



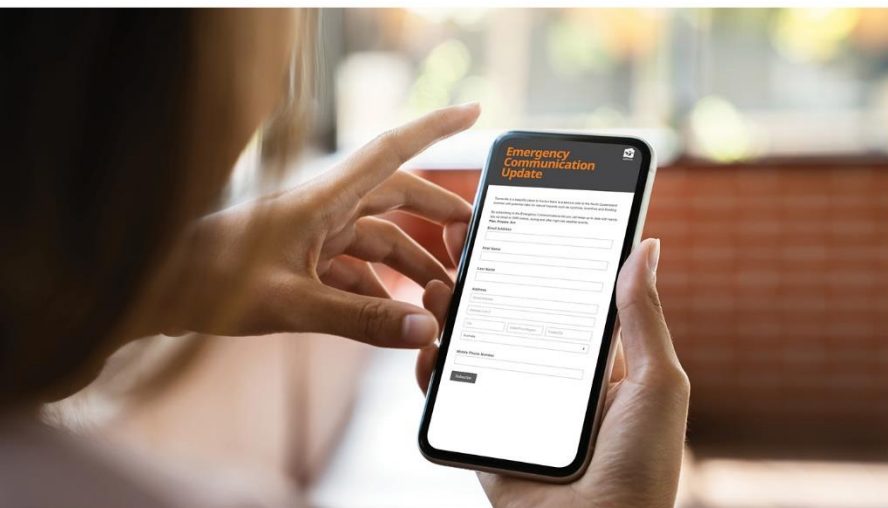
**TOWNSVILLE  
LOCAL DISASTER  
MANAGEMENT GROUP**



# Public Information & Warnings Sub Plan

*Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) Sub Plan*

V10 July 2024



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

# Executive Summary

This Public Information & Warnings Sub Plan has been developed by the Townsville Local Disaster Management Group (TLDMG) to ensure robust arrangements to warn and inform the public 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.

**Section 3** provides detail on the operational procedures developed to support the Public Information and Warnings Sub Plan including appointment of the Public Information Officer, media management and issue of Australia Warning System (AWS) and Emergency Alert (EA) compliant warnings to the community using multiple delivery modes.

**Appendix A**-provides supporting information as quick reference guides including, a Public Information Officer operational checklist.

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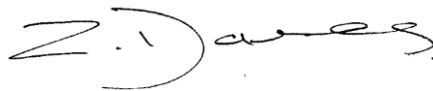
# Endorsement

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



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**Kate Hadley**  
TLDMG Core Member (Communications)  
Townsville Local Disaster Management Group  
Date: 03/09/2024



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**Zac Dawes**  
Deputy Local Disaster Coordinator  
Townsville Local Disaster Management Group  
Date: 03/09/2024



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**Cr Andrew Robinson**  
Chair  
Townsville Local Disaster Management Group  
Date: 03/09/2024

## Version Control & Record of Amendments

Version No.	Issue Date	Amended by	Action	Date
01 Initial Plan	September 2013	Allen Morris	Initial Plan	30 September 2013
02	October 2015	Gavin Hammond	Annual Review	25 October 2015
03	November 2016	Catherine Jordan	Annual Review	1 November 2016
04	January 2018	Wayne Preedy	Annual Review	5 January 2018
05	November 2018	Wayne Preedy	Annual Review	28 March 2019
06	April 2019	Wayne Preedy	Annual Review	28 March 2020
07	January 2021	Wayne Preedy, Bec Torrisi, Sarah Sullivan, Katrina Appleton, Richard Hannay Megan Leese, Michael McCall, Adam Pietrobon,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Review</li> <li>• Added Table to align TLDMG &amp; TCC ERG comms strategy.</li> <li>• Added Activation for water pipeline rupture.</li> <li>• EA Coloured Zones changed (All reference to brown removed) wording in voice message and text also updated.</li> </ul>	21 January 2021
08	March 2022	Wayne Preedy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Review</li> <li>• Updating of EA Messaging / Polygons</li> </ul>	
09	June 2023	Wayne Preedy, Sarah Sullivan,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual review</li> <li>• Update messaging</li> <li>• Include AWS</li> </ul>	
9.1	October 2023	Kate Hadley Zac Dawes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update to AWS and community messaging</li> </ul>	Oct 23
10	July 2024	Kate Hadley Zac Dawes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual review and update to new template</li> <li>• Deloitte Consultation</li> </ul>	



