



Disaster Operations

Overview
of
Activities

July
to
December
2009





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minister for Emergency Services activated the Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements on two occasions for natural disaster events that impacted Queensland during this period.

The State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) was activated on one occasion to support operations relating to the Samoan Tsunami & Sumatran Earthquake of September 2009. The SDCC was also activated in support of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 for part of the period, until November 2009. The SDCC Watch Desk also assisted in numerous minor operations that occurred state-wide but did not warrant formal out of hours activation of the SDCC.

There were no visits to Queensland by nuclear powered warships.



The aftermath of the Tsunami in Samoa in September 2009



Damage from the Sumatran Earthquake (above)

September 2009

Australian Disaster Response Teams fly to Sumatra





STATE DISASTER COORDINATION CENTRE

The State Disaster Coordination Centre was involved in the following operations during this period:

Hendra Virus, August 2009

Hendra virus infection was confirmed in a horse from a property at Cawarral near Rockhampton, which died on 8 August 2009. Quarantine and movement restrictions were imposed on several properties in the Rockhampton and Bowen areas.

Samoa Earthquake and Tsunami, September 2009



On 30 September 2009, an 8.1 magnitude earthquake occurred 200 km SSW of Apia, Samoa. This generated a tsunami that struck the Samoan and Tongan island groups. At least 149 people are deceased in Samoa, 34 deceased in American Samoa and 9 deceased, 7 injured and 500 displaced on Niuaotupapu, Tonga. Widespread damage to infrastructure occurred at Pago Pago, American Samoa, in many parts of Samoa and on Niuaotupapu, Tonga. Nearly all of the casualties and damage was caused by large tsunamis.

In response to the Samoan Government's official request for humanitarian assistance, the Australian Government activated the Australian Overseas Assistance Plan (AUSASISTPLAN), National Response Plan for Mass Casualty Incidents Involving Australians Overseas (OSMASSCASPLAN), Australian Government Reception Plan (COMRECEPLAN) and the Queensland Government activated the Queensland Government Reception Plan (QRECEPLAN).

As a result, the State Disaster Coordination Centre was activated and coordinated the Queensland whole of government humanitarian assistance and relief effort for Samoa and Tonga. This response included medical personnel, search and rescue teams and disaster relief supplies.

The COMRECEPLAN was activated on 1 October 2009 and Emergency Management Australia requested Queensland Government support for COMRECEPLAN operations that triggered the activation of the QRECEPLAN.

- The State Disaster Coordination Centre facilitated the coordination of Reception Centres at Brisbane and Amberley Airports.
- This consisted of members from Queensland and Australian Government agencies to assist in the reparation of injured and non-injured Australians.

Western Sumatra (Indonesia) Earthquake, September 2009

At 1716hrs (AEST) Wednesday 30 September, a 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of West Sumatra, approximately 53 kilometres northwest of Padang City. There was extensive damage to buildings and infrastructure in Padang and surrounding areas. Indonesian Government official casualty estimates are 1115 fatalities, 2902 injured, 2 missing. (As of Wednesday 14 October).



In response to the Indonesian Government's request for humanitarian assistance the Australian Government activated the Australian Overseas Assistance Plan (AUSASISTPLAN).

As a result the State Disaster Coordination Centre was activated and coordinated the Queensland whole of government humanitarian assistance and relief effort for victims of the Indonesian earthquake.

Queensland Government provided a 36 member Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service to assist the Indonesian Government in the search for survivors of the earthquake. The team departed for Sumatra from Amberley RAAF Airbase on 2 October 2009 and returned to Queensland on 08 October 2009.



Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 - April 2009 to current

On Friday 24 April the Australian Government's Department of Health and Aging, National Incident Room (NIR) was notified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) of cases of outbreaks of a new strain of swine influenza viruses in the USA and Mexico. Since the outbreak thousands of people have contracted the H1N1 virus all over the world. To date the worst affected locations in Queensland include Cairns, the Gold Coast and Brisbane. EMQ continues to support Queensland Health with their response to the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009.

The SDCC ceased to be activated for Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 in mid-November, but maintains a watching brief in case of further developments.

Avian Influenza - ongoing

The SDCC has been receiving Situation Reports from the Australian Government on the status of Avian Influenza since 29 January 2004. The SDCC continues to maintain a watching brief.

