

A City of Coffs Harbour Service

# RESILIENCE & RECOVERY

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COMMUNITY DISASTER

# Preparedness Guide

Get Ready • Get Connected!

Please keep this document as a handy source of information about:

- Community groups and facilities
- Emergency service organisations
- Preparing for emergencies
- Emergency response and recovery

## Acknowledgements

This project has been initiated by community members living on the traditional country of the Gumbaynggirr people, who have been caretakers of this land for time immemorial. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge their continuing connection to country.

## Context

This guide was compiled by the Resilience and Recovery team at City of Coffs Harbour, on behalf of community members in the City of Coffs Harbour who have been impacted by compounding disasters. We extend our gratitude to the Harrington & Crowdy Head Community Resilience Team who have allowed us to adapt and build upon their excellent “Resilient Community Guide” to tailor this resource for our region.

### DISCLAIMER

*This document has been compiled by members of the City of Coffs Harbour Community Resilience and Recovery Team as a service to the community. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document is correct at the time of printing, changes in circumstances after publication may impact on the accuracy of the information.*



COMMUNITY DISASTER

# Preparedness Guide

*A City of Coffs Harbour Service*

**RESILIENCE  
& RECOVERY**

*Get Ready • Get Connected*



# Table of Contents

## **1 INTRODUCTION 6**

1.1	Purpose of this Document .....	6
	Specific emergency-related information .....	6
	Building resilience through building community .....	6
1.2	Introducing our Community .....	7
1.3	Our recent experience: extreme weather events .....	7
	Bushfire .....	7
	Flooding .....	7
1.4	Our major vulnerabilities .....	8

## **2. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS 10**

2.1	State Emergency Service (SES) .....	10
2.2	Rural Fire Service .....	12
2.3	Fire and Rescue NSW .....	13
2.4	Marine Rescue .....	13
2.5	City of Coffs Harbour .....	14
2.6	The Australian Warning System .....	15
2.7	How are emergency responses coordinated? .....	16

## **3. MY ROLE: WHAT CAN I DO TO BETTER PREPARE, RESPOND AND RECOVER? 18**

3.1	Preparing for an Emergency .....	18
	Put together an emergency kit .....	18
	Prepare your home .....	20
	Prepare yourself and family .....	20
	Make an emergency plan .....	20



- Look out for your neighbours, friends and family ..... 21
- Have a plan for your pets ..... 21
- Tips for seniors and people with a disability ..... 21
- The Assist Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents Program (AIDER) ..... 22
- 3.2 Responding During an Emergency ..... 22
  - How to keep informed..... 22
  - How to help keep others informed..... 23
  - Evacuation Warnings and Evacuation Orders ..... 23
  - When an Evacuation Warning is issued ..... 24
  - When an Evacuation Order is issued ..... 24
  - Evacuation Centres ..... 24
  - What happens between an Evacuation Order and an All Clear! ..... 25
  - Returning to your property ..... 25
  - Neighbourhood Safer Places ..... 26
  - What about a tsunami? ..... 27
- 3.3 Recovering After an Emergency ..... 28
  - Disaster Recovery Centres..... 28
  - Recovery and coping after a crisis..... 28

**4. THE COMMUNITY DIRECTORY 30**

- 4.1 The Community Group Directory..... 31
  - Local Emergency Services Units ..... 31
  - Service Clubs and Organisations ..... 32
  - Sporting Clubs ..... 33
  - Health and Wellbeing ..... 33
  - Arts, Crafts and Special Interest Groups..... 34
  - School, Pre-School and Playgroups..... 35
  - Religious Faith-Based Groups..... 36

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this document

**This document is designed to help residents and visitors to become better prepared for emergencies in two related ways.**

### SPECIFIC EMERGENCY-RELATED INFORMATION

**Section 2** provides information to help you understand the role and responsibilities of various emergency services organisations. This may assist you to find the help you need more quickly.

**Section 3** provides information that can “help you help yourself” by outlining actions you can take through the three phases of “emergency preparation, response and recovery”. There are also links to resources with more detailed information.

### BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH BUILDING COMMUNITY

The relationships and sense of community cohesion that develops over time influences how well a community copes with, and recovers from, a disaster.

**Section 4** is where you can record the community groups and facilities, activities and volunteering opportunities which are relevant and specific to your household.



Coffs Harbour LGA

## 1.2 Introducing our Community

The City of Coffs Harbour is home to more than 78,000 people and is one of the fastest growing and dynamic areas within regional New South Wales (NSW). Our Local Government Area (LGA) is on the Mid-North Coast, from Bundagen in the south to Red Rock in the north and the rural hinterland villages of Ulong and Nana Glen in the west.

The land on which the LGA sits is part of the Gumbaynggirr Nation, one of the largest coastal Aboriginal nations in NSW. The Gumbaynggirr people have lived on the land and seas in this area since the Yuludarla or the Dreaming. The geographical area of the Gumbaynggirr Nation stretches from the Nambucca River in the south, to around the Clarence River in the north, and up to the Great Dividing Range in the west.

Today, the City of Coffs Harbour LGA is a popular holiday and retirement destination, with the population swelling to over 90,000 in peak holiday times. Tens of thousands of additional visitors pass through the region on the Pacific Highway (A1), which runs through the City Centre (with bypass construction underway and estimated for completion by late 2027).

When driving, the nearest cities are Port Macquarie to the south (1 hour 45 min), Grafton to the north (1 hour), and Armidale to the west (2 hours 40 min). Hundreds of thousands of people also transit through Coffs Harbour Airport each year, with direct flights to Sydney taking approximately 1 hour 20 min.

For residents, agriculture has historic and ongoing significance to the local economy. But the 5 largest employment sectors are health care and other social services, retail trade, construction, education and training, and accommodation and food services.

## 1.3 Our recent experience: extreme weather events

Our community has experienced significant challenges due to extreme weather events, particularly bushfire and flooding. Understanding the history and context surrounding these experiences can help with preparedness for future events.

### BUSHFIRE

There is a long history of bushfire events and damage in this area, and many locals are aware of the potential risks during bushfire season. But changes in the climate have led to more extreme risks.

A prolonged period of hot, dry weather from July 2019 to June 2020 resulted in catastrophic bushfire risk in NSW. There were 13,105 bush and grass fires recorded across the state during this period.

*It is predicted that global warming will lead to a combination of rising sea levels and more severe storms.*

In November 2019, these fires threatened and affected communities in the Coffs Harbour LGA, including the Orara Valley. More than 40 homes and outbuildings were destroyed or damaged, as well as tens of kilometres of fencing. There was also severe environmental damage on several properties.

### FLOODING

There is also a long history of flooding in the Coffs Harbour region. Significant flood events have occurred in 1917, 1938, 1950, 1963, 1974, 1977, 1989, 1991 and 2009.

A natural disaster was declared in November 1996 when Coffs Harbour experienced a storm event

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and major flash flooding. Around 800 properties were flooded and more than 250 residential properties and 210 commercial or public properties had water inundation above floor level. 300 people were also evacuated.

In 2009, two separate storm events caused flash flooding in the Coffs Harbour City centre in March and again in November, when more than 500mm of rain fell within 48 hours.

Significant flood events have also been seen in other localities across the LGA. In particular, in the Corindi and Arrawarra catchments in 2012 and 2021, and the Upper Orara catchment in 2020.

