

EXERCISE MATERIAL ONLY



Exercise EQUUS

Evaluation Report

Exercise Name:	Exercise EQUUS – Animal Welfare in Emergencies State Support Plan Discussion Exercise
Evaluators:	Lead Evaluators were Assisted by:
Agency / Capability:	DFES – SEMC Business Unit
Location of Evaluation:	DFES Belmont
Due Date:	
Recipient:	

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
 Template 3.2

Summary of Evidence

Exercise Objectives were assessed using a quantitative rating scale to measure if each KPI was able to be performed.

Objective 1:	Activation - Demonstrate the engagement procedures to activate the response arrangements in State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies.
State Capability Achievement Objective(s)	<p>Capability Area: Emergency Response: Core Capability: Command, Control and Coordination</p> <p>Achievement Objective: Pre-established and well understood protocols and structures exist that define the interrelationships between stakeholders during an event and facilitate effective command, control and coordination.</p>
OBSERVATIONS	
<p>Objective 1 KPI 1 - The State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies response arrangements are [engaged] / [activated]. – Performs with some challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Activation of the Plan occurred, however the process was not clearly described during the exercise. <p>Validation of the following engagement/activation methods:</p> <p>The Incident Controller (IC) makes a request to the Operational Area Support Group (OASG) agency Representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Facilitator/IC confirmed to some evaluators that for this scenario he would have made a request to the agency OASG representative, however this information was not clearly understood by the larger group. Some evaluators were unable to assess how the activation occurred. <p>Notification to the agency animal welfare emergencies number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Process for notification not evidenced however Director XXX confirmed that through situational awareness of the event, she would be on alert for a potential activation request through this number. <p>The agency recommends activation of plan to IC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not discussed during the exercise. <p>Other arrangements: Not discussed.</p> <p>If a request is made to the agency, how is the engagement/activation approved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ While not described within the State Support Plan (SSP), it was described during panel discussion. The Director XXX would approve activation of the plan if a request was made through the agency OASG representative. 	

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
Template 3.2

Objective 1 KPI 2 – The agency coordinates the internal activation procedures - **Unable to assess**

Unable to evaluate as internal agency procedures were unknown to evaluators. The agency did not provide their Operational Plan. As such, evaluators could not assess the linkages with the State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies (SSP-AWE).

- a. The agency provides a representative to the OASG at the request of the incident controller
Activation of the agency representative to/by the OASG was unclear as the scenario assumed there was an agency representative already sitting on the OASG – **Unable to assess**
- b. The agency will initiate the internal Incident Management System which may necessitate the establishment of an organisational structure, specific to the management of the welfare of animals in the emergency.
The agency OASG representative discussed activation of internal (Incident Management System (IMS) which is aligned with the Australiasian Interagency Incident Management System (AIIMS) framework. Additional comments were made to consider the need for additional sectors to be included within this internal structure, such as volunteer coordination, donations management, and wildlife. – **Performs without challenges**
- c. The agency determines if a local Animal Welfare Coordinator (AWC) is required.
Scenario did not lead to the discussion of a local Animal Welfare Coordinator. It was unclear if this position would have been required – **Unable to assess**
- d. The Local AWC remains as an ongoing point of local contact and will liaise with the State Animal Welfare in Emergencies Coordinator (SAWEC) to determine what additional support is required.
No Local AWC discussed - **Unable to assess**

Evaluator observations are captured within the Observation Analysis table (Attachment A).

