

Index

Introduction	3
What is a Tropical Cyclone?.....	4
Pre Cyclone Season.....	5
Annual Pre-Cyclone Clean-Up	5
Advices.....	5
Alerts	6
Cyclone Alerts	7
Cyclone Categories	11
Be Aware.....	12
Be Prepared	12
Family Emergency Kit	13
Responsibilities of Families and Individuals	14
Are you Mentally Prepared.....	15
Act Responsibly	16
Storm Water Drains.....	17
Caravans in Caravan Parks	18
Cyclones and Your Pets.....	19
Cyclone Screens	20
Local Welfare Centres.....	21
Outlying Communities	22
Preparing a Family Cyclone Plan	22
Emergency Contact List	24
Disclaimer	25
Copyright.....	25

Introduction

The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley (SWEK) is classified as a “Cyclone Area” (*Emergency Management Act 2005*).

The Shire covers an area of 121,000 square kilometers and is one of four local governments that make up the Kimberley region.

The Shire includes the towns of Kununurra and Wyndham and there are also a number of Aboriginal Communities; the largest being Kalumburu, which is situated in the northern part of the Shire.

Cyclone season runs from **1st November through to 30th April** each year.

This booklet is designed to provide residents of the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley with helpful information about the “Cyclone Season” and the services the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley provides to assist residents before, during and after a cyclonic activity.



What is a Tropical Cyclone?

A cyclone is an area of extreme low pressure characterised by rotating winds around a central calm "eye". The most destructive winds are closest to the eye with damaging winds sometimes extending over one hundred kilometres from the centre of the cyclone.

A cyclone often produces large amounts of rain, so in addition to damage from wind gusts, flooding may occur within the affected area and the associated catchment areas and river basins.

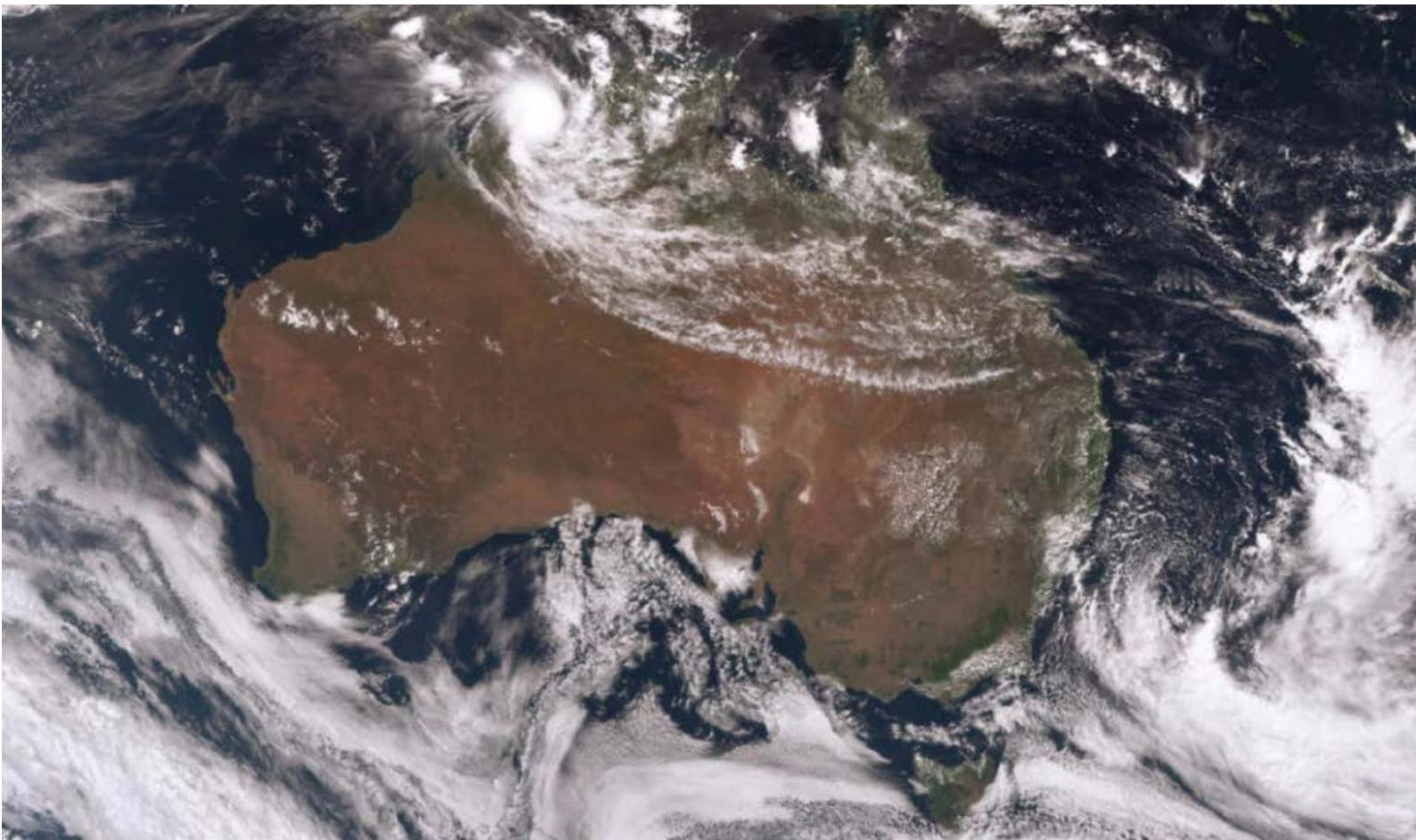
In severe cyclones, wind gusts exceed 165 km/h and can reach more than 280 km/h for category 5 systems.

