

IGEM *Connect*

Inspector-General Emergency Management

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November is always a busy but interesting time of the year for disaster management practitioners.

The Get Ready messaging has moved into full swing; activities and testing for the season have begun; and local and district disaster management groups have started to become more active and focussed with the seasonal threat of summer storms and cyclones.

I had the opportunity last week of spending a few days in Mt Isa and Mackay-Whitsundays, talking to Mayors and council staff and attending two DDMG meetings.

In listening to early season activities and preparations, I was encouraged by the collaborative work being undertaken in both the Mackay and Mt Isa districts.

Both are very different districts, with the own sets of unique challenges and circumstances.

And yet while their approaches and issues may differ, their commitment to providing the best possible outcomes for residents in their respective areas is at the forefront of all they do.

To me, the approaches in Mt Isa and Mackay epitomise what we are trying to achieve through the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.

The Standard is not about rigid tick-a-box compliance for practitioners. It is an outcomes-based tool designed to provide the best possible outcome for residents during times of emergency and disaster based on local resources, needs, culture, knowledge and circumstance.

When talking to councils and disaster management groups, I use the example of emergency community warnings.

Smaller councils in Queensland may not have the technological, social media, resource and financial advantage some larger councils in Queensland enjoy.

Often small councils rely on a simple doorknocking arrangement for warnings, which are described and documented in detail in plans, and exercised.

To my way of thinking, these smaller councils have a better system than many of the larger councils as we know their community warning penetration is far greater; it is more cost effective and direct; and they get a greater extent of immediate response and interaction from those potentially threatened.

From an outcomes-based perspective, these smaller councils are at the forefront of applying the Standard regarding emergency warnings.

Disaster Management Officer Collective

Tomorrow (November 24), we intend to hold our first Disaster Management Officer Network teleconference.

As I outlined in the last edition of *IGEM Connect*, the idea is to provide a forum for coalface practitioners within councils to:

- Build a sense of community amongst local disaster management officers in Queensland
- Support each other in applying and navigating the intricacies of Queensland's disaster management arrangements and associated doctrine
- Keep up to date with changes in the arrangements, doctrine and legislation
- Share and develop skills, knowledge, resources, ideas and innovation

It is encouraging to see that we already have localised forms of this collective in centres such as Wide Bay Burnett, Far North Queensland, Mackay and South East Queensland.

What I would like to see is the basis of this same collaborative effort built on a Statewide level and for officers in smaller councils who do not necessarily have a full time disaster management function guided where possible by more

experienced disaster management practitioners in other councils, a number of whom are among the best in Australia in my opinion.

With the assistance of an excellent working group comprising Jason Cameron, Mal Churchill, Michael Dickinson, Matt Dyer, Sarah Dean, Jason Quinnell, Susan Trappett and William Prentice, we have developed a draft Terms of Reference and Events Schedule for discussion at the first meeting. I see the group being peer-driven however in terms of future direction, activities and topics for discussion.

At this stage, it is envisaged the group will operate through a bi-annual teleconference system, with an annual two or three day face-to-face forum, subsidised by my office.

I wrote to Local Disaster Coordinators and key officers in all councils a few weeks ago seeking nominations of appropriate staff to participate in the first teleconference. To date the response rate has only been moderate. Can I encourage those who have not yet responded to do so.

I hold high hopes that this network will provide real benefit not only to individual coalface officers and their councils but ultimately the disaster management sector more holistically.

Research into Vulnerable Aged Persons Living at Home

My office is about to commence a three month study looking at elements of disaster management relating to vulnerable older persons living in their own homes in the Wide Bay Burnett region.

The study arose from attendance at a September meeting of the Wide Bay Burnett C2C disaster management group, where the need for greater localised research and information into the issue was raised.

Utilising a QUT intern who will work in my office over the next few months, my staff, in collaboration with Grant Marcus, Mal Churchill and Matt Dyer, will look at how to identify vulnerable older persons living in their own homes; how to prepare them better and enhance resilience; and options to better provide effective and coordinated services across all agencies and tiers of government.

The study, which begins today and will run until February 2016, will be restricted to the Fraser Coast, Bundaberg and North Burnett local government areas.

The study is not a formal review, nor will it contain recommendations or any binding work on disaster management agencies in the region. Rather, it is an attempt to collaboratively look at a current issue at a local level, with the potential to utilise findings or success actions more broadly in the State, if appropriate.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Office of the IGEM has commissioned TNS, an independent market research company, to conduct its annual customer satisfaction survey between 9 and 27 November.

State and Local Government disaster and emergency management stakeholders have been invited to participate in the 10 minute survey.

Participation in the survey is greatly appreciated as survey results will help my Office drive service improvement, stay customer focused and build a strong service culture to achieve the Office's vision of being a catalyst for excellence.

Any information provided in the survey will be treated as confidential and will only be released in a manner that prevents individual identification. Responses to the survey will be kept strictly confidential. The survey is being carried out in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld).

