ORDINARY MEETING 25 NOVEMBER 2026	5.4

ADOPTION OF THE CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

POP | 59/2/1-01 | #7982240

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. **Adopts the revised Cairns Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan.**
2. **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters relating to the Cairns Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan.**

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Cairns Region Local Disaster Management Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Cairns Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) has been comprehensively reviewed to ensure continued alignment with the requirements of the *Disaster Management Act 2023* (the Act) and current best practice in disaster management.

The revised LDMP was endorsed by the Cairns Region Local Disaster Management Group (CR-LDMG) at its Ordinary Meeting on 30 October 2026 following an extensive review undertaken in collaboration with member agencies and key stakeholders across the region.

The review incorporated contemporary legislative requirements, updated governance arrangements, agency capabilities, and findings from the latest hazards risk assessment. The resulting plan strengthens Council's disaster management framework and supports a coordinated, multi-agency approach to preparedness, response, recovery and resilience.

Adoption of the revised LDMP will ensure Council continues to meet its statutory obligations while maintaining a contemporary and effective framework for managing disaster risks across the Cairns region.

BACKGROUND:

Section 80 of the Act outlines the following functions of a Local Government:

- to ensure it has a disaster response capability;
- to approve its local disaster management plan; and

- to ensure information about an event or a disaster in its area is promptly given to the District Disaster Coordinator (DDC).

A ‘disaster response capability’ for Local Government means the ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the Local Government, to effectively manage or help another entity to manage, an emergency or a disaster in the Local Government area.

Section 57 of the Act states that Local Government must prepare a Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP), however it is a function of the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) to assist Local Government in this task.

Section 60 of the Act states that Local Government must make copies of the LDMP available to the public; for viewing at Customer Service Centres, published on Council’s website and hard copy supplied upon request.

COMMENT:

The LDMP review, supports modernising Disaster Management for the Cairns Region by:

- Utilising funding through the Local Recovery and Resilience Grant;
- Undertaking a comprehensive and consultative review of the Cairns Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP);
- Developing the LDMP alongside and informed by the hazards risk assessment;
- Updating the LDMP to align with contemporary Queensland disaster management requirements; and
- Incorporating lessons from major disaster events, exercises and operational experience into the revised LDMP.

The revised LDMP provides the strategic framework for disaster management within the Cairns Local Government area and reflects Council's commitment to community safety, resilience and operational readiness.

The review process considered legislative changes, governance arrangements, agency capabilities, operational lessons identified, emerging risks and the outcomes of the most recent hazards risk assessment. Significant input was obtained from CR-LDMG member agencies to ensure the plan reflects a coordinated, whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to disaster management.

The LDMP has been improved and moved from a large document to practical operational framework. The previous plan was over 200 pages, complex and administration-heavy making it difficult to navigate during disaster operations.

The revised plan is less than 100 pages, operationally focused, has improved accessibility and usability and includes clear decision-support tools and activation guidance. Key enhancements include:

- Visual decision-making support tools
- Clearer activation triggers and plans to respond
- Practical operational checklists
- Introduces "Plan on a Page" summaries and guides

- Reduces duplication and administrative burden requiring updates

The revised LDMP enhances integration between Council, emergency services, government agencies, infrastructure providers and community stakeholders, supporting effective preparedness, response and recovery outcomes. Overall providing faster access to critical information and coordinated decision-making during disaster operations.

The LDMP is maintained by Council's Disaster Management Unit and serves as the principal public-facing document outlining disaster management arrangements for the Cairns region. Supporting sub-plans, operational plans, hazard and risk assessments and procedures are maintained separately under the authority of the CR-LDMG and contain detailed operational information not intended for public release.

OPTIONS:

Option 1

That Council:

1. Adopts the Cairns Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan.
2. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act 2009 to finalise any and all matters relating to the Cairns Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan.

Option 2

1. Council refers the Cairns LDMP back to the CR-LDMG for further revision.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

Adoption of the revised LDMP will support Council's strategic objective of building a resilient and prepared Cairns region.

The updated LDMP reflects ongoing investment in disaster preparedness, community resilience and organisational capability. It strengthens governance arrangements, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and supports a coordinated multi-agency response to future disaster events.

The LDMP positions Council and its partners to respond effectively to emerging risks while enhancing the region's capacity to recover from significant events and continue building long-term resilience.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

Corporate Plan 2025-2030

- Focus 3, Design for liveability: Promote vibrant community that supports wellbeing, safety and resilience

Statutory:

Disaster Management Act 2023

Policy:

This LDMP provides the governance and coordination framework for disaster management within the Cairns Regional Council Local Government area and describes how the Cairns Region Local Disaster Management Group (CR-LDMG) fulfils its responsibilities under the *Disaster Management Act 2003* and the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA). The LDMP is supported by a suite of functional, operational and hazard-specific sub-plans that provide detailed arrangements for identified disaster management functions and hazards.

CONSULTATION:

An extensive consultation process was undertaken as part of the review. This engagement included CR-LDMG member agencies and key stakeholders across the Cairns region throughout the review process, including environmental scanning, plan development and endorsement activities.

The revised LDMP reflects broad stakeholder input and has subsequently been endorsed by the CR-LDMG in October 2026, recommended for Council adoption. Endorsement has also been received from Council's Executive Leadership Team and a Councillor workshop held providing an overview of the LDMP and review process.

Following Council adoption, the LDMP will be available for viewing at Councils Customer Service Centre, published on Council's website and hard copy supplied upon request.

ATTACHMENTS:

Cairns Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan (DM#7974783)



Rhys Newton
Local Disaster Coordinator



Holly McBride
Director, People and Organisational Performance



Cairns Regional Council

Local Disaster Management Plan

Cairns REGIONAL COUNCIL

Acknowledgement of Country

Cairns Regional Council acknowledges and pays our respects to the Traditional Custodians of our region, the Djabugay; Yirrganydji; Buluwai, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji; Mandingalbay Yidinji; Gunggandji; Dulabed and Malanbara Yidinji; Bundabarra and Wadjanbarra Yidinji; Madjandji, Mamu and NgadjonJii peoples. We extend this respect to all elders past, present and future, and other First Peoples within our region.

Foreword

Councillor Amy Eden – Mayor of Cairns Regional Council

Our region, the Cairns Regional Council (CRC) Local Government Area (LGA) is one of Australia's most diverse and dynamic communities. Our region is home to vibrant urban centres, rural and remote communities, internationally significant natural environments and critical infrastructure that supports both our residents and the broader Far North Queensland economy. At the same time, our location exposes us to a range of natural and human-induced hazards, including tropical cyclones, flooding, severe storms, bushfire, heatwave, landslide, infrastructure failure, and other emergencies.

CRC fulfils its responsibilities under the *Disaster Management Act 2003* through the Cairns Region Local Disaster Management Group (CR-LDMG). The CR-LDMG brings together representatives from Council, government agencies, emergency services, essential service providers, private industry and community organisations to coordinate disaster management activities across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Through these partnerships, the CR-LDMG maintains the capability and capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster events affecting our region.

The CR-LDMG is committed to working collaboratively with all levels of government, emergency services, essential service providers, non-government organisations, industry and the community to strengthen resilience and ensure an effective, coordinated approach to disaster management.



This Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) establishes the governance arrangements for disaster management within our region. No single organisation can manage disasters alone. Effective disaster management relies on strong partnerships, informed communities and a shared commitment to reducing risk, preparing for future events and supporting recovery. This plan provides the framework for that collaboration and supports a coordinated, scalable and flexible response to emergencies affecting the Cairns region.

On behalf of the CR-LDMG, I thank our member agencies, partner organisations, volunteers and community members for their ongoing commitment to building a safer and more resilient Cairns.

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Endorsement

The preparation of this LDMP has been undertaken in accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, to provide for effective disaster management in the CRC LGA. The LDMP was endorsed by the CR-LDMG on 30 October 2026 and recommended for adoption by Council.



_____

Mayor Amy Eden - Chair, Cairns Region, Local Disaster Management Group
Date:

CRC has adopted this plan by resolution at Ordinary Meeting of Council in accordance with *Section 80(1)(b) of the Disaster Management Act 2003* (QLD).



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Ken Gouldthorp –Chief Executive Officer Cairns Regional Council
Date:

1. Overview of Plan

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Cairns Regional Council (CRC) Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) is to establish the strategic arrangements for the prevention of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery, from disaster events within the CRC Local Government Area (LGA).
This LDMP provides the governance and coordination framework for disaster management within the CRC LGA and describes how the Cairns Region Local Disaster Management Group (CR-LDMG) fulfils its responsibilities under the *Disaster Management Act 2003* and the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA).
The LDMP is supported by a suite of functional, operational and hazard-specific sub-plans that provide detailed arrangements for identified disaster management functions and hazards.

1.2 Scope

This LDMP applies to all disaster management activities undertaken within the Cairns LGA and provides the strategic framework for the coordinated management of disasters across the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) continuum.

The Plan adopts an all-hazards approach and applies to natural, human-induced and technological hazards that have the potential to impact the Cairns community, environment, economy and infrastructure.

This Plan applies to the CRC, the CR-LDMG, member agencies, advisory organisations and all organisations contributing to disaster management within the CRC LGA, including government agencies, private sector organisations, non-government organisations and critical infrastructure providers.

This Plan is supported by a suite of hazard-specific, functional and operational plans that provide detailed arrangements for the management of identified hazards, functions and capabilities. Where more detailed arrangements exist, those documents should be read in conjunction with this Plan.

1.3 Authority

CRC has a legislative responsibility to prepare and maintain a Local Disaster Management Plan in accordance with section 57 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

Disaster management within the Cairns LGA is undertaken in accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the *Disaster Management Regulation 2014*, the Queensland Disaster Management Strategic Policy Statement, the State Disaster Management Plan, the Queensland Disaster Management Guideline and the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.

This LDMP documents the governance, coordination and planning arrangements established by Council to meet its obligations under Queensland disaster management legislation.

Council integrates disaster management considerations into its strategic planning, corporate governance, infrastructure planning, business continuity and operational decision-making to support a resilient and sustainable community.

The legislative and policy framework that underpins disaster management planning in Queensland is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

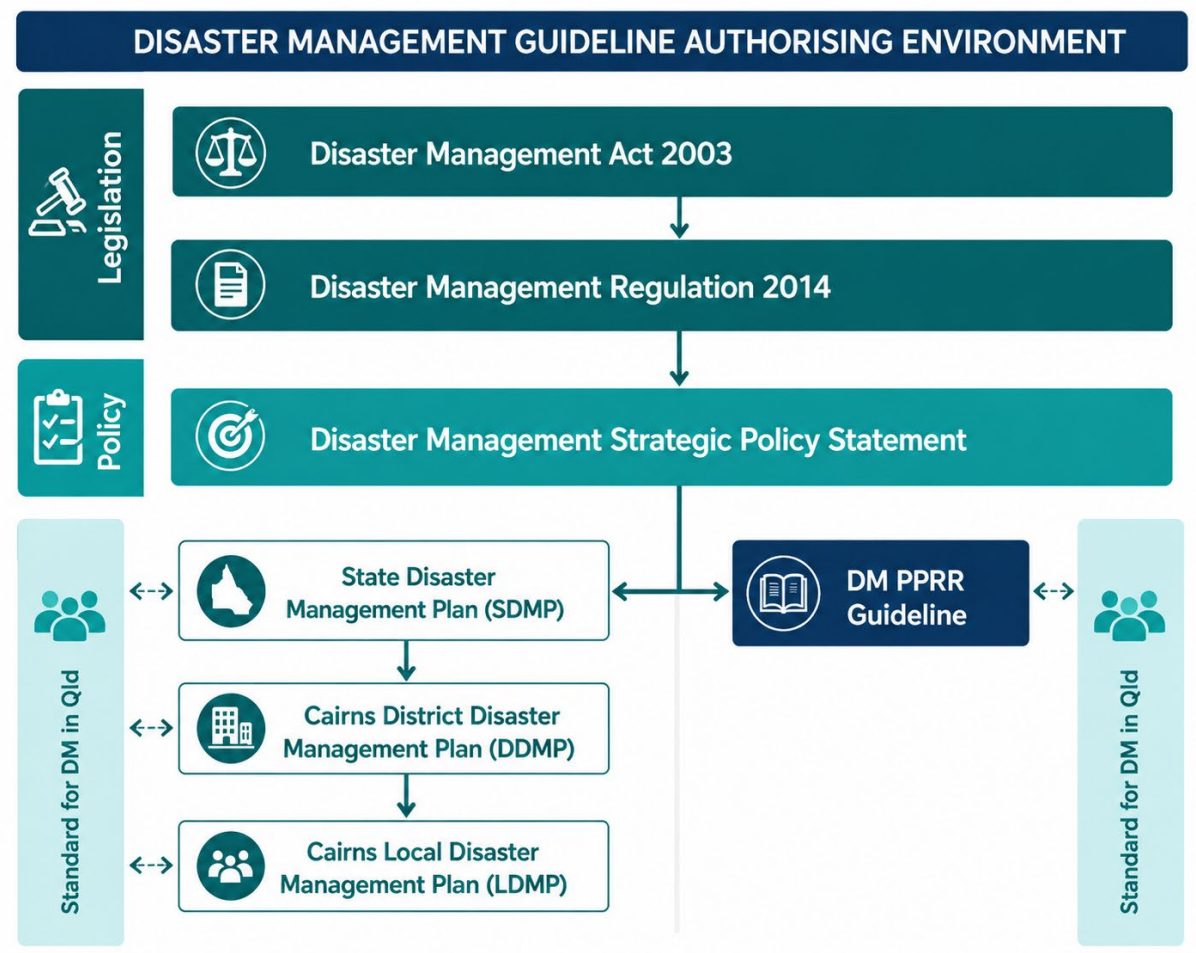

Figure 1: Disaster Management Authorising Environment

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this Plan are to:

- establish a coordinated and integrated framework for disaster management within the CRC LGA
- support the implementation of effective prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) arrangements
- define governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities that support effective multi-agency coordination and decision-making

- identify disaster risks and support risk-informed planning to reduce the impact of disaster events on the community, economy, environment and infrastructure
- strengthen community resilience through disaster risk reduction, public awareness and preparedness initiatives
- facilitate the coordinated management of information, resources and support before, during and after disaster events
- support continuous improvement through planning, training, exercising, evaluation and the incorporation of lessons identified.

