

## DRAFT CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR GOODOOGA EVACUATION

### SITUATION

As a result of recent flooding in Queensland, flood waters are beginning to extend into North Western New South Wales. There are flood warnings current for a number of areas, including on the Culgoa, Bokhara, Birrie and Narran Rivers.

On the Bokhara River near Goodooga ( eastern side ), a predicted peak of 4.3 metres is expected to occur around the 20 March 2010 causing major flooding. On the Birrie River near Goodooga ( western side ), a predicted peak of 5 metres is expected around the 20 March 2010 also causing major flooding. Although the peaks on some of these rivers are not predicted until the 20 March 2010, it is anticipated by the State Emergency Service that the township itself will be isolated due to the flood waters around the morning of Friday 19 March 2010. This isolation will result in the loss of some normal community functionality with the loss of services normally available through the township of Lightning Ridge.

Although the township will be isolated, it is not anticipated that the flood waters will inundate the town itself due to their being sufficient levee protection and higher ground within the town.

A Flood Evacuation Order has been issued by the State Emergency Service for the Goodooga Reserve area ( 20 people ) which is situated on the Bokhara River ( eastern side ). This evacuation order has been personally delivered by Indigenous Liaison Officers and community representatives.

The State Emergency Service is the combat agency for this event and is being supported by numerous agencies as well as the Local Emergency Operations Controllers and District Emergency Management Officer. A Local Emergency Operations Centre opened in Brewarrina on Wednesday 17 March 2010 in support of the State Emergency Service.

### IMPACT

The following strategies are based on information known as of **1400 hrs on Thursday 18 March 2010**:

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### PEOPLE

The population of Goodooga is around 300 - 400 persons with approximately 80% of the population identifying as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (2006 Census data).

It is assumed that the major impact on the community will be isolation for a period of up to 6 weeks however this may be extended.

Community consultation visits have initially been undertaken by NSW State Emergency Service Indigenous liaison resources and will be further co-ordinated by local authorities. These visits commenced on 15 March 2010 and included representatives from Community Services NSW, Centrelink and a representative of the State Emergency Recovery Controller to outline the assistance available to affected persons.

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## PROPERTY

It is not anticipated that there will be any inundation to personal or business property, outside those effects within the Goodooga Reserve. The town has adequate protection from the flood waters due to high ground and established levees.

In addition, significant stock losses are likely across the region due to the inability to access properties to remove stock prior to the floods arriving.

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## INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Electricity:** Disruption to electricity within the township is not expected; however Country Energy is in the process of making supporting arrangements. A generator has been supplied to provide back up power for the Goodooga Police Station.
- **Water supply and sewerage:** Brewarrina Shire Council advise that water and sewerage is unlikely to be affected. Council state mitigation works have been undertaken to ensure the provision of these services during isolation, however a residual risk remains which would be of a high consequence to the community.
- **Gas:** The NSW State Emergency Service advise that gas in the area is bottled and as such will not be affected.
- **Telecoms:** Not known at this time however not deemed to be a critical requirement. Liaison with Telstra to be undertaken however Satellite telephones could be utilised if required.
- **Transport:** The only access to Goodooga is via road from Lightning Ridge or Brewarrina. This access is expected to be cut by flood waters soon after Friday 19 March 2010, isolating the town. There is a tarred airstrip which is utilised by the Royal Flying Doctors Service however it has previously been affected by flood waters and has been identified as being isolated from the township by flood waters. There are no fuel supplies within Goodooga with the nearest fuel depot being located within Lightning Ridge.
- **Food supply:** There are no facilities in Goodooga. A resupply strategy is currently being implemented, including the establishment of a satellite store within the township.
- **Schools:** There is a Central school located in Goodooga.
- **Health facilities:** Greater Western Area Health Service ( GWAHS ) runs a clinic within Goodooga. In preparation for the floods, extra medical supplies have been delivered to this clinic. There is one Ambulance vehicle however no Ambulance staff positioned in Goodooga. An arrangement currently exists with the local Rural Fire Service to provide a driver in support of a nurse from the clinic during an emergency. The nearest hospital is Lightning Ridge.

- **Community assets:** There is an operating Police Station ( 2 Police Officers ), Rural Fire Service Station, Post Office and sporting field. In addition, there is a vacant Bowling Club and store facility.
- **Distance between key locations:**

Location	Distance
Goodooga to Lightning Ridge	70 km
Goodooga to Walgett	140 km
Goodooga to Gunnedah	410 km
Goodooga to Dubbo	420 km
Goodooga to Lake Burrendong	495 km

## CONCEPT OF OPERATION

Advice from the NSW State Emergency Service indicates the township will be isolated for an unknown period currently estimated at 6 weeks. The Goodooga Reserve is expected to become inundated with residents ( population 20 ) advised to move to other areas within the township.