In February 2021, the Upper Corindi catchment had more than 300mm of rain in six hours. This led to significant flash flooding in the Upper Corindi and Lower Corindi areas and impacted several properties.

*Widespread impacts and recovery processes make it essential for individuals, families and communities to be as prepared as possible for emergencies.*

During this event, a southbound freight train was also derailed north of Nana Glen, where floodwaters had gone over the track and washed away ballast. Rolling stock, freight and a large section of railway were significantly damaged, one of the two crew on board the train sustained minor injuries, and the line was closed for nine days.

When these extreme weather events happen, official emergency service organisations play a critical role. But the widespread impacts and recovery processes make it essential for individuals, families and communities to be as prepared as possible for emergencies.

## 1.3 Our major vulnerabilities

Landform has a strong influence on rainfall within the Coffs Harbour LGA. The Great Dividing Range passes very close to the coast and the coastal plain has no major river systems. Instead, there are 16 major coastal creeks plus the inland waterways of the Bobo River, Little Nymboida River, Bucca Creek and Orara River.

Our region experiences high rainfall, averaging 1700mm annually, with most rain falling in late summer and early autumn. Higher rainfall also occurs east of the coastal range due to moist maritime air rising over the land, which can lead to high-intensity storms.

Because the catchments are steep, relatively small in area and subject to high rainfall intensities, parts of the LGA experience 'flash flooding'.

Flash flooding is:

- Flooding that peaks within six hours of the rain that caused it;
- Very sudden, with little warning of its coming;
- A result of local heavy rainfall;
- Characterised by rapid rises of stream levels with elevated levels experienced for short periods of time.

The cooler months receive much less rainfall, and dry spells are not uncommon from April to October, which increases bushfire risk. There is also a high risk for one road in, one road out communities in the northern beaches' townships (Arrawarra, Safety Beach, Mullaway, Emerald Beach, Corindi, Red Rock).

Climate modelling suggests that floods, drought and bushfires will occur more frequently over the next few decades. It is predicted that global warming will lead to a combination of rising sea levels and more severe storms. This could increase the severity



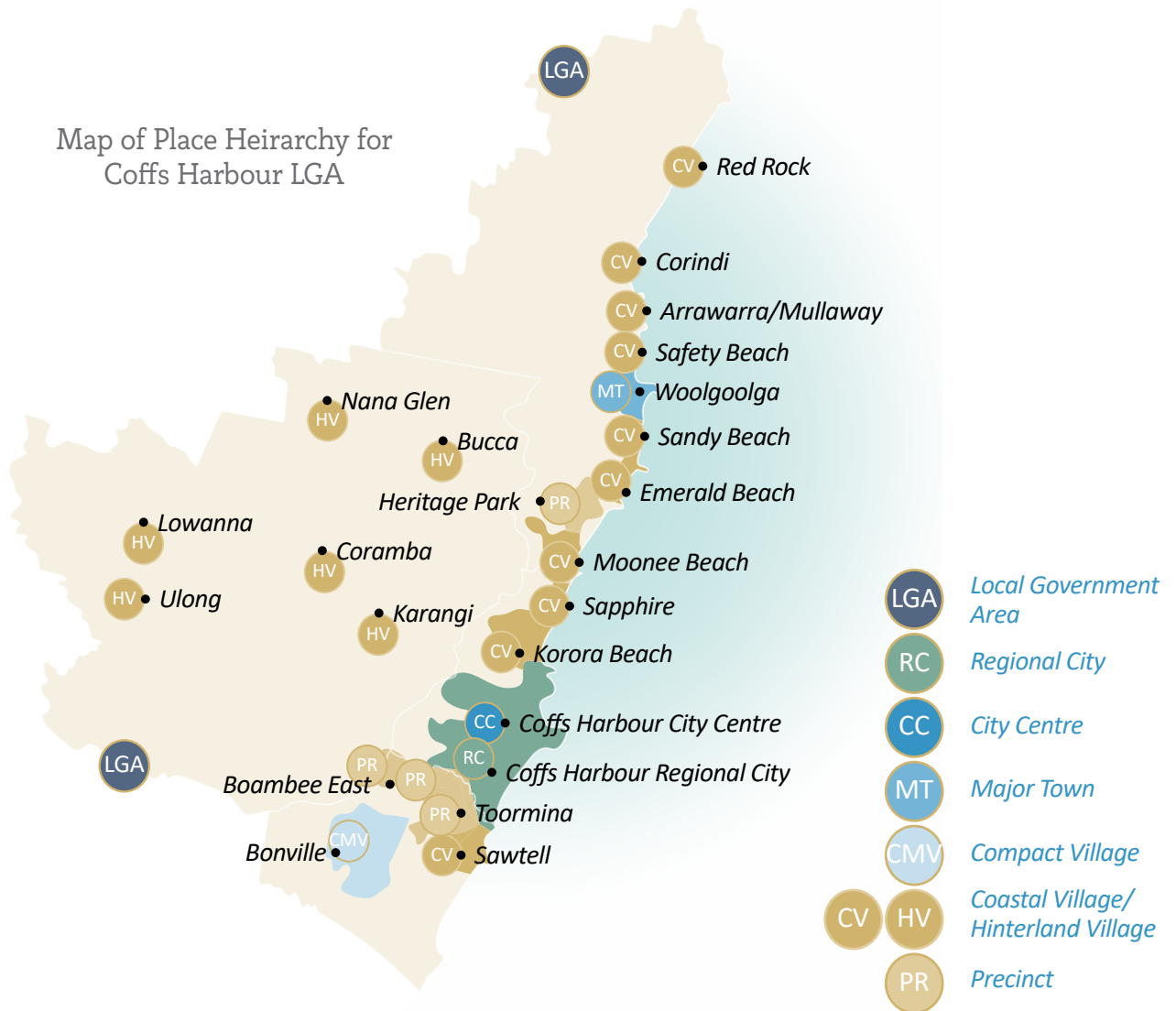
of flooding due to higher projected storm surges, rising tides affecting land further upstream and increased coastal erosion. There is also an increased risk of damage to existing infrastructure, including coastal fringe structures, stormwater infrastructure, sewerage systems and roads.

The effects of such disasters are felt first and most significantly by people with disabilities or other additional support needs, including young children, the elderly or incapacitated. This is an important factor in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

According to the 2021 Census, 30% of our population is aged over 60, and one in six residents are aged 70 or older. Over 5,400 (6.9%) of our residents need help in their day-to-day lives due to age or disability, and one in three people are managing one or more chronic illnesses.

Academic research into disaster resilience and preparedness consistently shows more connected local communities have lesser impacts from natural disasters, and better recovery outcomes. Better connected communities also increase the resilience and recovery outcomes for people with additional support needs during disasters.

Map of Place Hierarchy for Coffs Harbour LGA



## 2. Emergency Management Organisations

*Who does what?*

*Who should I contact in various emergency situations?*

*This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of various emergency service organisations.*

*It also provides an introduction to the Australian Warning System.*

### 2.1 State Emergency Service (SES)

The New South Wales State Emergency Service (NSW SES) is a volunteer-based emergency and rescue service dedicated to assisting communities in emergencies.