INSIGHTS (Are developed from observations and designed to inform the identification of lessons. Note: Insights need to be fact based and accurately describe the issue or observation. They can describe the issue or the consequences of the issue happening or not happening. They do not propose the solution)

- Terminology within the SSP regarding the 'engagement procedure' was inconsistent with terminology across the EM sector which refers to activation.
- Awareness of local animal welfare plans is held by several entities across the EM sector. Ongoing work to document the status of local animal welfare plans is being undertaken – this greater depth of knowledge will allow better integration of animal welfare in planning, response and recovery activities.
- The agency, as a support agency, relies on receiving situational awareness from the controlling agency. Lack of clarity or consistency on the process undertaken by controlling agencies to determine which support agencies to engage before, during and after events and how that engagement will take place lead to the support agency not being sure how, or indeed if, they would be contacted.
- The use of ad hoc or undocumented situational awareness procedures runs the risk of key stakeholders not being suitably informed or activated.
- While the agency command, control and coordination procedures are understood internally, they are not captured within the SSP.
- Procedures were unclear regarding the approval authority to activate the resources and support described within the SSP.
- The agency command, control and coordination procedures are understood internally, however not captured within the SSP.

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
 Template 3.2

➤ The agency representative undertook multiple roles within State level EM arrangements. As agency roles are not clearly described within the SSP, there was confusion as to how the IC would engage with the agency in different scenarios.

Was the exercise objective achieved: **Partially Achieved**

Objective 1 KPI 1 – Performed with some challenges
 Objective 1 KPI 2 – Unable to assess
 Objective 1 KPI 2a – Unable to assess
 Objective 1 KPI 2b – Performs without challenges
 Objective 1 KPI 2c – Unable to assess
 Objective 1 KPI 2d – Unable to assess

Why / why not?
 The key objective to activate the State Support Plan was achieved, however several of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were not able to be assessed as the injects and flow of the exercise did not allow for these issues to be properly explored and discussed.

Internal agency processes are understood quite well by agency personnel as evidenced during the exercise discussion, however they are not described in the State Support Plan, which did not allow for assessment of internal processes.

Objective 2:	Validate the internal communications, messaging processes and outputs to supporting agencies as per the State Support Plan.
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State Capability Achievement Objective(s)	<p>Capability Area: Emergency Response: Core Capability: Command, Control and Coordination</p> <p>Achievement Objective: Pre-established and well understood protocols and structures exist that define the interrelationships between stakeholders during an event and facilitate effective command, control and coordination.</p> <p>Capability Area: Emergency Response: Core Capability: Agency Interoperability</p> <p>Achievement Objective: Effective and interoperable communication systems (including incident management systems) exist to allow seamless communications during an emergency.</p>
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OBSERVATIONS

Objective 2 KPI 1 – The agency provides initial situational awareness to the Committee for Animal Welfare in Emergencies (CAWE) members. – **Performs with some challenges**

➤ Upon notification (MSE 006), SAWEC discussed sending an initial notification email to CAWE to inform of the Catastrophic Fire period.

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
Template 3.2

- CAWE XO (SAWEC) would recommend to members to maintain situational awareness and to inform networks of the impending situation.
- KPI was performed, however the action differed from the desired outcome as was suggested by the exercise planning team. The desired outcome to hold a teleconference with the CAWE was discussed later in the scenario when the fire had escalated and there were several road closures announced (MSE 012).
- No mention of how the activation of other agencies and the CAWE would occur (email SMS WEBEOC etc)

Objective 2 KPI 2 – The agency notifies CAWE members of decision to convene the Animal Welfare Emergency Group – Performs without challenges

- CAWE notified of plan activation and activation of the Animal Welfare in Emergencies (AWEG) at the appropriate time. **Note:** It was unclear which members were included on the AWEG initially.
- Extensive list of CAWE membership, wasn't clear on how the initial situational assessment was broadcasted to members

Objective 2 KPI 3 – The agency provides continued situational awareness reports to the Committee for Animal Welfare in Emergencies (CAWE) members. – Unable to assess

- SAWEC discussed maintaining situational awareness through Emergency WA, however continued situational awareness to the CAWE was not discussed. Only initial notification to CAWE discussed. No situation reports discussed for CAWE or AWEG.
- No regular planned sitrep times stated.

