

# Overview of Activities

## State Disaster Coordination Centre



**January to June 2015**



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## Executive Summary

Queensland experienced a number of severe weather events during this period, resulting in five activations of the Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA), and one activation of the State Disaster Recovery Arrangements (SDRA).

The State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) activated on two occasions during the first six months of 2015, firstly for Severe Tropical Cyclone (STC) Marcia in February and secondly, for Tropical Cyclone (TC) Nathan in March.

The new Emergency Management Directorate structure was approved; with the Directorate consisting of the State Operational Coordination Branch (SOCB) and the Systems Development and Support Branch (SDSB). The SOCB includes the SDCC, the State Operations Centre (SOC) and the Emergency Management Preparedness team.

The SDSB and SOCB have worked closely together to introduce the Noggin Event Management System (EMS) into the SDCC and across the emergency management areas of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES). Further development of EMS is being undertaken.

The SDCC Improvement Strategy Implementation Update report was signed by the Commissioner's QFES, Queensland Police Service (QPS), Inspector General Emergency Management (IGEM) and the Chief Executive Officer of the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA).

Evaluation of the activations of the SDCC and SOC during TC Marcia and TC Nathan were conducted as a tool to inform progress against the SDCC Improvement Strategy and to also assist with continued development of the training and exercise programs.

The SOCB is working closely with regions on a number of strategies to improve notifications and reporting across QFES, including developing a readiness brief, video conference script, establishing a QFES notification matrix and creating a QFES daily agency report.





## STATE DISASTER COORDINATION CENTRE

The SDCC was involved in a number of significant operations during the six month period concluding on 30 June 2015. These operations typically required analysis of the event, maintaining situational awareness, passage of information to affected Local Governments and other relevant agencies, tasking of State Emergency Service (SES) groups in response to requests for assistance from the general public, briefings to key decision makers, and forward planning.

### Bureau of Meteorology

During the period January to June 2015, 1736 weather advices were received from the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM). After analysis of these warnings, Watch Desk staff disseminated 1104 to stakeholders in affected areas. These warnings were for events such as cyclones, severe thunderstorms and flooding.

### SES 132 500 and RFA

In the six months to 30 June 2015, the Watch Desk received 12,174 requests for assistance through the SES 132 500 system and RFA Online. Watch Desk staff are responsible for actioning these requests by tasking the relevant SES groups. These requests from the general public normally relate to assistance required as the result of a severe weather event.

The above figure does not include the majority of calls made within the Brisbane City Council Local Government area which are dealt with by the council.

Agency Support requests, which typically include the activation of SES volunteers for functions such as Air Observer, Rural, Urban and Forensic Searches, Vertical, Flood and Road Crash Rescue are included in the figure above. Agency Support requests for SES assistance come directly from QFES FireCom, QPS Communication Centres, and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), and are often time critical and time intensive. They are actioned as a priority by Watch Desk Staff.

## SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS

Due to its size and location, Queensland experiences significant climate variations and is impacted by a number of weather phenomena including tropical cyclones, thunderstorms and flooding. During severe weather events, staff on the Watch Desk monitor the QFES Computer Aided Despatch (ESCAD) system, power and transport information sites as well as social and print media, to determine the impact of the event and monitor response activity.

Events of significance over the six month period until June 30, 2015 include the following:

### Riverine Flooding – January 2015

Significant rainfall was recorded in the upper parts of the Georgina River catchment, western Queensland during the first half of January. Over 100mm was recorded at Urandangi in the two days ending 9 January, with 85mm recorded to 9am on the 9th (the average monthly rainfall for January at Urandangi is 63mm). A major flood warning was issued for the Georgina River and Eyre Creek on January 20. Moderate to major flood warnings remained in place for the catchment until 24 February, with levels dropping to below minor by 26 February.

### Severe Thunderstorms Southeast Queensland – 1 January 2015

Southeast Queensland was impacted by severe storms producing heavy rain and flash flooding. The worst affected area was the Gold Coast; with Carrara recording 101mm of rain in the two hours between midnight and 2am. Approximately 4000 Energex customers lost power for a number of hours as a result of storm activity.

37 requests for SES assistance, mainly for leaking roofs, were actioned by Watch Desk staff.



## **Severe Thunderstorms Gulf Country and Northwest – 6 January 2015**

A severe thunderstorm produced heavy rain in the Mount Isa area, causing localised flash flooding.

QFES personnel including Swift Water Rescue crews and SES assisted QPS with the search for a person, reported missing in floodwaters in Mount Isa.

46 requests for SES assistance were received; most of the requests were for sandbags and assistance with leaking roofs as a result of the storm activity.

## **Monsoon Trough – January 2015**

On Thursday, 8 January 2015, the BoM Tropical Cyclone Outlook indicated that the likelihood of a tropical cyclone forming in the Eastern Region from Sunday, 11 January was HIGH. The increase in likelihood was due to a monsoon trough lying over the far northern Coral Sea, with a weak low embedded in the trough south of Papua New Guinea and another near the Solomon Islands. The monsoon trough was expected to develop further as it drifted south into the Coral Sea. Weather conditions eased, and neither of the two systems reached tropical cyclone intensity.

