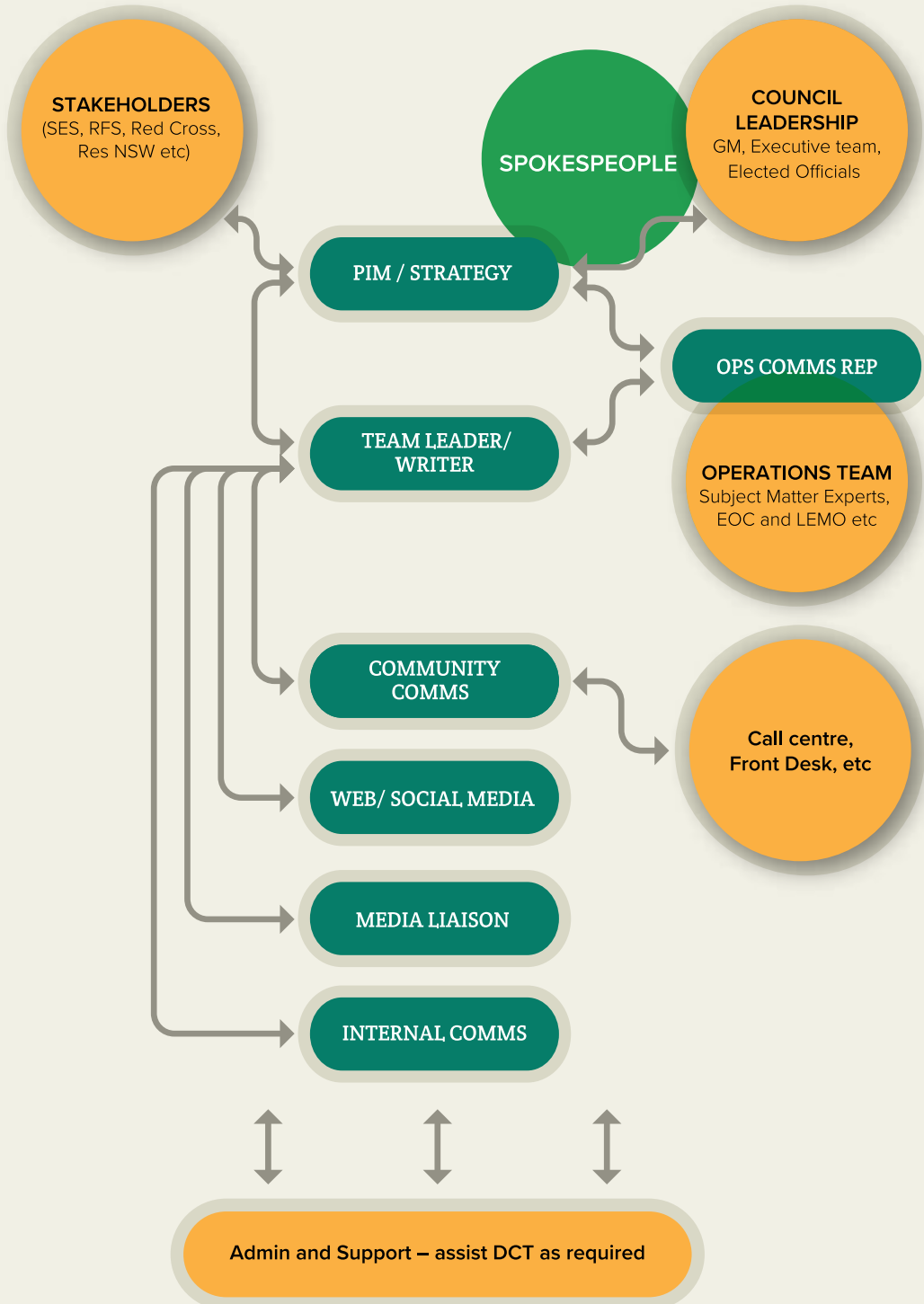


Disaster Communication Team - Work and Information Flow

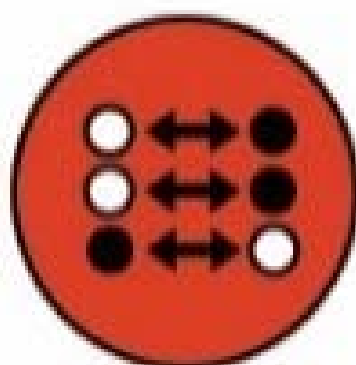




Disaster Comms Team - Rapid Reference Tool



Immediate actions



Disaster Ops



PIM / Strategy



Team Leader/ Writer



Ops Comms Rep



Community Comms



Web/Social Media



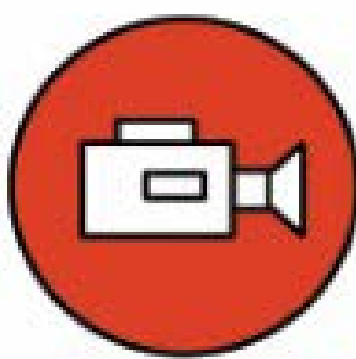
Media Liaison



Internal Comms



Support



Spokesperson



Grab bag contents

Supported by the



Immediate Actions

- + Check safety and wellbeing of the team
- + Activate the Team - set up your workspace
- + Build a clear situational picture
- + Build a clear contextual picture
- + Discuss objectives, priorities and needs
- + Check resources, logistics, and administrative support
- + Consider a long activation - who is the second shift?



Disaster Considerations

- + Safety always...Don't do anything your Grandmother wouldn't let you do!
- + Keep good records of decisions and actions
- + Always be alert for outrage
- + Be ready for challenges, trauma, and fatigue
- + Look after yourself and those around you
- + Work towards good handover notes for your relief
- + Record improvements and lessons learned as you go



Public Information Manager / Strategy

- + Liaise with the Council GM and executives, elected officials, other stakeholders, and agencies
- + Analyse contextual factors and issues
- + Define strategic objectives and message Themes with team leader
- + Coordinate and final approval of all communication tactics, messaging, channels, and timing etc
- + Select, guide, and prepare spokespeople



Team Leader / Writer

- + Manage the DCT personnel - focus on wellbeing
- + Discuss Objectives and Themes
- + Craft information in line with Themes
- + Work with team to convert Key Messages into the necessary outputs
- + Manage all DCT outputs and tactics with the rest of the team



Operations Comms Rep

- + Maintain a two-way conduit between operational or subject matter teams and the Comms Team
- + Share operational information, objectives, and priorities with the Comms Team
- + Source approved public information from other agencies
- + Work closely with the Subject Matter Expert's (eg LEMO in the EOC when appropriate)
- + Ensure information is confirmed by operational or subject matter expert



Community Comms

- + Coordinate communication directly to the community and with and through community leaders (in accordance with Key Messages) – including planning community meetings
- + Liaise and coordinate with external welfare agencies, community groups, and community engagement teams from other agencies/ organisations.
