

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

COMMUNITY-CENTRED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

FESA has a key role in improving Western Australia's emergency management capability. We provide services to build capacity, and advise and support key stakeholders at local, regional, State and national levels.

We build capacity by improving emergency management capability through training and development, policy and planning development and review, emergency management funding support and mitigation initiatives.

Advisory and support activities include secretariat services for the multi-agency State Emergency Management Committee and the State Mitigation Committee.

We also participate in State and national strategic working and reference groups, and undertake emergency management research.

LOCAL COMMUNITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

THE ALL WEST AUSTRALIANS REDUCING EMERGENCIES (AWARE) PROGRAM

The [AWARE](#) program enables local government to engage with their communities in emergency management.

AWARE encourages local emergency management committees to assist local governments in taking ownership of emergency management in their areas and provides funding to support local government emergency risk management projects and community emergency management training.

The total AWARE grants allocation for the 2006-07 financial year is \$258,621. This will not be fully expended until local governments achieve their project outcomes.

In 2006-07, AWARE training activities also increased awareness of emergency management. The total amount spent was \$41,498.21, and attendance at emergency management training was:

• AWARE coordinators workshops	9
• Emergency Management for Local Government	31
• Emergency Management Australia Activities	154
• Emergency Management Seminar	43
• Intro to Recovery Management and Intro to Emergency Risk Management Workshops	452

AWARE training was conducted across the State as far north as Karratha, south in Albany and east to Norseman.

SAFER COUNTRY

This innovative program provides emergency risk management services to remote Indigenous communities. The nine-module course has been developed to the Australian New Zealand Risk Management Standard 4360 in Emergency Risk Management. The course is customised to meet the needs and capacity of individual communities following engagement with community leaders to identify issues that are of importance to their community.

Each course is delivered by our Indigenous Programs staff using culturally appropriate language, resources and messages. We work with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and

Interpreters provider, Kimberley Interpreting Services, who provide expert advice on how to deliver training and safety messages in language appropriate to local needs.

In the past year, Safer Country has been delivered to remote indigenous communities at Beagle Bay, Lombadina, Djarindjin, Kalumburu, Mardi Warloop and Halls Creek.

AUSTRALIAN SAFER COMMUNITIES AWARDS

Emergency Management Australia coordinates the Australian Safer Communities Awards annually and FESA manages the local components of the program in Western Australia.

These awards recognise best practice and innovation by organisations and individuals that help to build safer communities. All aspects of emergency management – risk assessment, research, education and training, information and knowledge management, prevention, preparedness and recovery – are considered.

In 2006, nine diverse and innovative Western Australian award submissions produced two State winners and seven high commendations. One State winner, the City of Bunbury, received a Highly Commended national award in the category of Post Disaster – Local Government Stream.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICER (CEMO) PROJECT

We established the CEMO project in March 2006. It addresses recommendations in the Report of the Auditor General No 8 [Performance Examination – Responding to Major Bushfires](#), 20 October 2004 and concerns expressed by local governments that the *Emergency Management Act 2005* would impose additional legislated obligations on them that could not be met from existing resources.

In the forward estimates \$1.2 million has been allocated to support this ongoing initiative and assist local governments in understanding and meeting their legislative responsibilities.

To date, 44 local governments have been consulted about bushfire response planning with a preliminary finding that less a quarter of these have a plan that is current, in use and indicative of the majority of good practices which would address the findings of the Auditor General's report.

The CEMO project targets the completion of good practice Bushfire Response Plans for 75% of its linked local governments by 31 October 2007 – before the 2007 bushfire season – and completed plans for 100% by the 2008 bushfire season.

CAPE TO CAPE EMERGENCY SERVICES REVIEW

The Ministerial Review of Emergency Services in the Shires of Busselton and Augusta Margaret River, known as the *Cape to Cape Review* was progressed. Announced in October 2005, the review was prompted by recent rapid economic growth and demographic change in the area.

The review is evaluating the current and future capacity of existing emergency services to respond to existing and potential new hazards.

A steering committee chaired by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services includes the Assistant Commissioner of Western Australia Police, Shire Presidents, Member for the South-West, the Hon Adele Farina (deputy chair), chief executive officers of FESA and DEC and a representative of St John Ambulance.

A supporting project team includes representatives of all participating agencies and the chief executive officer of the South West Development Commission. Input also is being sought from emergency service volunteer groups, commercial and industrial interests and the general community.

The recommendations of the review are anticipated to be published in early 2008.

