

# BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

## **Concept of Operations Disaster Management**

**Revised: November 2009**

## **1.0 Aim**

To define Brisbane City Council's flexible and scalable response and recovery capability to natural and non-natural disaster events.

## **2.0 Context**

Brisbane City has recently experienced a number of significant disaster events that have impacted on Council business and the Brisbane community.

As a result of a severe storm event in November 2008, Council commissioned a review of Council's response to the event, of which a number of recommendations were made. One of the key recommendations related to the establishment of an expanded Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC), which included flexible and expandable functions to gain rapid situational awareness of events. Allowing for more effective allocation and coordination of resources, to ensure strategic planning priorities set by the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) are informed and met, and to improve reporting efficiency.

Brisbane City Council currently meets its legislative requirements and obligations under the Queensland State Government's *Disaster Management (DM) Act 2003*. Council has an experienced and effective Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) that provides strategic direction through all phases of an event and a tested recovery structure that addresses key contemporary recovery principals.

An all hazards and comprehensive approach to disaster management is imbedded into Council's Disaster Management practices and is demonstrated through continuous testing, review and improvement of the BCC Disaster Management Plan (and sub-plans) on an annual basis. The DM Plan outlines Council's roles and responsibilities during disaster events. Training and exercising in the Local and District Disaster Management Arrangements are also regularly conducted.

This Concept of Operations (CONOPS) enhances the current functions of Council's LDCC and provides a flexible and scalable response and operational capability in disaster events. The Concept of Operations will provide the over-arching framework to Council's management of an event and DM Plan and provides a high-level approach to expanded LDCC functions that will be further detailed in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) underpinning the DM Plan.

During any disaster event, the LDMG's priorities will always be to prevent serious injury and loss of life, minimise damage to property and infrastructure and maintain the provision of public services.

## **3.0 Key Principles**

- All operations reflect Council's Disaster Management Plan and disaster management arrangements;
- LDCC functions should be flexible and scalable to ensure appropriate levels of coordination;
- Ensure the delivery of timely, consistent and accurate information and communication to the affected community through appropriate systems and processes, such as Daily Briefing, Situation Reports (SITREPs), Crisis

Communication Plans, that may include working with stakeholders external to Council;

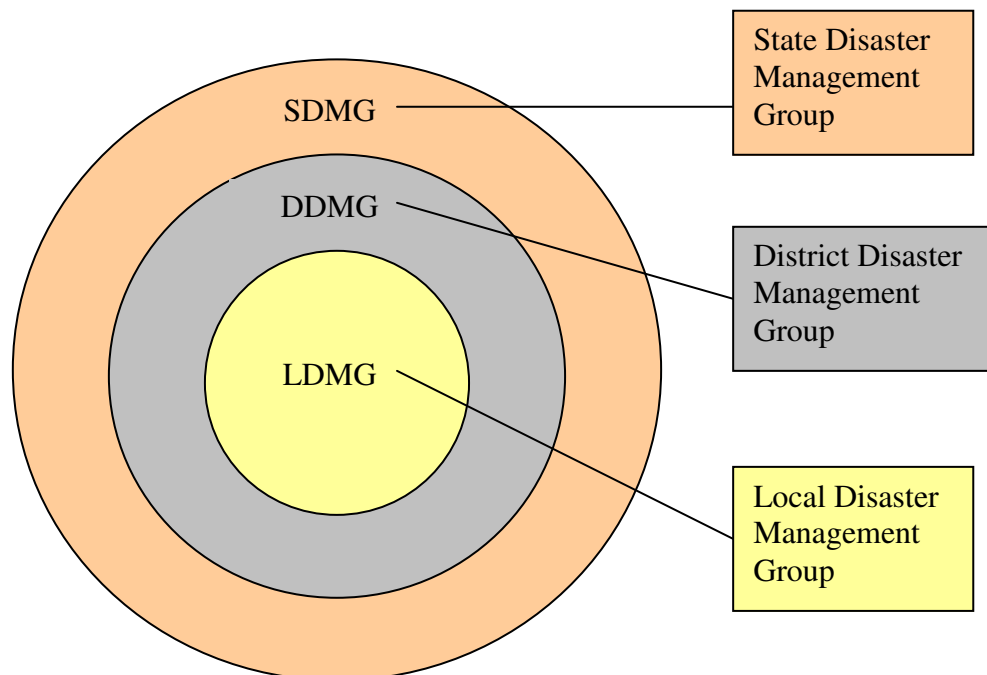
- Council business units ensure that standard corporate policies and procedures are followed to ensure business continuity, zero harm and delivery of services are maintained; and
- Council adopts an individual, organisational and community resilience approach to build community capacity to respond to and recover from disaster events.

