LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Local Recovery and Resilience Plan

Tropical Cyclone Alfred Severe Weather Event, March 2025

LDMG Stand Up 3 March 2025 | Recovery Stand Up 11 March 2025

Plan Approved by: Dan McPherson, Local Recovery Coordinator on 22 March 2025

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Lockyer Valley Regional Council

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Plan approved by Local Recovery Coordinator Dan McPherson 22 May 2025

Recovery Narrative

About our Community

Situated one hour west of Brisbane, and straddling the Warrego Highway, the Lockyer Valley region has an estimated population of 45,054 (30 June 2024)[1] living in 14,142 dwellings (2021)[2]. The region covers an area of approximately 2,200 sq kms that combines some of the most fertile agricultural land and an ideal growing climate. This has led to the region being in the position of one of the leading agricultural production zones in Australia, producing 35% of Queensland's vegetable supply. This is reflected in the top five industry subdivisions of employment for Lockyer Valley (R) LGA are:

1. Agriculture (12.2%)
2. Preschool and School Education (6.1%)
3. Construction Services (5.6%)
4. Food and Beverage Services (4.8%)
5. Road Transport (4.1%)[3]

Compared to the greater South-East Queensland area the Lockyer Valley region has a relative disadvantage. SEIFA Index Lockyer Valley Regional Council area is 948 (2021); SEIFA Index for South-East Queensland of 1010.7.[4]

About the Event

In anticipation of the potential impact from Tropical Cyclone Alfred, The Lockyer Valley Local Disaster Management Group moved to the Alert level of activation on 3 March 2025. On 5 March, with indications of impact to our region the following day, the move was made to Stand Up, with staffing of the Local Disaster Coordination Centre on a 24-hour basis. Evacuation Centres, managed and staffed by Council, were opened at Gatton Shire Hall and Laidley State High School on Friday 7 March. Residents took advantage of 13,800 sandbags and 735 tonnes of sand made available at 5 key sites across the region

The weather system began to pose a significant threat to the region on the evening of Sunday 10 March. An Emergency Alert was issued for people in the Laidley area with a further Alert issued to the entire region as rainfall escalated. Highest rainfall totals included 438mm at Mount Castle, 364mm at Thornton and an unofficial report of 515mm at Lefthand Branch.

The main arterial through the region, the Warrego Highway, was closed at 0940hours on Monday 10 March. Further escalation of the event saw significant increases at the Sandy Creek gauge near the township of Grantham, leading to the activation of the Grantham Siren to warn those in low lying areas to seek higher ground.

Tuesday 11 March saw the Warrego Highway reopen and evacuation centres closed. A recovery hub was established on Monday 17 March 2025 at the Laidley Recreation Grounds, followed by a pop-up hub some days later at the Lockyer Community Centre. Due to demand, the Gatton Hub was relocated to the Gatton RSL building on Saturday 29 March. The Laidley and the Gatton Recovery Hubs closed on Friday, 11 April 2025.

Key Event Dates			
3 March 2025 LDMG/LDCC Alert	5 March 2025 LDMG/LDCC Stand Up	11 March 2025 LDCC Stand Down	11 March 2025 LRG Stand Up

Summary of key impacts

Most damage to infrastructure was in the eastern half of the region with pockets in other zones. Multiple dwellings, private property and public infrastructure have been impacted in various ways, as well as services including internet and electricity.

- 144 roads and 17 bridges were affected by flood waters.
- 23 homes were damaged (17 minor damage, 6 moderate damage)
- 22 businesses sustained damage in the areas of Laidley (18), Grantham (3) and Glenore Grove (1)
- 181 tonnes of flood affected waste collected from footpath cleanup in affected areas
- 88 tonnes of commercial flood affected waste
- 70 tonnes of general flood waste
- 22 persons registered at evacuation centres in Laidley and Gatton

Local Human & Social support agencies report that some sectors of the community face significant financial and wellbeing impacts due to an inability to replace spoiled food (from power outages), not having any financial buffer to draw from, and in numerous cases, missed days at work in casual employment so no further income. There are more people impacted because of ongoing cost of living and housing affordability pressures and especially impacts on lower socio-economic sectors of the community. There were significant impacts on PALM Scheme Workers and other seasonal workers in the agricultural and related industries.