- + Assess and report relevant contextual information.
- + Liaise with Social Media to coordinate public messaging



Web/Social Media

- + Update web and social media (in accordance with Key Messages)
- + Monitor social media commentary for relevant contextual information
- + Liaise with Social teams from agencies/organisations.
- + Monitor key community influencers' SM accounts
- + Work with Community Comms to coordinate public messaging



Media Liaison

- + Develop and maintain excellent working relationships and effective interactions with media
- + Set up media monitoring and report relevant context
- + Liaise with media teams from agencies/organisations
- + Answer media calls and log them
- + Ensure accuracy of call recording... names, numbers etc
- + Support and prepare spokesperson in collaboration with PIM



Internal Comms

- + Ensure that staff are kept informed
- + Monitor staff welfare and needs
- + Consider impacts on families of staff members
- + Raise communication needs for Council employees – information, support, acknowledgement
- + Work with Team Leader to deliver internal messaging in line with Themes and objectives



Support

- + Facilitate logistic and administrative aspects of the DCT
- + Support Media Liaison as needed - including answer, record, and log media enquiries if necessary
- + Support community meeting event planning and logistics with Community Comms as needed



Spokesperson

- + Speak to the community through the media or directly at community meetings etc
- + Discuss Objectives, Theme and Key Messages with PIM and Media Liaison to prepare
- + Focus on your messages and your community (not your performance)
- + Express commitment and empathy, avoid blame or speculation and always tell the truth



Grab Bag contents

- + Mobile phone with charger
- + Laptop and power supply
- + iPad with charger
- + Media release templates etc
- + Notepads and pens
- + Contact lists
- + Maps / GPS
- + Torch
- + Business cards
- + USB thumb drive
- + Water bottle
- + Food and snacks
- + Sunscreen
- + Insect repellent
- + Towel
- + Relevant Policies and Plans



DISASTER COMMUNICATION TEAM TABLE

FUNCTIONAL ROLE	Name	Alternates
PIM/Strategy		
Operations Comms Rep		
Comms Team Leader/Writer		
Community Comms		
Web/Social Media		
Media Liaison		
Internal Comms		
Support		
Spokesperson		

Use this table to select and record the likely personnel in your Disaster Communication Team. You can add contact details here, but it is even more imperative that you keep them updated electronically.

Remember that it might be someone from another team or another Council.

