



EVACUATION

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Amendment Register

Version Number	Date of Amendment	Amendment Detail	Approval/Author
1.0	June 2018	New Version	Caitlyn Williams
1.1	July 2019	Annual Review	Caitlyn Williams Stretch Noonan
1.2	Oct 2020	Annual Review	Jo Moloney
1.3	Oct 2024	Annual Review	Emily McGrath

Administration and Governance

Purpose of the plan

This plan is intended to provide for the planned relocation of persons from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas to safer locations and eventual return.

Context

There are several emergency/disaster situations that might require an evacuation of all or part of the population. Small-scale, localised evacuations might be needed because of flash flooding, hazardous materials accident or major fire, while the evacuation of larger areas may be required because of major flooding, cyclones or storm surges.

Evacuating hazardous areas is the most effective action for protecting people in many disaster or disaster-threat situations. Evacuation may be required pre-impact, as a protective measure, or post-impact, as a result of a loss of services.

As outlined in the State Disaster Management Plan, Queensland Police Service is responsible for the management of the evacuation process.

This Operational Plan discusses evacuation in general terms and is not site-specific. The Operational Checklist at the end of the document is designed to guide the evacuation as it unfolds.

Planning Assumptions

It is assumed the public will receive and understand official information related to evacuation. Most of the public will act in their own interest and evacuate dangerous areas when advised to do so by authorities. Some individuals, however, may refuse to evacuate. Those individuals will be left until all who are willing to leave have been provided for.

Some events are slow-moving and provide ample reaction time. The worst-case assumption there will be little or no warning of the need to evacuate and it may be necessary to evacuate day or night. There may not be time to obtain support from outside resources. Local resources could be severely stretched.

Temporary accommodation facilities and food will need to be provided for evacuees; although many may seek shelter with relatives and friends rather than use designated evacuation centre facilities. Most evacuees will use private transportation means; however, transportation may need to be provided for some evacuees.

Spontaneous voluntary evacuation will occur when there is sufficient warning of the threat. Past events suggest that between 5 (5%) and 20 (20%) per cent of people at risk will evacuate before being directed to do so. Some people will refuse to evacuate, regardless of the threat.

Evacuation Planning Committee

Membership

An Evacuation Committee is established, comprising the following agencies:

Organisation	Position
Queensland Police Service	Officer in Charge
Queensland Police Service	Emergency Management Coordinator
Weipa Town Authority (Weipa LDMG)	Local Disaster Coordinator (WTA Superintendent), Weipa LDMG Chairperson
State Emergency Service	Local Controller
Queensland Ambulance Service	Office in Charge
Weipa Integrated Health Service (Hospital)	Director of Nursing
<i>Other agencies may be involved in an ad hoc advisory capacity.</i>	

Role

The role of the Evacuation Planning Committee is to:

- develop and maintain a viable evacuation plan.
- advise the Local Disaster Management Group in relation to the perceived need for any evacuation during a major event.
- assist in the management of an evacuation as required.

Community Education Awareness

WTA maintains an active community engagement and education strategy in relation to a number of disaster management areas, including the response required from the community to disaster events.

Stages of Activation

- a) Decision
- b) Warning
- c) Withdrawal
- d) Shelter
- e) Return

It should be noted no evacuation can be considered complete until the evacuated population has been returned (where possible) to its original location

Decision

Sometimes reaching the decision that evacuation is required is very easy - it becomes obvious that evacuation is the only sensible way of protecting the population. In other instances, the decision is less obvious, and if delayed, could cause substantial problems.

The decision to recommend the public evacuates an area for their own safety is not a light decision. 'Cry wolf' syndrome may result in the evacuation later being deemed unnecessary. As the recommendation is just that - a recommendation - it has no basis in law, and may be disregarded by a sceptical population

Where possible, the decision for such recommendation will be made by the full Local Disaster Management Group, after an appropriate situational briefing. Where time is of the essence, the decision to recommend evacuation may be taken by the Local Disaster Coordinator, following consultation with the Officer in Charge, Weipa Police.

Managed evacuation is specifically provided for only the following:

- a) a declaration of a *disaster situation* under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act;
- b) a declaration of an *emergency situation* under the provisions of the Public Safety Preservation Act; or
- c) in relation to specific powers under the provisions of the Fire and Rescue Service Act.