The SDCC moved to a heightened level of activity, with Watch Desk staff closely monitoring the development of the weather systems and disseminating bureau warnings and relevant information as necessary. The systems dissipated and there was no change of Alert Level for the SDCC.

## **Severe Weather Warning Southeast Coast – 11 January 2015**

Heavy, slow moving showers occurred on the northern stretches of the Gold Coast during the evening of 11 January, causing localised flash flooding. Coombabah reported rainfall of 188mm and Pacific Pines 143mm over a three hour period.

The heavy rains lead to the suspension of tram services and caused havoc on the roads, with a number of people forced to escape their swamped vehicles.

More than 50 requests for SES assistance were actioned. The bulk of these requests were for leaking roofs and sandbags.

## **Severe Thunderstorm Warning Southeast Queensland – 19 January 2015**

Severe thunderstorms, producing heavy rainfall and flash flooding were forecast for southeast Queensland in the early afternoon of 19 January. Jimboomba recorded 54mm of rain in a half hour period, from 12pm. Storms continued throughout the afternoon, with the BoM including damaging winds and large hail in the warnings. A 94km/h wind gust was recorded at Maryborough, and heavy rainfall led to flash flooding in the area.

More than 6000 Ergon and Energex customers lost power as a result of fallen power lines caused by the damaging winds.

55 requests for SES assistance were actioned by the Watch Desk. The requests were for assistance with damage resulting from fallen trees, leaking roofs and flash flooding.

## **Severe Thunderstorm Warning South East, South West, Central and Northern Regions – 20 January 2015**

Severe thunderstorms, producing damaging winds, heavy rainfall and large hail, impacted parts of southern and central Queensland on Tuesday, 20 January. A wind gust of 87km/h was recorded in Mackay, and Bengalla, on the southern border, recorded 62mm of rain in the two hours to 10pm.

Large hail was observed between Dalby and Oakey and strong winds in Dysart resulted in a number of trees being blown over.

37 requests for SES assistance were actioned by the SDCC Watch Desk.



### **Severe Weather Warning and Severe Thunderstorms North Coast, Northern and Central Queensland - 21 and 22 January 2015**

Two slow moving systems; a major upper low and a surface low, resulted in severe weather warnings being issued for parts of the Herbert and Lower Burdekin, Central Coast and Whitsundays, Capricornia, and Wide Bay and Burnett forecast districts. Severe weather and thunderstorms caused flash flooding. Williamson RAAF (near St Lawrence) received 69mm of rain in one hour. QFES Swift Water Rescue crews with the assistance of SES conducted rescues at Springsure and Emerald when drivers were caught in floodwater.

The SDCC Watch Desk received more than 100 requests for SES assistance, for jobs including flood evacuation, roof damage, and requests for sandbags.

### **Severe Weather Warning, Severe and Thunderstorm Warning Southeast Coast, Capricornia, Wide Bay and Burnett – 23 January 2015**

A severe weather warning was issued Friday morning, 23 January 2015. Falls of up to 80mm in one hour were recorded in the greater Brisbane area between approximately 6 and 8am. Hourly rainfall figures of 60-70mm were also recorded in the Hervey Bay area. Rainfall of up to 280mm was recorded in some areas, leading to significant flash flooding. The heavy rain, combined with high tides resulted in some inundation in low lying areas and a number of local road closures. QFES crews performed four swift water rescues, and assisted Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) crews to gain access to an elderly patient.

The SDCC Watch Desk received more than 500 requests for SES assistance. Jobs included sandbagging, flood evacuation, resupply of fresh food to the Yeppoon hospital and flood boat response for persons missing in flood waters.

### **Severe Thunderstorm Warning, South East Queensland – 26 January 2015**

Severe thunderstorms impacted areas of south east Queensland, including the Darling Downs and Granite Belt, and Wide Bay and Burnett districts. Heavy rainfall, damaging winds and large hail occurred with 41mm of rain recorded at St Aubyn in 30 minutes and large hail of up to 5cm observed at Leyburn (between Millmerran and Warwick). Tree damage occurred in Yarraman.

The Watch Desk actioned 16 storm related RFAs, mainly for fallen trees as a result of the strong winds.

### **Severe Thunderstorm Warning, Central, South East and South West Queensland – 31 January 2015**

On 31 January, severe thunderstorms in southeastern Queensland produced golf ball-sized hail at Acacia Ridge, and hail between 2 and 3cm in diameter at Hawthorne and Harrisville (north of Boonah).

More than 17,000 Energex customers in the Southeast Coast forecast district lost power as a result of the severe storms.

In excess of 130 requests for SES assistance were actioned by the Watch Desk. The bulk of the requests were for trees down, leaking roofs, and broken skylights in the Gold Coast, Sunnybank and Calamvale areas.



### **Severe Thunderstorm Warning, Central Region – 2 February 2015**

Severe thunderstorms, bringing heavy rain, damaging winds and possible flash flooding were forecast in Central Region on Monday, 2 February. Areas of the region recorded more than 110mm of rain, resulting in localised flash flooding and multiple short term road closures.

The Watch Desk actioned 31 requests for SES assistance, mainly for leaking roofs.

