



State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC)

Overview and December 2012 meeting synopsis

OVERVIEW

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is the peak emergency management body in Western Australia. The SEMC, appointed by the Minister, includes senior representatives (Directors General and Chief Executive Officers) from key agencies essential to the State's emergency management arrangements and also includes independent members with various expertise in government and the private sector.

The SEMC focuses on strategising, organising and overseeing the coordination and continuous improvement of emergency management in the State. This includes:

- promoting shared understanding and responsibility across whole of government and the wider community;
- establishing an emergency management framework based on a risk management approach;
- promoting preparedness for emergencies to minimise their impact and accelerate recovery; and
- providing advice to government on any matter in relation to emergency management.

The Strategic Plan endorsed by SEMC is available on the website (www.semc.wa.gov.au).

THE COMMITTEE

Recently reconstituted, the 11 member SEMC comprises:

Ms Kerry Sanderson AO	Chairperson (Independent)
Ms Sue Ash	Deputy Chairperson (Independent)
Ms Michelle Reynolds	SEMC Executive Director
Mr Frank Edwards	Independent Member
Mr Peter Conran	Director General, Dept. of the Premier and Cabinet
Mr Wayne Gregson APM	Commissioner, Department of Fire & Emergency Services
Dr Karl O'Callaghan APM	Commissioner, WA Police
Mr Keiran McNamara	Director General, Dept. of Environment and Conservation
Mr Kim Snowball	Director General, Dept. of Health
Mr Terry Murphy	Director General, Dept. for Child Protection
Ms Ricky Burges	CEO, Western Australian Local Government Association

A number of subcommittees (and associated working groups), with specific expertise, also exist and report to SEMC.

SEMC MEETINGS

The SEMC meets quarterly, in March, June, September and December. Additional meetings are also scheduled in May and October, to review issues from the previous season and annual preparedness, respectively.

General administration and coordination across agencies, policy formulation, local and district liaison, training and research functions are undertaken by the SEMC Secretariat.

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

4 December 2012 meeting: Highlights

The SEMC met on 4 December 2012 and worked cooperatively and efficiently through a full agenda with a broad range of issues and submissions. Key areas discussed and agreed during the meeting are summarised below.

PREPAREDNESS REPORT

The 2012 Emergency Preparedness Report was discussed, with the Chair thanking the agencies for their contributions to this inaugural report, which was compiled in a short period of time. Positive feedback was received on the Report, which forms the benchmark for future work. The State's preparedness was assessed through a 'capability' based approach and this was deemed to be an effective methodology. The SEMC approved a continuation of this method with an enhanced capability model to be rolled out in May 2013. Part 3 of the 2012 Report was dedicated to the review in detail of bushfire preparedness. Similarly, a specific section of the 2013 Report will focus on the review a specific key theme or topic.

SEMC SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEW

A review of SEMC's Subcommittee structure has been underway and preliminary findings and recommendations were tabled. With 6 formally established subcommittees currently reporting to SEMC, the review looked at whether greater efficiencies can be achieved and whether the committees can better align with SEMC's current strategic objectives. Several options were explored, with members expressing a preference for 4 Subcommittees covering Community Engagement, Response, Risk and Recovery. Before recommending any final approach however, further consultation needs to be undertaken and it was agreed that the current system will remain until June 2013. This means that the current subcommittees should continue to progress their work program.

COMPREHENSIVE RISK FRAMEWORK

A policy was tabled to adopt a State-wide risk framework covering all hazards under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*. This policy is to be adopted by all emergency management agencies, and likely other public agencies involved in emergency management. The framework centres on the *State's Core Objectives* including protecting people's lives and wellbeing, the economy, the State's social structures, government functions, key infrastructure and the environment. The project is designed to identify critical risks to these objectives and prioritise them, leading to investing in risk reduction strategies to bring risks within tolerable levels.

The SEMC agreed on the principle of the project with further work required to clarify the scope and roles of each agency. The urgency of much of the work and the need to complete risk assessments at least for natural hazards, by 30 June 2013 was understood.

OTHER POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PLANS

A range of policies, projects and plans were tabled and discussed. These included:

- SEMC's *2013 Annual Business Plan* was discussed and endorsed with some additions arising from the discussion during the meeting.
- A *Command, Control and Coordination (C3)* project was included as part of the Business Plan and focuses on streamlining multi-agency emergency response. This includes standardising operational procedures, terminologies and training across all agencies to facilitate more effective response. The project is due for completion by June 2013.
- The *Emergency Alert System* project was reported to have been completed and is operational. It allows for emergency messages to be sent to 'at risk' individuals and households, both through landline and mobile phone, in pre-defined geographic areas. In the initial stages, this will only be possible with the Telstra network; the existing alert system which will be run in parallel.
- A new *Westplan –Heatwave* was tabled by the Department of Health and endorsed along with its communication and marketing strategy. *Westplan – Health*, which has existed since 1996 (and updated in 2004 and 2007), was endorsed following the finalisation of its latest periodic review.
- SEMC's Executive Officer provided updates on a number of other ongoing reviews, both within the State and nationally. Of significant note was an update on funding availability under the Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP).
- Of particular interest was the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey on *Community Preparedness*. SEMC noted it should liaise and become involved in future iterations of the ABS surveys.
- SEMC noted the reports of the Sub-committees.
- SEMC also noted 16x Local Management Arrangements (LEMA'S).

A strategic discussion was also held around the *State Crisis Information Management System (SCIMS)* with a view to enhancing interoperability amongst hazard management and combat agencies. Most agencies have WebEOC and measures to provide increased access to this will continue to be examined.

The Chair concluded by thanking the Executive Officer, Ms Michelle Reynolds, for her contribution to the SEMC and the Secretariat over her previous 6 month secondment. Ms Reynolds will be handing over to Ms Noelene Jennings who takes up the role on 15 January 2013.

The next SEMC meeting will be held on 5 of March 2013.