

# Disaster Management (Extension of Far North Disaster District) Amendment Regulation 2017

Explanatory notes for SL 2017 No. 57

made under the

*Disaster Management Act 2003*

## General Outline

### Short title

Disaster Management (Extension of Far North Disaster District) Amendment Regulation 2017

### Authorising law

Section 148 and the schedule of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

### Policy objectives and the reasons for them

The *Disaster Management Act 2003* (the Act) creates a State disaster management framework that is based on State, district and local levels of disaster management. The Queensland Disaster Management Committee operates at the State level and disaster management groups operate at district and local levels.

Section 22 of the Act provides that a District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) is established for each disaster district. 'Disaster district' is defined in schedule 1 to mean 'a part of the State prescribed under a regulation as a disaster district'.

Section 19 of the *Disaster Management Regulation 2014* (the Regulation) provides that each part of the State mentioned in schedule 1, column 1 of the Regulation is prescribed as a disaster district, and that each such district is made up of the local government area or areas mentioned in schedule 1, column 2.

Section 19 (3) and (4) provide that the local government areas mentioned in schedule 1, column 2 opposite the disaster districts for Cairns and Mareeba are prescribed as the Far North disaster district and that this provision expires on 30 April 2017.

These subsections were inserted into the Regulation to bring into effect a trial amalgamation of the Cairns and Mareeba disaster districts, which was

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recommended by the Disaster District Boundary Review Steering Committee in 2014, based on consultation with regional stakeholders.

The purpose of the trial was to assess potential efficiencies in preparation and planning for, response to, and recovery from disasters that may be achieved through amalgamating the Cairns and Mareeba disaster districts.

The initial trial period comes to an end on 30 April 2017 and the Far North DDMG has recommended that the trial be continued for a further twelve months, until 30 April 2018.

The reason for this recommendation is that there has not been a substantial disaster event in the Far North DDMG during the trial period to allow for appropriate evaluation of the effectiveness of the combined group. A number of local disaster management groups from within the district expressed the view that the arrangements should be tested in a robust environment.

The Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) undertook an interim evaluation of the trial and reported in October 2016, ahead of the severe weather season. At that time, IGEM found indications that the trial district is more effective than having the separate DDMGs of Cairns and Mareeba, but that affected local governments still had some reservations, as the new arrangements have not yet been sufficiently tested by a significant event.

It is intended that IGEM undertake further evaluation work closer to the end of the extended trial period, to inform any decision at that time regarding making the arrangements permanent.

The objectives of the trial continue to be:

- To provide support for disaster prevention, preparation, response and recovery to local disaster management groups within the district;
- That Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Queensland Police Service provide professional support at the local level in the event of a disaster, with the provision of senior officers at the scene of a disaster;
- To maintain engagement with each local disaster management group within the merged disaster district;
- To provide access to regional State Government agency decision makers through the DDMG; and
- To provide a single point of coordination at the district level for disaster events.

The trial period will be extended by twelve months to 30 April 2018, in accordance with the recommendation of the DDMG. This trial period will allow sufficient additional time for assessment of the success of the trial, encompassing a full severe weather season. Consistent with the initial trial period, the end date has been chosen to reduce the likelihood that a disaster may occur in the region at the same time the trial is concluding.

The Disaster Management (Extension of Far North Disaster District) Amendment Regulation 2017 (the amendment regulation) will continue to provide for automatic

expiry of the amalgamation. Should the evaluation of the trial amalgamation be deemed successful and participants wish to amalgamate permanently, a further amendment will be required at the relevant time.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services has self-assessed this proposal, in accordance with the Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation, as exempt from regulatory impact analysis as it is machinery in nature and relates primarily to the internal management of the public sector.

## **Achievement of policy objectives**

The amendment regulation achieves its objectives by continuing the trial amalgamation of the Cairns and Mareeba disaster districts in the Disaster Management Regulation 2014.

## **Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law**

The amendment regulation is consistent with the objects of the Disaster Management Act 2003 in that it provides for effective disaster management within the State.

## **Inconsistency with policy objectives of other legislation**

The amendment regulation is not inconsistent with the policy objectives of other legislation.

## **Benefits and costs of implementation**

The amendment regulation will not impose any additional cost on Government.

## **Consistency with fundamental legislative principles**

The amendment regulation is consistent with the fundamental legislative principles defined in section 4 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992*.

## **Consultation**

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Inspector-General Emergency Management and members of the Far North DDMG, including local government representatives were consulted. All parties consulted support the amendment regulation.