

# Public Information and Warnings Plan

A sub-plan of the Local Disaster  
Management Plan

SP-5



OCTOBER 2020

Barcoo Shire Council

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## Endorsement

The Barcoo Shire *Public Information and Warnings Sub-Plan* provides a guide for timely, targeted and tailored information and warnings to empower people to make informed decisions, to take protective action, and to reduce the potential impacts and consequences of a hazard.

It is endorsed by the Barcoo Shire Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and approved for distribution.



.....  
(Signature)

Mayor Sally O'Neil

Chairperson

Barcoo Local Disaster Management Group

Date: 28 October 2020

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## Acknowledgements

Portions of this document are wholly or partially derived from the following sources:

- Section 5.6, Queensland DM Guidelines - [Communications and systems for public information and warnings guideline](#)
- Queensland Emergency Alert Manual, 2018
- Disaster Management Act 2003

The acknowledgement recognises the source and use of material from the above references throughout this plan.

## Document Control

The *Barcoo Shire Public Information and Warnings Sub-Plan* is a controlled document. The Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) holds the master copy of this document.

## Amendments

Any suggested or proposed amendments are to be forwarded in writing to:

Local Disaster Coordinator  
Barcoo Shire Council  
P.O. Box 14  
Jundah, QLD 4736  
Email: [shire@barcoo.qld.gov.au](mailto:shire@barcoo.qld.gov.au)

The LDC may approve inconsequential amendments to this document, however will ensure that any significant changes must be submitted to the LDMG for approval and be endorsed by Barcoo Shire Council.

A copy of each amendment will be forwarded to LDMG members. On receipt, the amendment is to be inserted into the plan and version control records updated.

## Version control

Version	Date	Comments
2.0	February 2019	
2.1	October 2019	Minor amendments and inclusion of appendices
3.0	October 2020	Annual Review

## Distribution

Copies of the sub-plan will be distributed to members of the Barcoo Shire LDMG and other entities as determined.

Organisation	Copy
Local Disaster Coordinator, Barcoo Shire LDMG	Master copy
Chairperson, Barcoo Shire LDMG	1
Media Liaison Officer	1
Barcoo Shire LDMG core membership	5
District Disaster Coordinator, Longreach	1
Longreach Emergency Management Coordinator Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	1
Others to be added as required	

## Abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation/acronym	Full name
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
EA	Emergency Alert
LDC	Local Disaster Coordinator
LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
QPS	Queensland Police Service

## Key contacts

For a list of key contacts please refer to p. 66 of the Local Disaster Management Plan. This is a restricted list.

# PART 1 – ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

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## Authority to plan

This plan has been prepared under the authority of the Barcoo Shire LDMG as an operational sub-plan of the Local Disaster Management Plan and in accordance with section 30 of the Disaster Management Act 2003 (the Act).

## Purpose of sub-plan

The purpose of this sub-plan is to describe the process for the effective delivery of disaster management information and warnings to the Barcoo Shire community across the disaster management continuum, namely, the phases of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

## Public information and warnings (PIAW) objectives

- To raise the awareness of the community of local hazards and risks and how best to respond to any disaster or emergency event when it occurs
- Manage the collection, management and distribution of accurate, useful and timely information and warnings to the community during a disaster event, in which the Barcoo Shire LDMG and its plans and processes have been activated

## Maintenance of this sub-plan

This plan is to be maintained by the LDC or delegate. It should be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and relevant.

## Describing the terms

### General definition

(Disaster or emergency) public information and warning is the ability to develop, coordinate, and disseminate information, alerts, warnings, and notifications to the public and incident management responders<sup>1</sup>.

### Public information

Public information is general information provided to the community to assist them in understanding a particular situation and what they should generally do to prepare for, respond to, or recover from a disaster event. It is ideally developed and delivered as a community awareness program as well as ongoing information during and following any event.

### Warnings

Warnings advise the community of a specific threat and usually advise on specific actions the community should take. Warnings may be provided by external agencies or by the Barcoo Shire LDMG or LDCC.

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<sup>1</sup> FEMA citation, unknown origin



## Functional responsibilities

### Local government

- Local governments are responsible for the management and operation of local warning systems and communication channels.
- In accordance with their local disaster management arrangements, Council has assigned this function to the LDMG.
- Community awareness programs as well as public information and warning activities should continue before, during and after an event in line with existing local arrangements. These strategies should be monitored for continuous improvement post the disaster event<sup>2</sup>.