Context Report (CONREP)

All DCT members are responsible for assessing the perceptions, opinions and needs of the community and other stakeholders during the emergency and recovery process.

Reports of relevant context are to be made to *the PIM* via email or in person for further assessment and action.

Date and time	
Source of issue or request (e.g. particular community member or media agency)	
Summary of Context <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attitude: concerns, fears, trauma, outrage• Knowledge: misunderstandings, misinformation, inconsistencies between official messaging, questions being repeatedly asked• Needs or requests	
Requested information or action <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From Council• From other Agencies	

STRATEGY TEMPLATE - THINK AND ACT

Context	
Objective	
Theme	Audience
Information	Channels
Key messages	Timing

LOCAL DISASTER COMMUNICATION KEY MESSAGING TOOL

Produced by the Hunter Joint Organisation to build disaster resilience in our region.
Funded under the joint State and Commonwealth Natural Disaster Resilience Program. @ 2020

Supported by the



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HOW TO USE

The message fragments in this word document are designed to provide approved raw materials for effective messaging in particularly challenging situations when there is resistance, confusion, mistrust, criticism or outrage from the community, or in situations of significant loss and trauma. They are designed so that you can add approved/confirmed information specific to the exact circumstance and detail of the situation.

They embody the respect for the community, transparency, competence and commitment that are necessary to maintain credibility in challenging times. It is important to assess the community's perspectives and needs to guide message choices. There are specific message fragments which focus on and highlight empathy, but empathy should be woven through every message.

These message fragments will help you define the tone of the communication. Edit them and add to them to suit your needs. Make sure they are reviewed and approved now, well before they are needed. Lengthy approval processes work against timely communication in emergency and recovery.

However, checks for accuracy, and that the information is current, has been released, and is approved are essential at the time of communication.

There are choices of phrasing and often several sentences created with similar but not identical meanings, to give users options. They are grouped under subheadings, but practitioners can choose which sentences, in which order, create the tone they require.

Most messages can be used during and after most disaster and emergency events, with optional phrases being hazard-specific. Some are more useful as spoken messages, or on social media. Some more formal ones can be used in written releases etc. You can make a message more or less formal in grammar to suit your needs for spoken or written language.

There may well be other more conventional safety messages and risk communication used during the same time or added to these messages when appropriate. Situation and response information will be inserted where applicable. During any emergency or disaster event it is important to work with subject matter experts and/or operations managers to confirm that the information you are adding to these messages is accurate and up to date.

GENERAL KEY MESSAGES

These general message phrases are approved for use in a variety of situations. Information regarding the specific situation will be added.

HOLDING STATEMENT

- It is early in this very [difficult / sad / challenging] situation. Right now, our efforts are focussed on all those who have been impacted and their loved ones. We will endeavour to get more information to you as soon as we have it.

EMPATHY

- Today has been a very hard day.
- We are greatly saddened to say...
- Unfortunately, it has been necessary to [] today because of [].
- Our thoughts are with the family and friends of...
- Our thoughts are with our community as they face ...
- The emergency management community and the people of [] come together today with Council staff to...
- We understand that the community is facing real [challenges / hardship] and feel [frustrated / uncertain / dissatisfied / worried].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Looking after the wellbeing of our community is our first priority and [responders / council workers / volunteers] are...
- We are doing everything we can to make sure people are safe.
- We are focussed on the wellbeing of the people in our [town/community/area/region]
- Local responders are doing everything they can to minimise impacts...
- Council is working with [] to respond the situation and minimise the impact on the community.
- Council has offered its full support and resources to assist [lead agency/Res NSW/ Red Cross etc].
- We are doing everything we can to build a clearer picture.
- We are working with [whoever is investigating] as they look into what has happened.
- We will do everything we can to help prevent this happening again.
- We will keep you updated when we have more information.

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

- The details of the [incident / situation] are not clear.
- There is a lot we don't know yet.
- Further information will be provided by [the lead agency / local government].
- All information relating to loss of life will be provided by Police.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- Those impacted and their families, should contact [] for more information.
- Please keep safe and...
- Please keep an eye on the [Council/ Lead agency/BOM] website for further information.
- If you are concerned about a loved one you can call the Red Cross Register or Find Reunite hotline on [] (*when activated*).
- We look forward to working with community members to understand what they need and how best to help them.

THANKS AND GRATITUDE

- We thank the public for their patience.
- We are grateful that [there were no injuries / no people's lives were lost].
- Our thanks to all those working to [support their community / help other community members / clean up] for their actions and their support.
- Our thanks to the public for their excellent response to a challenging situation.
- Council expresses our sincere gratitude to the dedicated volunteers/ teams from [response agencies / other councils / the community / NGOs] who have worked so hard to...
- Council expresses our sincere gratitude to the community members who have worked so hard to...
- A whole community was impacted and a whole community responded. Council is proud to have been a part of that.