Bureau of Meteorology

Disaster Operations has a very close relationship with the Bureau of Meteorology, as Queensland has a high frequency of severe natural phenomena affecting communities throughout the State.

During the period July to December 2009, 841 weather advices were received from the Bureau. 207 were warnings that required monitoring and notification to affected regions by the Watch Desk Officer. These warnings were for phenomena such as Flood, Severe Weather, Tropical Cyclone and Storm Tide.

An additional 634 reports were received from the Bureau but generally required minimal or no action as they were routine reports such as Coastal Waters Wind Warnings, Gale/Storm Warnings for shipping, Tropical Cyclone Outlooks, Tropical Cyclone Information Bulletins and Flood Summaries.

State Level Resupply Operations

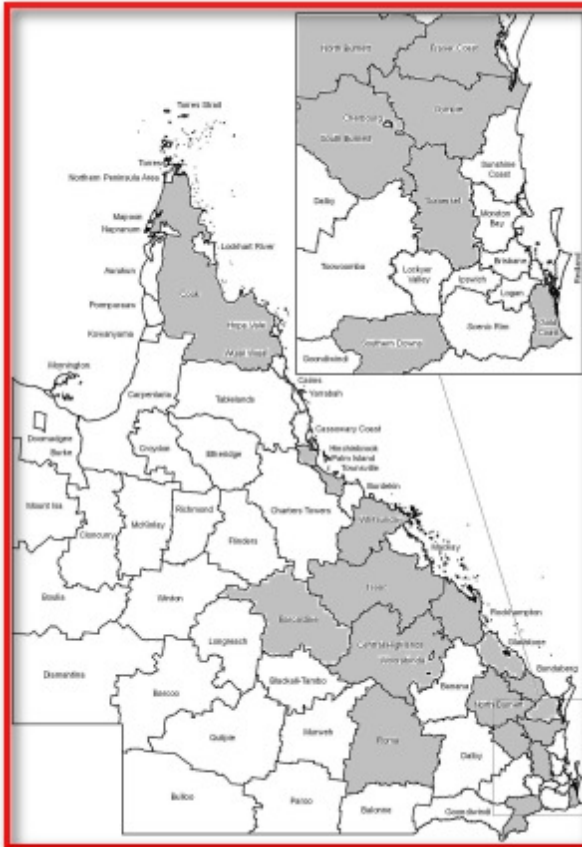
No resupply operations were undertaken during this period, as Queensland has not experienced sufficient rainfall this 'wet season' to isolate communities for an extended time. However, it is highly likely that resupply operations of essential foods will probably occur over the next months, when the monsoon trough becomes more active.



DISASTER RELIEF ARRANGEMENTS

The Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services activated Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements twice during this period.

Queensland Bushfires, September – October 2009



Communities within Queensland affected by bushfire activity commencing on 22 September 2009 in Central, Far North, North Coast, Northern, South East and South West Regions.

NDRRA Relief Measures Activated:

- Counter Disaster Operations
- Disaster Relief Assistance Scheme
- Concessional Loans to Small Businesses
- Concessional Loans to Primary Producers
- Freight Subsidies for Primary Producers
- Restoration of Essential Public Assets

The Local Government areas affected were:

LGA	Counter Disaster Operations	Disaster Relief Assistance Scheme	Concessional Loans to Small Businesses	Concessional Loans to Primary Producers	Freight Subsidies	Restoration of Essential Public Assets
Barcaldine Regional Council (RC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Bundaberg RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Central Highlands RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cook Shire Council (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fraser Coast RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Gladstone RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Gold Coast City Council (CC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



LGA	Counter Disaster Operations	Disaster Relief Assistance Scheme	Concessional Loans to Small Businesses	Concessional Loans to Primary Producers	Freight Subsidies	Restoration of Essential Public Assets
Gympie RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Hinchinbrook SC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Isaac RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maranoa RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
North Burnett RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Rockhampton RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Somerset RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
South Burnett RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Southern Downs RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Townsville CC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Whitsunday RC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



South West Queensland Flooding, 20-25 November 2009



Communities within Barcoo and Diamantina Shires affected by heavy rainfall and associated flooding activity during 20 – 25 November 2009.

