

Local Disaster Management Sub-Plan

Evacuation Sub Plan

V3 November 2024



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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF PLAN

1.1 CONTEXT & ASSUMPTIONS

Evacuation is a strategy that can mitigate the adverse effects of a disaster on a community. Evacuation may be required pre-impact, as a protective measure, or post-impact, as a result of a loss of services.

The decision to evacuate is not one taken lightly, as it is not without risk. Some disaster events are slow-moving and provide ample decision and reaction time. The worst-case scenario is that there would be little to no warning of the need to evacuate which may be necessary day or night. There may not be time to obtain support from outside resources, as a result, local resources could be severely stretched.

Past events suggest that between 5% and 20% of those at risk will spontaneously evacuate before being directed to do so. Most of the public will act in their own interest and evacuate dangerous areas when advised to do so by the authorities. However, some people will refuse to evacuate, regardless of the threat and owners of companion animals may refuse to evacuate unless arrangements have been made to care for their animals.

In the first instance, evacuees will be encouraged to be self-sufficient and seek shelter with family or friends or use commercial accommodation providers. In some circumstances, Evacuation Centres may need to be established to meet the basic needs of those evacuated.

Depending on the event, Evacuation Centres may be required for anything from a few hours to several days. Initially, only shelter and refreshments will be provided, but in an extended event, more substantial catering and support may be necessary.

If accommodation is required for a period beyond a few days, the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) should consult with the District Human-Social Recovery Committee.

1.2 AIM & OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this Evacuation Sub Plan is to outline the arrangements for the implementation of an evacuation of “at risk” persons within the South Burnett Regional Council (SBRC) area and to provide guidance on how to establish and manage evacuation centres.

The objectives are to:

- Identify the persons exposed and at risk
Document the process for making decisions to evacuate

- Co-ordinate an organised and coordinated movement of persons to a safer location and their return home
- Establish and manage evacuation centres
- Ensure basic human needs are met.

The Sub Plan is designed to enable prompt decision making and any strategies outlined should be refined at the time of an event when influenced by event specific factors such as size and magnitude and likely impact areas. The number and location of Evacuation Centres will depend entirely on the scale and extent of the situation.

1.3 OWNERSHIP

This Sub Plan is owned by the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) on behalf of the LDMG. All significant amendments must be approved by the LDMG.

The owner will ensure the:

- Master document is retained together with relevant supporting documents
- Level of circulation of the Sub Plan is determined by the LDMG and details of copyholders are recorded
- Sub Plan is updated and reviewed on at least an annual basis, or after activation, whichever is the sooner
- Sub Plan is tested and exercised as determined by the LDMG.

1.4 FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY & SUPPORT AGENCIES

Evacuation is the functional responsibility of Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the LDMG.

This Sub Plan directly applies to all member organisations of the LDMG.

1.5 LINKS WITH OTHER DOCUMENTS

This Sub Plan is interdependent on, and should be read in conjunction with, the Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP). This Sub Plan links directly to all other Sub Plans developed to respond to disasters in the SBRC area, including the LDMG Emergency Contact Lists.

This plan also links to:

- [Evacuation: Responsibilities, Arrangements and Management Manual – M.1.190](#)
- [Queensland Evacuation Centre Planning Toolkit](#)
- [Queensland Evacuation Centre Management Handbook](#)
- [Queensland Evacuation Centre Field Guide](#)

- [Australian Red Cross COVID-19 Evacuation Centre Planning & Operational Considerations](#)
- Queensland Health Evacuation Management Guide for COVID-19 – Multi-agency considerations for planning - [refer Guardian IMS references](#)

