

Inspector-General's message

I am pleased to present the 2019–20 Annual Report for the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (the Office).

From the outset, I would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of Iain Mackenzie AFSM, as Queensland's first Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM). Iain helped to spearhead the role during his five years as the IGEM. In this time, he established the initial strategic direction of the Office and undertook a number of reviews.

Following Iain's retirement in July 2019, I was seconded to the Office from my role as an Assistant Commissioner, Queensland Police Service. On 6 February 2020, it was humbling to be officially appointed as Queensland's new IGEM.

There has never been a more crucial time for our sector and the important work we do. The last summer was indeed a difficult and testing time for us all. I am looking forward to continuing to build on the strong foundations of Queensland's disaster management arrangements, to work closely with all stakeholders at the state, district and council levels.

During 2019–20, the Office continued to work with Queensland's disaster management sector to enhance community safety through several key pieces of work, including:

- launching a new four-year strategic plan to reflect the unique role of the Office, our sector and its stakeholders
- delivering the *Paradise Dam Preparedness Review Report 1: 2019–20* and *Queensland Bushfires Review Report 2: 2019–20* to the Minister
- commencing the development of an effective means of monitoring, evaluating and reporting to Government against the Office's review recommendations
- undertaking the 2019–20 local and district disaster management plan assessment process
- ongoing collaboration with Queensland's local governments through the Disaster Management Officers' Network (DMO network)
- continuing to apply the Queensland Disaster Management Research Framework (DMRF) to support a coordinated approach to undertaking, managing and sharing research with sector
- hosting the Office's Champion of Change Award in the lead up to International Women's Day 2020 and continued involvement in projects that help prevent and respond to domestic and family violence.

The 2019–20 financial year has also presented unique challenges for the Queensland disaster management sector, commencing with the sudden and severe onset of the bushfire season, followed by the cyclone season and the impact of global pandemic COVID-19.

This year has demonstrated that the disaster management sector must not only expect the unexpected, but plan and prepare for the unexpected. Indeed, emergencies and disaster events are becoming more frequent, more severe, more complex. Events have compounded and converged, on top of each other, in recent times. This has created unique challenges in planning and preparedness, and workforce and volunteer fatigue management across the sector.

It has also meant the Office itself has refocused its program of delivery on core business and frontline service delivery, while seeking to utilise online and digital platforms to engage with our stakeholders. Indeed, COVID-19 has meant some events such as the Office's planned Queensland Disaster Management Research Forum or the Disaster Management Officer's Forum could not go ahead in their current formats.

The Office has been able to forge new partnerships with our stakeholders to deliver new and reimagined events for our sector in 2020–21 and beyond.

Finally, I would like to thank the passionate and hardworking employees of the Office. I look forward to continuing to work together with the IGEM team to drive continuous improvement in emergency management in 2020–21.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alistair Dawson'.

Alistair Dawson APM

Inspector-General Emergency Management