

# Emergency Planning



Australian Government  
Department of Home Affairs



Australian Institute for  
Disaster Resilience



AUSTRALIAN DISASTER RESILIENCE  
HANDBOOK COLLECTION

# Emergency Planning

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The Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection provides guidance on national principles and practices for disaster resilience.

The Handbook Collection:

- provides an authoritative, trusted and freely available source of knowledge about disaster resilience principles in Australia
- aligns national disaster resilience strategy and policy with practice, by guiding and supporting jurisdictions, agencies and other organisations and individuals in their implementation and adoption
- highlights and promotes the adoption of good practice in building disaster resilience in Australia

- builds interoperability between jurisdictions, agencies, the private sector, local businesses and community groups by promoting use of a common language and coordinated, nationally agreed principles.

The Handbook Collection is developed and reviewed by national consultative committees representing a range of state and territory agencies, governments, organisations and individuals involved in disaster resilience.

The collection is sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs.

Access to the Handbook Collection and further details are available on the Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub: [www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/handbooks](http://www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/handbooks)

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Australian Emergency Management Arrangements

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Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience

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Community Recovery

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Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers

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**Emergency Planning**

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Evacuation Planning

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Flood Emergency Planning for Disaster Resilience

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Health and Disaster Management

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Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilient Communities

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Lessons Management

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Managing Exercises

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Managing the Floodplain: A Guide to Best Practice in Flood Risk Management in Australia

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National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines

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Public Information and Warnings

---

Safe and Healthy Crowded Places

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Tsunami Emergency Planning in Australia

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[www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/emergency-planning-handbook](http://www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/emergency-planning-handbook)

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# Executive Summary

Emergency planning plays an important role in the development of Australia's disaster resilience capability. The emergency planning process is the collective and collaborative effort by which agreements are reached and documented between people and organisations to meet their communities' or entities' emergency management needs. Emergency planning involves identifying and documenting strategies for preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies. Effective emergency planning contributes to reducing the likelihood and consequence of emergencies for individuals, communities, entities, and the environment and can have positive economic benefits.

*Emergency Planning* is part of the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection. The handbook reflects changes in the field of disaster risk reduction, emergency management and more broadly in society since the publication of the previous *Emergency Planning Manual* (AIDR 2004). Emergency planning is an essential element in the implementation of the policy framework established by the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* (COAG 2011).

The handbook contextualises key messages for emergency planning as considered in the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs 2018), *Profiling Australia's Vulnerability* (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs 2018), the *Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework* (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs 2018) and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015).

The handbook provides nationally agreed principles for good practice in emergency planning and draws on and complements current practices. The handbook introduces the strategic context and importance of emergency planning, the emergency planning process, the potential elements of an emergency plan, the actions needed to implement the plan, and monitoring and evaluation.

Additionally, it introduces the application of a project management approach to the development of an emergency plan and recognises the need to plan for uncertainty. The approach in the handbook can be applied to developing emergency plans for all hazards and may cover all the phases of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

# Introduction

## Purpose of this handbook

The *Emergency Planning* handbook provides nationally agreed principles for good practice in emergency planning. The handbook draws on and complements current practices and provides guidance on emergency planning for communities and entities. The emergency planning process described in the handbook can be used to develop a plan for any or all phases of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The handbook is for use by:

- emergency service organisations
- government agencies
- private sector businesses
- critical infrastructure owners and operators
- community groups
- non-government and not-for-profit organisations
- community event committees
- educational institutions.

The handbook is not intended to be operational in nature. Entities accountable for response and recovery operations have planning arrangements in place relevant to their agency. Emergency planning as covered in the handbook is undertaken in the preparedness phase of emergency management.

## Context

*Emergency Planning* is part of the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection. Emergency planning plays an important role in the development of Australia's disaster resilience capability. Emergency planning should ensure that approaches to prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery are based on analysis, consultation, engagement, and agreement. Emergency planning is an essential element in the implementation of the policy framework established by the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* (COAG 2011).

The handbook contextualises key messages for emergency planning as considered in the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs 2018), *Profiling Australia's Vulnerability* (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs 2018) and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015).

The handbook reflects changes in the field of disaster risk reduction, emergency management and more broadly in society since the publication of the previous *Emergency Planning Manual* (AIDR 2004). Some of the changes influencing the handbook include new approaches to:

- disaster risk reduction
- disaster resilience
- disaster recovery
- partnerships between the public, private and not-for-profit sector
- community engagement, consultation, and shared responsibility
- planning for catastrophic, cascading, and concurrent events
- emergent capability and capacity
- lessons management.

The handbook does not intend to repeat explanations of concepts or processes that are covered in other handbooks. This handbook refers to content further detailed in:

- *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements* (AIDR 2019)
- *Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience* (AIDR 2020)
- *Community Recovery* (AIDR 2018)
- *Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers* (AIDR 2018)
- *Evacuation Planning* (AIDR 2017)
- *Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilient Communities* (AIDR 2020)
- *Lessons Management* (AIDR 2019)
- *Managing Exercises* (AIDR 2017)
- *National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines* (AIDR 2020)
- *Public Information and Warnings* (AIDR 2018)

## Scope

The handbook provides a generic guide for emergency planners producing community or entity emergency plans. 'Entity' is used in this handbook as a proxy for the wide range of organisations, businesses and groups that develop emergency plans.


In this handbook the generic term 'risk management study' is used. The approach taken by a community or entity to applying the principles of risk management will vary.

The approach in the handbook can be applied to developing emergency plans for all hazards and may cover all the phases of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The handbook is not a guide to business continuity planning. There are specific standards and guides available for business continuity planning. However, the handbook can be utilised to develop an entity's emergency management plan as part of an integrated business continuity management framework.

The handbook applies a project management approach to the development of an emergency plan. Entities may use their existing project management processes. The handbook uses the term 'project team' to describe the people developing the emergency plan. The project team may be an existing emergency planning committee.

The approach set out in the handbook will need to be scaled to meet the needs of the user. Factors to be considered include resources available for the planning project, complexity and scope of planning required, and the degree of community and stakeholder engagement required.



# Chapter 1: Strategic context and principles of emergency planning

## Summary of key points

This chapter explains the national and international strategic context of emergency planning. Additionally, the chapter includes national principles underpinning emergency planning. Key points covered in this chapter include:

- implementation of emergency planning contributes to building disaster resilience
- an emergency plan sits within a framework of plans and documents
- an emergency plan is based on a risk study
- emergency planning requires effective communication and consultation
- emergency planning is an iterative process
- planning for uncertainty requires plans to be flexible and adaptive.