1.5 Disaster Management Strategic Policy Statement

This LDMP has been developed having regard to the Queensland Disaster Management Committee's (QDMCs) Disaster Management Strategic Policy Statement and supports the strategic direction for disaster management in Queensland.

Consistent with the Strategic Policy Statement, the CR-LDMG is committed to:

- applying a transparent, systematic and risk-informed approach to disaster management
- fostering collaborative partnerships and shared responsibility across government, non-government organisations, industry and the community
- strengthening disaster resilience through prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities
- supporting resilient, connected and informed communities.

1.6 Disaster Management Arrangements

The *Disaster Management Act 2003* establishes the QDMA providing the legislative framework for disaster management across Queensland. The QDMA establishes disaster management groups at the State, District and Local levels and provides a coordinated, scalable approach to disaster management based on the principle that disasters are managed at the lowest appropriate level.

The QDMA adopts a whole-of-government, all-agencies approach that recognises disaster management as a shared responsibility. Effective disaster management relies on collaboration between government, emergency services, non-government organisations, industry, critical infrastructure providers, the private sector and the community.

The CR-LDMG forms part of the QDMA and is responsible for coordinating disaster management within the Cairns Local Government Area. Where local capability is exceeded or specialised assistance is required, additional support is requested through the Cairns District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) in accordance with the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements.

The relationship between the levels of the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements is shown in Figure 2**.**

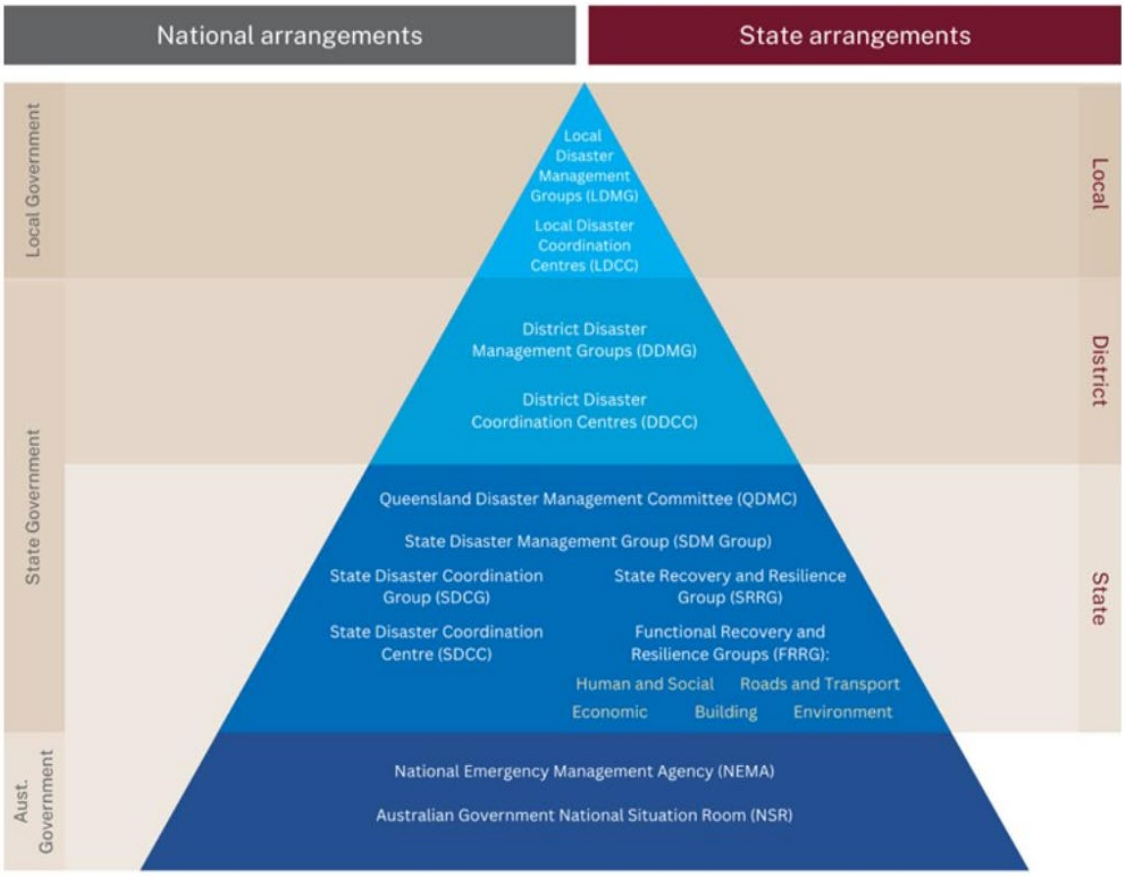

Figure 2: Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements

1.7 Roles and Responsibilities

Effective disaster management relies on the coordinated efforts of all levels of government, emergency services, non-government organisations, industry, the private sector, community groups and the public. Disaster management is a shared responsibility. Responsibilities are distributed across all entities with disaster management functions or capabilities, with coordination occurring through the QDMA.

The CR-LDMG provides strategic leadership for disaster management within the CRC LGA. Individual member agencies retain responsibility for performing their legislated functions and exercising their respective powers during disaster operations.

The principal roles and responsibilities within the Cairns disaster management arrangements are summarised in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Principal Roles and Responsibilities

Entity	Primary Responsibilities
Cairns Regional Council	Establishes and supports the CR-LDMG, adopts the LDMP, ensures Council maintains an effective disaster response capability, and provides resources to support local disaster operations. Council is responsible for ensuring information about disasters within the LGA is promptly provided to the Cairns District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) through established disaster management reporting arrangements.

Entity	Primary Responsibilities
Local Disaster Management Group (CR-LDMG)	Provides strategic leadership and coordination across all phases of disaster management, facilitates interagency collaboration, monitors disaster risks and capability, and oversees the development, maintenance and review of local disaster management arrangements.
Chair, CR-LDMG	Leads the LDMG, provides strategic direction during disaster events and represents the LDMG within the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements.
Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC)	Coordinates disaster operations for the CR-LDMG across the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery disaster management cycle, implements the Group's decisions, manages the operation of the LDCC when activated, coordinates operational reporting to the CR-LDMG and Cairns DDC, and facilitates requests for assistance where local capability is exceeded.
LDMG Member Agencies	Undertake disaster management functions within their respective legislative responsibilities and organisational capabilities, and contribute to coordinated planning, preparedness, response and recovery activities.
Advisory Members and Supporting Organisations	Provide specialist advice, technical expertise and operational support to assist the CR-LDMG in undertaking effective disaster management.

The detailed roles, responsibilities and legislative functions of individual agencies are established within relevant legislation, the QDMA and agency-specific plans and procedures. This Plan does not replace or duplicate those responsibilities but provides the framework for their coordination at the local level.

1.8 Relationship to Supporting Plans

This LDMP is the principal strategic disaster management document for the CRC LGA. It establishes the governance, coordination and planning arrangements that support disaster management across the PPRR phases, supporting resilience building across the entire disaster management cycle, and contributing to a safer and more disaster resilient community.

The LDMP is supported by a suite of functional, hazard-specific and operational plans that provide detailed arrangements for the management of specific disaster management functions, hazards and operational activities. The current suite of supporting plans is maintained within the CR-LDMG Plan Library, which provides the authoritative register of disaster management plans and supporting documentation. The Plan Library is maintained separately to enable document ownership, version control and review schedules to be updated independently of the LDMP.

The relationship between the LDMP and supporting plans is illustrated in **Figure 3.**

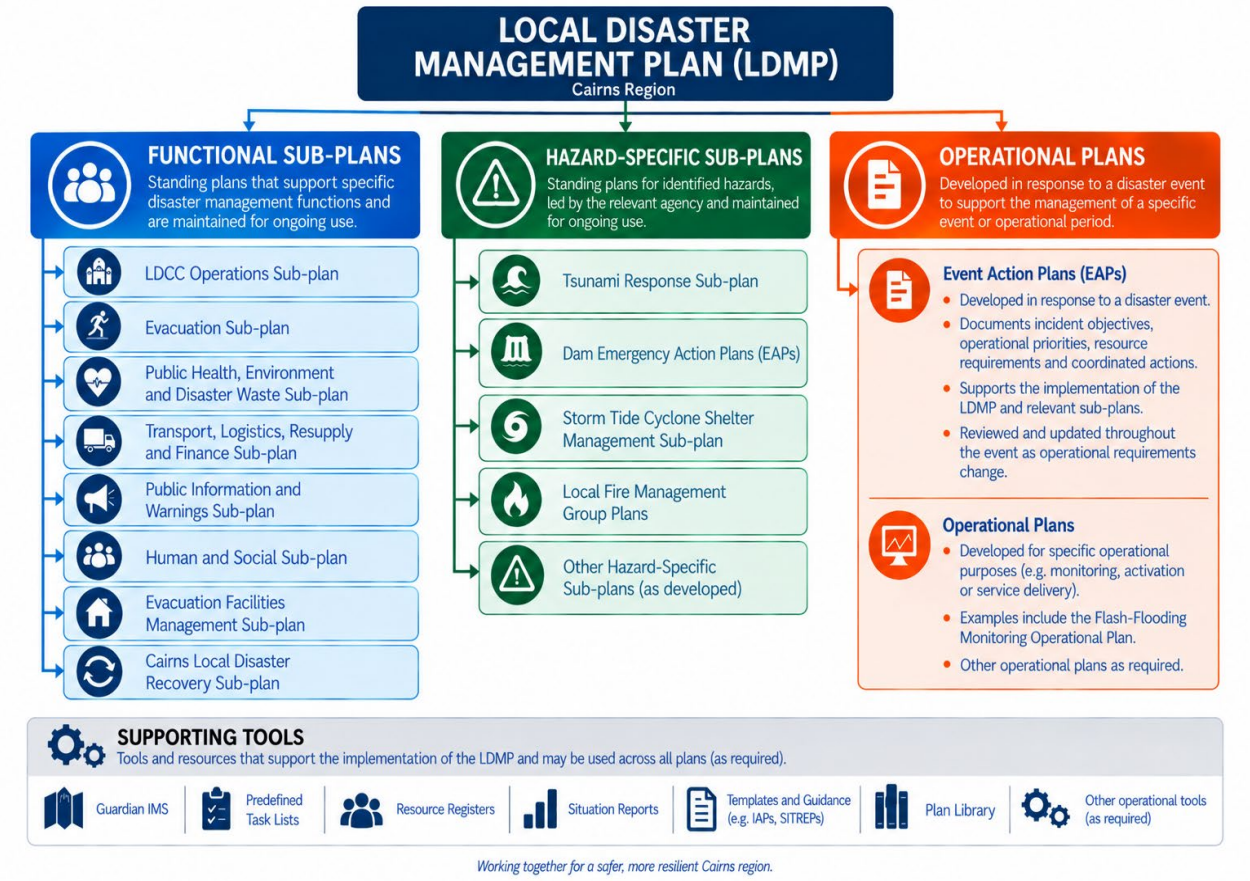

Figure 3: CR-LDMG Disaster Management Planning Framework

1.9 Planning Assumptions

This Plan is based on the following assumptions:

- disaster events may occur with little or no warning and may exceed the capacity of individuals, organisations or communities to manage using normal day-to-day arrangements
- disaster management is a shared responsibility requiring coordinated action by all levels of government, emergency services, non-government organisations, industry, businesses and the community
- disaster events will be managed in accordance with the QDMA, with responsibility remaining at the lowest appropriate level and additional support requested where local capability is exceeded
- member agencies will maintain their own operational procedures, business continuity arrangements and capability to fulfil their legislated responsibilities during disaster events
- critical infrastructure owners retain responsibility for maintaining and restoring their own assets and services
- effective disaster management relies on timely information sharing, interagency cooperation and coordinated decision-making
- disaster risks, community characteristics and organisational capabilities will change over time and require ongoing review and continuous improvement of disaster management arrangements
- supporting plans and procedures will be maintained and reviewed to ensure they remain current and aligned with this LDMP.

