

QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

STATEMENT OF RAYMOND CLAUDE BROWN, MAYOR OF WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

I, Raymond Claude Brown, Mayor of Western Downs Regional Council ("Council"), state under oath as follows:

First Written Statement

1. Attached to this statement and marked "Annexure 1" is a copy of Council's first written statement in response to the Commission's request for written information dated 17 March 2011. The matters contained therein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Second Written Statement

2. In response to the Commission's further request for written information dated 5 April 2011, I provide the written information that follows.

An assessment of the success of the SMS emergency systems in warning residents of the 2010/2011 flooding events in the Western Downs and any recommendations for change noting comments at the base of page 5 whereby, due to clogging of the networks, some Chinchilla residents did not receive their alerts.

3. Overall, the SMS alert was considered a very useful resource to advise the community of important information during the events. There has been much positive feedback on the SMS alerts. The alerts were considered so useful that Council has launched a similar, complimentary service called eNews, which will be able to send SMS alert to those in the community who have subscribed to the service, at any time during an event. eNews can be sent as Council and the LDMG wishes, unlike the emergency alert where the messages have to meet the criteria which satisfies the District Disaster Coordinator (i.e. able to send only to the affected area, must be an urgent/ emergency message, 160 characters maximum).
4. While it seems that the alerts may not have reached all residents in the community, this may be because the broadcasting of messages by Telstra is based on billing addresses. Council was required to identify the affected areas which were to receive the emergency message. Thus if the billing address of the intended recipient was not within the affected area then that person would not have received the message. It is understood that EMQ and Telstra are continuing to investigate the ability to distribute these messages to all intended recipients in an affected area, i.e. using the relevant tower signals. Council strongly supports this initiative.
5. The apparent "clogging" of the telephone networks was most likely due to the heavy use of the system on the days that ms alerts were issued traffic

A further explanation of where the further flood and rainfall monitoring devices might be installed as per your recommendations at page 23.

6. Further advice and information on locations where automatic reading stations should be placed is currently being gathered from the Bureau of Meteorology. Additionally, Council has now engaged a consultant to undertake a study on the event, and provide recommendations on what mitigation options could be considered, including flood warning and emergency planning and raising community awareness. Funding for this report will be applied for under the Natural Disaster Resilience Program, Round 3.

A response to the statement that the Council did not properly advise and warn all residents in Chinchilla of the 2010/2011 flood event.

[Redacted Signature]

Deponent

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7. Council had accurate information on affected residences and businesses based on mapping from previous floods, and door knocked those to be affected as waters rose. Council also made contact to businesses by telephone prior to the second event, while residents were contacted by letter drop. However, not all affected residents were due home due to the holiday season.
8. It is important to note that Council did not warn all residents of Chinchilla of the 2010/2011 flood events as the flooding only affected 5% of the town area to the west of Chinchilla.

A response to the statement that Council were initially reluctant to use a full town SMS emergency warning in the 'first' flood in Chinchilla but used this system in the 'second' flood.

9. Council had no need to utilise the SMS Emergency warning in the 'first' flood event in Chinchilla as it was a slow rising flood and there was ample warning of the event. Affected residents and businesses were contacted by door knocking.
10. The 'second' flood event came with little warning and the torrential rainfall resulted in a situation where residents were to be advised urgently of the event as two (2) streams that join close to town were both rising rapidly. There has not been a similar event in the recent history of Chinchilla, hence the need for an urgent SMS alert, which was requested by Queensland Police. Council issued a 'boil water' alert two days later.

A response to the statement that Council would not permit the burying of rubbish/perishables removed from freezers by SES after the evacuation of Condamine as they did not have a Council permit, creating a hygiene issue on the sports fields.

25. Council had identified that waste disposal, especially the disposal of putrescible waste from premises that were inundated or without power for an extended period of time was a critical public health issue. This was identified prior to the repatriation of residents. As such, Council allowed the burial of putrescible waste at Condamine and actually provided a trench for this purpose. A Council Officer entered the town in an advance party to identify a location for the disposal trench on about 3 January 2011 (prior to the return of residents), and this was excavated soon thereafter. This trench was well used by residents following the flood, and when these trenches were in use, the contents were regularly burnt to avoid odour and fly breeding within waste materials.
26. However, prior to the advance party returning to Condamine, there was a group of police officers and residents who had remained in the town for security purposes, and to look after animals. It is understood that this group, with the permission of residents, had sought to bury waste food collected from properties with disconnected fridges. It was this group which sought to access a burial pit but were not able to do so as the site chosen was in a road reserve and permission was being sought from the relevant government departments. They were further advised that Council's Environmental Health Officers needed to oversee the disposal.

Sworn by Raymond Claude Brown on 18 April 2011 before [Catherine Maree Harding], [JP Qual].



Deponent

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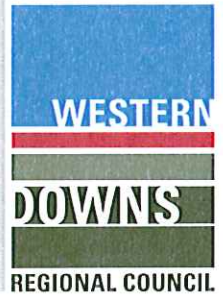


"ANNEXURE 1"

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Queensland Floods Commission Of Inquiry

Western Downs Regional Council Statement

1. *The preparation and planning undertaken by the Western Downs Regional Council and if they were members of or privy to the preparation and planning undertaken by the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and/or the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) in relation to the 2010/2011 floods.*

Summary

Western Downs Regional Council took a relatively proactive approach and was involved with disaster preparation and planning prior to the 2010/2011 flood event in the region.

The preparation and planning principally included the following:

1. *Drafting a Disaster Management Plan (Submitted as per the request for information 1 March 2011) -* Western Downs Local Disaster Management Plan has been developed to a Final Draft stage and although yet to be adopted by Council formed the basis to Council's response to the event. This plan was developed using previous Council Disaster Management plans from Chinchilla, Dalby/Wambo, Murilla and Tara.

