



Government of Western Australia  
State Emergency Management Committee

# STATE SUPPORT PLAN

## Emergency Public Information (SSP - Public Information)

Note: This document contains information relating to the whole of government public information arrangements. It must be read in conjunction with the State Emergency Management Policy (roles and responsibilities) and State Emergency Management Plan (generic public information arrangements)..

Responsible Agency: State Emergency Management Committee, Public Information Reference Group

Approved by: State Emergency Management Committee

Resolution Number: 91/2019

Version Number: V01.01

Date of approval: 04 October 2019

Date of effect: 31 October 2019

Review date: December 2023

Legislation

Policy

PLAN

Procedure

Guidelines

Glossary

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Chair, Public Information Reference Group (PIRG)  
State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC)

## AMENDMENT TABLE

Amendment		Details	Amended by:
#	Date		
1	December 2018	Version 01.00 - New State Support Plan format; statement of fact changes; machinery of Government changes; replacement of the term 'emergency public information' with 'public information'; removal of text relating to the general public information arrangements (this information is now included in the State Emergency Management Plan); clarification regarding the various public information roles and responsibilities of agencies and the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator; clarification of the support available under this plan and how it can be activated; additional text clarifying arrangements for the release of public information; replacement of the term 'Emergency Public Information Group' with 'Public Information Team'; and inclusion of additional information regarding support available during recovery.	SEMC Public Information Reference Group
2	October 2019	Version 01.01 – Minor amendments approved by SEMC (Resolution number 91/2019) as per <a href="#">amendments table v02.02</a> .	SEMC Business Unit
3			
4			

This State Support Plan is available on the State Emergency Management Committee website [www.semc.wa.gov.au](http://www.semc.wa.gov.au).

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Communities threatened by or experiencing an impact from an emergency have an urgent and vital need for information and direction. They need to know what is likely to happen (or has happened), what to do, and what to expect. They also need to know what the responding authorities are doing.

The public information function during emergencies includes:

- management and dissemination of appropriate information to the media to meet news needs and to broadcast information and instructions to the public; and
- management and dissemination of appropriate information and instructions to the public immediately before, during and after an emergency through various means, such as 'emergency imminent' alerting systems, the internet, social media, public meetings, public information lines and other mechanisms, systems or tools.

### 1.1 AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The aim of the State Support Plan Emergency Public Information (this Plan) is to detail the State's **whole of government** (high level) public information response arrangements (coordination and support) for activation during emergencies when required.

The objectives of the plan are to:

- establish the organisational role and responsibilities to assist Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) and Controlling Agencies during emergencies. This includes establishing the arrangements under which the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator (SEPIC) is supported;

- establish the SEPIC's role in preparedness, response and recovery activities in relation to the whole of government public information arrangements for emergencies;
- establish the basis for coordination between EMAs and, where agreements have been reached, Controlling Agencies and parts of the private sector involved in the provision of the public information function; and
- provide guidelines for the operation of this plan following activation of its response arrangements.

### 1.2 SCOPE

This Plan describes the State's whole of government public information arrangements. The generic public information arrangements, including roles and responsibilities of EMAs, Controlling Agencies and other public authorities, are in the *State Emergency Management Policy* (State EM Policy) (section 5.6) and *State Emergency Management Plan* (State EM Plan) (section 5.3.1).

### 1.3 AUTHORITY TO PLAN

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) has delegated responsibility for the preparation, maintenance and review of this Plan to the SEMC Public Information Reference Group (PIRG).

### 1.4 EXERCISE AND REVIEW PERIOD

The SEPIC is responsible for exercising the emergency public information arrangements within this Plan on an annual basis.

This Plan may be exercised independently, or as part of exercises for the State Hazard Plans (Westplans) or broader State emergency management arrangements. An activation of

the response arrangements within this Plan during an emergency may satisfy the requirement to exercise, in line with the State EM Policy (section 4.9).

## 1.5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The SEPIC is appointed by the State Emergency Coordinator (SEC), with oversight of this role provided by the PIRG. The SEPIC is Chair of the PIRG. The SEC has appointed the Director Media and Corporate Communications, Western Australia Police Force (WA Police Force), as the SEPIC.

