

# **Emerald's Recovery Process**

**The good, the bad and the  
ugly!**

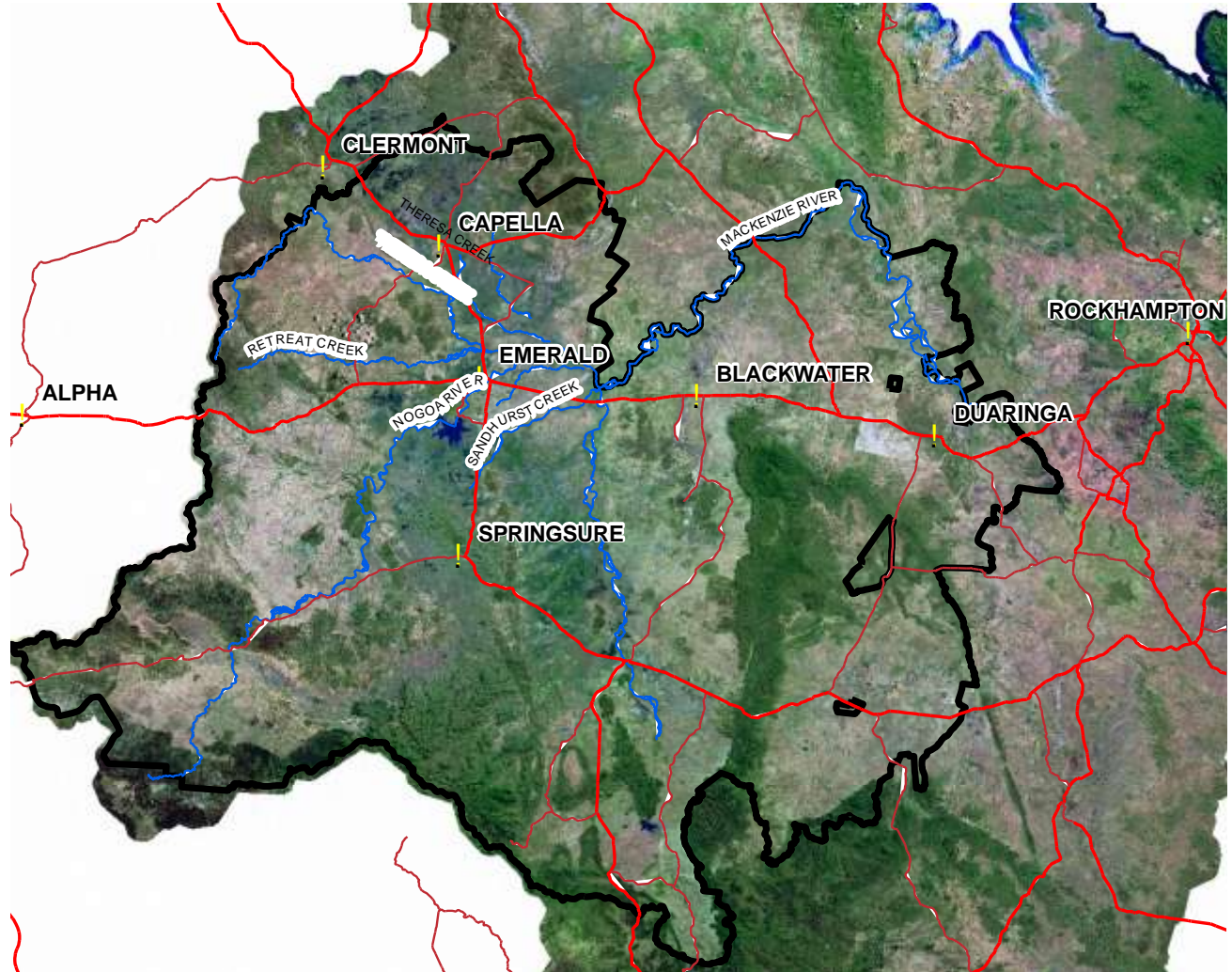
**LGMA National Congress-18 May  
2010**

**Cr Kerry Hayes & Mr Bryan Ottone  
Central Highlands Regional Council**

# Council Area and location



# Emerald District ..



60km

# Some brief Stats on CHRC

- Four Councils merged into one - 2008
- 60,000 sq kms in area (almost the size of Tasmania)
- Pop of 30,000 projected to 47,000 in 2031
- 5,000 kms of Council roads (22 graders)
- > 800M in assets
- Budget \$130M (inc Capital Exp)
- Diverse industry inc, coal, agriculture, horticulture, grazing, with tourism on the increase. Coal seam gas an emerging industry.
- Average income \$830 p.a. (Qld average \$602 p.a.)
- Over 20 discrete communities
- Average age 34.1 years

# Before the Flood ..

- Horticultural sector worth \$60 Million still recovering from Citrus canker.
- Replanting not long commenced.
- Northern half of Emerald recovering from mini tornado - Sept 07.
- Insurance unresolved for many from this storm.
- Fairbairn dam only 35% full.
- Tourist season at Gemfields not yet started.
- 14,000 residents living in Emerald township.