The SES is the lead agency for flood, storm and tsunami in NSW. It manages responses to these emergencies and helps communities prepare through planning and education. The Coffs Harbour SES is also the primary responder for road crash rescue in their area.

The SES is almost entirely made up of volunteer members in a range of different roles. You can learn more about **volunteering** with the SES and apply at [www.ses.nsw.gov.au/volunteer](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/volunteer).

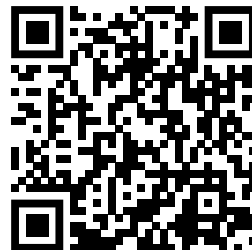
**SES Coffs Harbour Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/NSWSESCoffsHarbourCity](https://www.facebook.com/NSWSESCoffsHarbourCity)

**SES Woolgoolga Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/SESCorindiWoolgoolga](https://www.facebook.com/SESCorindiWoolgoolga)

**For emergency help** due to flood, storm and tsunami, phone NSW SES on 132 500.



*Scan this QR Code to visit the SES Contact Us page.*



**132 500**

For emergency help in flood, storm and tsunami

**000**

In Life-Threatening emergencies call Triple Zero (000)

### When to call the NSW SES

Due to flood or storm is anyone trapped or injured? **YES** Call **Triple Zero (000)**

**NO**

Has a fallen tree blocked access?  
(ie front door/driveway/road)  
**OR**  
Is a tree threatening to fall on your property or driveway?  
**OR**  
Is your property flooded or in danger of flooding?  
**OR**  
Is your roof damaged or leaking?  
**OR**  
Is there damage to your property that you cannot fix yourself?

**NO**

Contact your insurance company or a private contractor to assess and complete the job, or repair it yourself if safe to do so.

**YES**

**Call the NSW SES on 132 500**  
Your request for assistance will be logged by our operations centre who will give you a reference number. Your request will then be forwarded onto the nearest SES unit for action.

NSW SES Volunteers undertake temporary emergency measures to make your home and the situation safe. It is important that you contact either your insurance company or a private contractor to make permanent repairs to damage resulting from a flood or storm or to remove any remaining debris.

The NSW SES experiences many calls during floods and storms. Assisting people in our communities who are overwhelmed by damage and impacts of natural disasters as quickly as possible.

### What to do after logging a call with us:

- What to do after logging a call with us:
- Make sure you keep your phone close by so we can easily contact you about your request for assistance.
  - Stay away from any fallen trees and/or power lines that may have been brought down in the storm.
  - Follow any safety recommendations you are given by the NSW SES.
  - NSW SES attends to request for assistance on a priority based order. A life threatening emergency will always be given immediate priority.
  - If you no longer require emergency assistance, call us on 132 500 quoting your reference number to cancel the request. This helps free up our emergency crews if you no longer need us.

For great tips on how you can get ready this Storm Season, or to find out more information about the NSW SES, head to our website as [www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au)



## 2.2 Rural Fire Service

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is the world's largest volunteer fire service, with over 75,000 members. RFS members attend a range of incidents and activities including:

- Bush and grass fires;
- House and structure fires;
- Storm damage;
- Search and rescue;
- Motor vehicle accidents;
- Community education; and
- Bush fire mitigation.

**Find out about volunteering at:**

[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/volunteer/join-the-nsw-rfs](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/volunteer/join-the-nsw-rfs)

**To report a fire emergency** Call Triple Zero (000).

If you are deaf or have a speech or hearing impairment call 106

### FOR INFORMATION ON FIRES

Check the **Hazards Near Me** web page for current incidents: [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fires-near-me](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fires-near-me)

**Bush Fire Information Line:** [1800 679 737](tel:1800679737)

### Rural Fire Brigades in Coffs Harbour Council area:

Boambee	Nana Glen
Bonville	Orara
Coramba	Red Hill – Coffs Harbour
Corindi Country Club	Sandy Beach
Eastbank	Sherwood Creek Solitary
Karangie	Ulong
Lowanna	Woolgoolga
Moonee	Mid North Coast
Mullaway	Support Brigade



*Scan this QR Code to visit the Bush fire survival plan on the NSW Rural Fire Service website.*

## 2.3 Fire and Rescue NSW

Fire and Rescue NSW are an urban firefighting service and primary response agency for house and structure fires, hazardous materials incidents, building collapse and terrorist consequence management. They are also the key agency in urban search and rescue operations, motor vehicle accident response and other emergencies including storms, floods and bushfires.

The Fire and Rescue Stations in our community are a mixture of Permanent (24hr Shift) Firefighters and Retained (On-Call) Firefighters. They also engage in preventative and preparation work, such as pre-incident planning, installing free smoke alarms during home fire safety checks, and providing education on fire safety and driver safety.

Here are the contact details for your local stations:

### **COFFS HARBOUR FIRE AND RESCUE NSW STATION**

9-11 Market St, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450  
Phone: [\(02\) 6690 6157](tel:0266906157)

### **SAWTELL FIRE AND RESCUE NSW STATION**

140 Sawtell Rd, Toormina NSW 2452  
Phone: [\(02\) 6653 1422](tel:0266531422)

### **WOOLGOOLGA FIRE AND RESCUE NSW STATION**

1867 Solitary Islands Way,  
Woolgoolga NSW 2456  
Phone: [\(02\) 5646 2117](tel:0256462117)

## 2.4 Marine Rescue

Marine Rescue NSW provides a 24-hour emergency response service that supports the boating community and is committed to saving lives on the water. It also assists NSW SES with flood response. The service is provided entirely by volunteers. Find out about volunteering at:

[www.marinerescuensw.com.au/become-a-volunteer](http://www.marinerescuensw.com.au/become-a-volunteer)

### **IN A BOATING EMERGENCY**

Radio Channel 16 on VHF or Channel 88 on 27MHz, or ring Triple Zero (000)

### **COFFS HARBOUR**

#### **MARINE RESCUE UNIT BASE**

Edinburgh Street, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450  
Phone: [\(02\) 6650 4900](tel:0266504900)  
Email: [coffsharbour@marinerescuensw.com.au](mailto:coffsharbour@marinerescuensw.com.au)

### **WOOLGOOLGA**

#### **MARINE RESCUE UNIT BASE**

24 Third Avenue,  
Arrawarra Headland NSW 2456  
Phone: [\(02\) 6654 1785](tel:0266541785)  
Email: [uc.woolgoolga@marinerescuensw.com.au](mailto:uc.woolgoolga@marinerescuensw.com.au)

### **THE MARINERESCUE APP**

The MarineRescue App connects you directly to Marine Rescue NSW so it is easy to log on and provide details of your trip before you go out on the water. It is a great addition to your safety toolkit.



## 2.5 City of Coffs Harbour

Local councils play an important role in the recovery phase of an emergency. Support can include Recovery Centres, waste collection, emergency road repairs, and the restoration/repair of water supply and sewerage infrastructure.