## 4.0 Supporting Documents

The Concept of Operations will be an integral part of Council's Disaster Management Plan and arrangements. It is assumed that the reader will have a reasonable knowledge of Council's current disaster management arrangements and be familiar with Council's Disaster Management Plan and sub-plans.

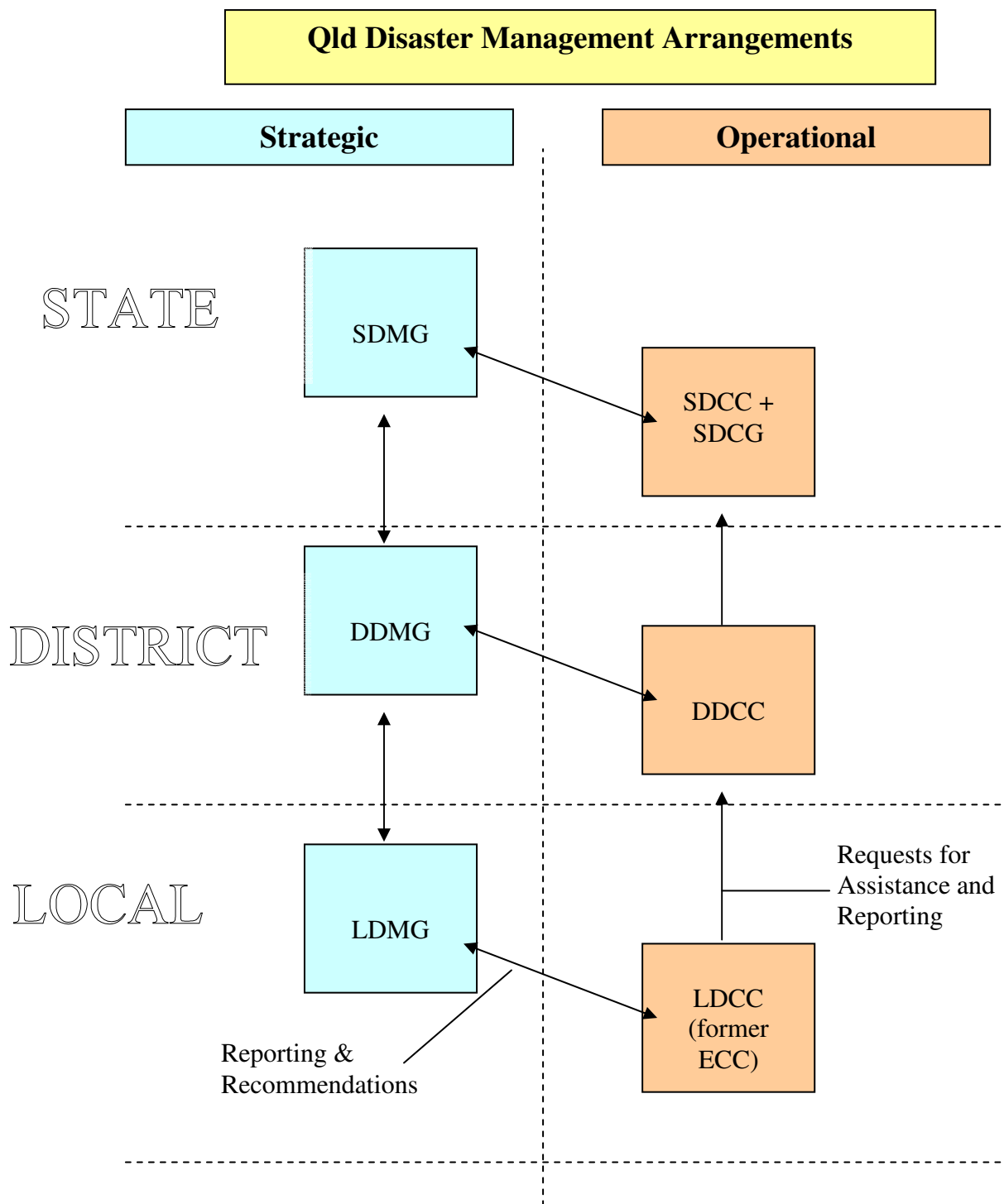
Under Queensland's *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the State and District Disaster Management Group supports the Local Disaster Management Group, who maintains control of operational response within their local government area.