# Then the rain ..

- Some properties record 650mm in 5 days.
- This is the average **total** annual rainfall for the District.
- Largest rainfall recorded in 100 years for some properties.

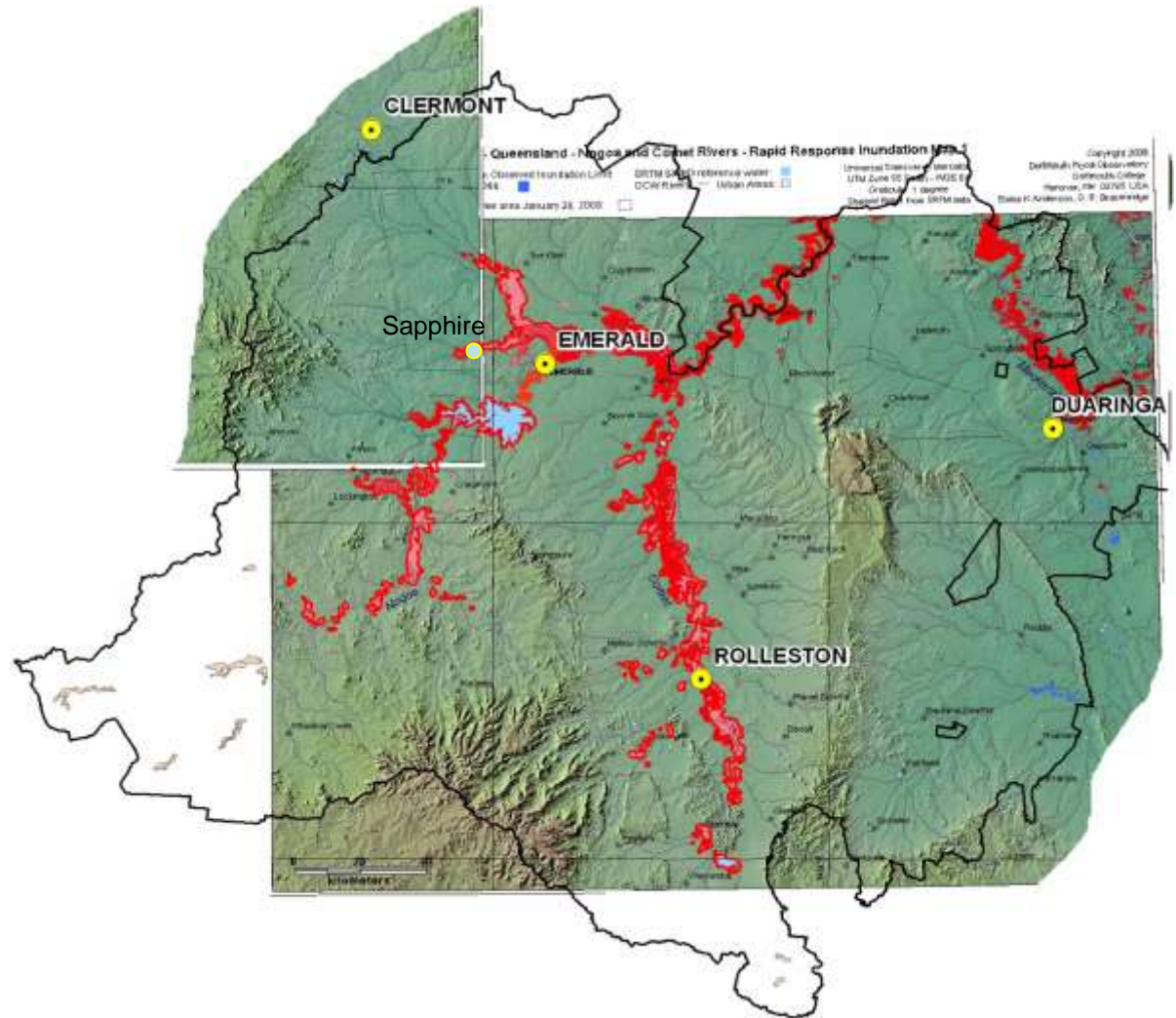


# Then the flood...

- Record floods – Nogoia R, Theresa & Retreat Ck's.
- Gemfields flooded first - without warning, middle of night.
- Graziers, Irrigators and Ensham Mine followed.
- Fairbairn Dam then fills and Emerald town floods.
- Dam fills to 170% - unknown territory, 2m higher then record.



