



Queensland Government
Department of **Emergency Services**
Emergency Management Queensland

Disaster Operations

OVERVIEW of ACTIVITIES

January to June 2008



Temporary Flood Barrier holds back floodwaters at Charleville – January 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
STATE DISASTER COORDINATION CENTRE	3
Southeast Queensland Flooding - January 2008	3
Tropical Cyclone Helen - January 2008	3
Central and Southwest Queensland Flooding - January 2008	3
Severe Storms - February 2008	4
North Queensland Flooding - February 2008	4
Space Debris – February 2008	4
Severe Storms - 29 May to 2 June	4
Severe Storms – 7 to 9 June 2008	4
Summary of Resupply Operations	5
Avian Influenza - ongoing	5
Bureau of Meteorology	5
DISASTER RELIEF ARRANGEMENTS	6
South East Queensland affected by flooding, 27 December 2007 to 7 January 2008	6
Communities throughout Queensland affected by monsoonal flooding, January 2008	7
Queensland areas affected by monsoonal flooding, February 2008	8
South East and Western Queensland affected by storms and flooding, 3-8 February 2008	9
South East Queensland affected by storms and flooding, 29 May to 2 June 2008	10
Communities within South West Queensland affected by flooding, June 2008 ...	10
NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIP PROGRAM	11
TRAINING and AWARENESS ACTIVITIES	11
SDCC Training	11
External Training	11
STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT ENHANCEMENTS	12
Workshop Contribution	12
Committee Contribution	12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minister for Emergency Services activated the Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements on six occasions, for natural disaster events that impacted a wide area of Queensland during this period. Due to the severe impact of some of these events, the Minister also declared Disaster Situations for the Emerald and Mackay areas under the provisions of the *Disaster management Act 2003*.

The State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) was activated outside normal business hours throughout January and February to support whole of government counter disaster operations, in relation to widespread flooding across most of Queensland. The SDCC also operated during normal business hours in response to a number of smaller operations such as localised storm damage and flooding events. The State Disaster Management Group's Duty Officer also assisted in numerous minor operations that occurred statewide but did not warrant out of hour's activation of the SDCC.

Throughout January many parts of southern and central Queensland were flooded and northern Queensland was also severely affected during February and March. Due to extensive road closures, eight resupply operations were conducted, which resulted in food and medical supplies totalling 23,404 Kilograms being airlifted to isolated communities.

There were no visits to Queensland by nuclear powered warships.

STATE DISASTER COORDINATION CENTRE

The State Disaster Coordination Centre was involved in the following operations during this period:

Southeast Queensland Flooding - January 2008

An off-shore low pressure system resulted in heavy rain over much of southeast Queensland in early January. Beaudesert and Logan were particularly impacted. Due to numerous road closures and damage to five bridges, properties became isolated for several days. NDRRA

Tropical Cyclone Helen - January 2008

Tropical Cyclone (TC) Helen developed over waters southeast of Darwin on 4 January and quickly intensified to a Category 2, however, on the following day it weakened to a tropical low as it crossed the Northern Territory coast, south of Darwin. It then tracked eastwards and entered the Gulf of Carpentaria but did not re-intensify to cyclone intensity. Communities in the southeast of the Gulf experienced elevated sea levels, typically exceeding the Highest Astronomical Tide by 0.75 metre. TC Helen finally crossed the Queensland coast near Burketown on 7 January as it maintained an easterly direction.

By 14 January it reached the Coral Sea near Cardwell and began to re-intensify as it tracked south before crossing the coast near Townsville the following day. Heavy rainfall occurred in the Townsville, Giru, Charters Towers and Rockhampton areas as it continued to move towards Longreach in central Queensland as an intense low pressure system.

