

**REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE WRITTEN STATEMENT TO FLOOD COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**  
**GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL**

The following information is provided in response to the request for a written statement from the Local Disaster Co-Ordinator, Gladstone Regional Council LDMG, to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry, received by Council on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

It should be noted, for the Commission's records, that Mr Brad Lutton is not the Local Disaster Coordinator for the Gladstone Regional Council, however he has provided input to this response in his role as Co-Ordinator – Disaster and Emergency Management.

The appointed Local Disaster Coordinator is Mr Mark Holmes, Director of Finance. The Acting Local Disaster Coordinator during the period from 25<sup>th</sup> December 2010 to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011 was Mr Mark Larney, Director of Corporate Services.

**1. The local planning and preparation, including training, undertaken in advance of and/or in relation to the 2010/2011 flood events.**

Planning:

Following local government amalgamation, a consolidated Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) was developed based on previous planning documents on all other relevant information available and adopted by the Gladstone Regional Council on 16 March 2010.

This plan was further reviewed and amended following legislative changes to the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, and was approved by Council on 16 November 2010.

Although draft documents were disseminated during the development phase primarily in 2009, no assistance, comment or advice was provided by Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) during this process and none has been provided since.

A number of community awareness and education activities were conducted as part of Council's normal media cycle, ie. fire season preparedness in the dry months, and heading into the wet season, articles on storm and cyclone preparations as well as flooding related awareness. These include articles in Council's newsletter as well as local print media and publishing of information materials and all media releases on Council's website

Training:

No training was provided by EMQ to the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) or persons who may have been required to work in the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC).

Council's Coordinator Disaster and Emergency Management, Mr Brad Lutton, provided overview training to council staff in disaster management arrangements in Queensland and a background to Disaster Coordination Centres.

Council's disaster management software providers conducted revision training for staff in the use of this software. There are currently 40-45 staff members trained in the Co-Ordination centre software.

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**2. Any measures implemented immediately prior to or during the 2010/2011 flood events that were designed to mitigate the effect of any flooding (for example, sandbagging, temporary levees), including an assessment of the performance of these measures.**

Council ahead of the storm season routinely undertakes maintenance activities in respect to the inspection and clearing of major road drainage structures to ensure they operate to maximum efficiency during the season.

Council also ensures that adequate quantities of sandbags and fuels are on hand to ensure that the ability to support Council's operational crews in roads, drainage, parks, water and sewerage is maintained.

Council in conjunction with the SES provided sandbags and sand to residents during the event (pre impact this was made available to Beecher community residents, during event localised drainage issues in the Barney Point suburb of Gladstone necessitated sandbagging of several private properties).

The State Emergency Service (SES) undertook a number of tasks in response to calls for assistance relating to storm water problems, however these statistics would be held by EMQ on their RFA Online computer system or in operational reports provided to them by the SES Groups.

Council is not included in this reporting process and have not been advised of any such statistics or measures undertaken by the SES.

**3. Local participation, or otherwise, in Emergency Management Queensland's (EMQ) 2010 Pre-Season Flood and Cyclone Workshop, including an assessment of the local assistance gained thereby.**

Council's Coordinator Disaster and Emergency Management, Mr Brad Lutton, participated in this workshop held in Gladstone on 13 October 2010.

Mr Lutton also provided a presentation at short notice on the request of EMQ as did Banana Shire and the Gladstone Disaster District.

These workshops are a bit 'tired' and need to be reformatted as the same things are covered year after year. Given the timeframes, and the variety of organisations attending, it is difficult to truly 'exercise' a scenario at these activities.

The presentations by the Bureau of Meteorology are informative and well received, certainly from a Council and LDMG perspective, as they provide an indication of what may be expected over the coming "season".

It would have been appropriate for EMQ to provide an update on matters pertaining to disaster management and the SES in greater detail at these workshops rather than "filling" the program with other matters. The scope of these workshops could be broadened to include emerging matters that may have a potential impact on local disaster planning.