### Local Disaster Management Group

Section 30 of the Act (Functions) provides for an LDMG to manage all disaster operations in its area on behalf of its local government, and includes:

*“to ensure the community is aware of ways of mitigating the adverse effects of an event, and preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster”*

This sub-plan supports that functional responsibility.

### Support agencies

All agencies involved in disaster management in the Barcoo Shire have a responsibility for ensuring their part of this Sub-Plan is implemented.

The following table details **official warning agencies** and their primary responsibility:

Agency/organisation	Responsibility
Barcoo Shire Council (BSC)	For local information on road closures, traffic routes, evacuations, evacuation centres, recovery centres, debris clean-up and all matters in relation to the activation of the LDMG.
Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)	Provides severe weather, flood (flood alert, flood watch and flood advice), land gales and severe bushfire weather advices to media outlets.
Queensland Police Service (QPS)	For information about a locally managed incidents, including directed evacuations.
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) – Fire and Rescue	Coordinates media and public information regarding fire, chemical or gas emergency situations.
Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR)	For information on closure of State highways
Ergon Energy	Provides information regarding power outages and power supply.
Queensland Health (QH)	For information on heatwave and pandemic

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<sup>2</sup> Information primarily sourced from Queensland Disaster Management Guideline, Part 5.6, Communications and systems for public information and warnings

Agency/organisation	Responsibility
RACQ	Supports State government agencies with ongoing traffic conditions and road closures
Telstra	For information on telecommunications
Biosecurity Queensland	For information about emergency animal/plant disease and its implications and the progress of control or eradication procedures.

## Checklist

Refer to *Appendix 2 – Responsibilities checklist*. This list is subject to restriction.

## Planning assumptions

- Public information includes community awareness programs (pre-season) as well as disaster/emergency information relative to an event
  - Public awareness and education programs will include material about natural and non-natural disasters and emergency events.
  - Public information is information that is given to the public in relation to a current disaster or emergency event and will include information about the event and recommended actions for the community to take
- Warnings about threats may emanate from different sources, depending upon the event (e.g. Bureau of Meteorology – severe weather hazard, flooding)
- Shore messaging Service (SMS), broadcast radio and television will be the primary outlet for public information and warnings in most events
- Council website and social media platforms are secondary outlets of information and warnings

## Important information

During operational periods where the impact of a hazard is imminent and there is a probability that the **Emergency Alert** (EA) system will be used, the user of this sub-plan should be fully aware of the contents and application of the Queensland Emergency Alert Manual.

# PART 2 – PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNINGS FRAMEWORK

## Introduction

This framework has been developed in accordance with the current Communications and Systems for Public Information and Warnings guideline and Queensland Emergency Alert Manual and should be read in conjunction with those documents.

## Public information and warnings cycle

This sub-plan provides a framework for the development, application and ongoing management of information across the disaster management continuum.

The framework is a **cylic** process and includes ongoing public awareness programs as well as information, alerts and warnings through the operational stages associated with an event.

As the operational stages of a disaster/emergency event transition, the type and characteristics of the information (including warnings, alerts and advisories) will also change. The following diagram and table describes the steps associated with any event requiring transmission of information and warnings to the community.

