

A virtual organisation: Queensland's crisis and response management

The Queensland floods of 2010-2011 were among the most extensive and costly natural disasters in Australia's history, on a physical scale massive by world standards.¹ Cars and people were swept away in raging floodwaters, lives and families ruined, entire townships had to be evacuated, and mining towns closed as their mines filled with water. Agricultural industries were in ruin as crops lay destroyed and rotting, dams filled to bursting point, and swollen rivers swallowed up huge tracts of inner-city infrastructure, sweeping away barges, boats, and wharves. For the first time, full-scale air evacuations of hospitals took place. As if that wasn't enough, the state was then ravaged by Cyclone Yasi, with a force stronger than Hurricane Katrina.

The media showed politicians, police, emergency crews and military personnel in control and doing their jobs, providing reassurance and regularly updated information, and answering thousands of calls for help across the state. Premier Anna Bligh implored Queenslanders not to lose faith: "As we weep for what we have lost ... and we confront the challenge that is before us, I want us to remember who we are".²

Telecommunication and electricity personnel were on standby, restoring power and communication to devastated communities faster than they had in previous disasters such as Tropical Cyclone Larry, despite the increased breadth of this one. Charities like Red Cross staffed evacuation centres, and thousands of volunteers, the "mud army" as they were later

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¹ Ferris, E., and Petz, D. (2012), *The Year that Shook the Rich*, Brookings Institute.

<<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2012/03/natural-disasters-review-ferris/chapter-1>>

² Levy, M. (2011) "Bligh's tear-filled cry: 'We are Queenslanders'", *Brisbane Times*, 13 January.

<<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/environment/weather/blighs-tearfilled-cry-we-are-queenslanders-20110113-190xt.html>>

dubbed, either went out on their own or were organised into work groups by local governments, and bussed to where their help (and their mops and buckets) were most needed.

Behind the scenes, key individuals, all members of the state's peak organising body during a crisis – the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG) – met at the Queensland disaster coordination centre located at Kedron. Formal meetings took place twice a day during the peak of the crisis, although in reality many involved in the coordination effort never left the building for days at a time. The State Disaster Coordination Centre had state of the art technology that allowed images and sound from around the state to be conveyed straight to the “war room” where the SDMG coordinated the response and recovery missions.

Because “no government can afford to keep a standing army of thousands of trained rescuers, on the off-chance that a disaster will strike”,³ disaster management systems are in many ways “virtual organisations.” Disparate groupings, who don't often work together, join up in a crisis but then retreat to their specific and often very different jurisdictions, cultures and work teams after each event. Queensland's disaster management system starts at the local level, building on the skills of professionals and volunteers. The emergency agencies (Fire and Rescue, Ambulance and Police) all have permanent staff and headquarters. Their work is complemented by the state's mainly volunteer “army” of trained rescuers from the State Emergency Service (SES), supported by rural fire volunteers in many parts of Queensland.

Queensland: Australia's most decentralised and disaster-prone state

Since European settlement, successive Queensland governments have emphasised and promoted regional growth across the 1.8m square km of Australia's second largest state. This pattern of development has made Queensland the most decentralised mainland state, with almost as many people living outside the South East region as in it.⁴ This history also goes some way to explaining the state's culture – pioneering, resource-dependent, and politically conservative (the National Party dominated the political scene and hugely influenced public policy agendas from 1957 until 1989).

The Victorian capital of Melbourne is closer to Brisbane than Cairns is and so, perhaps not surprisingly, some far-north Queensland residents regard their state capital and the government that resides there with suspicion.⁵ This explains why past state governments have instigated policies such as community-based cabinet meetings to try to connect with regional areas and make the government seem less remote and Brisbane-centred. The dispersed but relatively significant population living in the regions also has implications for the way the state's disaster management arrangements are organised, and explains the practical necessity for its “bottom-up” approach.

Queensland's disaster management architecture is tiered, and in line with its local, bottom-up ethos, the initial response to disasters is triggered from the local disaster management groups (LDMG), progressively flowing upward to the district disaster management groups (DDMG) – which cover one or more of Queensland's 73 local government areas⁶ – to the state-wide, peak coordination management group (SDMG) that takes a whole-of-government approach to disasters. The fourth and final tier is at the federal government level (managed through the

³ Personal communication, senior emergency agency official.