BUNBURY REVIEW

A major review of emergency services in Bunbury and the surrounding areas is continuing in consultation with key stakeholders, including local governments and volunteers. Bunbury and the surrounding areas are experiencing unprecedented growth, which is significantly impacting on emergency risks. The aim of the review was to identify the future strategic resourcing requirements for the region. Recommendations contained in the report consider the emerging issues and are designed to ensure that emergency services that match the risks can be provided into the future.

STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION

The [Emergency Management Act 2005](#) established overarching emergency management arrangements for Western Australia's emergency services, including local governments and support organisations. It provides a framework for managing emergencies requiring a significant and coordinated response, including the provision of legislative powers and protection for Hazard Management Agencies responsible for preventing or mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from, large-scale incidents.

FESA is the agency responsible for the administration of the *Act* and the ongoing development of regulations, policy and administrative arrangements.

We have undertaken significant implementation of the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, subsidiary legislation, and associated policy and plan development during the past year. Emergency Management Districts were gazetted on 22 December 2006 and Local and District Emergency Management Coordinators appointed. The *Emergency Management Amendment Regulations 2006* prescribing FESA and the Commissioner of Police as Hazard Management Agencies for a total of 14 hazards were gazetted on 12 January 2007. These regulations outline the membership and operation of the [State Emergency Management Committee](#) (SEMC) and prescribe Hazard Management Agencies for the hazards defined by the legislation and regulations. The remaining prescribed hazards will be dealt with during 2007-08.

STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SEMC)

As a part of the implementation of the Act, a five-year Strategic Plan titled [SEMC Emergency Management Strategic Framework 2006-2011](#) has been developed and approved by SEMC.

SEMC has identified 17 State Emergency Management policies to be given development priority and work commenced on 45% of these policies during 2006-07. To date, 20% of the policies have been completed and endorsed by SEMC including three critical ones that directly support the implementation of the Act:

- 2.1 Development and Review of State Emergency Management Policies.
- 2.2 Development and Review of State Emergency Management Plans.
- 2.5 Emergency Management in Local Government Districts.

STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS (WESTPLANS)

We conduct regular reviews of all [State Emergency Management Plans](#) (Westplans).

In the past year, 16 of the 26 hazard plans were examined in detail and a recommendation made to the SEMC Emergency Service subcommittee that the plans be reviewed and updated by the appropriate Hazard Management Agencies. Five of the seven support plans and one special plan have been 'recommended for review'.

STATE MITIGATION COMMITTEE

The FESA Chief Executive Officer, with executive support provided by the FESA Manager Mitigation, chairs the [State Mitigation Committee](#). It is a sub-committee of the State Emergency Management Committee and oversees mitigation and prevention activities for all hazards prescribed under the Emergency Management Act. The Committee ensures that Hazard Management Agencies which lack resources or expertise to fulfill their mitigation and prevention responsibilities have adequate assistance.

The committee is responsible for developing and maintaining the infrastructure required to reduce the social, economic and environmental cost of natural hazards in Western Australia. It advocates an

inclusive approach to natural hazard mitigation, emphasising the need for all levels of government to work with the community to achieve the common goal of a safer community.

NATURAL DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM

The [Natural Disaster Mitigation Program](#) (NDMP) is a national program which identifies, assesses and provides funding for natural emergency mitigation initiatives and prioritises projects that help the community withstand the effects of natural disasters. FESA administers the program in Western Australia through the State Mitigation Committee. In 2006-2007, 20 Western Australian projects met the NDMP eligibility criteria. Australian Government funding totalling \$1,175,000 was approved for 17 projects.

NDMP applications for 2007-08 funding were assessed in April 2007. The 15 eligible Western Australian projects have a total value of \$17,276,885 of which the State is seeking \$2,185,000 from the Australian Government.

STATE EMERGENCY COORDINATION GROUP

In the event of a significant emergency, a multi-agency [State Emergency Coordination Group](#) (SECG) is convened to support the Hazard Management Agency. The role of the SECG is to:

- Ensure the provision of coordinated emergency management by public authorities and other persons;
- Provide advice and direction to public authorities and other persons to facilitate effective emergency management, and;
- Liaise between emergency management agencies and the Minister.

During the past year, the group was activated for four emergencies:

- Australind Storm - August 2006
- Port Hedland Storm Event - January 2007
- South West Bushfires - Feb 2007
- Tropical Cyclones George and Jacob - March 2007

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF ARRANGEMENTS

FESA manages the [Western Australian Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements](#) (WANDRA) which provide financial assistance to communities whose social, financial and economic wellbeing has been significantly affected by a natural disaster.