The key elements of the plan are:

- (1) Aims and Objectives
- (2) Disaster Risk Management
- (3) Prevention
- (4) Preparedness
- (5) Response
- (6) Recovery

Prior to the events, in preparation for 'Exercise Orko', it was felt a new location for the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) was appropriate, that offered better facilities, equipment and ready access to all required support information, including flood mapping etc. The Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) was changed from the Senior Citizens building Roche Street, Dalby to the Engineering Customer Service Centre at 26 Wood Street, Dalby. This new location was also considered less likely to be affected by events that may develop.

2. *Participation in 'Exercise Orko' conducted by Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) in early November 2010 –*

Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) conducted a disaster management exercise designed around a hypothetical extreme weather event (flooding) affecting areas in South West Queensland. Local Governments Authorities involved included Toowoomba, Lockyer Valley, Southern Downs, Goondiwindi and Western Downs Regional Councils. For Western Downs, 'Orko's' focus was based on a major flood event affecting Dalby Town, with other emergencies occurring in the Western Downs Region.

The aim of the exercise was to enhance readiness of the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) for an extreme weather event. While the exercise proved an opportunity to review the draft Western Downs Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP).

3. *Membership on the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) (Submitted as per the request for information 1 March 2011), District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) (Submitted as per the request for information 1 March 2011) and Local Emergency Coordination Committee (LECC) (Submitted as per the request for information 1 March 2011) -*

Prior to the 2010/2011 flood event Council established the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and Local Emergency Coordination Committees (LECC) (Chinchilla, Miles and Tara).

Meetings of these groups occurred regularly prior to the event: Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) in October 2010 and the Local Emergency Coordination Committees (LECC) meet regularly. The District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) met in February 2010. At these meetings roles and responsibilities were discussed and the forum provided an opportunity to raise relevant preparedness or response issues. At these meetings the Draft Local Disaster Management Plan (DLDMG) has been described. Along side the Local Emergency Coordination Committee (LECC),

Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG), and District Disaster Management Group (DDMG's), Council participated in the Western Downs Recovery Committee.

4. Development and Maintenance of Flood Warning System in Conjunction with Bureau of Meteorology (further detail provided in Question 4) –

Prior to the event, in conjunction with the Bureau of Meteorology a flood monitoring system for the local Myall Creek catchments had been developed.

5. Providing the ability for the dissemination of Media releases, alerts and information to the public –
Western Downs Regional Council recognized the need to inform the community of any circumstances that may impact on the region. To assist with this Council resourced Communication Officers and made provision in the draft Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) for a Media Officer, dedicated to producing media releases and Alerts and keeping the website up to date (further detail provided in Question 3)

6. Developed a close relationship with other organizations in readiness to respond to an extreme event –

Western Downs Regional Council has developed close working relationships with other organisations to coordinate a response to emergency/disaster response. These include members of the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and Disaster Management Group (DMG) and other State and Federal Government Departments, non government agencies, community groups and businesses large and small. In particular Council works with and supports the State Emergency Services (SES). Council provides funding and resources which includes equipment, vehicles, sheds and land.

2. ***The response undertaken by the Western Downs Regional Council and if they were members of or privy to the response undertaken by the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and/or the District Disaster Manager Group (DDMG) in relation to the 2010/2011 flood events specifically:***
 - a. ***immediate management;***
 - b. ***resourcing;***
 - c. ***coordination and deployment of personnel and equipment;***
 - d. ***the adequacy of equipment and communications systems; and***
 - e. ***the adequacy of community response in their particular region.***

Summary

Western Downs Regional Council is among the top twenty largest Councils in Queensland spanning an area of 38,039 square kilometres, serving a population of 30,000, operating a \$100 000 million budget, managing public assets of \$527 million and employing a 700 strong workforce. Western Downs Regional Council's major towns include Dalby, Chinchilla, Miles and Tara.

Ex Tropical Cyclone Tasha produced areas of rain, over the southern and central interior. Heavy rain has caused flooding in multiple locations across Queensland and affected the entire Western Downs Regional Council area.

Within the region the major catchments include the Condamine River – Warwick to Cotswold and the Myall Creek to Dalby. When these experienced major flooding the towns of Dalby, Chinchilla, Condamine, Jandowae and Warra saw major events, while other towns and localities have experienced minor - moderate flooding and isolation. Major flooding occurred across the region from 21 December 2010 to 17 January 2011. The Western Downs Regional Council was declared a disaster situation by the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services at 12.46am on 28.12.10 and it was extended at 10.12am on 11.1.11.

The events dates and heights are summarised below:

1. **Chinchilla**
28 December 2010 7.25m
12 January 2011 7.45m
2. **Condamine**
01 January 2011 15.25m
16 January 2010 14.67 m
3. **Dalby**
20 December 2010 2.94m
27 December 2010 3.5m
09 January 2010 3.74m
4. **Warra**
01 January 2011(height not recorded)
11 January 2011(height not recorded)
5. **Jandowae**
10 January 2011 (height not recorded)
6. **Miles**
29 Dec 2010 12.1m
7. **Tara**
27 December 2010 0.8m

a. Immediate Response –

The Local Emergency Coordination Committees (LECC) were activated and set up the Local Emergency Operation Centres (LEOC) as an immediate response as the event unfolded. Relevant response personnel were notified. Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) with the appropriate liaison officers were on Standby monitoring the situation, until they were required to activate, in accordance with the Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP). The Local Emergency Operation Centres (LEOC) was set up.

