

Disaster Dashboard Development

Project Brief Guidance Document

Introduction

This document provides relevant guidance information for Councils in the preparation of a Technical Brief for the development of a Disaster Dashboard. The document is generic in nature and focuses on providing relevant information, examples and guidance documents to support Councils in developing technical briefs. There is an expectation that Council will consider the individual study requirements and tailor the brief as needed.

Overview of Disaster Dashboards

Disaster Dashboards are generally public facing websites operated by local governments and provide a single location for communities to access accurate and current information relating to disaster events and ensure consistency in messaging. In some instances, dashboards can contain both a public facing website and agency facing website, which provide different levels of information.

The aim is to provide up-to-date actionable information relating to all hazards, links to relevant information and other sources, streamline inter-agency communication, avoid confusion, and aim to reduce call times by providing a single source of information. Often dashboards will pull relevant information, such as road closures from other open sources or by agreement and provide this information in a single location for the community.

Some examples of effective Disaster Dashboards include:

* <https://disaster.bundaberg.qld.gov.au/>
* <https://disaster.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/>
* <https://beprepared.chrc.qld.gov.au/>
* <https://disasterhub.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/#Dashboard>
* <https://disaster.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/>
* <https://dashboard.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/>
* <https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/>

What information should dashboards provide

Dashboards should be designed to provide the most relevant and critical information on the landing page (i.e., the response page). This page should not include out-of-date information or information that is not relevant to the current disaster event. Some examples of information or links include:

* Road closures
* Vision from traffic cameras
* Bureau weather warnings and radar images
* Power outages
* Hazard mapping (when and where available)
* River heights
* Current alerts
* Beach conditions
* Locations and status of evacuation centres
* Important community messages
* Current social media posts from responding agencies.

Dashboards can provide both a public facing and agency facing side. Different information will be available for each of these. Other information provided include:

* Interactive mapping
* Before, during and after information
* Links to other responding agencies (i.e., QFES, BOM, QPS, Dam Owners, SES, TMR, energy companies etc.)
* Links to nearby Council Disaster Dashboards
* Hazard mapping.

Dashboard Evaluation

Disaster dashboards should be regularly evaluated and updated to confirm they are performing as intended. It is important to consider the overall purpose of the dashboard in this evaluation (i.e., is it to improve community resilience and reduce the impact experienced, improve inter-agency communication etc.). Dashboard evaluation should consider the following:

* What are the current best practice disaster and emergency dashboard examples
* The ability for customers to customise the site
* Knowledge discovery – the ability to extract useful knowledge from site information
* Site security, redundancy and the ability to load scale
* Information delivery – how is information presented
* Personalised alerts
* Visual design and user interface
* Integration and system connectivity
* Website hits - data received by visitors to your dashboard
* Reduction in customer calls to Council
* Customer feedback (both formal and informal)

Scope Considerations

Council should consider the overall purpose of the disaster dashboard in scope development. Consider the area and communities unique needs (i.e., rural and urban environments may need different information) and tailor the dashboard scope to meet these needs.

When developing a new dashboard, the scope should align with current best practice examples and scope items. Where the project is undertaking updates, consider if the existing dashboard meets all required needs. Refer to dashboards listed above around the state that are best practice.

Some best practice elements for inclusion might include:

* Add visible links for the community to your own Council website and the parts of the website where people will want to access (e.g. waste, animal management, report an issue etc.), surrounding Council and service provider (e.g. dams, telecommunications, energy) websites and their disaster dashboards. These should be clearly located on the landing page.
* Ensure cameras links (both council and TMR) are functional for both the Disaster Dashboard and the [Qld Traffic website](https://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/cameras.html).
* Ensure road conditions and camera vision is always current as out of date information often causes customer frustration
* Provide and highlight impacted locations with supporting maps to assist the travelling public. Include known road condition information and impacted locations (and likely and known work arounds) in your Council and surrounding LGAs to avoid situations which may result in the travelling public unknowingly travelling via closed roads or into remote and risky areas which may then require additional resources to recover them.
* Add point of interests or known reference points to maps to make for easier interpretation and understanding e.g., roadhouses, known points of interest, places to stop.
* Promote the use of mapping applications that provide real time traffic updates and conditions e.g., Waze, Google Maps, [Qld Traffic website](https://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/cameras.html) etc.
* Add known hazard mapping products when relevant. (e.g., flood and fire)
* Ensure all local and regional public alerts and notifications are current.
* Promote your dashboard as a “Disaster Dashboard” to promote them as a consistent brand across Queensland which will make them a respected, known and understood product
* Ensure your messaging is consistent and aligned with the Australian Warning System, the national approach to information and warnings during emergencies like bushfire, flood, storm, extreme heat and severe weather which uses a nationally consistent set of icons.
* Agency updates on jobs requested, by type (vegetation, SES, road repair etc.), tasked, and completed may assist the community with how response and recovery to the event is being managed and is likely to assist with customer case load management.
* Work with your supplier to ensure there is consistency in presentation styles and presentation of your dashboard, as actionable information that drives decision making is key to the success of the dashboard.
* Ensure there is a link to [Get Ready Queensland](https://www.getready.qld.gov.au/).
* Ensure the dashboard is viewable on both mobile and fixed platforms.
* Look to allow the travelling public to open the disaster dashboard mobile application where it will open in the council area in the Council area they are travelling through.

One of the most important aspects of a disaster dashboard is ensuring all information on the landing page is relevant, timely and quality information. The community should not need to go looking through the site for information relating to a current event.

Peer Review

Formal peer review is not required for Disaster Dashboard projects. However, if Councils would like advice from either QRA or the Technical Advisory Panel this is available.