In these instances, the authority for the declaration lies with:

- a) the District Disaster Coordinator, with Ministerial approval;
- b) a Commissioned Officer of Police; and
- c) an authorised officer, respectively.

A managed evacuation in Weipa would be an extremely rare event.

If it is apparent an evacuation must be carried out to protect the lives of the population at risk, there is provision for managed evacuation, which is enforceable under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act. The decision to invoke an evacuation rests with the District Disaster Coordinator, following consultation with the Local Disaster Management Group, and in accordance with a Declaration of a Disaster Situation under the provisions of the Act.

Whether the evacuation is recommended or managed, the decision and its application must be timely. Sufficient warning time must be given to allow the movement of the population from a place of danger to a safer location, given the restriction of weather conditions, transport availability and the capacity of the road network to handle the amount of traffic which will result.

Evacuation Timelines

Cyclone

A Bureau of Meteorology **tropical cyclone watch** is issued for coastal communities when the onset of gales is expected within 48 hours, but not within 24 hours.

A **tropical cyclone warning** is issued for coastal communities when the onset of gales is expected within 24 hours or are already occurring.

While the threat remains, a tropical cyclone advice will be issued every six hours, increasing to every three hours when cyclone warnings are required. In some circumstances, when a cyclone approaching the coast is under radar surveillance, the advice may be issued hourly.

Any evacuation because of tropical cyclone activity **MUST** be completed prior to the onset of 100 km/h wind gusts at both point of evacuation and destination, but it is strongly recommended members of the community are encouraged to be in shelter by the time wind gusts reach gale force, or approximately 70-75 km/h.

Bushfire

While the likelihood of the requirement for an evacuation because of a bush fire in the Weipa area is remote, Western Cape Rural Fire Service will monitor the projected path of any bushfire and will issue evacuation advice as appropriate.

Hazardous Material Incident

This is a sudden on-set event. There is no notice available for hazardous material incidents.

Suggested Event Timelines

Hazard	Exposed Areas	Population	Evacuation Method	Safer Location	Estimated Evacuation Timeframe	Transport Issues
Tropical Cyclone	Total Weipa Area	Approx. 3900	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tropical Cyclone with associated Storm Tide	Trunding Storm Tide up to HAT + 2 m	Approx. 960	Evacuation (voluntary/directed)	Weipa Storm Surge Shelter	Decision + 3 hours	Most households have at least one vehicle, but a community bus could be provided to assist Alternatives within walking distance for some residents.
	Trunding & Nanum Storm Tide over HAT + 2 m	Approx. 1880	Evacuation (voluntary/directed)	Weipa Storm Surge Shelter	Decision + 4 hours	
	Rocky Point & Golf Links Storm Tide over HAT + 2m-3m	Approx 1060	Evacuation (voluntary/directed)	Weipa Storm Surge Shelter	Decision + 4 hours	

^ Inundation areas as depicted by the Storm Surge Maps available from WTA.

Warnings

The prime function of a warning is to elicit action from the community. If a warning does not describe in extremely clear terms the situation, the resultant risk, and the desired response from the community, it will not be effective.

Many evacuation warnings will have been pre-empted by information provided by various sources regarding the hazard, e.g. the Bureau of Meteorology's cyclone track predictions, etc. This information will hopefully have made the community more aware of the situation, thereby making them more receptive to information about their ongoing safety.

Warnings should, at the minimum, include reference to:

- The areas to be evacuated
- Suggestions as to safe locations to relocate to
- Lead Time
- Anticipated duration of the evacuation
- The need to take appropriate food, clothing, and other disaster supplies during an evacuation
- The desirability of helping neighbours who may need assistance during an evacuation
- Provision of advance warning to special facilities & advise them to activate their evacuation transportation & reception arrangements
-

Methods of warning the community are as diverse as communities themselves. There is no 'one size fits all' for warnings. Some of the warning mechanisms which may be considered in case of evacuation are:

- Telephone / Mobile telephone SMS systems (Emergency Alert system)
- Radio

- Emergency Services public address vehicles
- House to house (State Emergency Service volunteers)

Withdrawal

Evacuation Routes

Except for site-specific evacuation plans, the determination of evacuation routes will involve ad hoc planning, dependent upon the type of hazard involved, the weather conditions, and the current viability of the transport network.