### **Severe Weather Warning, Northern Tropical Coast, Peninsula and Tablelands forecast districts – 7 and 8 February 2015**

Severe Weather Warnings and a Flood Watch were issued for areas of northern and far northern Queensland, in anticipation of expected heavy rainfall. The heaviest rainfall was recorded in the north tropical coast areas of Malanda and Glen Allyn. Cairns airport recorded rainfall totals of 145mm.

More than 30 requests for SES assistance were actioned by Watch Desk staff. QFES resources were required for a number of swift water rescues, and flood related operations, in and around the Tablelands area, including a request for the evacuation of children left stranded after a party held in Kuranda. All persons were evacuated without incident.

### **Tropical Cyclone Marcia – 18 February 2015**

On Monday, 16 February 2015 the BoM started to monitor a weak tropical disturbance in the Coral Sea. This disturbance developed into STC Marcia on Wednesday, 18 February. It was predicted to cross the Capricornia or Wide Bay coast on Friday, 20 February.

STC Marcia underwent a period of rapid intensification the following day, increasing by three categories to a Category 4 cyclone over a period of approximately 10 hours. Media transmitters were directed to use the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) when issuing cyclone warnings, as the cyclone intensified. STC Marcia turned almost due south intensifying further and reaching Category 5. The destructive core of the cyclone began to impact the Capricorn Coast and crossed the coast at Shoalwater Bay, north of Yeppoon, at 8am on 20 February. Significant damage occurred in Yeppoon and surrounding areas as a result of wind gusts of up to 156km/h. Water levels on the high tide were predicted to exceed the highest tide of the year with dangerous surf conditions and significant beach erosion. A storm surge of two metres was recorded at Port Alma, however this occurred near low tide and no significant impact was reported.

The weakening cyclone passed over Rockhampton during the early afternoon on 20 February, where wind gusts to 113km/h were recorded and again significant damage occurred. STC Marcia then turned to the south-southeast and impacted the town of Biloela early in the evening, with wind gusts up to 85km/h recorded.

STC Marcia was downgraded to a tropical low on Saturday, February 21, but impacts were still felt further south with heavy rain and flooding occurring in North Coast Region, particularly around the Sunshine Coast and the Mary and Burnett Rivers. Dangerous surf and abnormally high tides were also experienced around exposed beaches in southeast Queensland. The Severe Weather Warning relating to ex-TC Marcia was cancelled on Sunday, 22 February.

The SDCC moved to Lean Forward on Wednesday, 18 February, to Stand Up on Thursday, 19 February before moving to Stand Down on Wednesday, 25 February.

More than 8100 requests for SES assistance were received as a result of STC Marcia, with assistance requested for roof damage, fallen trees and localised flooding. The figures are a cumulative total for the period 18 February to 5 March 2015, as requests continued to be received for some days after the actual cyclone had passed.





### **Tropical Cyclone Lam – 17 February 2015**

In mid-February a weak low pressure system developed over the far northwestern Coral Sea. Isolated thunderstorms and areas of heavy rain developed over the east coast and ranges north of Cardwell in association with this low, and the active monsoon. The low developed into TC Lam, in the Gulf of Carpentaria on Tuesday, 17 February. TC Lam tracked slowly westwards, before crossing the coast near Milingimbi in the Northern Territory on 20 February.

The SDCC and QFES regional staff monitored the progress of the low as it crossed Cape York but there was no significant impact for Queensland.

### **Severe Thunderstorm Warning, South East Queensland - 21 February 2015**

Severe thunderstorms impacted Queensland's south east and north coast areas from early in the morning, Saturday 21 February. Destructive winds and heavy rain caused significant flash flooding and damage to homes and businesses. A waterspout which moved over land near Mooloolaba caused some building damage. Elimbah (Glasshouse Mountains) reported 136mm of rain and Caboolture 96mm over a two hour period.

More than 800 storm related, SES requests for assistance were received by the Watch Desk, mainly for leaking roofs, roof damage and sandbags.

### **Tropical Cyclone Nathan, Severe Thunderstorm and Severe Weather Warnings, Far North Queensland - 10 to 13 March and 19 to 20 March 2015**

TC Nathan, category 1, formed in the northwest Coral Sea on Tuesday, 10 March 2015, resulting in Severe Thunderstorm Warnings being issued for the Peninsula Forecast District and Severe Weather Warnings being issued for parts of the Peninsula, Northern Tropical Coast and Tablelands Forecast Districts. Damaging winds and heavy rainfall occurred with flash flooding in low lying areas.

A wind gust of 90km/h was recorded at Weipa Airport with rainfall of 221mm. Cooktown Airport recorded 209mm of rain during the weather event.

The Watch Desk actioned more than 40 requests for SES assistance as a result of the strong winds and heavy rainfall within the warning area. More than half the requests were for the Cooktown area, with jobs including sandbagging, roof tarping, and assisting QPS and council with placing signage on flooded roads.

TC Nathan shifted away from the Queensland coast and then strengthened again as it moved back towards the coast after several days over the Coral Sea. The system intensified to a category 3 cyclone on 19 March and reached category 4 strength before it made landfall at about 4am on 20 March on the east Cape York Peninsula coast between Cape Melville and Cape Flattery. A Severe Weather Warning was issued for damaging winds and heavy rainfall in the Gulf Country and Peninsula Forecast Districts and for abnormally high tides in the Northern Tropical Coast and Tablelands Forecast Districts but the impact from STC Nathan was fairly low due to the area having a low population density. Cape Flattery automatic weather station recorded wind gusts to approximately 170 km/h, and some wind damage was reported in Cooktown. Following landfall, TC Nathan tracked westwards across Cape York, maintaining category 1 intensity before it entered the waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria early in the morning of 21 March.