Emergency Alert SMS system was used quickly as a means to notify the relevant community, and Media Alerts were sent and posted on the Western Downs Regional Council website.

b. *Resourcing –*

There was adequate Council facilities, equipment and personnel at the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) and Local Emergency Operation Centres (LEOC) to coordinate the responses throughout the major event. Where specialist equipment or expertise was required these were available to be sourced from private areas, Government Departments the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) or the State Disaster Emergency Group (SDMG).

Dalby had an initial problem of accessing flood boats of a sufficient capacity to handle the flood conditions. Personnel trained and capable of operating in the conditions were limited. The Chinchilla SES boat assisted operations in Dalby. This had a lead on effect and in the first flooding event Chinchilla State Emergency Services boat was relocated to Dalby therefore the Chinchilla SES had to seek the use of private vessels. A boat from Wallumbilla was then resourced for the second event.

c. *Coordination and deployment of personnel and equipment –*

An email was circulated to members of Council staff and Local Emergency Coordination Committees (LECC) requesting contact details over the Christmas period in case plan had to be activated.

Council experienced difficulties in Dalby during the extended flood event due to various key personnel being unavailable at times to attend the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) in Dalby. Some of the key personnel were on annual leave out of Dalby and/or could not gain access to Dalby as roads were flooded or impassable. The other Local Emergency Operation Centre (LEOC) experienced similar albeit to a lesser extent.

Council liaised with the State Emergency Services (SES) and other agencies in deploying available staff and equipment. The energy companies in the areas provided manpower and equipment when required eg. sandbagging, vehicles, helicopters etc.

d. *The adequacy of equipment and communications systems –*

In Dalby no major problems were experienced with the communication systems. Council maintained access to the landline telephone and mobile systems as well as Councils two-way radio network.

Fortunately power supplies were maintained throughout the events, however a major power failure would have caused severe difficulties in the short term.

Electronic communications worked adequately however some early minor difficulties were evident on facsimile transmission and receiving in other centres.

During the December 2010 flood event of the Condamine River, the major problem occurred with the power supply being disconnected to the town resulting in a number of sewer lines also being disconnected. With the disconnection of the power, the Telstra tower in Condamine being inoperable this resulted in total isolation in terms of telecommunications. Satellite phone coverage was poor during this outage also.

The Chinchilla State Emergency Services (SES) flood boat is too big for the Charley's Creek Catchment area and therefore created problems which would have been alleviated with a small boat (issues with launching and retrieving the flood boat out of the water and maneuverability within the Chinchilla Streets). Two events in such short periods created problems with sandbagging and there wasn't any provision for new sandbags due to flooding in other parts of Queensland. The communication systems worked well although on one particular day the Telstra network was clogged due to SMS alerts in the Chinchilla District. Some mobile phones didn't receive these alerts.

e. ***The adequacy of community response in their particular region -***

In Dalby the community response was to be commended. The warnings issued and advice given to the public were generally heeded and acted on in a timely manner. The local people offered material assistance and volunteered to act in any capacity to assist council's response. Outside offers for various goods and services were many and at times overwhelming.

In regard to the Condamine incident, this flood was inconceivable to the residents and as such they were under prepared. There was resistance from some of the towns people to evacuate prior to the first event and this was heightened by the mandatory instruction. There was however no resistance to voluntarily evacuation in the second event. Offers of assistance from locals and volunteers in the first event were overwhelming.

The Chinchilla community was slow to react to advice from the Local Emergency Coordination Centre (LECC) for the first event, although the second event residents were more prepared and acted in accordance with instructions. The Chinchilla flood was inconceivable to residents and as such residents in the Condamine River Flood Plain in the Chinchilla District were underprepared and experienced a flood 1.4m higher in recorded history.

3. Measures taken by the Western Downs Regional Council to prepare members of the community in the event of a flood or other natural disasters.

Summary

Western Downs Regional Council have several measures in place to prepare the community for the event of a natural disaster.

Council has a website www.wdrc.qld.gov.au which gives the community access at all times to:

- Media releases
- Media alerts
- Bureau of Meteorology
- Emergency Services
- Road Closures
- Rainfall
- Weather

Computer access to all members of the community is provided at the local libraries throughout the region.

At the start of each storm season media releases are put out by Council reminding the community to be mindful that there could be large falls of rain over this period, to prepare and have the contact number for the State Emergency Service (SES) at hand. Western Downs Regional Council has a strong relationship with the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), other radio media, local papers etc. (Please refer to Mayors list of media contacts). This is supported by the Bureau of Meteorology supplying Council with weather warnings during this storm season which are passed onto appropriate organizations.

Council supports the State Emergency Services (SES) both financially and with resources. These resources are maintained by Council. The State Emergency Services (SES) regularly attends community events to heighten awareness of the hazards, the services SES can provide and/or recruit members.

Western Downs Regional Council makes Flood Studies available through Council resources to any community members.

As the events began the LDMG requested Emergency Alerts be sent as SMS and to home phones, Media Releases and Alerts were issued and updates made available on the website. Regular media announcement informing the community of the situation were aired on the ABC radio.

For Condamine specifically during the initial flood a town meeting was conducted following receipt of information that the rains were going to result in a record flood. A town meeting was also convened during the second event.

4. Measures taken by the Western Downs Regional Council and if they were members of or privy to the response undertaken by the LDMG and/or the DDMG to inform the community about the flood events and to protect life, public and private property.

