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Local Government Emergency Management Framework

DD MM 2025

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Acknowledgements

Content for this new version of the Local Government Emergency Management Framework includes information from previous publications delivered through the SA Council Ready program.

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Document Control

First issued	08 March 2019
Date updated	DD MM 2025
Version number	XX
Date of next review	XXXXXX
ECM ID	672733
Responsible organisation	LGA South Australia
Consultative stakeholders	Councils
Version Control	This version consolidates information from the previous Local Government Emergency Management Framework and the LGA guide to emergency management planning for local government.

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Acronyms

CIMT	Council i-Responda Management Team
CRC	Community Recovery Coordinator
DRFA	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements
EM	Emergency Management
HRRL	Hazard Risk Reduction Leader
IMT	Incident Management Team
JOG	Joint Operating Guideline
LGA	Local Government Association South Australia
LGDRAA	Local Government Disaster Recovery Assistance Arrangements
LGEMF	Local Government Emergency Management Framework
LGFSG	Local Government Functional Support Group
LRC	Local Recovery Committee
SCC	State Coordination (or Command) Centre
SEC	State Emergency Centre
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SRC	State Recovery Committee
ZEMC	Zone Emergency Management Committee
ZEST	Zone Emergency Support Team

Definitions

For the purpose of this Framework the following definitions (many taken from the State Emergency Management Plan) apply:

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)	The document that describes how a business responds to and operates during unexpected events and situations that can interrupt operations.
Capability	The ability to achieve a defined outcome applying a defined set of skills and assets.
Capacity	The ability to deploy a defined capability at a sustained level over a defined period of time.
Comprehensive approach	The “comprehensive approach” to emergency management considers planning for all phases of emergencies - prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.
Control	The overall direction of emergency management activities in an emergency. Authority for control is established in the SEMP and carries the responsibility for tasking organisations in accordance with the needs of the situation.
Control Agency	An agency that exercises control of an emergency as designated by the SEMP.
Coordination	The facilitation of agencies, functions and/or resources to ensure effective control and/or effective outcomes.
Coordinating Agency	Subject to Section 19 (2) of the Act, South Australia Police are the coordinating agency for all emergencies.
Council Commander	Person endorsed by a council CEO to undertake a temporary function for the comprehensive management of all council i-Responda Operations and a coordinated council response.
Council i-Responda Management Team (CMT)	A temporary management structure implemented by the Council Commander to ensure the functional needs of council support activities effectively achieved.
Council i-Responda Plan	The Council i-Responda Plan (previously Incident Operations Manual) describes how a council will organise itself and take actions immediately before, during, and immediately after an emergency incident. It defines the scope of incident operations

	for the council, provides delegation and authority for Council Commander(s) and describes arrangements.
Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA)	Cost-sharing arrangement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories to share the financial burden of responding to a disaster and support the provision of urgent financial assistance to disaster affected communities.
Emergency	An event that causes or threatens to cause the death of, or injury or other damage to the health of, any person; or the destruction of, or damage to, any property; or a disruption to essential services or to services usually enjoyed by the community; or harm to the environment, or to flora or fauna.
Emergency Management	A range of measures to manage risks to communities and the environment. The organisation and management of resources for dealing with all aspects of emergencies. Emergency management involves the plans, structures and arrangements established to bring together government and non-government agencies in a comprehensive and coordinated way to deal with the emergency needs including prevention, risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery
Emergency Management Sector	All people, agencies, organisations and groups that contribute to emergency management.
Emergency Support	Provision of resources supporting Control Agency response.
Functional Support Group (FSG)	A grouping of participating organisations coordinated by a lead agency that performs a functional role as part of the State Emergency Centre arrangements to support response and recovery operations for an emergency.
Incident Management	The processes, decisions and actions taken to resolve an emergency incident and support recovery that will enable the community to return to normality.
Incident Management Team (IMT)	A group of Control Agency incident management personnel including an Incident Controller, established for incident management.
i-Responda	The approach applied within the South Australian local government sector to prepare for and respond to requests for support during emergencies.

Joint Operating Guideline (JOG)	A document developed by LGA in consultation with a Control Agency and/or FSG, to identify activities, expectations, constraints, and process to enhance effective collaboration and coordination.
Local Government Association South Australia (LGA)	LGA South Australia which is a voluntary membership-based organisation providing councils with access to services, resources and support.
LGA Mutual	South Australian Local Government Mutual Risk Schemes and Services delivered in partnership by LGA Mutual Liability Scheme (LGAMLS), LGA Workers Compensation Scheme (LGAWCS), and LGA Asset Mutual Fund (LGAAMF).
LG Emergency Management Framework (LGEMF)	LGA's emergency management framework outlining the broad roles of the South Australian local government sector in emergency management.
LG Disaster Recovery Assistance Arrangements (LGDRAA)	Cost-sharing arrangement between the South Australian State Government and local councils to assist with managing the cost of disaster recovery activities following a natural disaster.
Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG)	The FSG comprised of LGA as the lead agency and all 68 Councils and Regional Local Government Associations as participating organisations, performing functional roles and capability that support the agencies responsible for managing and coordinating emergency response and recovery.
Local Government Functional Support Group Plan	The FSG plan prepared by LGA in line with the in line with the principles of the Emergency Management Act and SEMP that describes how it will achieve the needs identified in the different plans and of the different agencies within its scope of support.
Ordinary Operations in Extraordinary Situations	The i-Responda principle 'ordinary operations in extraordinary situations' refers to the capacity of a council to safely manage support activities which is fundamental to ensure a coordinated response which is referred to as the i-Responda principle 'managing council resources'.
Preparedness	All activities undertaken in advance of the occurrence of an incident to decrease the impact, extent and severity of the incident and to ensure more effective response activities.

Prevention	Undertaking of activities to understand disaster risk and reduce the likelihood of a disaster event occurring or the consequences of an event should it eventuate.
Recovery	The process of restoring or improving the livelihood and health, and the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities of a disaster-affected community. It is a complex process that provides an opportunity to enhance community resilience and to 'build back better' to avoid or reduce future emergency/disaster risk.
Relief	Provision of material aid and emergency medical care necessary to save and preserve human lives and enable families to meet their basic needs for shelter, clothing, water, and food (including the means to prepare food).
Resilience	The readiness and ability to withstand, adapt, respond or recover from adversity across many remits such as an individual level, to teams, organisations, community, assets, infrastructure, environment, economy, systems.
Response	Measures taken in anticipation of, during or immediately after an emergency to ensure that the effect of the emergency is minimised and that affected individuals are given immediate relief and support.
State Coordination (or Command) Centre (SCC)	The location from which an FSG coordinates the activities of its participating organisations. It may have a dual role if the FSG is also undertaking response or recovery operations.
State Emergency Centre (SEC)	The central point of coordination and support to the Control Agency from the State Coordinator, support agencies and functional support groups.
State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)	The plan outlining South Australia's emergency management arrangements developed and maintained by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.
Support Agency	An agency that provides support to the control agency.

1. Introduction

An emergency is an event that causes or threatens to cause the death of, or injury or other damage to the health of, any person; or the destruction of, or damage to, any property; or a disruption to essential services or to services usually enjoyed by the community; or harm to the environment, or to flora or fauna.

Emergency management is about preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies that may affect the community and endanger life, property or the environment.

Community expectations, emergencies of increasing frequency and severity and shifts in policy and legislation are creating new expectations of local government in relation to emergency management and adding to an already complex regulatory context.

Climate change amplifies the need to better mitigate known emergency risks and understand emerging risks. It also means that councils need to be ready to respond to and provide support during emergencies which are occurring more often and with less predictability.

Technological, demographic, social and economic changes continue to create new disruptors and previously unseen emergencies and exacerbate existing emergency risks. These challenges may also present new opportunities to strengthen resilience in communities.

Local government emergency management has historically focussed on the operational support that councils provide to emergency services during emergencies. In practice, local government makes a much greater contribution through reducing disaster risks, strengthening community resilience, and leadership, coordination and restoration of community assets in recovery.

South Australian councils play important and diverse roles because of their strong relationships with communities, knowledge of local hazards, risks and the local environment, ability to mobilise local resources, and experience in mitigating, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

A broader framing of emergency management aligns with international, national and state-based arrangements which emphasise disaster risk reduction and resilience to better manage emergency risks, prepare for an uncertainty and reduce costs to communities.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Local Government Emergency Management Framework (LGEMF) is to support the preparedness of councils, and support communities to be disaster resilient because emergency risks are understood, mitigated where possible, and there are effective systems to ensure community safety and wellbeing when emergencies occur.

The LGEMF provides context, a framework and guidance for emergency management planning to the local government sector in South Australia for emergency management.

