

# Tablelands Regional Council



# Local Disaster Management Plan

## Evacuation Sub-Plan

V7 October 2023





## Acknowledgement of Country

**We acknowledge the Native Title parties across the Tablelands Regional Council area and other family groups who are the traditional custodians of this land. We recognise your continuing connection to Country and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging including:**

- Bar Barrum of the area around the Walsh River and to the west of the Wild River
- Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji of the Gillies Range area
- Girramay of the Kirrama area
- Gugu Badhun of the Wairuna/Lamonds Lagoon area
- Jirrbal of the Koombooloomba, Ravenshoe and Herberton areas
- Mamu of the Millaa Millaa area
- Ngadjon-Jii of the Malanda and Topaz areas
- Tableland Yidinji of the Kairi, Tolga, Tinaroo and Lake Barrine areas
- Warrungu of the Gunnawarra/Goshen area.



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## Version Control & Record of Amendments

Issue Date	Version	Outline of Revisions	Prepared by	Approved
16 October 2013	V1.0	V1 issued for approval at LDMG meeting	SD	RL
11 November 2013	V2.0	Reviewed as a result of de-amalgamation. V2 issued to LDMG for approval from January 1 2014.	SD	RL
5 November 2014	V3.0	Annual review – minor updates.	SD	RL
4 November 2015	V4.0	Annual review – minor updates.	SD	RL
16 November 2016	V4.1	Minor changes – LDMG Chairperson and new FNDDMG arrangements.	SD	JP
10 November 2017	V4.2	Annual review – minor updates.	SD	JP
18 December 2017	V4.3	Annual review – minor updates.	SD	JP
20 January 2021	V5	Changes to LDMG Chairperson and minor changes throughout.	SD	BW
15 December 2021	V6	Modernisation project – reissue of new version.	SD	BW
19 October 2022	V7	Annual review – minor updates including addition of evacuation decision timeline example	SD	BW
18 October 2023	V8	Annual review – minor updates.	SD	BW



## Section 1: Overview of Plan

### 1.1 Context & Assumptions

Evacuation is a strategy that can mitigate the adverse effects of a disaster on a community. Evacuation may be required pre-impact as a protective measure, or post-impact as a result of a loss of services.

The decision to evacuate is not taken lightly and is not without risk. Some disasters are slow-moving and provide ample decision and reaction time. The worst-case scenario is little to no warning of the need to evacuate. There may not be time to obtain support from outside resources and, as a result, local resources could be severely stretched.

Past events suggest that between 5% and 20% of those at risk will spontaneously evacuate before being directed to do so. Most of the community will act in their own interest and evacuate dangerous areas when advised by authorities. However, some people will refuse to evacuate, regardless of the threat, and owners of animals may refuse to evacuate unless arrangements have been made to care for their animals.

Evacuees will be encouraged to be self-sufficient and seek shelter with family or friends or use commercial accommodation providers. In some circumstances, evacuation centres may be established to meet the basic needs of evacuees.

Evacuation centres may be required for a few hours to several days. Only shelter and refreshments will be provided initially but, in an extended event, more substantial catering and support may be necessary.

If accommodation is required for a period beyond a few days, the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) will consult with the District Human-Social Recovery Committee.

### 1.2 Aim & Objectives of the Plan

The purpose of this Evacuation Sub-Plan is to outline the arrangements for the implementation of an evacuation of 'at risk' persons within the Tablelands Regional Council (TRC) area, and to provide guidance on how to establish and manage evacuation centres.

The objectives are to:

- identify the persons exposed and at risk
- document the process for making decisions to evacuate
- coordinate an organised movement of persons to a safer location and their eventual return
- establish and manage evacuation centres
- ensure basic human needs are met.

The sub-plan enables prompt decision making and allows for strategies to be refined by event-specific factors such as size, magnitude and likely impact areas. The number and location of evacuation centres will depend on the scale and extent of the situation.



## 1.3 Ownership

This sub-plan is owned by the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) on behalf of the LDMG. All significant amendments must be approved by the LDMG.

