



**TOWNSVILLE
LOCAL DISASTER
MANAGEMENT GROUP**



Shelters & Evacuation Centres Sub Plan

Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) Sub Plan

V23 July 2025



This plan is to be read in conjunction with the Townsville Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP)

Executive Summary

This Shelters and Evacuation Centres Sub Plan has been developed by the Townsville Local Disaster Management Group (TLDMG) to ensure sheltering arrangements are in place to support frontline disaster response and recovery operations in the Townsville City Council (TCC) local government area.

Section 1 provides an overview of the plan including the aim and objectives, ownership, functional responsibility and the support agencies required to implement the plan. It also provides links to other key documents that inform this plan.

Section 2 relates to how the plan is activated, who needs to be notified and includes a visual aid flowchart as a quick reference guide. This section also identifies how disaster funding is activated.

Section 3 provides an overview on the Shelters & Evacuation Centres Working Group members and responsibilities.

Section 4 provides a general overview of the concept of operations for shelters and evacuation centres.

Section 5 provides detail on the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders involved in sheltering and evacuation centre operations.

Section 6 provides detailed information on the activation and operation of the Heatley Public Cyclone Shelter.

Section 7 provides detailed information on the activation and operation of Places of Refuge.

Section 8 provides detailed information on the activation and operation of Evacuation Centres.

Section 9 provides information on unauthorised or spontaneous shelters and evacuation centres established by the community.

Section 10 provides information on domesticated animals sheltering at Places of Refuge and Evacuation Centres.

Section 11 provides information on the equipment and resources available to support sheltering and evacuation centre operations.

Section 12 provides information on the communications requirements at Shelters and Evacuation Centres.

Appendices A & B provide supporting information such as decision trees, operational timeline considerations and an operational checklist for the Shelter and Evacuation Centre Coordinator (SECC).

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Endorsement

This plan is recommended for distribution by the Townsville Local Disaster Management Group.



Melissa McKeown
Chair
Shelter and Evacuation Centres Working Group
Date: 15 July 2025



Zac Dawes
Local Disaster Coordinator
Townsville Local Disaster Management Group
Date: 15 July 2025



Cr Andrew Robinson
Chair
Townsville Local Disaster Management Group
Date: 15 July 2025

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	Zac Dawes		

Consultation

A consultative process is used when developing the LDMP and associated Sub Plans. Prior to adoption, the Sub Plan is released for consultation with all core members and advisors of the LDMG and the working group members. The key stakeholders to be consulted in the development of Sub Plans varies for each plan and is determined by TCC. Updates to plans are based on stakeholder feedback and records are maintained by TCC on the stakeholders that were consulted and those that provided feedback.

1. Overview of Plan

1.1 Aim & Objectives of Plan

The aim of the Shelters and Evacuation Centres Sub Plan is to outline the arrangements for providing sheltering options to the community in the event of a threat of a disaster and / or following a disaster event within the Townsville Local Disaster Management Group (TLDMG) area of responsibility. The objectives are to:

- detail the arrangements for the activation, set-up, management, operations and closure of shelters and evacuation centres
- enable Townsville City Council (TCC) staff to effectively manage the shelter and evacuation centre process in association with key support agencies; and,
- provide shelters and evacuation centres for vulnerable groups in a disaster situation.

The implementation of this plan will allow the TLDMG to make informed, timely decisions regarding the activation of shelters or evacuation centres where required.

1.2 Context & Assumptions

Whilst the overall management of Public Cyclone Shelters, Places of Refuge and Evacuation Centre facilities are similar, the operation and provisions within the facilities are very different. The understanding of these differences is fundamental to the successful implementation of their management and operation.

Evacuees will be encouraged to be self-sufficient and seek shelter with family or friends or use commercial accommodation providers. In some circumstances, shelters and / or evacuation centres may be established to meet the basic needs of evacuees.

Emergency sheltering facilities will be activated as deemed necessary by the TLDMG to support evacuation operations. These facilities may be required for a few hours to several days. Only shelter and refreshments will be provided initially but, in an extended event, more substantial catering and support may be necessary.

If accommodation is required for a period beyond a few days, the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) will consult with the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning & Public Works (DHLGPPW) as responsible agency for emergency accommodation.

1.3 Ownership

This sub-plan is owned by the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) on behalf of the TLDMG. All significant amendments must be approved by the TLDMG.

The LDC will ensure the:

- master document is retained with relevant supporting documents
- level of circulation of the sub-plan is determined by the TLDMG, and details are recorded of copyholders
- sub-plan is updated and reviewed on at least an annual basis, or after activation, whichever is the sooner
- sub-plan is tested and exercised as determined by the TLDMG.

1.4 Functional Responsibility & Support Agencies

The LDC is to ensure all agencies and members of the TLDMG are aware of the procedures referenced in this Sub Plan. All member organisations of the TLDMG and the following organisations are support agencies to this sub-plan:

- Emergency Services
- Australian Red Cross
- St Vincent de Paul

Each member and support agency is responsible for:

- Retention of documents in accordance with their governance policies
- Ensuring staff and volunteers have undertaken Cyclone Shelter and Evacuation Centre Management training relevant to their role in accordance with the Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework (QDMTF)
- Participating in exercises to test the plan and agency capabilities
- Ensuring accurate recordkeeping of expenditure for submission of their own claims under SDRA/DRFA to relevant funding bodies post-event.

1.5 Links with Other Documents

This sub-plan is interdependent on, and should be read in conjunction with, the Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP). It links directly to all other sub-plans including the TLDMG Emergency Contact Lists. This sub plan also links to the:

- [TLDMG Evacuation Sub Plan](#)
- [TLDMG Logistics Sub Plan](#)
- Operating Procedure Heatley Public Cyclone Shelter (17362016)
- Heatley Public Cyclone Shelter - Operations Checklist, July 2024.
- Operating Procedure North Shore Community Centre Place of Refuge (17362031)
- Operating Procedure Places of Refuge (17362048)
- Operating Procedure Evacuation Centres (17362064)
- Operating Procedure Evacuation Centres Magnetic Island (17362138)
- Animal Care and Adoption Centre Emergency Operating Procedure (18623014)
- [Queensland Cyclone Shelter Reference Guide 2018](#)
- [Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters Maintenance Guidelines 2018](#)
- [Australian Red Cross Queensland Evacuation Centre Management Handbook 2017](#)
- [Queensland Evacuation Centre Field Guide](#)
- [Technical Guidance Document - Assessment of buildings as a Place of Refuge for Cyclones 2023](#)
- [Places of Refuge: Cyclones - Guidance on the site selection of buildings August 2023 -](#)

2. Activation & Notification Procedures

2.1 Activation of the Plan

The Shelters and Evacuation Centres Sub Plan will be activated by the LDC of the TLDMG, to facilitate effective and well-coordinated management of shelters and evacuation centres before, during and after the impact of a disaster event.

Activation follows the same model of escalation as outlined in the [Townsville LDMP - refer p.7.8.](#)

The Shelters and Evacuation Centres Coordinator (SECC) is responsible for the implementation of this plan. A role checklist is available at Appendix B.

The SECC may be requested to activate this plan for events outside of the activation of the TLDMG. Examples of when this might occur include:

- Under an Aerodrome Emergency Plan; and
- Evacuation of persons from communities outside of Townsville.

2.2 Decision to Activate Emergency Sheltering Facilities

The SECC is responsible for the activation of evacuation centres. This decision should be made by the full LDMG where time permits. Consideration is given to if:

- there has been a request from emergency services to open a shelter or evacuation centre
- the LDMG has recommended voluntary evacuation of an area at risk
- the DDC has declared a disaster situation to enforce directed evacuation of an area at risk
- there is a perceived need relative to an impending hazard impact, where the LDMG recognises that the public may choose to self-evacuate
- there has been mass evacuations from a neighbouring area
- the numbers of evacuees requiring accommodation is likely to exceed local commercial accommodation capacity.

Evacuation centres will take some time to set up from the initial call. It is important that an early warning of a request is given as soon as possible from the requesting agency to the LDMG so the relevant agencies and appropriate resources can be deployed in a timely manner.

Details of which locations are to be used will be released to the community once the centres have been established. This information will also be displayed on the Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard - refer [Public Information and Warnings Sub Plan](#).