For site-specific evacuation planning, the following should be considered:

Mapping

- Identification and mapping of appropriate routes to be used for evacuation purposes, including an assessment of the maximum capacity of the road at any given time
- Ensuring the population at risk is aware of the route(s) to be taken should evacuation be necessary
- Maintenance, Security and Traffic Control
- Ensuring the roads are maintained in good condition
- Ensuring the roads always remain trafficable, and are not blocked by any impediment, either accidentally or deliberately
- Changed traffic conditions

Transportation

- It is anticipated the primary means of evacuation for most individuals will be by personal transport. However, some individuals do not own vehicles and others will need assistance in evacuating. Provisions must be made to provide transportation for these individuals
- There will be a need for coordination of transportation for evacuees without vehicles or who need assistance in evacuating, determining and establishing pickup points if necessary.
- There may be a need for coordination of transportation assistance for the evacuation of special facilities.

Assembly Areas

In the case of Weipa being used as a reception area for evacuees from elsewhere, it may be necessary to establish assembly areas, to which evacuees will travel, and be further directed to a destination.

Not every evacuation will require assembly areas, but when they are required, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Need
- Number
- Location
- Facilities

Security of Evacuated Areas

Evacuated areas should be secured from the possibility of illegal activity in relation to unattended properties and the potential for death or injury to members of the community. A secure cordon utilising road blocks should be considered. Where it is considered safe so to do, internal patrols of the evacuated areas should also be mounted.

Shelter

The ideal situation is evacuated members of the community will have made alternative accommodation arrangements with relatives or friends in safer locations, thereby negating the need for the disaster management system to provide such accommodation.

Evacuation Centres

Premises will need to be identified within Weipa for alternative short term emergency accommodation purposes for housing evacuees. These houses are not shelters as they do not provide a safe refuge from an event, like a cyclone, for example. The premises are intended to provide basic accommodation and welfare necessities for a short time only.

Documentation

The effective management of information in relation to evacuations is important from a community awareness perspective.

Police, State Emergency Service and WTA telephone systems will potentially be jammed by people seeking information about their relatives in affected areas. A registration service provided at evacuation centres will register all members of the community within the individual evacuation centres.

If Assembly Areas are set up, it would be helpful to have the evacuees register there with an intended destination, if they are not going to be accommodated in an evacuation centre.

Return

The following questions need to be answered prior to allowing evacuated members of the community to return to their homes and businesses:

- Has the hazardous situation that caused the evacuation abated?
- Has sufficient debris been removed to permit travel?
- Are roads and jetties safe to use?
- Have fallen power lines been removed; ruptured water, and sewer lines repaired; and other significant safety hazards eliminated?
- Have structures been inspected and determined to be safe to re-occupy?

In a major event with significant widespread ramifications, it may be necessary to restrict access for a considerable time, and to allow access on a short-term basis only to allow incremental repairs to properties. The following issues need to be addressed in this regard:

- Identification and bona fides of persons requesting re-entry?
- Staged re-entry to permit repairs, etc?

Special Needs Population

There are several sections of the population which require special assistance in daily life and will require special consideration during a major evacuation. The following should be considered in evacuation planning:

- Home-bound population / Mobility impaired
- Aged
- Medical (Home Dialysis Machines, Oxygen Concentrators)
- Transient population (motel and hotel guests, tourists)
- Communities with a lack of transport (private or public)

There are several agencies within the community which are familiar with the location and status of special needs groups within the general population, such as Weipa Hospital and the Queensland Ambulance Service. Given the related privacy requirements, advice should be sought from those agencies at the relevant time.

Hospital

If evacuation of the facility is required, patients should be transported, with appropriate medical support to an alternative facility. Queensland Health, as the facility operator, is responsible for making arrangements for suitable transportation and coordinating use of appropriate host facilities.

In the case of short-notice or no-notice emergency situations, facilities may be unable to make the required arrangements for transportation and may need assistance from the Local Disaster Management Group with transportation and in identifying suitable reception facilities.

Schools / Day Care Centres, etc

Education Queensland have developed evacuation plans for their facilities, which include the notification of parents and the involvement of school bus providers.

Private day care centre providers are responsible for the development of their own evacuation processes.

