

Northern Regional **Emergency Plan**



**Northern Territory
Emergency Service**

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Acknowledgement of Country | 4 |
| 2. Introduction | 4 |
| 2.1. Purpose | 4 |
| 2.2. Application..... | 4 |
| 2.3. Key considerations..... | 4 |
| 2.4. Plan governance | 5 |
| 3. Northern Region context statement | 5 |
| 3.1. Tropical zone..... | 5 |
| 3.2. Grassland zone..... | 5 |
| 3.3. Map of NT Northern Region..... | 6 |
| 3.4. NT and Local Government | 7 |
| 3.5. Localities | 7 |
| 3.6. Homelands..... | 7 |
| 3.7. Police commands | 8 |
| 4. Prevention | 9 |
| 4.1. Prevention and mitigation..... | 9 |
| 5. Preparedness | 10 |
| 6. Response | 11 |
| 6.1. Regional Controller | 11 |
| 6.2. Regional Emergency Committee..... | 11 |
| 6.3. Local Controller | 11 |
| 6.4. Roles within the Emergency Operation Centre..... | 12 |
| 6.5. Functional group leaders | 12 |
| 6.6. Stages of activation – Response/Recovery | 12 |
| 6.7. Regional level arrangements..... | 13 |
| 6.8. Warning systems, notifications and dissemination | 13 |
| 6.9. Emergency shelters..... | 14 |
| 6.10. Evacuation centres | 14 |
| 6.11. Welfare recovery centres | 15 |
| 6.12. Evacuation..... | 15 |
| 6.13. Closure of schools and/or government offices | 16 |
| 6.14. Impact assessment | 16 |
| 6.15. EOC purpose and coordination | 16 |
| 7. Recovery | 17 |
| 7.1. Transitional arrangements..... | 17 |
| 7.2. Recovery Action Plan | 18 |
| 8. Debrief | 18 |
| 9. Related references | 19 |
| 10. Annexures | 19 |
| 10.1. Annex A: Functional groups | 20 |
| 10.2. Annex B: Evacuation guideline..... | 21 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 10.3. Annex C: Summary of response and recovery activities | 22 |
| 10.4. Annex D: Definitions and acronyms | 27 |
| 11. Document control..... | 29 |
| 11.1. Governance..... | 29 |
| 11.2. Version history | 29 |

1. Acknowledgement of Country

The Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES) acknowledges the First Nations people throughout the Northern Territory (NT), from the red sands of Central Australia to the coastal people in the Top End.

We recognise their continuing connection to their lands, waters and culture. We also pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with whom we work and who we serve and protect.

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to their leaders past, present and emerging.

2. Introduction

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to describe the emergency management arrangements for the Northern Region.

2.2. Application

This Plan applies to the Northern Region of the NT.

2.3. Key considerations

The *Emergency Management Act 2013* (the Act¹) is the legislative basis for emergency management across the NT.

The Act reflects an all hazards approach to emergency and disaster events, natural or otherwise. It provides for the adoption of measures necessary for the protection of life and property from the effects of such events.

The Act defines the emergency management structures, roles and responsibilities for the NT and, in conjunction with the Territory Emergency Plan², form the basis for this Plan.

This Plan:

- confirms appointment of a Regional Emergency Controller
- confirms establishment of the Regional Emergency Committee (REC)
- specifies control and coordination arrangements for mobilisation of regional, and, if necessary, Territory and national resources
- identifies roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders
- provides for the effective transition to, and management of, regional recovery arrangements in accordance with the Territory Emergency Plan.

This Plan complements the Territory Emergency Plan as it relates to the Northern Region, and is based on contemporary emergency management principles and recognises 4 phases of activities. These activities contribute to the reduction or elimination of hazards and to reducing the susceptibility or increasing the resilience to hazards of a community or environment.

¹ More information can be found at:

<https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EMERGENCY-MANAGEMENT-ACT-2013>

² More information can be found at:

<https://www.pfes.nt.gov.au/sites/default/files/uploads/files/2022/NTES%20Territory%20Emergency%20Plan%202021-2022.pdf>

These phases are referred to as Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery (PPRR). The activities described will generally be conducted at the local level, with regional support provided as required. This Plan is also complemented by functional group and hazard plans which are designed to operate on a stand-alone basis or as part of a wider response. They describe that group's capabilities and activities as set out by the Territory Emergency Plan.

2.4. Plan governance

Part 2, Division 2 of the Act outlines the preparation, consideration, approval and review requirements for regional emergency plans.

3. Northern Region context statement

The Northern Region emergency management area extends from Lajamanu in the south west, north to the Tiwi Islands, east to the Gulf of Carpentaria coast, and south east to Borroloola and the Queensland border. The Northern Region population is approximately 200,000 with the majority of the population situated within the greater Darwin, Palmerston and Litchfield area.

The Northern Region of the NT is a unique Australian environment from tropical coast to wide tracks of bushland and open grasslands. It includes world heritage areas and national parks, possessing magnificent vistas and allowing visitors exceptional wildlife encounters. The environment is vast and diverse – a land of ancient sandstone formations, wetlands, billabongs and unique native flora and fauna.

The NT recognises the importance of minimising vulnerabilities associated with emergency events and aspires to build safe, resilient communities through a range of activities that contribute to the prevention of, preparation for, response to and recovery from, the impact of emergency events.

The Northern Region is characterised by 2 main zones which experience distinct climatic conditions; they are the tropical zone and the grassland zone.