2.3 Triggers for Activating Emergency Sheltering Facilities

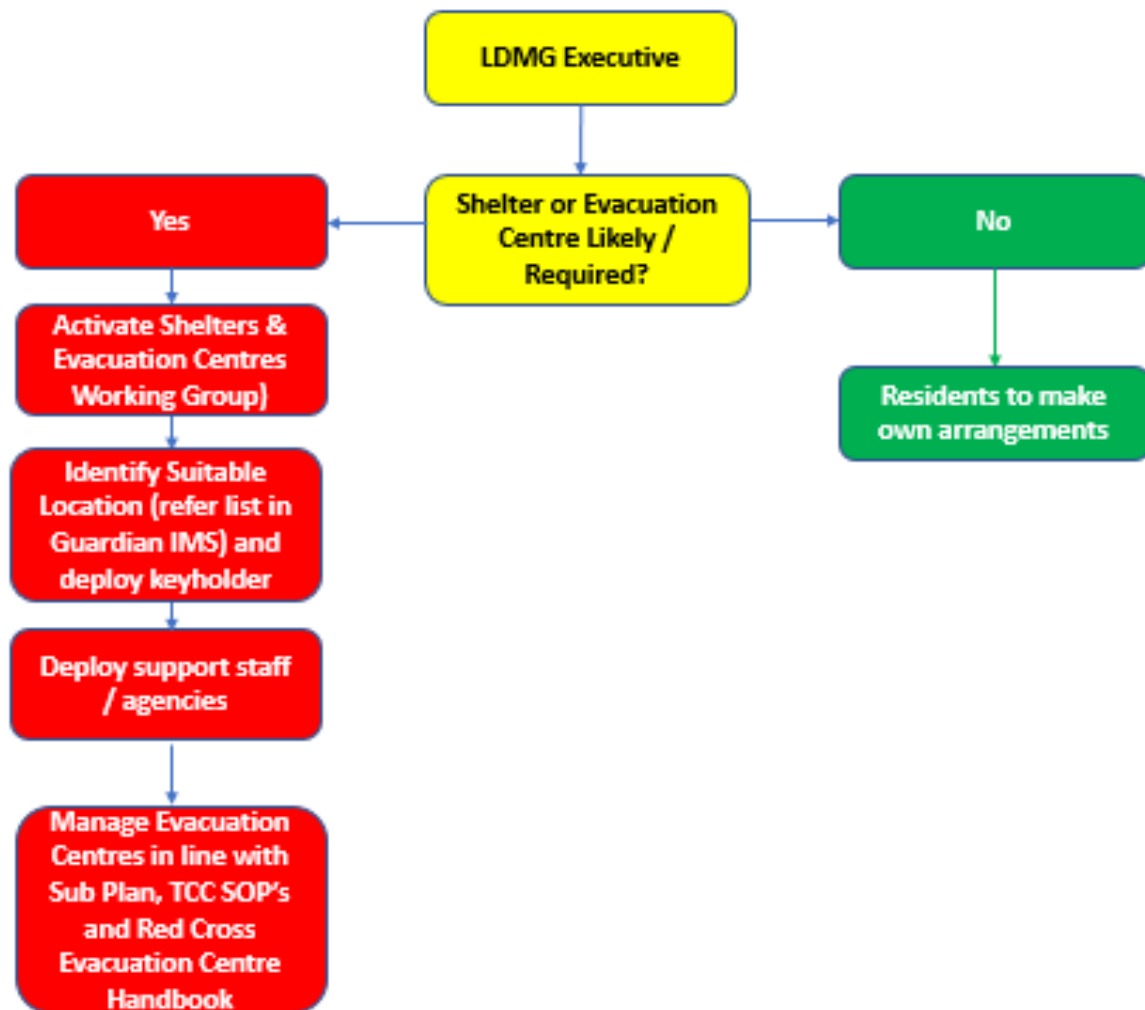
There are many factors that can influence the process described in the Lean Forward and Stand-Up levels of activation. These can include:

- how long it takes to have the shelter or evacuation centre handed over and prepared for operational use.
- the day and time will indicate the capacity of the evacuation routes and access to facilities.
- current and previous weather and its impact on evacuation routes.
- the predicted time of arrival of 80k/h winds (for severe tropical cyclones); and the availability of facilities to use as shelters or evacuation centres.

The following triggers points will guide the TLDMG in determining whether to activate this Sub Plan:

Facility	Trigger Points
Public Cyclone Shelter	• The TLDMG is at Lean Forward stage of activation; and/or • There is an imminent event (i.e. severe tropical cyclone) likely to cause significant damage from a storm surge; and/or • Voluntary or directed evacuation order has been issued or likely to be issued and/or. • Threat to life and/or damage to properties is anticipated requiring people to evacuate.
Places of Refuge	• The TLDMG is at Lean Forward stage of activation; and/or • There is an imminent event (i.e. severe tropical cyclone) likely to cause significant damage from a storm surge; and/or • Voluntary or directed evacuation order has been issued or likely to be issued. • Threat to life and/or damage to properties is anticipated requiring people to evacuate.
Evacuation Centres	• The TLDMG is at Stand-Up phase of activation; and/or • Significant damage has been sustained to residential housing, or an event occurs requiring people to seek alternative accommodation within the Townsville area. • Threat to life and/or damage to properties is anticipated requiring people to evacuate.

2.4 Notification Flowchart



2.5 Notification Process

When this sub-plan is activated, the Chairperson of the Shelters and Evacuation Centres Working Group is responsible for the implementation of this plan. A role checklist is available at Appendix B.

If a decision is made to not activate the sub-plan, then shelters and evacuation centres will not be established, and residents will continue to make their own sheltering arrangements.

3. Shelters & Evacuation Centres Working Group

3.1 Meetings

The Shelter and Evacuation Centre Coordinator (SECC) can also perform the role of the Chairperson of the Shelters & Evacuation Centres Working Group (SECWG). The SECWG will meet twice per year to perform planning, review and renew activities associated with the arrangements outlined within this sub plan. A formal Attendance Record will be kept, and minutes will be documented for each meeting.

Meetings will be called by the Chair. Members may request a special meeting be convened by the Chair depending on the circumstances. No business should be conducted at meetings without a quorum which comprises half the membership plus one.

The SECWG will meet at twice per year in:

- May - to update learnings from the past season and confirm exercise planning
- Nov/Dec - to confirm all plans and documents are ready for upcoming season

Refer to the SECWG Terms of Reference.

3.2 Membership

The SECWG consists of personnel from government and non-government agencies as determined by the Chairperson of the SECWG in consultation with the LDC - refer confidential contact list in Guardian IMS.

The Chairperson may appoint other agencies to the SECWG or invite other agencies to attend meetings if deemed necessary.

The role of the SECWG members is.

- To actively participate in the reviews and evaluations of the Shelters and Evacuation Centres Sub Plan and provide expert advice to help refine the roles and responsibilities and key actions required to ensure the effective implementation of the Sub Plan.
- To confirm each agencies individual emergency response plan meets the requirements of this Sub Plan.
- To communicate this sub plan within each agency and provide the appropriate training as required.
- To actively participate in the SECWG meetings.
- To actively participate in any exercises testing the performance of this sub plan and provide constructive evaluations and suggested improvements.
- To provide reports to the LDC - TLDMG via Chair SECWG.

4. Concept of Shelter & Evacuation Centre Operations

4.1 Shelters

There are two types of emergency sheltering arrangements to support disaster operations. This includes a Public Cyclone Shelter and Places of Refuge.

4.1.1 Public Cyclone Shelters

A Public Cyclone Shelter is activated when there is a threat from an impending tropical cyclone.

Public Cyclone Shelters are purpose-built facilities that provide shelter for people during a tropical cyclone, who have been evacuated from the storm tide evacuation zones or wind vulnerable accommodation, and who have not been able to leave the cyclone warning zone or shelter with friends or family in modern houses (built since 1982) outside the evacuation zone.

They are designed to be in operation for a short period of time (up to 36 hours or when the cyclone threat has passed).

4.1.2 Places of Refuge

Places of Refuge are activated when there is a threat from an impending tropical cyclone.

Although not purpose built, Places of Refuge are facilities capable of providing protection for people from an impending disaster (usually a tropical cyclone), who have been evacuated from storm tide evacuation zones or wind vulnerable accommodation, and who have not been able to leave the cyclone warning zone or shelter with friends or family in modern houses (built since 1982) outside the evacuation zone.

They are designed to be in operation for a short period of time (up to 36 hours or when the cyclone threat has passed).

4.2 Evacuation Centres

Evacuation Centres may be activated in the lead up to, during or after a disaster event and are capable of providing temporary accommodation to people that have been, or will be, adversely affected by the disaster and are unable to reside in their normal place of residence.

Evacuation centres may be in operation for a considerable period of time until people are returned or relocated and as such require additional resourcing and support.

Evacuation centres will not be used as a sheltering option in the lead up to a tropical cyclone. An evacuation centre will be established for those residents that cannot return to their normal place of residence post impact.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

5.1 TCC Staff

TCC staff across multiple departments are responsible for the coordination, control and implementation of this Sub Plan including annual reviews, amendments, exercises and chairing of the SECWG.

TCC Staff mostly consisting of Construction, Maintenance and Operations teams will assist in the set-up and pack-up of the designated PoR and Public Cyclone Shelter in accordance with the relevant operating procedure.

5.2 Shelters and Evacuation Centres Coordinator

The Shelters & Evacuation Centres Coordinator (SECC) will manage the response and implementation of this Sub Plan.

The SECC will need to determine the necessary staffing and resources required to respond to the disaster situation and coordinate the response with the support agencies including the Shelter and Evacuation Centre Management Team.

Refer to Appendix B for more details on the role of the SECC.

During the activation of the Sub Plan and the consideration for emergency sheltering or evacuation by the TLDMG, the SECC is to ensure the appropriate staffing of shelters and/or evacuation centres sourced from support agencies and council staff.

5.3 Shelter & Evacuation Centre Manager

The Shelter and/or Evacuation Centre Manager will be sourced from the following agencies:

Facility	Agency
Public cyclone shelter	TCC or through an RFA submitted by the SECC
Place of refuge	SES or through an RFA submitted by the SECC
Evacuation Centres	TCC or Red Cross

5.4 Shelter and Evacuation Centre Management Team

During the activation of the Sub Plan and the consideration for emergency sheltering or evacuation by the TLDMG, the SECC is to ensure the appropriate staffing requirements of the shelters and/or evacuation centres are sourced from support agencies and council staff.

The recommended Shelter and Evacuation Centre Management Team to effectively manage a shelter or evacuation centre ideally consists of some or all of the following, depending on the facility activated - refer sections 6, 7 and 8.