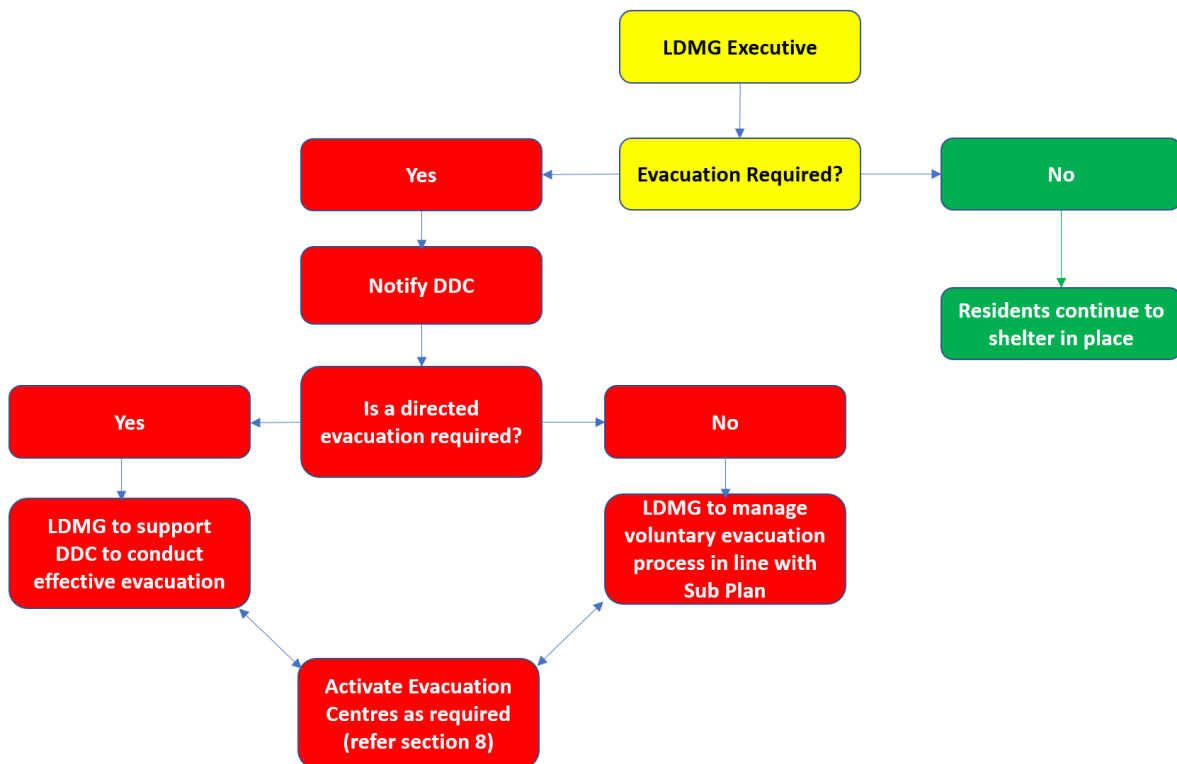


SECTION 2: ACTIVATION & NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

2.1 ACTIVATION OF THE PLAN

This Sub Plan will be activated where the nature of risk to a community requires the movement of persons to a safer location to be coordinated by, or supported by, the LDMG.

2.2 NOTIFICATION FLOWCHART



2.3 NOTIFICATION PROCESS

The LDMG Executive will maintain a state of readiness for evacuation operations. If evacuation becomes necessary as a result of an incident or event, the LDMG Executive will invoke the Evacuation Sub Plan.

Any evacuation that is required to be coordinated by the LDMG, will be undertaken in close consultation with the District Disaster Coordinator (DDC). Regular liaison must be maintained throughout any evacuation process.

If a directed evacuation is required, the DDC will need to declare a disaster situation under the Disaster Management Act 2003. The LDMG will support the DDC in conducting evacuations.

If a directed evacuation is not required, the SBRC will recommend voluntary evacuation and manage in line with this Sub Plan. The decision to recommend voluntary evacuation will be made by the full LDMG, subsequent to an appropriate situational briefing.

Evacuation Centres will be activated as required to support evacuation operations – [refer Section 8.](#)

SECTION 3: EVACUATION STRATEGY

3.1 AUTHORITY TO EVACUATE

There are three types of evacuations - self-evacuation, voluntary evacuation and directed evacuation. Refer [Evacuation: Responsibilities, Arrangements and Management Manual – M.1.190](#) for further detail.

