



# SEMC Communiqué

The SEMC's last meeting was held on 3 August 2018. Prior to this meeting one item was considered out of session - discharge of the State Bushfire Coordinating Committee. The outcomes and key discussion issues from this item and the 3 August meeting are summarised below.

## DISCHARGE OF THE STATE BUSHFIRE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The SEMC approved the discharge of the State Bushfire Coordinating Committee (SBCC), a subcommittee of the SEMC. The SBCC will be superseded by the State Bushfire Advisory Council which will largely incorporate the functions of the Coordinating Committee, with an expanded remit and membership.

## DFES RURAL FIRE DIVISION PRESENTATION

Mr Murray Carter, Executive Director of the newly established Rural Fire Division of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) provided a presentation on the Division. The establishment of the Rural Fire Division was announced in April 2018 as part of the Government's rural fire reform package. The reform package addresses recommendations made in the *Report of the Special Inquiry into the January 2016 Waroona Fire* prepared by Euan Ferguson AFSM.

As well as the creation of a Rural Fire Division, the reform package includes the establishment of a new \$18 million Bushfire Centre of Excellence, additional funding for bushfire mitigation activities, plus a range of new support measures for volunteers.

Mr Carter spoke about the role and structure of the Rural Fire Division, the proposed Bushfire Centre of Excellence and the Divisions' key achievements in its first three months. Mr Carter emphasised the importance of local engagement with the communities and volunteers in the activities of the Division.

## PRESENTATION ON ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY DURING EMERGENCIES

Ms Jackie Tang, Assistant Director General, Service Delivery: Metropolitan, Department of Communities, gave a presentation on addressing the needs of people with a disability during emergencies. The provision of emergency management welfare services are the responsibility of the Department of Communities which was established in 2017. These services were previously the responsibility of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support whose functions have transferred to the Department of Communities.

Emergency management welfare services provided by the Department of Communities include:

- Emergency accommodation;
- Emergency catering;
- Emergency clothing and personal requisites;
- Personal support services;
- Registration and reunification; and
- Financial assistance.

Ms Tang addressed some of the important considerations in meeting the needs of people with disabilities during emergencies, including communication, physical/sensory needs and psychological/emotional/behavioural issues. Ms Tang also spoke about initiatives of disability sector organisations, as well as challenges and risks.

## CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

The SEMC:

- Approved the minutes of recent SEMC ordinary and out of session meetings.
- Noted the progress of the implementation of the Ferguson Report recommendations and opportunities for improvement.
- Noted the Policy and Governance Review Project: Phase 4 (B) Final Report.
- Noted the progress of the SEMC Policy and Governance Review Project: Phase 7 Westplan Rationalisation Project and approved various revised timelines.
- Approved State Hazard Plans – Hazardous Materials Emergencies (HAZMAT); Maritime Environmental Emergencies; Search and Rescue; Crash Emergency; and Animal and Plant Biosecurity - and approved revocation of associated Westplans.
- Noted Emergency Management Exercise Management Framework progress and endorsed the concept document.
- Noted the request from the WA Police Force to develop an enhanced risk management framework in partnership with the State Risk Project.
- Noted the Local Emergency Management Arrangements for the Shire of Boyup Brook and the aggregated status of arrangements for the State.
- Noted Round 1 of the 2018-19 Bushfire Mitigation Activity Fund recommendations.
- Noted SEMC subcommittee minutes.

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATE

- The State Risk Project is now focusing on local level roll outs and treatment workshops with over half the local governments already commencing the process.
- The 2018 Capability Survey closed in June and a similar response rate to 2017 was achieved amongst the 170 agencies surveyed. The data acuity is expected to increase again compared with 2017.
- WebFusion functionality has now been implemented. The project is now complete, and oversight of the functionality will now be undertaken by the WebFusion Owners Group chaired by the WA Police Force.
- The joint Commonwealth/State Annual Preparedness Brief is to be held on 4 September 2018.
- The East Asia Summit International Disaster Assistance Workshop occurred from 8 to 10 May 2018. This exercise evaluated the Australian and WA emergency management arrangements for the receipt of international assistance into WA following a catastrophic event.
- The new Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements will commence on 1 November 2018. Significant changes to the State's processes and systems will be needed in order for the State to meet the requirements of the new arrangements and claim the funding being made available through this arrangement.
- A roundtable discussion with key agencies was held regarding the preparedness of the State after an event that has mass casualties. Further work is required. The intent is to ensure the State has a set of well-developed recovery plans for these events.
- Development of emergency management Lessons Management and Exercise Frameworks are in progress.
- The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has developed a draft State Emergency Animal Welfare Plan which is out for consultation until 27 August 2018.
- 288 treatments for 17 local governments to the sum of \$2.14 million were approved as part of Round 1 of the 2018-19 Bushfire Mitigation Activity Fund.
- With the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) integrated into DFES since 1 July 2018, the OEM website will soon cease to exist. A dedicated SEMC website is being developed and the URL will be: [www.semc.wa.gov.au](http://www.semc.wa.gov.au)

## SEMC ANNUAL REPORT AND OEM FINAL REPORT

In accordance with section 25 of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is required to prepare and submit to the Minister an annual report of its activities undertaken by it during 2017-18. As OEM was integrated into DFES from 1 July 2018, OEM will submit a "final report" in accordance with section 72(1) of the *Financial Management Act 2006*.