## 1.1 What is emergency planning?

The emergency planning process is the collective and collaborative effort by which agreements are reached and documented between people and organisations to meet their communities' or entities' emergency management needs (Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary).

Emergency planning applies communication and consultation processes to gain agreement about:

- risks and consequences
- risk acceptance
- risk reduction strategies – prevention and mitigation
- preparedness arrangements
- response and relief arrangements
- recovery arrangements.

Effective emergency planning ensures that agreed outcomes are documented and continuously improved. At each step in the emergency planning process consideration should be given to consequences across the social, built, economic and natural environments.

The process of emergency planning starts with a risk management study and requires a thorough understanding of the communities and entities the plan is for. Effective planning requires communication and consultation with the communities and stakeholders the plan applies to. Planning builds knowledge, relationships and networks that benefit all phases of emergency management. Developing an emergency plan is an iterative process, each step in the planning process builds knowledge that improves understanding of earlier planning steps. Once implemented, emergency plans

need to be reviewed for their effectiveness. An effective lessons management process enables continuous improvement of emergency plans. Consideration needs to be given to ensuring arrangements in new plans are reflected in existing policies and plans to ensure effective interoperability.

## 1.2 Why plan?

Scientific evidence from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and CSIRO indicates that a variable and changing climate is expected to further increase the severity and frequency of many natural hazards in Australia (CSIRO and BOM 2018). The *Fifth Assessment Report* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that there will be an 'increased frequency and intensity of flood damage to settlements and infrastructure in Australia', and an increase in the 'number of days with extreme fire weather' and 'greater frequency and intensity of droughts' (IPCC 2014).

The economic cost of disaster to Australian communities in the 10 years to 2016 has averaged \$18.2 billion per year. This figure is expected to rise to an average of \$39 billion per year by 2050 (Australian Business Roundtable (ABR) 2017). It is noted that, at the time of this handbook's publication, this projected figure is being updated. The intangible costs in terms of the impact on people's lives, their health and wellbeing, education, employment, and community networks as well as environmental damage are at least equal to, if not greater than, tangible costs (ABR 2017).

Emergency planning involves identifying and documenting strategies for preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies. Effective emergency planning contributes to reducing the likelihood and consequence of emergencies for individuals, communities, entities, and the environment and can have positive economic benefits.

The interconnectedness of systems in society causes cascading consequences in emergencies. Effectively managing risks therefore requires all sectors of society to plan for emergencies. Emergency planning is a legislative or regulatory requirement for many entities under state, territory and Commonwealth legislation.

## 1.3 Strategic context: enhancing disaster resilience

### 1.3.1 National Strategy for Disaster Resilience

The *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* (the Strategy) was adopted by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2011. The Strategy provides

high-level guidance on emergency management to federal, state, territory and local governments, business and community leaders and the not-for-profit sector, and provides priority areas to build disaster resilient communities.

The Strategy highlights that, to increase disaster resilience, emergency planning should be based on risk and be integrated with strategic planning of government and communities.

**Table 1. How emergency planning contributes to achieving each of the priorities in the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* (COAG 2011)**

| NSDR Priority   | How emergency planning contributes to achieving this priority  |
|---|--|
| <b>PRIORITY 1 –<br/>Leading change and<br/>coordinating effort</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies the range of stakeholders with planning responsibilities</li> <li>• connects planning stakeholders</li> <li>• assists people to understand the risks in their community/entity</li> <li>• facilitates information sharing about risks between entities</li> <li>• ensures people know the actions to be taken across the phases of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.</li> </ul> |
| <b>PRIORITY 2 –<br/>Understanding risk</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enables people to understand the risks in their community/entity</li> <li>• develops approaches to community education</li> <li>• facilitates information sharing about risks between entities</li> <li>• develops strategies to enable preparedness for risks.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>PRIORITY 3 –<br/>Communicating with and<br/>educating people about<br/>risks</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies stakeholder groups who need to know about risks and risk reduction strategies</li> <li>• identifies strategies to enhance stakeholder understanding of risk</li> <li>• facilitates information sharing</li> <li>• develops strategies for public information and warnings</li> <li>• incorporates lessons from past events for future use.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>PRIORITY 4 –<br/>Partnering with those<br/>who effect change</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brings together various sectors of the community to share knowledge and capabilities</li> <li>• builds partnerships between and across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors</li> <li>• engages with research institutions to develop new approaches.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PRIORITY 5 –<br/>Empowering individuals<br/>and communities to<br/>exercise choice and take<br/>responsibility</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensures community members and entities have the risk information they need before, during and after a disaster to take appropriate action.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PRIORITY 6 –<br/>Reducing risks in the built<br/>environment</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informs communities and entities about risks</li> <li>• provides information to enable improved decision making about risk reduction measures</li> <li>• engages critical infrastructure owners and operators in resilience building.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>PRIORITY 7 –<br/>Supporting capabilities<br/>for disaster resilience</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies capabilities required for effective prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery</li> <li>• identifies the availability of capabilities across the public, private and non-government organisation sectors</li> <li>• identifies the capacity required for each capability</li> <li>• identifies the capability and capacity of the community/entity.</li> </ul>                           |

### 1.3.2 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (the Sendai Framework) was adopted by Australia and other members of the United Nations at the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Through the Sendai Framework, Australia recognises the importance of not only managing disasters, but managing disaster risk.

The Sendai Framework states that it is urgent and critical to anticipate, plan for and reduce disaster risk in order to more effectively protect persons, communities and countries, their livelihoods, health, cultural heritage, socioeconomic assets and ecosystems, and thus strengthen their resilience.

### 1.3.3 National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

In early 2018 the Australian Government invited all states and territories, local government, and key private sector representatives to work together to co-design and develop the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* (the Framework). The Framework was endorsed by COAG in March 2020.

The Framework, which is informed by the Sendai Framework, sets out the foundational work to proactively reduce risk now and into the future. It guides national, whole-of-society efforts to proactively reduce disaster risk in order to minimise the loss and suffering caused by disasters.

### 1.3.4 Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework: A guideline to develop the capabilities required to manage severe to catastrophic disasters

The *Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework* (the Preparedness Framework) informs the strategic governance, policy and investment required for disaster preparedness. The Preparedness Framework provides guidance and support for jurisdictions to develop the required capability to effectively prepare for and manage severe to catastrophic disasters. It incorporates consideration of risk and consequence, and new and emerging ideas and technologies, to inform the strategic capability requirements and arrangements across governments and the private, non-government community and international sectors.

