PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNINGS SUB PLAN

VERSION 1.0

SCENIC RIM
Regional Council

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All requests for additional or clarifying information regarding this document are to be referred to:

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Endorsement

The Scenic Rim Public Information and Warnings Sub Plan, version number 1, dated 16 October 2020 has been endorsed by the Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Group, in accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

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Randall Deans
Manager Health Building and Environment, Scenic Rim Regional Council
Local Disaster Coordinator, Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Group

Dated: 28 October 2020

The Scenic Rim Public Information and Warnings Sub Plan, version number 1, was adopted by the Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Group on 16 October 2020, in accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

The Scenic Rim Public Information and Warnings Sub Plan is hereby approved for distribution.

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Cr Greg Christensen
Mayor, Scenic Rim Regional Council
Chair, Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Group

Dated: 4 November 2020

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1. Administration and Governance

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Sub Plan is to provide for the effective dissemination of accurate, useful and timely public information and warnings to the public during disaster events. This will provide a framework for the provision of public information and warnings inclusive of Emergency Alerts to be sent to the affected communities of the Scenic Rim region to prepare, respond and recover from events.

Each disaster event is unique and adaptations to this material may be required. The *Disaster Management Act 2003* Section 23(f) and 30(e) both state that a function of a Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) respectively: to ensure the community is aware of the ways of mitigating the adverse effects of an event, and preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster.'[1]

This Sub Plan should be read in conjunction with:

- *Disaster Management Act 2003*
- Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP)
- Scenic Rim Regional Council Media Policy (CM01.01CP)
- Scenic Rim Regional Council Social Media Policy (CM01.02CP)
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Emergency Alert Manual
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services PPRR Guideline

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Public Information and Warning Sub Plan are to:

- Identify the legislated authority for warnings and alerts.
- Define emergency services and supporting agencies responsibilities.
- Document the Emergency Alert and Standard Emergency Warning Signal process.

1.3 Authority

This plan is developed by Scenic Rim Regional Council under the authority of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* and in line with the Queensland Emergency Alert Manual (M.1.174; 2018)

This plan forms a sub plan of the Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) and will be managed in accordance with the administrative and governance processes outlined within the LDMP including approval, document control, distribution and review.

1.4 Activation

This plan outlines avenues the Scenic Rim LDMG will take to better inform the Scenic Rim community of significant emergency or disaster events within the region, also considering events outside the region that can affect the community's health, safety and wellbeing. The LDMG Executive (Chairperson and Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) are responsible to ensure the activation of this plan, and that agencies on the LDMG maintain communication to ensure accurate and timely information is also shared for the Scenic Rim community during disaster events. Significant support is given by Queensland Fire and Emergency Service

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[1] *Disaster Management Act, 2003*

(QFES) to assist in preparing and submitting critical information, such as an Emergency Alert (EA) and Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) if the event requires such an activity.

Continual information is being shared during non-disaster periods by Scenic Rim Regional Council through media platforms to maintain disaster engagement and education, to better prepare and build resilience to the Scenic Rim community.

This sub plan is supported by the:

- Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Plan
- Scenic Rim Evacuation Sub Plan
- Scenic Rim Recovery Sub Plan[2]
- Seqwater Emergency Action Plans

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[2] The Scenic Rim Recovery Sub Plan is currently in development and not available.

2. Introduction

2.1 Information during disasters

Local Governments are responsible for the management and operations of "local" warning systems and communications channels. Public information, warning and community awareness activities should continue before, during and after an event in line with existing local government processes. These processes, products and public information and warning strategies should be monitored for continuous improvement post the disaster event.[3]

The provision of public information is focused on information for a community to make informed decisions and actions to be taken. Multiple media platforms including radio, television, print, social media, local warning systems, websites and other channels are used to disseminate public information and warnings during an emergency or disaster.

The Scenic Rim LDMG is responsible for ensuring the community is aware of ways to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from, a local disaster. This incorporates raising awareness of identified risks and the means by which the public should respond individually and/or at a household level.

Under this plan, the Scenic Rim LDMG, is the official source of public and media information for the group's coordination and support activities. On LDMG activation, public warnings will be distributed through the LDCC, upon recommendation of the lead agency and the LDC, if time permits, and where possible on the authorisation of the Chair of the LDMG, or delegate[4]

2.2 Warnings and Alerts Training

Training in Warnings and Alerts is essential for agencies to develop and maintain their capability and capacity to engage the community in emergency or disaster event[5].

Section 16A of the Disaster Management Act 2003 outlines the legislative requirement of persons involved in disaster operations are appropriately trained to maintain and enhance capability under the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA).

All roles at the local, district and state level can complete the training on an as needs basis, as shown in the Queensland Emergency Management Training Framework (QEMTF), H.1.027 Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework[6], Queensland Prevention Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline, www.disaster.qld.gov.au.