**Telephone enquiries:** [\(02\) 6648 4000](tel:(02)66484000)

**Water & Sewer 24-hour service faults information:**  
[\(02\) 6648 4000](tel:(02)66484000)

**Coffs Coast Waste (bins, rubbish, bulk goods):**  
[1800 265 495](tel:1800265495)

**Email:** [coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au)

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# RESILIENCE & RECOVERY

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### COFFS HARBOUR RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY SERVICE

Subject to available grant funding and whether the City has experienced recent disasters, the City's **Resilience and Recovery service** can be contacted via email on [recovery@chcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:recovery@chcc.nsw.gov.au) or on the website [Resilience and Recovery Service](#)



*Scan this QR Code to  
visit the Resilience and  
Recovery Service*

## 2.6 The Australian Warning System

This national warning system is designed to provide consistent information and calls to action for emergencies like bushfire, flood, storm, cyclone, extreme heat and severe weather.

There are three warning levels. Each warning provides information about an emergency or hazard that is expected or already impacting communities at a specific point in time. The warning system describes the impact and expected consequences for communities and includes advice on what people should do.

### ADVICE (YELLOW)

An incident has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.

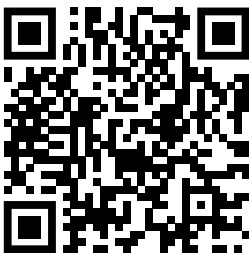
### WATCH AND ACT (ORANGE)

There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect yourself and your family.

### EMERGENCY WARNING (RED)

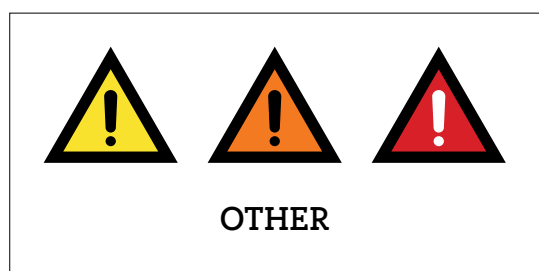
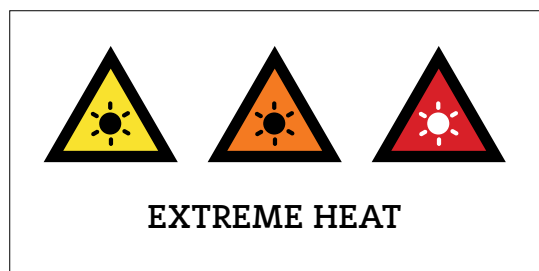
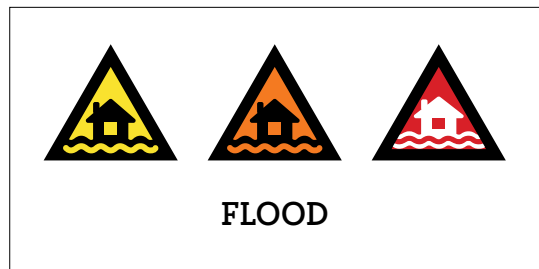
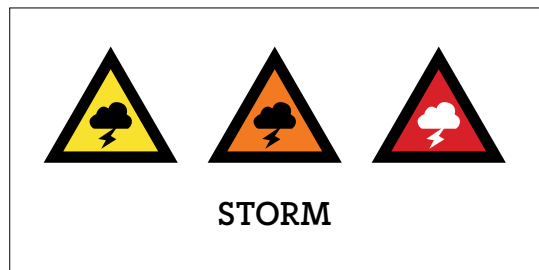
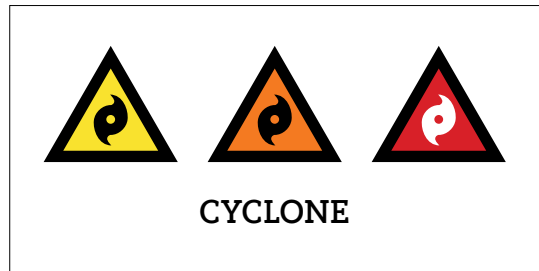
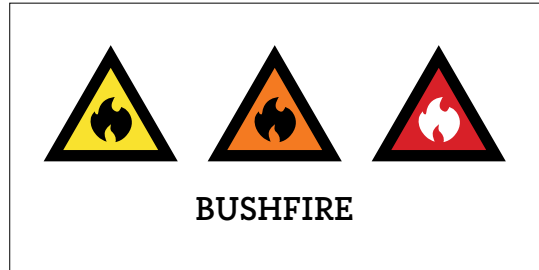
An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

Each warning level has a set of specific action statements according to the nature of the emergency. The System uses a nationally consistent set of icons for each type of threat (refer to the graphic on the right).



For more information:  
[australianwarningsystem.com.au](http://australianwarningsystem.com.au)

Scan this QR Code to visit the website



## 2.7 How are emergency responses coordinated?

Emergency Management in NSW is enabled under the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*. The act outlines which Emergency Service will be responsible for leading the response to certain types of natural disasters (known as the Combat Agency).

*The Combat Agency for bushfires in NSW is the RFS.*

*The Combat Agency for floods, storms and tsunamis is the SES.*

During natural disasters, the Combat Agency works with affected communities, other emergency services, Local and State Government, non-government organisations and occasionally the Federal government to respond and the return the situation to normal as safely and as quickly as possible.

The Combat Agency also advises affected communities of the possible consequences of predicted natural disaster threats and provides safety advice for affected communities. The agency will advise residents on what to do and where to go in the event of an emergency.

If an evacuation is necessary, an **EVACUATION CENTRE** will be established by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). Several other public authorities may be involved in the emergency response and transition to recovery, including but not limited to the City of Coffs Harbour, utility providers, Public Works Authority, Resilience NSW, Transport NSW and other agencies.