3.1. Tropical zone

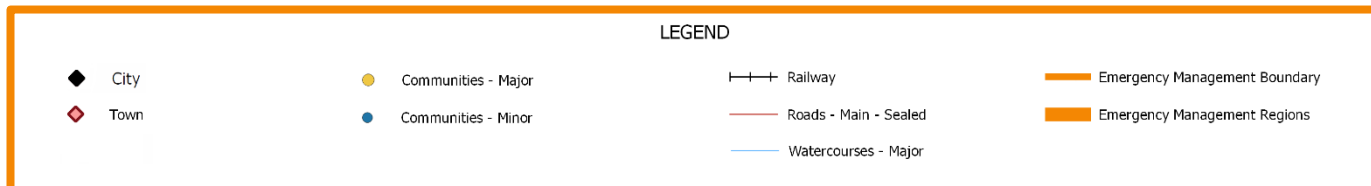
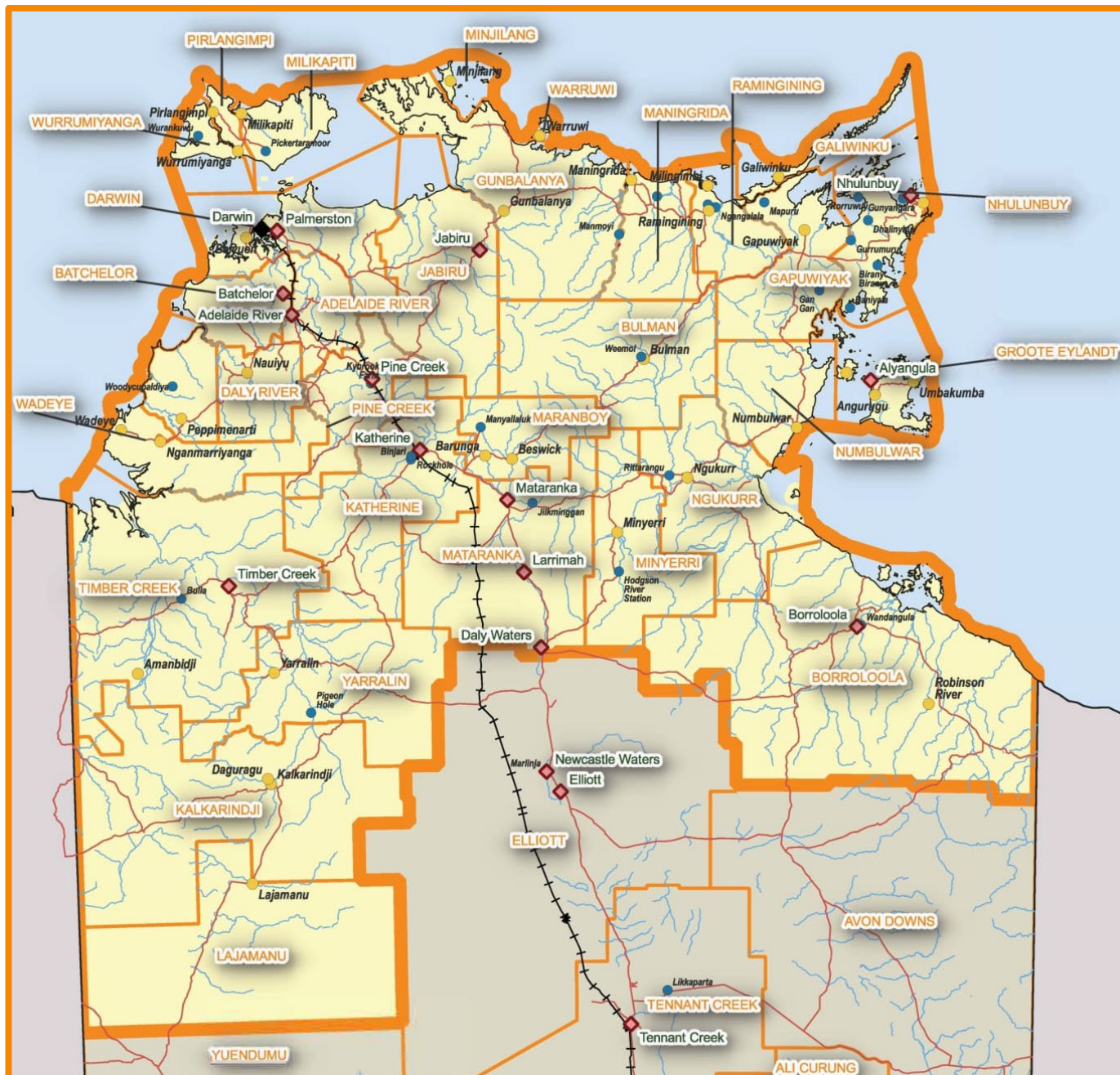
The NT tropics have a distinct Wet and Dry Season as the tropical rain belt shifts south and then north of the equator. It is hot and humid during the Wet Season (October - April), while the Dry Season (May - September) is warm and dry due to winds travelling across the continent.

The tropical zone can be affected by monsoons, cyclones, severe thunderstorms and flooding during the Wet Season, while the fire season occurs during the drier months, typically May - October. Heatwaves are exacerbated by high humidity during the early Wet Season (October - December).

3.2. Grassland zone

Central parts of the NT experience hot temperatures from October - March, while the middle of the year is mild in comparison. Throughout the Wet Season (October - April), when the monsoon trough drifts south, rainfall is more reliable in the northern part of the region and heavy rain events can occur. At other times of the year, rainfall across the region is unreliable. Fire danger is typically highest from September - December.

3.3. Map of NT Northern Region



3.4. NT and Local Government

In March 2019, the NT Government (NTG) implemented 6 regional boundaries across the NT to strengthen the role of the Regional Network Group and align service delivery and reporting. The NTG service delivery boundaries identified in the Northern Region are:

- Top End
- Greater Darwin (Darwin, Palmerston and Litchfield)
- East Arnhem
- Big Rivers

The region is represented by the following 14 local government authorities (councils), the remaining area is unincorporated and has no local government representation.

| Local Government Authority | Size of district (km ²) | Approx. population |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Belyuen Shire Council | 225 | 165 |
| City Of Darwin Council | 625 | 132,045 |
| City Of Palmerston Council | 250 | 40,471 |
| Central Desert Regional Council | 281,312 | 4,208 |
| Coomalie Community Government | 7,500 | 1,396 |
| East Arnhem Regional Council | 3,500 | 14,615 |
| Katherine Town Council | 11,500 | 10,836 |
| Litchfield Shire Council | 4,800 | 22,879 |
| Roper Gulf Regional Council | 183,175 | 7,477 |
| Tiwi Islands Shire Council | 11,250 | 2,745 |
| Victoria Daly Regional Council | 175,000 | 3,263 |
| Wagait Shire Council | 100 | 463 |
| West Arnhem Regional Council | 75,625 | 7,260 |
| West Daly Regional Council | 33,750 | 3,435 |

3.5. Localities

The Northern Region is divided into 32 localities and each locality operates under a Local Emergency Plan. This provides a basis for coordinated emergency and recovery operations in the locality. Each of the localities, major communities and corresponding local government authorities are listed in the tables located on page 8.