2. Governance

2.1 Governance Framework

The CR-LDMG is responsible for the governance, oversight and continuous improvement of disaster management arrangements within the Cairns LGA. The LDMP provides the strategic framework supporting these arrangements and is maintained on behalf of the CR-LDMG by the Local Disaster Coordinator.

The CR-LDMG monitors the effectiveness of local disaster management arrangements and promotes continuous improvement through planning, training, exercising, lessons management and assurance activities.

The Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the LDMP on behalf of the LDMG, including coordinating reviews, maintaining document control and facilitating amendments.

2.2 Local Disaster Management Group

2.2.1 Establishment

The CR-LDMG is established by CRC in accordance with section 29 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*. The CR-LDMG provides the governance and coordination arrangements for disaster management within the Cairns LGA.

The Group operates in accordance with its endorsed Terms of Reference, which detail the Group's governance arrangements, membership, meeting procedures, delegated authorities and legislative functions.

2.2.2 Functions

The functions of the CR-LDMG are prescribed under section 30 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*. In fulfilling these functions, the CR-LDMG:

- provides strategic leadership for local disaster management
- develops, maintains and reviews the LDMP and supporting plans
- coordinates disaster management activities across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery
- promotes disaster risk reduction and community resilience
- coordinates local disaster operations and multi-agency collaboration
- maintains effective coordination with the Cairns District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) and partner agencies
- identifies capability and resource requirements
- promotes continuous improvement through training, exercising, assurance and lessons management.

2.2.3 Membership

Membership of the CR-LDMG comprises representatives from CRC, Queensland Government agencies, emergency services, government-owned corporations, critical infrastructure providers, industry, private business and other organisations with disaster management responsibilities or capabilities. Members are appointed in accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the *Disaster Management Regulation 2014* and the CR-LDMG Terms of Reference.

Current membership is provided in **Appendix C – Local Disaster Management Group Membership**.

2.2.4 Legislative Authority of Key Appointments

The following table provides a summary of members and instrument of appointment. It is recommended appointments are made by position and not name to ensure continuity and capability.

Table 2: Legislative Authority of Key Appointments

Position	Instrument of Appointment	Procedure
Chairperson	Section 10 of the Disaster Management Regulation 2014	Appointment by Council. Mayor or Councillor nominated by the mayor.
Deputy Chairperson	Section 10 of the Disaster Management Regulation 2014	Appointed by Council
Local Disaster Coordinator	Section 35 (1) of the Disaster Management Act 2003	Appointed by Council *In consultation with the Chairperson and the Commissioner of Police (COP).
Local Recovery Coordinator	This position is not legislated	Appointed by the Chairperson of the CR-LDMG (should not be the LDC).
Secretariat	This position is not legislated	Appointed by the Chairperson of the CR-LDMG.
Member	Section 9 (1) (b) Disaster Management Regulation 2014	Appointed by Council*. Include one CRC Councillor and one nominated by the COP

** Delegated to CEO by Council.*

2.2.5 Member Responsibilities

CR-LDMG members are responsible for representing the capabilities and interests of their organisation and contributing to the effective coordination of disaster management within the CRC LGA.

Members are expected to:

- participate in meetings, training, exercises and operational activities
- maintain an understanding of the LDMP and supporting plans
- contribute to planning, capability development and continuous improvement
- facilitate information sharing between their organisation and the CR-LDMG
- support coordinated decision-making during disaster operations
- maintain appropriate organisational authority to commit resources or facilitate timely decision-making during disaster operations

- ensure an appropriately authorised, trained and briefed delegate is available to act during periods of absence or support prolonged disaster operations
- perform their disaster management roles and responsibilities in accordance with the State Disaster Management Plan, their agency's operational arrangements and the locally agreed responsibilities of the CR-LDMG.

Detailed member responsibilities and governance arrangements are contained within the CR LDMG Terms of Reference.

2.3 Plan Administration

2.3.1 Document Control

The LDMP and supporting operational plans are controlled documents maintained by the CR-LDMG.

The LDC maintains the master copy of the LDMP, coordinates document reviews and amendments and manages version control.

Minor administrative amendments may be approved by the LDC where they do not alter the intent of the Plan. Amendments affecting governance, policy or operational arrangements require endorsement by the CR-LDMG and, where required, adoption by CRC.

Refer Appendix C: Record of Amendments.

2.3.2 Consultation

The LDMP and supporting plans are developed and reviewed through consultation with CR-LDMG members, partner agencies, advisory organisations and other relevant stakeholders. The extent of consultation undertaken will be proportionate to the scope and purpose of the Plan or supporting document being reviewed.

2.3.3 Distribution and Public Availability

Controlled copies of the LDMP are distributed to CR-LDMG members, advisory members and other stakeholders as determined by the CR-LDMG.

In accordance with section 60 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the current version of the LDMP is made available for public inspection through the CRC website. Personal information, operational contact lists and other sensitive information are maintained separately in accordance with Council's information management and security requirements.

2.4 Review and Assurance

2.4.1 Review

In accordance with section 59 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the LDMG will review the effectiveness of this Plan at least annually. The review will consider changes to legislation, policy, community risk, organisational capability and the outcomes of disaster events, exercises and assurance activities.

Table 3: Annual Review Program

Timeframe	Activity
June – August	The LDC coordinates the annual review of the LDMP and supporting plans in consultation with LDMG members and relevant stakeholders.
September	Revised LDMP submitted to the LDMG for consideration, endorsement and amendment (if required).
October	Endorsed LDMP submitted to CRC for adoption (where required).
November	Adopted LDMP submitted to the Cairns DDMG.
Throughout the year	Minor administrative amendments, lessons management activities, and updates arising from operational activations, exercises or organisational changes may be incorporated as required.

2.4.2 Review Triggers

In addition to the annual review, this LDMP may be reviewed at any time where changes occur that affect the effectiveness or currency of local disaster management arrangements.

A review may be initiated following:

- activation of the LDMP for a disaster event
- an exercise or post-event review that identifies significant opportunities for improvement
- changes to the disaster risk profile of the CRC LGA
- changes to legislation, policy or QDMA
- changes to organisational structures, responsibilities or capability that affect disaster management arrangements
- significant changes to the community, built environment or critical infrastructure
- changes to local government boundaries or other administrative arrangements
- a request from the Cairns District Disaster Coordinator or the CR-LDMG.

Where one or more of these review triggers are identified, the LDC will coordinate a review of the Plan as soon as practicable, without waiting for the next scheduled annual review.

2.4.3 Reporting

The CR-LDMG maintains reporting arrangements that support effective governance, accountability and coordination across all levels of the QDMA.

The CR-LDMG reports through:

- annual reporting to CRC in accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003*
- CR-LDMG meeting minutes and resolutions
- routine reporting to the Cairns District Disaster Management Group
- operational reporting during disaster events in accordance with the Local Disaster Coordination Centre Operations Plan and the QDMA.

2.4.4 Assurance

Following adoption, the LDMP is provided to the Cairns DDMG to support consistency with district disaster management arrangements.

The Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM) may assess the LDMP and local disaster management arrangements in accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the Queensland Disaster Management Standard and the Emergency Management Assurance Framework.

Recommendations arising from assurance activities, operational activations, exercises and post-event reviews will be considered by the LDMG and incorporated into the ongoing review and continuous improvement of local disaster management arrangements.

3. Disaster Risk Environment

3.1 Geographic Context

The CRC LGA is in Far North Queensland and extends from the Coral Sea coastline to the Great Dividing Range, encompassing a diverse range of urban, rural, coastal and rainforest environments. The region covers approximately **1,687 square kilometres** and includes the major urban area of Cairns, the Southern Corridor, Northern Beaches, rural localities, coastal communities and island communities.

The Cairns LGA is bounded by Douglas Shire to the north, Mareeba Shire and Tablelands Regional Council to the west and south-west, Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire to the east, and Cassowary Coast Regional Council to the south. The region is characterised by its proximity to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, making it one of Australia's most environmentally significant and hazard-exposed regions.

Cairns is the principal regional centre for Far North Queensland and provides critical government, health, education, transport, logistics and emergency management services to communities across the Atherton Tablelands, Cape York Peninsula, the Torres Strait and neighbouring local government areas. The region also serves as the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas, supporting nationally significant tourism, trade and critical infrastructure.

Our Region's tropical climate, coastal location and diverse geography contribute to its exposure to a broad range of natural hazards including tropical cyclones, flooding, severe storms, landslides, storm tide, heatwave, bushfire and tsunami.

Much of the developed area occupies a narrow coastal plain between the Coral Sea and the Great Dividing Range, intersected by rivers, creeks and short-response catchments. The Bruce, Captain Cook and Kennedy Highways, together with key rail and utility corridors, are exposed to flooding, landslide and severe weather impacts. Disruption to these corridors may isolate communities within the LGA and affect the movement of people, emergency resources, freight and essential supplies across Far North Queensland.

The interaction of these geographic, climatic and environmental characteristics creates a complex disaster risk environment that requires a comprehensive, multi-agency approach to disaster management.

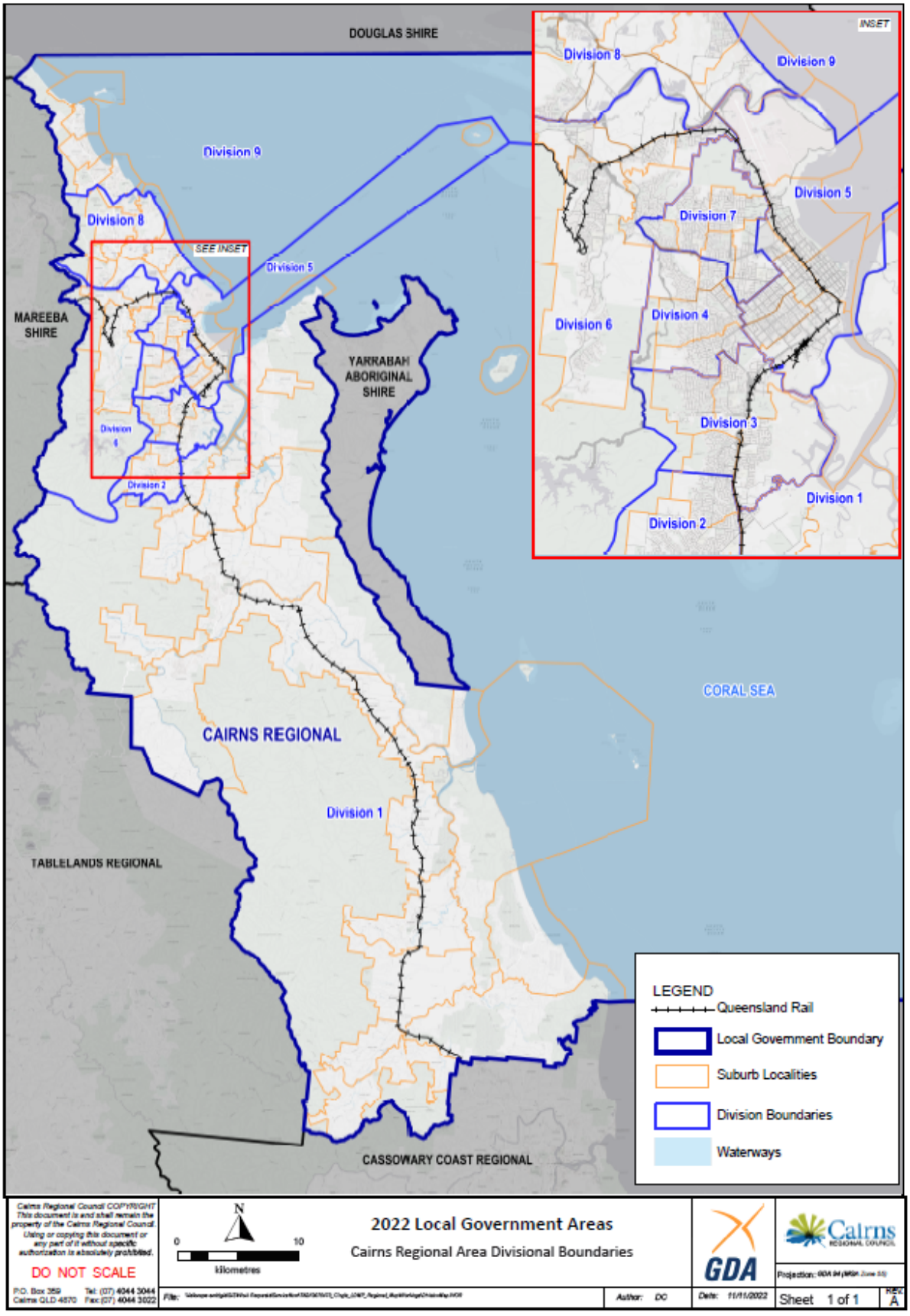

Figure 4: Cairns Regional Disaster Management Context

3.2 Community Profile

The Cairns region is home to a diverse and growing population, comprising permanent residents, seasonal workers, domestic and international visitors, and transient populations. Population distribution varies significantly across the LGA, with higher-density urban development concentrated within the Cairns metropolitan area and smaller rural and coastal communities dispersed throughout the region.