Based on community expectations and advice, the complete evacuation of Goodooga was deemed not to be viable or considered appropriate. A number of arrangements have been put into place to support the agreed strategy of Support in Place, including the establishment of a Satellite Store within the township.

The agreed comprehensive long term strategy for Goodooga is based on a commitment to provide the support necessary to sustain the community throughout the period of isolation. Initial response operations are being controlled by the State Emergency Service.

There is a low to moderate risk to the community of utility failure ( electricity, water and sewerage ) once flood waters arrive. Should any of these services fail, it may be necessary to conduct a complete evacuation of the township.

The agreed comprehensive long term strategy for Goodooga is to provide the necessary support, both in terms of hardening essential service and in sustaining community spirit, throughout the period of the community isolation. The success of this initial strategy would obviate the need for evacuation operations, however a small residual risk cannot be completely reduced. This draft Concept of Operations, provides a framework for the conduct of evacuation operations and is predicated on evacuation options relating to the risk assessment below :

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
Loss of Utilities (water, electricity and sewerage)	Low to Moderate	High
Public Unrest	Low to Moderate	High
Loss of community spirit	Moderate	Moderate to High
Loss of supply chain to town ( eg. bad weather )	Low	High
Increase flood level affecting parts of township	Low	High
Isolation beyond estimated duration	Moderate	Moderate to High
Outbreak of disease	Moderate	Moderate

The conduct of an evacuation will be carried out under two broad strategies:

**1. Progressive ( Voluntary ) Evacuation :**

Based on a voluntary decision made by the individual, not necessarily linked to a utility failure or other risk. It should be noted evacuees will not be returned to Goodooga until normal access is restored ( subject to case by case assessment ).

- Transport

Evacuation would be undertaken utilising existing aviation resources co-ordinated by the State Emergency Service. Transport Services Functional Area may also be engaged to assist in the provision of additional aviation and ground transport for evacuees to accommodation sites then transported to Gunnedah or Wellington and conveyed to their respective accommodation site.

- Accommodation

Welfare Services Functional Area have advised accommodation arrangements for Goodooga evacuees is complex will require significant planning. Initial evacuees would be accommodated by Housing NSW, but this capacity is limited to approximately five to ten families. Should the number of evacuees exceed this local capacity, then the Welfare Functional

Area would request a larger facility be established. . The Sport and Recreation facilities at Lake Keepit ( near Gunnedah ) and Lake Burrendong ( near Wellington ) have been identified as suitable accommodation that can cater for large groups of residents. These facilities are Government operated and have adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of evacuees ( see annexure for detail ).

Should either site be required to accommodate evacuees, a Site Management Group would be established consisting of ( but not limited to ) the following :

1. Sport & Recreation Liaison ( Centre Manager )
2. Government Liaison ( District Emergency Management Officer )
3. Welfare Services Functional Area ( Red Cross )
4. Transport Services Functional Area
5. Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer

The overall responsibility for the accommodation site will rest with the District Emergency Operations Controller.

- Welfare

Any welfare assistance would be provided in accordance with existing arrangements by Welfare Services Functional Area.

- Utilities

Energy & Utilities Services Functional Area will liaise with service providers and Brewarrina Shire Council with a view of identifying failures of critical infrastructure at the earliest opportunity.

- Health

Those facilities normally provided by Greater Western Area Health Service will remain available within Goodooga unless imminent failure of critical infrastructure occurs. Any health services required outside of Goodooga would be deemed a voluntary evacuation and return would be considered on an individual basis. Any medical assistance would be provided to evacuees in accordance with existing arrangements by Health Services Functional Area.

## **2. Complete ( Directed or Voluntary ) Evacuation :**

This would require the movement of large numbers of people based on the loss of essential services or community spirit due to protracted isolation.

- Transport

There are three options in relation to complete evacuation as follows :

1. Utilisation of State aviation resources.

2. Utilisation of State aviation resources supplemented by Australian Defence Force aviation resources.
3. Stand alone Australian Defence Force aviation resources.

Initial planning has been undertaken by the Australian Defence Force ( JOSS ). A Warning Order will be required in order to allow the Australian Defence Force to undertake further planning in support of this option. Requests for Commonwealth Assistance will be authorised by the State Emergency Operations Controller as per the State Disaster Plan.