3. Scope

The LGEMF relates to all emergency events, regardless of type, size, frequency, complexity or the hazards involved, and includes:

- the drivers for local government emergency management in South Australia.
- the roles of councils, LGA, regional LGAs, the LGFSG and LGA Mutual in emergency management
- how local government is integrated with national and state arrangements
- guidance, tools and templates for developing council emergency management policies and plans

4. Guiding principles

The following principles underpin this framework:

Comprehensive approach	The LGEMF is based on the comprehensive emergency management approach which considers all phases of emergencies including prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.
Holistic	There will be a holistic and integrated approach to emergency management planning and local government is a holistic contributor to emergency management.
Everyday strengths	Local government's participation in emergency management draws on the sector's core strengths and roles in communities and adds value to what is usual business for councils.
Local knowledge	Local government is the closest level of government to the community and has relationships with, and understands their local communities, networks, risks, vulnerabilities, strengths and resources.
First Nations' knowledge	By listening to, respecting, and embedding First Nations voices and knowledge, local government can develop more inclusive, effective, and culturally grounded emergency management plans.
Clear governance	Local government participates in emergency management in a coordinated way with clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.
United	Local government collaborates in emergency management as a single sector, sharing knowledge, resources and expertise, thereby mitigating variations in council size, risk exposure and capacity.
Evidence-based	Local government emergency management is risk informed, and draws data from all sectors, lived experiences and emerging risks.
Learning	Local government continually improves emergency management practices and adapts to emerging risks, thereby reducing the cost and impacts of emergencies.

5. Emergency management context

Emergency Management in local government sits within the wider state, national and international context.

Table 1: a non-exhaustive summary of frameworks, strategies and policies that provide the context for this framework

International	<u>Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030</u>
	<u>Paris Agreement on Climate Change 2015</u>
National	<u>National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework 2018</u>
	<u>National Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2011</u>
	<u>Productivity Commission Final Report on Natural Disaster Funding 2015</u>
	<u>Building Australia's resilience to natural disasters report for Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience and Safer Communities 2017</u>
	<u>Australia's Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism 2023</u>
	<u>Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Emergency Management Handbooks</u>
State	<u>State Emergency Management Committee Strategic Plan 2023-2026</u>
	<u>South Australia Disaster Resilience Strategy 2019-2024</u>
	<u>People at risk in emergencies framework for SA 2017</u>
	<u>State Public Health Plan 2019-2024</u>
	<u>Prospering in a changing climate: Climate Change Adaptation Framework for SA 2012</u>
	<u>State Biosecurity Policy 2024-2025</u>
	<u>SA Disaster Waste Management Capability Plan and Guidelines 2022</u>

6. South Australian arrangements

Local government responsibilities relating to emergency management are outlined in various pieces of legislation and South Australia's emergency management arrangements

6.1. State legislation

Table 1 below summarises the key legislative drivers for local government's involvement in emergency management.

Table 2: Key legislative drivers for local government's involvement in emergency management

Legislation	Relevance to local government emergency management
<i>Local Government Act 1999 (SA)</i>	The Local Government Act 1999 outlines responsibilities for councils to consider risks (including emergency risks) as follows: • make informed decisions (section 6) • take measures to protect their area from natural hazards (section 7) • provide infrastructure for community and for development (section 7) • ensure the sustainability of the council's long-term financial performance (section 8) • assess the maintenance, replacement or development needs for infrastructure (section 122) • identify anticipated or predicted changes in any factors that make a significant contribution to the costs of the council's activities or operations (section 122) In addition, councils must "give due weight, in all its plans, policies and activities to regional, state and national objectives and strategies concerning the economic, social, physical and environmental development and management of the community" (section 8).
<i>Emergency Management Act 2004 (SA)</i>	Outlines the state's strategies and systems for emergency management including direct references to local government. Provides the power for the creation of the State Emergency Management Committee and the State Emergency Management Plan.

Legislation	Relevance to local government emergency management
<i>Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (SA)</i>	Provides the head power for the State Bushfire Coordination Committee, Bushfire Management Areas, Bushfire Management Committee and Bushfire Management Area Plans.
<i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (SA)</i>	Establishes land use planning and development control systems, and the role of local government in these systems.
<i>SA Public Health Act 2011 (SA)</i>	Establishes councils are public health authorities, including preventative and response roles for environmental health officers. Requires councils to prepare Regional Public Health Plans.
<i>Natural Resources Management Act 2004 (SA)</i>	Establishes the State's natural resources management regions and boards to guide the use and management of natural resources.
<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)</i>	Establishes systems to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces.
<i>Environment Protection Act 1993 (SA)</i>	Establishes a system to protect the environment, including establishment of the Environment Protection Authority. Under section 87, details the powers of an authorised officer under this Act which allows them to take action to protect the environment which may arise in the case of an emergency (such as a hazardous waste spill).

6.2. State Emergency Management Plan

The local government sector is integrated into South Australian emergency management arrangements through the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) which sits under the *Emergency Management Act 2004*.

At the strategic level, LGA is a member of the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) and associated sub-committees. This provides a mechanism for the voice of local government to be heard on bodies which have strategic oversight of emergency management in South Australia.

Councils are represented on the eleven Zone Emergency Management Committees (ZEMCs) across the state (refer to Appendix A for a map of emergency management zones). ZEMCs are responsible for strategic zone level emergency management planning

The chair of each ZEMC is a local government representative. The roles of a ZEMC are to:

- identify, analyse and evaluate emergency risks that could impact the Zone
- identify and evaluate risk treatment options and develop a Zone Emergency Management Plan (ZEMP) to address residual risk, and
- provide assurance that arrangements are in place to prevent and/or mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies with the aim being to create safer and more resilient communities within the Zone

During emergencies, local government plays a support role to Control Agencies, Functional Support Groups and Support Agencies who have prescribed roles in the SEMP.

The LGA, as Lead Agency for the Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG) represents the sector at the State Emergency Centre (SEC) and Control Agency State Command Centre(s) (SCC) as required.

The LGFSG provides a coordination role for local government support, including:

- ensuring effective coordination and communication between impacted councils and emergency services
- facilitating resource sharing across the local government sector
- representing the local government sector at the SEC, SCCs, Zone Emergency Support Teams (ZESTs) and agency Incident Management Teams (IMTs) as appropriate

The LGFSG also supports the development of capability and capacity in emergency management through:

- providing guidance and templates
- providing training for council employees supporting emergency services during response
- for councils to develop emergency management policies and plans, thus enhancing preparedness

During recovery, local government may be represented on the State Recovery Committee by the LGA, and on Local Recovery Committees by impacted councils. The State Recovery Committee coordinates whole of government recovery activities across the state, while the Local Recovery Committee is responsible for coordinating local recovery activities after an incident. It is not uncommon for a senior council representative to perform the role of Community Recovery Coordinator in locally led recovery.

7. Drivers of local emergency management planning

Some of the drivers that influence the way local government plans for emergencies are outlined below.

7.1. Climate and disaster risk

The Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs publication [Climate and disaster risks: 01 Introduction](#) describes 'Climate and disaster risk' as the:

"Potential impacts of natural hazards and climate change on exposed or vulnerable people, communities, assets, natural environments and socio-economic activities and services. Climate and disaster risks are systemic risks. Climate change introduces novel hazards and disaster risks that incrementally compromise the capacity and stability of natural environments. Widespread coastal inundation due to sea level rise, ecosystem disruption or collapse due to critical thresholds being exceeded (e.g. coral ecosystems), and climate-sensitive vector-borne diseases are a few examples.

The accumulation of chronic risks such as these can ultimately lead to sudden, catastrophic and often irreversible change. The risks can be far-reaching for communities and economies that depend on safe and reliable essential water services, agriculture, fisheries or tourism provided by healthy stable ecosystems.

Natural hazards are also changing – and quickly. Unprecedented heatwaves, tropical cyclones, floods, storms, bushfires and drought are regular occurrences. So-called rare events are occurring more often and with greater intensity, and some events have characteristics not seen or experienced before. These changes are already negatively impacting the livelihoods and collective wellbeing of communities and economies around the world.¹

Our climate is changing. Extreme events such as bushfires, storms, heatwaves and floods are increasing in frequency, duration and intensity. New hazards and risks are emerging and are occurring in areas that previously have not experienced them, and emergencies are occurring with greater complexity through concurrent cascading and compounding events that trigger unforeseen consequences on communities.

¹ [Climate and disaster risks: 01 Introduction](#)

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The impacts of climate change mean that councils need to support communities affected by emergencies more often. It also necessitates a stronger focus on resilience, so communities can survive, adapt and grow through the experience of emergencies.

The more frequent and changing experience of emergencies are impacting the local government sector's ability to achieve its strategic goals resulting in the need to proactively identify and mitigate their climate risks, many of which are also emergency risks. Practically, this requires councils to apply climate and hazard data to better manage assets, plan community land use and manage risks.