Support will be provided by QPS, QFD, SES and QAS where possible. Consideration should be given to aligning an officer's shelter/evacuation centre management role with their normal core business role.

Any person who chooses to make themselves available to work in the shelter or evacuation centre needs to be made aware that this role will require a commitment and willingness to leave their normal place of residence and their family and friends during a time of activation.

Table 1: Shelter and Evacuation Centre Management Team

ROLE	AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY	TASKS
Shelters and Evacuation Centres Coordinator	TCC	• Manage the Shelters & Evacuation Centres process • Implementation of this Sub Plan • Notify and seek assistance from support agencies • Appoint a Shelter or Evacuation Centre Manager at each facility • Representation at TLDMG meetings • Activate Operating Procedures • staff and manage shelters and/or evacuation centres according to operational procedures	• Liaise with building owners to acquire facility when required • Activate participating agencies and maintain communication links • Coordinate the opening and closing of shelters and evacuation centres • Provide support and organise equipment and supplies for each facility • Monitor shelters and evacuation centre to ensure they are adequately resourced, equipped and managed • Communicate and provide regular updates to the TLDMG • Provide regular SITREPs to the TLDMG and be represented at TLDMG meetings • Regularly communicate with shelter and evacuation centre managers (SES/Red Cross) and support agencies

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ROLE	AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY	TASKS
Shelters and Evacuation Centres Management	TCC / State Emergency Services (SES)	- To act as centre manager for the evacuation centres until Red Cross become available. - Run and manage shelters and/or evacuation centres according to operational procedures - Completion of all Operational Forms - Communicate and report to the SECC	- Provide minimum of 2 officers at each shelter or evacuation centre - Directly communicate with the SECC and provide regular SITREPS (as requested) - Liaise and coordinate with support agencies in the operation of shelters and evacuation centres - Supply of communication tools e.g. radios, mobile phone - Assist with registering and data collection on to Register, Find, Reunite Forms - Maintain an attendance register of support agency personnel - Provide and complete the required operational forms - Maintain shelter area and facilities in a clean and useable condition - Manage supplied stock and allocate supplies as necessary - Ensure appropriate signage/notices are displayed and information communicated to persons - Report any incidences to SECC

ROLE	AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY	TASKS
Evacuation Centre Management	Australian Red Cross	- Support the management and operations of evacuation centres upon request from TCC. - Provide psychosocial supports and psychological first aid in evacuation centres. - Operate the Register.Find.Reunite. Service under the auspices of the QPS	- Provide minimum of 2 officers at each centre where resourcing permits - Directly communicate with the SECC and provide regular SITREPS (as requested) - Assist in the operation, establishment & co-ordination of each centre - Establishment of centre supplies and centre layout - Liaise and coordinate with support agencies in the operation of each evacuation centre - Provision of communication tools e.g. mobile phone - Manage the Register, Find, Reunite forms process (data collection and entry into system) - Maintain an attendance register of support agency personnel - Provide and complete required operational forms - Maintain centre area and facilities in a clean and useable condition - Maintain a secure stock area - Ensure appropriate signage/notices are displayed and information communicated to persons - Report any incidences to the SECC
Support	Queensland Police Service (QPS)	- Support SES in the operation of each place of refuge - Support Shelter Manager in the operation of the public cyclone shelter - Form part of the Shelter Management Team - Provide for the safe welfare of people at each shelter - Manage the Register, Find, Reunite process for all shelter and evacuation centres	- Provide minimum of 2 officers at each shelter - Provide on-site support to SES and Shelter Managers - Manage the Register, Find, Reunite forms process (data collection and entry into system) - Manage missing persons report and enquiries - Maintain calm and good order within the shelter - Manage traffic and parking control/s where possible
Support	Qld Fire Department	- Fire safety and control at the public cyclone shelter - Form part of the Shelter Management Team	- Provide minimum of 2 officers at the public cyclone shelter - Ensure safe access and passageways are maintained - Ensure evacuees adhere to fire safety rules in place

ROLE	AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY	TASKS
First Aid	QAS	Provide appropriate care to injured persons at shelters and evacuation centres	- Provide appropriate care to persons - Report any incidences to the Shelter or Centre Manager
First Aid	St John Ambulance Qld	Provide appropriate care to persons at the shelters and evacuations centres	- Provide support to QPS - Provide appropriate care to persons - Report any incidences to the Centre Manager
Building Management	Building Owners / Building Managers	Provide availability of building to operate as a shelter and/or evacuation centre	- Notify building tenants of buildings and seek cooperation - Provide building access keys / cards to the SECC - Arrange clearance of the car park / basement area / storage areas where possible - Report any faults or issues to the SECC - Advise SECC of any area off limits / not to be used - Participate in the handover and hand back process
Catering	The Salvation Army	Provide catering services and supplies for agency personnel and evacuees at evacuation centres	- Supply of skilled personnel to provide the catering services - Provision of adequate food and refreshments at scheduled meal intervals - Provision of cutlery, crockery & serving utensils - Maintain a sufficient food stock inventory and resupply - Report any incidences and resource needs to the Centre Manager
Bedding / Clothing Supplies	St Vincent De Paul Society Seventh Day Adventist Church	Provide adequate bedding and clothing supplies at the evacuation centres	- Coordinate the bedding and clothing requirements at the centre/s - Provide sufficient bedding requirements (e.g. mattresses, blankets, pillows etc.) - Provide sufficient clothing needs - Report any incidences and resource needs to the Centre Manager
Welfare Support of Evacuation Centres	Centacare North Qld	- Provide counselling services for agency personnel and evacuees at evacuation centres - Provide welfare and recovery support services at evacuation centres	- Monitor agency personnel and evacuees for signs of fatigue, stress etc. - Where appropriate, provide counselling to Agency personnel and evacuees - Assist in relaying information to evacuees to ensure they understand - Assist evacuees in accessing welfare support and Centrelink opportunities and referral to other appropriate agencies after event - Assist evacuees in their recovery back into the community

ROLE	AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY	TASKS
Child Support	54 Reasons (formerly Save the Children)	Provide child support services at evacuation centres	- Ensure children are adequately cared for and accommodated within the centres - Establish/ set up appropriate Child Friendly Areas within the centres - Report any incidences to the Centre Manager
Evacuation of Homeless & vulnerable person	QPS / Department of Housing and Public Works	Coordinate the plan for evacuation of homeless persons to Places of Refuge	Refer to separate plan (recovery group)

It will be the responsibility of the Shelter or Evacuation Centre Manager, in consultation with the SECC, to determine when the support agencies may be required. Under no circumstances should any agency be permitted to set up in a shelter or evacuation centre without first gaining the approval of the SECC.

5.5 Rotation of Personnel

The time that the shelter or evacuation centre may be operating could easily exceed the hours that one shift of personnel could work. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a roster for the rotation of staff into a number of shifts. Consideration will be required to ensure that there are sufficient staff to meet both shifts and debriefs are to occur at the handover of each shift. It should be noted that personnel at shelters will be required to stay during the expected event (i.e. tropical cyclone).

6. Heatley Public Cyclone Shelter

6.1 Purpose

The primary purpose of the Heatley Public Cyclone Shelter is to provide shelter for people evacuated from storm tide evacuation zones, or with no or vulnerable accommodation, who have not been able to leave the cyclone warning zone or shelter with friends or family in modern houses (built since 1982) outside the evacuation zone.

The Public Cyclone Shelter is not intended to store property or accommodate pets and personal property/bedding during a cyclone event.

The expectation of the TLDMG is that the Public Cyclone Shelter will be opened in time for the community to evacuate or be evacuated to the shelter and remain in use as a shelter until the severe tropical cyclone has passed.

Animals (except assistance animals) will not be accepted into a public cyclone shelter. Where evacuees with domesticated animals including dogs, cats and small birds require sheltering, a Place of Refuge will be designated and managed as per the Animal Management Emergency Operating Procedure.

6.2 Design

Public Cyclone Shelters in Queensland are constructed in accordance with the Queensland Governments "Design Guidelines for Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters."

Public Cyclone Shelters are located on high ground outside the storm tide evacuation zone and above the flood flow levels of a 1 in 500-year event (Q500) for creek and river flood levels. The shelter is engineered to withstand wind gusts of up to 306km/hr and associated windborne debris. The shelter is locked down during the passage of a severe tropical cyclone to increase occupant safety.

Note: Category 5 cyclones are cyclones with wind speeds of 280 km/hr or greater. The shelter was not designed to provide temporary accommodation or services after the cyclone has passed (i.e. evacuation or recovery centre).

6.3 Occupancy Level

The Public Cyclone Shelter occupancy level during a severe tropical cyclone is based upon the available floor area with a space allocation of 1.2m² for each person. The space allocation is based on most people being able to sit with occasional periods of standing.

A very limited number of beds are available for people that require them for medical reasons.

Basic building services of amenities and ventilation are based upon the occupancy level.

