



QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

Requirement to Provide Written Information to Commission of Inquiry

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With reference to the Commissioner of Inquiry request made on 3 May, 2011 via Mr. David Kevin of King and Company Solicitors and the Submission to the Queensland Floods Commissioner of Inquiry by the Bundaberg Regional Council on 18 March, 2011, I make the following comments:

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:

- On the 21st December, 2010 the Local Disaster Co-ordinator (LDC) and the Disaster Management Officer (DMO) attended a state-wide teleconference in collaboration with the District Disaster Co-ordinator (DDC). Based on the prognosis of the Bureau of Meteorology emanating out of that conference affirmative action was taken by the DMO placing the members of the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) on an *alert* mode with a *watching brief* adopted.
- On the 21st December, 2010 the DMO forwarded a message to the Area Director of EMQ requesting clarification of activation modes as outlined later in this statement.
- On the 22nd December, 2010 advice was received from the Area Director of EMQ that to the best of his knowledge and beliefs the 'Lean Forward/Stand Up' activation protocols had not been formally released, nor had training been undertaken.

ADOPTED MODE OF ACTIVATION:

- As a result of the information provided, it was decided to maintain the activation modes as depicted in Bundaberg Regional Council's Local Disaster Management Plan and as outlined hereunder:

Stage 1 -- **Alert:** Advice to members of the LDMG that there is in existence circumstances that may require formal activation of the LDMG, however, the situation was being closely monitored;

Stage 2 -- **Stand By:** The next step up from alert mode placing people on notification that there is a potential threat that may require a coordinated response from participant agencies of the LDMG;

Stage 3 -- **Activate:** Requires the activation of the Local Disaster Management Plan and the LDMG that a high level of possibility of a disaster occurring or has occurred. The LDC would also move to operational capability; and

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Stage 4 – Stand Down: Response to the event/s is effectively concluded; and

Stage 5 – Debrief: The terminology is self-explanatory but is utilised to elicit positive and negative information from participants in a timely way (not to be confused with defusing of personnel from the stressors of disaster management).

EVENTS OF DECEMBER 2010:

During the State disaster management teleconferences of 2010/2011 some disaster management proponents related in terminology to ‘Lean Forward/Stand Up’ and associated phases. Many others, particularly at local government level related in terms of ‘Stand By/Activate’. In my opinion, there were participants in the State disaster management teleconferences who appeared to be not aware of or had knowledge of the various phases contained in the activation system of ‘Lean Forward/Stand Up’ which was a further modification to that outlined in the current State Disaster Management Plan as outlined hereunder.

The Queensland State Disaster Management Plan 2008 was the applicable plan for the disaster events of December 2010 and January 2011. During that time the ‘Stand By/Activate’ model was the commonly used alert warning system. I am now aware that authority for the Queensland State Disaster Management Plan 2010 was given on 22 December, 2010 by the Chair of the State Disaster Management Group. Furthermore, authorisation and approval for distribution on 10 March, 2011 was given by the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services.

The Queensland State Disaster Management Plan 2008 had no containment of activation modes models. However, it is noted that in the Queensland State Disaster Management Plan 2010 that the ‘Lean Forward/Stand Up’ model is contained on Section 8.1: Activation of Response Arrangements on page 30 (see Table One) and in Annexure D: Levels of Activation for Response Arrangements on page 51 (see Table Two).

Table One

Level of Activation	Definition
Alert	A heightened level of vigilance due to the possibility of an event in the area of responsibility. No action is required however the situation should be monitored by someone capable of assessing the potential of the threat.
Lean forward	An operational state prior to ‘stand up’ characterised by a heightened level of situational awareness of a disaster event (either current or impending) and a state of operational readiness. Disaster coordination centres are on stand by, prepared but not activated.
Stand up	The operational state following ‘lean forward’ whereby resources are mobilised, personnel are activated and operational activities commenced. Disaster coordination centres are activated.
Stand down	Transition from responding to an event back to normal core business and/or recovery operations. There is no longer a requirement to respond to the event and the threat is no longer present.