3.6. Homelands

Homelands are typically located on Aboriginal land, which is held by the Aboriginal Land Trusts established under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976*. There are also some homelands that are located on Community Living Areas or parcels of land within national parks. Assets on homelands are owned by the underlying leaseholder, which for the majority of homelands is the relevant Aboriginal Land Trust. Generally, homelands are not subject to the NTG leasing or part of the NT's remote public housing system.

Homeland service providers contribute to the delivery of housing, municipal and essential services, including fire breaks, where funding allows. Homeland service providers do not deliver emergency services.

Land councils and local ranger groups within the Locality may provide land management activities on Aboriginal land, such as back burning, installing firebreaks and other mitigation works.

3.7. Police commands

By virtue of their legislated role in the Act, the emergency management boundaries of localities are in line with the existing NT Police boundaries. These boundaries are represented by the Police Commands of Darwin and the Northern Command.

| Darwin Command Locality | Major Communities | Local Government Authority |
|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Darwin | Darwin City | City of Darwin Council |
| Palmerston | Palmerston | Palmerston City Council |
| Darwin and Rural | Darwin rural areas - Howard Springs, Coolalinga, Humpty Doo, Bees Creek, Noonamah, Darwin River, Acacia | Litchfield Shire Council |
| Belyuen | Belyuen | Belyuen Shire Council |
| Wagait Beach | Wagait Beach Dundee Beach (unincorporated) | Wagait Shire Council |
| Northern Command Locality | Major Communities | Local Government Authority |
| Adelaide River | Adelaide River | Coomalie Community Government Council |
| Alyangula | Angurugu Milyakburra Umbakumba | East Arnhem Regional Council |
| Batchelor | Channel Point | Coomalie Community Government Council |
| Borrooloola | Robinson River | Roper Gulf Regional Council |
| Bulman | Bulman Weemol | Roper Gulf Regional Council |
| Daly River (Naiiyu) | Naiiyu Woolianna | Victoria Daly Regional Council |
| Galiwink'u | Gawa | East Arnhem Regional Council |
| Gapuwiyak | Mapuru Donydji | East Arnhem Regional Council |
| Gunbalunya | Gunbalanya | West Arnhem Regional Council |
| Jabiru | Manaburdurma Mudginberri | West Arnhem Regional Council |
| Kalkarindji | Kalkarindji Daguragu | Victoria Daly Regional Council |
| Katherine | Rockhole Binjari | Katherine Town Council |

| | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Lajamanu | Lajamanu | Central Desert Regional Council |
| Maningrida | Gamardi | West Arnhem Regional Council |
| Maranboy | Barunga Beswick Manyallaluk | Roper Gulf Regional Council |
| Mataranka | Mataranka Jilkminggan | Roper Gulf Regional Council |
| Milikapiti | Milikaptiti | Tiwi Islands Regional Council |
| Minjilang | Coburg Peninsular | West Arnhem Regional Council |
| Minyerri | Minyerri | Roper Gulf Regional Council |
| Ngukurr | Rittarangu | Roper Gulf Regional Council |
| Nhulunbuy | Yirkala | East Arnhem Regional Council & Nhulunbuy Corporation |
| Numbulwar | Numbulwar | Roper Gulf Regional Council |
| Peppimenarti | Peppimenarti Emu Point | West Daly Regional Council |
| Pine Creek | Pine Creek Kybrook Farm | Victoria Daly Regional Council |
| Pirlangimpi | Pirlangimpi | Tiwi Islands Regional Council |
| Ramingining | Milingimbi | East Arnhem Regional Council |
| Timber Creek | Timber Creek Bulla Amanbidji | Victoria Daly Regional Council |
| Wadeye | Pulumpa | West Daly Regional Council |
| Warruwi | Warruwi | West Arnhem Regional Council |
| Wurrumiyanga | Wurruranku | Tiwi Islands Regional Council |
| Yarralin | Yarralin Pigeon Hole | Victoria Daly Regional Council |

4. Prevention

4.1. Prevention and mitigation

Northern Region hazards include cyclones (along coastal areas), riverine flooding, flash flooding, tsunamis, heatwave and wildfires with a range of local hazards that are identified through local emergency plans. The Northern REC will provide operational support coordination to local response or recovery operations. A copy of each approved local emergency plan is located in the Web-Based Emergency Operations Centre (WebEOC) File Library and publically available on the NTPFES webpage³.

Prevention and mitigation relates to measures to reduce exposure to hazards, to reduce or eliminate risk. Actions include identifying hazards, assessing threats to life and property, and from these activities, taking measures to reduce potential loss of life and property damage.

³ More information can be found at: <https://www.pfes.nt.gov.au/emergency-service/emergency-management>

The cornerstone of mitigation is guided and coordinated risk assessments, which should involve all potentially affected members of a community. Strategies are developed based on a thorough understanding of hazards identified in emergency risk planning and their interaction with all aspects of society.

5. Preparedness

The Regional Controller is responsible for ensuring an adequate level of planning and training has occurred in localities within the region. This includes ensuring local emergency plans have been updated and readiness reports are prepared annually. Such reporting will generally occur within a pre-season readiness meeting of the REC.

Emergency plans are a legal requirement as set down by the Act. They become a record of agreements made by contributing parties to accept roles and responsibilities, provide resources and to work cooperatively.

Appropriate training is a legislative requirement for those involved in emergency management activities. Exercises should also be undertaken when the plan has not been enacted within a 12 month period or where substantial changes have occurred.

6. Response

Response actions are those taken in anticipation of, during, and immediately after an emergency to ensure that its effects are minimised and that people affected are given immediate relief and support.