Figure 1: Picture showing impact of erosion on coastal community

7.2. Changing society and interconnected systems

South Australian communities are continuing to experience changes brought about by population ageing, globalisation, inequality, decreasing confidence in governments, urban development, technological advancements, economic restructuring, health and a growing interconnectivity between the critical systems that support our communities.

“There is also greater potential for harm. Australia’s population is growing and ageing. The demand for infrastructure is growing. Existing infrastructure is ageing. Systems that deliver essential goods and services are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. Society is increasingly reliant and hyper-connected to these essential services. We are becoming more vulnerable to these hazards.”

Despite Australia's world-leading emergency response capabilities, these changes in exposure and vulnerability are already stretching the capacity of individuals, communities and the emergency services to cope".²

These changes present challenges for emergency management. For example, population growth may expose more people to emergency risks as neighbourhoods establish in areas at risk of fires, floods or coastal inundation.

During emergencies, communities and councils are especially vulnerable due to the complex interconnectedness of essential systems such as electricity, water supply, healthcare, transportation, and communication. When one system fails, such as a power outage, it can trigger cascading disruptions in others. For instance, a loss of electricity can halt water treatment operations, disable communication networks, and impair healthcare delivery. This systemic fragility means that a localised incident, like a cyberattack or severe weather event, can have wide-reaching consequences, overwhelming local governance structures and emergency services. Councils can struggle to maintain continuity of operations when dependencies across public and private sectors are poorly mapped or coordinated.

Modern communities rely on centralised digital infrastructure and just-in-time supply chains, which are highly efficient but lack resilience. During emergencies, disruptions to transportation or IT systems can limit access to food, fuel, and critical services, particularly affecting vulnerable populations such as the elderly, disabled, or low-income groups. Councils are then faced with a dual challenge: responding to immediate threats while managing the broader ripple effects across interdependent systems. Without robust contingency planning and cross-sector collaboration, even small-scale incidents can escalate rapidly, revealing gaps in preparedness and response capacity at both the community and institutional levels.

7.3. Growing costs of disasters

Emergencies are associated with increasing financial and human costs to communities, businesses and the local government sector.

According to Deloitte Access Economics, the total economic cost of natural disasters in South Australia over the past decade averaged approximately \$300 million per year. Looking ahead, this figure is projected to more than double, reaching \$700 million annually by 2050, with an average annual growth rate of 3.6%

The primary contributors to these costs in South Australia have been hail events (48%), followed closely by bushfires (45%), and storms (7%)³

² [Climate and disaster risks: 01 Introduction](#)

³ [media-release-nov-11.pdf](#)

These projections underscore the escalating financial impact of natural disasters on the state, highlighting the importance of proactive investment in disaster resilience and mitigation strategies to safeguard communities and the economy.

Through risk assessments, long term strategies and everyday business, councils know where investment is needed to mitigate emergency risks, for example through stormwater management, coastal protection, flood protection, or climate change adaptation. Councils have an important role in sharing information they hold about emergency risks, as this can help strengthen the resilience of communities, strengthen partnerships with other levels of government, prompt private sector investment and avoid higher insurance premiums.



Figure 2: Workers clearing fallen tree off of road after a natural disaster

The growing costs of disasters will drive a stronger focus on proactive emergency risk management, and see disaster risk a bigger consideration in decision making. This will be necessary to reduce the financial risks to the sector and ensure the sector continues to enjoy the protections and insurance that ratepayers expect.

7.4. The need to strengthen community resilience

Any of us can be at increased risk in an emergency at different times in our lives. For some, their increased risk can be adequately counterbalanced by their strengths, capacities and resilience, while others may require additional assistance to strengthen their capacities and resilience to be able to better prepare for, respond to and recover from an emergency.

Emergency events can disproportionately affect those who have the least capacity to prepare for, mitigate, respond to, or recover from emergencies. Recognising these vulnerabilities is essential in building a stronger resilient community.

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Community resilience is vital because it enables people to withstand, adapt to, and recover from challenges such as natural disasters, economic shifts, and social disruptions. Resilient communities are better equipped to protect lives, maintain essential services, and support vulnerable populations during crises. They foster strong local networks, encourage shared responsibility, and build the capacity to bounce back stronger. By investing in resilience, communities not only reduce long-term risks and costs but also create a foundation for greater stability, wellbeing, and sustainability in the face of future uncertainties.

As the level of government closest to communities, local government has a unique understanding of the needs and aspirations of communities. Councils are well placed to work with individuals, households, community groups and businesses to strengthen resilience to emergencies.

When emergencies occur, councils are a trusted source of information and support. While this trust and connection is a strength, it also comes with an expectation that councils are ready to support communities during and after emergencies.

In addition to councils, there are other organisations with strong pathways into communities. Communities fare better through the experience of emergencies if organisations across the community work together to strengthen disaster resilience.

7.5. Shared responsibility

The responsibility to mitigate risk and strengthen resilience therefore lies with all its members, including individuals, households, communities, organisations, states and nations.

Shared responsibility for local government is proactively contributing to emergency management and doing so in a coordinated way that is well integrated with local, regional and state arrangements. It also requires councils to work closely with individuals, households, communities and businesses.

In an era of increasing cost and role-shifting to local government, it is important that the sector does not assume roles that are best managed by other levels of government, the private sector or community. Local government activities in emergency management will be most successful when they draw upon the sector's core strengths and add value to what is core business for councils.

"A national, coordinated and cooperative effort is needed to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies and disasters. All sectors of society—governments, business, the not-for-profit sector, communities and individuals—must share responsibility for managing the risks."⁴

⁴ [National-Strategy-for-Disaster-Resilience](#)

8. Impacts of emergencies on councils and communities

Emergencies cause disruption and harm to councils and the communities they support. These range from everyday inconvenience to life changing impacts to the social, economic, and environmental systems that communities depend upon.

Table 3: Categories of emergency impacts

Category	Possible impacts on councils and communities
People	Emergencies can cause death, illness or injury. This includes members of the community and the people supporting them (including council staff).
Economy	The economy can be impacted adversely by emergencies. These impacts contribute to direct economic losses, and flow on consequences that cause indirect losses. Assets and systems that under-pin the economy may be significantly impacted.
Social cohesion	Community cohesion and social fabric may be impacted during emergencies (important events may be delayed or cancelled) and sometimes even resulting in displacement of community members leading to temporary or permanent community dispersal. Culturally important places or artefacts may be damaged or destroyed.
Environment	The environment may be impacted through disruption to or loss of species, ecosystems, or changes to landscape, or adverse impact on important environmental values such as air or water quality.
Public administration	Councils are a core provider of community and administrative services and are owners and custodians of assets that enable this. Emergencies may disrupt the public administration of council to such an extent that it may have to significantly change services or priorities, restructure financial arrangements, and seek external support. In some circumstances councils may not be able to deliver their core functions.

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The following table contains specific examples of South Australian emergencies and the impacts they had on councils and communities.

Table 4: South Australian emergencies and their impact on councils and communities

Emergency	Council impact and participation	Community impacts
2022-2023 River Murray Flood	Infrastructure damage included roads, levees, irrigation systems, and public facilities, requiring extensive repair and rebuilding Participation in sandbagging, and levee remediation, construction and monitoring Provided facilities for Relief and Recovery Centres Community engagement through newsletters, public meetings, and local recovery committees Collaboration with emergency services, government agencies and other councils, contributing to coordinated decision-making and resource sharing LGDRRA implemented to support councils to manage recovery costs and rebuilding efforts	Widespread inundation affected homes and businesses, across multiple council areas Significant economic disruption to agriculture and tourism sectors Social impacts including displacement, mental health challenges, and community stress due to prolonged uncertainty and recovery timelines Environmental impacts were mixed: while some ecosystems benefited from the floodwaters, others experienced degradation and blackwater events
2019-2020 Black Summer Bushfires	34 councils involved in direct support Councils contributed personnel, equipment, and logistical support, including road clearing, waste management, and community coordination	Widespread devastation in areas such as Kangaroo Island, Cudlee Creek, Yorketown, and Keilira, with over 278 homes destroyed and three lives lost Severe environmental damage, including loss of native wildlife and habitats