# Consultation

Organisation	Role / Agency consulted?	Date distributed	Date comments were received
TLDMG Members	Chairperson	7 Aug 24	
	Deputy Chairperson	7 Aug 24	
	Local Disaster Coordinator	7 Aug 24	7 Aug 24
	Deputy Local Disaster Coordinator	7 Aug 24	
	TCC ERG Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	QPS Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	QFD Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	QAS Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	SES Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	Department of Housing Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	TEL Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	Ergon Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	TLDMG Comms Core Member	7 Aug 24	7 Aug 24
	Shelters & Evac Centre Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	THHS Core Member	7 Aug 24	
	LRC Core Member	7 Aug 24	
TLDMG Advisors	DTMR	7 Aug 24	12 Aug 24
Townsville City Council	Christine Herman	7 Aug 24	7 Aug 24
	Amanda Golingi	7 Aug 24	7 Aug 24
Other	Deloitte		

# 1. Overview of Plan

## 1.1. Aim & Objectives of Plan

The purpose of the TLDMG Public Information and Warnings Sub Plan is to manage the effective collection, monitoring, management and dissemination of accurate, useful and timely information and warnings to the community before, during and after disaster events, in which the Townsville Local Disaster Management Group (TLDMG) and its plans and processes have been activated. The objectives are to:

- Provide the community clear and concise information regarding an emergency/disaster event so they are well informed and can take action to mitigate and prepare
- Ensure warnings are consistent with the Australian Warning System (AWS) where relevant
- Ensure Emergency Alert (EA) warnings can be issued as required.

The process of disseminating information and warnings is a standard responsibility of the TLDMG and does not depend on the activation of the group. This requirement is fulfilled via [Townsville City Council's Disaster Dashboard](#) until the TLDMG is fully activated.

## 1.2. Context & Assumptions

Public information is general information provided to the community to assist them in understanding a particular situation and what they should do to prepare for, respond to, or recover from a disaster event.

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 Townsville Local Disaster Management Group (TLDMG).

Effective warning systems are an essential prevention strategy that aims to convey information to the community relating to the impending disaster event.

When an event is imminent, it is essential the public are warned of the danger and provided with information and advice on recommended actions. Warnings will be consistent with the [Australian Warning System](#).

Warnings to the community from the relevant agencies and Council are transmitted via electronic media and radio as per the processes of their respective organisations. The key objective is to deliver accurate, clear, timely information and advice to the public, so they feel confident, safe and well informed, and are aware of any recommended actions. Effective public information lowers the potential for panic, fear and confusion resulting from rumours and hearsay. A community armed with effective and accurate information can make informed and sensible decisions.

Broadcast and social media are the primary platforms for public information and warnings in most disasters and are considered ineffective if they do not have the intended result. Ongoing community awareness and education programs regarding disasters are provided to the Townsville community by TLDMG agencies. These programs ensure the community understands what is required of them to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters in the region. A Community Engagement & Marketing Strategy and Annual Implementation Plan is available.

## 1.3. Ownership

This sub-plan is owned by the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) on behalf of the Townsville Local Disaster Management Group (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 role of the Public Information Officer will be undertaken by staff from Townsville City Council's (TCC) Community Engagement Team.

The LDC is to ensure that all agencies and members of the TLDMG are aware of these arrangements.

Member organisations of the TLDMG are support agencies to this sub-plan and will be required to contribute subject matter expertise for each 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 plan also links directly to:

- [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual M.1.174](#)
- [Queensland Standard Emergency Warning Signal \(SEWS\) Manual M.1.171](#)
- [Requesting Officer Quick Reference Guide for Emergency Alert](#)
- [Emergency Alert Request](#) Form
- TCC Predefined Polygons (refer Guardian IMS or Disaster Management Portal)
- TCC Predefined Emergency Alert Warnings (refer Guardian IMS or Disaster Management Portal)
- TCC AWS Warnings (refer Guardian IMS).
- [Communicating with People with Disability: National Guidelines for Emergency Managers](#)
- TCC Communications Emergency Operating Procedure
- TLDMG Local Disaster Coordination Centre Standard Operating Procedures

This plan is consistent with the [Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Public Information and Warnings Handbook](#).