**4. Local participation, or otherwise, in EMQ's 2010 Consultation Sessions concerning the proposed changes to the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld), including an assessment of the local assistance gained thereby.**

Councillor Rick Hansen (Deputy Chair of the LDMG), Mr Mark Holmes (Local Disaster Coordinator) and Mr Brad Lutton attended two sessions regarding the proposed changes to the *Disaster Management Act 2003*. The first was held in Rockhampton on 23 April 2010 and was in the format of a general overview of the proposed amendments and what they meant.

The second session was a more formal presentation on 30 July 2010, also held in Rockhampton, which provided more detail on the proposed amendments.

As overviews the sessions achieved what they were intended for and were certainly timely in that they were conducted well before implementation which allowed for preliminary work to be undertaken in updating plans ready for when the changes were enacted.

**5. Any measures taken to train and/or equip the local State Emergency Service (SES), including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof.**

Responsibility for training the SES rests with EMQ. Council is not advised of training activities or arrangements.

However, Council is aware that the local SES Unit and Groups conduct training activities throughout the year and this training is based on the skills required to respond to a broad range of situations.

The majority of equipment for the SES is supplied by EMQ. Council is aware that EMQ will only provide minimum levels of equipment which, in Council's view, is sometimes inadequate for the number of trained members and even more importantly, may leave the local area without resources when SES members and equipment are deployed to other areas to assist thereby creating a situation where the local SES cannot respond to its own community needs.

Council has a budget allocation for the SES which is utilised for the funding of the maintenance and operations of vehicles and equipment, along with maintenance and improvements of SES buildings, along with associated administrative costs.

**6. The local actions undertaken in advance of and/or in respect of the 2010/2011 flood events in relation to resourcing, coordination and deployment of any personnel and equipment.**

Ahead of expected significant rains / cyclones, that may potentially lead to isolation and/or power outages, generators are pre-deployed at critical infrastructure such as Water and Sewerage Treatment and Pumping facilities.

Also where possible, Council plant is placed in areas that may eventually be isolated to assist with repairs and response at these times.

Relevant operational crews, administrative and emergency response personnel were placed on standby, over the Christmas period ahead of the predicted wet weather event.

**7. The local actions undertaken in respect of the 2010/2011 flood events in relation to immediate management, response and recovery operations, including the coordination and deployment of personnel and equipment.**

Wet weather started in early December and in fact the Gladstone Region was included in a declaration for NDRRA funding as early as 6 December 2010.

However, the real issue for a Disaster Management perspective commenced in the lead up to Christmas when on 21 December advice was received from the Gladstone District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) Inspector Graham Coleman regarding upcoming severe weather for the region.

The Disaster Management system managed reasonably well throughout the event. Council's Coordinator Disaster and Emergency Management had the opportunity to ask Inspector Coleman on 5 January 2011 of any issues he may have had with GRC's Disaster Management response and he advised that there were no management issues from this region.

In fact, for the most part the event was handled at agency level – the most appropriate level – and only specific issues such as resupply, planning for evacuation, liaison with Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB), the DDC, Police and other agencies as well as a medical resupply in the Baffle Creek area needed to be coordinated at a disaster management level.

Of initial concern was the level of the Awoonga Dam. It had begun overflowing the spillway on Sunday 12 December, over a week earlier. Liaison commenced with GAWB on 21 December regarding possible scenarios depending on rainfall amounts and intensity. This liaison was ongoing with advice provided on dam levels and rates of rise a number of times daily.

A meeting of the LDMG was held on Wednesday 22 December 2010 to inform members of the current situation and the possibility of an escalation to the situation that may require further meetings of the group.

SES conducted a letter drop on the morning of Friday 24 December to those properties identified as possibly being affected by a 1:100 flood event downstream of Awoonga Dam.

On Tuesday 28 December, when dam levels were approaching the height of a 1:100 event (45.3m), and significant further rainfall had been forecast, a preliminary advice from GAWB of a potential dam height in excess of the 1:100 year flood level was received based on inflows at that time and further predicted rainfall for the catchment, further modelling was pending to confirm levels, however it was considered prudent to open the LDCC at 0900.

Police doorknocked identified properties on this day to raise awareness and reinforce the message previously provided.

The Tanyella Conference Centre was established as a welfare centre should evacuations be necessary and people did not have family or friends to go to.

