
Introduction

In October 2013, the Queensland Government established the role of Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) to ensure the best possible whole-of-government and whole-of-community arrangements exist to deal with emergencies and disasters in Queensland. More simply, to provide confidence in Queensland’s emergency management arrangements.

The functions of the Office of the IGEM are established under the Disaster Management Act 2003. The Act provides the authority to develop disaster management standards and to review and assess the effectiveness of disaster management to enable a level of confidence in Queensland’s disaster management arrangements.

Fundamental to gaining the confidence necessary to provide this assurance are the notions of sharing responsibility, accepting accountability and embracing a collaborative approach to improving performance across the system.

Stakeholder engagement and research into what form an appropriate standard for disaster management may take revealed strong support for an approach that concentrated on outcomes rather than more traditional and prescriptive views of outputs. The concept of an assurance framework evolved to become the Emergency Management Assurance Framework, and has been developed to provide the foundation for guiding and supporting the continuous improvement of entities’ programs across all phases of disaster management. It also provides the structure and mechanism for reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of these arrangements.

The framework will act as a catalyst for a more consistent approach to disaster management and is designed to: support the development of closer working relationships; reduce red tape and bureaucracy; allow greater flexibility at the local level to meet community needs and, reduce disaster management costs through improved coordination across the state.

Emergency Management Assurance Framework development

Policy Context

While imperative the EMAF was aligned with a National policy context, key policy drivers were State driven, including the need to ensure the framework considered the nine foundation areas of the Queensland Plan: a 30 year vision for Queensland ¹ and the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience which has been developed by the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience ², all with a single goal of contributing to the strategy of Queensland being the most disaster resilient State in Australia.

Development of the framework also considered the four National Principles and five Strategic Directions contained in the Strategic Directions for Fire and Emergency Services in Australia and New Zealand 2014-2016 ³.

Review of other Jurisdictions

The Office of the IGEM reviewed the standards and assurance systems from eight (8) other jurisdictions, including systems from five (5) other countries, and one (1) from the Australian health sector. The systems included:

- Victoria – Draft Monitoring and Assurance Framework

New Zealand – Civil Defence Emergency Management
South Africa – National Disaster Management Framework
United Kingdom – National Resilience Capabilities Programme
Scotland – Her Majesties Fire Service Inspectorate
USA – Department of Homeland Security
USA – Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP)
Australia – National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS).

Analysis of the different systems helped identify key objectives for Queensland’s EMAF which included:

- standards should be specific and relevant in a Queensland context
- standards should be outcome focused and performance based
- standards must meet the expectations of communities, agencies and the Queensland Government
- standards must be applicable across all entities that participate in Queensland’s disaster management arrangements and at all levels from State to local
- standards must be consistent, comprehensive and all hazards in approach
- standards must form the basis for performance assessment and reviews, allowing clear statements on the capability and effectiveness of agencies
- performance assessment should allow for different levels of capability, and provide gradients of capability and maturity for disaster management
- The cost of implementing and assessing the standards must not be greater than the value of the potential improvement.

Consultation
A range of options were examined, analysed and documented in an options paper, highlighting anticipated impacts on stakeholders. This was distributed to a group of stakeholders who became the EMAF advisory panel who played a pivotal role in the development of the framework. The advisory panel concluded there were no applicable frameworks that could be applied “off-the-shelf” and that the framework should be recognize components and learnings from other jurisdictions and industries, but deliver specific arrangements pertinent to Queensland.

The advisory panel comprised state government, local government (through association and individual representatives), non-government and volunteer organisations.

A stakeholder workshop of approximately seventy (70) representatives from across all levels of Government, Government-Owned Corporations and Non-Government Organisations with interest in emergency management was held to allow for direct input to the framework. The workshop provided stakeholders an overview of the EMAF, required participants to draft appropriate outcome statements against shared responsibilities and to provide examples of evidence required by the sector that would satisfy these outcomes.

While the final version of the EMAF underwent significant quality and peer review, this process ensured it was fundamentally built by emergency management practitioners.