Tropical cyclones can persist for many days and may follow quite erratic paths. They usually dissipate over land or colder oceans.

Outside of Australia, cyclones are often referred to as Hurricanes or Typhoons.

The Eye of the Storm

The centre of a cyclone is called the "Eye" and is often characterised by light winds and sometimes clear skies. The "calm" of the eye can be deceiving and people need to ensure they continue to observe the relevant "alert" and stay sheltered unless the "all clear" signal has been given.



Pre Cyclone Season

One of the most important things that any individual can do is to prepare their property for the cyclone season.

Preparing your property means that damage from a cyclone impact is minimised. This may contribute to the saving of both life and property.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Shire recommend that the following be undertaken before the season commences:

- Clear your residence or work area of unwanted materials and rubbish
- Trim trees of excess height and growth to enable them to withstand high winds.
- Clear drains of rubbish or obstructions.
- Prepare or review your “Family Cyclone Plan”.
- (For further information on preparing a Family Cyclone Plan, please refer to the DFES Cyclone SMART Kit: www.dfes.wa.gov.au)
- Prepare and have available your family emergency kit including adequate drinking water containers.
- Decide where best to shelter your pets.
- Organise tie down areas and obtain tie down equipment for securing caravans, boats, trailers and other large loose or bulky items.

Annual Pre-Cyclone Clean-Up

The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley has a “Free tip weekend” pre and post cyclone season.

The two weekends are for general/household waste only. Green waste is free all year.

The pre and post cyclone cleanup is advertised in advance in the local media to ensure residents have time to clean their property and dispose of their general/household waste.

For further information on the free annual pre and post cyclone clean up or to enquire about the Shire Landfill opening hours please contact the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley on 9168 4100 or refer to the website www.swek.wa.gov.au.

Advices

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) issues the following Tropical Cyclone advice:

- Tropical Cyclone Watch: when gales are expected within 48 hours.
- Tropical Cyclone Warning: when gales are expected within 24 hours.

These advices will also contain the Community Alerts issued by the State Emergency Services.

Alerts

DFES and the State Emergency Service (SES) information issue a series of alerts based on the received by the Bureau of Meteorology to warn our community of the approach of a cyclone.

The State Emergency Services issues Alert Stages in terms of colour. The alert system uses the three colours, Blue, Yellow & Red.



You can find community alert information:

- on ABC radio and other local media.
- via emergency alerts at www.dfes.wa.gov.au - or by calling the DFES Public Information Line on **1300 657 209**.
- on BoM's website www.bom.gov.au - or by calling the Bureau of Meteorology Cyclone Warning Advice Line on **1300 659 210**.

BLUE ALERT



Get ready for a cyclone.

You need to start preparing for cyclonic weather.