The SEPIC is required to appoint two Deputy SEPICs. The deputies must be members of the PIRG. The SEPIC must provide the deputy SEPICs with appropriate training and information to undertake their role.

As per the State EM Policy (statement 5.6.4), the SEPIC is responsible for maintaining strategic oversight of the State's public information arrangements for emergencies in conjunction with the PIRG.

The SEPIC has preparedness responsibilities in relation to maintaining strategic oversight of the State's whole of government public information arrangements, as outlined in section 2 of this Plan. The SEPIC also has response responsibilities in relation to activation of the response arrangements in this Plan, when required, for whole of government (i.e. across agencies) public information arrangements. These are outlined in section 3 of this Plan.

The HMA, other EMAs, Controlling Agencies and public authorities (including local government) have responsibilities when the response arrangements in this Plan are activated

during an emergency response. These are outlined in section 3 of this Plan.

It is recommended that each agency or organisation with a role or responsibility under this Plan has appropriate operational procedures that detail that agency's response arrangements in accordance with this Plan. These arrangements should be complementary to their existing operational procedures that enable them to carry out their roles and any responsibilities under the State EM Plan.

The SEPIC may also have recovery responsibilities, as outlined in section 4 of this Plan.

## 1.6 RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

This Plan is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- *Emergency Management Act 2005* (EM Act);
- *Emergency Management Regulations 2006* (EM Regulation);
- State Emergency Management Policy (State EM Policy);
- State Emergency Management Plan (State EM Plan);
- Relevant State Hazard Plans;
- Relevant State Support Plans;
- State Emergency Management Procedures (State EM Procedures);
- State Emergency Management Guidelines (State EM Guidelines); and
- State Emergency Management Glossary (State EM Glossary).

## 2 PREPAREDNESS

### 2.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR PREPAREDNESS

While the public information function is primarily a response function, the SEPIC has preparedness responsibilities in relation to maintaining strategic oversight of the State's whole of government public information arrangements. These include:

- ensuring EMAs, Controlling Agencies and public authorities are aware of their responsibilities under the State EM Policy, State EM Plan and this Plan;
- assessing the capabilities of EMAs (HMAs, Support Organisations and Combat Agencies), Controlling Agencies and public authorities to discharge their public information responsibilities during emergencies and reporting to the SEMC, relevant subcommittees and the PIRG on this matter;
- ensuring there are sufficient communications support resources available for emergencies from across government through the provision of regular training to staff of public authorities to enable them to assist with public information and media duties during emergencies – refer to section 3.3.8 of this Plan;
- providing training and information to the Deputy SEPICs to enable them to undertake the coordination function in the absence of the SEPIC;
- maintaining a contact list of key media contacts and trained public information and media staff (or equivalents) including digital media staff for HMAs, Controlling Agencies and EMAs;
- education of the media in relation to the State public information roles and responsibilities;

- establishment of protocols and procedures with the media for the dissemination of information and instructions to the public; and
- liaising with the Deputy SEPICs in relation to any absences from work that will result in the SEPIC being unable to activate this Plan during an emergency.

### 2.2 RESOURCES

Each EMA and Controlling Agency has responsibility for managing and coordinating their own public information resources. This Plan is based on the utilisation of resources existing within EMAs and public authorities, when required at the State level.

### 2.3 TRAINING

As part of the preparedness responsibilities, the SEPIC must ensure there is provision of training on, and exercising of, these public information arrangements on a regular basis, as per sections 1.4 of this Plan and as determined by the PIRG.



## 3 RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

### 3.1 PRINCIPLES

The whole of government public information arrangements established under this Plan are based on the principles of:

- the provision of accurate, coordinated, timely and accessible information on the emergency to the community and the media; and
- upon activation of the response arrangements in this Plan, implementation of coordination activities and a support structure (including personnel and groups) appropriate to the emergency including its location and public information needs.

### 3.2 ACTIVATION OF THIS PLAN

The SEPIC is responsible for the activation of the whole of government public information response arrangements in this Plan.

Activation of the response arrangements may occur:

- on the SEPIC's initiative in consultation with the HMA, Controlling Agency and, where possible, the SEC;
- on the request of the SEC or the HMA responsible for an emergency response
- when a State Emergency Coordination Group (SECG) is established; and/or
- when an emergency situation or state of emergency is declared.

