

Annual Report 2016-17

About the Queensland Disaster Management Committee

The Queensland Disaster Management Committee (QDMC) is chaired by the Premier of Queensland, or her nominee, and comprises a core group of Ministers, supported by their Directors-General (Assisting Officials) and assisted by other Ministers, senior officers, and representatives from other government agencies (from all three levels of government) and non-government organisations (NGOs) as required.

Additional support is provided through the State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG), the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) and the Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee (QTCCC).

The QDMC serves as the disaster management policy and decision-making committee for Queensland. Its role is to ensure the development and implementation of effective disaster management for the State and to provide clear and unambiguous senior strategic leadership in relation to the four phases of disaster management: prevention, preparation, response and recovery (PPRR). The QDMC allows direct Ministerial participation in the strategic management of disaster events, resulting in faster, better-informed decision-making during a disaster event.

Secretariat support is provided by the Queensland Police Service, with additional support from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Governance

The QDMC is established under section 17 of the Disaster Management Act 2003 (the DM Act) and its functions are prescribed in section 18 and include:

- Develop a strategic policy framework for disaster management for the State;
- Ensure effective disaster management is developed and implemented for the State;
- Identify resources inside and outside the State that may be used for disaster operations;
- Provide reports and make recommendations about matters relating to disaster management and disaster operations; and
- Prepare a State Disaster Management Plan (SDMP).

Members:

- Premier and Minister for the Arts (Chair)
- Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning
- Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services
- Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
- Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment
- Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport
- Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership
- Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply

Attending Officials:

- Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Director-General, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
- Director-General, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- Under Treasurer, Queensland Treasury

- Director-General, Department of Housing and Public Works
- Director-General, Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Chief Operating Officer, Public Safety Business Agency
- Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service
- Commissioner of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service

Observers:

- Inspector-General Emergency Management

2016-17 Meetings

Ordinary meetings

- Two (2) meetings – 8 August 2016 and 23 November 2016.

Extraordinary meetings

- Ten (10) meetings – 23, 26, 27 (2 meetings), 29 (2 meetings) March 2017; and 1, 3, 4, 5 April 2017.

The Year in Review

July 2016

Rain Event –15 to 21 July 2016.

- Multiple severe weather and severe thunderstorms impacted Queensland between 15 - 21 July 2016. Widespread unseasonal rainfall was experienced through Central, Southern, and Western Queensland. Multiple July rainfall records were set during this time.

August 2016

Bowen Earthquake – 18 August 2016

- At 14:30hrs (AEST) on Thursday 18 August 2016, a Magnitude 5.8 earthquake was detected offshore near Bowen. In excess of twenty aftershocks of varying strength were recorded in the coastal areas of Airlie Beach, with the strongest aftershock recorded as a Magnitude 4.1. While no damage or injuries were reported, precautionary evacuations of buildings occurred in some areas.

September 2016

Western Queensland Flooding – September 2016.

- Heavy rainfall throughout August resulted in flooding of the Diamantina, Bulloo and Warrego river catchments in early September. A series of troughs that spread across Queensland throughout the month brought widespread rainfall to much of Western and Southern Queensland.

October 2016

Severe Thunderstorm – Southeast Queensland - 3 October 2016.

- A severe thunderstorm with damaging winds impacted Southeast Queensland during the afternoon of 3 October 2016. The strong winds resulted in significant damage to homes, particularly in Acacia Ridge and Rochedale South areas.

Fraser Island Oil Spill – 16 October 2016

- On the afternoon of Sunday 16 October 2016, a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Ranger identified patties of oil on the beach in an area adjacent to Eurong Beach Resort on Fraser Island. Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) confirmed the presence of oil on Fraser Island beaches the following day.
- MSQ initiated an oil spill response, with reports of varying sized oil patties along approximately 40km of beach. A multiagency response ensued, with council officers, National Parks and Wildlife and MSQ staff performing clean-up operations which were completed by Tuesday, 25 October 2016.

November 2016

Severe Thunderstorms Southeast, Southwest, Central and Northern Queensland – 12 to 13

November 2016

- Severe thunderstorms with damaging winds, heavy rainfall and large hailstones impacted Southeast, Southwest, Central and Northern Queensland from Saturday, 12 November and until Sunday, 13 November 2016. A wind gust with the intensity of a category 2 cyclone was recorded at Brisbane Airport. The destructive winds resulted in flight delays and a loss of power to runway lights; multiple containers were blown over at the Port of Brisbane.

