



# Public Health Sub-Plan

**2021-2022**

Version 3 – ECM Ref:1212533

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## Endorsement

The preparation of this Public Health Sub-Plan has been undertaken in accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003 (the Act)*, to provide for effective disaster management in the local government area.

The plan was endorsed for distribution by the Charters Towers Regional Council's Local Disaster Management Group at a meeting held 8 November 2021:

Cr Graham Lohmann moved, seconded by Senior Sergeant Neil King that the Local Disaster Management Group endorse the following documents:

- a. Local Disaster Management Plan and Appendices
- b. Financial Sub-Plan
- c. Re-Supply Sub-Plan
- d. Public Health Sub-Plan
- e. Public Information and Warnings Sub-Plan
- f. Management of Vulnerable Persons Sub-Plan
- g. Pandemic Sub-Plan

**CARRIED**



Franklin C. Beveridge  
**Chair**  
**Local Disaster Management Group**



Aaron Johansson  
**Local Disaster Coordinator**  
**Local Disaster Management Group**

The plan is endorsed for distribution by the Charters Towers Regional Council.



Aaron Johansson  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Charters Towers Regional Council**



Franklin C. Beveridge  
**Mayor**  
**Charters Towers Regional Council**

<b>General Meeting</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	<b>Executive Summary</b> The Local Disaster Management Plan and Sub-Plans are tabled for Council's Endorsement.	<b>Officers Recommendation</b> That Council endorse the Charters Towers Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan and Sub Plans.  <b>Resolution No. 3797</b>  Cr GJ Lohmann moved, seconded by Cr JD Mathews that Council endorse the Local Disaster Management Plan and Sub-Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial</li><li>• Pandemic</li><li>• Public Health</li><li>• Public Information and Warnings</li><li>• Management of Vulnerable Persons</li><li>• Re-Supply</li></ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>CARRIED</b></p>
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#### Document Control

#### Amendment Control

The **Public Health Sub-Plan** is a controlled document. The controller of the document is the Charters Towers Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC). Any proposed amendments to this plan should be forwarded in writing to:

**Local Disaster Coordinator**  
**Charters Towers Regional Council**  
**P O Box 189**  
**CHARTERS TOWERS QLD 4820**

**Telephone: 07 47615300**  
**Email: mail@charterstowers.qld.gov.au**

The Local Disaster Coordinator may approve minor amendments to this document.

The Local Disaster Coordinator will ensure that any changes to the content of the document will be submitted to the Charters Towers Regional Council's Local Disaster Management Group (CTRCLDMG) for approval and be endorsed by the Charters Towers Regional Council.

**Amendment Register**

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>		<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	August 2013	Mic Langburne Environmental Services Coordinator	Initial Plan	August 2018
2	December 2019	Cr Graham Lohmann (Deputy Chair) Andy Pethybridge (Emergency Management Coordinator) Jennifer Brown (Secretariat – LDMG)	Review	July – September 2019
3	February 2020	Manager Regulatory Services/ Regulatory Services Coordinator	Review	October 2021

## 1.0 OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the *Public Health Sub-Plan* is to prioritise and direct the allocation of resources to conduct an effective public health response in the event of disaster.

Its intention is to empower the Charters Towers Regional Council with the processes and procedures necessary to protect the health and well-being of the public when normal daily services become compromised or unavailable.

This Public Health Sub Plan forms a part of, and should be used in conjunction with, the Charters Towers Regional Council's Local Disaster Management Plan.

### 1.2 Authority

This plan forms a sub-plan of the Charters Towers Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan (CTRCLDMP) and is developed under the authority of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

### 1.3 Functional Responsibility

The Local Disaster Coordinator is to ensure all agencies and members of the Charters Towers Regional Council Local Disaster Management Group (CTRCLDMG) are aware of these Public Health arrangements.

### 1.4 Review of the Plan

In accordance with section 59 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the Public Health Sub-Plan (PHSP) will be reviewed at least once each year by appropriately qualified personnel. The review of the effectiveness of the plan must occur at least once a year, this can be conducted by event activation, desk top or practical exercise. This must occur with representation from the Local Disaster Management Group, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) and associated stakeholders.