With rain easing within the catchment and the threat of flooding from the dam diminishing due to decreased levels of inflow, highest level reached was 44.094m at approximately 1300 – 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010, 1.206m below a 1:100 flood level and the tidal influence in flooding mitigated by moderating tides following the high tide at approximately 1445 (predicted high tide was 1.2m below HAT) – 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010, the LDCC was closed and operations reverted to officer and agency level.

The focus quickly shifted to the Discovery Coast area. Agnes Water/Seventeen Seventy handled the situation well organising transport by air and sea into and out of the town.

The opportunity was taken to resupply stores in Agnes Water with stock items via the return trip of one of the vessels that brought people to Gladstone.

Community resilience is promoted as a mitigation factor in disaster events and this resilience was particularly evident in the Boyne Valley. Officers spoke with the Ubobo Store owner on several occasions and he was able to arrange resupply himself. It is positive contributory actions such as this that assist the overall response to events.

It became necessary to organise a medicine drop to a number of properties in the Baffle Creek area. This was initially coordinated by the Rosedale SES Acting Group Leader and finalised and conducted through the work of Council officers in acquiring a helicopter and liaising with the relevant parties in Bundaberg.

The Helicopter was arranged through MI Helicopters of Hervey Bay and released by Ergon Energy (Maryborough) who had it under contract.

GRC Customer Service and Call Centre staff did a tremendous job throughout the period fielding calls for assistance and collating information regarding the performance of Council's infrastructure (roads, water, and sewerage), a significant volume of calls were received during the period 25<sup>th</sup> December – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010. Information regarding the closures and performance of Council's road network were posted to the website, as advised to local community members prior to the event, at the height of the rainfall and localised flooding the site received 60,000 visits per day, compared to an ordinary daily average of 900 visits.

From Council's perspective, the Gladstone Region SES performed extremely well in trying conditions and continued to do so when deployed to Gracemere to assist with the Rockhampton flood event.

**8. Any local measures taken or requested to preserve vital infrastructure and to manage, maintain or reinstate the supply of essential services (water, food, power, transport, communications and/or sewerage) during the 2010/2011 flood events.**

No measures were taken or requested to preserve vital infrastructure (water, sewerage, electricity, communications), as no such infrastructure, to our knowledge, was either directly threatened or at risk.

Transport routes were severely interrupted, both within the region, and also outside of the region which directly impacted supply routes from:

- South (Bruce Highway cut at Gin Gin, and then subsequently several days later at Gympie);
- North (Yeppen Flood Plain, Rockhampton) ;
- West (Theodore, Rolleston and Taroom).

The interruptions of transport routes *within the region* were communicated in the local media and website, and as flood waters receded and trouble spots made "trafficable" by Council roads crews, subsequent re-openings were advised.

The local areas in the Southern parts of the Gladstone region are subject to isolation as a result of flooding within the Baffle Creek system, isolating the townships of Agnes Water / 1770 and the communities of Baffle Creek and Rosedale. A barge was used to resupply the community of Agnes Water / 1770 with essential foods, whilst within Baffle Creek & Rosedale a helicopter was required to resupply medicines to several properties. Resupply was also required with the Boyne Valley area, with a local resupply organised by the shop owner, this area was isolated whilst the Awoonga Dam levels were greater than 41.5m (or 1.5m over the dam wall) and local roads cut in the Boyne Valley, which saw practical access cut to either Miriam Vale or Monto.

Liaison with DDC/DDMG was maintained throughout the period, regarding current stocks of food, medicines and fuels within the Gladstone region. No resupply was performed within the Gladstone area until transport routes around Gympie were cleared.

**9. Any information received or obtained concerning weather and flood forecasts or warnings, and the steps taken to disseminate that information to the community before, during and immediately after the 2010/2011 flood events.**

Council receives advice of weather situations in two forms, one, initial warnings of severe rainfall events, flooding information and other BOM warnings through the automated system established by the Bureau, this information is then distributed upon receipt to the following officers within Council:

- Chief Executive Officer;
- Local Disaster Co-Ordinator;
- Deputy Local Disaster Co-Ordinator;
- Co-Ordinator – Disaster & Emergency Management.

Secondly, by direct contact from Bureau of Meteorology or the District Disaster Co-Ordinator (or his representative).