Benefits of the EMAF
The outcomes delivered will result in safer and more resilient communities and allow the community and Government to have greater confidence in the performance of the sector through robust evidence of the sector’s strengths in planning for, responding to, and recovering from, major and catastrophic disasters and emergencies.
The community will have a greater understanding of the outcomes, disaster management entities are working towards empowering them to work with the sector and Government to minimise local risk.

The disaster management sector will benefit from clear and consistent expectations that focus on achieving Key Outcomes to drive improvement. The application of the Standard will enable entities in the sector to:

- better understand strengths and residual risks in disaster management capabilities
- identify opportunities for joint investment through coordinated planning to build capability and capacity and improve performance
- access opportunities for cooperative action across Government and the community
- regularly and consistently monitor and evaluate progress towards the Standard
- Identify disaster management priorities.

Framework overview

The framework is comprised of three main sections: Principles, the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (the Standard), and Assurance Activities.

Principles

Four Principles underpin effective disaster management in Queensland. These Principles are fundamental to the establishment and continuous improvement of effective disaster management programs, and recognise the interconnectedness of disaster management across all levels of Government, the private sector and the community. The four Principles include:

Leadership

The foundational principle of leadership is demonstrated at all levels through a commitment to a shared culture of disaster management excellence. Strategic planning, within the context of resources and risk, underpins clear decision-making and planning priorities to achieve disaster management outcomes for the community.

Public Safety

Public safety is the primary driver for the continuous improvement of Queensland’s disaster management arrangements. These arrangements are delivered through disaster management groups where policy, procedure and practice focus on the safety of the community, engaging stakeholders, and sharing responsibility.

Partnership

Everyone has a role to ensure Queensland is the most disaster resilient state in Australia. Strategic partnerships across all entities will improve disaster management outcomes when they are well governed, drive clear roles and responsibilities, and promote true collaboration.

Performance

A culture of performance drives disaster management outcomes where productivity and effectiveness is measured by a combination of quality, quantity, cost, time or human relationships. Performance is monitored and analysed against the Standard, lessons are identified and learnings are embedded in good practice across all phases of disaster management.

Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland

The Standard outlines the way in which entities responsible for disaster management in the state are to undertake disaster management\(^4\). The Standard uses an outcome-based approach to ensure disaster management programs meet the needs of the community. The elements of the Standard are the basis for improving performance across Queensland’s disaster management arrangements. The elements are:

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\(^4\) Disaster Management Act 2003, section 16N (1), p 23.
Shared responsibilities

Shared responsibilities under the Standard are the elements of disaster management that governments, entities and practitioners need to deliver against in order to meet broader community expectations, and represent the key areas to be considered as part of an effective disaster management program.

Components

Components reflect the key capability areas of disaster management in Queensland within each shared responsibility. These capability areas form the basis for disaster management functions and activities.

Key Outcomes

The Key Outcomes identify the intended results of actions undertaken by entities to deliver against capabilities or functions. The Key Outcomes are grouped by Component under each shared responsibility to guide the performance of disaster management programs.

Good Practice Attributes

Through consultation with the sector, it was agreed that the elements of an effective disaster management system for Queensland can be recognised by the following attributes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scalable</td>
<td>Able to be applied to any size or type of event and across all levels of Queensland’s disaster management arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Considers all phases of disaster management, all hazards and an all agencies approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interoperable</td>
<td>Promotes interoperability of systems, programs and resources to enable integration seamlessly across the sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>Ensures services and systems are able to be delivered by mechanisms that best represent value for money</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptable</td>
<td>Able to adapt to a changing environment and remain flexible to the needs of the community</td>
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These attributes have been validated through a thematic analysis of the findings arising from recent national, state and territory disaster management reviews.  

Accountabilities

The Standard outlines five Accountabilities that have been developed in collaboration with disaster management practitioners to indicate an entity’s performance across the five areas of governance, doctrine, enablers, capability and performance.