6.1. Regional Controller

The Territory Controller in accordance with section 54 of the Act appoints a Regional Controller. The Regional Controller for the Northern Region is the NT Police Assistant Commissioner, Greater Darwin, Road Safety and Support.

The Regional Controller is supported in the Northern Region by 2 Deputy Regional Controllers, being:

- Commander Darwin
- Commander Northern

The Regional Controller can nominate an appropriate Deputy Regional Controller to perform the functions as set out below to coordinate emergency operations.

The Regional Controller has the following functions:

- to supervise and coordinate emergency operations in the region
- to ensure that the Territory Controller's instructions, policies and procedures are complied with
- any other functions conferred by the Territory Controller or by the Act
- to conduct such meetings as are required, whether for normal business or to coordinate safe and effective resolution of emergency operations.

The Regional Controller is responsible for the care and maintenance of equipment made available to the region by the NT Emergency Service (NTES). This will be coordinated through respective Local Controllers at locations where the equipment is held and NTES Northern Command staff.

6.2. Regional Emergency Committee

In accordance with section 58 of the Act, a REC is established for the Northern Region.

The Northern REC is responsible for the development of effective emergency management preparedness and response arrangements to deal with identified emergency/disaster threats affecting the Northern Region and the production and amendment of emergency management plans. The functions, powers, membership and procedures of the REC are outlined in Part 4, Division 7 of the Act.

Contact details for members of the Northern REC can be accessed through the office of the Northern Regional Controller and on WebEOC⁴.

6.3. Local Controller

Local Controllers within the Northern Region are the NT Police Officers in Charge of the police stations for the 32 localities identified by the Territory Controller. Local Controllers report to the Northern Regional Controller, Deputy Regional Controllers and can provide advice to a delegated Incident Controller to coordinate effective preparation and response management to an incident.

Local Controllers and their respective Local Emergency Committees (LECs) will establish Incident Control Points for local management of emergencies and report through the regional Emergency Operations

⁴ More information can be found at: <https://webeoc.ntpfes.triservice/eoc7/>

Centre (EOC), established by the Regional Controller or Deputy Regional Controller/s for coordination of supporting operations.

Responsibility for response rests initially at the local level and is to be coordinated by the Local Controller through the LEC. Coordination of resources may escalate to the Regional Controller, or if stood up, the regional EOC.

6.4. Roles within the Emergency Operation Centre

Working under the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS), roles will be assigned to appropriately trained personnel from across the NTPFES, government agency personnel and non-government personnel. The EOC can be used as an Incident Control Centre (ICC), and for information on roles and responsibilities in an Incident Management Team (IMT), refer to the AIIMS Manual.

6.5. Functional group leaders

Functional groups roles and responsibilities are detailed within the Territory Emergency Plan. Functional group leaders are appointed by the respective agency to provide advice to the REC and provide status reports as requested by the Regional Controller.

When activation occurs, functional groups may be requested to provide a Liaison Officer into an IMT to provide advice on their group's status, resource availability and operational issues; contribute as requested to incident action plans, briefings and coordinate deployment of their respective group resources where applicable.

Overall incident planning, logistics and operations tasking will be managed from the EOC/ICC. Functional groups may operate from their own facilities, according to their respective activation plans, and will be tasked through the Operations section using WebEOC.

Communication from an Incident Controller to functional groups will be through many communication streams, including regular in person briefings, phone/video conferencing, emails and WebEOC.

6.6. Stages of activation – Response/Recovery

With the exception of cyclones where 6 stages are used, this plan sets out 5 stages of activation. These stages are designed to ensure a graduated response to hazardous events, thereby reducing the possibility of under or over reaction by the emergency management agency. The stages are:

| | | |
|---------|--|--|
| Stage 1 | Alert | This stage is declared when the Regional Controller receives warning of an event which, in their opinion, may necessitate an emergency management response. |
| Stage 2 | Standby | This stage is declared when the Regional Controller considers an emergency operation is imminent. During this stage passive emergency measures are commenced. |
| Stage 3 | Activation | This stage is declared when active emergency measures are required. |
| Stage 4 | Stand-down, response operations and transition to Recovery | This stage is declared when the Regional Controller considers that no further emergency management is necessary but if the consequences of the emergency require ongoing recovery coordination the Regional Controller will advise the Director, Emergency Management, Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (CM&C) in accordance with Section 5.2 of the Territory Emergency Plan. |
| Stage 5 | Recovery | This stage is called if ongoing recovery operations and coordination is required. |

The stages identified provide for a sequential response. However, it may be necessary because of the degree of warning and speed of onset of an event for either the relevant Regional or Local Controller to amalgamate the actions required under one stage.

Some events, pre-identified in local or hazard-specific emergency plans, may lead to activation of the Northern Regional Emergency Plan. This plan can be activated by either the Territory Controller, Director NTES or Regional Controller.

Recovery may be activated when an incident or event has occurred that did not necessitate the activation of response stages one to 4. This may be in relation to a sudden impact event such as a rail crash or an event with a long lead time such as flooding.

6.7. Regional level arrangements

Supporting organisations, agencies and functional groups may establish their own coordination centres to provide the focal point for the overall control and coordination of their agency resources. Nominal coordination centre locations are as follows:

- Biosecurity and Animal Welfare Group: Berrimah Farm Science Precinct, Berrimah
- Critical Goods and Services Group: Development House, The Esplanade, Darwin
- Digital and Telecommunications Group: Charles Darwin Centre, 19 The Mall, Darwin
- Shelter Group: 10th Floor, Mitchell Centre, Darwin
- Engineering Group: 2nd Floor, Highway House, Palmerston
- EOC: Peter McAulay Centre (PMC), McMillans Road, Berrimah
- Industry Group: 4th Floor, Charles Darwin Centre, 19 The Mall, Darwin
- Major Defence Installations: location(s) dependent on location and nature of emergency
- Medical Group: Manunda Place, 38 Cavanagh Street, Darwin
- Public Health Group: Manunda Place, 38 Cavanagh Street, Darwin
- Public Information Group: NT House, Mitchell Street, Darwin
- Public Utilities Group: Ben Hammond Complex, 15 Iliffe Street, Darwin
- Recovery Coordination: location(s) dependent on location and nature of emergency
- Survey, Rescue and Impact Assessment Group: PMC, Berrimah
- Transport Group: 2nd Floor, Highway House, Palmerston
- Welfare Group: Darwin Plaza, Darwin

6.8. Warning systems, notifications and dissemination

In the event of an emerging incident occurring, the Regional Controller will notify members of the REC by any or all of the following means:

- email
- SMS messaging
- telephone
- WebEOC alerts

Response agencies will be activated as per their relevant Standard Operating Procedures.

