

City of Ipswich

Local Disaster Management Sub Plan

Evacuation Centres

A3980097: April 2018



Approval and Endorsement

Approval by resolution at the Infrastructure and Emergency Management Committee No. 2018(04) of 16 April 2018 and Council Ordinary Meeting of 23 April 2018.

Endorsement by the City of Ipswich Local Disaster Management Group Meeting of 15 May 2018.

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PART 1: ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

1.1 Authorising Environment

This plan is prepared by Ipswich City Council under the auspices of the Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) for the City of Ipswich and pursuant to the provisions of Section 57(1) of the Disaster Management Act 2003.

1.2 Principles

This sub plan has been prepared as supporting document to the LDMP. Accordingly it must be read in conjunction with the LDMP itself. With the exception of pertinent information, reference to existing statements, definitions and acronyms will be excluded from the sub plan.

Each disaster event is unique and adaptations to this material will required on a case by case basis.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this sub plan is to provide a framework for establishment and management of evacuation centres during a disaster situation.

Ipswich City Council is the nominated lead functional agency for the Evacuation Centres, as such specific evaluation, plans and procedures relating to individual Centres will be completed as part of Council's Emergency Management preparedness operations. Council has established a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Red Cross to provide Evacuation Centre Management.

1.4 Key Objectives

The key objectives of this sub plan is to:

- Determine the sheltering arrangements for the City of Ipswich Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)
- Outline arrangements for the establishment and management of evacuations centres

1.5 Continuous Improvement

This document will be reviewed at least annually¹ with relevant amendments made and distributed as needed. The review process will be in accordance with the State guidelines. Minor amendments that do not materially affect the plan are able to be authorised by the Principal Officer (Emergency Management).

¹ Section 59, Disaster Management Act 2003, Reviewing and Renewing (the) Plan

It is acknowledged that feedback from stakeholders is essential. Proposals for amendments or inclusions can be addressed in writing to:

Post Chief Executive Officer
 Attention: Emergency Management Unit
 Ipswich City Council
 PO Box 191, Ipswich QLD 4305

Email council@ipswich.qld.gov.au

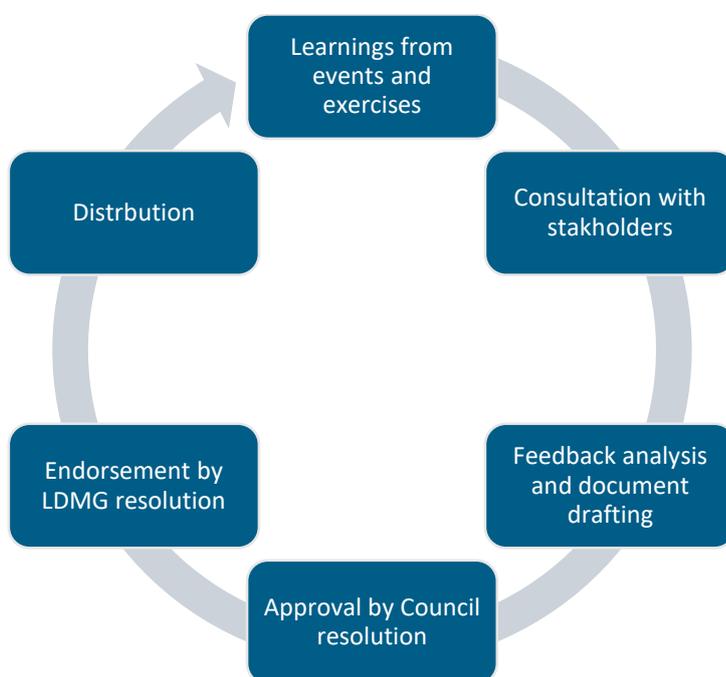


Figure 1 – Continuous Improvement Cycle

1.6 Amendment Register

Major document review history is maintained through Council’s internal electronic document management system. Table 1 outlines minor and inconsequential amendments that have occurred between major reviews or amendments.

Vers	Date	Comment
2.00	April 2018	Approved and endorsed version
2.01	Jan 2019	Annual Review – Minor and inconsequential amendments – update of template
2.02	21 May 2019	Minor and inconsequential amendments

Table 1 – Amendment Register

PART 2: KEY INFORMATION FOR LDMG MEMBERS

Significant opportunities for improvement and improved community outcomes have presented following various disaster events, including the 2011 and 2013 floods that impacted the City of Ipswich.