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Table Two

		ALERT	LEAN FORWARD	STAND UP	STAND DOWN
STATE	Triggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advice from warning authority ➤ Operational advice from District Disaster Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staged activation of LDMGs and / or DDMGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Significant activations of LDMGs and / or DDMGs ➤ Statewide hazard ➤ Significant Bureau of Meteorology warnings ➤ Prolonged operations ➤ Cross agency coordination of tasks required ➤ Collation of information/intelligence requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Response activities are concluded
	Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hazard identified and risks analysed ➤ Notify stakeholders via matrix in SDCC Standard Operating Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SDCC staff placed on stand by ➤ Rosters promulgated ➤ Conduct appreciations and prepare operations plan ➤ SDCC Liaison Officers Identified¹ ➤ Watch Desk Officer supported by State Duty Manager ➤ Appointment of State Disaster Coordinator considered by SDMG ➤ State Disaster Coordinator may be appointed by SDMG ➤ Recovery agencies placed on Alert² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SDCC activated ➤ Operations plan implemented ➤ SITREPs initiated for SDMG ➤ Critical Incident Directive activated ➤ Appointment of State Recovery Coordinator considered by SDMG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Final SITREP to SDMG ➤ Debrief of SDCC staff ➤ Transition from response and recovery to recovery ➤ Termination of State Disaster Coordinator appointment ➤ Financial reconciliation
	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SDCC contact through Watch Desk Officer ➤ State Duty Manager on mobile remotely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SDCC contact through Watch Desk Officer supported by State Duty Manager, present at SDCC ➤ State agencies on mobile and monitoring email remotely ➤ Ad hoc reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SDCC contact through established land lines and generic email addresses ➤ State agencies present at SDCC, on established landlines and/or mobiles, monitoring emails and producing agency Sitreps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Watch Desk Officer resumes watching brief of SDCC communications ➤ Agencies not involved in recovery operations resume standard business and afterhours contact arrangements

For ease of clarification and identification, reproduced hereunder is a modified activation mode model that has been utilised by members of the Queensland Police Service (QPS). From 1 November, 2010 when the QPS gained a lead role in disaster management as a result of the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2010 such members of the QPS have undertaken awareness training for utilisation of this particular model. Accordingly, the model has a number of modifications in the various stages by producing namely two phases to the Lean Forward and Stand Up modes. Otherwise familiarity and awareness with this model by majority of stakeholders was extremely limited;

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		STAND BY		ACTIVATE		STAND DOWN	
ALERT		LEAN FORWARD LEVEL ONE	LEAN FORWARD LEVEL TWO	STAND UP LEVEL ONE	STAND UP LEVEL TWO	STAND DOWN	
LDMG	Triggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of a threat that has the potential to affect the local government area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a likelihood that threat may effect local government area • The threat is not yet imminent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat is imminent • Community will be impacted • Requests for support received by LDMG agencies • Need for minor coordination in LDCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community impacted • Significant number of requests received by LDCC • The response requires coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement for coordinated response • Community has returned to normal function • Recovery taking place 	
	Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat identified • Information sharing with warning agency • LDC contacts EMQ • Initial advice to all stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMQ and LDC conduct analysis of predictions • Chair and LDC on watching brief • Establish regular communications with warning agency • Threat is confirmed credible • Check all contact details • First meeting of Core Members of LDMG • LDC advises DDC that LF level one • Commence cost capturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of LDMG-Core Group • Commence Sitreps to DDMG • LDCC activated with limited staff • Distribute contact details • Rosters for LDCC • Commence Operational plans • DDMG advised of potential requests for support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government shifts to disaster operations • LDMG takes full control • SOPs activated • Core group of LDMG located in LDCC • Situation reporting to DDCC • Rosters for LDCC implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final check for outstanding requests • Implement plan to transition to recovery • Debrief of staff in LDCC • Debrief with LDMG members • Consolidate financial records • Final situation report sent to DDMG • Hand over to Recovery Coordinator for reporting • Return to local government core business 	

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In accordance with the State Disaster Management Plan 2010 now institutionalising the 'Lean Forward/Stand Up' methodology for activations there is still a necessity that there be authorisation and ratification of a single activation mode model. It is reiterated that no known training has been provided to members at the local government level on either the State Disaster Management Plan activation model or, indeed, the SDMP or the modified activation model utilised by the QPS. In summary, there appears to be three (3) alert notification systems. The recommendation is that a definitive direction be issued on one (1) format for utilisation of activations during disaster management.

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