Objective 2 KPI 4 – The agency may transition some of the CAWE members into an Animal Welfare Emergency Group (AWEG) – Unable to assess

- Transition into AWEG not discussed, however Chair of AWEG / agency OASG rep engaged the observers (members of the CAWE) throughout the exercise to request resources.
- AVA, WA Horse Council, Western Australia Local Government Association (WALGA), and RSPCA offered responses to the Chair's request for resources, which may have shown the transition onto the AWEG.
- No formal process for transitioning of CAWE members to AWEG was described

Evaluator observations are captured within the Observation Analysis table (Attachment A)

INSIGHT(S)

- The CAWE is a body of people who have a range of skills and resources to deal with animals in emergency situations. The group involves veterinary associations, RSPCA, animal interest groups such as the WA Horse Council. This wide cross section of stakeholders can be appointed to the Animal Welfare in Emergencies Group (AWEG) during an emergency to support the agency with animal welfare issues. The AWEG facilitates the agency coordinating and liaising with animal welfare stakeholders prior to taking action. These stakeholders also provide logistical and information support as well as providing specialist services and resources. Clarity around this activation process would facilitate the prompt activation of the AWEG.
- The activation of the AWEG allowed effective and efficient information sharing. The continued situation information sharing to CAWE members would allow for AWEG membership to change to reflect changing circumstances.

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
 Template 3.2

<p>Was the objective achieved – Partially Achieved</p> <p>Objective 2 KPI 1 – Performs with some challenges Objective 2 KPI 2 – Performs without challenges Objective 2 KPI 3 – Unable to assess Objective 2 KPI 4 – Unable to assess</p>
<p>Why / why not? Initial situational awareness and notification of the activation of the SSP to the members of the CAWE was described, however the ongoing situational awareness process was not described. The process to request and transition CAWE members onto operational AWEG was unclear to evaluators.</p>

Objective 3:	Validate the external communications, messaging processes and outputs to the public as per the State Support Plan.
State Capability Achievement Objective(s)	<p>Capability Area: Community Involvement Core Capability: Public Information</p> <p>Achievement Objective: Messages to Communities at all stages of emergency management are planned, coordinated, prompt, reliable and actionable.</p>

OBSERVATIONS
<p>Objective 3 KPI 1 – The agency integrates with HMA/Controlling agency public information – Performs without challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The agency communications representative provided a sound understanding of the integration of Public Information functions across agencies. ➤ An agency public information officer will assist the HMA/Controlling Agency Public Information function in developing talking points or information releases on animal welfare emergency arrangements. ➤ The agency mentioned pre-existing relationships with DFES Communications team and would engage with DFES Communications to provide messaging that directs the public to the agency website for information regarding animal welfare. <p>Objective 3 KPI 2 - Establish communications with key industry and stakeholder contacts and identify any actions they are taking or concerns – Performs without challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No evidence provided of an internal agency Operational Plan. Evaluators were unable to confirm whether a detailed list of stakeholders contacts was available for easy reference. ➤ The agency advised they would establish communications with key industry and stakeholder contacts and identify any actions they are taking or concerns. ➤ CAWE networks were used to initially provide awareness to key industry and stakeholder groups. Further communication would be released through the agency website. <p>Objective 3 KPI 3 - Communication is developed and released for the public evacuating with domestic animals – Performs without challenges</p>

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
Template 3.2

- To provide consistent messaging, communication regarding public evacuating with domestic animals was also sent out through the AWEG to send to networks.
- Liaise with DFES media, LG Communications officer, use of social media. Importance of consistent messaging.
- There was robust discussion on how this would occur in partnership with DFES
- Recommend the agency establish a call centre (separate to DFES) for significant AWE

Objective 3 KPI 4 - Coordination is established and maintained between the agency and local government – **Performs without challenges**

- The agency PIO discussed liaising with the Local Government communications staff throughout the exercise scenario to provide consistent messaging to the public.

