



*Dedicated to a better Brisbane*

**Brisbane River Flooding Disaster  
January 2011  
Concept for Recovery**

**Prepared by:**

Forward Planning Group  
Local Disaster Co-ordination Centre  
Brisbane City Council

**Date:**

25 January 2011

## Table of Contents

1	Aim .....	3
2	Context .....	3
3	The Response Phase .....	3
4	Assumptions for a Concept for Recovery .....	5
5	Concept for Recovery .....	5
6	'Business as Usual' Approach.....	7
7	Recovery Structure .....	7
8	Governance .....	7
9	Sub-Committee Roles.....	8
10	Recovery Structure .....	8
11	Recovery Phases & Priorities.....	9
12	Recovery Plans.....	9
13	Funding Arrangements.....	9

## **1 Aim**

To provide a Concept for Recovery for the City of Brisbane following the Brisbane River Flood Disaster in January 2011.

## **2 Context**

In January 2011, Brisbane experienced a significant river flood event of a scale not seen since 1974. This followed torrential rain from December 2010 to January 2011, resulting in Wivenhoe Dam filling to 188.5% and Somerset Dam to 189.7% of their supply capacity on 12 January 2011. The Brisbane River broke its banks on 11 January leading to evacuations in Brisbane's CBD and suburbs located around the River.

On 11 January 2011, the Honourable Anna Bligh, MP Premier of Queensland declared flood affected areas of Queensland a 'disaster zone', including Brisbane. This declaration remained in place until 10am on Tuesday 25 January 2011. The implication of this declaration for Brisbane was that the Brisbane's Local Disaster Management Group was required to coordinate its response and work in conjunction with the Queensland Police Service Disaster District Coordinator.

The Brisbane River peaked on 13 January 2011 with 94 Brisbane suburbs affected by inundation. Some affected people were re-located to Evacuation Centres located at the RNA Showgrounds (1,490 people) and Queen Elizabeth 11 Stadium (QE11) (480 people).

The business community and related commercial properties in the CBD and suburbs suffered significant inundation, damage and interruption with the CBD closing for a period of five days. This impacted on the economy of the Brisbane region.

The flood event also substantially damaged some of the City's assets, essential services, and utilities (including power, telecommunications, gas, water supply and sewerage). Mud, silt and debris, as well the inundation of environmentally sensitive areas, have damaged the environmental balance of the Brisbane River catchment area and Moreton Bay.

The Lord Mayor has announced the establishment of an independent Flood Response Review Board. The board will review the effectiveness of Council's disaster management arrangements, planning regulations in flood affected areas, the effectiveness of public warnings and advice, the effectiveness of storm water and flood prevention infrastructure, and the failure of river-based infrastructure. This review will be Chaired by former Queensland Governor Major General (Retired) Peter Arnison AC, CVO and will report in May 2011.

## **3 The Response Phase**

The Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) was activated on 9 January 2011. A co-ordinated response commenced on commencement of the flood water receding on 14 January 2011.

Council's response was in accordance with its Disaster Management Plan, and utilising its own resources, Council worked in conjunction with emergency services including Queensland Police Service (QPS), Queensland Fire and Rescue Services (QFRS), Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), Emergency Services Queensland (EMQ), the State Emergency Service (SES), other government departments and agencies, other councils (particularly Logan City, Gold Coast City and Redland City), the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and not-for-profit agencies.

As the River peaked on 13 January 2011, a Council Ready Response Group was used in gathering intelligence on the receding water line and in making initial damage assessments. By 14 January 2011 water had started to recede. On 14 January 2011, Ready Response Group was joined by the QFRS Rapid Damage Assessment teams. These QFRS teams, with experience from other flood events, were deployed to assist with damage assessment.

On 14 January 2011, a major deployment was commenced to clear debris from major roads and transport corridors followed by secondary arterials. This included a significant effort by Council, the State Government and its emergency services, donated contractor manpower and equipment from business, resources from other councils and the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

On the weekend of 15 and 16 January 2011, Council mounted a highly coordinated community volunteer call out to assist flood affected residents to clear mud and flood debris from their homes and damaged possessions. This call out resulted in 22,973 volunteers registering at Council's four key volunteer marshalling areas. These volunteers assisted across the two days and were supported by a significant effort from Council employees and assets, ADF resources and civilian contractor employees and equipment.

