

August 2023

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) met on 2 August 2023.

Presentations

Albany Stranding

Stuart Smith, Director General of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) provided an overview of lessons learnt from the management of the mass Pilot Whale Stranding in Albany in July 2023. A number of community members attended to assist, and good management was vital to ensure the safety of volunteers and DBCA staff. Following the tragic outcome of the stranding, a vigil was held with the community to pay tribute to the whales and the incredible efforts of the community.

Tailings Dams

Newmont Australia presented to SEMC on the management of Tailings Dams. Tailings are the waste material from processing of ore which are stored in dams. Tailings Dams are governed by a range of national and international standards and State Government agencies. A key feature of risk management is community engagement, and Newmont outlined their work with the local government, local community, Local Emergency Management Committee and State Government agencies to ensure a relevant and effective Emergency Response Plan.

Community Disaster Resilience Strategy

Deputy Commissioner Melissa Pexton, Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) provided an update on the Community Disaster Resilience Strategy. The Strategy has been in development since 2019 in recognition that community members are not only the most impacted by disasters but also best positioned to activate local resources and coordinate localised efforts.

The Strategy has been written based on what communities across the state say is needed. This has been underpinned by 3 principles:

1. Listen and learn – listen to community experiences, international research and activities.
2. Don't do more: Do differently – prioritise doing things more locally and simply, rather than more layers and more complexity.
3. A journey not a destination - deliver a long-term Strategy, not a short-term action plan.

The Strategy is currently being finalised and will be submitted to SEMC in October 2023 for approval.

Discussion Items and Outcomes

State Resupply

WA is heavily reliant on a very small number of freight entry points and its relative isolation makes resupply an important emergency management consideration. Severe flooding generated by Ex-Tropical Cyclone (TC) Ellie in December 2022 and January 2023 closed key roads for an extended period and caused significant damage to key freight routes at Willare Crossing and Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley.

The flooding and infrastructure damage isolated the East Kimberley for an extended period and highlighted the need for a whole of government approach to resupply and supply chain issues caused by emergency incidents. SEMC endorsed the development of the State Support Plan – Freight and Supply Chain to allow for the establishment of clear roles and responsibilities, purpose, and arrangements across government for the prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery related to supply chain issues.

The SEMC endorsed the creation of a State Resupply Reference Group (SSRG) that will report to the Response Policy Subcommittee. The scope of the SSRG includes:

- Support regional Operations Area Support Group/Incident Support Group and Regional Chamber of Commerce discussions with local service providers
- Undertake reasonable measures to ensure HMA responsibilities regarding resupply are met
- Establish relationships between government and the private sector to facilitate the rapid and appropriate support to affected communities
- Maintain strategic oversight of local and regional support arrangements to affected Remote Aboriginal Communities
- To be convened in line with the DFES All-Hazards Liaison Group approach with regular meetings of retailer associations during the threat period to review the level of stocks within the community.

Local Emergency Management Arrangements Review Improvement and Implementation Plan

Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) refers to the suite of emergency management documents, processes and agreements which apply to a Local Government (LG) area.

The LEMA Review commenced in 2022, and is being delivered as a partnership project with the DFES and the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) in response to the challenges faced by LGs in fulfilling their emergency management obligations, which include:

- Clarity around emergency management roles and responsibilities
- Alignment between emergency management and their day-to-day business
- Financial and human resourcing to support emergency management planning.

The LEMA Improvement Plan was presented to SEMC and endorsed. A Program Plan will be developed to outline the implementation approach and presented to SEMC in December 2023 for approval.

Philanthropic Engagement Framework

The Philanthropic Engagement Framework aims to develop governance and assurance arrangements for the engagement of philanthropic and other not for profit organisations in Emergency Management. The project has delivered a draft Framework which was developed based on extensive consultation across the emergency management and philanthropic sectors. The Framework provides guidance to Emergency Management Agencies on key issues to be considered when determining appropriate governance arrangements for public-private partnerships.

SEMC endorsed the draft Framework to be released for broad consultation in accordance with State Emergency Management Procedure 3.5.

Public Safety Mobile Broadband Update

The current communication capabilities of public safety agencies including fire, ambulance and police are largely reliant on land mobile radio networks with limited data services. A national Public Safety Mobile Broadband (PSMB) capability will provide emergency service personnel with fast, safe and secure voice, video and data communications and instant access to data, images and information in live situations, emergencies and critical incidents. It will enable real time, data-rich analytics, situational awareness and cross-border communications.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has assumed leadership of the PSBM and will work in partnership with states and territories to drive this capability forward.

General Updates

Disaster Ready Fund – EOI Portal and Grant Webinars

The Commonwealth Government has established the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) which provides up to \$200 million per year, over five years to fund projects that build resilience to, prepare for, or reduce the risk of future natural hazard impacts. DFES is the nominated lead agency in Western Australia for the fund and is responsible for:

- working with local governments, communities and other organisations to identify suitable projects; and
- coordinating proposals and submitting applications to the NEMA.

Applications are assessed by the NEMA according to established criteria, with the final decision made by the Federal Minister for Emergency Management. More information about the DRF and the guidelines are available at <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/announcements/disaster-ready-fund/>.

To support WA organisations to develop their grant proposals and have the best chance of being successful in Round Two, an EOI portal is now open to assist organisations and agencies seeking to apply for DRF. DFES will also provide targeted support in grant review and coaching services for eligible projects. DFES encourages prospective applicants to register their EOI through the portal (<https://dfes.smartygrants.com.au/EOI>).

In addition, three webinars have been arranged to deliver a series of 'Introduction of Grant Writing'. The webinars will assist participants in how to prepare and write a quality grant application. The webinars will include what information applicants need to gather, development of the problem statement, guidance around quantifying expected outcomes and budget and market viability.

The webinars have been tailored for the following audiences:

Social services sector	30 August 2023, 10am – 12pm	Register here
Local government	4 September 2023, 10am – 12pm	Register here
State government	7 September 2023, 10am – 12pm	Register here

For those who are unable to attend, you can register your interest to access the recordings.

Telecommunications Disaster Resilience Innovation Program

Applications are now open for projects that improve the resilience of telecommunications network during natural disasters, particularly in rural, regional, remote and First Nations communities. The new \$50 million [Telecommunications Disaster Resilience Innovation \(TDRI\) program](#) will accelerate the development and deployment of new and innovative solutions to address communications issues during natural disasters. If you have any questions, please email TDRI@communications.gov.au. Questions should be sent no later than 14 days prior to the closing date for grant applications.

Next Meeting of the SEMC

The next meeting of the SEMC will be held on Wednesday, 4 October 2023.

Contact Us

If you have feedback or questions, get in touch at info@semc.wa.gov.au.