



Council Chambers
Cnr Prairie & Kroombit
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Biloela Qld 4715

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**Banana Shire Council
Banana Shire Flood Event De-Brief - Response
December 2010 to January 2011**

Date: Thursday 17 February 2011

Time: 8.00am – 4.00pm

Venue: Supper Room, Biloela Civic Centre, Biloela

1. Opening and Welcome/Apologies

Collin Head opened the meeting at 8.15am and welcomed the attendees.

Present:

Snr Sgt Kerry Hodgson	Queensland Police Service
Inspector Mike Dixon	Queensland Police Service
Sgt Jeff Beckitt	Queensland Police Service
Collin Head	Banana Shire Council
John Walker	Banana Shire Council
Jaz Tumbers	Banana Shire Council
Alan Harris	Banana Shire Council
John McDougall	Banana Shire Council
Todd Sleeman	Banana Shire Council
Cr John Hooper	Banana Shire Council
Cr Maureen Clancy	Banana Shire Council
Cr Vaughn Becker	Banana Shire Council
Cr Nev Ferrier	Banana Shire Council
Cr Pat Brennan	Banana Shire Council
Cr David Snell	Banana Shire Council
Cr Warren Middleton	Banana Shire Council
Patrick Downing	Emergency Management Queensland
Rex Cowan	Department of Transport & Main Roads
Gary Dobbs	Queensland Fire & Rescue Service
David Young	Queensland Fire & Rescue Service
Terry Zillmann	Queensland Ambulance Service
Anthony (Tony) O'Dell	Anglo American (Dawson Mine)

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23/05/11
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Date:

Exhibit Number:



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Apologies/Absent:

Snr Sgt Nick Paton	Queensland Police Station
Inspector Marcus Hill	Queensland Police Station
Matt Glover	Banana Shire Council
Ray Geraghty	Banana Shire Council
Ellen Palmer	Queensland Health
Brian Smith	Queensland Fire & Rescue Service
Lee Snoodyk	State Emergency Service

2. Introduce Facilitator – Senior Sergeant Kerry Hodgson

Collin Head introduced Senior Sergeant Kerry Hodgson as Facilitator of this debrief meeting.

3. Overview of Event

Collin Head gave an overview of the event.

4. Outline of De-Brief Process

Kerry Hodgson introduced himself and explained his role as Facilitator of the meeting.

Each attendee introduced themselves and explained their role during the event.

5. Discussion of Identified Topics

ACTIVATION

John Walker advised that the LDCC had a false sense of security on Christmas Eve as it was thought that the river had peaked and was not expecting the heavy rainfall early Christmas morning. When the LDCC was stood down on Christmas Eve, a number of staff were planning on going away for Christmas. BOM had predicted widespread rain, but the LDCC has not expected such localised flooding rain. Council mapping could not predict the levels as there was no information available. Collin Head advised that Council couldn't collate BOM river level heights with contours as this flooding was unprecedented.

Timeliness

Terry Zillmann advised that there was never any confusion as to whether the LDCC was activated or not. When the LDCC was not needed, the LDMG was always put onto stand by or watch mode.

Could we have stood up earlier?

Collin Head suggested that the LDCC could have been activated sooner. LDCC was working from BOM estimates and was influenced by the public mentality that "Council over-reacted during the March event". The LDMG needs to determine trigger points in the plan for each town.

Terry Zillmann advised that it was not inappropriate to scale back the LDMG to watch mode on Christmas Eve as the heavy rainfall was not expected.

Staffing Over Christmas Period

John McDougall suggested that Council needs to make succession planning for current LDMG members and provide training for key personnel in the LDCC.

Problems Raised:

- First 24 Hours
- False sense of security
- Christmas period
- Prolonged period of event

RESPONSE

Cr John Hooper advised that a lot of the flooding around Theodore was the result of Castle Creek and not the Dawson River. Locals had never seen river that high. This shows the need for an automatic measuring station in Castle Creek. Cr Hooper advised that after the March 2010 event, Council had requested the Government install more automatic measuring stations within the Banana Shire.

Vaughn Becker advised that there was frustration on site at Theodore as the LECC wasn't getting information through about the affect the creek systems was having and there was the perception that the creek system was not taken into account enough. Collin Head advised that BOM provided no hydrologic reporting on creek systems. John Walker advised that the LDCC took the initiative to gather rainfall data from individual properties and sending it to BOM. Collin also advised that BOM's predictions were half a metre off river levels without even considering water in the creek system and that a flood study will provide Council with information regarding Castle Creek in flood.

Collin Head advised that the access to the Theodore aerodrome needs to be upgraded to stay out of water for longer, which would make evacuation a lot easier (ability to use fixed wing aircraft).

Alan Harris advised that the Dawson River at Taroom reached heights and velocity that had not previously been recorded. The problem that was encountered was that once the height exceeded the 1956 level, there was no local knowledge to rely on. John Walker advised that this was also a problem for the LDCC.

Mike Dixon advised that in the lead up to the event (close to Christmas) that the DDMG had to contact the Theodore Police directly to get an update as not a lot of information was being passed onto the DDMG.

John McDougall advised that there was no administration officer on site at Theodore who could arrange for SitReps or written information to be passed on to the LDCC.

Cr Nev Ferrier advised that the response at Wowan went well. The Local BSC Supervisor at Wowan contacted Cr Ferrier to advise of the situation as the Supervisor has contacts that advise him when there is significant rain that could lead to an event. Cr Warren Middleton advised that the Wowan LECC has been formalised.

Cr Nev Ferrier advised that the flood event in Jambin was quite unnerving for the residents of Jambin. Residents were concerned that water was going to be released from Callide Dam and would impact them further. Jambin residents were completely isolated with no Police or SES personnel on site.

Tony O'Dell asked if there are plans for high ground helicopter pads or landing areas. John Walker advised that the LDCC identified landing areas for helicopters, however the identified landing pads for lower scale major floods were inundated. This event was out of the ordinary and the issue will be addressed by Council.

Action: Council to investigate helicopter pads/landing areas.

Cr David Snell commented on the Sewerage Treatment Plants, Water Treatment Plants and essential services. Cr Vaughn Becker advised that the sewerage system worked throughout the event at Theodore. Drinking water was an issue.

Rex Cowan advised that there were many State roads affected by this disaster event and that DTMR can improve their road/bridge inspections and signage. Collin Head commented that the 131940 website was not appropriate to give information in an event like this as it was incredibly slow and had inaccurate information. During the event, DTMR made the site more user friendly which helped the information flow. It was noted that QPS took a lot of initiative in advising of road conditions to the public.

Cr John Hooper advised that sandbagging resources are needed on all sites for future flood events. In this event, Wowan was given sandbags but no sand, and the Goovigen levy bank didn't stop water inundating school oval.

Todd Sleeman advised that some shop owners were worried about getting double-ups of supplies due to receiving re-supplies and receiving their normal orders once the roads opened.

David Young advised that QFRS brought in the Swift Water Rescue team a day before they were needed as people tend to make irrational decisions and try to get through flood water. It is better to have the team ready than to react to situations when they happen.

Cr Vaughn Becker raised the issue that a couple in Taroom waited on their roof to get rescued overnight. Mike Dixon gave overview of what actions the DDCC took. Vaughn and Mike will arrange for Mike to speak to the couple and advise of the situation.

Lessons Learned:

- The public needs to receive up to date information and advice,
Action: Set up of LECCs
- More accurate river levels and contours are needed.
Action: John Walker in the process of working out contours/mapping.
- Lack of local knowledge of BOM: Cr Warren Middleton advised that once the Theodore SES had evacuated the SES shed, BOM were totally reliant on the LDCC for river heights / information and the LDCC was updating BOM's website.
Action: Collin Head & John Walker are to attend Central Highland Regional Council (CHRC) to meet with the officer who generated CHRC's application for measuring stations.
Action: Council to identify funding sources (NDRRA).
Action: Council to identify contact points/people for rainfall/river levels and include in Disaster Management Plan.
- Access to Aerodromes: Collin Head advised that the Deputy Premier has been verbally advised of the need to upgrade access to Aerodromes.
Action: Collin Head and Cr Hooper – investigate the flood proofing of road access to aerodrome at Theodore and the Highway from Dululu to Wowan; and
Action: Council to make a formal submission to Minister or Premier with DTMR.

Evacuation

John McDougall suggested that the LDCC needs to focus on getting supplies and equipment into towns prior to the towns being isolated.

Tony O'Dell gave an overview of Anglo Coal's involvement in the evacuation:

- Anglo Coal had expected representatives from Red Cross or Council to come over to Moura on the day of evacuation, however no one showed up and it was left for Anglo Coal to deal with. Red Cross arrived on the second day and Anglo performed above what was expected.
- There are no protocols or Memorandum of Understanding between Anglo Coal and Council.
- There were other housing options that Anglo didn't use (houses, etc).
- Some self-evacuated people from other areas of the Shire wanted to be transported to Moura to take advantage of Anglo Coal's accommodation/meals.
- There were instances of rivalries between Theodore residents where they did not want to be in a room close to certain people.
- There was an issues with not knowing who was coming or going on the helicopters, no documentation was given.
- Radio transmission would have been beneficial between Moura & Biloela
- There was a difference of aviation fuel (avgas) for the helicopters.
- The Moura Airstrip was high and dry during the event, however there were issues as to what size aircraft could land. Would be beneficial for bigger aircraft to land there.
- Anglo Coal approached Council prior to Christmas 2010 about getting better warning of disruptions to the road network (eg. webcams, signs). Collin Head advised that signage on road closures is a big issue across the State. At one stage, Council ran out of "road closed" signs and were having to using hand painted signs. This issue will be addressed across the State. Tony advised that Anglo Coal is willing to assist in the upgrade of road signage.

ACTION: Collin Head to follow up.

- During Anna Bligh's visit there were people who were held up with her visit when they were needed elsewhere.
- Advised that there are two (2) nurses at the Moura Mine who would assist in an event.
- Advised that Anglo could supply staff for LDCC if needed.
- Cr David Snell asked if Anglo Coal could assist in an event when the Mine is fully operational. Tony advised that there are still things Anglo Coal could do to help, however not on a large scale response.

The Group discussed Red Cross' involvement in the evacuation, and determined the following:

- The LDCC expects Red Cross to run the evacuation centres and assist with the evacuation.
- Two (2) representatives from Red Cross were deployed to Theodore. One should have gone to Theodore, the other should have gone to Moura.
- Red Cross should have been in Theodore earlier.
- Red Cross were not able to bring all of their resources with them on helicopter.

John McDougall suggested that a different identification system be used when evacuating residents (eg. wrist band).

John McDougall also advised that an air controller was need on the ground on Theodore during the evacuation.

OPERATIONS – LOCAL DISASTER COORDINATION CENTRE (LDCC)

Todd Sleeman advised that administration staff need training on their roles and responsibilities in the LDCC, especially the staff who are normally not associated with Disaster management. Jaz Tumbers advised that limited training was provided to staff during the event (staff were told of their roles and responsibilities). Jaz also advised that Council is drafting a Standard Operating Procedure for the LDCC which will give a written position description to each staff member in the LDCC. Collin Head added that the Guardian software will improve the administrative operation in the LDCC and full training will be given to selected staff.

John Walker advised that there were only two Local Disaster Coordinators and felt that there should be more people capable of relieving this position.

Communication

John Walker suggested that Skype or a webcam could be beneficial to connect with people on the ground at the event site.

Alan Harris advised that the Taroom LECC would like to video-conference with the LDCC more often during events.

Gary Dobbs advised that the QFRS debrief resolved that communication methods with Baralaba cut out in an event. During an event, the electricity and telephone lines cut off. Once their solar power supply is out, residents are unable to charge their mobile phones. Radios do not work at Baralaba. Jeff Beckitt advised that he will contact Telstra to resolve the issue. Dave Young added that Baralaba needs generators for these situations.

Action: Jeff Beckitt to contact Telstra regarding communications at Baralaba.

Action: Council to investigate.

Room Set Up - LDCC

Patrick Downing advised that the set up of the LDCC needs to be restructured. Each agency needs a telephone line and compute so that each person will capture their conversations in Guardian. LDCC should be using projectors instead of white boards. Callers in room should have telephone head sets.

Collin Head advised that the current venue is unsuitable, but a new venue would mean spending more money. Council needs to look at its long term plan and possibly source a better facility.

Action: Council to investigate new LDCC venue.

Jaz Tumbers advised that measures need to be taken to manage the Centre better, such as bibs showing positions, an officer who is responsible for security in the Centre and the enforcement of designated seating

Cr Vaughn Becker advised there were needs to be better resourcing on site at Theodore (eg. internet, printer, photocopier).

Cr Maureen Clancy raised the issue of no Council IT staff were available during the event. Jaz Tumbers advised that all three Council IT staff were contacted and all were out of town on holidays. IT Coordinator Gerard Ridge was available on mobile phone and had contacted other IT people in town to assist in an emergency.

Cr David Snell commented that an emergency generator is needed for the LDCC in case the power had got disconnected. Collin Head advised that in a future event, a generator would be acquired at the beginning of the event.

LDMG MEETINGS DURING EVENT

John Walker advised that there were no formal or routine LDMG meetings during the event, however there were regular informal information sessions that LDMG members were able to attend.

Mike Dixon confirmed that the LDMG should hold separate scheduled meetings during the event that will need to be separated from the LDCC operations.

SITUATION REPORTS (SITREPS)

Jeff Beckitt advised that there was a problem with the DDCC not receiving information by the time it was needed as there was no set routine for when the DDCC expected SitReps to be submitted.

Action: The DDCC and LDCC need to establish specific times that SitReps need to be submitted on a daily basis.

Patrick Downing commented on the format of the SitRep changing during the disaster event. The State Disaster Management Group needs to set a format and not change it.

Jaz Tumbers advised that there was a problem with finding someone with authority to assist with the information being inputted into the SitReps. A resolution to this problem would be to designate a person (eg. Floor Manager) to assist with writing the SitReps and authorising the distribution of the Sitreps. Also, Guardian Software will assist in formulating the SitReps

Vaughn Becker advised that the Theodore District Health Council took it upon themselves to create and distribute Flood Update Newsletters during the event. These newsletters only contained facts and reiterated the information that was discussed at the public meetings.

LDMG / LDCC COMPOSITION

- Chain of Command
- Was it sufficient?
- Should other agencies have been at the table?
- Do other departments need to be included as core members of LDMG?

Kerry Hodgson explained the “spine” of the operations:

State Disaster Coordinator



District Disaster Coordinator



Local Disaster Coordinator

Collin Head is the Local Disaster Coordinator and he is in charge of the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC).

Agency Representation

Cr Maureen Clancy advised that in a lot of cases that were too many representatives from one agency, should be limited to only one representative.

John Walker commented that the QAS replacement for Terry Zillmann was not very knowledgeable of Disaster Management processes and didn't have the authority of a senior officer. Terry Zillmann advised that he was not aware the LDCC had activated until 28/12/10 and that there needs to be advise given to absent members upon activation. Mike Dixon suggested text messaging as well as emails.

Cr Warren Middleton advised that SunWater would like to have a representative in the LDCC in an event such as the recent event.

David Young advised that in the future, QFRS will have two people in the LDCC. The Logistics Cell will operate from the Biloela QFRS Station.

INFORMATION FLOW

Jeff Beckitt stressed the need for recording accurate information and using the information properly. The DDCC needs to receive detailed Requests for Assistance as well as comprehensive responses to questions.

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Jaz Tumbers advised that a process needs to be put in place for staff in the LDCC to exhaust local avenues before submitting Requests for Assistance.

John McDougall advised that some Requests for Assistance were not confirmed by the DDCC and it was just assumed that the Requests had been processed.

Vaughn Becker advised that there were issues regarding re-supplies at Taroom. The Taroom LECC wanted to use helicopter pilot from Taroom to conduct the re-supplies, but weren't allowed to as they were not on the DDCC's approved list of pilots. Jeff Beckitt advised that the pilots used are from Independent Aviation so that invoicing is not an issue. Vaughn requests that the local helicopter pilot at Taroom is added to the list for use.

Action: Vaughn Becker and Patrick Downing will have the local helicopter pilots added to the list.

TRANSITION TO RECOVERY

John McDougall advised that he believes there was no demarcation between Recovery and Response and there was a loss in information sharing.

Jaz Tumbers suggested that Recovery needed to start at or before the peak of the event. Recovery were needed to deal with offers of assistance, donations, etc. Also, the set up of a Recovery Centre could have diverted calls relating to Recovery out of the LDCC. Collin Head confirmed that the Response team should have been activated earlier.

Jeff Beckitt advised that QPS have asked for demarcation between Response and Recovery from the District Disaster Management Group. The SDMG did not demark Recovery and Response which subsequently flowed down to DDCC.

Jeff Beckitt advised that planning and guidelines for handling good will and donations needs to be handled at a State level to give guidance to District and Local groups.

Vaughn Becker commented that in the view of the public, there is no difference between Response and Recovery. This issue may call for public education on these two stages.

Vaughn Becker advised that there was no de-brief held for the Theodore LECC once the group was stood down. Vaughn believes that this should happen in the future.

OVERVIEW BY DDC (MIKE DIXON)

Mike advised that he believes the staff in the Local Disaster Coordination Centre did a tremendous job and the Centre was well operated.

Mike reiterated that everyone involved in the event needs to be weary of what mistakes were made and learn from those mistakes.

Jeff Beckitt added that staff training is definitely a primary issue that needs to be addressed.

6. CLOSE

Collin Head thanked Kerry Hodgson for his efforts as Facilitator and thanked the attendees for their contribution.

Meeting Closed: 3.26pm