The region also includes offshore island communities and resorts on Green, Fitzroy and Double Islands. Permanent residents, employees and substantial visitor populations may be dependent on marine transport, telecommunications and mainland services during disaster events, creating distinct warning, evacuation, relief and resupply considerations.

The region also contains significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse populations, older persons, people living with disability and other vulnerable groups who may require additional support before, during and after disaster events.

As one of Australia's leading tourism destinations, Cairns experiences substantial fluctuations in population throughout the year. Visitor populations, together with temporary workers and fly-in/fly-out personnel, international students, cruise ship passengers and marine tourism visitors may also significantly increase the number of people requiring information, transport and welfare support during disaster events.

These demographic characteristics are considered in disaster risk assessment, public information, evacuation planning, relief arrangements and recovery planning.

3.3 Economy and Industry

The Cairns economy is underpinned by construction, health care and social assistance, tourism, manufacturing, marine, aviation, and education sectors. The region also supports agricultural production, commercial fishing and defence activities that contribute to both the Far North Queensland and Queensland economies.

As the principal regional centre for Far North Queensland, Cairns performs a critical role in supporting regional economic activity, essential services and supply chains. Cairns Airport is one of northern Australia's busiest regional airports and provides vital passenger, freight and emergency management connectivity. The Port of Cairns is a key maritime gateway supporting tourism, commercial shipping, defence operations, fishing and the resupply of remote communities.

The region's road, air and sea transport networks provide critical links for passengers, freight and essential supplies to communities across the Atherton Tablelands, Cape York Peninsula, the Torres Strait and neighbouring local government areas.

The disruption or failure of critical infrastructure may significantly affect emergency response, essential service delivery, community safety and economic recovery. Protecting and restoring critical infrastructure is therefore a key consideration across all phases of disaster management.

3.4 Critical Infrastructure

The Cairns region contains critical infrastructure that supports the delivery of essential services to the community and the broader Far North Queensland region. This includes transport infrastructure, electricity, water and wastewater networks, telecommunications, health facilities, emergency services, aviation and maritime facilities, and major government assets.

Key local considerations include the exposure of Cairns Hospital and other critical facilities to coastal hazards; reliance on Cairns Airport and the Port of Cairns for regional passenger, freight, evacuation and resupply functions; referable dams within and upstream of the LGA; and dependence on a limited number of road, rail, electricity and telecommunications corridors. The region's water supply, wastewater, power, telecommunications and transport networks are also highly interdependent, meaning disruption to one system may affect the operation or restoration of others.

The resilience of critical infrastructure is fundamental to effective disaster management. Disruption to key industries, transport infrastructure or supply chains may have significant economic, social and regional impacts extending beyond the Cairns LGA.

Damage or disruption to these assets may significantly affect community safety, emergency response operations, essential service delivery and economic recovery.

3.5 Environment

Our Region contains areas of outstanding environmental significance, including the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, nationally significant wetlands, river catchments, coastal ecosystems and extensive national parks.

These environmental assets contribute to the region's identity, economy and liveability while also influencing the nature and consequences of disaster events. Disaster management activities seek to balance community safety with the protection of environmental values wherever practicable.

Environmental values are considered during disaster risk assessment, response and recovery to support sustainable recovery outcomes.

3.6 Community Vulnerability

Community vulnerability reflects the susceptibility of people, communities and systems to the impacts of hazards and is influenced by social, economic, environmental and geographic factors.

Within the Cairns region, vulnerability may be influenced by:

- isolated rural and coastal communities, offshore islands and communities reliant on access routes vulnerable to flooding, landslide or severe weather
- visitors and temporary populations who may be unfamiliar with local hazards, warning systems, evacuation routes and available support

- concentrations of vulnerable persons
- dependence on critical infrastructure and transport networks
- socioeconomic disadvantage
- housing characteristics
- exposure to multiple natural hazards

These vulnerability factors have been considered in the Queensland Hazard Risk Assessment Framework (QHRAF) and inform disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery planning.

3.7 Regional Context

Cairns performs a critical regional role within Far North Queensland. The city provides emergency management coordination, specialist health services, transport, logistics, aviation and maritime support to surrounding LGAs and remote communities.

Disaster events affecting Cairns may therefore have regional consequences, while disasters occurring elsewhere in Far North Queensland may generate additional demands on Cairns-based services, infrastructure and resources.

A significant disruption in Cairns may affect specialist health referrals, aviation and maritime operations, freight movement, essential supplies, government services and emergency support across Cape York, the Torres Strait, the Atherton Tablelands and neighbouring local government areas.

These regional interdependencies are recognised within local disaster management arrangements and underpin collaborative planning, resource sharing and coordinated operations across the QDMA.

3.8 Disaster Risk Context

Disaster risk within the CRC LGA is influenced by the interaction between hazards, exposure, vulnerability and consequence. The diversity of the region's geography, population, economy, environment and critical infrastructure contributes to a complex and dynamic risk environment.

CRC has undertaken a disaster risk assessment using the Queensland Hazard Risk Assessment Framework (QHRAF). The outcomes identify the hazards presenting the greatest risk to the community and inform disaster risk reduction priorities, capability development, planning and continuous improvement activities described in Section 4 of this Plan.
The disaster risk environment described in this section provides the basis for the disaster risk assessment, capability development and operational planning arrangements contained within this Plan and associated sub-plans.

4. Risk Assessment

4.1 Risk Overview

Disaster risk assessment provides the foundation for disaster management planning within the CRC LGA. CRC and the CR-LDMG adopt a risk-informed approach to disaster management, ensuring that prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities are informed by an understanding of the hazards, exposure, vulnerability, consequences and capability relevant to the region.

The disaster risk assessment identifies hazards that may impact the CRC LGA, evaluates the level of risk they present, and informs the development of risk treatment strategies to reduce disaster risk and strengthen community resilience.

The detailed Disaster Risk Assessment has been undertaken by BMT Global Consulting (BMT) as a supporting document to this Local Disaster Management Plan. This section summarises the key outcomes of that assessment that inform disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery arrangements. The full Disaster Risk Assessment should be read in conjunction with this Plan.

4.2 Risk Assessment Methodology

The CR-LDMG undertakes disaster risk assessments using the **Queensland Hazard Risk Assessment Framework (QHRAF)** in accordance with the Queensland Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline.

The QHRAF provides a consistent, evidence-based methodology for assessing disaster risk by considering:

- hazards that may affect the community
- the exposure of people, property, infrastructure, the environment and the economy;
- vulnerability of communities and assets
- potential consequences
- existing controls and capabilities
- residual risk.

QHRAF draws on ISO 31000:2018, AS/NZS IEC 31010:2020 and the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG). It runs in two stages across two steps being risk analysis and then risk treatment as shown in the graphic below.

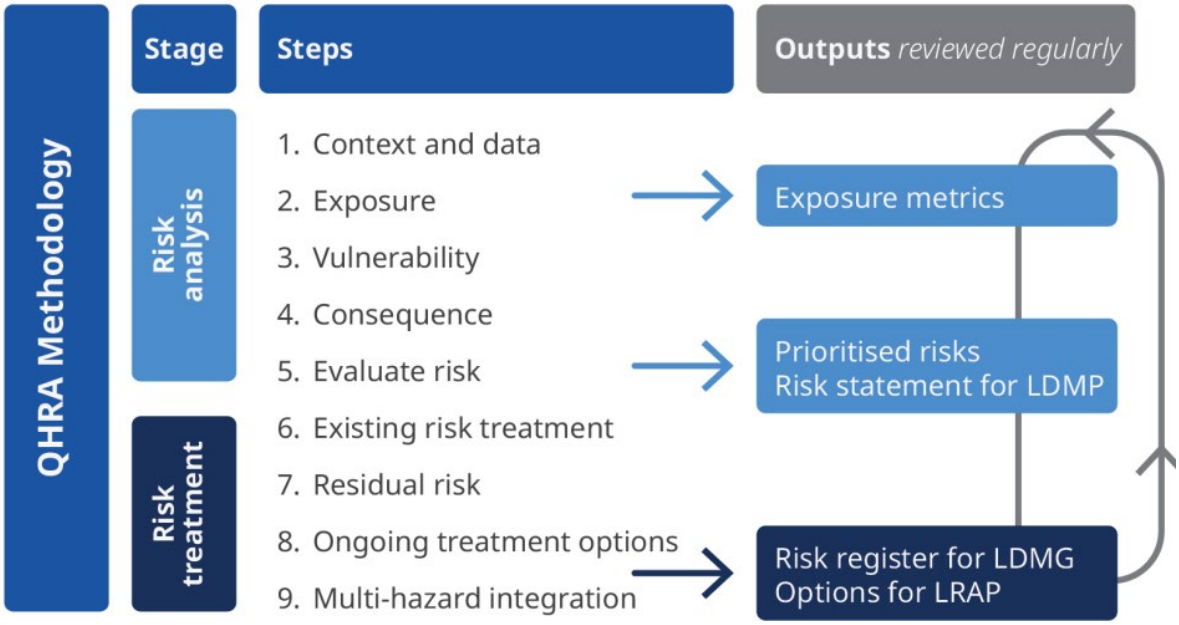

Figure 5: Queensland Hazard & Risk Assessment Methodology (February 2026)

The outcomes of the assessment support:

- disaster management planning;
- disaster risk reduction and mitigation;
- capability development;
- preparedness activities;
- operational planning;
- recovery planning; and
- continuous improvement.

CRC commissioned BMT to apply QHRAF across the Cairns LGA, and update the previous all-hazard assessment prepared by AECOM in 2013.

This QHRAF assessment was built on a structure agreed between BMT and CRC:

- Six primary hazard scenarios spanning wet hazards (cyclone, flood, storm tide) and dry hazards (bushfire, heat, earthquake)
- 27 asset groups, covering assets owned by Council and by external parties including Telstra, Ports North, Energy Queensland, Queensland Health, TMR, private hospitals, aged care providers and others
- Five "lines of resilience" applied to every asset group: Human and Social, Built, Environment, Roads and Transport, and Economy
- 27 asset groups x 5 lines of resilience = 135 assessments per scenario, and 810 assessments in total. Most result counts quoted in this summary are out of 135

The methodology followed a six-step process:

- Desktop review
- Exposure analysis via Geographic Information Service (GIS)
- Vulnerability and consequence assessment
- Assessment of hazard likelihood and inherent risk

- Stakeholder engagement
- Assessment of risk controls and treatments and assessment of residual risk

Ratings are recorded in a QHRAF Risk Register, which sits alongside the report and holds the asset-level detail.

4.3 Risk Profile

The Cairns LGA is exposed to a range of natural, technological and human-induced hazards. The hazard profile has been developed through the QHRAF assessment, local knowledge and previous risk assessments, and reflects the hazards with the greatest potential to impact the community, economy, environment, infrastructure and the continuity of essential services.

4.3.1 Selected Hazard Scenarios (Hazards assessed using QHRAF within this risk assessment)

The six primary hazard scenarios selected for this risk assessment are included within the table below. Hazard likelihood was assessed in accordance with the QHRAF framework.

Scenario	Description	Hazards Combined	Assessed Likelihood
1	Severe tropical cyclone (Cat 4–5) – credible worst case	Destructive wind (>225 km/h), storm tide 1% AEP, flash and major riverine flooding 1% AEP, landslide, erosion	Very unlikely
2	Severe tropical cyclone (Cat 3) – most likely cyclone case in this assessment	Strong wind, storm tide 10% AEP, moderate–major flooding 10% AEP, landslide, erosion	Moderate
3	Severe weather event	Localised flash flooding 10% AEP, storm tide / coastal inundation 10% AEP	Almost certain
4	Large-scale bushfire at the rural / urban bushland interface	Bushfire prone area mapping (medium, high, very high intensity plus 100 m impact buffer)	Moderate
5	Heatwave	Elevated temperatures beyond normal conditions (land surface temperature mapping)	Almost certain
6	Earthquake leading to possible tsunami	M4.9 shake map (Redlynch), seismic site class, tsunami evacuation zones, landslide	No likelihood assigned (dataset uncertainty)

Natural hazard risks were assessed against the current climate and will require periodic review as projections update; and residual risk requires continuous review by Council and the LDMG.

4.3.2 Hazards that the Cairns Region is Exposed to

The Cairns Region is exposed to the following hazards, with data included from previous risk assessments:

- Exotic Animal of Plant Disease (Biosecurity hazard)
- Explosion
- Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Incidents, including oil spills
- Pandemic
- Major road and rail accidents
- Terrorism
- Cybersecurity

4.3.3 Assessment of Community Vulnerability

Community vulnerability was assessed separately using an indicator-based index across all 404 Statistical Area 1 (SA1) units in the region. The index combines hazard exposure, sensitivity (population, dwelling count, dwellings built pre-1980), and adaptive capacity (mobility, awareness, financial recovery capacity). Indicators were normalised and equally weighted, so the output is a relative ranking for prioritisation, not an absolute measure.

Key drivers of community vulnerability included:

- Dwellings built pre-1980, which pre-date the introduction of cyclone-resistant construction standards
- Building density (number of dwellings in a specific area)
- Population density (number of people in a specific area)

Other community vulnerability indicators were considered including:

- Land tenure (renting indicates higher vulnerability than ownership)
- Mobility (access to motor vehicles)
- Recent arrivals and English language proficiency
- Financial recovery capacity

4.3.4 Emerging Risks

The disaster risk environment continues to evolve in response to changes in climate, population growth, land use, technology, interdependencies and community vulnerability.