- A cyclone may produce gales and heavy rainfall within 48 hours. Start taking precautions NOW
- The community should commence taking precautions. A cyclone is in the region and may produce strong winds.
- Keep up to date with the development of the cyclone through radio, television and/or internet www.bom.gov.au.
- Identify any loose material and rubbish around your property and consider time and methods of removal or securing.
- Ensure you have adequate tie down materials and anchor points - purchase supplies if necessary.
- Make sure your car is full of fuel.
- You should try to have a barbecue or portable stove at hand for use in a dry, ventilated outdoor area, in case the cyclone cuts out electricity.
- Identify the strongest part of your house and closest Welfare Centre.
- Ensure your family is aware of cyclone procedures.
- Consider re-locating the vulnerable and disabled such as late-term pregnant, elderly or infirm people whom may require special support.
- Identify a safe place for your pets. (Welfare Centres will not accept animals, except guide dogs)
- Ensure your prescription medication supplies are sufficient to last a minimum of 5 days.

YELLOW ALERT



Take action and get ready to shelter from a cyclone.
You need to prepare for the arrival of a cyclone.

There is a significant risk that destructive winds and possible flooding.

- The community should commence action in readiness for the cyclone's arrival because the cyclone has moved closer and there is a significant risk that destructive winds will develop.
- Continue to listen to radio, television and/or internet (www.bom.gov.au) for announcements on the cyclone's progress.
- If you live in a low-lying coastal area and the cyclone is likely to create a storm surge, evacuations may be recommended during Yellow Alert.
- Prepare to move rapidly to the strongest part of your house or closest Welfare Centre, if required.
- Store or secure loose material and items likely to be dislodged by destructive winds.
- Securely fasten all cyclone screens into position.
- Secure boats, caravans, trailers, garden sheds, rainwater tanks and LPG bottles to tie down points.
- Know the whereabouts of family members and pets. You may consider sheltering pets early.
- Ensure emergency supplies are in order as identified during Blue Alert.
- Fill emergency containers with water.
- Check that your vehicle is full of fuel and refuel if necessary.



The cyclone is imminent. Move immediately to shelter.

- The community should immediately move to shelter and **REMAIN INDOORS**.
- Only Emergency Services as identified by the Local Emergency Management Committee should still be functional.
- Continuously listen to portable radio for announcements on the cyclone's progress.
- Go immediately to the strongest part of your house when you hear or feel the winds getting stronger.
- Ensure that pets and animals are safely sheltered.
- Park vehicles in the most sheltered area available with the handbrake applied and in gear or shift in park position.
- Disconnect electrical appliances and turn off gas supply valves.
- Keep away from doors and windows and keep them closed.
- Stay indoors until the cyclone 'All Clear with Caution' message is given by the emergency services.
- Vehicles are not to be driven on Red Alert



The cyclone danger has passed, although there may be hazards.

- The wind and storm surge danger from the cyclone has passed, although ground hazards such as fallen power lines, structural debris and road hazards may exist.
- Continue to listen to radio/television for public information announcements.
- If moving outside, proceed with caution and check for ground hazards such as downed power lines, fallen trees, broken water and sewerage lines, loose roof sheeting and debris.
- Check to see if your neighbours are all right.
- Report any injuries and dangerous situations to DFES / State Emergency Service.
- Check whereabouts of pets and animals.
- Avoid using the telephone except in emergencies.
- Ensure Shire Environmental Health Officers and, if required, structural engineers have assessed your property prior to clean-up.

Cyclone Categories

Category 1 Tropical Cyclone

Wind Strength: 90-125 km/h (Gales)

- Damage Potential: Negligible house damage.
- Damage to some crops, trees and caravans. Water craft may drag moorings.

Category 2 Tropical Cyclone

Wind Strength: 125-164 km/h (Destructive winds)

- Damage Potential: Minor house damage. Significant
- Damage to signs, trees and caravans. Heavy damage to some crops. Risk of power failure. Small craft may break moorings.

Category 3 Severe Tropical Cyclone

Wind Strength: 165-224 km/h (Very destructive winds)

- Damage Potential: Some roof and structural damage.
- Some caravans destroyed. Power failures likely.

Category 4 Severe Tropical Cyclone

Wind Strength: 225-279 km/h (Very destructive winds)

- Damage Potential: Some roof and structural damage.
- Some caravans destroyed. Power failures likely.

Category 5 Severe Tropical Cyclone

Wind Strength: More than 280 km/h

- Damage Potential: Extremely dangerous with widespread destruction.

Be Aware

Keep up to date with the progress of a cyclone through information provided by the Bureau of Meteorology at www.bom.wa.gov.au.

During a cyclonic event it may be necessary to evacuate some low lying areas before the cyclone arrives.