## 2. Activation & Notification Procedures

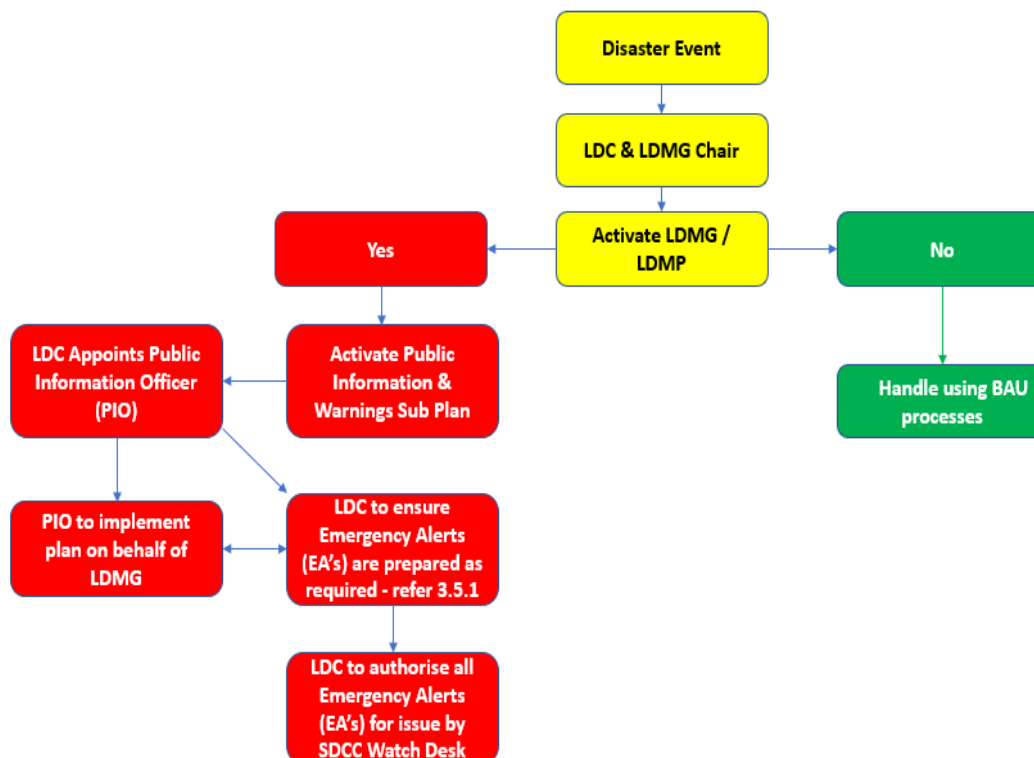
### 2.1. Activation of the Plan

The LDC is responsible for activating the TLDMG. This will usually occur following consultation with the Chair of the TLDMG and the District Disaster Coordinator (DDC).

This sub-plan will be activated by the LDC whenever the Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) is activated. This will ensure that public information and warnings are aligned with the activation levels detailed in the LDMP (refer section 7.8 p.79).

In the event of a TLDMG activation, Council's Community Engagement Team will transition their roles and responsibilities to undertake the Public Information Officer function to prepare and distribute messaging on behalf of the TLDMG as the "single point of truth" on a 24/7 basis as required.

### 2.2. Notification Flowchart



### 2.3. Notification Process

When the plan is activated, a Public Information Officer (PIO) will be appointed to manage all public information and warnings requirements under delegated authority of the LDC.

If the plan is not activated, public information and warnings will continue to be disseminated using standard BAU procedures.

## 3. Operational Procedures

### 3.1. LDCC Public Information Officers

The LDCC PIOs during disaster operations are members of Council's Community Engagement Team. Their roles are critical to effective operations and needs adequately trained deputies to ensure 24/7 availability.

The PIOs may perform their duties remotely, but it is preferable that they are in the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) when activated so they can provide direct support to the LDC and TLDMG Chair.

The PIO is the contact for all media enquiries and public information in relation to any event that results in the activation of the disaster management system. The PIO is responsible for:

- obtaining information on the current and projected situation
- preparing and distributing approved media releases, posts and online information
- responding to enquiries and requests from the media and community
- maintaining a working log of media releases, posts and online information, and contacts with the media
- coordinating and managing media interviews and briefings
- maintaining liaison with members of the TLDMG to ensure the accuracy of information and warnings released
- assisting with the development and distribution of Emergency Alerts and other official warnings
- maintaining a contact register of media contacts
- maintaining a suite of media information and templates for a range of media platforms
- ensuring adequate documentation and record keeping.

Refer PIO Checklist at [Appendix A.](#)

### 3.2. TLDMG Chair

The Chair of the TLDMG is the face of the media during disasters. The Chair is supported by the LDC. All media interactions are coordinated through the PIO to ensure consistent and accurate messaging. The LDC is to authorise all media releases. Uniformed personnel e.g. Queensland Police or Queensland Fire Department may be requested to deliver joint media briefings with the TLDMG Chair to ensure agency authority.

### 3.3. Media Management

Consistent information from all levels of Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements is critical during a disaster. The TLDMG's media is based on an all-hazards approach that identifies preferred spokespeople and key messages to inform the community including reinforcing the:

- TLDMG's role in coordinating support to the affected community
- District Disaster Management Group's role in coordinating whole-of-government support to LDMGs and the affected community.