The SDCC moved to Lean Forward on Wednesday, 11 March and remained at Lean Forward until moving to Stand Up on Thursday, March 19. The SDCC moved to Stand Down on Saturday, 21 March after the category 1 cyclone entered Gulf of Carpentaria waters. More than 100 SES requests for assistance were received between 11 and 21 March as a result of the cyclone and the heavy rainfall it generated. Household requests requested assistance with fallen trees, leaking roofs and localised flooding.



### **Severe Thunderstorm Warnings, Far Northern, Central, South West, South East Queensland - 21 March 2015**

Severe thunderstorms affected much of Queensland on Saturday afternoon and evening, 21 March. The worst affected area was Chinchilla which experienced a hailstorm that caused damage to over 15 residences and the hospital. Hailstones were reported as being up to the size of tennis balls.

Widespread power outages were experienced as a result of the storm activity, including approximately 1000 customers in Chinchilla.

Locations within Brisbane, Central, South Western, North Coast and South Eastern Regions recorded rainfall figures of up to 100mm or more between Saturday, 21 March and Sunday, 22 March.

66 requests for SES assistance were actioned by the Watch Desk. Jobs included sandbagging, chainsaw operations and roof tarping.

### **Severe Thunderstorm Warnings, North Coast, Central, South West, South East Queensland - 22 March 2015**

Severe thunderstorms brought heavy rainfall, damaging winds and some hail to parts of the Maranoa and Warrego, Central Highlands and Coalfields, Darling Downs and Granite Belt, Wide Bay and Burnett and Southeast Coast forecast districts.

Noosa Heads Alert recorded 123mm of rain in the 21 hours to 5am Monday, 23 March. Bribie Island Alert recorded 95mm, and Coolangatta 65mm for the same period.

Approximately 4800 Ergon customers in Warwick were without power for a number of hours due to damage caused by the storms.

More than 80 requests for SES assistance were received from across affected regions, including 34 in Brisbane.

### **Severe Thunderstorm Warning South East Queensland - 1 April 2015**

Bands of severe thunderstorms bringing heavy rainfall, and causing flash flooding impacted the North Coast and South East Regions on Wednesday, 1 April 2015. Rainfall totals of more than 100mm were recorded in some areas of southeastern Queensland in the 24 hour period to 5am on 1 April. Steilglitz Wharf Alert, near Jacobs Well recorded 147mm and the Carbrook Riedel Alert, 128mm.

The thunderstorm warning was cancelled on Wednesday, 1 April, but significant rainfall continued to fall to through the southeast and north coast areas of Queensland up until Sunday, 5 April.

### **Severe Thunderstorm Warning South East Queensland - 4 April 2015**

A Severe Thunderstorm warning was issued for the Scenic Rim area on Saturday, 4 April, with heavy rainfall causing flash flooding throughout the area. The Tarome Alert (near Aratula) recorded 73mm of rain in a 60 minute period, and total rainfall figures of between 100 and 160mm were recorded in a number of rain gauges in the Boonah area.

Fire crews worked with QPS to assist over 50 campers isolated at an equestrian event in Kooralbyn (SW of Beaudesert) when water levels in Cannon Creek rose sharply due to the heavy rainfall.

More than 140 requests for SES assistance were actioned by the Watch Desk between 1 and 5 April, due to persistent thunderstorms and rainfall. The majority of requests related to leaking roofs and internal flooding due to water inundation.



## **Severe Thunderstorm Warning Central and South Western Queensland and Severe Weather Warning South East, Central and South Western Queensland - 30 April 2015**

At the end of April a surface trough deepened over the interior of Queensland, and an upper level trough intensified over the southern interior, generating widespread, moderate rainfall along Queensland's central to southeastern coast.

Areas of North Coast Region recorded rainfall totals close to 100mm, while in Central Region many areas recorded more than 50mm of rain in the 24 hour period to 5am Friday, 1 May 2015.

85 requests for SES assistance were received and actioned by the Watch Desk. The bulk of the requests were for the North Coast, South Eastern and Brisbane Regions.

## **Severe Thunderstorm Warning South East Queensland and Severe Weather Warning Central, South East and South Western Queensland - 1 May 2015**

A strong upper level disturbance tracked across southeastern Queensland on Friday, 1 May, bringing showers, isolated thunderstorms and areas of rain to the southeastern corner of the state. The heaviest falls were associated with a surface low which developed near Fraser Island in response to the upper disturbance, tracking southwards along the southeastern Queensland coast during Friday and early Saturday, focusing the rainfall along the coastal strip, where rainfall totals close to 400mm were recorded.

Severe weather and severe thunderstorms resulted in significant flash flooding about the coast and adjacent inland from Fraser Island to the New South Wales (NSW) border throughout Friday, continuing into the early hours of Saturday morning. Damaging wind gusts, dangerous surf and elevated tides were also observed about the southern coast.