A summary of the key information is provided below:

- Shelter in place is the preferred option, where safe to do so. People are more comfortable in their home, despite limits to service availability.
- Evacuation centres are a place of last resort. Those suffering the trauma of a disaster event will have better outcomes and a more comfortable environment by seeking shelter with family or friends where possible.
- The single source of truth for open evacuation centres within the City of Ipswich LDMG is the Emergency Management Dashboard. Refer to <http://emd.ipswich.qld.gov.au>. Messaging around evacuation centres and evacuation generally should be consistent and coordinated.
- Evacuation centres require significant human resources during widespread events particularly, Red Cross staff and volunteers may be scarce. Organisations should not establish their own centres, as they may not be able to be supported to the same level.

PART 3: THE SHELTERING CONTEXT

Shelter, food and water are the most fundamental needs of people during a disaster event. Additionally, the need for somewhere to live, rest and sleep becomes vitally important, particularly for many of the more vulnerable groups in the community.

In response to a threat, the relevant authorities (either the Primary Agency or the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) or District Disaster Coordinator (DDC)) will initiate a five stage evacuation process.

The first three stages involve determining appropriate action in relation to the emergency, issuing warnings and evacuating. Return is the final stage in the evacuation process, and requires the careful planning and management of people as they return to their homes and community.



For more information on the other stages of evacuation, see the **Evacuation Process Sub Plan**.

3.1 “Sheltering” within the Stages of Evacuation

Shelter is considered the fourth stage and the provision and management of safe locations away from the potential hazard or area of impact. The LDMG is responsible for nominating these locations.

Sheltering is a process that goes beyond the provision of a physical structure. Prior to, or in the face of a threat, the emphasis should be on the provision of basic needs such as food, water, information and shelter from the hazard. This is often referred to as the immediate sheltering phase, up to 18 hours. A different phase of sheltering is temporary sheltering (the stages are not sequential). More comprehensive support may be required for up to three weeks before alternative arrangements can be made or it is safe to return home.

There are numerous types of shelters which may be established and utilised in response to various disasters. In Queensland, evacuation centres are only one type of shelter used during a disaster event.

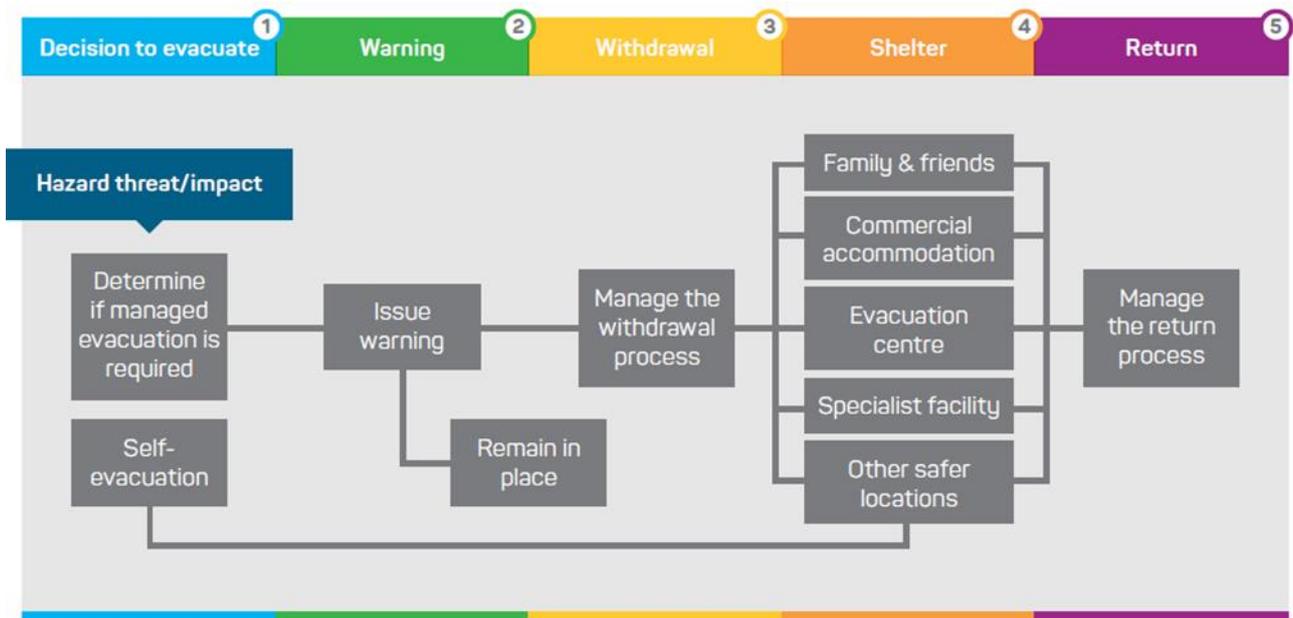


Figure 2 – Five Stages of Evacuation



This document deals only with the Shelter stage of the five stages of evacuation, in regards to Evacuation Centres.