Central and Southwest Queensland Flooding - January 2008

Ex-TC Helen continued to produce extremely heavy rainfall in the river basins around Emerald and Charleville. Strong wind was also experienced and a reading of 107 kilometres per hour was recorded at Charleville airport on 17 January. Heavy rainfall occurred in the Warrego area from 16 to 19 January, resulting in very high levels in the Warrego River and associated creeks. Up to 1,000 sheep perished in the floods. The system continued to move south and crossed the border into New South Wales on 19 January.

As Charleville's permanent levee system was still under construction, 500 metres of a temporary flood barrier system were loaned by New South Wales SES, and were airlifted to Charleville by two air force Hercules transport aircraft late on the evening of 18 January. Four experts were flown in from New Zealand to assist the crews, who worked through the night to erect the barrier to plug two gaps in the town's levee system. The task was completed by 4 am. When the flood

peaked later that day, the temporary barrier had prevented about 300 millimetres of water from entering the town. This major logistical event was completed in approximately 21 hours, and was successful due to the strong cooperation and partnership that Disaster Operations has with many Commonwealth, State and Local Government agencies.

Some sections of the Belyando River spread to up to 17 kilometres wide and the Nogoia River at Emerald peaked at the second highest level on record, resulting in major flooding. Approximately 1,300 people self-evacuated and 380 houses were identified as flood affected.

It was estimated that over 30,000 head of cattle were displaced by floodwaters, whilst 3,000 to 4,000 perished. A massive fodder operation swung into operation to feed groups of stranded cattle in the Emerald and Belyando area. Up to 17 helicopters including two Army Blackhawks were used daily for almost three weeks. Medium and large helicopters made stock piles of fodder in various locations, which allowed smaller helicopters to distribute it to stranded cattle. Levels of aviation fuel became critical and a series of tankers and drums were used to maintain the operation. This was the largest and most complex fodder operation in the history of Disaster Operations.

The Ensham and North Curragh mines suffered major infrastructure damage from flooding.

Severe Storms - February 2008

Western and southeast Queensland were impacted by severe thunderstorms from 3 to 8 February, which caused flash flooding across the southern part of the state from the Northern Territory border to the Gold Coast.

North Queensland Flooding - February 2008

An active monsoon trough once more impacted northern areas of Queensland. Mackay received 625 millimetres of rain in six hours, which produced considerable flash flooding particularly in the Glenella area. Rapid Damage Assessment teams inspected almost 9,000 properties for possible flood damage, with about 4,000 identified as having had water over their floors. Some were extensively affected with signs of structural damage.

Floodwaters threatened Giru and Rockhampton for the second time but generally only caused disruption due to flooded roads and some isolated properties.

Space Debris – February 2008

Emergency Management Australia activated the Australian Contingency Plan for Space Re-entry Debris due to the inoperable satellite USA-193, which had entered into a decaying orbit and was expected to re-enter earth's atmosphere around 6-9 March. Due to fears that large components of the satellite may survive re-entry and possibly be contaminated with toxic materials, the United States Navy shot it down causing the satellite to break up into smaller pieces that would burn up during the re-entry. The SDCC monitored the situation and developed a contingency plan.

Severe Storms - 29 May to 2 June

Severe storms associated with an east coast low pressure system impacted the eastern Queensland coastline from Gladstone to Hervey Bay. Squally wind conditions and some high rainfall prevailed for four days, resulting in many cases of flash flooding. Most damage occurred in the Gympie area.

Severe Storms – 7 to 9 June 2008

Severe storms affected the Barcoo and Diamantina Shire Councils in southwest Queensland over the Queen's Birthday weekend. Flash flooding and heavy rain caused significant damage.

Summary of Resupply Operations

Widespread flooding over south west, central and far north Queensland, resulted in eight resupply operations being conducted. Over 23 tonnes of essential foods and medical supplies were airlifted to isolated communities.