In particular, heatwave is expected to be a growing risk, and other risks such as bushfire, drought and flooding from extreme precipitation will also be affected by climate change.

Climate is expected to be a force multiplier for many of the risks that the Cairns region faces.

4.4 Risk Assessment Outcomes

4.4.1 State and Regional Assessment

The Queensland 2023 State Disaster Risk Report selects 10 hazards affecting Queensland as a whole. The state-based rankings are provided as guidance for

prioritisation, and they may assist decision makers at different levels to inform disaster risk management efforts.

Table 4: 2023 State level risk ranking

Hazard	Overall Rank (State)
Flooding	1
Tropical cyclone	2
Bushfire	3
Severe thunderstorm	4
Heatwave	5
Pandemic	6
Biosecurity	7
Chemical, biological, radiological	8
Earthquake	9
Tsunami	10

The 2023 State Disaster Risk Assessment also assessed hazards by planning region. The Far North Queensland planning region is included within the table below. While these priorities represent the relative importance of hazards for the region, the prioritisations do not imply that any hazard is unimportant. The hazards detailed in this report are all significant to disaster risk in Far North Queensland.

Table 5: Regional ranking of hazards for Far North Queensland

Regional ranking	Hazard									
	Tropical cyclone	Flooding	Severe thunderstorm	Bushfire	Heatwave	Earthquake	Tsunami	Pandemic	Biosecurity	Chemical, biological, radiological
Far North Queensland	1	2	4	3	7	10	9	5	6	8

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority is reviewing and updating the State Disaster Risk Assessment, and this may result in revised risk rankings for Far North Queensland. In particular, it is likely that heatwave is considered a growing risk compared to the last state-level disaster risk assessment.

The QHRAF builds on the state-based advice, and applies a hazard framework down to the local level, focussing on assets and services. QHRAF local risk ratings are determined through consideration of hazard likelihood, exposure, vulnerability, consequence, existing controls and residual risk.

4.4.2 Cairns Region Assessment Summary of Findings

The following findings are the headlines from the QHRAF risk assessment process.

Exposure across the region is very high for wet hazards. Under the Category 5 Severe Tropical Cyclone scenario, 78% of residential allotments (57,770) and 87% of assessed community assets sit within at least one hazard footprint. Even the "almost certain" severe weather scenario exposes 69% of allotments.

Existing treatments contain risk rather than resolve it. For the worst-case tropical cyclone, treatments cut Higher-rated assessments from 33 to 19, but most of that movement lands in Moderate rather than Lower, with Lower-rated assessment rising from 30 to 34.

The treatment record is broad but unverified. Across the cyclone scenarios, around 79% of assessments have a treatment recorded, yet only 9% are confirmed Effective; roughly 90% require "Further Analysis". Confirmed effectiveness tracks organisational maturity, more than it tracks asset type, particularly across Energy Queensland, Cairns Airport, CHHHS, NBN and the response agencies.

Earthquake and tsunami is the clear planning blind spot. 65% of assessments have controls rated Ineffective and 47% have no treatment at all, producing the broadest pattern of higher residual risk in the assessment, across 15 of the 27 asset groups. The reason is not that controls failed, but that the region's plans were built for flood and cyclone. TMR states directly that road and bridge inspection measures exist but are designed for flood and cyclone events, not seismic ones. The same pattern recurs across schools, community facilities, electricity and Council buildings.

Heat is the second gap, and it is the scenario most likely to occur. Heatwave is rated Almost Certain, yet 38% of assessments have no treatment identified, the highest of any scenario, and 22% are rated Ineffective. Twelve assessments remain Higher after treatment, concentrated in elderly care, education and protected areas.

Education and elderly care carry risk most persistently. Secondary and higher education is rated Higher under five of the six scenarios, more than any other asset group. Early education, elderly care and accommodation, and emergency services are each rated Higher under four scenarios. Across all of these asset groups, the recorded gaps are similar: no hazard-specific closure or evacuation procedures for fire, heat, earthquake or tsunami, and unassessed cooling adequacy and seismic safety.

Evacuation facilities remain a concern, but a narrower one than the exposure suggests. They are rated Higher under both cyclone scenarios and the earthquake/tsunami scenario, and Moderate under the other three. Shelter capacity, staffing, backup power and communications redundancy are recorded as gaps simultaneously, the generator-backed cooling hub plan is not operational, and no seismic assessments have been undertaken.

The same suburbs recur regardless of hazard. Earlville, Westcourt, Parramatta Park, Mooroobool, Stratford, Wrights Creek and East Russell appear in the most-vulnerable list for nearly every scenario. Several rank high on demographic grounds alone, not because of hazard exposure.

Bushfire is comparatively well contained. No assessment is rated Higher either before or after treatment. However, this reflects low initial risk rather than strong controls, and

the only two ineffective ratings in the scenario sit in electricity infrastructure, where the stated approach cannot work against an unpredictable fire front.

4.4.3 Summary of Hazard Scenario Findings

Severe Tropical Cyclone (Category 5)

Severe Tropical Cyclone (Category 5) was the highest consequence scenario, with likelihood rated as very unlikely. This scenario including severe cyclonic wind, storm surge, flooding and landslide. Particular vulnerabilities include:

- Cairns Hospital
- Electricity, road and rail lines
- Waste and water management facilities has high exposure
- Tourism facilities have high exposure, including hostels, hotels and campgrounds
- Almost all land parcels in the region
- 11 of the 27 asset groups assessed have High vulnerability

Other items to be considered are:

- Workforce availability may reduce response and recovery effectiveness
- Severing of regional transit network may impede the delivery of essential services and materials supporting relief and recovery

Severe Tropical Cyclone (Category 3)

Severe tropical cyclone (Category 3) was considered a moderate likelihood, and more likely than a category 5 severe tropical cyclone. This scenario including cyclonic wind, storm surge, flooding and landslide Particular vulnerabilities include:

- Jensen Street and Ragamuffin Quay wastewater pump stations can be affected by flooding
- Asset classes at High exposure are early and secondary education, elderly care, evacuation facilities and the emergency response agencies (true for all wet hazards)

Other items to be considered are:

- Asset network exposure to flood drops by approximately 50% when compared to a category 5 severe tropical cyclone
- Treatments are more effective (e.g. building wind speed design), compared to a category 5 severe tropical cyclone

Severe Weather (Storms)

Severe weather was considered an almost certain likelihood, with ten severe weather events across the last 25 years. This scenario included severe rain storms, resultant flooding (to a lesser degree than the cyclone scenarios), tornados, hail and lightning storms. Particular vulnerabilities include:

- Maritime facilities

- Coastal fuel terminals
- Fallen trees
- Road access
- Water supply

Other items to be considered are:

- Treatments are considerably more effective due to frequent nature of hazard
- There may be limited public awareness of flash flood speed

Significant Bushfire

Bushfire was considered a moderate likelihood, with 25% of the region's 1,689 km² classed as bushfire prone, including 9.5% classified as Very High potential intensity. Historic bushfire activity concentrates in Wooroonooran, Grey Peaks and Eubenangee Swamp National Parks and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. This hazard has the lowest exposure of the six detailed scenarios within the most recent risk assessment.

Heatwave

Heatwave was considered an almost certain likelihood. Recent events occurred in the 2018/19 summer, when Cairns Aero recorded 42.6°C on 26 November 2018, and again in 2022, with hospitalisations reported. Particular vulnerabilities include:

- Projected increases in heatwave frequency and maximum duration
- Human and social risks are high, including aged care

Other items to be considered are:

- Further treatments should be considered for a growing risk
- Water supply during prolonged heat
- Consideration should be given to cooling adequacy in education facilities
- Consider the availability of community facilities and gathering spaces that could serve as heat refuges for vulnerable persons during extended heatwaves and periods of elevated temperatures

Earthquake and Tsunami

No likelihood was assigned to earthquake due to dataset uncertainty. The University of Queensland recorded 287 earthquakes in the Cairns reporting area between 1886 and 2000; and a magnitude 4.3 event occurred 125 km east of Cairns in 2023 with no damage, injury or tsunami warning. Particular vulnerabilities include:

- High asset network exposure, with a large event likely to affect essential services
- Tourist accommodation has high exposure
- The tsunami evacuation zone contains significant infrastructure including emergency services infrastructure
- Bridges are likely to be heavily impacted

Other items to be considered are:

- Treatments for this risk should be considered as part of an all-hazards approach
- Communication networks are better served by their controls and response processes for this event
- The Noggin Block is an area of sea floor that is in the slow stages of collapse and increases tsunami risk to the Cairns and Cassowary Coast areas

4.4.3 Community Vulnerability Assessment

Community vulnerability was assessed using a number of indicators, including exposure to hazards, sensitivity to hazards, and adaptive capacity.
Sensitivity to hazards included indicators such as age of housing (with dwellings built pre-1980 more sensitive to some hazards), number of dwellings, and population density.
Adaptive capacity included indicators such as property owned vs rented, access to own motor vehicle, how recently populations arrived in Cairns, and English proficiency.
One of the key messages around community vulnerability, is that parts of some suburbs rank as vulnerable regardless of hazard, and in several cases they rank highly on demographic grounds alone rather than because of exposure, which can increase the consequences of a disaster on populations in these areas.

Parts of Earlville, Westcourt, Parramatta Park and Mooroobool are generally more vulnerable, and warrant priority attention in preparedness and communications planning even though their physical hazard exposure is comparatively low.

Parts of East Russell, Wrights Creek, Bungalow, Trinity Beach and Edmonton rank highly because of genuine exposure, and should be considered in physical mitigation efforts.

4.4.3 Regional Asset and Services Exposure

Damaged assets and interrupted essential services are key consequences of a hazard event, and can disrupt response and prolong recovery.

Assets and networks within the table below were located within one or more hazard footprints. 2,136 individual assets were included in the assessment, with linear networks comprising 3,163.6 km of roads, rail, bridges and high-voltage powerlines.

Table 6: Asset network exposure by scenario

Scenario	Residential allotments	Assets exposed	% of assets	Network km exposed	% of network
1 – Severe cyclone (Cat 5)	57,770 (78%)	1,852	86.7%	2,180.9	68.9%
2 – Cyclone (Cat 3)	54,716 (74%)	1,675	78.4%	1,234.0	39.0%
3 – Severe weather	51,332 (69%)	1,537	72.0%	1,138.0	36.0%
4 – Bushfire	14,868 (20%)	580	27.2%	491.3	15.5%
5 – Heatwave	Region-wide (not spatially bounded)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Scenario	Residential allotments	Assets exposed	% of assets	Network km exposed	% of network
6 – Earthquake / tsunami	32,529 (44%)	1,301	60.9%	2,819.5	89.1%

The earthquake/tsunami network figure is the highest of any scenario because almost the entire built-up area sits on Seismic Site Class D or E soils, which amplify ground shaking, with 2,637 km of the 2,819 km exposed is driven by site class rather than by tsunami inundation.

4.4.3 Asset Group Risk after Controls Applied

The matrix below is the assessment's central result. Each cell shows the highest risk result for all five of the lines of resilience, for that asset group, under that scenario, and after existing treatments are applied.

H Higher **M** Moderate **L** Lower

Asset Category	Residual Risk Rating					
	Scenario 1 Cat 5 Severe Tropical Cyclone	Scenario 2 Cat 3 Severe Tropical Cyclone	Scenario 3 Severe Weather Event	Scenario 4 Bushfire	Scenario 5 Heatwave	Scenario 6 Earthquake / Tsunami
Social and community						
Community facilities	M	M	M	L	M	M
Early and combined education	H	H	M	L	H	H
Secondary and higher education	H	H	H	M	H	H
Elderly care and accommodation	H	H	M	M	H	H
Economic and tourism						
Commercial and industrial lands	M	M	M	L	M	M
Tourist accommodation	H	M	L	M	H	H
Goods and services	M	L	L	L	L	H
Environment and heritage						
Protected areas	M	M	L	M	H	M
Emergency and health services						
Emergency services (evacuation facilities)	H	H	M	M	M	H

Asset Category	Residual Risk Rating					
	Scenario 1 Cat 5 Severe Tropical Cyclone	Scenario 2 Cat 3 Severe Tropical Cyclone	Scenario 3 Severe Weather Event	Scenario 4 Bushfire	Scenario 5 Heatwave	Scenario 6 Earthquake / Tsunami
Emergency services	H	H	L	M	H	H
Healthcare	H	M	M	L	M	H
Transport and access						
State roads	H	M	L	M	M	H
Local roads	H	M	M	M	H	M
Bridges	H	M	L	L	L	H
Rail	M	L	L	L	L	M
Aviation facilities	M	M	L	L	L	H
Utilities and lifelines						
Council building	M	M	L	M	M	M
Fuel distribution network	H	M	L	L	M	H
Electricity infrastructure	M	M	L	L	M	H
Electricity network	M	M	L	M	M	H
Waste and water management	M	M	L	M	M	H

The count of Higher-rated asset groups differs sharply by scenario: 15 of 27 under earthquake/tsunami, 11 under the worst-case cyclone, 7 under heatwave, 5 under the Category 3 cyclone, 1 under severe weather and none under bushfire. Secondary and higher education is the only group rated Higher under five scenarios.