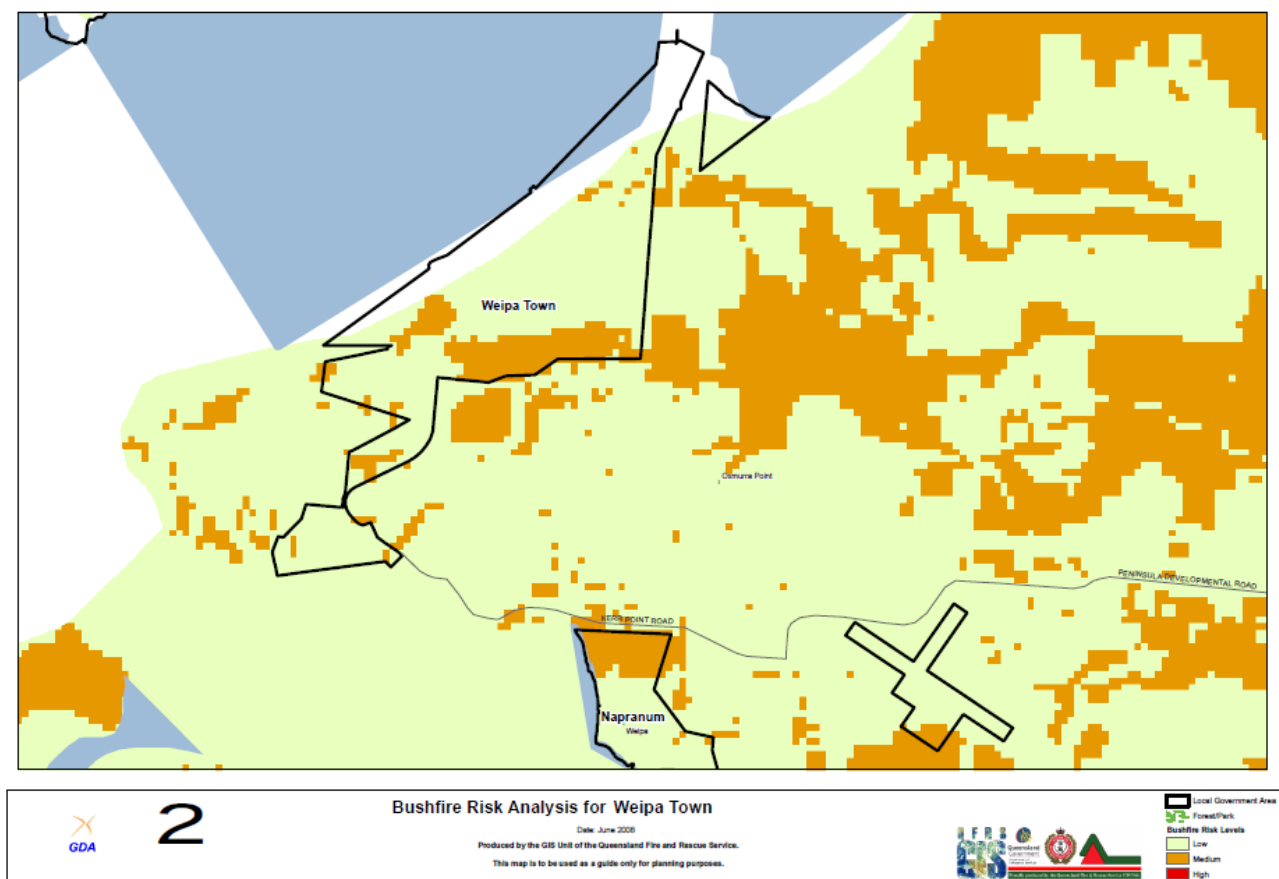
Animals

No special arrangements have been made for the looking after of pets or domesticated animals. This is the responsibility of the individual owner.

Hazard Areas

Bushfire

A bushfire hazard map for the area has been produced by Western Cape Rural Fire Service and is attached, (Contact Weipa Town Authority for further information).



Tropical Cyclone

Weipa is vulnerable to the effects of tropical cyclones.

A percentage of the community is vulnerable to storm surge inundation. Storm surge threat mapping has been developed, to indicate the areas of the community potentially inundated by storm surge activity. Storm surge mapping can be obtained from the WTA office.

Hazardous Material Incident

A number of hazardous materials are transported through and stored in the community. This includes a range of chemicals and petroleum products.

There is a community-wide hazardous material incident potential which, dependent upon the location and the materials involved, could require an evacuation.

Material Safety Data Sheets, available to the LDMG via various means, provide sound advice in relation to the evacuation parameters required in response to chemical incidents.

Population exposed

There are approximately 4,000 persons in the Weipa Township Area that could be exposed to the various hazards listed in this sub plan.