



# INFORMATION HANDBOOK





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# WHY THE ELO PROGRAM?

1.0

**The Emergency Liaison Officer Program (ELO Program) is part of Mackay Regional Council's Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements and aligns with the Disaster Management Act 2003.**

The Mackay region is susceptible to some of the most significant natural hazards in Queensland. Tropical cyclones, riverine flooding, severe weather events, coastal inundation, heatwaves and bushfires have all impacted our community at one time or another.

The local government is primarily responsible for managing disaster events in its local government areas. Local governments are ideally placed to provide specific disaster management at the community level given their knowledge and understanding of social, environmental and economic issues. They achieve this coordinated disaster management through the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG).

The Mackay LDMG plays a critical role in emergency management. Under the Disaster Management Act 2003, a function of the Mackay LDMG is to ensure the community is aware of ways of mitigating the adverse effects of an event, and preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster. Building and embedding resilience into communities is a way to mitigate the adverse effects of disaster events.

A resilient community is one that has sustained ability to withstand, adapt to and recover from a disaster. Adopting a locally led and regionally coordinated approach to community resilience allows for communities to contribute to, and drive, their own recovery and resilience. The impacts from Tropical Cyclones Ului (2010), Yasi (2011) and Debbie (2017) and the 2018 Bushfires on the Mackay region has highlighted the need for communication strategies at local community level, particularly for communities that may become isolated.





## 2.0

# WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY LIAISON OFFICER?

**The Emergency Liaison Officer (ELO) Program is a strategy that engages members of those communities prone to isolation, who understand their community and are passionate in building resilience in their community.**

The ELO Program allows council to have greater situational awareness by strategically selecting community-minded volunteer people who reside in localities prone to isolation. The ELO is the vital communication link between the community and Mackay Regional Council and will assist the LDMG through the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) comprehensive approach. The ELO will be a person who is passionate about their community, has strong community ties and is a well-respected member of that community. The ELO will act as the appointed LDMG point of contact in a specified isolated locality. The ELO will be provided with all the training required of the role and resources to assist in fulfilling the role.

ELOs are best positioned to assist in information management and knowledge sharing with potentially isolated communities. This strategy will ensure that communities will become more resilient to, and more prepared for, disaster events.



# HOW DOES THE ELO PROGRAM HELP BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE?

3.0

**Community resilience is a community's capacity to absorb disturbance and adapt so it can continue to grow and flourish. A resilient community is a stronger community and one that is better able to help themselves during a crisis and recover more quickly afterwards.**

## 3.1 ISOLATION

The Mackay Local Government Area comprises a diverse landscape with many areas prone to isolation during and after a disaster event. Isolation can occur as a result of loss of connectivity (power, internet, phone lines), loss of infrastructure (roads, bridges) or other means. For these communities, preparing for and building resilience to disasters is of paramount importance.

## 3.2 COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

A comprehensive approach encompasses all hazards and recognises that dealing with the risks to community requires a range of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery programs (PPRR). The ELO Program will ensure the enhancement of community resilience through the PPRR approach.

## 3.3 PREPARED COMMUNITY

The preparedness of communities prone to isolation involves all individuals taking a share of the responsibility and understanding their role under PPRR. Disaster resilience is significantly increased by proactive planning and preparation for the protection of life, property and the environment through an awareness of threats of the disaster and the associated risks. Through self-reliance, individuals and the community can often provide the most readily available and effective relief.



## HOW DO I BECOME AN ELO?

### 4.1 SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

As an ELO, you will:

- Be over the age of 18.
- Be a resident of the designated suburb/town.
- Supply equipment to adequately respond to emails, phone calls and text messages related to the ELO Program.
- Be familiar with the community of the designated suburb/town and surrounds.
- Be available to attend all training when required by council.
- Be available to volunteer when reasonably required by council. In the case of an emergency, the ELO acknowledges that they may be required to be available outside normal working hours or on weekends.

It is preferred that the ELO be a member of a well-established community organisation such as rotary or a progress association.

### 4.2 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

If you are interested in becoming an ELO, and you encompass the skills and experience as outlined in 4.1, lodge an EOI application through the ELO portal on the Mackay Regional Council website at [mackay.qld.gov.au/emergencyliaisonofficer](http://mackay.qld.gov.au/emergencyliaisonofficer). As part of the EOI process, you may be contacted to provide further information.

### 4.3 REGISTRATION AND AGREEMENT

If your EOI to become an ELO is accepted, the following steps will be taken:

- Step 1** You will be forwarded a Volunteer Registration form for completion and return.
- Step 2** You will also be forwarded an ELO Engagement Term agreement for signing and return.
- Step 3** Once both documents are returned, you will be contacted regarding the Mackay Regional Council Volunteer Induction Program.
- Step 4** Once the MRC Volunteer Induction Program is complete – you will be included on the council Volunteer Database and will now be a full-fledged ELO!

### 4.4 TRAINING

All training costs for ELOs will be the responsibility of council. Training required:

- The council Volunteer Induction Program is valid for two years from time of completion.
- Upon commencement as an ELO, you will be required to complete:
  - Psychological first aid training.
  - Queensland Disaster Management Training.
- You may be required to participate in other training such as radio usage, situation report writing etc.



# I'M OFFICIALLY AN ELO. WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

5.0

## 5.1 ACTIVATION

If ELO activation is required, you will be contacted by the Local Disaster Coordinator (LDC) or delegate. Self-activation is not permitted.

## 5.2 ROLE DURING ACTIVATION

If activated, you may be tasked to carry out certain activities by the LDC or delegate. Tasking, reporting and personal logs may be in accordance with the Activation Triggers and Actions (Appendix 1) and the signed ELO Engagement Terms.

## 5.3 COMMUNITY EDUCATION

You may be asked to assist in community education activities around disaster preparedness for your locality.

## 5.4 UNIFORM

You will be provided with a shirt and name badge which can be worn when carrying out duties as an ELO.

## 5.5 ELO KIT

As an ELO, you should be as self-sufficient as possible, ideally with the following items:

- Computer with internet.
- Mobile Phone.
- Own vehicle, preferably with high clearance ability.
- Printer.
- UHF / VHF radio.

You will be provided with a kit containing items to assist you in your role as an ELO, such as personal logbook, stationery items, situation report logbooks etc.

## 5.6 MEETINGS

You will be required to attend a minimum of two ELO meetings per year. There may be other meetings as required.

## PLEASE NOTE

### **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE WILL AN ELO PUT THEMSELVES OR OTHERS AT RISK TO FULFIL THESE DUTIES**

When undertaking the actions outlined in this document, the ELO is to provide strong leadership, a cooperative approach and support to community members.

### **EMERGENCY**

If the ELO is made aware of a life-threatening emergency the ELO is to advise the person to phone '000', if they are unable to phone '000' the ELO should only then endeavour to do so on their behalf.

# TERM OF ENGAGEMENT

6.0

The term of an ELO will be for two (2) years.



## KEY CONTACTS

Council's Emergency Management Team are here to help you!  
Key contact details below:

**Kristie Brown**  
Emergency Management Coordinator  
Ph: 0407 646 980  
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