### 1.3.5 Profiling Australia's Vulnerability: The interconnected causes and cascading effects of systemic disaster risk

The report *Profiling Australia's Vulnerability: The interconnected causes and cascading effects of systemic disaster risk* is the result of a year-long initial study of the causes and effects of disasters in Australia. The purpose of this work is to advance understanding of and approaches to assessing disaster risk. This report is a significant and innovative contribution to transforming how we plan and prepare as a nation for emergency events, as well as informing new approaches to reducing disaster risk and building resilience. It raises important questions about the cascading effects of vulnerabilities and the limits of resilience at every level.

## 1.4 Emergency planning principles

Principles underpinning emergency planning include:

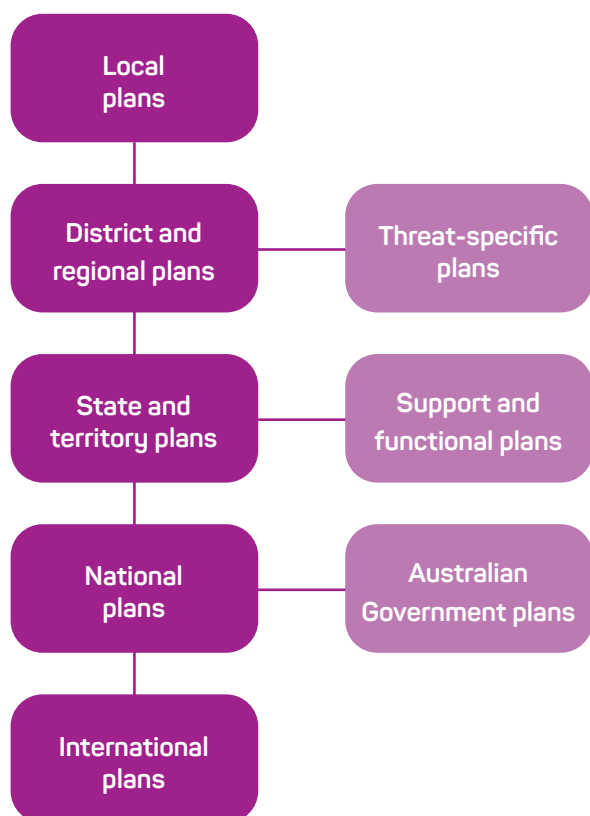
|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Emergency planning is <b>risk informed</b> . Planning is based on a risk management study.   |
| 2 | Emergency planning <b>reduces unknowns</b> . Planning increases understanding of risks, vulnerabilities, and treatment options across the social, built, economic, and natural environments. |
| 3 | Emergency planning is <b>collaborative and inclusive</b> . Planning involves consultation and engagement with those affected by the plan.  |
| 4 | Emergency planning is <b>strategic</b> . Planning develops strategic objectives, relationships, and networks.  |
| 5 | Emergency planning is <b>solutions oriented</b> . Planning develops agreed approaches to managing risks and consequences.  |
| 6 | Emergency planning is <b>iterative</b> . Learning from each step informs next steps.   |
| 7 | Emergency planning <b>enables adaptive capacity</b> . Planning develops frameworks that provide a base on which to build flexible and adaptive solutions.                                    |
| 8 | Emergency planning is a <b>shared responsibility</b> . Planning documents actions to be undertaken by a wide range of people/entities.   |



## 1.5 Emergency planning framework

An emergency plan commonly sits within a framework of plans and documents. An emergency plan may:

- fit within a hierarchical structure of plans e.g. national, state, regional and local
- cover a specific phase of comprehensive emergency management e.g. flood mitigation plan, bushfire response plan, community recovery plan
- cover a specific function or activity e.g. transport functional plan
- cover a specific supporting activity e.g. evacuation plan, public information and warning plan
- cover a specific hazard e.g. exotic animal disease plan
- cover a specific event or entity e.g. festival emergency plan, airport/aerodrome emergency plan.



**Figure 1. Emergency planning framework in government**

Figure 1 represents the structure of emergency management plans developed for general emergency management purposes by government. Many other entities at a local and national level develop plans that are not covered by this framework but nevertheless

interact with or impact plans in this government planning framework. These entities include the not-for-profit sector, private sector, critical infrastructure, non-government organisations and community organisations. Entities are encouraged to ensure plans they develop acknowledge and effectively interface with government plans.

Consideration must be given to interoperability issues between plans such as consistent terminology, responsibilities and arrangements. Developing the integrated framework of plans is a shared responsibility.

## 1.6 Planning for uncertainty

The level of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in contemporary society ensures that new issues continue to arise in emergency response and recovery. New issues may be caused by:

- catastrophic disasters exceeding planning arrangements
- complexity caused by cascading consequences
- emergencies not previously experienced by emergency planners and communities.

### Definition of a catastrophic disaster

A catastrophic disaster is what is beyond our current arrangements, thinking, experience and imagination (i.e. that has overwhelmed our technical, non-technical and social systems and resources, and has degraded or disabled governance structures and strategic and operational decision-making functions). It should be noted that severe to catastrophic disasters differ from emergencies in that they exceed business as usual emergency management systems and capability design parameters.

*(Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary 2019)*

To manage volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity the planning process needs to:

- be strategic in nature, adopting a principles-based approach
- identify subject matter specialists who can provide appropriate expert advice
- create flexible leadership structures that can integrate entities not identified in the planning process
- create collaborative networks and relationships that can provide support to each other and share innovative ideas

- establish processes that enable adaptive and creative thinking to produce innovative solutions
- create a learning organisation approach which enables rapid prototyping, trialling and evaluation of solutions.

‘Decision makers need to recognise and possibly reframe their understanding of the scale, nature and opportunities that rapidly changing environments present. They will need to revisit values, objectives, assumptions and approaches underpinning strategy development, planning, risk management and economic assessment to be compatible with large-scale change and high uncertainty’.

*Guidance for Strategic Decisions on Climate And Disaster Risk: Guidance on Scenarios* (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs 2019). See for more guidance on decision making and uncertainty.

### Vignette: Volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity - South Australia's extreme weather event

On 28 September 2016, South Australia experienced an extreme weather event which brought thunderstorms, destructive winds, large hailstones, and heavy rain. Cascading consequences from this event included:

- a loss of power to the whole state
- loss of access to food, medications, and fuel
- disruption to water supplies, telecommunications, banking services, and radio
- traffic disruption due to loss of traffic lights
- flooding of homes and business.

There were many learnings to improve future plans. One outcome was an alternative model for emergency relief and recovery to make these aspects of emergency management more effective and efficient.

Source: South Australian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet 2018, *Independent Review of the Extreme Weather Event South Australia 28 September – 5 October 2016*.

