

# SEMC COMMUNIQUE



March 2023

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) met on 8 March 2023, coinciding with International Women's Day and was attended by the Minister for Emergency Services, Hon. Stephen Dawson MLC. The Minister acknowledged International Women's Day, recognising the women in senior leadership roles throughout the SEMC's member agencies and across the public sector.

The Chair also acknowledged the presence and valuable contribution of the women in a variety of roles within emergency management. This included women such as Deputy DFES Commissioner Melissa Pexton, Director General of Department of Premier and Cabinet Emily Roper and a wide range of women in uniformed and non-uniformed roles who have all been central to emergency management in recent times. Significantly women working as volunteers have provided valuable contributions as individuals and within community support organisations.

## Presentations

### International Women's Day

In recognition of International Women's Day, Cassandra Pilgrim, Volunteer Firefighter for Kwinana Volunteer Fire and Rescue, presented to the SEMC. Cassandra provided the SEMC with insight into her experience as a mother, career woman and a volunteer.

Cassandra acknowledged the recognition of the challenges by her peers and provided insight to the encouragement and support provided by her "Fire Family" in finding her voice. Cassandra hopes to encourage young women in the community to reach for their dreams.

### Strategic Considerations for Emergency Management

Andrew Gissing, Chief Executive Officer of Natural Hazards Research Australia (NHRA) presented to the SEMC on the NHRA's mission to build safer, more resilient, and sustainable communities through research, science and innovation.

The NHRA is a Commonwealth funded independent natural hazards research centre. NHRA's key focus and capability areas include:

- Land use planning and resilient housing
- Risk mitigation and recovery processes
- Environmental solutions that work with the natural landscape
- Technological advances
- Social equity such as insurance affordability.

## Discussion Items and Outcomes

### Space Weather

Space weather is a low-probability and high consequence event. A space weather event occurs beyond the Earth's atmosphere and impacts on technology and the near-space environment. Such events include solar flares, solar energetic particles, and coronal mass ejections.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Energy Policy WA are considering the emergency management arrangements that would be required to respond to the consequential impacts of a space weather event.

A multi-stakeholder desktop exercise will be arranged to explore:

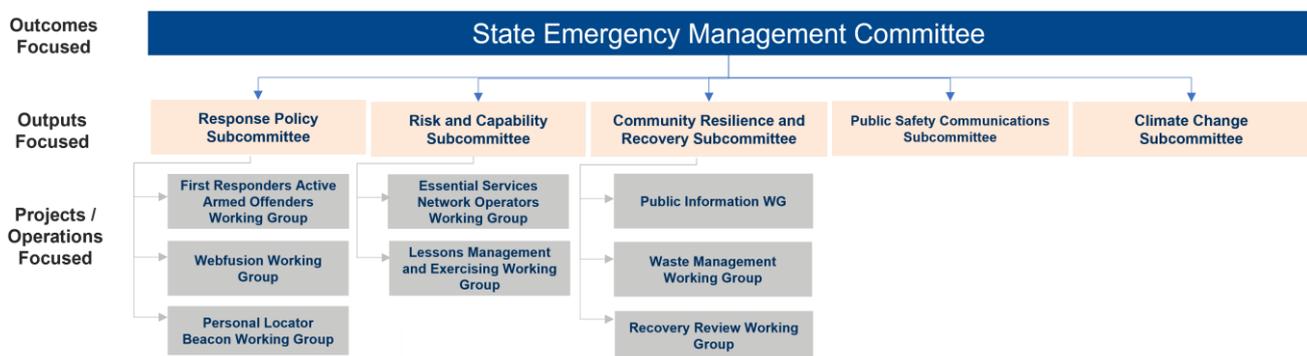
- The likelihood and consequences of a space weather event in WA and the likely result for the WA community
- The current capability of EM agencies and other stakeholders in the event of a space weather event, as well as gaps
- Strategies across the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery spectrum (if and where applicable).

### Subcommittee Review

The SEMC approved a new subcommittee structure, which aims to:

- Improve the strategic alignment of the subgroups with the SEMC Strategic Plan
- Improve the governance and organisational structure of the subgroups to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- Generate the environment for the subgroups to deliver against the SEMC Strategic Plan.