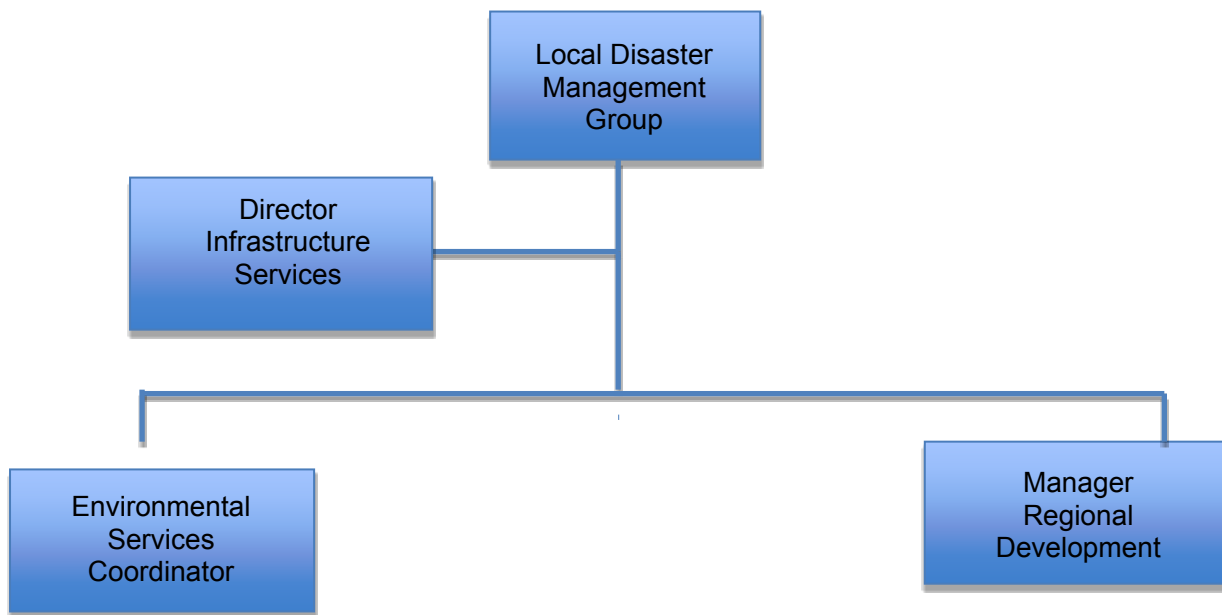
The Public Health Sub-Plan will also be reviewed following each disaster event to incorporate any amendments or adjustments considered necessary.

### 1.5 Support Agencies

- Queensland Health
- Department of Public Works and Housing
- Charters Towers Regional Council
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)

## 1.6 Scope

The public health response is structured as follows:



## 1.7 Roles and Responsibilities

### Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)

- Liaison with officers engaged in public health activities

### Director Infrastructure Services (DIS)

- Liaison between LDMG and officers engaged in public health activities
- Coordinate and oversee public health response activities
- Assist emergency services where required
- Direction of vector and vermin control activities

### Environmental Services Coordinator (ESC)

- Monitor compliance with the *Food Act 2006*
- Monitor compliance with the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- Monitor compliance with the *Public Health Act 2005*
- Assist emergency services where required
- Direction of sanitation activities
- Direction of miscellaneous health service activities
- Coordinate Vector Control and Vermin Control Activities
- Public information and communication
- Make recommendations to the LDMG or Director on all waste management issues
- Assist the LDMG, Director Corporate and Community Services on all matters regional where applicable
- Assist with the disposal of dead animals

### Manager Regional Development (MRD)

- Coordinate assistance of Rangers where possible to assist the LDMG, MO, ESC, RSC, MRD

## Rangers

- Assist the LDMG, DIS, ESC, & MRD when required
- Aid where required

Contact details of relevant staff are contained in the Controlled document however are not available in the plan for public information.

