

SEMC COMMUNIQUÉ

December 2025

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) met on 4 December 2025. The Chair acknowledged retiring SEMC members, Dr Andrew Robertson and Julie Waylen, for their contributions to the SEMC and emergency management.

Presentation

Higher Risk Weather Season Brief | Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Assistant Commissioner Danny Mosconi AFSM provided an overview of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) preparations for the 2025/26 high threat period.

Ahead of the high threat period key activities have been undertaken:

- Preseason forums and exercises: DFES has conducted forums and exercises with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), local government and partner agencies. These activities ensure teams are well-practiced and ready to respond to bushfires and severe weather events.
- New Emergency Planning Tool: Available via the Emergency WA app and website, this tool helps community members prepare for a range of emergencies—not just bushfires.
- Increased Aerial Support: DFES has activated additional aerial resources to strengthen response capabilities during this high-threat season.
- Grain Harvest Strategy: DFES is working with industry and local governments to implement strategies that reduce fire risk during harvest operations.
- Mitigation activities: Targeted mitigation, including prescribed burns and fuel load management, has been carried out to reduce the likelihood and impact of bushfires.

Preparedness for H5 High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza | Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

In Western Australia (WA), under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, the Director General Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is the hazard management agency for animal disease emergencies.

Since 2020, a new strain of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI), H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, has spread to every continent except Australia. The new strain, known as H5 avian influenza or H5 bird flu, has caused unprecedented outbreaks of disease in wild birds, wild mammals and some domesticated mammals. If H5 avian influenza reaches Australia, it would have significant impacts on our wildlife, agricultural industries and the economy.

DPIRD have been working with Federal, state and local governments, the poultry industry and wildlife stakeholders to prepare for and reduce the likely impact of H5 avian influenza if it arrives in Australia.

As prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities for animal hazards are a whole of government responsibility, a working group has been set up with representation from the DBCA, Department of Local Government Sport and Culture, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and Department of Health to consider roles and responsibilities in preparing for and responding to H5 avian influenza in wildlife.

DPIRD has been asked to work with stakeholders to formalise Incident Management Structures as a priority, with a focus on preparedness, a planning cycle, sector wide and public facing communications. They have been requested to report back to the SEMC in early 2026.

Discussion Items and Outcomes

State Recovery Arrangements

The revised State Recovery Arrangements were approved by the SEMC, having undergone extensive consultation and SEMC subcommittee endorsement.

Key changes include:

- Established State Strategic Recovery Priorities to guide governance, planning, and delivery of recovery in WA.
- Introduced Model for Recovery Coordination to define recovery coordination arrangements between State and local governments through a four-tiered framework (R1 – R4).
- Clarified roles and responsibilities of the State Government in recovery, including DFES, Hazard Management Agencies and State Agencies.
- Defined State-level recovery coordinator/controller positions, including the introduction of a new recovery event-specific State-level recovery coordinator position.
- Clarified recovery arrangements and procedures for transition from response to recovery, community engagement, public information and membership of the State Recovery Coordination Group and State Recovery Domains.

DFES will communicate the changes across the sector in preparation for the high threat period. Further information including FAQs and factsheets are available via [Engage WA website](#).

AUKUS

Jasmin Craufurd-Hill MStJ FIML FGIA, Australian Submarine Agency provided the SEMC with an overview of the nuclear regulatory environment in Australia, including the establishment of the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator on 1 November 2025.

Following this briefing, the SEMC discussed governance arrangements to ensure WA has appropriate emergency management frameworks in place to support an enduring nuclear-powered vessel capability. The Committee also considered the need for a dedicated forum to examine the implications of AUKUS on emergency management in WA.

As a result, the SEMC approved the establishment of the AUKUS Time-Limited Working Group to undertake this function. The SEMC will also prioritise the first SEMC Meeting of 2026 preparation for the establishment of Submarine Rotational Force – West in early 2027.

2026 SEMC Action Plan

The SEMC Strategic Plan 2026–29 was endorsed by SEMC in March 2025, received Ministerial approval shortly thereafter, and gained final endorsement from the incoming SEMC Chair in August 2025.

To implement the Strategic Plan, an annual works plan will be developed to focus actions and outcomes for each year.