Evaluator observations are captured within the Observation Analysis table (Attachment A)

INSIGHT(S)

- Animal welfare stakeholder networks provided appropriate support and consistent messaging regarding animal welfare public information.
- There is inconsistent messaging regarding animals at evacuation centres.
- Evacuation centres are established by the Department of Communities at the request of the Hazard Management Agency and with consultation with the relevant local government/s.
- State planning policy 4.6.1 directs that “EM planning must consider special arrangements for animals.” Local animal welfare plans are established by local governments, some of which allow for animals to be housed at nominated evacuation centres. There is a range of positions across local government (from full support including specialised animal welfare trailers, through to animals not being accepted).
- There is no one clear state level policy concerning animals in evacuation centres, leading to each incident having different options for this matter. DFES messaging does not allow for this level of variability with the result that all DFES messaging states that animals should not be taken to evacuation centres.
- This may lead to people remaining in harm’s way (not evacuating) for fear of what will happen to their animals if they cannot be accepted at the evacuation centre.
- Consistent coordination of public information occurred between the agency, DFES and local government prior to the release of information.
- There are existing and effective relationships between the agency and DFES in public information, which facilitates this coordination. However, activation processes for the State Support Plan – Emergency Public Information are not well understood. This caused confusion as to the roles and responsibilities of the SEPIC and the PIRG.

Was the objective achieved: **Achieved**

Objective 3 KPI 1 – Performs without challenges

Objective 3 KPI 2 – Performs without challenges

Objective 3 KPI 3 – Performs without challenges

Objective 3 KPI 4 – Performs without challenges

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
 Template 3.2

Objective 4:	<p>Demonstrate the agency’s capacity and capability to manage stakeholder roles and resources in respect to the roles and responsibilities described within the State Support Plan.</p>
State Capability Achievement Objective(s)	<p>Capability Area: Resources: Core Capability: People</p> <p>Achievement Objective - Agencies have appropriate levels of trained, capable and supported people to effectively undertake all aspects of emergency management.</p> <p>Capability Area: Resources: Core Capability: Volunteering</p> <p>Achievement Objective - A strategy exists to manage good Samaritans and spontaneous volunteers.</p> <p>Capability Area: Resources: Core Capability: Equipment/Critical Resources</p> <p>Achievement Objective: Organisations have or can readily access appropriate infrastructure and equipment during an emergency. Achievement Objective: Equipment can be mobilised during an emergency and plans are in place to address pre-deployment, peak surges and redundancies for outages.</p> <p>Capability Area: Emergency Response Core Capability: Evacuation</p> <p>Achievement Objective: Agencies have the resources and skills to undertake both directed and voluntary evacuation of both people and animals. 6.4. Suitable sites have been identified and are available that maintain the provision of critical goods and services (e.g. Food, potable water, shelter)</p>
OBSERVATIONS	
<p>Objective 4 KPI 1 - Provide support and advice on the transportation for evacuating animals – Performs with some challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The agency able to liaise with LG to access horse floats. The agency OASG representative/AWEG chair reached out to AWEG for assistance. ➤ Further advice and resources were able to be provided by WA Horse Council, however engagement of resources and timing to obtain restricted access permits were highlighted as issues. 	

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
Template 3.2

- Other concerns were raised with liability for moving animals, particularly horses to the nearest paddock when evacuating animals. These animals and locations would also need to be registered to ensure they could be assessed, triaged and reunited with their owner/carers.

Objective 4 KPI 2 - Identify the availability of locations to house evacuated animals. – Unable to assess

- Participants liaised with LG and were able to rely on LG plans for evacuation centres that allowed animals however the challenge with the acceptance of animals in evacuation shelters was highlighted as an issue. Unsure if this action engaged the AWEG, as it was able to be handled at the local level.

Objective 4 KPI 3 - Manage displaced or stray animals. – Unable to assess

- Group liaised with LG and were able to rely on LG Rangers to capture stray animals. Unable to assess State support.

Objective 4 KPI 4 - Manage volunteers and donated goods – Performs with some challenges

- The agency OASG Rep/AWEG chair reached out to AWEG for assistance.
- No discussion re coordinating with State Recovery Coordinator or working with WALGA to assist with coordination of volunteers and donations.
- AVA confirmed they would be able to coordinate their own veterinarians; however, they only represent approx. 40% of vets in the State. The agency to be liaison point between AVA and OASG.
- The agency took ultimate responsibility of coordinating volunteers and donations, where there were no resources able to provide. These conversations led to discussion of potentially needing to add additional sectors to internal incident management structure to facilitate.