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Accountability | Definition
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 Governance | How the entity demonstrates its values and aligns its corporate strategy to achieve the disaster management outcomes; e.g. roles and responsibilities, decision making, reporting, leadership, approvals, etc.
 Doctrine | How the entity’s business plan, programs, policies, practices and operational procedures align with its roles and responsibilities to deliver disaster management outcomes; e.g. plans, procedures, guidelines, policy
 Enablers | How the entity is using and developing the necessary systems, equipment, resources and technologies to deliver disaster management outcomes
 Performance | How the entity is monitoring and actively improving the performance of its service delivery to meet the disaster management outcomes; e.g. continuous improvement, review and monitoring
 Capabilities | How the entity is using training and exercising to help embed the necessary culture change and improve performance to meet disaster management outcomes

**Assurance Activities**

Assurance Activities assess performance against the Standard, or other relevant legislation, policy, good practice guidelines, or entity performance indicators to provide a level of assurance of disaster management effectiveness. Assurance Activities are structured into three tiers and provide a basis for monitoring and assessing individual and collective performance across the sector.

The Assurance and Excellence Development Program (the Program) is the mechanism used by the Office of the IGEM to discern a level of confidence in Queensland’s disaster management arrangements. The Program also aims to add value to the disaster management sector through collating and analysing information from the sector, making suggestions for improvement and sharing knowledge. The resulting assessment of confidence in the effectiveness of disaster management in Queensland will be reported to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

The Program is built on the philosophy that issues should be addressed at the lowest possible level (locally) and with the least amount of formality. The Program incorporates the suite of Assurance Activities that contribute to an understanding of the effectiveness of disaster management in Queensland. This will support more streamlined and relevant solutions that minimise impost on the sector and provide maximum value for money. Flexibility is also a key to the Program’s design, allowing for the right activity to be selected for each unique situation. A partnership approach is taken to developing solutions in support of a culture of innovation and improvement.

**Conclusion**

Core to the EMAF and its implementation is the notion of shared responsibility, clear accountability and cultural interoperability. While there has been limited validation of standards and assurance systems applied in the emergency management environment, Queensland has a unique opportunity though an IGEM and the EMAF, to influence and measure improvements and enhance a culture of interoperability and excellence in emergency management.
**Queensland Emergency Management Assurance Framework**

**Leadership**
Leadership at all levels is demonstrated through a commitment to a shared culture of disaster management excellence. Strategic planning, within the context of resources and risk, underpins clear decision making and planning to achieve outcomes.

**Public safety**
Queensland’s disaster management arrangements are delivered through effective disaster management groups where policy, procedure and practice all focus on safety of the public, engaging stakeholders and sharing responsibility.

**Partnership**
Everyone has a role to ensure Queensland is the most disaster-resilient State. Strategic partnerships are well-governed, drive clear roles and responsibilities, and promote true collaboration.

**Performance**
Productivity and effectiveness are measured by a combination of quality, quantity, cost, time or human relationships. Performance is monitored and analysed against standards and good practice across the spectrum of prevent, prepare, respond and recover.

**Shared responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard Identification &amp; Risk Assessment</th>
<th>Hazard Mitigation &amp; Risk Reduction</th>
<th>Preparedness &amp; Planning</th>
<th>Emergency Communications</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Relief &amp; Recovery</th>
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**Key outcomes**

**Good practice attributes**
The attributes that enable and indicate the quality of the outcome

**Accountabilities**
The area assessed against the ability to deliver the outcome

**Solutions, programs or systems are scalable** and can be applied in any size or type of event

**Systems and solutions are interoperable** and able to operate seamlessly

**Solutions, programs or systems are adaptive** and flexible to the needs of the stakeholder

**Solutions, programs or systems can demonstrate value for money**

**Solutions, programs or systems are comprehensive** and consider all phases of disaster management

**Governance arrangements support local needs**

**Doctrine** is in place that embeds common language, creates unity and clear purpose

The required **enablers** such as systems, resources, information and technologies are developed and maintained

The required **capability** is established, tested and maintained

**Performance** is measured, reported and managed to drive continuous improvement

**Assurance Tiers**

**Assurance activities**
The activities undertaken to validate performance

**Tier One activities**
e.g. Self-assessment

**Tier Two activities**
e.g. Peer review, exercise evaluation

**Tier Three activities**
e.g. IGEM-led review or post event analysis