

Tablelands Regional Council

Tablelands Regional Council

Emergency Management Dashboard

0 Emergency News <small>Published on 20/07/2017 14:30</small>	12 Road Conditions <small>Published on 20/07/2017 14:33</small>	0 Evacuation Centres <small>Published on 20/07/2017 14:30</small>	0 Power Outages <small>Published on 20/07/2017 14:33</small>
Helpful Contacts	River Heights	Early Warning Network	Get Ready



Local Disaster Management Sub Plan

Public Information & Warnings

V9 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 Koombalooomba, 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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Commented [NC1]: Template updates
 -Acknowledgement of Country
 -Calibri font
 -update contents page after changes accepted



Version Control

The following Sub-Plan updates have been issued and recorded:

Issue Date	Version	Outline of Revisions	Prepared by	Approved
31 August 2011	V1.0	Issued as live operational document.	RH	TG
13 November 2012	V2.0	References to previous Mayor and Media Officer removed and distribution list updated.	NB	RL
11 December 2013	V3.0	Reviewed for de-amalgamation purposes. V3.0 issued as live operational document from 1 January 2014.	NB	RL
5 November 2014	V4.0	Annual review – minor updates and private contacts removed.	NB	RL
4 November 2015	V5.0	Annual review – minor amendments.	NB	RL
16 November 2016	V5.1	Minor changes – LDMG Chairperson, new DDMG arrangements and references to MCO replaced with Public Information Officer.	NB	JP
10 November 2017	V5.2	Annual review – minor updates including change of plan owner.	SL	JP
18 December 2018	V5.3	Annual review – minor updates including change of plan owner.	SD	JP
20 January 2021	V6	Updates throughout to reflect changes to LDMG Chairperson and TRC processes including updating of templates.	TV	BW
15 December 2021	V7	Plan modernisation – updated to new version for approval.	TV / SD	BW
19 October 2022	V8	Annual review – minor changes.	TV / SD	BW



1 Overview of Plan

1.1 Context & Assumptions

Providing timely and accurate warnings about imminent hazards gives people the opportunity to prepare by taking action to reduce the level of risk for themselves, their property and others. Effective public information lowers the potential for panic, fear and confusion resulting from rumours and hearsay. A community armed with effective and accurate information can make informed and sensible decisions.

Broadcast and social media are the primary platforms for public information in most disasters, and warnings may originate from different sources. Information and warnings are ineffective if they do not have the intended result.

Ongoing community awareness and education programs regarding disasters are provided to the Tablelands community by Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) agencies. These programs ensure the community understands what is required of them to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters in the region.

1.2 Aim

The aim of the Public Information and Warnings Sub-Plan (the plan) is to provide for the effective collection, monitoring, management and dissemination of accurate, useful and timely information and warnings to the community before, during and after disasters. The objectives are to:

- educate and inform stakeholders and community members of disaster management information, warning methods and products
- inform stakeholders and community members of an impending or current hazard
- promote appropriate prevention, preparedness, response and recovery actions
- reduce the number of incoming enquiries to the LDCC during disaster events.

The process of disseminating information and warnings is a standard responsibility of the LDMG and does not depend on the activation of the group. This requirement is fulfilled via [TRC's Emergency Management Dashboard](#) until the LDMG is fully activated.

1.3 Ownership

This plan is owned by the Public Information Officer (PIO) on behalf of the LDMG. Significant amendments must be approved by the LDMG.

The owner will ensure the plan is:

- retained with supporting documents
- circulated in accordance with the Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP)
- updated and reviewed on at least an annual basis, or after activation, whichever is sooner
- tested and exercised as determined by the LDMG.

1.4 Links With Other Documents

This plan should be read in conjunction with the LDMP. It links directly to all other Sub-Plans including the LDMG Emergency Contact Lists.

Commented [NC2]: Are there any more references with the changes to alerts process?