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Emergency	Council impact and participation	Community impacts
	Supported community engagement and resilience building, including bushfire preparedness education and local recovery planning	Economic disruption affected agriculture, tourism, and small businesses, with long-term recovery needed for local economies Social and emotional toll including trauma, displacement, and mental health challenges Infrastructure damage included roads, power lines, and community facilities, requiring significant repair and rebuilding
2018 Thomas Foods Factory Fire, Murray Bridge	Spokesperson in recovery supported the community, and provided advocacy, leadership and coordination Council established Community of Practice for the sharing of information, knowledge and skills regarding emergency management/disaster resilience	Loss of jobs and economic impact of regional significance 1400 displaced workers, and secondary/tertiary impacts to other businesses The factory was commended for exemplary workplace safety and business continuity procedures
2016 state-wide blackout	Communication and coordination with state agencies and SA Power Networks to relay local conditions and restoration priorities. Supported vulnerable residents, conducting welfare checks and providing access to backup power and shelter where possible. Opened community centres.	Widespread power outage affected approx. 850,000 customers across SA, including homes, businesses, and essential services Community unable to access emergency services and disruption to critical infrastructure e.g. hospitals, water treatment plants, traffic systems, and communication networks Economic losses across industries, particularly in manufacturing, agriculture, and retail, due to halted operations and spoilage

Emergency	Council impact and participation	Community impacts
		Community safety concerns, especially for remote and/or vulnerable populations reliant on powered medical equipment Public anxiety and frustration due to uncertainty, lack of communication, and extended restoration times
2016 storm and flood events	Multiple significant storms and saturated soil and catchments led to flooding causing extensive damage to local government infrastructure, with costs estimated over \$20 million across 75% of South Australian councils Road closures and clearing roads of debris Repair of affected infrastructure Waste removal Council sites opened sandbagging stations for public access, some sites sustaining long term damage	Significant agricultural losses, particularly in the Northern Adelaide Plains, where around 250 growers were impacted, with estimated damages exceeding \$51 million Damage to homes and properties, including approximately 80 homes inundated (e.g. Old Noarlunga) Disruption to daily life and services, including road closures, power outages, and school disruptions in affected regions Emotional and psychological stress especially for displaced residents or those facing property damage and economic uncertainty
2015 Pinery fire	Assisted Country Fire Service during response and opened relief centres Long term recovery efforts through the Local Recovery Committee Replaced signage, repaired roads, removed dead trees Waived rates, development fees and building fees Extensive community work including fundraising	Two fatalities and over 90 people injured Loss of 91 homes and substantial property including housing, fencing, sheds and vehicles Loss of thousands of poultry and livestock

Emergency	Council impact and participation	Community impacts
	Managed waste and assisted with animal carcass disposal	
2015 Sampson Flat fire	Road clearance and debris removal Tree management Road closures Sustained community development in recovery Council sites used for housing evacuated animals	Destruction of 24 homes Extended road closures adding to psychological impact and restricted access to supplies

9. Comprehensive Emergency Management

Comprehensive emergency management emphasises coordination across government levels, agencies, and the community to build resilience and ensure a well-rounded, integrated approach to managing emergencies. It includes the four phases of comprehensive emergency management are Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery, sometimes referred to as PPRR.

Table 5: Definitions of the four phases of emergency management

Phase	Definition
Prevention	Prevention is the undertaking of activities to understand disaster risk and reduce the likelihood of a disaster event occurring or the consequences of an event should it eventuate.
Preparedness	All activities undertaken in advance of the occurrence of an incident to decrease the impact, extent and severity of the incident and to ensure more effective response activities.
Response	Measures taken in anticipation of, during or immediately after an emergency to ensure that the effect of the emergency is minimised and that affected individuals are given immediate relief and support.
Recovery	The process of restoring or improving the livelihood and health, and the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities of a disaster-affected community. It is a complex process that provides an opportunity to enhance community resilience and to 'build back better' to avoid or reduce future emergency/disaster risk.

Councils play a critical role in all phases of emergency management because they are closest to the communities they serve and understand local risks, needs, and resources.

Councils are not only support agencies; they are essential partners in emergency management. Their involvement across all four phases helps reduce risk, protect lives and property, and build stronger, more resilient communities.

9.1. Prevention

Prevention includes the actions taken to avoid or reduce the likelihood and consequences of emergencies.

Prevention includes intentionally taking action to avoid the creation of new disaster risks, reducing existing disaster risks, and managing residual risk. Effective prevention minimises the need to respond to and recover from emergencies.

The terms “disaster risk reduction”, “mitigation” or “prevention” are sometimes used interchangeably. Prevention measures seek to eliminate the impact of hazards, and/or reduce susceptibility to them. Mitigation measures accept that the event will occur and seek to reduce the impact by both physical means (e.g. flood levees) and by increasing the resilience of the community exposed to the impact of those hazards. Prevention and mitigation are both part of disaster risk reduction.



Figure 3: Council involvement in flood levees during River Murray Flood 2022

Councils help reduce disaster risks through land use planning, infrastructure maintenance, and environmental management. By integrating risk reduction into local planning, they can help prevent or lessen the impact of future emergencies.

In 2018, consultation with SA councils through the Council Ready program found that:

- mitigation of emergency risk is arguably councils’ biggest contribution to emergency management
- activities councils undertake to mitigate emergency risks largely occur through business-as-usual activities and are rarely explicitly communicated as part of councils’ emergency management arrangements
- there are strong strategic links between emergency management and public health, climate change adaptation, asset management and community wellbeing

- there is no quantification or reporting at the council or local government sector level about the significant investment that councils are making to disaster risk reduction⁵.

The SEMP assigns Hazard Risk Reduction Leaders (HRRLs) who are responsible for leading action to mitigate risks associated with priority hazards. Councils work in partnership with HRRLs on measures aimed at managing these hazards. For example the Department for Environment and Water are the HRRL for flooding and undertake risk assessments and risk reduction and mitigation activities to reduce flood risk.

Councils undertake a range of measures that reduce emergency risks and protect its area from natural and other hazards, often these activities occur through business-as-usual activities rather than specifically to address emergency risk. Council activities that contribute to risk reduction include:

- waste management
- community development
- fire prevention
- stormwater management
- development assessment
- tree management
- climate adaptation
- environmental health
- event management
- coastal management
- participation in Zone Emergency Management Committees
- risk management
- asset management plans
- strategic planning

Given the increasing emergency risks that communities are facing and the policy imperative around disaster risk reduction, there is scope for councils to provide a more focussed consideration of how they contribute to preventing disasters and reducing risk.

Strategies for local government in disaster risk reduction (prevention and mitigation) include:

1. improve understanding of current and emerging disaster risks, and the consequences on communities, and share this information with partners
2. integrate disaster risk and prevention information into local government planning and decision-making
3. advocate for investment in actions that prevent disasters and reduce disaster risks and strengthen community resilience.
4. seek to mitigate disaster risks and prevent disasters within the control and capacity of local government

⁵ LGASA Emergency Management Health Checks with SA Councils: Summary Report, Page 22-23

9.2. Preparedness

Preparedness includes all activities undertaken before an incident occurs to reduce the impact, extent and severity of the incident and to ensure more effective response activities.

Preparedness activities include planning, training, and exercising to ensure individuals, communities, and agencies are ready to respond effectively. It also includes activities undertaken by councils immediately before a period of increased risk to minimise the impact, for example clearing drains and gutters when heavy rain is predicted.

Councils play a crucial preparedness role in building community resilience and ensuring people know what to do before a crisis hits.

Examples of council preparedness activities include:

- developing emergency plans
- community education and awareness campaigns
- engaging with other agencies and organisations to establish relevant arrangements
- conducting exercises
- bushfire hazard risk reduction
- vegetation management
- removing debris from drains and creeks
- participating in Zone Emergency Management Committees



Figure 4: Trash rack to collect debris and rubbish in drain, uncleared can increase the risk of flooding during high rainfall events

9.3. Response

Response refers to measures taken in anticipation of, during or immediately after an emergency to ensure that the effect of the emergency is minimised and affected individuals are given immediate relief and support. It includes immediate actions taken to protect life, property, and the environment.

Table 6: Methods that councils can provide support during the response phase

Support	Activities
To own community	• support and communicate with the community through established networks • maintain and manage local roads • tree management • coastal management • environmental health • provide real-time information • mobilise local resources • engage with other agencies and emergency services
To other councils, Control Agencies or other parties through the LGFSG	Participation in emergency support activities (response) based on the principles in the i-Responda Framework including: • opening relief centres • tree management • clearing roads • clearing fire breaks with plant and equipment • bulk water carrying • support community sandbag locations • liaising between council(s) and the Control Agency • providing local knowledge and subject matter expertise

For councils, preparing to participate in response begins with ensuring routine systems are in place such as business continuity plans (including IT recovery), work health and safety systems and arrangements for managing crisis communications. This is because without staff being safe and supported, council's assets maintained and basic business disruptions being managed, local government is unable to provide broader assistance to the community.

During emergency response and support activities, councils are encouraged to use existing policies, procedures and systems. When developing policies and procedures that explicitly address response, it is important that their relationship with existing processes (e.g. routine call-out arrangements, internal communication protocols) is clearly communicated.