# Flood affects large area ..



# A lot of water ..

- Fairbairn dam spillway peaked at 3000 m<sup>3</sup>/sec.  
Theresa Creek at Emerald peaked at 4100 m<sup>3</sup>/sec.
- In practical terms, this equals  
330,000 and 460,000 cartons of beer every second!  
It's no wonder the breweries couldn't keep up!
- Seriously this was a lot of water.
- It exceeded '78, '83, '84 and '90 flood levels for Emerald & Sapphire.
- Without the Fairbairn Dam,  
Emerald township would have been in catastrophic trouble!

# A community inundated ..

- Normal Shire operations disrupted for 12 days – 17 January to 29 January, 2008.
- Major losses and disruption to communities, industry and businesses.
- 3,160 residents registered for evacuation.
- 166 homes, 73 units and 10 uncompleted buildings seriously damaged.
- 80 homes with minor water damage.
- Damage to 10 industrial sheds, 1 shopping centre, 1 day care centre, 1 big box retail and 1 not-for-profit agency.
- Extensive and widespread damage to rural properties and mining operations.

# A community in action ..

- Significant response from the Local Disaster Management Group.
- Declaration of Disaster Situation signed by the Minister for Emergency Services on 21 January, 2008.
- Natural Disaster Recovery and Relief arrangements activated.
- Multi-agency response to provide assistance to the area.
- Well-being survey conducted with registered evacuees.
- ***Community rallied to help itself - neighbours, family, friends, strangers***



# Gemfields ..



# Roads ..



# Agriculture ..



# Mines ..



# A community moving forward ..

- Emerald Shire Council established the Central Highlands Community Recovery Group (**CHCRG**) to coordinate disaster recovery
  - Membership of the CHCRG included:
    - Local Government
    - State Government
    - Federal Government
    - Insurance Council
    - Community, rural and business stakeholders
- Appointed a Recovery Manager.
- Established a dedicated Recovery Team.



# Recovery principles ..

The CHCR Group embraced the following principles:

- Have a **Plan**
- Community Involvement
- **Local** Level Management
- **State** and **Regional support**
- Empowerment
- Resourcefulness
- Responsiveness, Flexibility, Adaptability and Accountability
- **Integrated Services and team**
- Coordination
- **Planned Withdrawal**

# Initial actions ..

- Established a Community Recovery Centre.
- Developed a Recovery Action Plan – strategy / operation.
- Assessed actions arising from response and disaster management.
- Refocused smaller subgroups in existing network.
- Invited in experts to form technical Reference Groups as required.
  
- Correlated disaster damage and losses as identified by government, industry and community
- Determined the long term impacts / losses



# Initial actions *(continued)* ..

- Developed community participation / partnership strategies
- Recovery program advertising and branding.
- Developed public communication and media management plan.
- Prioritised projects.
- Resources needed and availability of these resources locally.
- Prepared funding strategies and submissions - worked with industry organisations to support their initiatives.
- Regular local radio, newspaper segments.
- Report to the District Disaster Recovery Group as required
- Communicate and coordinate with adjoining Local Government Areas

# Key strategic priorities ..

1. Social recovery
2. Environmental recovery
3. Economic recovery
4. Infrastructure recovery

Each priority area had a dedicated Recovery Manager, sourced from the local community for their expertise and experience in the relevant field.



# ***Priority 1: Social Recovery***

## **Short term goals included:**

- Return evacuated people to permanent accommodation.
- Identify immediate accommodation needs for evacuated people who could not be returned to their normal accommodation.
- Ensure appropriate personal support and counselling was available.
- Identify and manage financial assistance requests.
- Continuation of normal Local Government service delivery issues.
- Assist with provision of labour to help residents in the clean-up of flood affected homes.
- Manage transition of services from emergency response to recovery.

# ***Priority 1: Social Recovery*** continued

## **Medium term goals included:**

- Network with affected community.
- Provide emergency accommodation.
- Provide support for donations and distribution of household goods.
- Support identified vulnerable members of the community.
- Provide timely / accurate information - keep community informed.
- Promote sense of community safety, pride and involvement.