Objective 4 KPI 5 - Assist owners and carers to obtain Restricted Access permits. – Performs with major challenges

- The agency requested restricted access permits on behalf of owners/carers and volunteers, however timing was stressed for obtaining restricted access permits prior to areas being closed off. It was unclear if permits were obtained.

Objective 4 KPI 6 - Assess and triage impacted animals – Performs with major challenges

- The agency OASG Rep/AWEG chair reached out to AWEG for assistance.
- Challenges included the need to register where animals were left. Communities only capture information regarding pets and animals left behind if provided by residents at the evacuation centres.
- Information would be coming from observations from responders and LG would be capturing phone calls from residents. Some of these calls may include information regarding animals left behind or moved to a different location during evacuation.
- The agency recognised a potential need to set up a State call centre to support the registration of animals/ animal welfare needs.

Objective 4 KPI 7 - Identify/administer treatment to impacted animals. - Unable to assess

- The agency OASG Rep/AWEG chair reached out to AWEG for assistance.
- Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) may be able to provide coordination of volunteer vets from their networks to help administer treatment but they only represent 40% of registered vets. Non-members are not as easy to coordinate.

Objective 4 KPI 8 - Perform/assist with transportation for the humane euthanasia of affected animals. - Unable to assess

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
Template 3.2

- Insurance implications discussed for the euthanasia of high value horses

Objective 4 KPI 9 - Advise on/arrange for the disposal of deceased animals – **Performs with some challenges**

- The agency referred to pre-existing advice on the disposal of deceased animals and acknowledged that special precautions would be considered prior to identifying locations to bury deceased animals. It was discussed that some suitable locations could be identified by the agency, but it was unclear if support would be provided or only advice.
- Information and existing arrangements publicly available on the agency external website

Objective 4 KPI 10 - Identify/provide emergency food/water/shelter to affected animals – **Special ideas did not lead to discussion on this activity**

Objective 4 KPI 11 - Identify and reunite animals with their owners or carers. - **Special ideas did not lead to discussion on this activity**

Evaluator observations are captured within the Observation Analysis table. (Attachment A)

INSIGHT(S)

- A coordinated process for the registration of impacted animals will enable animal owners to be reassured that their animals are being appropriately managed during the emergency event. It will also enable a smoother process so that animals can be reunited with their owners.
- Further, a coordinated process will facilitate animals being assessed, triaged and receiving treatment if required.
- Impacted animals may include animals that are lost or injured, animals that remain in the impact area, and animals evacuated with their owner to an evacuation centre. Wildlife may also be impacted and need to be registered.
- A documented registration process can be shared with evacuation centre officers, the IC and LGs to enable early and coordinated information sharing.
- People have strong emotional connections to animals. As a result, where animals are impacted by emergencies, there is an outpouring of community goodwill, often in the form of skilled spontaneous volunteers, resources and donations. The agency has established relationships with a number of support agencies who can assist to manage this.
- Agencies supporting are able to provide volunteers and/or resources.
- Clear directions to the community in terms of what is required and where it can be delivered have proven to be beneficial as resources can be donated outside of the hot zone.
- Where restricted access permits have not considered animal welfare issues, there have been delays in provision of care and humane treatment of animals. Further, the DFES restricted access permits system is not always understood by community members and volunteers trying to offer animal welfare resources.
- There are significant liability issues concerning moving, treating and euthanising animals, especially companion animal and high worth animals such as breeding livestock or racehorses.
- Many of the stakeholders felt that there was value in clearly articulating these insurance and liability considerations and, where possible, having standard operating procedures to provide clarity. In an emergency 'good faith' actions are protected, but guidelines on what is and is not allowed may provide greater certainty both for animal owners and responders.