NDRRA Relief Measures Activated

- Counter Disaster Operations
- Restoration of Essential Public Assets

The Local Government areas affected were:

- Barcoo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council

Details of NDRRA relief measures and NDRRA Administering Authorities are available from:

<http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au/publications/pdf/QLD%20NDRRA%20Interim%20Guidelines%2008-09.pdf>



NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIP PROGRAM

Disaster Operations is the lead agency for coordinating Nuclear Powered Warship (NPW) visits to Queensland ports for crew rest and recreation purposes, however there were no visits during this period.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Disaster Operations maintains an active role in organising and conducting disaster management activities at a State level.

Disaster Operations staff are encouraged to attend internal and external training activities and courses as part of their professional development and succession planning.

Internal training sessions conducted during this period included Request For Assistance (RFA) Online Training, Task Tracking, Disaster Management System Awareness, Senior Disaster Management Officer's course and intermediate to advanced training on Microsoft Office products.

External training included the National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS), Parliamentary Education and Training Program for the Public Service, Emergency Alert Train-the-Trainer, Certificate IV Training and Assessment and First Aid.

State Disaster Coordination Centre Training

To provide a surge capability during protracted operations, Disaster Operations conducts regular training sessions for EMQ and other departmental staff who are interested in assisting the SDCC during operational periods.

Several exercises were also conducted within the SDCC to reinforce training, as well as attending Exercise Murphy which was a NRIS exercise at the Police Headquarters. The SDCC also conducted familiarisation training with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Security Planning Coordination Unit.

The Australian Government through the Endeavour Awards sponsored the Director, Provincial Earthquake Reconstruction & Rehabilitation Agency, Government of North West Frontier Province, from Peshawar, Pakistan to work within the SDCC for two months, which provided a useful exchange of information. The Director also gave presentations on the "The Pakistan Earthquake of October, 2005." and "The Internally Displaced People (IDP's) Scenario in Malakand (northwest Pakistan), May 2009".

The Endeavour Awards is the Australian Government's internationally competitive, merit-based scholarship program providing opportunities for citizens of the Asia-Pacific region to undertake study, research and professional development in Australia. Awards are also available for Australians to do the same abroad. For further details visit the Endeavour Awards website at www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au

STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT ENHANCEMENTS

The SDCC is trialling the Australian Emergency Coordination System (AECS), which was derived from the Australian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) which was previously used within the SDCC. AECS has been developed to establish a common high-level framework that operates at a strategic level of coordination. It is primarily designed to facilitate interoperability and communication between state, territory and Australian Government Emergency Coordination Centres.



A national telephone based emergency warning system, known as Emergency Alert (EA) was launched on 1 December 2009. The system sends alerts via landline telephones and to mobile phones based on the billing address. All SDCC staff are trained in the use of EA and a successful public trial was conducted in the Esk area of southeast Queensland in January. EA provides another tool to compliment existing strategies for alerting communities.

Disaster Operations staff were also actively involved in supporting the following workshops and committees:

Workshop Contribution

- Emergency Alert User Acceptance Testing
- Local Controller's Conference
- Local Government Association of Queensland Conference
- National Emergency Warning System Protocols Workshop
- Nuclear Powered Warship Seminar
- Queensland Police Service District Officer's Conference
- Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee Pre-Season Seminars
- Tsunami Focus Group

Committee Contribution

- Communication and Coordination Reference Group
- Counter Terrorism Training and Exercise Management Committee
- Disaster Management Alliance Management Group
- Emergency Alert Working Group
- Interdepartmental Committee on Bushfires
- National Emergency Warning System Media Working Group
- National Emergency Warning System Steering Group
- National Emergency Warning System Working Group
- Port of Brisbane Corporation Mutual Aid Group
- Queensland Emergency Operations Centre Project Control Group
- Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee
- Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee Public Awareness Sub Committee
- Senior Executive Management Team
- State Community Recovery Committee
- State Community Recovery Committee Training Sub Committee
- State Disaster Coordination Group
- State Disaster Management Group
- Traveller Information Standing Committee
- Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Intradepartmental Working Group



Official Visits

Disaster Operations hosted official tours of the State Disaster Coordination Centre and gave presentations to the following agencies.

- Australian Red Cross
- Brisbane City Council
- Emergency Service Cadets
- Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Health Unit
- State Emergency Service Volunteers
- Visiting overseas delegation from China
- Visiting overseas delegation from Pakistan
- Visiting overseas delegation from Shanghai
- Visiting overseas delegation from Vietnam's Ministry of Finance