2.3 Vulnerable Communities

The Scenic Rim region is currently home to approximately 40,000 residents. Over the past five years, the population of the Scenic Rim region has grown by 3,538 persons, or an average annual rate of 1.8%, higher than the average for Queensland (1.6%)[7].

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[3] Queensland Disaster Management Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) Guideline, (2017) p. 61

[4] Scenic Rim Regional Council, Local Disaster Management Plan, (2019) p. 55

[5] Queensland Disaster Management Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Recovery (PPRR) Guideline, (2017) p.7

[6] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 10

[7] Scenic Rim Regional Council, Local Disaster Management Plan, (2019) p. 26

Certain communities within Scenic Rim region may need to be specifically targeted for emergency or disaster information due to their increased vulnerability to the impacts associated with the event, or due to the time frame in which it will take them to evacuate.

An example of this, heatwaves are known to occur throughout the region. Heat healthcare to the vulnerable communities should be considered, in collaboration with local health care facilities and where possible the Scenic Rim LDMG[8].

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides the following estimates in relation to vulnerable people in the community for the Scenic Rim from 2020-2023[9]

Disability Type	Min	Max
Autism	402	614
Developmental Delay	82	183
Disability caused by Injury	63	106
Down Syndrome	35	75
Intellectual Disability	182	320
Mental Illness Associated Disability	91	200
Neurological Disorder	130	201
Participants with Physical Disabilities	69	129
Vision, Hearing, Speech or Other Sensory Impairments	96	175

Table 1 Disability Profiles for the Scenic Rim region (2020-2023)

It is the responsibility of the LDMG to perform the risk assessment process and collaborate with local organisations and agencies relating to the identified vulnerable groups regarding their specific needs that will need to be considered in the communication process and will be done prior sending the Emergency Alert (EA) campaign if applicable.

For an example; a specific location within a township or region may require the same severity of message, however instructed with a specific activity to other areas of the township or region. This could be an evacuation route or a specific action according to their demographic, topography or the nature of the disaster event.

3.   Communications

Public information is one approach that builds community resilience to better prepare the community to future disasters. Activities that engage and educate the local community about risk and preparation can enhance the impact of information and warnings during actual disaster events[10].

Warnings on their own will not assist everyone all the time, due to many factors of the individual, their situation and decision-making[11]. This is considered an important factor when the Scenic Rim LDMG is distributing information to the community. Many methods are utilized during disaster situations to ensure full awareness of the disaster situation and immediate instructions are given to that community.

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[8] Scenic Rim Regional Council, Local Disaster Management Plan, (2019), p. 43

[9] National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Demand Map https://blcw.dss.gov.au/demandmap/

[10] Public Information and Warnings, Handbook 16, (2018), Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection, p. 3

[11] Public Information and Warnings, Handbook 16, (2018), Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection, p. 3

3.1   Monitoring of Social Media

During all stages of a disaster event, the Scenic Rim Regional Council, acting in its capacity within the Scenic Rim LDMG conduct monitoring activities across multiple media channels to ensure that the most accurate and up-to-date information is able to be accessed.

Social media can be an invaluable asset to help the Scenic Rim LDMG provide convenient, quick and effective dissemination of information to a mass audience, however it can also allow for the spread of incorrect information.

It is therefore vital that social media channels be monitored, and corrections offered wherever possible. This is the responsibility of the agency or organisation that maintains that social media channel. Council's Regional Prosperity and Communications business unit manages and maintains all Scenic Rim Regional Council's media channels.

When engaging with a social media audience, the Scenic Rim LDMG and lead agencies will act in the best interests of the wider community, providing feedback that mitigates any undue concern caused by inaccuracies. Reference should be made to official warnings to ensure timely information and updates. It is important to update the original post about an emergency or disaster to ensure incorrect information isn't being circulated.

Warnings and messages will be reinforced by formal language and strong calls to action where required to ensure that the urgency of the situation is appropriately promoted.

Sharing of social media publications between Council, state and lead agencies that effect the community within the Scenic Rim region will be discussed through the Scenic Rim LDMG or through prior arrangements.

> Social media will work best with an audience that is already well engaged in the online presence. It is worth considering that social media in the emergency or disaster management sector should be utilised on a regular basis outside of disaster situations, to ensure the audience is fully engaged to the use of social media and its capability.

4.   Emergency Messages

The Scenic Rim Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) and Scenic Rim LDMG will follow the [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual M.1.174](#) to apply the decision to warn the local community when;

- there is a direct and likely threat to the community;
- there is a potential for loss of life and/or a major threat to a significant number of properties or the environment;
- the community needs to act in some way such as relocate to a safer location, prepare property and/or be aware of information;
- there is adequate time to process and approve the use of an Emergency Alert (EA) to disseminate the community warning; and
- the time of the emergency or disaster situation, such as, a community needing to be warned and/or act urgently in a short period or in the night.

