist for enforcement during future flood events.

DDMG meetings:

Given the number of LDMG meetings, teleconferences and agency briefings members agreed that more than one DDMG meeting daily would reduce the capacity of agencies to respond to their agencies operational requirements.

The frequency of DDMG meetings during the event was considered appropriate however consideration needs to be given in future for meetings to be held in advance of events if sufficient warnings are provided.

The DDCC venue was discussed with a number of issues identified. Improved teleconference capability was considered a necessity for future DDMG meetings. The building was also identified as having issues with overlapping responsibilities for DDCC, DDMG and police MIR operations. It was agreed that consideration be given to identify a separate facility for DDMG and DDCC operations away from the police complex.

Situation Reports:

Due to the size of the event, there was a lot of difficulty in initially establishing effective communication between all agencies. LDMGs had issues obtaining accurate and timely information from all agencies to then provide accurate information to the DDCC and the DDMG.

In the after event evaluations of both Local and District Disaster Plans the issue of SITREPs/communications/consistency of members needs to be addressed.

One issue that caused confusion was the format of the SITREPs changed on a number of occasions. The group identified the need to have guidelines from the SDCC regarding SITREPs and how they will evolve during a major event.

The group also considered that the statistical information was a necessity however a smart IT solution was needed to reduce the amount of time and resources required to complete the SITREPs at both District and Local levels.

DDMG Composition:

In considering this issue the group identified that the different boundaries for all the agencies caused logistical problems for supply of information and resources under the current disaster management arrangements. The fact many of the representatives do not work in the district, their offices are located in Brisbane, and they cover more than one Disaster District. The current arrangement regarding the districts arrangements for requesting resources directly from the group members or through the SDCC needs to be addressed.

Requests for Assistance / Information Flow:

A major concern raised by the group was that once requests for assistance were sent up to the SDCC there was no mechanism in place to acknowledge the receipt or follow up returned to the District on the status of the request. There was no acknowledgement for resource requests, acknowledgement that the request was received and then

acknowledgement of whether the request will be provided/satisfied. It was also acknowledged that the DDMG received requests from LDMG but no response was given.

The use of task tracker was promoted in recent training and events with EMQ but not available during this event. If available it would have resolved this situation.

If task tracker is not available then there needs to be some form of feedback system – to acknowledge receipt of requests – both up to SDCC and down to LDMG.

It was identified that every organisation has a different procedure and in some cases levels of request requirements. Communities and Health were able to be dealt with at DDC level, Q-Build were initially and previously required to go through SDCC. These differences in levels of request requirements need to be standardised to assist in better coordination of requests.

The appropriate contact information and quality of information contained in requests for assistance was also identified as needing improvement and they were identified as key issues. It was evident that the Somerset Regional Council did not have the capability to complete RFAs during the peak response period.

Agencies also identified the 'forced' assistance which was not specifically requested by LDMGs but provided from State or departmental level. An example being the supply of bedding and supplies to the Ipswich Evacuation Centre that were not requested and that resulted in doubled up supply during the event.

Media Management:

At the LDMG level it is evident that when it comes to major events the actions of elected representatives can be unpredictable. Some of the information released during this event was obtained from local, unconfirmed sources and was at times very misleading resulting in time being taken to resolve the issues.

However, the group was very satisfied that there was only one major incident of misreporting identified and this was quickly corrected by through local media.

The group questioned if there was a better way to relay important information to the community and the use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter should be considered in future.

The Ipswich District unlike most Disaster Districts has no local television coverage and therefore relies on local radio as the main timely information distribution source. The local radio station 94.9 were very quick at providing information and was very supportive however given the districts close proximity to Brisbane the issues were not covered in the detail as seen in other districts.

The group concurred that generally the media coverage was managed effectively during the course of the disaster.

Finally, the group recognised the importance of continually engaging the media during disaster events to ensure accurate reporting in the future.

Evacuation Centres / Recovery:

Generally it was considered that logistically the evacuation centres set up by the councils were well run however the number of self activated centres which were not planned caused issues with supply of resources. The LDMG's needed to consider how they will respond to the situation of local community groups activating their own centres and how the council will support those centres.