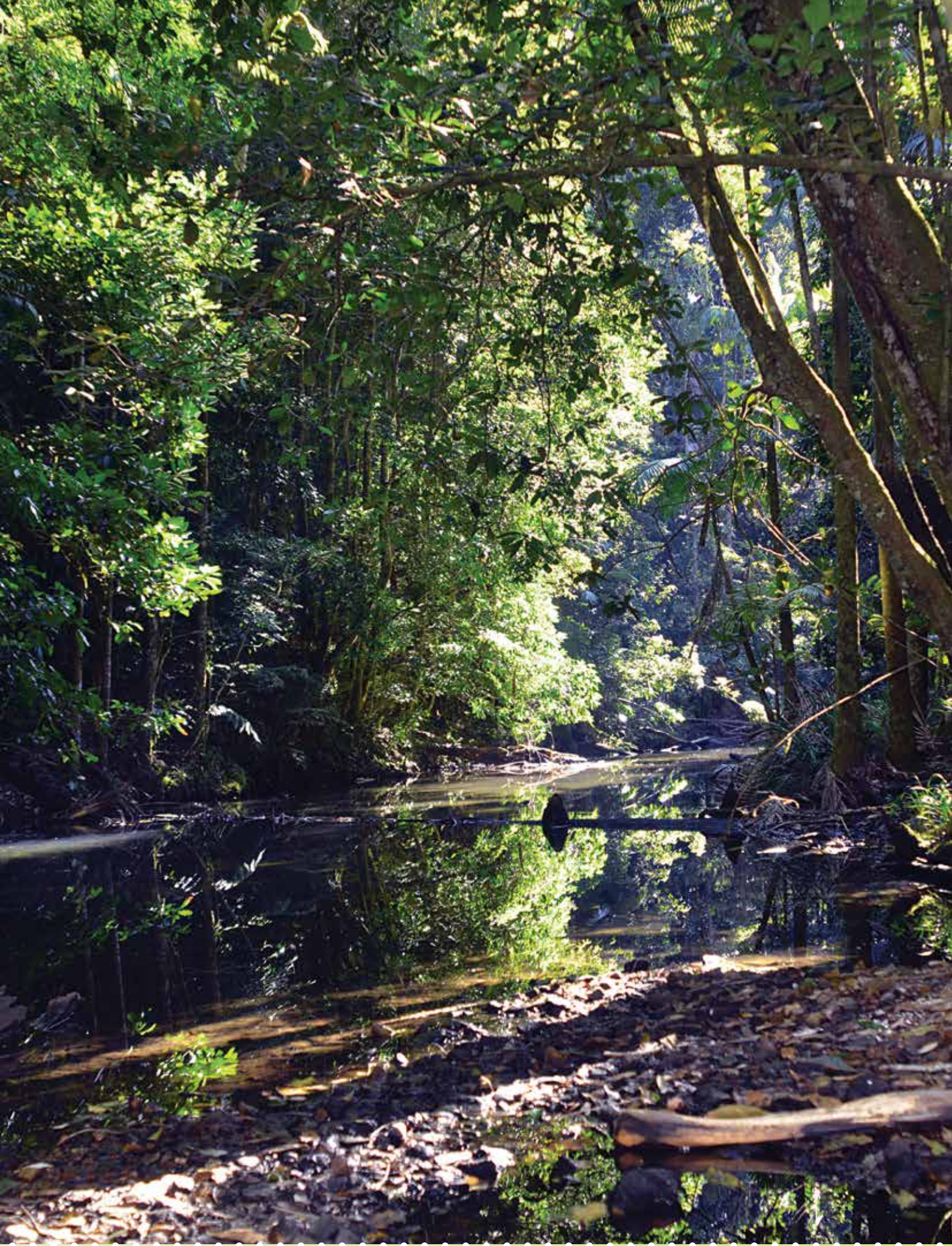
In major natural disasters, an **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE** may be established under the direction of the Local Emergency Operations Controller (LEOCON) to assist the Combat Agency in coordinating the emergency response and the transition to recovery. The LEOCON is a role that is usually held by the most senior Police Officer in that LGA.

Affected communities, groups and individuals also play a critical role in the management of natural disasters. This includes using community networks to pass on information and in mobilising people and resources to assist emergency services in efforts to save lives and protect properties. Communities also provide volunteers for the local emergency services units.

Communities in the City of Coffs Harbour council area have significant exposure to bushfire, floods, storms, heatwaves and tsunamis. In extreme conditions, they may be isolated for many days with restricted or no emergency service assistance. In such circumstances, the first responders may be made up of people in the community, with aerial emergency supplies and medical assistance flown in by helicopter.

Following an emergency, an official **RECOVERY CENTRE** may be established to provide face-to-face support for affected residents. This can include information and access to accommodation advice, lost document replacement, mental health services, local business support, clean-up services, financial assistance, insurance and legal support. A recovery centre is normally staffed by representatives of each level of government, providers of important commercial services (such as insurance and telecommunication), and welfare and community support organisations.





## 2. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS

## 3. My Role: What can I do to better prepare, respond and recover?

### 3.1 Preparing for an Emergency

The information in this section is sourced from the NSW SES, NSW RFS, Australian Red Cross, ABC Emergency and City of Coffs Harbour websites, where more detailed advice and resources are available.

[www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au)

[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare)

[www.abc.net.au/emergency](http://www.abc.net.au/emergency)



Scan this QR Code to visit [www.redcross.org.au/prepare](http://www.redcross.org.au/prepare).

The Red Cross site provides an easy, step-by-step guide to preparing for emergencies that can strike at any time without warning.

In addition to general preparedness information, the SES and RFS sites provide detailed information about preparing for flood, storm, tsunami and bushfire.

The ABC site provides guidance on preparing for a flood, storm or severe weather event, including a checklist of what to do before, during and after a flood.

The key message is:

**Prepare now. Be alert.  
Act early.**

#### PUT TOGETHER AN EMERGENCY KIT

Basic emergency kit contents include:

- Portable radio with spare batteries
- Torch (waterproof) with spare batteries
- First aid kit (with supplies necessary for your household)
- Candles and waterproof matches
- A combination pocket knife
- Woollen blankets
- Rubber gloves
- Emergency contact numbers
- Waterproof bag for valuables

When leaving or evacuating your property, place in your emergency kit:

- Mobile phone and charger
- Power bank
- Cash and credit cards
- Medications and prescriptions
- Toiletries and sanitary supplies
- Food and drinking water
- Identification documents, Medicare card
- Any special requirements for babies, the disabled, infirm and/or elderly
- Important papers and valuables (in a waterproof bag)
- A change of appropriate clothing and footwear

Keep your emergency kit in a waterproof storage container. On a regular basis, check your emergency kit. Remember to check use-by dates (e.g. batteries, first-aid supplies, medications) and replace items if you need to.

## What you'll need in your bushfire survival kit



Source: [www.abc.net.au/emergency/plan-for-emergency-survival-kit/12412048](http://www.abc.net.au/emergency/plan-for-emergency-survival-kit/12412048)

and in your cyclones and severe weather kit...



Source: [www.abc.net.au/emergency/what-you-need-in-your-cyclone-emergency-kit/102612154](http://www.abc.net.au/emergency/what-you-need-in-your-cyclone-emergency-kit/102612154)

**SAVE COPIES OF YOUR IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO A USB STICK / FLASH DRIVE THAT YOU CAN KEEP WITH YOUR EMERGENCY KIT.**

## PREPARE YOUR HOME

A well-prepared home is more likely to survive a bush fire or ember attack. It also helps reduce severe storm damage. Here are some guidelines to prepare your home. The RFS has more detailed advice on preparing your home for a bushfire at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/prepare-your-property](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/prepare-your-property)

- Keep your yard and balcony clean and free of rubbish
- Clean your gutters, downpipes and drains
- Trim trees and branches
- Keep your roof in good condition
- Check your insurance policy
- Listen to your local radio station
- Keep a list of emergency numbers near your phone or on your fridge

### SANDBAGS

In the event of expected flooding, the SES will establish sandbag stations at various locations. As of June 2024, the sandbag point in Coffs is at the Corner of Hogbin Dr and City Hill Dr. Follow your local SES Unit's social media page for up to date location information.



**LOCATION OF  
NEW SES SANDBAG  
FILLING STATION**

## PREPARE YOURSELF AND FAMILY

Preparing for an emergency means considering your physical, mental and emotional preparedness. Bush fires, floods and storms can be extremely frightening, and mentally and physically demanding. Power and water may be cut off. You may be isolated.

To help make better decisions in an emergency, it's good to know, and have practised, a way to manage stress. For example, deep breathing, positive self-talk (e.g. "I can do this"), and helping other people to stay calm.

## MAKE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Making a **bushfire survival plan** means knowing your risk and knowing what to do during a fire. Many households find discussing this over dinner works best as everybody is together and focussed. See [www.myfireplan.com.au](http://www.myfireplan.com.au) or [rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/bush-fire-survival-plan](http://rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/bush-fire-survival-plan).

It is **highly recommended** that you visit this RFS website. It has detailed step-by-step guides on how to prepare your home, how to prepare if you plan to leave early, and how to prepare if you plan to stay and defend your property.

