

5 Chapter 5: Preparedness



5. Preparedness

Key points

- Preparedness is the ability to be ready for, or to anticipate action, in response to or recovery from the risk of an emergency occurring.
- Preparedness should increase as the risk from hazards increases.
- All levels of all entities should amend their preparedness as the future risk changes.
- Planning, exercising and lessons management are key to continually improving preparedness and development of capability systems.
- Regularly scheduled testing of procedures and systems is an indicator of a resilient community.

5.1 Overview

Preparedness involves actions to ensure that, as the risk increases or when an emergency happens, communities, resources and services are available and capable of taking appropriate actions for response and recovery.

Examples of preparedness activities include:

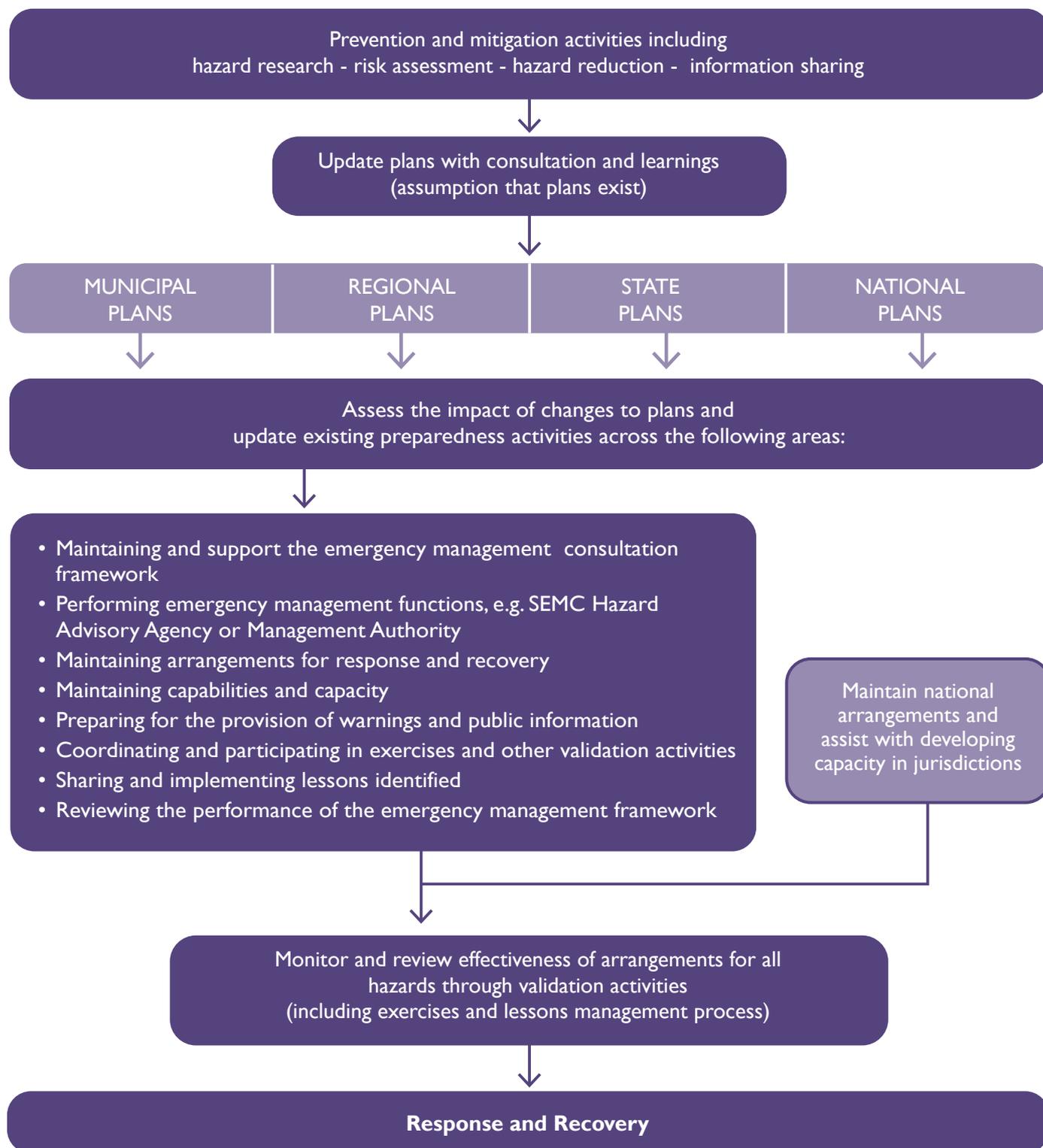
- developing household emergency plans and preparing emergency kits to last 72 hours;
- audits and planning to establish response and recovery capabilities and capacity;
- developing tailored response plans;
- critical infrastructure resilience planning and cooperation, undertaken by all levels of government in partnership with the private sector;
- public communication arrangements;
- interoperability of systems across the State;
- warning systems for the public, including the national telephone-based warning system – **Emergency Alert**;
- stockpiling and distribution of essential items, such as generators and medicines;
- education and training programs;
- testing of procedures through exercise programs; and
- managing lessons learnt and continually improving preparedness systems.