6.4 Occupancy Duration

The Public Cyclone Shelter is designed for a total maximum occupancy period of 36 hours. This period comprises:

- Set up period of up to 24 hours
- Reception period of 6-12 hours when people are arriving at the shelter
- Lockdown period, when the doors are closed limiting entry to and exit from the shelter, is approximately 18 hours
- Start of strong winds period when wind gusts regularly exceed 100km/h and is the stage when all doors and windows are closed, doors are strengthened to resist cyclonic winds by engaging barrel bolts, and the shelter is switched from mechanical to natural ventilation
- End of strong winds period is when the shelter is taken out of the strong winds mode when the wind gusts are less than strong gale force (<100km/h)
- End of lockdown is the period when the Cyclone Shelter Manager (CSM) and LDMG (LDC) identifies that it is safe for people to leave the shelter
- Prior to handover is the period where the building is returned to its condition prior to shelter use. Public Cyclone Shelters are not intended to provide temporary short-term accommodation for people whose houses have been damaged or destroyed during the event.

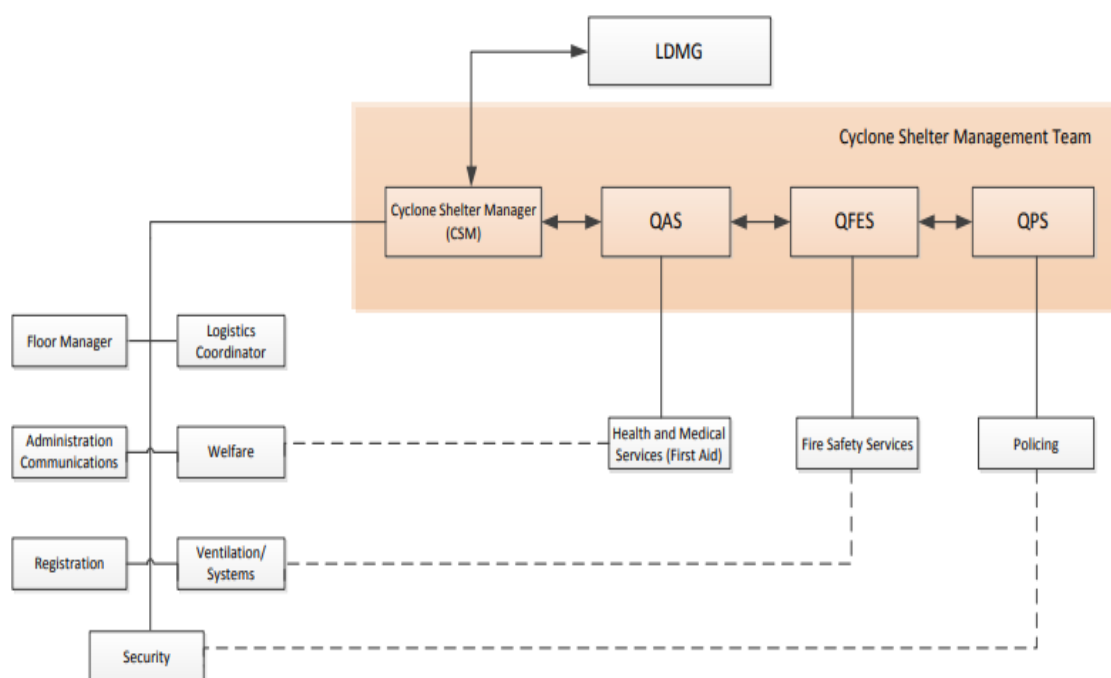
6.5 Cyclone Shelter Locations

The following provides a summary of the Public Cyclone Shelter/s located within the Townsville Area:

Facility name	Specific building identification	Asset Owner	Street address	Design occupancy capacity
Heatley Public Cyclone Shelter	Heatley Secondary College - school hall	DoE	321 Fulham Road, Heatley	800 people

6.6 Management of Cyclone Shelter

The recommended Shelter and Evacuation Centre Management Team to effectively manage a cyclone shelter ideally consists of the following:



Note: one person may be required to fulfil one or more of these positions depending on availability. Refer to the Public Cyclone Shelter Operating Procedure for more detail about key positions including position descriptions.

6.7 Support Agency Presence at Each Facility

FACILITY	SUPPORT AGENCIES
Heatley Public Cyclone Shelter	- State Emergency Service (SES) - Qld Police Service (QPS) - Qld Fire Department (QFD) - Qld Ambulance Service (QAS) - Townsville City Council (TCC)

6.7 Support

The services of the Public Cyclone Shelter include:

- emergency power
- lighting
- ventilation
- amenities
- water supply.

Features of the building and procedure for operating equipment can be found in the Public Cyclone Shelter Operating Procedure for each shelter.

6.8 Maintenance

Public Cyclone Shelters are to be maintained in accordance with the Queensland Public Cyclone Shelters Maintenance Guidelines. These guidelines define the organisations responsible for programmed maintenance and maintenance funding and require the building to be maintained in good condition. The Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) is responsible for the programmed maintenance of the Heatley Public Cyclone Shelter.

Annual inspection and testing are required to be undertaken by DHPW prior to June each year to identify maintenance required prior to the cyclone season. A pre-season test will also be undertaken by DHPW in October each year to confirm the shelter is suitable for use as a public cyclone shelter. The DHPW is to provide the TLDMG with a copy of the pre-season inspection and test report by 1st November each year as per the Public Cyclone Shelter Maintenance Guidelines.

Inspections of buildings after an event should be undertaken to determine what damage has occurred, if any. Damage should be reported to the DHPW & TLDMG. The MoU between the DoE and the TLDMG for use of the Heatley building as a Public Cyclone Shelter (refer to Appendix F - Memorandum of Understanding), defines the responsibilities for the cost of rectification works for damage caused while the building is being utilised as a cyclone shelter.

7. Places of Refuge

7.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Places of Refuge is to provide shelter for people evacuated from storm tide evacuation zones or wind vulnerable accommodation who have not been able to leave the cyclone warning zone or shelter with friends and family in modern houses (built after 1982) outside the evacuation zone. Their occupation should only be required for up to around 36 hours or until the danger has passed i.e., immediately leading up to the disaster and during the disaster. As such, only the basic necessities are provided such as refuge, toilet and hand washing facilities, first aid and limited emergency potable water.

Evacuees seeking refuge are required to provide for their own personal needs such as provision of blankets, pillows, chairs, non-perishable food, and potable water of sufficient supply for the duration of the event. At no time is cooking, naked flames or other activities that are likely to endanger the safety of others permitted within the refuge.

Animals (except assistance animals) will not be accepted at all places of refuge. Where evacuees with domesticated animals (including dogs, cats, and small birds) require sheltering at a Place of Refuge, a shelter will be designated for this purpose and managed as per the TCC Animal Management Emergency Operating Procedure. Refer to Part Ten of this Plan for managing domesticated animals at Places of Refuge.

7.2 Design

Although not purpose built, places of refuge are facilities capable of providing protection for people and are solid buildings not expected to sustain any damage from a tropical cyclone. They are located outside of flood prone areas. In December 2012, the then Department of Energy and Public Works reviewed all designated Places of Refuge and approved their use for the purposes sheltering evacuees in tropical cyclones.

The following documents are designed to support local governments in assessing Place of Refuge facilities:

- [Technical Guidance Document - Assessment of buildings as a Place of Refuge for Cyclones \(2023\)](#)
- [Places of Refuge: Cyclones - Guidance on site selection of buildings \(2023\)](#)

7.3 Occupancy Level

The occupancy level at Places of Refuge is based upon the available floor area with a space allocation of approximately 1.2m² for each person.

7.4 Occupancy Duration

They are designed to be in operation for a short period of time (up to 36 hours or when the cyclone threat has passed).

7.5 Place of Refuge Locations

The locations of designated Places of Refuge have been predetermined by the TLDMG and contained in the Places of Refuge Operating Procedure.

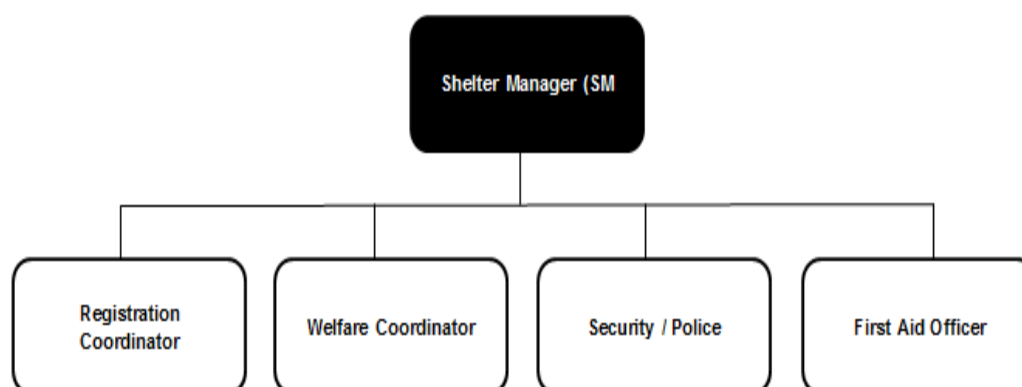
Designated Places of Refuge	Location	Capacity	Primary Use
Suncorp Plaza (Basement Car Park)	61-73 Sturt St Townsville	875	General Community
State Government Building (Basement Car park)	187-209 Stanley St Townsville	350	Homeless
Townsville City Council Building (Basement Car park)*	143-201 Walker St Townsville	305	General community
North Shore Community Centre	10 Iris Lane, North Shore	330	General Community
TOTAL		1860	

*This facility may be used to house domesticated pets.

The decision to activate a Place of Refuge is made by the SECC. The details and requirements of each Place of Refuge are contained in the Places of Refuge Operating Procedures.