In respect to the initial rainfall period in the region (3<sup>rd</sup> December – 13<sup>th</sup> December), only warnings were via the automated BOM system.

With respect to the predicted severe weather event over the Christmas Period, initial advice was received from the District Disaster Co-Ordinator on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2010, of impending wet weather of up to 600mm over the period between 23<sup>rd</sup> December and 27<sup>th</sup> December, with the likelihood of rainfall being in the order of 100mm – 200mm per day during that period.

During the rainfall event continual updates were received through BOM warnings directly, and participation in teleconferences from 23<sup>rd</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> December, that provided updates from BOM through the State Disaster network.

Following this initial advice Media Releases were issued to the community on the following occasions, copies of same have been provided to the commission in the information previously forwarded from Council:

- 21<sup>st</sup> December – “Gladstone Region residents urged to prepare for further flooding” – advising residents of the predicted rainfall and urging preparatory actions be taken by residents who may be impacted by isolation;
- 23<sup>rd</sup> December – “Residents urged to notify Council of flooded roads” – advising residents of contact numbers for updating road conditions over the period, and reinforcing community safety messages;
- 27<sup>th</sup> December – “Boyne Tannum residents – Potential Flood advice” – advising of predicted flood levels at Awoonga Dam and advising residents of flood risks at high tide, if further rainfall in dam catchment.
- 31<sup>st</sup> December – “LDMG keeps watching brief” – advising of current status of LDMG following rains and advising of status of various roads.
- 31<sup>st</sup> December – “Mayor commends local disaster management efforts” – thanking community members and volunteers that assisted with re-supply in Baffle Creek and Boyne Valley .
- 19<sup>th</sup> January – “Council urges residents to check flood assistance eligibility” – advising primary producers and small business owners of flood assistance programmes that they may be eligible for .

During the heaviest rainfall and the period immediately subsequent (26<sup>th</sup> December onwards until all roads are open, roads are still closed as at 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011 due to flood damage), Council's website was constantly updated by Council's 24hr Call Centre staff, with respect to the current status of road closures and flooding information within the region based on information provided by Council officers, Emergency Services and the general public. 60,000 web site visits were recorded at the peak of the flood event. These updates were also issued as a media release daily from 13<sup>th</sup> December.

Gladstone Area Water Board, dam operator, Awoonga Dam, continually advised updates to Council officers by text message and telephone (over the Christmas period) and email at other times of both current dam levels and predicted levels. Ahead of the severe wet weather event over the Christmas period – GAWB modelled several scenarios for the LDMG based on current dam levels at the time and various rainfall levels, and updated this modelling both after rainfall on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December to predict maximum dam levels based on the information available to them with respect to inflow rates and also predicted rainfall. This information was used as the basis for LDMG decision making and the basis for advice to residents in the Boyne Tannum Q100 flooding area.

A notice to residents in the Q100 area of Boyne/Tannum was issued on 24 December advising of expected rainfall, and urging preparatory action should the rainfall eventuate and advising that further advice would be pending should emergency action be required. Notices were distributed by SES members to approximately 550 properties, downstream of Awoonga Dam, within the Q100 flood area, and areas immediately adjacent thereof.

Police doorknocked as follow up on 28 December the same properties identified above advising of predicted dam levels, and to be prepared to evacuate should the situation escalate at the high tide, or further rainfall be experienced within the region.

**10. In relation to item 9, an indication of the source/s, accuracy and timeliness of that information for local purposes.**

As identified in 9 above, the sources of information were primarily from Bureau of Meteorology, and with respect to the Awoonga Dam, information was also being forwarded to the LDMG from GAWB.

Information was provided in a timely manner from the Bureau with respect to the major weather during the Christmas period, the information provided gave an indication of what to expect generally.

Given the nature of the event the information was both timely and relevant.

With respect to the information from GAWB, the reading information provided was both timely and accurate, the predicted dam levels were not as timely or accurate, due to:

- the outsourcing of the hydraulic modelling;
- the nature of the rainfall within the catchment and some inflows not being reliably estimated;
- the reliance on Bureau predicted rainfall.