3.2 Defining Characteristics of an Evacuation Centre²

Evacuation centres will be established by the LDMG.

Evacuation centres are characteristically:

- A building or facility that has been pre-designated and which is not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard.
- Used for temporary sheltering that usually extends beyond 18 hours and until recovery services are arranged.
- Providing relief services to the wider community whom may not be residing in the shelter / centre and at the minimum, supporting the basic needs affected by the emergency including:
 - Food and water
 - Non-food items, such as clothing
 - Registration
 - First Aid
 - Psychological First Aid

In certain situations, it may be necessary to utilise facilities not listed in the plan. The principles in this document can still be used as guides to assist in the management of any facility.

² Australian Red Cross Queensland Evacuation Centre Management Handbook

In any evacuation, the primary and secondary needs of affected people include:

- Primary needs
 - Safety of people and property
 - Shelter
 - Food and clothing
 - Adequate rest and sleep
 - General physical and emotional wellbeing
- Secondary needs
 - Maintenance of dignity
 - A sense of control of one’s destiny, a sense of order and belonging
 - Privacy
 - Access to accurate and timely information
 - Attending to urgent personal practical matters

Evacuation centres are open to all affected persons within the community, however special arrangements will need to be put in place for affected persons who are not self-caring, such as those with additional or special needs. The needs and dynamics of affected people accessing the evacuation centre will therefore be as diverse as any community and should be planned for in the resourcing and layout of the centre.

3.3 People

It can be helpful to break down the differences in people associated with evacuation centres for more accurate provision of assistance and reporting.



Figure 3 – People

Evacuees: people who are temporarily displaced as a result of a threatening or real hazard.

Self-Sheltering: people who have sourced their own shelter in response to a threatening or existing hazard.

Centre Residents: people accessing an evacuation centre for basic needs and services. They will usually be registered, have completed an intake form and be sleeping on site.

Centre Day Guests: people temporarily accessing an evacuation centre for basic needs and services, such as meals and information. They may be registered but are not sleeping on site.

Centre Visitors: unaffected persons who may be temporarily providing support services such as financial or mental health support or viewing the operations of the centre (e.g. media and VIPs). Depending on the location and scope of the disaster event, it may be necessary for local care facilities such as hospitals, aged care facilities and child care centres to be evacuated to an evacuation centre. In such instances, people requiring carers support may be accepted within the evacuation centre as long as registered carers such as nurses or childcare workers are on shift for the duration of their stay.

Consideration should take into account members of the community who may visit evacuation centres to access basic needs such as food, water, registration, information and personal support, even if they have external sleeping arrangements.

3.4 Special Considerations

3.4.1 People with Additional or Special Needs³

Managing evacuation centres often includes assisting people who are under a great deal of stress, and who may suffer from a variety of health and social issues. It is vital to recognise that the situations people are dealing with are often volatile and may lead to risky behaviours that could pose a danger to themselves and/or others.

Not all specific needs can be met when delivering services in an evacuation centre. Certain needs may have to be addressed on a 'best endeavours' basis. Council should not be obliged to take sole responsibility for specific needs and should continue the good practice already underway of engaging with providers who have expertise in supporting these specific needs.

3.4.2 Considerations When Providing Individual Support

Centre Managers are not expected to be specialists in caring for additional / special needs residents, but should be proactive in supporting all affected people. The best option is always to seek guidance from the people with additional / special needs or specialist organisations.



'The rule of two', means that it is recommended that staff members should work in groups of two or more when working with people with additional / special needs. There should also always be two staff present when working with or interacting with a child. This not only creates protection for the child, but also protects the worker from any potential false accusations.

³ Australian Red Cross *Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit*

3.4.3 When Working with Children⁴

- Always remain in eyesight and ear shot of other personnel;
- Do not initiate any physical contact such as hugs, allowing children to sit on the lap of a staff member, lifting or carrying. (A parent who has several children or those with a disability may ask for assistance in carrying an infant and this would be appropriate);
- Ensure care givers have given permission before engaging the child in any evacuation centre activities;
- Consult with the care giver before giving a child any food or drink as many children have differing allergies and dietary restrictions.