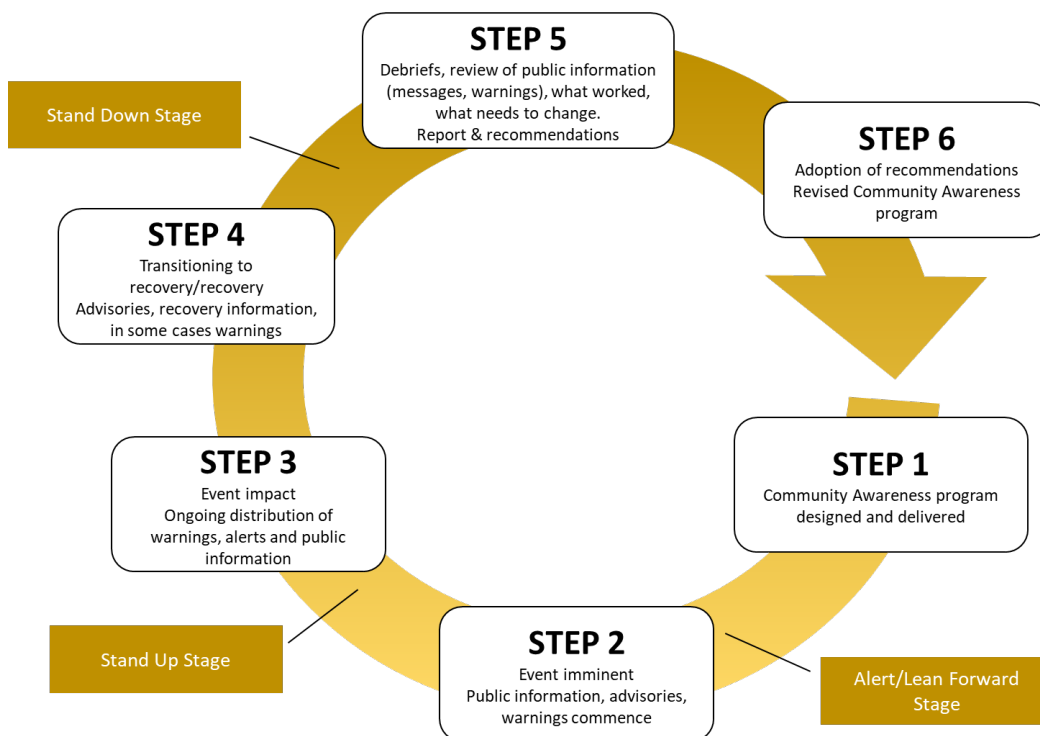


Diagram – Public Information and warnings schematic

## Public information and warnings steps

The following tables describes each of the aforementioned six (6) steps in this process:

	Operational stage	Description
<b>Step 1</b>	Non-operational period Community preparedness Pre-seasonal awareness programs	Develop and deliver an ongoing community awareness program based on local hazards, risks and actions the community should take during an event. This step should be based on previous experiences including lessons identified from previous events and a risk assessment of the local hazard-scape.
<b>Step 2</b>	Alert and/or lean Forward Event imminent	When an event is imminent, public information, advice and in some instances, alerts/warnings are broadcast to the community to ensure they are aware of the hazard, risks and actions they should take. This stage should re-enforce education/awareness programs previously delivered to community.
<b>Step 3</b>	Stand Up Event occurring	When the event occurs, public information messages, alerts and warnings are continued throughout the duration of the event detailing information about the event, what is likely to occur and what actions are required to be taken to ensure public safety.
<b>Step 4</b>	Transitioning to recovery phase of operations Still in Stand up stage	As the hazard dissipates and recovery operations commence, the information will change from that of an urgent nature to focus on recovery messages and information on services that are available to the community through this period.
<b>Step 5</b>	Review of operations	Following the response and recovery phases of the event, authorities will conduct operational reviews of how all aspects of operations were conducted. This may occur periodically whilst long-term recovery functions are still being conducted to ensure learnings are not lost. However, at some stage towards the completion of recovery operations, a final review of events (including public information and warnings) must be conducted to ensure all lessons are captured for future planning.
<b>Step 6</b>	Community awareness program revised	Following these reviews, public awareness programs may be modified to include any specific lessons identified from the event.

## PART 3 – LOCAL OPERATIONS

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### Actioning of warnings

Most warnings received from external agencies will need to be passed to the community in a TIMELY manner. Warnings should be repeated EXACTLY as provided by the warning agency. However, the Barcoo Shire Council or the LDMG may provide additional information and advice on actions to be taken by the community as part of their warning to the community. This should be identified as ADDITIONAL information provided by the Council or the LDMG.