⁴ DEEDI (2007), *The State of Queensland*, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.

⁵ The distance between Brisbane and Melbourne is 1669km; the distance between Brisbane and Cairns is 1718km. From the New South Wales border to the northern tip of Cape York is 7500km.

⁶ A 74th district in Weipa is managed by the mining company Rio Tinto Aluminium.

Attorney-General's Department), and is responsible for coordinating funding and resources for large-scale disaster events.

“Plans are useless...planning is critical”⁷

Australia's “sunshine state” is no stranger to natural disasters (defined in legislation to include cyclones, floods, storm, storm tide, tsunami and bushfires). A recent compulsory assessment under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) arrangement found that Queensland has the greatest risk profile of any state.⁸ A Senate committee report into the insurance of state infrastructure noted that “Queensland's risk profile is different to that of other states. Not only is there a higher incidence of flood and cyclone events than in [other] states, but its population and state assets are also more dispersed and its road network more extensive”⁹.

This risk profile has both advantages and disadvantages. While Queensland faces more hazards than other states – flood, storm tide, tropical cyclones (TC), severe storms and bushfires – this diverse range of threats also means that emergency personnel have significant experience in planning for and responding to a great variety of disasters, a fact that proved invaluable in 2010-11. On-the-ground experience from earlier, less widespread disasters (Cyclone Larry in 2006, severe storms in 2008 in the suburb of The Gap in Brisbane, Cyclone Ului in 2010) provided some lessons, but senior personnel also cited experiences from other jurisdictions as further drivers for a review of arrangements: the Victorian bushfires (2009), and the UK floods and subsequent Pitt Review.¹⁰ In 2005, staff from Queensland emergency agencies travelled to the US to learn firsthand from those involved in the management of Hurricane Katrina.

Disaster plans are part of the mix. Ongoing training, which includes regular full-scale exercise scenarios, is another. After TC Larry, the response for which was led by a group of dedicated disaster management personnel deployed from Brisbane, officials commissioned a review.¹¹ Published in 2009, the review recommended that changes be made to Queensland's crisis arrangements so that the state would be better able to cope with disasters more widespread than Larry. These included reinstating the Queensland Police Service (working in collaboration with local mayors and councils) as the lead agency in times of crisis, with District Disaster areas aligned to the 24 police districts (*Exhibit A*). This meant that the state would rely on an existing resource, with a continuing presence across the state, to deploy and direct volunteers. The review also recommended creating the role of state disaster co-ordinator, to be taken by a senior ranking police officer.

The recommendations were eventually enacted in November 2010, less than a month before large tracts of Queensland began to disappear under floodwaters. In the preceding years, much time and shoe leather had been expended to assure local mayors and councils that

⁷ Gary Mahon, Assistant Director-General of Community Safety, after President Dwight D Eisenhower (“Plans are nothing, planning is everything”).

⁸ The Disaster Management Act 2003 defines a disaster as ‘a serious disruption in a community’ that may be caused by natural or human acts or omissions (*An Overview of the Queensland Disaster Management System*, p. 2). Risk Frontiers, 2011 ‘State wide hazard risk assessment’ Macquarie University. <<http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au/Disaster%20Resources/SWNHRA.html>>

⁹ Senate Economics References Committee (2011), *The asset insurance arrangements of Australian state governments / The Senate Economics References Committee*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

¹⁰ Personal communication with author, 2011.

¹¹ Further detail about TC Larry can be found in the ANZSOG case study *North Queensland's Severe Tropical Cyclone Larry Response and Recovery*, 2008.67, available at www.casestudies.anzsog.edu.au.

police would take a collaborative rather than a command and control approach to their role. As more than one senior official noted, while controversial at the time, the new arrangement proved essential in managing the state-wide crisis of 2010-11. Also significant was that for the first time, police worked alongside other emergency services personnel at the Kedron Disaster Co-ordination Centre.