4.4.3 Hazards not included within the QHRAF assessment

Hazards outside of this QHRAF assessment are described below and include

- Exotic Animal of Plant Disease (Biosecurity hazard)
- Explosion
- Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Incidents, including oil spills
- Pandemic
- Major road and rail accidents
- Terrorism
- Cybersecurity

<u>Exotic Animal and Plant Disease (Biosecurity hazard)</u>

Cairns is home to considerable numbers of animal and plant species, so the possibility of an occurrence of exotic animal disease is always present. There are holdings of animals susceptible to an outbreak of disease, in the region. Disease source, identification,

tracking and quarantine is usually managed by the Department of Primary Industries in conjunction with the Cairns Biosecurity Working Group, managed by Cairns Regional Council. Many parties have roles in biosecurity as outlined in the plans named below. These organisations can call on the Local Disaster Management Group for support should a major issue arise.
The introduction of pests or plant disease can cause serious production losses to agricultural industries, jeopardise exports, and have a significant impact on the environment and economy.
Far North Queensland was affected by papaya fruit fly from 1995 to 1998. This affected a large range of fruit and vegetable crops. The incursion cost Queensland industry around $110 million in lost trade, control, treatment and eradication. March 2015 saw a number of cases of Panama tropical race 4 in North Queensland (Tully and Mareeba) investigated and confirmed by Biosecurity Queensland. Current pest issues include Parthenium, Siam Weed, Sicklepod, Giants Rats Tail grass, Tilapia, and Cane Toads, as well as other feral animals.
Key information on biosecurity is available through the Cairns Regional Council Biosecurity Plan, and the Queensland Biosecurity Strategy (Biosecurity Queensland / Department of Primary Industries)

Explosion

The occurrence of a major explosion is obviously unpredictable however has a reasonable probability and may occur in some form at any time. The locations at risk are the various industrial enterprises, storage of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) containers of various sizes, bulk depots of oils and petrol, motor service stations and similar establishments throughout the region.

Potential explosion of road tankers of petrol and gas is likely to be confined to the major traffic routes and the railways. Casualties may be likely and depending on location of event, evacuations may be required.

Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Incidents, including Oil Spills

Uncontrolled spills of hazardous materials (HazMat) can seriously affect Cairns Infrastructure systems and produce harmful conditions to the natural environment.

Hazmat of varying types is transported by road and rail, and sea, within and through the Cairns Region. Road and rail authorities, including heavy vehicle contractors, include this risk in their operations plans.

Although managed under dangerous goods legislation the potential for an incident involving dangerous goods and chemicals is moderate. Areas most likely to be affected include industrial areas of the region and major transport corridors and evacuations may be required if such an incident were to occur.

QFD would control the incident with assistance from other agencies including QPS, the QFD Research and Scientific Branch, local government and SES. Assistance will vary depending on the location and severity of an incident.

The possibility of a hazardous material or oil spill into the water systems within or surrounding Cairns is possible though the probability is low. Such an incident would be

relatively small and managed by QFD with assistance from CRC in terms of clean up etc. DETSI may also be involved.

Oil/fuel spills in Trinity Inlet have occurred previously. Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) and DTMR are the lead agencies in responding to such incidents. The Queensland Coastal Contingency Action Plan (QCCAP) outlines prevention, preparation, response and recovery arrangements for ship-sourced marine pollution incidents (oil and/or chemical spills).

MSQ may seek CR-LDMG's assistance during a significant marine pollution incident. The Port of Cairns First Strike Oil Spill Response Plan (Ports North) lists roles and responsibilities for local marine incidents.

Pandemic

Pandemics are epidemics on a global scale. For a disease to have pandemic potential it must meet three criteria:

- Humans have little or no pre-existing immunity to the causative pathogen
- Infection with the pathogen usually leads to disease in humans
- The pathogen has the capacity to spread efficiently from person to person

The likelihood of a pandemic is difficult to assess. The impact of a pandemic is highly variable but can be very widespread, affecting many areas of daily life, as has been seen with the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of a pandemic depends on how sick the pathogen makes people (clinical severity), the ability of the pathogen to spread between people (transmissibility), the capacity of the health system, the effectiveness of interventions and the vulnerability of the population

Queensland Health is the lead agency for pandemic. Queensland Health owns the Pandemic Sub-plan to the Queensland Health Disaster and Emergency Plan, and operates in conjunction with the Queensland Whole-of-Government Pandemic Plan. Queensland Health can call on the LDMG to provide support during a Pandemic.

Major Road and Rail Accidents

The CR-LDMG would likely become involved if a significant accident involved a tourist coach, semi-trailer or the like to assist with welfare requirements.

Although the likelihood of a specific accident is difficult to asses, many tourist coaches traverse the roads from Cairns to Cape Tribulation on the Cook Highway as well as south along the Bruce Highway.

The main northern rail route passes through the southern part of the Region with a terminus at Cairns. The Kuranda Scenic railway operates most days out of Cairns. There is also a network of sugar cane train tracks throughout the region. There is potential for a major rail disaster, especially if a train is carrying dangerous goods. Rail operators have their own emergency management plans for accidents on the rail network. The LDMG may be requested to assist by responding agencies such as QFD or QPS.

Terrorism

A terrorist act is an action or a threat of action that is intended to coerce a government, influence a government by intimidation or intimidate a section of the public.

The Australian Government assesses the likelihood of a terrorist act via The Terrorism Threat Level published on the Australian National Security website.

The Queensland Counter-Terrorism Strategy outlines the state-level arrangements for counter-terrorism. QPS leads state-level counter-terrorism operations, and partners with the Australian Federal Police. QPS may request CR-LDMG assistance, particularly after a terrorist act, for assistance with actions beyond normal QPS operations.

The likelihood of a terrorism event occurring within the Cairns region is somewhat unknown however the Cairns Region regularly hosts high profile events. It is important that facilities are assessed and measures taken in relation to security.

Cybersecurity

'Cyber security' refers to the methods, systems, and tools used to protect people and organisations from the harmful effects of online threats like cybercrime. Cyber threats and crime are on the rise globally. They can affect any business, industry or person and are becoming increasingly sophisticated and disruptive.

There is no single probability of cybersecurity incident, but the Australian Cyber Security Centre publishes an Annual Cyber Threat Report.

The Queensland Government actively works with the Commonwealth's Australian Cyber Security Centre to promote cybersecurity understanding. LDMG members are responsible for the cybersecurity of their assets and systems.

Should an CR-LDMG member be impacted by cybercrime, they may call on the CR-LDMG for assistance, particularly in dealing with the second-order affects of cybercrime, such as service or organisational disruption.

4.5 Disaster Risk Treatment

The CR-LDMG adopts a proactive approach to disaster risk treatment through prevention, mitigation, preparedness and capability development initiatives.

Risk treatments for effectiveness within the latest disaster risk assessment. Risk treatments were considered very effective for severe weather, due to the frequency of the hazard. Controls for less frequent events (such as earthquake), are less effective, which aligns with the much lower likelihood associated with these events.

Climate change is changing the likelihood and consequences of some hazards, most notably heatwave. Consideration is being given by the LDMG on how to implement the most effective risk treatments for hazards that are becoming more frequent.

Risk treatment actions are developed collaboratively with responsible agencies and stakeholders and are prioritised based on the outcomes of the QHRAF assessment.

Detailed treatment actions, responsible agencies and implementation priorities are maintained within the **Disaster Risk Treatment Register**, which is reviewed and updated separately from this Plan to support continuous improvement.

4.6 Residual Risk

Residual risk is the level of risk remaining after existing controls and treatment measures have been considered.

Residual risks identified through the QHRAF are recorded within the **Cairns Disaster Risk Register** and monitored by the CR-LDMG as part of its continuous improvement program.

Where residual risks exceed local capability or capacity, the CR-LDMG will:

- implement additional risk treatment measures where practicable
- seek support through the Cairns DDMG
- review capability development priorities
- incorporate lessons identified from disaster events and exercises
- review residual risks as part of future QHRAF assessments.

The Disaster Risk Register is maintained separately from this Plan to enable ongoing review without requiring amendment of the LDMP.

4.7 Monitoring and Review

Disaster risk is dynamic and changes over time because of environmental, social, economic and organisational factors.

The CR-LDMG will monitor and review disaster risk through:

- periodic review of the QHRAF assessment
- annual review of this Plan
- lessons identified from disaster events and exercises
- changes to legislation, policy and disaster management arrangements
- changes to community characteristics, infrastructure and organisational capability
- ongoing engagement with member agencies, stakeholders and the community.

The outcomes of future risk assessments and lessons management activities will be incorporated into disaster management planning, capability development and risk treatment to support continuous improvement.

5. Prevention

5.1 Prevention Overview

Prevention comprises the measures undertaken to eliminate or reduce disaster risk before a disaster event occurs. Prevention activities seek to reduce the likelihood and consequences of hazards through effective planning, mitigation, governance and community resilience.

The CR-LDMG supports a risk-based approach to prevention informed by the Queensland Hazard Risk Assessment Framework (QHRAF). Prevention activities are undertaken collaboratively by all levels of government, infrastructure providers, industry, community organisations, and the broader community to reduce disaster risk and strengthen resilience.

5.2 Prevention Priorities

Prevention priorities are informed by the outcomes of the Cairns Disaster Risk Assessment and are reviewed periodically to reflect changes in the risk environment, emerging hazards and organisational priorities. Current prevention priorities include:

- reducing disaster risk associated with the highest priority hazards identified through the QHRAF;
- improving the resilience of critical infrastructure and essential services;
- integrating disaster risk considerations into land use planning and development;
- strengthening community resilience and shared responsibility for disaster risk reduction; and
- supporting long-term climate adaptation and resilience initiatives.

5.3 Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster risk reduction is achieved through a range of strategic, regulatory and operational initiatives undertaken by Council, government agencies, infrastructure providers and the community.

These initiatives seek to reduce disaster risk by:

- avoiding the creation of new disaster risk
- reducing existing disaster risk
- strengthening organisational capability
- improving infrastructure resilience
- enhancing community resilience.

Current disaster risk reduction initiatives include:

- implementation of disaster mitigation and resilience projects;
- development of Local Area Community Disaster Resilience Plans for high-risk communities;
- flood risk assessment, flood studies and flood resilience initiatives;

- infrastructure upgrades that reduce community vulnerability to natural hazards; and
- ongoing disaster risk assessment and treatment through Council planning and investment processes.

5.4 Land Use Planning and Development

Land use planning contributes to disaster prevention by ensuring future development appropriately considers natural hazards and disaster risk.

CRC incorporates disaster risk considerations into strategic planning, development assessment and infrastructure planning processes in accordance with the *Queensland Planning Act 2016*, the State Planning Policy (currently under review), the CairnsPlan and other relevant statutory planning instruments.

5.5 Infrastructure and Essential Services

The resilience of critical infrastructure and essential services is fundamental to reducing disaster risk and supporting community resilience.

Council, infrastructure owners and service providers undertake planning, maintenance and investment activities to improve the resilience of infrastructure and minimise service disruption during disaster events.

This includes consideration of interdependencies between critical infrastructure sectors and the continuity of essential services during disaster events.

Infrastructure resilience initiatives may include:

- transport infrastructure improvements that enhance network resilience;
- water, wastewater and drainage resilience projects;
- asset management and renewal programs that reduce disaster risk;
- critical infrastructure improvement projects delivered by Council and essential service providers;
- continued fuel and vegetation management in recreational and protected areas to minimise bushfire risk as well as debris accumulation; and
- implementation of Local Resilience Action Plan (LRAP) initiatives and other resilience programs.

5.6 Climate Adaptation

Climate adaptation contributes to disaster risk reduction by improving the resilience of communities, infrastructure, essential services and the natural environment to current and future climate-related hazards.

Cairns Regional Council incorporates climate adaptation into disaster risk reduction through strategic planning, infrastructure planning, environmental management and implementation of its adopted climate adaptation strategies.

Climate adaptation initiatives complement the disaster risk treatment measures identified through the QHRAF and support long-term community resilience.

Climate adaptation initiatives may include:

- implementation of Council's Climate Change Strategy 2030
- coastal hazard adaptation planning;
- climate-informed infrastructure planning;
- natural environment protection and ecosystem resilience initiatives; and
- integration of climate change considerations into strategic planning and disaster risk reduction.

Council's climate adaptation activities are guided by the *Cairns Climate Change Strategy 2030* and *Our Cairns Coast: Adapting for the Future*. These strategies support long-term planning for changing hazard conditions, including coastal erosion, storm tide inundation, sea-level rise, extreme rainfall and heat. Relevant adaptation priorities and initiatives are considered through disaster risk assessment, land-use and infrastructure planning, community resilience activities and the ongoing review of disaster management arrangements.

5.7 Community Resilience

Community resilience is strengthened through education, awareness, preparedness programs and partnerships that encourage individuals, businesses and organisations to understand disaster risk and take appropriate action before disasters occur.