### Message sources

- Official warning agencies (*Refer Part 1 – Official warning agencies*)
- Commercial radio/local media
- Telephone (landline/mobile) – initiated (Emergency Alert)
- Television
- Internet/Disaster dashboard (Council’s web site)
- Social media platforms (Facebook/Twitter)
- Face to face
- Community organisation networks
- Roadside signage

### Local delivery methods

Mode of distribution	Delivery methods
Local radio (ABC, Commercial)	Arrange interviews for key messages from Mayor/Chair of LDMG
Newspaper/Council newsletters	Key messages from Mayor/Chair of LDMG, primarily during Community Awareness Program delivery period
Emergency Alert	Key warnings/advisory messages sent via: - SMS to mobile phones Automatic scripted voice recordings to landlines
Council telephone system	On hold messages – pre-recorded messages regarding seasonal hazards
Council website	Disaster ‘Dashboard’ providing key preparedness messages/information as well as current status of events/weather/road conditions
Council’s social media platforms - Facebook - Twitter	Maintain increased monitoring and posting of event status Key message delivery platform
Face to face	Door-knocking/PA systems
Community organisations	E.g. Neighbourhood watch network, CWA
Television networks	Key messages from Mayor/Chair of LDMG
Roadside signage	Signage for specific local hazards (e.g. flooded creek crossings)

## Local media contacts

Source	Contact details
ABC Longreach	Tel: (07) 4658 4011
Radio 4LG and West FM	Tel: (07) 4658 3333
Barcoo Shire Council	Tel: (07) 4658 6900
Council Website	shire@barcoo.qld.gov.au
Longreach Leader (Newspaper publication)	Tel: (07) 4658 3855

## Authority to release information or warnings

- Responsibility for speaking about a disaster event will rest with the Chairperson of the LDMG or, in the absence of the Chairperson, the LDC.
- For any other event that is not a disaster, the officer-in-charge of the lead agency coordinating the response to the event will be the spokesperson.

## Media Liaison Officer

The Chairperson, LDMG in consultation with the LDC may appoint a Media Liaison Officer (MLO) when a disaster event is imminent or has impacted the Shire. The role of this officer will be:

- To liaise with all media outlets to ensure that accurate and timely warnings and other information is disseminated to the public and other entities.
- Assist in the update of Council information channels including website and social media
- Ensure all information outlets are kept up to date with current situation

## Using council website and social media platforms

The council website and social media platforms (i.e. Facebook, twitter) will provide public information about the imminent hazard or disaster situation. The Media Liaison Officer, in conjunction with Council's website coordinator, is responsible for editing, where necessary, and lodging the contents of any routine updates or situation reports on these digital platforms.

The Media Liaison Officer is also responsible for the drafting of any messages to be posted, advising the community of imminent threats, changes to threat states, recommended actions and precautions. These messages (if time permits) are to be reviewed by the Mayor, or the LDMG Chair, or the Local Disaster Coordinator, prior to publishing on the website to ensure consistency.

## Hazard-specific messaging

The Media Liaison Officer, with the support of LDMG members, will develop prepared statements to assist in dealing with specific hazards such as:

- Severe weather events
- Flood
- Major Transport Incident (road and air)
- Fire (urban/commercial/industrial and rural)
- Hazardous Material Incident
- Emergency Plant/Animal Disease

Any of these events may result in the need for evacuation and recovery procedures. Specific evacuation and recovery prepared statements should be considered.

## Key information content

- Nature of the hazard/event and any continuing hazards (e.g. flooding)
- Advice on precautions to take and what immediate actions may be required
- Impact – both area affected and number of people potentially impacted
- Health and public safety information (e.g. boiling of water for consumption, “If its flooded, forget it” etc.)
- Environmental impact
- Economic impact
- Damage to infrastructure (e.g. roads, bridges, sanitation etc.)
- Assistance - How and where to get personal assistance and how and where to get information regarding assistance for livestock and companion animals.
- Agencies involved in response including scope of agency involvement and activity
- How information will be provided to the community and the frequency/availability
- How and where to get information regarding assistance for livestock and companion (pet) animals
- Telephone numbers for donations and methods of donating money
- Information relating to evacuation requirements (e.g. self-evacuate to family or friends)

Public Information should always come from an official source to ensure credibility and should use non-technical language.

When releasing public information or warnings ensure the time of the next warning / update is included.

## Recording all information and warnings released

Warnings and public information provided are part of the event record and are subject to audit. All warnings and public information messages should be stored along with LDCC records and archives.

## Controlling rumours

Disaster events are often characterised by confusion, conflicting information and ill-informed opinion. Rumours can have a significant detrimental effect on operational outcomes, the community as well as public safety. The LDMG and the LDCC must take quick action to dispel incorrect rumours through the issue of official public information.