The TLDMG's media strategy for disaster operations is consistent with the Crisis Communication Network arrangements outlined in the [Queensland Government Arrangements for Coordinating Public Information in a Crisis](#).

TLDMG member agencies may engage with the media in accordance with their own agency's media management policy to share public information on their organisations response operations.

#### 3.3.1. Templates

Key messages for local highest risk events (wet season) have been prepared as per the TCC Communications Emergency Operating Procedure for implementation when required. These pre-prepared message templates are stored in Guardian IMS references.

Warning messages have been pre-prepared for multiple hazards. These warnings are based on the requirements of the Australian Warning System and the Emergency Alert system where relevant and can be found in the reference section of the Guardian IMS system and in a backup, file held by the LDC.

#### 3.3.2. Authorisation of Media Releases

As per the TCC Communications Emergency Operating Procedure and TLDMG Local Disaster Coordination Centre Standard Operating Procedures (LDCC SOP), the release of information to the community regarding an emergency/disaster and associated hazards will be the responsibility of the TLDMG Communications Core Member (or nominated Deputy) on behalf of the TLDMG. All messaging must be reviewed and approved by the LDC of the TLDMG (or delegate) prior to distribution to the public

The LDC will authorise all information disseminated to the community from the TLDMG. This will be done in consultation with the Chair of the TLDMG, the CEO and the lead agency (where relevant).

### 3.3.3. Social Media and Websites (Digital Communications)

Social media will be developed from the authorised information and not require additional approval. Small and specific points of interest and information, not appropriate for wider broadcast, will also be disseminated via social media, without authorisation and at the discretion of the PIO. This includes responses to questions posted on social media and conversations on communication apps like Messenger. The PIO will ensure all interactions are recorded and that advice takes account of the latest situation.

As per the TCC Communications Emergency Operating Procedure, Council's Community Engagement team will ensure relevant and up to date information is available for the community. The process includes:

- The Disaster Dashboard Banner will be the first banner displayed on the public website. A warning notification will be created which will display on all pages within the site pointing users to the Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard.
- Ensure the bandwidth capabilities of Townsville City Council website host (Squiz) are monitored and adjusted where required.
- Setup social monitoring for disaster comms team including following relevant accounts, tracking keywords and hashtags. Add all relevant team members as editors to the Disaster Facebook page in preparation of providing 24/7 social support during a disaster.

When the Activation Level reaches Stand Up:

- Townsville City Council Corporate Facebook Page stays operational however only shares info from TDI page and answers queries as required.
- All TCC owned social media pages pause their own content and redirect to the Disaster Facebook page.
- Only banner on TCC website is Disaster Dashboard banner and all pages have a note to direct customers to the Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard.

### 3.3.4. Media Contacts

An extensive contact list is held by the TCC Community Engagement Team and is updated on a regular basis. Contacts must be Bcc'd when issuing an email.

### 3.3.5. Media Access to LDCC

Media will not be allowed into the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) without the approval of the LDC.

## 3.4. Warnings

### 3.4.1. Warning Sources

LDMG members will receive warning products via a number of means.

The DDC will receive notification directly from the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) and internally through Queensland Police Service Communication Centres and will ensure the dissemination of warnings to vulnerable LDMGs within the district.

The LDC and a number of agencies will also receive warnings directly from the Bureau of Meteorology (Brisbane). The TLDMG will be notified by the LDC and may also receive notification from internal agency central offices. TLDMG members will receive warning products via a number of means including text messaging, email and/or direct phone calls.

Details regarding responsibility for notification processes within TLDMG member agencies are detailed in respective agency plans. Agency plans will include detailed contact registers to achieve dissemination of warnings.

The agency responsible for issuing official warnings is dependent on the hazard.

The [Bureau of Meteorology \(BoM\)](#) is the information source for meteorological events including cyclone, flood (flood alert, flood watch and flood advice), severe storm (including thunderstorm), tsunami, land gales and severe bushfire weather advice to media. AWS compliant warnings for cyclones, storms and floods are the responsibility of the TLDMG.

[Queensland Police Service](#) and [Queensland Fire Department](#) (QFD) are the information sources for hazardous materials incidents. In the event of a major spill or potential contamination, the LDC will distribute the information to members/agencies of the TLDMG and the TCC Customer Experience Team.

[Queensland Health](#) (QH) is the information source for heatwave and health warnings. QH is responsible for ensuring heatwave warnings are compliant with the AWS. TCC is the information source for health warnings relating to water, wastewater and environmental health.