The Cairns LDMG supports initiatives that:

- improve disaster awareness
- promote personal and household preparedness
- strengthen community capability
- support vulnerable communities
- encourage shared responsibility for disaster risk reduction.

Community resilience initiatives are delivered in partnership with government agencies, non-government organisations, community groups and the private sector.

Community resilience initiatives may include:

- delivery of community disaster education and awareness programs;
- implementation of Local Area Community Disaster Resilience Plans;
- Get Ready Queensland activities and seasonal preparedness campaigns;
- partnerships with community organisations, businesses and volunteers to strengthen resilience; and
- resilience projects delivered through the Community Recovery and Resilience Officer (CRRO) program and other Council initiatives.

5.8 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Prevention initiatives are reviewed as part of the ongoing disaster risk management process and informed by:

- outcomes of the QHRAF
- changes to the risk environment
- lessons identified from disaster events and exercises
- changes to legislation and policy
- continuous improvement activities undertaken by the LDMG and partner agencies.

Prevention initiatives are monitored through Council programs, disaster risk assessments, capability assessments, lessons management activities and annual review of this Plan.

6. Preparedness

6.1 Preparedness Overview

Preparedness comprises the arrangements and capabilities established before a disaster event to support an effective and coordinated response and recovery. Preparedness activities enhance the ability of the CR-LDMG member agencies, stakeholders and the community to anticipate, respond to and recover from disaster events.

Preparedness is achieved through planning, capability development, training, exercising, public education, information sharing and continuous improvement.

6.2 Preparedness Planning

Disaster preparedness is supported by this LDMP together with a suite of operational, functional and hazard-specific plans that provide detailed arrangements for the management of identified disaster management functions and hazards.

Supporting operational plans include hazard-specific, functional and operational plans that address key disaster management arrangements such as evacuation, public information, logistics, resupply, business continuity, recovery and identified hazard risks. A current register of supporting plans is maintained by Council and reviewed in conjunction with this LDMP. Refer to Figure 3 for a list of the full plan suite.

Collectively, these supporting plans provide the detailed operational arrangements necessary to implement the strategic direction contained within this LDMP.

Capability development priorities may include:

- maintaining contemporary disaster management plans and operational procedures;
- developing the capability of LDMG members and supporting agencies;
- strengthening coordination arrangements across member agencies;
- improving situational awareness and decision-support capability;
- enhancing interoperability between agencies and supporting organisations; and
- addressing capability gaps identified through exercises, operational activations and lessons management.

6.3 Training, Exercising and Lessons Management

Training and exercising are essential components of disaster preparedness and provide opportunities to validate plans, develop capability and identify opportunities for improvement.

The CR-LDMG supports participation in disaster management training consistent with the Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework (QDMTF) and conducts a program of discussion exercises, functional exercises and operational exercises to test disaster management arrangements.

Lessons identified through training, exercises and disaster operations are incorporated into continuous improvement activities and future capability development.

6.4 Public Information and Community Preparedness

Community preparedness is supported through the provision of timely, accurate and accessible disaster information.

The LDMG promotes community awareness and preparedness through education initiatives, engagement activities and public information campaigns designed to improve understanding of disaster risk and encourage individual and household preparedness.

Community preparedness initiatives may include:

- annual Get Ready Queensland preparedness campaigns;
- maintenance of the Cairns Disaster Dashboard and other public information channels;
- community education and engagement activities;
- disaster preparedness initiatives for communities exposed to specific hazards, including dam safety awareness activities where appropriate;
- Community Recovery and Resilience Officer (CRRO) and Disaster Resilience Officer projects; and
- partnerships with member agencies and community organisations to improve disaster awareness and preparedness.

6.5 Capability Assessment

The CR-LDMG regularly assesses disaster management capability to identify strengths, capability gaps and improvement opportunities. Capability assessments are informed by operational experience, training, exercises, lessons management and changes to the disaster risk environment. Outcomes are used to inform capability development priorities, planning and investment decisions.

6.6 Resource Readiness

Member agencies maintain resources, systems and arrangements necessary to support disaster operations within their respective areas of responsibility.

Council maintains current information on locally available resources, suppliers and organisational capabilities to support disaster operations. Sensitive operational information, including contact details, fleet information and capability statements, is maintained separately from this public Plan.

Where local capability may be exceeded, arrangements exist to access additional resources through established disaster management arrangements, mutual aid agreements and QDMA Requests for Assistance (RFA).

Detailed resource coordination arrangements are contained within the relevant operational plans.

6.7 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Preparedness activities are reviewed through training, exercising, debriefs, lessons identified, capability assessments and operational activations.

The outcomes of these activities are incorporated into future planning, capability development and preparedness initiatives to ensure disaster management arrangements remain effective, contemporary and fit for purpose.

7. Response

7.1 Response Overview

Response comprises the actions taken immediately before, during and immediately after a disaster to minimise impacts on people, property, the environment, the economy and essential services.

The CR-LDMG coordinates disaster response within the CRC LGA in accordance with the QDMA. Response arrangements are scalable and are activated commensurate with the nature, complexity and consequences of the disaster event.

7.2 Activation

The CR-LDMG may activate in response to an actual or impending disaster event where coordinated disaster management arrangements are required.

Activation arrangements are scalable and may occur progressively, reflecting the scale, complexity and consequences of the event. Activation arrangements support effective situational awareness, decision-making, resource coordination and information sharing.

7.2.1 Responsibility for Activation

The Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC), or nominated deputy, is responsible for determining the initial activation level of the CR-LDMG and initiating the appropriate response arrangements. Wherever practicable, decisions to activate, escalate or stand down the CR-LDMG will be made in consultation with the Chairperson, or nominated deputy.
Where neither the LDC nor the Chairperson, nor their respective deputies, is available, responsibility for the initial activation decision rests with the most senior available Cairns Regional Council officer.

7.2.2 Activation Criteria

The CR-LDMG may be activated in response to an actual or impending disaster event where multi-agency coordination, resource support or disaster management arrangements are required.
Activation may be initiated in response to:

- An identified or emerging threat requiring coordinated preparedness or response activities.
- A request from a lead agency for multi-agency coordination or additional support.
- A request from a responding agency for resource support or operational coordination.
- A request from the Cairns District Disaster Coordinator (DDC).
- Advice or warnings from the Bureau of Meteorology or other relevant authorities indicating a potential threat to the Cairns region.

The decision to activate will consider the nature and severity of the event, anticipated impacts, available lead time, geographical considerations, local capability and the potential need to activate the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC).
In determining the timing and level of activation, consideration should also be given to the geographical characteristics of the Cairns region, including travel and response times, accessibility of affected communities, potential evacuation requirements and the time required to mobilise personnel and resources safely ahead of an impending hazard impact.

7.2.3 Activation Levels

The CR-LDMG operates across four activation levels: Alert, Lean Forward, Stand Up and Stand Down. The level of activation is determined by the nature, scale and potential consequences of the event and the level of coordination required. Progression through the activation levels is not necessarily sequential, and the CR-LDMG may move directly to a higher level of activation where circumstances warrant.

Table 7: CR-LDMG activation levels

Activation level	Description	Indicative triggers	Key actions
Alert	Heightened vigilance and preparedness due to the possibility of an event affecting the Cairns region.	Identification of a hazard that may affect the Cairns region.	Monitor the threat, maintain situational awareness, liaise with relevant agencies and provide initial advice to LDMG members.
Lean Forward	Heightened operational readiness in anticipation of a potential or developing disaster event.	Increasing likelihood of impact, emerging coordination requirements or a need for community warnings.	Brief LDMG members, confirm contact arrangements, prepare the LDCC, initiate preparatory activities and establish regular communication with the DDC.
Stand Up	Active disaster operations involving mobilisation of personnel, resources and coordination arrangements.	Imminent or actual impacts requiring coordinated disaster operations or additional support.	Activate the LDCC as required, implement operational plans, mobilise personnel, coordinate resources and commence operational reporting.
Stand Down	Transition from coordinated response operations to normal business and/or ongoing recovery activities.	The threat has passed and coordinated response arrangements are no longer required.	Finalise outstanding requests, progressively demobilise resources, conduct debriefs, complete reporting and transition outstanding activities to recovery arrangements.

Activation of the CR-LDMG and the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) may occur independently or concurrently, depending on the operational requirements of the event – refer section 7.4.

Activation of the CR-LDMG does not necessarily require the convening of a formal meeting or activation of the LDCC. Depending on the circumstances, activation may initially involve notifying members, sharing information, maintaining situational awareness and undertaking preparatory activities. The level of LDMG and LDCC activation will be determined by the operational requirements of the event and may be adjusted as circumstances change.

7.3 Coordination Arrangements

The CR-LDMG coordinates disaster response through established disaster management arrangements, working collaboratively with member agencies, advisory organisations, neighbouring local governments and the Cairns DDMG.

Response activities are coordinated to support the effective deployment of resources, sharing of information, implementation of disaster management strategies and prioritisation of community outcomes.

Response coordination is undertaken using the principles of the QDMA and the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS), where appropriate.

7.4 Local Disaster Coordination Centre

Where required, the LDCC will be established to support the coordination of disaster response operations.

The LDCC provides a central point for information management, resource coordination, operational support and communication between agencies involved in disaster response.

Detailed arrangements for the establishment and operation of the LDCC are contained within the **Local Disaster Coordination Centre Operations Sub Plan**.

7.5 Operational Plans

Operational response is supported by a suite of functional, operational and hazard-specific sub-plans maintained by Council and partner agencies.

7.5.1 Functional Sub Plans

Functional sub-plans provide detailed operational arrangements for the coordination and delivery of specific disaster management functions. These plans support the implementation of the LDMP by defining roles, responsibilities, procedures and coordination arrangements for key operational functions and are activated as required to support disaster response operations. Refer Figure 3.

7.5.2 Hazard Specific Plans

Hazard-specific arrangements complement the QDMA by providing specialist governance, operational coordination and technical guidance for hazards requiring specific legislative authority, expertise or capability.

Primary responsibility for managing hazard-specific events rests with the legislated lead agency identified in the QDMA and the State Disaster Management Plan.

Where the consequences of a hazard-specific event affect the Cairns LGA, the Cairns LDMG supports the lead agency through the coordination of local disaster management arrangements, consequence management and resource coordination, as appropriate.

Local hazard-specific operational arrangements are maintained through supporting sub-plans and procedures where required. Refer Figure 3.

7.5.3 Event Action Plans (EAP's)

Event Action Plans (EAPs) may be developed during disaster operations to document event objectives, operational priorities, resource requirements and coordinated actions for a defined operational period or phase of operations. EAPs provide a common operating picture for participating agencies and support the effective coordination and management of disaster operations.

7.6 Requests for Assistance

Where local capability is exceeded, additional resources may be requested through the QDMA. Requests for Assistance (RFAs) are coordinated by the Local Disaster Coordinator and submitted through the District Disaster Coordination Centre (DDCC) in accordance with established State procedures.

Detailed resource request arrangements, including the RFA process and supporting flow diagram, are contained within the **Transport, Logistics, Resupply and Finance Sub-plan**.

7.7 Public Information and Warnings

Timely, accurate and consistent public information is essential to support community safety and informed decision-making during disaster events.

The CR-LDMG supports the timely dissemination of locally relevant public information and warnings issued by lead agencies, together with locally developed information that assists community decision-making.

Public warnings will be issued by the appropriate hazard lead agency or authorised entity in accordance with the Queensland Warnings Manual and established Queensland warning arrangements.

Detailed local arrangements are contained within the **Public Information and Warnings Sub-plan**.

7.8 Situational Awareness and Information Management

Effective response depends on timely, accurate and shared situational awareness.

Information management during disaster operations supports decision-making, operational coordination, intelligence gathering and reporting across all levels of the QDMA. Situational awareness is developed through information provided by member agencies, field observations, intelligence products, community reports and other verified sources.

Situational awareness may be supported by rapid and detailed impact assessments addressing the extent of the affected area, impacts on communities and vulnerable populations, immediate relief needs, damage to critical infrastructure and essential services, and consequences for the economy and environment.

Operational reporting arrangements are detailed within the LDCC Operations Sub Plan.

7.9 Response and Relief Arrangements

Response and relief activities may include the provision of emergency assistance, community support, restoration of essential services and other immediate actions required to protect life, alleviate hardship and support affected communities. Depending on the scale and impact of the disaster, activities may also include debris clearance and other early recovery measures that facilitate the transition to recovery.

Relief focuses on meeting the immediate essential needs of affected communities, including food, drinking water, shelter, energy, communications and access to essential health and medical services.

Relief activities commence during the response phase and progressively transition into coordinated recovery activities as community needs evolve.

7.10 Transition from Response and Relief to Recovery

Recovery considerations commence during the response phase to support a coordinated and timely transition to recovery. This is particularly important following large-scale disaster events where response and recovery activities may occur concurrently over an extended period.

The Cairns Region Local Disaster Recovery and Resilience Group (CR-LDRRG) operates on an ongoing basis to support recovery preparedness, resilience and recovery planning. Following a disaster event, the Group may scale its activities commensurate with the nature, scale and consequences of the event.