Councils should have appropriate [i-Responda arrangements](#) in place including an emergency management policy, plans, registers of plant, equipment and personnel, and personnel need to undertake the relevant i-Responda training for their emergency support role. These arrangements are based on the [i-Responda Framework](#) which provides standard actions for councils while providing support to emergency services.

Councils' i-Responda arrangements should outline how council participates in the LGFSG. The LGFSG is established under the SEMP and coordinates the response from local government during an emergency. The point of connection between individual councils and the LGFSG during an incident is between the LGFSG State Duty Officer and the Council Commander.

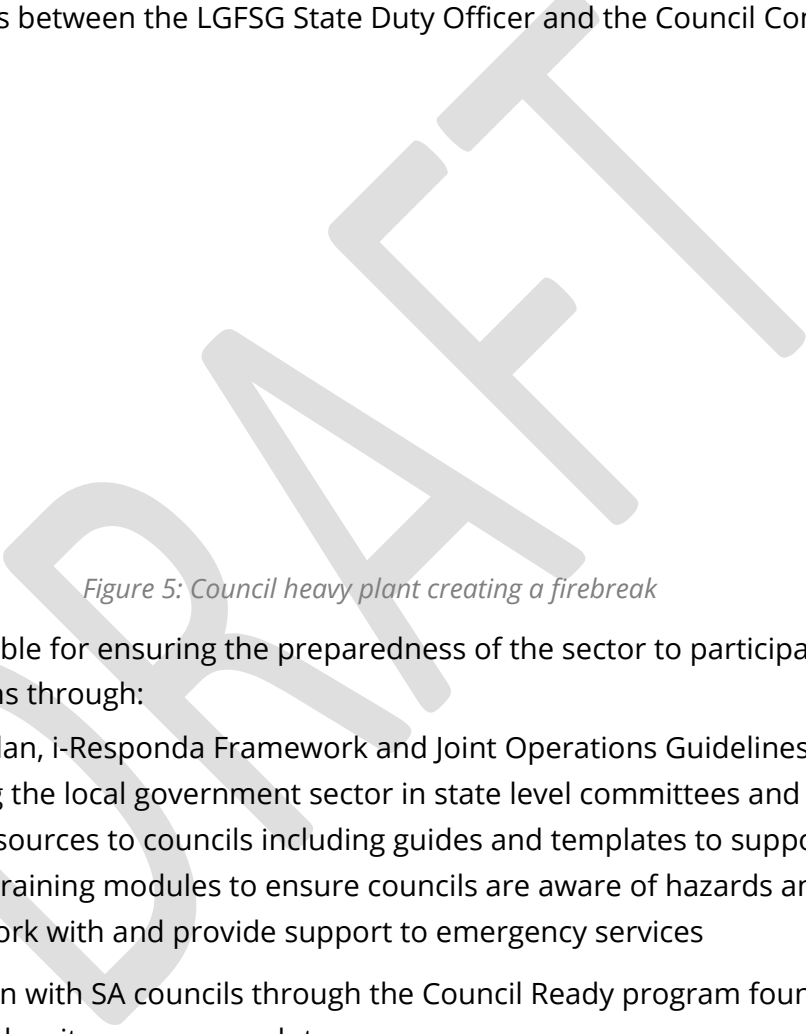


Figure 5: Council heavy plant creating a firebreak

The LGA is responsible for ensuring the preparedness of the sector to participate as the LGFSG. This happens through:

- the LGFSG Plan, i-Responda Framework and Joint Operations Guidelines
- representing the local government sector in state level committees and structures
- providing resources to councils including guides and templates to support planning
- i-Responda training modules to ensure councils are aware of hazards and how they can safely work with and provide support to emergency services

In 2018, consultation with SA councils through the Council Ready program found that:

- each council has its own approach to response
- emergency management documentation needs be tailored to the audiences including community, elected members, executive, operational managers and frontline staff
- there is stronger knowledge of frequently experienced hazards, such as bushfires or extreme weather, compared with less well understood or emerging hazards such as extreme heat or violent extremism
- reliance on key individuals who hold considerable knowledge and expertise is a consistent challenge.

9.4. Recovery

Recovery is the process of restoring or improving the livelihood and health, and the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities of a disaster-affected community. It includes rebuilding infrastructure and providing psychological and financial support.

In South Australia, arrangements for recovery are outlined in the [South Australian State Recovery Framework](#) and information for councils is contained in the [Guide to Recovery for SA Local Government](#) (under review).

There are four domains of recovery which are nationally recognised and reflected in South Australia's emergency management arrangements:

1. **Infrastructure and built** – public and commercial buildings, roads, paths, essential services (power, water, communications) and other infrastructure
2. **Social** – people, families and communities
3. **Economic** – employers, industry, investment and job creation
4. **Natural** – land management, air quality, natural heritage, culture, history and ecological conservation.

Councils are involved in all four domains, and after a major emergency, recovery can become a 'whole of council' concern that impacts upon all aspects of the organisation.

Examples of activities that councils might provide in recovery are:

- waste management
- vegetation management
- asset restoration
- development assessment
- tree management
- environmental health
- community development
- financial support
- infrastructure restoration
- stormwater management
- community information
- animal management
- supporting displaced people
- supporting community wellbeing.

Recovery is a complex process that provides an opportunity to enhance community resilience and to 'build back better' to avoid or reduce future emergency/disaster risk.

Depending on the scale of the disaster, recovery can continue for weeks, months or even years, as people and communities rebuild and restore their lives.

Recovery is a shared responsibility between affected communities, all levels of government and the not-for-profit and private sectors. In SA, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and Security, Emergency and Recovery Management (SERM) team provides coordination and support to all involved parties.

Helping local government build stronger communities.

Councils are heavily involved in recovery and participate through locally led Local Recovery Committees (LRC) and/or a State-led, State Recovery Committee (SRC).

LRC's, led by a Community Recovery Coordinator, coordinate recovery efforts between stakeholders at the local level.

As the level of government closest to affected communities, council input is critical to the effective recovery efforts and sustained presence of councils throughout recovery enables them to ensure recovery efforts are tailored, inclusive, and community driven.

Recovery can be complex and demanding process, involving a broad range of stakeholders and challenging issues to be negotiated. Usual council processes and practices may not work in the recovery context, and council staff and volunteers need to be flexible and adaptable when responding to changing community needs. Workforce management is also critical as staff and volunteers may be impacted themselves, impacting their ability to participate.



Figure 6: Debris and waste after a flood

In 2018, consultation with SA councils through the Council Ready program found that:

- Recovery disrupts business-as-usual in almost every part of councils
- the long-term nature of Recovery can lead to organisational fatigue as staff sustain high workloads over an extended period

Helping local government build stronger communities.

- there are inherent connections between activities councils undertake in recovery and what they do in disaster risk reduction such as community development, asset management, leadership and advocacy⁶.

To provide the most effective support to communities and minimise duplication of effort, recovery must be well planned and coordinated.

Strategies for councils in recovery include to:

- participate in a coordinated way that meets community needs and avoids duplication of effort
- consider the broad impacts that recovery will have upon local government organisations, across infrastructural, social, economic and natural systems
- plan for recovery in ways that establish the principles, structures, partnerships and approaches to guide the delivery of recovery activities.

It is important that recovery activities strengthen community resilience and contribute to disaster risk reduction through the adoption of betterment or 'build back better' approaches.

Resources for councils planning for Recovery include:

[South Australian State Recovery Framework](#)

[Guide to Recovery for SA Local Government](#)

Template for: Council Recovery Plan

Template for: Recovery Action Plan

⁶ LGASA Emergency Management Health Checks with SA Councils: Summary Report, Page 28-29.

10. Local government sector roles in EM

The following sections outline roles for councils, LGA, regional LGAs, the LGFSG and LGA Mutual in this framework, details the tools and supports available to assist implementation, and identifies approaches for monitoring progress. See also the LGFSG Plan for more detail on the roles and responsibilities of the participating organisations of the LGFSG.

10.1. Council roles

Councils have key roles in PPRR, as summarised in Table 6.

Table 7: Council roles in emergency management

Prevention	Preparedness
- Participate in the local Zone Emergency Management Committee and Bushfire Management Committee - Understand and communicate current and emerging disaster risks for council and the community - Integrate disaster risk into existing plans and decision-making (e.g. strategic plans, risk frameworks, asset management plan) - Partner with local stakeholders in addressing priority emergency risks - Strengthen disaster resilience through community development	- Establish locally relevant i-Responda arrangements - Establish a council emergency management policy, plans and registers - Undertake i-Responda training - Build capability of council to participate in the LGFSG - Participate in local Zone Emergency Support Team exercises
Response	Recovery
- Undertake usual community support activities such as tree management and clearing roads - Participate in emergency support activities in accordance with the i-Responda framework	- Participate in Local Recovery Committee during emergencies - Provide leadership, coordination and advocacy when the community is impacted by disasters - Plan for Recovery to establish the principles, structures, partnerships and approaches that will guide council - Secure grants and other funding assistance to support disaster recovery

10.2. Regional LGA roles

Regional LGAs provide leadership, advocacy and coordination roles, which are especially important to disaster risk reduction and recovery. They also support response as a member of the LGFSG, subject to their capacity. Examples of roles are outlined in Table 7.

