



STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SEMC)

10 MARCH 2015 MEETING: HIGHLIGHTS

The SEMC Chair, Mr Frank Edwards CSC welcomed the Committee to its first ordinary meeting for 2015.

THE COMMITTEE

The Chair introduced the newly appointed Independent Member, Mr Richard Simpson.

Mr Simpson has significant commercial and management experience in the financial services sector and over 20 years' experience in providing investment banking advice to a range of corporate and government clients in Australia and internationally. He has worked in investment banks in London, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

Mr Simpson was Chairman and Managing Director of Hartleys Limited from 2003 to 2008 and Head of Corporate Finance from 2002 to 2009. He remains a Director of Hartleys Limited.

Mr Simpson was appointed to the Botanical Gardens and Parks Authority Board of Management as the Chairman in 2002 and is also Chair of its Audit Committee.

The current 11 SEMC members are:

Mr Frank Edwards CSC	Chairperson (Independent)
Ms Sue Ash AO	Deputy Chairperson (Independent)
Mr Richard Simpson	Independent Member
Mr Mal Cronstedt AFSM	SEMC Executive Officer
Mr Peter Conran AM	Director General, Dept. of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC)
Mr Wayne Gregson APM	Commissioner, Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)
Mr Karl O'Callaghan APM	Commissioner, WA Police

Mr James Sharp	Director General, Dept. of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW)
Prof. Bryant Stokes	Director General, Dept. of Health
Ms Emma White	A/Director General, Dept. for Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS)
Ms Ricky Burges PSM	CEO, Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)

Key discussion areas from the meeting are summarised below:

MAJOR INCIDENT REVIEWS

The SEMC Secretariat is strengthening its role in undertaking major incident reviews established under the “Continuous Improvement Framework”. As the number of reviews increase, the SEMC Secretariat is creating one consolidated database to effectively manage all the reviews, their progress and outcomes.

THE LOWER HOTHAM FIRE AND O’SULLIVAN BLOCK FIRE REVIEW

The SEMC endorsed the proposal to undertake a review of the 2015 bushfires in Lower Hotham (Shire of Boddington) and O’Sullivan Block (Shire of Manjimup).

Following the successful model used in the Parkerville Stoneville Mt Helena Bushfire review, the intent of this review is to understand the aspects of the event that worked well and could be built on, as well as highlighting any issues that can be improved.

The Committee agreed on the Terms of Reference which will see the report overseen by a subcommittee of the SEMC comprising, as a minimum, the SEMC Chair, Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and DPaW Director General. Further support will be sourced through the lead agencies (i.e. DFES, DPaW and SEMC Secretariat). Expertise will also be drawn from organisations such as the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) as required.

The SEMC Chair will provide progress reports to the SEMC as required with the final report due to be tabled at the SEMC October meeting.

BUSHFIRE REPORT REVIEWS

The Shire of Mundaring conducted a 12 month recovery review on the Parkerville Stoneville Mt Helena Bushfire review in consultation with Shire staff who had a role in the recovery and with key partners, the Red Cross and Department for Child Protection and Family Support. The SEMC noted the report and its key points of what worked well, opportunities for improvement and where to from here. Further details relating to the review are available from Mr Adrian Dyson (adriandyson@mundaring.wa.gov.au), Manager Health and Community Services at the Shire of Mundaring.

HAZELWOOD MINE FIRE INQUIRY REPORT REVIEW

The SEMC noted the SEMC Secretariat's review of the 2014 Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Report.

The Hazelwood Mine Fire began on 9 February 2014 when embers spotting from nearby bushfires ignited and took hold on the coal mine in La Trobe Valley, Victoria. The fire burnt for 45 days and dispersed smoke and ash over the town of Morwell and surrounding areas.

The SEMC Secretariat examined the potential risk of a similar incident occurring in Western Australia through a desktop review of the 2014 [Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Report](#) to determine if any lessons identified could be considered in a Western Australian context. There are a number of issues highlighted within the report that are of interest to Western Australia. These will be forwarded to relevant SEMC Subcommittees and specialist groups for consideration.

BUSHFIRE STOCK-TAKE

The management of bushfire risk is a key priority and issue for Western Australia. Over the last several years, a range of reviews and initiatives have heightened and maintained community interest and concern.