Date	Destination	Cargo	Method	Kilograms
17 Jan	Two properties near Aramac	Medical supplies	Helicopter	1
18 Jan	Two properties near Charleville	Food and medical supplies	Helicopter	30
23 Jan	Quilpie	Food	Helicopter	6,000
23 Jan	Thargomindah	Food	Helicopter	12,370
14 Feb	Coen	Food	Aeroplane	780
21 Feb	Coen	Food	Aeroplane	700
29 Feb	Coen	Food	Aeroplane	3,443
6 Mar	Palmer River (northwest of Cairns)	Food	Helicopter	80
Total:				23,404

Avian Influenza - ongoing

The State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) has been receiving Situation Reports from the Australian Government's Department of Health and Aging on the status of Avian Influenza since 29 January 2004. The SDCC continues to maintain a watching brief.

Bureau of Meteorology

Disaster Operations has a very close relationship with the Bureau of Meteorology, as Queensland has a high frequency of severe natural phenomena effecting communities throughout the State. The State Disaster Coordination Centre has access to 20 weather radar sites around the State.

During the period January to June 2008, 920 weather warnings were received from the Bureau, which required monitoring and notification to affected districts by the SDCC or State Disaster Management Group (SDMG) Duty Officer.

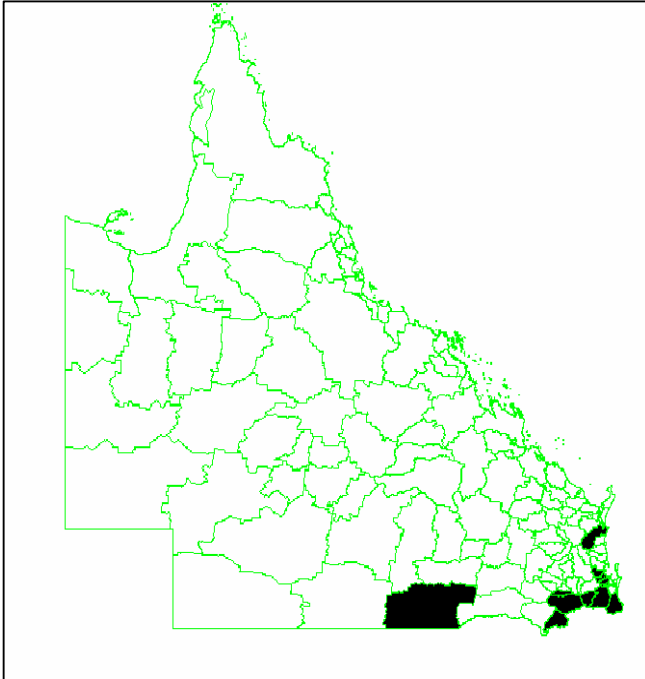
Type of Warning	No.
Flood	493
Severe Weather	166
Storm Tide	2
Thunderstorm	196
Tropical Cyclone	38
Tsunami	25

An additional, 1,256 reports were received from the Bureau but generally required no or minimal action, as they were routine reports such as Coastal Waters Wind Warning, Gale/Storm Warnings for shipping, Tropical Cyclone Outlook, Tropical Cyclone Information Bulletin and Flood Summary.

DISASTER RELIEF ARRANGEMENTS

The Minister for Emergency Services, activated Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements six times during this period. There was no activation of the State (funded) Disaster Relief Arrangements.

South East Queensland affected by flooding, 27 December 2007 to 7 January 2008



High winds and torrential rain commencing in the period from 27 December 2007 to 7 January 2008, caused coastal erosion, wide spread flooding in South East Queensland and significant damage in ten shires.

Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements were activated for the Restoration of Essential Public Assets, Counter Disaster Operations, Disaster Relief Assistance Scheme, Concessional Loans to Primary Producers, Concessional Loans to Small Businesses and Freight Subsidies to Primary Producers.