3.1.1 Self-Evacuation

Self-evacuation refers to persons who may be impacted by an impending hazard and proactively choose to evacuate prior to advice or direction from authorities.

3.1.2 Voluntary Evacuation

The LDMG may *recommend* voluntary self-evacuation of a community at risk. The decision to recommend to the general public that they enact their evacuation plans and leave the area for their own safety is not one to be taken lightly.

Voluntary evacuees are to use private transportation to manage their own evacuation. In exceptional circumstances, the LDMG may need to provide transportation for some evacuees – refer Logistics Sub Plan.

If necessary, the LDMG will make a recommendation to the DDC to declare a disaster situation to enforce a directed evacuation of persons at risk – refer 3.2.3 below. The LDMG has no legislative power to authorise a directed evacuation, this remains with the DDC or lead agency.

3.1.3 Directed Evacuations

Directed evacuations are when persons are formally directed, by appropriately authorised persons, to evacuate to a safer location. Directed evacuation is specifically provided for in the following circumstances:

- A declaration of an emergency situation under the provisions of the Public Safety Preservation Act (PSPA) 1986 (by a Commissioned Officer of Police)
- In relation to specific powers under the provisions of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 (by an Authorised Officer) or
- A **declaration of a disaster situation** under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act 2003 (by the District Disaster Coordinator, with Ministerial approval).

When an evacuation is directed, general advice and direction will be provided in relation to timings, places of shelter, location and preferred evacuation routes.

This Sub Plan mainly relates to directed evacuations as a result of a declaration of a disaster situation. However, the LDMG is able to provide support to QPS and QFD when undertaking directed evacuations under the PSPA or the Fire and Rescue Services Act.

3.2 DISTRICT & STATE SUPPORT

The movement of evacuees will require Local and District collaboration and may also require State level involvement. Some individuals and groups in the community will require more assistance than others and support may be needed with Evacuation Centre operations. Early liaison with the DDC should be initiated, as positioning of state resources may take several hours to days to occur.

3.3 EVACUATION STAGES

Figure 2 illustrates the evacuation process and is based on the [Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience National evacuation planning handbook](#). It highlights the need to work with communities at risk of evacuation well before a disaster event arises, to try and mitigate some of the factors that can have impact on the success of evacuation operations.

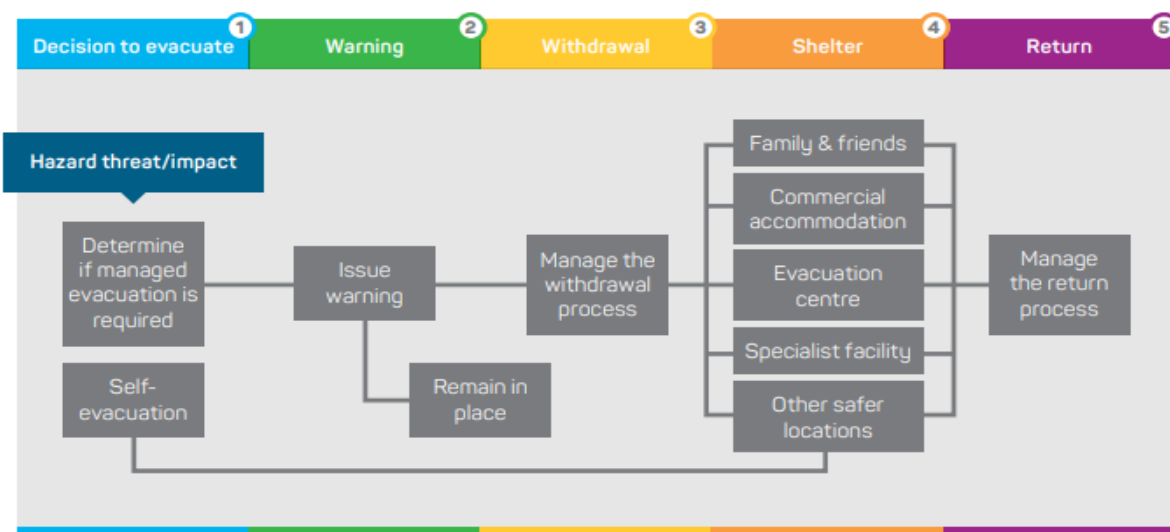


Figure 2: Evacuation Process

Any evacuation will involve five stages:

- **Decision to evacuate** – Decision makers analyse event intelligence and make an assessment of the necessity to evacuate persons exposed to a range of hazards
- **Warning** - Disaster event conditions and appropriate actions required are conveyed to the public
- **Withdrawal** - Exposed persons are moved from a dangerous or potentially dangerous area to a safer location
- **Shelter** - Refuge and basic needs for evacuees are provided in evacuation facilities and safer location

- **Return** – The disaster area is assessed and managed, with a planned return of evacuees.

Planning at each of these stages is crucial. The evacuation process must provide relative safety to those who are asked to voluntarily evacuate or ordered to evacuate. The decision to evacuate, the withdrawal process, the period of shelter and the return process should not expose the community to risks. An evacuation is not considered to be complete until all five stages have been implemented and the evacuated population has been returned (where possible) to their original location.

SECTION 4: DECISION PHASE

4.1 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Evacuation is a last resort. In some cases, the best advice will be for people to stay inside, with doors and windows closed, away from the danger and await further advice. Sometimes, reaching the decision that evacuation is required is very easy - it becomes obvious that evacuation is the only sensible way of protecting the population. In other instances, the decision is less obvious, and if delayed could cause substantial problems.

The decision to evacuate must be made in a timely manner to ensure it can be effectively implemented. The LDMG will analyse specific event information and intelligence and assess the necessity to evacuate persons at risk. Factors which will affect the decision include:

- Whether evacuation is the best option and if there are viable alternatives
- Time required to complete the evacuation and lead time available
- If the evacuation is voluntary or directed
- The number of persons and demographic of the population that requires evacuation
- Shelter and evacuation options
- Specific transportation and other requirements for vulnerable groups
- Availability and access to resources to effectively manage evacuation centres for the duration of the event.

4.2 TIMELINES

Understanding the timeline of hazard impact and how long it will take to safely evacuate is vital. Evacuation timelines guide the decision making for evacuation. Once a predicted impact time is assessed, planners simply work backwards subtracting time allowances for warning and withdrawal. The resulting time is the latest time a decision can be made. The LDC should develop evacuation timelines when the assessed impact of a hazard indicates that evacuations may be required.

SECTION 5: WARNING PHASE

5.1 ISSUING WARNINGS

A warning to evacuate needs to be communicated to the community when exposed areas have been identified, the location of safer areas has been determined and the decision to evacuate members of the community has been made.

The prime function of a warning is to elicit action from the community. If a warning does not describe in extremely clear terms the situation, the resultant risk and the desired response from the community, then it will not be effective.

Sufficient warning time must be given to allow the movement of a population from a place of danger to a safer place, given the restriction of weather conditions, transport and the capacity of the road network to handle the amount of traffic that will result.

Public information in relation to a recommended evacuation should include:

- Areas to be evacuated
- Evacuation routes
- Evacuation centre locations
- Lead time
- Anticipated duration
- Evacuation kit contents.

The community are also to be reminded of the need to take with them their Evacuation Kit which should contain details of prescription medications, food, water, clothing, and other personal supplies needed during an evacuation and to be a good neighbour and help others who may need assistance.

For further information on developing and disseminating warnings, refer to Public Information & Warnings Sub Plan.

SECTION 6: WITHDRAWAL PHASE

6.1 WITHDRAWAL PHASE

The withdrawal phase involves the safe and efficient process of relocating community members from hazardous or potentially hazardous environments to safer areas.

6.1.1 Evacuation Routes

There are no pre-defined evacuation routes. Evacuation routes will be advised at the time of the event. SBRC will work with QPS, SES and DTMR to ensure designated evacuation routes are kept trafficable and clear of debris.

The Bunya Mountains community has a single access and egress. Refer to the Bunya Mountains Community Disaster Management Sub Plan for further information on local community arrangements.