Townsville City Council (Water) is the information sources for dam failures or other issues with dams affecting Townsville.

[Geoscience Australia](#) is the information source for geo-technical hazards. Warnings are not available for earthquakes as they are difficult to predict. A post-event notification may be received that may result in the TLDMG issuing warnings.

[Queensland Fire Department](#) (Fire and Rescue and Rural Fire Service QLD) and [BoM](#) are the information sources for bushfires. QFD is responsible for issuing AWS compliant bushfire warnings. Coordinates media and public information regarding fire, chemical or gas emergency situations.

[Biosecurity Queensland](#) are the information source for emergency animal or plant disease outbreaks and implications for eradication and / or control.

[Department of Transport and Main Roads](#) for information on road closures on state highways (through 13 19 40).

[Ergon Energy](#) provides information regarding power outages and power supply.

[Townsville City Council](#) For local information on road closures, traffic routes, evacuations, shelters and evacuation centres, recovery centres, debris clean-up, and all matters relating to the activation of the TLDMG.

Information and warnings provided by lead agencies will be shared with the community via the TLDMG in the event of an emergency/disaster. All warnings will be pushed to the [Emergency Management & Disaster Dashboard](#).

It is the responsibility of TLDMG Executives and nominated Members, Advisors and Deputies regardless of the status of activation of the TLDMG, to ensure that the appropriate persons (as per their respective plans) are notified of this information.



## 3.5. Public Information & Warnings Distribution

All disaster management groups play a key role in notifying and disseminating information to members of their respective groups and the wider community.

### 3.5.1. Release Methods

Mode of Distribution	Delivery Methods
Radio	Implement pre-recorded radio ads or live reads with key messages (including any relevant changes)
Television	Implement pre-recorded television ads with key messages (including any relevant changes) Arrange interviews for key messages from Chair of TLDMG
Newspaper	Arrange interviews for key messages from Chair of TLDMG
Council's Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard ( <a href="https://disaster.townsville.qld.gov.au">disaster.townsville.qld.gov.au</a> )	User-friendly information sharing platform, which allows the TLDMG to communicate Emergency News and other essential information about disaster events, as well as provides a "one-stop shop" for users to obtain important updates from Emergency Services, Transport & Main Roads, Bureau of Meteorology, etc.
LDCC & TCC Owned Digital Display Billboards	Key information displayed on the external wall of LDCC, and Able to be updated and changed by LDCC staff and members of the Communications and Marketing, and Digital Design and operations team.
External Billboards	Arrange with Paradise Outdoor Advertising digital billboards to be uploaded.
Council's Phone System - Messages on Hold	Implement pre-recorded messages using same script as TV and radio ads
Council's Website ( <a href="https://townsville.qld.gov.au">townsville.qld.gov.au</a> )	Host emergency information for the Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard as required, and Remove all home page banners and feature one directing visitors to the Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard.
Council's Social Media Outlets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook - @townsvillecitycouncil</li> <li>Instagram - @townsvillecouncil</li> <li>LinkedIn - Townsville City Council</li> <li>X (formerly Twitter) - TSVCouncil</li> </ul>	Maintain increased monitoring and posting on TLDMG Facebook Page ("Townsville Disaster Information"), incl. sharing of information from lead agencies. Maintain increased monitoring and posting on @TSVCouncil X (formerly Twitter) account
Digital Advertising	Utilising localised geo-targeting in the following digital platforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spotify</li> <li>YouTube</li> <li>Digital display ads</li> </ul>
Person-to-Person	Doorknocking and/or mobile public address system / speakers
Community organisation networks	Contact as per arrangements through TLDMG

Mode of Distribution	Delivery Methods
Roadside and / or vehicle mounted variable message boards	Specific local messages at key locations
Queensland Government Emergency Alert System	Critical warning/advisory messages sent via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMS to mobile phones; and</li> <li>• Automatic scripted voice recordings to landlines.</li> </ul>
AWS Australian Warning System	Dashboard Website Social Media
Marine Radio	Safety information for mariners and vessels

### 3.5.2. Target Recipients

Townsville City Council understands that some members of the community may need to be specifically targeted with disaster and emergency information and warnings due to their increased vulnerability to the adverse impacts associated with these events. Through Council's risk assessment processes and extensive cooperation and collaboration with local organisations and agencies, potential vulnerable groups throughout the region have been identified and their specific needs considered in Council's communications processes.

Council, on behalf of the TLDMG, undertakes ongoing community engagement throughout the year with these identified vulnerable sectors of the community (and/or the agencies that represent them) with the aim to increase community resilience against emergencies and disaster events

- members of the community including those with special needs (see 3.7.3)
- residents
- visitors/tourists
- TLDMG member agencies (list in Guardian)
- response agencies
- TCC staff
- owners of properties and stations.