If advised to evacuate:

- Follow the directions from emergency services; lock your house; switch off electricity, gas and water; take a torch, sleeping bag, important documents and any necessary medications with you.

If staying in your home:

- Move to the strongest part of the house. If your house starts to break up, protect yourself with mattresses or get under a strong table or bed. Do not open or stand near windows or doors during a cyclone.

Be Prepared

Preparing prior to the cyclone season can minimise damage to your property and save you time in an emergency.

You can prepare prior to the cyclone season by:

- Trimming branches well clear of your home.
- Fitting window shutters or at least metal screens.
- Clearing your property of loose material that could blow about to cause injury or damage during extreme winds.
- Have an emergency kit prepared and on hand.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers handy (see page 25).
- Preparing your Family Cyclone Plan.

Family Emergency Kit

Your family emergency kit should include items that will help your family when the essential services are not available i.e. power, water, telephone.

Check your family emergency kit and organise supplies including but not restricted to:

- First aid kit.
- Torch, portable radio and plenty of spare batteries.
- Canned or dry foods.
- Drink water containers.
- Appropriate cash supply (EFTPOS may not work)
- Spare car and house keys.
- Blankets, spare clothing – including cooler weather clothing and baby care products
- Medications, tissues, toiletry and sanitary supplies.
- Strong plastic bags for storing important personal documents, such as; wills, passports, photos, birth and marriage certificates, powers of attorney and insurance policies.
- Headphones and a mobile phone, spare battery and charger.
- Books, playing cards or games.
- A full tank of fuel.

Keep your family emergency kit in an easily accessible place and ensure all members of the household are aware of its location.



Responsibilities of Families and Individuals

Families and individuals are primarily responsible for preparing themselves and protecting their property and assets against cyclones.

The combined actions, or lack of actions taken, by individuals and families can have a major influence on the severity of an emergency's impact.

In major emergency situations, Emergency Service Officers do not have the capacity to prevent and protect against the emergency threat for every individual or family at risk.

It is the role and responsibility of families and individuals to ensure they are as well prepared for, protected against and financially self-sufficient before, during and after a cyclonic event.

Families and individuals should:

- Be fully aware of the risk potential hazards have on regular activities such as work, schooling etc.
- If appropriate, arrange adequate personal insurance for vehicles, home and contents and any other personal insurance.
- Make plans and preparations for dealing with an emergency situation; ensuring the entire household, including your children, are aware of the plans and their responsibilities during an emergency event.
- Become aware of local emergency plans and arrangements; including potential risks to the local community, the location of welfare centres, information regarding preparing your home and family for a cyclone, family emergency kits etc.
- Familiarise yourself and your family with emergency procedures for cyclones.

There is a large variety of information material available via the DFES website www.dfes.wa.gov.au.

Are you Mentally Prepared

It is important to prepare yourself mentally for what it may be like to experience a severe tropical cyclone. Some people can find the experience stressful, scary and traumatic.

Try to picture yourself in a cyclonic event and think of how you, your family and other members of your house hold might deal with the stress of a cyclone.

During a cyclone:

- You could be inside for many hours
- There will be a lot of noise. You may not be able to talk to others over the noise.
- Walls and windows in your home may move and wall cladding and roofing can be torn off
- Loose material can crash into your home and could pierce the walls, roof or windows
- Windows can blow in due to the pressure
- Horizontal rain can enter the house from under doors and through building joints.
- Assistance from emergency services may be hours away at the height of the cyclone.
- Identifying your house and property risk and taking the necessary preparedness action will greatly increase safety and wellbeing.

Think about what might happen after a cyclone:

Put some thought into what you and your family might do following a cyclone bearing in mind that you may be in a situation where:

- You may be separated from each other, for example, your partner may have been required to shelter at work.
- Normal communications might be difficult or impossible.
- Power supplies may be cut.
- You may be injured, and others may be injured.
- There may be fire or other dangerous elements present e.g. gas leak.
- Information about the emergency may be limited in the early stages of the event. Talk with your family, household members and neighbours about things you could do.
- Knowing the basics of first aid can be very useful and you are encouraged to enrol in an accredited first aid course such as those run through the St Johns Ambulance.

Act Responsibly

It is recommended that residents act responsibly and refrain from drinking alcohol or having “cyclone parties” during a cyclonic event, in order to remain alert and be able to respond to an emergency situation coherently when necessary.