The subgroup structure endorsed by SEMC is below:



The SEMC Executive Officer will consult with the subcommittee Chairs, Executive Officers, and key stakeholders to implement the changes over the coming months.

### 2023 SEMC Strategic Planning Workshop

The meeting of the SEMC scheduled for 3 May 2023 will include a strategic planning workshop to identify strategic imperatives, in addressing emerging and future issues associated with the State’s emergency management framework.

Prior to the workshop all members, deputy members and observers will complete a self-evaluation survey. The survey seeks to understand members’ views on the achievements and challenges encountered by the SEMC over the past 12 months, the strategic direction undertaken by the SEMC, as well as emerging issues that may affect the strategic priorities of the Committee over the longer-term.

The findings from this survey will inform discussion of the current and future priorities at the SEMC Strategic Planning Workshop.

## General Updates

### Natural Disaster Risk Reduction grant program

The 2023/24 Natural Disaster Risk Reduction (NDRR) grant round will make \$2.5 million available for projects that reduce disaster risk in Western Australia. Projects may apply for between \$10,000 and \$250,000 grant funding for initiatives with local impacts, or up to \$2.5 million for projects that will result in State, region or sector-wide risk reduction.

Applications for the NDRR grant round will open on 24 April 2023 and close on 29 May 2023. Applications must be submitted in the online portal accessible via the SEMC website (<https://dfes.smartygrants.com.au/NDRR2324round>).

More information on the NDRR can also be found on the SEMC website or by contacting [semc.grants@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:semc.grants@dfes.wa.gov.au).

### Disaster Ready Fund

WA's application for the Disaster Ready Fund has been submitted to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) for assessment. A large number of applications were received from across the emergency management sector, including state government agencies, local governments, not for profit organisations, private sector organisations and universities. The Commonwealth Minister for Emergency Management is expected to announce the successful projects in May.

Another \$200 million dollars in funding will be available in the 2024 round of the Disaster Ready Fund and it's never too early to start planning projects. Projects are required to contribute 50% of the total project cost, so early planning can help ensure the required funds are included in future budgets.

More information is available on the NEMA website (<https://nema.gov.au/programs/disaster-ready-fund>) or by contacting [semc.grants@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:semc.grants@dfes.wa.gov.au).

### Philanthropic Review

The Philanthropic Review aims to develop a governance and assurance arrangements for the engagement of philanthropic and other not for profit organisations in emergency management. Consultation with key stakeholder groups has commenced and the outcomes of the review are expected to be presented to the SEMC at the August 2023 meeting.

### District and Local Emergency Management Committees Review

The objective of the District and Local Emergency Management Committees Review is to establish clear responsibilities, functions, and governance for the committees to support the strategic objectives of the SEMC. The Review is now underway with consultation set to be commence April 2023. The outcomes of the review are expected to be presented to the SEMC at the August 2023 meeting.

### Community Disaster Resilience Strategy

The draft Strategy was published on the SEMC website on 13 December 2022 and remained open for comment until 3 March 2022.

Twelve submissions were received during the consultation period and the feedback is currently being considered for inclusion.

The final Strategy will be submitted to the SEMC for endorsement at its August 2023 meeting.

### [Local Emergency Management Arrangements Review](#)

Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) refers to the suite of emergency management documents, processes and agreements which apply to a Local Government (LG) area.

The LEMA Review commenced in 2022, and is being delivered as a partnership project with the DFES SEMC Business Unit and the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) in response to the challenges faced by LGs in fulfilling their EM obligations, which include:

- Clarity around EM roles and responsibilities
- Alignment between EM and their day-to-day business
- Financial and human resourcing to support EM planning.

A draft improvement plan, supported by an implementation plan has been developed, with further testing activities with LG and other emergency management agencies occurring between April and May 2023. Outcome of testing will inform the final LEMA Improvement Plan, which is expected to be finalised in June 2023.

### [Next Meeting of the SEMC](#)

The next meeting of the SEMC will be held on Wednesday, 3 May 2023.

### [Contact Us](#)

If you have feedback or questions, get in touch at [info@semc.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@semc.wa.gov.au).