



State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC)

11 March 2014 meeting: Highlights

The SEMC met on 11 March 2014. The Chair welcomed the Committee and took the opportunity to acknowledge member Mr Terry Murphy, Department of Child Protection and Family Support, for his contribution to the SEMC. This was Mr Murphy's last SEMC meeting.

Key discussion areas are summarised below:

RISK PROJECT

State-wide Risk Assessment

The SEMC Secretariat was successful in completing the State-wide prioritised natural disaster risk assessment, fulfilling requirements as set out under the 2009-2013 National Partnership Agreement. The report was published online on 24 December 2013. The SEMC commented on the work and results of the report which covers risk assessments for seven sudden onset natural hazards (storm, earthquake, bushfire, tsunami, heatwave, cyclone and flood). It is apparent that while bushfire is a significant risk, so are cyclone, flood, storm and heatwave.

This first phase of work forms a starting point for the ongoing State-wide, All Hazards, Risk Management Project. WA is now moving to assess all the State's 27 prescribed hazards in a comprehensive and consistent manner at State, district and local level to provide increased awareness of risk at a local and regional level and knowledge of the State and local framework for managing risk as well as an improved basis for the development of Local Emergency Management Arrangements. The next six months will focus on project planning and resourcing, developing appropriate risk tools and documentation, training programs, planning of logistics, information system development and research. This includes a pilot study. From the fourth quarter of 2014, the project will concentrate on regional workshops throughout the State on a prioritised basis.

State Emergency Management Policy 2.9—*Management of Risks* (SEMP 2.9)

The new Policy on Risk Management endorsed by SEMC in March 2013 was distributed during the year for feedback to all SEMC Subcommittees, Local Governments and other relevant stakeholders for a three month consultation period. The document was also distributed throughout the eight Bushfire Risk Management Consultation workshops. This process was very useful. The SEMC Secretariat was able to gather and compile feedback into key theme areas and restructure the policy document for greater clarity. The new version was tabled at the Response and Risk Subcommittee meetings. The SEMC commented on the consultation process undertaken by the Secretariat and how it led to improvements in the policy as well as a greater understanding and acceptance of the document.

The SEMC endorsed the revised version of SEMP 2.9.

Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP)

The SEMC noted the pending signing of the two year National Partnership Agreement from 30 June 2013 to 30 June 2015 between the State and the Commonwealth to endeavor 'to enhance Australian communities'

resilience to natural disasters'. WA is allocated 12 per cent of the two year budget. The funds cover up to 50 per cent of the estimated cost of delivering activities specified in an agreed NDRP Implementation Plan, which will require matching funding within the State. The SEMC discussed the suggested allocations to maximise effectiveness of the NDRP funds.

The SEMC agreed to allocate 33 per cent of funds to competitive bidding for projects at a local or regional scale which follow a State key theme and align to the current State and National Priorities, such as strengthening community resilience (e.g. risk assessments and/or mitigation projects) and supporting emergency management volunteers. These priorities will be announced on the [SEMC website](#) as soon as the National Partnership Agreement is finalised. The remaining amount will be allocated to the State's priority projects, divided equally between Risk Management Planning and Bushfire Risk Management Planning.

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK REVIEW PROJECT

The SEMC Secretariat is currently undertaking a review of the SEMC policy framework and broader governance framework. The first phase of this project has involved research of other jurisdictional governance frameworks, both nationally and internationally. This review has identified a number of key themes in the various arrangements.

- A single state plan/arrangements document which reflects the all hazards approach, i.e. the assumption that those systems and methods of operation which work for one hazard are most likely to work for other hazards.
- The single plan/arrangements document is supported by sub plans, specific plans and arrangements for hazards that require specialised approaches.
- Australian policy/plans are structured around the comprehensive approach i.e. Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.
- Policy/plan documents are high level and strategic in nature, with all operational detail included in comprehensive non legislative guides.

The SEMC noted the research and the emerging best practice themes. The next stage of this project will continue the research to establish the most appropriate contemporary policy and plans framework for WA. A working group will be set up to assist with this project.

POLICIES

The SEMC Secretariat presented the policy and procedure review schedule. This schedule includes SEMC's current policy review work and its fit with the Governance and Policy Framework Review Project. As documents are completed they will be presented to the SEMC.

The reviewed SEMP 4.7—*Community Evacuation* and the WA Community Evacuation in Emergencies guide are currently with SEMC Subcommittees and Local Government for comment. The Evacuation Policy Review Group will review the amended documents and after further consultation both the Policy and Guide will be submitted to the June 2014 SEMC for endorsement.

WESTPLANS

The SEMC noted the progress of the review of Westplans and endorsed the following plans:

- the revised Westplan Welfare
- the revised draft Westplan – Chemical, Biological and Radiological Agents and Nuclear devices as a 12 month interim plan. The SEMC Secretariat will facilitate a review of this plan as part of the Governance and Policy Framework review project.

OTHER PROJECTS AND PLANS

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

- The SEMC noted the status of the Bushfire Risk Management Planning (BRMP) Project. The pilot with four Local Governments has started.
- The SEMC noted the following report reviews:
 - ◆ The status of the remaining items from the Keelty Report *“Shared Responsibility: The Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire 2011”*.
 - ◆ The progress of the Department of Parks and Wildlife’s quarterly update on the Report of the Special Inquiry into the November 2011 Margaret River Bushfire - Implementation Plan.

A Review team has been set up by the SEMC to prepare a report on the Parkerville Fire. A separate [communiqué](#) will be dedicated to updates on this review.

SEMC SECRETARIAT UPDATES

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

- The report on the Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMAs) was presented to the SEMC. This information allows a clearer understanding of the current status of LEMAs in Western Australia.
- The SEMC 2014 Annual Business Plan is progressing well. The SEMC noted the research conducted for the Policy Framework Project and project planning for the Risk Project.
- The SEMC agreed to formalise the appointment of current District Coordinators as Chairs of the respective District Emergency Management Committees (DEMCs).
- The update on the status of the 2013 Season Review recommendations. The SEMC noted that these items will be dealt with through relevant subcommittee work plans.

The SEMC Subcommittee minutes were noted. The Subcommittee sponsors all noted that the committees were working very well. The Chairs of the Subcommittees and Reference Groups will be networking during March.

In concluding this meeting, the SEMC discussed the need for a framework and procedures for the management and mobilisation of spontaneous volunteers during emergencies to ensure the safety of all concerned. The SEMC Secretariat will liaise with member agencies on the possibility of establishing a framework for the management of spontaneous volunteers.

SEMC MEETINGS

The SEMC quarterly meetings scheduled for 2014 are on 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.