All requests for the activation of this Plan are to be made to the SEPIC. The SEPIC must immediately notify the HMA and Controlling Agency when activation occurs.

### 3.3 RESPONSE ROLES

#### 3.3.1 Hazard Management Agencies (HMAs)

The relevant HMA<sup>1</sup> is in control of the public information function for the emergency, in collaboration with the Controlling Agency, as per the State EM Policy statements 5.6.9 and 5.6.10. **This responsibility continues when the response arrangements in this Plan are activated.**

#### 3.3.2 SEPIC

The SEPIC is responsible activating the response arrangements in this Plan when there is a need for whole of government public information arrangements. This will involve coordination of whole of government public information across the emergency (as outlined in section 3.5 of this Plan) and appointment of an appropriate support structure (as outlined in section 3.6 of this Plan), as required.

#### 3.3.3 Western Australia Police Force

The WA Police Force will provide staff to assist the SEPIC during an emergency response, when the SEPIC requires support. This may involve appointing staff members to undertake roles such as liaison with the HMA, administration support, and providing executive support for the Public Information Team. As per section 3.3.5 of this Plan, where

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<sup>1</sup> In some situations, there may be an advance agreement between the HMA and the Controlling Agency for the Controlling Agency to be in control of the public

information function during an emergency. Such arrangements will be documented in the relevant State Hazard Plan. (State EM Policy statement 5.6.10).

required, the SEPIC may request EMAs and Controlling Agencies to provide staff to also support these activities.

### 3.3.4 Deputy SEPICs

There will be instances where the SEPIC may not be able to fulfil their role. For example, when they are on leave, during prolonged events, or when their agency (WA Police Force) is the HMA leading the emergency response and they have responsibilities under their substantive role to provide support to their agency<sup>2</sup>.

In such situations, a Deputy SEPIC will be required to act as the SEPIC. The SEPIC must liaise with the Deputy SEPICs and their agency/organisation to ascertain their availability to act as the SEPIC.

Once appointed, the Deputy SEPIC is responsible for informing agencies that they are the Acting SEPIC. The Acting SEPIC is responsible for arranging any resources necessary to support them in the role.

### 3.3.5 EMAs and Controlling Agencies

EMAs and Controlling Agencies have various public information responsibilities in support of the HMA and SEPIC, as per section 5.3.1 of the State EM Plan and sections 3.5 and 3.6 of this Plan. This includes deploying public information and media staff (including digital media staff or the equivalent) to assist

each other and/or the SEPIC during emergencies, where practicable.

### 3.3.6 Public Authorities (State Government Agencies)

Public authorities are to deploy trained<sup>3</sup> public information and media staff on the request of the SEPIC, where this is practicable, to provide assistance with the HMA's public information activities during an emergency response.

### 3.3.7 Local Government

On the request of the SEPIC and, where practicable, local governments are to deploy media or other staff to participate in HMA activities and/or, when established, Public Information Team meetings.

### 3.3.8 Public Information and Media Staff

Public information and media staff deployed to assist the HMA are to work under the general direction of the HMA in relation to the public information activities they are undertaking for the emergency response.

### 3.3.9 Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Executive Services Branch

The DPC's Executive Services branch, when requested by the SEPIC, is responsible for:

- monitoring information disseminated by the electronic and print media and providing this material to the HMA and relevant EMAs to enhance the emergency response; and

<sup>2</sup> It is necessary and appropriate that the SEPIC's substantive agency role is maintained as separate to and distinct from their role as SEPIC.

<sup>3</sup> 'Trained public information and media staff' is a reference to government agency staff who have undertaken training on public information duties during emergencies

provided by the SEPIC and are included on the SEPIC's Public Information and Media Staff Contact List (internal document).

- disseminating media releases received from the SEPIC to the media when requested.

### 3.4 RELEASE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

The State EM Plan (section 5.3.1) lists the procedures that **must** be followed by all agencies during an emergency for the release of public information. These are provided in Appendix D of this Plan, and are summarised below:

- In general, the HMA is responsible for confirming publicly that there is an emergency and for releasing key messages associated with it;
- All agencies with response roles must not release information relating to the emergency until the HMA has publicly confirmed it, with the exception of life-saving information;
- EMAs may continue to release information relating to their business as usual activities; and
- EMAs and Controlling Agencies involved in the response must only release information relating to their areas of expertise. This information must be provided to the HMA prior to release through the EMA/Controlling Agency's channels.