[www.dpc.sa.gov.au/resources-and-publications/extreme-weather-event-review](http://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/resources-and-publications/extreme-weather-event-review)



# Chapter 2: Developing the emergency plan

### Summary of key points

This chapter presents the process involved in developing an emergency plan. Effective planning involves:

- taking a project management approach with clear deliverables, accountability and methodology
- using a risk study as a foundation on which to base strategies
- conducting consultation and communication not only within the project team but with entities and communities affected by the plan
- validating the plan through trials and exercises.

## 2.1 Overview of the emergency planning process

The emergency planning process is a sequence of steps by which an emergency plan is prepared, implemented and continuously reviewed. The planning process has a role in building the knowledge of people involved and strengthening the relationship and networks between them.

The planning process can be scaled to match the size of the project. The size of the project team and scope of work undertaken will vary according to the size of the community group or entity involved. In a smaller entity the work of the project team may be undertaken by one person.

The emergency planning process as shown in Figure 2. involves several steps:

- Establish a project plan.
- Establish a project team.
- Communicate and consult with communities, entities and stakeholders throughout the process.
- Understand the risk treatment options by conducting a risk management study.
- Develop strategies and arrangements for prevention, preparedness response and recovery.
- Document the plan. Multiple plans may be required for specific areas, activities or entities. Plans may be supported by other forms of documentation such as procedures, contracts, community information guides and mutual aid agreements.
- Endorsement of the plan.
- Implement the emergency plan through communication and education on arrangements, resource procurement, training, exercises and other resilience building activities.
- Monitor and review the planning process and plan.

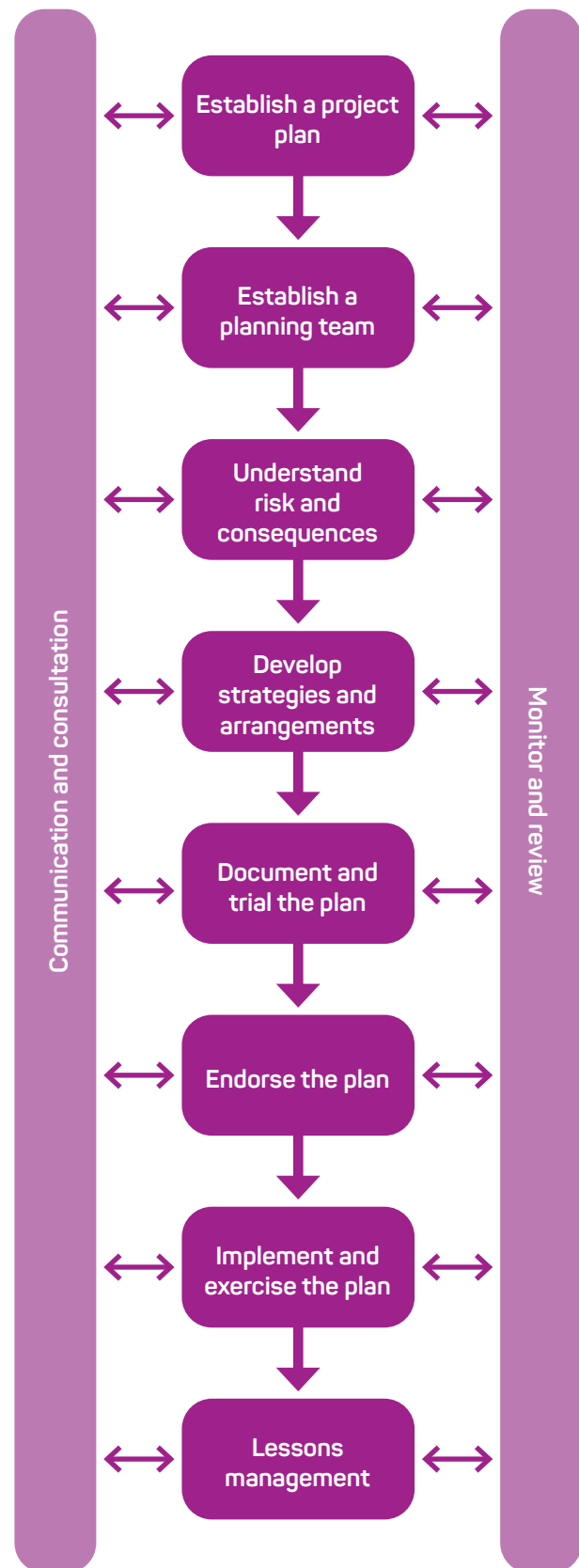


Figure 2. The emergency planning process

## 2.1.1 Establish a project plan

### Confirm the plan sponsor

The plan sponsor is the person or entity responsible for providing the resources to enable the emergency plan to be developed and implemented. The plan sponsor is responsible for ensuring the emergency plan is approved by the authorising entity.

### Establish authority

The project should be established under formal authority. Formal authority could include legislation, entity direction or community agreement. Clear authority for planning gives the emergency plan credibility, recognition and acceptance. There should be clear ownership of the responsibility for the development of the emergency plan.

### Appoint a project manager

The project sponsor will appoint a project manager. The project manager will:

- organise the administrative support for the project
- ensure the right people are representing their entity
- gain consensus on the project plan
- lead the project team
- engage all project team members and leverage the available knowledge and skills
- communicate and consult with project stakeholders.

### Develop a project plan

The project manager will develop a project plan. The project plan details:

- Project audience – Who is the audience the emergency plan is designed for?
- Project purpose – Why is the emergency plan being developed?
- Project scope – What is included and excluded from the emergency plan?
- Project aim and objectives – What will be produced by the project team?
- Project deliverables – What are the planning activities to be completed?
- Project timeline – What are the dates for information provision, meetings, feedback deadlines, consultation sessions?
- Project responsibilities – What are the responsibilities of the project sponsor, project manager, project team members and others?
- Resources – What resources are required to complete the project including time commitments?
- Administrative arrangements - What are the arrangements for document control and meeting support?

- Risk management – What risks could derail the project? What risk controls are required?
- Community and stakeholder engagement – How will the community and stakeholders be communicated and consulted with?

## 2.1.2 Establish a project team

The project team may be an existing emergency management committee, or a project team formed to undertake the development of the emergency plan. The project team members are individually responsible for:

- endorsing the project plan
- providing information and ideas to enable the development of the emergency plan
- reviewing documents and providing feedback
- organising their entity's endorsement of the emergency plan.

There are several requirements for a project team to be effective. These requirements include:

- project team members should be sufficiently empowered to represent their entity
- project team members should be committed to the planning process
- continuity of project team membership.