Queensland's disaster management arrangements

Recognising that disaster management requires a comprehensive approach, the *Disaster Management Act 2003* updated 28-year-old legislation that was introduced after Brisbane's 1974 floods and Darwin's Cyclone Tracey. The *State Counter Disaster Organisation Act*, passed in 1975, established the SES and remained largely unchanged until 2003. Prompted by the need to prepare for the 2000 Sydney Olympics, and the planned CHOGM meeting in Brisbane (delayed, then relocated for security reasons to the Sunshine Coast following the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001) and finally a COAG report in 2002, the state government introduced new legislation.¹² It replaced two state-level committees with a "single peak disaster management, policy and decision making body", the SDMG.¹³

The SDMG provided a quick response mechanism for both the development of disaster management policy and the planning, preparation and coordination of the resources needed in times of disaster.¹⁴ Initially comprising the Director-General (DG) of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, who remains the designated chairperson of the group, other members included the DG of the Department of Emergency Services (deputy chairperson), and several other chief executives. Following machinery of government changes in 2009 that reduced the total number of government departments to 13, all the DGs were made members of the SDMG, which in "peace-time" meets four times a year. This smaller total number of government departments committed all chief executives to attend the quarterly meetings. Non-government agencies such as the RSPCA, the Red Cross, and telecom and power companies are also included in the group.

According to Department of Community Safety senior personnel, the SDMG is now truly representative, and has the authority and decisiveness to make quick decisions when necessary. It is able to take a whole-of-government approach to disaster management.¹⁵ Additional members have been added over time, for example the Local Government Association of Queensland was added in 2010.

The SDMG is responsible for the development of the strategic policy framework for disaster management, and for maintaining relationships with the Commonwealth government and non-government agencies. It is advised on available resources both within and outside the state that could be deployed during a disaster. It provides reports and recommendations to the responsible minister and, based on this knowledge, prepares the State's Disaster Management

¹² COAG has driven a great variety of changes in natural disaster management since 2002/03 – including a much greater emphasis on coordination (see *Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements* (August 2002).

<[http://www.ag.gov.au/www/emaweb/rwpattach.nsf/VAP/\(99292794923AE8E7CBABC6FB71541EE1\)~Natural+Disasters+in+Australia+-+Review.pdf/\\$file/Natural+Disasters+in+Australia+-+Review.pdf](http://www.ag.gov.au/www/emaweb/rwpattach.nsf/VAP/(99292794923AE8E7CBABC6FB71541EE1)~Natural+Disasters+in+Australia+-+Review.pdf/$file/Natural+Disasters+in+Australia+-+Review.pdf)>

¹³ QPD, Reynolds, Disaster Management Bill, 2nd reading speech, 29 October 2003.

¹⁴ *State Disaster Management Group - Annual Report 2003-04*, p.7

¹⁵ McGowan, June 2011. Note: The Department of Community Safety replaced the old Department of Emergency Services in 2009. It includes the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Queensland Corrective Services and Emergency Management Queensland.

Plan (SDMP).¹⁶ Until December 2010, the state plan had been unchanged since 2008. It was modified on 22 December to emphasise the tacit understanding of the centrality of local government in any disaster response.¹⁷

The SDMG at work

Following years of drought and restrictions on water usage, December 2010 was the wettest month in Queensland's recorded history.¹⁸ The presence of a strong La Nina weather pattern alongside the normal monsoon season ensured Queensland received record rainfall. It was relentless. As dam levels rose and the ground became completely saturated, Queensland braced itself for flooding.

By early December, some towns in North Queensland were already feeling the effects of the heavy rain, while in the lead-up to Christmas Day, Tropical Cyclone Tasha dumped more rain on Rockhampton and the South-East region. The first extraordinary meeting of the SDMG occurred on 24 December (*Exhibit 2 is a timeline*). The meetings of the SDMG took place at the State Disaster Coordination Centre in Kedron (*Exhibit 3a*) – a suburb immune from flooding (unlike the Brisbane CBD where many government departments, including the Department of Premier and Cabinet, are located).