Table 8: Regional LGA roles in emergency management

Prevention	Preparedness
- Understand and communicate current and emerging disaster risks across the region - Use regional projects to support the integration of disaster risk into council planning and decision making - Advocate to drive investment and focus on disaster risk reduction in the region	- Build relationships with member councils - Establish arrangements for advocacy and support during emergencies
Response	Recovery
- Assist with coordination and support of member councils - Participate as a member of the LGFSG, as resourcing allows	Provide regional leadership, coordination and advocacy as appropriate

10.3. LGA roles (as an individual entity and as Lead Agency for the LGFSG)

LGA supports councils to undertake roles and responsibilities through advocacy, guidance and practical assistance and represents local government on state-level committees and working groups.

LGA is the Lead Agency for the LGFSG and is responsible for ensuring coordination of local government activities during emergencies, and for building local government capability and capacity for providing support during emergencies.

Table 9: LGA roles in emergency management

Prevention	Preparedness
• Work with Hazard Risk Reduction Leaders, Control Agencies and other stakeholders to understand current and emerging disaster risks • Provide tools to councils to help integrate disaster risk into council planning and decision making • Advocate and partner to drive focus and investment on disaster risk reduction • Contribute to state-wide planning and preparedness as member of state level committees	• Establish arrangements including LGFSG Plan and Joint Operating Guidelines • Provide tools and resources to councils to support planning and preparedness • Maintain a development program to assist councils prepare for incident operations • Ensure local government organisations are equipped to participate in the LGFSG • Train LGA staff to perform liaison roles • Receive briefings of high-risk weather and incidents • Provide a 24/7 State Duty Officer service • Facilitate exercising and lessons management
Response	Recovery
• Ensure a coordinated local government response as required under the SEMP • Facilitate requests for local government support • Ensure appropriate participation of councils and LGFSG representation in relevant incident structures e.g. SEC, ZEST, IMT	• Support councils in understanding the disaster recovery arrangements for SA • Provide leadership, coordination and advocacy across the local government sector

10.4. LGA Mutual roles

LGA Mutual via the LGA Mutual Liability Scheme and LGA Workers Compensation Scheme provide services that assist councils to assist with identifying and managing strategic and operational risks.

LGA Mutual provides emergency management risk services, workers compensation services and coverage as part of the everyday activities and service provision to councils. These roles exist across the emergency management spectrum, as shown in 9.

Table 10: LGA Mutual roles in emergency management

Prevention	Preparedness
- Support councils to consider current and emergency risks as part of their strategic risk management, and general risk management - Undertake new initiatives as required to support local government sector to proactively management current and emerging disaster risk - Incentivise councils who are proactively managing their current and emerging disaster risks	- Establish arrangements to provide support during emergencies e.g. legal advice, psychological support services, WHS advice - Ensure appropriate protections are in place to enable local government organisations to participate in incident operations - Support councils to implement i-Responda framework to ensure appropriate risk management in incident operations
Response	Recovery
Provide advice and support to the LGFSG	Provide assistance to local government organisations through claims management

11. Partners in EM

Councils' relationships with external organisations and networks are an important contribution to emergency management. Often extensive and built over long periods of time, these relationships contribute directly to the capacity of councils to reduce disaster risk, respond effectively to emergency incidents, and support communities in recovery.

Communities also provide access to data, knowledge and information that improves the quality of the emergency management planning. Examples of local partnerships that strengthen emergency management are shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7: Partners for councils in emergency management planning

Partner relationships are important for:

- developing and managing assets and infrastructure such as community wastewater management systems, flood and coastal management barriers and levees, storm water systems, safe road networks, fire breaks, urban cooling and security barriers
- providing services such as environmental health, community development, climate adaptation, waste management and development control
- leadership and advocacy including establishing strategic priorities, allocating funds and advocating for and on behalf of communities before, during and after emergencies

12. First Nations considerations

When councils undertake emergency management planning, it is essential to incorporate First Nations considerations to ensure culturally safe, inclusive, and effective approaches. Key considerations include:

Respect for Traditional Knowledge and Connection to Country

First Nations peoples have deep cultural, spiritual, and ecological knowledge of their lands and waters, accumulated over thousands of years. Councils should engage with Traditional Owners and Custodians to incorporate this knowledge into planning, especially for hazard mitigation, land management, and recovery strategies. Respecting Country means recognising its significance beyond property or geography, it is part of identity, law, and wellbeing.

Engagement and Partnership

Emergency management must be done *with* First Nations communities, not *for* them. Councils should build genuine, long-term partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and leaders. Engagement should be early, ongoing, and inclusive, not just during response phases. This includes involving First Nations people in decision-making bodies and local emergency planning committees.

Cultural Safety and Communication

Plans must ensure culturally safe evacuation centres, support services, and communication approaches. For example, some First Nations people may feel unsafe in standard evacuation settings due to past experiences or cultural needs. Councils should consider culturally appropriate signage, language use, and outreach methods that are community-specific and trusted.

Disaster Recovery and Healing

First Nations communities may experience unique and compounding impacts from disasters, including the trauma of loss of sacred sites, Country, or community dislocation. Recovery plans should include culturally sensitive psychosocial support and acknowledge the role of culture, ceremony, and community-led healing in the recovery process.

Equity and Inclusion

Many First Nations communities face systemic disadvantages, such as inadequate housing, infrastructure, or access to services. This can increase vulnerability during emergencies. Emergency management must address these inequities through risk reduction strategies that are locally tailored and informed by the lived experiences of First Nations people.

By embedding these considerations, councils contribute to more resilient, just, and inclusive emergency management outcomes.

See [A Planning Guide to Promote Resilience and Enhance Preparedness in Aboriginal Communities in South Australia](#) for practical tips on working with First Nations stakeholders.

13.Council emergency management planning

One of the key activities for council preparedness is emergency management planning.

The LGEMF is supported by tools, guidelines and resources to guide councils in fulfilling their emergency management responsibilities and develop fit-for-purpose documentation.

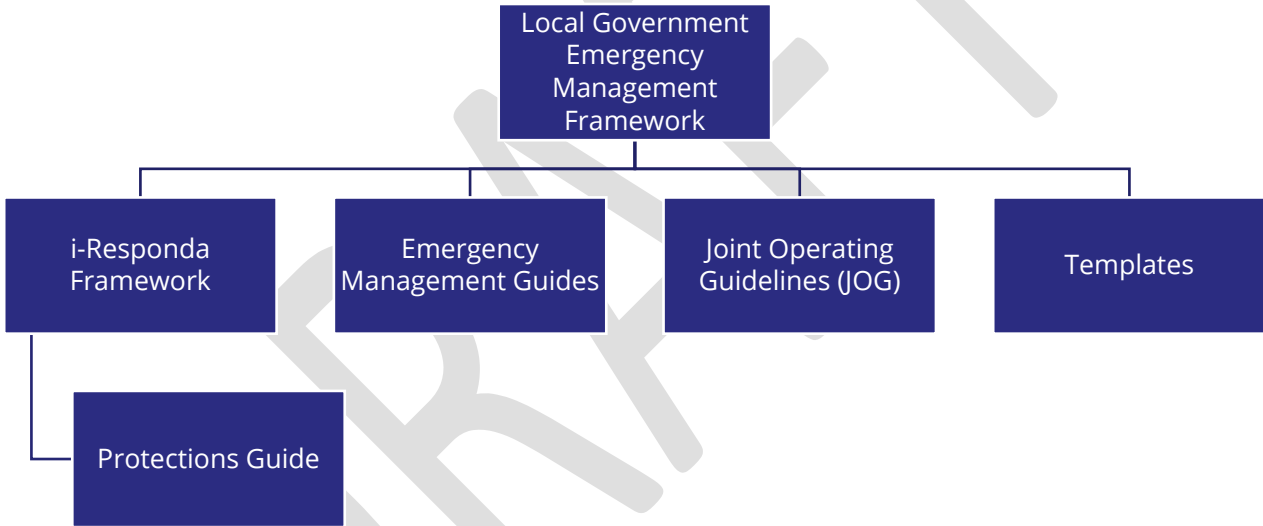


Figure 8: Relationship between the LGEMF and supporting documents

Table 11: List of LGA guides and templates available for councils

LGA Guides
• Recovery Guide for councils • Disaster Funding Guide • Emergency management communications guide • Emergency management workshop guide • Planning for Animals in Emergencies Council Guide • Elected Members Guide to Emergency Management • LGA Heatwave Guide for Local Government

Joint Operating Guidelines

- Emergency Relief Centres
- Community Sandbag Arrangements
- CFS Bushfire Support
- Road closures during emergencies

Templates

- Council Emergency Management Policy
- Council Emergency Management Plan
- Council i-Responda Plan
- Council Recovery Manual
- Council Recovery Action Plan
- Council Emergency Support Employee Register
- Council Emergency Support Plant and Equipment Register

Emergency management planning for councils involves building a suite of mutually supporting documents relevant to council's circumstances and integrated with councils' strategic goals and usual business processes

While there is great diversity amongst councils' exposure to emergency risks and approach to emergency management planning, there are benefits in a consistent approach. This section supports consistency by identifying the basic components of council emergency management planning.