The owner will ensure the:

- master document is retained with relevant supporting documents
- level of circulation of the sub-plan is determined by the LDMG and details of copyholders are recorded
- sub-plan is updated and reviewed on at least an annual basis, or after activation, whichever is the sooner
- sub-plan is tested and exercised as determined by the LDMG.

## 1.4 Functional Responsibility & Support Agencies

Evacuation is the functional responsibility of Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the LDMG.

This sub-plan directly applies to member organisations of the LDMG.

## 1.5 Links with other documents

This sub-plan is interdependent on, and should be read in conjunction with, the LDMP. It links directly to all other sub-plans that respond to disasters, including the LDMG Emergency Contact Lists.

This plan also links to:

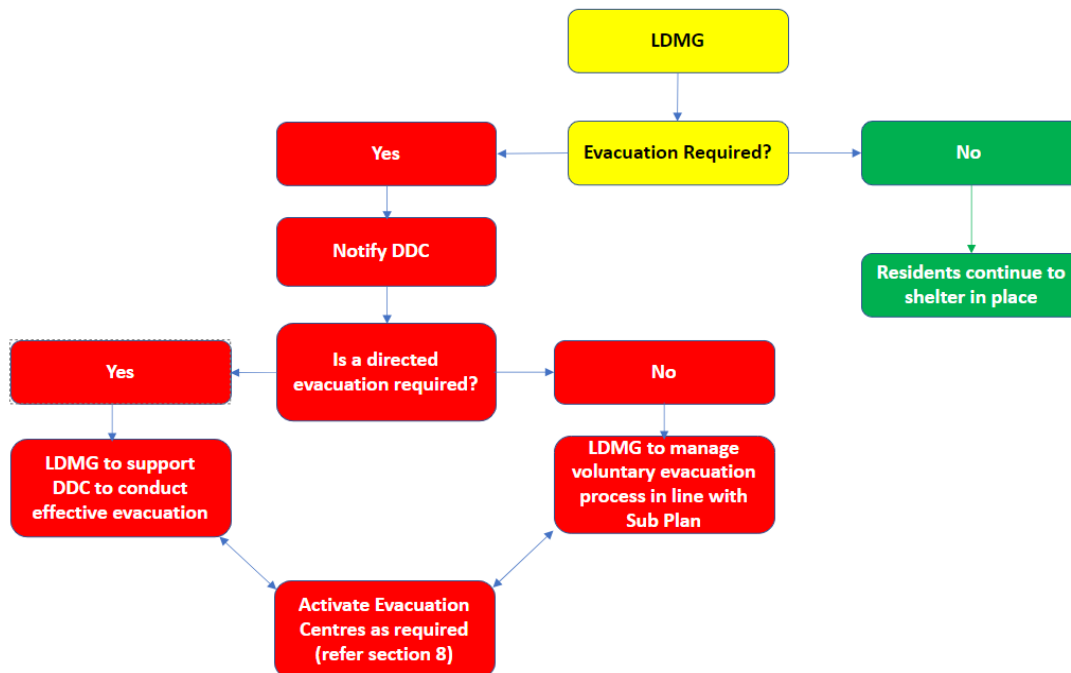
- [Evacuation: Responsibilities, Arrangements and Management Manual – M.1.190](#)
- [Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit](#)
- [Queensland Evacuation Centre Management Handbook](#)
- [Queensland Evacuation Centre Field Guide](#)
- Australian Red Cross COVID-19 Evacuation Centre Planning & Operational Considerations

## Section 2: Activation & Notification Procedures

### 2.1 Activation of the Plan

This sub-plan will be activated where the nature of risk to a community requires the movement of persons to a safer location to be coordinated by, or supported by, the LDMG.

### 2.2 Notification Flowchart



### 2.3 Notification Process

The LDMG will maintain a state of readiness for evacuation operations. All evacuation operations will be undertaken in close collaboration with the District Disaster Coordinator (DDC).