Setting up an evacuation centre is not the issue but the running the centres and providing support were the issues. Red Cross attended and were there to manage some of the centres however they were stretched. There needed to be a more coordinated approach to the setting up and running of the centres to ensure they are suitable and resourced properly.

Security was an issue at the recovery centres with the evacuees provided with cash and some people going out drinking and then returning to the evacuation centres causing problems. This was handled by police being tasked to the main centres however is an issue that needs to be considered in future planning.

There should be a process put in place to set up an evacuation centre not just announce that it is being set up. Retirees were dropped off at evacuation centres with no support staff. Aged Care facilities are required to have a plan to relocate their residents in situations such as this not just take them to the evacuation centres.

The group considered that it would be preferred that a recovery centre is not in the same place as an evacuation centre generally. It was determined that it was hard to identify the numbers in the evacuation centres as some people attended with no requirement to be there. A large number were there just for free meals or the power was off at their non-flood affected residences.

It was acknowledged that there was an expectation from the SDCC that we know the number of people in those evacuation centres and there was a need for these numbers to be accurate and with some validity.

The isolation of some areas necessitated the need for more centres to be opened. These organic centres should have been identified earlier to ensure the communities' needs were responded to. The appointment of one point of contact in each centre was needed to address issues as they arose.

The main issue was not about coordinating the organic centres but it was about providing support for the centres. Once they were identified the primary need was to find out what they needed – blankets, bedding, food. An area that was lacking was registering those people at the locally self activated centres.

11. Recommendations:

Issues to be addressed at local level:

1. It is recommended the Somerset Regional Council and Ipswich City Council Disaster Management Plans be reviewed and learnings from recent events be incorporated into the plans.
2. It is recommended EMQ provide LDMGs further training in the preparation of requests for assistance and the setup and running of coordination centres.
3. The councils develop policy and strategies to address the support and coordination of self activated evacuation centres.

Issues to be addressed at a District Level:

4. It is recommended the Ipswich District Disaster Management Plan be reviewed and learnings from recent events be incorporated into the plan.
5. It is recommended the Executive Officer in conjunction with EMQ provide DDMG and DDCC staff further training in the preparation of requests for assistance and the setup and running of coordination centres.
6. It is recommended the DDC commence liaison with DDCs from Brisbane, Logan and Redcliffe Districts to ensure effective management of disaster events across multiple districts and council areas.
7. It is recommended the Executive Officer review options for an alternative venue for the DDCC and DDMG which meets information technology, business continuity and space requirements.
8. It is recommended the Executive Officer review the DDCC Standard Operating Procedures to clarify information flows and the management of requests for assistance.

Issues recommended to be considered at a State level:

9. It is requested that consideration be given to the development of standard air operations protocols especially in the south east of the state for use during major disaster events.
10. It is requested the Queensland Police Service and Department of Transport and Main Roads examine the issue regarding enforcement and use of non compliant road closure signs and confirm legislative provisions exist for enforcement during future flood events.
11. It is requested that advice be sought from BOM on the development of area specific information during future events. The use of Council areas as the basis of announcements regarding weather events should be considered.

12. It is requested that consideration be given to the formalisation of governance arrangements for representatives on both the LDMG's and DDMG.
13. It is requested that consideration be given to an IT solution for the transfer of information including RFAs and SITREPs between Local, District and State to better facilitate responses to major events.

The very real consequence of failing to learn lessons is loss of lives and property. - This should motivate agencies in all emergency response disciplines and at all levels of government to give serious attention to the goal of inculcating a culture of learning from past disasters to prevent future losses.
DONAHUE & TUOHY, LESSONS WE DON'T LEARN *HOMELAND SECURITY AFFAIRS*, VOL. II, NO. 2 (JULY 2006)

Distribution:

1. District Disaster Coordinator
2. District Disaster Management Group members
3. Assistant Commissioner, Southern Region
4. Assistant Commissioner, QPS Flood Crisis Review Group
5. State Disaster Management Group
6. Disaster Management, Operations Support Command

Approved:

Superintendent Garth PITMAN
District Disaster Coordinator
Ipswich District
25 March 2011