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PREPARING FOR NATURAL DISASTER RECOVERY

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR RECOVERY

"The road to recovery is never easy and something you have to work on every single day."

Mal Churchill, Disaster Planning Coordinator, Fraser Coast Regional Council

OVERVIEW

Natural disasters of a variety and range of events, be it a cyclone, flood, earthquake, animal or plant diseases or whatever can arise at any time.

State and Local Governments have in place Disaster Management Plans that allows them to **Respond to and Recover from** such disasterous events. However, only so much can be done by levels of government. Crucial to achieving effective outcomes during and after an event evolves around having a resilient community, a community that can stand their ground in the face of adversity and the associated repercussions from a disaster.



The need to recover, and have the community 'back on it's feet' as soon as reasonably possible is integral to minimising vulnerability factors into the future. You are often asked 'are you prepared' and asked to get ready. So ask yourself - how is your level of resilience to cater for the demanding aspect of 'recovery' should you be affected.

Recovery is not simple. Recovery is not a single process. Recovery can be quite complex and at times very protracted as reflected in bygone cyclones such as Larry (2006), Yasi (2011), Oswald (2013) and Marcia (2015). The devastation caused to individuals and communities, the environment as well as the economy are now well documented. The impact brought on by these events, for example, the flooding throughout the Fraser Coast region that followed Oswald in 2013, had tremendous physical and psychological impacts on persons along with environmental impacts on nature and ecosystems, structural damage to infrastructure and many businesses.

OVERALL RECOVERY IS PURPOSEFULLY STRUCTURED INTO VARIOUS CATEGORIES:

- Human and Social
- Economic
- Environment
- Infrastructure including Roads and Transport

SOME COMPLEXITIES

- Affected individuals and communities have diverse needs, wants and expectations
- Events lead to a range of effects and impacts that require a variety of approaches; they can also leave long term legacies
- Conflicting knowledge, values and priorities among individuals, communities and organisation may create tension
- Events create stressful environments where grief or blame may also affect those involved
- Information on impacts is limited at first and changes over time
- The achievement of recovery is often long and challenging

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communications with communities is crucial. The Fraser Coast Regional Council acknowledges this fact, during the 2013 flood event, communities became isolated and communication systems were grossly affected. There was no possible output from the Local Disaster Management Group to community and there was no medium to obtain feedback from that community. The two way flow of communications was obliterated. This communications flow is one of the desirous points during a response phase and when transitioning across to recovery. To combat this factor into the future the Council has developed a number of Community Coordination Committees across the region and two way radios have been installed in a number of community halls. By this mechanism there is now a system in place where these communities will receive relevant information to feed back to their community. Importantly the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) can obtain a clearer understanding of the impactors, needs and wants of individual communities especially when transitioning across to the recovery phase. Why not become a member of one of these committees in your area?

SOME HUMAN AND SOCIAL ASPECTS



Resilient individuals and communities require little inspiration and empowerment. However, successful recovery whilst focusing on the core individual/communities there is an ardent need for them to be an active participant and this includes managing their own recoveries to the best of their ability. It is here that community leaders or established Community Coordination Committees will come to the fore. Who best knows their community? The community members themselves. This does not mean that one community has to walk down the same path as another. The community has the right to choose a different path to another, but be flexible to the changing needs that will eventuate over time during the recovery process.

IS THERE A RECOVERY PLAN

Don't leave 'Get Ready' to the last minute. It's up to you. Recovery is a major facet of disaster management that all levels of government take extremely seriously.

DOES THE FRASER COAST LDMG HAVE A RECOVERY PLAN?

Yes it does and energetically employs the basic principles of the plan right down to the factor of conducting community debriefings across the region. There is no 'running around in circles'. The actions are synergised – the community and the council. In other words 'getting the community input and feedback' which the LDMG enthusiastically requires to proceed with Recovery functions.

RECOVERY COMMITTEES

LDMG ensures that recovery is broken down into various recovery component committees aside from the Human-Social committee.