A reading of the SDMG extraordinary minutes conveys little of the frenetic pace of those involved. Many more than the eight members required to make up a quorum were present at every meeting. By 24 December, members of the SDMG as well as the Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, and other relevant ministers were getting regular 5am situation reports. Special units and the police air wing were on constant stand-by and the state was at the highest level of preparedness, with RoadTek¹⁹ crews ready to be activated and road and rail networks constantly monitored. Despite all these preparations, there was still uncertainty about whether the state's resources could cope. It was at a meeting on Christmas Eve that the chair, the Director-General of the Premier's Department, raised the issue of appointing a State Disaster Coordinator (SDC) for the December rain event. It was agreed that Deputy Police Commissioner Ian Stewart would be the inaugural SDC, effective immediately. The news was quickly relayed to district and local level coordinators. As well as traditional means of communication, the Queensland Police Service made wide use of social media to send out and update information.

Only four days after his appointment, on 28 December, Ian Stewart informed the SDMG that many local disaster management groups around the state were operational. He spoke of numerous disaster declarations having been made, and the SDMG noted that a request for Australian Defence Force (ADF) assistance had been made. As the rain continued, further extraordinary meetings were held on 28, 30 and 31 December; after each meeting, the Premier or government officials would broadcast updated information across the state.

¹⁶ *State Disaster Management Group – Annual Report 2003-04*, p. 9.

¹⁷ This added to the four earlier tenets of the disaster plan: the prevent, prepare, respond and recover model, the all hazard response, the importance and responsibilities of all levels of the disaster management hierarchy, and ensuring communities were alert to natural disasters in their areas (see *Interim Flood Report*, 2011, p. 113).

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Meteorology (2011), *Special climate statement 24: an extremely wet end to 2010 leads to widespread flooding across eastern Australia*, p.2, cited in the *Interim Flood Report* 2011, p. 24.

¹⁹ A commercial business within the Department of Transport and Main Roads, RoadTek is a major provider of transport infrastructure solutions throughout Queensland.

By 31 December the SDMG were given a summary of “hot spots around Queensland” and were told that residents of Emerald and Condamine had been evacuated, as well as the total population of Theodore, 314 people.²⁰ The ADF was on the ground and assisting with evacuations, the Red Cross was offering counselling to residents in Condamine, meanwhile in Rockhampton 200 houses had been inundated and plans were underway to relocate the Royal Flying Doctors to Gladstone. In Yeppoon the pineapple crop was ready for market and at risk of rotting; while in Bundaberg the SDMG dealt with rumours (later proved false) that the Paradise Dam had breached its wall. Returning from a tour of affected regions, the SDC reported that the state recovery committee had met. Meanwhile, as Queensland’s coal mines filled with water, and the loss in export revenue was predicted to be significant, the Premier wrote to the Prime Minister requesting level six assistance.²¹ Australia’s intergovernmental arrangements sprang into action – evidenced by the involvement of the ADF, through requests for support, as well as offers of assistance from other jurisdictions (Northern Territory offered Darwin hospital when Cairns base hospital needed to be evacuated; police from NSW and elsewhere were supplied to assist Queensland’s stretched force; SES volunteers were flown in from around Australia and New Zealand).

Further twice-daily extraordinary meetings were held on 2, 4 and 5 January, when it was assumed the worst was over. The ADF’s Major General Mick Slater had been appointed to the position of chairperson of the Queensland Flood Recovery Taskforce, and the DG of the Premier’s Department and chair of the SDMG announced that with this and the Commonwealth Recovery Cabinet sub-committee now in place, meetings of the SDMG would be scaled back in order to allow these bodies to take a lead in the recovery. The Director-General of the Department of Community Safety, Jim McGowan, raised the issue of leave management for volunteers and the need to have a fatigue management policy. No further extraordinary meetings of the SDMG were planned. Then the unthinkable happened.