### 3.5 COORDINATION ACTIVITIES BY THE SEPIC

The SEPIC's coordination activities include, when required:

- producing, maintaining and disseminating high level (i.e. non-operational) multi-agency talking points for distribution to EMAs' public information representatives involved in the emergency response, the SEC and relevant ministerial staff;

- developing a whole of government public information strategy in collaboration with the Public Information Team. Where required, this will occur in consultation with the SEC, the State Emergency Coordination Group (SECG) and/or State Disaster Council (SDC);
- calling and scheduling multi-agency media conferences, in close consultation with the HMA, Controlling Agency and relevant EMAs;
- identifying obstructions to flow of information relevant to the public information function from the local/district level through to the HMA and considering the establishment of a support structure (as per section 3.6 below) to assist, such as additional public information and media staff;
- providing advice and support to the SEC, SECG and State Disaster Council, as required;
- for emergencies where this plan was activated, arranging a public information briefing with the EMAs involved in the recovery phase and submitting a report to the PIRG; and
- arranging a multi-agency public information debrief following activation of this plan and submitting a report to the PIRG.

### 3.6 MULTI AGENCY SUPPORT STRUCTURE

According to the public information needs of the emergency, the SEPIC will establish an appropriate multi-agency support structure. This may include:

- coordinating personnel and facilities to assist the HMA with the provision of public information during an emergency. This may include facilitating a supply public information and media staff (including digital media staff)

to support the HMA, other EMAs and the State Recovery Coordinator;

- convening and chairing the Public Information Team – refer to section 3.7.1 and Appendix E;
- activation of an Emergency Media Centre (EMC) – refer to section 3.6.2;
- activating and ensuring the continued availability of the SPIL as required – refer to section 3.6.3;
- enhancing existing media monitoring services to aid the HMA/Controlling Agency and relevant EMAs; and
- facilitating additional web and social media services.

The HMA may, in some circumstances, elect to integrate media representatives into the relevant multi-agency support structure to enhance timely information flow to the public.

### 3.6.1 Public Information and Media Staff Including Digital Media Staff

The SEPIC will facilitate the provision of public information and media staff, including digital media staff, to assist the HMA, upon request. The SEPIC maintains an internal Public Information and Media Staff Contact List, which consists of trained public information and media staff, including digital media staff, from a variety of EMAs and Controlling Agencies.

These public information and media staff may be deployed to the HMA's public information team, co-located within the incident management team or located elsewhere.

The HMA, Controlling Agency and, when requested, other relevant EMAs must provide public information and media staff to participate (either face to face or otherwise) in meetings established by the SEPIC, including the Public Information Team if established.

### 3.6.2 Emergency Media Centre (EMC)

Depending on the nature of the emergency, the SEPIC may establish a dedicated EMC to provide a central point of information dissemination to the media. The location of this centre may alter, according to the scale, nature and location of the emergency. The HMA, Controlling Agency and other EMAs may continue to disseminate information in consultation with the EMC.

### 3.6.3 State Public Information Line (SPIL)

The SPIL will be established and maintained by the SEPIC, when required. The SPIL is a large-scale telephone call-centre facility for providing general information to the public regarding an emergency. In order to allow the SPIL to operate for the duration of the emergency or part thereof, call-takers must be arranged by the SEPIC.

There is a formal arrangement between the Department of Transport (Driver and Vehicle Services) (DVS) and the SEMC which enables the DVS telephone call centre to be used for the SPIL. There is a formal arrangement with the Commonwealth Department of Human Services (Centrelink) to provide surge capability for the SPIL and direction of an overflow of calls to the Centrelink national call centre.

The HMA, Controlling Agency and relevant EMAs are responsible for the effective flow of emergency information into the SPIL.

The SEPIC and the WA Police's Police Forensic Division are jointly responsible for the development and use of procedures within the SPIL to ensure that calls regarding persons affected by, or who are casualties of, the emergency are processed by

either the Disaster Victim Identification System or the Register.Find.Reunite System.