People who are at higher risk, such as children, the elderly or those with disabilities, should always leave early. Leaving early, before you are under threat, is always your safest option.

You should also know your risks and plan what do if there is a **flood, storm or tsunami**. This can save your life and the lives of others. It can also minimise damage to your property and possessions. Get details at [www.sesemergencyplan.com.au](http://www.sesemergencyplan.com.au)

The **Red Cross RediPlan** is a free disaster preparedness guide packed with helpful hints and clever strategies

on how to prepare for disasters and make your emergency plan. It includes templates to record important information (including insurance), utility

providers, medical conditions and medication lists, contact numbers for neighbours and more. It can be downloaded at [www.redcross.org.au/prepare](http://www.redcross.org.au/prepare)

The Red Cross also has a **Get Prepared mobile phone app**, which helps you access information and tools to complete an emergency plan and share it with your support people. It builds on the Red Cross RediPlan.

## LOOK OUT FOR YOUR NEIGHBOURS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Work with your neighbours to identify any hazards on your properties that could increase risk during a bushfire or cause damage in a storm. This may include overhanging trees or items that could blow around and cause damage.

*Share your plan with friends and family to ensure everyone is aware.*

Ensure you have people's contact details stored in multiple formats, in case you need to contact them in an emergency. They may be able to help if you're not home during a disaster event.

## HAVE A PLAN FOR YOUR PETS

People can do risky things in an emergency when they have not planned what to do with their animals. For example, delaying evacuation or entering unsafe environments to retrieve their animals.

To reduce the risks and stress, prepare your pets and small animals before an emergency. For helpful advice, visit: [www.ses.nsw.gov.au/get-ready-animals/get-ready-animals-splash-page/get-ready-animals](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/get-ready-animals/get-ready-animals-splash-page/get-ready-animals)

## TIPS FOR SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

A disability-inclusive planning tool, such as the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) toolkit, may suit your circumstances and is available at [collaborating4inclusion.org/pcep-old](http://collaborating4inclusion.org/pcep-old)

Sometimes people with disability may require additional supports from family, friends, neighbours and carers. Here are some useful tips.

- Identify your own capabilities and any support or assistance you may need
- Identify and speak with relatives, neighbours or friends that can provide help in an emergency
- Identify a support person
- Prepare a P-CEP Plan with your support person and give them a copy of your plan
- Speak with your carer or service provider
- Prepare an emergency kit (see above)

### Consider including these as part of your plan:

- A list of your support persons and their contact details
- Contact numbers for your care provider and doctor
- Instructions on how to turn off your electricity and gas
- A list of what is in your emergency kit and where it is located
- A list of locations for friends, relatives and neighbours that you can go to
- Your evacuation plans if you are required to leave your home
- A list of items that need to be raised if flooding occurs
- A list of dangerous or hazardous items around your house
- Instructions on how care will be provided to your pets
- Information on where to find the latest weather forecast and weather warnings
- A description of any medical issues or disability
- A list of any essential medications or equipment and instructions for their use
- The location of disability related supplies and any special equipment you require

The SES website includes information and advice for people living with hearing, visual, intellectual or mobility impairments and their carers.

[www.ses.nsw.gov.au/about-us/resources](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/about-us/resources)

A variety of SES factsheets are also available in languages other than English.

### THE ASSIST INFIRM, DISABLED AND ELDERLY RESIDENTS PROGRAM (AIDER)

If you have limited ability and support to prepare your property on bush fire prone land, then the NSW RFS may be able to provide assistance via the AIDER Program. This is a free, one-off service for eligible community members.

For more information, contact the AIDER Team by phone on 02 8741 4955, email [aider@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:aider@rfs.nsw.gov.au) or visit [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/aider](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/aider)



## 3.2 Responding During an Emergency

### KEEP INFORMED

REVIEW AND IMPLEMENT YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN

REFRESH YOUR EMERGENCY KIT

FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS FROM EMERGENCY AGENCIES

LOOK OUT FOR OTHERS

### HOW TO KEEP INFORMED

The ABC is the official emergency broadcaster. It will provide essential up to date information, including advice from authorities and available support. Your local ABC radio frequencies are:

- **ABC Coffs Harbour: 92.3 FM**

You can also subscribe to ABC Emergency on Twitter/X or Facebook and to official Police, Fire, SES social media feeds.

While not an official emergency broadcaster, CHY FM (104.1 FM), Triple M (106.3 FM), HIT FM (105.5 FM) and 2HC (100.5 FM) may also have relevant local information.

Here are some other tips to help you keep informed:

- Download the Hazards Near Me smartphone app (you can set up a Watch Zone on the app).
- Save the Bush Fire Information Line (1800 679 737) on your phone.
- Save links to the NSW RFS website and social media pages; Facebook and Twitter/X.
- Search for local community advice on the SES home page.

- Monitor weather conditions and check warnings on the Bureau of Meteorology website.
- Check road closures and conditions that may affect your planned evacuation route:
- Online: [www.livetraffic.com](http://www.livetraffic.com) or via the live traffic app.
- 24-hour hotline: 132 701 — information on traffic incidents such as vehicle accidents, road closures, major roadwork and special events.

## HOW TO HELP KEEP OTHERS INFORMED

*Encourage family, friends and neighbours to get familiar with these tips.*

If you're a social media user, you can share information about local conditions to help inform others. However, if you're going to do this, it is best to follow these three guidelines:

1. Take one or more pictures that help identify the suburb / town / landmark / bridge / road.
2. Create a social media post in your Community Facebook Group of choice.
  - a. Make sure 'sharing' settings are enabled on your post so that others can share your post
3. Describe what's going on:
  - a. Where is the photo (road name / location nickname)?
  - b. What time is it?
  - c. What is happening (water rising fast, road washed away, fire/trees blocking road)

There are dozens of community Facebook pages that are active across the Coffs Harbour LGA that are City-wide or hyper-local. During major emergencies, official warnings and advice from emergency services organisation may be posted into these groups.

### **It is important to always:**

1. Check the time and date of the original post to ensure that this is current and relevant information
2. Assess the information in the context of your own emergency plan; do you need to do anything differently to what you had already planned?

## EVACUATION WARNINGS AND EVACUATION ORDERS

Evacuation Warnings and Evacuation Orders are issued by the NSW SES for floods, storms and tsunamis, and by the NSW RFS for bushfires. The Evacuation Orders are communicated by the lead combat agency, with the assistance of the NSW Police.

There are a few ways you might hear about the need to evacuate, including:

- A doorknock by SES or Police
- ABC Radio Station
- ABC TV station
- Automated telephone and/or text message from the emergency number +61 (0) 444 444 444
- Commercial television
- Community resilience networks
- Local emergency service social media pages
- State-Wide emergency service social media pages
- Other community and commercial radio stations

## Get Ready • Get Connected

### WHEN AN EVACUATION WARNING IS ISSUED

- Check your location has been ordered to evacuate. When an evacuation order is issued, it will have information relating to specific areas, which could be as large as the whole LGA, or as local as a few streets.
- Locate important papers, valuables and mementos. Put them in your emergency kit.
- Listen to your local radio station for information, updates and advice, or check other credible sources, such as relevant authority websites and social media feeds.
- Follow instructions given to you by emergency services.