## Fact sheets

For further information refer to *Appendix 3– Fact Sheets*

## Disaster dashboard

(TO BE DEVELOPED – Contacted Carly Willats 10/10/2019)

## State-initiated warning systems<sup>3</sup>

### Emergency Alert

The Queensland Government’s “Emergency Alert Service” is the national telephone-based emergency warning system, which provides the capability to send warning messages to fixed line telephones (i.e. landlines) based on the location of the handset and as an SMS to mobile phones based on the location of the mobile phone. The “Emergency Alert” (EA) system will be utilised by the LDMG as required and as per the *Queensland Emergency Alert Guidelines*.

Messages will:

- Warn targeted areas of the local community of imminent and severe threats from disaster events
- Direct those warned to other sources of information and/or direct them to move away from an imminent hazard or threat

For more information, refer to *Appendix 4– Sample message templates*

Council will utilise Geographic Information System (GIS) data to generate a map of the region which includes a polygon of the defined incident area. Using this map, the EA system will:

- Identify the phone services located within that polygon area
- Send a voice message to all identified landline telephone services
- Send a text message of up to 160 characters to all identified mobile phone services
- Report on the delivery of these messages

The local areas to receive the messages and contents of the message will be prepared by the LDMG, approved by the Chairperson and processed as per the Queensland Emergency Alert Guidelines. Mapped areas should be reviewed annually.

For more detailed information, refer to:

*Appendix 5– Using Emergency Alert*

*Appendix 6 - Pre-prepared polygons for Jundah, Windorah and Stonehenge*

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<sup>3</sup> Information primarily sourced from Queensland Disaster Management Guideline, Part 5.6, Communications and systems for public information and warnings



## Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)

As a general rule, the following four factors should be present before broadcasting SEWS:

- Potential for loss of life and/or a major threat to a significant number of properties or the environment – usually the threat/impact would be the lead item in local news bulletins
- A significant number of people need to be warned
- A significant impact is expected or is occurring at the time
- One or more phenomena are classified as "destructive".

The SEWS sound precedes each emergency warning message sent from the EA system. In Queensland, the authority to initiate SEWS is restricted to:

- BoM Regional Director for weather events
- Commissioner, QFES for disaster events and HAZMAT related incidents
- Commissioner, QPS.

When a SEWS warning is issued, the LDC (or nominated delegate) of each local government affected by the warning is to be notified by the initiating authority at the earliest opportunity. All initiating authorities should notify the QFES State Duty Supervisor or State Duty Officer at the SDCC Watch Desk, who will then contact the relevant local governments.

## PART 4 - REVIEW AND EVALUATION

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### Introduction

The review of operational activities undertaken during a disaster is a key component of developing greater capacity and the improvement of council's disaster management arrangements.

As with the response phase, a formal evaluation of *public information and warning* activities should be undertaken after the operation has terminated.

After-action reviews (also known as Operational Debriefs) are conducted to:

- Assess operational performance undertaken including actions, decisions or processes
- Document those processes that worked well and identify a course of action to ensure that they are captured and updated in relevant plans for use during the next event
- Assess capability and consider where additional planning, training and/or exercises may enhance capability

### Types of debriefs

#### 'Hot' debrief

A discussion undertaken immediately after operations have ceased, giving participants the opportunity to share learning points while the experience is still very fresh in their minds. Multiple hot-debriefs during protracted operations may be appropriate to identify significant issues and provide prompt solutions for immediate implementation.

#### 'Periodic' debrief

Recovery can be a long process and debriefs may be undertaken at any time during the recovery process for any particular activity. Undertaking periodic briefings/debriefs will assist in capturing recommendations for immediate improvement or issues to be considered at a later time after operations have ceased.

The LRC and LRG will determine the nature and extent of periodic debriefs during the recovery process as part of ongoing continuous improvement. (E.g. a debrief of those involved in facilitating a public meeting should be conducted following the activity to determine how to improve for the future. Periodic debriefs of individual recovery programs and activities are encouraged and should be promoted by recovery entities.

#### 'Post-event' debrief

At the conclusion of recovery operations (usually within a couple of weeks) a formal review and evaluation process should be undertaken of the entire recovery effort. Usually debriefs are conducted from the bottom up meaning that subordinate entities debrief first and their findings are included in debrief of the next higher group.