Local Recovery Group

Established: 11 March, 2025
Local Recovery Committee Chair: Cr Julie Reck
Local Recovery Coordinator: Dan McPherson, Group Manager People, Customer and Corporate Services

Plan Approvals

LDMG Meeting: 12 June, 2025.
Council Meeting: 18 June, 2025.

[1] (Queensland Regional Profiles: Resident Profile: Lockyer Valley (R) LGA (ASGS 2021)
[2] (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury, Queensland Regional Profiles: Resident Profile for Lockyer Valley (R) Local Government Area).
[3] (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury, Queensland Regional Profiles: Resident Profile for Lockyer Valley (R) Local Government Area).
[4] The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) index, measures relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage and provides valuable insight into the community's well-being.

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Key stakeholders

Lockyer Valley Regional Council	Lockyer Valley community members and businesses	Department of Housing	Lifeline Darling Downs
Laidley Community Centre	Lockyer Community Centre	St Vincent de Paul	Kambu Health
Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA)	Qld Government Community Recovery Unit (DLGWV)	Toowoomba and Southwest Housing Service Centre	Rural Financial Counselling Queensland
Salvation Army Gatton	West Moreton Hospital and Health Service	Ipswich Housing Service Centre	ADRA Lockyer Food Pantry
Resilient Rivers SEQ	Healthy Land and Water	West Moreton Health	Biosecurity QLD
SEQ Water			

Damage and Impacts

Human and Social

- Cumulative psychological impacts on the community, businesses and agricultural industry, because of drought, bushfires, COVID-19, and flood events in 2010/11, 2013, 2017, February and May 2022, and January 2024.
- Financial and psychological impacts on community as homes and business inundated, material losses sustained and isolated communities face disruptions in the ability to access essential services.
- Extensive business closures and road closures (including Warrego Highway) caused a loss of work and income far greater than the eventual impact of the cyclone and associated flooding.
- Impacted resilience for some residents and businesses that sustained damage during repeated disaster events, especially where they have little capacity to relocate from vulnerable locations.
- Sustained rainfall, personal experiences of flooding, emergency warnings, strong and prolonged media attention in relation to cyclone including and social commentary caused ‘trigger’ responses for people who have been traumatised by previous disasters, even when not directly impacted in this event.
- Evacuation Centres were established at Gatton Shire Hall (13) and Laidley State High School (9) during the event. Additional Places of Shelter were opened at Forest Hill (2) and Grantham (0).
    - Additional psychological impact from this event resulting from people already in distress because of cost of living and housing pressures.

Economic

- Damage to business premises, trading stock and assets due to inundation. 26 Businesses Inundated.
- Damage to crops, cropping land, farm infrastructure and farm equipment due to inundation. Substantial area of farming land inundated.
- Financial loss due to business closures, road closures and an inability to access essential services.
- Psychological impacts associated with the event and the potential exacerbation due to repeated disaster events.

Environment

- Minimal impact to riparian areas observed in the region, with localised erosion recorded in Laidley creek, particularly in upper catchment areas. Other areas minor flooding only
- No observed increase in domestic animal related issues in response to flooding
- Several instances of aquatic weed dispersal in Glenore Grove
- No increase in mosquito related issues reported in period immediately after flood event
- No increase in environmental health related issues reported in connection with flood event
- Water quality monitoring at sites did not detect major increase in sediment loads in waterways

Building

- Water ingress affecting operational buildings, community halls, and public amenities.
- Internal damage to flooring, cabinetry, walls, and fixtures in several facilities.
- Electrical isolations required at multiple sites to ensure safety until power can be safely restored.
- Contamination risks from silt, debris, and mould in inundated buildings.
- Extensive cleaning and decontamination required before facilities can safely reopen.
- Temporary closure of affected facilities disrupting community access and service operations.

Roads and Transport

- Significant impact to road and drainage infrastructure mainly within the eastern portion of the region i.e. Thornton, Mulgowie, Glenore Grove and Brightview areas with isolated damage to floodways/creek crossings and unsealed roads.
- Significant collection of debris on bridges and siltation of culverts, pipes and table drains.
- Damage to the sealed road network is yet to be quantified.