If you have not yet received an invitation to participate in the survey but would like to do so, or have any other questions about the survey, contact Nikki Tran from my Office by 25 November at nikki.tran@igem.qld.gov.au or on (07) 3227 6752. Alternatively you can call the office on (07) 3227 6588.

Annual Assessment of Disaster Management Effectiveness

As I noted in the last edition of *IGEM Connect*, you should have received your preliminary results from the annual assessment of disaster management plans.

During the month of November we have been testing the final report product with four councils – Logan, Western Downs, both Torres Councils, and Bundaberg.

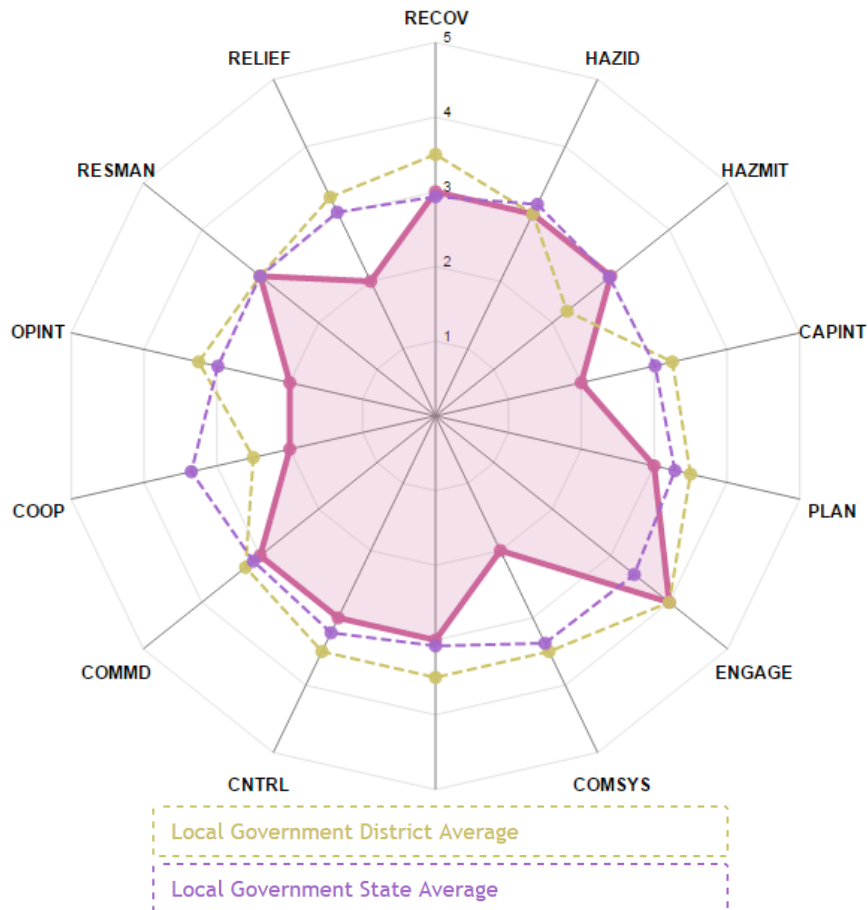
Individual tailored reports will be sent to councils shortly and will show your local government results compared to state and district averages; areas to focus on for improvement; and highlighting areas of good practice for future learnings.

Look forward to the material in your inbox after 1 December.

I will also be providing a report on the effectiveness of the plans to Minister Miller by March of next year.

The graph below is an example of how your results will be shown for each component of the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland compared with the district and state averages. Averages across all components show that the majority of local governments are committed in achieving the Key Outcomes of the Standard. For your council more detail on areas for improvement and of potential good practice will be included within the report.

Components of the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland



Ratings

- 1 - Aspirational** We want to be able to do this well, but have not yet started
- 2 - Emerging** We are moving towards doing this well but we need more capability
- 3 - Committed** We are committed to doing this well and we are on our way
- 4 - Strengthening** We do this well but can still improve
- 5 - Optimising** We do this really well and are open to helping and sharing with others

Abbreviations

CAPINT Capability Integration	HAZMIT Hazard Mitigation & Risk Reduction
CNTRL Control	OPINT Operational Information & Intelligence
COMMD Command	PLAN Planning
COMSYS Communication Systems	RECOV Recovery
COOP Cooperation and Coordination	RELIEF Relief
ENGAGE Public Engagement	RESMAN Resource Management
HAZID Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment	WARNGS Warnings

Standard for Disaster Management – Regional Workshops

May I convey my thanks to those of you who have attended the workshops we have held around the State over the past three months. It has been a valuable experience for my office to engage with the sector and hear directly from operational practitioners as to what is working well, and what is not.

The workshops have focussed on understanding the Standard, how it can assist practitioners, the logic behind how it was built by the sector, and how it can be used across all phases of your disaster management arrangements.

So far we have delivered 11 workshops, with six more to be held until mid-December.

What has been particularly heartening has been the attendance of councillors and senior executives at some of the sessions.

We intend to run more of these workshops in 2016 to support the Standard, align disaster management arrangements, and assist entities in the interpretation and performance of the Standard.

Further information on the workshops can be obtained from Rowena Richardson on 3227 6668.

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