6.1.2 Transportation

The LDMG may need to render assistance to people without the means to evacuate themselves to a place of safety. While many residents without their own transport will evacuate with friends or neighbours, it may be necessary to provide support to those requiring transport assistance – refer Logistics Sub Plan.

6.1.3 Evacuation Of Vulnerable Persons

Education Queensland has developed evacuation plans for their facilities, which include the notification of parents and the involvement of school bus providers. Private day care centre providers are responsible for the development of their own evacuation processes.

Aged and disability care providers are responsible for enacting their own evacuation plans and finding suitable alternate accommodation for their clients. However, it is recognised that these providers may seek assistance from the LDMG where the scale of the event is beyond their own resources and arrangements.

Caravan Parks are often sited in hazard prone areas. The permanent residents of such sites may be vulnerable. Caravan parks operators should ensure they have appropriate evacuation plans in place.

The LDMG may be required to support organisations that deal with vulnerable groups to effect evacuation.

6.1.4 Pets

It is recognised that separating people from their pets during disaster events can cause severe emotional stress and some animal owners may refuse to evacuate unless provision is made. This provision is for companion animals and not for stock (e.g. cattle, horses). Public information on arrangements for pets should be provided to evacuees prior to withdrawal – refer Public Information & Warnings Sub Plan.

Pets will not be allowed access to the Evacuation Centre but in some circumstances, provision close by may be possible.

Registered assistance animals will be accepted at ALL Evacuation Centres.

SECTION 7: SHELTER PHASE

7.1 SHELTER PHASE

The Shelter phase provides for a variety of self-sheltering and sheltering solutions, where community may take shelter with family & Friends, at commercial accommodation, at a safer place or refuge, or in a designated evacuation centre. Shelter involves the provision for basic needs of people affected by the emergency, away from the immediate or potential effects of the hazard.

7.2 ASSEMBLY POINT

An Assembly Point is a temporary designated location specifically selected as a point which is not anticipated to be adversely affected by the hazard. Assembly points are used to gather evacuees in one location prior to being transported to an Evacuation Centre.

If Assembly Areas are set up, it would be helpful to have the evacuees register at this location identifying an intended destination, if they are not going to be accommodated in an Evacuation Centre.

7.3 DESIGNATED EVACUATION CENTRES

Evacuation Centres may be provided for short periods of time in the event of an emergency (e.g. flood, bushfire) to provide basic needs such as accommodation, food, water, information and personal support services.

SECTION 8: EVACUATION CENTRE MANAGEMENT

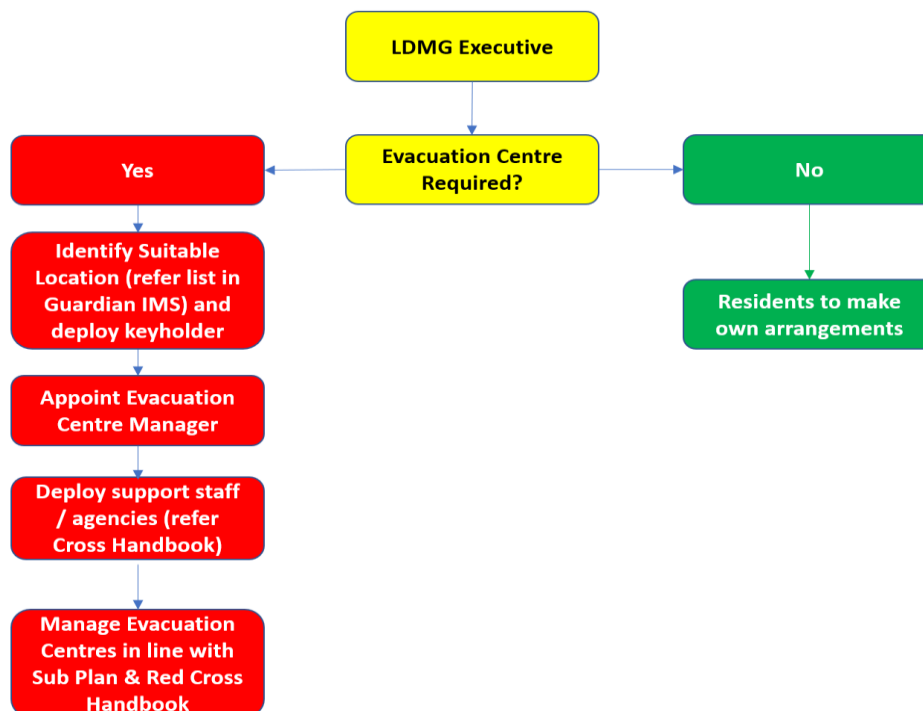
8.1 DECISION TO ACTIVATE AN EVACUATION CENTRE