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Recovery and Resilience Objectives and Measure of Success

Sub-Group	Lead (Name)
Human and Social	Neil Williamson
Economic	Helen McCraw
Environment	Chris Hoffmann
Building	Nicholas Jenkins
Roads and Transport	John Keen

Proposed Time Frames	
Short Term	By 30 April, 2025
Medium Term	By 30 September, 2025
Long Term	By March, 2027

Sub-Group	Objectives	Tasks
Human and Social	2	12
Economic	1	6
Environment	1	5
Building	1	11
Roads and Transport	1	4
TOTAL	6	38

Recovery and Resilience Themes

1. **Response: ensure community safety**
2. **Rebuilding: bring the community forward to a new normal**
3. **Restoration: working together to repair and re-establish community linkages across the lines of recovery**
4. **Resilience: embed the principle in all activities to mitigate, improve and build disaster risk reduction for the community.**

Human and Social

Objective 1. Define the scope of Human and Social impacts and ensure appropriate services are available to impacted community members.

Task #	Tasks (Short Term)	Timeframe	Measure of success
1	Community impact assessments undertaken	By 30 March 2025	Community impacts are identified and understood.
2	Coordinate efforts to allow access to psychological support services, financial support services, essential services	By 7 April 2025	Coordinated efforts to ensure community members have access to psychological support services, financial support services, essential services.
3	Community clean ups coordinated / facilitated.	By 30 March 2025	Community clean ups completed and returned home when safe to do so.
4	Coordinate access to emergency or temporary accommodation.	By 21 March 2025	Community returned to homes, normal routines, including returning to work and children to education.

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Task #	Tasks (Short Term)	Timeframe	Measure of success
5	Review available financial support for recovery-focused support agencies to ensure it is adequate and appropriate to meet identified needs, and is promoted to those non-profits, and/or lobby for increased resources where needed.	By 21 April 2025	Community members and support agencies report good awareness of and low wait times for support services
6	Recovery plans established and reviewed as required.	Est by 14 April Reviewed end of each month	Holistic community-led recovery and resilience-building initiatives implemented and evaluated.
7	Communicate Recovery strategies and/or support options.	By 21 March and ongoing	Recovery strategies are coordinated, communicated, and understood.

Objective 2. Improve community preparedness for and resilience to future natural disasters.

Task #	Tasks (Medium term)	Timeframe	Measure of success
1	Community education programs to create a greater understanding of natural hazards and man-made disasters	By 30 September 2025	Community has a greater understanding of natural hazards and man-made disasters that could impact them and their communities and have taken steps to build their own resilience to protect against future harm.
2	Continue with BAU community-led recovery and resilience-building initiatives.	Ongoing	Number of initiatives; with key measure at future events by how well the community prepares and reduces impacts
Task #	**Long term**	**Timeframe**	**Measure of success**
3	Address the issue of vulnerable people remaining in high-risk locations to natural disasters including advocacy for extension of home buy back and resilient homes fund programs for identified high risk locations. This includes those with low incomes and insecure accommodation that live in temporary arrangements more vulnerable to flooding.	30 March 2027	Measure of the number of dwellings removed from or made more disaster resilient in identified high-risk locations. The reduction in the number of temporary accommodations in vulnerable situations
	Resilience priorities identified in the LRAP		
4	Improving BAU funding to Laidley and Lockyer Community Centres to better manage the increase demand on their services during disaster recovery and longer term as vulnerable families require increased ongoing support.		A substantial increase in resourcing and funding from both State and Federal Governments including additional ‘emergency relief’ funding immediately following events for families struggling to catch back up.
5	Address the issue of vulnerable people remaining in high-risk locations to natural disasters including advocacy for extension of home buy back and resilient homes fund programs for identified high risk locations. This includes those with low incomes and insecure accommodation that live in temporary arrangements more vulnerable to flooding.	30 March 2027	Measure of the number of dwellings removed from or made more disaster resilient in identified high-risk locations. The reduction in the number of temporary accommodations in vulnerable situations.

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Economic

Objective 3. Define the scope of Economic impacts and ensure appropriate services are available to impacted businesses and farmers.