The SEMC was presented with, and subsequently approved the 2026 Action Plan. Key priorities include:

- The State Exercise Coordination Team and a State-wide exercising training cycle is established.
- The Emergency Management Framework Comprehensive Review is initiated, and will consider the integration of systemic and emerging risks.
- A review and refinement of State-level command and control arrangements is completed, ensuring clarity of roles, responsibilities, and interoperability across agencies.

- Membership across the Webfusion platform is enhanced to support operational coordination.
- Progress the SaferWA Digital Strategy.
- Establish the AUKUS Time-Limited Working Group and progress emergency management arrangements for Nuclear-Powered Vessels.

Disaster Ready Fund Round 3

The Disaster Ready Fund was established to reduce risk and build resilience in Australian communities.

Successful projects for Round 3 were announced on 17 November 2025. A total of \$12.06 million in Commonwealth funding is committed to support 15 projects across WA. Funding of \$5.42 million has also been committed by partners bringing the total combined investment to \$17.49 million.

More information and details of successful projects are available on the National Emergency Management Agency [website](#).

Resilient Australia Awards 2025

The Resilient Australia Awards recognise collaboration and initiatives across a broad range of sectors that strengthen disaster resilience, as well as images capturing resilience in action.

The program is sponsored by the Australian Government in partnership with the states and territories and is managed by the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience.

WA 2025 award winners include:

Resilient Australia Community Award

Winner: Financial Counsellors' Association of WA & Centre for Social Impact, UWA – Building Financial Resilience to Disasters: The Financial Counselling Disaster Framework

This project placed financial resilience at the heart of disaster management. Developed over two years with input from more than 200 stakeholders, the framework equips financial counsellors with trauma-informed tools to support communities before, during and after disasters. It enhances coordination, inclusion and outcomes, embedding financial counselling into emergency systems as a critical pillar of resilience.

Highly Commended: DFES – From Little (Local) Things, Big Things Grow: A Whole-of-Town Approach to Bushfire Emergency Preparedness

This project aimed to assist the community in response to the growing threat of climate-driven disasters, by building long-term resilience across rural Australia and reinvigorating local emergency services volunteerism.

The whole-of-town approach sought to improve property preparedness, community safety practices and evacuation outcomes to reduce bushfire ignitions, housing loss and trauma.

Resilient Australia Photography Award

Winner: Nicole Woods for 'Everyday Heros'.

Nicole's photograph captures the essence of resilience through the collaboration of emergency services. Each team contributes vital expertise under pressure, working together to protect and support communities during disaster response.

Resilient Australia Government Award

Winner: DFES – Kimberley Floods State Recovery and Resilience Plan (2023–2024)

This award recognises the response to the widespread impacts of the January 2023 Kimberley floods caused by ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie. Affecting 11 remote Aboriginal communities and damaging infrastructure across the Fitzroy River catchment, the recovery plan delivered measurable progress through initiatives focused on:

- Social and emotional wellbeing
- Aboriginal employment and local economic opportunities
- Infrastructure resilience
- Restoration of cultural and natural environments

Highly Commended: DFES – Next Generation Warnings Project Empowers Community Readiness and Resilience

The Next Generation Warnings project, led by DFES, has transformed emergency public information in WA. This initiative, informed by research and past bushfire experiences, addressed the need for accessible information in a changing environment. The Emergency WA website was refreshed in May 2024, with the Australian Warning System (AWS) implemented in July 2024 and the first Emergency WA App released in December 2024, providing reliable hazard information across consistent warning levels and icons.

Comprehensive Review Schedule

The following State Emergency Management documents are planned for comprehensive review and broad consultation in 2026:

State Hazard Plan – HAZMAT Annex B Space Re-entry Debris (SPRED)	State Hazard Plan – Animal and Plant Biosecurity
State Hazard Plan – Cyber Security Incident	Local Recovery Guideline
State Support Plan – Freight and Supply Chain	Impact Statement Guideline and Template
State Support Plan – Emergency Public Information	State Hazard Plan – Maritime Environmental Emergencies
State Hazard Plan – Hostile Act	WA Community Evacuation in Emergencies Guideline
State Hazard Plan – Collapse	State Hazard Plan – Heatwave
State Hazard Plan – Terrorist Act	State Hazard Plan – Earthquake
State Hazard Plan – Tsunami	Communicating in Recovery Guidelines
Traffic Management during Emergencies Guideline	District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC) Handbook

Next Meeting of the SEMC

The next meeting of SEMC will be held on 12 March 2026 at HMAS Stirling and the Henderson Maritime Precinct.

Contact Us

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