### WHEN AN EVACUATION ORDER IS ISSUED

The emergency services will provide details of a safe location or locations for people who need to evacuate. Even if a property seems secure, the safest option is always to move away from the affected area. Here are some actions to take before you leave.

- Turn off electricity and gas at the mains and turn off and secure any gas bottles
- Take your emergency kit and follow your emergency plan
- Take your pets with you, including a small amount of food and any medications
- Follow all instructions given to you by emergency services
- Wear appropriate clothing for the conditions, and ensure to have at least one change of clothes

You should leave well before roads and evacuation routes are cut off or closed. If there are floodwaters across your route, take another road or contact emergency services and remember that you will always be safest if you remain on dry land. Listen to ABC Radio broadcasts if you're travelling during a bushfire as there may be important information for your location.

For more advice on how you can prepare to evacuate, what to take and what you can expect visit: [www.nsw.gov.au/prepare-for-a-disaster/be-ready-for-an-emergency-evacuation](http://www.nsw.gov.au/prepare-for-a-disaster/be-ready-for-an-emergency-evacuation)

### EVACUATION CENTRES

Staying with family or friends away from the affected area can be the most comfortable, and safest option when it's possible for you to do so. Evacuation centres may also be established by welfare services in your area. However, these centres have basic facilities and sometimes crowded conditions.

**Their focus is on keeping people safe, rather than comfortable.** People with a disability, the very young and the elderly should consider alternative locations to evacuate to if it is possible and safe to do so.

*If you do attend an evacuation centre, you will be asked to register as being safe with an appropriate government or NGO partner.*

The help available at an evacuation centre may include:

- Access to Temporary accommodation
- Financial help
- Personal support (mental health)
- Help with obtaining identity documents
- Refreshments and meals
- Clothing and personal needs
- Help in contacting family and friends
- Access to medical support and medication



## WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN AN EVACUATION ORDER AND AN ALL CLEAR!

When you need to evacuate, the relevant authorities (e.g. Police, SES, RFS) will issue an Evacuation Order advising people of what to do and where to go. When it is safe for people to return to properties in the affected area, the relevant authorities will issue an 'All Clear' or a 'safe to return' message.

It is important that you wait for the 'All Clear' message before returning to a property to assess the damage and begin the clean-up. There are essential safety assessments that must be made by agencies before it is safe to return to affected areas. This includes assessments by the NSW SES, NSW Department of Public Works, FRNSW, Department of Housing, the local council, electricity and gas suppliers, and other organisations.

## RETURNING TO YOUR PROPERTY

The SES, ABC Emergency and Red Cross websites provide guidance on safely returning to your property and starting the clean-up and repair process after an evacuation.

[www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au)

[www.abc.net.au/emergency/plan-for-emergency-flood/12412050#after](http://www.abc.net.au/emergency/plan-for-emergency-flood/12412050#after)

[www.redcross.org.au/emergencies/coping-after-a-crisis/returning-home-and-coping-after-a-crisis](http://www.redcross.org.au/emergencies/coping-after-a-crisis/returning-home-and-coping-after-a-crisis)

Some of the key points are:

- Check your property's structural stability before entering. Be wary of hazardous materials or wildlife that may have taken refuge in houses and sheds.
- Make sure electrical and gas appliances that have been exposed to floodwater are inspected for safety before use.
- Wear suitable protective clothing, including boots and gloves, when cleaning up.

- Be aware of any slip, trip or fall hazards.
- Only eat food that has remained out of flood waters and only use clean utensils and personal items.
- Be aware that food gardens that have come into contact with floodwater may be contaminated by human and animal sewage waste.
- Have a supply of fresh drinking water. Never drink from taps, garden hoses or any water supply that may have been exposed to floodwater.
- Take lots of photos of damage for insurance claims.
- Let your family and friends know where you are.
- If your property has been damaged or destroyed by fire, do not enter the structure without an official assessment or advice from relevant authorities regarding risks such as smouldering or structural damage.

If you become separated from loved ones during an emergency, Red Cross manages **Register.Find.Reunite**, a national registration and enquiry service. The service is activated during major natural disasters. People can register at [redcross.org.au](http://redcross.org.au) or in person at an evacuation or relief centre.

If you evacuate from your home but have somewhere else to stay, it is still important that you register and provide details about where you are staying. This gives a clearer picture of the full impact of the event and allows you to be contacted if necessary.

## Get Ready • Get Connected

### NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES

A Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) is designed as **A PLACE OF LAST RESORT IN BUSH FIRE EMERGENCIES ONLY**. They can be used when you can't safely use any of the options in your bush fire survival plan.

Please note that travelling to or sheltering at a NSP does not guarantee your safety and there may be heavy smoke and poor visibility. The conditions at the NSP may be uncomfortable and you may be affected by heat, smoke and embers. Water, toilets and food may not be available at the NSP and emergency service personnel may not be present. Neighbourhood Safer Places are not intended for pets and livestock. If you use a NSP, bring as much water as possible, pure woollen blankets, rakes, fire blankets, masks and protective clothing; you have to defend the NSP location if fire reaches it.

For more information visit: Coffs Harbour LGA Neighbourhood Safer Places - NSW Rural Fire Service  
[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/neighbourhood-safer-places/lists/coffs-harbour-lga](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/neighbourhood-safer-places/lists/coffs-harbour-lga)

Locally, the designated neighbourhood safer places (as of June 2024) are:

Title	Type	Location	LGA
Amble Inn - Corindi Tavern	Building	Tasman Street, Corindi Beach	Coffs Harbour
Arrawarra Beach	Open Space	Arrawarra Road, Arrawarra Beach	Coffs Harbour
Ayrshire Park Reserve	Open Space	Ayrshire Park Drive, Boambee	Coffs Harbour
Bonville Hall	Building	6 East Bonville Road, Bonville	Coffs Harbour
Centennial Reserve	Open Space	Fawcett Street, Woolgoolga	Coffs Harbour
Coramba Sports Field	Open Space	Coramba Road, Coramba	Coffs Harbour
Eastern Dorrigo Community Hall	Building	13 Pine Avenue, Ulong	Coffs Harbour
Karangie RFS Shed	Building	Mastons Road, Karangie	Coffs Harbour
Korora Football Field	Open Space	Herman Reick Avenue, Korora	Coffs Harbour
Lowanna Community Hall	Building	33 Grafton Street, Lowanna	Coffs Harbour
Moonee Beach Shopping Centre	Open Space	Moonee Beach Road, Moonee Beach	Coffs Harbour
Nana Glen Memorial Hall	Building	26 Grafton Street, Nana Glen	Coffs Harbour
Red Rock Recreation Reserve	Open Space	Cnr of Red Rock Rd & Lawson St, Red Rock	Coffs Harbour
Sandy Beach Reserve	Open Space	Sandy Beach Drive, Sandy Beach	Coffs Harbour
Upper Orara Recreational Reserve	Open Space	Dairyville Road, Upper Orara	Coffs Harbour
Upper Orara Community Hall	Building	Cnr Dairyville Road and Upper Orara Road, Upper Orara	Coffs Harbour
Woolgoolga Beach Park	Open Space	Corner Ocean Street and Pollack Esplanade, Woolgoolga	Coffs Harbour
Woolgoolga Golf Club	Building	Safety Beach Drive, Safety Beach	Coffs Harbour

## WHAT ABOUT A TSUNAMI?

There have been more than 50 recorded incidents of tsunamis affecting the Australian coastline since European settlement. Tsunamis in Australia are usually only dangerous to swimmers and boaters as they result in dangerous rips and currents, rather than land inundation. However, climate change modelling by insurance companies places tsunamis as the highest catastrophe risk facing Coffs Harbour, even if the probability is low.

