

SEMC COMMUNIQUE

May 2024



The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) met on 8 May 2024.

Presentations

State Recovery Amendments

Su Groome, Director of Strategy and Policy, at the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) provided an overview of the current review of the state-level recovery arrangements in the State Emergency Management Framework (EM Framework).

The following proposed amendments were discussed:

- Refinement of the proposed four-level State Model for Recovery Governance (R1-R4), which was presented to SEMC in December 2023 and trialed in the 23-24 high threat period. The Model defines increasing State involvement relative to the complexity of recovery and capacity of the local government.
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities for the state at various recovery levels, including the role of the State Recovery Coordinator, Event Recovery Coordinator (R3 State Led), and Event Recovery Controller (R4 State Controlled).
- A draft Assessment Support Tool to be utilised in assisting decision makers to assess the level of recovery under the proposed new State Model, including escalation / de-escalation of State involvement in recovery.

The SEMC noted DFES is planning a public consultation process in quarter three (Q3), 2024 on proposed changes to state-level recovery arrangements in the EM Framework. Recommendations for amendments to the EM Framework will be presented to SEMC for consideration.

Discussion Items and Outcomes

Strategic Planning Workshop

Prior to the workshop all members, deputy members and observers were asked to complete a self-evaluation survey, to understand their views on the achievements of and challenges encountered by the SEMC over the past 12 months, the strategic direction undertaken by the SEMC, as well as emerging issues that may affect the strategic priorities of the SEMC over the longer term. With the expiry of the current Strategic Plan in 2025, the SEMC reviewed its strategic direction in anticipation of the development of a new Strategic Plan. The SEMC explored five key emergency management systemic issues:

- More frequent and severe emergencies
- Consideration of a systemic approach to risk management
- A whole of sector approach
- Strengthening capability and capacity
- A focus on vulnerability, preparedness and resilience.

Consultation on a new Strategic Plan, and the outcomes of the Strategic Planning workshop, will now occur with Subcommittees and District Emergency Management Committees throughout July, August and September 2024.

State Emergency Management Document Reviews and Amendments

DFES has completed the periodical comprehensive review of the State Hazard Plan – Hazardous Materials Emergencies (HAZMAT). The term ‘hazardous materials’ was removed from the title to reduce the confusion between the definition of a ‘hazardous substance’ within the *Emergency Management Act 2005* and the definition of ‘hazardous materials’ in the *Fire Brigades Act 1942*, and the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1988*. The plan is now known as State Hazard – HAZMAT.

The WA Police Force has amended the State Hazard Plan – Hostile Act, and State Hazard Plan – Terrorist Act to incorporate the consequential statement of fact amendments as a result of removing chemical, biological, and radiation (CBR) emergency from State Hazard Plan – HAZMAT. As described in State Hazard Plan – HAZMAT, DFES will continue to provide a HAZMAT (chemical, radiological or other substance) capability to hostile act or terrorist act incidents managed by the WA Police Force.

Comprehensive reviews have been initiated for State Hazard Plan – Fire, State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies and the State Emergency Management Local Recovery Guideline.

General Updates

All West Australians Reducing Emergencies (AWARE) Program – Now Open

AWARE is a competitive grant initiative of the Western Australian Government that invests in building capacity and preparedness activities at a local level. DFES provides executive and administrative support for the SEMC to administer the AWARE program.

Only local governments are eligible to apply for an AWARE grant and may submit multiple applications. Local governments are encouraged to collaborate and submit joint applications.

The 2024 AWARE grant round will distribute a total of \$200,000 to fund projects to:

- further the emergency risk management process
- facilitate capability-based exercises
- assist in reviewing Local Emergency Management Arrangements
- deliver emergency management training, events or forums.

Projects may be eligible for between \$2,500 and \$35,000 grant funding, including local level risk assessment projects. Applicants must contribute 25 per cent of the total project cost in cash or in-kind.

All applications must be submitted through the [online portal](#). The 2024 Round of the AWARE Program is now open and closes on 1 July 2024.

National Disaster Risk Reduction Grant (NDRR)

On the 22 May 2024, more than \$2.5 million was awarded to a string of Western Australian projects that will further protect disaster-prone communities across the State. Fifteen new projects that reduce the risk and impact of disasters such as bushfires and floods will be funded by the NDRR Grant Program.

A joint initiative between the Australian and Western Australian Governments, the NDRR Grant Program has now funded locally led projects to the tune of \$12.5 million. A range of local governments, volunteer groups and private businesses - stretching from Port Hedland to Boyup Brook - successfully applied for the latest round of funding to help make their communities more resilient.

2024 Resilient Australia Awards Now Open

The 2024 Resilient Australia Awards are now open for nominations.

The awards are celebrating 25 years of highlighting the outstanding work of those who invest in more resilient communities, making them safer, more connected, and better prepared.

Open to all Australians, the Resilient Australia Awards are an excellent opportunity to spark local and national conversations around risk, preparedness, resilience, and community recovery. The awards celebrate initiatives across the country that foster community resilience to natural disasters and emergencies such as bushfires, floods, and cyclones.

If you have a program or initiative that should be nationally recognised and promoted, consider nominating. Winners from each state and territory will also be in the running for two National Awards.

Nominations can be made in written or video format until 11.59pm AEST on Friday 7 June 2024, across seven categories by:

- individuals
- not for profit organisations
- all levels of government
- small and large businesses
- education institutions
- research bodies
- emergency service agencies.

For more information and to nominate, visit the [Resilient Australia Awards website](#).

LEMA Improvement Program

Building on the previous work of the LEMA Review, the LEMA Improvement Program will continue working toward the goal of a more capable and resilient community, through a local approach to emergency management.

To deliver on the commitment of a sector-led LEMA improvement process, the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) is partnering with SEMC. WALGA will work on behalf of local government, making sure that the sector is consulted, and their feedback guides the reform of local emergency management.

The projects that make up the LEMA Improvement Program will be fulfilled in phases. Phase 1 has commenced, with the following key activities underway:

- LEMA pilot program development
- Recruitment for a resource to undertake the local government emergency management policy work
- Setting up governance structures and groups.

LEMA Requirements for Local Governments

Local governments are essential players in WA's emergency management arrangements, providing expert knowledge about their communities and environments. Capturing this local knowledge through contemporary LEMA is a key part of the SEMC's oversight of emergency management arrangements and capability in Western Australia, contributing to a better-prepared, safer, and more resilient Western Australia.

During the reform of LEMA, the SEMC asks that you continue to review your local emergency management arrangements and processes and ensure that they are consistent with State emergency management policies and plans. This will enable compliance with your obligations under the Emergency Management Act 2005.

Consult with your local District Emergency Management Advisor for help and information about reviewing your LEMA.

Next Meeting of the SEMC

The next meeting of SEMC will be held on Wednesday, 7 August 2024.

Contact Us

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