4.1.1. *Case Study*

During the bushfires in 2019-2020 which impacted the Scenic Rim, it was found that public information sharing was effective at both the tactical and political level with engagement from local, national, and international media outlets(for Sarabah Bushfires). Whilst there was good sharing of information from the lead agency, there were instances found where the information capabilities of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and the Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Group were not known to one another or coordinated together.[12]

Learnings:

- Council can expect to see intense media attention (both domestic and international) during events, due to the existence of high-profile tourism destinations and its proximity to the state capital.
- An effective strategy for media engagement, management and messaging, includes a coordinated approach by QFES, QPS and the LDMG Chair, in particular around the conduct of combined media interviews.
- Live Facebook messages from the Chair of the Scenic Rim LDMG was a good platform, but there needs to be coordination of messaging with all agencies.
- Monitor agency specific information that could be out of alignment with official information (e.g. Rural Fire Brigade local Facebook pages)
- Consider the establishment of a joint communications team of QFES, QPS and Council for future events to ensure coordinated messaging is achieved.

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[12] Report 1: Lessons from the September – November 2019 Bushfires, Scenic Rim Regional Council p.12

4.2   Severity of Messages

The Scenic Rim LDMG implements the national tiered arrangements related to warning and advice messaging which is consistent with the [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual (M.1.174)](#), 2018.

The EA system does not follow a strict policy of 'first in first out' when processing campaigns.

Campaigns with a higher priority (severity) will take precedence over those with a lower priority to enable messages to be sent to those in greater danger, priority 1 being the highest and priority 3 being the lowest.

The below table provides guidance on when the EA system may be used and the relationship with the three alert levels.

Message Severity	Priority	General Meaning
ⓘ Advice	**3**	There is <u>no immediate</u> danger. General information to the community about their local area which requires awareness and/or monitoring.
! Watch and Act	**2**	You <u>may be</u> in danger. The community is likely to be impacted by the emergency and should start taking action to protect life and family.
‼ Warning	**1**	You are in danger and must take action <u>immediately.</u> The community will be impacted by the emergency. Voice messages will be preceded by a four (4) second sound of the **SEWS**, followed by the words **"Emergency, Emergency"**.

Table 2 Message severity[13]

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[13] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018)

4.3 Method of Distribution

Methods of distribution of public information and warnings will vary between emergency or disaster events and the availability of resources and technology during the event. The below table provides guidance on some of the distribution methods that will be utilised and determined by the Scenic Rim LDMG during disaster events in consultation by the Hazard Lead Agency.

Mode of Distribution	Delivery Methods
Radio	Written and approved radio public announcements with key messages. Also pitch for interviews for Chair of Scenic Rim LDMG
Television	Arrange interviews with key messages from Chair of Scenic Rim LDMG
Newspaper	Arrange interviews for key messages from Mayor as Chair of Scenic Rim LDMG.
Council Phone System – Messages on Hold	Implement pre-recorded messages using same script as television and radio advertisements.
Council Website (https://www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/)	• Maintain content distribution network to host emergency information for the website. • Reset home page to the disaster management website (http://disasterdashboard.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/)
Council's Social Media Outlets; Facebook & Twitter	• Maintain increased monitoring and posting on Scenic Rim Regional Council's social media channels • NOTE: Share Facebook posts from the Hazard specific lead agency of the emergency or disaster.
Person-to-Person	Door-knocking and/or similar practice.
Community Newsletter	Where necessary, disseminate a community newsletter via letterbox drop
Community Organisation Networks	Contact as per arrangements through the Scenic Rim LDMG, and through the most to date information at https://www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/our-community/for-residents/community-directory
Variable Message Sign (VMS)	• Use of Scenic Rim Disaster Management VMS Board. • Specific local messages at key locations.
Emergency Alert System	Key warning/advisory messages sent via: • SMS to mobile phones; and • automatic scripted voice recordings to landlines.

Table 3 Methods to deliver warnings and alerts

> ! It should be noted that the most desirable warning systems may not always be available during a disaster or event due to power outages or other service discuptions.
>
> The most effective methods available at the time of distrubtion should be utilised.
>
> Every effort will be made to ensure that the message is disseminated as widely as possible to the target audience.

4.3.1. *Case Study*

During the response to ex Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie in March 2017, the learnings were:

The LDCC was managing the Facebook page of over ~7000, but there is a need to manage comments, as it represented false information by third party stakeholders.
There is a need for spokespeople from the LDMG to have a consistent message being delivered by all agencies. The BoM notification of Logan River flooding were sometimes out of date, and therefore data cross check and validation is key to success. Queensland Police Service (QPS), based on a pre-prepared list of at-risk residents, were able to phone residents to initiate phone evacuations as required.