### 3.5.3. Special Needs Recipients

Members of the community with special needs e.g. aged, those with disabilities, dialysis patients, etc. should receive early advice of an impending disaster (particularly if it affects their location and in the case of evacuation).

Every effort will be made to ensure vulnerable people in high-risk facilities, such as aged care, hospitals, schools and childcare, are provided with appropriate warnings. The table at section 3.5.4 below identifies how at-risk communities receive warnings and the agency responsible for disseminating the warning. The PIO will provide these messages to the agencies identified to ensure warnings and key messages can be relayed to those with identified special needs.

The PIO will:

- Only distribute necessary and relevant information
- Verbalise visual information, including phone numbers and website details
- Use multiple information and presentation formats
- Keep information consistent, accurate, short and sharp; and
- Use plain language and simple sentences.

In order to assist in the delivery of emergency warning messages, Council will utilise interpreter services (including Auslan), and translate as required.

### 3.5.4. Communicating With at Risk Populations

The following table documents the agencies responsible for the dissemination of evacuation warnings to at risk populations including translation into other languages where this is required.

"At Risk" Population	Warning Method	Agency primarily responsible for dissemination of warnings
General Public	Media releases	LDCC/TLDMG via media contact lists
	Door knocking	QPS with assistance from SES/ADF, etc. as required
	Emergency Alert System	SDCC (LDCC formally requests through QPS)
	TCC Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard, Internet and Social Media	LDCC/TLDMG via TLDMG Public Information and Warnings Sub Plan
	variable message signs (Permanent or trailer mounted)	LDCC/TLDMG via TCC Resource Plant Allocation
Hospitals, Aged Care Facilities		LDCC/TLDMG via TLDMG members and Townsville Aged Care Partnership Group (TACPG) List (refer private contact list in Guardian IMS)
Schools, Day cares, University		LDCC/TLDMG via agency representative on TLDMG
Shopping Centres (Centre Management)		LDCC/TLDMG via agency representative on the Evacuation & Transport Working Group.
Detention Centres		LDCC/TLDMG via agency representative on the Shelters and Evacuation Centres Working Group
Tourists	Via Tourism Operators, Accommodation Providers, Location-based Emergency Alerts, etc.	Townsville Enterprise Ltd
Caravan Parks & Marinas		LDCC/TLDMG via contact list (refer private contact list in Guardian IMS)

<b>"At Risk" Population</b>	<b>Warning Method</b>	<b>Agency primarily responsible for dissemination of warnings</b>
Non-English Speaking	Contact Townsville Multicultural Support Group and Migrant Resource Centre	LDCC/TLDMG via agency representative on TLDMG
People with a Disability		NGO's, Agencies, Government Departments via their contact lists
Marine Users	Marine Radio and Distress Systems and Networks	Maritime Safety Queensland (Department of Transport and Main Roads)
Rough Sleepers		Queensland Police Service with assistance from CARE Coordination Group and SES
Mass Gathering Venues		LDCC/TLDMG via agency representative on TLDMG

## 3.6. Triggers for Community Warnings

Events that will trigger community messaging include, but are not limited to:

- Cyclone and storm tide
- Riverine flooding - particularly in relation to Ross River Dam
- Localised flash flood events
- Potential landslides
- Bushfire - particularly if in or adjacent to major urban areas
- Public health events - pandemics, heatwave, etc and
- Public infrastructure failures - water, sewage treatment.

Information for events will be analysed and assessed as per the TLDMP and its sub plans and procedures. Decisions relating to warnings of impending events, possible evacuations or other issues affecting the local community will be distributed via a range of methods and in a timely manner.

Communications will focus on preparation for and response to disaster events ensuring that residents are informed of:

- the progress of the event
- the progress made in mitigating or responding to the event and
- the threat to themselves and the actions they need to take.

Note - Messaging relating to riverine flooding from Paluma Dam is the responsibility of Charters Towers Regional Council.

### 3.6.1. Warning Content

Messages must be clear and unambiguous to ensure they result in the desired action. Warnings must:

- be from an official source
- be simple, arresting and brief
- be in plain English
- be suited to the community
- promote action
- explain the nature and location of the problem, and anticipated timeframes
- indicate probability of the event occurring
- identify continuing hazards and safety instructions
- indicate time of next warning/update.

The PIO will reference [Emergency Warnings – Choosing your Words](#) when preparing information and warnings. This is a national reference document on how to construct emergency warning messages for the Australia community.