Selecting the project team requires careful consideration to ensure communities and entities are represented by the appropriate people. The project team has to be limited to a functional size.

## 2.1.3 Communication and consultation

It is important that emergency plans meet the specific characteristics and requirements of the communities and entities they are for. Tailoring the emergency plan to the community or entity requires communication and consultation with communities and stakeholders impacted by the emergency plan. Communication and consultation are ongoing requirements throughout the planning process.

Aspects of communities and entities affected by the emergency plan will need to be understood through effective communication and consultation. Aspects include:

- the nature of the communities and entities affected e.g. demographics, distribution, mobility, language, vulnerability, cultural issues, previous experiences
- the capability and capacity of the communities and entities
- planning previously undertaken by communities and entities.

The nature of the planning project influences the scale and complexity of the communication and consultation process. Engaging with community members and stakeholders may require workshops, newsletters or community forums.

**Further information on community engagement can be found in *Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience* (AIDR 2020).**

### Vignette: Equi-Evac Centre Network - City of Mandurah Western Australia

The City of Mandurah has a Local Emergency Management Plan and an Animal Welfare Plan. The Equi-Evac Network project brought multiple agencies together in a collaborative approach to planning. This project won the Resilient Australia National Award in 2017.

The City of Mandurah Equi-Evac Centre Network project equips local public equestrian facilities as evacuation points for the surrounding community of horse owners in times of emergency. Public equestrian facilities deemed suitable are provided with a comprehensive activation kit including guidelines, contacts, equipment and information on animal welfare standards.

The project involved local governments, community members, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Department for Communities, the Department of Agriculture and Food, the Australian Red Cross and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The project highlighted the need for inclusive evacuation planning.

Source: *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, January 2018.

## 2.1.4 Understand the risks and consequences

The development of an emergency plan is based on the output of a risk management study. The project team may conduct the risk management study or use existing information. A risk management study provides information to understand risks and then decide on the most appropriate treatments to reduce these risks. Risk treatments may apply to any or all phases of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

The risk management study provides important information to enable effective emergency planning. Information resulting from a risk management study that is useful for an emergency plan includes:

- information on hazards
- register of risks
- level of risk reduction required
- risk treatment options and selected strategies
- cascading consequences from hazards
- information on community/entity values and changing community/entity profiles
- relevant characteristics of the community e.g. demographics, distribution, mobility, language, vulnerability, cultural issues, previous experiences
- describes the community/entity vulnerabilities
- opportunities to build community resilience
- stakeholders
- objectives to be met from the planning process
- plans required and responsible entities.

Throughout the emergency planning process, consideration should be given to other factors such as regulatory requirements and consultation with other entities able to influence the nature and application of risk treatments. For example:

- the emergency planning process may identify opportunities for risk treatments to be addressed through land use planning controls
- land use planning processes may require emergency planning within specified parameters.

Land use planning controls can support and enhance emergency management outcomes across all phases of emergency planning.

**Further information on risk management can be found in *National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG)* (AIDR 2020) which aligns with *ISO 31000:2018 Risk management - Guidelines*.**

**Further information on land use planning can be found in *Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilient Communities* (AIDR 2020).**

### Vignette: A collaborative catchment – Fitzroy Regional Resilience Strategy

Collaborative partnerships are required to plan effectively to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

The Fitzroy region is no stranger to floods. This vast catchment is one of Australia's largest river systems, taking in the Isaac, Nogoa, Connors, Comet, Mackenzie and Dawson rivers and the mighty Fitzroy River itself.

For the Fitzroy Basin, resilience is fundamentally about understanding risk. The vast basin has a long history of flooding in all its sub-basins and townships.

The objectives of the *Fitzroy Regional Resilience Strategy* are:

1. **understand risk** – linking the optimisation and operability of the Flood Warning Network (and other hazards where relevant) to risk awareness, community education and business continuity
2. **work together** – understanding how best to share technical capability, knowledge and resources across the catchment for collective benefit and a common approach to asset management.

Benefits of the strategy include:

1. a better understanding of flood risk that supports improved social and economic resilience outcomes for the community
2. a plan for collaborative action to optimise the Fitzroy Basin flood warning infrastructure network set against funding options.

Source: *A Collaborative Catchment – Fitzroy Regional Resilience Strategy*, Queensland Reconstruction Authority, January 2020.

## 2.1.5 Develop strategies and arrangements

Emergency planning requires the undertaking of research and a literature review to establish good planning practice and to scope what must be considered in development of the plan e.g. other doctrine, national terminology. The development of strategies and

arrangements should take into consideration those contained in other plans that they need to integrate with.

One of the issues to be considered by the project team is how much detail to include in the emergency plan. Where the problem and the solution are clearly understood and agreed to, the emergency plan can be detailed. However, a rigid emergency plan is less likely to cope with high levels of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Planning for uncertainty requires an emergency plan to provide guidance for adaptive decision making. In this case an emergency plan will be strategic in nature and adopt a principles-based approach.

The range of strategies and arrangements developed will depend on the aim, objectives and scope of the project.

## 2.1.6 Document and trial the plan

The format of the emergency plan depends on the requirements of the users. Users may require the emergency plan to be produced as an electronic or a paper-based document.

Content that changes frequently, such as phone numbers and email addresses, should be included in an annexure to the body of the document to assist in updating.

Emergency plans require administration and will include different elements depending on the purpose.

**Administration and elements of emergency plans are described in Chapter 3.**

Once the plan is documented assurance is required that the plan will function effectively. Assurance can be achieved through trialling the plan or reviewing the plan with an assurance tool. Trialling the plan could involve the conduct of a desk top exercise. An assurance tool can be used to ensure that the emergency plan conforms with higher-level policy or statutory requirements. There are several review guides used within industry, regulatory authorities and the emergency management sector.

Links to sample review guides are contained in the companion document *Emergency Planning Resources Links*.

## 2.1.7 Endorsement of the plan

The emergency plan must be approved by the person/s who have the authority to do so. This may include a sign off by the entities involved in the development of the emergency plan and those who have a functional role in the execution of the plan.

## 2.1.8 Implement and exercise the plan

Following the development of an emergency plan there is a requirement to ensure the plan is understood and the arrangements are effective. Plan implementation activities include:

- ensuring the plan is accessible to users
- communicating the emergency plan with the community and stakeholders
- communicating the emergency plan to relevant staff
- developing procedures, contracts, checklists, action cards
- educating those responsible for implementing the emergency plan
- exercising the plan
- assuring that capabilities and capacities identified in the emergency plan are available.

**Implementing and exercising the plan is discussed further in Chapter 4.**

## 2.1.9 Monitor and review

As part of the planning process, a timeline for monitoring and reviewing the outcomes of the process need to be programmed and the responsibilities defined. The review cycle needs to be included in the plan.