## **Long term goals:**

- Plan for future natural disasters.
- Return affected communities to **'new normal'**.



# ***Priority 2: Environmental Recovery***

## **Short term goals included:**

- Waste management and disposal.
- Manage pollution and hazardous materials.
- Pest management - mosquitoes, black fly, midge and rodents.
- Provide adequate drinking water and sanitation services.
- Coordinate capture of flood height and inundation data.
- Assess flood gauging instrumentation and warning network capacity.
- Identify stock management issues in conjunction with DPI.
- Monitor impact on water quality and riparian condition.
- Public safety – inundated / collapsed small Mining claims, Gemfields
- Protect native wildlife

# ***Priority 2: Environmental Recovery***

## **continued**

### **Medium term goals included:**

- Assess / manage environmental impact with lead agencies.
- Monitor weed incursion – communicate risk.
- Monitor mosquito borne viral notifications.
- Recommendations to improve flood warning communication.
- Map inundated land in critical parts of catchment.

### **Long term goals included:**

- Effective flood warning and communication network.
- Mosquito plan for future events.
- Maps to support future
- emergency response.
- Return to safe environmental standards.



# ***Priority 3: Economic Recovery***

## **Short term goals included:**

- Undertake impact assessment - key economic assets
- Assess employment issues – labour shortages, workforce resizing etc
- Assess capacity of local business to operate
- Support farmers and rural landholders
- Re-open businesses capable of doing so.
- Manage offers of assistance to tradespersons and volunteers including logistics.



# ***Priority 3: Economic Recovery***

## **Short term goals continued:**

- Coordinate priority insurance issues .
- Manage offers of assistance by tradespersons and volunteers including accommodation, logistics and transportation
- Communicate with rural and urban business and industry
- Communicate with the community through the establishment of a Recovery Communications Strategy
- Assess community sport and recreation facilities

# ***Priority 3: Economic Recovery***

## **continued**

### **Medium term goals included:**

- Assist business, residents and public infrastructure recovery.
- Review land-use planning for future development.
- Integrate data into local, regional and state
- planning instruments and frameworks.
- Ensure access to financial services.
- Ensure ongoing fodder drops to stranded stock.
- Stabilise industry in the region.
- Identify indirect economic impacts
  - lost production, lost wages.
- Identify intangible economic impacts
  - loss of contracts, heritage losses etc.

#### **Put CH First**

CHDC's Hayley Hunt shows off entry forms for the very popular CH First shop locally campaign. Spend \$10 or more in a participating business and you could win one of the weekly prizes of \$750 worth of shopping vouchers or the mega-prize of \$2000 in vouchers at the end of the six week campaign. So put CH First on your shopping list and be in with a chance!



# ***Priority 3: Economic Recovery***

## **continued**

### **Long term goals:**

- Capture the impacts of the floods in order to have a visual history and planning material for the region.
- Restore and enhance economic stability to the **'new normal'**.



# ***Priority 4: Infrastructure Recovery***

## **Short term goals included:**

- Assess damage of road and rail infrastructure.
- Repair essential road and rail infrastructure.
- Repair stormwater facilities, water, sewage, gas, electricity.
- Repair of homes and commercial buildings.

## **Medium term goals included:**

- Rebuild homes and commercial buildings.
- Repair non-essential road and rail infrastructure.
- Restore community services.
- Restore parks and gardens, community facilities, public playgrounds, sport and recreation.
- Ensure the safety of these facilities.



# ***Priority 4: Infrastructure Recovery***

## **continued**

### **Long term goals:**

- Permanent restoration or replacement of utilities (such as stormwater facilities, water, sewage, gas, electricity).
- Infrastructure needs returned to the **'new normal'**.



# We needed a communications officer ..

- Dept of Sport and Rec provided
- external support to develop
- broad com strategy with CHRC team.
- Team appointed local comms officer.
- Absolutely vital role.

Newsletter #4, March 22, 2008 Proudly sponsored by Emerald Office National

## Recovery NEWS

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS regional council  
community recovery program

### Shared memories...

**SALLES** from the beautiful Emerald Floods 2008 – Mixed Emotions commemorative book have added more than \$40,000 to the local fundraising appeal to help those devastated by the January event.

The book, a labour of love by local photographer **Just Lusk**, has sold out with the remnants of the 2000 Emerald Flood now to be found throughout Australia and the world.