Recovery arrangements may be activated during response operations where appropriate. The Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC) will work closely with the LDC to coordinate concurrent response and recovery activities, assess emerging recovery needs and prepare for the transition of governance and coordination arrangements. Where appropriate, a Recovery Support Team may be established within the Incident Management Team to support recovery planning and coordination.

The transition from response to recovery will be determined by the Chair of the CR-LDMG, in consultation with the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC), the Chair of the CR-LDRRG and the Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC). Transition arrangements should ensure continuity of information management and community support, recognising that response and recovery activities may continue concurrently, subject to the nature, scale and impact of the disaster event.

Where appropriate, a transition report should be prepared to support the formal transfer of coordination and governance arrangements and document outstanding actions, priorities and recovery requirements, including information from impact assessments.

Detailed recovery governance and operational arrangements are contained within the **Cairns Local Disaster Recovery Sub-plan.**

8. Recovery

8.1 Recovery Overview

Recovery comprises the coordinated process of supporting disaster-affected communities to restore, rehabilitate, reconstruct and enhance the social, economic, environmental and built environments following a disaster.

Recovery is an integral component of disaster management and should commence as early as practicable during the response phase. Recovery activities are coordinated to support community wellbeing, restore essential services and infrastructure, and promote sustainable recovery outcomes.

Recovery provides an opportunity to strengthen resilience by reducing future disaster risk, restoring community capability and ensuring that reconstruction and recovery activities consider future hazards and changing conditions.

Recovery is community-centred and locally led, supported by all levels of government, non-government organisations, industry and the community. The CR-LDMG and CR-LDRRG support recovery that strengthens community capability, reduces vulnerability and contributes to a safer and more resilient Cairns region.

Recovery activities within the CRC LGA are guided by the National Principles for Disaster Recovery, as reflected in the Cairns Local Disaster Recovery and Resilience Sub Plan

8.2 Recovery Governance

Recovery arrangements are coordinated under the governance of the CR-LDMG in accordance with the QDMA.

The Cairns Region Local Disaster Recovery and Resilience Group (CR-LDRRG) operates on an ongoing basis to support recovery preparedness, resilience and recovery planning. During business-as-usual operations, secretariat support is provided by Council's Disaster Management Unit.

Recovery governance:

- provides strategic oversight, establishes recovery priorities, coordinates participating agencies and supports the effective transition from response to recovery with a resilient recovery lens.
- seeks to ensure that recovery activities are coordinated, locally led and informed by community needs throughout the recovery process.

Depending on the nature, scale and consequences of the disaster event, the Chair of the CR-LDMG may appoint a Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC).

The Chair of the CR-LDMG, in consultation with the LDC, the Chair of the CR-LDRRG and the Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC), where appointed, may determine that the

CR-LDRRG is activated. Functional recovery and resilience groups may also be activated.

Detailed governance, operational arrangements and functional recovery responsibilities are contained within the Cairns Region Local Disaster Recovery and Resilience Sub Plan.

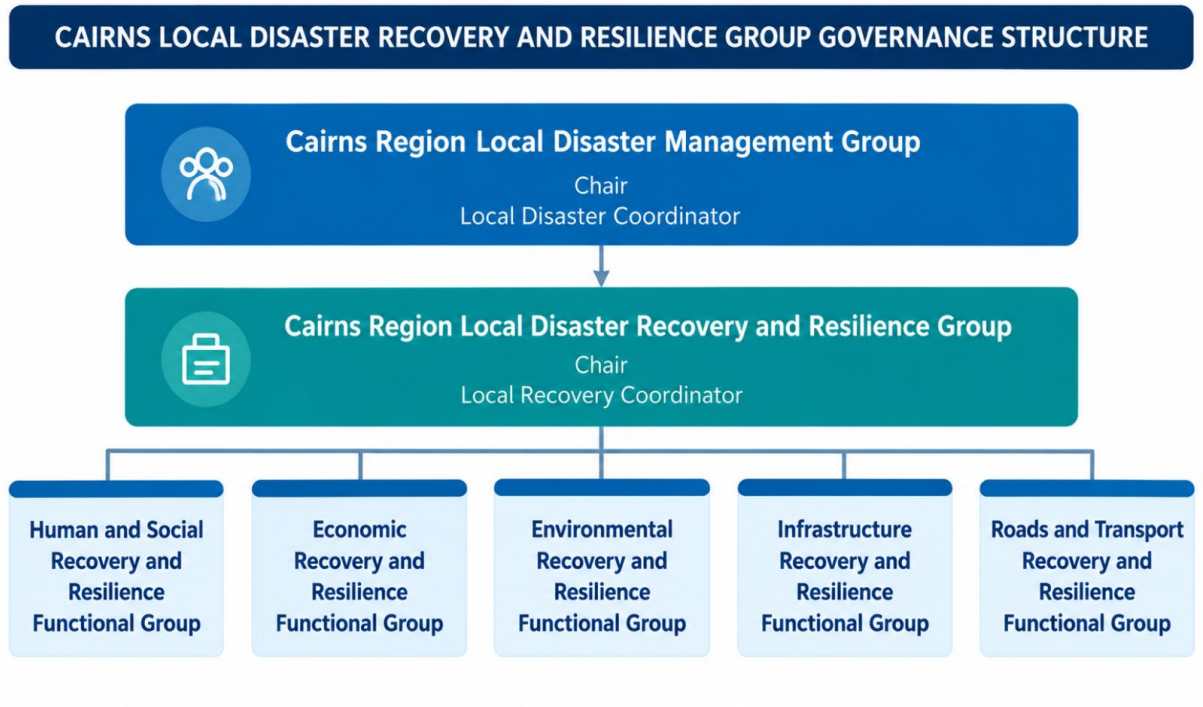

Figure 6: Cairns Local Disaster Recovery and Resilience Group Governance Structure

8.3 Functional Recovery

Recovery activities may be coordinated across one or more functional recovery domains, depending on the nature, scale and consequences of the disaster event.

- Human and Social Recovery and Resilience
- Economic Recovery and Resilience
- Environmental Recovery and Resilience
- Infrastructure Recovery and Resilience
- Roads and Transport Recovery and Resilience

The activation and coordination of functional recovery arrangements will be commensurate with the scale and complexity of the disaster event.

Each functional group considers both immediate and longer-term recovery needs across the domains, including opportunities to reduce future disaster risk, strengthen capability, support community wellbeing, protect and restore natural environments, enhance economic recovery, and improve the resilience of infrastructure, services, and systems.

Recovery objectives, priorities, actions and responsibilities may be documented in an **event-specific Recovery Plan**, where appropriate.

8.4 Transition to a Resilient Recovery

Recovery arrangements will progressively transition to regular organisational governance and business operations as recovery objectives are achieved, in some cases in a new normal. This will be outlined in the event specific Recovery Plan.

Throughout the transition, a focus will be maintained on resilience, ensuring that recovery initiatives consider opportunities to reduce future disaster risk, strengthen community and organisational capability, improve infrastructure and service resilience, and incorporate lessons identified through the disaster.

Where appropriate, longer-term resilience initiatives identified through recovery will transition into Council, agency and community planning, investment and business-as-usual programs, including the **Local Resilience Action Plan**.

9. Lessons Identified and Continuous Improvement

Following disaster events, the CR-LDMG and the CR-LDRRG will coordinate debriefs, evaluations and post-event reviews to identify lessons and opportunities for improvement.

Lessons identified will be incorporated into disaster management planning, capability development, training, exercising and future reviews of this LDMP and associated operational plans to support continuous improvement.

Appendix A: Local Acronyms and Terminology

This appendix defines local terminology and selected acronyms used throughout this Plan. It is intended to supplement, rather than duplicate, the glossary contained in Section 9 of the Queensland Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline.

Acronym	Meaning
AIIMS	Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System
AFMG	Area Fire Management Group
CDO	Counter Disaster Operations
CHHHS	Cairns & Hinterland Hospital and Health Service
CLDRP	Cairns Local Disaster Recovery Plan
CRC	Cairns Regional Council
CR-LDMG	Cairns Region Local Disaster Management Group
CR-LDRRG	Cairns Region Local Disaster Recovery and Resilience Group
CRRO	Community Recovery and Resilience Officer
EAP	Event Action Plan
EAP (Dams)	Dam Emergency Action Plan
GIS	Geographic Information System
IMT	Incident Management Team
CR-LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group – Cairns Region
QDMA	Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements
QHRAF	Queensland Hazard Risk Assessment Framework
RFA	Request for Assistance
RFB	Rural Fire Brigade — QFD
RFS	Rural Fire Service — QFD
SBC	State Bushfire Committee
SMEACS	Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration, Coordination, Safety

Appendix B: Local Disaster Management Group Membership

LDMG Membership	
Members	**Organisational Role**
Cairns Regional Council	Mayor
Cairns Regional Council	Deputy Mayor
Cairns Regional Council	Chief Executive Officer
Cairns Regional Council	Councillor
Cairns Regional Council	Local Disaster Coordinator
Cairns Regional Council	Disaster Management Officer
Cairns Regional Council	Local Recovery Coordinator
Cairns Regional Council	Associate Director – Service Delivery
Cairns Regional Council	Executive Manager Strategic Communications & Engagement
Cairns Regional Council	Director Lifestyle and Community
SES	Area Controller
QFD	Urban Fire Representative
QPS	Emergency Management Coordinator
QPS	Metro Inspector
QAS	Officer in Charge – position delegated to Operations Supervisor – Cairns & Coastal, Intensive Care Paramedic
Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety	Principal Community Recovery Officer
Queensland Health	Disaster Coordinator Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service
Cairns Airport	Manager Aviation Operations – position delegated to Emergency & Operational Resilience Manager
Ports North (Seaport)	General Manager Operations
Ergon Energy	Authorised LDMG Representative
LDMG Advisors	
Advisory Representatives	**Organisational Role**
Cairns Regional Council	Community Resilience Officer – Disaster
Cairns Regional Council	Disaster Planner
Cairns Regional Council	Director Planning, Growth & Sustainability
Cairns Regional Council	Team Leader Natural Areas Management
Cairns Regional Council	Manager Workplace Health & Safety
North Queensland Private Health Network	Area Manager for Cairns
Air Services Australia	Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting Operations Manager
Bureau of Meteorology	QFES Meteorologist

Chamber of Commerce	Chamber CEO
Tropical Public Health	Communicable Disease Control, Tropical Public Health Services (Cairns)
LDMG Advisors	
Advisory Representatives	**Organisational Role**
Australian Defence Force	Manager JOSS/51st FNQR/HMAS Cairns
Tropical Tourism North Queensland	Business Systems Manager
Queensland Reconstruction Authority	Manager, Recovery Operations and Capability Development
Queensland Rail	Yard Supervisor
Department of Transport and Main Roads	Senior Engineer (Civil) (Far North) | North Queensland Region
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	Rural Economic Development
Department of Education	Senior advisor for infrastructure
Department of Environment and Science	Compliance Delivery Manager
Optus	General Manager – North Queensland
Maritime Safety Queensland	Manager Vessel Traffic Management
Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association	Flotilla Commander QF9
Australian Red Cross	Team Convener for the Cairns Region
St John Ambulance	Business Development Manager
Sunwater Limited	Emergency Coordinator
RSPCA	Divisional Superintendent
NBN	Manager - North QLD, nbn™ local - Regional & Remote
Telstra	Field Services Lead Cairns
Surf Life Saving QLD	Operations Manager
Cairns Amateur Radio Club	Club President
Department of Housing and Public Works	Senior Advisor
Babinda All Hazards Group	President
Goldsborough Community Group	Chair

Appendix C: Record of Amendments

Version	Date	Prepared by	Comments
1	March 2007	DMU	Cairns Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) – first version under the *Disaster Management Act 2003*
2	December 2008	CT Management Group (Qld)	Revised Plan to reflect CRC area
3	August 2011	C Fitzgerald – DMU	Revised Plan incorporating revised Interim Local Disaster Management Planning Guidelines 2011 *and Disaster Management Act* Amendments 2020
4	September 2012	I Fell – DMU	Revised Plan incorporating Local Disaster Management Planning Guidelines 2012 and LDMP Assessment 2012
5	November 2013	I Fell – DMU	Revised Plan post de-amalgamation with Douglas Shire Council and inclusion of Cairns Region Natural Hazards Risk Assessment (AECOM 2014)
6	December 2014	I Fell – DMU	CR-LDMG Approved 2014 version
7	September 2015	I Fell – DMU	Annual Review CR-LDMG 2015 Approved Version
8	September 2016	I Fell – DMU	Annual Review CR-LDMG 2016 Endorsed Version
9	October 2017	I Fell – DMU	Annual Review CR-LDMG 2017 Endorsed Version
10	September 2018	C Ingle - DMU	Annual Review CR-LDMG 2018 Endorsed Version
11	September 2019	C Ingle - DMU	Annual Review CR-LDMG 2019 Endorsed Version
12	October 2020	C Ingle - DMU	Annual Review CR-LDMG 2020 Endorsed Version
13	September 2022	J Smith - DMU	Extensive Review CR-LDMG 2022 Endorsed Version
14	April 2024	C Ingle - DMU	Annual Review CR-LDMG 2023 Endorsed Version
15	September 2026	BMT	Comprehensive rewrite and plan modernisation.