Sources of warning information and systems utilised will depend upon the type of incident. No single warning system will be solely relied upon and multiple media methods will be utilised to get information to the public about emerging incidents.

As an example: the Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau) is the legislated authority to issue weather information.

Examples of communication platforms that may be used in the Northern Region include:

- media: ABC radio (official emergency broadcaster) and other locally-based radio stations may be utilised depending on the warning area
- social media: Secure NT Facebook and Twitter platforms, as the primary source and other relevant agency social media platforms
- electronic media: websites, such as Secure NT and the Bureau which include links to specific information, sites and/or educational materials
- print media: for long term events such as flooding or severe storms
- Emergency Alert: a location-targeted voice and text message delivery system
- loud hailer/door knocks: verbal messaging to specific small areas
- other local arrangements as identified in local emergency plans.

Broadcast messages may also include use of a Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS). SEWS is an audio signal designed to draw attention to a particular public safety warning. The decision to utilise SEWS rests with the Director, NTES, the Territory Controller or the Manager Hazard Preparedness and Response NT, the Bureau.

6.9. Emergency shelters

The Regional Controller can direct emergency shelters to open, pending an emerging threat. Each local emergency plans may have identified shelters and/or strong buildings that can be utilised during some emergency events.

An emergency shelter can generally only operate for up to 48 hours.

Although staffed by various community service providers, an emergency shelter offers minimal support services. People accessing a shelter are expected to be self-sufficient and provide their own food and emergency supplies.

6.10. Evacuation centres

Where longer-term emergency accommodation and support is required following a disaster or event, an evacuation centre may be established, at the direction of the Regional Controller. An evacuation centre is designed to accommodate people for short to medium periods of approximately 4 to 6 weeks, although this time may vary.

An evacuation centre will provide some or all of the following services:

- meals
- beds
- linen
- personal support

- medical services (or access to them)
- assistance accessing finances and recreational activities.

An evacuation centre implies the provision of these services in contrast to an emergency shelter, in which people are expected to be self-sufficient.

6.11. Welfare recovery centres

Welfare Recovery Centres (WRC) are one-stop-shops that provide a range of support services to an affected community. Accommodation services are not provided.

Types of services that may be provided in a WRC may include:

- financial support advice
- insurance advice
- psychological support or counselling
- emergency accommodation information
- recovery information
- public health information.

Establishment and coordination of WRCs is led by the Welfare Group. Centres may continue to operate throughout response and recovery phases of an emergency event.

The Regional Controller, in consultation with the Director, Emergency Management, CM&C, may request the opening of WRCs to support the recovery of an area. The relevant functional groups will be briefed and involved in planning to facilitate the set up and operation of WRCs. Local emergency plans may include suitable locations in communities that can be utilised as WRCs.

6.12. Evacuation

Evacuation is a risk management strategy that can be used to mitigate the effect of an emergency or disaster on a community. It involves the movement of people to a safer location and their post impact return. The decision to evacuate a community, including establishing an evacuation centre, is not taken lightly as it can represent significant risk, resource and financial implications. Self-evacuation is a preferred strategy.

Planning for an evacuation will be completed in consultation with the Incident Controller, functional groups and relevant LECs.

Where an evacuation is required, the Territory Emergency Management Council (TEMC) will be briefed by the Incident Controller and Regional Controller. A proposed evacuation plan is required to be formulated, and approved by the Territory Controller.

In planning for evacuation, consideration must be given to evacuation management, including evacuation centres, registration, reception and repatriation planning. A copy of the Evacuation Guideline can be found at **Annex B**.

The NT Evacuation Centre Field Guide has also been developed for government and partnering agencies to provide guidance to personnel working in evacuation centres. A copy of the guide is available on WebEOC.

6.13. Closure of schools and/or government offices

The decision to close schools due to an impending threat will be made by the Chief Minister on advice from the TEMC. When the nature of an emergency demands an immediate response, local authorities will take the appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the public. These steps may include the temporary closure of a school to enable communities to begin preparations, pending formal closure of a impacted school by the Chief Minister for the remainder of the emergency.

The decision to re-open schools will be made by the Chief Minister on advice from the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Education, based on advice from the Incident Controller.

The decision to close government offices due to an impending threat will be made by the Chief Minister on advice from the TEMC. When the nature of an emergency demands an immediate response, local authorities should take appropriate steps to ensure public safety and the protection of property. The decision to re-open government offices will be made by the Chief Minister on advice from the TEMC.

All agencies and facilities are to have an emergency management plan which sets out the processes for closing down their offices once approval has been given, and should also have clearly articulated employee guidelines to ensure employees know when they are authorised to leave and are required to return to work.

6.14. Impact assessment

Immediately after a hazard has affected a community, assessment of the impact is a vital component of the situational awareness and implementation of response and recovery activities.

Impact assessment may be carried out in 3 phases:

1. As part of initial post impact survey and rescue activities conducted by first responder agencies which will give a less detailed, big picture report on overall impact to a community
2. Rapid assessment is a more in-depth, "door to door" assessment of building damage and personal needs of affected persons to enable responding agencies to provide specific relief and recovery services
3. Comprehensive assessment is conducted as an event progresses by specific agencies and experts, to determine continuing effect on the community and infrastructure as a whole.

Detailed guidelines to conduct rapid assessments in the NT, including the establishment of a dedicated Rapid Assessment Team/s (RAT) to collect data in the field have been developed. A copy is available in the WebEOC library.