If a directed evacuation is not required, the LDMG may recommend voluntary evacuation and manage in accordance with this sub-plan. The decision to recommend voluntary evacuation will be made by the LDMG, subsequent to a situational briefing. If evacuation is deemed necessary, the LDMG will activate the Evacuation Sub-Plan.

If a directed evacuation is required, the DDC may declare a disaster situation under the *Disaster Management Act 2003*. The LDMG will support the DDC in conducting evacuations.

Evacuation centres will be activated as deemed necessary by LDMG to support evacuation operations. Refer to [Section 8](#).





## Section 3: Evacuation Strategy

### 3.1 Authority to Evacuate

There are three types of evacuations — self-evacuation, voluntary evacuation and directed evacuation. Refer to the [Evacuation: Responsibilities, Arrangements and Management Manual – M.1.190](#)

#### 3.1.1 Self-Evacuation

Self-evacuation refers to people who choose to evacuate prior to advice or direction from authorities.

#### 3.1.2 Voluntary Evacuation

The LDMG may recommend voluntary self-evacuation of a community at risk. Voluntary evacuees use private transportation to manage their own evacuation although the LDMG may need to provide transportation for evacuees in exceptional circumstances. Refer to the [Logistics Sub-Plan](#).

The LDMG may make a recommendation to the DDC to declare a disaster situation to enforce a directed evacuation of persons at risk. Refer to [Section 3.2.3](#). The LDMG has no legislative power to authorise a directed evacuation.

#### 3.1.3 Directed Evacuations

Directed evacuations are when an appropriate authority formally directs persons to evacuate to a safer location. Directed evacuation occurs when there is a declaration of an emergency situation:

- emergency situation under the provisions of the *Public Safety Preservation Act (PSPA) 1986* (by a Commissioned Officer of Police)
- emergency situation under the provisions of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* (by an Authorised Officer)
- there is a declaration of a disaster situation under the provisions of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (by the District Disaster Coordinator, with Ministerial approval).

General advice and direction in regard to timing, places of shelter, location and preferred evacuation routes should be provided to the community by the organisation undertaking the evacuation.

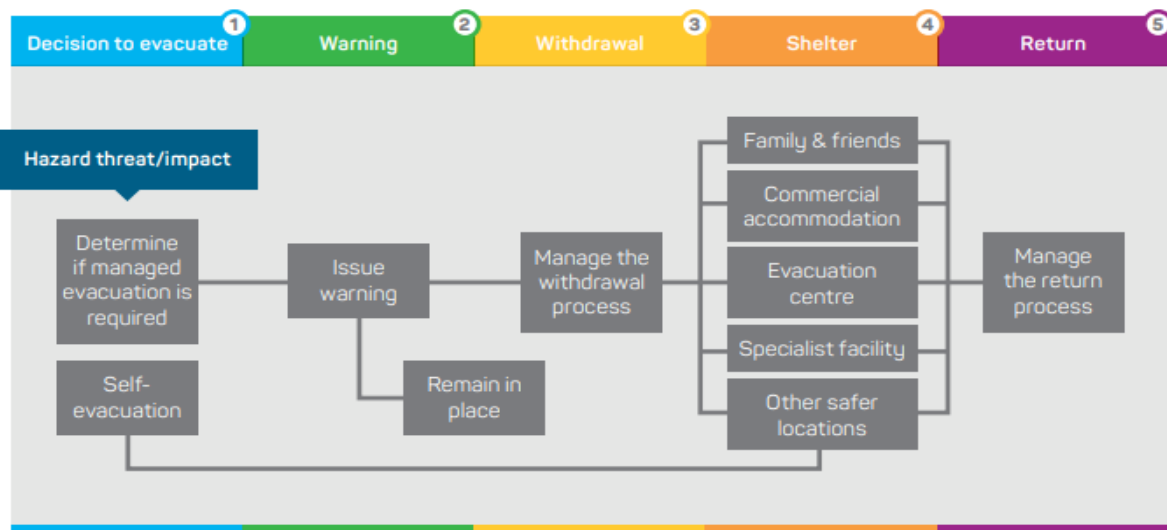
This sub-plan relates mostly to directed evacuations as a result of a declaration of a disaster situation. The LDMG can provide support to QPS and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services when undertaking directed evacuations under the PSPA or the *Fire and Rescue Services Act*.

### 3.2 District & State Support

The movement of evacuees requires local and district collaboration and may also require state-level involvement. Some individuals and groups in the community will require more assistance than others and support may be needed with evacuation centre operations. Early liaison with the DDC should be initiated, as positioning of state resources may take several hours to days to occur.

### 3.3 Evacuation Stages

The evacuation process is based on the [Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience National Evacuation Planning Handbook](#). It highlights the need to work with communities at risk well before a disaster occurs to mitigate negative impacts on the success of evacuations.



Evacuations involve five stages.

1. **Decision to evacuate** — decision makers analyse event intelligence and assess the need to evacuate persons.
2. **Warning** — disaster event conditions and appropriate actions are conveyed to the public.
3. **Withdrawal** — exposed persons are moved from a dangerous or potentially dangerous area to a safer location.
4. **Shelter** — refuge and basic needs are provided in evacuation facilities.
5. **Return** — the disaster area is assessed and return of evacuees planned.

Planning at each of these stages is crucial. The evacuation process must provide relative safety to evacuees. The decision to evacuate, the withdrawal process, the period of shelter and the return process should not expose the community to risks. An evacuation is not considered to be complete until all five stages have been implemented and the evacuated population has been returned (where possible) to their original location.

## Section 4: Decision Phase

### 4.1 Situational Analysis

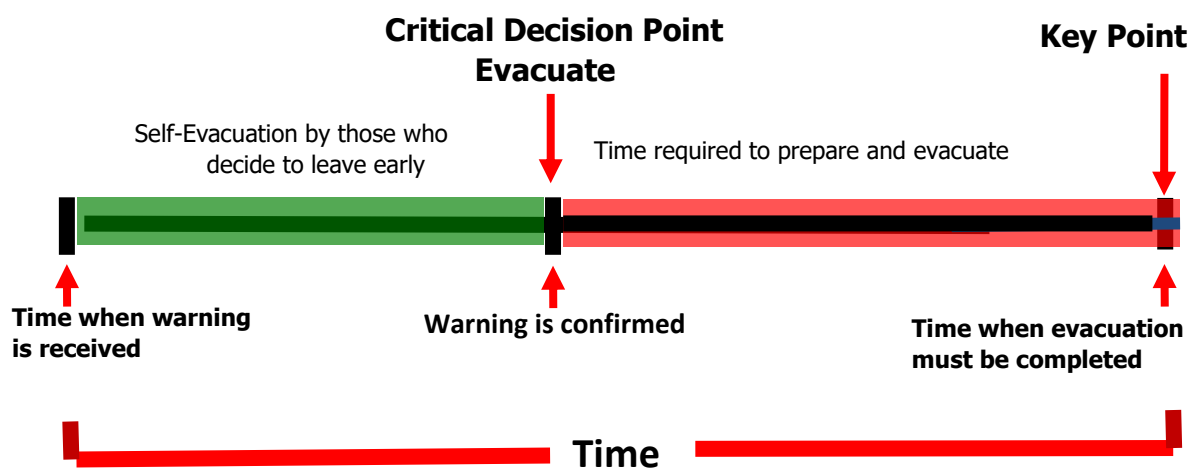
Evacuation is a last resort. The best advice will often be to shelter at home and await further advice. Reaching the decision that evacuation is required can be very easy — it becomes obvious that evacuation is the only sensible way of protecting the population. In other instances the decision is less obvious, and if delayed could cause substantial problems.

The decision to evacuate must be made in a timely manner to ensure it can be effectively implemented. The LDMG will analyse specific event information and intelligence and assess the necessity to evacuate. Factors that will affect the decision include:

- whether evacuation is the best option and if there are viable alternatives
- lead time and time required to complete the evacuation
- if the evacuation is voluntary or directed
- the number of persons and demographic of the population who require evacuation
- shelter and evacuation options
- specific transportation and other requirements for vulnerable groups
- availability and access to resources to effectively manage evacuation centres for the duration of the event.

### 4.2 Timelines

Understanding the timeline of hazard impact and how long it will take to safely evacuate is vital. Evacuation timelines guide the decision making for evacuation. Once a predicted impact time is assessed, planners work backwards, subtracting time allowances for warning and withdrawal. The resulting time is the latest time a decision can be made. The LDMG should develop evacuation timelines when the assessed impact of a hazard indicates evacuations may be required.



Evacuation Timeline - Example for a Major Flood

Latest Time for Decision	Time to develop and deliver Warnings	Time for Withdrawal	Safety Factor Time Allowance	Predicted Time of Impact



				Withdrawal Complete
<b>Example:</b>	1hour	4 hours	30minutes	
<b>8.30am</b>	9.30am	1.30 pm	2.00pm	<b>2 pm</b>



## Section 5: Warning Phase

### 5.1 Issuing Warnings

A warning to evacuate needs to be communicated when exposed areas have been identified, the locations of safer areas have been determined, and the decision to evacuate has been made.

The prime function of a warning is to elicit action from the community. If a warning does not describe the situation, risk and required actions in clear terms, then it will not be effective.

Sufficient warning time must be given to allow the movement of a population from a place of danger to a safer place, given the restriction of weather conditions, transport and the capacity of the road network.

Public information in relation to a recommended evacuation should include:

- areas to be evacuated
- evacuation routes
- evacuation centre locations
- lead time
- anticipated duration
- evacuation kit contents
- request to pass on information to friends and neighbours.

The community are also to be reminded of the need to take with them their Evacuation Kit which should contain details of prescription medications, food, water, clothing, and other personal supplies needed during an evacuation and to be a good neighbour and help others who may need assistance.

Refer to the [Public Information and Warnings Sub-Plan](#).



## Section 6: Withdrawal Phase

### 6.1 Withdrawal Phase

The withdrawal phase involves the safe and efficient process of relocating community members from hazardous or potentially hazardous environments to safer areas. The withdrawal phase should also consider a security strategy for the evacuated area to prevent unauthorised entry.

#### 6.1.1 Evacuation Routes

There are no pre-defined evacuation routes — they will be provided at the time of the event. TRC will work with QPS, State Emergency Service and Department of Transport and Main Roads to ensure designated evacuation routes are kept trafficable and clear of debris.

#### 6.1.2 Transportation

The LDMG may render assistance to people without the means to evacuate themselves. While many residents without their own transport will evacuate with friends or neighbours, it may be necessary to provide support to those requiring transport assistance. Refer to the [Logistics Sub-Plan](#).

#### 6.1.3 Evacuation of Vulnerable Persons

Education Queensland has developed evacuation plans for their facilities, which include the notification of parents and the involvement of school bus providers. Private day care providers are responsible for the development of their own evacuation processes.

Aged and disability care providers are responsible for their own evacuation plans and finding suitable alternate accommodation for their clients. These providers may seek assistance from the LDMG where the scale of the event is beyond their own resources and arrangements.

Caravan parks are often situated in hazard-prone areas. The permanent residents of these parks may be vulnerable. Caravan parks operators should ensure they have appropriate evacuation plans in place.

The LDMG may be required to support organisations that deal with vulnerable groups to effect evacuation.

#### 6.1.4 Animals

It is recognised that separating people from their animals during disasters can cause stress and some people may refuse to evacuate unless arrangements are made for their animals. Registered assistance animals are accepted at all evacuation centres. Public information on arrangements for pets will be provided to evacuees prior to withdrawal. Refer to the [Public Information & Warnings Sub-Plan](#).

Animals are not allowed in evacuation centre but may be able to be housed nearby. This provision is for small domestic animals only e.g. (dogs and cats) and not for stock (e.g. cattle, horses and goats).



## Section 7: Shelter Phase

### 7.1 Shelter Phase

The shelter phase provides for a variety of self-sheltering and sheltering solutions, where the community may take shelter with family and friends, at commercial accommodation, at a safer place or refuge, or in a designated evacuation centre. Shelter involves the provision for basic needs of people affected by the emergency, away from the immediate or potential effects of the hazard.

### 7.2 Assembly Point

An assembly point is a temporary designated point in a safe location. Assembly points are used to gather evacuees in one location prior to being transported to a place of refuge or evacuation centre.

It is helpful for evacuees to register their intended destination at the assembly point if they are not going to a place of refuge or evacuation centre.

### 7.3 Places of Refuge

Places of refuge are not cyclone shelters. There are no cyclone shelters in the TRC area.

The LDMG considers a place of refuge as an appropriate option for people with no alternative means of shelter. Places of refuge are buildings that have been assessed by the Department of Energy & Public Works to determine their suitability for use during severe cyclones (category 3+).

While the buildings selected have been assessed against strict criteria and hardened (where feasible), the LDMG cannot guarantee these facilities will withstand the impacts of severe tropical cyclones.

### 7.4 Designated Evacuation Centres

Evacuation centres may be provided for short periods of time to provide basic needs such as accommodation, food, water, information and personal support services. A list of designated centres is available in Guardian IMS.

## Section 8: Evacuation Centre Management

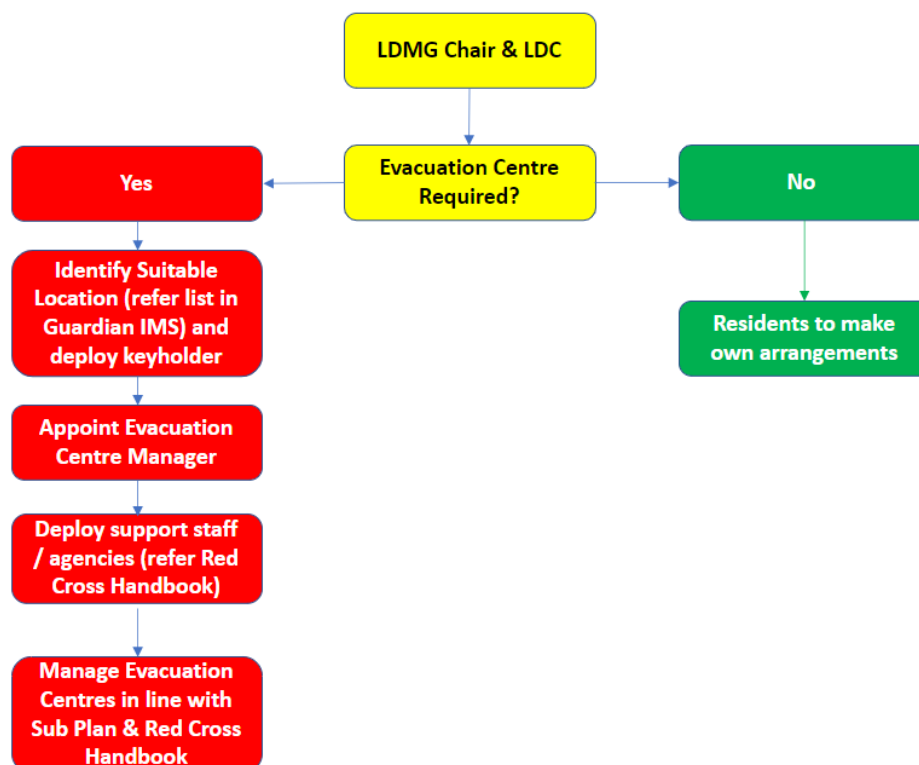
### 8.1 Decision to Activate an Evacuation Centre

The LDMG Chair and the LDC are responsible for the activation of evacuation centres. This decision should be made by the full LDMG where time permits. Consideration is given to if:

- there has been a request from emergency services to open an evacuation centre
- the LDMG has recommended voluntary evacuation of an area at risk
- the DDC has declared a disaster situation to enforce directed evacuation of an area at risk
- there is a perceived need relative to an impending hazard impact, where the LDMG recognises that the public may choose to self-evacuate
- there has been mass evacuations from a neighbouring area
- the numbers of evacuees requiring accommodation is likely to exceed local commercial accommodation capacity.

Evacuation centres will take some time to set up from the initial call. It is important that an early warning of a request is given as soon as possible from the requesting agency to the LDMG so the relevant agencies and appropriate resources can be deployed in a timely manner.

### 8.2 Activation Flow Chart





### 8.3 Evacuation Centre Locations

A number of buildings have been designated as evacuation Centres. Refer to [list in Guardian](#) for details and locations. These centres have assessed for suitability i.e. size, space, available parking, access, kitchen and bathroom facilities, ventilation, lighting, etc.

The nature and scale of the event will determine which evacuation centres are activated. It is also important to consider business continuity requirements and how long the centre may be required.

### 8.4 Managing Evacuation Centre Facilities

The management of Evacuation Centre facilities is scalable. Where the requirement is only to accommodate a few people for a short duration, TRC may elect to not activate a facility and support evacuees to access commercial accommodation. Alternatively, a small-scale facility with a few staff and / or volunteers may be opened with limited registration via Guardian IMS and limited support services.

In larger scale operations, Evacuation Centres will be managed in accordance with the [Queensland Evacuation Centre Management Handbook](#) and the [Queensland Evacuation Centre Field Guide](#). In these circumstances, TRC will activate an Incident Management Team of multiple agencies and will use the Guardian IMS system, Resident Intake Registration forms and / or the Register, Find, Reunite registration service forms to formally register evacuees. During large scale operations, TRC will work collaboratively with multiple agencies to provide various support services to evacuees.

The key considerations are:

- set up and layout
- management and staffing
- administration (briefings, debriefings, shift logs, handovers, finance, etc.)
- opening and closing
- reception, registration and departure
- catering and refreshments
- information point
- clothing
- medical support
- personal support
- animal management
- vulnerable persons
- sleeping facilities and arrangements
- security
- communications

### 8.5 Evacuation Centre Forms & Equipment

Copies of the forms to establish and operate evacuation centres are in [Guardian references](#).

Equipment to establish an evacuation centre and receive evacuees is held in store room two in the LDCC. The majority of evacuation centres will have some equipment on site that can also be used e.g. tables, chairs, etc. Additional resources can be requested via the LDCC who will source from TRC stores, local suppliers or through a formal request for assistance to the District Disaster Management Group.



## 8.7 Communication & Reporting

The Evacuation Centre Manager ensures the LDC is kept up to date with numbers at the facility, current situation, projected issues and resource requirements. The LDC will determine the frequency of reporting (e.g. hourly, daily, etc). There is a reporting template in [Guardian references](#).

When the LDCC is activated simultaneously, the LDC may delegate this liaison to the Logistics Team Leader. Refer to [Activation and Operation of the LDCC Sub-Plan](#).

### 8.7.1 Communications Equipment

The Evacuation Centre Manager will require access to communications to communicate with the LDC. It is recommended that a laptop and mobile phone is deployed to each Evacuation Centre as a minimum requirement.

## 8.8 Media

The Evacuation Centre Manager and other staff are not authorised to speak to the media and all media enquiries must be referred to the Public Information Officer.

Evacuation centres will attract media attention. Media will not be allowed access to the general areas to interview, photograph or record the evacuees. It is a matter for individual evacuees to decide whether to speak to the media outside the centre.

## 8.9 Finance

Requests for finance must be approved by the LDC. If the LDCC is activated, these requests will go via the Logistics Team. The LDC will determine what funding is available and provide advice to the Evacuation Centre Manager.

It is essential that a detailed log is kept of all expenditure at the Evacuation Centre. This should be supported by tax invoices. A financial statement may be required in accordance with the rules of the State Disaster Recovery Arrangements (SDRA) and Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Schemes. Refer to the [Financial Management Sub-Plan](#).

## 8.8 Closure of the Evacuation Centre

The decision to close evacuation centres will be made by the LDMG on advice from the Evacuation Centre Manager. When the decision is made consideration must be given to:

- ensuring the closing time and date are effectively communicated to evacuees and staff
- determining if evacuees with special requirements have alternate accommodation or care arrangements
- providing guidance on recovery options e.g. housing, legal and financial.

The Evacuation Centre Manager will coordinate the packing and cleaning of resources and make an inventory of consumable to identify re-stocking needs and/or claims for reimbursement costs.



## Section 9: Return Phase

### 9.1 Return Phase

The return of evacuees to their homes or alternative accommodation requires careful planning. A return strategy should be developed by the LDMG to ensure this phase is effectively managed and undertaken in a safe, timely and coordinated manner.

#### 9.1.1 Decision for Return

The decision to return will be made by the LDMG in consultation with the DDC with consideration of:

- hazard and possibility of its return
- access and egress
- safety and security of damaged structures / unsafe areas
- operation of power, water, sewerage and communications
- public health
- availability of schools and workplaces
- availability of support services
- availability of alternative accommodation for those whose homes have been significantly damaged or destroyed
- alignment of recovery planning with return strategies to ensure that appropriate recovery support, information and services are available.

## Appendix A: Evacuation Operational Checklist

EVACUATION CHECKLIST	
<b>DECISION TO EVACUATE</b>	<b>TICK</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate Evacuation Sub-Plan.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the specific circumstances of the event and review the Evacuation Strategy in light of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advice from authorities on severity, arrival and impact area</li> <li>• the nature of the at-risk population</li> <li>• the suitability of safer locations</li> <li>• the requirements of special needs persons and associated actions</li> <li>• specific transport issues</li> <li>• the availability of appropriate resources to effectively manage all aspects of the evacuation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider all aspects with particular emphasis on the time required to complete the evacuation and the lead time available.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a local risk assessment.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide on the type of evacuation (i.e. voluntary or directed).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the timeframe for conduct of evacuation if pre-impact.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the amount of external assistance that may be required.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise DDC that voluntary evacuation decision has been made and request assistance if required OR recommend to DDC that directed evacuation is required.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange opening and staffing of centres.</li> </ul>	
<b>WARNINGS</b>	<b>TICK</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue evacuation advice to exposed population.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evacuation teams with written order to be provided to the community.</li> </ul>	
<b>WITHDRAWAL</b>	<b>TICK</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate door-to-door evacuation teams.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure evacuation messages continue to be conveyed to the community.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the needs of vulnerable persons.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide regular situation reports to DDMG.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure regular reporting from field teams.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement security strategy for evacuated areas.</li> </ul>	
<b>SHELTER</b>	<b>TICK</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open evacuation centre/s.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all evacuees are registered.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure evacuation centre management is in accordance with handbook.</li> </ul>	
<b>RETURN</b>	<b>TICK</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine areas that are safe for return with consideration of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• results of damage assessment</li> <li>• health and safety</li> <li>• functioning of power, water, sewerage and communications</li> <li>• status of roads.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and modify the return strategy, addressing:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specific areas deemed safe for return</li> <li>• security of damaged and unsafe infrastructure</li> <li>• detailed return advice to evacuees</li> <li>• transportation requirements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise DDMG of implementation of return strategy.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue information on return strategy to? evacuees.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute return advice to evacuation centres. Tailor advice to vulnerable populations.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release information to returning evacuees on reactivation of utilities, damage repairs, clean up, debris removal, and human/social recovery support services.</li> </ul>	



• Maintain security controls for unsafe areas.	
• Coordinate temporary housing for evacuees unable to return to their residences.	
• Close evacuation centres.	
• Complete final situation report and stand down.	

*Live, discover and invest in a Tablelands community*



Tablelands Regional Council

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