Planning is guided by a risk-based approach to the actions taken and resources applied. This involves an analysis of the likelihood and consequence of an event occurring.

Agencies will individually and collectively prepare for known, potentially dangerous conditions. This may include pre-positioning scarce resources such as heavy plant, specialists, aircraft and other resources (including incident management teams and personnel) to locations where conditions are likely to become unsafe.

Preparedness for disasters also occurs in businesses, industry (including primary producers), the community, neighbourhoods, families and individuals.

Figure 5: Summary of preparedness processes



5.2 Shared responsibility

Ownership of preparedness activities is shared across the emergency management and volunteer sectors, the community, business and relevant industries. A collaborative state-wide effort is required to make Tasmania better able to withstand and recover from an emergency.

The State, regional and municipal emergency committees, sub-committees and other reference groups undertake a range of activities that provide strategic direction and guidance to preparedness Management Authorities.

5.3 Responsibility for preparedness

Preparedness Management Authorities, support agencies and other organisations are responsible for preparedness activities such as establishing or maintaining relationships, systems, processes and arrangements to ensure:

- an appropriate level of preparedness at all times;
- they are adequately prepared to fulfil their roles in emergency management if required;
- business continuity for as long as possible; and
- management of agency/organisational recovery of workers and services after an emergency.

Owners or operators of specific facilities and services establish or maintain systems, processes and arrangements so they can manage emergencies at their sites and assist their emergency management partners to be effective in response and recovery.

5.4 Planning for emergencies

Planning is a key element of being prepared.

Governments, business, non-government organisations and communities develop and document appropriate anticipated and planned actions, and develop capability and provisions for their own preparedness.

5.4.1 Emergency planning must be collaborative, integrated and inclusive

In some hazard types, risk management planning may be determined by relevant standards and legislation. Examples include standards for:

- critical infrastructure;
- bushfire risk minimisation;
- flood mitigation; and
- built environment standards.

These plans must be tested through exercises and events to ensure they are current and appropriate to the task. This process also helps build relationships between key people in different roles and in different organisations. This is critical because, in the urgency of a response when immediate decisions and actions are required, relationships between key people need to have already been established.

It is not possible to have a plan for every scenario. The concept of disaster resilience recognises that planning cannot be for every risk. Resilience to known hazards helps to address risks that are unforeseen or unexpected.

5.4.2 Special considerations

The *People at Increased Risk in an Emergency: a guide for Tasmanian Government and non-government community service providers* (the Guide) recognises that while everyone is at risk in an emergency, some people are at increased risk because they are experiencing factors that undermine their safety and security, health and wellbeing, knowledge and/or social connection.

The Guide promotes a shared approach to emergency planning and preparedness.