The process of issuing an EA was delayed because members between the LDCC and State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) had unclear process of the messaging requirements, slowing the release.

A number or residents located outside of the defined polygon for the EA were receiving them when the information didn't affect them (e.g. 2-3km outside the area that weren't going to be subjected to flood). This caused some confusion with residents.[14].

4.4   Organisational Roles and Responsibilities

The issuing of warnings and alerts is a shared role across the Scenic Rim LDMG. The below table provides guidance on which agency has primary responsibility according to the disaster risk.

Organisation	Responsibility	Lead Agency according to the LDMP[15]
Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)	Provides cyclone, flood (flood alert, flood watch and flood advice), severe storm (including thunderstorm), tsunami, gale winds and severe bushfire weather advices to media outlets.	
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAF)	Provides clear, accurate information about an animal/plant disease emergency and its implications and the progress of control or eradication procedures.	Emergency Animal & Plant Disease (Biosecurity Qld)
Department of Transport and Main Roads	For information on road closures on state highways (through 13 19 40 and website).	
Energy Queensland (Energex & Ergon Energy)	Provides information regarding power outages and power supply.	
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)	Coordinates media and public information regarding fire (urban & rural), chemical or gas emergency situations.	Rural & Urban Fire (Bushfire) and Hazardous Material
Queensland Health	For information regarding a public health epidemic or heat wave.	Communicable Disease

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[14] Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Group Debrief – ex STC Debbie – April 2017
[15] Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Plan, (2019), 7.14.3.1 Hazard Specific Response Agency, p 59-61

Queensland Police Service (QPS)	Has responsibility for providing information about a locally managed incident, including directed evacuations.	Road, Air & Rail Accident, Terrorism and Evacuation
Seqwater	Management and activation through the local SEQ Water Emergency Action Plans (EAP)s	
Scenic Rim Regional Council (SRRC)	Communicate to the local community in support to the Scenic Rim LDMG, LDCC and authorising organisations on request, in particular to Recovery arrangements there after a disaster event.	Flood, Cyclone, Severe Weather, Earthquake & Landslip and Place of Refuge / Evacuation Centre Management
Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)	For local information on road closures, traffic routes, evacuations, temporary shelters and evacuation centres, recovery centres, debris clean-up, and all matters relating to the activation of response and recovery of the LDMG.	
Scenic Rim Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC)	Coordination, management and implementation of this Public Information and Warnings Sub-Plan.	
Logan District Disaster Management Group (DDMG)	Advise and support the Scenic Rim LDMG in appropriate warnings and alert to the community, in collaboration with other LDMGs (LGAs), DDMGs and SDCC.	

Table 4 Organisational roles and responsibilities for warnings and alerts

4.5   Agency Specific Warnings

The process for the notification and dissemination of warnings is not a function dependent on the activation of the Scenic Rim LDMG; rather the automatic responsibility of the hazard lead agency, regardless of the Scenic Rim LDMG activation level. It is each organisation's responsibility to disseminate its own warnings as per their internal organisational procedures or plans. Consideration should be given to the specific needs of the exposed population with particular consideration of vulnerable community groups and how the dissemination of warnings will be best achieved to reach these groups.

However, as a hazard lead agency to the Scenic Rim LDMG, it is the responsibility of that agency to inform the LDMG Chair or LDC of any emergency or disaster event that occurs in the Scenic Rim area and that information will or has been distributed to the scenic rim community through their organisations procedures due to the importance and severity of the warning information required. Significant justification and purpose is required to be put forward to the Scenic Rim LDMG Chair and LDC for bypassing local communication and approval disaster management protocols.

4.5.1. *Emergency Action Plans*

Scenic Rim region has 5 referable dams that are managed by Seqwater. All referable dams must have an approved emergency action plan (EAP) in place. Under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*, and EAP assists in the;

- Identification, detection and management of dam hazards, as well as dam hazard and emergency events,
- How effective warnings and notifications are communicated to those potentially impacted.

The following EAPs are managed and maintained by Seqwater and have been approved by Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Group.

- Bromelton Dam Emergency Action Plan
- Maroon Dam Emergency Action Plan
- Moogerah Dam Emergency Action Plan
- Nindoonbah Dam Emergency Action Plan
- Wyaralong Dam Emergency Action Plan

The Emergency Action Plans are available to view here, https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/water/industry-infrastructure/dams/emergency-action-plans/map

The EAPs will assist the Local Disaster Management Group in distributing warnings and information to the Scenic Rim community if an event of such occurs, related to Dam failures.

4.6   Emergency Alert System

The EA system is a national telephone-based warning system that enables emergency services and local governments to send warning messages to landlines (voice message) and mobile phones (text message) in the event of an emergency or disaster.

