

# Chapter I: **Introduction**



# I. Introduction

## Key points

- *The Australian Emergency Management Arrangements* outline a consistent approach to enable coordinated effort nationally and across States and Territories.
- In line with national and international standards, Tasmania adopts a resilience-based approach.
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- Tasmania's geography, demographics and location influence our emergency management arrangements. As an island state, transport networks are critical. Our natural heritage attracts many visitors, and this has implications for emergency management.
- Bushfire is the most prominent natural hazard but other hazards impact Tasmanian communities.
- Tasmania's energy supply security is vitally important.
- Tasmania's comprehensive, all-hazards and resilience-based approach to emergency management is informed by events in Tasmania and elsewhere.

## I.1 Nationally consistent and coordinated efforts

There is a consistent approach to emergency management arrangements in Australia. Australians expect their governments at all levels to do their best to ensure that:

- their communities are as well protected from emergencies and disasters as is reasonably possible; and
- when emergency situations occur, communities will be well served by effective response, relief and recovery arrangements.

Under Australia's constitutional arrangements, State and Territory governments have primary responsibility for emergency management within their jurisdiction. However, all levels of government acknowledge that some emergencies could exceed the capability of a single State or Territory.

Australia's emergency management arrangements coordinate efforts across all hazards by bringing together:

- all governments;
- the private and the not-for-profit sectors; and
- volunteer agencies.

These arrangements are also based on a high level of trust and cooperation between the community and the emergency management sector.

## I.2 A resilience-based approach

The Australian Government aims to enhance disaster resilience so that Australians:

- focus on proactively reducing risks; and
- are better able to withstand and recover from disasters.

Australia is increasingly forming strategic partnerships to mitigate or reduce the impact of emergencies globally, particularly in Australia's region of interest.

The *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements* provide high-level overview of how our nation addresses the risks and impacts of hazards through a collaborative approach to PPRR.

### 1.3 The influence of Tasmania's geography, demographics and location

Tasmania's population of approximately 530,000 is dispersed amongst 29 council areas. The State has one of the higher median ages in the nation. There are also about 1.2 million visitors to Tasmania annually.

### 1.4 An island state with significant natural heritage

As an island state, transport networks are critical. Numerous seaports and airports enable access to other parts of Australia and overseas. Internal road and rail networks link populations around the State.

Agriculture is one of the key pillars of Tasmania's economy. Our wilderness and other areas attract many visitors but there are risks associated with our diverse topography and weather conditions. The State's natural and cultural heritage also needs to be protected. Due to these local factors, the State maintains response and recovery arrangements for:

- road crash rescue;
- biosecurity;
- search and rescue; and
- managing environmental pollution on land and at sea.

### 1.5 Bushfires and other hazards

Tasmania's low humidity, temperate weather and forest mean that bushfire is the most prominent natural hazard. Other hazards affecting the Tasmanian community include:

- flood;
- severe storms;
- coastal inundation;
- heatwave;
- landslide;
- pandemic influenza;
- earthquake; and
- tsunami.

Tasmania has low levels of animal, plant and marine disease. Maintaining this pest and disease-free status is very important for rural communities and crucial for primary production industries. As an island state, it is easier to control movements through the air and seaports.

### 1.6 Energy supply security

Tasmania's energy supply security is vitally important. Tasmania is part of the National Electricity Market and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO). AEMO manages the market and power system from two mainland control centres. Most electricity in Tasmania is from water (hydro generation) and wind. A gas-fired thermal plant and Basslink (a sub-sea inter-connector) supplements hydro and wind power generation. TasNetworks own Tasmania's transmission and distribution assets. A transmission pipeline supplies natural gas from mainland Australia. Sea tankers from mainland refineries and terminals supply petroleum products to Tasmania.

### 1.7 An approach informed by events

Tasmania has adopted a whole-of-nation, resilience-based approach to emergency management.

Experience gained and lessons identified from prior events that have occurred within the State and elsewhere have shaped the State's capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies (refer TEMA appendix 5).

International and national events over the past two decades highlight the devastation caused by natural, technological and (human) behavioural-related emergencies. The consequences of climate change and increasing risks have contributed to Australia adopting a comprehensive and all-hazards approach to emergency management.

Tasmania has integrated security and emergency management arrangements. These arrangements apply to any emergency event in this State, no matter what the cause.

Figure 1: Map of Tasmanian Municipal Council Areas and Regions