Follow the completion of all debriefs, an 'After-Act Report' (AAR) report is compiled to provide a record of the lessons identified following an event and importantly recommendations for improving the recovery process for future events.

### After-activation Report (AAR)

An After Action Report (AAR) is a retrospective analysis on critical actions previously undertaken. Its purpose is to evaluate performance, identify and document effectiveness and efficiencies, analyses critical procedure & policies and recommend improvements.

*For further information on AAR's refer to Council's LDMP (Post-disaster review).*

## LIST OF APPENDICES

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- 1) RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST
- 2) FACT SHEETS
- 3) SAMPLE MESSAGE TEMPLATES
- 4) USING EMERGENCY ALERT
- 5) PRE-PREPARED POLYGONS – JUNDAH, WINDORAH, STONEHENGE

## Appendix 1 – Responsibilities checklist

<b>Public Information &amp; Warnings Sub-Plan</b> <b>RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST</b> (THIS IS A RESTRICTED DOCUMENT: FOR USE BY LDCC DURING ACTIVATION)		
<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible organisation/agency</b>	<b>Responsible officer</b>
Develop an <b>Information Distribution Plan</b> for the event	LDMG LDCC	MEDIA LIAISON OFFICER (MLO)
The key public spokesperson is to be the Mayor of Barcoo Shire Council	LDMG	MAYOR/CHAIRPERSON
Use (in conjunction with relevant member agencies of the LDMG) pre-formatted public information fact sheets regarding various impacts of the event, and recommended community action	LDMG COUNCIL	MLO LOCAL DISASTER COORDINATOR (LDC)
Use pre-printed media information, briefing sheets and web pages	COUNCIL	MLO
Manage relationships with media organisations during the event	COUNCIL LDMG	MLO
Determine media release and briefing time frames during event	LDMG	LDC MLO
Establish and maintain liaison with local radio and other media outlets for distribution of community alerts and warnings	LDMG COUNCIL	MLO
Develop draft media releases and briefings.	LDMG	MLO
Monitor news coverage for accuracy, currency, completeness and report discrepancies to the LDCC.	LDCC	MLO and LDCC staff
Maintain a record of all media releases, contacts and activities for the Event Log.	LDCC	LDCC Administration Officer

## Appendix 3 – Fact sheets

[Stay safe and healthy after storms, floods and cyclones](#)

[Staying healthy in the heat](#)

[Mosquito-borne diseases after a storm, flood or cyclone](#)

[Ensuring safe drinking water](#)

[Caring for children in heat](#)

[Bushfires – staying safe and healthy in smoky conditions](#)

[Looking after your health during a dust storm](#)

## Appendix 4 – Message templates

### Pre-prepared sample messages

Developing complex messages during times of crisis should be avoided and wherever possible pre-prepared, formatted messages should be developed for specific high-risk areas or situations. The Table below provides specific templates that can be used with some modification for major hazards in the Barcoo Shire.

Hazard	Advice mode	Template
Severe storm	Text message	Severe Thunderstorm Warning from SES-Areas //DIRECTION and PLACE// -destructive hail/wind/rain next 2hrs-Warn others-Seek shelter/prepare NOW-Listen to ABC local radio.
	Voice message	This is a Severe Thunderstorm Warning from the State Emergency Services. The area //DIRECTION and PLACE// are likely/about to be affected by destructive hail/wind/rain in the next //HOURS/MINUTES//. You should warn neighbours, secure belongings and seek safe shelter now. For more information listen to ABC local radio or visit <a href="http://www.qldalert.com">www.qldalert.com</a> . For storm damage assistance contact the State Emergency Service on 132 500
Flood	Text message	Flood Warning from SES for //NAME// River affecting //PLACE – PLACE// -Major Flood- at/between //TIMETIME// -Warn others-Leave area NOW or seek higher ground-Listen to ABC radio
	Voice message	This is a Flood Warning from Barcoo Shire Council. The //NAME// River affecting //PLACE- PLACE// is expected to peak causing major flooding tonight at //TIME//. Properties in this area are likely to experience //EXTERNAL/INTERNAL// flooding. You should warn neighbours, secure your belongings and move to higher ground now. For more information listen to ABC local radio or visit <a href="http://www.qldalert.com">www.qldalert.com</a> . For flood assistance contact the State Emergency Service on 132 500

## Generic (Sample) templates for a range of hazards

The table below provides generic templates for a range of warning messages. These can be used as a guide to assist in the development of a specific Emergency Alert within the Barcoo Shire.