The Local Government areas affected were:

Balonne Shire Council
Beaudesert Shire Council
Boonah Shire Council
Clifton Shire Council
Cooloolool Shire Council
Gold Coast City Council
Stanthorpe Shire Council
Warwick Shire Council
Public Works in Brisbane City, Gold Coast City and Warwick Shire Councils

Communities throughout Queensland affected by monsoonal flooding, January 2008



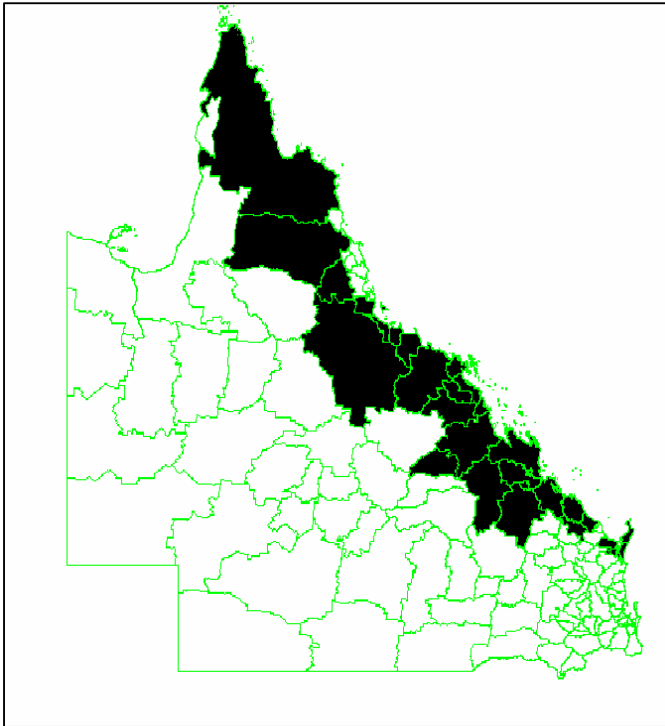
A tropical low has caused monsoonal rain and flooding throughout Queensland in January.

Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements were activated for the Restoration of Essential Public Assets, Counter Disaster Operations, Disaster Relief Assistance Scheme, Associations Natural Disaster Relief Scheme, Concessional Loans to Primary Producers, Concessional Loans to Small Businesses and Freight Subsidies to Primary Producers.

The Local Government areas affected were:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Aramac Shire Council | Ilfracombe Shire Council |
| Atherton Shire Council | Isisford Shire Council |
| Barcaldine Shire Council | Jericho Shire Council |
| Barcoo Shire Council | Johnstone Shire Council |
| Bauhinia Shire Council | Livingstone Shire Council |
| Belyando Shire Council | Longreach Shire Council |
| Blackall Shire Council | Mackay City Council |
| Booringa Shire Council | Mareeba Shire Council |
| Bowen Shire Council | McKinlay Shire Council |
| Broadsound Shire Council | Mirani Shire Council |
| Bulloo Shire Council | Mornington Shire Council |
| Bungil Shire Council | Murweh Shire Council |
| Burdekin Shire Council | Nebo Shire Council |
| Cairns City Council | Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council |
| Cardwell Shire Council | Paroo Shire Council |
| Carpentaria Shire Council | Peak Downs Shire Council |
| Charters Towers City Council | Quilpie Shire Council |
| Cook Shire Council | Richmond Shire Council |
| Croydon Shire Council | Rockhampton City Council |
| Dalrymple Shire Council | Roma Town Council |
| Douglas Shire Council | Sarina Shire Council |
| Duaringa Shire Council | Tambo Shire Council |
| Eacham Shire Council | Taroom Shire Council |
| Emerald Shire Council | Thuringowa Shire Council |
| Etheridge Shire Council | Townsville City Council |
| Fitzroy Shire Council | Whitsunday Shire Council |
| Flinders Shire Council | Winton Shire Council |
| Herberton Shire Council | Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council |