December 2016

White Spot Disease, Alberton and Logan – Commenced 1 December 2016

- On Sunday 2 December 2016, Biosecurity Queensland released a statement confirming a case of White Spot Disease (WSD) at an aquaculture property in Alberton, Logan. White spot was subsequently confirmed in seven prawn farms located in the Logan River region. The white spot virus that causes white spot disease was also found in a number of wild caught prawns and crabs taken from the Logan River region, Moreton Bay, Redcliffe Peninsula and Deception Bay. Decontamination of infected properties was conducted by Biosecurity Queensland and restrictions which prohibit the movement of uncooked crustaceans out of the white spot movement control area were implemented.

Russell Island Vegetation Fire – 15 December 2016

- A large, fast moving vegetation fire broke out on Russell Island on Thursday, 15 December 2016. A bushfire Emergency Warning was issued, and the Public Safety Preservation Act 1986 (PSPA) was invoked by QPS who evacuated a number of properties that were under threat from the fire. An evacuation centre was set up for displaced residents. The incident was handed back to local crews on Tuesday, 20 December.

January 2017

Severe Thunderstorms Southeast, Southwest and Central Queensland – 2 January 2017

- Severe thunderstorms impacted Southeast, Southwest and Central Queensland from on Monday 2 January 2017, resulting in localised flooding. Heavy rainfalls were recorded throughout Southeast and Central Queensland.

Severe Thunderstorm Central Coast and Whitsundays – 3 January 2017

- Severe thunderstorms were experienced in Central Coast and Whitsunday districts on Tuesday, 3 January 2017. The heavy rainfall resulted in multiple road closures and the evacuation of two properties in Sarina due to landslip.

Severe Thunderstorms Northwest, Herbert and Lower Burdekin, North Tropical Coast and Tablelands Forecast Districts – 4 January 2017

- Severe thunderstorms producing heavy rainfall and flash flooding were experienced in Northern and Far Northern Queensland on Wednesday, 4 January 2017.

Severe Thunderstorms North Tropical Coast and Tablelands Forecast District – 9 January 2017

- On Monday, 9 January 2017 severe thunderstorms and a weak low-pressure system off the Townsville coast caused heavy rainfall and flash flooding in Northern and Far North Queensland.

Severe Thunderstorms Central, Western, Northern and Southeast Queensland – 14 and 15 January 2017

- Numerous severe thunderstorms occurred across Central, Western, Northern and Southeast Queensland from the early hours of Saturday, 14 January until late in the evening Sunday, 15 January 2017. The heavy rainfall led to localised flash flooding in the impacted areas.

Bushfire Coolum – 20 January 2017

- A large bushfire impacted Coolum on the Sunshine Coast on Friday, 20 January 2017. The PSPA was declared and QPS and SES door knocked residents and provided assistance to those evacuating homes under threat. The PSPA was revoked late in the evening and residents allowed to return to their homes, however a PSPA was invoked again in the early hours of Saturday, 21 January due to the number of spot fires still burning in the area.

February 2017

Severe Thunderstorms – Northern Goldfields and Upper Flinders, North and Central West, Wide Bay and Burnett, Darling Downs and Granite Belt and Southeast Coast Forecast Districts – 13 February 2017

- Severe thunderstorms impacted Northern Goldfields and Upper Flinders, North and Central West, Wide Bay and Burnett, Darling Downs and Granite Belt and Southeast Coast Forecast Districts from Monday, 13 February 2017 until just after midnight on Tuesday 14 February. Damage to infrastructure and residences was caused by strong winds.

Tropical Low/Tropical Cyclone Alfred – Gulf of Carpentaria – 17 February 2017

- On Friday, 17 February 2017 a tropical low was situated near the north coast of Mornington Island. The slow-moving low developed into Tropical Cyclone Alfred on Monday, 20 February and remained as a category 1 cyclone for nearly 24 hours before again weakening to a tropical low.

March- April 2017

Tropical Cyclone Debbie – March – April 2017

- Severe Tropical Cyclone (STC) Debbie made landfall at Airlie Beach as a category 4 system at 12:40 hours Tuesday, 28 March 2017. Heavy rainfall and destructive winds were experienced from Bowen to Mackay with a peak wind gust of 263 km/h recorded at Hamilton Island. STC Debbie weakened to a tropical low by around 03:00 hours, Wednesday, 29 March 2017.

The remnant low turned southeast and produced damaging winds and torrential rainfall from Central Queensland to the Southeast. Significant rainfall was experienced in the Fitzroy River basin with up to 1000mm of rainfall over two days, resulting in major flooding of the Fitzroy River at Rockhampton during the following week.