Hazard	Advice	Template	Example short warning	Example long warning
Severe storm	Text	Severe Thunderstorm Warning from SES-areas //DIRECTION and PLACE// - destructive hail/wind/rain next 2hrs- Warn others-Seek shelter/prepare NOW-Listen to ABC local radio (167 characters)	Severe Thunderstorm Warning from SES-area east of XX-V destructive hail/wind/rain-Warn others-seek shelter/prepare NOW-listen to ABC local radio (160 characters)	Severe Thunderstorm Warning from SES-area east of XX V destructive hail/wind/rain-Warn others-seek shelter/prepare NOW-listen to ABC local radio (160 characters)
	Voice	This is a Severe Thunderstorm Warning from the State Emergency Service. The area //DIRECTION and PLACE// are likely/about to be affected by destructive hail/wind/rain in the next //HOURS/MINUTES//. You should warn neighbours, secure belongings and seek safe shelter now. For more information listen to ABC local radio or visit <a href="http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au">www.disaster.qld.gov.au</a> . For storm damage assistance contact the State Emergency Service on 132 500 (428 characters)	Emergency Emergency. This is a Severe Thunderstorm Warning from the State Emergency Services. The areas east of XX are about to be affected by destructive hail/wind/rain. You should warn neighbours, secure belongings and seek safe shelter now. For more information listen to ABC local radio. For storm damage assistance contact the State Emergency Service on 132 500 (395 characters)	This is a Flood Warning from the State Emergency Service. The Thomson River affecting XX is expected to peak tonight at 11pm. Properties in this area are likely to experience high water levels and inundation by flood water. You should warn neighbours, secure your belongings and move to higher ground now. For more information listen to ABC local radio. For flood assistance contact the State Emergency Service on 132 500 (474 characters)



Flash flood	Text	Flash Flood Warning from SES for //PLACE//- immediate threat to life/property-Warn others. Leave area/prepare NOW or seek higher ground-Listen to ABC radio (154 characters)	Flash Flood Warning from SES for XX. Immediate threat to life/property-Leave area NOW or seek higher ground-Warn others-Listen to ABC radio (157 characters)	
	Voice	This is a Flash Flood Warning from the State Emergency Services. Areas in the //PLACE// are likely to experience rapidly rising water levels and property inundation over the next 2 hours posing an immediate danger to residents. You should warn neighbours, secure your belongings and move to higher ground now. For more information listen to ABC local radio. For flood assistance contact the State Emergency Services on 132 500 (460 characters)	Emergency Emergency. This is a Flash Flood Warning from the State Emergency Services. Areas in the XX area are likely to experience rapidly rising water levels and property inundation over the next 2 hours posing an immediate danger to residents. You should warn neighbours, secure your belongings and move to higher ground now. For more information listen to ABC local radio. For flood assistance contact the State Emergency Services on 132 500 (472 characters)	

## Appendix 5 – Using Emergency Alert

This appendix details procedures for the use of Emergency Alert (EA) to provide warnings to the Barcoo Shire community during disaster operations.

This Appendix extracts and summarises key information from the Queensland Emergency Alert Manual which remains the principle reference for the use of Emergency Alert. A copy of these Guidelines is to remain with this sub plan at all times.

### Responsibility for Emergency Alert in Queensland

Emergency Alert in Queensland is managed by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES). Emergency Alerts are managed through the State Disaster Coordination Centre Watch Desk. Emergency Alerts can be requested by the LDMG/LDC.