The following committees are established after an event:

• ECONOMIC

The committee examines the impact on key economic assets with a view to stimulating the renewal of economic growth - facilitating business assistance renewal and recovery - ensuring the businesses and industry groups are involved - loss of business confidence - quality of life factors.

• ENVIRONMENTAL

This committee identifies and advises on environmental and cultural heritage impacts and risks caused by the event (e.g. air and water quality; soil and groundwater; landscapes; ecosystems and wildlife, heritage places and indigenous cultural heritage). Rehabilitation and conservation by supporting the natural recovery of impacted earthy, aquatic, marine ecosystems, wildlife and landscapes and natural resources are crucial. This would be achieved by ensuring that environmental bodies, affected communities and interest groups are involved in the process.

• INFRASTRUCTURE

The Infrastructure Committee undertakes assessment of housing, commercial and industrial buildings and structure as well as rural structures. The coordination of building safety inspection, securing damaged building and structures, coordinating the demolition of unsafe buildings and structures. This leads to the coordination of disposal of hazardous material and associated debris. The Infrastructure Committee also examines schools, public buildings, sporting facilities and public playgrounds. The Committee would also consider any requirements of restoration should a dam be affected. One crucial characteristic is to get affected roads, bridges and other transport back to a functional level via the relevant agency.

I THINK WE MAY NEED TO
UPDATE OUR DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN.
THIS ONE SUGGESTS WE ALL RUN
AROUND IN CIRCLES SHOUTING
'WHAT DO WE DO???' 'WHAT DO WE DO???'



HUMAN AND SOCIAL RECOVERY COMMITTEE

Some of the essential and fundamental issues that this committee will be involved in are:

- Provisioning of physical health and emotional support
- Public safety and and education support
- Temporary accommodation
- Psychological, spiritual, cultural and social wellbeing support
- Personal support and information
- Undertake needs assessment, monitoring and social impacts
- Community support and the restoration of community support services and networks
- Financial assistance (See Community Recovery Support)

VARIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL PHASES



NORMAL FUNCTIONING

- **Shock and Denial**
Avoidance, Confusion, Fear, Numbness, Blame
- **Anger**
Frustration, Anxiety, Irritation, Embarrassment, Shame
- **Depression and Detachment**
Overwhelmed, Blahs, Lack of energy, Helplessness
- **Dialogue and Bargaining**
Reaching out to others, Desire to tell one's story, Struggle to find meaning for what has happened
- **Acceptance**
Exploring options, A new plan in place

RETURNING TO MEANINGFUL LIFE

- **Empowerment**
Security, Self-esteem, Meaning

COMMUNITY RECOVERY SUPPORT

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services is the responsible agency for the Human and Social Recovery activities.

This includes the provisioning of financial assistance to **affected individuals, families and not-for-profit organisations**. This assistance can be accessed under a grant known as Immediate Hardship Assistance. Obviously there is certain criteria that must apply. These being:

- Live or be stranded in the targeted activation zone
- Unable to meet immediate essential needs
- Unable to seek support from family and friends and
- Demonstrate direct impact such as loss or damage to home, loss of essential personal items and/or isolation from home for more than 48 hours.

OTHER GRANTS

- **Essential Household Contents Grant** (If you are uninsured or unable to claim insurance you may be eligible for financial assistance to provided a contribution towards replacing or repairing essential household contents, such as beds, linen and whitegoods that have been lost or damaged in a disaster)

To be eligible you must meet all of the following criteria:

- » Live in a disaster affected area where the grant is activated
- » Be uninsured or unable to claim insurance to replace or repair the household contents
- » Qualify the income test (check www.qld.gov.au/community/disasters-emergencies/essential-household-contents)

- **Structural Assistance Grant** (If you are uninsured or unable to claim insurance you may be eligible for a one-off payment as a contribution towards repairs to your home to make it secure and safe. Eligibility criteria is to meet all the following:

- » Live in a disaster affected area where this grant is activated
- » Own or be mortgagee of the home, caravan or boat
- » Be living in the home, caravan or boat at the time of the disaster (it was not your primary place of residence)
- » Be uninsured or unable to claim insurance for the structural repairs
- » Meet the income test.
- » This grant is **NOT** available for repairs to investment properties, e.g. holiday houses or rental properties or assets such as caravans and boats that are not used as primary places of residence or for pre-existing damage prior to the event.
- » See www.qld.gov.au/community/disasters-emergencies/structural-assistance-grant/

- **Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Grant**
If you are uninsured or unable to claim insurance you may be eligible for a grant to help you reconnect essential services that were damaged by a disaster. There are two part to this poarticular grant namely:
 - » Inspection: up to \$200 towards a safety inspection for each essential service needing reconnection (electricity, gas, water and sewerage or septic system)
 - » Repair: up to \$4200 towards repair work to enable essential services to be reconnected (e.g. electrical wiring)
- **To be eligible you must meet the following criteria**
 - » Live in a disaster affected area where the grant is activated
 - » Be the owner or mortgagee of the home
 - » Be uninsured or unable to claim insurance to replace or repair your household contents
 - » Qualify under the income test
 - » See www.qld.gov.au/community/disasters-emergencies/essential-services-safety-reconnnection/grant/



SELF RECOVERY APP

The Queensland government has launced a Self Recovery App to provide access to vital information about disasters and emerencies in Queensland. The App features vital tips for preparing for disasters and cleaning up after them and includes:

- Insurance information
- Personal and family support
- Business support
- How to volunteer
- How to donate goods and services
- How to make a financial contribution

There is also very useful interactive features e.g. if you are in a disaster affected area, you can register your interest in receiving assistance from the Queensland Government via a mbile entry form.

TO DOWNLOAD THE SELF RECOVERY APP, VISIT

Apple <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/selfrecovery/id942944983?mt=8>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=comunities.gov.au.disasterrecoverydroid&hl=en>

LOCAL COMMITTEES

The Fraser Coast LDMG has an established Local Social Wellbeing Committee (LSWC) who work in a 'hand in glove' approach with the District Recovery Committee.

LSWC meets throughout the year, disaster or no disaster. However, it is fully activated usually at what is known as LEAN FORWARD which is a heightened level of awareness and operational readiness within the Local Disaster Coordination Centre. This is the activation status of the LDMG when a disaster or potential disaster event may be expected.

Components of the LSWC group are responsible for the opening and functioning of Evacuation Centres until the primary evacuation organisation of Red Cross can adequately staff and manage any such evacuation centre.

In addition the LSWC consists of core members of a wide variety of community focused organisations such as Red Cross, Department of Communities, Uniting Care, Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels and other support agencies that may be needed dependant on the nature of the disaster event.

SOME OTHER KEY OBJECTIVES ARE:

- Provide advice to persons with disabilities
- Provide health and other related services advice that may be needed or as directed
- Have available a list of suitable resources and wellbeing groups
- Assist in arranging emergency accommodation for disaster affected persons



Follow the FCRC website on www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au or FCRC Facebook site on www.facebook.com/FCRCdisaster



DISTRICT RECOVERY COMMITTEE

HUMAN & SOCIAL RECOVERY

In the second tier of the disaster management arrangements for Queensland known as the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) one key function is to ensure that recovery arrangements are prepared for, planned for and implemented, when necessary, to support the LDMG.

The Fraser Coast DRC is an integral part of the DDMG and also has a solid working relationship with the Local Social Wellbeing Committee. The Chair of the Fraser Coast DRC falls into the domain of the representative from the Department of Communities. The DRC purposefully conjointly meets with the LSWC to ensure continuity of recovery activities across affected areas within the Fraser Coast.

WHAT IF I AM A PRIMARY PRODUCER?

Natural disasters can affect primary producers in many ways. It may be that damage is sustained to:

- Dwelling
- Crops
- Animals (including housing)
- Equipment
- Machinery
- Stock and storage structures
- Business records

If your farm has been affected by a natural disaster you should immediately assess how everything has been affected. By doing this you will know what to do when you enact a recovery process. You can find out more by going to the following websites:

Disaster recovery for livestock farms:

www.qraa.qld.gov.au or

www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/agriculture/rural-disaster-recovery/disaster-recovery-for-livestock-farms

Disaster Recovery for crop farming:

www.qraa.qld.gov.au or

www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/agriculture/rural-disaster-recovery/disaster-recovery-for-crop-farming

EMOTIONAL OR CRISIS SUPPORT

Confidential emotional or crisis support is available through various agencies that are members of the Local Social Wellbeing Committee, or contact can be made with one of the following:

- Phone 13 11 14 to speak to one of Lifeline's trained volunteers 24 hours a day
- 'Beyondblue' can support persons experiencing depression and anxiety so go to www.beyondblue.org.au



**DO YOU HAVE A
BUSINESS CONTINUITY
PLAN – WILL YOU BE
ABLE TO WEATHER
THE STORM?**

WHAT IF I HAVE A BUSINESS?

You should have in place a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) of which part should be a Recovery Plan. This will assist to get your business up and running again and shorten the recovery time, achieve functionality and be able to address other critical business activities.

If you don't have a Business Continuity Plan, it is imperative that you do, no matter what size your business. There are excellent examples of Business Continuity Plans and Guidelines on the following website, www.business.qld.gov.au/business/business-continuity-planning

You need to understand that a natural disaster will not only affect your business premises and stock but also your employees, customers and even your competitors may also have been grossly affected. If you have a Recovery Plan as part of your Business Continuity, then you will have covered issues such as contact with your insurance provider, cleaning up the premises safely and being able to make a general assessment of your business.

Look at the following sites:

www.qraa.qld.gov.au or

www.business.qld.gov.au/business/running/disaster-resilience-and-recovery/natural-disaster-assistance

on this website you will also find a Natural Disaster Recovery checklist that outlines the steps you can take to help get your business back on track, thereby providing yourself the best chance of recovery after a disaster event.

Natural disaster assistance for small business may be available. Please visit www.qraa.qld.gov.au for more information.

THIS BROCHURE IS A GUIDE ONLY.

It does not encompass every conceivable aspect of Recovery nor does it cover every conceivable impact from a disaster but it does provide suitable information as a guide as well as contacts in which to seek out further information. Please remember you have a responsibility to be prepared so "Get Ready" now.

ARE YOU GOING TO BE BETTER PREPARED?

**TAKE THE STEPS NOW TO
GET READY, OTHERWISE,
IF YOU FAIL TO PLAN YOU
PLAN TO FAIL**

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS & CONTACTS

EMERGENCY - POLICE/FIRE/AMBULANCE		000
Disaster Coordination Centre (when activated)		4190 4999
State Emergency Service		132 500
Ergon Energy	Customer Service	131 046
	Faults 24 hours	132 296
	Life Threatening Emergency	131 670
Police (non-life threatening)		4123 8111
Fire (non-life threatening)	Hervey Bay	4325 6666
	Maryborough	4190 4801
	Rural Fires (Area Office)	4190 4839
Ambulance (non-life threatening)		131 233
Hospitals	Hervey Bay Public Hospital	4325 6666
	Maryborough Base Hospital	4122 8222
	St Stephens Private Hervey Bay	4120 1200
Marine Rescue	Hervey Bay	4128 9666
	Sandy Straits	4129 8141
RACQ (road closures)		13 19 40
Fraser Coast Regional Council	General Enquiries	1300 79 49 29
	Water & Sewerage Emergency	1300 79 49 29
Bureau of Meteorology		www.bom.gov.au
Queensland Disaster Management		www.disaster.qld.gov.au
Council Website		www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au
BE ALERT AND LISTEN OUT FOR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) siren sound at the beginning of serious warning on radio & TV. • Emergency Alert voice messages to your landline & your mobile telephone. • Sirens & loud-hailer announcements or door knocking may also be used by Emergency Services & Council. 		
Local Radio Stations: ABC AM - 855 AM, Sea FM - 101.9 FM, ABC FM - 100.1 FM, Mix FM - 103.5 FM		