By Thursday, 30 March Ex Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie, with damaging wind gusts and widespread rainfall, had tracked towards the Southeast. SDCC executed 75 Emergency Alert Campaigns, reaching almost four million people during the event. Campaigns included notice of school closures, cyclone, flood, storm tide and recovery information.

More than 7,500 requests for SES assistance were received for debris clean up, chainsaw operations, evacuation, resupply and flood rescue.

Activations

There were seven activations of the Commonwealth State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRAA) between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017. There were no activations of the State Disaster Recovery Arrangements (SDRA) between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017.

Declarations

There were three Disaster Situations declared pursuant to section 64 of the Disaster Management Act 2003 during the reporting period, in response to STC Debbie. Disaster declarations were made for Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton areas.

Disaster Management Activities

The following is a sample of activities undertaken to maintain or enhance Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements during 2016-17:

- The State Disaster Coordination Centre's (SDCC) Event Management System was updated to include expanded functionality for improved user navigation and access.
- Key messaging systems and guidelines including the Standard Emergency Warning Signal Guidelines were upgraded, and Emergency Alert (EA) polygons included on the recently launched Disaster Management Portal for Watch Desk staff.
- Queensland Government agency Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) remain in place and are updated at least annually. Most agency BCPs encompass agency Disaster Management Frameworks and include detailed business-critical information and communications technology (ICT) response and rapid recovery plans.
- Community recovery workforce was maintained with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) advising that at season commencement there were 1473 trained Government Ready Reservists and a further 265 being trained.
- The DeployMe App to support Ready Reservists was available and contained information on emergency and operational contacts; administration, logistics and finance; workplace health and safety; communications and reporting; and damage assessment procedures and condition ratings.

- Two key disaster-related public awareness campaigns “If it’s flooded, forget it”, and “RACQ Get Ready Queensland” were launched prior to the summer season. These campaigns highlight the need for good disaster preparedness and safety during an event and have been shown to positively impact on community outcomes.
- Rural Fire Service monitors the Fire Danger Rating Index throughout the year, providing one day forecast and four-day outlooks across the state, as well as maintaining the Wildfire Alert Level, which provides an alert notification for the level of preparedness of fire fighters and resources require on a particular day.
- A 75-member Urban Search and Rescue team, including a pre-loaded single semi-trailer was maintained at the ready for deployment with self-supporting field accommodation for up to 14 days.
- Operation Cool Burn was implemented from 1 August 2016 to mitigate bushfire damage.
- Queensland Police Service conducted refresher training in the Disaster Incident Event Management System, which includes the ability to communicate with the Northern Territory during Tropical Cyclone Events.
- Cyclone Shelters were constructed at nine state school sites and maintained in readiness for activation if required.
- The Department of Education and Training maintained two Emergency Response Unit trailers available for deployment via road or air to restore priority ICT in impacted regions if required.
- DCCSDS developed an online grants portal ready for go-live should Personal Hardship assistance grants be activated following a disaster.
- The Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) developed a Temporary Emergency Accommodation Plan which provides formal arrangements to support community members displaced by a disaster event.
- The Crisis Communication Network and intra-departmental communication process was updated and tested for response to a disaster activation.
- The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Partnerships (DATSIP) worked with the six Retail Stores located in Indigenous communities to prepare for the wet season.
- The Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) monitored and maintained a storm tide and wave network located around the Queensland coastline in preparation for the cyclone season.

Disaster Management Priorities

Disaster Management Priorities for 2017-18 are as follows:

- Implement the revised Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience.
- Support the *State Recovery Plan 2017-18: Operation Queensland Recovery* to ensure people, communities and businesses impacted by Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie received the resources and support they require to recover.
- Review and update the State Disaster Management Plan, a guidance document provided to support disaster management stakeholders within Queensland to mitigate the effects of, prepare for, respond to, recover from, and build resilience to disaster events.

Abbreviations

AEST	Australian Eastern Standard Time
App	Application
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
DCCSDS	Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
DHPW	Department of Housing and Public Works
DM Act	Disaster Management Act 2003
DMP	Disaster Management Plan
DSITI	Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MSQ	Marine Safety Queensland
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PPRR	Prevention, Preparation, Response and Recovery
PSPA	Public Safety Preservation Act 1986
QDMC	Queensland Disaster Management Committee
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QTCCC	Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee
SDC	State Disaster Coordinator
SDCC	State Disaster Coordination Centre
SDCG	State Disaster Coordination Group
SDMP	State Disaster Management Plan
SDRA	State Disaster Relief Arrangements
SES	State Emergency Service
STC	Severe Tropical Cyclone
WSD	White Spot Disease