This is reflected in the following diagram that outlines Queensland's disaster management arrangements:



While the Local Disaster Management Group will maintain control of operational response and the allocation of resources in most circumstances, in certain events such as a terrorist attack, a pandemic event or a large environmental incident (oil spill), Brisbane City Council and the Local Disaster Management Group will provide a support role to a nominated lead agency.

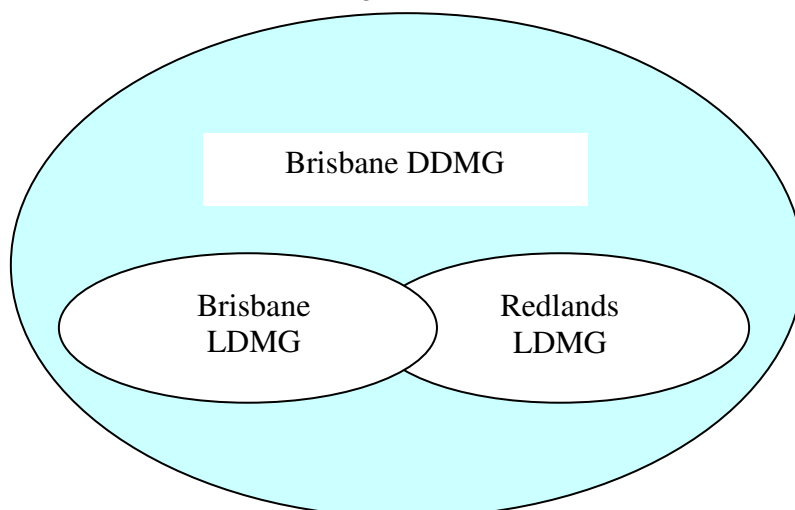
This diagram summarises the strategic and operation high-level arrangements which are further detailed in Council's Disaster Management Plan.



In a disaster event, strategic priorities are set by the Brisbane Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) through the Chair and implemented by the Executive Officer (XO) and/or the Disaster Operation Manager (DOM) via the Incident Coordinator (IC) of the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC).

The IC, LDCC will ensure the priorities set by the LDMG are maintained without deviation and will ensure effective coordination of the event. Priorities will be regularly reviewed by the LDMG and formally promulgated to the LDCC.

The Brisbane District Disaster Arrangements:



## 5.0 Brisbane City Levels of Activation

The Concept of Operations adopts a flexible and scalable approach to activations of Council's response. Activation levels are based on community impacts or consequences, and the required level of coordination of Council's response.

**Level One** – Managed through core business functions and normal incident response reporting as per corporate policies and procedures.

**Level Two** – Managed by the key BCC business unit. The XO (CEO) may request an IAT meeting to determine which BCC business unit takes the lead response and make decisions regarding Council's priorities and management of the situation. The DOM will notify and inform key stakeholders (both internal and external) of the incident with potential for standby of possible escalations and activations to level three or four.