A perfect storm

As in much of Queensland, rain in December and January had left the previously drought-affected Toowoomba catchment area saturated. In late December, the three dams servicing Toowoomba’s population of 162,057 had reached 53.2 per cent. By 10 January this level had risen to more than double that (127.2 per cent). That day, two intense thunderstorms crossed Queensland. By 11am they had joined and were headed in a south-westerly direction, towards the Toowoomba range. This “was not a situation in which any agency could have effectively warned residents of what was to come”.²² The heavy rain that resulted caused severe flash flooding that drowned a mother and her son as they drove through a city intersection, and generated an “inland tsunami” that devastated Toowoomba and the communities down the range in the Lockyer Valley. The rainfall had already triggered the Toowoomba Regional Council to call a meeting to consider activating the local disaster management group. Present at that meeting were representatives of the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue, Emergency Management Queensland, Telstra,

²⁰ An image of Theodore under water can be seen at <<http://qldreconstruction.org.au/u/lib/cms/theodore-2011-map-flood.pdf>>, one of a number of striking photographs on the Queensland Government’s website.

²¹ Level 6 refers to Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC). DACC Category 6 is support to civil authorities in the performance of non-emergency law enforcement related tasks where there is no likelihood that Defence personnel will be required to use force. The procedures for processing Category 6 requests is in annex H. <http://www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/file/0005/7673/Paule_Kevin_attachment.pdf>

²² Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry, *Interim Report*, August 2011. <http://www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/8781/QFCI-Interim-Report-August-2011.pdf> (hereafter *Interim Flood Report*).

and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. As they deliberated, calls started coming in about cars and people being swept away.²³

The SDMG met twice daily throughout this time. Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Senator Joe Ludwig, Defence Minister Stephen Smith and the Chief of the ADF Angus Houston joined the Queensland Premier Anna Bligh, the Deputy Premier and state ministers at the meeting on Wednesday 12 January. Also present either in person or via telephone were the mayors of Brisbane, Ipswich and Somerset, along with representatives from the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and District Disaster Coordinators from Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba.

By now it was obvious that Brisbane was under serious threat from flooding for the first time since 1974. A working party made up of representatives from ENERGEX, Police, Department of Public Works, Brisbane City Council and the Deputy Premier prepared to deal with the imminent loss of power to the Brisbane CBD. Meanwhile the SDMG was informed by BoM representatives that the dams above Brisbane had peaked at 191 per cent the night before, and that controlled water releases would continue for the next two days until their flood compartments were empty.

The State Disaster Coordinator then reported on events elsewhere. In Central Queensland the road to the south of Rockhampton was still closed, and the river at Chinchilla was flooded. Condamine was evacuated for the second time,²⁴ while St George, Surat, Warwick and Stanthorpe were “being managed”. In Toowoomba, police were still attempting to access areas of Murphy’s Creek and Grantham to carry out search and rescue activities, previously delayed by poor weather. In the township of Lowood, eight rooftop rescues had been conducted. The police were preparing for the rivers in Brisbane and Ipswich to peak. In Ipswich, ten areas had been evacuated and there were currently 12,000 people registered at evacuation centres.

Back in Brisbane, where many suburbs were flooding, with vehicle access and electricity cut off, two evacuation centres had been established. The CBD had been effectively shut down.²⁵ Over the next few days the SDMG, always ensuring that water and other essential goods were promptly supplied to affected areas around the state, would deal with the following:

- pontoons that had broken free and threatened critical infrastructure;
- A floating restaurant that had taken on water and was slowly sinking;
- Another former barge called the Island and used for parties that was breaking free of its mooring. A crew of men were aboard the boat, running the engine against the current while attempts were made to secure it;
- A little later, and further up the river, the Moggill ferry had broken free of one of the chains that secured it and was at risk of breaking free;
- There was some concern that the Wesley Hospital located close to the Toowong reach of the river may need to be evacuated;
- The rolling stock in the Mayne Rail yard had been moved and the yard was ready for evacuation if required;
- Bus routes around the city centre had shut down, while city ferries had stopped;

²³ *Interim Flood Report* p. 228-33 reports on these incidents in detail.

²⁴ As the army helicopters prepared to air vac residents, many had their pets in their arms. With flood waters rising, they were told they had to leave their pets behind. It took the actions of a local vet who told the crew they’d have to wait while he euthanised all the animals, before people were allowed to take their pets with them (personal communication with author).

²⁵ SDMG extraordinary minutes, 12 January 2011.

