



SEMC Communiqué

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) met on 2 May 2017.

Key discussion areas from the meeting:

SEASON REVIEW

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Director Risk and Resilience, Andrew Sanders, provided an overview of the OEM's State and District level risk profiles linking them to the major incidents that impacted WA during 2016-17.

The presentation began with the outlook from the pre-season briefing held in October 2016 forecasting a greater than average cyclone and flooding season.

This proved accurate for flood events. Between December and February there were 11 tropical lows and the rainfall deciles recorded by the Bureau of Meteorology ranged from above average to highest on record for most of the State.

This caused significant flooding and damage throughout WA including the extended isolation of two remote Aboriginal communities.

Mr Sanders explained to the SEMC the strong similarity between the *Flooding in Western Australia (January and February 2017)* event and scenarios evaluated during risk profiling over the past 2 years.

The District Risk Workshops have covered the entire State and across the State and District level there are now 74 credible worst case scenarios from 17 different hazards from which to plan preparedness activities.

All hazard scenarios include a comprehensive risk register which identifies what will likely be significantly impacted. The District Risk Reports are due to be released shortly.

The SEMC agreed that these hazard scenarios should be used for catastrophic disaster exercising. Catastrophic disaster exercising could be coordinated with relevant Hazard Management Agencies and would provide an effective and low-cost way to prepare for low likelihood/high consequence events.

The OEM State Recovery Coordinator, Steve Joske CSC, provided an overview of recovery activities associated with major incidents, illustrating some preliminary learnings.

Mr Joske was recently appointed to the role and his key focus in the first month has been on the *Flooding in Western Australia (January and February 2017)* event. This event affected 92 local governments and an area of 2,710,715 sq kms. It was proclaimed an eligible disaster under the Western Australia Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (WANDRRA).

The OEM provided recovery support to operations and activated the WANDRRA arrangements. The Recovery Team worked on ensuring the process was as streamlined as possible and managed the local government day labour exemption and Category C funding applications, as outlined below.

The OEM led a State and local government represented working group to develop a proposal for an exemption to the current local government day labour provisions under the federal Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. This proposal sought to allow

local governments to use their own workforce, plant and equipment when undertaking disaster reconstruction works on essential public assets for eligible events.

The proposal has been approved by the federal Minister for Justice. The exemption includes the provision of assurance that the use of local governments will be better value than engaging external contractors.

Category C funding provides for the reimbursement of the cost of clean-up, removal of debris, disposal of dead livestock and reinstatement for regions, communities or sectors severely affected by a natural disaster.

The Department of Agriculture and Food WA undertook impact assessments of the flooding event and identified the Shire of Ravensthorpe, Shire of Lake Grace and City of Swan as the worst affected local governments.

The OEM reviewed the assessments and an application for funding for these three local governments has been forwarded to the Prime Minister for his approval.

Mr Joske outlined to the SEMC that the Recovery Team's attention in the coming months will be on preparing the Team for the next event (surge capacity), providing better assistance to local governments through plans, people and processes and connecting with the local governments through the OEM's District Advisors.

NATURAL DISASTER RESILIENCE PROGRAM (NDRP)

The 2016-17 NDRP competitive grants round opened on 8 December 2016 and closed on 22 February 2017 with a total of 41 applications submitted.

The NDRP assessment panel met on two occasions, with a final consensus for recommendations reached on 7 April 2017. The panel considered 36 applications as five did not meet the minimum eligibility requirements.

The panel recommended that the SEMC endorse 13 projects. Six applications were identified to be better suited to the All West Australians Reducing Emergencies (AWARE) program, while the remaining 17 applications were declined.

The SEMC endorsed the list of recommended projects. The WA Minister for Emergency

Services is required to endorse the recommended projects, after which the Commonwealth Minister for Justice will be required to approve allocations.

It is anticipated that the successful projects will be announced via a joint media release in June 2017. Following this announcement, the OEM will work with successful applicants to commence their projects and monitor them throughout the delivery phase.

FERGUSON REPORT - IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The SEMC and the OEM (formerly known as the SEMC Secretariat) have completed many of the Ferguson Report recommendations allocated to them for implementation. The Executive Officer provided an update on the outstanding items as outlined below.

• Farmer, contractor and forestry firefighting units (Rec 9)

The OEM has prepared a discussion paper for limited circulation initially. Initial feedback has been obtained from WA Farmers, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), the Western Australian Local Government Association and the Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades prior to wider circulation of the discussion paper.

An information session will be held with relevant stakeholders upon finalisation of the discussion paper. Private contractors and foresters will be considered in a separate forum as MOUs are already in place for the use of their resources.

• Traffic management at emergency incidents (Rec 14)

The OEM will engage a consultant to undertake a review of interstate practices to identify best practice and, if required, determine where improvements to WA's policies, procedures and processes can be made.

• Community alert sirens (Opportunity 9)

A discussion paper and associated draft guidelines have been circulated widely for comment. Responses have been compiled for inclusion in a paper to be considered by the State Bushfire Coordinating Committee.

OEM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Assurance Function

The OEM is currently developing a 'governance options paper' for consideration by the Minister for Emergency Services. The paper will look at the assurance functions and resolution of the OEM independence and governance issues.

The Assurance Team is continuing with the tracking of recommendations made in previous major incident reviews which will be included in a lessons management framework.

This framework will complement the future assurance framework and will incorporate the holistic management of lessons and recommendations.

2017 Emergency Preparedness Report

The SEMC's Emergency Preparedness Report is due to the Minister for Emergency Services by 31 October 2017.

Preparations for the Report's development and associated publications are well underway. The Report's web-based collection tool has been refined and has been sent to stakeholders. During the month of May the Report's project manager will conduct a high level stakeholder interview program.

State Risk Project

Planning has now started for the risk assessments for the seven sudden onset natural hazards required to be completed by 30 June 2017 under the NDRP National Partnership Agreement.

The District Risk Reports are complete and being rolled out with an associated communications plan.

The local risk assessment rollout continues as per schedule.

The Director Risk and Resilience provided the SEMC a further update as part of the Season Review.

State Capability Project

Consultation for the project and associated documentation is now complete. Some of the learnings garnered during this process will be incorporated into the existing Preparedness

Report Capability model and data collection tool.

OTHER UPDATES

The SEMC noted a range of projects and updates discussed during the meeting:

- The SEMC endorsed for Ministerial approval the drafting of the *Emergency Management Amendment Bill 2017*. This will correspond with version 174-2 of the *Emergency Management Amendment Bill 2016*. Once drafted, the OEM will submit the Bill to the Minister for Emergency Services for subsequent submission to Cabinet for approval.
- The SEMC noted the draft Ministerial Statement of Intent provided to the Minister for Emergency Services.
- The SEMC noted the Local Emergency Management Arrangements for the City of Joondalup, City of Fremantle and City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

SEMC MEETINGS

The next SEMC meeting will take place on Tuesday 1 August 2017. The remaining meetings scheduled for 2017 will be held on 3 October and 5 December.

For further information, please contact the OEM