<b>Director Infrastructure Services</b>	Not available for public
<b>Environmental Services Coordinator</b>	Not available for public
<b>Manager Regional Development</b>	Not available for public

It is to be noted that Pandemic Planning/Management in the Charters Towers Region is managed under the Townsville District Disaster Management Group Health Functional Plan.

## 1.8 Relevant Legislation

Legislation relevant to the management of issues having the potential to impact public health under which relevant officers hold powers and authorisations, or may be directed to act by officers who hold powers and authorisations, include:

- *Food Act 2006*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Public Health Act 2005*
- *Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003*
- *Disaster Management Act 2003*
- *Public Safety Preservation Act 1986*
- Charters Towers Regional Council Local Laws

## 1.9 Public Health Issues

Public health issues arising in disaster events may consist of physical, chemical or biological threats. These threats have the potential to impact upon the health and well-being of the community unless they are effectively investigated, assessed and managed.

Some of these threats may involve:

- Food safety
- Vector control
- Water quality and security
- Waste disposal
- Personal and environmental hygiene
- Infectious diseases
- Environmental pollution
- Disposal of animal carcasses
- Biohazards

## 1.10 Support Agencies

Management of threat where necessary will involve a coordinated response with other government departments, service providers and businesses including:

- Queensland Health (Townsville Public Health Unit)
- Department of Environment and Science
- Ergon Energy
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
- Safe Food Queensland
- Department Agriculture & Fisheries (AusVetPlan)
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Ambulance Service



Contact details of these agencies are listed in the table hereunder:

Agency	Contact Details
Queensland Health - Townsville Public Health Unit	Telephone: + 61 7 4433 6900 Postal address: LMB 4016, Townsville Qld 4810 Street address: 242 Walker St, Townsville
Department of Environment and Science	13 74 68
Ergon Energy	13 10 46
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)	13 25 00
Safe Food Queensland	1800 300 815 <a href="mailto:info@safefood.qld.gov.au">info@safefood.qld.gov.au</a> P O Box 440, Spring Hill, Qld, 4004
Department Agriculture and Fisheries (AusVetPlan)	(02) 6272 3933 <a href="http://www.daff.gov.au/general-inquiries">http://www.daff.gov.au/general-inquiries</a>
Queensland Police Service/Charters Towers Police	000/4788 2555
Queensland Ambulance Service	000

The Director Infrastructure Services will coordinate with external agencies where necessary and direct staff accordingly.

### 1.11 Management Process

The management and mitigation of threats to public health is to be achieved by:

- Delivering best practice environmental and public health principles;
- Planning and preparing for effective response to hazardous events;
- Integrating Council's environmental health resources with other stakeholders;
- Delivering a timely response through the provision of timely advice and public information prior to during and after a disaster event;
- Regularly reporting to and consulting with the Director Infrastructure Services in relation to activities undertaken and decisions made;
- Learning lessons from experiences which can be used to improve practices and procedures in the future.

## 2.0 WATER

### 2.1 Water Supply

In instances where water may be contaminated or any of the systems shut down, Council's Environmental Services Coordinator will make provision to provide water, trucked in from unaffected areas.

The water will be made available from locations throughout the town as directed by Council.

A limit of 3 litres per person per day will apply (*Based on Queensland Evacuation Centre Toolkit – Australian Red Cross*) while stocks are available, but further rationing may occur if necessary.

## 2.2 Reticulated water supply

Council's Department of Infrastructure Services will monitor the quality and safety of its reticulated water supply. Boiled water alerts will be issued in accordance with the Public Information and Warning Sub-Plan, if it is determined that the water supply is not safe for human consumption. Should this occur, the public will be advised to use bottled or boiled water.