- The Brisbane floating walkway broke free of its moorings and along with private boats and pontoons headed toward the river mouth;

When the flood waters subsided, over 7000 volunteers armed with brooms, mops, gloves, buckets and shovels, joined 600 soldiers in the clean-up around the capital. The Brisbane City Council organised buses to ferry volunteers to the worst affected areas in a bid to ease the congestion around the city, as strangers and passers-by pitched in to clean up the mud and muck. While this process was not perfect and later some people complained that there were so many volunteers “we felt like sea-gulls fighting over a chip”, others remarked on the “amazing sense of duty” that had been displayed.²⁶ Later international delegations to Queensland’s emergency centre would remark at the level of volunteerism, saying it wouldn’t happen in their countries.²⁷

In just over two weeks the SDMG would be confronted with another natural disaster, as Cyclone Yasi formed in the Coral Sea off the North Queensland coast. In the days leading up to 3-4 February, the ADF moved 234 patients from the Cairns base hospital, in the first full-scale evacuation of a hospital in the state’s history. The day before it made landfall, the BoM notified the SDMG that Yasi had been “upgraded to a Category 5” cyclone and that “severe weather conditions” were to be expected. Yasi’s wind speed was measured at 285km/h when it made landfall at Mission Beach, making it one of the most ferocious cyclones on record. Before the SDMG meeting on the Wednesday before the cyclone hit, all police areas in the north of the state held a teleconference. The message was conveyed that “emergency services may not be able to respond to calls for assistance and that people may have to be self-sufficient for some time after the cyclone hit”. Police were warned to “prepare for significant trauma in the community”. Individual agencies including the ADF, Department of Community Safety, Ergon Energy, Optus, LGAQ, Department of Transport and Main Roads, and Queensland Health briefed the SDMG and the Premier about their preparations.

Over 10,500 people were evacuated during TC Yasi, including the largest aero-medical evacuation ever undertaken in Australia, from public and private hospitals in Cairns. Everywhere north of Rockhampton was isolated by road and rail for more than a week.

The summer of 2010/11 posed many challenges and stretched Queensland’s emergency services to the full. Disasters were declared in each of the 73 local government areas at least once. Two and a half million people and 136,000 homes had been affected. The cost of damages totalled \$US15.9 billion. Large areas, including the central business districts, of two major cities (Brisbane and Ipswich) were underwater for days. Yet no-one went without clean water, and no major public health issues arose. Despite initial misgivings, police and emergency services staff worked constructively together, with senior management emphasising the importance of building good relationships. Disaster Co-ordinator Ian Stewart was credited with modelling a cooperative and consultative approach that was mirrored by other police and earned widespread respect.

Over a three month period the SMDG coordinated and managed a range of activities as diverse as helicopter evacuations of multiple towns, and 360 swift water rescues. More than 2,600 SES volunteers were involved. While the response was not perfect, and 36 lives were lost, including the 22 people drowned in the Toowoomba flooding and Lockyer Valley

²⁶ Papadakis, M (2011) ‘The volunteer army mucks in to help flooded Qld’ January 16, 2011; AAP, 2011 ‘Social media rallied young Mud Army’ 28 February 2011. <http://www.techworld.com.au/article/378098/social_media_rallied_young_mud_army/>

²⁷ Private communication, senior official to author.

devastation, outside observers including the World Bank have indicated the Queensland model for 2010/11 was in many respects global best practice. Notably, the Interim Flood Report did not recommend that any significant changes be made before the next wet season.

Recovery

In the initial weeks of recovery, the Premier's poll ratings received a substantial, if temporary, boost.²⁸ But the state election held in March 2012 indicated that the poll boost was short-lived, while the decision that to make \$1000 compensation payments to all residents of flood-affected areas would prompt ongoing debate.

A more permanent reputational boost was given to the Queensland Police Service for its innovative use of social media to communicate with the state's residents in the crisis. This would later be called "a world leading effort" in "public engagement and emergency disaster responsiveness".²⁹

Learnings from the experiences of 2010/11 have already made their way into Queensland's disaster management arrangements, many of them prompted by findings of subsequent reports. For example, membership of the SDMG has been increased to include the ADF, the RSPCA and Surf Life Saving Queensland.³⁰ Emergency services have introduced a smart phone application that can notify residents of storms or other natural disasters likely to threaten their residential areas.