A dam level of approximately 46m was advised as a predicted height over the dam wall, however, given a combination of all of the above factors the actual maximum height was 44.094m.

Both GAWB and Council are looking at improving the flood warning network both upstream and downstream of the Awoonga Dam to improve the accuracy of these models, and to improve warning capacity within the Boyne River system.

**11. Any local measures undertaken to protect life and private/public property in connection with the 2010/2011 flood events (such as road/bridge closures, evacuation arrangements, etc), and the steps taken to disseminate information about those measures to the community before, during and immediately after the 2010/2011 flood events.**

As noted in 9 above, and other sections of this statement, media articles and continual education campaigns (in all media formats – print, electronic, radio and local television) were conducted by Council with respect to flood awareness, flood preparation, travelling and crossing of flooded roads both in the lead up to the wet season and during the wet season. These advices and media opportunities, were all concerned with raising awareness and maximising the community's opportunity to protect property and life in such events, and increasing awareness around community resilience regarding essential supplies such as foods and medicines should areas be subject to isolation.

Council's road crews were placed on standby during the period and staff were called in over the period to assist with the maintenance of Council's road network during the period, placing appropriate warning signs on roads and bridges, and providing road situation updates to the 24hr call centre to facilitate advice to the public through the website and media releases.

Notice to residents in Q100 area of Boyne/Tannum on 24 December 2010 and 28 December 2010, were detailed in Q9 above, preparation of the Tanyella Conference Centre was placed on standby from an evacuation perspective but was not required to be activated, this was advised to the community through notices to residents in the affected areas on both the 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> December.

**12. The circumstances of any rescues or evacuations performed in the local area in connection with the 2010/2011 flood events, including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof.**

The SES was requested by Police to extricate stranded German tourists from the Kroombit Tops National Park. Members of the Calliope SES Group responded to this request on Christmas Day but, after locating the tourists, were themselves stranded when attempting to return to Calliope.

All attempts to retrieve the SES members and tourists, or to arrange food drops to them, were impeded by continuing rain and low cloud which meant access by land or air was not possible. They were finally rescued after 4 nights.

This was achieved by the use of a large earthmoving vehicle provided and driven by the owner under Police direction.

This rescue activity was organised and performed by the QPS under normal search and rescue procedures, not as part of the disaster management response.

No managed or requested evacuations were undertaken during the event.

There were some voluntary and self arranged evacuations from the Agnes Water/Seventeen Seventy area by commercial ferry/barge services that accessed both Gladstone and Bundaberg.

**13. The circumstances of the establishment, and subsequent operation and performance, of any Evacuation Centre/s in the local area, including an assessment of any particular difficulties encountered.**



The Tanyella Recreation and Conference Centre (Tannum Sands) was established as an evacuation centre should evacuations be necessary for those residents in the Q100 area of Boyne Island, Tannum Sands and surrounding areas where people did not have family or friends to go to.

This was not required, however it did highlight that if more than one centre needs to be established in the region difficulty may be encountered in managing and providing services to the centres. This is due to the limited personnel and resources available to the community groups who assist in this regard.

Of particular concern for future events is the potential for Council, the LDMG and the disaster management system as a whole to manage the numbers of evacuees emanating from the workers construction camps on Curtis Island that are associated with the developing LNG Industry. The numbers for this will potentially be many thousands, given that one project alone is looking at housing several thousand workers in this manner.

**14. The circumstances of any flood-related human fatality within the region, including the measures taken to prevent and/or respond to such fatality, during the 2010/2011 flood events.**

Council is not aware of any flood-related fatalities being recorded in the Gladstone region.

**15. Any involvement had with State or federal agencies, including particularly the Queensland Police Service, in relation to the provision of emergency response measures, personnel, equipment, services or logistical support, together with an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof, during the 2010/2011 flood events.**

Normal involvement occurred through the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG).

Regular communication and liaison was maintained with QPS, QAS, QFRS through the LDMG and Council's disaster management staff, during the event and there was no issues encountered with respect to the performance of any of the aforementioned emergency services during the period.

All local Police stations assisted Council with road closures and reporting throughout the event.