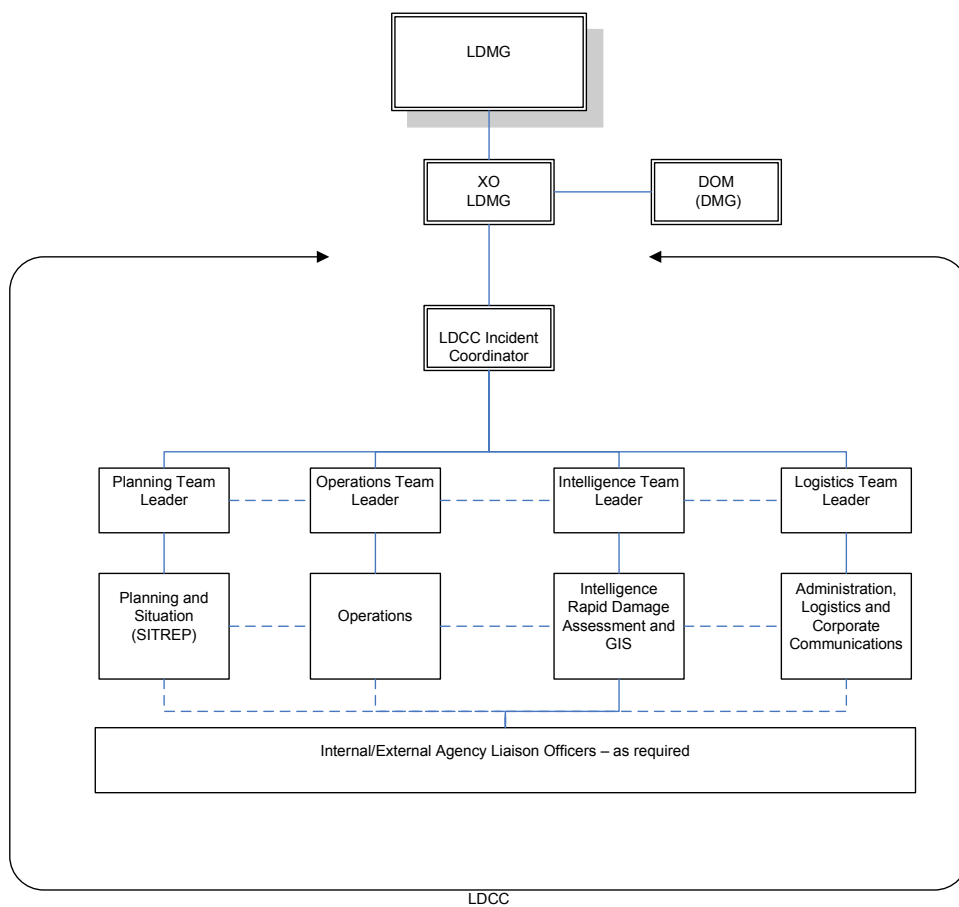
**Level Three** – Events that require an activation of the LDCC. Expanded functions of the LDCC may be put on standby for possible escalations and activation to level four. The LDMG may be activated at this level. The XO (CEO) may request a meeting of an IAT if this level is the initial activation. The decision to transition from Level 3 to Level 4 will be made by the XO (CEO) following IAT consultation or on direction from the LMDG if established.

**Level Four** – Events that require a complex response through high level coordination, resource allocation and forward planning from a range of stakeholders, including some external to Council. Level four would see a full activation of the expanded LDCC functions and possible escalation to State, Federal and NGO agencies.

The following diagrams outline Brisbane's Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) local arrangements, including the expanding functions of forward planning, field operations, disaster intelligence and rapid damage assessment, which would be applicable for activation levels 3 and 4.

