

Annexure 2

National Disaster Resilience Framework

Background

The Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management – Emergency Management (MCPPEM-EM) agreed on 6 November 2008 that the future direction for Australian emergency management should be based on achieving community and organisational resilience.

Aim

The aim of this framework is to support measures to strengthen communities, individuals, businesses and institutions to minimise the adverse effects of disasters on Australia. This improves the ability to prevent, prepare, respond to and recover (PPRR) from disasters across social, economic, environmental and governance elements.

Rationale

Protecting Australia from the impacts of disasters is a shared responsibility that cannot be borne by the emergency management sector alone. A cooperative nation-wide effort is required to make Australia better able to withstand and recover from a disaster. A more disaster resilient Australia would recognise current and future risk, reduce and manage those risks, and be better able to adapt to change and recover from disasters.

Scope

The framework articulates the high level disaster resilience agenda established by MCPPEM-EM, and sets clear guidance and principles for the emergency management sector in contributing to a disaster resilience agenda being pursued across all jurisdictions and all levels of government.

Actions arising from the framework will be limited to those aspects of emergency management that will benefit from national research, planning, coordination, resource sharing and consistency. It will build on existing programs in emergency management and other sectors and facilitates shared understanding of resilience issues amongst stakeholders.

Principles

1. Partners, including all levels of government, in the National Disaster Resilience Framework need a *shared understanding* of disaster risk, its context, and responsibility for its management.
2. Actions to increase disaster resilience must employ a *comprehensive approach* that seeks to manage risk, considers all hazards, and considers all aspects of PPRR.
3. A *nationally integrated approach* to implementation of the framework should build on existing networks and arrangements at all levels and utilise a whole-of-government approach. The emergency management sector must engage collaboratively with players in other sectors, including but not limited to social welfare, environment, land use planning, health and infrastructure, to further the aim of this framework.

Framework to enhance disaster resilience

Leadership and coordination

Leadership is required to drive change in improving disaster resilience. Responsibility for leadership must be taken by all partners within their sphere of influence in a coordinated manner so as to maximise the benefits from limited resources.

Agents for change from a wide range of government and non-government sectors should be identified to take advantage of a broader set of policy levers in other parts of government. Appropriate support should be provided to them, including tools and information. Disaster resilience outcomes should be delivered through existing programs and activities, by state and territory governments, local governments and NGOs.

Communications

Communication is required to shape community and organisational expectations and decision-making before disasters. In a disaster resilience context, the focus of communication requires a shift in emphasis from top-down messages to engaging individuals and communities at the grass roots level so they can understand disaster risks and share ownership of managing those risks, and take appropriate action in response to warnings that may be issued.

Work to optimise emergency warning systems should continue.

Awareness of the risk environment

An understanding of the disaster risk environment is required by governments and partner organisations to ensure that resources are prioritised. The emergency management sector needs to engage with work across governments, business, NGOs and scientific communities to develop a firmer evidence base of disaster risk and disaster risk management especially in areas of change and uncertainty, including climate change. The results of this work should be disseminated across a broad range of stakeholders.

Partnerships with those who effect change

Collective effort will produce greater effect than any government or organisation acting alone. The private sector and NGOs have access to relevant and significant resources and capabilities, provide community lifelines, and in many areas represent drivers for change.

NGOs and peak industry bodies have a strong community presence across Australia. Strengthening their existing networks and programs will achieve better community resilience. Better integrating the private sector, particularly community lifeline providers, into comprehensive arrangements, will improve their own organisational resilience and that of the community.

Empowered individuals and communities

Fundamental to the concept of resilience, individuals and communities should be more self-reliant and be prepared to take responsibility for the risks they live with. Individuals, NGOs and businesses requiring uninterrupted supplies or services should be encouraged to make their own contingency arrangements for deployment in the event of a disaster.

Governments at all levels need to facilitate the development of capacity and capabilities of individuals and communities and be ready to assist when the impact of disasters are beyond their capacity.

Individuals need to be empowered to take responsibility for their own risks, by having the relevant knowledge, skills and abilities to make informed decisions and take action. Those who are vulnerable need to be identified and ways of fostering their self-reliance planned for. Specific strategies should assist those more vulnerable, including remote and indigenous communities, to develop their capacity and capability.

Reducing disaster risk through appropriate development in the built environment

The single most effective method to reduce disaster risk in the medium to long term is to consider current and future disaster risk in urban and regional planning. There is a clear need for the emergency management sector to engage with and influence a broader set of policy levers in other parts of government, including climate change policies, land use planning policies, building codes and development standards to contribute to disaster risk reduction.

Flexible, adaptable capabilities for response to and recovery from disasters

Greater flexibility and adaptability to future risks, increases our capacity to deal with disasters. Increased resilience can be achieved through learning, innovating, and developing skills and resources, both at the community and operational level that can be applied to respond to a wider range of disasters.

The highest levels of interoperability of response and recovery capabilities between agencies, jurisdictions and levels of government will support decision makers during disasters. A shared understanding of national and jurisdictional capabilities and limitations is critical.

Capabilities should be maintained at the most effective level.

Regional countries with capacity and resilience

In any disasters involving Australians overseas, there is an expectation from the community that all practical assistance will be offered by government agencies.

Building capacity and resilience in our region will help to reduce costly requests for disaster assistance. Australia can also learn from the experience of other countries by sharing of experiences, intellectual resources and best practices.

Supporting Plans

This framework will be supported by the following action plans:

- Disaster Resilience Strategy (Attorney-General's Department to lead)
- Climate Change Action Plan (Attorney-General's Department to lead)
- National Partnerships Action Plan (AEMC Taskforce)
- Community Engagement Action Plan (Community Engagement Working Group)
- Regional Engagement Action Plan (Attorney-General's Department to lead)
- Recovery Action Plan (Recovery Working Group)
- Volunteers Action Plan (Attorney-General's Department to lead)
- National Action Plan to Reduce Bushfire Arson in Australia (Attorney-General's Department to lead)