The PIO will ensure all messaging is linked to the original source and that information is not replicated or reproduced. This ensures accuracy from a single point of truth and is particularly important given the rapidly changing nature of disasters and the associated impacts.

## 3.6.2. Warning Principles

Ten principles guide the development and use of warnings in Australia

1	<b>Life-saving:</b> Warnings can save lives and protect people from harm. They prompt and encourage protective action to minimise the social and economic impacts of an emergency. Warnings are an essential element of effective emergency management.
2	<b>Empowering:</b> The provision of warnings enacts a national commitment to building shared responsibility for disaster resilience, by empowering people to make decisions about their own safety.
3	<b>Trusted, authoritative and verifiable:</b> For greatest effect, warnings must come from a trusted source and be verifiable through multiple channels. Warnings should therefore be easily and widely shared to recognise the diversity of potential trusted sources. The official authority issuing a warning should always be clearly stated.
4	<b>Scaled based on risk:</b> Scaled warning frameworks should guide the delivery of all warnings and support the consistent risk assessment of a hazard, its impact and its consequence.
5	<b>Timely, targeted and tailored:</b> Warnings should be timely, targeted to communities at risk and tailored to provide detail and relevance. Specific consideration should be given to harder to reach and vulnerable members of the community.
6	<b>Conveying impact:</b> Warnings should describe the expected impacts and consequences of an approaching or current hazard, to assist people to understand and be motivated to take protective action.
7	<b>Including a call-to-action:</b> Warnings should include practical calls-to-action using language tailored to the level of risk, ranging from advice and persuasive recommendations to authoritative direction.
8	<b>Clearly communicated:</b> Warnings should be easy to understand and use a consistent structure to provide information. Both written and visual information should be considered to assist with clearly conveying risk and encouraging protective action.
9	<b>Readily accessible:</b> Warnings should be disseminated via multiple channels, tailored to suit each channel, and consider accessibility for diverse audiences. Ease of sharing and rapid dissemination should be supported with use of nationally agreed technical standards, and dissemination strategies should be in place to adapt to failure of technology or other systems.
10	<b>Part of a bigger picture:</b> Warnings are one component within a systems-based approach to community safety. Community engagement, education and awareness programs better prepare communities to receive, understand and act upon warnings.

Source: [Warning Principles - Public Information and Warnings Handbook s1.2](#)



## 3.7. Australian Warning System (AWS)

The [Australian Warning System](#) is a new national approach to information and warnings during emergencies like bushfire, flood, storm, extreme heat and severe weather. The Warning system aims to provide consistent warnings to Australian communities and uses a nationally consistent set of icons and colours for each hazard, so that people know what to do when they see a warning level. There are three warning levels:

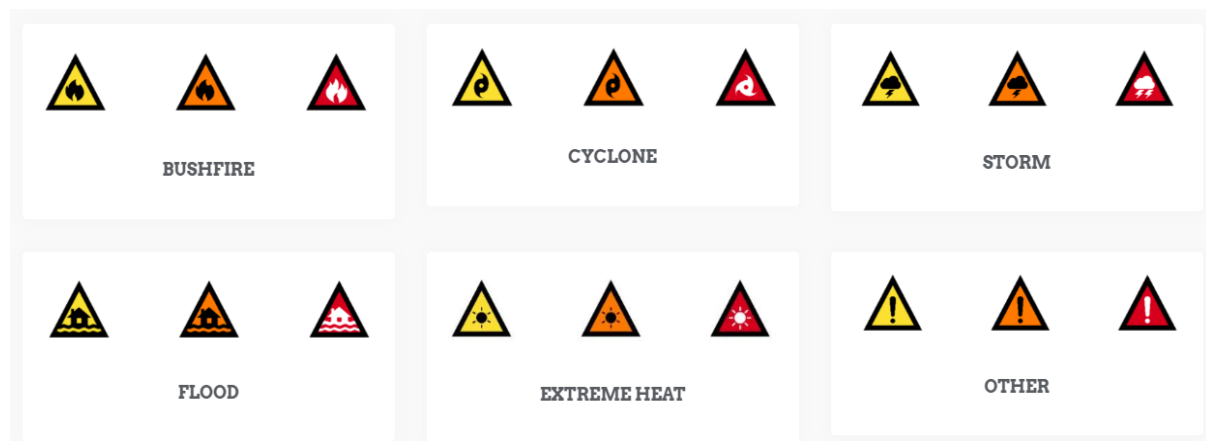
- **Advice (Yellow):**  
An incident has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.
- **Watch and Act (Orange):**  
There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.
- **Emergency Warning (Red):**  
An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

Each warning level has a set of action statements to give the community clearer advice about what to do. Calls to Action can be used flexibly across all three warning levels depending on the hazard.