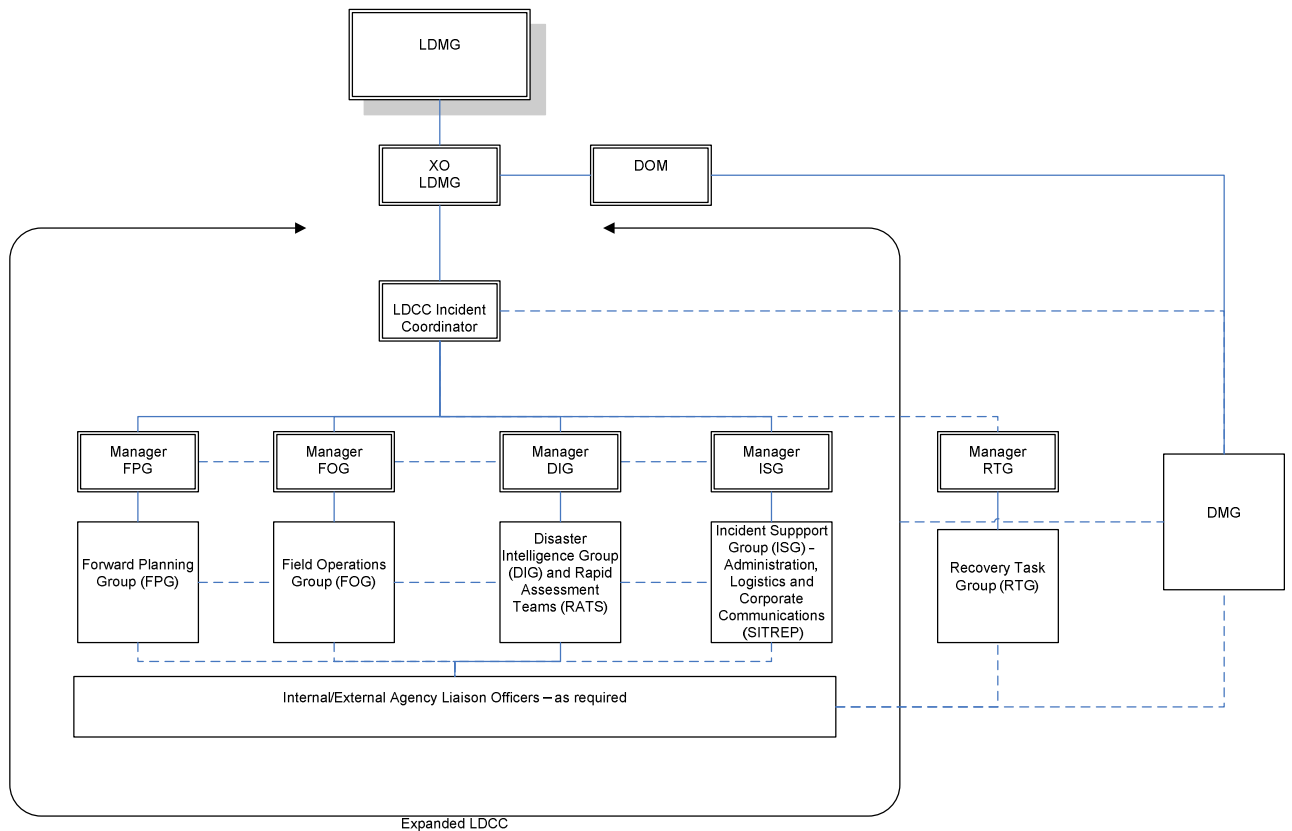
### Level 3 Activation

#### BCC LDCC LEVEL THREE (3) ACTIVATION



## Level 4 Activation

### BCC LDCC LEVEL FOUR (4) ACTIVATION



The **LDCC Incident Coordinator** controls and coordinates all LDCC activities and tasks on behalf of LDMG and is primarily responsible for the following tasks:

- assumes control for the overall responsibility for the coordination of the LDCC;
- coordinates briefings between FOG, DIG, ISG and other sections, BU and agencies as required;
- maintains LDCC internal situational awareness through ensuring regular briefs and accurate information is disseminated/displayed within LDCC;
- ensures LDCC is appropriately resourced and established for use;
- updates and maintains Action Plans (in coordination with FOG) and confirms tasks, timings and priorities with key staff;
- advises the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) and LDMG that the LDCC is operational;
- ensures that the LDMG Executive Officer is kept up to date and appropriate briefs given to LDMG, DDMG, CEO, Mayor, Councillors and DDC;
- ensures operational co-operation with all units of Council and participating agencies including other councils;
- ensures that adequate resources are available for BCC response agencies, and request external resources from LDMG and DDMG if required;
- liaises and consults, as required, with support agencies. Support the prioritisation of requests (through FOG) for assistance from other response agencies;

- manages the compilation and dissemination of situation reports to the LDMG & DDMG;
- liaises with Media Officer with regard to media releases and information required by the community, such as safety issues, public health issues;
- coordinates briefings at shift handover and at the end of the event; and
- notifies all parties of stand-down status, once advised by DOM, CEO or LDMG.

The **Forward Planning Group (FPG)** enhances the existing planning function of the LDCC. The FPG focuses on strategic and forward-looking planning to allow for better resource allocation and management, and to commence recovery considerations and planning. Forward planning activities may require multi-agency assistance and involvement and where appropriate additional or external resources may be sourced and allocated within current council procurement guidelines.;

The **Forward Planning Group Manager** is primarily responsible for the following tasks:

- supports the LDMG's decision making process;
- formulates strategic guidance on behalf of the LDMG;
- develops and delivers forward planning options (response and recovery considerations) to the LDMG;
- develops and manages the LDMG response and recovery agenda, including consideration of agenda issues;
- provides a forum for consultation between the LDMG and other appropriate government departments, including State and Federal agencies;
- undertakes consequence analysis and management;
- provides a strong communication network between the business community, responding agencies and non-government organisations at the strategic level;
- provides a 'think tank' beyond current operations.

The **Disaster Intelligence Group (DIG)** ensures that all information from the event is captured and assessed to gain a timely and accurate picture of the situational awareness to the LDCC Groups so that relevant tasking, decision making and forward planning can be undertaken. Information is gathered through the **Rapid Assessment Teams (RATs)** are located in the field to quickly assess the extent of damage and the general magnitude of the event. A number of other sources may also be utilised for gathering information, including Councillors, Council officers, community service providers and other agencies. The collected information will be assessed and validated to form the intelligence provided back to the LDCC and other agencies. Elements of the DIG may be allocated to the FOG to assist with operational functions as required.

The **Disaster Intelligence Manager** is primarily responsible for the following tasks:

- assumes overall responsibility for the timely collection, collation, assessment, analysis and dissemination of intelligence;
- manages often changing demands and priorities;
- maintains a close working relationship with the Incident Controller and other key personnel;
- assumes overall responsibility for Disaster Intelligence Unit staff;
- ensures critical information requirements and gaps are identified;
- ensures key issues and time lines are identified;
- ensures Rapid Assessment Teams are being deployed efficiently and effectively;



- maintains a high level of situation awareness and advise the Incident Controller of any emerging issues;
- attends management meetings and briefings as required and conducts briefings.

The **Field Operations Group (FOG)** coordinates and manages Council's operational response to an event. The FOG provides information to the IC LDCC on progress of Council's on-ground response and communicating emerging issues. Field operations may require multi-agency assistance and involvement and where appropriate additional or external resources may be sourced and allocated within current council procurement guidelines. Where this is the case, disaster management arrangements as outlined in Council's Disaster Management Plan are followed to escalate requests to the district and state levels for assistance. Existing Council management arrangements should be utilised where possible to coordinate response capability, including assigned external agencies.

The **Director of Field Operations** is primarily responsible for the following tasks:

- managing field operations in accordance with LDMG priorities;
- supports the LDMG's decision making process;
- coordinates the allocation of tasks to the Regional Incident Management Teams (RIMT);
- monitors progress of operations;
- synchronises the planning requirements from LDCC to current operations;
- attends management meetings and briefings as required and conducts briefings.