WHEN ASKED FOR INFORMATION WE DON'T HAVE

- We don't have that information but what I can tell you is...
- We are still gathering information.
- We will need to wait until that information is available to let you know.

WHEN ASKED FOR OPINION OR SPECULATION

- That is not something we can speculate on.
- We don't have enough facts to know if...
- At this moment our focus is on...

WHEN WE CANNOT ANSWER FOR LEGAL / ETHICAL REASONS

- Council does not have information on that. You'd have to get that information from [lead agency / Res NSW].
- As always, a full review will be undertaken. Questions like this will be answered as part of that review.
- The review will be made available to the public [when and through what channel]
- **A further update is expected at approximately [time].**

CHANGING EXPECTATIONS - DONATIONS

The following messages can be used to help shift behaviour from donating goods which may not be useful and will require logistic management, and encourage donation of money or specific necessary items. Get these messages out as early as you can to limit the amount of less than useful donated goods.

It is important to be appreciative and as clear as possible, and to recognise that this behaviour change will require messaging over the long term.

Connect with Res NSW and organisations such as Anglicare, Vinnies, Salvation Army, Lions, and Rotary as well as local community organisations to create consistent messaging around donations (These organisations can also help manage the goods that are inevitably donated).

Encourage and share clear messages about how the cash donations are managed to ease concerns regarding how much money is making it to the impacted people. Engage with organisations that can organise volunteers and direct people to them.

DONATIONS - HOW TO REALLY HELP

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- Over the last [timeframe] the communities in [areas] have been impacted by [hazard].
- [Region] Council would like to give thanks to the generous people who are offering help to the people in our community.
- So many people in [specific areas] have been impacted by the recent [floods/ fires/ storms etc]
- [Homes/ schools/ stock/ stockfeed etc] have been lost and [approx. numbers] families have been impacted.
- We are incredibly grateful to members of the wider community for offering help and looking at ways to support the people in our region.
- It is important to be clear that what the people of [area] really need at the moment is donations of cash through [organisation /charity /community groups etc].
- These charities will share the money with people of our community by [give details of processes].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- We are working with [Res NSW /Anglicare, Vinnies, Salvation Army, Lions, and Rotary] as well as local community organisations to organise management of donations.
- We are seeking donations of [any specific goods] to [contact details]
- [Region] Council is encouraging all those who want to help, to make a cash donation to [list options charities etc]. That way the help will make the most difference to people from our community who are facing real challenges.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- Please donate through [charities/ organisations].
- When you donate cash you also stimulate the economy in our area and help small businesses that are struggling to survive.
- Please do not donate [range of items]. There is nowhere to store them, and we do not want to see them wasted.
- Contact [] if you wish to donate your time or volunteer to help.

GRATITUDE

- Australians always lend a hand to help those in need. We see it after every disaster or emergency. Thank you for doing that in the ways that will help the most.
- Thank you to the generous people who have helped us already
- [Story of donations being put to good use or volunteers helping out]
- Thank you for working with us to make sure you truly help those in need.

LOSS AND DAMAGE

These messages are for use in response to potential concerns around loss of property, animals, or damage to the environment. These consequences of emergency can be very traumatic and can also cause outrage if people believe the loss was not inevitable or that their challenges are not understood or supported by the Council.

It is important to support community members by understanding their specific concerns and questions and responding to them in our messaging. Council may not be the primary source of information or assistance but we can focus on saying what we do know, being open about what we don't, and sharing sources of further aid and support, with the communities needing help.

IMPACTS ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATIVE FAUNA

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- Our thoughts are with the people of [] who are facing impacts from recent [flooding / flash flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc].
- We understand that people are anxious to know about the situation and that this is a stressful time for them and their families.
- What we know is that [situation and damage report].
- We believe that there are issues of [environmental damage / water contamination] impacting people in [].
- We understand our community's concern about the loss of native fauna and habitat.
- The full extent of the [damage / contamination] is not known. [Specific information gaps].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Council will be working with [National Parks / other stakeholders/ NGOs / Community groups] to keep community members informed about any [problems / contamination / risks / environmental damage/ animal welfare issues].
- Council will be working with [Department of Water /utility companies] to keep community members informed about the situation and what they need to do to stay safe.
- [Department of Water / other Agency or Utility / other stakeholders] have asked us to share that...
- Council is working with [Agency / Community group] to respond to the damage to [] and the animals who have been injured there.