Task #	Short term	Timeframe	Measure of success
1	Identify economic impacts and undertake economic assessment.	By 30 March	Impacts have been identified and economic assessments completed, referrals made to state and local agencies.
2	Reopening of businesses and clean-up of public main street areas.	By 30 March	Mud and debris removed from public areas. Business premises cleaned and businesses reopened.
Task #	**Medium term**	**Timeframe**	**Measure of success**
3	Financial assistance is made available to impacted business owners and farmers.	By 30 April	Farmers and small businesses are able to access financial support without the burden of overcomplicated application processes.
4	Business support services, including services for mental health are available to affected business owners and farmers.	By 30 April	Business owners and farmers can easily access business support services including support to alleviate stress and mental health.
5	Identify options to negate the perception that the region is not open for business.	By 30 June	Open for business included in messaging and marketing. Awareness campaign implemented and visitation and tourism numbers returned or increased.
Task #	**Long term**	**Timeframe**	**Measure of success**
6	Business Resilience and disaster preparedness planning is undertaken and updated.	Ongoing	Messaging to businesses and farmers reinforces the importance of resilience measures and disaster preparedness to minimise future negative impacts and losses.

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Environment

Objective 4. Define the scope of environmental impacts in the region and ensure adequate responses are provided in impacted areas

Task #	Short term	Timeframe	Measure of success
1	Monitoring of mosquitoes at public access priority sites, particularly for JE virus and mosquito species of concern, in conjunction with Qld Health	2- 4 weeks	Monitoring completed; results passed on to Qld Health
2	Monitoring of riparian areas for erosion and sediment loss issues	4 – 6 weeks	Priority sites identified
3	Monitoring of pest and weed outbreaks, particularly fire ants, aquatic weeds	4 weeks	New infestations detected; community awareness raised
Task #	**Medium term**	**Timeframe**	**Measure of success**
4	Monitoring of riparian areas and flood plains for erosion, pests and weeds	2- 6 months	New issues identified and reported
Task #	**Long term**	**Timeframe**	**Measure of success**
5	Develop management plans for pest, weed species and erosion control	6 – 12 months	Management plans develop and adopted by landholders

Building

Objective 5. Safely assess and restore flood affected buildings and services, support community recovery and strengthen future resilience through improved asset and planning practices.

Task #	Short term	Timeframe	Measure of success
1	Complete site assessments of flood-affected buildings.	By end of Week 1	All impacted properties assessed and prioritised for follow-up actions.
2	Coordinate make-safe works including electrical isolations, hazard removal, and fencing.	By end of Week 1	Hazards controlled and buildings stabilised where possible.
3	Organise building cleaning and decontamination works for public buildings and guidance for private properties.	By end of Week 2	Public buildings cleaned; community receives information/support for safe cleanup.
4	Engage qualified trades to inspect and restore safe use of essential services.	By end of Week 2	Power, gas, water made safe or reinstated with certifications.
5	Coordinate insurance and building inspection reports for affected Council assets.	By end of Week 3	All Council assets documented and lodged with insurers.

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Task #	Medium term	Timeframe	Measure of success
6	Facilitate repair and reconstruction works on impacted public buildings.	Commenced by end of Week 4	Repairs underway or completed for all priority public assets.
7	Support residents and businesses in navigating the building certification and repair process.	On going	Community reports improved access to recovery information and support.
8	Ensure coordination with waste and environment teams for safe debris disposal.	On going	Debris managed in compliance with regulations.
Task #	**Long term**	**Timeframe**	**Measure of success**
9	Identify and prioritise building assets for improved flood resilience.	On going	Resilience upgrades scoped and funded where possible.
10	Update maintenance and asset management plans based on learnings.	On going	Asset plans reflect lessons learned and updated risk profiles.
11	Collaborate to review zoning/design provisions for high-risk locations.	On going	Recommendations provided for planning and development improvements.

Roads and Transport

Objective 6. Return road network to pre-event condition while identifying opportunities for more resilient infrastructure.

Task #	Short term	Timeframe	Measure of success
1	Re-establish access to residents	1 month	All residents can access their properties.
Task #	**Medium term**	**Timeframe**	**Measure of success**
2	Emergent works, make the road network safe.	3 months	Safe network for motorists.
3	Remove flood debris and silt	3 months to 2 years	Drainage systems working effectively.
Task #	**Long term**	**Timeframe**	**Measure of success**
4	Restore assets to pre-damaged state	3 months to 2 years.	Assets restored to pre-event standard and opportunities for improved resilience identified.

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