The EA system is managed and administrated by QFES at the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC). A request to use the EA system can be made by the Scenic Rim LDMG approved by the LDC. The LDC is responsible for the approval of a request of an EA campaign that will be sent to particular geographical area with in the region[16].

The QFES representative on the Scenic Rim LDMG can assist in submission of the EA campaign as well as obtaining approval from the Authorising Officer (AO) within the SDCC.

It should be recognised that the EA campaign is only one way of warning the community, other methods should also be considered to ensure the warning is reaching the at risk community.

The EA system relies on telecommunications networks to send messages to targeted areas of the community about a likely emergency or disaster. The EA is sent using the Integrated Public Number Database (IPND) which contains all public and private numbers in Australia or the Location Based Number Store (LBNS) using telephone numbers in a geo-coded polygon.

QFES does not guarantee that each campaign will be approved for use. The emergency or disaster must have the risk of damage to property or loss of life, there must also be sufficient time to release the EA campaign to the effected community. Some emergencies. i.e. a microburst storm may need alternative warning messages and platforms[17].

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[16] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018)

[17] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018)

> The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, Emergency Warning Arrangements (2013) through the National Emergency Warning Framework states:
>
> *The purpose of an emergency warning is to inform the community of an impending or current threat and to prompt an appropriate response or action. The action that is required of the community is usually contained in the warning message, for example, 'seek further information', 'take shelter', or 'activate your emergency plan'.*
>
> *Emergency warnings are a primary tool for disaster management and play a significant role in the protection and resilience of Australian communities. Emergency warnings have the potential to significantly reduce the impact of disasters on communities, properties and the environment when they are combined with the community's understanding of environmental risks and disaster preparedness.*

4.7   Preparation of an Emergency Alert

In order to assist in the timely deployment of appropriate Emergency Alert, templates and pre-written messages have been created for the most common disasters that may occur in the Scenic Rim region, and are managed and maintained by the hazard lead agency outlined in section 4.4 Organisational Roles and Responsibilities in this Sub Plan.

Discussed in the Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, there are a number of specific pieces of information that should be included in an emergency alert campaign.

- The type of threat;
- The issuing agency;
- The affected area;
- What action is required;
- Information about where further information can be found; and
- Where relevant, the timing of the threat impact.

Consideration will be taken of local government boundaries and other significant land marks when preparing an Emergency Alert by the Hazard Lead Agency, understanding that information must be clear and concise with communication given to surrounding LDMGs that are experiencing the event to ensure they too are also aware of the EA campaign. [18]

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[18] Report 1: 2017-18 The Cyclone Debbie Review, Scenic Rim Regional Council, pg. 13

> *While it is the responsibility of **ALL** members of the Scenic Rim LDMG to provide warnings regarding imminent or existing hazards as they occur, it is important that the information being distributed to the public is consistent, accurate and aligns with lead agency / authority messaging.*
>
> *It is the responsibility of each lead agency (as outlined in Section 4.4: Organisational Roles and Responsibilities) to manage and maintain their own warning and alert templates and pre-prepared messaging.*
>
> *It is essential that **ALL** lead agency / authority warnings and alerts are communicated (via phone and written/email) to the Scenic Rim LDMG Chair and LDC before transmission commences. This is to ensure that all warning and alert messaging remains consistent and accurate and that the Scenic Rim LDMG can maintain adequate situational awareness.*

4.8   Approval

The LDC must approve all Emergency Alert campaigns that have been decided through the Scenic Rim LDMG prior to submission to the SDCC for Authorising Officer (AO) approval.[19] However, hazard lead agencies will take the initiative to send Emergency Alert campaigns as priority, then inform the Scenic Rim LDMG.

The Scenic Rim LDC should:

- Ensure stakeholders have the information they need to respond appropriately to the emergency or disaster;
- Ensure the ongoing flow of accurate information throughout the initial response period of the emergency or disaster; and
- Ensure that messages have been received by all relevant agencies, through the LDMG process

Once the EA template (Annexure A) has been completed or a pre-prepared message has been chosen by the LDC or delegate, they will be provided to the LDC for feedback, amendment and final approval. Only when the LDC has given approval, should the messages be deferred to the SDCC for dissemination. Other media means such as radio, internet and social media may be considered to support the EA campaign.

The DDC, SDC, QFES Incident Controllers (IC) or delegated officer of the referable dam owner (as listed in dam emergency action plans) can also request for an EA campaign to the region. If this occurs the person should ensure the Scenic Rim LDC or Chair of the LDMG are aware of this activity[20].

A record of the authorisation must be kept as evidence.

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[19] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018), p. 20

[20] Queensland Disaster Management Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) Guideline, (2017)

4.9   Release

Once an Emergency Alert has been completed and approved by the LDC, it is ready for submission to the SDCC. The QFES representative on the LDMG can assist in the submission of the EA campaign and obtain approval from the SDCC AO. [21]

Once the Emergency Alert campaign has been approved by an AO, the alert will be sent by the SDCC.