When a cyclone is approaching, carefully consider the following affects alcohol can have on the human body:

- Impaired judgement and movement
- Reduced inhibitions
- Slurred speech
- Impaired balance and coordination
- Slowed reflexes
- Impaired visual attention
- Unstable emotions

Please note: you may be called upon to act in an emergency, not only to help your own family and friends but also neighbours and other community members.

Excessive alcohol consumption can hinder emergency response attempts and could place you and others in the community at risk.

Whilst for many of you an approaching cyclone means time off work, we ask you to spare a thought for the Emergency Service workers, many of them volunteers, who don't get to knock off and go home and 'ride out the storm'.



Storm Water Drains

Residents in the community need to be aware of the dangers of children playing in or around flooded storm water systems.

- Never allow children to play around flood water, storm drains, ditches, ravines or culverts as it is very easy to be swept away by fast moving water.
- You may not be able to see on the surface how fast floodwater is moving or see holes and submerged debris.
- Flooding can occur quickly and storm water drains can quickly turn in to fast flowing water bodies.

Although they may look like an inviting or exciting place to swim or use a boogie board; flooded or flowing storm water drains are very dangerous and even very strong swimmers can find themselves sucked into the storm water system and possibly drown.

Parents are to discuss water safety with their children and advise them of the sudden dangers that can appear during a cyclonic event.



Caravans in Caravan Parks

The Shire has a number of caravan parks which are temporary homes for visitors and residents alike.

Caravans are constructed of lightweight materials and will be endangered in high winds unless special precautions are taken.

Some caravan park managers may ask you to leave their premises prior to a cyclonic event.

Consult with the caravan park management and familiarise yourself with their policy on cyclones.

If the caravan park management agrees:

- Prior to the start of cyclone season ensure that you have completed a chassis tie-down to suitable anchor points.
- Most caravan parks in cyclone prone areas provide ground anchor points for chassis tie-down.
- Once a cyclone warning has been issued, immediately complete a roof tie-down to prevent the van from overturning or swaying off its chassis.
- Make sure that items such as the annex, awnings, bicycles, toys, chairs, BBQs, garbage bins etc. be stored inside the van or secured in another manner.
- Heavy or bulky items that cannot be stowed in the van should be laid on their side, tied together with strong rope and lashed to suitable anchor points.
- Make sure your caravan is safe and tied down.

Even if your caravan is securely tied down you should seek other appropriate shelter. Prior to the beginning of cyclone season arrange to shelter with family or friends in the event of a cyclone approaching or if required, make arrangements to take shelter in one of the nominated welfare centres.



Cyclones and Your Pets

If you are staying at home:

- Ensure you have plenty of food and water for your pets. Ideally 2 weeks' worth of sustenance per pet.
- Try to maintain the animal's normal routine.
- Keep dogs and cats in separate rooms, even if they are friends. Cyclones can tend to make animals act differently to normal.
- Comfort or restrain your animals if necessary, some distraction toys may help.
- Make sure you have a lead or pet box nearby in case it is necessary to evacuate.

If you are relocating to a Welfare Centre or friends, and leaving your pet/s:

- Put your pets in a room with no windows or only a small window. i.e. a laundry or bathroom.
- Keep dogs and cats in separate rooms, even if they are friends, cyclones can tend to make animals act differently to normal.
- Put down plenty of newspaper on the floor to help soak up urine.
- Ensure you leave plenty of food and water for your pets and ensure the water is in a non-spill container.
- Leave comfort toys and clothing for your animals.
- Put a sign in each room stating the animal and its name. (For SES workers information).

If you are evacuating and taking your pet/s:

- Ensure it is acceptable to bring your pet/s.
- Put your pet in a pet carrier box or on a lead.
- Take enough food with you for each animal, a minimum of 3 days' worth.
- Take litter trays for cats or newspaper for dogs to give them a place to go to the toilet.
- Take cleaning products, paper towel and garbage bags to clean up after your pet.
- Bring your pet/s favourite toys, blanket and any medications.

PLEASE NOTE:

- ***Pets are NOT permitted at the evacuation centre due to hygiene and duty of care responsibilities.***
- ***Only animals that are used for guiding (blind/deaf) may be permitted.***

For further information regarding your pets and cyclones, please contact the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley Ranger Services on (08) 9168 4100.

Cyclone Screens

Cyclone screens are used to protect windows and doors (dominant openings) of buildings from being breached by the impact of air borne debris during a cyclonic event.