In the period through to 21 January 2011, Council coordinated the clearing of debris and rubbish to a 'first pass' of every flood affected street in Brisbane and significant progress was being made in removing temporary waste dump sites to permanent land fill. On the weekend of 22 and 23 January 2011, a further co-ordinated volunteer effort was mounted, on a targeted basis, to clear and clean parks and recreational facilities. Between 14 January and 22 January, it is estimated that 126,700 tonnes of waste were put into Council and private landfills.

As a result of these coordinated efforts from 14 to 23 January 2011, essential services have been restored, major roads and arterials have been cleared, public transport has commenced to operate, flooding debris and damaged household and business property has been cleared from suburban streets and residents have commenced to return to their homes to clean up and assess damage to their property. There remains significant damage to Council infrastructure assets such as the CityCat ferry terminal network and the floating Riverwalk. Many Council-owned community clubs were also inundated. There is a continuing risk of further damage from river bank slump.

The approval on 31 January 2011 by the Establishment and Coordination Committee (E&C) of the 'Concept for Recovery', provides that the Recovery phase will be initiated with the standing up of the Lord Mayor's Recovery Task Group and its Sub-committees of Community Recovery Co-ordination, Infrastructure Recovery, Finance and Economic Recovery, and Environmental Recovery.

From 31 January 2011, the Response phase of the disaster begins to transition to Recovery as major responding assets withdraw from the clean up effort, the LDCC returns to Level 3 operations as preparations are made to stand-up the Lord Mayor's Recovery Task Group and its supporting Recovery sub-committees. The Lord Mayor's Recovery Task Group will then assume responsibility for the Recovery Phases.

## **4 Assumptions for a Concept for Recovery**

The following assumptions underpin the Concept for Recovery:

- The Brisbane community is largely resilient and has demonstrated a capacity for community self help through significant volunteering.
- Some elements of the community will require external help to recover.
- Council's disaster recovery will need to be delivered while maintaining a 'business as usual' approach for the whole City. Council's operational plans and budgets will be modified where necessary.
- Council has the resources, skilled employees, community connectedness and plans to assist in the recovery effort, however it does not have the budget for the task.
- The Recovery phase will reflect a 'community led' approach focusing on the specific needs of affected communities.
- Council will be required to collaborate with lead agencies in the State and Federal Governments to implement the recovery.
- Funding will be made available in a timely way from the State and Federal Governments to assist in the recovery of the residential and business community and for Council's infrastructure.
- The Q100 flood planning level may no longer be valid.

## **5 Concept for Recovery**

### **5.1 Concept General Outline**

The Lord Mayor's Recovery Task Group will lead Brisbane City Council's recovery effort and will assist State agencies that carry broader recovery responsibilities.

Council will take a 'community led' approach to identify and respond to specific community needs. Council will cooperate and collaborate actively with lead State Government agencies on issues beyond Council's capability or responsibility.

These arrangements will be governed by a committee structure which includes the Lord Mayor's Recovery Task Group (RTG) and six Sub-committees.

These Sub-committees are:

- Community Recovery Coordination Sub-committee (Chairman: Cr Knapp)
- Finance and Economic Recovery Sub-committee (Chairman: Cr Schrinner)
- Infrastructure Recovery Sub-committee (Chairman: Cr Quirk)
- Environmental Recovery Sub-committee (Chairman: Cr Matic)
- Ward Recovery Sub-committee (Chairman: Cr de Wit)
- Planning for Recovery Sub-committee (Chairman: Cr Cooper).

The Sub-committees' place in overall governance is described in Diagram 1.

Council Divisions will be required to reprioritise current planned activity to the recovery effort and to re-allocate budget supplemented by Natural Disaster and Relief Recovery Arrangements funding and alternative sources of funding.

Recovery activity will be monitored against milestones and priorities endorsed by the Lord Mayor's Recovery Task Group and will be delivered through endorsed Recovery strategies and objectives and relevant Action Plans.

The Recovery is planned in three phases as follows:

- a. Phase 1 - Initial Recovery – (1 week to 1 month)
- b. Phase 2 – Medium term Recovery (1-6 months)
- c. Phase 3 - Long Term Recovery (6 months to 24 months).