GRATITUDE

- We thank the [farmers / business owners / householders / property owners /community members] of the [region] for their cooperation in this stressful and challenging time.
- Our heartfelt thanks to people in the [] community who are helping each other to recover and clean up. This is what creates resilience.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- Remember to stay safe by [safety messages].
- More detailed information will be available from [Lead agency/ Res NSW/ Department of Water / corporate stakeholder e.g. mine/ NGO/ Community group] on their [website / Facebook page / info line / phone number].
- If you need help call [].

- **A further update is expected at approximately [time].**

IMPACTS ON PROPERTY OR ANIMALS

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- Our thoughts are with the people of [] who are facing serious impacts from recent
- [flooding / flash flood / cyclone / severe weather].
- We understand that people are anxious to know about the state of their [property/ livestock and animals] and that this is a stressful time for them and their families.
- What we know is that [situation and damage report].
- Approximately [number] [homes / businesses / properties] have been inundated. And many lives and livelihoods have been affected.
- We understand that approximately [number] of [cattle/ sheep/ livestock] have been lost.
- We understand that there are challenges sourcing fodder and water to look after stock.
- The full extent of the damage is not known. [Specific information gaps].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Council is working with [Res NSW / NGOs / agencies] to support people in [] whose homes and businesses have been impacted by recent [flooding / flash flood / cyclone /severe weather] in the area
- Council is working with [DPI/ LLS] to support people in [] whose land or livestock have been impacted in recent [flooding / flash flood / cyclone /severe weather] in the area.
- Council Rapid Damage Assessment Teams will be deployed to investigate the damage.
- Part of this process involves comprehensive sweeps of the area to identify damaged buildings and to assess structures which might pose a danger to returning residents.

GRATITUDE

- We thank the [farmers / business owners / householders / property owners / residents] of the region for their cooperation in this stressful and challenging time.
- Our heartfelt thanks to people in the [] community who are helping each other to recover and clean up. This is what creates resilience.
- [We look forward to / We are] working with [agencies/ Res NSW / NGOs] volunteers and community members to clean up and get back on track.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- There is useful advice on assistance/ relief packages [our website/ the Res NSW website]. It will help you stay safe and give tips on cleaning, salvage, and health.
- Remember to stay safe during the clean-up.
- If your home has sustained serious damage and you need help, contact [appropriate agency/ Res NSW/ NGO/ Council team] for information and assistance.
- Contact [] for help in response to lost or injured animals.
- Before cleaning up, make sure all gas and electricity supplies are turned off.
- When you return home, you may be shaken to discover the level of damage. This can be a very difficult time.
- This is a time when we all need to support each other and even more importantly ask for support.
- Look after yourselves and look after each other. Call us on [] if you need any information or assistance.

- If you are insured, it is important to contact your insurer, request an assessment and specific advice relating to your policy before discarding, authorising repairs or cleaning any damaged or impacted property.
- For more information and advice contact the Insurance Council of Australia on 1300 728 228 or visit www.insurancecouncil.com.au
- Community meetings will be held [time and place] to respond to your questions and outline assistance available.
- Call council on [] with any concerns or questions.
- **Information updates are available on [].**

RESISTANCE

These messages are for use when community members choose not to act in accordance with safety messages, warnings, and guidance.

In order to change opinion and perspective and have a chance of creating behavioural change, it is important that it is clear that we have listened to the community's perspective. Any disrespect, insult or criticism will create greater resistance.

It can be useful to repeat safety advice and give as much context as possible about where the information has come from, how decisions have been made, what the consequences of ignoring the advice might be.

It can also be useful to talk about community members who are following the advice and discuss the positive outcomes for them.

RESISTANCE TO EVACUATION

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- This is a challenging time for the people of the [] community and for emergency responders and volunteers.
- There seems to be some questions about the best thing for the community to do at this point.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Council's first priority is helping people stay safe.
- The clearest information we have right now is that...
- This information comes from [information source] reports at [time].
- This information has triggered an evacuation warning.
- We are not sure [information gaps].
- There is some uncertainty about [how quickly the waters will rise / what direction the water is coming from/ where the cyclone will hit/ what speed and direction the fire is travelling].
- The warning issued by [lead agency or BOM] means...
- The evacuation warning issued by [Lead agency] means...
- At the moment responders are [overview of response].
- We understand that volunteers will be there to help people evacuate unless it isn't safe to do so.
- Unfortunately, there are times when it is too dangerous to evacuate people. Those are [difficult / awful] situations.
- Council teams are working with [agencies] and [community groups] and individuals to [sandbag / help evacuate/ prepare places of safety].