The nature of emergency-related risk changes over time. This includes shifting of priorities, perception and culture. As a result, the emergency plan needs to be updated regularly to ensure that approaches remain current.

The monitoring and review process should be documented in the emergency plan:

- ensuring identified arrangements are operating effectively and have not changed over time
- incorporating lessons identified from emergencies and exercises
- accounting for changes in the context of the risk assessment
- identifying and accounting for emerging risks.

**Monitoring and reviewing the emergency plan is discussed further in Chapter 5.**





# Chapter 3: Documenting the emergency plan

### Summary of key points

This chapter explains what might be contained within an emergency plan. This includes:

- administrative arrangements that support the emergency plan
- content of an emergency plan
- arrangements to monitor and review the emergency plan.

## 3.1 Writing for the plan users

The project manager needs to format the emergency plan to meet the needs of the various users. The emergency plan should be structured in segments that allow users to easily find the information they require. The emergency plan should:

- have logically labelled sections
- be written in plain English
- be easily searchable
- use annexures for checklists and stand-alone parts.

## 3.2 Plan administration

An emergency plan must be reviewed and updated regularly. An effective emergency plan requires all parties to have the current version to work from. Emergency plans can be stored on a computer server or in the cloud and accessed when required. Whether emergency plans are distributed as electronic files or in paper-based formats, procedures to update them are required. Emergency plans should be version controlled, with the version number and date on every page so that users can compare copies and determine which version they have.

## 3.3 Plan elements

The structure of an emergency plan depends on its purpose. The plan may include elements in this section.

### 3.3.1 Contents, abbreviations and glossary

The emergency plan should contain a table of contents and an explanation of all abbreviations used in the emergency plan. If unfamiliar terms are used a glossary of terminology may be required.

Further information on terminology can be found in *Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary*.

### 3.3.2 Authority

State under what authority the plan has been prepared. This section may include endorsement by a range of entities showing their commitment to complying with the arrangements in the emergency plan.

### 3.3.3 Security rating

A security rating may be required if the information contained in the emergency plan needs to be restricted. Consider whether it is possible to give unrestricted access to some parts of the plan while maintaining security of classified or confidential information in annexures.

### 3.3.4 Review schedule

State the scheduled review period and identify who is accountable for implementing the review.

### 3.3.5 Amendment register

The amendment register records:

- changes made to the emergency plan
- who made the changes
- date of the changes.

### 3.3.6 Distribution list

The distribution list records positions within entities that the emergency plan is distributed to. Copies of the emergency plan may be distributed to:

- entities involved in the planning process
- entities required to implement arrangements contained in the emergency plan
- entities whose procedures and priorities will interface with the emergency plan
- public or institutional libraries or websites
- higher levels of entities providing governance over the emergency plan.

### 3.3.7 Plan aim and objectives

State the aim and objectives to be achieved by the emergency plan. The aim sets out the goal or mission statement. The objectives set out what the emergency plan is putting in place to enable the aim to be achieved.

### 3.3.8 Legislative and policy context

Describe the legislative and policy arrangements in which the plan is required.

### 3.3.9 Plan context

Describe the hazard, event or entity that the emergency plan applies to.

### 3.3.10 Plan scope

This could include limitations to, inclusions or exclusions from the emergency plan.

Concisely set out:

- geographic area and timeframe of the emergency plan
- interfaces with other plans
- planning limitations
- planning assumptions.

### 3.3.11 Leadership and network structures

Identify the leadership and network structures required to achieve the aim and objectives of the emergency plan. This ensures clarity for stakeholders on accountability and decision making. Include:

- entities that have the authority to control, lead or coordinate others
- reporting chain
- roles of committees
- governance arrangements
- linkages to collaboration networks
- liaison requirements.

Entities must assess the roles and responsibilities they are allocated and confirm they have the capabilities and capacities expected of them.

### 3.3.12 Roles and responsibilities

Document the roles and responsibilities agreed to by entities.

Roles and responsibilities could include:

- the entity responsible for leading
- entities fulfilling functional leadership roles e.g. transport coordination
- entities responsible for prevention and mitigation strategies
- entities responsible for preparedness programs
- entities with capability and capacity to provide specific services e.g. Bureau of Meteorology
- community and business roles.

Entities listed in the plan may not be represented on the project team. If they are not represented on the project team then communication and consultation with them is required.

### 3.3.13 Financial management

Financial arrangements will need to be documented. It is imperative that the arrangements for paying for purchases and contractors is clear. Financial arrangements should include cost sharing arrangements between entities and levels of government e.g. national, state, regional, local. The type of costs to be considered cover all the phases of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

### 3.3.14 Communication systems

Detail the communications systems to be used between locations and entities. Communications systems can include:

- radio UHF, VHF, HF
- telephone
- phone trees
- social media
- websites
- satellite
- collaborative software platforms
- video conferencing
- courier.

All electronic communication systems have the risk of failure due to loss of electricity or physical nodes. Electronic communications may also be subject to cyber disruption. Emergency plans should identify contingency communication methods.

### 3.3.15 Information management

Describe arrangements for inter-entity information sharing. This includes arrangements to exchange information to build shared situational awareness. Information management includes strategies for the collection, collation, analysis, storage and dissemination of information.

Information sharing can occur between entities using:

- apps
- integrated computer aided despatch systems
- integrated command and common operating systems
- integrated administrative systems
- briefings.

Where there are requirements to share personal information, protocols must be in place to ensure compliance with relevant privacy legislation.

The responsibility and arrangements for records storage should be documented.

### 3.3.16 Resource capability and capacity requirements

Identify the resources and services required to implement the emergency plan. Considerations when identifying and planning to use resources and services include:

- resources and services may be held by the private, not-for-profit or community sector and may require development of contractual arrangements
- resource and service capability and capacity shortfalls should be identified
- resources and services may include the establishment of mutual aid agreements
- resources and services may involve the utilisation of emergent groups
- new resources and services may involve the conduct of risk assessments, development of safe work procedures or development of contingency planning
- resources and services may have limitations to their use.

The emergency plan should reference triggers and process to provide for surge capacity where business as usual resource capacity limits are reached.

Consideration should be given to planning for the management of emergent resources. Emergent resources may be formal or informal groups of people who do not have a routine role in emergency management but offer their services in an emergency. Emergent resources may include:

- existing community groups who take on a new role
- spontaneous volunteers
- emergent groups
- offers of assistance
- donated money and goods.

The management and integration of the capability and capacity of emergent groups should be pre-planned.