The **Incident Support Group (ISG)** encompasses the LDCC support functions to the incident (event). The ISG tasks include Administration, Logistics, Corporate Communication and the overarching Situational Reporting (SITREPs) promulgated during the event. The SITREPs will be informed by the activities of the LDCC Groups.

## 6.0 BCC Immediate Action Team (IAT)

The BCC Immediate Action Team (IAT) consists of senior executives including representation from the Lord Mayor's Office. If required, the IAT shall be activated by the CEO as a mechanism to provide informed decisions during fast breaking (or potentially fast breaking) events that may have:

- significant community consequences to Brisbane;
- significant disruption to Council's service delivery or internal business processes; and
- threats made against Council people, property or other assets, or against the City of Brisbane.

At the discretion of the XO (CEO), the IAT will disband once an effective response has commenced or the LDCC is activated.

## 7.0 Role of the Disaster Management Group (DMG)

The **Disaster Operations Manager (DOM)** is principally responsible for:

- providing disaster management advice and recommendations to the Executive Officer (XO) to the Brisbane LDMG and the Lord Mayor's Chief of Staff;
- supporting the XO in implementing the operational priorities determined by the strategic intent, as set by the LDMG;
- ensuring maintenance of effective and collaborative relationships with external agencies at the strategic level;
- provide disaster management advice to Council senior executive as required;
- ensure compliance to the Disaster Management Act 2003 and local disaster management arrangements including Brisbane City Council Disaster Management Plan; and
- other tasks as directed by the XO LDMG.

The **Disaster Management Group (DMG)** is principally responsible for:

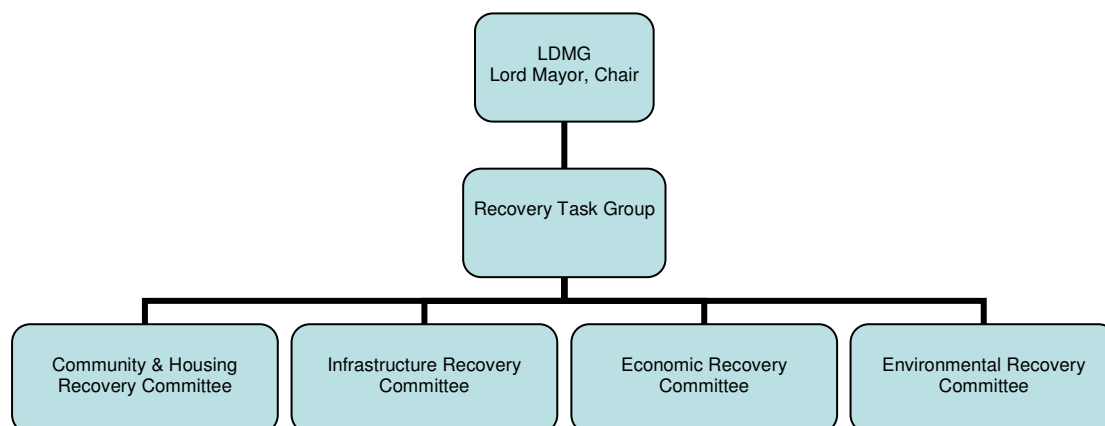
- providing recommendations and support to the DOM and XO in implementing the LDMG operational priorities;
- ensuring maintenance of effective collaboration and coordination with external agencies at the operational level;
- ensure compliance to the Brisbane City Council Disaster Management Plan and Disaster Management Act 2003;
- maintenance of LDCC infrastructure; and
- other tasks as directed by the DOM.

## 8.0 Recovery

Council's recovery roles and responsibilities are outlined in the Brisbane City Council Disaster Management Plan. Generally, Council coordinates overall recovery processes that are performed through a number of government and non-government agencies, in a multi-agency response.

Recovery and response activities may occur simultaneously during a disaster event, and recovery functions can certainly commence while response operations are being undertaken based on the information coming in from the LDCC network.