7.6 Management of Places of Refuge

The recommended Shelter and Evacuation Centre Management Team to effectively manage a place of refuge ideally consists of the following:



Note: one person may be required to fulfil one or more of these positions depending on availability. Refer to the *Places of Refuge Operating Procedure* for more detail about key positions including position descriptions.

7.7 Support Agency Presence at Each Facility

FACILITY	SUPPORT AGENCIES
Places of Refuge	• State Emergency Service (SES) • Qld Police Service (QPS) • Qld Ambulance Service (QAS) • Qld Fire Department • St John's Ambulance

7.8 Services

A Place of Refuge provides limited services for evacuees including:

- toilets
- hand washing facilities
- basic hygiene supplies
- water supply (bottled water)

Features of the building and the procedure for operating equipment can be found in the Places of Refuge Operating Procedure.

7.9 Maintenance

Regular maintenance of designated Places of Refuge is the responsibility of the building owner. Any damage sustained during the operation of the shelter must be communicated to the SECC. An application to recover any agreed costs for repairs will be sought through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

8. Evacuation Centres

8.1 Purpose

The purpose of Evacuation Centres is to provide emergency accommodation for evacuees in the lead up to, during, and after a disaster event that has resulted in potential damage to or inundation of their usual place of residence.

TCC has a MoU with the Australian Red Cross which identifies the responsibilities of both parties during the operation and management of Evacuation Centres, including the coordination and operational management of other agencies within an Evacuation Centre. The allocation of resources provided by the Red Cross will be made in the interest of state-wide response and recovery operations as identified in accordance with the MoU.

TCC has a MoU with Salvation Army who will provide meals and refreshments to evacuees, staff and agency personnel at evacuation centres. Refer to the Operating Procedure Evacuation Centres.

Animals (except assistance animals) will not be accepted at all evacuation centres. Where displaced persons with domesticated animals (including dogs, cats, and small birds) require emergency accommodation, an evacuation centre will be designated and managed as per the TCC Animal Management Emergency Operating Procedure. Refer to Part Ten of this Plan for managing domesticated animals at evacuation centres.

Evacuation centres will not be used as a sheltering option in the lead up to a tropical cyclone. An evacuation centre will be established for those residents that cannot return to their normal place of residence post impact.

8.2 Design

A number of facilities have been pre-determined for their suitability as an Evacuation Centre in consideration of their capability to provide sufficient services to evacuees including space for sleeping, kitchen facilities, toilets, showers, waste facilities, storage and recreational areas.

8.3 Occupancy Level

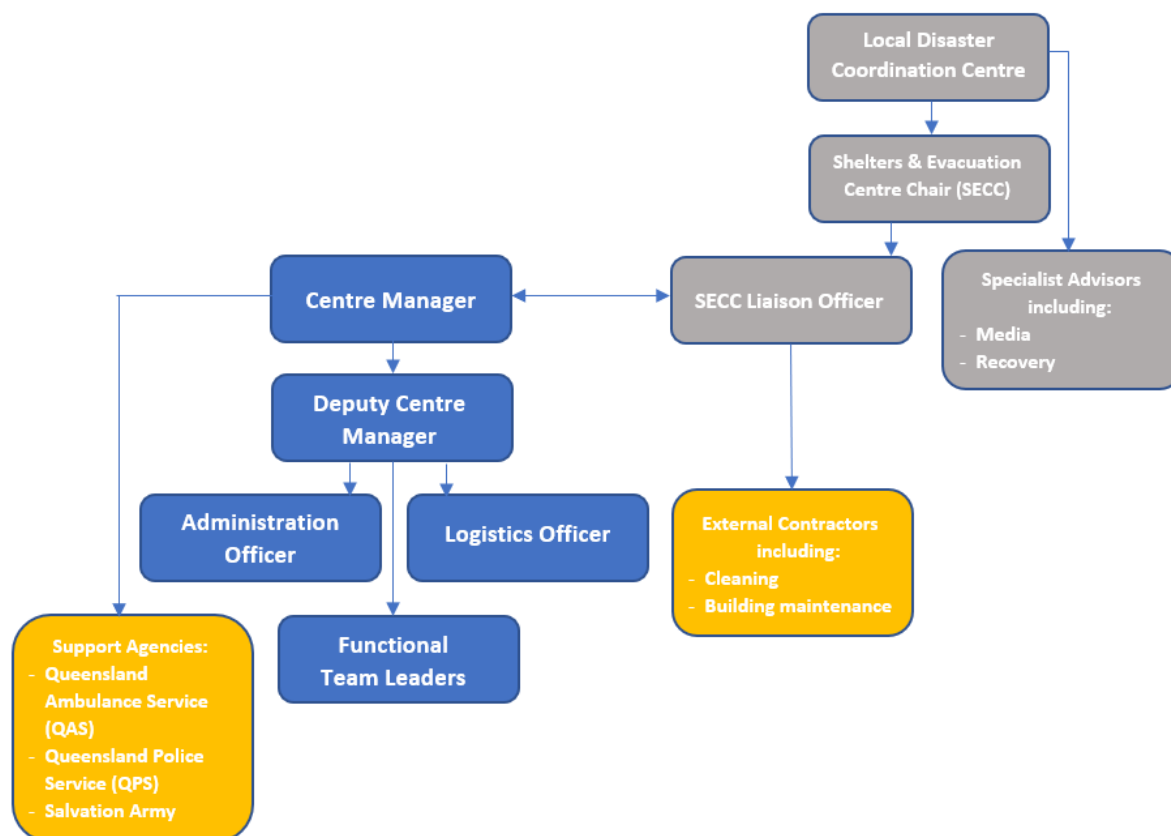
The maximum occupancy at each Evacuation Centre has been pre-determined and is detailed in the *Operating Procedure Evacuation Centres*.

8.4 Occupancy Duration

Evacuation Centres may be operational for an extended period of time (usually 3 to 7 days) depending on the level of destruction or flooding caused by the disaster, which may prevent evacuees from returning to their normal place of residence.

8.5 Management of Evacuation Centres

The recommended Shelter and Evacuation Centre Management Team to effectively manage an evacuation centre ideally consists of the following:



Refer to the *Evacuation Centres Operating Procedure* for more detail about key positions including position descriptions.

8.6 Support Agency Presence at Each Facility

FACILITY	SUPPORT AGENCIES
Evacuation Centres	- Australian Red Cross - Qld Police Service (QPS) - Qld Ambulance Service (QAS) - St John's Ambulance - Salvation Army - Centacare NQ 54 Reasons Provision of supplies: - St Vincent De Paul's - Seventh Day Adventist

8.7 Services

The basic human necessities such as accommodation, toilet and hand washing facilities will be provided at Evacuation Centres in addition to food, clothing and bedding supplies, welfare and recovery services and general comforts where possible. Provision of such services will be provided by agencies or organisations which are members of the SECWG or where council has a MoU in place with them to provide these services.

In larger scale operations, Evacuation Centres will be managed in accordance with the [Queensland Evacuation Centre Management Handbook](#) and the [Queensland Evacuation Centre Field Guide](#). In these circumstances, TCC will activate an Incident Management Team of multiple agencies and will use the Guardian IMS system, Resident Intake Registration forms and / or the Register, Find, Reunite registration service forms to formally register evacuees. During large scale operations, TCC will work collaboratively with multiple agencies to provide various support services to evacuees

The key considerations are:

- set up and layout
- management and staffing
- administration (briefings, debriefings, shift logs, handovers, finance, etc.)
- opening and closing
- reception, registration and departure
- catering and refreshments
- information point
- clothing
- first aid
- individual support
- animal management
- vulnerable persons
- sleeping facilities and arrangements
- security
- communication

8.8 Maintenance

Regular maintenance of designated evacuation centres is the responsibility of the building owner.

Any damage sustained during the operation of the facility must be communicated to the SECC. An application to recover any agreed costs for repairs will be sought through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

9. Spontaneous Shelters and Evacuation Centres

9.1 Establishment of Facilities not Activated by LDMG

In the event that a spontaneous shelter or evacuation centre is opened that has not been activated by the TLDMG, persons housed at these shelters/centres will be encouraged to relocate to an approved shelter or evacuation centre by a delegate of the SECWG.

The SECC will note down the details of the unauthorised shelter or evacuation centre (i.e. centre name, address, no. of people, contact person, special needs or assistance required) for monitoring and follow-up by a delegate of the SECWG.

10. Domesticated Animals at Places of Refuge and Evacuation Centres

10.1 Pre-Season Education

The TLDMG Community Education and Marketing Strategy annual pre-season marketing campaigns include messaging about preparing an emergency plan for pets. Owners must make arrangements to ensure they have a suitable plan for caring for their pets during a disaster or at times of an emergency.

10.2 Management of Domesticated Animals

Where evacuees or displaced persons present with domesticated animals (dogs, cats, and small birds) at emergency sheltering or accommodation facilities, suitable arrangements will be made by the TLDMG in conjunction with Council's Environmental Health & Regulation (EH&R) Team. The management of domesticated animals during an emergency will be in accordance with the following procedures:

- Animal Care and Adoption Centre Emergency Operating Procedure
- Animal Management Emergency Response Operational Procedure

Owners of animals regulated under the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act* must at all times comply with all conditions imposed in accordance with the animals' declaration, which includes muzzling a dog while it is out of its enclosure.

10.3 Designated Pet Friendly Facilities

It is important to note that pets (that are not registered assistance animals) are not permitted within the Public Cyclone Shelter.