Queensland areas affected by monsoonal flooding, February 2008



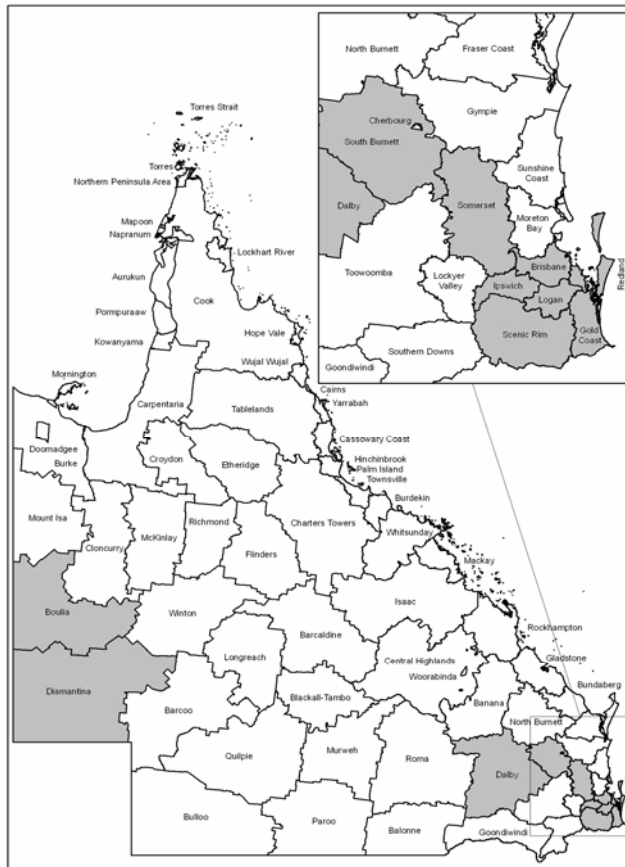
A tropical low caused monsoonal rain and flooding in Central Queensland throughout February.

Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements were activated for the Restoration of Essential Public Assets, Counter Disaster Operations, Disaster Relief Assistance Scheme, Associations Natural Disaster Relief Scheme, Concessional Loans to Primary Producers, Concessional Loans to Small Businesses and Freight Subsidies to Primary Producers.

The Local Government areas affected were:

Banana Shire Council
Bowen Shire Council
Broadsound Shire Council
Burdekin Shire Council
Burnett Shire Council
Calliope Shire Council
Charters Towers City Council
Cook Shire Council
Dalrymple Shire Council
Duarlinga Shire Council
Fitzroy Shire Council
Gladstone City Council
Herberton Shire Council
Hervey Bay City Council
Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Kolan Shire Council
Livingstone Shire Council
Mackay City Council
Mareeba Shire Council
Maryborough City Council
Mirani Shire Council
Miriam Vale Shire Council
Mount Morgan Shire Council
Nebo Shire Council
Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council
Peak Downs Shire Council
Rockhampton City Council
Sarina Shire Council
Thuringowa City Council
Townsville City Council
Whitsunday Shire Council
Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council

South East and Western Queensland affected by storms and flooding, 3-8 February 2008