Should the internal pressure of a building become positive as a result of a dominant opening being breached, together with forces generated by the external wind upon the outside of the building, this may cause further damage resulting in further air borne debris or failure of the building structure.

It is highly recommended that cyclone screens be installed and pinned in place to shield against the impact of air borne debris. This measure will enhance the safety and comfort of occupants during a cyclonic event.

WARNING - It is important to remember that cyclone screens are not to be used as security screens and should not be padlocked or permanently fixed as in the event of a fire or other emergency residents may need to exit through a window. Cyclone screens only need to be pinned in place during a cyclonic event.

An example of compliant cyclone screens:



Local Welfare Centres

In the event that evacuation becomes necessary during a cyclonic event, the police or DFES / SES will advise you on the actions you are required to take.

If you are required to evacuate, please consider seeking refuge at a friend or co-workers' property located on higher ground. Evacuees being relocated to a Welfare centre are reminded for personal comfort to take clothing, bedding, food and personal items.

The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley has welfare centres available for people who do not have permanent or adequate accommodation, to seek shelter in a cyclonic event.

List of Pre-Determined Welfare Centres

Primary

Kununurra Leisure Centre

Address: Coolibah Dr. cross of Rod Hodnett Dr.

Secondary

Kununurra District High School

Address: Mangaloo St. cross of Ironwood Dr.

Other

Kununurra Youth Centre

Address: Chestnut Dr. cross of Rod Hodnett Dr.

Local Welfare Emergency Coordination Centre

Kununurra Office, Dept. of Community Child Protection & Family Support Division

Address: Corner of Messmate Way and Konkerberry Dr.

Welfare centres will be opened on the advice from DFES/SES and manned by the Dept. of Community Child Protection & Family Support Division.

For further information regarding welfare centres, please contact the Dept. of Community Child Protection & Family Support Division on 9168 0333.

Outlying Communities

DFES works with outlying communities to promote preparedness and provide advice on the stocking of adequate food and fuel ahead of each cyclone season.

One of the main threats facing remote communities during the cyclone season is flooding.

Communities can get isolated for many weeks following a cyclonic event. By ensuring that each community has adequate supplies of food, water and fuel prior to the cyclone season, people in these communities are able to continue with daily lives comfortably until the flood waters subside.

DFES conduct aerial inspections of outlying and remote indigenous communities immediately following a cyclonic event to assess any damage that has been sustained and to drop off any additional supplies that may be required.

DFES may encourage indigenous communities to relocate to regional centres if they believe that it is too dangerous for people to stay at the community during a cyclone.

Preparing a Family Cyclone Plan

A family plan helps you prepare for a cyclone. Try to include the whole family or members of the household in the plan and assign specific tasks.

Your family plan should be written before the start of the cyclone season and be reviewed annually so you can avoid last minute decisions at a stressful time.

This guide will help you write a plan to suit your family or household and situation. Practice your plan so you know what to do if you need to use it.

It is suggested your Family Cyclone Plan include the following -

Family consideration

- Who will the family cyclone plan cover (list all household members)
- Who will collect the children from school?
- Who will get cash out (banking services may not be available)
- Who will you inform about your plan or contact in case you lose touch with each other?
- If you cannot make it home or contact each other, where will you meet or leave a message?
- Who will be responsible for checking and stocking the emergency kit?
- Where will it be stored?
- Neighbor's may need your help or who can help you (list possible assistance)

Preparing your property

- List the potential risks around your home
- List any actions you need to take and when
- “Be Prepared” – refer to page 13 of this booklet
- Fuel the car
- Tie down the boat or caravan
- Secure the outdoor furniture
- Fill water containers etc.

List any equipment you need and where you will store it

- Tie down material
- Anchor points
- Tape for windows
- Sandbags for flooding – create your own by using plastic bags or pillow cases filled with sand

On the day of the cyclone

- List any actions you will take to keep your pets and livestock safe
 - Our pets will shelter – where?
- If you plan to relocate some family members, pets or livestock and then return home, when will this be done, by whom and how long will this take?

We will now

- Secure our home
- Collect our emergency kit
- Place all important documents, valuables and photos with our emergency kit into a water proof plastic bag or containers
- Listen to the radio for advice and information

If sheltering at home In the event of a cyclone, if you remain in your home, unless advised otherwise, consider preparing to look after yourselves for four (4) days

Disclaimer

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