The Survey, Rescue and Impact Assessment Group, is led by the NTPFES and is responsible for impact assessments.

6.15. EOC purpose and coordination

An EOC is a facility designed to meet the needs of an IMT and supporting personnel throughout the course of an emergency event. It acts as a central facility from which information is received, collated, analysed and disseminated.

The EOC is located on the first floor, of the PMC in Darwin. When requested by the Regional Controller, the NTES will initiate set up of the EOC.

An EOC is established by the Regional Controller in response to a major emergency event. This may occur at the Territory, regional or local level. The IMT is scaled up, or down, in accordance with the key principles of AIIMS depending on the size, scale and complexity of the emergency event.

A large-scale emergency will trigger the activation of an EOC equipped with sufficient staff and communications facilities to coordinate Territory-wide resources, seek Australian Government support and provide streamlined public information via media outlets and other means.

Once the NT emergency management arrangements are activated, liaison officers from each functional group are present in the EOC as required by the Incident Controller. Key functions within an EOC include:

- information collection, collation, analysis and dissemination
- preparation and issue of official warnings and advice to the public
- coordination of the provision of resources required by the Incident Controller and if necessary Australian Government resources
- briefing the Regional Controller, Territory Controller and TEMC
- dissemination of information to the general public via the media and other means.

If transition to recovery has occurred (if deemed necessary), an EOC may transition into a Recovery Coordination Centre.

7. Recovery

Recovery is the coordinated process and measures for supporting emergency-affected communities in reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of social, economic and physical well-being.

7.1. Transitional arrangements

Transition from response to recovery represents a fundamental shift away from protection of human life and supporting the immediate needs of the community, to establish long-term, more sustainable support structures.

Transition from response to recovery is outlined in Section 5 of the Territory Emergency Plan. Recovery activities may commence with response operations through the development of a transition to recovery checklist. The Territory Controller and the Territory Recovery Coordinator will agree to the transition of control on advice from the Regional Controller and Regional Recovery Coordinator, in consultation with the TEMC.

Formal handover to recovery will not occur until the Territory Recovery Coordinator is satisfied the following briefings have been completed:

- the Territory Controller has briefed the TEMC and the Territory Recovery Coordinator
- the Regional Controller has briefed the Regional Recovery Coordinator
- the Incident Management Team has conducted a handover briefing to the Recovery team.

The indicators listed in the Territory Emergency Plan provide guidance for emergency managers to identify the most appropriate time for the transition to occur without loss of operational tempo.

Some of the indicators when the transition to recovery is ready to occur includes:

- survey and rescue operations are complete
- road clearance of main arterial roads is complete
- first round of impact assessments have been completed, and an initial assessment of the impact of the event has been developed
- evacuations have been completed to the shelter phase
- a visit by the Regional Recovery Coordinator or representative to the affected location/s has been undertaken

- a recovery coordination structure has been developed and is ready to be activated; and
- evacuation centres (where required) have been established.

7.2. Recovery Action Plan

A Recovery Action Plan will be developed for each impacted community or location, articulating the overarching recovery objectives and strategies for execution. Where there is no longer a requirement for a multi-agency recovery effort, the Territory Recovery Coordinator will seek endorsement from the TEMC to transition to agency arrangements.

8. Debrief

An operational debrief should be undertaken after all responses and is the responsibility of the control and/or recovery agency, typically the Incident Controller and Recovery Coordinator.

Debrief processes embed continuous improvement into the delivery of emergency management activities. Consistent approaches to lessons learned encourage adaptability, and flexibility across all levels of government. Sharing of knowledge and experiences throughout emergency events assists with ongoing continuous improvement of people and organisations involved.

The NTG implements a lessons learned approach recognising the positive impact on organisational culture with increasing opportunities to achieve emergency management goals. Whilst lessons learned often begins in one agency through an internal debrief process, those lessons learned are transferable across multi-agencies.

During any operational response, personnel involved are encouraged to record activities where there are lessons to be learned. Activities can include decision making and consequential responses. Where decisions are made by an Incident Controller, IMT member or a functional group member, those decisions should be recorded in a decision log (WebEOC). Decision logs can be referred to as part of the debrief process.

The 3 debrief methods are:

- hot debrief – usually held immediately after response operations, providing an opportunity for instant feedback especially in relation to addressing pressing or immediate concerns
- internal organisational debrief – to be held within 14 days of the event, where organisational issues are addressed, looking at both strengths and weaknesses to guide future training and development
- multi-agency whole of government debrief – to be held within 28 days of the event where the activity resulted in a multi-agency response. A formal debrief report should be formulated to ensure consistency in the approach to the collation of information.

More information on debriefs can be found in Section 6 of the Territory Emergency Plan with templates available in the WebEOC File Library.

9. Related references

The following references apply:

- *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976*
- *Emergency Management Act 2013*⁵
- *Territory Emergency Plan*⁶
- *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*⁷

10. Annexures

Annex A - Functional groups

Annex B - Evacuation guideline

Annex C - Summary of response and recovery activities

Annex D - Definitions and acronyms

⁵ More information can be found at: <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EMERGENCY-MANAGEMENT-ACT-2013>

⁶ More information can be found at: https://pfes.nt.gov.au/sites/default/files/uploads/files/2021/NTES_Territory_Emergency_Plan_2021.pdf

⁷ More information can be found at: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/national-disaster-risk-reduction-framework.pdf>

10.1. Annex A: Functional groups

| Functional group | Agency |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Biosecurity and Animal Welfare | Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (DITT) |
| Digital and Telecommunication | Department of Corporate and Digital Development (DCDD) |
| Critical Goods and Services | DITT |
| Emergency Shelter | Department of Education (DoE) |
| Engineering | Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) |
| Industry | DITT |
| Medical | Department of Health (DoH) |
| Public Health | DoH |
| Public Information | CM&C |
| Public Utilities | Power and Water Corporation (PAWC) |
| Transport | DIPL |
| Survey, Rescue and Impact Assessment | NTPFES |
| Welfare | Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (TFHC) |

Full details on functional group roles and responsibilities are outlined in the Territory Emergency Plan.

