

# Inspector-General Emergency Management

## Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland



Achieving effective disaster management outcomes  
for safer Queensland communities

## Authorisation

The Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland has been developed by the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management in accordance with Section 16C of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

This document is hereby authorised by the Inspector-General Emergency Management.

This document is developed and maintained by the Inspector-General Emergency Management.



Iain MacKenzie AFSM

**Inspector-General Emergency Management**

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## Document details

<b>Security classification</b>	PUBLIC
<b>Date of review of security classification</b>	13 June 2019
<b>Authority</b>	Inspector-General Emergency Management
<b>Author</b>	Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management
<b>Document status</b>	Final
<b>Version</b>	V2.0

## Version control

<b>Version</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Endorsement date</b>
1.0	Initial development	July 2014
2.0	Emergency Management Assurance Framework Refresh	June 2019

## Information for users

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# Contact details

All enquiries regarding this document should be directed to the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management:

Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management  
IGEM Mail Cluster 15.7  
GPO Box 1425  
Brisbane Qld 4001

[info@igem.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@igem.qld.gov.au)



# Acknowledgements

The participation and cooperation of practitioners, operators and experts from across the disaster management sector in the development and continuous improvement of the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland is highly valued and greatly appreciated.

The Office of the Inspector-General  
Emergency Management acknowledge  
Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait  
Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners  
and Custodians of this Country. The Office  
recognises their connection to land, sea and  
community, and pays respect to them, their  
cultures, and to their Elders, past, present  
and emerging.



# Foreword

The Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (the Standard) has been the basis of efforts to continually improve our disaster management arrangements for the past five years.

Developed in collaboration with Queensland disaster management practitioners, the Standard has defined the outcomes that we strive to achieve through policy, doctrine and practice. The past five years have also resulted in lessons about the Standard itself. In keeping with the Office's function to regularly review and assess disaster management standards, the Office has once again turned to the sector to 'learn' those lessons.

Work over past months has involved many in a refresh of the Standard. The aims of the refresh are to ensure it is contemporary and supported by tools for those that use it. All changes have been at the instigation of working group members, and from feedback gained over four years of application. All content from the original Framework and Standard has been mapped to the proposed refreshed versions to ensure nothing has been lost.

The result here is a contemporary Standard that is easy to understand and supported by systems to allow stakeholders to better apply and measure their own progress. The Queensland disaster management sector has always risen to the challenge of providing the best possible services to Queenslanders. This refreshed Standard provides the direction for this continued pursuit of excellence.

I reiterate my thanks of five years ago to all of our disaster management practitioners from across the State for their contribution as we build a more resilient Queensland.

Iain MacKenzie AFSM

**Inspector-General Emergency Management**

# Contents

Glossary	12
Related documents	14
Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland	16
Intent	16
A focus on Outcomes	16
Who it is for	16
Overview	18
Shared Responsibilities	18
Outcomes	18
Indicators	18
Accountabilities	18
How it works	19
Good Practice Attributes	19
Disclaimer	19
Shared Responsibilities	21
Managing Risk	22
Planning and Plans	24
Community Engagement	26
Capability Integration	28
Operations	30



# Glossary

Whilst some of the below terms feature in the IGEM Lexicon, it is important to ensure that there is clarity of all terms and what is meant when they are referred to in this document.

## Adaptation

The adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities (The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2016).

## Capability

The collective ability and power to deliver and sustain an effect within a specific context and timeframe.

## Capacity

The combination of all strengths, attributes and resources available within an organisation, community or society to manage and reduce disaster risks and strengthen resilience (Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon, 2018).

## Community

Individual, groups and organisations who, while they may participate in disaster management activities, do not operate under Queensland's disaster management arrangements, and do not have a legislated requirement to do so.

## Core business

The activity that is an entity's main purpose; usually the activity that it was originally set up to carry out (Collins English Dictionary, 2018).

## Disaster management

Arrangements about managing the potential adverse effects of an event, including, for example, arrangements for mitigating, preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a disaster (Disaster Management Act, 2003).

## Disaster management activities

Any activity that an entity of the community undertakes in support of disaster management. This includes operations, planning, and collaborative discussions across all phases of disaster management.