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- During the [cyclone /storm/ fire] it may well be extremely dangerous to be outside. We ask the community and the media to look after themselves and each other, and to stay safe.
- Community members are gathering at the evacuation centre at [] and [sharing their stories / other activities taking place at the evac centres]. [**Examples can be very useful here**].
- Delay might mean that roads [are not safe / are impassable].
- We ask community members to stay safe, look after themselves, and look after each other
- You can go to the evacuation centre at [address] or to family and friends.
- The evacuation centre at [address] is ready for you and your family.
- We ask community members to check on elderly neighbours or people who might need special help.
- If you need more information or assistance call [].
- If you are in life threatening danger, call 000
- Updates of emergency information can be found on Council's website, Council Facebook and Twitter or your local ABC radio station.
- If you are likely to be cut off by [hazard] make sure you have enough supplies to last several days.

- Go to Res NSW website for advice about getting an emergency kit ready. An emergency kit is essential for short term survival providing vital items for you and your family. Keep your kit in a handy place known to everyone in the household.
- Find ways to stay safe and other information on our website.

GRATITUDE

- The [specific organisations / community groups] running the evacuation centre have done an incredible job in support of the [] community. We are so very grateful for their efforts.
- We thank the [] community for working with responders and for supporting each other.
- [] is a great community – working together on a very difficult day.

- **A further update is expected at approximately [time].**

RESISTANCE TO ROAD CLOSURES

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- Recent [flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] is having significant impacts on communities in [].
- There have been [overview of impacts in communities].
- A number of roads are closed following [flooding / landslides / land slips / damage to the roads] in []. This includes [list major roads].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Council's first priority is helping people stay safe. We have the responsibility to close roads.
- The reason these roads have been closed is that [the roads are impassable and dangerous / there is damage to the roads and risk to the community / there are landslides posing risks to drivers and covering the road / the swift/deep water makes it unsafe to travel / the power of flood water is very dangerous / there might be washaways causing the road to crumble even when it looks solid / there can be dangerous debris / even the biggest car will float when it loses traction and bigger wheels will just make it more buoyant].
- At this stage, we are unsure when roads will be reopened.
- Following the event, a Main Roads engineer will assess the road, and advise Council when they safe to be reopened.
- [Emergency responders / Volunteers] rescued [number] people in the last [time frame]. Call 132 500 rather than take a risk.
- [Emergency responders / Volunteers] have helped [number] people evacuate or get where they needed to go in the last [time frame]. Call [] rather than take a risk.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- We understand that people might have really strong reasons to try to get to where they are going. Please contact your local [agency] on [] if you need help.
- If you are already on your journey and you are between towns, please call [agency].
- Stay safe and help your friends and family stay safe.
- Please be patient and look after each other and call [agency] if you need help to [solve a problem / get where you are going safely].

GRATITUDE

- We are thankful to the communities of [impacted areas], [agency volunteers] and Council teams who are looking after other members of the community.
- **A further update is expected at approximately [time].**

TRAUMA AND HARM

The following messages are for use when community members are missing or have been harmed, or when lives have been lost.

It is important to be aware of strong emotions, trauma, and grief. The communication team must work to ensure we understand how people are feeling before we comment on it. It is essential to be rigorously compassionate and avoid clichés.

If in doubt - imagine that the mother of a victim is listening.

MISSING PERSONS

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- Today has been a very hard day for both the people of [] and the emergency responders/ volunteers working to keep them safe.
- Our hearts go out to anyone who has been affected by this serious [flooding/ flash flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc].
- The people in [] have faced major [flooding / flash flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] which has [describe impacts].
- We understand that the community is facing real [challenges / hardship] and feel [frustrated / uncertain / worried].
- Unfortunately, there are reports of people being unaccounted for after the [flood / flash flood].
- We do not have an accurate or confirmed picture of the situation yet.
- This is an unfolding situation and at the moment, we don't have any further information.
- As more detail becomes available, the appropriate authorities will share it.
- Police will provide updates when more information is known.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Keeping people safe is our priority and responders are [*most recent response actions*].
- Our focus is on those affected and their loved ones.
- Our thoughts are with those who have been impacted in the community.
- We are working with [*other agencies / community members*] to help keep people safe.

GRATITUDE

- Our thanks to the people of [] who are coming together to assist us and support each other.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- Until then, we ask for your patience and to think of those who have been impacted.
- For continuing updates go to [*web / social media links*].
- **A further update is expected at approximately [*time*].**

LOSS OF LIFE – COMMUNITY

HOLDING STATEMENT (WHEN APPROPRIATE – E.G. MASS CASUALTY)

- The people of [] come together today to mourn the [devastating / heartbreaking / tragic / shocking] loss of life in this community.
- At this stage we are focussing on those impacted and their loved ones and working to assist Police and [Lead agency]. We will share more information as soon as we [have it / possibly can.]