3.4.4 Considerations for Supporting Groups with Additional or Special Needs

The Evacuation Centre Manager should use the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) as a primary contact for the provision of support and expertise for evacuees with additional or special needs.⁵

⁴ Australian Red Cross *Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit: Advice from Save the Children*

⁵ Australian Red Cross *Queensland Evacuation Centre Management Handbook*

PART 4: PRINCIPLES FOR EVACUATION CENTRES

4.1 Site Suitability

Multiple sites have been identified by Council for use as evacuation centre sites and other safer locations in the event of a disaster. Sites have been identified in several locations, in order to ensure that sufficient capacity can be provided to house evacuees, regardless of where the impact zone is located.

4.2 Site Classification

Evacuation Centre sites identified by Council have been categorised as shown in Table 2.

Category	Features
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Site has been assessed and profiled for use by Council- An MOU or other agreement has been established between the site owner and Council- Location is unlikely to be affected by most prevalent hazards to the Ipswich Local Government Area (LGA)
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Site has been identified as a possible location for evacuation, but has not been assessed and profiled for use by Council- No MOU exists between Council and the site owner- Site is located within or in proximity to areas impacted by previous events

Table 2 – Evacuation Centre Categories

A list of these sites and their recommended uses can be found in Council’s internal procedural documents.

4.3 Management and Operation of Centres

The City of Ipswich LDMG adopts the preferred sheltering practices of the Australian Red Cross in relation to the management of evacuation centres.

PART 5: ACTIVATION OF AN EVACUATION CENTRE

5.1 Site Review

Prior to the decision that an evacuation centre should be activated at a particular site, a review of the conditions at that location should be undertaken in order to determine its continued viability as a centre.

5.2 Site Preparation and Establishment

Once it has been determined that the location is still appropriate for activation as an evacuation centre, it should be prepared and all requirements established, prior to opening.

5.3 Layout

A recommended layout for each evacuation centre as identified in Council's list of possible evacuation centre sites should be included in the Evacuation Site Assessment for each site. As part of the review process, this should be checked to ensure that any works or alterations to the building have not rendered it obsolete. If this is the case, an amended floor plan may be required. Consider that this may also alter the capacity of the site.

5.4 Resourcing

The appropriate resourcing of evacuation centres prior to activation is an important consideration.

5.5 Evacuation Centre Kits

An Evacuation Centre Kit is a collection of items essential for the establishment and initial operations of an evacuation centre. The Kit makes resources immediately available to personnel during the early stages of an evacuation centre's operation, when resources may be challenging to acquire.⁶

The Ipswich City Council has two sets of the Red Cross endorsed evacuation centre kit bags available for immediate use. They are colloquially referred to as 'the green bags'.



Ipswich City Council as part of its emergency management program prepares more detailed procedures to support the activation and operation of Evacuation Centres.

⁶ Australian Red Cross *Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit*

PART 6: OPERATION OF AN EVACUATION CENTRE

6.1 Personnel Management

There are a variety of different personnel required to assist in the day-to-day management of an evacuation centre. Core positions that should be filled include:

- Evacuation Centre Manager (*Generally Red Cross*)
- Deputy Manager
- Logistics Officer
- Administration Officer
- Facilities Officer

The LDCC should be alerted if there are any insufficiencies in staffing arrangements for an evacuation centre.

6.2 Evacuee Acceptance

Evacuation centres are open to all self-caring evacuees within the community, i.e. all those who are able to feed, toilet and shower themselves, and who do not require supervision whilst passing time within the evacuation centre.⁷ Evacuees who do require additional assistance (such as children, the aged, and those with special needs) may be accepted at evacuation centres, provided that sufficient support services and/or persons accompany them for the duration of their stay. If evacuees with special or additional needs present at an evacuation centre unaccompanied, evacuation centre staff should seek assistance from appropriate support services.

6.3 Triage

As evacuees arrive at a centre, they may need to be assisted in various different ways. The figure below will assist in organising an appropriate triage of residents into the evacuation centre.



Figure 4 – Evacuee Triage

⁷ Red Cross Emergency Services: Qld Division *Evacuation Centre Management: Activation Training* Participant Handbook

6.4 Meet and Greet

The first point of contact in an evacuation centre is the Meet and Greet team. Most people who arrive at an evacuation centre have never been inside one before. It is therefore very important to provide assistance as soon as possible upon arrival, to provide reassurance and information regarding registration, accommodation, and services available.

6.5 Registration and Intake

It is best practice that all evacuees be registered on arrival using the *'Register.Find.Reunite.'* (RFR) service provided by the Red Cross.

During a disaster event, this service will be activated by the Red Cross, and made publicly available for use via the website <https://register.redcross.org.au/>. As this is an online service, it can be accessed by any computer or mobile device with internet access. If internet access is not available, there is a phone service also available; this can be accessed by contacting the Red Cross during a disaster. Registration can also be made in person at evacuation centres.