BOM provided information through its website and clarification of forecasts particularly relating to further predicted rainfall on 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010 was sought by direct contact from Council to the Bureau, in particular the Severe Weather and Flood Warning sections.

Gladstone Area Water Board, is the operator of the dam and is a Category 1 commercialised Water Authority under the Water Act 2000 and is responsible to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. GAWB provides advice to the LDMG as required with respect to dam issues, and as they have hydraulic modelling capacity with respect to the Awoonga Dam catchment, GAWB provided continual updates, and forecasted peaks during rainfall events such as in December. A close relationship exists between GAWB and Council, and information was readily provided to the LDMG and Council officers which was subsequently forwarded to the DDMG.

Council would like to emphasise the importance of solid, positive working relationships with all agencies involved in the disaster management system. With the recent changes to the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the relationship with the QPS is now even more important. The Gladstone region has been fortunate to have a LDMG (and members) and DDMG (and

members) that enjoy a good working relationship that has fostered positive outcomes to the community during emergency situations.

**16. The nature and timing of any communications with the disaster management hierarchy, including particularly any communication had with the District Disaster Coordinator (DDC), the State Disaster Coordinator or the State Recovery Coordinator, and whether any direction/s were given by the DDC and the nature of any such direction/s.**

Normal involvement through the DDMG on a regular basis with regard to information updates regarding issues within the Gladstone region.

Regular text messaging and verbal communication via mobile telephone to confirm water levels at the Awoonga Dam occurred for a number of days at the height of the flooding event.

No direction was given by the DDC to the Gladstone LDMG or to the GRC.

No contact with the State Disaster Coordinator or the State Recovery Coordinator.

**17. An assessment of the adequacy of equipment and communications systems in the local area during the 2010/2011 flood events.**

Unfortunately on Thursday 30 December communication was lost with the Baffle Creek community due to the damage to an optic fibre cable in the vicinity of Bundaberg, this was for a period of approximately 24 hours up to midnight on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> December. This was rectified with the installation of a temporary cable laid across one of the traffic bridges in Bundaberg that crosses the Burnett River.

To some extent this was overcome via the use of email to the Rosedale Acting SES Group Leader who had a satellite service, this helped facilitate the ongoing emergency response during the outage.

Otherwise communications within the remainder of the Gladstone region were satisfactory during the period.

**18. An assessment of the adequacy of the community's response in the local area during the 2010/2011 flood events.**

For the most part the community heeded the numerous advices and warnings of emergency services and the LDMG during the flood events, due to regular media releases in all forms by the LDMG over this past "wet" season, this event, and prior years.

There were instances of panic buying, that were exacerbated due to other "isolated" communities that would ordinarily source supplies from Rockhampton, and to a lesser extent Bundaberg, sourcing supplies from Gladstone and substantially reducing stocks within the region. Overall this resulted in a number of supplies running out in Gladstone and the towns of Boyne Island / Tannum Sands, Calliope, Mount Larcom and Miriam Vale.

Overall the communities throughout the region responded well to the events. It was fortunate that this region did not suffer as badly as others including those adjacent to our boundaries.

**19. Any measures being proposed, planned or implemented to prepare for, mitigate or manage future flood events (such as the installation of automatic river gauges, culvert management, levee construction and the like).**

This event has reinforced the need for better monitoring and alert system in our primary flood threat areas of the Boyne River and the Baffle Creek system.

Preliminary discussions were held with BOM and GAWB regarding this as early as July last year and it was determined that a network needs to be established in the Boyne River downstream of the dam, in the Baffle Creek system at Essendean Bridge and again further downstream as well as in the Dam catchment to allow better modelling and prediction of possible events.

This will also allow for the development of flood classifications such as Minor, Moderate and Major within each of these systems. This is something that does not exist at present and will be invaluable in planning for preparedness and response when we know river levels and what effects these have on the surrounding areas.

It is intended that these systems will be included as part of an application for funding during the next round of the Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP) and will be incorporated as part of 2011-12 Council budget considerations.

Additionally, a flood mitigation project within Gladstone City funded under the arrangements of the Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP) which was deferred until after the current wet season is scheduled for completion prior to the next wet season.

