



## State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC)

### October/November 2013: Highlights

#### **2013 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REPORT**

The SEMC met on 1 October 2013 to review the Emergency Preparedness Report and was impressed with the quality of the content and all the work undertaken. The SEMC members provided comments and feedback before endorsing the 2013 report.

The Chair thanked the SEMC Secretariat team and all the agencies who contributed to the report.

The report has been presented to the Minister for Emergency Services and once it is released, it will be published as an interactive PDF on the SEMC website ([www.semc.wa.gov.au](http://www.semc.wa.gov.au)).

#### **BUSHFIRE RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING WORKSHOPS**

The SEMC Secretariat completed its consultations for the Bushfire Risk Management Planning (BRMP) project. A series of eight workshops were held from August to October, with attendance by representatives from 43 local governments including regional representatives from Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) and Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES).

The workshops were facilitated by SEMC Independent member Frank Edwards and the Secretariat. The Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) and DFES presented details of the proposed project to participants. Attendees were active in sharing their views and all feedback and comments were recorded.

Overall the BRMP concept was well received by all participants. There is increased understanding of the risks posed by bushfire to communities and the acknowledgement that there is the need for a collective and collaborative effort to reduce this risk.

The SEMC Secretariat is currently analysing feedback and will be preparing a report.

#### **AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT OPERATIONAL PRE-SEASON BRIEFING**

During the month of October, Emergency Management Australia (EMA) held pre-season briefings in every Australian State and Territory. The purpose of this yearly program is to engage with all Australian jurisdictions that have a prime responsibility for protecting life and property and making sure everyone is better prepared.

These briefings brought together Federal and State representatives to share information, examine the seasonal weather outlook and review emergency management arrangements before the upcoming bushfire and cyclone seasons.

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This year, the SEMC Secretariat hosted EMA in its Western Australian pre-season briefing. The SEMC Chair, Kerry Sanderson, opened the session welcoming Western Australian State representatives from WA Police, Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW), WA Health and Commonwealth representatives from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), Geoscience Australia, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Department of Human Services (DHS). These agencies provided a comprehensive overview of the support and services available to WA during disasters and emergencies.

EMA gave an overview of their structure, improvements to the Australian Government Disaster Plan (COMDISPLAN 2013), the Crisis Coordination Centre and the newly launched Knowledge Hub ([www.emknowledge.gov.au](http://www.emknowledge.gov.au)).

Key presentations from agencies included:

- WA Police - the role of the State Emergency Coordination Group (SECG) and the activations that occurred in the 2012-13 bushfire/cyclone season.
- DFES - new single Westplan for Fire in WA with both Westplans Bushfire and Urban Fire being revoked.
- DPaW - new procedures for prescribed burning.
- WA Health – three activations of the new Westplan Heatwave in the 2012-13 season which was the hottest summer on record for Metropolitan Perth.
- BOM - seasonal outlook relating to severe fire weather, heatwave and cyclone activity.
- Geoscience Australia - overview of its support capability for emergencies such as baseline geographic information, hazard detection and alerting products as well as satellite imagery which are useful tools when preparing for and managing an emergency.
- ADF - information on the Defence Assistance to the Civilian Community (DACC) and their role in assisting civil community within Australia in both an emergency and non-emergency situation.
- DHS - overview of their capability to respond to emergency events and provide support arrangements after a disaster.

The briefing was very beneficial fostering information sharing and collaboration between Australian Government and State and Territory jurisdictions.

## **SEMC MEETINGS**

The next SEMC meeting scheduled for 2013 is on 11 December.

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