## 2.3 Ensuring Safe Drinking Water

*[Information taken from Queensland Health Fact Sheet – Last Updated February 2019 – Version 3.1](#)*

Having access to adequate supplies of safe drinking water during and immediately after a disaster is one of the most important parts of protecting the community's health. However, drinking water supplied by council may not be available or safe to drink after a disaster. As a result, residents should be encouraged to include adequate supplies of safe drinking water in their emergency kits. If residents haven't prepared adequate supplies of safe drinking water, the following information can help residents to treat water and ensure its safety:

**Make water safe:** If Council knows or suspects drinking the water might make residents sick because of disease-causing microbes, it will advise residents to boil the water before consumption. Water should be brought to the boil (100° C) and then allowed to cool, before being stored in clean, covered containers before use.

Residents are encouraged to take care when boiling water as it can scald. It is safest to boil water using an electric kettle. If residents have lost electric power water can be boiled, using a saucepan, on a gas stove, barbeque or portable gas cooker. Residents are reminded to always take care when boiling in pots and pans, particularly if they have young children or vulnerable people in their household.

Residents are reminded to keep pan handles turned inward so children cannot reach them. The use of bottled water is another safe alternative. Use cooled, boiled water or bottled water for:

- Drinking
- Preparing baby formula
- Hand washing
- Preparing food and cooking
- Brushing teeth
- Bathing infants, and
- Making ice.

Dirty dishes should be washed in hot soapy water, rinsed in hot water and left to completely air-dry before using again. Residents don't need boiled water for toilet flushing and clothes washing.

Water contaminated by chemicals (including fuels) will not be made safe by boiling. Residents are encouraged to use a different source of water if it is known or suspected that water might be contaminated.

Further information may be obtained from the following:

- Queensland Health <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/disaster>
- Disaster Management <http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>, and
- Contact 13 QGOV (13 74 68) for nearest Public Health Unit

**During and immediately following a disaster:** Council has an obligation to alert the public if it knows or suspects the safety of the water has been compromised because of a disaster. Residents will be encouraged to listen to their local radio and television station:

- **Commercial Radio Stations – Townsville & Charters Towers:**
  - ABC
  - Southern Cross Austereo
  - Local Radio:
    - 4GC/West FM
    - Bull FM

○ **Television Stations:**

- WIN
- Nine
- Seven
- ABC
- Imparja

or check Council's website (if possible) for updates on water supply. It is important that any advice provided through these channels is followed.

## **3.0 FOOD**

### **3.1 Inspections**

Council's Environmental Services Coordinator will undertake inspections of impacted food businesses to ensure compliance with the *Food Act 2006* and the *Food Safety Standards*. These inspections are intended to prevent and minimise the risk of food-borne illness in the community.

These inspections will focus on the safe production of food that is safe for human consumption including:

- the maintenance of appropriate temperature control of foods requiring freezing, chilling or heating;
- the protection of food from spoiling and contamination, and
- the preparation of food in premises in a fit state to prepare food for sale to the public.

Where an Officer is unable to get to a food premises, the officer may attempt to contact the food business operator by other means including by telephone, fax or email, or any other way considered appropriate in the circumstances.

### **3.2 Prioritisation of food businesses**

Where resources are limited, the Environmental Services Coordinator may seek assistance from the Tropical Public Health Unit based in Townsville or from the District Disaster Management Group through a Request for Assistance.

Priority will be governed by risk. Risk will be established on the key principles of vulnerability; namely, children including private schools and childcare facilities, aged care facilities, disable care facilities, the major food suppliers and all the remaining licensed food premises.

### **3.3 Food disposal**

Spoilt or contaminated food is to be disposed of at the Stublely Street landfill in Charters Towers or any of the Regional landfills within the region.

For all remaining areas, food must be buried so that it cannot be scavenged by people or animals.

In the event of isolation of a community the LDMG will plan applicable to the circumstances.

### **3.4 Donated food**

All donated goods are to be directed through GIVIT.

When offers of food are made to the LDMG, advice is to be given to ensure that the food items are suitable for donation.

Environmental Services Coordinator can provide advice to determine the safety of the food.

## **4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Environmental issues arising from disasters may involve the release of contaminants such as fuel, oil, chemicals, raw materials or sediments from industrial premises.