CONFIRMED BY POLICE *ONLY IF INFORMATION RELEASED

EMPATHY

- This is a [sad / tragic / sombre / hard / heartbreaking] day for our community/ the community of [].
- [] Council joins the people of [region community] as we come together today to mourn the loss of [number] lives.
- We grieve with our community today at the [sad / tragic / heart breaking / shocking] loss of [number] lives.

CONTEXT

- Police have confirmed, that tragically [number] people from the [] community have lost their lives in the recent [flood/cyclone/severe weather].
- They were [any confirmed and available details about sex, age, location if released] and Police are now investigating their deaths.
- We are not aware of any other people being unaccounted for / We understand that there are [number if known and signed off by Police] others, who remain unaccounted for.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- We share a deep sadness with the community over this news.
- Instances like this affect us all – and our thoughts are with their family, friends and the community.
- Council is working closely with [other agencies / community groups / local government] to provide support to the families and communities impacted.
- As always, there will be an independent review to understand what has happened and Council will support that process in any way we can.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- Please go to our website if you need more information or call [].
- Please keep safe and work to support other people in your community.
- Contact us on [] if you need help.
- If you are concerned about family or friends, please visit Red Cross - Register.Find.Reunite.
- If you need information you can call [].

GRATITUDE

- Our thanks and admiration to the people of [] who are coming together to support each other so powerfully.
- Our thanks to the incredible people of [] who are coming together to get through this as a community.

- A further update is expected at approximately [*time*].

CRITICISM AND REPUTATIONAL RISK

The following messages are for use when Council strategies and actions are being criticised. The more detail that we can access regarding the criticisms prior to communicating, the better.

It is important to be empathetic to the community's outrage even if the specific criticisms do not seem valid. Getting into an argument is likely to build outrage and increase reputational damage.

Openly letting people into Council processes – how and why we made decisions, is extremely valuable in diminishing outrage.

COMMUNITY CRITICISM OF COUNCIL'S MANAGEMENT

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- The recent [flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] has had some significant impacts on the people of [].
- They have had to deal with [brief description of the impacts].
- Some members of the community have raised concerns regarding [rescue efforts / supply of sandbags / the response / evacuations].
- Members of the community have raised concerns about the time it is taking to be allowed to return to their homes.
- At this point we don't know [other information gaps].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Council's first priority is helping people stay safe during emergencies. [The ongoing fire risks/ dangerous weather] have delayed access to the impacted areas. We will work with community to get them home as soon as possible.
- During this event we have had [numbers of council workers] working with [emergency responders/ NGOs] to support our community
- [*specific Council assistance story*]
- Disasters and emergencies are challenging, and we need to keep working with community members to understand what they need and how best to help them.
- We want to work with the community to address their concerns and to build resilience and readiness.
- We thank the people of the [] community who have raised these opportunities for us to improve.
- Council teams are working on building and primary industries damage assessments/ cleaning up rubbish/ getting the roads fixed as quickly as possible.
- It is natural that people will have questions about the response/ relief, and these will be answered, as part of a full Review of the event.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- If there are any community members who would like to speak with us, they should call...

GRATITUDE

- We are grateful to the community members who work with us to keep improving what we do.
- We thank the community for working with us during this event.
- We look forward to working with the people of [] to support their recovery and their readiness for future events.
- **A further update is expected at approximately [time].**

COMMUNITY CRITICISM OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- The recent [flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] has had some significant impacts on the people in [].
- They have had to deal with [brief description of the impacts].
- Some members of the community have raised issues about [public information / warnings / emergency alert / communication / difficulties in getting the information they need when they need it].
- We have heard that these challenges made them feel [frustrated / less secure / confused / frightened].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Council's priority is on the safety and wellbeing of people in our communities.
- Council knows how essential it is to communicate with communities before during and after emergencies, as well as we possibly can.
- We are keeping community members informed through [local meetings / social media/ radio / TV / on our website].
- We do not take this lightly and we will find out as much as we can to [resolve concerns / understand what changes can bring improvements / find ways to improve this / try to find ways to help].
- We want to make sure we reach out to as many community members as possible with information that is useful to them and that they understand.
- One of the things that emergency always does is make communication more challenging, so we will keep working with the community to resolve those challenges.
- We have already [any responses already made to address community concerns].
- It is natural that people will have questions, and these will be answered as part of a full Review of the event.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- Council is committed to working with communities to build their readiness and resilience, support their planning, and sustain their capacity to survive and thrive.
- Check the Council website for safety information.
[Mention the most relevant of these subjects and use messages from the site if appropriate].
- Call us on [].