Whilst the SDCC is sending out the EA, the LDC should also liaise with the Public Information Officer within the Scenic Rim LDCC to ensure the warning, once it has been sent out to the community is correctly and widely distributed through other media channels.

Communication from hazard lead agencies within the Scenic Rim LDMG will also inform the Scenic Rim LDC of any Emergency Alert campaigns that have been distributed to the Scenic Rim community, taking into account the activation level of the Scenic Rim LDMG. This is to also continue the support of disseminating consistent and accurate information as widely as possible throughout the time of the event.

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[21] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 22

4.10   Message Format

This is consistent with the Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M.1.174, (2018).

EXAMPLE ONLY	
Header	SMS: - +61 444 444 444 Voice Message: Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) Siren "Emergency, Emergency"
The Name/Title of Warning[6]	Classification of Warning **(Advice, Watch and Act, Warning)**
Authority (Issuing Agency) Who is issuing the warning[6]	Authorising Agency
Event Type The type of threat[6]	Emergency/Incident Type **(fire, flood, cyclone)**
Severity How likely it is to happen / How bad it is expected to be?[6]	Advice on the Likely / Very Likely / Will of the Emergency / Disaster and severity Dangerous / Very Dangerous
Location [Free Text] **(Affected Area)** Where the threat applies / who is affected[6]	Township / District / Location (Can reference the number of kilometres)
Event Description [Free Text] **(Timing of the Threat Impact)** When it is expected to happen / The type of threat[6]	Impact / Threat Details
Response Instruction [Free Text] **(Action Required)** What to do[5]	Advice on what actions the community needs to undertake
Information about where further information can be found A point of contact for more information or to report events[6]	Advice on where further information can be sourced e.g. a telephone number, web site address.
Serial/Date/Time	Automated - generated by system

Table 5 General Message format[22]

> ❗ *Each hazard lead agency will be required to develop their own Emergency Warnings and Alerts according to the Roles and Responsibilities within this Sub Plan and the Scenic Rim Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP)*

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[22] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 17

4.11 Recommendations

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services have guidelines to follow when creating messages to be sent out through the Emergency Alert system.

The following recommendations will assist in the campaign being approved quickly, easily distributed and understood by the targeted area.

Recommendations include;

- Target campaigns are limited to 50,000 notifications;
- Do not put campaigns over large bodies of water or large uninhabited areas. This will slow the EA system down as it searches for numbers in the polygon.
- For a reassurance message request a female voice;
- For a call to action or alert request a male voice;
- For text alerts 160 characters is the maximum allowed, this includes spaces and punctuation;
- For voice messages it is preferred that the message is under 450 characters which will equal roughly 31 seconds of message. It will equal 35 seconds when it is a high Emergency Alert where the 4 second sound of the SEWS proceeds the campaign message;
- In certain circumstances the voice message system will allow up to 4000 characters. However, this will create a message of 4 or more minutes which is not recommended;
- QFES recommends Council's use complementary warning mediums as well as the EA system;
- For campaigns with a priority rating of 1 (Emergency Warning), it is recommended that a threat direction is included for voices messages if applicable. This allows for people closer to the threat to be alerted before people who are further away;
- Having pre-prepared polygons approved and stored with the SDCC for frequent disasters is recommended as it will assist in the message getting out quickly;
- Whilst the EA system can be very effective, agencies are required to monitor the effectiveness of the warnings and ensure the community reaction and response is obtained and appropriate; and
- When drawing the polygon use a simple boundary (few vertices i.e. square or rectangle) so messages can be delivered quicker.[23]

4.12 Technical Considerations

Detailed below are some technical aspects and considerations relating to the EA system and campaign.

Factors that will affect performance can include;

- The length of the SMS message to be sent to mobile services i.e. a maximum of 160 characters;
- The number of times an EA user utilises the speech translation preview function and the time it takes to validate that message;
- The priority assigned to each campaign, as a warning message will have a higher priority than other message types regardless of which jurisdiction released it;
- Whether messages are to be delivered to fixed line services, mobile services or both;
- The number of fixed and mobile line congestion events detected by a campaign;
- Whether there is extremely high use of the SMS network by the general public at certain key times and dates (for example, around midnight on New Year's Eve, Christmas day and where there are major events being held in a particular location);

- The likelihood of a campaign area experiencing a high usage of the network due to an existing emergency, event or incident, which will be exacerbated by the sending of EA messages;
- Complex maps take longer for the EA User to replicate an EA and due to the higher number of vertices in the polygon it may have a detrimental effect on the EA, particularly if multiple campaigns are running. There is also a risk that the polygon may not exactly mirror the original map;
- In areas where there is poor mobile coverage and / or power failure occurs, warning messages may only be received by particular members of the public;
- Telstra has no control over the performance of other carrier networks.[24]

Other considerations;

- When multiple campaigns are released and target areas overlap, the same resident may receive duplicated or slightly different messages;
- Resources must be available to answer phone enquiries from concerned residents; and
- Close cooperation is required with local media.[25]

4.13 Polygons

Polygons are used by the EA system to identify a particular geographical area where the warning needs to be sent to.