While the Recovery arrangements are being implemented the Flood Response Review Board will also commence its work, separate from the Recovery effort.. This Board will review the effectiveness of Council's disaster management arrangements, the impact of planning regulations in flood affected areas and the effectiveness of public warnings and advice. It will also assess the effectiveness of storm water and flood prevention infrastructure, and the failure of river-based infrastructure. This Board will report in May 2011.

## **5.2 Community Recovery Co-ordination**

Community Recovery Co-ordination services will be provided in collaboration with the Department of Communities as lead agent. The focal point will be the State's Community Recovery Centres located in flood affected suburbs which act as a one-stop-shop for services, outreach and referral services.

Council will coordinate volunteers to assist the community, using assistance from external organisations as required..

The State Government will have the lead role in rebuilding homes while Council will work with the Insurance Council of Australia and industry bodies to assist residents who have lost their homes to gain access to appropriate assistance, including legal advice on insurance matters.

## **5.3 Infrastructure Recovery**

Council will coordinate the recovery of its own infrastructure, including buildings (where Council is responsible), public transport, parks, sporting and recreation facilities. Council will be seeking additional funding to support this task. Council will also work collaboratively with the lead State Government department, the Department of Infrastructure and Planning, to recover community and business infrastructure.

## **5.4 Finance and Economic Recovery**

Council will seek to restore business confidence in Brisbane's economy, through the Lord Mayor's Business Roundtable.

Further Council will re-prioritise its own budget to ensure Recovery tasks can be undertaken. However Council will rely significantly on Federal and State budgetary assistance to fund Brisbane's recovery.

## **5.5 Environmental Recovery**

Council will identify flood damage to Council's natural areas and waterway corridors and work closely with bushland and creek catchment groups to restore affected areas. Council will also seek the support of the State's relevant lead agencies

## **5.6 Ward Recovery**

A Ward Recovery Sub-committee reporting directly to the Lord Mayor's Recovery Task Group has been developed to allow Councillors to have a voice in the Recovery effort.

18 Wards are flood affected and this will provide the mechanism for Councillors, as elected representatives to represent the needs of their constituents and to ensure that the Lord Mayor's Recovery Task Group is advised of emerging or urgent needs.

## **5.7 Town Planning**

Council will instigate a review of town planning policies and practices in light of the characteristics of the 2011 flood. This may require assistance from external individuals or organisations

## **6 Recovery Structure**

The weather events in South East Queensland leading to the January 2011 Brisbane River flooding disaster were so severe that a State of Disaster was already declared. This declaration expired at 10am on 25 January 2011. As a result of extensive flooding elsewhere in Queensland, a State Recovery Task Group was appointed, headed by General Michael Slater by the time the Brisbane River flooding disaster occurred.

On 19 January 2011, the Honourable Anna Bligh, MP Premier of Queensland announced the establishment of a Queensland Reconstruction Authority Board (QRA) to scope and coordinate the total state-wide rebuilding program. The QRA replaces the State Recovery Task Group. It will develop and implement a state-wide plan for rebuilding and reconnecting communities across the State. It will work closely with local governments and communities, and will coordinate government and non government organisations to deliver the necessary services to assist individual communities in the rebuilding process. The QRA will legislative power to implement its recommendations.

The City of Brisbane flooding Response and Recovery arrangements were initially being undertaken under State Disaster Management arrangements as are set out in Appendix 1.

## **7 Governance**

Governance will be provided through a Recovery Task Group (RTG) chaired by the Lord Mayor. It will be constituted of Chairmen of the Recovery Sub-committees with the CEO as Executive Officer to the Chair of the RTG. Divisional Managers will be Executive Officers to the RTG Sub-committees. It is anticipated that the RTG will have a direct line to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Board. The Sub-committees are as follows:

- Community Recovery Co-ordination
- Infrastructure Recovery
- Finance and Economic Recovery
- Environmental Recovery
- Ward Recovery
- Town Planning

A challenge facing the RTG will be to maintain services to the non flood affected parts of Brisbane whilst directing priority effort to flood recovery.