GRATITUDE

- We thank the many people of the [] community who were prepared for this emergency, who implemented their plans and helped their friends and neighbours. They are an inspiration to us all. [**consider an example to strengthen this message**]
- We thank the people of the [] community who have raised these opportunities for us to improve.

- A whole community was impacted and a whole community responded. Council is proud to have been a part of that.
- **A further update is expected at approximately [*time*].**

CRITICISM OF BEHAVIOUR OF COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

These messages could be used in a variety of circumstances including: criticisms of racism / sexism / bullying / being alarmist or overemotional / not catering for the disabled etc.

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- The recent [flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] has had some significant impacts on the people of [].
- Some members of the community have brought to our attention their concerns about the behaviour of some of the [council employees].
- We understand that [brief summary of issue].
- [We understand that / They have said / They have told us] this behaviour made them feel [angry / discouraged / panicked / frightened / traumatised / insulted].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- We do not take this lightly and we will find out as much as we can to [resolve concerns / make sure it doesn't happen again / find ways to improve this / try to find ways to help].
- Council's priority is on the safety and wellbeing of our communities.
- Our teams are often helping other people when their own homes and families have been impacted.
- We know it's not always easy.
- Council is committed to finding a resolution to any issues
- Experiences of community members will be addressed in our Independent Review as we look for solutions and improvements.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- We are happy to discuss concerns with any community members.
- Please call [] or email [].

GRATITUDE

- We are grateful for the work of our teams, who often come from the impacted communities.
- We are also grateful for our relationships with people within the community and our opportunity to work with them to get this right.
- **A further update is expected at approximately [time].**

INTERNAL/ STAKEHOLDER ISSUES

These messages are to be used when Council employees or response volunteers are critical of Council.

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- Recent [flooding / flash flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] in [] has had some [significant / serious] impacts.
- Some [Council staff/ agency volunteers] have expressed concerns about [resourcing / warnings / decisions] during the response to [flooding / flash flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] in [].
- They have expressed that [brief summary of issue].
- It is clear that they have felt [angry / frustrated / discouraged / upset].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- We do not take this lightly and we will find out as much as we can to [understand the issues raised/ resolve concerns / understand what changes can bring improvements / find ways to improve this / try to find ways to help].
- Council's priority is on the safety and wellbeing of our community. We want to keep improving how we do that.
- We are happy to discuss concerns with any [community members /staff].

GRATITUDE

- We are grateful for our Council team, who often come from the impacted communities.
- We thank them for their efforts.
- They are often helping other people when their own homes and families have been impacted.
- We know it's not always easy.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- If any Council staff want to talk with their management, it is important that they do so. We want to listen to their concerns.
- Their experiences will be addressed in our Independent Review as we look for solutions and improvements.

- **A further update is expected at approximately [time].**

CRITICISM AROUND COMMUNITY ISOLATIONS

These messages are to be used to respond to issues regarding isolations. These might range from people doing it tough in the face of being isolated but are particularly focussed on situations when there is criticism regarding support of isolated communities.

EMPATHY & CONTEXT

- The recent [flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] has had some significant impacts on the people of [] who have had to deal with being [isolated / cut off due to ...].
- Some communities are frequently isolated during [flooding / flash flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] and many of them are extremely resilient. It is always a challenging time.
- For parts of our region, being isolated during [flood / cyclone / severe weather/ fire etc] is just business as usual.
- Outlying stations that have been impacted include [].
- Isolated communities include [].
- We are aware of community members in [] facing particular challenges.
- We understand there are issues with sourcing stock fodder and that sourcing and transporting stock water is an ongoing key issue.
- We don't know [information gaps].

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Council is working to support communities during these tough times by [outlining processes].
- We have worked with [agency/ Res NSW] who have had [numbers of responders / numbers request for assistance / numbers of flood boat rescues / numbers of volunteers / amount of supplies to cut off communities / numbers of resupply missions].
- Council's first priority is helping people stay safe during emergencies.
- Council is committed to continually improving the way we do that.
- Disaster and emergency are [complex / challenging / tough], and we need to keep working with community members to understand what they need and how best to help them.
- In this situation it was [necessary / important] to support those in the greatest need. [Give as much detail as possible].
- Right now, we are [any changes being made in response to community concerns].
- Their experiences will be addressed in our Independent Review as we look for solutions and improvements.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

- If there are any community members who need assistance, they should call [].
- If you're in a life-threatening situation call 000.

GRATITUDE

- We thank the community for working with us during this event.
- [] is a great community – working together at a very difficult time.
- We look forward to engaging with the people of [] to support their recovery and work with them to get ready for the next event.

- A further update is expected at approximately [time].