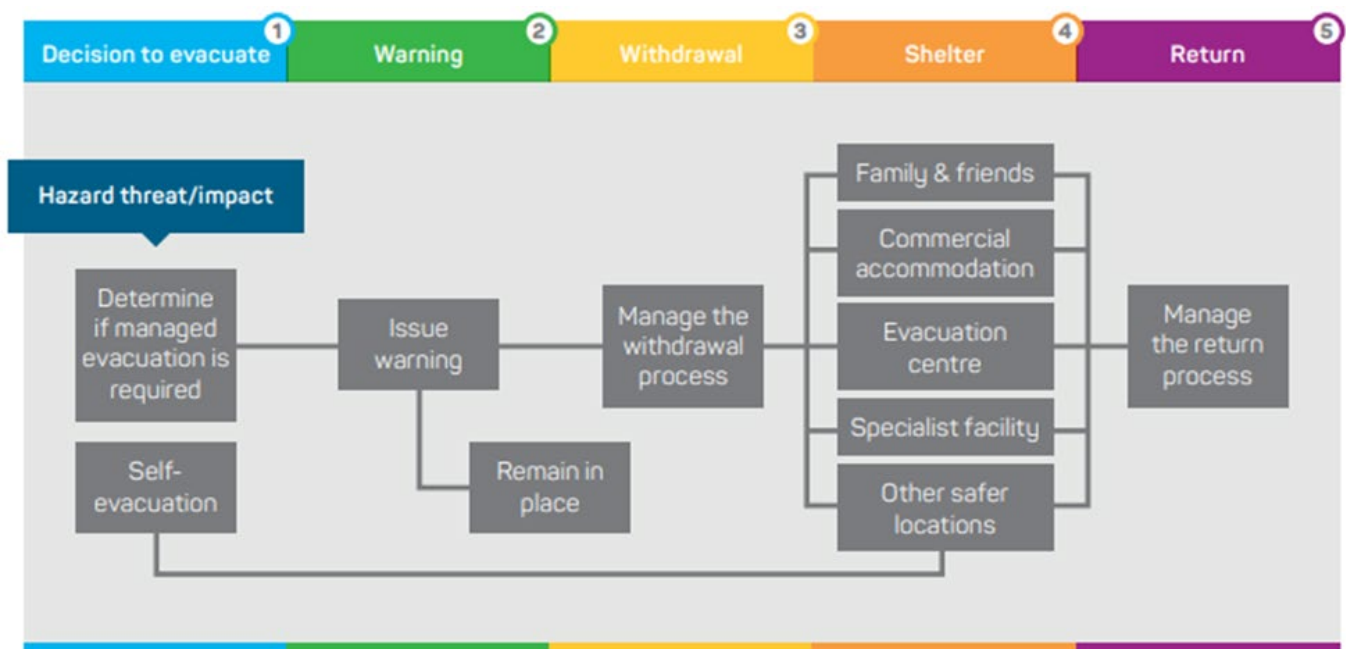
10.2. Annex B: Evacuation guideline

Evacuation is a risk management strategy that can be used to mitigate the effects of an emergency or disaster on a community. Evacuation involves moving people to a safer location, and is usually considered to include the return of the affected community. It is recommended that when advance warning is available to notify the TEMC.

Evacuation is a complex process that has 5 distinct steps:

1. decision
2. warning
3. withdrawal
4. shelter
5. return.

Each step is linked and must be carefully planned and carried out in order for the entire process to be successful. Given an evacuation centre will only be opened as a part an evacuation, it is vital to have an understanding of the 5-step process.



Source: Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience Evacuation Planning Handbook, 2017

10.3. Annex C: Summary of response and recovery activities

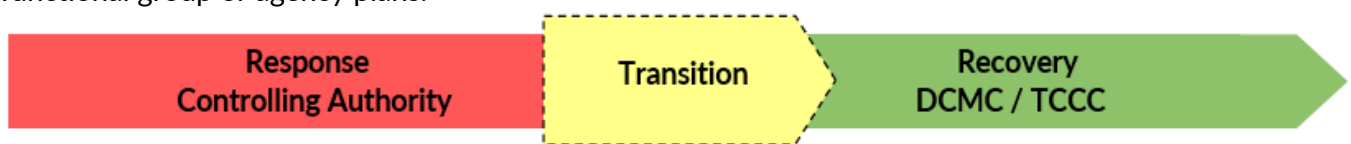
The following table outlines a summary of possible response and recovery activities to be considered following an event.

This table is presented as a guide only, assisting emergency managers with operational decision making, planning and resource allocation. It also highlights the importance of response and recovery coordination working collaboratively.

Activities have been broken down and are listed under either response or recovery for simplicity and ease of use. In practice not all response activities will be completed during the response phase. Likewise not all recovery activities will commence after the transition to recovery.

The post event period of any event is highly dynamic and produces many challenges, both foreseen and unpredicted. Response and recovery coordination must be flexible and able to adapt to the situation as it evolves.

In most cases the points noted in this table and in the ensuing document are outlined in greater detail in functional group or agency plans.



| Activity | Response activities | Recovery activities |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Situational awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road clearance teams General public Media reports Survey and rescue teams Impact assessment teams | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to recovery planning through impact assessment data Comprehensive impact assessments Needs assessment |
| 2. Public Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Information Group activation Spokes persons identified SecureNT activated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continues in recovery |
| 3. Survey and Rescue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey teams deploy to designated areas Critical sites surveyed Deploy rescue teams – NTFRS and Territory Response Group provide primary Urban Search and Rescue capability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey and impact assessment data used to develop the Recovery Action Plan |
| 4. Road clearance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road patrol teams deploy and check assigned routes Road clearance to priority sites Assess Stuart Hwy to Katherine (supply route) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration of road networks and bridges Return to business as usual |
| 5. Emergency accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency accommodation and shelter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evacuation centres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evacuation centres may continue into recovery |