Due to the dangerous nature of the thunderstorms and the impact expected from heavy rainfall, the BoM authorised the media to broadcast the SEWS when relaying all thunderstorm warnings throughout the day.

The heavy rainfall severely impacted road, rail and air services and caused power outages throughout the south east.

A total of 761 incidents were reported through to Fire Communications Centres; 246 of these being swift water rescue incidents; resulting in 58 actual rescues. During the event, five people lost their lives, in three separate incidents, when their vehicles became submerged in floodwater.

Caboolture hospital became isolated, but remained self-sufficient, with no major issues encountered.

Flood warnings were issued for multiple rivers throughout South East Queensland as a result of the excessive rainfall. Major flood warnings were issued for the Upper Brisbane and Stanley Rivers and the Logan and Albert Rivers.

More than 1500 requests for SES assistance were received, for jobs including sandbagging, roof tarping, chainsaw operations, flood rescue, debris clean up and traffic control. The SDCC was not activated for the event.



## SUPPLEMENTARY EVENTS

### **Burketown and Doomadgee Isolation – 8 to 26 January 2015**

Burketown and Doomadgee became isolated as a result of heavy rainfall that increased water levels at Running Creek and the Gregory Crossing.

The isolation of the towns led to a shortage of supplies, resulting in the receipt of a resupply request from the Mount Isa, District Disaster Coordinator on 8 January. Watch Desk staff coordinated the resupply of 4000kg of perishable foods, which were delivered by air to Doomadgee on January 9.

A requested resupply for Burketown was cancelled when the town was able to be reached by road.

### **Thor Commander – 12 January 2015**

On 12 January 2015, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) advised the Watch Desk that the vessel Thor Commander, on its way from South America to Townsville had suffered major engine failure around 200 nautical miles east of Mackay and around 17 miles to seaward of the outer edge of Great Barrier Reef.

The vessel was successfully towed to Gladstone without major incident and without damage to the Great Barrier Reef.

The SDCC monitored the situation throughout the salvage operation, providing support to MSQ and ensuring that relevant information was forwarded to disaster management stakeholders.

### **Mount Isa Water Supply – February 2015**

On 6 February 2015, Watch Desk staff were advised that there were issues with the Mount Isa water supply. Very high levels of algae on top of high turbidity in the water holdings due to flooding had rendered the natural filtration system inoperable. Potable water levels dropped to six per cent and a number of contingencies were put in place by the Mount Isa Water Board and the Mount Isa City Council.

Additional mechanical filtration systems were brought on line in early March with the potable water reserves replenished by mid-March.

### **Eidsvold Earthquake – 16 February 2015**

At 1.57am on Monday, 16 February, Geoscience Australia reported that an earthquake measuring magnitude 5.1MW had occurred at the town of Eidsvold. Geoscience Australia estimated the earthquake had the potential to cause damage up to 16 kilometres away. Residents in Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Brisbane and Toowoomba reported feeling the earthquake. There were no reports of damage.

### **Panama Disease Tropical Race 4 – March 2015**

A Tully banana plantation was placed into quarantine on 3 March, when the destructive Panama Disease Tropical Race 4 was detected on the property. A second plantation near Mareeba tested positive to the disease on 9 April but has since been cleared of the disease.

As at 30 June 2015, one property remained under quarantine, but was harvesting bananas under strict interim arrangements with Biosecurity Queensland. Operations are continuing to control the spread of the disease. The SDCC closely monitored the situation, reporting to relevant stakeholders as required.





### **Severe Tropical Cyclone Pam – 9 March 2015**

STC Pam formed in the South Pacific on Monday, 9 March 2015 and started moving south towards Vanuatu. STC Pam crossed the coast in Vanuatu as a Category 5 cyclone on Friday, 13 March. The cyclone devastated Vanuatu, with 16 people killed and thousands of homes damaged or destroyed.

The Director General, Emergency Management Australia (EMA) activated the AUSASSISTPLAN on 14 March and the COMRECEPLAN RED (Evacuation Imminent or Underway) on 15 March. Under the auspices of COMRECEPLAN the Australian Government assisted 242 people (208 Australians and 34 foreign nationals) return to Australia via four military flights into Brisbane and Sydney. QFES coordinated a Multi-agency Reception Centre at Brisbane Airport.

The COMRECEPLAN and AUSASSISTPLAN were deactivated on the 18 March and 1 April respectively.

### **Byfield Bushfires – 18 to 27 March 2015**

On Wednesday, 18 March, QFES Media issued a Watch and Act message for a fast moving fire burning in Byfield, north of Yeppoon. Fuelled by increased vegetation loads as a result of debris from TC Marcia, firefighters experienced difficulty controlling the fire due to its speed.

More than forty properties north of Yaxley Road were identified as at risk. QPS and SES door knocked residents urging them to self-evacuate to the Byfield state school. The Livingstone Shire Local Disaster Management Group moved to Stand Up to assist with local evacuation measures.

The firefighting operation involved multiple QFES resources including aerial attacks and the use of heavy plant and equipment to create fire breaks. The incident was active from 18 to 27 March.

### **New South Wales Flooding – 20 April 2015**

An intense low pressure system developed in a surface trough off the Hunter Coast on Monday, 20 April 2015. The system brought very heavy rainfall, strong winds and high seas, which impacted the Hunter, Sydney and Illawarra regions for more than 48 hours. Rainfall totals of more than 200mm were reported in multiple areas, with 436mm recorded in Maitland.