Since the initial Keelty-led inquiries into the Perth Hills Bushfires, significant work has been done to address the management of bushfire risk. Statutory planning policy is rapidly changing; bushfire prone areas are being defined; DFES and DPaW fire-related resourcing has been enhanced; a system of developing local government Bushfire Risk Management Plans (BRMPs) has been developed and an extensive "[Are You Bushfire Ready](#)" risk awareness campaign invoked. Despite this, there remains a need to examine more carefully what individual agencies are doing.

To better understand what is being done and what could be done better, the Minister for Emergency Services has requested that a bushfire stock-take of whole of government activities and current investments be undertaken. This will allow for a more comprehensive, integrated approach to management of risks, including funding options.

The SEMC Secretariat will deliver a report to the Minister by August 2015. A progress report will be provided to the SEMC and Minister at the 4 May 2015 meeting.

POLICIES AND PLANS

The SEMC noted the progress of the review of the State Emergency Management Plans (Westplans), approving the Westplan Animal and Plant Biosecurity.

The SEMC Secretariat will oversee the review of Westplan Dambreak and compile a detailed report for SEMC consideration.

The SEMC noted the review of the State Emergency Management Policies and Procedures including the update for Annual Reporting, Local Emergency Management Arrangements, Local and District Emergency Management Committees.

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The SEMC Governance and Policy Framework project has undertaken further consultation to include all Hazard Management Agencies and other Emergency Management Agencies. The development of the single policy document and the process of streamlining and simplifying the governance framework has been received positively by all stakeholders.

The next phase of the project includes a review of the policy content and procedures; and creation of an overarching State Emergency Plan (Westplan) during 2015. The review of existing Westplans to exclude common elements is proposed in line with the current Westplan review schedule.

The SEMC noted the continued work and endorsed the State Emergency Management Policy as a working draft.

NATURAL DISASTER RESILIENCE PROGRAM (NDRP)

In December the SEMC endorsed a total of 23 projects under NDRP. These projects were divided into 2 State-level and 21 competitive projects:

- State-wide Priority Hazard Management Planning—State Risk Project
- State-wide Bushfire Risk Management Planning Program
- Disaster Resilience Grants Program

On 22 January 2015, the Minister for Emergency Services approved all 23 projects. A joint State and Federal media release announcing the successful applicants is due to take place on Friday 20 March 2015 (this date may be subject to change depending on Ministers' competing priorities). Following this announcement, all applicants will be notified of the outcome of the approval process.

SEMC SECRETARIAT UPDATES

The Executive Director presented the new [SEMC 2015-2018 Strategic Plan](#) and SEMC Secretariat 2015 Annual Plan. Both documents have been developed in consultation with SEMC members and Secretariat staff. The new Strategic Plan outlines the Committee's key direction for the next 3 years with a strong focus on Risk, Capability and Impact.

The 2015 Annual Plan details the Secretariat's work on delivering the SEMC's strategic priorities and specific Committee direction. It will be revised and updated every year. Any outstanding items included in the 2014 Annual Business Plan will be incorporated in the current plan accordingly. Updates on the progress will be tabled at each SEMC meeting.

The SEMC endorsed the 2015-2018 SEMC Strategic Plan and noted the 2015 Secretariat Annual Plan. The new 2015-2018 Strategic Plan is available on the [SEMC website](#).

Other updates include:

- The Emergency Services Communication Strategy to be progressed as a priority.
- The Emergency Management Legislation Advisory Group reviewed Draft 9 of the EM Amendment Bill 2014 and the Secretariat is providing further drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel's Office.
- The Executive Director gave evidence to the Joint Select Committee, established by the Parliament of Australia about the Australia Fund Establishment.
- Groundwork for the 2015 Emergency Preparedness Report is underway including more strategic planning for the longer-term development of the report.
- The report on the Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMAs) was presented to the Committee.
- The SEMC Subcommittee and Reference Groups minutes were noted.
- Launch of the Australasian Hazards Conference website www.anhmc.org. Registrations are now open. The conference is hosted by the SEMC and will be held at the University of Western Australia on 13-14 October 2015.

SEMC MEETINGS

The SEMC meetings scheduled for 2015 are in May, August, October and December. For further information, please contact the SEMC Secretariat on (08) 9482 1700 or visit www.semc.wa.gov.au.