Evacuation Centres may be activated for any number of reasons but will only be opened according to need. The LDMG Executive is responsible for the decision to activate an Evacuation Centre. The following should be considered:

- Has there been a request from the Emergency Services to open an Evacuation Centre as a result of an emergency / major incident?
- Has the LDMG recommended voluntary evacuation of an area at risk?
- Has the DDC declared a disaster situation to enforce directed evacuation of an area at risk in the SBRC area?
- Is there a perceived need relative to an impending hazard impact, where the LDMG recognises that the public may choose to self-evacuate?
- Have there been mass evacuations from a neighbouring LGA?
- Are the numbers of evacuees requiring accommodation likely to exceed local commercial accommodation capacity?

Evacuation Centres will take some time to set up from the initial call. It is therefore important that an early warning of a request is given as soon as possible from the requesting agency to the LDMG in order that the relevant agencies and appropriate resources can be deployed in a timely manner.

8.2 ACTIVATION FLOW CHART



8.3 EVACUATION CENTRE LOCATIONS

A number of buildings have been designated as Evacuation Centres – [refer list in Guardian IMS references](#). These have been designated based on an assessment of their suitability i.e. size, space, available parking, access, kitchen and bathroom facilities, ventilation, lighting.

The nature and scale of the event will determine which buildings get activated as Evacuation Centres during operations. It is vital to ensure any Evacuation Centre is not at risk of being adversely impacted by the hazard. It is also important to consider business continuity requirements and how long the centre may be required.

8.4 COMMUNICATION & REPORTING

The Evacuation Centre Manager is to ensure the LDC is updated with regards to capacity and numbers present at the facility, current situation, projected issues and resource requirements. The LDC will determine the frequency of reporting (e.g. hourly, daily). A Reporting Template tool is available – [refer Guardian IMS references](#).

When the LDCC is activated simultaneously, the LDC may delegate this liaison to the Logistics Team Leader – refer Activation & Operation of the LDCC Sub Plan.

8.4.1 Communications Equipment

The Evacuation Centre Manager will require access to communications equipment to be able to adequately communicate with the LDC. It is recommended that a laptop and mobile phone is deployed to each Evacuation Centre as a minimum requirement.

8.5 MEDIA

The LDMG Chairperson is to authorise all information for public release. The Evacuation Centre Manager is not authorised to speak to the media without the express consent of the Public Information Officer (PIO).

It is possible that Evacuation Centres will attract media attention. For the privacy of evacuees, no media will be allowed access to the general areas to photograph or film without the express consent of ALL evacuees.

It is a matter for individual evacuees to decide whether to speak to the media. It is likely that evacuees will have immediate and instantaneous access to social media from their mobile phones whilst in the Evacuation Centre. This may need to be considered in terms of rumour control and potential misinformation.

All media enquiries should be referred to the PIO in the first instance.

8.6 FINANCE

Any demands for finance must be approved by the LDC. If the LDCC is activated, these requests will go via the Logistics Team. The LDC shall determine what funding is available and provide advice to the Evacuation Centre Manager.

It is essential that a detailed log is kept of all expenditure incurred at the Evacuation Centre. This should be supported by receipts and tax invoices. A financial statement may be required for submission to the government in accordance with the rules of the State Disaster Recovery Arrangements (SDRA) or Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Schemes – refer Financial Management Sub Plan.