The NSW SES received over 20,000 requests for assistance and more than 160 flood rescues were performed. As a result of the severe weather, 12 local government areas were declared natural disaster areas.

QFES SES personnel from South East and Brisbane regions were deployed to the Hunter Valley region on 24 April. Two QFES Liaison Officers and 48 SES volunteers were deployed to assist their NSW counterparts with storm damage, chainsaw and height safety operations. The deployment returned to South East Queensland on 27 April.

### **Ravenshoe Café Explosion**

On Tuesday, 9 June 2015, a vehicle crashed into the Serves You Right Café in Ravenshoe, Far North Queensland. The vehicle hit a gas cylinder causing an explosion that left 21 people injured, including two firefighters. The event had significant impact on the small community of Ravenshoe and a coordinated multiagency response was initiated to support the Tablelands Regional Council and other government and non-government agencies involved in event operations.

At the request of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the SDCC sourced and collated information from Queensland Government agencies which was then disseminated to key stakeholders. As at 30 June 2015, fourteen people remained in hospital and two persons were confirmed deceased as a result of the severe injuries they sustained from the incident.



## Space Re-Entry Debris

The SDCC was advised of the following pieces of space debris that could survive re-entry and possibly impact Queensland.

- A Russian spacecraft, Progress-M 27M, returning to Earth after it experienced technical difficulties post launch was forecast to re-enter the earth's atmosphere over the South Pacific Ocean on Friday, 8 May 2015. Re-Entry occurred off the coast of South America at 1219pm Friday 8 May (AEST), with nil effect for Australia.
- A Falcon-9 launch vehicle that was expected to land in the Indian Ocean on Monday, 29 June was reported to have experienced an overpressure event shortly after lift-off, in the upper stage liquid oxygen tank. The vehicle broke apart, with the debris falling towards the Atlantic Ocean.
- An SL-6 R/B vehicle was expected to enter the atmosphere over the South Pacific Ocean, at 0901am (AEST) Monday, June 29 2015. The trajectory of the vehicle changed and re-entry occurred over North America.

## Nuclear Powered Warships

QFES is the lead agency for coordinating visits by Nuclear Powered Warships when they dock at Queensland ports for crew rest and recreation purposes. There was one Nuclear Powered Warship visit during this period.

The USS George Washington docked at the Brisbane Grain Wharf terminal on Friday, 19 June and departed Wednesday, 24 June 2015. The SOCB hosted meetings for stakeholders in preparation for the visit as well as conducting a debrief after the event. Watch Desk staff provided weather updates to the PAZ Duty Officer and managed radio and pager communications while the ship was docked.



**DISASTER RELIEF ARRANGEMENTS**

The Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services activated the Commonwealth/State NDRRA on five occasions during this period. The SDRAs were activated on one occasion as a result of severe weather on 30 April and 1 May, 2015.

Full details of Disaster Relief Arrangements, are available on the [Queensland Reconstruction Authority Website](http://www.qra.qld.gov.au).

**STATE DISASTER RELIEF ARRANGEMENTS**

**South East Queensland Low, 30 April – 1 May 2015**



**Event and Timing**

A low crossed south east Queensland between Thursday, 30 April and Friday, 1 May 2015, bringing heavy rainfall and flash flooding to the area.

**SDRA Relief Measures Activated**

- Counter Disaster Operations
- Personal Hardship Assistance Scheme



**NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS**

**Western Queensland Heavy Rainfall and Flooding, 5 – 18 January 2015**



**Event and Timing**

Heavy rainfall and flooding between 5 and 18 January 2015, impacting a number of regions in Western Queensland.

**NDRRA Relief Measures Activated**

- Counter Disaster Operations
- Restoration of Essential Public Assets.





Central Eastern Queensland Heavy Rainfall and Flooding, 21 – 29 January 2015



**Event and Timing**

Heavy rainfall and flooding between 21 and 29 January, 2015 impacting the Central Eastern Queensland area.

**NDRRA Relief Measures Activated**

- Counter Disaster Operations
- Restoration of Essential Public Assets.



## North Queensland Severe Weather and Flooding, 8 – 15 February 2015



### Event and Timing

Severe weather and flooding between 8 and 15 February, 2015 impacting the North Tropical Coast and Tablelands regions in Queensland.

### NDRRA Relief Measures Activated

- Counter Disaster Operations
- Restoration of Essential Public Assets.



## Severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia and South East Queensland Trough, 19 - 22 February 2015



### Event and Timing

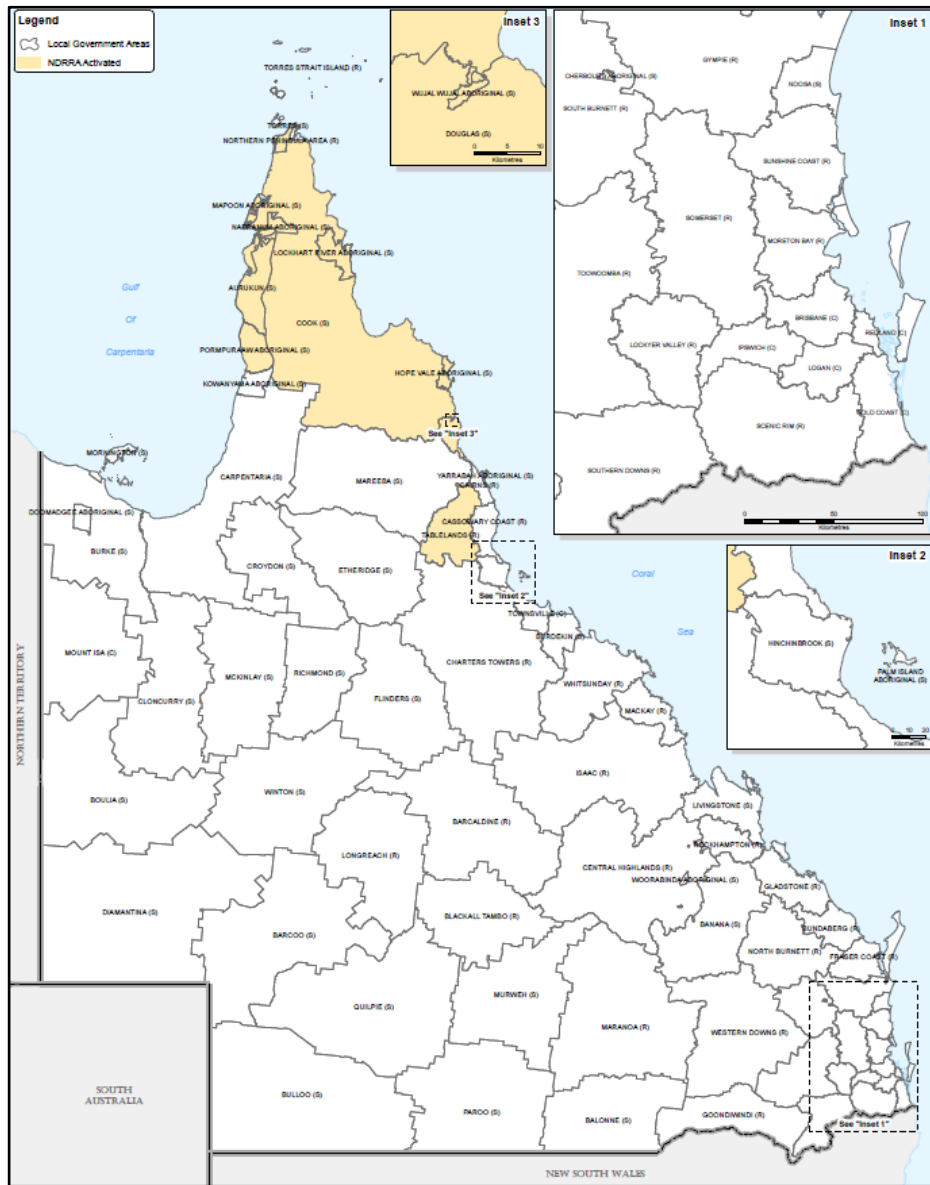
Severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia and associated trough, impacting Capricorn and Southern East Coast between 19 – 22 February, 2015.

### NDRRA Relief Measures Activated

- Counter Disaster Operations
- Personal Hardship Assistance Scheme
- Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme
- Essential Working Capital Loans Scheme for Small Business
- Essential Working Capital Loans Scheme for Primary Producers
- Freight Subsidies for Primary Producers
- Natural Disaster Assistance (Concessional Loans) for Small Business
- Natural Disaster Assistance (Concessional Loans) for Primary Producers
- Natural Disaster Assistance (Concessional Loan and Grant Packages) for Non-Profit Organisations
- Restoration of Essential Public Assets
- Special Disaster Assistance (Clean-up and Recovery Grants) for Small Business and Non-profit Organisations
- Special Disaster Assistance (Clean-up and Recovery Grants) for Primary Producers



## Tropical Cyclone Nathan and associated rainfall and flooding, 11 – 21 March 2015



### Event and Timing

Tropical Cyclone Nathan and associated rainfall and flooding, 11 – 21 March 2015.

### NDRRA Relief Measures Activated

- Counter Disaster Operations
- Essential Working Capital Loans Scheme for Primary Producers
- Freight Subsidies for Primary Producers
- Natural Disaster Assistance (Concessional Loans) for Primary Producers
- Restoration of Essential Public Assets





## **STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT ENHANCEMENTS**

There was a major focus on implementing the SDCC Improvement Strategy recommendations to ensure the physical work was completed. The renovation works for the SDCC have delivered improved functionality and IT infrastructure, through the increase in the number of work stations, and dedicated areas that support specific cell capabilities. Watch Desk staff ensure the operational readiness of the SDCC by performing monthly operational readiness checks and registering and reporting any faults or issues

### **State Operational Coordination Branch**

The SDSB worked with the SOCB to deliver the Noggin EMS into SOCB and across the emergency management areas of QFES. The SDSB reviewed EMS following the SDCC evaluations of TC Nathan and TC Marcia. SDSB continues to engage with Emergency Management stakeholders in the requirements and planning of the 'next stage' EMS and Information Exchange Platform (IXP) works.

