

SEMC COMMUNIQUE



May 2023

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) met on 3 May 2023.

Presentations

Overview of COVID-19 Response

Dr Andrew Robertson, Chief Health Officer and Health SEMC member provided an overview of the achievements and lessons identified from the COVID-19 response in WA in order to inform improvements to preparedness and resilience against communicable diseases and other relevant health-related emergencies.

Key achievements included:

- Governance structures were mobilised swiftly and early to respond to the pandemic
- Communications teams were in high demand and managed an unprecedented high frequency, high volume of work
- There was increased collaboration within the WA health system and with other government agencies
- The response highlighted the capability within WA Health and presented the opportunity for further development.

Opportunities for improvement included:

- Clarifying roles and responsibilities within WA Health emergency management structures
- Regular testing of emergency plans and processes
- Strengthening of communication protocols and plans.

Discussion Items and Outcomes

Strategic Planning Workshop

Prior to the workshop all members, deputy members and observers were asked to complete a self-evaluation survey, to understand their 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 SEMC over the longer term.

The SEMC discussed the survey results and the current and future priorities of the SEMC, confirming that the Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025 sufficiently captures these priorities.

The SEMC agreed that the current projects and activities underway remained a priority:

- Climate Change Adaptation Plan
- Philanthropic Review
- Local and District Emergency Management Committees Review
- LEMA Review
- SEMC Subgroup Review

The SEMC considered emerging issues, determining that with the increasing complexity, scale and frequency of natural and other disasters, risk management and the public sector and local government capability development becomes even more important.

SEMC Subgroup Review

The SEMC approved new subcommittee Terms of Reference for:

- Response Policy Subcommittee
- Risk and Capability Subcommittee
- Community Resilience and Recovery Subcommittee
- Public Safety Communications Subcommittee

The Terms of Reference reflect the structural changes approved at the March 2023 meeting and to support the recommendations of the SEMC Subgroup Review which include:

- Stronger alignment with the SEMC Strategic Plan
- Clarification of subgroup purpose and functions
- Ex-officio membership

In line with the new Terms of Reference and governance arrangements, the SEMC Business Unit will seek new subcommittee membership nominations from responsible agency heads and induct members in an ex-officio capacity to ensure the authority and responsibility of membership is retained over time.

The new Terms of Reference for all Subcommittees and membership arrangements will take effect from 1 July 2023.

General Updates

LEMA 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 and Implementation Plan has been endorsed by the LEMA Review Steering Committee and is currently being tested with select local governments and hazard management agencies. Outcomes of testing will inform the final LEMA Improvement Plan, which is expected to be finalised in June 2023.

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 opened 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.

Disaster Ready Fund

WA's application for the Disaster Ready Fund has been submitted to the National Emergency Management Agency for assessment. The Commonwealth Minister for Emergency Management is expected to announce the successful projects in May.

All West Australians Reducing Emergencies

The All West Australians Reducing Emergencies (AWARE) grant program will distribute a total of \$200,000 to fund activities aimed at building capacity and preparedness at a local level. Projects may apply for funding between \$2,500 and \$30,000 to support eligible local government initiatives. Applications for the 2023/24 AWARE grant round will open on 16 August 2023 and close on 20 September 2023.

More information on the AWARE can be found on the SEMC website or by contacting semc.grants@dfes.wa.gov.au.

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 2023. Sixteen 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.

Philanthropic Review

The Philanthropic Review aims to develop 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. 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.

Next Meeting of the SEMC

The next meeting of the SEMC will be held on 2 August 2023.

Contact Us

If you have feedback or questions, get in touch at info@semc.wa.gov.au.