The Guide outlines the 'susceptibility factors' and 'protective factors' that, if compromised, increases a person's risk. These include:

- proximity to event (living, working or travelling through impacted area);

- low understanding of warnings/risks;
- limited financial resources;
- reduced health and wellbeing;
- limited mobility;
- reliance on/or difficulty accessing support/medical services/medication/equipment;
- reduced or no access to transport and vital supplies;
- socially, physically or geographically isolated;
- religious and/or cultural beliefs that conflict with emergency advice;
- communication difficulties;
- harassment and/or social exclusion;
- reduced safety and security; and
- previous trauma history.

Low level of understanding of warnings and risks and/or the local context and risk factors must be accounted for in emergency management policies, programs and services.

People who have impaired judgement or cognitive ability, limited understanding of advice messaging and/or speak a language other than English or have low levels of English proficiency or literacy levels are susceptible to increased risk during an emergency. This includes:

- tourists;
- new residents to Tasmania;
- refugees;
- overseas/temporary workers; and
- visiting students.

5.4.3 Children and Youth

Ultimately, the primary duty of care for children (including infants) and youth is the responsibility of their parents/legal guardians or carers.

Children and youth may require special protection, both physical and psychological, during and after emergencies. The development of emergency management plans for children and youth should consider factors including:

- clear allocation of responsibility for the needs of children to specific roles or agencies;
- plans to maintain provision of essential services to children by agencies, organisations, educational and other facilities, especially those responsible for care and supervision of children;
- consultation with child protection experts by all levels of government;
- inclusion in municipal emergency management plans / arrangements for unaccompanied children, family reunification and the provision of child and family friendly spaces at evacuation centres;
- establishment of close links with school, kindergarten and childcare centres in municipal emergency management plans / arrangements;
- consideration on how to engage with children to allow them to contribute to plan development and implementation;
- testing through exercises, the elements of the plan that relate to the unique needs of children; and
- the requirements of children in all risk-assessment activities.

5.4.4 Animals

The welfare of wildlife, livestock and companion animals in emergencies is a significant issue.

Ultimately the owner/s of livestock and companion animals (pets) have responsibility for the welfare of the animals in their charge. This requires the animal owner to plan and put suitable arrangements in place to minimise the risk to the health and welfare of animals posed by reasonably predictable emergency scenarios.

Where evacuation (including self-evacuation before the area is impacted) is the best option in the circumstances, the ability to also evacuate owned animals results in improved recovery outcomes.

Municipal evacuation centres **may** provide facilities for the temporary accommodation of some animal species, either onsite or close-by.

The decision by Municipal Councils to accept animals

at evacuation centres or not, or identifying reasonable alternative arrangements, should be based on an assessment of the associated risks conducted as part of routine emergency preparedness. Municipal Councils should also clearly communicate their resulting policy about the management of evacuated animals to their residents as part of those preparedness activities to ensure there are realistic expectations in the community.

Collaborative arrangements between Municipal Councils specifically about evacuated animals should be encouraged to maximise efficient use of resources, provide contingencies for unpredictable situations and promote wider community resilience.

5.4.5 Volunteers (including spontaneous volunteers)

Some agencies and a number of non-government organisations engage volunteers for emergency management. Although the arrangements for recruiting, training and sustaining volunteers operate outside the Tasmanian emergency management framework, these volunteers are extremely important contributors to the management of emergencies and recovery.

Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers (2018) is a best practice guide to building local capability to manage spontaneous volunteers. Volunteering Tasmania (VT) can be contacted to provide assistance and advice regarding spontaneous volunteer management.

DPAC OSEM manages the State Government relationship with VT in relation to spontaneous volunteer management. Non-state government agencies (including Municipal Councils) must liaise directly with VT and make their own arrangements relating to the potential deployment or management of spontaneous volunteers.

VT's system and processes to manage spontaneous volunteers align with the national Spontaneous Volunteer Management Resource Kit.

5.5 Capability development

Capability is the collective ability and power to deliver and sustain an effect within a specific context and timeframe.