If owners of domestic animals become displaced and require emergency accommodation, they must make all reasonable attempts to house their animal at a suitable animal boarding/sheltering facility. In some circumstances, TCC may be able to provide pet friendly emergency sheltering and evacuation centre facilities. In these circumstances, owners of domestic animals can choose to shelter with their pets. If available, a designated Place of Refuge will be identified and communicated by the TLDMG at the time of the event. The purpose of having a designated facility is to take into consideration other evacuees who may also need access to emergency sheltering or evacuation centre facilities but may have an allergy or a phobia to certain animals.

Domestic animals which are accepted at the designated facility, will remain the responsibility of the owner/keeper for the duration of their stay and they must therefore bring with them sufficient supplies including the following items (as a minimum):

1. A cage, carrier, or other suitable fully enclosed enclosure that is of sturdy construction to contain the animal (a dog on a lead is not considered as a suitable containment measure),
2. A collar and lead to restrain the animal while it is out of its enclosure,
3. An amount of water and food that is sufficient to sustain the animal for the duration of stay at the PoR (including bowl/s),
4. Supplies to remove animal waste (e.g., plastic bags, gloves, litter tray, urine pads, etc.), and
5. Any medication required for the animal.

Animal owners must also consider any additional equipment (e.g., cooler) which they may need to bring with them should medications or food for their animal be required to be kept cold. There are not any accessible refrigeration facilities available, neither will refrigerated equipment such as portable fridges be accepted. Consideration will be given to creating clear boundaries between pets and people areas within the centre. Pets will not be permitted to access food preparation, serving, dining, or sleeping areas within the centre.

11. Equipment & Resources

11.1 Equipment Kits

The following prepared kits are available and ready for use:

Kit	Facility	Quantity
Forms Kits	Public Cyclone Shelter	1
	North Shore Community Centre PoR	1
	Places of Refuge	3
	Evacuation Centres	3
Stationary Kits	Public Cyclone Shelter	1
	North Shore Community Centre PoR	1
	Places of Refuge	3
	Evacuation Centres	3
Equipment Kits	Public Cyclone Shelter	1
	North Shore Community Centre PoR	1
	Places of Refuge	3
	Evacuation Centres	3

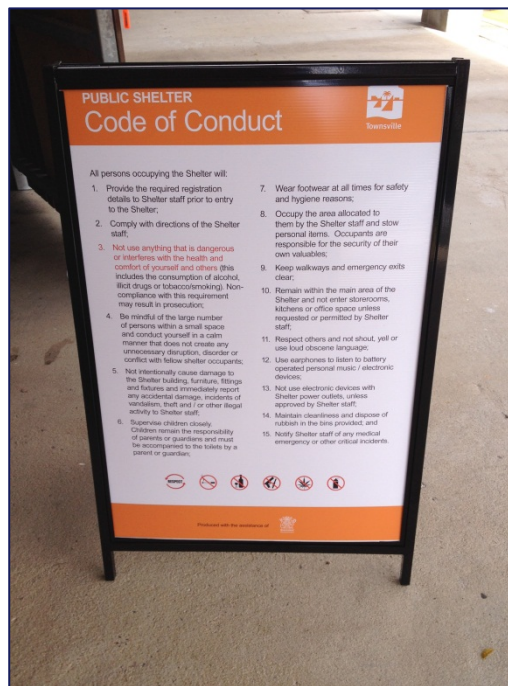
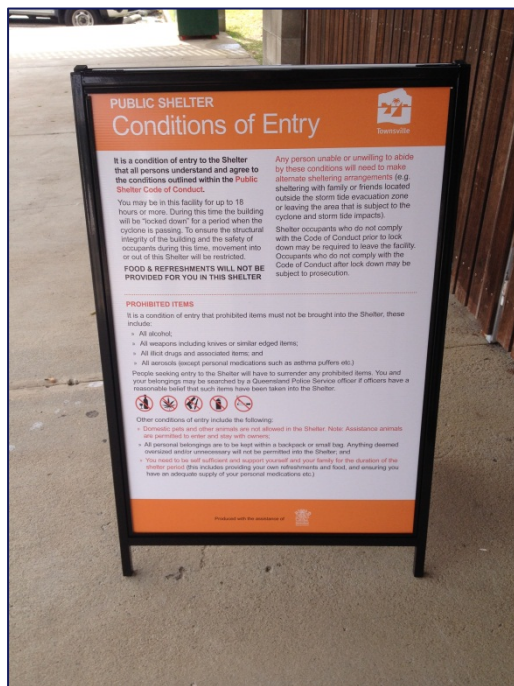
The kits will be assembled by council's Stores Department before commencement of high-risk weather season (October). These kits remain at Stores located at the Garbutt Operations Centre Depot until required. The kits are the size of a standard residential waste bin and require a suitable vehicle to transport.

Note - these kits are only an initial supply, and supplementary or additional supplies will be required. Additional kits will be sourced by the SECC wherever possible following deployment or after request from the Shelter or Centre Manager.

11.2 Shelter & Evacuation Centre Signage

A-Frame signage is available with the Code of Conduct displayed on one side and the Conditions of Entry on the other. There are 10 x A-Frames in total which vary slightly depending on shelter type. They are located in the basement storage room with the forms and stationary kits.

It is the responsibility of the Shelter or Centre Manager to ensure that all evacuees have read and understood the Code of Conduct and Conditions of Entry prior to acceptance into the centre.



11.3 Procurement Arrangements

The SECC is responsible for purchasing supplies and equipment for emergency sheltering purposes. The LDCC Logistics team will be made available to assist with procurement during activations. Purchasing is to be undertaken in accordance with council's procurement policies.

Unless there is a MoU in place permitting the purchase of goods on behalf of the TLDMG, support agencies are to make arrangements with the SECC for purchasing.

Costs associated with an emergency sheltering activity are to be collated within council's corporate system for inclusion in any Disaster Funding Arrangements. [Financial Management Subplan](#).

12. Communications

12.1 Internal Communications

Communications between the SECC and each Shelter or Evacuation Centre Manager will be via mobile phones. Should the need arise, the SECC will arrange through the LDC the use of UHF radios or Starlink Satellite Service to be set up in shelters and evacuations centres and LDCC for communications between both parties.

The SECC will provide regular SITREPS and updates to the Operations Manager at the LDCC and the TLDMG regarding which shelters, and evacuation centres are open, or which have been closed, how many people are being accommodated and any arising matters for consideration. The SECC will attend TLDMG meetings when they occur.

12.1.1 Telstra SMS System

A Telstra SMS System has been set up to allow SMS alerts and notifications to SECWG members.

Website: [Telstra Integrated Messaging](#)

Townsville City Council will act as administrator of this system.

12.1.2 Situation Reports (SITREPS)

During operations, the Shelter or Evacuation Centre Manager will be responsible for providing twice daily situational reports (SITREPS) to the SECC. Further information and templates can be found in the Operating Procedures.

12.1.3 Recording Decisions

During operations, the Shelter or Centre Manager(s) as well as the SECC will each be responsible for recording key decisions and actions they undertake in the performance of their duties in accordance with the *Public Records Act 2002*. This can be recorded in the form of a diary or notebook.

12.2 External Communications

Council's Emergency Management Team and Communications and Marketing team conduct regular education and media campaigns regarding preparedness during and leading up to the cyclone season. Refer to the Community Engagement and Marketing Strategy.

Key messages have been determined in advance. Refer to council's [TLDMG Public Information and Warnings Sub Plan](#).

12.2.1 Media

The Public Information Team in the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) are responsible for responding to media enquiries and requests for interviews. Any requests should be directed to the Media Officer.

Media should not be allowed to enter a shelter or evacuation centre without prior authority of the TLDMG. It is important that the privacy of personnel and evacuees at the shelter or evacuation centre are maintained. Permission must be given by personnel and evacuees before the use of film or photographic equipment.