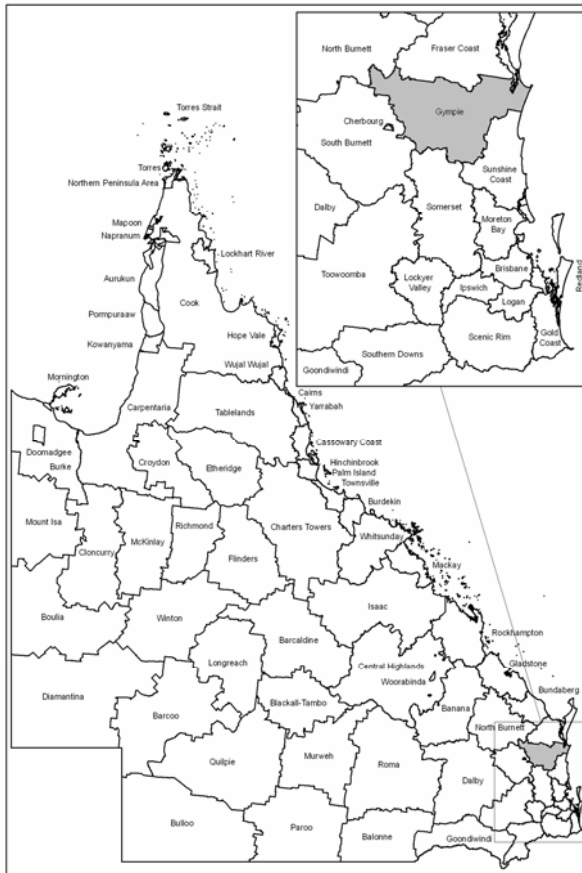
Storm activity commencing in the period from 3 to 8 February caused flooding in South East and Western Queensland.

Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements were activated for the Restoration of Essential Public Assets, Counter Disaster Operations, Disaster Relief Assistance Scheme, Concessional Loans to Primary Producers and Concessional Loans to Small Businesses.

The Local Government areas affected were:

- Boulia Shire Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Tara Shire Council
- Taroom Shire Council
- Wambo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Gold Coast City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- Logan City Council
- Redland Shire Council
- Boonah Shire Council
- Kilcoy Shire Council
- Kingaroy Shire Council
- Murgon Shire Council

South East Queensland affected by storms and flooding, 29 May to 2 June 2008

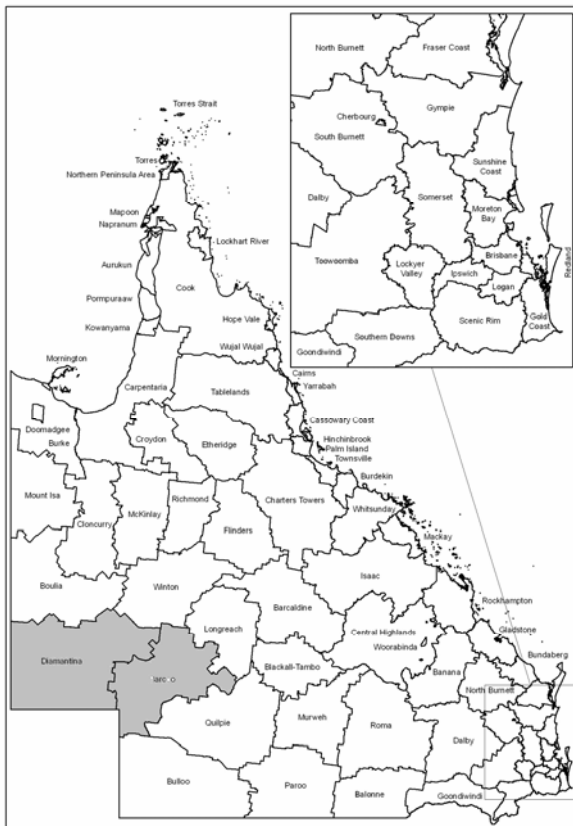


Storm activity commencing in the period from 29 May to 2 June 2008 caused significant damage in South East Queensland.

Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements were activated for the Restoration of Essential Public Assets and Counter Disaster Operations.

The only Local Government area affected was the Gympie Regional Council.

Communities within South West Queensland affected by flooding, June 2008



Storm activity around the Queen's Birthday Weekend 7 to 9 June caused localised flooding in South Western Queensland areas. As a result of the flooding, significant damage has been reported in two shires to date.

Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements were activated for the Restoration of Essential Public Assets and Counter Disaster Operations.

The Local Government areas affected were the Barcoo and Diamantina Shire Councils.

NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIP PROGRAM

Disaster Operations is the lead agency for coordinating Nuclear Powered Warship (NPW) visits to Queensland ports for crew rest and recreation purposes, however, there were no visits during this period.