For the year ending 30 June 2018 a consolidated report is to again be prepared, comprising the two reports. Subject to some minor amendments, SEMC members supported the SEMC section of the consolidated draft report.

## STATE RECOVERY COORDINATOR ARRANGEMENTS

The State Emergency Management (EM) Policy provides for the SEMC to appoint a State Recovery Coordinator (SRC). As part of the Machinery of Government changes that resulted in OEM being integrated into DFES, the OEM's SRC position was abolished and the role has been incorporated into the position of Assistant Commissioner Resilience and Recovery, DFES. In accordance with the EM Policy, the SEMC approved this appointment.

As this Assistant Commissioner position has considerably more responsibilities than the SRC position had in OEM, it is proposed to delegate a number of SRC responsibilities to a new Deputy SRC position. The SEMC endorsed the review of State recovery policy in relation to how the SRC is appointed and provide for the delegation of certain roles of the SRC to the Deputy SRC. State recovery policy will also be reviewed to ensure DFES support for the SEMC recovery function.

## RISK TREATMENT FRAMEWORK

With the completion of the State and District risk assessments, a number of risks were assessed as being high or extreme. Preliminary treatment workshops and discussions revealed that some treatment strategies fall outside the authority or responsibility of a local government and local governments are likely to have little influence over the responsible party to implement treatment options, which could lead to untreated risks.

A proposed new risk treatment model was endorsed by SEMC for consultation. Under the model the SEMC Risk Subcommittee would initially assess treatment options considered to merit the attention and decision-making power of the SEMC before being reviewed by the SEMC. To facilitate the proposed changes the SEMC endorsed revisiting the membership and terms of reference of the Risk Subcommittee and the review of the State's risk management policy.

## VOLUNTEER PROTECTIONS

OEM undertook reviews for the following Policy and Governance Review Project Phase 4(B) volunteering projects in the first half of 2018.

In relation to Project 12.1 – the review of employment protections for volunteers, the key findings of the review were as follows.

- Most volunteer activity in support of emergency management agencies (EMAs) occurs during the response phase. These volunteers are afforded employment protection under the *Emergency Management Act 2005* (EM Act) if they are a member of, or have a member-like association with, an EMA, and are involved in emergency response. The employment protections include access to normal pay and continuity of service for the calculation of various entitlements.

In relation to Project 12.2 – the review of income protection for self-employed volunteers, key findings of the review were as follows:

- Self-employed volunteers assisting EMAs cannot access the employment protections as they do not meet the definition of an ‘employee’ under the EM Act.
- When required, there is some compensation for costs for self-employed volunteers incurred via injury insurance and, in some cases, property damage and liability insurance coverage. Emergency services volunteers also have protection against civil liability under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998*. Reimbursement of costs may also be available via the current fuel card scheme and Emergency Services Volunteers’ Hardship Assistance Scheme.

The SEMC noted the findings of reviews and requested further consideration of the issues.

### LESSONS MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GROUP AND FRAMEWORK

An update on the progress of the development of the Emergency Management Lessons Management Framework was provided to the SEMC which included a consultation workshop held on 10 July 2018.

The Terms of Reference and capability requirements for the proposed Lessons Management Reference Group were considered by the SEMC and, subject to some minor changes, were approved. This establishes the Lessons Management Reference Group as a reference group of the SEMC. Responsibility for monitoring outstanding recommendations from historical inquiries, including those still in progress from the Ferguson Report Implementation Working Group, will be transferred to the Reference Group.

The next steps for the Lessons Management Framework include the finalisation of the Framework and the development of a Lessons Management database.

### HOSTILE ACT HAZARD

There are many events, situations or conditions such as a mass shooting, siege, hostage-taking, or hijacking, which are not adequately captured by the hazards prescribed under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*.

The SEMC has agreed that Ministerial approval be sought to prescribe a ‘hostile act’ hazard within the Emergency Management Regulations 2006 and that the Commissioner of Police be nominated as the Hazard Management Agency for the proposed new hazard.

### TELSTRA TRIPLE ZERO CALLS

On 26 May 2018 Telstra’s inbound triple zero call centre received ‘unusual inbound call activity’. On that day the Telstra triple zero call centre received a number of non-genuine calls. Telstra advised that there was some delay to triple zero calls being answered at the inbound call centre; however, the DFES Communications Centre was able to respond to calls received from Telstra’s triple zero call centre within normal timeframes.

The SEMC noted the information provided on this incident.

## TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS GOODS

The SEMC will oversee some work on the management of emergency risks associated with the transportation of hazardous goods through the Perth metropolitan area. The SEMC has previously undertaken related work on transport corridors and is well equipped to provide some analysis on the size, scope and nature of the gaps in legislation.

## SEMC MEETINGS

The upcoming SEMC meetings for 2018 are scheduled for: 5 October and 7 December.

For SEMC related information or enquiries, please email [info@semc.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@semc.wa.gov.au).