Once registered, evacuee details will be uploaded into the RFR database. RFR is an active computer database filing and retrieval system designed to provide relatives and close friends with basic details of the whereabouts and safety of people they know who may be visiting, living, or working in an area affected by an emergency.⁸

6.6 Daily Management

The day-to-day management of an evacuation centre is the responsibility of several key members of centre staff. These core personnel positions are outlined in Council's **Evacuation Centre Operations Manual** and are also available in Red Cross resources.⁹

6.7 Schedule

An unfolding disaster and consequent evacuation is an extremely disruptive force in the lives of those affected. The implementation of a regular schedule at evacuation centres can not only assist in returning the semblance of normalcy to the lives of residents, it is also a useful management tool in making sure that various important tasks are undertaken by staff and other associated agencies, ensuring that services and facilities are provided in a timely and organised fashion.

6.8 Operations

Operations management incorporates the management of people and facilities within the evacuation centre.

⁸ Australian Red Cross <https://register.redcross.org.au/>

⁹ Australian Red Cross *Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit*.

6.9 Safety

Safety considerations within an evacuation centre are vitally important, and as such should be taken very seriously. Agencies running and managing evacuation centres have a responsibility to provide facilities and amenities that are as safe and hygienic as possible under the circumstances, and to comply with State and Commonwealth legislation and local emergency management lead agency safety protocols.¹⁰

6.10 Work Health and Safety

The Logistics Officer is responsible for WH&S within evacuation centres. The selection of an appropriate Logistics Officer should include consideration for someone with experience in this area, as it will be up to them to ensure that the evacuation centre meets the relevant safety standards.

6.11 Personnel Issues

Personnel working within the evacuation centre may become easily stressed or exhausted due to the impact of the event, in conjunction with the large number of tasks that they will need to undertake within a short space of time.

6.12 Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for evacuation centres is a document that all residents and visitors must agree to abide by when on the premises.

6.13 Visitor Procedures

There are many different stakeholders who may wish to visit an evacuation centre while it is activated, for a variety of different reasons. Examples of the kinds of visitors that may arrive at an evacuation centre are:

- Day visitors (friends or family visiting guests, or people seeking assistance / support services);
- VIPs (political or otherwise);
- Organisations and service providers;
- Media personnel.

Media interviews and activities are not to occur at the evacuation centre. An evacuation centre can be a very emotional and traumatic environment for those that have suffered loss, injury or damage to their homes.

¹⁰ Red Cross Emergency Services: Qld Division *Evacuation Centre Management: Activation Training* Participant Handbook

6.14 Evacuation Centre Closure

Closure of an evacuation centre is a complex and often stressful task that needs to be undertaken with great care and coordinated with all of the stakeholders involved.



Ipswich City Council as part of its emergency management program prepares more detailed procedures to support the activation and operation of Evacuation Centres.

PART 7: INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

During the activation of an evacuation centre, there are several important stakeholder classes that will require ongoing information regarding the operation and daily requirements of the centre.

7.1 Internal Communication

Clear and effective communication between the evacuation centre management team and different internal stakeholders is essential to ensure the continued security, safety, comfort and routine stability of residents and other affected individuals. Internal communication groups can broadly be separated into two categories:

- Evacuees; and
- Personnel / assisting agencies.

7.2 External Communication

Communication with agencies or persons that may be acting in conjunction with, but external to the centre should be conducted on an as-needed basis. There are various strategies that may be used to communicate appropriate information effectively and concisely in different situations and to different external stakeholders.

External stakeholders can be broadly broken into two categories:

- LDMG / LDCC; and
- Media / VIPs

7.3 Record Keeping

It is important to keep records of all of the activities undertaken on a daily basis within an evacuation centre. This provides useful information for continuous improvement opportunities moving forward, as well as providing a sustainable and effective level of communication of important daily details between other internal and external stakeholders.

7.3.1 Shift Summary Logs

A daily shift summary log should be kept during the whole time that the Evacuation Centre is operational. This should contain details of incidents, resources requested, decisions made, and any other pertinent information that may assist either incoming personnel in consequent shifts, or during a review of centre operations post-disaster.

7.3.2 Day Guest and Visitor Logs

Logs should be kept of people visiting the Evacuation Centre (non-residents) who enter and exit each day. This will assist in evaluating food/consumable resource requirements for the ongoing operation of the centre, number of people accessing services not requiring accommodation, and assist with centre security.

7.3.3 Resident Log

Sign in/out sheets should be provided for residents of the Evacuation Centre. This is for fire safety purposes, and also assists with centre security.

PART 8: ANNEXURES

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