Summary

SMS Emergency Alert System was used to advise the community of significant hazards within the region. In the case of the 2010/2011 flood event SMS emergency alert system advised of the following situations across the region when:

- Water supply could be potentially contaminated;
- Water supply limited and restrictions;
- Flood heights that could be expected and opportunities to evacuate to centres and move vehicles to higher ground

In addition to the Emergency SMS, in Condamine specifically, after the residents returned to the town following the first event, contact mobile phone numbers were obtained and SMS notifications and alerts were provided prior to the second event. These mobile numbers were utilised by Council staff to notify residents to relocate their vehicles or themselves prior to the bridge becoming impassable during the second occasion.

Door knocking and a bull horn was used to advise the community to move vehicles of higher ground and the evacuation procedures.

In Chinchilla due to the event on the 10 January 2011 being after the businesses closed, businesses were contacted by phone and advised of major rainfall in the catchment area and to prepare for a second event. A flyer was distributed to all residents in low lying areas advising residents to be prepared for a higher flooding event.

Door knocking and letter drops were carried out to advise the community to move vehicles to higher ground and the evacuation procedures.

The Local Emergency Coordination Centre (LECC) was manned each day of the event and when the centre closed all phone calls were diverted to a message service advising of flood heights and emergency contact numbers for Chinchilla & District.

The automatic river station at "Seven Oaks" failed during the first event and therefore no accurate information was obtained for both events. The other river station is a manual read station at "Beruna" and the Local Emergency Coordination Centre (LECC) worked closely with the property owner in regards to river flows, heights and rainfall. Other properties owners in the Charleys Creek Catchment area frequently phoned in rainfall and creek height information.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) advised that the flooding events in Chinchilla were in uncharted territory and beyond modelling capabilities. The Local Emergency Coordination Centre (LECC) then had to rely on the elderly residents of Chinchilla District and property owners in the Charleys Creek Catchment area to provide information on previous floods in the area.

Western Downs Regional Council website www.wdrd.qld.gov.au posted regular media releases during the event.

Local Emergency Coordination Centres in each affected district, advertised their contact phone number to field questions and take requests for assistance.

The Myall Creek catchment to Dalby ALERT flood warning system was completed in the mid 1990's as a co-operative project between the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and the Dalby Town Council.

The system comprises a network of rainfall and river height field stations located in the catchment which report via VHF radio to base station computers located in Council offices at Dalby and the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) in Brisbane.

The two river height stations are at 'Clydesdale' on the Myall Creek, and 'Moffatt' on the Myall Creek North Arm. Following a peak at these two stations, an estimate of a peak in Dalby can be made. The peak in Dalby will occur approximately 12+/-2 hours after the peak at Clydesdale.

The field stations send reports for every 1 millimetre of rainfall and every 50 millimetre change in river height. The base station computer located in the Western Downs Regional Council Dalby Customer Service Centre collects the data and has software that displays it in graphical and tabular form. The data is also received by the Bureau's Flood Warning Centre where it is used in hydrologic models to produce river height predictions.

The base station computer also issues SMS/email alert notifications under specific event conditions which serves to notify personnel of possible flood/storm events.

Council's Myall Creek flood warning system was used to inform response personnel of possible flood events for the Town of Dalby. Response procedures are listed in the Myall Creek Flood Alert System Response Manual. The flood event log sheets hold records of alarms and notifications sent throughout the event and corresponding emails are attached. Council officers were on duty 24 hours when necessary to monitor the data of the field stations. Advice from Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) was sought when needed, and flood height predictions for the town of Dalby were provided to the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) and Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG). More information is provided in question 5 relating to the processes in place to provide suitable notification to residents that are known will be affected once river heights reach a particular level.

During the event Council provided community members with transport arrangements to work, from hospital, aerodrome etc.

5. Measures taken by the Western Downs Regional Council and if they were members of or privy to the measures undertaken by the LDMG and/or the DDMG to manage the supply of essential services (water, power and communications) during the 2010/2011 flood events.

Summary

DALBY WATER SUPPLY

The Dalby Water Treatment Plant was completely flooded by the Condamine River at approximately 2:00 am on 29th December 2010. Extensive damage was caused to the plant and the bore field supplying the plant. The Dalby Town Water Treatment Plant was totally out of operation for 4 days. A very limited capacity supply was restored on 2nd January 2011. Supply to the town was maintained during this period from a combination of storage in the town reservoirs, and a fleet of tankers carting from Jandowae, Oakey and Toowoomba.

A second peak on 13th January 2011 required the shut down of the plant again for a period of 1 day.

Details are as follows:

- 28 December 2010 - At 9:00 pm flood levels exceed the 1976 level and continue to rise.
- 29th December 2010 - At 2:00 am floodwaters enter the main control building. Power to the plant was shut down at 3:00 am. Computer control was transferred to the standby system at the Dalby Wastewater Plant. Water testing at the Edward St reservoirs in the town was OK. Emergency chlorine dosing equipment was established at the reservoirs, and the 4.5 ML reservoir isolated to act as an emergency reserve. The Mayor and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) were notified approx 6.30 am and contact with the media commenced immediately.
- 30th December 2010 - Recovery team leaders visited the plant by boat, and a recovery plan was finalised. A recovery team of approximately 20 Council staff and contractors were briefed. A fleet of water tankers was assembled and carting commenced late in the afternoon to replenish the supply direct into the Edward St reservoirs.
- 31st December 2010 - The recovery team accessed the plant by high clearance trucks, and recovery action commenced. 1.1 ML of water was carted in from Jandowae and Oakey water supplies.
- 1st January 2011 - The treatment plant recovery actions continued, and the bores were all accessed by boat for a preliminary assessment. Three bores were available. RO Plant 1 was started and first water delivered to the town at about 6:00 pm. 606 kl were produced overnight. 1.49 ML of water was carted.
- 2nd - 13th January 2011 - recovery continued with the RO Plant 1 operating, river plant being brought on line, but with supply still very restricted by damaged and inaccessible bores. Water carting by tanker continued until 6th January 2011, from Jandowae, Oakey and Toowoomba supplies.
- 13th January 2011 - The Condamine River again peaked causing shut down of the water treatment plant for a second time. Buildings were not flooded on this occasion, but water flowed into the Clearwater reservoir with the potential to contaminate the supply. Borefield was again extensively flooded.