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
Template 3.2

- Pre-existing plans facilitate the advice provided by the agency regarding the disposal of deceased animals. This information was discussed during the exercise and is adequately referenced within the SSP.

Was the objective achieved: **Partially Achieved**

- Objective 4 KPI 1** – Performs with some challenges
Objective 4 KPI 2 – Unable to assess
Objective 4 KPI 3 – Unable to assess
Objective 4 KPI 4 – Performs with some challenges
Objective 4 KPI 5 – Performs with major challenges
Objective 4 KPI 6 – Performs with major challenges
Objective 4 KPI 7 – Unable to assess
Objective 4 KPI 8 – Unable to assess
Objective 4 KPI 9 – Performs with some challenges
Objective 4 KPI 10 – Special ideas did not lead to discussion on this activity
Objective 4 KPI 11 – Special ideas did not lead to discussion on this activity

Why / why not?

Several of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were not able to be assessed as the injects and flow of the exercise did not allow for these issues to be properly explored and discussed.

Additional Notes:

Highlights:

- Preparedness is crucial for animal welfare especially regarding local/owner/carer level emergency and evacuation planning.
- Local Governments are acutely aware of local resources and needs, however local resources and planning can vary greatly across the State.
- Coordination between all agencies providing public information is crucial to effective external communications and consistent messaging.

Issues parked for further discussion/exploration:

- The process to get remote access permits (Include technology, time frames, prescriptive/bespoke) was not well understood by participants or observers and requires further clarification.
- Provision to declare an Animal Welfare Emergency under Animal Welfare Act – may simplify and clarify issues surrounding the emergency euthanasia of animals, particularly horses.
- Management of spontaneous volunteers – other groups ie. Volunteers WA
- Include Animal Welfare in AIIMS – where does it belong in the AIIMS structure? Operations or Logistics?
- Further clarity required on the management & coordination of Animal Welfare/volunteers
- How does the agency coordinate and communicate advice contained in Traffic Management plans?
- Inclusion of an Animal Welfare Division within DFES Incident Control Centre.
- Further clarity required on the management of donations of feed and large items. What areas can be used to store and drop off? Who coordinates, organises and manages this function?

Discussion Exercise Exemplar # 8
EVALUATION REPORT
Template 3.2

- Inclusion of an animal welfare assessment while DFES conduct impact assessments under RAPs
- Companion animals in evacuation centres – policy is out of date and advice provided to public is inconsistent with today's views. MLA writing to Minister to raise concerns that policy needs to be made more community friendly.
- Registration of animals moved to 'safe' area by authorities ie. Girls walking horses in affected area. Police evacuate girls and place horses in vacant paddock. Are there liability issues regarding the responsibility of the animals? Who is responsible for them?
- Notification to districts including surrounding districts
- Recommendation made for LEMA contacts list to include vets and processes to contact 24/7

Exercise Management Insights

- Evaluators were of the view that the exercise scenario was too operationally focussed which distracted players from considering the broader strategic issues. This made it very difficult to evaluate the specific objectives arising from a strategic State Support Plan.
- The Exercise scenario did not allow for adequate exploration/discussion and subsequent evaluation of some of the exercise KPIs.
- Local government animal welfare resources were continually able to be utilised which indicated sound planning and preparation by the LG. This however did not allow for the State's resources to be fully assessed in the exercise as the LGs capacity had not been fully exhausted.
- It was unclear which roles or groups the exercise participants and observers were playing throughout the exercise.
- Valuable awareness of the State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies and potential animal welfare issues was gained by the HMA representative.
- The Facilitator also held the role of Incident Controller, which provided good awareness of potential animal welfare issues that could arise, however the IC role may have been more useful as a participant in the discussion exercise. From a practical perspective however, the detailed 'operational' components and injects in the exercise were a valuable learning tool that was very useful in raising the awareness of exercise players of the complexities and issues that would arise (and the sequence of events) during a real incident. With the approaching fire season, it would have been valuable if more DFES ICs attended the exercise to gain an appreciation of the issues and an awareness and understanding of the SSP-AWE.