Capacity is the key determinant of how long a capability can be sustained for a particular level of ability.

The level of capability is determined by the combination of ability and capacity across the core elements:

- People;
- Resources;
- Governance;
- Systems; and
- Processes.

Capability development (skills and expertise), including the identification of capacity shortfalls and business continuity considerations, are crucial aspect of preparedness activities that the emergency management and volunteers sectors, business and relevant industries undertake in their respective areas of responsibilities.

All agencies should maintain capability assessment and development processes to meet the requirements identified in their plans. Factors that contribute to this include:

- administrative systems such as information management, financial management and evaluation (lessons management);
- human resource management, specifically:
 - Recruitment, retention, training and succession planning for roles and responsibilities across the PPRR phases (especially key decision-makers and temporary secondment during operations).
 - Workers can be responsible for more than one function in emergency management providing this does not lead to unmanageable gaps or be likely to generate conflict in performance of duties.
- stakeholder or relationships management with emergency management partners;

- education, training and awareness programs for emergency management workers and the community (e.g. public and environmental health programs and services); and
- maintaining 'fit for purpose' resources. Where adequate resources are not maintained on stand-by, agreements with redundancy support resources are maintained including arrangements for payment as required.

Following emergency operations and/or exercises, observations should be collected, analysed and lessons shared to identify opportunities for improvements in capability as part of the lessons management cycle.

5.6 Administrative systems

Organisations should maintain processes for collecting and maintaining administrative and financial records during and after emergencies. Ideally, organisations should use existing records management systems but share all relevant information with other agencies (i.e. through WebEOC).

Examples of administrative / financial records that should be maintained include:

- contract / work orders;
- timesheets;
- email correspondence;
- minutes of meetings;
- tax invoices;
- proposals;
- decisions relating to and during an emergency; and
- asset damage and inspection reports.

5.7 Community engagement

In keeping with *Tasmania's Disaster Resilience Strategy 2020–2025*, the community needs to be equally prepared as response agencies for the impacts of all hazards and, in particular, the impacts of natural disasters. Resilient communities are better able to withstand an emergency event and have an enhanced ability to recover from the event.

Community engagement could be hazard-specific or take an all-hazards approach. Regardless of the approach, it is important that messages are consistent and coordinated across all programs.

Community education and awareness campaigns aim to:

- develop awareness of the nature and potential impacts of hazards;
- promote individual responsibility for managing risks and preparation for emergencies;
- develop awareness of emergency management arrangements and assistance measures; and
- encourage community participation in volunteering and infrastructure protection activities.

5.8 Public information

It is essential to maintain regular communication through agreed and approved channels with the public to ensure they understand their role in preparing for, responding to and recovering from an incident.

Disseminating preparedness public information is a shared responsibility and is conducted by both relevant agencies and DPAC at a whole-of-government level.

Community preparedness strategies include communicating preparedness information through:

- public information campaigns;
- social media presence (TasALERT and RMA); and
- websites and online material (TasALERT and RMA).

For more information about public information, refer to the *Tasmanian Public Information Guidelines*.

5.9 Risk communication

Risk communication is the purposeful exchange of information about:

- risk or perceptions about risk; or
- any public communication that informs individuals about the existence, nature, form, severity or acceptability of risk.

Disaster preparation includes putting in place

arrangements for communicating risk to potentially affected communities, either for seasonal hazards during bushfire seasons or for emergent risk such as a flood campaign.

Consideration of risk communication should address the various methods of providing information to the public, including public meetings, multi-media broadcasts and social media.

5.10 Exercises

An exercise is a controlled, objective-driven activity that is used to test or practise the plans, procedures or processes that are in place – or not – to manage an emergency or the capability of an organisation (or multiple organisations) to deal with a particular emergency situation.

An exercise can range from small and simple (such as a planning group discussing an emergency plan) to large and complex (such as a major multi-agency event involving several organisations and participants enacting a real-life scenario).

