



## State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC)

### 13 May 2013 meeting: Highlights

The SEMC met on 13 May 2013 for its first Season Review meeting. This provided an opportunity for the Committee to consider the key improvements and events from the past year.

#### KEY IMPROVEMENTS

The SEMC was impressed and pleased to note important improvements implemented by agencies during the last 12 months and their alignment to the SEMC's continuous improvement goal.

These improvements contribute to Western Australia being better prepared for future events. A selection of the improvements include:

- **Endorsement and implementation of the Westplan-Heatwave**

Having endorsed the new Westplan-Heatwave has led to improved preparedness, including the ability to use weather forecast predictions and activate the Westplan in the lead up to a Heatwave, allowing for enhanced planning and preparation. The improved media engagement for public messaging means the Department of Health disseminates key warnings and messages to the community in advance.

- **New State Operations Centre at Cockburn Emergency Services Complex**

The Cockburn State Operations Centre provides a range of command, control and coordination functions during emergencies. It contributes to increased functionality and better integration of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) with other agencies during events.

- **Implementation of enhanced mobilisation program**

This program sees the mobilising of additional resources at the initial stages of a fire. During the recent summer months, this has assisted DFES in keeping the majority of fires to a minor level.

- **Increase of Early Response Teams**

The Department of Child Protection (DCP) has doubled its Early Response Teams to ensure a quick response in the early stages of events and provide greater depth of resources for welfare support.

- **Welfare Centre Databases**

The DCP has developed a comprehensive database of allocated welfare/evacuation centres across the State. The information contained in this database such as location, contact details, capacity has been made available to all Hazard Management Agencies (HMAs).

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- **State Welfare Emergency Evacuation Training (SWEET)**

The DCP has developed, together with the State Welfare Emergency Committee (SWEC) agencies, a new training package focusing on coordination across agencies of welfare/evacuation centres. The first official training in using the package is underway.

- **Operation Vulcan**

The WA Police have expanded their operation to target bushfire arson in regional areas.

- **Response Coordination**

The WA Police have rolled out Local Emergency Coordinator training to all Local Emergency Coordinators and developed strategic event briefs for the State Emergency Coordination Group.

- **Social Media specialist**

The WA Police have appointed a social media specialist to keep up with current and new communication channels to ensure a wider and more effective reception of public messaging.

- **Bushfire Management**

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has delivered more training and information to staff, to continue developing the skills of their workforce in the use of equipment and management of bushfires.

## **LESSONS LEARNT FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS**

As part of the SEMC's commitment to continuous improvement together with embracing learning and disseminating expert knowledge, the SEMC Secretariat presented a discussion paper on key findings from recent national and international incidents.

The discussion paper covers a range of incidents such as Tropical Cyclone Oswald and the Tasmanian bushfires in January 2013, the role of insurance in building resilient communities and the integration of social media into traditional emergency management structures.

It also provided information on "*Clean up or adaptation? Disaster proofing Queensland*" and the Augusta Margaret River Recovery Projects—a positive example of a recovery program including environmental and community initiatives.

The SEMC noted the research and will refer to relevant SEMC sub-committees, where appropriate.

## **EVENTS FOR REVIEW/ DISCUSSION**

Several agencies prepared presentations on Bushfire, Tropical Cyclone, Storm and Heatwave, that occurred in the past 12 months. These presentations opened the discussion among members on areas and opportunities to continue improving.

The key areas considered:

- Communication as top priority—ensure clear and consistent communications at all levels and frequently evaluate effectiveness of communication tools and channels.

- Interoperability—continuing to increase unified command and training between agencies.
- Keep building capacity within government agencies, the community and volunteers.
- Broaden and enhance public education on roles and responsibilities in an emergency.
- Promote shared responsibility at all levels—sharing information and learnings, particularly around safety and improvements.

## **RESILIENT COMMUNITY**

The City of Bunbury presented *The Resilient Community U-4-72 (Are U ready 4 72 hours?)* project. This behaviour change project encourages the community to think and act on the possibility of being able to survive 72 hours in an emergency without assistance. It aims to create a culture of emergency and disaster readiness, and resilience within the Bunbury community.

This project's messages and goals fit appropriately with the SEMC's strategic direction, particularly the goal of shared responsibility.

## **SEMC MEETINGS**

The next SEMC meetings scheduled for 2013 are on 11 June, 3 September and 3 December. There will be an additional meeting, planned on 1 October, to review the annual Preparedness Report.

Papers on issues pertaining to emergency management and its continuous improvement are submitted to the SEMC for their consideration through the SEMC Secretariat.