| Activity | Response activities | Recovery activities |
|------------|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of resources that will enable people to remain in their homes • Emergency clothing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary accommodation options • Repatriation planning |
| 6. Medical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaise with Transport Group on road clearance to the hospital - damage assessment - increase morgue capacity - divert patients from remote and regional areas - power (fuel) and water supplies • Medical clinics and field hospitals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - determine the need for clinics to be opened - assess damage to clinics - deploy field hospital/s • Medical presence in shelter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordinated by the Medical Group • Ambulance pick up points on key, cleared roads • GP clinics and pharmacies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify GP clinics able to open - identify pharmacies able to open • Medically vulnerable people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support agencies to follow-up and advise the Medical Group on vulnerable people in evacuation centres - support for vulnerable people at evacuation centres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - repair works - business continuity plans • DoH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - health centres - repair works - reopen other clinics • Support return of vulnerable people in community • GP clinics and pharmacies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ongoing liaison by the Medical Group • CareFlight / Royal Flying Doctor Service - resume business as usual • St John Ambulance – resume business as usual |

| Activity | Response activities | Recovery activities |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CareFlight / Royal Flying Doctor Service | |
| 7. Essential goods and services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish emergency feeding and food distribution points Assessing the damage to suppliers and retailers of critical resources Assess the impact on barge operations and any effect on the ability to supply remote communities Implement interim banking arrangements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the re-opening of the private business sector Monitor levels and availability of essential goods Manage logistics arrangements supplying resources to outlying communities Public Health inspections (food outlets) Banking sector business continuity arrangements |
| | <p><u>Fuel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel suppliers and point of sale Manage fuel supplies to emergency power generation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor fuel levels Infrastructure repairs Emergency fuel supplies for recovery Liaise with fuel suppliers, distributors and wholesalers to re-establish long term supply |
| | <p><u>Banking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess damage to banks and ATMs Implement temporary arrangements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency cash outlets Implement long term arrangements |
| 8. Evacuation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evacuations within community Evacuation out of community Registration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support services for evacuees Recovery information for evacuees Repatriation |
| 9. Public Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicable disease control response Drinking water safety standards Sewage and waste disposal Safe food distribution and advice Vector and vermin control Food and commercial premises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing in recovery |
| 10. Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power supply Power generation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore power network Restore water and sewerage infrastructure |

| Activity | Response activities | Recovery activities |
|---|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water supply • Sewerage • Emergency sanitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue alerts until safe to use |
| 11. Impact assessments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training assessment teams • Initial impact assessments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive impact assessments • Ongoing needs assessments |
| 12. Transport infrastructure (supply lines) | <u>Air (Airport/Airstrip)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear the runway to allow air movements • Establish a logistics hub at the airport • Terminal damage and operational capability assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor repairs and business continuity activities |
| | <u>Road</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway and critical access roads damage assessment • Repair work to commence immediately | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and prioritising repair work of all affected key Territory Highways (Stuart, Barkly, Victoria and Arnhem) |
| | <u>Rail</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail damage assessment • Outage estimation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing liaison with operator to support restoration to business as usual |
| | <u>Port, Harbour and Barge</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess damage to port infrastructure and harbour facilities <p>Assess the damage to barge facilities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairing infrastructure <p>Establish alternate arrangements for the supply of remote communities</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste management requirements and develop waste management plan if required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues in recovery |
| 14. Repairs and reconstruction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impact assessments - temporary repairs • Government buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - damage assessment • Public housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impact assessments • Private industry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information and support to facilitate repairs • Government buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - repairs and reconstruction • Public housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - long term repair plans • Private industry |

| Activity | Response activities | Recovery activities |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - damage assessments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - repair and reconstruction • Temporary accommodation for a visiting construction workforce |
| 15. Transport Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staged re-establishment of public transport services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues in recovery |
| 16. Tele-communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telstra and Optus will assess the damage to their infrastructure • Put in place temporary measures to enable landline and mobile services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair damage networks and infrastructure (for private entities there is support for operators only) |
| 17. Public safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police will maintain normal policing services to the community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual return to business as usual |
| 18. Animal welfare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary emergency arrangements for pets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reunite pets with their owners and cease emergency support arrangements |
| 19. Community consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provision regarding the overall situation, response efforts, what services are available and how to access them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community consultation process regarding long term recovery and community development |

10.4. Annex D: Definitions and acronyms

| Acronyms | Definitions |
|----------|--|
| ABC | Australian Broadcasting Corporation |
| AIIMS | Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System |
| AWS | Australian Warning System |
| AZRI | Arid Zone Research Institute |
| CM&C | Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet |
| DCDD | Department of Corporate and Digital Development |
| DIPL | Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics |
| DITT | Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| EOC | Emergency Operations Centre |
| ICC | Incident Control Centre |
| IMT | Incident Management Team |
| LEC | Local Emergency Committee |
| NT | Northern Territory |
| NTES | Northern Territory Emergency Service |
| NTFRS | Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service |
| NTG | Northern Territory Government |
| NTPF | Northern Territory Police Force |
| NTPFES | Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services |
| PAWC | Power and Water Corporation |
| PPRR | Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery |
| RAT | Rapid Assessment Team |
| REC | Regional Emergency Committee |
| SEWS | Standard Emergency Warning Signal |

| Acronyms | Definitions |
|----------|---|
| TEMC | Territory Emergency Management Council |
| TFHC | Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities |
| WebEOC | Web-Based Emergency Operations Centre |
| WRC | Welfare Recovery Centre |

11. Document control

11.1. Governance

| | |
|-----------------|---|
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11.2. Version history

| Date | Version | Author | Summary of changes |
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| 29/12/2014 | 1 | John McRoberts | First Version |
| 18/11/2016 | 2 | Reece Kershaw | Reviewed and Updated |
| 23/01/2019 | 3 | Reece Kershaw | Reviewed and Updated |
| 07/01/2020 | 4 | Michael White | Reviewed and Updated |
| 16/02/2021 | 5 | Jamie Chalker | Reviewed and Updated |
| 24/02/2022 | 6 | Jamie Chalker | Reviewed and Updated |
| 28/12/2023 | 7 | Michael Murphy | Reviewed and Updated |

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