



State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC)

11 December 2013 meeting: Highlights

The SEMC met on 11 December 2013 for the last meeting for the year. The Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Joe Francis MLA attended the meeting and commended the Committee on all the work undertaken during the year, particularly the significant change in strategic direction towards better preparing the State for emergencies. The need to ensure community understanding of the message that being prepared for an emergency is a shared responsibility by all was discussed.

RISK FRAMEWORK

Bushfire Risk Management Planning Consultation

Between August and October, the SEMC Secretariat conducted eight workshops in Perth, Rockingham, Dongara, Busselton, Northam, Bunbury and Albany. All 45 nominated Local Governments accepted the invitation to participate in the Bushfire Risk Management Planning (BRMP) process. Of the 45 Local Governments, 43 were able to attend the workshops.

The workshops were considered successful with the overall response to the BRMP concept in principle well accepted by attendees. Importantly, the positive feeling of all attendees demonstrates the keen interest to see improvements. The risks posed by bushfire to communities are well understood and the need for collective and collaborative efforts to reduce this risk is acknowledged.

A key element of the structure of the workshops was the amount of time dedicated to discussion and feedback. Ample opportunity was given to all participants to communicate their ideas and feedback: through discussion during the workshop, evaluation forms after the workshops and the BRMP concept evaluation form sent after two weeks. All the feedback was compiled into a Consultation Report by the SEMC Secretariat.

Participants discussed the implementation of this concept and highlighted key issues and concerns:

- the role and engagement of all the necessary stakeholders
- resources for the implementation of the scheme
- if the legislative authority supports the project or if it needs amending
- BRMP assessment and tools that would be used in the process
- proposed timeframe and need for pilot program
- effect of concurrent activities, such as the proposed amalgamation of Local Government areas.

The consultation report outlines details and recommendations for the future, including a series of in-depth pilot studies planned in 2014. The full roll out of the program is planned after the pilots. The SEMC noted the progress on the BRMP consultation and endorsed the Consultation Report.

State-wide Risk Assessment

The SEMC Secretariat has organised the final State-wide risk workshops for cyclone and flood which are currently underway. These will add to 5 other sudden onset natural hazards analysed in May/June 2013, namely storm, earthquake, bushfire, tsunami and heatwave. A report covering all 7 sudden onset natural

hazards will be sent to the Commonwealth by the end of December 2013 to fulfil the requirement of the National Partnership Agreement (NPA).

This report will continue to use the successful graphical presentation of risk information data utilised in the 2013 Emergency Preparedness Report which has received positive feedback from West Australian and interstate stakeholders. This report will be available on the SEMC website.

STATE RECOVERY CONTROLLER

The SEMC approved the role of State Recovery Controller being undertaken by a senior officer who does not have a key response function and is also well placed to advocate for recovery during preparation and response phases. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) have nominated an officer who has previous experience with implementing the Keelty recommendations, Mr Bob Hay, as the State Recovery Controller with immediate effect. DPC will provide additional support should it be required.

In order to give effect to this decision, the SEMC approved an interim *Westplan – Recovery Coordination* to include the role of State Recovery Controller with a final plan developed for SEMC consideration by October 2014.

POLICIES

An initial review of the *State Emergency Management Policy (SEMP) 2.5 – Emergency Management in Local Government Districts* has been completed. The current draft aims to improve the overall readability and internal consistency of the current policy and to align the policy more explicitly with a risk management based approach. It also includes guidance on the composition of Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs). The SEMC Secretariat has worked closely with a range of LEMCs and has provided a draft to further inform the policy's development before it is released for formal comment. A final draft will be circulated to the SEMC Subcommittees early in 2014.

The SEMC endorsed the *SEMP 4.1 – Incident Management and Operational Procedure 23 – Incident Level Declaration*. The SEMC considered the triggers for activation of a State Emergency Coordination Group (SECG) and decided that a SECG need not be activated for every Level 3 incident. The Hazard Management Agency will consult with the State Emergency Coordinator (SEC) to determine activation. It has also been clarified that the SEC can decide to activate the SECG without being requested to do so.

The SEMC noted the progress of the *SEMP 4.7 – Community Evacuation and Policies and Procedures* which are currently under review.

OTHER PROJECTS AND PLANS

A range of projects and plans were discussed and noted by the SEMC:

- The SEMC endorsed the revised *Westplan Collapse* and agreed on the revocation of *Westplan Urban Fire* and *Westplan Bushfire* as a natural progression following the endorsement at the September meeting of *Westplan Fire*.
- The Committee noted the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management's (SCPEM) communiqué which included two items of interest: the *Discussion Paper on Disaster Mitigation Investment* and the *Strategic Directions for Fire and Emergency Services 2012-2016*.
- The SEMC noted the following report reviews:
 - Department of Parks and Wildlife - October 2013 report
 - The Tasmanian Bushfire Inquiry report
 - Bushfire CRC – Community Understanding and Awareness of Bushfire Safety (Coonabarabran) report.
 - Sustaining the Unsustainable: Police and Community Safety Review

SEMC SECRETARIAT UPDATES

The Executive Director provided updates on a number of ongoing reviews and reports:

- The suggested dates for the 2014 meetings were agreed by the Committee.
- The steady progress of the Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMAs) report was noted.
- The National Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP) update was discussed. The SEMC approved the re-allocation of funds to support the BRMP process.
- Emergency Management Act 2005 (EM Act)
 - The Committee noted the proposal to transfer the responsibility of the EM Act from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to SEMC.
 - The EM Act update was tabled with the changes planned to become effective in 2014.
- The SEMC 2013 Annual Business Plan's priority items showed good progress. The Committee endorsed the 2014 Plan.
- The Westplan reviews are underway and will be progressed over the next 12 months.

The Chair was pleased with the SEMC Subcommittee minutes particularly how well the sponsor role was working.

SEMC MEETINGS

The SEMC quarterly meetings scheduled for 2014 are on 11 March, 10 June (this meeting will include the Season Review), 19 August and 2 December. There will be an additional meeting, planned on 7 October, to review the annual Preparedness Report.

For further information, please contact the SEMC Secretariat on (08) 9482 1700 or visit www.semc.wa.gov.au.

The SEMC Chair concluded the meeting by wishing all a happy Christmas and looking forward to another productive year ahead.