More detailed evacuation planning will be undertaken (with or without EMQ assistance) to better prepare for future events, however unless residents respond to advices and warnings in a timely manner, problems will occur, particularly with regard to isolation and the inability to relocate or access evacuation centres.

Site specific traffic warning signs are being designed and costed for erection prior to the next wet season. These signs will be located at Agnes Water, Miriam Vale and at a site to be determined near Bundaberg. They will provide an indication as to whether road access is possible along the Bundaberg to Miriam Vale Road at Essendean Bridge (over Baffle Creek on Tableland Road), at Needle Flats and at Alligator Flats (both locations along the Fingerboard Road).

Further, the development and formalisation of arrangements of community based groups to assist the LDMG and Emergency Services with the effective flow of information before, during, and after an event. It is believed that community based groups working with the LDMG, will play a vital role in building community resilience in areas that may be subject to isolation, during disaster events.

**20. Advice as to any special consideration that should be given the local area by reason of particular regional or geographic differences.**

Continual isolation of the Agnes Water/Seventeen Seventy and Baffle Creek (Discovery Coast) areas due to low bridge and road levels of the Bundaberg-Miriam Vale Road, which comprises the Essendean Bridge on Tableland Road across the Baffle Creek as well as the low lying areas of Needle Flats and Alligator Flats on the Fingerboard Road, all of which are a State Government responsibility.

This has implications for police and emergency services as well as resupply and transport issues. With no hospital in the local area, the nearest is in either Bundaberg or Gladstone, emergency evacuations during these times can only be facilitated by aero-medical services.

Additionally, the Baffle Creek area can be isolated in a number of "pockets" due to low-lying access roads and the area does not have a substantial store for supplies of food or fuel.

Therefore residents are isolated from themselves to a certain degree. This area does not have a local Police or QAS presence and rely on the volunteer SES and Rural Fire Brigade for assistance at these times, which places a strain on these volunteer organisations.

The Discovery Coast area's community of interest is Bundaberg where they access their supplies, as well as service providers such as doctors and chemists. This also creates some issues for management when trying to arrange resupplies of food and medicines, given that the resupply arrangements are being facilitated out of an area which there is limited local knowledge.

The Boyne Valley area to the south west of the region is also prone to isolation, particularly when the water level at Awoonga Dam is at 41.5m (1.5m over the dam wall). As it can take many weeks for this water level to return to one that will allow for through traffic on the Gladstone-Monto Road (a State road), this also provides resupply and other issues such as access to medical services, similar to the issues experienced in the Baffle Creek area.

**21. Advice as to any feature of the disaster preparation and planning stages or the disaster response and recovery operations which presented particular difficulty or may require practical or legislative change to improve future disaster management in the local area.**

Resupply policy would appear to be onerous and time consuming. In most cases the relevant documentation can be completed "on the fly" as was evidenced in this instance.

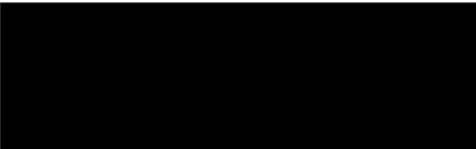
Information is not being provided to the local level by the facilitators of the disaster management system. The only way officers discovered up to date policies or guidelines was to search the web, resupply policy was an example of this. Local Government is the foundation of the Disaster Management system, however, the dissemination of vital information to Local Government is often overlooked by State Government agencies.

After guidelines, policy or procedures are released it is unrealistic to expect local government or LDMG's to develop planning arrangements or local policies within a matter of days, particularly if significant community consultation is required. Further if there are no briefings from policy setting bodies or associated training, consultation or assistance provided, the implementation of such mandates is compromised.

An example of this was the release of the "Draft Evacuation Guidelines" by Emergency Management Queensland, a copy of which was not provided to Council officers until 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010, given the early onset of the wet season, this work was not complete for 2010/11 "Wet Season", and yet expectations from State Government bodies, including QPS, was that this work was complete, when this opportunity had not been afforded to Council to apply the "Draft Guidelines".



**MARK HOLMES**  
Local Disaster Co-Ordinator  
GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL  
25<sup>th</sup> March 2011



**MARK LARNEY**  
Acting Local Disaster Co-Ordinator  
GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL  
25<sup>th</sup> March 2011