The intended outcome is for each council to have fit for purpose emergency management documentation.

Figure 9 demonstrates a recommended suite of council emergency management documentation.

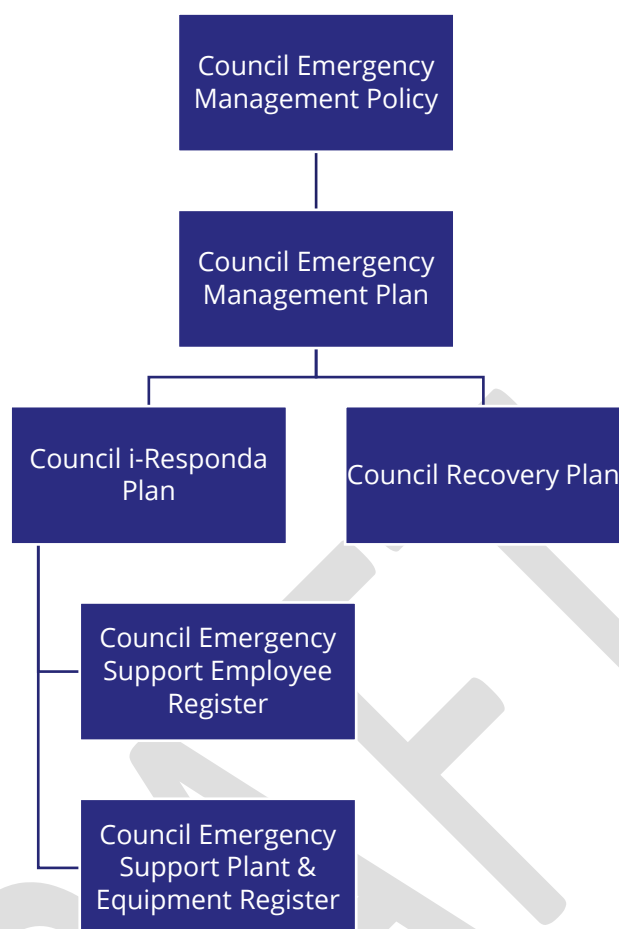


Figure 9: Recommended suite of council emergency management arrangements

The purpose of each document is listed in Table 12. There are templates available for each document.

Table 13: Purpose of council emergency management documents

Document	Purpose
Council Emergency Management Policy	Provides formal scope, direction and authority for the councils to participate in emergency management.
Council Emergency Management Plan	Establishes council strategic objectives for emergency management. Describes the emergency management actions that council will take through prevention, preparedness, response and recovery phases.
Council i-Responda Plan	Describes how the council will implement i-Responda and take practical action immediately before, during and immediately after an emergency incident.

Council Emergency Support Employee Register	Establish and maintain a register of council employees who have been identified as appropriate and have the relevant training, skills and experience.
Council Emergency Support Plant and Equipment Register	Establish and maintain a register of appropriate council plant and equipment that has been risk assessed for use by identified council employees during emergency support.
Council Recovery Plan	Describes how the council will support its community and provide leadership in recovery.

Councils are encouraged to reflect upon the Council Emergency Management Maturity Model (Appendix B) to understand their level of maturity in emergency management and prioritise their efforts for developing their documents. The maturity model identifies stronger planning regimes, greater engagement, and more comprehensive documentation as a council's level of emergency management maturity increases.

In business as usual, councils have a structured set of strategic, business, operational plans underpinned by a risk management framework. Effective emergency management planning identifies emergency management tasks and allocates accountability, resources and timeframes in a way that is integrated into existing councils' business planning systems.

Table 14 illustrates connections between emergency management documents and key council processes.

Table 15: Links between council emergency management and strategic documents

Council documents	EM Policy	EM Plan	i-Responda Plan	Recovery Plan
Strategic Plan	X	X		
Long Term Financial Plan	X	X		
Risk Register	X	X	X	X
Asset Management Plan		X		X
Governance Framework	X	X	X	X
Plans and Programs (economic development, community wellbeing, climate change, public health, environmental sustainability)	X	X		X
Council Procedures			X	X
WHS Systems			X	X

13.1. Council emergency management policy

The *Emergency Management Policy* provides formal scope, direction and authority for the council to participate in emergency management.

A Council Emergency Management Policy enables a council to integrate emergency management into its strategic direction and governance.

The authority and direction provided in the policy cascade through subsequent emergency management documents. The policy describes council's commitment to emergency management and provides the authority to staff to act to progress emergency management strategies and actions.

The emergency management policy should:

- define the scope of the council's emergency management activities
- describe council's approach to emergency management, including PPRR and delegations
- provide the council administration with authority to act within the defined scope
- establish links with other council policies
- provide for the development of emergency management documents
- describe a review process for the emergency management policy
- be adopted or endorsed in accordance with council's internal governance processes

Templates and resources

[Council Emergency Management Policy template](#)

13.2. Council emergency management plan

A Council Emergency Management Plan establishes council's strategic directions for emergency management and describes the actions the council will take to Prevent, Prepare, Respond and Recover (PPRR).

A Council Emergency Management Plan translates a council's emergency management policy into clearly defined actions with responsibility and resources allocated to PPRR.

The emergency management plan should:

- describe the context for the plan in terms of council and community values, related plans, state EM arrangements and the council's partners in EM
- establish linkages between the plan and other relevant council or regional strategies and plans that contribute to management of emergency risk
- identify emergency risks in the council area, and their possible impacts on council and community values
- identify the strategies council will adopt to manage emergency risks
- describe how the strategies will be acted upon by describing specific tasks and allocating accountability, resources and timeframes
- identify triggers for initiation of the council's response and recovery arrangements
- describe the capability required to deliver the response and recovery arrangements and how the council will maintain them
- identify the monitoring and improvement processes associated with the plan, including exercising.

Templates and resources

- Template for: Council Emergency Management Plan
- Template for: Council Emergency Support Employee Register
- Template for: Council Emergency Support Plant and Equipment Register

13.3. Council i-Responda Plan

The *Council i-Responda Plan* describes how the council will implement i-Responda and take practical action immediately before, during and immediately after an emergency incident.

Councils' i-Responda Plan (previously referred to as the Council Incident Operations Manual) are instructions for council's emergency support activities and are developed by council in accordance with the:

- i-Responda Framework
- Local Government Functional Support Group Plan
- Protections Guide

During an incident, councils may support the SA emergency management arrangements by:

- managing council's assets and services to the community
- supporting emergency services and control agencies in their emergency response
- making council assets and facilities available for refuge and relief
- providing local knowledge to support responses to emergencies
- assisting other councils impacted by an emergency as a participating agency in the Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG)
- supporting the community during Recovery

Councils' i-Responda Plan should reflect the i-Responda Framework which provides a standardised framework and set of actions for councils to operate under, while providing support to emergency services during incidents.

An i-Responda Plan should:

- define the scope of the council's incident operations and emergency support activities
- provide delegation and authority for the Council Commander(s)
- describe the:
 - activation triggers
 - command and council i-Responda management team structure
 - functions and tasks
 - resources, including people, places, technology, plant and equipment
 - communication with internal and external audiences
 - support to control agencies and emergency services
 - relationships with the emergency services, community, other councils and relevant suppliers of goods and services
- activities that council participates in for different hazards

Templates and resources

Council Emergency Management Plan template

Council i-Responda Plan Template

Local Government Functional Support Group Plan

Protections Guide

DRAFT

13.4. Council Recovery Plan

A Council Recovery Plan describes how the council will support its community and provide leadership in recovery

After a major emergency, recovery becomes a 'whole of council' concern that impacts upon all aspects of the organisation.