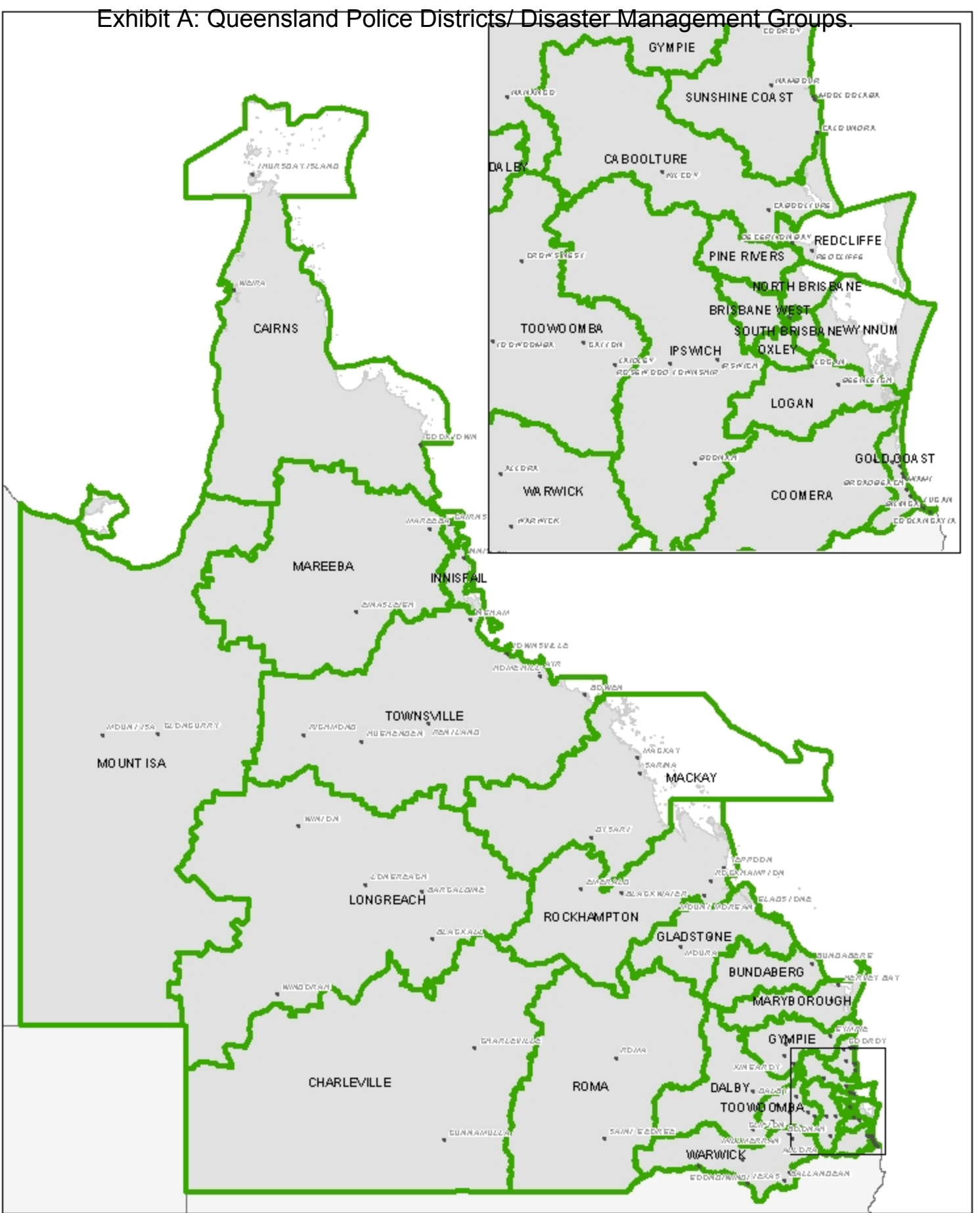
Disaster planning never ends. Queensland authorities continue to learn from other jurisdictions' experiences, and train and prepare for the next disaster – whatever that may be.