Recovery Sub-committees will develop and implement recovery action plans for their areas of responsibility, as required. Sub-committees will be guided by terms of reference approved by the RTG.

The Lord Mayor may augment membership of the RTG with relevant expertise applicable to the recovery and will endorse the membership of all recovery sub-committees.

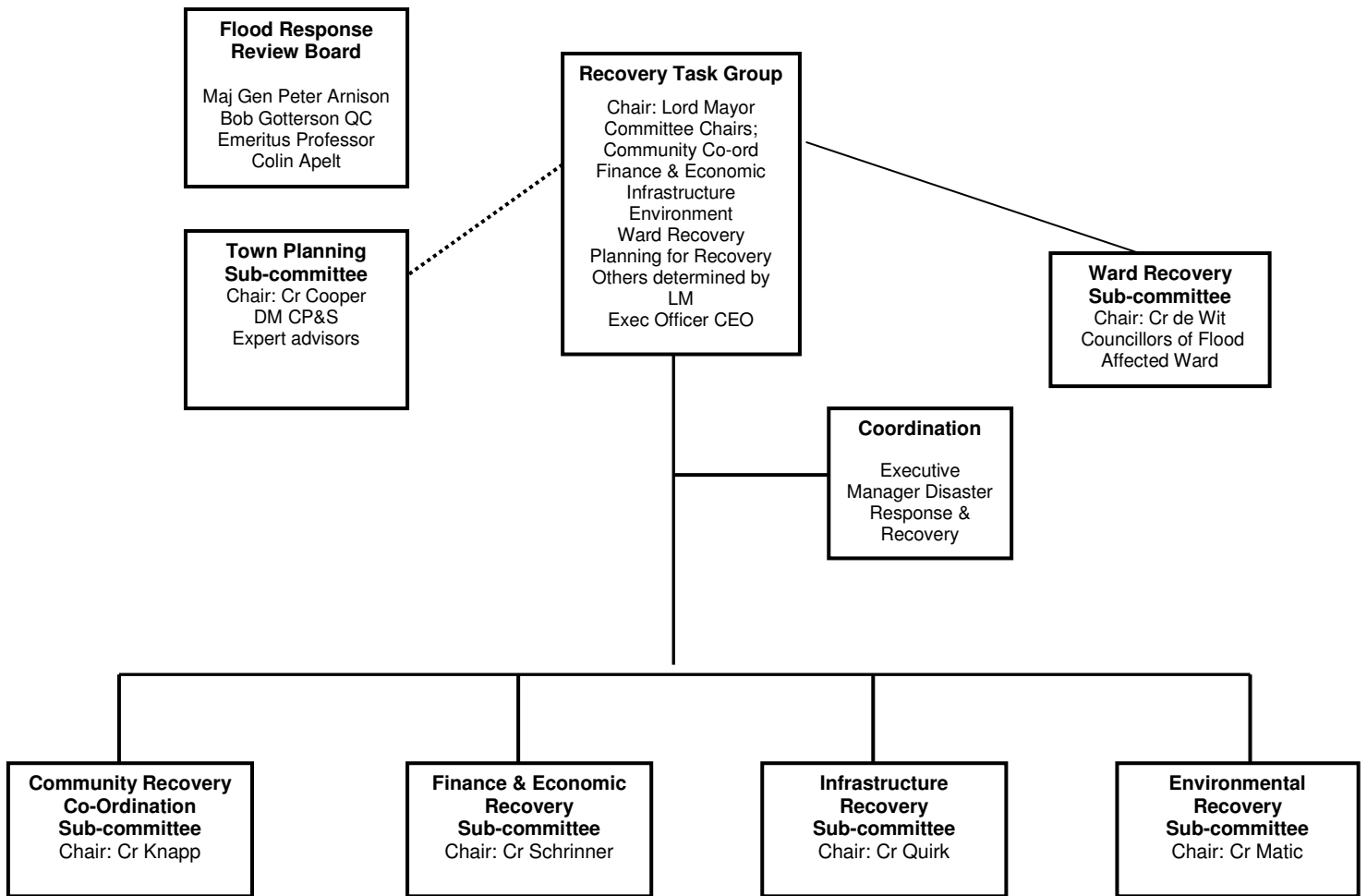
A senior Council executive will be appointed with a small team to provide coordination and support to the Lord Mayor’s Recovery Task Group, RTG Sub-committees, and the Flood Response Review Board. Additionally, this executive will be required to provide coordination and support across a range of cross-function projects and reviews directed by the RTG.