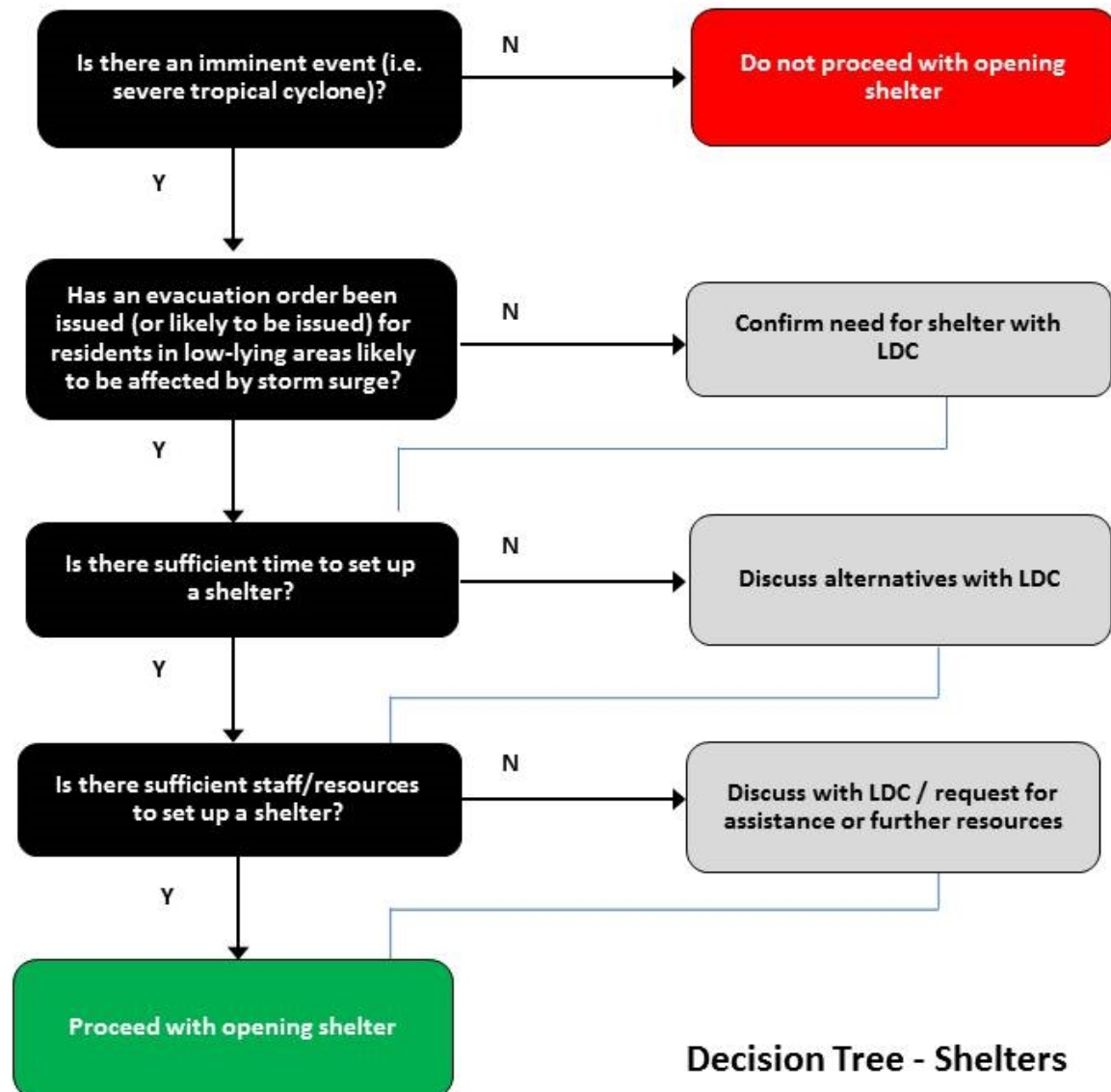
Under no circumstances is information about persons who may or may not be in a shelter or evacuation centre be provided to anyone except to QPS upon official request. The Register.Find.Reunite system is a National Registration and Enquiry Services which is maintained as an online database to assist in reuniting family and friends post an emergency event. QPS are the commissioning agent for the system which is administered on their behalf by the Red Cross.

Approved interviews should be conducted away from operational areas. Should evacuees wish to speak to the media, they can at their own discretion; however, these interviews are to take place outside of the centre.

Appendix A: Decision Trees & Operational Timeline Considerations

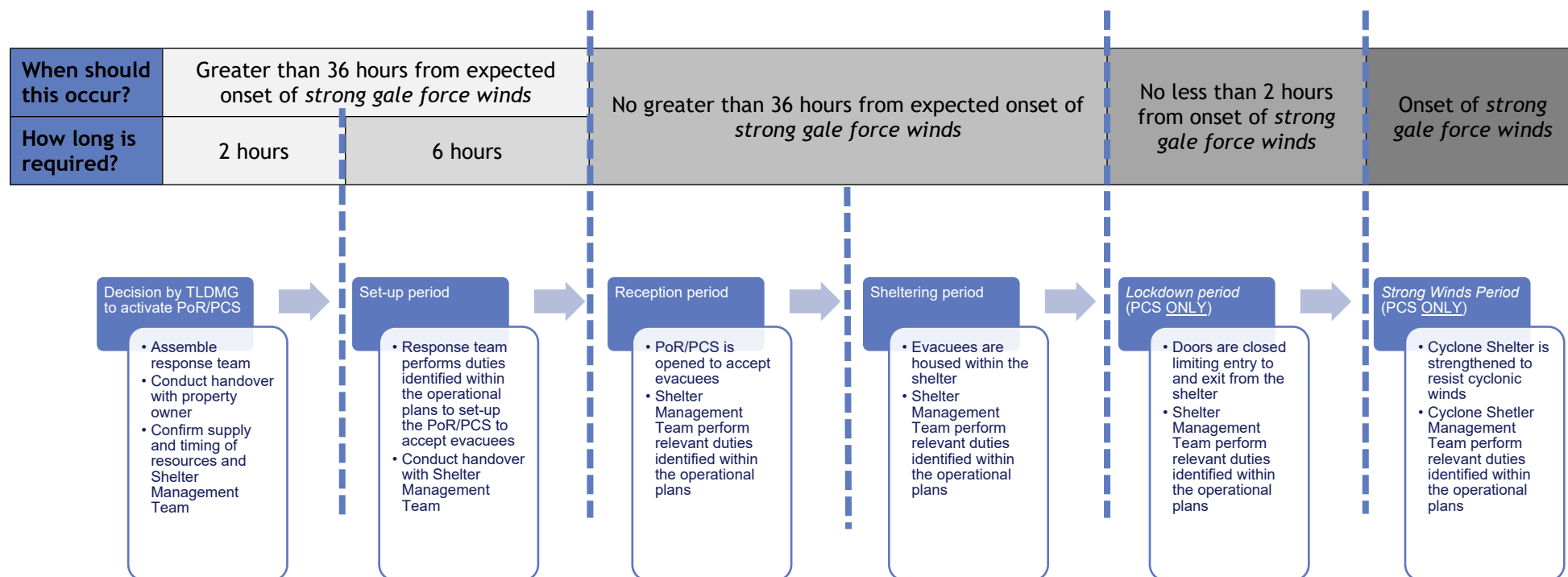
Decision Tree - Shelters

The following decision tree is to assist in determining whether a shelter should be opened:



The following guide will be used by the TLDMG when deciding to activate this Sub Plan to ensure there is sufficient time for TCC staff to make shelters and evacuation centres operational and ready to accept evacuees safely before the disaster event. Consideration must also be made to events which unfold rapidly, where an expedited timeframe may apply.