Businesses will be monitored by Council for environmental nuisance and environmental harm to ensure that there has been no release of contaminants from their premises.

Other factors impacting the environment may include noise and exhaust gases from generators used by residents and businesses experiencing ongoing power loss. When the use of generators give rise to noise complaints, Council Officers will provide education and advice to all parties involved and issue compliance notices only in extreme situations.

## **5.0 REFUSE**

The Environmental Services Coordinator will coordinate use of waste disposal sites as required. Open Spaces staff will attend to the clean-up of public places as soon as essential services are restored and work priorities permit.

Council will re-open its waste facilities as soon as possible following a disaster event.

## **6.0 DISEASE CONTROL**

### **6.1 Personal Appearance Services**

Businesses performing personal appearance services (eg. Hairdressers, Beauty Salons) will be instructed to cease such activities until power, clean water and waste services have been restored.

### **6.2 Dengue fever**

The risk of a dengue fever outbreak is significantly increased in the event of disaster. In the event of an outbreak, Council will conduct a joint response with Queensland Health, which will be conducted in accordance with the current Queensland Dengue Management Plan.

### **6.3 Soil Borne Diseases**

The risk of soil borne diseases (eg. Melioidosis) increase during prolonged periods of wet weather.

In the event of risk refer to Queensland Health.

## **7.0 VECTOR AND VERMIN CONTROL**

The threat of an increase in vector and vermin populations in populated areas is increased significantly following periods of excessive rain and flood. This can be exacerbated due to seasonal influences, unavailability of personal insect repellent, concentrations of people in evacuation centres and isolated communities.

Following a disaster event, Council's Environmental Services Coordinator will be supported by any other appropriately qualified staff members to intensify treatment of vectors and vermin throughout the affected area in the response and early recovery phase.

A summary of vectors and vermin and the diseases they can transmit are as follows:

<b>Vector</b>	<b>Some Diseases Transmitted by the Vector</b>
Mosquitoes	Dengue fever, Ross River fever, Barmah Forest virus, Viral Encephalitis
Houseflies	Diarrhoea, dysentery, salmonella
Cockroaches	Diarrhoea, dysentery, salmonella
Lice	Endemic typhus, pediculosis, relapsing fever, skin irritation
Ticks	Rickettsia fever, tularemia, viral encephalitis
Rodents	Rat-bite fever, leptospirosis, salmonella, melioidosis
Rodent fleas	Endemic typhus, plague
Rodent mites	Rickettsia fever, scrub typhus
Flying Foxes	Australian Bat Lyssavirus, Hendra Virus

## **8.0 HYGIENE**

Advice on personal hygiene will be made available to the community through information contained on Council's Emergency Dashboard including but not limited to:

- Handwashing
- Bathing
- Dental Hygiene
- Wound Hygiene, and
- Environmental Hygiene.

## **9.0 DISPOSAL OF DEAD STOCK AND ANIMALS**

The public health risk posed by the large-scale death of livestock and animals through contamination of water and stock feed in emergency situations can be devastating. For the prevention of Exotic diseases, Biosecurity Queensland may be contacted in certain situations to implement the AustVetPlan.

The LDMG will liaise with Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for advice to determine the appropriate course of action.

## **10.0 PUBLIC INFORMATION**

### **10.1 Prior to event**

Community engagement can help to create empowered, sustainable and resilient communities through:

- increasing awareness of the nature of hazards and the potential impact of those hazards;
- promoting public resilience through encouragement of personal responsibility, and
- developing the community's awareness of official disaster management arrangements and the assistance provided by disaster management groups.

As much information as possible is provided to the public to empower them to assess the risks and take whatever action is necessary to minimise personal injury or damage to property.

Information will be provided by Council through its communication channels and in accordance with its Public Information and Warnings Sub-Plan.

### **10.2 During and after an event**

Council will continue to provide information to the public in accordance with its Public Information and Warnings Sub-Plan.



## **Public Health Sub-Plan – 2021-2022**

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