DALBY SEWERAGE

The Dalby sewerage network was flooded during the event, resulting in huge quantities of infiltration. The treatment plant was undamaged, and full treatment capabilities restored shortly after the infiltration flows subsided.

WARRA WATER SUPPLY

Warra water supply's river pump station switchboard was flooded on 29th December, and supply lost to the town. Council's water operator's for Warra are based in Jandowae and were unable to access the town prior to and for much of the period. They kept in daily contact with a resident who was able to view the levels in the tower. Water was carted from the Chinchilla town supply to maintain water to the town.

CHINCHILLA SEWERAGE

Operation was maintained throughout the event. The main town pump station A is in the low flooded area of the town, but Ergon Energy ensured continued power supply which ensured continued operation.

Documents included for further understanding are a compilation of emails related to Question 5 and Question 6 regarding the maintenance of water and sewerage service and the restoration of those services during and after the flood events. The emails include reports to regulators, advice to senior management and directives to staff and contractors. Many of the emails are strictly operational issues discussing repairs, sampling or procedures to do a particular task.

6. Measures taken by the Western Downs Regional Council and if they were members of or privy to the measures taken by the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and/or the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) in the maintenance and reinstatement of essential services in the recovery phase following the 2010/2011 flood events, in particular the reinstatement of water and waste water services.

Summary

DALBY WATER SUPPLY

- 14th January 2011 - Work commenced on water treatment plant recovery. 1.778 ML of water was treated and pumped. Water carting recommenced. 0.42 ML of water was carted.
- Water treatment plant and the borefield pumps and switchboards were restored over time until a reliable full supply was in place by 9th February 2011. Water carting continued until 16th January 2011.

The Dalby water treatment plant is now providing an adequate and reliable supply to the town, but there is still repair work to be completed. Some non critical components of the water treatment plant are still to be repaired. Five low capacity bores are still to be provided with new switchboards. Building and grounds damage is also still to be repaired.

The Utilities Treatment Manager's notes on a presentation to staff and contractors included in documents submitted

WARRA WATER SUPPLY

A total of 520 kl of water was carted over the period from 4th to 27th of January 2011. A boil water alert was issued as a precautionary measure, after a resident reported dirty water in the town. Due to lack of access and the need to cart water from Chinchilla, the boil water alert remained in place until February 2011 after three clear days of ecoli test results were proven.

CHINCHILLA WATER SUPPLY

Chinchilla water supply was maintained to most of the town during the flood events.

The main river pumps were lost on 20th December 2010 during a rise in the Condamine River. As no road access was available to the pump site at this time, the town supply was transferred to the back up supply pumps in Charley's Creek. Water quality issues were encountered, as Charley's Creek water is 'difficult' to treat, being of very different quality to the Condamine River water. Dirty water issues did result, and a short period of boil water alert from 12th to 18th January 2011 was undertaken as a precautionary measure after continually low chlorine levels resulted in a positive ecoli test. The boil water alert was lifted only after normal procedures of testing resulted in three clear days.

Disruptions to the supply in some areas of town resulted due to 17 water main breaks over the period from 29th December 2010 to 20th January 2011. During the flood peaks the breaks were difficult to identify as some were under water, and substantial water losses were incurred. This resulted in disruptions to the water supply to some areas of the town. Two of the interruptions extended overnight as repairs could not be completed in daylight hours, and skilled relief staff were not available for night work.

CONDAMINE WATER SUPPLY

Condamine was evacuated on 1st January 2011. Prior to evacuation, the town operator shut down electricity supply to the water treatment plant at the main switch.

The water treatment plant subsequently flooded to a depth of approximately 1 metre. Recovery was undertaken and a restricted water supply was restored to the town two days after first access for restoration.

Details are as follows:

- Recovery team leaders were helicoptered into the town on 3rd January 2011 to assess the damage. The plant and pump station had been flooded to a depth of 1 metre.
- Brown Aqua Systems were subsequently briefed on the findings, and contracted to formulate and implement the restoration of the treatment plant.
- On 5th January 2011, Brown's commenced reinstatement works in Condamine. Repairs of switchboards and pumps were commenced, and no unexpected problems were encountered at that time. Bacteriological testing of the water stored in the reservoirs was also commenced.
- The restoration works continued on 6th January.
- On 7th January 2011, electricity was restored to the town by Ergon, and the high lift pumps became operational pumping water to the town from the storage reservoirs. The treatment plant raw water pumps in the river were found to be unserviceable however, and the pumping system was modified to use the sportsfield pump. The treatment plant was then operated, and treated water was supplied to the town for 4 hours until the sportsfield pump also broke down. The raw water pumps and the sportsfield pump were all submerged in the flooded river, and not accessible for repair. It was also reported at this time that the damaged high lift pumps would be only serviceable for a short term, and that replacement pumps would be required.
- On 8th January 2011, a temporary floating pump was installed, and water treatment was commenced at a restricted capacity.
- On 9th January 2011, water treatment continued at the restricted capacity. Low chlorine levels were an issue.
- On 11th January 2011, Condamine was evacuated again. Key pieces of equipment were including electrics and pumps were disassembled and taken to high ground. The floating pump was removed from the river.
- On 19th January, recovery team leaders again helicoptered into the town to reassess the damage. Water depth in the plant had been about 400mm.
- On 20th January, Brown Aqua Systems and Council's Electricians returned to recover the water treatment plant again. A restricted water supply was restored to the town. The high service pumps were performing poorly. The floating pump was still used as the raw water pumps were inaccessible. Chlorine levels were low, and sampling for microbiological testing was undertaken.

Subsequently, access to the raw water pumps has been gained and new pumps ordered. New high lift pumps have been installed. Supply to the town has continued at a restricted capacity. Safe potable water quality has been restored.

ELECTRICITY

Electricity supply was managed by Ergon Energy. Both Ergon Energy and Western Downs Regional Council are members of the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and information of when and where power was cut and restored was shared at the many Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) meetings.

Ergon worked directly with Western Downs Regional Council, and gave high priority to ensure that power supply was maintained to water and sewerage services. Power was not cut to the main building of the Dalby Water Treatment plant even though the buildings were flooded. The plant was shut down at the main switch, and Councils electricians and contractors ensured safety of the systems prior to switch on. Ergon Energy ensured high priority was given to maintaining supply to the essential bores, river pump stations and treatment plants throughout the region.

The Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) worked with Ergon Energy to assist the flood affected homes and businesses establish an early reconnection to electricity supply. In some instances it was possible to speed up the process of safety inspections and Ergon reconnections, where local contractors may not have been readily available, by requesting for assistance from local contractors in neighbouring towns and to the District Disaster Coordinator (DDC). In Condamine for example the lack

of electricians and the isolation of the entire Western Downs region, meant the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) felt it necessary to provide electricians to do safety checks and reinstate power in a relatively short time frame, rather than what would have resulted in delays. The same was done in other communities when possible and necessary.

7. Communications between local government, the LDMG, the DDMG and the State in relation to disaster management before, during and after the flood events of 2010/2011.

Summary

Before the 2010/2011 Flood Event the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and the District Management Group (DMG) shared information at their respective meetings. The groups contained similar members or agencies, so information would be known to both groups. Minutes from the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) are included in reports to council and distributed to all members of the groups (Submitted as per the request for information 1 March 2011).

During the events both the Local Emergency Coordination Groups and the Local Disaster Management Groups (LDMG) submitted Situation Reports to the District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) (Submitted as per the request for information 1 March 2011).

Requests for assistance were made to the District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) for food or medical supplies for properties or towns, resources to address the issues with water plant inundated and supply shortages, expertise from the Red Cross to provide support in managing the evacuation centers, bedding, amenities and similar material from Q-Build for the evacuation centers, experienced vector control officers trained and with equipment, resources for evacuating the townships of Condamine.

General communication and updates between the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG), District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) and State Disaster Management Group (SDMG) through the events was made via telephone, email and fax. In the vast majority of cases communication followed the pyramid hierarchy; the Local Emergency Coordination Centre (LECC) to the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) to the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) to the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG). The Local Emergency Coordination Centres (LECC's) regularly met, as did the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) met, then representatives from the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) were included in the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) meetings.

After the response phase, the Local Emergency Coordination Committees (LECC's) each held debriefs, the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) held a debrief on 22 February 2011 and the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) held a debrief on 8 March 2011 (Minutes submitted as per the request for information 1 March 2011).

8. Any provision of services by the Western Downs Regional Council to their local area whether via the LDMG, DDMG or independently before, during or after the flood events of 2010/2011.

Summary

Western Downs Regional Council, in particular with the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) quickly developed strategies to maintain or restore services to the local area during and after the events. The four aspects of community recovery, Human-social, Built environment, Natural environment and Economic were monitored. The draft Disaster Recovery Plan and the Council reports references within are included as it further details these operations.

Environmental Health coordinated waste collection, vector control, health and hygiene information to be distributed to flood affected businesses and residents.

- **Waste Collection:** Following the flood, crews, including waste contractors and work crews from local businesses and the energy sector, worked to remove flood debris and damaged household goods. Due to road closures and road limit restrictions, collection vehicles were unable to access many areas and permits for these vehicles to exceed limit restrictions proved extremely difficult to obtain. In all areas, recycling services had to be cancelled for a number of weeks and in some areas, both garbage and recycling were unable to be collected. At present, almost all services have resumed, although some properties are unable to be accessed due to road closures or load restrictions.
- **Vector Control:** A significant increase in mosquito and other biting insects were observed in the local urban communities following the flooding. Councils Mosquito Management Plan was activated, and Pest Management teams from Sunshine Coast Regional Council were accessed through a request for assistance to the DDC and Local Government Association Queensland's (LGAQ's) 'Peer to Peer Program', to undertake pest control works. A total of 65 hours of pest control work was undertaken
- **Environmental Health:** Council Officers were actively involved in other areas of Council operation, including establishing some of the evacuation centres and reviewing the quality of water supplies. Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) liaised with all food premises affected by floodwater, providing advice and support to those businesses. Many business operators expressed their appreciation for the contact. Messages relating to personal hygiene were also prepared for members of the public participating in the cleanup.

Engineering works crews with involvement from Transport and Main Roads commenced repairs to roads and bridges as soon as the water receded. Utilities faced significant and major impacts and formed strategies to quickly respond. (Detailed information is included in questions 5 and 6 on this point).

- **Utilities:** Flooding had a major impact on Dalby, Chinchilla, Warra and Condamine water supplies. Dalby and Condamine were severely damaged and supplies were disrupted. Dalby Waste Water Plant was offline for approx 2 weeks due to infiltration and high turbidity. Chinchilla suffered losses due to extensive mains breaks, and also quality problems. Warra river pump controls were inundated. Other plants were largely unaffected.
- **Roads:** The Councils road network experience significant damage both prior and during the flood event. The Western Downs Regional Council were included in disaster declarations each month from September 2010 to January 2011. This extensive damage was exacerbated with each event declaration and the Council continued to maintain the road network in order to maintain, where possible, a road network open for use by residents. During the event Council worked closely with the local Police Department in order to maintain public safety. Following the event, emergent repairs continue to be carried out to ensure a safe network is open for use. The Council has also been collating information on damage to all Council owned infrastructure to prepare a submission to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority for possible funding for these restoration works.

Community Services provided Evacuation centres and 'One Stop Shops'. The Coordination Centres coordinated food and medical resupply to individuals and towns, clean ups and other requests for assistance or information. Any resources the State Emergency Services (SES) requested during the events i.e. replacement vehicles, temporary head quarters, meals, accommodation was also supported by the Coordination centres.

Prior to the event to ensure the State Emergency Services (SES) can respond as best as possible to an incident/event Council provides and maintains equipment for training, transportation and other response equipment, manages accounts for State Emergency Services (SES) spending, food and accommodation, while Council manages funding applications for identified further resources for the group.

9. Any provision of services to the Western Downs Regional Council by the Commonwealth, State Disaster Management Group or DDMG before, during and after the flood events of 2010/2011.

Summary

Western Downs Regional Council, and/or its previous councils, have commissioned several Natural Disaster risk studies with the assistance of Commonwealth and State funding. These studies include the following (Submitted as per the request for information 1 March 2011).

- SKM 2007 flood study report
- Q100 flood map from SKM 2007 flood study report
- Q100 Hazard map from SKM 2007 flood study report
- Dalby Natural Disaster Mitigation Plan
- Dalby Disaster Risk Management Study
- Wambo Natural Disaster Mitigation Plan
- Wambo Disaster Risk Management Study
- Chinchilla Disaster Risk Management Study
- Tara Disaster Risk Management Study
- Murilla Disaster Risk Management Study

In particular these studies have received grants from the Natural Disaster Resilience Program. Included in the documents submitted is a complete list provided to Council by Emergency Management Queensland summarizing the approved funding since 2001. It lists the above mentioned studies, while in addition listing projects that have been approved under the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund and the State Emergency Non Recurrent funding.

Through these later mentioned funding programs Council has been assisted in providing resources from training and recruiting audiovisual equipment, to vehicles and response equipment to the State Emergency Service.

At request Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) provided *SEM2000 Introduction to Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements Induction* training for the Chairs of the Local Emergency Coordination Committees (LECC).

10 Any involvement Western Downs Regional Council had with the Commonwealth in relation to the provision of emergency response, such as but not restricted to, Australian Defence Force personnel, equipment and services.

A decision was made to mandatorily evacuate the township of Condamine on Thursday 30 January 2010. This decision was made by the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG), and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) were utilised to "airlift" the residents from Condamine. The same arrangement was made to "repatriate" the residents on 5 January 2011 and again on the 19 January 2011. Staff had discussed with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) the use of mobile water treatment plants, but these were not utilised.

Western Downs Regional Council requested the assistance for airlifts by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) helicopter of the evacuated Condamine residents from the Miles aerodrome (12 people with one piece of carry-on luggage each) and 10 persons with same luggage from "Windibri". The evacuated persons were required to be repatriated to Condamine to facilitate the clean-up of their residences. This cleanup could not occur until residents returned.

The offer of assistance from the Australia Defence Force (ADF) was received by the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) prior to the clean up after the second event. The Australian Defence Force (ADF) arrived on the afternoon of 19 January 2011 with approximately 70 personnel. Teams commenced work in assisting with the hosing out and cleaning up of affected premises on 20 January 2011 and debris removal. Debris removal continued during the 21 January 2011 as well as personnel undertaking mowing of general areas around the town of Condamine. A number of Australian Defence Force (ADF) teams were deployed to assist some older rural landholders with the removal of debris from fence and cleaning out of rural sheds over the two days.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) also undertook numerous transport tasks delivering supplies from the flood boat to the State Emergency Services (SES) shed/Cods oval. Vehicle recovery exercises were undertaken as well within the town area.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) also provided a portable water treatment plant however was not able to successfully operate this facility in the Condamine instance.

Assistance was also provided by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in transporting people across the bridge via the ablay in lieu of the flood boat just prior to the reopening of the bridge. This was greatly appreciated by the local State Emergency Services (SES).

11. Whether there was any arrangement for assistance in relation to immediate response and recovery of an informal nature between the Western Downs Regional Council and Australian Defence Force barracks through use of personnel, services or equipment.

As per Question 10. No informal or formal arrangements were in place between Western Downs Regional Council and the Australian Defence Force(ADF).

The decision for Condamine township to evacuate on 11 January 2011, (the second occasion) was by voluntary means.

It is understood that the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) arranged for army personnel and equipment to be made available when residents returned to Condamine on the second occasion of 19 January 2011.

12. Whether the local community, through individuals or local business and enterprise, assisted in the provision of services for preparation, response and recovery before, during and after the flood events of 2010/2011

Summary

Individuals within the local community and in district, state and national communities provided assistance during the event and after by way of:

- Donation of goods from white goods, household items to clothing;
- Offer to provide short term accommodation for evacuees as well as accommodation for evacuees that have suffered substantial damage to their homes;
- Individuals within the community that had specific skills assisted with grief counsellors, nurses to assist elderly, chefs to help in evacuation centres;
- Individuals with machinery, pressure cleaners, water tanks, truck, loaders, boats provided these services for free or minimal cost;
- Individuals assisted with door to door surveys to provide information on where the most flood affected areas were and assistance needed;
- Individuals provided water from their own tanks, bores etc.

Local businesses and subsequent enterprises provided support throughout the event and are continuing support by:

- Freshly prepared food was delivered to community members and volunteers;
- Organisations arranged work rosters to accommodate people affected by the event;
- Donations of water, food to evacuation centres;
- Donations of electrical items to support evacuation centres;
- Bottled water – essential due to the water crisis
- Donation of cutlery, plates, beds etc to support evacuation centres;
- Energy companies provided labour, equipment, water to assist with the cleaning up of homes;
- Offer to provide short term water storage to assist with cleaning up;
- Using their business premises as drop off points for donations and coordinating those donations;
- Providing appropriate larger machinery to assist with clean up and removal of rubbish

The energy sector who are based in the Western Downs area, isolated from their work locations, volunteered man power and played a significant role in operation centres organized clean ups and medical and food resupplies.

Queensland Fire and Rescue (QFR), Urban and Rural also had a significant contribution during the clean ups, while the local volunteers in the State Emergency Services (SES) Groups supported door knocks, resupplies, evacuations, clean ups and surveying.

Community service organizations, Ministers groups, Neighborhood and family centers provided assistance to all community members during the event. In particular by the Department of Communities and Red Cross having one stop shops, offices or outreach set up in these centres and they could link and provide a large amount of assistance to the community. These groups greatly assisted the coordination and distributions of the vast array of donations received.

These centres are still providing support and monitoring community members who may still need assistance from the event.

Supplied is the database of details for offers of assistance during this event within the region.

13. Any particular consideration that should be given to the particular local government area of Western Downs such as regional or geographic differences that affected preparation, planning, response and recovery for the region.

Summary

Western Downs Regional Council has a geographical size of 38,039 square kilometers. Recognising the significance of the size of the region, the distance between the major centres and the immediate time frame required to respond to an event and the possibility of an event affecting more than one location, Local Emergency Coordination Committees (LECC's) were established in Chinchilla, Miles and Tara.

Council's Community Services Managers were appointed as the Chairs. Sub plans within the Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) have been drafted to address any differences or specific considerations and characteristics of the areas.

The members of this committee are the local representatives that will be involved in the local and immediate response. As the event escalates into an emergency, where extra resources are required the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) will activate to support and coordinate the relevant Local Emergency Coordination Centre (LECC).

14. Any aspects of the above which, in the opinion of the witness from their professional viewpoint, requires practical or legislative change to improve future disaster management in their area.

Summary

Provided are some comments on recommendations that may be able to be addressed through practical or legislated changes which would contribute to a more effective response able to be provided.

- State Emergency Services (SES) volunteer concept reviewed. Recruiting and retaining members is an issue with many groups. It appears the pressures of work-life commitments, in addition to other obstacles, affects the ability for commitment. It is a belief that personnel should be paid rather than volunteers, in a similar system to the Rural Fire Brigades. Similarly this would allow the groups to be better trained as well as achieve other benefits to the group, community and individual members via having a more formal structure.
- Also consideration should be given to the joint role Council and Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) have in managing the State Emergency Services (SES). Practical and legislative amendments could streamline the funding, resourcing, ownership and insurance issues that bounce between Local Government and Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ).
- Communication methods for the response teams in the event of disasters should be reviewed with the aim to review. All options for communication should be considered options, due to the likelihood of one becoming disrupted.
- The Local Authority has commissioned a report of the flood event and from this future mitigation strategies will recommended and considered. In initial feedback it appears more flood and rainfall monitoring devices need to be installed to better inform the decision makers and community on the impact of rainfall events which have the potential to cause flooding.
- Review of the Resupply Process (individual/town) with the aim of ensuring it is most efficient and practical.
- Relief Payments reviewed again with the aim to of ensuring it is most efficient and practical.
- The gathering of information and recording inundations of properties could be coordinated better by one lead agency. There has been much doubling up within and between agencies and the sharing of information could have been done better with more formal structure surrounding this responsibility.

Request - Councillor Ray Brown, Mayor, is also required to produce the following documents:

1. his written notes of interviews and media involvement during the 2010/2011 flood events in the Western Downs

Summary

During the flooding events of 2010/2011 maintaining a high level of communication and keeping the community informed was of paramount importance. Attached to this statement are:

- notes made by the Mayor before and after interviews with all genres of media
- emails from media and the appropriate response
- list of media contacts.

The media were instrumental in providing accurate and up to date information to the community. The Mayor was in receipt of every media release and media alert that were written by Western Downs Regional Council to enable him to provide all the relevant information to all community members. Overall the Mayor participated in a total of 1,730 interviews with the media.

Due to a large presence of Government Officials engaging the Mayor and community this assisted in alerting the community to the impact of the flood events.

Request - Councillor Ray Brown, Mayor, is also required to produce the following documents:

2. all media releases and alerts attended to by the Western Downs Regional Council during the 2010/2011 flood events.

Summary

Media releases were sent out regularly following on from Local Disaster Management meetings. When the community needed to know important information or issues of relevance the usage of media releases was very effective.

Councillors were provided with copies of all media releases to enable them to be appointed as spokesperson for the Mayor when necessary.

Councillors have also included notes of their involvement with the media for your reference as they were instrumental in providing information to the community.

Council also provided the community with monthly updates outlining progress of how the region is regrouping from the flood events. These updates also provided information to the community on data collected from debriefing meetings with Council, community and other State Government authorities.

Opinion pieces have been published in the Surat Basin News which has a wide distribution area which updates industries, businesses and community on the level of progress.

At community debrief meetings feedback received indicated other options for communications could be considered, in light of this e-news has been released and made operational to all community members.