**Further information on emergent groups such as spontaneous volunteers can be found in *Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers* (AIDR 2018).**

### 3.3.17 Prevention and mitigation

While some risks cannot be eliminated, prevention aims at reducing vulnerability and exposure in such contexts where, as a result, the risk of disaster is removed (UNDRR 2017). Mitigation refers to the measures taken in advance of a disaster aimed at decreasing or eliminating its impact on society and environment (*Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary* AIDR 2019).

The emergency plan may contain arrangements for implementing risk reduction strategies for prevention and mitigation across a broad range of entities.

Prevention and mitigation strategies could include:

- land use planning
- building codes, standards and regulatory frameworks
- public health
- environmental health
- climate adaptation
- community development
- asset design
- vegetation management
- financial planning
- controls and or restrictions on movement and or activities.

### 3.3.18 Preparedness

Establish the preparedness measures to be implemented. Preparedness is the knowledge, capability and capacity developed by entities, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters. Preparedness action is carried out within the context of disaster risk management and aims to build the capacities needed to efficiently manage all types of emergencies and achieve orderly transitions from response to sustained recovery. Preparedness measures may include actions to be implemented by various sectors within the community such as residents, business, schools, health care, tourism operators, transport operators and event managers. Preparedness measures could include:

- developing business continuity plans
- training staff in emergency plans and procedures
- educating communities about risks and personal preparedness
- asset maintenance e.g. clearing gutters, maintenance of fire trails and levee banks
- ongoing compliance with planning and building permits, essential services maintenance for certain classes of buildings
- stockpiling or restocking emergency supplies e.g. sandbags, vaccines, personal protective equipment
- exercising emergency procedures.

### 3.3.19 Public education and community engagement

Public education and community engagement details how the public and stakeholders access information that enables them to take effective action across the phases of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Public education and community engagement strategies need to be developed with consideration to the wide range of groups within a community. Diverse approaches will be required to engage effectively with diverse groups. Some of these groups include:

- disability sector
- culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) sector
- business sector
- tourism sector
- residential sector
- aged care sector
- people experiencing homelessness.

Public education can include a wide range of approaches including:

- community meetings
- school programs
- media
- social media
- print and electronic information.

It may be appropriate to make all, or parts, of the risk management study and emergency plans available to the public and stakeholders.

**Further information on community engagement can be found in *Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience* (AIDR 2020).**

#### Vignette: Implementing plans through community education

The Northern Territory Local Community Emergency Management Plans identify the significance of flood as a natural hazard.

The Northern Territory Emergency Service was highly commended in the 2019 Resilient Australia Awards for their flood safe short films designed to educate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population about the importance of flood safety.

Between 1960 and 2017, at least 27 fatal floods in the Northern Territory have claimed the lives of 38 people.

To overcome the barrier of language in public safety information and flood warnings, the films are available in English as well as six local languages – Kriol, Arrernte, Kunwinku, Murrinh Patha, Warlpiri and Yolngu Matha.

The films create awareness about the dangers of entering floodwater.

Source: Australian Journal of Emergency Management, January 2020.

### 3.3.20 Plan scheduling and activation

Identify schedules for implementation of prevention and preparedness arrangements. Examples of prevention and preparedness activities that may be scheduled in a program of works include:

- pre-bushfire season hazard reduction works
- pre-storm season home maintenance and safety awareness campaign
- essential services maintenance in buildings
- staged levels of preparedness and actions in emergency plans for buildings and institutions according to risk context
- pre-cyclone season review of contact lists
- flood levee and barrier, checks and maintenance
- dam integrity surveillance programs
- pre-special event planning meetings.

Identify clear triggers for activation of response and recovery arrangements. There may be a range of phases of activation, such as:

- **Alert:** the period when it is believed that resources may be required at an increased level of preparedness.
- **Standby:** the period during which personnel are to be immediately available at home or other locations.

### 3.3.21 Response arrangements

Establish the response arrangements to be implemented in an emergency. Response is the actions taken in anticipation of, during, and immediately after an emergency to minimise the effects of the emergency and give immediate relief and support to people affected.

### 3.3.22 Emergency control and co-ordination facilities

A response or recovery plan may identify the location to be used for coordinating the response and/or recovery operations. Consider identifying alternate locations. Arrangements for operating the facility should be contained in procedures. Documentation should include alert, standby, activation and deactivation arrangements.

Facilities may include:

- emergency operations centres
- emergency coordination centres
- crisis control centres
- incident control centres
- relief centres
- recovery coordination centres.

### 3.3.23 Public information and warnings

Establish responsibilities and strategies for issuing public information and warnings.

Public information is provided to communities immediately before, during and after an emergency to reduce the potential impact of an emergency.

A public warning is defined as point-in-time information about a hazard that is impacting or is expected to impact communities. Warnings describe the impact and expected consequences for communities and include advice on what people should do.

The plan will record:

- who will produce, authorise and release public information and warnings
- how entities contribute to public information and warnings
- how public information and warnings will be distributed
- how the community reaction will be monitored.

Further information can be found in *Public Information and Warnings* (AIDR 2018).

### 3.3.24 Evacuation management

Describe evacuation principles and arrangements. Evacuation is a risk management strategy that may be used to reduce loss of life or lessen the effects of an emergency on a community, prior to the onset of, or during, an emergency. Evacuation is the movement of people threatened by a hazard to a safer location. It involves consideration of their safety and wellbeing during the evacuation and their timely return. For an evacuation to be as effective as possible, it must be appropriately planned and implemented. Evacuation of pets and livestock should also be considered.

Planning should cover all key steps in the evacuation process including:

- **decision to evacuate** – determine if managed evacuation is required and/or self-evacuation
- **evacuation routes** – including transport arrangements
- **warning** – may include remain in place
- **withdrawal** – manage the withdrawal process
- **shelter** – family and friends, commercial accommodation, evacuation centre, specialist facility, other safe location
- **return** – manage return process.

Further information can be found in *Evacuation Planning* (AIDR 2017).

### 3.3.25 Relief arrangements

Describe the arrangements for providing relief. This includes strategies for the provision of relief to affected communities and businesses during or immediately after a disaster. Relief may include temporary accommodation, catering, financial support and psychosocial support.

### 3.3.26 Recovery arrangements

Establish the recovery arrangements. Recovery management is the process of coming to terms with the impacts of a disaster and managing the disruptions and changes caused. Recovery is a long-term, multi-layered social and developmental process that is more than the replacement of what has been destroyed and the rehabilitation of those affected. All levels of government, along with non-government, community, corporate and philanthropic agencies, and community groups involved in the recovery effort have a responsibility to work closely and collaboratively with the impacted community to provide a range of recovery activities, programs and services.