Places of Refuge and Public Cyclone Shelter timeline



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Document No. - 17909746

Authorised by - Local Disaster Coordinator

Document Maintained by - Emergency Management Section

TLDMG Shelters & Evacuation Centres Subplan

Version No.23

Initial Date of Adoption (Version 1) - 15 Dec 11

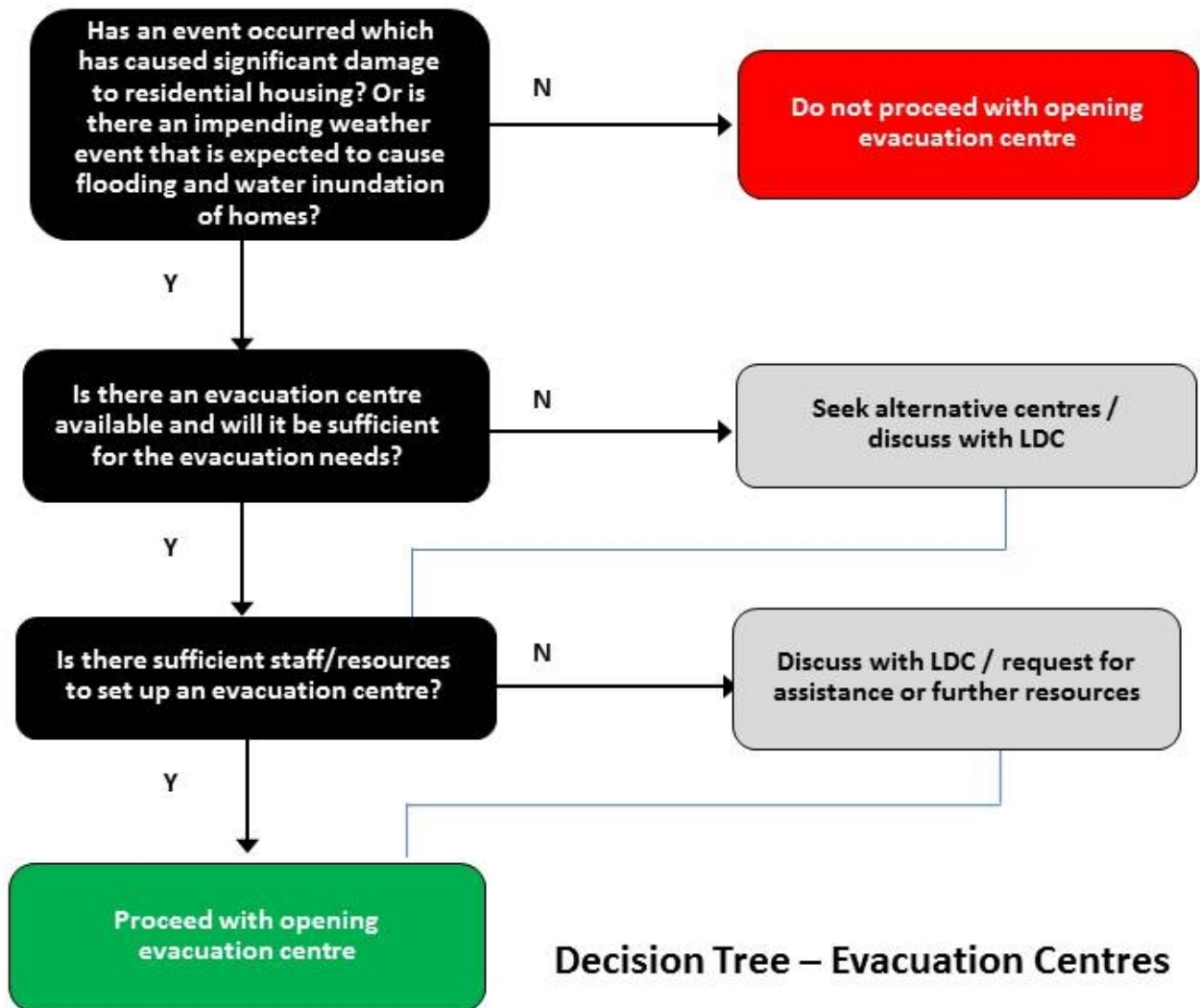
Current Version Reviewed - July 2025

Next Review Date - July 2026

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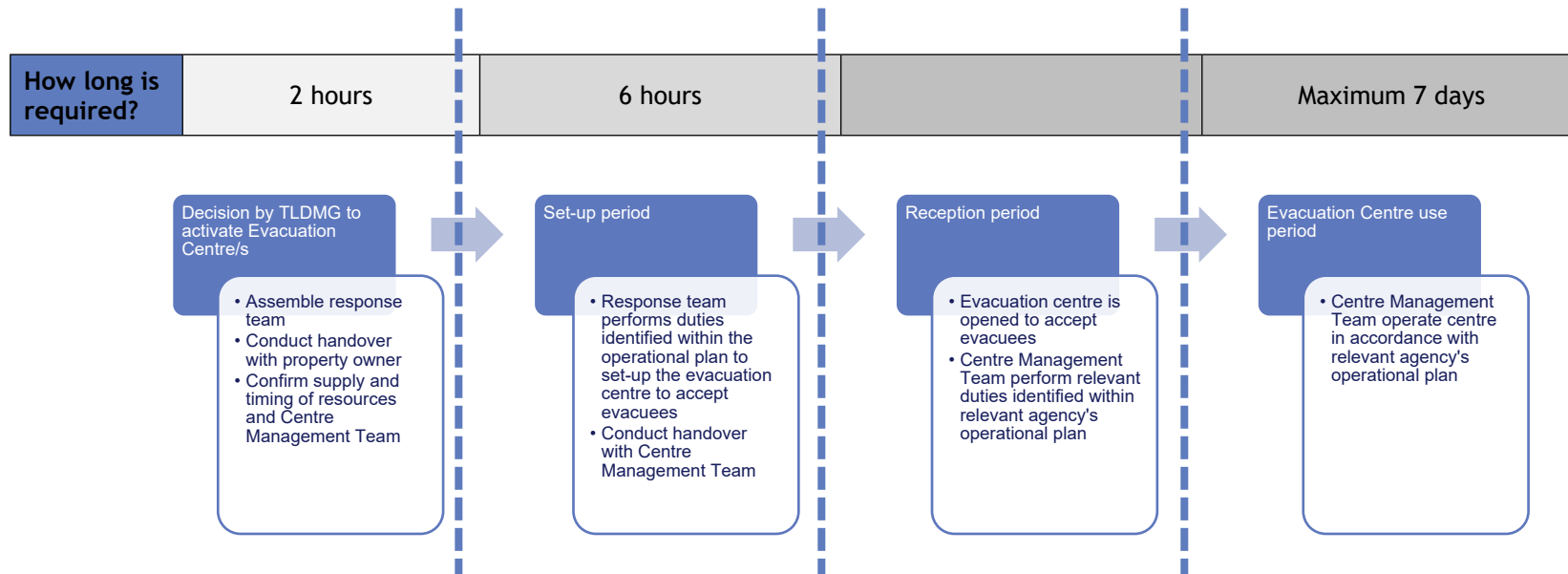
Decision Tree - Evacuation Centres

The following decision tree is to assist in determining whether an **evacuation centre** should be opened:



Decision Tree – Evacuation Centres

Evacuation Centres - Operational Timeline



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Next Review Date - July 2026

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Appendix B: SECC Operational Checklist

The SECC is responsible for undertaking the following:

Phase:	Responsibility:	Completed
Seasonal Preparedness Chair SECWG	- Annual review and update of the Sub Plan and operating procedure - Consult with support agencies for the review and update of the Sub Plan and procedures - Put arrangements in place and undertake preparedness activities - Implement improvements to the shelter and evacuation centre process - Organise relevant training and coordinate exercises for key personnel in the shelter and evacuation centre process - Chair Shelter and Evacuation Centre Working Group (SECWG) meetings - Provide regular reports to the TLDMG - Keep up to date with state government legislation and guidelines relating to shelters and evacuation centres	
Alert SECC	This Sub Plan will be at an Alert level of activation when the TLDMG is at an Alert level. The LDC will advise SECC that the TLDMG is at an Alert level. The SECC will notify the SECWG and support agencies. - Remain alert and ready to respond - Inform SECWG members and TCC Environmental Health & Regulation Section staff of the current situation	
Lean Forward SECC	This Sub Plan will be at a Lean Forward level of activation when the TLDMG decides that an evacuation is being considered. This may be when a cyclone watch is issued or when the evacuation timeline dictates preparatory actions are to commence. Shelter preparations may occur during this time. - Take preparations to identify shelter and evacuation centre requirements - Contact and alert building owners and/or take measures to take possession of particular facilities if necessary - Contact SECWG members and put them on stand-by - Inform TCC EH&R Section staff of the current situation - Determine staff availability, contact number and capacity to respond - Alert council's Stores department regarding the possibility of the need for supplies	

Phase:	Responsibility:	Completed
Stand Up SECC	This Sub Plan will be at a Stand-Up level of activation when the TLDMG has advised that emergency sheltering will be required. The LDC and SECC will ensure that the TLDMG considers the timeframe required to set up shelters or evacuation centres before information is released to the community. Refer relevant sections of this plan for more information about required timeframes to set up shelters and evacuation centres. Advice to the community will be undertaken as per the <i>[[Public Information and Warnings Sub Plan]]</i>. The SECC must commence preparations of shelters or evacuation centres to receive evacuees immediately if this has not already occurred. • Contact all SECWG members to provide them an update on the situation • Directly contact support agencies that will be required in the response for activation • Form a response team from Council staff to assist with activation • Organise with the building owners to take possession and handover of their facility • Coordinate the set-up of the necessary facilities (either shelters or evacuation centres) • Coordinate the delivery and set up of supplies in each facility • Coordinate with support agencies to ensure there are adequate personnel to manage the facility • Communicate status and readiness with the TLDMG • Continue to provide regular updates to SECWG members and the TLDMG • Attend TLDMG meetings • Monitor each facility and provide support and assistance to Shelter or Centre Managers • Organise for the re-supply of requirements at each facility	
Stand Down SECC	This Sub Plan will be at a Stand Down level of activation when the TLDMG is at a Stand Down level. At this stage, all shelters and/or evacuation centres should be restored back for normal use. • Provide advice to Shelter or Centre Managers when to close the facility • Assist Shelter and Centre Manager where possible with closing the facility • Organise for any supplies and equipment to be removed and returned to Stores or external suppliers • Coordinate the clean-up and repair of facilities where necessary • Coordinate the hand-back of facilities to building owners • Inform TLDMG when facilities have been closed • Organise a debrief with Shelter or Centre Managers and staff at each facility • Organise a debrief with TCC EH&R Section staff • Attend TLDMG meetings • Provide a report to the TLDMG with an overview of the activation, lessons learnt and future improvements • Review and update the shelters and evacuation centres Sub Plan and procedures	

Phase:	Responsibility:	Completed
	Finalise payment, collate invoices/receipts and account for any procurement in council's corporate system	

Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs)

Townsville City Council has the following Memorandum of Understanding in place to support the shelter and evacuation centre process through supporting agencies and evacuation centre arrangements.

Support Agencies	Expiry Date	Document Reference Number
Arcadian Surf Lifesaving Club (including use of Evacuation Centre)	March 2026	20138400
Australian Red Cross	18 November 2023	18977826
Department of Education (including use of PCS)	1 July 2024	19743506
Salvation Army	3 March 2026	19011796
Seventh Day Adventist Riverside Convention Centre (including use of Evacuation Centre)	In progress	TBA

Shelters & Evacuation Centres	Expiry Date	Document Reference Number
AIMS	TBC	TBA
Alligator Creek Bowls Club	TBC	TBA
Apex Camps	July 2026	20442905
Bluewater Community Centre	TBC	TBA
Calvary Christian College	TBC	TBA
Church of Latter-Day Saints	TBC	TBA
Crystal Creek Sports & Recreational Centre	TBC	TBA
Ignatius Park College	TBC	TBA
Island Palms Resort	TBC	TBA
JCU (all facilities)	TBC	TBA
Jensen Uniting Church	TBC	TBA

Shelters & Evacuation Centres	Expiry Date	Document Reference Number
Paluma Community Centre	TBC	TBA
Paluma Environmental Education Centre	TBC	TBA
Rollingstone Community Centre	TBC	TBA
Salvation Army Riverway Centre	In progress	TBA
Seventh Day Adventist Riverside Convention Centre	In progress	TBA
Suncorp Plaza	In progress	TBA
TAFE (all facilities)	TBC	TBA
Townsville Grammar School	TBC	TBA
Townsville Showgrounds	TBC	TBA
Willows Shopping Centre	In progress	TBA
YWAM	3 September 2024	TBA



**TOWNSVILLE
LOCAL DISASTER
MANAGEMENT GROUP**