Well-designed and executed exercises are the most effective means of:

- testing and validating policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment and interagency arrangements;
- identifying training needs or gaps and clarifying roles and responsibilities;
- improving interagency coordination and communication;
- identifying gaps in capabilities and resources;
- improving overall performance;
- identifying opportunities for improvement;
- building confidence and flexibility; and
- providing opportunities for discussion and feedback.

Exercises are an essential component of emergency preparedness and should be used to enhance the capability of an organisation and contribute to continuous improvement. The outcome of exercises can also

provide significant guidance to emergency management authorities and Municipal Councils during the review of plans and policies.

To be effective, exercises must be tailored to meet the identified need and stated aim and objectives, so they should be well planned, structured, managed and evaluated.

Exercises should be conducted at all levels and involve all relevant agencies and personnel, providing an opportunity to ensure that arrangements and plans are robust and understood, and that capabilities and resources are adequate to implement them.

Exercises should also occur to explore both response and recovery capabilities and capacity.

As and when appropriate, exercises should involve the community or at least seek to explore and evaluate elements of arrangements or plans that require community involvement and communication.

5.11 Emergency Management Education and Training

Training people in emergency management, even at the foundation or introductory level, is extremely important.

Emergency management education and training in Tasmania is a whole-of-government, collaborative approach. At the time of publishing the TEMA (Issue 1), the Tasmanian Emergency Management Training (TasEMT) platform was under development. Contributors to the development of the TasEMT included:

- Government agency representatives (including Municipal Councils);
- Non-government organisations;
- Representatives of key industries (e.g. critical infrastructure); and
- Reference Group participants from multiple organisations within the Tasmanian community.

The intent of the TasEMT is to provide a framework to ensure increased capability and capacity within the

Tasmanian emergency management sector across the PPRR phases. Trainers will have access to a range of training resources to enable continuity. Delivery of the content will be in a blended learning environment, including:

- face-to-face workshops;
- online modules; and
- a combination of both.

Tertiary level emergency management education is offered by UTAS and the development of some of that coursework involved close collaboration with the Tasmanian emergency management sector. From January 2020 there will be a new UTAS discipline called 'Police Studies and Emergency Management'.

The *Disaster Resilience Education Tasmania* (DRET) program includes teaching delivery resources that aim to educate students about the fundamentals of disaster resilience and encourage their participation in the development of safer Tasmanian communities. The five lessons of the DRET program link to the Australian curriculum for students in years 5 to 8 in the learning areas of: Humanities and Social Sciences; Geography; Science and Health; general capabilities of Literacy and Personal and Social Capability; and the cross curriculum priority of Sustainability.

www.disasterresiliencetas.com.au

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) hosts a 'Knowledge Hub'. The Knowledge Hub is an invaluable resource for students, teachers, researchers, historians and emergency services staff and volunteers.

www.aidr.org.au

The Hub is collections-based and includes Australian disaster information, the Emergency Management Library, the Australian Journal of Emergency Management, the national collection of disaster resilience and emergency management handbooks and manuals, and resources for teachers. Additional resources and information is added regularly, including guest collections from emergency services agencies and relevant national and international organisations.

5.12 Lessons management

The Tasmanian emergency management sector supports a culture of continuous improvement by:

- encouraging the sector to share lessons, both positive actions to sustain and areas for improvement;
- encouraging learning from both assurance activities and contemporary good practice;
- focusing on systems of work, rather than the performance of individuals; and
- recognising that identifying and implementing sustainable solutions takes time, resources and opportunity.

The lessons management process is supported by five cultural characteristics:

- just/fair;
- leadership;
- responsibility and accountability;
- communication; and
- learning focused.

This creates a learning and improvement culture, and allows the process of identifying and learning lessons to happen effectively and continuously before, during and after exercises and operations.

Lessons management is another area of education that is available to people who work in or have an interest in emergency management which helps the lessons 'lifecycle' to be widely understood and adopted in Tasmania.