²⁸ Walker, J (2011) 'Flood hero Anna Bligh turns the tide with the greatest recovery in Newspoll history', *The Australian* 24.3.2011.

²⁹ Queensland Police Service (2011) *Disaster Management and Social Media – a case study*, Media and Public Affairs branch, QPS. <<http://www.police.qld.gov.au/Resources/Internet/services/reportsPublications/documents/QPSSocialMediaCaseStudy.pdf>>

³⁰ *Interim Flood Report*, p. 10.

Exhibit A: Queensland Police Districts/ Disaster Management Groups.



Map Projection: 2811 - QRS
 Map Reference Number: 8-2748
 File: dmshd28mshs.mxd

QPS Districts

- Major Towns
- Police Districts

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Exhibit B: Timeline of significant events and weather in Queensland from 1 December 2010 – 1 March 2011

December 2010		
120mm rain in Emerald	3	
	8	BOM advice "above average tropical cyclone activity this season – up to 6 TC in Coral Sea"
Dalby-Myall Creek peaks at 3.2m	20	Continual rain across SE Queensland
	23	Significant rainfall in central and northern Queensland over 4 days commences (200-600 mm)
	25	Tropical Cyclone Tasha (Category 1)
Dalby disaster declared (flooding): Chinchilla 7 m flood, 20 people evacuated, disaster declared; Theodore flooded 13.9 m, disaster declared.	27	TC Tasha crosses between Gordonvale and Ravenshoe. Heavy rain between Rockhampton and Peninsula. Remains stationary over land between Gulf and SE Qld for a number of days. Heavy rain.
Disaster declared in Emerald, Bundaberg, Central Highlands, North Burnett: Woorabinda. Condamine River peaks in Mundubbera and Gayndah	28	
Theodore completely evacuated (300); Bundaberg flooded and evacuations.	29	Queensland premier launches disaster relief appeal
Condamine evacuated	30	
January 2011		
17 evacuation centres established; 200,000 people affected	2	
Surat River peaks at 12.75 m	3	Supersaturation reached in South East Queensland 3-4 January
Flood recovery task force head announced as Maj-Gen Slater	5	Fitzroy River peaks at Rockhampton
Controlled release of Wivenhoe Dam commenced	6	
	10	Flash flooding occurs in Toowoomba and Lockyer valley; Maryborough, Bundaberg and Gympie flooding
Evacuations from Lockyer Valley, Oakey, Nanango, Kingaroy, Brooklands, Cherbourg, Dalby, Chinchilla, Condamine, Woodford, Kilcoy, Moore, Dayboro Narangba, Caboolture, Strathpine, Burpengary, Gympie	11	Flash flooding across Qld: Brisbane, Caboolture, North Coast plus South West of Qld
Wivenhoe Dam at 189%; Goondiwindi flooding	13/14	Brisbane river peaks at 4.46 m, Bremer River peaks at 19.5 m (Ipswich)
	17	Floods COI announced, to be headed by Justice Holmes
Queensland Reconstruction authority announced: Mr Graeme Newton announced as Queensland Reconstruction Authority Chief Executive	19	
	31	TC Anthony (Category 2) crosses over Bowen in Northern Queensland
February 2011		
Evacuations of Cairns hospitals: full evacuation of Cardwell. TC Yasi impact zone included Mission Beach, Cardwell, Tully, Tully Heads, Innisfail, Ingham. Significant structural damage in Cassowary Coast region. ADF response to support SES/QPS	2/3	TC Yasi (Category 5) made landfall over Cassowary Coast region pm 2 Feb 2011
Queensland Reconstruction Authority North Queensland Director announced to focus on C Yasi effects	7	Federal reconstruction inspectorate announced by PM.
	15	Queensland reconstruction authority legislated
Queensland Reconstruction Authority legislation approved	21	
	23	First draft of State Plan released for consultation.

Exhibit C: The State Disaster Management Centre at Kedron



Exhibit D: All agencies and volunteers contribute to Queensland's disaster response.