*Australia has a world-class tsunami warning system providing 24/7 monitoring, detection and warning services for Australian community.*

### AUSTRALIA'S VULNERABILITY TO TSUNAMIS

Australia is surrounded to the northwest and east by some 8,000 kilometres of active tectonic plate boundaries capable of generating tsunamis, which could reach our coastline within two to four hours. One-third of earthquakes worldwide occur along these boundaries. The impact of a tsunami hitting vulnerable, low-lying areas on the Australian coast could be significant.

### WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS OF A TSUNAMI?

For most people, advice from the media (on radio or television) or from police and other emergency services is the first warning of a tsunami. Follow their instructions immediately.

There are also natural signs of a tsunami that you may sometimes experience when you are near the coast. Take action if you notice any of these three warning signs:

- A shaking of the ground in coastal regions may reflect the occurrence of a large undersea earthquake nearby that may generate a tsunami.

- As a tsunami approaches shorelines, the sea may, but will not always, withdraw from the beach (like a very low and fast tide) before returning as a fast-moving tsunami.
- A roaring sound may precede the arrival of a tsunami.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU NOTICE THE WARNING SIGNS OR HEAR A WARNING FROM EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Listen to your local radio station for information, warnings and advice.
- If you are at the beach, immediately move inland or to higher ground.
- Aim to move to higher ground that is at least ten metres above sea level or one kilometre away from the coast and rivers.
- If your boat is in deep water and offshore, maintain your position.
- If your boat is berthed or in shallow water, secure your vessel and move inland or to higher ground.
- If you are on the coast and cannot move inland, seek shelter in the upper levels of a stable building.
- Only return to the coast after you receive official clearance.
- Continue to follow emergency services instructions.

### MORE INFORMATION ON TSUNAMIS

The SES tsunami website includes maps of the areas where people would have to move to higher ground in the event of a land-threat tsunami.

[www.ses.nsw.gov.au/disaster-tabs-header/tsunami](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/disaster-tabs-header/tsunami)

The Bureau of Meteorology has answers to frequently asked questions at [www.bom.gov.au/tsunami/info/index.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/tsunami/info/index.shtml)

## 3.3 Recovering After an Emergency

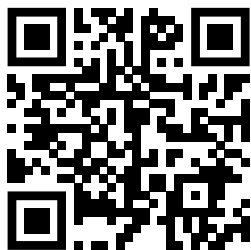
The information in this section is sourced from the following websites, where more detailed advice and guidance is available.



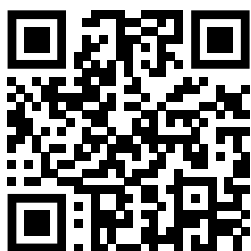
[www.ses.nsw.gov.au/  
next-steps-toward-  
recovery](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/next-steps-toward-recovery)



[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/  
plan-and-prepare](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare)



[www.redcross.org.au/  
emergencies](http://www.redcross.org.au/emergencies)



[www.abc.net.au/  
emergency](http://www.abc.net.au/emergency)



[disaster.coffsharbour.nsw.  
gov.au/dashboard/  
overview](http://disaster.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/dashboard/overview)

### DISASTER RECOVERY CENTRES

Disaster Recovery Centres may be established following some disasters. There is support for your immediate needs as well as information and advice about programs that are available from the government, charities and local support services. It is also a place where affected people can share their concerns with people who understand what they are going through.

Recovery centre staff can help you start relevant application processes and answer questions about your circumstances. There is support for individuals, businesses, farmers and landholders. Ongoing help is also available over the phone.

Agencies and services at a recovery centre may include the local council, small businesses, Red Cross, NSW Health, Legal Aid, Fair Trading, Salvation Army, chaplains and insurers. **Depending on the nature of the event, one of the greatest challenges in the recovery phase can be finding suitable housing for those whose homes have been damaged or destroyed — as well as temporary accommodation for volunteers and workers who come to assist in recovery efforts.** In such cases, the generosity of community members can help support the efforts of government agencies and welfare organisations.

You can find out more about the range of assistance available after an emergency event from:

**Disaster Welfare Services:** [1800 018 444](tel:1800018444)

**Disaster Assistance Finder:**  
[disasterassistance.service.nsw.gov.au](http://disasterassistance.service.nsw.gov.au)

### RECOVERY AND COPING AFTER A CRISIS

There are multiple government and non-government support services that specialise in post-disaster recovery for impacted communities. Mental health is a primary focus due to the significant traumas that people experience during a disaster.

People are affected in different ways. You may need mental health support in the days after a disaster, or find yourself needing support months or years later.

*Remember that there is help available, and it is OK to seek support.*

The Red Cross has a large range of resources which may help you — or help you support others — through a difficult time. Resources include:

- **Looking after yourself:** What you or others might experience after a crisis, and how to manage it.
- **Returning home and coping after a crisis:** Practical tips to help you cope and clean up following a fire, flood or other disaster.
- **Maintaining wellbeing in the face of long-term stress:** Simple things you can do to look after yourself and others.
- **Resources for parents and caregivers,** to support children and young people after a crisis — including activities, videos and story books.
- **Resources for teachers and schools** as they support their students, including lesson plans.
- **Information for agencies and community groups** looking to support their local community following a crisis.

Go to [www.redcross.org.au/emergencies/coping-after-a-crisis](http://www.redcross.org.au/emergencies/coping-after-a-crisis)



Get Ready • Get Connected

MY HOUSEHOLD'S

# Community Directory

[www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au](http://www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au)



*Scan this QR Code to open  
online Community Directory tool.*

# The Community Directory is a templated section for you to fill out with local information specific to you and your household.

Connect with your neighbours or existing community volunteer groups and help populate the following sections with relevant community information for each heading. Is something missing? Let's add it!

The City of Coffs Harbour Resilience and Recovery Service will work with each community to develop their tailored, local resilience and community connections guide.

## 4.1 Community Group Directory

As contact details for community groups can change, it's also good to connect with your neighbours, people at the local café, or online to learn more.

*A City of Coffs Harbour Service*

**RESILIENCE & RECOVERY**

*Get Ready • Get Connected*

### LOCAL EMERGENCY SERVICES UNITS

**IF YOU ARE IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000.**

Local RFS (Rural Fire Service):

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State Emergency Service (SES):

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Australian Red Cross:

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FRNSW (Fire and Rescue NSW):

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Surf Life Saving Club:

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Local Police Station:

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SCHOOL, PRE-SCHOOL AND PLAYGROUPS

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*Notes*

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A City of Coffs Harbour Service

# RESILIENCE & RECOVERY

Powered by the



Can you help?

We need your help to keep  
this guide up to date.

If you have any updates for your  
community groups and facilities,  
please scan this QR code and  
let us know.



THIS IS VERSION 1.1  
SEPTEMBER 2024