### **Disaster Management Branch**

The Disaster Management Branch (DMB) has developed a strategic plan to mitigate the 49 outstanding disaster management guidelines and sustain a five-year rolling review schedule.

The DMB worked closely with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, IGEM and QPS to support a review of the Strategic Policy Framework and State Disaster Management Plan. The branch also worked on an initiative to develop a Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) guidebook for QFES members involved in disaster management.

### **SDCC Operations Doctrine**

All Standard Operating Procedures are currently being reviewed, updated and replaced by a revised SDCC Operations Doctrine comprising of Disaster Management Directives and Disaster Management Process Guides. These documents provide succinct and structured guidelines and information regarding the comprehensive use and understanding of SDCC systems and processes.



## **TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES**

SDCC staff maintain an active role in organising and conducting disaster management training activities at a State level and ensure staff involvement in exercises and training that enhance SOCB capability.

### **Emergency Alert Authorising Officer Training**

In January 2015, SOCB Senior Management delivered Emergency Alert (EA) Authorising Officer training to relevant QFES and PSBA staff. Targeted training is conducted to ensure knowledge and understanding so that EA campaigns are rapidly approved and processed.

### **Exercise PacWAVE15**

On 4 February 2015, SDCC staff participated in Exercise PacWAVE15, an international tsunami exercise designed to test the new Operational Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) Enhanced Products. More than 40 Pacific countries participated in the exercise.

PacWAVE15 provided the opportunity for Watch Desk staff to exercise systems, management and processes related to tsunami warnings. During the exercise, staff were responsible for disseminating exercise warnings and for liaising with relevant stakeholders to ensure warnings and messages were received in a timely fashion.

### **Nuclear Powered Warship Exercise**

On 22 April 2015, SOCB staff were involved in a multiagency Nuclear Powered Warship exercise that included representatives from agencies including QPS, Transport and Main Roads, and the Port of Brisbane. The exercise was organised to prepare relevant stakeholders for the upcoming visit from the USS George Washington and was conducted in the SOC and on site at the Port of Brisbane. SOCB staff also undertook detailed training for the visit of the vessel.

### **Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements Training**

SOCB staff delivered QDMA Training to PSBA, Whole of Government and QFES staff throughout the first six months of 2015. QDMA training is delivered as part of the QFES responsibility of ensuring disaster management stakeholders are suitably trained.

### **SDCC Capability Training**

All SOCB staff undertook training to fulfil their roles in the various capabilities that form part of the SDCC when it is activated.

### **Fire Behaviour Training**

The BoM staff member embedded into the SDCC in August 2014 conducted Fire Behaviour Training to QFES representatives throughout the State. The training is designed to promote a better understanding of the impact that weather has on fuel load and fire ground behaviour, before the start of the 2015 bushfire season.



## Professional Development

SDCC staff were involved in the following training during the six months, January to June 2015:

- Four staff members are undertaking the Advanced Diploma Public Safety – Emergency Management.
- Three staff members are undertaking a Graduate Certificate in Disaster Management
- Staff within the branch participated in Collaborative Team and Collaborative Leadership Programs; with the program scheduled to continue until all team members have attended.
- Two team members attended a two day, Disaster Planning and Preparedness course at QUT Brisbane.
- One staff member attended a three day, Facilitate Emergency Planning Process course at EMA, Mt Macedon, Victoria.
- One staff member attended a CASA Aviation Safety Management Systems Update, briefing and workshop.
- SOCB staff undertook NDRRA training in January 2014.
- All current Watch Desk Staff attended EMS training due to the enhanced capabilities of the system.
- One staff member attended a two day Disaster Planning and Preparedness course at QUT in

## Committee Contribution

Staff were also actively involved in supporting the following committees and activities:

- Change Advisory Board
- Operation Delta
- Operation Cool Burn
- Emergency Management System Working Group
- State Disaster Coordination Group
- SDCC Capability Coordination Group
- Emergency Alert Contract Management Oversight Committee (CMOC)
- Information Communication Security Change Advisory Board
- Emergency Alert Systems User Reference Group

## OFFICIAL VISITS

Staff hosted official tours of the State Disaster Coordination Centre and State Operations Centre and gave presentations to personnel from the following agencies:

- Department of Transport and Main Roads: Emergency Management (2 Visits)
- Telstra: National Emergency Response
- Ergon Energy
- Legacy Way Tunnel
- QUT: Australian Research Centre for Aerospace Automation
- Inspector General Emergency Management
- Brisbane City Council: Disaster Management (2 Visits)
- Border Protection Command: Australian Customs & Border Protection Service



- Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
- Bond University: Retrieval Medicine Graduate Certificate
- Royal Flying Doctor Service
- QUT: Centre for Emergency and Disaster Management
- Rotary Club: Nundah
- Queensland Government Airwing
- Defence: 7 Combat Service Support Battalion
- Logan City Council
- Department of Communities
- Department of Natural Resources and Mines
- Brisbane City Council
- Origin Energy
- University of Queensland, School of Geography, Planning & Environmental Management
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Emergency Management Australia and Indonesian Delegate
- Griffith University: Australasian Universities, Risk and Insurance Management Society
- Vietnamese Delegation
- State Emergency Service: Southern Group
- State Emergency Service: Eastern Group
- RSL Tweed Heads
- Sunshine Coast District Disaster Management Group
- National Security College