The public will be notified via the news and social media of a contact phone number(s) for the SPIL as soon as it is operational.

#### 3.6.4 Media Access System (MAS)

Access to the WA Police Force's Media Access System (MAS) will be provided through the WA Police Force's State Operations Command Centre (SOCC) and/or the WA Police Force's Police Media Unit to allow rapid information updates to the media via phone. The MAS may be used in conjunction with the community warning system.

#### 3.6.5 Media Monitoring

At the request of the SEPIC, the DPC Executive Services branch will provide support through monitoring media on behalf of the SEPIC or HMA and provide regular summaries to all agencies involved.

#### 3.6.6 Additional Web Services

The SEPIC may facilitate use of additional web services to provide information to the public via the internet. Where possible, this information delivery will be coordinated between agencies.

#### 3.6.7 Social Media

Appropriate social media tools should be actively utilised where appropriate to deliver information, particularly in a dynamic emergency. Any additional social media activities implemented will be closely coordinated with the HMA or Controlling Agency's public information arrangements.

### 3.7 WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

Depending on the emergency, the SEPIC may be required to coordinate the development of a whole of government public information strategy. This strategy is developed in collaboration with the Public Information Team and, where required, in consultation with the SEC, the SECG and SDC.

#### 3.7.1 Public Information Team

The purpose of the Public Information Team is to develop, in conjunction with the SEPIC, a coordinated whole of government public information strategy for the emergency, and to ensure effective coordination of information dissemination to the media and public.

Establishment of the Public Information Team may occur on the SEPIC's own initiative or at the request of, or in consultation with, the HMA.

Appendix E provides further details on the Public Information Team.


### 3.8 OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

#### 3.8.1 Disaster Victim Identification Management (DVI)

As per State EM Plan (section 5.5.3), Disaster Victim Identity (DVI) management will be activated by the WA Police Force, in accordance with its internal DVI plan. The DVI plan details the WA Police Force roles and responsibilities for DVI management relating to casualties (deceased) of an emergency.

#### 3.8.2 Register.Find.Reunite

As per the State EM Plan (section 5.5.4), the State Welfare Coordinator will activate and implement registration and



reunification of affected people when necessary. A system that may be used to facilitate this function is the Register.Find.Reunite program.

Arrangements for the Register.Find.Reunite program are contained in the State Emergency Welfare Plan. The Register.Find.Reunite program does not release information regarding casualties (deceased). These enquiries are directed to the WA Police Force for management through the DVI process.

### 3.9 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

In accordance with State EM Policy section 5.12 and State EM Plan section 5.4, funding and reimbursement of costs associated with a multi-agency response will be met in line with guidance contained in the document, [Criteria for meeting costs associated with emergencies](#), which is available on the SEMC website.

It should be noted that only certain expenses are eligible for reimbursement and as such, expenditure should be approved by the HMA prior to being incurred.

### 3.10 DEBRIEFING POST OPERATION REPORTS

At an appropriate time after the conclusion of any emergency requiring utilisation of the response arrangements in this Plan, the SEPIC is to arrange a debriefing of the agencies.

Public information activities should also be included as part of the HMA's post operations debriefing and reporting.

The results of post operation debriefings related to the public information function should be made available to the PIRG for

review and consideration on whether the whole of government arrangements in this Plan require amendment.

## 4 RECOVERY

During the recovery phase of an emergency, the relevant local government is responsible for public information, such as information regarding the impact of the emergency and services available to the local community. Public information requirements may be related to satisfying the information needs of the broader community, or provision of information or advice aimed at those persons affected by the emergency.

Both the HMA and the relevant local government must communicate with the public in a coordinated manner until the HMA hands over responsibility for the public information function to the relevant government, via the Impact Statement. The SEPIC should be involved in completion of the Impact Statement in relation to public information, if the response arrangements under this Plan have been activated.

When required during the recovery phase, the SEPIC may coordinate whole of government (high-level) public information arrangements to assist the local government(s), the State Recovery Coordinator and/or the State Recovery Coordination Group. Requests for SEPIC assistance should be made through the State Recovery Coordinator.

### 4.1 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The State government may also be able to facilitate the provision of support to local governments for their recovery communications efforts, where the emergency and subsequent recovery work is large scale, or where the local government is severely under resourced.