The TLDMG will issue warnings for a storm, cyclone, and flood. Warnings about hazards such as bushfire, heatwave, biosecurity threats, and chemical spills will be issued by the relevant functional lead agency as set out in Section 3.4.

Warnings will be broadcasted to the community via the Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard, social media, and through local media outlets.

TCC has prepared a number of AWS warnings for use in a disaster event. This messaging may require tailoring to the specifics of an event. The warnings are stored in Guardian IMS references.



## 3.8. Emergency Alerts (EAs)

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) and to mobile phones. The "Emergency Alert" (EA) system will be utilised by the TLDMG as required and as per the [Queensland Emergency Alert Manual](#).

Messages will:

- warn targeted areas of the local community of imminent and severe threats from disaster events and
- direct those warned to other sources of information and actions required.

Council will utilise geospatial 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 of up to max 4000 characters, ideally message should be less than 450 characters to all identified landline telephone services
- send a text message of up to a maximum of 612 characters, ideally should be less than 160 characters including spaces to all identified mobile phone devices containing a SIM card and
- report on the delivery of these messages.

The local areas to receive the messages and contents of the message will be prepared by the TLDMG, approved by the LDC, TLDMG and processed as per the Queensland Emergency Alert Manual - M.1.174.

Predefined messages and mapped areas have been prepared for flood, tsunami and storm tide zones as per the TLDMG Tsunami Evacuation Guide and Townsville Emergency Action Guide ([www.townsville.qld.gov.au](http://www.townsville.qld.gov.au)) and stored by the Watch Desk, State Disaster Coordination Centre. These messages and mapped areas will be reviewed by the LDC annually in collaboration with Council's Spatial Analysts and Community Engagement Team.

A list of pre-approved emergency alert messages and map polygons have been prepared for implementation when required - refer Guardian IMS references.

Council and the TLDMG participate in exercises at least annually to evaluate the request process, as well as assess message content and polygon criteria for Emergency Alert. Details of these exercises are held by the Emergency Management Team.

A blank EA form can be found in Guardian IMS references.

**Emergency alert messages are sent from: +61 444 444 444**

These messages are not a scam and are official text messages from the Queensland State Disaster Coordination Centre as part of the national geo-targeting emergency alert system

### 3.8.1. Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)

The SEWS is a wailing siren sound that has been adopted by all States and Territories to alert the community to the broadcast of an urgent safety message relating to an emergency/disaster. The signal is sounded immediately prior to an emergency warning message being played on public media broadcasts, in the potential or likely impacted areas. As part of a coordinated national emergency plan, the SEWS is used to attract attention to emergency warnings such as cyclone warnings.

Responsibility for the management of SEWS in Queensland rests with the Chief Executive of the DM Act, in coordination with the Queensland State Manager BoM for meteorological purposes.

Full SEWS procedures can be found in the Queensland Standard Emergency Warning Signal - Manual M.1.171

# Appendix A: Public Information Officer (PIO) Operational Checklist

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)	
Reports to Local Disaster Coordinator	Tick
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain watching brief / state of readiness and receive initial information regarding disaster event from LDC.</li> <li>Commence operations log in Guardian IMS. Maintain adequate records of all media releases, contacts and activities.</li> <li>Regularly review Guardian IMS for tasks and to maintain situational awareness.</li> <li>Implement Public Information &amp; Warnings Sub-Plan in collaboration with other cells.</li> <li>Establish liaison with local radio and media outlets to confirm key contacts for community alerts, warnings and media releases / briefing schedules. Encourage 24-hour transmission where appropriate.</li> <li>If LDCC is activated, release LDCC Activated media release. Send LDCC Activated all staff email.</li> <li>Ensure access to pre-formatted media releases and warnings.</li> <li>Draft media releases for approval as required.</li> <li>Ensure relevant information and warnings are authorised by the TLDMG Chair and LDC as required. Distribute as per section 3.5 Public Information &amp; Warnings Sub-Plan and ensure all releases are uploaded into Guardian bulletins for display in the LDCC and on the Disaster Dashboard.</li> <li>Coordinate and manage media interviews and briefings.</li> <li>Report media misinformation and discrepancies to the LDC.</li> <li>Manage personnel assigned to the Public Information Cell (briefings, debriefings, welfare requirements, etc).</li> <li>Contribute to Incident Action Plan and Situation Reports (SITREPS) as required.</li> <li>Participate in debriefs as required.</li> </ul>	



**TOWNSVILLE  
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