Evacuees would be transported to Gunnedah or Wellington and conveyed to their respective accommodation site.

Transport Services Functional Area may also be engaged to assist in the provision of additional aviation and ground transport for evacuees to accommodation sites and within the community on a needs basis.

- Accommodation

Welfare Services Functional Area have advised accommodation arrangements for Goodooga evacuees is complex will require significant planning. The Sport and Recreation facilities at Lake Keepit ( near Gunnedah ) and Lake Burrendong ( near Wellington ) have been identified as suitable accommodation that can cater for large groups of residents. These facilities are Government operated and have adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of evacuees ( see annexure for detail ).

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3. Welfare Services Functional Area ( Red Cross )
4. Transport Services Functional Area
5. Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer

The overall responsibility for the accommodation site will rest with the State and District Emergency Operations Controller.

- Welfare

Any welfare assistance would be provided to evacuees in accordance with existing arrangements by Welfare Services Functional Area.

- Utilities

The failure of essential services and subsequent restoration would be referred to the Local Recovery Committee.

- Health

Any medical assistance would be provided to evacuees in accordance with existing arrangements by Health Services Functional Area.

Disaster Victim Registration ( DVR ) will be undertaken by the NSW Police Force of residents evacuated from Goodooga.

A Public Information strategy will be co-ordinated by the State Emergency Service for each option to ensure community engagement and awareness.

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## RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS

Recovery is being planned by State level resources and supported by Local and District resources.

A Local Recovery Committee has been established and based in Brewarrina. This will be co-ordinated in the first instance by the State Emergency Recovery Controller.

This committee comprises of Local / District Emergency Management Committee members and other stakeholders including ( but not limited to ) Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Housing NSW, Centrelink and Department of Premier & Cabinet.

The first Recovery Committee meeting was held on Tuesday 16 March 2010 and meetings will continue as required.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### GENERAL

1. The long term support and sustainability to the community of Goodooga continue until such time circumstances dictate otherwise.
2. Regular meetings be convened of key stakeholders and Functional Areas to progress multi agency support to the above concepts. The State Emergency Service continue to co-ordinate planning and implement plans for a progressive evacuation of Goodooga.
3. State Emergency Operations Controller and Commissioner, State Emergency Service make necessary representations to utilise Sport and Recreation facilities if required.

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## FURTHER INFORMATION

Combat agency	<a href="http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au">http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au</a>
SEOC	<a href="http://www.seoc.nsw.gov.au">http://www.seoc.nsw.gov.au</a>
Weather	<a href="http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/nsw/">http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/nsw/</a>
Recovery	<a href="http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au">http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au</a>

## Communities NSW - Sport & Recreation

### Lake Keepit

Fitness Camp Road, Gunnedah.

Ph: ( 02 ) 6769 7603

Located 50 minutes from Tamworth and 25 minutes from Gunnedah

Capacity for up to 160 persons.



#### ***Accommodation includes:***

- Air conditioned dormitory style lodges sleeping up to 14 per lodge
- Air conditioned cabins sleeping up to 8 people
- Air conditioned Lakeside cottage sleeping up to 14 people
- Facilities for camping including tents, camp kitchens and amenities

#### ***Other facilities include:***

- 25 metre swimming pool
- Sports field
- Multi purpose hall
- Dining room



***Activities include:***

- Ropes course
- Archery
- Rock climbing and abseiling
- Canoeing
- Sailing
- Kayaking
- Fishing

***Pre-planned activities:***

- Nil identified

# Communities NSW - Sport & Recreation

## Lake Burrendong

Tara Road, Lake Burrendong

Ph: ( 02 ) 6846 7403

Located 30 minutes from Wellington, 60 minutes from Dubbo and Orange

Capacity for up to 180 persons.



### ***Accommodation includes:***

- Modern lodges for large groups, including one with full access for guests with disabilities
- Self contained family cottages
- Self contained units
- Camp facilities

### ***Other facilities include:***

- 25 metre swimming pool
- Floodlit tennis courts
- Playing fields
- Barbeque and picnic areas
- Multi purpose hall

***Activities include:***

- Abseiling and rock climbing
- Mountain biking
- Ropes course
- Grass skiing
- Archery
- Tennis
- Fencing
- Swimming
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Fishing

***Pre-planned activities:***

- Active Life for Older Adults                      26 – 28 March 2010
- Western Horse Riders                                12 – 16 April 2010
- Adventure Camp                                        12 – 16 April 2010