This support will be arranged through the SEPIC, with requests for support to be negotiated between the SEPIC, State

Recovery Coordinator and the relevant local government on a case-by-case basis.

The support provided to local governments will be in the form of telephone advice during office hours from communication advisors from State government agencies and members of the PIRG who are trained in recovery communications.

Refer to section 5 in the Communicating in Recovery Guidelines for further detail, available on the [SEMC website](#).



## APPENDIX A: DISTRIBUTION LIST

This State Support Plan is available on the SEMC website ([www.semc.wa.gov.au](http://www.semc.wa.gov.au)).

The agencies below will be notified by the SEPIC (unless otherwise specified) when an updated version is published on this website.

- All agencies and organisations with responsibilities under this Plan
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Media Office
- Emergency Management Australia (SEMC Business Unit to notify)
- Minister for Emergency Services (SEMC Business Unit to notify)
- State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC), SEMC subcommittee and SEMC reference group members (SEMC Business Unit to notify)
- State Library of Western Australia (SEMC Business Unit to notify).



## APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS / ACRONYMS

### B1 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Terminology used throughout this document has the meaning prescribed in section 3 of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* (EM Act) or as defined in the State Emergency Management Glossary. In addition, the following definitions apply.

<b>Disaster Victim Identification</b>	The Disaster Victim Identity (DVI) program provides for the identification of disaster victims and notification of relatives. The Western Australia Police Force manages DVI.
<b>Media Access System (MAS)</b>	A two-way phone system between the Western Australia Police Force and media (main television and radio stations) in Western Australia. The MAS allows for a recorded message to be sent out to key major media outlets in Perth. The media can also ring a designated number to access current messages.
<b>Public Authorities</b>	As per the EM Act (s. 3), 'Public Authorities' include agencies as defined in the Public Sector Management Act 1994, a local government. Refer to the EM Act for the full definition.

#### Public information

The public information function during emergencies includes:

- management and dissemination of appropriate information to the media to meet news needs and broadcast information and instructions to the public; and
- management and dissemination of appropriate information and instructions to the public immediate before, during and after an emergency through various other means, such as 'emergency imminent' alerting systems, the internet, social media, public meetings, public information lines, alerts and warnings, and other mechanisms, systems or tools.

#### Public Information and Media Staff Contact List

Public authorities staff who have undertaken public information and media staff training provided by the SEPIC are included on this list. The SEPIC may arrange for these officers to assist an HMA/Controlling Agency, other relevant EMAs or the SEPIC during an emergency.

**Public Information Team**

Previously referred to as the Emergency Public Information Group. The Public Information Team develops a coordinated whole of government public information strategy for the emergency and ensures effective coordination of information dissemination to the media and the public. This team is established by the SEPIC on their own initiative or at the request of, or in consultation with, the HMA, the State Emergency Coordinator and/or the State Emergency Coordination Group. Refer also to Appendix E of this Plan.

**Register.Find.Reunite System**

A system that records the details of the location and well-being of persons in, or who have been evacuated from, an emergency affected area. This information can be used to respond to enquiries from friends and relatives. Refer to the State Emergency Welfare Plan.

**State Emergency Public Information Coordinator (SEPIC)**

The SEPIC is appointed by the State Emergency Coordinator (SEC), with oversight of this role provided by the Public Information Reference Group (PIRG). The SEPIC is responsible for maintaining strategic oversight of the State's public information arrangements for emergencies in conjunction with the PIRG. The SEPIC's responsibilities include activation of the whole of

government public information response arrangements in the State Support Plan - Emergency Public Information (this Plan), when required.

**State Public Information Line (SPIL)**

A large scale telephone call centre facility that may be established by the SEPIC to receive and respond to general enquiries from the public regarding an emergency. The surge capability for the SPIL is the National Call Centre, by formal arrangement through the Commonwealth Department of Human Services (Centrelink).

**Trained public information and media staff**

List of various staff who may be called on for support during an emergency. It includes key HMA and Controlling Agency public information and media staff. It also includes staff from public authorities (State government agency) who have undertaken training provided by the SEPIC on public information roles during an emergency. The list is an internal list maintained by the SEPIC.