8.7 CLOSURE OF THE EVACUATION CENTRE

The decision to close Evacuation Centres will be made by the LDMG on advice from the Evacuation Centre Manager and based on situational awareness.

When the decision is made to close evacuation centres the following issues will then be implemented:

- Ensure that the closing date/time is effectively communicated to evacuees and personnel
- Determine if evacuees who have special requirements have alternate accommodation or care arrangements as required
- Ensure that guidance is provided on recovery options e.g. housing, legal and financial.

The Evacuation Centre Manager will coordinate the packing and cleaning of all resources and make an inventory of resources used to identify re-stocking needs and/or claims for reimbursement of costs incurred.

SECTION 9: RETURN PHASE

9.1 RETURN PHASE

The return of evacuees to their homes or to other alternative accommodation solutions requires careful planning. A return strategy should be developed by the LDMG to ensure this phase is effectively managed and undertaken in a safe, timely and coordinated manner.

9.1.1 Decision for Return

The decision to return will be made by the full LDMG in consultation with the DDC. The following issues will need to be considered:

- Absence of the hazard and possibility of its return
- Access and egress
- Safety and security of damaged structures / unsafe areas
- Operation of utilities (power, water, sewerage, communications)
- Public health issues
- Availability of schools and workplaces
- Availability of support services
- Availability of alternative accommodation solutions for those whose homes have been significantly damaged or destroyed
- Alignment of recovery planning with return strategies to ensure that appropriate recovery supports, information and services are available to the impacted community.

APPENDIX A: EVACUATION OPERATIONAL CHECKLIST

EVACUATION CHECKLIST	
DECISION TO EVACUATE	TICK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate Evacuation Sub Plan 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the specific circumstances of the event and review the Evacuation Strategy in light of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advice from relevant authorities on severity, arrival and impact area • the nature of the “at risk” population • the suitability of safer locations • the requirements of special needs persons and associated actions • specific transport issues • the availability of appropriate resources to effectively manage all aspects of the evacuation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider all aspects with particular emphasis on the time required to complete the evacuation and the lead time available. Conduct a local risk assessment. Is evacuation the most suitable option? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide on the type of evacuation being contemplated 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the timeframe for conduct of evacuation if pre-impact 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the amount of external assistance that may be required to effect evacuation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise DDC that voluntary evacuation decision has been made and make a request for assistance, if required 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend to DDC if directed evacuation is required 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm evacuation centres, arrange opening and staffing of centres 	
WARNINGS	TICK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon authorisation, issue voluntary evacuation advice to exposed population 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide notice to “at risk” persons to evacuate 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive authorisation for directed evacuation from DDC, if required 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue directed evacuation order to the “at risk” persons 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evacuation teams with written order to be provided to members of public 	
WITHDRAWAL	TICK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate door to door evacuation teams 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure evacuation messages continue to be conveyed to public. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the needs of the identified vulnerable population 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular situation reports on evacuation to DDMG 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure regular reporting from field teams of completed tasks 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of security strategy for evacuated areas 	
SHELTER	TICK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open locations suitable for use as Evacuation Centres 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all evacuees are registered 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure evacuation centre management is in accordance with Handbook 	

RETURN	TICK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine areas that are safe for return with consideration of the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • results of damage assessment • health and safety issues • functioning of utilities; power, water, sewerage and communications • status of re-opening of roads 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and modify the Return Strategy, addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific areas deemed safe for return • security of damaged, unsafe structures or infrastructure • detailed return advice to evacuees • transportation requirements 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise DDMG of Return Strategy being implemented 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue information on return strategy for evacuees. Distribute return advice to Evacuation Centres. Tailor advice to vulnerable populations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release appropriate information to returning evacuees on reactivation of utilities, damage repairs, clean up and debris removal, process for human/social recovery support services 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain security controls for those areas that cannot be safely reoccupied 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the coordination of temporary housing for evacuees unable to return to their residences 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close evacuation centres 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete final situation report on evacuation and stand down. 	