During 2006-07, five events were proclaimed eligible natural disasters under the WANDRA provisions:

- Australind storm – 7 August 2006
- Tropical Low Isobel – 3 January 2007
- Dwellingup and surrounding areas bushfires – 26 January 2007
- Arrino/Mingenew Flood – 24 February 2007
- Tropical Cyclone George – 9 March 2007

FESA managed the provision of assistance to affected individuals, families, primary producers and local governments in partnership with the Department for Community Development and Department of Agriculture and Food.

In 2006, the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee of the WA Parliament commenced an inquiry into WANDRA, with particular reference to the adequacy of State Government assistance under the program.

The Committee tabled its [report](#) on 10 May 2007 and made 14 [recommendations](#) intended to address and resolve the concerns of affected communities. The recommendations have five key themes:

- Equitable financial contributions by local governments.
- Improved dissemination of information to those affected.
- Increases in the amounts available for Personal Hardship and Distress payments.
- Improvements to enable damaged infrastructure to be upgraded to a more resilient standard.
- Extra relief measures, including the costs of fencing materials and the secondment of staff to aid local recovery efforts.

A number of recommendations will affect emergency services workers, local government, primary producers and our main State Government partners.

We have established a dedicated WANDRA administrator to ensure an integrated approach to the development, reform and implementation of the WANDRA, including:

- Timely identification and proclamation of eligible events; and
- Promotion and awareness of the WANDRA through ministerial and agency media releases for each eligible event and direct liaison with local government and local recovery committees.

It is anticipated that WANDRA support to communities recovering from emergencies will be significantly improved as a result of FESA involvement.

STATE STRATEGY FOR REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

During 2006-07, the initial draft of the FESA State Emergency Management Strategy for Remote Indigenous Communities was completed.

We participated in the negotiation of the Western Australian State Bilateral Agreement for Indigenous Affairs to include emergency management.

Staff undertook visits to a number of remote Indigenous communities and commenced a review of resources required to meet risks. We have also commenced early negotiations with the appropriate Indigenous Coordination Centres to establish Shared Responsibility Agreements for the development of emergency management arrangements in the 'hub' communities in the Dampier Peninsula – Bidyadanga, Nhaanyatjarra Lands and Halls Creek.

RISK BASED LAND USE PLANNING

Unexploded ordinance

Many areas of the Western Australia were previously used as Department of Defence weapon training ranges. A variety of munitions were used in these areas, creating an unexploded ordinance (UXO) risk. As urban areas have grown the potential risk from UXO in the former weapon range areas must be reduced to facilitate development and infrastructure projects.

We are a key participant in the management of UXO. Our UXO Services Branch works with other government agencies, contractors and clients to manage UXO hazards efficiently. Field validation surveys of many larger-scale development sites determine the nature and extent of UXO pollution and reduce the risk on those sites to an acceptable level.

Searches are usually conducted by accredited private companies and funded by the landowner, developer or government agency responsible for the land.

Planning for Aboriginal Communities Project

Through the [Planning for Aboriginal Communities Project](#), we have established the potential for land use planning to reduce a current high level of vulnerability to natural hazards.

To date, six key Indigenous land use planners have completed the Risk Based Land Use Planning course conducted by Emergency Management Australia.

Recent aerial data was captured to assist the planning of the integration of the emergency risk management process for remote communities into the Planning for Aboriginal Communities Project.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Liaison between FESA and Emergency Management Australia on national working groups, committees, reference groups and through the provision of advice and recommendations to the Australian Government is an important link between national and State and territory emergency management agencies.

WORKING TOGETHER TO MANAGE EMERGENCIES

[*Working Together to Manage Emergencies*](#) is funded by the Australian Government and managed by Emergency Management Australia. The four year program will provide \$49 million in grants through the Local Grants Scheme and the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund. FESA provides local expertise and executive support for the program.

Local Grants Scheme

In 2006-07, 47 Western Australian projects were eligible for this scheme and total funding of \$1,687,246 was approved for 39 projects. These ranged from the provision of emergency generators and emergency coordination facilities to the production of community information booklets and maps; the development of emergency management plans; communication infrastructure; translation and interpretation services for Indigenous communities and an emergency management forum.

National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund

In 2006-2007, 21 projects were considered eligible for this fund. Total funding of \$540,289 was approved for 17 projects including upgrades to facilities, rescue equipment, volunteer recruitment and retention initiatives, and cadet training programs.