## Disaster operations

Activities undertaken before, during or after an event happens to help reduce loss of human life, illness or injury to humans, property loss or damage, or damage to the environment, including, for example, activities to mitigate the adverse effects of the event (Disaster Management Act, 2003).

## Entity / Entities

An individual, agency, group, organisation or department working within Queensland's disaster management arrangements.

## Escalation point

The point at which the capability and/or capacity of an entity to manage the current situation or event has been exceeded, resulting in an escalation to the next level of Queensland's disaster management arrangements for assistance, to continue to effectively manage the event.

### Fit for purpose

The activity conducted, or the method used is deemed suitable or the best approach to meet the desired outcome.

### Hazard

A process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation. Hazards may be natural, anthropogenic or socionatural in origin (Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon, 2018).

### Limits

The point at which the capability and/or capacity is exceeded.

### Mitigation

Activities intended to reduce or eliminate risks or lessen the actual or potential effects of consequences of an event (Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon, 2018).

### Multi-agency

A disaster management activity or event that involves more than one entity.

### Networks

The contacts that individuals have with others that result in a shared understanding or the roles, responsibilities or services that each provide.

### Offers of assistance

The offering of financial donations, volunteers, goods and services from individuals, corporations, businesses or organisations (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Disaster Management Glossary, 2018).

### Recognised methodology

A system of methods and principles for doing something, that is formally acknowledged as valid (Oxford Dictionary, 2018; Collins English Dictionary, 2018).

### Residual risk

The disaster risk that remains even when effective disaster risk reduction measures are in place, and for which emergency response and recovery capacities must be maintained (Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon, 2018).

### Service delivery

The act of providing a service or conducting an activity that is an entity's normal business.

### Shared understanding

Knowledge and awareness of a situation, person, or thing, that is shared across and between different entities to provide a common frame of situational awareness.

### Susceptible

Likely or liable to be influenced or harmed by something (Oxford Dictionary, 2018).

### Timely

Done or occurring at a favourable or useful time. This does not necessarily mean quickly; rather, it means something occurs or is done at the time when it will be of most use or effect.

### Training program

A program designed for training an individual in specific skills to meet the needs of their role.

# Related documents

The Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland falls within the Emergency Management Assurance Framework. The Emergency Management Assurance Framework is developed and maintained in close consultation with all programs conducted by the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (the Office). The content of other publications released by the Office is informed by and directly related to the Emergency Management Assurance Framework.

## Disaster Management Research Framework

The Disaster Management Research Framework seeks to equip disaster management practitioners throughout Queensland with significantly improved and relevant data and guidance to make enhanced evidence-based decisions and plans.

## Emergency Management Assurance Framework

The Emergency Management Assurance Framework promotes an end-to-end approach to the continuous improvement of disaster management and enables a statement of confidence in Queensland's disaster management arrangements.

## Inspector-General Emergency Management Stakeholder Engagement Framework

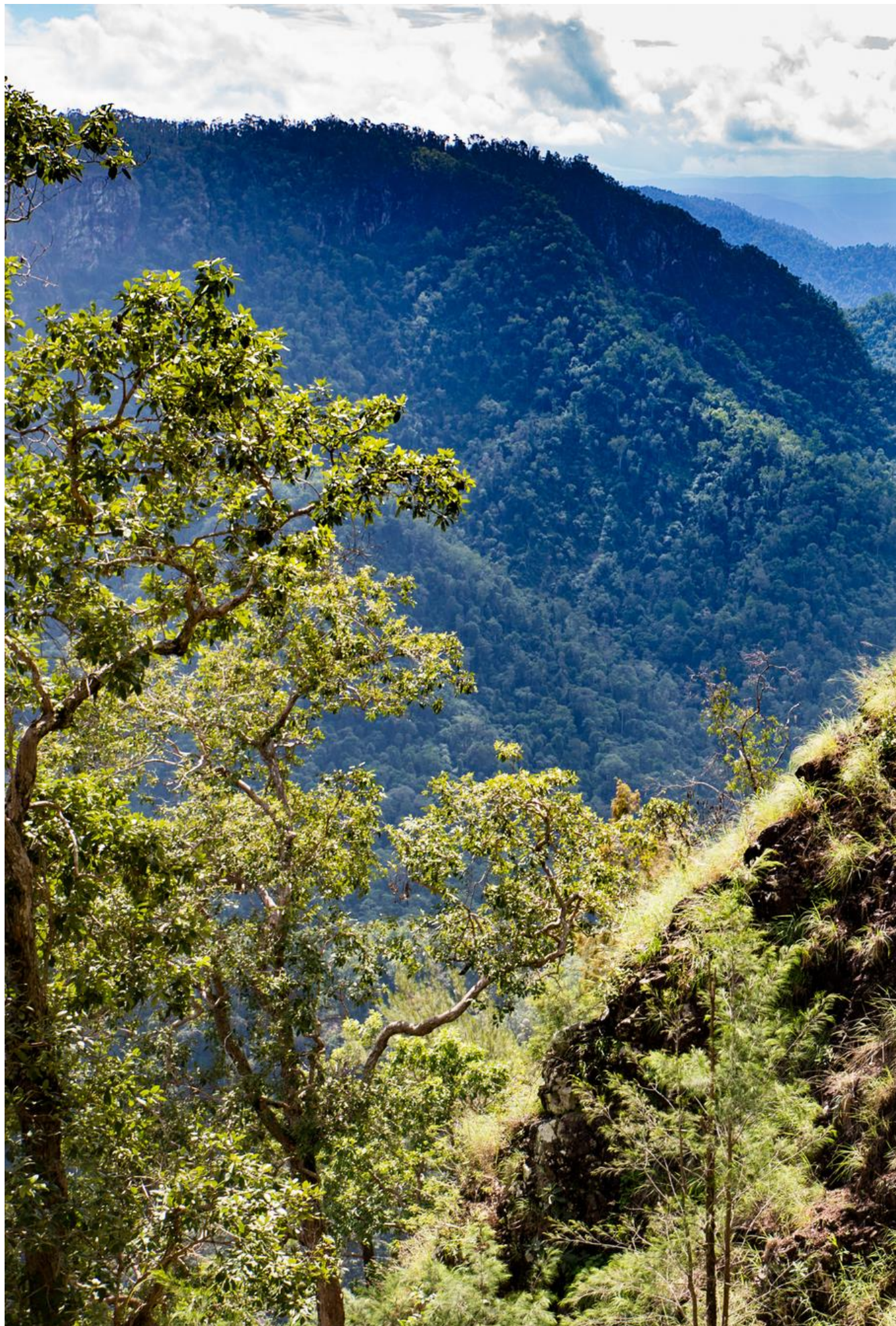
Effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement is pivotal to building and maintaining trusted networks and legitimate relationships. The Stakeholder Engagement Framework recognises such networks and relationships as foundational steps along the long-term, evolving journey to enacting and influencing sustained behavioural change and enduring partnerships.

## Lessons Management Program

The Lessons Management Program is tasked with implementing and maintaining a system-wide lessons management program for the disaster management sector in Queensland, based upon the identification and analysis of issues and the development, implementation and monitoring of improvement strategies.

## Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon

The Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon establishes a clear standard for common language within the Queensland disaster management sector. It promotes a shared situational awareness during events, contextualised to Queensland's disaster management sector



# Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland

## Intent

The Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (the Standard) establishes the performance requirements for all entities involved in disaster management.

This Standard is created under section 16N (1) of the Disaster Management Act 2003 (the Act) and is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains contemporary and meets the needs and expectations of the disaster management sector (the sector). The Standard forms the basis for assurance activities conducted by the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM or the Office) or a disaster management entity.

The Standard should be applied in conjunction with disaster management doctrine, good practice guidance and Government policy, with particular reference to the Act and the Queensland Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline (the Guideline).

## A focus on Outcomes

The Standard is the first example of an outcomes-focussed standard in the disaster management sector in Australia, and one of very few that exist internationally. By focussing on outcomes rather than setting a 'minimum' standard that must be met, the Standard moves away from a traditional compliance tool, and towards enhancing

performance and achieving shared system-wide goals set by the sector.

To focus on outcomes, the Standard must provide the parameters within which disaster management across all of Queensland should be conducted, without being prescriptive as to how it should be conducted. This allows the Standard to be applied flexibly across a range of different entities according to their capability, capacity, and needs. From Brisbane to Boulia to Bamaga, the Standard is applicable across the sector.

## Who it is for

The Standard should be used by all entities in Queensland with a responsibility to contribute to disaster management. This includes those with legislated roles, as well as entities acting on behalf of or under an arrangement with those that do.

## Entities

The term 'entities' is defined within the Acts Interpretation Act 1954. It determines that an entity includes both a person and an unincorporated body. Consistent with the Disaster Management Act 2003 (the Act), the Standard uses the term entity to describe those with roles or responsibilities within disaster management in Queensland. This includes all tiers of government, non-government organisations, not-for-profit organisations, disaster management groups, and others with legislated roles in disaster management.



Figure 1: Emergency Management Assurance Framework

The Standard falls within the Disaster Management Standards section in the Emergency Management Assurance Framework (the Framework).

The Standard is made up of several different elements. Each of these are interrelated. To apply the Standard in full, all elements of the Standard need to be considered together.

The major elements of the Standard are:

- Shared Responsibilities, containing the Outcomes and the Indicators
- Accountabilities.

A diagram of all the elements contained within the Standard can be found in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland Structure

# Overview

## Shared Responsibilities

The Shared Responsibilities are the elements of disaster management that all entities should deliver against and that everyone within the sector is responsible for contributing to. Shared Responsibilities should not be considered in isolation – they are the interconnected responsibilities that collectively make up the system of disaster management within Queensland.

## Outcomes

Outcomes are high-level statements that all entities should strive to achieve. They are the end state that the sector is collectively aiming for. Outcomes are grouped under the correlating Shared Responsibilities.

## Indicators

Indicators represent the individual items or actions that demonstrate that an entity is working toward or achieving an Outcome. Indicators define the elements that make up each Outcome. They provide guidance as to the evidence that may be provided when determining whether the Outcome

is able to be achieved. As such, all Indicators are specific to the related Outcome.

## Accountabilities

The Accountabilities provide structure for the delivery of Outcomes and Indicators. They consider what an entity is accountable for under legislation and accepted good disaster management practice. The Accountabilities are also a mechanism to frame what the Inspector-General Emergency Management may consider in evidencing the achievement of the Outcomes.

The five Accountabilities are:

- Governance
- Doctrine
- People
- Enablers
- Continuous Improvement.

Each of these Accountabilities has specific criteria that must be met to ensure a level of rigour around the delivery of Outcomes.

### How it works

To achieve each Outcome, entities must address each Indicator for that Outcome. They must also address each Accountability in the context of that Outcome.



Figure 3: Equation for Achieving Outcomes

This process provides an indication that the Outcome can or is being achieved. An entity is more likely to achieve an Outcome when all Indicators are evidenced.

Several tools have been developed by the Office to support the application of the Standard. These can be found on the Office's website, and can be applied to assess whether Outcomes are being achieved and provide focus areas for improvement.

### Good Practice Attributes

The quality of 'effectiveness' contained in the Act is defined by the consistent display of five distinct attributes. These Good Practice Attributes are an important part of the Framework, as they are applicable across all activities conducted within that construct. The Good Practice Attributes are Scalable, Comprehensive, Interoperable, Value Driven, and Adaptable.

The Good Practice Attributes can be applied to entities' disaster management activities to provide a measure of their effectiveness. For example, when undertaking Assurance Activities, the Office will apply the Good Practice Attributes to determine how effectively the Outcomes have been achieved.

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#### Disclaimer

The Inspector-General Emergency Management retains the right to conduct Assurance Activities beyond the scope of the Standard if necessary to perform the functions of the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management or of the Inspector-General Emergency Management under section 16C of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.



# Shared Responsibilities

The Shared Responsibilities, and the Outcomes that align to them, are listed below. Details, including the Indicators for each Outcome, can be found on the following pages.

Shared Responsibility	Outcomes
Managing Risk	There is a shared understanding of risks for all relevant hazards
	Risk is managed to reduce the impact of disasters on the community
Planning and Plans	There is a shared understanding of how the impact of disasters will be managed and coordinated
	Plans outline and detail how the impact of disasters on the community will be reduced
Community Engagement	Entities proactively and openly engage with communities
	The community makes informed choices about disaster management, and acts on them
Capability Integration	Resources are prioritised and shared with those who need them, when they need them
	Entities develop integrated capabilities and shared capacity to reduce the impact of disasters on the community
Operations	Operations minimise the negative impacts of an event on the community and provide the support needed for recovery
Collaboration and Coordination	Entities proactively work together in a cooperative environment to achieve better results for the community
	A collaborative culture exists within disaster management

# Managing Risk

The management of risk is fundamental to making the community safer. Risks need to be identified for both natural and human-caused hazards. Entities have a shared responsibility to work together with their community to develop integrated strategies to manage these risks.

## Outcomes

1. There is a shared understanding of risks for all relevant hazards
2. Risk is managed to reduce the impact of disasters on the community



## Accountabilities

<b>Governance</b>	Governance refers to how entities administer their disaster management responsibilities and ensure decision making is appropriate, clear and consistent.
<b>Doctrine</b>	Doctrine refers to the ideas, strategies and guiding principles contained in the documents that guide disaster management. These align with legislation, reflect good practice, and include guidelines, policies, plans and procedures.
<b>People</b>	People refers to the relationships and networks, training, skills and experience that enable the individuals who undertake disaster management to do so effectively.
<b>Enablers</b>	Enablers refer to the resources that assist entities in undertaking disaster management activities. This includes both the physical equipment and assets, and the systems, data and technologies.
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	Continuous Improvement refers to how entities monitor, evaluate, measure and improve disaster management activities.

## 1. There is a shared understanding of risks for all relevant hazards

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### Indicators

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The risk assessment process:

- involves all relevant entities
  - follows a recognised methodology
  - considers all hazards and potential risks
  - is evidence-based
  - draws on local knowledge and experiences
- 

Risk assessments:

- incorporate community values and priorities
  - are fit for purpose and relevant to the local context
  - are accessible to all relevant entities
  - inform all phases of disaster management
  - underpin all disaster management activities
  - inform business continuity planning
  - identify, refer or accept residual risk
- 

## 2. Risk is managed to reduce the impact of disasters on the community

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### Indicators

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Mitigation and risk reduction activities:

- are informed by risk assessments
  - are prioritised based on risk assessments and available resources
  - are included in strategic and operational plans
  - are considered as business-as-usual
  - consider unintended consequences
- 

Entities:

- understand hazards and risks
  - embed mitigation and risk reduction activities into normal business
  - encourage and enable the community to help manage their own risks
  - work together to manage risks
- 

The community:

- knows their hazards and the associated risks
  - is invested and acts to reduce the impact of events
-

# Planning and Plans

Planning involves many steps. It should result in entities working with their community to prioritise how their collective and collaborative efforts will reduce the impact of disasters on the community. Plans document these efforts, identify interdependencies, roles and responsibilities, and provide guidance on how to undertake disaster management. The planning process results in a shared understanding of the efforts required to reduce the risk to the community.

## Outcomes

3. There is a shared understanding of how the impact of disasters will be managed and coordinated
4. Plans outline and detail how the impact of disasters on the community will be reduced



## Accountabilities

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### 3. There is a shared understanding of how the impact of disasters will be managed and coordinated

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#### Indicators

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Planning for disaster management is:

- embedded into core business
  - embedded into maintaining service delivery
  - a collaborative process
  - coordinated between entities
  - undertaken and informed by the appropriate entities
  - based on a recognised methodology
- 

The planning process provides a shared understanding of:

- agreed roles and responsibilities
  - capability and capacity
  - limits and escalation points
  - processes for escalation
  - the management of resources
  - internal arrangements that may affect others
- 

Communities:

- are included in the planning process
  - have access to relevant plans and information
- 

### 4. Plans outline and detail how the impact of disasters on the community will be reduced

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#### Indicators

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Disaster management plans:

- are informed by disaster management guidelines
  - are informed by evidence
  - are informed by risks
  - are informed by people with relevant skills or expertise
  - are approved by the accountable entity
  - consider activities initiated by the community
  - consider funding arrangements, eligibility criteria, and activation mechanisms
  - identify redundancies for people and resources
- 

Disaster management planning and plans:

- are fit for purpose and meet entity needs
  - meet the needs of the community
  - identify and acknowledge community capability and capacity
  - are integrated and consider multi-agency requirements
  - address the management of offers of assistance
  - establish the requirements for post-event evaluation
-

# Community Engagement

The community is central to disaster management. Community engagement entails actively involving the community in managing their risk. It involves collaboratively planning how the community's collective efforts will contribute to their safety. Community engagement builds local capability, capacity and community self-reliance. This allows entities to focus their efforts where they are needed most.

## Outcomes

5. Entities proactively and openly engage with communities
6. The community makes informed choices about disaster management, and acts on them



## Accountabilities

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<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	Continuous Improvement refers to how entities monitor, evaluate, measure and improve disaster management activities.

## 5. Entities proactively and openly engage with communities

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### Indicators

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Entities distribute communications that:

- are risk-based
  - use plain language and common terminology
  - are current, timely, fit for purpose and easy to understand
  - meet the needs of the community
  - are developed and delivered by the appropriate mechanism and entity
- 

Engagement activities:

- are sustainable
  - are appropriately resourced
  - build on existing relationships and communication forums
  - establish two-way information sharing and learning opportunities between entities and the community
  - are consistent and coordinated between entities
  - are documented and based on a recognised methodology
  - gather the knowledge, experience and shared history of the community
  - are tested for understanding, effectiveness, and community perception of authority
- 

## 6. The community makes informed choices about disaster management, and acts on them

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### Indicators

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Communities:

- are aware of their level of susceptibility to disasters
  - receive relevant, timely, consistent, easy-to-understand warnings
  - have access to relevant information about disasters that affect them
  - are aware of the support that is available to them, and their eligibility to access it
- 

Entities:

- define communities that are at risk of impact from an event
  - identify and engage with those in the community who are or may be more susceptible to the impact of disasters than others
  - provide the community with information that enables them to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impact of disasters
  - support the community in developing skills, capability and capacity for disaster management
  - seek feedback from the community about disaster management practices
-

# Capability Integration

Capability integration involves entities building their capabilities together in a way that complements existing capability within the community. Capability integration is dependent on a shared understanding of the goals that guide the sector, and the ability to share and manage resources appropriately.

## Outcomes

7. Resources are prioritised and shared with those who need them, when they need them
8. Entities develop integrated capabilities and shared capacity to reduce the impact of disasters on the community



## Accountabilities

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## 7. Resources are prioritised and shared with those who need them, when they need them

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### Indicators

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In terms of resources, entities:

- are aware of their own and others' resources and their availability
  - understand how resources can be accessed and integrated
  - know which of their own resources other entities may require
  - coordinate and manage resources
  - understand the capability limits of available resources
  - make relevant plans, procedures, and other documents and resources available to other entities
- 

In terms of information, entities:

- source, verify and share relevant intelligence products with other entities
  - understand their own information requirements
  - share current, relevant information
  - can securely store and share sensitive data
- 

## 8. Entities develop integrated capabilities and shared capacity to reduce the impact of disasters on the community

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### Indicators

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Entities:

- consider the community's capability and capacity to manage their own risks
  - work together to build capability and capacity
  - have and maintain agreements for the provision and delivery of services and resources
  - have agreements with others for access to systems, documents and resources
  - develop and implement coordinated strategies
- 

Training and exercising programs are:

- determined by needs, roles and responsibilities
  - informed by evidence and risk and doctrine
  - developed in collaboration with relevant entities
  - coordinated across and involve all relevant entities
  - developed and conducted by the appropriate entities
  - consistent with recognised methodology
-

# Operations

Operations are the activities undertaken by entities during response, relief, and recovery for a specific event, including activities to mitigate and prepare for the impacts of that event.

## Outcome

9. Operations minimise the negative impacts of an event on the community and provide the support needed for recovery

This Outcome is to be applied separately for:

- Response
- Relief
- Recovery



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<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	Continuous Improvement refers to how entities monitor, evaluate, measure and improve disaster management activities.

## 9. Operations minimise the negative impacts of an event on the community and provide the support needed for recovery

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### Indicators

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Operations are:

- coordinated
  - timely and reflect the urgency of the situation
  - informed by plans
  - risk-based and based on evidence
  - based on community needs
  - conducted, led and coordinated by the appropriate entities
- 

Entities conduct operations that:

- start at the right time
  - support the transition between response, relief and recovery
  - incorporate the functions of recovery
  - support activities initiated by the community
  - minimise the likelihood of unintended consequences impacting the community
  - improve the community's ability to cope with future events
-

# Collaboration and Coordination

Collaboration and Coordination refers to how entities consider an integrated approach, and work together to promote a positive environment within the disaster management sector across all phases of disaster management. It includes the ways in which they show leadership and commitment to the principles behind disaster management.

## Outcome

10. Entities proactively work together in a cooperative environment to achieve better results for the community
11. A collaborative culture exists within disaster management



## Accountabilities

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## 10. Entities proactively work together in a cooperative environment to achieve better results for the community

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### Indicators

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#### Entities:

- work within internal agency structures
  - work together within cross-agency arrangements
  - implement disaster management systems and processes that coordinate with their normal business processes
  - understand the information requirements of other entities
  - have a formally assigned, accessible point of contact
  - work in partnership with community groups and leaders
- 

#### Entities make decisions based on:

- risk
  - a recognised and documented process
  - the best available intelligence
  - the capability and capacity of all relevant entities
  - the positive impact they will make to community outcomes
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## 11. A collaborative culture exists within disaster management

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### Indicators

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#### Entities:

- explore and act on opportunities for collaboration with others
  - show leadership through a commitment to, and investment in, practices that can be sustained
  - integrate disaster management into strategic and operational plans
  - identify interdependencies and work with other entities in a collaborative, problem-solving way
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#### Individuals within the sector:

- recognise the importance of and maintain trusted relationships
  - use exercises and events as an opportunity to shadow and mentor others
  - share their knowledge and experience with others
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# Accountabilities

The five Accountabilities and the criteria by which they should be met are detailed below. All of the Accountabilities should be applied to each Outcome within the Standard. The criteria ensure that a consistent and rigorous process has been applied to achieving the Outcomes.

There are several tools available on the Office's website to assist in applying the Accountabilities.

## Governance

Governance refers to how entities administer their disaster management responsibilities and ensure decision making is appropriate, clear and consistent.

- Roles and responsibilities have been identified, agreed to, and documented
- Entities have been authorised to carry out their delegated responsibilities
- The authorising environment for decisions and approvals has been identified and agreed to, and is being utilised
- Arrangements are in place for reporting on and monitoring the outcomes of decisions and actions
- Decisions are recorded as they are made, and their implementation is monitored

## Doctrine

Doctrine refers to the ideas, strategies and guiding principles contained in the documents that guide disaster management. These align with legislation, reflect good practice, and include guidelines, policies, plans and procedures.

- Roles and responsibilities are based on relevant doctrine
- The action or activity is based on relevant doctrine
- Doctrine is agreed and shared between entities
- Common language being used, and terminology is agreed and consistent with doctrine

## People

People refers to the relationships and networks, training, skills and experience that enable the individuals who undertake disaster management to do so effectively.

- Enabling networks and relationships between individuals and entities, both formal and informal, have been established and maintained
- Training requirements are documented, and the necessary skills and knowledge are being met
- Opportunities are provided for on-the-job training and development
- Upskilling and cross-training provide a reserve of personnel

## Enablers

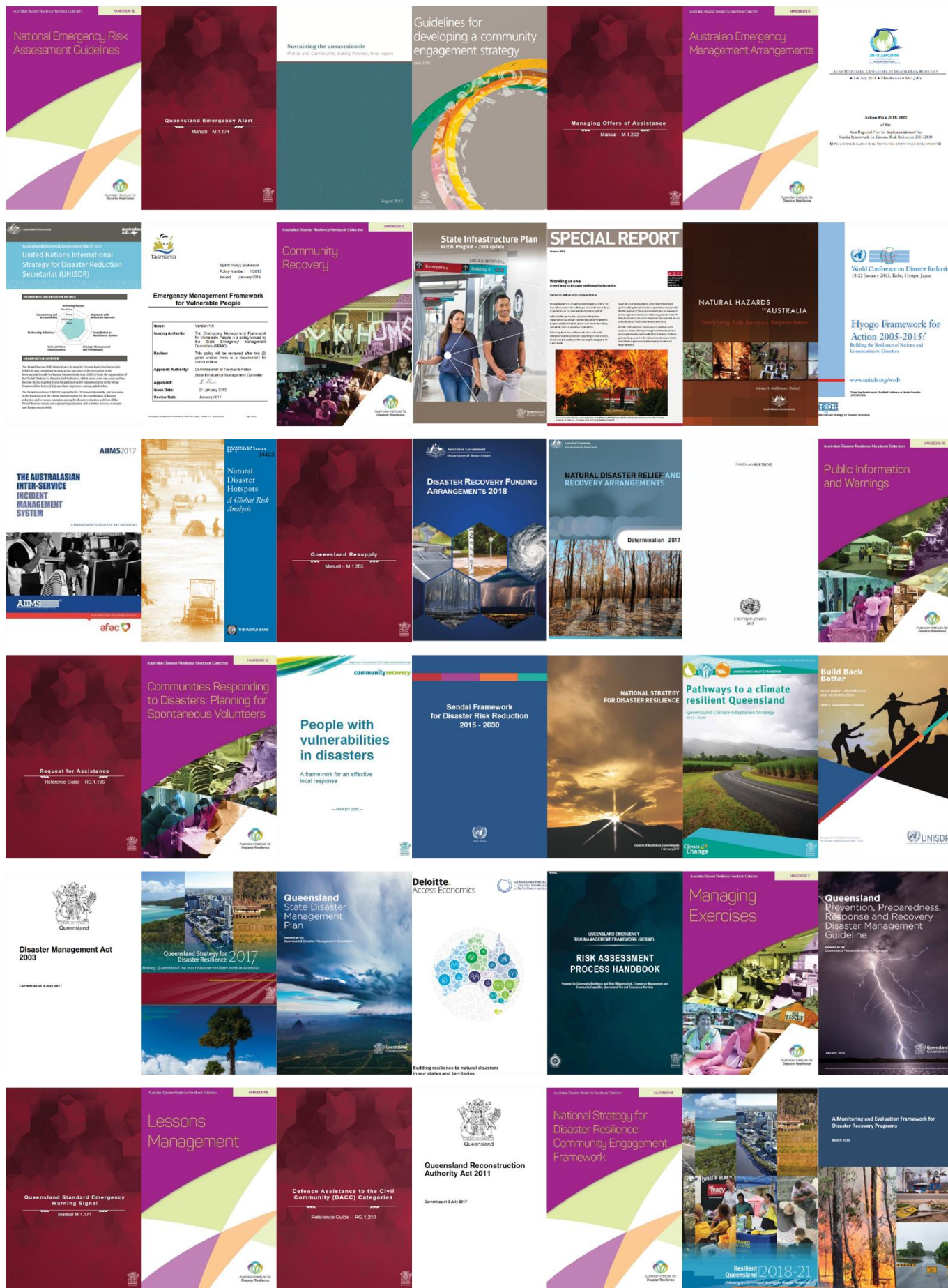
Enablers refer to the resources that assist entities in undertaking disaster management activities. This includes both the physical equipment and assets, and the systems, data and technologies.

- Enablers are in place, are fit for purpose, and are being used in line with agreed protocols
- Enablers are accessible to the relevant entities, including the community if necessary
- Enablers meet the needs and requirements of all relevant entities
- Benchmarks for the performance of enablers have been established and are being met
- Alternatives or backups are in place

## Continuous Improvement

Continuous Improvement refers to how entities monitor, evaluate, measure and improve disaster management activities.

- An established lessons management process is being undertaken
- The capabilities required have been identified, documented, and aligned to recognised and accepted training methodology
- A variety of exercising and testing methods are being conducted and evaluated
- Insights are included in a lessons management process
- Lessons identified are shared with other entities, and with the community when relevant
- Improvements are made based on insights gained through testing, exercises and operational activity



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