The 'build back better' principle underpins recovery in the built environment. Build back better encourages consideration of sustainable practices, which means investing in planning, designs, materials and community-led processes that enable reconstructed assets, buildings and homes to be more resilient in the event of future disasters (Queensland Reconstruction Authority 2017).

Recovery arrangements include:

- the social, built, economic and natural environment
- the structures enabling the effective coordination of recovery
- roles and responsibilities
- management of recovery funds
- restoration of essential services
- environmental restoration
- community consultation and engagement.

Further information on planning for recovery can be found in *Community Recovery* (AIDR 2018).

### 3.3.27 Exercise schedule

An exercise schedule should be included in the emergency plan. The exercise schedule establishes the frequency and type of exercises required.

Further information on exercises can be found in *Managing Exercises* (AIDR 2017).



# Chapter 4: Implementing the emergency plan



### Summary of key points

This chapter explains the requirement for action to be taken to ensure the emergency plan fulfils its aim and objectives:

- the emergency plan must be accessible
- establishment of the management structures and authorities
- stakeholders informed that the plan is endorsed
- procedures need to be developed and followed for people and entities with responsibilities in the emergency plan
- personnel, entities, and communities required to implement the emergency plan are educated in the plan
- capabilities and capacities required to implement the plan are available
- the emergency plan needs to be exercised.

## 4.1 Accessing the plan

The emergency plan must be available when required. Online emergency plans may not be accessible during infrastructure outages. Business continuity arrangements to ensure access to the emergency plan may include local file storage, thumb drives or paper-based copies.

Any related and inter-dependent plans, procedures and complimentary documents must also be available and accessible when the emergency plan is required to be activated.

## 4.2 Establishing the structure

The authority that is the lead for the implementation of the plan may not be the authority that led the development of the plan. The authorities and structure documented in the plan must be established to enable implementation of the plan.

## 4.3 Notifications

Communication arrangements may be required informing stakeholders the plan has been activated.

## 4.4 Undertaking responsibilities

During implementation of the plan the responsibilities and tasks identified in the plan need to be undertaken for the risks to be mitigated, managed or resolved. Exercising the plan is a useful approach to clarifying and reinforcing roles and responsibilities.

The successful implementation of a plan is dependent on all positions, individuals and entities identified with responsibilities in the plan undertaking those responsibilities effectively.

## 4.5 Developing supporting documentation

The emergency plan may require supporting documents:

- sub plans and supporting plans
- mutual aid plans
- contracts
- agreements
- procedures
- checklists
- action cards.

The emergency plan may require the review of other plans to ensure consistency and interoperability.

## 4.6 Implementing risk controls

Implementation of risk controls for prevention and preparedness may involve a range of community resilience building initiatives. Examples include:

- land use planning policy frameworks, provisions and procedures to avoid, mitigate and manage hazards and risks
- property buy back schemes
- construction of levee banks
- community education programs
- erection of warning signs
- regulatory changes
- property maintenance programs
- training and exercising
- relationship building
- immunisation programs
- staff education and exercises.

**Further information on the application of land use management in controlling risks can be found in the *Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilient Communities* (AIDR 2020).**

## 4.7 Exercising the plan

Exercises assist in:

- educating staff and community members in the content and intent of the emergency plan
- bringing together entities in the emergency plan to strengthen relationships.


Exercises are essential to ensure that emergency plans are workable and effective. They are required when:

- the emergency plan has not been implemented for some time
- there have been significant changes to the emergency plan
- there have been significant changes to the people or entities required to implement the emergency plan
- the emergency plan is for a low likelihood and/or a high consequence event.

Regular exercises are important for maintaining the currency of arrangements in an emergency plan. Regular exercises ensure workability of plans, where people and entities know what is required of them if a response or recovery plan is activated. Exercises enable people and entities to understand how each other approaches their tasks and assists in building effective ways to work together.

An exercise schedule should be included in the emergency plan.

**Further information on exercise management can be found in *Managing Exercises* (AIDR 2017).**



# Chapter 5: Monitoring and reviewing the emergency plan

## Summary of key points

This chapter explains the requirement for ongoing monitoring and review of both the emergency plan and the knowledge underpinning it. To ensure an emergency plan is relevant:

- emergency plans should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they comply with higher level policy or statutory requirements
- emergency planning requires a continuous improvement approach
- emergency plans should be reviewed after their implementation in an exercise or event
- emergency plans should be reviewed to include lessons from other events.

## 5.1 Monitoring and review

Emergency planning is based on knowledge and assumptions collected during the planning process at a point in time. Emergency plans require continuous review and updates, which could be due to:

- changing planning context
- changing risks
- changing community vulnerability and strengths
- evolving community expectations
- new technology
- new and emerging entities
- new legislation
- entity changes in staffing and resources
- lessons learned from implementing the emergency plan in an exercise or event
- lessons learned from other emergency events.

The emergency plan should detail who is responsible for ensuring the emergency plan is reviewed. Changes to the emergency plan should be recorded in an amendment register. The authorising entity should retain copies of past emergency plans.

## 5.2 Exercises

Exercises can be used to assist in:

- validating the effectiveness of the emergency plan
- identifying opportunities to improve the emergency plan
- validating that an emergency plan has remained contemporary, meeting the changing needs of stakeholders
- testing the capability and capacity of those in the emergency plan.

Further information on exercise management can be found in *Managing Exercises* (AIDR 2017).

## 5.3 Debriefs

Reviewing the emergency plan requires identification of improvement opportunities. Effective debriefs or after action reviews feed information into the lesson management process. The emergency plan should document how lessons inform and are used in the review of the emergency plan.

Further information on learning from exercises and emergencies to improve plans can be found in *Lessons Management* (AIDR 2019).

### Vignette: Learning from emergencies

Emergency planning can be improved through learning from other people's experiences.

The *Major Incidents Report 2018-19* highlights many observations from emergencies relevant to those responsible for emergency plans. Examples of observations include:

- Memorandums of Understanding between neighbouring local governments will improve access to skilled resources, particularly for those that have a deficit in recovery skills and capability.
- Processes to manage emergency incidents that are scalable upwards and downwards, tested to ensure they are adaptable to changing incident size and complexity, will enhance emergency management outcomes.
- Well implemented community education programs work, evidenced by the preparation of plans, and homes for the bushfire threat.
- When managing the evacuation of communities under threat, planners should be realistic when estimating the time needed to complete the withdrawal phase.

Source: *Major Incidents Report 2018-19*, AIDR 2019, [www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/major-incidents-report](http://www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/major-incidents-report)

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