TRAINING and AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Disaster Operations maintains an active role in organising and conducting disaster management activities at a State level.

SDCC Training

To provide a surge capability during protracted operations, Disaster Operations has been conducting regular training sessions for EMQ and other DES divisional staff who are interested in assisting the SDCC during operational periods. A number of planned training sessions were cancelled due to the high operational tempo between January and March, however, 29 personnel did attend theoretical training sessions.

As the State Disaster Coordination Centre will move to a 24/7 operation from July 2008, the six recently appointed Watch Desk Officers attended an intensive two-week induction course in June. The training covered all aspects of the Queensland Disaster management System, Emergency Risk Management and SDCC standard operating procedures. Participants were also required to take an active role in a number of simulation exercises, which were based on real events.

External Training

Several Disaster Operations staff attended internal and external training activities and courses as part of their professional development and succession planning.

Nine staff attended Earthquake Awareness Training conducted by the Seismology Research Centre in February and 20 EMQ staff attended a presentation on the Brisbane CBD Emergency Evacuation Plan in April.

Emergency Management Australia presented a briefing on their operational coordination roles to key EMQ staff in May.

STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT ENHANCEMENTS

As a result of the large fodder resupply operation in January, guidelines for Air Tasking Officers were written to assist staff when required to establish and operate a remote air base.

Staff visited the Royal Australian Air Force at Amberley in March to investigate the feasibility of using the base for the reception of Australian Nationals and other foreign nationals under the Commonwealth Reception Plan. Whilst small numbers could be received at Amberley it is not very desirable due to its remoteness and lack of local resources to support such operations.

The State Disaster Management Plan remains a dynamic document, it is amended as necessary to incorporate new conditions, best practice and new hazards and risks as they are identified. As a result of a Post Operational Report on Tropical Cyclone Larry that was submitted to Cabinet in June 2007 and the recent flooding events earlier this year, the plan was reviewed and updated. A new version was tabled at a State Disaster Management Group meeting on 11 June 2008.

Disaster Operations staff were also involved in the following activities:

Workshop Contribution

Disaster Operations staff actively participated in the following workshops:

- Geosciences Australia – National Exposure Information System, Brisbane, 23 January
- Developing Biosecurity Strategy for Queensland, Brisbane, 4 April and 9 May
- National Adaption Research Plan for Emergency Services, Brisbane, 11 April
- Natural Disaster Summit, Townsville, 22 April
- Broadcast Sector, Gold Coast, 22 May
- Emergency Media & Public Affairs Conference, Surfers Paradise, 26-27 June

Committee Contribution

Disaster Operations staff were also actively involved in supporting the following committees:

- Australian Tsunami Working Group
- Catastrophic Disasters Working Group
- Communication and Information Committee
- Community Warning Working Group
- Counter Terrorism Training and Exercise Management Committee
- DES Special Operations Managers
- Disaster Framework Reference Group
- Disaster Management Alliance Management Group
- Emergency Warning Systems Working Group
- Equine Influenza Control Group
- Gulf of Carpentaria Study Advisory Group
- Interdepartmental Committee on Bushfires and the Operations Subcommittee
- Mass Gatherings and Events Network
- National Oil Supplies Emergency Committee
- Port of Brisbane Corporation Mutual Aid Group
- Queensland Emergency Operations Centre Project Control Group
- Queensland Flood Coordination Committee
- Queensland National Plan State (Oil Spill) Committee
- Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee Coastal Inundation Sub-Committee
- SAFER Steering Committee
- Senior Executive Management Team
- South East Queensland Disaster Management Advisory Group
- SSQ Disaster Framework Reference Group
- State Community Recovery Committee
- State Disaster Coordination Group and the SDCG Working Group
- State Disaster Management Group
- State Disaster Mitigation Committee
- State Disaster Mitigation Committee Working Group