Featuring 92 pages of images from **Just** and other local photographers **Lorna Hicks** and **Barbara Swales**, along with individual stories, verse and shared memories, the book sold out of 2000 copies in just two-and-a-half weeks.

Taking two-and-a-half weeks to photograph and three days to compile, the book was launched at the postponed Emerald Shine Australia Day events and thank-you party and was subsequently sold through various local venues and businesses.

Ensuring all funds from the sale of the book would go to the Emerald Shine Flood Disaster Appeal, Emerald Shine Council agreed to underwrite the costs to the tune of \$8 per book.

"It was a huge task," **Just** said. "After two-and-a-half weeks of writing, we've sold just over 2000 books. Books have gone to Emerald, throughout Australia and throughout the world... and I'm still getting emails from people wanting more."

All the output, if it was decided funds raised through the sale of the book would be presented to the local Flood appeal so that

the money would stay locally. Last week, Emerald Neighbourhood Centre's **Lorna Hicks** was presented with a cheque for \$47,325.90 in aid to the appeal.

"This is overwhelming," **Mrs Hicks** said. "I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our community, I always knew our was a wonderful community but now I know it's even better!"

For those who missed out on a copy of Emerald Floods 2008 – Mixed Emotions there is a possibility there will be another print run later in the year.

In the meantime, **Just** has produced a DVD including over 300 images from the book, which is available for purchase.

### Appeal application assessments begin

FLOOD affected residents, who have sought help through the Emerald Shine Flood Disaster Appeal, may receive a much welcomed cheque in the mail from this week.

Assessment of the appeal applications, which is being undertaken by a group of community representatives, began last Wednesday night.

To date the local appeal, which is being coordinated by the Emerald Neighbourhood Centre, has received 60 applications.

Centre representative **Lorna Hicks** stressed this was only the first round of assessments and the appeal would be ongoing.

"Applications are still coming in and we know there are firms out there that have yet to be submitted," **Mrs Hicks** said.

Cheques, accompanied by a letter and a Loss and Charge brochure, are expected to start going out to successful applicants late this week.

### Trauma recovery workshop

A FLOOD and trauma recovery workshop will be held in Emerald on Thursday, April 17, aimed at people who would like skills to help family, friends and neighbours recover from the January flood.

Hosted by **Linda**, the short training workshop will help prepare people to respond effectively and appropriately to people immediately affected by a critical incident or disaster.

Any critical incident has the potential to overwhelm a person's everyday ability to cope.

When something emotionally traumatic is experienced, there is a need for caring support to help the person regain their confidence and sense of self control. A traumatic experience can leave a person feeling helpless and vulnerable.

The workshop will help to identify responses that would be helpful to a person affected by trauma and to know when it is best to refer the person to more specialised assistance.

The workshop will be held at the Emerald Library in Burke Street from 9am to 4pm. Cost is \$10 per person and a light lunch will be served.

CENTRAL Highlands Family support worker **Linda Drake** said if the need was evident, more workshops could be organised for later dates.

**Mrs Drake** said community members, local service groups and organisations were welcome to come along.

To attend, RSVP to **Hayley** on 4982 3700 by April 14.

### CH First starts next week

CENTRAL Highlands shoppers are reminded the buy locally CH First campaign starts next Tuesday, March 25.

Look for the CH First identification poster in the windows of participating businesses, spend \$10 or more and go into the draw to win fantastic weekly shopping vouchers from local businesses.

You will also go into the mega prize draw at the end of the six-week campaign.

The first of the weekly draws will be conducted on 4th on Monday, March 24.

**Community Recovery Centre**  
Cnr Borlita St and Church Lane, Emerald

• Phone: 4982 8327 • Email: recovery@emerald.qld.gov.au • Website: www.chrecovery.com.au

# Where we are at...

- This CHRC Recovery Team process withdrew after 10 weeks.
- Held a series of strategic community workshops and forum.
- Land inundation maps completed for Nogoia floodplain (approx 100km) and Sapphire township, including surveyed vertical elevations at key points.
- Status report containing 60 recommendations presented to Council.
- Flood warning network report and recommendations.
- Assistance in Part A charge relief for severely affected irrigators.
- CH First Buy local campaign.
- \$4M Weather radar station approved and opened in March 2010.
- Ongoing work with regional task force to review some key impediments – housing and financial assistance Gemfields, and insurance
- [www.chrc.qld.gov.au](http://www.chrc.qld.gov.au)

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDjhO4eLwjs>