### When is Emergency Alert to be used?

The LDC should consider the following factors when considering whether an Emergency Alert (EA) is used:

- Certainty
  - If the event is expected within 12 hours, what factors could increase or decrease the threat?
  - Is the expected impact inevitable?
- Severity
  - Is there a potential for loss of life and/or a major threat to a significant number of properties or the environment>?
- Timeframe
  - Is the event going to occur in a timeframe that makes the use of other warning methods ineffective? (I.e. a significant number of people need to be warned in a short period or overnight.
  - Is the event going to occur in a timeframe too short to allow EA to be used effectively? (E.g. A micro-burst storm cell can be a very destructive meteorological phenomena but usually only has a life-span of 5-15 minutes, yet it can take up to 30 minutes to prepare and release a campaign. Conversely, it may not be desirable to warn people 24 hours ahead of a cyclone, due to the often unpredictable nature of its path.
- Frequency
  - Is the event likely to happen so frequently as to raise unrealistic expectations in the community's mind about receiving alerts?
- Similarity

- Is the event similar to those that would trigger the use of the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)? [Refer Guideline for SEWS].
- Action
  - Does the community need to act in some way, for example listen to local media for detailed information?

## Emergency alert polygons

Barcoo Shire has developed a polygon (shape on a map) for each of the towns in the region that may be used as a basis for Emergency Alert. The polygons may be changed by the LDMDG based on the needs at the time of the event however; the basic polygons provide a basis for Emergency Alert for each town.

*These polygons are at Appendix 6.*

These maps are registered in the Emergency Alert System within the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) with copies (in KML format) held by Council.

## Decision and Authorisation Process

Use of Emergency Alert involves three key stakeholders, namely:

1. Barcoo Shire Local Disaster Coordinator – makes the request and confirms the campaign before release.
2. The SDCC operator of the Emergency Alert System (the user) – enters the EA requirement into the EA system, confirms it with the LDC and activates it once authorised.
3. The EA Authorising Officer.

## Making the EA Request

As part of the requesting process the LDC should:

- Complete the EA Request Form
- Confirm the campaign area by confirming the relevant EA Polygon.
- Prepare the EA Message (pre-prepared messages may be used or amended).
- Submit the EA Request to the State Disaster Coordination Centre Watch Desk by email. The SDCC Watch Desk may be contacted by phone to assist in submission of the EA request.
- Confirm the EA audio and SMS messages entered into the EA System by the SDCC Watch Desk are accurate and suitable to the operational situation.
- Prepare for a surge of calls to the Council offices as well as to emergency services.
- Ensure that all arrangements are in place to provide for services mentioned in the EA Message e.g. Evacuation Centres, Reception Centres, etc.

## **Authorisation of an Emergency Alert Campaign**

An Emergency Alert campaign cannot be activated until it is authorised by an Authorising Officer. This is done once the EA has been entered into the SDCC Emergency Alert System and the Local Disaster Coordinator has confirmed the prescribed area and messages. The Authorising Officer has overall responsibility for all aspects of the EA campaign.

## **Authorising officer responsibilities**

Ensure that all supporting requirements for the EA campaign are in place

- Approve the campaign as being compliant with the principles of Emergency Alert system
- Authorise the release of the campaign
- Records all details and timings of the authorisation request and approval.

## Authorising Officers for events covered by the Disaster Management Act, 2003 are:

- Commissioner, QFES
- Deputy Commissioner, QFES
- Assistant Commissioner, QFES
- Chief Superintendent, QFES
- Regional Manager, Rural Operations, QFES
- Director, Regional Operations, QFES
- Director, Disaster Management Branch, QFES
- Executive Manager, State Operations Coordination Branch and Central Region, QFES
- Regional Manager, Emergency Service Volunteers, QFES

The QFES representative on the LDMG can assist in submission of the EA request and obtaining approval from an authorising officer.

## How to Prepare Polygons

Preparation of polygons to support an Emergency Alert should be done quickly to ensure timely warnings are provided. The polygons can be created using Google Maps and Microsoft Office PowerPoint. These polygons may be modified as required for a specific Emergency Alert or new maps/polygons may be developed. New maps/polygons can be quickly created in four steps:

**Step 1** – Copy the base map from Google Maps by taking a screenshot and pasting it into a PowerPoint slide (final cropping and adjustments can be undertaken in PowerPoint).

**Step 2** – insert the polygon using PowerPoint’s shapes. Adjust borders, colours and fill to suit.

**Step 3** – Add title, North Reference Point and Geographic Reference Point to assist the Emergency Alert operator to quickly identify the location and polygon boundaries in the EA mapping system.

**Step 4** – Save the slide as a graphic (jpg) and include in the Emergency Alert Request.

Appendix 6 – Barcoo Shire town polygons

Jundah



Windorah



Stonehenge