**Whole of government public information arrangements**

High level strategic (i.e. non-operational) public information arrangements established under section 3 of this Plan which operate across multiple agencies and are activated by the SEPIC.



## B2 ACRONYMS

<b>DPC</b>	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
<b>DVI</b>	Disaster Victim Identification
<b>EMA</b>	Emergency Management Agency <sup>4</sup>
<b>EMC</b>	Emergency Management Centre
<b>HMA</b>	Hazard Management Agency
<b>MAS</b>	Media Access System
<b>PIRG</b>	SEMC Public Information Reference Group
<b>SDC</b>	State Disaster Council
<b>SEC</b>	State Emergency Coordinator
<b>SECG</b>	State Emergency Coordination Group
<b>SEMC</b>	State Emergency Management Committee
<b>SEPIC</b>	State Emergency Public Information Coordinator
<b>SOCC</b>	Western Australia Police Force State Operations Command Centre
<b>SPIL</b>	State Public Information Line.

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<sup>4</sup> Defined under section 3 of the EM Act as being Hazard Management Agencies, Combat Agencies and Support Organisations.

## APPENDIX C: RESPONSE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The State Emergency Public Information Coordinator (SEPIC) has the primary role of coordinating the whole of government public information arrangements when they are required during an emergency.

This appendix outlines the response roles and responsibilities of agencies under this Plan. Brief all-hazards information is provided for agencies who may have a role under this plan – full details of these roles and responsibilities can be found in the State Emergency Management Plan, Appendix E.

All agencies should maintain appropriate public information policy, plans and procedures in relation to their specific responsibilities.

Organisation	Response Responsibilities (see State EM Plan Appendix E for full all-hazards roles and responsibilities)
<b>Bureau of Meteorology</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.
<b>Commonwealth Department of Human Services (Centrelink)</b>	a. Provide surge capability for the State Public Information Line (SPIL) and direction of an overflow of calls to the Centrelink national call centre.
<b>Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.
<b>Department of Communities</b>	a. Coordinate and facilitate registration and reunification, including arranging for Register.Find.Reunite. to be activated via the Australian Red Cross, as required. b. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.
<b>Department of Fire and Emergency Services</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.
<b>Department of Health</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.
<b>Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.

Organisation	Response Responsibilities (see State EM Plan Appendix E for full all-hazards roles and responsibilities)
<b>Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Media Office</b>	a. When requested by the SEPIC, the DPC Executive Services branch is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring information disseminated by the electronic and print media and providing this material to the HMA and Emergency Management Agencies to enhance the emergency response.</li> <li>• disseminating media releases received from the SEPIC to the media when requested.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Transport</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.
<b>Department of Transport (Driver and Vehicle Services)</b>	a. Facilitate use of its telephone call centre facility for the State Public Information Line (SPIL) as a general information line for the public during an emergency.
<b>Energy Policy WA</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.
<b>Local government</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings. b. Undertake community recovery activities, including public information activities, as required.
<b>Main Roads WA</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.
<b>Public Authorities (State government agencies)</b>	a. On the request of the SEPIC, where this is practicable, deploy staff trained public information and media to assist an HMA/Controlling Agency, other relevant EMAs or the SEPIC during an emergency. b. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.
<b>Public Transport Authority</b>	a. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.