Council has adopted the principles of sustainability when delivery recovery outcomes. This is demonstrated through the following framework:



Council's recovery committees provide a strategic and forward-looking overview of recovery issues and activities during a disaster event. The committees propose priorities and resources towards immediate or short term emergency support, long term recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation of the affected community and identify and address emerging issues. Each committee is chaired by a political representative with executive support from a senior council officer. A Terms of Reference for each of the Recovery Committees is available in Council's Disaster Management Plan.

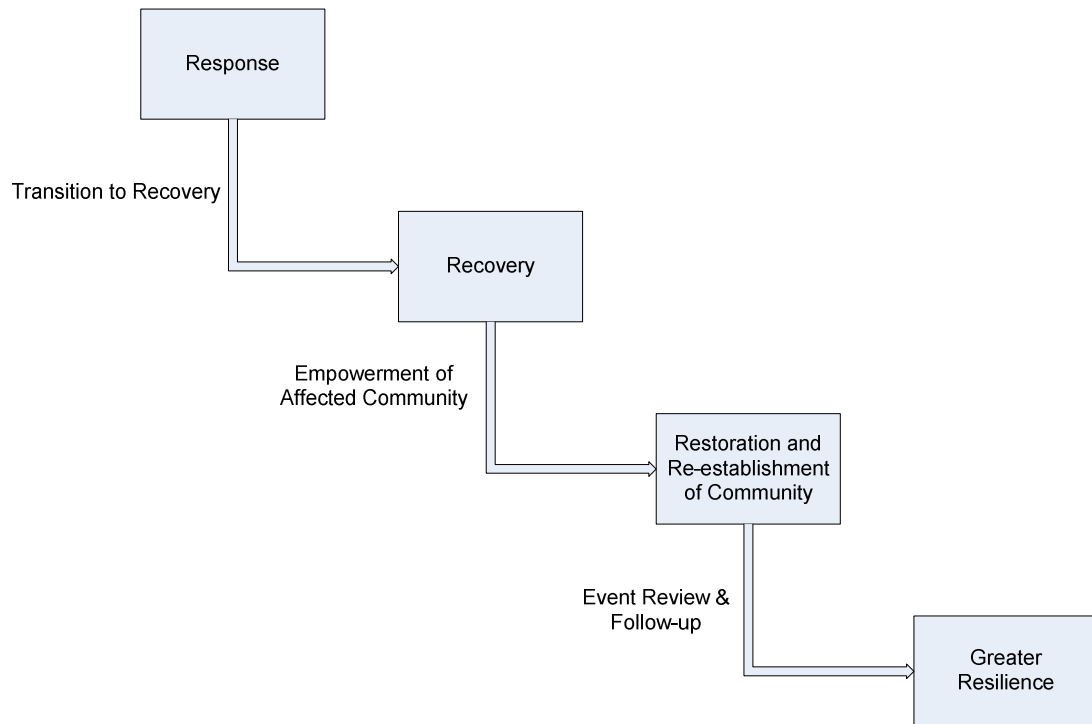
## 9.0 Transition and De-Escalation

Transitional arrangements must be developed in coordination with key agencies to prepare for de-escalation of the LDCC network and recovery committees and to commence a return to Council core organisational business functions and services.

The transitional strategies should be primarily formulated by the Forward Planning Group and delivered in concert with the Recovery Task Group, who should consider:

- reducing Council presence and response in the affected areas
- access to external agency mechanisms to encourage community empowerment in restoration after an event
- keeping the community informed
- reducing the regularity of committee meetings, especially once those priorities have been actioned and met
- incorporate outstanding tasks into core business functions and ensure they are adequately resourced and funded
- establish monitoring and reporting functions to ensure any outstanding tasks are actioned

The stand down process should follow a step down approach that ensures a seamless transition from the response to recovery:



Once the LDCC has stood down a post event report should be provided to the XO LDMG (CEO) that clearly articulates outstanding tasks and where these have been allocated and incorporated into Council core business functions and services. A team will be appointed at the commencement of the event to capture key issues and learning's from the event and ensures that they are incorporated into future planning, processes and exercises as part of Council's commitment to continuous improvement.