## 8 Recovery Structure

The recovery structure is presented on Diagram 1.

The membership of the Sub-committees will be approved by the RTG.

**Diagram 1 - Recovery Structure**



**Committee Memberships**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead Council Division: FACS</li> <li>Executive Officer, DM FACS</li> <li>Lead State Agency - Dept of Communities</li> </ul> <p>Other External Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by invitation as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead Council Division: CP&amp;S</li> <li>Executive Officer, DM CP&amp;S</li> <li>CFO</li> <li>Economic Development Branch</li> <li>Brisbane Marketing</li> <li>Lead State Agency - Dept of Employment, Economic Development &amp; Innovation</li> </ul> <p>Other External Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by invitation as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead Council Division: BI</li> <li>Executive Officer, DM BI</li> <li>Brisbane Transport</li> <li>Brisbane CityWorks</li> <li>Local Asset Services</li> </ul> <p>Lead Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dept of Infrastructure &amp; Planning</li> </ul> <p>Other External Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queensland Urban Utilities</li> <li>Other External Agencies</li> <li>by invitation as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead Council Division: CP&amp;S</li> <li>Executive Officer, DM CP&amp;S</li> <li>Local Asset Services</li> </ul> <p>Lead Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dept of Environment &amp; Resource Management</li> </ul> <p>Other External Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queensland Urban Utilities</li> <li>Other External Agencies</li> <li>by invitation as required</li> </ul>
---	---	--	--



## **9 Recovery Phases & Priorities**

The recovery of the City of Brisbane from the Brisbane River Flooding Disaster January 2011 will be undertaken in accordance with the following phases and priorities:

### **a. Phase 1 - Initial Recovery – (1 week to 1 month)**

Priorities for the initial Recovery are:

- the clearance of debris and waste from residential, commercial and shared areas;
- re-opening the CBD for business;
- assist State Government Agencies with:
  - return of residents to their homes or to temporary accommodation;
  - the restoration of essential services and public transport systems;
  - facilitation of the 'return to school' program;
  - the gradual withdrawal of responding agencies;
  - implementation of protective measures for protected and shared environmental assets.

### **b. Phase 2 - Medium-term Recovery (1-6 months)**

Priorities for the medium term Recovery are:

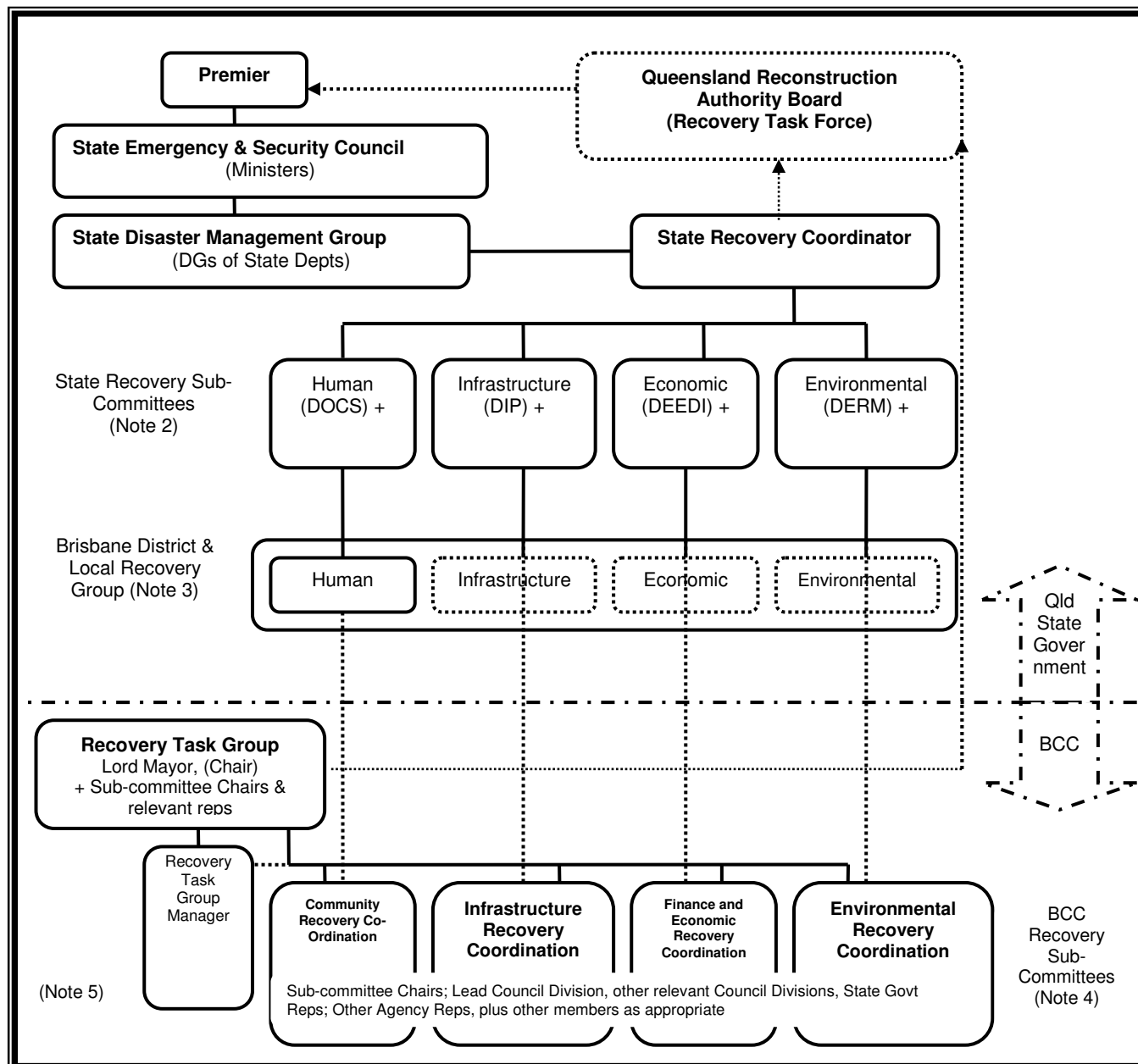
- economic activity is stimulated and investment confidence is restored in Brisbane;
- gradual restoration of Council's infrastructure and community assets;
- rebuilding a sense of community and rebuilding community resilience
- preservation of Brisbane's Australia's New World City brand;
- assist State Government Agencies with:
- restoration of protected and shared environmental assets ;
- supporting the State Government to ensure that long term displaced people are returned to housing/temporary accommodation.

### **c. Phase 3 – Long Term Recovery (6 months to 24 months)**

Priorities for the long term Recovery are:

- repair and reconstruction of key damaged Council infrastructure
- stimulated and increased economic activity including restored confidence in private sector investment;
- assist State Government Agencies with:
- full or close to full restoration and recovery of protected and shared environmental assets;

## Appendix 1 – Proposed Recovery structure



### Notes

1. See Diagram 1 for additional structures related to Lord Mayor's Recovery Task Group (eg Ward Recovery and Planning for Recovery).
2. The State Recovery Sub-Committees' Lead Agencies are: Human - DOC (Dept of Communities); Infrastructure - DIP (Dept of Infrastructure & Planning); Economic - DEEDI (Dept of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation); Environment - DERM (Dept of Environment & Resource Management). Other agencies participate.
3. The State is divided into Districts. Districts are further divided into Local Government areas. Brisbane and Redlands form a District. Because of its size and the nature of this event, Brisbane effectively forms a District on its own. Advice is that the Brisbane District Recovery Group has been established, predominately with DOCS as lead agent. On this basis, it is proposed that for Infrastructure, Finance and Economic and Environmental Sub-committees, a direct relationship will be established with the respective State Recovery Sub-committees.
4. BCC will need Senior representatives from each of the State Departments identified as members of the BCC Recovery Task Group Sub-committees. For membership, see Diagram 1.
5. The CFO will coordinate the recovery finance arrangements including grant submissions, donations and additional borrowings. The CFO will also ensure Council pursues the maximum available grant funding.