Organisation	Response Responsibilities (see State EM Plan Appendix E for full all-hazards roles and responsibilities)
<b>State Emergency Public Information Coordinator (SEPIC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Activate the public information response arrangements under the plan as required and notify the HMA/Controlling Agency when activation occurs.</li> <li>b. Coordinate the whole of government public information function including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. producing, maintaining and disseminating high level multi-agency talking points for distribution to EMAs' public information representatives involved in the emergency response, the SEC and relevant ministerial staff;</li> <li>ii. developing a whole of government public information strategy in collaboration with the Public Information Team;</li> <li>iii. calling and scheduling multi-agency media conferences;</li> <li>iv. identifying obstructions to flow of information relevant to the public information function from the local/district level through to the HMA;</li> <li>v. providing advice and support to the SEC, SECG and State Disaster Council, as required;</li> <li>vi. arranging a public information briefing with the EMAs involved in the recovery phase and submitting a report to the PIRG; and</li> <li>vii. arranging a multi-agency public information debrief following activation of this plan and submitting a report to the PIRG.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Consider the establishment of a support structure. If established, roles and responsibilities may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. coordinating personnel and facilities to assist the HMA with the provision of public information during an emergency;</li> <li>ii. convening and chairing the Public Information Team;</li> <li>iii. activation of an Emergency Media Centre (EMC);</li> <li>iv. activating and ensuring the continued availability of the SPIL as required;</li> <li>v. enhancing existing media monitoring services to aid the HMA/Controlling Agency and relevant EMAs; and</li> <li>vi. facilitating additional web and social media services.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Water Corporation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide a representative for the PIRG.</li> <li>b. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Western Australia Police Force (WA Police Force)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide staff to assist the SEPIC during an emergency response and undertake various roles such as liaison with the HMA, administration support, and executive support for the Public Information Team.</li> <li>b. Allow access to the Media Access System (MAS) through the WA Police Force's State Operations Command Centre (SOCC) and/or the WA Police Force's Media Unit to allow rapid information updates to the media via phone. The MAS may be used in conjunction with the community warning system.</li> <li>c. In the event of mass casualties, provide Disaster Victim Identification.</li> <li>d. Where required, provide an appropriate representative for Public Information Team meetings.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX D: PROCEDURES FOR THE RELEASE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

**During an emergency, the following procedures for the release of public information must be followed by EMAs, Controlling Agencies and public authorities:**

- The HMA is responsible for confirming publicly that there is an emergency and what is being done in response. The HMA also releases key messages associated with the impact and management of the emergency.
- Other EMAs, Controlling Agencies and public authorities with response roles must not release information relating to the emergency until the HMA has publically confirmed the emergency. The need for the HMA to publically confirm the emergency must be recognised, particularly if there are sensitivities. However, it must also be recognised that there may be instances where EMAs and Controlling Agencies may need to release immediate, life-saving information regarding an emergency prior to an HMA announcement.
- EMAs may continue to release information relating to their business as usual activities, such as delays in services.
- If approached by the media, EMAs, Controlling Agencies and public authorities should confirm they are assisting the HMA and direct enquiries to the HMA.
- EMAs and Controlling Agencies involved in response activities must only release information in relation to their areas of expertise. This information must first go to the HMA, who may include it in their public information, before individual agencies and organisations release it through their own channels.
- The HMA, EMAs and Controlling Agencies must seek approval for the release of their public information according to their own internal processes and procedures. Matters not falling within their direct responsibility should be referred to the appropriate agency/organisation for consideration.
- All EMAs must keep each other informed in a timely manner of the public information they have provided to the media and the public (i.e. effective information sharing must occur).
- EMAs should ensure the method of communication delivery is relevant to the hazard, circumstances (including urgency), type of information, size of the distribution area, and community demographics.

## APPENDIX E: PUBLIC INFORMATION TEAM

### **Purpose**

When convened, the purpose of the Public Information Team is to develop coordinated whole-of-government public information strategic activities for the emergency and ensure effective coordination of information dissemination to the media and public. This may include development of a whole of government public information strategy, and coordination and support activities to support the SEPIC, HMA/Controlling Agency and other EMAs involved in the emergency.

### **Establishment**

The SEPIC will determine whether a Public Information Team should be established. This may occur on the SEPIC's own initiative or at the request of, or in consultation with, the HMA/Controlling Agency, the State Emergency Coordinator and/or the State Emergency Coordination Group.

### **Composition**

The SEPIC has the discretion to invite any HMA, Controlling Agency, EMA, public authority, local government or private sector representatives to be a member of the Public Information Team, as they consider appropriate. Not all agencies responding to the emergency may need to participate. Priority should be given to agencies and organisations with a greater need to deliver messages to the community.

Strong consideration should be made to including representation from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Macquarie Media as representatives may be able to provide a confidential role in discussing media needs.

### **Meetings**

The Public Information Team meetings will be chaired by the SEPIC.

The SEPIC will determine the logistics for the meetings, including regularity of meetings and whether they will be held via teleconference or at a location appropriate to the emergency.

### **Executive Officer**

The SEPIC will appoint an executive officer for the meetings, who will be responsible for coordinating meetings. They may also act on behalf of the SEPIC in relation to business arising from Public Information Team meetings, such as follow up on action items.