Preparation of polygons to support an Emergency Alert campaign should be done in a timely manner to ensure that warnings are provided swiftly. Polygons can be drawn on the day, coordinates may be sent in to generate a polygon or pre-prepared polygons can be used.

For a polygon to be stored in the QFES EA portal it will need to be drawn in advance and sent in to the SDCC for approval before it can be stored.[26]

The following tips have been provided to assist in drawing polygons;

- All mapping must be checked with the SDCC watch desk to ensure that it can be loaded into the EA system;
- The campaign area could also have reference to topographic or street maps;
- The polygon can be generated off of coordinates;
- Maps provided must clearly state; the boundaries and the direction of North;
- Priority (1) one campaigns should also include a threat direction in the polygon so those closest to the event may receive the message sooner;
- Polygons should be simple in design (square and rectangle are preferred) i.e. less vertices in the polygon results in a less complex boundary and will ensure messages are delivered quicker;
- Polygons must have straight side; curved sides will not be accepted; and
- Polygons with an open area will not be accepted. [27]

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[24] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 4-6
[25] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 4-6
[26] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 19
[27] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 31

4.14 Guidelines for using Polygons

It is the responsibility of the Hazard Lead Agency of the Scenic Rim LDMG to collaborate to develop and store appropriate predefined EA campaigns and polygons where appropriate, to their responsibility.

4.14.1. *Spatial Format*

EA campaigns have strict limitations for importing spatial data of predefined extents. To ensure accurate and timely alerts, spatial data must be provided to the SDCC in one of the following formats with all the required file extensions;

Geographic Information System (GIS) Format	Required File Extensions
KML (preferred option)	*.kml
ESRI	*.dbf, *.prj, *.shp, *.shx
GML	*.gml, *.xsd
MapInfo TAB	*.MIDI Sequence, *.mif
MapInfo Mid/Mif	*.dat, *.id, *.map, *.tab

Table 6 Polygon spatial formats

- KML files are the preferred format and can easily be created by most GIS products;
- Shape file to be supplied in Geographic's coordinate system using GDA94 datum;
- ESRI shape files must be created in a Geodatabase;
- Polygons are to be simple i.e. no circular / donut and no multipart shapes are to be provided;
- No spaces or special characters in the shape file name;
- No additional file extensions to those listed above, e.g. sbn which contains the spatial index format; and
- Polygon names should follow the file naming conventions.
- Polygons that have many vertices can slow the EA system. It is recommended to keep them as simple as possible (preferably under 15 vertices). However, there may be cases such as when modelling a flooded river that more complex shapes are required. Generally, these polygons are acceptable unless it covers a substantial quality of high-density dwellings such as high-rise apartments.[28]

4.14.2. *Projection definition using GIS*

When setting the projection as GDA94, ensure that it is not also incorporated in the zone. The Projection definition should be in accordance with the information detailed at http://spatialreference.org/ref/epsg/4283/

To change the projection to GDA94 (without the zone) in MapInfo;

- From the MapInfo menu bar choose Map > Options > Projection;
- Choose 'Longitude / Latitude' in the 'Category' box; and
- Choose 'Longitude / Latitude (Australia GDA94)' in the 'Category Members' box.[29]

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[28] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 31
[29] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 32

4.14.3. *File Naming*

QFES recommends the date be provided using the following file naming convention;

Hazard Name_Agency_Extent Number

- Where the Hazard Name reflects the type of event, such as a Tsunami;
- Where the Agency reflects, the requesting agency's name but it does not have to be fully spelt out; and
- Where the extent number is a unique identifier, such as _04.[30]

4.14.4. *File Size Limits*

The maximum email size that can be received by QFES at the SDCC from an external agency is 5 megabytes.[31]

4.14.5. *Storing GIS Files*

The Disaster Management (DM) Portal (https://www.disaster.qld.gov.au/Pages/DM-Portal.aspx) contains an Emergency Alert sub web where agencies can upload their EA campaigns, consisting of predefined polygons, message texts and voice.

4.15 How to Prepare Polygons

The Scenic Rim LDCC under instructions from the Scenic Rim LDC or delegate will use Guardian Control to develop appropriate polygons for Emergency Alert campaigns.

The below process outlines the steps to take;

STEP 1: log into Guardian Control LIVE Map - Road Status;

STEP 2: Select "Draw a Polygon" from the left-hand menu, draw the polygon and select finish;

STEP 3: Select " Export Drawn Polygon". Text within the dialog box is the "KML" data.