This plan also links directly to:

- [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual M.1.174](#)
- [Queensland Standard Emergency Warning Signal \(SEWS\) Manual M.1.171](#)
- [Requesting Officer Quick Reference Guide for Emergency Alert](#)
- [Emergency Alert Request Form](#)

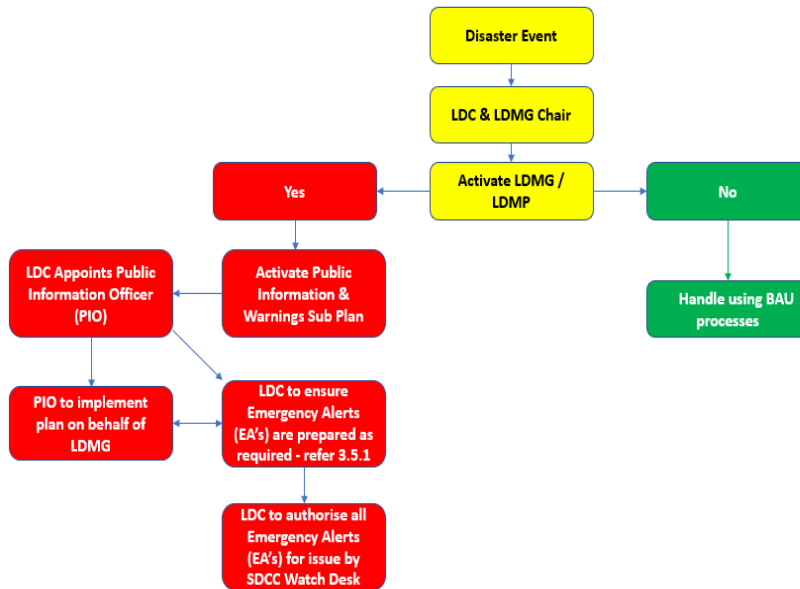
This plan is consistent with the [Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Public Information and Warnings Handbook](#).

2 Activation & Notification Procedures

2.1 Activation

This plan will be activated by the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) of the LDMG whenever the LDMP is used. Where possible, these decisions are made in consultation with the LDMG Chair.

2.2 Notification Flowchart



2.3 Notification Process

When the plan is activated, a Public Information Officer (PIO) will be appointed. The PIO has oversight of the plan on behalf of the LDMG.

If the plan is not activated, public information and warnings will continue to be disseminated using standard procedures.



3 Operational Procedures

3.1 LDMG PIO

The LDMG PIO during disaster operations is the TRC Strategic Communications Advisor (or nominated deputy). This role is critical to effective operations and needs adequately trained deputies to ensure 24/7 availability. When this officer is unavailable, the LDC of the LDMG will nominate an appropriate person to gather and distribute public information.

The PIO may perform their duties remotely, but it is preferable that they are in the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) when activated so they can provide direct support to the LDC and LDMG Chair.

The PIO is the contact for all media enquiries and public information in relation to any event that results in the activation of the disaster management system. The PIO is responsible for:

- obtaining information on the current and projected situation
- preparing and distributing approved media releases, posts and online information
- responding to enquiries and requests from the media and community
- maintaining a working log of media releases, posts and online information, and contacts with the media
- coordinating and managing media interviews and briefings
- maintaining liaison with members of the LDMG to ensure the accuracy of information and warnings released
- assisting with the development and distribution of Emergency Alerts and other official warnings
- maintaining a contact register of media contacts
- maintaining a suite of media information and templates for a range of media platforms
- ensuring adequate documentation and record keeping.

Refer PIO Checklist at [Appendix A](#).

3.2 LDMG Chair

The LDMG Chair is the face of the media during disasters. The LDMG Chair may defer to the Deputy Chair, LDC, TRC Mayor, TRC CEO, TRC Councillors, TRC General Managers and TRC Managers. All media interactions are coordinated through the PIO to ensure consistent and accurate messaging. Uniformed personnel e.g. Queensland Police or Queensland Fire and Emergency Services may be requested to deliver joint media briefings with the LDMG Chair to ensure agency authority.

3.3 Media Management

Consistent information from all levels of Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements is critical during a disaster. The LDMG's media is based on an all-hazards approach that identifies preferred spokespeople and key messages to inform the community including reinforcing the:

- LDMG's role in coordinating support to the affected community
- District Disaster Management Group's role in coordinating whole-of-government support to LDMGs and the affected community.



The LDMG's media strategy for disaster operations is consistent with the Crisis Communication Network arrangements outlined in the [Queensland Government Arrangements for Coordinating Public Information in a Crisis](#).

3.3.1 Media Templates

Media releases have been prepared and stored in Guardian to assist with information prompting and expediting processes. Pre-prepared media releases include:

- Advice after an event
- Conserve water
- Cyclone warning
- Donations
- Evacuation centre open
- Evacuation
- Flood heights and extents
- Food safety
- LDCC activated
- Personal hygiene
- Pets during disasters
- Places of refuge open
- Sandbags
- Vermin and vector control
- Water quality.

3.3.2 Authorisation of Public Information

The LDMG Chair will authorise all information disseminated to the community from the LDMG. This will be done in consultation with the LDC of the LDMG, the CEO and the lead agency (where relevant).

If the LDMG Chair is not available, the LDC or nominated deputy will authorise information for public distribution.

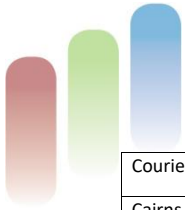
Social media will be developed from the authorised information and not require additional approval. Small and specific points of interest and information, not appropriate for wider broadcast, will also be disseminated via social media, without authorisation and at the discretion of the PIO. This includes responses to questions posted on social media and conversations on communication apps like Messenger. The PIO will ensure all interactions are recorded and that advice takes account of the latest situation.

3.3.3 Media Contacts

This is a generic list of media contacts. An extensive contact list is held in the CD Media inbox and is updated on a regular basis. Contacts must be BCCed when issuing an email.

Media Organisation	Contact Details
Cairns Post	editorial@tcp.newsltd.com.au
Win News	cairnsnews@winqld.com.au

Commented [NC3]: Should we add more local media e.g. ABC Radio, BlackStar etc?



Courier Mail	cos@thecouriermail.com.au
Cairns FM Radio	cairnsfmradio@bigpond.com
7 News	localnews@seven.com.au
Townsville Bulletin	mediarelease@townsvillebulletin.com.au
Southern Cross Austereo	news-cairns@sca.com.au
	news-northqld@sca.com.au
10 News	newsqld@networkten.com.au
Grant Broadcasters	qld.news@grantbroadcasters.com.au
Nine News	ninewsfng@nine.com.au
The Australian	media@theaustralian.com.au
	queensland@theaustralian.com.au
The Express	editorial@theexpressnewspaper.com.au

3.3.4 Media Access to Local Disaster Coordination Centre

Media will not be allowed into the LDCC without the approval of the LDC.

3.4 Warnings

Warnings are provided to the LDC and may be forwarded to the PIO for distribution to:

- LDMG
- Media distribution list
- TRC staff
- TRC website
- TRC social media.

3.4.1 Australian Warning System (AWS)

The [Australian Warning System](#) is a new national approach to information and warnings during emergencies like bushfire, flood, storm, extreme heat and severe weather. The System uses a nationally consistent set of icons, colours, warning levels (advice, watch and act, emergency warning) and action statements. TRC is responsible for ensuring compliance with the AWS system for flood, cyclone and storm emergencies.

3.4.2 Warning Sources

The agency responsible for issuing official warnings is dependent on the hazard.

The [Bureau of Meteorology \(BoM\)](#) is the information source for meteorological events including cyclones, floods and severe storms. AWS warnings for cyclones, storms and floods are the responsibility of TRC.

[Queensland Police Service](#) and [Queensland Fire and Emergency Services](#) (QFES) are the information sources for hazardous materials incidents. In the event of a major spill or potential contamination, the LDC will distribute the information to members/agencies of the LDMG and the TRC Customer Relations Team.



[Queensland Health](#) (QH) is the information source for heatwave and health warnings. QH is responsible for ensuring heatwave warnings are compliant with the AWS. TRC is the information source for health warnings relating to water, wastewater and environmental health.

[SunWater](#), [CleanCo](#), [Department of Resources](#) and [TRC](#) are the information sources for dam failures (depending on the owner of the facility).

[Geoscience Australia](#) is the information source for geo-technical hazards. Warnings are not available for earthquakes as they are difficult to predict. A post-event notification may be received that may result in the LDMG issuing warnings.

[Queensland Fire and Emergency Services](#) (Urban and Rural) and [BoM](#) are the information sources for bushfires. QFES is responsible for issuing AWS compliant bushfire warnings.

[Biosecurity Queensland](#) are the information source for emergency animal or plant disease outbreaks.

3.4.3 Warning Content

Messages must be clear and unambiguous to ensure they result in the desired action. Warnings must:

- be from an official source
- be simple, arresting and brief
- be in plain English
- be suited to the community
- promote action
- explain the nature and location of the problem, and anticipated timeframes
- indicate probability of the event occurring
- identify continuing hazards and safety instructions
- indicate time of next warning/update.

The PIO will reference [Emergency Warnings – Choosing your Words](#) when preparing information and warnings. This is a national reference document on how to construct emergency warning messages for the Australia community.

The PIO will ensure all messaging is linked to the original source and that information is not replicated or reproduced. This ensures accuracy from a single point of truth and is particularly important given the rapidly changing nature of disasters and the associated impacts.

3.5 Emergency Alerts

Emergency Alert (EA) is a national system that enables warning messages to be pushed to phones within a defined area. They are designed to alert receivers about an emergency situation and direct them to other sources of information, further directions or warnings. EAs are not opt-in and will work across all networks and carriers. EAs can be used in conjunction with other public warning tools when information needs to be urgently disseminated.

The LDC, District Disaster Coordinator, State Disaster Coordinator and delegated officer of the referable dam owner can request an EA campaign to be delivered. The request must be made through the QFES Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) for their respective disaster management group.

A blank EA form can be found at [Appendix C](#). The LDMG has prepared a number of EA warnings based on known hazards. These have been tested with the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) Watch Desk.



The prepared EA have been lodged in the [Disaster Management Portal](#) and are available in Guardian IMS references.

Further detail on the EA system is available in the [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual](#).

Once an EA has been issued, QFES Media publishes a version of the message on their [website](#) with details about who requested the message and relevant links to further information. This information is sent to the media via the QFES Newsroom and is uploaded to the Queensland Government Disaster Management website and QFES social media platforms.

3.5.1 Developing EA Process

1. The LDC will determine if an EA is required and has overall responsibility for developing the warning.
2. The LDC will liaise with the QFES EMC to ensure the DDC and SDCC Watch Desk are aware that an EA will be required.
3. If a prepared and tested EA is adequate for the situation, the LDC will review the EA lodged with the Watch Desk via the disaster portal to ensure accuracy. If accurate, the LDC will authorise it for issue by the SDCC.
4. If an EA needs to be slightly modified to meet the needs of the situation, this can be authorised by the LDC.
5. If a new EA needs to be developed to meet the needs of the situation, the LDC will work with the EMC, Intelligence Team Leader and PIO to define the polygon and craft the message.
6. If adequate time exists, the new EA will be approved by the LDMG Chair. If urgent, the LDC will authorise the message for release.
7. The LDC is responsible for ensuring LDMG Chair, LDMG members and call centre are advised that an EA has been issued.

Refer to process map at [Appendix B](#).

3.5.2 Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) Use

When warnings are issued for major emergencies, relevant authorities may use the SEWS prior to providing information on the situation.

SEWS is a wailing siren sound used throughout Australia for serious emergency events such as severe cyclone, bushfire, flood and storm. Strict criteria exist for the use and authorisation of SEWS.

When the signal is heard on radio, television or over the phone via EA messages, it is a cue to the community to pay attention to the information that follows and act immediately on the advice given.

Further detail on this system is available in the [Queensland Standard Emergency Warning Signal Manual](#).

3.6 Early Warning Network (EWN)

Residents can [subscribe](#) to the EWN to receive automatic alerts for severe weather and other emergency events. Official warnings and alerts relevant to the TRC from a third party are automatically forwarded via email and text to subscribers.

This service can also be used to push warning messages and information from the LDMG to all registered email addresses and phones within a defined area or via an established group. The LDC will determine whether the EWN will be used.

The EWN has some advantages over an EA because it can be issued quickly with no external approval. It does rely on those needing a warning to be subscribed. Where this cannot be guaranteed, an EA will be required. In some instances, an EWN message may be authorised for release prior to an official EA warning.



The PIO, GIS Team, Intelligence Team and LDC are all trained in using the [EWN system](#) to send appropriate information and warnings.

3.7 Public Information & Warnings Distribution

All disaster management groups play an important role in notifying and disseminating information to members of their respective groups and the wider community.

3.7.1 Release Methods

Broadcast and social media will be supported by other media tools to ensure maximum communication coverage. Methods of communication may include:

- [Emergency Management Dashboard](#)
- community noticeboards
- variable message boards
- TRC website and social media
- TRC vehicle two-way radio
- UHF-CB10 radio
- community meetings
- house-to-house (SES, Police, Neighbourhood Watch or TRC staff)
- EA system
- EWN
- community disaster teams
- email.

3.7.2 Target Recipients

- members of the community including those with special needs (see 3.7.3)
- residents
- visitors/tourists
- LDMG member agencies (list in Guardian)
- response agencies
- TRC staff
- owners of properties and stations.

3.7.3 Special Needs Recipients

Members of the community with special needs e.g. aged, those with disabilities, dialysis patients, etc. should receive early advice of an impending disaster (particularly if it affects their location and in the case of evacuation).

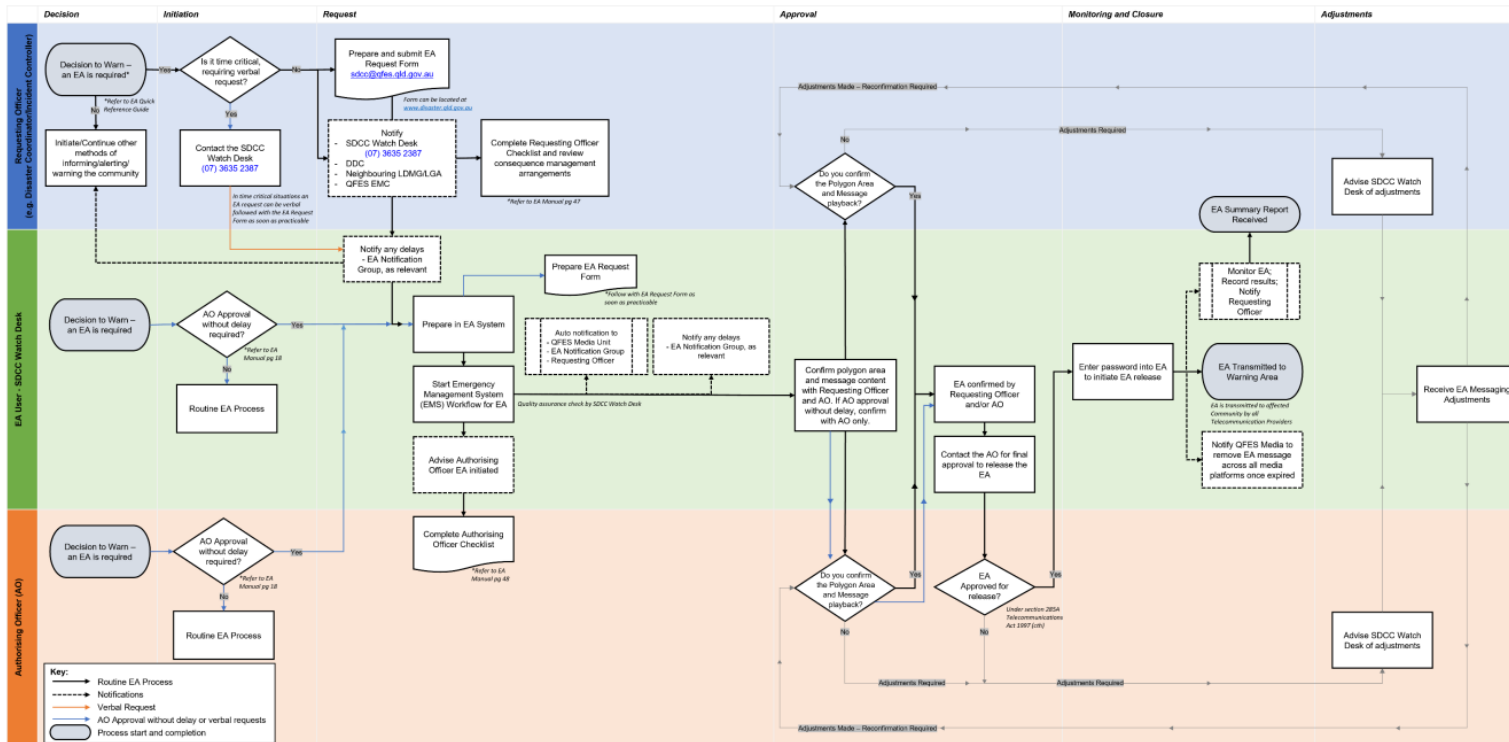
Every effort will be made to ensure vulnerable people in high-risk facilities, such as aged care, hospitals, schools and childcare, are provided with appropriate warnings. This is achieved using contact details maintained by TRC and other partner agencies. The PIO will provide these messages to operations to ensure warnings and key messages can be relayed to those with identified special needs.



Appendix A: POI Checklist


PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)	
Reports to Local Disaster Coordinator	Tick
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain watching brief / state of readiness and receive initial information regarding disaster event from LDC. • Commence operations log in Guardian IMS. Maintain adequate records of all media releases, contacts and activities. • Regularly review Guardian IMS for tasks and to maintain situational awareness. • Implement Public Information & Warnings Sub-Plan in collaboration with other cells. • Establish liaison with local radio and media outlets to confirm key contacts for community alerts, warnings and media releases / briefing schedules. Encourage 24-hour transmission where appropriate. • If LDCC is activated, release LDCC Activated media release. Send LDCC Activated all staff email. • Ensure access to pre-formatted media releases and warnings. • Draft media releases for approval as required. • Ensure relevant information and warnings are authorised by the LDMG Chair and LDC as required. Distribute as per section 3.7 Public Information & Warnings Sub-Plan and ensure all releases are uploaded into Guardian bulletins for display in the LDCC and on the Emergency Management Dashboard. • Coordinate and manage media interviews and briefings. • Report media misinformation and discrepancies to the LDC. • Manage personnel assigned to the Public Information Cell (briefings, debriefings, welfare requirements, etc). • Contribute to Incident Action Plan and Situation Reports (SITREPS) as required. • Participate in debriefs as required. 	

Appendix B: Emergency Alert Process



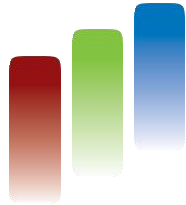


Appendix C: Emergency Alert Request Form

 Queensland Government	PHONE THE SDCC WATCH DESK (07) 3635 2387 – ADVISE EA IS BEING DEVELOPED	
	EMERGENCY ALERT REQUEST	
Location of Alert: (e.g. Suburb, Town)	Date & Time: _____ hrs	
LGA/Agency requesting:		
Requesting Officer (e.g. Disaster Coordinator/Incident Controller) Name: Agency/Position:		Telephone: <small>(SDCC Watch Desk may telephone you)</small>
Email:		
Advised	LDC/LDMG: <input type="checkbox"/> YES	DDC/DDMG: <input type="checkbox"/> YES Neighbouring LDMG/LGA: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Send Alert	Immediately: <input type="checkbox"/> YES	Scheduled: <input type="checkbox"/> YES Date & Time _____ hrs
Event Type	If Other (please specify)	
Distributed by: (Channel)	<input type="checkbox"/> Voice <small>(Landline only)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> SMS – Location Based <small>(Location of phone at time of distribution)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> SMS – Service Address Based <small>(Registered billing address)</small>
Message Severity	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Warning (Activates SEWS) <input type="checkbox"/> Watch & Act <input type="checkbox"/> Advice	
Threat Direction Required? <small>(e.g. Fire, Chemical Spill, Dam Spill)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Threat location indicated on map? <small>Only For Emergency Warning Voice & Service Address SMS</small>
EA Messaging Filename (Doc, Pdf):	Polygon Filename, (Kml, Kmz, Gml, GeoJSON):	
Number of polygons _____ (if multiple, attach list in order of priority)	Supplied via: <input type="checkbox"/> DM Portal <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal <input type="checkbox"/> Other <small>Other (please specify):</small>	
Voice: Type or handwriting, max 4000 characters incl. spaces. <small>(Ideally message should be < 450 characters)</small>		
SMS: Type or handwriting, use capitals for clarity, max 612 characters incl. spaces. <small>(Ideally should be < 160 characters incl. spaces)</small>		
Remove EA from websites:	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 hrs <input type="checkbox"/> 24 hrs <input type="checkbox"/> 48 hrs <input type="checkbox"/> Specify Date & Time: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Check back in 12 hrs: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Replace previous EA message _____ hrs Contact #: _____	
Requesting Officer: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____		
Send to sdcc@qfes.qld.gov.au and telephone (07) 3635 2387 to confirm receipt		
FOR USE BY SDCC		
EA Request Form completed by: SDCC Watch Desk <input type="checkbox"/> Requesting Officer <input type="checkbox"/>		
Notification of any delays provided to Requestor: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
EA User Name:	Date:	Emergency Alert No:
Signature:	Date:	EMS EA Campaign Report ID:
Authorising Officer Name:	Date:	
Signature:	Date:	
Report provided to Requestor on EA outcomes: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
<small>EA Manual, EA Quick Reference Guide and the EA Request Form Template are available at: www.disaster.qld.gov.au</small>		
SUBMIT	PRINT	SAVE AS
CLEAR FORM		

EA Request Form – F.1.177 Last Updated: 31 October 2022 Version: 3.0

When constructing EA messages, consider constructing the message in line with Stage 4: Message Construction & Dissemination (page 18 and 19) of the [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual](#).



Live, discover and invest in a Tablelands community



Tablelands Regional Council

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