Recovery arrangements establish the principles, structures, partnerships and approaches that guide councils in the delivery of recovery activities, and should:

- define the scope of council's roles in recovery
- describe the principles that will guide the council's recovery efforts
- identify arrangements in place for:
 - activation of recovery efforts
 - recovery management structures and participation in Local Recovery Committee
 - maintaining awareness of situation and community needs
 - functions and tasks
 - staff management, including workloads and wellbeing
 - communication, including with impacted communities
 - relationships with external organisations
- describe council's approach to managing recovery efforts alongside restoration of council assets/services and providing business-as-usual activities

Things to consider:

- council's responsibilities in terms of leadership, community liaison and community development
- recovery activities might each business unit undertake (e.g. waste management, community development, environmental health)?
- procedures to ensure adequate resources (physical, financial and human resources) are allocated to recovery
- How might recovery activities need to be tailored to council's emergency risk profile, and/or community context
- how will council meet responsibilities whilst managing the restoration of council assets/services, and maintaining business-as-usual functions?
- council's local, regional, state and national partners in recovery

Templates and resources

[State Recovery Framework](#)

[LGA Recovery Guide for Councils](#)

[Council Recovery Plan template](#)

14. Additional reading

[Australian disasters | Disaster Mapper](#)

[Australian Disaster Resilience Index](#)

[Australian Emergency Management Arrangements Handbook](#)

[Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience Handbook](#)

[Disaster Risk Reduction: National DRR Framework](#)

[Disaster Risk Reduction: Profiling Australia's Vulnerability](#)

[Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilient Communities](#)

[Local Government Functional Support Group Plan](#)

[A Planning Guide to Promote Resilience and Enhance Preparedness in Aboriginal Communities in South Australia](#)

[Second National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction](#)

[Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction | Knowledge Hub](#)

[State Emergency Management Plan | Department of the Premier and Cabinet](#)

[Strategic Disaster Risk Assessment Guidance](#)

[Systemic Disaster Risk Handbook](#)

Appendix A: Emergency management zones

The State is divided into 11 Emergency Management Zones.

Each Zone has a Zone Emergency Management Committee (ZEMC) made up of local and state government and emergency management staff.

These committees provide regional leadership and undertake risk assessment and emergency management planning for their zone.

Zone emergency management plans are available here [SASES - Zone Emergency Management Plans](#)

An electronic version of the map on the next page that can be zoomed into, can be accessed [here](#).

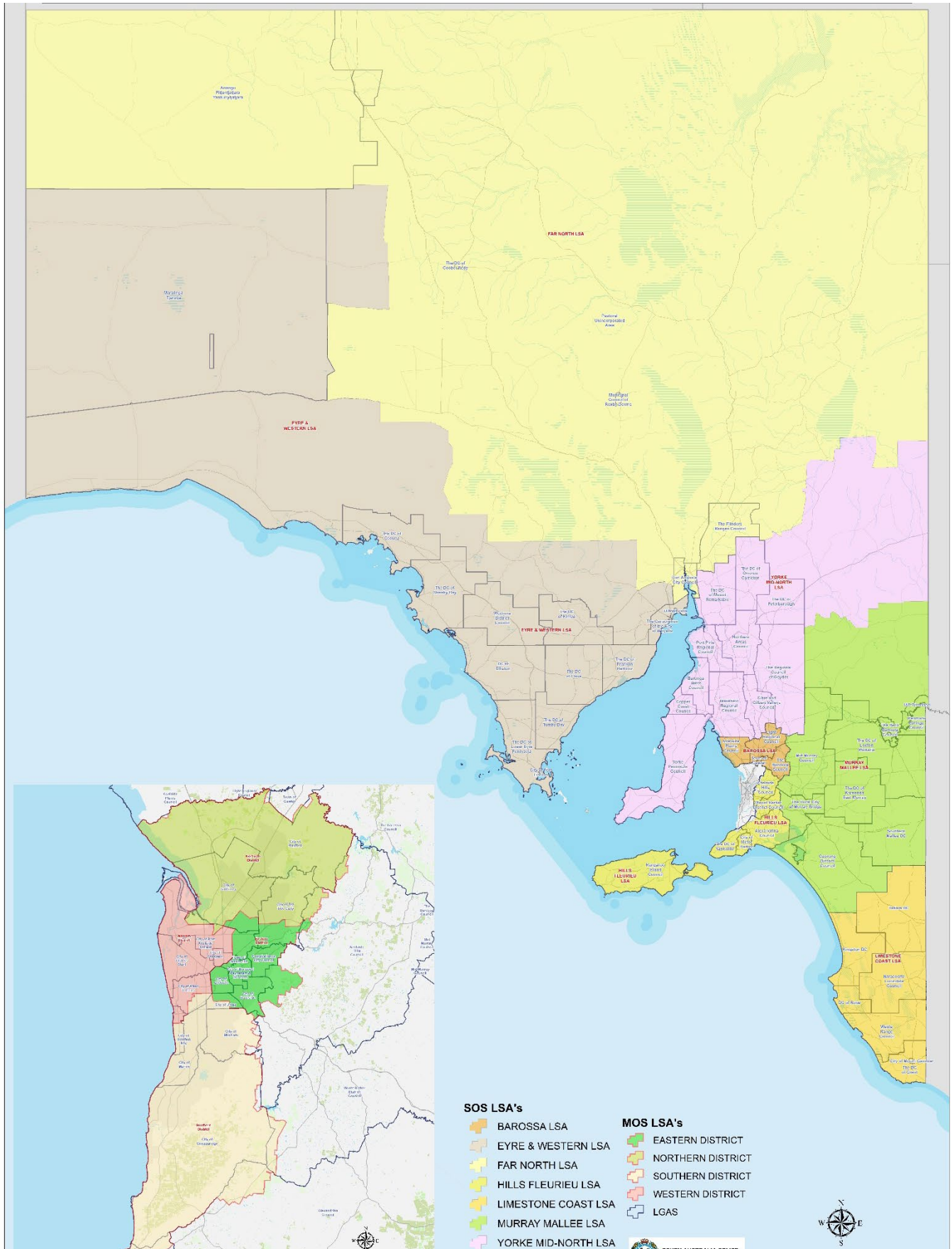


Figure 10: South Australian emergency management zones

Appendix B: Council emergency management maturity model



Figure 11: council emergency management maturity model

Table 16: Council emergency management maturity model

	Descriptor	Planning process	Stakeholders	Documentation	Improvement	Capability	Resource commitment
Leading	Emergency management is part of our cultural DNA and we are continually learning. We enable community emergency management.	Council provides leadership that enables community, business, other councils and broader stakeholders to play active roles in emergency management.	Community Businesses Other councils External organisations	Clear emergency management links in Council Strategic Plan, and other strategic documents	Assurance through independent review Community and stakeholder feedback Emergency management in annual reports Exercises with external stakeholders	Community capability development Emergency management integrated into organisational development	Staff and elected member time Staff time to support other councils Community, business and other stakeholders contribute time to emergency management planning
Advancing	We have a clear strategy to reduce disaster risks, respond effectively and provide leadership in recovery.	Council develops and maintains an Emergency Management Strategy or Framework in partnership with a range of internal and external stakeholders. This responds to council's strategic goals, is informed by an emergency risk assessment and integrates the range of council activities that contribute to emergency management.	Council Executive Staff from all departments Elected members External organisations Businesses Community	Emergency Management Strategy or Framework Emergency risk assessment and associated action plans Recovery plan/Guide Community resilience plan	Assurance through peer review Review of strategy Reporting program encompassing all activities Program of exercises Monitoring of emerging risks	Relevant staff are trained in emergency risk assessment, recovery, community resilience, communicating in emergencies and community engagement for emergencies	Executive and staff from all departments set the strategy Staff resources allocated to support the development and maintenance of the strategy and associated documents Staff time and funding to implement risk reduction, preparedness and community resilience activities
Managing	We have an emergency management program that encompasses activities that reduce our disaster risks and prepare to respond and recovery when incidents occur.	Council develops and maintains an Emergency Management Plan based on the LGA template or similar. Beyond this, activities that contribute to disaster risk reduction are planned through routine processes that have implicit emergency management objectives.	Council Executive Staff from a number of departments Key external stakeholders	Emergency management plan Risk reduction activities through other plans (e.g. fire prevention, stormwater, public health, development, climate change)	Review of emergency management plan Annual exercise of the plan	Relevant staff are trained in emergency management planning	Preparation and maintenance of Emergency management plan forms part of a staff role. Risk reduction activities are delivered through regular programming
Operating	We are operationally ready to provide support when the community is impacted by an emergency.	Council develops and maintains operational arrangements drawing upon staff knowledge and resources, such as templates.	Staff from key departments LGFSG	Operational arrangements Enabling policy Identification of people, vehicle, plant and equipment to support incident operations	Periodic review of operational arrangements LGFSG Annual Assurance Survey	Staff trained in i-Responda and incident management	Operational staff to support incident operations Staff time to prepare and maintain operational arrangements Maintenance of resources used in incident operations

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