This information is to be sent with the QFES Emergency Alert Request Form (Annexure A)

As part of the LDCC SOPs, detailed advice is provided on the step by step process to develop the KML data for an EA polygon.

> **!** *This process is only used by the Scenic Rim IMT when activated to an emergency or disaster event. It is to be noted Emergency Alerts are released by QFES during a significant Bushfire event and as per other Hazard Lead Agencies, where the Scenic Rim LDCC is support to that agency.*

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[30] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 33
[31] Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, M1.174, (2018) p. 33

5. Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)

The Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) is different to the EA system. SEWS is a distinctive audio signal (warning siren) used in Australia to alert the public to the broadcast of an urgent safety message relating to an emergency or disaster, requiring immediate attention and a call to action.

The SEWS wailing siren sound is designed to attract the listeners attention to an impending emergency message for emergency events such as cyclones, flooding and severe storms, as well as emergency evacuations.

When community members hear the signal on the radio or television or at the start of an EA on the telephone, they should pay careful attention to the message that follows and act immediately on the advice given.

Authority to initiate SEWS is governed by the QFES Commissioner, QLD BoM State Manager or QPS Commissioner via the SDCC. EA campaigns that are urgent and require voice messages to be sent to landlines will have the SEWS tone play for four (4) seconds before the audio message begins, provision of an Emergency Alert[32].

Further information can be found in The Standard Emergency Warning Signal Manual, M.1.171 [33].

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[32] Queensland Disaster Management Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) Guideline
[33] Queensland Standard Emergency Warning Signal, M1.171, (2018) p. 5

6. Recovery Messaging

Public information should also be used to support the recovery and resilience of the community, be developing strategies with individuals and communities to prepare them for possible events and outlining how they will recover from such events[34].

The transition from response to recovery must be managed effectively ensuring public information strategies are readily available for the community to ensure no further hazard or secondary event is likely to occur in the near future[35].

Recovery messaging will be supported by the existing communication channels to the public referenced in this Sub Plan[36].

6.1.1. *Case Study*

During the fires in 2018-2019 which impacted the Scenic Rim region, it was found that information flow and pace during recovery slowed from that which was provided during response. There were areas of the community that took it upon themselves to establish recovery points, which were not connected into the Local Disaster Management system, and while done in good faith impeded the recovery effort.

Learnings:

- The Disaster Dashboard was updated constantly during the response phase, this slowed significantly during the recovery phase.
- There is a need to ensure engagement with remote communities in the local government area as well as the more populated areas.
- Community groups setup their own recovery networks, however whilst in good intent, they were not linked into the broader recovery effort being coordinated across Council's area.
- Social Media was an enabler for these local networks to start and maintain momentum.

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[34] The Scenic Rim Recovery Sub Plan is currently in development and not available.
[35] The Scenic Rim Recovery Sub Plan is currently in development and not available.
[36] The Scenic Rim Recovery Sub Plan is currently in development and not available.

7.   Annexures

7.1   Acronyms

AO	Authorising Officer
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
DDC	District Disaster Coordinator
DDMG	District Disaster Management Group
EA	Emergency Alert
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
ESRI	Environmental Systems Research Institute
GIS	Geographic information System
GML	Geography Markup Language
KML	Keyhole Markup Language
LBNS	Location Based Number Store
LDC	Local Disaster Coordinator
LDCC	Local Disaster Coordination Centre
LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group
LDMP	Local Disaster Management Plan
MIF/MID	MapInfo Interchange Format
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
IPND	Integrated public Number Database
PPRR	Prevention, Preparedness, Response & Recovery
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Qld	Queensland
QPS	Queensland Police Service
SDCC	State Disaster Coordination Centre
SEWS	Standard Emergency Warning Signal

SMS	Short Message Service
SRRC	Scenic Rim Regional Council
txt	Text
VMS	Variable Message Sign
XO	Executive Officer

7.2 Definitions

EA campaign	The dissemination of a number of Emergency Alerts with additional materials, such as maps of the potential warning area.
ESRI	System that supplies geographic information system (GIS) software
GML, KML, MIF/MID .sbn	File format used to display geographic data.
MapInfo TAB	Format is geospatial vector data format for geographic information systems software.
GDA94	Is a plate-fixed or static coordinate datum base. It is a standard map projection of Australia

7.3 Schedule of Tables and Figures

Tables

7.4 List of Annexures

ANNEXURE A: Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES) Emergency Alert Request Form
[NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE]

ANNEXURE B: Scenic Rim Regional Council (SRRC) Pre-prepared Emergency Alerts [NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE]

ANNEXURE C: Local Disaster Coordinator (Authorising Officer) Emergency Alert Checklist
[NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE]