Evacuation: Responsibilities, Arrangements and Management

Manual

Updated: November 2024

Document Approval and Control

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Document	Version	Amendment	Approved by	Date
Evacuation: Responsibilities, Arrangements and Management	V.2	Refer to Amendment Schedule	Deputy Commissioner – Disaster & Emergency Management	11/24

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1   Purpose

The Evacuation: Responsibilities, Arrangements and Management Manual contains guidance for evacuation planning, and considerations for the operational conduct of evacuations in the Queensland context.

2   Introduction to evacuation

Evacuation is a risk management strategy that can mitigate the adverse effects of a disaster on a community. It involves scalable approaches to planning and coordination for the movement of persons from an unsafe or potentially unsafe location to a safer location and their eventual return home.

Evacuations can be necessary due to a range of hazards. They can take days, weeks, or months to complete, depending on the impact of the disaster. Evacuations may require the relocation of a small number of people or entire communities. They are generally stressful for people who must leave their homes, and for people managing an evacuation given the high level of responsibility and challenges involved.

In Queensland, local governments are primarily responsible for responding to disasters in their area (including those requiring evacuation operations) under section 4A(d) of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (the Act). This includes ensuring they have a disaster response capability (section 80(1)(a) of the Act and the establishment of a local disaster management group (LDMG) (s29 of the Act). Local governments are responsible for developing a local disaster management plan (LDMP) for their area (s57 of the Act). As responding to disaster may include planning and implementing the evacuation of persons affected by disasters and establishing and operating evacuation centres under the Act, most local governments plan for evacuation operations prior to the onset of disaster events with assistance from their LDMG, leveraging local knowledge, experience, and existing community relationships.

Evacuation usually involves five key stages, outlined in Table 1:

Table 1: Stages of the evacuation process

1	**Decision to evacuate**	Decision makers analyse event intelligence and assess the necessity to evacuate people exposed to a range of hazards.
2	**Warning**[1]	Disaster event conditions and appropriate actions required are conveyed to the public.
3	**Withdrawal**	Exposed people move from a dangerous or potentially dangerous area to a safer location.
4	**Shelter**	Refuge and basic needs for evacuees are provided in evacuation facilities and safer locations.
5	**Return**	The disaster area is assessed and managed, with a planned return of evacuees.

In addition to the above five stages, community preparedness is an important aspect of the evacuation process. This is because a community that is prepared for an event is more likely to respond quickly and effectively and become more resilient for the future.

Figure 1 illustrates the combination of community preparedness and the five-stage evacuation process. An evacuation is not considered to be complete until each stage has been implemented.

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[1] Within this manual the term 'warning' is used to describe a stage in the evacuation process and should not be confused with official warnings issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau) or other issuing agencies.

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Figure 1: Queensland Evacuation Process
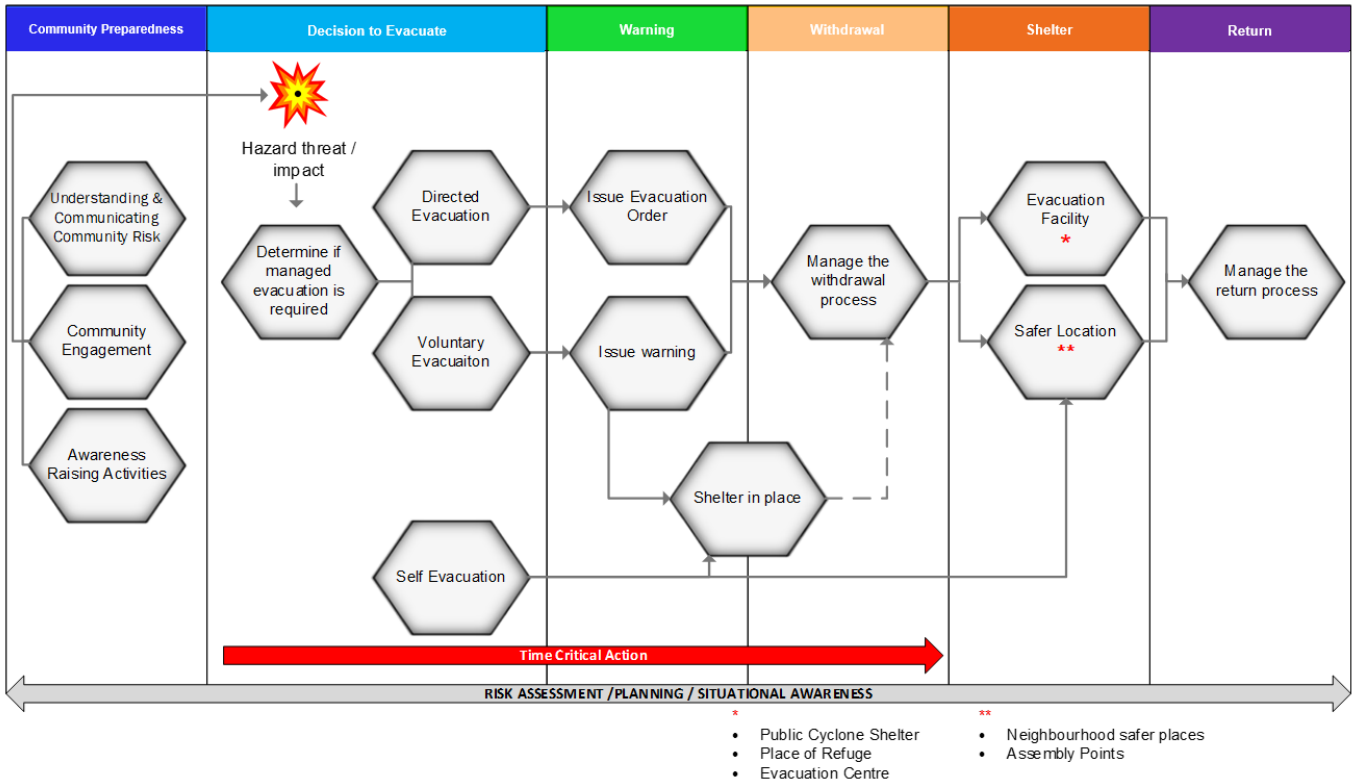
The operationalisation of these stages is addressed in Section 7 of this manual.

3   Risk Based Evacuation Planning

The evacuation process starts with planning for effective evacuation management. Working with communities and developing plans well before a disaster situation arises can help to alleviate some of the factors that may otherwise jeopardise the success of an evacuation operation[2].

3.1   Context of evacuation

Evacuations involve a range of considerations and actions, to ensure the safety of community members. Table 2 outlines core factors to be considered when planning for evacuations.

Table 2: Core considerations of evacuations

Scale	Planning should consider the consequences of the most reasonable worst case scenario within the local area and develop a plan which addresses a small to mass evacuation, based on the potential number of people involved.
Type of evacuation facility	The variety of buildings and sites to accommodate evacuees in response to a disaster event. There is a requirement to be clear on the types of evacuation facilities and/or safer locations.
Stages	Evacuation sub-plans should follow the five stages of evacuation.
Time	Evacuation may be required before a disaster event impacts a community as a preventative measure, or as a result of the disaster impacting a community resulting in the loss of services or severe damage to building structures.

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[2] AIDR Evacuation Planning Handbook

Notice	Depending on the nature of the event an evacuation may be immediate with little or no warning and limited preparation time or pre-warned allowing adequate time for preparation.
Compulsion	Some individuals within the community may decide to self-evacuate prior to any direction from authorities. When evacuation is recommended by authorities it is undertaken as voluntary evacuation. Authorities may also direct evacuation, where exposed persons are directed under legislative authority to evacuate an area.

Developing evacuation management processes requires identifying and planning for the following:

- key risks to essential services (particularly communications and power outages); availability of essential supplies in the community (including food and water); access to health and wellbeing services, particularly in communities that experience compounding effects of disasters. Evacuation planning should include contingencies for these risks
- relevant stakeholders and support agencies
- relevant safer locations and evacuation facilities and contingencies if these facilities are inaccessible or lack sufficient capacity
- appropriate communication mechanisms
- timeframes for action
- evacuation routes (which may enter neighbouring local government areas, Disaster Districts or cross-border communities), including roadside vegetation management, and contingencies if these routes are inaccessible or unable to cope.

3.2   Evacuation planning

Evacuation planning should be proportionate to the risks identified locally. These may range from small-scale local events to risks that may require large-scale evacuations with State and/or national consequences.

Evacuation planning involves both deliberate and immediate planning approaches, as described in Section 4.4.6 of the [Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline](#) (DM Guideline). Planning and preparing for evacuation is an important process, as it allows time to consider possible scenarios and determine an agreed approach to the management and coordination of an evacuation, through consultation with a broad range of specialised stakeholders (e.g. an evacuation sub-group). A written evacuation sub-plan (or equivalent) becomes a record of the arrangements made by these stakeholders regarding their roles and responsibilities, resources required, and linkages between various functions.

The process of deliberate and immediate planning ensures adequate planning, management and coordination of evacuation is achieved.

3.2.1   Deliberate planning for evacuation

- **Risk assessment:** The risk assessment process may identify risks that will require an evacuation of a community for certain hazards.
- **Evacuation sub-plans:** deliberate planning in the form of the development of an evacuation sub-plan may be undertaken. Evacuation planning should be completed prior to the onset of an event, to ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly identified and understood. Evacuation sub-plans should consider all-hazards, must be scalable, follow the stages of evacuation, and involve communication and collaboration with all identified key local, district and State stakeholders. Additionally, the development of an evacuation sub-plan should be noted in the LDMP.
- **Evacuation facility business continuity plans (BCPs):** BCPs may also from part of the evacuation planning process, to ensure the evacuation process and selected facilities can

continue to operate during a disaster event and to provide coordination and emergency support to the local community.

3.2.2 Immediate planning for evacuation

- **Operational plans:** An evacuation operational plan may be developed to address an event-specific situation. This type of plan usually outlines:
- the problem/concern/vulnerability (for example a cyclone approaching/impacting a populated coastline)
- the appropriate actions (what? who? how? when?)

Operational plans are developed when situational awareness and risk assessment identify specific community safety needs to preserve or protect life.

The approaches chosen by local government/LDMG will largely depend on the emergency planning arrangements within the area, the nature of the hazards faced, the resilience and availability of community assets, services and resources, and the characteristics of the communities within the local government area.

3.3 Assessing the risk

The identification of all hazards and the exposed population to each hazard is critical in the development of a planned and coordinated evacuation, to understand all facets of the community profile and to mitigate risk.

3.4 Analyse the population exposed

The characteristics of the exposed population to each hazard should be analysed to ensure evacuation sub-plans adequately consider the community they are developed to support. Plans should consider how they can support the evacuation of the following:

- critical facilities (e.g. hospitals)
- aged care facilities
- schools and childcare centres
- culturally and linguistically diverse populations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people with a disability
- caravan parks
- vulnerable people including homeless persons and house bound-persons
- offshore islands, isolated resorts, or settlements
- previous isolated communities
- temporary/transient populations and tourists.
- Additionally, evacuation planning should account for:
- existing public transportation systems
- socio-economic capacity of suburbs or areas
- pet ownership
- communities who are still recovering from a disaster.

3.5 Vulnerable populations

Evacuation planning processes will need to consider special arrangements for members of the community who may be vulnerable during an evacuation. As a guide, persons may be considered vulnerable if it is determined that upon receiving an evacuation message, they cannot comply with evacuation directions. Planning must include consideration of people who are potentially unable to evacuate, by reason of circumstances or personal characteristics.

In the planning stage LDMGs are encouraged to determine the best approach to engage and liaise with vulnerable people in their community and with the service providers who support them. These service providers are in regular contact with their clients and have pre-existing relationships with them and contact lists which will assist in communicating emergency messages and information.

Such service providers may include:

- Australian Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- St Vincent De Paul
- aged care providers (e.g. Anglicare, RSL LifeCare, BlueCare)
- State agencies
- advocacy groups
- neighbourhood centres

3.5.1 Aged care facilities

Aged care facilities must have an emergency management plan[3] which should include an evacuation plan. The evacuation component of the plan should:

- outline procedures for the complete evacuation of the facility
- include specialised transportation requirements
- outline established formal agreements with other aged care facilities
- outline alternative suitable accommodation to provide a safer location
- outline business continuity arrangements to ensure there is an appropriate level of care for their evacuated residents
- provide details for alternative power generation equipment
- provide details of additional stocks of critical store (including oxygen and common medications)
- outline triggers for evacuation and anticipated timeframes
- contain a high needs client register.

LDMGs should engage with aged care facilities, including private nursing homes, to develop an understanding of their emergency management plan and evacuation processes to ensure the LDMG is aware of any assistance they may be required to provide to the facility. This could include transportation, logistics or negotiations for alternative accommodation. Where the aged care facility identifies a requirement for external agency support which is outside their capacity (such as transport of residents with high care needs to an alternative location), the facility is to engage in detailed consultation with these agencies prior to the onset of an event to ensure a clear understanding of capacity and availability is discussed e.g. aged care providers should not include planning for QAS to evacuate high care patients without QAS consultation and agreement. During these discussions the LDMG should also encourage aged care facilities to ensure they understand and know how to act on emergency warnings and advice.

3.5.2 Pets and animal management

Pets[4] remain the responsibility of their owner during an evacuation and pet owners are encouraged to pre-plan alternative accommodation for their pets prior to the onset of an event.

Queensland, endorses embedding the consideration of animals (pets and assistance animals) into disaster planning, in accordance with the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*. Consequently, LDMG

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[3] See https://www.disaster.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/403267/BCP-and-DM-planning-resource-for-residential-aged-care-facilities.pdf for more information

is encouraged to consider how pets and assistance animals (e.g. guide dogs) will be managed during an evacuation and within evacuation facilities.

It is recommended that community education, awareness, and engagement programs educate residents on their responsibilities for their pets before, during and after an event. These responsibilities may also be articulated to the community during an event to ensure understanding and minimise confusion and anxiety.

As part of the evacuation planning process, it is recommended the following occur:

- clearly communicate the responsibilities of pet owners within the community
- develop and communicate a policy on the management of pets during an evacuation which outlines pet owner responsibilities
- consider a strategy for residents in low-risk areas to provide foster care for pets from high risk areas to minimise the number of animals requiring accommodation
- develop and document transport and shelter plans for pets. LDMGs are encouraged to seek local solutions to this issue before embarking on a large-scale evacuation of pets.

Note that reference to pets in this manual refers to household, domestic pets. The LDMG is not responsible for the evacuation of livestock. The primary responsibility for livestock rests with the livestock owner.

More information about planning for animals in disasters can be obtained from the [National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters.](#)

3.5.3   School closures

The authority to approve the temporary closure of a state school in an emergency situation rests with the relevant principal or person in charge, acting on advice from emergency service officers. In practice, principals would advise the relevant Regional Director of Education, Department of Education, who would authorise the closure of one or more schools. If a school principal cannot contact the Regional Director of Education, then the principal may close the school.

The Department of Education also can disseminate warnings and advice to Independent and Catholic schools but is unable to enforce the closure of these facilities.

The early closure of schools will also make school buses and school resources available for the broader evacuation needs of the community if required.

Note the closure of schools can create a flow-on issue for parents and/or carers and this needs to be planned prior to the school closure.

3.5.4   Tourists

Evacuation sub-plans should consider the needs of tourists or travellers, noting it is unlikely they will have friends or family they are able to seek refuge with. Considerations should include:

- will tourists be able to self-evacuate?
- what community messaging could occur to inform tourists, including information about evacuation routes?
- have local tourism organisations been involved in the evacuation planning process?
- what are the evacuation procedures for the local tourism providers (tour companies, accommodation and transport services)?
- what are the parameters for closing airports and roads?
- what are the recovery messages that will be used when access is permissible?
- Tourism operators in high risk areas should be encouraged to use messaging such as [What to do when visiting Queensland and a natural disaster strikes](#).

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3.6 Planning for the escalation of support

Evacuation subplans, in the local context should identify:

- the capability within the local government to support evacuation
- support requirements from the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG)
- the triggers to request assistance from the DDMG
- mechanisms for requesting assistance from the DDMG
- evacuation subplans, in the district context should identify:
- the capability within the District to support evacuation
- support requirements from the State
- the triggers to request assistance from the State
- mechanisms for requesting assistance from the State

3.7 Reviewing and exercising evacuation subplans

Evacuation sub-plans should be reviewed annually and include lessons identified, agreed recommendations from inquiries or reviews, evaluation reports from exercises, changes in risk assessments; and changes in contact details[5].

It is also recommended that evacuation sub-plans are exercised to ensure the effectiveness and scalability of the plan. Reviewing and exercising plans should include key local, district, and State stakeholders, and State and Territory cross-border stakeholders where appropriate.

3.8 Planning tools

When developing an evacuation subplan a PESTEL analysis may assist. The PESTEL analysis prompts the planner to consider Political, Environment, Social, Technology, Economic, and Legislation factors in the development of a plan. Table 3 provides several prompts to assist when using a PESTEL process.

Table 3: PESTEL factors for consideration in evacuation planning

Political	• political implications of your evacuation measures and the movement of people from an unsafe or potentially unsafe location to a safer location
Economic	• what resources are available to the LDMG to conduct and manage an evacuation? • how should local offers of assistance be managed? • how to identify and document the cost associated with the reception of people from other jurisdictions? • what are the local financial arrangements that can be implemented?
Social	• what is the community profile? • who are the local and state community service providers who may hold contact lists for the exposed population? • who are the local aged care facilities, childcare centres, hospitals
Technology	• the accuracy of intelligence data and mapping tools • the capacity of the public call centre and web-based systems to manage a large volume of requests • how will warning messages be delivered? • Interpreter services
Environmental	• risks to the evacuation process such as access, road blocks, strong winds, traffic congestion/management, topography, roadside vegetation

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[5] Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Evacuation Planning Handbook.

	• community profile or risk analysis of the community to identify types of hazards, exposed areas and population • what is the strategy for residents in low risk areas to provide foster care for pets from high risk areas to minimise the number of animals requiring accommodation
Legislation	• who is the responsible decision maker and what is the process to reach the decision to evacuate? • what are the legislative powers given to emergency managers to require evacuation? • roles and responsibilities of each agency/person involved in each facet of the evacuation process

In addition to the above PESTLE process, there are several key stakeholders that should be involved in the planning process. These stakeholders will vary based on your location and may include:

- Queensland Police Service (QPS)
- Queensland Fire Department (QFD)
- Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA)
- Local evacuation planning working group
- State government agencies (e.g. departments responsible for public works, education)
- Non-government organisations (e.g. Australian Red Cross)
- The community
- DDMG/DDMG Executive Officer
- Leading Age Care Services Ltd
- Australian Red Cross
- Bureau of Meteorology
- Energex/Ergon
- RSPCA Qld
- Telecommunications providers such as Telstra and Optus
- Tourism and Events Queensland
- Queensland Ambulance Service
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Tourism Industry Council
- Other local home care service agencies
- Local government animal management, local catteries and kennels
- Stakeholders responsible for State and Territory cross-border disaster coordination.

4   Evacuation approaches

4.1   Self-initiated evacuation

This is the self-initiated movement of people to safer places prior to, or in the absence of, official advice or warnings to evacuate (some people may choose to leave early based on a forecast). Depending on whether the disaster event is rapid or slow onset, self-initiated evacuation may be encouraged as the first option for residents. It is advisable that this message is included in community preparedness education, awareness, and engagement, such as early media releases and public information.

Safer places may include sheltering in their own home, or with family or friends who may live in a safer building or location. Self-initiated evacuees manage their own withdrawal, including transportation arrangements. People are encouraged to evacuate early if they intend to evacuate.

During the evacuation sub-plan development or event-specific evacuation planning, the sheltering and return of self-initiated evacuees needs to be considered.

4.2   Recommended evacuation

A person can choose to self-evacuate prior to an announcement of either an LDMG-coordinated recommended evacuation or a District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) directed evacuation. Exposed persons who may be impacted by an impending hazard are encouraged to evacuate. Evacuation subplans should consider documenting the management strategies and operational arrangements for a recommended evacuation.

4.3   Directed evacuation

A directed evacuation occurs in circumstances where a relevant government agency has exercised a legislated power that requires people to evacuate[6]. In Queensland, exposed people may be directed by a District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) or Declared Disaster Officer under the Act to evacuate.

A directed evacuation under the Act requires the declaration of a disaster situation. A DDC may declare a disaster situation with the approval of the Minister for Police if satisfied that the requirements of s64 of the Act have been met and the declaration must be in an approved form. During a disaster situation, the DDC and Declared Disaster Officers (DDO) are provided with additional powers under s76-78 of the Act. Specifically, section 77(1)(c) provides the power to evacuate persons or animals from the declared area or a part of the area.

A Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC), based on situational awareness, may make a recommendation to a DDC that a directed evacuation is required. However, as the LDMG/LDC has no legislative power to affect a directed evacuation, the responsibility for authorising a directed evacuation remains with the DDC.

4.3.1   Planning for directed evacuation

While an LDMG does not have the statutory power to authorise a directed evacuation, complete evacuation planning recognises and includes any scenario where a directed evacuation may be ordered by the DDC.

Similarly, it is recommended that a DDMG ensures the LDMGs within their disaster district are aware of directed evacuation arrangements in place at a district level.

4.3.2   Planning for the reception of evacuees from other local government areas

Even though an evacuation may not be necessary within their local government area, LDMGs may have a requirement to activate elements of their evacuation sub-plan to cater for the agreed reception of evacuees and/or pets or assistance animals, from other local government areas or districts. This should be documented in the evacuation sub-plan, along with possible management strategies, in consultation with the relevant DDMG.

5   Mapping the Data

Mapping can provide a visual representation of hazards and their potential impact to the community.

5.1   Develop evacuation zones

Areas exposed to the impact of a hazard should be categorised into evacuation zones based on severity of impact. For example, wet events (storm tide, riverine flooding, tsunami) may use inundation levels divided into the following four categories:

- Minor (Blue zone)
- Moderate (Yellow zone)
- Major (Orange zone)

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[6] AIDR Evacuation Planning Handbook

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- Extreme (Red zone)

When inundation levels have been identified, evacuation zones can be defined to create a visual illustration of this information. This will ensure it is readily accessible to disaster management decision makers and will assist with communicating with the community.

The application of the Storm Tide Evacuation Framework for Queensland ensures a consistent approach to the determination and colour coding of storm tide evacuation zones, the refinement of storm tide evacuation zones and storm tide specific community education strategies.

It is also recommended that evacuation mapping for other hazards are developed.

An effective means of displaying this information is the use of maps and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). When developing evacuation zones it is recommended the best available datasets are used for example:

- high resolution Digital Elevation Model (DEM) data is available for the majority of coastal communities from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. This data is in GIS format and the council will likely already have it available.
- QRA has a number of products available to support information on flooding.

5.2   Evacuation mapping

For communities vulnerable to storm tide, tsunami, and riverine flooding, local governments are encouraged to develop evacuation maps.

Evacuation maps will be informed by community vulnerability to hazards and the manner in which those hazards result in different exposed areas.

Evacuation maps are developed in two ways to assist decision making:

- disaster management response (to be used by disaster management groups)
- public information (to be used by the community).

5.2.1   Public information

It is recommended that evacuation maps or systems developed for public information include a basic level of information to ensure ease of understanding and application by members of the community. These maps should allow members of the community to easily identify their place of residence, level of exposure, and an evacuation route to a safer location.

Public information evacuation maps may include the following information and features:

- evacuation zones (clearly identified by colour coding)
- evacuation routes
- public points of reference to aid local orientation and increase awareness, such as the local church, library, park, roads, rivers, or natural features.

Safer locations such as evacuation centres, neighbourhood safer places, assembly points, and public cyclone shelters could be included on event specific public information maps.

It is more appropriate to use clear and relevant references to evacuation zones (colour and level of severity) rather than using lesser-known technical references such as heights above Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT) or Australian Height Datum (AHD).

5.2.2   Disaster management response

Include the following features on disaster management response evacuation maps:

- evacuation zones

- division of sectors or suburbs located within large, exposed areas to enable management of warning and withdrawal activities
- evacuation routes/alternate evacuation routes
- all identified safer locations, such as evacuation centres and neighbourhood safer places including pet friendly facilities
- hospitals, aged care facilities, schools and other similar facilities which may require special attention or response
- emergency services and other key response agencies and locations
- hazardous sites
- critical infrastructure
- local government or other relevant boundaries.

An understanding of the following will support the effective use of evacuation maps:

- population and demographic data within each exposed area
- estimated evacuation timeframes for each evacuation zone either independently or concurrently with other zones
- evacuation route capacity and hazard immunity levels
- estimated percentage of exposed population requiring emergency accommodation.

Disaster management groups and support agencies are encouraged to share information where possible.

When developing maps, consider the following:

- who are the key stakeholders, sources of data and geospatial information?
- what type of information and visual illustration is most appropriate for the hazard, impact areas and exposed community?
- what type of map is most appropriate to identify the evacuation zones?
- what level of detail is the most appropriate and relevant for the exposed community?
- how will the evacuation zones will be described for ease of understanding (for example above what river height, distance around hazard)?
- what strategy will be used for local areas to differentiate between evacuation zones for each hazard (for example storm tide, bushfire, flood, cyclone, chemical hazard)?

6   Community Education and Awareness

Thorough and sustained public awareness programs conducted prior to an event are required to build community resilience and ensure community confidence in the LDMG's ability to manage disaster events. Such programs are also required to reinforce the level of responsibility and self-preparedness required by residents in the event of an evacuation.

6.1   Before an event

Proactive preparedness planning is important and will promote a more resilient community which is confident, organised and well informed.

The LDMG, in conjunction with local government, are encouraged to develop a community education, awareness and engagement program that is planned and implemented before the onset of an event.

Emergency information is processed through two phases:

Phase	Description
Awareness raising	People receive emergency information through a variety of media. Current research indicates the preferred media for receiving information is

	through television, radio, brochures, interactive dashboards, internet, and social media.
Action	People seek further information and begin to prepare. The preferred method for seeking information is the internet, brochures, and discussion with friends and neighbours.

These programs should focus on:

- understanding the hazard risks in the community in which people live, including awareness of evacuation zones
- understanding of different shelter facilities (see section 7.4 Shelter)
- signage about evacuations and evacuation routes
- community engagement plans
- standardisation of community messaging, with particular regard to using nationally consistent terminology
- the development of warnings (pre-drafted and approved messages)
- references to useful websites and the local government call centre
- the information needs for each sector of the exposed community
- informing community leaders who can assist with communication to specific groups
- the types of evacuation
- information about evacuation facility locations and transport routes (including contingencies if usual centres or routes are not available or able to cope)
- providing calm, factual, timely warnings to ensure the community is not alarmed and stressed.

6.1.1   Developing evacuation warnings

An evacuation warning is a message that informs and enables individuals and communities to take appropriate action in response to an impending hazard. Guidance on warnings can be found in the Warnings Manual.

> **Community involvement in the planning process**
>
> The development of an efficient evacuation warning system can only be achieved through a comprehensive evaluation of the community and associated capabilities and limitations. Consideration should be given to involving key stakeholders and community groups within the consultation process to further refine warning content and appropriate methods of dissemination. This may include relevant members of the LDMG, private industry, media, and special needs community groups such as older people, people with disabilities, ethnic groups and medical, school and/or tourism boards. The participation of all these groups will provide valuable intelligence and ensure the development of effective warning content, format and associated processes.

It is recommended that an agreement is reached on the responsibilities for the dissemination of warnings and a table is developed within the evacuation sub-plan which documents all sections of the exposed population, the most appropriate warning methods, and an agency responsible for the actual warning dissemination. An example table is provided below.

Exposed population	Warning method	Agency primarily responsible for dissemination of warning

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6.2   During an event

The primary message to be conveyed to the community during an event is that individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for the safety of themselves, their family and their pets. This includes having an emergency plan, and an emergency/evacuation kit easily accessible and ready. Activation of the community education, awareness and engagement section of the evacuation sub-plan is required during an event to encourage individuals to be aware of the possible need to evacuate, to understand the warning system, and to take proactive steps to maintain safety and mitigate the effects of the identified threat. It is recommended that the relevant location of and routes to an evacuation centre are disseminated to the exposed population as soon as possible.

6.3   After an event

It is important to maintain communication with impacted residents to ensure they are fully informed of the process required for a safe return to their homes or businesses, such as structural and electrical assessment of dwellings, safe water, public health risks and viable access routes. All media outlets and community leaders also need to be fully informed to enable them to support the community to minimise anxiety and increase resilience and community wellbeing. All websites and call centres are recommended to be maintained with relevant information until safe return has been completed. See also section 7.9.3 Dissemination of return advice.

7   The Five Stages of Evacuation

As outlined in the introduction there are five stages of evacuation including:

1	**Decision to evacuate**	Decision makers analyse event intelligence and assess the necessity to evacuate people exposed to a range of hazards
2	**Warning[7]**	Disaster event conditions and appropriate actions required are conveyed to the public
3	**Withdrawal**	Exposed people move from a dangerous or potentially dangerous area to a safer location.
4	**Shelter**	Refuge and basic needs for evacuees are provided in evacuation facilities and safer locations.
5	**Return**	The disaster area is assessed and managed, with a planned return of evacuees.

7.1   Decision to evacuate

The decision to evacuate/not evacuate is supported by several components:

Component	Summary
Determining timelines	What is the time required to effectively and safely evacuate?
	develop a timeline to map the steps in an evacuation process showing the critical links between the: • predicted impact time • the decision to evacuate • factors that will determine the time taken to complete the withdrawal.
Decision points	plan decision points
	document decision points
	plan for the unexpected and predict possible scenarios

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[7] Within this Manual the term 'warning' is used to describe a stage in the evacuation process and should not be confused with official warnings issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau) or other issuing agencies.

Decision making considerations include: • Data and information • Warnings • Exposed population • Transport • Safer locations • Business impact	• has an all-hazards risk assessment been conducted based on event specific risks, timeframes available to safely effect an evacuation and the availability of alternative public protection measures? • has all advice from relevant authorities on severity, arrival of hazard and impact area? has the DDC been consulted? • what is the number of persons requiring evacuation • what is the type of evacuation necessary? • what is the time required to complete the evacuation and the lead time available? • is the evacuation achievable, safe and the most suitable option? • what is the critical point for the decision to evacuate and the point at which the evacuation is to be completed? • what is the availability of appropriate resources available to effectively manage the evacuation? • if the required resources available are insufficient, how more will be obtained? • how the current and predicted conditions, weather and the time of day will affect? • what is the proposed methods of warning dissemination, safety of movement and overall timeframe? • how will the process of evacuation affect the exposed population, especially people with special needs, and what special facilities are required for their safety? • what is the suitability of proposed safer locations and / or assembly points, including the ability to establish them quickly and sustain them for the duration of the event? • what is the most suitable safer location for the impending hazard, e.g. shelter in place or evacuation centre? • what are the implications on commercial operations and community criticism of unnecessary evacuation versus primary responsibility and duty of care for safety of exposed population?

7.2   Warning

The most advanced warning process will not be fully effective unless the community is educated and aware of what the warning means to them and are well informed on the actions they need to take for evacuation. Refer to the Warnings Manual.

Key considerations to support the warning stage of evacuations include:

During an event	• how and when to activate the community education, awareness, and engagement section of the evacuation sub-plan. how will you coordinate external information received by the community via media outlets? • how you will ensure consistent, up to date, and factual information is publicised? • planning for contingencies in case technology and web-based systems reach capacity and fail (due to higher than normal public usage) and become ineffective tools for disseminating information?
After an event	• how will you manage the expectations of the public, media, politicians and other disaster management groups and requests for information? • what relevant return information is provided to residents and how and when it will be disseminated? • the process and assessments required for the community to return safely to specific locations • providing counselling for affected residents to enable positive recovery

7.3   Withdrawal

Withdrawal focuses on moving exposed people from a dangerous or potentially dangerous area to a safer location.

7.3.1   Withdrawal considerations

Consideration	Summary
Managing the withdrawal process	how do you account for those who require assistance to withdraw?
	how do you develop a withdrawal operations map?
	how do you report progress on the withdrawal to the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC)?
	how do you identify residences which have been evacuated to ensure disaster management resources are not used unnecessarily?
Evacuation routes	have you pre-identified evacuation routes with regards to: • potential number of evacuees utilising the routes • ensuring evacuation routes to safer locations, such as an evacuation centre, leads away from the potential hazard • route capacity and hazard immunity?
	how will you ensure evacuation routes are accessible following the hazard?
	how will you sign evacuation routes as appropriate?
	what are the alternatives if the evacuation route becomes inaccessible?
Assembly points	have you pre-identified assembly points (these sites should not be adversely impacted by the hazard)?
	have you signed assembly points?
Signage	have you signed evacuation routes as appropriate?
Maintenance	evacuation routes should be maintained outside of the severe weather season
	evacuation routes should be prioritised for maintenance
Transport	have you developed a transport strategy (if required)?
	have you considered transport for vulnerable groups such as high need medical, people with disabilities and children?
	have you considered transport and care for assistance dogs and pets during the withdrawal phase?
Security	have you developed a security strategy (if required)?
	security options that may be considered include, but are not limited to: • regular patrols by privately contracted security and/or QPS • the erection of barriers and manned road closures to restrict unauthorised entry to evacuated areas • safety of emergency and / or security personnel.
Communication	how will you communicate evacuation routes to transient groups?
	how will you communicate evacuation routes in a timely manner to all sectors of the exposed population?

The level of detail included in the transport strategy should be adequate to enable prompt decision making and implementation at the time of an event. The strategy may identify transportation methods, transport resources, and may consider addressing the issues outlined within the below table.

Exposed area / suburb/location	Transport mode	Transport provider	Number of services	Pick-up point	Destination

7.3.2   Reception of evacuees from other jurisdictions

If an LDMG is unable to provide an appropriate safer location for its residents and/or animals within its boundary, the LDMG should brief the DDMG, escalating this issue to district level. Once the DDMG is aware of the issue and escalation has occurred, the LDMG, in close consultation with DDMG, will

liaise with the neighbouring LDMG area to ensure all the necessary support and amenities are available for cross jurisdictional support. The DDMG, if required, will assist with resources and coordination during an event.

If the reception of evacuees from other local government areas exceeds the capacity of the LDMG and the DDMG, the DDMG will escalate the issue and forward a request for assistance to the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC).

7.4 Shelter

The shelter stage of the evacuation process includes the provision of refuge to evacuees within nominated safer locations away from the potential hazard or area of impact. This stage of evacuation relates to the receiving, registration, and temporary respite or accommodation of evacuees.

It is recommended that suitable facilities and/or safer locations for the provision of refuge to evacuees are pre-identified and documented in the evacuation sub-plan. Core considerations when determining the type of shelter will include: the capacity of a facility to handle seasonal population variation; the suitability of a facility to cater for diverse groups, including vulnerable people, and those evacuating with animals, and the existence of communications facilities and alternate power sources.

7.5 Community responsibility

During a time where a hazard may be threatening to impact on a community, it is the responsibility of individuals to remain informed about the current situation (e.g. tuning into warnings, accessing local disaster area information, listening to the news, etc). When communities are informed and understand the potential risks of an impact to them, they are better able to determine the most appropriate sheltering solution and decide whether sheltering in place or finding alternative accommodation away from the exposed area (e.g. motel, hotel, other family, and friends). Persons who can move away without assistance are encouraged to relocate outside the exposed area.

7.5.1 Types of safer locations

A "safer location" is a designated location which is not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard. Some safer location options do not require significant coordination or investment by LDMGs. these include sheltering in place or staying with friends and family, neighbourhood safer places, and assembly points.

Evacuation facilities (including evacuation centres, public cyclone shelters, place of refuge, and in some cases, neighbourhood safer places) may require staff deployment, coordination of resources, just-in-time structural works or pre-activation checks.

7.5.2 Shelter in place

Shelter in place would be considered where the structure or location of the available buildings provides a safer environment during a disaster event or where the time prior to a disaster event is not adequate to conduct a safe withdrawal.

Residents should be encouraged to shelter in a structure that meets current building standards, has been well maintained, and is considered a safer location for the impending hazard. If their current residence does not satisfy these criteria or they are unsure if it satisfies these criteria, it is recommended they to move to a suitable location which may be with family and friends in the first instance.

Considerations:

- assistance cannot be provided during the event

- typically buildings that have been built since 1982 have been well maintained and are outside the impact of the hazard and are safer than those that were not and have not been maintained
- community members should be advised there may be a need to be self-sufficient for some time after the event.

7.5.2.1 Neighbourhood safer places

Neighbourhood safer places are buildings or open spaces where people may gather, as a last resort, to seek shelter from bushfire. Neighbourhood safer places can be used as a possible safer location and would usually only be utilised during events where specific shelter is not required and the duration of the evacuation is not predicted to be lengthy. Neighbourhood safer places may not necessarily be staffed, and evacuees may be requested to cater for their own basic requirements for a short stay and pets are not permitted.

7.5.2.2 Assembly points

An assembly point is a temporarily designated location specifically selected as a point which is not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard. Assembly points are often used as a means of gathering evacuees prior to their coordinated movement other evacuation facilities.

Considerations:

- amenities and meals may not be available
- pets may not be permitted (although it is recommended that LDMGs consider allowing pets).

7.5.3 Types of Facilities

7.5.3.1 Evacuation centre

An evacuation centre is a designated building specifically selected in a location not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard. Evacuation centres should be pre-determined and clearly categorised for event suitability by the LDMG.

Establishment and management of evacuation centres is a responsibility of the LDMG, in conjunction with DDMGs, as necessary. LDMGs may enlist the services of community or support agencies (for example Australian Red Cross) to assist them in the management and operation of evacuation centres.

When an evacuation is ordered and it is no longer safe to shelter in place, residents are advised to relocate to an open designated evacuation centre.

A list of prioritised hazard specific evacuation centres should be included in an evacuation subplan.

If the planned primary evacuation centres reach capacity, or residents are unable to reach them, identifying other options will allow planning for a flow on effect from one centre to another.

During emergencies, it is not uncommon for 'organic evacuation centres' to be opened spontaneously by well-meaning community members or organisations. LDMGs are encouraged to work together with communities as part of their planning and preparedness activities to identify where the community is most likely to go during an emergency and, if appropriate, incorporate these facilities into the formalised evacuation planning arrangements.

During the passage of a cyclone, it is important to note that an evacuation centre will not provide the same level of protection as a purpose designed cyclone shelter. However, on agreement between the LDMG and cyclone shelter owner, a cyclone shelter may be used as an evacuation centre after the cyclone has passed.

Considerations:

- availability of volunteer support organisations
- operational timeframes of evacuation centres (at least two weeks to allow assessment of ongoing accommodation needs)
- capacity of the facility and corresponding numbers
- registration capabilities
- what are the communication facilities
- who is providing food
- what amenities are required
- other supplies such as power and water
- what are the provisions for pets
- availability of QPS, emergency service or coordinating personnel.

7.5.4   Evacuation centre management

Where evacuation centres are being used as safer locations during an evacuation, it is recommended that they are opened and operational prior to their details being released to the public.

It is advisable that specific details on the coordination, management, and ongoing operation of evacuation centres is addressed and clearly outlined within the evacuation sub-plan. Local governments may also consider entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for evacuation centre management with the supporting agencies, which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party in planning and responding to evacuation requirements during an event.

An evacuation sub-plan should clearly outline the coordination and management of an evacuation centre in accordance with the Queensland Evacuation Centre Management Handbook.

In addition, communication protocols between the evacuation centre and the LDCC should be documented in the evacuation subplan to ensure regular advice on numbers of evacuees, requirements for catering, and any health and safety issues, is provided.

Children and people with special needs may be particularly vulnerable in an evacuation centre as their normal safeguards, routines, and support structures have been interrupted or altered. Consideration on how their needs could be met is encouraged, with a focus on:

- access to health and wellbeing support, including for people who need psychosocial support
- additional measures to ensure the safety and protection of children, including the establishment of 'child-safe spaces'
- provision of age-appropriate activities and recovery support programs.

7.5.5   Public cyclone shelter

A public cyclone shelter is a building specifically located and designed to provide protection to occupants from the effects of the most severe tropical cyclones until the cyclone threat has passed. For a structure to be designated as a public cyclone shelter, it must be designed and constructed in accordance with the Design Guidelines for Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters.

The primary purpose of a public cyclone shelter is to protect people evacuated from their homes, due to the threat from potential storm tide inundation or those without shelter who have been unable to find alternate accommodation outside the potential impact area during the passage of the cyclone.

Although, public cyclone shelters are not designed for the long-term temporary accommodation of evacuees, or for the provision of services to evacuees after a cyclone has passed, a public cyclone shelter may be converted for use as an evacuation centre after a cyclone, on agreement between the LDMG and cyclone shelter owner.

The LDMG is encouraged to consider a policy for animals in the cyclone shelter in partnership with the asset owner. Where pets, except for assistance animals, are not permitted in the facility, it is essential that contingencies are developed to address unsolicited presentation of pets at a shelter.

Considerations:

- significant planning required to open, operate, and return buildings to owners
- room for seating-only
- attendees are expected to bring their own food, with no cooking facilities available
- limited capacity for occupancy usually 500-800 people
- conditions inside are unfavourable – crowded, noisy, basic amenities only
- QPS and emergency services may be in attendance
- volunteer support organisations may or may not be in attendance.

Local governments and LDMGs are advised to consult the [Queensland Cyclone Shelter Reference Guide](#) when planning for the use of public cyclone shelters.

7.5.6   Place of refuge

A place of refuge is usually a building that will provide a level of protection from the effects of the cyclone as it passes but has not been built or designed in accordance with the Cyclone Shelter Design Guidelines.

A place of refuge may be solidly built, located outside of storm tide areas and evacuation zones, and could be one of the following but not limited to:

- concrete commercial or government car parks
- shopping centres
- solid industrial buildings
- school buildings.

The location and opening of a place of refuge will usually be announced by a member of the LDMG, (most likely the Chairperson) but could also by made by a local government official or police officer.

Considerations:

- volunteer support organisations may not be in attendance
- capacity of the facility to accommodate people may be limited
- emergency food or other supplies, power and water may/may not be available
- there may be no provision for pets
- QPS, emergency services or coordinating personnel may not be in attendance.

7.6   Identification of suitable safer locations and evacuation facilities

It is recommended that safer locations and evacuation facilities are established at well known, accessible, and easily recognisable sites within the community. In planning for evacuation, LDMGs are encouraged to ascertain suitability based on the following considerations:

- event suitability
- capacity
- negotiation for use
- limit disruption to recovery
- facility considerations

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7.6.1 Event suitability

It is critical the nominated safer locations are suitable and are not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard. For this reason, it is recommended that a list of locations is not released prior to an event to ensure the public does not arrive at a wrong location. A location which is suitable for one hazard may not be suitable for refuge from all-hazards, so suitability/limitations should be documented within evacuation sub-plans.

7.6.2 Capacity

It is important to quantify the capacity of the safer location to ensure public health and evacuee welfare and safety are maintained. While an assembly point in an open location may not have a maximum capacity, there may be a maximum capacity for evacuees to park their cars or for other transport solutions (e.g. buses or ferries) to pull up and unload evacuees.

In determining the capacity of a facility, it is also important to consider the function it is going to provide. Some facilities, such as cyclone shelters, will have different design capacities during the passage of the cyclone compared to its use as an evacuation shelter after the event.

The Australian Red Cross Preferred Sheltering Practices for Emergency Sheltering in Australia publication provides guidance about minimum and preferred standards for space management, waste management, water supply, sanitation, and food in evacuation centres.

7.6.3 Negotiation for use

In planning for evacuation, it is recommended the use of a safer location or evacuation facility be negotiated with the owner or managing body of the location or facility. In addition, it will be important to seek clear instructions and advice on contact details or arrangements for after-hours access.

7.6.4 Limit disruption to recovery

When considering locations that may be suitable as safer locations or evacuation facilities, it is imperative to consider the impact this may pose to the usual business of the location. For example, most school halls could be deemed suitable for use as an evacuation centre, however using this facility may delay the return of children to a normal routine and may also compromise a child's sense of safety and wellbeing in their own school. Other facility selections might impact negatively on the local economy.

7.6.5 Facility considerations

When assessing and determining suitability of a facility for use as an evacuation centre the following may be considered:

Communication	▪ To ensure communication to the LDCC, consider availability of access to internet, phone, email and a redundancy communication mechanism such as a battery-operated radio. ▪ Evacuees will require communication mechanisms to stay informed of current situations with the event; this may be achieved via television, radio broadcast, and an information board for updated advice and messages from the LDCC.
Amenities	Toilets and shower facilities should be adequate to cater for the proposed capacity of the location. This may need to be achieved through the provision of temporary amenities.
Disabled access and amenities	The facility should have suitable access and amenities for evacuees with disabilities.
Kitchen facilities	▪ Basic facilities should include access to a supply of clean drinking water.

	▪ Kitchen facilities should be able to cater for the capacity of the location and a service provider should be identified, for example the Salvation Army. ▪ Planning should include the provision of meals prepared externally to the location such as, commercial catering, pre-packaged airline food.
Ventilation	Ventilation should be sufficient to cater for the proposed capacity of the location.
Vehicular access	Suitable vehicle access should be available at the location including parking within close proximity. Consider all weather access and hard stand/clear areas for parking heavy vehicles.
Pet and animal facilities	Consider: ▪ the availability of suitable housing for pets within the facility or within close proximity to the facility. ▪ how aid animals (e.g. guide dogs) and companion animals will be accommodated.
Alternative power supply	Consider the availability of an alternative power supply or a connection for emergency supply.
Alternative water supply	Consider the availability of alternative water supply. This may include planning for the provision of alternative bottled supply.

In areas likely to be impacted by cyclonic winds, it is critical that occupants are not placed in buildings or areas within buildings that will be adversely impacted by the shattering of overhead/ceiling or wall window glass because of debris impact or window failure.

7.6.6   Document safer locations

Once safer locations suitable for hazards captured in the risk assessment have been identified and an agreement reached with the owner/manager of the facility, it is advisable to include detailed information on each safer location within an appendix of the evacuation sub-plan, including contact details for 24/7 access to the facility.

It is recommended that maps used for disaster response include the location of each safer location or evacuation facility. Appropriate evacuation route/s to each location should also be mapped and included in an evacuation sub-plan.

7.6.7   Registration

It is recommended that all evacuees are registered, and that their registration is documented. This can be achieved through Register.Find.Reunite (RFR), which is administered by the Australian Red Cross, on behalf of QPS.

RFR offers two options for people during a disaster or emergency situation:

- registering to let other people know they are safe
- enquiring to find people they know may be affected by the disaster.

Australian Red Cross then uses the information to reunite family, friends and loved ones through a matching process that enables the sharing of details (with permission) for people to reconnect.

Methods of registration will vary depending on the nature of the emergency and the volume of evacuees. Registration may include online registration, completion of registration forms at designated locations (such as cyclone shelters or evacuation centres), or via telephone registrations. Wherever possible, it is important to register evacuees at the end point of their journey.

7.6.8   Pets and animal welfare

Pets refer to household, domestic pets only. The LDMG should not be responsible for the evacuation of livestock, the primary responsibility for livestock will rest with the livestock owner.

Some evacuees may require accommodation for their pets and consideration of the following is recommended:

- domestic pets to be separately accommodated for hygiene and safety reasons
- assistance animals' accommodation with the evacuation centre.

Consideration and planning are also encouraged for situations where pet owners have been required to quickly evacuate (possibly under *Public Safety Preservation Act 1986*), leaving pets behind that will require welfare checks and/or feeding and watering.

7.6.9   Recovery hubs

It is important to note that Recovery Hubs – which provide a range of welfare, support, financial and psychosocial recovery services – are not evacuation facilities. Recovery Hubs, commonly referred to as 'One Stop Shops' perform a separate function to evacuations centres, with differing management and facility requirements (e.g. recovery hubs do not provide accommodation) and will normally be housed separately to an evacuation centre. Determining the need for recovery hubs is managed by the State department responsible for community recovery, based on needs identified by an LDMG.

7.6.10 Key sheltering considerations

- the identification of approximate number of evacuees to be accommodated
- a process for background checks and police checks of potential evacuees
- evacuation centre signage that is able to be understood by and is accessible to all community members
- identifying community groups who may take responsibility for establishing and operating centres in the future
- establishing cooperative arrangements with these community groups which outline how the centres should operate, and to ensure the centres have appropriate facilities
- suitable evacuation centres (event specific) away from the hazard to accommodate the identified number of evacuees (with power generators)
- how the establishment and maintenance of communication with 'organic' evacuation centres will occur including resupply
- developing a floor plan for each safer location that describes the lay out and allows calculation of occupancy and resource requirement
- how the resources for your evacuation centre will be provided
- how costs will be documented and billed
- car parking spaces
- transportation to the safer locations (buses or private transport)
- access for emergency vehicles (e.g. ambulance, fire, police)
- security for evacuees, staff, and resources

7.7   Return

The return of evacuees to their homes or alternative medium to longer term accommodation arrangements requires careful planning to ensure the process is undertaken in a managed and coordinated manner.

The return process may include:

- return to the area by emergency services and work teams only
- partial return to only some areas of the evacuated area
- temporary return during daylight hours only.

Planning and consideration will be required to manage those persons who voluntarily evacuated without the visibility and knowledge of the LDMG, as these people may not be registered and may not be receiving direct public information regarding the return to their homes.

The timely return of evacuees is considered a critical step in human and social recovery; however, safety should not be compromised, and their return is not to be undertaken until all issues have been considered and the disaster area is deemed safe for return.

It is also important to note that during the pre-planning of the return of residents to their home, it is essential that appropriate support and counselling is considered and where possible, offered through local, State agencies, and/or non-government organisations. This proactive measure will promote a calm, connected environment, enhancing the recovery process.

7.7.1   Decision to return

The decision to begin the return process is to be made by the LDMG in consultation with all other agencies involved in the evacuation process including:

- DDC
- local government sections, as relevant to local area, may include:
  - environmental health
  - building services
  - water and sewerage
  - roads and drainage
  - animal management
- electricity providers
- telecommunication providers such as Telstra and Optus
- Local Recovery Coordinator (if appointed).

To determine if an impacted area is safe for return, it will be necessary to conduct a detailed assessment of the area addressing the following issues:

- has the threat passed and is there is no likelihood of further impact?
- is there suitable management of public health issues and secondary threats such as electrical risks, sewerage contamination, mosquito infestations and contaminated water supply?
- are building structures safe to reoccupy?
- are utilities such as power, water, sewerage, and communication networks operational?
- have QPS completed related investigations to meet Coroner's needs?
- are roads and transport infrastructure open and safe for use?
- are commercial food supplies available?
- does adequate security remain for damaged or unsafe areas?
- what is the availability of support services including financial and welfare services?

The majority of the information required to assess the suitability of an area for return will be available from impact assessments or needs assessments conducted during the response phase.

7.7.2   Return strategy

Before the onset of an event, LDMGs are encouraged to consider the development of a return strategy to outline the arrangements necessary to plan and execute a safe and organised return.

The return strategy should identify:

- how to determine if a specific area is deemed safe for return
- any staging requirements for the return to larger areas
- special needs requirements
- recovery support to be offered during the return process

- ongoing security arrangements for damaged, unsafe structures or infrastructure
- a traffic management plan and transportation requirements.

7.7.3   Dissemination of return advice

It is important to maintain communication with impacted residents to ensure they are fully informed about the return process. This may be achieved by notices and announcements at evacuation centres and assembly points, Emergency Alerts, broadcasts on radio and television, social media, and/or notices in local papers.

Where the return advice relates specifically to schools, hospitals, aged care facilities, and other institutions, it may be provided directly to the affected agency or overarching body such as the Department of Education or Queensland Health.

Information to be detailed in the return advice may include the following, where appropriate:

- issuing authority, date, and time
- details of event and data to signify threat has abated
- specific areas deemed safe for return, include maps where appropriate
- suitable routes including any load limits and specific traffic control arrangements
- public transport arrangements, where provided
- requirement for evacuees to provide advice of proposed return to evacuation centre or other evacuee registration service, as appropriate
- appropriate health and safety messages, if required such as requirement to boil water before consumption, any potential public health risks
- recovery services available
- contact number for further information or clarification
- a successful structural and electrical assessment of dwellings.

All media outlets and community leaders also need to be fully informed to enable them to support the community to minimise anxiety and increase resilience and community wellbeing.

All websites and call centres should be maintained with relevant information until safe return has been completed.

7.7.4   Recovery

The longer-term accommodation requirements of those unable to return to their homes are managed through the recovery process. Appropriate longer-term temporary accommodation will be required for these evacuees once evacuation centres are closed. The transition from response to recovery is a very important step in the process and it is recommended that it be detailed and planned for in the evacuation sub-plan. Recovery agencies should be identified, and strategies listed as to how these agencies will be communicated with, and whose role it will be to liaise will these groups. Recovery planning should be sufficiently flexible to deal with the needs of the impacted community, regardless of the nature of the disaster.

7.7.5   Key considerations for return

- has the threat has passed?
- what process will be used to return to the area: temporary return, partial return, complete return?
- who will assess the buildings and roads for safety?
- who will coordinate the return and community recovery?
- are all services available to residents and buildings safe for habitation?
- are there any possible health and safety risks to the residents and how will these be managed and solved?

- are the recovery services ready and able to enter the area to assist residents?
- are any load limits on roads/access and how will this impact the return and recovery process?
- is there adequate food and clean water for the community?
- how will information on the community return be communicated with residents?
- how will the special needs population be managed to return to their homes?
- has each home been inspected by electricians if flood affected?

8   After Action Review

A review of all evacuation processes should be completed following an event. The lessons identified from this process should be captured to inform future updates to the evacuation sub-plan.

9   Further Information

Contact your local Emergency Management Coordinator or District Disaster Management Group Executive Officer for more information.

10 Related Links

Further supporting documentation can be found in the following locations:

- Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub Handbook 4 – Evacuation Planning
- Queensland Warnings Manual
- Queensland Evacuation Centre Management Handbook
- Register.Find.Reunite.
- www.getready.qld.gov.au
- Design Guidelines for Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters
- Preferred Sheltering Practices for Emergency Sheltering in Australia
- Neighbourhood Safer Places